

Observation on the time of the death and place of burial of Queen Katharine Parr / [T. Nash].

Contributors

Nash, T. (Treadway Russell), 1725-1811.

Publication/Creation

[London] : [Soc. of Antiquaries], [1789]

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/n2zvan8s>

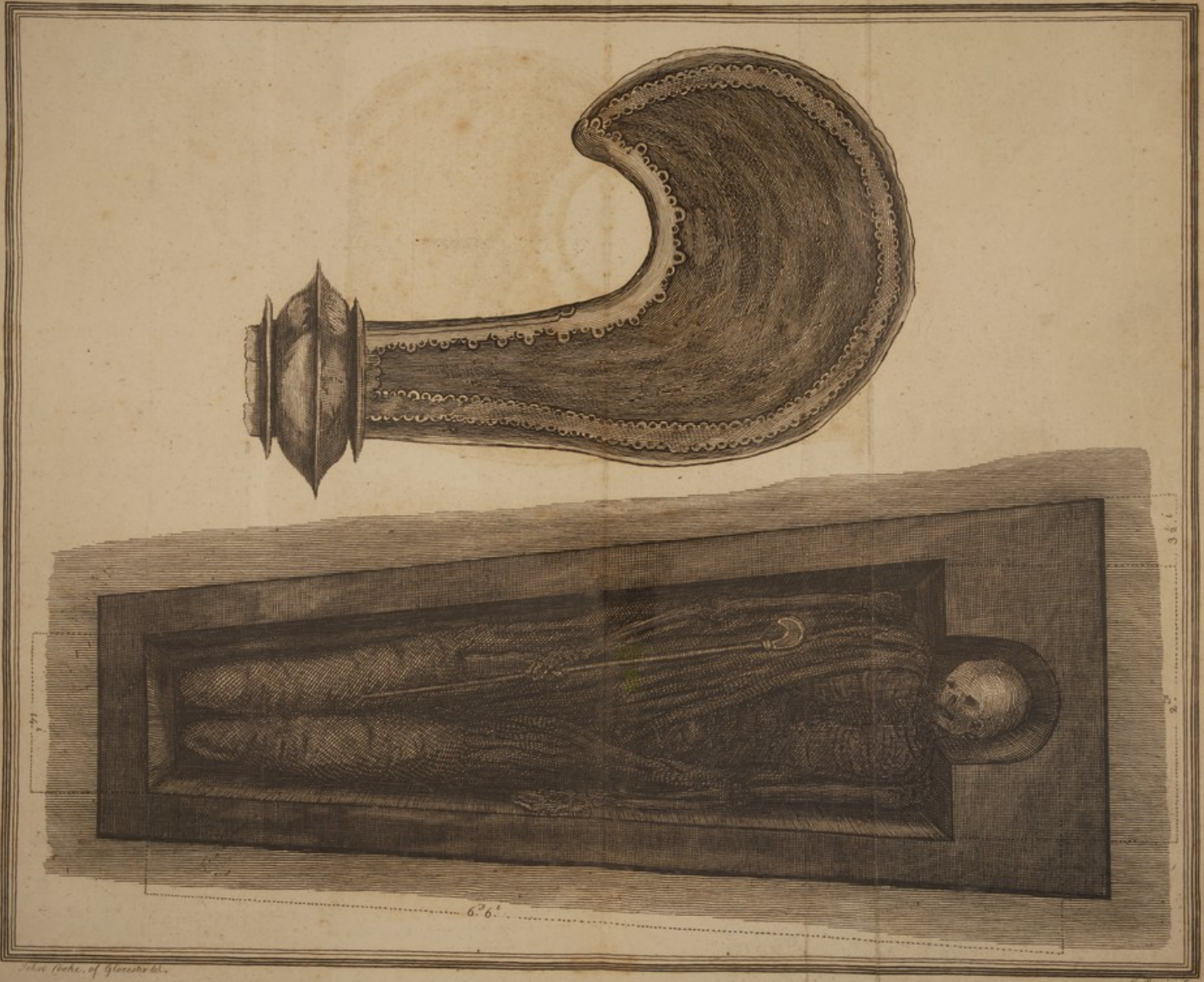
License and attribution

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>



72200
11

(1)

ARCHAEOLOGIA:
OR,
MISCELLANEOUS TRACTS, &c.

I. *Observation on the Time of the Death and Place of Burial of Queen Katharine Parr. By the Rev. Treadway Nash, D. D. F. A. S.*

Read June 14, 1787.

