C’est la Deduction du Somptueux ordre: A Commentary on the Royal Entry of Henri II into Rouen and its Festival Book

The royal entry festival was an important ceremony of kingship in the sixteenth century. The historian Michael Wintroub describes it as "a ritual celebration staged to welcome a newly anointed king at the time of his first visit to a city. It was generally structured in terms of a reciprocal exchange, where a city traded its recognition of the king’s authority, for his recognition of the customary rights and privileges historically accorded to its citizenry and clergy" (Wintroub 1998, 465). Renaissance royal entries were embedded in the political realities of the time, both in reflecting the achievements of princes, and in presenting the hopes and expectations of the people. Wintroub calls the entry "an allegorical narrative which aimed to adapt the political characteristics definitive of just rulership to the particular social, intellectual, and material concerns of the provincial elites responsible for the entry" (Wintroub 1998, 471).

In addition, royal entries were large civic events, involving the activities of many--civic authorities, local nobility, merchant classes, and townspeople, as well as architects, painters, sculptors, poets, and engineers (McGowan 1968, 199).

HENRI II ENTERS ROUEN

On March 1, 1547, Henri II succeeded to the throne of France. Mars, therefore, was seen as being important to Henri’s reign. He had warlike abilities and an addiction to sports, and he loved great

physical demands such as exercising with arms. One of his primary goals upon becoming king was to recover face after the military defeats of his father, François I. He also decided that he would visit many of the towns and cities in him realm. He made more than thirty royal entries in the years immediately following his accession to the throne (Wintroub 1998, 491). He entered Lyon in 1548, Paris in 1549, and Rouen on the 1st and 2nd of October, 1550.

Margaret McGowan, who has written on this entry and who edited the facsimile of the festival book, believes that this Rouen entry was one of the most important of all sixteenth-century public spectacles. She says that the revival of an ancient ceremonial corresponded exactly to the political situation of Henri II at the beginning of his reign. He entered Rouen just after a military triumph in Normandy, having won the port city of Boulogne. She also says that artistic elements, the personal taste of the king, and the political and religious wishes of the people constantly interplayed in this entry (McGowan 1968, 199). This paper will focus on these wishes and the manner in which they were voiced.

Rouen was (and is) on the River Seine, like Paris, but further northwest and closer to the Manche. It was the capital of Normandy, a rich and abundant province. Rouen was both traditionalist, being devoted to the cult of the Virgin, and humanist, with an important humanist university being nearby at Caen.

The civic authorities of Rouen decided to combine local artistic traditions with the novel idea of creating an antique Roman procession (ibid.). It would be designed with the guidance of local humanists, and the king would be presented with a complete

re-enactment of a Roman imperial triumph (Strong 1984, 47). Henri would enter Rouen in the guise of a caesar (Bowles 1989, 37). The entry was to be so organized and consistent in character that "[n]o shows of any kind were to be privately arranged. All intentions and ideas had to be submitted to the town councilors for their approval, so that, if necessary, these could be fitted into a general plan" (McGowan 1968, 206).

EMBLEM AND ALLEGORY

According to Daniel Russell, a French scholar studying emblems and devices, allegory was first used at Rouen. He says that the first allegorical tableaux were presented on Rouen stages early in the sixteenth century (Russell 1995, 94). He stresses that a symbolic mentality underlay the rhetoric of propaganda at this time (ibid., 92).

Rouen also had an early preoccupation with emblems. Russell states that Rouen "is where the 'new iconography' of the virtues, as Emile Mâle called it, developed in the second half of the fifteenth century (ibid., 127).

In fact, one of the changes that the mid-sixteenth century saw in its royal entries had to do with the use of emblems and devices. Russell tells us that it was "with the entrées prepared to welcome the new king, Henri II, around 1550, [that] a pattern developed whereby devices became an essential part of the epideictic presentation associated with such welcoming ceremonies" (ibid., 214). Rouen, therefore, would give its messages to Henri in allegorical and emblematic form.

RECORDING THE ENTRY

Rouen was in the forefront in another way, as well. Roy Strong writes, "The Rouen entry is also an early instance of an illustrated royal entry book. Its appearance is seemingly recorded in a series of woodcuts, ...[but it is] the idealisation of an event, often quite distant from its reality as experienced by the average onlooker. One of the objects of such publications was to reinforce by means of word and image the central ideas that motivated those who conceived the programme" (Strong, 1984, 47).

Margaret McGowan has published a facsimile of one of the 1550 Rouen entry festival books. Her facsimile contains twenty-nine woodblock prints, five of which are double-page.

