

*DISTINCTIONES* AND SERMONS:  
THE *DISTINCCIONES LATHBURY*  
(*ALPHABETUM MORALE*)  
AND OTHER COLLECTIONS IN  
FOURTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

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AMONG the arsenal of tools that helped medieval preachers to build their sermons were books called *Distinctiones*.<sup>1</sup> Originally collections of words found in Scripture that would set forth and explain the various meanings a biblical term could have, specifically its literal and spiritual meanings, they soon included other words and concepts a preacher might deal with and became handbooks that contained all kinds of material, ranging from the four senses of Scripture to information about historical or “scientific” matters, and further to pious stories, similes, and examples from daily life, all for the purpose of instruction in faith and morals. The effort to collect and organize such material and to call the resulting work *Distinctiones* continued among fourteenth-century English theologians and includes the *Distinctiones Lathbury* or *Alphabetum morale* attributed to the Franciscan John Lathbury, which even contains entire sermons.

<sup>1</sup> The basic, though short, study of the matter is Richard H. and Mary A. Rouse, “Biblical Distinctions in the Thirteenth Century,” *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 41 (1974): 27–37, with earlier literature listed in the footnotes. Further: Rouse and Rouse, *Preachers, Florilegia, and Sermons: Studies on the Manipulus florum of Thomas of Ireland*, Studies and Texts 47 (Toronto, 1979), esp. 7–9, 65–90, and 398. Recent overviews are Olga Weijers, *Dictionnaires et répertoires au moyen âge: Une étude du vocabulaire*, CIVICIMA, Études sur le vocabulaire intellectuel du moyen âge 4 (Turnhout, 1991), 26–28; and Mariken Teeuwen, *The Vocabulary of Intellectual Life in the Middle Ages*, CIVICIMA, Études sur le vocabulaire intellectuel du moyen âge 10 (Turnhout, 2003), 260–63. For an early collection of this kind, see Gillian R. Evans, “Alan of Lille’s *Distinctiones* and the Problem of Theological Language,” *Sacris Erudiri* 24 (1980): 67–86, esp. 67–69; for a slightly later one, Joseph Goering, *William de Montibus (c. 1140–1213). The Schools and the Literature of Pastoral Care*, Studies and Texts 108 (Toronto, 1992), 52–54, 69–71, 261–64, and passim.

Technically, *distinctio* refers to the mental act of discerning that words can have several meanings or refer to several parts or aspects of things.<sup>2</sup> Thus, a genus can have several species (for instance, bird: eagle, sparrow, etc.), a whole several parts (bird: wings, beak, etc.), a natural object different qualities (a bird flies, builds a nest, etc.), a word different meanings (bird: the animal, a girl, etc.), or a word in Scripture several spiritual meanings (bird: a just person, angel, pride, etc.). This process became an important technique in the scholastic analysis of matters of faith and morals. For instance, when Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa theologiae* asks whether it is theft if one keeps something one has found, he answers that one must distinguish (*distinguendum est*) between different “somethings” that may be found: natural things like seashells that belong to no one, an ancient coin, or perhaps a wallet belonging to a known individual.<sup>3</sup> It held a similar position in the work of preachers when they divided the thema of their sermons and developed its parts with distinctions and sub-distinctions.<sup>4</sup> Strictly speaking, in the language of medieval preachers a “division” deals with the parts of a clause or sentence, whereas a “distinction” is concerned with an individual word or notion.<sup>5</sup>

In preparing future preachers for their work, masters at universities or study houses “read”—that is, lectured and commented on—various books of the Bible, and many of them edited their lectures or had them edited in book form. These naturally tended to be lengthy works, and a preacher who was looking for material on, say, Advent might have to spend hours to find the right material in a manuscript that probably did not stand on his own bookshelf. The solution, an easy access to what was looked for, could be found in two ways. The edited lectures could be provided with an index (*tabula*) listing major topics in alphabetical order and indicating the places where they were treated in the lectures. Or else, the material in the lectures could be reorganized into topical articles arranged in alphabetical sequence. The latter were, among other things, called *Distinctiones*. A good fourteenth-century example of the two ways is provided by Robert Holcot, OP (ca. 1290–1349),

<sup>2</sup> The primary text on this matter for medieval students would have been Boethius’s *De divisione*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, II-II, qu. 66, art. 5, ad secundum (ed. De Rubeis et al., 4 vols. [Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1948], 3:349).

<sup>4</sup> See Siegfried Wenzel, *Medieval Artes Praedicandi: A Synthesis of Scholastic Sermon Structure* (Toronto, 2015). For the division, see 65–75; for the development, 78–90.

<sup>5</sup> On the difference between *divisio* and *distinctio*, and the occasional confusion of the terms, see *ibid.*, 70. For a genuine *divisio* of the thema, see below, n. 51.

who lectured at Oxford and Cambridge and left, among many other works, a very popular commentary on the Book of Wisdom.<sup>6</sup> In the incunabular edition of 1494 the commentary is a fairly sizeable book of 218 pages of two columns.<sup>7</sup> These are followed by a *tabula* or alphabetical index filling another 26 pages. The *tabula* exists in manuscripts as well and was occasionally even copied by itself, together with similar indexes to other works.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, the wealth of material in Holcot's lectures was selectively reorganized into alphabetical articles, either by Holcot himself or a student, in the *Distinctiones Holkot super Sapienciam*, which contains 184 articles from *Abhominabitur autem Deus to Ydola*.<sup>9</sup> That the material in the *Distinctiones* is excerpted verbatim from Holcot's lecture course on Wisdom can be readily seen, for example, in the article on *Ludus* (article L.11), where the entire discussion of "play" that occurs in Holcot's commentary on the Book of Wisdom<sup>10</sup> is copied verbatim in slightly shortened form but including Holcot's remark on the feast of Corpus Christi, a remark apparently unique in fourteenth-century literature.<sup>11</sup>

The same linking of lecture course to a *tabula* and to *Distinctiones* appears in the work of the Franciscan John Lathbury as well. One of the "classicising

<sup>6</sup> For Holcot's life and writings, see Beryl Smalley, "Robert Holcot O.P.," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 26 (1956), 5–97, and *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1960), 133–202 and passim. A summary account can be found in Jenny Swanson, "Holcot, Robert (c. 1290–1349)," [electronic] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. A more recent account with rich bibliography, especially for Holcot's theological works, is Hester Goodenough Gelber, *It Could Have Been Otherwise. Contingency and Necessity in Dominican Theology at Oxford, 1300–1350*, *Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters* 81 (Leiden, 2004), 92–98.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Holkot, *Super libros Sapientie* (Hagenau: [Heinrich Gran], 1494; facsimile reprint Frankfurt/Main: Minerva, 1974).

<sup>8</sup> Thus in Lincoln, Cathedral Library MS 68, fols. 190r–199v, next to *tabulae* for Grosseteste's *Dicta* and the *Flores* of St. Bernard.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Sharpe, *A Handlist of the Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland Before 1540*, *Publications of the Journal of Medieval Latin* 1 (Turnhout, 1997), 555, lists five manuscripts as *Distinctiones Bibliae*. I have used Oxford, Merton College MS 112, where the work is called *Distinctiones Holkot super Sapienciam* (fols. 65ra, and 2v, the index).

