
Configuring the Authority of Queens in the French Monarchy, 1600s-1840s

Author(s): Sarah Hanley

Source: *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques*, Summer 2006, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Summer 2006), pp. 453-464

Published by: Berghahn Books

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41299380>

REFERENCES

Linked references are available on JSTOR for this article:

https://www.jstor.org/stable/41299380?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references_tab_contents

You may need to log in to JSTOR to access the linked references.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques*

JSTOR

Configuring the Authority of Queens in the French Monarchy, 1600s-1840s

Sarah Hanley

Reading the provocative studies of Fanny Cosandey, Thomas E. Kaiser and Jo Burr Margadant in sequence, it is startling to behold the range of issues raised by the interdependent nature of family and state relations in the French monarchic system of government. Whereas most monarchies in Europe adhered to male preference in succession to the crown but recognized female rule in lieu of males, France was an exception. Once the ancient Salic Law (purportedly excluding women from rule) was exposed as a gross medieval forgery, modern French jurists and political writers configured an alternative political theory of Male Right grounded in the law of nature and expressed through the notion of *The king's one body*.¹ The development of a French precept of Male Right rooted in nature

1. The ancient Salic Law Code (c. 507-804) did not contain an ordinance that excluded women from realm and rule, hence the Carolingian text of the Salic ordinance (tit., *De alode*, art. 6) that was resurrected in the 1400s would not sustain that legal claim without the serious tampering that occurred; see Sarah Hanley, "Identity Politics and Rulership in France: Female Political Place and the Fraudulent Salic Law in Christine de Pizan and Jean de Montreuil" in *Changing Identities in Early Modern France*, ed. Michael Wolfe (Durham, NC, 1997), pp. 79-97; "Mapping Rulership in the French Body Politic: Political Identity, Public Law and *The King's One Body*," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 23 (1997): 129-149; and "La Loi Salique" in *Encyclopédie politique et historique des femmes*, ed. Christine Fauré (Paris, 1997), pp. 11-30 (Eng. ed., London, 2003); and the book (in progress) on the topic, Hanley, *The King's One Body: From the Fraudulent Salic Law to the Political Theory of Male Right in France, 1400s-1700s*.

Sarah Hanley is a Professor of History and Law at the University of Iowa.

© 2006 HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS/REFLEXIONS HISTORIQUES, Vol. 32, no. 2

challenges scholars to consider how the authority to govern was theorized, articulated and practiced thereafter. To that end, these articles investigate the way foreign-born queens (by marriage to French kings) acted with astute advisers (jurists and political writers, eulogists and ceremonial planners, artists and engravers) to conceptualize, publicize and practice queenship while walking a thin ideological line between observing male rule and deflecting opposition to female authority in the monarchic state, 1600s-1700s, and then balancing family interests with the public interest in the French state, 1830s-1840s.

We can discern three distinct stages in this complex endeavor to shape a queen's office that would complement that of the king from the 1600s to the 1840s. In the study of Fanny Cosandey, "La maîtresse de nos biens": Pouvoir féminin et puissance dynastique dans la monarchie française d'Ancien Régime," a first stage in that schematic framework emerges during the 1600s, when queens were aided by a sort of cultural bridge that enabled them to cross between family and state affairs and achieve integration in the monarchic state. In that of Thomas Kaiser, "Scandal in the Royal Nursery: Marie-Antoinette and the *Gouvernantes des Enfants de France*," a second stage is evident in the late 1700s, when the bridge for crossing between the royal family and the monarchic state was blocked at points, disallowing full assimilation in the monarchic state. In the work of Jo Burr Margadant, "Representing Queen Marie-Amélie in a 'Bourgeois' Monarchy," a third stage is marked in the 1830s and 1840s by the lack of any cultural bridge to assist a queen in moving between the royal family in a constitutional monarchy and the larger political arena of the French state. Tracing the actions of four daughters of the European aristocracy who were raised in foreign lands and installed as French queens by marriage acts—Marie de Médicis (Italy), Anne of Austria (Spain), Marie Antoinette (Austria) and Marie-Amélie (Sicily)²—reveals the array of steps taken to replicate an ostensibly staid, but actually unstable, office of queen which required constant reinvention in a system of monarchy where family and

2. In the monarchic state of the 1600s-1700s the king-spouses treated here were Henry IV (Marie de Médicis), 1589-1610; Louis XIII (Anne of Austria), 1610-43; and Louis XVI (Marie Antoinette), 1774-9[3] (the monarchy was abolished in 1792, the king and queen executed in 1793). In the French state of the 1800s the king-spouse was Louis-Philippe I, "king of the French" (Marie-Amélie), 1830-48 (he was a cadet male called to rule by the Chamber of Deputies).

