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Isabelle Draelants

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Bartholomeus Anglicus – Bartholomew the Englishmann (c. 1200- 1272)

Isabelle Draelants,
Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Institut de recherche et d’histoire des textes.

The Franciscan Bartholomew the Englishman is one of the main so-called encyclopaedists of the thirteenth century, the golden age of medieval encyclopaedism. Bartholomew is mainly known through his compilation of natural and theological science divided in nineteen books, called *De proprietatibus rerum* (On the properties of things), which circulated very widely since the seventeenth century.

Bartholomew wrote his encyclopaedic work after 1230 and before 1247 (Sturlese 1990), after he was sent in 1231 or 1232 with another Englishman (*Johannes Anglicus*) by the provincial of France, John Parenti, to lecture in the recent monastery of Magdeburg (founded 1223), when the Franciscan decided to split the province of Saxony from the province of Germany (*Alemaniam*) and to create a *studium provinciale* (provincial college) in Magdeburg. We know, also from the Franciscan *custos* Jordan of Saxony (he wrote c. 1262), that before this career as a Saxonian Franciscan, Bartholomew lectured on the Bible as a clerk (*clericus*) in the *Studium generale* (main college) in Paris, where he certainly was c. 1220. In Paris, he rubbed shoulders with other members of the English Nation (*natio anglica*), some of them he may have known before, because as his name suggests he may be of insular origin. In Magdeburg, he may have known Arnoldus Saxo, whose *De floribus rerum naturalium* use several common quotations of sources (Draelants & Frunzeanu 2015). He may have been educated in Oxford (Schönbach 1906, p. 64) or Chartres (Se Boyar 1920, p. 175-6). Jordan of Saxony also says that Bartholomew became the sixth provincial minister of Saxony in 1262. He remained minister until his death in 1272. The other biographical data (given by Seymour 1992, p. 2-3) are far less certain. It is for example doubtful that he was bishop of Lukow and that he may be identified with Bartholomeus of Prague, provincial minister of Bohemia in 1255-6.

He compiled *On the Properties of things* as an introduction to the Holy Scripture based on the natural examples given by the Creation. The work was supplemented, probably from the start, with no less than 10 300 marginal brief notes intended for allegorical use, still to be found in c. 78 manuscripts (Loncke 2008 and Meyer & Van den Abeele 2005).

Bartholomeus Anglicus: Afterlife and translations of his encyclopaedia ‘On the properties of things’

Almost from the start, this work was very popular. It was recommended and sold by university librarians (*stationarii*) since at least 1275 in Paris for the study of natural philosophy and the Bible (Se Boyar 1920: 185), and some parts of it, as for Book XIX, circulated through the system of *pecia* (partial numbered copies loaned for students to be copied). At least 317 manuscripts of it survive, with c. 200 complete copies of the standard version; a lot of them are illustrated (Meyer 1988, p. 237-74 and Meyer 2000, completed to the present day by Van den Abeele 1994 and others). The climax of popularity is around 1300. The success went on until the 17th century, as evidenced by no less than fifty-two distinct printed editions (ed. princeps: Cologne: Jean Veldener, c. 1472).

Monastic and cathedral schools in England used it as a teaching tool and it was immediately a source of inspiration for many sermons and moral works as well as for many scholars (Twomey 1997, p. 341), for example by Berthold of Regensburg or the Occitan writer Matfre Ermendgaud (*Breviari d'Amor*). It was also very influential on the encyclopaedic literature; it was the main source for the *Liber septiformis de moralitatibus rerum* of the Franciscan Marcus of Orvieto (c. 1281-1291), the *Multifarium* (c. 1320) written in Bologna, the *Liber de exemplis et similitudinibus rerum* of the Italian Dominican Giovanni da san Gimignano (1310-1320), the *Reductorium Morale* of the Benedictine French monk Pierre Bersuire (c. 1340), the German Cistercian Heinrich of Schüttenhofen (*Liber de naturis animalium cum moralitatibus*, c. 1299), etc. (B. Van den Abeele 1994). Concerning its influence and afterlife in other works, further investigation is still to be done.

Because of his great many medical sources, Book VII on diseases (ed. Walsch 1933) inspired a short treatise on humours as soon as in the thirteenth century; it was adapted many times (Hünemörder 1985) and still largely in use among physicians in the fifteenth century (Meyer 2000: 259-262). The compilation of natural descriptions of things became a sort of tank for each branch of study of nature, and the chapters about God, the angels, human anatomy and various stages of life have begun to disappear in later copies in favour of the description of physical realities.

As soon as between 1299 and 1308, it was translated in Italian by Vivaldo Belcazer for the Lord of Mantova, Guido Bonacolsi. An Anglo-Norman anonym translation of Book XV on geography, *Le Livre des Regions*, was made perhaps as soon as 1260. In 1374, Jean Corbechon, an Augustinian monk, translated it in French for the French king Charles V, and in 1398, John of Trevisa made an English version of it. There was also a Dutch anonym version (ed. Haarlem: Jacob Bellaert 1485, illustrated) and two Castilian translations, one incomplete, written in romance probably in the fourteenth century, the other made probably by brother Vincente de Burgos from Jean of Corbechon's Middle-French version in 1494 (Eggert 2008). Another anonym version was made in Occitan in the middle of the fourteenth century, maybe for the Count of Foix, Gaston Phebus (1331-1392) (Cavagna 2016). A part of the work was adapted by Konrad von Megenberg c. 1350 and by Michel Baumann for the Books I and II in 1478.

