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The reflections of memory : an account of a cognitive approach to historically informed staging

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2 Allegorical program by Quinault for the Poetics of the French opera

« It is true that Lully had the good fortune to find a Poet whose verses were worthy of his music, and those verses being such as he desired in order to reveal with them all of the beauties and delicacies that his art could bring to light, but this good fortune was due to the composer himself, to the effect that nothing remained to be desired in his works. »

Charles Perrault. *Des hommes illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce siècle...*
Paris: A. Dezallier, 1696¹.

« It was not enough to say that Quinault was an excellent Poet in the Lyrique du Theater, and that no one, neither Ancients nor Moderns, had equaled him in this kind of poetry. One went as far to say, and to say it all in one voice, that perhaps there would never be another one who equals him. »

Charles Perrault. *Des hommes illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce siècle...*
Paris: A. Dezallier, 1696².

With the impressive list of distinguished collaborators that joined forces to write it, but also in the variety of its different versions, *Psyché* has a special place in the works of Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–1687) and therefore is of special relevance when trying to understand the specificity of French opera. Aside from the various productions by Molière (1622–1673) of his play, the work knew two distinct versions with music by Lully separated by several years: in 1671, *Psyché, Tragi-comédie, et Ballet*, a theatre play with incidental music and, in 1678, the opera *Psyché*, also presented as a *Tragédie*, like other operas by Lully, in its contemporary editions³. This temporal distance is even more consequential as this period saw the birth of the Lullist opera. *Psyché* is indeed one of Jean-Baptiste Lully's most intriguing works: in the various other pieces which lead to it, but also in the plurality of interpretations its libretto allows.

¹ « Il est vray qu'il [Lully] a eu le bonheur de trouver un Poëte don't les Vers ont esté dignes de sa Musique, & tels qu'il pouvait les desirer pour bien mettre en leur jour toutes les beautez & toutes les delicatesses de son Art, mais ce bonheur luy estoit deu [du] afin qu'il ne restait rien à desirer à ses Ouvrages. » in *Des hommes illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce siècle, avec leurs portraits au naturel. Tome 1 /*, par M. [Charles] Perrault,... Paris: A. Dezallier, 1696, p. 86.

² « On ne s'est pas contenté de dire qu'il [Quinault] estoit un Poëte excellent dans le Lyrique du Theatre, & que personne, ni des Anciens, ni des Modernes ne l'avoit égalé dans cette espèce de Poësie, on a esté jusqu'à dire, & à le dire tout d'une voix, qu'il en viendrait peut-estre jamais un autre qui l'égalast. » in *Des hommes illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce siècle, avec leurs portraits au naturel. Tome 1 /*, par M. [Charles] Perrault, ... Paris: A. Dezallier, 1696, p. 82.

³ The distinction between the two versions is easier if one keeps in mind the slightly different spelling, with the letter « i » used for the *Psyché* of 1671, and with a « y » for the *Psyché* of 1678. See: *Psyché, tragi-comédie et ballet, dansé devant S. M. au mois de janvier 1671*. Paris: R. Ballard, 1671. And: *Psyché, tragédie représentée par l'Académie Royale de Musique*. Paris: René Baudry, 1678. Subsequent editions are not always consistent in this regard, but in this article, I refer to the spellings given in the first printed edition of each libretto. (It is interesting to remember that the name of the composer himself will see a similar modification, from Lulli to Lully.)

Of all the musical « Intermèdes » from the original 1671 play, the last one shows this celebration and has a specific status. This final long scene, where dance is mixed with singing, is clearly considered a special entity as evidenced by the original title of the piece: *Psiché, Tragi-comédie, et Ballet*. This concluding *Ballet* after the end of Psyché's story is not written by Molière – like all sung parts which punctuate the *Tragi-comédie*, the verses are from the hand of Quinault. In style and composition, it is of a completely different dramatic nature compared to the rest of the piece. This surprising ending presents a complex program of « entrées » in the « V. Intermède », and by its length and complexity seems to call for a special elucidation, both symbolic and emblematic. To date, this *Ballet* of *Psiché* has generated little research and no real critical interpretation⁴; therefore, I will try here to propose a new reading of Quinault's contribution.

This research started in 2006, while preparing my stage production of *Psyché*, the opera version of 1678 wherein the final ballet of 1671 is integrated in its entirety, for the Boston Early Music Festival⁵. My aims were threefold: to examine the detail of the texts of this *Ballet* while focusing on the poetics and the aesthetics of *Ballet de Cour*, to provide a first period intellectual spatial order transferable for the blocking and applicable for the staging, and to give some new perspective on the role Quinault played in creating French opera. The present chapter develops this approach and gives some new references to support the importance of *Psiché*'s ending in the history of French opera.

2.1 The *Ballet* of *Psiché* in 1671

The circumstances around the creation of the very first piece in 1671, presented under the title *Psiché*, are revealing as to the importance of the staging in its poetic conception but also regarding the effect of the royal artistic propaganda, a program which increased its sphere of influence at the time⁶. The poet François Lagrange-Chancel (1677–1758) gives a rare testimony of the genesis of *Psiché*, albeit long after the first performance. He tells us that Louis XIV (1638–1715) was « resolved to give all his court one of these great festivals »⁷. The king was the declared patron, but the command was based on two performing circumstances. The first was driven by economic and stage constraints: keen to reopen the « Salle des Machines », the theatre of the Palais des Tuileries, and also to reuse the scenery from *Ercole amante*, which had been presented there almost ten years earlier, the king asked several poets to propose a performance subject that « an excellent decoration representing the Underworld could be put

⁴ See: Norman, Buford. *Quinault, librettiste de Lully, Le poète des Grâces*, Translation by Thomas Vernet and Jean Duron. Versailles: Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, and Liège: Mardaga, 2001. See also: Couvreur, Manuel. *Jean-Baptiste Lully, Musique et dramaturgie au service du Prince*. [Bruxelles]: Marc Vokar, 1992, p. 257.

⁵ A summary of the research was presented in the 2007 BEMF Program Book. See: Blin, Gilbert. “The allegorical ending of *Psyché*” in *Boston Early Music Festival Program Book, 11–17 June 2007, Feast of the Gods*. Cambridge, (MA): Boston Early Music Festival, [2007], pp. 140 & 141. This text, with some minor edits, was included in the CD booklet of the recording by the Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra & Chorus conducted by Paul O'Dette and Stephen Stubbs, CPO 777 367-2.

⁶ See: Apostolidès, Jean-Marie. *Le roi-machine, Spectacle et politique au temps de Louis XIV*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1981.

⁷ « ayant résolu de donner à toute sa cour une de ces grandes fêtes » in: Lagrange-Chancel, François. “Préface” to *Orphée, Tragédie en Machines* in *Œuvres de Monsieur Lagrange-Chancel, nouvelle édition, revue et corrigé par lui-même*, Tome IV, Paris: Libraires associés, 1758, p. 63.

into, which was carefully preserved in his furniture repository »⁸. Beyond the obligation to use an existing set there was the royal artistic propaganda, then developing its influence, to consider: the sun king had ceased dancing in 1670⁹, and the court ballet, obligatory entertainment for the Carnival, lacks in polarity. Louis XIV wanted to renew and to extend the political influence of his *Menus-Plaisirs*¹⁰. There were many suitable subjects in Greco-Roman mythology that would require the underworld scenery, and the poets most able to serve the royal request answered the call of the king with the best-known ones: « Racine proposed the descent of Orpheus, Quinault the abduction of Proserpine [...] and Molière, with the help of the great Corneille, was for the subject of Psyche »¹¹.

Indeed, it may be a vain wish to want to see in the proposal by Jean Racine (1639–1699) the desire to feature a character known as a poet and a musician; more likely it would have been influenced by the innovation of « machines » spectacles in France. The subject of Orpheus had previously been treated on the French stage by Luigi Rossi (1597–1653) and Francesco Buti (1604–1682) with their *Orfeo*, offered to the Parisians by Cardinal Mazarin (1602–1661) in 1647. The myth also inspired François de Chapoton (15??–16??), and his *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers* had achieved great success in 1639. This *Pièce à machines* was subsequently revived in 1648 and 1662 to benefit from the popularity of the mechanical performances of the machines for *Orfeo* and *Ercole amante*¹².

Constructed in 1659–1661, the theatre of the Tuileries Palace was built specifically to present the opera *Ercole amante*. The « Théâtre des Tuileries », also known as the Salle des Machines¹³, because of its elaborate stage machinery, was designed by the Italian theatre architects Gaspare Vigarani (1588–1663) and his two sons, Carlo (1637–1713) and Lodovico (1624–16?). This theatre was not a new architectural conception but based on the one Vigarani had built in Modena before, the Teatro della Spelta. In the eighteenth century, the French Président de Brosses visiting Modena, reported: « After the opera, the duke¹⁴ took me by the

⁸ « Pour cet effet, il leur demanda un sujet où pût entrer une excellente décoration qui représentoit les enfers, & qui étoit soigneusement conservée dans ses garde-meubles. » in: Lagrange-Chancel, François. "Préface" to *Orphée, Tragédie en Machines* in *Œuvres de Monsieur Lagrange-Chancel* [...]. Paris: Libraires associés, 1758, p. 63.

⁹ Although Louis XIV rehearsed his roles of Neptune and Apollon, he did not dance in February 1670 for the performances of *Les Amants magnifiques* by Molière with music by Lully: two courtiers replaced the king. See: La Gorce, Jérôme de. *Jean-Baptiste Lully*. Paris: Fayard, 2002, pp. 156–158.

¹⁰ The *Menus-Plaisirs* was the royal organization responsible for the "lesser pleasures of the King", which meant in practice it was in charge of all the preparations for ceremonies, events and festivities at Court. Cowart, Georgia. *The Triumph of Pleasure, Louis XIV & the Politics of Spectacle*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008.

¹¹ « Racine proposa le sujet d'Orphée ; Quinault [sic], l'enlèvement de Proserpine [...] & Molière, avec l'aide du grand Corneille, tint pour le sujet de Psyché » in: Lagrange-Chancel, François. "Préface" to *Orphée, Tragédie en Machines* in *Œuvres de Monsieur Lagrange-Chancel* [...]. Paris: Libraires associés, 1758, p. 63.

¹² Chapoton, François de. *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers* 1639, Établissement du texte, notes et postface par Hélène Visentin. Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2004.

¹³ Coeyman, Barbara (1998). "Opera and Ballet in Seventeenth-Century French Theatres: Case Studies of the Salle des Machines and the Palais Royal Theater" in Radice, Mark A. *Opera in Context: Essays on Historical Staging from the Late Renaissance to the Time of Puccini*. Portland (OR): Amadeus Press. 1998, pp. 37–71.

¹⁴ Duke Francesco III d'Este (1698–1780).

hand and said to me: “Come, let me show you the Tuileries Hall.” He had torches brought by his pages and conducted me to a large auditorium entirely similar to this one. The same architect built both; the one of Modena is the original. On the reputation it had, the king [Louis XIV] wished to have one in France. It is not used much in Modena, nor in Paris; it has been recognized that the ordinary form of our theatres is even more convenient »¹⁵. Both theatres had two main particularities: their auditoriums were constructed as an amphitheatre and their stages were extremely deep, allowing perspective sets to be of grand architectural proportions, framed by tall columns and pilasters. The stage of the Tuileries was narrower than the one of Modena, as it can be observed while comparing a little documented drawing of the Italian theatre¹⁶ and an engraving showing the Salle des Machines¹⁷. (Figure 1 and 2).

