

The College of Prémontré in Mediaeval Paris

PART II *)

The Students and their Academic Life **)

Chapter IV

THE EARLIEST MEMBERS OF THE COLLEGE

Of the four well-known faculties — theology, canon law, medicine, and arts — comprising the mediaeval University of Paris, it was undoubtedly the masters of theology who gave Paris its pre-eminent fame. Surely it was their faculty which first induced

*) Part I: *An. Praem.* XXVIII, 1952, 137-171.

**) As was promised at the end of Part I, the present section treats of the intellectual life of the mediaeval College, but it does so from a very limited point of view. Premonstratensian thinking at the College no doubt reflected the thought going on around it, but the author does not possess the erudition or comprehension to master the whole maze of theories competing for favor in Paris. As a result he has generally had to confine himself to the more general academic framework and to a few of the more significant intellectual trends within which the Premonstratensian thinking was carried on. Aside from its inadequacy with respect to the wider context, the present account cannot adequately recreate Premonstratensian thinking even in isolation. Most of our students left no records of the thought processes in which they worked out their views of the theological or canon law worlds, and of those that did most of the records have not been found. The limited scope of the present work did not allow the extensive search which would be required to uncover whatever theological or canonical texts still survive in various municipal and abbatial libraries of Western Europe. Even in the few instances where texts are available, it was not possible to make an elaborate exposition of them without overbalancing the rest of the work. There are grounds for believing, however, that even if all the texts were at our disposal they still would not provide a con-

the Premonstratensians to found their College in Paris ¹). Hence it is the aspirations and regulations of this faculty that can tell us most about the academic life of the earliest members of the College of Prémontré.

To judge from their accomplishments, the mid-thirteenth-century Parisian theologians made it their purpose to take and assimilate the Christian patristic heritage, synthesize it with the recently recovered intellectual legacy of pagan Greek antiquity, and in the process add a major contribution of their own to the sum of human wisdom. Serving and in part justifying this aim was their teaching of the new generation of students, some of whom would continue their work, others of whom would dilute and disperse the newly-won wisdom among the Christian masses. Devotion to the ideal was not always of the same intensity, in fact the ideal itself changed with the years. And naturally so did the particular regulations which were intended to insure that, whatever the ideal was, it continued to be realized. Some of these transformations shall be reflected as we progress. At the present juncture, however, let us restrict ourselves to a brief sketch of the network of academic procedures

tinuous and coherent story. This possibility offers some basis for thinking that later more detailed studies will not entirely invalidate the more general conclusions arrived at from the limited and unavoidably desultory nature of the present investigation.

It is really in the mere assembling of the Premonstratensian personages who did whatever thinking there was in the College that the present work offers its main contribution. It brings together documentary sources independent of those used by any of the few previously concerned with the College and also of those used by L. Goovaerts in making his valuable répertoire of Premonstratensian intellectuals. The result is the calling of attention to a number of Premonstratensians who were previously either almost altogether unknown or at least unknown for any intellectual endeavors. The attempt to discover all the men who studied at the College naturally could not succeed: lists of this sort are meant to be added to. For each student certain essential biographical details, where ascertainable, are given. But no attempt was made to make an exhaustive study of any one of them, though some certainly deserve further attention. In the notes those sources quoted with an asterisk (*) preceding contain further bibliographical information. Relegated to an Appendix is a list of Premonstratensians for whom a connection with the College has varying degrees of probability, though not attested by conclusive evidence.

¹) The early academic references to the White Canons mention them in connection only with the faculty of theology. See university and papal documents of 1254, 1263, 1295 in H. DENIFLE and E. CHATELAIN, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis* (Paris, 1889-97), I, no. 230, p. 253; no. 386, p. 429; II, no. 591, p. 66.

which enmeshed the intellectual endeavors of the first members of the College ²⁾. Then we can look at the members themselves.

The first academic task facing a young Premonstratensian scholar upon his arrival in Paris was to select a master under whose tutelage he would work and who would be responsible for him before the faculty of theology ³⁾. The prior of the College as well as its elder members no doubt guided him in this chice. Once his master was chosen, the student could settle down to five ⁴⁾ or six ⁵⁾ years of steady attendance at lectures prior to obtaining his baccalaureate. Gregory IX allowed only a month of annual interruption for summer vacation ⁶⁾, but by 1335 custom dictated an annual interlude from the feasts of Saints Peter and Paul (June 29th) till the morrow of the feast of St. Denis (October 9th) ⁷⁾.

When he chose his master, the student indicated the man whose intellectual approach attracted him most. In actual practice, however, he found that a major part of his instruction came not from his master's lectures — which with the passing of time became less and less frequent — but from the lectures of the master's more advanced students.

