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978-1-108-04872-9 - The Chronicle of Pierre De Langtoft: In French Verse, From the
Earliest Period to the Death of King Edward I: Volume 2

Edited by Thomas Wright

Excerpt

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THE CHRONICLE
OF
PIERRE DE LANGTOFT.

VOL. II.

A

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*Anno Domini m<sup>o</sup>. c<sup>o</sup>. quinquagesimo quinto.*

Henry fiz l'emperyce à Loundres est venu,  
De trestut le pople curtaysement resceu,  
Le jour saint Leogere<sup>1</sup> Henry est rays conu.  
De la terre tute cel heure primat fu  
[Thebaud de Canterbire ercevesque tenu ;]<sup>2</sup>  
Ad<sup>3</sup> Henry la coroune et le anel est rendu.<sup>4</sup>

Henry fiz l'emperyce, duk de Aquitayne,  
Quatre fiz avayt, deus fylles<sup>5</sup> en demayne,  
Henry, Richard, et Geffray counte de Brettayne,  
Jon<sup>6</sup> fust sun fiz pusnez, sovent jolis en bayne ;<sup>7</sup>  
Alyenore sa fillye fu rayne de Yspayne ;  
Rayne de Cecylle Johanna la fillye darayne.  
Icesty<sup>8</sup> ray Henry fu tuz jours en wayne ;<sup>9</sup>  
Plus riche prince n'estayt<sup>10</sup> deça<sup>11</sup> la mountayne.

Henry le seconde est cesty ray nomez,  
Ke tu[te]<sup>12</sup> Engleterre tent<sup>13</sup> en ses poustez ;  
Angou et Normendye sunt à ly liverez,  
De Aquitayne est duk, dount est enheritez ;

Corona-  
tion of  
Henry II.

Names  
of his  
children.

<sup>1</sup> *sein Leger*, B. *saynt Legger*, C. The day of St. Ledger (Leodgarius) was the 2nd of October.

<sup>2</sup> This line, given here from B., is omitted in A. C. and D.

<sup>3</sup> *Q'à Henri*, B.

<sup>4</sup> *ad rendu*, B.

<sup>5</sup> *dous fitz*, B.

<sup>6</sup> *Johan*, B.

<sup>7</sup> *baigne*, B. D.

<sup>8</sup> *E cesti*, B.

<sup>9</sup> *en wayne*, C. *en waygne*, D.

<sup>10</sup> *prince estait*, C.

<sup>11</sup> *de cy à la*, D.

<sup>12</sup> *tote*. B. *trestut*, D.

<sup>13</sup> *tint*, B. *teent*, C.

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*Anno Domini* 1155.

Henry son of the empress is come to London  
And courteously received by all the people ;  
On the day of St. Ledger Henry is acknowledged  
king.

At that time of all the land was primate  
Held Theobald archbishop of Canterbury ;  
To Henry is given the crown and the ring.

Henry son of the empress, duke of Aquitaine,  
Had four sons and two daughters in his family,  
Henry, Richard, and Geoffrey count of Britany,  
John was his youngest son, often gay in his living ;  
Eleanor his daughter was queen of Spain ;  
Joan, his youngest daughter, queen of Sicily.  
This king Henry was always gaining ;  
There was not a richer prince on this side the mountain.

This king is named Henry the Second,  
Who holds all England under his authority ;  
Anjou and Normandy are delivered to him,  
He is duke of Aquitaine, which is his inheritance ;

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Chuvalers et clers sunt à ly jorez.  
 Sun chaunceler cel heure fu Thomas appelez,  
 Erceden<sup>1</sup> de Kaunterbyre, et de Loundres neez;  
 Fiz fu Thomas Beket, estret des melz vanez  
 De la cyté de Loundres, et riche home assez.  
 En chascune cause enquyst les veritez.  
 L'erceveske pur veir<sup>2</sup> à Deu est comaunde;   
 Del digneté Thomas est en sun lu sacrez;<sup>3</sup>  
 Ben sustynt saynt Eglysé et ses dignetez;  
 Par drait<sup>4</sup> lay escryt mayntint les ordynez.  
 Mès ke par layes estaynt attaynt des<sup>5</sup> malvestez,  
 Ne suffry pas k'il fussent par allours jugez  
 Fors en court de clerk; le ray, cum ws orrez,  
 Vers Thomas se corouce, la cause ore escotez.  
 Clers sunt sovent hastifs, les uns<sup>6</sup> fount volentez,  
 Passent drait sovent,<sup>7</sup> n'esparnent [en] lay fez;<sup>8</sup>  
 Ke sentent la grevaunce al ray sunt alez,  
 Et de cel outrage<sup>9</sup> amendes ount priez.  
 Le ray parmy sa terre ses lettres ad maunde,  
 Ke entre clers et lays sa pes sait gardez;  
 Et si clerk mespreygne en ses regaltez  
 Par homycyde ou playe, de larcyne arettez,  
 En la court le ray ly sayt agardez  
 A porter jugement de ses iniquytez.  
 Ly erceveske Thomas al ray ad moustrez<sup>10</sup>

Thomas  
Beket  
made  
Arch-  
bishop.

