

INTRODUCTION TO AN ALTOGETHER UNKNOWN BOOK

AVIS, LEÇONS, SENTENCES (1868)¹

The origins of the Institute and Marist spirit according to Brother Jean-Baptiste Furet

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Many Marist Brothers of today never read, nor even consulted, *ALS* during their formation. It is one of the last works of Brother Jean-Baptiste Furet. Nonetheless, it is one of the most complete expositions of the origins and spirit of the Institute by one of Marcellin's first, and most illustrious, disciples: a sort of spiritual testament of its author, and it merits greater consideration.

The circumstances surrounding the publication of *ALS*

It was in 1868 that there appeared at the Nicolle printer-publisher's of Lyon the work entitled *Sentences, Lessons, Opinions of the Venerable Father Champagnat explained and expanded upon by one of his first disciples*. Its author, Brother Jean-Baptiste Furet had entered the Marist Brothers in 1822; he became an Assistant to the Director General, Brother François, in 1839. Although very ill, he held on to the post of Superior, first of all, of the Provinces of St Paul and Aubenas until 1860, then of St Genis-Laval until his sudden death on 5th February 1872. A Circular of Brother Louis-Marie, the Superior General, of 8th April, gave an outline of the biography of the deceased, notably presenting him as the Congregation's legislator. It is true that he had taken a paramount part in the editing of the *Common Rules*, the *Schools' Guide* and the *Constitutions* approved during the three sessions of the 1852 - 1854 General Chapter. He was also the brains behind the 1856 biography of Marcellin. However, tradition exaggerated his role, almost completely forgetting Brother François, the first Superior General, still alive in 1872, but even then quite overlooked.

From 1860, Brother Jean-Baptiste was in practice shut in his room because of asthma, governing - essentially by letter - the Province of St Genis-Laval². Sleeping badly, he devoted much of his time to compiling works for the Institute. In 1863 he published the voluminous *Directory of*

¹ [Translator's Note] Over the years there have been a number of English translations of this work, with different translations of the book's title. In the English-speaking Marist world the book is generally known by its French title, so, to avoid confusion, I will keep to the French title, and will use the abbreviations ALS in the body of the text where necessary.

² The chronology given in the Circulars states that, in 1867, Brother Felicité was appointed to help Brother Jean-Baptiste govern the Province. Although physically weak, Brother Jean-Baptiste did not want this help and Brother Felicité would instead take on the post of Secretary General.

Solid Piety for the use of the Little Brothers of Mary and *The Principles of Christian and Religious Perfection for the use of the Little Brothers of Mary*, which took up and expanded into two volumes the *Manual of Piety* of 1855, destined for the formation of novices and a collection of prayers used in the Institute. These works were not completely new, nor were they his own works, but compilations

On the other hand, with the *Biographies of Some Brothers distinguished by their virtue and love of their vocation*³ and the *Sentences, Lessons, Opinions of the Venerable Father Champagnat* published in the same year of 1868 Brother Jean-Baptiste saw himself as the chronicler of the Institute. Moreover, both works carry on the first page, above the title, “*Chronicles of the Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary*” as if noting the start of a series. However, the *Good Superior or the qualities of a good Brother Director according to the spirit of the Venerable Father Champagnat, Founder of the Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary*⁴ in 1869 did not carry this surtitle.

Clearly, these were difficult years, when the Institute was faced with an Imperial government which had become hostile to Congregations and a republican undertow very aggressive towards the Church. This is why the Regime (the General Council) of the Institute adopted a more discrete style of publishing, an example of which, the baroque-style seal composed of the letters AM interlaced and surmounted by twelve stars, would, from then on, find its place with the title of Marist works⁵ up to the end of the 20th Century. In these later years Brother Jean-Baptiste published only anonymous meditations. Only the coat of arms would allow one to know that they were Marist⁶.

Brother Jean-Baptiste’s printed works can be divided into three phases. The first, from 1852 to 1863, concerns the principal books of the Congregation, with it being understood that he was the driving force, rather than the single author. In 1868 - 69 he took on the role of Marist author to put some vigour back into a tradition the memory of which he was afraid of being lost. The *Biographies de quelques Frères, Sentences, Leçons, Avis, and Le Bon Supérieur* therefore had a very personal character. However, the Institute perceived these belated works as the teaching of an ageing Brother Jean-Baptiste who was respected without being taken too seriously. As for the books on meditation of the later years, they went out to a wide public.

³ [Translator’s Note] *Biographies...* is a collection of biographies of deceased Brothers issued by the General Administration on an occasional basis for the edification of the Brothers up until the 1960s. Even although it was regularly translated into English, it continued to be known in the English-speaking Marist world by its abbreviated French title, *Biographies de Quelques Frères*.

⁴ [Translator’s Note] Again, better known in the English-speaking Marist world by its abbreviated French title, *Le Bon Supérieur*.

⁵ The 1863 *Directory* has a seal composed of the letter M in a classical style, surmounted by a cross and surrounded by a crown of flowers.

⁶ *Meditations on the Passion and Names of Our Lord* (1870); *Meditations on the Mystery of the Incarnation, on the Virtues of Jesus Christ and on the Eucharist* published posthumously in 1875.

A misunderstood work, poorly appreciated

In the Circular entitled “Brother Jean-Baptiste or the Serious Vocation” (8th April 1872), Brother Louis-Marie deplored the indifference of the Brothers to the work of the deceased. He himself quite selectively praised his ascetical works, “particularly the asceticism of the Sentences and the Biographies”, in particular Ch 7 of ALS⁷ “What Sin Is” and Ch 19 “The Big Question” (that is, temptation against Jesus Christ), which appeared to him to be particularly useful for the young Brothers. He also mentioned “the ten chapters on charity” (ALS Chs 24 - 33) and “the seven chapters on education”(ALS Chs 35 - 41) which are “real spiritual treasures offered to the whole Congregation”. However, these are just the chapters in which Brother Jean-Baptiste has little to say about Marcellin’s spirit. Brother Louis-Marie says nothing about the chapters in which witness is borne to the origins and Marcellin’s teaching is interpreted.

Marist tradition has ratified these reservations up to the present day. In the *Annals of the Institute* (Vol 3, 1872) Brother Avit, who was writing after 1884, was clearly inspired by the 1872 Circular and praised the *Principles of Perfection* “so well-thought of by serious people” and the “*Biographies* of our principal Brothers, which only he could write”. *Le Bon Supérieur* is a book “beyond all praise”. As he contents himself with citing *Sentences*, *Leçons*, *Avis* without any praise, we suspect that Brother Avit did not think much of it.

It has to be recognised that *Sentences*, *Leçons*, *Avis*, which on subsequent editions would become ALS, often gave the impression, particularly in its first part (Chapters 1 - 23) that Brother Jean-Baptiste threw chapters together without sufficient organisation, mixing his own thinking with Marcellin’s or using his own teaching as introduction and illustration. Moreover, even today, ALS is not, or is only partially, translated into the customary languages of the Institute.

Even in French, there are not many editions. It is necessary to wait for the Circular of 2nd February 1913, in which Brother Stratonique places ALS in third place, after *Principles of Perfection* and the *Life of Father Champagnat* in his list of the twelve principal sources of the spirit of the Institute, to find a Superior praising the work. He announced a new edition “the first edition of ALS being used up”. However, it was the Institute’s centenary which justified this operation. The Circular of 2nd February 1914 announced that the work was in the process of being printed, but the war upset its distribution. And then, as an international entity, the Institute was no longer an environment favourable to the reception of an old book in French.⁸ Even in the French-speaking world, the 1914 edition rarely had a place in libraries. The Secretary General had made the work more attractive by modifying the title and particularly by providing a highly

⁷ [Translator’s Note] Brother André makes the point that the order of words in the book’s title was only settled in 1914.

⁸ In his Circular of 22nd April 1912, Brother Stratonique raised the language-problem which prevented Brothers who did not speak French from reading the Congregation’s ascetical literature. Translations of ALS had already appeared in English, Spanish and Italian.

detailed index, which one would have been happy to find in all the Institute’s old books. However, these improvements only highlighted its manifest faults. Very long at 41 chapters, and without a clear plan, the book went beyond the abilities of the young Brothers to take it in. It could even be seen as an unconvincing reprise of Marcellin’s teaching outlined much more clearly in the *Life*.

ALS as the legitimate interpretation of the original tradition

Nevertheless, this book is not without merit if we accept it as an expression of the human and spiritual personality of Brother Jean-Baptiste, a witness to the origins, a legislator, a chronicler, spiritual master and Superior of the Brothers, notably of the Provinces of St Paul and La Bégude-Aubenas between 1840 and 1860. We know, moreover, from the statements of various witnesses that his teaching was much appreciated. Quite often the introductions to the chapters of ALS reflect his alert style. However, by 1869 Brother Jean-Baptiste’s prestige had decreased very much, as Brother Louis-Marie hinted at.

1. A HIGHLY COMPLEX BOOK

It is time to present in detail a book of 41 chapters without internal divisions. Nevertheless, with some little attention, a reader can discern three distinct parts. This flaw gives us the impression of a rushed publication; however, an artificial unity might have been preferred to a badly-balanced work. The first part, then, which covers Chapters 1 - 23 is quite varied in form, even if unified by two key ideas: the story of the origins of the Institute and the early teaching of Marcellin. The second part, on fraternal charity, comprises Chapters 24 - 34 and is particularly inspired by Brother Jean-Baptiste’s own teaching. The third, on education, was compiled by Brother Jean-Baptiste and takes up Chapters 34 - 41. This division, set out below, requires explanation. I have respected the often very long and not always clear titles and suggest a summary of the contents of each chapter.⁹

Chapter	Title	Summary of Contents
Foreword	What is the Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary?	Its origins, its spirit of humility (Little Brothers!)

⁹ [Translator’s Note] For the remainder of this Paper, I have taken the English translations of ALS from *Listen to the Words of your Father. Opinions, Conferences, Sayings and Instructions of Marcellin Champagnat*, a translation of the 1927 edition of ALS by Brother Leonard Voegtle. This translation will be referred to as ALSE.

1st Part: The Teaching of Marcellin on the Origins (Chapters 1 - 23)

a) Vocation: its greatness. Good and Bad ways of living it.

ONE	What a Brother is, according to Father Champagnat.	The greatness of this vocation before God. Its religious and social usefulness.
TWO	What a young Brother is and how necessary it is to train him well.	A fragile vocation requiring indulgence, respect and firmness.
THREE	The misfortune of losing one's vocation.	Its various degrees: lack, loss, apostasy. Infidelity to one's vocation (indifference).
FOUR	How the young Brothers fasted.	Four types of fast: 1. Of the eyes. 2. Of the tongue. 3. From faults and little passions. 4. Not to make your souls fast. Its twofold aim: mortification and charity.
FIVE	The kinds of Brothers Father Champagnat did not like.	As teachers: the Brothers who preach; those who are careless in their work; those too familiar or brutal. More general faults: the lazy Brothers, the negligent, the unsettled, those lacking docility, the vain, the unpunctual.
SIX	The first places.	The three focal-points of charity: Bethlehem, Calvary, the Altar.

b) Sin: its nature. The religious and social consequences

SEVEN	The aneurysm: an image of infidelity to the Rule.	How neglect in small things leads the Religious to grave faults, or going from venial sin to mortal sin.
EIGHT	What sin is.	It wrongs God. It wrongs humanity. The cause of all worldly evils.
NINE	The hundredfold to all, or to each according to his works.	Religious Life: a paradise for the good Religious; a prison for those who violate the Rule.
TEN	Sin is an evil for the one who commits it, for his family and for his community.	The bad Religious, a cause of unhappiness and a lack of success.

c) Piety. The history of its practices in the Institute

ELEVEN	The origin and reason for practices customary in the Institute.	1. Devotion to Our Lord. 2. To Our Lady. 3. To St. Joseph. 4. To our patron saints and guardian angels. 5. To the souls in purgatory...etc.
TWELVE	New Year's Eve or giving thanks.	A practice from Marcellin's time. Knowing how to give thanks for the outgoing year and for every grace received.
THIRTEEN	Our need for meditation and mental prayer.	They enlighten the spirit, strengthen the heart, preserve from sin.
FOURTEEN	The five types of devotion or piety	1. Of the spirit. 2. Of the heart. 3. Of the conscience. 4. Of the elbow. 5. Of the tongue.
FIFTEEN	The Office	Why it is said badly. How to say it well. Justification for a practice which seems to cause problems in communities.

d) Religious Life as a spiritual battle. Holiness accessible to all.

