

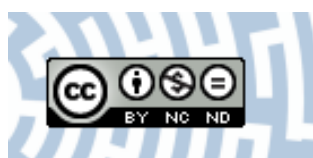


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# The 'Obstacle of Sex'. Christina of Sweden and Her Aspirations to the Polish–Lithuanian Throne

Dorota Gregorowicz 

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## ABSTRACT

An important field of research related to early modern sovereignty is the topic of female political authority. This article aims to utilise the category of gender to analyse potential obstacles that Queen Christina of Sweden had to overcome in order to obtain royal dignity in an elective monarchy, the early modern Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. Could the election of a female monarch constitute an acceptable and functional alternative for the Catholic and conservative noble society of this vast composite state? Former examples of Jadwiga of Anjou (1384) and Anna Jagiellon (1576) elected and crowned Kings of Poland seemed to suggest as much. The case of Christina's aspirations is all the more interesting, as her prominent supporter during the royal election of 1669 was the head of the Catholic Church, Pope Clement IX. It is, in fact, the diplomatic correspondence created by the papal Secretariat of State that constitutes the historical basis for the research presented here.

One cannot overlook the importance of female rule in early modern Europe. Despite the restrictions of Salic law regarding female succession, in sixteenth-century France, Catherine de' Medici exercised authority as regent for two of her sons for several years. This practice was repeated during the seventeenth century by Maria de' Medici and Anne of Austria. In England, Mary and Elizabeth Tudor reigned in their own right, while in Scotland, Mary Stuart, daughter of James V, assumed power following her return from France. Her mother, Mary of Guise, had governed as regent up to that point. In the Netherlands, regency was exercised by Margaret of Austria and Margaret of Parma. Finally, the office of the viceroy of Portugal was given to Margaret of Savoy. Female governance frequently caused controversies and even factional disputes. Nevertheless, European societies became quickly accustomed to these unusual rulers, often appreciating their virtues.<sup>1</sup>

In this article, I use the category of gender to analyse potential obstacles that Queen Christina of Sweden had to overcome in order to obtain a new royal dignity in an elective monarchy, the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, after she had abdicated the Swedish throne in 1654. Could the election of a woman constitute an alternative for the noble society? The earlier examples of Jadwiga of Anjou (1384) and Anna Jagiellon (1576), elected and crowned 'Kings' of Poland, seemed to suggest as much. The case

of Christina's aspirations is all the more interesting as her main supporter during the royal election in the Commonwealth (1669) was Pope Clement IX. It is, in fact, the diplomatic correspondence created by the papal Secretariat of State that constitutes the historical basis for this article.

Polish historiography is still dominated by classic narratives and themes, which largely overlook the perspective of gender. While in recent years, many international scholars have emphasised the need to integrate women's history into established fields such as political and diplomatic history, it has been largely neglected in Polish historical writing.<sup>2</sup> This article uses the case of Christina to indicate the ways in which gender perspectives can reinvigorate these traditional areas of inquiry.<sup>3</sup>

It is clear that the terms 'kingship' and 'queenship' are gendered themselves. We note that women who ruled independently used to be called 'queens regnant', as the non-circumscribed term 'queens' did not determine their right to exercise ruling prerogatives and was used mainly in consideration of their sex and 'queens consorts' gendered tasks.<sup>4</sup> Also, in the Polish-Lithuanian monarchical tradition, the notion of 'queen regnant', which corresponds to its male equivalent: 'king' is non-existent. In the Polish language, there is the only form functioning for both gendered formulas: *król*. From one point of view, it can be understood in terms of genderless office description, as the word 'king' was used regardless of whether the person described was female or male. On the other hand, it is so strongly gendered that it semantically prohibits any awareness that a woman could ascend the throne.<sup>5</sup> In fact, apart from the purely ceremonial language, both for Jadwiga and Anna also the formulas *królowa* and *regina* were in common use. This reveals that the erection of a viable model of female rule within a male-dominated political culture requires a significant semantic shift in our understanding of the nature of kingship.<sup>6</sup>

In an elective monarchy, such as seventeenth-century Poland-Lithuania, the historical precedents of the royal exaltation of Jadwiga of Anjou and Anna Jagiellon could constitute a solid basis to return to the concept of electing and crowning a female 'king', at least in certain exceptional cases. It was undisputed, however, that in such an anomalous situation (as regards the social reality and political practice of the Commonwealth), the queen would immediately be obliged to marry. This is because the ability of women to govern independently was still questioned in early modern Europe.<sup>7</sup> As Cesarina Casanova points out,

the sixteenth-century political treatises argued women's inadequacy to rule with the weakness deriving from their physical and moral constitution. While it was claimed that *imbecillitas sexus* rendered them naturally unable to command armies, also mendacity and uncontrolled lust that would have been innate to them, made them similarly inappropriate for administering justice.<sup>8</sup>

Elisabeth A. Leffeldt similarly observes that 'the general European consensus on the question of female rule was to avoid it whenever possible', which means it was rarely considered in an *elective* monarchy.<sup>9</sup> 'Fickleness' and 'weakness' were mentioned among the recurring characteristics of a woman in the act of seizing power. Female sovereigns were supposed to lack reason, courage and physical strength – all qualities normally inherent to the desired ideal monarch.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, a number of powerful women ruled various European polities during the period in question.<sup>11</sup> As Cynthia Herrup states, 'to rule well required traits associated with both the masculine and the feminine: kings had to be both unyielding and tender,

both economical and bountiful with words and goods, and both courageous and peace loving'.<sup>12</sup> Thus, there were also positive features that early modern European societies could see in a female ruler, and the key to a well-ordered realm constituted the balancing of male and female qualities in proportion.<sup>13</sup> This notion indicates the existence of political discourse regarding the strengths and weaknesses of female rule as well as the desired feminine and masculine royal attributes. This article investigates whether such a discussion appeared in the seventeenth-century Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and if it was invoked during the candidacy of Queen Christina of Sweden to the throne in Warsaw.

### Female sovereignty in early modern Europe and Poland–Lithuania

The particular features of the political and social structures of medieval and early modern Poland and Lithuania raise important questions concerning female agency in politics and society and require a short introduction here. In medieval Poland, customary law excluded women from inheriting the throne.<sup>14</sup> This changed only with in the Privileges of Koszyce, a set of concessions made by Louis I of Anjou, King of Poland and Hungary, to the Polish nobility in 1374. In exchange, the Poles agreed to accept one of the two daughters of Louis as their monarch after his death. From the perspective of dynastic policy, Anjou's promise of these privileges resulted in success. His youngest daughter Jadwiga succeeded him in 1384.<sup>15</sup> Due to her minority, in the opinion of the local magnates, it was imperative to rapidly arrange her marriage, as it would be the royal husband who would exercise power. As a result of Jadwiga's marriage with Lithuanian Władysław Jagiełło, a formal duality of power in the Kingdom of Poland occurred. Jagiełło's dominant position is not questioned. For various reasons, probably mostly on account of her age, Jadwiga did not take advantage of her unprecedented queen regnant position.<sup>16</sup>