THE FIRST MOVEMENT

The royal entry into Rouen was designed to be in three movements. The first movement began at 7:00 a.m. on October 1, 1550. The initial meeting place was the meadow of the priory of Sainte Catherine de Grandmont. Henri took his place in his raised "loge" (McGowan 1968, 207-08). This was the focal point for the first part of the ceremonies. The first movement consisted of long processions of clergy, merchants, military men, tax collectors--all the worthy citizens of Rouen who had been able to claim a place. The "Lieutenant general du Bailly de Rouen," marching with the men at law, made a welcoming speech to the king, "acknowledging the authority and expectations of the king but also stressing the power and hopes of the citizens who did him homage. They welcomed their

monarch loyally and magnificently, but they expected favors in return, such as the confirmation of the privileges received by the town from earlier monarchs," according to McGowan (McGowan 1968, 208). The citizens thus gave their king the first message requesting that he pay attention to their needs and wishes. Henri assured the men at law that he would continue the town's privileges, and the procession started up again.

THE SECOND MOVEMENT

The second movement of the royal entry was where the town displayed the elaborate triumphal chariots which they had had constructed. The first chariot (or "char de triomphe") was drawn by four white horses which had been fitted with white wings. It had moldings and friezes displaying battle scenes, and it was piled with war booty, thus celebrating Henri's recent military victories. Two dead soldiers lay at the feet of Death, represented as a skeleton in chains. Holding the chains was the goddess Fama, who was enthroned above the rest. When she went past the king, she recited an eight-line verse which explained herself. This is a double-page woodblock illustration. This "Char de Renommée," as it was called, was followed by men representing Henri's fifty-seven royal ancestors. This chariot and its troop of followers departed at the sound of trumpets.

The "Char de Religion" came next. This chariot was drawn by two unicorns, which were led by men in turbans and somewhat Turkish-looking dress. The chariot itself carried five beautiful and richly-dressed ladies, according to the text. One, Vesta, the god-

dess of religion, wore wings and was seated on a throne, holding a model of a church. The two women at her side represented Royal Majesty and Virtue Victorious. On the front of the chariot, the other two women represented Reverence and Fear. The text tells us that these five women sang a song with each one on her own part. The music is included at the end of the book, but it is interesting to note that it is in four parts, not five.

Following this, the book shows us six of bands of military men (six in each band, if the illustrations are to be believed). They carried reminders of Henri's victories. Soldiers of the king who had taken part in his recent campaigns followed these six groups.

Next there were six "elephants," not real ones but pageant "machines." They were led by turbaned men. Three of the elephants carried flaming vases which dispensed sweet odors. The other three carried more reminders of Henri's military victories.

The next group provided a re-enactment of the event the previous year when captives had been paraded in front of Henri next to the town of Boulogne, which he had just captured.

Flora and her nymphes came next, scattering flowers before the third and final chariot. McGowan states that this is to demonstrate that what came next would be the culminating point of the triumph (ibid., 216). The layout of the festival book emphasizes this, as well, for in the center of an otherwise almost blank page, in large type, is printed "Le Triumphe d'hEureuse Fortune." This is followed by a double-page illustration of the chariot. This chariot was of great importance because it carried the living image of the king. A man who had been chosen because of his resemblance to Henri

was seated on a throne, carrying a sceptre and a laurel branch. Behind and above him, Fortuna was seated and was in the act of placing a crown on his head. Four of Henri's children sat at his feet. A man impersonating the Dauphin, carrying a laurel branch and riding on horseback, followed.

The last part of the second movement comprised two groups of Sons of the Town. The first group were on foot and the second on horseback, performing great feats of horsemanship, according to the author of the festival book.

THE THIRD MOVEMENT

In the last movement the king and his retinue joined the procession, which moved from the meadow of the priory into and through the city of Rouen. Six trumpeters led the royal household of two hundred people. The Connétable de Montmorency, carrying the sword of state, led Henri II himself, who was on horseback and dressed in black velvet trimmed in silver and jewels. Princes of the royal blood and knights followed him. There is no illustration of this part of the procession in the book, meaning that the design of the book was meant more to record what the town presented to the king, rather than focusing on the king's presence at the ceremony.

The bulk of the third movement consisted of tableaux presented by the town to the king. The Rouennais had constructed what was supposed to be an authentic Brazilian landscape in the Faubourg Saint-Sever on the banks of the Seine. The meadow there was planted with natural and artificial trees and shrubs, and then populated with exotic birds, monkeys, and squirrels. Native French trees

were disguised as palms; their trunks were colored red and bunches of palm branches were tied to their summits.

Fifty Brazilian men and women had been brought to Rouen by its merchants. They were joined by 250 Norman sailors who were said to be well–acquainted with both the language and the customs of the Brazilian natives. The author notes that none of these people wore any garments at all.

