

## CHAPTER SUMMARIES

### PART ONE: LARGER TRENDS

*Religious Autobiography*  
Fernando Durán López

One of the most frequent manifestations of Catholic spiritual literature in Spain, beginning in the 16th century, is feminine conventual autobiography written from obedience. Starting with the model consecrated by the *Life* of Saint Teresa, and finding its period of maximum impact in the early to mid-17th-century, a genre of writing is constructed which had a long trajectory in Hispanic spirituality, with some very definite characteristics, conceived for use on the inside of the religious orders and—to a lesser extent—as a testimony for society as a whole. Mystical effusion and ascetic mortification, the sacrament of penance, the pressures of the Inquisition, the necessity to nurture a modern hagiography and the proselytizing of the reformed religious orders are the principal formative elements of this Catholic autobiography in Golden Age Spain. This chapter centers around describing and analysing all these characteristics, as well as deviations from the basic model which have been highlighted by feminist criticism. It touches upon the external history of the genre and its quantification; the typology of authors; the relationship between female authors and their confessors; the goals of the text (moral example, control of orthodoxy, proselytizing, hagiographical documentation), as well as its narrative structure and mystical content.

*Traditions, Life Experiences and Orientations in Portuguese Mysticism*  
(1515–1630)

José Adriano de Freitas Carvalho

Remembering some lines of influence which, in authors and in works—be they literary writings or reformed religious institutions—converged in spiritual currents at the end of the Middle Ages in Portugal (which must be situated within the larger picture of the Iberian Peninsula), we propose to examine, through representative examples, their continuities and renovations throughout the 16th century. We must remember, however, that this long period witnessed fractures, frontiers and attempts at unity, manifested in the face of repressive institutions as well as through solemn definitions and conciliar orientations. Consequently, we will try to show how, in such a controlled context, men and women—lay and religious, noble and peasant—were reviving continuities (readings of ancient texts and assumptions of medieval ways of life such as pilgrimage and hermitism) and living renovations (reformed and new religious orders, themes and methods of prayer, meditation and devotions). Some authors from this period dedicated their works, many of

which enjoyed wide diffusion throughout Europe, to the defense and illustration of the *ars orandi*. We judge these works to be significant for the consolidation of the multiform Catholic reform movement in the Iberian Peninsula. Finally, we shall allude to the artistic popularization of some of these new forms of devotion.

*New World Colonial Franciscan Mystical Practice*  
Francisco Morales

The Franciscan Order had a significant influence on late medieval mystical practice. The "Itinerarium mentis ad Deum" of Saint Bonaventure had shaped generations of Franciscans, many of whom came to the New World in the 16th century. The native communities of Mesoamerica, for their part, practiced a religion enriched with experiences quite similar to those of medieval mysticism. The great contribution of the Franciscans to New World mystical practice was their notable effort to express the medieval European mystical tradition, enriched with humanistic and Renaissance thought, within a cultural context completely different from that of western Christianity. The Franciscans of New Spain wrote, published and promoted books written in the Nahuatl (Aztec) language containing exercises and concepts which stem from Franciscan mysticism. Study of these provides an excellent opportunity to analyse new forms of expression of western mysticism within a non-western culture.

*The Alumbrados: Dejamiento and its Practitioners*  
Alastair Hamilton

The term *alumbrado* (or "enlightened") has always been vague and was rejected by those to whom it was applied. Yet the edict of 1525 condemning the movement also referred to the *dejados*, those who practiced "abandonment". This group of mystics, who were quite ready to accept the name, are the subject of this article. Mainly active in the area of Guadalajara, with numerous contacts with local Franciscan convents and the households of the higher nobility, the *dejados*, most of whom were of *converso* origin, disseminated their teaching from the beginning of the second decade of the 16th century until the time of their arrests between 1524 and the late 1530s. Their doctrine presents a hybrid appearance symptomatic of the spiritual restlessness that characterized Spain (and much of Europe) at the time. Criticisms of the sacraments and ceremonies of the Church were combined with an insistence on the prerogatives of those inspired by the Holy Spirit, an evangelical emphasis on the Bible, and a mystical practice which had its origins among Franciscans but was soon regarded as heterodox. The *dejados* are discussed here in the broader context of contemporary Spanish spirituality, Spanish reactions to Lutheranism, and widespread suspicion of the *conversos*. The article ends with a survey of recent interpretations of the phenomenon.