The University of Nottingham

School of Humanities

Splendours of the Sun King. The Construction of Louis XIV's Glory in the Visual Arts.

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A Dissertation Submitted to the School of Humanities in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts by Research in Art History.

35,000 words

September 2023

Abstract

This dissertation explores how visual artists willingly helped create the glory of Louis XIV of France, starting with the period's iconic image created by Hyacinthe Rigaud's painting of Louis in Coronation Robes, a larger-than-life work summing up Absolutist splendour. Furthermore, sculptures of the king demonstrated his ability to crush political and religious enemies, while equine sculptures illustrated Louis's mastery of his horse, which by implication showed his authority over his subjects. Sculpture in the form of medals and coins formed part of a fabricated personal history intended for Louis's future reputation.

Engraved prints of monumental history paintings distributed internationally ensured Louis's renown.

In the second part, this study seeks to show how Louis's propaganda was served by the creation of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture and how artists had to conform to the snobbery of court life. When Louis XIV aligned himself with past heroes such as Alexander the Great in monumental scenes of glory, court artists were required to study ancient texts, informing themselves on theories of classical composition, gesture, deportment, and colour.

In the final part, the study investigates Louis's dynastic persona as the Sun King through the mythology of Apollo and how this pagan role balanced with Louis's portrayal as the most Christian king.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful for the help and guidance of Assistant Professor Dr Isobel Elstob and Assistant Professor Dr Gabriel Neher, who both kept me on track.

Dedication

For Penny.

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Literature Review

The study uses the art of various painters like Charles Le Brun, Jean Nocret, and Pierre Mignard, or sculptors such as Antoine Coysevox and Gian Lorenzo Bernini to provide us with a faithful record of Louis XIV's appearance as he aged and in his many roles. The key work in the visual presentation of absolutism is Rigaud's portrait of Louis in coronation robes but I found no monograph on this. A large part of the thesis places that painting in its art history context, yet there is no comparable, translated, text on such a significant portrait painter. James-Sarazin's 1970 Rigaud exhibition catalogue, could have been potentially useful but it was not available in translation.

Michel Gareau (1992) useful reappraisal of Le Brun focuses on paintings and preliminary drawings. Leaving aside the largely irrelevant religious examples, Gareau demonstrates how, through Le Brun's lectures, he fell into the trap of laying down rules for the Academy artists. This included the contemporary bizarre idea of physiognomics, as examined in Le Brun's own 1734 words, published in Gale Primary Sources.

Wolf Burchard's (2016) lavishly illustrated work attempts to raise the reputation of Le Brun who, by comparison with Poussin, has generally fallen out of favour due to Le Brun's association with absolutism. Burchard rightly places Le Brun in powerful cooperation with the King's minister Colbert, carrying out through the Goblin factory, the visual glorification of Louis XIV. Burchard demonstrates how Le Brun's influence and control spread though architecture, tapestries, even the design of floor tiles, but most useful for this thesis was Burchard's identification of figures in artworks. The excellent quality of the illustrations helped a great deal.

Charissa Bremer-David (2015) helps our understanding of the history and importance of tapestries in the art world of the sixteenth century. Bremer-David's explains in detail Le Brun's control of the Gobelin manufactures role in interpreting the Alexander cycle of painting into tapestries used as the king's propaganda.

Norma Bryson's (1981) less reverential treatment of Le Brun, seen at times as unimaginative, demonstrated the weight artists gave to the authority of text.

Regarding sculpture, Cecil Gould's (1981) biography of Bernini, apart from providing a background to the political intrigues of an Italian in the French court, describes, through Bernini's own word an account of the artist's working methods. This evidence was important for two key works, the portrait bust and the equine statue of the king.

S.A. Callisen (1941) provides a background for the motivation regarding the sighting of monuments, by various sculptors, throughout France. Callisen, with Gould, offer explanations about the rescue from destruction of Bernini's equestrian masterpiece. Callisen also delves into the French obsession with classical exemplars. Souchal's (1977-1993) extensive online volumes of French Sculpture allows us to identify several sculptors, including Girardon (various spellings), Gobert and Hurtrelle, all responsible for equestrian statues glorifying Louis who is usually attired as a Roman Emperor. Although some may be regarded as minor works the combined effect, Louis trampling foreign or religious enemies under hoof, is one of supporting absolutism.

Martin Weyl (1989), although only covering part of Louis's reign, is essential to an understanding of aesthetics, how the model of the ancients determined, and at times constricted, the production of art. Weyl explores what was meant by honnete, how ideal physical behaviour affected the representation of figures and gesture in painting. Despite the somewhat confused theories of the period, the work helped explain Le Brun's imagery and the regulations of the Academy. Without a grasp of what should, or should not have been represented, and how it should be shown, the degree of verisimilitude and properties of les bienséance, works of this period would not make sense.

If today we view tapestries as less exciting than painting, coins and medals may also get overlooked, but Robert Wellington (2015) provides another strand in our understanding of sixteenth century French art. Described as the "incorruptible bearers of historic truth," at least as far as Louis was concerned, what has proved true is that the permanence of gold, silver and bronze has helped to assure the future of coins and medals. Louis's collection, the Cabinet des Medailles (including cameos) was housed in Versailles, and argues Wellington, was central to aristocratic identity. Numismatics provide a version of history (and its contemporary retelling) but also allow us to admire the skill of profile sculptors such as Jean Warin. Importantly, coins could deliver royal portraiture and propaganda to the people, whereas state portrait spoke mainly to the elite.

Like coins for the dispersal of image, print played an important role in spreading absolutist propaganda. Marchesano & Michel (2020) bring into our view the little recognised skill of named engravers who translated works such Le Brun's Alexander history epic into print. Those with money could buy calendars, large prints, and almanacs in the style of the Grand Manner. As the authors point out print was also available to those anti monarchists.

On the fringe of this thesis is fashion. Fashion prints were part of Colbert's attempt, under Louis's direction, to export French culture and trade abroad. Opulent fashion, power dressing, played an important part in Louis's meeting with foreign dignitaries. Norberg & Rosenbaum's (2014) study of accessible hand-coloured prints not only supply an interesting, if fanciful costume history for 'persons of quality,' such prints educated the public in court deportment and gesture. And as Mikosch (1990) argues, fashion for the nobility functioned as a status symbol.

Regarding the historical background, Beik (2000) is useful for primary source documents.

Burke (1989) organises many, but not all, the visual arts in a 'fabrication' of Louis XIV's glory. In a telling line Burke explains that viewers of the period were not unaware of the attempts to persuade them. In this regard, pageants and the like spoke directly to the people, unlike panegyrics in the form of inscriptions which were created for the elite, and posterity.

Hatton (1972) in a similar vein warns historians against the bias found in contemporary letters, diaries, and memoirs, and how myths can grow into propaganda, for or against Louis. For example, the Montespan memoirs may be fascinating when describing Bossuet as a 'vile sycophant,' or gossip about Osmin the queen's 'little blackmoor' and their affair, but they are most useful as enrichment. Hatton is kinder than Burke, seeing Louis as a paternalistic absolutist. Hatton provides an interesting excuse for the king's revocation, and for Fourquet's downfall, less about being outshone at Vaux-le-Vicomte, more about financial irregularities.

Mettam (1990) is strong on the legal background. He argued that, although Louis XIV was in theory an absolute monarch, he was constrained by a 'community of interests,' the church, nobles, bureaucrats, obstructing courts, and permanent office holders, and more. Mettam agrees that Louis used a divide and rule policy supported by distributing favours. Mettam (1995) elaborates on this by detailing the roles of nobles of the epee and those of the sword, and how 'loyalty and self-advancement were always intertwined.'

Elias's (1983) sociological study paints a picture of a hermetically closed world of the higher ranked nobility and underlines the idea that Louis XIV's monarchy and government were inseparably connected. Even though the king preserved his power by maintaining the barriers between the elite and the bourgeoise and having learnt from the dangers of the Fronde to keep the nobles of sword and the robe competing for status and prestige, the proximity of the people of France seldom questioned the status quo.

Chaline (199) questions who had the greatest need of the court, the crown, or the nobility. Talking up Elias's point, the parading of the king and his court before the people in elaborate displays of obeisance, and in triumphal arches, was a necessity for an absolute monarch, a theme explored in the final part of the thesis.

Introduction.

Louis XIV's absolutism, propaganda, and performance, are the three main themes of this thesis.
Chapter one uses the iconic state portrait of Louis XIV in coronation robes by Hyacinthe Rigaud's to analyse the imagery of absolute monarchy. It places the work in its art historical context of naturalism. Louis's glory is then examined in sculpture which references Roman Emperor representations. Their placement and practicalities are discussed. The chapter concludes with an analysis of Louis's glorification through medals and coins.

Chapter two explores how Louis's glory was bolstered by his appropriation of legendary and mythological figures. This is demonstrated when Louis was likened to Alexander in the key work of Le Brun's, *Queen of Sheba.* The painting is discussed in depth because it raises issues concerning contemporary art theory. The image of the recapture of the Franche-Comte is then discussed in relation to Louis's interpretation of history. The chapter concludes by examining allegorical examples of Louis presenting himself as a mythological god.

Chapter three is about Louis XIV 's public performances and his use of the Apollo myth when he presented himself as the semi-divine Sun King. It argues that Louis XIV subverted Christian religion for his own arrogant ends. This is illustrated in Le Brun's painting of Louis, as donor, appearing in the presence of the risen Christ. Further discussion involves the king's miraculous performance in the 'Toucher sacre.' The chapter concludes with the king's public performances in spectacular secular events such as fetes and carousels.

Glory

Louis declared, "the passion for glory was definitely the leading passion of my soul." Gloire, is both intangible and mysterious, and like gold, lasting.[1]

[1] Ian Thompson, 2006. *The Sun King's Garden*. p57.

For Louis, more important than intelligence, creativity, or money was his reputation for splendour and greatness. Thus, driven by a prestige-fetish he sacrificed European peace in his quest for miliary glory. This fetish may also explain why, on Mazarin's death, the king decided to govern alone.

Glory might be thought more than propaganda in that glory fosters reputation: "Glory cannot exist without its spectators…" but equally, "what the heroic invader requires from a province is not its substance or booty, but signs of its surrender…" explains Norman Bryson.[2] More than praise, glory represented honour through great actions. For this reason, Louis often associated himself with past heroes such as Alexander, Charlemagne or legends and myths. In many instances, Louis was 'insulated against the truth' by 'intriguing courtiers' who, for their own ends, and the king's vanity, created 'a fictitious wave of popularity.'[3] Louis was not well educated and was said not to know how little he knew, but he was aware of flattery. To the dramatist Racine, Louis said 'I would praise you more if you praised me less.'[4] The style, '*Louis XIV*' summons the notions of opulent splendour. However, when we excavate below this surface, other truths are revealed: "The éclat [glow] and renown of great kings are like the machines at the opera" wrote Liselotte, wife of Louis's brother, "seen from afar, nothing is grander or more beautiful, but if one goes backstage and takes a look at all the ropes and wooden slats that make the machines move, they are most ungainly and ugly."[5]

From dawn to dusk, Louis's life was a public performance. The height of achievement was to partake in the Sun King's divertissements such as the daily *levée,* the ceremony of the king rising from bed. The most favoured in court were allowed to watch, even help the King get dressed. As odd as this may seem it was a daily ceremony reminiscent of taking on the mantle of kingship in the coronation. Saint-Simon (1675-1755) describes how he was marked out for distinction in the prescribed ceremony of the king lying down to

[2] Bryson, Norman. 1981*. Word and Image. French Painting of the Ancien Régime*. p38-39. Cambridge University Press.
[3] Callisen, S.A. 1941. *The Equestrian Statue of Louis XIV in Dijon and Related Monuments*. p1. The Art Bulletin. June. Vol, 23. No, 2. Published by: CAA.
[4] Wilkinson, R 2018. *Louis XIV*. p5. ibid
[5] Liselotte von der Pfalz.1652-1720. A Woman's life in the Court of the Sun King: The Letters of Liselotte von der Pfalz. p129-130. Translated and introduced by Elborg Forster. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 1984.

sleep, couchée. Saint-Simon was allowed, if briefly, to hold the chandelier to light the king to bed. Such ceremonies and court etiquette were ways in which Louis distributed power.[6]

In the snobbery of Louis's court, the aristocrats, driven by an insatiable conspicuous consumption of splendour essential for their rank and respect, were prepared to play their part in dressing up spectaculars. Although Louis created a centralized power structure ('L' ETAT, C'EST MOI, I am the State) supported by a venal system of hereditary and bought office holders known as *intendants*, his power was constrained by the many traditions and laws of France. Louis kept the elite in check by dispensing favours as he wished, but Mettam has shown Louis created 'communities of interests' amongst the elite and that the aristocracy- acting as patrons especially of the arts- also dispensed power.[7] For example the ill-fated Minister Fouquet (1615-80) employing Charles Le Brun (1619-90) to decorate Fouquet's Chateau of Vaux-Le-Vicomte, mistakenly to glorify Fouquet, not the king. Louis, 'depriving the aristocracy of their duties while leaving them their privileges' also excluded 'ecclesiastics' from his council. Louis appointed, Le Tellier (1603-85) secretary of war, Lionne (1611-1671) in charge of foreign affairs, and most importantly for the arts, he replaced the discredited Fouquet with Colbert (1619-83) as Controller-General of Finance.[8] With a background in merchandise and banking, Colbert's principal job was the maintenance of the king's glory. That glory was directed in the arts by Le Brun under the controlled by Colbert. "Loyalty and self-advancement were always intertwined in Bourbon France, and no one would have been surprised or shocked that this was so," explained Mettam.[9]

[6] Elias, Norbert. 1983. p89. *The Court Society*. Translated by Edmund Jephcott. Oxford. Blackwell.
[7] Mettam, Roger. 1990. *Absolutism in Seventeenth-Century Europe*, in Chapter two. Edited by J. Miller. MacMillan Press Ltd.
[8] Ashley, Maurice. 1946. *Louis XIV and the Greatness of France.*p45. Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, for The English University Press.
[9] Mettam, Roger. 1995. *The French Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. p 122. Vol,1. Western Europe. Edited by H.M. Scott. Longman Group Ltd.

Chapter One.



1.Louis XIV's intertwined 'L' Monogram. Versailles.

Naturalism in the Service of Absolutism

There exist several paintings of Louis XIV as a child wearing sacred-coronation- robes. Henri Testlin (1616-1695) produced at least two in 1648, a sombre standing image and a seated version of the king aged ten. Justus van Egmont (1601-1674) produced a full frontal, impressively large, ermine robed, seated version of Louis aged fourteen, two years before he was crowned in Reims Cathedral (fig 3).



2.*Louis XIV, King of France in Coronation Robes*. 1652.Oil on canvas, 137.5 x 105 cm, by Justus van Egmont. Ambras Castle, Innsbruck. Kunsthistorische Museum Vienna.

Yet whenever Absolutism is discussed in print, one iconic image is repeatedly used, that of the state portrait by Hyacinthe Rigaud of, *Louis XIV in Coronation Robes,* even though the king is many years older than the event. The naturalistic painting is loaded with emblematic significance and has come to represent and influence internationally, the idea of the state portrait. The painting is used to explore the symbols of royalty, the significance of religious jewellery and regalia, the dignity of the king's image, his imposing stance, the use of architecture to imply his stability, the demonstration of wealth in luxurious fabrics and furs both in the surroundings and in costume, and theories of revelation in aspects of drapery.

Louis XIV was born in 1638. In 1643, his father Louis XIII died. Nearly aged five Louis XIV became king. Louis's mother (1601-1666), Anne of Austria, the Queen Regent, and the first minister Cardinal Jules Mazarin (1602-1661) ran the kingdom until Mazarin death when Louis began his personal reign. Louis's reign would last until his death in 1715. 'I am the State,' (L'Etat, c'est moi) Louis XIV is reported to have stated in 1655 to a *Parlement* which met without his permission. The defining act of Louis's reign was when he became his own chief minister, "...an aberration from the general pattern of French politics"[10] says Chaline. Thus, only a handful of men attended Louis's council table.

Louis's most striking achievement, was arguably to create a society in which "royal authority was respected."[11] Following the intrigues and corruption which led to the Fronde, "France fell in love with her king," says Philippe Erlanger and "the subjects accepted submission."[12] Throughout Louis's reign there was surprisingly little protest, but then any opposition to the king was seen as disloyalty, at worst, treason. What revolts by the peasantry did occur were directed towards royal officials, tax collectors and financiers. But because the lower classes had no knowledge of the national situation, or a way of organising nationally, revolts were easily and brutally put down.[13] A labourer was killed while working on the building of Versailles and the mother, on calling Louis a tyrant, was publicly flogged. A 60-year-old father who

[10] Chaline, Oliver.1999, p77 in The Princely Courts of Europe, Ritual, Politics and Culture under the Acien Regime. Edited by Adamson, John. Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
[11] Wilkinson, Richard. 2018. *Louis XIV*. Second Edition. Oxon. Routledge.
[12] Erlanger, Philippe. 1967. *The Age of Courts and Kings, Manners and Morals, 1558-1715*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. London.
[13] Beik, William. 2000, *Louis XIV and Absolutism, A brief Study with Documents*. Boston. New York: Bedford/St Martin's. pp14-15.

complained about the death of his son at the building site of Versailles, was sent to the galleys and had his tongue cut out.[14]

[14] Marly, Diana de. 1987. *Louis XIV & Versailles*. B. T. Batsford Ltd. London. p34.



3.Louis XIV in Coronation Robes. 1701. By Hyacinthe Rigaud.

The Painting, Louis XIV in Coronation Robes, by Hyacinthe Rigaud

In 1701, Bontemps, Louis' loyal body servant died, and Louis' bother Philippe died of a stroke following a quarrel with the king over family matters. Yet the year 1701 saw the creation of a masterpiece of style and grandeur, an image of *Louis XIV in Coronation Robes*, which would be passed down to posterity and signify

absolutism. Hyacinthe Rigaud's (1659-1743) oil painting on canvas is massive at 2.76m high and 1.90m wide and intended to over awe the audience looking up at his majesty. Louis commissioned the painting with the intention of sending it to his grandson, Philip V of Spain, but on seeing the work Louis decided to keep the original for himself and have a copy made for Spain. Neither version left France. The Absolutist portrait was first displayed in the Paris Salon in 1704, but now hangs in the Musee du Louvre, while a copy hangs in the Apollo Room at Versailles. The existence of the copy demonstrates the high regard in which Louis held this painting. Rigaud was paid 10,000 livres for two large and one small (modello) portraits which occupied him for twelve months. In the past it was assumed that the small work was made for 'future duplication' by the official copyists, but Ariane James-Sarazin claims that the 'finished sketch' or modello (she does not state the size) was the initial idea presented to Louis for approval.[15] The copying of the painting is evidence of the need to distribute the image widely.

Rigaud painted Louis' face simultaneously at least three times which was not an unusual practice in this period. Rigaud painted the 'coronation' head of Louis on a small canvas which was later stitched into a larger full-length portrait of Louis in cavalry armour (fig 4). The background scene of the Siege of Namur was painted by Joseph Parrocel (1646-1704). Parrocel's involvement highlights another common practice, that of skilled studio assistants specialising in painting landscapes, columns, armour, and the like. *Louis XIV of France* shows the king with a general's flourishing white cummerbund and depicts Louis the last time he led his armies into battle. The work is now in the Prado. The same head appears on a third painting by Rigaud (fig 5). A three-quarter length portrait of Louis in gold edged cavalry armour with flourishing red robe and dated 1701. As Ramon Coll points out, our current concern with the *original* was of no consequence in Rigaud's time.[16] Fig 6 is evidence that other copies by followers of Rigaud were made.

[15] James-Sarazin, Ariane. 2017. "Le Modello du Portrait de Louis XIV en grand costume royal, Hyacinthe Rigaud (1659-1743) L'homme et son art-Le catalogue raisonne, Editions Faton, [enligne] published on 2 March 2017, URL;http://www.hyacinthe-rigaud.fr/single-post/2017/03/02/modello-portrait-de-Louis-xiv Translated by Google.

[16] Coll, Ramon Faura. 2014. *Louis XIV in Royal Costume: The Decapitation of the Mystical Body*. The EAR History of Art and Architecture Journal. 7th Feb 2014.

As we shall see in the example of Le Brun's paintings, artists kept reusing the same figure in several painting.



4. Louis XIV of France. 1701, Oil on Canvas, 238 x 149 cm, by Hyacinthe Rigaud. Prado Museum.

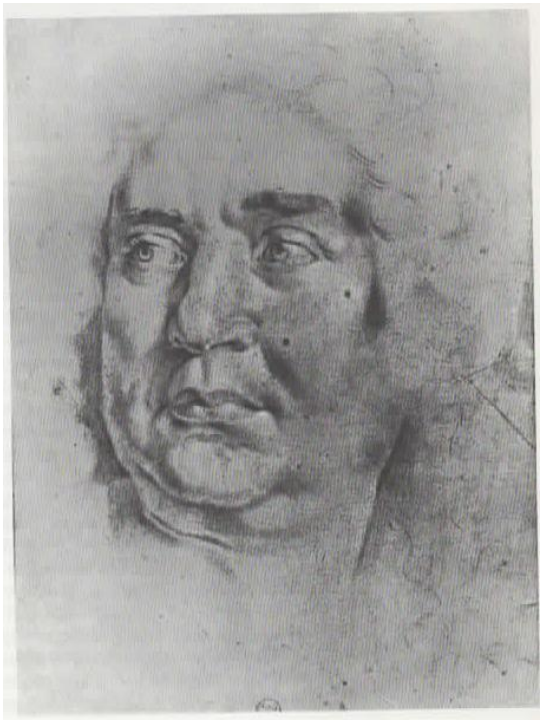


5.*Three Quarter Length Portrait of Louis XIV in Cavalry Armour*. 1701, Oil on Canvas, 162 x 129cm. by Hyacinthe Rigaud. Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum, Germany.


6. *Louis XIV*. 1701, by a Follower of Hyacinthe Rigaud (121.3 x 90.8 cm) Private Collection.

It is known that during the process of the coronation painting, Rigaud was visited by the king on January the 19th and March 10th and 11th 1701. This was probably to put finishing touches to the details of Louis's face; the artist having worked from a costumed mannequin up to that point. Aristocratic subjects had little time to waste sitting for portraits and the working practices of artists are interesting. A good visual memory must have played an important role, as would the ability to make rapid sketches which, with colour notes, could be worked up into a finished portrait. Rigaud made a considerable number of official, Chastel calls them, 'glitter' portraits.[17] The red chalk drawing of the architect, Martin van den Bogaert, commonly known as Desjardins, demonstrates Rigaud's superb mastery as a draughtsman (fig 7). In the hands of a master like Rigaud, this sensitive, delicate drawing could have been achieved in a lot less than an hour.

[17] Chastel. 1996. p240.



7. Martin Desjardins red chalk drawing by Hyacinthe Rigaud. Montpellier, Musee Fabre.

Painted years after Louis's coronation which took place on June 7th, 1654, by 1701 Louis was not a well man suffering from gout and, having undergone an horrendous operation on an anal fistula in 1686. He had recovered from a fever, probably typhoid, suffered from gonorrhoea and from fainting spells and headaches, but these were most likely to do with love potions slipped in his drink (Versailles at the time was beset with people poisoning others). Louis continued almost daily hunting and walking, but a life of overeating resulted not only in bad teeth and receding cheeks, but a flushed face. As Robert Wellington explains; "The mouth is sunken, with prominent jowls and a double chin, but there are signs of exemplary physiognomy: the face is roughly oval, the forehead and brow are high, the head is turned slightly to one side to show the aquiline line of the nose, and the eyes are slightly hooded and lively."[18]

Portraits as copies

Aristotle defined three ways in which a portrait might be painted; it could improve, make similar, or make worse. For Aristotle a copy should "surpass the model" and art should please[19]. The Roman Horace emphasised art's utilitarian use. Somewhere around the third century portraiture was seen as no more

[18] Wellington, Robert. 2015. *Antiquarianism and the Visual histories of Louis XIV, Artifacts for a Future Past*. Ashgate.
[19] Weyl, Martin. 1989. *Passion for Reason and Reason for Passion. Seventeenth Century Art and Theory in France, 1648-1683.* Peter Lang Publishing. New York.

than mechanical copying and within a century the Christian church had condemned it as idolatry. Leon Baptista Alberti and Leonardo da Vinci in the Renaissance thought that the painter should please an educated public, while to the idea of pleasing, Vasari (who reports the use of death masks in Florentine households) added the idea of grace (grazia). The death mask, while being a true likeness of external features, and even as a coloured counterfeit like a Madame Tussaud waxwork, only gives a surface likeness. This simulacrum is unlikely to say anything about the subject's social position, character or inner life, the imagination of the artist, or the cultural milieu or the occasion. Portraits which contained cryptic references and obscure puns were clearly intended for the patron and any well-educated observer. Royal portraits, additionally, had a particular moralising purpose and were intended to provide the children of a prince with inspiration and instruction in good governance.

