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Thierry Crépin-Leblond and Monique Chatenet, eds., *Anne de France: art et pouvoir en 1500: actes du colloque organisé par Moulins, Ville d'art et d'histoire, le 30 et 31 mars 2012.* Paris: Picard, 2014. 221 pp. Illustrations, plans, genealogical tables, bibliography. 69.00€ (pb). ISBN 978-2-7084-0962-0.

Review by Nicola Courtright, Amherst College.

Anne de France: Art et pouvoir en 1500, acts of a colloquium that took place in Moulins in March 2012, edited by Thierry Crépin-Leblond and Monique Chatenet, contains relatively brief but invaluable chapters stocked with new information and original interpretations. It is divided in two: the first half is dedicated to studies about Anne of France, daughter of Louis XI and sister of his son Charles VIII, and the other half to her patronage and that of other notable, politically active noblewomen--regents and queens--influenced by Anne circa 1500. Throughout the entire volume, the authors seek to indicate ways in which these women's acts and patronage of art and architecture exhibit some kind of political authority. They unearth documents, explore the visual valence of objects and architecture, and examine literary texts to argue that Anne of France, Margaret of Austria, and Anne of Brittany played a significant role in the history of Europe in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. A major strength of this collection is how authors are deeply engaged with drilling down into the documents to find new material to apply to the questions they pose or offer new interpretations of little-known material. Finding and interpreting documentation of events and patronage that is closely associated with these women and their effect upon the practice of rule, upon political events, and upon the symbolic expression of royal authority is especially valuable because, as is well known, figuring out the nature of women's power, even that of queens, depends upon archival records that are missing or just plain silent.

Near-contemporary chroniclers insist upon Anne's importance in shaping policy and influencing the direction of the kingdom, but it was difficult for Anne of France to act with authority when she had none that was explicitly given to her in the way a king habitually received his right to rule in France: divine appointment through male inheritance. In France, owing to the sixth-century Salic Law compiled under Clovis, women were not allowed to rule in their own right, but given political upheavals, kings' early deaths or mental illness, female regency in the name of an underage son often came to be regarded as a necessary course of action. Queen regents, based on their intimate relationship with their sons, were charged with the dauphin's tutelage and guardianship. Already Blanche of Castile had become regent after her husband Louis VIII's death in 1226, and the kingdom was in the care of the widowed regent even after their son Louis IX came of age.[1] Blanche essentially acted as a sovereign in multiple capacities as regent during her son's minority and again when he went on a crusade in 1248. In recent decades, scholars have pointed out that the Salic law, which excluded women from royal succession by the alteration of a clause from the ancient Lex Salica in a 1413 transcription of the text, actually permitted the queen regent to assume a paradoxical kind of authority to head the realm in the name of her son, for she gained no personal advantage when her spouse died, and could be a faithful advocate for the claims of her son and for him alone; she could not usurp him.[2]

However, in the case of Anne of France there was an additional wrinkle: daughter of a dead king--one of the *filles de France*--but sister to the underage king, she had less of a motive than a mother would to oversee her brother's welfare. And, as Aubrée David-Chapy in "Une femme à la tête du royaume, Anne de France et la pratique du pouvoir" points out, Anne did not officially possess the title of regent, for her father only made an oral vow about the succession that did not explicitly name Anne or even her husband Pierre II de Beaujeu, Duke of Bourbon, regents. To be sure, Charles VI had earlier promulgated ordinances that placed the mother of the king at the head of a regency council, yet even she was not given the title "regent," and Anne was not the underage king's mother. She was in an unprecedented, ticklish position politically. Nevertheless, as David-Chapy outlines, with her husband Beaujeu, Anne worked to gain legitimacy through the acts of the États généraux of 1484, which supported their political role as head of the regency council and guardians of the king. Anne went on to exercise power in the name of the king through military, epistolary, and diplomatic strategies, including important matrimonial alliances, over decades. The juridically unclear situation of Anne of France, David-Chapy contends, allowed her to act in ways that French queens ordinarily could not. Other essays in this volume make clear in what multiple fashions Anne of France was an efficacious leader of the country and shaped the political expertise of her female mentees.