²⁾ The primary material for this sketch comes from the papal statutes prescribed for the University by Robert de Courçon in 1215, and from Pope Gregory IX's bull *Parens scientiarum* of 1231. See DENIFLE-CHATELAIN, *Chartularium*, I, no. 20, pp. 78 f.; no. 79, pp. 136 ff. Also valuable are the statutes of 1335 which record customs and rules « observed from ancient times in the venerable faculty of theology ». *Ibid.*, II, no. 1188, p. 691. For a more ample treatment of the customs of the theological faculty see P. GLORIEUX, *Répertoire des maîtres en théologie de Paris au XIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1933), I, 15-24; A. G. LITTLE and F. PELSTER, *Oxford Theology and Theologians* (Oxford, 1934), pp. 25-56; H. RASHDALL, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* (new ed., Oxford, 1936), I, 471-96; P. FERET, *La Faculté de Théologie de Paris et ses Docteurs les plus célèbres, Moyen-Age* (Paris, 1894-97), 4 vols. passim.

³⁾ See the statutes of de Courçon, DENIFLE-CHATELAIN, *Chartularium*, I, no. 20, p. 79; also *Parens scientiarum*, *ibid.*, no. 79, p. 138.

⁴⁾ See de Courçon's statutes of 1215, in *ibid.*, I, no. 20, p. 79.

⁵⁾ See statutes of 1335, *ibid.*, II, no. 1188, p. 692 (10); see also no. 1002, p. 464.

⁶⁾ *Ibid.*, I, no. 79, p. 138; L. THORNDIKE, *University Records and Life in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1944), p. 38, no. 19.

⁷⁾ See DENIFLE-CHATELAIN, *Chartularium*, II, no. 1188, p. 692. Further respites came from numerous holidays interrupting the schedule, days set aside for special disputations, etc. Glorieux has counted 52 holidays in the fourteenth-century University calendar reproduced in DENIFLE-CHATELAIN, II, no. 1192, pp. 709-16.

The subjects of these lectures and the method used in approaching these subjects are of great value in revealing the theological spirit of the time. The text at the basis of all speculation was naturally the Bible ⁸⁾. Not improperly, therefore, were the theologians frequently called masters of the Sacred Page (*magistri in sacra pagina*). But around the time our College was founded theological interest in the Bible was being established on a much more scientific basis than it had previously known. The Parisian masters were abandoning the mainly allegorical approach characteristic of a Gregory the Great for a more literal interpretation. They were also disengaging theology from its nearly total identity with biblical exegesis put to moral and homiletic ends; henceforth, as a speculative as well as a practical science, theology would be interested in the Bible primarily as a storehouse of premises from which a supernatural *weltanschauung* could be built along the lines of the world structure of the newly discovered Aristotle ⁹⁾.

Next in importance to the Bible as a theological text were the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, the famous mid-twelfth-century synthesizer. Although independent speculation on problems arising from the *Sentences* had advanced, by the time our College was founded, far beyond a simple exposition of the text, the *Sentences* nevertheless remained for several centuries as a necessary point of departure ¹⁰⁾. Other authors, such as Boethius, the Pseudo-Areopagite, etc., might also become the object of a magistral exposition. The works which today are regarded as the best expression of scholasticism and which were then just being written, namely the various *Summae Theologiae*, had no official curricular status. Later, of course, adherents of the various schools would make the work of their master the official guide to the solution of any and every problem that could possibly be raised.

The period between a student's attainment of the baccalaureate degree and his mastership was divided into two phases. For two years of the first or teaching phase, the student lectured on the

⁸⁾ See H. DENIFLE, « Quel livre servait de base à l'enseignement des maîtres en théologie dans l'Université de Paris », *Revue Thomiste*, II (1894), pp. 149-61.

⁹⁾ See B. SMALLEY, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (2d ed., Oxford, 1952), pp. 293 f., 368 f.

¹⁰⁾ The result is the mass of commentaries on the *Sentences* bequeathed to later ages. See the collection of them listed by F. STEGMÜLLER, *Repertorium Commentariorum in Sententias Petri Lombardi*, 2 vols., Würzburg, 1947.

Bible as a *cursor* or *baccalarius biblicus* ¹¹). This was followed by two more years of lecturing ¹²), this time on Lombard's Sentences, as a *baccalarius sententiarius*. During this first phase of his bachelorhood the student also had to begin taking a part in the University's theological disputations — one of the main academic avenues giving outlet to mediaeval theological speculation. With his lecturing completed, and tried by dialectical ordeal, the student could advance to the second and last phase of his bachelor's career.

This period as a *baccalarius formatus* seems to have been an innovation introduced about the time our College was founded ¹³). By 1335 it extended itself out over four years, during which time the candidate for the license had ample opportunity to demonstrate his competence and good character as well as to give himself a feel of the magistral life. His specific task, aside from continued study in Paris, was to act as official respondent at five different disputations ¹⁴), each of which brought him a step nearer the final goal. The fourth of these, the quodlibetal or « whatever-you-please » disputation, in which anyone present could raise any theological question he wished, required two separate sessions: the first was the dispute proper in which the questions were raised and discussed, and the second was the *determinatio* at which the presiding master gave his deciding solutions ¹⁵).

The actual reception of the license to teach as a master in theology was itself closely bound up with three disputations — the last of which was really the inauguration of the candidate's new life as a master ¹⁶).