Bartholomew Anglicus: Contents and purpose of *De proprietatibus rerum*

The structure of *On properties of things* is rather classical, following the pattern of the encyclopaedia of Isidore of Seville (*Etymologiae*, 622) and Rabanus Maurus (*De universo*, c. 840). The nineteen books correspond to the number of the Signs of the Zodiac (12) plus the planets (7). It follows a Neoplatonic order, beginning with the incorporeal world, from God, the spiritual Creation, the angels and the Soul (Books I-III), to the human nature and the corporal humours (Book IV), the parts of the body (Book V), the role of people of various ages and sexes in an ordered society (Book VI), the diseases and their treatment (Book VII, ordered --as traditionally in practical medicine-- from head to foot; in each record, Bartholomew quotes first the authorities, then goes to aetiology, symptoms, treatment). Then come the properties of the things in the cosmos, the time and the celestial bodies (Books VIII and Book IX). The next books deal with the sublunary world, the four elements and their phenomena: fire, matter and form (Book X), air (Book XI on meteorology, Book XII on birds, alphabetical), water (Book XIII on sea animals), earth (Book XIV on mountains, Book XV on geography, with alphabetical records on countries and peoples; Book XVI on stones and

gems, which is a very rich alphabetical lapidary; Book XVII on plants, the longest, an alphabetical herbal with 197 chapters and 2000 allegorical notes; Book XVIII on earthly animals, alphabetical). The nineteenth book focuses on everyday reality and practical questions; it deals with “accidents”, this is to say various aspects of natural world and science: number, music, colour, smell, taste, etc. and is particularly interesting for giving the first new doctrine about colour studied by Robert Grosseteste.

Considering the work of the Creator, the encyclopaedic compilation does not address history, but natural science and *realia* (terrestrial things). As said in the foreword and the epilogue, it is basically meant to describe, explain and illustrate the Holy Scripture in an allegorical way in order to help preachers to write their sermons, hence the presence of a lot of marginal allegorical notes, which disappear at the end of the fourteenth century (Meyer 1988: 246-55 and Meyer 2000).

Bartholomew Anglicus: Sources of *De proprietatibus rerum*

At the end of the work, probably Bartholomew himself listed in a final table his *auctoritates*, i.e. his classical and medieval sources, dividing them between saints or theologians (Augustine, Basil, Boetius, Isidore of Seville, Bede the Venerable, Gregorius Magnus, etc.) or philosophers (Plato, Aristotle, Ptolemy, Macrobius, Martianus Capella); among the last he also counts the translations of Arabic philosophical and medical works (Albumasar, Messahallah, Alfarganus, etc.) and recent writers (William of Conches, Bernardus Silvestris, Thierry of Chartres, etc.). His most recent sources are Alexander of Halès (*Questiones disputatae*, 1220-36) and some scholars coming from an English milieu, as Michael Scot (d. after 1237), the physician Gilbertus Anglicus (d. 1250), the philosopher Robertus Grosseteste (d. 1253; he uses *On colour*, written between 1229 and 1235, and the Commentary on the *Hexahemeron*, see Draelants-Frunzeanu 2017), the *Summa* ‘On the Soul’ of Jean of La Rochelle (1233-39), perhaps even Ricardus Rufus on Meteorology (c. 1238) (Draelants-Frunzeanu, 2017). Nevertheless, the various books of the encyclopaedia were not written at the same time, as a careful study of the sources shows it. For example, among the Aristotelian works, Bartholomew does not yet know the translation of the *De sensu* (‘On sensation’) in Books III and V, but he uses it generously in Book XIX about colour (Galle 2008).

The work is very rich in medical sources such as Galen, Hippocrates, Isaac Israeli (c. 855-955), Dioscorides (Ist c. CE), Ps.-Aristotle *De plantis* (Nicolaus Damascenus, Ist c. BCE) and the Commentary of Alfred of Shareshill, Platearius, and the *Antidotarium Nicolai*, but the most frequent medical authority used is Constantinus Africanus (d. 1089), with the *Viaticum* and the *Pantegni* adapted from Arabic sources, and the most recent one is named *Egidius*, who may be Gilles of Corbeil. The Fathers of the Church are also frequently quoted, as well as grammatical authorities such as Papias (11th c.), Hugutio of Pisa (c. 1140-1210), Evrard of Béthune (d. c. 1212), Alexander Neckam (1157-1217), even on medical and pharmacological matters. For the works of Aristotle, Bartholomew does not yet know the translations of William of Moerbeke (c. 1215-1286) but uses the translations of Burgundio of Pisa (*fl.* since 1135- d. 1193), Gerard of Cremona (c. 1114-c. 1187), Alfred of Shareshill (*fl.* c. 1200) and Michael Scot.

It is remarkable that he also used, at least in the Book XVII, the recent so-called “glossa anglicana”, i.e. a thirteenth-century gloss on the natural works of Aristotle (ed.

Ventura 2007). A little known fact about his sources on the natural world is that Bartholomew, with Thomas of Cantimpré (*Liber de natura rerum* c. 1230-50), Hélinand of Froidmont (*Chronicon* c. 1220) and Vincent of Beauvais (*Speculum naturale* and *Speculum doctrinale*, c. 1240-1257), is one of the first users of a complete copy of the ‘Natural History’ of Plinius, a fact which shows –if it was needed– that Bartholomew went to libraries in Northern France, where the complete Natural History first circulated since the end of the twelfth century.

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