It would be interesting to know how queens fared in reigns missing from our purview: in the monarchic state, Louis XV (Marie Leszczyńska, Poland), 1715-74; and in the French state, Louis XVIII (Louise-Marie-Josephine, Savoy), 1814-24 (who proclaimed himself regent for his nephew, the dauphin [Louis XVII, d. 1795]), and Charles X (Marie-Thérèse, Savoy), 1824-30, whose grandson was bypassed for the cadet, Louis-Philippe (1830) treated here.

state interests, for better or worse, were irrevocably interlaced across generations.

Fanny Cosandey, whose fine book on French queens is essential reading in the field,³ looks at the first stage in this odyssey of queens during the 1600s. Marie de Médicis and Anne of Austria were integrated, actually and symbolically, in the monarchic system by virtue of their ability to criss-cross safely, despite endemic badgering and criticism, between family and state arenas of power. While gendered parameters separated queen from king, they also facilitated the capacity of a queen, through the authority conferred by maternity (giving birth to sons), to act in the political arena as well. In this era the queen was authorized to fill the related, albeit contingent, political office of regent (for a minor son) in the event of political necessity (death of the king). The authority of the queen was enhanced, therefore, by her stance in two complementary spheres, the family (as mother) and the state (as putative queen regent). In one sphere a queen, as mother, physically sustained the royal family in *one body* by giving birth to sons and transmitting property to them. In the other the queen, as regent, politically maintained the monarchic state in the *other body* by taking up the office of regent (for a minor son). As a result, the queen was a key player in a complex familial-political arena where she legitimately sidestepped female bias and transcended male rule for the “public good” by taking an interim place in government. It is worth recalling, in support of Cosandey’s thesis, the unprecedented and powerful civic rituals that were devised to confirm the queen’s extended familial and political authority, such as the Inaugural Lit de Justice assembly, first held in 1610, again in 1643, and well advertised in pictures publicly circulated. There the queen, as regent, sat in the Parlement of Paris with the dauphin (under her tutelage), who was invested as king (albeit a minor), thus displacing the Royal Funeral (rendered obsolete thereafter) and the Coronation (held months later).⁴ While the king (who was *married to the*

3. Consult Fanny Cosandey, *La Reine de France: symbole et pouvoir XVe-XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 2000), which includes important information on the legal condition of French queens as wives and transmitters of property; also Cosandey, “Puissance maternelle et pouvoir politique: la régence des reines mères,” *Clio* 21 (2005): 69-90, discussing the budding idea of the queen’s *two bodies*.

4. See Sarah Hanley, *The Lit de Justice of the Kings of France: Constitutional Ideology in Legend, Ritual, and Discourse* (Princeton, NJ, 1983; French ed., Paris, 1994), chaps. 10-12, fig. 7-13, reconstituting the civic rituals featuring Marie de Médicis and Anne of Austria as regents seated with dauphins in the innovative Inaugural Lit de Justice assemblies (1610 and 1643) and also the Majority Lit de Justice (1614 and 1653), including the engravings immediately circulated to advertise those events; also for the maxims, including the extended marriage metaphor.

kingdom, the domain the dowry of his crown) was confined to *one body*, the body politic, Cosandey suggests the queen (married to the king, her property heritable) stood ready and able to fill *two bodies*, one in the royal family (as mother) and transmitter of “goods,” the other in the monarchic state (as putative regent). The notion of *The queen’s two bodies* that surfaces in this context, I would suggest, complemented the theory of *The king’s one body* already in place.

