Constructing the Sublime: The Discourse on Architecture and Louis XIV's Sublimity in Seventeenth-Century Paris

Knegtel, F.J.L.C.

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PROMOTORES
Prof. dr. Stijn Bussels
Prof. dr. Caroline van Eck

CO-PROMOTOR
Dr. Bram van Oostveldt

PROMOTIECOMMISSIE
Prof. dr. Agnès Guiderdoni (Université catholique de Louvain)
Prof. dr. Hendrik Ziegler (Philipps-Universität Marburg)
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Contents

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Introduction

"Rien n'est plus nouveau que le dessein de cét ouvrage."[1]

With these words, French Jesuit and writer René Rapin (1621-1687) opened the "avertissement" of his treatise *Du grand ou du sublime dans les mœurs et dans les differentes conditions des hommes*, which he published in Paris in 1686 (fig. 1).[2] He was right. To place an entire treatise on the sublime outside of the realm of discourse or literature was highly novel – an idea he described in the following manner:

> On n'en a peut-estre jamais traité de pareil: Car l'idée qu'on se forme du Sublime est tellement attachée au discours, qu'on a de peine a le mettre ailleurs. Mais comme il peut y avoir du Grand & du Merveilleux en toutes choses, j'ay cru qu'on pouvoit aussi y concevoir du Sublime.[3]

The novelty of his work lies in the fact that Rapin considers "le sublime" as a quality of human morality, even though the specific concept of the sublime that he adopts was firmly rooted in the more traditional domain of discourse – of rhetoric and poetic aesthetics. For his book, Rapin relied on the highly influential *Traité du Sublime ou du merveilleux dans le discours* by Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (1636-1711) from 1674, a recent French translation and discussion of the ancient treatise *Peri hypsous*. This treatise on sublimity in great writing was written by a Greek writer in the first or third century AD who we identify as Pseudo-Longinus, and Boileau's edition sparked a renewed interest in the idea of sublimity and its theoretical repercussions.[4] Boileau's publication was not so much a translation as a shift in understanding of the Longinian sublime, for Boileau shifted its dominant association with the style of discourse towards the extraordinary

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1 René Rapin, *Du grand ou du sublime dans les moeurs et dans les différentes conditions des hommes: avec quelques observations sur l'éloquence des bienséances* (Paris: Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1686), iii: "Nothing is newer than the objective of this book." All English translations in this thesis are mine, unless stated otherwise.

2 In this dissertation, the names of all persons mentioned are accompanied by birth and death dates, except for ancient authors and individuals whose birth and death dates are unknown.

3 Ibid., iii: "It has perhaps never been treated in a similar manner: For the idea that we form of the Sublime is so much attached to discourse, that we have difficulty placing it elsewhere. But since the Great [du Grand] and the Marvellous [du Merveilleux] can exist in all things, I thought that we might just as well conceive the Sublime here."

4 In the first two paragraphs of his treatise, which he addresses to Guillaume de Lamoignon, Rapin writes: "Je pourrois vous renvoyer à la Traduction de Longin," and states on the following page: "Car je prétens mettre à tout ce Sublime de la mesme maniere que Longin l'a mis au seul discours, & vous faire trouver de nouvelles graces, & de nouvelles beautez, en ce qu'il y a de plus ordinaire & de plus commun dans les différens estats de la vie." Rapin, *Du grand*, 2-3.

quality and effect of discourse.[5] Rapin soon recognised its potential and adapted the Longinian sublime to serve his own argument. His book revolves around four different men who are sublime themselves, since they each manifest a different type of sublimity: the sublime "in the *noblesse de robe*" ("dans la robe"), "in the *noblesse d'épée*" ("dans l'épée"), "in private life" ("de la vie privée"), and "in public life" ("dans le public & sur le trosne"), which he respectively found in the French jurist Guillaume de Lamoignon (1617-1677), the Marshal General Henri de La Tour d'Auvergne (or Turenne) (1611-1675), Louis II de Bourbon-Condé (Prince de Condé) (1621-1686), and King Louis XIV (1638-1715) himself.[6]

However, Rapin's book has some major problems. Novel it may be, but the core of his treatise reveals at once all of the vulnerabilities of the sublime. Central to his argument is a bold claim: the king himself is sublime, and therefore he is in need of a sublime representation to be able to evoke it through artifice (literature and the visual arts, such as painting and architecture). Underlying this claim are two problems, which point to the dangerous tipping point that the sublime has always known.

I Firstly, the poetics (or rhetoric) of the sublime used to evoke the effect of sublimity has always been problematic, since it relies on an interplay between opposite *extremes* (such as high-low, great-small, light-dark, everything-nothing). Such a union of opposites makes for a powerful poetic effect, but is therefore very unstable. It can easily topple, lapsing into ridicule or excess even with the slightest failure of artifice (be it a text or a building), or with the slightest push by political opponents, by means of satire for example. When applied to human beings, the sublime easily fails since human life is inherently flawed and rarely comes into contact with true extremes, apart from that of life-death – even the reign of kings such as Louis XIV. This thought also leads us to the second problem underlying Rapin's claim.

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5 In the "Préface" to his French edition, Boileau emphasises that Longinus' understanding of the sublime differs from the idea of the sublime style (or "Stile Sublime"), the highest of the three rhetorical styles in Ancient Rhetoric: "Il faut donc sçavoir que par Sublime, Longin n'entend pas ce que les Orateurs appellent le Stile Sublime: mais cet extraordinaire & ce merveilleux qui frappe dans le Discours, & qui fait qu'un Ouvrage enleve, ravit, transporte. Le Stile Sublime veut toûjours de grands mots: mais le Sublime se peut trouver dans une seule pensée, dans une seule figure, dans un seul tour de paroles. Une chose peut estre dans le Stile Sublime & n'estre pourtant pas Sublime." See Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, "Traité du sublime ou du merveilleux dans le discours. Traduit du Grec de Longin," in Œuvres Diverses Du Sieur D*** *avec le Traité du* sublime ou *du* merveilleux dans le discours (Paris: Claude Barbin, 1674), x.

6 Rapin, *Du grand*, 12-13. The English translations of these four conditions are quoted from Ann T. Delehanty, *Literary knowing in Neoclassical France: from poetics to aesthetics* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2013), 115. Louis II de Bourbon-Condé will be referred to as "Condé" in this dissertation.

II Secondly, when in spite of these dangers, notable contemporaries of Louis XIV such as Rapin did eventually establish the king *himself* as being sublime, a second problem emerged: how do you successfully represent and evoke the sublimity of a monarch through artifice (art, architecture and literature) – a sublimity that, according to seventeenth-century rhetoric, was in itself ineffable and lay far beyond the scope of normal human beings? This paradox was used by some writers as a cover to uphold the claim of the sublime itself: one could easily state that one's efforts fall short in the face of such transcendence, and resort to commonplaces such as: "Oh, I cannot continue, for this elevated task lies far beyond my humble capabilities." But ultimately, this rhetoric cannot avoid succumbing to its own weaknesses, since it reveals a fundamental inability or impossibility to wield the sublime so that it would evoke the monarch's elevation in all its glory and for all time. Rapin himself also admitted that he was incapable of executing this task.

Together, these two issues, I will argue, are at the core of the problematic claim of Louis XIV's sublimity. To be able to form a better understanding of these issues, my thesis will inquire into the development that had led to this claim. In other words, what is the history of the problem that is the sublime of Louis XIV?

One of the main reasons to turn back this clock is the fact that we can already recognise the same way of thinking about Louis XIV in an earlier work. Roughly sixteen years before Rapin's publication, the French writer on art and royal historiographer André Félibien (1619-1695) already elaborated on the very same case: the ineffable sublimity of Louis XIV himself.[7] In his *Tapisseries* du *Roy, ou sont representez les quatre elemens et les quatre saisons: avec les devises qui les accompagnent et leur explication* from 1670, Félibien focused on the capacity of tapestry and emblematics to best represent the sublimity of the monarch. The core of Félibien's argument, and the tapestries he discusses, expresses the very same idea of the sublimity of Louis XIV ("la grandeur d'Ame de Sa Majesté […] qui ne se propose rien que de magnifique & de sublime")[8] – an inner grandeur that, since his birth onwards, has elevated the monarch above all others towards a level of transcendence that ravishes all those who witness it and surpasses the ordinary scope of men ("Sa Majesté par ses vertus & ses actions heroïques, étonne & ravit tous ceux qui en sont les témoins, & surpasse les forces naturelles, & la portée ordinaire des Hommes").[9]

7 André Félibien, *Tapisseries du roi, où sont representez les quatre élémens et les quatre saisons* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1670).

8 André Félibien, *Tapisseries du Roy, ou sont representez les quatre elemens et les quatre saisons: avec les devises qui les accompagnent et leur explication*, rev. ed. (Paris: Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1679), 19. I will use this particular edition of Félibien's book in my thesis, unless stated otherwise.

9 Félibien, *Tapisseries du Roy*, 89.

The two publications by Félibien and Rapin demonstrate a notion of sublimity that operates around and beyond the traditional borders of discourse, by placing it in the domain of morality.[10] The driving force behind these ideas is the elevated status of the French monarch himself. Both works also connect the notion of sublimity with the question of representation: to what extent are not only words, but artworks and buildings able to evoke the transcendence of elevated human beings? These two books alone warrant an approach to seventeenth-century French thought on the sublime that explores more closely contemporary ideas on the grandeur of the French king and its problems, while also taking into account domains other than that of discourse. The fundamental vulnerabilities underlying not only their assertion of Louis XIV's sublimity, but also the role of architecture and literature as tools to evoke it, help us to discover how long these problems already existed. In fact, the question of approaching and representing royal transcendence was already particularly acute at the time of the monarch's birth.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE PROBLEM OF LOUIS XIV'S SUBLIMITY: GENERAL AIM AND METHODOLOGY

At its very core, Rapin's method and approach reveal a number of ambiguities and loose ends. These problems provide us with a vital reference point: they actually reveal several weaknesses in earlier French thinking on the sublime and human beings. These weaknesses can be traced back to the early years of Louis XIV's reign, and are a symptom of the ever unstable and subjective nature of the phenomenon of sublimity itself – a symptom the sublime has always had and always will have. Since the domain of architecture was used throughout the century as a vehicle to contemplate on the question of sublimity, it leads us directly to the heart of this problem. Therefore, the two problems of human sublimity that have just been introduced will inform the structure of my argument. Since both problems point to a development in time, they will be addressed in a two-part structure. The four decades prior to 1670, a time of conflict and power building (both literally and figuratively), expose our first problem and will therefore form part I of this thesis. And since the publication of the *Tapisseries du Roy* reveals our second problem, this case study will introduce part II of my argument.

10 On Rapin and the monarch's sublimity of morality, see Delehanty, *Literary knowing*, 115-125, and Ann T. Delehanty, "From Judgment to Sentiment: Changing Theories of the Sublime, 1674–1710," *Modern Language Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (June 2005): 151-72.

The first of these two issues, which will cover the first part of this thesis, concerns the *markers* of the sublime. This term, coined by James Porter in his comprehensive study *The Sublime in Antiquity* from 2016, refers to the causes which provoke the sublime, and therefore help to locate "sublimity in contexts where the critical term is not being used […] or where it has not yet surfaced as a technical term of aesthetics or criticism."[11] These markers should not be understood as containers of the sublime; they are causes, since they provoke the sublime. As examples of these markers, Porter lists features such as "immense heights (*hupsos* in a literal sense) or profound depths (*bathos* in a literal sense)," as well as "sudden or extreme, often violent, motions or changes," "limits" and "sharp collisions and contrasts (contrastive opposites)." What many of these markers have in common is the interplay between extremes, which we can identify as a fundamental agent of the sublime. Already for Longinus, the first prerequisite of the elevation of thought is "the power of grand conceptions," which often involves the interplay of profound qualities – contrasts and extremes that can only be found on opposite ends of spectrums.[12] Here, the potential of the sublime lies in the moment when the interplay between these opposites becomes too overwhelming for human beings to comprehend, such as a rapid change or transformation from one extreme into the other, or even instances in which the two converge. These are moments, Porter states in his article "Sublime monuments and sublime ruins in ancient aesthetics," in which "*les extrèmes se touchent* in a kind of ecstasy of representation."[13] This idea of a seemingly paradoxical union is vital. As examples of such dynamic unions Porter mentions high-low, great-small, rapid-slow, palpable-impalpable, and everlasting-ephemeral – and to this list one can add other notable examples such as silence-eloquence, humility-magnificence, and brevity-infinity. Porter rightfully describes this interplay as a "tension" that subsists between these extremes, and identifies this tension as a "sublime gap," one that is formed by "the polarities that stretch between any number of extremes."[14]

Even though words such as "tension" and "gap" explain very well the powerful potential of extremes and conflicts that characterises the force of the sublime, they equally well point to its fundamental vulnera-

11 James Porter, *The Sublime in Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 53.

12 Longinus, *On the Sublime*, trans. W. Hamilton Fyfe and Donald A. Russell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 8, 181, https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.longinus-sublime.1995. The English translation is derived from this source.

13 James Porter, "Sublime monuments and sublime ruins in ancient aesthetics," *European Review of History: Revue europeenne d'histoire* 18, no. 5-6 (2011): 690.

14 Porter, *The Sublime in Antiquity*, 55.

bilities. Here lies the first issue of sublimity, that of extremes, which can best be explained by examining cause (Porter's "markers") and effect.

Here, it might help to look at the example of the marker of heaven-hell. When a reader or spectator is confronted with an image or idea of the terrific space and contrast between both extremes, this tension can elevate both, as a union, towards the sublime and produces an overwhelming effect in the recipient. This relationship, which Porter explains, can be compared to a *spectrum*.[15] Here, even though hell and heaven are located on opposite ends of the same spectrum, they are both sublime. And especially when they cooperate, they can evoke a powerful sense of sublimity in the recipient.

However, extremes such as "hell," "nothingness" or "total darkness" are fundamentally ambiguous notions, for they can also evoke sensations in us that are very different from the sublime. If we would associate the sublime with the greatness of virtue, then these notions would constitute the opposite of the sublime itself. In this case, we are not concerned with a spectrum but rather with a *scale* of sublimity. Whereas on a spectrum of sublimity, both its ends are sublime (even though they are each other's opposites, such as heaven and hell), on a scale of sublimity only the top end constitutes the sublime (let us say "heaven"), while the other end of the line forms the opposite of the sublime *itself*, the antithesis of sublimity (let us say "hell"). And in the pursuit of the sublime, towards this top end of the line, one can easily fail and fall downwards towards the extreme opposite of the sublime on the lowest end of the scale. Examples such as these are attempts at greatness that are considered ridiculous, excessive, and, most of all, vicious. An illustration of this possibility can be found in those human beings who want to achieve greatness, but fall prey to the dangers of hubris and trip and fall downwards. This metaphor of height returns in the *Traité de la Cour ou Instruction des Courtisans* by Eustache de Refuge (1564-1617), an influential treatise on courtly conduct from 1616:

> L'on monte en ces grandes fortunes par degrez; mais quand l'on est monté jusques au comble, le plus souvent l'on n'en trouve point pour descendre; & le moindre ebloyssement de veuë, qui prend ordinairement à ceux qui sont elevez si haut, leur fait perdre l'assiette du pied, & les precipite en bas tout à un coup.[16]

15 Referring to Longinus' image of "the failed Colossus," Porter writes: "Here we see clearly how the sublime is generated at the nether ends of the spectrum that monuments can occupy: at their moment of greatest possible expansion (at the farthest reaches of the cosmos) and at the moment of their imminent collapse." Porter, "Sublime monuments," 690.

16 Eustache de Refuge, *Traité de la cour: ou instruction des courtisans*, rev. ed. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1656 [1616]), 349: "Wee ascend to those *Great* and *Eminent* fortunes of the *Court* by degrees and steppes; but when we are mounted, and have attained the top, then we find neither stepps nor degrees whereby to descend; and the least dasling of our eyes (which comonly befalles those who are elevated so high) makes us loose our footing, and in one moment and

Like Refuge's metaphorical stairway, a scale of sublimity thus always carries the possibility of failure, of not reaching the top and falling downwards along the scale towards the sublime's dangerous antithesis. Therefore, a scale of sublimity, instead of a spectrum, can be often found in the ideas of political opponents, such as works of satire. This is why the underlying methodology of the first part of this thesis constitutes the tension that exists between the spectrum and the scale of the sublime.

Rapin's problematic approach to the sublime reveals this issue of extremes very clearly. In his *Du grand ou du sublime*, Rapin shows a strong reliance on the power of opposite extremes. In his discussion of the persons of Condé and Turenne, for instance, Rapin characterises them by using different interplays of extremes: employing those of action-tranquillity and humility-magnificence respectively. In these interplays, Rapin referred to the role of architecture as a key participant: Condé's retirement from military glory at his magnificent castle of Chantilly made him sublime, whereas Turenne's sublimity arose from his humility, for instance when approaching the castle of Versailles. But such was Rapin's confidence in his endeavour that he chose to establish the sublimity of his four human subjects as different types of the sublime, while leaving aside the question of how these multiple "sublimes" related to each other. Soon after the publication of his treatise, he himself became painfully aware of the issues underlying these choices. From his correspondence with several French intellectuals, we know that Condé's son, Henri-Jules de Bourbon-Condé (Prince de Condé) (1643-1709), and his court were very displeased with Rapin's description of his father in the treatise. Startled, Rapin wrote to Roger de Bussy-Rabutin (1618-1693), a memoirist and lieutenant-general to Louis XIV, that several members of Henri-Jules' inner circle at Versailles had complained that Turenne had been treated much better in the book than Condé has. In order to reassure his opponents, Rapin adds that, in response to this criticism, he would argue that the sublime he had given to Condé was actually "more grand and much more extensive than that of M. de Turenne." Because reason, Rapin continues, "is the sovereign perfection of man […], the sublime of spirit and of reason that I give to the Prince is preferable to that of the sword, which I give to the Maréchal." [17]

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blow precipitates, and throwes us downe headlong." The English translation is derived from Eustache de Refuge, *A treatise of the court or Instructions for courtiers Digested into two books*, trans. John Reynolds, vol. 1 (London: Augustine Matthews for Will: Lee, 1622), 188-89.

17 Rapin writes to Bussy-Rabutin: "Il est vray qu'a Versailles quelques gens de la cour de Monsieur le Duc se plaignirent que j'avois mieux traitté M. de Turenne que Monsieur le Prince. A quoy je repondis que le sublime que je donne a Monsieur le Prince est plus grand et bien plus étendu que celuy de M. de Turenne; car comme la raison est la souveraine perfection de l'homme, et que la valeur n'en est qu'un effet et qu'une suitte, le sublime de l'esprit et de la raison que je donne au Prince est preferable a celuy de l'épée, que je donne au Maréchal." See letter "103. *Du P. Rapin*" in Roger de Bussy-Rabutin, *Correspondance avec le Père René Rapin*, ed. C. Rouben (Paris: A.-G. Nizet, 1983), 220.

Here, Rapin's interplay of extremes backfires. For the circle of Condé's son, Turenne's sublimity outshone that of Condé: Rapin's idea of his father's magnificence at Chantilly sounded far less exalted than Turenne's noble humility in the face of the king's magnificence.[18] In a rather desperate public effort to satisfy his critics and remove any ambiguities, Rapin turned to the protestant philosopher Pierre Bayle (1647-1706), who was about to write a review of Rapin's book in the *Nouvelles de la république des lettres*.[19] Audaciously, Rapin tried to influence the content of his own review, asking Bayle to underline the following two ideas: Condé's sublimity of glorious tranquillity outshines Turenne's sublimity of military action, but Turenne's sublime humility (*anéantissement*) elevates the king by association even more.[20] The inconsistent twists and turns of Rapin's efforts are obvious, and the result is an indistinct hierarchy of sublimes that would fit better in a poetic panegyric than in a treatise.[21]

In other words, the powerful potential of extremes carries with it many risks, since their use can easily become subject to interpretation, subversion and excess – and this topple-effect becomes particularly clear when human beings are connected to the sublime. The first part of this thesis will examine the use of such interplays of extremes during the first decades of Louis XIV's life, with a particular focus on the role of human virtue in this process.

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18 Rapin explains that Condé's civility and magnificence are qualities that lead better towards grandeur of spirit than Turenne's valour does: "Mais outre que je donne à M. le Prince tout le sublime de la valeur, je lui donne encore celui de l'esprit, de la politesse, de la magnificence et toutes les autres qualités qui font la grandeur d'âme bien plus que la valeur." Bussy-Rabutin, *Correspondance*, 220.

19 Rapin reveals that one of the motives behind his audacious requests to Bayle is "to satisfy those who are not content, perhaps wrongly" with his characterisation of Condé: "[L]'auteur/ seroit obligé à M. Besle de luy ayder à faire sentir cela afin de contenter ceux qui ne sont pas contans peut estre mal à propos du caractere qu'il a donné à Mr. le prince qui en a esté contan[t] luy mesme, et mieux senty que les autres l'excellence de son sublime." René Rapin to Pierre Bayle, March 8, 1686, in *Correspondance de Pierre Bayle*, accessed 3 May 2018, http://bayle-correspondance.univ-st-etienne.fr/?Lettre-531-Rene-Rapin-a-Pierre&lang=fr.

20 Rapin, writing to Bayle in the third person, presents his wishes to Bayle as follows: "C'est sur cela qu'on le prie dans le jugement qu'il fera du livre qu'on luy envoye de vouloir bien en consideration de ses amis insinuer dans le sublime qu'on donne à Mr de Turene, qu'il semble que ce n'est que pour louer mieux le Roy que l'auteur a pris plaisir de si bien louer Mr de Turene : que c'est un tour nouveau qu'il a imaginé de faire l'eloge de ce prince, dont les louanges sont épuisées, bien plus beau, en embellissant celuy de ce grand homme. Rien n'est mieux conceu, et plus nouveau, que de relever le merite de ce guerrier pour en faire hommage au Roy en l'aneantissant devant luy, de la maniere dont il le fait. On voudroit aussy qu'il voulut bien insinuer dans le caractere de M. le prince que l'auteur apres luy avoir donné tout le sublime de l'action par la valeur des armes, luy donne encore tout le sublime du repos et de la gloire qu'il y a [à] en jouir comme fait ce prince ; que ce sublime de la gloire du repos est autant preferable au sublime de la gloire de l'action." René Rapin to Pierre Bayle, March 8, 1686.

21 Rapin described his book as a "petit Traité," Rapin, *Du grand*, iv.

Only with Félibien's publication of the *Tapisseries du Roy* around 1670, which was published by the Imprimerie royale, we start to see large-scale efforts to officially establish the king himself as sublime – and here we reach the second issue discussed in this thesis. In essence, the imperfect and capricious lives of humans are seldom governed by or confronted with *truly* absolute contrasts, let alone absolutes. Of course, you may feel that a person is sublime, but once you poetically or, in Rapin's case, theoretically establish someone as a "sublime human being," you run the severe risk of provoking a public backlash – a problem that only increases when not one but several sublime human beings are involved.[22] After all, sublimity is ultimately a subjective quality, an aspect that has already been stressed by Lydia Hamlett. In her article "Longinus and the Baroque Sublime in Britain," she discussed the empirical ways of judging the sublime in art by pre-Kantian and pre-Burkian authors such as Jonathan Richardson (1665-1745) – authors who tried to define the sublime but realized that, as Hamlett writes, "there was always something out of their grasp, something unquantifiable because, affect, sublimity, is subjective."[23]

While it is complex for the reader of Rapin's book to interpret the mutual relationships between his sublime subjects, Rapin does however attempt to make clear that Louis XIV's sublimity is the most sublime of all. This is the point where our second issue becomes most tangible, since the author needs to address the far-reaching consequences of the question of the monarch's sublimity. At the end of his treatise, Rapin concludes his argument by contemplating the greatness of his most sublime subject, Louis XIV himself. At one moment during his éloge of the monarch, he stops and admits to the reader that he cannot continue. He explains why:

> Voilà le dernier trait de son éloge: mais il faudroit une main plus sçavante que la mienne pour l'achever. Toutes ses actions passeroient pour des miracles, si elles estoient bien représentées. On aura de la peine à l'avenir, parce qu'on n'a rien veû de pareil dans le temps passé; & si j'avois toute la force de genie que demanderoit un si grand sujet, je ferois peut-estre un portrait de Louïs le Grand, que l'envie respecteroit, & où le temps n'oseroit toucher. Mais je laisse faire ceux

22 This is the problem of Rapin's multiple "sublimes": virtually everyone can attempt to elevate a notion towards a sublime extreme (or interplay of extremes), but when one sublime is deemed more profound than the other, the competitive element that arises at once reveals all of the sublime's hidden vulnerabilities.

23 Lydia Hamlett, "Longinus and the Baroque Sublime in Britain," in *The Art of the Sublime*, ed. Nigel Llewellyn and Christine Riding, Tate Research Publication, January 2013, accessed January 9, 2017, https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/the-sublime/acknowledgements-r1141239.

> qui méditent sa vie pour en rendre compte à la postérité. C'est à eux à dire les merveilles d'un Règne si admirable, & de mettre en œuvre le Sublime de son ame & de son cœur par tout le Sublime de leur éloquence.[24]

Confronted with the grandeur of the king, he writes that only a more learned man would be able to carry on this great task. Only if his actions are well represented, Rapin argues, future generations will be able to believe them. Time, in this respect, is a particularly dangerous actor, since it will erode everything it touches. Although Rapin's passage is highly rhetorical – the monarch's sublimity is such that it defies all representation – he seems to address an actual issue here. Rapin's efforts to pin down and instrumentalise the sublime ("faire l'application"), in order to use it, both theoretically and politically, as a quality of virtue and the object of representation, ultimately reveals the impossibility to wield it. Cunningly, Rapin tries to avoid the problem by placing the impossible task with someone else, a third party of future geniuses, thereby rendering this sublime representation as something purely hypothetical.

Starting with Félibien's 1670 publication of the *Tapisseries du Roy*, the second part of my thesis will place this issue – the issue of the king's sublimity and its representation – into a much broader context of contemporary debates on Louis XIV's virtue, and the capacity of literature and architecture to evoke it.

APPROACHING THE SUBLIME IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PARIS

To start this inquiry and to better introduce the relevant, modern scholarship in this particular field, we can use fragments of Rapin's text as points of reference. While Félibien's *Tapisseries du Roy* attempts to evoke the king's sublimity in poetry and emblems, Rapin's *Du Grand ou du sublime* opts for a theoretical strategy towards the same end. He builds an argument which is constructed by means of a number of statements that reveal, more clearly than Félibien's text does, the author's own view on the nature of sublimity. As a means of introduction, let us use several of his statements as starting points in order to be able to get acquainted with the nature of our problem of human sublimity. This will enable us, in the thesis itself, to turn back the clock and see how this problem has developed during the course of the reign of Louis XIV.

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24 Rapin, *Du grand*, 89-90: "Here, we have arrived at the last part of his eulogy: but it would take a more learned hand than mine to complete it. All of his actions would pass for miracles, if they are well represented. This will prove difficult in the future, because we have not seen anything like it in the past. And if I had all the power of genius that such a great subject would require, I might make a portrait of Louis le Grand, one which envy would respect, and which time would not dare to touch. But I will let those who meditate on his life to provide an account for posterity. It is up to them to express the wonders of a reign so admirable, and to put into action the Sublime of his soul and of his heart by all the Sublime of their eloquence."

The first of these statements has already been mentioned earlier; in his opening text, Rapin states that since we can find the "Grand" and the "Merveilleux" in all sorts of things, this also might be true for the "sublime" ("But since the Great [du Grand] and the Marvellous [du Merveilleux] can exist in all things, I thought that we might just as well conceive the Sublime here").[25] This short introductory statement in his book provides us with two thoughts that best summarise his argument. On the one hand, he suggests a close relationship between, on the one hand, the ideas of "le Grand" (the Grand) and "le Merveilleux" (the marvellous), and, on the other hand, the notion of "le Sublime". Secondly, by writing "en toutes choses," he identifies the area of interest of his treatise not only as "*all* things," but also "*in* all things."

THE SEMANTIC FIELD OF THE SUBLIME

As far as this first thought is concerned, the importance of examining the close relationship Rapin establishes between "le Grand," "le Merveilleux," and "le Sublime" becomes clear when we compare Rapin's words with those of his main source of influence: Nicolas Boileau. For his edition of Longinus from 1674, Boileau chose the following title: *Traité du Sublime, ou Du Merveilleux dans le Discours*. Unlike Rapin, Boileau regarded the ideas of *le sublime* and *le merveilleux* as having the same meaning, indicated by the word "ou" ("or") that he puts between the two notions in his title. These different viewpoints are emblematic of the semantics of sublimity. The relationship Boileau establishes is synonymous, but with Rapin we move into another, albeit similar domain. If we were to view the notion of sublimity – and this thesis will use the English words "sublimity" and "sublime" as synonymous – as a generic idea that comprises a set of various related words that can be grouped semantically (by meaning) under this specific idea, we speak of a semantic field. In early modern Europe, semantic interrelationships between these specific terms were, however, far from fixed or regulated; sometimes two words would be subjected to a hierarchical relationship, while others would regard the same terms as synonymous. These different semantic relationships are important in understanding the nature of the idea of the sublime, which functioned as a floating concept that included a constantly changing field of "neighbouring terms," such as *le merveilleux*, *la magnificence*, and *le je ne sais quoi* – notions which play a central role in my argument.[26] Modern scholars have

25 Ibid., iii: "Mais comme il peut y avoir du Grand & du Merveilleux en toutes choses, j'ay cru qu'on pouvoit aussi y concevoir du Sublime."

26 The idea of neighbouring terms is derived from Richard Scholar, *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe. Encounters with a Certain Something* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 50, but I am referencing here in particular the Springer lemma "Sublime." See note 27.

devoted much attention to the complexity of these relationships in early-modern Europe, such as Françoise Graziani, Robert Doran, Richard Scholar, and Eva Madeleine Martin.[27] Most notably, French historian Louis Marin has tackled this issue several times. In his article "Le sublime dans les années 1670. Un je ne sais quoi" from 1986, the author argued that in the seventeenth century the concept of *le je ne sais quoi* (or the I-do-not-know-what), developed in the 1670s by Dominique Bouhours (1628-1702) and Nicolas Boileau, should be considered as a broader term that encompasses the French term of *le sublime*.[28]

My own research will first and foremost depart from the involvement of this semantic field of sublimity, as a group of constantly intersecting terms and shifting relationships. Therefore, the definition of sublimity that I will use in my research, should, on the one hand, reflect the fluidity of the notion in seventeenth-century France, while, on the other hand, encompass the common denominator of all its different conceptions.

The definition I will employ to this purpose is a rather recent one: as part of my ERC-project "Elevated Minds," I co-wrote a lemma on the "Sublime" for Springer's *Encyclopedia of Renaissance Philosophy* in 2018.[29] This lemma departs from a newly formed definition that is the result of the project's five-year research and interinstitutional collaboration. It states that the sublime (or sublimity) is "a great or noble quality of literature or art, which is characterized by an irresistible and overwhelming effect and which produces strong and often conflicting emotions such as awe, fear, and admiration in its recipients."[30] What is key here is that, as the lemma also states, this "great or noble quality" operates on an "extraordinary level." This word "extraordinary" is of great importance, since it well reflects the fact that the sublime is always a profound quality, and therefore has such powerful potential. At its core, the sublime deals with a sense of the extreme. This elicits strong reactions in people, since extremes do not often form part of our everyday experiences or frame of reference. However, the power and location of sublimity is and can never be fixed: what might be a moment of wonder and the ineffable to some, will be an example of excess, of hubris, and of ridicule to others. This problematic aspect, I will argue, runs as an ever recurring symptom

27 See Françoise Graziani, "Le miracle de l'art: Le Tasse et la poétique de la *meraviglia*," *Revue des Études Italiennes* 42, no. 1-2 (1996): 130-31; Robert Doran, "The Sublime and Modern Subjectivity: The Discourse of Elevation from Neo -Classicism to French Romanticism" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2004), 88-94, ProQuest (3145499); Scholar, *Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi,* 50; and Eva Madeleine Martin, "The 'Prehistory' of the Sublime in Early Modern France: An Interdisciplinary Perspective," in *The Sublime. From Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Timothy M. Costelloe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 80.

28 Louis Marin, "Le sublime dans les années 1670. Un je ne sais quoi," *Biblio* 17, no. 25 (1986): 186.

29 Stijn Bussels, Bram van Oostveldt, Wieneke Jansen, Frederik Knegtel, and Laura Plezier, eds., "Sublime," in *Encyclopedia of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. M. Sgarbi (Springer International Publishing AG, November 20, 2017), accessed January 17, 2018, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02848-4_1136-1.

30 Ibid., 1.

through the seventeenth century, without ever being acknowledged. It was only after the turn of the century, when Boileau, in his *Réflexions*, would gradually shift the sublime away from the tradition of poetic creation towards the experience of the audience in the face of a divinely inspired work or thought, such as a Biblical text.[31] He ultimately concluded that the sublime cannot be produced according to rules but is something strictly experiential, and very rare as well (to *feel* universal truth, when present in a work, in all its elevating simplicity).

THE CONSTRUCTION OF LOUIS XIV'S SUBLIMITY: A DISCOURSE AT THE INTERSECTION OF ARCHITECTURE AND LITERATURE

As we have seen, Rapin considered the sublime as a quality that already resides *in* things and people, rather than primarily evoked through words, as argued by Longinus and Boileau.[32] One particularly important argument Rapin uses to further substantiate this idea of the sublimity of human beings, is that it does not only radiate from these individuals themselves, but is also evoked through the things they do or make. He thus directs the attention away from the Longinian capacity of words, towards the capacity of architecture to evoke this sublimity. In other words, in addition to literature, architecture can evoke just as well the elevated quality Rapin finds primarily in people. As an example to explain this point, Rapin discusses the castle and grounds of Chantilly. Constructed originally for the family of Montmorency, the domain was confiscated by Louis XIII (1601-1643) in 1632 and became the property of the Bourbon-Condé family in 1643. In the subsequent decades, Condé (also named *le Grand Condé*) would transform it into a place of architectural innovation and a centre of artistic and intellectual exchange:

> Les pensées qu'il a eûës pour parer son hermitage, sont à proportion aussi sublimes que les grandes actions qu'il a faites dans ses campagnes pour sa gloire & pour celle de l'Estat. Tout enfin répond à la noblesse de son génie jusques aux moindres choses: la grandeur de son caractere se découvre par tout; & il n'y a presque rien qui ne represente l'esprit de celuy qui en est le maistre.[33]

31 Delehanty, "Judgment to Sentiment," 170-71.

32 Boileau does, however, write that Longinus is sublime himself because he is able to talk about the sublime: "En traitant dez beautez de l'Elocution, il [Longin] a emploié toutes les finesses de l'Elocution. Souvent il fait la figure qu'il enseigne, & en parlant du Sublime, il est lui mesme tres-sublime." Boileau, "Traité du sublime," iv.

33 Rapin, *Du grand*, 58: "The ideas he has conceived to embellish his home are in proportion as sublime as the great actions he has performed in his campaigns, for his glory and for that of the State. Everything, in fact, responds to the nobility of his genius down to the smallest detail: the grandeur of his character is revealed everywhere. And there is almost nothing that does not represent the mind of its master."

The ideas, Rapin writes, behind embellishing his castle are as sublime as his grand actions during his military campaigns. This is the aspect that elevates Chantilly in particular; the authorship and execution of its design can be traced back to Condé himself, thereby rendering the castle and park as a magnificent mirror of his own sublime virtue ("Il falloit qu'il en fist luy-mesme le plan, qu'il en conceust le dessein, & qu'il en fust l'ouvrier.").[34] In other words, Rapin states that Chantilly's design evokes the sublimity of Condé's virtues, in the same manner as sublime rhetoric of words can evoke the sublimity of Louis XIV's virtues ("mettre en œuvre le Sublime de son âme & de son cœur par tout le Sublime de leur éloquence").[35]

This thesis will argue that these ideas form the culmination of a much older discourse that exploited the affective impact of monumental architecture to uphold the sublimity of Louis XIV – a discourse that we can trace back to the period of the king's birth. Before Rapin, writers were not yet able to express their ecstatic and elevated ideas on the monarch in such a concrete manner, mainly because prior to Boileau's 1674 edition, the critical concept of "le sublime" did not yet exist. There were, however, various conventional modes these writers could adopt to contemplate on this sublimity: rhetorical styles and figures that had always been associated with the elevated and overwhelming wonder of political power. In the attempt to evoke the sublime, writers used architectural metaphors that deal with profound heights, vast spaces and dynamic movements. In this discourse, architecture and literature often even intersect; while a writer can place a building in a text (and the reader finishes this construction in the mind's eye), a text can also be placed in or on a building (such as inscriptions on façades and triumphal arches).

One key notion that motivated my inquiry into the intimate relationship between architecture and literature is the idea of *phantasia*, the Ancient Greek word for "visualisation." As a rhetorical term, it features in works such as Longinus' treatise and refers to the images that are evoked through speech in the mind of the recipient.[36] The concept of visualisation points to the similarities the domains of architecture and literature share: the construction of worlds. The early-modern interest in these intersections helped push the sublime from the realm of rhetoric and poetry into the visual arts, and nourished an interplay between both domains.[37] Both the writer and the architect are concerned with

34 Ibid., 57.

35 Ibid., 89-90. With "leur," Rapin refers to writers that are far more superior than he is. Only these geniuses, he states, would be able to write a succesfull portrait of the king.

36 Caroline van Eck, *Art, Agency and Living Presence: From the Animated Image to the Excessive Object* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2015), 48.

the creation of structures, be it in the mind or in the third dimension. Moreover, both are able to inform the work of one another, especially in a political and cultural environment that controls and facilitates the production of texts, images and buildings. For instance, in his description of Chantilly, Rapin states that the grandeur of the Condé's soul and spirit that characterises his design of the gardens at Chantilly (the "grandeur de son génie" and "l'élévation de son ame") can only be found in the realm of historic fable, of mythological prose and poetry.[38]

One literary genre in particular strongly nourished and stimulated these types of intersections and interrelationships between literature and architecture in early modern France. The impact of epic poetry during the first half of the seventeenth century was highly significant. Influenced by the late sixteenth-century revival of the epic in Italy, the 1650s saw a wave of national and Christian poems in French, celebrating royal and religious figures from the nation's past as new epic heroes. The genre's relationship with the notion of sublimity was twofold. First of all, in early modern France, the epic became associated with the highest of three literary styles, usually named the *style sublime*. As the highest of the *genera dicendi*, this mode returns in passages by writers such as Homer, Pindar and Virgil.[39] As Nicholas Cronk writes in his *The Classical Sublime*, "[I]n the seventeenth century, the 'stile sublime' seems to be invoked systematically with reference to the epic poem."[40] For example, Georges de Scudéry (1601-1667), author of the epic *Alaric* (1654), connected the genre with the first of his

37 Already in 1637, the protestant philologist Franciscus Junius the Younger associated the Longinian sublime with the art of painting, in his widely disseminated publication *De pictura veterum* (*On the Painting of the Ancients*). The example of Junius demonstrates particularly well why modern research on the intersections between art and the sublime – whether or not Longinian – in early modern Europe cannot dismiss the vital role of the domain of literature (or discourse). The ideas that Junius and other authors such as Samuel van Hoogstraaten would extend into the world of art were originally rhetorical. Insisting on the powerful capacity of visual images, such as paintings and sculptures, to strike or petrify the viewer, they relied on rhetorical notions from the works of Longinus and Hermogenes, such as the ability to enthral [*ekplettein*] an audience by means of *phantasia*. See Caroline van Eck, "The Petrifying Gaze of Medusa: Ambivalence, *Ekplexis*, and the Sublime," *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 8, no. 2 (2016): 3-4, https://doi.org/10.5092/jhna.2016.8.2.3.

38 Rapin, *Du grand*, 57-8: "[O]n voit jusques dans les ruisseaux, dans les bocages, dans les berceaux, dans les fontaines, dans les canaux, & dans ces grands réservoirs d'eau quelques traits de la grandeur de son génie: tout y respire l'élévation de son ame, & la politesse de son esprit, par certaines traces qu'il semble qu'il ait imprimé par tout de ces douceurs & de ces charmes de cét âge d'or qui ne se trouve plus que dans les fables" ("[E]ven in the brooks, in the groves, in the garden pavilions, in the fountains, in the canals, and in these great reservoirs of water, we see some features of the grandeur of his genius: everything there breathes the elevation of his soul, and the courtesy of his mind, as a result of the marks he has left, which he seems to have invigorated with all the gentleness and charm of the golden age that is only found in mythological fable").

39 C. Stephen Jaeger, "Introduction," in *Magnificence and the Sublime in Medieval Aesthetics*, ed. C. Stephen Jaeger (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 1.

40 Nicholas Cronk, *The Classical Sublime: French Neoclassicism and the Language of Literature* (Charlottesville: Rockwood Press, 2002), 86.

tripartite division of "le sublime; le mediocre; & le bas," while also using the term of *le magnifique* as a synonym for this most elevated style.[41] Secondly, through the Italian sixteenth-century epics by writers such as Torquato Tasso (1544-1595) and Giambattista Marino (1569-1625), the poetic ideal of *la meraviglia* (*le merveilleux* or the marvellous) seeped into French thought on poetry. Tasso, who was influenced by both Longinus and Aristotle, translated the Greek word for astonishment or awe (*thaumaston*) – Aristotle's criterion for the epic – as *meraviglioso*.[42] The term coincides with the Longinian notion of *hypsos,* since it combines transport, surprise and elevation, and it was subsequently rendered in French as *merveilleux* or *admirable*.[43] Marino argued the same, writing that the poet's aim is to create wonder ("È del Poeta il fin la meraviglia") and to amaze ("stupir").[44] Thirdly, the epic was an ancient laudatory genre, and has always used wondrous architectural spaces as well as dynamic movement in space, such as journeys or flights, as fundamental tools in the creation of political meaning and elevating effect. In addition, the modern Italian epic provided French poets with a mixture of Christian figures, such as angels and saints, with more pagan elements, such as enchantresses and demons, which suited the struggles and subsequent glory of epic heroes, and by extension contemporary politicians, particularly well.

The repercussions of the success of both ancient and modern epics – from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* – on the ideas, designs and iconography of French royal buildings and artistic programs were great. This is why my research will inquire into the nature and scale of the interrelationships between epic wonder and French cultural policy under Louis XIV, between the realms of fiction and reality. And in addition, how should we understand the contemporary relationship between epic heroes and real people, such as Louis XIV himself? Particular attention will be paid to the role of the semantic field of sublimity in this respect, in order to arrive at a better understanding of the mutual relationship between the neighbouring terms in this field.

Already in Longinus, Richard A. Etlin states, we are able to recognise a "constant interchange between architecture and literature in creating either descriptions or architectural forms capable of imparting a feeling of the sublime."[45] Imaginary buildings could function as powerful poetic metaphors; fictional temples of virtue or glory featuring in laudatory poems fulfilled their encomiastic function by constructing themselves in the mind of the reader, resulting in an

41 Ibid., 86.

42 Martin, "The 'Prehistory,' " 94. See also Cronk, *The Classical Sublime*, 94.

43 Robert Doran, *The Theory of the Sublime from Longinus to Kant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 104-5. Doran refers here to Graziani, "Le miracle de l'art," 130-31. See also Martin, "The 'Prehistory,' " 94.

appearance that depended on the power of one's imagination. Moreover, these types of images evoked by grand works of poetry, such as laudatory or larger epic poems, also participated in the design process and experience of real buildings. Here, the two realms of imagination and reality enter into a complex relationship. Let us say, for example, that a poetic image of an imaginary, wondrous building influences the design of an actual palace, the end result will have to compete with the highly fantastical, enchanting and subjective image of its poetic original, an image that changes from one person to the other. In other words, the original poetic image participates in the experience of its real counterpart. This also applies to laudatory poems written in order to glorify the actual building, which have to avoid lapsing into ridicule.

HISTORIOGRAPHY ON THE SUBLIME AND THE FRENCH VISUAL ARTS

The "effect of the 'merveille,' " French historian Marc Fumaroli tentatively stated in his École du silence (1994), is "a state of silent rapture caused by admiration and delight," which was "common to poetry, to the arts and to the sciences" in the seventeenth century.[46] Since the publication of Fumaroli's book, which addresses the sublime only briefly, modern studies on the relationship between art and the sublime have become more numerous.

Most of these studies lean heavily on the heritage of Longinus in early modern Europe. While Louis Marin's *Sublime Poussin* (1999) and Clélia Nau's *Le temps du sublime* both placed the work of the French painter Nicolas Poussin in the context of the sixteenth-century rediscovery of Longinus' treatise, a much wider scope of research lay at the basis of the publication *Translations of the Sublime. The Early Modern Reception and Dissemination of Longinus'* Peri Hupsous *in Rhetoric, the Visual Arts, Architecture and the Theatre* (2012), edited by Caroline van Eck, Maarten Delbeke, Jürgen Pieters, and Stijn Bussels.[47] Its authors have revealed an early modern network in which Longinus was received and disseminated, which would contribute to the transfer of Longinian ideas into the production and reception of the visual arts, architecture and theatre. Furthermore, Timothy Costelloe's edited volume *The Sublime. From Antiquity to the Present* (2012) contains two contributions that locate the sublime within

44 "È del Poeta il fin la meraviglia:/ parlo dell' eccellente, non del goffo;/ chi non sà far stupir vada alla striglia." ("The poet's aim is to create marvel: I speak of the excellent, not the akward sort; and may he who cannot amaze be sent to the stables!"). This translation is derived from Nancy L. Canepa, "Literary Culture in Naples, 1500-1800," in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, ed. Tommaso Astarita (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 435. For the original text see "Fischiata xxxiii" in Giambattista Marino, *La Murtoleide fischiate del caualier Marino* […] (Nuremberg: Ioseph Stamphier, 1619), 35.

45 Richard A. Etlin, "Architecture and the Sublime," in *The Sublime. From Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Timothy M.

early-modern French art and architecture. Richard A. Etlin's "Architecture and the Sublime" is mainly concerned with the dynamic image in Longinus and Ovid, an energetic movement through space that in some instances constitutes a "combination of spatial dynamism and emotional dynamism, both felt emphatically."[48] His argument centres on the chapel of the sixteenth-century Château d'Anet, as an imitation of several Ancient Roman models. The link he establishes between the chapel's architecture and the poetic figure of Phoebus Apollo is particularly important within the scope of my own research, certainly because this connection would return in the creation and reception of Parisian architecture throughout the seventeenth century. Furthermore, Eva Madeleine Martin, in her chapter "The 'Prehistory' of the Sublime in Early Modern France," argues that the semantic fluidity of the term became exploited in order to put the literary or rhetorical notion of the sublime "into conversation with ideas in politics, science and religion."[49] Both Boileau's *Traité du Sublime*, Martin states, and the earlier anonymous translation "De la sublimité" share the conception of *sublimité* as a "divine force," transforming the king into the supreme embodiment of the sublime.[50] However, as Martin indicates, their different vocabularies – Boileau's *sublime* or *merveilleux* and the anonymous translator's *sublimité* or *magnificence* – suggest different ways of employing sublimity.[51]

Martin's chapter embraces a vast amount of contexts and ideas, and therefore reads almost like a manifest or an essay. Its hypotheses and conclusions are nonetheless tantalising, and deserve a broader study. The emphasis the author puts on the fluid semantic nature of the notion of sublimity also runs parallel with the argument C. Stephen Jaeger puts forward in the volume *Magnificence and the Sublime in Medieval Aesthetics: Art, Architecture, Literature, Music*, published in 2011. In the Middle Ages, Jaeger states, the "Magnificent and the Sublime as aesthetic principles operated more or less undetected" and "have gone unrecognized in their relatedness to the Magnificence of the Renaissance and to the Sublime as formulated by antiquity and obsessed over in the eighteenth century."[52] "Yet," he writes, "these two principles are infused, not so subtly, in

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Costelloe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 237.

46 Marc Fumaroli, *L'École du silence. Le sentiment des images au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1998), 126-127.

47 See Caroline van Eck, Maarten Delbeke, Jürgen Pieters, and Stijn Bussels, eds., *Translations of the Sublime. The Early Modern Reception and Dissemination of Longinus'* Peri Hupsous *in Rhetoric, the Visual Arts, Architecture and the Theatre* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

48 Etlin, "Architecture and the Sublime," 238.

49 Martin, "The 'Prehistory,' " 84.

50 Ibid., 94.

51 Ibid., 92.

52 Jaeger, "Introduction," 1.

medieval art, architecture, literature and music; they were often practiced, though seldom theoretically reflected on."[53] And perhaps the most prominent reason we know this is because, as Jaeger continues, an "extensive descriptive vocabulary fans out from them."[54]

In seventeenth-century France, notions such as *sublime, le je ne sais quoi*, *le merveilleux*, *la magnificence* bore a close relationship to the Longinian sublime, and were often described as related or synonymous to the latter in the experience of the arts. In order to understand their mutual relationship, one needs to look beyond Longinus and beyond the domain of discourse alone. James Porter, in his publication *The Sublime in Antiquity* (2016), argued as much when he writes that "Longinus may not have been a known quantity in late antiquity and the Middle Ages, but sublimity was, and it enjoyed a vital existence that can be documented in all aspects of culture – in biblical hermeneutics, theology, church architecture; in music, poetry, and pictorial art."[55] My research will further examine this train of thought in the context of the reign of Louis XIV.

LAY-OUT OF THE ARGUMENT

This perspective informs to a great extent the structure of this thesis. The dissertation is divided into two parts, studying a period that runs from 1630, at the height of the success of Armand Jean du Plessis, Cardinal Richelieu (1585-1642) and just before Louis XIV's birth, until the death of the monarch in 1715.

The first part focuses on our first issue: the central role of extremes in the poetics of sublimity, and how often and easily these extremities would backfire, or would be subverted by opponents. We will discuss the thirty years before the advent of Louis XIV's personal reign in 1661, which were politically very turbulent – an element that would shape the absolute nature of the king's politics as well as his artistic and literary patronage. When constructing a reign in such an unstable climate, to rely on extreme notions because of their powerful potential means to rely on an instrument that is equally unstable. The first chapter will focus on the extensive patronage of Richelieu and Cardinal Jules Mazarin (1602-1661), which facilitated the interrelationship between architecture and literature, and between fiction and reality, in the discourse on political sublimity. The interest in the poetics of the epic (and the role of *le merveilleux* in particular), however, served both supporters and opponents of the crown; the French civil war, the Fronde, led to the production of a vast amount of satirical pamphlets against the

53 Ibid., 1.

54 Ibid., 1.

55 Porter, *The Sublime in Antiquity*, 18.

crown that invested in the same powerful potential and sublime connotations of epic wonder. The second chapter will continue with a similar train of thought, by focusing on the differences in opinion between the two founders of the abbey of Val-de-Grâce: Queen Anne of Austria (1601-1666) and her friend, the abbess Marguerite d'Arbouze (1580-1626). As a response to the miraculous birth of Louis XIV, a new church building became devoted to the humility of the crib of Christ. This project, however, revealed that both women had opposing views on the elevation of humility towards the sublime in architecture. The third chapter introduces the problematic role of the Palais du Louvre in the construction of the reign of the king, whose new system of *académies* formed a more grand continuation of the patronage of his former ministers. With this perfected system came a more controlled interchange between architecture and literature, which nourished the deliberate confusion of fiction and reality in the case of the Louvre's construction and glorification. However, yet again, this enterprise proved to be a significant challenge, given the problem of the building's incomplete state.

The second part of the thesis introduces a second, and added issue: the idea of the monarch's very own sublimity, and its representation. The fourth chapter examines the prominent role of Félibien's *Tapisseries du Roy* in this venture. In addition to writing one of the earliest texts on the sublime aesthetics of architecture, the author considered the emblematic devices used in the king's tapestries as new visual "characters" capable of representing the monarch's own sublimity. The fifth chapter starts with the impact of Boileau's 1674 edition of Longinus' *On the Sublime*, which created the critical concept of *le sublime*. The chapter will inquire into the wave of published critical reflections that adopted the newly popularised ideas of Longinus and Boileau, mainly for the sake of sustaining the monarch's sublimity. These ideas were infused into new theoretical discussions on the use of architectural inscriptions under Louis XIV and their rhetorical role in evoking sublime virtue. The sixth and final chapter deals with late seventeenth-century attempts to revive the outdated epic (Christian) poetics and aesthetics to uphold the diminishing glory of the monarch, who was faced with increasingly problematic public responses to his own representation.

PART I

FIRST ISSUE

An interplay of extremes: the unstable poetics of sublimity (1630-1670)

Elevating and subversive wonder: *Le merveilleux* and the artistic patronage of Richelieu and Mazarin

The reign of Louis XIV truly gained momentum after the end of the rule of Richelieu and Mazarin, a period which lasted until the late 1650s. But in order to be able to fully comprehend seventeenth-century discourse on the sublimity of the French monarch, we first need to consider the cultural and political climate during the administration of both cardinals. Their policies as ministers and patrons of the arts shaped the nature of the king's future rule, since the young king would adopt many new systems and ideas introduced by them. However, equally fundamental in shaping the king's reign was the troubling social upheaval that persisted in the country during this period. The nobility, whose power and influence Richelieu had already attempted to weaken, vigorously opposed his likeminded Italian successor during the civil wars of the Fronde (1648-53). But despite the many differences between these two opposing forces, they both shared the same instrument of architecture.

Buildings can be created in various ways: as structures and places in the third dimension, but also as literary constructs on paper that are conjured up in one's mind's eye. Once a building is created, it becomes part of a social dynamic of experience and appropriation. The importance here lies in the interplay that is established by contemporaries between real and fictional space, since the two mutually influenced their proper appearance and experience. And more intriguingly, the boundary between the real and the fictional is often not easily drawn in texts.

In this dynamic, as I will explain in this first chapter, the role of wonder is critical. First of all, because of the notion's association with the enchanted and the inexplicable, it had a particularly strong political potential to overwhelm or persuade a viewer or reader. Moreover, as I will argue, the wondrous or marvellous (*le merveilleux*) would become one of the most prominent notions in seventeenth-century French discourse on the sublimity of literature, art and, by extension, the king himself.

In order to be able to understand the close relationship between the king and the notion of sublimity, we first need to be aware of the following tripartite relationship: the union of sublimity, architecture, and human virtue in French literature – a relationship that would become increasingly strong during the course of the seventeenth century.

The bond between an architectural structure or space and a human being can hardly become more close than in the device of the metaphorical building, which became increasingly popular in French encomiastic poetry during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. The image of the imaginary temple, disguised metaphorically as a magnificent structure, often functioned as an allegory of virtue, love, peace or glory that ultimately aimed at transcending the virtuous dedicatee or patron of the text. Because of this broad potential, the temple metaphor returns in various lyric and narrative poetic genres during this period, as well as emblematic texts and images. One of the most influential sources, in this respect, proved to be the temple described by Virgil in the third book of the *Georgics*.[1] At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Waloon poet Jean Lemaire de Belges (1473-1524) used temples – because of their imperishable and eternal character – as multi-layered metaphoric vehicles to honour particular patrons, but also to reflect on his own literary talents and abilities.[2] Although Lemaire's *topos* of the complex metaphoric building would be further developed during the sixteenth century, in the 1550s, we can detect a change in approach to the treatment and readings of these metaphors. David Cowling's research on architecture as metaphor from 1998 demonstrates that writers like Pierre de Ronsard (1524-1585), François Habert (1510-1561) and François Rabelais (ca. 1483-1553) continued the use of many conventional metaphors, but rendered them less multi-layered. Instead of the linguistic and hermeneutic process of reading and re-reading in order to grasp the multiple meanings of the purely metaphorical building, the poetry of the second half of the sixteenth century testifies to an interest in the effect of visual description.[3] In Ronsard's *Temple des Chastillons*, Cowling argues, "the precision of the description privileges the surface of the object described at the expense of its potential metaphorical signification," and thus the architecture and other arts "carry their meaning in their plastic qualities, like a classical ekphrasis."[4]

1 Stéphanie Lecomte, "Temples of Virtue: Worshipping Virgil in Sixteenth-Century France," in *Virgilian Identities in the French Renaissance*, ed. Phillip John Usher and Isabelle Fernbach (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2012), 73.

2 See Jean Lemaire de Belges' *Temple d'Honneur et de Vertus* (1503) and *La Concorde des deux Langages* (1513).

3 David Cowling, *Building the Text: Architecture as Metaphor in Late Medieval and Early Modern France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 213-14.

4 Ibid., 213.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, writers began to invest even more in the powerful effect of the elaborate description of architecture and its encomiastic function. The main reason behind this development is the blossoming of the epic poem in early modern Italy and its enormous impact on French writers. Although the epic (or heroic) poem is much larger in design than the poems just mentioned, the genre shares with the ode its encomiastic character and its use of the elevated or "high style."[5] Moreover, the epic also attaches a fundamental value to the relation between space and wonder, which is mirrored in the genre's reliance on architectural devices such as magical palaces and gardens to structure the poem's narrative. Reinforced by the genre's elevated style, the use of wondrous spaces aimed at evoking an overwhelming effect in the reader. Together these ingredients – the genre's encomiastic aspect combined with the aspect of overwhelming effect of wonder – formed one of the pillars of seventeenth-century ideas on sublimity and its relation to art.

Other than the French notion of *le sublime*, *le merveilleux* has an older critical history within European poetic discourse, and was closely tied to the development and revival of the epic poem in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Italy and France.[6] As an adjective the word was used to describe something or someone as being inexplicable, admirable or supernatural. As a noun, it usually defined the effect of this wonder on the reader. Because of these two associations, *le merveilleux* remained a constant factor in the critical development of the notion of sublimity during the century. It was primarily the influence of Torquato Tasso's Italian epic poem *Gerusalemme Liberata* from 1581, as well as Tasso's critical discourse *Discorsi dell'arte poetica* from 1587 that led to a reconciliation of the genre of the epic poem and the notion of *le merveilleux* in France.[7] Even though Tasso understood the poetic sensation of *meraviglioso* as a combination of transport, surprise and elevation, he also asserted that the marvellous must be verisimilar.[8] When introducing an element of wonder in a text, the writer ought to combine it with an element of probability or believability. In this way, the wonder will strike the reader even more powerfully, since it invades the reader's sense of reality.

In early seventeenth-century French epic poetry, the joining of this notion of verisimilitude (*vraisemblance*) with an element of *le merveilleux* was deemed

5 Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 25.

6 During the first half of the seventeenth century, *le merveilleux* was already an established critical term, one which was, as Cronk writes, "inherited from Italian criticism (*mirabile*, *meraviglioso*)." Moreover, Weinberg has pointed to a sixteenth-century critic, Patrizi, who linked the term *mirabile* with theory derived from Longinus. See Cronk, *The Classical Sublime*, 115.

7 Tasso's *Discorsi dell'arte poetica ed in particolare sopra il poema eroico*, published in Venice in 1587, has been republished and annotated in French as: Torquato Tasso, *Discours de l'art poétique. Discours du poème héroïque*, ed. and trans. Françoise Graziani (Paris: Aubier, 1997).

8 Doran, *The Theory of the Sublime*, 105.

necessary for the amazement (émerveillement) of the reader.[9] Tasso's discourses had an immediate and lasting impact in Italy, France and England, and as a result a considerable number of French epics were built on his thoughts.[10] One of the most prominent ways writers increased the verisimilitude of their text, was to place the struggle of their heroic protagonist in a real and familiar setting, such as the historical landscape of France or its capital. Real space and architecture here function as a vehicle for the *vraisemblable*. Next to this world the author may place a realm of wonder, which becomes the location of some sort of enchantment, or the home of sacred or supernatural beings such as angels and demons. Both realms are thus juxtaposed; they merge either by means of the deeds of the narrative's hero who roams through these two worlds, or by means of sacred or miraculous intervention. The majority of these poems are highly political Christian poems that can be grouped under the denominator of the *merveilleux chrétien,* for example *Saint Louis* (1653) by Pierre Le Moyne (1602-1672), *La Pucelle* (1656) by Jean Chapelain (1595-1674), and's *Clovis* (1657 and 1673) by Jean Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin (1595-1676). In the latter epic, the presence of the Holy Virgin and of Saint Severin and Saint Denis does not exclude the role of the pagan sorcerer Oberon, who, at the beginning of the poem, lures the Frankish king Clovis in his marvellous palace in the middle of the Vosges mountains:

> Le beau couple d'Amans sous des voutes se range.
> Ma Reyne, dit Clovis, quelle avanture estrange!
> Quel séjour admirable icy s'offre à nos yeux?
> Aurèle, suis-je en terre: ou suis-je dans les Cieux?[11]

By means of overlapping real and fictional space, the epic does not merely seek to teach (*docere*) or to please (*placere*), but rather to move and transport the soul of the reader.[12] And while these descriptions of grand spaces are reinforced with figures of speech such as amplification and hyperbole, the author needs to restrain the extravagance, in order to prevent lapsing into ridicule.[13] Georges and

9 Ibid., 104. See also Graziani, "Le miracle de l'art,"120.

10 See Irene Samuel, "Introduction to Tasso," in *The Discourses on the Heroic Poem*, ed. and trans. Mariella Cavalchini and Irene Samuel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), xx. Derived from Doran, *The Theory of the Sublime*, 104.

11 Jean Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin, *Clovis, ou La France chrestienne. Poème héroïque* (Paris: Augustin Courbé, 1657), 11 (Livre I). Translated to English, the verses read: "The beautiful couple of Lovers move below the vaults/ My Queen, said Clovis, what a strange adventure!/ What admirable residence presents itself before our eyes?/ Aurèle, am I on earth: or am I in Heaven?"

12 Judith Labarte, *L'épopée* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2006), 48. She writes: "Si la finalité de la poésie épique réside dans l'émerveillement, il faut recourir à un style magnifique ou sublime. Le but du texte consiste à émouvoir et à transporter l'âme, par le fait de traiter de grandes choses: autrement dit pas vraiment à *docere*, à enseigner […] ni à *placere*, plaire, du moins pas prioritairement."

13 Ibid., 48.

Madeleine de Scudéry (1607-1701) echoed this thought in the "Préface" to their epic poem *Ibrahim ou l'Illustre Bassa* (1642), writing that all excess is vicious, and that one should only use it moderately in order to preserve the *vraisemblable* and to touch the mind of the reader.[14]

The topic of imaginary architecture in early seventeenth-century French poetry has received some attention in an article by Richard Sayce from 1972. The description of the fictitious palace, he argues, "becomes an indispensable element of the epic that wants to be taken seriously, and not only the epic."[15] Perhaps equally indispensable is the exuberant and ecstatic character of these epic passages. Sayce recognises an incipient interest in the poetic potential of imaginary splendour in the poem *la Semaine* (1609) by Christophe de Gamon (1574-1621) "in which the convention was not yet formed, although the poet already aims at the richness of the materials and at magnificence."[16] Perhaps the most prominent examples, in this respect, are Desmarets' descriptions of imaginary magnificence, which are meant to appear as the result of some sort of "delirium of the mind," as Sayce describes it, but are of course carefully composed figures of speech. Another telling example is Scudéry's description of royal architecture in his epic poem *Alaric ou Rome Vaincuë*, which evokes an aesthetic effect of wonder mixed with stupefaction:

> Mais du grand Bastiment, la Façade Royale,
> Efface tout le reste, & n'a rien qui l'esgale:
> Elle charme les yeux; elle estonne l'esprit;
> Et fait mesme trembler la main qui la descrit.[17]

This sense of ecstatic admiration, characterised by Sayce as "la *meraviglia* de Marino," thus contributes to the transfer of the wonder to the reader.[18] Another aspect of Sayce's argument that makes his article particularly relevant for the study of early modern French architecture, are the parallels between the fictional

14 In their "Préface," the authors write the following: "Pour moy, je tiens que plus les avantures sont naturelles, plus elles donnent de satisfaction: & le cours ordinaire du Soleil me semble plus merveilleux, que les estranges & funestes rayons des Cometes. […] Mais comme tout exces est vicieux, je ne m'en suis servy que moderément, pour conserver le vray-semblable. […] [Des] actions incroyables dégenerent en contes ridicules, & ne touchent point l'esprit." Georges de Scudéry and Madeleine de Scudéry, *Ibrahim ou l'illustre Bassa*, vol. 1 (Paris: Antoine de Sommaville, [1641] 1644), xxii-xxiv.

15 Richard Sayce, "Littérature et architecture au XVIIe siècle," *Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des Études Françaises* 24 (May 1, 1972): 242. He writes: "La description du palais devient en effet un élément indispensable de toute épopée qui veut être prise au sérieux, et non seulement de l'épopée."

16 Sayce, "Littérature et architecture," 242.

17 Georges de Scudéry, *Alaric, ou Rome vaincuë. Poëme héroïque* (Paris: Augustin Courbé, 1654), 104. Translated to English, the verses read: "But of the grand Building, its Royal Façade,/ Overpowers all the rest, and has nothing that equals it:/ It captivates the eye; it astonishes the mind;/ And even makes the hand that describes it tremble."

18 Sayce, "Littérature et architecture," 242.

and the real that he discusses. For instance, the *château* of Valterre that Madeleine de Scudéry describes in *Clélie* (published between 1654 and 1660) largely corresponds with the appearance of the castle of Vaux-le-Vicomte, designed by Louis Le Vau (1612-1670).[19] These types of allusions to real, modern buildings allow the writer to play with the reader's sense of reality and fiction by joining the *vraisemblable* and the *merveilleux*.

One crucial aspect that Sayce ignores in his article, however, is the encomiastic potential of this wonder – an aspect that explains why many imaginary buildings were employed in contemporary texts in the first place. Instead of explaining descriptions of fictional architecture as part of the debate between classicist architectural theorists and baroque adherents, as Sayce does,[20] I would suggest that we should understand it as part of an encomiastic model that joins three elements: sublimity, space (or architecture), and human virtue. This is, of course, largely a political model; great power evokes great wonder, and in this practice of power, human beings and (their surrounding) spaces are inseparable actors. And whereas some authors used wondrous architecture to contemplate ancient virtuous heroes, such as Frankish kings, other writers turned to contemporary heroes.

CONTEMPORARY WONDER: ARCHITECTURE AND HUMAN VIRTUE

When inquiring into the nature of wondrous architecture or spaces in texts from the first half of the century, it is vital to examine another work by Georges de Scudéry. In 1633 he wrote the poem *Le Temple*, which is written as an epic poem and is dedicated to Richelieu. In the poem's "Advertissement," Scudéry not only explains the ensemble of *le merveilleux* and *la vraisemblance*, but also emphasises the use of architectural descriptions:

> Selon les Règles que nous tenons des Anciens, tout Poëme Epique, doit estre fondé sur deux Principes: le vray-semblable, & le merveilleux. Ainsi voit-on dans Homere, le Siege de Troye, & la Magie de Circé: dans Virgile, le voyage

19 Ibid., 246. In one of the chambers of Valterre, a ceiling painting depicting the palace of the sun is described, which, Sayce rightfully emphasises, adds an extra layer of imagination: "[T]he architecture in the painting in the architecture in the *roman*."

20 He points in particular at the contrast between, on the one hand, an emphasis on notions such as simplicity, symmetry, unity and harmony in contemporary architectural theory, and, on the other hand, an interest in baroque magnificence and its overwhelming and transcending effect when evoked in poetic descriptions. He explains the contrast between architectural theory and poetry as a fight, describing it as a "cunning dispute between theory and practice, between that which we can call the classical and the baroque, perhaps between the real and the imaginary" ("[une] lutte sournoise entre la théorie et la pratique, entre ce qu'on peut appeler le classique et le baroque, peut-être entre le réel et l'imaginaire"). See Sayce, "Littérature et architecture," 250.

