

DYNASTIC DIVISIONS

THE LATER FIFTEENTH century saw the Montfort dynasty confronting its own succession troubles. They had run out of male heirs and the potential claim of Jeanne and Charles's descendants was enshrined in the treaties of Guérande. Tensions were exacerbated by renewed conflict with France under the regency of Anne de Beaujeu. The eventual resolution came with the advent of Duchess Anne (r. 1488–1514), who was also twice queen of France thanks to her marriages to Charles VIII (r. 1483–1498) in 1491 and to Louis XII (r. 1498–1515) in 1499. Despite rocky beginnings, Anne's rule came to mark a period of political and cultural productivity for the duchy even as it slowly shifted course towards unification with the kingdom (1532).¹ In the face of internal uncertainty alongside external threats (or opportunities, depending on one's point of view), the official ducal histories of this period consolidated patriotic sentiment and exalted the duchess's lineage. In so doing, they drew on the earlier chivalric chronicles as well as a regional tradition of history-writing within the inner Montfortist circles, offering a re-evaluation of the civil war from the other side, so to speak.

It is in this phase of reputational development that we might expect elements of a so-called "black legend" to develop around the Penthièvre leaders. Women rulers were perennially at risk of slander that sought to undermine their authority by portraying them as inadequately performing their feminine roles, attempting to undeservedly perform a masculine role, or both. While specific examples will be cited below, it is telling that all but two of the chapters in the most recent volume on queenly reputations focus on the negative portrayal of their subjects.² In the case of male rulers, as we have seen, it was more likely for blame to be deflected to those around them, but they too could be attacked for failing as men or abusing their power. The Montfortist historiography, however, engaged only superficially with such motifs, and it is worth examining why their impact remained limited on the winning side of the war. I consider in turn

1 Brown, *Cultural and Political Legacy*.

2 Rohr and Benz, *Queenship, Gender, and Reputation*; cf. Graham-Goering, "Authority," 100–101.

the negative tropes that were retained or developed here, as well as those that could have appeared but did not. There were even positive portrayals of both Jeanne and Charles in these accounts, which attest the ongoing weighing of reputational alternatives.

Although much of this material was drawn from previous narratives, the gendering of Jeanne's and Charles's leadership responded to new political demands and the reconceptualization of ducal authority. Understanding the civil war through the lens of aristocratic partnership helped these authors overcome the contradictions in their stance on female succession. At the same time, Jeanne's and Charles's relational reputations became more independent of each other than in previous phases, reflecting the plasticity of the familial and lineal identities that lay at the heart of aristocratic legitimacy. Treating them separately helped communicate the "correct" interpretation of Breton history within a dynastic framework, of the sort that increasingly characterizes the study of early modern polities in particular.³ Nevertheless, approving or condemning one half of a ruling couple did not undermine the sharing of power itself, which points towards the conceptual resilience of the practice of co-rule.

Reputation in Ducal Historiography

The two writers at the centre of this chapter are Pierre Le Baud (1458–1505) and Alain Bouchart (d. by 1531).⁴ Both came from noble families in western Brittany and played a role in the ducal administration, especially under Duchess Anne, although Le Baud was a churchman by training and Bouchart a lawyer. Their careers shaped their history-writing in two similar ways. First, they both took what we might call a technical approach to their narratives of the civil war, engaging with more of the legal details surrounding the original succession dispute and its various settlements, as well as the genealogies of the people involved. When using older accounts, they were critical of the material they repeated or adapted, evaluating its reliability, comparing different versions, and correcting errors.⁵ Second, putting the record straight (as they saw it) served the interests not only of

3 Backerra, "Personal Union"; Brero et al., "Dynasties and Dynastic Rule," 43–44; Watts, "Lordship and the State," 24–25.

4 The editions of their works used here are Le Baud, *Compilation* (hereafter LBC); Le Baud, "*Genealogie*" (hereafter LBG); Le Baud, *Histoire* (hereafter LBH); Bouchart, *Grandes croniques* (hereafter GCB).

5 Cassard, "Historien au travail."

their successive patrons, but their own in the fate of the Montfortist duchy. Anne's succession was a politically delicate moment, not entirely unlike that of Duchess Jeanne's some hundred and forty years earlier. Le Baud and Bouchart responded to these tensions with a dynastically oriented attempt to put Brittany and its dukes on a solid historical footing in relation to their powerful French neighbour.

Pierre Le Baud was the more prolific, though at the same time less publicly successful, of the two authors. His successive employers determined the shape of his historiographical output. He first secured the patronage of the powerful Laval and Derval families, to whom he was related on his mother's side. As secretary to Jean de Derval, Le Baud was commissioned to write a "Compilation of the chronicles and histories of the Bretons," probably around 1470–1473.⁶ One of the nine great barons of Brittany, Jean was also a prolific book collector, and Le Baud likely had access to his extensive library. As suggested by its name, the *Compillation* synthesized other texts such as Froissart, whose popularity boomed in this period, and the *Grandes chroniques de France*.⁷ Jean de Derval had copies of both these works, though the inclusion of certain anecdotes suggests that Le Baud may have consulted several versions of Froissart.⁸ He also used classical authorities such as Lucan to place the destiny of the Breton people on par with the supposed great civilizations.⁹ This first version of his work survives, however, in only two manuscripts, suggesting a limited audience beyond its original patron.

Le Baud then became almoner to Francois II's wife, Marguerite de Foix, for whom he composed a brief genealogy of the kings and dukes of Brittany just before her death in 1486. This work served as both an overview of ducal history for Marguerite (who came from what is now southern France, though she had by then lived in Brittany for fifteen years) and, above all, to defend women's succession to the duchy in light of the probable claim of Marguerite's daughter Anne.¹⁰ The need to reconcile female inheritance with the legitimacy of the Montfort line posed a real problem for the late Montfortist historians, as I will discuss further, and this short piece had slightly more uptake than the voluminous *Compillation*, with four extant manuscripts,

⁶ Le Baud, *Compillation*, ed. Abélard, 10.

⁷ Tesnière, "Manuscrits copiés par Raoul Tainguy," 302.

⁸ Le Baud, *Compillation*, ed. Abélard, 13.

⁹ Le Baud, *Compillation*, ed. Abélard, 16 (cf. 395), 22.

¹⁰ Le Baud, "Genealogie," ed. Kerhervé, 519.

two of them apparently practical working copies.¹¹ Finally, Le Baud became priest and councillor to Duchess Anne herself, for whom he reworked his *Compillation* into a more streamlined “Book of the chronicles of the kings, dukes, and royal princes of Armorican Brittany.”¹² Completed in 1505 and surviving in only one manuscript, this work was later edited and published under the name of *Histoire de Bretagne*, by which it is usually known today.

Although Le Baud’s output did not receive wide recognition at the time, it strongly influenced the much more successful account of his near contemporary Alain Bouchart, who enabled the Breton historiographical tradition to make the leap from manuscript to print. Bouchart was a notary and jurist who, as Duke François II’s secretary, helped publish for the first time an edition of the fourteenth-century Breton customary laws (*Tres ancienne coutume de Bretagne*).¹³ Although he, unlike Le Baud, originally opposed Duchess Anne’s marriage to King Charles VIII, he changed his mind and quickly entered the upper echelons of royal service, spending the rest of his career in Paris. Anne’s patronage allowed him to show the full potential of a national history of Brittany by giving the principality its own *Grandes croniques* analogous to those of France. The first, printed edition of 1514 survives in fourteen copies, and the first half of the sixteenth century saw four more editions (some extended by later anonymous authors), attesting the popularity of this narrative.¹⁴

The political context in which they wrote and the close relationship between their texts makes it possible to study Le Baud and Bouchart together as a pivotal stage in the historical narration of the Breton war of succession across the centuries. Looking forward, these two works essentially set the pattern for historians of Brittany up until the Revolution. First came Le Baud’s great-nephew Bertrand d’Argentré (1519–1590), who likewise trained as a jurist and inherited Le Baud’s materials. He was followed by the Benedictine historians of the Maurist school, who engaged in a number of sweeping projects covering different aspects of French and regional history.¹⁵ Looking back, they built not only on the *Grandes chroniques de*

11 Le Baud, “*Genealogie*,” ed. Kerhervé, 522–24.

12 “Armorican” Brittany refers to the Breton peninsula, as opposed to the island of Great Britain.