Regarding seventeenth century verisimilitude, the French art critics never pinned down its exact meaning probably because it was too difficult to define other than a general agreement that the artist's task was to distinguish the false from the truth, and that truth and beauty were inseparable: "The painter was supposed to disguise, with a certain grace and beauty, certain things that were part of the story."[20] Today, the phrase 'Louis the XIV' describes a recognisable period style.

In appearance, "the King was tall, with light hair, his mien was good and his deportment manly" wrote the Duchess of Orleans[21]. Rigaud decided to mix and match, putting an old head on youthful body and legs. Using an earlier stance of Louis as a dancer (1694), Rigaud gave the sixty-three-year-old Louis, no longer an Apollo, the legs of a young dancer. Dressed in slender white silk stockings, adorned with gold garters, Louis' feet are arranged in a ballet position. Louis had been an eager dancer taking a considerable number of parts in court ballets, notably Moliere's comedies-ballets and Colin Jones points out that Louis's "…calf

[20] Weyl, Martin. 1989,184. ibid

[21]Duchess of Orleans. Book 1. Section VIII. Gutenberg Project. EBOOK no,3859. Released 25 August 2004. Produced by D, Widger.

muscles are scarcely those of a sexagenarian."[22] Style was the message. It was not about which part of history was to be presented, it was how it was presented that mattered, suggests Coll.[23]

Louis wears red heeled shoes, conjecturably symbolizing the crushing of one's enemies under foot. Red heels were introduced by Louis in 1673 and worn only by nobles at Versailles, later becoming fashionable in the courts of Europe.[24] In the painted cartoon for a tapestry, *Marriage of Louis Duc de Bourgogne and Marie Adelaide of Savoy, 7 December 1697,* by Antoine Dieu, (fig 8) all the men of the court are shown wearing red top and block heeled shoes.



8. *Marriage of Louis de Bourgogne and Marie Adelaide of Savoy, 7 December 1697*. Oil on Canvas 343 x 578cm, By Antoine Dieu, 1710-11. National Museum of Versailles.

Montespan records in her diary: that following a wifely insult by Henriette to Monsieur Duc d'Orleans, the people of France would think the duke's stature smaller than that of the king (who happened to be small)[25]. Monsieur was mortified: "The very next day he summoned his old boot maker, Lambertin, and

[22] Jones, Colin. 2008. *The King's Two Teeth*. History Workshop Journal. No, 65. (Spring) pp79-95. Oxford University Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25472975 [online]accessed 14.11.2022.
[23] Coll, 2014,10. ibid
[24] Mansel, Philip. 2005. *Dressed to Rule. Royal and Court Costume from Louis XIV to Elizabeth II*. Yale University Press. New Haven & London. p15.
[25] Montespan. Memoirs of Madame la Maquise de Montespan-complete. The Project Gutenberg. Release date Dec 2,2004. (EBOOK#3847) Produced by David Widger.

ordered him to put extra heels two inches high on his shoes." Henriette related this folly to the king who immediately ordered his own shoes to be increased in height so that his brother remained the smaller of the two men. The king would retain the court fashion of red block shoes until his death.



9. Detail of red shoes and Louis's gartered legs.

Above Louis' legs we see white petticoat breeches (fig 9) which the king wore "…during the first two decades of his adulthood…" but which were by 1700 out of fashion. Not that state robes relate to fashion.[26] They are all about tradition.

The impressive figure of the king is meant to reassure us that he is capable and virtuous and can be trusted in matters of state. Louis's impassive expression was a good defence for life at the court, better not to show with a smile the loss of teeth. As Erlanger observed everyone at court must have watched Louis for signs, as, "A look, a smile, an expression on his face was sufficient to provoke calm or tempest."[27] Descartes had positioned the soul just behind the bridge on the nose, a tranquil face was therefore the outward evidence of a calm soul, evidence of honnetete. As Weyl explains, honnete, or honest man, in the seventeenth century was a man who was the model of humanity[28]. Honnete was an expression of social grace, decorum of language, civility, and politeness, even gallantry. A concept which played itself out in art theory as well as social life. Louis was described as never having a handsome face, but he had a "humorous

[26] Marley, D. 1987. Ibid.
[27] Erlanger, P. 1967. ibid
[28] Weyl, M. 1989, p29-30. Ibid.

and kindly aspect."[29] He probably had, through his Aragon family line, Jewish and Moorish blood, but importantly the bearing of an actor, reportedly being extraordinarily graceful, and in keeping with the dignity of his royal presence. In the prime of life Louis lost all his teeth. His face showed signs of smallpox which he caught in 1647 but managed to survive despite being bleed and purged by doctors, a treatment which frequently killed their patients. Louis' sister-in-law said that he had a "habit of keeping his mouth open in an awkward way."[30]



10.Detail of Louis's face, his two-pointed wig and silk cravat.

In Rigaud's painting Louis is 184 cm tall, slightly taller than the real life 162cm. Louis is made to look taller by the wig he wears: a full-length two-pointed black wig which surrounds a flabby jawed face (fig 10). Periwigs prevailed in France from 1670 to 1700 and can be seen in Largilliere's 1703 portrait of Philippe Duc d'Orleans. The term periwig was used in England and derives from the French *perruque* or head of hair. Divided into two peaks the curled and styled natural hair wig cascaded over the shoulders down the back nearly to the waist and was surprisingly light weighting only a few ounces. Full bottomed wigs made a man appear taller, and although men carried hats, they seldom wore them. When in 1658 Louis began losing hair through an illness, he began to wear a wig, but Marly claims that Louis did not adopt the full perruque until 1672.[31] Wigs were becoming fashionable amongst European nobility and Louis may have been following the current fashion or creating it, for, whatever the king wore was sure to be imitated by the court providing that they did not outshine him. Before breakfast, Louis' barber Quentin presented the king with two or more wigs of different lengths. Louis wore the shorter wig before breakfast, a longer one

[29] Mitford, Nancy. 1966. *The Sun King, Louis XIV at Versailles*. Vintage Books.
[30] Ashley, Maurice. 1946, *Louis XIV and the Greatness of France*. London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd. p131.
[31] Marly, D. 1987. ibid

for the rest of the day, reports Joanna Richardson.[32] In Antoine Coysevox's (1640-1720) 1686 marble bust (Dijon Museum), Louis' curling locks cascade down his shoulders, but we cannot be certain if the sculptor was portraying the monarch's own hair or a wig. As the hair has no centre parting it may be the king's own hair. A marble bust by an unknown artist dated 1660 (Victoria and Albert Museum) depicts the king with his own shoulder length curling locks. Louis lived through a time when wigs were fashionably powdered with colour, but he always wore black.[33]

The Stance

Situated on a wall above the spectators eyeline, these portraits look down on us, as we are intended to look up to these rulers. Courtiers withdrew from viewing the portrait displayed in the throne room exactly as they withdrew from the real presence of the king, not turning their back on their monarch. An early example of the portrait used as a substitute presence, (fig 11) is thought to be the anonymous portrait of Richard II (1367-1400), also known as the Westminster Portrait (1395). Importantly, also larger than life size at 213.5 x 110 cm (linseed oil on panel), Richard sits facing the viewer, full frontal, dressed in ermine, holding orb and sceptre, and wearing his crown in the manner of an enthroned religious icon.


11. Westminster [Abbey] Portrait of Richard II. Linseed oil on Panel, 213.5 x 110 cm. Anonymous.

Richard in majesty is an image which seems to demand not only attention but respect or confrontation. This recalls what John Berger describes as the mystification of a work of art; an atmosphere of "entirely

[32] Richardson, Joanna. 1973. *Louis XIV*. George Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
[33] Marly, D. 1987, p 117. ibid

bogus religiosity."[34] Placed on a dais, Richard has all the presence of a figure who expects us to genuflect before him. A chronicle of the period says that whenever Richard's eye fell upon a courtier, regardless of rank, they were expected to kneel. In Rigaud's painting Louis XIV looks directly at us- he has his eye on us. As a child of seven Louis was described as "devout, grave, polite, and instinctively non-committal. He knew that he belonged to a race apart."[35] The child's 'impassive mask' and his 'indecipherable gaze' became an asset in the adult Louis.

Important to the power portrait is where it is positioned, a government office, on stamps and coins or medals. We think of the deference once paid to these images as recently as the 1950's when in cinemas the public would stand for the National Anthem while viewing a picture of royalty at the end of the film. A remnant of the idea that the portrait was a substitute for the actual person.

Jones raises Ernest Kantorowitz's theory of the two king's bodies.[36] A king had, the natural, biological, transitory mortal body subject to all of nature's infirmities, but also a body politic which is devoid of nature. (In this we might think of the royal image in paint or marble or metal.) This body is eternal and ceremonial, it is for the government, policy, and direction of the people. The two bodies are indivisible and incorporated in one person. Kantorowitz tries to make a case for the traditional role of kingship being somehow also mystical.[37]

It should be noted that Louis XIV was the son of the Spanish infanta/princess, Anne of Austria, and that the Spanish court was known for its apparent gravitas of dress and manners, so it may be down to his mother's influence that Louis always presented himself with poise. The king's means of communication, says Monod, was his body.[38] It was for others to find the words, which clearly had failed, hence the need for the visual arts in praise of the man. While the Spanish royals thought they would appear more special if the public only occasionally viewed them, Louis made himself available to his people, although not quite as far

[34] Berger, John. 1972.*Ways of Seeing*. London: BBC & Penguin Books Ltd.
[35] Richardson, J. 1973. P25. Ibid.
[36] Jones, 2008, Kantorowitz 1957, excerpts.
[37] Kantorowitz, Ernest. 1957. *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval political Theology*. Princeton University Press, excerpts.
[38] Monad, Paul Kleber. 1999. *The Power of Kings, Monarchy and Religion in Europe 1589-1715*. Yale University Press.

as Gustav Adolf of Sweden who spoke to his subjects in the marketplace. The humblest French subjects were personally able to hand a petition to Louis, having said that, no letter went unopened by his secret police.[39] Rigaud's painting is a balanced combination of formality in the coronation attire and informality in Louis's pose. The Hapsburgs, having been in power much longer, possibly had less interest in establishing an image, whereas Louis, only a third generation Bourbon, needed to make his mark, his glory.[40]

The Imperial, full length, larger than life, three-quarter pose; and virile stance had its origins in Imperial Roman sculpture in such works as the marble statue of Augustus of Prima Porta, c20 BCE (fig 12). The figure is shown as if addressing his troops, but significantly, Augustus stands barefooted, suggesting that he did not wish to be depicted in his lifetime as a god.



12.Augustus wearing lorica (leather cuirass) c 20-17BCE. Marble statue from Prima Porta. Vatican Museum.



13.*The Sounion Kouros*, in the pose of heroic nudity, showing Egyptian influences. c600 BCE. Naxian marble, 3.5m high. Restored.



14.*Menkaure and His Queen*. Giza. C 2575 BC. Slate. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

[39] Erlanger, P. 1967, p 210. ibid

[40] Bourke, Peter. 1992. *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*. New Haven & London. Yale university Press. p184.

The stance of one leg forward suggesting slight movement, argues Ernst Gombrich, can be traced back to archaic Greek statues known as kouroi or Apollines, (fig 13) developing from one foot slightly forward, followed by a bend in the arms held beside the body, then a twist in the torso.[41] Earlier still the line of development began with the Egyptian concept of pictorial completeness and the necessity to depict two legs in profile. This transferred to sculpture in such immobile figures as *Menkaure and His Queen*, c2575 BC (fig 14)

Moreover, showing the whole of figure, preferably in isolation confers on the person an air of authority. "When spectators observe a whole-body pose, they are distanced from the figure. Unlike a bust or a half-body pose, the whole-body pose reserves a respectful, free space around itself in which to manoeuvre, a space of impunity" explains Coll.[42] There is little of the humble about the 17th century power portraits and because these people saw themselves as the ruling class, frequently, they stand alone, if ever accompanied it is with some lesser mortal such as a child, servant or slave (most often Black), animal or allegorical being.

Norman Bryson draws our attention to theatre of the period. Unlike Italian theatre where gesture proceeded the script, French drama was 'word bound,' where, "bodily movement is always the servant of speech…"[43] This was supported in acting manuals by directions of how the body should pose, which leads us to consider if Louis was influenced thus. The actor should "…stand with one leg slightly forward, in the classical posture of eloquentia…" This was wonderfully hammed up in Blackadder Goes Forth, the Regency period when Hugh Paddick and Kenneth Conner gave acting lessons.

The way in which Louis XIV stands, in particular the way he uses the sceptre either as a support, or nonchalantly as a walking cane, has been compared to, or influenced by, Anthony van Dyke's 1635 painting of *Charles 1 of England, Hunting* (fig 15). Clearly, van Dyke's figure of Charles has none of the pomp of the Rigaud posturing.

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[41] Gombrich, Ernst. 1956, revised 1961. *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*. Princetown University Press.
[42] Coll, F. 2014, p49. Ibid.
[43] Bryson, Norman. 1981. *Word and Image. French Painting of the Ancien Regime*. Cambridge University Press. p78.

15.*Charles I of England, Hunting*. By Anthony van Dyck. Oil on canvas, 226 x 207cm. Louvre Museum. Paris. The hunting trip is a reference to aristocratic privilege.

Rigaud collected works by Rembrandt, Rubens, Titian, and others, and was to die a rich man; but it was his collection of eight Anthony van Dyke's which influenced Rigaud's style the most. Louis the XIV is shown full length, in a stance reserved for royalty and in the three-quarter view manner of Van Dyke's painting. The painting of Charles at the hunt is thought to have been in Paris in 1736 in the Paris collection of the Countess of Verrue, where Rigaud could have observed it. Guillaume Faroult argues that when Rigaud moved to Paris he would have come across Van Dyck's works which were well known in the city and Rigaud had ample opportunity to study van Dyck's technique.[44] Rigaud's portrait of Marie Cadenne 1684, according to Faroult, is a reworking of Van Dyke's painting of British women, whom he called Venetian Beauties. Van Dyck was among a small group of famous foreign artists which the French Crown commissioned. As pointed out by Faroult, "Van Dyck undertook at least two visits to Paris at the request of Louis XIII and his powerful minister Cardinal Richlieu."[45] Cardinal Mazarin, a famous collector acquired twenty-four Van Dyck portraits of 'persons of estate.' Van Dyck's fame rose during the battle of styles, colour versus drawing, but for the French, Van Dyck seems to have trod a middle path. Van Dyck was well represented in Louis XIV's collection, principally because the king did not disdain portraits of those from

[44] Faroult, Guillaume. 2012 (Autumn). *Van Dyck and France under the Ancien Regime 1641-1793*. Tate Papers, No 18. Accessed 20.2. 21.
https://www.tate.org.uk/resaerch/tate-papera/18/van-dyck-and-france-under-the-ancien-regime-1641-1793.
[45] Faroult,G. 2012. ibid

the lower ranks. At the time portraiture was considered by the Academy a minor genre compared with history painting. The critic Felibien thought Van Dyck's deficiency lay in the speed with which he painted. Later this 'freely sketched painting technique' would be recognised as a great skill. Faroult notes that Rigaud was to acquire Van Dyck's technique. In a 1762 biography of Rigaud, Antoine Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville, wrote on the death of the artist that, "France has lost her Van Dyck in the person of Hyacinthe Rigaud."[46] Another possible influence for the composition, the handling of space and the pose of the figure is proposed by Coll, that of Champaigne's 1640 *Portrait of Richelieu* (fig 16) but I am inclined to see only superficial similarities.[47]


16.*Richelieu*. By Philippe de Champaigne. c1639. Oil on canvas, 222 x 165cm. Louvre Museum, Paris.

For Rigaud, who admired Rubens, there is very little flesh on display in the painting of Louis XIV. The hand on the hip may be gloved and holding another glove. Louis wears a delicate lace cravat and flamboyant lace cuffs. From the 1660 Colbert imposed strict standards over lace design no doubt influenced by Le Brun the court designer. Initially, using Italian and Flemish workers alongside the French, Colbert hoped to raise standards added to which he instituted official designs from which deviation was not permitted. The period 1665 to 1680 saw French lace garnered with several royal symbols, crown, sun, cockerels mixed with abstract shapes. Understandably, the church would have had a view on fashion, or at least on women's dress. In 1644 Cardinal Mazarin, for whatever reason, prohibited the use of 'point lace, gold,

[46] Faroult.2012, p7. Ibid.
[47] Coll, R. 2014. Ibid.

silver and copper lace,' and in 1656 he also prohibited the use of 'bows of ribbon called gallants.'[48] But these edicts were largely ignored. The silk and woollen manufactures guarded their industries and Colbert's policies, although subject to many regulations, argues Gillian Crosby turn out to be more flexible than originally believed.[49] Moreover the intense rivalry between master craftsmen resulted in novel designs and inventions in technology. Under Colbert's direction, Lyon which had previously imported Italian textiles, emerged as the luxury silk weaving centre of France and it is thought that one third of Lyon's population, were involved in the industry, spinning, dyeing, or printing the paper for the designs. Italian silk was not only expensive but also heavy and was mainly used for furnishing and wall coverings, whereas French silk became mainly used for clothing. The demands of Louis' luxury court gave rise to an enormous consumption of silk.[50]



17.Detail of Charlemagne's sword from Hyacinthe Rigaud's painting of Louis XIV.

At his side Louis wears the Joyeuse (joyous) sword of Charlemagne, with jewelled scabbard which had been used in French coronations at least since 1270 (fig 17). The blade, reputedly made from the spear which had pierced Christ's side, was claimed to have magical properties, being so bright that it outshone the sun, and prevented the holder from being poisoned, a useful property for anyone involved in the court at Versailles. The sword symbolises the king's power to declare war or make peace. Coll refers to it as an

[48] Studebaker, Frances Priscilla. 1930. *Costume During the Times of Louis XIV, XV and XVI of France*. MA Thesis, p10. University of Wisconsin.
[49] Crosby, Gillian.2016. "*The Prohibition on Printed Calicoes in France, 1686-1759*." PhD Thesis. Nottingham Trent University.
[50] Davis, Elizabeth Seaton. 2012, "*Visualizations of Fashion in Seventeenth-Century French Prints*." p30. PhD Thesis. Cornell University. Jstor.

Imperial rather than a royal sword.[51] When Charlemagne's heir Louis the Pious died in 840, the empire was divided into three parts, one of which, Francia Occidentalis, is now present-day France. Wearing Charlemagne's sword is a declaration that Louis XIV intended to restore Leopold's Bohemia and Hungary back into the French empire. The Joyeuse was a relatively heavy ceremonial sword, wielded by two hands, compared with the epee, the light fighting sword with hand guards. The epee was carried as a mark of the nobility (see fig 4 & 5). Serious disputes between the *nobles d' epee,* were settled by duels until Louis banned such fights.[52]

Louis is attired in his coronation robe of forty-seven years earlier. The heavy robe displays the gold fleur-de-lys on blue (normally white and blue), symbols of the bourbon dynasty (fig 18). The fleur-de-lys, lily is a symbol of purity, having, it was said, to have sprung from the ground where Eve's tears fell as she departed Eden. France, being a predominantly Catholic country is associated with the Virgin Mary, and the use of the fleur-de-lys dates to at least Louis VI in the 12th Century. Another Biblical connection has been made with Aaron's rod (Numbers 17.1) Aaron's staff, which represented the tribe of Levi, sprouted flowers: a sign that God chose Aaron from amongst the twelve Israelite tribal leaders to put an end to rebellion. Here, at least is a connection with the Fronde. Although the idea fits with the ending rebellion, the rod blossomed and produced almonds which does not fit.

[51] Coll, R. 2014. ibid

[52] Mettam, Roger. 1995, *The French Nobility, 1610-1715*. (The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. Vol 1. Western Europe. Edited by H. Scott. Longman Group. p116.


18.Detail of Louis XIV's ermine lined robe.

The heraldic device of lilies, as Christoph Frank explains, might be connected, "with that of Sainte-Ampoule. According to the legend, a heavenly angel appeared on the day of Clovis's baptism, carrying a shield adorned with three lilies for the king. This was subsequently presented as the sign of a divine intervention which marked the French monarchy as preeminent in Christendom."[53]

The voluminous robe is folded back to expose the most expensive fur lining of the black tipped tail of ermine. Ermine, apart from the status symbol of wealth where its wearing was restricted to royalty, has a long history as a symbol of purity. Medieval Bestiaries, like the third century Physiologus, tell of the hunter, who wishing to catch the stoat in its white winter coat, covers its den with dirt knowing that the animal would rather die than sully its coat escaping into its' burrow. Leonardo famously used an ermine in his

[53] Frank, Christoph. 1993. The Mechanics of Triumph: Public Ceremony and Civic Pageantry under Louis XIV. p60. PhD Dissertation. The University of London. Warburg Institute.

portrait of Cecilia Gallerani (1484) to imply the woman's purity while also referencing Lodovico, her lover and his coat of arms.[54] Lodovico, the ermine, has its claws in the woman.

Ceremonial costume made to impress the people and foreign dignitaries etc, should also include theatrical costumes such as Louis dressed by Menus Plaisirs, appearing as the Sun in the 1653 ballet, de la Nuit. Generally, the king's clothes were different in that they belong to the traditions of the past. Coronation robes were timeless. The king's clothes belonged to the king's wardrobe, not the king. This is understandable when we think, that of the three categories, informal, formal, and ceremonial, the last two, evidenced in paintings and prints, had little to do with fashion. Philip Mansel quotes Nicolas Delamare "…splendour is necessary to maintain the rank of birth, to teach respect to the Peoples…" [55] Not that the People had much time to view such works of art, in the main they were struggling to survive and feed themselves.

Le Cordon Blue

Around the neck of Louis on, *Le cordon blue*, a blue ribbon, is the Order of the Holy Spirit, indicating Louis's line of succession back to Henri III. The order is a Maltese Cross, with each of its eight rounded points representing the Beatitudes, between the four arms of the cross are four *fleur-de-lys* representing the gospels, and the twelve petals stand for the Apostles. In the centre of the cross is a downward pointing dove, the holy spirit. The dove brought from heaven the ampule containing holy oil for Louis' coronation, so it was believed. The motto*, Duce et Auspice*, significantly means 'under his guidance.' Under Louis guidance, debatably, much of the wealth of France was spent on wars and building palaces. The collar of the Order of the Holy Spirit was a sign of Louis' commitment to Catholicism as the defender of the faith, but also a warning to Protestant. In 1701 at the time of this painting, Louis' enemies were Protestant Holland, England, Denmark, and although Leopold 1st of Austria was a Catholic, he tolerated Protestants. In a portrait by Nattier of Peter the Great in armour, Peter wears the blue sash of the Order of St Andrew,

[54] Schneider, Norbert. 1994. *The Art of the Portrait*. Taschen. p55.
[55] Mansel, P. 2005. ibid

patron saint of Russia. Peter established this order in 1698, having seen the effect of such orders in European capitals. By rewarding his nobles with the order- he saved the state- himself- the expense of giving away large estates or money. The honour system persists in modern Britain for those who support monarchy.