<sup>10</sup> In *Lectio* 172 in the edition of Hagenau 1494, sections C–D (over two columns).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Siegfried Wenzel, "An Early Reference to a Corpus Christi Play," *Modern Philology* 74 (1977): 390–94; rpt in Wenzel, *Elucidations: Medieval Poetry and Its Religious Backgrounds*, *Synthema* 6 (Louvain, Paris, Walpole, Mass., 2010), 339–44.

friars” in England famously studied by Beryl Smalley,<sup>12</sup> Lathbury is said to have died as an old man (*senex*) in 1362. Like Holcot before him, he taught as regent master at Oxford, seemingly shortly after 1350, where he presumably lectured and wrote his commentary on the Book of Lamentations. Nearly all extant manuscripts of *Lathbury super Threnos* contain one or even two indexes.<sup>13</sup> In addition, material from the lectures appears in a more useable form in the *Distinciones (Johannis) Lathbury*, also titled *Alphabetum morale*. It is this work, its putative character as a set of distinctions, and its relation with actual sermons that will be considered in the remainder of this article, together with similar works by other authors of the same period. In order to avoid confusion with such other works also called *Distinciones*, I will refer to it as *Alph*.

Beryl Smalley observed that Lathbury’s lectures were “reorganised into *distinctiones* and drafts of sermons by Lathbury himself, and circulated as an *Alphabetum morale*.”<sup>14</sup> That *Alph* is based on Lathbury’s lectures on Lamentations can be argued primarily from the fact that both frequently use the same proof texts, including curious, even odd sources of the kind that drew Smalley’s attention,<sup>15</sup> though it must be said that *Alph* also quotes a number of fourteenth-century works not found in the Lamentations commentary. Lathbury himself cannot have been the work’s author, since the extant text contains a reference to “lollards” as well as a quotation from “Repyngdoun,”

<sup>12</sup> Smalley, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century*, 221–39; cf. James G. Clark, “Lathbury [Lathbery], John (d. 1362),” [electronic] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>13</sup> See the brief manuscript descriptions in Smalley, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century*, 369–73.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 222, my emphasis.

<sup>15</sup> A good instance, not mentioned by Smalley, is a quotation from “Vrso in Afformis, Affo. 26” in the commentary on Lamentations (Oxford, Merton College MS 189, fols. lxiii vb–lxiv ra) and in the *Alphabetum* (London, British Library Royal 11.A.xiii, fol. 152r, on *Passio*). In general, the relation between the two works is not as straightforward and easy to see as that between the two works by Holcot mentioned above. The “Vrso” passage (the wounds of a murdered man bleed again in the presence of the murderer) was apparently a commonplace for fourteenth-century preachers. It was also used by “Frysbi” (ca. 1350?) in one of his introductory lectures to Peter Lombard’s Sentences (Padua, Biblioteca Antoniana MS 515, fols. 127v–128r); see Siegfried Wenzel, *Latin Sermon Collections from Later Medieval England: Orthodox Preaching in the Age of Wyclif* (Cambridge, 2005), 126–27.

both of which would place it into the 1390s or even later.<sup>16</sup> I will therefore, in the following, refer to the author of *Alph* as “Ps.-Lathbury.”

*Alph* is known to exist in five complete copies and one fragment.<sup>17</sup> One of these is London, British Library Royal 11.A.xiii. It is an octavo volume of 1 + 241 folios made up of parchment and paper and contains *Alph*, here called *Distincciones Johannis Lathbury*<sup>18</sup> (fols. 1r–237r), followed by a sermon on *Amore lingueo* written in the main Anglicana text hand (fols. 237r–240v). The texts are written throughout in one line. The distinctions appear in at least two different scripts of the fifteenth century. One is an upright, squarish Anglicana bookhand, which appears from fol. 1 on to the end; the other is a Secretary hand with a strong tendency to incline to the right, making its first appearance on fol. 13 and then alternating with the Anglicana hand. The scripts change frequently, often on the same page (e.g., fols. 16r, 16v, 177r) or even within a line (e.g., fols. 15v, 187r, 187v, etc.). In later sections of the manuscript the Anglicana hand has corrected the text of the Secretary hand, by means of erasures and marginal additions (e.g., fols. 129v, 133r).

*Alph* contains 215 topical articles in alphabetical order,<sup>19</sup> from *Abstinentum*,<sup>20</sup> *Abel*, *Ablactacio* . . . to *Xristus uel Christianus*, *Ymago*, and *Ypocrita*. Seven of them are in two separate paragraphs with the headword repeated. The articles vary considerably in length, from just over one line (*Abel*) to more than fourteen pages (*Perseuerancia*). They usually begin a new line, with the headword starting with an enlarged initial in red (with a guide letter still visible) and the second letter in a slightly enlarged form. The Secretary hand usually wrote the entire headword in a larger script. In many instances, however, the space for the initial is left blank. There are several cases where a new article begins within the line, with or without initial letter (e.g., *Accidia*, fol. 19v; *Racio*, fol. 209r; etc.). Such irregularities go even further: in the midst of the distinction on *Abstinentia* appears what looks exactly like the

<sup>16</sup> I argue this point, with additional stylistic features, in “John Lathbury’s Commentary on Lamentations and the *Alphabetum morale*,” forthcoming in *Journal of Theological Studies* (2017).

<sup>17</sup> Sharpe, *Handlist*, 273; and Smalley, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century*, 373–74. Another copy of *Alph* appears in London, British Library Harley 3130, fols. 17r–76v, ending incomplete in the article on “Misericordia hominis.”

<sup>18</sup> Thus the explicit on fol. 237r as well as later inscriptions on the front flyleaf and fol. 1r.

<sup>19</sup> Alphabetization is by first letter only. *Quatuor*, the only article on Q, appears between *Prosperitas* and *Propheta*.

<sup>20</sup> The headword is probably intended to be *Abstinentia*, which together with the usual references to other articles (see below) is written in the top margin of fol. 1r.

beginning of another article on the same topic: “Abstinencia. Vbi Delicie per totum” (for this format compare item 1 below). All this suggests that the production or at least the scribal work of this book was somewhat haphazard.

The individual articles deal with theological and related terms and topics, whether they are biblical or not (such as *Racio*, *Nero*, *Julianus Apostata*). In them, its author—Ps.-Lathbury—has essentially gathered a mass of illustrative material for use in preaching. Their format and style differ widely, but a number of common elements recur with regularity, as the following example, an article of average length (nearly two pages), will demonstrate:<sup>21</sup>

5 <C>**ontemplacio.** Vbi *Ascensio Christi*, \vbi *Religio*, vbi *Ecclesia*, vbi *Celum*  
bene, vbi *Gloria celi.*/ Eligius *De mirabilibus mundi*, libro 1, capitulo 19, dicit  
quod in quibusdam partibus Ethiopie est quidam populus qui dicuntur Ath-  
lantes, qui nunquam vident sompna.<sup>22</sup> Consimiliter sunt multi qui considera-  
10 cionem futurorum non percipiunt nec vmquam contemplantur vitam futuram  
sed presentem solum. Item Plinius dicit quod inter omnia que sunt, mel  
maxime conseruat fructum a putrificazione.<sup>23</sup> Consimiliter dulcedo con-  
templacionis superne, que est tanquam mel in anima, conseruat opera nostra  
bona ne per peccatum putrefiant; Prouerbiorum 24: *Commede, fili, mel.*<sup>24</sup>  
15 Huic concordat figura 1 Regum 15: Jonathas cum in bello esset fessus in  
tantum ut videre non poterat, cum gustasset paululum mellis, aperti sunt eius  
oculi et forcior est effectus. Consimiliter spiritualiter oculi mentis nostri  
quandoque sunt clausi et aperiantur melle, etc.; Canticorum 4: *Mel et lac sub*  
*lingua eius, fauus distillans labia eius*, etc. Item Rabanus libro 8, capitulo 6,  
15 dicit quod passerres nidificant in tectis domorum vel in altis locis, non in ymis  
super terram, ne pulli earum rapiantur a serpente,<sup>25</sup> teste Psalmista qui dicit:  
*Etenim passer inuenit sibi domum vbi reponat pullos suos*; et alibi in Psalmo:

9 Prov 24:13      10–12 1 Sam 14:27      13–14 Cant 4:11      16–17 Ps 83:4

<sup>21</sup> London, British Library Royal 11.A.xiii, fols. 26v–27r, with punctuation and paragraph division here slightly modernized. Interlinear material is reproduced between slashes.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Solinus, *De mirabilibus mundi* 31.2 (ed. Theodor Mommsen, *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*, 2d ed. [Berlin, 1895]).

