

ANNE VAN ARSDALL and HELEN MOODY, eds. and trans., *The Old French "Chronicle of Morea": An Account of Frankish Greece after the Fourth Crusade*. (Crusade Texts in Translation 28.) Farnham, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015. \$149.95. ISBN: 978-0-754631-52-1.

doi:10.1086/698677

After the First Crusade of 1099, which saw the capture of Jerusalem and the carving out of Latin Christian lordships in the Levant, the crusading movement rarely achieved substantial territorial gains. An exception was the Fourth Crusade, the diversion of which from the Holy Land led to a series of events that culminated in 1204 with the sack of the capital and the occupation of the provinces of the Byzantine Empire. A group of texts in French, Greek, Italian, and Spanish—of varying dates of composition, but with a common core—recounts the story of that conquest and its aftermath. The focus is on the longest-lived (until 1432) of the crusader polities, the Principality of Morea or Achaia, which the Villehardouin dynasty from Champagne founded in the Peloponnese and which, in its heyday, held sway over much of the Aegean world. The Principality was home to a distinctive, complex society. This society emerged out of contact and exchange between the settlers and the indigenous population.

Known collectively as the *Chronicle* or, alternatively, *Chronicles of Morea*, this extensive body of narrative material has been the subject of a number of studies, including a monograph (Teresa Shawcross, *The Chronicle of Morea: Historiography in Crusader Greece* [2009]). The Greek text has been accessible for decades in a complete English translation (Harold E. Lurier, trans. and ed., *Crusaders as Conquerors: the Chronicle of Morea* [1964]). The same was not true of the French, despite its importance.

In undertaking the first translation of the entire French text, Van Arsdall and Moody faced significant challenges, notably the need to grapple with the uncertain status and peculiar dialect of the sole manuscript (Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, MS 15702). The translators conjecture this is a late fourteenth-century copy of a damaged abridgement, itself derived from “a (presumably French) document that was perhaps the prototype” (3). The view does not reflect a scholarly consensus, although it is plausible. At any rate, the text is not written in the *langue d’oïl*, the medieval Romance language native to what is currently Northern France that developed into modern French, but instead in a separate linguistic variety from the eastern Mediterranean. Representative of the kind of literary production that resulted from the dissemination and transformation of Francophone culture outside its heartland, the text incorporates Italian (for example, “fin a,” “panatique”) and Greek loanwords (for example, “arconde,” “despine,” “livadi,” “prothoalogatora,” “panejours,” “prothoficiaire,” “sevastade,” “sevastocratora”). The translators are sensitive to these terms, preserving many of them and providing elucidation in a glossary (35–41).

Explaining the method by which they proceeded in their translation, Van Arsdall and Moody indicate that, working primarily from the printed edition by Jean Longnon (*Livre de la conquête de la Princée de l’Amorée: Chronique de Morée (1204–1305)* [1911]), they checked its readings against a microfilm of the manuscript. They chose to divide the text, adding “headings and subheadings” and “shortening most sentences” (25–26). These are sensible decisions aimed at aiding readability.

It is true that the translators’ interventions sometimes upset the organization and flow of the text, distorting emphases. The French text depends on syntactical subordination in order to convey complex semantic relationships that replacement with parataxis obscures (compare par. 401, at p. 155 in the original with p. 104 in the translation; similarly, par. 595, at p. 239 with p. 136). One does not necessarily realize from the English translation that, in the account of the adventures of the Moreot knight Geoffrey of Bruyères with another man’s wife, what is underscored is less his love than his sins towards his liegeman, his lord, and God. Or that the account of the accession of Isabelle of Villehardouin and Florent of

Hainault as rulers of Morea highlights the fact their overlord imposed conditions on them that were made public through proclamation.

Moreover, there are occasional misreadings: for instance, “devers Costantinople” (par. 189, at p. 67) means “on the side of Constantinople,” not “apart from Constantinople” (p. 71); “li Latin” (par. 668, at p. 267) should be “the Latins,” not “the French” (p. 148). Other passages could have been rendered more persuasively: “du grant despit que elle ot de ce que sa suer lui ot dit” (par. 422, at p. 163) is better understood as “because of her great pique at what her sister had said to her” rather than “because of the scornful words her sister said to her” (p. 108); “deviserent la teneur” (par. 595, at p. 239) as “they explained the meaning” rather than “they arranged to have them read” (p. 136); “heant la seignorie et la conversacion des gentils hommes” (par. 665, at p. 265) as “hating the lordship and proximity of noblemen” rather than “hating the aristocracy and the behaviour of noblemen” (p. 147). Finally, some factual errors have crept in: “a Sainte Sophie a la maison des Freres Preceours” (par. 410, at p. 158) refers to the Dominican church the princely court used for assemblies, and not to “the Franciscans’ monastery” (p. 106).

Nonetheless, this is a careful translation. Van Arsdall and Moody display considerable skill in rendering episodes such as that of the preliminaries to Isabelle of Villehardouin’s marriage to Philip of Savoy (par. 841, original at p. 333; translation at p. 177). They also work hard to provide background material, incorporating into the volume an introduction to historical events (6–25), a timeline (27–34), and an annotated index of named persons and places (215–51). They draw attention to the role in the narrative of hitherto unnoticed female figures by appending a “list of unnamed women” (253–56).

Both translation and scholarly apparatus should be commended for making the French *Chronicle of Morea* more accessible and facilitating future engagement with it.

TERESA SHAWCROSS, Princeton University

PAUL WEBSTER and MARIE-PIERRE GELIN, eds., *The Cult of St Thomas Becket in the Plantagenet World, c.1170–c.1220*. Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2016. Pp. xviii, 252; 11 color and 2 black-and-white figures. ISBN: 978-1-78327-161-0.

Table of contents available online at <https://boydellandbrewer.com/the-cult-of-st-thomas-becket-in-the-plantagenet-world-c-1170-c-1220.html>

doi:10.1086/698543

Veneration of Saint Thomas Becket was widespread across medieval Europe, with his shrine rivaling Rome and Compostela in its ability to attract pilgrims for over three centuries. Yet scholars have yet to explain precisely why Saint Thomas was so popular. Other European bishops were assassinated and became locally venerated saints, but none received the acclaim of Becket. The present collection of articles explores this question from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Paul Webster introduces the volume, which originated as papers given at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds, with an up-to-date bibliography.

Anne Duggan leads off the collection with an overview of the speedy transformation of Becket from beleaguered archbishop to one of the most widely venerated saints. Duggan is not only a leading scholar of Becket’s life, but she was also the first Anglophone historian to carefully study Becket’s cult. In her article, she identifies John of Salisbury’s circular letter of early 1171 describing Becket’s martyrdom and the earliest miracles at his tomb as the keys for Becket’s unusually rapid ascent to sainthood. The letter was quickly incorporated into liturgical texts to commemorate Becket’s murder. Duggan then reviews the vivid and colorful liturgical offices that spread Becket’s cult across Europe, before turning to Henry II’s reconciliation with “Saint Thomas” and the dynastic devotion of Henry’s family for their new pa-