Indeed, finding a subject to fill up such a performing space was the first key of a possible success. Lagrange-Chancel tells us that he « often heard from the famous Racine that the subject of Orpheus was of all the adornments the most able to form a great spectacle »¹⁸. To create a « great spectacle » was the general guideline of the royal command. Philippe Quinault (1635–1688), aware of the potential of the story of Proserpine for the spectacular, suggested the character, and although his proposal was not selected, « he subsequently made [it] one of his finest operas. »¹⁹ As early as 1666, Quinault worked as a poet for the court ballets with his contributions to *Le Ballet Royal des Muses*²⁰. His production for spoken theatre, of which his tragedy *Pausanias* performed in 1668 marks the peak, was crowned with success.

¹⁵ « Après l’opéra, le duc me prit par la main et me dit : Venez, que je vous fasse voir la salle des Tuileries. Il fit apporter des flambeaux par ses pages, et me conduisit dans une grande salle de spectacle entièrement semblable à celle-ci : le même architecte a construit l’une et l’autre ; celle de Modène est l’original. Sur la réputation qu’elle avait, le roi voulut en avoir une pareille en France. On ne s’en sert pas trop à Modène, non plus qu’à Paris ; on a reconnu que la forme ordinaire de nos théâtres est encore plus commode. » in Lettre du Président de Brosses à M. de Neuilly, « A Modène, le mercredi des Cendres 1740. », in *Le Président de Brosses*, édition par Yves Florenne, Paris : Mercure de France, 1964, p. 205.

¹⁶ Sale “The Collection of the late Marianne C. Gourary”, Bloomsbury Auction, Oct 28, 2015, London. This drawing shows, in front of the proscenium, a group of seven men and among them, the Duke of Modena, recognizable to his hat and his position right under the coats of arms of Este at the top of the theatre frame, pointing at a paper presented by the architect Gaspare Vigarani. On the stage, some painters are still working on the sets: A huge cloud machine is hovering above the stage. On the ground is a figure of dragon. This view is also known thanks to an engraving by Bartolomeo Fenis, albeit in a reverse composition.

¹⁷ This reduction was imposed by the fact the architect had to fit his plan to continue the existing architecture of the Tuileries palace. See: La Gorce, Jérôme de. *Carlo Vigarani, intendant des plaisirs de Louis XIV*. Paris : Perrin, 2005, pp. 19–20.

¹⁸ « J’ai souvent entendu dire au fameux Racine, que le sujet d’Orphée étoit le plus susceptible de tous les ornemens qui peuvent former un grand spectacle. » in: Lagrange-Chancel, François. “Préface” to *Orphée, Tragédie en Machines* in *Œuvres de Monsieur Lagrange-Chancel* [...]. Paris: Libraires associés, 1758, p. 64.

¹⁹ « dont il fit dans la suite un de ses plus beaux opéras » in: Lagrange-Chancel, François. “Préface” to *Orphée, Tragédie en Machines* in *Œuvres de Monsieur Lagrange-Chancel* [...]. Paris: Libraires associés, 1758, p. 63. Quinault’s libretto for *Proserpine* will be finalized in 1680, during his « comeback » to the opera stage, not long after the second *Psyché* of 1678. See: Quinault, Philippe. *Livrets d’Opéra, Présentés et annotés par Buford Norman, Tome Premier*, Toulouse: Société de Littératures Classiques, 1999.

²⁰ This Ballet, created in the Château de Saint-Germain-en-Laye on 2 December 1666, has seven texts by Quinault, See: *Le Ballet Royal des Muses Dansé par Sa Majesté à son chateau de S. Germain en Laye, le 2. décembre; 1666* Paris: Robert Ballard, 1666.

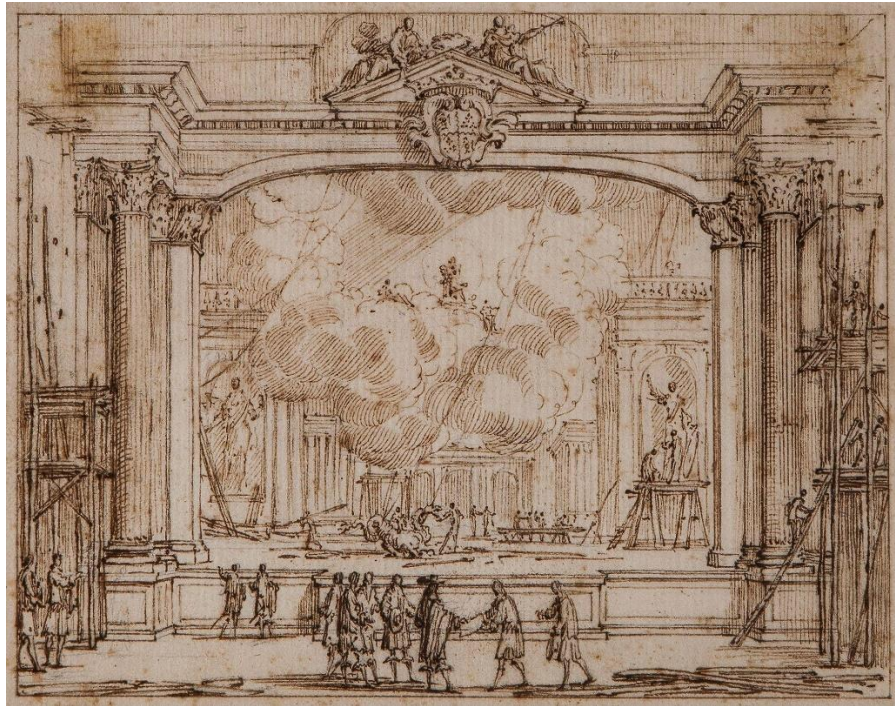


Figure 1: Adam Perelle (1640-1695), attributed to, *Gaspare Vigarini presenting to Duke Francesco I the Teatro della Spelta in Modena, 1659.*
Actual location unknown

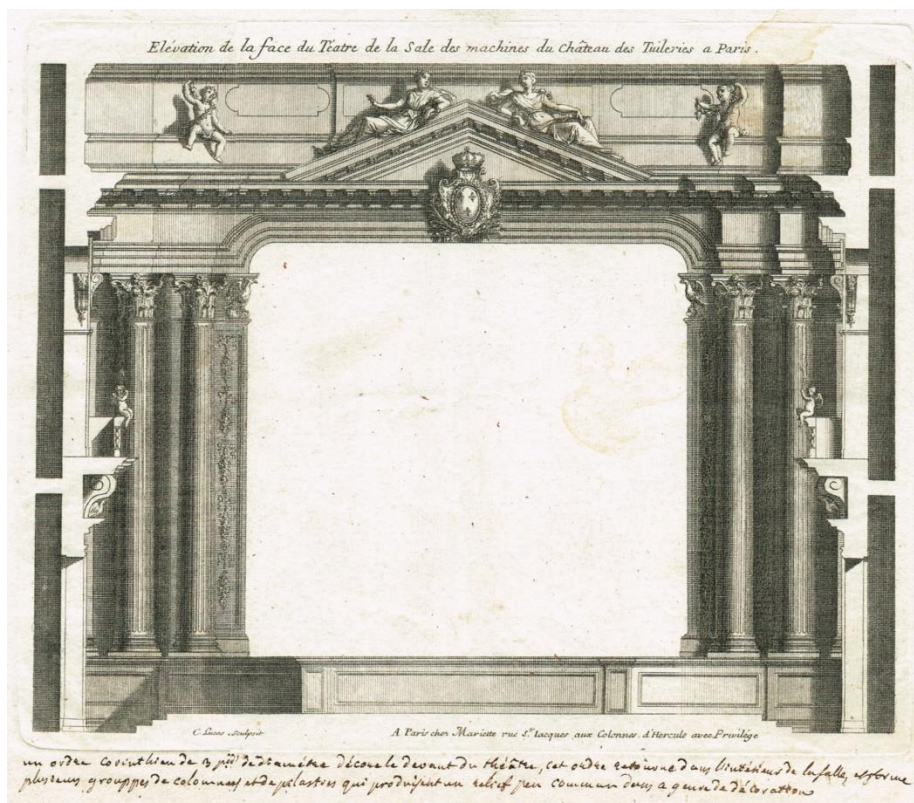


Figure 2: *Elévation de la face du Théâtre de la Sale des machines du Château des Tuileries a Paris*
Engraving by Claude L. Lucas (1685? – 1765)
from Jean Mariette. *L'Architecture françoise*. A Paris, chez Mariette, [1727-1738].
Collection of Gilbert Blin.

The same year he had already collaborated with Molière on the spectacle of *Le Carnaval, mascarade*²¹. The first attempt by Quinault and Lully to offer a fully composed homogenous operatic work, *La Grotte de Versailles*, was successfully performed before Louis XIV in 1668 and revived in 1669 and 1670 « avec une dépense extraordinaire »²². Quinault's reception at the Académie française in 1670 established him as an official poet considered well suited to fit the regicentric rules of the royal institution²³. *Bellerophon*, the first tragedy he offered as academician, was officially presented to the Parisian audience in February 1671. But Quinault's play had already been given during some « visites », a type of pre-premiere at court, in January, at the same time *Psiché* was performed²⁴, suggesting rehearsals concurrent with *Psiché*'s.

A project like the Tuileries show required not only literary qualities but also those of a theatre man, able to direct the stage of such a big theatre. Molière, when he proposed the story of Psyche, was acting not only as a poet but also as a company director capable of organizing and uniting the many talents, including the one of the set designer Carlo Vigarani (1637–1713), that such a grand spectacle requires²⁵. And events were to prove that it was this last quality that saved Molière, who was unable to write the full text of the play but resourceful enough to gather around him other gifted poets such as Pierre Corneille (1606–1684) and Quinault to collaborate on the text; they ultimately provided a grand spectacle. Louis XIV, still delighted with the recent successes of *Les Amants magnifiques* and *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme*, chose Molière and thus Psyche, perhaps bearing in mind that the subject allowed for the comic episodes that were appropriate during Carnival²⁶. The Roman tale of the beautiful mortal Psyche provided Molière the plot of the play: the persecutions she endures from the envious Venus, goddess of

²¹ The first version of 1668 was created at the Louvre (appartements du roi) on 18 January 1668 (Note: The 1675 version is different). See: *Le carnaval, mascarade royale, dansée par Sa Majesté, le 18 janvier 1668*, Paris: Robert Ballard, 1668.

²² Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Manuscrits, Mélanges Colbert 286, f. 11v-12r: « A M Nicolas Melique tresorier aux menus plaisirs et aff^{es} de la chambre du Roy la somme de six mil six cent vingt cinq livres quatorze sols pour avec iii.⁹ [3.000] It qu'il a ci devant recus faire ix.⁹ vi.^c xxv.^{lt} xiiii s. pour le parfait paiement de la desp.^{ce} extraordinaire faite dans lesd' menus plaisirs tant po^r. l'Eglogue et autres divertissemens representez devant sa Maiesté au chau' de Versailles les 23. aoust et 6. septemb^r 1670. ». See: <http://www.quinault.info/Home/la-vie/Sources> (accessed 5 November 2017)

²³ « Je scay, MESSIEURS, qu'il s'en faut beaucoup que le vulgaire apperçoive ce que vous pénétrez, & que souvent il y a bien loin de l'estime du peuple à votre approbation, aussi n'ay-je souhaité d'obtenir la grace que vous m'accordez, que pour acquérir parmy vous la perfection qui me manque, & les lumieres dont j'ay besoin. » In "Compliment fait en 1670. Par Monsieur Quinault, Auditeur des Comptes, lorsqu'il fut reçu à la place de Monsieur Salomon" in *Recueil des harangues prononcées par Messieurs de l'Académie françoise dans leurs réceptions, & en d'autres occasions différentes, depuis l'establissement de l'Académie jusqu'à present*. A Paris: chez Jean Baptiste Coignard, imprimeur ordinaire du Roy, & de l'Académie françoise, rue S. Jacques, à la Bible d'or. MDCLXXXVIII [1698], p. 102.