<sup>23</sup> Perhaps Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 22.50 (in Pliny, *Natural History*, ed. W. H. S. Jones, vol. 6, Loeb Classical Library 392 [Cambridge, Mass., 1951], 370).

<sup>24</sup> Biblical references are cited according to Robert Weber et al., eds., *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*, 3d ed., 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1983) and listed by line number.

<sup>25</sup> Rabanus, *De universo* 8.6 (PL 111:250), expanded.

Cedri Libani quas plantavit, illic passeris nidificabunt. Consimiliter religiosi  
 nidificare et pullos bonorum operum in celestibus producere deberent, et  
 20 etiam alii ecclesiastici et contemplativi, ne pulli eorum, id est opera, rapiantur  
 ab illo serpente de quo dicitur Apocalipsis 12 quod *proiectus est draco*  
*magnus ille serpens antiquus in terram et angeli eius*. Vnde hic est ille draco  
 qui *traxit tertiam partem stellarum*. Et ideo Ambrosius *De figura seculi*:  
 “Non ambulemus,” inquit, “in terrenis, et serpens nobis nocere non poterit.”<sup>26</sup>  
 25 Philippensium 3: *Nostra conversatio in celis est*. Nota quod avis ascendens in  
 altum secreta est ab accipite [*read accipitre*], et quanto altius, tanto securius.  
 Figura huius Mathei 14 de Christo Jesu.<sup>27</sup> Sed quamcito descendit super  
 terram et quiescit, tunc est in periculo ne illaquietur, et licet laqueo capiatur,  
 quamdiu tamen commedit et quiescit in terra, non sentit se illaqueatum, sed  
 30 statim cum vellet inde recedere et in altum volare, tunc primo percipit se esse  
 deceptam et captam. Conformiter volans in altum ad Deum per  
 contemplationem securus est a laqueo diaboli, et quanto altius, tanto securius,  
 sed quamcito descendit ad quietem deliciarum terrenarum, est in periculo ne a  
 laqueo diaboli capiatur, et licet capiatur, quandoque non percipit quamdiu  
 35 manet in deliciis, sed quando vellet recedere finaliter ad Deum et ad  
 beatitudinem celestem, tunc sentit se esse ligatum laqueo peccati; ut de talibus  
 verificetur illud Job 18: *Tenebitur planta eius laqueo*. Item Isidorus 2  
*Ethimologiarum* capitulo 1: “Greci,” inquit, “appellauerunt hominem *an-*  
*tropum*, eo quod sursum spectet sublimatus ab ymo ad contemplationem sui  
 40 artificis.”<sup>28</sup> Quod Ovidius poeta designat dum dicit:

Pronaque cum spectant animalia cetera terram,  
 Os homini sublime dedit celumque videre.  
 Iussit et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.<sup>29</sup>

Et secundum Philosophum 1 *De animalibus* caput hominis est positum<sup>30</sup> supra  
 45 totum corpus. Et in libro 12 notat quod in generibus animalium non est genus

17–18 Ps 103:16–17      21–22 Apoc 12:9      22–23 Apoc 12:4      25 Phil  
 3:20      37 Job 18:9

<sup>26</sup> Ambrose, *De fuga saeculi* 7.43 (ed. C. Schenkl, CSEL 32.2 [Vienna, 1897], 197).

<sup>27</sup> Ps.-Lathbury may be thinking of Matthew 14:23–33, Jesus going into a mountain or walking upon the water.

<sup>28</sup> Isidore, *Etymologiae* 11.1.5 (in Isidorus, *Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, ed. W. M. Lindsay, 2 vols. [Oxford, 1911], vol. 2, n.p.).

<sup>29</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.84–86 (ed. Frank Justus Miller, two vols., Loeb Classical Library 42–43 [Cambridge, Mass., 1966], 1:8).

eleuati corporis nisi homo, in signum quod homo deberet querere que sursum sunt et sapere non que sunt super terram secundum Apostolum Colossensium 3. [fol. 27r] Vnde Augustinus *De ciuitate Dei*, libro 22, capitulo 24: “Non,” inquit, “ut animalia rationis inexperta, que prona in terram parua<sup>31</sup> esse videmus, ita creatus est homo, sed erecta in celum corporis forma adiuuet eum que sursum sunt sapere.”<sup>32</sup> Item Crisostomus *Operis imperfecti* omelia 10 dicit sicut oculus exterior quanto mundior fuerit, tanto remocior\ius/ videt et clarius.<sup>33</sup> Sic anima quanto longior fuerit a solitudinibus huius mundi et quanto mundior a peccato, tanto clarius contemplatur celestia. Item narratur de Anaxagoro philosopho cum quidam quereret ab eo ad quid natus esset et pro quo fine, respondit se ad hoc esse natum ut celestia contempletur.<sup>34</sup> Et ideo sicut narrat Valerius libro 8 de eodem philosopho qui, cum diu extra patriam suam peregrinando abisset, tandem cum ad patriam suam redisset et possessiones suas desertas vidisset, ait: “Non essem,” inquit, “saluus nisi iste perissent.”<sup>35</sup> Et ideo in signum quod homo non fuerit creatus pro voluptate carnis, non pro gloria mundana, non pro dominacione terrena, sed solum pro Deo glorificando, contemplando, et laudando, dicitur Deuteronomii 26: *En Deus elegit te ut sis ei populus et custodias omnia precepta eius, et faciet te excelsiorem cunctis gentibus quas creauit in nomen et laudem et gloriam suam, ut sis populus sanctus Domini Dei tui.*

Item 4 Regum 2 habetur quomodo Helias ascendit in paradysum in curru igneo. Pro quo notandum quod currus iste debet habere quatuor rotas. Prima rota est consideracio de diuinis beneficiis, quomodo omnia que habemus proueniunt ex Dei dono et eius bonitate. Namque omnia bona in hoc mundo uel

47–48 Col 3:2

62–65 Deut 26:18–19

66–67 4 Reg 2:11

<sup>30</sup> *est positum* is written twice.

<sup>31</sup> Notice that *parvus* is the etymology for *passer*: Rabanus, *De universo*, 8:6 (PL 111:250). Otherwise, *parua* could be a scribal error for *posita*.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Augustine, *De ciuitate Dei* 22.24 (in Augustine, *The City of God*, ed. and trans. William M. Green et al., 7 vols., Loeb Classical Library 411–17 [Cambridge, Mass., 1957–72], 7:330).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Ps.-Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum*, homily 10 (PG 56:685).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Walter Burleigh, *De vita et moribus philosophorum* 18 (ed. Hermann Knust, Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart 177 [Tübingen, 1886; rpt. Frankfurt, 1964], 80).

