“Something More than a Portrait”:
Antoine Benoist’s Wax Sculpture in Louis XIV’s France

David Mitchell

Department of Art History and Communication Studies
McGill University, Montreal
November 2023

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Abstract

"Something More than a Portrait":
Antoine Benoist's Wax Sculpture in Louis XIV's France

Nothing remains of Antoine Benoist's *Cercle royal*, a display of life-scaled wax figures, bewigged and clothed, on view in Paris over the course of Louis XIV's reign. Only one of Benoist's wax fabrications survives, a profile relief depicting Louis XIV in old age (Chateau de Versailles, c.1705). This singular royal portrait has fascinated and confounded commentators for its seemingly irreverent depiction of the king's scarred and wrinkled skin in the visceral particularity of polychrome wax. This dissertation examines the reception of Benoist's waxworks, which were alternately celebrated as vivid miracles or derided as deceitful trivialities. The contested verisimilitude of Benoist's sculptural practice provides an informatively problematic case for considering complications of replicative materiality for both art theory and royal representation under absolutism.

Part One, "Replicating Prestige," addresses the *Cercle royal*'s reception over five decades. The exhibition's presentation of waxwork aristocracy in sumptuous dress was a site of both appreciative marvel and controversy beginning in the 1660s. It subsequently expanded to include diplomatic emissaries to France and foreign rulers. These first chapters draw on a diverse array of texts (including journalistic newsletters, tourist guidebooks, satirical tracts, and legal documents such as inventories and trial records) in order to chart the exhibition's shifting forms and situate it within the cultural landscape of Louis XIV's Paris. I underline the prestigious potential of Benoist's replicative craft, which emerged in tension with anxieties over the cheap thrill of waxworks' deceitful illusion. Part Two, "Replicating Authority," examines specific circumstances surrounding the commission of the extant wax profile. These chapters elaborate a context of institutional demands and aristocratic patronage that has been almost entirely overlooked in assessments of Benoist's work. I argue that in counterpoint with the debate over the questionable decorum of waxwork's provocative mimesis, this case demonstrates the medium's potential to embody legacy.

Résumé

« Quelque chose de plus qu'un portrait » :
la sculpture en cire d'Antoine Benoist sous Louis XIV

Il ne reste rien du *Cercle royal* d'Antoine Benoist, une exposition de figures en cire grandeur nature, avec perruques et vêtements, présentée à Paris pendant le règne de Louis XIV. Une seule des créations en cire de Benoist a été préservée, un bas-relief représentant Louis XIV, de profil, dans sa vieillesse (château de Versailles, c.1705). Ce portrait royal singulier a fasciné et déconcerté les commentateurs en ce qu'il représente de manière apparemment irrévérencieuse la peau cicatrisée et ridée du roi avec les caractéristiques saisissantes de la cire polychrome. Cette thèse porte sur la réception des cires de Benoist, qui ont été tour à tour célébrées comme des miracles vivants ou tournées en dérision comme des trivialités trompeuses. La vraisemblance contestée des oeuvres de Benoist fournit un cas notable pour examiner les problématiques de la corporalité et de la réplication pour la théorie de l'art sous l'absolutisme ainsi que pour la représentation royale.

La première partie de ce projet, « Reproduire le prestige », traite de la réception du *Cercle royal* pendant ses cinq décennies. Cette exposition des nobles en cire vêtus de somptueux habits a suscité à la fois l'émerveillement et la controverse à partir des années 1660. Elle a ensuite inclus des ambassadeurs en France et des souverains étrangers. Ces premiers chapitres s'appuient sur un large éventail de textes (notamment des bulletins journalistiques, des guides touristiques, des satires et des documents juridiques, tels que des inventaires et des comptes rendus de procès) afin de retracer les configurations changeantes de l'exposition et de la situer dans l'imaginaire urbain du Paris de Louis XIV. Nous soulignons le potentiel prestigieux porté par l'art de Benoist, qui est apparu en tension avec les angoisses liées au frisson de la trompe l'oeil. La seconde partie, « Reproduire l'autorité », examine les circonstances entourant la commande du profil de cire qui nous reste. Ces chapitres détaillent un contexte d'exigences institutionnelles et de mécénat qui a été presque entièrement négligé dans les évaluations de l'œuvre de Benoist. Cette étude propose qu'en contrepoint du débat sur le décorum discutable offert par la mimésis frappante de la cire, ce cas démontre le potentiel commémoratif d'un tel médium à incarner un patrimoine.

Acknowledgments

For good guidance and the example of their work, I thank my supervisors. This project had its origin in Angela Vanhaelen's 'Boredom' seminar. Beyond my early reflections on figurations of early modern emptiness and the historiographic rhetoric of *ennui*, the dissertation's completion in this form owes much to Angela's patient readings of some sprawling drafts and her longstanding support. Richard Taws offered attentive comments and encouragement at key moments during the project's development and in its last stretch.

This research was supported by a Joseph Armand Bombardier Fellowship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, a research travel grant from McGill's Faculty of Arts, and a Max Stern Fellowship. I owe thanks to staff at the Musée du château de Versailles, the Bibliothèque Mazarine. the Archives nationales de France, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the Musée des arts décoratifs, and the Musée Carnavalet. I am grateful to McGill's Interlibrary Loan staff for responded to my many requests.

A small army of thoughtful friends lent their ears, read pieces of draft, and shared much coffee (as well as a considerable number of small Russian donuts). My cohort in the Arts Dissertation Workshop discussed early chapter drafts. Gretchen Bakke offered wise counsel then and beyond. For their insights on dissertation matters and generosity of spirit, I thank (in order of appearance): Liz Maynard, Doug Hanes, Chantelle Lepine-Cercone, Tomasz Grusiecki, Sarah Ghabrial, Heather Mills, Steph Schwartz, Lauren Kaplow, Leslie Cheung, Shana Cooperstein, Carla Benzan, Sylvie Boisjoli, Jacqueline Peters, and Sara Breikreutz. I must acknowledge, in particular, Fran Cullen's sharp editorial eye.

My parents and my brothers have supported me in this venture as in everything. Nancy Rotman was there, truly, for all of it. On one strange night she saved my life. Leah and Lark brightened the last era of work on this project.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

INTRODUCTION

A Metonym of Materiality

In his second meditation, René Descartes tells a story about a small piece of wax. He first enumerates the qualities of this seemingly solid substance. Recently extracted from the honeycomb, Descartes's wax is cold to touch. It still tastes of honey. He then approaches heat and narrates the wax's altered shape and transformed attributes in the suspenseful immediacy of the present tense: "But notice that, as I speak, it is moved closer to the fire. It loses what remains of its taste, its smell is lost, the colour changes, it loses its shape, increases its size, become a liquid, becomes hot and can barely be touched. But does the same wax not remain?"[1]The initial description of the solid bit of wax is inverted in Descartes's re-examination of the resulting puddle. Size temperature, solidity, and colour are transformed. Shape, taste, and smell are negated. That which could be neatly summarized in a single statement (heat melts wax) is here minutely scrutinized and elaborately recounted.

In Descartes's text, wax's malleability and sensitivity to heat make it an exemplary substance for his argument about the essential instability of the perceptible material world. Indeed, the description of melting wax is typical of the homely metaphors that Descartes frequently employed to convince his readers of the plausibility of abstract and counterintuitive theoretical principles.[2] His detailed narration of a simple experiment is designed to elicit easy agreement from readers who would be intimately familiar with wax as a transformative substance from activities of daily life – burning candles and letters sealed with wax imprints. The building sense of complicity with the accumulation of each obvious detail serves to interpolate readers in preparation for the meditation's far less familiar points of argumentation. The tangible, material world is volatile. It eludes our perceptual capacities and surreptitiously confounds.[3] The mind's abstractions are, by contrast, reliable and solid.

---

[1] Descartes, *Meditations*, 27.
[2] Dear, *Revolutionizing the Sciences*, 88–89.
[3] Ellen McClure elaborates this point in *The Logic of Idolatry*, 82.

In his seemingly commonplace account of melting wax, Descartes was also writing himself into the lineage of canonical philosophical inquiry. Aristotle's model of wax impression as a metaphor for sensory perception was repeated and developed by a series of prominent thinkers over centuries.[4] Aristotle presented wax at key moments in his treatise on the soul, *De Anima*, to characterize the mind's fluctuating streams of thought and perception. He compared the intellect's latent potential to a yet untouched *grammateion,* a writing tablet painted with a layer of wax, designed to be etched with a stylus. This metaphor was sublimated in subsequent philosophical tradition through the Latin translation of *grammateion* as *tabula rasa*.[5] The material specificity of Aristotle's image for sensory perception, of a signet ring impressed in wax, was the subject of prominent interest and commentary for subsequent generations of readers.[6] Within this sequence of citations, however, Descartes inverted the analogy. It was not the mind that was impressionable as warm wax, formed in relation to the world perceived, but objects of apprehension that were given shape by the mind's schemas of comprehension.

Wax's vulnerable solidity rendered it a potentially persuasive model of uncertain physicality. Toward the meditation's conclusion the narrator states that all observations on wax "may be applied to "everything else that exists outside of me."[7] Descartes's piece of wax is a metonym of materiality, in the sense that it is a small fragment that encapsulates a wide associative sphere.[8] In this case, the sample is apt for demonstrating broader contradictory dynamics underlying our perception of matter.

Like Descartes's scrutiny of one piece of wax (albeit hypothetical) as an informative, problematic sample of the material sphere, this dissertation concentrates on one wax object to investigate problematics of early modern materiality. My primary focus is Antoine Benoist's 1705 wax profile relief depicting Louis XIV (fig. 0.1). It is the only surviving wax fabrication of a portraitist who

[4] Didi-Huberman, "Wax Flesh, Vicious Circles," 64; Hecker, "Sealed between Us," 17.
[5] Agamben, "Bartleby, or On Contingency," 244–45.
[6] Thomas Aquinas, for example, referenced Aristotle in comparing visual perception to the transfer of a seal's metallic image to wax. See Camille, "Before the Gaze," 209–10.
[7] Descartes, *Meditations*, 30.
[8] Susan Stewart demonstrates the referential dynamics of metonymy in *On Longing*, 136.

had styled himself Louis XIV's *premier sculpteur en cire* (first sculptor in wax). Benoist gained significant recognition and wealth for an exhibition of life-scaled wax figures depicting the royal family and their courtly entourage under the title *Cercle royal* (royal circle). On view at the sculptor's residence in Paris's fashionable Faubourg Saint Germain as of the 1660s, the display fluctuated and expanded over the course of Louis XIV's reign, but the collection of figures was subsequently lost entirely. Benoist's extant wax profile is, therefore, the fragmentary remnant of a thriving sculptural practice.

The extant profile itself is an assemblage of intricately-textured materials. Wax skin records the king's old age with clinical precision. Wrinkles are faithfully rendered, as are stubble and traces of small pox, scars from youth. The veristic effect of polychrome wax is enhanced by the incorporation of a glass eye, a wig of human hair (once brown, now bleached by sunlight). Tufts of velvet and lace suggest the king's waistcoat and jabot. A strip of blue silk ribbon evokes the chivalric order of the Holy Spirit. Benoist's intricate process of treating materials and combining textures builds up an illusionistic sliver of tangible corporeality. The profile relief compels proximate viewing in the intricate detailing of its various tactile surfaces.

This dissertation takes the wax profile's exceptional conservation as a point of departure. I suggest that the profile's preservation, in contrast to the disappearance of the entirety of the sculptor's documented work in wax, indicates a significance invested in this singular object as a commemorative artefact. Discourses of replicative anxiety revolved around Benoist's sculptural practice. The *Cercle royal*'s wax figures were occasionally deemed trivialities as cheap simulacra, but also celebrated as marvels of enchanted verisimilitude. The dissertation charts the *Cercle royal*'s reception and traces specific circumstances surrounding the commission of the extant wax profile to reveal the material's potential salience in embodying legacy. I will claim that in counterpoint with the debate over aesthetic mimesis was the possibility of authenticity in replicative authority.

Absolutist Aspiration

Since entering Versailles's collection in 1856, Benoist's wax profile has presented its commentators with an interpretive conundrum. Its fleshy tangibility and its unflinching scrutiny of aged, blemished skin would seem incompatible with the decorum of royal portrayal in this era. Louis XIV was frequently portrayed in ceremonial splendour, or enthroned as an icon of authority.[9] He was endlessly represented in the heroic guise of myth or as the modern embodiment of Alexander the Great's ancient military glory. Louis XIV's image appeared in the precious intimacy of bejewelled miniatures and in the towering grandiosity of colossal monuments (figs. 0.2-3). In its human scale and its stark, incisive detailing, Benoist's wax profile would seem profane in comparison to the articulation of a sacred ideal. Here is the magnanimous divinely ordained ruler reduced to mortality. Here is the pitiful king of one of Blaise Pascal's thought experiments: "a man full of miseries."[10] This eccentric object challenges our conceptions of early modern aesthetics and royal decorum.

Indeed, commentary from nineteenth-century observers to recent publications positions this exceptional royal representation as a foil to the extravagant mode of Louis XIV's state portraits. In 1862, Napoleon III's Master of Ceremonies, Félix Sébastien Feuillet de Conches, perceived the existential turmoil of frustrated infirmity in the wax profile. For Conches, Benoist's Louis XIV had "reached that immense boredom that will one day devour everything that is great on earth. He cries for his old age and demands again for his legions at Varus."[11] This dramatic reading was subsequently quoted by nineteenth-century scholars.[12] With reference to Benoist's wax profile, Pierre de Nolhac, Versailles's chief curator as of 1892, opposed "the realism of this old man's head" with the idealized

[9] On the range of Louis XIV's formats of portraiture see Milovanovic and Maral, Louis XIV: *L'Homme et le Roi*; Coquery, "Le Portrait de Louis."

[10] "Qu'on laisse un roi tout seul sans aucune satisfaction des sens, sans aucun soin dans l'esprit, sans compagnies, penser à lui tout à loisir, et l'on verra qu'un roi sans divertissement est un homme plein de misères." Pascal, *Apology for Religion*, 39.

[11] "Il [...] atteint de cet immense ennui que dévore un jour tout ce qui a été grand sur la terre, il pleure de vieillir et redemande ses légions à Varus." Conches, *Causeries d'un curieux*, 2:244.

[12] Blondel, "Les Modeleurs En Cire," 429–30; Dutilleux, "Antoine Benoist," 200.

regality of Antoine Coysevox's marble bust of Louis XIV (fig 0.4).[13] In his seminal 1911 study of the genre of wax portraiture, Julius von Schlosser contrasted Benoist's faithful veracity with the inflated fictions of baroque theatrics.[14] In an encyclopedic survey of French art, the preeminent art historian André Chastel acknowledged Benoist's profile with the qualification that "this somewhat repellent craft casts doubt on the true depth of grand taste."[15] In a 2009 exhibition catalogue, Versailles curator Alexandre Maral describes how the "realism" of Benoist's wax profile undermines standards of official royal protocols with greater force than anti-royalist satire.[16] Recent references extend implications of the wax profile's unnerving realism in describing its "uncanny" effect.[17]

This dissertation examines the reception of Benoist's sculptural practice in order to present an alternate reading of this exceptional portrait, not as an uncanny document nor a truthful subversive trace that undermined absolutist ideals of Louis XIV's sacred eminence, but as a complicated glorifying testament. In elaborating the historical circumstances surrounding this exceptional object, I make the case for its possible appreciation with reference to official strategies of monumental commemoration. I claim that it engaged reflection on posterity's aspirational endurance despite the contingencies of uncertainty. The exceptional conservation of this wax profile from Benoist's practice of portraiture evidences a particular investment in it and presents the challenge of conceiving of a historicist materiality different from our own. I contend that the sense of uncanny realism that consistently strikes the work's modern commentators is, in fact, a distorted echo of commemorative tribute.

In order to make these claims, I investigate the overlapping contextual frames that inform the object's initial reception. I begin by examining the diverse responses to Benoist's exhibition. On view within the sculptor's residence in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, Paris's emerging fashionable hub, the *Cercle royal*'s presentation of life-scaled wax aristocracy was a site of appreciative marvel and

[13] Nolhac, Versailles and the Trianons, 58.
[14] Schlosser, "History of Portraiture in Wax," 258.
[15] Chastel, French Art, 3:170.
[16] Alexandre Maral's catalogue entry inMilovanovic and Maral, *Louis XIV: L'Homme et Le Roi*, 226.
[17] I position this terminology in an expanded assessment of Benoist's historiography in the literature review below.

controversy beginning in the 1660s. I chart the exhibition's expansion to include an array of diplomatic emissaries and foreign rulers over decades. I subsequently elaborate a context of institutional demands and aristocratic patronage that has been almost entirely overlooked in assessments of Benoist's work. I unravel a historiographic conundrum by laying out documentation for Benoist's engagement as an illustrator for the Académie des inscriptions, the committee of scholarly antiquarians tasked with the substantial program of Louis XIV's medallic commemoration.[18] I present evidence for the wax relief's relation to portrait illustrations commissioned from Benoist for the revised version of Louis XIV's monumental medallic history, *Médailles sur les principaux evénements du règne de Louis le Grand,* an edition finally published in 1723.[19] Benoist's commission from this institution has significance for our understanding of the relevance of Benoist's extant wax profile. It implicates this exceptional object within the intensive debate on commemorative strategy and monumental legacy that surrounded Louis XIV's numismatic representation. Wax materiality engages with this dialectic of aspirational longevity despite mortal ephemerality in its vulnerable substance. This connection is also significant since Benoist's work for the académie was commissioned under the supervision of Louis Phélypeaux, Count of Pontchartrain. A powerful minister who was named Louis XIV's chancellor in 1699, Pontchartrain was also the original owner of Benoist's wax profile.

As chancellor, Pontchartrain kept the royal seals that were employed to materialize law by stamping heated wax. Each seal was a royal portrait in wax relief. The wax profile's line of provenance to Pontchartrain's descendants has been noted, but the implications of this commission for its initial patron have not been addressed.[20] I will argue for the possibility of Benoist's waxwork as a testament

[18] This engagement was suggested in a 1913 publication by Pierre de Nolhac and subsequently buried in an erroneous rebuttal by a prominent numismatic scholar, Joséphe Jacquiot. See Nolhac, "Un Nouveau Portrait."I go about untangling this historiographic confusion with additional documentation in Chapter Three, 'Profiling Louis XIV.'

[19] Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, *Medailles sur les principaux évenements du regne entier de Louis Le Grand*. Notably this edition was released significantly after Benoist's death in 1717. The timeline of the sculptor's engagement with the publication is detailed in Chapter Three.

[20] The Musée de Versailles acquired the wax profile in 1856 from the collection of Paulinne Knip. Documentation from 1833 indicates that Knip's possession had originated in the collection of Jean-Frédéric Phélypeaux, Count of Maurepas, the grandson of Louis XIV's chancellor, Louis de Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain. Milovanovic and Maral, *Louis XIV: L'Homme*

to Pontchartrain's status and identity in its very format and materiality. While Pontchartrain has only been a footnote in the provenance record of the wax profile, my research indicates his centrality for understanding Benoist's waxwork and its legacy.