> d'Italie, & celuy des Enfers: dans l'Arioste, la guerre de France, & les charmes d'Alcine: dans le Tasse, la prise de Hierusalem, & les Enchantements d'Armide: Et c'est sur ces fameux exemples que j'ay basty cét ouvrage; […] & qu'on voye le vray-semblable en mon voyage, & le merveilleux en mon Temple. Il est bien vray que j'ay un peu plus penché vers le dernier, que vers l'autre, comme plus propre aux descriptions, qui sont l'ame de la Poësie: au reste, comme l'Epopœe doit embrasser par Episodes toutes les sciences, & tous les Arts, ayant parlé de Geographie, d'Architecture, de Portraicture en toile, en Verre, en Marbre, en boix, & de la Navigation.[21]

Scudéry expresses here very distinctly that both *le vraisemblable* and *le merveilleux* are inextricably connected to space or architecture, whether it be a building, a city, or a landscape. The examples he provides are well-known examples from epics that all participate in a dynamic union between two worlds: Circé's mansion from Homer's *Odyssey*, the descent into the underworld from Virgil's *Aeneid*, and the enchanted palaces of Tasso's Armida and that of Alcina in the epic *Orlando furioso* (1516) by Ludovico Ariosto (1474-1533). The descriptions of these places and their interplay with both our realm and sense of reality are fundamental to all epic poetry. Therefore, he stresses, the epic should embrace the other arts, such as architecture.[22]

—— FICTIONAL STRUCTURES: THE TEMPLES OF LOUIS XIII AND HENRI II DE BOURBON

Just like the literary works that Scudéry mentions in the preface – epic poems in which the hero travels from a familiar landscape to a realm of enchantment or infernal wonder – his own poem *Le Temple* from 1633 features a voyage that brings the protagonist to a marvellous environment: a temple on a remote island off the coast of Marseille. But in contrast to poems such as Le Moyne's *Saint Louis*, Chapelain's *La Pucelle*, and Desmarets' *Clovis*, Scudéry's poem takes place

21 Georges de Scudéry, *Le Temple. Poeme à la gloire du Roy, et de Monseigneur le Cardinal Duc de Richelieu* (Paris: François Targa, 1633), III-IV: "According to the rules we have learned from the Ancients, every epic poem must be based on two principles: the verisimilar and the marvellous. So, we see in Homer the siege of Troy and the magic of Circe; in Virgil, the journey through Italy and through the Underworld; in Ariosto, the war of France and the charms of Alcina; in Tasso, the taking of Jerusalem and the enchantments of Armida. And it is on these famous examples that I have built this work; […] so that we see the verisimilar in my voyage, and the marvellous in my Temple. It is true that I have inclined a little more towards the latter than towards the first, which suits the description in general, being the soul of poetry; and besides, since the epic must embrace in its episodes all of the sciences, and all of the arts, having spoken of geography, architecture, portraiture."

22 His main requirement, however, is that a modern epic poem draws from profane Christian history and avoids both pagan and sacred history, since only profane Christian history "can provide us in our time with that marvellous and that verisimilitude, which are, so to speak, the soul of the Epic Subject." See the "Préface" in Scudéry, *Alaric*, XXI.

in contemporary France – for his temple is one dedicated to both Louis XIII and Richelieu. The author remains true to the requirements of the epic that he presented in his preface, since the greater part of the poem forms a highly visual description of the temple itself. Its interior is composed of a large number of precious materials, and its effect can hardly be comprehended. By means of several rhetorical figures of amplification such as *enumeratio* (enumeration) and *anaphora* (repetition), Scudéry attempts to convey the idea of overwhelming splendour:

> Mais à quelque grandeur, que ce beau Temple arrive;
> Et bien qu'on soit ravi de voir sa perspective;
> Ce n'est rien par dehors: & contraire aux Tombeaux,
> Ses objets par dedans sont mille fois plus beaux.
> Le pavé tout d'Esmail, en ses couleurs meslées,
> Feroit honte à l'Azur des Voutes estoilées,
> Je n'osois y marcher, tant il avoit d'apas,
> Et je croyois avoir, l'Arc en Ciel sous mes pas. […]
> Les Perles, les Rubis, les Zaphirs, les Opales,
> Confondant leurs couleurs, esclatantes, & pasles,
> Font un divin meslange; & par tout ce lambris,
> A peine voit-on l'or, sous les pierres de prix.[23]

Once inside, the traveller finds himself surrounded by rooms made of colourful stones and gems. By means of a series of descriptions, Scudéry enables the reader to gradually construct the dazzling space in his mind. Here, fictional space functions as a vehicle to merge the imaginary with the "reality" of the virtues and deeds of the French king and his minister. This connection, however, is not so much created by means of several layers of metaphors, but rather through the sensations evoked by many layers of visual splendour. In each of these layered descriptions of the visual arts, the fictional and the real merge together, and the emphasis is put on the marvellous effect this creates. First of all, the richness of the temple's fictional appearance and design invites a comparison with real, physical architectural works commissioned by the crown and the efforts of Richelieu. Moreover, Scudéry devotes great attention to describing the paintings that adorn the temple's interior, some of which resemble works of art that were actually created at the time, such as depictions of the siege and surrender of the cities of

23 Scudéry, *Le Temple*, 11-12: "To what level of grandeur this beautiful Temple reaches;/ And although we are ravished when seeing its prospect;/ It is not so much outside: since contrary to a tomb,/ Its objects inside are a thousand times more beautiful./ The pavement entirely made of enamel, and its mixed colours,/ Shame the blue of the starry vaults,/ I did not dare to walk there, for it was so alluring,/ And I thought I had the rainbow under my feet. […] The pearls, the rubies, the sapphires, the opals,/ Merging their colours, bright and pale,/Create a divine mixture, and in all of this panelling,/ One can hardly see the gold, underneath all the precious stones."

Montauban and La Rochelle. In one of these fictional paintings that feature in the poem, the painter has depicted the opposing Huguenot forces defending La Rochelle's *faubourg* of Tadon as an army of fictional creatures, which include armed ghosts and marching mummies. Remaining faithful to epic conventions, Scudéry thus creates a multi-layered sequence of descriptions of marvellous art and architecture, but retains a sense of *vraisemblance* by describing the effect of real political deeds. As he articulates it in the poem itself, the marvellous effect of art itself is crucial in conveying political power:

> Ce Temple a des Tableaux, où l'Art & la peinture,
> Peuvent decevoir l'homme, & vaincre la Nature […]
> O merveilleux effect de ce rare Pinceau,
> Qui rend le bruit visible, en ce divin Tableau.[24]

This parallel between fiction and reality becomes even more concrete when Scudéry, in the role of Apollo, glorifies the art patronage of Richelieu and Louis XIII, which equals that of Augustus and even rivals the radiating splendour of Apollo himself ("Il passe tout ce qu'on escrit;/ Et mon Char à moins de lumiere,/ Que ce rare & divin Esprit.").[25] Scudéry's *Temple* further develops Ronsard's emphasis on the visual effect of art and architecture in conveying meaning, instead of investing in layers of complex and obscure metaphors. Moreover, in addition to glorifying the virtuous military deeds of Louis XIII and Richelieu, Scudéry uses the visual magnificence of the temple and its paintings to reflect on the role of the king and his minister in commissioning – and thus creating – real magnificent art and architecture. The poem thus blends *merveilleux* and *vraisemblance*, in an attempt to render the various wonders of political power and virtue very real.

In a similar, but later poetic temple, this experience of political virtue through art and architecture becomes even more transcendental. Shortly after the death of Henri II de Bourbon-Condé (Prince de Condé) (1588-1646) in 1646, the anonymous poem *Le Temple de la Gloire. A monseigneur le Duc d'Anguyen* was published. The text glorifies the turbulent life of Henri, a *prince du sang* who was heir presumptive to the French throne until the birth of Louis XIII. After opposing Marie de' Medici (1575-1642), Henri sided with the crown and played an instrumental role in the king's military campaigns against the Protestants during the Huguenot rebellions. The poem appropriates yet again the characteristics of an epic. It opens with a description of a forest stroll at night-time, during which the narrator is suddenly dazzled and enchanted by the

24 Ibid., 12 and 17: "This Temple has pictures, its Art and Painting,/ Capable of deceiving man, and defeating Nature. […] Oh marvellous effect of this rare brush,/ Which makes the noise visible, in this divine painting."

25 Ibid., 22.

appearance of the figure of Fame (la Renommée), radiating an extremely bright light. The figure's vehement and thunderous announcement of the glory and death of the prince fills the narrator with an ineffable and contrasting sensation of fear and rapture, which mirrors the dangerous but marvellous deeds of Henri himself ("Dont le son tout ensemble agréable & terrible,/ Disoit je ne sçay quoy de pompeux, & d'horrible").[26] The narrator continues with a description of his sudden transport to the temple of glory.[27] But before providing the reader with a description of the building's structure, the anonymous poet explains that the temple simultaneously constitutes and accommodates the purpose of art itself. Like poetry, the industry of art is a task that is reserved only for a select group of people, who require a "noble fureur" in order to be able to immortalise the prince's glorious splendour in a single image:

> Il ne me reste plus que porter cette Histoire
> Dans le sejour sacré du TEMPLE DE LA GLOIRE,
> Où cent Peintres sçavans, *cent sublimes Esprits*,
> D'une noble fureur divinement espris
> Travaillent nuit & jour à l'immortelle Image
> De ce PRINCE, à qui mesme ALCIDE rend hommage.
> Toy, qui dés ta naissance eut au Ciel quelque ardeur;
> Quelques rayons du feu d'immortelle splendeur,
> Qui brille dans l'Esprit, & qui transporte l'Ame;
> Et dont l'Art d'APOLLON sçait conduire la flame;
> Si la GLOIRE te plaist, suy mon vol; & t'en vien
> Travailler avec eux, à l'Image d'ANGUYEN.[28]

Ultimately, the architecture that is evoked in both of the poems just discussed remains an imaginary daydream; the precious materials that are described do elevate the dedicatee and elicit a powerful effect in the reader, but in reality would prove too expensive, rare and inadequate to function as construction material.

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26 *Le Temple de la Gloire. A monseigneur le Duc d'Anguyen* (Paris: Augustin Courbé, 1646), 4. The poet writes: "Dont le son tout ensemble agreable, & terrible,/ Disoit je ne sçay quoy de pompeux & d'horrible/ Et ce grand cor, bruyant au defaut de sa voix,/ Réveilloit les échos endormis dans les bois. […] Qui pourroit exprimer les soins, la vigilance,/ La vehemente ardeur, l'incroyable vaillance,/ Et les faits merveilleux dont il s'est signalé/ Dans les sanglans dangers où son coeur l'a meslé?"

27 Ibid., 15: "Que de pompe & d'éclat! que de vives clartez/ Que de brillans tresors! que de rares beautez!/ Que de chants de triomphe, & de hautes merveilles/ Ravirent en ce lieu mes yeux, & mes oreilles!"

28 Ibid., 10-11. My emphasis. Translated to English, these verses read: "All that is left for me to do now, is to lead this story/ Towards the sacred dwelling of the Temple of Glory,/ Where a hundred learned painters, a hundred sublime minds,/ By a noble fervour divinely possessed/ Work night and day on the immortal image/ Of this Prince, to whom even Alcida pays homage./ You who, from your birth onwards, possess a heavenly ardour;/ A few fiery rays of immortal splendour,/ Which shine in the mind, and transport the soul;/ Flames which Apollo's art is able to control;/ If this Glory pleases you, follow my flight and come here/ To work with them on the image of Enghien."

They are primarily used for the sake of their encomiastic power. Certainly when the praise of a sublime subject is deemed almost impossible, the *topos* of equally impossible architecture forms perhaps the most appropriate instrument.[29] This issue is evoked in the plaintive self-referential cry of the enraptured poet:

> La GLOIRE me pressa d'ayder à cet Ouvrage,
> Mais un si haut Sujet estonna mon courage;
> Et me sentant trop foible en un si grand dessein,
> De crainte le Pinceau me tomba de la main.
> Alors dans le transport de mon Ame estonnée,
> Je m'escriay. DEESSE aux Honneurs destinée,
> Je n'oze desirer ny l'employ, ny le prix
> Que reçoivent icy ces *Sublimes Esprits*.[30]

Nevertheless, these purely fictional spaces do betray an interest in the potential of real art and architecture in glorifying marvellous virtue. The dimension of *le merveilleux*, and particularly the sort associated with epic fiction, will play a key role in the creation and experience of many Parisian buildings commissioned by Mazarin and the future King Louis XIV. In order to understand this relationship between wonder and physical architecture, we first need to explore the patronage of Richelieu.

REAL STRUCTURES: THE MERVEILLEUX OF RICHELIEU'S PARIS

The Edict of Nantes of 1598 made for a period of relative peace that lasted several decades, and Henry IV's urban planning resulted in the creation of grand squares and long vistas. Architects such as Salomon de Brosse began to reject the conventional tendency to fill large architectural surfaces with detailed Renaissance ornaments, in favour of a more sober and monumental approach. This fostered the ideas of architects such as Jacques Lemercier (1585-1654) and François Mansart (1598-1666) and boosted the creation and renovation of Parisian architecture, which was made possible by the generous and particularly comprehensive patronage of Richelieu. But in addition to architects such as Lemercier, many authors also worked under the direct protection of Richelieu – and

29 This issue would become more acute during the course of the century, and would eventually become the topic of several debates dedicated to the representation of royal sublimity. See chapter 4 of this thesis.

30 *Le Temple de la Gloire*, 20. My emphasis. Translated to English, these verses read: "Glory urged me to help with this work,/ But so elevated a subject astonishes my courage;/ And feeling too weak for such a grand project,/ Out of fear, the brush fell out of my hand./ So, in the transport of my astonished soul,/ I cried. Goddess dedicated to all hours,/ I dare not desire either the task or the reward/ That these sublime spirits receive here."

this atmosphere of culture prosperity stimulated those who formed part of it to poetically contemplate each other's work, thereby amplifying the grandeur of the overarching scheme even more. One of these participants, the tragedian Pierre Corneille (1606-1684), expressed the effect of the rapidly changing appearance of Richelieu's Paris through the characters of his play *Le Menteur* (*The Liar*) from 1644. The fifth scene of the second act opens with a conversation between three men: the quasi-villain Dorante, accompanied by his butler Cliton and his father Géronte. After a long promenade that started in the Tuileries, Géronte asks the fatigued company to stop and admire the beauty of the grand building's façades ("Que l'ordre est rare & beau de ces grands bastiments!")[31] Corneille continues with a remark made by Dorante, who states that Paris has been transformed into a land that could previously be found only in literature; a realm of fictional enchantment that has suddenly become a reality:

> Paris semble à mes yeux un pays de Romants,
> J'y croyois ce matin voir une Isle enchantée,
> Je la laissay deserte, & la trouve habitée,
> Quelque Amphion nouveau sans l'ayde des maçons
> En superbes Palais a changé ses buissons.[32]

Here, the playwright not only refers to the recent building activities on the Parisian islands of Île Saint-Louis and the Île Louviers. He also appropriates the *topos* of the enchanted island that had become popular in French encomiastic poems (such as those discussed above), and, by extension, in the earlier Italian epics of Tasso and Ariosto. To reinforce this thought, he compares the almost inexplicable sudden emergence of magnificent structures with the Greek myth of Amphion, who was able to build the walls of the city of Thebes solely by means of the chords of his harp. Although the fictional structure has here been replaced by real buildings, Corneille's play exhibits the same encomiastic character as the poems discussed above; Géronte's immediate reply reveals that the company is contemplating the façade of the Palais Cardinal, the palace commissioned by Richelieu and completed only four years before the premiere of Corneille's play. Through the character of the protagonist's father, the playwright is able to glorify the newly constructed residence of his own patron:

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31 Pierre Corneille, *Le menteur, comédie.* (Paris: Antoine de Sommaville, 1644), 39.

32 Ibid., 39-40. Translated to English, these verses read: "Paris seems to me a world from a novel,/ This morning I thought I saw an enchanted island,/ I left her deserted, and found her inhabited,/ Some new Amphion, without the aid of builders/ Has changed its bushes into beautiful palaces."

Paris voit tous les jours de ces métamorphoses:
Dans tout le Pré-aux-Clercs tu verras mêmes choses;
Et l'univers entier ne peut rien voir d'égal
A ce que tu verras vers le Palais Royal.[33]

Géronte continues by coinciding *le merveilleux* with *le vrai* instead of merely *le vraisemblable*; while describing the Parisian metamorphosis as a miracle, the character also states that an elevated building elevates its residents as well:

Toute une ville entière, avec pompe bâtie,
Semble d'un vieux fossé par miracle sortie,
Et nous fait présumer, à ses superbes toits,
Que tous ses habitants sont des Dieux ou des Rois.[34]

Another author who reflected on Richelieu's Paris in a similar manner was the French bishop and poet Antoine Godeau (1605-1672), whose flourishing career was largely made possible due to the cardinal's efforts. Godeau frequented the literary circles at the Hôtel de Rambouillet and the salon of Madeleine de Scudéry, and was particularly interested in employing the genre of poetry for religious purposes. Like Desmarets and Le Moyne, Godeau was one of the most prominent representatives of the *merveilleux chrétien*. Instead of a relying on imagery derived from classical mythology (such as the *merveilleux païen*), the *merveilleux chrétien* was the type of imagery used in religious epics, such as Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* and the French epics of Tasso's numerous admirers published during the 1650s and 1660s. Like Tasso's work, Godeau's large-scale Christian epics such as his *Saint Paul* from 1654 are characterised by the dominant vision of the Catholic struggle against the dangers of heresy, and feature an abundance of supernatural figures, such as ancient demons. This type of marvellous imagery also returns in other poetic works such as his *Les fastes de l'Eglise pour les douze mois de l'année,* in which the city of Paris is described as a place of recurring miracles, such as those attributed to Sainte Geneviève.[35]

33 Ibid., 28. Translated to English, these verses read: "Every day, Paris sees these metamorphoses:/ In the Pré-aux-Clercs you will see the same things;/ And the whole universe has not seen anything equal/ To that which you will see at the Palais Royal." In later editions of *Le menteur*, the verse "A ce que tu verras vers le Palais Royal" is replaced with "Aux superbes dehors du Palais-Cardinal."

34 Pierre Corneille, *Le Menteur*, Œuvres complètes, ed. Georges Couton (Paris: Gallimard, [1644] 1984, II, 5, 561-64. Quoted from: Elizabeth Kugler, "Spectacular Sights: The Promenades of Seventeenth-Century Paris," *L'Esprit Créateur* 39, no. 3 (Fall 1999): 38. Translated to English, these verses read: "An entire city, built with pomp,/ Seems to have miraculously risen from an old ditch,/ And makes us assume, with its beautiful roofs,/ That all its inhabitants are either gods or kings."

35 Antoine Godeau, *Les fastes de l'Eglise pour les douze mois de l'année* (Paris: François Muguet, 1674), 6-7.

In the year 1636, Louis XIII granted him the bishopric of Grasse, and decisions such as these partly stem from the good relationship between Godeau and his patron; [36] Godeau regularly dedicated his poetic texts to Richelieu, and perhaps the most extensive ode, in this respect, is his poem *La Sorbonne* from 1653. Written almost ten years after Richelieu's death in 1642, Godeau's text reflects on the cardinal's efforts in redeveloping the architecture of the Sorbonne. Its chapel, the construction of which was begun by Lemercier in 1626, became the cardinal's mausoleum upon his death, and plays a central role in Godeau's ode. Against the background of the demonic troubles of the Fronde, Godeau describes the Sorbonne as a peaceful and eternal refuge, which protects the study of the Catholic faith as well as the patron himself against the forces of contemporary demons[37] – and here, Godeau is at pains to emphasise that this wonder of the building ultimately leads back to the virtuous cardinal Richelieu himself.[38] The poet further elaborates on Richelieu's patronage by explaining that the process of construction is crucial to the building's grandeur. He refers here to the Egyptian pyramids, as one of the ancient wonders of the world. Although these are marvels that evoke a superhuman magnificence, Godeau explains, these ancient structures were built by heavily mistreated slaves: "Every single brick is a single crime […] since it took more blood than water to lay them."[39] The Sorbonne, on the contrary, is not at all the result of injustice and oppression, he writes:

> Ouvrages merveilleux, dont la magnificence,
> Surpassoit des mortels la commune puissance,
> Desseins trop insolens de ces antiques Roys
> Dont l'Egypte feconde a reconnu les Loix,
> Miracles de vos temps, Pyramides superbes
> Vos sommets aujourd'huy sont plus bas que les herbes[40]

Whereas the marvellous imagery of hell aided Ancient and early modern authors of the epic to contrast the extremes of demonic vice with the elevated virtue of

36 Yves Giraud, *Antoine Godeau, 1605-1672: de la galanterie à la sainteté* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1975), 237.

37 Antoine Godeau, *La Sorbonne, Poeme* (Paris: Pierre le Petit, 1653), 4. He writes: "La fameuse Sorbonne, où depuis tant d'années,/ Par des prosperitez l'une à l'autre enchainées,/ On t'a veu triompher du Monde, & du Demon,/ Retenant son esprit, & conservant son nom,/ Prend l'éclat somptueux d'une face nouvelle,/ Aussi digne de toy, comme il est digne d'elle./ Un autre chantera les riches ornemens,/ Et l'ordre merveilleux de ses beaux bastimens."

38 Ibid., 8: "Cet homme merveilleux dont je fais la peinture,/ L'ayme avec une ardeur aussi vive que pure,/ Et pour en assembler des Docteurs renommez,/ Par qui, d'un sage soin, d'autres fussent formez,/ Il conçoit le dessein des bastimens celebres/ Qui defendent son nom de l'oubly des tenebres."

39 Ibid., 20: "Châque pierre est un crime, & pour en faire un rang/ On employa moins d'eau, qu'on n'employa de sang./ Mais, ô sainte Sorbonne, en ta structure auguste,/ On ne voit point l'effort d'une puissance injuste."

40 Ibid., 19. Translated to English, these verses read: "Wondrous works, with your magnificence/ Surpassing the common power of mortals,/ Too insolent projects of ancient kings/ Whose powerful Egypt recognised their laws,/ Miracles of your time, stunning pyramids/ Today, your tops are lower than the grass."

their heroic, triumphant protagonists, authors outside of the epic could also use the same imagery in a similar manner. Godeau's text positions the wonder of the Sorbonne as the noble antithesis of the wonder of demonic chaos and suppression, which alludes to the bloodshed of the Fronde. He makes use of the dynamic and overwhelming epic imagery of hellish wonder to be able to contemplate both virtue and vice. Ironically, this particular use of demonic wonder, Scudéry's *merveilleux* "des Enfers," also appealed to political opponents of Richelieu's successor, Cardinal Jules Mazarin, during the Fronde. Whereas Mazarin was a fan of epic imagery, so too were his enemies.

THE SUBVERSIVE WONDER OF VICE: THE PALACE OF MAZARIN

After a meeting with Richelieu in January 1630, Mazarin became an ardent admirer of the cardinal. In order to get closer to the powerful minister, he further reinforced the Franco-Italian relations at the Papal Court. Being appointed a papal nuncio, he often travelled to France. Already during his first trips in 1632 and from 1634 to 1636, Mazarin was bestowed the task of arranging gifts of artworks for members of the French court, while informing his Roman patrons – Antonio Barberini (1607-1671) in particular – of French works they might wish to bring to Italy.[41] When Mazarin finally left for Paris to work as Richelieu's client, Mazarin took with him thousands of écus worth of pearls and jewels. Then, gradually, from 1640 onwards, the rest of his collection of furniture, works of art, books and jewels moved to the French capital. Mazarin was able to surround himself with a vast social – his relatives of the Mancini family – and aesthetically rich environment, which had completely migrated within a few years and was aptly described by historian Pierre Goubert as "La Galaxie Mazarin."[42] As in Rome, the cardinal ensured that the extent of the splendour he had collected was able to grow substantially during the course of his Parisian career.

After the death of Richelieu in 1642, Mazarin inherited several of his former mentor's policies. These were both foreign, such as the Thirty Years' War against the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs, as well as interior, such as Richelieu's policies of centralization. Moreover, Mazarin protected many writers who had earlier worked under Richelieu's patronage, such as Corneille, Desmarets, and Jean Chapelain.[43] But as far as the visual arts were concerned, Mazarin relied heavily on Italian talent. This had a significant impact on the appearance of his new Palais Mazarin, and on the further development of the arts in the capital.

41 Thomas P. Campbell, Pascal-François Bertrand, and Jeri Bapasola, eds., *Tapestry in the Baroque: Threads of Splendor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 332.

42 Pierre Goubert, *Mazarin* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), 452.

43 Peter William Shoemaker, *Powerful Connections: The Poetics of Patronage in the Age of Louis XIII* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007), 235.

The creation of this Parisian palace started in 1643, when Mazarin bought the hôtel Chevry-Tubeuf in the rue Neuve des Petits Champs in Paris (fig. 2).[44] He hired the talent of the Italian painter Giovanni Francesco Romanelli (1610-1662), a pupil of Pietro da Cortona (1596-1669).[45] The latter offered his patron to decorate the ceiling of the *Galerie haute* with scenes of Roman history, but this idea was deemed inconvenient since they underscored too much the foreign origins of the Cardinal.[46] Instead, Mazarin preferred the theme of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, since he considered them "plus gai et mieux adapté au goût du pays."[47] Under the direction of Romanelli, the *décor* was rapidly executed, and was completed in the autumn of 1647.[48] An engraving produced by Robert Nanteuil (1623-1678) depicts Mazarin in the centre of the completed space, and also includes the highlights of his sculpture collection (fig. 3). But as the wealth in his palace steadily grew, the country was faced with the high costs of recent wars. Mazarin's administration attempted to implement new revenue measures, which would also affect royal officials. In April 1648, tensions rised because the judicial *officiers* of the Parlement de Paris strongly opposed Mazarin's new tax edict, which they considered illegal and malicious for it excluded some colleagues, the *parlementaires*, "from the requirement to lose income."[49] Mazarin's sudden arrest of Pierre Broussel (1575-1654), a councillor in the Parlement de Paris led to a sudden popular uprising that started the first Fronde.[50] Only a year after the completion of the *Galerie haute*, the new civil war halted the development of the palace's construction. The strong opposition to the policies of Richelieu and Mazarin regarding the distribution of wealth, and the weakening position of nobles during the Fronde contributed to a flood of public criticism.

Some contemporaries translated their anger and disgust into prose and poetry, which led to the publication of approximately five thousand satirical pamphlets (*libelles*) or *mazarinades* during the course of the civil war.[51] The main goal of these *mazarinades* was to ridicule the Cardinal, and, rather cunningly, its authors made use of the same instruments as the encomiastic poet. The majority

44 Geoffrey Treasure, *Mazarin: The Crisis of Absolutism in France* (London: Routledge, 1995), 119.

45 After the death of Urban VIII, Romanelli had followed the Barberini nephews to Paris, who were sent in exile and were protected in France by Mazarin. See Richard E. Spear and Philip Lindsay Sohm, *Painting for Profit: The Economic Lives of Seventeenth-century Italian Painters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 78.

46 Madeleine Laurain-Portemer, "La Galerie Mazarine et sa restauration," *Bulletin d'informations - Association des bibliothécaires français* 104 (1979): 148.

47 Ibid., 148.

48 Ibid., 148.

49 David J. Sturdy, *Richelieu and Mazarin: A Study in Statesmanship* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 105.

50 Ibid., 110.

51 See Hubert Carrier, *La presse de la Fronde (1648-1653): Les mazarinades, vol. I, La conquête de l'opinion* (Geneva: Droz, 1989), 1-54.

of these *libellistes* used the effective and insulting effect of burlesque imitation, by subverting poetical forms, as well as by subverting its use of wonder, of *le merveilleux*. When introduced in an encomiastic poem, *le merveilleux* has the potential of elevating the subject or dedicatee. However, when the *merveille* itself is employed differently, the text can achieve the opposite effect.

This ambiguity of wonder can be best explained using the example of Phaeton. In *Peri hypsous*, Longinus applauded the dynamism that characterised well-written journeys, combats and flights between hell and heaven in Ancient epics. One example Longinus mentions is Phaeton's fatal chariot flight through the skies in the work of Euripides, whom Longinus praised for his ability to mount his soul "aboard the car" so that the author "takes wing to share the horses' peril."[52] Mazarin himself was a fervent admirer of this type of imagery evoked by Ovid: a painted scene of Ovid's Gigantomachy between Jupiter (Zeus) and the Giants (Titans), in which the supreme god smites down his enemies by means of a thunderbolt, formed the central panel of Romanelli's ceiling of the *Galerie haute* (*Jupiter foudroie les géants*) (fig. 4).[53] However, the ambiguous image of Phaeton and its effect can easily be exploited and turned into something negative. The strong desire of both Phaeton and Icarus to aim for great height and grandeur may seem commendable, but in their flight they fall prey to their own haughtiness. Likewise, Longinus argued that in order to reach greatness one needs to take a risk, but warns that great heights can also lead to great falls: "humble, mediocre natures," he states, "because they never run any risks and never aid at the heights, should remain to a large extent safe from error, while in great natures their very greatness spells danger."[54] With the example of Phaeton, Longinus plays with the ambiguity of greatness or height: while Phaeton's fall can be sublime because of the overwhelming effect of its dynamic imagery (high and low participate *together* in the sublime), its example of hubris also demonstrates the moral contrast between sublime greatness (high) and vicious lowliness (low), the place where those who fall end up. This ambiguity can be clarified by using the terms of spectrum and scale. On a poetic spectrum of epic wonder, both of its extreme ends of "hell" (or "low") and "heaven" ("high") can work together to evoke the effect of the sublime, especially when both extremes are dynamically juxtaposed

52 Longinus, *On the Sublime*, 15, 219. See also Etlin, "Architecture and the Sublime," 238.

53 The poet Scarron dedicated a burlesque poem to Mazarin, in which the poet mocked the epic imagery of the mythological Gigantomachy: Paul Scarron, *Typhon, ou La Gigantomachie. Poëme burlesque. Dedié a monseigneur l'eminentissime cardinal Mazarin* (Paris: Toussainct Quinet, 1644). It appears that Scarron's attitude towards Mazarin was not particularly negative at that time. However, Mazarin's dismissive stance towards Scarron in the following years nourished the latter's resentment against the cardinal, which Scarron expressed during the Fronde. See Alain Génetiot, "Paul Scarron (1610-1660)," in *La Poésie française du premier 17e siècle: textes et contextes*, ed. David Lee Rubin and Robert T. Corum (Charlottesville, VA: Rookwood Press, 2004), 374.

54 Longinus, *On the Sublime*, 33, 266-67. This metaphor of height also plays a key role in early seventeenth-century French texts on court life and rules of civility, most notably in Refuge's *Traité de la Cour* (1616).

(Porter's "*les extrèmes se touchent*"). But if we consider height as a metaphor of virtue, the spectrum flips and transforms into a scale of sublimity. Here, we only find the sublime, or true virtuous greatness, at its highest end in "heaven," while its other end represents the dangerous opposite of "hell": the demonic realm of vice as the antithesis of the sublime itself.

In fact, this scale of sublimity returned in many of the *mazarinades*. A great number of pamphlets invested in the ambiguity of marvellous extremes in the epic by exploiting its moral association with demonic vice. For instance, in several *mazarinades* the comparison is drawn between the persona of Mazarin and those of Phaeton and Icarus, such as in *La Nazarde à Jule Mazarin* (1649) and in *L'Icare sicilien ou la cheute de Mazarin, avec sa metamorphose* (1652) respectively (fig. 5).[55] Perhaps the most striking literary example of the use of ambiguous wonder during the Fronde is an anonymous text called *Inventaire des merveilles du monde rencontrées dans le palais du cardinal Mazarin* (1649). The narrator invites the reader to accompany him on a tour of the Parisian residence. Mazarin himself is characterised as some sort of enchanter, who has succeeded in summoning both art and nature in his palace ("Il n'y a que le seul Cardinal Mazarin qui semble avoir appelé dans sa maison l'Art & la Nature avec leurs ornemens; & les avoir contraint de loger dans son Palais.").[56] The text centres around the powerful sense of admiration and seduction that the objects evoke. Near the end of the text, however, the narrator senses the dangers of these effects, and realises that the only piety and charity in this palace are made of paint and stone.[57] "Although Ambition has built this rich Palace," the narrator states, "Fear has changed it to a very different place."[58] The final advice of the author is made very clear: instead of admiring its miserable and seductive riches, one should immediately escape this place. A place of enchanting wonder reveals itself as the seat on Fear:

> Fuyons de cette Maison, puisque le siege de la Crainte y est. Cette Passion estouffe en nos cœurs la curiosite; nous ne voulons plus considerer ces richesses que comme un thresor de miseres; car parmy ces raretez, le repos y est bien rare, & avec cet or on achete bien cher des soins & de la crainte.[59]

55 See *La Nazarde à Jule Mazarin* (Paris: Chez la veufue de l'Autheur, 1649) and *L'Icare sicilien ou la cheute de Mazarin, avec sa metamorphose, en vers burlesques* (Paris: unkown publisher, 1652).

56 *Inventaire des merveilles du monde rencontrées dans le palais du cardinal Mazarin* (Paris: Rolin de la Haye, 1649), 3.

57 Van Eck, *Art, Agency*, 94.

58 *Inventaire des merveilles*, 7: "L'Ambition a basty ce riche Palais, mais la Crainte s'en est fait un autre bien different." This relates to Scudéry remarks in his preface to *Le Temple*: *le merveilleux* does not only reside in the "charmes d'Alcine" or the "enchantements d'Armide"; *le merveilleux* is also found in the fires of hell ("celuy des Enfers").

59 Ibid., 7: "Let us flee from this house, since here lies the seat of Fear itself. This passion stifles the curiosity in our hearts; to us these riches are now nothing but a treasure of miseries. Because amidst such rarities one can hardly rest, and seeing this gold, one realises that those troubles and fear are bought at a high price."

Similarly, a large number of *mazarinades* employ the wonders of hell to reflect on the vanity and pride of Mazarin's false magnificence, which mirrors the Cardinal's own vices. While its authors alluded to the tradition of the epic, such as to the descent into the underworld in Virgil's *Aeneid* or to the use of demons in the contemporary Christian epic, their texts playfully and deliberately confuse the hero with the demon. These *mazarinades* appropriated the gravity and sublime imagery of the epic, but reversed their encomiastic effect, placing Mazarin at the lowest end of the scale of sublimity. In one of these satirical pamphlets, called *Les Entretiens de S. Maigrin et de Manzini, aux champs elisiens* […] *avec la description de l'appartement qu'on prepare à Mazarin dans les Enfers* (1652), Mazarin's residence itself, instead of the riches it contains, becomes the object of infernal wonder. The text opens with the aftermath of the death of the noblemen Jacques Stuer de Caussade (Marquis de Saint Maigrin) (ca. 1616-1652), Paolo Mancini (Mazarin's nephew) (1636-1652), and Charles-Amédée de Savoie (duc de Nemours) (1624-1652). All three did in fact succumb to their injuries they sustained on the Parisian battlefield of the Fronde in July 1652. In the satire, the first two men meet again in the Elysian Fields, and they are later joined by the third. The company arrives at a beautiful place that resembles the city of Paris, but they all agree that it cannot be the same place, since Mazarin has transformed the real city into a living hell:

> A cét objet, Manzini ne pût s'empescher de souspirer, Hé ! de grace, dit-il à saint Maigrin, faites-moy connoistre si Paris se trouve aussi dans les Champs Elisiens, ou si les Champs Elisiens sont a entour de Paris, à cela dit saint Maigrin, la response est fort facile: les Champs Elisiens ne sont point autour de Paris, parce que vostre Oncle en a fait veritablement un Enfer: mais l'image de Paris est dans les Champs Elisiens, & c'est pourquoy l'on en doit exclure vostre oncle, ainsi qu'on l'exclud du sejour de la ville de Paris.[60]

Turning away from the Elysian Fields, the company is guided towards the actual hell, where they are promised to visit the apartments that will eventually serve as Mazarin's eternal abode after his death. Traversing a fiery mountainous landscape, an "affreuse Cité des Enfers" resembling the besieged city of Troy, they arrive at the Cardinal's *post mortem* residence:

60 *Les Entretiens de S. Maigrin et de Manzini, aux champs elisiens. Et l'arrivée du Duc de Nemours au mesme lieu, Avec la description de l'appartement qu'on prepare à Mazarin dans les Enfers* (Paris: unknown publisher, 1652), 21-22: "At this view, Manzini could not help but sigh, 'Hey, what grace,' he said to saint Maigrin, 'please tell me whether Paris is located in the Elisian Fields, or whether the Elisian Fields are located around Paris,' to which Saint Maigrin replied: 'The answer is very easy: the Elisian Fields are not located around Paris, because your uncle has transformed it into a real Hell. But the image of Paris is found in the Elisian Fields, and that is why we must exclude your uncle from here, as he is excluded from his home in the city of Paris.' "

> Ils eussent demandé où estoit l'appartement de Mazarin: mais ils virent escrit sur la porte d'une Casematte, plus noire que toutes les autres, ces deux mots escrits en lettre italique, *Palais de Mazarin*. En mesme temps on les fit entrer dans cette Caverne, dont deux vilaines Furies gardoient l'entrée.[61]

At the fortress's entrance roam the "vertus cardinales du Mazarin," by which he means the vices of hate, envy and despair. The palace, the narrator continues, "was paved with sharp points of iron, and was vaulted with a black stone, where several corpses seemed to be attached to iron rings." These would present the future host of the dwelling "with a perpetual image of his crime."

While these pamphlets only refer to the figure of Mazarin, other writers employed the person of Mazarin himself as the main narrator, and produced fake letters that reveal a repentant Cardinal desperately begging for mercy. In *L'Amende honourable de Jules Mazarin, des crimes qu'il a commis contre Dieu, contre le Roy, & contre luy-mesme* from 1649, the figure of Mazarin reflects on his sinful behaviour, but still implores Christ to prevent him from being sent off from the Louvre to the fires of Hell ("je vous conjure *par vos graces sublimes* de me pardonner, & de ne permettre pas qu'un meschant homme de Cardinal que je suis, aille du Louvre loger dans l'enfer").[62]

FROM HELL TO HEAVEN: TEMPLES OF VIRTUE AND MAZARIN'S RE-ELEVATION

In 1652, the year in which the capital saw the publication of many of these pamphlets, Mazarin was still in exile. After a disastrous and brutal revolt led by Condé, during which the prince lost many followers, the French king was able to re-enter the city of Paris in October of that year. Louis XIV was officially proclaimed of age, and after Mazarin's return to the capital in 1653, the Fronde was replaced with an absolutist administration that left no space for noble rebellion. Mazarin's victory led to a slight increase in laudatory poems, the majority of which were, not surprisingly, written by several of his Italian confidants. Faced

61 Ibid., 31: "They had asked where Mazarin's apartment could be found, but then they saw written on the door of a fortress, darker than all the others, the following two words in italics: 'Palais de Mazarin.' At that moment they were brought into the cavern, the entrance of which was guarded by two ugly Furies."

62 *L'Amende honourable de Jules Mazarin, des crimes qu'il a commis contre Dieu, contre le Roy, & contre luy-mesme* (Paris: unknown publisher, 1649), 8. My emphasis. The same text was also published under another title three years later: *La declaration du cardinal Mazarin, envoyes a Son Altesse Royalle* (Paris, Louys du Sol, 1652), 8: "I can see, my Jesus, that the discord has animated the demons against me, in order to deliver me to the Devil. And having committed more crimes than I would admit, I am unworthy of Paradise. However, my Saviour, since your goodness surpasses all my crimes, I beg you, by your sublime graces, to forgive me, and to not allow the wicked man of a Cardinal that I am to leave the Louvre for a stay in hell. My soul is too precious, so please place it in Heaven."

with his gravely damaged reputation, partly as a result of the vast amounts of satirical texts during the Fronde, several poets attempted to re-elevate Mazarin to unprecedented heights. Most importantly, in order to achieve this goal, their poems merged the *merveilleux* of the fictional architecture with the patronage of real architecture – in a manner very similar to the anti-Mazarin satire, but with a completely opposite purpose.

Perhaps the earliest of these later poems on the glory of Mazarin was written by the Italian ducal agent Girolamo Graziani (1604-1675). Graziani worked as a diplomat in the service of the Este family from 1628 until his death. He played an important role in establishing diplomatic ties with the French court, and was eventually awarded a pension by Louis XIV in 1666.[63] In France, he came into contact with Frenchmen who were responsible for building a system of royal propaganda in the prosperous post-civil-war period, such as Chapelain. We know that Chapelain reserved an instrumental role for foreign authors such as Graziani, since the Frenchman wrote in a letter addressed to the Italian poet that "it is important for His Majesty's honour that his praise should appear voluntarily and, to appear voluntary, it should be printed outside of his kingdom."[64] After having won the friendship of Mazarin, Graziani wrote the panegyric *Il Colosso Sacro* (The Sacred Colossus), which was published in Modena in 1656. The poem attempts to glorify the Cardinal by describing the creation of a gigantic statue in his honour. Graziani's poetic imagery is not entirely fictional, since he mentions a real sculptor, Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680), as the ideal candidate to execute this task. Ideally, the combined efforts of his own pen and Bernini's chisel would successfully perpetuate the likeness and virtues of Mazarin for posterity.[65] Through his poem, Graziani expresses the wish for a new era of poetry and architecture under the cardinal's ministry, led by the miraculous sculptural talent of figures such as Bernini.[66]

The example of *Il Colosso Sacro* shows particularly well how this type of imagery permeated into the political domain, and became disseminated from there. The French man of letters Pierre Costar (1603-1660), a friend of Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac (1597-1654) and Gilles Ménage (1613-1692) and an enemy of Chapelain, received a copy of Graziani's panegyric from the future Minister of

63 Nathalie Hester, "Baroque Italian Epic from Granada to the New World," in *The New World in Early Modern Italy, 1492-1750*, ed. Elizabeth Horodowich and Lia Markey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 276.

64 Jean-Christian Petitfils, *Louis XIV* (Paris: Perrin, 2014), 283: "[I]l importait pour l'honneur de Sa Majesté que son éloge parût fait volontairement et, pour paraître volontaire, il fallait qu'il fût imprimé hors de ses États."

65 Girolamo Graziani, *Il Colosso Sacro alle glorie dell'em.mo e rev.mo sig.re Cardinale Mazarino* (Modena: Bartolomeo Soliani, 1656), 6: "Di lui pregio del Tebro, e de la Senna,/ Inclico [inclito] Mazarino, honor de l'Ostro,/ Il tuo ferro, o Bernino, e la mia penna,/ Deve à prova nel marmo, e ne l'inchiostro/ Con gemino lavoro in doppi studi/ Eternar le sembianze, e le virtudi."

66 Ibid., 31: "Orna di sì bei pregi il tuo lavoro/ Saggio Bernino, e con mirabile arte/ Aggiungi ancor quando frà nembi d'oro/ Influenze benigne egli comparte/ À la virtù, da cui più degni frutti/ Sacri à l'eternità sono produtti."

Finance, Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619-1683). Around the time of the publication of the poem, Colbert worked for Mazarin as his personal financial administrator and managed his vast fortune until the cardinal's death in 1661.[67] In a letter written by Costar to Colbert, the first writes that he was astonished by the work and had reread it three times. He opens his letter by praising the "sublime character" ("caractere sublime") of the poem's first two stanzas, which evoke the idea of both artistic and poetic inspiration by means of dynamic images of vast, untouched marble mountains and heavenly flights:

> J'ay relû trois fois le beau Panegyrique que vous [FK: Colbert] m'avez envoyé, & ç'a esté avec un plaisir extraordinaire. Ce dessein d'un Colosse a quelque chose de nouveau & de surprenant de la sorte qu'il est pris & qu'il est conduit. Le commencement est tout à fait du caractere sublime: *Montagnes ouvrez-vous à l'envy, & témoignez une noble jalousie, à qui fournira le marbre le plus precieux & le plus exquis, où le sage Bernino puisse imprimer avec le cizeau ce que je tascheray d'exprimer avec la plume. Et vous, Clio, qui inspirez les autres Poëtes demeurez là. Le vol que je veux prendre est trop haut pour vous. Une Muse terrestre n'a pas l'aisle assez forte pour s'élever jusqu'aux Cieux.*[68]

Graziani was one of many Italian poets who were active in France and who worked under the protection of Mazarin. A particularly notable figure was the Friulian knight Ascanio Amalteo (born ca. 1630), who entered the cardinal's service as an « *eximius vates et eques* » in August 1646.[69] He played an important role in the fusion of the Italian and French culture, by teaching the Italian language to the young king and acting as an interpreter at important occasions, such as the baptism of Louis de France, Grand Dauphin (1661-1711) in 1662 and Bernini's voyage to Paris in 1665.[70] In 1660, Amalteo published the poem

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67 Jacob Soll, *The Reckoning. Financial Accountability and the Rise and Fall of Nations* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2014), 76.

68 See Pierre Costar to Jean-Baptiste Colbert, n.d., in *Lettres de Monsieur Costar* (Paris: Augustin Courbé, 1658), 1:151: "I have reread the beautiful Panegyric that you have sent me three times, and with extraordinary pleasure. The design of a Colossus has something new and surprising, the manner in which it is undertaken and carried out. The beginning has an absolutely sublime character: 'Mountains, open at will, and show a noble envy to who will provide the most precious and exquisite marble, in which the wise Bernini, with his chisel, will imprint that which I try to express with my pen. And you, Clio, who inspires the other poets, stay there. The flight I want to take is too high for you. A terrestrial Muse does not have wings strong enough to rise to the Heavens.' " The first two stanzas of Graziani's original read: "Monti apritevi à gara, e tu che puoi,/ Dare con ferro vitale il senso a i marmi,/Prendi, ò saggio Bernino, à i pregi tuoi/ Nuovo oggetto maggior da i nostri carmi:/ Sia comune lo studio, equale il vanto,/ Imprima lo scarpello, esprima il canto./ Tu resta, ò Clio, ch'è troppo eccelso il volo,/ Non hà Musa terrena ali celesti,/ Lungi da me scorta profana, e solo/ Guida sicura aura del Ciel mi presti,/ Mentre hoggi innalzo à le sublimi glorie/ Di celeste virtù degne memorie." See Graziani, *Il Colosso Sacro*, 5.

69 Pascale Mormiche, *Devenir prince: L'école du pouvoir en France. XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2009), 300.

70 Ibid., 300.

Il tempio della Pace edificato dalla virtù dell' eminentissimo Cardinale Mazarino, a laudatory poem written on the occasion of the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659, which ended the Franco-Spanish War.[71] Amalteo opted for an approach similar to Graziani's poem, employing an imaginary structure to glorify the figure of Mazarin: a metaphorical temple of peace built by the virtue of the cardinal himself (fig. 6). The poem's preface, which the poet addresses to the figure of "Peace," introduces this structure as "the Building of your lofty Temple [and] the industry of a sublime Architect" ("Edifizio del tuo eccelso Tempio. L'industria dell Architetto sublime"). And like Graziani, in addition to metaphorical descriptions of this temple's form and beauty, the poem extends its scope to the creation of real art, by establishing a parallel between the talent of Bernini and that of French painter Pierre Mignard (1612-1695), who produced a "breathing" portrait of Mazarin between 1658 and 1660.[72]

In addition to these Italian examples, this period also saw the publication of a great number of French "Temples" in support of Mazarin, which included René Rapin's *Templum Famae* (1657), P. du Fayot's *Le portrait de son Eminence fait par la Paix* (1660), and *Le temple de la Paix* (1660) by Marc-Antoine Deroys de Ledignan.[73] The latter demonstrates particularly clearly how poetic images that were used subversively during the Fronde, could again be used in Mazarin's advantage. Whereas the satirical *mazarinades* used the idea of deceptive wonder (the case of the terrorising wonder of Palais Mazarin) to Mazarin's disgrace, Ledignan employed the same idea in such a way that it achieved the opposite effect. In the poem, the goddess of Peace laments the fact that the enchanting buildings of Paris were ultimately not deceptive enough to enchant the goddess of war, Bellona. Instead of terrorising buildings, Ledignan's Paris was the victim of the terror of war:

> Tout ce que Paris mesme enfermoit de charmant,
> N'avoit rien d'assez doux pour flater son tourment;
> Elle [FK: Bellona] ne voyoit plus ses structures pompeuses,
> Que comme un feint portrait de figures trompeuses,
> Qu'un charme décevant auroit representé
> Dans les illusions d'un Palais enchanté;

71 Yvan Loskoutoff, "Fascis cum sideribus III Le symbolisme armorial dans les éloges du cardinal Mazarin, ses prolongements dans les mazarinades, chez Corneille, Racine et La Fontaine," *XVIIe siècle* 214, no. 1 (2002): 71.

72 Ascanio Amalteo, *Il tempio della Pace edificato dalla virtú dell'eminentissimo Cardinale Mazarino* (Paris: Claude Cramoisy, 1660), 20: "Bernin, tu, che inuitato à l'alta impresa/ Sculto hauer deui omai l'alto sembiante,/ Mignardi tu, che in dotta tela hai resa/ L'eccelsa effigie sua come spirante;/ Distinguetemi quante/ Dal suo volto seren grazie traheste,/ Quai presagi scorgeste/ In' ampia fronte, e in maestoso ciglio,/ Per fedeli sostegni al Franco Giglio."

73 For a discussion of the first two texts, see also Loskoutoff, "Fascis cum sideribus III."

Ses Idoles d'honneur, ses monumens sublimes,
Estoient de son mépris les illustres victimes;[74]

In other words, the wondrous architecture in Paris may be sublime, but not enchanting enough to stop the belligerent camps from destroying it, let alone avert a war in the first place. During war, Ledignan poetically and metaphorically suggests, the only building blocks that can answer to and prevent these troubles are that of peace and virtue. His poetic temple, a richly decorated building rebuilt in order to welcome back the figure of Peace, symbolises the diplomatic and virtious efforts of Mazarin, which would lay the foundation for the royal wedding that took place in June of the same year.[75]

Poems such as these blurred the boundaries between fiction and reality by exploiting the broad scope of architectural invention, which transcends the sphere of the material and enters into a playful relationship with the imaginary. But most importantly, architecture can mirror human virtue. Nowhere is this dual capacity more evident than in a poem written a few years after Mazarin's death on March 9, 1661. In 1664, the cardinal's principal heir Armand-Charles de La Porte de La Meilleraye (1632-1713), who had married the cardinal's niece Hortense Mancini (1646-1699) and was named duc de Mazarin by the cardinal himself, published the book *La pompe funebre, ou les eloges de Jule Mazarini* by Vincent du Val. [76] Even though the work was written and presented as an epic poem ("Poëme Heroïque"), the publication ultimately functioned as a pamphlet to a funerary ceremony – but one that had never taken place, and existed only visually on the poem's frontispiece (fig. 7).[77] In fact, Paris had never seen a funeral ceremony for Mazarin, and for obvious reasons. Cunningly, the text and image make it deliberately unclear whether the event is commemorated or fabricated by the book. One thing that is clear, however, is that the clothing and objects of the depicted group of people, as well as the procession in which they participate, remind one of Ancient Roman funerary rites. The ceremony on the frontispiece,

74 Marc Antoine Deroys de Ledignan, *Le temple de la Paix, à son éminence* (Paris: Charles de Sercy, 1660), 5: "All the charms that Paris itself held,/ Had nothing gentle enough to flatter her torment;/ She only saw the city's pompous structures,/ As a pretending portrait of deceptive figures,/ As a disappointing charm, represented as the illusion of an enchanted Palace;/ Its Idols of honour, its sublime monuments,/ Were the illustrious victims of her contempt."

75 Ledignan was further able to contemplate the elevated virtues of Mazarin in his "Poëme, à Monseigneur l'Eminentissime Cardinal Mazarin," which is bound in the same publication as his *Temple* (see the copy held in the Bibliothèque nationale de France). In this work, he poetically describes the sublime effect of Mazarin's actions on his defeated enemies: "Vostre cœur genereux, de son ressentiment,/ A fait un sacrifice à ce grand changement;/ Leur fureur a ployé sous cet effort sublime,/ Et leur haine est éteinte au pardon de leur crime;/ Quelque aveugle transport qui les eust animez,/ Ils suivent un vainqueur qui les a tous charmez." Ledignan, *Le temple de la paix*, 2:26.

76 On their marriage, see Hortense Mancini and Marie Mancini, *Memoirs*, ed. and trans. Sarah Nelson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 4.

77 Vincent du Val, *La pompe funebre, ou les eloges de Jule Mazarini, cardinal, duc, et premier minister* (Paris: Sebastien Martin, 1664), v.

Yvan Loskoutoff argues, is reminiscent of the pyre ceremonies described by Herodian in the fourth book of his *History of the Roman emperors*.[78] Nevertheless, the monument appears very contemporary; while its caryatids seem to recall those used by Jacques Lemercier in his façade of the Pavillon de l'Horloge roughly ten years earlier, the pyramidal design of the monument itself recalls the ephemeral arch built on the Place Dauphine on the occasion of the royal wedding in 1660.

Du Val's French poem and its frontispiece by François Chauveau (1613-1676) thus aimed to fill a gap. Only a simple and solemn service was held after Mazarin's death at Notre-Dame in Paris in April 1661, which paled in comparison to the pomp and splendour of the funeral ceremony à machine in Rome, which Mazarin's agent Elpidio Benedetti (ca. 1609-ca. 1690) had organised in his memory the very same month.[79] For this occasion, both the interior and exterior of the Roman church of Santi Vincenzo e Anastasio a Trevi were decorated with symbols and personifications of virtue and death, the designs of which were published in a volume entitled *Pompa funebre nell' esequie celebrate in Roma al Cardinal Mazarini* (1661).[80] The funerary ode that was pronounced that day by French Carmelite priest Léon de Saint-Jean (1600-1671) further contemplated on these virtues, and in a manner completely opposite to the harmful satire that had been published in Paris.[81] Whereas the *mazarinades* stressed the vertical gap between opposite extremes – between admiration and fear, between heavenly architecture and Mazarin's vicious residence in hell at the lowest point on the line – this Roman oration sought to gloriously reunite the contradictory opposites that characterised the cardinal's career, thereby attempting to return to a spectrum of sublimity.[82] Mazarin's life, the orator argues, is a "mysterious enigma which, like the most accomplished painting, is composed of opposite contradictions" ("un mysterieux Enigme, composé comme les Tableaux les plus achevez, de contrarietez opposées"). As a person, Mazarin joined opposites such as captive and ruler, friend and enemy, French and Italian, which had made him into "an illustrious Persecuted, a glorious outrage" ("Un illustre Persecuté, des outrages glorieus") and thereby "a phoenix rising from the ashes, a sun returning after the obscurity of night" ("Un Phenix qui renait de ses cendres. Un soleil que le retour après le tenebres d'une epoisse nuict"). "Oh God!," the orator cried out, "What clarity and what obscurity, what light and what shadows are enhancing the beauty of this picture?"

78 Loskoutoff, "Fascis cum sideribus III," 78.

79 Dietrich Erben, *Paris und Rom: Die staatlich gelenkten Kunstbeziehungen unter Ludwig XIV* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004), 258.

80 See Elpidio Benedetti, *Pompa funebre nell'esequie celebrate in Roma al cardinal Mazarini nella chiesa de SS. Vincenzo & Anastasio* (Rome: Stamparia della Reu.Cam.Apost., 1661).

81 The eulogy was also translated into French, and was published in the same book as *L'Eloge funebre de l'eminentissime cardinal Jules Mazarin*, together with a dedication to the king. See page 5-22.

82 [De Saint-Jean], *L'Eloge funebre*, 7.

In addition to the use of this spectrum of sublimity in this Roman *Pompa*, in which both opposites participate in the aim of sublimity, Du Val's fictional Parisian *pompe funèbre* had to rely on the scale of sublimity in his elevation of Mazarin. His poem tried to push him heavenwards, thus pulling him away from its infernal opposite, the lowest point of the line where the *mazarinades* had placed him roughly ten years earlier. In this endeavour, text and image work together. At the top of the monument depicted in the frontispiece, above its reliefs of Mazarin's heroic deeds, the structure is crowned by a sculpture group representing his apotheosis. Here, the figure of the cardinal is seated on a chariot and is lifted from a bed of billowing clouds by a pair of giant eagles. The final destination of this ascension is revealed in the poem itself; a heavenly retreat surrounded by a landscape of sharp rocks, which can only be passed by those that are blessed with a sublime virtue:

> De mille affreux rochers l'abord inaccessible
> En a rendu la route & fascheuse & penible:
> Par ces aspres penchants un cœur ambitieux
> Qui presume arriver au sommet de ces lieux;
> Est du sort inconstant la honteuse victime
> S'il n'est pas soustenu d'une vertu sublime.[83]

Once past this vicious landscape, and amidst a forest of fragrant cedars, the cardinal would find his entire field of vision filled with the hundred Doric columns of the "glorious Temple of the Ministers of State":

> Au fond d'une forest de cedres odorants
> Qui bravent les hyvers & triomphent des ans:
> L'œil tout charmé découvre un royal edifice,
> Qui porte en lettres d'or sur un haut frontispice,
> Ce tiltre qui decore & marque avec esclat
> LE TEMPLE GLORIEUX DES MINISTRES D'ESTAT.
> Cent colomnes de marbre, ordonnance dorique,
> Eslevent sa façade où triomphe l'optique,
> Sur des portes d'argent superbes en festons
> Sont gravez de nos Roys les chiffres & les noms:[84]

83 Du Val, *La pompe funebre*, 9: "The inaccessible surroundings of a thousand frightful rocks/ Have made the road unwelcoming and troublesome:/ In this rugged landscape, an ambitious heart/ That presumes to arrive at the summit of this place;/ Will be the victim of unstable fate/ When it is not supported by a sublime virtue."

84 Ibid., 9-10: "Deep in a forest of fragrant cedars/ Which brave the winters and triumph the years:/ The charmed eye discovers a royal edifice,/ Which bears on its high frontispiece the golden letters,/ Of the title that decorates and brilliantly marks / the glorious temple of the ministers of state./ One hundred marble columns, of the Doric order,/ Elevate its façade where the optics triumph,/ On silver doors rich in festoons/ The initials and names of our Kings are engraved."

Through the poem and its frontispiece, one building refers to the other, and it ultimately depended on the knowledge and beliefs of the seventeenth-century reader whether he or she considered these building to exist, or to have existed. In any case, the poem demonstrates the contemporary appeal of architecture on paper, which, through the mind of the recipient, can shape public views and experiences of real buildings and the people who inhabit them.

As many examples from the 1650s and 1660s have shown, the mode *par excéllence* to achieve this goal was the epic. The potential of the genre's sublimity of style, in its use of a variety of rhetorical figures of speech, can be recognized in Du Val's use of repetition in his description of the heavenly temple ("Ce ne sont que faisseaux, que cornes d'abondance"),[85] which appears as a reference to George de Scudéry's use of *anaphora* in the description of the enchanted palace in his epic *Alaric* from 1654 ("Ce ne sont que Festons, ce ne sont que Couronnes").[86] But in addition to style, a more important actor in the contemporary appeal of architecture on paper was the other main feature of an epic: the poetic imagery of wonder, of *le merveilleux*. As cases from opposing political camps and from contrasting poetical genres have reminded us, spaces and structures, as agents of wonder, are frames of mind, in every sense of the word.

During the era of Richelieu and Mazarin, French writing on architecture was often as much concerned with the idea of human virtue as it was with buildings. In the sphere of politics, real, physical buildings ideally worked as manifestations of their patron's power, virtue, ideology or pedigree – which could persuasively be communicated through architectural orders, composition, proportion, emblems and inscriptions. Moreover, fictional buildings also had the capacity to express these same ideas, without having to account for all sorts of realistic limitations. The broad patronage of both cardinals created a cultural and political climate that stimulated the interchange of poetry and architecture, and with it, the intersection of real and fictional architecture. The revival of the epic poem further stimulated the importance of this development, and provided a wealth of poetic imagery for both poets and architects to draw from. In addition to the epic's sublimity of style, this poetic imagery defined the epic's elevated character. Its broad range of wonder – which translates to a spectrum of sublimity – provided a dynamic of contrasts, which evoked the imagery of awe-inspiring buildings, journeys, figures and transformations that elicited a sense of *le merveilleux*. Nevertheless, contrasts and extremes are dangerous notions, for they can just as well provoke anger, shock and disgust as a result of their exaggerated or vicious character.

85 Ibid., 10.

86 Scudéry, *Alaric*, 105.

The elevation of humility: Val-de-Grâce and the miracle of Louis XIV

Both in the creation and reception of architecture, whether fictional or real, the notion of wonder not only served to elevate but also helped to achieve the exact opposite. In this chapter, I will discuss the question of elevating architecture, by focusing on the implications of the miraculous birth of Louis XIV. His birth is closely connected to the construction of the Parisian monastery complex of Val-de-Grâce. The original monastery was first built by the queen's good friend Marguerite d'Arbouze, the abbess at Val-de-Grâce. The adjacent grandiose church and the monastery's reconstruction were the result of the queen's efforts, in gratitude towards God for providing her the young king she and the French nation had long desired.

A few years before the construction of this grand church, Jacques Sanson (1596-1665), a Discalced Carmelite also known as Father Ignace de Jesus-Maria, praised the united efforts of the abbess and queen in service of the crib of Christ and therefore recognised in the monastery and its community a "sublime humility":

> J'ay esté consolé d'avoir rencontré un Val de Grace, & un Mont de Calvaire fondez quasi en un mesme temps par deux sainctes fondatrices Benedictines, & establies aussi en mesme saison à Paris par deux grandes Reynes: Val, où se voit l'humilité sublime: Mont, où se recognoist la sublimité humble.[1]

While Sanson's celebration of the union of "burning hearts" and "beautiful ornaments" reflected the shared dedication of both women in service of the humility of Christ, these words would also constitute the core of a disagreement that arose between the two women. In their quest to manifest the most profound, elevated form of humility in the completion of the architectural complex at Val-de-Grâce, their paths radically diverged from each other.

1 Jacques Sanson, La vie et les éminentes vertus de Saint Maur, abbé (Paris: Pierre De Bresche, 1640), 430: "I brought me solace to have found a Val-de-Grâce, and a Mont de Calvaire, founded almost at the same time by two blessed Benedictine founders, as well as established by two great Queens in Paris in the same season: Val, where one finds sublime humility, and Mont, a place of humble sublimity."

We can trace the origins of the abbey of Val-de-Grâce back to the eleventh century. From this century onwards, a small community of Benedictine nuns lived in a monastery called l'Abbaye du Val-Profond, in the valley of the river Bièvre that flows south of Paris.[2] As a result of a reform by Queen Anne of Brittany (1477-1514) in the year of her death, the abbey's name was changed into Val-de-Grâce de Notre-Dame de la Creche (Val-de-Grâce of Our Lady of the Nativity), in gratitude for the reform and the devotion of the nuns to the mystery of the birth of Christ.[3] Relatively soon, Huguenot pillages forced the nuns to abandon the abbey. Upon their return, however, the unhealthy living conditions and the occasional floods of the river area had transformed the abbey into a ruin, which led the Benedictine nuns to move to Paris.[4] As a token of the close friendship between the abbey's abbess Marguerite de Veny d'Arbouze and Queen Anne of Austria, the latter provided the community with royal funds and a permission to install a new abbey in the Hôtel du Petit-Bourbon, in the capital's Faubourg Saint-Jacques, in 1621. Here, Marguerite was able to build a new royal monastery (l'Abbaye Royale du Val-de-Grâce), to which the queen would later add a new church (figs. 8-11) and royal apartments.

In order to gain a more profound understanding of the physical union of these religious buildings, one must look beyond the friendship between the queen and the abbess. Much more important was their spiritual union; at the very core of the relationship between Anne and the Benedictine order is the religious philosophy of humility, a notion that formed the basis of their pious bond and would be fundamental to the construction of both the abbey and church.

THE PROFOUND HUMILITY OF AUSTERITY: ANÉANTISSEMENT

The prominent role of the idea of humility in the life and works of Marguerite d'Arbouze is inextricably linked to her strict and fundamental ideas regarding Catholic reform. In 1599, at the age of nine, she entered the Benedictine abbey of Saint-Pierre in Lyon. Here, she already tried to reform the establishment during a period of ten years, since her strong desire of austerity did not correspond to the mitigated rules of the abbey.[5] Dissatisfied, she moved to the abbey of her

2 Pierre Lemoine, "L'Abbaye Royale de Notre-Dame du Val-de-Grâce," in Trésors d'art sacré à l'ombre du Val-de-Grâce, ed. Jacques Charles (Paris: Délégation à l'Action artistique de la Ville de Paris, 1988), 77.

3 Ibid., 77.

4 Ibid., 77.

5 Marie-Elisabeth Henneau, "Marguerite de Véni d'Arbouze," Dictionnaire des Femmes de l'ancienne France, 2007, http://siefar.org/dictionnaire/fr/Marguerite_de_V%C3%A9ni_d%27Arbouze.

abbess' sister Marie at Montmartre during the summer of 1611, which was a place of more engaged reform that suited Marguerite's ideas. Soon, she became in charge of the novitiate of La Ville-l'Évêque, a house in the Parisian Faubourg Saint-Honoré that fell under the direction of Montmartre – and here she was able to create a powerhouse of Catholic reform, attracting a large number of engaged, likeminded members of the Parisian female aristocracy.[6] Through family relations and her rapidly growing social network, she gained the support of her nephew the State Councilor Michel de Marillac (1560-1632) and the queen, and was provided the abbatial seat by Louis XIII at the abbey of Val-de-Grâce in the valley of the Bièvre in 1619.[7]

The nuns of Val-de-Grâce at Bièvres, as followers of the monastic rule of St. Benedict of Nursia, knew the importance of the idea of humility very well, since it plays a key role in the rule's fifth and seventh chapter ("On Obedience" and "On Humility" respectively).[8] However, they were not at all accustomed to the extremely high degree of humility that Marguerite pursued in her quest to reform. Her principal advisor and collaborator in this process of reform was Jacques Ferraige, ordinary preacher of the queen and confessor at Val-de-Grâce. In his book on the life of Marguerite from 1628, he writes about her first day as abbess at Bièvres. Upon her arrival at the convent, she was guided through the complex, and was shocked when confronted with its richly decorated interiors and cells. Aided by the Sisters she brought with her, she immediately and fervently started to strip the space of its vain riches, as Ferraige describes:

> Elle voyant les marques de la vanité, *où devoit estre la profonde humilité,* la superfluité en la pauvreté, demanda une eschelle : & avec ses Sœurs qu'elle avoit emmenées, détendit toute la tapisserie, défit les licts, tira les cheses, les tables & les tapis, pliant le tout pour le service de l'Eglise. Car une Benedictine, disoit-elle, qui doit, plus qu'aucune autre Religieuse, imiter Jesus-Christ en sa pauvreté, & qui doit estre contente, comme dit la saincte Regle, de ce qui est le plus vil, ne peut sans synderese de conscience user de telles ou semblables superfluitez.[9]

6 Ibid.

7 Claude Mignot, Le Val-de-Grâce: l'ermitage d'une reine (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1994), 14.

8 See Saint Benedict, The Rule of Saint Benedict, trans. Leonard J. Doyle (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2001).

9 Jacques Ferraige, La vie admirable et digne d'une fidèle imitation de la B. Mère Marguerite d'Arbouze dite de Sainte Gertrude (Paris: Fiacre Dehors, 1628), 106. My emphasis: "Seeing all these marks of vanity, which should have been those of profound humility and absolute poverty, she asked for a ladder. And together with the Sisters she had taken with her, she took down all of the tapestry, undid the beds, took the chairs, tables and rugs, and packed everything in service of the Church. As a Benedictine, she stated, one should, more than any other nun, imitate Jesus Christ in his poverty and ought to be content, as the holy Rule specifies, with that which is most vile. In the pursuit of the synderesis of consciousness, we therefore cannot use such or similar superfluities."

"What is the use," Marguerite adds, "of dressing walls and covering the chairs of a nun" who is "bound to religious austerity in order to strive for perfection?"[10] The austerity that Marguerite mentions is one of the main aspects in her quest for "la profonde humilité." This idea of total, annihilating humiliation before God, or *anéantissement*, stresses the superfluity of decoration of the surrounding architecture. Only through extreme poverty is one able to imitate the poor living conditions of Christ and, thus, experience the glory of his love. Shortly after the above passage, Ferraige writes about a conversation that Marguerite started with the Prioress of the not yet reformed abbey: "my Mother," Marguerite explains, "there is only humility that raises us upwards; and only total annihilation ["que l'anéantissement"] that brings us towards true grandeur."[11] The sense of strict urgency that characterises the reform that Marguerite started is particularly evident from the conflicts that arose once she entered the community of Val-de-Grâce. Ferraige writes that one of the nuns became particularly angry with her: "There was one of the old, not yet reformed nuns, who, through her diabolical artifice – covered nevertheless with a concealed piety – thought to spoil the good esteem we had for our Mother" and "implied that she was compelled to […] leave the Convent, especially since the Abbess did not wish to release her from her regular austerity."[12] Marguerite's strict rules were not an exception in the French monastic world; in other convents, as Anthony D. Wright writes in his study *The Counter-Reformation*, "the noble birth and family connections of abbesses sometimes helped them to impose strict enclosure and a common life on nuns who had become used to less austere ways in the confusion of late sixteenth-century France."[13]

As Ferraige – and, through him, Marguerite – explains, the idea of *anéantissement* joins the notions of sublimity and humility, the first being a result of the extreme execution of the latter. This ideal of total renunciation was widely shared in the religious communities that were being founded in and around Paris after the Counter-Reformation, especially in the Faubourg Saint-Jacques. The period after the wars of religion experienced a remarkable spiritual renewal, and new models of piety were proposed. Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle (1575-1629), in particular, strongly contributed to the success of the notion

10 Ibid., 105-06. The original French reads: "A quel propos, disoit-elle, habiller les murailles, couvrir les cheses d'une Religieuse, qui ne porte point de linge, qui est obligée à l'austerité religieuse pour tendre à la perfection?"