<sup>35</sup> Valerius Maximus, *Facta et dicta memorabilia* 8.7.ext.6 (in Valerius, *Memorable Doings and Sayings*, ed. and trans. David R. Shackleton Bailey, 2 vols., Loeb Classical Library 492–93 [Cambridge, Mass., 2000], 2:234–35).

- 70 sunt bona nature, bona fortune, uel bona graciae. Nota de singulis. De hiis omnibus apostolus Iacobus, Iacobi 1: *Omne datum optimum et omne donum perfectum desursum est descendens a patre luminum*. Secunda rota est consideracio proprie ingratitude, quod consideratis Dei beneficiis non reddimus sibi grates. Tales namque sunt similes decem leprosis a Christo mundatis,
- 75 quorum tantum unus dedit laudem Deo, de *nouem vbi sunt?* etc. Nota de ingratitude in verbo *Pater* de filiis sagittantibus ad corpus patris mortui, etc.<sup>36</sup> Tercia rota est consideracio pene inferni. Nota in verbo *Infernus* de Lazaro, etc. Quarta rota est consideracio glorie celestis. Nota in verbo *Gloria celi* de conuiuio Ioseph ad fratres suos, Genesis 43, etc. Et hoc est quod beatus
- 80 Augustinus *De visitacione infirmorum* dicit: “Nollem,” inquit, “habere locum angeli in celo si possem habere locum debitum homini.”<sup>37</sup> Septem equi trahentes currum istum sunt septem virtutes opposite contra septem vicia capitalia. Primus equus est humilitas, secundus caritas, tercius paciencia, quartus labor virtuosus, quintus paupertas, sextus abstinentia, septimus continencia.
- 85 Ductor istius currus est voluntas, virga est [ar, *canc.*] timor Dei, qui facit hominem in via Dei et virtutum velociter ambulare, etc.

71–72 Jac 1:17    75 Lc 17:17    78–79 Gen 43:16 ff.

Elements that this article shares with many others are the following:

(1) It begins with cross-references to other articles in *Alph*: “*Vbi Ascencio*,” etc. Similar cross-references may also occur later in the article, as they do in *Contemplacio*, where we read near the end: “Nota de ingratitude in verbo *Pater* de filiis. . . .” They are usually introduced with “vbi,” a reference marker commonly used in late medieval works (e.g., “ubi supra”) or else with “in verbo X,” both employed in *Contemplacio*. Sometimes they include additional details, such as the “de filiis” here, a reference to the widespread exemplum of three sons shooting arrows at their father’s corpse in order to determine which of them is his true son.

(2) The text of the article itself then may begin with a piece of natural knowledge as here, or a story, or any other kind of “authority.” These are often introduced with “legitur” or “narrat” or “secundum.” Some articles start with a simple aspect of everyday life, such as “When pilgrims are thirsty, a

<sup>36</sup> The story referred to is Tubach 1272, in Frederic C. Tubach, *Index exemplorum. A Handbook of Medieval Religious Tales*, FF Communications 204 (Helsinki, 1969), 102.

<sup>37</sup> Ps.-Augustine, *De visitacione infirmorum* 2 (PL 40:1153).

drink is very delightful and desirable. In the same way, our present life is a kind of pilgrimage. . . .”<sup>38</sup> Others, however, begin with a genuine distinction. *Abel*, for instance, the shortest article in this work, has “Fuit virgo, sacerdos, et martir,” which is supported with the single authority of “Augustinus *De mirabilibus Scripture*, libro 3, capitulo 3,”<sup>39</sup> and no further moralization.

(3) These pieces usually lead to the moral teaching they illustrate, and the connection is most frequently made with “consimiliter” or “conformiter,” or less often with “moraliter” or “spiritualiter.”

(4) The illustrative pieces in an article are usually connected with “Item,” as in the given example. In contrast to more analytical *Distinctiones* by other authors (see below), Ps.-Lathbury’s are catena-like, an accumulation of proof texts and illustrative material.

(5) Biblical texts occur as part of this illustrative material in one of two ways. They may be proof texts supporting a bit of moral teaching, such as the quotation of Proverbs 24 near the beginning of *Contemplacio*; or else they provide a *figura*, a biblical event or story that functions exactly like any other, non-biblical story or exemplum, such as Jonathan here tasting a bit of honey.

As noted in point 2, one can find a genuine distinction either at the beginning of an article or later in its body, as is the case in *Contemplacio* when it specifies the wheels and horses of the chariot of fire that took Elijah to heaven, at the end of the article. The majority of such distinctions specify a number, mostly three, kinds of what the headword indicates. Thus, *Ablactacio* (“weaning”) has three kinds: a baby’s being weaned from its mother, an infant’s from its nurse, and a child’s from its tutor.<sup>40</sup> Under *Cadere* Ps.-Lathbury distinguishes three ways a person can fall: with respect to his soul, or to his body, or to both. Other distinctions focus on different qualities or effects an object can have. Thus, whiteness is the foundation of all colors, it is seen more readily than anything else, and it causes a stain on it to be more easily seen than elsewhere—all properties applicable to *Castitas*. To these two types—species of a genus and properties—belong the majority of distinctions

<sup>38</sup> “Peregrinantibus sicientibus potus est valde delectabilis ac desiderabilis. Consimiliter presens vita est quedam peregrinacio . . .” (*Apostoli*, fol. 14r).

<sup>39</sup> Ps.-Augustine, *De mirabilibus Scripturarum sacrarum* 3.3 (PL 35:2154).

<sup>40</sup> Lathbury quotes “Magister in *Historiis scolasticis*.” Peter Comestor’s text has: “Propterea quidam dicunt tres esse ablactationes: prima est a lacte mamillae, quae fit tertio anno; secunda a lacte infantiae, quae fit septimo; tertia a lacte pueritiae, quae fit duodecimo, et sic amovetur puer a nutrice, a paedagogo, a tutore” (see PL 198:1297), whereas in *Alph* the final clause appears as “a nutrice, a doctore \pedagogo/, et a timore” (fol. 2r–v).

included. But other kinds occur as well, though less regularly. For instance, a whole may be divided into its parts; thus *Avaricia* is said to be like a hand, which has five fingers. A special form of this occurs when a name furnishes an acrostic whose letters are said to be parts of what the name stands for. Thus, the four letters of ADAM stand for *anathole*, *dysis*, *archis*, and *mesembria*, the Greek words for the four points of the compass, signifying that man's sin affected the whole universe.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, IUDEA, which means "confession," indicates the five qualities a true confession must have: it must be *integra*, *uera*, *dolorosa*, *erubescens*, and *accusatoria*.<sup>42</sup> This method includes using the etymology of a word, here a name, which elsewhere is applied to simple nouns. A good example is *dominus*, whose three medieval "etymologies" according to Ps.-Lathbury—*dans minas*, *dans manus*, and *dans minus*—are applied by him to the three divine persons.<sup>43</sup> Such distinctions, of various kinds, can be found throughout the work.

