Alexander Eichinger of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences in Munich, Joseph Goering of the University of Toronto, Maura O'Carroll SND London and Klaus Rodler of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences. It is hoped that the first volumes of the edition, planned over a decade, will be published in Munich under the watchful eye of Klaus Rodler in 1999. In the meantime interested readers have to be content with this issue of *New Blackfriars*. The papers published here stem from the Colloquium held in July 1998 in Blackfriars Oxford to commemorate the 750th anniversary of the death of Richard Fishacre and to celebrate with sung Mass, conversation and a wine and cheese party the gift of this little- known English theologian to the Church.

Who is Richard Fishacre?

Maura O'Carroll SND

Information about Richard Fishacre[1] is limited. Making sense of it is like assembling a jigsaw puzzle with many of the pieces missing. It is known that he was a regent master in the *studium* at Blackfriars, Oxford in the second quarter of the thirteenth century, that he taught, that he preached, that he wrote several books and that he died in 1248. This, so far, is the only certain date in his life. Hence the memorial and celebration 750 years later in 1998.[2]

There are a few items of more or less contemporary information about Fishacre: the Paris MS[3] seems to indicate that the annotator knew Richard Fishacre who was still alive. Whether the annotator was Richard Fishacre is at present an unanswerable question. The St Albans' chronicler, Matthew Paris, expressed unusual appreciation and praise of both Richard Fishacre and Robert Bacon[4]. Nicholas Trivet, writing about fifty years or so after Fishacre's death, indicated that he came from the Exeter diocese.[5] Whether any of Fishacre's writings contain autobiographical information is still a question which may be answered in the next ten years.

Fishacre is an unusual name. In neither Ekwall's place name dictionary[6] nor the *Oxford Dictionary of Surnames*[7] is the name Fishacre found. It would seem that the "Fish" element is fishy—a metonymic occupational name for a catcher or seller of fish—rather than a variant of

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.1999.tb01685.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

variant of the Norman "Fitz" indicating "son of'. The *Oxford Surname Dictionary* also gives a Jewish use of "Fisch" as a first part of a common surname. Consultation with British Telecom has found no Fishacres in central London, Exeter, the whole of England nor Dublin; but there are twenty-seven Hintons—the surname of one of Fishacre's Dominican contemporaries, Simon of Hinton—in London alone and nationally hundreds of Hintons. Clearly Fishacre is not a contemporary English nor Irish surname.

One result of the 1998 Colloquium has been the discovery of the Fishacre family[8]. We now know that Richard de Fishacre is a man who grew up in South Devon. He travelled its ancient lanes, knew its tumbling rivers in their steepsided wooded valleys, its broad estuaries and the sea near at hand, saw for himself the farming of its rich soil. He may well have visited his relatives as the families spread westwards through that part of Devon known as the South Hams and over to the Tamar valley and Cornwall. But equally he was familiar with Dartmoor and its unique harsh landscape. He would probably have visited Ashburton and Buckfast Abbey several times. He may well have been to Crediton where the Bishop had his chief manor and also to Exeter, the cathedral city. But it is most unlikely that he first met the Dominicans in Exeter, as their priory there was not founded until 1232[9]. Richard possibly went from Devon to the schools in Oxford with the intention of becoming a priest of the Exeter diocese. If he went there it must have been after 1213 when the Interdict was lifted, as any scholar at Oxford during it would not have been permitted to continue study there later. Already two of his wider family, Robert and Warin, were in the Church, while Sir Peter de Fishacre of Moreleigh had capacity to provide a further benefice. Once in Oxford, however, he may have become one of Jordan's "catches". Richard Fishacre OP was not unique in his family in entering religious life, but he was different in that he chose to join a mendicant not a monastic order.

It is not certain when Richard de Fishacre entered the Order of Preachers. It is unlikely to have been before 1221 when the Dominicans came to England. The date of his writing of his *Sentence Commentary* is estimated to be 1240-1243 and definitely before 1245[10]. If he entered as a youth and was educated within the Order wherein the able friars alternated study with teaching stints then he would be aged between 35 and 40 when he incepted as a master of Theology. So he could have been born between 1200 and 1208. But if he entered the Order already a master of Arts, his becoming a master of Theology would take less time. It would seem that the Colloquium commemorated the anniversary of a man who—despite the differences in ageing between the thirteenth and the twentieth centuries—died in his prime.

What else can be known of Richard de Fishacre? He lived, studied and taught in Blackfriars Oxford, first in the house in the Jewry, the schools of

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.1999.tb01685.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

St Edward, and probably later in the friary built in Paradise from 1236 to the 1250's, and lived in from 1245, and where in 1248 he was buried. Initially Oxford was the place of novitiate, of priory school, of provincial school and of what was required in 1248 to be a *studium generale*. It was in Oxford that Richard succeeded as regent master his mentor Robert Bacon (the first regent master at Blackfriars), here that he introduced a modern way of teaching theology that was not so acceptable to the Bishop[11] and here that Richard as an active Dominican preached. So far only two of his sermons have been edited[12]. They show that he was a lively preacher who applied his theological analyses to his preaching and who had not only an interest in the science of the day and in the social life of his time, but had a great pastoral concern for the spiritual welfare of his hearers and, as could be expected of a Dominican, a deep devotion to Our Lady.