During the early modern period of the elective monarchy in Poland–Lithuania, which began in 1572 with the death of the last male representative of the Jagiellonian dynasty, Sigismund II Augustus, there were no codified standards presenting conditions necessary to apply for the crown. Gender issues could not be considered as predetermined, either. After the extremely short reign of the first elective monarch Henry of Valois (1573–74), which ended with his escape to Paris to obtain the French throne, another *interregnum* was soon inaugurated in the Commonwealth. As a result of the widespread noble disappointment caused by the short reign of a foreign monarch, it became possible for the younger sister of Sigismund Augustus, Anna, to become the official font of local power. Any male prince would be able to sit on the Polish–Lithuanian throne only through marriage to her – that is, to the last 'Jagiellonian heiress'.<sup>17</sup>

On 13 December 1575, in Warsaw, Anna Jagiellon was hailed by the assembled nobility as the 'King' of Poland: following the example of Jadwiga of Anjou, who had lived and reigned two centuries earlier, yet in different political circumstances.<sup>18</sup> It evoked the chronologically parallel examples of Empress Matilda and Mary Tudor, a female 'succession' after two centuries of uncontested lineal male heirs, in which a system of royal primogeniture which included women remained in 'constitutional mothballs'. Yet, unlike in England, the problem of female rule was never discussed

in the Polish–Lithuanian context, neither in the parliamentary forum nor in a broader political discourse.<sup>19</sup>

In the act of election, Anna was obliged to marry Stephen Báthory, the voivode of Transylvania. Although a woman was elected due to noble volition, her mandatory marriage should be considered a clear manifestation of a deeply entrenched patriarchy of Polish–Lithuanian society. Although, according to the election diploma, Anna had a status equal to or even higher than her spouse, in the end, it was Báthory who was anointed first at the coronation. The ceremony took place in Cracow, on 1 May 1576, immediately after their marriage. Before being crowned, the queen was obliged to relinquish her dynastic properties in Lithuania to the Commonwealth and, in fact, to cede all her political authority to her husband, which she promptly did.<sup>20</sup> As Robert I. Frost notes:

On the model of Jadwiga, who ruled as queen regnant alongside her husband, Władysław Jagiełło, between 1386 and her death in 1399, Anna might be presumed to have enjoyed the right to rule alongside her husband, King Stefan Batory. [...] In practice, however, she was given no opportunity to exercise the regnal powers she certainly believed she possessed.<sup>21</sup>

In fact, Anna's role as a queen regnant did not materialise. To make matters worse, she lacked all the usual advantages of a queen consort: her political authority was limited, she was not fully respected by her husband, and, because of her age, she could not provide him with offspring. Despite that, the queen managed to outlive Báthory, and then to enact an important political decision: she proved fundamental in introducing her nephew, the Swedish prince Sigismund Vasa, to the Polish–Lithuanian throne (1587–32), which was later ensured (though always as part of the practice of royal election) to his sons Władysław (1632–48) and John Casimir (1648–68). In this way, she led to the creation of the 'Jagiellonian' branch of the Vasa dynasty.

### **The abdication of John II Casimir Vasa (1668) and its implications for papal politics**

The last eight years of the reign of John Casimir may be defined as a real crisis of royal authority in the Commonwealth. They were marked by defeats in the international sphere: a hardly favourable peace treaty with Sweden (1660) and the resumption of the Polish–Muscovite war with the truce of Andruszów (1667), as well as by internal political tensions, manifested in full force in the Lubomirski's Rebellion (1665–66). Finally, the abdication of John Casimir (1668) constituted the climax of the whole crisis. On 16 September 1668, during the General *Sejm*, the king ceded the crown to the Commonwealth, thus definitively concluding the period of Vasa rule, which had begun in 1587.

After receiving information concerning John Casimir's decision to lay down the sceptre, which reached Rome at the end of May 1668, Clement IX opposed the king's plans and repeatedly tried to dissuade him from abandoning the throne. Responsibility for persuading John Casimir to abandon his abdication plans was entrusted to the apostolic nuncios in Poland–Lithuania: Antonio Pignatelli and Galeazzo Marescotti.<sup>22</sup> The cardinal protector of the Commonwealth, Virginio Orsini, was also involved. Moreover, in the Roman curia, the sending of a papal legate *a latere* to Poland–Lithuania was considered, but the plan did not come to fruition because of the

reluctance of the local episcopate.<sup>23</sup> In Rome, there were concerns about further political destabilisation in the Commonwealth and the possibility of the Tsarevich's election. This disquiet stemmed from the already rich papal experience concerning the Polish–Lithuanian *interregna*, which had always threatened the state's internal stability and the position of the local Catholic Church. The Holy See wanted to ensure that the Commonwealth remained in the political and confessional orbit of the papacy, especially considering the risk of imminent conflict between Christian Europe and the Ottoman Empire.

Since the *vivente rege* election reform programme, supported by the Holy See from the beginning of the 1660s, turned out to be impracticable under Polish–Lithuanian political conditions, the papal diplomats' priority was to urge the king to remarry (his wife, Marie Louise Gonzaga, had died in 1667). A new royal marriage might solve the problems related to the continuation of the Vasa dynasty's rule in Poland–Lithuania, if it were to produce offspring. When it became clear that John Casimir was not interested in marriage, the efforts of the Holy See focused on postponing the abdication until political situation were more favourable to the Catholic candidacies of Philip William Neuburg or Charles V of Lorraine, whom Clement IX would have been glad to see on the throne of the Commonwealth. The pope was not strictly interested in ensuring that the Polish–Lithuanian crown remained with John Casimir. All the actions taken by the Holy See in order to dissuade him from laying down the sceptre resulted exclusively from the potential risks created by a new *interregnum*.<sup>24</sup>

The wider Polish–Lithuanian nobility was not convinced by either of the candidates. Officials of the papal Secretariat of State were persuaded that the noble electorate would not accept either of the candidacies promoted before the abdication of John Casimir, with particular emphasis on French aspirations. According to the report of Clement IX's nephew, Cardinal Giacomo Rospigliosi's, it was primarily this factor that persuaded his uncle to support Christina of Sweden's ambitions for election to the Polish–Lithuanian throne.<sup>25</sup>

### The candidature of Christina of Sweden

Christina of Sweden abdicated the throne of her native kingdom and converted to Catholicism in 1654, then moved to Rome at the end of that year. As a famous convert, she took refuge under papal protection. Christina was interested in the Polish–Lithuanian succession as early as 1661. We know that she tried to obtain information about the content of John Casimir's testament at that time. The queen contacted the apostolic nuncio in Warsaw, Pignatelli, to seek information on this point.<sup>26</sup> Christina may have already regretted her decision to abdicate the Swedish throne, as is suggested by her efforts to obtain the crown in Naples between 1656 and 1657. She felt uncomfortable as an ordinary mortal endowed with an empty royal title, continuously lacking revenue.<sup>27</sup> As Casanova observes, 'the authority, which she had renounced, continued to tickle her', or, perhaps more probably, Christina demonstrated an internal need to manifest her royal status outwardly, which was a challenge due to her difficult economic situation.<sup>28</sup>

Christina had a strong relationship with Clement IX, who had been recently elevated to the papal tiara in the summer of 1667. With regard to the upcoming