13 Jones, “Bouchart, Alain.”

14 Bouchart, *Grandes croniques*, ed. Auger et al., 1:7, 11.

15 Argentré, *Histoire de Bretagne*; Lobineau, *Histoire de Bretagne*; Morice and Taillandier, *Histoire ecclésiastique et civile*.

France (which Le Baud preferred to refer to as the “book of deeds” of individual French kings), Froissart, and Cuvelier (either his original poem or the Prose Guesclin A), but also on the distinctive contributions of previous history-writers in the employ of the Montfort dukes. From the reign of Jean IV on, these writers were a mix of clerics and laymen, but they all held administrative positions in the ducal government that inspired their historical endeavours and gave them access to the records they needed to write them.¹⁶ Naturally, these authors interested themselves in the Breton civil war. First, Guillaume de Saint-André wrote a moralizing poem in praise of his employer Jean IV after the duke’s return to power in 1381. Completed by 1385 and surviving in four medieval manuscripts, this work used the duke’s trials and tribulations to illustrate the vagaries of Fortune, though the later Montfortist writers appear to have been less interested in the poem’s didactic aspect than in its content.¹⁷ Next, the *Chronicon Briocense* or chronicle of Saint-Brieuc (so called for an invocation to that saint at the head of the manuscripts) was completed by 1416, in the reign of Jean V (r. 1399–1442). Its author was probably another of Jean IV’s administrators, Hervé Le Grant, a ducal secretary and archivist who may have begun his work in the late years of that reign.¹⁸ His was the first attempt to set Brittany into the wider course of world history, but his relatively dry, year-by-year account of events in Latin contrasts strikingly with the vivid, emotional rhymes of his colleague Saint-André. Although the *Chronicon* was again limited in popularity, with two surviving manuscripts of middling quality, Le Baud’s notes copied many passages.¹⁹ It was then under Duke François II that a concise, general history of the duchy was attempted in French, this time by his chamberlain Jean de Saint-Paul (ca. 1470), but this work now exists only in later fragments. The surviving portions concerning the war, from the 1350s onwards, largely followed Saint-André and Cuvelier.²⁰

The memory of the Breton civil war within the more-or-less official ducal historiography thus occurred in three phases. Initially, writers personally acquainted with the triumphant Jean IV developed strongly parti-

16 Kerhervé, “Aux origines d’un sentiment national.”

17 Saint-André, *Chronique*, ed. Cauneau and Philippe, 149.

18 Jones, *Le premier inventaire*, 69–86.

19 [Le Grant?], *Chronicon Briocense*, ed. Le Duc and Sterckx, 8. Since the part discussing the Breton civil war has only been edited as excerpts (Morice, ed., *Mémoires*, 1:42–57), I will instead cite from the text of the oldest manuscript, Paris, BnF, MS latin 6003.

20 Saint-Paul, *Chronique*, 3–47.

san works recounting the Montfortist version of events. Then, during the uncertainties of François II's rule and the precarious independence of the duchy under Anne, a revived interest in the arc of Breton history produced new syntheses that responded to present concerns while taking a more detached view of the civil war period. Finally, long after the duchy had been incorporated into the French domain, historians picked up on these later accounts to consolidate a narrative largely accepted until the later nineteenth century. Taking *Le Baud* and *Bouchart* as the culmination of the medieval narrative tradition and the jump-start of the early modern one is important for assessing their version of Jeanne's and Charles's joint reputations in three interconnected ways.

First, in comparison with the earlier authors, *Le Baud* and *Bouchart* were perhaps surprisingly balanced in their treatment of the civil war. These were partisan texts, rather than propagandic like those of *Saint-André* and *Le Grant*.²¹ That is, they did not conceal all the messiness of the war as the foundations of the current dynasty even though they ultimately promoted its legitimacy. *Le Baud* even explicitly chose to follow *Froissart's* account because of its neutrality and attention to detail, and avoided using the ducal title on either side to forestall charges of favouritism.²² Second, writing about these events from a distance of a century and a half, *Le Baud* and *Bouchart* generally relied on established accounts and on documentary evidence. Their originality therefore lay less in adding new material (though there are a few noteworthy exceptions), but in what they chose to retain or omit from previous authors and how they framed its significance. Third, for *Le Baud* and *Bouchart*, the civil war was only one part of the long sweep of Breton history, and from the Montfortist perspective Jeanne and Charles had never been the protagonists. Faced with evolving political concerns over the period of their writings, they did not make a concerted attempt to establish a single, definite picture of the Penthievre duke and duchess. Instead, they dealt piecemeal with the different, even contradictory, legacies of their roles. Even as reputation moved from an ongoing dialogue to the authority (however complicated) of written tradition, then, it could always be contested. Nevertheless, a range of themes emerged, or were expanded upon, that spoke to the impact of gendered expectations and aristocratic partnership on reactions to the Breton civil war at the end of the independent duchy.

21 LBC, 14.

22 LBC, 315, 402.

An Unstable Partnership?

One way to criticize a ruler was to describe them with physical defects that supposedly reflected a wider moral failing. Although the idea that outward flaws reflected interior ones was by no means universally accepted in the Middle Ages, the potential link between disfigurement and sin could always be politically deployed.²³ In the case of kings, the metaphorical (or indeed, theological) link between the condition of their physical body and that of their realm meant that disability could be leveraged to their discredit.²⁴ While later medieval rulers were not generally disqualified purely on the basis of physical impairment, they remained unable to live up to the idealized princely body.²⁵ Ruling women were especially vulnerable to this type of attack, since in addition it also implied they fell short of specifically feminized body standards. A beautiful appearance was often considered a reflection of inner worth, making it an expected attribute of the nobility, and of women in particular.²⁶ But just as good queens were often represented as ideal beauties, so too could bad queens become ugly, deformed, even monstrous.²⁷

These negative characterizations frequently developed long afterwards, and Jeanne's case is no exception. The chivalric chronicle tradition had sporadically mentioned Jeanne's feminine virtues. The few times she was described, Jeanne possessed the conventional assets of a lady, being called "a beautiful young girl" at her marriage in Froissart, while Cuvelier's Bertrand du Guesclin praised her goodness.²⁸ It was Bouchart who instead introduced the idea that Jeanne was lame (*boeteuse*), and even turned it into an epithet, Jeanne la Boiteuse.²⁹ Despite this late invention, it was taken as fact in the sixteenth century and persisted at least through the nineteenth.³⁰ Bouchart did not explain or comment further on the descrip-

23 Metzler, *Disability*, 46–47, 49, 51–54, 163.

24 Le Goff, "Mal royal," 106.

25 Lecuppre, "Déficiência du corps."

26 Wilkinson, "Gendered Chivalry," 235.

27 E.g., Gibbons, "Isabeau of Bavaria," 55–56, 64–65; Huneycutt, "Creation of a Crone," 35; Turner, "Eleanor of Aquitaine," 20; Woodacre, "Leonor of Navarre," 168; Alliot, "*Male royne boiteuse*," 121; Green, "A Woman Given to Slippery Ways?," 317; Lewis, "Katherine of Valois," 126.

28 Rome, 462; *Chanson*, l. 1884.

29 GCB, 2:26, 33.

30 Graham-Goering, *Princely Power*, 36n1.

tion. Ironically, his patron Anne was lame herself; possibly, assigning this same characteristic to her predecessor was meant to redirect attention elsewhere, while restraining Bouchart's over-emphasis of this trait.

In itself, however, describing Jeanne as lame implied several things. Such lopsidedness could be associated with the Devil, and so signify an authority out of balance.³¹ The most obvious referent here was Jeanne's legitimacy as duchess, which Bouchart thought was not legally grounded.³² Her lameness visibly signalled the inadequate foundations of her title. For ruling women, there were also gendered considerations to lameness.³³ Jeanne's ability to physically carry out her duties as duchess were not hindered as a man's might have been since she was not expected to perform feats of arms.³⁴ However, a queen's crookedness could destabilize the "royal equilibrium" in two ways: either by exercising too much authority and so blurring the boundaries between queen and king, or by failing to adequately support her husband and guide him towards just rule.³⁵ In Jeanne's case, both might have applied, as she at once dominated Charles and corrupted his authority. Thus, either on her own or as part of a partnership, Jeanne's lameness subtly flagged her up as a misfit for her role.

