

REVIEWS

A Soldiers' Chronicle of the Hundred Years War: College of Arms Manuscript M9.
Anne Curry and Rémy Ambühl.

Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2022. 456 pp. \$120.

A Soldiers' Chronicle details a transformative phase of the Hundred Years' War. It opens with Henry V's invasion of Normandy in 1415 (the Agincourt campaign) and concludes, abruptly, at the siege of Orléans in 1429. The work was compiled for Sir John Fastolf, the master of the duke of Bedford's household, and internal evidence suggests that the authors intended to continue the narrative until 1450 but that Fastolf's death (in 1459) led them to abandon the project.

At the heart of this fine volume is an edition and translation of a relatively brief section of College of Arms Manuscript M9, folios 31^r–66^v. Because of the enormous quantity of supplementary detail and analysis provided by the editors, this is not presented in the now typical facing-page model. Rather, the French edition, which contains footnoted information concerning the manuscript itself and its textual amendments, precedes an English translation and forms a separate section that provides a wealth of chiefly biographical material concerning the individuals mentioned.

The chronicle is unnamed in the original, but the title given by the editors is entirely appropriate. This is very much about soldiers. The chronicle's authors show enormous interest in detailing the major participants in a succession of military engagements, large and small. Indeed, for the period 1415–22, nearly half of the text (47.4 percent) comprises a series of lists of names, and while the period 1422–29 is structured in a more conventional narrative style, such lists remain a prominent feature. The chronicle is therefore of great help in providing corroboration and new evidence regarding the involvement of individuals in specific military operations. It is also of value for its consideration of Franco-Scottish military links and its discussion of the conquest of Maine. This is unsurprising, given that Fastolf held the office of military governor of Maine and Anjou from 1425–26, and that one of the chronicle's authors, Christopher Hanson, saw service in the area at the same time.

As this may suggest, the chronicle was a collaborative venture. Alongside Hanson, a professional soldier described as a German (*de patria almayn*), who entered Fastolf's service after the fall of Normandy in 1450, worked Peter Basset. While the usual difficulties regarding nominal record linkage exist with a name of this sort, it is quite possible that Basset's military career began in 1415, and that he continued to see service in Normandy after it came under English control. In the 1430s he served in Alençon, where he probably first encountered Fastolf, who took command of the region in 1435. The incipit to the chronicle also reveals the involvement of Fastolf's secretary, William Worcester, in a supervisory role in the project, as well as the participation of Luket Nantron, a Parisian clerk.

Similarly (and appropriately), *A Soldiers' Chronicle* is also a collaborative venture. In addition to the editors and translators, Anne Curry and Rémy Ambühl, introductory chapters are offered by Deborah Ellen Thorpe (on “The M9 Chronicle and Its Authors”), Richard Ingram (on the choice and use of French as the language in which the chronicle was written), and Scott Lucas (on certain aspects of the later history and use of the chronicle). This latter section, aspects of which are also addressed by Ingram, involve the chronicle’s use by heralds (and hence its connection to the College of Arms) and its links to various Tudor authors, including Edward Hall, Raphael Holinshed, and William Shakespeare.

These discussions help locate this relatively brief chronicle—little more than 18,000 words—in a range of contexts—linguistic, literary, historical, and political—while the text itself also reveals some intriguing details about the thought-world of the professional soldier in the later Middle Ages. There are only trifling remarks about logistics or strategy, but a good deal regarding courage, both individual and collective, as a necessary quality. Here, discretion is never the better part of valor. There is also a clear nationalistic tone. As a work aimed, initially, at a singular audience, it naturally aspired to reflect its patron’s interests and his role in the great affairs of the day. For readers today, it provides an unusual but fascinating perspective on a turbulent period.

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Marsilio Ficino: On the Christian Religion. Dan Attrell, Brett Bartlett, and David Porreca, ed. and trans.
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022. 272 pp. \$95.

With his groundbreaking study on *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, Paul Oskar Kristeller (1905–99) laid the foundation for eight decades of continued scholarship on the eminent Florentine humanist scholar Marsilio Ficino (1433–99). This scholarship has been enriched by the English translation of Ficino’s *De Christiana Religione*. The treatise was completed in 1474, a year after Ficino’s double Roman Catholic Church ordination as deacon on 18 September 1473 and as priest on 18 December 1473. Ficino’s volume represents a most provocative contribution to the contemporary debate over the precedence of *religio* over *scientia*. Ficino’s *De Christiana Religione* provides a logical continuation of his scholarship on the ancient Greek tradition, including the eighteen-volume *Platonic Theology on the Immortality of the Soul* (written ca. 1470; published 1484), as well as his translation of the *Opera Omnia Platonis* (published 1576).

In this volume, the topics of the individual chapters suggest a subdivision of the volume into two parts. In the first part, comprising chapters 1–28, Ficino dwells on the importance of ancient theology—the *prisca theologia* shared by such luminaries as