Many of the chapters tease out and define what female ruling authority is when it is acted out in the absence of charters or laws granting rights or privileges to queens, and enumerate which kinds of acts, events, or artistic expressions convey political authority. In harmony with recent literature about the place of queens in governance from the last decades, this volume shows that it was not necessary for queens to exercise direct power through royal acts or legislation for them to influence the course of events.[3] Various chapters point out that Anne and other queens expressed royal political authority through peace negotiations, through arranging marriages between parties that become politically stronger through the union (and more connected to the crown), and through mentoring other, future queens or consorts of kings. Underlying the entire collection is the assumption that royal governance relied upon a complex system of courtly social and political relationships in which queens or noble consorts played an integral role. As Theresa Earenfight has argued about late medieval queenship, monarchy and dynasty were based on a familial model in which queens, as partners to kings and as bearers of their heirs, legitimized the dynasty inside and outside the kingdom. Queens were consequently intertwined politically with their mates and sons.[4] These familial, social, and political relationships were played out not only in royal acts or negotiations between opposing powers, but also in ceremony and ritual, the commissioning of art and objects for symbolically rich settings, and the construction of architectural spaces where such relationships and displays of authority were formally demonstrated.

Numerous essays give concrete examples of how other kinds of events and deeds outside of direct action or official responsibility also contribute to and enable the power to rule. Thierry Crépin-Leblond's useful conclusion, "Anne de France et la commande artistique: pistes de recherche," places some of the essays in context and posits next steps for determining evidence for Anne's personal taste through the examination of jewelry, furniture, and other kinds of material culture she patronized. But despite this contribution, the authors do not always make connections between their discoveries within the covers of this collection. For example, select chapters elucidate how ceremonies as well as the patronage of art and architecture illustrated hierarchies of the court and state that articulated the ideal scheme of governance headed by a divinely appointed king. By imitating royal patronage and ceremonial in their familial lands outside of the capital, these influential women made their and their spouses' relationship to the all-powerful crown and its authority concrete. Murielle Gaude-Ferragu in her "Anne de France, la mort et les corps saints" points out that Anne of France and her spouse Pierre II de Beaujeu, duke of Bourbon, built a Sainte-Chapelle in Riom in Auvergne, which intentionally recollected St. Louis's chapel in Paris in order to claim authority for the Bourbons, who inherited the duchies of Auvergne and Bourbonnais in 1488. Likewise, Annie Regond in "Les duchesses de Bourbon et de Savoie en leurs châteaux. Quelques aspects de commandes des duchesses du XIVe au XVIe siècle à Chambéry et

Moulins" observes that the Sainte-Chapelle built in 1472 by Yolande of France, sister of Louis XI, emphasized her royal relationship and implicit authority in the ducal lands of Savoie.

Royal iconography legitimized rule in a variety of media; it both developed in the duchies that were the strongholds of these women's families, and also traveled inward to Paris from those lands and the Netherlands. Gaude-Ferragu rivetingly analyzes the funerals that Anne of France organized--her mother's and her husband's--and demonstrates that in manifold, explicit ways they emulated the king's funeral ceremony to affirm, the author contends, Anne's legitimacy and right to succession. Martha Wolff in "Anne de France et les artistes: princesse et commanditaire" likewise takes seriously the role of ceremony and symbolism around Anne of France to express political aims. To that end she analyzes the iconography of a reconstructed retable by Jean Hey, a Netherlandish artist frequently employed by Anne and Pierre, to propose persuasively that the allusions to Charlemagne and St. Louis, which she finds in other imagery of Anne and Pierre, were intentionally and frequently appropriated symbols of the emperor and sanctified king to sanction the pair's position of authority (although Wolff is careful to say that in the absence of documents it is not easy to figure out Anne's personal contribution). Expanding on the career, works, and importance of artists such as Jean Hey and emphasizing his wide-ranging ability to design for a variety of media, including sculpture and stained glass, Philippe Lorentz in "Jean Hey à Paris? Un vitrail de Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, paroisse des ducs de Bourbon" proposes a move for Hey from Bourbonnais to Paris. If the artist were active there as well, it implies the larger political reach of the imagery and style associated with the Bourbon ducal pair who were the regents for the young king, and who were arguably working towards developing a royal style and iconography that reached far back, as Wolff suggests, into the mythic French past.

Anne's strong-willed political acts for what she surely regarded as the good of the realm dramatically altered both Margaret of Austria's and Anne of Brittany's lives: Anne had the marriage of Margaret, daughter of the Habsburg who became emperor Maximilian I, to her brother, the future Charles VIII, annulled in order to negotiate a better union for him with Anne of Brittany. But the essays contend that these women nevertheless saw Anne as their model of a successful negotiator for queen's royal prerogatives. Margaret, who was raised in the French court from childhood, then became consort of Juan of Aragon-Castile, spouse to Duke Philibert II of Savoie, and finally regent of the Netherlands.[5] Benoît-Henry Papounaud in "Le mécénat de Marguerite d'Autriche et la construction du monastère royal de Brou" expands upon Margaret's Anne-like diplomatic skills and above all, her artistic patronage, which the author argues served to legitimate her position as regent and, further, articulated a scheme of governance headed by a divinely appointed king. Caroline Vrand in "Anne de Bretagne et les arts: expression et mise en scène du pouvoir" plumbs much archival evidence that demonstrates how Anne of Brittany and Margaret of Austria commissioned many of the same, non-local artists and artisans as Anne of France--not only Jean Hey but also goldsmith Arnoul du Viviers and Jean Perréal--for portraits, chains of gold, tapestries, and tombs. The younger women surely intended such emulation to reflect the kind of power Anne of France projected (and that was also possibly inflected by rivalry, the author suggests). But more importantly, these objects and many more were essential to the spectacle of courtly life that portrayed the active role and authority of the queen within it.