It would be well, it seems to me, to align the political theory of Male Right set forth from the mid-1500s—which incorporated the immortal body politic in *The king’s one body* (an undying series of male successors)—with the emerging notion of *The queen’s two bodies* in order to examine more fully how the offices of both king and queen were articulated in theory and practice at the time. To that end, modern scholars must first correct the serious problem caused for historical studies by the misleading short-cut phrase, “Salic Law,” used (then and now) to signal female exclusion from rule in France from time immemorial (as if contexts did not change over centuries). There was no Salic Law that excluded women from rule in the French kingdom; only a gross forgery produced under that name in the 1400s. By the mid-1500s that Salic Law forgery was publicly exposed by eminent jurists and political writers who were shocked by the constitutional fraud, and right away they formulated an alternative precept upholding Male Right by a “law of nature.” The Salic Law forgery and the precept of Male Right were different phenomena contextually sited that cannot be conflated without skewing the historical process. To reach historical conclusions untainted by fraud, or shrouded in myth, the advent of this important historical shift legitimating ruling authority in male terms must be taken into account.⁵ The medieval Salic Law forgery (falsely excluding women from rule) corrupted an ancient ordinance in a Salic Law Code which could be found, verified and rejected as indeed happened. But the modern precept of Male Right grounded in a law of nature was a political theory metaphysically rooted in biological dictates

5. If the fraudulent designation, “Salic Law,” is applied to signify female exclusion after the mid-1500s, when the precept of Male Right prevailed, we pretend, erroneously, that there was a French law that excluded women and thus perpetuate a medieval myth, or falsity, into eternity despite the fact that French succession ordinances (1374-1407) never cited a Salic Law, or specified female exclusion, nor did the ordinances of kings, or governments, from the 1400s through the 1700s. We also reward the medieval forgers who created and defended the juridical fraud; bypass the modern political writers who revealed a major constitutional deception (female exclusion) and offered an alternative precept of Male Right; and contrarily, favor their adversaries, who clung to the fraud, or lobbied for a new French law that would provide juridical, as well as natural, grounds for Male Right, in appeals ignored by governments until the monarchy ended over two hundred years later.

of natural philosophy more difficult to unravel. As a result, critics of Male Right during the later 1600s into the 1700s had to move in a different direction to counter the precept, and they did so by developing an early theory of “natural rights.”

In the 1600s French jurists knew the Salic Law was bogus and understood the Male Right precept articulated in terms of *The king's one body* (an undying royal male body propagated through male seed, king to dauphin) that incorporated the body politic (also rendered immortal). Around the 1640s, for instance, Claude Le Prestre readily admitted the ancient “Salic Law” (excluding women) was fraudulent, “a myth imagined by fantasy, without Author and without proof.” Nevertheless, he bemoaned the current lack of a French law asserting the reverse principle (Male Right). The French custom of crowning kings recorded by history, he said, should be legally established as “our French Salic Law . . . a fundamental law of our state,” because male rule is grounded in “nature.” That said, Le Prestre certainly did not identify his proposed Salic Law as “the first law of the French,” the old designation as a founding law falsely given by medieval forgers to the spurious Salic ordinance. Rather, he recast this modern “French Salic Law” in terms of the metaphysical rationale already in place that rooted the male right to rule in nature. As Le Prestre explained, the “French Salic Law” he now proposed would be recognized as a “fundamental law of our state” because it abides by “the first Law of Nature,” which demands that “the naturals” (that is, royal sons serially generated by male seed from kings) succeed to the crown, not “the foreigners” (that is, royal daughters whose sons, generated from alien male seed, would break that biogenetic link). Here, it is important to remember, these kinds of appeals for juridical grounds to support Male Right (dictated by nature), exemplified in Le Prestre, were ignored by kings and governments in perpetuity. All the while, moreover, the legal arguments mounted to attack and defend Male Right in law courts did not cite a Salic Law as evidence for female exclusion. For example, one party in the high-profile case, *Longueville v. Nemours* (1674), argued that privileging males in family succession and the right to rule was a “perversion” of the “order of nature”; while the other party defended male right as an innate sex attribute grounded in nature. But neither the parties (both eminent noble women), nor the lawyers or the judges, mentioned a Salic Law (long known to be spurious).⁶ For several reasons, it seems to me, the advent of