The accoutrements- the crown, sceptre, the hand of justice- represent themselves. They are objects of Kingship. Louis holds in his right hand the sceptre, but interestingly, since it is up-side down, he seems to be using it more as a cane for support. The intention may be to suggest the nonchalant pose of a country gentleman: the informal pose influenced by Anthony van Dyke's portrait of Charles 1st (c1635) who is shown in the manner of a gentleman with his walking stick in the countryside. The hand of justice, ivory on a gold rod, lies on a gold tasselled cushion. The hand, palm outwards, its fingers arranged in the symbolic form of a blessing is unique to the French monarchy. This gesture, sometimes called the hand of God can be seen in works, as far back as Giotto's 1310, (church of) *Ognissanti Madonna*, now in the Uffizi, Florence. The symbol probably dates beyond the earliest 6th century image of Christ by an unknown, Byzantine artists, *Christ Pantocrator* (He who has authority over everything) blessing.

On the cushion rests the crown (destroyed in 1793), which was given Louis at his coronation by the Archbishop of Reims, and importantly signifies the king's absolutism and has been identified as a Vermeil crown, *vemeil* (vermillion). Made from silver gilt or bronze gilt and is likely to be the crown which would be used for Louis XIV's funeral. The crown illustrated in Justus van Egmont's 1652 Coronation Portrait of Louis XIV, (fig 2) shows a smaller crown but of the same fleur-de-lys design. Behind Louis is a throne. Compositionally it lies in the shadows. Did Rigaud mean to give us an interpretation of a throne in shadows?


19.Detail showing the base of a column with the base-relief figure of Themis.

The column has long stood for power, we might think of the Roman honorific, fifty metre high, porphyry column to Constantine, originally topped with a statue of the emperor. The classical column, a traditional device since the Renaissance was used to indicate antiquity and stability. From a drawing of five classical column of the period made by Claude Perrault (1613-1688) the unfluted shaft in Rigaud's painting appears most likely to be a Tuscan column (fig 19). We cannot see the capital and it is of interest that the ever talented Le Brun had designed-on paper- a new French order which included cockerels, fleur-de-lys, and the head of Apollo.

A view of the column's lower section implies that the subject belongs in surroundings such as a palace, whereas the depiction of a whole column might, by comparison, reduce the importance of the portrayed.


20.Titian's *Pesaro Madonna Altarpiece*. 1519-1526. Oil on canvas 488 x 269 cm. Venice.

Such tall columns can be seen in Titian's *Pesaro Altarpiece* (fig 20). Apart from the controversy concerning their meaning, the twin massive columns, do draw the eye heavenwards. Framed by columns supporting

an arch, the view through seems to be outside where the two columns dwarf the sacred group. But to what purpose? Are they Boaz (meaning strength) and Jachin (meaning established), the two pillars of Solomon's Temple? Coincidentally, those two pillars were decorated at the top with the Lily. (1 Kings 7:22)

In the base of the Rigaud column is a carving of the goddess Themis, goddess of good council, the personification of fairness. In one hand she holds the sword of justice in the other hand the scales, clearly implying such wisdom belongs to Louis XIV. Such references, obscure puns and cryptic puzzles were meant to be read by the well-educated, conveying on them the understanding that they too belonged to 'the elite,' whilst also establishing the erudition of the artist.

Earl Rosenthal suggests an origin for the device of the column in paintings of the aristocracy.[56] In the classical tale of Hercules, one of the god's labours was to deliver the oxen belonging to the monster Geryon to Eurystheus. After travelling over many lands Hercules arrives at the frontier between Libya and Europe. As a monument to his progress at the Straits of Gibraltar, Hercules created two mountains (pillars) Calpe and Abyla. On top of these pillars or columns, he placed a sign to warn sailors not to venture further because they would find no land, which held true until Columbus found the Indies. Although not exactly heraldry, the device in 1516 of two columns raised on rocks above the sea and joined by a ducal crown came into use as a badge for Charles V, representing the twin powers of Spain and the Habsburgs; indeed, Charles and his forebears, claimed decent from the mythical Hercules. The two columns appear in 1454 tapestries in the Burgundian Court and Rosenthal provides several illustrated examples of the twin columns, including a coin and in the choir of Barcelona Cathedral. While the painters of European courts like to make references to classical antiquity the flaw with Hercules' two columns is how did they become one! It is just as likely that the origins of the use of columns or pillars lies in the scriptures: "For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them." 1 Samuel .2.9. In Hugo Van der Goes 1475*, Nativity*, a centre panel of the *Portinari Altarpiece* can be seen a massive column. This, in

[56] Rosenthal, Earl, E.1973. *The Invention of the Columnar Deice of Emperor Charles V at the Court of Burgundy in Flanders in 1516*. Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes. Vol, 36. p230. https://www.jstor.org/stable/751163

iconographic punning terms, gave support to Mary as she gave birth. Columns thus can infer stability and support.

The Drapery

Above and to the side of Louis, Rigaud has pictured gold trimmed, heavy red swags of drapey, gold chords and tassels, giving the impression that the material has been lifted to reveal his majesty. Such drapery was a common element in portraits of the aristocracy. The use of drapes in power portraits may have its roots in paintings such as Simone Marini's, 1316 fresco Maesta, where the Virgin is positioned beneath the kind of canopy held over royalty in processions. In Jan van Eyck's 1437, *Lucca Madonna* the canopy is integrated with the throne, becoming a box, not dissimilar to the canopy on a four-poster bed. In Rogier van der Weyden's 1450, *Virgin and Child with St Peter, John the Baptist, Cosmas and Damian*, the canopy has developed into a tent. Coll suggests that "By unfolding volumetrically, it [the drape] is more easily assimilated by the baldachin [ceremonial canopy over an altar] or pallium and so becomes a stage devise that delimits a space and indicates a depth of field."[57] In Renaissance Low Countries such drapery had liturgical associations where it might represent an altar cloth.



21.Hugo van der Goes. *Adoration of the Shepherds*. 1480. Oil on Panel, 97 x 245cm. Staatliche Museum, Berlin. Revelation is depicted by two Prophets who, "… draw back a set of trompe l'oeil curtains, the rings of which are painted onto an actual rod that protrudes from the surface of the frame." (p8. Adoration of the Shepherds by Jessica Buskirk. Journal of Netherlandish Art.2014).

[57] Coll, R. 2014. p29. Ibid.

Awnings, screening blinds or drapes, apart from their privacy function and their ability to exclude heat, cold, drafts or light, were also a way of decorating spaces adding to the pageantry of occasions. These drapes took on symbolic meaning differentiating between public/private, inclusive/exclusive, concealment/revelation, and the like. In Hugo van der Goes' 1480 Nativity, (fig 21) two prophets draw aside a curtain allowing us to view the Nativity somewhat in the manner of a 'mystery theatre.'[58] Curtains took on the religious meaning of sanctity because of a line from Exodus, 26, 1. regarding the veils of the Tabernacle and the Jewish Temple: "Moreover, thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them."

Before the Renaissance, the draped fabric played an important role in Byzantine ceremony, as Maria Parani makes clear, preserving Imperial dignity but also turning the Imperial presence into wonder.[59] To see beyond the drape was to be allowed an audience with the most holy. Parani quotes Corippus in 566 AD "the more a thing is hidden, the more valuable it is considered." (We are reminded of the many modern examples, Magritte's Lovers of 1928, where what is concealed is more important than that which is allowed visible.) Draped curtains served the function of revelation in Byzantine Imperial rule. When drawn aside they exposed the emperor as a god or demi-god, in the way in which Christ was made manifest to the Magi: an epiphany. Look, the fabric says, I reveal to you the great king Louis! If the fabric is thought to be a curtain, in the way a theatre uses the curtain, then we are in the presence of a performance. After all Louis was in effect 'on stage' all his waking day. Fabric as curtain is expanded by Bryson: "In performance, the curtain divides the theatre into two distinct zones: in front of the curtain, audience, life, the absence of coded meaning; behind it, stage, art, the arena of meaningfulness."[60] In other words, what we see in Rigaud's painting is front. The mask. A public performance. And somewhat like the theatre and the unreal, it is difficult to identify exactly where the light source is.

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[58] Lassaigne, J .1977, *Flemish Painting, The Century of Van Eyck*. Skira. p121.

[59] Parani, Maria, 2018. *Mediating presence: curtains in Middle and Late Byzantine imperial ceremonial and portraiture*. p21. Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies. Vol, 42. Issue,1. April 2018. pp1-25.
DOI:https//doi.org/10.1017/6yz.2017.33

[60] Bryson, N. 1981. Ibid.

Discussing Le Brun's monumental painting of the Jabach Family, Watt explains how "textiles and dress have long functioned in portraits as markers of wealth, social status, identity and taste…" and drew attention to the amount of painted surface given over to the depiction of various fabrics.[61] Much the same can be said of Rigaud's portrait of Louis XIV. The French Academy placed History painting as most important, followed by portraiture, whereas genre still life had little importance, that was left to the Dutch. But what we see in Rigaud's work is a mastery of still life surfaces, woven carpet, polished metal, hair, velvet, marble, lace, and ermine fur.

Dazzled by Light

The Byzantine theatrical element is clear in the additional use of lighting. For evidence Parani turned to texts such as the Book of Ceremonies of Constantine VII, Porphyrogennetos (945-59).[62] The text concerns being born in the purple, meaning a member of the royal family. The significance lay in the fact that Tyrian purple dye was very expensive and reserved for royalty. The book gave descriptions of woven textiles with embroidery, applique and gold thread which reflected light. The ceremony of the 'golden curtains of Easter' held in the Chrysotriklinos, a reception hall of the great palace of Constantinople, saw the drapes drawn aside or lifted, importantly by unseen hands, revealing as if by magic the emperor in radiance, symbolic of Christ's Resurrection. Apart from the reflective qualities of the fabric, no doubt theatrical lighting played its part in convincing the populous that the emperor was sun-like. Clearly Louis XIV, as Apollo, was not the first to present this fabrication and we are reminded of Louis' use of light in firework displays.

The Dais

Another feature is the apparently insignificant small dais on which Louis XIV stands. Dais comes from the Anglo-French meaning a table or platform and can be traced to the end of medieval halls were the lord and

[61] Watt, Melinda. 2003. *Textile Production in Europe: Silk, 1600-1800*. In Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/txt_s/hd_txt_s.htm(October 2003)
[62] Parani, M. 2018. ibid

his family dinned separately from the crowd. The dais' function is to raise the subject above the common heard, so to speak, to give the occupant greater status, to be, metaphorically beyond reach. It can also be traced to the Byzantine ceremony of the prokypsis: an elevated wooden platform on which, when the curtains were drawn, revealed the emperor from the knees up, in imitation of the rising sun. Ultimately the origin of this small platform is the religious altar, the holy table, and in Christian mythology, the altar signifies the presence of Christ. An engraving, (fig 22) *The Silver Throne*, 1686, depicts a high dais with three steps used by Louis to impress the Persian and Oriental ambassadors, then regarded as 'oriental despots.'[63]



22.Attributed to Pierre Paul Sevin (1650-1710) *The Royal Reception of Ambassadors from the King of Siam to His Majesty*. 1687. Etching & engraving on paper, 82 x 52cm. Louvre.

Is it too fanciful to compare the dais to the first step of a staircase with its hierarchical implications, the heavenly ladder by which God, or in this case Louis, descends from heaven to earth? Afterall, was this not what the Ambassadors Staircase was, in part, intended to imply to an approaching visitor!

In Rigaud's painting, Louis stands on a richly patterned gold carpet. This gold background material may be a carpet or a tapestry, but the design is difficult to identify. Clearly there are scrolling acanthus leaves. But the dark linear swirls are unlike anything seen in the geometry of Savonnerie carpets. If it is a carpet, it may have come from the king's collection of medieval carpets or it may be oriental silk. France had colonies in

[63] Burke.1989, p160. Ibid.

America, Africa, and India and contacts with Siam (Thailand) and China, could this be Chinese silk? Whatever its origin the gold says everything.

The title of the painting may be in dispute. The inscription was decided, not by Rigaud but by the king consulting with the academy. Coll asks "What does the 'XIV' signify?[64] Is it the fourteenth king of that name? Or is it the fourteenth Louis to wear the royal costume?" A somewhat pedantic point. The inscription was first written in Latin by Charpentier and then translated into French by Boileau and Racine who tried to minimize the adjectives. The move from Latin to French suggests the exertion of French pride.

More relevant is the question, why at the age of sixty-three did Louis want a portrait of himself in this robe? If coronation costumes are liminal rituals, what transforming experience did Louis seek? At the time of this portrait, France, following the Nine Years War, had only been at peace for three years. Louis was now considering a Protestant coalition against him of the English, Dutch and Germans. Is this French, coronation robed portrait an assertion of Catholic supremacy as Louis enters the War of Spanish Succession?

A final consideration is the size of this and other political paintings. The Coronation portrait is a massive canvas 2.76m high. It is not unusual for political statements to be made on a large scale and we think of The Raft of Medusa at 7.16m wide, or Guernica at 7.76m wide, or each of Le Brun's 12 m wide, Battles of Alexander.

State portraits serving several functions, not least as moral exemplars for their dynastic progeny, to display dignity and stability, but also, as Lorn Campbell observes, to "keep themselves and their families in the public eye and to let foreign courts know what they looked like…"[65] The painting of *Louis XIV and His*

[64] Coll, R. 2014. Ibid.
[65] Campbell, Lorn. 1990. *Renaissance Portraits*. Yale University Press.

Heirs,(fig 23) attributed to Nicolas de Largilliere may appear a family group but is in fact a statement of dynastic rule.



Fig 23. *Louis and His Heirs*. Attributed to Largilliere. 1715-20 disputed. Oil on Canvas, 127.6 x 161cm. The Wallace Collection, London.

Louis is seated. Now an old man wearing brown rather than the bright colours of his youth. He still wears the old-fashioned high wig and block heeled shoes. A reference to his past glories is in the painting on the wall showing Apollo in his chariot. The past is shown by a bust of the king's father Louis XIII (1601-1643), just behind the king. Behind Madame de Ventadour is a bust of the king's grandfather, Henri IV (1553-1610). The governess Ventadour had saved the king's grandson from the 1712 epidemic of measles.

The future is represented by both the king's grandson (1682-1712), Louis Duke of Burgundy (or Bourgogne, according to Diana de Marly),[66] dressed in red, and the child sporting ostrich plumbs on its head, the king's great grandson, (the future Louis XV), duc d Anjou (or Duc de Bretagne). Both the death of the Grand Dauphin, (1661-1711) seen resting an arm on the king's chair and the death of the Duke of Burgundy, may have prompted the need to visually underline the continuity of the Bourbon dynasty. The painting is a construction taken from existing portraits and probably painted in the Cabinet du Roi workshop. Others are known to exist. The gesture of the two hands, the king's, and the child's, represents the circular continuity of the absolute rulers.

Absolutist Sculpture

[66] Marly, Diana de. 1987. *Louis XIV & Versailles*. B.T.Batsford Ltd. London.

For the people of France to recognise their king, widely distributed public sculpture was more accessible than palace paintings. Louis had no great desire to meet the people but he needed their acceptance and sculpture provided one way to inculcate his magnificence.

Under the supervision of Le Brun, a huge marble fountain surrounded by river gods and chained slaves and topped with an equestrian statue of Louis XIV trampling Rebellion and Heresy (Envy & Discord) was approved by the king. Le Brun had made sketches of a rearing, agitated horse, sculpted by the Italian Francois Girardon, (1628-1715) for the top of the rock pile, but the project was never realised. Girardon in his lifetime produced a large body of work and died (coincidently the same day as Louis) a very rich man. On the death of Colbert, his successor, Louvois, cancelled the project.[67] Louvois needed a project to replace the abandoned fountain and became aware that Francois d'Aubusson, Duc de la Feuillade, competing for the king's attention by proposing to erect a statue of Louis surrounded by four flaming torches: 'votive candles.' For the statue in the Place des Victoires he commissioned Martin Desjardin (1637-1694). For fear that Louvois might be out manoeuvred, Louvois devised a scheme whereby cities throughout France, between 1685-86 would appear to spontaneously request permission to erect a statue of the king. Clearly, they would not be denied. Government officials known as *Intendants,* responsible for taxation and controlling troops, were sent strong hints, if not orders, to make such requests of the king. The public had little or no say in this. Various cities erected statues of Louis standing, or as busts, or on horseback in honour of a king who was kept ignorant of the intrigues at court and of his unpopularity.

Most important to the erection of public sculpture in towns was the dedication ceremony which as Christoph Frank says, "brought together all social strata in a solemn display of power and unity."[68] Throughout the 1660s Louis increasingly expressed a dislike for elaborate ceremonies and pageants in his

[67] Callisen, S. A. 1941. *The Equestrian Statue of Louis XIV in Dijon and Related Monuments*. P132. The Art bulletin. Vol, 23. No,2. pp131-140. Published by CAA. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3046751

[68] Frank, Christoph Daniel.1993. *The Mechanics of Triumph: Public Ceremony and Civic Pageantry under Louis XIV*. p134. University of London, Warburg Institute. Oct 1993. URI: http:hdl.handle.net/10044/1/8760

honour. Although the creation of statues of Louis was meant to encourage unity in the population, Louis is not known to have attended any of the dedication events in his honour.

It is important to see casting a bronze statue in a similar light to oil painting, both had a cachet about them, exclusively for the rich. Although the king would sometimes pay for the bronze casting, the cities bore the cost of transport, buying land or revamping existing spaces into royal squares and suitable pedestals. The Duc de Richelieu commissioned the sculptor, Jean-Baptiste Gobert (1627-1723?), in 1685 to produce a bronzed maquette of Louis on a galloping horse. Louis is portrayed almost touching the stead with one finger which was deemed sufficient to make the animal move. The recognised skill of Louis as a horseman was reinforced on the pedestal with the Latin inscription declaring that lightning appeared to emanate from the king's hand. The maquette was never cast in bronze.[69] A painting of Louis on horseback has relevance to the sculpture. Although destroyed in the Revolution, it is known through Felibien's description and a copy by Pierre Rabon dated 1663-68 (oil on canvas, 329 x 257cm) in the Musee de la Chartreuse, Douai. The horse, cheval Isabelle, with glaring eye, importantly according to Nivelon is performing the levade. This might easily be confused with a rearing horse but in fact is a movement in classical riding, where the horse lifts its forelegs which are then drawn under, while balancing with its haunches deeply bent. It thus demonstrates the rider's skill. As Wolf Burchard explains, "Metaphorically, they aligned the sitter's ability to establish complete control over a horse, a wild force of nature, with his ability to reign over his kingdom."[70] The Rabon copy, presented to the king in 1668, shows Louis in armour wearing a lace cravat. Above the horse and rider is gold drapery. Behind them a classical column. Rabon has copied Le Brun's 1662 head and shoulder portrait of the king, an almost identical head except for the style of cravat. Above the Le Brun head are the words in gold lettering LOVIS QUATORZE, a reference to the winning fourteen points in the card game piquet.

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[69] Souchal, Francois, et al. 1977-1993. *French Sculptors of the 17th and 18th Centuries, The Reign of Louis XIV*. p 84. Vol, 1. 1977. Vol, 2. 1981, Vol,3. 1987, Vol, 4, 1993. Wilderstein Foundation and Bruno Cassirer Vol 1-3. Wilderstein Institute and Faber & Faber, Vol, 4. https://wpi.art

[70] Burchard, Wolf. 2016. The Sovereign Artist, Charles Le Brun and the Image of Louis XIV. Paul Holberton Publishing.

Etienne Le Hongre's (1628-1690) equestrian statue (fig 24) shows Louis XIV dressed as a Roman general but, incongruously, in a wig which at the time did not seem odd. Beside the cost to the various cities there were also technical problems like the weight of such monuments. In 1686, le Hongre signed a contract for an equestrian statue of Louis, 12 feet high, and a horse 13 feet long, at a cost of 90,000 livres. In 1692, the nineteen-and a half ton horse, and the eight and four fifths of a ton rider, proved difficult to move and it was not until 1748 that the work was fully installed in the Place Royale in Dijon. Eventually it was broken up and melted down for cannons.


. 24. Bronze Statuette. 48 x 37 x 16 cm. by Etienne Le Hongre. Museum of Fine Arts. Dijon.

In 1692, Francois Girardon (1628-1715) made a model (fig 25) for a colossal equestrian statue of Louis XIV, to be cast in a one-piece bronze. The cost of the model and the casting was 101,398 Livre, of which Girardon received 14,750 Livre. The statue was positioned in 1699 in the Place Louis-le-Grand (Place Vendome) Paris. Louis is shown dressed as a Roman commander, his horse trampling on an enemies shield and weapons. A marble and bronze pedestal, surrounded by Atlases, designed by S. Slodtz, was paid for by the king. Louis commissioned the painter, Rene Antoine Houasse (c1645-1710) to make two paintings depicting the sculpture being transported (fig 26). Houasse's paintings illustrates the scale of the statue, showing that human figures could fit under the belly of the horse. Girardon's 1685 red wax and wood maquette, now in Yale University Art Gallery, show the sculptors original intention of a tree stump supporting the belly of the horse(fig 25).



2 25. Francois Girardon's wax, *Model for Equestrian Statue of Louis XIV*. 1687? Yale University Art Gallery.

Anonymous engravings of the statue and another maquette, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, attest to the existence of this once massive work which was destroyed in the Revolution.

The horse's gait in the equestrian statue should project a message perhaps more subtle than at fist appeared. Dora Janson explains: "while it [Girardon's model] may look static-lame, in fact-next to Bernini's design, its Baroque qualities show up clearly in comparison with ancient prototypes: the fluid modelling, the wind-blown movement of the king's cloak. There is even a hint at an "invisible complement"-instead of looking at us, the king raises his head and leans back as if communicating with some celestial power."[71]



26.Rene Antoine Houasse painting of the *Transport of Statue of Louis XIV*. 1699. Oil on Canvas. Museum Carnavalet. Paris.

The ideal horse was viewed as Classical in origins and modelled on a prototype of a statue of Marcus Aurelius in Rome which was much admired by French artists at that time. In 1685 moulds were made of the Marcus Aurelius horse and the plaster casts set up in the courtyard of the Louvre, but by 1735 the

[71] Janson, Dora Jane. 1962. *A History of Art*. Thames and Hudson. London. p445.

horse had disintegrated. At a time when horses were essential to everyday existence, sculptures of horses would have met with critical inspections, and a high level of realism was essential.

Antoine Coysevox's Equestrian Portrait of Louis XIV (1681) is an oval relief carving in marble (fig 27). It is in the Salon dela Guerre, in the Palace of Versailles. The carving was the 'most Baroque in spirit' in the palace according to the Oxford Companion to Art[72] but only because the horse must leap over bodies. Again, Louis is dressed as Alexander, which might be interpreted as a Roman emperor, rather than a Christian king! Louis' horse is portrayed profile in a stylised gallop jumping over the bodies of the slain enemy. Is the horse apprehensive as it charges across the battlefield? The message is that we should not be worried, Louis, unconcerned looks directly out at us. It is, as Monod says, as if Louis were controlling his stead 'by will alone.'[73] The king, with absolute power as ever, is in control.


27.Antonie Coysevox's Stucco Medallion. 1687. Salon de la Guerre. Versailles Castle.

Not every image was acceptable. In 1670-71 Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680) made a terracotta model of a proposed equestrian statue of Louis, showing Louis with flowing locks of hair (fig 28). The horse was about to reach the summit of the path of Virtue, claimed Bernini. If the Aurelius horse could be seen as standing or just about to move forward it contrasted radically with Bernini's, free standing sculpture of Louis astride a mount with the front two legs off the ground rearing or leaping forward. Bernini told Colbert that he would represent the king "…in an attitude of majesty and command."[74] The full-size work (made by Bernini's pupils) arrived nineteen years late at Versailles, but the statue was rejected as being too dynamic and Louis thought it showed him sitting wrongly in the saddle. Louis was also said to have rejected

[72] Oxford Companion to Art. Edited by Harold Osborne. 1970, p228.
[73] Monod, Paul. 1999. Ibid.
[74] Monod, Paul. 1999, p322. ibid

the statue because Bernini portrayed the king smiling. Did Bernini's sculpture fail because the pose did not represent the stability of his reign, or was it that it too closely resembled Bernini's 1670 statue of the Emperor Constantine in Scala Regia in the Vatican? Some might have thought the king should be spending his time attending to his army not commissioning more statues and was Bernini's frightened horse leading the king in the wrong direction? Louis wanted Bernini's sculpture broken up, but in the end, the king had it transformed by Francois Giradon to depict Marcus Curtius, a Roman patriot, with his horse leaping over the fiery abyss. Louis's objection to his portrait and the realism of the horse, as Callisen observes, "condemned the statue by Bernini, thereby banning the rearing and truly baroque equestrian statue from France. Indeed, the fully developed Italian baroque remained alien to the Frenchman of the seventeenth century."[75]



28. *Louis XIV on Horseback*. By Bernini. Terracotta, 76cm high. Galleria Borghese. Rome.

