

Rozsa23:50

Here I am, Claire and Tim. All a-tingle and can't wait to tell you more about Anne of Brittany, ruler of Brittany and twice queen of France. Her dates? 1477-1514

Claire Ridgway0:00

Welcome everyone to tonight's live chat! And a special welcome and thank you to author Rozsa Gaston for her talk and for joining us. I'm sure we'll get more members joining as we go on. Feel free to ask questions about Anne of Brittany, Rozsa's work and research, and her books.

Rozsa0:00

Hello from Bronxville, New York, Laurie Duerr.

Laurie Duerr0:00

Hi Rozsa! I'm in central New Jersey, so not far!

Lorna Wanstall0:00

Hello everyone

Claire Ridgway0:00

Hi Lorna!

Rozsa0:01

Hello Lorna, from whence do you hail?

Lorna Wanstall0:01

Funny that Laurie I thought you were somewhere in good old blighty

Claire Ridgway0:01

Rozsa, can I just ask how your first became interested in Anne of Brittany?

Claire Ridgway0:02

*you

Lorna Wanstall0:02

Hi Rozsa I'm from the Isle of Grain in Kent England

Rozsa0:06

Lorna - Lovely. I will look up the Isle of Grain this evening. Claire - About 6 years ago I spotted a book online with an image of a young early Renaissance era female on the cover. She looked sure of herself: confident, self-possessed. The book was *Twice Queen of France: Anne of Brittany* by Mildred Allen Butler. I read it non-stop, discovering this late 15th c. woman had come to power in 1488 at age 11 as ruler of Brittany. She then became queen of France at age 14. This, despite losing every one of her immediate family members by age twelve. Her story was beyond belief, and I had to know more.

Lorna Wanstall0:07

14 pregnancies poor Anne had and only 2 of her children survived.

Claire Ridgway0:07

Thank you, Rozsa!

Claire Ridgway0:08

Hi Katherine!

Laurie Duerr0:08

Yes she certainly has quite a story!

Rozsa0:08

Indeed, Lorna. And as I do further research, I see she may have had up to 16 pregnancies. As queen of France, her foremost mandate was to produce an heir to the throne.

Lorna Wanstall0:08

Rozsa little titbit where I live is the 3rd most remotest village in England.

Claire Ridgway0:08

Woah, 16! Poor poor woman!

Laurie Duerr0:09

Wow that had to have had such an emotional impact on her too...

Rozsa0:09

Lorna - I am intrigued and will research your village toute de suite. I live in a tiny village of 6,000 30 min. north of Manhattan that the real estate brokers always compare to Stratford-on-Avon.

Katherine Carlisle0:09

Hi everyone. I'm in a waiting room with my son at urgent care so I may be a short visitor!

Claire Ridgway0:09

Oh no! I hope he's ok!

Lorna Wanstall0:09

Such was the life of a royal woman back then. They weren't anything more than baby machines

Rozsa0:09

Katherine - I'm so sorry. He's in the right place, though.

ADMIN Tim0:09

Hope your son is ok!

Claire Ridgway0:10

Well, obviously he's not ok, but you know what I mean! Much love!

Lorna Wanstall0:10

I hope your son will be ok Katherine

Rozsa0:10

Ladies - Bearing children for queens was so much worse than for the average woman. It was the be-all and end-all of a queen's survival. Think of poor Katherine of Aragon.

Claire Ridgway0:10

There was so much pressure on these women. I expect their bodies didn't have time to recover between pregnancies or between miscarriages and getting pregnant again.

Claire Ridgway0:11

Hi Roland!

Rozsa0:12

Claire, you have hit the nail on the head for why Anne only lived til three weeks short of her 37th birthday AND for why she lost so many children. She didn't wait long enough between pregnancies to produce healthy children. Some say there was an Rh factor too.

Laurie Duerr0:12

Yes very true, and not to mention the added pressure of having a son, when you could bear a child..

Roland Hui0:12

Rozsa - How did you get interested in Anne of Brittany?

Roland Hui0:11

Katherine Carlisle0:12

Thanks. I can't imagine being with sick children in Tudor times. They must have felt so helpless!

Claire Ridgway0:12

Her daughter Claude was very similar in being pregnant most of the time she was queen.

Lorna Wanstall0:12

The way I see the whole pregnancy bit back then that as soon as a woman was churched they were expected to get pregnant once again. Small wonder some many died so young, either worn out with childbirth or dying in childbirth. Their bodies never had time to recover

Claire Ridgway0:13

Roland, Rozsa answered that one at the start, so if you scroll up a bit you can see.