The illustrative material collected by Ps.-Lathbury in *Alph* comes from a large number of sources. Their identification is surprisingly accurate, as can be seen from the notes to the quoted article above. These sources include the works Smalley was especially interested in, but it should be stressed that such works as *De parvo lapide*, *De visionibus Sibille*, *De corde sive musica amoris* and the like, which are largely untraceable, pale in number in comparison with better known patristic, medieval, or secular writers. It is noteworthy, though not astonishing, that Ps.-Lathbury quotes a number of fourteenth-century writers by name, a fact that may be of interest for his standing as well as for literary history. Especially the *Polychronicon* by "Cestrensis," i.e., Ranulph Higden of Chester, is quoted again and again, with precise indications of book and chapter. Another chronicle that appears at least once is that of "Norvoburgensis" (fol. 130v). Of fourteenth-century theologians Ps.-Lathbury quotes Nicholas Treveth (apparently on Augustine's *City of God*, fol. 46v), Thomas Waleys on the Psalms ("Wallensis," fols. 24v, 47v, 74v, etc.), Holcot (on the Book of Wisdom, fols. 11v, 18r, 18v, 70v, etc.), and Ringsted on Proverbs (fol. 12v). A "tabula rubea," apparently containing material on topics similar to the *Distinctiones*, furnished details in at least five articles (fols. 89v, 111v, 123r, 170v, and 192v). The Franciscan handbook

<sup>41</sup> Adam, fol. 10r. Lathbury cites "Jeronimus *De ordine creaturarum*." But see Augustine, *In Iohannis euangelium tractatus cxxiv*, tract. 10.12 (ed. R. Willems, CCL 36 [Turnhout, 1954]).

<sup>42</sup> *Confessio*, fol. 34r.

<sup>43</sup> *Dominus*, fol. 57v. For the use of such an etymology in a sermon, see Wenzel, *Latin Sermon Collections*, 56 n. 9.

*Fasciculus morum*, too, is quoted at least three times, again with precise indications of part and chapter (fols. 25r twice, and 171r), as are the earlier *Breviloquium* (fols. 212r, 218v, 219r) and *Communioloquium* (fol. 20r) by John of Wales.

Of much greater interest is the fact that Ps.-Lathbury included a number of sermons.<sup>44</sup> Smalley speaks of seven,<sup>45</sup> but there are in fact many more. These appear in various states of completeness: some have all the essential parts of a scholastic sermon, from the initial thema through its division and development (*processus*) to the standard closing formula, while others are more rudimentary. Their thema usually has some verbal or at least notional connection with the topic of the article where they appear. For example, the article on *Dominus* begins with two sets of “etymologies” for the word, all of them explained and supported with biblical prooftexts. Then the text states the liturgical occasion (3 Advent) and begins the sermon on *Dominus prope est* (sermon 9 below).

In the following I list the complete sermons together with several pieces that show essential sermon features but are not complete sermons. For each item, numbered consecutively as it appears in *Alphabetum*, I indicate the biblical thema and beginning words, the occasion, and the article in *Alphabetum* where it appears. Material in square brackets is not found in the manuscript.

Sermon 1: “*Induamur arma lucis et sicut in die honeste ambulemus*, Romanorum 13 et in epistula hodierna. Karissimi, pro processu sermonis est notandum.”

- First Sunday in Advent.
- *Aduentus Christi*, fols. 7r–10r. Before the thema: “Dominica prima aduentus Domini thema.”

Sermon 2: “*Qui habet aures audiendi audiat*, Luce 8. Karissimi, Menander *De figuris Yram et Salamonis*.”

- ?
- *Clamare*, fols. 27v–29r. Before the thema the scribe wrote “thema” in the text and in the margin.

This is immediately followed by what seems to be a second sermon on the same thema:

<sup>44</sup> As did Peter of Limoges († 1306) already in his *Distinctiones*; see Nicole Bériou, “La prédication au béguinage de Paris pendant l’année liturgique 1272–1273,” *Recherches Augustiniennes* 13 (1978): 195–229, at 109.

<sup>45</sup> Smalley, *English Friars and Antiquity in the Early Fourteenth Century*, 375.

- Sermon 3: “*Qui habet aures audiendi audiat*. Karissimi, Neemie 8 scribitur quomodo Esdras scriba ascendit.”
- ?
  - *Clamare*, fols. 29r–30r.
- Sermon 4: “*Quomodo sedet sola ciuitas plena populo*, Trenorum 1. Pro processu vltiori notandum quod textus seu questio ista potest referri lamentatiue ad Christum.”
- Good Friday; marginal: “Nota pro sermone in die Parasceue.”
  - *Ciuitas*, fols. 38r–41v.
- Sermon 5: “*Videns Iesus ciuitatem fleuit*, etc. Luce 19 et in euangelio hodierno. Karissimi, prosperitas ciuitatis stat in tribus.”
- Good Friday.
  - *Ciuitas*, fols. 41v–43r.
- Sermon 6: “*Faciamus tria tabernacula*, Mathei 17 et in euangelio hodierno. Secundum sententiam Philosophi duo opposita contraria non possunt simul manere in eodem subiecto.”
- Second Sunday of Lent? The thema is preceded by: “Vnde dominica \2a/quadragesime.”
  - *Domus*, fols. 51r–52r.
- Sermon 7: “*Revertar in domum meam*. Nota de septem requisitis ad templum. . . . Pro antethema nota de duplici cornu. . . . Pro processu sermonis est notandum.”
- Third Sunday of Lent: The thema is preceded by “Dominica 3a quadragesime. Thema,” with “Sermo” in margin.
  - *Domus*, fol. 52r–v.
- Sermon 8: “*Nunc dies salutis*, 2 Corinthiorum 2 [read 6]. Karissimi, sciendum est secundum Tullium in primo *Rhetorice* . . . tria reperta in doctore.”
- The pericope is for the First Sunday in Lent.
  - *Dies*, fols. 54v–57r.
- Sermon 9: “*Dominus prope est*. Karissimi, secundum Magistrum *Sententiarum* triplex reperitur aduentus.”
- Third Sunday in Advent: “Dominica 3a aduentus Domini” before the thema.
  - *Dominus*, fols. 58r–59r.
- Sermon 10: “*Iesus exiit de templo*, Johannis 8. Karissimi, Augustinus *De ciuitate Dei* libro 4, capitulo 22, narrat.”
- Passion Sunday: “Dominica in Passione, antethema” before the thema.
  - *Ecclesia*, fols. 61r–63r.

- Sermon 11: “[I]ntrauit Iesus, Mathei 21. Narrat Solinus *De mirabilibus mundi*.”
- Easter Sunday: “Dominica Pasche,” marginal.
  - *Ecclesia*, fol. 63v. After repeating the thema “Intrauit Iesus in templum” the text refers to “vbi supra” and continues with: “Karissimi, pro processu sermonis est sciendum quod Rengsted in principio prologi super Prouerbia recitat. . . .”
- Sermon 12: “*Nomen virginis Maria*, Luce 1, etc. Karissimi, processus euangelii hodierni declarat salutacionem Virginis.”
- Annunciation: “In annunciacione thema” before the thema.
  - *Maria*, fols. 106v–108r. The text continues: “Item in Natiuitate Beate Virginis uel Concepcione thema *Sapiencia edificauit sibi domum*. Nota superius in verbo *Ecclesia* de fundamento etc. et applica ad Mariam.”
- Sermon 13: “*Rex aedificauit civitatem*, Judith 1. Karissimi, scribitur Ecclesiastes 9 *Ciuitas parua et pauci viri*.”
- Nativity of the Virgin: “Item in Natiuitate beate Marie,” before the thema.
  - *Maria*, fols. 108r–110v.
- Sermon 14: “*Accipe puerum et nutri eum*, Exodi 2. Secundum processum Scripture ibidem Pharaon rex Egipti.”
- Christmas: “Item in festo Natiuitatis Christi thema,” before the thema.
  - *Natiuitas Christi*, fols. 135r–137v.
- Sermon 15: “*Congregabunt electos a quatuor ventibus*, Mathei 24. Karissimi, euangelium hodiernum declarat quomodo in fine mundi.”
- The “euangelium hodiernum” would be for Trinity 23 according to the Franciscan use. Marked “thema” in margin.
  - *Quatuor*, fols. 203r–204v, with marginal “deficit.”
- Sermon 16: “*Regem honorificate*. Karissimi, pro processu istius sermonis est sciendum quod tria sunt insigna regalia.”
- Third Sunday after Easter: “Thema dominica 3a post Pascha,” marginal.
  - *Rex*, fols. 210r–211r.
- Sermon 17: “*Ecce tempus acceptabile*, 2 Corinthiorum 6. Karissimi, pro processu sermonis est sciendum quod totum tempus vite humane transit per quatuor tempora anni.”
- Possibly First Sunday in Lent.
  - *Tempus*, fol. 227v (only twelve lines).

