

Francia. Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte

Herausgegeben vom Deutschen Historischen Institut Paris

(Institut historique allemand)

Band 1 (1973)

DOI: 10.11588/fr.2001.2.46766

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Saluons la volonté affichée de centrer le livre à la fois sur l'histoire de l'Europe comme sur celle du monde, l'accent enfin posé sur les méthodes de travail, et les aspects novateurs de l'histoire »moderne«. Mais l'histoire économique, surtout vue de France, et plus encore l'histoire des mentalités sont-elles réellement tellement récentes? La première connaît de longue date, une large désaffection; la seconde enregistre des résultats solides très contrastés. Le mot »Volkskunde« peut, pour d'aucun d'entre nous, évoquer de fâcheux souvenirs. Quant aux images de l'histoire de l'art, à ne les considérer qu'en tant que simple source, me semble, à tort ou à raison, un tantinet court. D'autres notions font l'objet de confrontations difficiles à arbitrer surtout pour un étudiant débutant: par exemple celle de révolution atlantique présente de très sérieux inconvénients. Des coïncidences, en bon jargon policier, ne sont pas des preuves.

Ces remarques critiques ne doivent pas occulter le caractère résolument novateur de l'ensemble, ne doivent pas masquer l'extraordinaire exploit que constitue la condensation en moins de 20 pages d'un savoir admirable – inégal certes, comme pour tout ouvrage collectif, le sérieux avec lequel le tout a été conçu et exécuté: j'aimerais disposer pour nos étudiants français, de quelque chose d'équivalent. Ceci dit, la découpe de l'histoire moderne peut se concevoir autrement: notre collègue Schilling, en un maître livre, en a fait la démonstration. Faire débiter l'histoire moderne au début du XIII^e siècle n'a pas le même sens que de la faire commencer avec Luther. Quant aux choix bibliographiques, si utiles, ils sont tous discutables, par nature. Il est bien des grands noms qui paradoxalement manquent. Il faudrait que la jeune génération, qui nous apporte tant, n'oublie quand même pas l'historiographie passée, qui avait, en Allemagne surtout, d'énormes maîtres. Tout ce qui est vieux n'est, certes, pas nécessairement bon; mais inversement tout ce qui est récent (et qui comporte tant de répétitions volontaires ou involontaires) n'est pas non plus nécessairement excellent¹.

Jean MEYER, Paris

Fanny COSANDEY, *La reine de France. Symbole et pouvoir XV^e–XVIII^e siècles*, Paris (Gallimard) 2000, 414 p. (Bibliothèque des Histoires).

The status, activities and influence of consorts and mothers of rulers in the early modern age have too often remained hidden. Only when they acted as regent, or were conspicuously active in court faction, do we find more than fleeting attention in traditional historiography. Surely, this situation was not primarily dictated by the paucity of sources, as these contain frequent references to royal consorts. At court, their presence was so marked that observers willing and able to perceive it should be able to fill this notable gap in historiography. This is what Fanny Cosandey has attempted to do in »La reine de France«. Cosandey concentrates on the legal and symbolic position of the queen, as constructed in the *loi salique*, marriage and dowry, and in the great dynastic ceremonies: *sacre*, entries, funerals. Furthermore, she discusses the powers of the queen-mother as regent, and the apparent effacement of the queen in the later seventeenth century. In the final chapter, Rubens' famous cycle of paintings for Marie de Medici is discussed in some detail, as it reflects several themes recurring in the book. The conclusion, finally, reaches beyond the relatively detailed analysis characteristic for the preceding chapters, presenting a sweeping overview of the queen's role from the later middle ages to the end of the ancien regime.

In the first part of Cosandey's book, succession in the male line emerges as one of the factors dominating the French queen's fate; her full, yet always conditional sharing of the

1 Nota Bene: un très bon point à la page 409 où un hommage vibrant est enfin rendu à la H.A.B. de Wolfenbüttel où tant de collègues français ont reçu un accueil inoubliable (l'ennui est que le livre de Lindner est épuisé, pour de bien obscures raisons).

king's sovereignty as another. The *loi salique* arose as a reinterpretation of earlier practices, prompted by the Hundred Years' War. Women were barred from succession to the throne mainly to prevent the investiture of a foreign prince in France. Yet in the same period the dowager-queen emerged as the accepted and natural regent. Princesses, likely to marry foreign princes, should not rule; queen-mothers, however, were expected to bridge the gap in male succession by acting as regent. French kings would increasingly marry foreign princesses, as only these dynasties could match their sovereign status; yet such marriages were not seen as threatening, because the queen was expected to take a clearly subservient role. Furthermore, they created multiple ties among the European dynasties, and were seen as a means to cement interdynastic alliances. The queen's dowry, more substantial than the dowry given to princesses, approached the traditional princely appanage in its near-autonomous character, and her train of life demonstrated her prominent share in the soaring construction of royal power.