Polish–Lithuanian election, Rome would gain a lot from her potential success in the Commonwealth. First of all, it would remove the demanding and expensive Christina from the Eternal City. Her election would also guarantee a strengthening of papal influence in central and eastern Europe in the context of the ongoing war of Catholic Europe with the Ottoman Empire, and could have important implications for the career of the Roman confidant and intimate friend of the queen – Cardinal Decio Azzolini. There is no doubt, however, that the aspirations to the Polish–Lithuanian crown were Christina’s initiative. Carl N. D. Bildt suggests that Clement IX merely ‘welcomed the queen’s request’.<sup>29</sup> The letter written by Christina to Azzolini on 18 July 1668 confirms this: ‘After everything you told me in your letter, is it possible that you can destine me to Poland, as you attest? At least, I hope I will be forgiven for my temerity’.<sup>30</sup> At that time, Azzolini, rather than Rospigliosi, was the real controlling force in the papal secretariat, despite papal nephew’s formal authority.<sup>31</sup>

In Rome, the prospects of Christina’s election were primarily seen in the context of the fierce political struggle ongoing in the Commonwealth during the last years of John Casimir’s rule, which were exacerbated by his abdication. The interference of foreign powers in the internal affairs of Poland–Lithuania was considered a potential contributory factor to the discontent of the noble masses, ‘with the irritation of the natural pride of the Nation’, which could result in the election of an unexpected candidate.<sup>32</sup> Both the pope and Christina were aware of this problem, and they were right, as was subsequently proved by the election of an obscure Polish magnate, Michael I Wiśniowiecki. Thus, the Roman curia considered the queen’s candidacy as a stalking horse, to be used in case of an internal conflict in the Commonwealth, or even a split election.<sup>33</sup> Christina also saw her chance in the rivalry between her opponents in Poland–Lithuania. She was convinced that the Francophile party would not push its interests, while the Neuburg candidacy was too weak, despite its international support.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, although Clement IX had expressed his support for the queen, it was weakened by his insistence that everything should be kept secret until she had obtained the crown.

Were there any concerns in Rome regarding the papal support for the candidacy of a woman? Apparently not, as Rospigliosi emphasised that Christina was a talented ruler with a strong character, capable of wielding the sceptre as effectively as other (male) princes.<sup>35</sup> At the papal court, it was clearly believed that the queen represented all the masculine attributes necessary to exercise power in Poland–Lithuania. Royal soul, piety and virility – these were her characteristics according to the Cardinal Nephew’s description.<sup>36</sup> Among other strengths of Christina’s candidacy, Rospigliosi mentioned her descent from the Swedish line of the Vasa dynasty, thus evoking her notorious father Gustav II Adolf.<sup>37</sup> Also the dynastic connection with the Polish Vasas was frequently emphasised. The Roman curia was aware of the traditional affection of the nobles for the ruling dynasty.<sup>38</sup> Katarzyna Kosior notes appositely that

the Jagiellonians [and, after them, Vasas] had become a formidable myth. No longer able to cause a dynastic threat to the monarchy’s electiveness, they were remembered primarily in a positive light as one of the forces that had shaped the Commonwealth’s republican system of government.<sup>39</sup>

Obviously, the queen was also eager to portray herself as the heiress of the Catholic Vasa line, readily recalling her conversion.<sup>40</sup> It was a tradition that the Holy See

appreciated the neo-converts, but would Christina's candidacy withstand accusations based on her Protestant origins and upbringing? <sup>41</sup> It seemed so. Her abdication from the Swedish crown, motivated by reasons of faith, was regarded in Rome as sufficient evidence of the queen being sincere in her religious beliefs. <sup>42</sup> Moreover, the arguments used by Christina often referred to her Catholic conversion. <sup>43</sup> 'His Holiness, who loves the Queen dearly, and who would like, for the singular merit she has shown having trampled [sic] a Kingdom for our Holy Faith, to be able to reward it even more' – so wrote Rospigliosi to the new nuncio in Poland–Lithuania, Marescotti, in July 1668. <sup>44</sup>

It should be noted that the main goal of the diplomatic activity of the Holy See regarding the royal elections in Poland–Lithuania in the second half of the seventeenth century was not to influence the election of any one particular candidate, but to encourage all Catholic pretenders to recognise papal authority in case any one of them should be elected. For this reason, the apostolic nuncio in Warsaw, Marescotti, could openly present Christina's candidacy on behalf of the pope only if he saw a substantial chance of her obtaining the crown and not offending other pretenders in the process. <sup>45</sup> The Secretariat of State repeatedly emphasised the personal commitment of Clement IX to promote Christina's candidacy; however, Rospigliosi reminded Marescotti that the pope always needed to remain neutral towards all Catholic princes, including any pretenders to the Polish–Lithuanian throne. <sup>46</sup> In this period, the papacy's role in European politics was beginning to decrease on account of the developing secularisation of politics and the evolution of the practices of diplomatic negotiation after 1648, in which papal arbitration was no longer deemed necessary. Nevertheless, the memory and legacy of the mediatory position of Rome still guaranteed the pope, as *padre comune*, an important influence in European political matters, at least in disputes between Catholic princes.

For these reasons, Marescotti was not to be involved in any actions directly intended to support Christina's candidacy in Poland–Lithuania, especially while support for the other contenders remained strong. He was, however, constantly obliged to 'keep the matter in a condition that it can be then promoted when the time comes', while keeping everything secret. <sup>47</sup> Rospigliosi informed Clement IX that Christina's candidature would only attract support if other candidates offended the electorate, in which case the pope might declare his support to secure an election that would be of singular benefit to Poland–Lithuania and Christendom. <sup>48</sup> Marescotti was in possession of papal briefs for the Election *Sejm*, in which Clement IX stated his official support for the queen. The decision concerning their effective use was left to the nuncio. <sup>49</sup>

Initially, especially before the abdication of John Casimir, Christina was similarly unwilling to publicise her desire for the Polish–Lithuanian throne. She also did not seek any other political protectors apart from the Holy See. <sup>50</sup> The queen believed in the authority of papal protection and thought it should be enough to remove the obstacles in her way to power. She accepted the delaying tactics of Marescotti, but she wanted him to observe and influence the political scene of the Commonwealth more effectively. <sup>51</sup> As her emissary to Poland–Lithuania, Christina chose her chaplain, Father Michał Antoni Hacki. Bildt rightly described him as a 'subaltern agent', considering him to stand too low in the diplomatic hierarchy to launch any effective election campaign. Hacki travelled to the Commonwealth in August 1668 with Christina's recommendations to be presented to the apostolic nuncio. <sup>52</sup>



For Marescotti, receiving instructions to support Christina's aspirations to the Polish–Lithuanian throne proved problematic despite the assurance that in the event of her ascent, he would gain Clement IX's gratitude and the prospect of a prestigious career.<sup>53</sup> The nuncio already had to manoeuvre between Philip Wilhelm Neuburg and Charles V of Lorraine, the two other Catholic candidates supported by the pope. The fierce factional struggle among the Polish–Lithuanian nobility was of no benefit to him. Marescotti was, therefore, reluctant to follow the papal instructions regarding Christina. He was convinced that the queen could not be considered a credible candidate and was aware of the improbability of her election. The nuncio was also afraid of exposing himself to ridicule by proposing a female candidate.<sup>54</sup>