- Sermon 18: “*Praeparabit viam tuam ante te*, Malachie 3 et Mathei xi. Pro processu est sciendum quod quadruplex via est ad presens assignanda.”
- Second Sunday of Advent: “Thema in dominica 2a Aduentus,” marginal.
  - *Via*, fol. 230r–v.
- Sermon 19: “*Faciamus hominem ad imaginem nostram*, etc., Genesis 1. Karissimi, Magister *Sentenciarum* libro 2, dist. 16, tractans hu[n]c textum.”
- ?
  - *Ymago*, fols. 233v–236r.

The items listed stand in the text of their respective articles without break. There is no doubt that they are, and were intended to be, sermons—not records of actually preached ones but models for use by preachers. Several are in fact called “sermo.” In addition, though differing in completeness, they have all the basic elements of a late medieval scholastic sermon:<sup>46</sup> a thema, often called so;<sup>47</sup> an address (always *Karissimi*); an invitation to pray at the end of the introduction;<sup>48</sup> a division; the development (*processus*); occasionally a typical closing formula;<sup>49</sup> and in almost all cases an indication of the liturgical occasion for which they are intended.<sup>50</sup>

The “division”—an essential feature of the scholastic sermon—in these pieces is in fact a *distinctio* as defined above.<sup>51</sup> It underlies the entire

<sup>46</sup> For these basic sermon features see Siegfried Wenzel, *Medieval Artes Praedicandi: A Synthesis of Scholastic Sermon Structure*, Medieval Academy Books 114 (Toronto, 2015).

<sup>47</sup> Notice also the occurrence of *antethema* in sermons 7 and 10.

<sup>48</sup> Usually with *Rogate*, in sermons 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 15, and 19.

<sup>49</sup> For example, “Quod nobis concedat omnipotens Deus, qui eternaliter viuit et regnat. Amen,” in sermon 5 (fol. 43r); similar endings in sermons 10, 13, and 18. Sermon 14 even has a rare final *unitio partium* (cf. Wenzel, *Medieval Artes Praedicandi*, 84–85): “Pro omnibus istis quatuor principalibus simul scribitur 4 Regum 4 de Helyseo propheta qui frequentabat domum cuiusdam viri dixitque mulier viro suo: *Animaduerte quod vir iste sepe transit per nos. Faciamus ergo ei cenaculum paruum et ponamus in eo lectum*, pro primo; *mensam*, pro secundo; *candelabrum*, pro tercio; *et cellam*, pro quarto. Hec est cella, idest cathedra, in qua rex Dauid canebat psalmum Domino, etc.” (fol. 137v). The quoted text is 4 Reg 4:9–10.

<sup>50</sup> In fact, my identification of these sermons is based on the presence of a biblical thema and a reference to a liturgical occasion, including “hodiernum euangelium” or the like.

<sup>51</sup> To illustrate a “division” that is a genuine *divisio* (rather than a *distinctio*): In Cambridge, Pembroke College MS 200, the thema *Induamur arma lucis* is applied to the holy fathers in Limbo who were waiting for Christ’s coming, and the preacher divides

discourse built upon it. For example, sermon 1, on “Let us be clothed in the armor of light” (Romans 13:12), begins thus:

Beloved, for the development of the sermon we should notice that in the course of the gospel we read that Christ was clothed in a fourfold garment. For he was clothed in:

a white garment, Luke 23;  
a purple one, John 19;  
a yellow one, Matthew 27;  
and a seamless tunic, John 19 [:23].

In the same way, any good Christian who wants to belong to Christ’s company and wear his livery should adorn himself with this fourfold garment, that he may meet his Savior worthily.<sup>52</sup>

The four garments are moralized as purity, justice, humility, and charity. Three of them—purity, justice, and charity—are then developed in the following paragraphs in due order and form the three major parts or *principalia* of the sermon.<sup>53</sup> Each part, *principale*, is numbered (*primo*, *secundo*, *tercio*) and begins with the putative preacher saying *Primo principaliter dico quod* . . . and so on.

The term *principaliter* is of special interest here. It is a standard ingredient in late medieval sermons, used when the preacher begins a principal section of his discourse that develops one part of his division or distinction.<sup>54</sup> Now, in *Alph* there are many spots besides the sermons listed above where such a *principaliter dico* or *dixi* appears. A good example is the article on *Contur-*

the thema: “In quibus uerbis tanguntur tria: Veniet enim Dei Filius primo ornatus nouo velamine, ibi *induamur*; secundo ornatus fortitudine, ibi *arma*; tercio illustratus splendenti lumine, ibi *lucis*. Primo dico . . .” (fol. 1r).

<sup>52</sup> “Karissimi, pro processu sermonis est notandum quod in processu euangelii legitur Christum indutum fuisse quadruplicem vestem. Erat namque indutus:

veste alba, Luce 23;  
veste purpurea etc., Joh 19;  
veste coccinea [*sic*], Mat 27;  
et tunica inconsutili, Joh. 19.

Conformiter, quilibet bonus Christianus volens esse de secta et liberata Christi debet se ornare hac quadruplici veste, vt digne poterit occurrere suo Saluatori” (fol. 7r).

<sup>53</sup> The *vestis coccinea* (Mt 27:28), listed as the third, is not developed.

<sup>54</sup> Examples in printed sermons can be found in Siegfried Wenzel, *Macaronic Sermons: Bilingualism and Preaching in Late-Medieval England* (Ann Arbor, 1994), 310, 322, 332; or Patrick J. Horner, *A Macaronic Sermon Collection from Late Medieval England, Oxford, MS Bodley 649* (Toronto, 2006), 135, 145, 151.

*bare*. In developing the idea that *conturbaciones*, “disturbances,” can be caused by natural forces, Ps.-Lathbury offers the following distinction:

According to Saint Augustine, the Romans had four gods whom they related to the four elements:

Pluto, to earth, who was served through worldly desires and avarice;  
 Neptune, to water, who was served through a voluptuous life;  
 Jupiter, to air, who was served through pride and elation;  
 Vesta, to fire, who was served through wrath, envy, and maliciousness.<sup>55</sup>

These four are then developed in sections beginning with “Primo principaliter dico” to “Quarto principaliter dixi.” The article, *Conturbacio*, has no other sermon elements, but it might well be considered as part of a sermon, and it clearly shows how a distinction, such as the four Roman gods, could be used in preaching. Similar developments with *principaliter dico/dixi*—and also other sermon features—occur in other articles, such as *Benedicchio*, *Beatitudo*, *Liber*, *Lacrimare*, *Pastor*, and others, which could therefore be included in the list of sermons given above.