SIXTEEN	Brother Hyppolite and his lamp.	The lamp, symbol of prudence. Marcellin's lessons on this topic.
SEVENTEEN	Why the devil tempts us.	The devil makes war on those who give themselves to God. How to fight temptation to impurity.
EIGHTEEN	Our Lady of the Holy Cincture.	The four-fold protective barrier of the Brothers: 1. The religious habit. 2. The residence. 3. The vows. 4. The Rules.
NINETEEN	The great question	Horror of impurity. Excellence of purity.
TWENTY	What a saint is.	1. Someone who fears sin 2. is pious 3. who loves Jesus 4. is obedient 5. is humble 6. is mortified.
TWENTY-ONE	What a saint is (continued).	1. A light. 2. A model and a book. 3. An instrument of divine mercy. 4. Weak and a sinner. 5. Always happy. 6. Never complains.

TWENTY-TWO	The great temptation.	A metaphysical and historical vision of the revolt against God. Lucifer, heretics, Jansenists, philosophers. ¹⁰
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e) Brother Jean-Baptiste’s (“an old man”) theory of the development of Religious Life, whether it has succeeded or remains mediocre.

TWENTY-THREE	The five sayings of a wise old man, or the seasons of Religious Life.	1. From 15 to 20 years of age: formation of the heart. 2. From 20 to 30: the age to sort oneself out. 3. At 30: becomes set in his ways - good or bad. 4. At 40 the Religious is either not at peace nor solidly virtuous. 5. At 50 one Religious is a big baby, another is truly virtuous.
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2nd Part: Fraternal Charity (Chapters 24 - 34)

TWENTY-FOUR	On Charity	Eleven ways of loving one’s neighbour: support, indulgence... (the little virtues).
TWENTY-FIVE	Correction or Fraternal Admonition.	A safeguard for the Brothers and for the Institute (among other things, the <i>coulpe</i> ¹¹ was implied, ‘tho’ not mentioned).
TWENTY-SIX	Slander	A great pitfall in Religious Life.
TWENTY-SEVEN	On being silent and reserved in one’s speech.	Evils caused by the tongue.
TWENTY-EIGHT	The only way to establish and maintain unity in a community.	The twelve little virtues necessary for unity.
TWENTY-NINE	Can we reach a point where peace and unity in a community will never be disturbed?	To live peacefully a) seek to please everyone; b) support others; c) clothe yourself in mercy; d) do not be overly just; e) be united in thought; f) honour

¹⁰ I do not quite understand why Brother Jean-Baptiste has not placed this chapter with the other temptations. He perhaps wanted to separate moral theology and Religious Life from what concerns dogmatic theology, ecclesiology and history.

¹¹ [Translator’s Note] The *coulpe* was, until the late 1960s, a regularly-held community exercise at which Brothers accused themselves, and other community members, of minor infractions of the Rule and the norms of community-life.

		everyone.
THIRTY	Trials, or the testing of fraternal charity.	Four types of trial: from the devil; from our neighbour; from work; from ourselves.
THIRTY-ONE	What life in a religious community should be like.	Conditions of family-life: 1. the paternity of the Superior, 2. the spirit of sonship of the inferiors.
THIRTY-TWO	On the virtues of family-life.	Charity is patient, gentle, caring...
THIRTY-THREE	In unity there is strength.	The story of unity in the Institute (the “three in one” ¹²)
THIRTY-FOUR	Assignments	Accepting and fulfilling one’s assigned tasks. ¹³

3rd Part: Education (Chapters 35 - 41)

THIRTY-FIVE	What it means to educate a child.	1. Bringing out his intelligence and giving him the principles of the faith. 2. Putting right vices and faults. 3. Forming the heart. 4. Forming the conscience.
THIRTY-SIX	The necessity of education.	Education is the guide for life.
THIRTY-SEVEN	What it means to teach catechism well.	How to prepare. Three qualities of a Brother’s lesson: method, brevity, clarity.
THIRTY-EIGHT	The respect we owe a child.	As the image of God he has a right to respect, vigilance, esteem and good example.
THIRTY-NINE	A conversation about discipline	The happy effects of discipline. The means of obtaining it.
FORTY	Supervision	A Brother is a guardian angel for his pupils. The duty of vigilance.

¹² [Translator’s Note] The “three in one” refers to Brother François as Director-General, and his two Assistants, Brothers Jean-Baptiste and Louis-Marie. The unity of the three was held up as a model for the Institute. In fact, as Brother André has himself shown, they were very far from being united.

¹³ Brother Louis-Marie did not understand why this chapter should be in the section on charity. However, it should be considered as an aspect of reciprocal charity between the Superior and inferior.

FORTY-ONE	What is a teacher? ¹⁴	He exercises a judicial function, a paternity, an apostolate and a priesthood.
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In dividing ALS up this way, I am not claiming to have broken down Brother Jean-Baptiste's organisation of the work, but I am proposing a credible framework for advancing our investigation. Moreover, this plan appears retrospectively more coherent than it did previously. In my opinion, Chapter 23 constitutes a sort of summary of the first part, in looking at the big questions which each Religious must face up to: vocation, sin, piety, the spiritual battle. The two following parts present the Institute as a community ruled by the law of charity and as an association of elementary teachers governed by zeal.

The plan is in the title

If the organisation of ALS remains subject to interpretation, the title is clear: it is about presenting the teaching of the Founder according to three classic literary genres of the monastic world:

- The sayings or maxims, following the sayings of the Desert Fathers, containing, in a short phrase, a treasure of wisdom to be memorised and meditated upon by the disciples.
- The lessons, as indicated by their name, are lengthy teachings of the spiritual master to his disciples when they are gathered together and can take more or less substantial notes for their personal and collective spiritual treasury. After the master's death, it is from these re-assembled notes that his biography and teachings to the group are established. The Brothers did this after 1840 for Marcellin.
- The opinions are between these two clearly distinct genres. More or less making up the equivalent of one or two paragraphs, sometimes in the form of a dialogue, they can be presented in public on different occasions, recreations, walks, conversations..., or in private on the occasion of spiritual direction or confession. Initially reported by one or two witnesses, then brought together in writing, they constitute a source of the master's teaching which is more spontaneous than the two preceding literary genres.

Brother Jean-Baptiste's intention, then, was to report on the teaching of the Founder by these three means. However, since he added that they were "explained and developed by one of his first disciples", a difficulty arises: how do we distinguish Marcellin's thinking from that of his interpreter? Brother Jean-Baptiste was conscious of this ambiguity as, on the first page of Chapter 1¹⁵, he stated that:

¹⁴ [Translator's Note] The French word translated here as "teacher" is used to denote an elementary-school teacher.

¹⁵ [Translator's Note] In ALSE, this note appears at the end of Chapter 1, on P 28.

“Father Champagnat’s exact words are reproduced in italics. Statements in quotation marks give the gist of his thought. The rest are the words of the author, but often enough his explanations are merely an analysis of the founder’s conferences.”

This note is only half-satisfactory since the texts in italics or between quotation marks are relatively few and far between and the reader might often wonder whether he is reading Marcellin’s thoughts or those of his commentator.

However, the author claims to provide “an analysis of the conferences” of Marcellin which means that he had held on to them. Now such a statement made in 1868 is not trivial, because it contradicts the rumour of an early destruction, by Brother Jean-Baptiste himself, of the documents he used to write the *Life of Father Champagnat*¹⁶. We must, then, abandon a period of study, properly so-called, of ALS to find out whether or not Brother Jean-Baptiste did still possess the old sources, among which were Marcellin’s conferences. If such is the case, then ALS would be firmly connected with the origins, in spite of its late date.

2. ALS AND REMEMBERING THE FOUNDER

It was in the preface of *Biographies de quelques frères* (1868) that Brother Jean-Baptiste puts forward his justification for his vocation as a legislator and chronicler:

“This work is an act of obedience. It is less through inclination that we have edited it than through a sacred command. During his lifetime, we would have heard said to our venerable Father, ‘everything we do will be written down one day and will serve as a rule of conduct for those who come after us.’ [...] Moreover, on various occasions he said to me, ‘You, my dear Brother, who have such a faithful memory, must write down what we do and say today. I charge you to take note of everything that might edify the Brothers and later serve as a rule.’ ”

He claimed, however, not to have taken this suggestion seriously, before a visit to L’Hermitage by Father Maître pierre¹⁷ eighteen months after Marcellin’s death. In the name of Father Colin, he asked if some notes on Father Champagnat could be gathered together.

“When Brother François observed that his work and his headaches would not really allow him to take on the task, I was given the responsibility. [...] From that day, I set to work, with the thought of gathering material and documents; the rest followed on through circumstances, and I do not know how.”

¹⁶ [Translator’s Note] Further references to this work will be noted simply as *Life*.

¹⁷ At that time, Provincial of the Marist Fathers, with particular responsibility for the Brothers.

The previous efforts of Brother François

Brother Jean-Baptiste does not mention the previous initiatives of Brother François, in particular the Circular of 8th September 1840 announcing the retreat:

“We will find him (the Founder) again in the monument of his zeal, of his devotion to us, in remembering his pious lessons and in the mutual recitation of his virtues and holy examples.”

In particular, in the Circular of 10th August 1841, just fourteen months after Marcellin’s death and perhaps before Father MaîtrePierre’s request, the exact date of which we do not know, Brother François is very clear:

“We oblige all the Brothers to carefully gather and send to us all their recollections which could be used in the story of our dear and pious Founder, letters which might be found in the Establishments, private letters, insofar as they are not confidential; what they remember of his conferences, his sayings and the distinctive characteristics of his life.”

The Circular of 25th August 1842, certainly influenced this time by Father MaîtrePierre’s request, launched an appeal and slightly modified the request:

“Once again we oblige all the Brothers to carefully gather and send to us all their recollections which could be used in the story of our dear and pious Founder.”

So, we must not concede too much to Brother Jean-Baptiste in the collection of sources and play down the role of Brother François.

Two depositories for the written recollections on the origins and on Marcellin

Above all, our Roman archives¹⁸ have been holding two series of collected sources, one from Brother Jean-Baptiste, the other from Brother François. Of the first, we have five files:

- AFM 5201.21: Named “Paper 1” or “E1” composed of 97 “Meditations on the great truths”. Their interest is limited since they express a general teaching in which it is rare to find something specifically Marist. Nevertheless, they witness to the teaching of the Superiors after Marcellin’s time and are largely an echo of his own teaching.
- AFM 5201.22: “Paper 2” or “E2” is composed of 88 headings for examination of conscience and is entitled “Headings for the Particular Examen”. It appears to be the

¹⁸ [Translator’s Note] Brother André means the Institute’s Archives at the General House. In what follows, the label AFM is the French abbreviation for “Marist Brothers’ Archives”

work of Brother Jean-Baptiste but is made up of older material which frequently seems to look back to Marcellin.