In fact, it was not until late autumn 1668 that Marescotti began gathering information on potential reactions to Christina's candidacy. 'His Holiness's concern is entirely for the Majesty of the Queen of Sweden' – wrote Rospigliosi in December 1668.<sup>55</sup> In March 1669, Clement IX would manifest 'more than ever the concern to see this crown worthily placed on the temples of the Queen'.<sup>56</sup> From the beginning of 1669 until the eve of the Election *Sejm* in May 1669, the correspondence between Christina and Marescotti was still frequent but acquired a more courteous and superficial character.<sup>57</sup> At the end of the *interregnum*, the nuncio decided to prepare a special memorandum in which he summarised the advantages of the queen's candidacy.<sup>58</sup> Just before the opening of the Election *Sejm*, Marescotti received a double instruction: to exclude any non-Catholic candidates and to pursue Christina's election.<sup>59</sup> At that time, Rospigliosi reminded the nuncio once again: 'In the matter of the election, His Holiness wishes above all every possible advantage for the Queen of Sweden'.<sup>60</sup> It was stressed that regardless of Rome's current instructions regarding other candidates, Marescotti should always work in Christina's favour.<sup>61</sup>

In the end, neither the nuncio nor Hacki managed to build support for Christina in the Commonwealth.<sup>62</sup> The only potential promoter of her candidacy proved to be the bishop of Poznań, Stefan Wierzbowski. However, the reason for his support was not his fondness for the queen, but his desire to please the Holy See. This is shown by his earlier proposals regarding the papal nephew's possible candidacy.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, Marescotti took steps to gain Wierzbowski's political collaboration.<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, according to Bildt's account, 'the bishop made many signs of the cross, not willing to take the matter seriously, and begged the nuncio not to say a word about it, not to excite general laughter'.<sup>65</sup> Despite this, Wierzbowski quietly sounded out opinion among some senators potentially favourable, but received in response a categorical declaration that the nobility universally rejected the idea of a woman becoming the monarch. As expected both by Marescotti and Wierzbowski, a similar proposal evoked resentment and derision among the wider nobility. The nuncio reported these reactions to Rome, appealing for the timely abandonment of Christina's aspirations for the sake of the image of the Holy See in Poland–Lithuania.<sup>66</sup> It seems that a female candidacy proved much less problematic and more acceptable at the Roman court than in the local context, which only the papal diplomat, acting on the spot, could have understood.

### The 'obstacle of sex' and marriage

Christina was well aware of the earlier precedents in which women were elected and crowned 'kings'. She willingly used this argument in her dialogue with the Holy See.<sup>67</sup>

Indeed, the court of Rome hoped that the attachment of the Polish–Lithuanian nobility to the Vasa dynasty also could extend the latter female line.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, in Hacki's letter to Christina from 20 July 1668, we read: 'Pour les difficultés à l'égard de Votre Majesté, on n'en trouvera pas d'autre que le sex'.<sup>69</sup> Christina's gender appeared to constitute the main impediment to her candidacy, and the papacy immediately considered this. In diplomatic correspondence, it was repeatedly described as an 'obstacle', even if, as already mentioned, at the Roman court it was believed that Christina had all the qualities necessary to wield power at her disposal (including those considered masculine).<sup>70</sup> 'It truly does not seem credible that the Polish attitude is to abandon custom, and perhaps the laws of the Kingdom, to elect a Woman' – Rospigliosi suspected.<sup>71</sup> He rightly assessed the general noble view, but he made a mistake in assuming that Polish–Lithuanian laws forbid the election of a female. The capitalised spelling of the word 'Woman' is significant, quite surprisingly reflecting the particular papal respect for Christina's gender.

The queen also feared the rejection of her candidacy on account of her sex, which she considered a defect and the only weak point of her aspirations.<sup>72</sup> Her pessimistic vision of a woman might derive from the negative image of Christina's mother Maria Eleonora of Brandenburg, which was particularly connected to her femininity and attractiveness while showing no interest in political or intellectual matters:

Women should never reign. I am so convinced of that, that if I had married, I would have probably expropriated the right of succession to my daughters. I would certainly have loved the kingdom more than my children, and allowing the succession to the daughters means to betray it. You have to believe me, especially as I speak against my interest. Nonetheless, I have a habit of telling the truth at my expense. It is nearly impossible for a woman to perform royal duties worthily, whether she rules autonomously or as a regent. The ignorance of women, the weakness of their soul, body, and spirit make them unable to reign. And all the women I have seen, both in the stories and in the [real] world, reigning or pretending to reign, have made themselves ridiculous.<sup>73</sup>

Christina's aversion to femininity shaped her attitudes about female rulers. Because she saw women as ignorant, as well as mentally and physically weak, she believed them unfit to exercise power. In the context of the cited passage, one might wonder if Christina imagined herself as a woman at all. In the 'public' sense, it seems she probably did not since she considered herself fully capable of a typically 'male' form and style of governance. The queen, clearly assuming the ideas of Cartesian dualism, was convinced that sexuality concerned only the human body and that the soul was free from any restrictions in this regard. This means that when it comes to knowledge and religious feelings, but also the exercise of power, biological sexuality would have no influence on one's gender.<sup>74</sup> Christina often wore male outfits to prove that despite being a woman, she felt, and wanted to introduce herself as 'superior to her sex'.<sup>75</sup> Her physical traits did not suggest masculinity, but rather her behaviour, attitudes, lifestyle, gestures, ways of speaking, standing and walking.<sup>76</sup> The queen emphasised presenting her public image as masculine, accentuating her innate right to sovereignty. In early modern Europe, power and masculinity were in fact intrinsically related. Almost every female ruler was at some point talked about as masculine, Isabella of Castile and Elizabeth Tudor in particular.<sup>77</sup>

For such reasons, unsurprisingly, among the features recognised in Rome as the queen's virtues which might be helpful for her ascent to the Polish–Lithuanian throne,

the concept of 'virility' was frequently emphasised. According to it, a potential difficulty concerning Christina's aspirations was military command. It traditionally constituted an important royal prerogative, and insofar as women were concerned, it was considered that they lacked the capacity to lead armies. Nonetheless, according to the Roman opinions, Christina was by no means deprived of talent for command.

