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# ROBERT HOLCOT O. P.

BY  
BERYL SMALLEY

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## I - INTRODUCTION

'Secundum naturam verbum super aquam delectabilius in loco distantiori auditur, unde campane pulsantes super aquam delectabiliorem faciunt melodiam et ad loca distantiora virtuosius se diffundunt'. 'As bells ring more sweetly over the water...': Michael du Four O. P. used this charming comparison to show the force of the text, *Factum est verbum super Iohannem*, opening his prologue to his commentary on St John<sup>1</sup>. It expresses the aim of a group of early fourteenth-century commentators. They hoped that their teaching and preaching would make more impression if they presented it gracefully. Thus Michael bases himself on St Thomas's commentary on the Fourth Gospel, but popularises it, illustrating the moral teaching from nature lore. The Englishman, Robert Holcot, marks the extreme of this tendency, though he differs from Michael du Four in thinking in terms of sight rather than of sound. He represents a 'Decorated period' in biblical exegesis, preferring, indeed, decoration to decorum. No medieval moralist, and it is a large claim, ever had a stronger sense of humour.

Holcot has attracted the attention of medievalists from three points of view. Historians of scholasticism know him as an intellectual sceptic, who rejected the traditional and Thomist proofs for the existence of God<sup>2</sup>, and who was one of the principal 'Pelagians' attacked by Bradwardine in his defence of predestination<sup>3</sup>. Students of medieval learn-

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<sup>1</sup> T. Käppeli, Der Johanneskommentar des Michael de Furno O. P., in Archivum FF. Praed. 4 (1934) 225-8. Michael du Four was a Fleming. He was assigned to read the *Sentences* at Paris in 1318.

<sup>2</sup> C. Michalski, La physique nouvelle et les différents courants philosophiques au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, extrait du Bulletin de l'Académie polonaise des sciences et des lettres, Cracow 1928, 9-18, 32-40.

<sup>3</sup> C. Michalski, La problème de la volonté à Oxford et à Paris au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, in *Studia philosophica*, II, Lemberg 1937, 264-5, 303-7; D. Knowles, *The Religious*

ing and of early humanism know him as an assistant of the great book collector and book lover, Richard de Bury, bishop of Durham, a correspondent of Petrarch and author of the *Philobiblon*. De Ghellinck pointed out the extravagant richness and variety of quotation in Holcot's Wisdom-commentary in his study of Richard de Bury<sup>4</sup>. Lastly, Holcot has a place in the history of preaching in England. Dr G. R. Owst stresses the artificial, over-ingenious and pagan element in Holcot's *Moralitates*<sup>5</sup>. The abbé J. Th. Welter gives him an important role in the evolution of the *exemplum*<sup>6</sup>. Here we may add a sub-section. The *Moralitates*, a collection of *exempla* for the use of preachers, include descriptions of curious emblem-like pictures (I shall call them 'pictures'), which have intrigued the art-historians. Dr. H. Liebeschütz mentions them in his edition of John Ridewall's *Fulgentius metaforalis*<sup>7</sup>. F. Saxl found them actually illustrated in two German picture books of the early fifteenth century. He could find no earlier illustrations and wondered why they waited so long for an artist<sup>8</sup>.

The aim of this paper is to study Holcot as he appears in three biblical commentaries, on Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus and the Twelve Lesser Prophets. The *Moralitates* will be considered in connexion with these, since the two types of work supplement and clarify each other. His scholastic works should be included on the same principle; they, too, find echoes in his commentaries on Scripture; but this would have enlarged the scope of my paper beyond all bounds. I shall therefore mention his theology only in passing. I shall describe his method as a commentator and then make an attack on the seried ranks of his authors; a complete study of Holcot's quotations would involve many years'

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Orders in England, II, Cambridge 1955, 80-2, referring to an unpublished Cambridge thesis on Bradwardine by G. Leff.

<sup>4</sup> Un évêque bibliophile au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, in *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 18 (1922) 495.

<sup>5</sup> G. R. Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England*, Cambridge 1926, 301; *The Pulpit and Literature in Medieval England*, Cambridge 1933, passim, see index, 605.

<sup>6</sup> L'exemplum dans la littérature religieuse et didactique du Moyen Age, Paris 1927, 360-6. M. Welter concludes: 'En élargissant le cadre de la moralisation, Holcot s'est fait le propagateur de la nouvelle méthode de prédication'.

<sup>7</sup> *Fulgentius metaforalis*, Leipzig 1927, 39.

<sup>8</sup> *Aller Tugenden und Laster Abbildung*, in *Festschrift für Julius Schlosser*, Vienna 1927, 116-21; *A Spiritual Encyclopaedia of the Later Middle Ages*, in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1952) 82-134; the references to Holcot are on p. 99-103, 115-7. G. R. Owst notices other examples of the use of 'pictures' in English homiletic literature, *Pulpit and Literature*, op. cit., 52-3, 595.

research. Next I shall discuss the composition of 'pictures' in the commentaries and *Moralitates*. In conclusion I shall sum up his teaching and his opinions on current problems in so far as these enter into his biblical commentaries, in the hope of drawing together the three or four Holcots known to different kinds of specialist. Our composite Holcot will be interesting not only as a person of strong individuality, but as a member of a group, bound by common aims, if not by any formal relationship. He belonged to a set of men having keen literary and classicising tastes. Readers must prepare for a leisurely ramble; Holcot leads us into many odd byeways of literary history.

## II - LIFE

Our scanty knowledge of Holcot's career has been supplemented by Fr. Wey's publication of his *Sermo finalis*<sup>9</sup> and by Mr A. B. Emden's researches in episcopal registers, which he kindly allows me to quote from his forthcoming book on medieval Oxford masters. Holcot is a village in Northamptonshire. Robert's later connexion with Northampton makes it clear that he derived his name from this village and not from another Holcot in Bedfordshire. He was probably professed at the Dominican priory at Northampton. The Friars Preachers had chosen this town, an important midland centre, for an early foundation (1233) in their plan for settling in the key places of England<sup>10</sup>. He was licensed to hear confessions in Lincoln diocese in March, 1332 (Reg. Burghersh, Linc. v, fol. 457<sup>v</sup>), and probably incepted at Oxford, which was in the diocese of Lincoln, in the same year. His Sentence-commentary was completed in or just before 1332, although he revised it in 1336<sup>11</sup>. He tells us in his *Sermo finalis* that he is resigning his chair to a Roger Gosford O. P. of Coupland. He had gained it the year before against a competitor, Roger Granton O. P., who had a special grace from the university, while Holcot had followed the normal course of studies. His professorship had been laborious; he refers here to his commentary on the four books of *Sentences*; he had to lecture in hired rooms instead of at Blackfriars, as was his right. Fr. Wey suggests some temporary dislocation such as building as an explanation. Although weaker than others, he had persevered in his pursuit of wisdom. The

<sup>9</sup> Mediaeval Studies II (1949) 219-22.

<sup>10</sup> W. A. Hinnebusch, *The Early English Friars Preachers*, Rome 1951, 495.

<sup>11</sup> C. Michalski, *op. cit.*

*Sermo finalis* can be dated by its allusions to disturbances at Oxford caused by the riots between northern and southern students and the northerners' migration to Stamford in the spring of 1334<sup>12</sup>. Since he refers to the troubles, which may have been brewing earlier, and not to the actual migration, it seems safest to put his regency between the dates 1332-4.

We hear of him next as licensed to hear confessions in Sarum diocese before 1342 (Reg. Wyvile, Sarum i, fol. 19<sup>v</sup>). He would have been attached to the Dominican house at Salisbury (founded in 1281)<sup>13</sup>. He was at Northampton from early in 1343 until the autumn of 1348, the date of his last appearance in a bishop's register<sup>14</sup>. Hence we may believe the tradition that he died at Northampton of the plague in 1349; he is said to have caught it while ministering to the sick<sup>15</sup>. His grave is mentioned in a will as late as 1536. A certain Mary Middleton left a bequest of vestments and plate to the Northampton Blackfriars and asked to be buried in the church 'next to Holcott'<sup>16</sup>.

We know from the reminiscences of William de Chambre, marshall of the Benedictine priory of Durham, that Holcot was patronised by Richard de Bury, consecrated bishop of Durham on Dec. 19, 1333<sup>17</sup>. Holcot must have helped the bishop to prepare his *Philobiblon*, which was finished on Jan. 24, 1344. The book is actually ascribed to Holcot in some manuscripts. A reading of *Philobiblon*, however, makes it seem unlikely that so personal a work could have been composed by anyone other than the man who claims to be its author, Richard de Bury. The

<sup>12</sup> The latest and most reliable account of the Stamford schism will be found in Victoria County History of Oxfordshire, III, 1954, 8.

<sup>13</sup> The priory at Wilton, founded in 1245, probably became a cell of Salisbury after 1281; see Hinnebusch, *op. cit.*, 56, 495.

<sup>14</sup> He was licensed to hear confessions in Northampton archdeaconry, Feb. 10, 1343, the license being renewed Oct. 5, 1343, licensed for Northampton and Buckingham archdeacons for two years, May 11, 1345, for Northampton archdeaconry for one year, Oct. 23, 1347, and had the license renewed for one year, Oct. 21, 1348 (Reg. Th. Bek, Linc. vii, foll. 94<sup>v</sup>, 95<sup>v</sup>, 97; Reg. Gynewell, Linc. ix c, foll. 39, 45).

<sup>15</sup> Victoria County History of Northamptonshire, II, 1906, 145.

<sup>16</sup> R. M. Serjeantson and H. I. Longden, *The Parish Churches and Religious Houses of Northamptonshire*, in *Archaeological Journal* 70 (1913) 446, quoting no. E. 177 of the Northampton Probate Registry. Fr. G. Anstruther very kindly sends me this notice.

<sup>17</sup> N. Denholm Young, *Richard de Bury (1287-1345)*, in *Collected Papers*, Oxford 1946, reprinted from *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th series, vol. 20 (1937).

note found in other manuscripts is more plausible: 'Philobiblon... venerabilis viri domini Richardi de Bury, Episcopi Dunelmensis editus per venerabilem magistrum Robertum Holkot anglicum O. P.'<sup>18</sup>. Holcot could have worked for Bury, even if never officially attached to the bishop's household. He must have had a reputation for learning by the time of Bury's consecration. A connexion with the bishop of Durham, either unofficial or perhaps as his confessor, could be fitted into Holcot's career between his *Sermo finalis* at Oxford, 1333/4, and his license to hear confessions in Sarum diocese, before 1342. They may have kept in touch until Bury's death on April 4, 1345, and Holcot may have acted as the bishop's literary executor.

There remains a possible regency at Cambridge, suggested by two manuscripts of the Wisdom commentary, seen by Echard, describing Holcot as a doctor of Cambridge<sup>19</sup>. He may have been sent to teach there after his regency at Oxford, that is, after 1333/4.

### III - WRITINGS

#### a) BIBLICAL COMMENTARIES, MSS AND DATES

The commentaries will be described in the order of the books of the Vulgate. Authenticity and original shape will be considered in relation to the manuscript tradition of each; the dates of the Old Testament commentaries will be discussed all together afterwards. The surviving prologue to a New Testament commentary will come last.

I have not been able to study the commentary on Ecclesiastes ascribed to Holcot by Echard. The manuscript tradition seems to be complicated. There are many more commentaries on Ecclesiastes dating from the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries than there are on Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus or the Twelve Prophets. Hence a study of Holcot on Ecclesiastes would have to be comparative if it were to be serious, and must be postponed for the present. I have looked at an incomplete copy of a commentary on Ecclesiastes in MS London, British Museum, Royal 2.D.iv, foll. 90-159<sup>v</sup>, which the authors of the catalogue ascribe tentatively to Holcot<sup>20</sup>. It accompanies abridgements of his commen-

<sup>18</sup> See the recent edition of *Philobiblon* by A. Altamura, Naples 1954, 9-II.

<sup>19</sup> Quétif-Echard, *Script. Ord. Praed.* I, 629-30.

<sup>20</sup> Warner and Gilson, *Catalogue of Western MSS in the Old Royal and King's Collections*, I, London 1921, 55.

taries on Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus. The hand is fourteenth-century. This was certainly written by an Englishman. The commentator describes a milk drink prepared by the Welsh (fol. 91<sup>v</sup>) and refers to a sham fight which turned into a real fight, because the son of a magnate was injured by a man of lower condition, at a place called 'Le Colkmeade (or Tolkmeade)' (fol. 140). I have not traced the story, but it must be set in England. The commentary deserves to be studied even if it is not Holcot's.

The Wisdom commentary is authenticated by Holcot himself. He puts his name and surname in his prologue, punning on his two introductory texts, *Dominus petra mea et robur meum* (II Reg. xxii, 2) and *Columba mea in foraminibus petre* (Cant.ii,14). The Bâle edition adds 'Robertus' and 'Holcot', which are not in early MSS. The allusions would have been clear enough to Holcot's pupils:

'Hec sunt autem foramina domuncule sive case, in quibus iuxta cognominis mei sensum debeo conversari. Ita cognomen habeo a foramine case datum, et ideo sicut nomen meum in robore, ita cognomen meum intueor in foramine petre (MS Oxford, Balliol College 27, fol. 3<sup>rb-va</sup>)'.

Thus he derives Robert from 'strength' and Holcot from 'cot in the rock'; in fact, it probably means 'cot in the hollows'<sup>21</sup>.

Holcot's phenomenal success in expounding Wisdom is attested by the surviving MSS and by library catalogues. Every well-stocked library came to possess his commentary. Its appeal is explained in a note following the explicit in a late-fourteenth century copy from northern Italy (MS London, British Museum Add. 31,216, fol. 175<sup>va</sup>) and a fifteenth-century English copy (MS Cambridge, Pembroke College 181, fol. 138<sup>vb</sup>), possibly in others:

'Quamvis ista sapientia in qualibet parte scripture sacre valeat inveniri, specialiter tamen et quadam peculiari forma in libro sapientie continetur, in quo reges et principes de cultu Dei et bonis moribus informantur'.

The biblical wisdom literature, a little neglected in comparison with other parts of Scripture in the early middle ages, came into its own in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Yet Wisdom had had to wait

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<sup>21</sup> E. Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names*, Oxford 1940, 233.

for its commentator. Probably its address to rulers endeared it particularly to an age which took so much interest in political science. Here was the biblical counterpart of a *De regimine principum*. Holcot 'cashed in' on this new popularity. He gave to Wisdom a commentary which would stand beside St Bonaventure on Ecclesiastes.

Given the number of MSS, it is unnecessary for our present purpose to list them all. Prof. R. A. B. Mynors pointed out to me that MS Balliol College 27 has references to the 'liber magistri' written in the margins in a hand contemporary with the script. Judging from the hand, it cannot have been written any later than the middle of the fourteenth century and it might be rather earlier. It seems, therefore, that we are quite close to an autograph and we can use this copy for a preliminary survey.

OXFORD, Balliol College 27: Written in English hands of the mid-14th cent., double columns, red and blue initial on the first page of text, 13½ × 9½ in. (Prologue) fol. 2<sup>ra</sup>: Dominus petra mea et robur meum, Reg. 22. Artes et scientie humanis studiis adinvente per occasionem quadruplicem materiam glorie sibi sumunt...

(Text) fol. 4<sup>ra</sup>: *Diligite iustitiam*; Circa librum istum, qui liber Sapientie nuncupatur, sunt in principio tria notanda. Primum est de eius nomine...

(Explicit) fol. 314<sup>va</sup>: ... quarto, magnificat hominem premiando gloriose, dando semetipsum, Reg. 26: Magnificetur anima mea in oculis Domini et liberet me de omni angustia. Quod nobis concedat etc.

A table of contents, summarising the contents of each *lectio* in order follows, foll. 313<sup>va</sup>-314<sup>va</sup>, then a table of *quaestiones* in order as they come in the commentary, foll. 314<sup>vb</sup>-315<sup>rb</sup>. The simplicity of the table, which is not alphabetical, testifies to an early date. Later copies have more elaborate ones. Foll. 315<sup>v</sup>-316<sup>v</sup> are blank.

fol. 317<sup>ra</sup> in a different hand of roughly the same date: *Lectura Willelmi Dencourt super Ecclesiasten*<sup>22</sup>.

(Prologue) fol. 317<sup>ra</sup>: Vanitati creatura subiecta est, Rom. 8. Hugo, lib. 4 super Ecclesiasten circa medium dicit sic...

(Text) fol. 318<sup>vb</sup>: *Verba Ecclesiastes etc.* Iste liber (quem) pre manibus habemus dividitur in titulum et tractatum, in conclusionem sive epilogum. Prima pars ibi: *Quid habet amplius...*

(Explicit on Eccles. vii, 1) fol. 383<sup>vb</sup>:... potest investigare et scrutare credenda. Sequitur: *aut quis poterit etc.*

The commentary breaks off incomplete. The rest of the leaf is blank.

A fifteenth-century hand has written on the first flyleaf: *Holcot super librum Sapientie. Dencourt super Ecclesiasten. Liber domus de Balliolo in Oxon.*

<sup>22</sup> See Archivum FF. Praed. 14 (1954) 85, n. 47.

de legatis magistri Roberti Thwaite, quondam magistri eiusdem domus et decani de Aukland.

Robert Thwaytes was Chancellor of Oxford University 1446-7 and Master of Balliol 1450. He died in 1458<sup>23</sup>.

This manuscript is not quite complete. A quire was lost between foll. 125-6 of the modern foliation. Hence part of lect. lxxix, lect. lxxx-lxxxi, and part of lect. lxxxii are missing. The Wisdom commentary has been corrected in a contemporary hand. At the end of lect. cxix (fol. 178<sup>vb</sup>) there is a marginal note beside two blank lines: 'Hic erat unum spatium magnum in libro magistri'. Lect. cxxvi (fol. 189<sup>v</sup>) has an addition to the text of ten closely written lines in the lower margin. The corrector did not know exactly where the insertion should have been made. 'Non erat signum in libro magistri ubi deberet intrare, sed erat scriptum in superiori margine supra principium istius lectionis'. He notes against the words of the text 'Digna facta est ista habitatio per tria', where Holcot seems to break off short (lect. clix, fol. 236<sup>ra</sup>): 'Non erant ista tria in libro magistri'. Again he notes 'quartum non fuit in libro magistri' against a passage where Holcot lists six benefits of God to man, but omits the fourth of the list when he comes to explain them severally (lect. cxcvi, fol. 290<sup>ra</sup>). He suspected his original of mistakes, even if it were the Master's own book; he notes beside 're absoluta distinctas', 'res absolutas, credo' (lect. clxvi, fol. 245<sup>va</sup>). It is interesting to find the note '1. post Pascha' beside the beginning of lect. lxxxiii (fol. 127<sup>ra</sup>). The *lectio* has no bearing on either the Gospel or the Epistle for Low Sunday and no mention of the day. Does it refer to the work of the scribe or corrector? Or was it already in 'the Master's book', as a note that he had reached this point in the year? If the latter, it would mean that Holcot continued his lectures over more than one scholastic year. 212 lectures spread over two years would tally with his reaching the 83rd just after Easter of the first<sup>24</sup>.

Another copy, now MS Oxford, Bodl. Laud. misc. 562, was made at Paris within Holcot's lifetime. It came from St Mary's, Ebirbach, and was bound up with a late twelfth-century copy of Jeremias and Lamentations with the *Glossa ordinaria*. A small French illumination on fol. 1 shows a man, perhaps the scribe, kneeling before the Madonna and Child. The commentary, foll. 1-<sup>ra</sup>-188<sup>vb</sup>, is followed by two tables, one for the subject matter, beginning with 'abortire', foll. 189<sup>ra</sup>-193<sup>vb</sup>, the second for the *quaestiones*, foll. 193<sup>vb</sup>-194<sup>rb</sup>; a preface to the tables explains the system:

'Ad evidentiam tabule sequentis, que est super expositionem libri Sapientie, sciendum quod in ea breviter continentur materie materiales (*sic. morales?*), naturales, et alie curiose questiones, non tamen disputabiles,

<sup>23</sup> V. C. H. Oxfordshire, *op. cit.*, 39, 89.

<sup>24</sup> It seems that Thomas Hopeman O. P. lectured on the same book for more than one scholastic year; Archivum FF. Praed. 25 (1955) 323-4.

que in dicta expositione diffusius pertractantur, exceptis quibusdam que in dictis sanctorum continentur. Ad inveniendum autem materiam que queritur significatur in tabula quota lectione tali modo pertractatur. Ponuntur littere a, b, c, d, partibus lectionum ubi tales materie pertractantur, ut quod queritur citius habeatur, sic etiam de uno vocabulo ad aliud vel ad alia, ubi consimilis materia pertractatur, remissio a b'.

The scribe has written at the end of the tables, fol. 194<sup>rb</sup>:

' Expliciunt tituli questionum huius libri, qui completi fuerunt in die Septem Fratrum, anno Domini 1347, Parisius per fratrem Henricum de Stetthin de Almania. Exemplar tabule parum valuit, presertim in cifris. Credo quod post 100 pauce sint vere, sed sub centenario numero maior pars est vera, ut patet per se. Crede si vis '.

The text has *pecia* marks throughout, alternate numbers being noted, ' fi. pe.1' (fol. 3, outer margin), ' fi. pe. 3' (fol. 7, outer margin), and so on<sup>25</sup>.

A comparison of the edition made at Bâle, 1586, the latest and most convenient to use, with these two manuscripts is both reassuring and disappointing. The latter, because the manuscripts throw no light on Holcot's puzzling references to obscure authors and works, the former because it proves that the edition was based on a good text. The editor has added his own versions of the Wisdom text in Latin and Greek at the head of each *lectio*. If we ignore these, we find very few important variations. Corruptions such as ' Nota fabulam de pugna leonis contra pictorem' (p. 540) for ' ... ad hoc pertinet fabula de Pigmaleone pictore' (MS Balliol 27, fol. 241<sup>va</sup>) are exceptional. MS Laud. misc. 562 was already on the downward path with ' pingia leone' (fol. 148<sup>ra</sup>). Holcot's classicism must have been baffling to his copyists. The edition can sometimes be helpful in making corrections to little slips which may have already occurred in the ' liber magistri'. The numbers of *lectiones* do not exactly correspond. The edition and MS Laud. misc. 562 each has a total of 212, though they get out of step in the middle; MS Balliol 27 has only 211. It corresponds perfectly with the edition up to no. cxc. Then the scribe stopped marking the numbers. Some are numbered by a later hand, which has led to some confusion, up to no. ccvi of the edition. Here the scribe began to number again. He numbered no. ccvi of the edition as ccv, and so kept one behind the edition number to the end.

<sup>25</sup> See J. Destrez, *La pecia dans les manuscrits universitaires du XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Paris 1935.

Since MS Balliol 27 has lost a quire and does not number the *lectiones* consistently, and since the edition is trustworthy, I have generally referred to the *lectio* and page of the edition. I have only transcribed MS Balliol 27 where the variants were many and significant. This will make it easier for readers to look up the context of the pieces quoted if they wish.

This commentary was certainly delivered as lectures. Not only is the text divided into *lectiones*, but Holcot also says 'in hodierna lectione', 'in littera lecta', and addresses his hearers as 'vos charissimi' (p. 69, 308, 285). The lectures are of uneven length. *Lectio* cxi takes up less than a leaf of MS Balliol 27 (foll. 211<sup>ra</sup>-va) and goes on to two pages of the printed edition (p. 472-3), whereas four or five pages represent a normal *lectio*. Holcot may have been hurried that day. He sometimes breaks off before completing his argument:

'Istam imaginationem complere non potui, preventus temporis brevitatem, sed est occasio melius alias cogitandi (lect. cxi, p. 376)'.

There was no clockwork standardisation.

The commentary on Ecclesiasticus i-vii is ascribed to Holcot in the MSS and by the bibliographers. From internal evidence we know that it was written by an Englishman in the early fourteenth century; King Edward, son of King Henry (Edward I 1272-1307) appears in an *exemplum*<sup>26</sup>. The commentary shows all Holcot's characteristics.

There are three English MSS, all in the Royal Collection at the British Museum and all of English provenance. They are fully described in the catalogue<sup>27</sup>. MS 3. A. xiv, foll. 1<sup>ra</sup>-67<sup>rb</sup>, with tables foll. 76<sup>va</sup>-69<sup>vb</sup>, fourteenth-century from Reading Abbey, gives a full text but omits the prologue. The incipit is that of the first *lectio* on the text (see the incipits of MS Bâle B.V.11, below). MS 2.F.vii, foll. 231<sup>ra</sup>-326<sup>vb</sup>, fifteenth-century, from St Alban's Abbey, must derive from a copy closely related to MS 3.A.xiv, since it also omits the prologue and has the same end-rubric. It follows Holcot on Wisdom, abbreviated and arranged with the excerpts in alphabetical order according to subject matter, foll. 79<sup>ra</sup>-231<sup>ra</sup>. MS 2.D.iv, foll. 14-89<sup>v</sup>, fourteenth-century, gives an abridged copy, without the prologue and incomplete, because some leaves at the end have been lost. An abridgment of Holcot on Wisdom, with the end missing, is in the same volume, foll. 160-269<sup>v</sup>. Its provenance is not known, but the hands are English.

Of the continental copies I have studied MS Bâle B.V.11 in a microfilm.

<sup>26</sup> See below, p. 61.

<sup>27</sup> Op. cit. I, 55, 66, 70.

It belonged to the Bâle Dominicans, who would probably have procured a good exemplar from England. It is written in a 14th cent. continental hand. (Prologue) fol. 1<sup>ra</sup>: Incipit postilla super librum Ecclesiasticum edita a fratre Roberto Holcot sacre pagine doctore O. P.

*Omnis sapientia a Domino Deo est.* Magister et dominus Gundissalinus, libro suo de ortu scientiarum, sic ait: Felix prior etas...

(Text) fol. 3<sup>vb</sup>: lectio prima. *Omnis sapientia a Domino Deo est...* Beatus Augustinus, libro 4<sup>o</sup> De doctrina christiana, cap. 12<sup>o</sup>, doctrinam cuiuslibet eloquentis approbat...

(Explicit) fol. 98<sup>rb</sup>, on vii, 8, *nec in uno eris immunis ... tangere quod ad eos pertinet, ne involvamini in peccatis eorum.* Explicit lectura etc.

A later hand inserted a line after the explicit, illegible in the microfilm.

Explicit explicat ludere scriptor eat

Donum scriptori debetur <de> meliori (in the hand of the scribe).

On fol. 98<sup>v</sup>, otherwise blank, is an inscription in a 14th cent. hand: Iste liber est fratrum ordinis predicantium conventus Basiliensis.

Table of contents foll. 99<sup>ra</sup>-102<sup>va</sup>. Explicit tabula.

A different hand has added a nonsensical line, probably a *probatio pennae*: Ha leu ha deu dire ha... (last word illegible).

A comparison between the Bâle MS and the edition made at Venice, 1509, shows identical incipits, explicit and very close resemblance in the text. The number of *lectiones* is 88 in the printed edition, 87 in the Bâle MS and in MS Royal 2.F.vii, because the MSS number *lectio viii* of the edition *lectio vii*. The tables of contents differ and the edition concludes with a rubric:

'Clarissimi sacre theologie professoris magistri Roberti Holcot Anglie O. P., viri doctissimi, super prima capitula Ecclesiastici postilla eruditissima explicit. Quam doctor ipse preclarus a Deo vocatus ac morte preventus explere non potuit'.

I have trusted to the printed edition for my study, collating it with MSS Bâle B. V. 11 and Royal 2. F. vii, where the text seemed to be doubtful. My references will be to the edition unless otherwise stated.

The following list of MSS, which I have not seen, was kindly sent me by Fr. T. Kaeppli:

BERLIN, Oeffentlich. Wissenschaftl. Bibl., Theol. fol. 210, foll. 5-126, 15th cent <sup>28</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> V. Rose, Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der königl. Bibl. zu Berlin, Lat. Handschr., II, Berlin 1901, no. 499, 365.

BRAUNSCHWEIG, Stadtbibl. 26, fol. 123 ff, 15th cent.; 98, foll. 1-269<sup>v</sup>, 15th cent.; 149, foll. 289-292<sup>v</sup> (probably an abridgment or the prologue only), 15th cent.<sup>29</sup>.

MUNICH, Clm 13501, 14th cent., ascribed to Thomas Anglicus; 23463, fol. 137<sup>ra</sup>-213<sup>rb</sup>, 14th cent.<sup>30</sup>.

MODENA, Bibl. Estense a. W. 8, 19, unfoliated, 15th cent.

PRAGUE, University Library VIII. E. 26, foll. 1-88<sup>v</sup>, 14th cent.<sup>31</sup>.

Dr M. Burckhardt was obliging enough to send me a description of the piece ascribed to Holcot in MS Bâle, University Library A.II.26, foll. 104<sup>r</sup>-105<sup>v</sup>. It is the prologue to Ecclesiasticus only, with incipit and explicit as in the printed edition, ending: 'Explicit principium Holcot in librum Ecclesiasticum'. The next piece is a *principium* on Ecclesiasticus ascribed to Nicholas Gorran O. P. The hand is about 1400.

As far as I can judge from the catalogues and from Fr. Kaeppli's information, these all represent the same version. MS Berlin Theol. fol. 210 has the explicit: 'Ideo bene dicitur: *Non pecces in multitudine civitatis*' (Ecclus. vii, 7), which differs from the others. Probably it is incomplete, since the others end on the text vii, 8. The present study must be regarded as provisional.

The Ecclesiasticus commentary is divided into *lectiones*, like that on Wisdom, and the audience is sometimes addressed as 'charissimi' (foll. 26<sup>va</sup>, 39<sup>vb</sup>). It resembles the Wisdom commentary in that the text is expounded very fully; Holcot takes 17 *lectiones* to expound the first chapter of Ecclesiasticus.

The commentary on the Twelve Lesser Prophets survives in four manuscripts. All give his name and the content is typical of him. He makes use of the 'pictures' technique as he does in his *Moralitates*, and we shall see that internal evidence dates it in his teaching period. It has not been printed.

The incipit and explicit are:

Incipit

Prologue. *Verbum Domini* etc. Liber xii prophetarum in xii partes princi-

<sup>29</sup> H. Nentwig, Die mittelalterlichen Handschriften in der Stadtbibl. zu Braunschweig, Wolfenbüttel 1893, 14, 81, 135.