- AFM 5201.23: “Paper 3” or “E3”. This is a collection of conferences, summaries of conferences, letters, examinations of conscience, various notes, copied from papers left after the death of Brother Jean-Baptiste. There are numerous texts in the collection which are direct or indirect echoes of Marcellin’s teaching in the years 1835 - 1853, that is to say, right in the period for which we have little data.
- AFM 5201.24 : abbreviated. “Paper 4” or “E4”. This manuscript is very similar to the preceding one, but appears to consist of documents both much older and much more recent (during 1860 - 1872). It is possible to pick out preparatory texts for the editing of *ALS* and *Biographies de quelques frères*. It contains two sets of instructions explicitly attributed to Marcellin.
- AFM 5201.25: Initially called *Treatise on Education*, it was later given the title *Apostolate of a Marist Brother*. One version is a handwritten copy (402 pages) by Brother Jean-Baptiste (Manuscript A) and another, copied after his death, (866 pages) (Manuscript B). A fragment (Version C), which is only partially in the hand of Brother Jean-Baptiste, seems to be based on old notes from the “voluminous notebooks” recalled by Father Mayet. The *Treatise* comprises two parts: the first very much influenced by Marcellin’s instructions, the second largely the work of Brother Jean-Baptiste. Probably already very much worked out by 1850, this treatise is one of the principal sources for the chapters on education of the *Life of Champagnat* and of the *Schools’ Guide*.

As I will demonstrate further on, it is evident that these collections are the key source for our spiritual literature.¹⁹ I will not linger on the three collections of instructions of Brother François, which were at least as important as the manuscripts of Brother Jean-Baptiste, but which did not directly influence ALS.

- AFM 5101.307 (Collection 307) a weighty notebook of instructions, of 534 pages.
- AFM 5101.308 which further seems to reflect the teaching of Brother François.

¹⁹ I published the initial results of my research in 2000 in a work entitled *Un « chaînon manquant » de la spiritualité mariste. Les manuscrits d'instructions des F. François et Jean-Baptiste*. Beyond that, I produced a *Catalogue général des instructions des F. François et Jean-Baptiste* where you will come up against a maze of lessons, examinations of conscience and meditations, very discouraging for the uninitiated reader and partially explaining why these manuscripts have remained unknown for so long. [Translator’s Note: Unfortunately, neither of these two works has been translated into English yet.]

- AFM 5101.309 of which the second part, entitled “Summary of Instructions” repeats the texts of Notebook 309.

There was, therefore, no coordination on the gathering of sources between the two Superiors, which is not surprising in this period when the Director General of the Brothers and his two Assistants were so lacking in unity that, in May 1841, Father Colin warned them, “You are all on separate journeys; you can’t even get along together.” Nevertheless, Brother Jean-Baptiste’s five files and the three of Brother François contain a large number of documents which are so similar that they have a common source of inspiration as if certain Brothers had sent their notes to one or the other. It was often even the case that Brother Jean-Baptiste had two versions of the same instruction. In any case, the references made to these manuscripts in ALS are so numerous that I will give some examples of them.

Another story about the gathering of recollections about Marcellin

In the *Life* (Part 1. Chapter 23. P 282 English Bicentenary edition) Brother Jean-Baptiste brought some clarification when he recounted the use of collected material for the editing of a “definitive” Rule.

“They [ie. the Regime] made a close examination of all the writings, notes and instructions left by the Founder on the Rules; from these, they gleaned whatever was calculated to clarify or explain certain points of Rule, to give them coherence and fill them out.”

In the Preface (Pages 8 & 9 English Bicentenary edition) he speaks of having collected the sayings and analysed the instructions of the Founder. He mentions four sources for the biography:

- Notes written by the Brothers, filled out by interviews.
- Testimonies of those who had known him, particularly ecclesiastics.
- The writings of Father Champagnat himself, in particular his letters sent and received.
- His own recollections as a Brother of long-standing.

It is by no means a question of a biographical sketch, even if the Brothers’ notes and the testimonies certainly carry a number of biographical elements. Entire chapters of the *Life*, but also of ALS, are testimonies of Brothers or other people. In particular, Marcellin’s instructions came from notes taken by Brothers during their retreat. The corpus described above was still intact in 1868 at the time of the editing of ALS. Partial destruction - more or less 1/3 of it, was to take place after Brother Jean-Baptiste’s death. This is something I will return to.

Father Mayet and the development of the *Life*

The story of an early destruction by Brother Jean-Baptiste is old, but it was reinforced by *Origines Maristes* (Vol 2 P 729 - 763) in which Fathers Coste and Lessard²⁰ set out a scenario of the gathering together of sources on Marcellin Champagnat after his death. It was based on the writings of Father Mayet. Very much concerned about knowing the origins of the Society of Mary, he stayed at L'Hermitage from 19th to 25th March 1847 and consulted "voluminous notebooks" collected by the Brothers. On his return to Lyon, he wrote, "Reading the life of Father Champagnat, it seemed to me to be the life of a Desert Father: I found there wonderful traits of contempt for the world, and deeds which are not of this century." In 1854, while drawing up the list of works edited up to that time by Marists, he mentioned "Life of Father Champagnat by the Marist Brothers. Manuscript.". Indeed, a late manuscript, *The Directors' Manual*, which brought together Brother Jean-Baptiste's retreat conferences of 1853 - 1863²¹, mentions, as the tenth conference of the 1854 retreat, "Thoughts on the vow of obedience and a reading of a chapter of the life of Father Champagnat (his great spirit of faith)²²" without any further explanation. The following year he reports in this manner, "A reading of the life of Father Champagnat...the lukewarm Religious is more detrimental than the scandalous Religious...5 reasons". Now, we find this passage in Chapter 19 of the *Life* (Part 2 P. 509 English Bicentenary edition). However, as the Brothers' archives no longer contain the documents corresponding to Father Mayet's description, *Origines Maristes* ended a little abruptly: "This first-hand documentary material has unfortunately perished after being used." This hypothesis seems false to me because the Marist Fathers focused their attention on editing a biography of Marcellin.

Priority for doctrine and the Constitutions

With the Marist Brothers after 1840, the urgency was to perpetuate the primitive spirit by directives taken from the teaching of the Founder while waiting for Providence to decide their status in the bosom of the Society of Mary. Then, from 1845 (Circular of 9th February 1845) the Superiors were occupied with drawing up the Constitutions since the General Chapter of the Fathers of 9th - 19th September 1845 had refused to allow Father Colin to be also the Superior General of the Brothers. Once civil authorisation had been acquired in 1852, the 1852 - 54 General Chapter of the Brothers developed the Common Rules (1852), the *Schools' Guide* (1853) and the Constitutions (1854). As for the *Life*, published in 1856, its second, very doctrinal part, could only have been written after the General Chapter since the author had to demonstrate that the Institute's recent legislation was already in germ in Marcellin's time. Contrary to the

²⁰ [Translator's Note] Fathers Jean Coste and Gaston Lessard, both Marist Fathers, were the most prominent scholars of the twentieth century on the origins of the Society of Mary.

²¹ This manual is the copy of a Brother Director's retreat notes, certainly made public after Brother Jean-Baptiste's death.

²² This is the second chapter of Part 2 of the *Life*.

wishes of the Marist Fathers, this biography had not been a priority for the Marist Brothers, but it served as a guarantee and crowning of the Institute's recent legislative texts.

It is highly probable that snippets of Marcellin's biography had been edited earlier on since, on the day after the Founder's death, Brother François' announcement of his illness and death seems to have been used in Chapters 21 - 22 of the first part of the *Life*²³. Moreover, the death in 1847 of Brother Louis seems to have given rise to a biography describing the origins at La Valla and then used in the *Life* and in *Biographies de quelques frères*.

Material taken from Superiors' conferences

Long before the collections of numerous documents were used to create the Rule, the Superiors used them for their own teaching of the Brothers, bringing out Marcellin's teaching, but also making their own additions and personal interpretations. In ALS, Brother Jean-Baptiste would only continue this long-standing practice, without taking much care to respect the "ipsissima verba" (the authentic words) of the Founder. The Institute would base its legislation on a corpus mixing original teachings with glosses, commentaries and citations to the extent, around 1850, where it was already quite difficult to distinguish the words of the Founder from those of his authorised interpreters. We know, moreover, that, during the Chapter of 1852 - 54 different interpretations of the tradition gave rise to significant tension. Hence the letter presenting the Common Rules in which the capitulants insisted on their fidelity to the Founder with statements which were more or less convincing because they ignored the Congregation's twenty-two years of life between the Founder's death and the Rule, a period which had already known much change:

"Not all of them (these rules) were written by the hand of our pious Founder, but they came from him because we either heard them from his mouth or gathered them from his writings or the customs which he established among us."

Also, the 1852 Rule, like the *Life* which reinforced its legitimacy, was far from generating a general and enthusiastic welcome among the older Brothers. Brothers François and Louis-Marie were aware of this from 1858 when they undertook the work for the canonical recognition of the Congregation.²⁴

²³ In the *Annals of the Institute* (1840; Sections 647 - 653; 660 - 668; 671) Brother Avit perhaps uses a much shorter version of this story than that of the *Life*

²⁴ In particular with the establishment of the Vow of Stability. However, above all, the Superiors intended to revert to primitive customs which had fallen out of favour, such as the wearing of cloth stockings or the coulepe.

A return to ancient strata of the tradition?

To make a geological comparison, Marist tradition was established in several successive strata. The most ancient, still largely oral, dates from before 1840. The second was laid down between 1840 and 1852, gathering together previous elements, but also remodelling them, interpreting them or completing them. The development of the official literature of the Institute in 1852 - 1856 was the third stratum, making a drastic selection to end up with clear, normative texts, but with certain older Brothers suspicious of novelties like the Vow of Stability.

Clearly, this third stratum of the tradition, once published, became the only legitimate one, but without suppressing the oral tradition kept alive by the older Brothers, for which Brother Avit was the chronicler in the years 1884 - 1890.²⁵ As for the second stratum, (1840 - 1852), that of the collecting of sources, it would become devalued because it became an outmoded repository of teachings: somehow or other, the drafts of published works. However, in writing ALS, Brother Jean-Baptiste brings life back to the previous strata, of which he is the most illustrious trustee. He also gives the impression of a return to the past, as if he wished to complete - and, in a certain measure, to challenge²⁶ - the interpretation of official teaching developed largely by him during the years 1852 - 1856. Since he is not his own boss, the dissemination was undertaken by a Brother Louis-Marie, the Superior General of course, but regarded as less well-grounded in the tradition than him since he entered the Congregation ten years after him, in 1832.

Would ALS, then, be the manifestation of a classic quarrel in Congregations during their structuring-phase, between those bound by the institution and the free-thinkers, between the traditionalists and the innovators? It probably is. And that would explain, at least in part, the feeble reception of ALS among the Brothers. Then, it was the time of the conflict at the Marist Fathers between the rule of Father Colin, the Founder and first Superior, and the Constitutions of Father Favre, his successor. All the same, if there was any conflict at the Marist Brothers, it was very minor, with Brother Jean-Baptiste rather making himself the spokesman for tradition and the sensitivities of the older Brothers who were hesitant about the imperious and dynamic government of Brother Louis-Marie, but largely overwhelmed by the younger Brothers.

3. ALS AND THE COLLECTIONS OF OLD SOURCES

As I have just reminded you, ALS is far from being a book of confused memories; on the contrary, it is powerfully attached to the conferences of the Founder and his early successors, not

²⁵ Brother Sylvestre did the same to a lesser extent.

²⁶ He is, in effect, insinuating that not everything has been said on Marcellin's teaching and on the Marist tradition.

only in general, but even in detail, as I am going to demonstrate below with a few significant examples.