Lorna Wanstall0:13

Anne's daughter Claude wasn't much better, she was worn out from childbirth as well

Rozsa0:14

Laurie - Which is where Brittany and France differed. Anne wore two hats: she was ruler of Brittany but also queen of France. Brittany was under semi-salic law: daughters can succeed to the throne if no sons are produced. France was under Salic Law: Only sons could succeed to the throne. If it's all girls in the family, the succession goes to a nephew or closest male relative.

Lorna Wanstall0:14

Claire we seem to have a twilight zone thing going on here, both of us are almost saying the same thing

Claire Ridgway0:15

Ha! Yes, Lorna!

Rozsa0:15

Lorna - Claude did an AMAZING job of being a royal babymaking machine. She had seven children in nine years. Five lived to adulthood (better luck than her mother). Sadly, this wore her out and she was dead by age 24 (not of childbirth, but something else.)

Laurie Duerr0:15

Yes, very good point about that law, thanks!

Claire Ridgway0:16

You mentioned Louis having loved her since she was a child. When did they first meet?

Rozsa0:17

So silly about Salic Law, in my book. Meanwhile Isabella of Castile was ruling in Spain and one of England's greatest monarchs ascended the throne just decades after Anne died. (You know who I'm talking about, Elizabeth.)

Roland Hui0:18

Do we know if Anne was overtly religious as a person, or just conventionally so?

Rozsa0:18

Claire - This is the wildly romantic part of Anne and Louis' story. They met when Anne was 7 or 8 (her birth year is disputed - either 1477 or 1476, I say 1477) and Louis was 21. Louis was UTTERLY impressed with her maturity, not to mention her charm and intelligence, and Louis was Anne's VERY FIRST CRUSH.

Elizabeth Alex0:18

I took note of Anne being described as one who controlled her emotions (and I enjoyed learning the term rusee).

Claire Ridgway0:18

Thank you!

Laurie Duerr0:19

It's quite a love story!

Lorna Wanstall0:19

It's interesting to note that Anne was betrothed a number of times before she married Maximilian. She must have been a very powerful woman if you know what I mean

Rozsa0:20

Roland Hui - Anne was both pious and devout. In my book, it was not a show, this was the real person. And precisely for this reason and others, the French disliked her, because the French court was moving toward a more liberal relaxed Renaissance-inflected atmosphere. To point, Anne's daughter married Francois I, who led a royal court the diametric opposite of Anne and Louis' court.

Roland Hui0:20

Interesting - thanks

Roland Hui0:21

How was Anne as a patroness of the arts?

Rozsa0:21

Elizabeth - Yes, the controlling her emotions thing is something I am fascinated by. It is an absolute necessity for an effective monarch. Elizabeth I was a master at it (when she wasn't having a temper tantrum in her council meetings.)

Claire Ridgway0:23

What made Charles VIII reform his ways with regards to his marriage?

Rozsa0:23

Anne was the wealthiest widow in Europe at the time first husband Charles VIII died at age 27. she

had funds, she had annual revenues from her wealthy duchy of Brittany, and she had excellent taste and education, thanks to her father, Duke Francis II of Brittany, who ran a most refined court (and supported Henry Tudor's 14-yr. stay in Brittany before he returned to England to claim England's crown).

Roland Hui0:25

Can we assume that Anne met Henry Tudor?

Rozsa0:26

Claire - there are two schools of thought: 1) he lost 4 out of 4 children with Anne. He thought God might be punishing them for his constant non-stop philandering, so he changed his ways. 2) many historians speculate that he came back from his Italian campaign with either syphilis or some other nasty disease. He was thinner than when he left one and a half years earlier and he looked sickly. It is possible that he just didn't have it in him to get up to all his usual hi-jinks, so he turned his attention to Anne and to administering his kingdom. I think it's a combination of both.

Lorna Wanstall0:27

I wonder why H7 didn't try to marry Claude to Henry junior, that way he would have his foot in the door to Brittany and possibly France as well.

Katherine Carlisle0:28

I'm going to read the chat later when we get home. So excited to discover a new monarch to learn about. Thanks everyone. Claire loving the "this day" items on YouTube! Farewell from Alexandria VA, USA!

Claire Ridgway0:28

Ah, ok, thank you!