Disputes  
with the  
clergy.

Beket's  
obstinacy.

<sup>1</sup> *Erceciaken*, B.

<sup>2</sup> *pur voirs*, B.

<sup>3</sup> *L'erceciaken Thomas Beket est en son see sacrez*, B. *Le erceden Thomas est en son see sacrez*, C. *L'erceden Thomas est en son see sacrez*, D.

<sup>4</sup> *Par droite*, B. Robert of Brunne translates this line, "With the lawe to wirke mayntend the ordiné."

<sup>5</sup> *pur heez estoient attenuz de*, B. *par hoes*, C. *Mès qe par hoes estaynt ataynt de malveytez*, D.

<sup>6</sup> *et les uns*, C. *efount volentez*, D. Robert of Brunne translates this as follows:—

"Clerkes often tide misdo blithely,  
"For deynoushede and pride, and  
"for ther state is hy;"

and adds some further remarks upon the conduct of the clergy.

<sup>7</sup> *sovent droit*, B. C.

<sup>8</sup> *en lai feez*, B. C. D.

<sup>9</sup> *de tel utrage*, C. *de tele*, D.

<sup>10</sup> *est moustrez*, C.

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PIERRE DE LANGTOFT.

5

Knights and clergy are sworn to him.  
His chancellor at that time was called Thomas,  
Archdeacon of Canterbury, and a native of London ;  
He was son of Thomas Beket, descended of the most  
distinguished

Of the city of London, and rich man enough.  
In every case which came before him he sought the  
truth.

The archbishop in truth is despatched to God ;  
Thomas is consecrated in his place to the dignity.  
Well he sustained Holy Church and her dignities ;  
Maintained the clergy by right written law.  
But those who were accused by laymen of offences,  
He did not suffer that they should be judged else-  
where

But in ecclesiastical court ; the king, as you will  
hear,  
Takes anger against Thomas ; now hearken to the cause.

Ecclesiastics are often hasty, some of them act  
wilfully,

Often exceed justice, spare not in lay fiefs ;  
Those who feel aggrieved are gone to the king,  
And have prayed for amends for that injury.  
The king has sent his letters through his land,  
That his peace be kept between ecclesiastics and  
laymen ;

And if a clergyman commit an offence in his regalities  
By manslaughter or wound, being accused of theft,  
That it be appointed to him in the king's court  
To receive judgment of his iniquities.  
The archbishop Thomas has represented to the king

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Quel serement il fist kant il fu coronez ;  
 Par Deu ly defend ke klerk sait chalangez,  
 Si noun par saint eglise, dount membre est clamez.  
 Co fu à Claringdoun où Thomas ad parlez.  
 Et ad Norhauntoun vynt-il altre fez,  
 Deliverer ses clers, mès rens ly fu grauntez.<sup>1</sup>  
 A la court de Rome ad Thomas appelez.

Corona-  
tion of  
Prince  
Henry.

Thomas devers la court va la mer passer ;  
 Et le ray Henry fet mayntenaunt maunder  
 Le erceveske de Everwyk, sun<sup>2</sup> [noun] fu Roger,  
 Et sun fiz Henry le fyst<sup>3</sup> corouner  
 Et oynder en rays le regne gouverner.<sup>4</sup>  
 Tort fist à Thomas, ke fust outre mer,  
 Ke pur veir<sup>5</sup> à ly appent cel<sup>6</sup> myster.  
 Kaunt Thomas le seet, fet escomenger  
 Le ercevesk par noun, ke ne put ministrer,<sup>7</sup>  
 Et tuz ke oveske ly dayvent communer,  
 Forspriz le rays Henry, ses fiz, et sa mulier.<sup>8</sup>  
 Sachez Thomas ne volt à sun repairer

Cause of  
Becket's  
exile.

Le ercevesk assoldre pur nuly prier.<sup>9</sup>  
 Les causes ws ay dit, ws les devez saver,  
 Pur quai<sup>10</sup> le ray Henry fist Thomas exyller,<sup>11</sup>  
 Al ray ne devez pas sa mort aretter.  
 Nent plus dist<sup>12</sup> le ray à sun chualer,  
 " Ay-jo<sup>13</sup> nule gent ke me pount<sup>14</sup> venger  
 " Sur un tel clergoun, ke fu moun chaunceler ?"