²⁴ *Bellerophon* was performed on 22 and 23 January 1671 at the Château of Vincennes. « Leurs majestez continüans les Divertissemens du Carnaval, au Chasteau de Vincennes, y eurent celui de la chasse: & apres une splendide Collation, celui d'une Tragedie intitulée Bellérophon, par la troupe Royale » in *La Gazette*, No. 14, Paris: 1671, p. 107.

²⁵ Molière had already proven his capability in Versailles with *Les Plaisirs de l'île enchantée* of 1664 and *Le Grand Divertissement Royal* of 1668. See: Moine, Marie-Christine. *Les fêtes à la Cour du Roi Soleil 1653–1715*. Paris: F. Sorlot & F. Lanore, 1984.

²⁶ The story of Psyche is first told by Apuleius (ca. 124 – ca. 170 AD) in his *Metamorphoses*, a comical novel known today as *The Golden Ass*, following the designation by St. Augustine (Asinus aureus).

Beauty, and the Love she inspires in Cupid (L'Amour) himself. Cupid disguises himself in order not to be recognized, but curiosity overtakes Psyche and she discovers the identity of her lover. She breaks Cupid's charm, and Venus, to test Psyche, orders her to carry out a symbolic task: to go to the underworld. Psyche, saved by Love, returns, and to appease the jealous Venus, Jupiter makes Psyche immortal. Psyche and Cupid are reunited, and Jupiter invites all the Gods to celebrate the glory of Love. Molière²⁷ arranged the plot in such a way as to use in his staged production not only the sets of the underworld, but almost all the decorations of *Ercole amante*: the sea port fortified by several towers, the cypress garden full of magnificent sepulchers, the desert of horrible rocks, the courtyard of a palace, the garden, the portico of the Temple of Hymen. This re-use of existing resources from *Ercole amante*²⁸ did not prevent the invoices of painters and decorators working on *Psiché* to reach substantial amounts. The state of the production expenses²⁹, gives a huge total without counting the fees of the actors. If the construction costs of the theatre building are included, it is said that it was the most expensive of the French court's « great spectacle » mounted up to that date.

2.2 The content and symbolism of the *Ballet of Psiché*

Psyché's marriage with Cupid symbolized, for the audience of 1671, the eternal union of the human soul with the divine love³⁰. To celebrate this eternity which starts with the apotheosis of Psyché, all of Olympus appears at this concluding Ballet. « The divinities who had been divided between Venus and her son, reunite, seeing them in agreement; and all together, through concerts, songs, and dances, celebrate the nuptial feast of Love and Psyche. »³¹ Indeed, as the peace is restored, all the gods and goddesses who have appeared during the tale return to the stage. From the list of the « Noms des personnes qui ont recité, dansé & chanté dans Psiché, Tragi-comédie, & Ballet » which is found at the end of the editions of Molière's play, it appears that most of the characters seen during the previous intermèdes would have returned to form, by their union with the gods appearing in the plot, the « Chœur des Divinités célestes ». But to complete this Olympus, created by cloud machines, other divinities appear for the first time in this entertainment. Four masculine deities, who have not been seen before, rule over the revels: Apollo, the god of harmony; Bacchus, the god of wine; Momus, the god of mockery; and Mars, the warrior god. It would be easy to assume that each of these gods is simply what he is known to be in classical mythology, but the significance of

²⁷ Molière *Psyché, Tragédie-Ballet en cinq actes avec une notice et des notes par Georges Monval*. Paris : Librairie des Bibliophiles Flammarion, 1895.

²⁸ [Francesco Buti] *Ercole amante : tragedia rappresentata per la nozze delle Maestà christianissime, Hercule amoureux : tragédie représentée pour les nocces de leurs Majestez tres-chrestienne*. Paris : R. Ballard, 1662.

²⁹ This document, preserved in the manuscripts of the British Museum, was first published in 1891, by M. Bougenot in *Bulletin historique et philologique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques*, 1891.

³⁰ This was the moral interpretation of the myth given in the fifth century by Martian Capella and the Christian approach by Fulgence. For an history of the myth of Psyché, see: Collignon, Maxime. *Essai sur les Monuments grecs et romains relatifs au mythe de Psyché*. Paris: Ernest Thorin, 1877; Le Maître, H. *Essai sur le mythe de Psyché dans la littérature française des origines à 1890*. Paris: Boivin & Cie, éditeurs, [1940]; and Gély, Véronique. *L'invention d'un mythe : Psyché, Allégorie et fiction, du siècle de Platon au temps de La Fontaine*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 2006.

³¹ « Les divinités qui avaient été partagées entre Venus & son fils, se réunissent en les voyant d'accord ; et tous ensemble par des concerts, des chants, & des danses, célèbrent la fête des nocces de l'Amour & de Psyché. » Molière, *Psiché*, V. Intermède.

this ballet is hidden behind such a first reading. The choice of these gods leaves the viewer perplexed: if music and wine are expected at a wedding, Apollo and Bacchus could serve as « Maîtres d'hôtel »³² under the order of Jupiter, and the presence of Momus could announce some theatrical entertainments, but how to explain Mars? War is an unlikely guest, and an even more unlikely « ordonnateur »³³ at such nuptials.

To determine their personal status, we must consider that if they appear on stage together, it is these associations which need to be deciphered. The four of them, each with his own retinue, are of equal importance, and even if the order in which they will sing will be of special relevance, it is by their association that these four gods indicate an allegorical meaning. Since the sixteenth century, the art of *Ballet de Cour*, as a princely entertainment, was intended to connect well-read references and witty associations in an intricate manner³⁴. The Greek and Latin worlds, with their complex systems of allegory, were associated with contemporary references through a visually transmitted rhetoric³⁵. By 1671, after decades of taking part in and being the audience for numerous Ballets, Louis's court was sufficiently trained to expect and to decipher enigmas through mottos and visual attributes³⁶. Given the ingenuity of Quinault who was familiar with the complex world of the *Ballet de Cour*³⁷, which concept is symbolized in the action of the final ballet of *Psyché*?

The royal commission behind the creation of *Psyché* began as a kind of poetry contest. The winner, Molière, was busy as « The Carnival was approaching, and the pressing orders of the King, who intended to give this magnificent entertainment several times before Lent, put him in the necessity of suffering a little help ». This « little help » was a euphemism by the publisher as Molière gathered a large team around him including Quinault, one of the unsuccessful contestants³⁸. « This work is not all by one hand. M. Quinault has made the words

³² François Vatel (1631–1671) is the most famous of these Maîtres d'hôtel. Vatel served Louis XIV's superintendent Nicolas Fouquet in the splendid fête at the Château de Vaux-le-Vicomte on 17 August 1661. Ten years later, few months after the opening of *Psyché*, Vatel was responsible for a banquet for 2000 people hosted in honor of Louis XIV by le Grand Condé in April 1671, at the Château de Chantilly. According to Madame de Sévigné, Vatel, distraught about the lateness of the seafood delivery, committed suicide. See: James A. Harrison, editor, *Letters of Madame de Sévigné*, 1899, p. 35. For a visually historically informed cinematographic interpretation, see also Joffé, Roland. *Vatel, DVD, Film by Roland Joffé*. Neuilly-sur-Seine: Gaumont Vidéo, 2000.

³³ I used the French word « ordonnateur » as an equivalent of the Italian « corago ».

³⁴ See: Christout, Marie-Françoise. *Le Ballet de Cour de Louis XIV, 1643–1672, Mises en scène*. Préface d'André Chastel. Paris : Picard, 1967 and Durosoir, Georgie. *Les ballets de la cour de France au XVIIe siècle, ou les fantaisies et les splendeurs du Baroque*. Genève: Éditions Papillon, 2004.

³⁵ See: Saunders, Alison. *The Seventeenth-century French Emblem: A Study in Diversity*. Genève, Librairie Droz, 2000.

³⁶ See: Mourey, Marie-Thérèse. «L'art du Ballet de Cour aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles : poétique de l'image animée» in: *La construction des images : persuasion et rhétorique, création des mythes, Actes en ligne du Colloque Ecole Doctorale IV, « Civilisations, cultures, littératures et sociétés »*. Paris : 2009. <http://www.paris-sorbonne.fr/fr/spip.php?article9555>. (accessed 5 November 2017).

³⁷ For period perspectives on the *Ballet de Cour*, see : Ménestrier, Claude-François. *Des Ballets anciens et modernes selon les règles du theatre*. Paris: Rene' Guignard, 1682.

³⁸ We do not know for sure how this team was made, but one may surmise that Molière would have wished to exclude Racine. See: Caldicott, Edric. «Les fonctions incompatibles de Molière, impresario et auteur de cour» in *Les Métamorphoses de Psyché*. Dossier établi par Carine Barbaferi et Chris Rauseo. Valenciennes: Presses Universitaires de Valenciennes, 2004, pp. 101–112.

in it which are sung in music, with the exception of the Italian Complaint. M. de Molière has drawn up the Plan of the work, and regulated the disposition, in which he is more attached to the beauties and pomp of the Spectacle than to the exact regularity. As for the Versification, he had not the leisure to do it whole. [...] Thus, there is only the Prologue, the First Act, the first Scene of the Second and the First of the Third, of which the Verses are by him. M. Corneille was occupied a fortnight for the rest; and by this means His Majesty found himself served at the time that he had ordered it ».³⁹ The events, which tell about this remarkable team working diligently to satisfy the king, are close enough to the gods uniting their talents to answer Jupiter.

Quinault, in charge of the sung verses which conclude the spectacle, may have made an allusion to these circumstances of the creation, in the pure tradition of the allegorical tribute of the *Ballet de Cour* to its participants. It is thinkable to see in Jupiter, the ruler of the gods, who wanted the other deities to celebrate Love and Psyché, an image of Louis XIV himself, asking his most accomplished poets to create a new entertainment to mark the elevation of a lady to a superior status (maybe to celebrate Madame de Montespan (1640–1707), the favorite who had just given birth to his son?⁴⁰). And Quinault could have traced portraits of his colleagues in this unseen team of artists: Lully (Figure 3) was perhaps the god of harmony Apollon in this assembly⁴¹, while Molière (Figure 4) could be seen as Momus, the god of raillery. Pierre Corneille (Figure 5), famous for his heroic plays⁴², would have made a suitable Mars and Quinault (Figure 6) might have seen himself as Bacchus, as he had just gained special recognition for his abilities in the *Pastorale* genre for *La Grotte de Versailles*. These « grands génies de son siècle »⁴³ answered the order of Louis, much like the gods united their talents to create something new to please Jupiter and to entertain the celestial court⁴⁴.

³⁹ « Le libraire au lecteur. Cet Ouvrage n'est pas tout d'une main. M. Quinault a fait les Paroles qui s'y chantent en Musique, à la réserve de la Plainte Italienne. M. de Molière a dressé le Plan de la Pièce, et réglé la disposition, où il s'est plus attaché aux beautés et à la pompe du Spectacle qu'à l'exacte régularité. Quant à la Versification il n'a pas eu le loisir de la faire entière. Le Carnaval approchait, et les Ordres pressants du Roi, qui se voulait donner ce magnifique Divertissement plusieurs fois avant le Carême l'ont mis dans la nécessité de souffrir un peu de secours. Ainsi il n'y a que le Prologue, le Premier Acte, la première Scène du Second et la première du Troisième, dont les Vers soient de lui. M. Corneille a employé une quinzaine au reste ; et par ce moyen Sa Majesté s'est trouvée servie dans le temps qu'elle l'avait ordonné. » in Molière, *Psyché*, avertissement du libraire, in Molière. *Œuvres complètes*. Paris: Gallimard, 2010, vol. II, p. 423.