AS it is the plan of the Society of Antiquaries to give attention to discoveries however trifling, which may tend to illustrate any point of English history, I now take the liberty of laying before them some circumstances which clearly ascertain the time of the death, and burying place of Katharine Parr, sixth and last wife of Henry the Eighth. If no account of this discovery hath by any one been laid before the Society, I wish this to be read, as George Ballard the industrious Antiquary of Cambden, a town about ten miles from Sudley, says, the particulars of

Vol. IX. B the



Part of Archaeologia, vol. IX

the death and burial of this lady are *defiderata*, and his ignorance of it appears the more extraordinary, as his business of a stay-maker must often have led him into those parts.

Indeed my late worthy and ingenious friend Mr. Granger, says, "The Rev. Mr. Hugget, a very accurate Antiquary, has given undoubted authority for the death of this Queen in the Castle of Sudley in Gloucestershire, September 5, 1548; and for her interment in the Chapel there." Probably he alludes to a MS. in the Heralds College, intituled, "A book of Buryalls of trew Noble Persons, N^o 15, p. 98, 99, entitled a breviat of the interment of the Ladye Katheryn Parre, Quene Dowager, &c."—which goes on,

"Item, on Wenyfdaye the 5 Septembre, between 2 or 3 of the clocke in the morninge died the aforesaid Ladye, late Quene Dowager, at the Castle of Sudley in Gloucestershire, 1548, and lyeth buried in the Chappell of the said Castle.

"Item, she was ceaird and cheftid in lead accordinglie, and so remained, &c."

This account being published in Rudder's new History of Gloucestershire, raised the curiosity of some ladies, who happened to be at the Castle in May 1782, to examine the ruined Chapel, and observing a large block of alabaster, fixed in the North wall of the Chapel, they imagined it might be the back of a monument formerly placed there. Led by this hint they opened the ground not far from the wall; and not much more than a foot from the surface they found a leaden envelope which they opened in two places, on the face and breast, and found it to contain a human body wrapped in cerecloth. Upon removing what covered the face, they discovered the features, and particularly the eyes, in perfect preservation. Alarmed at this sight, and with the smell, which came principally from the

cere-

cerecloth, they ordered the ground to be thrown in immediately without judiciously closing up the cerecloth and lead, which covered the face: only observing enough of the inscription to convince them that it was the body of Queen Katharine.

In May 1784 some persons having curiosity again to open the grave, found that the air, rain, and dirt, having come to the face, it was entirely destroyed, and nothing left but the bones. It was then immediately covered up, and no farther search made.

October 14, 1786, I went to Sudley [a], in company with the Hon. John Sommers Cocks, and Mr. John Skipp of Ledbury, having previously obtained leave of Lord Rivers, the owner of the Castle, to examine the Chapel. Upon opening the ground, and heaving up the lead, we found the face totally decayed, the bones only remaining; the teeth, which were found, had fallen out of their sockets. The body, I believe, is perfect, as it has never been opened: we thought it indelicate and indecent to uncover it; but observing the left hand to lie at a small distance from the body, we took off the cerecloth, and found the hand and nails perfect, but of a brownish colour: the cerecloth consisted of many folds of coarse linen, dipped in wax, tar, and perhaps some gums: over this was wrapt a sheet of lead fitted exactly close to the body.

I could not perceive any remains of a wooden coffin. On that part of the lead which covered the breast was the inscription similar to the etching hereunto annexed.

The Queen must have been low of stature, as the lead which inclosed her corpse was but five feet four inches long. The letters K. P. above the inscription was the signature she com-

[a] Sudley is situated near to Winchcombe, about 13 miles from Gloucester, and about 8 from Cheltenham.

monly used, though sometimes she signs herself, "Keteryn the Quene."—It seems at first extraordinary she should be buried so near the surface of the ground, but we should consider, that a pavement, and perhaps some earth had been taken away, since she was first interred, and as she was buried within the Communion-rails, probably that ground might be formerly two or three steps higher than the rest of the Chapel [b].

I could heartily wish more respect were paid to the remains of this amiable though unfortunate Queen, and would willingly, with proper leave, have them wrapt in another sheet of lead and coffin, and decently interred in some proper place, that at least after her death her body might remain in peace; whereas the Chapel where she now lies is used for the keeping of rabbits, which make holes and scratch very indecently about her Royal corpse. Besides the Queen, many other eminent persons are buried in this Chapel, Sir John Bruges created Lord Chandos of Sudely, in the reign of Queen Mary (ancestor to the present Duke of Chandos), his son Edmund Lord Chandos, Giles Lord Chandos, and Grey Lord Chandos, who, for the great interest he had in those parts, was called the King of Coteswold; and George Lord Chandos, who had three horses killed under him at the Battle of Newbury, in defence of King Charles the First. All these, together with many eminent men, lie neglected in the ruined Chapel of Sudley.