6. Sarah Hanley, “The Family, the State, and the Law in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century France: The Ideology of Male Right versus an Early Theory of Natural Rights,” *Journal of Modern History* 78 (2006): 289-332, recounts Claude Le Prestre’s ruminations relevant to the later highly publicized case, *Longueville v. Nemours* (1674), in which the operative precept

this precept of Male Right, which was grounded in nature (not in law), is crucial for supporting Cosandey's thesis holding that the queen's maternal authority enabled her political role as regent. First, the rubric on Male Right sought to cover the silence of French succession ordinances (1374-1407), which did not cite a Salic Law, or specify female exclusion in lieu of males (always a thorny problem for exclusionists). Silence left room to maneuver. Second, and most important, the resort to grounds in "nature" for Male Right opened up fertile terrain for elevating female authority through the queen's maternity, which was unquestionably rooted in nature as well. Nature is a two-edged sword. Third, when the axioms, *The queen's two bodies* and *The king's one body*, are treated as complementary rubrics, the investigation of ruling authority in a monarchic state is expanded to two fronts—male and female, king and queen—refusing a single focus on the male side of this coin. Fourth, this move to "naturalize" Male Right pushed critics of that ideology, in turn, to develop the important counter notion of "natural rights," as witnessed in *Longueville v. Nemours* (1674). Contrasting this era featuring queens as regents (called in history the *femmes fortes*) with other time frames is all the more striking.

Thomas Kaiser, whose recent studies on Marie Antoinette's place in the monarchy have spurred new considerations of the way familial and political forces worked to undermine the place of the queen even before the revolution intruded,⁷ moves to the second stage in this odyssey of queens, the later decades of the 1700s. At this point it is starkly evident that the cultural bridge of the 1600s, which might have facilitated a queen's crossing from family matters to state affairs, now lacked the safety rails, actual and symbolic, that had protected queens formerly empowered by nature (through maternity) to act in both those arenas. As a result, Marie Antoinette did not achieve integration in the monarchic system. Indeed, many of the symbols and rituals that once signified the familial and political authority of queens had broken down, so that gestures, acts and pictures

of Male Right was attacked (not a spurious Salic Law long a dead letter) by Marie, duchesse de Nemours (who developed an early theory of "natural rights" in opposition), and was defended by Anne, duchesse de Longueville. See also Hanley, "Contro l'ordine naturale e la disposizione delle leggi," pp. 95-120, *Innesti: Donne e genere nella storia sociale*, a cura di Giulia Calvi (Rome, 2006), and *Princesses et pouvoir politique à l'époque moderne*, ed. Marie-Karine Schaub et Isabelle Poutrin (Paris, 2006); along with *Dictionnaire des femmes de l'ancienne regime*, at "Marie de Nemours," www.siefar.org.

7. See Thomas E. Kaiser, "Who's Afraid of Marie-Antoinette? Diplomacy, Austrophobia, and the Queen," *French History* 14 (2000): 241-71; and "From the 'Austrian Committee' to the 'Foreign Plot': Marie-Antoinette, Austrophobia, and the Terror," *French Historical Studies* 26 (2003): 579-617; *Princesses et pouvoir politique*; also *Dictionnaire des femmes*, at "Marie Antoinette," www.siefar.org.

formerly packed with meaning now floundered for lack of sign posts. In other important studies Kaiser has shown why Marie Antoinette was unable to transcend the foreign Austrian origins assigned to her at the outset. Here he provides another example of how that queen was relegated to the sidelines in the family realm and denied entry to the political one. Influenced by the popular sentimental notions of motherhood advanced in her time, Marie Antoinette (with advisers) took steps to enlarge the role of motherhood (beyond maternity, giving birth) and therewith carve out secure family space for the queen in the monarchy. Attempting to enter the royal nursery and gain personal oversight of her children, however, the queen found the passage blocked by an officially appointed governess acting (in an office) under government auspices. To be sure, the personal motherhood niche actively sought by the queen was morally prescribed for families in popular literature on the topic. Also, a mother's live presence in the nursery offered unique protection for the royal children, since the governess in office, known to be negligent, had already endangered the dauphin's health to the alarm of the entire court. That said, those wielding state policy protected the officeholder at the expense of the mother and in the process injured the reputation of the queen.

