

Joël Blanchard, ed. *Procès de Jacques d'Armagnac: édition critique du ms. 2000 de la Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève.*

Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance 510. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2012. cxxv + 968 pp. \$144. ISBN: 978-2-600-01695-7.

The main objective of this book, in presenting a complete edition of the original manuscript of the trial of Jacques d'Armagnac, duc de Nemours in 1477, is to reveal a major source on the policy of Louis XI and on late medieval French judicial history. The context is a series of some twenty treason trials in the aftermath of the War of the Public Weal launched against Louis's enemies in the course of the 1470s, including those of Charles de Melun, Antoine de Chabannes-Dammartin, the duc d'Alençon, and most vividly against Louis de Luxembourg, constable of Saint-Pol (Joel Blanchard has also published an edition of the sources on this trial). The story of these trials has in the past been told through fragmentary later copies. The contemporary text edited here is unusual for its depth of detail, the light it throws on extraordinary judicial proceedings, and in the purposes for which it was constructed. It is almost certainly the copy found in a sack among the effects of Charlotte de Savoie, Louis XI's queen. In this period and well into the sixteenth century it was usual for the documents concerning such cases to be destroyed and for the record only to consist of the final "arrêt." The registers of the special tribunal of the Parlement charged with the case have not survived, so this is a copy specially made for the king's reference and is a clear indication that the king himself took charge of the proceedings.

Grandson of the powerful Bernard VII d'Armagnac (d. 1418) and cousin of the last counts of Armagnac, Jacques was closely related to the Valois and Bourbon lines and inherited the counties of Castres, Pardiac, and La Marche from his father Bernard (d. 1462). He was by all accounts a gracious courtier and the accession of Louis XI actually marked his ascent into high royal favor as a *mignon*, bringing him the hand of the king's cousin Louise d'Anjou and the duché-pairie of Nemours to which his mother had a disputed claim (1462). Traditionally portrayed, by Mandrot among others, as weak and vacillating, Nemours was enticed into the camp of the rebel grandees in 1465 but returned to obedience after the treaty of Conflans. Not surprisingly, it seems that he was never really forgiven by the king. After a series of conspiracies in the late 1460s, he was humiliated in 1470. Arrested in March 1476, Nemours entered the Bastille in August and was examined judicially between June 1476 and March 1477. Trial before a commission of the Parlement, presided over by Pierre de Beaujeu (who gained the county of La Marche as a result), resulted in his condemnation to death on 10 July 1477 and execution at les Halles on 4 August.

The trial papers consist of documents concerning Nemours's lack of faith going back to 1465. Louis's main objective, according to Blanchard, was the "delegitimation" of rebellion on the part of princes. As a result, it became essential to show that he had betrayed the oath he took to Louis after the War of the Public Weal. In addition, it was determined to show that he had embarked on the infringement of royal rights in his territories in high Auvergne such as Carlat,

Murat, and Castres, as well as the county of La Marche. Thus enquiries by Aubert Le Viste in Auvergne were carefully deployed. Nemours presided over a numerous *fidélité* in Auvergne that made the exercise of royal power difficult. Some fifteen Auvergant nobles were questioned in the trial.

Above all this was a case of *lèse-majesté*, derived from the concept of the king as emperor in his kingdom. As Blanchard points out, it was one in which the truth was not so much established by the trial so much as declared by it. It was an exceptional case in the legal traditions but one that became characteristic of the early modern state. The Nemours trial, he adds, sealed at the same time the expansion of sovereign *maiestas* and the political and territorial discipline of the kingdom.

The lengthy exposé of the cultural dimension of the trial in its involvement of accusations of divination and necromancy, the consideration of its lexicographic aspects, and above all the full and very thorough edition of the text with useful notes and index makes this work indispensable for a scholarly understanding of the era of Louis XI.

DAVID POTTER
University of Kent, Canterbury