As she was a young and inexperienced ruler, chancellor Axel Oxenstierna continued to oversee Swedish military matters. However, he generally kept the queen informed and asked her opinion on decisions taken. Prevalent social attitudes prohibited Christina from being directly involved in combat, but she actively managed her kingdom's administration.<sup>78</sup> Christina was Gustav II Adolf's only surviving daughter, and since the war kept her father away from court for most of the time, the Swedish king was well aware of his limited chances of fathering another heir (six years later, he died in the battle of Lützen). Already conscious of the precariousness of his dynasty's future, the king had ordered his only daughter to be raised as a prince, having obtained from the *Riksdag* the acknowledgement for transmitting sovereignty to Christina (female succession was previously sanctioned in 1604, in Norrköping).<sup>79</sup> After all, during the seventeenth century, the only model available for the education of a future ruler was a 'masculine' one, which confirms that a woman, on her way to power, had to undergo a specific itinerary which was aimed at a certain masculinization of her features.<sup>80</sup> This means that since she was a child Christina had had a lot of practice in the art of politics and warfare, but also in physical exercise.<sup>81</sup> As a result, her military and leadership skills could be, in fact, highly regarded. The queen also claimed that she did not fulfil the vision of a woman being 'fickle and weak', writing to Hacki:

At the time I ruled in Sweden, I was only a maiden. It appears that now, with divine assistance, I could be incomparably better at accomplishing my duty, in an age in which I find myself forceful, vigorous both of spirit and body, capable of every kind of fatigue and involvement. What could one ask of me that I could not do? If it is needed to administer justice, to discuss, or to decide in the Councils, I offer myself to give them satisfaction, if not with as much eloquence and knowledge, at least with as good judgment as whoever would provide. If it is necessary for the service of the Commonwealth to march heading an army, I will do it with great satisfaction.<sup>82</sup>

As Mary E. Ailes states, 'Christina's military roles during the end stages of the Thirty Years' War represent the changing tide of military structures and military leadership that came to full fruition during the seventeenth century'.<sup>83</sup> In fact, both male and female monarchs increasingly came to direct their war efforts from their courts rather than being present on the battlefield.<sup>84</sup> This turn created the conditions for the establishment of balanced gender opportunities in commanding the military, which now no longer depended directly on one's biological sex and physical strength.

For these reasons, there was a conviction that the queen would be able to govern independently and without a royal husband. Rospigliosi went so far as to express an opinion that, in the context of governance, Christina 'could be considered a male', and even that 'everyone already considers the Queen not only as a male but as superior to all men'. It should be noted that papal diplomacy by no means praised Christina as a female queen, but promoted her candidacy by arguing almost exclusively for her masculinity ('God would be pleased, if in any time all the Princes have had thoughts and virtues as masculine, as those Her Majesty has').<sup>85</sup> As Elisabeth Waghäll Nivre observes, Christina's 'masculine traits were used positively to show her capacity as a

ruling monarch, negatively when trying to make her fit into conventional stereotypes of a woman'.<sup>86</sup> It may explain why both Christina's biological sex and her masculine deportment were mentioned in Rome as potential obstacles for her election in Poland–Lithuania, which is quite contradictory.<sup>87</sup>

The papal policy was indeed full of paradoxes. Countering the abovementioned points, the Secretariat of State repeatedly suggested that the queen's biological sex could also prove an asset in her quest for the Polish–Lithuanian throne. In Rome, it was believed that crowning her would not arouse the envy of the competitors, as she might not have a potential successor. Hence, Christina's election would not entail the political defeat of other candidates, who could soon have another chance to present themselves as candidates for the Polish–Lithuanian crown. Her rule might therefore establish a kind of *interim*, almost a regency, useful for solving the difficult situation of the Commonwealth. This is also contradictory; an *interregnum* was usually considered as a potential risk. Here, instead, it was presented as an opportunity.<sup>88</sup>

However, discussion about Christina's marriage as a monarch in the Commonwealth was inevitable. As noted above, although the idea of female governance in early modern Europe was accepted in some specific cases, it was generally considered weak and a handicap. Therefore, a woman on the throne was expected and supposed to seek the protector and overseer of her reign, which would almost necessarily mean a husband.<sup>89</sup> It is certain, though, that the queen understood and perceived marriage in a completely different way. Since her infancy, the young Queen of Sweden (which she became as a six-year-old child in 1632) was continuously constrained to face the question of marriage, which she vehemently rejected. Mainly for this reason, Christina announced her intention to abdicate and forced the *Riksdag* to transfer the succession to her cousin, Carl Gustav, whom she had previously intended to marry. At the same time, she became increasingly enamoured of Catholic teaching, finally converting and abdicating in 1654. While many questions over Christina's sexuality and gender remain debatable, at least one of the reasons that guided her in the matter of marriage was her definitive rejection of any possibility of subordinating her life to a man (or, more generally, to another person).<sup>90</sup> Subordination to father, husband or religious order constituted the three possible and morally accepted women's positions in early modern European society. According to Christina, it was at odds with her vision of herself as a sovereign, so she could never accept such submission.<sup>91</sup> The result of this attitude was the queen's permanent and categorical refusal to marry. On 10 August 1668, she wrote to Hacki:

Around the point of the marriage, I confess that it embarrasses me a lot, since considering my humour and my age, I see that there is no remedy. As for my humour, it is the mortal enemy of this horrible yoke, which I would not allow for the Empire of the entire world. Having God made me be born free, I would never know how to resolve to give myself a Master; and since I was born to command, how could I settle myself to obey and come myself down to such slavery.<sup>92</sup>

Considering both her age and refusal to marry, Christina could not fulfil the redemptive role of a queen consort, related to the issue of succession.<sup>93</sup> This element of affirmation of female governance as a positive example of the use of a queen's sexuality was not, however, a necessary condition in an elective monarchy such as the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. As discussed above, the absence of those elements could even be advantageous for Christina's aspirations. Therefore, in the

Roman curia, her candidacy was considered in terms of female regency; it was about 'depositing the Kingdom in the person of the Queen to wait for better times and avoid the present dangers and disconcertments'.<sup>94</sup> Regencies were universally considered periods of political weakness and disorder because those who governed were supposed to lack full authority (regardless of whether it was a female governor or a regency council). In some cases, though, as the papacy seemed to perceive it, a regency could constitute 'a period of relaxation, transformation, and political experimentation' and transform the potential risk of an *interregnum* into an opportunity for reconciliation.<sup>95</sup>

Nevertheless, it seems that Clement IX erred in his supposition that the noble electorate would interpret Christina's negative attitude towards the institution of marriage positively. Although formally, the nobility considered the free royal election as one of its main privileges and was not eager to agree to any modification of the law regarding it, in practice, under the rule of the Vasas, the attachment to the dynasty was evident. The dynastic succession *de facto* could indeed guarantee the political stability of the Commonwealth, formally providing the noble society with the feeling of freedom, and the prerogative to monitor and control the royal conduct.<sup>96</sup> It does not seem probable, however, that the wider nobility recognized Christina as the heir of the previously ruling Polish–Lithuanian monarchs. After all, she came from the Swedish, not the 'Jagiellonian' branch of the family, and the papacy seemed not to notice this subtlety.

## Conclusion

To become the female 'king' of Poland–Lithuania, despite existing precedents, Christina had to overcome custom and tradition. The wish to preserve the Vasa dynasty might be an advantage; as noted in the historiography, 'the need to perpetuate a dynasty superseded even the most entrenched attitudes and prejudices', even in an elective monarchy.<sup>97</sup> It was, however, not enough. The ideal of a female ruler in the medieval Kingdom of Poland and subsequently in the early modern Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth was the queen who remained in the political shadow of her royal husband, devoted to piety and charity, and above all, ensuring the dynasty's heir. Women in power who were strongly involved in political life, such as Bona Sforza (1518–57) or Marie Louise Gonzaga (1646–67), aroused aversion in noble society and were subjected to sharp public criticism and obscene lampoons.<sup>98</sup> As Anna Becker notes, early modern women were thought to adhere to a strictly private sphere of life: household and family, which was in conflict with the public, and, especially, political sphere.<sup>99</sup> For this reason, we cannot expect that the Polish–Lithuanian context could be seen as a stage on which equality of the sexes could be demonstrated, as it was 'completely masculine and diametrically opposed to a non-political female world'.<sup>100</sup> It seems there was indeed no stage in early modern Europe where such equality could be not only demonstrated, but even advocated.

