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Des entrées solennelles au XVI^e siècle
et des rituels publics ou privés au XX^e siècle



Sous la direction de Marie-France WAGNER
Mise en page de Marie-Douce ST-JACQUES

HENRI II AS A *REX-IMPERATOR* IN THE ENTRY INTO ROUEN (1550)*

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In sixteenth-century France, a king's entry into a city was one of four royal ceremonies, which also included the royal coronation, the *lit de justice* and the funeral. These ceremonial entries welcomed the King or other important political figures as they passed through a city, and in doing so they celebrated royal grandeur and prestige. The king traditionally made a first entry into Paris, after his coronation at Rheims, and into each of the kingdom's major cities as a revival of his accession to the crown and in order to renew grants and privileges to the cities. Beginning in the Middle Ages, this ritual gradually evolved and, under the influence of Italian festivals, reached its apogee in France in the middle of the sixteenth century, becoming more secular and increasingly magnificent. The entries of Henri II into Lyon (1548), Paris (1549), and Rouen (1550) are often taken together as representing the model of the humanistic entry which was meant to turn to Antiquity and evoke roman triumphs. However, on closer inspection, we find that in these three entries there are a number of stylistic, and thematic differences, as well as differences in their political ends.

In this paper, I will concentrate on the way that Henri II's entry into Rouen focuses on the representation of the king's authority and military power. The work of Michael Wintroub¹ on this entry has shown how the choice of its iconographic program and *tableaux vivants* underlines the "civilizing cultural mission" of the king, praising eloquence over arms². Wintroub takes the opposition between barbarity and civilization in the reconstructed battle with the savage Brazilians as central to the entries overarching meaning. As convincing as Wintroub's analysis is, it only treats in passing the initial *tableau vivant* of the entry, a sophisticated re-enactment of the King's recent military victories in Scotland, and especially in Boulogne (Henri II had besieged Boulogne, forcing the English to come to terms and give up the city that Francis I had lost). In fact,

¹ "Civilizing the savage and making a King: the royal entry festival of Henri II (Rouen, 1550)", *Sixteenth Century Journal*, XXIX, 2, 1998, p. 465-494; "L'ordre du rituel et l'ordre des choses : l'entrée royale d'Henri II à Rouen (1550)", *Annales*, 2001, n° 2, p. 479-505. I found out about Wintroub's recently published book (*A Savage Mirror: Power, Identity, and Knowledge in Early Modern France*, Stanford University Press, 2006) after having written this conference. I shall take into account the last thoughts of Wintroub in a more elaborate version of this article.

² On this question, see also the article of Lawrence Bryant, "Politics, Ceremonies, and Embodiments of Majesty in Henry II's France", in H. Duckhardt, R. Jackson and D. Sturdy eds, *European monarchy. Its Evolution and Practice from Roman Antiquity to Modern Times*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1992, p. 127-154.

it is not the architectural triumphal elements such as the obelisk, the temple, the portico, and the arch that distinguish this entry from its predecessors in Lyon or Paris, but the *mise en scène* of the ruler in a triumphal setting, as a *rex-imperator* on a chariot, integrated into the city's procession passing in front of Henri II himself (in fact, the Rouen entry includes only one triumphal arch along with several *tableaux vivants* about which I will talk about later). In other words, the Rouen entry does not emphasize illusionistic paintings but rather the moving elements of the entry (the mock battle of the Brazilians, a naumachie, several mythological dramatic scenes, and more importantly the triumphal floats), which underline the King's power.

As far as I know, it is one of the few entry ceremonies in the sixteenth century that not only celebrates a message of peace and concord, but also glorifies military victories. Even the entry of Francis I in Rouen in 1517, shortly after the famous victory of Marignan is not envisioned in this kind of martial spirit. Although it was a common theme in Italian entries, the French rarely represented real military triumphs, but only borrowed isolated elements from them, such as the chariot and the triumphal arch. Therefore, the word "triumph", often used in contemporary written accounts to mean magnificent and luxurious, returns in the Rouen entry to its original sense, a procession celebrating military victories with chariots and captives, the highest honor in the ancient times that Rome grants to a hero. Rouen's triumphal imagery, using floats showing the spoils of war and the King entering the city as an Emperor, emphasizes a new style and language in political discourse. I argue that by acknowledging the image of Henri II as a *Rex-Imperator* as a central theme we can understand this entry as a new representation of royal power, different from that of Henri II's Paris and Lyon entries in which the military aspects are attenuated or much more dissimulated (for instance, in the Paris entry, the triumphal arch, which evokes explicitly military prowess and victory, was not part of the procession route into the city and was erected next to Saint-Paul church, in the district of the Palais des Tournelles where the King and the Queen were staying).

