

STEFANO L. FORTE O. P., *Robert Pynk O. P. provincial of England (c. 1361-68)*, in «Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum» (ISSN 0391-7320), 27, (1957), pp. 404 - 413.

Url: <https://heyjoe.fbk.eu/index.php/afp>

Questo articolo è stato digitalizzato della Biblioteca Fondazione Bruno Kessler, in collaborazione con l'Institutum Historicum Ordinis Praedicatorum all'interno del portale [HeyJoe](#) - *History, Religion and Philosophy Journals Online Access*. HeyJoe è un progetto di digitalizzazione di riviste storiche, delle discipline filosofico-religiose e affini per le quali non esiste una versione elettronica.

Il materiale sul sito [HeyJoe](#) è disponibile sotto licenza CC BY-NC-ND 4.0: può essere scaricato, stampato e condiviso per uso non commerciale, con attribuzione e senza modifiche.

This article was digitized by the Bruno Kessler Foundation Library in collaboration with the Institutum Historicum Ordinis Praedicatorum as part of the [HeyJoe](#) portal - *History, Religion, and Philosophy Journals Online Access*. HeyJoe is a project dedicated to digitizing historical journals in the fields of philosophy, religion, and related disciplines for which no electronic version exists.

The material on the [HeyJoe](#) site is available under the CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 license: it can be downloaded, printed, and shared for non-commercial use, with attribution and without modifications.



ROBERT PYNK O. P.  
PROVINCIAL OF ENGLAND (c. 1361-68).

BY  
STEPHEN L. FORTE O. P.

---

The series of Provincial Priors of the English Dominicans from their first coming to England in 1221 till the present day is almost complete, but the dates of appointment and release from office are very frequently unrecorded<sup>1</sup>. More often than not those elected to govern the Province were graduates of the universities of Paris, Oxford and Cambridge. Some of them left philosophical and theological writings, and took great part in contemporary academic controversies; others became royal confessors or bishops, and two, Robert Kilwardby and Thomas Jorz, were raised to the cardinalate. Others however left little or no mark, and would have passed into oblivion but for some incidental references to them. Such is Robert Pynk, master in theology and provincial, who is the subject of this biographical notice.

The first reference to Pynk is on 10 July 1361 in the will of Thomas Starcolf, mercer, who bequeathed him pieces of silver plate<sup>2</sup>. On 14 July of the same year Friar Robert Pynk master in theology was given licence by Robert Stretton bishop of Lichfield to absolve (except in cases reserved) Katherine countess of Warwick, her family and household for a year<sup>3</sup>. He belonged presumably at this time to the priory at Warwick<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> R. Palmer O.P., *Fasti Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum: The Provincials of the Friar-Preachers, or Black Friars, of England*, *Archaeological Journal* 35 (1878) 134-165; W. Gumbley, *Provincial Priors and Vicars of the English Dominicans 1221-1916*, *English Historical Review* 33 (1918) 243-251; A.G. Little, *ibid.* 496-497. My grateful thanks to W. Gumbley O.P.

<sup>2</sup> R. R. Sharpe, *Calendar of Wills in the Court of Husting*, London, II, 36.

<sup>3</sup> Register of Bishop Robert de Stretton 1360-85, ed. R. A. Wilson, *The William Salt Archaeological Society*, new series, 8 (1905) 15.

<sup>4</sup> A Robert Pynk O.P. was ordained priest on 22 May 1372 (Reg. Stretton 260),

A letter testimonial of 24 November 1364 in favour of Pynk given by the mayor and corporation of the city of London throws light on the period previous to this date.