Becket's  
death.

Quatre chualers, saunz plus comaunder,  
 Sunt alez en l'eglyse saynt Thomas tuer.

<sup>1</sup> *ly est grauntez*, C. D.

<sup>2</sup> *son noun*, B. C.

<sup>3</sup> *se fist*, C.

<sup>4</sup> *le regne pur g.*, D.

<sup>5</sup> *Qar pur voir*, B. C.

<sup>6</sup> *tel*, B.

<sup>7</sup> *q'il ne pout mustrer*, B

<sup>8</sup> *se fiz sa mulier*, D.

<sup>9</sup> *pur nul prier*, B.

<sup>10</sup> *Par quei*, B.

<sup>11</sup> *exillyer*, D.

<sup>12</sup> *Qar nient plus dit*, B.

<sup>13</sup> *Fors a ge nule*, B.

<sup>14</sup> *porrunt*, B. *qe me pcut*, C.

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What oath he took when he was crowned ;  
 On God's part he forbids him that an ecclesiastic be  
     brought to trial  
 Except by Holy Church, by which he is claimed as a  
     member.

It was at Clarendon that Thomas has spoken.  
 And at Northampton he came another time  
 To deliver his clergy, but nothing was yielded to him.  
 Thomas has appealed to the court of Rome.

    Thomas proceeds to cross the sea on his way to the  
     court ;  
 And king Henry now causes to be summoned  
 The archbishop of York, his name was Roger,  
 And his son Henry he caused him to crown  
 And anoint, as king to govern the kingdom.  
 He did wrong to Thomas, who was beyond sea  
 For in truth to him belongs this duty.  
 When Thomas knows it, he excommunicates  
 The archbishop by name, who has no power to admi-  
     nistrate,  
 And all who may hold communication with him,  
 Except king Henry, his sons, and his wife.  
 Know that Thomas will not, on his return,  
 Absolve the bishop for anybody's prayer.  
 The causes I have told you, you ought to know them,  
 Why king Henry banished Thomas ;  
 You must not ascribe his death to king Henry.  
 The king said no more to his knight but,  
 " Have I no people who can avenge me  
 " Of such an ecclesiastic, who was my chancellor ?"  
 Four knights, without further command,  
 Are gone into the church to slay saint Thomas.

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The life of Becket referred to. Ki volt saver coment saint Thomas vesquit,  
 Coment le ray de Fraunce honurer ly fist;  
 Coment le apostoylle par bulle ly transmyst<sup>1</sup>  
 Legat en Engleterre, coment se<sup>2</sup> entremyst,  
 Coment à Pountyné<sup>3</sup> le aungel à ly dist,  
 Coment sun lynage hors de terre fuist,  
 Coment l'apostoylle la payne à cels purvyst  
 Pur quels<sup>4</sup> en sainte eglyse playe et mort suffryst,  
 Saunz agarde de court,<sup>5</sup> coment il 'parfist  
 Par sa passioun ke pur Deu emprist,  
 Et coment Deu pur ly ovre où il gist;  
 Regarde [ben] sun lyvre,<sup>6</sup> ke n'est pas petyt,  
 Et là la verité trovera tut escryt.

Mort est le erceveske, et nostre<sup>7</sup> joven rays  
 Est la mer passé, et sur ly quens<sup>8</sup> curtays,  
 Sir William de Albemarle,<sup>9</sup> par aide des Englays,  
 Pris ad deus chastels, engettez les Fraunçays.<sup>10</sup>  
 [A] le chastel de Albemarle<sup>11</sup> barouns prist-il trays,  
 En Engleterre les meyne; cels sunt<sup>12</sup> les deus Flan-  
 drays

Ke morent en prisoun pur lur fez malvays.

Henry's grief for Becket. Pur la mort<sup>13</sup> Thomas le ray avaunt nomé,  
 Henry fiz<sup>14</sup> l'emperyce, est molt angussé.

<sup>1</sup> *tramist*, B.

<sup>2</sup> *s'en*, C. D. Robert of Brunne translates this, "And how, or he went, he serched alle the state."

<sup>3</sup> *Pounteneje*, B. D. *al Pontenye*, C.

<sup>4</sup> *Par quels*, B. C.

<sup>5</sup> *du court*, B.

<sup>6</sup> *Regardez bien son livre*, B. C. *Regarde bien son livre*, D.

<sup>7</sup> *à nostre*, C.

<sup>8</sup> *li quent*, B.