As Henri came up to the bridge over the River Seine, he found a tableau entitled "Le Massis du Roch à l'entrée du Pont." It appeared to be a huge rock, supported on a base of rusticated stone. Near the top, Orpheus sat in a grotto playing a harp. To the left of the grotto, the nine Muses played what appear to be viols in the woodcut. On the right, Hercules was busily cutting off the heads of the hydra, an odd juxtaposition with all the music–making. There was an eight–line verse on a placard to explain this scene.

Wintroub believes that this Hercules is the pivot of the entire entry, representing both the warrior values of the old noblesse d'épée, and the humanist (anti–scholastic) values of the new noblesse de robe. I disagree with him. In the first place, Hercules is not at the center of this tableau. Orpheus is. Secondly, the first half of the eight–line verse states,

> "Your majesty royal, oh most Christian king,
> Is for the great good of all; a Hercules on earth,
> Who puts the haughty mine of Mars into disarray,
> To plant, in honor, peace in the place of war."
> (my translation)

The creators of this entry were explicitly putting Hercules to one side, and were telling the king that although he had been a Hercules, now it was time to bring peace in place of war for the good of all.

The last double-page illustration is also an impressive scene. While Henri was crossing the bridge, Neptune and two other marine creatures darted out from behind an artificial rock which had been placed in the middle of the crossing. Neptune offered the king his trident as an acknowledgment of his dominion over the waters, whereupon all three creatures dove into the river and sported with other marine creatures who then appeared. There was a great deal of music-making, according to the festival book, and I wonder how they made all those instruments impervious to water.

On the opposite side of the bridge (shown on the same side in the illustration), a naumachia took place between two ships. The ship displaying white crosses represented France, while the other, displaying red crosses, represented Portugal. France of course won. Henri was especially fond of naumachiae, and this one was staged on both October 1 and 2, for both the king's and the queen's entries (McGowan 1968, 223-24).

The next tableau was "La figure de l'aage dor." It was the only true triumphal arch in the whole procession, meaning it was the only arch through which the company actually processed. It was at the city gate and officially marked the point where the king entered the town. McGowan (McGowan 1968, 224) says that triumphal arches were a relatively new feature to French entries at this time.

On top of the arch, two sibyls supported a large crescent moon with the figure of Saturn standing in it. The title "l'âge d'or" meant that the townspeople were expecting Henri to bring a new age of abundance, peace, and prosperity. Wintroub says, "It was then explained to the king that it was through his support of arts and

letters that he would--like Saturn--be able to restore the world to a golden age of peace and tranquility" (Wintroub 1998, 486). Even McGowan stresses this point, saying that it expressed a real desire for peace and thus was showing the king the expectations of his people, but that Henri's motto, "Donec totum impleat orbem," showed that he was more interested in earthly power (McGowan 1968, 224–45).

At the cathedral of Notre Dame de Rouen they next saw a platform supported by four crouching harpies. On this stood the figure of Hector, the hero of Troy, clad in armor. When the king came near, the wounds which Hector had received from Achilles began to bleed--in the form of three inter-connected crescents (the crescent being one of Henri's devices). The triple crescent showed that Henri was thrice king: of France, of Scotland, and of Normandy by his recent conquest (ibid., 229).

The next tableau had the title "Le Theatre de la Crosse," and it changed while Henri watched it. At first he saw a flaming salamander, the device of his father, François I. Behind it were two of the Fates, Clotho and Atropos, holding a serpent biting its tail, the symbol of eternity. The scene transformed into a large globe with flames around it, which burst open and a Pegasus sprang up to the top of the scene (as shown in the illustration). The text explains that this Pegasus was meant to represent long life and prosperity, peace, and union within the Church, as well as immortal fame, not just for the king, but for his entire realm. A triton perched on top of the entire tableau. He sounded his trumpet and the scene changed again. The globe unfolded into a picture of Henri II standing on a crescent with the word "Fides" below it, and

under that, a dog (symbol of faithfulness) in the flames. Henri held a flowering sword in his right hand. Above him, personifications of the seven planets offered him their particular scepters. A grape vine grew from the king's heart, symbolizing abundance, as well as being a christomorphic element. There are two groups of men kneeling at Henri's sides. They represent the different nations who have come to press the juice of the grapes of France (abundance) into their cups (Chartrou 1928, 138). Based on the length of text associated with this woodcut, it was seen by the author as one of the most important.

The final tableau in the pageant was in a square which had been planted with shrubs, fruit trees, and flowers to resemble the Elysian Fields. François I was there with two women personifying Good Memory and Egeria. Two men were asleep at their feet. They were dressed to represent Nobility and Labor, which the new king was to awaken (ibid., 139).

