

H-France Review Vol. 19 (November 2019), No. 231

Jacques Santrot, *Les doubles funérailles d'Anne de Bretagne. Le corps et le cœur (janvier-mars 1514)*. Geneva: Librairie Droz (Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance N° DLXXII), 2017. 728 pp. 79 figures and indexes. \$74.40 U.S. (pb). ISBN: 978-2-600-04749-4. \$59.52 U.S. (eb) ISBN: 978-2-600-14749-1. \$89.28 (pb+eb) ISBN: 978-2-600-24749-8

Review by Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier, The American University of Paris

Queen Anne de Bretagne's gold and enamel cardioph, created in the week following her death, is the artistic kingpin of the Musée Dobrée in Nantes, where Jacques Santrot served as chief curator for thirty-five years. His prize-winning 725-page book, *Les doubles funérailles d'Anne de Bretagne. Le corps et le cœur (janvier-mars 1514)*, devoted to two separate funerals organized around the queen's body and heart, is the product of a long career led in close proximity to a rare extant exemplar of the early 16<sup>th</sup>-century French goldsmithery trade.[1] Anne remained sovereign duchess of Brittany during her two successive marriages to the French kings Charles VIII and Louis XII. Santrot's *Avant-Propos* (pp. 13-16) presents the "mystical relationship" of Bretons to this politically charged heart vessel produced in 1514 in Blois, then the royal seat of the French realm, while *Annexe 4* (pp.497-507) offers a detailed technical analysis of the present state of this unique piece. The main strength of Santrot's book lies in its dense, micro-historical framing of Nantes' precious object within the three-month-long groundbreaking pageantry that marked Anne's death, the most brilliant obsequies ever to honor a French queen (p. 278).

Part one is divided around Anne de Bretagne's two unequal funeral ceremonies, from which her close family was intentionally excluded to avoid being tainted by death (pp. 63-65). The first, more grandiose, began with her decease in Blois on January 9 and finished thirty-nine days later, after the passage of her embalmed cadaver and its effigy through the French capital of Paris and her inhumation at the royal site of Saint-Denis (pp. 21-190, map Fig. 13), where a banquet ended with the symbolic dissolution of her household on February 16. The second staged the transportation of her heart and its effigy down the Loire River to the Breton capital of Nantes where, on March 23, the cardioph was buried in a tomb commissioned by Anne seven years earlier for her parents in the Carmelite church (pp.191-276). The site highlighted female filiation, since her mother Marguerite de Foix had singled it out (p. 59, n. 147). If the second funeral denotes the symbolic conclusion of the Montfort dynasty (p. 279), the book provides ample proof that the Breton duchess, instead, expended much energy on the future empowerment of her female line.

Part two is again divided into two unequal parts, this time around the sources related to the royal or "national" (p. 441) funeral of Anne's body (pp. 283-406) and that of her heart (pp. 441-474).

Santrot begins by aligning thirty-eight known manuscripts (and five later copies) of Pierre Choque's crucial *Commemoracion et advertisement de la mort de ... Madame Anne...*, which he divides into three series and whose dedicatees he identifies, when possible, and presents in a supplemental "who's who" entitled *Le petit monde d'Anne de Bretagne* (*Annexe 5*, pp. 509-601, with biographies of the artists employed). He then considers the two extant exemplars of a chronologically subordinate text, *Le Trespas de l'Hermine regret[te]*, mentioning a third inventoried in the library of Marguerite d'Autriche. The latter included, his list contains seventeen dedications to men, twelve to women, one to a couple (the *comte et comtesse de Tonnerre*) and one bearing a double inscription to both Odet de Foix and his sister Françoise (later the mistress of King François I). His analysis of the ensemble considers the multiplicity of scribes and supposed illuminators, particularly the "Master of the Parisian Entries" and the superior Jean Pichore. He also transcribes documents in Paris (Florimond Robertet's "Estat des officiers qui ont accompagné le corps de la feue royne", pp. 391-403), but especially Nantes. The latter include a copy of the *Commemoracion* preserved in the *Bibliothèque municipale* (ms. 653, pp. 320-390 and 441-458)[2] and different fiscal accounts: that of the queen's *trésorier et receveur général des finances* Guillaume de Beaune, one of the sons of Anne's close ally Jacques de Beaune, Semblançay (pp. 404-440), the last ever to have belonged to the *Trésor des chartes des ducs de Bretagne*; a *mynu* (defined in the glossary, *Annexe 6*) related to municipal expenditures related to the heart burial (pp. 459-471); and a bill paid to Corneille de Gand (pp. 469-471) for having made 100 of the thousands of coats-of-arms that filled the streets and churches of the numerous processional sites. Additional annexes include statistics concerning expenditures related to the funeral of the body (*Annexe 1*) and that of the heart (*Annexe 2*), and a comparison of salaries and prices in Blois, Paris, and Nantes in 1514 (*Annexe 3*). Three distinct bibliographies, two extremely useful indexes, thirty-two figures, and thirty-five colored plates complete this elaborate whole, which a better copy editor could have further refined.