<sup>9</sup> *Aumarle*, B. *de Almarle*, D.

<sup>10</sup> *le Fraunceys*, B.

<sup>11</sup> *Al chastel d'Aumarle*, B. C. *Al chastel de Albemarle*, D.

<sup>12</sup> *ses sunt*, B. This passage is translated by Robert of Brunne, in language not very intelligible, by the following lines: —

"Of Almarle in the castelle thre

"lordes he toke,

"Of messengers fulle snelle he sent

"hider to loke,

"Untille Ingland, of Flanders men

"fulle ille,

"In warde or in bond in prison leve

"thei stille."

<sup>13</sup> *Puis la mort*, B.

<sup>14</sup> *le fitz*, C.



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9

Who desires to know the life St. Thomas led,  
How the king of France caused him to be honoured;  
How the pope by bull sent to him  
A legate in England, how he interfered,  
How at Pontigny the angel spoke to him,  
How his kindred fled out of the land,  
How the pope provided punishment for those  
Through whom he suffered in holy church wound and  
death,

Without judgment of court, how he completed,  
By his passion, that which he undertook for God's sake,  
And how God performs miracles for him where he lies,  
Look well into his book, which is not small,  
And there you will find the truth all written.

Dead is the archbishop, and our young king  
Has crossed the sea, and from the courteous count,  
Sir William de Albemarle, with the aid of the English,  
Has taken two castles, and expelled the French.  
In the castle of Albemarle he captured three barons,  
He brings them into England; these are the two  
Flemings

Who remain in prison for their evil deeds.

For the death of Thomas the king before named,  
Henry son of the empress, was much chagrined.

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War with  
Scotland. William ray de Escoce de plus est conforté,  
Et sur le ray Henry guere ad comencé.  
Le chastel de Burge ad pris en sa pousté,  
Malgarde fu par ly perduz, Prudhowe<sup>1</sup> salvé.

The king  
of Scotland  
taken. S'en va vers Alnewyk, où pris est et mené  
Tut draït à Richemund, où il est gardé.  
Richard de Morvyle, chuvaler renomé,  
Et Richard Comyn, of ly sunt herbe[r]gé.<sup>2</sup>  
De bons fez des Norays<sup>3</sup> le rays Henry est lé;  
Des riches douns les ad si ben rewerdoné,  
Ke trestuz ly altres parmy sun regné  
Sunt al rays venuz<sup>4</sup> à sa volunté.

Peace  
restored. Contek entre countes de tot est relessé,  
Barayt des barouns par tut<sup>5</sup> oblyé.  
Ore est Engleterre en pees et charyté;  
Ço fist le ray Henry par sa [grant] bounté.<sup>6</sup>  
Le xix. an le ray Henry<sup>7</sup> regnayt,  
Henry le joven rays, ke sun fiz estayt,  
La sore le ray de France esposé avait.

The young  
king raises  
war  
against his  
father. Phelippe counte de Flaundes, ke durement amait  
Henry le joven rays, sovent ly consaillait,  
Et Thebald de Blesence,<sup>8</sup> ke Henry molt creait,<sup>9</sup>  
Et le ray de France sun poer donait  
A Henry le joven, dount il començait  
Suspendre sun pere, où il ne avayt<sup>10</sup> drayt.  
Kaunt sun pere le seet, tost maunder fesayt  
William ray d'Escoce, ke vynt of graunt<sup>11</sup> esplayt,  
Et David sun frere William of ly<sup>12</sup> menayt.  
Le counte de Leycestre cel heure<sup>13</sup> ben guyait.

<sup>1</sup> Proudhove, C. Robert of Brunne says, "Mulgard thorgh him was  
" lorn, Prudhow saved welle."

<sup>2</sup> *od li sunt herbergé*, B.

<sup>3</sup> *les Norays*, C. *Des bons fetz  
de Norays*, D.

<sup>4</sup> *à li venuz*, B.

<sup>5</sup> *de tote*, D.

<sup>6</sup> *grant* is omitted in A.

<sup>7</sup> *Le dise neefsmé an qe Henri*,

B. C. *Le dys et le noefyme an ke  
Henry*, D.

<sup>8</sup> *Ethelmu de Plesence*, B. *Ke  
Thebald*, C.

<sup>9</sup> *croit*, B. *crait*, C. D.

<sup>10</sup> *où n'avoit*, B.

<sup>11</sup> *od grant*, B. *oue grant*, D.

<sup>12</sup> *od le*, B. *oue ly*, D.

<sup>13</sup> *cel ost*, B. *cél host*, C. *Le count  
de Gloucestre cel host*, D.