The sudden introduction of this stereotypical critique in the late Montfortist tradition contrasts with an unexpectedly receptive attitude towards Charles's ongoing legacy as a virtuous prince or even a saint. Jean de Saint-Paul knew the Prose Guesclin B and paraphrased its eulogy for Charles by noting his chivalric glory (*honneur*) in seventeen (sic, a slight misreading of the original) of his eighteen battles.³⁶ While Le Baud's *Compillation* avoided such praise, his *Histoire* repeatedly commended Charles's knightly virtue.³⁷ Charles fought valiantly and vigorously at both La Roche-Derrien and Auray. He had been chosen as Jeanne's husband and champion by the Estates of Brittany (referring to a regional assembly of churchmen, nobility, and towns, which had not in fact existed before 1352), because even at

31 Ueltschi, *Pied qui cloche*, 192, 239, 244.

32 GCB, 2:43.

33 Cf. Ueltschi, *Pied qui cloche*, 278.

34 Jeanne's own succession case had cited lameness as a failing particularly for *male* heirs: Graham-Goering et al., *Aux origines de la guerre*, doc. 2, no. 87.

35 Bagerius and Ekholst, "For Better or for Worse," 640; Allriot, "*Male royne boiteuse*," 132; Parsons, "Queen's Intercession," 147; Jones, "Marguerite de Clisson," 349.

36 Saint-Paul, *Chronique*, 21.

37 LBH, 267, 304, 327, 329.

a young age he was a “prudent, wise, and virtuous prince.” And after his death, Jean IV had him reverently and honourably buried “because he had been a good and worthy prince.” Bouchart expanded this posthumous tribute, mentioning Charles’s loyalty and that “his body was sanctified by the grace of God and they call him Saint Charles; and Pope Urban V approved and canonized him because he performed and still performs miracles every day.”³⁸ Their acceptance of Charles’s good character and even sanctity certainly reflected the decreased political threat it posed to the current ducal dynasty. However, it also opened space to play Charles and Jeanne off each other as good spouse/bad spouse, as Le Baud and Bouchart reopened the question of why the civil war failed to resolve sooner and more peaceably. By reusing and elaborating different aspects of the offshoot of the chivalric tradition discussed in Chapter 2, they created new readings of the lopsided responsibility for violence.

Back in the fourteenth century, Guillaume de Saint-André had been happy to make Charles entirely responsible for the diplomatic breakdown. For Charles, peacemaking was only a feint, not a commitment.³⁹ He did not care “a pennyworth” (*maillee*) for the peace accords proposed at Saint-Omer in 1361, and refused to match Jean IV’s show of goodwill negotiation at the Landes d’Évran in 1363.⁴⁰ Worse still, when Jean gave Charles another chance to fulfill these broken promises before Auray, Charles remained hard-hearted, unwilling to settle for less than the whole of Brittany even though it belonged rightfully to Jean.⁴¹ Meanwhile, Saint-André minimized Jeanne’s authority, mentioning her only twice in the whole poem.⁴² After all, since he was writing within a decade of Charles’s near-canonization and before the release of Jeanne’s son Jean from captivity, Charles’s reputation likely seemed the greater threat to Montfort legitimacy, though this version still appealed much later to Jean de Saint-Paul.⁴³

Charles’s diplomatic duplicity fed into a sustained attack on his war-time conduct in this work. As part of his moralizing aims, Saint-André played up the contrasts between Jean IV and Charles according to mascu-

38 GCB, 2:92.

39 Saint-André, *Chronique*, ll. 665–69.

40 Saint-André, *Chronique*, ll. 551–52, 891–980.

41 Saint-André, *Chronique*, ll. 1174–77.

42 Saint-André, *Chronique*, ll. 604, 1505.

43 Saint-Paul, *Chronique*, 16–17.

linized standards of justice, piety, and chivalry. He reiterated Jean's pursuit of a righteous, divinely sanctioned war while stressing that Charles had no lawful claim to the ducal title.⁴⁴ This false authority undermined Charles not only as a prince but as a knight, fighting under an insignia to which he was not entitled.⁴⁵ Indeed, Charles's behaviour was hardly chivalrous either on or off the battlefield. A trucebreaker, he revealed an inappropriate bloodthirstiness by swearing to kill not only Jean, but anyone captured alive at Auray, a breach of the usual (if complicated) norms of war and an echo of the cruelty that had challenged witnesses at the canonization.⁴⁶ It was Jean rather than Charles who called for the battle to be postponed to respect the feast day of Saint Michael, as the Church asked of knights, but the offer was rejected.⁴⁷ At several encounters, Charles's knights were willing to fight only with superior numbers or not even then, a cowardice that reflected badly on Charles's leadership.⁴⁸ And where Jean responded gently to insults, Charles was bitter with vengeance and scorned courtesy.⁴⁹ The humility and courtliness that had formerly contributed to Charles's positive reputation were here reassigned. Worse even was the fact that Charles was an oath-breaker. Whereas Jean took his pledges as seriously as the Mass, Charles took no care of his own, and his faithlessness was a recurring theme.⁵⁰ This perfidy violated the "trueness" at the heart of the construction of knightly manhood.⁵¹ In this light, Charles's failure to bring about peace was a masculine rather than a feminine problem.

Subsequent Montfortist writers, however, increasingly brought Jeanne into the picture. The *Chronicon Briocense*, which also repeated the tale of Charles's brutality at Quimper from the anonymous *Chronicon Britannicum*, portrayed him as unwilling to fulfill his promises from Évran, a lapse that led more or less directly to his death at Auray.⁵² This fate, Le Grant noted, "was nothing to wonder at since Charles went against his oaths

44 Saint-André, *Chronique*, ll. 446, 1246–54, 1290–94, 1301; 505, 509–16, 799.

45 Saint-André, *Chronique*, ll. 1271–74.

46 Saint-André, *Chronique*, ll. 833–34, 1193–200; Ambühl, *Prisoners of War*, chap. 1.

47 Saint-André, *Chronique*, ll. 1201–30.

48 Saint-André, *Chronique*, ll. 657, 692–700, 790–95, 887–90.

49 Saint-André, *Chronique*, ll. 459, 464, 831–32, 1015–17.

50 Saint-André, *Chronique*, ll. 655, 744, 834–35, 1189–92.

51 McVitty, "False Knights," 459–60.

52 BnF, MS lat. 6003, fol. 102v.

made upon the body of the Lord and the holy Gospels of God.”⁵³ However, he added, rumour had it that this lamentable volte-face was provoked by his wife and his other counsellors.⁵⁴ By suggesting that Charles was being led rather than leading, the question of fault became more ambiguous.

Le Baud intensified Jeanne’s responsibility, saying she disrupted the peace talks not only at the Landes d’Évran, but also on two occasions prior to Auray. At each point, his two versions nuanced the exact dynamics implied. At Évran, the *Compillation* claimed it was “milady the wife of milord Charles” herself who broke the treaty, because she did not wish to cede Nantes or the other towns specified therein.⁵⁵ Charles accommodated her because he depended on her for his right to the duchy. The agency given to Jeanne in light of her inheritance here showcased the dangers of female succession. Le Baud’s *Histoire* instead took a step back and again identified Jeanne (here referred to as the countess of Penthievre and Lord Charles’s wife) as foremost among the counsellors who instigated his contravention of the accords.⁵⁶ At the same time, Le Baud escalated Charles’s desire to merely please (*complaire*) his wife, which now became a more thorough obedience or submission (*obtemperer*). Charles’s subordination undercut his ability to demonstrate a manly control. Yet, Le Baud now conceded, it was out of character for Charles to break his word, “for he is attested to have been a good prince, true and loyal.” By redeeming Charles’s trueness and showing Jeanne as the one acting out of place, the abortive peace became once more a failure of femininity, but also downplayed Jeanne’s status as heiress.

The dealings before Auray likewise developed Jeanne’s culpability to differing degrees. The *Compillation* reported that Charles notified his wife of the eleventh-hour compromise directly, in recognition that the ducal title lay with her.⁵⁷ She refused it, and persuaded him to do likewise, giving her a lead role but ultimately making them jointly responsible. The *Histoire* attributed Jeanne’s refusal to her strong mettle, and Charles simply reported her decision back to the count of Montfort.⁵⁸ In the lead-up to these events,

53 BnF, MS lat. 6003, fol. 103r, “Nec est mirandum ex hoc quia idem Karolus contra juramentum suum supra corpus domini et sancta dei evangelia per ipsum factum et prestitum.”