Sculpture provided another opportunity to show the standing figure of the king crushing his defeated enemies. Louis Le Conte (1639-1694) produced a marble statue of Louis XIV standing with one foot crushing an old, naked, prostrate man crawling with serpents which represents Heresy. A heretical Calvinist book is also shown. The statue of 1685-87 was destroyed in the Revolution, but we know of its existence from an engraving by Vermeulem after a drawing by Boullongne the Younger.[76] A similar figure, by Jean-Baptiste Poultier (1653- 1715) known only through an engraving, shows Louis XIV dressed as a Roman Emperor, his right hand resting on the club of Heracles, and this time his foot is crushing Heresy represented as a Hydra.[77] In 1654, Gilles Guein's (1611-1678) statue of the king aged fifteen, one foot crushing rebellions head

[75] Callisen, S.A. 1941, p138. Ibid.
[76] Souchal, F. 1977, p220. ibid
[77] Souchal, F. 1977, p165. ibid

underfoot, was unveiled. Guein was paid 3,000 livres for the statue and pedestal by the commissioning magistrates of Paris and was meant as a peace offering to Louis because Paris had been the centre of the Conde's rebellion the Fronde. Louis never again trusted Paris and the marble statue was to stand in the Hotel de Ville for thirty-three years a constant embarrassment to Paris. In the statue Louis' sword is broken, but in a terracotta version now in the Louvre we can see that the sword points to rebellions genitals indicating the Fronde's impotency. Louis age fifteen is a naturalistic image of a youth, with a message the public could appreciate.

In 1665, Bernini was commissioned by Louis to make his portrait bust. Bernini was allowed to spend thirteen, one-hour sessions in the presence of the king carving Louis's face from life. The result, a masterpiece of Baroque carving was considered a true likeness. Moulds were created and at least seven copies were made proving its popularity but also allowing a wider audience to view their king's likeness. The marble bust shows a young man with a small moustache, flowing curls, and wearing a cravat above swirling, Baroque style fabric. Much to the sculptor's dismay, courtiers and artists offered advice while watching Bernini at work. The main criticism concerned the treatment of Louis' forehead which we may recall, in physiognomic terms, denoted the highbrow intellectual. The sculptor and medallist, Jean Warin (1607-1672) was the chief critic. Although not a Frenchman, his opinion was very respected. Warin, from northern Europe (Liege, then in the Netherlands), based his criticism on the accuracy, or lack of, detail. Bernini, an Italian, was more concerned, we might think correctly, with 'capturing a likeness.'[78]

In the same year Warin made a marble bust of Louis which was clearly in competition to Bernini. Warin's version shows Louis wearing Roman generals cuirass on which is emblazoned the head of Apollo. Much of the debate as to which was the greatest work of art probably can be attributed to national pride, French versus Italian. Warin's sculpture was given pride of place in the centre of the Ambassadors' staircase in Versailles, only to be replaced two years later by Antoine Coysevox's (1640-1720) marble bust of Louis.

[78] Wellington, Robert. 2015, p159. Ibid.

Coysevox's work owes a debt to Warin in that the bust displays much fine detail in the pattern on clothing, but by comparison with the Bernini bust, both look dull and lifeless. The quality of the sculpting was important but equally important is where these works were positioned. Pride of place in the Ambassadors staircase was important, but Bernini's masterpiece was moved from the Louvre to Versailles into the Salon de Diane, the King's apartments above the stairs.

Even more accessible images of Louis lay in the public's pockets and purses, their coins.

Numismatics, sculptures for posterity

There is a well-established tradition, dating back to Persian satraps (local rulers), of rulers using numismatics to glorify their image and Louis XIV was no different. In Republican Rome veristic heads showed all the wrinkles and imperfections, but Augustus was the first to idealize the Imperial classical portrait.[79] Alexander the Great is often credited as being the first to portray a ruler as a regular feature of coins. The standard for realistic profiles was set by the Renaissance medallist, Antonio Pisanello (1395-1455/6), described by Erwin Panofsky as an 'archaeologically minded artist.'[80] The importance of the medal is illustrated in Sandro Botticelli's '*Young Man with a Medallion of Cosimo de Medici, c1474*. By holding the medal close to the youth's heart, it suggests dedication and loyalty to Cosimo, although the inserted plaster cast could be removed and replaced!

[79] Trentinella, Rosemarie. 2000. "*Roman Portrait Sculpture: The Stylistic Cycle*." Also, "*Roman Portrait Sculpture: The Republic Through Constantine*." Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. Metropolitan Museum of Art.
[80] Panofsky, Erwin. 1970. *Meaning in the Visual Arts*. Peregrine.



29.*Louis d'or* .1709

Louis XIV's profile (fig 29) on coins was the most immediate way the public were able to recognise their king but more importantly established the person as *The State.*



30.Louis XIV coin. 1698.

The livre, sou and denier, variously minted in gold, silver or copper were, in Louis' reign, often devalued due to war. The silver ecu 'with long hair' refers to a depiction of Louis aged twelve, a coin in which the youth is shown wearing a victor's laurel wreath in his hair.

Coins and medals have been described as the "incorruptible bearers of historic truth."[81] Cast in precious metals they circulated internationally as diplomatic gifts, but those in baser metals came within the reach of the nonelite of France.[82] Even if buried in the ground for thousands of years, gold, silver, or bronze coins, when exhumed are hardly damaged, in this sense, they were an art for posterity and more durable than print and painting, or sculpture and architecture.

[81] Wellington.2015,16.
[82] Martin, Meredith & Weiss, Gillian 2022. *The Sun King at Sea. Maritime Art and Galley Slaves in Louis XIV's France*. J. Paul Getty Trust.

In a letter dated 1662 to Colbert from the poet Jean Chapelain, the poet wrote: "As for the plan concerning medals, it is an invention that the Greeks and Romans used to eternalize the memory of the heroic actions of their princes, their captains, and their emperors, because of the permanence of the metals they were made of, especially those in gold and silver. I highly approve of your using them as one of the means to perpetuate the kings [memory], since this is a method used throughout the centuries for a similar end, and it is very much in keeping with the royal dignity…"[83]

Collections

Louis XIII had little interest in antiquities therefore the coin collector, Gaston duc d'Orleans bequeathed his collection to Louis XIV and this became the basis of the royal cabinet of medals. Alan Stahl[84] points out that Charles Patin advised Louis XIV to think about the commemorative value of medals as a way of promoting his reign. Colbert took Jean Chapelin's (1595-1674) advice that medals were an excellent way of glorifying Louis, and as Louis told the academy, "I entrust you with the thing that is most precious to me in the world, which is my reputation."[85]

In the same year of 1665, that Jean Warin produced a marble bust of Louis, he created a gold medal in high relief (fig 31). This was criticized by Bernini but requested by Colbert and the Academy. The obverse side shows Louis with animated flowing locks of hair and a swirling shoulder covering much in the style of Bernini's work. On Louis' chest is the head of Apollo badge. The inscription reads, 'Louis XIV reigns and builds,' referring to the image on the reverse side of Bernini's facade of the Louvre. This medal (Worth 500 crowns), with two inscriptions was placed beneath the foundation stone in a ceremony attended by Louis which recognised the king as the builder of the Louvre.[86] Louis claimed the glory even though he neither designed nor laboured on the palace.

[83] Beik, William. 2000. p201. Ibid.
[84] Stahl, Alan, M. 2015, *Ancient and Modern in the Metallic Series of Louis XIV*. P5. The Medal. No, 67. Pp4-11.
[85] cited in Wellington, 2015, 14, from Charles Perrault, Memoires de ma vie, ed Paul Bonnefon. Paris:H.Laurens,1909.41
[86] Wellington, Robert. 2015, p47. ibid

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31.*Louis XIV medal*. Designed by Warin. *Louvre conceived by Bernini*. 1665. Gun-metal. British Museum.

In 1684 the medal and coin collection moved from the Louvre to Versailles and was positioned next to the royal apartments where Louis could enjoy the collection, a collection which would grow to twenty thousand coins. Louis, like many of the elite who were collectors of antiquities regarded these objects with great esteem not only for their age and intrinsic worth but importantly they connected the aristocracy with history. It was Catherine de Medici who used ancient medals to instruct a young monarch. Coin, medal and base-relief collections formed the focus of many salons where savants discussed how ancient history recalled the great deeds of men like Trajan and his expansion of Rome, relating that to the good governance of Louis XIV.

In the 1660s, it was proposed to create a positive history of past and current medals of Louis. Clearly the destruction of Heidelberg in May 1693 by French forces would not be commemorated because it would send the wrong message. The constructed history would involve creating medals to fill in the missing events in the king's reign, even when Louis was too young to have taken part or when he was never there. Medals had

to show Louis as the centre of the event. “All the events from the reign must be explicitly attributed to the king, and he must be acknowledged as the principal agent of history” writes Wellington.[87]

Inscriptions

The Academy of Inscriptions (or *Petite Academy*) was Founded in 1663. Hatton[88] argues that its real purpose was to raise the standard and clarity of officially used French language. In 1701, medals were added to the title. Latin inscriptions were more concise than French, an important consideration on a small surface such as a coin and Latin had endured since Classical times. In 1684 there took place the quarrel over inscriptions, but this had more implications for painting rather than coins. In part the quarrel highlighted the fact that not everyone at court knew their Latin and it was partially about asserting the triumph of the French language. Painting was moving away from referencing Alexander towards Louis’ own history. If Latin might lead to confusion of interpretation, the French inscription, it was argued, left no room for error. Between 1691 and 1692 a series of medals were struck known as the *Histoire metallique de Louis le Grand,* indicating the king’s new, self-proclaimed title. In 1702 the first documentation of the medals was published. This catalogue not only illustrated each of Louis’ medals and translated the inscriptions from Latin into French but most importantly explained the meaning thus reinforcing the king’s propaganda.

Conclusion.

We mistakenly tend to make heroes out of those in power, people who, in fact were ordinary individuals born to positions of power, argues A J P Taylor.[89] Individuals who “…were mainly concerned to show off and enjoy themselves -hunting, running after mistresses, building palaces, collecting works of art, or merely eating and drinking.” All of which chimes with Louis XIV. Louis’ greatest achievement might be thought to be that the people of France accepted absolute monarchy.

Rigaud’s coronation portrait of 1701 is truly iconic and most often reproduced to illustrate Absolutism, yet

[87] Wellington, Robert.2015, p53. ibid
[88] Hatton, R. 1972.p72.
[89] A. J. P. Taylor. *Essays in English History*. 1976, p15.

as Burchard argues, the work is largely ignored as a masterpiece of French art. Appreciated in its own time, the monthly published periodical, *Le Mecure de France*, said "never has a portrait been as accomplished, or as convincing." [90] Engravings of the painting were reproduced all over Europe influencing the pose of kings, princes, and aristocrats.

Of the many portraits of Louis XIV, Rigaud's 'state portrait.' in most respects, a dignified, late Renaissance portrait. Although Wellington[91] calls Rigaud's work a "Baroque confection of billowing textiles…" It can also be argued that this work of 1701 represents evidence of a change in culture. If we ignore the column's sculpture of Justice, there are no allegorical attributes, suggesting that the royal culture is moving towards a demystification of image bearing in mind that the work is near the end of Louis' reign. We are also reminded, near the end of his life, of Louis' regret for the wars he inflicted on France.

The work has none of the allegorical flights of fantasy with winged cherubs flying about, which we see in the Baroque classicist, Le Brun. Allegorical statements about enemies trampled underfoot are made in state sculpture.

[90] Burchard, Wolf. 2015, *Blinded by the Sun: The Age of Louis XIV*. Review in Apollo Magazine. 24 March.
[91] Wellington, Robert. 2015, p176. ibid

Chapter Two


32.Louis XIV's globe with fleur-de-lys and royal crown. Detail from Porte Saint-Denis triumphal arch, 1672. Paris.

The Sun King, Propaganda and Glory.

Introduction

Chapter two looks at how Louis XIV aligned himself with the historic Macedonian hero, winner of battles, Alexander the Great. The version used of Alexander was a highly selective account of the past, one that suited the French. The first in a series and a key work in this fabrication was Alexander's fictive treatment of the conquered in Charles Le Brun's painting of the *Queens of Persia at the Feet of Alexander*, a story well known to the elite and the king's court. The next part of chapter two looks at how Louis used the conquered French 'possessions', be they non-Catholic or non-white, to demonstrate the supremacy of his reign. The subjugation of 'Turks' (as all people of colour were called) in portraiture and sculpture, was a proud boast.

Painting History.

Portrait artists of the past might have had to work from memory or verbal descriptions, death masks or medals, frescoes or murals, or children who would not keep still, problems identified by Lorne Campbell.[92] How artist were to portray Biblical figures or of figures from history such as Alexander the Great was another problem. Due to the snobbery of the seventeenth century, the painter of historical scenes, "was supposed to disguise, with a certain grace and beauty, certain things that were part of the story."[93] Regarding colour, light, proportion, etc, the art critics of the period believed that the artist should

[92] Campbell, Lorne. 2008. *Renaissance Faces: Van Eyck to Titian*. p34-40. National Gallery Company. London.
[93] Weyl, Martin. 1989. *Passion for Reason and Reason for Passion.Seventeenth Century Art and Theory in France, 1648-1683.* p184. Peter Lang Publishing Inc.New York.

distinguish between, for example, the rustic and the noble. Clearly a farmer would have a vulgar outline! Henri Testelin identified four such proportions, the rustic/vulgar, pastoral, noble, and majestic. These ideas stemmed from a belief that in art and literature the Classical world, had produced perfection.

In 1641 Poussin brought to Paris, from Rome, several base-relief plaster casts of Trajan's column, an excellent example both of art and war portrayed as a continuous narrative document in a freeze. Poussin proposed to decorate the walls of the Grande Galerie in the Louvre with seventy of these plaster casts plus other ancient works portraying Hercules' labours. (Hercules was significant because the Bourbons had claimed descent from him). In 1666 "Louis XIV had the entire monument [the column] once again encased by scaffolding in order to produce new casts for the Académie," Wolf Burchard tells us.[94]

Why the French thought the Classical so important is not answered simply. Anthony Blunt[95] struggled to define Classicism but cautiously proposed that in architecture the forms were clear and simple with preferences for the square and circle. In sculpture the style of figures and drapery imitated that of the Roman style. In painting the preference was for symmetry and clarity; compositions which were static, not full of movement, and the lighting should be daylight, rather than chiaroscuro.

From the classical came the idea of arcadia. The inscription *Et in Arcadia Ego*, on the tomb in Poussin's painting, is discussed by Erwin Panofsky. Panofsky pointed out that Pan's domain of Arcadia, rather than being an ideal place of the imagination, was a hard rocky ground scarcely able to feed goats. Death, also was here. The version of Arcadia as 'a land overflowing with milk and honey (a Utopia), according to Panofsky, was created by Virgil. The idea disappeared only to reappear much later in the Renaissance and then in Poussin's second version of *Et in Arcadia Ego* (Louvre, Paris) the Arcadians are thus "…immersed in mellow meditation on a beautiful past."[96] The motivation for the Classical was, in part, one of nostalgia.

Art in the Service of Propaganda.

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[94] Burchard, Wolf. 2016. *The Sovereign Artist, Charles Le Brun and the Image of Louis XIV*. p134. Paul Holbereton Publishing.
[95] Blunt, Anthony. 1980. *Art and Architecture in France 1500-1700.* p11-12. Pelican.1953, revised 1980.
[96] Panofsky, Erwin. 1970. *Meaning in the Visual Arts*. p359. Peregrine.

Propaganda was initially the promotion of religion but for Louis XIV it meant promoting himself as comparable with a selective account of the ancient hero Alexander the Great. At Louis birth he was declare the new Alexander. Of all the heroes from literature and history- Charlemagne, Clovis, Augustus, or Hercules- it was Alexander who, in the early part of Louis's reign, best fitted the king's propaganda. As a model for leadership, Alexander was not only a conqueror but also offered a model of elaborate ceremonials such as those based on Persian and Egyptian courts, like the reverential bowing down of proskynesis. More importantly, Alexander was a model of invincibility. His attacking the Persians drew a parallel with Louis XIV's war against Islam.

The history of Alexander was well known to the French and Europeans at the time. In 1656 Francesco Cavalli's opera about Alexander's second wife Stateira (also Statira) *Statira Princess of Persia*, premiered in Venice. Peter Burke tells us that Racine told the king that history was full of young conquerors; perhaps Racine hoped that Louis would seek peaceful exploits. Racine achieved fame in 1665 with his play about Alexander which dealt with the hero's love for the Indian princess Cleofile: "Racine's tragedy *Alexander le Grand*, the literary equivalent of Le Brun's cycle of paintings, was dedicated to the king on its publication in 1666." [97]

The Queens of Persia at the Feet of Alexander the Great, by Charles Le Brun.

1661 was the year in which Louis XIV took sole charge of his kingdom, abolished the post of prime minister, and assumed control of the treasury. He summoned Le Brun to the Chateau de Fontainebleau where it was decided that the painter's subject was to be the *Queens of Persia at the Feet of Alexander*. The painting (fig 33) is an oil on canvas measuring 298 x 453 cm, painted in 1661 or possibly 1662. It is sometimes given the title of The Tent of Darius. The painting is in the Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon.

[97] Burke, Peter. 1992. *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*. p28. New Haven & London., Yale University Press



33.*The Queens of Persia before the Feet of Alexander*. c.1660. by Charles Le Brun. Oil on Canvas, 298 x 453 cm. Versailles.

On the left of the composition are two standing figures, the Macedonian conquerors Alexander the Great and his friend Hephaestion (sometimes written Ephestion). To the right of the two victors and facing them is a crowd of the captured Persian queens, princesses, courtiers, servants, priests, and slaves, who take about two thirds of the picture space. The scene takes place outdoor but under an open awning. The action of the battle has already taken place. Darius, the Persian king has been defeated and has fled the battlefield.

Darius's mother, dowager Queen Sisygambis, has mistakenly addressed Hephaestion for Alexander and throws herself at the feet of Alexander begging his forgiveness. Alexander reassures the queen that she has made an understandable error because his loyal friend also has the qualities of an Alexander. A eunuch in the crowd seems to have identified the true Alexander. Alexander stands with open arms indicating leniency. This is the essence of the painting. For Alexander we are meant to think Louis XIV. The engraved version of the painting has the inscription 'It is for the king to vanquish himself.' The Latin inscription on the tapestry version reads, 'Svi Victoria Indicat Regem' which might be translated as, 'It is for the king to vanquish himself.'

A later painting of 1689 by Pierre Mignard of the same subject was engraved and the print carried two inscriptions. One in Latin (Superatis Hostibus Requium Est Abstinere) It is right to abstain from defeating

the enemy. The inscription in French (La Moderation est vne Second Victory) Moderation is a second victory. Nicos Hadjinicolaou[98]draws our attention to those close to home in France, "…the members of the immediate court environment and those who were directly dependent on the monarch had every reason to remind him that he ought to be magnanimous? When the ruler governs 'by grace of God', it is certain beneficial-for third parties, at any rate- that his attention should constantly be drawn to the example of someone whose magnanimity was among the reasons for his fame."

History from literature and Visual Sources.

Le Brun had studied ancient history and the Classics, and was praised for his fidelity to texts. In cultural preparation for his 1642 visit to Rome with his mentor and friend Poussin, Le Brun studied, "…drawings of medals and anthologies of writing on ancient artistic movements," explains Michel Gareau.[99] Le Brun's sources for the Queens of Persia were the ancient Greek historians, Quintus Curtis, Diodorus Siculus, and Arrian of Nicomedia. The battle tactics were described by Plutarch in The Life of Alexander the Great. Darius III, king of Persia was defeated at the Battle of Issus in 333 BCE. Darius brought his family with him on campaigns fearing that leaving them at home they may have been taken as hostages by those opposing his rule, however, according to various histories, says Pavivash Jamzadeh (2012,7), the cumbersome baggage train of family and over three hundred concubines always accompanied Darius to the battlefield[100]. Darius had fled the battlefield and had previously committed atrocities on Alexander's captured and wounded soldiers, so that Darius's mother, his wife and her two daughters had every reason to fear Alexander. The 'hero' Alexander was not without blame. The depredations of the Macedonian king were identified in 1629 in Nicolas de Soulfour's *L'Alexandre franncois* who wrote of the king being stained with the blood of people who had surrendered.

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[98]Hadjinicolaou, Nicos. 1998.*The Disputes about Alexander and his Glorification in the Visual Arts*. p4. Catalogue of the Exhibition Alexander the Great in European Art.p2. 22 sept 1997-11 Jan 1998.
http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr

[99] Gareau, Michel. 1992. *Charles Le Brun, First Painter to King Louis XIV*. p13. Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers. New York.

[100] Jamzadeh, Pavivash. 2012. The Plight of the Achaemenid Royal Women. Alexander histories and Iranian Reflections. Studies in Persian Cultural History. Vol, 3. Published by Brill.
https:///doi.org/10.163//9789004217522_003

Louis's propaganda proclaimed that like Alexander, Louis could show clemency and restraint when he conquered. Hadjinicolaou having examined the representations of Alexander in the arts states, "…the dark side of Alexander does not seem to have made much impression on the visual arts."[101] The people of Tyre had resisted Alexander for months but when they were finally defeated his troops tortured and slaughtered the population and some 30,000 were sold into slavery. The idea of clemency may have only applied selectively to the royal courts and families, not to the respective armies. Talking of Alexander's spoils of war, Plutarch said that he "… treated these illustrious prisoners according to their virtue and character."[102] It is known that Darius in seeking the release of his family, as a peace offering, was prepared to give his daughters in marriage to Alexander. A not unfamiliar practice in the Seventeenth Century.



34.The Women of Darius's Family before Alexander the Great. C1517 by Giovanni Antonio Bazzi. Fresco 370 x 660 cm. In the Alexander Room of the Villa Farnesina.

A not often mentioned possible source for Le Brun's painting is the c1517 mural (fig 34) by Giovanni Antonio Bazzi (also known as Sodoma) of, *The Women of Darius' Family before Alexander the Great,* in the Villa Farnesina, Rome. Although it has the basic elements- the tent, the two victors, the prostrate queen, and the family- it is a far less dramatic work than Le Brun's. The mural also lacks Le Brun's ethnic range of characters. Gareau[103], Le Brun's biographer, placed the artist in Rome from 1619 to 1622, where with the

[101] Hadjinicolaou, N. 1994. p4. Ibid.
[102][102] Dimock, Wai, Chee. 2008. *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time*. p94. Princeton University Press.
[103] Gareau, Michel. 1992. Ibid.

permission of the Pope, Le Brun studied the art and monuments, returning to France with nearly 500 details in sketchbooks. It seems most likely that Le Brun saw the Bazzi fresco.



35.*The Reception of the Envoys from Carthage*. Tapestry. 458.5 x 732.8cm. Dermoyen workshop. 1530s-1555? San Simeon, California, Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument.

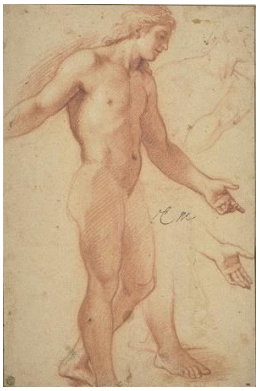
Bremer-David[104] draws our attention to another source, the open armed gesture of Scipio in a Renaissance tapestry (fig 35). This faded work was later copied in reverse at the Gobelin factory. Le Brun would have taken inspiration from Scipio's magnanimous gesture. The Roman general stands while before him defeated Carthaginians on bended knee beg for peace, an event recorded in Livy's history. The event and gesture had parallels which would have appealed to Louis and Le Brun.