The burgeoning literature on wax sculpture has foregrounded the medium's unique evocative potential for describing bodies.[21] Wax's malleable softness compellingly replicates the skin's surfaces and, in anatomical models, the internal workings of viscera. As the secretion of bees, it is an organic substance in correspondence with flesh.[22] The medium's fragility corresponds to the vulnerability of human bodies. The contingency of its form, on the verge of ephemeral dissipation, echoes mortality. This sphere of reflection is undoubtedly pertinent to the visceral physicality of Benoist's wax profile. The portrait's incorporation of a glass eyeball and human hair, its careful variegated pigmentation, and its clinical detail of gathered wrinkles, small pox scars, and stubble all work to heighten its evocative corporeality. Yet I claim that this was not the only implication of the relief's materiality. In contextualizing Benoist's work within a series of Pontchartrain's commissions, I propose that this wax profile did not merely evoke the immediate shock of suggestive presence. As a material echo of the seals that the chancellor dispensed, the work's substance can also be related to the repetitive and plodding machinations of bureaucratic authentication: the internal workings of the absolutist state.

Lost Wax: Methods and Materials

In our assessment of Benoist's practice of wax sculpture, the *Cercle* royal's missing figures present a conspicuous absence. Historical comments on Benoist have invariably glossed over uneven varieties of historical evidence. The *Cercle royal* is only known through written documents, mostly brief descriptions or evocative comments. The wax profile, by contrast, is a singular preserved artefact

et Le Roi, 397.

[21] Wax's compelling bodily evocation is the central premise of the seminal Getty volume and a through-line in the literature. See Panzanelli, *Ephemeral Bodies*.

[22] Didi-Huberman, "Wax Flesh, Vicious Circles."

whose initial context has been obscure. In the face of these gaps in source material, the wax profile has been taken primarily as an object of relevance to the lost exhibition. Historians have fit the isolated object together with the exhibition's documented, though unillustrated, context. The profile is certainly pertinent to the *Cercle royal* as a rare example of Benoist's wax fabrication. This object presents a sample of the technical craftsmanship and aesthetic effects of the sculptor's work in wax. It represents Louis XIV, the central figure of Benoist's display. Primary source statements of the convincing vivacity or dissembling deformity of Benoist's wax portraiture can be weighed by viewers of the wax profile. It is an important piece of evidence with reference to the *Cercle royal,* but also, I will maintain, a problematic one. Not merely an object of interest in relation to the lost exhibition, the wax profile also had its own sphere of implications.

Considering these uneven, fragmented primary records, an assessment of the relations between the exhibition that gained Benoist his reputation and the extant profile, fabricated late in his career, demands two distinctly calibrated methods of approach. It is impossible to consider the *Cercle royal* separately from the terms of its reception. Examining this site is an exercise in literary analysis and speculative reconstruction. In the dissertation's first chapters, I draw on a diverse array of texts (including journalistic newsletters, tourist guidebooks, satirical tracts, and legal documents such as inventories and trial records) in order to chart the exhibition's shifting forms and situate it within the cultural landscape of Louis XIV's Paris. Tracing the reception of Benoist's exhibition reveals conflicting opinions for the merits of wax representation. Dissonance in the record of response is precisely one of the rewards of this approach.[23] Surveying reception positions the *Cercle royal* as a controversial site with relevance to the era's core debates in sculptural craft and portrait aesthetics, but also broader issues of deception and aristocratic imposture, royal representation, and commemorative

[23] Literary theorists have underlined reception's value in drawing out diverse associations against standard notions of an artwork's coherent meaning or singular purpose. Foundational texts of reader response theory highlight the emergence of meanings in the course of relational interactions. See Iser, *The Act of Reading*.

materiality. The diversity of responses surveyed provides groundwork for the dissertation's second half, which aims to reposition the singular extant waxwork within a body of medallic representations that Benoist painted, engraved, and cast in bronze. I lay out documentation that draws these extant works in diverse media together as a body of work that Benoist produced for a single patron.

Though there is undoubtedly a degree of chance in the intact survival of a fragile assemblage over centuries, the object's existence today inherently attests to the protective care that carried it through to its acquisition by the museum in 1856. Within the contingencies of circumstance that determine the fragmentary survivals of material culture, disappearance can be arbitrary. Objects might be deliberately disposed of or neglected, but destructive accidents can be unpredictable and indiscriminate. Long-term preservation, by contrast, necessarily attests to a stream of decisive commitments. Stephen Greenblatt underlines the uncertainty that collectors confront when he writes that "museums function, partly by design and partly in spite of themselves as monuments to the fragility of cultures […]."[24] The collector's triage will be inflected by shifting economic circumstances, changing aesthetic values, protocols of collection, conditions of storage, or the lines of provenance that distinguish heirlooms of collective or personal significance.[25] Wax's delicacy heightens our sense of the intentional effort that its conservation requires.

Offset from the vanished figures of the *Cercle royal*, we must ask: what associations might Benoist's wax profile have encapsulated to motivate, first, its acquisition and then subsequently, the desire to preserve it? Arjun Appadurai's comment on archival futurity is pertinent here. He observes that while academic history has entrenched investment in archives as "the tomb of the trace," archival collections orient forward. Their founders and caretakers look to the future in plotting legacy and framing heritage.[26] In Benoist's wax profile, the sense of entombed trace is embedded in the surface of

[24] They index "the fall of sustaining institutions and noble houses, the collapse of ritual and the evacuation of myths, the destructive effects of warfare, neglect, and corrosive doubt." Greenblatt, "Resonance and Wonder," 43–44.
[25] The literature on collector's motivations and history's fragmentary remains is vast. Krzysztof Pomian offers one point of reference in describing tensions of "value" between usefulness and meaning. See *Collectors and Curiosities*, 26–34.
[26] Appadurai, "Archive and Aspiration," 16.

the sculptural skin, in the punctures of scars and the incisions of wrinkles. Following Appadurai's reoriented timeline, we need to consider the material rhetoric of evidentiary indexicality as anticipatory commemoration. In its temporal complexity, Benoist's wax profile embodies some of the forceful paradox of Walter Benjamin's dialectical image, a historical representation that confronts by encapsulating tension between past and present without resolution.[27] I will frame this provocation as a consequence of the object's potentially salient materialization of posterity in its early modern reception.

In considering Benoist's wax profile in relation to the curated posterity of administrative authority, I draw on a growing number of studies inflecting foundational accounts of absolutist representation. Absolutism conjoined a singular focus on the king's sacred sovereignty with a proliferating administrative infrastructure. Investigations of the era's royal imagery have focused substantially on the spectacle of Louis XIV's political domination. Canonical accounts of the royal image include Peter Burke's sociologically informed assessment of Louis XIV's propaganda, Jean-Marie Apostolidès's marxist study of spectacle, and, most influentially, Louis Marin's semiotic analysis of the rhetorical negotiation of absolutist desire.[28] Scholars have increasingly aimed to complicate these seminal approaches. Chloé Hogg, for example, examines print journalism's intimate address as a literary rhetoric that tempered the performative authority emphasized in Apstolidès and Marin's studies.[29] Hans Bjørnstad and Robert Wellington have built on Marin's work on the temporal rhetorics of Louis XIV's commemorative effort in their examinations of absolutist glorification.[30] Within the effort of absolutism's reassessment, the work of Claire Goldstein, Etienne Jollet, Ellen McClure, Thierry Sarmant, and Mathieu Stoll among others has taken up the issue of administrative self-

[27] Michael Ann Holly describes historical inquiry as fixation on the open wound, or "the cut between past and present" with reference to Benjamin's dialectical image. See *The Melancholy Art*, 116.*T*Georges Didi-Huberman's comment on wax's provocative anachronism is also pertinent here, "Viscosities and Survivals," 159.
[28] Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*; Apostolidès, *Le Roi-Machine*; Marin, *Portrait of the King*.
[29] Hogg, *Absolutist Attachments*.
[30] Bjørnstad, *The Dream of Absolutism*; Wellington, *Antiquarianism and the Visual Histories of Louis XIV*.

fashioning in relation to royal imagery.[31] Under Louis XIV, a bureaucratic corps negotiated its position within the pervasive dynamics of royal personification. This dissertation addresses the embodiment of such complexity in a singular fragile monument.

One definition, in particular, is in order. I have identified 'materiality' as a central subject of analysis. By this, I mean not only the technical, material specificities of Benoist's sculptural fabrication, but also the associative implications of material: the resonance of substance and form within a broader contextual sphere. In parallel with 'visuality,' an extensively theorized term within the art historical literature, we might say that materiality refers to varying, socially embedded understandings of matter.[32] Malcolm Baker draws attention to Michael Baxandall's canonical investigation of limewood carving as a model for approaching early modern materiality.[33] Baxandall attends to the particularities of craftsmanship, but, additionally, he traces the resonance of sculptural materiality within the broader social field through the figurative potential of material analogy and the descriptive lexicon of material qualities.[34] For the art history of early modern Europe, materiality has come into particular focus with reference to Christianity's denominational conflict, in histories of iconoclasm or conceptions of idolatry.[35] It emerges prominently in studies that address Europe's interrelation with the broader globe through diplomacy, trade, and colonial exploit.[36] Such perspectives figure, in this study, in the terms of idolatry and exoticism that were occasionally associated with Benoist's exhibition. For the material sphere of early modern France, there has been particular attention to absolutist mercantilism and the aristocratic arena of conspicuous consumption.[37] Chandra

[31] Goldstein, Vaux and Versailles; Jollet, "The Monument to Louis XIV"; McClure, *Sunspots and the Sun King*; Sarmant and Stoll, *Régner et Gouverner*.
[32] On 'visuality' as vision's social construct see Nelson, "Descartes's Cow and Other Domestications of the Visual," 2. Daniel Miller outlines 'materiality's' multivalence in dialectic with immateriality in "Materiality: An Introduction."
[33] Baker, "Limewood, Chiromancy and Narratives of Making"; Baker, "The Materiality of the Sculptural Object."
[34] Baxandall, The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany.
[35] See for example, Cole and Zorach, *The Idol in the Age of Art*.
[36] Art's materiality is foregrounded with reference to early modern global encounter in Wilson and Vanhaelen, "Making Worlds."
[37] A seminal engagement with Versailles's courtly consumption is Elias, *The Court Society*. Questions of luxury display have been developed in literature on fashion and architectural décor. See, for example, Norberg and Rosenbaum, *Fashion Prints in the Age of Louis XIV*.

Mukerji proposes that the display culture of presentation constituted "a politics by other means" in Versailles's courtly sphere, in which appearance and "social choreography" could encapsulate political subjectivity.[38] As an echo of the courtly sphere, Benoist's display extended those dynamics of political positioning. As an intriguing visceral variation on a standard commemorative form, the medallic profile, Benoist's extant wax relief is a particularly productive case study for considering the potential of material to embody stature's aspiration.

With reference to this body of early modern scholarship, this project speaks to material culture's challenge for art history. Jennifer Roberts presents art's materiality as a particularly timely problem for a discipline long "consumed by its anxious relationship to visual culture."[39] Michael Yonan observes that "art history has tended to suppress its status as material culture even as it has flirted continuously with materiality."[40] While the physicality of form is a central focus of art historical inquiry, formalist lenses have invariably narrowed in on questions of technical achievement and stylistic variation. Approaches of Iconography and Social History have often looked past art objects' physicality to focus on abstract issues of content. Art history's tentative engagement with material culture studies might be due to a fear of losing distinctive relevance within material culture's capacious range of interests.[41] Benoist's case is informative to this disciplinary debate for its contested status as sculpture. The anthropologist Daniel Miller writes that while conceptions of materiality are often inherently understood within social groupings and rarely articulated, instances of controversy or conflict can bring materiality to the fore.[42] Problem objects serve as particularly effective foci for examining materiality's elusive conceptions. The negotiated controversy of Benoist's sculptural practice, is, therefore, potentially informative.

[38] Mukerji, *Territorial Ambitions and the Gardens of Versailles*, 231–39.
[39] Roberts, *Transporting Visions,* 162.Though historically removed from my project, Roberts' discussion of objects that perform "an unexpected interfolding of illusion and materiality" has relevance to approaching Benoist's waxwork.
[40] Yonan, "Toward a Fusion of Art History and Material Culture Studies," 233.
[41] Yonan, 241.
[42] Miller makes this point with reference to Ernst Gombrich's claim that frames only come into focus when they clash with the artwork they envelop. "Materiality: An Introduction," 5–6.

Literature Review

The foundational event for the modern scholarship on Benoist was the purchase of his sole extant waxwork, the profile relief of Louis XIV, by the Musée de château de Versailles in 1856. The museum was only two decades old at the time.[43] The portrait's acquisition was marked by a pamphlet authored by curator Eudore Soulié that introduces the wax profile as a unique monument of its genre and overviews a number of sources that attested to the reception of the *Cercle royal.*[44] This initial investigation spurred other historians and archivists to seek out further sources documenting Benoist's career. Over the next decades, a series of articles compiled references to the *Cercle royal* and pieced together a timeline of the sculptor's biography. A local historian of Benoist's home region of Joigny, for example, tracked down the sculptor's birth certificate.[45] This series of publications were part of a scholarly effort to order the archive of nationalistic art history and consolidate the canon of French artists. Some of the major figures in that initiative of reference publications, such as Jules Guiffrey, of the *Archives nationales*, and Anatole de Montaiglon, a researcher on faculty at the *École des Chartres,* also edited and published documents related to Benoist.[46] Often, archivists published complete transcriptions of relevant documents with only brief introductory remarks. For example, Benoist's 1688 *privilège,* a renewed patent for an expanded version of the exhibition, was published in transcription, as were his 1706 letters of ennoblement.[47] Such minimal editorial frames fulfilled the exigencies of positivist history, which revered the documentary trace of archival evidence.[48] A comprehensive overview of nineteenth-century documentary efforts was compiled in 1905 by Adolphe Dutilleux in

[43] The ambition to reinvent the royal palace of Versailles as a national museum took place under the July Monarchy. The museum was officially opened on June 10, 1837. See Gaehtgens, "Le Musée historique de Versailles."
[44] Soulié, *Louis XIV, Médaillon en cire*.
[45] Jossier, "Antoine Benoist de Joigny," 12–13.
[46] Montaiglon, and Guiffrey, "Antoine Benoît. sculpteur en cire."
[47] The text of the *privilège* was published in Boislisle, "Les Figures de cire sous Louis XIV," 168–69.Papers of ennoblement were reproduced in Montaiglon, and Guiffrey, "Antoine Benoît. Sculpteur en cire."
[48] On nineteenth-century anxieties of interpretive distortion and the rhetorical tactics of framing objective evidence, see Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 115–24.On academic history's foundational reverence for the documentary trace, see Appadurai, "Archive and Aspiration."

two articles, still the most detailed publication devoted to Benoist.[49]

Yet even as curators, archivists, and critics built up a documentary record that attested to Benoist's accomplishment and stature, the wax profile itself was persistently an object of unsettling fascination and occasionally derisive horror. A number of scholars acknowledged discomfort with the genre and attempted to distinguish Benoist's accomplishment from the medium's subsequent descent into "decadent" commerce and general discredit.[50] In ekphrasis extending from the mid-nineteenth century into the twentieth, a series of commentators relished detailing the abjection of Benoist's profile. In 1897, Louvre curator Émile Molinier, condemned the wax profile as a "monstrous head." In his estimation it provided an exact idea of Louis XIV in its "horrific decrepitude".[51] Henry Roujon, secretary of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, described the profile as a revolting image of a despot reduced to pitiful boredom in an article of 1908.[52] For the eminent historian Jules Michelet, writing in 1862, the profile's heavy lips and flaccid cheeks betrayed Louis XIV's lascivious appetite.[53] In 1866 art critic Léon Lagrange, similarly ascribed carnality to bloated cheeks. He observed an arrogant nose and a contemptuous, grimacing mouth.[54] Nineteenth-century physiognomic theory, which claimed that personality was legible in facial traits, thus informed the reception of the profile as a revealing image of Louis XIV. The profile's ugliness and its assumed unmediated accuracy were intertwined in this early body of commentary, with long consequences for the reception of this sculpture.

Nineteenth-century publications by archivists and curators served as the basis of Schlosser's discussion of Benoist in his foundational 1911 history of wax portraiture. In his bibliographic comment, Schlosser acknowledged, in particular, Spire Blondel's series of articles in *La Gazette des*

[49] Dutilleux, "Antoine Benoist."
[50] Stein, "Nouveaux documents Sur le peintre sculpteur Antoine Benoist," 799; Boislisle, "Les Figures de cire sous Louis XIV," 168; Jossier, "Antoine Benoist de Joigny," 17.
[51] Molinier, Les Meubles du moyen Age & de la Renaissance, 234.
[52] Roujon, "Figure de Cire," n.p.
[53] "Ces joues, ces lippes épaises, n'expriment que trop bien un pesant amour de la chair." Michelet, Louis XIV et le duc de Bourgogne, 150.
[54] Quoted in Vaudin, "Antoine Benoist de Joigny," 317.

Beaux Arts as well as Gaston Le Breton's essay for the catalogue of the Spitzer collection, a pedagogical exhibition that included anatomical waxes.[55] Both sources cited scholarship on Benoist in their accounts of waxwork history. Schlosser noted the limitations, in nineteenth-century French scholarship on wax, of an "antiquarian" approach, which considered its topic "very much as a subject of *curiosité*, in the sense still understood today of that French word."[56] Schlosser thereby differentiated his own approach and signalled the self-conscious 'rigour' of cultural analysis esteemed by his academic milieu in Vienna.[57]

In charting the fluctuating history of wax portraiture beginning in antiquity, Schlosser was especially interested in its shifting purposes and stature.[58] His wide historical sweep included the wax portrait's roles in commemorative practice and votive donation. Underlying his interest in the genre's varied history was its subsequent demotion to the lowbrow commercial realm in the familiar spectacles of Schlosser's early twentieth-century context. Within this schema, Benoist was of particular interest for his official recognition, his legal patents and ennoblement. The aristocratic association of Benoist's portraiture was evidence of the vicissitudes of cultural forms through cycles of preservation, alteration, and revival. Benoist practiced an "old courtly art" on the verge of "democratization."[59] Despite underlining the esteem of Benoist's accomplishment, Schlosser read the wax profile as a horrific representation drained of royal dignity. He observed "the flaccid features of the aging king [portrayed] with dreadful truthfulness."[60]

Almost a century after its initial publication, translations of Schlosser's study have bolstered interest in the subject of wax portraiture and drawn some attention to Benoist's work. For example,

---

[55] Blondel, "Les Modeleurs en cire"; Le Breton, Essai historique sur la sculpture en cire.
[56] Schlosser, "History of Portraiture in Wax," 174. See also 284, n.18 for Schlosser's sources on Benoist.
[57] Christopher Wood describes a generation of young Viennese art historians in the 1920s "impressed by Schlosser's methodological austerity." Wood, "Introduction," 31.
[58] In this orientation, Schlosser drew on anthropologist Charles Tylor's notion of "survival." See Didi-Huberman, "The Surviving Image," 59–69.
[59] Schlosser, "History of Portraiture in Wax," 266.
[60] Schlosser, 258.