54 “Uxore sua et aliis suis consiliariis ut dicebatur instigantibus.”

55 LBC, 384.

56 LBH, 321.

57 LBC, 388.

58 LBH, 324.

Le Baud reported Charles's leave-taking from Jeanne, including her speech extracting his promise to give away no part of the duchy.⁵⁹ His earlier version matched Froissart's nearly word-for word. In the second, Jeanne no longer called upon God to witness her rightful title, only the Breton barons in attendance, slightly tempering her claim. Much more importantly, Le Baud added that Charles "was most gentle and courteous" and would have gladly agreed to peace, if he had not been so urged (*sollicité*) by his wife and knights. The cumulative effect of these scenes was ambivalent, as the straightforward reporting of Jeanne's justifications could even verge upon the positive. Yet her high-handedness and rigidity were increasingly problematized, while Charles's primary fault was reduced to an inability to resist his wife.

The story finally presented by Bouchart did away with these nuances. Having efficiently skipped straight over the Landes d'Évran, he made Jeanne solely responsible for brow-beating Charles before Auray.⁶⁰ This time, Jeanne having said her piece, Charles departed for battle, whereupon his knights and squires took pains to console him. In addition to being gentle and courteous, Charles was now described as being *humain*—kindly, benevolent, or compassionate. Unfortunately, Bouchart concluded, "he was so put upon by his wife" that he could not go back, "because of which great harm befell him thereafter." The knights had shifted to Charles's side, leaving Jeanne alone to ruin her husband. Jeanne's aggressive domineering, whose possible sexual connotations (cf. Chapter 2) may have become even clearer with the knights out of the picture, almost physically reversed the expected gender of command.

These reinterpretations provide a rich opportunity to understand how the circulation of information interacted with the choices of individual chroniclers. Transmitting reputation across a patchwork of textual authorities was an iterative process. As I showed in Chapter 2, Jeanne's failure as a peacemaker initially evolved circuitously across different branches of the Froissart and Cuvelier narratives. Since Saint-André wrote around the same time as Cuvelier, Jeanne's role in rejecting compromise had scarcely entered the discourse, and he consistently condemned Charles. By Le Grant's time, Cuvelier's version of events must have become known from either his poem or the Prose Guesclin A, although Le Grant simplified the chronology by conflating the Auray and Évran negations, and made Jeanne the ringleader of the ill-advisors, rather than the more indirect association in Cuvelier. The

59 LBC, 386–87; LBH, 323–24.

60 GCB, 2:84.

options expanded in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Le Baud followed Le Grant's positioning of this episode, but evidently also encountered multiple copies of both the Guesclin and Froissart stories. His *Compilation* used Froissart's original version of the leave-taking scene, but he later switched to one of the variant manuscripts blaming Jeanne. This change may reflect access to new material following Anne's elevation to queen of France. Bouchart probably saw that manuscript too, since he reverted to the original vocabulary which Le Baud had modified. More surprisingly, in addition to the standard version of Cuvelier, Le Baud used the Prose Guesclin B for Jeanne's reaction to the negotiations at Auray. The pro-Penthièvre sympathies of this work were not reflected in his *Compilation* but made it into his *Histoire's* description of Jeanne as highly spirited, a trait whose positive connotations he let stand.⁶¹ Likewise, Le Baud used Saint-André to critique Charles's trustworthiness over previous truces, but rejected the poet's interpretation of the Landes d'Évran and contrasted Charles's personal chivalry with his troops' despair.⁶² The fluidity with which these authors approached their sources meant that rewrites were sometimes more conservative while elsewhere they innovated—which explains the difficulties historians often encounter in trying to date chronicle versions based on originality.

The non-linear development of Jeanne's and Charles's reputations for warmongering demonstrates the particular malleability of gendered critiques in the context of shared power. Both masculinity and femininity could be violated through the failure to make peace (or indeed wage war) correctly, but the emphasis depended on the sliding scale between individual and joint responsibility, as well as different hierarchies within the latter. The late Montfortist chroniclers helped themselves freely across the range of options, cherry-picking and juxtaposing pieces of information without trying to reconcile them. Under the pressure of multiple viable norms, then, reputations had a tendency to fragment. The personas of Jeanne and Charles continued to feed back on each other, but the effect was more kaleidoscopic than harmonic.

61 His restraint contrasted with the expanded version of this scene in Argentré, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 473: "The said de Blois let his wife know what had happened, and sent her the signed terms to see. This lady was no coward, and she immediately picked up the scent and got angry; and she said it straight, that the said de Blois her husband, was selling too cheaply that which did not belong to him." By turning Jeanne into an angry scold, this treatment effectively turned praise into a caricature of an uppity woman.

62 LBC, 381, 383; LBH, 319.

An Integrated Partnership?

Perhaps the easiest way to criticize a woman in a position of power was to go after her feminine qualities and portray her as a failed mother and/or wife. Domineering queens were said to abandon their children or even cause their deaths, or conversely, to nurture children born out of wedlock as if the king's own.⁶³ Certain queen mothers were also condemned for refusing to cede power to their offspring, abusing their maternal authority to rule in their stead.⁶⁴ Jeanne, however, was largely spared posthumous comments on her shortcomings as a mother or spouse. Despite Charles's long absence in England, she was never accused of infidelity, a strategy we might expect from hostile chroniclers to discredit her descendants and undermine their claim to the ducal title. Because the late Montfortist writers were primarily concerned with patriotic questions of dynasty, however, Jeanne's claim as heiress meant confronting the relative roles of men and women within the ducal lineage, and deciding who did and did not belong in the Breton family. Their interpretation of both Jeanne's and Charles's familial relationships was therefore complicated and unsettled.

For Le Baud and Bouchart, the issue of female succession underpinning the war was intimately bound up with the political circumstances in which they wrote each version of events. From a legal perspective, they became progressively less antagonistic to excluding women as heirs while (of course) maintaining that Jeanne's particular claim was invalid. They did so by nuancing their evaluations of the formal judgement by the French *parlement* that had originally granted the duchy to Charles on Jeanne's behalf.

At first, Le Baud opposed female succession through a detailed rebuttal of the sentence of Conflans given in favour of the Penthievre suit.⁶⁵ Women, he argued, could not inherit a kingdom, and so likewise could not claim the duchy of Brittany, which had its own royal past.⁶⁶ He also asserted that male heirs had always taken precedence over female ones in Brittany. Both these

63 Vallée-Karcher, "Jeanne de Bourgogne," 96; Alliot, "*Male royne boiteuse*," 122–24; Gibbons, "Isabeau of Bavaria," 57–59, 67–71; Adams, *Life and Afterlife*, 40–47; Turner, "Eleanor of Aquitaine," 26, 29; Green, "A Woman Given to Slippery Ways?," 318.

64 Huneycutt, "Creation of a Crone," 35; McCannon, "Two Queens," 163–64; cf. Turner, "Eleanor of Aquitaine," 37; Benz, "Conspiracy and Alienation," 120; Lewis, "Katherine of Valois," 129, 132–37.

65 LBC, 311–12.

66 Women's inability to succeed to the French throne had developed in legal theory over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: Taylor, "Salic Law."

arguments had been summarized in the *Songe du vergier*, a political treatise produced in the 1370s to prove, among other things, Charles V's right to confiscate Brittany from Jean IV, but which later appealed for its selective summaries of the original succession debate.⁶⁷ Le Baud's exclusion of women as heirs legitimized the Montfort dynasty at a moment of weakness, for their successions had not passed smoothly from father to son since 1450. In the early 1470s, Jean II, the powerful lord of Rohan (1452–1516), asserted the rights of his wife Marie de Bretagne (1446–1511) as legitimate heiress of the duchy according to the rules of succession prior to the treaty of Guérande.⁶⁸ Although his ambitions were more vaguely defined, Le Baud's first patron Jean de Derval positioned himself as part of the ducal family and likely aspired to follow the then-childless Duke François.⁶⁹ Reaffirming the dynasty's commitment to masculine inheritance was therefore pressing.