The Chapel was an elegant building in the Gothic style, ornamented with a tower, battlements, and pinnacles, probably of a later date than the Castle, which, though it was much altered and improved by the High Admiral, doth not appear as if built by him from the foundation, but of an age prior to that

[b] Her head lies to the West, and her feet to the East, so that rising upon her feet, her face would be to the East.

of Henry the Seventh. Indeed, great part of the Castle was built by Ralph le Boteler, Lord of Sudley, 20 Henry VI. out of the spoils taken from the French. He was Treasurer of England, and Admiral at Sea, where he took Portman a Frenchman prisoner, with whose ransom he built one of the towers, which from his name was called Portman's Tower [c]. It was probably *then* a very magnificent palace, for the owner of it, when arrested by Henry the Fourth, as he was being conveyed to London, looked back upon Sudley Castle, and was heard to say, "Sudley Castle, thou art the Traytor, not I."

From the epitaph written by Dr. Parkhurst, chaplain to Queen Katharine, as well as from the style of the building, I should think the *Chapel* was intirely built by the brother of the Protector Somerset; for the brothers were both great patrons of the arts, and Sudley Castle might once have rivalled Somerset House in the Strand, and had this advantage, that it was not founded so much on rapine, and devastation of private property.—But to return to Queen Katharine.

Katharine Parr was born about the year 1510. She was the eldest of the daughters of Sir Thomas Parr of Kendal in Westmoreland. Her father, though not rich, bestowed on her a learned education, which at that time was much in fashion: her fine parts and great application enabled her to make improvements suitable to the opportunities allowed her. Her person and deportment were amiable, though she was not esteemed a beauty. Her father by his last will gave her a fortune of £.400. a portion even at that time small for the daughter of a country gentleman. Sir Thomas likewise in his will bequeaths to his son a gold chain given him by the King, of the value of £.140.—If the royal present had not been highly esteemed,

[c] See Atkins's Gloucestershire, p. 369.

the chain would have been fold, and increased his daughter's fortune.

Katharine was early married to Edward Burghe; after his death, to John Neville Lord Latimer, a nobleman of large property in Worcestershire, and other counties; for George Neville Lord Latimer, marrying Elizabeth, daughter and heir of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, had the manors of Great Cumberton, Wadborough, and other estates in our county, which, on his marriage, John Lord Latimer settled on Katharine Parr in jointure, and she held them during her life.

I do not find how long her first or second husband lived with her, but she was [d] married to the King at Hampton Court, July 12, 1543, at the latter end of that Monarch's life, when he was violent and cruel, so that, in all probability, she enjoyed with him but little happiness or quiet. Indeed, she was near paying for her royalty with her life, for as she had been taught from her infancy to enquire into the principles of her religion, she could not help arguing sometimes with the King: a thing he could never bear, especially in matters of religion, in which he thought every one should conform to his ideas, and deemed it the highest presumption, that Kate, as he called her, should turn Doctor, and pretend to instruct him; by the instigation therefore of Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, he ordered the Chancellor Wriothesley to arrest her, and convey her to the Tower, from whence she would probably have ended her days upon a scaffold, if her adroitness and submission had not appeased the wrath of her husband. With this tyrant she lived three years, six months, and five days, and only escaped his

[d] It is to be observed that though a widow when she married the King, yet she was distinguished by her maiden name. So the wife of Edward IV. was called Elizabeth Widville, and not Elizabeth Grey.

clutches

clutches, to fall into worse hands. She loved learning, and was a great patron of it, being herself well informed. She interceded earnestly for the University of Cambridge, which was in danger of sharing the fate of the monasteries [e]. She was of a religious turn, composed many letters, prayers, and pious meditations both in Latin and English. I shall quote one prayer, which breathes the true spirit of Humanity and Christianity. It was written during the French war, and the King's expedition into France, and seems preferable to the prayer directed by our liturgy to be used in time of war. It runs thus: "Our cause being just, and being enforced to enter into war and battle, we most humbly beseech thee, O Lord God of Hosts, so to turn the hearts of our enemies to the desire of peace, that no Christian blood be spilt; or else, grant, O Lord, that with small effusion of blood, and to the little hurt of innocents, we may, to thy glory, obtain victory, and that, the wars being soon ended, we may all with one heart and mind, knit together in concord and unity, laud and praise thee, O Lord."—This to my ears sounds better than, "abate their pride, assuage their malice, and confound their devices."