<sup>30</sup> Halm and Meyer, Cat. Cod. lat. Bibl. regiae Monacensis, II, ii, München 1876, 112, II, iv (München, 1881) 72. Robert Holcot, Thomas Waleys, Thomas Ringstead, were often confused by the bibliographers. Neither Waleys nor Ringstead commented on Ecclesiasticus.

<sup>31</sup> J. Truhlar, Cat. Cod. MSS lat., qui in C. R. Bibl. publ. atque Univ. Pragensis asservantur, I, Prague 1905, 1, 553.

paliter est divisus. In proseguendo etiam patebit divisio specialis. Prima pars huius libri est Osee...

Text. Incipit tractatus et dividitur in v partes. Primo ponuntur divina precepta...

Explicit ... habeant benedictionem per gratiam in presenti et gloriam in futuro.

Ad quam nos perducatur, qui sine fine vivit et regnat etc.

LONDON, Gray's Inn 2, foll. 1<sup>ra</sup>-72<sup>ra</sup>.

This copy has been fully described in *Aristoteles latinus*, since it is bound up with some Latin translations of Aristotle <sup>32</sup>. It is written in a hand of the late 14th cent. by Ra (dulphus?) Wyche, the scribe of MS Gray's Inn 11, (*Speculum religiosorum* and *Stimulus amoris*), and is one of the twelve Gray's Inn manuscripts to come from the Franciscan convent at Chester <sup>33</sup>. There is an English illuminated initial on fol. 1 and a table of contents, foll. 72<sup>ra</sup>-74<sup>vb</sup>, relating the subject matter to the biblical chapters.

OXFORD, Balliol College 26, foll. 1-176<sup>v</sup>.

This is a small compact volume, 11 × 8 in., single columns, in an English hand of the early 15th cent., English illuminated initials on foll. 1, 48<sup>v</sup>, blue and red initials in the text. Table of contents, foll. 178-189<sup>v</sup>, written by the same scribe:

Incipit tabula super postillam Holkote super 12 prophetas, et nota etiam quod ubicumque in margine istius libri occurrit tale signum (a cross with loops at three ends), ibi incipiuntur folia secundum istam tabulam.

Fol. 190 is blank. A set of Augustinian and Pseudo Augustinian treatises are on foll. 191-202<sup>v</sup>, and an extract from Hugh of St Victor's *De laude caritatis* (Pat. lat. 176, 971-6) on foll. 202<sup>v</sup>-204<sup>v</sup>. Another 15th cent. hand has written 'Holcot super xii prophetas' and a third, rather earlier, 'Holcot super xii prophetas, Tabula super eodem, Hugo de sancto Victore, De laude caritatis' on the verso of the flyleaf. The book was given to Balliol by William Gray, bishop of Ely 1454-78, according to an inscription on the flyleaf. Gray (or Grey) was a Balliol man, Chancellor of Oxford 1440/1-42, famous as a book collector, who studied under humanist teachers in Italy while keeping theology as his main interest <sup>34</sup>. The scribe or his exemplar marked the number of the leaf in the margin at the line where an earlier scribe had begun a fresh leaf. This explains the numbering of the table at the end. Some quires have been displaced, but the scribe who put the biblical chapter numbers in the

<sup>32</sup> Ed. G. Lacombe and M. Dulong, I, Rome 1939, 372.

<sup>33</sup> N. R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain*, London 1941, 32, and his card index of MSS from English monastic libraries, kept in the Bodleian (see his *Medieval Libraries*, viii), which gives additional details.

<sup>34</sup> R. Weiss, *Humanism in England during the Fifteenth Century*, Oxford 1941, 86-97.

margin took no account of it; thus he numbers Joel ii, *Canite tuba*, as Os. vii (fol. 31). He goes back to Os. viii, *In gutture*, on fol. 35<sup>v</sup>. Some leaves had been lost before the mediæval foliation was made, between foll. 32-3, so that part of the commentary on Os. vi-vii is missing.

Bodleian Library, Bodl. 722 (2648)<sup>35</sup>, foll. 1-140. English, early fifteenth-century hand. Ascribed to Holcot in a contemporary hand on the flyleaf, fol. 111<sup>v</sup>. It was presented to Bodley by the Dean and Chapter of Exeter Cathedral in 1602 and was at Exeter by 1506<sup>36</sup>.

VALENCIA, Cathedral 191, foll. 125<sup>ra</sup>-169<sup>rb</sup>.

Early fifteenth-century. It follows Holcot's Wisdom commentary, with tables, foll. 1<sup>ra</sup>-124<sup>rb</sup>. The ascription to Holcot is in a later hand on the flyleaf. The incipit and explicit resemble those in the other three MSS<sup>37</sup>.

MSS Bodl. 722 and Balliol 26 derive from the same defective *exemplar*. Both have gaps of several lines at intervals in the text. Both make the same mistakes. Where they differ, sometimes one will be better, sometimes the other. MS Gray's Inn 2 has fewer gaps and the text seems to be less corrupt. I have transcribed mainly from MS Bodl. 722, B, and checked it from MS Gray's Inn 2 for doubtful passages. MS Balliol 26 is difficult to use on account of its displaced quires and its missing leaves. All copies contain the same version. Such differences as they show arise from scribal errors.

This version originated in a lecture course, as appears from its scholastic form and from cross-references, such as 'in prima lectione dixi' and 'in proxima lectione patebunt' (B, foll. 37, 117). It is divided into the chapters of the biblical text. Holcot may have taken each as the subject of a *lectio*. A reading of the commentary suggests that it was copied and circulated from a set of very rough lecture notes. We find references to the actual quires of the master's notebook: 'responsio in alio quaterno', 'responsio ad ista dubia in alio quaterno', 'alia responsio patet in alio quaterno'; an *exemplum* to be told 'patet in alio quaterno' (B, foll. 56, 95, 113<sup>v</sup>, 46). We can see where he wrote 'Nota' with the head of the point he would make: 'Nota quomodo quidam scolaris Oxonie doluit dentes'; the *exemplum* breaks off here (B, fol. 56).

<sup>35</sup> Described in A Summary Catalogue of Western MSS in the Bodleian, II, i, Oxford 1922, 469.

<sup>36</sup> N. R. Ker, *op. cit.*, 46.

<sup>37</sup> E. O. Y. Canalda, *Códices de la Catedral de Valencia*, Madrid 1943, 142-3. Fr. Kaeppli sent me a longer incipit and explicit than are given in the catalogue, so that I could collate them with the English MSS.

He leaves arguments unfinished: 'Relinquo vestro iudicio requirendum', 'Relinquo vobis argui' (B, foll. 16, 94). He refers back to subjects that he has not in fact dealt with and forward to subjects that he in fact omits<sup>38</sup>. Holcot cannot have found time to prepare this work for publication. No wonder that it failed to win the favour in which his more polished products were held. The four surviving copies, three, at least, prettily illuminated, show that even an untidy sheaf of notes found readers.

The Wisdom commentary has allusions to three datable events.

1) In his prologue Holcot says that canon and civil law should follow theology as a maid follows her mistress, not walk beside her. It is dangerous, unsuitable and absurd that lawyers should determine in their legal terms concerning the articles of the faith, the sacraments of the Church, the beatific vision and the gravity of sins. This turns Catholics into schismatics, faithful into heretics, and doctors into flatterers, 'as has happened to you recently and as you have lately seen by experience':

'Et signanter dicitur quod ista famula dominam sequebatur. Nimis enim periculosum est, inconueniens et absurdum quod cum sua domina paraliter procedat, quod ipsa de fidei articulis, de ecclesie sacramentis, de visione beatorum vel pondere peccatorum determinet iuxta verba legum in terrenis negotiis usitata (MS visitata). Hec enim catholicos in schismaticos, fideles in hereticos et doctores in adultores convertit, sicut recenter vobis occurrit et nuper experimento vidistis (MS Balliol 27, fol. 1<sup>vb</sup>)'.

Holcot is referring to the beatific vision controversy started by John XXII in December, 1331, which reached a climax in 1333. His appeal to recent experience may hint at the fate of Thomas Waleys O. P.: Waleys was arrested and imprisoned for heresy because he preached a sermon at Avignon on Jan. 3, 1333, attacking those who supported the pope's opinion on the subject of the beatific vision. John XXII was a lawyer rather than a theologian by training, a point which Holcot's audience would not miss. His opinion caused scandal, if not schism,

<sup>38</sup> On Os. xiv, after quoting from the *De sex alis cherubim* ascribed to Alan of Lisle, he says: 'De sex alis cherubim patebit in pictura postea angelorum in Malachia propheta (B, fol. 36)'. The lectures on Malachias contain no 'picture' of angels, the last two chapters being expounded only very briefly. The prologue to Joel refers back to a comparison between the twelve prophets and the twelve gates of Jerusalem in the opening lecture. It is not there.

and those who opposed him regarded his defenders as 'flatterers'<sup>39</sup>. Holcot would probably give his first lecture at the beginning of an academic year. Hence we may take the autumn of 1333 as a *terminus a quo*; 1332 seems too early for so warm a reference to the dispute.

2) Holcot quotes a saying of Simon Mepham, archbishop of Canterbury:

'Nota dictum Simonis de Mepham, Cantuariensis archiepiscopi. Ista, inquit, valent in urbe, non in orbe, loquens de subtilitatibus questionum (Sap. lect. cxvii, p. 393)'.

Mepham had a reputation for 'sancta simplicitas' which would agree with the 'wisecrack' ascribed to him. He was consecrated archbishop on June 5, 1328, and died on Oct. 12, 1333<sup>40</sup>. Such stories generally circulate after the subject's death. Holcot then would have got to the last third of his lecture course after the autumn of 1333.

3) Holcot refers to an event of 1318 as 'recent':

'Sicut patuit nuper nostris diebus de quodam clerico scriptore necromantico (MS necromantice), cui demon apparens promisit quod foret rex Anglie et quod cum tanta militia duceretur in medio regni Anglie sicut unquam Edwardum, filium Henrici, viderat equitare. Hic tandem in Northamptona tempore parliamenti, comitantibus totius regni proceribus, tractus fuit et suspensus quamdiu ossa ossis adherebant (lect. cxc, MS Balliol 27, fol. 280<sup>v</sup>)'.

A pretender who claimed that he and not King Edward II was the eldest son of Edward I was executed for treason at Northampton on July 20, 1318<sup>41</sup>. An event described as recent must have taken place

<sup>39</sup> Th. Käppeli, *Le Procès contre Thomas Waleys* O. P., Rome 1936, 7-63. Waleys accused the supporters of John XXII's opinion of being weak-kneed and said that the whole Church was scandalised, *ibid.*, 105, 108.

<sup>40</sup> F. M. Powicke, *Handbook of British Chronology*, London 1939, 135; *Dictionary of National Biography* XIII, 260-3. This saying does not appear in the *Speculum Regis Edwardi*, now ascribed to Mepham; see L. E. Boyle, *The Oculus Sacerdotis* of William of Pagula, in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, vol. 5 (1955) 104, 107. Since no other work of a literary kind is ascribed to Mepham, the saying, if genuine, must be a record of his talk.

<sup>41</sup> *Chronica de Melsa* (Rolls Series) II, 335-6; *Vita Edwardi II auctore Malmesberienese*, in *Chronicles of the Reign of Edward I and II* (Rolls Series) II, 234-5; *Annales Paulini*, *ibid.*, I, 282-3. The pretender was an Oxford scrivener, who dabbled in sorcery. Holcot's story tallies with that of the chroniclers, but gives an independent account of the devil's promise. He may have seen the execution at Northampton.

within the last twenty years. Hence we cannot put the Wisdom commentary much after 1333. The academic year 1333/4 seems to be indicated, if the lectures were given at Oxford, immediately afterwards, if Holcot went on to a regency at Cambridge.

The commentary on the Twelve Prophets has references to his commentary on books i and ii of the *Sentences*:

'Hic potest esse dubium utrum penitentia restituat hominem ad pristinam caritatem, et utrum homo resurgat in equali caritate cum illa quam perdidit in peccando. De istis dixi super secundum Sententiarum (B, fol. 94<sup>v</sup>)'.

On the sin of the Jews in hating God:

'De ista materia dixi super primum Sententiarum (B, fol. 115)'.

This would put it after 1332<sup>42</sup>.

Holcot refers to a recent incident in France. A lion will spare the blood royal. Hence when the queen was accused of adultery, the king of France had his eldest son exposed to a lion, which recognised his legitimacy and spared him:

'Dicitur quod leo parcat primogenito filio regis, sicut nuper in Francia est expertum, quando regina fuerat infamata et primogenitus apud regem Francie et alios habebatur suspectus. Positus erat puer in quadam area publica leoni devorandus. Leo autem naturali proprietate puerum legitimum sentiens, ei quasi domino regi reverentiam exhibuit, ludens et saltans cum gaudio coram eo (B, fol. 44)'.

This legend must have been built around the great scandal at the French court of 1314. Three princesses were arrested and accused of adultery. Two had sons, who died in childhood or infancy. Jeanne de Bourgogne was exonerated and her husband, Philip V (1316-22), received her back in spite of the gossip. Her eldest son died on Feb. 18, 1317 within a year of his birth. Blanche de Bourgogne remained in prison, though her husband, Charles IV (1322-8), did not get an annulment until after his accession in 1322. Blanche was 'queen without a crown for three and a half months'. Her son, born in 1313, seems to have died before 1322<sup>43</sup>. Holcot's story probably refers to the rehabilitated Jeanne

<sup>42</sup> In default of a modern edition and index to Holcot's *Sentence* commentary I find it difficult to identify these quotations.

<sup>43</sup> *Receuil des historiens de la France* XXI, 617; XXII, 726; *Continuatio Gerardi de Fracheto, Société de l'histoire de la France* II, 43, 47; P. Lehugeur, *Histoire*

rather than to Blanche. In any case, we can argue again that 'nuper' would indicate an event falling within the last twenty years.

Veiled allusions to current events suggest that Holcot was lecturing not long after the deposition of Edward II in 1327. He tells a story from Henry of Huntingdon, an English chronicler of the early twelfth century, of a certain man of God who foretold that the English would be unexpectedly defeated in punishment for their sins by the French and even by the despised Scots (B, fol. 57)<sup>44</sup>. The Scottish victories over the English under Edward II brought this prophecy into circulation. The Canon of Bridlington tells it *à propos* of the Scottish invasion of 1322<sup>45</sup>. Holcot compares the English to monkeys, owls, asses and peacocks, his reason for bringing in owls being especially piquant:

'... bubonibus propter aliorum contemptum et irreverentiam, quia communiter omnes nationes contempnunt anglicos et derident (B, fol. 94<sup>v</sup>)'.

It would be strange if these words had been written after Edward III's victory over the Scots at Halidon Hill in July, 1333. They could hardly belong to the period after the beginning of the war against France in 1337. In another place he complains of the behaviour of a bishop, who ruined his lord, the king, owing to opportunism or bribery:

'Constat autem quod prelati cupidi faciunt perturbationes in populo et in clero. Homo impavidus expavescit, quando aliquis pomposus, audax et strenuus inter pauperes sibi subiectos debiles et egenos, fugit hostes regni, vel ductus tempore, accipiens pecuniam, perdit dominum suum regem; et hoc facit perturbationem (B, fol. 58)'.

This goes further than the moralist's stock-in-trade under the heading 'prelates'. Holcot may have shared the sympathy of his Order for the deposed Edward II, a good friend to the Dominicans<sup>46</sup>. In any case he would be agreeing with many contemporaries if he blamed the English

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de Philippe le Long, Paris 1897, 16-17; M. Boudet, Thomas de la Marche, *Revue historique* 59 (1895) 58-69. There were many channels by which French gossip could reach England, but we may remember that Edward II's queen, Isabella of France, was staying at the French court in 1314 and is said to have exposed the scandal in the first place.

<sup>44</sup> *Historia Anglorum* (Rolls Series) 173.

<sup>45</sup> *Gesta Edwardi II*, ed W. Stubbs, *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and II* (Rolls Series) II, 80-1.

<sup>46</sup> See D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, Cambridge 1948, 169.

episcopate for the troubles of the reign, more particularly those members of it who went over to Queen Isabella and Mortimer to their own profit<sup>47</sup>. Another passage points to the early years of Edward III. Holcot tells a story from one of his classical sources of an army which suffered defeat because the men, though courageous, had no king for leader. He adds:

‘Benedictus Deus! anglici modo possunt dicere: nunc habemus animum et regem etc. Verumptamen credo quod una de maioribus ignominiiis Anglie est paucitas baronum et comitum sapientum (B, fol. 15v)’.

His complaint at the lack of wise barons and earls may reflect the disturbances of Edward II's reign; his joy that the English now have a king may refer to the fall of Mortimer, October, 1330, and the beginning of Edward III's personal rule. Thus the lectures on the Twelve Prophets seem to belong to the same years as those on Wisdom, that is, soon after 1332. We do not know whether they were given at Oxford or at Cambridge. There are two Oxford *exempla*<sup>48</sup>, but Fr. Forte has shown that these may occur in a Cambridge lecture course just as well<sup>49</sup>.

The Ecclesiasticus commentary has no anecdotes or allusions which might suggest a date. Holcot's use of Nicholas of Lyre leads one to place it after the commentaries on Wisdom and the Twelve Prophets<sup>50</sup>. We have seen that Holcot broke off after chapter vii and that the printed edition ends with a note explaining that he died before finishing. MSS Braunschweig 26 and Royal 3.A.xiv end similarly: ‘Morte preventus nihil aliud de dicto libro exposuit’; ‘Morte preventus residuum non complevit’. If this tradition is true, and it sounds plausible, Holcot would have lectured on Ecclesiasticus at Northampton, since he was living there for the last six years of his life. These lectures are not obviously more elementary than those given in his university courses. They are interesting evidence of the teaching activities in the friary schools of England in the early fourteenth century. We know that

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<sup>47</sup> K. Edwards, The Political Importance of the English Bishops during the Reign of Edward II, in *English Historical Review* 59 (1944) 311-47.

<sup>48</sup> An Oxford scholar has toothache; the story breaks off here (fol. 56). An Oxford master spends all he has on a prostitute, who kills him when he has nothing more (fol. 86).

<sup>49</sup> *Archivum FF. Praed.* 25 (1955) 323.

<sup>50</sup> See below, p. 26.

those of York and Norwich reached a high academic standard<sup>51</sup>. We must probably add Northampton.

Echard ascribes a commentary on St Matthew to Holcot<sup>52</sup>. This seems to be lost, but Fr. Wey has discovered the prologue, concealed under the name *sermo finalis* in the printed edition of Holcot on the *Sentences* and in MSS Oxford, Oriel College 15, fol. 114 and London, British Museum Royal 10. C. vi, fol. 136, following on his *Sentence* commentary. Fr. Wey kindly communicated his discovery to me, but I hope that he will publish his edition soon and that by further study he may be able to date it, as he dated the genuine *sermo finalis*. Meanwhile I shall give a summary based on MS Royal 19. C. vi, foll. 136<sup>rb</sup>-137<sup>ra</sup>. The piece is an inaugural lecture, which serves at the same time as a prologue to a proposed commentary on St Matthew. Holcot addresses his audience as 'socii reverendi, qui in hac universitate lectores Biblie sunt hoc anno'. He says that he ought to have given his inaugural earlier, but has been prevented, 'occupatione temporali distractus et in dispositione corporali confractus'. It is the friars, he remarks, who have to shoulder the main burden of theological studies in the schools today. Most interesting, from the point of view of his exegesis, is his account of his aims and method in the proposed Matthew commentary. He quotes the text: *Dabo vobis triginta sindones et totidem tunicas* (Iudic. xiv, 12). The number 30, he says, corresponds to the 28 chapters of St Matthew plus a prologue and 'today's lecture'. This strongly suggests that he meant to devote one lecture to each chapter. These represent the thirty coats. The thirty shirts signify the literal sense of the Gospel, which in Holcot's exegesis will be of thinner stuff than the coats; that is to say that the lectures will be concerned mainly with moralisation:

'Ecce 30 tunice. Sed 30 sindones, qui sunt panni tenues, signant litterales expositiones, que per me super illas tunicas valde tenuiter apponuntur'.

He means, in fact, to concentrate on moralities here as in his other biblical commentaries.

The inaugural was probably given at Oxford. Holcot refers to poor health and much business, echoing the complaints in his *sermo finalis*. We know from the latter that he lectured on the *Sentences* at Oxford

<sup>51</sup> See the suggestive remarks of W. A. Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century*, Cambridge 1955, 119.

<sup>52</sup> Op. cit., 631-2.

and the manuscript tradition attaches the inaugural to his *Sentence* commentary. The non-survival of his proposed Matthew commentary makes one doubt whether it ever materialised. If Holcot was so busy and unwell he may not have given the course or at least not have given it in a form fit for publication.

#### b) MORALITATES AND CONVERTIMINI

The *Moralitates*, a series of moralised *exempla* for the use of preachers, are printed at the end of the Bâle edition of the Wisdom commentary (pp. 709-48). J. Th. Welter has published a list of manuscripts and has compared the manuscript traditions. He found that the edition put the items in a more logical order than that of the earlier manuscripts and that the number of items varies slightly<sup>53</sup>. J. A. Herbert lists and summarises the *exempla* in the British Museum manuscripts of the *Moralitates*, giving sources and analogues where possible<sup>54</sup>.

The date depends on the relationship between the *Moralitates* and the *Gesta Romanorum*, a compilation which seems to have originated in a Franciscan *milieu* in England. The earliest manuscript of the *Gesta Romanorum*, now at Innsbruck, is dated 1342; it represents a version which was later altered and expanded<sup>55</sup>. Welter argued that the compiler borrowed from Holcot and not *vice versa*. A comparison of the *Gesta Romanorum* with Holcot's biblical commentaries bears out his argument. Only a few of Holcot's *exempla* are common to his *Moralitates* and his commentaries. The *Gesta Romanorum* contains many *exempla* from the *Moralitates*, but none, as far as I can see, from the commentaries. This suggests very strongly that the compiler of *Gesta Romanorum* borrowed from the *Moralitates*, where he had all the *exempla* collected together. Had Holcot borrowed from *Gesta Romanorum* he could have used it for his commentaries as well as for his *Moralitates*. This would give a *terminus ad quem* for the *Moralitates* of a few years before 1342, to allow time for the compilation of *Gesta Romanorum* before the writing of the first copy known to us. I think that the *Moralitates* came after the commentary on the Twelve Prophets. Here Holcot

<sup>53</sup> Op. cit., p. 360, n. 63.

<sup>54</sup> A Catalogue of Romances in the British Museum, III, London 1910, 106-16.

<sup>55</sup> Ed. W. Dick, Erlangen-Leipzig 1890. The later version was edited by H. Oesterley, Berlin 1872. He gives the parallels with the *Moralitates*. On the date and origin of *Gesta Romanorum* see Welter, 367-75.

uses the 'picture' technique which characterises many items of the *Moralitates*, but it strikes me as much less effective and developed<sup>56</sup>. Hence the *Moralitates* would come after c. 1334, the date of the commentary on the Twelve Prophets, and before 1342, by which time the compiler of *Gesta Romanorum* had used them.

The success of the *Moralitates* is proved by the large number of manuscripts, widely scattered, and by many quotations. Some of the items appear in the *exempla* collection found in a British Museum MS, Harl. 7322, in a hand of the later fourteenth century<sup>57</sup>. A continental collection borrows with acknowledgment. This is a set of 'pictures' of virtues, vices and concepts, such as *Natura humana*, *Sapientia*, *Amor fatuus*, *Amor verus*, *Adulatio*, *Mundana deceptio*, *Oratio*. Liebeschütz gives a list of manuscripts and analyses the contents from MS Vat. Palat. lat. 1066, foll. 231<sup>v</sup>-243<sup>v</sup><sup>58</sup>. The incipit is: 'Prudentia depingebatur' or 'Prudentia secundum aliquos depingitur'. I have seen the copy in MS Paris, Bibl. nat. lat. 590, foll. 177-9, which also has a copy of the *Moralitates*, foll. 73-99<sup>v</sup>. The rubrics at the beginning and end describe it as: 'Tractatus de vitiis et virtutibus datus per reverendum magistrum nostrum cancellarium parisiensem, sacre pagine professorem'. Jean Gerson has been suggested as author, but the treatise does not appear in the most recent study of his works<sup>59</sup>. It would be difficult to decide between the eight chancellors of Paris university who held office 1336-95<sup>60</sup>. As some manuscripts are late fourteenth-century, we cannot include any chancellors after that date, the year of Gerson's appointment.

<sup>56</sup> See below, p. 79. Welter thought that the *Moralitates* came after the Wisdom commentary, because the latter does not use the 'picture' technique at all: but neither does the Ecclesiasticus commentary, which probably belongs to the end of Holcot's life. He may have regarded it as more suitable to the exposition of the Prophets than to that of wisdom literature.

<sup>57</sup> Herbert, *op. cit.* III, 166-79.

<sup>58</sup> *Op. cit.*, 49-53, 115.

<sup>59</sup> P. Glorieux, *La vie et les œuvres de Gerson*, in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age* 18 (1951) 149-92.

<sup>60</sup> Denifle-Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, II, Paris 1891, *Introductio*, cap. iii. It is not even certain that the whole treatise was compiled by a Paris chancellor. There are two 'pictures' of 'Pietas'. The second derives from Holcot, the first begins: 'Pietas secundum cancellarium Parisiensem depingitur sic... (fol. 185)'. This may have led to the ascription of the whole to a Paris chancellor, when really he contributed only one 'picture'. If so, we have no clue to the compiler's identity at all.

The writer quotes a saying on *Temperantia*, 'sicut optime declaratur in moralitatibus Holcoth, moralitate 4<sup>a</sup> (fol. 180<sup>v</sup>)'. This is a reference to n. 4 in the early manuscript version of the *Moralitates* (ibid., fol. 73<sup>v</sup>), no. XXXVIII of the Bâle edition. After describing *Oratio* he says: 'Require de ista materia in moralitatibus Holcoth, moralitate 2<sup>a</sup> (fol. 187)'. The whole description comes from Holcot on 'Oratio' (no. 2, ibid., fol. 73, no. XIX of the Bâle edition). The 'pictures' of *Adulatio*, *Misericordia* and *Pietas* (foll. 183, 186, 187) are borrowed without acknowledgment (no. 39, 15, 8 of the MS, LXIII, X, III of the edition).

Later still, some 'pictures' from the *Moralitates* were illuminated in two independent compilations containing virtues and vices and other religious and didactic material, lavishly illustrated, MSS Rome, Casanatensis and London, Wellcome Museum; both picture books come from Germany and were made in the early fifteenth century<sup>61</sup>. Other quotations and illuminations perhaps remain to be discovered.

The *Convertimini*, an aid to preaching which includes many *exempla*, has been described by Welter<sup>62</sup> and analysed by Herbert<sup>63</sup>. It needs only a brief mention here, since it contains one 'picture' of Justice, of the same type as those found in the *Moralitates*<sup>64</sup>. The *Convertimini* has not been printed.

A *Tractatus de septem vitiis* is ascribed to Holcot in MS London British Museum Add. 21,429, foll. 244-266<sup>v</sup>:

Incipit: 'Hec est via, ambulate in ea... Ysa. 30. Magnam facit misericordiam ac humilitatem, qui vagabundum dirigit errantique viam veritatis, quo tendere debet, ostendit...

Explicit: '... ad fontem pietatis, in psalmo: Sicut cervus desiderat ad fontes aquarum etc. Explicit quidam tractatus de septem vitiis, peccatis mortalibus, editus a fratre Roberto Olchot de provincia Anglie, O. P.'.

An anonymous copy of Holcot's *Moralitates* follows immediately afterwards, foll. 266<sup>v</sup>-289<sup>v</sup><sup>65</sup>. The treatise, as Mr M. W. Bloomfield has

<sup>61</sup> Saxl, op. cit.

<sup>62</sup> Op. cit., p. 366, n. 63.

<sup>63</sup> Op. cit., III, 116-55.

<sup>64</sup> Herbert found this item also in a Munich Manuscript of the *Moralitates*, III, 119, no. 7; but it is probably a later addition to them; it is not in the Bâle edition or early manuscripts. It may have been added from the *Convertimini*.

<sup>65</sup> The catalogue gives a full description, Catalogue of Additions to the MSS in the British Museum, London 1875, 381.

pointed out, has an incipit very similar to that of the *Dieta salutis* of William Lavicea O. F. M.<sup>66</sup> A comparison of them shows that the *Tractatus* follows the *Dieta* in its arrangement of the sins, as well as copying the incipit. Both begin with Superbia and end with Luxuria. This makes it unlikely that Holcot was the author. He would probably have modelled himself on the *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus* of Peraldus (Guillaume Peyraut O. P.), a classic in the Dominican Order. Holcot quotes Peraldus in his commentaries as 'Magister' and 'Auctor'<sup>67</sup>. The Dominican writer puts the sins in another order; he begins with Ira and ends with Gula. The *Tractatus* seems to have made no use of Peraldus at all. Its *exempla* seem to be derivative and it has no traits which remind one of Holcot. In any case, it has no 'pictures' and so may be left out of account here.

#### IV - METHOD AND SOURCES

Holcot's method is roughly the same in each *lectio* of these three commentaries. He divides his text, gives a brief note on the literal sense, and then moralises, drawing out the moral content of the 'letter', where the text lends itself to such a procedure, or by the traditional method of moralisation. Sometimes as a supplement or alternative to moralising he gives a number of *quaestiones* concerning theology or casuistry. The *quaestiones* treat the same subjects as were discussed in Sentence commentaries or disputations, but are shorter and less elaborate. The preface to the table of contents in MS Laud. misc. 562 calls them 'curiose questiones, non tamen disputabiles' (fol. 189<sup>ra</sup>), but this probably refers to the form rather than to the content. They have little bearing on the literal sense of the text. Either Holcot was reverting to a much earlier period in the history of medieval exegesis, when *quaestiones* were attached to the scriptural text, or we must suppose that the custom had never been dropped at Oxford, 'the home of lost causes'<sup>1</sup>. It seems superfluous, at first sight, to cumber one's lectures on Scripture with theological discussions when students could learn

<sup>66</sup> The Seven Deadly Sins, Michigan 1952, 253. He gives a list of other manuscripts probably containing the same *Tractatus*. The *Dieta salutis* has been printed in the Opera of St Bonaventure VI, Rome 1596, 285-38. On William of Lavicea see Histoire litt. de la France XXVI, 1873, 552-5; he may have died in 1310.