11 Ibid., 113: "Tout doucement, tout doucement, ma Mere (dit nostre B. Mere) il n'y a que l'humilité qui nous rehausse; & que l'aneantissement qui nous establisse en la vraye grandeur."

12 Ibid., 113: "Il y en eut une des anciennes non reformee, qui par ses artifices diaboliques, couverts neantmoins d'une pieté dissimule, pensa gaster la bonn'estime qu'on avoit de nostre B. Mere" […]. "[Elle] estoit contrainte de sortir, & de quitter le Convent, dautant que l'Abbesse ne luy vouloit rien relascher de son austerité reguliere, qu'elle ne la pouvoit supporter."

13 Anthony D. Wright, The Counter-Reformation. Catholic Europe and the Non-Christian World (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 217.

of *anéantissement* in these growing spiritual circles, and he emphasized that only through self-sacrifice, abasement and humiliation one is able to imitate Christ as incarnated on earth.[14] Éva Madeleine Martin aptly summarises this thought when she writes that "nowhere more that in such *anéantissement* do we see how *humilis* and *sublimis* were codependent in the *siècle de Saint Augustin*."[15]

Marguerite's rigorous measures expressed the idea that in order to fully empty one's mind in the "nonconsideration of one's own existence," one first needs to empty the surrounding space.[16] This ideal of total renunciation is clearly depicted in a painting that Philippe de Champagne (1602-1674) produced for the abbey of Port-Royal-des-Champs, a community of Cistercian nuns situated in the Vallée de Chevreuse, southwest of Paris (fig. 12). The work shows the painter's daughter Catherine (de Sainte-Suzanne) (1636-1686) – who had joined the Port-Royal monastery – together with mère Catherine-Agnès Arnauld (1593-1671). They are depicted in a room of extreme austerity; only a few simple wicker chairs and the wooden cross on the wall provide a sense of space to the composition. The heavenly light radiating from above, and *not* the space or its furnishings, constitutes the only and true grand splendour within the walls of the abbey. At Val-de-Grâce, Marguerite pushed this idea of austerity and grandeur even further. In addition to stripping the spaces of the convent, she often hinted at Ferraige that she would ideally leave the abbey and hide in the middle of nowhere, to free herself from all things and be alone with God, for only total silence would elevate her towards the ineffable. Ferraige writes:

> Elle me disoit souvent, Ha! si je me pouvois aller cacher en quelque trou, è affranchié de toutes choses estre seule avec Dieu, je le ferois de bon cœur, car quand quelqu'un vient, é qu'il faut que je parle, il y a tousiours quelque matiere de Confession, si je n'estois point Abbesse, je parlerois peu aux seculiers, je ne dissiperois pas tant l'esprit, le silence m'éleveroit à mon Dieu ineffable, é je luy parlerois, é il me parleroit sans paroles.[17]

For Marguerite, the instrumental and only necessary adornment of a space of prayer – whether it be a cave or cloister cell – would be a cross. The object would continue to instill a sacred shame, a "saincte honte," in her heart ("lors qu'ell'

14 Martin, "The 'Prehistory,' " 99.

15 Ibid., 101.

16 Ibid., 99.

17 Ferraige, La vie admirable, 245-46: "Ah! If I could only go hide in some hole, and, free from all things, be alone with God, I would do it heartily. Because when someone comes, and I have to speak, there is always some matter of confession. If I were not an abbess, I would hardly speak to seculars, I would not dissipate so much the spirit, and silence would elevate me towards my ineffable God, and I would speak to him, and he would speak to me without words."

estoit assise en son siege Abbatial, é qu'ell' y voyoit la Crosse, elle rougissoit d'une saincte honte é humilité"), an intense contemplation that would help her raise her spirit towards the sublime ("attiroit son esprit à la sublime, é haute contemplation").[18]

In 1621, the abbey of Val-de-Grâce was transferred from Bièvres to the Parisian Faubourg Saint-Jacques, an enterprise in which she was joined and aided by Ferraige.[19] Since Marguerite was quite determined to restore the rule of Saint Benedict in this new environment, she prepared a commented edition of the text, which she published in 1623 under the name *La vraye règle de saint Benoist avec les constitutions accommodées à icelle, pour les Religieuses Bénédictines de nostre Dame du Val de Grace*.[20] Its notions of extreme humility are mirrored in the reforming changes Marguerite put in place in the new building complex. However, some of the abbess's choices caused major concern and criticism inside and outside the community. According to the cleric and ecclesiastical historian Claude Fleury (1640-1723), one of Marguerite's first decisions as abbess at the new convent was to establish a system of enclosures; she ordered all the gates to be locked, and placed grilled fences at all the parlours.[21] Moreover, female *Portières* and *Tourrières* were installed, guarding the doors and towers of the convent. These decisions were strongly criticised by several of Marguerite's nuns as well as members of other religious orders; while leaving the convent after visiting, a Capuchin Father stated that he "found it very strange, this way of reforming."[22] Moreover, in July 1624, the queen placed the first stone of the new complex, which would include a new church and convent. During the subsequent construction phase, several of the nuns expressed their concern about the rising costs and grand scale of the building to be constructed. Occasionally, there was no money left in the building, and, according to Fleury, Ferraige would often reveal his worries on this matter to Marguerite: "I am afraid," he had told her, "that you will end up like this man in the gospel, who starts building without having counted the money that he

18 Ibid., 245-46. In another passage, Ferraige summarises Marguerite's ideas very well: "La crainte de nostre B.M. faisoit plusieurs effects, le premier, c'est qu'elle l'humilioit profondement, & étoit grandement humiliee. De sorte qu'elle n'avoit aucun appuy ny consolation en elle, mais en Dieu. Ad meipsum anima mea turbata est. Car son esprit s'eslevoit souvent en la majesté divine, voyoit sa grandeur, sa justicee & equité animee de sa toute puissance."

19 Henneau, "Marguerite de Véni d'Arbouze."

20 See Mère Marguerite d'Arbouse and Dom Eustache de Saint-Paul, La Vraie Règle de S. Benoît, avec les constitutions accomodées à icelle pour les religieuses bénédictines de Notre-Dame du Val de Grâce, dite de la Crèche (Paris: Veuve Chastellain, 1623).

21 Claude Fleury, La vie de la Vénérable Mère Marguerite d'Arbouze, abbesse de l'abbaye royale du Val-de-Gr ace (Paris: Gervais Clouzier, 1684), 55.

22 Ibid., 56: "Un Capucin à qui elle avoit tenu ce discours, dit en sortant au confesseur du convent qu'il trouvoit fort étrange cette manière de réformer."

actually needs."[23] Furthermore, Fleury continues, the Mère de Saint Etienne, a close friend of Marguerite at Val-de-Grâce, had told her: "My mother, we are ruining ourselves."[24] However, Marguerite's subsequent response betrayed an almost blind and absolute reliance on divine providence: "When you are afraid that the earth falls short, elevate yourself towards the trust of God."[25]

As the example of Marguerite shows very clearly, the notion of profound, elevated humility is a decisive and fundamental one in the construction of Val-de-Grâce. However, its inconsistencies and problematic effects become very apparent here, which leads me to address a related, and much larger, issue that is at stake here – one that becomes clear when comparing Marguerite's notion of profound humility with that of the queen. In her active role in the construction process of the new Val-de-Grâce complex, Anne of Austria had her own particular views on how to elevate humility, focusing on the magnificence of architecture instead of extreme austerity. As I will demonstrate, the apparent antithesis between these two divergent views on the elevation of humility, caused both fierce criticism and, later, great admiration in contemporary French society. Again, we return to the ambiguity of extremes in the context of architecture, sublimity and virtue.

THE QUEEN'S ELEVATION OF HUMILITY: MAGNIFICENCE

In order to understand the rich and grandiose splendour of the church of Val-de-Grâce, one needs to know the motives behind the queen's contribution to its construction and appearance. It is self-evident that we are dealing here with two very different roles and contexts: that of an abbess in a Benedictine convent on the one hand, and a queen ruling as regent on the other. Henceforth, their respective roles in the creation of architecture, as well as the marks of their piety are fundamentally different.

But to explain the differences in appearance between the church and the monastery as a result of their differing roles in society is to dismiss the *shared* role of both women in the reconstruction of the building complex of Val-de-Grâce. The queen's project for the new church needed to form a respectful relationship with the adjacent monastery lead by Marguerite, since both were part of the same building complex. The queen thus needed to reach an agreement with the abbess in order to create a harmonious unity. Ironically, the idea of humility,

23 This is a reference to a parable in the fourteenth chapter of the Gospel of Luke, in which Jesus gives the example of constructing a building without considering whether or not one is able to finish it: "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?" Luke 14:28 (New International Version).

24 Fleury, Mère Marguerite, 131: "La M. de saint Estienne luy disoit: Ma mere nous nous ruïnons."

25 Ibid., 131.

which cemented their friendship and shared piety, would turn into a controversy; both women had contrasting ideas on the manifestation of the idea of profound humility in the architecture of the new church at Val-de-Grâce. The birth of Louis XIV, as part of the queen's divine vow (or *vœu*), played a fundamental role in this difference.

—— ROYAL VOWS AND THE MIRACLE OF LOUIS XIV

Both the news of the queen's pregnancy and the subsequent birth of the *dauphin* at Saint-Germain-en-Laye on 5 September 1638 were welcomed by an abundance of descriptions, images and rituals – all of which provided various layers of meaning and significance to the events and their origins. Most importantly, both announcements gave a new resonance to the vow Louis XIII made at the beginning of the year 1637 to consecrate the Kingdom of France to the Virgin Mary, as well as to the offerings the royal couple made in several sanctuaries during the period leading up to the birth.[26] The causal relationship that became established between both the royal and public vows and the birth of the *dauphin* became the subject of a variety of prints, which includes works by Abraham Bosse (ca. 1604-1676) and Grégoire Huret (1606-1670) from 1638.[27] In addition to these images, numerous texts proclaimed and commemorated the royal birth as a miraculous one, which ranged from the announcement of the birth in the *Gazette de France* to the publication of church histories.[28] Moreover, the queen's patronage that led to construction of the church of Val-de-Grâce also became associated with personal vows she would have made prior to her pregnancy. In 1645, a bronze medal was produced by Jean Warin (1607-1672), which featured François Mansart's original design for the church and the accompanying words "OB GRATIAM DIU DESIDERATI REGII ET SECUNDI PARTUS. QUINTO CAL. SEPTEMBRIS 1638" ("To the long desired birth of the king and his brother. 5 September 1638").[29] Later

26 Alexandre Maral, Le Roi-Soleil et Dieu (Paris: Perrin, 2012), 42. See also Géraldine Lavieille, "« Tout conspire à rendre graces à Dieu pour un si grand bien » : Dévotions et célébration de la naissance de Louis XIV," in Naissance et petite enfance à la cour de France (Moyen-Âge - xixe siècle), ed. Pascale Mormiche and Stanis Perez (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2016), 190.

27 R.P. Dom Yves Chaussy, "Autour du Vœu de Louis XIII," in Charles, Trésors d'art, 34-40, and Jacques Charles, ed., "La consécration de la France à la Vierge," in Charles, Trésors d'art, 40-47.

28 The Gazette de France characterised the birth as "la Majesté de ce benefice inenarrable du Ciel" and described the crowd gathering around the newborn baby as the result of "la veuë d'un miracle." See "Particularitez de la Naissance de Monseigneur le Daufin, & ce qui s'est passé en suite à S. Germain, & à Paris," La Gazette de France, September 10, 1638, 505-09. Moreover, in 1647, Symphorien Guyon described the birth as a "naissance miraculeuse d'un Fils donné de Dieu à la France." See Symphorien Guyon, Histoire de l'Eglise, diocèse, ville et université d'Orléans, vol. 2 (Orléans: Maria Paris, 1647), 482. Quoted from Lavieille, "Tout conspire," 195.

29 Thierry Sarmant, "Medaille représentant Louis XIV et sa mère Anne d'Autriche," accessed September 6, 2016, http://www.carnavalet.paris.fr/fr/collections/medaille-representant-louis-xiv-et-sa-mere-anne-d-autriche.

sources, such as Fleury's *La vie de la Mère Marguerite d'Arbouze* (1685) would even trace the church's origin back to an original promise she had made to God. Here, the promise of a church forms part of the vow that led to the birth of the dauphin: "[P]our s'acquitter de la promesse qu'elle avoit faite à Dieu de luy faire bâtir un temple magnifique, s'il luy donnoit un dauphin, elle entreprit de rebâtir entierement l'église & le monastere du Val-de-grace" ("to fulfil the promise she had made to God to build him a magnificent temple should he give her a *dauphin*, she set about to rebuild the whole church and monastery of Val-de-Grace").[30]

In this sense, the church of Val-de-Grâce played a performative role in both the creation and reification – an abstract thought being made a material or concrete thing – of the sublimity of the Louis XIV. Performative, because the building (and its idea) was an actor through which Anne created and defended the dynastic future of her country. Sublime, because, on the one hand, it connected her son Louis XIV to the most profound and elevated "monarch" Jesus Christ (as the king of kings), and on the other hand, because this divine connection provoked (politically desirable) responses of ecstatic admiration. The creation of the building forms part of a complex development of cause and effect, a hermetically sealed bubble in which a sequence of instances of interacting creative agency eventually leads to the building's completion. Its main agents are not the architects, but the figures of Anne of Austria, Louis XIV, and the figure of God (and Christ). I will try and dissect this complex, layered structure of authorship – who or what "creates" and "is created" – which successfully transcended the still young Louis XIV far above the realm of the normal and comprehensible.

Firstly, Anne turned to God and presents the idea of the building, which she would construct should God give her a son. Subsequently, God provides the queen with a child: the *dauphin* and future King Louis XIV. Then, by means of the physical building of Val-de-Grâce, Anne materialises a part of her divine covenant; she reifies it as a physical vessel through which she returns her message of gratitude directly back to God. This stage is visualised by Mignard in his fresco, through the painted figure of Anne holding in her hands a model of the church and presenting it to the image of the Holy Trinity above her (figs. 14 and 15). The Val-de-Grâce, in this sense, constitutes much more than a regular church dedicated to God; it is a *direct answer* to God, a physical part of a divine engagement. What is important, here, is that the young Louis XIV – being an integral part of the queen's vow (or *vœu*) – laid the first stone of the church,[31] thereby starting the creation of a building that, in a sense, *created him*, for Anne's idea of the building formed the condition of his very existence. In other words, paradoxically, the church created Louis, who created the church. Finally, after

30 Fleury, Mère Marguerite, 271-72.

31 Lemoine, "L'Abbaye Royale," 77. See also Fleury, Mère Marguerite, 272.

the completion of the church, and the consecration of the building and its altar, God again returns to the queen, and the world, through the vessel of the church; visually, through his likeness in the painted dome, and more profoundly and spiritually, as the body of Christ through the sacrament of the Eucharist. It is not surprising that it was the queen who was the first person to receive the Holy Communion during the first mass being held in the church.[32]

This role of the church of Val-de-Grâce as an object that forms part of a complex sequence of mutual, interactive agency, resembles the case of St Peter's Basilica. British anthropologist Alfred Gell describes the building as an example of an index that is both a divine "gift-object" and an "index of human agency," which acts as a bridge between the realms of the human and the divine:

> The papal title 'Pontifex Maximus' (Jvlivs II Pontifex Maximvs blazoned over the apostle of St Peter's in Rome) attributes to the Pope the power to build bridges between earth and heaven. […] And in St Peter's one can certainly detect the clear implication that God is the exchange-partner of his more important subjects such as Julius II if not the mass of his worshippers of low estate. St Peter's is the bridge; but the point is that the making of the bridge had been attributed unambiguously to the Pope, Julius II, his predecessors and successors. He, in exchange terms, is the primary donor, the holder of […] the 'unencumbered valuable' […] which is sent out to find its match, the valuable which can be measured against it and returned for it. St Peter's, as a gift-object and an index of human agency, elicits a responsive counter-gift, which, paradoxically, is St Peter's itself, invested with divine power now available to mankind…[33]

This interplay of authorship also returns in the design of the building's interior. Behind the tabernacle, a curved marble wall resembling the exterior of a roman rotunda (behind which is situated the Chapelle du Saint Sacrement) bears the inscription: "Qui Creavit Me Requievit In Tabernaculo Meo" ("He/she who made me rested in my tabernacle").[34] The sentence is in fact a fragment from the twenty-fourth chapter of the Biblical book of Ecclesiasticus, which can mean either that Christ, who was Mary's creator, "rested in her womb, or that Mary,

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32 Charles Le Maire, Paris ancien et nouveau. Où l'on voit la Fondation, les Accroissemens, le nombre des Habitans, & des Maisons de cette grande Ville, vol. 2 (Paris: Nicolas Le Clerc, 1697), 320-21.

33 Alfred Gell, Art and Agency. An Anthropological Theory (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 114-15.

34 See also Robertus Keuchenius' poem dedicated to this inscription at Val-de-Grâce: Robertus Keuchenius, Gallia Sive Poëmatum Heroicorum Libri Duo: Ad Christianissimum Regem Ludovicum XIV (Arnhem: Johan Friderich Hagen, 1670), 54. Keuchenius was a Dutch poet who traveled to France shortly before publishing this book, the poems of which were used to try to gain the king's favour. See A.J. van der Aa, K.J.B. van Harderwijk, and G.D.J. Schotel, eds., Biografisch Woordenboek der Nederlanden, vol. 10 (Haarlem: J.J. van Brederode, 1862), 150-51.

the maker of Christ, rested in heaven with him upon her death."[35] There is no consensus in contemporary studies about the church on the precise interpretation of this inscription, but some seventeenth-century writers, such as Charles Le Maire in his work *Paris ancien et nouveau* from 1685, connected the meaning of the inscription to the queen.[36] Whatever the intended interpretation, the inscription clearly alludes (both metaphorically as well as literally) to the connection between the creation of the human body (that of Anne, Louis XIV or Christ) and the creation of architecture.[37]

The close relationship between the birth of Christ and that of Louis XIV also returned in contemporary accounts, some of which are dedicated to the construction of Val-de-Grâce and its associated ceremonies. In Le Maire's detailed description of the first stone ceremony in April 1645, the author stated that it was the wish of the queen that the seven-year-old king ("un Roy enfant") would "commence the construction of this building, dedicated to the honour of a God that was made child, who is the King of Kings."[38] This playful use of the notion of the "Roy des Rois" to mean Christ, but simultaneously alluding to the young Louis XIV himself, resembles the poetry of Gabriel du Bois-Hus (1599-ca. 1652) in his work *La Nuit des nuits* from 1638. The poem, which bears the lengthy title *La Nuit des nuits, Le Jour des jours, Le Miroir du destin* ou *La nativité du Dauphin du ciel, La Naissance du Dauphin de la terre et le tableau de ses aventures fortunés,* was written and published on the occasion of the birth of Louis XIV. In this work, the poet establishes the parallel between the birth of Christ ("la nuit des nuits") and that of the *dauphin* Louis ("le jour des jours"). His realisation of the implications of this birth results in poetic expressions of his ecstatic rapture:

> Dauphin, ah! Dieu je n'en puis plus
> Mon pauvre cœur n'est qu'un reflux
> D'amour, de plaisir et de joie.
> Je ne suis plus à moi, mon esprit m'a quitté
> Et ma raison se noie
> Dans l'agréable excès de sa félicité. […]

35 David J. Rothenberg, The Flower of Paradise: Marian Devotion and Secular Song in Medieval and Renaissance Music (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 56.

36 Le Maire, Paris Ancien, 328. The nineteenth-century French architect and art historian Victor Ruprich-Robert connected the inscription to the Sacrament of the Eucharist, as well as her gratitude towards God and "the idea that established this rich sanctuary of Val-de-Grâce." See Victor Ruprich-Robert, L'église et le monastère du Val-de-Grâce: 1645-1665 (Paris: V.A. Morel, 1875), 56.

37 The tabernacle, for example, can be read as a metaphor for the body.

38 Le Maire, Paris Ancien, 313: "Les fondemens en furent ouverts, le Mardy 21. Février 1645 & le Samedy premier jour d'Avril de la mesme année, le Roy Loüis le Grand âgé de sept ans y mit la premiere pierre en grande Ceremonie; & c'est la premiere que Sa Majesté ait mise, la Reine Regente sa Mere, qui y estoit presente, l'ayant ainsi voulu, afin qu'un Roy enfant, donnât commencement à ce lieu, dedié à l'honneur d'un Dieu fait enfant, qui est le Roy des Rois."

Extases, pâmoisons, transports
Inondez mon âme et mon corps
De vos agréables souffrances.
Amoureux battements qui me venez saisir
J'aime vos défaillances
Et je mourrai content si je meurs de plaisir.[39]

THE NEW CHURCH BUILDING: DIFFERING VIEWS ON HUMILITY AND MAGNIFICENCE

The contrasting views of Marguerite and Anne on the elevation of humility lead us to our main issue, which is put forward by cleric Claude Fleury – the writer who also addressed the troubles that arose as a result of the choices Marguerite made as abbess. Like Ferraige, Fleury devoted an entire book to the life of Marguerite, called *La vie de la Mère Marguerite d'Arbouze, abbesse de l'abbaye royale du Val de Grâce* and which was published in 1684. In his account of Marguerite's life, Fleury was obviously able to retain much more distance to his main subject than Ferraige could; not only was Ferraige Marguerite's collaborator and close friend, Fleury's account was also written much later in the seventeenth century. Near the end of his book, the author discusses the friendship between Anne and Marguerite:

> La reine qui la connoissoit depuis pres de trente ans, prit en elle une entiere confiance. Elle luy laissa fort long-temps entre les mains les resolutions qu'elle avoit écrites dans une retraitte de trois jours, qu'elle fit au Val-de-grace cette premiere année de sa regence; & luy communiqua le desir qu'elle avoit de se retirer de la cour, & de passer le reste de ses jours dans ce monastere. L'abbesse aprés s'estre excusée de dire son avis sur une affaire si importante, conseilla à la reine de demeurer dans le monde, pour y servir Dieu par son bon exemple & par sa charité à secourir les miserables.[40]

39 Gabriel du Bois-Hus, La Nuit des nuits, Le Jour des jours, Le Miroir du destin ou La nativité du Dauphin du ciel, La Naissance du Dauphin de la terre et le tableau de ses aventures fortunées (Paris: Jean Pasle, 1641). Quoted from Georges Dethan, "« …Un siècle de plaisirs » Louis XIV annoncé par un poète," in Charles, Trésors d'Art, 62: "Dauphin, ah! God, I can go on no more/ My poor heart is but a reflux/ Of love, pleasure and joy./ I am no longer within myself, my mind has left me/ And my reason is drowning/ In the pleasant excess of his happiness. […] Ecstasies, swoons, transports/ Flood my soul and my body/ As a result of your pleasant suffering./ Loving heartbeats start to take over me/ I love your faintness/ And I will die happy if should I die of pleasure."

40 Fleury, Mère Marguerite, 269. "The queen, who had known Marguerite for almost thirty years, placed her entire trust in her. For a long time, she entrusted her with the resolutions she had written down during a retreat of three days she spent at Val-de-grace in the first year of her regency; and she expressed to Marguerite her desire to retire from court, and to spend the rest of her life in this monastery. The abbess, after having excused herself for expressing her own opinion on so important an affair, advised the queen to remain in the world, and to serve God through her good example and through her charity of helping the miserable."

Fleury also emphasises that Marguerite's influence on the queen was, to a large extent, characterised by her ideals of reform, of putting into practice the austere humility of St. Benedict's rule.[41] But after explaining the pious and restrained interests that brought Anne and Marguerite together, he continues with a discussion of the queen's intentions of rebuilding the church and monastery of Val-de-Grâce on a grandiose scale. Here, Fleury stresses the contrast between, on the one hand, the queen's quest for austerity that she shared with Marguerite, and on the other hand the queen's preference for magnificence and splendour in response to her vow. Fleury introduces their conflicting views by referring to Anne's divine promise:

> Cependant la reine voulut donner à l'abbaye du Val-de-grace des marques éclatantes de son affection […]. Ensuite pour s'acquitter de la promesse qu'elle avoit faite à Dieu de luy faire bâtir un temple magnifique, s'il luy donnoit un dauphin, elle entreprit de rebâtir entierement l'église & le monastere du Val-de-grace, & de n'y épargner aucune dépense pour y laisser des marques éternelles de sa pieté.[42]

And this is where Fleury expresses Marguerite's problem with Anne's plan. He writes:

> L'abbesse representa plusieurs fois à la reine que leur maison ne devoit pas estre un palais, mais un monastere de religieuses qui font profession de pauvreté : mais la reine persista dans son dessein, disant qu'il est juste de consacrer à Dieu ce que la nature a de plus precieux, & ce que l'art peut inventer de plus exquis; plûtost que de l'employer à des usages profanes; & que cette maison étant destinée à honorer l'humble naissance du Fils de Dieu, il falloit relever l'abjection de l'étable, où il avoit bien voulu naître, par le temple le plus magnifique qu'il seroit possible. Elle voulut aussi que le roy son fils qui estoit encore enfant, mît la premiere pierre à cet édifice dédié au roy des rois fait enfant pour nous.[43]

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41 Ibid., 269. He writes: "The abbess used this familiarity only to inspire the queen with sentiments of virtue, and to introduce to her the practice of all sorts of good works; which she undertook with a marvellous competence: but above all she supported her in protecting – in all of her actions – the reform of the order of St. Benedict, and to procure its progress." ("L'abbesse n'usoit de cette familiarité que pour inspirer à la reine des sentimens de vertu, & luy proposer la pratique de toutes sortes de bonnes œuvres; ce qu'elle faisoit avec une adresse merveilleuse: mais sur tout elle la portoit à proteger en toutes rencontres la reforme de l'ordre de Saint Benoist, & en procurer le progrés.").

42 Ibid., 271: "The queen, however, wished to leave on the abbey of Val-de-Grace a grandiose mark of her affection; […]. Furthermore, to fulfil the promise she had made to God to build him a magnificent temple should he give her a dauphin, she set about to rebuild the whole church and monastery of Val-de-Grace, and to spare no expense in order to leave here an eternal mark of her piety."

43 Ibid., 271-72: "The abbess repeatedly expressed to the queen that their house should not be a palace, but instead a monastery of nuns who profess poverty. But the queen persisted in her plan, stating that it was right to consecrate to God the most precious things in nature, and the most exquisite inventions of art, rather than to use these for profane purposes; And since this house is destined to honour the humble birth of the Son of God, she deemed it

It is this difference in view on the nature of sublimity that brings us back to the same relationship between spectrum and scale that has been discussed in the previous chapter. The queen, on the one hand, deemed it necessary to elevate the poverty of Christ's stable. What she implies by this is that the notion of humility is elevated by means of magnificent splendour, so that both arrive at an equilibrium, a spectrum on which both are balanced and mutually reinforce one another. In other words, the antithesis of two seemingly opposing extremes is transformed into a union, in which both work *together* to arrive at the queen's personal idea of pious grandeur. Nowhere is this idea more clearly manifested than on the church's high altar, where Anguier's sober and natural Nativity scene is crowned by a majestic baldachin, designed by Gabriel Le Duc (ca. 1630-1696) (figs. 11, 16 and 17). The idea of the need to have to elevate, through material means, the poverty of Christ's birth, diametrically opposed the beliefs of many French religious thinkers at the time, such as the supporters of Jansenism. Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), in this respect, was very clear in his view on the relationship between pomp and humility in the context of Christ. In his *Pensées* (ca. 1657-63) "Great minds" such as Christ, he writes, "have no need of worldly greatness, which has nothing to do with what they seek. They are seen by the mind, not by the eye, but this is sufficient."[44] And therefore, "it is ridiculous to take offence at the lowliness of Jesus Christ," he stated, "as if his lowliness were in the same order as the grandeur that he manifested."[45] This is why, Pascal explained, "the greatness of people of spirit is invisible to kings." Christ "was humble", he adds, but "Oh in what great pomp, and in with what wonderful magnificence."[46]

These thoughts strongly echo Marguerite's view on the matter of the church building. Fleury's account makes it again quite clear that it is the abbess's firm belief that Benedictine nuns strongly distance themselves from the construction of material splendour, from *magnificence*. One raises the spirit, and elevates it towards a state of profound humility – a process that does not play out on a spectrum, but on a scale that would designate magnificent splendour as the antithesis of the sublime. Other than the queen, Marguerite's notion of the most

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necessary to elevate the abjection of the stable – where he was willingly born – by means of the most magnificent temple possible. She also wished that her son, the king, who is still a child, should lay the foundation stone, since this edifice is dedicated to the king of kings made child for us."

44 Blaise Pascal, Pensées de monsieur Pascal sur la religion & sur quelques autres sujets, vol. 1 (Lyon: Claude Chize, 1669), 107. In his fourteenth chapter devoted to Jesus Christ, he writes: "Les grands génies ont leur empire, leur éclat, leur grandeur, leurs victoires, & n'ont nul besoin des grandeurs charnelles qui n'ont nul raport avec celle qu'ils cherchent. Ils sont vûs des esprits, non des yeux, mais c'est assez."

45 Ibid., 109: "Il est ridicule de se scandaliser de la bassesse de Jesus-Christ, comme si cette bassesse étoit du même ordre que la grandeur qu'il venoit faire paroître."

46 Ibid., 107-08. Describing the grandeur of Christ and Archimedes, he writes: "La grandeur des gens d'esprit est invisible aux riches, aux Rois, aux Conquerans, & à tous ces grands de chair." And on the following page, Pascal writes about Christ: "O qu'il est venu en grande pompe, & en une prodigieuse magnificence aux yeux du cœur, & qui voïent la sagesse."

sublime state of humility does not include an interplay with other qualities. As far as the role of architecture and ornament is concerned, it rather seeks to exclude as many as possible. Like the abbess Marguerite, many contemporary French writers addressed their concerns on the dangers of magnificent architectural splendour in religious contexts. In his *Le Théologien françois* from 1651, Léonard de Marandé argued that God does not need the extravagant ornaments and expensive splendour of modern architects; true magnificence lies in his presence. Only the common matter of the Eucharist (the sacramental bread and wine) truly strikes the senses ("frappent nos sens").[47]

The contrasting views of Anne and Marguerite on this extremely important matter, as well as the queen's perseverance in executing her own ideas, are striking peculiarities in the history of the building complex. This particular aspect of the church's construction has not yet received much attention by scholars. One interesting observation on this problem has been put forward by Jean-Pierre Babelon in the extensive exhibition catalogue *Trésors d'art sacré à l'ombre du Val-de-Grâce* from 1988.[48] He rightly observes, in my opinion, that "the whole spirituality of Val-de-Grâce is based on a multi-faceted antithesis."

Firstly, he argues, there is the antithesis that opposes the manger (*crèche*) of Bethlehem to the Temple of Jerusalem. Here, Babelon refers to the abovementioned thought of the queen that the unfathomable humility desired by God for the birth of his Son on earth, should be compensated by the splendour of human structures dedicated to the glory of God. If we recall Anne's ideal as written down by Fleury ("il falloit *relever l'abjection de l'étable*, où il avoit bien voulu naître"), we can recognise this first antithesis in the relationship between the grand baldachin and the sober Nativity scene. The second antithesis lies in the contrast between, on the one hand, the publicly visible magnificence of the abbey's forecourt and church, and, on the other hand, the unknown world of the cloistered nuns hidden behind the large gates of the transept. To avoid being seen by the public, the nuns made use of an ingenuously arranged outer circulation gallery, which ran along the choir on both sides and allowed the nuns to reach several of the church's

47 Léonard de Marandé, Le Théologien françois, vol. 3 (Paris: Michel Soly, 1651), 271-72. Marandé was a Counselor and the King's Chaplain, and he fiercely opposed Jansenism. He writes: "Ce n'est pas sans raison que les Architectes sont si curieux dans le choix des materiaux qui doivent estre employez pour les Palais & les superbes bastimens des Princes de la terre : les Grands ont besoin d'ornements, pour enrichir & annoblir le lieu de leur demeure. Tout ce qu'ils ont de lustre & d'esclat au dehors, procede du brillant de leurs couronnes ; & la magnificence des choses exterieures, ne contribuë pas peu de chose pour jetter le respect dans les yeux, & la veneration dans les cœurs de ceux qui approchent leurs Majestez Souveraines. Mais Dieu qui ne peut recevoir de lustre ny d'esclat d'aucune des ses creatures (dont toute la beauté est dans la dependance de son estre) ne choisit qu'une matiere commune, encores n'en prend-il que les accidents & les especes, pour se dresser un palais & une demeure Sacramentale. C'est sa presence qui donne l'ornement aux choses & aux lieux où elle se rencontre; qu'on ne s'estonne donc pas, si une matiere si commune, telle qu'est le pain & le vin, reçoit aujourd'huy tant de veneration & de reverence entre les mains de Jesus Christ ou de ses Lieutenants, qui sont ses Prestres & Sacrificateurs, puis qu'ils participent à l'honneur de son Sacerdoce."

48 Jean-Pierre Babelon, "Avant-Propos," in Charles, Trésors d'art, 22-33.

chapels without having to cross the fence.[49] The third and final antithesis that Babelon mentions is the difference between the pious humility of the nuns and the august presence of the queen within their walls. This aspect is mirrored in the contrast between the sober appearance of the façades of the abbey and the adjacent graceful and magnificent queen's pavilion, housing her apartments. This problem is absent at the Spanish Escorial, for example.[50] The court historian of King Philip II (1527-1598), Fray José de Sigüenza (1544-1606) witnessed and described its construction, and based his interpretation of the restrained style of the Escorial on the aesthetic categories described by Saint Augustine.[51] The beauty of the building, De Sigüenza writes, "is seen in how all its parts imitate one another, and how much the whole is in all the parts," which demonstrates "the authority not alone of Vitruvius … but that of the divine Augustine." This "correspondence in architecture," he continues, tells us that Philip II, "as we learn from Saint Augustine, returned us to reason and made us notice that the arts contain reason both in themselves and in the proportion they make with our souls." In other words, the austere unity of the Escorial's grey granite desired by Philip II establishes a spiritual connection between the restrained material surroundings and the self-restrain in the humble visitor's soul.

Whereas both the late sixteenth-century church at the Escorial (Basilica of San Lorenzo de El Escorial) and the early seventeenth-century church at Val-de-Grâce form part of the same wave of post-Tridentine churches that swept through Catholic Europe, the stronger austerity at the Escorial connected much more to the style of the early Italian Counter-Reformation churches. As Babelon rightfully explains, the antitheses we see at Val-de-Grâce are typical characteristics of a different post-Tridentine spirituality, a later one.[52] During the early seventeenth-century, the original austerity of the earliest post-Tridentine Italian churches gradually became replaced by newer Baroque redecorations – largely a result of the increase in the number of wealthy lay patrons.[53] Apart from the grand, yet restrained French classicism we recognize in the white decorated walls at Val-de-Grâce (fig. 10), as well as the church's Roman façade and dome design – in which we clearly recognize early Post-Tridentine church characteristics[54] – the church of Val-de-Grâce also clearly flirts with more modern aesthetic tendencies,

49 Pierre Lemoine, "L'Abbaye Royale," 78.

50 Babelon, "Avant-Propos," 28.

51 Christy Anderson, Renaissance Architecture (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 96. The quotes from De Sigüenza's text that feature on this page are also derived from Anderson, who provides a longer passage from the book, which is translated into English.

52 Babelon, "Avant-Propos," 28.

53 Wright, Counter-Reformation, 199.

54 Ibid., 198.

as is visible in the extravagant baldachin by Le Duc (fig. 11), inspired by Bernini *baldacchino* at St. Peter's Basilica.[55]

These flirts with Italian innovations in church decoration explain to a large extent the somewhat awkward "antitheses" at Val-de-Grâce. For instance, in its sculpted reliefs by Michel Anguier (1612-1686), the emphasis on themes such as the Sacrament and Catholic saints is typical of Counter-Reformation interiors. However, among them are personifications of the attributes of the Holy Virgin, such as Humility, Simplicity, and Poverty, which seem to clash with the expensive extravagance and grandeur of the general interior. Most strikingly, the latter figure, which can ironically be seen between the gilded marble columns, holds a bag in her left hand, out of which spill several coins. Moreover, the decoration of the arcade above the gate of the Chapelle St. Anne is comprised of a considerable number of so-called "Hiérogliphiques," sculpted symbols that are characteristic of the mysticism of the period. A contemporary anonymous account written by a visitor of the church describes these symbols and their interpretation. The "burning heart on an altar" expresses the idea of the sublimity of extreme humility ("complete annihilation before His grandeur"), which, again, clashes with the queen's surrounding "Palace," as Marguerite described it according to Fleury. The anonymous author writes:

> Le cœur brûlant sur un autel.
> Ce cœur, qui se consomme par la flamme sur cet autel, est une véritable image de celui qui assiste au sacrifice de la messe avec les dispositions nécessaires ; car enfin, comme c'est un mystère d'amour et que le fils de Dieu n'a pu témoigner plus de tendresse et d'inclination vers les hommes qu'en leur communicant son être tout entier, qu'en s'unissant à eux de la plus forte et de la plus intime de toutes les unions, il est plus que raisonnable que nous lui rendions amour pour amour, *que notre cœur se consomme par ce feu en sa présence, que nous nous anéantissons devant sa grandeur*, et enfin que nous intimons son sacrifice par le nôtre.[56]

55 The Nativity at Val-de-Grâce is a nineteenth-century copy, since Michel Anguier's original from 1665 was relocated to the Église Saint-Roch in 1805, shortly after the Revolution. See Pierre Lefebvre, "La Statuaire," in Charles, Trésors d'art, 137. The sculptors Justin-Marie Lequien, Louis Desprez, and Clément Denis were responsible for producing this copy, which was created shortly after 1868. See Ruprich-Robert, L'église et le monastère, 32.

56 The anonymous text is held by the Archives nationales (L 1037, pièce 16) and was published in M. Taxil, "Les Hiérogliphiques de l'arcade de la grille de la Chapelle Saint-Anne se rapportant ad sacrifice de la messe," Procès-verbaux/Commission municipale du Vieux Paris, May 11, 1918, 99-104. My quote from this document is derived from Mignot, Val-de-Grâce, 102. My emphasis: "The burning heart on an altar. This heart, which is consumed by the flame on this altar, is a true image of those who attend the Sacrifice of the Mass with all the necessary dispositions; for, after all, as it is a mystery of love, and since the Son of God has been able to show more tenderness and inclination towards man by communicating to them his whole being, by joining them in the strongest and most intimate of all unions, it is more than reasonable that we return love for love, that our heart is consumed by this fire in his presence, that we annihilate ourselves before his greatness, and, finally, that we manifest his sacrifice through ours."

Similarly, the series of paintings on the life of Saint Benedict that Philippe de Champaigne produced for the private apartments of the queen at Val-de-Grâce, only seem to *remind* of the idea of extreme poverty and renunciation instead of putting it into practice. Art historian Dominique Brême similarly states: "L'illustration de la vie de Saint Benoît […] devait être, dans le salon de la reine, un perpétuel rappel à la rigueur de la Règle bénédictine quelque peu altérée par la somptuosité des lieux."[57]

THE QUEEN'S MAGNIFICENCE AS A ROYAL VIRTUE

What is key to understanding the motives and contemporary defence of the queen's actions is the understanding of magnificence as a virtue. If we turn to the etymology of the French term *magnificence*, we arrive at a notion that not so much focuses on the grand result of expenditure, but rather on the noble and appropriate motives and effort that lie behind this patronage of great splendour. The early modern understanding of the word *magnificence* is greatly indebted to Aristotle's writings on virtue in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, in which he connects the term "*megaloprépeia*" to the expenditure of large sums of money to contribute to noble purposes and public good.[58] This covered, for instance, the subsidisation of votive offerings to the gods, as well as the financial support for the construction of temples like those on the Acropolis.[59] Cicero, fusing Greek and Roman traditions, employed the term *magnificentia* in the second book of his *De Inventione*, and further imbued the notion with a sense of sublimity by describing magnificence – translated by H.M. Hubbell as "highmindedness" – as the "contemplation [*cogitatio*] and execution [*administratio*] of great and sublime projects with a certain grandeur and magnificence of imagination."[60] The idea of the greatness of action was since embedded in the term itself, which draws from the Latin *magnum facere*, meaning "to do something great." The ideas of both classical writers, in part, had a great impact on Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), whose influential writings on magnificence in his *Summa theologiae* mixed Ancient Greek and Latin theory with Christian principles. Aquinas stressed in par-

57 Dominique Brême, "Anne d'Autriche au Val-de-Grâce et les toiles commandées à Philippe de Champaigne," in: Charles, Trésors d'art, 162.

58 Rollen Edward Houser, "The Virtue of Courage (IIa IIae, qq. 123-140)," in The Ethics of Aquinas, ed. Stephen J. Pope (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 312-13.

59 Ibid., 312-13.

60 Cicero, On Invention, trans. H.M. Hubbell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), 2:54.163, 330-31, http://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.marcus_tullius_cicero-de_inventione.1949: The original text reads: "Magnificentia est rerum magnarum et excelsarum cum animi ampla quadam et splendida propositione cogitatio atque administratio". See also Houser, "The Virtue," 312-13.

ticular the ability to accomplish great works for God or community as a general analogue of the virtue of magnificence, and saw the expensive public project as its most defining aspect.[61] For Aquinas, an exemplar of this magnificence, Rollen E. Houser argues, would be the construction of the Sainte Chapelle in Paris by King Louis IX (1214-1270). Aquinas arrived at his court around the time the royal chapel was built, and the monarch's religious ardour, his extensive commitment and the expenses that characterised his architectural patronage are all aspects Aquinas emphasised in the *Summa*.[62] In early modern France, the notion of *magnificence* remained intimately connected with both virtuous royal power and the sublime. In the first-known French translation of Longinus, which was titled "De la sublimité du discours" and written about 1645, the anonymous writer even translated the Longinian *hupsos* to *magnificence*. And although the revised, second version of the manuscript replaces this with *sublimité*, *magnificence* is "maintained as a secondary translation for *hupsos* and synonym for *sublimité* throughout the corrected manuscript."[63]

The queen's decision to elevate humble poverty by using its extreme opposite of costly splendour may have seemed wildly unsuited from the Benedictine viewpoint of Marguerite, but when understood in the context of the virtue of magnificence, the queen's efforts and persistence are much more appropriate. In fact, many contemporaries that supported the queen were at pains to stress the noble motives of her patronage. Fleury, for instance, opens his biography of Marguerite by stating that the overwhelming effect of the Val-de-Grâce: "Those that are struck with admiration at the sight of the buildings of Val-de-Grâce," he writes, are struck with the "effect of the piety and of the magnificence of Queen Anne d'Autriche," and therefore should look beyond, since her motives are "more noble than the work itself."[64] Fleury's opening words point in particular to those spectators who are "usually content to learn" very little, and therefore "do not inquire into the reasons" behind the building's presence. This is the primary danger of magnificent splendour, which distracts the eye and soul very easily and should not lead the beholder astray, away from its pious intentions. Many of the Crown's supporters were very much aware of these temptations, and some of them even tried to warn the queen herself against the dangerous lure of splendour.

61 Houser, "The Virtue," 313-14.

62 Ibid., 313-14.

63 Martin, "The 'Prehistory,' " 90.

64 Fleury, Mère Marguerite, 1-2: "Ceux qui sont frappés d'admiration à la veuë des bâtimens du Val-de-Grace: se contentent pour l'ordinaire d'apprendre que c'est un effet de la pieté & de la magnificence de la reine Anne d'Austriche: & ne s'informent gueres des raisons qui ont porté cette princesse à choisir ce monastere entre tant d'autres pour l'honorer de son affection, & y en laisser des marques si éclatantes. Cependant ces motifs sont plus nobles que l'ouvrage mesme: & il est plus beau à cette grande reine d'avoir aimé une maison religieuse à cause de la parfaite regularité qui s'y observe, que de l'avoir ornée de superbes édifices."

An example is Pierre Le Moyne's ode of the queen that forms part of his major work *La gallerie des femmes fortes*, published in 1647. In this book, Le Moyne places the queen in the context of descriptions of strong historical female figures, representing the worlds of Judaism, gentility and Christendom – each of whom has a poem, ode and moral reflection. In the opening "Épistre panégyrique" dedicated to Anne, Le Moyne addresses the virtue of *magnificence*. He starts by arguing that *magnificence* rightfully belongs to the world of the royal court; the court is both its birthplace and its primary stage ("Il n'est point nouveau, de voir la Magnificence à la Cour. Elle est originaire de ce païs là: elle y a son Theatre & des exercices").[65] "But to tell the truth," he warns the queen regent, "it is rare to find at court an ordered and regulated Magnificence, purified of haughtiness and pride."[66] He continues:

> La Souveraineté, madame, a un éclat qui est de sa condition ; elle a des lumieres qui luy appartiennent par estat, & qu'il ne vous est pas permis d'éteindre. Les vertus de vostre Fortune, sont d'un autre orde, & doivent avoir d'autre marques, que celles de vostre Personne. Et par une disposition toute contraire à celle de l'Arche d'Alliance, qui n'estoit couverte que de simples peaux, & estoit parée d'or & de pourpre au-dedans ; vôtre Majesté peut bien reserver la modestie à son interieur, & l'humilité à ses sentimens : mais elle doit du lustre & de la pompe à sa dignité : elle doit un exterieur splendide & de montre aux yeux de Peuples. *Ce temperament du splendide & du modeste, & cette alliance de la majesté qui paroist, avec l'humilité qui est cachée, est la forme derniere & la consommation de la Magnificence Chrestienne*.[67]

To paraphrase Le Moyne: it is the alliance between majesty in appearance and hidden humility that constitutes the ultimate form of Christian *magnificence*. The key, he argues, is to conserve the elevation of the soul amidst an infinity of magnificent objects:

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65 Pierre Le Moyne, La gallerie des femmes fortes (Paris: Antoine de Sommaville, 1647), xiii: "Mais disons la verité, madame, il est bien rare de voir à la Cour, une Magnificence ordonnée & sujette aux regles; purifée de l'enflure & de l'orgueil; guerie de l'ostentation & du luxe; dégagée des sens, & sans attachement aux matieres qu'elle manie."

66 Ibid., xiii.

67 Ibid., xiv. My emphasis: "Sovereignty, madam, has a brilliancy that belongs to its condition; it has a light that belongs to its state, which you are not allowed to extinguish. The virtues of your Fortune are of another order, and they must have other marks than those of your Person. And by means of an arrangement completely opposite to that of the Ark of the Covenant – which was covered only with simple skins, but was adorned with gold and purple on the inside – your Majesty should reserve modesty for its interior and humility for its sentiment, while giving lustre and pomp to its dignity and a splendid exterior to the eyes of the people. This temperament of the splendid and the modest, and this alliance between visible majesty and hidden humility forms the ultimate form and achievement of Christian Magnificence."

> Ce qui est humilité sous le sac, & abstinence dans un cloistre, seroit peut-estre enflure & presomption sous la pourpre ; seroit ambition & avidité dans un Palais. La vraye force, madame, est de surnager comme vous faites, à l'abondance de sa condition, & à la plenitude de sa Fortune : *elle est de conserver l'élevation de son ame & la liberté de son cœur, parmy une infinité d'objets qui abatent doucement, & attachent avec plaisir*. Elle est de se maintenir dans une posture d'esprit, pareille à celle des Cherubins de l'Arche, qui parmy l'or & les pierreries, au milieu de la pourpre & des parfums, ne détournoient point les yeux de dessus le Propitiatoire. *Elle est enfin de garder la pureté de l'intention, & la droiture de la veuë, dans les actions les plus éclatantes & de plus grande pompe*.[68]

Le Moyne stresses the combination of humility and magnificent splendour as part of the royal virtue of *magnificence* ("vertus […] Heroïques & toutes Royales"), which are necessary for a powerful queen regent. The "antithesis" of magnificence-humility is understood as a mutually reinforcing union – an idea that would become an instrumental argument in favour of the queen during the period after the civil war of the Fronde, which we will discuss later.

During the civil war, however, the queen's opponents rather sought to emphasise the dangers and grave implications of the expensive splendour that Le Moyne alludes to. Financial problems already played a major role during the construction of the first building complex, directed by the abbess Marguerite. During the early years of the second phase of construction, which started in 1645, similar problems reappeared. The queen had appointed her own *intendant des finances*, Jacques Tubeuf (1607-1670), as administrator of the works at Val-de-Grâce in February of this year. Already during the placement of the church's foundations, he became so frightened by the necessary costs that he dismissed François Mansart from the project in October 1646.[69] During the Fronde, these towering financial costs, as well as the still incomplete state of the church, became arguments that were published in *mazarinades* by furious *frondeurs*. One of the most interesting and unique of these *libelles* was the text *La vérité toute nue, ou Advis sincere et desinteressé sur les veritables causes des maux de l'Estat, & les moyens d'y apporter le remede* (June 1652), since its author did not belong to either of the two opposing camps. The text is attributed to Robert Arnauld d'Andilly

68 Ibid., xiv-xv. My emphasis: "What humility is in the habit of penance and abstinence in a cloister might be haughtiness and arrogance amidst the royal purple, or eagerness and greed in a Palace. The true strength, madam, is to stay afloat, as you do, in the abundance of your condition, and in the plenitude of your Fortune. It means to preserve the elevation of the soul and the liberty of the heart amidst an infinite number of objects that gently destroy and attack with pleasure. It means to maintain a position of mind similar to that of the cherubs on the Ark [of the Covenant], who amidst the gold, jewels, purple and perfumes, do not avert their eyes from the Propitiatory. Ultimately, it means to preserve the purity of intention and the righteousness of the vow in the actions of greatest brilliance and pomp."

69 Jacques Charles, "Un temple en l'honneur de la crèche," in Charles, Trésors de l'art sacré, 148.

(1589-1674), who was one of the most prominent figures in the circle around Port-Royal.[70] What the author attempts to do is to paint an objective picture of the financial troubles of the State, and to point out those that are responsible. As far as the queen's expenses are concerned, the author does not see a fault. He argues that accusing the queen would be unfair, since the Val-de-Grâce was the only building she had undertook.[71] That same year, however, the text of *La vérité toute nue* gave rise to a fierce polemic. Claude du Bosc de Montandré (d. 1690), one of the most prolific authors of *mazarinades*, contributed by writing his counter response, called *L'advocat général, soustenant la cause de tous les grands de l'Estat, outrageusement offencez dans le Libelle intitulé, La verité toute nue…* (1652). Cleverly, he appropriates the very same arguments in favor of the queen regent from the original source and uses them as counter arguments. The fact that Anne had not yet been able to finish the church of Val-de-Grâce is enough evidence to condemn her, Du Bosc de Montandré argues. "If her devotion – which is not really extraordinary – had invited her to hasten the completion of this edifice, she had not failed to find two or three million, or to at least subtract them from those immense sums that her favourite [FK: Mazarin] secretly transported […] from Italy":

> De dire, pour faire voir que la Reyne n'estoit point complice de tant de vols, que cette Princesse *n'a jamais peu achever le Val de Grace* ; je pense que c'est une preuve qui la condamne bien plustost, qu'elle ne la justifie, puis qu'il n'est que trop evident que si sa devotion qui n'est pas fort extraordinaire, l'eut tant invitée à haster l'achevement de cet edifice, elle n'eut pas manqué de trouver deux ou trois millions ou de les retrancher du moins de ces sommes immenses que son favory faisoit secretement transporter par ses ordres dans l'Italie, pour y bastir des Palais à la plus infame de toutes les races du monde.[72]

Moreover, he continues, "if her intentions regarding the completion of this edifice would have been sincere, could she have not used for this action of piety the immense sums that her favorite lavished on theatre decorations […]. [S]he just preferred building the fortune of Mazarin, instead of the cells of Val-de-Grâce":

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70 Christian Jouhaud, Mazarinades: la Fronde des mots (Paris: Aubier, 1985), 174.

71 La vérité toute nue, ou Advis sincere et desinteressé sur les veritables causes des maux de l'Estat, & les moyens d'y apporter le remede (Paris: Unknown publisher, 1652), 5. He writes that "one cannot, without injustice, accuse the Queen of having amassed great amounts of money during her regency" ("Voila au vray en quel estat estoient les Finances lors de la mort du feu Roy. Voyons maintenant de quelle sorte elles ont esté depuis administrées. On ne sçauroit sans injustice accuser la Reyne d'avoir eu dessein d'amasser de grands tresors durant sa Regence, puis qu'au contraire chacun sçait qu'elle doit beaucoup, & qu'elle n'a pû achever l'Eglise du Val-de-Grace, qui est le seul bastiment qu'elle a entrepris").

72 Claude du Bosc de Montandré, L'advocat général, soustenant la cause de tous les grands de l'Estat, outrageusement offencez dans le Libelle intitulé, La verité toute nue (Unknown publisher, 1652), 7.

> [S]i ses intentions pour l'achevement de cet edifice eussent esté sinceres, pouvoient elle pas employer à cet action de pieté, les sommes immenses que son favory prodigoit à des decorations de Theatre; & ne luy estoit il pas trop facille de retrancher quelques milliers de ceux que le Mazarin envoyoit par son consentement dans toutes les banques d'Italie. Mais quelque mine que la Reyne fit, elle aymoit bien mieux bastir la fortune de Mazarin, que les cellules du Val de Grace, & comme elle estoit desvoüée à cet indigne favory par un engagement d'affection, qui la maistrisoit bien loing de faire eriger des maisons pour en faire les monuments d'une pieté Chrestienne, elle en eut fait demolir, pour donner des preuves plus authentiques des tendresses qu'elle avoit pour son Mazarin.[73]

IN DEFENCE OF THE LATE QUEEN: FUNERARY REFLECTIONS ON VAL-DE-GRÂCE

After the death of Anne of Austria on January 20th 1666, funeral orations glorifying her life and deeds were pronounced in churches across the country. In the vast majority of these odes, the example of Val-de-Grâce is addressed to defend the union of magnificence and humility in the life and actions of the queen. The large amount of criticism and satire during the Fronde had inflicted a lot of damage, and many of these orations attempted to reduce some of these damages, by bringing together the apparently contrasting notions of magnificent splendour and pious humility as one virtuous union. Moreover, these funerary orations were also used as occasions to reflect on the nature and place of sublimity in other aspects of royal life; firstly, in the practice of art and poetry, and secondly, in the practice of politics. These funerary reflections display an interest in both the power and dangers of the elevated, which would return in the creation and reception of art and politics during the course of the Louis XIV's reign.

RE-JOINING MAGNIFICENCE AND HUMILITY, BUILDING AND BUILDER

One of the most prominent ideas that were discussed in these funerary odes was the thought that magnificent royal splendour and extreme humility miraculously coexisted in the person and actions of the queen. The idea of magnif-

73 Ibid., 7-8: "[I]f her intentions for the completion of this edifice had been sincere, she could not have employed for this pious action the immense sums that her favourite lavished on theatrical decorations; and it would not have been too easy for her to subtract several thousands of the sums that Mazarin had sent, by her consent, from all of the banks of Italy. No matter the queen's pretended intentions, she liked to build Mazarin's fortune much better than the cloister cells of the Val-de-Grâce. And since she was devoted to this unworthy favourite with such commitment of affection, instead of erecting houses in order to transform them into monuments of a Christian piety, she should have had these demolished in order to provide more authentic proofs of her affection for Mazarin."

icence, understood as a royal virtue, was put forward in these texts to serve as an argument to re-join these opposite notions after the Fronde. In a manner very similar to the ideas Le Moyne put forward, several of the odes argue that the seemingly problematic relationship between these notions, rendered their union in the form of the queen's virtue, all the more powerful and spiritual.

In the *Oraison Funebre* pronounced by the Friar Sérapion de la Passion, the orator expresses this very thought. He states that there are two types of virtues: radiant virtues such as the royal virtue of *la magnificence* and obscure virtues, such as *l'humilité* in voluntary poverty. "It appears," he continues, "that the first cannot incorporate the shadows and baseness of the second, nor the second the splendour and elevation of the first."[74] However, only Anne d'Autriche wondrously "humbles all of the august qualities, while elevating in her heart all of the lowest virtues."[75] In a very similar manner, Paschal Rapine de Sainte-Marie expressed his amazement when he states that the power of the virtuous grace of Anne "joins these opposites," by which he means the contrasting notions of magnificent splendour and humility where secular, royal grandeur and Christian penitence meet. Here, Rapine de Sainte-Marie refers explicitly to the power of the interplay of extreme opposites ("la force de la grace qui joint ces contraires, qui fait ces confusions"), which elevates her actions themselves and joins splendour with austerity, and elevation with mortification:

> [L']alliance qui demande nostre attention, & qui cause nostre étonnement, est celle qui se trouve entre la grandeur seculiere & la Penitence chrêtienne, laquelle est embrassé par les Princes, & par les Rois : En effet quelle plus grande opposition qu'entre la souveraineté & l'humilité, l'élevation & la mortification, la gloire du monde & l'opprobre de la Croix ? quelle plus grande antipathie qu'entre les voluptez & les austeritez, les richesses & l'esprit de pauvreté, la couronne d'or, & celle dont les espines font le tour & le circuit ? En cela consiste la force de la grace qui joint ces contraires, qui fait ces confusions ; & ce qui releve davantage son action, est la qualité du Ministre qu'elle employe à cette grande reconciliation.[76]

74 Frère Sérapion (de la Passion), Oraison Funebre de Tres-haute, Tres-excellente & Tres-puissante Princesse Anne d'Austriche (Paris: Estienne Maucroy, 1666), 7: "Il est de deux sortes de Vertus : des Vertus éclatantes, & des Vertus obscures : des Vertus de Thrône, comme la Magnificence, la Force, la Clemence ; Des Vertus d'Hospital, comme la Pauvreté volontaire, l'Humilité, la Patience. Il semble que les premieres ne peuvent prendre les ombres & la bassesse des secondes, ny les secondes l'éclat & l'élevation des premieres." My emphasis.

75 Ibid., 7: "Cependant, voyez la merveille, Nostre Reyne abaisse en sa Personne Royalle toutes ses augustes qualitez, & elle releve en son cœur toutes les plus basses Vertus. Elle est humble, l'humilité en elle devient auguste: Elle est pauvre d'esprit, la pauvreté en elle est éminente; Elle est patiente, la patience en elle est couronnée. Toutes ces Vertus s'élevans au dessus d'un si grand cœur, pouvoient elles se placer dans un lieu plus éminent, & regner dans un plus noble cœur? Elle acquerent ce Thrône par les genereux efforts de la Reyne." My emphasis.

The orator pushes the power of this miraculous union even further, and argues that the building's (as well as Anne's) performance of both hidden humility and a radiant appearance helped her conquer and submit all of her enemies after the troubles of the Fronde.[77] The very close relationship between builder and building that is embedded in the virtue of *magnificence* – a quality of greatness in which both actors are mutually dependent – promoted a philosophy in which both overlap and acted as each other's metaphors. Even after her death, the body of the queen and the material body of the church building would, in this sense, work together to elevate each other, and thereby also elevate the beholder upwards, far beyond the earthly realm. Similarly, Sérapion de la Passion's ultimate wish is for a mausoleum to be built, to contain the remains of the queen and to represent all of her virtues. Through a hole in the marble and porphyry, the viewer would find and lament the vanity of the bodily remains of the queen herself, which would have decayed into nothing more than "food for the worms."[78] This contrast would ideally lead the beholder to elevate his or her mind far beyond the vanity of man

76 R. P. Paschal Rapine de Sainte-Marie, Oraison funèbre d'Anne d'Austriche (Paris: Gilles Alliot, 1666), 9-11: "The alliance that demands our attention, and which causes our astonishment, is the alliance we find between secular greatness and Christian penance, which is embraced by both Princes and Kings. Indeed, what greater opposition is there than between sovereignty and humility, elevation and mortification, the glory of the world and the reproach of the Cross? What greater antipathy is there than between the pleasure of the senses and austerity, wealth and the spirit of poverty, a golden crown and a crown completely covered with thorns? This is where we find the power of grace that joins these opposites, which creates these confusions. And what elevates her actions even more are the qualities of the Minister whom she employs in this great reconciliation."

77 Ibid., 42-43: "[J]e vous expose un autre spectacle de pieté sçavoir est le Val de Grace, sous le Dôme duquel paroist cette inscription marquée sur la ceinture […] Anne d'Autriche, par la grace de Dieu, Reine de France & Regente du Royaume, à laquelle Dieu a soûmis tous ses ennemis, afin qu'elle bâtit cette Maison à son honneur. Voila ce que vaut à Dieu & à la France la persecution d'Anne d'Autriche; voila tout l'effet de son zele irrité, & le monument élevé par sa clemence; Voila la Maison où elle a merité de vaincre, & qu'elle a voulu construire & enrichir, pour renvoyer à Dieu la gloire de ses Victoires. O Maison superbe! racontez-nous les devotions publiques & secretes de vostre Fondatrice! O Palais dedié à la pieté par la Pieté même! revelez-nous ses humiliations cachées, ses penitences particulieres, ses resignations profondes, […] ô murailles que l'or rend éclatantes! […] [V]ous estes le vœu d'une Princesse, qui par ses oraisons & ses larmes a vaincu ses ennemis."

78 Fr. Sérapion, Oraison funèbre, 22-23: "Ie voudrois donc que l'on erigeast un Mausolée à cette Illustre defuncte, où l'on vît toutes les Vertus dépeintes, mais où leurs larmes servissent à détremper les couleurs, où les Lys de la France fussent ombragez d'un voile noir, où l'Eglise parust affligée & suppliante, où les Nobles gemissent, où les peuples se desolassent, où le marbre & le porphire reçeussent les impressions de nostre douleur, n'en pouvant pas recevoir le sentiment, & les portassent par les yeux dans tous les cœurs. Mais ie voudrois aussi (voicy mon dernier souhait) que ce triste & precieux Ouvrage eust un charme innocent, pour attirer secretement les yeux de tous spectateurs au-dedans de soy, & que là ils considerassent attentivement une Couronne abattuë, un Sceptre brisé, des yeux brillans dans l'éclipse, des mains autrefois si belles & si agissantes, sans couleur & sans mouvement, une chair si delicate devenuë la pasture des vers." My emphasis. Another ode, Honoré Bontemps' Oraison funèbre d'Anne d'Austriche, goes much further in his discussion on vanity and argues that only the art of words, of rhetoric, can bring the dead back to life. Stone, unlike an oration, does not speak and will eventually perish; it cannot make the dead alive even when it strikes the eye of the beholder. What does not speak can not stir the soul, but he words of an orator, however, can: "Le Marbre, le Iaspe & le Porphire sont choses muettes & inanimées, qui n'ont aucune vertu pour faire revivre les morts, qui perissent elles-mesmes avec le temps, & font perir avec elles la mémoire de ce qu'elles couvrent, & qui ne parlant pas ne touchent iamais l'Ame, lors mesmes qu'elles frappent les yeux. Mais un Eloge Funebre r'anime les morts en quelque façon, les tire du tombeau pour les faire parler & converser sur la terre parmy les hommes, & fait apres leur mort leur pourtrait vivant par des couleurs vives & inanimées." My emphasis.

on this earth ("Ah vanité ! Ah inconstance! Monde, tu nous trompe: il ne faut pas s'arrester en toy: Il faut porter ses yeux & son cœur plus haut que toy").[79]

In addition to the reflections on the past life of the queen, the collection of *oraisons funèbres* dedicated to Anne of Austria also reveals contemplations pertaining to the future of the young monarch himself. The subject of the united virtues of humility and magnificence in the life and deeds of the queen, also lead some clerics to address the future relationship of these virtues during the new reign of the king. This reign was already characterised by large expenses and a radiant iconography: the Petite académie had already existed for three years, and the *carrousel* of 1662 had introduced to the world the monarch's personal device of the sun.[80] Reasoning from the viewpoint of Anne's *vœu* and the king's miraculous birth, many contemporaries advocated the imagery of heavenly splendour as a particularly appropriate iconographic choice for the young king. Monsieur de Folleville's funerary oration on April 20 1666 defended the image of the sun: referring to the use of the sun iconography at the Louvre, the orator argued that its image would succeed in evoking the radiating glory of the new *dauphin* as the gift of God: "He will be among all the Kings and Princes of Europe, what the Sun is between the stars," and will force all people to lower the eyes, "unable to bear the brightness of the splendour of the victories of the Sun of Kings."[81] Another cleric, however, provided a radically different point of view. The oration of preacher Jacques Biroat (d. 1666) quotes Saint Augustin's advice to great persons on the importance of having a humble heart beneath a splendid appearance. However, there are those, he states, who extend their sublimity too far. Princes such as these resort to the Heavens, and name themselves after the King Sapores, the brothers of the Sun. Biroat's views almost seems a veiled attack on the choices of symbolic imagery of Louis XIV and the Petite académie:

Vous [FK: Anne] portez vostre humiliation au milieu de vous-mesme. Vous avez autour de vous l'éclat, la grandeur, & la gloire: mais vous avez au-dedans de vous le sujet de vostre humiliation. Quelle invention de l'humilité, & combien opposée à l'insolente vanité de ces Princes, qui pour porter plus haut l'élevation

79 Ibid. 22-23: "Ah! ils s'écrieroient à ce pitoyable spectacle : Est-ce donc là le terme de toutes les grandeurs du monde ? Est-ce donc là où aboutissent toutes les felicitez de la terre ? Ah vanité! Ah inconstance! Monde, tu nous trompe: il ne faut pas s'arrester en toy: Il faut porter ses yeux & son cœur plus haut que toy." My emphasis.

80 Gérard Sabatier, "La gloire du roi. Iconographie de Louis XIV de 1661 à 1672," Histoire, économie & société 19, no. 4 (2000): 540.

81 (Monsieur) de Folleville, Oraison Funebre d'Anne d'Autriche (Paris: Pierre Prome, 1666), 11: "Oüy, Madame, ne vous affligez plus, vous aurez un fils, il s'appelera Dieu donné. Il sera l'un des grands Roys du monde […]. Il sera entre tous les Roys & Princes de l'Europe, ce que le Soleil est entre tous les Astres. [Marginal note of the author: "Pour presage dequoi le Roy fait mettre des Soleils à tous les principaux ouvrages du Louvre."] Les Aigles (trouvé le bon, Madame,) qui ont la fierté d'oser regarder fixement ce bel astre tout brillant de lumiere qu'il est se trouveront contraintes de baisser les yeux, ne pouvant supporter l'éclat des Victoires de ce Soleil des Roys."

de leur gloire, alloient chercher des alliances imaginaires dans le Ciel, se faisant appeler comme le Roy Saporés, les freres du Soleil.[82]

These reflections on the nature of sublimity in the domains of architecture and politics would become emblematic for the contrasts in the literary approaches to the reign of Louis XIV, as we will see in the following chapter on the Louvre. The case of the Val-de-Grâce demonstrates particularly well, in this respect, the role of literature in (retrospectively) constructing and disseminating meaning, not only to serve the idea of a magnificent queen, but also a sublime monarch. The interplay between text and building prominently participated in this construction: the different narratives pertaining to the origin the church of Val-de-Grâce, as expressed through inscriptions in stone and descriptions on paper, diffused the border between fiction and reality. At the same time, however, writers resorted to the same medium of literature to create an awareness of the thin line between sublimity and excess or ridicule, between virtue and vice. Like the Palais Mazarin, as well as our next case study of the Louvre, the splendour of the Val-de-Grâce provided a clear target of criticism.

82 Jacques Biroat, Oraison funèbre d'Anne d'Austriche, reine de France et mère du roi, prononcée dans la Sainte-Chapelle de Paris (Paris: Edme Couterot, 1666), 52: "You carry your humiliation within yourself. Around you, you have splendour, greatness and glory: but within you, you hold the subject of your humiliation. What invention of humility, and how very much opposed to the insolent vanity of those Princes, who, in order to push the elevation of their glory even higher, went to seek for imaginary alliances in the Heavens, and called themselves, like the King Shapur, the brothers of the Sun."