¹¹) DENIFLE-CHATELAIN, *Chartularium*, II, no. 1188, p. 692 (16).

¹²) By 1335 only one year was required. See *ibid.*, II, no. 1188, p. 692 (12).

¹³) See GLORIEUX, *Répertoire*, I, p. 22.

¹⁴) One in the hall of the bishop of Paris, another the evening dispute when a new master was being inducted, the third at the Sorbonne during the summer vacation, the fourth the quodlibetal dispute in Advent, and the fifth a general disputation. DENIFLE-CHATELAIN, *Chartularium*, II, no. 1188, pp. 692-3 (18).

¹⁵) On the subject of quodlibetal disputes see GLORIEUX, *Répertoire*, I, pp. 18 f., and especially his earlier work, *La Littérature quodlibétique de 1260 à 1320* (*Bibliothèque Thomiste*, V), Le Saulchoir, Kain (Belgium), 1925, pp. 11-95.

¹⁶) The statutes of the theological faculty at Bologna, copied sometime after 1362 from contemporary practices in Paris, are one of the best sources for the ceremonies connected with the awarding of the mastership in theology. See F. EHRLE, *I più antichi statuti della Facoltà Teologica dell'Università di Bologna* (Bologna, 1932), pp. 40-6. See also DENIFLE-CHATELAIN, *Chartularium*, II, no. 1188, note 5, pp. 693-4.

The very length of the theological course — eventually thirteen or fourteen years — was enough to eliminate many would-be aspirants. The more properly intellectual hurdles undoubtedly discouraged many more. Nevertheless, the number of successful candidates was often still greater than the number of vacant positions as regent masters on the faculty. Pope Innocent III in 1207 had limited the number of faculty chairs to eight ¹⁷⁾. By 1254 the number had increased only to twelve. Under these circumstances, the identity of the first member of our College to attain the honor of a faculty position as a regent master is a matter of prime interest. Especially so, since it has been intimated that a Premonstratensian already occupied a chair when such transcendent geniuses as Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas were just inaugurating their careers. The intimation is contained in the famous open letter of the University directed against the Mendicants in 1254, with the relevant passage as follows:

But as time went on, our predecessors considered that there were six colleges of different orders, namely, Cistercians, Premonstratensians, Vallis Scholarium, Trinitarians, Friars Minor, [and Friars Preacher] and that other regular clergy, not having colleges among us, had come to Paris for the sake of studying theology and some of them had become professors, while others not yet properly qualified for professorial chairs aspired to them according to what they themselves said ¹⁸⁾.

Of the twelve official chairs three were occupied permanently by the secular canons of the Cathedral of Notre-Dame. This apparently left the other secular clerics with meager remnants, for the letter continues:

... after nine of those twelve chairs were occupied, as they were about to be, irrevocably by the said colleges, which because of the continued succession of friar teachers would never henceforth revert to secular masters, two or three at the most would

¹⁷⁾ *Ibid.*, I, no. 5, p. 65.

¹⁸⁾ A translation from L. THORNDIKE, *op. cit.*, no. 27, p. 58. The original text is in DENIFLE-CHATELAIN, *Chartularium*, I, no. 230, p. 253: « Porro tempore procedente considerantes majores nostri diversarum religionum vj collegia, videlicet fratres Clarevallenses, Premonstratenses, de Valle-Scolarium, de Ordine Trinitatis, fratres Minores, preter alios regulares apud nos collegia non habentes, causa discendi sacras litteras Parisius convenisse, et in eis quosdam usque ad cathedram profecisse: alios vero nondum competenter provectos ad cathedras magistrales, secundum quod et ipsi asserunt, processu temporis aspirare; ... ».

be left over which could be reserved for the secular persons who flock from every region under the sun to the university of Paris ¹⁹⁾.

The impression left by this letter, to the effect that the six religious colleges already held seven magistral chairs (including the two held by Dominican masters), was not gainsaid by Denifle ²⁰⁾ or Rashdall ²¹⁾. This would mean there was a Premonstratensian regent master already in 1254. However, the evidence which Denifle himself adduces in the same note would put this impression under suspicion. He found that in 1259 when the faculty still had strongly anti-Mendicant members, there were at least three secular masters — not canons of Notre-Dame — who sympathized with the Mendicants ²²⁾. The presumption is that the secular masters constituted at least a bare majority. This makes very tempting the thesis advanced by P. Mandonnet, namely that the only chairs held by religious in 1254 were the three that had been in the hands of the Dominicans (two) and the Franciscans (one) for over twenty years ²³⁾. If one accepts the effectiveness of the limitation of the number of chairs to twelve, the temptation of Mandonnet's thesis becomes almost irresistible when one sees P. Glorieux uncover twelve regent masters for 1254 without going beyond the seculars, the Dominicans, and the Franciscan ²⁴⁾. Considering the available evidence, then, it would seem that the monopoly of nine chairs by religious masters is only a danger of the fairly distant future, even though the polemically-minded secular masters are willing to let it pass as very imminent and in good part already present. One can hardly affirm with any confidence, therefore, at least until new and more cogent evidence has been found, that the Premonstratensians possessed an official chair in

¹⁹⁾ THORNDIKE, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-9; DENIFLE-CHATELAIN, I, p. 254: « ... postquam ex illis xij novem cathedre, sicut in promptu est, a predictis collegiis irrevocabiliter fuerint occupate, que propter fratrum regentium successionem continuatam ad seculares magistros nunquam deinceps revertentur, due aut tres dumtaxat poterunt superesse, que personis secularibus ex omni regione que sub celo est ad studium Parisius confluentibus valeant reservari ».