<sup>67</sup> See below, p. 60.

<sup>1</sup> B. Smalley, The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages, 2nd ed., Oxford 1952, 275-80.

their doctrine and speculate on doctrinal matters in a far more comprehensive and basic fashion in lectures on the *Sentences* and in disputations. We must remember, however, that Holcot was training specialists to be general educators. His pupils would have to preach, and for this they would need the moral exposition as guidance; they might also teach theology in priory schools or in bishop's schools for clergy who did not get as far as the university. Perhaps his *quaestiones* were meant to help his pupils to give simple instruction within the framework of sermons or lectures to students of theology at a more elementary level. Holcot himself may have given this type of teaching at Northampton, if his Ecclesiasticus commentary belongs there.

The exegetical sources are soon listed. Apart from the *Gloss*, the *Historia scholastica* and the standard patristic or early medieval commentaries, used occasionally throughout, he had an 'expositor' on the Twelve Prophets, Simon of Hinton O. P. He refers to Simon anonymously as 'expositor' in six passages, all of which correspond verbally to Simon's commentary as contained in MS Oxford, New College 45<sup>2</sup>. Two examples will illustrate his manner of reference<sup>3</sup>:

On Os. xii, 6: *misericordiam et iudicium custodi*:

'dicit expositor (quod) fuit simul consolans misericordia et semens<sup>4</sup> disciplina (B, fol. 35<sup>v</sup>).' MS New College, fol. 18<sup>ra</sup>.

On Malach. ii, 13: *operiebatis lacrymis altare Domini...*:

'Hic movet expositor dubium, quomodo ante altare, cum non licet mulieribus neque viris atrium introire, ubi altare fuit holocaustorum, nisi in paucis casibus, sicut dicit magister in historiis (fol. 136)'. The question and answer are in MS New College 45, fol. 223<sup>vb</sup>.

There is a general reference to Simon's views on the prayer of Jonas in the fish's belly as 'dicunt doctores' (fol. 65<sup>v</sup>)<sup>5</sup>. Holcot used Simon for the literal exposition. He does not take his *quaestiones* from Simon, although he had many to choose from, and his only borrowings from Simon's *moralitates* concern the comparison between the Twelve Pro-

<sup>2</sup> On Simon's commentaries see B. Smalley, Two Biblical Commentaries of Simon of Hinton, in *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 13 (1946) 57-85, and: Some more Exegetical Works of Simon of Hinton, *ibid.* 15 (1948) 97-108.

<sup>3</sup> The other references are in B, foll. 108<sup>v</sup>, 129, 138, 138<sup>v</sup>, and see *Archivum FF. Praed.* 24 (1954) 79.

<sup>4</sup> If 'semens' is a corruption, Holcot found it in his text of Simon.

<sup>5</sup> See B. Smalley, Two Biblical Commentaries, *op. cit.*, 78-9.

phets and the twelve precious stones in the wall of the New Jerusalem. Simon was teaching at Oxford about 1250. It is interesting that Holcot thought him sufficiently up-to-date to use as his 'expositor'. I have not found any equivalent in the Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus commentaries. Perhaps he had some basic source for each, which he does not quote by name, in some lost or unknown Oxford lecture courses; or perhaps the Oxford doctors had been too much taken up with theological problems, especially those arising from the reception of Thomism, to pay great attention to exegesis in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

The very popular *Compendium litteralis sensus totius Bibliae* of Peter Aurioli O. F. M., published in 1319<sup>6</sup>, is quoted four times on the division of the text of the Twelve Prophets<sup>7</sup>, but not elsewhere, as far as I can see. Holcot was treating his text more fully in the Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus commentaries, so that Aurioli's division of these books may have been too summary to help him. There is one quotation from Nicholas of Lyre O. F. M. in the commentary on the Twelve Prophets, which I have not been able to trace. Holcot says on the text Zach. xiii, 1, *in die illa erit fons patiens*, describing the Passion of Christ and referring to the servant Malchus, whose ear was cut off by St Peter (Ioan. xviii, 10):

'Minister vero vocabatur Malcus, sed, ut dicit magister Nicolaus de Lira<sup>8</sup>, fuit mancus et erat ex illis qui Christum ad columpnam flagellaverunt (B, fol. 125)'.

This does not occur in the printed edition of Lyre's Gospel commentaries. The other quotations from Lyre, three in number, come from his postill on the fourth book of Kings and are all in Holcot's Ecclesiasticus commentary. They are from the *Postilla litteralis*<sup>9</sup>. Lyre began

<sup>6</sup> Stegmüller, no. 6422.

<sup>7</sup> On Joel ii, Amos v, Zach xi and xiv (B. foll. 43<sup>v</sup>, 59, 119, 127). Holcot says: 'Petrus Aurioli dicit' or 'secundum Petrum Aurioli'. His quotations can be found verbally *ad loc.* in the *Compendium*. I used the Strassburg 1475 edition, unfoliated.

<sup>8</sup> MS Gray's Inn 2, fol. 65<sup>v</sup><sup>b</sup>, has 'doctor de Lira'.

<sup>9</sup> 'Unde magister Nicolaus super 4 Reg. 22, ut non videant oculi tui omnia mala, (dicit) quod sapientes solebant reputare malum maius videre destructionem sue regionis et populi quam perire (lect. xi, fol. 10<sup>rb</sup>)'.

'Exemplum 4 Reg. 11, ubi dicit magister Nicolaus de Lira quod mortuo Ioadā, qui secundum Comestorem vixit 30 annis, principes volentes regi Ioadā adulari exhibuerunt sibi divinos honores, ut dicit Rabi Salomon (lect. lxvi, fol. 51<sup>ra</sup>)'.

his literal exposition of the Old Testament at Genesis between 1322 and 1323 and had reached the Psalms by 1326; he revised his earlier commentary on Daniel in 1328. He commented on the Apocalypse in 1329. His Gospel commentaries in the *Postilla litteralis* represent a revision of earlier work. He divided his *Postilla litteralis* into two sections, the first comprising the canonical, the second the extracanonical books. He was commenting on Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus between 1330 and 1331<sup>10</sup>. These dates may help us to understand Holcot's seemingly erratic use of Lyre. He probably did not get access to Lyre's *Postilla litteralis* on the Twelve Prophets, Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus in time to quote it in his lectures on these books. His elusive quotation from Lyre on St John (?) may perhaps derive from an early version, different from the later revision. By the time he was lecturing on Ecclesiasticus, Lyre's *Postilla litteralis* on the canonical books of the Old Testament must have been available and he was perhaps reading Lyre on IV Kings while preparing his lectures. Holcot's contemporary, John Baconthorpe O. Carm., lecturing on St Matthew at Oxford or Cambridge 1336-c.1340, quotes Lyre on St Matthew and Isaias<sup>11</sup>. He and Holcot both witness to the eager reception of Lyre's *Postilla litteralis* by English friars.

Another Gospel commentary quoted is St Albert on Luke. Holcot is discussing the question of the appearance of Moses and Elias at the Transfiguration (Lc. ix, 30) in a *quaestio*, 'an Spiritus sanctus detestetur et fugiat omnem fictionem', raised by the text Sap. i, 5, *Spiritus enim sanctus disciplinae effugiet fictum* (Sap. lect. vi, p. 24-5). He quotes

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'Et sicut dicitur 4 Reg. 19, numerus percussorum fuit 185,000. Sed quomodo percussi fuerunt docet Rabi Salomon, ut recitat magister Nicolaus de Lira, quod omnes hebrei in hoc conveniunt quod omnia corpora interfectorum fuerunt igne cremata (lect. lxxviii, fol. 52<sup>ra</sup>)'.

All three quotations can be found in the edition of Lyons, 1588-90, where the *Postilla litteralis* and *moralis* is printed with the *Glossa ordinaria* and the *Additiones* of Paul of Burgos, vol. II, col. 984, 921, 961. In the second, Holcot has added the reference to the *Historia scholastica* of Peter Comestor; in the third he gives the sense and not the exact words. The editors claim to have used an autograph from Verneuil, where Lyre made his profession, for the *Postilla litteralis*. I have generally found that quotations in later writers can be found in this edition.

<sup>10</sup> Histoire littéraire de la France XXXVI, 1927, 373-5.

<sup>11</sup> See my forthcoming paper, John Baconthorpe's Postill on St Matthew, in Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies. Baconthorpe also uses the *Compendium* of Peter Aurioli.

two passages almost verbally from 'Albertus super Lucam, cap. 9'<sup>12</sup>. This would be interesting, seeing that St Albert's biblical commentaries were less popular than his philosophical works<sup>13</sup>, if one did not suspect that this particular extract was commonly quoted in discussions of Holcot's question. The quotation need not have come from the original.

Holcot will occasionally compare his text with 'libri correcti et expositores' (Ecclus. lect. xvi, fol. 14<sup>ra</sup>) or 'alia littera' (Ecclus. lect. lxiii, fol. 50<sup>rb</sup>) and discuss the difference between ancient and modern spelling of a biblical word (Sap. lect. clix, p. 527, MS Balliol College 27, foll. 235<sup>vb</sup>-236<sup>ra</sup>). He must have had a *correctorium* to hand. He also contrasts the chapter division of Wisdom, according to 'nonnulli antiqui', which he was following in his first lecture, when dividing his text, with the commonly received reckoning. We know that the modern chapter division of the Vulgate was only arrived at by a long process of adjustment<sup>14</sup>. Holcot probably had a Bible with one of the earlier divisions by him when he started his lectures and later noticed the discrepancy. Realising, no doubt, that the chapter division was arbitrarily imposed anyway, he says that it makes little or no difference. He has reached x, 1; henceforward he prefers to use the new division:

'Hic designatur decimum capitulum, et est secunda pars huius libri, quamvis nonnulli antiqui signaverunt capitulum parum ante, ibi: *Nam per sapientiam sanati*<sup>15</sup>, quos in principio libri dividendo sequebar, sed quia hoc modicum refert vel nichil, ad libri processum modo tamen sequi malo capitula communiter computata (Sap. lect. cxxv, p. 420)'.

There is something engaging about Holcot's cheerful informality.

In fairness to him one should notice his appreciation of the special character of biblical wisdom literature. He enters with gusto into the praises of wisdom and of moral conduct. His prologues to Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus bespeak an emotional pleasure, rare in this strictly academic *genre*. But here his interest in the literal exposition seems to

<sup>12</sup> Com. in Luc. in Opera omnia, ed. Borgnet, XXII, Paris 1894, 660: 'Moyses apparuit... visionem peragendam'; 'Anima tamen sua de limbo venit... habes potestatem'. Holcot reverses the order of the passages.

<sup>13</sup> B. Geyer, Die handschriftliche Verbreitung der Werke Alberts des Grossen als Masstab seines Einflusses, in Studia Mediaevalia in hon. R. J. Martin, Bruges s. a, 221-5.

<sup>14</sup> Bibliography in B. Smalley, The Study of the Bible, ed. cit., 221-4, 333.

<sup>15</sup> Sap. ix. 19.

end. He explained the general trend of his authors; the details of the literal exposition were a mere preliminary to the moral. Holcot held, as against St Jerome, that Solomon was the author of Wisdom. The question of authorship can hardly have mattered to him, since he speaks of the doctrine as proceeding from 'Solomon' and 'the Holy Spirit' interchangeably. The prophecy in Sap. ii, 10-25 is interpreted as referring to Christ in its primary sense without any discussion. Holcot, in fact, concerned himself little with the relationship between the author's primary meaning and the spiritual senses to be based on it, although the need to do so had emerged clearly from St Thomas's teaching on the senses of Scripture. 'Per me litterales sensus valde tenuiter apponuntur' was Holcot's own admission. It is significant of his approach that he thought of the literal sense as something 'put on' to the moralisation. This lack of interest in the literal sense explains why his exegetical sources form so small a proportion to the others.

A rapid glance at his patristic sources, apart from commentaries, suggests that they are varied but unremarkable. St Augustine, 'flos et decus doctorum' (Ecclus. lect. i, fol. 2<sup>ra</sup>), predominates. A reference to *De Trinitate* has some interest; Holcot quotes various chapter divisions 'secundum diversos libros' (B, fol. 72). Medieval scholars were attempting to standardise the chapter divisions of patristic texts just as they standardised the chapters of the Bible<sup>16</sup>.

Holcot follows the custom of contemporary exegetes in citing medieval theologians only up to the last generation, St Thomas, Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus; Duns is the last to be quoted by name<sup>17</sup>. This restraint contrasts with the number of contemporaries or near contemporaries quoted in his theological works<sup>18</sup>. It reflects the cautious and elementary character of the theological teaching given in biblical commentaries as distinct from that found in *Sentence* commentaries, *Quaestiones* or *Quodlibeta*<sup>19</sup>. Holcot even quotes the *Elucidarium* of Honorius Augustodunensis for a saying on hell-fire. This early

<sup>16</sup> R. W. Hunt, Chapter Headings of Augustine *De Trinitate* ascribed to Adam Marsh, in Bodleian Library Record 5 (1954) 63-8.

<sup>17</sup> B, fol. 117.

<sup>18</sup> J. Wey, op. cit., 219.

<sup>19</sup> Thus Henry of Ghent in his commentary on the Hexaemeron quotes Simon of Tournai, William of Auxerre, Philip the Chancellor and no later theologian; B. Smalley, A commentary on the Hexaemeron by Henry of Ghent, in *Rech. Théol. anc. méd.* 20 (1953) 86-99. John Baconthorpe, working about 1340, quotes no theologian later than Duns Scot; see my forthcoming paper, above, n. 11.

twelfth-century manual, as recent research has shown<sup>20</sup>, was little used by scholastic theologians, as being too imprecise and elementary, while retaining its function in popular instruction. Lectures on Scripture made a bridge between the two duties of university masters of theology; they had to provide doctrine for the learned and training in preaching, and did not disdain elementary aids.

To turn the pages of the Wisdom commentary in the Bâle edition, where the verse is printed as verse, is to see it in its true light. It is a vast *florilegium* of poetry and prose drawn up for the use of preachers. The other two commentaries would show the same character, if we could read them in modern form. I must leave the verse for another occasion and consider only the prose, picking out those sources which appear to be unusual or interesting. J. Th. Welter has listed the sources of medieval *exempla* from the twelfth century onwards and the sources of Holcot's *exempla* in the Wisdom commentary<sup>21</sup>. A comparison of the two lists will show them to be almost coextensive; Holcot used the bulk of sources available in his day. As Welter shrewdly observed, he resembled his contemporaries in knowing his authors largely at second-hand. It would be a long task, however, to discover exactly what intermediaries he used. The *Speculum* of Vincent of Beauvais seldom left his side; he quotes it constantly with and without acknowledgment. He found sayings of Alexander and Plato 'in libro quodam qui intitulatur De dictis philosophorum et sapientum, cap. De dictis Alexandri, ... et cap. De dictis Platonis (Sap. lect. lix, 209)'. This is the *Liber philosophorum moralium antiquorum*, a very popular translation from the Arabic<sup>22</sup>. His *Liber de vitis philosophorum* has defeated me:

'In cuius signum antiqui philosophi philosophiam vocaverunt matrem suam, sicut Plato et Demosthenes dixisse leguntur in libro de vitis philosophorum. Unde isti duas matres se fabulantur<sup>23</sup> habere, videlicet

<sup>20</sup> Y. Lefèvre, *L'Elucidarium et les Lucidaires*, Paris 1954. Holcot says: 'In Lucidario dicitur quod sicut ignis verus et materialis se habet ad ignem pictum... (B, fol. 41)'. It is not quite exact as a quotation. Honorius contrasts material fire with painted fire to show the difference between material fire and hell-fire; III, 14, ed. Y. Lefèvre, op. cit., 447. Holcot does so to show the difference between the fires of Purgatory and Hell. Lefèvre has illustrated the large number of additions and corrections to the *Elucidarium* in the MSS.

<sup>21</sup> Op. cit., 95-101, 360-1.

<sup>22</sup> Ed. E. Franceschini, *Atti del R. Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti* 91 (1931/2) 530, 480.

<sup>23</sup> MS Balliol 27, fol. 143<sup>vb</sup>: 'fatebantur'.

naturam et philosophiam, de quibus matribus (ista) fuit eorum sententia: Natura nos genuit mortales et rudes, sed philosophia nos genuit divinis virtutibus informatos (Sap. lect. xcvi, p. 322)'.<sup>24</sup>

I cannot find this quotation in the *Liber philosophorum*, in John of Wales' *Communiloquium* or in Walter Burley's *De vitis et moribus philosophorum*. Generally Holcot tells his stories of the philosophers without giving a source and it would be difficult to pin them down to any one compilation.

It is natural to compare him with Thomas Waleys O. P., a contemporary and fellow Oxonian. They shared an admiration for ancient men of letters and a taste for book-hunting. Holcot must have endeared himself to his patron, Richard de Bury, by his discovery of some rare letters of Seneca<sup>24</sup>. Waleys, however, had the advantage of contact with scholars in Northern Italy and Avignon and of a more studious temperament. Hence the two men differ in their approach to the classics. Waleys developed an interest in ancient history and antiquities for themselves. Holcot valued them more for their moral content. He wanted to show that good pagans without the aid of revelation could put Christians to shame. Some preachers, he says, keep the sword of reproof in its sheath; others speak out boldly, teaching how to eschew vice and sin and to keep to God's paths, 'exemplo quorundam satirorum, sicut fuit Flaccus, Persius et Iuvenalis (Ecclus. lect. lii, fol. 43<sup>ra</sup>). On the text Ecclus. iv, 34, *Noli citatus esse in lingua tua*, he cites examples of pagans who would not speak evil, and wishes that Christians and religious would exercise the same self control (ibid., lect. lv, fol. 44<sup>vb</sup>). If the pagans were punished for neglecting to consult their false gods in time of crisis, how much more should we Christians have recourse to the true God in all our business, if we want to obtain what we seek (ibid., lect. xlix, fol. 39<sup>vb</sup>)<sup>25</sup>?

Whereas Waleys seldom makes a mistake, Holcot can be wildly wrong in his references. He mentions Sallust's book on Catiline and claims to quote from it:

'Contra varia vitia Catiline fecit Sallustius, magnus rhetor, unum librum, quem Catilinarium appellavit, ubi de eo sic dicit':

<sup>24</sup> Archivum FF. Praed. 14 (1954) 97.

<sup>25</sup> Holcot has just told the story of the defeat of Marcus Crassus after neglecting divine warnings, from Valerius Maximus, *Factorum et dictorum memorabilium libri novem*, I, vi, 11.

Three quotations follow, all ascribed to Sallust, 'secundo subiungit Sallustius... Ideo tertio subdit Sallustius de moribus Catiline' (Ecclus. lect. xv, fol. 13<sup>vb</sup>). All come from Cicero's *Pro M. Caelio*, 14. Holcot may have taken them from Vincent of Beauvais, though Vincent ascribes them correctly to Cicero<sup>26</sup>. Worse, he cites Livy as an authority for the history of the Roman Empire! He tells two stories of the Emperor Nero: that he never wore the same garment twice, from the *Policraticus*<sup>27</sup>, and that he fished with golden nets, from the *Historiae adversus paganos*<sup>28</sup>. If Holcot had looked carefully at the *Speculum historiale*, he would have found both stories ascribed to Suetonius, the original source<sup>29</sup>. But he throws in Livy instead:

'Item de Nerone dicitur in Policratico, lib. 6, cap. 14, quod nullam vestem bis induebatur, ut in aliquo pre ceteris singulari gloria preluceret, et piscebatur retibus aureis, secundum Orosium de Ormesta mundi et Titum Livium (B, fol. 20)'.

His ignorance of the scope of *Ab Urbe condita* is the more surprising in that he twice refers to Livy as his source for the story of Coriolanus, though probably he found it in some compilation (B, foll. 91, 123)<sup>30</sup>. We remember that Waleys read Livy in the original and that he gloried in knowing the fourth decade.

Holcot liked his ancient history mixed with medieval symbolism, legend and romance. He tells a fantastic tale about the promulgation of imperial laws. When the Roman emperor promulgated a law relating to the whole empire, he had a vein opened and let his blood fall to the ground to symbolise that those who disobeyed it were touching his very blood and deserved to be put to death. The most startling point about this rigmarole is that Holcot fathers it on Livy:

'Refert Titus Livius in libro suo de Urbis origine quod consuetudo apud romanos imperatores fuit quod quando imperator aliquam legem condere volebat, et erat sue intentionis quod solum in speciali loco servari deberet, illam publicari mandabat per nuntium, cui legi non tenebantur nisi illius loci specialis homines, in quo fuerat publicata. Sed quando sue intentionis erat quod per totum imperium servaretur, illam legem ore

<sup>26</sup> Spec. hist. VI, 31, ed. Venice 1591, fol. 63<sup>ra</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> Ed. Webb, Oxford 1929, II, 40.

<sup>28</sup> VII, 5; C. S. E. L. V, 453.

<sup>29</sup> IX, 7; ed. cit. fol. 109<sup>ra</sup>; see Suetonius, De vita Caesarum, VI, 30.

<sup>30</sup> *Ab Urbe condita* II, 40. Holcot could have found the story in Valerius Maximus, op. cit. V, iv. 1; but Valerius does not cite Livy here.

proprio publicabat, et de suo palatio ad palatium publicum et commune accedebat, et ultra hec venam propriam sinebat aperiri, et sanguinem in terram effundi, ut ex hoc bene intelligeretur quod sicut ipse erat persona communis, qui proprio ore hanc publicabat, sic sue intentionis erat totum imperium ad illam obligare, et quicumque legem predictam violaret, sicut in testimonium observationis sanguinem effuderat, sic ille legem frangens eius sanguinem tangebatur, et ideo sine intermissione pena mortis puniretur (Ecclus, lect. lxii, fol. 48<sup>vb</sup>)'.

We shall reach even higher flights of fancy when we discuss Holcot's 'pictures' of virtues, vices and affections, such as 'dilectio Dei' and 'amicitia', in their pseudo-antique settings. He and others of his day were simply adding another layer to the medieval accretions to classical sources. The gods and goddesses, who fascinated Holcot, came to him with their accumulated meanings and attributes<sup>31</sup>. Almost every classical text that he read had its medieval commentary. It would take too long to identify them all. Remigius on the *Nuptiae* of Martianus Capella was a favourite<sup>32</sup>.

His 'Commentator' on Boethius' *De consolazione philosophiae* turned out to be an older contemporary and *confrère*, Nicholas Trevet O. P. This need not surprise us; Trevet's commentary (written before 1307) on a beloved medieval text came after a long pause, during which no *apparatus* to it had appeared, and was widely welcomed<sup>33</sup>. Holcot appreciated his painstaking filling in of the classical allusions. He quotes almost the whole of Trevet's long account of the labours of Hercules on *De consolazione philosophiae* lib. iv, metr. 7, ending:

'Omnia facta illa Herculis supradicta ponit Boetius, lib. 4 De consolatione, et exponit commentator, sicut dixi (B, fol. 133<sup>v</sup>)'<sup>34</sup>.

Shorter quotations are on lib. ii, pros. 2: 'Vide commentatorem, 2 De consolatione, ubi narrat quod Cresus, confidens in divitiis ... (B, fol. 2<sup>v</sup>)'<sup>35</sup> and on lib. ii, pros. 1 where he copies out 'the Commentator's' explanation of the wheel of fortune and the verses added to the expla-

<sup>31</sup> J. Seznec, *The Survival of the Ancient Gods*, revised by the author and translated from the French by B. Sessions, New York 1953.

<sup>32</sup> See below, p. 72.

<sup>33</sup> P. Courcelle, *Étude critique sur les commentaires de la Consolation de Boèce*, *Archives d'hist. doct. et litt. du moyen âge* 14 (1939) 97-100.

<sup>34</sup> MS Oxford, Bodl. Auct. F. 6. 4 (2150), English, 14th cent., fol. 236<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 111.

nation (B, fol. 90)<sup>36</sup>. His last quotation is impossible to trace, since he leaves a gap for the *locus* of *De consolatione* (B, fol. 138); all three MSS of Holcot on the Twelve Prophets have a gap here. There may have been good reason for it. Holcot claims to be giving 'the Commentator's' moralisation of a knight's armour, which would be odd in such a context. He may have forgotten where he really found it<sup>37</sup>.

He also quotes another early fourteenth-century commentator on Boethius, William of Aragon, calling him 'Guilelmus Medicus':

'Hec est descriptio philosophie secundum Boetium. Athenienses vero preter istum modum philosophiam tripliciter descripserunt, aliqui sicut dominam delicatam iacentem, aliqui sicut imperatricem stantem, aliqui (sicut) reginam in cathedra sedentem... Llecticam autem philosophie quatuor persone portabant, due in specie iuvenum, scilicet philos et chopos, id est amor et labor, due in specie puellarum, id est philomena et agrimena, id est cura et vigilia, secundum Hugonem in Didascalicon<sup>38</sup>, licet expositor Boetii, Gulielmus medicus, dicat quod omnes quatuor habuerunt species puellarum (Sap. lect. xcv, p. 322)'.

A parallel passage, beginning 'Athenienses vero tripliciter descripserunt eam preter hunc modum...', and containing the words 'depingebantur quatuor domicelle lectum portantes', occurs in William of Aragon's commentary on *De consolatione Philosophiae* I, pros.i. I used the copy in MS Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College 309, foll. 89-170<sup>v</sup><sup>38a</sup>. This manuscript consists of two volumes bound together. The first has a gloss on the *De consolatione* in a twelfth-century hand, the second William of Aragon's commentary in a 'rough' fourteenth-century English hand, followed by three prolo-

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., fol. 109.

<sup>37</sup> Another untraceable quotation is on Eccles., lect. XXX, fol. 24<sup>va</sup>. After quoting lib. III, pros. 6, 'Nobilitas est quaedam de meritis veniens laus parentum', Holcot says: 'Unde allegat commentator Virgilium: Sola nobilitas una est virtus'. Trevet quotes verses from Juvenal here, not Virgil.

<sup>38</sup> Hugh of St Victor, *Didascalicon*, iii, 17, ed. C. H. Buttmer (Washington 1939), 68: The description of Philosophy's couch comes ultimately from Martianus Capella, *De nuptiis* i, 143-6. The corruption 'philomena et agrimena for 'philemia et agrimnia' (found also in MS Balliol 27, fol. 144<sup>va</sup>) may have been in Holcot's copy of *Didascalicon*.

<sup>38a</sup> See M. R. James, *Descriptive Catalogue of MSS in Gonville and Caius College Library I, Cambridge, 1907*, 354-5. Mr N. R. Ker tells me that the book probably came from Gloucester, because its pressmark and some of the marginalia resemble those in MS Laud. misc. 123, which is of Gloucester provenance; see his *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain, London, 1941*, 51.

gues<sup>38b</sup> and Lupus of Ferrières on the metres<sup>38c</sup>, with some additional notes (foll. 171-172v). The commentary ends with a rhyme: 'Hic lectura (sic) petit quisnam sit lector et unde, / Ne careat titulis vel(ut) peregrina suis, / Hic est Willelmus medicine sorte magister. / Regis Aragonie de ditione fuit'. A fifteenth-century annotator has added: 'Commentator precedens vocatur Willelmus medicus, ut hic in versus et per Holcot supradictum in lectione 95,h.' The same hand has noted in the margin of the commentary on Philosophy's garments, I, pros.i: 'De ista muliere obtime (sic) per Holcot super Sap. lect. 95, et usque in fine(m) lectionis'. This fifteenth-century student had remarked Holcot's quotation from Willelmus Medicus of Aragon.

Prof. P. Courcelle has listed William of Aragon among the commentators of Boethius' *De consolazione* and gives the incipit, explicit and an extract from MS Erfurt in fol. 358, foll. 1-25. These correspond exactly with the relevant passages in MS Caius 309, except that the Erfurt manuscript has an addition to the final rhyme: 'Completa Mon(tepessulanae?) anno Domini 1335 post Reminiscere feria quinta'<sup>38d</sup>. The date 1335 probably refers to the completion of the copy rather than to publication, since Holcot quoted the commentary probably before 1334. William of Aragon on Boethius must have been quite well known: a fourteenth-century treatise on virtues and vices in MS Paris, Bibl.nat.lat. 590<sup>39</sup> quotes the same passage as Holcot:

'Narrat magister Guilelmus Arogenensis (sic) quod Athenienses sapientiam tripliciter descripserunt. Quidam enim depinxerunt eam iacentem in lecto et quatuor domicellas lectum preparantes... Alii depinxerunt sapientiam stantem... Alii depingebant eam... ut reginam sedentem in cathedra... (fol. 181)'.

The commentary, called 'lectura' in the final rhyme, was actually given as a lecture course; William says in his prologue: 'Ad utilitatem igitur talium, librum Boetii de consolatione philosophie proposui

<sup>38b</sup> Vitae I and II, ed. Peiper, Boetii Philosophiae Consolationis libri quinque, Leipzig, 1871, xxx-xxxii. The third prologue begins 'Nobiles romani...'.

<sup>38c</sup> Ed. Peiper, *ibid.*, xxv-xxviii.

<sup>38d</sup> P. Courcelle, *op. cit.* 100-1. I have not seen the Erfurt Ms. Fr. Kaepeli kindly pointed out to me the copy in MS Caius 309.

<sup>39</sup> See above, p. 26.

legere... (fol. 89<sup>v</sup>). He suggests that such lectures were common by disagreeing with his colleagues on a point of interpretation on I, pros.i, 4:

‘Hec littera communiter sic invenitur lecta... Qui autem sic legere voluerunt, sic legat (sic). Ego autem dico Boetium hec non intellexisse nec ad propositum veritatem habere (fol. 92)’.

He was probably lecturing in the Arts Faculty at Paris, since he explains *Academicis studiis* (I, pros.i, 10) as follows:

‘... iuxta portam achademicam, que sic dicebatur Athenis, sicut porta sancti Dionisii Parisius (fol. 93)’.

