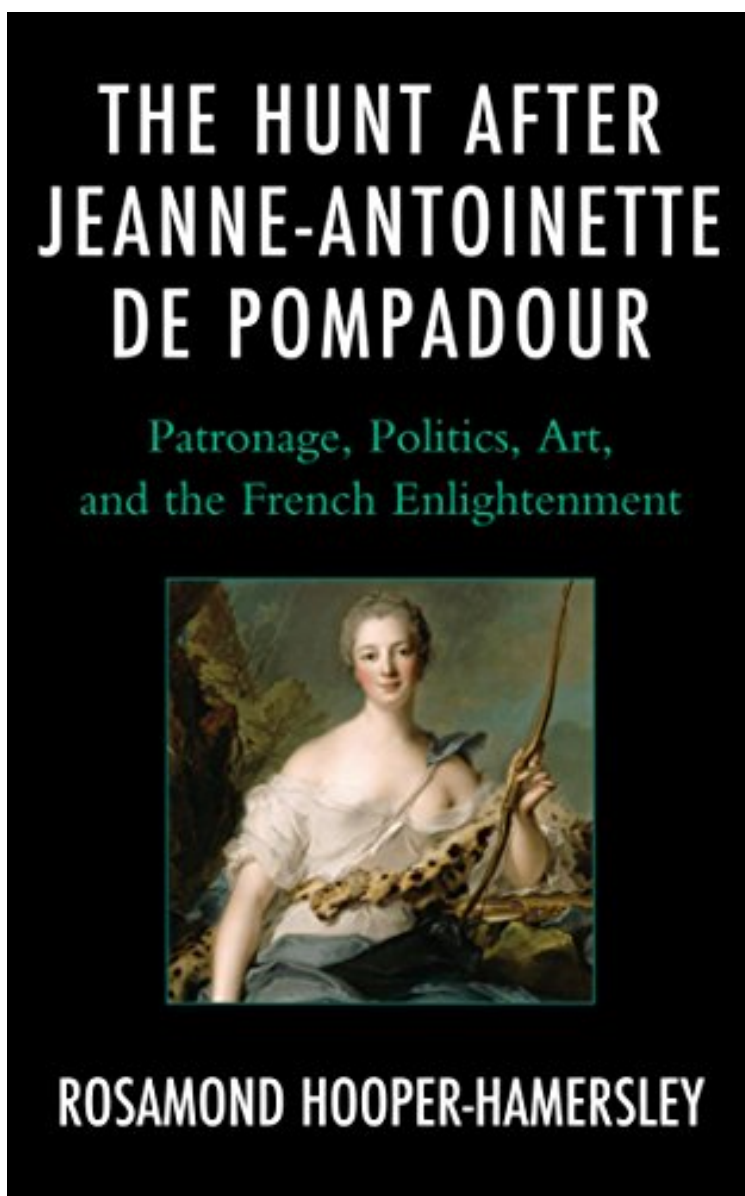


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## The Hunt after Jeanne-Antoinette de Pompadour: Patronage, Politics, Art, and the French Enlightenment

*Rosamond Hooper-Hamersley*

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**Rosamond Hooper-Hamersley : The Hunt after Jeanne-Antoinette de Pompadour: Patronage, Politics, Art, and the French Enlightenment** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all

praised *The Hunt after Jeanne-Antoinette de Pompadour: Patronage, Politics, Art, and the French Enlightenment*:

This book recasts the import of Mme de Pompadour as a political and artistic patron at the court of Versailles in mid-eighteenth century France. Pompadour's visual record is lush and the memoirs, diaries, correspondence, and political records are fecund examples of the weight she carried. In them she dazzles and impresses, offering both a passionate and intellectual view of the tumult that characterized pre-revolutionary France. This extensive body of evidence supports the argument that her place on the balance sheet has been overlooked. We find Pompadour simultaneously in multiple spheres of influence including the political arena, the France Academy of Painting and Sculpture and the larger art public, and, finally, within the Enlightenment, advocating the ideas expressed by its principal proponents. In 1745 Pompadour reigned as the new Favorite of Louis XV and kept company with him as a mistress for nearly five years. She was beset by physical infirmities and exhausted by the king's insatiable appetite. Pompadour instituted a striking transition in 1750 from mistress to friend, effecting an iconographical rehabilitation and positioning herself as an indispensable power broker within political and cultural spheres until her death in 1764. This book stimulates the audience to sit up and take notice of Pompadour's worth and measure. She is a fabulously engaging and magnetic individual whose particular influence contributed to the shifting landscape of France inching slowly toward revolution. This work overturns prevailing views of Pompadour's detractors who blind us to her import as an agent, not an object of change. Here we find a nuanced image of Pompadour through a careful examination of archival and printed sources and the art that she patronized, collectively revealing the charismatic breadth of her contributions. As she declared unapologetically, 'I am stubborn in the service of the King and I won't hold back in anything.' The historical timeline of France from 1745 to 1764 bears the unforgettable imprint and face of Pompadour.

A spirited defense of Madame de Pompadour, this biography places her in the context of her age. Though the details of her life remain shrouded by her friends who wished to protect her and exaggerated by her enemies who wished to vilify her, Pompadour emerges here through the author's diligent mining of every possible source, including insightful interpretations of the art of the era. A real contribution. (Jack R. Censer, George Mason University)The marquise de Pompadour owed her name and place at Versailles to King Louis XV; her place in history she conquered herself. Rosamond Hooper-Hamersley shows us how this came to be. This delightful narrative captures with great subtlety Pompadour's appeal as well as the impact she had on French politics and fine arts. (Doina Pasca Harsanyi, Central Michigan University)Rosamond Hooper-Hamersley considers the extraordinary Mme de Pompadour's beauty, talent, intelligence, and loyalty in a historical and cultural narrative that is exhaustively researched and documented but engagingly written. Prof. Hooper-Hamersley's dazzling erudition allows her to cut through numerous tangles that once obscured Louis XV's mistress, adviser, and friend to offer a new vision of her as patron of the arts, friend of the Enlightenment, and insightful political and diplomatic counselor. An excellent read about an important agent of change. (Allan H. Pasco, University of Kentucky)About the AuthorRosamond Hooper-Hamersley is assistant professor of European history at New Jersey City University.