LITTERA MISSA DOMINO PAPE PRO ROBERTO PYNK

Sanctissimo in Christo patri ac domino nostro domino Urbano [V] divina providencia sacrosancte ac universalis ecclesie summo pontifici sui humiles et devoti servitores, maior et tota comunitas civitatis London. devotissima pedum oscula beatorum. Pater sanctissime, hec beatitudinis vestre famosa celebritas iam in auribus orbis personuit universi, quod pensato dignitatis libramine viros in scientia precipue ac moribus approbatos pre ceteris promovet et exaltat. Hinc est quod fratrem Robertum Pynk, sacre theologie doctorem, priorem provinciam fratrum ordinis predicatorum in provincia Anglicana, hac fulti fiducia ad tronum vestre gracie accedentes, eidem affectuosius quo poterimus comendamus, utputa virum quem facta scolastica et diuturnitas studii a primeva etate prout universitas Oxon' in qua studuit contestatur, cum morum venustate usque ad doctoratus apicem excellencius adornarunt.

Insuper in civitate London' postmodum per triennium et amplius in lectoratus officio assidue ad regularium et secularium quamplurium instructionem et fructum notabilem laboravit. Sane in predicatione verbi dei per eandem civitatem creberrime coram Rege, Regina, Principe, Ducibus, Comitibus et ceteris regni proceribus; coram archiepiscopis, episcopis ac aliis ecclesiarum prelatis, necnon ad plebem, fere per omnes partes Anglie supra multos coetanos a viginti annis et amplius sic singulariter desudavit, quod tam regnum pro maiori parte quam sepedicta civitas edificarentur insimul et gauderent, si beatitudo vestra, que sola laborem et dolorem considerat et invitat opere pocius quam sermone: «venite ad me omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis et ego reficiam vos», dictum fratrem Robertum et negociorum suorum expeditionem gratuitam infra pietatis viscera multiplicatis intercessoribus reciperet cum effectu. Vestram sanctam paternitatem munitat feliciter et conservet ad ecclesie sue exaltationem rerum omnium gubernator.

Scriptum London' octavo kalend. Decembris anno domini millesimo trecentesimo sexagesimo quarto, secundum computationem ecclesie Anglicane <sup>5</sup>.

and belonged to the priory of Warwick. He was most probably related to Pynk senior, perhaps his nephew. Another Robert Pynk of Coventry and Lichfield diocese, order not indicated, appears on the list of acolytes not promoted 21 December 1370 (Reg. Simonis de Sudbiria, ep. London. 1368-75, ed. R. C. Taylor, The Canterbury and York Society 38 (1929) 92). He is perhaps identical with the former.

<sup>5</sup> Corporation of London, Records Office, Letter Book I (241). Another copy is in Letter Book G. fo. 139<sup>b</sup>. For a summary in English of this letter see R. R. Sharpe, Calendar of letters from the Mayor and corporation of London c. 1350-1370, London 1805, 111. Some details of the latin text are wanting in the summary.

It is evident from this letter that Pynk, who had been preaching 20 years, was a priest by 1344. A friar selected for higher studies would proceed, on the completion of the theological course, to a *Studium Generale* of the Order. Here he would be required to fulfil all the statutory regulations regarding length of residence and scholastic exercises. This would take, for a non M. A., eight or nine years. Thus Pynk could scarcely have taken his doctorate at Oxford before 1352. His name has not been found in any records of the university, or of the Order. The assignments of students to a *Studium Generale* made by the general chapters are all too often missing from their extant *Acta*. Indeed the reference in the mayor's letter is the only evidence that Pynk ever studied at Oxford.

Next we are informed by the mayor that he taught for three years in London after taking his doctorate - *postmodum*. These three years could not have begun later than 1358, for by the end of 1361 he was Provincial. Actually the earliest reference to him as provincial is not till 12 February 1363<sup>6</sup>; we can deduce however that he was already provincial considerably earlier.

John Tattenhal, who had been prior provincial from at least 1356, presided over his last provincial chapter, held at Northampton 15 August 1361<sup>7</sup>. About three months later, on 8 November he was nominated bishop of Ossory in Ireland<sup>8</sup>. This vacancy necessitated an immediate election, and the Constitutions<sup>9</sup> prescribed in such cases that the prior of the house where the next Chapter was due to be held assumed the temporary charge of the province, and convoked the electors within one month. According to the Constitutions a provincial could not be elected except in a provincial chapter. If the annual chapter had already been celebrated then a second chapter was summoned, and

<sup>6</sup> On this date Pynk presented friar Gervase of St Patrick O.P. for faculties to hear confessions in the diocese of Hereford. (Reg. Ludovici de Charlton, ep. Herefordensis, Canterbury and York Society 14 (1941) 66).