This article will treat of three important points : 1) the competitive spirit which animated the design of the entry ; 2) the strength of local traditions ; 3) and the imperial themes which emerge from the iconographic program and, consequently, reflect the increasingly authority of the Monarch.

1) While it is true that the competition between the large cities of the Kingdom to receive the King always existed, it would seem that in 1550 the organizers of the Rouen entry had the explicit will to exceed what was done in Lyon and in Paris. One reads in the inventory of the communal records of Rouen that: “[...] l’advertissement donné en lad. Ville par Mgr le Gouverneur, estoit requiz se mectre de tout en son debvoir à faire théâtres, establies pour monstrier le bon voulloir que ses vrays et bons subjetz auroient en luy [c’est-à-dire le roi], qui auroit déclaré son affection qu’il verroit autant de choses singulières en sa dicte ville de Rouen que à nulle aultre villes de son royaume, où il avoit esté”³.

In the official printed account⁴, while depicting the order of the city procession passing in front of Henri II and about to describe the triumph inserted between the captains of Normandy and the children of honor of the city, the narrator points out “le parfaict du magnifique triumphe que la ville de Rouen vouloit exhiber à la majesté de son Roy, non par simulachres ou platte peinture, ains par l’effect des choses vives et mouvantes, a l’immitation expresse des Romains triumphateurs, chose bien deue à ung si magnanime et victorieux prince comme est le nostre.” The expression “par simulachres ou platte peinture” refers explicitly to the triumph of Honor and Virtue which is represented on one of the friezes of the large triumphal arch for the Temple of Honor and Virtue in the Lyon entry.

The narrator then proceeds to give a very detailed description of each element of the complex triumph presented as a re-enactment of the recent victories of Henri II over the English (the seat of Boulogne):

- The chariot of Fame, triumphing over Death -- the chariot is drawn by four winged horses; Fame speaks to Henri II granting him the title of King.
- The chariot of Religion, drawn by two unicorns; Religion holds a miniature of a church; the two ladies each side of her are the Royal Majesty and the Virtue of Victory.
- These two chariots are followed by six bands of military men wearing Henri II’s device and carrying vases, forts won at Boulogne, banners, and

³ Archives communales de Rouen: Inv. A 16, 17 juillet 1550, p. 171.

⁴ *C’est la déduction du somptueux ordre, plaisants spectacles et magnifiques théâtres dressés et exhibés par les citoyens de Rouen...*, Rouen, Robert Le Hoy, 1550.

all sorts of spoils of war; then, fifty soldiers who had taken part in the King's recent military campaign, six elephants bearing symbols (some of which referring directly to Boulogne), several captives "de triste representation", and Flora and her Nymphs.

- At the end of the procession appears the third chariot, "le char d'Heureuse Fortune", on which had sat an effigy of Henri II: "un beau et elegant personnage, aprochant de corsage et traict de visage à la noble personne du Roy, nostre sire." The King is surrounded by four of his children, and behind him, we see Fortune holding the imperial crown.

The works of Margaret McGowan and Victor E. Graham⁵ have uncovered the literary and iconographic sources which inspired the conception of the triumph of Henri II. I only will argue here that the description of this imposing moving triumph occupies a little less than half of the printed account, which underscores the importance that this element occupied in the spectacular syntax of the entry. Moreover, the last words of the account also stress the triumphal aspect of the entry: "Lequel triumphe fut trouvé pour ce jour plus excellent en beaulté, plus complet en varieté et non moins plaisant et delectable que le tiers triumphe de Pompée le grand, celebré le jour de sa nativité, fut veu des Romains superbe en richesses et abondant en despeuilles des estranges nations". Given these aspects of the entry, it seems obvious that there was a will among the organizers of this entry to produce something original and to create a kind of spectacle, which had never been seen before in France. More importantly, it is the first time in French entry ceremonies that the royal effigy is placed on a chariot as an Emperor. It is indeed this triumph which the narrator of the entry of Henri IV into Paris (event in 1596; account published in 1599) privileges among others entry into Rouen:

Mais pour suffisant tesmoignage de la continuation des nos citoyens de Rouen en tel devoir vers leurs roys et princes naturels, la memoire nous represente