Fishacre's contemporaries include Robert Grosseteste, regent of the Franciscan school at Oxford and Bishop of Lincoln from 1235, Edmund of Abingdon, sometime Archbishop of Canterbury, older Dominicans like John of St. Giles and Fishacre's master and friend Robert Bacon, fellow students like Simon Hinton. Other contemporaries included Franciscans like Adam Marsh and Richard Rufus of Cornwall as well as many others known and unknown.

And what of the English Province of the Dominican Order? Unlike the Franciscans who on arrival in England in 1224 left four friars each in Canterbury and in London before settling with four in Oxford, the Dominicans on arrival in 1221 preached before the Archbishop in Canterbury, went through London and brought all thirteen founding friars to Oxford, the home of a budding University. It was three years before a second foundation was made in London. The primacy of Oxford in the province is clear. But so are other aims. By 1248 there were Dominican priories in every English diocese except Bath and Wells, Chichester, Sarum and Rochester; and in two of the four Welsh dioceses, Bangor and St Asaph. Norwich, head of the most populous diocese after London, and York the head of the York province in *Ecclesia Anglicana* were the third and fourth foundations respectively, while Bristol and Exeter were the fifth and sixth. Although the Dominicans were settling in fast-growing towns they settled in remote rural areas as well. It would seem that pastoral considerations for both lay and cleric were important to the early English Dominicans. Moreover, of the twenty three foundations made by 1248 fourteen were directly on the main Roman roads, more usable in the thirteenth century before the onslaught of wheeled traffic. This is significant as, in the spirit of apostolic poverty, the friars walked on their pastoral missions.

While we know little more of Richard Fishacre in the modern biographical sense, we do have some of his writings, especially his *Commentary on the Sentences*, the first from Oxford—and one of which

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.1999.tb01685.x Published online by Cambridge University Press

Thomas Aquinas wished to have his own copy[13]. Quètif and Echard listed some of Fishacre's works in their *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum*, Kaeppeli has brought their list up-to-date while several of Fishacre's treatises have been identified and edited by R. James Long .[14] It is to be hoped that as the writings of Richard Fishacre become available, not only will more be learnt of his personality and character, but that his place and significance as an English and European philosopher and theologian will become clearer.

1 Variants of the name from the MSS of the *Sentence Commentary* are: Fissakre, fixacre, Fishakele, fissacre, ffisshacre, Fisachre, Fishaker, fyssakyr, Ffishacre, and fisacre. A. B. Emden, *A Bibliographical Register of the University of Oxford to 1500* 3 vols. (Oxford, Clarendon Press 1957-1959) 685-686, has at least another 10 variants of Fishacre's surname. The printed royal and administrative records, as well as the Exeter diocesan records have numerous versions of the surname.

2 The first version of this paper was given at the Fishacre Colloquium, Blackfriars Oxford, on July 8th 1998.

3 Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, MS 16389 fol.90vb. Rogo te lector quisquis es ut roges Deum pro fratre Richardo de Fixacre qui hoc opus edidit, ut eum Dominus nunc et semper in anima costodiat et in corpore vires prebeat, ut residuum operis ad finem prospere producat. Amen.

4 Matthew Paris: *Chronica Majora* vol V for year 1248, ed. Luard 16. Et eodem anno duo fratres de eodem ordine (OP's) quibus non erant majores, immo nec pares, ut creditur, viventes in theologia et aliis scientiis, videlicet frater Robertus Bacun et frater Richardus de Fishakele qui egregie plurimis annis in eadem facultate legerunt et populis gloriose praedicaverunt verbum Domini, ab hoc saeculo ad Deum migraverunt.

5 ed.Thomas Hog, Nicholas Trivet OP: *Annales sex Regum* (London, 1845). for the year MCCXL, 229-230 Fuerat huic socius in schola magister Robertus Bacon, qui Oxoniis regens in theologia. Praedicatorum ordinem est ingressus. Post ingressum vero lectiones suas in scholis sancti Edwardi per plures continuavit annos: sub quo primus de fratribus incepit frater Ricardus de Fissakre O[E]xoniensis dioecesis, legens una cum fratre Roberto predicto in scholis, quas fratres infra locum. quem nunc habitant. habuerant.// Hic Ricardus super Sententias scriptum temporibus suis perutile composuit. et super Psalterium usque ad psalmum septuagesimum postillas edidit pulcherrimas, moralitatibus suavissimis intermixtas.

6 Ekwall, Eilert, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place Names* 4th edition (Oxford,OUP 1974), 180.

7 Patrick Hanks and Flavia Hodges, *A Dictionary of Surnames* (Oxford: OUP 1988) 184-185.

8 see below *The Fishacre Tribe...*

9 Between 1221. the year of the Dominicans' arrival in England and 1248, the year of Fishacre's death, only 23 of the 51 priories were in existence. To begin with settlement was slow but was carefully considered, as no foundation was made without the full number of twelve as required by the Constitutions: Oxford 1221, London 1224, Norwich 1226. York 1227. Bristol 1230. Exeter and Shrewsbury 1232. Initially Oxford was the place of novitiate, of priory school, of provincial school and of general school.

10 D. A. Callus OP "Introduction of Aristotelian learning to Oxford", PBA 1943, 229-281, 258. C.H. Lawrence "The University in State and Church" in *The Early Oxford Schools* ed. Catto, 101.

12 See *Towards a bibliography...* below.

13 Callus op.cit., 259.

14 See *Towards a bibliography...* below.

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-2005.1999.tb01685.x Published online by Cambridge University Press