<sup>7</sup> On 16 November 1356 Tattenhal presented friar John Cliff of Hereford for confessions. (Reg. Lud. de Charlton, p. 61). For a list of Provincial Chapters drawn up mainly from the record of alms granted annually by the King for that purpose, see R. Palmer, *Spicilegia de capitulis S.O. Praedicatorum pro provincia Angliae*, *Analecta S. Ord. ff. Praedicatorum*, VI (1898) 549-566.

<sup>8</sup> F. M. Powicke, *Handbook of British Chronology*, London 1939, 264. C. Eubel, *Hier. Cath.*, Münster 1913, I, 380, and P. B. Gams, *Series episcoporum...*, Ratisbonae 1873, 230, give 1370 as the date of Tattenhal's death, and leave out two bishops: William 1366 and John de Oxford 1370.

<sup>9</sup> Mon. Ord. FF. Praed. Hist. IV, 363, 371, 375, 381, 394, 397, 409.

having elected the provincial was dissolved without conducting any other business. If no chapter had been held, it was summoned to meet within a month, and celebrated in the customary form, with the election of the provincial followed by the legislation for the administration of the province.

Between the date of Tattenhal's promotion (8 November 1361) and the first reference to Pynk as provincial (12 February 1363) is a period of fourteen months. It is scarcely possible to insert another provincial between Tattenhal and Pynk. There is certainly no evidence of any such person. It must therefore be assumed that Pynk was the immediate successor of Tattenhal, and was elected provincial within the month, and therefore in December 1361.

On Whitsunday 1362 the General Chapter was held at Ferrara, and all the provincial priors were bound to attend. The extant *Acta*<sup>10</sup> of this chapter do not give the names of the participants, so it is not known whether Pynk was there.

What was the business that took Pynk to the papal court with this letter of recommendation from the mayor and corporation to Urban V? The letter itself gives us no hint, but we can hazard the suggestion that one of the points which he meant to discuss was the attack on the friars which had been going on for some years, and was still raging. Richard FitzRalph, archbishop of Armagh, chief protagonist for the secular clergy, the monks and the university against the mendicant orders, had died at Avignon 10 November 1360<sup>11</sup>. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge took the matter into their own hands, and enacted statutes against the « abduction » of boys to the mendicant orders, and subjected the student-friars to irksome limitations on their admission and other scholastic exercises in the university<sup>12</sup>. The friars evidently appealed to Urban V, for on 25 November 1364 he sent letters to the archbishop of Canterbury, and to the bishops of London and Lincoln (for Oxford), and to those of Landaff and « Lamburgen. » (for Cambridge), to call the respective chancellors and masters and make them abrogate these statutes. As nothing transpired, the pope sent more peremptory orders

<sup>10</sup> Mon. Ord. FF. Praed. Hist. IV, 393.

<sup>11</sup> On FitzRalph and the friars see the interesting chapter in A. Gwynn, *The English Austin Friars in the time of Wyclif*, Oxford 1940, 80-89.

<sup>12</sup> *Munimenta Academica* 204; *Statuta Antiqua Universitatis Oxoniensis*, ed. Strickland-Gibson, Oxford 1931, 164, 157-8; H. Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. F. M. Powicke and A. B. Emden, III, 1936, 75-6.

on 1 June, and on 16 July 1365<sup>13</sup>. Finally in 1366 the king intervened and the controversy finished for a time with a compromise. The friars were not to be molested and the statutes against them were to be abrogated, but all appeals pending at the papal courts were to be immediately revoked, and no new appeals instituted<sup>14</sup>. Pynk as provincial was certainly involved in this controversy, but all we know for certain is that it was the appeal by the provincials of the four mendicant orders against the two universities that induced the king to intervene.