The fairest characters may easily admit a stain, and the most immaculate are not secure from the breath of scandal: even Queen Katharine is charged with too great a partiality for Sir Thomas Seymour, and with an affection for him before she married the King. This affection revived after the death of her royal husband, if it did not continue during his life: however it is certain she soon and privately married Sir Thomas, "so soon, that it is said, if she had early proved pregnant it might have been doubtful whose child it was," but she was not delivered

[e] See her Letter in Strype's Ecclesiastical Memorials.

for a year and half after the king's death. This match was attended with the fate of most clandestine marriages, the misery and ruin of the female; for, cruel as Henry was, Katharine escaped better from the clutches of the King, than from the ill usage and treachery of her beloved Seymour. She died the seventh day after she was delivered of a daughter (whom the father before his execution committed to the care of the Dutchess of Suffolk), of a broken heart, not without suspicion of poison [f].

Thus did a hard fate attend this amiable woman. The ambition of Seymour, the object of her choice, was not satisfied with marrying the Queen Dowager, but he aimed at a match with the Princess Elizabeth, by which he hoped he might one day become husband to the Queen regent, if not King of England: besides, the pride of her sister in law, and the ill temper of her husband, whom she adored to the last, and who had every external qualification calculated to captivate the female heart, were constant sources of misery to this unfortunate woman.

Strype has given us an Epitaph written by her chaplain, Dr. Parkhurst, afterward Bishop of Norwich, which perhaps was engraved on the monument erected for her in the Chapel of Sudley castle: it is as follows;

Hoc Regina novo dormit Katharina sepulchro,
 Sexus fœminei flos, honor, atque decus:
 Hæc fuit Henrico conjux fidiſſima regi,
 Quem poſtquam e vivis Parca tuliffet atrox,
 Thomæ Seymero (cui tu, Neptune, tridentem
 Porrigis) eximio nupſerat illa viro:
 Huic peperit natam; a partu cum ſeptimus orbem
 Sol illuſtraſſet, mors truculenta necat.

[f] This heavy charge is founded on the Salisbury papers published by Haynes, p. 103, 104.

and Place of Burial of Queen Katharine Parr.

2

Defunctam madidis famuli deflemus ocellis,
Humescit tristes terra Britanna genas :
Nos infelices mœror consumit acerbus,
Inter cœlestes gaudet at illa choros.

Englished thus :

In this new tomb the royal Kath'rine lies,
Flower of her sex, renowned, great, and wise.
A wife by every nuptial virtue known,
And faithful partner once of Henry's throne.
To Seymour next her plighted hand she yields
(Seymour who Neptune's trident justly wields);
From him a beauteous daughter blest'd her arms,
An infant copy of her parent's charms.
When now seven days this tender flower had bloom'd,
Heaven in it's wrath the mother's soul resum'd.
Great Kath'rine's merit in our grief appears,
While fair Britannia dews her cheek with tears,
Our loyal breasts with rising sighs are torn,
With saints she triumphs, we with mortals mourn.

There is an original picture of her in the gallery at Lambeth
over the chimney-piece.

II. *An Account of the Discovery of the Corpse of one of the Abbots of Gloucester. In a Letter from Mr. John Cooke, Surgeon, of that City, to Charles Marsh, Esq. F. R. and A. S. S.*

Read June 21, 1787.

IN the year 1741, Bishop Benson, at his single expence, for the better securing of the organ, which had been removed some years before from the South side of the choir, gave order that a screen with proper pillars should be erected. During the course of this work a stone coffin containing the corpse of an abbot was discovered. Very lately it was thought proper that the whole of the pavement of the body of the church should be new laid, to which the late Chancellor Benson very liberally contributed. It was begun in his life-time. This occasioned the same coffin to be again exposed, and by this it is also to be apprehended that many very antient grave stones must be destroyed and the modern ones removed from the vaults they covered to distinct places, to effect the uniformity of the flooring. On Monday the 7th of March last I had past through the Cathedral at the time when the same graves were just exposed. Several persons were standing round the venerable remains, and I was called upon to be a spectator of that awful sight. My attention was instantly fixt, and I made a sketch which I have since perfected.

perfected[a]. Had I not accidentally past at the time of the removal of the stones which concealed the above coffin, it is probable we might not have had this opportunity of illustrating the annals of our abbots. The stone coffin in which the corpse was laid, was so near the surface that it had no other covering but the old pavement. The deceased appeared to have been buried in a robe or gown, and leathern boots: the leather still retaining a degree of firmness, nor had it totally lost its elastic quality. The robe was decayed; for although it had the appearance of folds in several parts, yet when toucht it was found to be nothing but powder or dust; the bones were not injured.