⁵ Victor E. Graham, "The Entry of Henry II into Rouen in 1550: A Petrarchan Triumph," in *Petrarch's Triumphs. Allegory and Spectacle*, K. Eisenbichler and A. Lannucci Amilicare eds, Ottawa, Dovehouse, 1990 ; "The Triumphal Entry in Sixteenth-Century France," *Renaissance and Reformation*, vol. X, n° 3, 1986, p. 237-256 ; and Margaret McGowan, "Form and Themes in Henri II's Entry into Rouen," *Renaissance Drama*, I, 1968, p. 199-252 ; "The Renaissance Triumph and its Classical Heritage," in *Court Festivals of the European Renaissance. Art, Politics and Performance*, J. R. Mulryne et E. Goldring éd., Burlington, Ashgate, 2002, p. 26-47.

encores les entrees de Loys douzième et François premier et, sur toutes autres, celle de Henry deuxième, faicte à la sortie de la guerre de Picardie qui avoit du tout incommodé ceste dicte ville. Car on peut bien en verité affermer icelle entree avoir esté de plus de despence, d'appareil et magnificence que toutes celles que jamais les empereurs romains ayent faictes, dont toutesfois les histoires font tant de mention.

2) In fact, and this will be my second point, it thus seems important to analyze and understand the presence of triumphal chariots in the Rouen entry compared to the local tradition in which the triumphal chariot is one piece of Renaissance visual culture that had been adopted by local artists. Indeed, several representations of triumphs had been produced in this city before Henri II's entry in 1550, some religious taking as a starting point the *Triumphus crucis* of Savonarole (1452-1498) and corresponding to a new iconography which was developed in reaction of the expansion of Protestantism, others pagan drawn from Petrarch's *Trionfi*, Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Polifili* (1499) or Mantegna's *Triumph of Cesar*, which typify the Renaissance taste for Roman triumphs. Among the several images of pagan triumphs found in palaces and manor houses in Normandy, and especially in Rouen, "la Galerie d'Aumale" of the Hôtel de Bourgtheroulde (1520-1530) in this city offers an eloquent example. The gallery is entirely decorated with a bas relief composed of six arcades and two superposed friezes. One of them is the historical event of the Field of the Cloth of Gold and the other one is an illustration of Petrarch's *Trionfi*⁶.

The place of the triumph in the intellectual and artistic milieu in Normandy was largely stimulated by George Ier d'Amboise, archbishop of Rouen (1494-1510) and minister of State of Louis XII⁷, who commissioned the first French translation of Petrarch's *Triumphs* and had illustrated manuscript of this text produced (in about 1503).

⁶ The construction of the *Hôtel de Bourgtheroulde* was undertaken at the end of 15th century by Guillaume II Le Roux, lord of Bourgtheroulde, baillif d'Elbœuf before becoming to advise at the Parliament of Rouen. After having inherited this aristocratic residence, Guillaume III, abbot of Aumale and intimate of George d'Amboise, enlarged it and embellished it while building a gallery between the years of 1520-1530, called "of Aumale", whose frontage is entirely decorated by a bas-relief that one can still admire today. See I. Lettéron, *Rouen, l'hôtel de Bourgtheroulde et sa galerie*, Rouen, Service régional de l'Inventaire général de Haute-Normandie, Itinéraires du Patrimoine, n° 9, 1992; D. Gillot et I. Lettéron, *Rouen, l'hôtel de Bourgtheroulde, demeure des Leroux*, Rouen, Service régional de l'Inventaire général de Haute-Normandie, *Cahiers du patrimoine*, n° 44, 1996.

⁷ "[...] C'était lui [G. d'Amboise] qui avait donné à Rouen en quinze ans une impulsion décisive, qui avait fixé pour longtemps le visage monumental de la ville." (Marc H. Smith, "Rouen – Gaillon : témoignages italiens sur la Normandie de Georges d'Amboise," in *L'Architecture de la Renaissance en Normandie. I-Regards sur les chantiers de la Renaissance*, Caen, Presses Universitaires de Caen, 2003, p. 45).

He also had the triumphal procession offered to Louis XII at the time of his entry into Milan, which takes again the imagery of the triumph of Cesar, carved in one of the façades of the courtyard of his castle of Gaillon, in 1508 by Antoine Juste.