By contrast, Le Baud later squarely foregrounded the possibility of female succession. His *Genealogie* acknowledged the novelty of the Montfortist position on the exclusion of female heirs, and noted that the count had seized and occupied the duchy. Jean Kerhervé has argued that this work aimed to show that the heir's gender mattered less than the prestige of the dynasty.⁷⁰ However, handling this transitional moment actually meant promoting different gendered roles, because it was easier to justify one unsuccessful female inheritance when women did not personally perform the ducal role. Throughout this work, Le Baud focused on the men who had come to power through their wives or mothers, not the Breton countesses and duchesses themselves. This approach reflected the new political circumstances facing the duchy in 1486. After Anne's birth in 1477, Jean de Rohan had switched tactics to advance his own claims according to a masculine line of succession, a title he would reassert in 1492 after the death of François II.⁷¹ It was therefore useful for Le Baud to reopen the possibility of female inheritance to secure the position of his patron's daughter and preclude rivals, while acknowledging the important role that the nine-year-old Anne's eventual husband would inevitably play.

67 [Le Fèvre?], *Songe du vergier*, 1:260.

68 Gicquel, "Jean II de Rohan," 5.

69 Mauger, *Aristocratie et mécénat*, 32–33.

70 Le Baud, "'Genealogie,'" ed. Kerhervé, 521.

71 Gicquel, "Jean II de Rohan," 6, 8.

Le Baud finally developed a third interpretation in his *Histoire*.⁷² In his critique of Conflans, he avoided the issue of gendered succession entirely, preferring to summarize a few points relating to the mechanics of succession drawn from Froissart and the *Grandes chroniques*. He directed his readers to the *Songe* for further information, but refrained from wading deeper into the debate himself. After all, writing for Duchess Anne in her prime of life, he had no wish to undercut her authority. In contrast with her first marriage, Anne was able to exert herself on a much more even footing with her second husband. Meanwhile, the threat of the Penthievre claim had finally been put to rest for good. Jeanne's great-granddaughter and last remaining heiress, Nicole de Bretagne, had sold her rights to Brittany to King Louis XI (r. 1461–1483) for 50,000 *livres* in 1480. A beautiful family tree made in the early 1490s, probably to celebrate Anne's marriage to King Charles VIII, showed a happy resolution to the civil war through the union of the respective heirs of Jean and Jeanne.⁷³ Since Anne's marriage with her second husband, Louis XII, had only consolidated her position as ruler of her duchy, there was more leeway to tolerate Jeanne near the top of the princely hierarchy.

Just before Anne's death and the succession of her daughter Claude, Bouchart reduced female inheritance to a non-issue. Rather than debating any points of law, he simply translated the text of the sentence of Conflans, including the Montfortist points against female heirs but also those of Jeanne and Charles in favour.⁷⁴ He then reported that Jean de Montfort was not surprised at the outcome because he had anticipated Philippe's favouritism towards his nephew. This framing suggested that the case was less a precedent than a fluke.⁷⁵ Also, unlike Le Baud, Bouchart did not warn of the risks of female succession when reporting Jean III's earlier attempt to trade Brittany to the king of France. This story, adapted from a fourteenth-century Parisian chronicle, had originally given Jeanne some agency as the niece "who said she had the right to the duchy."⁷⁶ However, a woman inheriting such an important territory was considered a threat to the kingdom at large, a premise which Le Baud accepted in both major versions of his

72 LBH, 274.

73 Nantes, Archives départementales de Loire-Atlantique, E 6-4. My thanks to Michael Jones for drawing my attention to the document's production context.

74 GCB, 2:39–43.

75 Cf. GCB, 2:93.

76 Géraud, ed., *Chronique latine de Guillaume de Nangis*, 2:144.

narrative.⁷⁷ For Bouchart, the risk was only that Jean de Montfort would not tolerate Jeanne as duchess.⁷⁸ Because his chronicle did not contest the principle of female succession at any point, the legal issue gave ground to personal perspectives and ambitions.

This clear progression in the legal interpretation of women's place in the ducal dynasty contrasted with a more complicated portrayal of the social implications. Viewing the succession in masculine terms reflected patrilineal norms that expected noble families to transmit their legacies via a series of male heirs. However, it was common enough to run out of sons that alternatives were regularly sought.⁷⁹ One solution lay in the fact that a majority of noblewomen ended up marrying into families of lower status than their own.⁸⁰ This power imbalance meant that sometimes a husband agreed to join his wife's family instead of vice versa, giving them a male representative to whom they could pass on their identity and authority. Focusing on Charles's authority rather than Jeanne's therefore entailed defining his place within the Breton ducal lineage, whereas allowing for female succession made this belonging more negotiable.

This dynamic is apparent in comparing Le Baud's first and last versions of how Jean III attempted to arrange his own succession.⁸¹ In the *Compilation*, Le Baud claimed that the duke chose Charles as Jeanne's husband thinking that Charles should succeed him, with Jeanne's own claim coming only as an afterthought. He noted (probably following the *Songe du vergier*) that the marriage arrangements specified that Charles and his heirs would bear the name and coat-of-arms of Brittany.⁸² These symbols represented not just the ducal authority but the act of joining their kindred.⁸³ This report created a line of male succession, having Charles take Jeanne's place in the family. It was Charles's position as heir which Le Baud criticized for impinging on Jean de Montfort's rights, and he reported with some satisfaction that nearly all the barons who swore to follow Charles had been killed in battle.⁸⁴ In his *Histoire*, however, he repeatedly stressed that Jean III thought

⁷⁷ LBC, 300; LBH, 266.

⁷⁸ GCB, 2:33.

⁷⁹ Nassiet, "Parenté et successions dynastiques," 621.

⁸⁰ Nassiet, *Parenté*, 137, 140–42.

⁸¹ LBC, 300–301; LBH, 267–68.

⁸² [Le Fèvre?], *Songe du vergier*, 1:261–62.

⁸³ Cf. Nassiet, "Parenté et successions dynastiques," 622–23.

⁸⁴ This observation sits a little oddly in a work dedicated to Jean de Derval, whose

Jeanne should succeed him and possess (*avoir*) the duchy after his death. Charles was then selected to defend Jeanne's right and to handle (*traicter*) the duchy. The verbs chosen for each spouse presented Charles as working on his wife's behalf, more a manager than a duke in his own right. Le Baud later reported that "according to certain authors" Charles could have succeeded to the duchy himself if he had assumed the familial identity of the Breton dukes, but he did not endorse this interpretation, and added that these unnamed authors said Duke Jean had forced the barons to perform homage to Charles. When Jeanne's rights were taken more seriously, Charles was only able to access the ducal authority by proxy, and his status within the family was called into doubt.

In fact, Le Baud and Bouchart were generally much more willing to incorporate Jeanne into their understanding of the ducal lineage than they were Charles, in keeping with the ongoing significance of powerful matrilineal connections within the French nobility at large.⁸⁵ Charles's identity as part of the Breton line was never secure among the chroniclers. Froissart and Cuvelier (and even the Prose Guesclin B) already consistently referred to him as Charles "de Blois," rather than "de Bretagne," a practice continued by Le Baud and Bouchart despite the story about him adopting the Breton name, arms, and battle-cry. They also went further in developing Charles's own familial identity. For Froissart, Charles's royal affiliation had been an important attribute, and it remained so here, but the Montfortists also focused on defining Charles's affiliation with the counts of Blois. This point of his identity had confused some copyists of Froissart's A text, who mistook Charles to *be* the count of Blois (an error that periodically crops up even in modern scholarship).⁸⁶ After discussing the marriage arrangements, Bouchart insisted that "you should know that the counts of Blois, for their surname, did not have the name of Blois, but they had the name of Châtillon. And so, to speak truly, this Charles should have the name of Châtillon, as I have read it in chronicles of the period."⁸⁷ Le Baud claimed that Charles's taking the Breton arms had been conditional upon his renunciation of "his name of Châtillon or of Blois," though he also acknowledged a tenuous connection to Brittany via Jean III's first wife and Charles's mother, who were

own ancestors fell solidly into that category.

85 Chassel, "Nom et les armes"; cf. Duindam, "Gender, Succession and Dynastic Rule."

86 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud misc. 745, fol. 34r; Paris, BnF, MS français 2647, fol. 73r, and MS français 2677, fol. 69v.

87 GCB, 2:34.

sisters.⁸⁸ The sensitivity of the choice of surname was likewise illustrated by Le Baud's insistence that French references to Jean IV as "de Montfort" did not stop the Bretons from recognizing him as "of the direct generation of their ancient princes."⁸⁹ These authors used familial affiliation to argue for inclusion or exclusion in the schematic understanding of the lines of power.