Manifesting sublimity: The Louvre of Louis XIV and the construction of epic transcendence

The example of Mazarin has taught us that the poetic image of the epic enchanted palace gradually permeated the description of real architecture during the first half of the seventeenth century. From the beginning of Louis XIV's adult reign, the interplay between the domains of literature and the arts in the service of the monarch further reinforced and facilitated this fusion of marvellous fiction and Parisian reality. This development, I will argue in this chapter, reached new heights in the enlargement of the Louvre under Louis XIV. Both the appearance and experience of the palace became part of a closer interrelationship between the domains of architecture and literature, in which the poetics of *le merveilleux* acted as a driving force. Furthermore, during the 1660s, a nascent theoretic interest in the elevating effect of the Louvre's architecture reinforced this poetic image while contributing to a developing discourse on the sublime effect of art and architecture. However, as we have seen in the previous two chapters, in spite of these developments, opinions nevertheless remained strongly divided on the idea of the transcendent nature of royal architecture.

BLURRING THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN FICTION AND REALITY

In France, the 1660s was a decade of rigorous cultural reorganisation, in which two developments already discussed in the context of Richelieu and Mazarin were cultivated even further. Firstly, we see the rise of a more comprehensive and propagandistic system of artistic patronage, which encouraged a more intense collaboration between artists and writers. Secondly, this collaboration reinforced and facilitated, on a much grander scale, the (con)fusion of fiction and reality (or truthfulness) in artistic and poetic expression – or to describe it in a more contemporary manner: the marvellous and incomprehensible quality of reality itself.

An instrumental step towards uniting these different media in a system of *académies* during the course of the 1660s was made by poet and literary critic Jean Chapelain, who produced a report on the matter of the different uses of the arts "for preserving the splendour of the king's enterprises" ("principaux moyens pour conserver la splendeur des entreprises du Roy et le détail de ses miracles")

in a letter to Colbert on 18 November 1662.[1] When Chapelain mentions the idea of writing down the history of the king ("travailler à l'histoire de Sa Majesté") he is, as Jacob Soll rightfully points out in his study on Colbert, talking about "*a* history": a version that excludes all inconvenient and secret details ("l'histoire de Sa Majesté, en la manière qu'elle doit estre, ce ne doit estre que pour tenir l'ouvrage caché jusqu'à ce que les inconveniens remarqués ne puissent prejudicier à ses affaires ni à celles de ses alliés.").[2] For the pure sake of royal propaganda, Soll states, only the most appropriate historical documents could be employed, and Chapelain was given the task of searching for a team of international scholars, such as Isaac Vossius and Christiaan Huygens, and flattering them into this venture.[3] In the same letter from November 1662, which was requested by Colbert, Chapelain did not only elaborate on the use of prose and poetry, or on artefacts such as medals, tapestries, and prints. He also emphasises the types of monuments that capture equally powerfully the eyes of the people, such as pyramids, triumphal arches, equestrian statues, and marble busts:

> Il y a bien, Monsieur, d'autres moyens louables de répandre et de maintenir la gloire de Sa Majesté, desquels mesme les anciens nous ont laissé d'illustres exemples qui arrestent encore avec respect les yeux du peuples, comme sont les pyramides, les colonnes, les statues équestres, les colosses, les arcs triomphaux, les bustes de marbre et de bronze, les basses-tailles, tous monumens historiques auxquels on pourroit ajouter nos riches fabriques de tapisseries, nos peintures à fresque et nos estampes au burin, qui pour estre de moindre durée que les autres ne laissent pas de se conserver longtemps. Mais ces sortes d'ouvrages appartenant à d'autres arts que celuy des muses, sur lequel vous avez souhaité mes sentimens, je me contenteray de vous en avoir fait souvenir, afin que vous jugiez s'ils peuvent entrer en part de vos autres sublimes idées.'[4]

In fact, three months later, these "sublime idées" would give rise to the creation of the Petite académie (the later Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres), which

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1 Burke, The Fabrication, 50.

2 Jacob Soll, The Information Master: Jean-Baptiste Colbert's secret state intelligence system (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 127. My emphasis. I quoted the French original from Jean Chapelain to Jean-Baptiste Colbert, November 18, 1662, in Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Colbert, ed. Pierre Clément (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1868), 5:588.

3 Soll, Information master, 127. Soll mistakenly refers to Vossius as "J.G. Vossius."

4 Jean Chapelain to Jean-Baptiste Colbert, November 18, 1662, in Clément, Lettres, 5:588-89: "There are indeed, Monsieur, other praiseworthy means of disseminating and maintaining the glory of His Majesty, and even the ancients have left us with some illustrious examples which still capture the attention of the people. There are the pyramids, columns, equestrian statues, colossi, triumphal arches, marble or bronze busts, basse-tailles, as well as all the historical monuments to which one could add our rich tapestries, our frescoes, and our engravings, which do have a shorter lifespan than the others but can still be preserved for a long time. And even though these types of works belong to other arts than those of the muses, on which you wanted to hear my ideas, I will content myself with having reminded you of them, so that you can judge if they can form part of your other sublime ideas."

became responsible for the inscriptions and emblematic images (emblems, symbols, *devises*) that would feature on the monuments and medals glorifying the king. Most importantly, in this respect, Chapelain emphasises two ideas that would further amplify the immersive and overwhelming effect of the arts under Louis XIV. On the one hand, his letter stresses the potential of systematically combining all different media to create a coherent program; one that is visually omnipresent and relies on the interplay between two-dimensional text and image and three-dimensional space. On the other hand, to reinforce an even more complete experience, Chapelain mentions the idea of adding ("ajouter") works of art to already existing structures to incorporate these buildings into a new performativity of art and literature. Tapestries and frescoes ("nos riches fabriques de tapisseries, nos peintures à fresque") adorn walls and ceilings and, thus, enter into a very close relationship with the building's material fabric and its associated political and symbolic dimension.

This centralised collaboration between authors, artists and architects enabled, in particular, the creation of marvellous space, of poetic structures in which the arts and literature work together to provide the spectator with a space of wonder. In addition to the poetic comparisons that were made between Parisian buildings and the marvellous architecture of epic literature (see chapter 1), the newly developing system of artistic and literary production facilitated the creation of real life epic architecture. Writers and artists found several ways to incorporate the marvellous of the epic into the sphere of French architecture under Louis XIV.

One particularly powerful example was the art of ephemeral architecture, which made it possible to transport poetic images three dimensionally into the sphere of Parisian architecture. Spectacles such as triumphant entries relied on the creation of a political narrative, which was made possible by the construction of temporary structures featuring both quasi-historical as well as highly allegorical two- or three-dimensional *tableaux*. By positioning these ephemeral buildings in a sequence along a route, entries thus adopted the linearity of poetic or prose narratives. Moreover, spectacles, but also tapestry series and medals, formed part of the larger enterprise of the *histoire du roy*, which was the creation of a larger historical narrative of the deeds of Louis XIV, which constituted perhaps the most prominent method of representing the king as an absolute ruler during the early years of his adult reign. Louis Marin, in his *Le portrait du roi* from 1981, already discussed the power of the public painting in this period, such as reliefs, painting or tapestries, as a deliberate confusion of *tableau* and *récit*: "il faudrait créer à l'usage de la rhétorique du tableau une figure spécifique, le 'narrativisme' qui, déployant l'unique instant représenté par le tableau dans la diversité toujours cohérente de ses circonstances, donnerait à lire au regard attentif et compétent dans cette totalité complexe et une à la fois, 'les moments qui l'ont précédé et lui ferait entendre toute l'histoire'."[5]

5 Louis Marin, Le portrait du roi (Paris: Minuit, 1981), 148.

Images and narrative descriptions (or inscriptions), Marin explains, were not only combined, such as on public tapestries, but the spectator was also encouraged to perceive a single image (or sequence of images) as a narrative and vice versa.[6]

In addition to the use of such *tableaux*, the 1660 entry of Louis XIV and Maria Theresa of Spain (1638-1683) into Paris also employed other means that relied on the deliberate confusion of reality and fiction. The makers chose for one of its ephemeral structures the Mount Parnassus, the mountain sacred to Apollo and the dwelling place of the Muses, and thus transposed the world of the epic on a grand scale into the streets of Paris. On top of the ornate arch sat an artificial mountain, on which were placed allegorical figures representing the arts and sciences. Freed from the troubles of the civil war that had taken them captive for several years, the deities paid homage and grace to the authors and artists of France, as is stated in Jean Tronçon's description of the arch:

> Apollon tenoit la premiere place dans cette Illustre Assemblée comme il a de coustume, & il estoit aisé à reconnoistre par ses grands cheveux blonds, couronnez de branches de Laurier, entre-meslées de fleurs d'Hyacintes, par ce grand manteau d'Escarlatte qu'Ovide dans le II. de sa Metamorphose luy met sur les espaules. […] [Calliope] portoit une couronne d'or sur sa teste, & dans ses mains diverses guirlandes de Laurier pour la recompense de ceux qui reüssissent le mieux aux Poëmes Heroïques dont Virgile nous apprend qu'elle a donné l'invention.[7]

Repeatedly, the author is at pains to emphasise that this ephemeral structure stays as close to the imagery of the classical epic poem as possible. The Parnassus arch constituted a marvellous building: a piece of materialised poetic space that combined elements from the realm of the epic with images of the king and queen, and was placed in the heart of the French capital. To further reinforce the powerful presence of these ephemeral structures in the city, several creators of the 1660 entry were also responsible for writing the descriptions of the royal entry itself.[8]

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6 Ibid., 149.

7 Jean Tronçon, L'entrée triomphante de leurs majestez Louis XIV Roy de France et de Navarre et Marie Thérèse d'Austriche son espouse, dans la ville de Paris capitale de leurs royaumes, au retour de la signature de la paix generalle et de leur heureux mariage (Paris: Pierre le Petit, 1662), 9: "Apollo holds the most prominent position in this illustrious Assembly, as is customary, and he was easy to recognise by his long and fair hair, crowned with laurel branches and interwoven with hyacinth flowers, as well as by the great scarlet cloak which Ovid put on his shoulders in the second of his Metamorphoses. […] [Calliope] wore a gold crown on her head, and in her hands she held various laurel garlands, as a reward for those who would best succeed in writing Epic Poems, which, according to Virgil, she has invented."

8 Jean-Vincent Blanchard, "Description et rhétorique politique: du récit d'entrée royale à la promenade de Versailles," XVIIe siècle 212, no. 3 (2001): 480. He writes: "L'entrée royale, par son cheminement à travers la ville et ses stations face à des monuments significatifs, mais transformés, est un acte de pouvoir sémiotique: la re-disposition de l'histoire de Paris selon le récit qui donne sa vraisemblance à l'absolu du pouvoir. On comprend dès lors l'importance des narrations et descriptions de ces cérémonies dans ce contexte. Elles étaient écrites le plus souvent par les concepteurs mêmes des festivités, comme c'est le cas pour l'entrée de 1660."

Moreover, in their descriptions, these writers further blurred the boundaries between reality and fiction; by playing with the thought that the urban fabric around the ephemeral structures – i.e. the Louvre's *grande galerie* or the statue of Henri IV (1553-1610) on the tip of the Île de la Cité (fig. 18) – seemed to have been erected to serve the grandeur of the triumphant arches, instead of vice versa:

> On ne sait si l'arc avait été dressé pour l'ornement du pont, ou si le pont avait été dressé pour servir la grandeur de ce monument […]. Cette magnifique statue de bronze […] semblait avoir été mise en ce lieu pour l'ornement de cet arc, et la perspective dont elle faisait partie, était achevée par la grande galerie du Louvre qui paraissait dans l'éloignement.[9]

Keeping these mechanisms in mind, when we turn from ephemeral architecture to the royal residential architecture of the Louvre, we see, in this period, that not only the poetics of the sublime discussed above (i.e. the marvellous space of the epic) but also the aesthetic *effect* of the sublime play an instrumental part in both the building's reception and its architectural development. Moreover, this sense of sublimity plays out on a much broader scale than in the cases discussed before; with the Louvre, the notion of the sublime – understood as an effect – begins to permeate the sphere of architectural theory, in works by writers such as Antoine Le Pautre (1621-1679) and André Félibien.

THE LOUVRE BETWEEN POETRY AND REALITY (1600-1660)

But first, what cannot be ignored in gaining an understanding of these developments are earlier written approaches to the Louvre, since these helped shape the public image of the palace and provide an insight into the effect of the building on the contemporary viewer. Prior to seventeenth-century thinking about the Louvre, which concern us here, prose and poetic texts dedicated to the royal building had already existed for centuries. The Louvre had been a royal residence, and bore its characteristic name, since the times of King Philip II (or Philip Augustus) (1165-1223) during the twelfth century. The building's political significance, its grand and ever-changing exterior and its central location next to the Seine contributed to its symbolic quality as a continuous home of France

9 Tronçon, L'entrée triomphante, 24. Quoted from Blanchard, "Description et rhétorique," 480. The author describes the obelisk-like arch that was erected at the tip of the Place Dauphine: "One cannot tell whether the arch was erected to ornament the bridge, or whether the bridge had been built to serve the grandeur of this monument […]. This magnificent bronze statue […] seemed to have been put in place for the ornamentation of this arch, and the perspective of which it forms a part was made complete by the grande galerie of the Louvre, which appeared in the distance."

and its kings. This impact of the Louvre on French culture was such that the palace's name gradually became a synonym for a magnificent palace (*un Louvre*) in the French language. For instance, the poet Esprit Aubert reprinted in his *Marguerites poëtiques tirées des plus fameux poëtes françois* (1613) lines from a large number of French poets and compiled alphabetically what poets had written on various subjects. In the category of the sun in the skies ("Soleil 4. Ciel") he quotes the following lines written by Jean-Édouard Du Monin (1557-1586) on the palace of the sun:

> – le postilon celeste,
> Qui a posé son Louvre & sa brillante teste
> Au cœur du rond des Cieux, pour verser en tous lieux
> La vitale clarté, de ses raix gratieux.[10]

Similarly, but in a different context, the noun *un Louvre* was also used to refer to magnificent biblical palaces. The work *L'Histoire sainte: Les roys*, written by French Jesuit and historian Nicolas Talon (1605-1691) and published in 1645, forms a historical work in which Talon paraphrases stories from the bible in the form of a romance. In his adaptation of the second book of Samuel, in the conversation between King David and the prophet Nathan, Talon employs the word Louvre to refer to David's grand palace:

> Ne vous semble-t'il pas, dit-il, que je devrois avoir honte de me voir sous ses lambris de Cedre & dans un Louvre si superbe, tandis que l'Arche du Seigneur est sous des peaux de chevres & à l'abry de quelques pauvres pavillons ? n'est-il donc pas bien raisonnable que maintenant j'employe le repos & les commoditez que Dieu m'a départies si liberalement pour luy bastir un Temple ?
> Oüy certes, luy réplique Nathan, cette entreprise est raisonnable, & vous n'avez qu'à suivre les instincts de vostre ame & les inspirations qui vous viennent sur ce sujet.[11]

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10 Esprit Aubert, Les marguerites poëtiques tirées des plus fameux poëtes françois, tant anciens que modernes (Lyon: Barthelemy Ancelin, 1613), 1079: "The heavenly messenger,/ Who has placed his Louvre and his brilliant front/ At the heart of the circle of Heavens, to pour everywhere,/ The lively clarity of its gracious rays." In the category "Que le ciel meut," Aubert included the following lines by Monin: "Volans iusques au Louvre où l'on vit en repos,/ Ont rapporté d'en haut ces pancartes sacrees/Des seaux de leur esprit doctement cachetees." See Aubert, Les marguerites, 1067. Another well known, albeit later example is the use of "a Louvre" in Jean de la Fontaine's fable "La Cour du Lion": "Par ce trait de magnificence/ Le Prince à ses sujets étaloit sa puissance./ En son Louvre il les invita./ Quel Louvre! un vray charnier, dont l'odeur se porta/ D'abord au nez des gens." This fable could be easily read as a critique of Louis XIV and his court. See Jean de la Fontaine, Fables, deuxième recueil: livres VII, VIII, vol. 3 (Paris: Claude Barbin and Denys Thierry, 1678), 38.

11 Nicolas Talon, L'Histoire sainte: Les roys, vol. 3 (Paris: Sebastien Cramoisy, 1645), 270 : "Don't you think, he said, that I should be ashamed to find myself underneath its cedar paneling and in such a superb Louvre, while the Ark of the Lord is covered by goat skins and sheltered by some poor structures? Would it be reasonable, then, that I use the time and amenities that God has distributed to me so generously to build him a Temple? Yes, of course, Nathan replied, this enterprise is reasonable, and need only follow the instincts of your soul and the inspirations that you receive on this matter."

Using the word *Louvre* to signify any real or fictional magnificent palace undoubtedly strengthened the image of the Parisian original as the perfect prototype of a magnificent palace. Another significant factor that contributed to this assimilation can also be found in Talon's passage quoted above, which is the use of the *topos* of the comparison between the palace and the hut. The elaborate cedar panelling that surrounds David in his rich palace make him wonder whether it is right that the Ark of the Lord is housed in such contrasting surroundings, sheltered only by several goat skins and poor pavilions. In literary works, this contrast could be employed to serve several purposes, one of which was to glorify or amplify the object described. One of the most prominent and influential examples is the poetic work *La Seconde Semaine,* written by Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas (1544-1590) and printed between 1584 and 1603. This work was written as a sequel to his immensely popular *La Sepmaine ou creation du Monde* ("The Week, or creation of the World"), a hexameral poem dedicated to the creation of the world in seven days. The epic *La Seconde Semaine* describes what followed; a history of the world running from Adam in the earthly paradise to the ultimate apocalypse. Du Bartas includes in his work an audacious comparison, likening the first impressions of Adam of the surrounding landscape of God's earthly paradise with a poor shepherd who is suddenly confronted with the view of Paris and its buildings. The man had, until then, known nothing but the space of his inferior thatched hamlet ("son bas hameau") and the company of his cattle. Confronted with the Louvre and its surrounding urban fabric, the simple *pasteur* finds himself suddenly ravished in a state of sublime ecstasy. He is unable to tell whether he is awake or asleep, whether he is looking at something feigned or true, whether he is on earth or in heaven:

> Tout tel que le Pasteur, qui n'a veu d'autrefois
> Que des bœufs, des moutons, des vignes, & des bois,
> Et qui son bas hameau, bien que couvert de chaume,
> Repute, mal accort, estre un puissant royaume :
> Voyant du grand Paris les miracles divers,
> Idiot pense entrer en un autre Univers.
> Il admire tantost sans art les Artifices,
> Les masses & l'orgeuil des sacres Edifices,
> Qui seurement bastis, & parez richement
> Touchent l'enfer du pied, du front le firmament. […]
> Il admire son Louvre, il admire ses Isles,
> Il admire ses Ponts, non plus Ponts, ainçois villes.
> Car dans ce beau Iardin l'homme se plaist si fort,
> Qu'il ne cognoist, ravy, ou s'il veille, ou s'il dort :
> Si ce qu'il a devant, est feint ou veritable :
> Si c'est ou terre, ou Ciel. Tout est plus qu'admirable.
> Son ecstase est petit pour un si grand excez.

N'ayant assez d'esprit pour s'estonner assez
Il desire cent yeux, cent nez, & cent oreilles,
Pour avoir l'usufruict de si douces merveilles.[12]

To reinforce this sense of *ravissement*, Du Bartas explains that the simple shepherd does not have enough spirit to be completely and ecstatically astounded, which could only be possible if he would have a hundred eyes, noses and ears.

During the first half of the seventeenth century, descriptions and poetic images of the Louvre and its surroundings such as these nourished the collective imagination. Nevertheless, Parisians and visitors to the city were very well aware of the boldly eclectic and unfinished nature of its design. The Louvre was an amalgam of alternated medieval and Renaissance wings and pavilions, tightly interlocked by the urban fabric (fig. 19). In this period, the Louvre had become a palace in transition, a place of continuous construction; in 1624, Louis XIII had begun with his new building program, commissioning Jacques Lemercier to start the construction of the Louvre's central *Pavillon de l'Horloge* and extending the western wing northward by duplicating the design by Pierre Lescot (1515-1578). Construction on the northern wing started in 1639, but was halted shortly after the death of the king in May 1643.[13] In October of that year, the queen regent, together with her retinue and Mazarin moved from the Louvre to the nearby Palais-Cardinal (or Palais-Royal).[14] It was not until after the Fronde that the Louvre's construction would be revived: between 1653 and 1660 Anne's apartments were adorned, and only in 1659 the enlargement of the Cour Carrée truly resumed, now under the direction of Louis le Vau.[15] The engravings produced by Jean Marot (1619-1679) and Israël Silvestre (1621-1691) in the 1640s and 1650s depicting the Cour Carrée provide a clear image of the court's unfinished state and the absence of any building activity. A 1642 engraving even shows an

12 Guillaume de Saluste du Bartas, L'Eden ou Paradis terrestre de la seconde semaine de Guillaume de Saluste seigneur du Bartas, auec commentaires et annotations (Lyon: Benoist Rigaud, 1594), 55-57: "Like a shepherd, who had until then seen/ Only oxen, sheep, vines and forests,/ And who inconsiderately assumed his lowly hamlet, though thatched,/ to be a powerful kingdom:/ Upon seeing the various miracles of grand Paris,/ The idiot thinks he entered another Universe./ While artless he admires the Artifices,/ The mass and pride of sacred Buildings,/ Which, confidently built and richly adorned/ Touch hell at their foot, and the firmament at their top. […] He admires its Louvre, its Islands,/ He admires its Bridges, which are no longer Bridger but rather cities./ Because in this beautiful garden the man is so greatly pleased,/ That, in his ravishment, he does not know whether he is awake or asleep:/ Whether that which is in front him is fake or real:/ Whether it is earth of Heaven. Everything is more than admirable./ His ecstasy is small for such great excess./ Since he does not have enough spirit to be that much astonished/ He desires a hundred eyes, a hundred noses, and a hundred ears,/ In order to be able to benefit from such sweet wonders."

13 Georges Poisson, La grande histoire du Louvre (Paris: Perrin, 2013), 113-14.

14 Ibid., 113-14.

15 Robert W. Berger, Palace of the Sun: The Louvre of Louis XIV (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 11.

abundance of plants proliferating on the few walls that would later become the northern wing (fig. 20). The effect of the palace's many different façades returns in the diary of the English writer John Evelyn (1620-1706), who wrote in February 1644 that he "went to see the Louvre with more attention, its severall courts and pavilions. One of the quadrangles, begun by Henry IV. and finish'd by his son and grandson, is a superb but mix'd structure."[16]

Visiting foreigners who relied on highly poetic and imaginative French descriptions of the experience of the Louvre, such as those by Du Bartas, Ronsard and Jean Loret (1600-1665),[17] would sometimes experience the opposite effect when arriving in the capital. In 1621, the young and aspiring English writer Peter Heylyn (1599-1662) transformed his lectures on historical geography presented at Magdalen College, Oxford into a lengthy book, bearing the ever so ambitious title *Microcosmos: a Little Description of the Great World*. The book consists of a series of chapters on the different parts of the world: it starts with an extensive description of Europe, after which the writer elaborates on the Asian, African and American continents respectively, ending with the unknown parts of the world. His paragraph dedicated to France, and his description of the architecture of Paris and its vicinity in particular, illustrates very clearly that Heylyn often relied on earlier accounts by travellers written in "good faith," rather than venturing into the world himself.[18] The result is an enumeration of speculations and superlatives, transferring the writer's high expectations to the reader. It would take another four years before Heylyn would actually embark on a six week journey into France. He arrived in the capital in 1625, but contrary to what Heylyn had expected, the palace that was "so much talked of" gravely disappointed him. Hence, his new description of the Louvre in *The voyage of France*, a book he dedicated to his journey, forms a vehement critical response to the accounts and poems on which he had become so reliant at Oxford and Cambridge:

16 John Evelyn, Memoirs of John Evelyn, vol. 1 (London: Henry Colburn, 1827), 72.

17 Jean Loret published his "Lettre Cinquième, du premier Février (1659)" in La Muze historique, which features several lines in which he compares Louvre and its royal inhabitants with a radiating sun: "Et le Louvre, qui, l'autre-jour,/Paroissoit un triste séjour,/Avec juste raizon se pique/D'être, à prézent, lieu magnifique:/ C'est un Ciel, semé de clairtez,/ Dont nos Augustes Majestez,/ Avec leurs splendeurs ordinaires,/ En sont les deux grands Luminaires;/ Dont, du roy, le frere charmant/ Est, du moins, le tiers ornemant;/ Dont, mesmement, Son Eminence,/ Fond de lumiére & de prudence;/ Et, bref, (sans dire icy, leurs noms)/ Dont quantité d'Objets mignons,/ que dieu prézerve de dézastres,/ Sont les chers & radieux Astres,/ Qui, comme dans leur Elément,/ Eclatent, admirablement./ ô Cour si brillante & si belle!" See Jean Loret, La Muze historique ou recueil des lettres en vers, vol. 10 (Paris: Charles Chenault, 1658-60) 17.

18 Peter Heylyn, Microcosmos a Little Description of the Great World (Oxford: William Turner and Robert Allott, [1621] 1633), 98-99: "The chiefe buildings of it, are the pallace of the Loure, so much talked of […]. Here is in this Isle, the royall palace of Fountainebleau, (that is, the faire Fountaine) the fairest house not of France, but (as they say) of all Christendome: and indeed I have heard travellers of good faith report, that it farre exceedeth both for beauty and bignesse, the largest and bravest of his Majesties Houses in England."

> It had the name of *Louvre quasi L'oeuvre,* or the work: the Building by way of excellencie. An *Etymologie* which draweth nigher to the ear than the understanding, or the eye. And yet the *French* writers would make it a miracle […]. In my life I never saw any thing more abused by a good report, or that more belyeth the rumours that go of it. The ordinary talk of vulgar travelers, and the bigg words of the *French* had made me expect at the least some prodigie of Architecture, some such Majestical house as the *Sunne Don Phœbus* is said to have dwelt in by *Ovid*.
>
> *Regia solis erat sublimibus alta columnis,*
> *Clara micante auro, flammasque imitante pyropo* :
> *Cuius ebur nitidum*, &c.

Indeed I thought no fiction in *Poetry* had been able to have parallel'd it; and made no doubt but it would have put me into such a passion, as to have cryed out with the young Gallant in the *Comidie*, when he saw his *Sweet heart*; *Hei mihi qualis erat? talis erat qualem nunquem ego vidi*. But I was much deceived in that hope, and could find nothing in it to admire, much less to envy.[19]

Heylyn, who explains elsewhere that he had read a large number of French texts in preparation for his journey,[20] exclaims that he had anticipated an almost ecstatic confrontation with an epic structure as overwhelming as the lofty palace of the sun from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, of which he quotes the famous first lines of the second book.[21] Instead, he admits, the Louvre reminded him far more of a gaudy prison, since it "hath given up now its […] great prisoners to the *Bastille*; and at this time serveth only to imprison the *Court*."[22]

Having read descriptions and poems on the Louvre at Oxford, Heylyn had become the victim of the elevating power of both French and Ancient Roman poetry. The literature he had read conjured up a miraculous image of a heavenly palace in his mind's eye, and the idea that the magnificence of the real edifice could even surpass that of the mythological palace, or any "fiction in *Poetry*," left him with a restrained emotional ecstasy waiting to be manifested.[23] His mental

19 Peter Heylyn, The voyage of France, or, A compleat journey through France (London: William Leak, [ca. 1625] 1673), 150.

20 He mentions André Du Chesne's Les Antiquitez et recherches des villes, chasteaux et places plus remarquables de toute la France (1609): "Du Chesne calleth it superbe bastiment qui n'a son esgal en toute la Christiente: and you shall hear it called in another place, Bastiment qui passé muioud huy en excellence et en grandeur, tous les autres. Brave Elegies, if all were Gold that glistered." Ibid., 150.

21 Heylyn quotes the description of Phoebus' palace of the sun, with which Ovid opens Book II of his Metamorphoses: "The palace of the Sun stood high on lofty columns, bright with glittering gold and bronze that shone like fire. Gleaming ivory crowned the gables above." See Ovid, Metamorphoses, Volume I: Books 1-8, trans. Frank Justus Miller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), 2.1-4, 60-61, https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.ovid-metamorphoses.1916.

22 Heylyn, The voyage, 150.

23 Ibid., 150.

image was a true *simulacrum*: a case in which the image, in Jean Baudrillard's terms, "bears no relation to any reality whatsoever."[24] Moreover, as he explains, he had expected that the building *in situ* would ideally strike him *again*, and in such a manner that the almost incomprehensible sight would put him into an overwhelming passion.[25] One can easily see what goes wrong here: the physical building gives rise to a poetic conception of a majestic, but fictional palace; a vivid picture that is finally challenged when the reader is confronted with the actual building itself.

Heylyn's description is important since it combines the potential of both text and architecture to elevate the recipient in an overwhelming emotion of great admiration. Here, the two domains of (epic) literature and art intersect in various ways. Furthermore, the confusion of epic with reality that had such a great effect on Heylyn, would become one of the main strategies in the construction and reception of the Louvre under Louis XIV.

The contrast between the poetic and the real image of the Louvre, which is central to Heylyn's text, was also given particular attention in a discourse between the physician and philosopher Samuel Sorbière (1615-1670) and the churchman Michel de Marolles (1600-1681) during the 1650s.[26] Sorbière addressed three *Discours sceptiques* to Marolles, which were written between September and December 1656 and were subsequently published by Marolles in his *Mémoires* the following year.[27] Sorbière was an avid orator, and in the first "Discours Sceptique … à Philotime, pour monstrer que Paris & les François ne sont pas exempts de toute sorte de Barbarie," Sorbière explains to Marolles that, during a recent argument with a friend, he strongly defended the poetry on the elevating effect of Parisian architecture, such as works by Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484-1558) and Bartas:

> Il ne me servit à rien de protester que je souscrivois volontiers à l'Epigramme de Jules Cesar Scaliger, qui represente les Estrangers si confondus & estonnés des merveilles de Paris, qu'ils ne peuvent point croire ce que leurs yeux leur en rapportent.

24 Jean Baudrillard, Simulations (New York, NY: Semiotext(e), 1983), 11.

25 The first of the two sentence's Heylyn quotes ("Hei mihi qualis erat") is derived from the second book of Virgil's Aeneid, and translates as: "Ah me, what aspect was his!" ("ei mihi, qualis erat!"). See Virgil, Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid: Books 1-6, trans. Henry Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), 2.274, 334-35, https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.virgil-aeneid.1916.

26 Although the abbé de Marolles was primarily active as a churchman, his later historic and theoretical works on epic poems (Traité du poëme épique from 1662) and Parisian architecture (Paris, ou la Description succincte, 1677) betray a large interest in the workings of both art and poetry. He frequented literary salons, such as those organised by Madeleine de Scudéry and was extremely productive as a translator of classical texts, which include works by Ovid, Lucretius, Virgil, Horace and Seneca.

27 Lorenzo Bianchi, "Absolutism and Despotism in Samuel Sorbière," in Skepticism in the Modern Age: Building on the Work of Richard Popkin, ed. José R. Maia Neto, Gianna Paganini, and John Christian Laursen (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 199.

Francigenæ princeps populosa Lutetia gentis,
Exerit immensum clara sub astra caput.
Hîc civis numerum, ars pretium, sapientia finem
Exuperant, superant thura, precesque Deos.
Audiit, obstupuitque hospes, factusque viator
Vidit, & haud oculis credidit ipse suis.

Et ces beaux vers de du Bartas, que j'avois leus peu de jours auparavant, ne furent pas assez presents à ma mémoire pour me rendre un bon office, en me tirant du blasme que j'encourus de ne pas juger equitablement d'une si belle Ville. Vous serez peut estre bien aise de les entendre, & je me les rememore volontiers en faisant mon Apologie. Le Poëte compare le premier homme lors qu'il entra dans le jardin d'Eden à un Berger qui vient à Paris, & represente l'estonnement de ce dernier par une agreable description qu'il fait de tout ce qu'il y a à admirer dans ceste Ville incomparable.[28]

However, Sorbière continues, these truly magnificent buildings are situated in an urban fabric that can best be characterised by its "sludge, dirt, filth, and insolence."[29] Foreigners, he writes, are only able to truly appreciate the city "as soon as they become accustomed to its traditions: for it is certain that the city displeases at the beginning."[30] Later in his *Discours,* Sorbière admits to Marolles that he is actually equally concerned by the current state of the Louvre as his friend:

> Je ne me sens pas moins touché que vous à la veuë du Louvre, qui seroit le plus beau & le plus magnifique bastiment du monde, si on avoit le courage de l'achever […]. Cependant non seulement ils [nos Rois] souffrent qu'un si grand dessein demeure imparfait; mais ils ne se mettent point en peine de se servir de ce qui est desia elevé, & à quoy il ne faut que le couvert & les ameublemens.[31]

28 Samuel Sorbière, "Discours sceptique a Philotime," in Michel de Marolles, Les mémoires de Michel de Marolles, vol. 2 (Paris: Antoine de Sommaville, 1656-57), 55-65: "It would be of no use to protest that I gladly agree with the Epigram of Julius Caesar Scaliger, which describes the Foreigners that are so confounded and astonished by the wonders of Paris, that they can not believe what their eyes present to them. […] And these beautiful verses by Du Bartas, which I had read a few days ago, are not vivid enough in my memory to satisfy myself, and I avoid the blame I would bring upon myself for not providing a fair judgment of such a beautiful City. You may be pleased to hear them, and will gladly recollect them when presenting my Apologie. The poet compares the first man entering the Garden of Eden to a Shepherd who arrives in Paris, and he evokes the astonishment of the latter in a pleasant description of all there is to admire in this incomparable City."

29 Ibid., 59: "Certes je ne puis point encore depuis vingt ans que je connois Paris m'accoustumer aux bouës, à la saleté, aux filous & à l'insolence."

30 Ibid., 59: "Et c'est, à mon advis, une des principales raisons pour laquelle toute sorte de personnes se plaisent à Paris, dès qu'elles y ont contracté des habitudes: Car il est certain qu'on s'y deplaît au commencement."

31 Ibid, 64: "I do not feel less concerned than you do when seeing the Louvre, which would be the most beautiful and magnificent building in the world if one had the courage to finish it […]. Yet, not only do they [our Kings] suffer because such a great project remains imperfect; but they do not trouble themselves with using that which has already been erected, and which only needs to be covered and furnished."

But before discussing the implications of this unfinished Louvre and the inertia of its architectural construction, the chapter will first look into the efforts – artistic, poetic and theoretic – that were made to resolve these issues and to establish both a persuasive and lasting image of sublime grandeur during the enlargement of the Cour Carrée under Louis XIV.

POETRY AND THE LOUVRE OF LOUIS XIV: THE APPROPRIATION OF OVID

After achieving a secure peace with Spain through the Treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659, the idea of completing the unfinished Cour Carrée was given serious thought. Louis Le Vau, who took over the post of *premier architecte du roi* after the death of Jacques Lemercier, provided and executed new designs for several wings of the square court. Designs for the east façade were also commissioned from a number of other architects; from Antoine Léonor Houdin in 1661, from François Le Vau (1613-1676) around 1662-64, and ultimately from Bernini in 1665 and Carlo Rainaldi (1611-1691). After the dismissal of these Italian designs, a council named the *Petit Conseil* was formed, which consisted of Louis Le Vau, Charles Le Brun (1619-1690), and Claude Perrault (1613-1688). They would together become responsible for the final and executed design of the east and south facade.[32]

Of particular importance, here, is the design produced by François Le Vau for the east façade. Prominently placed in the attic's central bay of the central pavilion is the enormous sculpted figure of Apollo (fig. 21). The god stands upright on his chariot, which is pulled by four horses that are represented in front of the wagon. His head is adorned with a crown of radiating beams of light, and he points his left arm towards the skies as to indicate his movement. In this design, Le Vau makes it very clear and very concrete that the façade represents nothing less than a palace of the sun. Moreover, on the entablature of the main colonnade underneath the figure of Apollo the architect has added a stone panel, which features the king's motto "Nec pluribus impar." Flanking the rusticated ground floor of François Le Vau's central pavilion are two large stone panels, both of which were meant to carry an inscription. The importance of the presence of these panels, and the idea of inscriptions that were visible to the public, was underlined by Chapelain himself, who was made responsible for carrying out this task. In a letter written by Chapelain that was addressed to Colbert, dated 10 September 1665, the author states that he attached to the letter a proposed poetic inscription for the Louvre: "Cependant, Monsieur, vous trouverez dans

32 These details concerning the construction of the Louvre are derived from Berger, Palace of the Sun, 11-12.

ce paquet une inscription en vers pour le Louvre, de M. Petit, médecin gratifié, et une épigramme en la mesme langue, d'un autre médecin."[33] Apparently the poet gathered a large number of proposed inscriptions, which is made clear in another letter by Chapelain addressed to the lawyer Monsieur Nicole:

> Monsieur, j'avois à vous rendre un conte plus exact de cette prétendüe inscription du frontispice du Louvre, mais par l'absence de celuy qui m'en pouvoit le mieux éclaircir je ne l'ay peu faire plustost. Enfin j'ay sçeu que ce qu'on vous en avoit mandé estoit une pure chimère et qu'elle n'a pas seulement esté proposée entre celles qui ont esté faittes en grand nombre sur cela […]. Mais on ne parle point encore de cela, ce grand ouvrage ne devant estre de long temps en estat de recevoir cet ornement là qui doit estre le dernier placé.[34]

The "grand nombre" of which Chapelain speaks, was indeed a large amount of proposed emblematic devices and Latin inscriptions that were destined to be placed on the Louvre's façade.[35] One of these proposed inscriptions, a manuscript written by Claude-Charles Guyonnet de Vertron (1645-1715), is particularly interesting, since it leaves the viewer no doubt that the facade on which this inscription was supposed to be carved, was that of the palace of the sun.[36] In his inscription, Vertron adapted the famous opening lines from Ovid's second book of the *Metamorphoses*, appropriating them into the context of the king:

MUSAE LATINÆ
SEU
INSCRIPTIONES
IN LUPARAM DOMUM

II.
Quem non terra capit, capit hœc domus; hoste redacto
Iura dat & pacem sublimia tecta coronant.
[…]
V.
Atria miraris sublimibus alta columnis,
Desine mirarj, Regia solis erit.[37]

33 Jean Chapelain to Jean-Baptiste Colbert, September 10, 1665, in Clément, Lettres, 5:604-05.

34 Jean Chapelain to M. Nicole, April 24, 1670, in Lettres de Jean Chapelain, de l'Académie française, ed. Philippe Tamizey de Larroque (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1883), 2:683-84.

35 Jean Chapelain to Jean-Baptiste Colbert, September 10, 1665, in Clément, Lettres, 5:604-05.

36 I would date this manuscript to the early 1670s. Vertron would eventually publish this work in 1680. See Claude-Charles Guyonnet de Vertron, Les Tableaux des vertus royales, ou les genies François, Latin, Italien & Espagnol, presentez au Roy par le Sieur de Guyonnet de Vertron (Paris: unknown publisher, 1680).

In his fifth Latin inscription, Vertron rearranges and adds to the words by Ovid. Instead of Ovid's "Regia Solis erat sublimibus alta columnis" ("The palace of the Sun stood high on lofty columns") his inscription translates as "You admire the elevated palace high on lofty columns,/ Stop marvelling, it will be the palace of the sun." Using the imperative "desine" ("stop" or "cease") and the infinitive "mirari" ("to wonder at" or "to be astonished at"), Vertron tries to convince the viewer he or she is already astonished, while simultaneously urging the viewer to stop doing this.[38] At first glance, the expression "stop marvelling" seems an odd choice for an inscription. It almost seems to convince the beholder that there is no need to be astonished, thereby giving the impression that the building is not worthy of a sublime response. But in fact, I would argue, Vertron actually writes about a *confused* beholder: a spectator who is so overwhelmed that he or she no longer comprehends what he or she is looking at. That is why the poet, or the building itself in a sense, needs to explain that the incomprehensible sight, the palace of the sun, is indeed physically there and will be completed. De Vertron thus invests in the multiple meanings of the Latin *mirare*, and the notion of wonder in general. Since the verb includes not only admiration but also astonishment or confusion, it perfectly covers the conflicting sensations that make up a sublime response.[39] Vertron's use of "desine mirari" actually seems to echo Martial's use and context of the same expression in one of the Roman poet's epigrams. The texts in his *Liber spectaculorum* commemorated the inauguration and spectacles of the Roman Colosseum under Titus and Domitian, and present the building, as well as the emperor's almost divine control over the forces of nature, as a wonder of the world.[40] Similarly to Vertron's adaptation of Ovid to the glory of Louis XIV, Martial's short epigram changes the ending of the mythological story of Hero and Leander in order to make a dumbstruck Leander contemplate

37 Charles-Claude Guyonnet de Vertron, Les Tableaux des vertus royales, ou Les Genies françois, latin, italien et espagnol, par c.c. guyonnet de vertron, Manuscript, Français 890, fol. 20, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Archives et manuscrits.

38 In his proposed French inscriptions, entitled "Les Muses Françoises ou les Inscriptions Françoises pour le Louvre," Vertron similarly establishes the experience of the viewer: "Les siecles auenirs auront peine a le croire,/ louis le grand louis fait sa plus grande gloire […] Ce superbe palais, dont la riche structure/ Fera l'étonnement de toute la Nature." Guyonnet de Vertron, Les Tableaux, fol. 21.

39 In the proposed inscriptions by another contemporary poet, the Englishman Andrew Marvell, the poet applies the same strategy. In the fourth inscription of his "Inscribenda Luparae" ("Inscriptions for the Louvre") he writes: "Atria miraris, summotumque aethera tecto," which translates to "You are amazed at the halls and the sky driven up by a roof." The inscription and English translation are derived from: Andrew Marvell, "Inscribenda Luparae," in The Poems of Andrew Marvell, Nigel Smith, ed. (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2007), 185-86. According to Smith, these "distichs were written in response to the competition [FK: led by Colbert], notwithstanding his anti-French and pro-Dutch sentiments at this time." These "Inscribenda Luparae" were published in 1681.

40 Helen Lovatt, "Flavian Spectacle: Paradox and Wonder," in A Companion to the Flavian Age of Imperial Rome, ed. Andrew Zissos (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 365-66.

the incomprehensible greatness of the emperor Titus and his newly built Flavian amphitheatre in Rome: "Cease to wonder, Leander, that the night wave spared you. Twas Caesar's wave" ("Quod nocturna tibi, Leandre, pepercerit unda, desine mirari: Caesaris unda fuit."[41] Vertron's inscriptions were never applied on the façade, but they do testify to a need to control the viewer's experience and to convice him or her of the sublime nature and effect of the building. Moreover, by inscribing these words into the very material of the façade itself, Vertron would quite literally remove any space between the epic image and the building itself.

On top of the large number of commissioned inscriptions, various laudatory poems were dedicated to the Louvre during its enlargement – poems which similarly underscored the association with the epic palace of the sun. Perhaps the most important example is Claude Olry de Loriande's lengthy poem *Le Superbe dessein du Louvre,* published in 1670. Like Vertron's inscription, Olry de Loriande's text attempts to take control over the epic narrative, and reverses the roles. Writing about Louis XIV, he makes Ovid reflect on the king and the Louvre instead of the other way round: "Connoist que c'est de toy qu'Ovide a deu parler/ Lors qu'il nous a décrit sous de sçavantes fables/ Les beautez d'un Palais que tu rends veritables" ("Know that it is about you that Ovid had to speak/ When he described in his learned fables/ The beauties of a Palace that you render true"). Likewise, the poet explains, Tasso's epic figure of Armida would also have predicted that an "Heros glorieux/ Feroit faire un Palais plus grand que ceux des Dieux." ("[A] glorious Hero/ Would construct a palace larger than those of the Gods").[42] And in addition to the poem's association with the epic, another point of overlap between Vertron and Olry de Loriande is the simulation of a sublime response. The poet similarly exploits the epic's rhetoric of the sublime in his description of the effect of the palace's ineffable grandeur, albeit in a slightly different manner: while Vertron's proposed inscriptions placed the sublime response in the Louvre's beholder, Olry de Loriande places the same overwhelming effect

41 Martial, Epigrams, Volume I: Spectacles, Books 1-5, trans. David Roy Shackleton Bailey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), Spect. 28(25), 30-31, https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.martial-epigrams.1993. Instead of drowning in the "Hellespont" (today's Dardanelles), as in the original story, Martial's figure of Leander is spared by "Caesar's wave." The poet explains to Leander that he was actually swimming in an amphitheatre. "The clemency of the emperor," Helen Lovatt writes, "is displayed by the wave in his show, implying that the waters are an extension of his will." Martial thus attempts to convey to the reader (and the emperors to whom he presented these epigrams) the wonders that the emperors have the power to create in the new amphitheatre. See Lovatt, "Flavian Spectacle," 366.

42 Claude Olry de Loriande, Le superbe dessein du Louvre. Dedié a Monseigneur Colbert (Paris: J. Le Gentil, 1670). Quoted from Berger, Palace of the Sun, 135: "Connoist que c'est de toy qu'Ovide a deu parler/ Lors qu'il nous a décrit sous de sçavantes fables/ Les beautez d'un Palais que tu rends veritables:/ Si l'éclat du Soleil n'eut ses yeux éblouïs,/ Il nous auroit prédit que c'estoit pour LOVIS,/Armide ainsi qu'Ovide eut tres-certainement/ De ta construction quelque pressentiment,/ Et lors que sur Regnault elle essaya ses charmes,/ Elle avait un Soleil pour devise & pour armes./ Elle mena l'objet de ses contentemens,/ Dans un vaste Palais semé de diamans:/ Puis luy dit qu'en Europe on verroit des spectacles/ Qui passeroient la Foy des plus puissans miracles./ Elle predit aussi qu'vn Heros glorieux/ Feroit faire vn Palais plus grand que ceux des Dieux."

of the building in himself. Confronted by the incomprehensible dimensions and beauty of the building, the poet lapses into a simulated state of sheer ecstasy and ravishment. Here, Olry de Loriande relied on the combination of two rhetorical figures of pathos; that of *aposiopesis*, which means to break off suddenly in the middle of speaking due to being to excited, which transforms into *adynaton*, which is the figure for magnifying an event by expressing the impossibility of finding the right words.[43] He contemplates his own difficulty in describing the Louvre, which would only be truly possible if one could adopt the radiant language of the building itself:

> Enfin n'y voyant rien que de riche & de tendre,
> Et mesme des grandeurs que je ne puis comprendre,
> Je m'écrie, ô Chasteau! miracle de beautez!
> En ta faveur les Arts se sont ressuscitez,
> Dépeigne qui voudra ta visible armonie
> Et l'auguste beauté de ta grace infinie
> Pour moy je tiens qu'il faut un rayon du Soleil
> Pour dépeindre un Palais comme toy sans pareil […]
> Revenu de l'extaze & des ravissemens,
> Où l'on tombe en voyant des objets si charmans,
> Commançons à parler de ce Palais de marbre.[44]

In fact, his response appears even more rhetorical and artificial when one realises that the poet was involved in the project of the Louvre itself. When placed in a broader cultural perspective, the example of Olry de Loriande reminds us of the fact that many individuals responsible for producing poems and descriptions on the Louvre, actively or indirectly participated in the design and construction

43 See H. Baran, A.W. Halsall, and A. Watson, "Aposiopesis," in The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics: Fourth Edition, ed. R. Greene, S. Cushman, C. Cavanagh, J. Ramazani, and P. Rouzer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 60-61; A.W. Halsall and T.V.F. Brogan, "Adynaton," in Greene, Cushman, Cavanagh, Ramazani, and Rouzer, Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry, 9.

44 Olry de Loriande, Le superbe dessein, 136: "At last, seeing nothing but all things rich and tender,/ And even instances of greatness that I can not understand,/ I cry out, oh Château! miracle of beauties!/ The Arts have been resurrected in your favour,/ To those who want it: describe your visible harmony/ And the august beauty of your infinite grace/ I would need one of the sun's rays/ To describe the unequaled Palace that you are:/ […] Having recovered from the state of ecstasy and rapture,/ In which one enters when seeing such charming objects,/ Let us now continue by talking about this marble palace." The Ovidian image of Apollo's palace of the sun was not used exclusively for the Louvre, but was also employed to describe the effect of other buildings and spectacles associated with Louis XIV. Louis Le Laboureur, for instance, uses the vocabulary of the sublime in his description of the effect of the interior at the Château Vieux of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, renovated by Louis XIV: "Je crus en vérité, sans pousser trop les choses,/ Estre, par un miracle à nul autre pareil,/ Transporté d'ici-bas au palais du Soleil,/ Tel qu'on le voit bâti dans les Métamorphoses." See Louis Le Laboureur, La Promenade de Saint-Germain à Mademoiselle de Scudéry (Paris: G. de Luynes, 1669). Quoted from: Cynthia Skenazi, Le poète architecte en France (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2003), 310-11.

process of the building itself. In his role as Ingénieur du Roy, Olry de Loriande produced the engravings of François Le Vau's designs for the east façade that have already been discussed above. Similarly, as Thomas Kirchner has demonstrated, the allegory of the poem *La Peinture* by Charles Perrault (1628-1703) alluded to his brother Claude's project of enlarging the Louvre with a new wing, which would reunite a newly proposed hierarchy of genres of painting in the palace's decoration. According to a marginal note added by Charles to his poem, the nine Muses that are charged with decorating the palace of Apollo represent the "nine genres of painting."[45] Although the project was eventually abandoned, its hierarchy was partly transferred to Versailles.[46]

THEORETICAL WRITINGS ON THE LOUVRE OF LOUIS XIV: THE EFFECT OF THE SUBLIME

The fascination for the effect of royal architecture on the beholder that is apparent from these poems and inscriptions, I would argue, can be seen both as a symptom of, as well as a further incentive for, a growing interest in the elevating and marvellous effect of language and art during the seventeenth century. The organisation of both monarchy and church had changed significantly, and the revival of the epic was only one of its effects. The politics of centralisation, which changed the nature of royal patronage, and the lasting effects of the Counter Reformation – in particular, the prominence of Jesuit writers under Louis XIV's rule – created a vast nexus of individuals that all contemplated on the spirit of the French nation in a new era, by emphasising its divine and heroic origins, as well as by considering the powerful capacity of language and architecture. This interest in the elevating capabilities of language, images, and things or beings, was an interest that transcended the borders of domains such as those of literature, art and religion.

Even though the critical interest in the effect and nature of sublimity, as well as the quest for a critical nomenclature of this very idea, truly gained momentum in French writings during the 1670s, theoretical approaches to the sublime in both art and language already appear decades earlier. These texts not only use already established critical terms, such as *le merveilleux* from the domain of poetics, but also notions that had not yet acquired this status, such as the "neighbouring concepts" of *je ne sais quoi* and *sublime*. Notions such as these were often used

45 Émmanuelle Hénin, Ut pictura theatrum: théâtre et peinture de la Renaissance italienne au classicisme français (Geneva: Droz, 2003), 179.

46 See Thomas Kirchner, "La nécessité d'une hiérarchie des genres," in La Naissance de la théorie de l'art en France, ed. Christian Michel (Paris: J-M. Place, 1998), 186-96. Derived from Hénin, Ut pictura theatrum, 179.

next to one another, or were sometimes seen as interchangeable.[47] Félibien's role is critical, in this respect, since his *Entretiens* introduced the aesthetic discourse on the sublime into the world of architecture.

In the case of the Louvre of Louis XIV, we are able to detect a particular attention to the overwhelming and enchanting effect of the palace that cannot and should not be isolated from this development. As the association of the physical Louvre with the poetics of elevation (the epic enchanted or heavenly palace) became increasingly reinforced, its effect on the beholder became increasingly theorised in the corresponding terms of the sublime. One of the earliest critical analyses of the idea of the marvellous effect of architecture in French critical discourse is a passage in Antoine Le Pautre's *Œuvres d'architecture* from 1652. Focusing in particular on Italian architecture, Le Pautre states that there are some people who believe that the marvellous effect of a building depends on an enchantment that is the result of a surprise caused by the abundance of ornaments and the rarity of its materials. However, these people, the author continues, forget that only the beauty of proportion impresses a respect and astonishment in the intelligent mind:

> Il y a enfin des personnes qui s'imaginent que *le merveilleux d'un edifice* dépend d'un enchantement, dont le jugement ne peut pas rendre raison, parce qu'il est surpris par les yeux, & que cette surprise est causée par l'abondance des ornemens, & la rareté de la matiere, sans faire reflexion qu'il n'y a que les belles proportions qui impriment le respect & l'étonnement dans les esprits intelligens, & que plusieurs Eglises de Naples, avec la profusion de l'or & des marbres, sont inferieures en beauté à celle de Sainte Justine de Padouë avec la simple blancheur de ses murs.[48]

In his discussion of the simple white columns and walls of the interior of the Basilica of Santa Giustina in Padua, which underwent a major reconstruction during the first half of the seventeenth century, Le Pautre's thoughts strongly remind of earlier remarks made by John Evelyn while contemplating the façade of the Louvre. On 8 February 1644, the latter wrote in his diary that the Louvre's Grande Galerie actually lacks this powerful simplicity: "We went through the long gallery, pav'd wth white & black marble, richly fretted and paynted *a fresca*.

47 Bram van Oostveldt and Stijn Bussels, "Introduction: The Sublime and Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Art," Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art 8, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 4, https://doi.org/10.5092/jhna.2016.8.2.3.

48 Antoine Le Pautre, Les oeuvres d'architecture (Paris: Jombert, 1622), 38: "Finally, there are people who think that the marvellous of a building depends on some sort of enchantment, of which judgment cannot provide an explanation, because they eye is surprised, and because this surprise is caused by the abundance of ornaments, and the rarity of the material – without realising that only beautiful proportions excite respect and astonishment in the intelligent mind, and that many churches in Naples, with their profusion of gold and marble, are inferior in beauty to that of Sainte Justine in Padua, and the simple whiteness of its walls."

The front looking to the river, tho' of rare worke for ye carving, yet wants of that magnificence which a plainer and truer designe would have contributed to it."[49]

The idea that the Louvre's exterior exerts a ravishing and astonishing effect on the beholder also returns in the work of Henri Sauval (1623-1676), albeit explained and substantiated with different arguments. Although published in 1724, his *Histoire et recherches des antiquités de la ville de Paris* was actually written during a period of approximately twenty years, from around 1656 until his death in 1676.[50] Whereas Le Pautre elaborates on the marvellous effect of proportion, Sauval emphasises the power of the material that is used in the Louvre's exterior. In his discussion of the building's architecture, Sauval states that some viewers find the massive exterior of the palace too rough, while others are completely ravished and astonished when confronted with the contrast between the structural solidity outside and the beauties inside – a solidity that represents the grandeur of the king ("Leur solidité les ravit & étonne tout ensemble, & même leur represente assés bien la grandeur, & la gravité de nos Rois").[51] Sauval attempts to explain this idea by contemplating on the effect of pure terror that the Louvre may have on those who are only ever able to gaze at its fear-inducing exterior, and thus by extension, both fear and admire its royal resident that lives inside. This contrasting sensation of the sublime terror and horror is made more delightful when entering the building, where the grace of the interior expresses the idea that a king is agreeable and righteous towards his subjects. By describing the interplay of the extreme opposites of fear and admiration, of delightful horror, Sauval relies on a particularly emotional spectrum of sublimity:

> Ils disent […] que les dehors du Palais d'un grand Prince ne sauroient être trop terribles; que le peuple qui porte son jugement dans ses yeux, & ne voit d'ordinaire que les dehors, considere avec bien plus de *veneration & de crainte* son maître renfermé dans un bâtiment, dont l'ordonnance est si fiere, & si severe, qu'il prend des pavillons informes pour de bons bastions, & l'œuvre entier pour une forte citadelle, & s'imagine que d'un lieu si rude, & si majestueux, il ne part que des foudres que si l'ordonnance du dedans au contraire, est adoucie, pour

49 Evelyn, Memoirs, 1:72.

50 Henri Sauval, Histoire et recherches des antiquités de la ville de Paris, vol. 1 (Paris: Charles Moette and Jacques Chardon, 1724), i.

51 Ibid., 32: "[L]es dehors du Louvre plaisent bien moins à quelques-uns que les dedans. Ils disent qu'ils forment une masse trop nue, & trop grossiere, qui ne promet rien de toutes ces beautés dont on est surpris en entrant ; qu'une tromperie de cette qualité par l'opposition de deux ordonnances si contraires deplait à l'esprit ; que l'attique même par le dehors est plus désagreable, & fait un plus mauvais effet que par le dedans ; il leur semble bas, simple, & petit ; que la nudité de ses vastes trumeaux le rendent difforme, & couronne par dehors de très-mauvaise grace ce grand bâtiment si magnifique. Avec tout cela tous les goûts sont differens: j'en connois beaucoup à qui les dehors plaisent bien davantage, ils disent que cette belle surprise dont on se plaint est toute Royale & pleine d'esprit. Leur solidité les ravit & étonne tout ensemble, & même leur represente assés bien la grandeur, & la gravité de nos Rois." My emphasis.

> ainsi dire, & temperée par une architecture gratieuse, c'est pour rassurer l'esprit épouvanté, & par ce moyen l'ayant tiré de cette frayeur que lui avoient donnée des dehors si menaçans, lui fait connoître que la puissance des Princes n'est terrible qu'aux méchans, & qu'autant qu'ils sont à craindre pour ceux-là, autant se montrent-ils agreables & doux aux autres qui demeurent dans le devoir ; & comme ça été le caractere de la plupart de nos Monarques, Clagny, peut-être en bâtissant le Louvre, l'a-t-il voulu faire remarquer par ses murailles.[52]

This notion of grace (or *grâce*), and certainly its incomprehensible character, would actually play a significant role in further theoretical thoughts on the architecture of the Louvre and the effect of sublimity, and received particular attention in the work of André Félibien. Félibien was one of the first members of the Petite académie, and was later appointed by Colbert to the entirely new post of *historiographe des bâtiments du roi*, which involved the publication of official descriptions of those paintings, tapestries, buildings and spectacles that were commissioned by the king.[53] Essentially, these were eulogies of the king that were poured into the mould of descriptions of art and architecture. Thus, these texts functioned as rhetorical accomplices, spelling out and thereby attempting to reinforce and disseminate the intended effect of the object that they describe. This complex mechanism of steering the viewer's response while describing as well as glorifying the visually lavish spectacle of the monarch and his architecture strengthened the tenacious grip on art and narrative that was the *histoire du roy*. In addition, Félibien even adopted this rhetorical mechanism in his theoretical texts about the king's buildings.

From 1666 onwards, Félibien published his *Entretiens sur les vies et sur les ouvrages des plus excellents peintres anciens et modernes*. Through this seminal multivolume work, he would establish himself as a respected art critic, combining an extensive description of the lives and works of the most excellent painters working under Louis XIV with newly formulated principles on art. At the beginning of each of the first eight *entretiens*, Félibien added preluding texts on architecture that served to introduce and reinforce his subsequent discussions

52 Ibid., 32. My emphasis: "They say […] that the exterior of the Palace of a great Prince cannot be too terrifying; that the people who are witness to his judgment, and usually only see the exterior, consider with much more veneration and fear their master, who is locked in a building that is so proudly and severely designed, that they take the formless pavilions for true bastions, and the whole building for a strong citadel, while imagining that a place so rude and majestic produces nothing but thunder. But when the design of the interior is softened, so to speak, and tempered by means of a graceful architecture, it then reassures the terrified spirit. By building on the fright produced by the menacing exterior, the interior makes the soul aware of the fact that the power of Princes is only terrible to the wicked. And as much as they instil fear in these people, they are agreeable and kind to those who remain faithful to their duty. And since the majority of our Monarchs shared this character, Clagny, by building the Louvre, may have wanted to point this out by its exterior."

53 Burke, The Fabrication, 53.

on painting. Each one of these preludes is situated in a royal castle, all of which repeatedly remind the reader of the political context of the production and discourse of art.[54]

The first one of these introductions, which opens the first volume, is a conversation between a narrator and a mentor named Pymandre, who simultaneously behold and discuss the building situated in front of them. The reader soon learns that the company is examining a scale model of the Louvre palace, which, at this time, could only represent one of the designs produced by Bernini.[55] The conversation quickly centres on the idea of *beauté* in the proportion and distribution of a royal palace, and in particular on the difference between *beauté* and *grâce*.[56] The idea of *grâce*, the narrator states, "can be found much less easily in architecture; only a few people know how to add it to their work, but we admire it wherever it occurs."[57] After Pymandre further insists on learning the difference between the two notions, the narrator explains that *beauté* stems from a building's proportion and symmetry, while *grâce* arises from within the architect, and is created through the presence and movements of soul in the work:

> Dans les Ouvrages de l'art aussi-bien que dans les productions de la nature, on voit des beautez qui n'ont ny la grace ny ce je ne sçay quoy qui rendent certaines personnes ou certaines Ouvrages plus agreables que d'autres qui sont neanmoins plus parfaits.
> Quelle difference, reprit Pymandre, mettez-vous donc entre la grace & la beauté […]. Je puis vous dire en peu de mots, luy repartis-je, la difference qu'il y a entre ces deux charmantes qualitiez. C'est que la beauté naist de la proportion & de la symetrie qui se rencontre entre les parties corporelles & materielles. Et la grace s'engendre de l'uniformité des mouvemens interieurs causez par les affections & les sentimens de l'ame. […] Alors il s'en engendre cette grace que l'on admire dans les personnes les plus accomplies.[58]

54 Stefan Germer, Art – Pouvoir – Discours. La carrière intellectuelle d'André Félibien dans la France de Louis XIV, trans. Aude Virey-Wallon (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2016), 400. The book was originally published as: Kunst – Macht – Diskurs. Die intellektuelle Karriere des André Félibien im Frankreich von Louis XIV (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1997).

55 Germer, Art – Pouvoir – Discours, 401-02.

56 André Félibien, Entretiens sur les vies et sur les ouvrages des plus excellens peintres anciens et modernes, vol. 1 (Paris: Pierre le Petit, 1666), 35.

57 Ibid., 35: "Mais vous pouvez juger par tout ce que je viens de vous dire, si c'est peu de chose que de sçavoir bien disposer & mettre à execution de si grands travaux: Et si l'on ne doit pas les considerer avec admiration, quand on y voit, je ne dis pas cette beauté que la raison & l'art fait produire aux Ouvriers, mais encore cette grace qu'on ne trouve que difficilement, que peu de gens sçavent donner à leurs Ouvrages, mais qu'on admire par tout où elle se rencontre."

58 Ibid., 36: "In works of art, as well as in the productions of nature, we see beauties that have neither grace nor that 'I do not know what' which make certain persons or certain works more agreeable than others that are nevertheless

Together, the narrator states, the two components of *beauté* and *grâce*, when combined in a perfect work, are a *je ne sais quoi* (or "je ne sçay quoy"), a secret quality that is difficult to explain. Similar to the spiritual brilliance of a rose that starts to blossom early in the morning, this inexplicability is nothing but an "entirely divine splendour":

> Que s'il en sort de la main des plus excellens Maistres où l'on rencontre une juste convenance de toutes les parties du corps & une belle uniformité de mouvemens qui concourent à une mesme fin, c'est alors qu'on admire comme quoy la beauté, & la grace un ouvrage parfait.
> Ce je ne sçay quoy qu'on a toûjours à la bouche, & qu'on ne peut bien exprimer, est comme le nœud secret qui assemble ces deux parties du corps & de l'esprit. […] [C]e je ne sçay quoy n'est autre chose qu'une splendeur toute divine qui naist de la beauté & de la grace.[59]

Here, Félibien attempts to theoretically pin down an aesthetic union that rests on something that cannot be fully comprehended. This very idea – the elusive nature of grace – fascinated not only Félibien, but many writers before him, and forms part of a longer critical tradition in the aesthetics of poetry and art. The idea of grace, as *venustas* or *gratia*, was widely discussed in ancient writings on oratory and rhetoric; Cicero and Quintilian had already emphasised the instrumental part played by nature and genius in the production of grace, rather than art and rules alone.[60] In particular, Quintilian's comparisons with the world of art – he addresses the lack of grace in pictures and statues that depend too much on rules – would have a significant impact on early modern discourse.[61] While Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574), Gian Paolo Lomazzo (1538-1592) and Franciscus Junius (1591-1677) continued to focus on its natural and unteachable sources,[62] the latter, in his *De Pictura Veterum*, also connected grace to the effect of sublimity.

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more perfect. What a difference you establish between grace and beauty, Pymandre said […]. I can summarise in a few words, I told him, the difference that exists between these two charming qualities. Beauty arises from the proportion and symmetry that is found between the bodily and material parts. And grace arises from the uniformity of the inner movements caused by the affections and feelings of the soul. […] That is how this grace, which we admire in the most accomplished people, is born."

59 Ibid., 39: "That when it is produced by the hand of the most excellent Masters, where we find a right agreement of all the parts of the body and a beautiful uniformity of movements that contribute to the same end – it is then when we admire beauty and grace in a perfect work. This 'I do not know what' which is always on the tip of our tongue, but cannot be well expressed, is like the secret knot that gathers these two parts of the body and the mind. […] [T] his 'I do not know what' is nothing but a totally divine splendour, which stems from both beauty and grace."

60 Samuel Monk, "A Grace Beyond the Reach of Art," Journal of the History of Ideas 5, no. 1 (Jan. 1 1944): 135. For the role of the notion of grâce in the work of Claude Perrault, see Wolfgang Herrmann, The Theory of Claude Perrault (London: A. Zwemmer, 1973).

61 Monk, "A Grace," 135.

62 Ibid., 142.

Relying on Quintilian and Longinus, Samuel Monk states, "Junius maintains that grace, the perfection of beauty, and elevation are the products not of mere natural genius, but of nature *and* art" and that grace carries spectators, as Junius states himself, "into an astonished extasie, their sense of seeing bereaving them of all other senses," captivating them in a mix of "admiration and amazement."[63] In this respect, the ideas on the elevating and ineffable effect of *grâce* that Félibien expresses are very similar to those of Junius. Junius likened the originally rhetorical term of *grace* (drawing from Cicero, Quintilian, Pliny, and Plutarch) to Longinus' notion of sublimity, and translated this union into the domain of painting.[64] Similarly, Félibien also connects the idea of *grâce* to the elevating effect of ravishing splendour, but was is novel, here, is that he incorporates this idea in the domain of architecture. In other words, he imports the discourse on the sublime from narrative media (poetry and painting) into the non-narrative medium of architecture.

Félibien uses the notion of the *je ne sais quoi* to describe this powerful effect – a notion that was previously only employed in contexts such as hermetic language (the 1644 translation by Jean Baudoin (1590-1650) of the *Iconologia* by Cesare Ripa (1555-1622)), ethics (Pascal) and social behaviour (Claude Favre de Vaugelas (1585-1650) and Antoine Gombaud, chevalier de Méré (1607-1684)).[65] More importantly, as a noun it precedes Bouhours' use of *le je ne sais quoi* in his eponymous text published as the fifth "entretien" in his *Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène* (1671). In this first systematic treatise dedicated to the *je ne sais quoi*, Bouhours similarly describes the idea in terms of the sublime: as something "that amazes, and carries away the heart at a first glance" when confronted with scenes of nature, art and religion.[66]

In his recent study *The Theory of the Sublime*, Robert Doran quotes Louis Marin as "the principal purveyor of the view that there is a relation of identity between the *je ne sais quoi* and the sublime in French neoclassicism."[67] Instead of seeing the *je ne sais quoi* as intrinsically connected to *le merveilleux* and the broader idea of sublimity, as Marin does, Doran writes that "the relationship [between these two] is far more oblique than Marin imagines." "For one thing,"

63 Ibid., 144. The citations from Junius are quoted from the same page.

64 Joanna Sheers Seidenstein, "Grace, Genius, and the Longinian Sublime in Rembrandt's Aristotle with a Bust of Homer," Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art 8, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 4-5, https://doi.org/10.5092/jhna.2016.8.2.3. On Junius' connection between, on the one hand, poetic imagination and (Longinus' notion of) rhetorical evidence, and, on the other hand, the power of painting, see Colette Nativel, "Ut pictura poesis: Junius et Roger de Piles," XVIIe siècle 245, no. 4 (2009).