The Foreword: reflects the intentions and the method of Brother Jean-Baptiste

The function of an Introduction is to set out the author’s intentions and Brother Jean-Baptiste did not forget this when he began with the first sentence, “What is the Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary?” The little history that follows shows that the book was not addressed only to Marist Brothers: “It is a congregation born in humility, poverty, and the shadow of the Cross of Jesus”: a work built up under the protection of Mary, honoured with civil recognition since 1851 and with Roman approbation²⁷ since 1863.

I found a draft of this type of prospectus in Manuscript E4, which contains numerous accounts of conferences.

Manuscript E4 P 48.	ALS Foreword
What is the Society of the Little Brothers of Mary?	What is the Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary?
1. It is a Congregation born in humility, poverty and in the shadow of the Cross of Jesus. Today, it is 47 years old. ²⁸	It is a congregation born in humility, poverty, and the shadow of the Cross of Jesus. It was founded on 2nd January 1817, and so today has been in existence for 52 years. ²⁹
	The little house which served as its cradle resembled the stable of Bethlehem; there was the same destitution and solitude, for it stood alone [ALSE: it was very poor] and at the time was somewhat removed from the other houses of the village of La Valla.
	The Venerable Father Champagnat [ALSE: Marcellin Champagnat], the founder of this congregation, was a priest filled with the virtues and the spirit of Jesus Christ; but he had neither property nor money. His disciples, our first Brothers, all lacked financial resources. Living together as a family, they provided for their needs

²⁷ [Translator’s Note] ie the formal approval of the Church.

²⁸ This means that the note dates from 1864.

²⁹ [Translator’s Note] ALSE has this last phrase as “and so is still relatively young.”. There are some significant differences in ALSE from the French first edition which Brother André quotes and these will be noted.

	by the work of their hands.
2.It is a Congregation rich in divine prosperity and blessings. The proof of this is that it has more than 2,000 subjects, around 400 school-communities and 60,000 pupils.	The Institute of the Little Brothers of Mary is a congregation rich in divine prosperity and blessings... The proof of our statement lies in the fact that it spread rapidly not only in the major provinces of France, but also into Belgium, then the British Isles, Africa, the Cape of Good Hope and Oceania. [ALSE: ...the British Isles, Spain, Italy.] It founded in these various countries more than 400 school-communities where two thousand Brothers give instruction and a Christian education to more than sixty thousand children. [ALSE: It opened a considerable number of schools, in which several thousand brothers offer a Christian education to legions of children.]
3.It is a small Congregation which has already given to heaven more than four hundred and fifty of those predestined.	In addition, more than six hundred [ALSE: many] of our Brothers have already died in the most edifying dispositions. We are consoled by our confidence in the predestined [ALSE: confidence that they represent a phalanx of blessed souls] that the Congregation has given to heaven and who will pray [ALSE: heaven where they are praying] for us. <i>Congratulations on the legal recognition (1851) and the canonical recognition (1863 and on the Provinces).</i>
4.It is a small Congregation which is specially dedicated to honouring, loving and imitating the Blessed Virgin and to spreading her cult and devotion among children.	It is a small [ALSE: humble] Congregation which is specially dedicated to honouring, loving and imitating the Blessed Virgin and to spreading her cult and devotion among children.[ALSE: spreading devotion to her among its students.]
	That is why we carry the name LITTLE BROTHERS OF MARY.
	<i>Thoughts on the adjective “little” inserted before the 5th point. (See below)</i>
5.It is a small Congregation which the Mother of God has taken under her special protection and that she has promised to keep pure from discord and all evil plants, in particular the following four: the evil spirit which kills obedience and charity, the spirit of possessiveness,	Finally, our Institute is a small [ALSE: modest] Congregation which the Mother of God has taken under her special protection and that she has promised to keep pure from discord and all evil plants,[ALSE: promised to preserve free of weeds and all harmful plants] in particular the following four:

pride and impurity.	Bad spirit which kills obedience, charity and family life. Pride, which God detests, which sows trouble everywhere and which would ruin the spirit of the Institute if it got into it. Impurity, which is the seal of Satan and which should be unknown among God's children, Mary's servants, the elect. The spirit of possessiveness, which is [ALSE: omits "The spirit of"] the great enemy of holy poverty, the guardian of religious houses.
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The conference on the spirit of the Institute

Brother Jean-Baptiste combined this conference with a series of spiritual thoughts on the word “little” which were inspired by a recent Circular of Brother Louis-Marie defending the expression “Little Brothers of Mary”, suggested in 1824 and which had taken on an official character with the legal recognition of “the Charitable Association of the Little Brothers of Mary” in 1851. However, during the procedure for canonical recognition, the Pope and his administration in Rome had decided that the Marist Brothers very much resembled the Brothers of Christian Schools³⁰ and had imposed the canonical name “Marist Brothers of the Schools”. Thus, each in his own way, the Superior General and his Assistant reminded everyone that the old title retained its relevance. Both had good reasons for that because they referred to one of Marcellin's conferences: conserved by Brother Jean-Baptiste under the title “The Spirit of the Institute”, and by Brother François under the title “Character and Spirit of the Society of Little Brothers of Mary”³¹. Here, first of all, is the comparison between the old conference, which seems to me to be slightly later than the 1837 Rule, and the Foreword, which takes account of developments. For example, the first text speaks of the Rule and of humility and simplicity, while the second mentions the Constitutions and the three virtues of humility, simplicity and modesty.

Spirit of the Institute (Manuscript E3 p 124)	ALS Foreword
Why does this word “Little” offend some people, perhaps embarrass some Brothers, and perplex those who do not know the spirit of our Congregation?	But why that expression “Little Brothers”, which offends some people and perhaps embarrasses certain brothers who are still weak in the spirit of their vocation?
This word “Little” is there to teach us the spirit of our Rule, the spirit which should animate the	This word “Little” is there to teach us the real spirit of our Institute, the spirit which

³⁰ [Translator's Note] Known in many parts of the English-speaking world as the De la Salle Brothers.

³¹ There can only be a common source, therefore: Marcellin.

<p>members of the Institute. This word “Little” is the torch which must enlighten us and without which we would have and see only the dead letter of our Rule. It is the key which will give us the true sense and understanding.</p>	<p>should animate all the brothers who belong to it. The word “Little” is the torch which should enlighten us when we read and meditate on our Rule, and without which we would see it as merely a dead letter. It is the key which opens the door for us, shows us its true meaning and helps us to understand it perfectly.</p>
<p>It is, in a single word formed by five letters³², the commentary on and explanation of the entire Rule. It is not there by chance or without a reason; it is not a superfluous word, nor, still less, useless, as some might believe. It has great, immense, significance and doing away with it or withdrawing it would change our spirit. That would, I am not afraid to say, destroy and abolish our Institute.</p>	<p>In one six-letter word it is the most natural and most accurate commentary on everything contained in our Constitutions. So, it was not by change, nor without reason, that it appears on the title page of our books; it is not superfluous or useless, as some would like to believe. It has profound meaning.</p>
<p>What does this word mean, which has such a scope, what does it teach us? It teaches us that the spirit of this Institute is a spirit of humility and simplicity, that the life of the Brothers must be a humble life, hidden and unknown in the world, that humility and simplicity must be the principal virtues and privileges of the Brothers of Mary, that we must work ceaselessly to become humble and it is through these virtues that we will be able to acquire perfection in our state and procure the glory of God; that we must strive continually to make ourselves little and see ourselves not only as the least of Religious, but also as the least of the faithful in God’s Church.</p>	<p>So what does this word “Little” mean? What does it teach us? It teaches us that the Spirit [ALSE: spirit] of our Institute is a spirit of humility, simplicity and modesty; that following Mary’s example, the brothers’ life should be humble, hidden and unknown to the world; that we should recreate and bring to life again in our own conduct the virtues of the Blessed Virgin, especially her profound humility and her ardent charity as we strive to become like her - humble, modest, and burning with love for Jesus.³³</p>

After having recalled this supremely important lesson, which probably inspired Brother Louis-Marie (who says nothing about it), Brother Jean-Baptiste is very practical in setting down the variations on the word “little”, after a preamble:

“Such is the distinctive character of our Institute’s own spirit. We are called to sanctify ourselves through humility, striving, as the Reverend Brother Superior General exhorted us in his last

³² [Translator’s Note] The French word for “little” has five letters in the singular.

³³ [Translator’s Note] The words in bold have been made so by Brother André and do not appear in this way in the texts themselves.

Circular, to be and to appear in everything and everywhere what the beautiful name that we carry calls us: good and true Little Brothers of Mary.”

ALS Foreword	Circular of 16th July 1868 (Chapter 3)
<p>“Little” before God, in order to imitate Jesus Christ [...] Let us also, like him, pray with great modesty and profound reverence, and our prayers will always be heard by God.</p>	<p>Little before God, in the example of Our Lord [...]</p>
<p>“Little” before our superiors, like all true religious who see in them only God’s representatives and the holders of his authority [...]</p>	<p>Little before our Superiors like all true Religious who see in them only God’s Representatives and the Holders of his authority [...]</p>
<p>“Little” before the authorities, clergy and magistrates, loving, respecting and honoring them as the [ALSE: our] Rule wishes [...]</p>	<p>Little before the Authorities, Clergy and Magistrates, loving, respecting and honouring them as the Rule wishes [...]</p>
<p>“Little” before our confrères [ALSE: brothers] [...] like our divine master who assures us that he did not come to be served but to serve.</p>	<p>Little before our Confrères [...] like our divine Master who said himself that he did not come to be served but to serve.</p>

The final propositions retain a less classical character and give slightly more important variations which allow us to suspect that the two authors were inspired by different versions of the same basic text. The first proposition is identical in both:

“Little even before the children [ALSE: our students], seeing in them the members of Jesus Christ, the temples of the Holy Spirit, the children of God and heirs of heaven; and from this faith-perspective, treating them with respect and honour, devoting ourselves wholeheartedly to their education, sparing no pain and no effort to form them in virtue and preserve their innocence.”

Only the Foreword carries the following paragraph. It is possible that Brother Louis-Marie omitted it since it is largely repeated in the paragraph after that:

“Little in our teaching. With this in mind, let us study secular subjects and devote ourselves to the religious and secular education of the children [ALSE: our students], only in order to please God and win souls for him. Let us do good quietly, keep ourselves out of view and carefully

avoid honours, praise, and everything else which merely flatters and attracts the praises of men [ALSE: of others]³⁴

The last paragraph presents some quite important variations:

<p>“Little” before ourselves, in our thoughts, desires, words, actions and our entire behavior; fleeing vanity, vain glory, honors, and applause; humiliating ourselves a great deal so that God will not humiliate us.</p>	<p>Little before ourselves in our thoughts, desires, words, actions and our entire behaviour; fleeing vanity, vain glory, honours, and applause; loving to be ignored, counted as nothing, humiliating ourselves a great deal so that God will not humiliate us, because “all who exalt themselves will be humbled” says Jesus Christ himself. (Luke 18:14)</p>
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So, study of the Foreword demonstrates that Brother Jean-Baptiste put together extracts from conferences of various times. A very large number of chapters were composed on this same model of copy-and-paste.

ALS and the *Treatise on Education*

I have already mentioned the *Treatise on Education* (AFM 5201-25), which was recently given the title *Apostolate of a Marist Brother (Apostolate)*. The first part, entitled “Means of doing good among the children” is a treatise in 17 chapters on educational zeal, very much inspired by Marcellin’s conferences. The second part, “On Education” has twenty-two chapters and is largely the work of Brother Jean-Baptiste, largely inspired by Bishop Dupanloup, a well-known writer on education.³⁵ Chapter 1 of ALS, “What is a Brother?” is a reflection on these two parts of *Apostolate*. The table below shows the results of this research.