As V. E. Graham puts it: “Royal entries into Rouen differed from those in other parts of the Kingdom in that they regularly involved the use of triumphal chariots, [...], rather than just stationary decorations”⁸. This was true of entries in Normandy more generally. Let me cite three main examples of the presence of chariots in royal entry ceremonies in Normandy. For the entry of François Ier in to Rouen in 1517, a scaffold transports the chariot of the Three Graces⁹; in 1532, for the Rouen entry of the Queen Eleonore and the Dauphin, a mythological triumph closes the city procession: three chariots of which those of Mercury, Juno and Pallas, accompanied by men carrying trumpets and buccines and other mythological figures¹⁰; finally, in 1532, for the entry of François Ier into Caen, there was the triumphal chariot of “le Dieu Mars, armé de toutes pieces, assis en une chaire triumphale battue en or et azur”, preceded by the nine Valiant Knights (les neuf Preux)¹¹. It is clear that the god Mars refers to Francis Ist as a warrior, but this association is made by the means of a mythological figure, whereas in the Rouen entry of 1550 there is no use of mythological imagery; the description of Henri II as a

⁸ “The Triumphal Entry in Sixteenth-Century France,” p. 237

⁹ “L'enfant descendoit en iceluy monde avec trois rayons pour noter les graces et perfections de l'ame. Et estoit receu par troys belles filles bien gorgiasement acoustrées de draps de soye et de drap d'or aux couleurs du Roy assises dedens ung car representantes les troys deesses nommées Graces, desquelles des noms sont Aglaïa, Thalia et Euphrosine. Et estoit en ce signifié que le roy a toutes graces en luy, tant du corps que de l'ame, tellement que on le peult dire ung chief d'œuvre de nature. Le jeune enfant receu par les dictes graces, le car commença à mouvoir par soy-mesme tressecretement et par bon artifice et porta les dictes Graces et enfant devant ladicte deesse Pallas qui lui donna l'escu de prudence ainsi que autrefois avoit fait à presens pour ses vertus, finalement obtint de Juppiter lieu et place entre les estoilles.” (*L'entrée du treschrestien et tresvictorieux Roy de France François premier de ce nom faicte en sa bonne ville et cité de Rouen ...* Rouen, Louis Bouvet, 1517).

¹⁰ *Les entrées de la reyne et de monseigneur daulphin, lieutenant general du roy et gouverneur en ce pays de Normandie. Faictes à Rouen en l'an mil cinq cents trente et ung*, Rouen, Rolin Gaultier, 1517.

¹¹ “Et un peu après marchoyent quatre Buccines, ou Trompettes, devant un chariot triumphant, sur lequel estoit le Dieu Mars, armé de toutes pieces, assis en une chaire triumphale battue en or et azur. Ledict chariot enrichi d'or et d'argent, autour duquel estoyent pourtraites choses servantes aux armes, comme instrumens de guerre, conduit par six hommes sylvestres ; devant lequel estoyent les neuf Preux magnifiquement en ordre, vestus de draps de soye de diverses couleurs, enrichis de broderie : trois vestus à la Judaïque, c'est à sçavoir Josué, David et Judas Machabeus, montez sur un Elephant, un Chameau et un Cerf ; Hector, Alexandre et Jules Cesar, à la turque, montez sur une Licorne, un Griffon et un Dromadaire: lesquelles bestes estoyent encaparençonnées de draps de soye à broderie, si bien pourtraites sur le vif, et ayans tels mouvemens qu'ils sembloient estre naturels. Artur, Charlemaigne et Godefroy de Billon, vestus à la Françoisise, montez sur coursiers, faisans pennades et sauts si a propos qu'il n'est possible de mieux faire [...]” (*Les entrées triomphantes du Roy nostre sire et de monseigneur le Dauphin, Lieutenant general de sa Majesté et Gouverneur au pays de Normandie, faictes en la ville et Université de Caen, en l'an mil cinq cents trente-deux, avec l'ordre tres-exquis en iceluy tenu*, 1532).

strong and victorious King is more direct and literal, compared also to the previous contemporary entry into Paris where the Monarch is represented allegorically in the figure of Jupiter, Typhis or Hercules.

The choice of re-enacting a triumph was thus something natural for the Rouennais since the artistic motif of the chariot was very familiar. Consequently, this was a way to put a local stamp on this entry, especially since there was very little explicit reference to the city itself, whereas in the other entry ceremonies into Rouen, the blazon of Rouen – a lamb carrying a cross – is present everywhere. In the Henri II's entry into Rouen, there is only one appearance of the lamb on the costume of the 50 principal rafters of the city¹². It is as if the triumphal chariot had temporarily become the city's device in participating to the exaltation of the city cultural history. I will add that the reduction of the city symbols redounds to the profit of the Monarch (It is obvious when one reads along the account of the Lyon entry in which the arms of the city – a crawling lion – is omnipresent).