*Alph* is full of such distinctions, together with other features that develop them. They occur throughout the work, and as can be easily seen from the sermons I have indicated, they may function as the initial division in a scholastic sermon as well as a distinction or subdivision in the development as these were taught in contemporary *artes praedicandi*.<sup>56</sup> It is thus patent why a handbook for preachers such as *Alph*, even if it contains much more than formal distinctions, could still be called *Distinctiones*.

Nor is this work the only one made in late medieval England with this title. For comparison I will briefly discuss two other writers who were active shortly before Lathbury and apparently called their works thus. Both were Dominicans, and both produced a number of important theological and pastoral writings. Simon Boraston (fl. 1311–38) wrote an *Alphabetum de vocalibus predicabilibus*, which in some manuscripts is called *Distinctiones*,<sup>57</sup> as well as

<sup>55</sup> “Secundum quod recitat Augustinus *De ciuitate Dei*, libro 4, capitulo 10, Romani posuerunt quatuor deos quatuor elementorum, quorum quemlibet tanquam deum coluerunt et sibi seruierunt. Primo posuerunt Plutonem, deum terre; et Neptunum, deum aque; Iouem, deum aeris; et Vestam, deum [*sic*] ignis. Vesta est Venus secundum Treueth . . . Quidam enim seruiunt Plutoni, deo terre, secundum eius proprietates propter mundialem cupiditatem . . .” (fol. 46v).

<sup>56</sup> See Wenzel, *Medieval Artes Praedicandi*, 65–75, 78–80.

<sup>57</sup> For the (eleven) extant manuscripts see Sharpe, *Handlist*, 609–10.

a cycle of sermons on the Epistles and Gospels of the Church year and some special occasions.<sup>58</sup> His *Alphabetum* contains 355 articles in alphabetical order, from *Abire* to *Zelus*.<sup>59</sup> These differ in character from Ps.-Lathbury by being much more biblically oriented: they focus on the biblical occurrence and meaning of the respective word. Often a word is discussed *in bono* and *in malo*. They contain far fewer distinctions of the kind we find in “Lathbury.” A good example to show the difference is the article on *Ignis*, “fire.” Ps.-Lathbury distinguishes at once four kinds of fire, namely that of hell, purgatory, fire in this world, and the fire of the sphere,<sup>60</sup> which he then explains in the remainder of the article. In contrast, Boraston says that “In Holy Scripture [fire] signifies the Holy Spirit in many places” and goes through a number of them, quoting among other authorities Josephus on Maccabees and Fulgentius in his *Mythology*. Then he adds “Of the fire of hell it is written” and again adduces scriptural passages on this meaning of “fire.”<sup>61</sup> Yet some proper distinctions occur in his work as well, even if less prominently than in Ps.-Lathbury. For instance, three things are said to cause a person to leave his house: an earthquake, fire, or the collapse of the house;<sup>62</sup> or “We should know that there are three kinds of eyes: those of the body, of reason, and of contemplation.”<sup>63</sup> But the difference between the two authors in this respect is palpable.

<sup>58</sup> For his life and works see Simon Tugwell, “Boraston [Burneston], Simon,” [electronic] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. The basic study of Boraston is Stephen L. Forte, O.P., “Simon of Boraston O.P.: Life and Writings,” *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 22 (1952): 321–34. The sermons are preserved in Oxford, Merton College MS 216, from which the following quotations are taken.

<sup>59</sup> Oxford, Merton College MS 216, fols. 45ra–202ra.

<sup>60</sup> “Ignes sunt quatuor, viz. infernalis, purgatorii, ignis in hoc mundo mixtus, et ignis in | spera sua purus. Primus urit sed non consumit nec purgat. Secundus urit et purgat et consumit. Tercius urit et consumit. Quartus calidus quidem est sed non consumit sed confortat” (London, British Library Royal 11.A.xiii, fols. 83v–84r).

<sup>61</sup> “Ignis in Scriptura sacra signat Spiritum Sanctum in multis locis.... De igne inferni scribitur ...” (Merton College MS 216, in *Ignis*; the manuscript is not foliated).

<sup>62</sup> “Tria nos monere deberent que mouent hominem corporaliter exire domum suam, scilicet terremotus, ignis nimius uel accesus, et ruine impetus,” *ibidem*, in *Egredi uel egressus siue exire in bono*”

<sup>63</sup> “Sciendum est igitur quod est triplex genus oculorum. Sunt quidam oculi carnis, oculi rationis, oculi contemplacionis, secundum Hugonem,” *ibidem*, in *Oculus*. Boraston is citing Hugh of St. Victor’s commentary on Dionysius’s *Hierarchia coelestis*, 3.2 (PL 175:976).

Although Boraston's *Alphabetum* or *Distinctiones* contains no sermons, he also wrote a cycle of sermons separately from this work.<sup>64</sup> The sermons are fairly short pieces. They regularly begin with an introduction that cites an authority (very often Saint Augustine) or speaks of some experience of everyday life, and then turns to a division of the thema, in two or three parts, which are briefly developed, mostly with proof texts. The material in them can largely be found in his *Alphabetum* as well. For instance, his sermons on *Existis videre* and *Caeci vident*, for the Third Sunday in Advent, contain material from his articles on *Egredi* (and *Egressus*), *Videre*, and *Cecitas*.

Boraston's confrère John Bromyard, who died probably by 1352, also left an alphabetical handbook for preachers, known as *Summa praedicatorum*, apparently after its initial word "Praedicatorum [vita]."<sup>65</sup> It contains 189 sections,<sup>66</sup> from *Abiectio* (A.1) to *Xristus* (X.1). In their majority they begin with an outline that lists the articles that follow in them. Very many start off with a *distinctio*, which thus forms the first article. Thus the section on *Aduentus Domini* (A.13) begins as follows:

About the Advent of Our Lord --

- first will be shown a distinction;
- second a sufficientia;<sup>67</sup>
- third how Christ's coming in the flesh was preceded by a preparation;
- fourth what brings us comfort in his coming;
- fifth what should follow owing to justice;
- sixth what preparation should be made before Christ's coming to our soul;
- seventh what gains accompany it;
- eighth what should follow it on our part.

Regarding the first point: Christ's coming in general is twofold, namely the first of mercy and the second of justice. And both are subdivided.

<sup>64</sup> Extant only in Merton College MS 216, fols. 2ra–42va, preceded by a table, fol. 1ra–vb.

<sup>65</sup> He also wrote earlier a similar work called *Opus trivium* or *Tractatus iuris civilis et canonici ad moralem materiam applicati*; see Siegfried Wenzel, "Bromyard's Other Handbook: Canon and Civil Law for Preachers," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, Third Series, 6 (2009): 93–123.

<sup>66</sup> I refer to them as "sections" because in the *Summa* Bromyard uses "articuli" for the parts within an (alphabetical) section or chapter. The sections are tagged by alphabetical letter and running number (A.1 and so on).

<sup>67</sup> *Sufficientia* is a rationale or reason for the parts of a given term or notion, and their number.

For the coming of mercy is twofold:

one [is his coming] into the Virgin by assuming flesh,  
the other into our soul by giving us grace. . . .

The second kind of his coming is also subdivided, for the coming of justice is twofold:

one for the particular judgment. . . ,  
the second in the general judgment [i.e., the Last Judgment].<sup>68</sup>

This opening reveals the conceptual clarity and control over the material Bromyard will present in discussing the given topic, announced in what is formally a *divisio textus*, that are hallmarks of his work throughout. With them goes a sophisticated logical and theological analysis of the concept concerned. All this is very far from the distinctions we found in Ps.-Lathbury, where material is put together in a rather helter-skelter fashion.