In some cases, the authors conclude that Anne of France was honored as a powerful figure with a dignity equivalent to her husband's. Portraying the queen as a partner sharing the exalted status of the king as well as the honors and prerogatives of his office appears in coronation ceremonies and juridical texts concerning Anne of France's protégée Anne of Brittany.[6] In this volume, Gaude-Ferragu similarly shows that in the funeral ceremony for Anne of France's mother, Charlotte de Savoie, the effigy of the dowager queen displayed the same regalia as her husband Louis XI had at his death, suggesting that she incarnated his power and even monarchic sovereignty. In another vein, Josiane Teyssot in "'Reine' et princesse, Anne de France en Auvergne et Bourbonnais" presents a biographical overview of the couple Anne and Pierre, demonstrating how they were politically conjoined. On the one hand, Anne-Sophie Condette-Marcant in "Le dernier combat d'Anne de France: le statut juridique du

Bourbonnais" emphasizes how Anne used her authority to defend the rights of the Bourbons following her stint as regent for the crown. Clarisse Siméant,"'Joindre et unir' à la Couronne de France à la fin du Moyen Âge," on the other hand, elucidates the conflicts for once-sovereign principalities facing the expansion of royal power. Anne herself experienced the conundrum of keeping the duchy of Bourbonnais out of danger from royal covetousness while still asserting royal prerogatives for herself and her family.

Jean Guillaume in his "Anne de France à Gien: Le château d'une fille de roi" persuasively shows that architecture itself portrayed the joint dignity of the Bourbon couple and concludes that it is also a means of emphasizing Anne's elevated status. Based on a painstaking reconstruction of a much-altered building, he finds a striking, architecturally rare situation in the Bourbon château at Gien where there were two superimposed identical suites, one for each of the married couple, replete with twin galleries. The architectural configuration, especially notable since the gallery was historically a masculine space, indicates that there wasn't a sole "master" at Gien, Guillaume suggests, and instead proposes that the sister of the king and her spouse Pierre II de Bourbon were absolutely equal. Inasmuch as it resembled royal spousal configurations elsewhere, such as the symmetrical, superimposed suites (sans galleries) built in the late fourteenth century for Charles V and his Bourbon consort Joanna at the royal residence of the Louvre,[7] one could well conclude that the architecture styled Anne's position as a regent, and later royal adviser, as one embodying not only royal birth but royal authority. Vincent Droguet in "Rome-Moulins-Fontainebleau. À propos de la migration de quelques forms architecturales" intriguingly relates Anne's additions to the château at Moulins to the architecture of Innocent VIII's Villa Belvedere in the Vatican, and, post-Moulins, to Francis I's gallery at Fontainebleau, a space physically connected to the apartment of Louise de Savoie, a Bourbon who was the king's mother. This hypothesis implies not only influences flowing from papal Rome to France via the Bourbons, but also suggests a subtle appropriation of papal prerogatives that Francis I would later embrace more overtly through displaying the collection of antiquities he had copied from the papal collection at his château at Fontainebleau.[8]

Monique Chatenet, co-editor of this collection and the remarkable scholar who for decades has linked in illuminating ways the structures and ceremonies of early modern French court society to the built environment where court life takes place, here in her "Les enseignements d'Anne de France à sa fille Suzanne de Bourbon" opens up another window into the world of the daughter of a French king.[9] Rather than focusing on masculine prerogatives, which scholarship once maintained was the only valid form of authority and which queens often delicately suggested and inferred for themselves rather than proclaimed, Chatenet performs a nuanced reading of Anne's missive to her daughter. This text articulates the underlying rationale for the queen's actions: it recounts the attitudes, tools of behavior, and consciousness of rank and hierarchy that were the sine qua non for a queen such as herself and Anne of Brittany to be influential in their societies. Rather than promulgating the courtly humanism of Christine of Pisan or Castiglione, Chatenet contends, Anne underscored the rigorous Christianity that women of her lineage obeyed, with an eye to achieving the kind of glory and fame through virtuous behavior that triumph over death. The goal of queens and consorts was to practice virtue, achieve wisdom, and gain honor; and thus they were to exemplify the correct path through expressly feminine means. Ultimately this behavior lent them authority and even independence, and would aid them as women at the pinnacle of kingdoms, duchies, and principalities. This approach sheds a new light upon David-Chapy's evaluation of Anne as governing "en roi" with a "face féminine" via her diplomatic and peace-making skills (p. 33).