There is one further piece of evidence that suggests that Pynk did in fact go personally to Avignon. On 28 March 1365, only four months later, (i. e. after 24 Nov. 1364) a plenary indulgence at the hour of death was granted « dilecto filio Roberto Pyng priori provinciali ord. frat. pred. professori in Anglia, in sacra theologia magistro »<sup>15</sup>. Such graces could of course be obtained by an intermediary, but the fact that Pynk was setting out for Avignon suggests that he received this particular grace personally from the hands of the Pope.

On Whitsunday 1365 the General Chapter was held at Genoa, and was one which all provincials were expected to attend, but we have no evidence that Pynk was present. His own provincial chapter this year was held at King's Lynn as usual after the General Chapter<sup>16</sup>.

A royal writ of 30 January 1366 directed to Adam de Toneworth, chancellor of Oxford, ordered him to arrest friar Michael de Polo O.P., of the province of Aragon, and deliver him to Robert Pynk, prior provincial of the Friars Preachers. All that the king's letter tells us is that Polo « is wandering from country to country to the peril of his soul and the scandal of the order, as the said prior has certified »<sup>17</sup>. A later document throws light on this matter. On 9 December 1368 Urban V in a letter addressed to Nicholas Eymeric O.P., inquisitor of Aragon, granted licence to Michael Polo to take his master's examination at Barcellona instead of Oxford. It is said in this document that Polo had been assigned by the general chapter to study at Oxford, where he actually went and started his lectures on the Sentences. During this period he took part in the disputations and responded to the masters of the

<sup>13</sup> Cal. Papal Registers, Letters IV, 91, 52-53.

<sup>14</sup> Rolls of Parliament II, 290; Cal. Pap. Reg., Letters IV, 52-3.

<sup>15</sup> Arch. Vatic. Reg. Avinion. 159, f. 416<sup>v</sup>. I owe this reference to the kindness of Fr. Leonard Boyle O.P.

<sup>16</sup> Mon. Ord. FF. Praed. Hist. IV, 403; Analecta O.P. VI, 509.

<sup>17</sup> Cal. Pat. Rolls Edw. III, 1364-67, 278.

faculty, but could not complete his course because of some troubles among the students at the same university<sup>18</sup>.

Michael Polo must have left Oxford without the provincial's permission, who in his turn had recourse to the secular arm. It is not clear whether these disturbances were restricted to the dominican students, or were general in the university. The former view is however more likely. Some time in 1370 the disturbances among the dominican students at Oxford were so serious that William Bottlesham, then prior provincial, on 4 May of that year, was obliged to have recourse to the royal authority in order to reduce to discipline some rebellious student-friars<sup>19</sup>. Although the *Acta* are reticent, it would seem that Bottlesham's release from office soon after by the General Chapter of Valencia in 1370 was in consequence of the rebellion of these students at Oxford<sup>20</sup>.

The *Acta* of the General Chapter of 1367 are far from complete, and in 1368 no chapter was held<sup>21</sup>. Hence Pynk's relinquishment of