Bonne Mémoire held out a book to Henri. It contained an account of François's achievements, written in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. This was a reference to the collège that François had founded--the Collège Royale, or the Collège de France, also known as the Collège of Three Languages (which was the central focus of this humanistic collège) (Wintroub 1998, 474–75). It took three placards to explain this tableau to the king. A woodcut of this tableau forms the last illustration in the festival book.

Different writers have had different opinions on this tableau. McGowan says that it shows "his father, enjoying the fruits of his labors in Paradise, reminding his son that although he must perse-

vere and work to maintain good government in his land, the final goal in life is a spiritual one" (McGowan 1968, 235). I do not see this as a religious message, however. The text talks about promoting learning and praises the donations that both François and Henri have made towards the Université de Paris. Since this entry had been designed under the guidance of humanists, the praise of support for learning would be a more likely message for them to give.

Wintroub repeatedly calls this Champs Elysées "the Elysian fields of the terrestrial paradise" (Wintroub 1998, 487). He talks about it as showing the good life. I do not agree with this, either. It is not terrestrial. The verse from one of the placards says that François has been delivered to this place and that Henri is going to want to follow his father there. It represents Heaven.

CONCLUSIONS

McGowan states that the goal of Henri II's royal entry into Lyon in 1548 was to provide him with amusement; that of his entry into Paris in 1549 was to stress his potential greatness and encourage preparations for war; and that of his entry into Rouen in 1550 was to praise his achievements and to express hopes for consolidation and expansion (McGowan 1968, 233). I think that the most strongly-voiced hopes expressed in the Rouen entry were the hopes for future peace. Rouen, as the capital of Normandy, had been close enough to the battle to be cognizant of the suffering and of the expense of war.

McGowan claims that the verse description of the entry says that there were "hopes that the territories of France might be con-

siderably extended" (McGowan 1968, 235). Yet she quotes the verse as:

> "You well deserve other triumphal arches
> Than those which were made for the Caesars:
> For peace through its merits makes one greater
> Than the Caesars [were made] by their cruel exercises."
> (ibid., 240) (my translation)

McGowan goes on in her article to say that "[b]y far the most interesting and revealing feature of the text, however, is the insistence on the theme of arts and letters" (ibid., 247), and that "[t]he great attention given to these matters suggests that the author had a vested interest in persuading Henri II to emulate the magnaminity of his father" (ibid., 248). I think that both of these quotes from her support my thesis that the organizers of the Rouen entry were trying to deflect Henri's attention from warfare onto more intellectual pursuits.

Wintroub says, "at a time when the self-perception of large sections of the ancestral nobility maintained a close connection to the feudal values of the warrior knight, it would have been both a dangerous and ineffective strategy for the organizers of the entry to try to persuade the king simply to forego his chivalrous/military ideals in favor of the Ciceronian values represented by the Gallic Hercules" (Wintroub 1998, 488). I agree. That is why the organizers both praised Henri for his valor and successes in war, and then, with increasing frequency and stress, set forth their hopes for peace and the value of it. I will close by summarizing the structure of the seven tableaux in the third movement to prove this.

1. The Brazilian villages. The victory over the Portuguese.

This praised war.

2. "Le Massis du Roch." The majority of the scene was taken up by Orpheus and by the Muses, so it stressed arts and letters and the fruits of peace.

3. "Le Triumphe de la Riviere." The marine creatures and the naumachia. The battle of the two galleons praised war, but Neptune, while handing Henri his trident, said, "Seeing you, Mars is disarmed by virtue" (ibid., L,ii(v)) (my translation), so Neptune was telling the king that he had won and it was time to disarm Mars.

4. "La figure de l'aage dor." A request for peace.

5. "La figure d'Hector." Bleeding wounds which praised Henri's prowess in war.

6. "Le Theatre de la Crosse." A complex image. Pegasus, according to the author of the festival book, represented happy and long life, the defence of the realm, and the maintenance of peace (ibid., N,ii(v)). The grape vine growing out of Henri's heart and those kneeling in front of him represented bounty of France available to other nations, which seems also to stress peace.

7. "La figure du pont de Robec." The book which Bonne Mémoire held out to Henri, setting out the noble deeds of his father, invited him to imitate François I, because (it said) "no one can become dressed in immortality except through learning and virtuous acts" (ibid., O,i(v)) (my translation). He was being told that it was the fruits of peace that would earn him immortality. Henri was being told yet again that war is turmoil and upset, and that all good kings turn to the arts and sciences, tempered by justice, once war is concluded.

The tempo of the demands for peace increased as Henri approached the end of the entry. After a brief nod at his threefold kingship with Hector's wounds, Rouen presented him with two very complex and eloquent assertions of the need for peace and its justice. They were to be disappointed, but this was their plea.