The treatment of Charles contrasts with how Le Baud and Bouchart insisted on Jeanne's affiliation with her natal family, in a way absent from the earlier tradition. The distinction was communicated through surnames, as when Le Baud spoke of "Jeanne de Bretagne, daughter [of Guy] and Charles de Blois, her husband," and Bouchart of "milord Charles de Blois and milady Jeanne de Bretagne his wife."⁹⁰ Jeanne regularly had her full name from the *Genealogie* onwards, so that no matter which spouse was taken as the starting point, their family lines could be kept separate. These cues were markers of legitimacy and standing within the family. Similarly, when Olivier de Clisson began to look for suitable marriage partners for his daughters in the mid-1380s, he thought of Jeanne and Charles's eldest son Jean, count of Penthievre.⁹¹ Jean, Olivier reflected, was of august extraction from both France (because his paternal grandmother had been the king's sister) and Brittany (because his mother—that is, Jeanne—was the daughter of Duke Arthur's younger son). While Le Baud identified Jeanne only via a junior member of the Breton family, it was emphatically her rather than Charles who brought in this link at all. The convention of referring to Jeanne as "de Penthievre," which persists on the merits of better distinguishing her from many other Jeannes, dates (as far as I can trace) only to the eighteenth century and implied that she was part not of the main ducal family but of its second noble house.⁹² Le Baud and Bouchart preferred to stress Jeanne's membership within the dynasty they served.

There was thus no real need to impugn Jeanne's marital reputation, as happened to other women. Jeanne's relative security within the late Montfortist conception of the ducal dynasty meant that it was Charles, not her, who represented a convenient weak link in the claims of their descendants. Attacking Jeanne would only have reflected badly on her dynasty, and it was possible to distance her heirs from the ducal title by other means. Jeanne

88 LBH, 267–68.

89 LBH, 319.

90 LBH, 270; GCB, 2:84.

91 LBC, 454.

92 Lobineau, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 2:308, for the first instance.

and Charles had five children who featured in the Montfortist chronicles. Their affiliation to either parent, however, was inconsistent. Le Baud's *Histoire* particularly insisted on Charles's role as a progenitor, mentioning on three separate occasions the children that Charles had produced from Jeanne.⁹³ Previously, it was Jeanne who had gotten children by Charles.⁹⁴ By foregrounding one parent over the other, these writers were able to reconfigure the ducal family tree as they saw fit.

This pattern is again most visible with their eldest son (whose date of birth Le Baud remarkably happened to note).⁹⁵ Jean's self-styling as "de Bretagne" raised some thorny issues. Unsurprisingly, his use of the ducal name and arms met with disapproval in the Montfortist chronicles. Le Baud reported Jean IV's sarcastic reaction to his cousin's presumption: "We are willing that he call himself Jean, for it is his proper name, and count of Pen-thièvre, but we wish him to set aside the [ducal] ermines and write 'Jean de Blois' or 'de Châtillon', and bear the arms of Châtillon and no others."⁹⁶ This demand forcefully prioritized Jean's patrilineal identity at the expense of his matrilineal connections. Nevertheless, Le Baud eventually conceded that Jean might want to retain some affiliation with the Breton family to which his mother's origins entitled him, in which case he could modify the Châtillon arms with a modest use of ermines.⁹⁷ However, Le Baud still intended to exclude Jean from the Breton ducal lineage, as comparison with his contemporaries shows. Bouchart, discussing the treaty of Guérande, instead noted Jeanne's ongoing right to use the full arms of Brittany, while her children would only need to modify these by adding a red border.⁹⁸ He even asserted that Jeanne's own heirs, female as well as male, were potential claimants to the ducal title, and referred to Jean as "de Bretagne" without further comment.⁹⁹ Saint-Paul before him had similarly reported that Jeanne retained the lifetime title of duchess of Brittany.¹⁰⁰ The actual treaty had made no such concessions, instead reserving the name and arms to Jean IV.¹⁰¹ These revi-

93 LBH, 311–12, 320, 330.

94 LBG, 555.

95 LBH, 296.

96 LBC, 457; cf. LBH, 402–3, 406, 409, 410.

97 LBH, 410.

98 GCB, 2:95.

99 GCB, 2:96, 148–49. Cf. LBH, 333, 381, 391, who preferred "de Blois."

100 Saint-Paul, *Chronique*, 24.

101 Morice, ed., *Mémoires*, 1:1590.

sions showed a more inclusive attitude towards Jeanne and her posterity as part of the Breton dynasty, where Le Baud had preferred to see the counts of Penthievre branching off or even transferring dynasties completely. If a patrilineal dynastic model remained the default, emphasizing matrilineal ties remained a viable means of constructing continuity or discontinuity to suit immediate interests.

The paramount importance of constructing the idealized ducal dynasty meant that Le Baud and Bouchart not only assessed Jeanne and Charles as claimants to a title, but measured them against the gendered roles of parenting. Charles bore the greatest blame for threatening familial interests by not fulfilling his responsibilities as a father. Importantly, this disruption did not stem from Charles's alleged extramarital affairs, which received at least passing attention. Froissart had reported that Charles's bastard son "Jean" died alongside him at Auray, and Le Baud and Bouchart embraced this detail.¹⁰² Such evidence of adultery would not have carried the same stigma for a nobleman as for a noblewoman, and by the fifteenth century bastard children had come to play an important and publicly recognized role in furthering paternal political ambitions and familial strategies among the upper aristocracy.¹⁰³ Moreover, this rumour—which scandalized François Plaine, the modern advocate of Charles's sanctity—shows how Charles's reputation for strict chastity in 1371 did not appeal as strongly to secular historiographers.¹⁰⁴ Although the Church and the law morally disapproved of illicit sex, romantic chivalric ideals could instead see the resulting offspring as the outcome of knightly service to ladies, and so a fulfillment of noble manhood.¹⁰⁵

Rather, problems arose with how Charles used his sons Jean and Guy as hostages for his ransom. According to Le Baud, Charles left them in England so that he could be released to secure the required sum, while Bouchart thought they had actually been captured alongside Charles at La Roche-Derrien.¹⁰⁶ As Rémy Ambühl has shown, a captured knight's children made for "ideal" hostages because "fatherly love and the concern for the perpetuation of a lineage" could be expected to encourage the knight's prompt payment

102 Amiens, 3:348; FrB, 6:168; LBC, 395, 397; LBH, 328; GCB, 2:89–90.

103 Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 189; Harsgor, "Essor des bâtards," 327, 331–33.

104 Plaine, "De l'autorité de Froissard," 21; but cf. Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 130, 257.

105 Harsgor, "Essor des bâtards," 350.

106 LBC, 371; LBH, 311; GCB, 2:70.

and good behaviour.¹⁰⁷ Normally, then, this exchange would not have raised any eyebrows. Charles, however, turned his thoughts towards revenge upon his release on parole, which led him to pursue an ill-advised strategy.¹⁰⁸ Rather than raising funds through the expected channels of his dependents and his French allies, he proceeded to make war on the countess of Montfort. Though technically allowed within the terms of his ransom as he did not fight in person, this plan resulted in the disastrous battle of Mauron in which Charles's much larger force was wiped out, a thorough defeat that spoke for itself. While in Le Baud's *Histoire* it appears that Charles simply forgot about his children in his desire to strike back against his foes, the *Compillation* explicitly made Charles's objective in this campaign to "conquer something which would profit him to get back his two sons."¹⁰⁹ But his failure in this risky approach left his sons imprisoned. Nor could Charles save any face for himself in the process, since his inability to arm himself kept him at home with his wife, undercutting his chivalric manliness.