Multiple minor errors, such as the dates of Jean Marot (which should read v.1450-v.1526, p. 569) or a missing "r" in the oft-repeated Nantes "coll. Lajarriette," pepper the text. On a more important level, the index entry "Jeanne de France" confounds "Madame Jehanne de France," Louis XI's daughter the duchesse de Bourbon (†1482?), with the first wife of Louis XII (1464-1505). Marguerite d'Autriche was not the grandmother of François I (p. 307). Louis de Bourbon-Vendôme prince de La Roche-sur-Yon (p. 523) was never comte de Montpensier, although he married Louise de Bourbon-Montpensier in 1504 (not 1508), to whom the status of duchess only accrued in 1538, and since Louis died in 1520, as specified, he could not have fought with François I at Pavia in 1525. The "Très noble duc de Bourbon et d'Auvergne," to whom BnF ms. fr. 5096 is dedicated, is perforce the connétable de Bourbon (1490-1527) and not Charles de Bourbon (1489-1537), comte, then duc de Vendôme, but never duc de Bourbon et d'Auvergne.[3] Nonetheless, Santrot's fine mastery of Breton history allows him to weave lesser known regional facts into standard narratives of the realm, adding depth to our knowledge of the households of Anne de Bretagne and her daughter Claude de France.

The wealth of information provided in this volume enables conclusions that go above and beyond those of the author himself (pp. 277-280 and 310-320), who generically implicates "personnel of the queen's household rather than the crown" (p. 319). At the roots of this immensely expensive two-pronged performance was a tug-of-war between King Louis XII, bent on organizing the marriage of his daughter Claude de France to François d'Angoulême (which, according to the Venetian ambassador, concerned Brittany, p. 62), and the household of the deceased queen. Is it because Anne's shadow loomed so large ("cent ans et plus ne trespasa Royne de France avant

les Roys, ne qui fut sy grosse terrienne,” p. 122) that her testament is no longer extant (p. 196)? Although the queen was dead, it was nonetheless her *Chapelle* that sang at Notre-Dame de Paris (p. 139). It was her treasury that covered the bulk of expenditures, including payments for the arms of both Louis and Anne. Related imagery excises the arms of the king, though, just as Pierre Choque, Anne’s “roi d’armes et premier héraut,” acknowledges only those of the queen (p. 134). No princes of the blood and no officers of the crown accompanied her heart (p. 225), which was carried to Nantes by her aging chancellor Philippe de Montauban. This “Breton fidèle entre tous” (p. 225, 573-574) and three of her heralds (Choque included) presided over its inhumation, while the Carmelite doctor who pronounced the sermon insisted that her lineage was as prestigious as that of the king of France (p. 242). If the royally produced heart vessel attributed to Pierre Mangot and Geoffroy Jacquet bears a single crown (Pl. XX-XXII, XXV, XXVII, XXIX), it appears a number of times in the *Commemoracion* copies with not one but two. Anne’s coats-of-arms in Nantes, like those of the effigy placed under the most spectacular of several *chapelles ardentes*, that of the Carmes (Pl. XXX), were always topped with the double crown of the queen, insisting on her ducal sovereignty (p. 226-228, 240) and defining her as “plus bretonne que française” (p. 250). At stake was the future status of her eldest daughter Claude, the dedicatee of Choque’s most important manuscript (BnF ms. fr. 25158), which names her “fille de roy, de royne et de duchesse” (p. 286, 311-312), but also of her second daughter Renée, a pair referred to in the *Trespas* as “mes deux dames ses filles,” p. 61; my emphasis).