The only evidence for the date of William’s lectures, apart from Holcot’s quotation on Wisdom and the ‘1335’ in the Erfurt manuscript, is that he does not seem to know either Nicholas Trevet or Pseudo-Aquinas as commentators on Boethius. This indicates a date fairly early in the fourteenth century, before these two works became popular<sup>40</sup>. William shows no more interest in medicine or natural science than we commonly find in lectures on literary texts of the period. He may have taken his degree in medicine later. His *De somniis et visionum prognosticationibus* gives no indication of date. It confirms what we know of his Spanish origin, however, by a reference to a method of catching vultures in Spain<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> The comment on IV, metr. 3, *Vela Neritii ducis* must have been altered or interpolated in MS Caius 309: ‘Ulixis, qui dux fuit Varitii (sic) in Grecia, sicut dux Aurelianus in Francia (fol. 143<sup>v</sup>)’. Philip VI created the Duchy of Orleans in 1344 for his younger son, Philip, born in 1336. William of Aragon could not have referred to it in a lecture given before 1335.

<sup>41</sup> See L. Thorndike and P. Kibre, *A Catalogue of Incipits of Mediaeval and Scientific Writings in Latin*, Cambridge, Mas., 1937, 486. I used the copy in MS Oxford, St John’s College 172, foll. 140-152<sup>v</sup> (incompletely foliated). It is written in a fifteenth-century hand and formerly belonged to Oxford University; see N. R. Ker, *op cit.*, 80. Both Courcelle and Thorndike-Kibre refer to the notice on a William of Aragon in N. Antonio, *Bibliotheca vetus Hispana* II, Madrid, 1788, 346. This William of Aragon dedicated a summary of the doctrine of John Duns Scot to Alphonso of Aragon, archbishop of Saragossa 1478-1520; see P. B. Gams, *Series episcoporum*, Ratisbon, 1875, 20. He has nothing to do with our fourteenth-century doctor of medicine of the same name.

Another William is quoted as expounding Macrobius on *De somno Scipionis*:

'Quicumque autem nascuntur ante septimum mensem communiter moriuntur, sicut dicit Guilelmus de mortibus, exponens Macrobius, De somno Scipionis (Sap. lect. lxxxix, p. 302)'.<sup>42</sup>

I cannot find any reference to a commentary on Macrobius ascribed to a William. The medical detail suggests that possibly William of Aragon may be involved here, too<sup>42</sup>. Our Dominican has a habit of bunching his references. He will refer to the same author several times within the space of a few lectures and then forget him, as though he were making the most of what happened to lie on his desk at the moment. Perhaps he had a collection of commentaries by William of Aragon by him at some stage in the preparation of his lectures on Wisdom.

When he was lecturing on Joel, Holcot had access to glossed copies of Cicero's *Philippics*, *De senectute* and *De amicitia*. He quotes some strange tales from them:

- 1) 'Hic potest adduci historia quam vidi in quadam notula super primum librum Tullii in Philippicis, super illud, *quid est aliud quam tollere a vita vite societatem, colloquia amicorum absentium*<sup>43</sup>. Quidam videns solem sibi subtractum, multum dolens, a quodam sene accepit berillum, qui ad se trahit radium solis. Vidit (in berillo?) leonem (eum?) devorare volentem. Erat in puteo profundo et ascendere non potuit, ubi a vermibus, nisi citius recederet, premeretur. Hec dicit illa notula, quia non habuit bonam societatem. Venit ergo quidam senex socius, qui diu absens fuerat, et quem ille reliquerat, et dat ei libellum contra leonem (B, fol. 43<sup>v</sup>)'.
- 2) 'Iterum super illam litteram, *ante faciem eius ignis vorans*<sup>44</sup>, adduci potest quod dicitur in quadam notula super Tullium, De senectute, quod quidam vidit quatuor serpentes, quatuor calores emittere... (fol. 44)'.<sup>44</sup>

The four serpents are described. The four fires emitted by them correspond to four kinds of worldly desire which inflame men.

- 3) 'Unde dicitur in quadam notula super Tullium, De amicitia, quod quidam, volens regnum cuiusdam regis invadere, qui rex per tres consiliarios regebatur unanimes et concordēs, caute inter istos consiliarios discordiam procuravit... (fol. 44<sup>v</sup>)'.

When the counsellors have been corrupted, the realm falls into confusion and is easily conquered.

<sup>42</sup> This does not occur in William of Aragon's *De somniis*.

<sup>43</sup> Oratio Philippica II, cap. iv § 7.

<sup>44</sup> Joel i, 3.

- 4) 'Dicit enim glosa parva super Tullium, De amicitia, quod inter duos homines... (fol. 46)'.

Two friends feel sympathy at a distance.

Here we have three classical texts fitted out with *exempla* designed to express the meaning in picturesque, concrete terms. (1), (2) and (4) all introduce an element of the marvellous. We understand Holcot much better when we realise in what form he read his Cicero.

'Quidam expositor super Iuvenalem, lib. 1 Satirorum' gave Holcot a detailed account of a day in the life of 'noble Romans', beginning with an early visit to the triumphal arches to see scenes of their ancestors battling with the enemies of Rome, for the edification of their youths (Sap. lect. liv, p. 192). 'A purely bibliographical tradition' ascribes a commentary on Juvenal to Nicholas Trevet, no trace of which has survived<sup>45</sup>. Was Trevet Holcot's 'expositor'? He is certainly quoting a full-length commenary and not mere *scholia*.

One more example may be mentioned to illustrate the growth of a legend. Commending Scripture in the customary manner in the prologue to his Wisdom commentary, Holcot says that it follows the precept of Horace on 'mixing grave and gay', and he quotes the tag, a favourite of Stephen Langton in the late twelfth century: 'Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci (*Ars Poetica*, line 343)'<sup>46</sup>. He then proceeds to a circumstantial account of how a Roman poet's work would be read publicly before the five orders of the Roman People. If it won general approval, each order would put a mark (punctum) at the end of the writing, after which the poem would be held to be 'authentic' (we should say 'to be a classic'). It is a charming picture:

'Convenienter autem difficultati sacre scripture dulcis et utilis suavitas est annexa, quia secundum Horatium in Poetria, et est ad propositum: Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci. *Omne tulit punctum*, id est poeta, *qui miscuit utile dulci* in libro suo, et approbationem et favorem habuit omnium romanorum. Populus enim romanus in quinque ordines erat distinctus. Erant enim patres conscripti, senatores, ordinarii, equites, plebs. Si ergo poeta quicumque aliquod nobile opus edidisset,

<sup>45</sup> R. J. Dean, *Cultural Relations in the Middle Ages: Nicholas Trevet and Nicholas of Prato* in *Studies in Philology* 45 (1948) 553; G. Highet, *Juvenal the Satirist*, Oxford 1954, 203, 315.

<sup>46</sup> B. Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, op. cit., 256; and see E. R. Curtius, *European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages*, translated from the German by W. R. Trask, with additions by the author, London 1953, 417-28.

coram populo publice legebatur. Si generaliter placuit, unusquisque ordo unum punctum apposuit in fine scripti, et tunc carmen illud deinceps autenticum habebatur, et ideo docet Horatius quod qui vult opus suum omnibus placere, videat quod opus suum habeat illa duo, scilicet quod sit delectabile et utile, quia omne etc... Hoc autem maxime facit sacra scriptura (Sap. lect. i, MS Balliol College 27, fol. 3<sup>rb</sup>).

The fifth-century glossator of Horace, Pseudoacron, says on the line in question:

'*Omne tulit punctum ... Puncta dicuntur populi suffragia... id est omnium meruit fauorum iuxta legem tabellarum, quae cauerat non uoce, sed puncto debere ferri suffragium*'.

He has just mentioned 'centuriae seniorum' and 'equites' in his comments on lines 341-2<sup>47</sup>. Here is the germ of Holcot's story. The Roman People, 'elders' and knights, are brought together with a mention of voting by 'punctum'. Anyone who knew of the five orders and of the Roman custom of reading works aloud, frequently referred to in classical poetry and also practised in the middle ages, could have invented the scene of a public reading before the five orders. Heaven knows through what stages the legend passed between Pseudoacron and Holcot!

He quotes an 'expositor super Eglogam Theoduli' for the story of Licaon<sup>48</sup>:

'Lichaon, qui fuit rex Archadie invitavit Iovem ad hospitium suum cum ceteris diis. Lichaon, volens experiri utrum Iuppiter esset verus deus an non, porrexit ei venenum, ob quam rem Iuppiter eum mutavit in lupum (Ecclus. lect. lii, fol. 42<sup>ra</sup>)'.

The *Ecloga Theoduli* was an often-expounded ninth-century school-text, a source for classical mythology<sup>49</sup>. With this we have reached medieval authors as distinct from medieval commentators on the classics.

<sup>47</sup> Pseudoacron Scholia in Horatium vestustiora, ed. O. Keller, II, Leipzig 1904, 363-4.

<sup>48</sup> Theodula Ecloga, ed. J. Osternacher, Urfahr 1902, line 61.

<sup>49</sup> Holcot's quotation comes almost verbally from the commentary printed with the early editions, *Ecloga Theoduli cum commento*, Cologne 1495, fol. 12<sup>v</sup>. On the medieval commentaries see M. Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischer Literatur des Mittelalters*, I, München 1911, 572-4.

As we contemplate the host of medieval writers, historians, chroniclers, satirists and homilists, who jostle one another in Holcot's pages, we can detect a preference for the English. He quotes Bede, Henry of Huntingdon, William of Malmesbury, Walter Map and Gerald of Wales. Some stories were current in *exempla* collections, for instance those from Henry of Huntingdon about King Cnut and the waves and the holy man prophesying the defeat of the English as a punishment for their sins<sup>50</sup>, but Holcot also tells of Cnut's vengeance on the traitor Eadric verbally from Henry of Huntingdon<sup>51</sup>. He sets St Bernard and Henry of Huntingdon side by side as authorities on morals; both attack display in dress:

'Varietas vestium est mentium varietas et cordium secundum Bernardum ad Eugenium et Henricum Huntodonensem, lib. 6 (B, fol. 94<sup>v</sup>)'<sup>52</sup>.

He knew so many anecdotes of British and English history, such as the legend of King Bladud, the magician, who built the city of Bath and attempted to fly<sup>53</sup>, that one supposes him to have turned the pages of some English chronicles. Not all his tales can be traced to surviving sources. Here, as in his tales of the Romans, we find a mixture of tradition and possibly pure invention. Luxury was introduced into England by a king called William, who sent round to all parts for magnificent and marvellous recipees for food and drink. Holcot prefaces this tale by 'dicitur'<sup>54</sup>. It could easily have been suggested by the chroniclers' accounts of William II's extravagance and love of show. I do not know whether it was an English king who said that he would rather lose his kingdom than miss a good drink<sup>55</sup>.

Another story has great interest as showing a picture of the Norman Conquest which was forming itself in England in Holcot's lifetime.

<sup>50</sup> B, foll. 57, 92<sup>v</sup>; Herbert, *Catalogue of Romances*, op. cit., III, 160, 62.

<sup>51</sup> B, fol. 13<sup>v</sup>, from Henry of Huntingdon, op. cit., 185-6.

<sup>52</sup> De consideratione, iii, 5, P. L. 182, 771; *Historia Anglorum* (Rolls Series), 174.

<sup>53</sup> Holcot tells this tale twice, B, foll. 37, 121, from Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia regum Britanniae*, ii, 10.

<sup>54</sup> 'Dicitur quod quidam rex Anglie, nomine Willelmus, misit ad omnes regiones ad inquirendum magnificum et mirificum modum in cibariis et poculis et sic luxuriam introduxit (B, fol. 20)'.

<sup>55</sup> 'Dicitur quod quidam rex, deditus ebrietati, dixit: Si haberem potum delectabilem in manu mea, et hostes regni mei essent in tali statu quod possint capi vel occidi, si dimisso potu statim sumerem arma mea, alioquin ipsi diriperent totum regnum, citius permitterem totum regnum destrui et everti quam carere potu tenearius predilecto (B, fol. 26<sup>v</sup>)'.

Robert of Gloucester in his *Metrical Chronicle*, written towards the end of the thirteenth century, points out that the Normans substituted French for English as the language of the upper classes, so that now only 'low men' speak it. 'I think', he adds, 'that there is no other country in the world but England that holds not to its own speech'<sup>56</sup>. Ranulf Higden, compiling his *Polychronicon* towards the middle of the fourteenth century, gives an account of the various tongues and dialects of Britain in which he regrets the corruption of English resulting from the Conquest. Children are forced to use French in school and it has a snob value in society:

'Hec quidem native lingue corruptio provenit hodie multum ex duobus; quod videlicet pueri in scholis contra morem ceterarum nationum a primo Normannorum adventu, derelicto proprio vulgari, construere Gallice compelluntur; item quod filii nobilium ab ipsis cunabulorum crepundiis ad Gallicum idioma informantur. Quibus profecto rurales homines assimilari volentes, ut per hoc spectabiliores videantur, francigenare satagunt omni nisu'<sup>57</sup>.

A much more sweeping statement on the effects of the Conquest appears in the *Historia Croylandensis*, which is now known to be a forgery and not the contemporary account of late eleventh-century history that it claims to be. The forger, a monk of Croyland, is generally thought to have worked towards the end of the fourteenth century. He adds changes in customs and laws to the change in language and ascribes them to the Normans' hatred of the English; the latter were expelled from office and replaced by less able foreigners. Although this passage is well-known, it must be quoted here in part for comparison with Holcot:

'Tantum tunc Anglicos abominati sunt, ut quantocumque merito pollerent, de dignitatibus repellerentur; et multo minus habiles alienigene, de quacunque alia natione, que sub celo est, extitissent, gratanter assumerentur. Ipsum etiam idioma tantum abhorrebant, quod leges terre, statutaque Anglicorum Regum lingua Gallica tractarentur; et pueris etiam in scholis principia literarum grammatica Gallice, ac non Anglice traderentur; modus etiam scribendi Anglicus ommitteretur, et modus Gallicus in chartis, et in libris omnibus admitteretur'<sup>58</sup>.

<sup>56</sup> Ed. W. A. Wright (Rolls Series, 1887) II, 543-4.

<sup>57</sup> Ed. C. Babington (Rolls Series, 1869) II, 156-8.

<sup>58</sup> Ed. T. Gale, *Rerum Anglicarum Scriptorum Veterum* tom. I, Oxford 1784, 70-1. On the date of Pseudo-Ingulf, the forger, see C. Gross, *The Sources and Literature of English History*, 2nd ed., London 1915, no. 1371.

Holcot converts the change-over from English to French into a stroke of conscious policy on the part of William the Conqueror. William pondered on how to abolish the 'Saxon speech' in order to assimilate the two peoples one to another. He therefore decreed that no one should plead in the royal court except in French and that each boy to be taught his letters should learn French, and Latin by means of French, which continues 'to the present day'. The moralisation gives bite to the story. William I represents the devil, king of the realm of falsehood, as opposed to Christ, the king of truth. Like William, the devil has no hereditary right to his kingdom, but rules by might alone; hence he is no true heir, but a conqueror. His own language in his infernal province is the language of lies. To assimilate the world to this infernal province, he has decreed that lies should be used in all secular business. Just as the schoolboy begins by learning French, so the youth, starting on his career in the world, by toil and study learns to tell lies. Holcot does not work out his parallel any further, but he implies a contrast between honest Englishmen and deceitful French. He begins, moreover, with a sharp distinction between the two peoples:

'Persone diversorum regnorum et diversarum terrarum facilliter ab invicem discernuntur per diversitatem idiomatum et linguarum, ut communiter, quia qui gallicum loquitur, gallicus est vel estimatur, et qui anglicum, anglicus. Sic enim arguebatur contra Petrum quod esset galileus et ex Christi discipulis, Mt. 26...<sup>59</sup>. Sunt moraliter loquendo duo regna ad invicem in hac vita commixta, videlicet regnum Dei et regnum mundi, et regnum Christi et regnum diaboli, regnum celeste et regnum terrestre; et sicut ista distant in regibus et legibus, ita in idiomate non concordant; nam idioma regni celestis est veritas... Idioma vero regni terrestris sive mundi est falsitas... Si ergo homo velit perpendere ad quod regnum pertineat, videat cui regno in idiomate concordat. Narrant historie quod cum Willelmus, dux Normannorum, regnum Anglie conquestivisset, deliberavit quomodo linguam saxoniam posset destruere et Angliam et Normanniam in idiomate concordare; et ideo ordinavit quod nullus in curia regis placitaret nisi in gallico, et iterum quod puer quilibet ponendus ad litteras addisceret gallicum, et per gallicum latinum, que duo usque hodie observantur. Isto modo moraliter princeps huius mundi diabolus est...; sed verum est quod principatum suum in mundo non habet hereditaria successione, sed violenta oppressione, et ideo non est

<sup>59</sup> Holcot quotes Mt. xxvi, 73. It was customary to give examples from contemporary differences in dialect to clarify the meaning of this text; see B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, ed. cit., 319.

heres, sed conquisitor<sup>60</sup>. Idioma autem suum proprium in provincia infernali est mendacium... et ideo ut concordet mundum cum provincia infernali in idiomate, ordinavit quod omnia secularia in conventionibus, mercationibus, et commutationibus utantur mendaciis; et sicut puer, docendus in scola, primo addiscit gallicum, ita iuvenis, applicandus seculo, cum studio et labore addiscit loqui mendacium... (MS Balliol 27, foll. 19<sup>v</sup>-20<sup>ra</sup>)<sup>61</sup>.

Probably his need to moralise led Holcot to exaggerate. We can hardly suppose that he meant his parallel between William and the devil, Normandy and the infernal regions, to be taken too literally. If pressed, it would make Edward the Confessor into a type of Christ and the truth. Holcot certainly thought of the Confessor as a model king. After listing the qualities of a good ruler, he says he is sure that St Edward had them all, and that his land was not lacking in government and dignity, for the reason that his feast is kept with great ceremony in England:

'... Certus sum quod sanctus Edwardus omnes condiciones habuit gratiose et terra sua non fuit sine rege nec sine solempnitate, quia die suo magna est solempnitas anglicorum (B. fol. 14<sup>v</sup>)'.

Still, we must not run away with his passing ideas. The importance of the passage is that Holcot goes further than Robert of Gloucester or Higden in judging the linguistic effects of the Conquest and that he anticipates the *Historia Croylandensis* in his anti-Norman bias. When he says 'narrant historie', does he refer to a written source or to a current, unwritten version of English history? In either case we see a legend in the making and a stage in the formation of English 'vernacular consciousness'<sup>62</sup>.

We may now pass to the literary and devotional writings of Englishmen quoted by Holcot. John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* is in constant

<sup>60</sup> MS Laud. misc. 562, fol. 13<sup>ra</sup>, adds 'et tyrannus' after 'conquisitor'.

<sup>61</sup> Sap. lect. xi, p. 42. J. Th. Welter (*L'exemplum dans la littérature religieuse et didactique du Moyen Age*, Paris 1927, p. 361, n. 58) quotes this passage and notes the similarity with *Polychronicon*.

<sup>62</sup> On the unhistorical character of the legend see V. H. Galbraith, *Nationality and Language in Medieval England*, in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th series, vol. 23 (1941) 113-28; H. Suggett, *The Use of French in England in the Later Middle Ages*, *ibid.* vol. 28 (1946) 61-83; see also W. H. Stevenson, *The Introduction of English*, in *An English Miscellany Presented to F. J. Furnivall*, 1901, 421-9.

use. Holcot knew it well enough to repeat lines from 'Iohannes in Enthetico', the verse prologue to *Policraticus*<sup>63</sup>. We should expect him to know the encyclopedia and biblical dictionary of Alexander Nequam, as indeed he does, but he also refers to an interpretation of a verse of the Canticle from Nequam's commentary<sup>64</sup>, which had less vogue than the *De natura rerum* and *Corrogationes Promethei*<sup>65</sup>. It is surprising and significant to find him quoting 'blessed Baldwin, archbishop of Canterbury'. Baldwin, archbishop 1185-90, left a reputation for piety, but his works, mainly homilies of a conventional kind, are not known to have been widely read<sup>66</sup>. Holcot quotes him on the need for humility from his *Exhortatio ad sacerdotes*<sup>67</sup>. We have seen that Holcot also quotes a pious saying of a later archbishop of Canterbury, Simon Mepham. The didactic works of Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln, enjoyed their greatest popularity in the later middle ages; the fashion for them had not set in when Holcot was teaching<sup>68</sup>. Nevertheless, he refers to a sermon of Grosseteste's with approval<sup>69</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> B, fol. 91<sup>v</sup>, from *Policraticus* ed. C. C. J. Webb (Oxford, 1909) vol. I, p. 11, lines 7-8.

<sup>64</sup> I did not include this among Holcot's exegetical sources because it is a devotional work rather than a literal exposition.

<sup>65</sup> 'Cant. 6, dicit Christus ad matrem: *Averte oculos tuos a me, quia ipsi me avolare fecerunt*. Hic exponit Alexander de oculis beate Marie virginis in sui filii passione, quia plus doleat pro matris languore quam pro pena propria (B, fol. 29<sup>v</sup>)'. Nequam comments on Cant. vi, 4: 'Volens itaque filius dolorem maternum verbis consolationis lenire, ait: *Averte oculos tuos a me, quia ipsi me avolare fecerunt*. O mater dulcissima, quid dolorem adicis dolori? Dolor maternus est et filii. *Averte*, igitur, *oculos tuos a me*, ut sic leniatur dolor tuus, mitigetur et sic dolor meus (MS Oxford, Bodl. 356, fol. 198<sup>va-b</sup>)'.

<sup>66</sup> Dict. Nat. Biogr. I, 952-4.

<sup>67</sup> 'Ut dicit beatus Baldewinus (ed. Beldegnius) archiepiscopus Cantuariensis: Omnis, inquit, dignitas ipso dignitatis nomine indigna est, si humilis dedignetur. Humilitas sine honore ipsa sibi sufficit ad honorem. Honor sine humilitate sese ad confusionem perducit. Et post: Si egregius es, esto tamen de grege; si omnibus prees, non dedigneris subesse. Considera magistrum. Non veni, inquit, ministrari, sed ministrare. Hec ille (Eccles, lect. xxxiii, fol. 26<sup>vb</sup>)'. See *Tractatus varii*, P. L. 204, 533. The second quotation, beginning 'Si egregius es', is not in the printed text, but is suggested by the theme of the sermon.

<sup>68</sup> Robert Grosseteste, ed. D. A. Callus, Oxford 1955, 85.

<sup>69</sup> 'Pulchre declarat Linco(l)niensis in sermone quam fecit de pastoribus, ita dicens: Sicut cera mollis fortiter applicatur sigillo... (Sap. lect. lxxxiv, p. 291)'. On Grosseteste's sermons see S. H. Thomson, *The Writings of Robert Grosseteste*, Cambridge 1940, 160-3.

There are stories from the life of St Edmund Rich <sup>70</sup>, and a wise answer on the qualities required in a good counsellor is ascribed to 'Henry, king of England':

'Ideo quesitum fuit a rege Anglie, Henrico, ut dicitur, quis bene protegeret regnum. Respondit: homo sine pelle, homo sine felle, plenus melle; et exponendo ait: omnia exteriora et bona mundana et laudes humane, favores et honores pelles sunt, in quibus homines inaniter gloriantur. Homo plenus melle est homo iustus, verax et humilis et mansuetus. Hoc autem dixit propter falsos, cupidos et insipientes consiliarios, qui ducunt reges et regna, non autem a vitiis protegunt, sed consulunt potius ad peccandum, tantum commodum proprium requirentes (B, fol. 129)'.

Anecdotes on the piety of Henry III appear in *exempla* collections <sup>71</sup>. Holcot's tale must belong to the same tradition. It may have originated in the memory of Henry's revulsion from his 'evil counsellors', when the barons forced him to expel them <sup>72</sup>. Holcot thinks it worth while to refer to a homily of Odo of Cheriton as his source for a well-known *exemplum* <sup>73</sup>. Coming closer to his own time, we find him citing the Franciscan, John of Wales, by name. He quotes a definition of the virtue of perseverance 'secundum Vallensem' verbally from John's *Breviloquium* <sup>74</sup>.

If we list his sources for political theory we find the English coronation order of 1308 added to the *Politics* with their commentators

<sup>70</sup> St Edmund's mother appears to him in a vision and rebukes him for spending his time on 'perspective and geometry'. Holcot tells the same story twice (Ecclus, lect. xxxiv, xxxv, foll. 28<sup>ra</sup>, 28<sup>va</sup>). See B. Ward, *St Edmund Archbishop of Canterbury. His Life, as told by Old English Writers*, London 1903, 32-3.

<sup>71</sup> J. Th. Welter, *La Tabula Exemplorum*, Paris, 1927, 3, 89; *Le Speculum laicorum*, Paris 1914, 10.

<sup>72</sup> Sir Maurice Powicke, *Henry III and the Lord Edward, I*, Oxford 1947, 144-5. Holcot does not specify which King Henry he means, but his story fits the character of Henry III better than either of his predecessors'.

<sup>73</sup> 'Refert Odo, omelia (followed by blank in MSS), quod quidam frater... (B, fol. 27<sup>v</sup>)'. This is the story of the monk dipping his crust in the wounds of Christ; see the edition of Odo's *exempla* by P. Hervieux, *Les fabulistes latins*, IV, Paris 1876, 269. On Odo's career see A. Friend, *Master Odo of Cheriton in Speculum* 23 (1948) 641-58. He died 1246/7.

<sup>74</sup> Ecclus., lect. viii, fol. 9<sup>vb</sup>, from *Breviloquium* iv (Lyons 1511), fol. 257<sup>va</sup>. On John of Wales, who died between 1285 and 1300, see A. G. Little, *Studies in English Franciscan History*, Manchester 1917, 174-92, and W. A. Pantin, *op. cit.*, 147-8.

and the *De regimine principum* of Giles of Rome<sup>75</sup>. Holcot illustrates the duties and responsibilities of kingship by describing the coronation ceremony with the oath, anointing, prayers and other details (Sap. lect. lxxv, p. 264-5). His account corresponds with the order of 1308<sup>76</sup>, except that he gives the oath in its ancient form<sup>77</sup> without mentioning the extra concessions which were forced upon or freely granted by Edward II<sup>78</sup>. This may have been due to royalist sympathies or to pure traditionalism. Edward III's coronation in 1327 seems to have followed the same order as his father's<sup>79</sup>, so that Holcot may have had this recent ceremony in mind.

Further, Holcot used books by four English friars which have wholly or partly disappeared. Putting them into rough chronological order, we have:

1. Walter Wimborne O.F.M.

'... et secundum Wymborne<sup>80</sup> in tractatu morali de elementis, in parte de terra: Amor sive dilectio est Iacob, qui xii filios genuit... (B, fol. 22)'.  
The names of the twelve patriarchs are moralised.

<sup>75</sup> Holcot uses St Albert's commentary on the *Politics*; for instance he quotes some verses (Sap. lect. cxxii, p. 410) from iv, 10; (ed. Borgnet, *Opera omnia* VIII, Paris 1891, 381). He also makes a generalised reference to the opinion of 'expositores' on the question whether a hereditary or elective monarchy is more desirable.

There are two references to the *De regimine principum* of Giles of Rome in Holcot on Ecclesiasticus. He quotes Giles on the traits of women (lect. xl, fol. 32<sup>rb</sup>) 'secundum dominum Egidium in libro suo de regimine principum' (lib. II, pars i, cap. 18, ed. Rome 1556, fol. 161<sup>v</sup>) and on the duties of a king in caring for the helpless: 'Tertio rex potens habet curam de orphanis scilicet secundum Egidium, de impotentibus et mendicis, qui non possunt defendere iura sua (lect. v, fol. 6<sup>rb</sup>)'. I have not traced this quotation; probably it could be found if we had a modern edition and adequate index to the *De regimine principum*.

<sup>76</sup> J. Wickham Legg, *Three Coronation Orders*, Henry Bradshaw Society XIX, 1900, 39-49.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>78</sup> P. E. Schramm, *A History of the English Coronation*, Oxford 1937, 74-9. Prof. Schramm points out that Holcot's account of the English king's coronation was reprinted from the Wisdom commentary by the antiquary Arthur Taylor, *The Glory of Regality*, London 1820, 406-8. He says that it comes from the *ordo* of 1308 (*ibid.*, 235), but does not notice that Holcot gives the older form of the oath. For a recent discussion of the additions to the oath in 1308 see H. G. Richardson, *The English Coronation Oath*, in *Trans. R. Hist. Soc.* 4th series, vol. 22 (1941) 135-44.

<sup>79</sup> Schramm, *op. cit.*, 79.

<sup>80</sup> MS Gray's Inn 2, (fol. 13<sup>rb</sup>) has 'Wynburne'.

'... Habet enim amor, ut dicit Wymborne in tractatu suo morali de elementis, faciem leoninam, faciem vitulinam, faciem humanam et faciem aquilinam. Faciem leoninam habet amor sive dilectio in signum liberalitatis et fortitudinis. Quid enim fortius amor(e) qui Deum trahebat ut nos redimeret?... (B, fol. 23)'

'Notari potest secundum Wymborne in tractatu suo de elementis, 34: Est vinum quo reprobi potantur, scilicet defectivum, vinum infectivum et vinum interfectivum, et quodlibet istorum facit principes furire <sup>81</sup>... (B. foll. 24<sup>v</sup>-25)'

John Bale lists a Walter Wiburne, who wrote a poem on the Blessed Virgin, and then says: 'Gualtherus Wynburne, Minorita, doctor, scripsit, Proprietates terre lib. i, Pulsante fratrum instantia. Ex bibl. Nordouicensi' <sup>82</sup>. Later bibliographers added 'sancte' to the title <sup>83</sup>. The work is lost, but it seems likely to be the same as Holcot's *Tractatus moralis de elementis*; perhaps the 'sancte' was an incorrect addition, supplied by the bibliographers to make sense. Holcot's treatise had a section 'De terra', as one would expect in a work called 'De elementis'. Bale may have seen the section 'De terra' with the heading 'Proprietates terre'. Judging from Holcot's quotations and from the title 'Tractatus moralis', it was an account of the four elements, with a moralisation of their properties, long and elaborate, since it had at least thirty-four chapters.