Furthermore, Christina could not be perceived positively by the nobility for another reason. John Casimir was criticised for breaking his royal oath by abdicating, thereby violating noble 'golden freedom'.<sup>101</sup> Why should they choose someone who had already abandoned her native throne, even if she defended this action with

confessional arguments? Moreover, Christina's general reputation in Europe was controversial. This suggests that the improbability of the queen's success at the election was not only connected with her gender. It confirms Judith Richards's thesis, which points out how political circumstances rather than the monarch's sex alone determined the success of various forms of kingship, especially as women in power have generally demonstrated considerable skills in conforming themselves to the early modern ideal of a desired monarch, often consciously and premeditatedly adopting masculine features for this purpose.<sup>102</sup>

Contrary to what Susanna Åkerman wrote, we cannot talk about a real political campaign led by Christina in Poland–Lithuania in order to assume the throne, nor about the official support of Clement IX.<sup>103</sup> Bildt aptly described the initiative as an 'electoral campaign fought exclusively in the darkness of the chanceries'.<sup>104</sup> The fact that Christina's aspirations remained almost unnoticed is demonstrated by the lack of references to her in the diplomatic correspondence and political writings during the *interregnum* of 1668–69. Her candidacy was not discussed, or criticised, as it was almost immaterial. Due to the lack of any documentary material inferring the Polish–Lithuanian nobility's sentiments about Christina's political attempts appears, therefore, problematic in this analysis. Christina's aspirations to the throne of the Commonwealth prove the queen's great internal need to return to power, but can also testify to her relative inexperience in the matter of the Polish–Lithuanian royal election and, more generally, its socio-political characteristics.

That said, it was also the ultimate affirmation of the elective monarchy in Poland–Lithuania which prevented more frequent female access to power, not only as 'queens regnants', but also as royal mothers and regents.<sup>105</sup> In any case, Christina certainly did not enjoy the authority, wealth and origins of the Angevin and Jagiellonian queens. In 1382, the community of the realm had already accepted the idea of a female ruler; in 1576, Anna Jagiellon was a known quantity, a member of the dynasty, and there were distinct advantages to marrying her as a female beyond childbearing years. To do so was a clever move that would guarantee that future royal elections would take place. Finally, it is dubious whether anyone in Poland–Lithuania thought that Christina was a member of the same dynasty as Sigismund III, Władysław IV and John Casimir. The point was not that they were Vasas; it was that they were Jagiellons through Sigismund's mother and Anna's sister, Catherine. Christina was a Vasa, but she was no Jagiellon.

As societies change, gender issues come to be understood differently. It seems evident that, despite the precedents of Jadwiga of Anjou and Anna Jagiellon, in the seventeenth-century Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, the idea of a female monarch – a queen regnant – was unacceptable for noble society. Sharon L. Jansen also observed that 'the number of women exercising political authority in the sixteenth century was unparalleled in the seventeenth'.<sup>106</sup> In conclusion, it is worth noting that while the overall social position of women in early modern Poland–Lithuania should be considered relatively good (marriage was often based on a partnership between husband and wife, misogynist attacks were less ferocious than, for example in Germany, cultural patronage proved of great female interest), in the political sphere it still remained precarious.<sup>107</sup>



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## Notes

1. Maria Bogucka, *Women in Early Modern Polish Society Against the European Background* (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 161.
2. For the history of diplomacy, see esp. Tracey Sowerby, 'Early Modern Diplomatic History', *History Compass* 14 (2016), pp. 441–56, see esp. p. 445; Roberta Anderson, Laura Oliván Santaliciestra, Suna Suner (eds), *Gender and Diplomacy: Women and Men in European Embassies from the 15th to the 18th Century* (Wien: Hollitzer Wissenschaftsverlag, 2021). For the early modern Poland–Lithuania, the works of Maria Bogucka can be considered a unique methodical exception in this field. Still, they refer much more to the social and cultural context of women's history rather than the political one. See esp. Bogucka, *Women in Early Modern Polish Society*. On political aspects, see also Robert I. Frost, 'The Ethiopian and the Elephant? Louise Marie Gonzaga and Queenship in an Electoral Monarchy, 1645–1667', *Slavonic and East European Review* 91 (2013), pp. 787–817.
3. Charles Beem, *The Lioness Roared: The Problems of Female Rule in English History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 2–3.
4. Cf. Beem, *The Lioness*, pp. 2–3; Cesarina Casanova, *Regine per caso: donne al governo in età moderna* (Bari-Roma: Laterza, 2019), pp. 116–17.
5. Cf. Cynthia Herrup, 'The King's Two Genders', *Journal of British Studies* 45 (2006), pp. 493–510: here p. 496.
6. Beem, *The Lioness*, p. 2.
7. Cf. Casanova, *Regine*, p. 117.
8. Casanova, *Regine*, p. IX. Cf. Jean Bodin, in Marian Tooley (ed.), *Six Books of the Republic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), book 6, chaps. 4–5; John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (Genève: Crespian, 1558).
9. Elisabeth Ann Leffeldt, 'Ruling Sexuality: The Political Legitimacy of Isabel of Castile', *Renaissance Quarterly* 53 (2000), pp. 31–56: here p. 33.
10. Leffeldt, 'Ruling Sexuality', pp. 31–56: here p. 33.
11. See Sharon L. Jansen, *The Monstrous Regiment of Women: Female Rulers in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).
12. Herrup, 'The King's Two Genders', pp. 493–510: here p. 498.
13. Herrup, 'The King's Two Genders', pp. 493–510: here p. 499.
14. Bogucka, *Women in Early Modern Polish Society*, p. 162.
15. Monumenta Poloniae Historica, series II (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1978), vol. 5: *Najdawniejsze roczniki krakowskie i kalendarz*, p. 178: 'Est in regem Polonie coronata ob defectum sexus masculini domini regis Lodovici'. The question of the uncertain 'kingship' and 'queenship' of Jadwiga was more broadly argued by Stephen Christopher Rowell. See '1386: The Marriage of Jogaila and Jadwiga Embodies the Union of Lithuania and Poland', *Lithuanian Historical Studies* 11 (2006), pp. 137–44: here p. 140.
16. Jarosław Nikodem, *Jadwiga, król Polski* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 2009), pp. 158; 221–23.
17. Despite the nobility's sentimental attachment to the dynasty, which played an important role, Anna had no hereditary rights in an elective monarchy. Cf. Bogucka, *Anna Jagiellonka* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 2008), p. 130; Katarzyna Kosior, 'Anna Jagiellon: A Female Political Figure in the Early Modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth', in Elena Woodacre (ed.), *A Companion to Global Queenship* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), pp. 70–72.
18. This thesis is widely recognized in historiography (see Bogucka, *Anna Jagiellonka*, pp. 135–38; Frost, 'The Ethiopian', pp. 787–817: here p. 796), while it was recently contested by Kosior ('Anna Jagiellon', pp. 67–78).
19. Beem, *The Lioness*, pp. 9–10.
20. Cf. Bogucka, *Anna Jagiellonka*, pp. 135–38; Frost, 'The Ethiopian', pp. 787–817: here p. 796; Kosior, 'Anna Jagiellon', pp. 67–78: see esp. pp. 70–71.
21. Frost, 'The Ethiopian', pp. 787–817: here p. 796.