ALS Chapter 1³⁶	<i>Apostolate</i>
<p><i>What is a Brother?</i> <i>1. He is a soul [ALSE: A brother is someone] predestined for great piety, a very pure life and solid virtue; a soul for whom God’s mercy has special plans.</i></p>	<p>Part 2. Ch 3: “How advantageous it is to work for the salvation of souls.”</p> <p>“It is a mark of predestination says St Liguori, to work to win souls for God”</p> <p>This vocation requires: “great application to our spiritual advancement, striving to grow every day in piety, in charity, and in all sorts</p>

³⁴ Brother Jean-Baptiste is citing an article of the Rule.

³⁵ He had published his work *On Education* in 1850.

³⁶ Text in italics is Marcellin’s verbatim thoughts; that between quotation marks denotes a paraphrase.

	of virtue.”
<p>2. <i>A brother is God’s co-worker and Jesus Christ’s partner in the holy mission of saving souls.</i></p> <p>“Brothers who are teaching and forming children to virtue, gather the fruit of the cross and of the blood of Jesus Christ; with St Paul, they can say: <i>We are God’s coadjutors in the ministry of the sanctification of</i> [ALSE: of saving] <i>souls.</i> What glory, what an honor [ALSE: What an honor and glory] for a brother.”</p>	<p>Part 2. Ch 3: “Excellence of this (educational) goal.</p> <p>“Now, such is the excellence of our vocation, such is the dignity of the work confided to us, that we are called to cooperate with God in the most elevated task in the world, which is the salvation of children. We can say with the apostle that we are God’s helpers. One can find nothing greater than a work which the Son of God himself has come to carry out on earth and for which he gave his blood and his life.”</p>
<p>3. <i>A brother is the wise man Isaiah speaks of, who spends his life laying foundations and rebuilding ruins.</i></p> <p>“He lays the foundations of fear of sin, by forming children’s consciences and preserving them from evil.”</p>	<p>Part 2 Ch 3: “If you help the poor, if you console the afflicted, if you instruct the ignorant, says the prophet Isaiah, you will raise foundations for the rest of the ages; you will be called the repairer of ruins [...]”</p> <p>Part 1 Ch 8: “To form the conscience of children and inspire them with a lively horror of sin.” “After having enlightened and formed the conscience of children, it is necessary to devote oneself to inspiring in them a great fear of God and a lively horror of sin.”</p>
<p>“He lays the foundation of every virtue, by forming the child’s heart.”</p>	<p>Part 1. Ch 10: “To form the heart of a child.”</p> <p>“To truly form the character of children, it is necessary to form their heart. Indeed, the source of vices lies in the heart.”</p>
<p>“You can harvest in a field only what you have sowed in it; if it was wheat, wheat you shall have; if you sowed chaff [ALSE: weeds] all you can harvest is chaff [ALSE: weeds]. A child who receives the principles [ALSE: the beginnings] of virtue produces the fruits of virtue. One who is left to himself or receives a bad education, will produce the fruits of death. A life of virtue and a life of vice therefore have their foundation [ALSE: are rooted] in one’s education.”</p>	<p>Part 2 Ch 2: “You can harvest in a field only what you have sown in it. If wheat was sown, you shall have wheat. If you sow chaff, all you can harvest is chaff. If the child receives the principles of virtue, he will produce the fruits of virtue, if he is left to himself or if the lessons and examples he receives are bad, will produce only the fruits of death.”</p>
<p><i>He lays the religious foundations of parishes.</i></p>	<p>Part 2 Ch 4: “Another advantage of the</p>

<p>“Children are the Church’s nursery [ALSE: greenhouse]; through them it renews itself and preserves faith and piety.”</p>	<p>Christian education given to children in school is conserving the faith in families and ensuring the success of the pastors’ ministry. Indeed, children and the Church’s nursery; it is through them that it renews itself; it is through them that it conserves faith and good morals.”</p>
<p><i>4. A brother is a substitute father and mother.</i> “A great number of children would remain in ignorance, would rot [ALSE: grow up] in vice and lose themselves [ALSE: their souls], if God in his infinite mercy had not had pity on them and raised up pious teachers to take care of them and bring them up in a Christian manner. That is the reason for Brothers’ schools and the aim which God proposed [ALSE: and what God had in mind in founding them.]”</p>	<p>Part 1 Ch 1: “In this century parents are not able to give their children instruction and religious education.”... “From which it follows that an infinite number of young people will remain in ignorance of the truths of the Christian faith and will rot in vice if God in his ineffable mercy had not had pity on them and raised up pious teachers to take care of them and bring them up in a Christian manner.”</p>
<p><i>A brother is the assistant of the pastors of the Church.</i> “They are the aides, the co-workers of the pastors of the Church, who being too taken up with other aspects of their holy ministry, cannot give to the instruction and education of children all the time which such an important task (the catechism) requires.” [ALSE omits “the catechism”]</p>	<p>Part 2 Ch 4: “the future fruit of the ministry of pastors is enclosed in it germ in this education and it is from it that all their success and the fruits of their work depend. It is in vain that the priests proclaim the word of God if they have not been understood; and how will they be if children are left in ignorance and without education?”</p>
<p><i>A brother replaces soldiers and police officers.</i></p>	<p>Part 2 Ch 2: “It must not be concealed that it is bad education which peoples the countryside with criminals, enemies of society and the hell of reprobates” Part 2 Ch 5: “Education without religion develops the germs of vice. [...] It favours the growth of crime rather than diminishing it.”</p>
<p><i>5. A brother is the children’s guardian angel.</i></p>	<p>Part 2 Ch 13: “A Brother is the guardian angel of his children.”</p>
<p>“In order to be the children’s guardian angel a brother should exercise continual vigilance over them and that vigilance should include all the children, all their senses, all their actions.”</p>	<p>This seems to summarise Part 2 Ch 13.</p>

6. <i>A brother is the model and living gospel for the children and for everyone else.</i>	Part 1 Ch 11: “Their actions must be like a continual catechism which teaches the children to live in a Christian fashion, their life being a living gospel where each pupil can read the way in which he must conduct himself both in order to imitate Jesus Christ and to be a perfect Christian.”
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The correlation between *Apostolate* and ALS is clear. Nevertheless, the majority of references have to do with the Second Part of the *Treatise*, less influenced by Marcellin, as the table below shows:

Chapters of ALS	<i>Apostolate</i> . Part 2. On Education
Ch 38 (The respect we owe a child) Ch 40 (Supervision)	Ch 13: On Supervision Ch 15: On the respect owed to a child
Ch 35: (What it means to educate a child)	Chs: 1.- 2; 6 - 8; 10 - 11; 13, 16, 20.
Ch 36: (The necessity of education)	Chs 2 - 3 The necessity of a good education for the child, the State, the family, religion.
Ch 37: (What it means to teach catechism well)	Part 1 Chs 11, 14 ³⁷ Part 2 Ch 18 The necessity of study Ch 19 Preparation of the catechism Ch 21 The qualities of instruction
Ch 39: (A conversation about discipline)	Ch 11: Discipline. The second means of education.

All the chapters of ALS concerning education were put together from the Part 2 of *Apostolate*³⁸ For this reason, the influence of Marcellin’s conferences is weak: several chapters (36, 38, 41) do not refer to the Founder and others only cite him very briefly. Brother Jean-Baptiste, therefore, largely reinterpreted Marcellin’s educational thought in the light of the philosophers of education of the middle of the nineteenth century, of whom Bishop Dupanloup was by far the most important. If it did not contradict Marcellin’s educational doctrine, this step was far removed from the care to strengthen the primitive spirit set out in the Foreword. Quite conservative in

³⁷ These two chapters come from Marcellin.

³⁸ It is true that this influence is not always direct since the manuscript “E2”, which has 37 examinations of conscience on education, follows the plan of *Apostolate* and seems to be very much inspired by it, occasionally being referred to. For instance, Examen 69. which is about good example, is abruptly interrupted with these words: “The following, such as it is in the...” And indeed, this is found in Ch 11 of *Apostolate*.

spiritual matters, Brother Jean-Baptiste would have been more of an innovator in educational matters, at least as far as developing them.

Other links between Brother Jean-Baptiste's manuscripts and ALS

There is evidence of other links. For example, the Part 2 Chapters 13 - 15 speak of prayer, mental prayer and the Office. To deal with these topics, Brother Jean-Baptiste had an embarrassment of choice in the manuscripts:

Prayer and piety in general

Manuscript	Page	Title
E1	76	Second means of salvation. Prayer.
E2	9	Piety. Esteem that we should have for piety.
	10	On the necessity of prayer.
	22	Ways...of acquiring the spirit of prayer and the gift of piety.
	70	On the second way of doing good (to children) which is prayer.
	71	Opinions of the saints on the need for prayer in order to do good.
	72	On the second means...which is prayer. Practices.
E3	86	Necessity of prayer in general.
	185	Examen on prayers.
	272	Examen on prayers.
	305	Pious exercises.
E4	37	The spirit of prayer
	272	Necessity of piety, of the spirit of prayer for a Religious.

Mental prayer and other practices

Manuscript	Page or No.	Title
		1. Mental Prayer

E1	77	Third means of salvation, mental prayer.
	78	On mental prayer. (continued)
E2	11	On the fruits of mental prayer.
	12	On the fruits of mental prayer. (continued)
	13	On the fruits of mental prayer. (continued)
	14	On preparation for mental prayer.
	15	On subsequent preparation for mental prayer.
	16	On considerations.
	17	On affections.
	18	On resolutions.
	19	On the obstacles to mental prayer.
	20	How distractions must be fought.
	21	How distractions should be regarded.
E3	303	Meditation
E4	299	Necessity of mental prayer and meditation.
		2. Various Practices
E2	23	On the Office and other vocal prayers.
	24	What must be done during the Office.
	25	On the examination of conscience. ³⁹ On the esteem we should have for it.
	26	On the examination of conscience and its necessary conditions.
	27	Correcting the fault which is the subject of our examen.
	28	Why the particular examen produces little fruit.

On the topic of holiness, (ALS Chapters 20 - 21) the sources available to us are equally numerous:

³⁹ I note that ALS does not mention this practice, however important it may be in Religious Life. Other classical themes not treated, apart from by allusion are: poverty, marian devotion, confidence in God...

Manuscript	Page or No.	Title
E1	43	What a saint is.
	44	What a saint is. (continued)
	45	1st feature of holiness, the fear of sin.
	46	2nd feature: the gift of piety.
	47	3rd feature: love of Jesus Christ.
	48	4th feature: humility.
	49	5th feature: obedience.
	50	6th feature: trials, love of the cross.
E3	261	The saints were people just like us.
	263	What do we have to do to be a saint?
	359	Knowledge of saints.
E4	59	Have you seen a saint? You will recognise him by these marks.

I believe I have sufficiently shown how far ALS was anchored in these manuscripts held by Brother Jean-Baptiste and it is time to test ALS as a source of history.

4. THE VALUE OF ALS AS HISTORY

The introductions to numerous chapters have anecdotes about the life of the Brothers in Marcellin's time. For a long time I assumed that these were invented by Brother Jean-Baptiste to rouse the attention of his readers. I now think that a large number of them have a historical basis, coming from the oral tradition of the Institute, personal stories, Brother Jean-Baptiste's memories, and even written testimonies of which he retained a copy.

Up above, I drew attention to the five collections he left us, but I have not yet pointed out that, after Brother Jean-Baptiste's death, all of his papers had been copied by the General Secretariat into notebooks numbered from 1 to 87 then brought together in series. The table below shows that, at present, around 1/3 of the copied version of Brother Jean-Baptiste's papers is missing.