Édouard Pommier was translating Schlosser's essay into French as he was preparing his own study of early modern portraiture's theoretical complexity. The two publications appeared within a year of each other.[61] Pommier's engagement with Schlosser's work is apparent in a brief discussion of Benoist within his study of portrait theory. Pommier presented Benoist's profile as foil to ideal representations of absolutist sovereignty. He noted, in particular, the poetics of wax's transient delicacy and positioned the relief alongside the practice of cast death masks within the Jansenist circle of Port Royal. Notably, Pommier's observation of the wax profile's "veristic decrepitude" echoes Schlosser's earlier assertion of its "dreadful truth."

Pommier's French edition was the first of a number of translations of Schlosser that have anchored growing scholarly attention. Also contributing to the canonization of Schlosser's essay was a reissued German edition.[62] The 2011 Italian translation of Scholsser's text inaugurated further engagement with waxwork history with some particular focus on Benoist.[63] Andrea Daninos, editor of the Italian translation, subsequently curated an exhibition of Italian wax portraits, ranging from aristocratic and saintly portraits to nineteenth-century criminology.[64] More recently, in 2019, Daninos published a detailed analysis of Benoist's painting collection, which builds on Antoine Schnapper's mention of Benoist's collection of paintings and exotica in a survey of collecting practices in early modern France.[65] Daninos scrutinized inventories and examined provenance records in order to chart Benoist's increased involvement in the market for paintings in the later decades of the seventeenth century.[66] In offering a thorough account of Benoist's painting collection, Daninos explores a facet of Benoist's artistic enterprise that was adjacent to his primary engagement with wax portraiture.

Within anglophone art history, beginning in the 1980s, a reorientation to the breadth of visual

[61] Schlosser, Histoire du portrait en cire; Pommier, Théories du portrait.
[62] Schlosser, *Geschichte Der Porträtbildnerei in Wachs.*
[63] Schlosser, *Storia del ritratto in cera : un saggio*.
[64] Daninos, Waxing Eloquent.
[65] Schnapper, Curieux du Grand Siècle, 2:2:403.
[66] Daninos, "La Collezione d'arte Di Antoine Benoist."

culture beyond the discipline's traditional canon laid the ground for revived interest in Schlosser's approach to wax.[67] In *The Power of Images* (1989), David Freedberg included waxworks in his call for a significantly expanded corpus of affective imagery beyond the strictures of art historical propriety. Mention of Benoist within his series of examples relied on Schlosser's account.[68] In 2008, the English translation of Schlosser's study was embedded in a collection of incisive case studies of wax, edited by Roberta Panzanelli and published by the Getty Research Institute under the title, *Ephemeral Bodies.*[69] An essay by Georges Didi-Huberman provided a historiographic frame for Schlosser's project by underlining the medium's critical potential for the discipline.[70] A burgeoning literature on wax has emerged in the wake of *Ephemeral Bodies*, focused especially on enlightenment anatomical modelling and Tussaud's variety of scintillating urban spectacle.[71] In 2013, an issue of the *Oxford Art Journal* edited by Hanneke Grootenboer and Allison Goudie, entitled *Theorizing Wax,* featured case studies of preserved wax fabrications from the eighteenth-century, as well as considerations of wax in modern and contemporary sculptural installations. The volume's introduction emphasized the methodological challenges posed by wax objects.[72]

In a 2017 volume of *Journal18,* devoted to the problematics of lifelike representation in the eighteenth-century, editors Noémie Étienne and Meredith Martin note the particular pertinence of wax to this theme, and include a subset of short essays devoted to the medium.[73] One of these contributions,

---

[67] Taking stock of seismic shifts in the discipline, *October*'s Visual Culture Questionnaire observed renewed interest in Aby Warburg and Alois Riegl (figures adjacent to Schlosser) as a hallmark of visual culture's anthropologically-inflected interdisciplinarity. Alpers et al., "Visual Culture Questionnaire," 25. Warburg was Schlosser's contemporary and friend. Riegel was an influential figure for Schlosser's intellectual milieu in Vienna. In parallel to recent attention to Schlosser's history of wax portraiture is renewed interest in Warburg's investigation of wax votives in fifteenth-century Florence. On the surge of interest in Warburg see Wood, "Homo Victor."

[68] Freedberg, The Power of Images, 224, 479 n.80.

[69] Panzanelli, Ephemeral Bodies.

[70] Didi-Huberman, "Viscosities and Survivals."

[71] Another seminal publication for this burgeoning literature was *La Specola'*s 1999 catalogue of anatomical wax models, which also featured an essay by Didi-Huberman. See von Düring, Didi-Huberman, and Poggesi, *Encyclopaedia Anatomica*.

[72] Grootenboer, "On the Substance of Wax," 6.

[73] The introduction describes wax's emergence as "an exciting and provocative field of study." Étienne and Martin, *Journal18 Lifelike*. My own contribution to this issue focused on the persistent fascination of *La Specola*'s famed anatomical Venus.

by Robert Wellington, addresses Benoist's *Cercle royal* and, therefore, deserves particular attention here. Following up on a comment in an earlier publication, in which he glossed Benoist's wax profile as "the most grotesque of all renderings of Louis XIV," Wellington presents the profile as a confounding object.[74] He writes: "it is difficult to understand how such gruesome fidelity could please Louis XIV and win his approbation."[75] In order to address this dilemma, Wellington focuses on the foreign ambassadors that were featured in the *Cercle royal*. He relates these portrayals to Charles Le Brun's painted groupings of tributaries in murals for the ambassadors' staircase at Versailles. Both displays suggested royal glory and asserted Louis XIV's world-wide dominance. Wellington usefully presents Benoist's display as a worthwhile site for considering the representation of global power dynamics. His perceptive comparison between the configuration of Benoist's display and the official iconographic program of a ceremonial reception area at Versailles also evokes a number of questions. In addition to correspondences there are also disjunctions between official state imagery and its echoes in popular spectacle. This discussion does not, additionally, account for the aesthetic particularity of the wax profile, which Wellington qualifies as an "uncanny" sample of Benoist's work.[76]

For Katie Scott, the extant wax profile is similarly an "uncanny record."[77] She addresses Benoist's work within an extensive analysis of legalities of authorship over the course of France's long eighteenth century. She charts the complicated trajectory from the ancien regime's elaborate, overlapping legal channels to the post-revolutionary conception of author's rights. Benoist's sculptural practice features in a chapter entitled "Crimes of Likeness," in which Scott considers the complications of portraiture as an inherently replicative genre, in both legal arguments and art theoretical tracts. Benoist's *privilège*, which provided exclusive protection to his replicative sculptural mode foregrounds this paradox, which Scott contextualizes with reference to a series of legal contestations over

[74] Wellington, *Antiquarianism and the Visual Histories of Louis XIV,* 175.
[75] Wellington, "Antoine Benoist's Wax Portraits of Louis XIV."
[76] Wellington concludes that the extant profile "provides just a hint of that uncanny spectacle of kingship once found at *Le Cercle* on the rue des Saints-Pères." Wellington, "Antoine Benoist's Wax Portraits of Louis XIV."
[77] Scott, *Becoming Property*, 217.

reproductive portrait prints. Scott's study is deeply engaged with an extensive legal archive. In highlighting Benoist as one of her examples, she underlines the sculptor as a potentially notable case for considering possibilities of artistic identity in the ancien régime. Within this discussion, however, the profile relief itself is primarily an evocative example of the sculptor's replicative work.

Benoist has occasionally made brief appearances in publications focused on broader topics. Michel Lemire overviews the *Cercle royal* in his survey of wax anatomical modelling and display.[78] Benoist is also mentioned in Gérard Sabatier's overview of display practices for royal portraiture and Robert Isherwood's account of Parisian fairground spectacle in the ancien régime.[79] Genevieve Warwick comments on Benoist briefly in her study of Bernini's conception of sculptural relief.[80] Benoist's painted portraits, submitted for admission to the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture, are addressed within Hannah Williams's investigation of that institution's negotiation of collective identity.[81] Knowledge of Benoist has thus been filtering into the scholarly understanding of display culture in Louis XIV's France.

While Versailles curators such as Soulié and Nolhac contributed to the foundations of scholarship dedicated to Benoist, two significant museological publications have scrutinized the wax profile more recently. The first is an inventory of wax sculpture in French museum collections, published in 1987. Notably, the entry on Benoist contains a technical examination of the object undertaken by conservators alongside X-ray images.[82] In 2009, Versailles staged a significant exhibition focused on Louis XIV's personae, *Louis XIV: L'Homme et le roi.* In its selection of royal representations and the paraphernalia of kingship, this exhibition charted the grandeur of the absolutist image alongside the elusive individuality of royal subjectivity. The catalogue entry for Benoist's profile

[78] Lemire, *Artistes et Mortels*, 70.
[79] Sabatier, "Le Portrait de César, c'est César'" 226–27; Isherwood, *Farce and Fantasy*, 201.
[80] Warwick, "The Story of the Man Who Whitened His Face," 15–16.Warwick assumes that Chantelou disapproves of Benoist's practice. I address evidence for Chantelou's particular appreciation of wax portraiture in Chapter One.
[81] Williams, *Académie Royale*, 32.
[82] For the technical examination by conservators France Drilhon, Sylvie Colinart, and Anne Tassery-Lami, see Gaborit and Ligot, *Sculptures en cire de l'ancienne Egypte à l'art abstrait*, 11–12.

was informed by an updated technical examination.[83] Curator Alexandre Maral describes the profile in terms of subversive documentary "realism."[84] In line with early museum publications, the wax profile was framed as a privileged representation for perceiving the personhood normally subsumed by the trappings of monarchical glorification.

In sum, the historiography of Benoist's sculptural practice is a fragmentary literature, consisting largely of shorter notices and brief references. Since Dutilleux's 1905 study, virtually no author has engaged with the sculptor's work for more than just a few published pages. This dissertation builds on the documentation and interpretive problematics outlined above. It centres Benoist's extant wax profile and subjects it to sustained contextual analysis. It builds on the archival record compiled in the nineteenth century, by integrating a number of new primary sources previously unaddressed and scrutinizes the corpus of relevant documents. Within the limitations of overview, authors have typically presented Benoist's *Cercle royal* as a single entity. My more nuanced examination of the *Cercle royal* differentiates its eras and charts the shifting emphases as the exhibition fluctuated and expanded over the decades of its display.

Despite the distinctions of orientation and method over more than a century, there are points of consistency in the record of the profile's scholarly reception. I have underlined some of the terms of abjection that persist in publications ranging from 1856 to its recent descriptions. For modern commentators, the wax profile is monstrous, hideous, repellant, decrepit, dreadful, grotesque, or gruesome. Benoist's wax profile of Louis XIV is not simply an incisive representation of an elderly subject, but a visceral disturbing provocation. It has often been deemed an aesthetic offence that requires the distancing of condemnation. References to the uncanny contextualize this entrenched vocabulary of ugliness within an established aesthetic category. Unmoored from its contextual specificity, Benoist's extant wax profile has been adrift in the realm of modernity's wide-ranging

[83] See *La Restauration du portrait de cire*.
[84] Milovanovic and Maral, *Louis XIV: L'Homme et Le Roi,* 226.

uncanny imaginary. I aim to untangle the historiographic insistence on uncanny realism and its cognates from the initial terms of the wax portrait's early modern reception.

Dissertation Outline

This study turns on the conceptual negotiations of replicative materiality. It is divided into two parts, each consisting of two chapters. Part I, 'Replicating Prestige,' considers the reception of Benoist's exhibition over five decades in order to establish terms of debate in response to Benoist's work. Part II, 'Replicating Authority,' addresses the circumstances surrounding the commission of Benoist's extant wax profile. I will chart the allure of substitutive presence, the commemorative salience of the indexical trace and the authenticity of bureaucratic imprint as possibilities that emerged in tension with the discourse of wax representation's deceitful illusion. The dissertation's sequence is broadly chronological, extending from the controversies over crafted verisimilitude that the *Cercle royal* provoked upon its initial recognition, to the exhibition's expansion and increasing prominence, which culminated in a sequence of prestigious commissions late in Benoist's career.

My first chapter, 'Fabricating Enchantment' examines the terms of the exhibition's initial recognition and controversy. At the time of its first documentation in the 1660s, the *Cercle royal* was primarily a presentation of aristocratic attendants gathered around representations of French royals. Benoist's intricate duplicative techniques rendered remote figures of the elite proximately tangible for viewers. While some early responses celebrated Benoist's figures as vivid wonders, others derided their hollow illusion and distressing morbidity. In accounting for this discrepancy in the criteria of lifelike representation, this chapter argues that discussions of sculptural verisimilitude were intertwined with questions of artisanal stature. The provocative materiality of Benoist's waxwork representation provides an informatively problematic case for assessing the negotiation of craftsmanship within

emerging academic hierarchies of art practice. In drawing out subtexts for the debate over wax verisimilitude, I demonstrate that questions of social identity were folded into aesthetic discourse.

Chapter Two, 'Mutable Bodies,' addresses shifting implications for Benoist's practice as the exhibition fluctuated and expanded from the 1680s into the eighteenth century. First, I examine Benoist's contribution to the queen's memorial services in 1683 in order to underline the commemorative tradition of royal wax death masks as a ritual practice that bolstered the prestige of Benoist's medium. Alongside this engagement with memorial ceremony, Benoist revised the *Cercle royal* with reference to a fluctuating cast of prominent courtly personages. The chapter's second half charts the exhibition's expansion to include representations of visiting ambassadors to France. The *Cercle royal* was thus an urban echo of Versailles's elaborate diplomatic ceremonial. While Benoist's engagements were diverse in these decades, his contributions to memorial services for the queen and his reconfigurations of the *Cercle royal*'s installations were in dialogue with absolutism's theatre of state. Wax rendered the majestic grandeur of ceremony captivatingly intimate for Benoist's viewers.

While Part I argues for the prestigious potential of Benoist's replicative craft, which emerged alongside anxieties over the cheap thrill of deceitful illusion, Part II broaches a distinct problematic of replicative materiality. Beyond the scandal of trompe l'oeil, the dissertation's second half considers the extant wax profile with reference to the dialectical tension of authenticity and counterfeit in a different manner. The authority of official insignia relied on consolidated consistency in contrast to counterfeit deviations. As opposed to early modern art theory's disdain for rote replication as the epitome of lowly craft, schematic sameness and imprinted reproduction had different implications within the spheres of commemorative representation and legislative materiality. Part II shifts away from Benoist's exhibition spaces within the Faubourg Saint-Germain (his *loge* in the Saint Germain fair and the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, in addition to the *Cercle royal*'s principal venue in Benoist's residence). In order to analyze the context of Benoist's extant wax profile, Part II is set in the spaces of institutional

negotiation, administrative self-fashioning, and legislative ceremony. Sites of investigation include the meeting chambers of royal academies in the Louvre, Versailles's cabinet des médailles, and the sumptuous interiors of Pontchartrain's residences, especially the family seat of the château de Pontchartrain.

Chapter Three, 'Profiling Louis XIV,' situates Benoist's wax profile within the context of the sculptor's work for the Académie des inscriptions and the dynamics of medallic commemoration. I present documentation for Benoist's engagement as an illustrator for the second edition of Louis XIV's monumental medallic history, *Médailles sur les principaux evénements du règne de Louis le Grand.* The revision was initiated in 1702 but only completed in 1723. Though this effort of revision was long stalled in production, I argue that in the interim period of waiting, Benoist promoted this official commission to gain recognition for state patronage. Benoist disseminated his illustrations in a variety of formats. Indeed, a significant portion of Benoist's extant works are variations and replications of this prestigious commission. Benoist's engagement with medallic representation, thus allows us to reconsider the materiality of his exceptionally preserved waxwork with reference to its typology as a medallic profile. I question how this portrait's suggestive visceral substance inflected the commemorative implications of medals. I conclude this chapter by examining the implications of medallic commemoration in relation to the prevalent descriptions of the wax profile's 'realism' in its historiographic assessment. I propose that modern historians' insistence on realist documentary can be read as the extended rhetorical effect of what I term the wax profile's initial 'testamentary materiality.'

The fourth chapter, 'Pontchartrain's Possessions,' considers Benoist's wax profile as an object of particular relevance for its original owner. While the original location of the work's display remains unknown, and there is no documentation for the responses it initially elicited, I will position this singular object with reference to a series of documented bronze reliefs that Benoist produced for Pontchartrain in the era of chancellorship. Examining the curation of Pontchartrain's opulent residential

spaces suggests the chancellor's particular investment in sculptural display. I subsequently turn to consider the materiality of juridical authority by focusing on the royal seals as encapsulations of the chancellor's administrative position. With reference to the fabrication, use, and representation of the legislative seals, I present an alternative frame for thinking about the potential implications of wax's replicative materiality: not only with reference to counterfeit derivation and empty simulacrum, but also as authoritative royal pronouncement.

My argument for the relevance of Benoist's wax profile to Pontchartrain's identity in its substance and form has broader implications beyond the specificities of historical situation. In opening alternatives to intuitive perceptions of uncanny irreverence, this examination can bring latent assumptions about replicative materiality into focus. Underneath the insistence of the wax profile as a subversively revealing index undermining absolutist ideals might be a desire for documentary realism and intimate proximity to frustratingly evasive subjects of historical study. I address such historiographic complications in the dissertation's conclusion, 'History's Uncanny.'

Chapter 1

Fabricating Enchantment: Aristocratic Appearances in Benoist's *Cercle royal*

They did not yet know how to deprive themselves of the necessary in order to have the superfluous or to prefer pomp to useful things […] wax was for the altar and the Louvre.
-Jean de La Bruyère, *Les Caractères,* 1688 [1]

Antoine Benoist's *Cercle royal* is an elusive object of study. Nothing remains of the assembly of life-scaled wax figures, bewigged and clothed, on view for a fee at the sculptor's Parisian residence in the Faubourg Saint Germain over the course of Louis XIV's reign. I have only located one extant image that records the display, an etching of 1670 by Jean Lepautre (fig. 1.1). In the etching, curtains part to reveal a theatrical mise-en-scène: an assembly of posed courtiers on a carpeted platform. The exhibition's title, 'Cercle royal', is centred above them. The faint indication of foliage and architecture on wall panels behind the figures suggest that painted murals set the assembly of waxworks against the backdrop of palatial gardens. At centre Louis XIV leans on his cane. He is positioned between his brother, Monsieur, and his son, the dauphin. The queen, Marie-Thérèse alongside attending duchesses are seated on either side of them with only slight variation in their gowns and gestures.[2] The figures in the rows behind them turn to each other as though in conversation.