²⁰⁾ *Ibid.*, I, no. 203 n. 12, p. 258.

²¹⁾ H. RASHDALL, *op. cit.*, I, p. 374 n. 2; but see also p. 382 n. 2 by the editors.

²²⁾ DENIFLE-CHATELAIN, I, no. 230 n. 12, p. 258, and no. 340, p. 389.

²³⁾ P. MANDONNET, « De l'incorporation des Dominicains dans l'ancienne Université de Paris », *Revue Thomiste*, IV (1896), 168.

²⁴⁾ See the second table which he gives after p. 228 of his *Répertoire*.

theology during the quarrel of 1254 or even during the years immediately following when Thomas Aquinas was launching his career. More likely at this time their status was that of those who were admittedly aspiring to a chair which they did not yet possess.

According to Glorieux, the Premonstratensian aspirations would still not have been satisfied by 1320 ²⁵). This view, however, despite the paucity of our sources, seems too exclusive. The main evidence to the contrary is provided in a fragment of a manuscript ²⁶) found and published by the late Msgr. M. Grabmann ²⁷). The fragment contains a portion of the determining solution given to a quodlibetal dispute by a master identified simply as John the Premonstratensian together with Frater Stephan ²⁸). Even if John were not explicitly called a master, one could nevertheless infer his academic status from the function he was performing. In the thirteenth century, to preside at a quodlibetal disputation was still, as Glorieux has shown, a distinctively magistral prerogative ²⁹). From internal evidence the dispute ought to be dated in 1285 or later ³⁰).

²⁵) See the tables referred to in the preceding note.

²⁶) Vienna, Nationalbibliothek MS. Lat. 2165 (fol. 142r).

²⁷) See M. GRABMANN, « *Doctrina S. Thomae de distinctione reali inter essentiam et esse ex documentis ineditis saeculi XIII illustratur* », in *Acta Hebdomadae Thomisticae* (Rome, Academia S. Thomae Aquinatis, 1924), pp. 141-2.

²⁸) See the following note, which Grabmann says is barely legible, appended at the bottom of the fragment: « *Nota quod pro praedicto articulo determinaverunt Parisiis anno Domini 1279 magister Joannes Praemonstratensis et frater Stephanus in suo duplici quolibet, scilicet quod esse non fluit ab essentia in aliquo genere suo* ».

²⁹) See GLORIEUX, *La Littérature quodlibétique*, pp. 11-20.

³⁰) The fragment mentions the disputed questions *De esse et essentia* of Giles of Rome. E. HOCEDEZ, *Aegidii Romani Theoremata De Esse et Essentia* (Louvain, 1930), p. 11 f., has shown that these belong to the time between Easter of 1285 and Christmas of 1286. It is possible that the figures which Msgr. Grabmann gave as 1279 (see note 28 above) were really too illegible to be able to be read correctly. In any event, a date in 1285 or later offers a possible identification for the Frater Stephan who cooperated with Master John in determining the dispute, and whom Glorieux has doubtfully identified with Stephan du Fermont (*Répertoire*, II, no. 390, p. 285). The fact that he was a co-determiner would make Frater Stephan a master too. It so happens that Stephan of Besançon, later Master General of the Dominican Order, was a regent master at Paris between the years 1286 and 1288 (GLORIEUX, *Répertoire*, I, no. 42, pp. 158 f.). If the dispute was held in 1286 or soon after, then its attribution

The thesis which Master John and Frater Stephan were seeking to maintain is that « the act of existing is not a property flowing from the essence, but is from without, as heat in water and light in air »³¹). Most of the arguments adduced by Master John are taken from Thomas Aquinas, but within several short paragraphs he also evinces a familiarity with Algazel, Giles of Rome, Augustine, Aristotle, Avicenna, and the author of the Neo-Platonic work *De Causis*. He furnishes us with one of the earliest examples of the late thirteenth-century's preoccupation with the basic problem of the kind of distinction obtaining between essence and the act of existing. He accepts the doctrine of the so-called real distinction and ascribes it to the recently deceased Frater Thomas Aquinas (d. March 7, 1274) at a time when even Aquinas' Dominican confreres were far from unanimous either in accepting the doctrine or in admitting it as his³²). Whether or not John's position is the correct one, it is certainly a crucial matter that he is concerned with. For one's views on the 'real' distinction, apart from characterizing one's attitude toward the distinction between God and the world, basically affect one's philosophic position with regard to such matters as the nature of the ultimate substratum of material things and the principle of their numerical individuation, and one's theological position with regard to the union of the human and the divine natures in Christ³³).