Missing from Santrot’s illustrations, surprisingly, is the sole dedication scene of this vast series of manuscripts (fol. 3v of Claude’s copy), the interpretation of which is crucial to an understanding of the funereal project as a whole. Choque (“Bretaigne”) had himself depicted offering his text to his future mistress (p. 536) Claude, not this image’s tiny figure in courtly dress (p. 286-287) but rather its most commanding figure, in mourning, placed under an empowering canopy and shown reaching out to accept his large black volume.[4] The lady in mourning to her right could well be Queen Anne’s cousin and first lady-of-honor, Jacqueline d’Astarac, dame de Mailly. D’Astarac’s husband produced the miraculous celestial sign (*signe de Suse*, Pl. IV, p. 25-28, 350-351, 566-567) credited with announcing the death of Anne, and she kept vigil over the queen’s catafalque and preceded the queen’s ladies and maidens during the funeral rites. The tiny figure in elegant garb to Claude’s left is most plausibly her four-year-old sister Renée. The figure that the little princess recommends to her left would then be Anne’s lady-in-waiting Michelle de Saubonne, dame de Soubise (p. 592), the queen’s close long-standing advisor to whom Anne, on her deathbed, confided Renée, and who in turn recommends her little charge.[5] Saubonne is at the center of a cluster formed by Choque and two fellow heralds, their *cottes* testifying to their allegiance to the queen/duchess, four additional ladies-in-waiting, and perhaps two of the humanists who contributed poetry to this grand ceremonial campaign (possibly André de la Vigne and Germain de Brie, p. 219-220). Claude’s dedication page thus opens a window onto a team of ladies of rank, heralds, and authors who faithfully continued to promote not only their own interests but also those of the queen and her heiresses beyond the tomb.

The profusion of information amassed by Jacques Santrot makes it possible to add nuances to his characterization of Anne as religiously “dévoté” and “respectueuse des préceptes de l’Eglise de Rome quand surgissent les prémices de la Réforme,” too (p. 16). The general tenor of the spectacular religious performances in and between Blois, Paris, Saint-Denis, and Nantes (costly masses and bell-tolling, incessant prayers and superabundant alms) does continue to reflect a “religion of fear” mustered to free Anne’s soul from purgatory (pp. 170-172). Yet, after the cost

of lodging the 1500 participants of the first funeral ceremony, the greatest expense covered by the queen's household was the production of a *débauche de lumière* (pp. 113-119), a spectacular symbolic show of light (36.5% of the recorded disbursements, p. 185-186). One of the heart epitaphs transcribed by Choque contends that Anne's body was buried in France to serve as the realm's banner and light (p. 450), which can be linked to signs of her late-in-life interest in early religious reform. Germain de Brie, her secretary from 1512, was close to Jean Lascaris and had frequented Erasmus in Venice (p. 528). The ecclesiastic who presided over the religious rites at Notre-Dame-des-Champs, just prior to the transferral of Anne's body to Notre-Dame de Paris, was none other than Guillaume Briçonnet, the renowned reforming bishop of Lodève and abbot of Saint-Germain-des-Près. Briçonnet's early career was tightly linked to Anne: he became president of her *Chambre des comptes* in 1495, her almoner in 1496, then her first almoner in 1513 (p. 527). The author of her funeral oration was his ally Guillaume Petit (Parvy), instrumental in the attempt to link Erasmus to the nascent royal college four years after her death (p. 581). The prelate in closest proximity to Anne's body during the processions, he who received her catafalque (Pl. XIII) and performed the services in the capital and at Saint-Denis, was Philippe de Luxembourg, the early reforming bishop/cardinal du Mans.[6] In Jean Pichore's impressive final image of the Petit Palais *Trespas* (Pl. XIX), the cardinal dons the richest cope ever donated to the royal abbey (p. 172-176), a gift from Anne bearing her ermine (and devices), as he inhumes her body and her Breton officers transmit her crown to her heralds. The same team would be reconvened in 1517 for the coronation ceremonies of their new mistress or ally Claude de France, to whom her mother's devices, and her mother's uphill battles, accrued.