In the image, nothing differentiates the assembled wax figures, posed in refinement, from a gathering of living courtiers. An anonymous caption in verse complicates the image by identifying the figures portrayed as sculpted imitations. This short poem praises Benoist's remarkable technical proficiency in conjuring enlivened illusion: "Benoist's creatures/ seem almost not to be the work of fingers/ and I believe he could boast, without difficulty/ of having performed a great miracle/ If he had given them voice."[3] The poem's variation on tropes of compelling verisimilitude positions Benoist's

[1] "Ils ne savaient point encore se priver du nécessaire pour avoir le superflu, ni préférer le faste aux choses utiles […] le cire était pour l'autel et pour le Louvre." La Bruyère, *Les caractères ou Les moeurs de ce siècle*, 154–55.
[2] My evidence for these identifications is presented below.
[3] "Les créatures de Benoist/ ne semblent presque pas estre un oeuvre des doigts/ et je croi qu'il pouroit se vanter sans obstacle/ qu'il auroit faict un grand miracle/ s'il leur avoit donné la voix."

exhibition as a liminal space for encountering the *nearly*-vivacious and the *potentially*-miraculous. The display was an immersive installation for momentarily experiencing the sense of approaching the kingdom's elite. This site offered an opportunity to examine human-scaled models of royals and their attendants outside the protocols of the court's reverential decorum. The fleeting illusion of courtiers' presence in tension with the literal physicality of crafted replication encapsulated a paradox of fabricated enchantment for the *Cercle royal*'s visitors that I aim to examine and contextualize.[4]

This chapter foregrounds dissonance in the record of the *Cercle royal*'s reception in order to demonstrate that vexed questions of artisanal identity were embedded within debates of lifelike aesthetics. Contested notions of craftsmanship were at the crux of the *Cercle royal*'s initial recognition. As in the text on Lepautre's etching, a number of authors identified unfathomable relations between work and the enlivened illusion it conjured as the exhibition's compelling aspect. Some commentators, as we shall see, evoked the alchemical potential of Benoist's meticulous work. In counterpoint to such descriptions of enchanted technical marvels, was the dismissal of Benoist's replicative process as mere manual labour and the disdain for his portraits as disappointing trivialities. Imprinted life-cast molds and intricately textured surfaces could be deemed hollow superficiality. The tactile specificity of Benoist's works could also establish an experience of vicarious contact with remote courtly figures.

The ambivalence of discord in the *Cercle* royal's reception reveals that though 'life' was consistently a term of praise for compelling artistic accomplishment, its frame of reference was adaptable. A growing number of studies have emphasized implications of evocative presence for the early modern descriptions of lifelike representation.[5] Scholarly perspectives that emphasize variabilities

[4] As we shall see, "enchantment" was a historical term that occasionally, labelled the *Cercle royal*. In foregrounding "enchanted, I also intend to evoke Alfred Gell's influential essay on the dialectics of technical means and enchanted effects at play in perceptions of art. Gell's comment on the repression of craftsmanship's enchanting fascination in the Western "art cult" is particularly informative to my discussion here. See "The Technology of Enchantment," 56.

[5] Eck, *Art, Agency and Living Presence*; Jacobs, *The Living Image in Renaissance Art*; Turel, "Living Pictures"; Hoffmann, "Portrayal from Life, or to Life?" These studies frequently offset their priorities from a previous generation of scholars that had assumed implications of mimetic accuracy and direct observation for claims of lifelike correspondence. Sheila McTighe observes that twentieth-century art historians were largely invested in a distorted teleological model, wherein a drive toward naturalism found its apotheosis in photography. *Representing from Life in Seventeenth-Century Italy*, 27–28.

and uncertainty in the discourse of crafted verisimilitude are most pertinent to my discussion here.[6] Within the open-ended irresolution of seeming life, the imbalanced analogy between crafted objects and living referents, there was room for diverse, contradictory valuation. While some viewers celebrated the intricate precision of Benoist's replicative exactitude as the basis of animate presence, others presented wax likeness as the antithesis of compelling lively representation.

The present chapter concentrates on the *Cercle royal*'s first decade of recognition, beginning in the mid-1660s, when the exhibition consisted primarily of French courtiers. I also draw on later sources that underline and extend foundational polemics of uncertain presence and replicative artifice. Benoist's recognition emerges within a proliferation of courtly representations in the first decade of Louis XIV's personal rule.[7] I begin by considering the specifics of the exhibition's courtly presentation, as an urban site that reproduced exalted figures in tangible proximity to viewers. Next, I address evidence for the particularities of the portraits' fabrication and the implications of their provocative materiality within the exhibition's documented reception. Both the initial appreciation and the initial controversy of Benoist's portraiture must be contextualized with reference to the reconsideration of artisanship's political potential and its shifting institutional frameworks in the 1660s. The chapter's second half extends beyond the early period of the *Cercle royal'*s recognition to consider the long consequences of the exhibition's contested verisimilitude. Embedded within aesthetic debates over perceptions of enchanted aristocratic presence and the hollow deceit of waxwork illusion was a subtext of concern over the appropriative imitation of aristocratic appearance.

---

[6] See, in particular, Keating and Foutch, "Sculpture, Animacy, Petrification." Frank Feherenbach underlines dynamics of oscillation and liminality in references to art's enlivenment in *Quasi vivo*.

[7] Louis XIV's 'personal rule' was inaugurated by eliminating the role of prime minister following Jules Mazarin's death in 1661. This administrative restructuring provided an opportunity for symbolically consolidating absolutist sovereignty in the image the king. See Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*, 61–64.

"An Enchantment in Wax": The Queen's Circle

On February 19, 1669, Louis XIV himself arrived at Benoist's residence in the Faubourg Saint Germain to see the *Cercle royal*. A number of journalists reported on the king's encounter with his own wax image as an event of note. They specified that Louis XIV's visit followed the queen's viewing a few days before. These reports described perfectly replicated courtiers at life scale and celebrated the exhibition in terms of rarity, novelty, and marvel. Charles Robinet's rhyming newsletter, for example, designated the *Cercle royal "*an enchantment in wax."[8] He presented beautiful portraits as perfect equivalents to their illustrious subjects. The *Gazette*'s article concluded with the assertion that considering Louis XIV's refined tastes: he "could not withhold his approval of *Sieur* Benoist, who is the author of this rare work."[9] La Gravette de Mayolas described perfectly ingenious portraits lacking only speech. He specified the entry fee of half an *écu*, or 10 *sols*, and encouraged readers to follow in Louis XIV's footsteps and view the wonder for themselves.[10] In documenting royal attention to Benoist's display, journalists were also promoting the *Cercle royal* by enticing readers to view perfectly replicated courtiers and confirm the exhibition's fantastic allure.

Louis XIV's visit in February of 1669 followed an official certification of royal approbation only five months earlier. On September 23,1668 Benoist secured a legal patent or *privilège.* This document protected Benoist's exclusive right to display wax courtiers in Louis XIV's realm.[11] This certification is intriguing as evidence of Benoist's entrepreneurial strategy and artistic ambition. Its terms are informative for considering dynamics of royal favour and commercial regulation. Drafted according to ancien-régime legal convention, in the monarchical voice of the third-person plural, the

[8] 'un enchantement de Cire'; Robinet, *Lettres en vers à Madame*, 3.
[9] 'Ce grand Prince, si delicat dans toutes les belles connoissances, ne put refuser son approbation au Sieur Benoist, qui est l'Autheur[sic.] de ce rare Ouvrage.*' Gazette (*February 1669) 192.
[10] Gravette de Mayolas's letter of 21 February 1669 is reproduced in Rothschild, *Continuateurs de Loret*, III: col. 497.
[11] Benoist's 1668 privilège is not extant, but its content was quoted in Benoist's renewed *privilège* of 1688. This second iteration extended the exhibition's protected purview to include diplomatic ambassadors and foreign courtiers. The document's text is transcribed in Boislisle, "Les Figures de cire sous Louis XIV," 168–69.

privilège granted Benoist permission to display his wax representations of "considerable persons of our court who were accustomed to compose the circle of the […] queen our most dear and most beloved wife."[12] Indeed, the phrase *Cercle royal* referred specifically to Marie-Thérèse's entourage. When holding court, her attendants gathered to form a circle, with only duchesses and princesses permitted seating.[13] Aristocrats of lower rank remained standing in the queen's presence.

A single printed sheet presents significant evidence for the initial spatial layout of Benoist's display. This undated leaflet shows the arrangement of sculptures through distributions of names on the page (fig. 1.2**)**. In addition to the configuration of figures, hierarchy of status is conveyed through typography, with king, dauphin, and queen centrally placed and capitalized in the largest font. Below this central trio, in a slightly smaller font, four names are distinguished in capitals: Monsieur and Madame, Louis XIV's brother and sister-in-law, Phillipe d'Orléans, and Henriette d'Angleterre, and below them Madame de Soubise and Madame de La Vallière. While emphasis on Monsieur and Madame is unsurprising considering their rank within the royal family, the distinction of the princesse de Soubise and the duchesse de La Vallière seems noteworthy. Louise de La Vallière had been Louis XIV's mistress from 1661 to 1667. She gained a degree of official stature toward the end of their affair when the king named her a duchess by bestowing the territory of La Vallière and recognizing their young daughter as his legitimate child.[14] This new rank, controversially, secured La Vallière the honour of seating within the queen's *cercle*.[15] La Vallière's son, born in 1667, was legitimated in 1669.[16] These two children, the prince de Vermandois and the princesse de Blois are listed at the bottom of Benoist's leaflet, indicating that they were placed in front of the adult courtiers.

---

[12] "personnes considérables de nostre cour qui avoient accoustumé de composer le cercle de la feu reine, nostre, très chère et très-aimée epouse." Boislisle, 168.The 1688 document refers to Marie-Thérèse as the late queen since she had died in 1683.
[13] Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, S.V. CERCLE.
[14] Leroux, *Les Maîtresses Du Roi: De Henri IV à Louis XIV*, 150–51.
[15] Leroux, 102.
[16] Leroux, 151.

This specification indicates 1669 as the earliest possible date for the instantiation of the *Cercle royal* represented by this leaflet, the year Vermandois received his title. Further evidence for the leaflet's date as c. 1669 is the notation of a 'Turkish ambassador' toward the front, a reference to Suleiman Aga, who visited Louis XIV's court in 1669. Additionally, Anne de Rohan-Chabot, princesse de Soubise whose name was distinguished alongside La Vallière's, was Louis XIV's object of pursuit in 1669.[17] The distinction of these two aristocratic women underlines the way that Benoist's exhibition traded in court celebrity, providing up-to-date representations of some of the court's most enticing personae. The leaflet provides a complement to Lepautre's etching in offering reference points of identification for the clustered figures. Notably, considering the *Cercle royal* referred to the queen's hosted gathering, she is not distinguished in Lepautre's print. Rather, in this image, she fades into the assembly of Louis XIV's entourage.

Marie-Thérèse's ambiguous stature as an undistinguished central figure demands account. While Lepautre's etching is unique as visual documentation of the *Cercle royal*, it is one of many images of courtly spectacle and sociability that Lepautre rendered. For example, he contributed to illustrations of Versailles's first festival, *The Pleasures of the Enchanted Isle*. Though on a vastly different scale of production, this elaborate three-day event in 1664 offers a noteworthy reference point for Benoist's "enchantment in wax" to quote Robinet once more.[18] Officially in honour of Marie-Thérèse and the queen mother, the Versailles festivity was widely understood as a covert tribute to La Vallière.[19] Its scripts underwrote the young king as a gallant seducer, a virile persona in complement to the administrative sovereignty of personal rule established in 1661. The event's enchantment was both its mythological content and its enticing courtly splendour centred on the charismatic king.[20] The

[17] A letter of October 1669 penned by Marquis Saint-Maurice, a diplomat from Savoie, noted that "all Paris" was aware of the king's interest in Soubise. Quoted in Petitfils, *Madame de Montespan*, 141.
[18] Robinet, *Lettres en vers à Madame*, 3.
[19] Mukerji, *Territorial Ambitions and the Gardens of Versailles*, 216.
[20] Mukerji, 216.

Cercle royal's presentation of Louis XIV as protagonist within the queen's milieu, in counterpoint with the royal mistress, therefore, relates to a broader framework of representing courtly magnificence in this period.

As an urban echo of the palatial realm, the *Cercle royal* was a site of extended royal presence and evocative courtly brilliance. Documentation and imagery of the Versailles festival had broadened the range of its captivating impact. Likewise, the *Cercle royal* expanded the audience of courtly presentation. It worked in coordination with its printed representations such as Lepautre's etching and the 1669 reports. Chloé Hogg has analyzed this era's proliferating periodical press under the rubric of "absolutist attachments." The conversational address of print journalism complemented and tempered the dominating impact of ceremonial spectacle. A constant stream of information on royal activities and courtly interactions in print bred familiarity that forged bonds of political affiliation.[21] In the case of the *Cercle royal,* the vicarious contact of sculptural tangibility encapsulated this sense of intimacy with eminent elite.

Making Wax Heads: Mixing Moulding, Melting, Pouring, Painting

The text on Lepautre's print evoked Benoist's incomprehensible labour, an intriguing craftsmanship that seemed almost not "the work of fingers." This section gathers evidence for specificities of Benoist's fabrication and highlights the tempered fascination with this technique. We can begin with an item inventoried in Benoist's possession in 1712: a vessel, three feet in diameter, with two basins, one of which could contain the burning wood to "melt the wax for portraits."[22] Once softened in this custom oven, the wax was poured into its plaster mould. Examination of the Versailles profile relief indicates that the substance consisted of beeswax mixed with a small quantity of fat and trace amounts

[21] Hogg, *Absolutist Attachments*.
[22] "de bois a faire fondre la cire pour les portraits." "Inventaire Fait Apres Le Deces/ de Dame Antoinette Oudaille," fol. 37.

of lead and earth.[23] The detection of these materials corresponds with Giorgio Vasari's record of waxworkers' sixteenth-century recipes, which included red earth and lead to enhance flesh tone and fat to render the substance malleable.[24] An initial pour, coating the mould's surface thinly and evenly, was reinforced in delicate areas with a second layer. The details of eyebrow hairs and stubble as well as the lips' colouration were all painted on in coloured wax.

Benoist's wax heads were affixed to costumed mannequins to form multimedia assemblages. A record of expenses for a wax bust commissioned by Henri-Jules de Bourbon, prince de Condé, provides specification for Benoist's artisanal collaborators. In addition to a payment to Benoist for 1500 *livres*, the report inventories a series of smaller sums: 159 *livres* to Papon, a tailor, 50 to Sehent, a wigmaker, 46 to a jeweller, and 54 to the *panacher,* who provided the costume's decorative feathers. The final payment was 35 *livres* to a seamstress for a length of lace for the portrait's ruff.[25] This exceptional record underlines Benoist's wax figures as composite creations that incorporated the craftsmanship of aristocratic luxury apparel. The refined garments that clothed Benoist's figures had been a notable aspect of the exhibition's appeal. Gravette's 1669 report had specified "superb vestments."[26] Lepautre's rendering is notably attentive to the detailed patterning of fabrics. At the rise of a burgeoning fashion industry focused on aristocratic styling, and before the ubiquity of Parisian fashion prints in the 1680s, the *Cercle royal* was a site for appreciating sumptuous courtly garb.[27]

The formation of Benoist's moulds was documented in Paul Fréart de Chantlou's journal account of Gianlorenzo Bernini's visit to the *Cercle royal* on October 14, 1665. In response to Bernini's question of how the wax portraits were made, Benoist apparently responded that "for certain of the

[23] Gaborit and Ligot, *Sculptures en cire de l'ancienne Egypte à l'art abstrait*, 100.
[24] Vasari, *Vasari on Technique*, 148.
[25] The bust depicted the household's *premier écuyer* in 1708. *Macon, Les arts dans la Maison de Condé, 57–58.*
[26] La Gravette de Mayolas in Rothschild, *Continuateurs de Loret*, III: col. 497.
[27] On the burgeoning market of luxury apparel and the advent of Parisian fashion prints see Norberg and Rosenbaum, *Fashion Prints in the Age of Louis XIV*.

ladies, he formed them with closed eyes and others with open eyes."[28] This snippet suggests life casting with eyes closed for full-face moulds. This implication complements the language of Benoist's *privilège*, which referenced "natural masks in wax."[29] Benoist specified a carefully calibrated recipe for mixing his plaster moulds that included marble dust and crushed eggshells. Additionally important were "the invention of life in the eyes and careful repair," the treatment and polish of the wax surface.[30] Bernini's final pronouncement was that Benoist's portraits were certain to appeal "to those who loved each other."[31] The tactile contact and measured care of Benoist's work, therefore, evoked associations of familiarity and intimacy.

The *Cercle royal*'s inclusion in Bernini's Parisian itinerary indicates the exhibition's rising prominence. Chantelou's particular interest in the medium of wax is evidenced by his commission of a wax bust in Rome decades earlier from an unspecified portraitist. It fell to none other than Nicholas Poussin to package and ship this delicate fabrication to Paris once complete.[32] Chantelou had accompanied the papal legate, Flavio Chigi to the *Cercle royal* during his embassy to France in 1664.[33] It was Chigi, a dedicated collector of portraits, who first mentioned the *Cercle royal* to Bernini.[34] Bernini's assessment of the salience of Benoist's portraits as tokens of affection was a shift of tone from an initial conjecture, months earlier, that the *Cercle royal* was undoubtedly "a thing of women."[35] Despite the dismissive tone of this gendered association, Bernini had confirmed his interest in viewing

[28] "il a dit qu'à quelques unes de ces dames il les formait les yeux fermés, et d'autres les yeux ouverts." Chantelou, *Journal de voyage du Cavalier Bernin*, 259.
[29] "masques au naturel en cire,"Boislisle, "Les Figures de cire sous Louis XIV," 169.
[30] "[...] que l'importance était la dose de ces matières, puis l'invention du vi des yeux et le soin de réparer," Chantelou, *Journal de voyage du Cavalier Bern*in, 259.
[31] "ces portraits étaient pour plaire beaucoup aux personnes qui s'entr'aiment," Chantelou, *Journal de voyage du Cavalier Bernin 259.*
[32] After a series of updates over months, in February of 1643, Poussin confirmed that the wax portrait was bound for Paris, along with other acquisitions in Rome, in boxes marked with Chantelou's seal and a drawing of a flask to indicate fragile contents. Poussin, *Correspondance* 247.
[33] On Chigi's diplomatic visit see Del Pesco, "La Légation de Flavio Chigi à Paris en 1664."
[34]"Bernini first mentioned the wax display as an attraction that the legate had described: "[…] il m'a dit ensuite qu'il serait bien aise de voir de ces portraits de cire dont M. le Légat lui avait parlé." Chantelou, *Journal de voyage Du Cavalier Bernin,* 143. Chigi's particular interest was in portraits of renowned female beauties. In 1672 he commissioned a notorious series of paintings depicting Roman noblewomen. See McPhee, *Bernini's Beloved*, 132.
[35] Chantelou transcribed Bernini's Italian phrase: *che è cosa di donne.*" *Journal de Voyage Du Cavalier Bernin*,143.

the wax exhibition. An association with femininity carries through in the account of Bernini's visit. Chantelou evokes the *Cercle royal*'s assembly of courtiers with specific reference to Hortense Mancini, duchesse de Mazarin, (in the first row of duchesses alongside the Turkish ambassador on the leaflet).[36] Chantelou's report of Benoist's casting procedures specifies preparing moulds for ladies. The interest in femininity seems to correspond with the exhibition's focus on the queen's courtly entourage. Robinet, in 1669, describes Benoist's inclusion of the court's principal beauties who had tempted so many hearts.[37]

At the time of their encounter, Bernini and Benoist were sculptors of decidedly different statures. The very fact of Bernini's attention in 1665 is a mark of recognition. The shoptalk that Chantelou documents focuses on textured surfaces: first, the carefully measured plaster substance in direct contact with the skin of portrait subjects and then, the repair, as Benoist treated the surfaces of wax casts. The scrutiny of technical specifics within the context of Bernini's ambivalent fascination would already seem to be a comment on waxwork's stature within a hierarchy of sculptural media. Immediately following their visit to Benoist, Chantelou and Bernini continued to the residence of the Flemish sculptor Gérard van Opstal. There they examined reliefs in marble and ivory. Bernini remarked on their grandeur and Van Opstal's "fiery imagination," with no mention of technical facets or fabrication.[38] This coincidence of itinerary, as Bernini travelled from one sculptor's home to another, underlines the perceived contrasts of two artistic practices. Bernini's responses recognize distinct originary moments for the sculptures he viewed. The conceptual force of Van Opstal's spirited imagination was opposed to Benoist's careful measurement and intricate work: his dextrous labour.