<sup>18</sup> Arch. Vatic. Reg. Avinion. 170, f. 498<sup>v</sup>-499: « Dil. filio Nicolao Eymerici o. ff. p. professori, sac. th. mag... Cum itaque sic accepit dil. fil. fr. Michael Polo, qui tam in Ilerden. et in diversis locis ejusdem ord. prov. Aragoniae secundum morem dicti ordinis naturalem philosophiam, quam in Barchinon. studiis lib. sentent. legit, quique per dil. fil. magistrum et cap. gen. dicti ord. ad legendum lib. sent. huiusmodi et magisterii honorem suscipiendum in studio Oxonien. Lincoln. dioc. deputatus fuit, et per aliqua tempora ibidem lib. dictum sentent. legit et prefatum lib. legendo pluribus magistris sibi opponentibus in dicta facultate sufficienter respondit, et propter aliquas discordias inter studentes in dicto studio exortas huiusmodi lecturam complere nequivit, in eadem facultate adeo divina gracia sibi suffragante perfecit, quod digne mereretur honorem magisterii huiusmodi suscipere in eadem; pro parte dicti Michaelis fuit nobis humiliter supplicatum ut eum ad honorem huiusmodi magisterii promovere provideri de benignitate apost. mandarem. Nos igitur de ipsius sufficientia... si per tuam et aliorum iv magistrorum in facultate predicta in dicto studio Barchinon. existentium diligentem examinationem dictus Michael ad hoc ideo idoneus et sufficiens repertus extiterit magisterii honorem et docendi licentiam in facultate predicta... auctoritate apost. largiaris. Dat. Rom. apud S. Petrum v idus dec. anno VII ».

The following further biographical details, taken from the unpublished Acts of the Provincial Chapters of Aragon, now in Zaragoza Bibl. Univ. cod. 97, complete Polo's curriculum: 1349 assigned student of logic at Zaragoza (p. 190); 1351-52-53 lector of logic at Pampelona (pp. 217, 232, 242); 1354 at Barcelona (p. 260); 1355 lector of natural philosophy at Ilerda (p. 274); 1357, 1358 sublector at Zaragoza (pp. 287, 300); died at San Mateo in 1373 (p. 427).

<sup>19</sup> R. Palmer, *The Friar Preachers of Oxford*, Reliquary 23 (1883) 157-8.

<sup>20</sup> Mon. Ord. FF. Praed. Hist. IV, 416.

<sup>21</sup> Up to 1367, when Helias Raymond was elected Master General, the Chapters were held annually. Helias and several of his adherents wanted them biennial for

office is not recorded. His successor, William Bottlesham, was in office on 15 August 1368 when he presided over the Chapter being held at Lincoln<sup>22</sup>, but whether he had been elected by this chapter or by its predecessor is unknown. Pynk at all events was out of office by August 1368, and of his further career no details have come to light.

## II

We are less fortunate as regards the literary activity of Robert Pynk. None of the usual academic writings, such as commentaries on the Bible and on the Sentences, *quaestiones* and sermons, fruits of his scholastic years at Oxford and London, seem to have survived. Pynk's career as a preacher for more than twenty years « fere per omnes partes Anglie supra multos coetaneos », so highly commended by the mayor, seems to have left no other monument. There is for instance no record of any royal alms for preaching before the king, as one might expect.

The only extant work of Pynk has been copied into a late XIV century codex now in the library of the Marquis of Salisbury at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire<sup>23</sup>. There is no published catalogue of this library, besides the notice in the Calendar of Salisbury MSS<sup>24</sup>, so a fuller description of this manuscript may be useful.

MS Hatfield 290 is a parchment folio codex of late XIV century English hand, having 270 ff. + two paper flyleaves at the beginning and end. It is not paginated, and the original first folio is missing. Some initials are finely illuminated, such as that on fol. 13 the beginning of

---

several practical reasons. Thus there was no Chapter in 1368. The innovation was first inchoated in 1370 and observed from that date. Cf. Mon. Ord. FF. Praed. Hist. IV, 409-460; R.P. Mortier, *Histoire des Maitres Généraux de l'Ordre des Frères Prêcheurs*, Paris 1907, III, 291-397.

<sup>22</sup> Letter of confraternity granted by: « Fr. Willelmus de Bodekysham prior provincialis fratrum ordinis predicatorum provincie Anglicane... In cuius concessionis testimonium sigillum officii mei presentibus est appensum. Datum in nostro provinciali capitulo Lincolnie celebrato in festo Assumpcionis Virginis gloriose anno domini MCCCLXVIII ». P.R.O., E. 40/A. 13187.

