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WYCLIFFE’S PREFERMENTS AND UNIVERSITY DEGREES.

The following two documents are the only ones yet found in the Vatican archives which throw light on Wycliffe’s preferments, and especially on the chronology of his university degrees. They belong to the registers of petitions and the so-called Vatican registers. The yet unexplored series of Avignon registers may also in its turn be expected to yield its contribution. The information contained in these two documents has been utilised by Mr. Rashdall for his article on Wycliffe in the ‘Dictionary of National Biography,’ lxiii.

J. A. Twemlow.

I.

1362, 24 November, Avignon. Petition to Urban V from the University of Oxford for provision to be made to John de Wyclif, priest, M.A., of a canonry and prebend and a dignity of York, notwithstanding that he holds the church of Fillingham,¹ value thirty marks. Granted in Westbury.² Reg. Supplic. (Urban V.), xxxiv. f. 207.³

f. 207. ROTULUS MAGISTRORUM UNIVERSITATIS OXONIE.

Sanctitati vestre supplicant filii vestri humiles et devoti cancellarius et ceterus unanimis magistrorum universitatis Oxonie quatenus gracias infrascriptas eis de begunititate [sic] solita concedere dignemini et signare, cum reservacione, inhibitione, et decreto, acceptacione, et anteferrí, ac aliià clausulis consuetis et eciam oportunis, et eciam executoribus, ut est moris.

The fifth petition on the roll occurs on f. 207 d.

Item. Supplicant sanctitati vestre quatenus Johanni de Wychif [sic] Eboracensis dioecesis, clerico et presbytero ac magistro in artibus, de canoniceatu et prebenda cum dignitate in ecclesia cathedrâli Eboracensi dignemini providere, non obstante quod ecclesiæ parochialæ de Fillingham Lincolniensis dioecesis, taxe xxx marcharum sterlingsorum, optinere nescatur. Fiat in ecclesia de Westbury dioecesis Vigorniensis, B.⁴ In margin W. [i.e. Wigorniensis].

¹ Fillingham, Co. Lincoln. ² Westbury-on-Trim, Co. Gloucester. ³ Calendar of Petitions, i. 390. ⁴ The capital letter added after the word Fiat is, in the case of Boniface IX (1389–1404) and his successors of the Roman obedience, and so down to the present pope, invariably the initial letter of their Christian name. For the popes of the Avignon period, however, and their successors of the obedience of Avignon it is not clear what determined the choice of the particular letter used in their signatures. John XXII (James Arnaldi d’Ense) and Benedict XII (James Novelli, alias Fournier) both have, like Urban V, Fiat B. Clement VI and Gregory XI, who were each named Peter Roger, or Rogier, both sign Fiat R. The Fiat G of Innocent VI (Stephen Alberti, Aubert) least of all admits of explanation. Of the popes of the obedience of Avignon during the schism Clement VII (Robert of Geneva, Gebenmess) has Fiat G, and Benedict XIII (Peter de Luna) has Fiat L; and their practice suggests that in the fuller form of Urban V’s name, William Grimoard de Beaunois, may be found a possible explanation of his Fiat B. Although a satisfactory explanation has not yet been given, it is meanwhile permissible to doubt whether, as suggested by Breslau (Urknunsllehre, i. 738), the choice of initial letter in the signatures of the fourteenth-century popes was purely arbitrary. Several of them, including Urban V,
The date, viii Kalendas [corrected from Idus] Decembris anno primo, occurs, as usual, at the end of the roll.

II.

1878, 26 December, Avignon. Grant by Gregory XI to John Wiclif, M.A., S.T.M., rector of Lugdgersale, that he may retain his canonry and prebend of [Aust in] Westburi, even after he obtains possession of a canonry and prebend of Lincoln; notwithstanding the clause to the contrary in the provision lately made to him by the pope of a canonry of Lincoln, with expectation of a prebend, soon after which provision he became licentiate, and then master, of theology. Reg. Vat. (Greg. XI), col. xxxiv. f. 188.6


ELIZABETHAN GLEANINGS.

III. Pius IV and the English Church Service.

It has long been known that Pope Pius IV did something in the way of prohibiting those Englishmen who were likely to attend to papal commands from participating in the worship of the English church. I am not aware, however, that the document in which were monks, but it is not known what, if any, cloister names they assumed. (The signatures of John XXII, Benedict XII, and Gregory XI, whose registers of petitions have disappeared, are preserved, it may be remarked, in their chancony rules. See E. von Ottenthal, Regulas Canoellarie Apostolice [Innsbruck, 1888], pp. 2 sqq., 9, and 81.)