Even the miraculous has a place in this collection. Béatrice Chancel-Bardelot and Philippe Bardelot in "Les reliques de sainte Jeanne de France (1464-1505), fondatrice de l'Annonciade" investigate the spiritual history of the cult of Anne of France's sister, Jeanne, who founded the order of the Annonciade. Her possessions such as shoes, drawings she made, and little chests, which the authors trace, became the

miracle-working objects of her cult, all the more precious following the disappearance of her actual physical remains during the religious upheavals of the later sixteenth century.

I particularly admire the expertise of the specialists who contributed to this collection. Art historians scrutinize the art technically to be sure that it is original and to identify who the patrons actually were, allowing non-specialists to profit from the results so that they can weave together the disparate pieces of evidence for this period that have been dispersed to the four winds or destroyed. For example, scholars here reconstruct evidence of an altarpiece that was disassembled and of enameled gold work wrongly taken apart and re-assembled (Wolff), seek evidence from stained glass that was restored in the 19th century (Lorentz), identify relics of a sainted queen that were preserved but insufficiently documented (Chancel-Bardelot and Bardelot), and recreate an important château that had been rebuilt multiple times to understand its original function and symbolism (Guillaume). A conservator's detailed report of the restoration of the major altarpiece for Anne de France and her spouse, also published here by Béatrice Duclos-Damour, "Émotion maximale pour une intervention minimale," gives future historians a more accurate picture of the original.

There are a few desiderata, of course. Crépin-Leblond, Chancel-Bardelot, and Bardelot do a service by noting the recent literature on (respectively) Anne and her patronage and Jeanne de France, her younger sister, something that would have been useful for all of the women studied. While this collection cites much of the major recent literature on these figures in the individual essays, unfortunately there is no bibliography or index. And sometimes, as is common, the learned and particularized detective work, close observation, and search for documentation appear to overcome the larger question at hand that undergirded the colloquium, and the reader is required to delve into one fascinating phenomenon after the other, to think, and to draw the conclusions for him or herself about the possibilities of the queens' patronage as a political tool.

It is worth the effort, however. This collection of essays is a splendid resource for future scholarship.

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NOTES

[1] André Poulet, “Capetian Women and the Regency: The Genesis of a Vocation,” in John Carmi Parsons, ed., *Medieval Queenship* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993), pp. 108-109; Miriam Shadis, “Blanche of Castile and Facinger’s ‘Medieval Queenship’: Reassessing the Argument,” in Kathleen Nolan ed., *Capetian Women* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 137-62.

[2] Poulet, “Capetian Women and the Regency,” p. 112; Fanny Cosandey, *La reine de France: symbole et pouvoir, XVe-XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000); Craig Taylor, “The Salic Law, French Queenship, and the Defense of Women in the Late Middle Ages,” *French Historical Studies* 29.4 (2006): 543-64; Eliane Viennot, *La France, les femmes et le pouvoir: l’invention de la loi salique (Ve-XVIe siècle)* (Paris: Perrin, 2006).

[3] Theresa Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe: Queenship and Power* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 155-56; Louise Olga Fradenburg, ed. *Women and Sovereignty* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992).

[4] Theresa Earenfight, “Without the Persona of the Prince: Kings, Queens and the Idea of Monarchy in Late Medieval Europe,” *Gender & History* 19.1 (2007): 1-21; Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe.*

[5] Dagmar Eichberger, ed., *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York, Margaret of Austria* (Leuven/Davidsfonds: Brepols, 2005).

[6] Elizabeth McCartney, “Ceremonies and Privileges of Office: Queenship in Late Medieval France,” in Jennifer Carpenter and Sally-Beth MacLean, eds., *Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), pp. 178-219.

[7] Mary Whiteley, “Le Louvre de Charles V: dispositions et fonctions d’une résidence royale,” *Revue de l’art* 97 (1992): 60-71.

[8] Nicola Courtright, “The King’s Sculptures in the Queen’s Garden at Fontainebleau,” in David Levine and Jack Freiberg, eds., *Medieval Renaissance Baroque: A Cat’s Cradle for Marilyn Aronberg Lavin* (New York: Italica Press, 2010), pp. 129-48.

[9] Monique Chatenet, *La cour de France au XVIe siècle: vie sociale et architecture* (Paris: Picard, 2002).

Nicola Courtright
Amherst College
nmcourtright@amherst.edu

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