Wimborne (or Wynbourne) was eighth regent master of the Friars Minor at Cambridge about 1263-6 <sup>84</sup>. He has generally been distinguished from the poet of the same name, listed by Bale as Wiburne; the poet has been allocated to the mid-fourteenth century. Drèves, however, who printed the *Enconium Beate Marie*, thought that it might well belong to the thirteenth century <sup>85</sup>. Both the *Enconium* and the unprinted verses (identified by Drèves from the incipit) in MS Oxford, Laud, misc. 368, foll. 203<sup>ra</sup>-216<sup>ra</sup> (early fourteenth-century), show a classicising tendency and a lightness of touch which would have delighted Hol-

<sup>81</sup> MS 'furere'.

<sup>82</sup> Index Brit. Script., ed. R. L. Poole and M. Bateson, Oxford 1902, 111.

<sup>83</sup> A. G. Little, *Initia Operum Latinorum*, Manchester 1904, 181.

<sup>84</sup> Eccleston, *De adventu Fratrum Minorum*, ed. A. G. Little, Manchester 1951, 58; J. R. H. Moorman, *The Grey Friars in Cambridge*, Cambridge 1952, 31, 144, 225.

<sup>85</sup> *Analecta hymnica L* (Leipzig 1907), 630. The poet gives his name and his Order in the course of his poem, *ibid*, 643.

cot. Virgil, Livy, Homer, Minerva and Cicero appear in the same verse, as having been unable to praise the Virgin, and the Last Judgment is preceded by a lecture on the *Ethics*, delivered 'in sublimi cathedra' <sup>86</sup>. The Virgin's gift of her Son to sinners is daringly compared to 'bar-tending':

' Ve michi misero! tabernam video  
Et ventris dolium, sed tamen doleo,  
Non enim pretium condignum habeo,  
Quo frui merear vino virgineo ' <sup>87</sup>.

There seems to be no good reason for separating the poet from the moralist quoted by Holcot.

### 2. Hugh Sneyth O. P.

' Narravit magister Ugo de Suetonia <sup>88</sup> quod due antiquitus erant leges. Una erat hec: raptam liberans, si vult, ducat. Alia: libera libere nubat... (Ecclus, lect. xliii, fol. 35<sup>ra</sup>) '.

There follows an *exemplum*, too long to quote in full, about a knight who rescues a lady from her violator and claims to marry her according to the first law. She prefers to marry her violator, and claims her right to do so according to the second law. The emperor, judging the case, tells the knight that she is not good enough for him and condemns both violator and bride to death. The story is moralised, the violator being the devil, the lady the soul, the knight Christ, and the emperor God.

Hugh Sneyth O. P. was bachelor at Oxford 1284-7 and master between 1287 and 1296. He composed an *Ars praedicandi* of which only a short summary has survived <sup>89</sup>. Holcot may have taken the *exemplum* from some lecture or sermon, possibly from hearsay at the Oxford Priory, since he says 'narravit'. He would have liked its antique setting, and chosen it for that reason.

### 3. Robert of Leicester O. F. M.

On Zach. xiii, 8. 'Notandum est super hanc litteram de duabus partibus et de tertia quod dicitur Apoc. 8, quod tertia pars solis percussa est et tertia

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 637, 643.

<sup>87</sup> MS Laud. misc. 368, fol. 205<sup>vb</sup>. There are references to Aristotle, Cicero and Virgil in this poem, too, foll. 208<sup>va</sup>, 209<sup>vb</sup>, 210<sup>vb</sup>, 211<sup>ra</sup>.

<sup>88</sup> MS B. M. Royal 3. A. xiv, fol. 35<sup>vb</sup>, has 'Hugo de Sutona', MS Bâle B. V. 11, fol. 51<sup>va</sup>, 'Hugo de Suotore'.

<sup>89</sup> Th. M. Charland, op. cit., 45-6. There is a similar type of story in *Gesta Romanorum*; see Herbert, *Cat. Rom.*, op. cit., III, 198-9. Holcot's has many more details and is more elaborately worked out.

pars lune et tertia pars stellarum et tertia pars diei, ut non lucent (sic.). Similiter et noctis. Hoc exponens, frater Robertus de Leycestria dicit quod in tertia parte solis percussa intelligitur dampnatio falsorum prelatorum. Sol habet corpus magnum in quo notatur prelatorum auctentica pre-eminentia... Dicit quod clerici signantur in lumine lunari... Mali laici signantur in tertia parte luminis diurnalibus... Hec ille Robertus (B, fol. 126<sup>v</sup>)'.

The comparison between the prelates and the sun, the clergy and the moon, the laity and the stars is fully worked out. This sounds like an extract from a commentary on the Apocalypse. The idea was not original; it appears in a frequently-copied anonymous commentary, *Vidit Iacob in sompniis...*; but Holcot's quotation from Robert of Leicester shows no verbal identity with the equivalent passage of this commentary<sup>90</sup>.

The Franciscan, Robert of Leicester, was presented for license to hear confessions while at Northampton, probably teaching at the friary school there, in 1300. He was 48th regent master to the Cambridge Franciscans, 1321-2. He lectured at the Curia at Avignon soon afterwards and was regent at Oxford in 1325. He may have died between 1327-34, though the date 1348 has also been suggested. If the later date is correct, he would have lived to be eighty. He wrote a *Compotus hebreorum*, dedicated to Richard Swinfield, bishop of Hereford, and dated 1294, and a treatise connected with the controversy on apostolic poverty, *Super egenum et pauperem Christum*<sup>91</sup>. No commentary on the Apocalypse has been ascribed to him. Perhaps he gave unpublished lectures on it, which Holcot may have heard if they were delivered at Oxford in 1325. Perhaps they survive in some anonymous copy.

#### 4. John Ridewall O. F. M.

a) 'Unde Augustinus, 4 Confessionum, cap. 2, dicit de Oreste et Pilade quod traditur, si non fingitur, quod vellent pro invicem simul vivere<sup>92</sup>. Magister Iohannes Ryder' dicit quod unus optulit se pro alio ad immolandum in templo Efechie (B, fol. 46)'.

<sup>90</sup> P. Glorieux, Répertoire des maîtres en théologie de Paris XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, Paris 1933, no. 14<sup>9v</sup>. I compared the quotation in Holcot with the copy in MS Oxford, Bodl. 716, fol. 199<sup>ra-b</sup>. There is a commentary ascribed to 'Robertus' in MS Bodl. 864, foll. 69-146; but this has no similarity to Robert of Leicester's as quoted by Holcot.

<sup>91</sup> Notices of his life and writings are in A. G. Little, *The Grey Friars in Oxford*, Oxford 1892, 168-9, and C. Walmesley, *Two long lost works of William Woodford and Robert of Leicester*, in *Archivum Franciscanum historicum* 44 (1953) 458-70.

<sup>92</sup> Confess. iv, 6.

- b) 'Super istam litteram *In Domino non est confisa*<sup>93</sup> potest adduci quod in parte ait Prudentius de pictura spei<sup>94</sup>, et magister Iohannes Ridevalis<sup>95</sup> addit; et ego alia superaddam. Pingitur enim spes in forma matris... (B, fol. 96)'.  
 c) 'Potest dici quod fingunt poete de pictura suavitatis, scilicet quod erat imago sexus virilis in facie, cor madens cruore,... Dicit magister Iohannes Ridevalis quod est imago sexus virilis ad designandum quod suavitas debet carere mollitia feminea... (B, fol. 98)'.  
 d) 'Recitat magister Iohannes Ridevalis quod gratia depingitur dei Iovis nata, ... sp(h)erice sceptrata... Pingitur gratia sp(h)erice sceptrata quia, ut dicit magister Iohannes Rydevalis, pingebantur tres virgines cum tribus pomis aureis in manu, que sunt sp(h)erice facte... (B, fol. 107v)'.  
 e) 'Iterum super illam litteram *Veritatem tuam et pacem diligite*<sup>96</sup> ponit (sic) picturam veritatis, quam tangit Ieronimus in suo dialogo inter Actitum et Actabolon<sup>97</sup>, ut dicit magister Iohannes Ridevalis. Pingitur enim esse in forma virili, etate senili... (B, fol. 114v)'.

John Ridewall was 54th regent master at the Oxford Greyfriars. He was teaching there in 1330 and was present at Bâle, Oct. 28, 1340<sup>98</sup>. The date of his death is not known. Dr H. Liebeschütz has edited his *Fulgentius metaforalis*. The full title, which gives us a clue to Holcot's quotations from Ridewall, with their mention of 'pictures', is *Commentarius super Fulgentium continens picturas virtutum et viciorum sub imaginibus deorum et dearum*<sup>99</sup>. Ridewall's other work, a commentary on the Apocalypse, survives in extracts in MS Venice, Marc. lat. 494 (1790), foll. 110<sup>ra</sup>-119<sup>ra</sup>. It is written in a fourteenth-century English hand and is headed: 'Extracta de lectura fratris Iohannis Rydewalensis super Apoc.'. It follows the copy of *Fulgentius metaforalis* used by Dr Liebeschütz as the basis of his edition. He noticed that the Apocalypse commentary contained 'pictures' of the type found in *Fulgentius metaforalis*. I have used it in a microfilm.

<sup>93</sup> Soph. iii, 2.

<sup>94</sup> Psychomachia, C.S.E.L. LXI, 182-3.

<sup>95</sup> MS Gray's Inn 2, fol. 52<sup>vb</sup>, adds 'de ordine minorum'. The name is spelled 'Rydevallis' and 'Ridevallis'.

<sup>96</sup> Zach. viii, 19.

<sup>97</sup> Dialogus adversus Pelagianos, P. L. XXIII, 520: 'Veritas amara est...' MS Balliol has 'Cercobulum' for 'Actabolon', which is closer to St Jerome's 'Citolulum', but ascribes the dialogue to St Gregory.

<sup>98</sup> Eccleston, *De adventu Fratrum Minorum*, ed. Little, op. cit. 56; Little, *The Grey Friars*, op. cit., 170-1.

<sup>99</sup> Op. cit. Holcot borrows from *Fulgentius metaforalis* without naming the author; see below, p. 74.

Holcot's quotations (b) and (d) come from Ridewall on the Apocalypse. Ridewall writes on 'Spes': 'Spes depingitur, sicut tangit in parte Prudentius... (fol. 115<sup>vb</sup>)'. He gives the same attributes; but if we compare the two we see that Holcot has kept his promise to add something to Prudentius and Ridewall; his 'picture' of hope has one extra attribute. On grace, Ridewall says: 'Nota gratia a poetis depingebatur dei Iovis nata...', and explains the attribute 'spherice scep-trata' by an account of the three graces (fol. 110<sup>va-b</sup>). The only difference is that Ridewall gives grace seven attributes; Holcot adds six more. Holcot also quotes Ridewall's 'picture' of faith, here hiding him under 'quidam':

'Et quidam dicunt quod cum deo Iove fides apud antiquos fuit depicta quasi virgo delicata, quia fides, manens fides, non potest temerari, sicut virgo, manens virgo, non potest violari... secundo, pingitur fides vultu venerata... (ibid, foll. 89-90)'.

He lists thirteen attributes of faith, all found in Ridewall's commentary on the Apocalypse (fol. 115<sup>ra-b</sup>). His 'picture' of 'pigritia' (ibid., fol. 74) closely resembles Ridewall's 'picture' of 'accidia' (fol. 114<sup>vb</sup>).

Presumably Holcot had before him the complete lecture course, not merely the surviving extracts. Quotations (a), (c) and (e) are not to be found in MS Marc. lat. 494, which reads as a set of disjointed fragments and which covers only the first four chapters of the Apocalypse. (c) and (e) must have come from Ridewall's 'pictures' of 'suavitas' and 'veritas' respectively. Quotation (a) appears in a 'picture' of 'amicitia'. Perhaps the whole 'picture' derived from Ridewall. On the other hand, Holcot does not mention him even as 'quidam' as an authority for this 'picture'; he begins:

'Secundum fictionem poeticam et partim per auctoritatem sanctorum ponitur quod amicitia pingebatur in forma cervi... (ibid, fol. 45<sup>v</sup>)'.

He quotes Ridewall only as explaining St Augustine's allusion to the friendship of Orestes and Pylades in the *Confessions*. Ridewall may have commented on the *Confessions*, though it has not been recorded. He certainly commented on *De civitate Dei*<sup>100</sup>. The significance of

<sup>100</sup> His commentaries on books i, ii, iii, vi, vii of *De civitate Dei* survive in MSS Oxford, Corpus Christi College D. 186-7; see Little, *The Grey Friars*, 171. The prologue to the first book shows Ridewall already busying himself with his pagan gods and goddesses. He finds a correspondence between each of the twenty-two books

Holcot's borrowing 'pictures' from Ridewall will be discussed later. For the moment we must notice that Holcot used a little-known and partially lost work of Ridewall as well as the better-known *Fulgentius Metaforalis* and that he may be pointing to a wholly lost and unrecorded commentary on the *Confessions* of St Augustine, too. In Ridewall we have yet another classicising contemporary.

The identification of the two quotations (b and d), moreover, is a positive gain in our study of Holcot's sources. It gives one some confidence in his references to contemporaries. Ridewall's *lectura* on the Apocalypse has survived almost accidentally and is hardly known<sup>101</sup>. Wymborne, Sneyth and Robert of Leicester left works which, again by accident, have failed to survive and which now have a shadowy existence through Holcot's quotations.

At this point it will be useful to list a number of books and writers quoted by Holcot which I have not been able to trace. Two at least are classicising and all may be English. The most intriguing is 'Boralensis'<sup>102</sup>:

- a) 'Potest adduci illud quod narrat Boralensis de quodam qui cum ingenti gaudio occurebat Plutoni, et optulit ei Pluto pro pace lapidem et accepit et comedit et factus est in ore eius amare, et dedit sibi bibere de Cochito et statim occidit in foveam (B, fol. 7<sup>v</sup>)'.
- b) 'Rex enim debet esse protectio et solacium subditorum, terror adversariorum. In signum istorum et aliorum secundum Boralensem rex pingitur esse talis, scilicet oleo linctus... (ibid, foll. 11-11<sup>v</sup>)'.
- There follows a 'picture' of a king with explanation of the various attributes.
- c) 'Unde Boralensis querit que sit causa quare leges regni non custodiuntur nec libenter audiuntur. Respondeo... (ibid, fol. 24)'.

and a god. He sets out his program after listing twenty-two pagan deities: 'Ista xxii genera deorum correspondent istis xii libris, ita quod cuilibet de istis xii libris correspondet unus deus, cuius cultus specialiter ab Augustino reprobatur, sicut in prosecutione ostenditur (MS D. 186, fol. 3)'. A glance through the commentary suggests that Ridewall was working in the tradition of Trevet and Waleys and using the *De civitate Dei* as a framework for his researches into pagan history and myth. He comments at great length. Two volumes are required for his commentary on only five books; presumably that on books iii-iv went into an intermediate one. If he continued and worked on the same scale, he must have filled about twelve volumes. The surviving part would repay further study.

<sup>101</sup> John Ridewall has not been listed in Prof. F. Stegmüller's *Repertorium biblicum*.

<sup>102</sup> MS Gray's Inn 2 has 'Baralensis' (fol. 7<sup>ra</sup>) and 'Borlacensis' (fol. 62<sup>vb</sup>), 'Boralensis' in the other corresponding passages.

Holcot replies to the question: since kings will not listen to God's law, men will not listen to their laws.

- d) 'Est notandum quod secundum Boralensem quod (sic) quidam turpiter confusus, magnus et potens, requisitus cur tam enormiter confunderetur, respondit: confusus sum in vento, confusus sum in umbra, confusus sum in echo... (ibid, fol. 36)'.  
 e) 'Describit Boralensis patientiam, dicens quod est homo sedens ... (ibid, fol. 82v)'. 'Picture' of patience with attributes.  
 f) 'Ratione istius dicti pone<sup>103</sup> descriptionem devotionis quam fingit Boralensis posse dici talem. Ergo describitur esse quasi imago pallida, sp(h)eris coronata... Hec ille (ibid, fol. 117v)'. 'Picture' of devotion with attributes.

One thought first of Walter Burley, whose *De vitis et moribus philosophorum*, a collection of anecdotes about ancient sages, enjoyed enormous popularity and is quoted with acknowledgment by Holcot's contemporary, Thomas Waleys<sup>104</sup>. The anecdotes in quotations (a) and (d) might well derive from a book of the kind; but they are not to be found in *De vitis et moribus philosophorum*. In any case, it does not contain any 'pictures'. The remarks on the qualities of a good king and the question on the keeping of laws in quotations (b) and (c) might perhaps derive from Burley's commentary on Aristotle's *Politics*<sup>105</sup>; but this is still more unlikely as a source for 'pictures'. I tried the *Distinctiones* of Simon of Boraston as a 'long shot' without success<sup>106</sup>. 'Boralensis' may be a corruption. If it does refer to Walter Burley, he must have left an unrecorded work containing classicising anecdotes and 'pictures' of which Holcot quotes three, a king, patience and devotion.

A 'liber Lebeonis' is quoted as a source of *exempla* and wise sayings. The following will serve as a sample. A repentant prisoner compares his condition *inter alia* to that of one supporting the heavens without the help of Jupiter:

'Narratur parabolice in libro Lebeonis quod quidam erat sub duro onere et in impuro aere et in obscuro carcere, et ideo quando querebatur ab eo qualis erat similis, respondit: similis sum talpe cece sine lumine,

<sup>103</sup> B has 'post', MS Balliol 26, fol. 149v, more correctly 'pone'.

<sup>104</sup> Archivum FF. Praed. 24 (1954) 82.

<sup>105</sup> S. H. Thomson, Walter Burley on Aristotle's *Politics*, in *Mélanges Auguste Pelzer*, Louvain 1947, 557-78. Burley's commentary on the *Ethics* resembles that on the *Politics* in being a scholastic work with no 'pictures' in it.

<sup>106</sup> See St. L. Forte, Simon of Boraston, *Life and Writings*, in *Archivum FF. Praed.* 22 (1952) 331-4.

quia sum in obscuro carcere; similis sum mortuo sine medicamine, quia in impuro aere nichil paret differens a morte; similis sum celo sine iuvamine sub duro onere. Fingunt enim poete quod celum propter onus semel periclitabatur et cecedisset nisi Iupiter sustentasset; et quando querebatur ab eo: « qualis fuisti, quia hec pateris? non videtur quod sine causa », respondit: quia tenebras quesivi, ideo sum in obscuro carcere; gaudium odivi, ideo sum mortuus, quia tristis in impuro aere; potentiam ambivi, ideo premor duro onere. Quando querebatur ab eo qualem invenisset, respondit, penitens et dolens; inveni stellam radiantem, auram puram et recreantem, virum fortem mea onera supportantem (B, fol. 40<sup>v</sup>).

The poetic as well as the classicising flavour of this story would endear it to Holcot and to his readers; a marginal note in B says: 'Nota bonam historiam'. But what reality lies behind the title, probably corrupt in the MSS, 'liber Lebeonis'?

Holcot ascribes another story to 'a certain postillator called Peter', who appears once only, at least by name. The story resembles in type some told in Holcot's *Moralitates*; it concerns inscriptions pointing a moral. Here they are addressed to a runaway slave, who is forgiven and exhorted by his master and his friends:

'Ut autem homo curetur ab omnibus infirmitatibus est advertendum quod quidam postillator, nomine Petrus, finxit: quidam dominus habuit servum, variis insignitum, qui a domino recedens bonis omnibus spoliatur. Dominus autem, misericordia motus, scripsit sibi, dicens: voco, expecto; agnosce; remitto; ignorans contempnis, punio; accipe, redde, adiuvo, premio. Servus iste a quatuor amicis recepit varia ornamenta, quia nudus erat; et a primo amico recepit pallium, tunicam et pilleum. In pallio scriptum erat: fuge, time, quiesce. In tunica scriptum fuit per totum: proprie prudentie ne inniteris; in homine non confidas; de bono facto non peniteas; continens esto lingue et ventris. In pilleo scriptum erat: cum istis esto benignus, nemini blandus, paucis familiaris, omnibus equus... (ibid, fol. 39)'.<sup>107</sup>

We continue through the gifts and inscriptions presented by the three other friends. A story about inscriptions is unlikely to occur in a biblical commentary much earlier than Holcot's. If we assume from his very vague reference that he found the *exemplum* in a commentary on the Twelve Prophets on the text Joel i, 4 (his *locus*), we may guess at a lost commentary by Pierre de la Palu O. P.<sup>107</sup>. It is not a hopeful guess,

<sup>107</sup> Stegmüller, op. cit., no. 6767.

since the extant commentaries by Pierre de la Palu that I have seen do not contain this type of story. At any rate, Holcot is claiming to have a predecessor who invented (*finxit*) the sort of preciosity that he liked.

'A certain expositor' called Arnulf suggests a commentary of a different type. Holcot is explaining the text Sap. xvi, 9, *Illos enim locustarum et muscarum occiderunt morsus*:

'Arnolphus etiam, quidam expositor, sic ait: minimum genus locustarum in deserto Iudee, quod pastus est Iohannes, usque hodie apparet, et habet corpusculum in modum digiti manus, membris exilibus et brevibus; in herbis facile capitur. Hec ille (Sap, lect. clxxviii, p. 587)'.

It sounds like a commentary on Matthew or Mark, since Holcot has just referred to the locusts eaten by the Baptist in the wilderness (Mt. iii, 4). I have found nothing similar in any of the Gospel commentaries that I have seen. Arnulf evidently took an interest in the literal sense of the Gospel.

'Iohannes in speculo ecclesie' suggests a dictionary of biblical terms. Holcot discusses various spellings of the word 'crabrones' (Ios. xxiv, 12):

'Correctores tamen Parisienses et Iohannes in speculo ecclesie dicunt crabrones (ibid, lect. cxlviii, p. 496)'.

He cannot mean the *Catholicon* of John Balbi O. P., since he quotes it several times by its correct title<sup>108</sup>, and Balbi prefers the spelling 'cabro' to 'crabro'<sup>109</sup>. In fact the reading 'crab(r)ones' appears in the *Correctorium totius Bible*, ascribed to Grosseteste in one late manuscript, but generally anonymous. A 'Magister Iohannes in speculo ecclesie' is one of the sources most frequently quoted in this *Correctorium*. His identity is unknown<sup>110</sup>.

I have investigated a handful of Holcot's innumerable *exempla*,

<sup>108</sup> He quotes 'auctor libri qui vocatur Catholicon, on the word 'non' (Sap. lect. xlviii, p. 173) and a definition of 'cestus' 'secundum Catholicon' (Ecclus., lect. lxxii, fol. 54<sup>ra</sup>). Both passages come from *Catholicon* (ed. Lyons 1514), ad loc.

<sup>109</sup> *Catholicon*, ad loc.

<sup>110</sup> S. H. Thomson, op. cit., 128. Thomson identifies the *Speculum ecclesie* with the *De mysteriis ecclesie* of John of Garland, but this is a different type of work. I found the reading 'crabones' in MSS Bodl. Auct. D. 3. 1. (2665), fol. 408<sup>rb</sup>, Bodl. Fairfax 27 (3907), fol. 12<sup>v</sup>. Dr R. W. Hunt kindly called my attention to the *Correctorium*.

choosing only those which seem to be topical or at least characteristic. Many derive from the stock collections. He himself describes one as 'antiquum', meaning familiar<sup>111</sup>. Even if we find parallels in a later or contemporary compilation, such as Bromyard's, we need not suppose that Holcot was the source. They may have been current before we hear of them<sup>112</sup>. He has a natural liking for tales of or by members of his Order. The *Vitae Fratrum* and Etienne de Bourbon supply stories of Jordan, 'first master general of our Order'<sup>113</sup>, and we find a well-known incident from the life of St Thomas Aquinas<sup>114</sup>. Holcot cites Jacques de Lausanne O. P. as the source of an *exemplum* against pride<sup>115</sup>. 'Dominus Durandus, episcopus atque doctor', who told the story of a vision, was probably Durand de Saint-Pourçain O. P.<sup>116</sup>. Other tales and sayings come from the *Summa de virtutibus et vitiis* of Guillaume

<sup>111</sup> He contrasts the fate of the falcon and the hen, 'iuxta antiquum exemplum'. The falcon is honoured in its lifetime and thrown out when dead, whereas the despised hen is brought splendidly to table (Sap., lect. lxxv, p. 228-30). See J. Th. Welter, *La Tabula Exemplorum*, Paris 1926, 59-60, 226. The story goes back to Caesarius of Heisterbach and was very popular.

<sup>112</sup> For example the drunken man who sees two candles (B, fol. 26<sup>v</sup>) is also found in John Bromyard's *Summa Praedicatorum*, Venice 1586 II, fol. 44<sup>vb</sup>. John Bromyard O. P. may have written after Holcot, since his *Summa Praedicatorum* is cited 1336-53 and he was licensed to hear confessions in 1326; see W. A. Pantin, *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century*, Cambridge 1955, 147.

<sup>113</sup> His reply to the Cistercians (Sap., lect. xxvi, p. 94) and his gift of his belt to a poor man (Ecclus., lect. xli, fol. 33<sup>ra</sup>) from Gerardus de Fracheto, *Vitae Fratrum Praedicatorum*, ed. B. M. Reichert, *Mon. Ord. Praed. Hist. I*, Rome 1897, 139-40, 101; his story of the devil called 'Mille Artifex' (Ecclus., lect. lxxii, fol. 53<sup>vb</sup>) from Etienne de Bourbon, ed. A. Lecoy de la Marche, *Soc. Hist. Fr.*, Paris 1877, 197. Holcot quotes the compilation of Etienne by name, *Liber de septem donis* (Ecclus., lect. xli, fol. 33<sup>ra</sup>) and tells a number of *exempla* deriving from it.

<sup>114</sup> St Thomas chases away the girl sent into his room during his imprisonment (Sap. lect. xxxviii, p. 134); see *Acta Sanctorum*, Mar. I, 661.

<sup>115</sup> 'Idem patet per contradictionem cuiusdam superbi, de quo refert Iacobus de Losanna quod quidam ambitiosus honoris, cum litigasset cum alio pro beneficio pingui et optinisset in causa, contigit quod in sua presentia evangelium legeretur: omnis qui se humiliat exaltabitur, Luce 14, quod ut audivit, blasphemando dixit: falsum est, quia si me humiliassem, isto beneficio caruissem. Et statim gladius igneus intravit per os eius, et sic miserabiliter expiravit (Ecclus. lect. xxxiii, fol. 26<sup>va</sup>)'. On Jacques de Lausanne and his place in *exempla* collections, see J. Th. Welter, *L'exemplum*, op. cit., 349, 385, 405. His biblical commentaries (Stegmüller, op. cit., no. 3887-3969) are full of *exempla*.

<sup>116</sup> Ecclus. lect. I, fol. 40<sup>va</sup>. It may be in his unprinted sermons; see P. Glo-rioux, op. cit., no. 70<sup>n</sup>.

Peyraut O. P., quoted as 'Magister in summa de vitiis' and 'Auctor de vitiis et virtutibus' (B, foll. 75, 121<sup>v</sup>)<sup>117</sup>.

Holcot is often personal in his story-telling as in so much else. For instance, he tells the well-known *exemplum* of the adulterous swan whose mate called the other swans to deplume and kill her, with the observation that perhaps the female swans were called first because women tend to be harder on their own sex than on men<sup>118</sup>. The following *exempla* are localised or said to be told by persons known to Holcot and are not to be found in the stock compilations:

1. Steward cannot keep his own house in order.

'Quendam novi qui fuit optimus senescallus ordinando familiam alienam et etiam magnorum dominorum et pessime scivit ordinare de regimine domus sue (Sap. lect. xxxvii, p. 131)'.

2. A lawyer in France leaves all his wealth to the Friars Preachers of the town to found a house there. The town is not specified.

'Audi de quodam causidico de regno Francie... (ibid., lect. lvi, p. 199)'.

3. A plague of flies in Norfolk destroy the crops and are found to have the words 'ira Dei' written on their wings.

'In quadam patria Anglie que Nortfolkia nominatur dicitur contigisse quod blada in estate pulcherrima creverant (ibid., lect. ccvi, p. 681).

4. Brother Richard the Shoemaker has a vision of an apostate from the Christian faith in the time of Edward I, wearing a garment partly white and partly bloody, to signify his baptism and redemption. He complains of his sufferings for having neglected the second.

'Exemplum retulit frater Ricardus subtuler, frater admodum fide dignus, de quodam christiano qui apostavit a fide tempore regis Edwardi, filii regis Henrici in Anglia, qui, licet fuerit incarceratus per regem et sua conversatione diligentius informatus, tamen in sua malitia expiravit. Qui postea apparuit predicto fratri, qui prius eius notitiam habuit specialem, et in veste partita... (Eclus., lect. 1, fol. 40<sup>vb</sup>)'.

Holcot is probably referring to the London Dominican, John of Reading, who apostatised to the Jews, was circumcised and married a Jewess. King

<sup>117</sup> From *De acedia*, pars ii, cap. 3, and *De superbia*, pars iii, cap. 12 (*Summa aurea de virtutibus et vitiis*, ed. Lyons 1585, II, 258-9, 370-1). See A. Dondaine, *Archivum FF. Praed.* 18 (1948) 162-236.

<sup>118</sup> 'Quia communiter mulieres contra mulieres sunt crudeles et quandoque sauciabiles vel minus crudeles contra virum' (B, fol. 4). The story of the swans comes from Nequam, *De natura rerum* (Rolls Series), 112-3.

Edward I handed him over to the archbishop of Canterbury in 1275 and nothing more is heard of him. According to this story he would have died unrepentant<sup>119</sup>. Holcot does not say that he belonged to the Order, which is understandable; but he tells us that a friar had 'special knowledge' of him.

5. A priest at 'ffromme' (probably Frome in Somerset) catches his neighbours' geese with two corded and weighted rods which he calls reason and justice. At his parishioners' request he pronounces sentence of excommunication against all and sundry who have stolen geese 'without reason and justice'.