⁴⁰ Louis-Auguste de Bourbon, duc du Maine was born 31 March 1670 in Saint-Germain-en-Laye. See: Voltaire. *Le Siècle de Louis XIV*, publié par M. de Francheville... Tome second. Berlin: C.-F. Henning, 1751, pp. 53–55.

⁴¹ Lully may also have contributed to the libretto: the verses of the Italian complaint is attributed to him.

⁴² The apocryphal words of Turenne, « Où donc Corneille a-t-il appris l'art de la guerre? », supposed to have been prompted by *Sertorius*, were reported and at the same time dismissed by Voltaire in his 1764 *Commentaires sur Corneille*. Nevertheless, their existence points to the martial quality of Pierre Corneille's theatre, where honor and duty were at the center of his stage rhetoric.

⁴³ See: Lagrange-Chancel, François. "Préface" to *Orphée, Tragédie en Machines* in *Œuvres de Monsieur Lagrange-Chancel, nouvelle édition, revue et corrigé par lui-même, Tome IV*. Paris: Libraires associés, 1758, p. 63.

⁴⁴ This reading is supported by some verses of Charles Robinet dating from 1665: « L'admirable et plaisant Molière, / Le Mome des terrestres Dieux, / Comme l'autre est Molière aux Cieux » quoted in: La Gorce, Jérôme de. *Jean-Baptiste Lully*. Paris: Fayard, 2002, p. 496.



Figure 3: *Jean-Baptiste Lully* (1633–1687)
Engraving by Dominique Sornique (1708–1756)
Collection of Gilbert Blin.



Figure 4: *Jean Baptiste Poquelin Molière* (1622–1673)
Engraving by Gérard Edelinck (1640–1707) from *Des hommes illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce siècle, avec leurs portraits au naturel. Tome 1/, par M. [Charles] Perrault, ...* Paris: A. Dezallier, 1696.
Collection of Gilbert Blin.



Figure 5: Pierre Corneille (1606–1684)

Engraving by Jacques Lubin (1637–1695) from *Des hommes illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce siècle, avec leurs portraits au naturel. Tome 1 / , par M. [Charles] Perrault,...*

Paris: A. Dezallier, 1696.

Collection of Gilbert Blin.



Figure 6: Philippe Quinault (1635–1688)

Engraving by Gérard Edelinck (1640–1707) from *Des hommes illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce siècle, avec leurs portraits au naturel. Tome 1 / , par M. [Charles] Perrault, ...*

Paris: A. Dezallier, 1696.

Collection of Gilbert Blin.

2.3 A Forebearer in 1656: *Le Ballet de Psyché ou de la Puissance de l'Amour*

It is Apollo as the Sun God, presented by Quinault as « Dieu de l'Harmonie », who leads the whole celebration. He opens with a « Récit » (musical speech) that orders the unification of all Gods and « invites [them] to rejoice », after which he orders them to « sing together to praise Love ». The shift of focus from Psyché to Amour is radical; indeed, the heroine is never mentioned again⁴⁵. More eloquently, in Quinault's text, the French name « Amour » not only refers to Cupid, the character of the tale whom the feast honors, but also to the general feeling that he incarnates: Love. The poet fully exploits this ambiguity of the French language, which uses the same word for both. Such richness of meanings had already been captured by Molière and Pierre Corneille in the rest of the play, but Quinault gives the word its double sense in order to expand the significance of his ballet, which thereby acquires another level of meaning. In this introduction Quinault invokes what the inspiration of his ballet: Love and its eternal power. The theme was not new, as it had previously been the subject of a *Ballet de Cour* on a text by Isaac de Benserade (1612–1691) with music by Lully: *Le Ballet de Psyché ou de la Puissance de l'Amour*. Created fifteen years before, in 1656, this ballet deserves some attention as, despite its music having been lost, it offers some perspective on the *Psyché* of 1671.

Le Ballet de Psyché ou de la Puissance de l'Amour was created on 17 January 1656 in the Louvre⁴⁶. Benserade did not develop the story of the love between Psyché and L'Amour in dramatic terms but articulated the ballet around two major events: « In the first are depicted the beauty and delights of the Palace of Love. And in the second, Love himself entertains the beautiful Psyche by the representation of some of the wonders he has produced. »⁴⁷ Some features of Benserade's *Ballet* are particularly relevant to *Psyché*. The king, then aged eighteen, danced in the production, first as the character of Le Printemps (spring) in the second entrée next to Zephyre, Flore, Vertumne and Bacchus, gods who also appear, again associated with the abundance given by the royal peace, in the *Psyché* of 1671. The first part offered a ballet within the ballet: a « Ballet of the Five Senses », inserted in the larger structure and developed in as many consecutive entrées of « merveilles » : First three excellent painters were brought into the Palace by the will of Love, to satisfy the sense of sight with their works. Musicians followed to charm the sense of hearing.⁴⁸ In the following entrée a god and his allegorical

⁴⁵ It is possible that the full ballet of *Psyché* could have come from the draft Quinault proposed in 1670 for a work on *Proserpine*, « dont il fit dans la suite un de ses plus beaux opéras ». See: Lagrange-Chancel, François. « Préface » to *Orphée, Tragédie en Machines* in *Œuvres de Monsieur Lagrange-Chancel* [...]. Paris: Libraires associés, 1758, p. 63. When Quinault completes the project on this character as an opera for Lully in 1680, he creates a similar situation at the end of the opera in the wedding of Pluton and Proserpine (order restored: rejoicing about the power of love) which could lead to the text of the full final ballet of *Psyché*, as the title character is not mentioned in the text of the ballet. See : Quinault, Philippe. *Livrets d'Opéra, Présentés et annotés par Buford Norman, Tome Premier*. Toulouse : Société de Littératures Classiques, 1999.

⁴⁶ Ballet in two parts with twenty-seven Entrées, « dansé par le roi au Louvre le 16 janvier 1656 ». See: [Benserade, Isaac de] *Ballet de Psyché ou de la Puissance de l'Amour, dansé par Sa Majesté le 16 jour de janvier 1656*. Paris: R. Ballard, 1656.

⁴⁷ « Dans la premiere sont représentées les beautez & les delices du Palais d'Amour. Et dans la seconde, l'Amour mesme y divertit la belle Psyché par la representation d'une partie des merveilles qu'il a produites » See: [Benserade, Isaac de] *Ballet de Psyché ou de la Puissance de l'Amour, dansé par Sa Majesté le 16 jour de janvier 1656*. Paris: R. Ballard, 1656.

⁴⁸ See: *Ballet de Psyché ou de la Puissance de l'Amour...* Paris: R. Ballard, 1656.

retinue were used for the sense of taste: « Comus God of feasts accompanied by Cleanliness and Abundance ». The pleasure of smell called for four Perfumers carrying the sweetest fragrances of « happy Arabia ». The last entrée, dedicated to the sense of touch, saw, the physical entrance of Psyche herself: « The fifth and last of the senses being reserved to Love in the legitimate possession of the beautiful Psyche, she arrives accompanied by Beauty and the Graces ».⁴⁹



Figure 7: Isaac de Benserade (1612–1691)

Engraving by Gérard Edelinck (1640–1707) from *Des hommes illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce siècle, avec leurs portraits au naturel. Tome 2 / , par M. [Charles] Perrault,...*

Paris: A. Dezallier, 1700.

Collection of Gilbert Blin.

In the second part of his ballet showing the « wonders » of Love, Benserade extended the power of that god from Comus on to Apollon, Mars and Momus, all deities who will reappear in 1671. The twelfth entrée of the second part featured the effect of Love in the Underworld: « A den opens, Pluto appears on his Throne, surrounded by Demons. Fear, Suspicion, Despair and Jealousy make an Italian concert, supported by various Instruments. Composed by Sieur Baptiste [Lully] »⁵⁰. Louis XIV portrayed Pluton, presiding over the

⁴⁹ VI Entrée: « Trois excellents Peintres portez dans le Palais par le vouloir de l'Amour, pour y satisfaire par leurs ouvrages le sens de la veüe. » VII Entrée: « Sept Musiciens venus en ce lieu pour y charmer le sens de l'oïe. » VIII Entrée: « Comus Dieu des festins accompagné de la Propreté & de l'Abondance pour le sens du goust. » IX Entrée: « Quatre Parfumeurs chargez des plus douces odeurs de l'Arabie heureuse pour le Plaisir de l'odorat. » X Entrée: « Le cinquième & dernier des sens estant reserve à l'Amour dans la possession légitime de la belle Psyché, elle arrive accompagnée de la Beauté, & des Graces. » See: *Ballet de Psyché ou de la Puissance de l'Amour...* Paris: R. Ballard, 1656.

⁵⁰ « Un antre s'ouvre, Pluton paroist sur son Trône, environné des Daémons. la Crainte, le Soupçon, le Desespoir & la Jalousie font un concert Italien, soustenu de divers Instruments. Composez par le Sieur Baptiste ». See: *Ballet de Psyché ou de la Puissance de l'Amour...* Paris: R. Ballard, 1656.

suffering caused by Love, with Lully's music performed by Italian singers⁵¹. « Pluto and his Dark Court testify by a very extraordinary dance that Love inspires cheerfulness even to the Underworld »⁵². After many entrées showing a great variety of characters, L'Hymen, performed by Monsieur, younger brother of the king⁵³, offered a moral, but ironic and detached, conclusion to this panorama of the power of Love.

The ballet was a huge success⁵⁴. But its popularity, and the memory of it, may be one of the reasons why Benserade (Figure 7) was not one of the writers asked by the king to propose a theme for the 1671 performance. Indeed, at that time Benserade was also a theatre author and therefore would seem to have been a legitimate candidate to answer the royal command. There must be a reason why his name does not appear among the playwrights consulted by Louis XIV. It may have something to do with the fact that the king did not plan to dance himself in the new ballet. Benserade may have been judged too old-fashioned as his style was at its best when he wrote to associate aristocratic dancers from the court with allegorical figures, a witty talent which was not required in 1671⁵⁵. Did Benserade, who may have had health problems around this time, have doubts about his ability to successfully complete the project given its ambitious schedule and decide not to propose a subject? Maybe the poet was bitter about seeing his younger rival Quinault being received at the Académie française before him⁵⁶. Did Benserade feel left out of the Royal establishment and of the royal favor⁵⁷? Nevertheless, revisiting the theme of the power of Love from the ballet by Benserade, Quinault, polishes his subject by first presenting each of the four gods of his 1671 *Ballet* as they boast of their puissance except in the face of Love: indeed Apollon, Bacchus, Momus and Mars tell us how Love inspires them to unexpected behaviors and alters their individual natures.

⁵¹ Among these Italian singers, notable are the names of those who will sing in *Ercole amante* in 1662: Anna Bergerotti (Gelosia in the *Puissance*, Iole in *Ercole*) and Gian Francesco Tagliavacca (La Desparatione in the *Puissance*, Mercurio in *Ercole*). See the Manuscript of Philidor, André (1652?–1730). [Ballet Relation de ce qui s'est passé à l'arrivée de la Reine Christine de Suede A Essaune en la maison de Monsieur Hesselin avec un Panegyrique Latin sur l'entrée de cette Princesse. A Paris l'an 1656. / Ballet de Psyché ou de la Puissance de l'Amour dansé par sa Majesté l'an 1656 / Ballet de l'Amour Malade dansé par sa Majesté l'an 1657], 1705. <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k103683r/f77.image.r=Ballet%20de%20la%20puissance%20de%20l'Amour> (Accessed 8 September 2017).