Charles's initial misstep was compounded by the long-term implications of the situation. The Montfortist chroniclers agreed that had the kings of France and England wished to find a solution to the Breton war, Charles would have recovered his children from their imprisonment (and prolonged his own lifespan).¹¹⁰ While this breakdown of peace negotiations was not Charles's fault, it was he—and, noticeably, not Jeanne—who bore the consequences as the one responsible for their captivity in the first place. The subsequent length of Jean and Guy's imprisonment and the toll it took on them (especially Guy, who died in England) became a recurring theme, always with the reminder that it was on their father's behalf or by his doing that they were there.¹¹¹ After Charles's death, moreover, "there was no one left from his side to take up the war nor the rights which he claimed, because Jean and Guy, his two oldest sons, to whom the matter related and belonged, were prisoners in England."¹¹² Le Baud transferred the weight of defeat to Charles and his children, cutting Jeanne out of the picture (despite having acknowledged just a few lines earlier that it was to her that Jean III had given the duchy). Charles's inability to redeem his sons from captivity imperilled

107 Ambühl, *Prisoners of War*, 252.

108 LBC, 371; LBH, 311.

109 LBC, 372.

110 LBC, 380; LBH, 318; GCB, 2:79.

111 LBC, 448, 454–55; LBH, 330, 381, 391.

112 LBC, 399; cf. LBH, 331.

his lineage and its interests, as well as straining the bonds of affection that should have united father and sons.

Jeanne's maternal role was, on the whole, relatively understated. Froissart, as we saw, had emphasized Jeanne's affective motherhood at specific points in his narrative. In his Rome version, Jeanne used her young sons Jean and Guy to help her rally support after Charles's capture.¹¹³ Amiens and the Abridgement showed the widowed duchess mourning the imprisonment of her two eldest sons and (in Amiens alone) taking comfort in her remaining son, young Henri.¹¹⁴ Louis d'Anjou was especially willing to support Jeanne because he had married her daughter, making Jeanne his mother too.¹¹⁵ These versions were not in wide circulation, so few of these anecdotes were later adopted. Conversely, small details introduced by the late Montfortists painted a more negative picture. Bouchart reconfigured Louis's relationship as Charles's son-in-law rather than Jeanne's, even though she was the focus of this interaction.¹¹⁶ Le Baud outlined a parallel between the two parents, who were unable to retain their children. After Auray, one of Charles's sons was in Nantes with his mother, but was given into his sister's care out of fear of Jean IV; thus, of their three sons, the two eldest were held in an English prison for their father, and the third was sent away by his mother to France.¹¹⁷ Jeanne's forced separation from her child also mirrored that of Jeanne de Flandre, giving the Montfortists a sort of poetic justice. Later, Jeanne's death meant that Jean despaired of ever being rescued from prison; if his father had put him there, his mother had been his last hope.¹¹⁸

But Jeanne was able to make up for this scattering of her family in a way that Charles never was, because she signed the treaty of Guérande with the victorious duke and so gave her descendants significant rights. Le Baud and Bouchart consistently recognized that should Jean IV have died without sons, Jeanne's heirs (or those of herself and Charles) would have been entitled to reclaim the duchy of Brittany.¹¹⁹ It was also Jeanne alone who was to enjoy the county of Penthièvre, and pass it on in turn to her eldest son.¹²⁰

113 Rome, 818.

114 Amiens, 3:356; Abridged, 418.

115 Cf. FrB, 6:173.

116 GCB, 2:92.

117 LBH, 330.

118 LBC, 455; LBH, 391.

119 LBC, 401–2; LBH, 333; GCB, 2:96.

120 LBC, 473–74; LBH, 410; GCB, 2:95.

By securing her children's future, she fulfilled a core responsibility of motherhood. Nor did this provision have to come at the expense of Jeanne's personal interests. The lands were hers, and thereafter her son's: this was one point where Jeanne's place in the succession was not contested. The fact that Jean was imprisoned until after her death may have influenced this narrative, as he was unable to administer the lands in any case, so she could not reasonably be expected to hand them over. Nevertheless, the net result was that Jeanne's ongoing authority as countess of Penthievre preserved her son's rights rather than usurping them, compensating for Charles's lapse and maintaining an honourable position within the Breton ducal family.

An Alternative Partnership?

As a result of the late Montfortists' dynastic readings, Jeanne's prominence in the narrative of the civil war had tended to increase, impacting her reputation for leadership for better or worse. She was often mentioned at Charles's side where she had not been in Froissart, and was shown at the head of her party more regularly.¹²¹ Yet despite the importance of this partnership, these chronicles also developed her solo career after her husband's death in new ways. The prolonged coda of the war—or indeed, its constant crisis—meant that her authority in this period could be reimagined outside the context of her earlier collaboration. The political reconfiguration during the rebellion of 1379–1380 meant that Jeanne's primary counterpart became instead Duke Jean IV, her former rival. She kept her familiar position at the head of the Breton barons, but her status as countess of Penthievre rather than duchess of Brittany meant that she could contribute to Montfortist interests in a new way.

Froissart's B text was the first to include Jeanne among the partisans of the duke-in-exile. He noted that several knights and squires took part in this alliance, as well as "the countess of Penthievre, mother of the children of Brittany."¹²² She was notably the only supporter so specifically identified, though Froissart did not give her an explicit leadership role here. Indeed, her status was ambivalent: countess, she nevertheless remained a link in the legitimate ducal line. The implication could be that her participation was meant to preserve the interests of her children in the duchy as a whole, as specified in the treaty of Guérande.

121 LBH, e.g., 319; GCB, e.g., 2:43, 44, 49, 70.

122 FrB, 9:137.

The complexity of this situation, however, may have prompted Froissart to revisit her motivations in the C version of the text.¹²³ Here, among other new details, he stressed the opposition to the royal takeover across gendered lines: not only lords, barons, and knights, but also ladies and damsels, collectively called for government according to Breton laws. Froissart found it remarkable that the countess of Penthievre herself agreed with them.¹²⁴ This time, though, he linked her engagement not to the ducal title, but to protecting the liberties of her lands and subjects. Her position as countess streamlined her cooperation with the duke compared to framing her as a rival. These independent interests also augmented Jeanne's authority, although Froissart still did not specify how exactly she contributed to the rebellion.

That angle came instead from the Montfortist historiographical tradition. Saint-André, as usual, skipped over Jeanne entirely, perhaps because he was particularly aware that Jeanne had opposed the king more than she had supported Jean during these quite recent events. But Le Grant developed Jeanne into the ringleader of the Breton rebels who rallied behind Jean. Her agency first operated in the legal sphere.¹²⁵ With Jean IV unable to respond to a court summons of which he was unaware, it was Jeanne who fought the royal sentence of confiscation. She ordered several prominent and learned Bretons from among her servitors to argue that the king was unlawfully attempting to deprive the duke of his rights. Moreover, even supposing that such a confiscation was licit, he could not then prejudice the rights of Jeanne herself and of her children based on the terms of Guérande. Le Grant presumably felt justified in reporting this display of unexpected altruism, where Jeanne placed the duke's needs above her own, based on the logic of the *Songe du vergier*. This text tackled Jean IV's expected claims first, followed by Jeanne's.¹²⁶ By lumping them together as the case put forward by Jeanne's representatives, however, Le Grant neatly acknowledged the potential divergence of her interests while still moving her into the Montfortist camp. Similarly, he referred to her as both countess of Penthievre and the duke's first cousin. This designation legitimized her as part of the wider

123 Chicago, Newberry Library, MS Case f.37.2, fol. 77r.

124 The word he used, *proprement*, could have stressed either Jeanne's personal involvement as a high-profile player, the veracity of this report clarifying her participation, or the significance of her rallying to the Montfort camp.

125 BnF, MS lat. 6003, fol. 106v.

126 [Le Fèvre?], *Songe du vergier*, 1:258–63.

ducal family but, by foregrounding her separate authority, also distanced her from any immediate competition with Jean.

It was then almost inevitable that Jeanne should act as the head of the anti-French party in initiating the diplomatic shift that followed the royal sentence. She clearly outranked the rest of the regional nobility, and so where Froissart had listed the Bretons and then Jeanne, for Le Grant she took precedence. Moreover, she did not merely agree in spirit with the rest of the regional elites, but took action, first receiving her envoys' reports and then sending for Duke Jean to return from England. She was thus pivotal in transforming a legal objection into an outright rebellion. This hierarchy and initiative were also reinforced when the viscount of Rohan brought news of the king's military plans back to Jeanne and the "other" nobles of Brittany. She took counsel with them and together they began to assemble an army to defend their Breton homeland and its liberties. With this portrayal, Le Grant turned Jeanne into Jean's lieutenant, exercising power in his absence but towards the same ends. Ultimately, she relied on his return, but was also the one who made it possible in the first place.