Jacques Santrot's book provides a mine of data for scholars in search of the broad historical picture, shedding light on many of the mechanisms Anne de Bretagne set in place to bequeath to her daughters not only a household, but also religious and cultural advisors who could help them hold their own against overwhelming odds. In the months following their mother's death, their own father, whose first loves were "la reyne Anne, et ceste belle duché" (Brantôme, cited p. 15, n. 5), enacted Claude's marriage to François d'Angoulême and had her relinquish her rights over Brittany to her spouse. Then, in a highly symbolic move, he transferred the hearts of their Breton grandparents to the Orléans chapel at the Célestins in Paris (p. 195). Another mighty blow was dealt to Anne's heiresses in 1515, the year Claude and François rose to the throne, when the new king and his mother Louise de Savoie disgraced Claude and Renée's brilliant political consultant Michelle de Saubonne (p. 592). The regal performance around Anne's cadaver far outweighed the ducal performance surrounding her heart. Anne's female and male household's strategic defense of her heiresses was hence doomed to defeat, despite their masterful communication campaign which this book helps reframe.

## NOTES

[1] In 2018 the book was awarded the *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres de l'Institut de France Prix des Antiquités de la France*.

[2] For a parallel publication, with another presentation of *Commemoracion* and *Trespas* texts, further transcriptions, including epitaphs, and short biographies, see Elizabeth A.R. Brown, Cynthia J. Brown, Jean-Luc Deuffic, with an introduction by Michael Jones, « *Qu'il mecte ma povre ame en celeste lumiere* » *Les funérailles d'une reine Anne de Bretagne (1514)*. Pecia, le livre et l'écrit, vol. 15, 2012 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).

---

[3] Deuffic (*ibid.*, p. 127) shares this misidentification (pp. 287-288 and 520-521).

[4] Most recently discussed and reproduced by Jean-Luc Deuffic, "La transmission à la postérité : textes, images et manuscrits," in Laure Barthes ed., *Le Cœur d'Anne de Bretagne*. Exh. Cat., château de Châteaubriant (Milan: SilvanaEditoriale, 2014), pp. 20-29. Deuffic, unlike the present reviewer, considers Louis XII to be the probable patron of Choque's text.

[5] Pauline Matarasso, "Seen Through a Squint: The Letters of Jacques de Beaune to Michelle de Saubonne, June to September 1505," *Renaissance Studies* 11/4 (December 1997): 343-357.

[6] Jean-Marie Le Gall, *Les moines au temps des réformes: France, 1480-1560* (Seysse: Champ Vallon, 2001), pp. 101-102.

Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier  
The American University of Paris  
[kchevalier@aup.edu](mailto:kchevalier@aup.edu)

Copyright © 2019 by the Society for French Historical Studies, all rights reserved. The Society for French Historical Studies permits the electronic distribution of individual reviews for nonprofit educational purposes, provided that full and accurate credit is given to the author, the date of publication, and the location of the review on the H-France website. The Society for French Historical Studies reserves the right to withdraw the license for redistribution/republication of individual reviews at any time and for any specific case. Neither bulk redistribution/republication in electronic form of more than five percent of the contents of H-France Review nor re-publication of any amount in print form will be permitted without permission. For any other proposed uses, contact the Editor-in-Chief of H-France. The views posted on H-France Review are not necessarily the views of the Society for French Historical Studies.

ISSN 1553-9172