<sup>23</sup> I take this opportunity to thank the present Marquis of Salisbury for allowing me to examine the manuscript at Hatfield House. My thanks also go to Mr R.L. Drage, the curator, and to the present librarian for sending me a microfilm of Pynk's treatise.

<sup>24</sup> Historical MSS Commission, Salisbury XIII, 3. I am much obliged to N.R. Ker, lecturer in Palaeography at Oxford, who first drew my attention to this manuscript.



the treatise of William of Pagula. The volume is a collection of religious treatises, and originates in all probability from some monastic house. Here are the principal contents:

- ff. 1-4<sup>ra</sup>: Chronicle of the kings of England from Egbert to Edward I (incomplete).
- ff. 5<sup>ra</sup>-6<sup>rb</sup>: Tractatus de cruce <sup>25</sup>.
- ff. 6<sup>rb</sup>-7<sup>ra</sup>: Tractatus de penitencia Adae.
- ff. 7<sup>ra</sup>-7<sup>b</sup>: Miserabilis finis Jude traditoris.
- ff. 7<sup>rb</sup>-va: De statura, et forma domini nostri Jesu Christi.
- ff. 11<sup>va</sup>-129<sup>ra</sup>: Pars oculi sacerdotis Willelmi de Pagula <sup>26</sup>.
- ff. 129<sup>va</sup>-137<sup>rb</sup>: Vita b. Job a mag. Petro Blessensi exposita <sup>27</sup>.
- ff. 137<sup>va</sup>-145<sup>rb</sup>: Meditationes b. Bernardi <sup>28</sup>.
- ff. 145<sup>va</sup>-149<sup>vb</sup>: Elucidarium Honorii Augustodunensis <sup>29</sup>.
- ff. 150<sup>ra</sup>-155<sup>rb</sup>: Hic incipit quoddam miraculum de spiritu Guidonis <sup>30</sup>.
- ff. 155<sup>va</sup>-162<sup>rb</sup>: De raptu animae et visione Tundali <sup>31</sup>.
- ff. 163<sup>ra</sup>-268<sup>vb</sup>: Thomas Chabham de penitencia <sup>32</sup>.
- ff. 269<sup>ra</sup>-va: Libellus b. Augustini de cognitione vite eterne <sup>33</sup>.
- ff. 269<sup>vb</sup>-270<sup>vb</sup>: Lamentacio Christi in cruce pendentis.
- ff. 270<sup>vb</sup>: Versus: Quare aqua benedicta portatur ante crucem.

Respondeo, quia Jesus Christus noster dominus baptizatus fuit antequam crucifixus fuit (Explicit).

The item attributed to Robert Pynk occupies ff. 7<sup>va</sup>-10<sup>vb</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. the description of MS Roy.8.D.iv, item 3, in Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King's collection in the British Museum, vol. I, 243.

<sup>26</sup> See the interesting paper by L.E. Boyle O.P., *The Oculus Sacerdotis* and some other works of William of Pagula, in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Series, vol. 5 (1955) 81-110.

<sup>27</sup> P.L. 207, 795-811.

<sup>28</sup> P. L. 184, 485-508.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Yves Lefèvre, *L'Elucidarium et les Lucidaires* (Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, vol. 180), Paris 1954.

<sup>30</sup> On this work and its author see *Histoire littéraire de la France*, XXXV (Paris 1921) 538-556.

<sup>31</sup> The compiler of the present collection says that he has copied this legend from Vincent de Beauvais, *Speculum Historiale*, lib. 27, cc. 88-104 (ed. Duaci 1624, pp. 1127-1133). For further information see H. L. Ward, *Catalogue of Romances in the Department of MSS in the British Museum*, London 1893, II, 416-424.

<sup>32</sup> For the author of this work see J. R. Russell, *Dictionary of writers of thirteenth-century England* (*Bulletin of Institute of Historical Research*, special supplement no. 3, London 1936) 158-9; T. Kaeppli in *Archivum FF. Praed.* 26 (1956) 183-191.

<sup>33</sup> P. L. 40, 1005-1032.