Having successfully recalled her cousin to power, Jeanne consolidated her place as first among his supporters. This dynamic played out most dramatically in a scene that was at once derivative and unique.¹²⁷ Jean celebrated his return from exile by disembarking at the northern town of Dinan (a ducal holding in the heart of Penthièvre territory), where he first delivered a speech to "his" Bretons, criticizing the king's usurpation and praising Brittany's historical greatness and privileges. He then retreated to a more private space in the local Dominican friary to reiterate his justifications in greater technical detail. Jeanne, as first to respond within this assembled inner circle (*ceteros precedere*), reprised her position of command among the ducal advisors seen in the chivalric chronicles. In fact, the speech Le Grant put into her mouth was taken from a foundational piece of Arthurian lore, Geoffrey of Monmouth's enormously influential *Historia Regum Britannie*. This early twelfth-century work helped define King Arthur's role in British history (comprising both Great Britain and Armorican Brittany), and Le Grant had used it to develop much of the earlier period of his chronicle. By returning to this material out-of-context, however, he set Jeanne and Jean's dynamic into a well-known mould.

Monmouth's original speech was delivered by Hoël, king of Brittany, to his cousin Arthur, when Arthur's lands and sovereignty were being threat-

127 BnF, MS lat. 6003, fol. 109r.

ened by the Romans.¹²⁸ The parallels with Jeanne's situation in the *Chronicon Briocense* were obvious, as Le Grant reminded the reader that Jeanne was Jean's first cousin and called her "Jeanne de Bretagne, countess of Penthievre," marking her out as a Breton ruler but a subordinate one like Hoël. Hoël's speech had three main parts.¹²⁹ First, he praised Arthur's wisdom and the solidarity of his advisors. He then expressed confidence in their prospects of victory against Rome in a righteous cause, justifying Arthur's offensive measures as a licit response to attempted theft. Finally, he confirmed that fate and God were on their side and pledged all their lives to Arthur's war, specifically offering to stand with him with ten thousand warriors. The appeal of these themes in Jeanne's reconciliation with Jean are readily apparent. This speech made her acknowledge Jean's worthiness as a leader, transferring to him all the legitimacy—personal, legal, and divine—she might once have claimed for herself and/or her husband.

In giving these words to Jeanne, Le Grant made some necessary contextual changes, substituting the regions of France for Rome, playing up the Breton–French conflict, and removing references to classical rhetoric and prophecy. He also made three smaller edits that underscored different aspects of Jeanne's relationship with Jean. In the first two sections, Hoël's use of the second person singular *tu* to refer to Arthur gave way to Jeanne's use of the plural *vous*, displaying a greater degree of respect and hierarchy.¹³⁰ Nevertheless, rather than protecting only their liberties, they now defended their *patria*, their homeland—or inheritance. As Bretons, Jeanne and Jean shared a common stake, effectively burying the memory of the disputed succession. At the end, Jeanne offered Jean not a clearly enumerated force, but "all the strength of arms of my territory" (*omnem vim armatam territorii mei*). This localization of her military might confirmed that she did not control the entire duchy, but also reinforced her independent right of command in a lesser capacity. She could therefore function as Jean's partner, not in the sense of being his equal, but as an active participant in his rule. This partnership was apparent to the assembled barons, who responded to Jeanne's inspirational words by "praising and approving the duke and countess and joining them" in the fight.¹³¹

128 Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*, para. 160.

129 Cf. Martin, "Hoel-Hearted Loyalty," 32.

130 Cf. above, p. 77.

131 "Ipsorum ducis et comitisse laudantes et approbantes et eis adherentes."

The choice of Hoël as a prototype for Jeanne reflects how her involvement in the rebellion was not primarily interpreted with reference to a marked gender. Both her leadership and her subordination came as a function of her rank and lineage, rather than on her capacity as a woman. She organized legal, diplomatic, and finally martial activities with equal competence and lack of fuss. Perhaps the only concession to the limits of her potential was that she did not, unlike Hoël, offer to stand beside Jean in person, but her absence in no way detracted from the military importance of her contribution. On the contrary, she was an exemplar to the rest of the barons, who immediately followed her model (*ad instar...huius domine comitisse*) in pledging troops to the duke. Jeanne's ability to unify and motivate the regional nobility into war made her a natural participant in a scene originally constructed around men alone.

The Arthurian echoes would have been apparent to much of Le Grant's intended audience, given the popularity of Monmouth's story and its many derivatives. However, they did not appeal to any of Le Grant's successors, for the memory of Jeanne's activity in 1379 waned in the later fifteenth-century accounts. Following Froissart, Le Baud's *Compillation* listed Jeanne de Bretagne, countess of Penthièvre and wife of Charles de Blois, among the duke's partisans. He cited personal motivations only: the devastation of civil war was preventing her from peaceably enjoying her lands.¹³² Her stakes remained safely local, reflecting concerns that any regional aristocrat might reasonably have. He repeated this story in his *Histoire*, but without explaining why the countess acted as she did.¹³³ However, this time he had also taken inspiration from Le Grant (though citing Saint-André) to report that the countess had defended her cousin's rights in the royal court, followed secondarily by her own. Le Baud was therefore willing to recognize Jeanne's contribution on the basis of the promises made at the conclusion of the war, but he did not go so far as Le Grant in making her Jean's right-hand woman. At the same time, he noted that the king of France continued to refer to Jeanne as duchess of Brittany (while denying Duke Jean his own title), a clearly improper usage. On this point, Bouchart was more neutral, keeping verbatim Jeanne's title as duchess of Brittany in the second treaty of Guérande, which he quoted at length.¹³⁴ But he chose not to keep any of Jeanne's activity in the lead-up to this settlement, leaving her the passive

132 LBC, 424.

133 LBH, 361–62.

134 GCB, 2:144, 147; Morice, ed., *Mémoires*, 2:299, 301.

recipient of a deal worked out between duke and king. This omission probably had less to do with Jeanne herself than with Bouchart's pro-French interest in downplaying the attempted annexation as a whole.¹³⁵ Le Grant's satisfying resolution to the original Penthièvre–Montfort rift, reconciling Jean and Jeanne in an archetype of dynastic harmony, had its moment, but later gave way to other concerns.

Conclusions

To the extent that she was able to nurture rather than challenge family interests, Jeanne could occupy a satisfactory function within its history, whereas Charles's pursuit of the war led to undesirable outcomes and even undermined his masculinity both as a duke and as paterfamilias. Conversely, when it was Jeanne who chased the ducal title, she showcased the inadvisability of female authority—although maintaining and transmitting her rightful patrimony to her own line remained acceptable—while Charles became either a paragon or, paradoxically, a victim of her usurpation. The development of these dynamics in both Le Baud's and Bouchart's works never rose to the level of highly gendered praise or condemnation that we sometimes find in more polemic assessments of medieval rulers. Without denying that such extreme indictments certainly existed, there is a historiographical overrepresentation of slanderous reputations, which can lend disproportionate weight to highly polarized readings of gendered rulership. The Montfortists' more moderate and ambivalent reactions to the civil war remind us that the foundations of aristocratic partnerships complicated any uniform approach to the strategic deployment of masculinized and feminized ideals.

At the same time, while there is considerable overlap between these chronicles and their predecessors, Le Baud and Bouchart heightened Jeanne's and Charles's structural individuality. Whereas Froissart and even Cuvelier largely framed their partnership as functioning in tandem, now there was greater emphasis on the potential for difference and even opposition. This approach gave the Montfortist historians greater leeway in placing the Penthièvre leaders within the dynasty's vertical framework in order to address questions of its long-term unitary integrity. Their solutions generally represented familial authority using only one member of the couple at a time, creating a transmission of power concentrated in a single person rather than in a pair. Nevertheless, such strategies of inclusion and exclu-

135 Guitton, "Vices des princes," 464–65.

sion fundamentally relied on the possibility of shared power. Legitimizing and de-legitimizing different aspects of Jeanne's and Charles's authority by turns necessarily gave them both an active part in the processes of leadership, even if it did not establish clear parameters for how such collaborative authority should operate. The resulting narrative instability indicates that the unilateral model of power was not self-evident. Rather, these authors asserted that model against a persistently viable alternative of power-sharing as a solution to dynastic challenges. Framing the Breton civil war as a discrete conflict that marked a turning-point in how ducal power was organized suggested that a definitive configuration was possible, but the prevailing conditions of constant crisis made revisiting the issue of leadership almost inevitable.