⁵² « Pluton & sa Cour ténébreuse témoignant par une danse toute extraordinaire que l'Amour inspire la gayeté jusqu'aux Enfers ». See: *Ballet de Psyché ou de la Puissance de l'Amour...* Paris: R. Ballard, 1656.

⁵³ Philippe I, Duke of Orléans (1640–1701), was then sixteen years old.

⁵⁴ The Ballet was revived on the 17, 23 and 30 January, the 14 and 16 February and the 18 March 1656, but also the following year, in February 1657.

⁵⁵ Charles Perrault (1628–1703) in his article about Benserade singles out this aspect of his ballets. See: Perrault, Charles. *Des hommes illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce siècle, avec leurs portraits au naturel. Tome 2 / , par M. Perrault*. Paris: A. Dezallier, 1700.

⁵⁶ Benserade, twenty-three years older than Quinault, may have hoped to be elected to the seat that had been occupied by Salomon de Virelade (1620–1670), but Quinault was elected instead. Benserade was received by the Académie française in 1674, replacing Chapelain (1595–1674).

⁵⁷ It seems that Benserade was having some health problems: a sonnet he wrote, possibly during this period, appears to allude to a psychological burden: « Je suis las de jouer ce rôle: / depuis long-temps je travaille au ballet; » in: *Annales poétiques, depuis l'origine de la Poésie Française, tome XXII*. Paris: Merigot, 1782, p. 83. N.B. This volume contains a rare biographical sketch of Benserade.

2.4 Visual allegory in *Le Ballet of Psyché*

These four gods do not introduce themselves and their identity is only a visual one: nothing in their first words tells us who they are, and it is only through the printed text that we know now who they are. On stage, these identities were certainly easier to decipher thanks to the elaborate costumes for the performance, a characteristic of the French *Ballet de Cour*. The costumes of the « divertissements » of *Psyché* had been drawn by Henry de Gissey (1621–1673); he had held the post of « dessinateur du cabinet du Roi » in the *Menus-Plaisirs du Roi* since 1661. Gissey's appointment was no more than an official recognition of the fact that the designer had already been designing costumes for the French royal court for ten years. In 1651, at the Palais Royal, Henri de Gissey made his recorded debut by creating the costumes of the ballet *Les Fêtes de Bacchus*. He was nominated in 1660 to be the « Concierge et Garde des décorations et machines » of the Salle des Machines of the Tuileries, then under construction. He also collaborated in many official spectacles, like the famous *Carrousel* of 1662⁵⁸. Although his participation in the creation of the costumes for the *Ballet royal de la nuit* of 1653 is not fully established⁵⁹, we know he oversaw the costumes for the *Ballet de l'Impatience* (1661), the *Ballet des Arts* (1663), and the *Ballet des Muses* (1665).

In 1666 Gissey was appointed « Garde salle et machines » of the theatre of the Palais-Royal, where Molière and his company were tenants. Collaborating with Molière, Gissey designed costumes for the intermèdes of *George Dandin* in 1668 and *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* in 1670, anticipating the role he would take for *Psyché* in the following year. Gissey's fanciful costumes accentuated the relation with the *Ballet de Cour*⁶⁰. His designs were seen as « perfect » by the great collector Michel de Marolles (1600–1681): they had « nothing of the ugly » about them and were considered to be « of fine manner and pleasing look. »⁶¹ The costumes by Gissey for *Psyché* are of Roman inspiration for Apollon, Mars and Bacchus (Figures 8, 9 & 11). Momus, on the other hand, seems to be influenced by the fashion of the sixteenth century, a trend he therefore shares with the characters of Italian theatre, particularly the *Commedia dell'arte* (Figure 10). They all have trimmings and hand props suitable to their character and their ability to be clearly seen on the big stage of the Salle des Machines assured an understanding of their identity. Apollon, holding his bow, has a costume and a headset full of rays of the sun, a costume reminiscent of the one worn by Louis XIV as Apollo in the *Ballet de la Nuit* of 1653.

⁵⁸ See: Castelluccio, Stéphane. *Les Carrousel en France, du XVI^e au XVIII^e siècle*. Paris et Versailles: L'Insulaire & Les Éditions de l'Amateur & Versailles: Bibliothèque Municipale, 2002.

⁵⁹ Gissey is a possibility as much as Charles Beaubrun (1604–1692) or Henry Beaubrun (1603–1677). See: *Ballet de la Nuit*. Edited by Michael Burden and Jennifer Thorp. The Wendy Hilton Dance & Music Series No. 15. Hillsdale (NY): Pendragon Press, 2009. See also “River gods theatrical costumes” in the Case-studies of the present dissertation.

⁶⁰ La Gorce, Jérôme de. “Les costumes d'Henry Gissey pour les représentations de *Psyché*” in *Revue de l'Art*, numéro 66. Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1984, pp. 39–52; and Dock, Stephen V. “Unpublished Costume Drawings by Henry Gissey for Molière's *Psyché*” in *Theatre History Studies, Volume XIII*, edited by Ron Engle. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama, 1993, pp. 181–207. See also: La Gorce, Jérôme de, & Jugie, Pierre. *Dans l'atelier des Menus Plaisirs du roi. Spectacles, fêtes et cérémonies aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles*. Paris : Archives nationales-Versailles, Artlys, 2010, No. 14 ; and Marie-Françoise Christout. *Le Ballet de Cour au XVII^e siècle*. Genève: Minkoff, 1987.

⁶¹ « A propos de Rabel, Jessé [Gissey] fut admirable / A former des dessins pour des jeux de balet; / Ses crayons achevez ne portoient rien de laid / D'une manière fine et d'un air agréable. » in Marolles, Michel de. *Le livre des peintres et graveurs*, edited by Georges Duplessis. Paris: P. Jannet, 1855, p. 28.



Figures 8, 9, 10 & 11: 1670, Henry Gissey, costume designs for Apollon, Bacchus, Momus and Mars in the *Ballet of Psyché* (presented here in the order of their vocal entrance).
Stockholm, Nationalmuseum.

Bacchus holds a cup while his costume and his spear⁶² are ornate with grapes and wine leaves. Momus holds a thyrsus, usually associated with Bacchus but a symbol of hedonism and pleasure in general, while Mars has a helmet, shield and sword, symbolic of high rank.

The art of costume design for the *Ballet de Cour* integrated conventions and rules of association between garments and roles, allowing audiences to recognize characters. Existing sculpture, paintings and printed materials helped in tracing sources and creating new ones. Among these references, Cesare Ripa (ca. 1560-ca. 1622) in his *Iconologia* had fixed a visual codification for moral entities inspired by Greek and Roman emblematical representations. Since 1593, his influential emblem book was used by orators, artists and poets to give visual substance to virtues, vices, passions, arts, sciences, etc. For each entry Ripa proposes a description of the allegorical figure about how to embody the concept, giving the type and color of its clothing and its varied symbolic paraphernalia, along with the reasons why these were chosen, reasons often supported by references to classical literature. But the interest of the book lays not only in this compendium. The concepts were arranged in groups which had their own logic and meaning. Therefore, these groupings offered not only a promise of extra poetic syntax, but also, by their order in the descriptions, an order emphasized by later illustrated editions, gave a first placement of individual values in relation with each other, useful for organizing any further visual representation. All these qualities allowed the book to be used as a practical reference and as such Ripa's thesaurus of abstractions-made-images was a major iconographic reference for costume design and staging.

2.5 Iconology in *Le Ballet of Psyché*

If we look at the groups of four presented by Ripa: the elements, the seasons, the parts of the world, the ages, the winds, the fortunes, among other, one assembly offers a clear correspondence with the four gods of *Psyché's* ballet: The Four Poems. Because they are presented together, the four gods embody a much larger concept: they are, in Quinault's text, the expression of the four Forms of Poetry: Lyric Poetry is represented by Apollon, Pastoral Poetry by Bacchus, Satiric Poetry by Momus, and Epic Poetry by Mars. The figures illustrating the four types of Poetry engraved by Jacques de Bie (1581–1640) for the first French edition of 1643 – the edition most likely used in France in 1671⁶³ – share many attributes with the designs of Gissey and clarify the identities of the four deities chosen by Quinault for *Psyché's* ballet⁶⁴ as seen on Figure 12.

The phylactery which each character is holding helps clarify his identity. Their mottos, inscribed on speech scrolls, enhance this ancient convention and had a double relevance, historical and symbolic. The historical elements come from the texts of antiquity, which were

⁶² This hunting spear may have initially been a shepherd's crook as the paper of this design has been cut to fit the silhouette.

⁶³ The French edition of 1643 indicated on the title page that Ripa's system was « nécessaire à toutes sortes d'esprits, et particulièrement pour ceux qui aspirant à être, ou ceux qui sont en effet, Orateurs, Poètes, Sculpteurs, Peintres, Ingenieurs, Auteurs de Médailles, de Devises, de Ballets, et de Poèmes dramatiques ». See: Guillermin, Jean-Pierre. "Introduction" in [Ripa, Cesare]. *Iconologie, ou les principales choses qui peuvent tomber dans la pensée touchant les Vices et les Vertus, sont représentées sous diverses figures, gravées en cuivre par Jacques de Bie, et moralement expliquées par J. Baudouin*. Gravures de Jacques de Bie. Textes par Jacques Baudouin. [Paris], MDCXXXIII, 1643. Facsimile Paris: Aux Amateurs de Livres, 1987.

⁶⁴ [Ripa, Cesare]. *Iconologie...* Seconde partie. Paris : 1643, pp. 77–79.

originally written on scrolls, many of them in the same Latin being used for mottos (because the idea linking words must be short to be quickly readable). The symbolic relevance is clear, as poetry could be written as much as sung. The banderole held by the Poème Lyrique which reads « Brevi complector singula cantu » could be translated as « I tell of the unique in a short song », or as the French understood it: « In a few words I enclose all things ». The figure of the Pastoral Poetry says « Pastorum carmina ludo »: I play shepherds' songs. In *Psyché's* final Ballet, Aegipans and Maenads are grouped around Bacchus and Silene; ever since Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the two gods had been associated with Pastoral settings. The motto of Heroic Poetry, crowned with laurels symbolizing military victory, is « Non nisi grandia canto », meaning: I sing only of great things. Words like « cantu », « canto » or « carmina » present in these mottos are a clear common active denominator encapsulating the expressive function of poetry. The last figure, which is the one of the Satiric Poetry, holds a banderole inscribed « Irridens cuspidi figo »: through ridicule I wound with prickings⁶⁵.

The familiarity of Quinault with these types of mottos is a matter of historical record. Although he came from a simple social background, we know now that Quinault had received a full literary education, notably in Latin⁶⁶. In the early 1680s Quinault composed some « Devises » for the Royal Treasury⁶⁷; at the end of his life, Quinault created the mottos intended for the Dauphine, Anne-Marie Christine Victoire de Bavière (1660–1690), a prestigious responsibility⁶⁸. But the question remains: although these speech scrolls are not visible in the costume designs of Gissey, were they somehow included in the show, carried by followers? It is more than likely: the statement of expense done in 1671 for *Psyché* specifies that some mottos were painted for the performance. Georges de Tourny, painter, was paid 210 livres for « peinture des devises, des drapeaux et banderolles »⁶⁹. Aside from the flags for the four dancers, « Guerriers avec des Drapeaux » who accompany Mars, the « devises » (mottos) may have been presented on stage either by the god himself on one the « banderolles » or painted on the « rendaches » (shields) that four of his followers were holding, as was the custom during tournaments⁷⁰.