It seems, then, that the technical specifics of life casting were both a topic of speculative fascination and an impediment to the unreserved appreciation of Benoist's work. In her investigation of legal

[36] Chantelou also specifies Madame de Lionne who is not included in the leaflet. Likely a reference to Paule Payen, wife of the diplomat Hughes de Lionne.
[37] Robinet, *Lettre En Vers à Madame,* 3.
[38] Chantelou, *Journal de voyage du Cavalier Bernin*, 259.

negotiations of authorship in the ancien régime, Katie Scott notes vagueness in the terms of Benoist's *privilège*.[39] She notes that the authorization acknowledges the portraitist's inventiveness without identifying a specific innovative technical facet. Nonetheless, a number of authors echoed the *privilége*'s praise for Benoist's technical accomplishments. In his 1687 Parisian guidebook, Germain Brice underlines the profound skill and inventive achievement of Benoist's moulds "from the natural."[40] Most informative to this question of Benoist's perceived innovation is the *Dictionnaire universel de commerce* (1723), authored by the Parisian a customs officer Jacques Savary des Bruslons. This work was released posthumously following Savary's death in 1716.[41] The author was thus Benoist's contemporary despite the text's delayed publication. Savary specifies widespread recognition of Benoist's "ingenious invention."[42] He credits Benoist with having "found the secret of forming on the faces of living people, even the most beautiful and the most delicate, and without risk to either health or beauty, moulds into which he subsequently melted wax masks."[43] Notably, considering Savary's role as a bureaucrat overseeing Parisian industry and commerce, the reference to wax masks echoes the precise language of the *privilège*, which describes "natural masks in wax."[44] Savary acknowledges the vulnerability of portrait subjects as participants in sculptural creation as their skin comes into contact with wet plaster. In pinpointing the physical imprint that mediated contact with the realm's refined elite as innovative expertise, Savary's praise enforces our sense that the indexical trace of the aristocratic body was the primary draw of Benoist's portraiture.

---

[39] Scott, *Becoming Property,* 218.
[40] Brice highlighted "la profonde pratique qu'il en a lui a fait inventer l'art de mouler sur le naturel." *Description nouvelle de ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable dans la ville de Paris*, 2: 220.
[41] It fell to his brother to complete the work's revision.
[42] "L'Invention ingénieuse de ces circles composes de personages de Cire, qui ont fait si longtems l'admiration de la Cour, & de la Ville." Savary des Brûlons, *Dictionnaire universel de commerce*, 1.781.
[43] Benoist "trouva le secret de former sur le visage des personnes vivantes, mêmes les plus belles, & les plus delicates, & sans aucun risqué, ni pour la santé, ni pour la beauté, des moûles dans lesquels il fondoit ensuite des masques de cire [...]." Savary des Brûlons, *Dictionnaire universel de commerce*, 1.781.
[44] "masques au naturel en cire," Boislisle, "Les Figures de cire sous Louis XIV," 169.

"If he had given them voice": Replicative Surfaces and Absent Essence

In 1666, one year after Bernini's visit, a scathing dismissal of Benoist's genre of sculpture appeared in a prominent publication, the first installment of André Félibien's multi-volume compendium of painters' biographies: *Les Entretiens sur les vies et les ouvrages des plus excellents peintres anciens et modernes.* This publication appeared as Félibien was consolidating his role as a dominant cultural authority. In 1666 he was designated official chronicler of monuments and festivities with the title *historiographe des bâtiments, peintures, sculptures, arts et manufactures royales*. He was appointed an honorary counsellor to the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture the following year, in 1667, which tasked him with editing the Académie's 1667 lecture cycle, the *conférences*, for publication. The *Entretiens'* first volume was thus part of a coordinated sequence of publications and appointments in Félibien's advancement.[45] His paragraphs on wax deserve particular scrutiny here as the opinion of a decisive aesthetic arbitrator, published in close coordination with Benoist's rising prominence.

Within the *Entretien's* theoretical introduction, wax portraiture served as a consummate foil for differentiating mere imitation from insightful interpretation. Félibien acknowledged the waxworker's carefully observed subtle colouration, which could describe skin in fine-grained detail: "we even discern all various flesh tones, veins, fibres, even pores."[46] While such meticulous replication could "surprise sight," Félibien differentiated its sensational impact from a more profound variety of resemblance. He identified the wax portrait's disappointment in the procedure and materials of casting, which he dramatized as an oppressive experience. Though life-casting is admittedly uncomfortable, in Félibien's account, portrait subjects were virtually smothered by the slathered mess of plaster that hardened against their skin:

---

[45] Having gained prominence initially within Nicholas Fouquet's entourage, Félibien retreated to Chartres following the minister's downfall in 1661, but was quickly recalled to Paris for royal service. For the timeline of Félibien's career see Thuillier, "Pour André Félibien." For the crux of Félibien's authority in 1666-1667, see Germer, *Art, pouvoir, discours,* 314–15, 399–400.

[46] " l'on y voit toutes les teintes de la chair, les veines, les fibres, et même jusques aux pores, ." Félibien, *Entretiens,* 123.

> since those whose faces are moulded remain calmly in a plate while they are worked on, the material that is used and with which all of their features are covered, impedes their natural function, represses and chases away, so to speak, the varieties of spirit and the interior movements that give them life, so that they are suspended, which is the reason that from these same features, which remain without support, only a mass is derived which truly conserves the resemblance and the form where it was found, but which is only a deathly and insensible resemblance.[47]

In the trajectory from the portrait subject's stifled immobility to the morbid plaster imprint, life-casts were barely distinct from death masks.

Félibien emphasized the thoughtless nature of the process by designating the plaster mould itself as the cast portrait's true creator. In contrast to the subtle discernment and inspiration of painters and sculptors, "this mould, which is the only craftsman of these other portraits" can only imprint indiscriminately.[48] Casting's un-selective exactitude was, therefore, labour deemed incommensurate with the informed perception of creative judgement. Félibien's striking image of the plaster substance itself as a monstrous copyist underlines life-casting's threat to the sculptor's standing. In this sense, wax portraiture's primary offence was in undermining the construct of the artist as distinguished intellectual.

As a disappointing literal copy, the wax portrait was a tangible negative correlate to the artist's divinely channelled grace. A key term in Félibien's writing, grace was a crucial but elusive quality, distinct from beauty's measurable symmetries.[49] Grace was: "that *je ne sais quoi* that one always has on the tip of the tongue, and that we cannot express well […]."[50] The ideal of spiritual communion between gifted artists and discerning viewers was foundational in early modern art theory.[51] Though not

---

[47], "La raison que j'en trouve, est que ceux de qui on moule le visage, deumeurant dans une assiette tranquille pendant qu'on y travaille, la matière qu'on emploie et dont on couvre tous les traits, empêche leurs fonctions naturelles, chasse et repousse, s'il le faut ainsi dire, de telle sorte les esprits et les mouvements intérieurs qui leur donnent la vie, qu'il s'en fait une suspension qui est cause que ces mêmes traits demeurant sans aucun soutien, on n'en tire qu'une masse qui véritablement conserve la ressemblance et la forme où elle les trouve, mais qui n'est qu'une ressemblance morte et insensible."Félibien, *Êntretiens,* 123.

[48] "Ce moule qui est le seul artisan de ces autres portraits ," Félibien, *Êntretiens,*124.

[49] Félibien, *Êntretiens,*120. On Félibien's grace see Dauvois, "Beauté et grâce chez Félibien."

[50] Ce je ne sais quoi qu'on a toujours à la bouche, et qu'on ne peut bien exprimer [...]." Félibien, *Entretiens*, 122.

[51] Thys Weststeijn explores "the two-way transfer of spirits" as a model that proliferated in early modern art theory. See "Painting's Enchanting Poison," 143.

addressed within the elevated rhetoric of Félibien's text, the economics of Benoist's display, wherein viewers paid a mere10 *sols* for entry, may have also offended.[52] A pound of butter cost about 8 *sols* in this period.[53] The accumulation of a fortune in small fees ran counter to an ideal of liberal patronage. Félibien indicated this pinnacle of accomplishment with particular reference to Zeuxis, the paragon of ancient achievement, and Nicolas Poussin, the modern hero of Félibien's text. These painters were supposedly distinguished by patrons who bestowed munificent gifts in return for 'priceless' paintings.[54] It is pertinent to note that grace referred to both a divine gift and the bond of patronage, as in "to be in the good graces of rulers."[55] In identifying the absence of grace in wax portraiture, Félibien was quite possibly objecting to the impropriety of commercial display in addition to the jolting impact of illusion.

Félibien did not name Benoist, but spoke more broadly of his genre. The identification of Benoist as Félibien's target is confirmed in a rebuttal to Félibien's volume, self-published by the printmaker Abraham Bosse.[56] Embittered after his dismissal in 1661 as the Académie's perspective instructor, Bosse took offence at Félibien's criticism of painters deemed over-reliant on the geometric principles of perspective. With fierce indignation, Bosse aimed to defend his reputation and heaped criticism on the *Entretiens*'s theoretical propositions. Bosse objected in particular to Félibien's pronouncements on grace, which he mocked as pretentious drivel: "I have an aversion in these matters

[52] As noted above, Robinet mentioned this entry fee. We will see that the price went up slightly in the 1680s.
[53] Nicholson, "Fashioning Fashionability," 48, n.6.Nicholson also notes that small-scale engravings were occasionally priced as low as 10 *sols*, which underlines the parallel between Benoist's entrepreneurship and this mode of commerce.
[54] Zeuxis was lauded for "liberally" donating priceless paintings to his greatest princely admirers. Félibien, *Entretiens,* 143. Poussin presented an updated model of this ideal. Félibien emphasized the painter's competitive patrons and his disinterest in the market. See, Pace, *Félibien's Life of Poussin*, 100–101.
[55] "GRACE, se dit aussi des faveurs des Princes." Furetière's dictionary entry for 'grace' charts its range of association, beginning with the concept of a gift generously bestowed and the statement that "God is the author of all graces" with reference to Augustine. Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel,* s.v. GRACE.Grace's multivalence as a term that referenced both the theology of divine mercy and refined elegance rendered it invaluable for articulating artistic transcendence. See Démoris, "La Grâce, Ou Vénus et Ses Masques Dans Les Entretiens de Félibien."
[56] The full title of Bosse's review encapsulated his indignation at being mistaken for Félibien's chump: "Discours tendant a desabuser ceux qui ont creu, que l'auteur d'un traité qui a pour titre 'Entretiens sur les vies et les ouvrages des plus excellens peintres anciens et modernes' avoit prétendu m'attaquer dans sa preface." I have found this 4-page text bound in certain copies of Bosse's *Le Peintre Converty,* a treatise that defined his vision of aesthetic accomplishment.

of analysis to say, as he does: some *je ne sais quoi,* this *je ne sais quoi* and a *je ne sais quoi.*"[57] In the conclusion of Bosse's, combative pamphlet, he turns to defend "the beautiful and surprising wax portraits of Monsieur Benoist."[58] Against Félibien's accusation of "deathly and insensible resemblance" Bosse designated Benoist's portraits to be inventive and lively. This confrontation establishes the technical means of lifelike representation as a polemical issue, for which Benoist's practice was a prominent and controversial example.

Félibien's notion of morbid superficiality echoed through a number of other responses to Benoist's display. Madame de Sévigné, noted epistolary stylist, penned the following rhetorical flourish in a letter to her daughter on April 8, 1671: "if by some miracle that I neither hope nor wish for you were out of my thoughts, it seems to me that I would be empty of everything, like one of Benoist's figures."[59] The literal hollowness of Benoist's heads provides a physical analogue for the ache of parental separation and loss.[60] This reference implies familiarity with the technical process for Sévigné, an acquaintance of the aristocrats portrayed in Benoist's *Cercle*. Bronze casts are also hollow, of course. Benoist's figures evoked something more specific for Sévigné, however. The clothed, corporeal shell foregrounded the vacuous absence of a simulacrum. In a letter of 1681, Sévigné referenced Benoist again, this time to describe a state of immobile shock. She writes that Madame de Bertillac's "blood and spirits stopped flowing" in a moment of public humiliation so that "she became one of Benoist's images as she had once been."[61] Notably, Sévigné's description of impeded spirits echoes Félibien's physiological specificity in describing Benoist's portrait subjects as victims of repressive

[57] "[...] j'ay avertion en ces choses de démonstration de dire ainsi que luy; des je je ne sçay quoy, ce je ne sçay quoy, & un je ne sçay quoy." Bosse, "Discours," n.p. On the currency of the phrase "je ne sais quoi" at this historical moment see *Scholar, The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe.* Louis Marin has discussed the "je ne sais quoi" as a precursor to the sublime in *Sublime Poussin*, 210.

[58] "les beaux & surprenans Pourtraits de Cire de Monsieur Benoist"; Bosse, "Discours," n.p.

[59] 'Je ne pense qu'à vous: si par un miracle que je n'espère, ni ne veux, vous étiez hors de ma pensée, il me semble que je serois vide de tout, comme une figure de Benoît.' Sévigné, *Lettres,* 2:154.

[60] On Sévigné's adaptation of amatory tropes to encapsulate parental attachment see Duchêne, *Madame de Sévigné et la lettre d'amour.*

[61] Sévigné, *Lettres*, 6:211. Bertillac's shocking humiliation was the cruel exposition of her extramarital devotion. In Sévigné's telling, Bertillac remained debilitated until she swelled with gangrene and died.

stillness, suspended between life and death. For Sévigné, as for Félibien, the physical particularities of Benoist's sculptural mode were unsettling, perhaps, but conceptually gripping.

A short dialogue by Antoine Torche similarly invokes Benoist's sculptural practice by way of underlining a distinction between mere physicality and internal subjectivity. The narrator visits a Parisian waxworker.[62] Their exchange centres on a cherished subject of affection whose beautiful features are enumerated. In conclusion, the narrator evokes her qualities of generosity and tenderness, but ends with the quip that these virtues are meaningless for the portraitist's purpose of representing her in wax.[63] Like Félibien, though in a playful key, Torche centres the problematic relationship of surface appearances and elusive interiors with reference to wax portraiture's capacity to duplicate bodily form. In these instances, wax replications did not suggest enchanted courtly presence but its undermining counterpart, as illusion dissipated under scrutiny.

Yet these evocations of emptiness and immobility complement a more conventional mode of lifelike ekphrasis, one applied to Benoist's figures with notable frequency. As in the verse on Lepautre's etching, which describes "creatures" missing only voice, Benoist's wax representations were repeatedly praised for nearly perfectly convincing verisimilitude that lacked but one crucial feature to be fully alive. In 1669, Gravette asserted that Benoist's figures were "rare marvels... lacking only speech."[64] Robinet referred to wax subjects present "*almost* in body and soul."[65] Within his poetic survey of artists, composed in 1677, the abbé de Marolles described Benoist's sculptural practice as an alchemical replicative procedure. The base substances of wax and pigment are transformed into

[62] Though unnamed, the portraitist is an obvious stand-in for Benoist as a Parisian painter, famous for moulding wax portraits of courtly women: "La curiosité me conduisit l'autre jour chez ce Peintre que les Portraits en cire ont rendu si fameux dans Paris ; & comme il me faisoit voir les figures de toute les Belles qu'il a moulées."Torche, "Dialogue d'un curieux & d'un peintre," 35.
[63] "Mais tout cela, dis-je au Peintre, ne fait rien pour vous, il vous suffit qu'elle soit belle, pour le dessein que vous avez de la representer en cire." Torche, 42.
[64] "rares merveilles ... ne manque que la parole." Gravette de Mayolas in Rothschild, *Continuateurs de Loret*, III: col. 497.
[65] Emphasis mine. Robinet, *Lettre En Vers à Madame,* 3.

marvels that seem to lack "only the truth of soul."[66] Later, in 1684, the *Mercure galant* stated that Louis XIV's reworked wax representation lacked only movement to be "something more than a portrait."[67] In 1702, the poet Baraton noted Benoist's secret procedure for animating wax, and asked if his wax courtiers might possibly be breathing.[68] As in Félibien's description of perfectly replicated wax physicality missing the essence of grace, this series of lifelike references also foreground lack. In pinpointing the essential absence of voice, breath, or soul, both admirers and critics could forcefully evoke the perceptual paradox of wax illusion.

These formulaic variations on verisimilitude are entirely conventional. Antoine de Furetière's 1690 *Dictionnaire universel* included the statement that a vivid portrait "lacks only speech" as an example of a common phrase for the term 'speech.'[69] Vasari had described small wax reliefs that lacked "nothing but spirit and the power of speech."[70] In Benoist's case, the consistent rhetorical patterning for both accolades and censure is striking nevertheless. Alex Potts identifies the inherent tension in figurative sculpture between its evocation of live beings and the literal inert substance as "the Pygmalion problem." The discrepancy between animate illusion and lifeless matter motivates viewers to scrutinize sculpted surfaces and contemplate workmanship.[71] Benoist's figures provoked a specific, heightened variety of this oscillation at the threshold of suspended disbelief. The same sources that celebrated Benoist's vivid illusions, each evoked craft as the other side of the dialectic between animate enchantment and manual fabrication. Gravette described perfect well-made portraits.[72] Baraton evoked secretive 'ingenious' art while Robinet described an art that rivaled nature.[73] For Potts, the inherent

[66] "de la vérité l'âme seule s'éloigne." Marolles, *Le livre des peintres et graveurs*, 18.
[67] *Mercure galant*, (April 1684) 121.
[68] Baraton, *Poesies Diverses,* 340.
[69] "Ce portrait est si vif, si animé qu'il n'y manque que la *parole*." Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, S.V. PAROLE.
[70] Quoted in Daninos, "Wax Figures in Italy," 13 n.1.
[71] Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination*, 35.
[72] La Gravette de Mayolas in Rothschild, *Continuateurs de Loret*, III: col. 497.
[73] Baraton, *Poesies Diverses,* 340.

tension of the "Pygmalion problem" is potentially both frustrating and intriguing.[74] In offsetting Félibien with other enthusiastic commentators we see both the irritation and the fascination with the ambiguity of Benoist's replicated bodies.