Acting as the good mother, Marie Antoinette was cast by public opinion as a bad one said to be the negligent party. Doubly tarnished with the brush of friends publicly despised for scandalous behavior (unpunished by the government), the queen was targeted along with them by malcontents with an array of social and political issues in hand. In repeated venomous attacks the critics declared Marie Antoinette an unfit mother, therewith destabilizing her place in the royal family (already limited) and thus her place in the monarchy as well. At the same time, the queen could not enhance her present position by way of a future post as queen regent, because state policy had closed that route to service. While the personal motherhood role sought by the queen was limited, the contingent political office was out of commission. The political fallout from the affair of the royal nursery suggests that once Marie Antoinette was unable to put sentimental motherhood into practice, thereby enlarging her place in the royal family, she was distanced, as queen, from the monarchy rather than assimilated into it. In retrospect, I would suggest, the past also impinged upon this queen with palpable force.

By the 1780s and 1790s the French monarchic system could not be conceptualized any longer in metaphysical terms, or metaphorical ones, denoting *The king's one body*, or *The queen's two bodies*, or *The king married to the kingdom*; nor were powerful civic rituals mounted to demonstrate a queen's legitimate double claim to familial and political

authority. By this time the social imagination did not comprehend the symbolic content of such earlier axioms, metaphors and rituals, because reference points that once produced legal and political meaning no longer existed. Throughout the later decades of the 1600s, in fact, royal ceremonial planners focused all cultural spotlights on the king (asleep or awake) at Versailles in staged events akin to entertainment.⁸ In addition, during the mid-1600s famous jurists (the “arrestographes”) identified and named a “civil society” (*société civile*), which they defined as public space framed by French civil law and located (in theory) between the family and the state. And in that civil space they promoted the practice of “judicial publicity” whereby litigants took family law stories (in print) from the courts to the streets. By the early 1700s some jurists attuned to the growing public appetite for family stories turned plots of legal cases into fictional tales advertised as “true”; and by the 1780s and 1790s some court cases were cast in melodrama guaranteed to attract public attention. As a result, “the public” (addressed by litigants) was adept at pursuing information on the family affairs taken to law courts that jurists repeatedly linked with the “public interest” or the “public good.” Inevitably that pursuit included the royal family.⁹ Although Marie Antoinette was conspicuously absent from state affairs and also limited in her access to family matters (as shown in the nursery), the scandal-mongers insisted the queen was active in both bailiwicks. Stalked by history now negatively reinterpreted, this queen was tarred by references to previous queens (the *femmes fortes* of the 1600s) who were involved, without doubt, in both family and state business. The conundrum is alarming: the queens from the century past, who had attained and exercised domestic and political authority successfully, were re-clothed in the present as interfering monsters whose bad example corrupted the current queen. The past also intruded in another way. Marie Antoinette was unable to accrue political capital as a potential queen regent, the most powerful office held by queens to date, not only because legislators after 1789 banned women from the post of regent, but also because state policy in this regard had changed much earlier, in 1715, when a male regent was appointed for the minor king (whose mother was

8. For that shift, whereby events staged at Versailles replaced civic ritual, and the Inaugural Lit de Justice of 1715 was bereft of meaning, see Hanley, *The Lit de Justice of the Kings of France*, chap. 13-14.

9. Consult Sarah Hanley, “The Jurisprudence of the Arrets: Family Union, Civil Society, and State Formation, 1550-1650,” *Law and History Review* 21 (2003):1-40, and “The Pursuit of Legal Knowledge and the Genesis of Civil Society in Early Modern France” in *Historians and Ideologues*, ed. A. Grafton and J.H.M. Salmon (Rochester, NY, 2001), chap. 4, pp. 71-86. For the 1780s and 1790s see Sara Maza, *Private Lives and Public Affairs: The Causes Célèbres of Prerevolutionary France* (Berkeley, CA, 1993).

dead). All told, Marie Antoinette's attempts to gain valid space for action were cut short in a monarchy still beholden to Male Right, but no longer tempered by maternal authority, or open to queens presiding as future regents, or inclined to aid this queen, tainted by "Austrophobia," in finding a proper place. The serious risks run by a queen thus dislocated in a monarchy were evident in the malicious indictments, including vitriolic sex charges, accusing the queen, ironically, of corrupting the royal family, hence the monarchic state (preceding her execution in 1793). Comparing the obstacles met and overcome, or not, by queens in the monarchic state with those met by a queen in a reformed monarchy working to hold a place in the French state is instructive.