22. Maciej Matwijów, 'Geneza abdykacji Jana Kazimierza Wazy 1662–1668', *Czasopismo Zakładu Narodowego Imienia Ossolińskich* 11 (2000), pp. 79–136: here p. 128; Dorota Gregorowicz, 'Stolica Apostolska wobec abdykacji Jana Kazimierza 1667–1668', *Kronika Zamkowa. Roczniki* 68 (2015), pp. 139–63.
23. Gregorowicz, 'Primate Mikołaj Prażmowski and the Unwelcome Papal Legation in Poland-Lithuania (1668–1669)', *Legatio: The Journal for Renaissance and Early Modern Diplomatic Studies* 2 (2018), pp. 29–62.
24. Gregorowicz, 'Stolica Apostolska wobec abdykacji', pp. 139–63.
25. Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, Segr. di Stato [hereafter: AAV, SS], Nunz. Diverse 151, Giacomo Rospigliosi to Galeazzo Marescotti, 15 XII 1668, p. 196.
26. Christina of Sweden to Antonio Pignatelli, 4 X 1661, in Johan Arckenholtz (ed.), *Mémoires concernant Christine, Reine de Suede: pour servir d'éclaircissement a l'histoire de son Regne et principalement de sa vie privée et aux evenemens de l'histoire de son tems civile et littéraire: suivis de deux ouvrages de cette savante princesse*, vol. III (Amsterdam-Leipzig: Schreuder & Mortier, 1759), p. 239. Cf. Carl Nils Daniel Bildt, *Christine de Suède et le cardinal Azzolino: lettres inédites (1666–1668)* (Paris: Plon Nourrit, 1899), p. 443.
27. Louis André, 'La candidature de Christine de Suède au trone de Pologne', *Revue historique* 99 (1908), pp. 209–43: see esp. pp. 210–11.
28. Casanova, *Regine*, p. 157.
29. Bildt, *Christine de Suède*, p. 448.
30. Christina to Decio Azzolini, 18 VII 1668, in Bildt, *Christine de Suède*, p. 457.
31. Marie-Louise Rodén, *Church Politics in Seventeenth-Century Rome: Cardinal Decio Azzolino, Queen Christina of Sweden, and the Squadrone Volante* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2000), p. 194. About the Cardinal Nephew's office and its evolution see Mario Rosa, *La Curia romana in età moderna* (Roma: Viella, 2013).
32. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 28 VII 1668, p. 37r.
33. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 1 IX 1668, p. 50; AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 6 X 1668, p. 56v; AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 29 XII 1668, pp. 83–84r; AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Marescotti to Rospigliosi, 12 VI 1669, p. 671; Marescotti to Christina, 2 X 1668, in Arckenholtz, *Mémoires*, vol. III, pp. 371–72.
34. Christina to Decio Azzolini, 1 VIII 1668, in Bildt, *Christine de Suède*, pp. 461–62.
35. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 28 VII 1668, p. 36v. Cf. Bildt, *Christine de Suède*, pp. 452–53.
36. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 24 XI 1668, p. 70r.
37. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 28 VII 1668, p. 36v.
38. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 4 VIII 1668, p. 41v; AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 16 III 1669, p. 100r.
39. Kosior, 'Anna Jagiellon', pp. 67–78: here p. 75.
40. Bildt, *Christine de Suède*, p. 447; Susanna Åkerman, *Queen Christina of Sweden and her Circle. The Transformation of a Seventeenth-Century Philosophical Libertine* (Leiden-New York: Brill, 1991), p. 234.
41. Gregorowicz, *Tiara w grze o koronę: Stolica Apostolska wobec wolnych elekcji w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów w drugiej połowie XVI wieku* (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 2019), p. 340.
42. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 11 VIII 1668, p. 43.
43. Cf. Åkerman, *Queen Christina*, pp. 235–36.
44. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 28 VII 1668, p. 37v.
45. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 4 VIII 1668, p. 42v; AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 18 VIII 1668, p. 45r; AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 8 IX 1668, pp. 51v–52r; AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 6 X 1668, p. 57v.
46. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 28 VII 1668, p. 38.
47. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 28 VII 1668, p. 37v.
48. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 28 VII 1668, p. 38r. Cf. Marescotti to Christina, [13 IX 1668], in Arckenholtz, *Mémoires*, vol. III, p. 370.
49. Clement IX to the Estates of the Commonwealth, Rome 8 IX 1668, in Arckenholtz, *Mémoires*, vol. III, pp. 367–68; AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 8 IX 1668, p. 51v; AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 6 X 1668, p. 57r. Cf. Bildt, *Christine de Suède*, pp. 450–51.
50. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 4 VIII 1668, p. 42r; Christina to Marescotti, 10 X 1668, in Arckenholtz, *Mémoires*, vol. III, pp. 372–74. Cf. André, 'La candidature de Christine', pp. 209–43: see esp. pp. 211–13.