3) I would like to conclude by underlining the military aspects of the Rouen entry which are highlighted by the movement and the action of the performances organized for Henri II, among them the mock battle with the savage Brazilians, the naval battle (a *naumachie*) between France and Portugal to conquer the Brazilians, and obviously the moving triumph integrated into the city procession. More precisely, the place of the triumph in this entry is significant: it is integrated into the city's procession passing in front of the King: Henri II sees his own image passes in front of him.

... Dès lors que ledit Char de triomphe, posé fut sous l'arc triomphal, où le Roi était. Celui qui représentait la personne du Roy, après révérence dument faite, disertement prononça & d'honnête assurance ce huitain.

*Représenter ta majesté, ô, sire,
Indigne suis, & tous autres fors toi,
Car ta présence, un César te fait dire,
Et ton absence, incomparable roi,
Si dont Rouen te représente en moi
Ta majesté n'en est pas moins excellente,
Puisque de l'ordre et triomphe où me vois,*

¹² "Chascun arbalestrier estoit couvert d'ung hoqueton ouvré d'escailles d'argent aux armaries de la ville, qui est un agneau d'argent sur champ de guelles, soubz troys fleurs de lys d'or, sur fons d'azur, le tout artistement labouré d'orfavrerie."

L'honneur retourne à toi que représente.

These verses underline the image of the King as a representation; one detects the question of the presence/absence, the concept of the Representation which work of Louis Marin has clarified. The actor riding on the chariot reveals here the King absence and the fact that he is present elsewhere by way of a symbolic substitution which evokes the notion of the King's two bodies. The question is whether this imposing triumph entered the city following the procession. If the answer is yes, the chariots, thanks to their mobility, could have been seen by all the Rouennais placed along the procession's route through the city. Before seeing the actual body of the King, spectators would have first seen his image. Passing from a symbolic representation to a real presence of royal power produces a legitimization of that power.

This last idea underscores the King's authority in the city, and inscribes him in a rivalry among kings and rulers to claim the glory of roman triumphs. The rivalry between the Valois and the Habsburgs is too well known to recounted here, but it would have been present in the minds of all involved that in 1550 Henri II still aspired to the imperial crown (the negotiations related to this desire continued with the Protestant princes of Germany until 1552). In addition, the victory against England was to some extent an affront to Charles V because the Emperor and the King of England were bound by a pact which provided that the Emperor must help defend England in the event of a French attack. In this connection, it is interesting to note that one of the scaffolds on the King's route through the city, "le théâtre de la Crosse," represents a sphere, which is an imperial symbol. As recalled by V. Hoffman¹³, the Roman emperors from the time of Cesar were represented with a sphere as a sign of universal monarchy. On the scaffold of the "théâtre de la Crosse", there was "un grand et spacieux globe, peint à fraiz dedans et dehors, de couleur du ciel." This sphere opened and revealed a painted image of Henri II wearing an imperial crown. Gods and Goddesses handled him "sceptres tant modernes que antiques avec coroones imperiales royales & ducales à ce Roy." Furthermore, the text specifies that the the effigy of Henri II held a Gorgon whose widespread blood meant "l'Heureuse

¹³ "Donec totum impleat orbem: symbolisme impérial au temps de Henri II," *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de l'art français*, 1978, p. 29-42.

victoire que nostre souverain seigneur & Prince obtient sur ses ennemis enfans & l'engendrement de discorde.”

If we consider that the 1550 entry into Rouen was Henri II's last entry in one of his major cities, there was without any doubt a will to impose the stamp of the new military regime of Henri II and underline his imperial mission and its political ambitions. One wonders if this new impulsion to glorify the king was part of a royal dictate or was simply a matter of the Rouennais pandering to the king's vanity. In this order of ideas, the printed account serves as an instrument of propaganda, a kind of “paper triumph” in the style of the Triumph of Maximilian I by Dürer (1522) and the one of Charles V by Hans Schaeufelein (around 1540). Let me conclude by saying that this engraving of Henri II is among the rare images that presents a French King in a representation more typical to that of an Emperor. Through this unique and original image of Henri II, I wanted to demonstrate how explicit in the Rouen entry is the victorious nature of the Monarch, reflecting the increasing royal authority in a context of rivalry.