Jo Burr Margadant, whose recent work treats the ways gender considerations intruded into public life and reoriented the place of queens, hence kings, in the new "bourgeois monarchy,"¹⁰ picks up a third stage in this odyssey of queens seeking legitimate space for action within a monarchy now ensconced in a French state no longer embodied in kings. By the 1830s and 1840s, it is clear, the cultural bridge that once linked the royal family and the monarchic state in the 1600s and was blocked in the later 1700s had disappeared altogether, along with the office of queen regent undone in 1715, outlawed after 1789, and again in 1795. In the constitutional monarchy (since 1814) kings were beholden to a charter (or written constitution) and shared political power with constituent bodies. And by 1830 the title "king of the French" replaced the earlier "king of France." In this political context, Margadant investigates the trek taken by the last queen in France, Marie-Amélie, seeking integration in the monarchy. At this time a queen appeared to have one choice: to augment the position of the entire royal family. Marie-Amélie gave birth to five sons and three daughters, a boon for the survival of any monarchy (dependant on family continuity) and especially this one, adhering to male rule. Maneuvering to aggrandize the royal family in the monarchy, therefore, Marie-Amélie (with advisers) moved along two paths. One, the queen complemented her role as mother (and queen) in the royal family by drawing the king (as father) into that family orbit as well; and two, she replicated in the royal family the bourgeois values witnessed in high society, replete with sentimental overtones, that appealed to a public audience. Marie-Amélie expertly nurtured eight royal children, who were lavished with affection, liberally educated and treated to family outings with both parents in full public view. For years a revered figure in this large royal family known for espousing the "bourgeois" values (held by political

10. Consult Jo Burr Margadant, "Gender, Vice, and the Political Imaginary in Postrevolutionary France," *American Historical Review* 104 (1999): 1461-96.

patrons), the queen was eulogized by the public as a model of rectitude and a paragon of family virtues, clearly a credit to the monarchy. Yet these vaunted merits turned sour in the midst of political struggles, including conflicts between “bourgeois,” “aristocratic” and “republican” factions, as well as those attending the persistent efforts of French working men to extend the franchise.

At first vigorously applauded, the queen was later viciously attacked, along with the king and the royal family, precisely for the “bourgeois” ethos in which this monarchy was wrapped. Which agency of government must pay for the marriages of seven more children (after the dauphin) in this bourgeois royal family: the monarchy or the French state? The royal family found the question incomprehensible, the angry public audience right on target; and the issue widened all the political fissures. As Margadant warns, the notion of persons or things “bourgeois” cannot be dismissed as a myth, because the term was rife with meaning at this time. That negative label was widely applied, for example, by the wrathful satirists who tarnished the monarchy by demonizing the royal family for actions and values cast as “bourgeois.” Once the public, already angry on other counts and well-schooled in insurrection, contrasted the interests of the “bourgeois” royal family (in the monarchy) with the interests of other families (in the French state)—emphasizing the incompatible differences, rather than the shared similarities—the political disputes in motion were exacerbated by the escalating attacks on the royal family. Comparing the positive, sentimentalized pictures of the bourgeois royal family with the powerful, venomous caricatures later, demonstrates the political power of that familial criticism. There is witnessed here, I would suggest, two socio-political shifts that completely overturned the foundation upon which monarchy rested: the royal family.

In my mind the first shift in 1830 weakened this family foundation: that is, the radical political decision to bypass the royal family installed, then ousted, by denying the king’s grandson (in a direct line) in favor of a cadet.¹¹ On the heels of that departure from monarchic succession, the second shift wreaked major damage to this family foundation: that is, the social change in family typology, substituting a bourgeois family model for the old aristocratic family in the monarchy. This last, in fact, turned familial traditions in the monarchic state into political flaws in the French state. The first tradition-turned-flaw: reproducing a royal family. To sustain the French monarchy over time, male progeny had to be produced, as were the five sons and three daughters who assured continuity for this royal family