Name of Manuscript	Notebooks Numbered	Present Condition
<i>Treatise on Education (Apostolate)</i>	1 - 24	All available.
14 notebooks	25 - 39	All disappeared.
E4 (424 pages)	40 - 64	Missing: 46 - 48; 62, 65 - 68.
E2 "Subjects for examination of conscience."	69 - 78	Missing: 79 - 80.
E3: "Conferences" (360 pages)	81 - 87	Missing: 85.

Without exception, these disappearances have not been accidental. What has been eliminated are the notebooks recopied from the letters of spiritual direction. This belated concern for discretion came perhaps from the decree *Quemadmodum* from the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars in 1890 which forbade Superiors of lay Congregations from questioning their subjects in the internal forum, particularly in the matter of chastity. Keeping letters of direction implying such a practice, which was very badly thought-of by confessors, in particular the Marist Fathers, might have been awkward. Moreover, the consequence of this decree was an end to the practice of letters of direction which the Brothers had to send regularly to their Assistants. Not everything had been destroyed: the beginning or end of certain notebooks retained some letters which had escaped destruction. However, the majority of notebooks of the series 40 - 87 must have contained these letters.

The disappearance of notebooks 25 - 39, which constituted a coherent group of around 500 pages, certainly had a different cause. I wonder if they did not contain written testimonies of Brothers collected by Brother Jean-Baptiste after 1840 and used to write the *Life of Champagnat*. Using this corpus up to his death in 1872, Brother Jean-Baptiste would have been able to include extracts in ALS and *Biographies de quelques Frères*.

This disappearance of notebooks 25 - 39 could have been caused by the opening of the diocesan process of Marcellin's canonisation in 1886 - 1888. This was certainly the moment when the Superiors, requiring a canonical biography of the Servant of God, wanted to base this on the 1856 *Life*. The troubles and complications which would have risen from the re-gathering of older sources can be imagined. This is only a hypothesis; during the process of beatification, the Superiors would have to strongly argue for the idea that the 1856 *Life* really reflected the historical truth and deserved to be regarded as a canonical biography. The *Memoires* of Brother Sylvestre are the response of an old man to those who doubted its authenticity. In his Foreword,

he does not attempt to haggle over the praises heaped on the Founder's *Life*, "undoubtedly accurate" and on its author, "his sure and certain judgement, rare intelligence and and, in particular, his personal tact."⁴⁰

The traces of ALS in the canonical biography of Marcellin

In 1991 Brother Agustin Carazo published the Acts of the Diocesan Process of Marcellin's canonisation, which contained his biography organised into 21 chapters and 376 articles. Even if the overwhelming majority of these come from the *Life* of 1856, the influence of ALS is not totally absent. I noted the following articles:

Number	Chapter	Subject	ALS chapter
131	7. His heroic faith	Assignments of Brothers	34. Assignments.
207	9. His heroic prudence	The Brothers' fast	4. How the young Brothers fasted.
248	12. On the virtue of religion	The month of Mary and marian feasts	11. The origin and reason for various practices customary in the Institute.
256	As Above	A document of 1818 on devotion to the guardian angels	As Above
269 - 271	12. De gratitudine	On thanksgiving to God	12. New Year's Eve, or giving thanks.
313	14. De Castitate	The sending away of the Postulant or the corrupting Novice	19. The great question.

As we can see, the harvest is indeed scanty, even if certain reported facts have a historical importance, to which I will return. Having said that, whatever the causes of the disappearance of the sources, that was later on and ALS must have retained traces of documents which are no longer with us today.

⁴⁰ He also declares that he had given his opinion on this *Life* at the request of the Superior General, not only to himself, but to other old Brothers.

The historical chapters

Several chapters of ALS have a clearly historical character. That is the case in Chapters 11 and 12 which present a true tale of liturgical practices and devotion in the Institute. In Chapter 11, where a large number of facts and details are packed in, the major feasts such as Christmas are recalled, with its adoration of the Child Jesus in the crib; Lent, with its meditations and readings of “*The Sufferings of Jesus Christ* by Father Allaume”⁴¹, crowned with the ceremonies of Holy Week...

Curiously, the author dates the beginning of solemn liturgical practices “in 1824, as soon as there was a chapel”. While the community was only installed in L’Hermitage in the spring of 1825, it considered the provisional chapel in the woods to be the first. “The processions of the Blessed Sacrament at the mother-house of the Hermitage began that same year, 1824.” And again, the five principal feast of the Blessed Virgin were celebrated solemnly in the Institute “since 1824”. In particular, when the author recalls at length the establishment of the Salve Regina on the occasions of the 1830 Revolution, it has particularly important implications: “The custom of reciting the Salve Regina after Mass in the novitiates is older, and dates from 1824; it was born in the tiny chapel in the woods where Father said Mass during the construction of the Hermitage.” Undoubtedly, for Brother Jean-Baptiste and Marist tradition, the base year was not that of the installation of the community in L’Hermitage in May 1825, but that of the construction of the foundations of the house during spring and summer 1824, the chapel in the woods being the symbolic place for that refoundation. We even learn some important things of the time in La Valla:

“Once they had a chapel in La Valla, over and above Mass and private visits which each one could make during the day, the whole community went to the chapel three times a day to adore the Blessed Sacrament: when they got up in the morning, when they left the table after dinner and at night before retiring.” And again, “The practice of the Saturday Fast dates from the first days of the Institute”⁴².

There was also the month of Mary:

“May devotions date back to our origins. Father Champagnat began them in La Valla as soon as he arrived in that parish. He performed them every morning after Mass. Following his example and suggestion, May devotions were held in all the hamlets of the parish and soon even each family had its shrine...”

⁴¹ In fact, the work is by Father Thomas of Jesus, a Portuguese Religious, and translated by Father Allaume.

⁴² [Translator’s Note] Fasting on a Saturday was practised in the Institute until the late 1960s.

I will linger on the reference to a particular document:

“In a note in the Founder’s handwriting, dating from 1818, summarizing the main things the brothers ought to teach the children, we read the following: ‘The brothers will have great confidence in their guardian angel; they will invoke him often, as well as the guardian angels of the children entrusted to them. A picture of the guardian angel will be placed in every classroom, and the brothers will not fail to profit by all occasions which may arise to remind the children of the outstanding service which the guardian angels perform for us, what we owe them, how advantageous it is to invoke them and to have great devotion to them.’”

I have not been able to find any trace of this text in Marist sources - even if the idea of the Brother Guardian Angel - a commonplace in the educational literature⁴³ - is affirmed there several times. On the other hand, I am astonished at the date of 1818, since that is at the time when the Brothers had just begun teaching in La Valla, and, perhaps, Marllhes. However, Brother Jean-Baptiste was not in the habit of assigning a date to documents without reason. Is it a document coming from Marcellin, which had then disappeared?⁴⁴

Chapter 12 completes the story of devotions by describing a custom which was abandoned after Marcellin’s time: the last hour of the current year and the first of the following year being spent in thanksgiving, in repentance, and in offering the new year to God, a practice which certainly dates from the time in La Valla. Brother Jean-Baptiste says nothing about the reasons and circumstances for the abandonment of a practice which was quite demanding for the novices.

Chapter 33, entitled, “In Unity there is Strength” which extols the unity of the Congregation from the time of its origins also has great historical value. It cites several of Marcellin’s Circulars and his Spiritual Testament. In particular, we find there praise for the unity between Brothers François, Louis-Marie and Jean-Baptiste, referred to as “the three-in-one”:

“Brother François and his two Assistants, as much out of affection for their Father as out of virtue and a sense of duty in conscience, faithfully followed this advice of Father Champagnat. Their unity was total, constant and inalterable. [...] These three brothers were among the oldest; they had lived with the Founder for a long time and had helped him in the government of the Institute and they had been specially trained by him. [...] his spirit had passed whole and entire into each of them and it was this spirit which was the soul of their administration and of all the works they were given to perform.”

⁴³ I imagine that the idea comes from the De la Salle Brothers, although I have not been able to find it in their literature.

⁴⁴ The canonical biography of the diocesan process of canonisation cites this passage in full. This is a sign that there is no other source for this document.

The text, however sends out a discrete reservation in showing that the union had a weak link:

“Brother François, who was almost always sick and unable to act, was forcibly obliged to leave the entire burden of administration to his Assistants, who [...] provided for everything with such a perfect spirit of unity, and such self-abnegation, that [...] the brothers hardly noticed that he stepped back and acted only through his Assistants.”

This is a chapter which greatly idealised the story of the Institute’s governance and glorified, without any nuance, Brothers Jean-Baptiste and Louis-Marie while devaluing Brother François. It poses a problem for us with regard to its author because the self-glorification of Brother Jean-Baptiste appears astonishing and even unseemly. However, this points us indirectly to the author:

“One of the most capable and spiritual brothers [...] stated, ‘It would be more difficult to divide those three men than to plant a rosebush in the middle of the ocean’”

Almost certainly, it was Brother Pascal (1824 - 1867), Master of Novices then Assistant from 1854, whose life Brother Jean-Baptiste came to write, using the papers that he had left.

Anecdotes from the oral tradition or different people

We now need to examine texts which are slightly less interesting, but still not to be neglected. Thus in Chapter 2 of ALS, Brother Jean-Baptiste states:

“An old brother who was a bitter, difficult and narrow-minded character, being annoyed one day by the presence of the youngest brothers⁴⁵ and the noise they were making, burst out impatiently, ‘What good are so many quarter-brothers? All they do around here is create disorder, disturb recollection and use up the Institute’s money. And in the schools, they are good for nothing except to make people laugh and talk, embarrass the brothers and impede the success of the schools.’

Father Champagnat happened to be passing by and heard what the brother said. He just laughed and replied, ‘A quarter-brother! Now, that’s really a bit too much! That shows too much contempt for these youngsters; at least admit that they are good half-brothers!’”

This story is not pure invention, since it illustrates too clearly the generation-conflict between the old and young Brothers at L’Hermitage during the years 1835 - 1840, when the novitiate was

⁴⁵ [Translator’s Note] In ALSE, Brother Leonard notes that the “youngest brothers” in those days would have been in their early teens, or even younger.

packed. The circumstances of the invention of the expression “quarter-Brother” appears to me to be historical, even if no old Brother had the outburst reported above.

In Chapter 3, the situation is fairly similar: Marcellin, passing the novitiate sees a novice doing penance; at the following recreation the novice explained to him, “While Bro. Louis was explaining to us what it meant to miss one’s vocation, I said to so-and-so, ‘You’re nothing but a missed brother’ [...] seeing that several of them had come over and were listening to the conversation [Marcellin] repeated, ‘What does it mean to miss one’s vocation?’ ‘Throwing your cassock into the bushes’ said one.” There then followed a talk by Marcellin on the topic.

What is the history behind all of that? The mention of Brother Louis attracts our attention because he had been the Formator of Novices in La Valla in 1820 - 1822 then at L’Hermitage around 1828 - 1830. On the other hand, the community was quite small and there was a good relationship between Marcellin and the novices. This episode took place during the time at La Valla. It might even be a personal memory of Brother Jean-Baptiste, who entered the novitiate in 1822, and could even have been the novice who was disciplined.

It is the same year that an anecdote in Chapter 20 alludes to, an anecdote told by Brother Jean-Baptiste himself⁴⁶ :

“...during the novena in preparation for the feast of All Saints Fr. Champagnat stimulated and nourished his brothers; piety by saying a few words to them every evening about the reason for that feast. One day, before saying the grace after supper, he asked me this question, ‘Tell me, brother, how many different types of Church are there?’”

Having given a brilliant answer, Father Champagnat asked him again, “Do you know what a saint is?” As no-one was able to respond satisfactorily, he gave one day to think about it. Brother Jean-Baptiste adds: “The other young brothers and the novices did the same thing [as me] because any of us might be called upon.” The community was, therefore, quite small. As the novices thought that to be a saint meant to perform miracles, Marcellin intended to disabuse them of this.

