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Sarah Grant, *Female Portraiture and Patronage in Marie-Antoinette's Court: The Princesse de Lamballe*. New York: Routledge Press, 2019. xvi + 232 pp. Illustrations, acknowledgments, figures, notes, plates, bibliography, and index. \$128.00 U.S. (hb). ISBN 97810138480827; \$48.95 U.S. (pb). ISBN 9781032338927; \$39.16 U.S. (eb). ISBN 7781351061827.

Review by Lauren Walter, Independent Scholar.

Sarah Grant's *Female Portraiture and Patronage in Marie-Antoinette's Court: The Princesse de Lamballe* seeks to correct two things: 1) the longstanding omission of the Princesse de Lamballe in art historical scholarship and 2) the princess's false narrative as a "lachrymose simpleton" perpetuated by her early nineteenth-century biographers (p. 2). By considering her portraits, exploring the drive behind her commissions, and detailing the ins and outs of her public and private patronage, Grant adds greatly to the scholarship available on the princess, most of which was published between 1801 and 1995. As the title of her book suggests, Grant also examines Lamballe's position in Marie-Antoinette's court, explaining how the princess's station at Versailles affected her patronage and the wide range of motives behind her portraiture.

The book moves chronologically through Lamballe's life. In chapter one, Grant suggests that early depictions of Lamballe as a docile, decorous, and grieving princess were not of Lamballe's doing but that of her father-in-law, the Duc de Penthièvre, who hand-selected Lamballe to marry his son. The duke was the third wealthiest man in France, one of the nation's greatest landowners, and the grandson of Louis XIV. Thus, when Lamballe married into this family, she gained power and influence, as well as a close relationship with her father-in-law. Although Lamballe's husband died shortly after the couple's marriage, Lamballe remained close to her father-in-law. In her examination of the portraiture of Lamballe, Grant covers portraits by Charpentier, Carmontelle, and Gautier-Dagoty. In these works, Lamballe is represented in a variety of ways: a fertile new wife, a pivotal member of the Penthièvre family, and a devoted widow. Using Lamballe's portraits as a case study but thinking about eighteenth-century painting in general, Grant also suggests that "the network of eighteenth-century portrait painters extends far beyond the few famous names that have been passed down through the annals" and that "the Academy was not the only guarantee of success; there were other ways an artist came to the attention of a noble patron" (p. 11).

Chapter two turns away from Lamballe's family portraits to those she commissioned during her time at Versailles. Highlighting the princess's long-lasting relationship with Marie-Antoinette and her roles as a *surintendante de la maison de la reine*, *salonnière*, and freemason, Grant illustrates Lamballe's rise as a person of power and influence at court, her celebrity status in Europe, as well

as her role as a significant art patron. During her time as *surintendante*, Lamballe commissioned portraits by fashionable artists, many of whom were female artists, such as Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun, Marie-Victoire Lemoine, Marie-Gabrielle Capet, and Marguerite Gérard as well as male artists: Joseph Ducreux, Richard Cosway, and Anton Hickel. These portraits illustrate Lamballe's political and social ambitions as well as the new rise in popularity of informality and intimacy in French portraiture. Despite there being approximately forty uncontested portraits of Lamballe, only two were ever exhibited which Grant suggests "reflects the preference shown by the royal family for commissioning private portraits to be circulated among their intimates," particularly Marie-Antoinette (p. 35). In this chapter, Grant also covers Lamballe's time as a freemason, her turbulent relationship with the Duchesse de Polignac, her "self-imposed estrangement from the court" between 1775 to 1780, and pornographic prints depicting the Queen, Lamballe, and Polignac (p. 69).

Chapter three examines Lamballe's Anglophilia as demonstrated by the princess's private collections, library, and musical and literary patronage. While the English had long been fascinated by French culture, in the 1770s and 1780s, the French became particularly infatuated with English culture, including Lamballe. The princess made two visits to England during her lifetime, one in 1787 and the other in 1791, both while Anglomania was at its height in France. Grant argues that these trips document Lamballe's international reputation as well as the princess's efforts to strengthen her social and political standing by forging new connections with the Georgian *Beau Monde*. Illustrating Lamballe's international reputation, the English press published the details of the princess's life—from her wedding to her role as *surintendante*—long before she arrived in England. Once the princess crossed the Channel, newspapers celebrated her arrival and wrote about her travels and visits with the *Beau Monde* throughout the country. During these visits, Lamballe toured country houses, where she would have seen the *crème de la crème* of English portraiture, prints, and *objets d'arts*. This fascinating chapter also covers Lamballe's English gardens at Rambouillet, her English print collection, and links between the French and English schools of painting, especially through the print market.

Reinforcing the idea of Lamballe as a significant patron at the epicenter of Marie-Antoinette's court, chapter four details Lamballe's collections of art at three of her residences: the Hôtel de Lamballe, the Hôtel d'Eu, and the Hôtel de Toulouse. Grant rightly points out that the women in Marie-Antoinette's court have received little attention and dismissive treatment when it comes to their patronage and collecting of art. She writes, "Interest in the interiors inhabited by the queen and the women of her circle, and the collections assembled within them, has intensified in the past two decades, but while art historians have rightly read luxury and elegance in these carefully conceived spaces rarely have they interpreted them as displays of an informed taste, and never as enlightened connoisseurship" (p. 137). This chapter reflects Grant's careful archival work and details the ins and outs of Lamballe's residences. She highlights the size and location of Lamballe's homes and the inventories of her collections, which included paintings, sculpture, Sèvres porcelain, many prints, and furniture.

Employing a wide range of archival sources and covering a large portion of Lamballe's life and oeuvre, Grant creates a full and complex picture of the princess. She successfully illustrates that Lamballe has been both under- and misrepresented and that Lamballe was a significant member of court. Grant's detailed accounting sheds new light on not only Lamballe and her magnificent collections, but also on the women of Marie-Antoinette's circle, their relationships, and how art functioned in their court. However, at some points in the book Grant leaves the reader wanting

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a deeper analysis of Lamballe's portraiture. This is the case with Grant's examination of Charpentier's Penthièvre family portrait (1768) in which Lamballe sits in the center looking out to the viewer. Grant explains that Lamballe is portrayed as a "pivotal" member of the family but does not offer much more analysis in relation to Lamballe (p. 15). This reader expected a more thorough analysis from an art history text with Lamballe's portraiture as its focus. Along this same line of thinking, in the section "A Rivalry in Portraits," Grant discusses the rivalry between Polignac and Lamballe, but does not give much detail about how the portraits themselves connect to and demonstrate the women's rivalry. Nonetheless, Grant's expertise of the Princesse de Lamballe shines forth and her book makes an important contribution to art historical scholarship on the eighteenth century and women of the court.

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