⁶⁵ Jacques Baudouin translates the motto of the Poème lyrique: « en peu de mots je comprends toute chose ». Baudouin uses « comprendre » with the meaning of « to contain » not « to understand ». Poème Pastoral: « avec cette devise, Pastorum carmina ludo. Comme s'il disoit, Je m'entretiens des chansons des Bergers ». Poème Héroïque: « Non nisi grandiae canto, qui signifient Mon chant a pour objet les choses les plus grandes. » Poème Satyrique: « Comme s'il vouloit dire à peu près, je raille & picque tout ensemble ». See: [Ripa, Cesare]. *Iconologie...* Textes par Jacques Baudouin. Seconde partie. Paris : 1643, pp. 77–79.

⁶⁶ La Gorce, Jérôme de. “Un proche collaborateur de Lully, Philippe Quinault” in *Société d'Étude du XVIIe Siècle n°161*. Paris: Société d'étude du XVIIe siècle et du C.N.L., du C.N.R.S. et de la Ville de Paris, 1988, pp. 365–370.

⁶⁷ See: Gros, Étienne. *Philippe Quinault, sa vie et son œuvre*. Paris: Champion, 1926. Facsimile Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1970, pp. 11 & 175.

⁶⁸ See: Palaprat, Jean de. “Lettre à M. B. P. M. D. M.” in *Les Œuvres de Monsieur de Palaprat... Tome Second*. Paris: Pierre Ribou, 1712, p. 184.

⁶⁹ See: « État officiel de la dépense faite pour représenter *Psyché* en 1671 », submitted by Louis-Marie d'Aumont de Rochebaron, « premier gentilhomme de la chambre de Sa Majesté », kept at the British Museum, in: Bougenot, Étienne-Symphorien. “*Psyché* au Théâtre des Tuileries” in *Bulletin historique et philologique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques*. Paris: 1891, pp. 71–80.

⁷⁰ For surviving examples of this type of shield, see: *Riddarlek och Tornerspel, Sverige - Europa*. Katalog sammanställd av Lena Rangström. Stockholm: Livrustkammaren, 1992, No. 175 p. 162 & No. 198 p. 174.

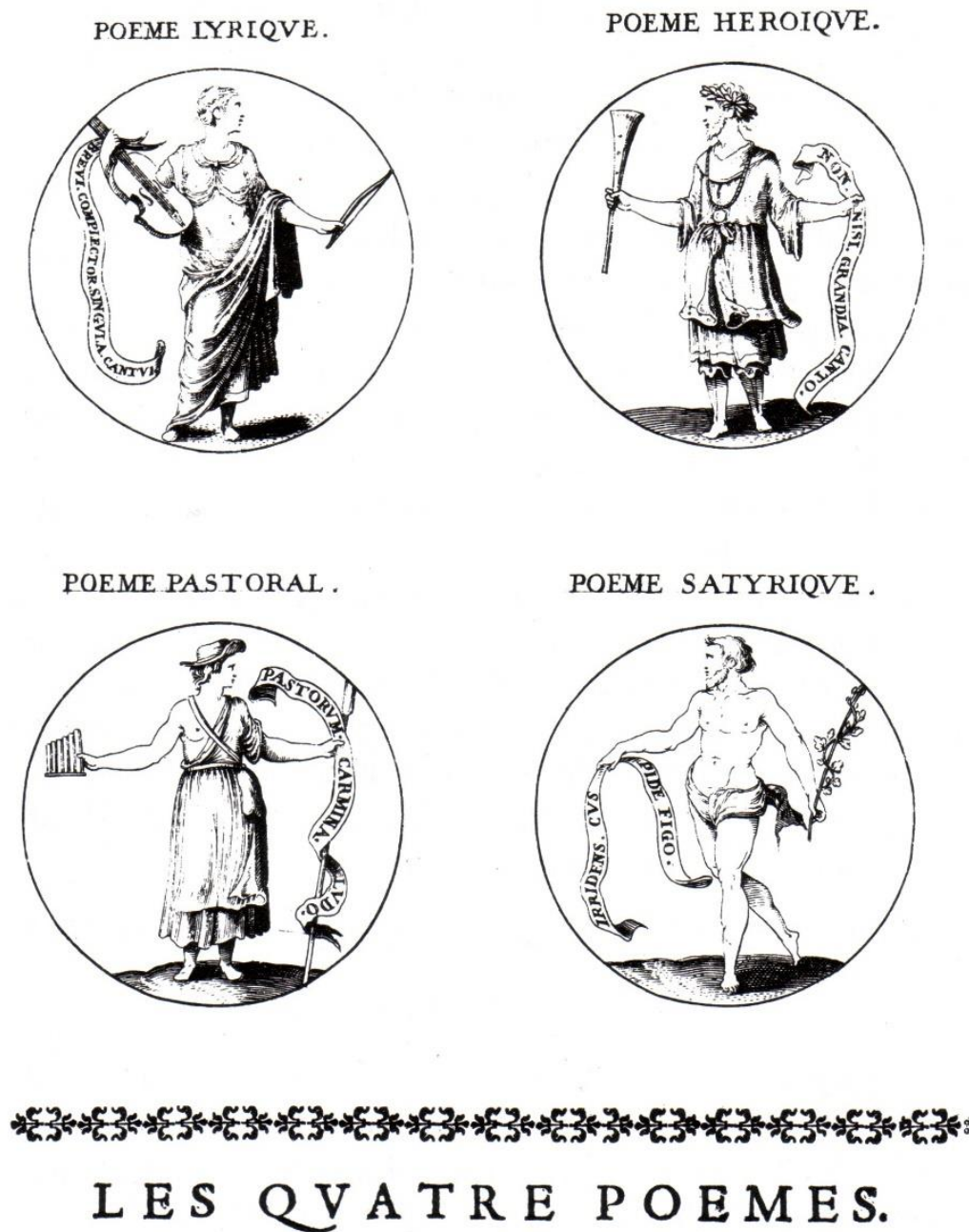


Figure 12: « Les Quatre Poemes. », engraving by Jacques de Bie (1581–1640) from [Ripa, Cesare] *Iconologie, ou les principales choses qui peuvent tomber dans la pensée touchant les Vices et les Vertus, sont représentées sous diverses figures, gravées en cuivre par Jacques de Bie, et moralement expliquées par J. Baudouin*. [Paris], MDCXXXIII [1643].

For the designs of the shields of the Carrousel of 1662 see: Castellucio, Stéphane. *Les Carrousel en France, du XVI^e au XVIII^e siècle*. Paris: L'Insulaire - Les Éditions de l'Amateur and Versailles: Bibliothèque Municipale, 2002, pp. 150–169. And for the definition of the « devises », see: Fabre, Antonin. *Chapelain et nos deux premières Académies : études littéraires sur le XVII^e siècle / par l'abbé A. Fabre*. Paris: Perrin, 1890, pp. 417 & 445.

From the same statement of expenses, we know that Jean Breton, « armurier », provided shields for 80 livres. A similar thing had been done the previous year, when the royal motto had been painted on trophies for the final intermède of *Les Amants magnifiques*, to accompany Apollo for his entrée concluding the « Jeux Pythiens »⁷¹.

In *Psiché*, the three Recits that follow Apollon's call for unity are undeniably illustrations of the Power of Love, to which Bacchus, Momus and Mars successively declare they have surrendered. In addition to indications of staging and the sung text, the libretto, following the tradition of the *Ballet de Cour*, includes comments that explain each song of the allegorical celebration. Bacchus « makes it understood that he is not as dangerous as Love »: the effects of wine pass after one day, while Love's effects last forever. Momus mocks everyone but Love, who « he dares not make fun » of because it is Love « who spares no one ». The final god, Mars, concedes that « he has not been able to avoid surrendering to Love »⁷²: Amour alone can boast of defeating the god of war. Each one presents the inspiration of their entrée to come, telling us not to look at them as they usually are, but through the opposing force that an irresistible Love produces to accomplish poetry. A call from the heavenly gods, wrapping up what is undeniably a kind of introduction, invites the instruments and voices to join the general rejoicing and the Ballet can now line up the successive entrées of Apollon, Bacchus, Momus and Mars.

2.6 La Petite Académie behind *Le Ballet of Psiché*?

This assembly of the four poems is also present in the design of the « Grande Commande », the large commission ordered by Louis XIV for statues intended to decorate the gardens of the Palace of Versailles, as initially conceived in 1672. In 1674, la Grande Commande was in progress under the supervision of Charles Le Brun (1619–1690)⁷³. From 1662, when he was made « Premier Peintre du Roi » (First Painter of the King), everything artistic that was done in the royal palaces was directed or influenced by Le Brun. In 1663, he became director of the *Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture*, and with this title, was responsible for the designs of the Versailles sculptures. The theme of the fundamental elements influenced by the course of the Sun was to be an extension of his setting for the Great Apartments, based then around the myth of Apollo, a glorification of the king which started on the ballet stage⁷⁴. As was true of the planned decoration for the ceilings of the palace, the Grande Commande was dominated by Apollonian and solar significance⁷⁵. This ensemble, destined for the « Parterre d'eau », was conceived as a broad panorama on the effects of the solar god on the order of the world and on the arts, based on the unity of man and nature⁷⁶. The sculpture decoration was to include twenty-four statues representing the four Parts of the world, the four Hours of the day, the

⁷¹ See: [Molière] *Intermèdes des Amants magnifiques*. Paris: R. Ballard, 1670, p. 28.

⁷² *Psiché, tragi-comédie et ballet, dansé devant S. M. au mois de janvier 1671*. Paris: R. Ballard, 1671.

⁷³ See: Gady, Bénédicte. « Charles Le Brun et les sculpteurs de Versailles » in *Versalia*, No. 11, 2005, pp. 85–95.

⁷⁴ See: Sabatier, Gérard. *Versailles ou la figure du roi*. Paris: Albin Michel, 1999, pp. 48–56.

⁷⁵ Moine, Marie-Christine. *Les fêtes à la Cour du Roi Soleil 1653–1715*. Paris: F. Sorlot & F. Lanore, 1984.

⁷⁶ Maral, Alexandre. *La Grande Commande de 1674. Chefs-d'œuvre sculptés des jardins de Versailles sous Louis XIV*. Montreuil: Gourcuff Gradenigo, 2013.

four Seasons, the four Elements (Water, Earth, Air, Fire), the four Temperaments of Man, and the four Poems (Figure 11). These were complemented by eight mythological abductions symbolizing the changes in the four Elements. Claude Denis (1596-1680) described around 1675 the groups, then still in the making: « The four Poems./ The epic [heroic] poem exposes and makes known, / that in the fighting the heroes make appear, / their great actions and the famous exploits / that their courage makes for the glory of the Kings./ Here we see another and it is the dramatic / which contains a subject in tragic or comic, / The comic is filled with features of gaiety, / the tragic is pompous and full of gravity, / the satiric spades, and taking against the vice, by its biting style condemns Injustice, the lyric deals with various subjects, and composes songs of odes and tunes ».⁷⁷

The program of royal propaganda was devised under the supervision of the *Petite Académie*, entrusted, since 1663, with the primary responsibility of writing the history of Louis XIV in inscriptions, medals and monuments⁷⁸. Members of the *Petite Académie*, under its active secretary Charles Perrault (1628–1703), extended their duties soon to all artistic programs that were related to the king⁷⁹. Quinault officially joined the ranks of this elite group consisting of members of the Académie française in 1672, but as an academicien starting in 1670⁸⁰ and as a friend of Perrault, he was no stranger to its work before then. Inspired by Cesare Ripa, and certainly advised by the *Petite Académie*, Charles Le Brun produced the preparatory drawings for the sculptors (Figure 13), following the same order in his spatial layout as in Ripa's *Iconologia*. Beyond this example of the conjunction of their artistic endeavors⁸¹, relations between Quinault and Le Brun were close, even familial; one of Quinault's daughters later marries Le Brun's nephew and godson, who he treated as an adoptive son. Their circle was rich in artists and it is also worth mentioning that Jean-Baptiste Tuby (1635–1700), the sculptor of the *Poème Lyrique* of Versailles (also known as *Thalie*), was a witness at the 1685 wedding.⁸² It is around this year, or the previous one, that the statues of the Grande Commande were transferred to other locations in the gardens, due to the forsaking of the Apollonian theme.