Félibien's vociferous rejection of wax portraiture was, ironically, a tribute to Benoist's growing reputation. The provocation of the genre at that moment required pointed dismissal. Notably, Félibien's text contains the most involved description of a moulding technique that most others merely implied. The gritty specifics of material processes rhetorically encapsulate a sense of wax representation's incapacity for transcendence.[75] In contextualizing Félibien's evaluation within broader rhetorical patterns of the *Cercle royal'*s reception, we gain a sense of his defensive position. In Félibien's insistence on life-casting as undignified manual labour, he refused to recognize the possibility of salience for the indexical trace as the basis of vivid illusion. Félibien was negotiating the demotion of wax portraiture in opposition to those who appreciated its wondrous evocations, a group that included Louis XIV himself.

Indeed, as we consider the timeline of the *Cercle royal*'s growing prominence and the variety of responses it elicited, the most notable tension is between Félibien's vehement opposition in 1666 and the official recognition of Benoist's sculptural practice in the *privilège* of 1668, only two years later. Félibien framed his presentation of the fine arts' intellectual refinement as a means of glorifying Louis XIV's prodigious rule. Yet on this particular point, Félibien's erudite authority, in all its eloquent complexity, was undercut by the fact of legal protection. In the 1660s, the first decade of Louis XIV's personal rule, royal portraiture was an important facet of a broad effort to consolidate sovereignty in the king's image.[76] The *privilège*'s function was regulatory, both rewarding Benoist's effort and

[74] Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination,* 35.
[75] On Félibien's disdain for artisanship, apparent even in his 1676 survey of artistic techniques, seeBertucci, *Artisanal Enlightenment*, 14.
[76] Gérard Sabatier overviews the formats and problematics of royal portraiture in the first decade of personal rule. Sabatier, "La Gloire Du Roi. Iconographie de Louis XIV de 1661à 1672."

restricting other variations. Its target was, specifically, potential counterfeiters. In their demonstrated trust in Benoist's enterprise, the officials who drafted and approved the *privilège* imposed a standard on this popular form of courtly representation.

The sources that make up the record of the *Cercle royal*'s early reception are various to be sure: a legal certificate, newsletters, some paragraphs in a theoretical treatise, a singular etching, a couple of stray references in letters. Despite distinct viewpoints, purposes, and investments, together they allow us to plot the *Cercle royal'*s growing prominence in the 1660s. Ambivalence and revulsion in evaluations by prominent cultural figures such as Bernini and Félibien at mid-decade inherently indicate a phenomenon worthy of attention. Sources cluster toward the decade's end: Benoist's *privilège*, Louis XIV's visit, Lepautre's etching followed by references in texts by Torche and Sévigné in the early 1670s. This timeline of the early recognition of Benoist's display is noteworthy for its coordination with the fluctuating image of king and court in the initial phase of personal rule. The case of Benoist's *Cercle royal* draws particular attention to the contested possibilities of sculpture in the dissemination of that courtly image.

Recognizing Sculpture: Contexts of Artisanship

> We can say that in this renowned Académie, he [Louis XIV] is to painters and sculptors what they are themselves in relation to their chisels and brushes.
> -- André Félibien, *Conférences de l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture,* 1668[77]

The *Cercle royal*'s initial reception underlines contested terms of workmanship for wax-cast portraits at a threshold moment for differentiating the fine art of sculpture from the broader realm of artisanship.[78] Malcolm Baker has observed that wonder about the procedures of sculpture's manufacture might

[77] "On peut dire que dans que dans cette célèbre Académie il [Louis XIV] est aux peintres et aux sculpteurs ce qu'ils sont eux mêmes à leurs ciseaux et à leurs pinceaux […]." Félibien, *Conférences,* n.p.ˆ
[78] Félibien introduced the term beaux art as an equivalent to the literary term belles lettres. See Germann, "Les Dictionnaires de Félibien et de Baldinucci," 255.

constitute a persistently significant aspect of viewers' fascination often overlooked in scholarship.[79] If art history has typically prioritized stylistic innovation and iconographic significance at the expense of critical engagement with the labour of craft, this is, in part, the result of a bias deeply ingrained in writing about art. The debate around Benoist's exceptional practice offers insight into the roots of this disciplinary resistance.

The *Cercle royal* came to prominence as the political role and institutional regulation of artisanship was under reconsideration. The state's investment in cultivating art and industry in the 1660s was manifest in a series of experimental initiatives supervised by Jean Baptiste Colbert, Louis XIV's innovative minister.[80] The system of royal academies expanded significantly in this decade. In the midst of this administrative reconfiguration, the statutes of the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture were redrafted in 1663.[81] These new regulations included stipulations for the lecture cycle of *conférences,* a program finally initiated in 1667, which Félibien edited and published in 1668. Félibien's preface to that volume aimed to define seminal academic priorities with long consequence for artistic pedagogy and aesthetic discourse. At the time of its publication, however, this text offended a significant faction of academicians so that the publication of future compilations of *conférences* was abandoned.[82] Considering the undecided possibilities of artisanal stature in this decade, Benoist's contested work is informative for revealing the terms and dynamics of sculpture's negotiated definition.

Benoist's fabrications confounded emerging categories of academic engagement. In the *Entretiens,* Félibien opposed wax heads to the achievements of "an excellent painter or a capable sculptor."[83] Benoist's *privilège,* by contrast*,* acknowledged Benoist's dual engagement by designating

[79] Baker, "The Materiality of the Sculptural Object."
[80] Bertucci, *Artisanal Enlightenment*, 34–35.
[81] As transcribed in Schnapper, *Le métier de peintre au Grand Siècle*, 316–22.
[82] Germer, *Art, pouvoir, discours,* 34–38. As late as 1675, lecture notes were still supposed to be submitted to Félibien in anticipation of another publication, but none materialized. Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions*, 217 n.24.
[83] "un excellent peintre ou un habile sculpteur." Félibien, *Entretiens*, 124.

him Louis XIV's "painter and ordinary sculptor in wax [*Nostre peintre et sculpteur ordinaire en cire*]."[84] A detail of Lepautre's etching underscores Benoist's hybrid artistry. The panelled backdrops of gardens sketched in behind Lepautre's figures include, at bottom right, two antique marbles (figs. 1.3, 1.4). The discrepancy between sculptural paintings and painted sculptures, integrated in a multimedia installation, underlines Benoist's incoherence in relation to the Académie's effort to codify hierarchies of artistic practice. In Félibien's landmark articulation of the hierarchy of painting's genres in his 1668 preface to the *conférences*, he defined still life (*nature morte*), the representation of "dead things without movement."[85] Within this schema, the "deathly and insensible resemblance" of wax heads could be considered still lives rather than portraits.

The stature of Benoist's practice was negotiated in coordination with other debates around sculpture's distinctive potential. In 1668, the year of Benoist's *privilège,* for example, the Académie undertook the publication of a legal argument pronounced on behalf of Van Opstal. This text asserted the sculptor's right to overdue payments from a recalcitrant patron by elaborating sculpture's status as a liberal art, beyond the terms and conditions that governed artisanal labour.[86] The case concerned marble reliefs commissioned and executed in 1658.[87] The patron's widow claimed that the debt had long expired according to a convention that relieved dues to manual workers after the period of a year and a day.[88] Before a parliamentary committee on December 31, 1667, Van Opstal's lawyer successfully argued that sculpture was of a different order. He insisted that the fine arts were distinct from mechanical trades. Van Opstal was deemed a man of profound artistic knowledge and refined skill. His

[84] Boislisle, "Les Figures de cire sous Louis XIV," 164.
[85] 'des choses mortes et sans movements', Félibien, Conférences, n.p..
[86] Lamoignon de Basville, *Plaidoié Pour Le Sr Girard Vanopstal.*
[87] The patron is only identified by initial in the published account of the trial. A 1692 biographical account of Van Opstal by the Académie's secretary, Guillet de Saint Georges, identified the patron as Duchemin, an *intendant* to Mademoiselle d'Orléans for his residence in the region of Brie. Saint Georges specified that the sculptures in question were eight low reliefs of *Hercules's Labours a*s well as four allegorical figures in half relief. Lichtenstein and Michel, *Les conférences au temps d'Henry Testelin,* 210 n. 5.
[88] Paul Duro details the circumstances of the case in *The Academy and the Limits of Painting*, 24–25.20-24. Van Opstal's lawyer was Nicolas Lamoignon de Basville, the young son of one of parliament's *premier présidents*.

lawyer surveyed ancient sources that attested to the esteem of painting and sculpture. Toward the conclusion, the lawyer turned toward the parliamentary jury and issued an ultimatum:

> How could it be, gentlemen, that a profession that draws its origin from God himself, that is filled with his spirit, his intelligence, his wisdom, that philosophers, emperors, and kings have practiced, that they have elevated by so many decrees and is, finally, esteemed by all nations in all eras is today reduced to the lowest ranks of the mechanical arts by the most refined nation in the world?[89]

In rhetoric that winds its way from divine spirit through to a claim for universal appreciation, the lawyer tied one sculptor's payment to the kingdom's honour. Parliament's judgment in Van Opstal's favour was celebrated as a landmark event for the Académie.[90] In its relevance to the institution's core identity, Van Opstal's trial was of a different order of significance from Benoist's contemporary *privilège*. Both legal engagements, however, reveal negotiation around the question of the sculptor's standing as well as the conceptual distinction and monetary worth of sculptural labour.

In his analysis of Van Opstal's case, Paul Duro observes noteworthy elisions in the legal rhetoric that denotes sculpture's ambiguous stature within the Académie's purview. Van Opstal's lawyer demonstrated key points with reference to painting, invoking, in particular, a familiar comparison between gifted painters and divinely-inspired poets.[91] The ardour of sculptural labour rendered it suspect in arguments differentiating it from the manual work of artisanship. In Leonardo da Vinci's cutting assessment, sculpture was "a highly mechanical exercise, often accompanied by great amounts of sweat composed of dust and converted into mud."[92] Though the Académie's central premise was the

---

[89] "Comment se pourrait-il donc fare, Messieurs, qu'une profession qui tire sa naissance de Dieu même, qu'il a remplie de son esprit, de son intelligence, de sa sagesse, que les philosophes, les empereurs et les rois ont exercée, qu'ils ont élevée par tant de prérogatives, et enfin que toutes les nations ont estimée dans tous les siècles fût aujourd'hui méprisée et mise au plus bas rang des arts mécaniques par la nation du monde la plus polie?" Lamoignon de Basville, *Plaidoié Pour Le Sr Girard Vanopstal,* 31–32.

[90] Duro writes that the case was especially noteworthy as recognition of the institution's core principles outside the restricted sphere of its own communications. Duro, *The Academy and the Limits of Painting*, 25.Lamoignon's address included substantial quotation from the Académie's recently renewed *lettres* of 1664 and 1665. *Plaidoié Pour Le Sr Girard Vanopstal,* 36.

[91] "N'a-t-on sujet de dire que les peintres sont inspirés par quelque divinités aussi bien que les poètes?" Lamoignon de Basville, *Plaidoié Pour Le Sr Girard Vanopstal,* 25..

[92] Farago, *Leonardo Da Vinci's Paragone,* 257.

union of painters and sculptors in differentiation from other craft trades, Duro observes that with some frequency authors chose to "subsume sculpture into the theology of painting."[93] Paintings were the focus of almost all the early *conférences*.[94] Key theoretical texts of the era prioritized painting, including Fréart de Chambray's 1662 *L'Idée de la perfection de la peinture.* Charles Perrault's *La Peinture* was presented to the Académie on the same day as the script for Van Opstal's case, on February 4, 1668.[95] The dynamic of sculpture's ambiguous subordination to painting is apparent in Félibien's presentation of Benoist's wax portraiture as sculptural foil in the *Entretiens*.

Considering these tensions, it is pertinent to examine the terms of Benoist's entry into the Académie on November 9, 1681.[96] The circumstances of this acceptance confirm the ambivalent regard of his sculptural practice. Even though Benoist had forged his reputation over the previous decades as a sculptor in wax, he was received within the Académie as a portrait painter. His acceptance relied on his initial training and designation as *peintre ordinaire du roi*, which had preceded his celebrity as creator of the *Cercle royal*.[97] Sculpture was not simply the manufacture of three-dimensional representations within the Académie's institutional hierarchy. Academic sculptors drew on antiquity's legacy to fabricate monumental objects. Such expectation was reflected in the infrastructure of academic rank. Only sculptors and history painters could attain the Académie's upper supervisory positions. Portrait painters, like Benoist, were restricted to the lower echelons.[98]

In keeping with the Académie's initiation rites for portraitists, Benoist was assigned two portraits of established academicians to paint within six months: the painter Gabriel Blanchard (fig.

---

[93] Duro, The *Academy and the Limits of Painting,* 24.
[94] Lichtenstein, *The Blind Spot,* 22, 25.The exception was Van Opstal's lecture on the *Laokoon,* presented on July 2, 1667 with reference to a small plaster copy.
[95] Editors of the Académie's records note that while Perrault's text was reissued in numerous editions over the next century, the plea on Van Opstal's behalf was published only once in 1668, indicating its particular relevance to this moment in the Académie's institutional life. Lichtenstein and Michel, *Les conférences au temps d'Henry Testelin*, 208.
[96] Benoist presented his candidature on March 9, 1681. Montaiglon, *Procès-verbaux,* 2:185.
[97] Benoist was registered in 1657. Dutilleux, "Antoine Benoist," 1:82.
[98] See Williams, *Académie Royale*, 104.

1.5) and the sculptor Jacques Buirette (fig. 1.6).[99] While both portraits combine gentlemanly refinement and professional attributes in typical statements of accomplished artistry, Buirette's portrait is also a conceptually complex image that negotiates Benoist's position between painting and sculpture. The painting includes a depiction of Buirette's allegorical relief, *The Union of Painting and Sculpture*. This marble work, Buirette's own reception piece from 1663, depicts the equivalence of painting and sculpture in the allegory of two women embracing (fig. 1.7). Its statement of harmonious union between art forms encapsulated the Académie's purpose.[100] The encounter of painting and sculpture has particular pertinence for Benoist, however, considering that his sculptural practice relied on the painterly qualities of colouristic illusion. Benoist's portrait includes attributes that reference the Académie's sculptural ideals. Buirette rests his arms elegantly on the replica of an antique bust alongside drawings of male nudes in red chalk, creased and rolled. Benoist's mastery of paint's illusionism is apparent in his focus on the variations of textured materials. The sculptor's compass projects out into the viewer's space in trompe l'oeil. To appreciate the extent to which Benoist's painting consists of an assembly of various intricately textured surfaces, we can compare it with the reserved elegance and illuminated focus of an earlier portrait of Buirette, which also presents the subject alongside his celebrated marble relief (fig. 1.8).

By 1681 Buirette had lost his vision from smallpox. Benoist specified the sculptor's squinting blindness and scarred skin that resulted from the disease. For the influential art theorist Roger de Piles, elected an honorary academician in 1699, Buirette's blindness rendered him an exemplary sculptor for his reliance on touch alone. In 1708 De Piles compared Buirette to Giovanni Francesco Gonelli, an

[99] Montaiglon, *Procès-verbaux*, 2: 185. The selection of subjects drawn from the Académie's membership for the reception pieces (*morceaux de réception*) of aspiring portraitists, resulted in an institutional collection of portraits that articulated collective identity. See Williams, *Académie Royale,* 17–69.

[100] Other subjects for *morceaux de réception* also featured painting and sculpture's coordination in allegorical form. Jacques Prou's reception piece, *Sculpture Presenting Painting with a Portrait of the King* (1682), is another notable example. See Lichtenstein, *The Blind Spot,* 17–22.

iconic blind sculptor from Cambassi, born in 1603.[101] In De Piles's telling, Gonelli modelled wax heads by feeling the surfaces of his models' faces: "his eyes are on the tips of his fingers."[102] Within de Piles's polemic this example was a means of elevating painting's conceptual insight over sculpture's groping blindness.[103] For our discussion of Benoist, Buirette's connection to a blind portraitist working in wax is noteworthy for its implied pejorative association.[104] Additionally, Benoist's depiction of Buirette's scarred skin is interesting in relation to the minute anatomical specificity of the extant wax profile. It reveals a mode of portrayal oriented to exhaustive precision across media.

Acceptance to the Académie was typically an initiation to an elite forum of professionals after years of apprenticed training. Benoist was already well established at the time of his acceptance, however. The records of the Académie's meetings note this exceptional circumstance in stating that Benoist had applied only for the honour of association and was, therefore, exempt from the payment normally required for entry.[105] In recognition of the Académie's "grace" in having exempt him from fees, Benoist donated a painting from his own collection, Antoine Paillet's *Augustus in Triumph after the Battle of Actium.*[106] Benoist's primary practice, the fabrication of wax figures, is not explicitly acknowledged in the Académie's records. The exchange of paintings and the Académie's generous *"*grace*"* in waiving Benoist's fees recall the terms of Félibien's theoretical schema. This negotiation

[101] Gonelli was profiled by Filippo Balidnucci. De Piles took up this figure without naming him, referring to him only as the 'blind sculptor of Cambassi." Though Gonelli had worked in both wax and clay, De Piles notes only wax. An Aristotelian, De Piles's discussion conforms to the entrenched philosophical tradition of highlighting wax in a model of sensory engagement. Piles, *Cours de Peinture Par Principes*, 161.; On Gonelli see Darby, "Ribera and the Blind Men," 196. For the Aristotelian core of De Piles's polemic see Lichtenstein, The *Eloquence of Color.*

[102] De Piles, *Cours de Peinture Par Principes,* 161.

[103] Lichtenstein, The *Blind Spot*, 70.

[104] Elsewhere, however, De Piles celebrated the wax dioramas of Gaetano Giulio Zumbo for heightening sculpted form with colouristic illusion, De Piles, *Cours de Peinture Par Principes*, 229–36. I consider Zumbo with reference to Benoist in this dissertation's conclusion.

[105] "[…] à l'égard de la contribution que les Académiciens qui sont reçeus ont acoutumé de payer, la Compagnie, consisderant le mérite dud. *sr. Benoist* et qu'il ne se présente que pour estre honnoré du titre d'Académicien et avoir place dans une si honnorable Compagnie, en a quitté et quitte led. sr. Benoist*." Montaiglon, Procès-verbaux,* 2:201.