Alexander and Hephaestion

The art critic Andre Felibien (1619-1695) became historiographer of Louis XIV in 1666. When Felibien died he left a large body of writing most of which was on the arts. Before his royal post, Felibien in 1663 published an officially sanctioned text explaining *Reines de Perse aux pieds d'Alexandre*, to the public, some of whom already knew the work by reputation. The painting, it was claimed provided a shared experience, "…a painting about passions becomes a passionate aesthetic experience for king and subjects alike" theorized Chloe Hogg.[105] Felibien saw his role as educating the French public in how to read the painting and most importantly, addressing the story of the misrecognition of the king. Felibien's text enabled the spectator to recognise Alexander by examining details of gesture, clothing, and ornament.

[104] Bremer-David, C. 2015. *Woven Gold, Tapestries of Louis XIV*. J. Paul Getty Museum. Los Angeles.
[105] Hogg, Chloe. 2014. *Subject of Passions: Charles Le Brun and the Emotions of Absolutism*. Philological Quarterly. Jan 1. pp 65-98.

Alexander wears a silver cuirass while his friend wears a baser metal of black with gold decoration. Alexander wears a royal purple cloak, Hephaestion wears a red cloak which is fastened with a cameo depicting Alexander, whereas Alexander's cloak is fastened with a diamond clasp. Le Brun portrays clemency in Alexander's tilt of the head and the gesture of the open hand. Alexander bows (fig 36) but cannot lean forward more because of the wound in his hip which he sustained in the recent battle.



36. Le Brun's *Male Nude study for Alexander's pose*. 1661. Red chalk on beige paper, 43.3 x 28.8 cm. Louvre Museum.

Alexander's friendship is indicated by his extended arm towards Hephaestion who displays compassion in a tranquil countenance and open hand of peace. Hephaestion may be looking deferentially towards Alexander or looking at the captives. In a preliminary sketch (fig 37) Le Brun has Hephaestion looking towards Alexander.



37.*The Tent of Darius*. By Charles Le Brun, c1660. Indian ink and bistre on paper. V & A Collection.

Hephaestion's pose displays civility by resting one leg behind the other, as interpreted by Felibien. Felibien required that the artist paint the hero beautifully, present him with beauty and grace, and in the body

should be seen the quality of Majesty and the movement of the body should be 'agreeable' [106]. The hero, Martin Weyl explains, would neither have "…extreme passions' nor was he to be extravagant in his movement…" which corresponds to how Le Brun portrays Alexander. There are unanswered questions concerning the misidentification of the king. Louis had made a point of being in sole charge of the 'ship of state,' so we might ask, who does Hephaestion represent? Is it Philippe, Duc d' Orleans, the king's younger brother? Philippe who was known to have had a passion for the Chevalier de Lorraine, a taste, so Philippe Erlander informs us, at the time was referred to cryptically as *Italian.*[107] Lempriere's Classical Dictionary describes Hephaestion as, "A Macedonian, famous for his intimacy with Alexander the Great."[108] There is no evidence that the two had a same sex relationship apart from the Cynics who, long after the king's death, said that Alexander was only defeated once and that was by Hephaestion's thighs.

Philippe had proved himself a good soldier on the battlefield. By contrast, Darius had been told by his foremost commander that his battleplan would fail, at which point Darius had his general executed. Is Hephaestion there to demonstrate the contrasting paired comparison?

We do not know who modelled for the figure of Alexander. It might be thought that the young king would be an appropriate model. But portraits, by Pierre Mignard (fig 38) of Louis aged about twenty-two, and Jean Nocret's portrait (fig 39) of Louis aged seventeen only shows slight similarities to Alexander.

[106] Weyl, Martin.1989. *Passion for Reason and Reason for Passion, Seventeenth Century Art and Theory in France, 1648-1683*. Peter Lang Publishing, Inc. New York. pp197-203.
[107] Erlander, Philippe. 1967. *The Age of Courts and kings, Manners, and Morals, 1558-1715*. Weidenfeld and Nicholson. London. p211.
[108] Lempriere. J. 1984. *Lempriere's Classical Dictionary*. Bracken Books. London. p300.


38.*Louis XIV* represented circa 1660. After Pierre Mignard. Versailles, Palaces of Versailles, and Trianon.


39.*Louis as a Young Man*. By Jean Nocret. 1655. Oil on canvas. 108.5 x 89 cm. Museo Del Prado.

Gareau believes that for Alexander's portrait Le Brun first used the head of Minerva from a medal but later made a drawing (fig 40) from a sculpture of the Greek which had been brought from Alexandria to Versailles.[109]


40.*Head of Alexander*, by Le Brun. Pastel on beige paper. 409 x 274 cm. Cabinet des dessins, Louvre.

The Crowd

The two victors display calm, tranquillity and passions restrained, in contrast to the crowd who illustrate movement and wonder, astonishment, fear, and sadness. The crowd display various postures, gestures, and expressions of emotions. Depending on the age, status, and mental capacity of the eighteen figures in

[109] Gareau, Michel. 1992. Ibid.

the composition they all react differently, and Le Brun gives each a special gesture and expression, according to his theory which will be discussed below. The entourage of Darius's court are arranged in strict hierarchical order from queens all the way back to slaves. This is also evident in their clothes, from Alexander wearing a royal purple cloak to, on the far right, a distraught slave with head pressed to the ground who wears a garish red shirt. This coincidentally balances compositionally with Hephaestion's vermillion red cloak. The prostrate Queen Sisygambis, showing submission, wears a gold robe.

The mother (a renowned beauty) is the wife of Darius with her son Oechus. She is Queen Stateira dressed in a blue gown who looks up pleadingly. Her grief will induce compassion in the victor. The kneeling figure in white holding her blue gown to her eyes is princess Stateira II. Le Brun has here reused a figure, almost identical to a figure from a 1660 painting of The Penitent Mary Magdalen. The process of mix and match, borrowing from other works was not uncommon, especially when a successful artist's time was in high demand. Stateira II smothers her tears and, it was claimed, her emotional state has caused her neck and throat to swell, while the blush of red on her cheeks indicates her modesty. Behind Stateira II is the second daughter Drypetis, wearing a pale blue, V-neck, gold collar. She looks forward anxiously, her fingers outstretched as though she is not sure what to grasp. Her hands uncertain and eyebrows express fear. Norman Bryson elaborates; "one knee is on the ground (placation), while the other is raised (uncertainty); and in the clothes, an obvious disorder indicates to Felibien that' she is not acquainted with this sort of duty, and her imagination is so disturbed, that although she would perform punctually what her governess directs her, she knows not even what she does.'"[110] Felibien's, reading of one painted figure was a truly impressive. The Queen and her son and two daughters are incongruously modelled on white skinned Europeans playing the parts as Persians. This must have been a conscious choice for Le Brun because he recognised other ethnicities.

[110] Bryson, Norman. 1981. *Word and Image. French Painting of the Ancien Regime*. Cambridge university Press.p54.

Behind Drypetis is a figure in green with a white turban. This is most likely the daughter's governess or attendant, and her pose is protective, not touching Drypetis as she looks at the girl. Behind the attendant is a kneeling woman dressed in a pale green gold collared dress with a red cloak. She wears a blue head band and stares towards the victors. Her eyebrow is furrowed, her mouth open and her hands clasped tightly in fear. Standing behind her is a woman with a white head band, her shoulder partly covered by the green awning. Her mouth is open as are both her open hands suggesting wonder. Felibien identifies the woman with a white face who wears a light gold headwrap as a Greek. Her mouth slightly open, almost smiling, she leans forward towards her captors whom she recognises as fellow Greeks. Her hand rests on the slave next to her, as if to say, be quiet and listen to Alexander.

The bald slave next to her has turned his head towards the woman to ask what the king is saying. Felibien describes the slave as Barbarian, being vile and base, and in fear of everything. However, as Wolf Burchard points out the Barbarians also represent various ethnicities which Alexander/Louis theoretically welcomed into their kingdoms.[111] This propaganda must be qualified when one examines the plight of slaves in Louis' France.

At the back of the crowd stands a figure with raised head for a better view. Identified as Egyptian by the sash, white head dress and dark skin. This figure may be a priest whose mouth is slightly open which might be interpreted as wonder but, since the figure does not yet know its fate, the expression may be, what Hogg identifies as inquiry. She, or he, is uncomprehending and does not understand what Alexander is saying. The problem with illustrating anger or fright, as with other emotions, is that they are interchangeable if they lack context. The standing, half naked figure with outstretched arm behind the princesses is a high courtier eunuch who, in Persian custom, has torn his clothes as a sign of great distress. Le Brun made separate pastel studies (fig 41) of some of these heads.

[111] Burchard, Wolf. 2016. *The Sovereign Artist, Charles Le Brun and the Image of Louis XIV*. Paul Holberton Publishing. p225.



41. *Head in Profile*. by Le Brun. Pastel 353 x 266mm. Stadel Museum. Germany.

To fail to 'read' these figures is to miss the point of Le Brun's painting. However, there is one unexplained figure, the seated three-quarter back view figure to the left of Hephaestion. This figure was left out of the tapestry version. I am so far unable to identify the figure.

The Composition

Polite, tranquil, peaceful court behaviour was to be matched in painted scenes of a hero. Similarly, a congregation of figures should display polite behaviour although quite how this was to work in a battle scene went unexplained. Essentially there was the painted world and there was reality. Unpleasant subject matter was simply ignored. The painting of historical events could show conquest and death, but the spectator did not wish to see gore and guts. As discussed previously this was the problem with bienséance, art should not upset the public.

The painting of the Queens resembles a stage set where everyone has a tale to tell, and one could imagine a group of Madame Tussauds figures on a set. It has the feel of a tableau with a shallow depth, and we are reminded of the formal, dignified arrangement of figures in a similar shallow space (fig 42) in Andrea Mantegna's *Arrival of Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga*.


42.*The Arrival of Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga*, (1456-74) by Andrea Mantegna. Mantua.

Burchard compares the scene in the Queen's to a theatrical drama arguing that the concept of unity of time, place, and action itself derived from contemporary drama. [112] Jennifer Montagu accurately describes the colour palette as "cold and sombre" and the composition as "severe orderliness…with almost excessive classicism the unites of time, space and action." [113]

For Andre Felibien (1619-1695), the painting, a tableau of figures was 'an infinity of beautiful expressions.' Joshua Reynolds thought Felibien wrong in claiming that the light fell on Alexander. The strongest light fell on the centre of the painting the cold blue of a dress, and due to decorum, Alexander could not be in the centre of the composition.

The Battle of Styles

Montagu's comments about the cold colour and formal design highlights Le Brun's deliberate choice of style prior to a conflict of theoretical approaches to art known as the battle of styles, the Querelle du Coloris, (1671-72) the quarrel of colour.This was most likely sparked by Roger de Piles criticising Raphael but praising Titian. It was, in line with the snobbery of the time, partly an attempt to establish painting as an elevated artform, but it also "…marks a deep crisis in the practice of history painting."[114] One group supported the colourful sensuality of Rubens who represented pleasure, while others followed the classical compositions of Poussin who represented the idea of design (dessein) and delectation. Discussions

[112] Burchard, Wolf. 2016. p101. Ibid.
[113] Montagu, Jennifer.1994. *The Expression of the Passions. The Origin and influence of Charles Le Brun's Conference Sur L'expression generale et Particuliere.* p42. PhD thesis. Yale University Press, New Haven & London.
[114] Allen, Christopher. 2003. *French Painting in the Golden Age*. Thames & Hudson Ltd. p160.

between Poussinistes on drawing versus Rubenistes on colour, were always polite gentlemanly affairs. It was one thing for art critics to agree that art should please, it was quite another to say how they should go about it.

Colour, it was argued by Le Brun, was dependent on light and was no more than an accident. Colour also had implications of manual labour, the production of paint and dyes. Le Brun referred to colour as having a symbolic function, although he was not too consistent in this. Dessein, on the other hand, spoke of the mind, the intellectual and imagination which the pencil makes visible.[115] Those who favoured Poussin seemed wedded to the past and classical ideas, those who admired Rubens favoured the Baroque and large-scale works, which may or may not be thought, decorative. Le Brun seems to have found a middle path. A useful comparison can be found in Poussin's painting (fig 43) The Death of Germanicus 1627-28 (Minneapolis Institute of Arts) and Le Brun's, Queens of Persia, 1660-61 (Chateaux de Versailles). Both have a close compact well-ordered group of highly posed Classical figures in a relatively shallow picture space, but their sizes are telling. The Poussin is 148 x 198 cm, the Le Brun figures are life size in a work measuring 298 x 453 cm.



43.*Death of Germanicus*, 1627-28. by Nicolas Poussin.

Part of the theoretical hierarchical debate about design over colour was about the social status of the painter. Was painting a craft like any other 'mechanical' activity such as pottery or weaving? Did history painting concern the mind as opposed to just the hand? The so-called mechanical arts did not struggle to

[115] Burchard, Wolf. 2016. p85-90. Ibid.

define themselves, some people made ceramics, some made cabinets, some made tapestries. Craftspeople were not allowed to produce paintings but apart from that the mechanical arts were not concerned if they were a noble or servile activity. Le Brun, regardless of his position in the debate had a vision for Versailles as a complete work of art which saw him designing doorknobs to the tiles for the baths. Burchard elaborates; "one can assume that neither the king nor his entourage cared much about the theoretical value of painting. They certainly valued the mechanical arts as part of architecture, pomp, and spectacle, which were part of the overall portrayal of the king…" [116]

To the ideas of pleasure or delectation was added the indefinable notion of reason which then meant a faculty of moderation and avoidance of excess, not only in behaviour but also in art. As Weyl informs us, there is an almost complete lack of signatures on artworks.[117] Collectors and the public showed no interest in sketches or maquettes, only the finished work. Weyl explains; "delectation at the period did not imply a detached pursuit of pleasure for its own sake. Rather it was a moral obligation that contained hedonism in its true sense, the ethical doctrine that only that which is pleasant is intrinsically good."[118] At the academy artists gathered in front of works attempting to analyse the art in a detached critical way. A first for art criticism. To begin, the principals were explained then the work was analysed to see if it matched. Discussions centred around whether a work corresponded to vraisemblance (verisimilitude). If it did it was judged beautiful. Unfortunately, as Weyl points out, few academicians had the intellectual rigour for such an exercise, they did not realise their 'intellectual shortcomings.' At the time the writer Samuel de Sobiere mocked art experts who had a style of art-talk with a "jargon that fill a fat dictionary," reports Donald Posner.[119]

According to Charles Perrault, the king was 'extremely pleased' at seeing the artist paint the Queens of Persia, and Claude Nivelon concluded that Louis' passions accounted for the fact that the artist was then

[116] Burchard, Wolf. 2016. p109. ibid
[117] Weyl, Martin. 1989. p162. Ibid.
[118] Weyl, Martin. 1989.p156. ibid.
[119] Posner, Donald. 1993. *Concerning the 'Mechanical' Parts of Painting and Artistic Culture of Seventeenth-Century France*. p 587. The Art Bulletin. Dec 1993. Vol LXXV. No 4.

able to paint passions. Thus, in the propaganda of the court, everything must seem to stem from the king! The king wished to watch Le Brun in the act of painting, and, having done so wished to return the next day to watch more. “It is difficult to conceive this prince’s satisfaction in seeing such skilled and swift hand paint the passions of the soul and trace the most noble traits of beauty in the representation of these princesses, who go down in history as very beautiful” reported Nivelon.[120] Madame Elizabeth-Charlotte, Duchesse D’ Orleans, says in her secret memoirs, Louis, like his son, could scarcely read or write being so ignorant. This is supported by Weyl who says, “At the beginning of the century the nobles still flaunted their ignorance as a sort of element of honour.”[121] This corresponds with the claims that Richelieu kept the young Louis in ignorance to maintain power over him. His successor Mazarin probably did the same. Weyl explains that it was not until the middle of the century that mistrust in books lessened and a good gentleman was expected to possess a library although education was superficial and based on conversations and lectures. It is therefore difficult to believe that the king would realise the implications of his choice. Did Le Brun suggest the subject and by implication was he hinting that the king display military restraint, to show self-control in imperial ambition? Whoever decided on the subject it was Louis who was paying. Le Brun liked to see his relationship with the king in the same light as the legendary Greek court painter Apelles had been to Alexander the Great. Le Brun’s painting of the Queens of Persia was meant to illustrate the exemplum of self-control and was the foundation of Le Brun’s career in the king’s service to be followed by a series of monumental, if bloodless battles scenes, also depicting Alexander the hero.

Le Brun’s theory and the Academy

For many artists, Le Brun was a modest friend. To work as an artist/craft person in Paris, the individual had to belong to the guild, the Maitrise [Masters]. To enter the guild a candidate had to present a masterpiece, voted on by highly conservative guild judges. Non guild members who contravened their rules were sanctioned with punishments, fines, or seizure of work. There were two exceptions, and both applied to Le

[120] Nivelon translated in Hogg, Chloe, 2014. Ibid.
[121] Weyl, Martin. 1989. p20. Ibid.

Brun, working for the king, or inheriting membership of the guild. Le Brun's father, a sculptor, was a guild member. Le Brun saw the guild's power as restrictive and, on behalf of other painters, set about, with Louis's approval, to create the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture. The academy was summed up by Anthony Blunt as "reason, rules, and the best masters" which proposed that painting was an intellectual activity of the mind and consequently 'design' was superior to the ephemeral experience of 'colour,'[122]

Tilghman has sympathy for the position French art found itself in in the seventeenth century which had only known a long period of Gothic art.[123] The Italian Renaissance had mostly passed France by. Painting in France was largely controlled by the deadening effects of, essentially, mediaeval guilds. France needed a national painting style. Painters like Le Brun visited Rome and returned with ideas about Classicism which seemed to provide the answer. Inspired by Le Brun, Louis XIV's centralizing government created in 1648 the Academy of Painting and Sculpture which had the task of producing a national art in the service of the king and his glory. The Academy, as Tilghman says, quickly realised it had nothing to teach and needed an art curriculum. Copying a Raphael or an antique statue might be sterile, but as Tilghman[124] suggests, they had to start with something.

The search for, and the belief in the idea that art could be reduced to a set of rules which could be learnt- a science of beauty- goes back to the Renaissance if not before. In seventeenth century, France, the one genre to which rules did apply was history painting. The key rule in history painting was that of Time, Place, and Action. Weyl notes that in a discussion about Titian's painting of St Catherine it was pointed out that the rule of time had been broken because St Catherine could not have been in conversation three hundred years earlier with Christ. However, this objection was overcome by saying that such a meeting could have taken place through, the somewhat convenient device of the miracle. As Weyl points out, by accepting the impossible as probable, they opened the door to allegorical interpretations.[125]

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[122] Blunt, Anthony.1980. *Art and Architecture in France 1500-1700.* p345. Pelican 1953-1980.
[123] Tilghman, B, R. 1992. *Charles Le Brun: theory, Philosophy and Irony*. British Journal of Aesthetics. Vol,32. No, 2.
[124] Tilghman, B, R. 1992.p125. ibid
[125] Weyl, Martin. 1989.p186. ibid

Bienséance

There was also the rule of propriety- les Bienséance. Bienséance was different from the Renaissance concept of decorum within the elite. Bienséance was aimed at the whole of honnete society (186) and, as Weyl argues, resulted in an artificiality, "solemnity and frozen quality of the art of the period…"[126] This seems a reasonable description of the Queens of Persia. Bienséance was important to the people of the time and concerns two aspects. The internal one which was about the object and its own nature, the habits, and actions of a person, thus kings behaved like kings, women like ladies, and so on. External ones were more about the person's taste, and the opinion of society. In a painting of an historical action, in the artist's judgement (bienséance external), he might leave out that which he thought might upset the public. In the many battle scenes, (Le Brun's Crossing of the Granicus 1661-65, Battle of Arbela 1669, Alexander and Porus,1673) there is a lot of death but no blood and gore. History was modified. In honnete society, pleasing the public came before verisimilitude. Weyl explains, bienséance applied to all behaviour in painting, "It enabled the painter to be unfaithful to the human types found in history, as well as to the imitation of nature and the imitation of the antique with its psychological types which were regarded as universal. The bienséance's thus formed a serious threat to the principals of imitation of nature, or even to the theories of expression since it justified all aesthetic relativisms." [127] Le Brun was certainly 'unfaithful' to the cruelty of the historical Alexander.

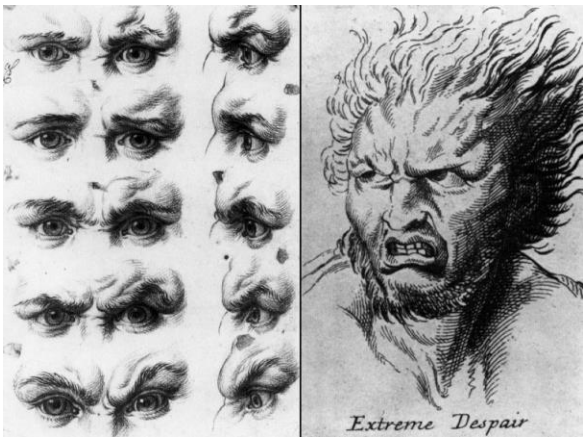
Colbert insisted on monthly lectures at the Academy which were the motivation for Le Brun's attempt at defining art. Le Brun's lecture, (Conference sur l'expression generale et particuliere) *Concerning Expression in General and in Particular*, excerpts of which were translate by H Jouin, and published in Amsterdam in 1698.[128] Le Brun's lecture, -printed after his death which went to sixty editions- was delivered to the

[126] Weyl, p194. ibid.
[127] Weyl, Martin. 1989.p193. ibid.
[128] Holt, Elizabeth, G. Editor. 1958. *A Documentary History of Art.Vol.2. Michelangelo and The Mannerists: Baroque & the Eighteenth Century.* A Doubleday Anchor Book. p 162.

Academie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture in 1668. Le Brun included illustrations of faces, and these were thankfully preserved by Louis XIV's minister Louvois following the artist's death.

Le Brun's Theory

In Le Brun's lecture he explained expression as, "a naïve and natural resemblance of the things which are to be represented." Expression, or truth to nature is "present in colour as well as drawing…" moreover it "shows the emotion of the soul and makes visible the effects of passion."[129] This passion, Le Brun believed 'evokes action in the body.' He then tediously described his version of the physiology. The action follows from the brain to muscle to blood, resulting in the 'exterior' movement of the body. 'Admiration' causes the body surprise coming across something 'rare and extraordinary' causing no spirits to pass into the muscles resulting in the body to become 'motionless as a statue.' This admiration being the 'first and mildest' passion, caused the 'least disturbance to the heart.' Changes in the face are described.



44. *Eye Movements*, by Le Brun. Black chalk, black and brown ink. Cabinet des dessins, Louvre.

The 'raising of the eyebrows' being the same on both sides (fig 44). The eye, 'may be a little more open than usual, the pupil centred between the lids and motionless, fixed on the object which will cause admiration.' One can imagine students taking notes. 'The mouth will be partly open but will show no more expression of suspense that the other part of the face.' Thus, it was that the soul has time to ponder the object.

[129] Holt, Elizabeth. 1958. p161. ibid

Le Brun's exposition of anger explained that the person will have "red and enflamed eyes, a wandering and sparking pupil," the eyebrows "raised then lowered," a deep creased forehead and more crease "between the eyes," flared nostrils but lips tightly pressed together. The lower lip pushed over the upper lip and the mouth forming a "cruel and disdainful laugh." How the student was supposed to paint a subject grinding their teeth with a mouth full of saliva would be somewhat challenging. Anger apparently had a swollen face, "the veins of his temples and forehead and neck are swollen and protruding, his hair bristling…"[130]

Gesture and its History.

The idea that gestures could be codified was not new. The Roman Emperor's raised right hand in statues indicated an orator. The Byzantine Christian hand gesture of benediction was just as obvious. Then, in what seemed naturalism, Giotto's use of the body to illustrate the vices, as Bernard Berenson notes, inconstancy is a woman with a blank face, injustice is a strong man 'clenching the hilt of his sword.'[131] Moshe Barasch believed he could identify nine separate hand gestures, including 'awe' and 'expulsion', used in Giotto's paintings.[132] Most body movements/ postures could give the viewer much information, except perhaps the figure of Christ which was almost formulaic, and the figure of the Virgin equally traditional apart from variations in skin colour. Both Alberti and Leonardo hinted that gesture could give indications of the subject's mental and spiritual state, both had strayed into the unfortunate territory of physiognomy.