Rozsa0:28

Claire - She was 20 years younger (b. 1477) than Henry (b. 1457). He returned to England in the late 1480s, so I do believe they met. And I am frustrated that nothing anywhere that I've read gives an account of this meeting.

Claire Ridgway0:28

Bye Katherine, I hope your son is ok xx

Rozsa0:29

Katherine - Hope the progeny is all patched up soon. Please stay in touch!

Lorna Wanstall0:29

Keep safe Katherine and my best wishes for your son's speedy recovery Xx

Elizabeth Alex0:29

Oh yes, take care, Katherine.

Rozsa0:30

Lorna - Claude was promised first to Charles V of Luxembourg then to Francois d'Angouleme, who became Francis I. She was all tied up by treaties Anne and Louis had made regarding her future marriage.

Laurie Duerr0:30

Rozsa, I love the symbolism of the ermine for Anne; when was it first introduced as representing her?

Rozsa0:32

Roland - Anne was a very active patron of the art. It's really the only point on which the French regard her fondly. She had deep pockets and exquisite taste. With all the plunder, artists, and artisans that Charles then Louis brought back from Italy, she had a wealth of new artists to pick from and she was a generous patron. MUCH more generous than Louis, who had a rather parsimonious nature.

Roland Hui0:33

Besides the visual arts, do we know if Anne was greatly interested in music?

Rozsa0:33

Laurie - The ermine was the symbol of the dukes of Brittany as a symbol of purity. this is due to it's

coat turning white in the winter to protect it from predators. I cannot say exactly when it was introduced as the dukes of Brittany's emblem, but definitely before Anne was born.

Rozsa0:34

Roland - I have read nowhere that Anne was greatly interested in music. She was greatly interested in books, including illuminated manuscripts, paintings, and sculptures.

Lorna Wanstall0:34

It sounds like Anne was very modern in some ways.

Laurie Duerr0:35

Thanks Rozsa! I love seeing the ermine symbols all over Amboise!

Roland Hui0:36

What places do you recommend to visit to follow in Anne's footsteps?

Rozsa0:36

Lorna - She was an avant-la-lettre feminist, meaning a feminist before the term was invented.

Rozsa0:38

Roland - It's very straightforward and follows the path of the Loire River: Nantes, Langeais, Amboise, Blois. Anne was born in Nantes, married in Langeais, lived in Amboise with Charles VIII, then lived in Blois with Louis XII. She died in her bedroom at Blois Castle on Jan. 9, 1514. A straightforward tour of the Loire Valley!

Claire Ridgway0:39

Blois and Amboise are stunning. I need to do the others.

Rozsa0:39

Laurie - I love those ermine symbols too! They are at Langeais, Amboise, Loches, and Blois and probably elsewhere as well.

Rozsa0:40

Claire - The BEST exhibit on Anne of Brittany is the one at Chateau de Langeais, put together by Jacques Siegfried, a wealthy French aristocrat who fell in love with her story and wished to recreate it at Langeais, where she married Charles VIII in a secret ceremony on Dec. 6, 1491. Well worth a visit!

Elizabeth Alex0:40

Thank you for pointing out the 'Tud' connection by mentioning the ancient diocese Tudwal. I enjoy connecting those sorts of strands.

Lorna Wanstall0:41

I've only seen pictures of Amboise and Blois, they look wonderful. I can fully understand why Mary QoS was so sad at leaving them.

Claire Ridgway0:41

Thank you, I must go.

Rozsa0:41

Elizabeth - I am eager to deepen my knowledge of the Tud connection and to that end am now reading Tony Riches trilogy on Henry, Jasper, and Warwick.

Roland Hui0:41

I wasn't aware of how Charles VIII died, and had to look it up - oh boy! One would have thought the usual - in war, disease, old age, etc.

Laurie Duerr0:41

Yes, its amazing! Really being transformed back to their world there.. i.e. I remember the "Anne de Bretagne" hotel at Blois!

Claire Ridgway0:42

Such a freak accident, Roland, it's crazy!

Rozsa0:42

Claire - Au revoir and I look forward to following your Youtube videos on Tudor history.

Claire Ridgway0:42

Sorry, I meant I must go to the chateau. I'm still here!

Elizabeth Alex0:44

Wonderful, Rozsa.