Aside from its interest for the history of mediaeval philosophy in general, Master John's dispute has special interest for the history of our College. It witnesses that John of Rocquigny's educational dreams were being carried through to fruition within a generation after the College was founded. Premonstratensians were definitely coming to Paris, were assimilating its wisdom, and were even taking an active part in the dialectical struggles through which that wisdom was being further refined.

It is indeed regrettable that more of Master John's writings are not available today and that more is not known of the role

to this Stephan has much in its favor. Unless, of course, Frater Stephan was only a student of John the Premonstratensian filling the role of respondent.

³¹) « *Esse non est proprietas fluens ab essentia, sed est ab extra sicut calor in aqua et lux in aere* ».

³²) See HOCEDEZ, *op. cit.*, p. (106); also pp. (57 f.).

³³) See J. GREY, *Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*?, II, no. 704, p. 106.

he played within his Order. That he was referred to simply as Joannes Praemonstratensis might imply either that he was from the mother abbey of Prémontré itself or that he was so far the outstanding Premonstratensian at Paris that such a title suggested no confusion with collegiate confreres of the same name. In any event, it is clear that there were several other Premonstratensians named John at Paris towards the end of the century. As a preliminary step towards investigating the lives of these and several other early inhabitants of the College it will be necessary to digress briefly on what one might call the school of Vicogne.

The abbey of Vicogne, situated in the diocese of Arras³⁴), had flourished with learning at least since the beginning of the thirteenth century when Eustace of Lens was a canon there. Eustace, as we saw above in our first Part, Chapter I, is reputed to have been a master in theology from Paris. Besides his theological writings, he left some disciples at Vicogne³⁵). Among them was the monastery's thirteenth abbot, William de Verchinio (1258-1279). Under William's rule, Vicogne sent out at least five men to preside over other abbeys of the Order³⁶). Upon William's death his place was taken by John de Bavay of Maubeuge, who, at the time of his election, had just begun to lecture on the Sentences at Paris³⁷). These bachelor's lectures on the Sentences are probably what inspired Hugo to call him a doctor of theology. His regime as abbot, which ended with his death November 11, 1290, was marked by a staunch defense of ecclesiastical liberties against an attack by the

³⁴) For a bibliography on this abbey, see R. VAN WAEFELGHEM, *Répertoire des sources ... relatives à l'histoire ... de l'ordre de Prémontré* (Brussels, 1930), no. 692.

³⁵) The intellectual atmosphere he encouraged at Vicogne would tend to make credible the opinion that Witelo, famous thirteenth-century authority on mathematics and optics, spent part of his life in this abbey. See L. GOOVAERTS, *Ecrivains, artistes et savants de l'ordre de Prémontré, dictionnaire bio-bibliographique* (Brussels, 1899-1920), III, 203, and C. BAUMKER, *Witelo, Ein Philosoph und Naturforscher des XIII Jahrhunderts (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalter, Bd. III, Heft 2, Münster, 1908)*, pp. 22 ff.

³⁶) C.-L. HUGO, *Sacri et Canonici Ordinis Praemonstratensis Annales* (Nancy, 1734-36), II, 1077 f.

³⁷) See NICHOLAS OF MONTIGNY's Chronicle of Vicogne edited by J. HELLER in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores*, XXIV (Hannover, 1879), 291-313 (312). Other sources of information about John are HUGO, *Annales*, II, 1078; GOOVAERTS, *Ecrivains*, III, 134; *Gallia Christiana*, III, 464.

Count of Hainaut, and no doubt also by a continued encouragement of higher learning.

Evidence for the encouragement of higher learning is the career of John of Tongres, another outstanding early member of the College of Prémontré ³⁸⁾. He was born, probably after the middle of the thirteenth century ³⁹⁾, at Tongres in modern Belgium. It is likely that he entered the Order of Prémontré at Vicogne, and therefore that it was John of Maubeuge who sent him to Paris to study theology. According to Glorieux ⁴⁰⁾, he became a master before the year 1300. On August 23, 1301, he became the seventeenth abbot of Vicogne. Hugo says he was less suited for administering an abbey than for teaching, and that within two years he had resigned to enter the Order of St. Francis ⁴¹⁾. He was back in Paris by June 1303, signing an appeal of the University for a General Council to decide the fate of Pope Boniface VIII ⁴²⁾. Glorieux suspects that he may have been a regent master in 1304-05 amidst the turmoil aroused by the departure of a certain number of masters from Paris because of their disagreement with Philip the Fair in his quarrel with Boniface. Sometime during his academic career John wrote six books of commentaries on the first three books of the Sentences. He is also credited with some ordinary and quodlibetal disputed questions and doubtfully with a treatise on the Lord's Prayer ⁴³⁾. Even after becoming a Franciscan, he remained in intellectual contact with his old abbey and on March 28, 1312 borrowed some books from Vicogne. These were returned after his death (at an unknown date) along with his body which was interred at Vicogne before the door of the chapel ⁴⁴⁾.

