ANTELM THE NASTY, FIRST LATIN ARCHBISHOP OF PATRAS (1205–CA. 1241)

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Our sources for the first few decades of the history of Frankish Greece are limited, especially for the period after about 1210 when Henri de Valencienne’s chronicle ceases and the Chronicle of the Morea is vague and inaccurate. For some topics we rely almost exclusively on diplomatic sources, mainly papal letters in the Vatican Archives. The letters of Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) have been available for some time, and a portion of those of Honorius III (1216–1227) and even more of Gregory IX (1227–1241) have been published in full, the remainder having been printed in summary form.1 Moreover, the effort to publish the papal letters dealing with the Eastern Churches, known as CICO, has printed the texts of many of the important letters dealing with the Greeks from these three popes.2 Nevertheless, there are still a few items

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of interest waiting to be discovered in the full text of those letters that until now have been unavailable except in summaries. At the moment I am collaborating with William Duba on a project to edit the almost 250 letters of Honorius III involving the former Byzantine territories conquered by the participants of the Fourth Crusade. One of these letters sparked my curiosity about Antelm, the first Latin archbishop of Patras, and led to my characterizing him as “the Nasty.” The letter is dated 10 June 1224 and addressed to the archbishop of Athens and to the dean and Canon Bernard of Corinth. In 1895 Pietro Pressutti summarized it as follows:

It relates the things that the Apostolic See did with respect to the archbishop of Patras, and explains individually his faults, the clamor of which had increased from the time of Pope Innocent III of happy memory, so that Pope Honorius wrote letters to the archbishop of Coron—now of Corinth—and his colleagues, and then to the archbishop of Larissa and his colleagues, and finally to Cardinal Giovanni of Santa Prassede, then papal legate in those parts. The pope announces that he has suspended the archbishop [of Patras] from his episcopal duties for a year and ordered him to live in a monastery for one year, and that he has assigned the bishop of Coron and Canon Lantelm of Patras to be his coadjutors in the spiritual and temporal affairs of the cathedral for three years, decreeing that his incomes from there, minus the archbishop’s necessary expenses for that time period, are to be given to the church for decorations and for the restoration of the structure.

As summaries go this is admittedly quite extensive. Still, in the only study devoted to Antelm, described as “one of the greatest figures of the Catholic hierarchy established in Greece after the fall of Constantinople to the Latins,” Dionysios Zakythinos merely gave it a sentence in a paragraph on Honorius III’s “disfavor” toward the archbishop, mentioning the one-year suspension and the stay in the monastery, but not the mysterious “faults” or the three-year loss of income. Aloysius


3 The project is Bullarium Hellenicum: Pope Honorius III’s Letters Involving Frankish Greece and Constantinople (hereafter: Bullarium Hellenicum), supported by generous funding from the University of Cyprus. The letter in question was first transcribed by a student, Christina Kaoulla, in the context of my seminar on Latin palaeography. Ms. Kaoulla, then an undergraduate, has since completed her M.A. at Cambridge and is now preparing her Ph.D.

4 Pressutti, no. 5034.

D. A. Zakythinos, “Ὁ ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Ἀντέλμος καὶ τὰ πρῶτα ἐτη τῆς λατινικῆς ἐκκλησίας Πατρίων,” Ἑπετηρίς Ἐταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν 1 (1933) (hereafter