The hands were the most obvious objects to focus on for the artist and in terms of person-to-person communication we only have to think of sign languages used across world cultures. Baxandall (1972) found two sources in fifteenth century paintings for codified hand gesture, priests gesticulating as they preached to their flock, and Benedictine monks, who, being a silent order, spoke to each other with gestures. The argument being that the congregation or the viewer of art would know this language. Baxandall uses the convincing example of Masaccio's The Expulsion from Paradise (c 1427). Eve holds her hand across her

[130] Holt, Elizabeth. 1958.p163. ibid.
[131] Berenson, Bernard. 1958. *Italian Painters of the Renaissance*. p72. Meridian Books.
[132] Barasch, Moshe. 1987.*Giotto and the Language of Gesture*. Cambridge Studies in the history of Art.

heart in 'grief' while Adam's figures cover his eyes in 'sham.'[133] And just to underline the point, an angel overhead, behind the pair, points the way out of a door.

Not all were so straight forward to read. Artistic interpretation left room for manoeuvre. In Carpaccio's painting The Dead Christ with St. Jerome and Job, (c1490) St. Jerome rests his head on his hand in a posture which suggests meditation or melancholia. Then as now, perhaps we need someone to interpret for us. The pious gesture of holding the hands up with palms outward would then be seen as devotion, now as surrender. It is difficult to think our way back into the past and we may need an expert to guide us. Baxandall uses Botticelli's secular painting Primavera as an example. Venus's right hand is extended in a profane gesture not dissimilar to benediction, but this is an invitation into her kingdom, "We miss the point of the picture if we mistake the gesture" explains Baxandall.[134]

Since art is about communication it follows that the spectator *should* be able to 'read' the emotions expressed. Le Brun's semi-scientific attempt to understand the principals of nature, what cause the muscles to produce a smile etc, and then to improve on nature and codify the results were admirable, even if the results are formulaic and a failure. As Montagu pointed out, the still, frozen painted face provides little evidence of emotion because such emotions are the result of movement and context.[135] If it is argued that there are thought to be some basic expression; Happiness, Surprise, Fear, Sadness, Anger, Disgust, there remains the problem of determining if anger is not in fact annoyance, and so forth. To this is the layer of art theory and its interpretation. In the age of the 'gentleman' there were the conventions of what was permissible to show, the representation of nature, not as it is, but ideally as it ought to be. Snobbery pervaded battle scenes where the violent expressions of an ordinary soldier might be different to those of an officer.

[133] Baxandall, Michael. 1972. *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*. Oxford University Press.p56-70
[134] Baxandall, p70. ibid.
[135] Montagu, Jennifer. 1994. ibid

By the 1680's French artists and writers were finding Le Brun's prescriptive theories somewhat sterile. Fontaine said, "the unpardonable error of Le Brun to give recipes for representing at one's pleasure simple love, admiration or faith and to freeze forever what is most mobile and most individual in the human face."[136]

Physiognomics, a discipline supposedly founded by Physonomyas.

Tilghman notes that in the seventeenth century Descartes (Traite sur les passions de l'ame) had theorized the role of the passions which were, "to incite the soul to consent and contribute to the actions that can serve to conserve the body or render it in some way more perfect."[137] Moreover, the principal expressions could be seen in, "actions of the eyes and face, changes in colour, trembling, languor, fainting, laughter, tears, groans, and sighs."[138] In the 1630's Poussin had led the way in "the depiction of emotion by the gestures, pose, and facial expression of his figure…"[139] Le Brun's interpretation of Descartes's ideas was to produce, as Tilghman notes, a "unique collection of eyebrow raisings, lip curls and the like," illustrations, for his students, with faces demonstrating how these emotions might appear.[140] Le Brun elaborated his idea venturing into the pseudo-science of physiognomy which had a long history back to the ancients. In the Renaissance it was thought that the books, Phsiognomica and Secretum Secretorum in which qualities of the soul could be deduced from features of the body, were written by Aristotle. In England in 1597-8 parliament outlawed palmistry, fortune telling and such charlatan practices as physiognomics. Ideas about physiognomics had permeated the Renaissance with the likes of Leon Battista Alberti and Leonardo da Vinci, recommending visiting the 'wretched quarters' to draw the grotesque and deformed heads.[141] Giovanni Battista Della Porta's, (1538-1615) book, De Humana Physiognomia, (1586) translated into Latin, the Della Fisionomia dell'Uomo, then translated in 1665 into French proved very popular in France. It set

[136] Tilghman, B, R. 1992. Footnote p123. ibid
[137] Tilghman, footnote p129. ibid
[138] Tilghman, footnote p130. ibid
[139] *The Oxford Companion to Art*. 1975. p905.
[140] Tilghman. 1992. p130. Ibid.
[141] Campbell, Lorne. *Renaissance Portraits*.1990. Yale University Press. p27.

out to illustrate parallels between human types and animals by drawing Roman busts alongside heads of animals (fig 45). Bryson summed up the logic by the statement that- "All parrots are talkers, all men with noses of a certain shape are like parrots, therefore all such men are talkers."[142] The problem with physiognomics was that the resemblances with animals was also a resemblance with their vices and virtues, the courageous lion, crafty fox, or the stupid cow.



45.*Three Eagle's Heads*. *Three Phsiognomic Heads Based on the Eagle*, by Le Brun. Black ink, grey wash on beige paper 218 x 316mm and 224 x 317mm. The Louvre.

Le Brun abandoned his attempts to place the human face mid-way between the animal and the human realising that not everyone would be able to make such connections as 'he resembles a turtle dove therefore he must be devoted'! What did persist in the mind of artists like Le Brun was the notion that "a person of noble birth looks different from a vulgar one."[143] Le Brun was not alone in believing that the flow of blood in the body resulted in various passions, Mignard, Van Obstal, and de Piles, all had similar theories.

The Engraving

An engraving by Gerard Edelinck (1640-1707) dated to around 1675 shows a reverse image of *The Queens of Persia at the Feet of Alexander* painting. The engraving, with the four battles scenes, became known as the *Cabinet du roi*. Le Brun's assistant Claude Nivelon made a scaled down copy of the painting, then used that to make a tracing which was given to the engraver. Edelinck, Le Brun's favourite engraver, first etched

[142] Bryson. 1981. p44. Ibid.
[143] Weyl, Martin. 1989.p 140. Ibid.

some guidelines, a technique which the engraver had brought with him from the Netherlands. The print was pulled by Jean Goyton. At least 1,850 prints were taken from the plate.

The engraving is proportionally wider and shows more details of trees at the edge of the picture. The engraved print was the only way the image of the Queens could be distributed widely and turned the artwork into a popular masterpiece known throughout Europe. The main techniques used in printing were etching and copperplate engraving which had largely replaced woodcuts. The works produced were to a very high standard due to the imported Flemish crafts people. Le Brun handed over the work of copying his paintings to printmakers who made monumental prints, some, when sheets were combined, measuring five feet by three feet. Such was the skill of these engravers that in time their work was seen to surpass that of the painter. The first set of prints were published in 1666 and depicted The Battle at the Milvian Bridge, and the Triumph of Constantine, both scenes from the life of the first emperor who made Christianity the official religion of the state. A second set of prints based on Le Bruns history paintings of the life of Alexander became known as the Battles and were amongst the best-known art works in Europe at the time. State propaganda, or soft power, took the form of a series of album prints which illustrated festivals and gardens at Versailles and prints of the masterpieces in the royal collection of paintings such as Francois Ragot, after Rubens, Battle of the Amazons, (34”x 46”) 1662. Albums of prints were produced as diplomatic gifts spreading the Sun King’s glory far and wide. Apart from scenes of the pomp and ceremonies of court coronations, funerals, marriages, they also showed the king in battle scenes and as heroic figures from mythology, but they also illustrated the natural world and more mundane household objects such as fabrics and teacups, tea drinking was becoming the fashion.[144] Le Brun oversaw the 950 images in sets of prints published in twenty-three bound volumes and accompanied with explanatory texts. To offset the ruinous cost of this project, single prints were offered to the public and judging by the fact that sales ran into several thousand, the prints were a popular success.

[144] Symcox, G.2015.*A kingdom of Images: French Prints in the Age of louis XIV, 1660-1715*. Getty Publications. Book Review.

The Tapestry

Le Brun designed the tapestry version of the Queens of Persia at the Feet of Alexander, including the border. Henri Testelin made the cartoon for a high loom for use of the weavers. The tapestry was woven in the Gobelin workshop run by Jean Jans the Elder. In both the print and the tapestry, it is easier to see details of the five figures in the background shadows. **T**he seated female figure to the left of Hephaestion has been left out of the composition in the tapestry. This figure is not part of the crowd and commentaries on the painting, print and tapestry seem to have ignored it. Who was this person and what was their role in the story? More research is needed.

The complete set of Alexander's Story consisted of eleven tapestries. The first of the story, The Queens of Persia at the Feet of Alexander was made of wool, silk, gilt metal, and silver-wrapped thread and measured a massive 486 x 691cm. On the top border is a trophy of military weapons displaying a ribbon with Louis XIV motto, NES PLVRIBVS IMPAR (Not unequal to many [tasks]) (106) indicating Louis's ability to attend to various tasks, much as the sun shines on many lands. At the centre of the top border is an elaborate military shield containing a blue globe bearing three fleurs-de-lis. A crowned helmet includes a miniature sun god Apollo mask representing Louis XIV. Beneath the shield hangs the Order of Saint Michael and the Order of the Holy Spirit.

The French crown had amassed a large collection of tapestries, some antique, others purchased and gifts which the crown tried to buy back. In all the crown owned 304 sets, or 2566 individual pieces. To get some idea of what Colbert was prepared to spend on behalf of the king's 'magnificence', in 1662 the duc de Mazarin (1632-1713) purchased the set of tapestries called the Hunts of Maximilian for 83,400 livres. This detailed information is drawn from Bremer-David's book on Louis XIV's tapestries in which she notes, "As a point of reference, thirty livres in 1664 covered the annual cost of food and lodgings for one apprentice at the Royal Tapestry Manufactory at Beauvais."[145]

[145] Bremer-David, Clarissa.2015. p,xi. Ibid.

In 1663, Le Brun became the director of the Gobelins, the crown's manufactory of tapestries, furniture, silver and goldwork, mosaics, marquetry, ceramics, crystal and locks, sumptuous luxuries to satisfy the king's needs. Many artists (which we are now able to identify), including battle, floral, animal, and marine painters and embroiderers, mosaic and lapidary experts worked at the Gobelins. An idea of the product range of this factory (fig 46) can be gleaned from both a painting (by Renard de Saint André after Le Brun) and a tapestry depicting *Louis XIV Visiting the Gobelins*. The king can be seen on the left with a cane and wearing a hat.



46.Drawing by Charles Le Brun for the tapestry. 580 x 928 mm. Black chalk. Drawing made after the king's visit to the Gobelins in 1663. Louvre Museum.

The workshops, sometimes called the Hotel of the Gobelins comprised several buildings on the same site with the appearance of a small village where not only craftsmen lived but also their families and those they employed and some sixty children apprentices. It is known that in 1668 around four hundred people were employed at the Gobelins. Before 1680 workers were paid by the square ell (or aune) but following Colbert's intervention the weavers were paid according to the complexity of the task, 'heads and flesh' being the most skilled. It is interesting to note that among the skilled workers were men like John Vavoq, renown as the best for 'doing heads and flesh.'[146]

Following the Queens of Persia, Le Brun went on to create, over a period of twelve years, more scenes from the life of Alexander which likened Louis to the ancient hero. Bremer-David's study of these works as tapestries were, as she says: "the embodiment of Baroque classicism's grand manner in subject, scale, and materiality." Le Brun had hoped that the four scenes known as The Battles would hang together but they

[146] Bremer-David, C. 2015. p19. Ibid.

were split between Paris and Versailles. The court then decided that Louis should be seen more as the hero of his own history rather than continually referencing Alexander. With each of the four major works were inscriptions reinforcing Louis's propaganda. The Battle of Granicus, *Virtue Surmounts every Obstacle*. The Battle of Arabela, *Virtue is Worthy of the Empire of the World*. The Entry of Alexander into Babylon, *Virtue Pleases, Although Vanquished*. The Wounded Porus before Alexander, *Thus by Virtue Heroes Rise*.

There exists in the Musee Carnavalet, Paris, a portrait of Louis (fig 47) which is of interest because it is clearly a portrait of Louis although dressed as Alexander.


47.*Louis XIV as Alexander the Great* (Louis XIV as a Roman Emperor) Anonymous. 1638, possibly 1650-1699.

Charles Le Brun's painting of 1680/84, *The Franche-Comte Conquered for the Second Time 1674*, is an important step forward because it shows Louis, although clad in ancient armour, bewigged, wearing a gold cloak and helmet, but appearing as himself (fig 48). It is a recognisable portrait of Louis XIV. Importantly, amidst the surrounding chaos, Louis remains calm. His commander's staff planted on the river god, indicated by water spilling from vases, which symbolizes the successful crossing of the river Doubs. Louis' stance is one of clemency which references Alexander's earlier pose.

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48.The original. The Franche-Comte Conquered for the Second Time. by Le Brun. 1680/84.



49.The copy

The Franche-Comte (Free Country) on the border of Switzerland, was given to the Spanish in the time of Charles V but in 1668 it was recaptured by France. Under the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, it was returned to Spain. In 1674 France captured the territory for a second time. Besancon, the principal town of the region was isolated. Under siege its fate was inevitable. Although Louis is presented as glorious the French suffered unnecessary heavy losses in an inept assault on the citadel. The assault was meant to impress Louis on his arrived on the battlefield.

There are two versions of this propaganda painting by Le Brun, both in Versailles. One painting is in the ceiling of the Galerie des Glaces, and most likely the original. Several versions being made of a painting was not uncommon. Mars, the dashing figure carrying a shield bearing the fleur-de-lys arms of France, can be seen in the second version (fig 49). In the ceiling image, Mars (or Force, as decoded by Nivelon) is the armoured figure carrying a dagger immediately to the king's left. Mars delivers the distraught women seeking clemency who represent the towns of the territory. Le Brun consulted Ripa's handbook of allegory while also inventing his own images and, as in this painting, 'packing the scene with obstacles for Louis to overcome.'[147] "This kind of mythological narrative, in which each labour stood for a particular event in Louis XIV's reign, maintained the principles of history painting in the Grand Manner…" explain Louis Marchesano and Christian Michel.[148]

The prostrate figure of a female dressed in a white top and blue dress is the personification of the principal town of Besancon. The citadels high defensive wall is represented by a huge rock behind Louis. She offers the keys of Besancon to Louis. She may be distressed but is not trampled underfoot because she, with all the other grieving women (towns) scattered across the ground in front of Louis, are now part of France. The conquered towns are identified by their heraldic shields scattered on the ground. Behind Louis, climbing the rock is the naked figure, club in hand of Hercules, symbol of heroic valour. To his side, spear in hand is Minerva, symbol of protection. Behind them a winged figure with a trumpet represents Renown. Another winged figure by the tree carries the laurel wreath denoting the king's Victory. Above all, high left in the light is Glory, symbolized by the obelisk and golden diadem. Le Brun created a form of mythology mixed with history painting, not Classical nor Baroque, but suited to the glory and propaganda of Louis XIV reign.

The right side of the composition is dark representing the enemies of France principally the Spanish Lion which had controlled Besancon. Behind the rock is "the harshness of the season, symbolized by a grizzled

[147] Marchesano, louis, & Michel, Christian. 2010. *Printing in the Grand Manner*. p29. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.
[148] Ibid, p28.

old man (winter)" explains Gareau.[149] The war in February 1668 had taken place in winter which was unusual. The bull stands for Taurus the months of April and May representing the time of the siege. Perched on the dead tree is an 'Imperial Eagle, "troubled and menacing, but not intervening." It is not clear how we are to interpret this symbol. The engraving makes it easier to study the background figures which include, a soldier with shield representing military valour, and the Winds, Pisces, and Aries.[150]



50.Louise-Magdalena Horthemels (1686-1767) copperplate engraving (295x400mm) after Le Brun.

Mars with shield is not included in the original or the signed print (fig 50) which went to at least sixty editions.[151] It is a complex, if not confusing, tableau of allegory, mythology, history, and glory.

***The Family of Louis XIV* by Jean Nocret (1617-1672)**

Family was important and as a royal dynastic family, it was a race apart. For the forebears of royal dynastic group portraits, we might think of Giuseppe Arcimboldo's 1563, painting of *Maximilian II, His Wife, and Three Children*, not to mention the dog, or Valazquez's, 1656, *La Meninas*. For an informal conversation

[149] Gareau, Michael. 1992. *Charles Le Brun, First Painter to Louis XIV*. p70. Harry N Abrams, New York.
[150] Ibid, p70.
[151] Poulson. 1985. p80.

piece we can think of Anthony van Dyck's 1633, *Charles I of England and wife Henrietta Maria with their two eldest children, Prince Charles, and Princess Mary*. But for mixing the real world with allegory we must turn to the 1569 painting by Joris Hoefnagel and Hans Eworth of *Elizabeth Ist Appearing in the Presence of the Three Graces,* Venus, Juno, and Minerva. Louis XIV and his family went one step further dressing fancifully and impractically in pseudo classical costumes, posing as gods and goddesses, in a 1670 painting by Jean Nocret (fig 51).



51.*The Family of Louis XIV* by Jean Nocret. 1670. Oil on Canvas, 420 x 305cm. Chateau de Versailles.

The huge canvas measuring 4.2m wide and 3m 5cm high, is in the Chateau de Versailles. The work was commissioned by Louis's younger brother Philippe, Duc d' Orléans, (1640-1701) known as Monsieur, for his chateau in St Cloud. Schama suggests that the work is an early example of the royal family portrait in which a careful balance is achieved between high ceremony and bourgeois demystification which has helped monarchies survive through to today. I'm not sure how an allegorical work can be claimed to be a

demystification.[152] The composition divides the two brother's families into their respective two groups. On the right, seated on a throne placed on a dais is the sun king protected by a canopy. Louis is draped in a gold robe and holds a sun headed mace identifying him as Apollo.

Louis XIV hardly knew his own father and Louis upbringing, his life at risk in political unrest, might be described as dysfunctional.[153] The birth of Louis XIV after twenty-five years of childless marriage was regarded by most as a miracle, astrologers stressing that the birth was on a Sunday. Not only that but Louis was born precociously with two teeth, a pain for his wet nurses. "The most interesting interpretation of the Dauphin's [Louis] horoscope, written at Anne of Austria's personal request, is a Latin eclogue by the utopian philosopher Tommaso Campanella, in which he prophesied an Augustan age of imperial peace; according to his calculations the Dauphin was born at the moment when the sun was at its closest to the earth ever recorded," Christoph Frank informs us.[154]

In 1662 Louis XIV wrote, "I chose to assume the form of the sun, because of the unique quality of the radiance that surrounds it; the light that it imparts to the other stars, which compose a kind of court…Those who saw me ruling with a degree of ease, unhampered by the many cares that royalty has to assume, persuaded me to add the globe of the earth, and for a motto *Nec Pluribus Impar*; by which they meant, agreeably flattering the ambitions of a young king, that equal in myself to so many things, I would certainly yet be equal to ruling other empires."[155]

On the left, and lower as befits his position in the royal household, is seated Philippe. Philippe, Duke of Orléans is draped in white who holds a horn of plenty from which issues light denoting the brother as the god of the dawn, Hesperus the morning star. He is thus the complement to the sun. The two roles, morning star and Apollo, reflect the roles the brothers played in the Ballet of the Night (discussed later).

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[152] Schama, Simon. 1986. *The Domestication of Majesty: Royal Family Portraiture 1500-1850*. Journal of Interdisciplinary History. Vol,17. No,1. Summer. pp155-183.
[153] Thompson, I. 2006. p43.
[154] Frank, Christoph Daniel. 1993. *The Mechanics of Triumph: Public Ceremonies and Civic Pageantry under Louis XIV*. p32. PhD Dissertation. The University of London. Warburg Institute.
[155] Richardson, Joanne. 1974. *Great Lives, Louis XIV*. p52.George Weidenfeld and Nicolson and Book Club Association.

While the painting recognises Louis as the centre of the universe, it highlights Philippe's lack of political power, not to mention his financial dependence on the king. When Philippe spoke to Louis about the plight of the poor the king's reply was, "if four or five thousand of that canaille [scoundrels] were to die, would France be diminished? They are not much use in the world. I pray you, do not meddle in matters which do not concern you." [156]

But Philippe needed to demonstrate his status. The painting was commissioned by Philippe for his chateau where he could hold *his* court of Orléans. The chateau at St Cloud, as pointed out by Marlen Scneider was a palace with attractions with "a fantastic garden, including terraces, fountains and alleys, which invited visitors to wander through the park and admire its owner's wealth and good taste…"[157] All before Versailles was complete. This suggests a polite rivalry which can also be found in the king's choice of artist, Le Brun, while Philippe chose the painter Nocret.

Philippe was second in line to the throne up to 1661 when Louis' son, the Dauphine was born. The Dauphin sits on the dais below his father and like Louis, the child wears a wreath of victory. The golden-haired child holds a vase from which emanates sunlight. The child is playing the role of Hymen the god of marriage.

The hold which mythology held on the minds of the elite may be traced back to "the Neoplatonic ideal of universal harmony that had inspired the festivals of the Italian Renaissance," claims Georgia Cowart, and particularly marriage, as a symbol of an idyllic society.[158]

Standing behind the king is his cousin, Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, la Grande Mademoiselle, holding a spear, and on her head a crescent moon denoting her as Diana the huntress. In the centre of the composition, holding a globe, is the seated figure of Anne of Austria, the king's mother, dressed in blue as Cybele, goddess of nature. To her right stands Henrietta of England, the wife of Philippe, who is dressed as

[156] Richardson, J. 1974. p123. Ibid.
[157] Schneider, Marlen. 2014. *Much Lesser than the Sun: The Self-fashioning of Philippe I, Duc d' Orléans*. p172. The Court Historian. Vol,19. 2014.Issue,2. pp169-173. https://doi.org/10.1179/cou.2014.19.2.005
[158] Cowart, Georgia. 2008. The Triumph of Pleasure, Louis XIV & the Politics of Spectacle. p15.University of Chicago Press.

Flora, the goddess with her flowers. Both, if not more, are terrestrial goddesses, in contrast to the Sun King.

Phlippe's left-hand caresses the face of his daughter dressed in blue. She is Marie-Louise. She wears butterfly wings indicating that she is Isis, messenger of the gods. Beside Philippe, at the far left of the painting sits Henrietta, the king's aunt holding a trident, while in her other outstretched hand rests a branch of coral, denoting her as goddess of the sea.

Seated beneath the king is his wife, the Queen of France, Maria Theresa, in the guise of Juno with her sacred animal the peacock. (Marie, or Margarita Teresa, as a child is seen as the centre of attention in Velasquez's, 1654, *Las Meninas*). Philippe Charles of France is the winged Cupid with his quiver of love arrows, leaning on the queen's leg. Louis' first love had been Marie Mancini, politically an impossible match, and he was forced to marry the infanta.

Such an assembly of different figures was an organizational and compositional challenge for any artist, we only have to think of Rembrandt's, The Militia Company of Frans Banning Cocq (The Night Watch) of 1642, or Hans Holbein the Younger's drawing of Sir Thomas More and His Family, 1526-27.

The queen holds the hand of her child, Louis, Dauphin of France, Duke of Burgundy. The Dauphin is the only one of five children to survive. The mortality of French children was one in three, but the higher royal death rate led people to surmise that it was Heaven's retribution for the king's various adulteries. Louis liked children and grieved when his or his illegitimate children died young. His love of children was expressed in the many sculpted putto in Versailles. Below the Dauphin sits a child, Marie Thérèse, Madame Royal, or La Petite Madame, holding a chain of flowers. She died young. In the framed picture are two babies, Anne Elisabeth and Marie Anne, both of whom died young. The two, winged boys holding the harp could be Philippe Charles, and Louis Francois, both of whom died before their first birthdays. At birth, each was given the title the Duc d'Anjou. In the background, helping to form one triangle in the composition, are

the three daughters of Gaston d' Orléans, Marguerite Louise, Elisabeth Marguerite, and Francoise Madeleine, who may represent the Charities.