[106] "Et, après avoir led. *S. Benoist* presté serment, a donné à l'Académie, en considération de la grâce qu'elle luy fait, un tableau représentant Auguste triomphant après la bataille D'Actium […]." Montaiglon, 2: 201.

conforms to the dynamics of wealth's conversion to cultural capital.[107] The commercial success of the wax exhibition was the unacknowledged basis of an honorific exchange of grace and paintings (Benoist's *morceaux de reception* and his donation). The exchange overlays the problematic status of Benoist's wax practice and highlights his strategic maneuvering around this obstacle to his recognition as a sculptor.

Complicating Counterfeit: Legal Frictions

While Benoist's wax practice is informative for conceptual distinctions and institutional friction within the Académie, the debate around his portraiture also has broader implications. This section aims to elaborate the dynamics of wax's anxious replicability, by which I mean the provocation of its illusionistic particularity. Félibien insisted that the manual artisanship of rote reproduction resulted in morbid wax images, an affront to portrait aesthetics and a threat to artistic dignity. I propose that interrelated with Benoist's compromised stature as a manual copyist was another set of issues related to replicative illusion: concerns of dissembling aristocratic appearance and appropriated rank. This discussion extends beyond the initial era of the *Cercle royal*'s recognition to show the consequences of lifelike polemics over the course of Benoist's career.

On February 8, 1702, there was a police raid on a grocery shop on the Île de la Cité in Paris. An extant legal brief describes the scene as the shop owners, a widow and her daughter, were confronted with a bailiff and two officers at their door. The complaint against the shop had been submitted by the Maitrîse (the Painters' and Sculptors' Guild). The shop stood accused of "modelling, moulding, and casting figures and heads in wax before painting them in flesh-tone, and selling them to the public."[108] Such enterprise, it was claimed, infringed on the statutes of the Maîtrise. The widow and her daughter,

[107] Pierre Bourdieu's foundational sociological work on cultural capital has been applied to the realm of the old regime Académie by Natalie Heinich in *Du Peintre à l'artiste.*

[108] Guiffrey and Champardon, "Anécdotes inédites sur la vie et les moeurs des artistes Français," 273.

Jeanne Crenon and Marie-Magdeleine Boucher, protested vehemently, insisting that "they were not working as painters nor sculptors" and that the waxworks they fabricated, candles as well as figures, had nothing to do with the guild masters.[109]

Despite their pleas, the bailiff's warrant authorized the confiscation of the offending materials and the officers preceded to inventory and package the widow's waxworks, moulds, and tools as the rightful property of the Maîtrise. The documented inventory of objects and instruments preserves a record of the demand for subjects in wax and the scale of production in this particular locale. The inventory includes over sixty plaster moulds and eleven boxes of wax figures, some furnished with glass for display. There were numerous depictions of the Christ child. Some were in dioramas, surrounded by other children in religious garb. Such religious scenes in miniature recall the tradition of the Christmas crib. The shop's proximity to Notre Dame amidst businesses specializing in prayer books and devotional items can explain this specialty. Some of the small wax dolls or candles were undoubtedly purchased as votives for donation. There were also three life-sized busts in glass display cases, two life-scaled straw mannequins for figures' armatures, and a clay bust ready for moulding.[110]

The anecdote is notable for positioning wax fabrication at the contested margins of artistic production. In addition to the grocers on the Île de la Cité, the Maîtrise was pursuing two other offending businesses for trading in wax figures and heads: a merchant of preserves on rue de Marmouzets, and an additional grocer on the rue Saint Antoine.[111] Despite the Maîtrise's claim of jurisdiction over wax sculpture, their complaint abutted the legal exclusivity of Benoist's portraiture. Of particular significance within the inventory of the widow's shop, were three life-sized portrait busts

[109] "[elles] nous ont dit qu'elles ne travaillent de la profession de peinture ni sculpture." Guiffrey and Champardon, 273.
[110] Guiffrey and Champardon, 274.
[111] Guiffrey and Champardon, 273.. The second grocer was coincidentally named Benoist. She is identified in the brief as "la femme Benoist." It seems unlikely that she was a relation of Antoine Benoist considering the class status of an *epicière*. Benoist had one daughter, Françoise, who was married to an artillery officer. For Françoise Benoist's basic biography see Dutilleux, "Antoine Benoist," 211.

in wax, one of which is identified as a depiction of the duchesse de Noailles.[112] Benoist himself would undertake a privately commissioned portrait of an aristocrat from that same noble house one year later, in 1703. He was still pursuing full payment for that portrait in a trial of 1711, almost a decade after its completion.[113] If nothing else, such court cases give a sense of the highly litigious terrain of craft in this era.

Notably, the shopkeepers' insistence that they were neither painters nor sculptors echoes Félibien's assertion in the *Entretiens* that wax portraits' craftsmanship was fundamentally opposed to the creations of painters and sculptors. This confirms some wider relevance for Félibien's differentiation between waxwork and fine art. The widow and her daughter emerge as lay theorists. In a moment of desperation, they were pushed to articulate a hierarchical schema of craftsmanship that distinguished between their work and the institutionally protected realm of the Maîtrise. Their indignation and attempt at self-defence, in 1702, also enriches our understanding of Félibien's earlier published comments. The overlap between Benoist's portrait subjects and displays in grocery shops foregrounds the liability of association with cheap triviality and ordinary commerce that informed Félibien's presentation of wax portraiture's anxious replicability.[114] Its sensational force could appeal to viewers uninitiated to the contemplative refinements of connoisseurial appreciation.

The cluster of legal claims over wax craftsmanship invites a return to the terms of Benoist's *lettres de privilège.* In it, the king grants the sculptor's "humble supplications" in order to give him the means to enjoy "the fruit of his invention and his work."[115] The certificate forbids all, regardless of "quality or

---

[112] Most likely Louise Boyer, duchesse de Noailles (1632-1697).

[113] Most likely Anne-Marie de Noialles (1691-1703). See transcription of a court ruling in favour of the defendant and portrait subject's mother, Marguerite Thérèse Rouillé, widow of the marquis de Noailles, reprinted in Montaiglon, and Guiffrey, "Antoine Benoît. Sculpteur En Cire," 302.

[114] For example, in his 1692 guidebook to Parisian businesses and noteworthy figures, the physician Nicolas de Blégny mentioned the Cercle royal and one of the offending spice merchants (la femme Benoist on rue Saint Antoine) in the same notation. The coincidence of their names glosses over distinctions of enterprise: "M. Benoist qui tient le Cercle royal, rue de Saints Peres & Madmoiselle Benoist rue Saint Antoine, font très bien les portraits en cire." Blegny, Le *Livre Commode Contenant Les Adresses de La Ville de Paris,* 109.

[115] Boislisle, "Les Figures de cire sous Louis XIV," 169.

rank," from "either making or counterfeiting" wax representations of Benoist's subjects "under the pretext of novelty, augmentation, [or] correction […] without explicit permission of the aforementioned Benoist."[116] Punishment for infraction involved the confiscation of the counterfeit wax sculptures as well as tools of artisanship, like the Maîtrise's claim on the offending shopkeepers in 1702. Benoist's *privilège* additionally threatened a fine of 6000 *livres* to be divided between Benoist himself, the royal treasury, and a charitable donation to the Hôtel Dieu of Paris. An attestation of Benoist's ambitious entrepreneurship, the *privilège* was both an honorific distinction and a reward for inventive industry.

The restrictive effectiveness of Benoist's patent is evidenced by rejected rival applications. In 1686, for example, the requested *privilège* of a candle maker in the menagerie of Versailles, named Desrotois, was refused by the *Maison du Roi*.[117] It had requested exclusive protection for the wax representation of meat, fruits, human figures and festivities "to the exclusion of those concerning the work of Sr Benoist, who has a *privilège* for the circles of European courts."[118] The application mentions Desrotois's wax representation of the Marriage at Cana, recently exhibited at the Saint Laurent Fair in Paris. Desrotois's denied request underlines Benoist as a model of entrepreneurship within a burgeoning and competitive field. Notably, Desrotois's 1686 application was submitted two years before Benoist's renewed *lettres de privilège* in 1688. Desrotois notes Benoist's protections for the representation of European courts while Benoist's updated patent extended his range of subjects to include figures of ambassadors that had already been integrated into the *Cercle royal,* explored in more detail below. In other words, Benoist secured augmented protections as competitors adapted his modes of display.

---

[116] "à toutes personnes, de quelque qualité et condition qu'elles puissent estre, de faire ni contrefaitre les représentations en cire [...] sous prétexte de nouveauté, augmentation, correction, changement de nom ou de modèles [...] sans le consentement exprès dudit Benoist [...]." Boislisle, "Les Figures de cire sous Louis XIV,"169.

[117] Desrotois's application to the *Maison du roi* is transcribed in Boislisle, 170.

[118] "[…] à la reserve de ce qui concerne les ouvrages du Sr Benoist, qui a eu un privilège pour la représentation des cercles des cours de l'Europe." Boislisle, 170.

Though protected from counterfeiters, Benoist's portraits were themselves occasionally deemed counterfeits for their striking liveliness. A *Mercure galant* article of 1704 described a Tripolitan ambassador criticizing Benoist's "counterfeit" figures.[119] The revival of antiquated terminology of the portrait as 'counterfeit' also opens into the conceptual complications of portraits as copies.[120] In Katie Scott's analysis, Benoist's legal protection exemplifies portraiture's fundamental paradox of imitative originality. In her overview of the ancien regime's elaborate legalities, she is interested, in particular, in the intersection of legal discourse and art theoretical writing. Scott asks: "Can one copyright a copy?"[121] Benoist's patents provide the seemingly straightforward response: yes. Scott's discussion of Benoist's legal protection within a series of cases that negotiated authorial rights in conflicts over reproductive prints indicates dialectics of authenticity and forgery in flux over the course of the long eighteenth century.

Within the legal negotiations around Benoist's medium, wax displays emerge as disputed sites. If Benoist's bid for recognition was legitimated in his *privilèges*, the embroiled legal conflicts around waxwork evidence lingering ambiguity as to the medium's potential. Wax representations could still be designated mere trivialities, wholly distinct from creative artistry, as in the widow's attempted defence. In part this ambivalence has to do with the relative accessibility of a medium whose function was not primarily sculptural. The waxwork displays of both the widow, Jeanne Crenon, and Desrotois extended from the work of fabricating candles. In Paris, candle-making was, notably, under the purview of the grocer's guild.[122] In this era, wax was also required for seals. It was a common ingredient in medicinal ointments and a standard adhesive in shoe repair.[123] These examples indicate a persistent place for wax

[119] The ambassador supposedly predicted Benoist's condemnation for aspiring to "counterfeit" God's creatures. *Mercure galant* (July 1704) 145. This notable passage will be addressed in further detail in Chapter 2, below.
[120] On the medieval sense of the portrait as counterfeit see Perkinson, *The Likeness of the King*, 135–88.
[121] Scott, *Becoming Property*, 211.
[122] Bruslons, *Dictionnaire universel de commerce*, 1:873, S.V. ESPICERIE. In her analysis of the sixteenth-century grocer's guild, Ronda Larmour notes that wax candles were common wares for grocers. See "A Merchant Guild of Sixteenth-Century France," 471.
[123] Pomet, *Histoire générale des drogues,* 54–56.

in a sphere of material culture well beyond the elite realm of Félibien's interest. The admission fees and wide appeal of the *Cercle royal* also rendered it suspect (despite the attention of such distinguished visitors as Bernini and Louis XIV). In the interstices of legal protections awarded and infractions attempted, we get a sense of the competitive market for waxwork and a persistent lower-class association. The *privilège* presented the social prestige of royal approval and the reward of financial gain as unproblematically integrated. Others, however, as we shall see, sought to pry these apart by insisting on tension or incoherence between Benoist's accumulated wealth and the dignity of prestige.

Fairground Fortune

> Mr. Benoist enriched himself by displaying his circles at the fairs.
> -Louis-François Dubois de Saint Gelais, *Histoire journalière de Paris*, 1716[124]

While Desrotois's wax installation of the marriage at Cana was displayed at the Saint Laurent fair, Benoist *Cercle royal* was a fixture of the Saint Germain fair, the more prestigious of the Parisian fairs, and a short distance from the sculptor's residence.[125] An annual event, running from February third through Lent, the Saint Germain Fair was a hub of luxury commerce and spectacular entertainment. A map of the site overviews the fair's vast space and labels the rows of vendors (fig. 1.9). These include stalls for purchasing the accoutrements of fashion such as silks, hats, and wigs; products hailing from China, the Ottoman empire, or Flanders; and boutiques for purchasing the works of painters, goldsmiths, or clockmakers. The print also evidences the fair's performers by noting the puppeteers' lane and presenting a tightrope act in the foreground. When Gravette de Mayolas surveyed noteworthy attractions of the Saint Germain Fair in his rhyming newsletter in 1669, he reworked the passages describing Louis XIV's visit to the *Cercle royal* that had been published some months earlier. He

[124] "M. Benoît s'enrichit à faire voir ses cercles aux foires." Dubois de Saint Gelais, *Histoire journalière de Paris,* 191.
[125] One guidebook to Paris stated that the Saint Laurent fair was primarily for country folk and locals and rarely attracted the" people of quality" that frequented the Saint Germain fair. Nemeitz, *Séjour de Paris,* 170.

described the perfect replication of courtiers in wax as an unparalleled rarity and as a noteworthy highlight of the fair.[126]

Early modern commentators on the fair often framed it as a site of social mixing. The fair had long functioned as something of a suspended alternate realm from the ordinary strictures of social decorum.[127] One author described a throng of contrasting types: "Everyone is gathered pellmell, masters with valets and lackeys, cheaters with honest men."[128] In his published travel journal, the physician Martin Lister noted that Monsieur, the king's brother, the dauphin, and other princes of the blood visited the fair annually, but also remarked that "knavery here is in perfection."[129] The seventeenth-century urban historian, Henri Sauval, described the fair's abundance of luxury goods and its divided character: the hoardes of commoners that crowded the fair by day were replaced with society's elite at night. This shift was so stark that Sauval spoke of two different fairs rather than one. He compared the change to an act of unmasking: everyday the fair "twice changes face."[130]

The social variability of the fair is highlighted in Florent Carton (Dancourt)'s 1696 play, entitled *La Foire Saint Germain*, which features farcical antics involving characters of diverse rank. This script, in particular, has been identified as evidence that interaction across class hierarchy was the fair's definitive aspect.[131] In addition to mixed company, characters impersonate and deceive. Notably, the play concludes with the visit to an exhibit akin to Benoist's. Farfadel, the play's antagonist, is enraged

---

[126] "On admire dans ces Ouvrages/ Si parfaitement leurs Images […] On ne peut rien voir de semblable." La Gravette de Mayolas, Recueil de *Lettres en vers et en prose, dédiées au Roy*, n.p.

[127] The fair was, for example, beyond the reach of guild regulation. Brice notes that foreigners and "those who were not masters" could sell their wares there without fear of persecution by urban authorities. Brice, *Description Nouvelle de La Vîle de Paris*, 2: 315.Robert Isherwood presents Parisian fairs as subversive spaces in line with Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque. In "Entertainment in Parisian Fairs in the Eighteenth Century," 27.

[128] "tout y est pêle-mêle, les maîtres avec les valets & laquais, les filoux avec les honêtes gens. Les courtisans les plus raffinez, les plus jolies filles, les filoux les plus subtils, sont comme entrelacez ensemble. Toute la Foire fourmille de monde, dépuis l'entrée jusqu'au bout." Nemeitz, *Séjour de Paris,* 181.

[129] Lister, *A Journey to Paris in the Year 1698*, 176–77.

[130] "[…]tous les jours elle change de face deux fois si differentes cependant, qu'il semble que ce soient deux Foires, & non pas la même. Sauval, *Histoire et recherches des antiquités de la ville de Paris,* 666.Sauval wrote his historical study of Paris in the mid-seventeenth century. The manuscript was finally published in 1724.

[131] Isherwood, "Entertainment in Parisian Fairs in the Eighteenth Century," 31; Crow, *Painters and Public Life,* 46.

to be confronted with his own portrait, a figure that seems "possessed by the devil."[132] His anger is dismissed by the other characters who appreciate the "speaking figures" of the "beautiful circle."[133] In the play's finale, the *Cercle*'s representations come to life and sing of romance sparked in the midst of the fairs.[134] The conceit of crafted representations that are animated in song and dance is a literal enactment of Benoist's figures gaining voice and movement. In its themes of doubling and pleasurable deceit, this play centres Benoist's display as paradigmatic of the fair's engaging illusions and surprising encounters.

One leaflet survives as evidence of Benoist's presentation at the Saint Germain Fair (fig. 1.10). The printed key describes three distinct clusters of wax figures. A line at the bottom of the page provides practical specificities: "These three circles are on view during the Saint Germain fair, in Sieur Benoist' s usual *loge,* at all hours of the day and even under torchlight [mesme aux flabeaux], entry is 15 *sols* per person."[135] An addendum of a handwritten inscription specifies that this printed sheet was acquired "in Paris in March 1684." By the 1680s Benoist's *Cercle royal* had expanded significantly and the next chapter will delve into the timeline of these changes. At this point, however, it is worth discussing the particularity of the fairground leaflet, which was distinct in one respect from the others I have located. This listing presents the largest recorded version of Benoist's display, consisting of no less than eighty nine figures.

This configuration notably features "A Circle representing the marriage ceremony of a Greek princess." A number of the figures that were integrated into a representation of the Ottoman sultan's courtly entourage, were cast here as participants in a fictive scenario. Warriors, such as the janissary, peik, and solak, as well as women in regional dress (from Armenia, Constantinople, Turkey, Tripoli,

---

[132] Dancourt, *La foire Saint Germain,* 75.
[133] Dancourt, *La foire Saint Germain,* 75.
[134] Dancourt, *La foire Saint Germain*, 78–81.
[135] "On verra ces trois cercles pendant la Foire saint Germain, dans la loge ordinaire du Sieur Benoist, à toutes heures du jour et mesme aux flambeaux, on prendra quinze *sols* pour chaque personnes."

Morocco, Persia, Syria, and Smyrna) were presented as wedding guests. The Sultan, his queen, their son, and the Grand Vizier are also presented in the attending entourage of the Greek bride. This narrative tableau builds on the intriguing presentation of foreignness and theatricality that were integral to the allure of the Saint Germain fair. Dancourt's *Foire Saint Germain,* for example, opened with merchants hawking their wares, including cosmetics from the Levant, teas, and chocolate. The play also featured a chevalier reduced to selling coffee in 'arminian' disguise.[136] The romance of a foreign princess's wedding evidences Benoist's effort to stage engaging scenarios and entice repeat visitors. The leaflet's specification that the exhibition remained open well into the night, under torchlight, has particular relevance in the context of the fair, since, as Sauval specified, the night was the most fashionable time for an elite audience.