'Dicitur quod quidam sacerdos apud fromme fecit duas virgas, alligans et appendens cum corde modica pondus ferri in fine utriusque. Unam vocavit rationem et aliam iustitiam, et cum tali ratione et iustitia ipse et clericus suus de nocte in autumpno aucas vicinorum venabantur et frequentius tonderunt. Qui die dominica ad instantiam parochianorum sententiam excommunicationis protulit in hunc modum: excommunico omnes illos et singulos qui aucas talium et talium sine ratione et iustitia rapuerunt (B, fol. 34)'.

6. The practice of lawyers who, like Demosthenes, sell their silence<sup>120</sup>, is illustrated by the experience of one who practised in the court of Arches in London and afterwards became bishop of Chichester.

'Quidam autem advocatus in arcubus Londonienis effectus est postea episcopus Cicestrensis. Dixit se aliquando accepisse centum libras uno die ut taceret (ibid., fol. 62<sup>v</sup>)'.

This must refer to Gilbert of St Liffard, bishop of Chichester 1288-1305, who began his career by practising in the court of Arches in London<sup>121</sup>.

Scenes from medieval life flash from the pages as subjects for parallels or moralisation. People wait anxiously in the papal antichamber and return sadly to their lodgings when the bell goes to signal that audiences are over for the day (Sap. lect. xi, p. 40). Collectors of alms for hospitals bearing indulgences go about the world telling how many blind, paralysed and leprous patients their hospital is supporting, hoping to raise more money in proportion to the number of horrible diseases they name (ibid, lect. xliii, p. 151-2). 'A certain doctor tells that it is the custom in some places to brand a criminal in the face for

<sup>119</sup> W. A. Hinnebusch, *op. cit.*, 32-3.

<sup>120</sup> John of Wales tells the story of Demosthenes taking money not to plead, but without the topical illustration; *Communiloquium*, Lyons 1511, fol. 45<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>121</sup> *Dict. Nat. Biogr.* VII, 1197-9.

a small theft, if it is his first offence, just as we shear off a cutpurse's ear'. Holcot says that if such a thief could find a plastic surgeon to remove traces of his scar, he would be very grateful (Eccles. lect. xxvi, fol. 22<sup>ra</sup>). During the harvest children are allowed to pick fruit in mag-nates' orchards and eat as much as they can, but the gardener examines each one separately and sometimes unbelts him to see that he takes no fruit away with him. Clever boys, when they notice this, arrange to throw it over the wall or fence to some comrade who afterwards shares it. Then they can eat with enjoyment and peace of mind. Even so, rich men have to strip themselves for their friends and relatives on their deathbeds and are sometimes robbed of the very clothes and beds they lie in. Prudent men will share their goods with the poor, unknown to their relatives, and so store up treasure in heaven (ibid, lect. xlv, fol. 36<sup>va</sup>). Like Thomas Waleys, Holcot mentions the use of spectacles by old men with weak sight, to distinguish letters more clearly (ibid, lect. lxxix, fol. 52<sup>rb</sup>)<sup>122</sup>.

Natural science interests him less than the humanities as a theme for moral lessons, though he quotes a wide range of current books on all aspects of the subject. The Oxford preference for optics and perspective among the sciences is reflected in his account of an experiment to show that a penny in a dish will be visible from further off when water is poured over it (Sap. lect. xxvii, p. 97), and in his description of three kinds of geometrical figure cast by a shadow according to its relationship with the light causing the shadow (ibid, lect, lxxiv, p. 224). The Wisdom-commentary in particular shows him impressed by the need to warn students against superstition and magic. The very word 'experiment' is suspect, he tells them, referring to Gilbert's *Experimenta*<sup>123</sup>:

'Similiter in Gilberto ubicumque ponitur experimentum, intelligitur aliquid superstitiosum, que omnia generaliter spectant ad aliqua pacta antiquitus inter demones et homines constituta (lect. cxc, p. 627)'.

He knows the *Ars notoria* and has evidently seen a specimen. This magical text, ascribed to Solomon, 'seeks to gain knowledge from God by invocation of angels, mystic figures and magical prayers. We are told that the Creator revealed this art through an angel to Solomon...

<sup>122</sup> Archivum FF. Praed. 24 (1954) 73. Holcot cannot have borrowed this observation from Waleys, since the wording is quite different.

<sup>123</sup> L. Thorndike, *History of Magic and Experimental Science*, II, New York 1923, 478; Thorndike and Kibre, *Catalogue of Incipits*, op. cit., 212.

and that by it one can in a short time acquire all the liberal and mechanical arts' <sup>124</sup>. Holcot thinks that it may be entirely ineffective or else reliant on demons:

'... et inter talia videtur ars notoria tenere locum, per quam suadetur homini omnem scientiam posse acquiri per inspectionem quarundam figurarum et orationibus dicendis cum observationibus, que vel est totaliter inefficax, quod est michi credibile, vel per revelationem demonum potest haberi, observatis principiis illius artis, que sunt valde difficilia, ut patet artem illam intuenti (ibid., p. 626)'.

In the same context he quotes Haly Abbas on the *Centiloquium* ascribed to Ptolemy on a magic stone engraved with the sign of the scorpion:

'Minor probatur per illud quod narrat commentator super Centilogium Ptolemei, verbo 9, ubi narrat se vidisse quendam qui sculpsit figuram scorpionis in lapide... (ibid.)' <sup>125</sup>.

Holcot has just told two stories of deception to point his moral. A German pilgrim to St James of Compostella on his way through Navarre meets a necromancer who shows him in a mirror his wife and her lover plotting to murder him on his return and then burying him in a stable. The necromancer gives him a magic recipe against the danger, but all happens as he has seen. The tale is summarised in a rhyme (ibid, p. 625). The second tale concerns the pretender to the throne under Edward II, already referred to <sup>126</sup>. Holcot also blames the use of magical images, reported to work cures; he instances a reported cure of a fever:

'... temporibus meis quidam in Londonia dicebatur curari a quartana per imaginem leonis auream secundum certam constellationem factam (lect. clx, p. 530)'.

Old women commonly say that images acquire virtue in the sixtieth year after their manufacture (lect. clviii, p. 524).

Holcot's many proverbs might be the subject of a special study. It will be enough to say here that he notices the vogue of proverbs in

<sup>124</sup> Thorndike, op. cit., 281-2. See also S. Berger, *Quam notitiam lingue Hebraice habuerint Christiani medii aevi temporibus in Gallia*, Paris 1893, 42.

<sup>125</sup> The story is told on verbum 9 of the *Centiloquium*, MS British Museum, Royal 12 F. VIII, fol. 244<sup>vb</sup>, beginning: 'Et ego vidi...' See Thorndike and Kibre, *Catalogue* 214.

<sup>126</sup> See above, p. 20.

the arts course, where they were used for teaching grammar. They might be popular sayings or wise maxims like the following with its explanation:

'Notandum est quod proverbialiter dicitur apud grammaticos: non est tractandum cum homine umbram sequentem, cum homine fumum gerente, cum homine spicas et urticas portante nec cum homine vitam dissipante. Alium signant isti grammatici, quod amicitia non est computanda cum decem generibus hominum, scilicet cum cupidis divitibus, qui umbram sequuntur... (B, fol. 47)' <sup>127</sup>.

It would be unreal, in describing Holcot's sources, to distinguish too sharply between the medieval and the classical, and equally so to draw the line between the literary, the oral and the visual. Certain books on his shelves are now lost. His references to them introduce us to a group of writers, mainly English, who show a remarkable classicising tendency. His *exempla* echo convent gossip and his analogies show us his contemporaries going about their daily business. He took the whole of life as his library.

## V - THE 'PICTURES'

The 'pictures' in the *Moralitates* raise two problems which concern us here. First, their sources: neither Oesterley, Herbert, Welter, Saxl nor Liebeschütz could find any. The 'pictures' have an antique setting, but betray their medieval origin in every line. 'Penitentia' and 'Munditia' may serve as examples:

'Imago penitentie, quam depinxerunt sacerdotes dee Veste secundum Remigium: penitentia depingebatur ad modum unius hominis nudati per totum corpus, qui tenebat in manu sua quoddam flagellum, quinque folia ferens, in quo scribebatur quinque versus sive sententie... (Moral. XXII, p. 728)'.

Inscriptions on the five-thonged scourge follow. If the student turns confidently to Remigius of Auxerre on the *Nuptiae* of Martianus Capella, he will be disappointed. No *locus* of the *Nuptiae* could have suggested the subject of penance to his commentator, nor does Remigius

<sup>127</sup> See A. C. Friend, The Proverbs of Serlo of Wilton, in *Mediaeval Studies* 16 (1954) 179-80; L. A. Gabriel, The Educational Ideas of Christine de Pisan, in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 16 (1955) 18.

mention a temple, let alone penance, in his comments on any passage of the *Nuptiae* referring to Vesta<sup>1</sup>. Our suspicions deepen when we read on:

‘Penitentia iterum depingebatur in templo dee Veste ad similitudinem militis armati, ad ostendendum quod debemus cum diabolo pugnare (Moral. XXIII, p. 729)’.

An ‘armed knight’ is surely post-Remigian. The ‘picture’ of *Munditia* again starts from the goddess Vesta:

‘Dea Vesta depingebatur cum lilio quinque folia habente, et in quolibet folio scribebatur unus versus, quos sacerdotes templi in concursu populi in templo dee Veste exponerent (Moral. XXXII, p. 736)’<sup>2</sup>.

Vesta commonly represented chastity<sup>3</sup>, but Holcot slides from symbol to history. Where did he find his account of pagan priests giving sermons on chastity to their congregations? Other authorities quoted are ‘Theodosius in vita Alexandri’ (Moral. I, p. 709) and ‘Romulus’ or ‘Remigius in annalibus Iudeorum’ (Moral. V, VI, XXIV, p. 712-3 729). Theodosius tells of Alexander’s reception by a king of Sicily and of how he slept in a bed with four curtains, each bearing the picture of a beautiful woman with inscriptions. An expert on the medieval Alexander legend tells me that Alexander was sometimes sent to Sicily in mistake for Cilicia, but that Theodosius and his story are alike unknown in any Alexander cycle<sup>4</sup>. We may emend Romulus or Remigius to Josephus, without manuscript evidence; it does not help us to trace patently medieval stories.

The second problem concerns the interconnexion between the *Moralitates* and contemporary art. Saxl wondered whether the authors of ‘pictures’ had actual paintings in mind, or whether they thought of them as purely literary productions. The absence of illuminations in manuscripts of the *Moralitates* made him lean to the second alternative. We shall consider these two problems in the light of lectures on Scripture.

<sup>1</sup> For a genuine quotation of Remigius on the *Nuptiae* see below, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> Both the Bâle edition and MS Paris, Bibl. nat. lat. 590 (no. 18) have this text. MS London, Brit. Mus. Arundel 384, fol. 87, has: ‘Munditie imago depingebatur ad formam pulchre mulieris, stantis in veste alba, tenentis in manu liliū cum quatuor foliis, quos sacerdotes in concursu populi in templo dee Veste exponerent’.

<sup>3</sup> J. Seznec, *op. cit.*, 92, 119.

<sup>4</sup> Mr G. V. Smithers very kindly gave me this information.

The commentary on the Twelve Prophets admits us to Holcot's workshop and allows us to watch his production of 'pictures'. He fabricates one for a least half the chapters. They have become a normal part of his technique. Although he does not introduce them into his commentaries on Wisdom or Ecclesiasticus, these are relevant to our study, since they provide clues to his method. They show us a strongly visual imagination at work. Holcot mentions paintings and carvings by way of illustration. The painting on a building points to its function. A chapel has different kinds of painting from a tavern. One is painted with 'gesta sanctorum', the other with 'gesta fatuorum' (Sap. lect. lxvii, p. 239). Tombs of the wealthy are covered with carvings and paintings (Sap. lect. xii, p. 44). These show weeping and praying figures, a contrast to the corruption within<sup>5</sup>; Holcot adds the verses carved on Fair Rosamund's tomb at Godstow<sup>6</sup> (Ecclus. lect. xv, fol. 13<sup>va</sup>). He illustrates the vice of self-importance from the story of a lunatic who thought that the sky would fall unless he supported it and from the painted carving of a grotesque, pretending to support the fabric of the building. Here he gives a vivid little description of a corbel:

'... omnino similes sunt babbewyno<sup>7</sup>, depicto et sculpto, qui collo, humeris et brachiis et facie prominens, totam fabricam cum onerosa fatigatione se simulat supportare (Sap. lect. clxvi, MS Balliol 27, fol. 246<sup>vb</sup>)'.

Charlemagne is said to have had all the liberal arts painted in his palace 'miro modo' (Sap. lect. lv, p. 196)<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Holcot may have seen the 'weepers' on the tomb of Archbishop Pecham (d. 1292) at Westminster Abbey. For early representations of weepers on tombs see E. Mâle, *L'art religieuse de la fin du Moyen Age en France*, 5th ed., Paris 1949, 417.

<sup>6</sup> For the Rosamund legend and the verses on her tomb see E. Kelly, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*, Cambridge Mass. 1950, 150-2, 395.

<sup>7</sup> A 'babwen', derived from 'baboon', designated a grotesque; see J. A. H. Murray, *A New English Dictionary*, I, Oxford 1888, 606. The scribes did not understand the word and tried to correct it. MS Balliol 27 has 'Balduino' in the margin. The Bâle edition has substituted 'Baldevio', p. 549.

<sup>8</sup> Holcot mentions this in connexion with the 'translatio studii' from Rome to Paris by Charlemagne, which he could have found in the *Speculum* of Vincent of Beauvais, op. cit. I, fol. 331<sup>ra</sup> (lib. xxiii, cap. 173 of the Spec. hist.). Theodulf of Orleans wrote a poem on a picture of the seven liberal arts, but it is not certain that this was actually in the palace at Aachen; see R. Hinks, *Carolingian Art*, London 1935, 152-3. On medieval pictures of the arts see E. Mâle, *L'art religieuse du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle en France*, Paris 1948, 80-9. The actual source for the story is the chronicle of Pseudo-Turpin, ed. C. Meredith Jones, Paris 1936, 220-8.

The commentator on Ecclesiastes of MS Royal 2. D. iv, who may be Holcot, describes a picture which he has seen in a Lombard's house at Paris, showing a 'wretched woman' riding on Aristotle's back, with her speech to him in French and the Philosopher's answer, also in French:

'... per summum ingenium ergo (Aristoteles) pollebat et per supremam sapientiam quam habebat iste in medio glorie sui ingenii et virtutis ita se male humiliavit et tam de sapiente infatuatus erat quod captivatus amore cuiusdam mulieris permisit eam equitare seipsum; unde sicut vidi scriptum Parisius in domo quorundam lombardorum ibi hec historia depicta erat: mulier misera super philosophum equitans dixit sic: Aristote, sire veillard, qe tant savez d'augni et de arte, portez me suef par courtoisie on vous aurez del seorgorie. Cui miser Aristoteles respondit: Dame ieo faco tut mon poer pur acomplier vostre volire, e chose qa vous a talent pur tost venir a maudent (fol. 158<sup>v</sup>)' <sup>9</sup>.

This must have been a fresco representing the Aristotle-Phyllis legend, popular in the Middle Ages and frequently represented in medieval art from the late thirteenth century onwards. Another fresco is recorded in a fourteenth-century house at Constance, where it formed part of a 'domination of women' series, as may have been the case at Paris<sup>10</sup>. The 'mulier misera' does not suggest the pretty girl who charmed the Philosopher into crawling about on all fours to give her a ride, but our commentator may have misremembered or misinterpreted the picture.

Not content with contemporary pictures, Holcot likes to imagine them in antiquity. We have already seen how he makes the ancient Romans visit their ancestors' monuments to see their patriotic deeds commemorated there<sup>11</sup>. He adds to the twelve labours of Hercules a

<sup>9</sup> Miss M. Dulong kindly transcribed this passage for me. The text is much abbreviated, corrupt and very difficult to read. One might expect the French to come from the *Lai d'Aristote* of Henri d'Andeli, ed. M. Delbouille, *Bibl. de la Faculté de Philos. et Lettres de l'Univ. de Liège CXXIII*, Paris 1951; but it does not correspond to the conversation between Aristotle and his rider there.

<sup>10</sup> A. Borgeld, *Aristoteles en Phyllis*, Groningen 1902, 78-9. The most recent bibliography on the subject will be found in J. A. Ross, *Allegory and Romance on a medieval French marriage casket*, in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 11 (1948) 118-20. I am most grateful to Dr. B. Trapp of the Warburg Institute for his help in finding parallels to the Aristotle-Phyllis picture.

<sup>11</sup> Above, p. 42.

further achievement, the setting up of *imagines* as a sign of conquest. This may have been his own invention, since he could not have found it in Boethius or his commentator, Trevet, Holcot's source for the Hercules story<sup>12</sup>. The triumphal monuments of Hercules are moralised as are his other labours:

'Aliud factum Herculis fuit imagines erigendo. Erexit enim imagines in oriente et occidente in signum quod ab uno loco usque ad alium locum dominium acquisiverat fortitudine et virtute. Erigat homo sapiens imaginem crucifixi et... tunc erit dominus orbis et urbis et faciat iurisdictiones fieri summo Deo (B, fol. 133<sup>v</sup>)'.

Painting is used as a symbol: the devil paints vices in the shape of animals in the sinners' soul (Ecclus. lect. lii, fol. 42<sup>rb-va</sup>)<sup>13</sup>. The illuminator's technique of mixing his colours occurs twice to illustrate moral lessons (Ecclus. lect. vii, fol. 8<sup>rb</sup>, lect. lxxxi, fol. 58<sup>vb</sup>). Taken singly, none of these examples would amount to much. Collectively, they become impressive, especially in view of the extreme rarity of allusions to pictures in earlier commentaries. The only one that I can recall is a reference at second hand (legitur quod in quodam libro) to an illumination showing the flagellation of St Paul, made in the ninth-century commentary on the Pauline Epistles ascribed to Haimo<sup>14</sup>. Holcot's predecessors, however vivid their descriptions of men and nature, had not alluded to visual aids in the same way. Even his first-hand descriptions differ from others' in quality. Holcot was a conscious artist in words. He strives to convey atmosphere and to bring out the poetry in his fables and metaphors.

A touching example is his treatment of the theme 'sic transit'. The passage of time induces in him a pleasant, gentle melancholy, which he expresses first by the various similes for human life found in Scripture, all pointing to its transitory nature, then by a fable, ascribed (wrongly) to Aristotle's *Poetics*, of a poet addressing a deserted palace on its former glory, and lastly by a comparison of man's life in the world to a fox's crossing a frozen river; she listens to the current running beneath and distrusts the ice if the current flows strongly. The glory

<sup>12</sup> Above, p. 37.

<sup>13</sup> On the seven deadly sins associated with animals see M. W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, Michigan 1952, 245-9.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted by E. Riggerbach, *Historische Studien zum Hebräerbrief*, in *Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons VIII*, 1907, 63. On the authorship of the commentary *ibid.*, 80.

of the world resembles fair, shining ice and is just as brittle. Now a king, now an earl, now a bishop, now a knight passes away. A theme which might be as banal as it is gloomy acquires grace and charm in Holcot's phrasing:

'Notandum est quod sacra scriptura vitam humanam comparat multis rebus, sed nunquam vel raro alicui rei permanenti vel stabili, sed semper rebus transeuntibus et caducis. Comparatur autem vita humana quandoque herbe, quandoque rori, quandoque hospiti, quandoque cursori. Omnia autem ista transitoria sunt, momentanea et caduca... Sic ergo patet quod vita nostra semper rebus transitoriis comparatur, iuxta responsionem quam quoddam vetus palatium desertum dicitur respondisse; unde Aristoteles in Poetria inducit fabulam cuiusdam poete quoddam palatium desertum deplora(n)tis in his verbis: Domus egregial compungor ad lacrimas, tuam intuens solitudinem. At illa contremuit, compassa michi propter lacrimarum multitudinem. Cui inquit: Ubi, queso, sunt qui quondam in te habitaverunt et iocundam vitam cum securitate et temporis amenitate duxerunt? At illa: temporales, inquit, exeuntes temporaliter cum tempore, et me quoque sub sorte temporis quandoque transituram dimiserunt. Res nempe nulle stabiles, que cum fluxu huius temporis fluxibiles fluunt. Hec responsio palatii<sup>15</sup>. Vulpecula, transitura glaciem, apponit aurem ad glaciem et si audit aquam currentem et fluentem fortiter sub glacie nullo modo confidit de illa glacie, quia est nimis tenuis ad supportandum eam. Ista cautela debemus nos uti. Gloria mundi est quasi quedam pulchra et splendens glacies, quia delectabile est honorari ab hominibus, pasci et potari et vestiri delicate et habere magnam familiam, cui possit imperare; sed cavendum, quia glacies illa est valde fragilis. Ausculta diligenter et audies murmur aquarum transeuntium sub ista glacie. Apocalipsis: Aque multe, populi multi<sup>16</sup>. Advertas et audies, quia modo transit unus rex in mortem, modo unus comes, modo episcopus, modo miles, et sic de aliis; et ideo de illa glacie non est confidendum (Sap. lect. xvii, MS Balliol 27, foll. 29<sup>v</sup>b-30<sup>v</sup>a)'.<sup>15</sup>

Coming closer to the 'pictures' we find in the prologue to Ecclesiasticus Holy Scripture personified with the seven liberal arts kneeling round her, each with the instrument of her trade:

'Unde imaginandum est quod septem artes, quasi septem ancille ad arcem domine imperatricis, provolutis genibus, obtulerunt suum ancillarium famulatum, ut possint ab ea dirigi et tueri, at imperatrix, provida percunctatrix, siscitabatur a singulis quidnam agere vel in quo servire

<sup>15</sup> I do not know the source of this quotation.

<sup>16</sup> From Apoc. xvii, 15.

sciverunt. Tunc grammatica, vestita lineis atramentarum scriptorum ad renes eius calamo scribens sic suum officium intimavit... (Ecclus. lect. i, fol. 2<sup>vb</sup>)'.

Holcot could easily have seen a representation of Philosophy with the seven liberal arts and only had to adapt it to Scripture, if indeed, this had not already been done for him. He was accustomed to personifications of Philosophy and virtues. Coming closer still, we find representations of the gods and goddesses with their attributes. Holcot, in common with many of his contemporaries, took a great interest in the pagan deities. He seizes the opportunity, offered by the attack on idolatry in Wisdom, to give an account of the pagan pantheon, as he knew it (Sap. lect. clv, p. 518-9). In other contexts he refers for instance to Minerva (ista dea depingebatur quasi virgo decora...), to Mercury, to Apollo and to Fortune (Sap. lect. cxiii, p. 380, lect. cxli, p. 473, Ecclus. lect. x, fol. 9<sup>rb</sup>, lect. lxxiii, fol. 54<sup>rb</sup>). His sources were Fulgentius, Isidore, Martianus Capella with the commentary of Remigius, Peter Comestor and Mythographus tertius, the last quoted as 'Alexander Nequam in scintillario poetarum'<sup>17</sup>. Often the deities are moralised after the manner of John Ridewall in his *Fulgentius metaforalis*<sup>18</sup>. These moralisations make a bridge to the 'pictures' as when Holcot describes 'ebrietas' under the form of a god:

'Fingitur a quodam imaginem ebrietatis sic fuisse depictam, ut imago puerilis, cornu habens in manu et in capite coronam vitream (Sap. lect. xxi, p. 77)'.

The child signified that a drunkard becomes speechless and childish, the horn that he keeps no secret, the crown that he thinks himself glorious and rich when he is really a nobody<sup>19</sup>.

The commentary on the Twelve Prophets contains the following 'pictures'. Holcot introduces them *à propos* of some word or phrase in his biblical text. He generally puts them into rhythm or rhyme.

<sup>17</sup> The author was probably Master Alberic of London; see E. Rathbone, Master Alberic of London, 'Mythographus Tertius Vaticanus', in *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies* 1 (1941) 35-8. On medieval knowledge of the gods and their attributes, see J. Seznec, *op. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> Ed. H. Liebeschütz, *op. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> Holcot does not give his sources here. He identifies 'ebrietas' with the god Liber and works out his attributes with reference to his authorities at length in a 'picture'; see below, p. 73.

Presumably he intended them as an aid to preaching and this would make them easier to memorise. Sometimes he gives a source for the 'picture' or at least indicates his starting point; sometimes he launches straight off by himself. He first catalogues the attributes of his 'picture'; then he justifies each one by a string of quotations from Scripture, the classics or medieval authors, often all three, explaining its moral significance. The arrangement may differ slightly in that he sets out the authorities for each attribute after its place in the catalogue, instead of completing the catalogue first. I have reduced each 'picture' to its catalogue to save space. The justification and moralisation of an attribute may involve an *exemplum* or even a *quaestio*. The 'picture' often takes up a whole chapter of exposition, apart from the *divisio textus* at the beginning.

My purpose in transcribing the 'pictures' is to illustrate the development of a technique; but they may also have some interest for students of medieval iconography<sup>20</sup>.

1. *Fornicatio*, on Os. i, 2

'Fornicatio pingitur esse una mulier, lecto reclinata propter desideria... 2° pingitur ut stomacho gravata... 3° depingitur pice denigrata... Iterum 4° pingitur ut dextra mutilata propter vecordiam... Iterum 5° depingitur ut cornu ventilata propter eius ignorantiam et frontositatem... 6° pingitur ut oculis orbata propter ignorantiam et cecitatem... 7° item pingitur cremata propter vehementiam ardoris in re acta... Iterum 8° pingitur ut corpore vitiato propter infectionum frequentiam... Item 9° pingitur ut fame fedata propter fetoris olentiam... Item 10° pingitur cede cruentata propter consequentem discordiam' (B, foll. 3-4).

2. *Cupido*, on Os. ii, 3

'Super illam litteram, *Ne forte expoliam eam nudam*, potest (esse) descriptio Cupidinis, dei amoris. Pingitur enim puer pharetratus, facie ignitus, nudus et pennatus, adamantinis nexibus alligatus. Ultimam conditionem ponit Remigius super Martianum, *De nuptiis Mercurii et Philologie*' (B, fol. 6, 6v)<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> See for instance R. Freyhan, *The Evolution of the Caritas Figure in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 11 (1948) 68-86.

<sup>21</sup> The whole description comes from Remigius on the *Nuptiae*; I have used the twelfth-century copy in MS Merton College 291: '*In potentiam pharetrate Cupidinis dicit, ut malum demonstret esse Cupidinem filium Veneris, qui depingitur*

3. *Rex*, on Os. iii, 4-5

'Rex enim debet esse protectio et solatium subditorum, terror adversariorum. In signum istorum et aliorum secundum Boralensem rex pingitur esse talis, scilicet oleo linctus, sole vestitus, anulo insignitus, virgis sceptratus, iride coronatus, luna calciatus, in throno collocatus, baltheo zonatus, leonibus armatus, ut sic per istas decem descriptiones possit pervenire ad regnum celorum' (fol. 11, 11<sup>v</sup>).

4. *Terra*, on Os. iv, 1 (against worldly riches)

'Potest dici quod terra tunc potuit esse descripta sub specie cuiusdam statue habentis buccas grandes, bovinas linguas et caudas serpentinas, in manu sinistra gladium, in dextra manu Mercurium<sup>22</sup>, cum oculo chimerino<sup>23</sup> et pede vulpino, et hoc dico correspondenter ad litteram istam' (fol. 16<sup>v</sup>).

5. *Catitas sive dilectio*, on Os. vi, (the whole chapter)

'Hic dicendum est secundum Augustinum super Iohannem, sermone 7: Qualem faciem habet dilectio, qualem formam, qualem staturam, quales manus, quales pedes habet, nemo potest dicere. Habet tamen pedes, quia ipsi ducunt ad ecclesiam<sup>24</sup>. Unde ex ista imagine potest caritas sive dilectio describi sicut una regina in throno collocata, statura elevata, figura quadrata, Phebo maritata, prole vallata, melle cibata, cum facie quadriformi et veste auriformi, manus habens stillantes et porrectas, aures apertas et directas, oculos flammeos et uxorinos et pedes caprinos (fol. 21)'.<sup>25</sup>

6. *Liber*, on Os. vii, 5 (against drunkenness)

'Ex istis<sup>26</sup> apparet quod Liber, id est deus vini, depingitur quasi iuvenis, hyans, hirsutus, exprimens et cornutus, a Merone nutritus, victor solis calore, sedens in tigribus (MS tegribus), vallatus (MS vallata) menadibus, id est ministris; cum defectibus depingitur, nudus seu nudatus, membratim divisus, de femore Iovis natus, edere adornatus (fol. 25<sup>v</sup>)'.

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puer nudus, alatus et pharetratus... *Adamantinis nexibus*, id est fortissimis et insolubilibus (fol. 3<sup>va</sup>)'

'*Micat*, id est splendet tibi Cupido flagrans, id est splendore ore, id est aspectu... (fol. 1<sup>rb</sup>)'.

<sup>22</sup> Explained later as: 'Iterum 4<sup>o</sup> describitur terra quasi statua cum Mercurio et hoc propter furtum... Mercurius enim dicitur deus mercatorum et furis (fol. 17<sup>v</sup>)'.

<sup>23</sup> 'Chimera enim interpretatur idem quod fluctuans in amore (fol. 18)'.

<sup>24</sup> From Augustine, In Epist. Ioh. tract. VII, cap. iv, P. L. 135, 2034. The personification is further worked out by Augustine: 'Habet manus nam ipsae pauperi porrigunt... Habet oculos... Habet aures...'

<sup>26</sup> Holcot found all these attributes in Mythographus tertius, ed. G. H. Bode, *Scriptores rerum mythicarum* (Cellis, 1834), 245-6. He refers to it in his explanation as 'Alexander in mythologiis suis'.

7. *Idolatria*, on Os. ix, 1

' In fine capituli, super illam litteram *Noli letari*, ubi loquitur de idolatria, pono picturam antiquorum de idolatria. Depingebatur enim quasi mulier notata, oculis orbata, aure mutilata, cornu ventilata, vultu deformata, morbo vexata <sup>26</sup> (fol. 30) '.

8. *Puer*, on Os. xi, 1 (on innocence)

' Super illam litteram, *Quia puer Israel*, dicitur quod puer depingebatur sine (sic, cum?) specie floris, modice stature, forme pure, vultu letatus, lacte satiatius, paratus ad ambulandum, extendens manus ad dandum et os ostendens ad osculandum (fol. 32) '.