65 Cronk, The Classical Sublime, 62-63.

66 See his chapter "Le je ne scay quoy" in Dominique Bouhours, Les entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène (Paris: Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1671), 247.

67 Doran, Theory of the Sublime, 106.

he continues, "the *je ne sais quoi* has nothing whatsoever to do with elevation and or grandeur of spirit, an essential element of sublimity."[68] However, I do not agree with Doran on this point, for Félibien is actually at pains to underscore the relationship that Doran denies. Despite admitting that the effect of both beauty and grace is something inexplicable (a *je ne sais quoi*), this does not prevent Félibien from stating what this effect *does* to the mind and soul of the beholder experiences. First, he stresses that both the accomplished painter and architect are able to arrive at a union of beauty and grace, since this union can be manifested in all of the mind's creations:

> [l'Architecte] ne laisse pas de communiquer à tout ce qu'il fait cette grace & cette beauté qui se peuvent répandre generalement dans toutes les productions de l'esprit. Car les proportions de toutes les parties qui composent un Edifice, en font la beauté corporelle; & la conduite & sage dispensation qui se fait de toutes ses parties par le mouvement de l'esprit de l'Architecte, c'est ce qui donne toute la grace.[69]

Then, Félibien adds that the effects of both are equally similar, and very powerful. In the case of architecture, the narrator explains, when everything is executed in a beautiful order and symmetry, a building elevates the spirit and carries the soul into the heavens:

> Et si quand les Peintures sont excellentes, elles charment nos yeux & émeuvent nos affections. De mesme dans l'Architecture quand toutes choses y sont faites avec un bel ordre & une belle symetrie, elles élevent nostre esprit & portent nostre ame jusques dans les Cieux.[70]

In other words, Félibien argues that the sensations of *le je ne sais quoi* and transcending elevation overlap in the effect of a truly accomplished building, and refers to elements of beauty and grace as the conditions for this accomplishment. Whereas his understanding of the relationship between beauty and grace in architecture is very similar to the notion of *concinnitas* as used by Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472), the effect of sublimity Félibien identifies as the consequence of this

68 Ibid., 106.

69 Félibien, Entretiens, 1:42: "[The Architect] ought not fail to communicate to all this grace and this beauty, which, in general, can be expressed by all the productions of the mind. For the proportions of all the parts that make up a building create its physical beauty; while the conduct and wisdom that is manifested through these parts by the architect's movement of spirit is what gives it its grace."

70 Ibid., 43: "When Paintings are excellent, they enchant our eyes and stir our affections. Similarly, in Architecture, when all things are executed in a beautiful order and symmetry, they elevate our spirits and carry our souls towards the Heavens."

architectural harmony is very novel in the domain of architectural theory.[71] When viewed in the broader context of the king's grandeur, Félibien thus aims to use his *Entretiens* as a means to theoretically underpin the transcendent effect of royal architecture, and by association the transcendent nature of its royal inhabitant.

In order to illustrate this experience of sublime transcendence and its relation to the king's grandeur, the narrator provides the reader with an example of this elevating sensation, and describes a visit to a chapel, by which he means François Mansart's Chapelle de Fresnes. After Mansart had been dismissed from the project of the church of Val-de-Grâce, and his design was thoroughly revised by Jacques Lemercier and Pierre Le Muet (1591-1669), the architect was still able to execute his design at the Château de Fresnes. For his patron, the politician Henri du Plessis-Guénégaud (1609-1676), Mansart reduced the diameter of the chapel's dome to approximately a third of its original size, though this choice apparently did not affect its intended, overwhelming effect.[72] According to Félibien, the longer he stared at the chapel's dome, the more it appeared to elevate itself, thereby attracting him towards the centre. Here, he argues, lies the end and perfection of art – a degree of excellence he particularly expects to find in the finished Louvre. After all, he argues, the Louvre will be built in a manner worthy of the grandeur of the king himself:

> C'est ce qui m'arriva il n'y a pas long-temps en considerant cette Chapelle dont je parlois tantost. Car en contemplant toutes les parties les unes après les autres, & en portant peu à peu mes regards en haut, je me sentois doucement attiré jusqu'au milieu de la voûte. Il me sembloit que plus je la regardois, & plus elle s'élevoit en l'air & paroissoit se soûtenir d'elle-mesme. Ainsi je rencontrois dans cet Edifice comme la fin & la perfection des choses que l'art peut produire. C'est de la sorte qu'en voyant un jour tous ces beaux bastimens que le Roy fait faire; tout le monde en admirera l'excellence. Et parce que le Louvre sera orné d'une maniere digne de la grandeur de ce Prince, on y verra sa vie & ses actions dépeintes en tant d'illustres & de differentes façons, que la posterité ne cherchera point ailleurs d'autre sujet de son étude & de ses admirations.[73]

Félibien's prelude exploits the sense of enthusiasm and unrestrained hope that characterised the long period in which the Cour Carrée was designed and con-

71 Alberti's concept of concinnitas, which is inspired by the writings of Cicero, points to "the bringing together of heterogeneous elements into a harmonious whole." See Liane Lefaivre, Leon Batista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili: Re-Cognizing the Architectural Body in the Early Italian Renaissance (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 174-75.

72 Antoine-Nicolas Dézallier d'Argenville, Voyage pittoresque des environs de Paris (Paris: De Bure, [1749] 1762), 337-38.

structed. Since the east façade had not yet been constructed, he could, on the one hand, rely on the aesthetic power of the commissioned designs and scale models, while, on the other hand, still fantasise and anticipate the grandeur of the finished result.

Félibien resumed his discussion on the overwhelming effect of Louis XIV's architecture in the prelude to the third *entretien* in his second volume. Here, Félibien continues the conversation between Pymandre and the narrator; Pymandre had been obliged to leave Paris for important affairs, and after six months returned to the capital and re-arranged with the narrator. "Having returned," the narrator states, "one of the first things he inquired about was the current state of the Buildings of the Louvre."[74] When the company arrives at the square in front of the Palais des Tuileries, they together contemplate its façade and compare its newly built *galleries* with the Grande Galerie facing the Seine.[75] Overwhelmed and confused by the presence of the new buildings, Pymandre starts to wonder whether he might actually be in an enchanted place. "In fact," the narrator finally responds, "everything you see here is nothing but an enchantment. You are not where you think you are":

> Pymandre, qui avoit toûjours esté absent pendant qu'on avoit travaillé à ce Palais, demeura surpris; & aprés avoir esté quelque temps à le regarder, se tournant vers moi, me dit: *Est-ce un charme que ceci? Ne suis-je point dans un lieu enchanté? Et ce Palais peut-il estre le Palais des Tuilleries, où quand je suis parti de Paris il n'y avoit rien de tout ce que je vois?* […] Tout cela peut-il avoir si promptement changé de forme sans le secours de la magie? Alors ne pouvant m'empêcher de sourire: En effet,

73 Félibien, Entretiens, 1:43: "That is what happened to me not so long ago, while looking at this Chapel I mentioned earlier. By contemplating all of its parts one after the other, and gradually lifting my eyes upwards, I felt myself gently drawn towards the centre of the vault. It seemed to me that the more I looked at it, the more it elevated in the air and seemed to support itself. Thus, I found in this Building the end and perfection of that which art can produce. In the same manner, when looking one day at all these beautiful buildings that the King has created, everyone will admire their excellence. And because the Louvre will be adorned in a manner worthy of the grandeur of this Prince, we will see his life and actions portrayed here, in so many illustrious and different ways that future generations will not have to look elsewhere to find the subject of their study and admiration."

74 See "Troisième Entretien," in André Félibien, Entretiens sur les vies et sur les ouvrages des plus excellens peintres anciens et modernes, vol. 2 (Paris: Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1672), 1-3: "Quoi que nous eussions résolu Pymandre & moi de nous revoir bientost, pour continuer les Entretiens que nous avions commencez sur les Vies & sur les Ouvrages des Peintres; néantmoins Pymandre aiant esté obligé de quitter Paris pour ses affaires particuliéres, nous demeurâmes prés de six mois sans nous voir. Estant de retour de son voyage, une des premiéres choses qu'il me demanda, ce fut en quel estat estoient les Bastimens du Louvre. Je ne puis, luy dis-je, vous en rien dire: il faut que vous aiez le plaisir de voir ce que l'on a fait aux Tuilleries pendant vostre absence; & si vous n'avez point d'affaire qui vous retienne, nous pourrons, si vous voulez, employer le reste du jour à visiter cét agréable Palais."

75 Ibid., 1-3: "Quand nous fûmes arrivez dans la Place qui est devant les Tuilleries, & que nous pûmes voir toute la face qui est depuis la grande Gallerie jusques au bout de la Sale des Machines, où l'on a déja commencé une autre Gallerie pareille à celle qui est du costé de la riviére, nous nous arrestâmes pour considérer d'une seule veûë tout ce grand Ouvrage."

> lui dis-je, tout ce que vous voiez n'est qu'un enchantement. Vous n'estes pas où vous pensiez être: Paris est plein de préstiges, & l'on n'y voit plus ce qu'on y voioit autrefois.[76]

Instead of comparing epic architecture to real Parisian buildings – as we have seen earlier in the poetic works of Du Bartas' *La Seconde Semaine*, Corneille's *Le Menteur* and the appropriations of Ovid in poems on the Louvre – Félibien aims to render the confusion of reality and fiction complete here. He essentially substantiates the poetic idea of enchantment, by attempting to analyse the overwhelming and inexplicable effect of its façade. These passages are highly rhetorical pieces of literature, and they are meant to be even more persuasive by means of the theoretical context in which they are prominently placed. By theoretically orchestrating the sublime on paper, Félibien essentially asserts the sublime objectively, instead of referring to it subjectively. Here, we can recognise one of the earliest theoretical reflections on the relationship between the sublime and the greatness of Louis XIV – a relationship Félibien would push towards a new, albeit problematic level in the publication of the *Tapisseries du Roy* (1670) (see chapter 4). Since this publication introduces a very novel claim – that of Louis XIV's inner sublimity, and the capacity of artifice to evoke it – it will form the starting point of the second part of this thesis.

THE AMBIVALENT ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE INCOMPLETE LOUVRE

The Louvre as it was being enlarged during the 1660s and 1670s carried with it a sense of enormous political potential and artistic progress – an aspect Félibien's *Entretiens* particularly tries to take advantage of. The military successes of Louis XIV, from the victory of the Crown after the Fronde through to the early wars in the Low Countries, heightened his glory and, by association, that of the palace as well. Moreover, in the decades prior to the adult reign of Louis XIV, the French revival of the epic poem concurred with the advent of the Louvre's enlargement, which nourished an interest in the interplay between reality and fiction, such as the effect of the enchanted palace and its political connotations. As we have seen, the sense of hope and admiration that was elicited by the idea of a finished, magnificent Louvre was frequently employed as a political instrument. The fact

76 Ibid., 1-3: "Pymandre, who had been absent during the construction of this Palace, remained surprised; and after having looked at it for a while, turned to me and said: 'Is this a charm? Am I not in an enchanted place? Could this Palace really be the Palais de Tuileries, for when I left Paris nothing of what I see was actually there? […] Could all this have so quickly changed shape without the help of magic?' I could not help but smile: 'In fact,' I tell him, 'everything you see here is nothing but an enchantment. You are not where you think you are: Paris is full of illusions, and what used to be seen here cannot be seen anymore.' "

that one does not yet know what the completed palace will look like, provides room for the imagination to finish the palace in the mind. Moreover, there were more aspects of the "unknowable" that reinforced the building's powerful effect in this period. A façade, and certainly a façade that is grand and noble, hides to the general public the spaces of its interior as well as the actions that take place there, rendering them unknown. Whereas today, Perrault's eastern colonnade features a sequence of fourteen glass windows, the original façade had a row of fourteen niches with statues, which gave the façade a much more massive and closed character than after its transformation. In painting, the depiction of the actions of the monarch by a painter such as Adam Frans van der Meulen (1632-1690) *figuratively* veils the real actions of the king, whereas in architecture a façade more *literally* veils these real actions, for example when the king is present at the Louvre. The material fabric of the façade, then, can evoke both the presence and grand authority of the king, while still retaining some space with regard to this (hidden) royal subject. We have discussed this particular effect in Sauval's aforementioned passage on the overwhelming royal terror of the Louvre's exterior.

A sense of distance can be a powerful agent of the sublime, since it not only establishes a hierarchical contrast between a great subject and an inferior recipient, but also maintains a sense of the unknowable or ineffable. Some things or ideas cannot be reached, but only approached.

However, the Louvre experienced recurring periods of inactivity, and when the king moved his court to the castle of Versailles in 1682, the reality and future of the Louvre appeared very bleak. The greatest part of the east and north wing of the Louvre still had no roof, a major default that would remain unresolved for many decades, and is clearly visible on the Turgot map of Paris of 1739 (fig. 22). Moreover, the space inside the Cour Carrée, as well as the immediate surroundings of the court, were riddled with small and centuries-old houses that blocked the view of the lower part of the Colonnade for the Parisian public. This situation remained unchanged throughout the seventeenth century; both the Cour Carrée and the area in front of the Colonnade would only be cleared from 1755 onwards (fig. 23).[77] Voltaire (1694-1778), in his *Embellissements de Paris* from 1749 expressed that, walking in front of the Colonnade, he passionately yearned to see the whole east façade, which was "cachée par des bâtiments de Goths et de Vandales."[78] The exterior of the Louvre would only be completed under the premier Empire by the architects Charles Percier (1764-1838) and Pierre François Léonard Fontaine (1762-1853).

77 Marianne Roland Michel, "The Clearance of the Colonnade of the Louvre: A Study Arising from a Painting by de Machy," The Burlington Magazine 120, no. 906 (September 1978): i.

78 Voltaire, "Des embellissements de Paris," in Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire, vol. 5 (Paris: Furne, 1835), 390: "On passe devant le Louvre, et on gémit de voir cette façade, monument de la grandeur de Louis XIV, du zèle de Colbert, et du génie de Perrault, cachée par des bâtiments de Goths et de Vandales."

This combination of hope and despair that characterised the construction of the Louvre can already be found in texts written just after the Fronde, such as in the work of Le Moyne. In 1659, Le Moyne published his epic poem *La veuë de Paris. Lettre heroïque et morale*, written as a letter and addressed to Pierre Séguier, Chancellor of France (1588-1672). In his letter, he expresses in a most dynamic and epic manner his desperation concerning the poor cultural, political and moral state the French capital was in at the time. Le Moyne paints the scene of the capital as a place of vanity, sin and greed, which would ultimately be consumed by the final fire of the apocalypse. His Paris is Babylon, Quentin M. Hope aptly states, a city illuminated by an "infernal rather than heavenly" glow, only being "traversed by a brilliant gleam of light emanating from the imperishable deeds of heroism and piety of the great kings and captains of the past."[79] Its buildings display a vain magnificence that has brought Paris from a golden age into an iron age ("âge de fer"), as Le Moyne expresses: "Que Paris est changé depuis cét heureux temps!/ Que de nos Devanciers nous sommes differens!/ Et qu'il s'en trouve peu, qui sur ces beaux Modelles,/Se bastissent au Ciel des Maisons eternelles!"[80] And although Le Moyne balances his epic images of rising and crumbling Parisian structures with the more virtuous palace of kings ("La demeure des Roys, & le Ciel du Royaume"), the poet admits that also these structures will eventually perish ("Je sçai que la Grandeur n'a pas assez de poids,/ Pour garantir du vent, les vestiges des Rois").[81] The royal palace is *like* the sun, but unlike the eternal sun in the skies, the "ciel" of French kings has a different fate:

> Depuis que le Soleil roulant par ses maisons,
> Donne le jour au Monde, & regle les Saisons;
> Une si continuë & si longue carriere,
> N'a rien diminué de sa beauté premiere […]
> Nos Rois ont dans leur Ciel un tout autre destin:
> Leur course a son midi, comme elle a son matin:
> Mais aprés leur Couchant, il ne vient point d'Aurore
> Qui leur rend leur pourpre, & leur teste redore.[82]

79 Quentin M. Hope, "Call for an Edition of Pierre Lemoyne's 'Entretiens et lettres poétiques,' " French Forum 7, no. 1 (1982): 29.

80 Pierre Le Moyne, La veuë de Paris. Lettre heroïque et morale. A monseigneur le Chancelier (Paris: Augustin Courbé, 1659), 11.

81 Ibid., 14.

82 Ibid., 14: "Since the Sun, rolling by his houses,/ Gave the World the day, and arranged the Seasons;/ A career so long and continuous,/ Has not diminished its original beauty:/ […] Our Kings have in their Skies a very different destiny:/ Their path has its noon, as it has its morning:/ But after their sunset, there will be no dawn/ Which would give them their royal dignity, and reguild their front."

The character that Le Moyne associates with the royal palace is of a pious and moral nature; the Louvre is the place of a virtuous though finite magnificence. As discussed earlier in the context of the church of Val-de-Grâce, Le Moyne deemed magnificence – both in spirit and in architecture – an important royal virtue, but warned against its dazzling effect. The elevated value he attaches to royal magnificence is clearly evident in his "Traité du poeme heroique," a short treatise on epic poetry which precedes his own epic *Saint Louys, ou la Sainte couronne reconquise* from 1666. In this theoretical text, Le Moyne compares the sublimity of the epic poem to the magnificent grandeur of the Louvre:

> Les Maison Bourgeoises ne demandent que de la propreté & de l'ordre : l'éclat & le luxe y seroient hors de leur place ; ils y feroient du scandale ; & on les accuseroit tout au moins, de mauvais ménage & de prodigalité. Il n'en est pas ainsi de celles des Rois: *elles veulent de la splendeur & de la magnificence, de la hauteur & de l'*étenduë […]. Le Poëme Heroïque est un Edifice de cette grandeur & de cette forme: il y faut garder les mesmes regles, qui se gardent en la structure des plus grands Palais. Et le Lecteur ignorant de ces regles, qui *sans avoir égard au Magnifique, au Sublime, au Merveilleux que demande l'Heroïque*, y chercheroit le Joli du Madrigal, ou le Mignard de l'Elegie, feroit à peu prés, comme si dans les Sales & dans les Galeries du Louvre, il chercheroit la politesse & le lustre d'un Cabinet de la Chine.[83]

The characteristic that both the poem and the building share, Le Moyne states, is that they are not perfect. The argument he puts forward here is that imperfections ultimately do not spoil beautiful and grand works. In other words, instead of the vain magnificence of most Parisian architecture that Le Moyne describes in his *veuë de Paris*, both the architect and the poet should instead strive for a

83 See his "Traité du poeme heroique" in Pierre Le Moyne, Saint Louys, ou la Sainte couronne reconquise, poème héroïque (Paris: Thomas Iolly, 1666), vii-viii: "Bourgeois houses require nothing but cleanliness and order: lustre and luxury would be out of place there, since they would create a scandal and one would accuse them of a bad household and of prodigality. However, this does not apply to those of Kings: they are in need of splendour and magnificence, of height and expanse […]. The Epic Poem is a Building of this grandeur and form: here, one should follow the same rules that apply to the structure of the largest Palaces. And those Readers who ignore these rules, who – without regard for the Magnificent, the Sublime, and the Marvellous that the Epic needs – look for the gentleness of the Madrigal, or the Delicate of the Elegy, would do the same as someone who would look for the gentle order and lustre of a Chinese Cabinet in the Rooms and Galleries of the Louvre." Similarly to Le Moyne, Félibien also stressed the similarities between art and epic poetry, and even deemed painting a genre of poetry. In his "Deux lettres sur Vaux-le-Vicomte," Félibien had argued that Le Brun's compositions for the castle's interior equated the medium of painting with the genre of poetry in successfully rendering the grandeur and nobility of the epic poem on the ceilings of Fouquet's chambers. Here, Hercules allegorically represents the grandeur of the patron-surintendant: "[S]i la Peinture est un genre de Poësie comme tout le monde l'advouë, il faut que vous demeuriez d'accord que ce sçavant Peintre [Le Brun], et ce docte Poëte tout ensemble, qui a composé ce bel Ouvrage, ne pouvoit pas mieux reüssir à rendre visible un Poëme Heroïque dont le sujet et la conduite n'a rien que de grand et de noble." Quoted from Thomas Kirchner, Der Epische Held. Historienmalerei und Kunstpolitik im Frankreich des 17. Jahrhunderts (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2001), 236.

virtuous and humble magnificence, and, in this process, respect the margin for any imperfections. "This is why," Le Moyne argues, "you will not find perfection in works of such vast expense and force." The unfinished state of the Louvre is, according to him, an excellent example: "La perfection, je dis la consommée, & la derniere perfection, n'est pas des Ouvrages de cette étenduë & de cette force. Un Chasteau de carte se fait en joüant, & s'acheve en moins d'une heure. Le Louvre n'est pas encore achevé depuis tant d'années qu'il est commencé."[84]

—— POETIC EXTREMES: THE LOUVRE-HUT TOPOS

The *topos* of the contrast between the simple dwelling and the magnificent Louvre that Le Moyne uses, returns in many seventeenth-century French works. Like Bartas' *Seconde Semaine*, in which the magnificence of Paris ravishes the simple shepherd, Le Moyne uses the *topos* to underscore the sublimity of both royal architecture and of the poetry that describes it. However, throughout the century, the *topos* was also used to serve a completely opposite purpose. In fact, the same contrast between extreme "high" and "low" proved a most appropriate poetic instrument to attack the vanity associated with the elevated aspirations of the failing Louvre project.

Relatively early seventeenth-century examples of the use of this *topos* allude to the equality of all human subjects in the face of God or that of Death, whatever rank or wealth one may possess. Their most important classical source of inspiration was a line from Horace's *Odes* (*Carmina*, Lib. 1, Od. 4), in which the Roman poet expresses the idea that no one is able to hide from death, not even behind the walls of a palace ("pallida Mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas regumque turris" or "Pale Death knocks with impartial foot on the poor man's cottage and the rich man's castle").[85] One of the most famous examples from the early seventeenth century that express the same idea, are the words by François de Malherbe (1555-1628) in his *Consolation à M. Du Périer sur la mort de sa fille* from 1598: "Le pauvre en sa cabane, où le chaume le couvre,/Est sujet à ses lois;/Et la garde qui veille aux barrières du Louvre/N'en défend point nos rois."[86] Here, the use of the noun "Louvre" can easily be replaced with the word "palais," or with the name of any other magnificent residence, for that matter. However, later examples of this poetic contrast – between the Louvre and a

84 Le Moyne, "Traité," iii.

85 Horace, Odes and Epodes, trans. Niall Rudd (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), C. I.4.13-14, 32-33, http://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.horace-odes.2004. Both the original and translated texts are derived from this source.

86 François de Malherbe, Les Poesies de M. de Malherbe, avec les Observations de Monsieur Menage (Paris: Louis Billaine, 1666), 223.

hut, or even a tomb – are quite specific in their criticism of the Parisian palace. In a sonnet by François Maynard (1582-1646), published in 1621, the Louvre's power to ravish the beholder is nothing more than an effect of vain, arrogant, and audacious magnificence. Soon, Maynard writes, the palace will disappear beneath a thick layer of grass and will become nothing more than a grand coffin:

> Quoy sert, dites-moy, la Royale Fabrique
> De *ces grands bastimens qui ravissent les yeux*,
> Par les divers éclats des marbres precieux
> Que les excez du luxe ont tirez de l'Afrique.
>
> Plus le faste arrogant d'un Louvre magnifique
> Approche du Soleil son front audacieux,
> Plus il se fait voisin de la fureur des Cieux,
> Et plus sa vanité rend sa honte publique.
>
> Miserable mortel, l'effort de peu de jours
> Sous l'herbe cachera la hauteur de ces Tours
> Qui menaçent les Dieux d'une seconde guerre.
>
> Et le soudain malheur de ce pompeux orgueil,
> T'accablant dessous luy, fera voir à la terre
> Qu'un superbe Palais, n'est qu'un pesant cercueil.[87]

Here, the poetic play of extremes is pushed to its very limits: in order to arrive at a more powerful counterpart of the Louvre (as the most elevated type of dwelling), the image of the hut is replaced by the even lower image of the grave or tomb.

During the adult reign of Louis XIV, such unrestrained and clear criticism was much more difficult to publish. The majority of critical works by *burlesque* and satirical writers such as Paul Scarron (1610-1660), François Colletet (1628-ca. 1680), le sieur Berthaud, and Claude Le Petit (1638-1662) sometimes appeared in the form of foreign or anonymous editions. Their works, such as Colletet's *le Tracas de Paris* (1665) and Le Petit's *La Chronique scandaleuse ou Paris ridicule* (1668) constitute some valuable negative and cynical counterparts to the

87 This sonnet by François Maynard was published in François de Rosset, Les delices de la poesie francoise, ou dernier recueil des plus beaux vers (Paris: Toussainct du Bray, 1621), 1041: "Tell me, what good is the Royal Construction/ Of these great buildings that ravish the eyes,/ By means of many pieces of precious marble/ That have been brought from Africa by the excesses of luxury./ The more the arrogant pomp of a magnificent Louvre/ Approaches the Sun with its bold front,/ The more it comes closer to the fury of the Heavens,/ And the more its vanity makes its own shame public./ Miserable mortal, effort of only a few days/ The grass will hide the height of these Towers/ Which threaten the Gods with a new war./ And the sudden misfortune of this pompous pride,/ Overpowering you beneath itself, will show to the earth/ That a superb Palace is nothing but a pitiful coffin." My emphasis

idealised poetic views on the capital that were constructed and regulated in and around the sphere of the monarch. The risks these writers faced by publishing these types of poetry were quite severe; in 1688, Le Petit was arrested for obscene writings and was burned at the stake on the Place de Grève, a place he had ridiculed in his *Paris ridicule* approximately twenty years earlier.[88] In order to explain how effectively Le Petit's poems constructs his ridicule, it might help to compare his views on the Louvre with another contemporary text – one that represents most clearly the summit of the development of the Louvre's sublime poetic image that has been explored in this chapter, and which Le Petit aimed to dismantle. In 1660, the French Protestant theologian and metaphysician Moïse Amyraut (1596-1664) published his text *Le ravissement de S. Paul expliqué en quatre sermons*, a series of sermons he had pronounced in which he emphasised that the example of Saint Paul's ecstasy was not only a marvellous subject ("choses […] merveilleuses") but also a great result of instruction ("un grand fruit d'instruction & d'edification").[89] In his third sermon he includes an analogy that includes the epic enchanted palace, the ravishing magnificence of the Louvre and the Louvre-hut *topos*. The writer, perhaps inspired by Du Bartas, refers to the Louvre's effect on a simple peasant as an appropriate example to explain the ecstasy of Saint Paul, transported in an inexpressible sensation towards paradise:

> Jamais homme mortel n'en vid un si grand ny si glorieux, ny si capable de remplir toute l'estenduë de ses facultez pour si vastes qu'elles peussent estre. […] [L]a merveille de ce que S. Paul a veu & ouï, luy a esté si nouvelle, & luy a donné d'abord une si grande admiration, qu'il a esté aisé de s'imaginer qu'il en sentit un transport inconcevable. Et si vous vous figurés un paysan, qui n'a jamais passé plus loin que les environs de sa chaumine, estre enlevé par un Ange, & transporté dans la ville de Paris, & que l'Ange le met tout endormi dans le plus beau lieu du Louvre, au milieu des plus grandes magnificences de la Cour […]. [V]ous n'aurez point besoin de vous mettre dans l'esprit l'idée des Palais enchantez dont parlent quelques Romans & quelques Poëtes, celle-là, si vous vous figurez que ce povre homme se réveille, & que tous ces beaux objets frappent en mesme moment ses sens, suffira pour vous faire conçevoir qu'en telles occasions on se trouve si estonné qu'on ne sçait si on est vivant ou si on est mort, si on dort ou si on veille.[90]

88 Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink and Rolf Reichardt, The Bastille: A History of a Symbol of Despotism and Freedom, trans. Norbert Schürer (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 6. Brossette, one of the commentators of the work of Boileau, discovered an allusion to the unfortunate end of Le Petit's poetic career and life in the second chant of Boileau's Art Poétique: "Toutefois, n'allez pas, goguenard dangereux,/ Faire Dieu le sujet d'un badinage affreux;/ A la fin, tous ces jeux que l'athéisme élève/ Conduisent tristement le plaisant à la Grève." See P.L. Jacob, Paris ridicule et burlesque au dix-septième siècle (Paris: Adolphe Delahays, 1895), iii.

89 Moïse Amyraut, Le ravissement de S. Paul expliqué en quatre sermons (Saumur: Antoine Rousselet, 1660), 3.

In one single breath, Amyraut combines the *merveilleux* of the epic with the poetic extremes of the Louvre and the hut, and uses the vocabulary of the sublime ("transport inconcevable," "enlevé," "frappent en mesme moment ses sens") in a comparison between the powerful effect of architecture and that of divine, ineffable wonder. Amyraut's passage is interesting in many aspects, but most importantly it demonstrates the wide range of this poetic image in many domains of French society. Le Petit's *Paris ridicule*, which was first published in Cologne a few years later, proposes a very different view. Instead of being carried away by a dangerous poetic *simulacrum* ("l'idée des Palais enchantez dont parlent quelques Romans & quelques Poëtes"), Le Petit uses the very medium of poetry itself to approach the building in a completely opposite manner. The building, his poem explains, might *aim* to "dazzle the eyes" ("Pensant nous éblouir les yeux"), but when these very eyes of the spectator gaze back at the Louvre, they discover the poor means by which the palace attempts to achieve this effect:

Le Louvre.
Vois, muse comme il nous découvre,
Pensant nous éblouïr les yeux,
Ce grand bastiment neuf & vieux,
Q'on appelle aujourd'huy le Louvre?
Vois-tu ces murs si mal rangez,
Par l'antiquité tous rongez? […]
Vois sur cette aisle-cy l'ardoise,
Et sur cette autre-là le plomb,
Regarde un peu ce Pavillon
Plus court que l'autre d'une toise:
Admire ces compartimens,
Ces reliefs, ces soubassemens,
Cette façade, & ces corniches,
Rien n'y manque hormis d'y graver
Au dessous de toutes les niches,
Maisons à loüer pour l'hyver.[91]

Le Petit deconstructs the Louvre's intended effect of éblouissement, and by ex-

90 Ibid., 104: "Never did a mortal man see such greatness and glory, nor was he capable of filling the expanse of his faculties, as vast as they may be. […] [T]he wonder of that which Saint Paul had seen and heard was so new to him, and provoked in him such admiration at first, that one can imagine that he felt an inconceivable transport. Imagine a peasant who has never travelled beyond the vicinity of his cottage, and who is suddenly carried away by an Angel and transported to the city of Paris. While asleep, the Angel puts him in the most beautiful place of the Louvre, amidst the greatest magnificence of the Court […]. [Y]our mind does not need the idea of an enchanted Palace, which we find in various Novels and Poets, when you imagine the moment this poor man awakes, and all these beautiful objects strike his senses at the same time. This is enough to be able to imagine that on occasions like these we are so astonished that we do not know whether we are alive or dead, asleep or awake."

tension its derivative poetic images, by encouraging his muse, and through her the reader, to look at the original building. He emphasises the façade's irregular, weathered, and unfinished appearance, as well as its vast empty and abandoned interiors. Only by looking at the material shell of the Louvre, one learns that the Louvre does not elevate the viewer, and does not even succeed in accommodating their own inhabitants ("Rien n'y manque hormis d'y graver […] Maisons à loüer pour l'hyver"). These last lines render the contrast with the simultaneous submissions of inscriptions for the Louvre's east façade all the more conspicuous – especially, since the majority of these inscriptions *did* attempt to convince the proposed spectators of their own ravishment. Thus, in a very simple and concise manner, the poet effectively breaks down the sense of the ineffable that characterised both the intended effect as well as the poetic image of the Louvre, both of which played a key role during the palace's enlargement. Le Petit juxtaposes the construction of an ideal with a display of the building's reality, the political implications of which he is able to playfully underscore in the poem's concluding lines.

When considering the variety of views on the construction and effect of the Louvre, we can again identify the two different dynamics of spectrum and scale. The effect of the enchanted palace, which through its immediacy and contrasts constituted a prime example of sublime aesthetics, relied on a spectrum of sublimity. At one of its two extreme ends we find "nothing" (empty space) and on the other we find "abundance" (a complete palace), and the potential of the sublime lies in the sudden shift between one and the other, both back and forth. An enchanted palace manifests its power through the surprise and astonishment of its immediate magnificent appearance (as well as the immediacy of its magical disappearance). These are marvellous qualities and sensations both Félibien and Amyraut recognised in the reality of seventeenth-century Paris and would both poetically exploit. Whereas Félibien emphasised the immediacy that characterised the nature of enchanted architecture, in its sudden transformation from absence to presence ("Ne suis-je point dans un lieu enchanté […] où quand je suis parti de Paris il n'y avoit rien de tout ce que je vois?"), Amyraut also stressed its subsequent effect on the astonished beholder ("l'idée des Palais enchantez" [où] "tous ces beaux objets frappent en mesme moment ses sens"). The conditions that underlie the experience of both beholders, however, are quite particular and unique. Félibien's character returned to Paris after a long period of absence, which evoked his astonishment, while Amyraut's character is a man of poor means suddenly transported to the heart of courtly splendour.

91 Claude Le Petit, La Chronique scandaleuse ou Paris ridicule (Cologne: Pierre de la Place, 1668), 4-5: "The Louvre./ Look, muse, as he discovers us,/ Thinking that it dazzles our eyes,/ This great building new and old,/ Which we today call the Louvre?/ Do you see these badly arranged walls,/ All eaten away by the ages? […] Look there is slate on this wing,/ While there is lead on the other,/ Just look at this Pavilion/ Shorter than the other by a toise:/ Admire its chambers,/ These reliefs, these pedestals,/ This façade, and these cornices,/ Nothing is missing, except to engrave/ Below all its niches,/ 'Houses for rent in the winter.' "

However, the daily reality of the Parisian public was a building complex that remained in a constant unfinished state, which is unabashedly evoked in Petit's critical satire: a building that was simultaneously "neuf & vieux" while courtly poetics boasted of "ébloüir les yeux." In a similar vein, Sorbière the architecture's aim to astonish ("estonnés des merveilles"), but admitted that its true magnificence would only be manifested in its finished state ("[Le] Louvre, qui seroit le plus beau & le plus magnifique bastiment du monde, si on avoit le courage de l'achever"). In other words, instead of the enchanting ends of a spectrum of sublimity, the problematic situation of the Louvre project could be more aptly described as a fixed dot somewhere along the scale of sublimity. In pursuit of the sublime "complete palace" at the top of the scale, the Louvre remained stuck on this line and would hardly elevate.

To try and counter these issues, the court of Louis XIV had to establish a much closer relationship between the idea of enchantment and the actions of the monarch himself, and the possibility of locating the enchanted realm at his new main residence of Versailles formed a convenient way to mitigate the issues in the capitol. Whereas the construction of the Louvre progressed very slowly, the relatively short time in which the enlargement of the new castle and gardens at Versailles took place strongly inspired contemporaries to exploit the possibilities of the poetics of enchantment in descriptions. The immediacy of sudden enchantments in poetry, such as the magical palace, were likened to the astonishing transformations that were produced by figures such as garden designer André Le Nôtre (1613-1700) and fountain engineer Denis Jolly. The *Mercure galant* of April 1672 informed their readers about "things that surpass the imagination," such as the "wonders the waterworks produce," the "miracles that Monsieur Nautre has achieved" in these gardens, and a castle that "surpasses the Palace of Armida."[92] These experiences of the castle and grounds at Versailles resemble to a large extent the manner in which enchanted palaces inhibit the actions of their imprisoned heroes.[93] Similarly to the enchanted palace in George de Scudéry's *Alaric* ("D'un fort grand pauillon, la superbe façade,/ Arreste ses regards, comme sa promenade"), Reinhard Krüger rightly points out, the court at Versailles "cap-

92 "Discours sur les Eaux de Versailles, sur les Jardins, & sur les nouveaux Ouvrages qu'on y a mis; avec les noms des Sculpteurs," Mercure Galant, January-April, 1672, 247-53. The novelty of Le Nôtre's techniques and the vastness of his designs evoked many comparisons with the enchantments from Tasso's epic, and not only in Paris or at Versailles. In 1675, Madame de Sévigné wrote a letter to her daughter Madame de Grignan, in which the first not only mentioned the idea of rereading Tasso, but also stated that she was reminded of Tasso's Palace of Armida when visiting the castle at Clagny, situated near Versailles: "Nous fûmes à Clagny: que vous dirai-je? c'est le palais d'Armide; le bâtiment s'élève à vue d'œil; les jardins sont faits: vous connoissez la manière de le Nôtre; il a laissé un petit bois sombre qui fait fort bien; il y a un petit bois d'orangers dans de grandes caisses; on s'y promène; ce sont des allées où l'on est à l'ombre; et pour cacher les caisses, il y a des deux côtés des palissades à hauteur d'appui, toutes fleuries de tubéreuses, de roses, de jasmins, d'œillets: c'est assurément la plus belle, la plus surprenante, la plus enchantée nouveauté qui se puisse imaginer: on aime fort ce bois." See Madame de Sévigné to Madame de Grignan, August 7, 1675, in Lettres de Madame de Sévigné, de sa famille et de ses amis, ed. Louis Monmerqué, vol. 4 (Paris: Hachette, 1862), 13-30.

tivates" its courtiers in multiple ways: by containing them in the world within its walls, as well as by demanding their admiration and paralyzing astonishment.[94] In fact, this association was made much more concrete by George's younger sister Madeleine de Scudéry, whose use of heroic language and a vocabulary of the sublime in her descriptions of royal architecture tested the reader's sense of reality. Her *Promenade de Versailles* (1669), for instance, cannot be isolated from her broader oeuvre of multi-volume *romans* in which the boundary between the fictional and the real, between history and epic, is rendered indistinguishable through a *merveilleux vraisemblable*.[95] The *Promenade* makes the reader wonder whether the mysterious foreign friends that accompany the primary narrator are as real as the series of extraordinary architectural marvels the company encounters during their stroll on the royal grounds. As Jean-Vincent Blanchard writes, "le texte est tout plein de ces hyperboles et de ces topoï du genre selon lesquels l'art surpasse la nature à Versailles. La compagnie galante, au cours de sa visite, va en effet de surprise en surprise. Alors qu'ils arrivent à la fameuse grotte, il ne peuvent croire à ce qu'ils voient."[96] While writing about a real place, Blanchard argues, the style and rhetoric of the text elevates itself above a "vraisemblance romanesque" and towards the idea of an epic poem.[97] Elevation of style and elevation of subject matter (in the form of astonishing, incredible architecture) work together here to create a highly concentrated piece of rhetoric, which aims at strategically representing political power.

Most importantly, in this respect, the project at Versailles was not subjected to the mass public scrutiny that existed in Paris. Key characteristics such as the castle's secluded position and its hidden machinery approached the unknown and the ineffable by several degrees – which are qualities the open shell of the incomplete Louvre could ultimately only attain successfully on paper. And while the promptitude with which the enlargement of Versailles was arranged engendered persuasive fictions much more easily (Madeleine de Scudéry's "*Le Roi bastissoit Versailles*"), it also increasingly estranged the Louvre from the monarch, rendering both the literary and visual rhetoric of the Parisian project all the more artificial.

93 Reinhard Krüger, Zwischen Wunder und Wahrscheinlichkeit: die Krise des französischen Versepos im 17. Jahrhundert (Marburg: W. Hitzeroth, 1986), 271.

94 Ibid., 271. He writes: "Überall finden Alarics Augen Objekte der Wahrnehmung, die ihn zum repos zwingen […]. Alles im Zauberschloß, dessen Zuordnung zum absolutistischen Herrschaftsbau möglich war, ist auf die Wirkung der inaction ausgerichtet. Dieser Typus von Herrschaftsbau umschließt den Raum und setzt ein Spektakel in Szene, das denjenigen, der sich in ihm befindet, durch Überflutung der Sinne gefangen hält. Es ist ein « goldener Käfig », der den « Gefangenen » im cartesianischen Sinne die admiration und das lähmende étonnement abverlangt."

95 Blanchard, "Description et rhétorique," 485.

96 Ibid., 485.

97 Ibid., 485.

PART II

SECOND ISSUE

Louis XIV's own sublimity and the problem of representation (1670-1715)

The claim of human sublimity: Félibien's *Tapisseries du Roy* and the problem of the representation of Louis XIV

Three years after the edition of his first *Entretiens* in 1666, Félibien published his *Tapisseries du Roy* (1670), an engraved and commented edition of two of Charles Le Brun's tapestry series commissioned by Louis XIV.[1] These tapestries together allegorically visualise the four elements and the four seasons, glorifying the king through emblematic devices. Like the many prose and poetic texts that have been discussed in the previous three chapters, the *Tapisseries du Roy,* which was a true panegyric, relied on the poetics of the sublime in its aim to evoke the grandeur of the monarch.[2] However, the publication also marked an important shift in thinking about the very nature of this sublimity. In fact, the *Tapisseries du Roy* is the first clear and confident declaration of Louis XIV's inner sublimity, which was a claim that would eventually form the foundation of Rapin's treatise *Du grand ou du sublime*, roughly sixteen years later. In other words, in addition to Félibien's discussion on the sublime effect of art, which we explored in his *Entretiens*, he attempts to use his *Tapisseries du Roy* to further demonstrate the possibility of art to represent a sublime person.

To designate a human being as sublime also required a new way of thinking about how the poetics of the sublime should change with it. The explanatory texts by Félibien in the *Tapisseries du Roy* are very clear about this shift, and emphasise the prominent role emblematics play in this process. Moreover, Félibien's ideas should also be read against the background of the broader, and rapidly developing, discourse on the nature of sublimity that took place in the same period – the scope of which being much broader than the study of (poetic) literature alone. From the 1660s onwards, various French writers attempted to tackle the issue of the absence of a unifying critical notion that would cover the still "floating" notions of sublimity. This trend increasingly brought together notions such as *le merveilleux* and *le je ne sais quoi*, and *sublime* and eventually culminated in Boileau's

1 This chapter is a revised version of an article I published in the edited volume *Emblems and the Natural World*, which appeared as the 50th volume of the BRILL Intersections series in 2017. See Frederik Knegtel, "Transcending the Natural World: A Developing Sublime in André Félibien's *Tapisseries du Roy*," in *Emblems and the Natural World*, ed. Karl A.E. Enenkel and Paul J. Smith (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 383-418.

2 As I have stated in the introduction of this dissertation, I will make use the following edition of Félibien's publication: André Félibien, *Tapisseries du Roy ou sont representez les quatre elemens et les quatre saisons avec les devises qui les accompagnent, et leur explication* (Paris: Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1679).

1674 edition of Longinus: his *Traité du sublime ou du merveilleux dans le discours*.

But like the poetics of elevation, to connect the notion of sublimity to a quality of innate superhuman virtue also means to confront its pitfalls. The majority of these obstacles concern the problematic implications of Félibien's claim for the accomplished representation of Louis XIV's sublimity, an issue that is addressed only positively in the book but is actually much more acute and complex than is suggested. In fact, the scope of the problem is made very evident through the publication's many conflicting choices.

In order to fully understand the role of tapestries during the reign of Louis XIV, we need to briefly return to the report presented by Chapelain to Colbert in 1662 "for preserving the splendour of the king's enterprises." The use of the tapestry was given particular attention in the creation of new modes of royal representation, and in the context of architecture, Chapelain states, tapestries could be added to the exterior walls of buildings ("tous monumens historiques auxquels on pourroit ajouter nos riches fabriques de tapisseries"). The visual language manifested by the tapestry itself could thus participate in the effect that the building evokes. Félibien's publication of the *Tapisseries du Roy* further adds to the complex dynamic of political narrative and aesthetic effect that the presence of these tapestries creates.

BETWEEN EARTHLY AND LOFTY: ART AND NATURE IN THE TAPISSERIES DU ROY

In 1664, two tapestry series were designed by Charles Le Brun in close collaboration with Colbert's Petite académie (the later Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres) in order to glorify the still relatively early, but successful reign of Louis XIV. Four tapestries represented the Four Elements, four others the Four Seasons (fig. 24). In the central part of each of the eight tapestries, Le Brun depicted an allegorical tableau representing a classical deity connected to each of the seasons and elements. Additionally, Le Brun and his team placed four personalised emblematic roundels, or *devises*, in the corners of the more expensive *haute lisse* versions of the two tapestry series (fig. 25). These devices each had a Latin motto and corresponded to the theme of the tapestry, representing metaphorically the virtues and deeds of Louis XIV. A total of around twelve tapestry sets of the *Éléments* and *Saisons* were produced during the reign of Louis XIV, and only a small number of these sets had the elaborate border with four devices in each corner.[3]

3 See Jean Vittet, *La collection de tapisseries de Louis XIV* (Dijon: Faton, 2010), 128. In fact, since an early *haute lisse* tapestry set of the *Éléments* (with devices) was presented by the king to Cosimo III de' Medici (Grand Duke of Tuscany from 1670) in September 1669, a similar set was made to replace this earlier version. Thereby, the Gobelins and the king ensured that this elaborate and powerful set remained within the walls of the court and could be presented to the king's subjects.

In order to underscore the value of these tapestries – both within court circles and for a larger public – André Félibien, a royal historiographer and writer on art, published a non-illustrated description of the tapestries' devices in 1665.[4] In a 1667 edition, poetic madrigals were added. The majority of these short poems were devised by Charles Perrault, and they were supplemented by members of the Petite académie, including Jean Chapelain, Jacques Cassagnes (1636-1679), and François Charpentier (1620-1702).[5] Around this time, the painter Jacques Bailly (1634-1679) finished a collection of colourful miniatures on vellum depicting the tapestry devices, which Bailly himself had redesigned for this purpose (fig. 26).[6] In 1668, the madrigals and engraved versions of Bailly's work by Sébastien Le Clerc were brought together and published by Bailly under the title *Devises pour les tapisseries du roy: Ou sont representez les quatre elemens et les quatre saisons de l'année*. Félibien later expanded this edition with descriptions of the two tapestry sets and gave the new edition of 1670 a more complete title: *Tapisseries du Roy, ou sont representez les quatre elemens et les quatre saisons. Avec les devises qui les accompagnent, et leur explication* (fig. 28-30).[7] The publication reappeared in several editions in the course of the following decades, as well as in Dutch and German translations.

In 1669, the first sets of the actual tapestries were completed.[8] The expensive *haute lisse* woven sets were hung in the chateaux of Saint-Germain-en-Laye and Versailles and were displayed to an audience of courtiers and guests on special occasions. Other sets of both series were sent to foreign courts and officials as diplomatic gifts. The *Mercure galant* of July 1677 mentions that the month before, a large procession was led through several courtyards at Versailles, the walls of which were adorned with at least thirteen highly propagandistic tapestry sets, including both the *Éléments* and the *Saisons*.[9]

Both in the central scene of each tapestry, and in the devices around them, the realms of nature and architecture adopt several forms and intersect in various ways. These intersections range from allegorical interrelations between imaginary buildings and the natural world to juxtapositions of animals and plants in the rich architectural framework that

4 Alison Saunders, *The Seventeenth-Century French Emblem. A Study in Diversity* (Geneva: Droz, 2000), 296.

5 Ibid., 296.

6 For a facsimile of and commentary on this Bailly edition, see Marianne Grivel and Marc Fumaroli, *Devises pour les Tapisseries du Roi* (Paris: J. Guiffrey, 1988). Painted reproductions of the tapestries themselves were added to the manuscript several years later.

7 Grivel and Fumaroli, *Devises*, 115-16.

8 Alison Saunders, "Emblems to Tapestries and Tapestries to Emblems: Contrasting Practice in England and France," *Seventeenth-Century French Studies* 21, no. 1 (1999): 249. I want to thank Alison Saunders for generously giving me a copy of this article.

9 Thomas P. Campbell and Elizabeth A.H. Cleland, eds., *Tapestry in the Baroque: New Aspects of Production and Patronage* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 345-46.

surrounds the emblematic devices. This vibrant interplay of nature and architecture reflects the contemporary activities of the king in several ways.

Firstly, while the two tapestry sets contain a large variety of wild animals, plants and landscapes, they emphasise royal dominance over the untamed natural world. The *Éléments* tapestries show a large number of birds and plants in their wild environment, but the presence of allegorical figures and human tools both appropriate and cultivate the depicted savage landscape. More importantly, while the tapestry of *Le Feu* demonstrates the raw force of thunder, and while *L'Air* and *L'Eau* show a multitude of wild birds and sea creatures in their respective natural habitats, the final tapestry of *La Terre* depicts exotic animals such as a lion and a camel in the park of a classical country house. The fourth and culminating tapestry of *La Terre* reacts to the three previous elements: Louis XIV, having calmed the natural fury and disorder of fire, air and water, works miracles on the earth.[10] This idea of shaping the natural world into palaces and gardens, is carried over into the tapestry set of the *Saisons*, each of which is dedicated to one of Louis XIV's palaces. Versailles is shown in spring, Fontainebleau in summer, Saint-Germain-en-Laye in autumn and the Louvre in winter. Mythological gods are shown floating gloriously in the gardens of each palace. The palaces themselves are visualised in the background of each central *tableau* and function in the season concerned as political headquarter or country seat. Construction or enlargement of these buildings, as well as the transformation of their rough natural surroundings into formal gardens by André Le Nôtre, actually coincided with the production of these tapestry scenes. One excellent example is the central scene of the *L'Été* tapestry (fig. 29). The figures of Minerva and Apollo are depicted in front of the palace at Fontainebleau, and they hold an image of the central pavilion of the Tuileries palace, which was considerably enlarged at that time.

Secondly, Le Brun's compositions in the central scenes allegorically relate the floating mythological figures to the landscapes behind them. Both speak about the king's virtues.[11] A similar visual language returns in the surrounding devices, which are each visualised in detail in Félibien's publication. In the device's central medallion, the king's virtues and deeds are metaphorically represented by examples taken from the natural world and from the realm of the visual arts. For example, two devices in the *L'Été* tapestry refer to the king's building practice. While the first, a carpenter's square with the words "Dirigit Obliqua" ("He Makes the Slanted Straight"), symbolises the king's dedication

10 Félibien, *Tapisseries du Roy*, 35. Félibien opens his description of *La Terre* with the following words: "Si sa Majesté sceû dissiper les foudres & les orages qui menaçoient incessament nos testes; si Elle a rendu l'air serein & tranquille; si Elle a calmé les flots de la Mer, & dompté sa fureur: Elle n'a pas fait de moindres miracles sur la Terre. Et c'est ce que l'on a tasché de representer dans le quatriéme Tableau qui figure cét Elément."

11 Fumaroli, *L'École du silence*, 12. Fumaroli's text can also be found in Grivel and Fumaroli, *Devises*.

in reforming problems of State, the other device – a halcyon building a nest at sea, together with the words "Miratur Natura Silens" ("Nature is Astonished in Silence") – is actually concerned with the king's buildings:

> *Pour les Bastimens, Divertissement. Dans la piece de la saison de l'Esté.*
> Un Alcion bâtissant son Nid sur la Mer, qui se tient calme, pour ne pas troubler un Bâtiment si merveilleux, avec ce mot, MIRATUR NATURA SILENS; pour exprimer la beauté des Bâtimens du Roy, qui est telle, qu'il semble que toute l'Europe ne se soit tenuë en Paix, lors que Sa Majesté a recommencé d'y faire travailler, que pour en admirer mieux la structure surprenante & incomparable.
>
> *Lors que de l'Edifice où je dois habiter,*
> *Et que le temps doit respecter,*
> *J'entreprens la structure à nulle autre pareille,*
> *La Nature s'impose une profonde Paix,*
> *Pour mieux considerer l'incroyable merveille*
> *Du Bâtiment que je me fais.*
>
> Perrault.[12]

Félibien's description and Perrault's accompanying madrigal, describe Louis XIV's architectural projects as "incredible wonder[s]," and explain that during construction, the natural world – symbolizing all of Europe – imposes a profound peace that enables one to better admire the marvellous structure of the building.[13]

Here, the device not only speaks about beauty and good government, but about something much more powerful, namely the potential of the arts and of literature to stupefy and astonish, to the point that the beholder cannot express his or her feelings in words. Many of the madrigals in the book are written in the first person singular – using *je*, *me* and *moi* – which suggests that the device's ultimate subject, Louis XIV, is talking about himself to the reader. The Halcyon device is actually one of a great number in the *Tapisseries du Roy* to deal with the overwhelming and the elevating. These devices – the Bird of paradise, the Fir Tree, the Lily, the Ivy-covered Pyramid, and the Theatrical Machine – and their

12 Félibien, *Tapisseries du Roy*, 69: "For the Buildings, Entertainment. In the piece of the season of Summer A Halcyon is building its nest at Sea, which keeps calm as not to disturb a marvellous building, with the words, MIRATUR NATURA SILENS; to express the beauty of the King's Buildings. This beauty is such that it seems that all of Europe maintains peace when His Majesty has resumed his building activities, only to better admire the amazing and incomparable structure. *When I start the unparalleled construction of the Building where I have to live and which time should respect, Nature imposes a profound Peace, in order to be able to better consider the incredible wonder of a Building that I am making.*" My emphasis.

13 Félibien, *Tapisseries du Roy*, 69.

use of the natural world seem to work as vehicles of the sublime, a phenomenon that became reconsidered and increasingly conceptualised during this period, partly in order to answer to the grandeur of Louis XIV.

The two tapestry sets and Félibien's book *Tapisseries du Roy* have not yet been extensively studied within the domain of the sublime or related notions, certainly not in a separate investigation. Marc Fumaroli only briefly touches on the relation between the devices of the *Tapisseries du Roy* and the sublime when he writes that Jacques Bailly celebrates the variety of the world's "wonders" with, and I paraphrase, a lyricism that may carry with it a development of the sublime.[14] Moreover, Claire Goldstein, in a chapter dedicated to the tapestries in her book *Vaux and Versailles*, also briefly mentions the sublime in relation to Félibien's publication: "The text presents the king as immanent and immediately perceptible – revealed in an instant like the lightning strike of Boileau's Longinian sublime."[15] Upon closer investigation of the devices, Fumaroli's and Goldstein's caution actually seems unnecessary. The *devises* belong, in several respects, to the seventeenth-century discourse on the overwhelming and transporting power of text, image, and human virtue. In this chapter, I wish to argue that the publication of the *Tapisseries du Roy* illustrates two currents of the developing seventeenth-century French sublime. Firstly, I will discuss the notion of the sublime that was understood as the overwhelming effect that is created when noble ideas are powerfully conveyed through text and image. Secondly, I will inquire into the problematic shift the publication makes towards the claim of Louis XIV's own sublimity, which is virtually impossible to represent.

I. A SUBLIMITY THROUGH MOTTO AND PICTURA: THE DEVICE

In order to be able to convey someone's virtues of personality, a device could be created to adorn surfaces such as facades, chimneys, shields, banners or tapestries. The device relies on the combination of an image (*pictura*) and a succinct sentence or soul (*motto*). In a multitude of elaborately depicted devices, the reader of the *Tapisseries du Roy* is confronted with an array of these images. One is first drawn to the central metaphor, reinforced by the accompanying Latin *motto* above it. In rhetoric, as described by Quintilian and Cicero, an orator or writer is able to use figures of speech in texts to evoke vivid images before the mind's eye of the receiver.[16] As Aristotle wrote, effective metaphors

14 Fumaroli, *L'École du silence*, 557. He writes: "Bailly, comme Binet, célèbre la variété du monde, ses merveilles avec le même lyrisme qui peut avoir l'essor du sublime (les Alcyons, le Phénix)."

15 Claire Goldstein, *Vaux and Versailles: the appropriations, erasures, and accidents that made modern France* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 102.

16 Van Eck, *Art, Agency*, 19.

animate that what is essentially inanimate. However, the viewer of the tapestry devices or the devices reproduced in Félibien's *Tapisseries du Roy* is simultaneously and visually confronted with a thought and image.[17] At the time when the tapestries of the *Éléments* and *Saisons* were first produced and displayed, several French intellectuals wrote about this particularly striking power of the device, connecting it to the concepts of *le merveilleux* and *le je ne sais quoi*.

One of these writers was Pierre Le Moyne. In the following passage, from his work *L'Art des devises* from 1666, he stresses the power of devices to evoke an idea almost instantaneously:

> [I]l est de la Devise en cela, comme de ces images universelles données aux Esprits superieurs, qui representent en un moment, & par une notion simple & degagée, ce que les nostres ne peuvent representer que successivement, & par une longue suite d'expressions, qui se forment les unes apres les autres.[18]

Le Moyne calls devices "the language of a mysterious passion," one that is concise and secret.[19] What should be present, Le Moyne adds, is that one should add to the *corps* of the device a sense of *le merveilleux*: "Le beau & le noble ne suffisent pas aux corps des Devises. Le grand & le merveilleux y veulent estre adjoutez."[20] The content of a device must enlighten the mind of the spectator; "it resembles," he writes, "the sublime and heroic, and approaches grandeur and the majestic."[21] Le Moyne argues that one needs rare and surprising things, but no monsters. A key prerequisite of this *merveilleux* was a sense of verisimilitude (*le vraisem-*

17 Quoted from Saunders, *French Emblem*, 288-289. This connects to Félibien's fascinating message about the king's glory, published in the *Tapisseries du Roy*: "C'est par ces Peintures ingénieuses qu'on veut apprendre la grandeur de son Nom à ceux qui viendront aprés nous, & leur faire connoistre par ces Images allégoriques ce que des paroles n'exprimeroient pas avec assez de force. En effet, de quelle maniére pourroit-on assez bien écrire tout ce que S. M. a fait depuis qu'Elle est montée sur le Trône, & comment pourroit-on assez dignement representer les avantages arrivez à l'Etat, depuis qu'Elle en a pris la conduite ? Cependant, toutes ces merveilles sont si misterieusement dépeintes dans les quatre Tableaux que je veux décrire, que l'oeil les découvre d'abord avec plaisir, & l'entendement les connoist avec admiration."

18 Pierre Le Moyne, *De l'art des devises* (Paris: Sebastien Cramoisy, 1666), quoted from Kate E. Tunstall, "Hieroglyph and Device in Diderot's *Lettre sur les sourds et muets*," *Diderot Studies* 28 (2000): 167-68: "It is a Device in that sense, like these universal images that are within the power of superior minds, that represent in one moment, and by a simple and clear notion, that which our minds can only represent successively, and by a long series of expressions, which are formed one after the other."

19 See Cronk, *The Classical Sublime*, 66-67.

20 Le Moyne, *l'art des devises*, 110: "The beautiful and the noble are not sufficient in the *corps* of devices. The grand and the marvellous need to be added to it." This idea is shared by a contemporary of Le Moyne, Monsieur Clément, who writes in his *Regles pour la connoissance des devises*: "Les Devises doivent estre fondées sur le merveilleux ou, pour mieux dire, sur quelques propriétez rares, & singuliers, des Corps qui s'y représentent, afin que l'esprit de ceux qui les voyent, en soit agréablement surpris." For Clément's text, see Daniel S. Russell, "Two seventeenth-century French treatises on the art of the device," *Emblematica* 1, no. 1 (1986): 79-106.

21 Le Moyne, *l'art des devises*, 14. He writes: "La Devise tient plus du sublime & de l'Heroïque, approche plus de la grandeur & de la majesté."

blable), which pertains to the believability and the recognizable character of the core of the device. Therefore, the natural world constituted the ultimate source of metaphors that were powerful enough to evoke the epic or heroic quality of a person. These metaphors in turn create a sense of the *merveilleux* in the viewer. Le Moyne writes:

> Or l'Heroïque, comme chacun sçait, ne va pas à petit train ; il luy faut de l'appareil & de la suite […] & le grand ne doit pas manquer à son appareil, non plus que le merveilleux à sa suite. Mais dans la Devise, aussi bien que dans le Poëme, il faut prendre garde, qu'au lieu du merveilleux qu'on cherche quelquefois où il n'est pas, on ne tombe dans l'obscur & dans l'inconnu. Qu'on n'aille donc point chercher […] des Fleurs, des Herbes, & des Plantes qui ayent besoin d'inscription & d'étude : qui ne soient connuës que de […] ceux qui sont versez […] en l'Histoire de la Nature. […] Qu'on ne prenne donc que des Corps connus.[22]

In other words, one has to retain a sense of verisimilitude for the device not to become obscure, bizarre or hyperbolical. The device's core must be recognizable and knowable for all, while still retaining a sense of surprise.

This idea – the natural world as a powerful means to transmit *le merveilleux* through a device – was further developed by Dominique Bouhours in a discussion of the device in *Les Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène* from 1671. Bouhours knew Le Moyne's work and also combined the notion of the instantaneous with the notion of *le merveilleux*, but geared it more towards an exploration of the somewhat problematic notion of *le je ne sais quoi*. One of the central thoughts of his *Entretiens* is the potential of nature as a powerful metaphor; he first uses the example of the sea and claims that although art is not always able to imitate nature, art still is of crucial importance, since the natural world, when used in art as a metaphor, can evoke a wholly different response.[23] Here, Bouhours's argument resembles that of Longinus, who discusses the human tendency to admire natural phenomena, but only restricts the true sublime to the rhetorical use of these natural events (as metaphors or analogies) in discourse.[24] Bouhours's *Entretiens* culminates with a discussion dedicated to the device, which he re-

22 Le Moyne, *l'art des devises*, 110-111: "Now, the Heroic, as everyone knows, does not go in small steps; it needs a design and a consequence [FK: or "effect"], and *le grand* should not be absent in its design, nor should *le merveilleux* be absent in its consequence. But in the Device, like in a Poem, one must be careful that instead of *le merveilleux* for which we sometimes look where it is not, we fall into the obscure and unknown. One therefore should not look for […] those Flowers, Herbs, and Plants that are in need of description and study, or that are known only to those who are well versed in Natural History. Therefore, we only take a well-known *Corps*."

23 Cronk, *The Classical Sublime*, 53.

24 For Longinus and the natural metaphor, see: Theodore Gracyk, "The Sublime and the Fine Arts," in *The Sublime. From Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Timothy Costelloe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 222.

gards as a powerful vehicle of *le merveilleux*. He explains that the device depends upon the interaction of two levels of meaning; the full meaning depends on the comprehension of the *motto* and the *pictura*.[25] Bouhours argues: "[La devise] cache […] à la façon des mysteres beaucoup plus de choses qu'elle n'en découvre ; et l'on y conçoit je ne sçay quoy d'admirable que l'on ne voit point."[26]

More important, Bouhours continues, is the idea of brevity that is implied by the use of a metaphor, since a device is designed to convey both the visual and textual level of meaning simultaneously. By means of its "similitude metaphorique," this metaphorical structure compels the viewer to establish a connection between two separate objects, and functions as a mask that surprises us ("un masque qui nous surprend").[27] The devices thus combine image and text to convey one powerful thought, Bouhours argues. Referring to Aristotle on metaphors, he concludes that the device strikes the senses and sight ("elle frappe les sens, & particulierement la veûë"); it ultimately creates a sense of astonishment and thus arouses *le merveilleux*: "Les devises ne sont point parfaites, si le merveilleux ne s'y rencontre" and "les excellentes devoient avoir quelque chose de piquant & de relevé; que c'étoit le merveilleux qui leur donnoit cette pointe."[28]

This interdependence of mystery and striking wonder brings us back to the tapestry sets of the *Éléments* and *Saisons* themselves, since these notions lie at the very heart of the tapestries' production and their accompanying publication. These sets were among the most prominent examples of the use of the device in the visual (and public) arts during the 1660s and 1670s, and also provided the contemporary viewer with a large number of examples. The viewer would first be struck by the richness of the tapestry's vibrant colours and gold thread. Subsequently, the design would draw the viewer's attention towards the central allegorical *tableau*, and finally towards the four devices in each corner. This is where the tapestry aimed at keeping hold of its viewer, who would ponder on the hidden message of the images.[29] Through their light, vibrant background and thick pearl border, the devices greatly contrasted with their much darker sur-

25 Cronk, *The Classical Sublime*, 68. The device, as Nicholas Cronk writes, disrupts the normal mimetic process.

26 Bouhours, *Les Entretiens*, 378: "[The device] hides, in the manner of mysteries, many more things than it reveals; and we conceive here a wonderful *je ne sais quoi* that we do not see."

27 Ibid., 377. See also Cronk, *The Classical Sublime*, 67.

28 Cronk, *The Classical Sublime*, 69: "Devices are not perfect if we cannot find in them a sense of *le merveilleux*" and "the most excellent ones need to have something piquant and elevated; it is *le merveilleux* that gives them this striking subtlety." See also Daniel S. Russell, *The Emblem and Device in France* (Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1985).

29 Actually, when comparing the devices with the central *tableau*, viewers would discover that many of the devices' animals and plants also returned in Le Brun's central *tableaux*. For example, this is the case in the tapestry of *L'Air* (in the *Éléments*), in which the bird of paradise of the device in the upper-right corner (SEMPER SUBLIMIS) is also included hovering in the skies of the central allegorical scene.

roundings, making them appear as four illuminated circular windows. Moreover, their simple design and brevity similarly contrasted with their highly abundant pictorial context.[30] Apart from Félibien's short Latin inscription that was included in the lower part of each of the borders, the abundance of meaning of the tapestries remained hidden. The main language of these tapestries was that of marvellous and suggestive imagery; his argument, which is further expounded in his explanatory texts on the eight tapestries, is completely in line with the ideas of Le Moyne (and Bouhours) on the striking power and *merveilleux* of the device.[31]

But as far as *le merveilleux* of the device is concerned, Félibien's book causes a problem. Ultimately, Félibien's book and the manner in which he presents the devices, ultimately subvert and harm the marvellous power of these devices. He and his colleagues add to the isolated devices a large number of explanatory texts; a new title, a short explanation of both *pictura* and *motto*, a madrigal of six lines, as well as lengthy explanations of the tapestries elsewhere in the book. Keeping Le Moyne and Bouhours in mind, these added components actually seem to weaken the striking mystery of the device, since its *sens caché* is made less cryptic.[32] Thus, instead of preserving the marvellous rhetoric of the isolated device, Félibien and his team dismantle it.

The addition of these texts, are a symptom of a major problem underlying Félibien's project. The publication essentially tries to shift the notion of sublimity from its traditional understanding as a quality evoked through art and literature – as explained by Le Moyne and Bouhours – towards an understanding of sublimity as a human virtue, which can be found as an innate quality in Louis XIV himself. Here, we already recognise a philosophy of sublimity, and in particular of the monarch's transcendence, that would reach a climax in Rapin's 1686 treatise *Du Grand ou du sublime*. However, the many problems such an understanding creates, which underlie Rapin's treatise and which he admitted not being able to solve, also underlie Félibien's publication and point us towards the instability of his project.

30 In the tapestry set of the *Éléments*, The viewer was also able to compare the ambiguous content of the devices with two small panels or *tableaux*, which were located in the same border (on the left and right side of each tapestry). These panels depict more familiar scenes relating to the actions of Louis XIV, such as festivities, cityscapes, and scenes of war.

31 Félibien. *Tapisseries du Roy*, vii: "C'est par ces Peintures ingénieuses qu'on veut apprendre la grandeur de son Nom à ceux qui viendront aprés nous, & leur faire connoistre par ces Images allégoriques ce que des paroles n'exprimeroient pas avec assez de force. […] [T]outes ces merveilles sont si misterieusement dépeintes dans les quatre Tableaux que je veux décrire" ("Through these ingenious Paintings we want to make the grandeur of his Name known to future generations, and to make them aware – through these allegorical Images – of that which words would express less powerfully. [A]ll of these wonders are so mysteriously depicted in the four *Tableaux* that I wish to describe").

32 Madrigals were often added to published versions of devices, and were even read during ceremonies (see Pierre-Daniel Huet, *Discours prononcez [par MM. P.-D. Huet et Fléchier] à l'Académie françoise* (Paris: Pierre Le Petit, 1674). Le Moyne adds madrigals in his *De l'art des devises*, and Bouhours actually praises the madrigal that accompanied a sun-device of Louis XIV, since it completely expressed his thoughts ("le madrigal qui accompagne cette Devise, exprime admirablement ma pensée." See Bouhours, *Les Entretiens*, 324.

The main claim of the *Tapisseries du Roy* is that Louis XIV radiates an intrinsic sublimity, which has nothing borrowed and is visible to all, which ravishes the spectator and surpasses the forces of nature and the ordinary scope of man, and thus remains a secret and striking mystery. The use of the French word "sublime" by Perrault and his colleagues as applied to Louis XIV, alludes to a quality *inherent* in certain things and beings, instead of only created through words or images.