Why the king would choose to portray himself in pagan imagery is interesting. Boys and girl's education was minimal, and they were lucky if they had personal tutors. Older girls went off to convents where their education was mainly religious. If boys went off to college, they would learn Latin or Greek and in so doing come across pagan literature. In their minds they would have to balance a Catholic religious upbringing and stories from Classical mythology. Louis was not the first to be depicted as a god. Nicoletto da Modena's, c1545, oil on panel, shows *Francis I of France as an Antique God.* His costume includes the androgynous attributes of Minerva, Diana, Mars, Amor, and Mercury. Around 1540/50, Agnolo Bronzino depicted Andrea Doria as the trident carrying Neptune.

In allegorical works, cities could become women, rivers become old men and kings become gods symbolizing some attribute like morality. Artist might need to explain their intention, on a certain occasion Mars stands for valour not war. Some personifications were decidedly obscure. A woman holding a caduceus (the herald Mercury's/Herme's wand) could stand for the Academie Francaise.

The intellectual world in Europe was slowly changing thanks to scientific discoveries. Descartes suppressed his 1633 work, Le Monde, which defended a heliocentric view of the solar system but in 1637 anonymously published parts of his book on geometry, optics, and meteorology. In 1672 Leibniz, independent of Newton, laid down the foundations of differential calculus, at the same time supported the existing order of things. Pascal, inventor of a calculating machine, rejected Aristotelian thought that people should rely on sacred texts, but believed in predestination. Science and the supernatural were paradoxical bed fellows.

What did Louis XIV think of being depicted allegorically? According to Montespan Louis, "examined them without vanity, with no enthusiasm, and seemed to regard them as accessories inherent to the composition, as conventional ornaments, the good and current small change of art." [159]

[159] Montespan, Vol,7. Chapter, XLII.

In Charles Poerson' (1609-1667) painting (fig 52) Louis is celebrating his victory in the civil war. Louis is the god Jupiter holding tongues of flames and the lightning bolts of destruction.



52. *Louis XIV as Jupiter, Vanquisher of the Fronde*. 1652-54. by Charles Poerson. Oil on canvass 166 x 143 cm.

It is one of those strange, indoor/outdoor scenes, where Louis sits on a chair/throne with a lion headed arm rest. In the hierarchical world of the Versailles court only the monarch sat on an armchair. Louis sits in front and beneath a swag of gold edged red canopy drawn to one side. The sweep of the fabric has a compositional justification, but otherwise, makes little sense. What is it doing outdoors? It is clearly not a campaign tent.

As Jupiter, Louis sits centre stage, wearing a metal cuirass and in swirls of a blue cloak. On his head he wears an oak leaf wreath. His outstretched right hand clutches tongues of fire, while his left leg (a useful compositional diagonal) rests on an upturned round shield bearing the head of the Gorgon, Medusa. Scattered on the floor are the remnants of the Fronde battle, a helmet, drum, quiver full of arrows, a trumpet, the barrel of a canon and a white flag, presumably, that of the surrendering forces. Beneath Jupiter sits a dark eagle, a form in which the god Vulcan sometimes shape-shifts. It too clutches flames. The drawn canopy reveals an ancient, if somewhat damaged, especially as the flutes are misaligned, classical column. Is this the result of battle, or have the classical forms had their day?

To the king's right are three gods, some of the many sons of Jupiter: Vulcan (Hephaestos) hammering at his forge, Mars (Ares) god of war, and possibly Hercules (Heracles). They seem to be making armour. This mythological portrait of Louis, dated 1652-54, was made during or to the end of the civil war (1648-53).

"When Apelles painted Alexander's portrait, he is said to have put a lightning bolt (also the symbol of Jupiter, the king of the gods) in his hand," Ripa[160] tells us. But although Mazarin encouraged a comparison to be made between the king and Alexander, Apollo and Jupiter, the effect is somewhat lessened by the 'boys tender face.'

The theme of war is found in the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles. Le Brun painted a ceiling medallion called *The Reestablishment of Navigation Rights*, (fig 53) which shows a seated Louis on a golden throne holding Neptune's trident. Behind him stands Abundance, a female allegory holding flowers. Beneath Louis's feet three chained, turbaned slaves. As Meredith Martin and Gillian Weiss describe: "with shackles, swarthy bodies, headgear visually identifying them as captured Muslims, they create a painted contrast with the king's own pale, illuminated flesh."[161] To the right of the scene a docker unloads bales from the ship seen in the background.

[160] Ripa, Cesare. 1971. *Iconolgia*. Ed E.A,Maser. New York, Dover. Quoted in Martin, Eva. 2012. The Prehistory of the Sublime in Early Modern France, An interdisciplinary Perspective. The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present, pp77-101. The illustrated Iconolgia can be viewed on a Warburg website, *Iconologia, or, Moral Emblems.*

[161] Martin, Meredith. & Weiss, Gillian. 2022. *The Sun King at Sea. Maritime Art and Galley Slavery in Louis XIV's France.* J. Paul Getty Trust. p 80.



53.*The Re-establishment of the Navy*. 1663. Oil on canvas. By Le Brun. Palace of Versailles.

The 'reestablishment' evokes the creation of both the East and West India Company and refers to Louis's creation of a merchant navy and his claim to have 'cleansed' the Mediterranean of Islam. As an example, at least two thousand 'Turks,' -as Muslim slaves were called- worth around 250 livres each- were chained oarsmen in Louis XIV's galleys.[162]

Apart from the galleys the French fleet consisted of warships whose power lay not only in numbers and cannon but in their decoration. The sight of these gold decorated, glinting sculptures, banner and flag flying vessels would have been truly impressive, a floating palace with guns. The 2400-ton, 110-gun, Royal

[162] Weiss, Gillian, 2014. *Ransoming 'Turks' from France's Royal Galleys*. African Economic History. Vol.42. pp37-57. University of Wisconsin Press

Louis flagship (fig 54) took, following Le Brun's sculpture directions "more than a year and more than forty artisans to execute," explains Martin & Weiss.[163]



54. Louis's Flag Ship.

We do not know for certain if the carved figures were made from Le Brun's drawings of statuary.

A drawing of the stern depicts a seated Louis in Roman dress. Above Louis are two winged victories. To the side of Louis, winged figures blowing trumpets. Below them is Neptune with his trident and on the other side wreathed Fame with her cornucopia. Below them are four fishtailed males blowing horns and on the gun deck two winged Pegasus to speed the ship on her journey. Fishtailed putti support the two-royal crests. We can only imagine what the rest of the ship's carved decoration was, and it is hardly surprising that in 1670 even Le Brun became aware that the weight of these decorations might compromise the ship's fighting efficiency.

[163] Martin & Weiss. 2022, p54. Footnote according to Magali Theron, 129.

Jean Legeret's 1668 drawing is of the stern of the 104-gun warship, the Royal Duc, a name referring to the Duke of Beaufort but later renamed, La Reyne, the king. This drawing also shows evidence of two slave figures, one with a topknot, the other most likely a convict or a Protestant.

There exists a 1729 drawing in the Marine Archives, which depicts a sculptured figure holding a wreath and a harp on the prow of a ship. Behind the decorative prow is a panel bearing the intertwined 'L's of Louis XIV's monogram so it is likely that the ship is the navy's flagship Soleil Royal (fig 55). We know the Soleil Royal and its elaborate carved figures from a 1690/92 illustration of the prow without forecastle by Jean I Berain. Berain also illustrated the stern which shows Louis in a chariot drawn by four horses and around the outside four figures such as a Native American Indian, suggesting that the four represent the then known continents.



55. *Soleil Royal.*

Brendon Udy describes the Sun King's sculptures: "the taffrail was adorned with a dramatic rendering of a horse-drawn sun god stretching across the sky with an ornate figurehead depicting winged maidens on either side of a seahorse."[164]

[164] Udy, Brendon. "*Soleil Royal-History of the Legendary French Ship*". http://www.taylorandgoes.com)

Conclusion

The visual presentation of the king in the guise of the legendary hero Alexander, not only resulted in Le Brun advancing to the position of first painter to Louis XIV, but also as the King's main propagandist. In later paintings Louis still appeared dressed as Alexander but increasingly he was depicted in contemporary events, even if those history paintings mixed allegory and mythology. Such propaganda was also evidenced in the decoration of Louis's warships.

Chapter Three.

The Sun King: Divinity, Magic, and Pageantry.


56. Louis' sun symbol on the gates to Versailles.

Introduction

Chapter three argues that Louis, the Sun king, used Christian imagery to imply his own divinity, and that his public theatrical performances, persuasive but with little substance, were used to bolster his absolutism.

Louis XIV and Catholicism.

As a child, it was made clear to Louis by the Queen-Regent, that his rank was not due to his personal talents, but because God placed him there. Louis' first duty should always be to France, not his own inclinations. But his sexual and intellectual weaknesses[165] are evidenced by his far from moral behaviour, as in the double adultery, for both he and Mme de Montespan were married. For France, Louis was "the Most Christian King and Eldest Son of the Church, descended from Charlemagne and Saint Louis," [166] Having said that Louis missed holy communion at Easter rather than give up his affair with Mme de Montespan. And it was said no woman of position would turn down the chance of being his mistress. Following the piety of Louis' youth, he became in middle and old age more religious, attending mass daily, taking confession always from a Jesuit priest, and listening to hundreds of sermons. From Louis' waking, framed with prayers, to Mass, the day was steeped in the sacred. Louis was a devote Catholic but had little theological knowledge. The Duchesse D' Orleans said that he was ignorant of religion and "believed all that the priests said to him…" and worse "…had never seen a Bible in his life."[167] Bishop Bossuet, one of Louis'

[165] Burke, Peter. 1992. *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*. p137.Yale University Press. New Haven & London.
[166] Wilkinson. 2018. p166.
[167] Duchess of Orleans. Book 1. Section 11.

closest priests, claimed that Louis's absolutism was derived from scripture, and was paternal, sacred, and subject to reason. Louis's court was thought, a reflection of the holy court, and ecclesiastically, the court was a miniature diocese.

Louis' life was beset with political tensions between his duty as Rex Chistianissimus, the Pope as guardian of Catholicism, the many French Catholic groups, including anti Papacy Janesenists & Gallicans, and Parlement. The Gallican church, composed of the 'regular and secular' clergy were in general lacking in piety and learning, and the upper ranks of the clergy, which came from the nobility of the sword and robe, had their positions due to the corrupting patronage from the Crown and as a result were disinclined to criticise the king.[168] Louis, having little interest in doctrine was, up to a point, tolerant of other religions. His persecution of Huguenots (in the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes), who had been loyal to the king in the Fronde, is puzzling. To his enemies, repelled by absolutism, Louis was the 'Christian Turk.' An insult derived from the revocation, as Hatton[169] explains was "…a domestic crusade to coverup France's failure to act positively against the Turks."

Louis' performance as a Catholic needed to be demonstrated to his people in such altar pieces as La Brun's painting (fig 57) where the king takes on the traditional role of donor.

Louis in the presence of divinity.

[168] Salmon, J.H.M. 1965. *The King and his Conscience: The Religious Problems of Louis XIV*, Part 1. History Today. Vol,15. Issue,4. April

[169] Hatton, Ragnhild.1972. p84. Louis XIV and his World. Thames and Hudson, London.



57.*Louis XIV Adoring the Risen Christ*. 1674. By Le Brun. Oil on canvass. 485 x 265 cm. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon. Altarpiece for the Chapel of the Mercer's Company.

The painting of *Louis XIV Adoring the Risen Christ* was made for the high altar of the church of Holy Sepulchre, rue Saint-Denis, Paris. As Gelfand et al[170]notes the presence of the donor painting as close as possible to the altar, as with the Rolin image, was a reminder to the congregation to keep the donor in their prayers. The origin of the painting is explained by Bénédicte Gady. "In February 1674, the military setbacks and financial difficulties of the Dutch war led Jean-Baptiste Colbert, controller general of the kingdom's finances, to suggest to the wealthy community of merchants and haberdashers of the City of Paris to make a free donation to the king of sixty thousand pounds [crowns]. The community dithered,

[170] Gelfand, Laura D., and Walter S. Gibson. Surrogate selves: the Rolin Madonna and the late-medieval devotional portrait. Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art 29,10.3/4 (2002):119-38.https://doi.org/10.2307/3780931

then, the pressure threatening to turn into constraint, yielded fifty thousand pounds to the sovereign. In return for this generosity, he obtained the abolition of the drapers' exclusive control over woollen goods."[171] The venal system of Louis's patronage was typical of how commerce survived. 2,000 crowns out of the fifty thousand funds were used to commission Charles Le Brun's painting. Le Brun was connected to the church because his father, Nicolas, a sculptor, had a sculpture of St Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, the patron saint of the merchants in the 'carpentry niche' of the high altar.

The donors were the marchands merciers (corporation of merchants) and the haberdasher brotherhood whose shield (with motto, *Gemino nota sub axe,* literally; a double note under the axis[172]) can be seen in the bottom left-hand corner. The haberdasher's wished, "the painting to be an eternal monument to the magnificence of Louis XIV."[173] The haberdashers had insisted that Colbert be represented in the work because of the part he had played in fund raising and they asked to view preparatory drawings (dessin) showing the various parts of the composition, however none have been identified. Positioned behind the king, the standing Colbert points to the riches of the kingdom represented by coins scattered on the ground and the snake handled urn filled with gold and the red lidded treasure chest, while he stares out at us, 'the faithful.'

St Louis (crowned) patron saint of the House of France mystically appears to introduce Louis XIV to Christ. Louis, wearing his coronation robe is dressed in armour and, like some Byzantine ruler offering gifts to Christ, Louis holds up the sceptre of Charlemagne and a red ostrich plumed helmet. The work refers to an earlier painting, (fig 58) Philippe de Champaigne's, 1638, *Vow of Louis XIII* in which the earlier monarch offers the sceptre and crown to Christ and sought protection from the Virgin Mary.

[171] Gady, Bénédicte. 2014. Catalogue of the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon. Part of which was supplied by email by Gérard Bruyere, Chargé du Service de la Documentation.
[172] The meaning of Latin mottos, especially when out of context, are often obscure.
[173] Gady. Ibid.



58.*Vow of Louis XIII*, 1638, by Philippe de Champaigne. Oil on canvas, 3.42 x 2.67m.

Musée des Beaux-arts de Caen.

In Le Brun's painting Louis XIV seeks, "renewed blessing of divine intervention on behalf of France's military actions," explains Burchard.[174] The composition is divided across the middle by the white shroud, a reference to the 'six merchant corps.' The shroud (linceul) supported by angels, separates the heavenly realm above from the earthly world below. Billowing white fabric floats around Christ's body. In Hollander's[175] study she notes that Baroque drapery often seems to be hyperactive material. Such free-floating fabric, as in Anthony van Dyck's, *The Countess of Castlehaven* (c1635-8) while to us seems improbable, was to "locate the picture within the realm of artifice." In Le Brun's altarpiece, the dark world below can be seen soldiers who have fallen asleep guarding the tomb or are awake and watch in fear. Above, three winged angels, a reference to the trinity, lift stones away from the tomb. Christ floats high above all in a pose not dissimilar from Raphael's 1518-20 last great work, *The Transfiguration of Christ*, in the Vatican, (fig 59).



59.Detail of Raphael's *Transfiguration of Christ*. 1516-1520. Tempera grassa on wood. 410 x 279 cm. Vatican, Rome.

[174] Burchard, 2016. p233. Ibid.
[175] Hollander, 2002.Fabric of Vision. Dress and Drapery in Painting. p82. National Gallery, London.

Louis XIV before the risen Christ is reminiscent of a Renaissance work which showed the donor, be they Popes, bishops or rulers, time-slipping back two thousand years into the presence of Christ. The citizens of Solonika commissioned a mosaic of St Demetrius, the protector of the city, and it was this pose of a kneeling figure which became the universal pose of a donor. By having themselves depicted kneeling in prayer, as Falque[176] says, donors hoped to ensure their salvation and dedication to Christ. Private persons who wished for intercession with the divinity did so indirectly through a saint. In the past the donor had been 'minimally intrusive.' What was so shocking about Jan van Eyck's 1435, *The Virgin of Chancellor Rolin*, (fig 60) was Rolin's presence, unaccompanied by a patron saint. Rolin's appearance, not only in contemporary dress of the period but sumptuously clothed emphasising his social status. His presence in the same space, not as a diminutive figure but on equal terms with the Virgin. All of which applies to Le Brun's version of Louis in the presence of the resurrection. "Rolin is a big man with a savage haircut and a look of brute cunning, much like the enforcer he was in real life," writes Cummings. [177] Infrared reflectograms showed that there was a money purse hanging from Rolin's belt, but van Eyck painted it out. The donor buying his way into heaven might be unintentionally referenced in Le Brun's use of coins on the ground (fig 55).



60.*Madonna of Chancellor Rolin*. 1435. Oil on panel 66 x 62 cm. By Jan van Eyck. Louvre, Paris.

In Le Brun's painting Louis has slipped back 1600 years to witness the Resurrection, and Louis appears, as does Colbert, even though he is lower and pushed to the edge, both at the same scale as Christ. As

[176] Falque, Ingrid. 2011. Conference paper, Devotional Portraits in Early Netherlandish Painting.
[177] Cummings, L. (2009) A face to the World. Harper Press.

discussed earlier regarding Titian's painting of St Catherine appeared before Christ, Louis XIV has also made a miraculous appearance, breaking the contemporary art theory rule of one Time, one Action, and one Place.

The artists of the academy wanted to be seen as good Christians, the church was after all an important patron.


61.*Le Bon Pasteur de Tours*. c1650-60. By Philippe de Champaigne. Oil on canvas, 154 x 95 cm. Museum of Fine Arts of Tours.

The Cheval Renaud de Sevigne commissioned this sacred work (fig61) by Philippe de Champaigne (1602-1674) for the abbey Port-Royal. "The simple and monumental composition, evoking the parable of the lost sheep (Luke, XV, 3-7) is very much in the Christocentric spirit of the Jansenist milieu…" explains Marc Jeanneteau. [178] It is what one might expect of a religious work.


62.*Louis XIV as the Good Shepherd*. Possibly by Pierre Paul Sevin. Vellum, size unknown. Date unknown.[179]

Louis XIV, posing as the Good Shepherd (fig 62) is an anonymous work on vellum, date unknown. It seems to suggest that Louis may be Christ! The Arcadian, rustic idea of an unsurpassable happiness, as epitomized by rural shepherds was just that, no more than an idea. What are we to make of what seems a sacrilegious

[178] Jeanneteau, Marc. Museum of Fine Arts, Tours, gallery commentary on the Champaigne painting now considered to be the original from which many 'replicated copies or interpretations' were made.
[179] Christies of London were unable to trace details of this item which they auctioned.

image such as this? Martin Weyl explains how pagan mythological imagery lived alongside Catholicism. "Many, or even most, religious people at the period could be described as those who did not have the time or courage to become atheists yet."[180] And regarding art Jacob Burchhardt explains, "in an eager attempt to imitate and reproduce the men and the institutions of antiquity, religion was left to take care of itself."[181] Making a religious painting had little to do with belief. "Thus, a religious subject in a painting served as a framework in which an artist could express his preoccupation with history, expression, psychology, gallantry, civility, good manners and other *honnête* virtues."[182] The availability of Greco-Roman texts made it possible to interpret these fables as the embodiment of virtue, aesthetics, even eroticism. The problem of balancing pagan literature and Biblical texts had dated back to the Middle Ages, and the essential challenge was to, "neutralise pagan myth, to make it safe for general consumption." [183] Mythological figures representing vices, or virtues in the case of Louis XIV, could be seen as 'antetypes of events in the life of Christ.

Divine Right, **the King Performs Miracles**.

In Melvin Bragg's BBC, Radio 4 programme, The Divine Right of Kings, it was pointed out that while the idea of divine right was driven by Catholic theology, initially it was Henry VIII's Protestantism which sort a direct communication with God bypassing the Papacy. At birth Louis was proclaimed Le Dieudonne, God given. As the 'deputy of God', Louis wrote, "there is nothing which we ought to guard more jealously than that pre-eminence" moreover, that only one person should govern the people, "he [the king] who holds that function should be exalted so much above all others, that no other person could possibly be compared with him." [184] In 1598 James VI of Scotland published an essay, *The True Law of Free Monarchies*, in which he set out his argument for divine right based on the idea of a continuous apostolic succession, which

[180] Weyl, Martin. 1989. Passion for Reason and Reason for Passion. Seventeenth Century Art and Art Theory in France, 1648-1683. Peter lang Publishing, Inc, New York. p111.
[181] Weyl. p 109, footnote 47, Burchhardt, Civilization of the Renaissance, pp303-313.
[182] Weyl. p 113. Ibid.
[183] Ford, Philip. 2002. *Classical Myth and its Interpretation in Sixteenth-Century France*. p332. Brill's Studies in Intellectual History. Vol, 109.
[184] Richarson, Joanna. 1973. *Louis XIV.* p51. Book Club Associates. London.

carried with it the power of the laying on of hands. Logically, since the king was there by divine right, he had miraculous powers and could, like Christ, heal by touch. The medieval French ritual of lever, saw Louis, on occasion touching as many as 2,000 of the sick. “Superstition was rife in the country. People cursed with the evil eye were said to be everywhere; ghosts were suspected on all sides,” explains Richardson.[185] In a rare criticism of Louis, the Archbishop of Cambrai said of the king’s reign, “your religion consists of superstitions and shallow superficial practices.”[186] Three years after Newton published his Principia on the scientific laws of motion, Jean Jouvenet painted Louis as a miracle worker (fig 63), *Louis XIV Curing the Scrofula* (1690). While no one seriously believed that Louis was the Sun and Maria Theresa was Juno, some must have believed in miracles and magic and witches. Scrofula, or the king’s evil (Tuberculous lymphadenitis) often went into remission on its own giving the impression that the king had worked a miracle.



63.*Louis XIV Curing the Scrofula.*by Jean Jouvenet. Oil on canvas. 1690. Abbey church of Saint-Riquier.

[185] Richardson, J. 1974. p117. ibid
[186] Salmon. 1965. Ibid.

In Louis XIV curing scrofula we see the aging king in coronation robes touching a kneeling member of the public. The king is watched over by a supernatural St Marcoul (480-558) a healer of boils, abscesses, scrofulas and scrotums. Behind him is the abbot of Saint-Riquier. The 'patient's' hands are being restrained by the captain of the Guard to protect the king. The dark figure on the left with his back to us may be the King's physician Antoine Daquin, or possibly Guy-Crescent Fagon. Physicians were co-conspirator in this theatrical farce making sure that 'patients' were genuinely sick and not just there for the money. The little girl may be with the kneeling woman Madame de Maintenon. Giovanni-Paolo Marana claimed that the king had restored the 'Word' to the mute child. Considering the ability of Louis to perform miracles it is surprising that, as Stanis Perez says," the panegyrics were, as a whole, quite discreet about the ritual." This is supported by the fact that Jouvenet's painting seems an isolated example.

"Le Roi te touche, Dieu te guérit, the king touches you, but God heals you," was said as the king made the sign of the cross on the face of the sufferer. "The grand aumônier or his replacement then gave the suppliants alms which varied according to their geographical origins…"[187] At a time when hygiene was not good Louis was protected from infection by the three Chiefs of the Goblet, each with a gold plate ready for hand washing. The first one presented Louis with linen soaked in vinegar, the second with water and the third with water perfumed with orange blossom.

The origins of the 'Toucher sacre' extend back before the reign of St Louis (1226-70). In 1649 Theoddore and Denis Godefroy published a treatise on the subject, the Ceremonial Francois.[188] The French claimed that this gift originated exclusively in France and one physician traced its origin back to Clovis I (481-511). A now lost stained glass window (fig 64) dated 1488 in the Abbey Mont Saint-Michel showed the king receiving Communion and touching the sick.