Lorna Wanstall0:44

Roland Charles was 27 when he died it was caused from the result of accident when he was on his way to a game of real tennis

Rozsa0:44

It was truly freakish, Roland. Charles hit his head on a low door lintel and recovered, but went into a coma two hours later, dying the same day. BUT some say that since Charles was in poor health since returning from Italy, this may have exacerbated what should have been just a slight concussion. A doctor who examined him in Italy was said to have said that he would not live a long life.

Rozsa0:45

Thank you for staying, Claire, I suggest we all meet up at the chateau together one day. Trip to the valley of kings and queens, anyone?

Laurie Duerr0:45

Yes, definitely count me in!

Roland Hui0:45

With people apparent being shorter back then, you would think the door frame would have been made higher!

Elizabeth Alex0:46

Before or after The Anne Boleyn Experience?!

Claire Ridgway0:46

It would be a great meet-up!

Claire Ridgway0:46

Ha! Yes, Elizabeth, the sites of England and then France!

Lorna Wanstall0:46

I wish, have to get a passport first to be able to come

Roland Hui0:47

How was Queen Claude supposedly deformed?

Rozsa0:47

Elizabeth - The Tudor connection is so interesting. From my point of view, the fact that an obscure commoner such as Owen Tudor could have fathered a king of England and England's most notable monarchical line is absolutely mind-boggling!

Claire Ridgway0:47

The Loire Valley is so pretty. Lovely cider in Amboise too!

Laurie Duerr0:47

Yes, and Anne Boleyn did spend time at Amboise and Blois, so it works perfectly!

Rozsa0:47

The Loire Valley is simply the most stunning escape I have ever made. Any excuse to go back...

Claire Ridgway0:48

Owen was Henry's grandfather, but yes! Amazing.

Claire Ridgway0:48

The Loire Valley is a definite must-see, a bucket list item.

Rozsa0:49

Claude had a slight limp, like her mother. Definitely inherited. They say one of Anne's hipbones was higher than the other. They both hid it by having specially made built-up shoes made for them with higher platforms on one side. (Believe it was the left side that was shorter, but not sure.)

Roland Hui0:49

Well, Owen was supposedly very good looking to catch Catherine of Valois' attentions.

Claire Ridgway0:49

Tudor charm!

Lorna Wanstall0:49

Not to mention Margaret B quite amazing how a single mum of age 13 managed to plot and scheme her son on to the English throne and found a dynasty

Rozsa0:50

Roland - And now that you bring it up, Louis was MUCH better looking than Charles. Thank God she ended up with the true love of her life. Louis: crack tennis player, tall, long-limbed, debonair, naturally elegant. Charles: short, huge torso, short spindly legs, bulbous eyes, mouth that hung open, the endlessly long Valois nose...

Laurie Duerr0:51

Lol, I give her credit for even marrying him, despite the political advantages!

Lorna Wanstall0:51

Louis was known as the spider as well, I don't know why he was given that nickname though

Rozsa0:51

Now another author I recently discovered is Judith Arnopp, who has written a trilogy on Margaret of Beaufort. She was quite the woman of steel. If not for her, Henry Tudor would never have attained the throne.

Claire Ridgway0:52

Judith Arnopp is excellent.

Roland Hui0:52

Interesting! we always get this idea of Louis being ugly, because in his later years he married the beautiful and much younger Mary Tudor.

Rozsa0:52

Lorna - That was Louis XI, the spider king. QUITE different from Louis XII. Louis XII was a true gentleman, he was known as the father of his people.

Lorna Wanstall0:52

Another book to put on my wish list all good

Roland Hui0:52

I think Louis was called 'the universal spider' for his craftiness and skilled in politics

Lorna Wanstall0:53

Oh right, ok

Roland Hui0:54

Or was it another Louis as Rozsa says?

Rozsa0:54

Roland - Poor Louis aged early. He died at age 52, but was in poor health. One of the reasons for this was that his stalker (she was infatuated with him) was Anne de Beaujeu, regent of Charles VIII during his minority, who had Louis, Duke of Orleans (the future Louis XII) locked up for 3 years after he fought on Brittany's side in the Mad War against France. Real reason she locked him up? She was furious he disdained her attentions.

Claire Ridgway0:54

Yes, it was Louis XI

Claire Ridgway0:55

I didn't know about him being locked up!

Lorna Wanstall0:55

Roland, tis the life of princesses, married to old farts whether they like it or not.

Rozsa0:55

Roland - You are describing Louis XI. He was an incredibly skilled politician who succeeded in uniting France, bringing it firmly out of the feudal period. He was also very much disliked, unlike Louis XII who was well liked.