In that respect, it already prefigures the parallel Bouhours would later establish in his *Entretiens* between the *je ne sais quoi* and the king's *magnificence*. But most importantly, this notion of the sublimity of virtues and actions in Félibien's *Tapisseries* constitutes an early version of the idea of the "Sublime en toutes choses" that would later return in the writings of René Rapin and Pierre-Daniel Huet (1630-1721) during the 1680s.[33] In his famous letter to Charles de Sainte-Maure, duc de Montausier (1610-1690) from March 1683, Huet would make a categorisation of four types of sublimity;[34] above the Longinian "sublime des pensées," he places the "sublime des choses" ("sublime of things"), which is an intrinsic sublimity that "depends solely on the grandeur and dignity of the subject that is treated, and manifests itself without the author even needing to use artifice (rhetoric) to make it as grand as it really is."[35] Huet, who sees God as the ultimate example of this fourth type, concludes the following – and here we recognise the same ideas that were expressed in the aforementioned Lily device ("*Rejetton glorieux d'une tige sublime* […] [Je] *brille d'un éclat qui n'a rien d'emprunté*"):

> [L]e sublime des choses est le véritable sublime, le sublime de la nature, le sublime original, et les autres ne le sont que par imitation et par art. Le sublime des choses a la sublimité en soi-même, les autres ne l'ont que par emprunt…[36]

33 Rapin, *Du grand*, iii.

34 Pierre-Daniel Huet to Charles de Sainte-Maure, duc de Montausier, March 26, 1683, in *Mémoires de Daniel Huet*, ed. Charles Nisard (Paris: Hachette, 1853), 286. He distinguishes the following four categories: "le sublime des termes" (an apparent elevation of discourse by choice of beautiful or grand words), "le sublime du tour de l'expression" (elevating by a certain arrangement or disposition of words), "le sublime des pensées" (a sublimity that immediately departs from the mind, and is felt just by itself, given that it is not weakened by low words or a wrong arrangement, and "le sublime des choses" (which depends solely on grandeur and dignity of the subject that is treated, without needing artifice (rhetoric) to make it as grand as it really is).

35 Huet, *Mémoires*, 287. The original French reads: "Pour le sublime des choses, il dépend uniquement de la grandeur et de la dignité du sujet que l'on traite, sans que celui qui parle ai besoin d'employer aucun artifice pour le faire paraître aussi grand qu'il est."

36 Ibid., 288: "The sublime of things is the true sublime, the sublime of nature, the original sublime, while the other ones are sublime only by means of imitation of art. The sublime of things has sublimity in itself, the other ones as a result of borrowing."

Three years later, in 1686, Rapin published his *Du Grand ou du sublime,* in which he argued that the sublime Longinus found in discourse can also be found in things and people.[37] According to Rapin, the most elevated sublimity of human beings resided in the person of Louis XIV. The sublimity cannot be understood, he claimed, only felt.[38]

But what was, then, the true purpose of Félibien's enterprise? The author's introductory text reminds the reader quite quickly that the book seeks to teach to "those who come after us the grandeur of his name." Félibien repeatedly makes sure that the reader does not overlook this key motive, which is the representation of profound grandeur, of the monarch's own, inner sublimity. And only the means of emblematics and allegory, Félibien argues, can achieve this:

> Lors que les hommes eûrent trouvé l'art de faire des vers, ils n'employerent cette noble façon de s'exprimer, que pour parler des Dieux ; & crûrent que la Poësie estant un langage divin, ils ne s'en devoient servir que pour chanter leurs loûanges. C'est sur cét exemple, que pour parler de l'Auguste personne de SA MAJESTÉ, on cherche aujourd'huy d'autres paroles que celles qui ont esté en usage jusques à présent, & que pour décrire les grandes actions du plus grand Roy du monde, on forme de nouveaux caracteres.[39]

Félibien boldly implies here that both the seventeenth-century artist and poet are at the threshold of a new era: where the ancient man had once learned that only a divine language can answer to the divinity of the gods, the emergence of a new type of profound grandeur makes man, again, ask the very same question. In other words, Félibien points to an ideal language that would be able to evoke true greatness. The search for such a language had already existed for centuries, and was philosophised over and over again. For instance, works such as *De erroribus magnorum virorum in dicendo* (Rome, 1635) by Leone Allacci (ca. 1586-1669) were the product of an antiquary milieu around Francesco Barberini (1597-1679) that studied the "remnants of a lost knowledge, [and] remnants of a language of this

37 See Rapin, *Du grand*, 3: "Car je prétens mettre à tout ce Sublime de la mesme maniere que Longin l'a mis au seul discours, & vous faire trouver de nouvelles graces, & de nouvelles beautez, en ce qu'il y a de plus ordinaire & de plus commun dans les différens estats de la vie."

38 Ibid., 13: "Vous trouverez, Monsieur, […] que vous n'aurez pas de peine à comprendre ce que c'est que ce Sublime dont je vous parle, tout incompréhensible qu'il est : & ce sera par l'admiration & par l'étonnement qu'il vous causera, que vous le comprendrez" ("You will find, Monsieur, […] that you will have no difficulty in understanding this Sublime of which I speak, although it is incomprehensible: only through the admiration and astonishment it will cause you, you will be able understand it").

39 Félibien, *Tapisseries du Roy*, vii: "When man had discovered the art of composing verses, he only employed this noble manner of expression for speaking about Gods; and believing Poetry to be a divine language, he only used it when singing his praise. Following this example, when speaking of the august person of HIS MAJESTY, we now look for other languages than those that have been in use until now. And in order to be able to describe the grand deeds of the greatest King in the world, we now form new characters."

knowledge" during the 1630s.[40] Allacci's book, which includes his translations of passages from Longinus, departs from the original language God gave man in Paradise, which eventually lost its universality with the confusion and scattering of speech at the Tower of Babel.[41] In sublime eloquence, which is highly figural, the orator approaches this original language very closely, reducing the distance between inner and outer speech.[42] Even Longinus himself, Clélia Nau writes, built his treatise on a similar thought: through his book he contemplates the primitive ideal language that Greek and other more ancient authors possessed, and by collecting the many scattered fragments of examples of the vestiges of Greek "great art" such as Homer's work, he thus hopes to better approach this echo of a language.[43]

Through the *Tapisseries du Roy*, Félibien aims at establishing the means of emblematics as such a language. This means, Félibien argues, that poetry will simply not suffice anymore; only emblematics and allegory can communicate "the grandeur of his Name to future generations" while making them aware "of that which words would not express with enough force."[44] The sentence that follows is meant as a rhetorical question: "Indeed, in what manner could one describe well enough all that His Majesty has done since he ascended the throne; and how can we represent most worthily ["assez dignement representer"] the benefits that have come to the state, since he started his leadership?" With "représenter," Félibien, and later Rapin, means a true *evocation* of the monarch's sublimity, so that it can be expressed in its entirety and thus can be felt and experienced by the recipient looking at a building, or viewing a text or image. In a sense, it means trying to harness his sublimity for the sake of evoking it, thus protecting from the destructive force of time. But even though Félibien's question aims to convince the reader of the importance of the *Tapisseries du Roy* as an answer to the question of the monarch's representation, it actually, I would argue, articulates the book's largest problem.

Félibien's question reveals the following issue underlying his book, which concerns his general aim: while Félibien claims to have found a means that is powerful enough to *represent* the monarch's sublimity in order to evoke his grandeur

40 See Marc Fumaroli, "Hiéroglyphes et lettres: la « Sagesse mystérieuse des Anciens » au XVIIe siècle," *XVIIe siècle* 158 (January-March 1988): 7-20. Quoted from Clélia Nau, *Le temps du sublime. Longin et le paysage poussinien* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2005), 36.

41 Caroline van Eck, "Figuring the Sublime in English Church Architecture," in Van Eck, Bussels, Delbeke and Pieters, *Translations of the Sublime*, 240.

42 Ibid., 240.

43 Nau, *Le temps*, 36.

44 Félibien. *Tapisseries du Roy*, vii: "Through these ingenious Paintings we want to make the grandeur of his Name known to future generations, and to make them aware – through these allegorical Images – of that which words would express less powerfully. […] [A]ll of these wonders are so mysteriously depicted in the four *Tableaux* that I wish to describe."

for posterity, Félibien and his team structurally and repeatedly only *refer* to the idea of his sublimity and its representation – in such a forced and explanatory fashion, that they disrupt and break down the power ("la force") that the original devices were said to evoke. Their various attempts to contain and cope with the underlying tension that is the monarch's transcendence, all point to the dilemmas that arise when shifting the sublime towards human virtue. Moving the sublime from texts and artworks to persons opens up a gap between representation and the represented – a gap that, by the very fact itself, can no longer be bridged with literary or artistic techniques of representation. In fact, Félibien's book shows the first symptoms of the problem with which Rapin was faced in his treatise roughly twenty years later: to evoke Louis XIV's sublimity, Rapin himself stated, you need a sublime representation, which Rapin admitted he was incapable of, and therefore postponed the problem, advancing it towards other people ("C'est à eux à dire les merveilles d'un Regne di admirable, & de mettre en œuvre le Sublime de son ame & de son cœur par tout le Sublime de leur éloquence").

There are various signs and inconsistencies that give the impression that Félibien and the Petite académie already seem to have been aware of the far-reaching implications of their sublime shift of the monarch himself. The most extensive one deals with a contrast that exists between the introductory text and the framework of the rest of the book. While arguing that only the means of device and allegory, instead of poetry, should be powerful enough to represent the king's sublimity ("representant les plus hauts mistéres" or "representer ces effets merveilleux"), the authors make the contradictory decision of using poetry, as well as lengthy prose texts, to explain the power of these devices and the message they hide. Félibien even apologises in advance for this decision:

> On m'excusera donc bien si j'ose entreprendre d'expliquer à ceux qui ne sont pas accoustumez à voir ces caracteres misterieux, de quelle sorte on a figuré les grandes actions que Sa Majesté a faites dans chacun de ces Elémens, & combien le Peintre a caché de merveilles sous le voile de ses couleurs.[45]

Félibien's book essentially breaks down the mysterious power that he himself deemed instrumental in the monarch's true representation, sacrificing it by means of a less powerful medium for the sake of communicating the hidden message to the reader ("ce n'est pas avec moins de force & d'éloquence"). For instance, by means of words such as "ainsi" and "de même," the short prose texts that

45 Ibid., 2: "Therefore forgive me when I dare to explain to those who are not accustomed to see these mysterious characters, in what manner the grand actions of His Majesty are figured in each of these Elements, and the manner in which the painter has hidden these wonders under the veil of his colours." He explains that the painter's "activité merveilleuse" is able to create "Peintures misterieuses" that evoke the king's own "effets merveilleux." The "voile" resembles Bouhours's explanation of the device's metaphorical structure as a "habit étranger."

are added above the engraved devices change the structure of the device from a metaphor into the related but much less powerful figure of a simile. Ultimately, the added madrigals and explanations accompanying the *pictura* and *motto* do not primarily seek to create a manifestation of a sublime effect through artful or technical means, but rather to show Louis XIV's own sublimity. In Félibien's description of the tapestry of *L'Air*, he describes the king as a person capable of provoking conflicting and powerful emotions: "The mere sound of his name and the radiant light of his qualities," he writes, "are able to create in the beholder a sense of fear mingled with admiration."[46] The king does not need artifice to create a sense of sublimity. In the madrigals and explanatory texts accompanying the devices, Félibien and the authors of the Petite académie evoke the same ideas.

Firstly, there are the two devices of the Skyrocket (Perrault, in the Element of *Le Feu*) and the Bird of Paradise (Perrault, in the Element of *L'Air*). Although the first is taken from the world of art and spectacle, and the second one belongs to the realm of nature, they both convey the same idea: the king's elevated glory. The ardour of his soul elevates *itself*, while dazzling all the eyes of the beholders, and transports the king above all others. But given the fact that a skyrocket must also come down, the following device with a bird of paradise was perhaps more effective in symbolising this idea (fig. 28). The explanation teaches us that, according to naturalists, the bird of paradise never touches the ground, which is why the motto reads "Semper Sublimis" (Always Elevated):

> *Pour la Magnanimité, Dans la piece de l'element de l'Air.*
> L'Oyseau que l'on appelle de Paradis, si l'on en croit les Naturalistes, se soûtient toûjours élevé dans l'Air, sans jamais toucher à terre ; ce qui, joint avec ces paroles, SEMPER SUBLIMIS, exprime assez bien la grandeur d'Ame de Sa Majesté, qui est toûjours occupée à de grandes choses, & qui ne se propose rien que de magnifique et de sublime.
>
> *Il n'est rien de si relevé,*
> *Où si son vol n'est arrivé,*
> *Il ne monte sans peine & sans trop entreprendre.*
> *Il ne cesse d'agir, & jamais il n'est las;*
> *Il regarde sur nous, & voit sans y décendre,*
> *Tout ce qui se passe icy bas.*
>
> Perrault.[47]

46 Ibid., 15: "[T]outefois le seul bruit de son Nom, & les lumiéres éclatantes de ses grandes qualitez ont toûjours tenu nos esprits dans une crainte respectueuse, & pleine d'admiration."

47 Ibid., 19: "For Magnanimity, in the piece of the element of Air. The Bird which we call 'of Paradise', if we are to believe the Naturalists, is always elevated in the Air without ever touching the ground: this, together with the words

"The king," Perrault writes, "never proposes anything but that what is magnificent and sublime." There is nothing as "relevé" ("elevated") as he is, and he sees everything that happens below him without ever having to descend. Whereas the *pictura* in the device seems to have been taken from Le Moyne or from the earlier work by Joachim Camerarius the Younger (1534-1598), Perrault's madrigal is quite unique.[48] Whereas Le Moyne in his device and madrigal uses the bird of paradise to evoke both man's divine inspiration and the idea of fiery poetic and artistic enthusiasm, Perrault equates the bird with Louis XIV himself. By employing the word "sublime," the explanatory text seeks to enforce the king's elevated status, while the use of prose transforms these explanations into declarations. The same notion of elevation is evoked in Perrault's device of the Fir Tree (in the Element of *La Terre*). The device's explanatory text tells us that the king's love for all things elevated transports him as high as the heavens, in the same manner as the tree that sits on the highest mountains and is still able to rise even further:

> *Pour la Magnanimité, Dans la piece de l'element de la Terre.*
> Un Sapin, & ce mot RECTA SE TOLLIT IN ALTUM. Sa Majesté qui se plaist dans les choses grandes & elevées va droit à la gloire, ainsi que le Sapin qui se plaist sur les montagnes les plus hautes, & qui s'éleve droit en haut sans jamais se gauchir.
>
> *Plein d'une fierté magnanime*
> *Jusqu'aux Cieux j'éleve ma cime*
> *Affermy par mon propre faix,*
> *Rien ne peut faire que je plie,*
> *Moins encor que je m'humilie,*
> *Je m'éleve tousjours & ne gauchis jamais.*
>
> Perrault.[49]

SEMPER SUBLIMIS, expresses quite well the grandeur of Soul of His Majesty, who is always occupied with great things, and who only proposes that which is beautiful and sublime. *There is nothing so elevated,/ Where does his flight not arrive,/ He ascends without trouble and without too much effort./ He never ceases to act, and he is never weary;/ He looks at us, and sees, without having to descend,/ Everything that happens here below.*"

48 See Le Moyne, *l'art des devises*, 330 for the obvious similarities.

49 Félibien, *Tapisseries du Roy*, 39: "A Fir Tree, and the words RECTA SE TOLLIT IN ALTUM. His Majesty, who revels in grand and elevated things, rises straight to glory, as well as the Fir Tree, which is most pleased on the highest mountains, and which rises upwards without ever warping. *Filled with a magnanimous pride,/ Towards the Heavens I elevate my crown,/ Strenghtened even by my own burden,/ Nothing can make me bow,/ Let alone, make me humble myself,/ I will always elevate and will never warp.*"

Similarly, in the device of the Lily (in the Season of *L'Été*), the king rises towards the heavens, like the flower, as the 'glorious offshoot of a sublime stem', while his radiance has nothing borrowed. In other words, the king does not need to rely on artifice such as rhetoric, his sublimity is intrinsic. And while his actions and virtues are visible to everyone, their source and power remain a mystery and a miracle:

> *Pour l'Esté, Dans la piece de la saison de l'Esté.*
> Un Lys, & ce Mot, CANDORE OMNIA VINCIT. Le Lys, qui est le Symbole de la Candeur & de la Sincerité, a esté choisy pour representer le procedé noble, sincere, & genereux de Sa Majesté dans toutes ses Actions.
>
> *Rejetton glorieux d'une tige sublime,*
> *Je monte vers le Ciel d'un effort magnanime,*
> *Et brille d'un éclat qui n'a rien d'emprunté ;*
> *Rien de ce que je suis aux mortels ne se cache ;*
> *Mon front toûjours ouvert, aussi bien que sans tache,*
> *Sert de parfait symbole à la Sincerité.*
>
> Charpentier.[50]

And in the device of the Ivy-covered Pyramid (in the Season of *L'Automne*), the plant refers to a sublimity that emanates from the king himself and knows no limits whatsoever:

> *Pour l'Automne, Dans la piece de la saison de l'Automne*
> Une Vigne de Virginie, qui de ses branches couvre une grande Pyramide, & s'étend encore au dela. On luy a donné pour Ame ces Paroles, CRESCIT IN IMMENSUM; pour marquer la vaste étenduë de l'Ame & de la Puissance de Sa Majesté, qui ne trouvant point de bornes en elles-mesmes, ne sont limitées que par les sujets où elles peuvent s'étendre & s'appliquer.
>
> *Un progrès sans pareil a suivy ma Naissance;*
> *Par une merveilleuse & secrette puissance,*
> *On me voit élever toûjours;*

50 Ibid., 65: "For Summer, in the piece of the season of Summer. A Lily, and this word, CANDORE OMNIA VINCIT. The Lily, which is the symbol of Candor and Sincerity, has been chosen to represent the noble, sincere and generous process of His Majesty in all his actions. *Glorious offshoot of a sublime stem / I ascend to the heavens in a magnanimous effort / And shine with a radiance that is not borrowed / Nothing of what I am is hidden to mortals / My forehead is always lifted, as well as unblemished / And serves as a perfect symbol of Sincerity.*"

Il n'est obstacle, ny limites,
Qui puissent retarder mes démarches subites,
Ny qui puisse borner mon cours.

Charpentier. [51]

To "mark the vast expanse of the soul and power of His Majesty," the ivy in François Charpentier's madrigal accompanying this device refers to "une merveilleuse & secrette puissance" ("a marvellous and secret force") that has elevated Louis XIV from his birth onwards. This force may seem to have been impeded by certain obstacles such as political enemies or domestic issues, he writes, but still keeps extending itself beyond these apparent limits.

With every added explanatory and poetic text, Félibien leads the book increasingly further away from his introductory proclamation of a new era of noble and forceful representation. It shows an inability to refrain from the use of praise or *louange* ("faites à la loüange de SA MAJESTÉ") in the face of the construction of an all-transcendent monarch – an issue Rapin would describe in his treatise twenty years later as a growing symptom of his sublime reign:

> On est si accoustumé à le voir faire des choses loûables & glorieuses, qu'on n'a plus rien de nouveau à luy dire sur ses loûanges. C'est un sujet épuisé que son éloge: & l'éloquence qui ne parle que trop par tout ailleurs, est devenue muette quand il faut parler de luy. Ces grands nom de Cesar & d'Alexandre, si usez dans ses Panegyriques, n'ont rien d'assez fort pour exprimer toute sa vertu.

Rapin emphasises, in particular, the fact that most comparisons that were used in relation to Louis XIV are usually "not virtuous enough to enter into a comparison with those of the monarch" ("pas assez vertueuse pour entrer en comparaison avec la sienne"). The same tensions already grew underneath the surface of the project of the *Tapisseries*. The core of Félibien's argument, and the final device of the Theatrical Machine in particular, expresses the idea of an innate grandeur which has elevated the monarch towards a level of transcendence "that ravishes all those who witness it, and surpasses the forces of nature and the ordinary scope of men" (fig. 30):

51 Ibid., 73: "For Autumn, in the piece of the season of Autumn. A Five-leaved Ivy, which covers with its branches a large pyramid, and extends itself even beyond it. The following words serve as the *Ame*, CRESCIT IN IMMENSUM; to mark the vast expanse of the soul and power of His Majesty, which find no bounds in themselves, and are only limited by those subjects on which they can extend and apply themselves. *An unparalleled progress followed my birth;/ By a marvellous and secret power,/ One will always see me rise ;/ There is no obstacle, nor limit,/ That may delay my sudden actions,/ Or can limit my course.*"

Pour les Ballets et Comedies, Divertissement. Dans la pièce de la saison de l'Hyver. Une Machine, avec ce mot, NATURAM SUPERAT; pour dire qu'une Machine par ses mouvemens surprend & charme les spectateurs, & surpasse les effets ordinaires de la Nature. Ainsi Sa Majesté par ses vertus & ses actions heroïques, étonne & ravit tous ceux qui en sont les témoins, & surpasse les forces naturelles, & la portée ordinaire des hommes.

Quel merveilleux objet, quel auguste miracle,
Par son rapide cours surmontant tout obstacle,
Ravit les yeux & les esprits?
D'un art victorieux sa force est animée,
Et de ses mouvemens la Nature charmée,
L'admire, & luy cede le prix.

Cassagnes.[52]

If the monarch surpasses the ordinary forces and effects of the natural world – an idea that also returns in the device's *motto* "Naturam Superat" ("He Surpasses Nature") – the project's fundamental reliance on comparisons with examples from the natural world to represent his sublimity, creates yet another tension. Instead of representing the king's sublimity, a comparison with a lesser, surpassed object would only downgrade the initial claim of the sublimity of the main subject. From this viewpoint, the presence of dogmatic explanatory texts accompanying the devices appears as an attempt to counterbalance this instability; the *pictura* can easily be misinterpreted, and the *motto* can easily be reversed by opponents and satirical writers. A telling example of this subversive nature is the device of the Ivy-covered Pyramid in the tapestry of *L'Automne*. In his *Memoires,* Pierre de Bourdeille, Seigneur de Brantôme (1540-1614) writes that a similar version of this device was used by Charles, cardinal de Lorraine (1524-1574), and that its *pictura* and *motto* (an ivy-covered pyramid with the words "As long as you endure, I will flourish") at one point elicited the derogatory pun "If you endure, I will perish."[53] One cannot escape the reputation of ivy as a destructive, uncontrollable plant, gravely damaging and destroying the structure

52 Ibid., 89: "For the Ballets and Comedies, Entertainment. In the piece of the season of Winter. NATURAM SUPERAT. A machine, through its movements, surprises and charms the spectators, and surpasses the ordinary effects of Nature: So his Majesty, by his virtues and heroic actions astonishes and ravishes all those who witness it, and surpasses the forces of nature and the ordinary scope of man. *What marvelous object, what august miracle,/ Overcoming all obstacles by its rapid course,/ Ravishes the eyes and spirits?/ Its force is animated by a victorious art,/ And Nature, charmed by its movements/ Admires him and gives him the prize.*".

53 Pierre de Bourdeille, *Memoires de Messire Pierre de Bourdeille, Seigneur de Brantome. Contenans les vies des hommes illustres & grands capitaines estrangers de son temps*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Jean Sambix le Jeune, 1666), 8: "Charles le Cardinal de Lorraine, lequel portoit pour devise, une piramide entournée de lierre avec ces mots, *Te stante virebo*. Mais

on which it proliferates. Other devices that feature in the *Tapisseries du Roy* also share this ambiguous character, since almost all plants and animals are perishable and corruptible. For example, in the device of the Tree struck by lightning (in the Element of *Le Feu*) or the Falcon attacking its prey (in the Season of *L'Automne*), an unsuspecting viewer or political opponent could easily view the tree and the prey themselves as metaphors for the French king.

A third, and related, attempt of the *Tapisseries du Roy* to deny any gap between representation and the represented can be found in its use of madrigals. In a number of these added poems, their authors made it appear as if Louis XIV himself is proclaiming his own sublimity directly to the reader, by making use of the first-person. Notable examples include the Lily device ("Rejetton […] d'une tige sublime, je monte vers le ciel"), as well as the Fir Tree device ("jusqu'aux Cieux […] Je m'éleve tousjours"). It seems as a clever way to try and bypass the artificiality of these metaphors, in order to achieve a type of agency that appears unmediated. However, this effect too becomes unstable, since these and other examples are alternated with madrigals that refer to Louis XIV in the third person, underscoring the role of the writer and artists in presenting the monarch before the reader.

In retrospect, we can see that the publication tried to balance itself between the necessity of artifice to evoke grandeur, and a denial of this artifice as the original source of this grandeur. The poetics of the sublime ultimately aims to give the impression of a sudden, unmediated transfer of greatness – and this idea seems to underlie the decision of the Petite académie to invest in the medium of the device. Contemporaries like Bouhours saw in the device the ideal means to evoke wonder in the most striking way possible. Moreover, the choice of adding madrigals to make some devices speak for themselves, as if the king addresses himself directly to the reader ("I dazzle all eyes by my vivid splendour, and nothing is equal to the ardour that transports me"), appears as an attempt to only further reinforce their striking potential. In other words, instead of only referring to his grandeur, the book wants to evoke it. In this regard, Félibien clearly realised and admitted that the royal devices – his "nouveaux caracteres" that the world *needs* to be able to express and experience the grandeur of the king – should ideally be understood by everyone and for eternity. To achieve this, he made the problematic decision to explain the mystery behind these images and mottoes, by resorting to the less powerful means of words. Adding text after text to the tapestries' images, the book ends up dismantling the devices. These measures testify to the many challenges that

le Pasquin le tourna au contraire, *Sed te virente peribo*. Estant le naturel du lierre de ruïner & faire perir ce qu'il estraint." ("Charles Cardinal de Lorraine, who had a pyramid covered in ivy as his device, with the words *Te stante virebo*. But the *pasquin* turns it around, to *Sed te virente peribo*. It is in the ivy's nature to ruin and destroy that which it constraints.").

the notion of an elevated monarch posed for seventeenth-century writers, architects and artists. In addition to these twists and turns, the publication attempts to further sustain the expression of sublimity by investing in dangerous supernatural and superhuman extremes. These exclamations and metaphors of the monarch's eternal transcendence posed a genuine problem: to elevate the king to the ineffable, means to arrive at a claim which, Rapin would admit sixteen years later, can hardly be evoked, let alone represented – a symptom of the sublime's ever elusive and subjective nature. In fact, as we shall see, these lofty claims would elicit much criticism outside of the kingdom, even in the Dutch edition of the *Tapisseries du Roy* itself.

The many efforts that were needed to sustain the claim of the king's sublimity, as well as its evocation, simultaneously disturbed its balance. The *Tapisseries du Roy* uncovered many problems that would be debated extensively and vehemently in the following decades, which is a topic that will be discussed in the next chapter.

The sublime as a critical notion: reflections on architecture, rhetoric and the king's virtue (1670-1687)

The case of the *Tapisseries du Roy* demonstrated that even though ideas such as the ineffable and superhuman might seem as powerful rhetorical instruments at first, they are ultimately unstable, and virtually unrepresentable and uncontrollable. Trying to instrumentalise a quality that was deemed elevated beyond all human control, meant trying to wield something that cannot be grasped. And Félibien's attempt to dismiss the less powerful means of language in this venture, ultimately confronted him with the problem that he still depended on it.

This mysterious and unquantifiable character of sublimity became a topic of studies and regular debates during this period. The domain of poetic and artistic creation has always been subjected to the reflections of the world of criticism; and indeed, opposite the claim of royal sublimity in French poetry and the visual arts, such as the example of the *Tapisseries du Roy*, we are able to find a community of philosophers and theoreticians that reflected on these ideas. From 1667 onwards, during the same period in which Félibien worked on the *Tapisseries du Roy*, a literary circle called the Académie Lamoignon was formed, at the home of Premier Président Guillaume de Lamoignon. Its members, which included Rapin and later Boileau, as well as other notable figures such as Paul Pellisson (1624-1693), Fleury, Claude-François Ménestrier (1631-1705) and Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627-1704), each read papers on Ancient, religious and early modern literature during the Académie's regular Monday meetings. Among its recurring topics was the sublime, which, as Elfreida T. Dubois writes, "was discussed as a category of rhetoric" but was "gradually set apart as an independent aesthetic emotion and expression."[1] During the 1670s and onwards, a growing critical discourse on the nature of sublimity developed, which was characterised in particular by a necessity to create of a French critical concept – one which would be able to incorporate ideas that "neighbouring concepts" such as *le merveilleux, le je ne sais quoi* and *la magnificence* already shared. Boileau's French edition of Longinus' *Peri hypsous* (1674) would succeed in this endeavour, by using the noun *le sublime* to translate

1 Elfrieda Teresa Dubois, "Some definitions of the sublime in seventeenth-century French literature," in Essays presented to C.M. Girdlestone, ed. Elfrieda Teresa Dubois (Newcastle upon Tyne: University of Durham, 1960), 77. Quoted from Cronk, The Classical Sublime, 124.

the Longinian *hypsos*, and employing *le merveilleux* as its synonym. As a result of its success, a number of French texts were published in the 1680s that employed the sublime in theoretical reflections on Louis XIV and the representation of his transcendence. Nevertheless, being able to reflect better on the sublime did not at all solve the issue of instrumentalising it politically.

After Boileau's publication, the critical concept of the sublime became used as a means to *reflect back* on the interrelationship between architecture, literature and the royal virtue in seventeenth-century France. From 1670 onwards, and in the context of several debates, the notion of *le sublime* became increasingly used to address the strengths and weaknesses in this interrelationship. What needs to be understood here, however, is that all of these texts actually underscored Félibien's claim of Louis XIV's own sublimity, instead of attacking it or breaking it down. The weaknesses that were discussed only concerned the pitfalls in evoking the monarch's sublimity, and not the sublimity itself. This begs the question if, and to what extent these reflections collectively participated in the same claim. A part of the answer lies in the shared aims of several quarrels – the members of which, despite belonging to opposing camps, all shared the same thought: the joint power of language and architecture in evoking royal sublimity.

The first quarrel that will be discussed in this chapter is Élisabeth Sophie-Chéron's (1648-1711) criticism of Molière's (1622-1673) laudatory poem *La Gloire du Val-de-Grâce* (1669) (fig. 31). In her poetic response, the notion of the sublime is used to reflect on the failure and dangers of rhetoric of both Mignard's fresco and Molière's laudatory poem. Secondly, this chapter will inquire into another major debate of the 1670s: the *Querelle des Inscriptions*. Although this quarrel focused on the question whether the inscriptions on Parisian public monuments should be in Latin or French, the debate quickly transcended the limits of literary rhetoric alone. The French camp relied on the argument that the sublimity of the monarch mirrors the united grandeur of French architecture, language, and national virtue. This argument would return in the work of Bouhours, who nevertheless emphasised the dangers of hyperbole and exaggeration that could potentially harm this sublime unity.

EARLY CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON ARCHITECTURE AND RHETORIC: CHÉRON ON MIGNARD AND MOLIÈRE

In the second of his *Satires*, Boileau addressed the difference between accomplished and failed poetry. Here, he praises Molière by characterising the poet (and himself) as frustrated geniuses, in the face of a pack of foolish and enslaved "rimeurs" ("rhymesters") such as Georges de Scudéry.[2] Although these "rhyme-

2 See his "Satire II", in Boileau, Œuvres Diverses, 14.

sters" lack the sacred gifts of taste and inspiration, they are still able to find a large audience of other fools. But poets such as Molière, the satirist suggests, produce works that are truly great, even though they break the rules. In contrast to the lofty aims Scudéry expressed in the preface to his epic *Alaric* (1654) – to push the genre of the epic poem towards the most elevated style of "le sublime," instead of sinking towards those of "le mediocre; & le bas"[3] – Boileau emphasised the poor and rushed nature of Scudéry's rhyme, and stated that both the poet and his public seemed to be totally oblivious of these shortcomings. Why, Boileau lamented, can such a fool be so admired and astonished by himself and by others, while those blessed with a truly sublime mind, such as Molière, never seem to be able to arrive at their desired degree of perfection.[4]

There were, however, others that found the same problems that Boileau had with the work of Scudéry in the work of Molière himself. Whereas Boileau saw in Molière's oeuvre a union of rhyme and reason, the painter and poet Élisabeth Sophie-Chéron saw the complete opposite. Although she recognised the beauty of his rhymes, it was the contrast with its subject matter that troubled her. In order to understand her criticism, which is related to the grandeur of Louis XIV, let us first turn to the object of her response.

—— MOLIÈRE'S LA GLOIRE AND CHÉRON'S RESPONSE

In 1669, Molière published his poem *La Gloire du Val-de-Grâce,* a text consisting of 366 verses that was written as a eulogy glorifying the interior of the dome of the Church of Val-de-Grâce, painted by Pierre Mignard in 1663 (fig. 14). Molière's work is in fact a response to Charles Perrault's impassioned 1668 poem *La Peinture. Poème*, a laudatory text celebrating the work of Charles Le Brun. Molière had several reasons to attack both Perrault and Le Brun, and to defend Mignard. The close friendship between Mignard and Molière may have been one of the most important.[5] The year 1663 saw the first confrontation between Mignard and Le Brun, when the first refused Le Brun's proposal to become a member of the Académie Royale, explaining that he and his friend and colleague, Charles Alphonse Du Fresnoy (1611-1668), were far too occu-

3 Cronk, The Classical Sublime, 86.

4 Boileau, "Satire II," 14: "Un sot en écrivant fait tout avec Plaisir:/ Il n'a point en ses vers l'embarras de choisir:/ Et, toûjours amoureux de ce qu'il vient d'écrire,/ Ravi d'étonnement, en soi-même il s'admire./ Mais un esprit sublime, en vain veut s'élever/ A ce degré parfait qu'il tâche de trouver."

5 In her book Molière. A Theatrical Life, Virginia Scott argues that Perrault had "forced Mignard, against his will and on pain of exile, into the newly founded Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture to take orders from Le Brun." See Virginia Scott, Molière. A Theatrical Life (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 206-07.

pied with the decoration of the dome at Val-de-Grâce.[6] Molière's poem reads not only as a defence of Mignard's work, but also as a theory of painting. In particular, *La Gloire* responds to and adopts parts of the poem *De arte graphica,* written by Du Fresnoy himself and published in 1668. This didactic poem in Latin presented to the reader the principles of painting, and was translated into French by the art critic Roger de Piles (1635-1709) in the same year.[7]

A lengthy critical response to Molière's poem was written by Élisabeth Sophie-Chéron, a female painter who was admitted to the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, under the sponsorship of Charles Le Brun. This response enabled her to claim a place in the camp of Le Brun, Colbert, and Perrault, opposing Molière, Mignard, as well as the figures of Du Fresnoy and De Piles.[8] Her poem, bearing the title *La Coupe du Val-de-Grâce*, remained a manuscript of which we do not know the precise date.[9] A heavily edited version was published in a *recueil* entitled *Anonimiana ou Mélanges de Poésies*, and only in 1700.[10] Jean-Marc Poiron argues that Chéron's *La Coupe* must have been written much earlier, even before Molière's death in 1673. He uses the argument that the poem directly challenges Molière and "le prend à partie au présent."[11] Also, he continues, the poem does not refer to the *Querelle sur le Coloris* that started in 1671 (with Louis-Gabriel Blanchard (1630-1704), and later Champaigne, Le Brun and De Piles). Thus, one would date the poem between 1669 and/or 1670. If Poiron's hypothesis is true, this would imply that the debate between Chéron and Molière, and in particular their discussion on the role of the sublime in the visual arts, would predate Boileau's 1674 translation of Longinus and the subsequent popularization of the sublime in the field of aesthetics.

One should not forget that the ultimate subject of Mignard's fresco, and of Molière's poem as well, is the person of Louis XIV himself. While the Holy Trinity, saints and angels are present in the scene of heavenly glory, they are present for the sake of the queen's *vœu*, which is depicted near the dome's edge (fig. 15). Molière also clearly underscores the important role of Anne's wish in the

6 Jean-Marc Poiron, "Elizabeth-Sophie Chéron et La Coupe du Val-de-Grâce," in René Démoris, ed., Hommage à Elisabeth Sophie Chéron. Texte & Peinture à l'Âge Classique (Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1992), 19.

7 For Du Fresnoy's original text, see Charles-Alphonse Du Fresnoy, De Arte Graphica (Paris, 1668), ed. and trans. Christopher Allen, Yasmin Haskell, and Frances Muecke (Geneva: Droz, 2005). The poem departs from Horace's parallel between painting and poetry (ut pictura poesis). See also Jacqueline Lichtenstein, The Eloquence of Color. Rhetoric and Painting in the French Classical Age, trans. Emily McVarish (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 147.

8 Christopher Allen, "Charles-Alphonse Dufresnoy, Painter and Poet," in Du Fresnoy, De Arte Graphica, 21.

9 Élizabeth-Sophie Chéron, La Coupe du Val de Grace, Réponse au poème de Molière, ed. P.L. Jacob (Paris: Libraire des Bibliophiles, 1880). In my discussion of the poem, I will refer to and quote from this edition.

10 See Élizabeth-Sophie Chéron, "Reponse à la gloire du Val de Grace. De M. de Moliere," in Anonimiana ou mélanges de poesies, d'eloquence, et d'erudition, unknown editor (Paris: Nicolas Pepie, 1700), 241-81.

11 Poiron, "Elizabeth-Sophie Chéron," 10.

building's *gloire*, to which he refers in the second strophe of his poem.[12] Therefore, the glory in Molière's poem is the glory of Louis XIV's birth, and any faults in its representation would harm the communication of its grandeur towards the spectator below. In this respect, Chéron's critical message strikes two birds with one stone; the core of her poem is her belief that Mignard's fresco completely ruined a divine subject with crude and mundane imagery, which, she explains, also rendered Molière's laudatory poem on his fresco as a piece of pure flattery. In other words, for Chéron, the subject of the fresco is sublime, but both its execution and its poetic counterpart are the exact opposite. As a result, she considered this sense of sublimity gravely assaulted and inverted. Both painter and poet are guilty of obstructing a union of style and subject matter – and the fact that the context is both royal and religious only worsened their crime.

Chéron's text is constructed as a true *prosopopeia*; it is Mignard's painted dome itself that speaks and responds to a group of men visiting the church and quarrelling about the glory of the painting itself. Here, Chéron seems to employ Molière's idea of a talking dome; in his poem, Molière already writes that the dome itself "lectures" on topics such as arrangement, rules of proportion, colour and the portrayal of emotional states.[13] Molière further anthropomorphised the dome when he described it as a beautiful stranger who strikes the eyes of the beholder ("Et la belle inconnuë a frapé tous les yeux").[14] However, at the very beginning of Chéron's poem, the dome turns itself to Molière, the ever-praising *sçavant*, and opens a direct attack toward the poet and his poem. It is only as a result of Molière's lies and flattery, Chéron implies, that the painting seems so very elevated in his poem:

> Pourquoi faut-il, pour mon malheur, […]
> Que tu m'esleves dans la nüe
> Pour me rendre aux yeux trop connüe?
> Veux-tu passer pour un menteur,
> Toy qu'on ne crut jamais flatteur?[15]

The dome continues its attack on Molière's verses. Here, Chéron reveals the central, underlying issue of Molière's verses, and by extension of Mignard's fresco:

12 Molière, La Gloire du Val-de-Grâce (Paris: Pierre Le Petit, 1669), 6: "Fais briller à jamais, dans ta noble richesse,/ La splendeur du saint vœu d'une grande Princesse;/ Et porte un témoignage à la posterité/ De sa magnificence, & de sa pieté."

13 Michael Call, "The Poet's Vision and the Painting's Speech: Molière and Perrault on the Sister Arts," Cahiers 17 13, no. 1 (2010): 135. Call refers to: "Il [FK: le dôme] nous enseigne," "Il nous dit," or "il nous dicte."

14 Molière, La Gloire, 21.

15 Chéron, La Coupe, 10: "Why do you (to my misfortune)/[…] Have to elevate me towards the clouds/To make me too well-known?/ Do you want to pass for a liar,/ You, who has never been considered a flatterer?"

instead of elevating its subject, the poet's lofty rhetoric may have actually ruined it even more:

> Cache donc à tout l'univers
> Ces grands et magnifiques vers,
> Car leur eloquence divine
> Seroit cause de ma ruine.[16]

Opening the attack, Chéron's description of Molière's text as an example of divine eloquence seems an act of ironic mockery. She appears to address the paradoxical issue of the *Verbum Dei,* which featured, for example, in Jesuit rhetorical theory: is it possible to pour the Holy Truth in the mould of human speech? Jean-Yves Boriaud writes on this matter that "the Word of God does not manifest itself immediately," and therefore the paradox resides in the question whether a Christian orator can be a mediator acting as "an adapter of a spiritual philosophy whose mysteries go beyond the profane," beyond the worldly.[17] In her poem, Chéron points at the same paradox, and includes the visual arts in the rhetorical discussion on the distinction between the divine and the earthly.[18] This shift between these two realms is key to Chéron's counter attack, in which the question of the position of Molière's and Mignard's rhetoric between these two worlds is at issue.

—— CHÉRON ON "SUBLIME" VERSUS "BAS," OR HOW TO RUIN DIVINE RHETORIC

In seventeenth-century France, the prevalent view on religious painting of the period was to a great extent influenced by the Council of Trent. "Limits were imposed on the artist in the invention of his own details," Henry Phillips writes

16 Ibid., 10: "So hide to the entire Universe/ Your grand and magnificent Verses,/ Because their divine eloquence/ Would cause my own ruin."

17 Jean-Yves Boriaud, "L' «Orator Christianus ». D'après les traités de rhétorique jésuites de la 1re moitié du XVIIe siècle," Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé 2 (1998), 162.

18 Using the notion of "éloquence divine," she evokes the "triple éloquence," the three registers of the Catholic voice – éloquence divine, héroïque and humaine – as introduced by Nicolas Caussin in his 1618 Electorum symbolorum et parabolarum historicarum Syntagmata. Caussin attributed divine eloquence, which is inspired and sublime, to saints and prophets such as Moses and Paul; heroic eloquence, which is based on human methods, belongs to the Church Fathers, such as Basil or John Chrysostom; and finally the purely human eloquence, though strong and wise, is that of Demosthenes and Cicero. On Nicolas Caussin, symbolics and sacred eloquence, see Florence Vuilleumier, La Raison des figures symboliques à la Renaissance et à l'âge classique: Etudes sur les fondements philosophiques théologiques et rhétoriques de l'image, vol. 2 (Geneva: Droz, 2000), 173. See also Marc Fumaroli, L'Âge de l'éloquence: Rhétorique et "res literaria" de la Renaissance au seuil de l'époque classique (Geneva: Droz, 2002), 208.

in his *Church and Culture in Seventeenth-Century France*, "certainly as far as the central episode was concerned, and his painting had to reflect exactly the text of the Scripture."[19] Being loyal to the Bible and to historical facts was deemed important, as well as avoiding profane elements. However, no consensus existed on these matters. Some, like Champaigne, who also produced paintings for the Val-de-Grâce complex, respected these ruling "injunctions" but others, such as Simon Vouet (1590-1649), did not.[20] Chéron seems to agree with Molière on these prevailing norms on religious painting, but, interestingly, uses the same arguments as Molière, not to glorify but rather to criticise Mignard and the poet himself. Whereas Molière writes that Mignard's fresco teaches us about the right *vraisemblance* and *ordonnance*, Chéron disagrees and enumerates all the crimes Mignard has commited in this respect. Responding to Molière's verses on human proportions ("Où la teste n'est point de la jambe, ou du bras"), Chéron writes, from the dome's viewpoint, that Mignard has dishonoured all of his subjects by breaking the bones of his painted virgins, but without a sword or cutlass.[21] Furthermore, through the mouth of one of her characters, Chéron reminds the reader what a painter must do when treating a glorious, elevated subject – a message this character expressed even more firmly in an earlier version of these verses ("N'y doit rien mettre qui n'exprime/ Le grand, le divin, le sublime."):

> Et la raison ne permet pas
> D'y rien faire entrer qui soit bas.
> Tout doit, aux cieux, estre celeste;
> Il n'y faut rien qui soit terrestre.[22]

In order to be able to convey this argument even more clearly and powerfully, Chéron also attempts to dismantle any claim of the fresco's sublime effect on the part of the beholder. To do this, she first constructs a sublime response that she can attack: one of her characters, the so-called "deffenseur" ("defender"), is in

19 Henry Phillips, Church and Culture in Seventeenth-Century France (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 50.

20 Ibid., 50.

21 Chéron, La Coupe, 12: "Celuy qui m'a voulu parer/ N'a fait que me deshonnorer./ Il a fait souffrir le martire/ A mainte Vierge: il les déchire,/ Il leur casse jambes et bras,/ Sans espée et sans coutelas." Further on in the poem, she writes a similar statement on Mignard's rendering of the figures: "Que c'est une haute imprudence/ De donner des expressions,/Ou plustost des contorsions,/ Des actions si messeantes/ Aux ames qui sont jouïssantes." See ibid., 28. For Molière's verse 122, see Molière, La Gloire, 12.

22 Chéron, La Coupe, 29. "And reason does not allow him/ To add anything that is low./ In the heavens, everything should be heavenly;/And nothing should be earthly." Longinus similarly writes that "the thought of the genuine orator must be neither small nor ignoble." See Longinus, On the Sublime, 9, 184-85. The verses Chéron rejected in her manuscript ("[A painter] Must not paint anything that does not express/ The grand, the divine, the sublime.") are collected in the "Variantes du manuscrit autographe." See Chéron, La Coupe, 49. These two lines were nevertheless added to the published version of the poem in 1700.

complete awe of Mignard's work. He states he is ravished ("me ravit"), praises the "sublime spirit" of the saints ("ce grand saint Hierosme" and "son grand et sublime esprit"), and exclaims that the fresco paradoxically strikes the ears with the eyes ("Frappe l'oreille avec les yeux").[23] Then, suddenly, a more critical character of the *troupe de gens* takes the floor and begins his scornful tirade, stating than there is no grandeur or magnificence at all, and that nothing amazes the eye.[24] One example the character mentions is the figure of Saint Jerome, who is shown reacting to the sound of the trumpet of the Last Judgment. Chéron states that he is supposed to be ravished and elevated by the sight and sound of Christ approaching. Instead, he is represented as a worried and distressed figure, shown in a state of pure terror the painter, and "the painter is to blame" ("L'extase ou le ravissement/ Qui remplit les saints d'allegresse/ Se change en luy comme en detresse.").[25] Chéron also recognizes the same low and earthly emotions, contrary to the sublime state in which they ought to appear, in Mignard's figure of Saint Catherine (fig. 32):

> Venons à Sainte Catherine,
> De qui l'eloquence divine
> Convertit les plus grands docteurs, […]
> Elle exprime une passion
> Contraire à l'adoration,
> Et l'on connoist dans son visage
> Le ressentiment d'un outrage;[26]

What is clear from the immediate context of the neighbouring lines, is that Chéron accuses Mignard of copying his Saint Jerome from a painting by Tintoretto of the same saint, and his Saint Catherine from the *Death of Dido* by Guido Reni (1575-1642).[27] Here, Chéron particularly stresses the importance of expression, seemingly referring to the recent and influential *Conférences* on the expression of the passions (1668) held by her protector Le Brun. More importantly, the aspect Chéron disapproves of the most is Mignard's disregard to

23 Ibid., 24-25.

24 Ibid., 26: "Je vous dirai donc, sans destours,/ Que je ne voy point d'ordonnance,/De grandeur, de magnificence,/ Rien d'esclattant, rien de pompeux,/ N'y rien qui surprenne les yeux,/ Dans cette si fameuse Coupe."

25 Ibid., 31: "Saint Jerome is more frightened/ Than a group struck by thunder,/ His action is that of worry/ As if he saw the trumpet/ That will herald the Judgment./ The ecstasy or ravishment/ That fills the Saints with delight/ Changes in him into distress."

26 Ibid., 33: "Let us turn to Saint Catherine,/ Whose divine eloquence/ Converts the greatest of Doctors/[…] She expresses a passion/ Contrary to that of adoration,/ And we recognise in her face/ The resentment of contempt."

27 Ibid., 31-32: "Tintoret l'a fait, sans escrire,/ Dans l'endroit d'où Mignard le tire" and "C'est la Didon près du trepas,/ Cette belle Didon du Guide."

the suitability and the true, heartfelt passions of the saint's figure, rather than the painter's plagiarism.[28] According to the ideas of René Descartes (1596-1650), Marin Cureau de la Chambre (1594-1669) and Le Brun, the face was seen as a faithful index of the inner passions.[29] Hence, an inadequate rendering of the facial expression could inhibit the transfer of overwhelming emotion towards the viewer.

Near the end of her poem, Chéron returns to the intentions behind Molière's laudatory poem. After having asserted the issues of Mignard's visual rhetoric – as a result of his failure of communicating a divine rhetoric – the sublime verses of Molière appear as hollow phrases: "Si la Coupe est une merveille,/ Ce n'est que dedans ces beaux vers" ("If the Dome is a marvel,/ It would only be in his beautiful verses").[30] Therefore, the angry dome states, ignoring Molière's poem would be the most appropriate laudation of the fresco itself:

> Voila, docte et rare Moliere,
> L'estat fascheux où je me voy.
> Malgré ce que tu dis de moy,
> Malgré ces éloges sublimes,
> Malgré tes magnifiques rimes,
> Chacun de moy s'entretiendra.
> Tant que l'ouvrage durera,
> Qui n'en dira mot fera grace
> A la Coupe du Val de Grace.[31]

Chéron's critical poem constitutes one of the first large attempts to discuss the failures of the interrelationship between art and poetry during the seventeenth century. Of course, her opinions should be understood within the broader context of the rivalry between Le Brun and Mignard, and particularly her interests as an aspiring young painter. Nevertheless, her poem is a strong manifesto of the pitfalls of visual and literary rhetoric; it enumerates all of the ingredients that impede the elevation of ideas, namely that of hyperbole, exaggeration (*enflure*), and the poverty of thought. In the same period, around 1670, a much larger intellectual debate on the relation between visual and literary rhetoric (and its potential and

28 Jennifer Montagu, The Expression of the Passions: The Origin and Influence of Charles Le Brun's Conférence Sur L'expression Générale Et Particulière (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 61-62 and 202, note 42.

29 Joseph Rykwert, The Dancing Column: On Order in Architecture (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999), 41.

30 Chéron, La Coupe, 38.

31 Ibid., 43: "This is, wise and unique Molière,/ The enraged state in which I find myself./ Despite what you say about me,/ Despite this sublime praise,/ Despite your magnificent rhyme,/ Every piece of me will speak/ As long as the work will last,/ Only those will not talk about me, would spare [FK: or "would give grace to"]/ The Dome of the Val-de-Grâce."

hazards) began to develop – a debate in which the role of the sublime assumed ever greater proportions.

THE TRIUMPHAL ARCH INSCRIPTION: IN SEARCH OF A LANGUAGE TO EVOKE SUBLIME ROYAL VIRTUE

Through Boileau's adaptation of Longinus' *Peri hypsous*, and his added "Préface" in particular, Longinian ideas reached a great number of scholars. During and after the second half of the 1670s, some of these authors began to employ these ideas to serve their respective arguments. Although Boileau's edition ensured that the difference between the elevated style and the elevating effect of rhetoric became very clear, this did not mean that the Longinian sublime could not be moulded and shaped in order to arrive at new conceptions of sublimity, such as Rapin's treatise on sublime morality. In their new treatises on rhetoric and virtue, these writers continued to discuss the same problem that was central to Chéron's text: the dangerous gap between an elevated aim and a failed execution, between means and end, be it in inscriptions or descriptions. Moreover, in these treatises, the transcendence of Louis XIV would remain the elevated aim in question. In their discussions, these texts recognised an essential and mutually reinforcing relationship between the elevated virtue of the French monarch (and his people), on the one hand, and the powerful capacities of language, on the other. In view of a project for a triumphal arch in honour of Louis XIV, an intellectual quarrel on the most appropriate language for its inscriptions was the next step. On the one hand, these various theoretic works discussed the relative merit of both ancient and contemporary rhetoric, which led them to reflect on several modern texts that have already been discussed in this thesis. On the other hand, these works looked forward to the future of French language and its capacities, particularly in relation to the challenge of Louis XIV's correct representation.

As we have seen earlier, Colbert's idea to enrich the Louvre's east façade with Latin inscriptions generated much interest among French writers, who submitted an incredible amount of proposals. But with the production of these inscriptions also came a number of theoretical reflections that discussed the issues associated with Colbert's decision. One of the earliest examples is a small text written by Michel de Marolles, which he added to his *Histoire auguste des six auteurs anciens* from 1667.[32] Its title, "Discours pour servir d'eloge à la Langue Françoise, au sujet de quelques Inscriptions," already makes it quite clear what the problem is that the author wants to address. He starts his argument by stating

32 Bernard Magné, Crise de la littérature francaise sous Louis XIV: humanisme et nationalisme, vol. 1 (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1976), 405.

that he has no doubt that many contemporaries are convinced that Latin is more magnificent and advantageous for inscriptions on palaces or other public buildings than the French language. However, he immediately adds that perhaps not the entire world shares this opinion. Rhetoric, he argues, belongs to all idioms and all ages, and the French language, with the beauty of its words and the order of its composition, is so pure and agreeable, that it is not at all inferior to Latin.[33] This notion of purity, joined with that of clarity ("claret") and brevity ("concision" or "brièveté") are central to his belief that the French language, compared to Latin, is able to include as many ideas in just as few words.[34] To substantiate this idea, he has composed a total of twenty-six inscriptions for the Louvre:

> J'ay fait en deux vers les Inscriptions qui se verront en suite, au sujet des Bastimens du Louvre, pour montrer contre l'opinion de beaucoup de gens que nostre Langue, aussi bien que la Latine, est capable de comprendre beaucoup de sens en peu de paroles: Et je ne voy pas qu'il y en ait davantage dans ce Distique Latin quelque beau qu'il soit, de l'un des meilleurs Poëtes de nostre temps en cette langue là, quand il escrit avec son élegance accoustumée, pour une pareille inscription des bastimens du Louvre.[35]

With these distiches, which reflect on the grandeur of the building and its royal inhabitant, he responds to an earlier Latin proposal for the Louvre, which he attributes to Charles du Perrier, a poet from Aix-en-Provence: "Attonitis inhians oculis, quam suspicis hospes,/ Magna quidem, domino non tamen æqua domus" ("Stranger, agape and with eyes aghast you stare at this large mansion; yet, it is not equal to its Lord").[36] More powerfully than Vertron's proposal for the Louvre, the inscription aims to confront and convince the Louvre's beholder with his or her open-mouthed and awestruck admiration. Marolles, however, was not totally convinced. He explains that Perrier had derived his words from Virgil's seventh book of the *Aeneid* ("attonitis inhians animis ut regius ostro/ velet honos levis umeros" or "agape with wonder at how the glory of royal purple drapes her

33 Michel de Marolles, "Discours pour servir d'eloge à la Langue Françoise, au sujet de quelques Inscriptions," in L'Histoire auguste des six autheurs anciens, Spartien, Capitolin, Lampride, Gallican, Pollion et Vopiscus (Paris: Jean Couterot, 1667), 24.

34 Ibid., 27.

35 Ibid., 31: "In two verses, I wrote the Inscriptions that will follow, about the Buildings of the Louvre, in order to demonstrate, contrary to the opinion of many people, that our own language, as well as Latin, is able to contain a lot of meaning in a few words. And I do not think that this Latin distich written by one of the best Poets of our time should contain more, beautiful as it may be, when he writes with his customary elegance a similar inscription for the buildings of the Louvre."

36 I adapted this English translation from Andrew Amos, Martial and the moderns (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell and co., 1858), 255. He writes: "Stranger to Paris! you gape and stare at this large mansion; yet, it is not equal to its Lord."

smooth shoulders"), but by replacing the word *animis* (minds) by *oculis* (eyes), Perrier seemed to express the same thing twice.[37] "And when considering more closely the meaning and composition of these words," Marolles continues, "they express in a way the figure of a grimacing man, who is contemplating something very attentively."[38] He explains that this idea reminds him particularly of "those fanciful people who live beyond the mountains, who walk down the street with glasses on their noses, and consider with a sense of ridiculous astonishment everything that presents itself before their eyes."[39] Marolles uses the example to stress that instead of the use of such figurative speech, which "does not always evoke in us a beautiful image," the French language is capable of "elegantly representing our thoughts in discourse according to the order in which they form themselves in the mind."[40]

The twenty-six French inscriptions on the Louvre that supplement his own argument are accompanied by valuable "Remarques sur les Inscriptions," footnotes in which Marolles explains the ideas and composition of each of his distiches.[41] The inscriptions have all the ingredients of the aim of a dual sublimity that would be expressed in the *Tapisseries du Roy* three years later, by which I mean the elevation of rhetoric and of people (the transcendent nature of the represented subject, which, through the means of art and literature, aims to evoke in the beholder an overwhelming effect). Firstly, the fourth distich ("Admires-tu si fort cette haute structure?/ L'Art, comme toy, l'admire avec la Nature") expresses the manner in which the building talks to the beholder, as if through a guardian angel ("que l'Ange tutelaire du grand Palais, parle aux Citoyens & aux Estrangers qui le contemplent"). The building's heavenly and epic character amazes ("étonne") and dazzles ("éblouit") the beholder ("V. Pour quel sujet fit-on ce Dôme nompareil?/ C'est l'auguste portail du Palais du Soleil"). Secondly, this effect evokes in the spectator an idea of the limitless grandeur of the king ("XI. Si la grandeur du Louvre étonne l'Etranger,/ La grandeur de mon Roy le fera bien songer"). Instead of Perrier's wide-eyed and open-mouthed beholder ("l'espece d'étonnement ridicule"), Marolles returns to the idea of "l'esprit," since the physical grandeur of the Louvre elicits the *moral grandeur* of Louis XIV in the mind of the beholder ("Il passe de la consideration d'une

37 Marolles, "Discours," 33. For Virgil's original and translation, see Virgil, Aeneid: Books 7-12, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918), 7.814-815, 58-59, https://doi.org/10.4159/DLCL.virgil-aeneid.1916.

38 Marolles, "Discours," 33.

39 Ibid., 33-34: "J'avouë qu'elles me remettent en l'imagination ces gens fantasques de delà les Monts, qui vont par les Ruës avec des lunettes sur le nez, considerant avec une espece d'étonnement ridicule, chaque chose qui se presente devant eux."

40 Ibid., 34: "Nous nous pouvons donc bien passer de ces sortes de paroles figurées, qui ne font pas toûjours chez nous une fort belle Image: & nous avons cela de bon dans le bel usage de nostre François, de representer élegamment nostre pensée dans le discours, selon l'ordre qu'elle forme en l'esprit; ce qui n'est pas ordinaire dans le Latin."

grandeur Physique a une grandeur Morale"). Here, Marolles' text already hints at the union of physical and moral grandeur, a union which merges building and inhabitant, which would be discussed more extensively by René Rapin.

Marolles' approach, however, does betray the very same weaknesses and pitfalls that would underlie the *Tapisseries du Roy* a few years later. Like Vertron and Félibien, his texts ultimately try to enforce the experience of the sublime on the part of the reader-spectator. The inscriptions already spell out the overwhelming effect that the recipient is supposed to feel, while hopelessly trying to evoke it. His distiches, in other words, are more descriptive than evocative. In fact, while Marolles implies that the French language has enabled him to "elegantly represent" his own thoughts in his own distiches, his rhetorical style, however, betrays that he wants to represent and control the thoughts of the spectator as well. His approach thus disrupts the "order in which thoughts form themselves in the mind," since his distiches try to take over this creative process.

THE EARLY QUERELLE DES INSCRIPTIONS ON LOUIS XIV

Marolles' argument forms the beginning of a longer polemic on the superiority of Latin or French inscriptions on public buildings; the *Querelle des Inscriptions* – a quarrel in which Boileau's Longinian sublime repeatedly returns as a critical instrument. Shortly after Marolles' "Discours," a broader quarrel in the form of a controversy on the superiority of either Latin or French as the language for public inscriptions on monuments began to arise, which seems to have been instigated by Louis Le Laboureur (1615-1679). The latter addressed to the *académicien* Henri Louis Habert de Montmor (1600-1679) a dissertation on the advantages of the French language compared to Latin, which, in turn, provoked two letters in Latin written by René-François de Sluse (1622-1685) and addressed to Samuel Sorbière.[42] Le Laboureur, then, replied and collected the texts in a new work called *Avantages de la langue françoise sur la langue latine*, published in Paris in 1669. Soon, the discussion that these texts had started truly gained momentum on the occasion of the erection of a triumphal arch dedicated to Louis XIV, near the Porte Saint-Antoine in Paris (fig. 33). The first stone had been laid in August 1670 and inscriptions were needed, but the choice for the most appropriate language was not yet made. Since the decision lay with the team of Colbert, the quarrel revolved around the Petite académie, and by extension

41 For the twenty-six distiches, see ibid., 35-38. And for his "Remarques sur les Inscriptions," see ibid., 40-42.

42 Ferdinand Brunot, Histoire de la langue française, des origines à 1900. Le français en France et hors de France au XVIIe siècle, vol. 5 (Paris: A. Colin, 1917), 10.

the Académie française. Charles Perrault, for instance, would receive letters from both Ancients and Moderns who tried to persuade him to follow their respective advice, and several members of the *Académie* pronounced their arguments during the academy's meetings.

After the publication of Jean Desmarets' *La Comparaison de la langue et de la poésie françoise avec la grecque et la latine* in 1670, one of the earliest, albeit weak, arguments, it would take a few years before the quarrel evolved into a more serious polemic. The year 1676, in particular, would be a key year in the debate, since it saw three important contributions: a speech in Latin by the Jesuit Jean Lucas from the *Collège de Clermont*, a response by the *académicien* Paul Tallemant le Jeune (1642-1712), and the publication of a speech by fellow *académicien* François Charpentier. The oration by Lucas, which was published as *De monumentis publicis latine inscribendis oratio* the following year, attempts to summarise and refute the most prominent arguments of his opponents and thus provides a clear insight into the quarrel's most important themes. Crucial in his speech is the universality and eternity Lucas attributes to Latin, which therefore constitutes the most appropriate language to guarantee the equally universal and eternal fame of Louis XIV.[43] As Tim Denecker has argued, Lucas' argument is based on properties that fit into a conception of language as a platonic system. Its properties (perfection, stability, perpetuity and universality) would ensure that the inscribed text – provided that the marble will not perish – will be understandable for everyone and for all time. And since Louis XIV's device is a radiant sun, a preference for a language "as timeless and universal as sunlight" would be most fitting.[44] In his speech, Lucas' four properties also served as counter arguments refuting the claims that the French language would be immediately intelligible, as opposed to the understanding of Latin which several of Lucas' opponents limited to a small elite.[45] The rather "patriotic" argument of the dishonour of preferring Latin to one's mother tongue, which was dismissed by Lucas as a populist idea, played a rather large part in the French or Modern camp.[46] Whereas Charpentier argued that the beauty and nobility of the French language is the result of a noble minded nation ("le peuple dont la langue est la plus parfaite est celui dont l'esprit est le plus éclairé et le plus noble"), his colleague Desmarets agreed, but opted for a different phrasing: "la nation française étant […] noble, prompte […], aussi sa langue, suivant le génie de la nation, est […] pure, noble, et magnifique."[47]

43 I am much indebted to the annotated edition of Lucas' speech in Tim Denecker, "Joannes Lucas SJ, De Monumentis Publicis Latine Inscribendis Oratio (Paris, 1677): Introduction, Analysis of Assumptions About Language, and Annotated Edition," Humanistica Lovaniensia 62 (2013): 527-28.

44 Ibid., 531-32.

45 Ibid., 529.

46 Ibid., 529.

47 Magné, Crise de la littérature, 1:428-29.

A month later, on 23 December 1676, Tallemant presented similar arguments in his reaction to Lucas' oration in a speech to the *Académie*, which was published as a "Discours … pour servir de reponse à celuy du R.P. Lucas Jesuite, qui soûtenoit que les Monumens publics doivent avoir des Inscriptions Latines." The French language, he argued, has the same beauty and grace as Latin, but is also characterised by a *je ne sais quoi* that cannot be explained.[48] Moreover, Tallemant puts forward the same "patriotic" argument of the link between the beauty of a language and that of its nation. Although Tallemant is far more concerned about the choice of language in books about the king, instead of short inscriptions,[49] the sheer idea of Latin texts on public monuments angered him. Why, he argues, would you hide the message of a public inscription from the French public itself, from a French soldier on the street who needs to be able to read in his own language the glorious deeds of his king? It is, he states, the same language that helped the king to win his military campaigns:

> Peut-on être assez aveugle, pour ne pas voir que le dessein de faire connoître ses glorieux travaux à une poignée d'Etrangers qui les sçauront d'ailleurs, les cache en même temps à un nombre infini de personnes, & sur tout à ses Sujets? Pourquoy ôter au Peuple la douceur de lire tous les jours ce qu'on fait pour son bien, & pour son avantage? […] Servons nous, Messieurs, pour raconter tant de merveilles, de la même Langue, dont ce fameux Heros s'est servy pour gagner des batailles, & pour prononcer des oracles, & laissons aux Traducteurs, qui ne nous manqueront pas, le soin d'expliquer nos écrits à toutes les Nations. Je ne veux point icy insulter à ceux qui écrivent en Latin, ny leur reprocher que se servant d'une langue qu'ils ne peuvent sçavoir assez

48 Paul Tallemant le Jeune, "Discours … pour servir de reponse à celuy du R.P. Lucas Jesuite, qui soûtenoit que les Monumens publics doivent avoir des Inscriptions Latines," in Recueil des harangues prononcées par Messieurs de l'Académie francoise (Paris: Jean-Baptiste Coignard, 1698), 301: "Je voy dans nôtre siecle toutes les mêmes circonstances qui ont accompagné ces siecles les plus fameux […]. [C]'est chez nous que se trouvent les Architectes, les Sculpteurs, les Peintres, les Musiciens; mais pour dire encore plus, nous avons des Tacites, des Demosthenes, des Euripides, & des Terences. […] Quand je les compare aux anciens, je leur trouve les mêmes graces & les mêmes beautez qui leur ont fait meriter de venir jusqu'à nous; quand j'en veux juger par le bon sens naturel, j'y voy tout conforme à la nature & à la raison, j'y trouve cette politesse & ce je ne sçay quoy qui plaît tant, & qu'on ne peut exprimer; quand j'y cherche la noblesse, & la douceur du langage, j'y trouve des expressions magnifiques & éloquentes." My emphasis.

49 Ibid., 303-04: "[I]l nous reste une plus forte raison à examiner, qui est l'interêt de la gloire du Prince que nous servons; on dit que ses grandes actions & ses vertus innombrables doivent être connuës par toute la terre, & que le Latin y est plus propre comme étant plus universellement entendu des Etrangers. […] Si l'interêt de la gloire de ce Monarque invincible demande du Latin, il est à croire que c'est principalement dans les ouvrages qui sont entre les mains de tout le monde, & qui se transportent chez toutes les Nations, & non pas dans l'Inscription d'un Arc de Triomphe, qui étant de marbre, & de pierre, ne va qu'en estampe chez les Etrangers, & plûtôt pour leur faire connoître la magnificence, & la beauté d'un pareil Monument, que pour leur faire lire une Inscription tres-simple."

> pour la bien parler, leurs écrits sont dépoüillez de cette grace naturelle qui fait la principale beauté d'un Ouvrage.[50]

The final remark in this quote is a cleverly covered point of criticism, since Tallemant subtly evokes the idea that Latin is not at all a living and spoken language. This argument was shared by many of his fellow companions.