9. *Amicitia*, on Joel ii, 18

' Iterum super illam litteram, *Zelatus est Dominus*, dicitur quod Dominus amore punivit eos, quia ipse est enim amicus noster specialis... Secundum fictionem poeticam et partim per auctoritatem sanctorum ponitur quod amicitia pingebatur in forma cervi, alterius cervi capud supportantis <sup>27</sup>, in forma cordis in duobus corporibus existentis, in forma anime duo corpora vivificantis, in forma papardi et camaleonis colorem mutantis, in forma panis recreantis, in forma lucis et solis letificantis, in forma pueri ortum custodientis, in forma ferri ferrum acuentis (fol. 45<sup>v</sup>) '.

10. *Pigritia*, on Mich. iv, 5

' Super istam litteram, *Omnes populi ambulabunt unusquisque in nomine dei sui*, dicitur quod hoc est contra habentes pigritiam, qui torpent et iacent, que pigritia depingitur quasi vetula rugosa, in lecto soporata, pede vulnerata, manu mutilata, fame attenuata, veste lacerata, igne concremata... <sup>28</sup>. Unde secundum quendam grammaticum depingitur pigritia cum spinis acutis in signum quod homines ferventer et acute laborant pro temporalibus divitiis adquirendum, et iste spine lacerant vestem caritatis et pietatis... Nota secundum Remigium quod pigritia pingitur habere visum obscuratum, auditum gravatum, tactum ebetatum, pallentem in colore, tristem in merore <sup>29</sup> (fol. 74, 74<sup>v</sup>) '.

<sup>26</sup> From John Ridewall's *Fulgentius metaforalis*, op. cit., 70. The rhymed description is the same. Ridewall prefaces it by the words: ' Notari autem potest, qualiter antiqua pictura poetica huius maximi peccati, scilicet idolatrie, concordat cum processu Fulgentii in serie istius mythologie. Hec enim fuit apud aliquos idolatria... '.

<sup>27</sup> In justifying this description, Holcot cites Augustine's story of deer helping one another across a river by supporting one another's heads, on Gal. vi, 2, De divinis quaestiones lxxxiii, quaestio 71, P. L. 40, 81.

<sup>28</sup> Based on ' Accidia ' in Ridewall's *Lectura*, above, p. 55.

<sup>29</sup> I have not identified the ' quidam grammaticus ' or the passage in Remigius. The latter may be wrongly ascribed, since there is no obvious locus for a picture of ' pigritia ' in the Nuptiae.

11. *Patientia*, on Nahum i, 3

'Super istam litteram, *Dominus patiens*, describit Boralensis patientiam, dicens quod est homo sedens, ditatus, vilibus cibatus, vultu letatus, omnibus inclinatus<sup>30</sup>, purpura vestitus, hostibus munitus, cum manu arida et alia extenta, sine pedibus, sine lingua et auribus (fol. 82<sup>v</sup>)'.

12. *Impatientia*, on same text

'Impatientia fuit descripta quasi pauper splendide cibatus, mestitia respersus, omnibus adversus, vestibus nudatus, aculeis vallatus, cum manibus leprosis et pedibus vulpinis, cum lingua serpentina et auribus leoninis. Expositio istius picture pateri potest ex dicta descriptione patientie. Ideo transeo (fol. 83)'.

13. *Luxuria*, on Nahum iii, 4

'Notandum quod secundum aliquos luxuria fuit depicta mulier plena sorde, sine corde, excecata, spoliata, ignita, columbis custodita, cum dampno de mari nata, Vulcano maritata, concha marina honorata, rosis adornata<sup>31</sup> (fol. 85<sup>v</sup>)'.

14. *Fides*, on Habuc. ii, 19

'Quintum peccatum fuit idolatria, ibi, *Ve qui dicit ligno etc.* Nota quod dicit Augustinus, 4 De civitate Dei, cap. 20: Fides, inquit, dea credita est et accepit illius (sic) templum et altare inter deos<sup>32</sup>; et quidam dicunt quod cum deo Iove fides apud antiquos fuit depicta quasi virgo delicata... 2<sup>o</sup> pingitur fides vultu venerata... 3<sup>o</sup> pingitur fides purpurata... 4<sup>o</sup> pingitur fides frontē signata... 5<sup>o</sup> depingitur manu dextra, utens utraque manu pro dextra... 6<sup>o</sup> pingitur fides ornata... 7<sup>o</sup> scribitur (sic) fides anulo arrata... 8<sup>o</sup> pingitur fides in equo locata... 9<sup>o</sup> pingitur fides hostibus vallata... 10<sup>o</sup> armis velata... 11<sup>o</sup> scuto gemmata... 12<sup>o</sup> telis infestata... 13<sup>o</sup> formata caritate... (foll. 89-90)<sup>33</sup>'.

15. *Fortuna*, on Habuc. iii, 4

'Notandum quod Moyses dicitur fuisse cornutus et divites dicuntur cornuti propter fortunam, que depingitur quasi mulier delicata, in rota celata, cum facie duplata, vultu variata, visu excecata, cornibus vallata (fol. 91<sup>v</sup>)'.

16. *Spes*, on Soph. iii, 2

'Super istam litteram, *In Domino non est confisa*, potest adduci quod in parte ait Prudentius de pictura spei et magister Iohannes Ridevalis addit, et ego alia superaddam. Pingitur enim spes in forma matris seu matrone, sta-

<sup>30</sup> MS 'ab omnibus', but 'homo omnibus inclinatus' below.

<sup>31</sup> The 'picture' of Luxuria slides into a description of Venus.

<sup>32</sup> De civ. Dei iv, 20.

<sup>33</sup> From Ridewall's *Lectura in Apoc.*, see above, p. 55. Holcot has taken the attributes from Ridewall, but added his own *exempla*, quotations and explanations.

ture erecte, scuto protecte, decore commendate, vultu letate, hostibus vallate; galea firmata, suaviter dicitur pennata, nam applicata in pulvere collocata, pacifice conversata<sup>34</sup>. Depingitur in forma matrone quando agitatur hastam vibrantem (MS vibrantis), auro coronate, lanceo sceptrate (fol. 96)'.

17. *Suavitas*, on Ag. i, 10

'Potest dici quod fingunt poete de pictura suavitatis, scilicet quod erat imago sexus virilis, infacilis, cor madens cruore, oculis amore (sic); os spirat dulcorem, manus fundunt rorem. Dicit magister Iohannes Ridevalensis quod est imago sexus virilis ad designandum quod suavitas debet carere mollitie feminea...<sup>35</sup> (fol. 98)'.

18. *Pax*, on Ag. i, 12

'Notandum autem quod Iesus est rex pacificus et pax secundum quosdam depingitur esse una domina ex Minerva generata, statura elevata, facie iocundata, gladio reparata, olivis honorata, care comparata, tubis proclamata, res sociata, lucidi coloris, validi vigoris (fol. 98)'.

19. *Misericordia*, on Zach. i, 16

'Super illam litteram, *Revertar ad Ierusalem in misericordiis*, fingitur quod misericordia erat picta quasi mulier de Phebo generata, pellicano confortata, oleo coronata, aquis irrigata, in sinistra sex lili foliis adornata, in dextra sex lucernis illustrata, cum sinistra plena et dextra serena, cum vultu iocundato et vestitu variato, cum ore ebrioso et latere diviso... in medio egen-  
tium collocata, sanguissuge sociata... ore obriso (fol. 101v)'.

20. *Gratia*, on Zach. iv, 7

'Notandum est propter litteram *Exequabit gratia gratie* ponitur depictio gratie quod dicitur esse talis secundum Fulgentium et alios. Recitat magister Iohannes Ridevalis quod gratia depingitur dei Iovis nata, nectare cibata, ore dulcorata, sensu approbata, lumine lustrata, flore decorata, facie letata, vultu variata, veste nudata, serto coronata, lingua lunata, manu colligata, numero sacrata, sp(h)erice sceptrata, musis comitata<sup>36</sup> (fol. 107v)'.

<sup>34</sup> Also from Ridewall's *Lectura*, above, p. 55. Holcot has added the last attribute and much of the explanation. The *Psychomachia* of Prudentius has suggested only the 'dulciter dicitur pennata'; '... praestringens aëra pinnis in caelum se virgo rapit' (C.S.E.L. LXI, 183). The 'stature erecte' may perhaps echo the *Peristephanon*; 'spem non iacentem' (ibid., 383). The *Spes* of Prudentius is a virgin, not a matron.

<sup>35</sup> Holcot is referring to a part of the *Lectura* now lost.

<sup>36</sup> From Ridewall's *Lectura*, see above, p. 55. Ridewall gives seven attributes of 'gratia'; Holcot fifteen.

21. *Avaritia*, on Zach. v, 7: *Ecce mulier sedens in medio amphorae*

'Notandum quod amphora dicitur esse avaritia et avarus etiam describitur secundum Chrysostomum super Mat., omelia 28, esse homo ab oculis ignem emittens, niger, ab alterutris humeris dracones habens (loco) manus dependentes. Fit autem ei os pro dentibus gladios acutos habens infixos, pro lingua autem veneni et pestiferi formati fontem emanantem, habens etiam ventrem caminum; pedes sunt subalati; facies ipsa a lupo et cane constructa, et loquitur nichil humanum sed sonitum habet non delectabilem, sed terribilem, et in manibus flammam habet. Terribilia esse videntur que dicta sunt, sed nondum secundum quod est avaritiae formavimus. Hec ille <sup>37</sup>. Ex istis dictis posset dici quod avarus pingitur esse homo denigratus in cute, gladio transverberatus, cum fonte venenato et oculis igneis cum flamma in manibus, ex humeris draconibus dependentibus, cum vultu lupino, habens os pro dentibus cum subalatis pedibus et sonis terribilibus (fol. 109)'

22. *Veritas*, on Zach. viii, 19

'Iterum super illam litteram, *Veritatem et pacem diligite*, ponit picturam veritatis quam tangit Ieronimus in suo dialogo inter Atticum et Actabolon (sic), ut dicit magister Iohannes Ridevalis <sup>38</sup>. Pingitur enim esse in forma virili, etate senili, veste lacerata, fronte rugata, corpore fedata, pedibus nudata, onere gravata, armis infestata, onere captivata, morte dampnata, capite truncata, sed in sede revocata. Hec omnia patent in Christo (fol. 114<sup>v</sup>)'

23. *Devotio*, on Zach. x, 2

'Ratione istius dicti pone (MS post) descriptionem devotionis quam fingit Boralensis posse dici talem. Ergo describitur esse quasi imago pallida, sp(h)eris coronata, Iovi consecrata, nectare nutrita, podere vestita <sup>39</sup>, fontibus irrigata, hostibus impugnata, sensibus sopita, facibus ignita, balsamo intincta, vario precincta, oleo lincta, Hercule munita. Hec ille (fol. 117<sup>v</sup>)'

24. *Superbia*, on Zach. xi, 2

'Nota quod superbia describitur vel depingitur esse quasi rex coronatus, ut aquila exaltatus, vestibus laceratus, capite infirmatus, cum dentibus aprinis et pedibus taurinis, colore denigratus, familia stipatus, magnam habens prolem et impugnans solem, vermibus infestatus, in fetibus collocatus, tenebrescens et intumescens <sup>40</sup> (fol. 120<sup>v</sup>)'

<sup>37</sup> Hom. xxviii in Mt., P. G. 58, 356. Holcot has copied this description of a monster faithfully from Chrysostom, who ends: 'Hoc monstro deterior est avarus'.

<sup>38</sup> This comes from a lost part of Ridewall's *Lectura*. Atticus says to Critobulus in St Jerome's *Dialogus adversus Pelagianos*: 'Veritas amara est, rugosae frontis, offenditque correptos'. (P. L. XXIII, 520).

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Apoc. i, 18.

<sup>40</sup> Ridewall's 'picture' of superbia in his *Lectura* (fol. 117<sup>ra</sup>) is quite different from Holcot's.

25. *Mansuetudo*, on Zach. xiv, 3

' Ideo dico quod hec virtus mansuetudo describitur sive depingitur quasi una domina regiña, divitiis ditata, in pace locata, orti servativa, ferri attractiva, cum pulchra comitiva, Iovis placativa, viliter despecta et fortiter protecta, in auribus ornata, honorifice exaltata (fol. 128) '.

26. *Paupertas*, on Malach. ii, 2: *Mittam in vos egestatem*.

' Dicitur quod paupertas describitur quasi una domina, vultu letata, philosophis maritata, deliciis relecta, Iano despecta<sup>41</sup>, quasi aqua clara et pura, ut castrum segura, sedens quietata, recte dimensionata, hostibus infestata, auro coronata, armis immunita, bisso vestita, mercibus honorata, in sublimi collocata (fol. 136v) '.

Our list shows that Holcot had predecessors in the invention of 'pictures', John Ridewall (7, 10, 14, 16, 20, 22), the mysterious Boralensis (3, 11, 23) and perhaps an unnamed grammarian (10). He ascribes the semi-classical 'pictures' of 'Luxuria' (13) and 'Pax' (18) to 'aliqui' or 'quidam'. John Ridewall certainly and Boralensis possibly had used them in biblical commentaries. Ridewall provides a clue to their genesis. His technique in his *Fulgentius metaforalis* was to collect the attributes of a god or goddess from his classical sources, rhyme them and then moralise them. Fulgentius' description of Saturnus-Prudentia, 'Opis maritus, senior, velato capite, falcem ferens; cuius virilia abscissa et in mari proiecta Venerem genuerunt', becomes: 'Nam pingitur: Opi maritatus, senio gravatus, capite velatus et falce sceptratus, vultu desolatus, pudendis orbatus et prole cibatus'<sup>42</sup>. Ridewall transferred the method to the 'picture' of an abstraction or sin, 'idolatria', giving it an extra *cachet* by calling it 'antiqua pictura poetica'<sup>43</sup>. In his *Lectura* on the Apocalypse he tried his hand at 'prophetica revelatio'<sup>44</sup> and virtues and vices. Once the technique had been discovered, mass-production could begin. The same attribute, such as 'vultu letatus' or 'iocundatus' could be used many times. Those looking for material could find it in the Fathers, not to mention

<sup>41</sup> Holcot supports this attribute by Horace, Epist. I, i, 15 (fol. 137), quoting the inscription in the temple of Janus.

<sup>42</sup> Op. cit., 73.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>44</sup> MS Marc. lat. 494 (1790), fol. 110<sup>ra</sup>: 'Nota quod philosophi depinxerunt revelationem propheticam cum 12 conditionibus, que possunt appropriari Christo'. A 'picture' follows.

Prudentius and Boethius. 'Dilectio' had hands and feet according to Augustine (5), 'Veritas' a wrinkled forehead according to Jerome (22); Chrysostom described the avaricious man as a fantastic monster, which needed only slight rearrangement to turn it into a 'picture' (21). The study of rhetoric contributed 'poetic fictions' as a source (9, 17); the list of figures for 'Amicitia' (9) suggests a series of emblems rather than a single 'picture' of the usual type. The *distinctio* was another precursor of the 'picture'. Holcot's 'Puer' (8) could be re-written as a *distinctio*; he lists and moralises the properties of a child<sup>45</sup>. The development lies in his disposition of the properties. Instead of remaining a mere list, as they would do in a *distinctio*, they create the image of a real live baby. For the most part, however, the 'pictures' do not lend themselves to reproduction in colour and line. They consist of qualities which are sometimes hardly capable of representation, such as 'fame fedata' (1), and sometimes incompatible; 'Luxuria' is both 'spoliata' and 'rosis adornata' (13). The gods and goddesses as represented in medieval art have more attributes than they know how to carry<sup>46</sup>. It is even more difficult to envisage 'Fides' with her thirteen qualities (14). They would tax the most resourceful artist.

Holcot so far has borrowed an existing technique. Apart from the sources that he acknowledges, it is impossible to guess how far his 'pictures' were original and how far suggested or adapted from others. The *Moralitates* show an advance in method. There are three main changes. He reduces his cumbersome set of attributes so as to present a single image, fanciful indeed, but easily grasped and capable of being drawn or painted. This makes room for verbal inscriptions in the 'picture', helping to point its moral. They appear on or besides the figure or on scrolls which are part of the design. Thirdly, he seems to insist much more on the antique setting. To see the difference, one may compare the incisive 'picture' of 'Misericordia', as 'the pagans' used to paint it, in the *Moralitates* with the corresponding muddle in the commentary (19); a man holds a cloven heart inscribed with messages of mercy:

'Finxerunt pagani tot esse deos quot sunt virtutes, quibus diis virtutes appellate et appropriate sunt. Deus autem pietatis et clementie depingebatur ad similitudinem hominis, qui tenebat in manu sua cor scissum

<sup>45</sup> B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible*, 246-8, 258-9.

<sup>46</sup> J. Sez nec, *op. cit.*, 149-83.

in duas partes; et in circuitu cordis scribèbatur litteris aureis sic: Pietas et misericordia tota die expectant, quando peccator a suo peccato recedere curet. In una parte cordis scriptum erat litteris aureis sic: Nisi esset peccatum, non esset misericordia; si venia petatur, cito habetur. In latera parte cordis scribebatur: Ibi est misericordia, ubi est peccatum; ibi nulla est misericordia, ubi nullum est peccatum (Moral. III, p. 710)'.

'Amicitia' has ceased to be a catalogue of symbols (9) and has become a youth dressed in green, with inscriptions on his bare head, on the fringe of his dress and on the heart in his open side:

'Narrat Fulgentius in quodam libro de gestis romanorum quod romani verum amorem sive veram amicitiam hoc modo descriperunt, scilicet quod imago amoris vel amicitie depicta erat instar iuvenis cuiusdam valde pulchri, induti habitu virido. Facies eius et capud discooperta erant sive nudata et in fronte ipsius erat hoc scriptum: Hyems et estas. Erat latus eius apertum, ita ut videretur cor, in quo scripta erant hec verba: Longe et prope. Et in fimbria vestimenti eius erat scriptum: Mors et vita. Similiter ista imago habebat pedes nudos etc. (Moral. XXVI, p. 731)'.

We may also compare the 'imago pallida' of 'Devotio' ascribed to Boralensis, whence no clear figure emerges (23), with the very paintable 'Oratio' of the *Moralitates* (Moral. XIX, p. 725). Here stands a man with head and heart turned heavenwards, surrounded by four angels each bearing a scroll inscribed with encouraging verses.

Holcot shows a liking for inscriptions in all his commentaries. He mentions devices on shields (Sap. lect. xxxvi, p. 127), verses on the tomb of Fair Rosamund (Ecclus. lect. xv, fol. 13<sup>va</sup>) and of Julius Caesar (B, fol. 119), and collects *exempla* which bring them in <sup>47</sup>. He had only to combine them with 'pictures' in his *Moralitates*. Contemporary English illumination may have suggested the combination. Dr. R. W. Hunt points out to me the distinctive intermingling of scrolls and inscriptions in the illumination of William de Brailes, an English artist,

<sup>47</sup> The *exemplum* ascribed to a certain commentator called Peter has already been quoted, above p. 58. Other examples are the story of the statue with inscriptions concealing buried treasure (B, fol. 23); see Catalogue of Romances, op. cit. III, 127; the story of inscriptions on circles found below the house of a wealthy man at Rome (B, fol. 36<sup>v</sup>); see Catalogue of Romances III, 240; and a story which I have not identified of a Jew who saw in a dream, before the Incarnation, a silver statue between two valleys, having a golden head, a crown of flowers, and the Tetragrammaton inscribed on it (B, fol. 63).

almost certainly working in Oxford, of the second half of the thirteenth century<sup>48</sup>.

The commentaries, therefore, show a stage in the evolution of a *genre*. Holcot must have pondered long before he hit on the right formula for presenting his 'pictures'. The success of his *Moralitates* rewarded his efforts.

We may now answer the second of the two questions raised by his 'picture' technique. Had Holcot any real pictures in mind? Would he have been surprised to see his words illustrated in early fifteenth-century picture books? Here 'Amicitia', for example, is shown in his green dress, just as Holcot described him<sup>49</sup>. Did he, on the contrary, think of them as 'purely literary productions'? We can say that Saxl was right in preferring the second hypothesis<sup>50</sup>. The 'pictures' had a purely literary genesis, though they may have been influenced by the use of inscriptions in contemporary art. It is doubtful that Holcot looked forward to a time when his 'pictures' would become illuminations. It is much more probable that he meant to help the preacher to tickle the curiosity of a sophisticated audience. He was developing the *exemplum* from classical sources, so much in favour for the purpose. An image which could be readily visualised, just complicated enough to intrigue without confusing, projected back into romanticised antiquity, and furnished with short inscriptions to intrigue the hearers still further and to stick in their memories, this was excellent material. The 'pictures' have parallels, moreover, in fabricated laws, letters and mottoes on armour, which are literary by definition<sup>51</sup>. The 'pictures' are aural, not visual aids to preaching.

One can also suggest an answer to the first question: what were Holcot's sources in the *Moralitates*? The puzzle simplifies itself if one considers his purpose. We have seen him give Livy as an authority for apocryphal stories in his commentaries; so we are not surprised to find Livy sponsoring tales of a golden table and an image of the goddess

<sup>48</sup> S. Cockerell, *The Work of William de Brailles* (Roxburghe Club), Cambridge 1930, 5, 17; D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, Cambridge 1948, 302; G. Pollard, in *Bodleian Library Record* 5 (1955) 202-9.

<sup>49</sup> Reproduced by F. Saxl, *op. cit.*, plate 23 c.

<sup>50</sup> *Op. cit.* 102.

<sup>51</sup> Moral. I-II, V-VII, IX, XVII, XXIV, XLVI. For *exempla* concerning laws in the commentaries, see above, p. 36, 52. Nicholaś Trevet may have helped to popularise the 'ancient law' type of *exemplum* in his *Declamationes Seneca moralitate*; see J. Th. Welter, *op. cit.*, p. 363 n. 60.

of Fortune, which are not in *Ab Urbe condita* (Moral. XXI, XLIV, p. 727, 744). If Holcot could attach *exempla* to real authors with no justification, may he not have invented authors as well as *exempla*? He used a medley of classical and medieval sources, medieval commentaries on classical texts in particular. The borderline between what he read and what he invented must have been thin. 'Theodosius' and 'Romulus' may have been part of his setting, designed to strengthen the illusion of antiquity. He anticipates the historical novelist who claims to have found his tale 'in an old manuscript', hidden in some secret drawer. Holcot not only pillaged antiquity and improved on it, but invented ancient tales and ancient authors when it suited him. He had the qualities of a historical romancer. The fourteenth-century sermon provided scope for talents which we now associate with secular literature.

## VI - THE MIND OF HOLCOT

Holcot admitted as an exegete to the scepticism that he professed as a theologian. He did not parade it. The text of Ecclesiasticus and of the Lesser Prophets gave him no reason to discuss proofs for the existence of God or for the immortality of the soul and he did not raise the question. Wisdom, on the contrary, offered a challenge which he felt bound to meet. He put forward the same opinion as he did in his Sentence commentary. It appears even starker owing to the absence of scholastic arguments: God's existence was incapable of proof; but God would give sufficient knowledge of himself by revelation or inspiration to all who sought him sincerely. On Wisdom ii, 1, *Dixerunt enim cogitantes apud se non recte... non est qui agnitus sit reversus ab inferis*, he says that the immortality of the soul can be inferred in three grounds, God's goodness, God's equity (rewards and punishments) and God's truth. Then he qualifies:

'Tertio per idem patet ex divina veritate, quia Deus nullum fallit, sed promisit nobis vitam eternam, si bene fecerimus, et penam eternam, si male; ergo ita fiet. Et licet non possit forsitan ratione naturali probari, sicut satis patet per debilitatem rationum, que ad hoc tam a sanctis quam a philosophis adducuntur, summe tamen convenit hoc credere, sicut multa alia sunt vera, que probare nescimus (Sap. lect. xv, MS Balliol College 27, fol. 26<sup>v</sup>b)'.  
'

He instances as other matters on which reason cannot determine the questions whether the world is created or eternal and whether it is possible to square the circle (*ibid.*).

Wisdom xiii raised the question whether the pagan philosophers might have attained to a knowledge of God: *et de his quae videntur bona, non potuerunt intelligere eum qui est, neque operibus attendentes agnoverunt quis esset artifex* (verse 1). Holcot asks how the philosophers could do what even Christians cannot do by reason; he answers that God reveals himself to true seekers:

'Sed qualiter est quod philosophi ad demonstrandum Deum esse sufficientes fuerunt, cum nec christiani, qui soli unius veri Dei notitiam habent, ad hoc non sufficiant? Ad hoc dicendum, ut estimo, quod Deum esse non est per aliquam rationem demonstratum hucusque nec Deum esse creatorem mundi, sed quicumque ad Deum innocenter se habent et rationem naturalem exercent studendo, nec divine gratie obicem prebent, Deus eis sufficienter sui communicabit notitiam, sic quod eis sufficiant ad salutem. Exempla ad hoc habentur de Cornelio, cui missus est Petrus, de Paulo cui missus est Ananias, qui sic se disposuerunt quod revelationem vel inspirationem de uno Deo meruerunt habere; et ideo dicendum quod sine culpa hominis habentis usum rationis nunquam eveniet quin notitiam de Deo habeat, saltem quanta est necesse ad salutem (Sap. lect. clv, MS Balliol College 27, fol. 231<sup>ab-a</sup>)'.

The next verses, 3-9, argue that the philosophers might have deduced God's existence from the grandeur and beauty of created things. Holcot explains the argument in all fairness. He illustrates it by Aristotle's 'attempt' to prove the existence of a first mover. He mentions a current view, 'dicunt doctores'; they could have understood *that* God is, without understanding *what* God is. But he himself prefers another approach. He bases himself on St Augustine's teaching that a primitive revelation made knowledge of God's existence possible to all. He goes on to a non-biblical tradition, found in the *Historia scholastica*, that the patriarch Noe had a son called Ionith, who received the gift of wisdom from God and discovered the science of astronomy. As sages learned to measure the size of the earth, sun and moon, so they might have learnt to worship the true God. This little postscript suggests that not only knowledge of God, but all science came from a primitive revelation rather than from human reason:

'Consequenter ostendit quomodo per ista duo media intellectus humanus ascendit in Deum, quasi dicat: hec est ratio quare gentiles ab ignorantia sua de Deo sunt inexcusabiles, quia *a magnitudine speciei et creature poterit creator rerum cognoscibiliter videri. A magnitudine speciei, id est pulchritudinis et creature, id est mirabilis facture, debebant arguisse*

creatorem esse maiorem, tam specie quam virtute. Sicut enim Aristoteles per viam motus nisus est probare unum primum movens esse impartibile et infinitum, nullam habens magnitudinem corporalem, 8 Physicorum...

*Si enim tantum potuerunt scire, ut possent seculum estimare, quomodo huius Dominum non facilius invenerunt?...* Sed contra illud ultimum videtur esse illud superius positus, cap. 9: *Difficile estimamus que in terra sunt, et que in prospectu sunt invenimus cum labore, que autem in celis sunt quis investigabit?*<sup>1</sup> Dicunt doctores quod aliud est comprehendere de Deo, quia est, et aliud, quid est. Primum potuerunt philosophi, secundum fuit eis impossibile. Sed quia nec Deum esse hucusque demonstratum inveni<sup>2</sup>, aliter ad dictam obiectionem respondeo. Dicam enim secundum mentem beati Augustini, 18 De civitate Dei, cap. 28, quod ante omnes philosophos grecos vel barbaros prophete sancti precesserunt, qui tam verbo quam scripto Dei notitiam docuerunt, et ideo Deum esse statim a principio mundi per Adam et filios suos extitit predicatum<sup>3</sup>, cui dicto quidam assenserunt et quidam dissenserunt, sicut modo de aliis articulis invenimus. Isti ergo philosophi, audientes Deum esse et a Dei cultoribus fuisse predicatum, poterant ex regimine mundi rerum uniformi gubernatione rationabiliter asseruisse Deum esse; et ideo quod erraverunt eorum vel negligentia vel malitia fuit in causa, et quia propter antiquam revelationem divulgatum est apud omnes gentes, legibus utentes, Deum esse, et quod est omnibus notum, videtur ipsa natura notum. Ideo estimo Damascenum dixisse<sup>4</sup>, Sent. cap. 3: Cognitio existendi Deum nobis naturaliter insita est, quamvis non ingenii naturalis investigatione, sed potius divina revelatione Dei notitia hominibus fuerit communicata.

Unde dico quod multo facilius est Deum, id est fidem de Deo, invenire quam *seculum estimare*, et bene utentibus naturali ingenio Deus seipsum aliquo modo revelat vel per extrinsecam informationem vel per intrinsecam inspirationem. Confirmatur hec responsio, quia nec aliter astronomiam dicunt pluri que (*sic*) adinventam fuisse. Unde Magister in Historia scolis (scholastica) super Genesim de dispersione filiorum Noe narrat Noe habuisse quendam filium nomine Ionithum, qui accepit a Deo donum sapientie et invenit astronomiam<sup>5</sup>. Sicut ergo addiscere potuerunt ad

<sup>1</sup> Sap. ix, 16.

<sup>2</sup> The printed edition has an interpolation here, p. 522.

<sup>3</sup> Holcot is probably referring to De civ. Dei xiv, 28 or to xviii, 37. He may have had both chapters in mind.

<sup>4</sup> De fide orthodoxa, i, 3, PG 94, 794: Velut enim iam diximus, insitum nobis a natura est, ut Deum esse noscamus. Holcot uses Grosseteste's version, MS Bodl. Ashm. 1526, fol. 122<sup>va</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Petrus Comestor, Hist. schol. in Gen. cap. xxxvii, PL 198, 1088: Centesimo anno tertiæ chiliadis natus est Noe filius ... et dixit eum Ionithum... hic accepit a Domino donum sapientie et invenit astronomiam.

mensurandum quantitatem terre, solis et lune, ita potuerunt didicisse colere verum Deum (Sap. lect. clvii, MS Balliol College 27, fol. 233<sup>va-b</sup>).