³⁸⁾ Some of the sources for knowledge about John of Tongres are A. MIRAEUS, *Ordinis Praemonstratensis Chronicon* (Cologne, 1613), pp. 192-3; HUGO, *Annales*, II, 1079-80; I, Praef., K; *Gallia Christiana*, III, 464; * GOOVAERTS, *Ecrivains*, II, 257-8; * CHEVALIER, *Répertoire, Bio-Bibl.*, II, 2501.

³⁹⁾ GOOVAERTS suggests around 1260.

⁴⁰⁾ GLORIEUX, *Répertoire*, II, no. 341, p. 202.

⁴¹⁾ HUGO, *Annales*, II, 1079-80.

⁴²⁾ GLORIEUX, *Répertoire*, II, no. 341, p. 202. DENIFLE-CHATELAIN, *Chartularium*, II, no. 634, pp. 101-2, give the text of this University document but not the names of the masters who signed.

⁴³⁾ GLORIEUX, *Répertoire*, II, p. 203, gives the incipit of the last named work as « Pater noster... Plurimi Apostoli petierunt a Christo », and lists the following manuscripts: Dijon 223 (foll. 4-111); Charleville 47; 120; 270. He does not mention any manuscripts of the other works.

⁴⁴⁾ HUGO, *Annales*, II, 1080.

John of Tongres' resignation did not leave Vicogne bereft of intellectuals. His second successor, John of Prisches — so named from the place of his birth in Hainaut — is also credited with public lecturing in Paris and a mastership in theology ⁴⁵). His abbatial career lasted from 1307 till 1312 when he resigned in order to devote his time more fully to study. Still extant of the fruits of this labor, in Hugo's time (1736), was an *Alphabetum vitae religiosae digestum libris sex*. He has been credited also with some prose and verse written in the vernacular French ⁴⁶). John of Prisches died in 1320 at the latest. His obituary was commemorated at Vicogne on July 3 ⁴⁷).

The story of Vicogne does not end with John of Prisches' resignation. The long-standing intellectual tradition continued to have its representatives. Although no documentary evidence now known proves that these later men were members of our College, the presumption is great in the case of several. And in any event, even if the influence they reveal of Paris is only indirect, they nevertheless are very deserving of at least brief mention here, because it is the exercise of just this kind of influence that provides the College with its chief *raison d'être*. We would here have excellent evidence that the learning and ideals of the students in Paris were being effectively diffused among their confreres back home.

Let us mention only the triad of men whom tradition regards as doctors of theology — the men whom we can consider as possible members of the College. Most commendable among them, according to Hugo, is Godfrey of Bavay ⁴⁸). A native of Cambrai, he was born probably around 1275 or 1280. If he obtained his mastership in theology at Paris, it is likely that he was there around 1300 and after. In 1310 he was sent as a delegate to the Council of Vienne. Two years later Godfrey became abbot of

⁴⁵) Certain authors — including J. FOPPENS, *Bibliotheca Belgica*, II, 714 — have made one and the same abbot out of John of Prisches and John of Tongres. HUGO has brought forward the evidence against this view. See *Annales*, II, 1079.

⁴⁶) See GOOVAERTS, *Ecrivains*, II, 62-3. It does not seem clear whether or not these manuscripts are still in existence and, if so, where they may be found. Some of Vicogne's manuscripts went to Valenciennes, but these are not among those listed in the Valenciennes Catalogues of 1860 and 1894.

⁴⁷) HUGO, *Annales*, II, 1080, 1079.

⁴⁸) *Ibid.*, I, Praef., K; II, 1081-2; GOOVAERTS, *Ecrivains*, I, 43.

Vicogne. During his long reign — till his death in 1344 — he served as counselor to William the Count of Hainaut, and made an investigation of the Beguines at Valenciennes for Pope John XXII in 1322. The Hundred Years War violently disturbed the quiet of his last years. He has been credited with some literary works, unfortunately lost ⁴⁹).

The second of these men, Thomas of Vicogne, has been called a « doctor eximius » ⁵⁰). Not much is known of his life ; indeed, if C. Oudin ⁵¹) is correct in his reasons for rejecting Le Paige's ascription of a book of commentaries on the Cantic of Canticles to Thomas, then there may be valid grounds for thinking that the only life he ever enjoyed was a fictional one in the minds of his seventeenth-century creators. But since Oudin's reasons are not conclusive, we shall note them, make allowance for their possible validity, and then mention what other sources have told us ⁵²). He would have lived, according to some ⁵³), towards 1308 ;

⁴⁹) GOOVAERTS, I, 43.

⁵⁰) By J. LE PAIGE, *Bibliotheca Praemonstratensis Ordinis* (Paris, 1633), 307. A. MIRAEUS, *Ordinis Praemonstratensis Chronicon* (Cologne, 1613), p. 195, is the oldest published source of information about Thomas. See also HUGO, *Annales*, I, Praef., K.