« Hic incipiunt questiones necessarie composite per Robertum Pynk fratrem de ordine predicatorum magistrum in theologia.

(Prol.) In varia vallis lacrimarum vicissitudine animus laceratus ab affectibus variis in eo apud quem non est transmutatio nec vicissitudinis obumbratio...

Questio 1: Quomodo possit homo scire quando sit in caritate...

» 2: Quid sit caritas...

» 3: Que sit oratio sufficiens et necessaria ac cotidie exercenda...

» 4: Que sit elemosina necessaria et melior facienda...

» 5: Que sit licita munerum acceptio in curia...

» 6: Quando possit homo scire sine dubio quod sit in via salvandorum...

» 7: Que sunt exercenda ad hoc quod homo possit habere bonum finem...

» 8: [Quomodo quis] evadere possit visionem malorum spirituum et visionem diaboli in hora quando anima exitura est a corpore...

» 9: Quomodo quis melius possit restituere decimas oblitis rectoribus, de quibus modo non constat nec de summa nec de personis...

» 10: Que penitencia sit magis meritoria...

» 11: Quomodo potest quis manere in curia regis et animam suam salvare...

» 12: Quid sit anima...

...Ista et omnia necessaria ad salutem sit credere, querere et invenire, ut vitam eternam consequamur nobis concedat Jesus Christus. Amen. Explicit.

This item consists of a prologue and twelve chapters, in which Pynk replies to twelve queries or « questiones necessarie » set forth to him by a certain Richard. These questions and answers throw some light on the character and position of this unknown Richard. We can infer, for instance from QQ. 5 and 11, that he held a responsible post « in curia regis », either as a judge or perhaps an advocate. He is evidently concerned about gifts that came to him in his official capacity:

« Ideo karissime frater in Domino hec sola munerum acceptio in curia est licita, per quam iusticia promovetur in labore illius qui negocia sequitur, numquam pro iniusticia muneris te magnitudo deflectat. Unde cuidam filio magni iudicis ne paternorum scelerum fieret imitator fuit sic caute consultum: a manu refeces munus, ab aure preces pauperum et impotentium negocia eciam cum labore diligenter exequere et sine dono, in Deo spem tue mercedis reponens, qui potens est et de facto veniet reddere unicuique secundum opera sua. Ab aliis autem qui sunt potentes pro qualitate laboris recipere poteris satis bene, testante Salvatore, qui de spiritualiter laborantibus ait: Dignus est operarius mercede sua. Concorditer loquuntur iura: Nemo tenetur stipendiis propriis militare. Semper tamen oculus mentis dirigendo ad Deum,

quod nec intencio in huiusmodi recepcione sit corrupta, nec recepti quantitas meriti tui limites nimis excedat. Sicque fiet preparacio bene bona ut aliis morum principiis observatis, confidere possitis quum pocius credere tenemini sine dubio te esse et in via salvandorum, quod erat sexto quesitum» (f. 9<sup>rb-ua</sup>).

From the ninth question and answer it is clear that Richard has been so long away from his native parish that he has forgotten the name of his parish priest, who may have even died, and the amount of tithes left unpaid. His liability to pay parochial tithes is further evidence that he is a layman:

« Circa cuius solucionem esset diligencia vehemens adhibenda, presertim cum in se plures partes contineat et brigosas. Primo enim supponitur tamquam de radicata iusticia in cordibus hominum que vocatur lex naturalis, et est hec: hoc facias alii quod tibi vis fieri, et alteri ne feceris quod tibi fieri non volueris. Sumpta communi iuris descriptione, quod ius est reddere unicuique quod suum est. Ex quibus duobus simul patet quod de singulis ablatis vel iniuste detentis facienda est restitucio, hoc enim sibi fieri quilibet appetit. Sed hoc iam noto quod restitucio sit facienda de decimis, quia quanto quis amplius ad aliquid obligatur, tanto plus delinquit eidem contraveniens. Sed subditur in questione, quibus rectoribus, et cum secundum iura quedam sunt decime personales, quales sunt per personam hominis alicuius facienda de bonis personaliter acquisitis, et rectoribus illius ecclesie in cuius parochia talis persona moratur ac sacramentorum ecclesie recipit administracionem. Decime prediales sunt de proventibus bladorum feni, fructuum et aliorum que possidenti innovantur annuatim, que, secundum consuetudinem a bonis et gravibus approbatam, sunt faciende rectori infra cuius parochiam terre tales situantur. Unde proventus veniunt antedicti ubicumque persona illa fuerit degens ad quam novem partes residue applicantur, quia eciam suo iure nulla ecclesia est defraudanda, cum alie aliis privilegiis predotentur ac suis limitibus diocesibus et parochiis dinoscantur gaudere. Ideo etsi de personis quibus fuerant decime applicande tunc non habeatur noticia vel forte sint substracte de medio, illi tamen ecclesie sunt precipue faciende a qua detinebantur. Quod si de ecclesiis vel ecclesia fuerit hesitacio, quod tamen non est verisimile cum facile sit mansivum, ad solucionem decimarum adstrictum ad memoriam reducere in qua parochia moram traxerit diurnam. Tunc reputo faciendum secundum consilium domini Hostiensis, sicut de restitucione alia facienda quando ignoratur persona cui sit facienda, quod scilicet, eundem ad episcopum loci vel alium virum opinione et scientia peditum, de cuius consilio in pios usus pauperum dicta restitucio expendatur, et talis de dilatione peniteat. Quod si summa ignoretur, quantum bono modo poterit tenetur sine fraude estimare, et Deus cui maior cura est de bona voluntate quam de rebus, ymmo de rebus quasi nulla, unde Apostolus: Non est cura Deo de bobus: Licet summa minor sit, propicius fiet servo suo ». (f. 10<sup>ra-rb</sup>).

Richard is obviously a man of tender conscience, anxious about his state of soul, his religious duties, and the special temptations of one in high position. His preoccupation with thoughts of his final end, the need of penance, the fear of deathbed apparitions, and scruples as to his state of grace, all point to a man advanced in years.

It is clear from several replies that Pynk and Richard were on terms of intimate friendship. Four times Pynk addresses him in phrases that would not be used towards a stranger or casual acquaintance: « Dilectissime frater Ricarde », « Karissime Ricarde », « Dilectissime Ricarde », « Karissime frater in Domino ».

From the incipit we know that this work was written after Pynk became master in theology, and therefore about 1350. If he had written it during his provincialate (1361-7 or 8), we should expect him to be called Provincial as well as master.

The questions put by Richard are not academic. They are difficulties of a man anxious about his state of soul. They are put in a logical order, so much so that Pynk tells Richard: « et ut estimo non sine spiritu Dei erant questiones se necessario consequentes et connexe eo ordine quo ponuntur a vobis quesite » (f. 9<sup>ra</sup>).

It is unfortunate that Pynk does not rise to the occasion. The whole treatise is a compilation of texts from the Fathers and other writers. Many of his answers, even to the more personal questions, are taken in large measure from earlier writers; q. 11 for instance comes verbatim from Vincent de Beauvais « De morali principis institutione » (Paris, Bibl. Nat. Lat. 13963, f. 18<sup>rb-vb</sup>), and in the reply to q. 3 we find St Augustine's exposition on the Pater noster (P. L. 33,500) and so forth.

What little remains of Pynk after abstracting his quotations, is not enough to enable us to form an estimate of his ability. There is certain aptness in his choice of texts, there is an orderliness and brevity in his replies. He is writing to a layman, and this limits his scope for theological subtleties. We must confess however that the moral problems of life at court aroused other writers to heights of eloquence, and had always been treated as a fair target for preachers, but Pynk writes of them as one compiling a formal treatise, and not as one advising a friend. There are times however when we get a glimpse of a more homely counsellor, and this makes us regret that Robert Pynk should be known to history only by these few pages.