The historicity of the episode reported in Chapter 5 on “The kinds of Brothers that Father Champagnat did not like” is more difficult to establish:

“One day, after speaking about the qualities a teacher needed in order to make his students like him, he laughed and said, ‘Guess what kind of brothers I don’t like!’ He then gave details of five types of bad teacher: the preaching Brothers, the pretentious Brothers, the Brothers who are ‘nannies’, the executioner Brothers, drawing from a Brother objections founded on Scripture

⁴⁶ Marcellin told him that, “Saint John the Baptist, your glorious patron, did not perform any miracles”

which recommended punishing children and “that we need to punish children in order to obtain the discipline which you assure us is half of education.”

This conversation took place at recreation, then the bell interrupted the debate, which was taken up again at the following recreation with Marcellin declaring that he further did not like the Brothers who “have sore elbows” (lazy), the Brothers who act like servants (no dedication), the nonchalant Brothers⁴⁷ etc.

Brother Jean-Baptiste has certainly grouped together into one or two conversations teaching which unfolded over a longer period and at different times. Nevertheless, we again see the importance of recreations during which Marcellin, still the curate in La Valla with little time available, was instructing the novices while entertaining them.

The story of the fast of the young Brothers in Chapter 5 certainly took place in L’Hermitage after 1830. At Lent, the novices, who were still minors and therefore not compelled to fast, asked Marcellin if they could fast like the adults. There was a large number of novices, since a delegation of six went to request Marcellin’s agreement. There followed a conversation which was definitely invented by Brother Jean-Baptiste and which concluded with an invitation to make a fast of one’s passions. The contrast with the stories which had recreation as a framework is clear: the relationship between the Founder and the novices is more distant. For all that, this story is part of the well-known oral tradition of the old Brothers which Brother Jean-Baptiste just set in writing.

The introduction to Chapter 6 has the advantage of offering a dating: “One Sunday in July during a conference on the gospel for the feast of St. James, which fell the next day (25th July)” a Brother thought that the mother of James and John was being very pretentious in wanting the first places for her sons. Marcellin responded to him by developing the teaching on the three first places he wanted for his Brothers: the crib, the cross and the altar. Thanks to a perpetual calendar we can suggest two years for this teaching since Sunday 24 and Monday 25th July fell in 1825 and 1831. The year 1825 is the more probable since, in 1831, we are just a year after the Revolution of 27th - 29th July 1830; a particularly harmful event for the Institute; the anticlerical consequences of the Revolution had not yet settled. In 1825, on the contrary, the politico-religious situation was favourable. The community had just been installed in L’Hermitage. The precise dating suggests that the source was a written testimony.

On educational issues, the final chapters of ALS use Marcellin’s words occasionally. However, there is one of his teachings which is situated with some precision, in Chapter 39.

⁴⁷ [Translator’s Note] This is the translation given in ALSE. However, it seems rather weak; the French word is better translated as “moody” or “temperamental”.

“One Thursday, while they were taking a long walk through the Mt. Pilat range, the Brothers Headmasters, after talking about a little bit of everything, began discussing ways to attract children to the schools and to give them a taste and liking for study.”

For one, there are rewards, for another emulation. A third thinks that the ability and dedication of the teacher are decisive; a fourth advocates “beautiful handwriting and drawing models” to show the children. Marcellin gave his judgement on the debate by reminding them that all those ways would be useless “if they are not backed up and reinforced by strong fatherly discipline”.

Do we need to see this walk as a simple pretext for a dissertation on discipline, or can we find a historical basis for it? Undoubtedly both. It is clear that the walks on Pilat were more frequent during the time in La Valla, undoubtedly more than after the installation in L’Hermitage. It took place on a Thursday, which was the weekly school holiday and not a feast day nor the holidays.

In all colleges and seminaries⁴⁸, this was the traditional walk. There was nothing more commonplace than the “Brothers Headmasters” who lived in La Valla discussing teaching. The principal interest in this episode lies in its evoking a weekly college-custom, probably before 1824. A custom which otherwise could give credit to the idea that Father Champagnat ran a college.

We end with a dramatic episode reported in Chapter 19, incontestably situated in L’Hermitage and possibly confidential. The *Life* had already recalled the deed and its suppression in La Valla, at the time of the construction of L’Hermitage in 1824.

“He had no mercy on those who corrupted others, but drove them away without pity.

When he was told about a candidate of that type at ten o’clock one night, an hour after the community had retired, he could not bring himself to let him stay in the house until morning; he made him get up and sent him away at once [...] he pushed him out the door and closed it behind him.”⁴⁹

Biographies

With Chapter 7, Brother Jean-Baptiste offers us a biographical sketch of Brother Pacôme as an introduction to a lesson on fidelity to the Rule. He did not put it into *Biographies de quelques Frères*, undoubtedly because of the dearth of information collected about the Brother. However,

⁴⁸ The first Marists in 1816 benefited from this walk up to the country-house of the St Irenaeus Seminary by getting together in the garden.

⁴⁹ The possessions of the culprit were also tossed out, to the other side of the river. This tale was told again in the canonical biography for Marcellin’s canonisation and drew objections from the Promoter of the Faith that Marcellin’s actions were too severe.

he certainly used the personal notebook of the Brother, where he found his reflections on his approaching death.

“Brother Pacôme, whose secular name was Jean-Marie Revoux⁵⁰, died suddenly of a hemorrhage. Like many other men, he had unfortunately lived a long time far from God. He was converted by one of Father Champagnat’s sermons on the uncertainty of the moment of our death, [...] During the 1838 retreat, he had a presentiment of his approaching death, [...] On 9th January he was suddenly stricken by a massive hemorrhage, which carried him to the tomb in less than two days. [...] he calmly watched it come and accepted it with resignation and even holy joy. So Fr. Champagnat profited by his death to give the brothers an excellent conference. He spoke of the danger in which the religious who is unfaithful to his rule puts his soul.”

Brother Pacôme was born in La Valla in 1797. In what was clearly a late vocation, he made temporary profession on 12th October 1834 and then his Final Profession on 16th October 1836⁵¹. A cobbler by trade, he was in L’Hermitage for a short time, as head of the shoemaking department.

Another biographical sketch appears in Chapter 16. “Brother Hippolyte was a young man of twenty-six when he entered religious life. He had been trained as a tailor.” After some hesitation, Brother Hippolyte “renounced the world and [...] went to the Hermitage with the money for his novitiate expenses”. He was the Brother Tailor for forty-one years. Moreover, he was so careful about the security of the house at night with the help of his lamp that tradition held him up as a symbol of vigilance and prudence.

This Brother’s fiche tells us that he was named Jean Remillieux, born on 12th October 1799. Having entered the postulancy in September 1826, he completed his novitiate on 8th September 1828. On this date he took his Final Vows⁵². This was the third year in which the Brothers had taken private, Temporary or Final Vows, according to the degree of their fervour. So, he was part of the group of the oldest Brothers. He died at St Genis-Laval on 26th March 1868, no doubt too late to figure in *Biographies de quelques Frères*. Brother Jean-Baptiste, who had taken his Final Vows the same years as him, used ALS to praise an old Brother of great merit.

Personal testimonies from spoken or written statements

⁵⁰ [Translator’s Note] Brother André gives the spelling of the surname as Reour, but says that several versions appear, such as Revoux, Reoux, Roux. ALSE gives Revoux.

⁵¹ [Translator’s Note] Before the changes in Canon Law at the beginning of the 20th Century, the periods of temporary profession varied widely. Records in the Institute’s General Archives show periods of anything from nil to nine or ten years.

⁵² [Translator’s Note] This is not a misprint; see above Footnote.

Up to now I have spoken of public facts which could have been lifted from the oral tradition. However, Brother Jean-Baptiste also reports private facts which he could only have known from oral or written statements. Thus the beginning of Chapter 10 is based on personal testimony since it arose in the context of confession and spiritual direction.

“One of our old brothers recalls [...] I once accused myself in confession of having lied. When I added that this fault had not hurt anyone, he reacted energetically: ‘What did you say, brother? Sin, any sin at all, always hurts the one who commits it, and it is not possible for someone to offend God without wounding his own soul, and without doing himself harm. [...] Since this instruction of the Father’s made such a strong impression on me, I brought up the same topic a few days later in a spiritual conversation I had with him.’...”

In Chapter 12 we find another personal testimony:

“A certain brother, who was giving Father an account of his conscience, told him that he was not attached to his vocation and felt tempted to abandon it. ‘Do you fight this temptation?’ Father asked him. ‘Very little’. ‘Have you ever thought very highly of your vocation?’ ‘During my novitiate I loved and esteemed it quite a bit.’...”

And the conversation went on with the importance of thanksgiving to God.⁵³

In Chapter 17 there is the story of a young Brother who was definitely scrupulous and who “often went to speak to Fr. Champagnat about his interior difficulties and especially his temptations against the holy virtue” but was always dissatisfied with the remedies Marcellin suggested. This gave rise to a talk on temptation. The details left to us suggest that the scrupulous young Brother later wrote down his story and undoubtedly found a remedy in this lesson.

The following, more mundane, historical recollection is a personal memory of Brother Jean-Baptiste, who had been sent to St Paul-sur-Ternoise in the north of France in 1838.

“On leaving L’Hermitage to found the establishment of Saint-Pol (Pas de Calais) the Brother Director asked the venerable Father’s permission to take a book entitled, *Formula for Novenas and Tridua for all the Feasts of Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin*. ‘Yes, take that book’ he replied, ‘and use it often. Up there you will need to make novenas if you want God to bless you.’”

⁵³ At this time we learn that Marcellin practised, along with numerous pious people, what was then called a Memento: “The anniversaries of his baptism, first communion, ordination, and religious profession, and of other days on which he had received special favors, were always for him feast days totally dedicated to thanksgiving.”

After chapter 23, which marks the end of the first part of ALS, the historical tales become rarer. However, in Chapter 25 on fraternal correction, we find the following on this topic:

“A certain brother who had neglected this duty, and then felt remorse, made known his fault to Fr. Champagnat, who replied, ‘You have faults, you repent of them, God be praised! [...] Don’t forget that failing to inform the superior is to fail against charity’”

In Chapter 28 there is a conversation between Marcellin and Brother Lawrence on unity in the community.

“One day, Bro. Lawrence went to see Fr. Champagnat and told him with his usual simplicity: [...] ‘We’re six⁵⁴ brothers in the house to which you assigned me a few days ago. [...] the brothers are all virtuous men [...] we all want what is good and are working to obtain it. But in spite of all that, there isn’t complete unity among us. There is even less unity in the community of...who are our nearest neighbors, and whom we visit now and then, and this is so even though the three brothers there may all be stricter Christians and more fervent religious than we.’”

Marcellin responds to him by praising the little virtues, which sum up the expression of religious civility.

Brother Lawrence left a written testimony on Marcellin: the only one we still have. As for the tale above, it could perhaps have been collected by Brother Jean-Baptiste, since Brother Lawrence had been retired in L’Hermitage from 1848 - 1851. Can this statement be situated as to time and place? He speaks of two or three neighbouring communities. Now, he was Headmaster in Marllhes during 1820 - 1822, while at St Sauveur-en-Rue, founded in 1820, Brother Jean-François (Etienne Roumesy⁵⁵) headed the school from 1820 - 1823, with Brother Barthélemy Badard as his deputy. It was within this context that the interview took place. Indeed, in a letter of 1st December 1823, the first that has been preserved for us, lists his school-visits: Bourg-Argental, Boulieu, Vanosc, St Sauveur et Tarentaise. We learn that, “Brother Laurent⁵⁶ seems happy in Vanosc, but his resources there are still minimal.”, while as for Brother Jean-François, who had been withdrawn from St Sauveur, “his mood seems to be improving slowly”. I am quite happy to grant that the conversation reported above took place during Marcellin’s visit to these places in 1820 since Brother Laurent had been sent there only a few days previously⁵⁷. All these schools are quite close to each other, particularly Marllhes, St Sauveur, and Bourg-Argental.