[187] Sabatier, Gerald.2007. *Religious Rituals and the Kings of France in the Eighteenth Century*. p257. In Monarchy and Religion: The Transformation of Royal Culture in Eighteenth-Century Europe. pp249-281, Michael Schaich (ed). Oxford University Press.
[188] Grell, Chantal. 2007. *The Sacre of Louis XIV*. in The End of Myth, from Monarchy and Religion: The Transformation of Royal Culture in Eighteenth-Century Europe. Michael Schaich, ed. OUP. pp345-366.


64.A 15th Century manuscript showing Clovis I, healing by touch following his coronation.

The 'Toucher sacre' was for Burchard [189]"…a pillar of Bourbon propaganda." One of these events took place in the Grande Galerie of the Louvre where up to 3,000 kneeling subjects waited for the forehead to be touched. In Easter 1680 Louis laid hands on 1,600 people (Pentecost in 1698 the king touched 3,000. Trinity in 1701 some 2,400 invalids. Pentecost 1715, 1,700 sufferers).[190] But it was Voltaire, who sarcastically pointed out that the king's mistress had died of scrofula despite Louis touching her many, many times. More damning probably is the fact that these royal 'scrofula events' were well advertised in advance and that those attending would each be paid 15 sous. [191]

The supernatural basis of the king's power.

Fifteen-year-old Louis' coronation involved a ceremony known as Le Sacre, the confession and oath when the king promised to continue the privileges of his subjects followed by the blessing of the sword of Charlemagne, the spurs, and the ring with which the king married his kingdom. This was followed by the consecration when, "The king's body was anointed with chrism, holy oil from the Holy Ampulla, the bottle said to have been brought from heaven by a dove when Clovis, the first Christian king of France, was baptised by St Remy."[192] For onlookers at the time, the Sacre was probably a way of legitimising the Bourbon dynasty, all the way back to St Louis, but some of the witnesses might have remembered that this ancient ceremony expressed the view that the king should share power with his nobles. This ritual of

[189] Burchard. 2016.p183. ibid
[190] Sabatier, Gerald. 2007.p 263. Ibid.
[191] Burke. 1992. P157. ibid
[192] Burke. 1992. p41. ibid

chrism propaganda made the king believe he was quasi-divine. A ceremony, Karl Marx termed medieval rubbish. The anointment was given a theological justification by Bishop Bossuet, the high priest of royal bombast, as Wilkinson calls him. The king is "the representative of divine majesty" said Bossuet who argued that God reigns though the king and his ministers, "without this absolute authority, he [the king] can neither do good nor supress evil…" However, Louis was constrained, as Bossuet pointed out by

"the law of the kingdom to which the prince is subject as much as anyone else-or rather more than others…"[193] The endless panegyric heaped upon Louis sometimes was a two-edged sword because the laudatory discourse would also be a reminder of what the king should be. On his deathbed Louis thanked those who had cared for his soul, but in a sting, he said that they would have to "…answer before God for the advice they had given him."[194]

Ballet

It was essential for Louis to perform well in court life, and in dance Louis found a way to express himself. Ballet gave Louis self-confidence and poise and by the age of eight Louis was said to have danced perfectly. For a young noble male dancing was as important as fencing (fig 65). "Dancing and the martial arts have much in common- set moves, good posture, balance and control," explains Ian Thompson.[195] "As a young man," Fraser tells us, Louis "excelled at the grave so-called Slow Courante and could perform the necessary turn-out of legs and feet [45° rather than 180°] with supreme elegance."[196] In this we are reminded of the stance in Rigaud's coronation portrait.

[193] Beik, William. 2000. *Louis XIV and Absolutism. A Brief Study with Documents*. Emory University, Boston. New York. Beik's translation. p168-9.
[194] Hatton, 1972. p118.
[195] Thompson, Ian. 2006. *The Sun King's Garden. Louis XIV, André Le Nôtre and the Creation of the Gardens of Versailles*. p48. Bloomsbury.
[196] Fraser, Antonia. 2006. *Love and Louis XIV, The Women in the Life of the Sun King*. p40. Weidenfeld & Nicolson.



65.*Louis XIV in Ball Dress*. 1660. Bibliothèque Des Arts Decoratifs (library). By E. Lechevallier-Chevignard, hand coloured lithograph by A, Didier.

The costumes themselves represent power, not only in materials, but the hours of labour in their making.

In 1653 Mazarin ordered a celebration for the end of the civil war with a thirteen-hour long ballet (fig 66) in which, symbolically, Louis as sunlight brings an end to the chaos of the Fronde.[197] The Ballet of the Night, (Ballet de la Nuit) performed through the four night Watches (each 3 hours long).[198] It is of note that in the first Watch, "professional dancers posed as beggars with bandaged wounds so that they could be 'cured' in the Court of Miracles."[199] All sorts of 'Beggars and Cripples' emerge strong and healthy. The Court of Miracles was a nickname for a part of Paris and may, perhaps sarcastically, refer to the King's touch!



66.Costume design for Louis XIV as Apollo, for the Ballet of the Night, 1653. by Henri Gissey (1621-1673). Pen, wash, and gouache with gold highlights. 16.7 x 26 cm. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

[197] Dickhaut, Kirsten. 2018. *History-Drama-Mythology*. p97.Stable URL:https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvbkjxlb.12. Published by De Gruyter.
[198] A detailed account of each Watch can be found on p68-69 of Sebastien Daucé (translation by Charles Johnson) 2015. *Le Concert Royal de la Nuit*. Fondation Orange. Book and two CDs of the music, harmonia mundi. Liner notes and libretto in English, with 70 illustrations.
[199] Fraser. 2006. p40. Ibid.

Louis, bedecked in goldleaf, rubies, pearls, diamonds, and golden ostrich plumed feathered headdress dispelled the darkness and vanquished the night.[200] Importantly, Louis face is not masked, "the face of power that is at the same time the face of the sun. Body politic and body physical merge," explains Kirsten Dickhaut.[201] In the first part, the night is a chariot drawn by owls. Part three was plunged into the darkness of a lunar eclipse, but all was saved in part four as *Aurora the Dawn* heralded the appearance of Louis, the Sun. Louis tells us, "Without doubt I belong to the World I serve; I exist not for myself but for the Universe. To it I owe the sunny beams that crown my head. It is my duty to regulate the time and the seasons, and Order will not suffer pleasure to keep me from my work."[202]



67.*Louis XIV in the guise of Apollo*. 1654. Graphite, watercolour, body colour and gold on vellum. 30.4 x 22.5 cm. Probably by Henri Gissey or his pupil. Royal Collection. London.

Because the censors tended to see opera-ballet as frivolous, ephemeral, or superficial (fig 67) they often missed the hidden criticism of both absolutism and the king's propaganda. Burlesque (Burla meaning mystification) ballet flourished in the earlier French court of the 1620's where nobles indulged in carnivalesque themes including 'character reversal, obscenity, and sexual, racial, or class cross-dressing.'[203]

Louis XIV appeared to put a stop to burlesque when in 1661 he founded the Royal Academy of Dancing aiming to "restore the art of dancing to its first perfection."[204] Between 1651 and 1668 Louis took part in

[200] Chastel. 1996. p24. ibid
[201] Dickhaut, Kirsten. 2019. *The King as a "Maker" of Theatre: Le Ballet de la nuit and Louis XIV*. p122. From the book *Theatre as Metaphor*. Walter de Gruyter.
[202] Sikes, Alan. 2007. p24. *Dancing with the Sun King: The Performance of Privilege in the Realm of Louis XIV.* Palgrave Studies in Theatre and Performance History. Palgrave Macmillan. New York. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230605619_2
[203] Franko, Mark. 2022. *Double Bodies, Androgyny and Power in the Performance of Louis XIV.* p71-82. TDR (1988-), Vol.38, no.4,1994, pp71-82. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.2307/114625.Accessed 4.9. 2022.
[204] Homans, Jennifer. 2013. *Apollo's Angels: A History of Ballet*. p15. Granta Books.

cross-dressing burlesque/ballets. Such court ballets continued until around the 1670s when Louis danced less and by the 1680s Louis, suffering from gout, took less part in masquerades and ballets.

Masques and Carousels

Masques, the earlier form of masquerades were a useful way of keeping the aristocracy close at hand spending fortunes on fancy dress (fig 68). The court would be required to dress as Turks, Chinese or Persians, but not as Black Africans or Native American Indians because such costumes would expose too much flesh. “From just before Candlemass-day to Easter of this year [1700] nothing was heard of but balls and pleasures of the Court.” Saint-Simon and his wife “…passed three weeks of this time without ever seeing day,” reported Saint-Simon.[205]



68.Portrait of *Louis XIV dressed as a Hungarian*. By Joseph Werner (1637-1710) One of a pendant both of which show face masks. Norton Simon Museum. Pasadena. United States of America.

The king gave masquerades at Versailles and at Marly, and “Everyone was compelled to be masked,” says Saint-Simon. On the 5th and 6th of June 1662, to celebrate the birth of the Dauphin, Louis took part in a massive carousel watched by some fifteen thousand spectators. Several illustrated pamphlets were

[205] Saint-Simon. *Memoirs of Louis XIV by the Duke of Saint-Simon*. Vol, 2. p XVI. The Project Gutenberg, E Book. Produced by David Widger.

produced and a book (fig 69) by Charles Perreault (1628-1703) *Course de teste et de bag*ue, (courses and ring races) later known as the Grand Carrousel was published by the royal printers in 1670. Four hundred copies in French and three hundred in Latin for foreign distribution,



69.Dedication page from Charles Perreault's book. Princeton University Library.

The red leather-bound book asserted a coherent model of an absolutist court comprised of a god-king, the aristocracy, and academicians. It documented the area in front of the Palaise de Tuileries, showing an outer parade ground with a cavalcade of mounted riders (fig 70) and an inner fenced square arena where events took place such as mock tilting and dancing bears. It was really an equestrian ballet and has been described as 'propaganda on horseback.'[206]



70.*The Grand Cavalcade in Paris*, 1662. Engraving by Israel Silvestre the Younger. (1621-1691) Hand coloured 1670 by Jacques Bailly (1629-1679). Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Louis in the centre as a Roman emperor.

[206] Thompson, Ian. 2006. *The King's Garden. Louis XIV, André Le Nôtre and the Creation of the Gardens of Versailles*. p49. Bloomsbury.

The prince de Conde, the former leader of the Fronde rebellion, appeared as De Turce. His device was a crescent moon symbolising the fact that, “whatever light the moon possess comes ultimately from the sun.” a pointed reminder of his powerlessness.[207] Le Quadrille des Romains, (Romans) commanded by Louis, had a horse caparisoned in diamonds. Louis carried a shield with the inscription *Ut vidi vici*- ‘I no sooner saw than conquered.’ Louis wore a silver helmet covered in gold leaf and surmounted with red dyed ostrich plumes. The Grand Cavalcade Given in Paris in 1662, is well illustrated (fig 71) in Israel Silvestre the Younger’s (1621-1691) engravings of 1670 which were hand coloured by Jacques Bailly (1629-1679).



71.*Philippe I, Duke of Orleans*. 1662. Coloured engraving by Israël Silvestre the Younger.

Colbert, claimed that these revelries were meant to please the people but also to affect foreigners giving an impression of magnificence, power, wealth, and grandeur.[208] It took Colbert two years to find the vast cost of the event, to which he invited the royal courts of Europe. The opening date was announced in the Paris Gazette, the official newspaper of the monarchy, which printed 19 pages of description and reported the event, of which, it claimed, the whole world should know. As Louis explained to his son in his Memoire pour les Annees (1661) the carousel was a political device. It served three functions. Firstly, it brought about public stability. Secondly, it reinforced the king’s reputation with the people. Thirdly, it established the connection between the king and his people, for although he was different by birth, rank, and power,

[207] Thompson. 2006. p49. Ibid.
[208] Chastel. 1996. p31. Ibid.

the people 'had free and easy access to their prince.'[209] The acid tongued Montespan reports that Louis became enamoured of Mademoiselle de Fontanges, not then eighteen. The king's attire was rejuvenated with feathers, emeralds, and diamonds. "Allegorical comedies, concerts on the waters recommenced," reports Montespan. "Triumphant horse-races set the whole Court abob and in movement."[210]

Fetes

In 1664, 1668 and 1674 the king held three festivals at Versailles. For Bolduc these fetes turned Versailles into an 'enchanted domain,' but also, a way of keeping the nobility under surveillance.[211] The 1664 fete called, Pleasures of the Enchanted Isle, took place over nine days and was based on a novel, "Ariosto's story of the liberation of Ruggiero from Alcin's enchanted palace."[212] In 1668, a thousand returned to Versailles for a one-day celebration of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. The fete included a promenade, a theatrical performance, a supper, and a ball. This time the story concerned Leto, "a powerful reminder of the fate that awaited the opponents of the Sun King's imperial ambitions." [213] When Leto returned, troublesome peasants were turned into frogs. The third fete in 1674, set in the new gardens of Versailles, saw one thousand people attend a six-day celebration of Louis' conquest of the Franche-Comte. The festivities included a promenade, musical events, theatrical performances, fireworks, and the king with guests riding gondolas on the Grand Canal. The magical explosion of fireworks illustrated a cycle of destruction followed by regeneration (fig 72). It was a fiction made from papier-mâché, wood, canvas, and painted stucco. "For what the artists working for the Sun King were ultimately proposing was that the creation of Versailles miraculously made visible the heavenly Jerusalem," explains Benoit Bolduc.[214]

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[209] Hayton, Darin. 2008. *Courses de Testes et de Bague and the Cultural Legitimization of Louis XIV's Personal Rule 1661-1671*. http://thesis.haverford.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/10066/1414/2008NelsonN.pdf
[210] Montespan. Vol, 5. Chapter XVI. Ibid.
[211] Bolduc, 2015. P12. ibid
[212] Bolduc. p213. ibid.
[213] Bolduc, Benoit. 2015. *Fetes on Paper. Graphic Representations of Louis XIV's Festivals at Versailles*. p215. The Princeton University Library Chronical. Vol, 76. No, 1-2 (Winter) pp 211-241. https://doi.org/10.25290/prinunivlibrchro.76.1-2.0211
[214] Bolduc. 2015. p235. Ibid.



72.*Firework display*. By Jean Le Paute. Burin on copperplate engraving, 29.9 x 42.6 cm, printed on paper. Musée de Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon.

The firework displays of 1674 over the Grand Canal in Versailles was illustrated by the engravings of Jean Le Pautre (1618-82) and printed in books and sold to the public or given to diplomats. The print shows an explosive display lighting the night sky and illuminating the centre stage surmounted with a symbol of the sun. Tournaments were not restricted to the land. At Dunkirk a sea battle had been arranged firstly with a man-of-war and a sham battle to demonstrate a boarding of the enemy, which Montespan says gave the king much pleasure, "and our ladies [of the Court] made their hands sore in applauding. This naval fight terminated in a great feast, which left nothing to be desired in the matter of sumptuousness and delicacy."[215]

Conclusion



73.*Louis Le Grand*, engraving 68.7 x 51.7 cm, by Pierre Drevet (1664-1738) after Hyacinthe Rigaud,1712. Départment des Estampes, Bibliothèque Nationale. Paris.

[215] Montespan. Vol, 6. Chapter, XIX.

Hyacinthe Rigaud's portrait of the absolutist monarch Louis XIV was to become an iconic image, in part made possible by being reproduced through the excellent engraving by Pierre Drevet (fig 73) and being distributed widely in Europe.[216] Coronation robes were timeless, and it was argued that if Louis appeared in the high fashion of the day, that fashion would rapidly be outdated, hence "the 1660s and 1670's saw a veritable flood of representations of that king in Roman military habit," regardless of the incongruity of a Periwig, itself a status symbol.[217] A similar consideration of the eternal was required when Louis appeared as a celestial being dressed diaphanously.

Louis XIV's rebuilding and elaboration of Versailles, from a hunting lodge to a palace provided both the centre of his power and a monument to his future reputation. His own apartments-named after the seven planets- culminating in his throne room reflected his vision of the world orbiting around France, if not his own body. Several of the works studied above were to be found in the palace and the famous *L'Escalier des Ambassadeurs,* described by Burchard as the 'centre of the world,' a total work of art and the summation of the art of the period. Most of that work was made, or directed by, Charles Le Brun who inherited the Renaissance artists self-conscious wish to please their monarch. "The zeal of the artist, however, was not measured in terms of blood, but of time and dedications," emphasises Martin Weyl.[218]

Placing these artworks in the context of authority, kingship, and absolutism, is greatly helped by an understanding of the art theory and art criticism of the time. In the elite world of the king's court where snobbery prevailed the idea of perfection in painting extended, at least in theory, to the artist themselves, *homme de bien*, their modest behaviour and polite conversations.

To produce a good history painting the artist had to study the literary sources and the assumed perfection of Classical sculpture and for supporters of Poussin's Classicism, everything in the scene had to be well

[216] A potentially useful source would have been James-Saazin's 1970 catalogue to the Rigaud exhibition in France and the same author's biography of Rigaud which may have thrown more light on the coronation painting, but neither were available in translation. Also unavailable in translation was Louis's (ghost written) memoirs, a treaty on kingship for his son.
[217] Marly, Diana de. 1975. The Establishment of Roman Dress in Seventeenth Century Portraiture. p 449. The Burlington Magazine. Vol, 117. No, 868. (July,1975). Pp442-451.
[218] Weyl, Martin. 1989. *Passion for Reason and Reason for Passion, Seventeenth Century Art and Theory in France, 1648-1683*. P98. Peter Lang Publishing, Inc. New York.

ordered and united. Emphasis was laid on the expression of figures and physiognomics. Through a study of the past, Le Brun formulated a theory, often stultifying, of gesture and expression, which in theory allowed the viewer's passions to be engrossed. Felibien, who was influenced by musical theory of the period made the comparison, as music charmed the ear, "so in painting the eye is only satisfied if it rests on a harmony of colour, and proper and ordered succession of the various components."[219]

It was also argued that perfect painting (*Idee de la perfection de la peinture*) required a scientific basis, hence the engraver Abraham Bosse giving lessons on Euclidean geometry and perspective on the opening of the academy.[220] The underpinning of art with science derived, in part from the artists feelings of inferiority. In the snobbery of the time "people of quality do not work with their hands." [221] Painters and sculptors, along with the pork butchers of Paris ranked third in the five categories of métiers. Belonging to an 'academy' appeared at least to place artists on the same level with '*honorables hommes*,' such as lawyers and physicians.

In contrast to classicism was the high flying cherubins of baroque mythology. Erudition was required by both artist and viewer when *reading* a mythological scene. Heroic mythology was, "well suited to use by noble and royal patrons seeking artistic glorification," explained Erica Harth.[222] In the complex mythology, Apollo, lyre in hand and sun beams issuing from his head, guided the chariot of the Sun, as Louis guided France. The son of Jupiter, Apollo was born in Arcadia where he gave laws to the inhabitants, as Louis reigned in his arcadia, France. When Apollo the god of archery was born, he killed with his golden arrows the serpent Python which had been sent by Juno to persecute Apollo's mother. Louis has been shown protecting the mother church by crushing heresy in the form of a serpent. Apollo was the god of medicine, music, poetry, eloquence, and fine art, as Louis was proclaimed protector of the arts which he used to

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[219] Felibien, Correspondence 1647, pp 372-373, Poussin to Chantelou. Footnote found in Allard, Joseph, C.1982. Mechanism, Music, and Painting in 17th Century France. p271. The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism. Vol,40. No, 3. (Spring) pp269-279.
[220] Goldstein, Carl. *Studies in Seventeenth Century French Art Theory and Ceiling Painting*. p234. The Art Bulletin. 47, No,2. (1965) 231-356.
[221] Posner, Donald. 1993. p 584. Ibid.
[222] Harth, Erica. 1981. *The Ideological Value of the Portrait in Seventeenth-Century France*. p16. L'Esprit Createur 21, No.3. (1981):15-25.
http://www.jstor.org/stable/26283700

glorify his name. But the representation of Apollo was highly selective. Apollo had the power of prophecy and an ability to shapeshift to satisfy his numerous passionate affairs, an unfortunate comparison with Louis's infidelities. Apollo gave the lyre to Mercury who gave Apollo the Caduceus, originally an olive branch carried by ambassadors symbolising peace, but the one thing Louis did not bring to France was peace.

This study did not take a chronological approach charting the changes in representation. Instead, it has considered Louis' three main themes, absolutism, propaganda, and his performance as semi divine. The study concludes with an examination of the spectacular distractions in which Louis performed for the people and which Louis used to divert, control, and observe the potentially dangerous nobility. "In the leisured society of the French court, being entertained was one of the highest privileges, and the ability to produce entertainment one of the highest signifiers of power," Georgia Cowart tells us.[223] Pageants, fetes, carousels, masques, and ballets, an artificial facade constructed of insubstantial materials, all proposed Louis's presence as a vision of heavenly Jerusalem. "The king is a vortex of significance and everything he touches, however humble, acquires the stamp of the historical…" [224] explained Bryson.

[223] Cowart. 2008. Ibid.
[224] Bryson. 1981. p40. ibid.

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Appendix 1

1638	Louis XIV is born.
1643	Louis XIII dies.
	Lous XIV's mother, Anne of Austria becomes regent.
	With the assistance of her first minister, Cardinal Mazarin, governs France.
1648-53	The Fronde.
1648	End of the Thirty Years' War in Germany.
1654	Coronation of Louis XIV.
1661	Death of Mazarin. Louis XIV takes on the power of a king.
1662	Chapelain discusses glorifying Louis.
1667-68	War of Devolution.
1667-81	The height of Madame de Montespan's influence over Louis.
1672-78	The Dutch War.
1682	The court moves permanently to Versailles.
1683	Death of Colbert.
	Louis XIV secretly marries Madame de Maintenon.
1685	Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.
1688-97	Nine years War.
1701-14	War of Spanish Succession.
1715	Death of Louis XIV.

Appendix 2

Principal Characters

Henry IV (1553-1610) the first Bourbon King of France and sometimes known as Henry of Navarre. Henry was Louis XIV grandfather.

Louis XIII (1601-1643) son of Henry IV, and father to Louis XIV. Louis XIII established in 1624 a hunting lodge at Versailles.

Louis XIV (1638-1715) the self-styled Sun King, King of France, and son of Louis XIII.

Ann of Austria (1601-1666) mother of Louis XIV. She became Regent on the death of her husband Louis XIII. Ann was influenced by Cardinal Mazarin, who may have also been her lover, or even her husband.

Philippe, Duc d'Orleans (1640-1701), Louis XIV younger brother. Philippe was known at court as 'Monsieur'.

Henriette D'Angleterre (1644-1670) the first wife of Philippe d'Orleans. Henriette was the daughter of Charles 1 of England.

Elizabeth Charlotte, Duchesse d'Orleans (1617-1680) the second wife of Philippe. She is sometimes referred to as the Princess Palatine.

Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1642) chief minister to Louis XIII.

Cardinal Mazarin (1602-1661) succeeded Richelieu becoming the chief minister of France and governing until Louis XIV became old enough to be crowned king. Mazarin's administration provoked the civil war known as the Fronde.

Francoise-Athenais de Rochechouart de Mortemart, Marquise de Montespan (1641-1707) mistress of Louis XIV by whom she had seven children. Montespan wrote her Memoires.

Francois Charlotte Amable d'Aubigne, Madame Scarron, Marquise de Maintenon (1635-1719) who married Louis XIV in secret.

Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619-1683) Louis XIV finance minister who created the Gobelins manufactory.

Louis II de Bourbon, Prince de Conde (1621-1686) French general who led the rebellion (the Fronde) against the Crown but later became a supporter of Louis XIV.

Duc de Saint-Simon (1675-1755) who kept a secret and highly informative memoire.

Hyacinthe Rigaud (1659-1743) Catalan-French portrait painter.

Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) landscape painter.

Charles Le Brun (1619-1690) premier painter to Louis XIV and highly influential in the decorations of royal houses.

Pierre Mignard (1612-1695) also known as Mignard le Romain, painter of religious, mythological and portrait subjects.

Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680) Baroque sculptor.