51. André, 'La candidature de Christine', pp. 209–43: here p. 215.
52. Bildt, *Christine de Suède*, p. 446.
53. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 4 VIII 1668, p. 41r.
54. Bildt, *Christine de Suède*, p. 449. Cf. Waclaw Uruszczak, *Polonica w korespondencji królowej szwedzkiej Krystyny w zbiorach Bibliothèque Interuniversitaire w Montpellier* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo UJ, 2001), p. 11.
55. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 1 XII 1668, pp. 71v–72r.
56. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 16 III 1669, p. 100r.
57. André, 'La candidature de Christine', pp. 209–43: here p. 235.
58. Bildt, *Christine de Suède*, p. 453. Unfortunately, we do not have access to some of the material that De Bildt used in this work. It is about the *Marescotti papiers*, made available to him by the archivist of the Archivio di Stato di Roma, Costantino Corvisieri. We know that this collection was sold to an unknown purchaser (Bildt, *Christine de Suède*, pp. XVIII, 445). Also, Von Pastor writes about the 'loss' of this documentation, without specifying who the buyer was. See Ludwig von Pastor, 'Le biblioteche private e specialmente quelle delle famiglie principesche di Roma', in *Atti del Congresso internazionale di scienze storiche, Roma 1-9 aprile 1903*, vol. III, part II (Roma: Accademia dei Lincei, 1906), p. 125.
59. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 27 IV 1669, pp. 105v–6r.
60. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 3 VI 1669, p. 108r. Cf. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 15 VI 1669, p. 112r.
61. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 4 VIII 1668, p. 41r.
62. Bildt, *Christine de Suède*, p. 451.
63. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 16 III 1669, p. 100v. Cf. Bildt, *Christine de Suède*, pp. 453–54.
64. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 25 V 1669, p. 107r; AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Marescotti do Rospigliosi, 24 IV 1669, p. 624; Bildt, *Christine de Suède*, pp. 453–54.
65. Bildt, *Christine de Suède*, p. 454.
66. Bildt, *Christine de Suède*, p. 454.
67. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 6 X 1668, p. 57r.
68. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 16 III 1669, p. 100r.
69. Hacki to Christina, 20 VII 1668, in Arckenholtz, *Mémoires*, vol. III, pp. 351–52. Cf. André, 'La candidature de Christine', pp. 209–43: here p. 213.
70. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 18 VIII 1668, p. 44v; AAV, Segr. di Stato, Pol. 82, Marescotti to Rospigliosi, 12 VI 1669, p. 671v.
71. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 4 VIII 1668, pp. 41v–2r.
72. Christina to Azzolino, 1 VIII 1668, in Bildt, *Christine de Suède*, p. 462.
73. Cristina di Svezia, *La vita scritta da lei stessa* (Napoli: Cronopio, 1998), p. 83. Cf. Jean-Pierre Cavaillé, 'Masculinité et libertinage dans la figure et les écrits de Christine de Suède', *Les Dossiers du Grihl* 1 (2010), p. 12; Mary Elisabeth Ailes, *Courage and Grief: Women and Sweden's Thirty Years' War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), p. 147.
74. Cavaillé, 'Masculinité et libertinage', p. 12.
75. Casanova, *Regine*, p. 22.
76. Cavaillé, 'Masculinité et libertinage', p. 2; Ailes, *Courage and Grief*, pp. 146–47.
77. Ruth Nilsson, 'Tankar om kvinnökönet. Att vara av kvinnligt kön är ett stort hinder för dygd och förtjänst', in Eva Borgström and Anna Nordenstam (eds), *Drottning Kristina. Aktör på historiens och livets scen* (Göteborg: Göteborgs Universitet, 1995), p. 18; Herrup, 'The King's Two Genders', pp. 493–510: here p. 504; Jansen, *The Monstrous Regiment*, pp. 20–23.
78. Ailes, *Courage and Grief*, pp. 149–60.
79. On Queen Christina's education, see Martin Lowther Clarke, 'The Making of a Queen: The Education of Christina of Sweden', *History Today* 28 (1978): pp. 228–35; Ailes, *Courage and Grief*, pp. 138–40; Duke Carl deposed Sigismund in 1599 but was afraid of being crowned immediately, seen by many as a usurper. Finally, in 1604, he got crowned, and in the exact moment, the statute for female succession was approved (Carl had a son, Gustav Adolf, born in 1594, but Sigismund and his heirs still constituted a threat. If Gustav Adolf should not survive to adulthood, his half-sister Catherine would become a candidate for the throne). The intention was to preserve the succession in the Swedish line of the Vasa dynasty. Subsequently, to strengthen Christina's position, Gustav II Adolf called the Riksdag in 1627, and its allegiance to Christina was sworn then. Interestingly, Christina brought this female-including succession practice to an end through her Abdication Agreement in 1654, since she ceded her crown to Carl Gustav and his male heirs. Cf. Ailes, *Courage and Grief*, p. 141.

80. Rodén, *Drottning Christina en biografi* (Stockholm: Prisma, 2008), pp. 66–67.
81. Ailes, *Courage and Grief*, p. 140.
82. Memorial on gender and maidenhood obstacles, Hamburg VIII 1668, in Arckenholtz, *Mémoires*, vol. III, pp. 360–61. Cf. André, 'La candidature de Christine', pp. 209–43; see esp. pp. 205–6.
83. Ailes, *Courage and Grief*, pp. 159–60. Cf. Martin Van Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 51–57.
84. Ailes, *Courage and Grief*, pp. 161–63. Another female example of such an involvement is Amalie Elisabeth of Hanau-Münzenberg, who was politically and militarily far more effective than her husband, William V, Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel, once he had died. See Tryntje Helfferich, *The Iron Princess: Amalia Elisabeth and the Thirty Years War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).
85. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 4 VIII 1668, p. 42r. Cf. Bildt, *Christine de Suède*, p. 449.
86. Elisabeth Waghäll Nivre, 'Writing Life – Writing News: Representations of Queen Christina of Sweden in Early Modern Literature', *Renaissance Studies* 23 (2009), pp. 221–39; here p. 238.
87. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 16 III 1669, p. 100r.
88. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 28 VII 1668, p. 37.
89. Lehfeldt, 'Ruling Sexuality', pp. 31–56; see esp. pp. 33, 36.
90. Cf. Åkerman, *Queen Christina*, pp. 239–40; Casanova, *Regine*, p. XVII. The view of marriage as an element that plunges the position of women in society was shared by Heide Wurder, who stated that marriage and family are structures marked and shaped by the feudal system, through which rule and power are executed. See 'Er ist die Sonn', sie ist der Mond'. *Frauen in der Frühen Neuzeit* (München: GRIN Verlag, 2009).
91. Cavallé, 'Masculinité et libertinage', p. 13; Malin Grundberg, *Ceremoniernas makt. Maktöverföring och genus i Vasatidens kungliga ceremonier* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2015), p. 173. In this case, we can compare Christina's attitude towards marriage with that represented by Elizabeth Tudor, who defied social and political convention by never marrying, 'to the horror of contemporaries and the continued amazement of generations of historians'. Cf. Beem, *The Lioness*, p. 23. The negative relationship between marriage and a female exercise of regnal power is central to the study of Charles Beem, in reference to the marriage of Anne Stuart and Prince George of Denmark. See Beem, *The Lioness*, pp. 101–39.
92. Memorial on gender and maidenhood obstacles, Hamburg VIII 1668, in Arckenholtz, *Mémoires*, vol. III, pp. 361–62.
93. See Elena Woodacre and Carey Fleiner (eds), *Royal Mothers and their Ruling Children. Wielding Political Authority from Antiquity to the Early Modern Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
94. AAV, SS, Pol. 82, Rospigliosi to Marescotti, 6 X 1668, pp. 56v–57r.
95. Casanova, *Regine*, p. 164.
96. Stefania Ochmann-Staniszevska, *Dynastia Wazów w Polsce* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2007), pp. 29–30.
97. Theresa Earenfight, 'Without the Persona of the Prince: Kings, Queens and the Idea of Monarchy in Late Medieval Europe', *Gender & History* 19 (2007), pp. 1–21; here p. 2.
98. Bogucka, *Women in Early Modern Polish Society*, pp. 162–64.
99. Anna Becker, 'Gender in the History of Early Modern Political Thought', *The Historical Journal* 60 (2017): pp. 843–63; see esp. pp. 847–50.
100. Becker, 'Gender in the History of Early Modern Political Thought', pp. 843–63; here p. 849.
101. Ochmann-Staniszevska, *Dynastia Wazów w Polsce*, p. 79. Cf. Anna Grzeskowiak-Krwawicz, *Queen Liberty: the concept of freedom in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012).
102. Judith Richards, 'Love and a Female Monarch: The Case of Elizabeth Tudor', *Journal of British Studies* 38 (1999), pp. 133–60.
103. Cf. Åkerman, *Queen Christina*, p. 235.
104. Bildt, *Christine de Suède*, p. 445.
105. Frost, 'The Ethiopian', pp. 797–817, see esp. pp. 792, 794.
106. Jansen, *The Monstrous Regiment*, p. 224.
107. Bogucka, *Women in Early Modern Polish Society*, pp. 177–79.

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