⁵¹) OUDIN, *Commentarius de scriptoribus ecclesiae antiquis* (Leipzig, 1722), II, 1575 f.

⁵²) It seems that OUDIN (see *ibid.*) visited Vicogne in 1680 and examined all its manuscripts. Among them he found what was otherwise an anonymus commentary on the Cantic of Canticles except for having the name « Thomas » affixed to it. From his experience with the same text in other libraries Oudin was able to identify it with a commentary which was written about 1180 by a Cistercian abbot named Thomas (published by Migne, *P. L.* CCVI, 17 ff.). « And so », he concludes, « either good old John Le Paige was of the opinion that every anonymus work found among the Vicogne manuscripts was written by a man from Vicogne, or else perhaps one of the Vicogne canons ... deceived him... ». Before commenting on this argument, one should perhaps state that Oudin, as an apostate and renegade from the Premonstratensian Order, was not exactly an unbiased critic of his former confreres, and took pleasure in belittling their intellectual accomplishments at every opportunity. So much the better, then, if he could deprive them of an author. In the present instance, however, we have no proof that the basis for ascribing a commentary on the Cantic of Canticles to a Thomas of Vicogne was provided by the stray entry of the name « Thomas » in an otherwise anonymous work. It is quite possible that the ascription is based on some other manuscript which escaped Oudin's vigilant eye. In any event, it is almost certain that Le Paige did not get his information in this way. Much more likely he copied it from A. MIRAEUS' *Ordinis Praemonstratensis Chronicon*

Le Paige claims he was flourishing in 1326. These dates mean that his formal education would have been obtained around the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century. Besides the already mentioned commentary on the Cantic of Canticles, there has also been attributed to him a commentary on the book of Job. These works could well have been the subjects of lectures given by a cursor or bachelor *biblicus*.

The third of these « doctors », Peter of Vicogne, was flourishing in the 1320's. He wrote an *Introductio in Theologiam*, of which manuscripts were still in existence during the early seventeenth century in the abbeys of Ninove and Affligem ⁵⁴).

Vicogne was to continue to have intellectual representatives in Paris, but an account of them must wait while mention is given to other early members of the College.

One of the first, perhaps a contemporary or even a predecessor of John the Premonstratensian, was Walter of Flavennes. According to the testimony of Hugo ⁵⁵), he had at one time lectured publicly on the Sentences in the schools of Paris. This means he advanced at least to within a step of the mastership, and in all likelihood before 1286 when he became abbot of Bonne-Espérance ⁵⁶). In this position, as distant successor to the great twelfth-century intellectual, Philip of Harvengt, he completed the building of a cloister and dormitory, and obtained some indulgences from Pope Nicholas IV for those devoutly visiting the church of Bonne-Espérance. Hugo does not ascribe any writings to him. He relin-

published 20 years before his own work, for both authors mention identically the same few facts. The question then arises as to whether Oudin's criticism is valid against Miraeus, who, since he was not a Premonstratensian, cannot be accused of the same bias in favor of the Premonstratensians that Le Paige might be accused of. If the criticism is still valid, then there remains to be accounted for Miraeus' attribution of another work — a commentary on Job — to Thomas of Vicogne. Was there yet another anonymous work at Vicogne with the stray entry « Thomas » on it ?

⁵³) GOOVAERTS, *Ecrivains*, II, 243; CHEVALIER, *Répertoire Bio-Bibl.*, II, 4517 f.

⁵⁴) MIRAEUS, *Chronicon*, 195; LE PAIGE, *Bibliotheca*, 307; HUGO, *Annales*, II, 1092; GOOVAERTS, *Ecrivains*, II, 45.

⁵⁵) *Annales*, I, 360 f.; see also GOOVAERTS, *Ecrivains*, II, 365.

⁵⁶) U. BERLIÈRE, *Monasticon Belge* (Maredsous, 1890-97), I, p. 399, says he became abbot in 1285 and resigned between July 19 and August 28 of 1291. But this does not accord with his own statement that Walter's rule lasted only $4\frac{1}{2}$ years.

quished his abbatial position in 1290 ⁵⁷⁾ or 1291 ⁵⁸⁾ and may have lived for several years after ⁵⁹⁾.

Walter probably had a confrere from Bonne-Espérance with him as a fellow student at Paris in the person of William of Louvignies. Because William's educational career seems to herald a change in the educational policy of the College he will be considered in the next chapter.

Another abbey with several learned abbots in these early days of the College was Floreffe. The first of them, Nicholas de Gestial or Gestaul ⁶⁰⁾, is described by Hugo simply as a master of arts. Because of the early age at which this degree could be obtained (21 according to Robert de Courçon's statutes of 1215), it would not be improbable that he obtained it even before entering the Order and hence his residence at the College is not too likely. He left a reputation for favoring studies, but his rule at Floreffe (1306-1310) was not otherwise very successful, ending in a resignation forced by the intrigues of his confreres. He then withdrew to care for the pastorate at nearby Aublain, where he died, according to Berlière, on January 14, 1319 ⁶¹⁾.