In the variety of sixteenth- and more particularly seventeenth-century treatises discussing French kings, their ceremonies and their sovereign rights, the queen was usually relegated to a minor role. While Cosandey has gleaned relevant details about the queens' positions in ceremonies from these texts, she also exposes their tendency to turn the constitutional myth of Salic law into the more general notion that women simply were not fit to rule – Cardin le Bret's »De La Souveraineté du Roy« (1632) is most often cited as an example. The great dynastic ceremonies, and their reflections in printed works, have long since been studied by a range of fine scholars, notably including Ralph E. Giesey (funerals), Sarah Hanley (*lits de justice*), Lawrence Bryant (entries) Richard Jackson (*sacre* and coronation), and more recently Alain Boureau. In the second part of her book, Cosandey adds to this »historiographie cérémonialiste« dominated by American historians what has previously been omitted or discussed only briefly: the exact position granted to the queen in *sacre*, entry, and funeral. She carefully notes the changes over time; the differences with the king's position are analysed (and summarised in a useful table at the end of the book). The wealth of detail, and the obvious erudition of Cosandey's work are impressive. While clearly conveying the relevance of well-orchestrated dynastic highpoints, she manages to circumvent the quagmire of endless ceremonial detail. This book is an important contribution, as it allows us to locate the queen more clearly in a vital sphere of the courtly universe.

The *sacre* and the funeral indicate that the queen ascended to her supreme status only through the king. In the initial phase of the *sacre*, the queen's role was clearly less elevated than the king's: her anointment was simpler, nor did she share the king's chivalrous and priestly appurtenances. Towards the end of the funeral she would again lose the near-equality she had enjoyed as queen of France. The king in addition to his mortal body had an everlasting symbolic and dynastic body, representing the continuity of monarchical rule. This dimension was conspicuously absent in the queen's case. Her *maître d'hôtel* shouts twice: »la reine est morte«, as does his compeer for the king – but only in the king's case, do we find the familiar corollary: »vive le roi«. Incidentally, queens could mould royal ceremonies: Anne de Bretagne's funeral, marking not only her death but also the transition of the duchy of Bretagne to France, set the standard for François I's funeral. The entries, more diverse and less codified than either *sacre* or funeral, also granted a special place to the queen: she was addressed as the peoples' go-between with the king. The queen stood for peace and stability, the king for victory and glory. The urban communities wanted the queen to intercede with the king.

In the third part of »La Reine de France«, Cosandey connects the increasingly religious images of king and queen to *droit divin* and the rise of »absolutism«. Whereas the queen in her intermediary and religiously coloured role approached the image of the Virgin Mary, the king became »roi Christ«. Louis XIII radically transformed the royal funeral ceremonies by omitting the habits most conspicuously indicating that the king »never died« such as the

meals served to his effigy: he wanted his funeral without much ado, and posed not as the supreme sovereign but as a simple Christian. The last chapters of the third part deal respectively with the queen as regent and the Rubens cycle for Marie de Medici; they lead to a conclusion stressing the effacement of the queen, pointing to the examples of Marie-Thérèse, Marie Leszcynska, Marie-Antoinette. The process of stateformation, from the religious wars to the rise of absolutism, emerges as a major explanation for the queen's subsidiary status after the late seventeenth century.

After reading the entirely convincing first two parts of this competent study, the last part is somewhat disappointing in construction and argument. More clearly than the other parts, it shows the limits of Cosandey's considerable achievement. Can we discuss the power of queens on the basis of learned tracts and descriptions of ceremony? Cosandey allows us to grasp the changing symbols and rituals, but can we conclude that the queens' power neatly followed this development? A recurring problem in the study of conspicuous representation is the nature of the connection between this ceremonial ›discourse‹ and the down-to-earth realities of life at court. Surely, the latter dimension – reconnoitered by such authors as Jacqueline Boucher, Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret, and Simone Bertière – contains relevant information. Details about the queen's *maison*, her finances, her connections at court and elsewhere, form an indispensable complement to Cosandey's approach. She understandably chose not to systematically pursue the non-symbolic dimension of power, but did not extend the logic of this legitimate choice to her conclusion. Within the ›symbolic‹ domain Cosandey, moreover, neglects the ritualized routines of the household, such as the queen's role in religious or diplomatic ceremonies at court: these show few traces of ›effacement‹.

Can we fully accept the suggestion that the sequence of three less imposing queens, and a male regency were the consequence of a structural effacement of the queen, engendered by wide-ranging processes? Marie-Thérèse died young, and Louis XIV chose not to marry publicly and officially thereafter – his morganatic wife, however, had great influence especially in his last years. Cosandey herself explains that Marie Leszcynska's position was exceptional: she was mainly selected as the most healthy and promising mother for a new *dauphin*, and was no match for the major European dynasties. *L'Autrichienne* Marie-Antoinette is mentioned briefly by Cosandey, who suggests that her attempt to obtain a comfortable level of privacy cost the French monarchy dearly – an overstatement, as the same penchant had surfaced in Louis XIV's last years, and much more explicitly in Louis XV's reign. A quick glance at the situation in Austria, moreover, would have suggested that Marie-Antoinette simply followed the habits of her court, a tendency to be observed throughout the early modern age. Moreover, the sequence of sturdy empresses and dowager-empresses in Vienna counteracts the notion of a general ›effacement‹ of female rule or power. Without being an adept of ›iffy‹ history, moreover, we may feel tempted to consider what would have happened if the duc de Bourgogne and his accomplished Sabaudian *dauphine* had not died prematurely – a more substantial role for that queen seems altogether likely.

Cosandey's sketch of the queen's formal and symbolic position as it evolved from the later middle ages into the seventeenth century is of undisputed merit and interest; she shows great knowledge and understanding of ceremonies. Her less solidly based observations about later seventeenth- and eighteenth century queens form a coda that did not strike me as wholly convincing.

Jeroen DUINDAM, Utrecht