Lectures on Scripture were not the place for Holcot to justify his rejection of intellectual proofs and he does not do so. He simply states his position. If we remember the extraordinary diffusion of his Wisdom commentary, we realise how important this simple statement could be. How many readers were introduced to the scepticism of the schools through Holcot's plain speaking on Wisdom? From the point of view of our present study it is interesting for the light it throws on his whole mental attitude. He did not keep his scepticism in a closed compartment of his brain: far from it. He draws consequences for the function of theology. Thus he shows some irritation with 'the laymen of modern time' who expect 'us theologians' to give reasons for what the layman holds by faith alone. A good theologian who has heard the heretics' arguments without losing his faith is worth more:

'... ideo multo plus meretur bonus theologus, qui vidit et audivit rationes hereticorum contra fidem, et tamen assentit (fidei) <sup>6</sup> quam laici moderni temporis, qui putant nos theologos habere scientiam subalternantem ad fidem eorum, quasi nos demonstrare possemus illa que ipsi tantummodo fide tenent (Sap. lect. xxix, MS Balliol College 27, fol. 48<sup>ra</sup>)'.

Holcot twice tells a story of a simple Dominican lay brother's conversion of a heretic. The latter persisted in disbelieving the immortality of the soul in spite of all the arguments brought forward by learned doctors of the convent. The lay brother pointed out that it would be better to 'play safe'. One would lose nothing by believing if one's belief were unfounded and gain everything if it should prove to be true. The heretic submitted<sup>7</sup>. This is true scepticism. It goes with fideism, since in each case Holcot tells the story to illustrate the need to believe in the absence of proof.

Did he confine his scepticism to such abstract questions as proof for the existence of God or did he turn his power of criticism to account in more concrete matters? The answer is that Holcot had a feeling for historical and literary evidence. He attacks the claims of the Carmelites and Austin Friars to have originated in Old Testament times on grounds of history and common sense. The Carmelites traced their foundation

<sup>6</sup> 'fidei' inserted in the Bâle edition, p. 103.

<sup>7</sup> Sap. lect. xv, p. 56, Eccclus. lect. xix, fol. 16<sup>va</sup>.

to the prophet Elias on Mount Carmel and regarded St John Baptist as a member of the Order. The Austin Friars, too, claimed an ancient foundation, holding that St Augustine in his youth had grouped them into an Order, had taken the habit and given them a rule<sup>8</sup>. Holcot sets forth their claims when he comments on Amos i, 2, *exsiccatu est vertex Carmeli*; then he makes fun of them:

‘Quantum ad hoc, utrum ordines isti fuerint tempore illo instituti, iudicetis. Videtur tamen michi quod si tunc fuerint religiosi, vel erant de secta phariseorum vel saduceorum vel essenorum. Ista tres sectas ponit Iosephus, lib. (?)<sup>9</sup> Antiquitatis; et constat quod isti erant principaliter conspirantes in morte Christi, et hoc per invidiam; ideo non est in hoc gloriandum; ideo deberent magis dolere si ordo illorum tunc fuisset institutus. Estimo quod milites moderni temporis non gloriantur de militibus qui crucifixerunt Christum, et idem de pontificibus etc. Argumenta etiam non concludunt, quia non sequitur: vidit vel instituit viros candidos vel candidos institutos (sic, indutos?)<sup>10</sup>, ergo carmelitas. Tunc enim sequeretur quod molendinarii et pastores communiter essent carmelite. Consimile argumentum de zona pellicea. Videatis etiam picturam Iohannis baptiste et incessus.

Preterea si Augustinus 18 annorum recepit habitum illum et instituit eos congregare in unum, ergo recepit habitum illum manicheus et infidelis, et in habitu illo filium generavit, quia fuit 30 annorum antequam ad fidem converteretur, sicut patet (B, foll. 50<sup>v</sup>-51).

Holcot gives what he takes for a correct account of the origin of the Order of Hermits of St Augustine elsewhere. The so-called Rule of St Augustine concerning the common life for clerks is the basis of the rules of the Orders of Preachers and Carmelites. The hermits of St William and St Augustine and many others received it much later, when they ceased to be hermits and came to live in urban communities. The Rule of St Augustine is not for hermits and St Augustine never was one:

‘Unde regula de communi vita clericorum, que vocatur regula beati Augustini, quam multi alii religiosi sumpserunt postea. Inter quos sunt

<sup>8</sup> On the Carmelites see *Dictionnaire d'histoire et géographie ecclésiastique* XI (1949) 1073-4; on the Austin Friars and Guillemites, also mentioned by Holcot, *ibid.*, V (1931) 499-502.

<sup>9</sup> Blank in MS. The reference is to XIII, v, 9.

<sup>10</sup> Holcot refers to a legend he has mentioned above on the foundation of the Order of Carmel: ‘quidam dicunt quod Helias propheta in monte Carmeli; quia Sabatha, pater Helie nondum nati, vidit viros in sompnis candidos se invicem salutantes etc. Unde isti viri candidi induti sunt fratres ordinis supradicti etc.’.

predicadores (et) carmelite; et longe postea heremite sancti Guilhelmi et sancti Augustini et multi alii, convenientes in unum collegium, facti sunt ex heremitis urbanite; et assumpserunt sancti Augustini regulam, que heremite vite omnino repugnat: et vocatur modo ordo ille ordo heremitarum sancti Augustini, de quo ordine nunquam fuit Augustinus, quia nunquam fuit heremita, sicut patet per verba eius, 10 Confessionum in fine<sup>11</sup>, ubi loquens ad Deum dicit sic: Contritis peccatis meis ... meditatusque fueram fugam in solitudinem, et prohibuisti me et confortasti, dicens... (Sap. lect. xcvi, p. 326)'.<sup>1</sup>

The rivalry between the Orders for precedence must have sharpened Holcot's tongue in these two passages and led him to give free rein to his critical sense. His deduction that if the Carmelites really went back to Jewish groups and the Austin Friars to St Augustine's pre-Christian period, it would discredit them rather than otherwise, must have delighted the Friars Preachers and Minors as much as it annoyed their rivals. The discussion continued after Holcot's death. A Cambridge Dominican, John Stokes, used some of his predecessor's arguments in his *Determinatio* of 1370 against the Carmelite claim to have Elias as founder. This is lost, but some of the points have been preserved in a *Defensorium sui ordinis* by John Hornby O. Carm., given at Cambridge as a reply to Stokes in 1374<sup>12</sup>. Stokes had made Holcot's point that an Order founded by Elias must have belonged to a sect of the Pharisees, Saducees or Essenes. Hornby rejects it on the score that *secta* is different from *religio*<sup>13</sup>. His argument turns mainly on legal points and he relies on secondary rather than primary sources. Holcot's view of the origin of the various Orders is shrewd by comparison and shows a real sense of historical development.

We sometimes see flashes of the same spirit when Holcot considers questions of bibliography. The Pseudo-Ovid *De vetula* was generally taken as genuine and was said to have been found in the poet's tomb. Roger Bacon accepted it; Petrarch is supposed to have been the first

<sup>11</sup> Confessionum, X, xlili, 70.

<sup>12</sup> B. Jarrett, *The English Dominicans*, London 1921, 16; B. Xiberta, *De scriptoribus scholasticis saeculi XIV ex ordine Carmelitarum*, Louvain 1931, 172. Hornby's *Defensorium* survives in MS Oxford, Bodl. e Mus. 86 (3629), foll. 176<sup>ra</sup>-211<sup>rb</sup>. Dr. D. A. Callus kindly drew my attention to this material. See also D. Knowles, *The Religious Orders*, op. cit., II, 52.

<sup>13</sup> MS Bodl. e Mus. 86, fol. 197<sup>va</sup>-b.

to expose it as spurious<sup>14</sup>. Holcot quotes the so-called prophecies of Christ from *De vetula*, adding: 'An sit liber Ovidii, Deus novit'. He tells the legend of its discovery and ends with a touch of sarcasm:

'Unde constat quod si liber veraciter suus erat, fuit pulcherrima prophetia. Sed hoc est extra propositum (Sap. lect. lxi, p. 216)'.

He tried to verify another legend, that the Venerable Bede had paid a visit to Rome<sup>15</sup>. After repeating a current tale about this visit<sup>16</sup>, he expresses doubt. He has not seen it in any authentic work. Someone may have seen it in a book of Bede, but he has not; neither have the monks who claim to have all Bede's books. Holcot seems to shrug his shoulders:

'Istud non vidi in aliquo auctentico, sed dicitur sic fuisse. Utrum autem Beda fuerit Rome vel non, nescio. Quidam dicunt quod sic, quidam quod non. Ideo historia predicta valeat quantum valere potest. Forte quod unus non vidit in originali, alius vidit; ideo non est sic arguendum. Ego hoc non vidi in libris Bede, nec monachi qui dicunt se habere omnes libros Bede. Ergo non est in ali(quo) libro Bede (B, fol. 61)'.

He carries it up to his own times by discounting the number of miracles currently reported in England. Miracles were necessary to water the roots of faith in the early Church:

'Ex his videtur quod si tot sunt miracula in Anglia, sicut dicitur his diebus, vel radix fidei adhuc non est firmata in Anglia, sed infirma, vel si sit firmata, tunc quando dicuntur miracula vel sunt superflua vel sunt ficta. Verumtamen ex quo in ecclesia semper manet fides, licet talia corporalia signa non sint, tamen ea spiritualiter facit ecclesia, que per apostolos signa corporalia faciebat (Ecclus. lect. xlvii, fol. 38<sup>ra</sup>)'.

Holcot thought that many preachers brought the faith into contempt by putting too great a strain on their hearers' credulity and by trying to prove what was true with the help of fictions, such as the marvellous

<sup>14</sup> P. Lehmann, *Pseudo-antike Literatur des Mittelalters*, Studien der Bibliothek Warburg, Leipzig 1927, 13-4; F. Ghisalberti, *Medieval Biographies of Ovid*, in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 9 (1946) 36-7.

<sup>15</sup> On the origin and growth of the legend see C. E. Whiting in *Bede, his Life, Times and Writings*, ed. A. Hamilton Thompson, Oxford 1935, 11-4; William of Malmesbury mentions the visit, but will not vouch for its truth, *Gesta regum*, i, 27.

<sup>16</sup> Herbert, *Catalogue of Romances*, op. cit., III, 171.

properties of stones and herbs, which experience disproves. He says this in a little treatise on preaching, comprising his comment on Ecclus. iv, 28, *Non abscondas sapientiam in decore suo*, which compensates for his lost *Ars praedicandi*<sup>17</sup>:

'Tertio, verbum predicatum debet esse probabile, ut illud quod suadetur et docetur secundum fidem appareat esse verum; et similiter quod illud quod assumitur tanquam verum ad probandum vel explanandum pateat esse verum vel saltem quod oppositum pateat esse falsum. Sic multi allegant virtutes lapidum et herbarum, naturas rerum diversarum, et tamen experientia docet oppositum; et tales magis nituntur promovere propriam vanitatem quam fidei veritatem...; et hec est causa quare frequenter non credunt omnes homines predicanti et aliis, quia doctrinam totam parvipendunt, quia ad probandum vera interserunt quedam falsa (Ecclus. lect. liii, fol. 43<sup>ra</sup>)'.

Alas! Holcot did not always practise what he preached in avoiding the marvellous, just as his critical faculty was often in abeyance in questions of bibliography. He understood contemporary taste too well to keep up an austere standard of scholarship.

The advice to preachers ends with a plea for gentleness. The preacher must never drive wretched sinners to despair by his threats, but must rather sympathise with them in their perils. Sympathy is more effective than condemnation (fol. 43<sup>rb</sup>). Here at least Holcot followed his own precept. Thirteen of his *Moralitates* deal with the theme of God's love and mercy to sinners. A reading of the commentaries suggests the same proportion. The text Zach. xiii, 1, *In die illa erit fons patiens domui David*, evokes a long meditation on the Passion of Christ and on his love for men, with a description of his sufferings. Holcot finishes a part of the piece with an exhortation to devotion: 'Cogita quis amat, quantus fuit iste amor et qualis fuerit (B, fol. 126)'.

It may have been this gentle strain in Holcot that made him dislike ecclesiastical endowment. He blames the Donation of Constantine as the root of evil. It brought quarrels, lawsuits, anxiety and attacks on the Church even from those who had formerly striven to enrich her. The poverty of the early Church spelt freedom from such cares. In common with his contemporaries, Holcot accepted the Donation as a historical fact, though he qualifies the story with 'dicitur'. He brings it into a comparison between the signs of the zodiac and the ages of man. The

<sup>17</sup> Th. M. Charland, *Les « Artes Predicandi »*, Paris-Ottawa 1938, 82.

last phase in man's history will be the reign of Anti-christ. The present corresponds to the sign of the Archer, when the arrows of litigation fly. It began with the Donation:

'Fuerunt enim a tempore Sylvestri pape et Constantini imperatoris, qui temporalia ecclesie primo dicitur dedisse, semper iudicia, placitationes et dissensiones inter clericos quis eorum videretur maior ad pascendum oves Christi. Hec est causa quare volant sagitte acute, nunc regalium supplicationum ad romanam curiam, nunc accusationum, nunc diffamationum ad inferiorum iudicum audientiam, ita quod plena est ecclesia advocatis in omni causa ad defendendum iniuriam... Si esset ita pauper ecclesia modo, sicut fuit quando Christus in ea vixit in terra, non haberet ecclesia tales placitatores nec tales invasores. Pauper et iuvenis mercator non timet predones nec patitur insultus, sed cum est dives, tunc eum nituntur spoliare etiam qui eum prius conabantur ditare; ita est quando ecclesia studuit paupertati, bene valuit; modo studet ditari et patitur a sagittariis (Sap. lect. lxi, MS Balliol College 27, fol. 100<sup>va</sup>)'.

This is strong enough. In his lectures on the Twelve Prophets he went even further. The 'picture' of poverty has another attack on the Donation. Here the positive advantages of poverty contrast with the drawbacks of riches. When religious were poor they could attend to their spiritual duties better. And Holcot adds to his account of the Donation the legend that a voice from heaven spoke the words: 'Today poison has been poured into God's Church'. This legend had been used by defenders of apostolic poverty in the controversy between John XXII and the Spiritual Franciscans, as it was to be used later on by Wyclif and the Lollards. Its inclusion in *Polychronicon* attests its popularity in England in the early fourteenth century<sup>18</sup>. Holcot clinches his argument with the story of a vision of Holy Mother Church to 'a certain saint'. She appeared to him as a lady, fair behind and foul before, to signify her beauty in the past in the time of the Fathers and her foulness at present 'in modern prelates'. This *exemplum* need not be reproduced in full, since it seems to have been current. It occurs in a slightly different form in a fifteenth-century Italian compilation<sup>19</sup>:

'Notandum etiam quod quamdiu ecclesia fuit regulata per pauperes piscatores, bene fuit et pariter (di)mensionata. Nunc autem habundantia temporalium sic occupat ecclesiam religiosorum quod meditationes, orationes, lectiones, devotiones, contemplationes et predicationes, quibus

<sup>18</sup> *Polychronicon*, op. cit., V, 130. See above, p. 39, n. 57.

<sup>19</sup> Herbert, op. cit., III, 662.

debeat principaliter sustentari, pereant in eadem. Unde officium divinum non videtur nisi tumultus et strepitus inordinatus... Nota etiam quomodo legitur in vita magni Constantini, quando datum fuit occidentale imperium ecclesie a Constantino, facta est vox de celo, dicens: hodie infusum est venenum in ecclesia Dei, quoniam ecclesiam divitiis sic ditavit. Sic nota quomodo domina in posterioribus pulcherrima et in facie turpissima, apparuit sancto... (B, foll. 137<sup>v</sup>-138)'.<sup>19</sup>

Holcot was probably writing in the lifetime of John XXII, who died on Dec. 4, 1334. This pope upheld the views of Boniface VIII on the relations between Church and State. To attack the Donation in the pontificate of the author of *Ad conditorem canonum* and *Cum inter nonnullos* was to make one's sympathies tolerably clear. What Holcot does not say tells us almost as much about his opinions as what he does. He hardly ever mentions the pope in his lectures, except to refer to the withdrawal of the Paris condemnations as touching the doctrine of St Thomas, a papal action of which he naturally approved (Sap. lect. clxxxix, p. 623). Holcot did not wish to dispute papal claims directly; neither would he argue in their favour<sup>20</sup>.

The logical step to take after attacking ecclesiastical endowments was to exalt the power of the State and *raison d'état*. Marsilio of Padua and Wyclif both did so, each in his own way. Holcot draws no such practical conclusions. There is no evidence that he would have approved of any scheme for reducing the clergy to a state of apostolic poverty by force. He was merely voicing the helpless nostalgia for a pure and primitive past which became more widespread than ever under the Avignon papacy, a reaction to the prevailing legalism<sup>21</sup>. Yet Holcot's scattered remarks on politics add up to a stress on the importance of the State in the person of its ruler. They do not pass beyond current

<sup>20</sup> We may perhaps read something into the following passage: 'Ideo quotiescumque diabolus per aliquod delectabile vel apparens motivum ducit aliquem christianum ad negandum Deum, sicut Sylvestrum II papam et multos alios fecit negare Christum propter honores habendos, de omnibus talibus dici potest illud Iacobi 2: Peccatum operamini etc. (Ecclus. lect. vii, fol. 7<sup>tb</sup>)'. If 'Sylvestrum II' is the right reading, Holcot would be referring to the legend of Gerbert the magician, in league with the devil; see William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, iii, 167. If it should be 'Sylvestrum I', then Holcot would be making an even stronger attack on the Donation. MSS Bâle B. V. 11, fol. 108<sup>va</sup> and Royal 3. A. xiv, fol. 4<sup>ra</sup>, have the reading 'Celestinum papam'. It is difficult to see how Holcot's stricture on the pope could apply to Celestine V's resignation of the papacy. Only a thorough study of the manuscript tradition would throw light on the point.

<sup>21</sup> Y. Renouard, *La Papauté à Avignon*, Paris 1954, 116-22.

generalities on the duties of kingship, if one takes them separately. Their effect is cumulative. The Church has a duty to the State. Holcot thought that bishops should support the throne and preach political sermons on occasion. This is deduced from the text Sap. vi, 11, *Qui autem custodierint iusta iuste, iustificabuntur; et qui didicerint ista, invenient quid respondeant*. Holcot points out that after addressing kings (verse 10), his author turns to prelates, who have charge of social order, showing them that it is not enough to preach generalities; they must descend to particulars when bad report or rebellion make it necessary:

‘Exemplum datur prelati quod non est satis generalia predicare, cum curam habeant animarum, sed necesse habent in casu ad particularia descendere, quando infamia seu rebellio compellit (Sap. lect. lxxx, p. 278)’.

Perhaps, when he gave this lecture, Holcot had in mind the crisis of 1327, and felt that some of the bishops might have taken a stronger line than they did.

He also had a certain understanding of *raison d'état*. Extortion from unwilling subjects may be excused for the good of the commonwealth. Holcot warns his students that this applies to the king only, not to lesser lords, whose confessors must beware of using it indiscriminately:

‘... quia longe aliter est loqui de regibus et de dominis istis parvis (Sap. lect. xxiii, MS Balliol 27, fol. 38<sup>va</sup>)’.

In a *quaestio* on ‘acceptance of persons’ he admits that patrons of livings have some justification in presenting canon lawyers in preference to theologians; the former will know better how to defend their rights. Similarly the Church acts reasonably in granting dispensations to marry within the prohibited degrees to noblemen and not to poor men. The reason for such dispensation is the establishment and increase of peace among the greater in the Church, which does not apply to poor folk (Sap. lect. lxxix, p. 277).

Most significant of all, he tells the story of the Donation again in another context. Here he links the greediness of prelates, consequent on endowment, with disloyalty to the king and disturbance among clergy and people. The passage has been quoted in part already<sup>22</sup>, but will bear repetition:

‘Ideo dicitur in magna vita Constantini quod cum Constantinus ecclesiam dotaverat, audita est vox de aere, dicens: hodie venenum in

<sup>22</sup> See above, p. 22.

ecclesia Dei est infusum. Constat autem quod prelati cupidi faciunt perturbationes in populo et in clero. Homo impavidus expavescit, quando aliquis pomposus, audax et strenuus inter pauperes sibi subiectos, debiles et egenos, fugit hostes regni vel ductus tempore, accipiens pecuniam, perdit dominum suum regem; et hoc facit perturbationem (B, fol. 58)'.<sup>23</sup>

Holcot touches lightly on a chord which was to reverberate in the polemical works of Wyclif: endowment causes treachery and sedition. Holcot was thinking of a particular case, the deposition of Edward II; Wyclif generalised. But their inference was identical.

John Baconthorpe O. Carm. was lecturing in the same decade as Holcot; he violently defended both the Donation and the claims of John XXII in regard to Church and State<sup>23</sup>. Perhaps our Dominican inspired the defence of the Donation by his criticism. He certainly explains the Carmelite's warmth on the subject. We can sum up his position *vis à vis* Baconthorpe as follows: he disliked ecclesiastical wealth and power on the score that it led to litigation and distracted the clergy from their spiritual and pastoral duties; Baconthorpe held that endowment was an essential condition of the Church's mission to the world. Holcot emphasised the duty of the Church to the king and feared that temporal possessions might tempt to disloyalty; he kept silence on the subject of the papacy. Baconthorpe, on the contrary, saw the clergy first and foremost as soldiers of the papacy to defend the claims of the Church; he kept silence on the subject of the State as a focus for duty and obedience. Many cross-currents of opinion existed in an English university in the early fourteenth century.

They could coexist in the same breast. Consistency was not Holcot's outstanding virtue as a thinker, unless it may be that he was true to his scepticism in being inconsistent. Scepticism makes it difficult to hold a clear-cut theory in politics as in theology, witness William of Ockham. If endowment had really 'poured poison into the Church', it would seem that the whole body was poisoned and that a purge was the only remedy. Far from holding this pessimistic view, Holcot saw the bright side of the contemporary Church. Indeed he is one of the few medieval moralists who let slip occasionally that not all is wrong. Surprisingly, he has a good word for modern prelates. In one passage he compares them to eagles, which are said to have one claw bigger than the other. The two claws signify two affections, the right the care for souls, the

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<sup>23</sup> See above, p. 31, n. II.

left the seeking for tithes. Instead of blaming prelates for neglecting the former for the sake of the latter, Holcot says that by God's grace the right claw is much bigger than the left. The clergy plead in the courts for churches, offerings and tithes, but they do so as a means to guarding Christ's sheep (Sap. lect. lxxv, p. 230). Though he joins in the general complaint against graft in the giving of benefices and the promotion of unsuitable priests, he also knows that the Church provides a career open to talent. 'We commonly see', he tells us, 'that the sons of the rich and powerful will not learn, while the sons of simple poor men reach the highest ecclesiastical dignities by their character and science' (B, fol. 19<sup>v</sup>)<sup>24</sup>. Against his complaint at the 'horror of voluntary poverty in these days' (Sap. lect. ix, p. 35), implying a dearth of vocations, we can set another statement: great men do not wish their sons to be lettered in case they might join the friars (B, fol. 11<sup>v</sup>)<sup>25</sup>. Here he only complains that vocations are impeded.

The interpretation of medieval moralists is a tricky business. It is safest to study the mind of the moralist and to suspect his information on the state of society; this is normally one-sided and second-hand. Holcot gives us a valuable picture of a state of mind. He criticises, but not bitterly. He has no sense of impending crisis. A gay humour shines from his pages. A child's rhyme, 'The world is so full of a number of things, I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings', seems to sum up his attitude to life. To illustrate this side of him, we may compare the treatment of the same theme by Holcot and a later English moralist, Thomas Brinton O. S. B., bishop of Rochester 1373-89<sup>26</sup>. Brinton was conventional and unoriginal in his choice of *exempla*. At least five of his moralised fables from classical sources may have come from Holcot on Wisdom; it is not excluded that he got them from some intermediary or that they both drew on a common source. The very closeness will bring out their difference in temperament. We shall compare two, the fables of Atalanta and Narcissus<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> 'Videmus communiter quod filii divitum et potentum non addiscunt et filii simplicium pauperum propter mores et scientiam promoventur ad maximas ecclesiasticas dignitates'.

<sup>25</sup> 'Nota quod homines magni nolunt quod filii addiscant, ne forte religiosi fiant mendicantes'.

<sup>26</sup> The Sermons of Thomas Brinton, Bishop of Rochester (1373-1389), ed. Sister M. A. Devlin O. P., Camden Society, 3rd series, vol. LXXXV-VI, London 1954.

<sup>27</sup> The other parallels are the fables of Hercules killing the snakes sent by Juno to his cradle (Brinton, p. 56; Holcot, Sap. lect. xxiv, p. 86-7), the sacrifice of Numa

The Atalanta story appealed to Holcot. He tells it in his *Sermo finalis*, in his *Moralitates* and again in his Wisdom commentary, each time with a different application. In this third telling, Atalanta signifies the human soul, racing for the prize of favourable judgment on the Last Day. Hippomenes signifies the devil, who throws golden apples, the delights of the world, to hinder her in her course. Holcot ends on a note of encouragement, reminding his audience of St Paul's brave performance in the race for salvation:

'Virgo ista velocissima est anima humana, que est mire venustatis, quia creata ad Dei imaginem, et nimie agilitatis, quia affectionibus et cogitationibus nunc est Rome, nunc est Parisius, nunc in celo, nunc in terra, nunc in inferno. Ista habet currere per stadium vite presentis ad bravium finalis iustitie. Sed unus agillimus, qui simul cum ea conatur currere, videlicet diabolus, qui cursor velocissimus est,... habet tria poma aurea, id est tres peccatorum delectationes... Et ideo necesse habemus certare viriliter et per virtuosam continentiam a talibus abstinere ... Sic enim certaverat et cucurrerat Paulus, sicut ipsemet recitat... (Sap. lect. xiv, p. 52-3)'

Brinton tells the story in the same words, only substituting Avignon for Paris in the comparison of the soul's agility with Atalanta's swiftness. His conclusion differs from Holcot's in that it shows the later medieval fixation on death and decay:

'Si te invadat hostis antiquus per carnis lasciviam, recale diligenter qualiter caro tua in vita delectabilis ita erit in morte abhominabilis quod quamvis sit compacta ex quatuor elementis, scilicet ex igne, aqua, aere, et terra... ipsa tamen mortua in aquis non proicitur ne aque inficiantur; in aere non suspenditur ne aer corrumpatur; in igne non comburitur ne fetor sentiatur, sed tanquam venenum vilissimum sub terra absconditur ne amplius videatur. Ecce gloria carnis, quali fine clauditur (p. 41-2)'

Holcot tells the Narcissus myth with his own inimitable grace and lightness, drawing the inevitable moral. Those who delight in their physical beauty come spiritually to grief. He brings forward the Judgment of Paris as another example of how beauty tempts us, as well as some stories from Scripture. Aristotle teaches in the *Ethics* that no earthly pleasure satisfies man with his human craving for change. God, on the contrary, as Aristotle says, being simple and unchanging in his

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Pompilius (Brinton, p. 107; Sap. lect. excviii, p. 653), Ulysses and the sirens (Brinton, p. 312; Sap. lect. lxiv, p. 226).

nature, ever rejoices in the one, simple delight which he has in the contemplation of himself<sup>28</sup>. And so man may look forward to unchanging bliss after his glorious resurrection. Holcot has effected the transition from earthly to heavenly beauty, from Narcissus to the blessed, without losing sight of his theme, the beautiful:

'Iste puer propter speciem nimiam elatus in superbiam designat vane gloriantes de fragili decore corporis, qui tantum delectant de sue pulchritudinis venustate, quod totaliter evanescent: ubi homines esse deberent, inutiles flores fiunt ... Sic per oppositum dicit Aristoteles: quia Deus est natura simplex et invariabilis, semper gaudet una et simplici delectatione, quam habet in contemplatione sui ipsius. Cum ergo ad statum divinum devenimus, per gloriosas dotes corporis et anime, erit delectatio nostra semper una et uniformis et perpetua (Sap. lect. clvi, p. 519-20)'

Brinton's treatment of the theme needs no commentary. Again he uses the same words and illustrations. Again he differs in his conclusion; the ugliness of death fascinates him:

'Tales propria pulchritudine decepti non attendunt proprie fragilitati quo(u)sque ad modum florum fuerunt commutati. Sicut verum flos primo virescit deinde marcescit, et tandem evanescit, sic venustas corporis virescit dum quis est iuvenis, marcescit asperitate febre vel alterius infirmitatis, et tandem evanescit per resolutionem in cineris vilitatem... Quisquis igitur superbis de pulchritudine corporis, attende quomodo morte accedente nasus frigescat, dentes nigrescant, vene et nervi rumpentur, et cor pre nimio dolore dividetur. Immo corpus tuum nunc apparens pulcrum et delectabile ita in morte erit abhominabile quod tanquam venenum pessimum sub terra abscondetur ne amplius videatur. Ecce forma glorie tue, quali fine clauditur (p. 220)'

We have heard Holcot on the topic 'quali fine clauditur'<sup>29</sup>. He can contemplate it as well as Brinton, but he does so with a gentle sadness, not with Brinton's horror and gloom. Even sudden death may wear a serene aspect, as in this picture of a scholar found dead among his books in his chair:

'Legitur de quodam viro sancto et litterato, quod mortuus inventus fuit, sedens inter libros suos in cathedra et habens in gremio suo librum apertum; cumque alii compatiens eum adinvenerunt et multum de subita

<sup>28</sup> *Ethica nicomachea*, vii, 14, 1154<sup>b</sup>, 20 30.

<sup>29</sup> Above, p. 69.

morte tristarentur, consideraverunt diligentius et invenerunt manum suam super librum iacentem et indicem extentum ad textum huius lectionis: *Iustus autem si morte preoccupatus fuerit etc.*<sup>30</sup> (Sap. lect. xlviij, MS Balliol 27, fol. 79<sup>rb</sup>).

It symbolised the passing of an era that Holcot himself should have perished in the plague of 1349. Artistic, cultured, smiling, perhaps rather flippant and inconsequent too, he closed the period of literary interests among the English Dominicans. Ringstead, Dencourt and Hopeman carried on the tradition for a few years longer, but they had less standing and less personality. The chime of the bells 'ringing sweetly over the water' died away. The future of theology in England lay with grimmer, narrower men.

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<sup>30</sup> Sap. iv, 7, the text of Holcot's lect. xlviij.