11. Charles X’s grandson was bypassed for the cadet under scrutiny here, Louis-Philippe I (see n. 2 above).

publicized as “bourgeois” and featuring two parents. To be sure, Marie-Amélie, the mother (and a queen with no political authority), remained active (as was expected) within the family orbit alone. But the father (also “king of the French”) found it difficult (as was expected) to extricate himself (as *père de famille*) from this royal family orbit. In his problematic crossing from the domestic charge, requiring a father to preserve family interests, to the political office, demanding the king conserve the “public good,” the king stumbled on rocky terrain unforeseen. The second tradition-turned-flaw: replicating a royal marriage policy. To sustain a royal family (central to a monarchy) over time, the children of kings and queens had to marry into royalty. Therein lay the paradox. No matter how bourgeois, or sentimental, this royal family appeared in daily life, the sons and daughters (as in all monarchies) had to be wed, not logically—into great French bourgeois families—but traditionally—into great French or European aristocratic families. And this marriage policy was debated amid growing cultural conflict over contradictory values enshrined in “bourgeois” or “aristocratic” ways of life that were reflected in political passions lit by “republican” sentiments. The spiteful contest over who should pay the marriage costs for the cadet sons and the daughters—the royal family or the French state—seriously devalued the queen’s maternity, now treated as a financial burden on society, and undermined the king’s political authority, now said to inflict royal family expenses on the state (that is, other French families).

The politicized marital contest suggests that a royal family swathed in bourgeois traits, rather than aristocratic ones, was absolutely antithetical to the institution of monarchy. First, the royal family ethos, albeit self-consciously bourgeois, was actually and necessarily—in a monarchy—aristocratic in the matter of marriage acts. Second, it was politically untenable to install a bourgeois family (replicating a national one) in a monarchy, because that social change enabled ordinary citizens (with family expenses) to make invidious comparisons that tarnished monarchy as an agency of government in the state. Emboldened on the grounds of public interest, the critics and satirists opened fire on the royal family, castigating them on various counts, including a marriage policy viewed as a costly enterprise with questionable returns. The result was bizarre. In the streets a public audience, adroit for two centuries at circulating information on family affairs, rebuked the marital practices of the royal family and thus weakened the system of monarchy itself which depended for family continuity on aristocratic nuptials. Amid this familial-marital dilemma, part of the extended political turmoil underway, the queen and the king tightly enmeshed in the bourgeois royal family could not reposition that family in a monarchy slowly sliding toward the brink.

Indeed, the French monarchy—whether bourgeois or aristocratic—was no longer viable once its interests (represented by the royal family) were severed from the interests of the French state (representing all French families) and obliged now to define the public interest and maintain the public good.

Looking at the queens who searched for legitimate space to act in the French monarchy (old or new) where family and state interests, by necessity, intersected and where male rule prevailed, offers a multi-faceted approach for assessing historical outcomes. In the 1600s the interests of family and state were bridged and the queens, Marie de Médicis and Anne of Austria, were integrated into the monarchy. A queen was empowered by maternity (a facet of nature) that enabled her to take the interim political office of regent (at the death of the king). And a notion of *The queen's two bodies* complemented and tempered the axiom of *The king's one body* that articulated Male Right in a monarchic state. During the later 1700s that bridge was blocked at critical points, disallowing Marie Antoinette's full integration into the monarchy. In the royal family the queen's maternity (a facet of nature) did not confer domestic authority, still less entitle her to exercise political office as regent. The queen's effort to extend the role of motherhood was limited by state policy, and the complementary roles (actual or potential) spelled out for queen and king were no longer publicly articulated in theory, symbol or ritual, leaving the queen dislocated, hence at risk in the monarchic state. By the mid-1800s there was no bridge to connect either the royal family, or the constitutional monarchy (just one agency of government), to the French state. Marie-Amélie, as queen-mother, assiduously worked to bring the entire royal family (eight children), along with the king-father, to the public fore; and they were garbed as a "bourgeois" family rather than an aristocratic one. But that major shift in family typology damaged the institutional foundation upon which monarchy stood in league with aristocracy. The consequent inability of king and queen, as royal parents, to separate the private interests of the bourgeois royal family (necessarily pursuing expensive aristocratic marriages) in the monarchy from the public interests of ordinary families (beset by their own expenses) in the French state entailed a fundamental shift of political obligation with institutional after-shocks. When the French state was designated as the repository for the public good, the monarchy denuded of that political charge amid the insurrection of 1848 was swiftly dismantled for the last time. Tracing the spheres of action carved out by queens in the French monarchy across time opens up for scholars another window through which to study the history of monarchy as an institution.