

Call for papers

**QUEEN CHRISTINA OF SWEDEN WITHIN HER NETWORKS
FIGURES AND MODES OF POLITICAL ACTION IN THE 17TH CENTURY**

Rome – Institut Français Centre Saint Louis
6 and 7 November 2026

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The year 2026 marks the 400th anniversary of the birth of Christina of Sweden. To mark the occasion, the Roma Barocca in musica association is organising a grand concert by the Escadron Volant de la Reine, which, with the help of musicologist Luca della Libera, has unearthed and reconstructed the music from Christina of Sweden's funeral. The concert will be held at the Chiesa Nuova, where the funeral ceremonies took place in April 1689. In conjunction with this musical event, the anniversary provides an opportunity to continue the renewal of historiography around Christina of Sweden during an international symposium aimed at reflecting on how, within multiple and diverse networks, the queen was able to be an actor and/or object of political actions that shaped the European scene in the 17th century.

The funeral of Christina of Sweden was not only a religious event, but also involved multiple political, cultural and diplomatic issues, reflecting the queen's involvement in numerous Roman and international networks. This symposium will therefore explore Christina of Sweden's links with her networks by combining 17th-century political history, the history of intellectual, political and artistic sociability, and the social history of cultural and diplomatic exchanges. Rather than simply studying Christina of Sweden's links with one or other of the major figures of her century, the aim will be to consider the intricacies of the various networks, the forms of political action they enabled and the impact of these interactions on the international political scene.

While Christine of Sweden's involvement in the intellectual, cultural and scientific circles of her time has already been extensively explored, this symposium aims to diversify the topics of study and deepen the analysis of the political uses of these networks and their interconnections at the European level. Pioneering work has already been done to examine Christina of Sweden's involvement in the intellectual networks of 17th-century Europe (Åkerman, 1991; Castagnet-Lars, Foucault, 2017; Cavaillé, 2021) and their influence on the queen's trajectory. Similarly, the role of her patronage on the Roman cultural scene has given rise to numerous studies, whether concerning her academies (Poli, 2005; Donato, 2009; Gallo, 2017) or her integration into Roman patronage networks – particularly among musicians (De Lucca, 2011, 2012; Morucci, 2020).

However, this meeting aims to broaden these investigations from several perspectives.

On the one hand, **other networks** – which sometimes played a decisive role in the Queen's trajectory – have been largely neglected and deserve to be studied more extensively and linked together. One example is the diplomatic networks that had a powerful influence on her public actions from her reign in Sweden to her final days in Rome, which have been the subject of studies that remain relatively isolated to this day (Lemaignan, 2012, 2025; Peter, 2017; Fogelberg Rota, 2022). Given the particularly diverse sources (avvisi, avisos and handwritten news, diplomatic correspondence, networks of informants, etc.), we may then question how Christina of Sweden mobilised these networks, but also how they used her name, image, or their supposed connections for diplomatic purposes.

With the exception of work on the Flying Squadron (Rodén, 2000), ecclesiastical networks have so far received only marginal attention. One might consider, for example, the Queen's links with the Jesuits from Stockholm to her life in Rome and – more than their impact on her philosophical choices –

question, for example, how they structured her integration into Roman and European life; or the relationships she forged with Roman ecclesiastical networks and the political advantages she sought to derive from them – particularly with the Pope. Finally, we could also look at the networking of writings – manuscripts or printed works – around the figure of the queen: how they circulated, were translated, and influenced each other to the point of creating a kind of written Europe around the figure of Christina of Sweden. As these issues are by no means intended to be exhaustive, any proposal exploring other forms of networking will be most welcome.

This symposium therefore aims to explore other networks of circulation and political action of the queen, but we also wish to focus on **the intersections and porosities** between different social circles and between different periods of the queen's life. Indeed, while her links with the Republic of Letters, her academies and her patronage activities are now the subject of a wide variety of studies, these approaches sometimes remain geographically (between Stockholm and Rome, for example), chronologically (between her Swedish reign and her Roman period) and disciplinarily compartmentalised. We may therefore question the continuities, contacts and interconnections that characterise groups and activities – between diplomatic and musical, ecclesiastical and scientific networks, for example – and the political significance of these exchanges. The polarisation between Stockholm and Rome also sometimes tends to marginalise certain courses of action that would undoubtedly benefit from being reconsidered from a more global perspective. One example that springs to mind – among others – is her battles against the Ottoman Empire: how did she mobilise her networks in an attempt to unite European political actors? What were the consequences? Conversely, during her attempt to ascend to the Polish throne, and beyond the question of gender (Gregorowicz, 2023), how can we analyse her diplomatic strategies and the apparent disappearance of any network? How does she use her numerous connections within different spheres of influence?

Finally, rather than focusing on the process of (self-)construction of this figure, which has been the subject of research in recent years (Lemaignan, 2012, 2025; Fix and François-Denève, 2022; De Caprio and Ponzi, 2025), this study will focus on examining its circulation and uses within and in the service of forms of collectives that we will need to characterise. **To what extent is she herself employed for purposes that surpass her own intentions?** What are the broader impacts on the European political arena beyond the individual trajectory of Christina of Sweden? We aim to reflect on these modalities of action within the broader framework of Europe's political history. We will thus seek to examine how Christine of Sweden was able to build and invest in her networks in order to develop more efficient public and political action; how she relied on them to develop her power to act as a young queen who had to assert her authority and then to negotiate new uses of power as a former sovereign who had been deposed. We will also examine the possible instrumentalisation of this figure (literary, satirical, iconographic, etc.) to highlight how she became the 'bridgehead' for political action on different scales. We will then ask ourselves for what purposes Christina of Sweden built and mobilised networks of multiple orders, how she articulated them, but also to what extent she herself became a political instrument on the international stage.

Ultimately, the aim will be to use a variety of sources (correspondence, diplomatic, iconographic and artistic sources, dedicatory epistles, etc.) to paint a picture of Christine of Sweden's Europe, the political action of the networks that structured it and the uses to which the queen was able to put them; to examine how she implemented political strategies through a multitude of porous and interconnected networks – or how her figure was mobilised, becoming a political instrument in the service of public actions that brought about changes on the European political scene in the 17th century.

Practical details: As this conference has an international and interdisciplinary focus, proposals may take a historical, musicological, diplomatic, art history or other approach. Simultaneous translation will be available during the conference. Proposals (approximately 500 words) accompanied by a short bio-

bibliography should be written in French, English or Italian and sent before 30 March 2026 to the following addresses: marion.lemaignan@ac-lyon.fr and renaudesc@gmail.com. Responses will be sent around 30 April 2026.

Location: Institut Français-Centre Saint Louis – Rome

Transport, accommodation and meals for speakers will be covered by the organiser.

The proceedings will be published.

This conference will also be open to non-academic attendees.

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