Another member of the "French camp," Desmarets, went even further in his attack on the competence of the Ancients. A few years in the *Querelle des Inscriptions*, Desmarets published his *La défense du poëme héroïque* (1674), in which he includes a paragraph "Remarques sur la traduction du Traité de Longin." Desmarets saw the opportunity to continue his attack on the Ancients as defenders of Latin and Greek, by focusing on the flaws in Boileau's edition. Through a fictional dialogue between Doranthe and Philène, Desmarets responds to Boileau's attack on his work in his *Art Poétique*, by arguing that Boileau does not understand Greek, nor Longinus, and that he translates ancient poetry into poor verses. According to Desmarets, Boileau replaced and added words and meanings of his own in his translations of Homer from Longinus.[51] Desmarets closes his "Remarques" with a particularly peculiar one, when he writes that Boileau's presentation of his *Traité du sublime* to Louis XIV is an act of poor judgment, given the anti-monarchical message of Longinus' final chapter. In this closing text, Longinus sees the loss of sublimity of mind as a cause of cultural decadence, and asks the question why there is a lack of great minds capable of elevating themselves towards the sublime.[52] The reason, Boileau-Longinus states, is the absence of a popular government and its associated state of freedom, which would nourish and form great geniuses.[53] And here, Desmarets actually considers Boileau to a large extent complicit in the message expressed in Longinus' final chapter on the constraining

50 Ibid., 305: "Could we be so blind that we do not see that by communicating his glorious deeds to a handful of foreigners (that will know them from elsewhere) we hide these deeds at the same time from an infinite number of people, and his own subjects in particular? Why deprive the People of the tenderness of being able to read every day what is done for their well-being, and to their advantage? […] To tell so many wonders, Messieurs, let us use the same Language that this famed Hero has used to win battles, and to pronounce oracles. And let us leave it to the Translators, who will not fail us, to explain our writings to all nations. I do not want to insult those who write in Latin, nor blame them that by using a language they cannot grasp enough to be able to speak it well, their writings are stripped of this natural grace that forms the main beauty of a work."

51 Jean Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin, La défense du poëme héroïque (Paris: Jacques Le Gras, 1674), 120-21. Desmarets writes, for instance: "Pourquoy mettre dans ses vers, du haut d'une tour, puis que cela n'est pas dans son texte Grec, & qu'il y a seulement, assis sur un lieu élevé regardant vers la mer […] Que de choses qui ne sont point dans le texte Grec, par incapacité de serrer le sens," and on the following page: "On peut aider au vers pas quelque mot adjouté, mais on ne doit pas y joindre des sens qui ne sont pas dans le texte. Car ne le faisant pas, on ne pouvant pas le faire, on se fait voir Escolier, & bien bas, en mesme temps que l'on veut se faire le Maistre, & bien haut, par un traité du sublime."

52 Ibid., 125.

53 Ibid., 125: "[C]'est le gouvernement populaire, qui nourrit & forme les grands genies; & qu'il n'y a rien qui éleve davantage l'ame des grands hommes, que la liberté."

effect of the monarchy.[54] In a concluding response to both Boileau and Longinus, Desmarets puts forward the monarchy as the true source of the sublime, since only the grandeur of the virtues and deeds of a great king truly elevate us ("Et il n'y a rien qui éleve tant au sublime, que les frequentes actions Heroïques d'un grand Roy, & que ses vertus, qui sont bien plus grandes que ne furent jamais celles des Areopagites, ny celles des Ephores.").[55] Here, we approach the ideas put forward by Félibien in his *Tapisseries du Roy* that same year, who described Louis XIV himself as a source of the sublime, and therefore reflects on the need for a new means that would be able to evoke it.

In retrospect, we are able to detect two key aspects in Desmarets' argument that would remain fundamental to the Modern relationship to the notion of *le sublime* during the course of the following decades. Firstly, he points at the inability of Ancients to fully comprehend, translate and speak classical languages. As a result of Boileau's lack of knowledge of the Greek language, of French poetic translation, and of his sense of judgment, Desmarets implicitly suggests that his *Traité du sublime* is ironically detrimental to the sublimity of language and of people (Louis XIV in particular). And secondly, instead of dismissing *le sublime* and its obvious associations with classical literature and irrational ecstasy entirely, the choice of Desmarets (as well as other representatives of the French camp) to appropriate and adapt Boileau's notion to be able approach the elevated virtues and deeds Louis XIV's needs to be emphasised more than has yet been done.[56]

THE HEIGHT OF THE QUERELLE DES INSCRIPTIONS: CHARPENTIER AND LOUIS XIV'S ELEVATED SPIRIT

Perhaps the most surprising use of the Longinian sublime in this context can be found in the work of François Charpentier, another defender of the French language who published two of the most important texts in the *Querelle des Inscriptions*: his *Deffense de la langue françoise pour l'inscription de l'arc de triomphe dédié au Roy* from 1676, and *De l'excellence* de la langue françoise from 1683. His *Deffense* builds one the oration he delivered before the *Académie* in December 1675. Although Charpentier, as one of the first four members of the Petite académie,

54 Ibid., 126-27. By "cét homme" Desmarets seems to mean the "Traducteur": "Où est le jugement de cét homme, de rapporter la cause de la decadence des esprits à l'Etat Monarchique, & la cause de l'élevation des esprits à la liberté, à l'Etat Populaire, & aux prix que les Republiques proposoient; puis que vivant sous un bon & sage Roy […]. Et il faut luy demander si la consideration du Roy luy a osté l'ardeur de s'élever au dessus de tous les Poëtes." He continues: "Il se seroit bien passé de rapporter à la Monarchie les causes de la decadence des esprits, & des foiblesses du sien; & d'esperer son élevation par cette seule traduction du traité du sublime."

55 Ibid., 126.

56 In this sense, Desmarets' Défense should be placed in the same development to which belongs another Modern creation: the Tapisseries du Roy from 1670.

had much influence on the creation of public inscriptions, he had tough competition. One of his opponents in the debate, Amable de Bourzeis (1606-1672), also belonged to the same small, illustrious group of four. Moreover, Bourzeis was supported by Jean-Baptiste Santeul (1630-1697), a most ardent advocate of the use of Latin as a living language, who had also been responsible for many inscriptions that adorned public monuments and fountains in Paris. In order to be most persuasive and to invigorate his defence as much as possible, Charpentier moves the central arguments of the French camp to the first lines of his "Epistre au Roy," which is also the first part of his book. "The cause that I defend," he writes, "is that of your Majesty, since it is that of the whole of France. There is such a close relationship between the spirit of a people and its language, that it should not be treated with disregard."[57] Charpentier continues by explaining that words are the images of one's thoughts, so if there is any deformity or confusion in these images, then the same imperfections can be found in the thoughts that produce them. "In the same way one can judge the beauty or ugliness of a person by his portrait," he argues, "one can also judge the grandeur or pettiness of the genius of a nation by its language."[58] He continues:

> Et de vray, y a-t'il autre chose qui fasse la beauté des Langues, que le bel Esprit de ceux qui s'en servent? Si l'Usage ou le Hazard les introduit, c'est la delicatesse du Goust qui les purifie; c'est la fertilité de l'Imagination qui les rend abondantes; *c'est la noblesse des Sentimens qui leur donne de la Force & de la Sublimité*. Tellement qu'on ne sçauroit dire qu'une Langue est foible & grossiere, sans donner à penser quelque chose de desavantageux du Peuple qui la parle. Il en est de mesme, si on la compare avec une autre; Celle où il paroistra plus de Majesté & plus d'Elegance, est *celle dont le Peuple a plus d'élevation dans l'Ame* & plus de politesse dans les Mœurs.[59]

57 François Charpentier, Deffense de la langue françoise pour l'inscription de l'arc de triomphe dédié au Roy (Paris: Claude Barbin, [1676] 1683), iii-iv: "La Cause que je deffens, est celle de Vostre Majesté, puisque c'est celle de toute la France. Il y a une relation si estroite entre l'Esprit d'un Peuple & sa Langue, qu'elle ne peut estre méprisable, que ce ne soit un sujet de blasme pour luy."

58 Ibid., iv: "Nos Paroles sont les Images de nos Pensées; S'il y a de la difformité ou de la confusion dans ces Images, il faut que ces mesmes imperfections se rencontrent dans la Pensée qui les produit; Et comme on peut juger de la beauté ou de la laideur d'une personne par son Portrait, de mesme on peut juger de la grandeur ou de la petitesse du Genie d'une Nation par sa Langue."

59 Ibid., p. iv. My emphasis: "And, indeed, would there be anything else that makes up the beauty of Languages than the bel Esprit of those who use them. If it is this Use or Chance that introduces them, it is the delicacy of Taste [FK: du Goût] that purifies them; it is the fertility of Imagination that enriches them; it is the nobility of Feeling that gives them Strength and Sublimity. So much so that one cannot state that a language is weak and crude without giving any thought to the inferiority of the People who speak it. The same applies when we compare it with another; one that holds more Majesty and more Elegance has Speakers whose souls are more elevated and whose Morals are more civil."

In other words, when one's sentiments and thoughts are governed by a *bel esprit* (nourished by a delicate *goust* and a certain *noblesse*), they are able to attain a level of power and sublimity. Chapelain's argument is very similar to the argument Bouhours put forth in his *Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène* from 1671, in which he explained that a "bel esprit" is one of several qualities one must possess in order to be able to produce the ineffable ("le je ne sçay quoy") in great works.[60] And in addition to Bouhours' thoughts, Charpentier here anticipates Rapin's moral understanding of the sublime. Both authors adapted the Boileau-Longinian sublime of discourse to a virtuous quality, arguing that elevated minds bring forth a sublimity that is mirrored in the actions and language of the people.[61] And from the beginning of his first "discours," Charpentier is very clear about the question which language this would be: a choice for the French language would mirror the king's glory, serve the public interest, and testifies to a powerful authority and love for French traditions ("Il importe à la gloire du Roy, & à celle de toute la Nation, que ce fameux Monument soit tout François"). And since the king, Charpentier argues, did not approve of the destruction of those buildings of the Louvre that were constructed by his forefathers, he would also never "dishonour a language that had been cultivated with such care by all of the Kings, [his] predecessors."[62]

Moreover, a large majority of Charpentier's argument responds and calls into question De Bourzeis' claims concerning Latin, such as those of its universality and its origins. One of Charpentier's most intriguing counter-arguments focuses on the sublimity of works from antiquity written in *other* languages than Greek or Latin, such as in Hebrew. The example he uses to support this attribution of "eslevation de pensées" is the famous passage on the divine creation of light from the book of Genesis (Genesis 1:3), which Charpentier quotes from Longinus:

> [L]es grandes qualitez de ce fameux Historien & Legislateur, n'ont pas esté inconnuës aux Payens, comme il paroist par le Sophiste Longin, qui l'appelle *un Homme extraordinaire*, & qui louë si hautement cette expression sublime tirée

60 See Bouhours' "Entretien IV" on "Le Bel Esprit" in Bouhours, Les Entretiens, 190-236, and see Delehanty, Literary Knowing, 56.

61 This is a point Nicholas Cronk also emphasises, although he does argue that Charpentier's might have adaptated the sublime because he "either misunderstood, or actively disagreed with, the particular interpretation of Longinus enshrined in Boileau's translation, for the proposition that sublimity is simply the reflection of elevated feeling would make of le sublime a moral concept, an approach which in no way accords with Boileau's emphasis on the sublime as a characteristic of literary discourse." I would nuance this view, for Charpentier does not only consider noble sentiment but also an elevated soul as a source of the sublime. This thought resembles the words used by Boileau to describe Longinus himself: "[H]is sentiments have that ineffable quality that marks not only a sublime mind [or spirit]: but a soul far elevated above the common" ("[S]es sentimens ont je ne sçai quoi qui marque non seulement un esprit sublime: mais une ame fort eslevée au dessus du commun"). See Cronk, The Classical Sublime, 123. And for Boileau's remark in his "Préface", see Boileau, "Traité du sublime," vii.

62 Charpentier, Deffense, v-vi.

> du premier chapitre de la Genese, ou pour marquer la celerité, avec laquelle toutes choses furent creées par la puissance Divine, il se sert d'une façon de parler si serrée, qu'elle semble imiter cette promptitude mesme. *Dieu dit que la Lumiere soit faite, & la Lumiere fut faite*. Tout cela justifie donc, qu'il y a eu de l'Eloquence, & de la Beauté d'esprit, ailleurs qu'à Athenes & à Rome. Et si cela a esté ainsi dans les siecles passez, pourquoy cela ne seroit-il pas de mesme aujourd'huy?[63]

Although Longinus originally quoted Moses in Greek in his *Peri hypsous*, Charpentier consciously ignores this detail for the sake of his argument, implicitly referring to the powerful brevity and promptitude of the original words in Hebrew. Moreover, he does not provide the biblical passage in Hebrew, but in a French translation. Charpentier thus bypasses the Greek language while still emphasising the fact that a Greek sophist acknowledged the expression of sublimity through languages other than his own, which is precisely Charpentier's point. Another crucial aspect is that the French sentence he provides differs from Boileau's translation of Longinus, which reads "Dieu dit: Que la lumiere se fasse, & la lumiere se fit."[64] Whether or not Charpentier has used or read Boileau's edition – and it seems very likely that he did – his specific wording might be another manner of avoiding the Greek text that underlies Boileau's translation.

In addition to establishing and placing the perfect conditions for sublime literature – and most importantly inscriptions on buildings – in contemporary France, Charpentier finishes his argument by extending his debate to the creation of buildings themselves. The words that Augustus had once uttered when describing Rome, for example, could apply today to the architecture of Louis XIV ("he found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble").[65] Shifting the attention away from the unfinished building of the Louvre to the palace of Versailles, Charpentier (as Félibien did before him) employs the epic poetic image

63 Ibid., 280-81: "[T]he great qualities of this famed Historian and Legislator were not unknown to the Pagans, as we see in the example of the Sophist Longinus, who described him as an extraordinary man and who praised very highly this sublime expression drawn from the first chapter of Genesis. In order to evoke the promptitude with which all things were created by Divine power, he used a manner of speaking so limited, that it seems to imitate this very promptitude: 'Dieu dit que la Lumière soit faite, & la Lumiere fut faite.' All this justifies, then, that Eloquence and the Beauty of spirit also existed beyond Athens and Rome. And if this is true for the past, why would not it be the same for the present?"

64 Boileau, "Traité du sublime," 21-22.

65 Ibid., 280-81: "Il peut dire de cette Ville immense, & particulierement de la Maison Royale, qui en est la plus noble & la plus belle partie, ce qu'Auguste disoit de Rome, Ie l'ay trouvée de Brique, je la laisseray de Marbre. […] [N]ous pouvons dire aujourd'huy dans Paris, ce qu'Horace disoit autrefois dans Rome peut-estre avec moins de verité que nous." Charpentier here refers to a statement attributed to Augustus that was recorded by the historian Suetonius (born c. 69 AD) in his De Vita Caesarum (Augustus, 28). See, also for the English translation used above: Paul Zanker, The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1990), 139.

of the enchanted palace in an intellectual context, thereby reinforcing the sense of sheer wonder, nobility, magnificence and vastness that is manifested here:

> Il a trouvé le Louvre petit, irregulier, composé de vieux & de nouveaux Edifices, indigne, à n'en point mentir, de servir de Siege à la Majesté de l'Empire. Aujourd'huy il en fait un Palais admirable, & qui ne trouvera point son égal dans ces Bastimens à qui l'Antiquité donna le nom de Merveilles du Monde. Que peut-on opposer encore au fameux Chasteau de Versailles, qui semble n'estre fait que pour justifier la possibilité des Palais enchantez, si l'on peut se deffaire de l'opinion qu'il n'ait esté fait luy-mesme par enchantement? Tout y est surprenant, soit qu'on regarde la beauté de sa Situation, le riant aspect de ses Dehors, la noblesse de l'Architecture, la magnificence des Appartemens, la richesse des Meubles, le grand amas de Peintures & des Statuës excellentes, la vaste estenduë des Jardins.[66]

The question whether Versailles was constructed to justify the possibility of enchanted palaces, or that it may very well be an enchantment itself, is a rhetorical question that seems almost too metaphorical and poetic to be taken seriously. Nevertheless, he explains, like French literature the palace's grand structure is the product of the grand ideas of its builders, which, in turn, emanate from the sublime spirit ("un Esprit plus relevé") of Louis XIV himself:

> Tout cela n'avoit point esté veu en France jusqu'à nos Jours; nos Ouvriers n'avoient point encore eu de si grandes Idées, & cela fait bien comprendre, qu'ils ont esté guidez d'un Esprit plus relevé, d'une Intelligence plus éclairée qu'à l'ordinaire. Tous les autres beaux Arts se ressentent de ce Progrez merveilleux. La Poësie, l'Eloquence, la Musique, tout est parvenu à un degré d'excellence où il n'avoit point encore monté.[67]

Together, the French arts share in the same "marvellous progress," which constitutes for Charpentier a definitive sign of a French sublime, and one that can

66 Charpentier, Deffense, 331-32: "He found the Louvre small, irregular, composed of old and new Buildings, unworthy, no doubt, to serve as Seat to the Majesty of the Empire. Today, it is an admirable place, and will find no equal in those buildings that Antiquity called Wonders of the World. Also, what can we oppose to this famed Castle of Versailles, which seems to have been made only to justify the possibility of enchanted Palaces, if one could only, in the first place, disprove the idea that it created itself by enchantment? Here, everything is amazing, whether you look at the beauty of its location, the pleasant appearance of its Exterior, the nobility of the Architecture, the magnificence of the Apartments, the richness of its furniture, the great collection of Paintings and excellent Statues, the vast expanse of its Gardens."

67 Ibid., 332-33: "France has until now never seen such things; our Workmen had not yet had such great Ideas, and one can easily see that they have been guided by a more elevated Spirit, an Intelligence that is more enlightened than usual. All the other fine Arts are influenced by this marvellous Progress. Poetry, Eloquence, Music, they all have reached a degree of excellence to which they had not yet ascended."

be virtually independent from the classical tradition ("Et il ne faut pas que nous nous imaginions ne pouvoir rien dire de grand ni d'eslevé, sans emprunter leur Eloquence").[68] Compared to the rather poor arguments that had been used by his colleagues earlier on in the *Querelle des Inscriptions*, Charpentier here puts forward a much more productive fiction on the relationship between a sublime spirit and a sublime representation, since he generates the idea of a *Roi architecte*. The mind and intelligence of the monarch himself, he argues, guides the arts.

Charpentier continued his defence of the French language and its use on royal architecture by publishing his *Excellence de la langue françoise* in 1683. In his second volume of his *Excellence*, he returns to his praise of Longinus' emphasis on simplicity, ordinary language and promptitude ("celerité") – an example with which he also wants to clarify that his criticism of ancient works is not at all absolute, and that one should pursue a balanced and respectful approach in a debate.[69] This emphasis on the importance of ordinary language plays an important role in the *Excellence*, and Charpentier returns to this argument in his comparison between medals and public monuments. He seems to build on Bouhours' writings on devices when he explains the mysterious and sublime power of medals. Ideally, Charpentier argues, the various layered meanings of a medal present themselves simultaneously to the beholder's mind, but because of its subtle and mysterious nature they demand a learned taste and a penetrating genius ("goust exercé & un genie penetrant").[70] This reduces the number of people who are able to grasp the medal's "image sublime" to a milieu of learned intellectuals, who would fully understand the language, the image, and the hidden references.[71] In comparison, he argues, a public monument is much more inclusive, since, in addition to the use of language, it approaches the idea and experience of elevation in a more understandable manner: by evoking moral grandeur through physical grandeur. Here, Charpentier adds to the argument of his *Deffense*, which underlines the capacity of the French language to mirror the elevated spirit and virtue of the nation and the king himself. In addition to the powerful and more easily understandable message of a French inscription, the *height* of the statue of the king placed on top of the same structure (such as a triumphal arch or column)

68 Ibid., 334.

69 François Charpentier, De l'Excellence de la langue françoise, vol. 2 (Paris: Veuve Bilaine, 1683), 548-50: "[O] n pouvoit donner de la sublimité au discours, en ne se servant que des termes ordinaires. La principale beauté de l'Expression consiste à la rendre convenable à son sujet. […] Qu'on y adjouste encore d'autres ornemens, plus il y aura de Pompe, moins il y aura de Sublimité."

70 Ibid., 783: "Il est donc tres-assuré que les Medailles ne sont point des Monumens Populaires, quoy-qu'elles se respandent parmi le Peuple, & qu'on ne peut en bien juger à moins que de sçavoir un nombre infini de choses tres-curieuses, qui eschappent mesme au commun des Gens de Lettres, & qui demandent un goust exercé & un genie penetrant."

71 Ibid., 777: "Car l'assemblage de ces Figures & de cette Inscription, produit dans l'Esprit une image sublime de cet evenement; mais ce n'est que dans l'esprit de ceux qui sçavent la Fable."

creates a similar effect in the beholder. The distance between the spectator's eye and the king's sculpture represents and evokes the manner in which the king's virtue elevates itself above all other subjects:

> Les Inventeurs de ces Edifices, aussi bien que des Colomnes Triomphales, n'ont point eu d'autre objet que d'eslever fort haut les Statuës des Heros, & les exposer, de là, à la veuë des Peuples, afin que les yeux s'accoustumant à les regarder de bas en haut, l'esprit s'accoustumant aussi à les considerer avec un profond respect, & que la distance qui se rencontre entre l'œil du regardant & la Figure regardée, fust comme la mesure de la distance qu'il y a entre la Vertu de ces grands Personnages & le merite des autres hommes.[72]

In a manner very similar to Marolles' reflection on the relationship between the Louvre's physical grandeur and the king's moral grandeur, Charpentier uses the example of the triumphal arch to discuss the moral elevation of art, language and spirit. Moreover, his *Excellence* thus enables him to build on his thoughts on Versailles published in his *Deffense*, which refer to the unity between Louis XIV's elevated spirit ("esprit relevé") and the grandeur of his architecture.[73]

BOUHOURS ON LOUIS XIV: THE SUBLIME, THE INSCRIPTION AND THE DANGER OF HYPERBOLE

Although Charpentier was at pains to emphasise that he disapproved of the absolute, unqualified criticism and hasty generalisations he recognized in some of his peers, he made his position in the *Querelle* very clear. There were, however, a great number intellectuals who did not took position at all in the developing quarrel between the ancients and the moderns. One of these authors was Bouhours, whose *La manière de bien penser dans les ouvrages d'esprit* (1687) opted for a more balanced approach to the close interrelationship between rhetoric and architecture under Louis XIV. As Nicholas Cronk explains, Bouhours already attempted to resolve contemporary critical problems in his *Entretiens*, partly by launching the term of the *je ne sais quoi*, but this concept ultimately "had nothing like the

72 Ibid., 783: "The Designers of these Buildings, as well as of Triumphal Columns, aimed only at raising the Statues of Heroes very high, and to thus display them to the Public, so that they get used to looking upwards at them from below, and that their minds also become accustomed to considering them with a profound respect, and that the distance between the eye of the beholder and the Figure were like the measure of distance between the Virtue of these great Characters and the merit of other men."

73 Perrault's Arc du Triomphe du Trône (for the Place du Trône), the triumphal arch that would bear the new inscription, was onlt partially built and thus never completed. These parts were eventually demolished. See Michael Petzet, "Der Triumphbogenmonument für Ludwig XIV auf der Place du Trône," Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte 45, no. 2 (1982): 145-94.

success or the impact which the *sublime* had enjoyed in the wake of the Œuvres diverses [by Boileau]."[74] With Bouhours' bold critical aspirations of the *Entretiens* in mind, the *Manière*'s many allusions to Boileau can rightly be interpreted, as Cronk does, as an "attempt to rebut the *Traité du sublime* and to regain the critical initiative."[75] But instead of focusing on the relationship between Bouhours and Boileau, which has already been extensively studied, we need to inquire into the *Manière*'s relationship to the arguments put forward during the earlier *Querelle des Inscriptions*. Even though Bouhours' publication does not form part of this debate, which had already ended by then, it very much focuses on the same issue. Most notably, Bouhours' "Troisième Dialogue" of his *Manière* focuses on the question of sublimity in the interrelationship between architecture and literature under Louis XIV, particularly in laudatory poems and inscriptions. But before we turn to these reflections, let us first consider his thoughts on the Longinian sublime and Louis XIV from his preceding, second dialogue.

The dialogues in Bouhours' *Manière* consist of three conversations between the fictional characters of Philante and Eudoxe, two figures that Maarten Delbeke respectively described as "an enthusiastic defender of novelty" and "the more moderate voice of Bouhours."[76] At the very beginning of the second dialogue, the two friends continue their discussion on ingenious thoughts ("pensées ingénieuses"), which, Eudoxe states, should not be characterised by truth alone. What should be added, he continues, is something extraordinary that strikes the mind.[77] To explain this idea, Eudoxe uses the example of architecture: "Truth," he argues, "is to a thought what the foundations are to a building; it sustains it, and renders it solid. But a building that is only solid would not have enough to please those who are familiar with architecture."[78] Bouhours here transcends the usual comparative architectural *topos* of foundations, by attributing to an accomplished building the three key elements that will structure his central argument

74 Cronk, The Classical Sublime, 132.

75 Ibid., 132.

76 Maarten Delbeke, "Elevated Twins and the Vicious Sublime. Gianlorenzo Bernini and Louis XIV," in Van Eck, Bussels, Delbeke and Pieters, Translations of the Sublime, 133.

77 Dominique Bouhours, La manière de bien penser dans les ouvrages d'esprit. Dialogues (Paris: Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1687), 78: "[L]e vray ne suffisoit pas, & qu'il y falloit ajoûter quelque chose d'extraordinaire qui frappast l'esprit."

78 Ibid., 78-79: "Nous l'avons dit, & on ne sçauroit trop le dire : la vérité est à la pensée ce que les fondemens sont aux édifices; elle la soûtient, & la rend solide. Mais un bastiment qui ne seroit que solide n'auroit pas de quoy plaire à ceux qui se connoissent en architecture. Outre la solidité, on veut de la grandeur, de l'agrément, & mesme de la délicatesse dans les maisons bien-basties; & c'est aussi ce que je voudrois dans les pensées dont nous parlons. La vérité qui plaist tant ailleurs sans nul ornement, en demande icy; & cét ornement n'est quelquefois qu'un tour nouveau que l'on donne aux choses. Les éxemples vous feront comprendre ce que je veux dire. La mort n'épargne personne. Voilà une pensée fort vraye, & qui ne l'est que trop par malheur, ajoûta Eudoxe; mais c'est une pensée bien simple & bien commune. Pour la relever, & la rendre nouvelle en quelque façon, il n'y a qu'à la tourner de la maniére qu'Horace & Malherbe ont fait."

on accomplished texts: the elements of *grandeur* (or *la sublimité*), *agrément* and *délicatesse*, which make up Bouhours' three genres of thought (*espèces de pensées*). "In addition to solidity," Eudoxe states, "one desires grandeur, pleasure and even a sense of delicacy in well-built houses – and this is also what I would like to find in the thoughts of which we will speak."[79] As an example of such an elevating turn (*tours*), he mentions the verses by Horace and Malherbe on the indiscriminating knocking of Death at the door of both huts and palaces (see chapter 3).[80]

The other key aspect of Bouhours' argument is that a *pensée* should always suit the subject (*sujet*) of a text. It is therefore quite fitting that he chooses the comparison between architecture and literature mentioned above, since a significant portion of the examples of *pensées* he uses in his *Manière* have as their *sujet* royal buildings and their patrons, and Louis XIV in particular. In other words, the sublimity of a subject (a grand royal building for instance) needs *pensées* that attain the appropriate level of grandeur. Bouhours explains:

> Pour moy, repliqua Philante, j'aime sur tout les pensées qui ont de l'élevation, & qui ne représentent à l'esprit que de grandes choses. Vous n'estes pas en cela de trop méchant goust, dît Eudoxe. La sublimité, la grandeur dans une pensée est justement ce qui emporte, & ce qui ravit, pourveû que la pensée convienne au sujet : car c'est une regle générale, qu'il faut penser selon la matiére qu'on traite ; & rien n'est moins raisonnable que d'avoir des pensées sublimes dans un petit sujet qui n'en demande que de médiocres : il vaudroit presque mieux n'en avoir que de médiocres dans un grand sujet qui en demanderoit de sublimes.[81]

In fact, Bouhours is very clear on the subject of the king; he later mentions in his second dialogue that the *sujet* of Louis XIV is a particularly sublime and therefore elevating subject ("Mais c'est sur le Prince qui nous gouverne […] que nos meilleurs Écrivains ont pensé peut-estre plus noblement; commi si la hauteur du sujet avoit élevé leur génie"), which therefore inspires the noblest *pensées* of all.[82] It is no surprise, in this respect, that the architectural inscription plays a

79 Ibid., 78-79. See note 446.

80 Ibid., 79: "La mort n'épargne personne. Voilà une pensée fort vraye, & qui ne l'est que trop par malheur, ajoûta Eudoxe ; mais c'est une pensée bien simple & bien commune. Pour la relever, & la rendre nouvelle en quelque façon, il n'y a qu'à la tourner de la maniére qu'Horace & Malherbe ont fait."

81 Ibid., 80: "Personally, Philante replied, I especially like those thoughts that have elevation, and which represent only great things in the mind. That does not at all show bad taste, said Eudoxe. The sublimity, the grandeur in a thought is precisely what carries away, and what ravishes, provided that the thought suits the subject; for it is a general rule that we must think according to the matter we treat. And nothing is less reasonable than to express sublime thoughts in a small subject that requires only mediocre ones. One would almost prefer expressing only mediocre thoughts in a grand subject that would require sublime ones."

82 Delbeke, "Elevated Twins," 133. See Bouhours, Manière, 108: "Mais c'est sur le Prince qui nous gouverne, ajoûta Eudoxe, que nos meilleurs Ecrivains ont pensé peut-estre le plus noblement; comme si la hauteur du sujet avoit élevé leur génie, & que Loûïs le Grand leur eust inspiré luy-mesme des pensées dignes de luy."

vital role in Bouhours' argument. Inscriptions not only express a close alliance between architecture and literature (which is cemented by the fact that the inscription forms part of the material structure of the building itself), but usually also express the close relationship between the building and the grandeur of its royal patron. "Longinus," Bouhours argues, "not only provided rules for the sublime in speech but also in thoughts [*pensées*]," which Longinus explained by means of numerous grand subjects from both nature and art. A more recent example of such grandeur, Bouhours adds, would be the foundation medals that Louis XIII produced for the Église des Jésuites de Saint Louis in Paris. They featured the lines "Vicit ut David, ædificat ut Salomon" ("Il a vaincu comme David, il bastit comme Salomon"), evoking the grandeur of the king's enterprise.[83]

However, in literature, grandeur can also become too grand, and Bouhours is at pains to stress that the three genres of *pensées* are prone to exorbitance, and that they are far too often exaggerated in literature. One of the causes of this excess, Bouhours explains, lies in the fact that one can push the sublime much further in poetry than in prose, since the first allows a writer to be much bolder (*hardi*) in his expressions.[84] Still, this gives the poet no licence whatsoever to ignore the rules. Small works of poetry, Philante argues, fall outside of the rules that govern the epic poem, but Eudoxe is quick to add that "grave and serious small poems do have to be as exact as grand poems with regard to their *pensées*. Hyperbole and exaggeration that are not within the rules should be banished."[85] One is never allowed to exaggerate, even when the treated subject is elevated and pompous.[86]

The examples he provides in his third dialogue are, yet again, royal subjects, which are appropriate cases, Delbeke writes, "to determine the tipping point of greatness."[87] Bouhours uses the example of Martial's *pensées* on grand palaces to illustrate his concerns. "Martial would not share the sentiment of Longinus," Philante states, for "he usually exaggerates in grand subjects, and I confess that his amplifications have nothing that shock me."[88] Eudoxe replies by reciting one of Martial's poems ("Ce Palais est aussi grand que le ciel, mais plus petit que le

83 Bouhours, Manière, 118-19: "Sur une des médailles que l'on jetta dans les fondemens de l'église des Jésuites de Saint Loûïs, que Loûïs le Juste faisoit bastir, ces paroles estoient gravées: Vicit ut David, ædificat ut Salomon. Que peut-on imaginer de plus grand ? Il a vaincu comme David, il bastit comme Salomon."

84 Ibid., 267.

85 Ibid., 267: "Je ne croy pas, dît Philante, que les petits ouvrages de poésie soyent assujétis aux regles rigoureuses des poëmes Epiques. Dés que ces petits ouvrages, repartit Eudoxe, sont graves & sérieux, ils doivent estre aussi éxacts que les grands poëmes pour ce qui regarde les pensées. L'hyperbole & l'éxagération qui ne sont pas dans les régles, en doivent estre bannies."

86 Ibid., 254.

87 Delbeke, "Elevated Twins," 133.

88 Bouhours, Manière, 254: "Martial n'est pas du sentiment de Longin, dît Philante. Il s'enfle d'ordinaire dans les grands sujets, & pour moy je vous avoûë que son enflure n'a rien qui me choque."

Maistre qui l'habite"), which leads Philante to exclaim: "Could there be an even higher idea of a superb Palace, and of an august Monarch?"[89] Unconvinced by his friend, Eudoxe replies that it would be better to produce a proper and decent idea, instead of exaggerating one.[90] By placing Domitian next to or even above Jupiter, Eudoxe continues, Martial demonstrated that his temperament and tendency to flatter knew no boundaries whatsoever.[91] This leads the two friends to discuss the role of the sublime, hyperbole and exaggeration in French poetry ("on peut pousser le sublime plus loin en vers qu'en prose […] mais cette hardiesse poétique doit avoir ses bornes"), and here, Bouhours employs Martial's verses on Domitian's palace in order to address the subject of the enlargement of the Louvre. "As far as I am concerned," Eudoxe admits, "I hardly consider the epigram of one of our poets on the Louvre's new buildings better than that of Martial on the palace of Domitian":

> Quand je vois ce Palais que tout le monde admire :
> Loin de l'admirer, je soupire
> De le voir ainsi limité.
> Quoy, prescrire à mon Prince un lieu qui le resserre !
> Une si grande Majesté
> A trop peu de toute la terre.[92]

Philante attempts to relieve Eudoxe's contempt by quoting several of the proposed inscriptions for the Louvre's colonnade ("Jupiter ne s'est jamais veû à Rome un tel Palais ; & Rome n'a jamais adoré un tel Jupiter" and "Que nos Neveux étonnez de la magnificence de cét Edifice, cessent d'admirer: c'estoit le Palais du Soleil.").[93] Eudoxe admits there are some less opulent and less dazzling ones that nevertheless possess much nobility, which leads him to mention a few other proposals that appear more classical and are more beautiful ("Ouvrez

89 Ibid., 255.

90 Ibid., 255.

91 Ibid., 256: "Pour flatter Auguste, il [Horace] se contente de dire, en parlant à Jupiter: Les destins vous ont chargé du soin de César, & il fait seulement ce souhait : Que César tienne la premiére place après vous dans le gouvernement de l'univers. Ces pensées ménagent la Divinité de Jupiter en relevant la grandeur d'Auguste, & ce sont-là les tempéramens qu'un esprit juste sçait prendre dans le genre sublime. Martial ne connoist guéres ces tempéramens ; & quand il se jette dans la flatterie, il met Domitien audessus, ou du moins à costé de Jupiter; fort éloigné en cela d'Horace, qui ne donne à Jupiter ni de supérieur, ni d'égal."

92 Ibid., 267-68. "There's an Epigram on the Louvre, which out-does that of Martial on the Palace of Domitian, in Exaggeration. […] When this Palace I behold/ Which all the World admire;/ Far from admiring it, I sigh,/ To see it so confin'd./ What to my Prince a Place so close prescribe,/ In the whole Earth there is no Room/ For so much Majesty?" This translation is derived from a re-edition of Oldmixon's translated text: John Oldmixon, The Arts of Logick and Rhetorick... Interpreted and Explain'd By...Bouhours (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1976 [1728]), 251.

93 Bouhours, Manière, 268.

vos portes aux peuples, Louvre superbe; il n'est point de maison plus digne de l'Empire du monde" and "Cent villes prises font voir ce que LOUÏS peut dans la guerre; une seule maison montre ce qu'il peut dans la paix.").[94]

In order to demonstrate true hyperbole in contemporary inscriptions, Bouhours diverts the attention away from the Louvre towards the example of Bernini's bust of Louis XIV. Bouhours employs the term "sublime vicieux" to characterise the proposed Italian verses meant for the sculpture's pedestal. This criticism, Delbeke rightfully argues, "is aimed at the poems explaining the pedestal, but in the process brings down the contraption itself as well," and thereby "bares the weakness of the underlying invention and by extension Bernini's artistic capacities."[95] In other words, in its aim to evoke the grandeur of its subject or patron, a façade or a pedestal is dependent on the accomplished interplay of its constituent elements – therefore, when pushed towards extravagance and hyperbole, the inscription can easily backfire and will thus tarnish the rest of the artwork or building, as well as the subject, in the process. In this regard, Bouhours' example should also remind the reader that the art of inscriptions constitutes not only the closest but also the most public interrelationship of art and literature under Louis XIV, which is why it requires a high degree of control and nobility. The case of Bernini also leads Bouhours to address other examples of exaggerated Italian laudatory poems on the French monarch. Bouhours is thus able to point at the dangers of poetry, but without criticising French poetry too much, let alone placing the noble merit and spirit of French poets under that of their Italian colleagues. In fact, his comparison between French and Italian poetry enables him to divert the attention away from the errors and impurities of French poetic praise of Louis XIV, towards the pompous hyperbole of the Italians. One Italian poet of a panegyric of the king is even pardoned by both Eudoxe and Philante for the extravagancy of his verses; not only, Bouhours states, because is it understandable that an "incomparable monarch" evokes in the poet such an elevated idea, but also because the *spirit* of the Italians has a different moral and intellectual character.[96] The French, on the contrary, "appreciate true grandeur." Here, Bouhours' central argument clearly shines through – one that is in line with Charpentier's defence of the French language, architecture and people on the grounds of a shared noble virtue; the monarch's sublime grandeur elevates his people, which is the reason why French poets best evoke this royal grandeur, much better than their foreign colleagues.[97]

94 Ibid., 268.

95 Delbeke, "Elevated Twins," 134.

96 Bouhours, Manière, 272.

97 The declaration in his Entretiens (1671) of the superiority of the French language and culture with regard to other European civilisations already stirred up a heated debate. Moreover, Bouhours' Manière played a key role in instigating a French-Italian controversy between the French author and the Bolognese marquis Gian Giuseppe

Boileau's translated edition of Longinus introduced the notion of *le sublime* as a critical concept, and it is primarily in the sphere of polemic debate or quarrels that it became used as such. Contemporary readers recognised that *Peri hypsous* was first and foremost a treatise on poetic aesthetics, emphasising the extraordinary grandeur of thought and its overwhelming effect. In Longinus, this grandeur is often represented by images of grand actions and grand spaces (the idea of height), or a combination of both. These examples stimulated early modern writers to contemplate the elevated nature of subjects in art and architecture, and to extend this thought to the level of elevated (and elevating) virtue, be it the king or his nation. The creation of public architecture under Louis XIV united all of these aspects, and therefore constituted one of the most potent political instruments of power. The *Querelle des Inscriptions* departed from this very idea – the grandeur of space to evoke the grandeur of virtue – a thought which all of its participants could agree on. Perhaps surprisingly, the *Querelle*'s central question on the most appropriate language to serve this visual and literary rhetoric of power, gave rise to appropriations of Longinus on both sides of the quarrel. In the modern camp, the poet Desmarets used Longinus as the unfortunate victim of an incompetent translator (and his "sublime" as the irrefutable feature of Louis XIV himself), while his fellow modern colleague Charpentier saw in Longinus an illustrious companion in his defence of languages other than Greek or Latin.

However, similarly to Chéron, writers such as Bouhours also pointed at the dangers of exaggerated thoughts and forms, which exceed the grandeur of the subject and thus achieve the exact opposite effect. The unfortunate consequences of these types of excess in visual and literary rhetoric became particularly acute in the architectural manifestations of Louis XIV around the turn of the century, which will be the topic of the following, and last chapter.

Orsi. In this public debate, commonly labelled as the "Orsi-Bouhours polemic," the Manière, in particular, "caught the Italians' and Arcadians' interest and enmity," and turned Bouhours into an "emblem of French chauvinism." See respectively: Vernon Hyde Minor, The Death of the Baroque and the Rhetoric of Good Taste (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 32, and Paola Gambarota, Irresistible Signs: The Genius of Language and Italian National Identity (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 59.

Excess and exaggeration: Louis XIV and the issues of art and sublimity near the end of his reign (1685-1715)

Poetic and theoretical reflections on royal sublimity and the capabilities of language and art continued to be published during the course of the 1680s and around the turn of the century, but their share of highly critical texts began to steadily increase. The last decades knew a series of expensive wars and financial crises, which made the image of a transcendent king more difficult to maintain. This last chapter will explore the numerous efforts to uphold the role of sublime grandeur in the interrelationship between the monarch and his architecture from 1685 onwards.

In this inquiry, particular attention will be paid to attempts at defending the merits of the *merveilleux* in this period. France's heyday of the epic had already passed, but the year of 1685 saw several opportunities to use the slowly dying *merveilleux chrétien* to Louis XIV's advantage. However, the conventional rhetorical fictions that had been represented on paper and in the urban realm of Paris for decades now, needed to remain in keeping with a changed society.

THE LEGITIMATE MONARCH: ARCHITECTURE AND THE MARVELLOUS IN PROSE AND POETRY

Boileau used his *L'Art poétique* from 1674 to spell out the fundamental rules underlying classical writing, but in addition employed it as a satirical and polemic instrument. As we have seen in the previous chapter, his poem condemns the lengthy descriptions and *ekphrases* of marvellous architecture that enabled the readers of modern Christian epics to mentally construct the imaginary enchanted space from foundation to cornice. By means of a slightly adapted paraphrase from Scudéry's *Alaric* – Boileau cunningly puts his adapted verse line between double quotes: "« Ce ne sont que festons, ce ne sont qu'astragales. »")[1] – Boileau aimed to deliver a crushing blow to this poetic tradition ("Fuyez de ces auteurs

1 See the "Chant Premier" of his *L'Art poétique* in Boileau, *Oeuvres diverses*, 105.

l'abondance stérile").[2] Moreover, Boileau similarly employs his "Chant troisième" to proclaim his aversion to the *merveilleux chrétien*, but here rejects the whole genre altogether. In the following verses, Boileau alludes to the works of Tasso and Ariosto and in particular to the more recent work of Desmarets, who all mistreat and impoverish Christian subjects by adding fabulous things, such as demons and magicians:

> C'est donc bien vainement que nos auteurs déçus.
> Bannissant de leurs vers ces ornemens reçus,
> Pensent faire agir Dieu, ses saints et ses prophètes,
> Comme ces dieux éclos du cerveau des poëtes;
> Mettent à chaque pas le lecteur en enfer,
> N'offrent rien qu'Astaroth, Belzébuth, Lucifer.
> De la foi d'un chrétien les mystères terribles
> D'ornemens égayés ne sont point susceptibles.[3]

Although the Christian epic had become overshadowed by other more popular genres favoured by the Ancients during the end of the century, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes of 1685 and the subsequent demolition of the Protestant church at Charenton provided a new impetus for the *merveilleux chrétien*.

DEFENDING THE MERVEILLEUX CHRÉTIEN TO THE GLORY OF LOUIS XIV: LE NOBLE'S CHARENTON AND BELLOCQ'S INVALIDES

Inspired by these events, Eustache Le Noble (1643-1711) composed the Christian epic *L'Hérésie détruite: poème héroïque* in 1690, which aimed to glorify the king's destruction of the Huguenot community just outside Paris. As Philippe Hourcade shows in his work on Eustache Le Noble from 2015, the subject of his poem justified the use of the *merveilleux chrétien*, which also ensured the continuation of the line of French epics inspired by and glorifying the monarchy.[4] Le

2 Ibid., 105.

3 Ibid., 125. The English edition of Boileau's *L'Art poétique*, published by Sir William Soames and John Dryden in 1683, provides an excellent translation, which retains the original rhyme scheme: "In vain have our mistaken Authors try'd/ These ancient Ornaments to lay aside,/ Thinking our God, and Prophets that he sent,/ Might Act like those the Poets did invent,/ To fright poor Readers in each Line with Hell,/ And talk of *Satan, Ashtaroth,* and *Bel;/* The Mysteries which Christians must believe,/ Disdain such shifting Pageants to receive." See Nicolas Boileau, *The art of poetry written in French by the Sieur de Boileau; made English*, trans. William Soames and John Dryden (London: R. Bentley, 1683), 40.

4 Philippe Hourcade, *Entre Pic et Rétif: Eustache Le Noble, 1643-1711* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1990), 170: "Fait remarquable, l'utilisation du merveilleux chrétien, que justifiait le sujet du poème, place *L'Hérésie détruite* dans la lignée ouverte par les épopées françaises, celles notamment d'inspiration monarchique, qui l'avaient précédée dans le siècle."

Noble's poem contains all of the traditional elements of the *merveilleux chrétien* of the epic. In addition to the dynamic imagery of the "vols sublimes" between the different realms of earth, heaven and hell ("Qu'autant que ce Grand Roy le veut, & le permet./ Ce bruyant Messager calant son vol sublime"),[5] the epic also features an instance of heavenly "sacred horror" (in Chant I) that is contrasted with a sense of infernal, demonic horror (in Chant III):

[FROM CHANT I:]
Du Heros attentif quelle fut l'horreur sainte?
Quel fut l'étonnement, & la pieuse crainte?
Quand du sein luminieux de ce nuage ouvert,
Son redoutable Ayeul HENRY se fut offert.[6]

[FROM CHANT III:]
Mais d'un autre costé dans le fond des Enfers
Au bruit de ce Conseil CALVIN rongeant ses fers […]
A ses cris douloureux dont il répand l'horreur,
Vole & se rend vers luy le Démon de l'Erreur.[7]

In the same vein, the poem ends with a *deus ex machina* that counteracts the wrath of Satan and his demons, who had interrupted the demolition of the church at Charenton by means of a grave tempest ("Mais enfin du Très-Haut l'équitable Clemence,/De ces Tyrans de l'air arreste l'insolence;/ Et d'un signe qui fait trembler tous les Démons,/Les fait soudain rentrer dans leurs antres profons.").[8] This allows the workers to resume their work, in the name and to the glory of the poem's royal hero. Like *L'Hérésie détruite*, a great number of texts and artworks produced in response to the creation of the Edict of Fontainebleau imbued the subject of the "destroyed heresy" (or "l'hérésie détruite") with a sense of demonic wonder, thereby underscoring Le Noble's epic. A particularly eye-catching example was a homonymous bronze medallion designed and executed by Martin Desjardins (1637-1694) for the statue of Louis XIV on the Place des Victoires.[9] One of the two heretics represented by the sculptor gazes upwards toward the

5 Eustache Le Noble, *L'Heresie détruite* (Unknown publisher, 1690), 43.

6 Ibid., 7: "What sacred horror came over the attentive Hero?/ What astonishment, and pious fear?/ When from the luminous centre of this opened cloud,/ His formidable grandfather HENRY was presented."

7 Ibid., 24: "But on the other side, in the depths of Hell/ CALVIN gnawed his shackles at the sound of this Council, / […] His painful cries, which spread horror all around,/ Attracted the Demon of Error, who flew towards him."

8 Ibid., 58-60.

9 This particular medallion was already ordered on March 9 1685, seven months prior to the revocation itself. See Clio Karageorghis and Bruno Zeitoun, eds., "L'Hérésie détruite," accessed December 4, 2017, http://cartelfr.louvre.fr/cartelfr/visite?srv=car_not_frame&idNotice=776.

figure of Religion and, by removing a mask, reveals a set of large donkey ears and a head of snake-like curls. Another example is Antoine Coysevox's (1640-1720) bronze relief of "Religion Triumphant" from 1687, which features a crouching Heresy with devils horns, holding a similar mask.[10] The relief was executed for the base of a statue of Louis XIV for the Hôtel de Ville in Paris.

In the context of imaging and image making around the Revocation, one image in particular reveals several striking parallels with Le Noble's epic narrative, although being completely different in nature. In 1685, an unknown printmaker produced a crude engraving of the church's destruction – an image that must have functioned as a piece of protestant propaganda (fig. 34). It shows several of the marvellous ingredients used by Le Noble, but they are employed in such a way that they serve the opposite effect; an anti-Catholic scene of a demonic king and court destroying the Reformed Church of France. On the foreground, a number of royal men are depicted, molesting a group of distressed women, while guided by the figure of Satan behind them. Although the latter is cloaked in a large coat, his large claws and pointy horns leave no doubt about his menacing identity. While gazing at his destruction of Charenton's church building, he is accompanied by his greatest accomplice: a winged dragon with seven heads, which represent the main figures of the Revocation. Among them are Louis XIV himself, his confessor Father François d'Aix de la Chaise (1624-1709), the Grand Dauphin, chancellor Michel Le Tellier (1603-1685), two bishops, and lieutenant-general of the police Gabriel Nicolas de la Reynie (1625-1709).[11] Whereas Le Noble affirmed his work as a true Christian epic by means of its concluding *deus ex machina*, the protestant engraving shows a very similar scene that, in this context, achieves a truly dismal effect. Heavenly forces try to stop Charenton's destruction, but to no avail. An angel is depicted hovering above the scene, presenting the tables of the law to God, whose presence is evoked by an opening in the clouds. This particularly melancholy detail must have deeply resonated with its contemporary Huguenot viewers; the heavenly scene above the half-demolished building appears on paper as if frozen in time, reminiscing the last remnants of Protestantism in France, and a final battle against the ungodly, Catholic tyranny of the French court. As Rémi Mathis emphasises, this print not only constitutes "an extremely rare instance of the use of the print to vector effective propaganda related to a specific event at very low cost," but also forms a "visual avatar of the many texts intended to denigrate Louis XIV" near the end of the century.[12]

10 Martha Mel Stumberg Edmunds, *Piety and Politics: Imaging Divine Kingship in Louis XIV's Chapel at Versailles* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2002), 63.

11 Rémi Mathis, "Destruction of the Protestant Church of Charenton," in *A Kingdom of Images. French Prints in the Age of Louis XIV, 1660-1715*, ed. Peter Fuhring, Louis Marchesano, Rémi Mathis, and Vanessa Selbach (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2015), 210-11.

12 Ibid., 211.

Another pro-royal example of the struggling *merveilleux chrétien* near the end of the century can be found in poetic work *L'Eglise des Invalides. Poëme*, written by Pierre de Bellocq (1645-1704), a minor poet and *valet de chambre du Roy* who befriended Boileau, though remained his enemy as a poet.[13] Bellocq's choice to produce a lengthy laudatory poem can be explained by taking into account several factors. First of all, the poem forms part of a steady increase in the production of laudatory poems on royal architecture towards the end of the seventeenth century. In retrospect, we can identify a network of writers that included among others Bellocq, Nicolas Catherinot (1628-1688), François Boutard (1664-1729), Charles Perrault, and the Abbé du Jarry (1658-1730), who all produced poems in Latin and French, and translated each other's works to reach a larger audience. Secondly, to remain in the sphere of Christian values, Bellocq's poetic use of the *merveilleux chrétien* in the context of the Dôme des Invalides fits with the increasing association between the monarch and his canonised forefather, Saint Louis, to which the church is dedicated. Towards the end of the century, Louis XIV's troubles and failures during the Nine Year War (1688-1687), and the country's famine and financial shortages, accelerated a process that separated and isolated the monarch himself from the heroic image of the military conqueror. This very well may have contributed to several major changes in the church's iconographical programme, such as the rejection of a painted scene of "La Gloire du Roi et la prosperité des armes" for the dome's interior, in favour of a scene that focuses primarily on the figure of Saint Louis.[14]

But most importantly, the main goal of Bellocq's poem, and its use of the Christian supernatural, is to reach *beyond* the figure of Saint Louis, towards a sublime unity between the Dôme and the figure of the monarch. Already in the poem's dedication to the king, Bellocq describes the church as an "effort sublime," a crowning achievement that enables the poet to push the comparison between Saint Louis and Louis XIV even further, suggesting the latter surpasses the first:

> Cependant, s'il étoit permis de dire son sentiment sur une matière si relevée, j'oserois soutenir que V.M. n'a jamais rien fait de plus grand que l'établissement des Invalides. Cet effort sublime de vôtre magnificence Royale a porté au plus haut point l'amour de vos Sujets, & l'admiration des Etrangers. […] Si des vuës humaines et politiques ont pû inspirer à d'autres Princes quelque informe crayon d'un si grand dessein, il n'appartient qu'à la charité Chrétienne de le pousser à sa perfection. Celle de S. Louis, quoique tres-vaste, ne s'étendit que sur les Guerriers que la cruauté des Sarrazins avoit privés de la veuë: la vôtre, SIRE, embrasse

13 See Robert Sabatier, *Histoire de la poésie française: La Poésie du XVIIe siècle*, vol. 3 (Paris: Albin Michel, 1975), 302.

14 Bertrand Jestaz, *L'Hôtel et l'église des Invalides* (Paris: Picard, 1990), 38.

> tous ceux que le sort des armes a mis hors de combat. […] La superbe Eglise que l'on vient d'achever par les ordres de V.M. a mis le comble à ce fameux Ouvrage.[15]

The poem itself opens with the Genius of Architecture, sent by Faith to Versailles, where he wakes the sleeping figure of architect Jules Hardouin-Mansart (1646-1708) in the guise of his famous great-uncle François Mansart (fig. 35). Encouraging the young architect to honour God, the Genius disappears and leaves Hardouin-Mansart in a fury of artistic inspiration. The subsequent construction of the Dôme attracts the Demon of Envy and her infernal accomplices. The Demon explains her intentions to harm the French monarch to the figure of Fortune. While her group flees after being frightened by the golden cross atop the Dôme (fig. 36), the Demon hides in one of the hollow columns of the incomplete baldachin, thereby obstructing the construction (fig. 37). Hardouin-Mansart prays to heaven, and the Archangel Michael, in the guise of a labourer, curses the Demon. She is sent back to hell, and is forced to gaze at the fortunate reign of Louis XIV for all eternity.

After the poem's *deus ex machina* and the disappearance of the Archangel as saviour, the poem ends with its ultimate subject: the visiting monarch and his sublime response to the church:

> LOUIS, du noble objet frapé subitement,
> Fut au premier coup d'œil saisi d'étonnement,
> Il en convint luy-même, & ce grand témoignage
> Au faîte des honneurs plaça l'insigne Ouvrage,
> Qui peut, par cet aveu pour jamais ennobli,
> Braver impunément & le temps & l'oubli.[16]

Adding to the poem a sense of *vraisemblance*, the verse lines on the king's amazement were in fact based on the royal visit in May and July 1701.[17] The *Mercure galant* wrote about the first visit that the "Prince was struck with astonishment

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15 See the "Epistre" in Pierre de Bellocq, *L'Eglise des Invalides. Poëme* (Paris: M. Brunet, 1702), v: "However, if it were permitted to state one's opinion on such an elevated matter, I would dare argue that Your Majesty has never done anything more great than establishing the Invalides. This sublime effort of your Royal magnificence has carried the love of your Subjects and the admiration of foreigners to the highest point. […] Whereas human and political goals have been able to inspire other Princes towards only an incomplete sketch of a grand design, it is up to Christian charity to push it to perfection. That of Saint Louis, though very vast, extended only to the Warriors deprived of their sight by the cruelty of the Saracens: Yours, SIRE, embraces all those who are put out of action by the fate of war. […] The beautiful Church that has just been completed by the orders of Your Majesty has crowned this famous Work."

16 Bellocq, *L'Eglise*, 29: "Louis, suddenly struck by the noble building,/ Was seized with astonishment at first glance;/ He himself had to acknowledge that, and this great testimony/ Granted to this Work the highest honour,/ Which, after this confession, will, forever ennobled,/ Defy unpunished both time and oblivion."

17 R.W. Berger, "Pierre Du Bellocq's Poem on the Dôme des Invalides," *Seventeenth-Century French Studies* 32, no. 2 (2010): 144.

at first glance" ("Ce Prince fut frapé d'étonnement au premier coup d'œil"), having not expected such grandeur.[18] Upon his return in Meudon, the monarch repeatedly returned on the subject the following days, often repeating that "he had been astonished" ("ce Prince repetant souvent pour le marquer, 'qu'il avait esté étonné' ").[19]

In fact, this sense of sublime astonishment even returned in official descriptions of the Dôme des Invalides, such as Jean-François Félibien des Avaux's (ca. 1656-1733) *Description de l'Eglise Royale des Invalides* from 1706 – a work by Félibien's son which even reused Le Pautre's prints that were made for Bellocq's poem, such as images of the supernatural figure of Architecture. Thus infusing his description with marvellous images, they perfectly accompanied a description that evokes the same astonishment as that of the king. Here, the author's experience strongly echoes the exploratory thoughts of his father André Félibien in his *Entretiens* on an aesthetic sublime in architecture, when the latter described the transporting effect of grand domes (see chapter 3):

> [S]i la grandeur & la beauté de tous les dehors de l'eglise cause de l'estonnement à ceux qui la voyent de plus prés; un ravissement qu'on ne peut exprimer surprend en entrant dans cet auguste temple. La veue descouvre dés le premier aspect au delà du sanctuaire par une ouverture tres spacieuse, toute l'estenduë du chœur des invalides, d'où la grande hauteur du dome & tout ce qui forme la croix grecque, produit encore un effet surprenant.[20]

In order to push the level of sublimity even further, Félibien des Avaux adds another layer of sublime reaction to the equation, which he recognises in the expressions of the depicted figures of the saints in the Dôme's interior. He asserts that the spectator inside the church, while gazing at the depicted sensations of divine transcendence and ecstasy, experiences a comparable experience of ravishment:

> Le peintre a employé tout l'art de pinceau à marquer dans la figure de ce saint Evangeliste l'elevation & la sublimité qui rendent ses ouvrages si admirables.

18 ["Visit of Louis XIV to the new church of the Hôtel des Invalides"], *Mercure galant*, May 1701 (vol. 1), 288-90.

19 Ibid., 290.

20 Jean-François Felibien des Avaux, *Description de l'Eglise Royale des Invalides* (Paris: J. Quillau, 1706), 27-28: "[W]hereas the grandeur and beauty of the exterior of the church elicits astonishment in those who look at it more closely, a ravishment that cannot be expressed amazes those who enter this august temple. From here, one immediately discovers, beyond the sanctuary and through the very spacious opening, the whole extent of the choir of the Invalides [FK: the old church]. And here, the great height of the dome and all aspects of the Greek cross also produce an astonishing effect." A similar sublime experience is described by the contemporary writer Claude-Marin Saugrain: "En entrant dans cette Eglise par la grande porte, l'on découvre jusqu'au fond de l'Eglise intérieure, dont je vous ai parlé ; mais la vue se trouve tout d'un coup si occupée & si remplie d'objets admirables, qu'il faut avouer que l'on est également surpris & enlevé. Il faut cependant vous fixer à un seul sujet." See Claude-Marin Saugrain, *Les Curiositez de Paris* (Paris: Saugrain, 1716), 273.

> […] [O]n voit que transporté hors de luy-mesme par un saint anthousiasme, il est tout occupé de la veuë du ciel […]. Il n'y a personne qui ne se sente comme ravi hors de soy en regardant à la fois du milieu du dome toutes les peintures.[21]

In this manner, Félibien des Avaux further builds on the sense of sublime astonishment that started with Louis XIV's described visit, which, in turn, informed the poetic construction of Bellocq. All texts and images are connected to each other, and collectively share and try to uphold the same dynamic interrelationship between the grandeur of the monarch and that of his art and rhetoric.

REAL FICTIONS, FICTIONAL REALITY: PUBLIC SPACES AND THE ISSUE OF EXCESSIVE GRANDEUR AND IDOLATRY

The literary works by Le Noble and Bellocq invested in a mainly literary dynamic between the *merveilleux* on the one hand, and (architectural) reality on the other. In addition to these texts, the last decade of the seventeenth century saw a number of efforts to take this dynamic a step further, by translating conventional *topoi* of the marvellous into the third dimension and, thus, blending the marvellous and real together. The reign of Louis XIV had already seen several attempts at introducing "imaginary" architecture in the urban sphere of Paris, such as the ephemeral Mount Parnassus at the 1660 entry of Louis XIV and Maria Theresa of Spain. In the year 1689, and ten years later in 1699, two similar ephemeral structures were constructed in the centre of Paris. Other than their 1660 sibling – which constituted a quite conventional example of ephemeral entry-gate architecture – these two new ephemeral "temples" were both built on the occasion of the inauguration of a statue of Louis XIV. The first structure, an octagonal "Temple de l'Honneur," was erected on the Place des Grèves on 14 July 1689 (fig. 38). It celebrated the creation of a new statue of the king as emperor, which was executed by Antoine Coysevox and was destined for the interior of the Hôtel de Ville. The second structure, a quadrangular "Temple de la Gloire," similarly served to glorify the inauguration of the grand equestrian statue of the king and the surrounding Place Louis-le-Grand, on August 13th 1699. This ephemeral temple was built on an artificial island in the middle of the Seine, opposite the Louvre, and formed the centre of a dazzling firework show (fig. 39). Two official descriptions were published to accompany the festivities, and both were written by the Jesuit writer Claude-François Ménestrier, who

21 Félibien des Avaux, *Description*, 80-81: "The painter has used the art of his brush to express in the figure of this holy Evangelist the elevation and sublimity that make his works so admirable. […] [W]hile transported out of himself in a state of sacred enthusiasm, we see that he is completely focused on the sight of Heaven […]. There is no one who does not feel as if ravished out of oneself when seeing all these paintings in the centre of the dome at the same time."

had already built a solid authority as an expert in emblematics and heraldry. In the same manner as Félibien's explanatory description of the *Tapisseries du Roy*, Ménestrier's publications offer the reader a description of the structure's appearance, translations of Latin inscriptions, as well as explanations of the mysterious meanings contained in the numerous devices that adorned the two temples. They both had a strong visual appeal; temples like these were usually employed as imaginary, metaphorical ideas on paper. Therefore, their presence as *fremdkörper* in the capital, suddenly appearing in familiar surroundings like some sort of mirage, must have overwhelmed the contemporary spectator. Their laudatory function stayed the same; they both expressed a poetics of transcendence that had now become conventional, describing Louis XIV as an elevated marvel that marvelled its beholder.

Despite their visual and ideological similarities, the second temple and its accompanying festivities met with far more criticism than the first one – issues that Ménestrier's laudatory descriptions could ultimately not control or prevent. Shortly after the festivities of August 1699, the journalist and pamphleteer Nicolas Gueudeville (1652-1721) published his satirical work *L'Esprit des cours de l'Europe*, in which he focuses on the relationship between the appearance of the temple and the extravagant enthusiasm of the Parisian masses. He opens his commentary by addressing the aim of the festivities, which, according to him, was to render the monarch as the "Divinity of the Temple of Glory." All manner of heroes from fable and history, he continues, had been placed opposite the image of the king, for the sake of a comparison that, in fact, always produces the same result: Louis as the grandest of all:

> On voit que le but qu'on s'est proposé dans cette Pompe a été de rendre le Roi la Divinité du Temple de la gloire; & si ce terme de Divinité scandalise les ames scrupuleuses, disons qu'on a voulu faire occuper à S.M. la premiere place de cet édifice imaginaire. On a rassemblé ce que l'on a pu trouver de plus distingué, & de plus fameux parmi les Héros de la Fable & de l'Histoire; on les a tous mis l'un aprés l'autre vis-à-vis de Louïs le Grand; ils ont subi tour à tour l'examen & le paralelle; & la conclusion a été ce qu'elle est toûjours dans ces occasions, c'est que Louïs est plus grand qu'eux; & qu'ils sont obligez en bonne justice de le laisser passer.[22]

22 Nicolas Gueudeville, *L'Esprit des cours de l'Europe*, vol. 1 (The Hague: Frères L'Honoré, 1699), 364: "We can see that the aim underlying this Pump was to transform the King into the Divinity of the Temple of glory; and if this expression of divinity shocks the scrupulous souls, let us say that they wanted His Majesty to occupy the most prominent place of this imaginary edifice. They had drawn from the most distinguished sources, the most famous Heroes of Fable and History. They had placed them all, one after the other, opposite Louis le Grand, and they were all reviewed and paralleled. And the conclusion was, as always on such occasions, that Louis is greater than every one of them, and that they are obliged, in good justice, to let him pass."

The idea of Louis XIV's transcendence was evoked through a wide range of inscriptions, iconographical elements and architectural choices – ideas that were carried out in a much grander and lofty manner than in July 1689. The choice for an island in the middle of the river, Ménestrier explains, points at the notion of inaccessibility, since the road to Glory can only be travelled by those individuals who are able to elevate themselves above men ("tel est le chemin de la Gloire, & l'on n'y arrive que par des travaux infinis […]. Il faut s'élever au dessus de l'homme pour le meriter").[23] In Antiquity, he continues, those men descended from their Gods, and were given divine honours, since their immortality had made them worthy of such things.[24] An inscription applied on one of the pedestals facing the Louvre proclaimed that the king is elevated above all praises and monuments ("*Titulis & nomine Major*. Plus grand que son grand Nom & que tous les Eloges"), which made it only fitting that the temple's crowning medal, pointed at the heavens, expressed the words "*Sic Itur ad astra:* C'est ainsi qu'un Heros s'éleve jusqu'aux Cieux."[25] In view of these choices, Gueudeville argues, one can still offer those earlier heroes and kings which the monument outranks through the figure of the ever-elevated Louis XIV some small consolation. A temple of glory built on a river, amidst a feast of fireworks, is transient and lacks true solidity. "If there is one foundation on which a Temple of glory can endure," he states, "it is in the minds of those who are enlightened":

> [U]n Temple de gloire bâti sur une Riviére en Feu d'Artifice est quelque chose de bien peu solide, une partie de la matiére tombe dans l'eau & s'enfuit avec son cours, l'autre s'envole en l'air, & se dissipe. S'il y a un fond sur lequel le Temple de la gloire puisse subsister, c'est dans les esprits qui sont éclairez, & qui ne sont prévenus d'aucune passion; fond rare, fond sans prix, mais fond qui se trouve pourtant, & où l'on ne juge point des choses par les flateries outrées de quelques Courtisans affamez, par les loüanges fades d'une plume vénale, ni par les concours, & par les acclamations d'une populace aveugle.[26]

Exaggerated flatteries and blind, gullible praise, he writes, constitute the greatest dangers inherent in the relationship between rulers and people. In public

23 Claude-François Ménestrier, *La Statuë Equestre de Louis le Grand*, *Placée dans le Temple de la Gloire* (Paris, Veuve Vaugon, 1699), 3.

24 Ibid., 4: "[C]'est pour cela que les Anciens faisoient descendre ces grands hommes de leurs Dieux, & déferoient mesme les honneurs divins à leurs Heros, c'est-à-dire à ceux que leur vertu avoit rendu dignes de l'immortalité."

25 Ibid., 7 and 12.

26 Gueudeville, *L'Esprit*, 365: "A Temple of glory built in a River amidst fireworks is something very weak; part of the material falls into the water and floats away in its stream, while the other material flies upwards and dissipates. If there is one foundation on which a Temple of glory can endure, it is in the minds of those who are enlightened, and who are not accused of any passion. It is a rare and priceless foundation, but one that does exist, however, and which does not lead people to judge things by the outrageous flatteries of some hungry Courtiers, nor by the bland praise of a corrupt pen, or by the contests and the cheers of a blind mob."

responses to art and architecture, Gueudeville recognises a degree of excessive behaviour that the very same people also exhibited at barricades and during the recent civil wars. A sign of a true idolatrous nation ("si la Nation est plus idolatre de son Prince que des autres"), he explains, is when the public has as little respect for reasonable bounds during rebellions as they have during their applause and praise.[27] He continues by emphasising that he not aims to diminish the glory of Louis himself, since according to the author, never has a Prince elevated to such heights as the result of his deeds.[28] But when read within its immediate context, his sharp satire shines through; the problem with glorifying temples and statues, he writes, is that they can, and have been, erected both for tyrannical rulers as for good governors.[29]

Similar charges of hyperbole, flattery and idolatry also returned in many commented editions on the relation between the king and the arts around the turn of the century, both in France as abroad. An interesting case is the Dutch bilingual edition of Félibien's *Tapisseries du Roy* dating from around 1700. The publisher Pieter van den Berge opens the publication by presenting his "Dedication" to a group of four Dutch gentlemen (probably authors or publishers), in which he openly expresses his disregard concerning the exceptionally high level to which Félibien and his colleagues have elevated Louis XIV:

> Myne Heeren, De geneegentheid en liefde, die U Edd alle konsten en voornamentlyk de Historien toedraagt, verschaft my heden, de gelegentheidt om U Edd: deese Tafereelen en Zinnebeelden op te offeren, die hoewel de Roem van den Koning van Vrankryk daar te ver in getrokken is, (die de Franschen onderdanen eigen zyn) evenwel alle Liefhebbers van schone Tekeningen aangenaam moeten voorkomen; want de vleyeryen aen een zyde stellende, so moet een ieder zich verwonderen over de ryke uitvindingen, die men daar in aanmerkt.[30]

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27 Ibid., 365-66: "Je ne puis, sans m'en faire un plaisir comparer ces échafaux avec ces Baricades, ces spectacles, & ces jeux, avec les dernieres guerres civiles; ces cris de joye avec ces infames pasquinades, qui se conservent dans les Bibliotéques qui en sont comme les precieuses Ordures, & qui aprendront à la posterité que si la Nation est plus idolatre de son Prince que des autres, comme quelques-uns le pretendent, c'est quand elle n'a plus d'autre parti à prendre que celui de l'idolatrer, & qu'elle garde aussi peu de mesure dans la Rebellion, qu'elle en garde dans les applaudissemens, & dans les éloges."