His successor, a member of the cabal against him, was his chaplain, Peter of Solre ⁶²⁾. Peter has been called a Parisian doctor of theology by Berlière. It may well be, however, that Hugo went as far as the facts allow when he called him simply a master from Paris without indicating the faculty to which he belonged ⁶³⁾. It would then be possible that this faculty was that of arts. In

⁵⁷⁾ HUGO, *Annales*, I, 360 f.

⁵⁸⁾ BERLIÈRE, *op. cit.*, p. 399.

⁵⁹⁾ The necrology of Bonne-Espérance lists him on October 30th, but that of Floreffe on November 11th (*ibid.*). *Gallia Christiana*, III, 201, says he died November 29th.

⁶⁰⁾ For information on him see HUGO, *Annales*, I, 86; *Gallia Christiana*, III, 612; GOOVAERTS, *Ecrivains*, IV, 86; BERLIÈRE, *op. cit.*, 118.

⁶¹⁾ J. B[ARBIER] in *Analecetes pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique de la Belgique*, VIII (1871), p. 426 n. says 1325. The same author's history of the abbey of Floreffe has not been available to me.

⁶²⁾ For information on Peter see HUGO, *Annales*, I, 86 f.; GOOVAERTS, *Ecrivains*, II, 45; IV, 86; [LIENHART], *Spiritus literarius norbertinus* (Augsburg, 1771), p. 81; BERLIÈRE, *op. cit.*, 118; *Chronique des Abbés de Floreffe*, edited by J. B[ARBIER], *loc. cit.*, p. 426.

⁶³⁾ LIENHART's view that he was a Master of the Sorbonne seems to be merely an embellishment of Hugo's few facts.

any event, Peter's career as abbot — noted above all for pomposity and prodigal management — does not reveal any of the theologian's reputed wisdom. Loss of memory has been offered as an excuse for some of his conduct ⁶⁴). He died July 2, 1314.

The students, actual or possible, so far named do not begin to exhaust the number of early members of the College. But in the present stage of research, wherein the University records of the thirteenth century are very incomplete, it does not seem possible to uncover many more. One further possibility, however, is provided by a library receipt found by L. Delisle ⁶⁵). The receipt, dated April 26, 1284, acknowledges a loan of a book from the abbey of St-Germain-des-Prés at Paris by a man called Frater Baldwin the Premonstratensian. So far he has not been further identified, but it seems most probable that he is another student of the College.

Among the doctors of Paris claimed for the fold of St. Norbert by the annalist Hugo is Henry Bate of Malines (born 1246 — died after January 1310) ⁶⁶). The question is not to know whether he finished out his days at the Premonstratensian monastery of Tongerlo, a fact on which all are agreed, but to know whether he actually joined the Order. Hugo's claim has not been considered in G. Wallerand's studies on this « thirteenth-century John of Salisbury » ⁶⁷). The question is of considerable interest to the intellectual history of the Premonstratensian Order, since Bate is considered one of the most erudite men of his time ⁶⁸), but it will be overlooked here since it is clear that he was not yet a member of the Order during his student days in Paris. In any event, the fact of his retirement to Tongerlo would suggest either that a congenial intellectual atmosphere already prevailed

⁶⁴) See GOOVAERTS, *Ecrivains*, II, 45, referring to Peter of Herenthals as his source.

⁶⁵) L. DELISLE, *Le Cabinet des manuscrits* (Paris, 1868-81), II, 43; see above, Part I, Chapter III, note 75.

⁶⁶) See HUGO, *Annales*, II, 971, under his treatment of the abbey of Tongerlo.

⁶⁷) See G. WALLERAND's edition of *Henri Bate de Malines, Speculum Divinorum et Quorundam Naturalium* (*Les Philosophes Belges*, XI, 1, Louvain, 1931), and the same author's *Henri Bate de Malines et saint Thomas d'Aquin*, *Revue Néoscholastique*, XXXVI (1934), 387-411. GOOVAERTS, *Ecrivains*, I, 38, disagrees with Hugo.

⁶⁸) The answer might be found through an examination of the miniature of Bate in Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale MS. 2961, fol. 4.

there or else that Abbot Godfrey Herentals was desirous of having one prevail.

A resumé of the scattered information we have gathered together about the earliest known members of the College of Prémontré should perhaps emphasize the fact that most of these men have been credited with treatises on theological and other subjects. The original impulse given by the College's founder, John of Rocquigny, was having a definite intellectual effect, even though no conclusions as to its nature and value can be drawn until the writings themselves are found. There is evidence also that the Parisian students were returning to teach their colleagues back home. This is especially clear in the case of Vicogne. Finally it is worthy of note that most of these students were later charged with the administration of abbeys. Even though these abbatial duties would prevent the early students of the College from giving themselves wholly to an intellectual life, they nevertheless put these same students in an admirable position to encourage the intellectual life of the young religious who came after them. How well they took advantage of this opportunity will be a main object of the following investigation.

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