

Bibliographical Exercise: Froissart's Chronicles

Introduction

Jean Froissart's *Chronicles* is a very long prose narrative detailing events between c. 1326 – 1400.¹ The original manuscripts are spread across over 150 manuscript volumes, held by more than 30 libraries across North America and Europe.² The *Chronicles* are divided into four books, the first three of which 'exist in substantially different versions'.³ Most published versions of the *Chronicles* are abbreviated to some extent because of the length of the original manuscripts. The purpose of this exercise was to carry out an internet search to evaluate different published and online versions of the *Chronicles*, noting some of those deemed important from a scholarly perspective. As the original language of the *Chronicles* was French, many of these versions are English translations. Translation presents its own difficulties. A good translation can bring a text alive but it is important that the translator does not interpret too freely if a text is to maintain its scholarly integrity. The British Library website was a key resource to consult at the start of this project. Various university library websites were also consulted. The University of Cambridge website was particularly useful because of its large stock of early editions of the *Chronicles*. The Internet Archive is a valuable resource because it has several digitised versions of the *Chronicles* published in earlier centuries. Various internet search engines were used to track down obscure references and to follow up leads.

1. Penguin edition of 1978

Froissart, Jean, *Chronicles*, trans. and ed. by Geoffrey Brereton, reprint with minor corrections (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978)

This is a reprint of a 1968 version that includes some minor corrections from that edition. It is the main version currently published by Penguin. The translator is Geoffrey Brereton. Only a selection of the *Chronicles* is provided, spread across all four books. The introduction to this selection is particularly informative. There is an excellent glossary in this edition. There are some notes but they are not extensive; unsurprising as the book is aimed at a general readership. Penguin has a reputation for employing bona fide academics to translate and edit their 'Penguin Classics' series of

1 The Online Froissart, <https://www.dhi.ac.uk/onlinefroissart/> [Accessed 05 November 2020]

2 The Online Froissart, <https://www.dhi.ac.uk/onlinefroissart/> [Accessed 05 November 2020]

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books even though they are sold at reasonable prices in order to make them accessible to a wide audience. An online version of the 1968 book is available at:

The Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/chroniclesoffroi00froi> [Accessed 05 November 2020]

2. Harvill Press edition of 1967

Froissart, Jean, *Froissart's Chronicles*, trans. and ed. by John Jolliffe (London: Harvill Press, 1967)

This has been reprinted by Penguin under the banner 'Penguin Classic History' in 2001 and by Faber in 2012. It is difficult to evaluate this translation as a digital version is not available to consult. However, the fact that Penguin still publishes it as an alternative translation to that of Geoffrey Brereton suggests it is a good alternative. Faber also has a good reputation for scholarly endeavours. It would be very informative to compare the two Penguin translations.

3. The Online Froissart

Ainsworth, Peter, and Godfried Croenen, ed., *The Online Froissart*, version 1.5 (Sheffield: HRIOOnline, 2013), <http://www.dhi.ac.uk/onlinefroissart> [Accessed 5 November 2020]

This is a collaborative interdisciplinary project led by The University of Sheffield and The University of Liverpool, involving researchers from many different countries. It has manuscript transcriptions, English translations and chapter summaries. There are also some facsimile images of some of the manuscripts. The site is scholarly, accessible and comprehensive. The site concentrates on the first three books of the Chronicles, while providing some translations of Book IV. There are also some excellent background essays on a variety of topics associated with Froissart and the events of the fourteenth century. The current version of the translation was completed in 2013.

4. Translation by John Bouchier, Lord Berners

Froissart, Jean, *The Chronicles of Froissart*, trans. by John Bouchier, Lord Berners, ed. By G. C. Macaulay (New York: Harvard Classics: P. F. Collier and Son, 1910)

Martin Hargreaves (2302668)
Assignment Two

This was published as part of The Harvard Classics series in 1910 but dates from 1899. A one volume version of this translation, edited and reduced by G. C. Macaulay, formerly a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, is available for inspection on the Internet Archive:

The Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/chroniclesoffroi00froiuoft/page/ii/mode/2up>
[Accessed 06 November 2020]

In the preface to this edition Macaulay notes that the original translation by Lord Berners is an English classic. An electronic version of this translation is hosted by Fordham University:
<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/froissart-full.asp> [Accessed 05 November 2020]

5. Selections from Lord Berners' translation of Froissart's Chronicles

Froissart, Jean, *Selections from [Lord Berners' translation of] Froissart's Chronicles*, ed. N. L. Frazer, trans. Lord Berner (London: Horace Marshall & Son, 1903)

This is another edited version of Lord Berners' translation. Here the editor is N. L. Frazer.

6. The Days of Chivalry. Stories from Froissart's Chronicles

Froissart, Jean, *The Days of Chivalry. Stories from Froissart's Chronicles*, ed. John Hampden (Leicester, Edmund Ward, 1952)

A selection of stories from Froissart's Chronicles.

7. French Edition

Froissart, Jean, *Chronique de France, d'Angleterre et de Bretagne* (Desclée: De Brouwer, 19--)

An online version of this book is available at:

The Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/chroniquedefranc01froiuoft/page/n17/mode/2up>
[Accessed 05 November 2020]

8. Stories from Froissart

Froissart, Jean, *Stories from Froissart*, trans. Barry St. Leger (London: Published for Henry Colburn by R. Bentley, 1832)

There are three volumes to this early nineteenth-century translation. It does include notes. An online version of the second volume of this book, which runs to nearly 400 pages, is available at: The Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/storiesfromfroi01froigoog> [Accessed 05 November 2020]

9. Chronicles of England, France and Spain

Froissart, Jean, *Chronicles of England, France and Spain and the Adjoining Countries: Volume 1*, trans. by Thomas Johnes, rev. edn (London: Colonial Press, c1901)

This book lacks an index and scholarly notes but runs to over 400 pages, which is large for a first volume. An online version of this book is available at:

The Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/chroniclesofengl01froiuoft/page/n9/mode/2up> [Accessed 05 November 2020]

10. Medievalist website

Medievalist, <http://www.medievalist.globalfolio.net/eng/f/index.php> [Accessed 06 November 2020]

This website allows a twelve volume edition of the Chronicles to be downloaded, claiming it is the only full version. There is also an extensive list of known editions of the Chronicles that extends back to the sixteenth century and includes many French editions. This is useful as a reference for further research.

References

The Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/> [Accessed 05 November 2020]

The Online Froissart, <https://www.dhi.ac.uk/onlinefroissart/> [Accessed 05 November 2020]