⁷⁷ « Les quatre Poesme./ La le poesme Epique [héroïque] expose et fait connoistre,/ ce que dans les combats les heros font paroistre,/ leurs grandes actions et les fameux exploits/ que leur courage fait a la gloire des Roys./ Icy l'on voit un autre et c'est le dramatique/ qui contient un sujet en tragique ou comique, / Le comique est rempli de traits de gayeté,/le tragique est pompeux et plain de gravité, /le satyrique picque, et reprenant le vice, par son stile mordant condamne l'Iniustice, / le lyrique s'occupe a des sujets divers,/ et compose des chants des odes et des airs. » in « Explication de toutes les grottes, rochers et fontaines du chasteau royal de Versailles, maison du soleil et de la menagerie, en vers heroïque », par « C. DENIS ». Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, Français 2348. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9006949h> (accessed 26 June 2018).

⁷⁸ See: Charton, Fabrice. “« Vetat Mori. », Une institution au service du Prince, de la Petite Académie à l'Académie royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres (1663–1742)” in *L'Atelier du Centre de recherches historiques* [online], 2011. URL: <http://acrh.revues.org/4549> (accessed 2 November 2017).

⁷⁹ See: Fabre, Antonin. *Chaplain et nos deux premières Académies : études littéraires sur le XVIIe siècle / par l'abbé A. Fabre*. Paris: Perrin, 1890, p. 443.

⁸⁰ See: Couvreur, Manuel. *Jean-Baptiste Lully, Musique et dramaturgie au service du Prince*. [Bruxelles]: Marc Vokar Editeur, 1992, pp. 43–63.

⁸¹ See: Himelfarb, Hélène. “Source méconnue ou analogie culturelle ? Des livrets d'opéras lullystes au décor sculpté des jardins de Versailles” in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, VI^e période, Tome CXX, 1486^e livraison, 1992, pp. 179–194.

⁸² See: La Gorce, Jérôme de. “Un proche collaborateur de Lully, Philippe Quinault.” in *Société d'Étude du XVIIe Siècle n°161*. Paris: Société d'étude du XVIIe siècle et du C.N.L., du C.N.R.S. et de la Ville de Paris, 1988, pp. 365–370.



Figure 13: 1674, *Les Quatre poèmes*, drawing by Charles Le Brun (1619–1690).
Design for the sculptors of the « Grande Commande ».
Versailles, Musée du Château de Versailles.

By separating them the elaborate message was weakened. Ten years later, although still associating the statues in the numbering of his plates, Thomassin, in his *Recueil des Figures, Groupes, Thermes, Fontaines, Vases, Statuës & autres Ornemens [...] dans le Château et parc de Versailles...*, orders them differently. He puts the *Poème Héroïque* first and therefore blurs the image of the concept of « Les quatre poèmes », further obscuring Quinault's purpose in his Ballet for *Psiché*⁸³. With this restriction, the engravings published by Thomassin in 1694 have the merit to give a first well-defined image of each poem (Figure 14, 15, 16 & 17). One cannot miss the omnipresence of music instruments: trumpet, lyra, and pan flute are linking the godly figures with the arts they are representing. The thyrsus, was used to hit the floor and one of the instruments of orgiastic feasts. The royal chronicler André Félibien (1619-1695) had seen this use of the thyrsus in the Versailles party of 1668⁸⁴, at the end of *George Dandin* by Molière: « All the dancers mingle together, and among the shepherds and shepherdesses are four of Bacchus's followers with thyrsus, and four bacchantes with a kind of Basque drums, which represent those sieves which they formerly carried during the feasts of Bacchus. Of these thyrsus, the followers hit the screens of the bacchantes and do different postures while the shepherds and the shepherdesses dance more seriously. »⁸⁵ This last observation gave us a hint about the comical use of the phallic symbol, well in the satirical spirit.

⁸³ Even today, there is still some ambiguity in the understanding of the program behind the royal visual propaganda. See: La Moureyre, Françoise de. "Réflexions sur le style des statues aux façades du château de Versailles" in *Bulletin du Centre de recherche du château de Versailles [En ligne], Articles et études, mis en ligne le 16 juin 2008*, URL: <http://cercv.revues.org/992> . See also : *Versailles, décor sculpté extérieur* by Béatrix Saule, Conservator in chief of the Château de Versailles: <http://www.sculpturesversailles.fr/html/5b/index/index.htm> (Both sites accessed 8 November 2017.)

⁸⁴ The 1668 party was celebrating the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.

⁸⁵ « Tous les Danseurs se mêlent ensemble et l'on voit parmi les Bergers & les Bergères quatre suivans de Bacchus avec des thyrses & quatre bacchantes avec des espèces de tambours de Basque qui représentent ces cribles qu'elles portaient anciennement aux fêtes de Bachus. De ces thyrses, les suivans frappent sur les cribles des Bacchantes, & font différentes postures pendant que les Bergers & les Bergères dansent plus sérieusement. » in Félibien, André. *Relation de la feste de Versailles du 18^e juillet 1668*. Paris: Pierre Le Petit, 1668, p. 28.



Figure 14: Le Poème Heroique (1674–1680)
etching of 1694 by Simon Thomassin (ca. 1652–1732) of the sculpture by Jean Drouilly (or De Rouilly) (1641–1698),
after a design by Charles Le Brun (1619–1690), Plate 107 from *Recueil des Figures, Groupes, Thermes, Fontaines, Vases, Statuës & autres Ornemens tels qu'ils se voyent à present dans le Chateau et parc de Versailles, gravé d'après les originaux. Par Simon Thomassin.*
Collection of Gilbert Blin.



Figure 15: Le Poème Lyrique (1681–1682)
etching of 1694 by Simon Thomassin (ca. 1652–1732) of the sculpture by Jean-Baptiste Tuby (1635–1700),
after a design by Charles Le Brun (1619–1690), Plate 108 from *Recueil des Figures, Groupes, Thermes, Fontaines,
Vases, Statuës & autres Ornemens tels qu'ils se voyent à présent dans le Château et parc de Versailles, gravé d'après les
originaux. Par Simon Thomassin.*
Collection of Gilbert Blin.



Figure 16: *Le Poème Pastoral* (1675–1681)
etching of 1694 by Simon Thomassin (ca. 1652–1732) of the sculpture by Gérard-Léonard Hérard (1637– 1675)
& Pierre Granier (1655–1715),
after a design by Charles Le Brun (1619–1690), Plate 109 from *Recueil des Figures, Groupes, Thermes, Fontaines, Vases, Statuës & autres Ornemens tels qu'ils se voyent à present dans le Château et parc de Versailles, gravé d'après les originaux. Par Simon Thomassin.*
Collection of Gilbert Blin.



Figure 17: Le Poème Satyrique (1674–1679)
etching of 1694 by Simon Thomassin (ca. 1652–1732) of the sculpture by Philippe de Buyster (1595–1688),
after a design by Charles Le Brun (1619–1690), Plate 110 from *Recueil des Figures, Groupes, Thermes, Fontaines,
Vases, Statuës & autres Ornemens tels qu'ils se voyent à présent dans le Château et parc de Versailles, gravé d'après les
originaux. Par Simon Thomassin.*
Collection of Gilbert Blin.

2.7 The Four Poems and Quinault's « anchainement »

After the chorus of mixed musical forces that opens the feast, with episodes of alternating dances and songs, the series of four entrées in *Psiché* develop the quadruple gods/poems approach. The meaning resides not only in the four main gods but in their retinues, made up of singers, dancers and on-stage instrumentalists, which in turn emphasize their association to the four forms of poetry. The musical instruments that had a decisive role in clarifying the identity of the four poems in Ripa are carried by the gods' followers in *Psiché*. The lira (depicted as a lira da braccio on the 1643 Jacques de Bie's engraving for the « Poème lyrique ») is given by Quinault to one of the Muses. (A feminine figure was also chosen by Le Brun for Versailles.) The trumpet that Mars was holding has now been multiplied and blown by nine trumpeters; Pan's flute⁸⁶ from the Pastoral likely appears together with the « Aegipans », the satyrs who accompany Bacchus, while Momus, still holds a « Thyrese », possibly used as a percussion instrument, as his followers, Matassins and Polichinelles, have costumes with small bells. All of these instruments were undoubtedly integrated with the orchestration during the performance. The visual indications of musical instruments in the costume iconography related to *Psiché* are numerous and a thorough analysis of them could certainly be useful for the musical performance of each section⁸⁷.

In addition to completing the identity of the four divinities, these four groups create a subtle but clear link between the deity they accompany and the one to follow. In this way, Quinault follows one of the precepts formulated by the Abbé Michel de Pure (1620–1680) in his *Idée des spectacles anciens et nouveau*, published in 1668. The rhetorician states that the entrée is independent of that which precedes it and of that which follows it. But he insists that it may prove advantageous to link the entrées together by « anchainement », by concatenation, a kind of invisible web of what he calls the « incidents », which are the thematic links that develop from one entrée to the other⁸⁸. Here is my understanding of the incidents in the ballet of *Psiché*: Apollon is accompanied by the Muses and the Arts, but the libretto points out that the Arts are dressed as « Bergers Galants » (gallant shepherds) to make a more fitting appearance at the

⁸⁶ Pan was considered as one of the possible originators of bucolic poetry. See: Colletet, Guillaume. *Discours du Poème Bucolique*. Paris: Louis Chamhoudry, 1658, p. 2, in *L'art poétique du Sr Colletet, où il est traité de l'épigramme, du sonnet, du poème bucolique, de l'églogue, de la pastorale et de l'idyle, de la poésie morale et sentencieuse, avec un discours de l'éloquence et de l'imitation des anciens, un autre discours contre la traduction et la nouvelle morale du mesme auteur*. Paris: A. de Sommaville & L. Chamhoudry, 1658.

⁸⁷ The special context of a performance can also provide some extra information: in 1671 in Dunkerque, during the concert performance of *Psiché*, cannons were shot following the invitation of Mars, which emphasizes the double importance of « props »: visual and accoustic. For the Dunkerque performance, see: Powell, John S. "The Metamorphosis of Psyché" in *Les Métamorphoses de Psyché*. Dossier établi par Carine Barbafieri et Chris Rauseo. Valenciennes: Presses Universitaires de Valenciennes, 2004, pp. 227–251.