28 Ibid., 366: "Mon but n'est pas dans tout ceci de diminuer la gloire qui est duë à S.M.T.C. j'avoüe que jamais Prince n'a plus merité ces honneurs, non pas tant à cause que jamais Prince ne s'est élevé si haut, que parce qu'il a retabli la paix, la justice, & le bon ordre au milieu de ses Peuples; on peut dire, sans prodiguer l'encens, que Louïs le Grand est justement l'homme que cherchoit Horace."

29 Ibid., 367: "[C]es sortes d'honneurs peuvent aussi bien être les preuves d'une grande tirannie, que d'un bon, & d'un aimable gouvernement: en effet, n'a-t-on pas bati des Temples à Tibére aussi bien qu'a Auguste?"

30 Pieter van den Berge, "Dedication," in André Félibien, *Tapisseries du Roi, ou sont representez les quatre elements, avec les devises qui les accompagnent & leur explication. Tapyten van den Konink van Vrankryk verbeeldende de Vier Elementen, Beneffens haar wonderlyke Zinnebeelden, en uytlegging op dezelve* (Amsterdam: Pieter van den Berge, ca. 1700), v-vi: "*Messieurs*, your inclination for all the arts and mainly for History, provides me today with the opportunity to present to you these paintings and these emblems. Although these images push the glory of the King of France

In the foreword, Van den Berge expresses a similar message addressed to the reader of the book. Although he is at pains to convince the reader of the great quality and splendour of Le Brun's designs, his expresses his disgust regarding the all-transcending sublimity of the king equally clearly:

> Een ider zal kunnen oordelen hoe hoog de Roem van den Koning hier in getrokken is, door deze uitvinders die zich niet ontzien hebben dezelve selfs boven 't menschelyke te verheffen, doch 't zy hoe het zy, men sal sich over de schoone Kunst en groote uitvinding moeten verwonderen, en stellen de swakheid en sucht, die de onderdaenen in 't gemeen, en wel voornamentlyk de Franzen, hunnen Koning toedragen, aan een zyde.[31]

The ease with which Van den Berge dismantles the innate sublimity of Louis XIV, primarily by pointing at the writers, artists and the French public (instead of a divine source) as being responsible for this transcendence, renders the carefully constructed preterition of Félibien's *Tapisseries du Roy* even more superficial. Here, the French dependence on rhetoric, which was employed to be able to approach and maintain the king's sublimity, excites a completely opposite response.

DENYING IDOLATRY: LEMÉE AND THE PLACE DES VICTOIRES

One of the main reasons why the discourse on the idea of Louis XIV's inner sublimity, to which Félibien so strongly contributed, strongly persisted during the latter decades of century was the interest in the *representation* of his grandeur. Rapin's treatise *Du Grand ou du sublime* could be seen as the climax of the intellectual discourse around this development. But whereas he describes the king's numerous contributing virtues, he does *not* provide a definitive representation of the king's sublimity, because he simply can not do this ("Il ne restoit pour l'accomplissement d'un si grand dessein qu'un stile assez élevé, pour faire encore mieux sentir toute la sublimité de mon sujet: mais c'est un don qui n'est que pour les genies extraordinaires"). Of course, it suited the transcendent and ineffable

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too far, they still appear pleasant to the eyes of all those who love beautiful paintings, because putting aside the customary flattery of the French, everyone has to admire the rich inventions that can be found here." In the second volume, the publisher's 'Dedication' features a similar statement: "[D]e grootste Meesters van Vrankryk zyn hier van de uitvinders geweest, niet alleen om de roem van haaren Koning tot op den hoogsten top, maar zelfs (God vergeeve het haar) ver boven 't menschelyke te verheffen." ("[T]he greatest Masters of France have been its inventors, not only to elevate the fame of her King to the highest peak, but even (God forgive her) far beyond the human." Ibid., v-vi.

31 Ibid., viii: "Everyone can judge whether the glory of the King has not been pushed a bit too far by the artists, who apparently did not have any problem with elevating him even above the human; but one should still be astonished by these beautiful and magnificent inventions, and put aside the weak tenderness that the King's subjects and mainly the French bear for him."

nature of his treatise's principal subject that he ends his book with questions and hopes rather than answers, which he explicitly carries over to a new generation of intellectuals, artists and so forth. Ideally, these thoughts would remain in their elusive state as they would continue to be transferred for the sake of posterity, thereby maintaining the idea of sublimity.

However, the *visual* representation of the monarch's grandeur, as well as its public response, proved much more difficult to control. In fact, the criticism raised by the design and public response to the second *Temple de la Gloire* belongs to a wider debate that was sparked by the inauguration of the controversial monument dedicated to Louis XIV at the Place des Victoires in 1686, the very same year Rapin's treatise was published. The king himself did not attend the inauguration, but the company did include the Dauphin, the *prévôt des marchands*, the échevins and the *régiment des Gardes* (fig. 40). As part of the official parade, François III d'Aubusson, duc de la Feuillade (ca. 1631-1691), the initiator of the new Place des Victoires, stopped in front of the statue and dismounted from his horse to salute the image, after which the present officers raised their spears and the dignitaries took off their hats as they passed the monument.[32] Not long after the inauguration ceremony, when the first descriptions and visual representations of the statue and accompanying medals were published, harsh criticism began to arise. As Hendrik Ziegler has pointed out, the hyperbolic and overpowering character of the sculptural ensemble – particularly its inscription *Viro immortali* (The immortal man) – was strongly condemned.[33] Furthermore, Louis XIV seemed to be treated as an idol, as the ceremonial responses to the statue strongly reminded of religious practices, such as types of cult worship that were traditionally only reserved for a deity.[34]

In the face of both French and foreign criticism, such as Gueudeville's satire, there were other French contemporaries who were at pains to defend both Louis XIV and the Parisian public against charges of idolatry.[35] The most influential example is François Lemée's *Traité des Statues*, which was published in 1688 and has been intensively studied by Caroline van Eck in her 2013 book *François Lemée*

32 Caroline van Eck, *François Lemée et la statue de Louis XIV: les origines des théories ethnologiques du fétichisme* (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 2013), 17-18.

33 Hendrik Ziegler, "Der Anlass für die Abfassung des *Traktats über die Statuen*: die in- und ausländischen Einsprüche gegen das Denkmal der Pariser Place des Victoires," in François Lemée, *Traité des Statuës*, ed. Diane H. Bodart and Hendrik Ziegler, vol. 2 (Weimar: Verlag- und Datenbank für die Geisteswissenschaften, 2012), 85.

34 Ibid., 85.

35 One of these charges appeared in the anonymous pamphlet *Sur la statue du roy élevée à la Place des Victoires en 1686*, which, Van Eck writes, "presents a conversation between the abbé Louis Feuillet and a group of persons at the court, including Monsieur, the brother of the king, Madame de Guise and the Grand-Duchess of Tuscany, in which the King is accused of presumption, and his subjects who assisted at the inauguration, of idolatry." See Van Eck, *Art, Agency*, 80-81.

et la statue de Louis XIV, as well as in her book *Art, Agency and Living Presence* (2015). Lemée's text departs from the example of the king's statue on the Place des Victoires, and the ceremonies and practices that had taken place around it. Lemée acknowledges that statues such as this one can bring about venerations, and in this respect, Van Eck writes, "he continues the traditional line of reasoning, going back to the right accorded to Roman emperors to have their images venerated and the mediaeval doctrine of the king's two bodies, which justifies such veneration through the quasi-divine status of the ruler represented."[36] But, in addition, Lemée attempts to deny the accusations of idolatry by stating that we are not at all dealing with an idol here, since an idol "is taken as the thing itself, and not as an image of the thing" ("L'Idole se prend pour la chose même, & non pas pour l'image de la chose").[37] Therefore, he deems it completely normal to act in front of a royal statue as if the monarch himself is actually present, since the statue "works as an index and a companion of the substantial form itself":

> Or les Philosophes nous enseignent que cette façon de parler n'est point impropre: car encore qu'il y ait bien de la différence entre la substance de l'un & de l'autre, & que le Roy ne soit pas la moindre particule de sa statuë, comme elle n'est par la moindre particule du Roy. La ressemblance néanmoins, qui se rencontre entr'eux leur communiquant le même nom & la même figure, fait qu'ils paroissent aussi une même espèce: la figure étant l'indice & la compagne de la forme substantielle.[38]

"In the case of the King," Van Eck paraphrases, the adoration of his statues "does not run the risk of degenerating into idolatry because their prototype is 'ferme et stable'."[39]

Nevertheless, as far as the use of text is concerned, the statue's inscription of VIRO IMMORTALI formed an unfortunate companion to its referent. It appeared in many criticising texts, which were produced by groups that included courtiers, clergymen and intellectuals.[40] To many, the two Latin words must have appeared as an homage that was approved by the monarch himself. Even

36 Van Eck, *Art, Agency*, 88. For the political concept of the King's two bodies (the body politic and the body natural), which can be traced back to the Middle Ages, see Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957).

37 François Lemée, *Traité des Statuës* (Paris: Arnould Seneuze, 1688), 11.

38 Lemée, *Traité*, 425-26: "Now, Philosophers teach us that this manner of speaking is not improper. There is, of course, a difference between the substance of the one and the other, and the King is not in the least a piece of its statue, just like the statue is not at all a piece of the King. However, because of the resemblance they both share they also share the same name and the same figure, which is why they appear to be of the same sort. The figure works as an index and a companion of the substantial form itself."

39 Van Eck, *Art, Agency*, 91. For the original sentence, see Lemée, *Traité,* 11.

40 Ziegler, "Der Anlass," 90.

though the monument, commissioned by the duc de la Feuillade, was a tribute to the monarch, the issue of guilt by association sticks to the image: the crown still *appeared* to facilitate or even desire the presence and appearance of the statue.[41] In a small poem on the inscription, which was added to a later edition of the official description of the statue by François-Séraphin Régnier-Desmarais (1632-1713), the poet warns the king against the dangers of flattery and the associated idolatry. A too elevated title can be quickly fabricated, and a truly grand king cannot risk to be struck down by it:

> Reçois ces vrais honneurs, mais fuy la flatterie.
> Preste d'aller pour toy jusq'à l'idolatrie.
> Des attributs divins suy [FK: fuis] l'abus criminel,
> Et souffre jamais qu'on te nomme Immortel,
> Ce faux titre, qu'on voit au pied de ta figure,
> Loin de te faire honneur Prince te fait injure […]
> J'excuse toutesfois qu'une trop promte main
> S'êchappe à te donner un titre plus qu'humain.
> Tout homme est ébloui de ta grandeur suprème,
> Mais tu ne peux jamais t'en éblouir toy même.[42]

The poet describes Louis XIV as the *victim* of his own imagery. Although meant as an expression of support, thoughts such as these also undermined the king's reputation. The poet warns the king that a fervent belief in the superhuman nature of his representation would also obstruct his ability of assessing its con-

41 Ibid., 89. The *Viro Immortali* inscription also appeared on medals distributed to the various dignitaries present at the monument's inauguration. An engraved version of the first medal was also published in Ménestrier's *Histoire du roy Louis le Grand par les medailles* in 1689. The creators of the *Histoire métallique*, which was drawn up during the 1690s and graphically reproduced in 1702, decided to omit the two medals bearing the Latin inscription. This may have been done, Ziegler suggests, in response to foreign criticism on the monument.

42 Francois Seraphin Regnier Desmarais, *Description de la statue ou du monument erige a la gloire du Roy Louis XIV* (Paris: Pierre Marteau, 1690), 22-23. Around the turn of the century, even the series of façades that surrounded the monument – they were designed by Hardouin-Mansart to frame Desjardin's centrally located statue – were not spared in the wave of criticism. In addition to the excessive grandeur that many associated with the statue and its inscriptions, others had troubles with the excessive grandeur of the square itself. In the 1714, architectural historian Jean-Louis de Cordemoy issued the second edition of his influential treatise *Nouveau traité de toute l'architecture*, which included a letter written by one of his brothers, written to engineer Amédée-François Frezier in defence of Jean-Louis. In his letter he addresses his issues with the façades of Hardouin-Mansart's Place de Vendôme and his Place des Victoires, since they share the same architectural rhythm. The element that bothers him in particular is the uneasy relationship between the facades' transoms and pilasters, which 'mixes the small with the sublime' and thus affects the dignity of the square: "C'est ainsi qu'on en devoit user dans les nouvelles Place de Vendôme & des Victoires, où il ne s'agissoit point de multiplier les apartemens & les étages: mais seulement d'embellir ces Places, sauf à pratiquer dans les Maisons qui les environnent des Entre-soles. […] Pourquoy donc y profiler des Impostes contre des Pilastres? vû que cela ne sert qu'à faire remarquer les divers étages d'une Maison, dont les passans ne se mettent guere en peine. C'est faire une chose hors d'œuvre: c'est oublier son sujet: *c'est mêler le petit avec le sublime*: en un mot c'est ne sçavoir pas se soûtenir avec dignité." See Jean-Louis de Cordemoy, *Nouveau traité de toute l'architecture, ou l'art de bastir* (Paris: Jean-Baptiste Coignard, 1714), 190. My emphasis.

sequences. The poet's use of "éblouir," which means "to dazzle" or "to marvel" but also "to blind" or "to stun," is key here. Even though everyone is dazzled by the monarch's supreme grandeur, the poet states, the monarch ought not dazzle himself in the process.

ON THE LOCATION OF THE SUBLIME: THE DISENCHANTMENT OF ART AND THE SUBLIMITY IN PEOPLE

Lemée's clear distinction between the idol and the statue also enables him to deny Louis XIV any share in the problem, such as presumption or hyperbole that could lead to promoting exaggerated behaviour. The words with which Lemée opens his seventh chapter dedicated on pedestals of statues, for instance, are aptly chosen; like Charpentier in his *De l'excellence,* Lemée directly links the literal elevation of a statue (for example that of Louis XIV) with the moral elevation of its referent, with their sublimity ("Les élevations ne servent aux statuës des grands Hommes que pour les faire voir au dessus des autres. Il est bien raisonnable qu'on leur défere cet honneur, puisqu'ils les ont surpassez par la grandeur de leur courage & la *sublimité de leur esprit*.").[43] Moreover, his fourteenth chapter on the "surprising effects of statues" ("De quelque effets surprenants des Statuës") discusses the idea that some ascribe to statues any enchanting, miraculous qualities. In the case of Louis XIV, Lemée argues that any powerful effect or sentiment created by one of his monuments and statues is purely the result of his glory and majesty, rather than some mysterious enchantment:

> Mais quelle surprise! quand elle verra que les Monumens de Loüis le Grand, sans être enchantez ny sans recevoir d'influences d'aucune constellation auront neanmoins de soy-même le pouvoir de certaines statuës dont parle Photius, qui retenoient le feu du Mont Etna dans ses cavernes, & empêchoient les Barbares d'aborder au lieu où elles etoient posées.[44]

With these words, Lemée almost seemed to put an end to the ever-repeated rhetorical poetics of enchantment of the seventeenth century, which had time and again associated the art and architecture of Louis XIV with a sense of epic mystery.

43 Lemée, *Traité*, 153.

44 Ibid., 394: "But what a surprise! when she [Louis' offspring] will see that the Monuments of Louis le Grand themselves, without being enchanted nor being under the influence of some constellation, will nevertheless have the same power we also see in certain statues of which Photius speaks – statues that held the fire of Mount Etna in their caves, and prevented the barbarians from entering the place where they were erected."

Amidst the increasing amount of conflicting and criticising voices on the grandeur of the king, we find two figures who aimed to lay a solid theoretical and historical foundation that could serve as an eternal declaration and glorification of their king's innate sublimity. One of these two was Claude Charles Guyonnet de Vertron, the historian whose proposed inscriptions for the Louvre have already been discussed in this dissertation. Around the time of the inauguration of the Place des Victoires, he published his *Parallèle de Louis le Grand avec tous les Princes qui ont été surnommez Grands* (1685), and a year later appeared his *Nouveau Pantheon*. Both works are very much alike, since they propose a great number of inscriptions, devices and sonnets, all underscoring the sublimity of Louis XIV. Although both texts aim to compare the French monarch to other great rulers from the past, Vertron simultaneously and ultimately builds on the central argument that nothing is more sublime on earth than Louis – as an "über-king," as Maarten Delbeke described Vertron's approach to the French king in his contribution to *A Transitory Star: The Late Bernini and his Reception* from 2015.[45] Most devices and inscriptions from his *Parallèle* express the same lofty message: "Sublimior illis (*Il est plus élevé que tous les autres Grands*)"[46] or "Tout est beau, tout est grand, tout est sublime en vous, Maist nostre GRAND LOUIS, vous a surpassé tous, Et jamais le Soleil n'a rien vû qui l'égale."[47] Such elevated rhetoric seamlessly connected to iconographic and architectural ensembles such as the Place des Victoires, with its medals and four illuminating lanterns. Already early on in the *Parallèle*, the book seems to arrive at the conclusion that a comparison with great human rulers is not appropriate; the king's grandeur can only be compared to that of himself, or more befittingly, to the grandeur of the heavens.[48] In his *Nouveau Pantheon, ou le Rapport… aux actions de Louis le Grand*, Vertron tends to value the idea of metaphorical architecture and memory far greater than physical monuments. The large number of inscriptions he proposes work just as well on their own, on paper. Alluding to the Place des Victoires, he counterbalances its use of (perishable) marble and bronze with the permanence of memory through words, such as those published in his book:

45 Maarten Delbeke, "Bernini and the Measure of Greatness: The Bust of Louis XIV and Its Pedestal as Seen by La Chambre, Lemée, and Bouhours," in *A Transitory Star: the Late Bernini and His Reception*, ed. Claudia Lehmann and Karen J. Lloyd (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 27.

46 Claude-Charles Guyonnet de Vertron, *Parallèle poétique de Louis-le-Grand avec les princes surnommez grand* (Le Havre [Le Havre de Grace]: Jacques Gruchet, 1686), 10.

47 Ibid., 11.

48 Ibid., 7-9.

> Le temps qui détruit tout, détruira à la fin le marbre & le bronze, mais il conservera toûjours avec respect la memoire de LOUIS LE GRAND, & quand même dans les siecles les plus éloignez nos petits neveux ne verroient plus les restes précieux de ce superbe monument, ils repeteront neanmoins par Tradition en faveur de vôtre illustre Mecene [des] beaux vers de Virgile.[49]

Moreover, in his opening *Epitre* dedicated to the king himself, Vertron dwells on the near impossibility of the mimetic representation of the monarch. Essentially, his grandeur requires that every type of poetic or artistic representation needs some sort of unattainable "langage divin." Ultimately, Vertron seems to admit in a state of transcendent ecstasy, only the rhetoric of impossibility remains:

> Je confesse neanmoins, que dans le paralelle de VOTRE MAJESTÉ, dans mes autres Ouvrages, comme dans celuy-cy, je n'ay pu faire qu'un portrait ébauché de cette Grandeur supréme, qui est au-dessus de tout ce qu'on peut imaginer: En effet, pour peindre le SOLEIL, […] il faudroit sçavoir parfaitement le langage divin.
>
> Reçois ces éternelles marques
> De mes sinceres vœux & fidelles sermens;
> Pouvoit-on élever de moindres Monumens
> AU PLUS GRAND DE TOUS LES MONARQUES?
>
> Ah, SIRE, dans le transport où je suis à la veue de tant de merveilles, que n'ay-je à present l'éloquence de MERCURE, pour me fournir des expressions proportionnées à l'excellence de si beaux sujets![50]

This "langage divin" was already hinted at in Félibien's *Tapisseries du Roy*, when he pointed at the new possibilities of the mysterious characters of allegories and devices. Inspired by the "langage divin" of ancient poetry, Félibien proposed that "[f]ollowing this example, when speaking of the august person of His Majesty,

49 Claude-Charles Guyonnet de Vertron, *Le Nouveau Pantheon, ou le Rapport des divinitez du paganisme, des héros de l'antiquité et des princes surnommez grands, aux vertus et aux actions de Louis-le-Grand* (Paris: Jacques Morel, 1686), 17: "The time that destroys everything will, in the end, also destroy the marble and the bronze, but it will always respectfully preserve the memory of LOUIS LE GRAND. And even in the most distant future, our grandnephews, who would not be able to see the precious remains of this superb monument anymore, will nevertheless traditionally recite [the] beautiful verses of Virgil in favour of your illustrious patron."

50 See his "Epitre," in: Ibid., xix-xx: "I confess, however, that in the parallel of YOUR MAJESTY, both in other Works as well as this one, I have been able to make only a sketched portrait of this supreme Greatness, which lies above everything that we can imagine. Indeed, in order to render the SUN, […] one would have to perfectly master the divine language. Accept these eternal signs/ Of my sincere vows and faithful oaths;/ Could we really erect lesser Monuments/ TO THE GREATEST OF ALL MONARCHS? Ah, sire, being overcome by a transport at the sight of so many wonders, I only possess the eloquence of MERCURY at this moment, to provide me with expressions that would have to do justice to the excellence of such beautiful subjects!"

we now look for other languages than those that have been in use until now. And in order to be able to describe the grand deeds of the greatest King in the world, we now form new characters."[51]

And with Vertron, we finally return to the original issue that started the inquiry of this thesis: the sublimity of Louis XIV as it was established and asserted by Rapin. And in this assertion, Rapin's treatise foreshadowed Boileau's adjusted views on the sublime, which he expressed in the tenth of his *Réflexions* around 1710. One view on sublimity that the two shared was its *truth*, which is a point that is rightfully stressed by Ann T. Delehanty in 2005.[52] In the dedication to Nicolas de Lamoignon de Basville (1648-1724) that opens Rapin's treatise, the latter writes: "[L]et us seek the truth [*le vray*] without moving away from those things solid in what we think, and let us imagine nothing that is not founded on reason, if we want our thoughts to be well received by the public."[53] Even though Boileau's tenth *Réflexion* would express ideas on the sublime that were far more progressive than Rapin's – Boileau now privileged the idea of sentiment (albeit connected to *goût*) instead of reason or genius in the operations of the sublime[54] – both Rapin and Boileau would insist on truth as the basis of sublimity and its experience. Boileau attempted to explain this by using the example of the *fiat lux* passage [FK: "Let there be light" etc.] in the Scriptures:

> S'il se trouve quelque homme bizarre qui n'y en trouve point, il ne faut pas chercher des raisons pour lui montrer qu'il y en a, mais se borner à le plaindre de son peu de conception et de son peu de goût, qui l'empêche de sentir ce que tout le monde sent d'abord.[55]

In other words, for Boileau in 1710, only those things that are universally and eternally true can be felt as sublime, which means that those people who do not agree are therefore bizarre, since they lack perception and taste – a thought that corresponds to Rapin's "tomber dans le bizarre" when drifting away from the truth.[56]

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51 Félibien, *Tapisseries du Roy,* vii. See note 355.

52 Delehanty, "Judgment to Sentiment," 170.

53 Rapin, *Du grand*, 14: "[C]herchons le vray sans nous éloigner du solide en ce que nous pensons, & n'imaginons rien qui ne soit fondé en raison, si nous voulons que nos pensées soient bien receûës du Public." Nicolas de Lamoignon de Basville was the son of jurist Guillaume de Lamoignon, who constitutes one of Rapin's four sublime human beings in his book.

54 Delehanty, "Judgment to Sentiment," 170.

55 Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux, "Réflexion X," in *Oeuvres complètes de Boileau*, ed. Antoine Charles Gidel, vol. 3 (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1873), 399-421: "If one were to locate some bizarre man who found no sublimity in them, it would not be necessary to look for reasons with which to demonstrate their sublimity to him, but instead to pity him for his lack of perception and his lack of taste ['goût'], which prevents him from feeling ['sentir'] what everyone else feels ['sent'] immediately." This English translation is quoted from Delehanty, "Judgment to Sentiment," 165.

56 Rapin, *Du grand*, 14.

Boileau's views on the sublime had changed significantly in the more than thirty years after his *Traité du sublime* – he now recognised that the sublime is primarily *felt* – but he would not separate it from the idea of universal truth as the sublime's most fundamental condition. Boileau's passage, which Ann T. Delehanty describes as "ostensibly self-sufficient," is indeed a circular one. Belgian scholar Christophe Madelein, in his 2010 study *Juigchen in den adel der menschlijke natuur* on the sublime in the Low Countries, similarly recognises the problem of "Boileaus circular reasoning" in this passage, since it says that "the sublime is sublime, because it is sublime."[57]

As the case studies in this thesis have demonstrated, the means of architecture was considered a potent instrument in the creation of truth and reality, both on paper and in the third dimension. Buildings make us think about extreme and lofty matters, and therefore have the political potential to overwhelm, transport and terrify the public. And most importantly, they are often employed and seen as the extension of their inhabitant's virtue. In retrospect, the emphasis of Rapin and Boileau on universal and incontestable truth as a condition and therefore fundamental evidence of the sublime (be it that of Louis XIV or a biblical passage), can already be traced back to the early years of the monarch's life. The artificial creation of the reality of Louis XIV's *gloire* and his personal history, a discourse in which architecture played a key role, would often invoke the rhetoric and virtuous metaphor of the sublime. However, all case studies have also shown the elusive nature of sublimity. In all its subjectivity and mystery, it was a notion that time and again proved difficult to define and agree upon. Moreover, its lofty vocabulary and rhetoric often relied on opposite extremes – and because human reality, in comparison, often disappointed, disproved and counteracted, the construction of a sublime reality could easily topple over, lapsing into ridicule or excess. Opposite extremes are easy targets for political opponents, since they include notions that are fundamentally ambiguous, such as darkness, terror, nothingness, and the demonic.

A source that best summarises these issues is one that originated outside of the reality and truth of Louis XIV's sublimity that writers like Félibien and Rapin attempted to establish: *Les soupirs de la France esclave qui aspire après la liberté,* a highly critical pamphlet against the monarch's absolutism, which was published from 1689 onwards. We do not know who wrote it, but it could very well have been either the French protestant Pierre Jurieu (1637-1713) or the French Oratorian priest Michel Le Vassor (ca. 1648-1718), who later converted to Protestantism.[58] The anonymous author vehemently attacks the political system in

57 Christophe Madelein, *Juigchen in den adel der menschlijke natuur – Het verhevene in de Nederlander (1770-1830)* (Ghent: Academia Press, 2010), 28.

58 Both authors have always been the most likely candidates for the authorship of the pamphlet. On *Les soupirs*, see also Arlette Jouanna, *Le Prince absolu. Apogée et déclin de l'imaginaire monarchique* (Paris: Gallimard, 2014) and Wladyslaw Jozef Stankiewicz, *Politics & Religion in Seventeenth-century France* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1960), 213.

France as one of "oppression and of tyranny," governed by a monarch who has taken the place of the State itself, for the sake of himself and at the expense of the State and its people.[59] The issue of the "immense sums" that circulate in this process leads the author to the matter of the king's excessive grandeur. As political philosopher W. J. Stankiewicz aptly described it in his *Politics & Religion in Seventeenth-century France* in 1960, the pamphlet stresses the idea that "royal authority has become so elevated that all social distinctions appear negligible; the whole machinery serves only the aggrandizement of the king."[60] The king has replaced one reality by his own ("Le Roi a pris la place de l'Etat […] Enfin le Roi est tout, & l'Etat n'est plus rien. Et ce ne sont pas seulement des paroles & des termes, ce sont de réalitez"), but one that is a "vast abyss" that ultimately engulfs everything around it.[61] His reign, the author states, is sustained by flattery: his likeness itself is replicated in "gold, silver, bronze, copper, marble, thread, pictures, paintings, triumphal arches, and inscriptions," while his deeds can be narrowed down to the gain of a few provinces and the dispossession of the rights and means of his inferiors.[62] The "Grandeur of Louis le Grand," he writes, is in fact nothing more than "a Love for immense grandeur," but to which so many "sacrificed so much."[63] Although the argument of the author strikes by its tenacious and angry character, it is at the same time cleverly composed; in many places, the pamphlet employs the same rhetoric once used to the glory of the king, which appears all the more contrived and banal when placed in a new context. For example, the notion "future generations will never believe," which Rapin connected to Louis XIV's sublimity, is here connected to the unbelievably high "revenue of the Crown […] used for the magnificent buildings to the glory of the king."[64] Moreover, the thought of palaces or castles "too small to accommodate such a Prince," which featured in the proposed inscriptions for the eastern façade of the Louvre, here stresses the king's profound megalomania.[65] The author is at pains to address a situation that cannot be further removed from the Aristotelian virtue of *magnificence*: instead of investing large amounts of money in projects that would benefit the lives of the people, he argues, the king's projects actually benefited the king's own glory and even costed people's lives. Contemplating the creation and ultimate fate of these structures, many of

59 *Les soupirs de la France esclave qui aspire après la liberté* (Unknown publisher: Amsterdam, 1690), 18: "Aprés cela, si nous considerons l'usage que l'on fait de ces sommes immenses qu'on léve avec tant d'excés & tant d'exactions, on y verra aussi tous les caractéres de l'oppression & de la tyrannie."

60 Stankiewicz, *Politics & Religion*, 213.

61 *Les soupirs*, 18.

62 Ibid., 19. Here, he also explicitly refers to the monument of Louis XIV at the Place des Victoires, and its inscription "VIRO IMMORTALI."

63 Ibid., 19.

64 Ibid., 19.

them left unfinished and uninhabited, the author finally turns to the example of Phaeton, which enables him to evoke its age old association with the fine line between sublimity and excess:

> C'est pour laisser à la Posterité un monument de sa grandeur par les prodigieuses dépenses qu'on aura faites à un tel ouvrage. Il est vrai qu'il ne subsistera pas, & que les ravines le ruïneront la premiére année qu'on le négligera; & qu'enfin on l'abandonnera, parce que la dépense de l'entretien surpassera de beaucoup le profit. Mais n'importe; ce seront de grandes ruines qui marqueront la grandeur de l'ame de celui qui en a formé le projét, & sur lesquelles on écrira,
>
> *Quem si non tenuit, magnis tamen excidit ausis*.[66]

But what is most important here, is that the author's reference to Phaeton is a very bitter one, because he is aware of the ambiguity of the sublime. Even though the author himself strongly disapproves of the king's failed and excessive projects, he fears and expects that future generations will rather admire the grandeur of the king's attempts – for people would associate a grand attempt with a grandeur of soul ("grandeur de l'ame"). This is why the anonymous author makes his character quote Ovid: while the epitaph expresses that Phaeton had reached too far, the epitaph also commemorates the greatness of his attempt. In the case of Phaeton, Pramit Chaudhuri rightfully argued in his study on Roman theomachy from 2014, "excessive ambition, however disastrous, proceeds from a spirit of admirable daring and allows […] a glimpse of the world from an extraordinary perspective, a view typically unavailable to humankind," which are visions "characteristic of the sublime."[67] In other words, even excess still holds much potential for the experience of the sublime. There is, alas, still hope for the sublimity of Louis XIV.

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65 Ibid., 19.

66 Ibid., 20: "It means to leave to Posterity a monument of its grandeur by means of the prodigious expenses that we will make for such a work. It is certain that it will not stand, that the ravines will ruin it as soon as we will neglect it, and that we will finally abandon it because the cost of its maintenance will greatly exceed the benefit. But this all does not matter, for these will be great ruins that will mark the greatness of the soul of the one who formed the project – ruins about which people will write: *And though he greatly failed, more greatly dared*." See Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 2:328, 82-83: "QUEM ☒ SI ☒ NON ☒ TENUIT ☒ MAGNIS ☒ TAMEN ☒ EXCIDIT ☒ AUSIS" ("AND THOUGH HE GREATLY FAILED, MORE GREATLY DARED.").

67 Pramit Chaudhuri, *The War with God: Theomachy in Roman Imperial Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 138.

Conclusion

To a significant extent, the early-modern French discourse on the phenomenon of sublimity was concerned with the realm of literature. Longinus' treatise *Peri hypsous* and its French edition by Boileau – to name two influential players in this regard – are devoted to the striking, ineffable effect of writing, both in works of prose and poetry. However, were we to exclusively restrict ourselves to the purely literary, we would lose sight of the developments that took place not only at the boundaries of literature or at its intersections with other arts, but also outside of the world of literary possibilities altogether. At the very outset, this thesis has as its starting point two figures that ventured into these regions: André Félibien, through his *Tapisseries du Roy* and *Entretiens* in the 1660s and 1670s, and René Rapin, in his treatise *Du grand ou du sublime* from 1686. Both would agree on the same matter: a new sublimity that resided primarily in their monarch, which could and should be evoked by means of literature, art and architecture, however difficult this task may be. While Rapin adapted the revalued Longinian sublime in order to be able to speak about this elevated virtue, Félibien – who published his work when Longinus had not yet attained such popularity – employed a variety of words to arrive at the same goal.

However, this thesis did not depart from the strength of their work, but from the shared problems underlying both publications and their thoughts on the monarch. To be able to fully come to terms with these issues, another history of the sublime in seventeenth-century France was needed – one which also takes into account the role of the visual arts in this troublesome process.

PART I. THE ISSUE OF OPPOSITE EXTREMES

The sublime has always been a quality dealing with the profound, and when and where it is recognised as a quality, writers resort to its vocabulary and rhetoric of extremes. In the construction of the reign of Louis XIV, seventeenth-century France saw an increasing rapprochement of the domains of architecture and literature that invested in the shared poetics and aesthetics of transcendence. This development was to a great extent the result of a revival of the epic poem in early seventeenth-century France, and with it its elevated style, its architectural fictions, and its effect of *le merveilleux*. The political use of this poetics in the discourse on political power and virtue, was further boosted by the more controlled and centralised collaboration of artists, architects and writers for the sake of the glory of Louis XIV's reign.

During the first half of the century, many writers of French poetry used the *topos* of marvellous architecture in their work. The role of the fictional building – and its connotations of the elevated and ravishing – as a major constituent of laudatory poetry, had its origins in ancient and medieval works of literature, and was more directly influenced by sixteenth-century French and Italian prose and poetry. The revival of the epic genre brought with it three key elements that safeguarded its early modern success: the elevation of style (*style sublime*), the central role of heroic virtue, and the effect of *le merveilleux*. Moreover, fictional buildings on paper or in the mind's eye were not subjected to restrictions that applied in reality, such as rules of structural support or financial limitations, and therefore functioned perfectly as metaphors for limitless and ineffable grandeur (such as a *temple de la gloire*). At the same time, these poetics of *le merveilleux* entered descriptions of Parisian art and architecture, which coincided with a fashion for epic themes in the iconography of artworks and buildings. A driving force behind these developments was the extensive patronage of Richelieu and Mazarin. They facilitated the collaboration of artists, architects and writers, which reinforced a cultural climate in which architects responded to writers and vice versa; marvellous fictional architecture became a source of influence for the construction of real architecture, which, in turn, became praised by means of the poetics of marvellous architecture.

However, the idea of sublimity remained very unstable; its broad semantic field, its highly subjective nature, and its danger to lapse into ridicule or excess were significant and, for a long time, largely undiscussed issues underlying French discourse throughout the seventeenth century. The rhetoric of *le merveilleux* was greatly dependent on the use of spectrums of sublimity: the use of extreme opposites that both have a sublime potential, but especially when they are juxtaposed to form a powerful contrast. But still, notions such as "hell," or "total darkness" are not only powerful but fundamentally ambiguous, since they can easily be associated with vice instead of virtue. Therefore, a spectrum that runs from "heaven" to "hell" can just as well be seen as a scale that runs from the sublime to the vicious. And since those people who greatly invested in these marvellous spectrums were most of all concerned with the construction of an image of virtue, these spectrums often backfired because of their moral ambiguity. This ambiguous character traditionally suited the struggle of the epic's hero, such as Aeneas' descent into the underworld in Virgil's *Aeneid*. But when applied to real people and real situations, this rhetoric can easily blow out of proportion, and would sometimes work better in the hands of a satirist. In fact, this ambiguity was exploited on a vast scale in satirical attacks on the French crown during the first half of the seventeenth century. The idea of the terror of demonic vice – the complete opposite of the idea of virtuous elevation – became adopted by opponents of Mazarin during the Fronde. In these pamphlets, both the interior as

well as the exterior of the cardinal's Parisian palace were transformed into places of infernal, terrifying wonder. In contrast to contemporary Italian poems on Mazarin, which employed poetic images of apotheoses and heavenly architecture, French satirists attempted to achieve the exact opposite.

In the pursuit of royal sublimity, another conflict concerning the use of extreme opposites emerged at Val-de-Grâce. The creation of the church and its Benedictine abbey complex was the result of a friendship between abbess Marguérite d'Arbouze and Queen Anne of Austria. Despite their shared devotion to the pious idea of humility, they had diverging views on how to elevate this idea through architecture. Marguerite's preference for extreme humility (*anéantissement*) contrasted with the queen's wish to use *magnificence* to elevate the humility of the holy stable. Anne's intentions were a response to the miraculous birth of her son Louis XIV, an event that would define the elevated character of the king's future reign. In response to the church's completion and Anne's death, a large number of authors attempted to resolve the difficult relationship between the queen's *magnificence*, on the one hand, and the idea of *humilité* on the other. They argued that the queen gloriously combined the two notions in her character, and in the building of Val-de-Grâce as an extension of her character.

With the advent of Louis XIV's personal rule came a more controlled and centralised collaboration of artists, architects and writers – a development started by Richelieu and Mazarin and perfected by Chapelain and Colbert – which further reinforced the use of the marvellous poetics of the epic for the glory of the monarch. Both in the creation and description of the Palais du Louvre, a deliberate confusion of fiction and reality was pursued. The Louvre had already been the subject of poetic comparisons for centuries, and the enlargement of the palace during the seventeenth century further nourished associations with (epic) enchanted and heavenly architecture. André Félibien, in his *Entretiens*, even aimed to theoretically – albeit rhetorically – explain and underpin the effect of the Louvre's enchantment, by discussing the palace in the context of *le je ne sais quoi*. Moreover, his ideas form part of a growing interest in the ravishing and inexplicable aesthetic effect of architecture and literature – ideas that would imbue the work of his son Jean-François Félibien on the Dôme des Invalides, and would occupy French intellectual circles the following decades.

Whereas the delayed construction of the Louvre strongly appealed to the public imagination, the palace's enlargement also elicited many contrasting responses. Not unlike the fate of the Palais Mazarin, the case of the Louvre demonstrates the failure of the façade's aim to sustain the suspense of wonder and the ineffable; although the magnificent new shell of the Louvre aimed to amplify the wonder it contained, the shell itself became the subject of much criticism. As we have seen in Part I, any attempt to reach for the extreme and the most elevated

involves the danger of provoking the opposite effect – and some writers dared to comment on the vanity and false rhetoric of the Louvre's magnificence in its pursuit of epic transcendence in both architecture and poetry. The danger associated with expressing criticism during the personal rule of Louis XIV did not, however, silence all. While some writers characterised the Louvre's aim for sublimity as a thing of ridicule, others put the vain endeavour of the Louvre into the more elevated perspective of the cosmos and the merciless flow of time.

The idea of the ambiguity of sublimity and the associated thin line between sublimity and ridicule or excess would prove difficult to deny or control – a thought that runs through this entire thesis. Therefore, in the case of the monarch, many efforts would be made during the further course of the century to assert, maintain, and evoke his *own* sublimity.

PART II. THE ADDED ISSUE OF SUBLIME HUMANS

Félibien's *Tapisseries du Roy* demonstrates two major elements that would become vital to further critical discourse on the phenomenon of sublimity and its association with the monarch. Firstly, the *Tapisseries du Roy* is built on the idea of the inexplicable and ineffable sublimity of the king *himself*. Secondly, to invigorate this idea, Félibien and his team departed from the need to employ "new characters" in order to be able to respond to this elevated nature of the king ("pour décrire les grandes actions du plus grand Roy du monde, on forme de nouveaux caracteres"). This language was the emblematic genre of the *devise*, and its concise and mysterious effect could be employed both in architecture and literature. Félibien's interest in the device's effect was shared by Jesuit writers Pierre Le Moyne and Dominique Bouhours, who saw in the device – and Louis XIV's device in particular – the perfect means to evoke the powerful effect of *le merveilleux* and *le je ne sais quoi* respectively.

The king's miraculous birth and the glory of his deeds are central to the message that Le Brun's allegories and devices (and by extension Félibien's publication) aim to express. However, Félibien's idea to explain and disseminate this mysterious language to a wider audience is pursued to such an extent, that his added explanatory texts are detrimental to the concise language of these devices. Here, we see some major symptoms of the problematic claim of Louis XIV's sublimity: Félibien aimed to evoke the king's sublimity for all people and for all time – the same aim that would later return in Rapin's treatise – but could not overcome a dependence on a language that he himself deemed "not powerful enough." Moreover, the book tries to uphold the bold idea of a supernatural and superhuman sublimity, but uses earthly and highly ambiguous metaphors and similes in this attempt.

The central question that underlies Félibien's book – how do we evoke Louis XIV's sublimity for all people and for all time? – would continue to play an important role during the subsequent decades. In the same period, from the 1670s onwards, a growing critical discourse on the nature of the sublime developed. It was characterised by a necessity to create of a French critical concept of sublimity, which would be able to incorporate ideas that "neighbouring concepts" such as *le merveilleux, le je ne sais quoi* and *la magnificence* shared. Boileau's French edition of Longinus' *Peri hypsous* (1674) would succeed in this endeavour, by using the noun *le sublime* to translate the Longinian *hypsos*, and employing *le merveilleux* as its synonym.

In the wake of Boileau's edition, his revalued Longinian sublime provided a favourable means to continue to uphold the claim of Louis XIV's sublimity, and not exclusively from the side of the Ancients. The 1680s saw the publication of several treatises that employed the Longinian sublime in theoretical reflections on rhetoric, with Louis XIV as the ever recurring example. The majority of these works were part of the *Querelle des inscriptions*, the participants of which all agreed that a public inscription for a royal building should convey the virtue of king and country, and in such a manner that it would never lose any of its power. We can find the sublime in François Charpentier's publication *Defense de la langue franfoise pour l'inscription de l'Arc de triomphe* (1676), which defends the French language, instead of Latin, as the most appropriate and powerful language to be put on a triumphal arch for Louis XIV. In the wake of this *Querelle*, Bouhours' *La manière de bien penser dans les ouvrages d'esprit* (1687) dissected and analysed more closely the narrow relationship between architecture and rhetoric, by means of the Longinian sublime. In this discussion, Bouhours – through his dialogue between the fictional Eudoxe and Philante – focuses on matters such as the sublimity of simplicity in inscriptions, and dangers such as the hyperbole and "sublime vicieux" of Italian descriptions. However, many, such as Bouhours, also knew that the idea of sublimity remained something ineffable; that this was a quality that was much more easily and more often felt and recognised, than created or evoked. This was a fundamental albeit latent problem to which most intellectuals and poets responded by resorting to rhetorical figures of speech and inconsistent argumentation, thereby only revolving around the issue, as well as postponing it.

In several efforts to underscore the monarch's religious policies during the 1680s, and well as his proximity to God, the *merveilleux chrétien* of the epic – which at this time had already left its best days behind it – was rekindled through poems on the victory of Catholicism at Charenton and at the Dôme des Invalides. The entire spectrum of the marvellous was once again employed for this purpose; these poems included the struggle of the hero, the final opposition of demonic forces, and the resolving *deus ex machina*. Prose descriptions of the Dôme also invested in this sense of sublimity. Like his father, Félibien des Avaux explored the

aesthetic sublime experience of art and architecture – a total experience evoked through the combined effect of vast architectural space decorated with sacred emotions of sublimity itself.

The dangers of false and exaggerated rhetoric that Bouhours had addressed, for instance in the case of public inscriptions, became increasingly prominent when a number of inscriptions and public images pertaining to the king, as well as their public reactions, evoked harsh criticism because of their exaggerated character. The superhuman status of the monarch that marvels and dazzles the normal human being, an idea that was expounded in the *Tapisseries du Roy*, now returned very explicitly and concretely in public art and architecture. The marvellous, grand *temples* that had mostly been used as literary and metaphorical devices during the course of the century, were now erected as ephemeral structures in the centre of Paris on multiple occasions. Here, the *merveilleux* left the confines of poetic composition, to be transformed into all too real and concrete three-dimensional incarnations. The degree of the monarch's elevation that was evoked in the temples' iconography and inscriptions, combined with the exaggerated, manic response of the Parisian masses, elicited all sorts of critical commentary from both French and foreign writers. While some condemned the artists and architects in their efforts to transcend the king above the human, others carefully warned the monarch himself, lest he marvel and dazzle himself in the process.

But amidst this criticism on royal art, rhetoric and their Parisian public response, the theoretical work of Rapin cunningly aimed to point beyond artifice. In an almost definitive attempt at underscoring the sublimity of the monarch himself, Rapin's treatise *theoretically* established Louis XIV innate sublimity, which can be felt but can hardly be understood or represented. With his treatise, Rapin asserted a paradigm of the sublimity of virtue that had gradually been developing. As Félibien's *Tapisseries* and Vertron's *Nouveau Panthéon* already suggested, albeit poetically, Rapin argued that in addition to the manifested sublime that can be evoked through grand expressions, there exists a hidden sublime (a "sublime caché"). This type resides in certain people; it is only felt by the heart, and exists independently from artifice, expressing more than what is only evoked through art. Nevertheless, Rapin could not avoid the issue of artifice, and he used the closing paragraphs of his treatise to ask, once again, the very same question that underlay the *Tapisseries* and the *Querelle des Inscriptions*: what can poetry and architecture do together to evoke, both publically and for posterity, the elevated level of Louis XIV?

Although Rapin remained optimistic that such a sublime representation of the monarch would eventually be made, the harsh criticism following the publication of his book truly revealed why not only this representation could never be made, but also why an objectively sublime human being could not exist in the

first place. Some of his readers deemed one of his human subjects more sublime than the other, and Rapin agreed and reformulated the premise of his book. In retrospect, we can see what happens here – and this is a key aspect of sublimity which Boileau was only able to discover just after the turn of the century: the sublime is ultimately a subjective quality. It can only be felt, and can therefore never objectively be asserted, for example in a work or person, let alone be wielded as an instrument of power.

As a quality, the sublime has always been around, and people have always experienced it, but each and anyone in their own particular way. Therefore, one cannot pin it down by theoretically asserting it in something or someone, let alone wield it as an overwhelming force; in the end, only the recipient decides what he or she experiences as sublime. This explains why seventeenth-century French intellectuals were never truly able to grasp the sublime as a notion, let alone their foreign contemporaries. To return to Lydia Hamlett's study of John Richardson: however much Richardson and his fellow intellectuals "had tried to define the sublime there was always something out of their grasp, unquantifiable because, ultimately, affect is subjective."

—— THOUGHTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH: THE QUESTION OF PERFORMATIVITY

It remains very difficult to assess whether thoughts and conventions on the sublime ("Louis XIV is sublime") were seen by their most prominent disseminators as artificial (perhaps Rapin and Félibien did really experience the monarch as sublime). To try and answer such questions, one risks creating an anachronism. Nevertheless, what can be seen is the increasing institutionalisation of the cultural domain in which the public communication of such thoughts played out. A telling example is Ménestrier's *Histoire du roi Louis le Grand, par les médailles, emblèmes, devises, jetons, inscriptions, armoiries, et autres monuments publics* (*History of King Louis the Great, Told through Medals, Emblems, Devices, Tokens, Inscriptions, Arms, and Other Public Monuments*) from 1689, the title of which not only evokes the central thought but also the scope of its communication towards the public. The enterprise of the *Histoire du roy* that Ménestrier refers to, combined many literary genres and visual arts for the sake of creating a single narrative, and thus claimed a significant part of French culture and society. By manifesting and disseminating a thought on such a scale, through various and mainly public media, and by repeating this process for decades, the Crown invested in the *performative* power of artifice. The *Histoire du roy* made an active claim to reality, by constructing a new reality.

While keeping the many problems of sublimity in mind, the performative aspect of literature and the arts under Louis XIV inspires an array of questions for further research. The idea of performativity constitutes a shift towards a perspective on art that inquires into its reality-producing dimension. The notion was first introduced into linguistic theory by the British philosopher John Langshaw Austin. In his lecture series "How to Do Things with Words," presented at Harvard in 1955, he argued that under certain conditions signs can generate reality, such as effects and experiences that are brought about situationally – in a given spatial and discursive context – and relationally, to a viewer or public.[1] A few decades later, American philosopher Judith Butler further drew on Austin's work. According to Butler, a "speech act" can produce what it names in a certain context. Acts such as judicial pronouncement are very clear examples, but Butler takes this idea much further and recognises these constructions and their effect in the much broader context of everyday life. She argues that in society, by endlessly citing conventions or ideologies of reality, people enact and "incorporate" this reality; they perform and embody these fictions.[2] We thus make them appear to be natural, even though they remain artificial.

The most striking examples of such instances of performativity can be found at the intersections of text and image, places where the rhetorical capacity of artifice can be exploited by means of several media. Among the case studies that have been discussed in this thesis, two examples in particular contributed to a large extent to the construction of the idea of human sublimity, and both through the performative practice of the "speech act": firstly, the combination of inscriptions and fresco at the church of Val-de-Grâce, and secondly the publication of the *Tapisseries du Roy* by Félibien. The church building of Val-de-Grâce presented the viewer with numerous assertions of authorship and divine exchange, which would lead the public to contemplate on this process (Anne presented God with her vow, God presented her Louis XIV, Anne and Louis then built and presented the church to God, and God presented himself through the Eucharist). Moreover, these ideas were constantly repeated in many texts and images throughout the century, which stimulated this contemplation and thus contributed to the miraculous and sacred character of Louis XIV's person and reign. For instance, when contemplating the inscription that is visible behind the tabernacle ("He/she who made me rested in my tabernacle") it is difficult for the viewer to establish who is actually speaking, and who is referred to. The Val-de-Grâce thus blurs the

1 John Langshaw Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, ed. J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisà (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

2 See Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'sex'* (New York: Routledge, 1993). Derived from Dino Felluga, "Modules on Butler: On Performativity," in *Introductory Guide to Critical Theory* (Purdue University, College of Liberal Arts), last modified January 31 2011, http://www.purdue.edu/guidetotheory/genderandsex/modules/butlerperformativity.html.

distinction between the Holy Virgin and Anne, between Christ and Louis XIV, which was exactly the desired effect. However, in the case of Félibien's *Tapisseries du Roy*, the figure of the speaking Louis XIV (the "je," "me," and "moi") in its poems achieves a much less powerful effect. In short, all mystery and claims of sublimity fall apart: the book deems it necessary to explain both metaphor and poem to the viewer, while the metaphor itself cannot escape its association with all things earthly (and thus corruptible and ephemeral) instead of eternal and ever-transcendent. In retrospect, we can see that the attempts to wield and assert the sublime are the victim of their own artificiality.

Illustrations

10 The nave of the church of Val-de-Grâce.

11 The baldachin of Val-de-Grâce (designed by Gabriel Le Duc), crowning the high altar and Michel Anguier's Nativity scene (nineteenth-century copy), ca. 1663-65.

12 Philippe de Champaigne, *Portrait de Mère Agnès Arnauld et de Sœur Catherine de Sainte-Suzanne, dit L'Ex-Voto*, 1662, Paris, Musée du Louvre.

13 The baldachin below Mignard's fresco in the dome of Val-de-Grâce.

14 Pierre Mignard, *La Gloire des Bienheureux*, 1663-66, Paris, Église Notre-Dame du Val-de-Grâce.

15 Pierre Mignard, *La Gloire des Bienheureux* (detail showing the Queen, accompanied by Saint Anne and Saint Louis), 1663-66, Paris, Église Notre-Dame du Val-de-Grâce.

16 Justin-Marie Lequien, Louis Desprez, and Clément Denis (after Michel Anguier), *Nativité*, ca. 1868-69. Paris, Église Notre-Dame du Val-de-Grâce.

17 Michel Anguier, *Nativité*, 1665, Paris, Église Saint-Roch.

18 François Chauveau (after Charles le Brun), *Obélisque dans la place Dauphine*, ca. 1660. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

19 Israël Silvestre, *Veüe et Perspective de la Galerie du Louvre, dans laquelle sont les Portraus des Roys des Reynes et des plus Illustres du Royaume*, ca. 1650-55. Paris, Musée Carnavalet.

20 Jean Marot *et. al*., *Veue et Perspective du dedans du Louvre, faict du Regne de Louis XIII,* from *Vues de Paris* (suite 49). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France. (Kristina Deutsch, *Jean Marot: Un graveur d'architecture à l'époque de Louis XIV* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015), 271).

21 François Le Vau, Project drawing for the eastern façade of the Louvre (detail, showing the central pavilion), ca. 1662-64. Stockholm, National Museum. (Christopher Tadgell, "Claude Perrault, François Le Vau and the Louvre Colonnade," *The Burlington Magazine* 122, no. 926 (May 1980): 336).

22 Louis Bretez, *Plan de Turgot* (detail of sheet 11 and 15, showing the unfinished Louvre), 1734-36. Kyoto, Kyoto University Library.

23 Pierre-Antoine Demachy, *Dégagement de la colonnade du Louvre*, 1764. Paris, Musée Carnavalet.

24 Charles Le Brun (design) with the collaboration of Adam Frans van der Meulen and Isaac Moillon, Autumn tapestry (*L'Automne*), part of the set *Les Saisons,* before 1669. Paris, Mobilier National. (Christina Bremer-David, *Woven Gold: Tapestries of Louis XIV* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Publications, 2015), 99).

25 Detail of one of the devices of the Autumn tapestry. (Frederik Knegtel, "Transcending the Natural World [...]," in *Emblems and the Natural World*, ed. Karl A.E. Enenkel and Paul J. Smith (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 384).

26 Jacques Bailly, Charles Perrault, François Charpentier and Jacques Cassagnes, The device of "Magnanimity" in the Element of Air, from *Devises pour les tapisseries du roy, ou sont representez les quatre elemens et les quatre saisons de l'anneé*, 1669. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

27 Sébastien Le Clerc, after Charles Le Brun (design), Air tapestry (*L'Air*), from André Félibien, *Les Tapisseries du Roy* (Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1670). Paris, École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts.

28 Sébastien Le Clerc (engraver), texts by André Félibien and Charles Perrault, The Bird of Paradise device in the Element of Air, from Félibien, *Tapisseries du Roy* (Paris: Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1679). Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek.

29 Sébastien Le Clerc, after Charles Le Brun (design), Summer tapestry (*L'Été*) (detail), from André Félibien, *Les Tapisseries du Roy* (Paris: Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1679). Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek.

30 Sébastien Le Clerc (engraver), texts by André Félibien and Jacques Cassagnes, The Theatrical Machine device in the Season of Winter (*L'Hiver*), from André Félibien, *Tapisseries du Roy* (Paris: Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1679). Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek.

31 Title page of Molière's *La Gloire du Val-de-Grâce* (Paris: Pierre Le Petit, 1669). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

32 Pierre Mignard, *La Gloire des Bienheureux* (detail showing Saint Catherine), 1663-66, Paris, Église Notre-Dame du Val-de-Grâce.

33 Sébastien Le Clerc, design by Claude Perrault, Project for a triumphal arch on the rue Saint-Antoine, ca. 1667. Paris, Musée du Louvre.

34 Printmaker unknown, Destruction of the Protestant Church of Charenton (*Les supost de satan asembles pour / la detruction du temple de charanton*), 1685. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

35 Pierre Le Pautre, The dream of Jules Hardouin-Mansart, from Pierre du Bellocq, *L'Eglise des Invalides. Poëme* (Paris: M. Brunet, 1702). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

36 Pierre Le Pautre, The Demon of Envy and her group above the Dôme, from Pierre du Bellocq, *L'Eglise des Invalides. Poëme* (Paris: M. Brunet, 1702). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

37 Pierre Le Pautre, The Demon of Envy in the Dôme, from Pierre du Bellocq, *L'Eglise des Invalides. Poëme* (Paris: M. Brunet, 1702). Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

38 Pierre Le Pautre, Frontispiece of Claude-François Ménestrier's *La Statue de Louis le Grand placée dans le Temple de l'Honneur: Dessein du feu d'artifice dressé devant l'Hostel-de-Ville de Paris, pour la statue du Roy qui doit y estre posée* (Paris: Nicolas and Charles Caillou, 1689). Paris, Bibliothèque de l'INHA.

39 Printmaker unknown, *Le temple de la gloire / Dessein du feu d'artifice dresse sur la riviere de Seyne pour l'erection de la / statue équestre de Louis le Grand [...] / le 12 aoust 1699*, Frontispiece of Claude-François Ménestrier's *La Statuë Equestre de Louis le Grand, Placée dans le Temple de la Gloire* (Paris, Veuve Vaugon, 1699). New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

40 Printmaker unknown, Inauguration of the Place des Victoires on 26 March 1686, 1686. Paris, Musée Carnavalet.

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Nederlandse samenvatting

In 1686 publiceerde de Franse Jezuïet en schrijver René Rapin in Parijs zijn traktaat *Du grand ou du sublime dans les mœurs et dans les differentes conditions des hommes*, waarmee hij vier van zijn Franse tijdgenoten uitriep als sublieme personen. Rapin gebruikte hiervoor een eeuwenoud concept; zijn notie van het sublieme ("le sublime") ontleende hij aan Pseudo-Longinus' traktaat *Peri hypsous* uit de eerste of derde eeuw na Christus. Dit concept, dat verwees naar de verheven stijl en het overweldigende effect van literatuur, paste Rapin aan om over de verheven menselijke conditie te kunnen schrijven. Rapin's belangrijkste claim is dat Lodewijk XIV de meest sublieme van de vier personen was, en dat hij om die reden een sublieme representatie nodig heeft om die verhevenheid te kunnen overdragen naar het publiek (via literatuur en beeldende kunst, zoals poëzie en architectuur). Het argument dat hij opbouwt om deze centrale claim te kunnen ondersteunen, weerspiegelt niet alleen de ontwikkeling van de notie van het sublieme gedurende de zeventiende eeuw, maar ook de onderliggende zwaktes van het concept. Met Rapin als uitgangspunt, onderzoeken we twee fundamentele problemen van het sublieme van Lodewijk XIV tijdens de zeventiende eeuw, die de ruggengraat vormen van dit proefschrift:

Deel I: Eerste probleem: De retoriek van het sublieme die wordt gebruikt om het effect van sublimiteit te creëren altijd al problematisch geweest, omdat het berust op een wisselwerking tussen twee tegenovergestelde extremen of uitersten (zoals hoog-laag, groot-klein, licht-donker, alles-niets etc.). Een dergelijke samenkomst van tegengestelden zorgt voor een krachtig poëtisch effect, maar is om die reden ook instabiel. Het kan makkelijk instorten en vervallen in spot of overdaad, als gevolg van de kleinste mislukking of door middel van satire door politieke tegenstanders. Zodra het sublieme wordt toegepast op mensen faalt het vaak al snel, aangezien het leven van mensen van nature al gebrekkig is en zelden in contact komt met echte uitersten – en dit geldt ook voor koningen als Lodewijk XIV. Dit brengt ons tot het tweede probleem dat ten grondslag ligt aan Rapin's claim. Deel II: Tweede probleem: Toen tijdgenoten van Lodewijk XIV, zoals Rapin, de koning zelf toch als subliem verklaarden ontstond er een tweede probleem: hoe representeer je de sublimiteit van een koning door middel van kunst (schilderkunst, architectuur en literatuur) en hoe wek je deze op bij de toeschouwer of lezer – een sublimiteit die, volgens zeventiende-eeuwse retoriek, op zichzelf al onbevattelijk was en ver buiten het bereik van normale mensen lag? Deze paradox werd door sommige schrijvers gebruikt als dekmantel om de claim

van het sublieme te handhaven. Je zou namelijk makkelijk kunnen stellen dat je inspanningen tekort schieten tegenover een dergelijke verhevenheid, en neemt om die reden toevlucht tot gemeenplaatsen. Echter, uiteindelijk bezwijkt deze retoriek onder haar eigen zwakheden, omdat het een fundamenteel onvermogen blootlegt om het sublieme te hanteren of beheersen zodat het de sublimiteit van de vorst in al zijn glorie en voor altijd zou kunnen oproepen. Rapin gaf zelf ook toe dat hij niet in staat was deze taak uit te voeren. Samen, beargumenteer ik, vormen deze twee kwesties de kern van de problematische claim van Lodewijk XIV's sublimiteit. Om een beter begrip van deze kwesties te kunnen vormen, richt dit proefschrift zich op de ontwikkelingen die tot deze claim heeft geleid.

Het eerste deel van dit proefschrift richt zich op de eerste kwestie: de centrale rol van extreme noties in de retorica van het sublieme, tussen 1630 en 1661. Dit deel beslaat de dertig zeer turbulente jaren vóór het begin van Lodewijk XIV's persoonlijke bewind – een factor die vormend zou blijken voor het absolute karakter en de artistieke en literaire opdrachtgeverschap van de vorst. In zekere zin waren de extreme noties in de sublieme retorica die werd ontwikkeld even instabiel als de politieke omstandigheden in deze periode. Deze uitersten werkten vaak averechts en konden eenvoudig worden ondermijnd door politieke tegenstanders. Het eerste hoofdstuk richt zich op de omvangrijke patronage van Richelieu en Mazarin – een patronage die, binnen het discours over politieke sublimiteit, herhaaldelijk de wisselwerking tussen fictie en realiteit opzocht. Om dit doel te bereiken werden de werelden van architectuur en literatuur met elkaar verweven, zoals in het ophemelen van bestaande Parijse gebouwen in gedichten, en het creëren van verheven fictieve gebouwen in verslagen, allemaal ter glorie van de opdrachtgever of het onderwerp van de tekst. Een sturende kracht was de breed gedeelde interesse in het epische gedicht en de effect van *le merveilleux* in het bijzonder – al diende het epos zowel voor- als tegenstanders van de kroon. De Franse burgeroorlog, de *Fronde*, leidde tot de productie van een enorme hoeveelheid satirische pamfletten gericht tegen de kroon, waarvan vele werken direct inspeelden op de kracht en sublieme connotaties van het episch wonder als politiek instrument. Het tweede hoofdstuk concentreert zich op de problematiek van *la magnificence* in deze periode, een andere notie uit het semantisch veld van het sublieme, en onderzoekt de meningsverschillen tussen de twee stichters van de abdij van Val-de-Grâce: koningin Anna van Oostenrijk en de abdis Marguerite d'Arbouze. Als antwoord op de wonderbaarlijke geboorte van Lodewijk XIV werd een nieuw kerkgebouw in Parijs gewijd aan de nederigheid van de kribbe van Christus. Tijdens en kort na de uitbreiding van dit abdijcomplex bleek echter dat de twee vrouwen tegengestelde opvattingen hadden over de verheffing van het idee van nederigheid (*humilité*) tot het sublieme in de architectuur van het centrale kerkgebouw. Marguerite's voorkeur voor extreme nederigheid (*anéantissement*)

botste met de wens van de koningin om overweldigende pracht (*magnificence*) in te zetten om het nederige en aardse karakter van de heilige kribbe te verheffen. Het derde hoofdstuk richt zich op de problematische rol van het Louvre in de constructie van Lodewijk's bewind, wiens systeem van *académies* een grootse voortzetting vormde van het opdrachtgeverschap van zijn voormalige minister Mazarin. Met dit nieuwe systeem – en tijdens de uitbreiding van het Louvre – ontstond een nog sterker gecontroleerde wisselwerking tussen architectuur en literatuur, waarmee de grens tussen fictie en realiteit nog meer werd vervaagd dan voorheen, en *le merveilleux* van het epos een leidende functie kreeg. Het zonnepaleis en het betoverde paleis fungeerden in zowel poëtische als theoretische teksten over het Louvre. Het zonnepaleis werd zelfs ingezet in voorgestelde inscripties voor de oostgevel van het Louvre, waarmee de relatie tussen aards en hemels, tussen realiteit en fictie nog nauwer werd. Echter, wederom bleek deze realiteit problematisch: het complex zou de hele zeventiende eeuw in een onvoltooide staat blijven.

Het tweede deel van het proefschrift introduceert een notie die eveneens problematisch zou blijken, en die vanaf 1661 ontstond: het idee van Lodewijk's eigen sublimiteit, en de representatie hiervan. Het vierde hoofdstuk onderzoekt de belangrijke rol van André Félibien's publicatie *Tapisseries du Roy* in de ontwikkeling van dit idee. In aanvulling op zijn *Entretiens* – met één van de vroegst bekende teksten over het sublieme effect van kunst en architectuur – stelt hij in zijn *Tapisseries* dat de emblematische deviezen die zijn gebruikt in de koninklijke tapijten nieuwe visuele "karakters" zijn waarmee de sublimiteit van de koning zelf kan worden weergegeven. Hier herkennen we al enkele belangrijke symptomen van de problematische claim van Rapin: Félibien wil de sublimiteit van de koning voor iedereen en voor altijd oproepen – een doel dat Rapin ook zou nastreven – maar moest toegeven deels terug te moeten vallen op de taal van de poëzie, die Félibien zelf "niet sterk genoeg" vond. Bovendien probeert het boek het idee van een bovennatuurlijke en bovenmenselijke sublimiteit te verdedigen, maar gebruikt het tegelijkertijd aardse en zeer dubbelzinnige metaforen en vergelijkingen. Het vijfde hoofdstuk opent met de impact van Nicolas Boileau's editie van Longinus' *Peri hypsous*, die hij publiceerde in 1674 en waarmee hij de notie *le sublime* tot kritisch concept maakte – een term die de ideeën die aanverwante concepten als *le merveilleux*, *le je ne sais quoi* en *la magnificence* deelden kon bundelen met één woord. Dit hoofdstuk onderzoekt het grote aantal kritische publicaties die de gepopulariseerde ideeën van Longinus en Boileau overnamen, voornamelijk met als doel het idee van de sublimiteit van de vorst verder te ondersteunen. *Le sublime* werd ingezet in nieuwe theoretische reflecties en debatten (*querelles*), zoals over het gebruik van architecturale inscripties onder Lodewijk XIV en hun retorische rol in het overbrengen van sublieme deugd in de publieke sfeer. Het zesde en laatste hoofdstuk richt zich op laat zeventiende-eeuwse po-

gingen om de inmiddels verouderde epische (Christelijke) poëtica een nieuwe impuls te geven omwille van de glorie van de monarch, die in deze periode sterk afbrokkelde en geconfronteerd werd met steeds meer problematische reacties op zijn eigen representatie.

Concluderend stel ik dat het sublieme niet alleen een extreme – en daarmee instabiele – notie is, maar dat het ook een subjectieve notie is. Het kan daarom nooit objectief worden vastgesteld, bijvoorbeeld in een werk of persoon, noch kan het worden beteugeld en daarna ingezet als een machtsinstrument.

Curriculum Vitae

Frederik Jacob Lucas Christiaan Knegtel was born in Tilburg in the Netherlands on 22 July 1990. In 2008 he graduated at the Odulphuslyceum in Tilburg. He received his bachelor's degree in Art History at Leiden University in 2011. He pursued his studies at Leiden University, where he received his research master's degree (cum laude) in the Study of Art and Literature in 2014. In the same year, he started his PhD research as part of the ERC-program 'Elevated minds: The Sublime in the public arts in 17th-century Paris and Amsterdam', supervised by Caroline van Eck, Stijn Bussels, and Bram van Oostveldt. As part of this project, he taught courses on early-modern French and Dutch architecture and applied arts in Leiden and at the École du Louvre in Paris (as part of several summer schools). In 2016, he received the Bourse d'excellence Descartes, which enabled him to do research in Paris for five months. He participated in several national and international conferences, such as in Berlin, Paris, Münster, and Madrid. He wrote articles published by Brill and Amsterdam University Press, and has gained experience in content and copy editing for several publishers. Since 2019 he has been working as an expert in furniture and applied arts at the Venduehuis, The Hague.