John Peckham Encyclopedia Article

John Peckham

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John Peckham

d. 1292

English scholar who wrote on practical applications of optics, as well as on other scientific subjects. A member of the Franciscan order, Peckham taught at Oxford and later Rome before becoming archbishop of Canterbury in 1279. In his scientific writing, most notably his *Perspectiva communis*, he showed the influence of Ibn al-Haytham (Alhazen; 965-1039) and Witelo (c. 1230-1275). During the fourteenth century, the writings of Peckham and Witelo gained a much wider audience than those of Roger Bacon (1213-1292) with regard to optics. It would only be in the mid-sixteenth century that scholars took a new interest in Bacon's work on the subject, which, as it turned out, offered much more promise with regard to development of optical instruments.