⁸⁸ « Section VII. Des incidents. Encore que nous laissions la liberté au Poète de détacher les Entrées les unes des autres, il est toutefois avantageux pour Elles, & pour le Sujet, qu'elles soient bien liées entr'elles : & que la suite fasse une espece d'anchainement, comme indivisible. Cette liaison se fait avec plus de facilité & plus de perfection par le moyen des Incidents, & lors que l'Entrée est un progres ou un embarras de celle qui a precedé, ou une préparation pour celle qui suit. » in Pure, Michel de. *Idée des spectacles anciens et nouveaux. Des anciens : cirques, amphithéâtres, théâtres, naumachies, triomphes ; Des nouveaux : comédie, bal, mascarades, carosels, courses de bagues et de testes, joustes, exercices et revues, militaires, jeux d'artifices, entrées des rois & des reynes [...]*. Paris: Michel Brunet, 1668, p. 242.

Feast. Their pastoral disguise – an echo of *La Grotte de Versailles*⁸⁹? – connects them with the bucolic world of Bacchus and Silene, themselves introduced by a court of Maenads and Satyrs. The drunken energy of their scene links with the arrival of Polichinelles coming to « join their jokes and banter » to the feast. Followers of Momus, these theatrical characters are accompanied by Matassins, dancers who, in public squares, imitated war in a burlesque manner. Thomas Corneille (1625–1709) in his *Dictionnaire des Arts et des Sciences* relates them to Mars: « the Dancers who were called Matassins, were dressed in little Corselets, with golden helmets, bells on their legs, and the sword and shield in their hands. It was made by imitation of a Dance Numa [Pompilius] instituted for the Sali, Priests of the god Mars, who danced with weapons ».⁹⁰ Their presence indeed prefigures that of Mars, who leads Warriors and an on-stage military music band, including timpani, and encourages them « to enjoy their leisure by taking part in the Divertissement ». In 1671, while peace is celebrated in the opening verse of the Prologue, military power was still on the royal agenda as the kingdom of France was preparing to go to war with the Dutch Republic and declared it the following year⁹¹.

This pattern of successive musical and theatrical numbers carries the spectacular energy into a final grandiose reprise of the general chorus, which orders « drums and trumpets » to mix with « musettes ». The musettes were already a traditional instrument of the *Ballet de Cour* and Charles-Emmanuel Borjon (1633–1691) in his *Traité de la musette* of 1672 stresses the place that the instrument attained in Louis XIV's spectacles: « We have nothing sweeter nothing more marvelous than concerts of it, as we know from those which often contribute to these entertainments of our invincible monarch. The pastoral and bucolic spectacles cannot do without them and one sees them nearly every year in the King's ballet »⁹². The rhetoric of military instruments opposed to pastoral ones was to become a convention of the French *Tragédie en musique*⁹³.

⁸⁹ The dancers may even have worn the costumes used for the performance of *La Grotte de Versailles* the preceding year: once the principle of the reuse of the sets of *Ercole amante* was accepted, costumes could also come from the stock of the *Menus-Plaisirs*.

⁹⁰ « Sorte de danse folastre. C'étoit autrefois une danse, dont les Danseurs qu'on appelloit aussi Matassins, estoient vestus de petits Corcelets, avec des Morions dorez, des sonnettes aux jambs, & l'épée et le bouclier aux mains. Elle estoit faite à l'imitation d'une Danse que Numa institua pour les Saliens, Prestres de Mars, qui dansoient avec des armes. » Thomas Corneille's definition of « Matassin »: in *Le dictionnaire des arts et des sciences*. T. 2, M-Z / , de M. D. C. de l'Académie française. Nouvelle édition revue, corrigée et augmentée par M****, de l'Académie royale des sciences... Paris: Le Mercier, 1732.

⁹¹ See: Bluche, François. *Louis XIV*. Paris: Fayard, 1986, pp. 359–386.

⁹² « Dans l'estat où est à present la Musette on ne peut rien trouver de plus doux, ny de plus merveilleux que les concerts qu'on en fait, comme on le peut juger par ceux qui contribuent souvent à ce divertissement de nôtre invincible Monarque. Les representations pastorales & champestres ne s'en sçauroient passer, & nous en voyons presque tous les ans dans les balets du Roy. » See: Borjon de Scellery, Charles-Emmanuel. *Traité de la musette, avec une nouvelle méthode pour apprendre de soy-même à joier de cet instrument facilement et en peu de temps*. Lyon: J. Girin and B. Rivière, 1672, p. 33. For the musette at the French court, see: Leppert, Richard D. *Arcadia at Versailles, Noble Amateur Musicians and Their Musettes and Hurdy-gurdies at the French Court (c.1660-1780), A Visual Study*. Amsterdam and Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger, 1978.

⁹³ Lully « a fait entrer agreablement dans ses Concerts jusqu'aux Tambours & aux Timbales, Instrumens qui n'ayant qu'un seul ton sembloient ne pouvoir rien contribuer à la beauté d'une harmonie, mais il a scû leur donner des mouvemens si convenables aux Chants où ils entroient, qui la plupart estoient des Chants de guerre & de triomphe, qu'ils ne touchoient pas moins le cœur, que les instrumens les plus harmonieux.» in *Des hommes illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce siècle, avec leurs portraits au naturel*. Tome 1/, par M. [Charles] Perrault,... Paris: A. Dezallier, 1696, p. 86.

Quinault's Ballet in *Psyché* not only refers to the past tradition of the *Ballet de Cour*, but also prefigures the future stylistic definition of French opera, made of heterogeneous components all united by the power of lyric art, in his poetic and musical expression. It was indeed a recognized characteristic of lyric poetry to be of an assimilating capability and of superior nature⁹⁴. As Jean Baudouin (ca. 1590–1650), explained in his edition of Ripa: « In only one thing, the Lyric Poet tightens several others [...] *Brevi complector singular cantu*. That is to say, in a few words I contain everything ».⁹⁵ In accordance with this tradition, the last entrée of *Psyché*'s Ballet, which « incorporates all the others »⁹⁶, is clearly a moment of unification. This concept of a poetic integration in the form of the ballet had already found an expression under the hand of Claude-François Ménéstrier (1631–1705). In his *Remarques pour la conduite des Ballets*, the Jesuit states, after listing different forms of poetry (epic, satiric and dramatic): « The Ballet includes them all, and as learned painters skillfully mix fantasies with pieces of history, we do a dance mixing Serious and Ridiculous, Natural and Chimerical, Fabulous and Historical to make a fair Ballet ».⁹⁷ Quinault, in his 1671 *Ballet* for *Psyché*, makes an attempt to allegorically describe a poetic form and, in the shape inherited from the *Ballet de Cour* of a poem about poetry, produces a poetics manifesto for the not yet born French opera⁹⁸. In 1671, the vision of potentially creating a new type of lyric art was a daring concept, one which proved to be possible by Quinault and Lully two years later with their first original opera, *Cadmus et Hermione*, a piece which will establish the form of French opera for the years to come.

The history of the different versions of *Psyché* will support this interpretation: the multiple paternity of 1671 finds an echo in 1678, when Lully, unable to collaborate with Quinault during the latter's banishment from the French court, asked Thomas Corneille to transform the drama written by Molière and Pierre Corneille (Thomas's elder brother) into an opera, requesting that he keeps the pre-existing musical material and therefore Quinault's texts. Thomas Corneille had to shape a new piece, creating a Quinault-style adaptation of the myth where the original divertissements would find their natural places in the narration. The poetic program of the Ballet from *Psyché* had proven to be valid in the intervening years, and for his first opera libretto,

⁹⁴ Quinault's attachment to hierarchy appears during his entrance at the Académie française: « Il en est du Royaume des Lettres ainsi que des autres Empires, il doit y avoir de la subordination, & l'harmonie ne s'y trouveroit jamais parfaite, si tous les Genies s'y rencontroit également élevez. » in « Compliment fait en 1670, par Monsieur Quinault, Auditeur des Comptes, lorsqu'il fut reçu à la place de Monsieur Salomon. » See: *Recueil des harangues prononcées par Messieurs de l'Académie française dans leurs réceptions, & en d'autres occasions différentes, depuis l'establisement de l'Académie jusqu'à présent*. Paris: Jean Baptiste Coignard, 1698, p. 102.

⁹⁵ « Sa figure est celle d'une jeune Femme, qui tient de la main gauche une Lyre, & de la droite un archet. Son habillement est de plusieurs couleurs, mais agréable à voir & assez étroit, pour montrer que dans une seule chose, le Poète Lyrique en resserre plusieurs autres ; comme il est signifié par ces paroles latines, *Brevi complector singula cantu*. C'est à dire, en peu de mots je comprends [contiens] toutes choses. » See: [Ripa, Cesare]. *Iconologie...* Textes par Jacques Baudouin. Paris: 1643, Deuxième partie, p. 78.

⁹⁶ « Dernière entrée. Les quatre Troupes différentes, de la suite d'Apollon, de Bachus, de Mome, & de Mars apres avoir achevé leurs Entrées particulières, s'unissent ensemble, & forment la dernière Entrée, qui renferme toutes les autres. » in *Psyché, tragi-comédie et ballet...* Paris: R. Ballard, 1671.

⁹⁷ « Le Ballet les embrasse toutes, & comme les Peintres sçavans meslent addroitement des fantaisies aux pieces d'Histoire, on fait une danse meslée du Sereux & du Ridicule, du Naturel & du Chimerique, du Fabuleux & de l'Historique pour faire un juste Ballet. » in Ménéstrier, Claude-François. *Remarques pour la conduite des ballets*. Lyon: Jean Molin, 1658, p. 50.

⁹⁸ See: Norman, Buford. *Quinault, librettiste de Lully, Le poète des Grâces*, translation by Thomas Vernet and Jean Duron. Versailles: Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, and Liège: Mardaga, 2001, pp. 74–76.

indeed the first opera libretto for Lully not written by Quinault himself, Thomas Corneille rigorously followed the precepts that Quinault had created in the early 1670s. But in 1678, this original form was already outdated, and that may explain the semi success *Psyché* in its full operatic form met then with the Paris audience. In 1675, *Thésée* had been the last attempt of Quinault to have the four forms of poetry present in his opera⁹⁹. Abbé Dubos (1670–1742) remarked in 1679 that Quinault « would not have made two operas, that he understood well that the characters of jesters, so essential in the Opera of Italy, were not appropriate in Opera made for French people. *Thésée* is the last Opera where Monsieur Quinault introduced jesters; and the care he took to ennoble their character, shows that he had already felt that these roles were out of place in tragedies made to be sung, as well as in the tragedies made to be declaimed. »¹⁰⁰ Forgetting the fundamental influence of the *Ballet de Cour*, the presence of *Tragédie* in the French opera would dominate for a decade while the opera monopoly of Lully made any attempt to create an alternative remarkable. I will show in the next chapter how Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643–1704) has been working on a different path.

⁹⁹ Blin, Gilbert and Stubbs, Stephen. “Thésée - a mirror of its time” in *Boston Early Music Festival & Exhibition, June 11-17, 2001. The French Influence in Europe*. Cambridge (MA) : Boston Early Music Festival, 2001, pp. 128-129.

¹⁰⁰ « Monsieur Quinault qui travailla pour nôtre theatre Lyrique après les Auteurs que j’ay citez, n’eut pas fit deux Opera, qu’il comprit bien que les personnages de bouffons, tellement essentiels dans les Opera d’Italie, ne convenoient pas dans des Opera faits pour des François. Thésée est le dernier Opera où Monsieur Quinault ait introduit des bouffons; & le soin qu’il a pris d’annoblir leur caractere, montre qu’il avoit déjà senti que ces rolles étoient hors de leur place dans des Tragedies faites pour être chantées, autant que dans les Tragedies faites pour être déclamées. » in Dubos, Jean-Baptiste. *Réflexions Critiques sur la Poésie et la Peinture*. Paris: Jean Mariette, 1679. I, pp. 159–160.