Elizabeth Alex0:55

Human nature!

Laurie Duerr0:55

Crazy what infatuation can make someone do!

Rozsa0:57

Oh Claire - it is such a sad story. there's a historical fiction book out called the golden Porcupine that describes the whole sad three years. I hope some of it is fictional, because the conditions of his imprisonment by Anne de Beaujeu are heartbreaking. Thank God, Charles VIII, his cousin, released him, in order to convince Anne of Brittany to marry Charles. It's all in my tale Anne and Charles.

Claire Ridgway0:57

When did Anne de Beaujeu lock Louis up? Wow!

Lorna Wanstall0:58

Yes I seem to recall the porcupine was one of the french emblems, why was that?

Rozsa0:58

From age 26-29, in the flower of his young adulthood. The battle of Cormiers Saint Aubin was in 1488, so it would be 1488-1491.

Claire Ridgway0:58

I've never heard of that. I'll have to do some digging.

Rozsa0:59

There's two theories: The porcupine according to this historical fiction book I read The Golden Porcupine came to visit Louis at the window of his prison cell and would come in to have some milk and keep him company. I hope this one's wrong, because it's too sad.

Claire Ridgway0:59

Thank you, Rozsa, for joining us and answering our questions. It's always lovely to discuss historical figures that so often get neglected. Thank you Tudor Society members for the wonderful questions.

ADMIN Tim1:00

Thank you everyone for coming, and especially for Rozsa for joining us in the Chatroom. We'd like to announce that Laurie Duerr is the lucky winner of a copy of Rozsa's book "Anne and Charles" and we'll get that to you very soon!

Lorna Wanstall1:00

This is why I love history so much, the more you did the more you find, and the more you find the more you understand that these people who lived hundreds of years ago aren't so different from us after all

Elizabeth Alex1:00

Many thanks, Rozsa, for the intro to Anne. Look forward to learning more.

Elizabeth Alex1:00

And thanks to all.

Roland Hui1:00

Thank you Rozsa

Rozsa1:00

The second theory is that in French porc-epins means pig without spines and Louis was a real gentleman, who truly cared about his people. By the time he became king, he did not wish to treat anyone the way Louis XI had treated his subjects. Therefore he tried to rule without spines.

Laurie Duerr1:00

Wonderful and very interesting! Thanks so much Rozsa and Claire!!

Claire Ridgway1:00

Congratulations, Laurie!

Lorna Wanstall1:01

Thank you Rosza, please feel free to drop into our forum and make a comment on any page that tickles your fancy

Claire Ridgway1:01

Thank you everyone for coming!

Rozsa1:01

Thank you all, wasn't this fun? Claire - put together a tour of the Loire Valley on Anne Boleyn and I'll cover the Anne of Brittany part.

Claire Ridgway1:01

That would be good!

Laurie Duerr1:01

Rozsa, do you ever do talks or events at any of the NYC museums?

Rozsa1:02

Brava, Laurie Duerr! Come and visit my Anne of Brittany Series facebook page and become a royal courtier at Anne's court.

Lorna Wanstall1:02

Right folks I'm off to bed, got a long day tommorrow. Take care and keep safe all of you Xx

Lorna Wanstall1:03

Well done Laurie Happy reading Xx

Laurie Duerr1:03

Thank you so much! How exciting!! I cant wait to read it!!

Rozsa1:03

Laurie - I am in discussion now with the Met-Cloisters to do an Anne of Brittany talk. Stay in touch through my Anne of Brittany Series facebook page and I will let you know more.

Laurie Duerr1:04

That's great, Rozsa! I will definitely keep an eye out for it!!

Lorna Wanstall1:04

Enjoy looking at the Isle of Grain, there is a lot of history here. Queen Victoria had a soft spot for this place.

Claire Ridgway1:05

Good night everyone and thank you!

Lorna Wanstall1:06

St Mary Hoo which is just down the road, the church there is where George the 4 or Prince George as he was at the time married his mistress.

Lorna Wanstall1:06

Maria Fitzherbert

Rozsa1:07

Claire - Just to let you know, Anne de Beaujeu had Louis locked up in Bourges, France. Truly awful, but once he got out, he forgave her. When he became king he was documented to have said that the grievances of the duke of Orleans were forgotten by the king of France. A truly noble soul, no wonder Anne of Brittany fell in love with him.