⁵⁴ This number cannot be true: no school where Brother Lawrence worked had more than three Brothers. Brother Lawrence is no doubt talking about two communities of three Brothers which are in close contact. He is also, perhaps, thinking of a third school, with which relations are less frequent.

⁵⁵ In the Annals of St Sauveur, Brother Avit considers Brother Jean-François and Brother Etienne to be two different people.

⁵⁶ [Translator’s Note] In his translation of Marcellin’s Letters, Brother Leonard keeps Brother’s name in French.

⁵⁷ However, it is equally true that it could have been at the end of 1822 when he was sent to Vanosc.

Chapter 31 also has an issue about a school-visit and we know who Marcellin's companion was: Brother Jean-Baptiste himself.

“After visiting a certain community of the institute, Father Champagnat was not at all satisfied with what he had seen, so he told the brother director, ‘I am not pleased with your community. [...] Your community has no religious life, no family life.’ [...] After explaining what he meant in a few words, he said goodbye to the brothers, leaving them very much affected by the reprimand they had just received.”

Marcellin's companion left there quite confused. “A few days later” Marcellin sent his companion back to the community, estimating that he now understood what the problem had been and that he was able to explain it to the Brothers. He concluded:

“What I told those Brothers can be summarised in one sentence: *to be happy in community and to sanctify ourselves there, we have to find family life in it*. Now, family life is summed up in these two phrases: a fatherly attitude on the part of the superior, a filial spirit on the part of his brothers.”

He continued with examples of family spirit, in particular that of Brother Jean-Pierre Martinol, Director of Boulieu, who, in 1824, left La Valla early one morning after a visit. As breakfast was not ready, Marcellin offered him a large roll, which had been blessed. However, the Brother refused to eat it during his journey. “I will take it to my brothers and we will eat it together. [...] We will talk about nothing but you and our brothers in La Valla all during dinner.” While this was a private conversation, the edifying story must have been known soon after Brother Jean-Pierre's death in 1825. We have, moreover, seen that ALS does not praise only Marcellin, but also several of the old Brothers, fewer and fewer in number and quite forgotten and the time ALS was published.

Conclusion

It is time to go over the principal findings of this study. Firstly, it is clear to my eyes that ALS is a work in three parts. In the first part (Chapters 1 - 23) Brother Jean-Baptiste expresses himself as an old Brother and disciple. In the second, he is particularly the superior preoccupied with preserving the unity of a body for which he shared responsibility (Chapters 24 - 34). Finally, it is as a theoretician of education and teaching that he completes his work (Chapters 35 - 51). Any possible new edition would have to show this three-part structure clearly. Another principal finding: ALS is not a sort of historical novel nor a repetition of the *Life of Champagnat*, but a work based on oral and manuscript sources which often recover Marcellin's early teaching and that of Brother Jean-Baptiste before the major work on legislation of the years 1852 - 1854.

Finally, even if the historical foundation of the work is quite difficult to excavate, it is far from being negligible, notably because Brother Jean-Baptiste introduced into it his own recollections, put into writing oral traditions and saved for posterity a certain number of written testimonies which were destroyed after his time.

In order to understand this work well, we must think of it as the centrepiece of three works published in 1868 - 1869, undoubtedly the fruit of work undertaken during the years 1863 - 1867 during which time Brother Jean-Baptiste had not published anything. In the *Biographies de quelques frères*, he celebrated the Congregation as a society of apostles, saints, and the predestined; in *Le Bon Supérieur* he developed the portrait of the ideal Superior: the person he himself had sought to be. By using the language of the time, we can say that these two works are edifying; they speak of the ideal.

With ALS this adjective is less adequate because it presents the story of the origins and doctrine in a way which is less coherent, less complete, less serene, but more realistic. It is as if ALS was in part the autobiography of a more complex, less sure, Brother Jean-Baptiste than his other works suggested.⁵⁸ In sum, it acted as the spiritual testament of Brother Jean-Baptiste Furet, an old Brother somewhat thrown off-balance by the rapid growth of the Congregation and the imperious government of Brother Louis-Marie.

Arriving too late, the work did not have a major impact. It was, however, the main attempt to bring the origins of the Institute and the years 1860 - 1870 together, over and above the standardisation of the Institute's major legislative texts and the difficulty of putting them into practice. With *Biographies de quelques frères* and *Le Bon Supérieur*, ALS brings to an end the major writings of Marcellin's first disciples and successors. These works complement the Circulars of Brother Louis-Marie and perhaps even act as a discrete opposition to them. At any event, a comparison would be instructive.

⁵⁸ In his biographical sketch of Brother Jean-Baptiste, Brother Louis-Marie picked up on this quite clearly.

APPENDIX

An attempt at an analysis of the chapters of ALS

Numerous chapters of ALS are introduced by a story, a saying or an opinion coming from Marcellin. Sometimes it is a longer lesson. However, Brother Jean-Baptiste frequently develops the Founder's thinking and, like many self-taught people, he has a tendency to multiply arguments and gather citations, as if their number would have a bearing on the reader's being convinced. Thus, the longer the chapter, the more it witnesses to his influence and the shorter, the less Brother Jean-Baptiste has intervened.

The chapters closest to the primitive teaching are:

Chapter 3: The misfortune of losing one's vocation.

Chapter 6: The first places (at the crib, the cross and the altar).

Chapter 7: The aneurysm: an image of infidelity to the Rule.

Chapter 10: Sin is an evil for the one who commits it, for his family and for his community.

Chapters 20 - 21: What is a saint?

In contrast, the longest chapters constitute the group which were strongly subjected to Brother Jean-Baptiste's influence. This was the case for the following twelve chapters:

Chapter 1: What is a Brother...?

Chapter 2: What a young Brother is...

Chapter 8: What sin is.

Chapter 13: Our need for meditation and mental prayer.

Chapter 14: The five types of devotions or piety.

Chapter 19: The great question (on purity).

Chapter 22: The great temptation (against Jesus Christ)

Chapter 31: What life in a religious community should be like.

Chapter 32: On the virtues of family life.

Chapter 39: A conversation about discipline.

Chapter 40: Supervision

Chapter 41: What is a teacher?

There remain, therefore, twenty-three chapters for which the criterion of length is not sufficient.

Classification by form and source

The examination of the contents of each chapter allows me to get closer to a more detailed result. Thus, the preamble to each chapter often indicates in what circumstances Marcellin had provided the saying, an opinion, or a lesson. After the introduction there follow four types of text:

1. A lesson explicitly attributed to Marcellin
2. One of Marcellin's lessons, filled out by Brother Jean-Baptiste
3. A series of Marcellin's sayings, with commentary by Brother Jean-Baptiste
4. An original lesson of Brother Jean-Baptiste

In the table below, I have tried to present in the simplest way possible, the results of my research suggesting the principal or sole author of each chapter: CH indicates Marcellin, JBF indicates Brother Jean Baptiste Furet. Occasionally, when it has been impossible to detect a single or dominant author I have put both sets of initials. It is obvious that the result remains quite speculative since only a detailed study of each chapter in the light of Brother Jean-Baptiste's manuscript sources would allow more certain conclusions. However, that would have to be a very large volume.

1st Part: What is a Little Brother of Mary?

Chapters	Preamble (stories, citations etc.)	CH's S, L, O. ⁵⁹	JBF's I, C, A. ⁶⁰	Principal author
Foreword	History of the Little Brothers of Mary	Spirit of the Institute		CH/JBF
1.	Marcellin's thinking (in substance)	S.	C.	CH/JBF
2.	Story of the "quarter-Brothers"	L.	A.	CH
3.	Story of the "missed-Brother"	L.		CH
4.	Story of the novices in	L.		CH

⁵⁹ [Translator's Note] S = Sayings; L = Lessons or Conferences; O = Opinions.

⁶⁰ [Translator's Note] I = Instructions; C = Commentaries; A = Additions.

	Lent.			
5.	Story of Marcellin questioning the Brothers.	S.	C.	CH/JBF
6.	“One Sunday in July”	L.		CH
7.	Death of Brother Pacôme (1839)	L.		CH
8.	A Saying of Marcellin		An analysis of instructions.	JBF
9.	The legend of the mediaeval monastery		I.(following on from Ch 8)	JBF
10.	An old Brother in confession	L.		CH
11.	Opinions about various devotions	Extract from the conference on Christmas	The history of devotions at the time of the foundation.	JBF
12.	Announcement of the subject: knowing how to give thanks	Several pieces of advice from Marcellin	A story from the past	JBF
13.	Opinions		Explanation of these opinions	JBF
14.	A Saying	Extract from a conference	I.	JBF
15.	A history lesson and a Saying	Conference		CH
16.	Biographical sketch	Various opinions	Instruction on prudence	JBF
17.	Story of a scrupulous young Brother	Conference	A.	CH
18.	Edifying story	Conference		CH
19.	Citations from the Bible and spiritual authors		I.(Including the expulsion on the abuser from	JBF

			L'Hermitage)	
20.	Recreation on the Feast of All Saints, 1822	Lesson		CH
21.	(following on from the previous Chapter)	Various opinions	A.	JBF
22.	A lesson on temptations	Conference	A.	CH/JBF
23.			I.	JBF

I go on then to ten chapters where it seems to me that Marcellin's thinking and words predominate and another nine where I consider that Brother Jean Baptiste's interpretation predominates. In the preamble and four chapters, I did not want to determine a principal author.

2nd Part: On charity

24.	Charity is a commandment	A Saying	I.(with numerous citations)	JBF
25.	A rule of community life	Advice to a Brother	I.	JBF
26.	Extract from the Spiritual Testament	Various opinions	Explanation of the opinions	CH/JBF
27.	Citations on the topic		Additional citations	JBF
28.	The question from Brother Laurent	A lesson on the little virtues	Probable additions	CH
29.		Conference	A.	CH/JBF
30.	Meaning of the word "trial"		I.	JBF
31.	Critical remarks to a Director	Advice to a Brother	I.	JBF
32.	Citations of spiritual authors		I.	JBF
33.	Citing Marcellin		Praise for the	JBF

			unity of the “three-in-one”	
34.	Citing Marcellin		A.	JBF

The apportioning is very different to that of Part 1 since I have attributed eight chapters to Brother Jean-Baptiste as principal author and only one to Marcellin, with two chapters being indeterminate. Brother Jean-Baptiste would see himself as a Superior and spiritual author rather than a disciple.

3rd Part: Education

35.	Marcellin’s opinions		I.	JBF
36.	Citing the gospel		I.	JBF
37.	Question from a Brother about the catechism	Lesson-plan	A.	CH/JBF
38.			I.	JBF
39.	During a Thursday-walk	Lesson		CH
40.			I.	JBF
41.			I.	JBF

Brother Jean-Baptiste is the principal author of this series, and even the sole author of five of these chapters. I attribute only one chapter to Marcellin.

Conclusion

However, perfunctory this investigation may be, it allows us to confirm that in the first part Brother Jean-Baptiste situates himself rather as a disciple of Marcellin. Basically, his Foreword, in which he presents the Little Brothers of Mary and their spirit, is about the first twenty-three chapters of ALS. In the second and third parts, it is as a Superior and spiritual master and teacher that he contributes, with Marcellin being only one point of reference among others. This is, without doubt, one of the causes of the indifference of the Institute towards a composite work where it is difficult to discern the author.