

Response Page

The following responses were posted on the H-France discussion list in response to Colin Jones's review of *Journal de santé de Louis XIV. Écrit par Vallot, Daquin et Fagon*, ed. Stanis Perez.

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The original review may be found on the H-France web page at:

<http://www.h-france.net/vol4reviews/vol4no94Jones.pdf>

17 January 2005

Elizabeth W. Marvick

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Colin Jones's brief review of Stanis Perez's new edition of the scrappy and largely insignificant *Journal de Louis XIV's health* would scarcely warrant comment were it not for his hype, "we get to know more about Louis XIV's body than that of just about any other historical figure (with the possible exception, thanks to Hérouard [sic], of his father)." [1] As those familiar with early modern French history, as well as many other political historians of various eras and cultures, are aware, the comparison is ill chosen: "No document in Western literature gives as complete a record of one individual's early life as the diary kept by Jean Hérouard on the childhood and youth of Louis XIII of France." [2]

Jones's unfamiliarity with studies of Louis XIII and his doctor's famous "registre" apparently has led him to refer the reader to the rather slipshod and grievously inadequate Fayard edition of the diary, rather than to the scrupulously edited and indexed 1868 scholarly edition, still available through booksellers and libraries. [3] Philippe Ariès's *Centuries of Childhood*, a work with a polemical purpose, innocent of manuscript sources, is the only citation of secondary material given by Jones to refer the reader to a substantial body of work that dates at least from Tallemant Des Réaux (1619-1692). [4]

[1] Review by Colin Jones of Stanis Perez, ed., *Journal de santé de Louis XIV. Écrit par Vallot, Daquin et Fagon*. Grenoble, France: Éditions Jérôme Millon, 2004. *H-France Review* Vol. 4 (September 2004).

[2] Elizabeth Wirth Marvick, "Louis XIII and his Doctor: On the Shifting Fortunes of Jean Hérouard's Journal," *French Historical Studies* 18 (1993): 279.

[3] *Journal de Jean Hérouard sur l'enfance et la jeunesse de Louis XIII (1601-1628)*, ed. Eudore Soulié and Edouard de Barthélemy. 2 vols. Paris: 1868.

[4] *L'enfant et la vie familiale* (Paris, 1960); trans. Robert Baldick, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Knopf, 1962).

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Here's a brief commentary on the polemical observations concerning early modern royal health journals.

The Journal of Héroard was totally reedited by Madelaine Foisil and published in I believe 1991.

That no mention should be made of such a massive scholarly achievement by either reviewer I find startling and dismaying.

20 January 2005

Colin Jones

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A FOOTNOTE TAKES ON A LIFE OF ITS OWN

It has been an interesting experience, being hauled over the coals by two respected scholars for a passing footnote in perhaps the most innocuous book review I have ever written in my life. In future, I had better stick with being contentious and objectionable, as usual.

Preston Perkiss is 'startled' and 'dismayed' to discover that in my review of the recent edition of the Journal de santé de Louis XIV, I make no mention of the edition of the physician Jean Hérouard's account of the medical history of Louis XIII edited by Madeline Foisil. His shock-and-awe, hoity-toity tone seems a little excessive in the light of the fact that I do in fact cite Madeleine Foisil's editorial role in the text of my review. But perhaps it is only the notes of the article which Professor Perkiss has managed to get round to? This edition was also published in 1989 as I stated rather than 1991 as he suggests.

For those readers who have been somewhat mystified by the force of Elizabeth Marvick's comments on my review, which was published in H-France as long ago as September, it may be worth pointing out that I was reviewing an account of Louis XIV's (sic) medical history, and in passing speculated that only Louis XIII had a more complete extant medical record than the Roi Soleil. I do not think that Professor Marvick actually disagrees with this. She is simply aggrieved

that in my footnotes I refer readers to the most recent and most complete text - the 1989 edition of Jean Hérouard's work, rather than the 1868 edition, the latter published when Louis Pasteur was little more than a callow youth and Robert Koch scarcely out of rompers. Professor Marvick's hostility to the Foisil version of the text is well-known and extensively documented in her own 1993 article which she generously cites in her intervention. She champions the 1868 edition over the 1989 one. I don't, but it will be up to readers to compare and contrast and then come up with their own decision. There are problems with both editions. For the point I was making in my review - namely that we know a lot about Louis XIII's health because of the Hérouard text - the Foisil edition has the signal advantage of containing a great deal more of the original text than the 1868 edition, a point which I believe Professor Marvick will concede. So maybe she and I should just agree to differ without further unpleasantness? If she was wondering, however, I do know, and admire, her monograph on the early life of of Louis XIII, Louis XIII: Making of a King (1986) (though I disagree with some of its premisses) and prefer it to Madeleine Foisil's L'Enfant Louis XIII, l'éducation d'un roi (1996). If acknowledgement of this fact is what her intervention was destined to achieve, then it has been duly achieved. I didn't think footnotes in book reviews on one subject should stretch that far on something quite different, but then maybe I was wrong.

It is excellent to see that Professor Marvick - to whom I hereby convey my very sincerest respects, and with whom I look forward to raising a convivial glass in future - can still throw a powerful punch. I just wish I felt that I deserved to be on the receiving end of it. What I am really hoping, however - and I think she will share my excitement - is that this utterly insignificant and somewhat fatuous footnote dispute will become the trigger for one of those wonderful serial debates for which H-France has become famed. We will soon (I hope) be collectively ricocheting around into international footnoting practices, the potty-training and sex-life of kings (Hérouard is good on both), French breastfeeding habits, Parisian rental practices, H-France's contribution to peace-making in the Middle East, the respective merits of Jerry Lewis (in France) and Benny Hill (in North America), and much, much else. At the end of the day, as the wires cease to buzz, Professor Marvick and I will write separate best-selling accounts of the 'Great Footnote Controversy' (with colossal royalty advances), re-stage our dispute on Oprah Winfrey (or Jerry Springer?), and then split the film rights 50/50 (we may have to offer Professor Perkiss something, though), before going off together to live out our days in simple but decadent splendour in Tahiti. I think it is now up to other H-France readers to make all this happen.

Oh! And by the way, in case anyone was wondering, the book I actually reviewed is really quite good.

21 January 2005

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Further to Professor Jones' point towards the end, all this has of course been dealt with in advance by the delicious 'Deadringers' sketch that stages a reconstruction of a battle between 'the two greatest historical minds of their age' i.e. Schama and Starkey. As the Schama voice puts it - 'its was brutal, it was personal'. I leant the tape to my sister who teaches history to ten year-olds. It's essential stuuf. But in the end both film crews/armies are seen off by a bunch of hippy-archaeologists. Historians - Dontcha Just Luv 'Em?