But like Ps.-Lathbury's *Alph*, Bromyard's *Summa* also contains partial and even complete sermons, and this in several forms. Here and there, Bromyard produces what formally amounts to an entire sermon<sup>69</sup> or a collation,<sup>70</sup> with

<sup>68</sup> “Aduentus Domini nostri. Primo ostendetur distincio, secundo sufficiencia, tercio ostendetur qualiter aduentum Christi in carne precessit preparacio, quarto qualia in aduentu suo nobis portant commoda, quinto qualia sequi deberent iusticie debita, sexto qualis aduentum Christi in animam precedere debeat preparacio, septimo qualia concurrunt lucra, octauo qualis sequi debeant ex parte nostra opera. Quantum ad primum: Aduentus Christi in generali est duplex: primus videlicet misericordie, et secundus iusticie. Et uterque subdiuiditur, quia aduentus misericordie est duplex: vnus in Virginem carnem assumendo, alius in animam gratiam largiendo. De vtroque Johannis 14: *Veniemus et mansionem apud eum faciemus*. Ad omnes enim venit, sed cum quibus mansionem facit vel non nota D.9.21. Secundus eciam aduentus subdi[ui]tur, quia aduentus iusticie est duplex: vnus ad iudicium particulare, videlicet in mortem iustorum uel malorum, per se uel per angelos bonos uel malos sentenciam execucioni debite demandando. Secundus in iudicium generale. Sed de hiis duobus | vltius dicetur infra locis suis” (London, British Library Royal 7.E.iv, fol. 27rb–va).

<sup>69</sup> An example of an entire sermon is section A.10 (*Accipere*), which begins with the thema “Accipietis uirtutem superuenientis Spiritus Sancti in uos et eritis michi testes” (Act 1:8) and is followed by a complex *divisio intra* and a *divisio extra* in four parts, which is then developed (fols. 19rb–20ra). For the difference between the two kinds of division, see Wenzel, *Medieval Artes Praedicandi*, 67–68.

<sup>70</sup> For example, section V.8, on visitation, contains fifteen *collaciones*, so called and numbered in the margins. There are further simple references to *collacio* elsewhere in the *Summa*.

thema, division, subdivisions, and development. Furthermore, several sections include lists of themata that would be appropriate for the subject of the respective chapter, such as Christmas, Christ's Passion and Passion Sunday, the dedication of a church, a visitation, or crusading sermons.<sup>71</sup> In addition, throughout the *Summa* there are numerous references to "ser." (over three hundred, with numbers, in both text and margin), "ad." (fewer than twenty, in margins), and "col." (over twenty, in margins). Bromyard is said to have written several sermon collections, including works named *Sermones*, *Additiones*, and *Collationes*, but no such works are known to exist.<sup>72</sup> We do, however, have two collections ascribed to him, both uniquely extant in one manuscript each, where they are called *Exhortaciones* and *Distincciones* respectively.<sup>73</sup>

Because of its title, Bromyard's *Distincciones* is of particular interest here. It contains 155 items for the Sundays, feasts days, and saints' feasts of the Church year. Each begins with a thema taken either from the liturgical Epistle or Gospel of the day or from another biblical text. This is regularly divided into three or four parts, which are then developed with biblical and other authorities, similes, and stories of different kinds. This looks much like a sermon cycle, but except for the just mentioned elements (thema, development, and references to the liturgical occasion) the items lack such important sermon features as addresses,<sup>74</sup> prothemes or similar introductions, or (usually) closing formulas, and above all genuine divisions of the announced thema. Instead of giving the latter—as a proper sermon should—the majority of the items begin at once with "Primo" and develop the first of the three or four points, often with a subdivision.<sup>75</sup> They are thus not sermon outlines<sup>76</sup> but

<sup>71</sup> In the chapters on *Nativitas Christi* (N.1), *Passio Christi* (P.2), *Dedicatio* (D.4), *Visitacio* (V.8), and *Crux* (C.17).

<sup>72</sup> See Peter Binkley, "Bromyard [Bronyarde], John," [electronic] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; and Binkley, "John Bromyard and the Hereford Dominicans," in *Centres of Learning: Learning and Location in Pre-modern Europe and the Near East*, ed. J. W. Drijvers and A. A. MacDonald (1995), 255–64. In the "Appendix" (264) Binkley lists some of the frequent cross-references between Bromyard's works.

<sup>73</sup> The *Exhortaciones fratris Johannis de Bromiard de ordine fratrum predicatorum* appear in Cambridge, University Library Kk.4.24, fols. 1ra–114va; the *Dictincciones Magistri Johannis Bromyard* in Oxford, Bodleian Library Bodley 859, fols. 60r–225v. See Wenzel, *Latin Sermon Collections*, 136–38. For the medieval reception of Bromyard's works, see *ibid.*, 322–24.

<sup>74</sup> Second-person verb forms, however, appear frequently: "if you want to know," "that you may know," etc.

<sup>75</sup> Occasionally the "primo" is preceded by a brief explanation of the thema or a bridge passage, e.g., "He has called many, Luke 14, and in the Gospel. Just as it may

developed distinctions of something declared or suggested by the thema. Significantly, Bromyard himself calls them *distinctiones*, not only in their title but in the texts themselves, which are full of cross-references to other *distinctiones*. Most of them refer to items in the preceding text (*supra*), but some point as well to what is to come later (*infra*). I have counted over 160 occurrences of “d.” or “di.” with the number and part of the respective distinction (e.g., “di. clx.e”). These references do not occur regularly: some distinctions have none, others have two or more, up to thirteen. Spot-checking reveals that they are accurate. The references may of course not be Bromyard’s own, but given the fact that his *Summa* and the *Opus trivium* are similarly provided with complex systems of cross-referencing, and that Bromyard calls attention to his form of *cotacio* (“quoting”) in the prologue to his *Summa*, it is more than likely that he inserted cross-references to “distinctio” himself.

But why, then, did he call what amounts to a complete cycle for the Sundays and saints’ feasts of the Church year *Distinctiones*? Or perhaps rather, why did he not call it *Sermones*? I suggest the latter is because of the absence of a genuine division of the thema (and perhaps of other sermon features as noticed above). Given the fact that so much of the work consists of material that exemplifies a point and is regularly referred to as *exemplum* or *exempla*, in the text as well as in the margins, he might have called the cycle *Exemplarium* (a word not used as a medieval book title) or *Similitudinarium*. Instead, he chose *Distinctiones*—I believe because it consistently furnishes three or four distinctions of a word or notion in the given thema, distinctions of the various kinds noted above, at the beginning of this article.

The *oeuvres* of Bromyard, Boraston, Holcot, and Lathbury, therefore, show that in fourteenth-century England *Distinctiones* continued to be used as a book title for a variety of works that may have differed in form and content but all gathered material of use for preachers looking for matter to develop their sermons. In the case of Ps.-Lathbury, such material even included a number of entire sermons.

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happen that a worldly lord calls a person to himself for four reasons. so does God. First to give him service ...” (*Vocauit multos*, Luce xiiii, et in euangelio. Sicut potest contingere quod dominus mundi vocat ad se hominem propter quatuor raciones, sic Deus. Primo ad seruicium exhibendum ...” Oxford, Bodleian Library Bodley 859, fol. 104v).

<sup>76</sup> A genuine sermon outline, based on another preacher’s handbook, can be found in Siegfried Wenzel, *Verses in Sermons. Fasciculus morum and Its Middle English Poems* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), 47–48.