Anatomists tell us, “bodies may be discovered in vaults seeming perfect and sound, because the earth in every part of the animal still retains a degree of adhesion, though every other principle is destroyed, such bodies are not putrid (for it does not follow that animals always became putrid after death) yet when exposed to air or on the touch crumble into dust.”

There was in the hand of the deceased a crozier neatly adorned with silver, which had been gilt and burnished. It was chiefly of wood, and the staff perfectly hard and sound. When first seen by me it was intire. The drawing gives an exact copy of it, as to size, form, &c. There were also some remnants of other symbols, marking the grave of an abbot. Our monastic history informs us, that JOHN WIGMORE, or WYGMOR, prior, was made abbot in 1329, and dying on the 12th of the Kalends of March 1337, was buried in the South side, near the entrance of the choir, which he inclosed. On this very spot was this stone coffin. It is of one stone only, hewn out for the reception of the body. The cavity in which the corpse, &c. was laid measures in length six feet six inches and an half; its form as represented in the drawing I have sent. The crozier was removed

[a] See plate II.

by some person in 1741, when it was first discovered; but the pious bishop, who considered the remains of his predecessor as sacred, ordered that it should be immediately replaced, and commanded that no further liberties might be taken with any thing appertaining to the deceased. But this humane order was not strictly observed, as several persons cut off pieces of the gown or robe, in appearance a kind of serge. One of the sextons was known to have a remnant of this robe in his pocket for many years. I have heard also of the remains of the gloves and other ornaments not very exactly described by those who saw them. As to the sketch herewith sent, it has been seen by some of those people, who agree that as well as they can recollect it resembles what they saw at the time of the former opening of the pavement. Two of these persons saw it after the second opening, and all agree in sentiment, and I have the satisfaction to hear them declare it to be a faithful representation.

I am to add, this strongly proves that a dry situation near the surface of the ground, where nothing is near the body but a porous stone, is one of the best preservatives for the animal frame, and in that situation the bones may remain without injury 400 years.

On the day following I made another visit to the place; beheld the grave was filled up with rubbish, and the sacred bones of the venerable old man were scattered, his skull broken in pieces, and my distress not easy to be described. Several persons were standing round the grave. A few days after this one of the vergers called on me at my request, and brought with him the remains of the head of the abbot's crozier, that I might correct my drawing by it if necessary. The master of the workmen has great part of the stick or staff which belonged to it,

of one of the Abbots of Gloucester.

13

it, and I had from the sexton a piece of the boot. The motive which induced the workmen to disturb the body seems to have been the searching after spurs. If this narrative of facts has your approbation, and you think proper to lay it before the Society, you will do me honour.

I remain with great esteem,

Sir, your obliged and obedient humble servant,

Gloucester, April 18, 1787.

JOHN COOKE

III. *Letter from Count de Bruhl, Envoy from the Elector of Saxony, and Knight of the White Eagle of Poland, F. R. and A. SS. to the Hon. Daines Barrington, containing some Chess Anecdotes of the present Century.*

Read May 3, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

I FIND myself very much honoured by the very able and learned Dissertation you have been pleased to address to me, and, in compliance with your commands, I have sent it to the Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries, to which I can easily conceive it must prove a very valuable acquisition. Perhaps, before it is sent to the press, you would wish to add some notices concerning two eminent players in France, and likewise make use of the inclosed anecdote.

One of the first rate players in France was a Monsieur de Grosmenil, who died at an advanced age about the year 28 or 30 of this century, and, who had attained such a superior skill that Mr. de Légal who is still living, though turned of 80, told me when I was last at Paris, in Nov. 1785, that Mr. de Grosmenil generally beat him every game of which he had the move. Mr. de Légal is allowed to be even now the best player after Philidor, who owes chiefly to his instruction the superior skill he possesses. The late Chancellor Daguesseau was also an excellent player, to whom neither Mr. de Légal nor Philidor

P. V. M. S.