The position of Benoist's waxworks in the midst of the fair, associates them with the pleasurable deception of festivity. It is notable that Benoist was credited with marketing carnival masks that incorporated the intricate textures of his sculptural craft. Savary mentioned these noteworthy features of luxury costuming in his *Dictionnaire du commerce*:

> We also see masks lined with canvas and coated with coloured wax, with enamelled eyes inserted through them. These are most expensive and most prized since they most closely approach the truth of nature. Some claim that it was Sieur Benoist who was the first to make them in France. *See* Wax.[137]

This last notation directs readers to the dictionary's entry on 'wax' that addressed Benoist's exhibition in greater specificity, as discussed above. The mention of Benoist's *supposed* initiation of the costumed masks seems noteworthy since it presents the possibility tinged with uncertainty. Regardless of whether or not Benoist ever produced such elaborate props for masquerade, the association provides subtext for

[136] Dancourt, *La foire Saint Germain*, 2,8.
[137] L'on voit aussi des masques doublez de toile inscrustez par dessus de cire colorée, avec des yeux d'émail percez par le milieu. Ces derniers dont fort chers & fort estimez, parce qu'ils approchent le plus de la vérité de la nature. L'on prétend que c'est le Sieur Benoist qui en a le premier fait en France. *Voyez* CIRE Savary de Bruslons, *Dictionnaire universel de commerce,* 2:689.

his sculptural practice of "fabricating masks from nature" as described in the *privilège.*[138] It implies not simply the technique of moulding but also a play with social identity and the potential deceit of appearances.

The wax masks described by Savary were featured in a ball during the carnival season at Versailles in 1683. The dauphin, a fashion icon at court, appeared in a series of magnificent outfits throughout the festivities.[139] Some involved doubled masks, where one mask was removed to reveal a wax mask underneath. The *Mercure galant* specified that these were so ingeniously fabricated that "once unmasked we sometimes believed we were seeing a natural face that fooled everyone."[140] According to the *Mercure,* the dauphin's deceptively natural masks in wax, were designed by Jean Berain, the court costumer. The play of revelation and concealment that the dauphin's illusionistic wax masks enabled suggests a notable connection between Benoist's sculptural practice and imposture.

Substance of Self

This kind of association between Benoist's fabrications and deception was the crux of a harsh assessment of the sculptor by the satirist Jean de La Bruyère in his *Les Caractères ou Les Mœurs de ce siècle,* (first published in 1688), a collection of moralistic aphorisms and caricatures that address social hypocrisy. La Bruyère dismissed Benoist's exhibition in a single cutting phrase: "B. got rich by showing a circle of puppets."[141] Benoist is referenced by initial only, but already in the seventeenth century, indexes of La Bruyère's encrypted portraits confirm Benoist as the target.[142] La Bruyère discussed Benoist alongside charlatans and social upstarts who have accrued wealth through fraudulence.

[138] "masques au naturel en cire," Boislisle, "Les figures de cire sous Louis XIV," 169.
[139] On the Dauphin's influential fashion see Norberg, "Louis XIV: King of Fashion?," 154-55.
[140] "il avoit méme quelquefois des Masques doubles, & des Masques de Cire si bien faits sous un premier Masque, que lors qu'il s'est démasqué, on a cru voir quelquefois un visage naturel qui a trompé tout le monde. *Mercure galant (*March, 1683) 233.
[141] "B. s'enrichit à montrer dans un cercle des marionettes.,"La Bruyère, *Les caractères ou Les moeurs de ce siècle*, 279.
[142] La Bruyère, "Les Caracteres De Theophraste [...] et la clef, En marge & par ordre alphabetique, 2:131.

The list is embedded within a reflection on artistic labour, social recognition, and monetary worth. La Bruyère's narrator complains of the empty appreciation of moralist writers who are impoverished despite literary praise. The hypocrisy of unrewarded accomplishment is emphasized in La Bruyère's incisive descriptions of the literal physicality of writing craft and payment: "Don't speak to me of ink, paper, plume, stylus, printer, or press, don't ever again tell me: you write so well."[143] The narrator compares glorious reputation to useless wind unaccompanied by coin, a "scrap of that metal that procures all things."[144] Then follows the list of those who have gotten rich at the expense of others. His first example is a corrupt lawyer, followed by a lackey who gains riches above his master and becomes ennobled. Then comes Benoist who gained wealth through the display of puppets. The text thus associates Benoist with parvenus, tricksters, and criminals, as a band of anti-authors who receive unmerited recognition.

While La Bruyère aims to undermine Benoist's accomplishment, the embittered persona of the satirist thrives on complaint and dissatisfaction. Benoist provides, therefore, something of an antagonist-muse. Bernard Roukhomovsky has presented the forum of the Parisian fairs as a paradigmatic site for considering La Bruyère's literary project. The fair's trade in rarity and enticing novelty relates to the satirist's scrutiny of particularity and absurdity. La Bruyère's accumulation of satirical aphorisms is like a collection of fascinating oddities. Roukhomovsky highlights La Bruyère's reference to Benoist's "circle of puppets" as a passage that connects the satirist to the forum of the Saint Germain fair and engages with the dynamics of demonstration and spectatorship.[145] Bruyère's attention to Benoist's sculptural practice might, therefore, underline the relevance of this form of exhibition to social concerns despite its negative slant. Building on Roukhomovsky's observation regarding the wider resonance of Benoist's wax display in La Bruyère's text, I would also draw

[143] "Qu'on ne me parle jamais d'encre, de papier, de plume, de style, d'imprimeur, d'imprimeries, qu'on ne se hasarde plus de me dire: "Vous écrivez si bien *Antisthène*!" La Bruyère, Les c*aractères ou les moeurs de ce siècle*, 278.
[144] "Ai-je un grain de ce métal qui procure toutes choses?" La Bruyère, 279.
[145] Roukhomovsky, "Le Montreur de Caractères: La Bruyère et l'imaginaire de la foire," 45.

attention to La Bruyère's reflection on urban experience and mimicry. He insisted on the city as a place of dissimulative appearances: "Paris apes the court, [but] does not always know how to properly counterfeit it."[146] Benoist's exhibition is, arguably, the most literal manifestation of La Bruyère's vision of a counterfeit court within the city.

Evidence of the impact of La Bruyère's denouncement of Benoist's accomplishment appears in a surprising source: a three-page publication labelled *Factum*, or "fact."[147] Such pamphlets were frequently distributed alongside trials in an effort to sway public opinion.[148] This one was printed in the midst of a volatile legal dispute between Benoist and Jean Simon, a guardian of the king's horses in the region of Vallières. The *factum*, authored by Simon's lawyers, conforms to the genre's tendency toward wild accusation. The document presents a convoluted tale of corruption and vengeance. In the lawyers' account, Benoist purchases a house in the village of Vallières, where Simon was keeper of the king's horses. The Marquis de Monchevreüil, governor of Saint Germain, grants Benoist limited permission for hunting in the woods. When Benoist kills a doe, Simon reports the kill to the governor. Benoist is reprimanded and vows to undo Simon. The *factum* claims that the sculptor gathered peasants and tried to convince them to murder the groundskeeper. Following a court case transferred to Paris, a provost supposedly colluded with Benoist to have Simon's primary witness detained on trumped up charges of petty theft. The *factum*'s conclusion calls for the release of this witness and a retrial to vindicate Simon's reputation. This pamphlet claims to be a response to a slanderous *factum* that Benoist had been distributing along with his printed leaflets for the *Cercle royal.*[149] That Simon's *factum* was printed with some urgency is apparent in its numerous typographical errors.

---

[146] "Paris, pour l'ordinaire le singe de la cour, ne sait pas toujours la contrefaire." La Bruyère, *Les caractères ou les moeurs de ce siècle*, 152.
[147] Factum pour Jean Simon, garde à cheval des plaisirs du roi."
[148] Maza, *Private Lives and Public Affairs,* 34–36.
[149] "Benoist par un Placet en forme de Factum qu'il a prasenté à Messieurs, & qu'il a fait distribuer dans le public comme ces billets du Cercle Royal, s'attache à destruire la reputation de Simon & affecte de publier ses talens qui sont tres-mediocres […]." "Factum pour Jean Simon, garde à cheval des plaisirs du roi," f.1.

Though it purports to be fact, Simon's *factum* is, essentially, a fleshed-out version of La Bruyère's snide remark. The document repeatedly describes Benoist's meagre talents and inflated recognition. It portrays him as a virtual servant in the years of his apprenticeship, so that his rise to wealth is akin to La Bruyère's pretentious lackey. The lawyers write that Benoist falsely established himself as an *honnête homme* through his illegitimate wealth. They then cite La Bruyère explicitly: "the author of Theophrastus's characters even did him [Benoist] the honour of referring to his fortune." In designating La Bruyère's slander of Benoist an "honour," the lawyers call on the noteworthy author as a witness.

Beyond the question of Benoist's decency or guilt, the *factum* is an intriguing document for the way it presents Benoist's illusionistic sculpture as evidence of his deceitful character. The lawyers write: "He took on the airs of a gentleman; he carried a sword to make himself, within the city, *as difficult to recognize as his portraits*."[150] In their dissemblance, the wax portraits reference not only deception, but specifically a deception associated with social stature in an urban context. The accusatory *factum* is, then, most interesting for transferring criticism from sculpted figures to the sculptor himself, as aristocratic imposter. The commercial success of the *Cercle royal* both enabled and corrupted Benoist's social advancement. Benoist's portraits, as strikingly vivacious illusions, become material metaphors for thinking about the false claims and illegibility of social rank.

This case opens a new perspective on the controversy of Benoist's lively portraits. The association between duplicative sculptural form and conniving moral duplicity focuses our attention on the extent to which social concerns were embedded in art theoretical precepts. It connects debates about replicative material and evocative illusions to a body of literature that has examined the heightened stakes of maintaining appearances in this social context. In his canonical study of court sociability, Norbert Elias underlined the dynamics of disciplined composure and concealment that motivated

[150] "Il a pris des airs de Gentilhomme, il a porté l'épée, pour se rendre dans la Ville *aussi difficile a connoistre que ses portraicts* [emphasis mine]."“Factum pour Jean Simon, garde à cheval des plaisirs du roi," f.1.

intense scrutiny of appearances.[151] A number of more recent scholars have developed this line of inquiry by examining the self-conscious performative dynamics of the courtly sphere.[152] Questions of convincingly replicated appearances were not simply aesthetic. Rather, illusion's compelling dissimulation could be enmeshed with social concerns about usurped privileges and unmerited stature.

The accusation of Benoist's duplicity in pursuit of sculptural trompe l'oeil was not the only instance of close identification of the sculptor with his waxwork. In granting Benoist exclusivity in wax portraiture, the patent melded, in a sense, the man with his medium. The moniker "Benoist du Cercle," (Benoist of the circle), which one obituary notes, identified the sculptor closely with the site of his renown. The phrase effectively positions the sculptor in the realm of the figures of his creation.[153] When Benoist registered a coat of arms with Charles d'Hozier, the design made notable reference to his medium of sculpture.[154] Benoist's arms consisted of a series of gilded bees on a blue circle. Three larger bees mark the points of the heraldic shield (fig. 1.11). This evocation of his sculptural trade within the design is distinct from other artists who purchased arms. For example, François Girardon, the most prominent sculptor of Benoist's generation, purchased arms consisting of the standard abstractions of heraldic iconography (fig. 1.12). The patterned bees on Benoist's arms explicitly link his social ambition with the specifics of the sculptural medium.

Benoist's aspiration was realized in his letters of ennoblement, issued on July 25, 1706. The certificate acknowledged, in particular, "talent in the fine art of painting" and noted eleven portraits of Louis XIV in wax and paint as well as numerous representations of other members of the royal family and court.[155] The document acknowledged merit and royal service and enumerated a noble genealogy. A

---

[151] Elias, The *Court Society,* 106–10.
[152] Cohen, *Art, Dance, and the Body in French Culture of the Ancien Régime*, 141–65; Mukerji, *Territorial Ambitions and the Gardens of Versailles*, 239–47.
[153] Dubois de Saint Gelais, *Histoire journalière de Paris,* 191. The epithet also appears in *Mercure galant* (April 1699) 61.
[154] Legislation of 1696 required the registration of arms for a fee. Many took the opportunity to purchase invented armorial crests.
[155] "Lettres de relief de dérogeance à noblesse" (25 juillet 1706) is transcribed in Montaiglon, and Guiffrey, "Antoine Benoît. Sculpteur En Cire," 303.

blood line supposedly extending from one of Charles VII's *valets du chambre* was deemed sufficient to excuse the "mechanical" trade of Benoist's father as a carpenter. The terms of menial labour and the immaterial grace of divine gift, which were central to Félibien's discussion in the *Entretiens* play out in this document with reference to the artisanship of Benoist's father's woodwork, and the benevolence of royal grace that pardoned it. This document had a notably different tenor from Charles Le Brun's letters of ennoblement in 1662, which acknowledged a merited honour bestowed on a painter whose supreme accomplishments "erased" those of previous eras.[156] The text specified honorific recognition in proportion to virtue. Benoist's letters acknowledge the sculptor's royal service and accomplishment but concentrate on genealogy.

Ennoblement was the culmination of sustained effort to gain recognition and stature despite opposition and setbacks. We have seen Benoist variously characterized. He was a miraculous alchemist and enchanter. He was Félibien's tinkering labourer, La Bruyère's conniving puppeteer, or the *factum*'s corrupt villain. Germain Brice followed the logic of the *privilège* in designating him inventive.[157] He was a "renowned artisan," an excellent man," or the "author of [a] rare work."[158] Titles and signatures were a way for Benoist to bolster his claims to stature. He styled himself as Louis XIV's "first sculptor in wax [*premier sculpteur en cire*]." For example, Benoist selected this epithet for a plaque commemorating a charitable donation to his hometown of Joigny in 1706, the year of his ennoblement.[159] He provided this title to register his arms.[160] Admiring authors repeated the designation: Brice uses it in the 1698 edition of his guidebook and Baraton in the dedication of his madrigal in 1702.[161] On the official legal certificate of the 1688 *privilège*, by contrast, Benoist was simply called

[156] This document is reproduced in Nivelon, *Vie de Charles Le Brun,* 284–86.
[157]Boislisle, "Les Figures de cire sous Louis XIV," 168–69.
[158] "le célèbre artisan," Robinet, "Lettre En Vers à Madame," 3; "Cet excellent homme," *Mercure galant* (April 1684) 76; "autheur [sic.] de ce rare ouvrage," *Gazette* (February 1669) 192.
[159] The Marble plaque within the Hôtel-Dieu hosptial in Joigny is reproduced in Vaudin, "Antoine Benoist de Joigny," 33.
[160] "Antoine Benoist, Peintre ord^re^ du Roy et p.^er^ Sculpteur en cire de Sa Majesté" Hozier, "Armorial Général de France," fol. 547.
[161] Baraton, *Poesies Diverses,* 340. Brice, *Description nouvelle de la ville de Paris,* 265. In 1706 Brice repeated the appellation. In the next edition of 1713, however, Benoist was "peintre et sculpteur en cire" In 1717, the year of Benoist's

"our painter and ordinary sculptor in wax [*Nostre peintre et sculpteur ordinaire en cire*]."[162] The chosen designation of *premier sculpteur en cire* echoed the established titles of the king's first painter (*premier peintre*) and the king's first architect (*premier architecte*). The title *premier sculpteur* was not an official designation under Louis XIV.[163] Previous monarchs had appointed first sculptors (Pierre de Franqueville to Henri IV, Francesco Bordoni to Louis XIII), but never in a specific medium. Benoist provided a variation of his preferred appellation when he designated himself the king's "sole sculptor in wax [son unique sculpteur en cire colorée]" during the dictation of his will in 1714.[164] In his various iterations, Benoist emerges as a figure as protean as the substance in which he worked.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the *Cercle royal*'s reception as evidenced in the printed texts that documented, promoted, praised, and derided it. The exhibition's uneven reception contrasted admirers who celebrated Benoist's waxworks as living, breathing wonders, with critics who dismissed these portraits as trivializing, malformed counterfeits. In a number of instances, detractors identified deceitfully illusionistic waxworks with the sculptor himself as a socially-ambitious fraud in an attempt to undercut the honours that Benoist had accumulated: protective royal patents, admission to the Académie, and ennoblement. The necessity of focusing substantially on records of the *Cercle royal'*s reception, in the absence of the figures that once comprised the display, is an undeniable limitation. It is also, I would contend, an interpretive opportunity. These passages of text draw our attention to the

death, Brice eliminated the entry on the Cercle royal. Brief mention of Benoist designated him "peintre de l'académie."
[162]Boislisle, "Les Figures de Cire Sous Louis XIV," 164. The term *ordinaire* referred to perpetual stature within the royal retinue, see Schnapper, Le métier de peintre au Grand Siècle, 34–35.
[163] Sarmant, *Les Demeures Du Soleil,* 109. A central premise of Alexandre Maral's definitive monograph on François Girardon is that the sculptor's responsibility and influence positioned him as the defacto 'premier sculpteur' even though the title was not awarded in this era. Maral, *Girardon (1628-1715)*: Le Sculpteur de Louis XIV. Alongside his registered arms, for example, Girardon was identified by his leadership within the académie, as "Chancellier et Recteur de L'Academie Royalle de Peinture et Sculpture." Hozier, "Armorial Général de France," f.547.
[164] "écuyer, peintre ordinaire du roi et son unique sculpteur en cire" "Testament d'Antoine Benoist," 13 décembre 1714, f.1.

associative implications of wax's materiality. They underline the contested terms of workmanship for wax-cast portraits at a threshold moment for differentiating the fine art of sculpture from the broader realm of artisanship. In implying the potential of conniving deception within discussions of sculptural illusion, sources reveal the social discourses embedded within debates of replicative craft. By demonstrating that issues of identity and stature were implicated within the embroiled aesthetic discourse of waxworks' ambiguous enlivenment and deathly resonance, this chapter has established foundational context. As we shall see, questions of evocative courtly presence and morbid suspension were of ongoing relevance to the *Cercle royal'*s reception as the exhibition changed.

Chapter 2

Mutable Bodies: Waxwork Theatres of Death and Diplomacy

The wax statues and busts — of which one is today an emperor, tomorrow a political subversive, and the next day a liveried attendant; of which another represents today Julia Montague, tomorrow Marie Lafargue, the day after tomorrow Madame Doumergue — all are in their proper place in these optical whispering galleries.
-- Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 1927-1940

In Walter Benjamin's reflection on modernity's urban imaginary, he was particularly interested in wax displays' fluctuating configurations, as figures morphed into new shapes or were undressed and re-costumed to assume new identities.[1] Benoist' s *Cercle royal* was fundamentally distinct from later wax displays like the Musée Grévin, Benjamin's focus, for the royal tribute at its core. Yet within this framework of reverence, Benoist rotated through a cast of waxwork characters in a sequence of curatorial revisions. Benjamin's evocation of historical traces and the political malleability of waxworks within "whispering galleries" offers a suggestive point of departure for my investigation of early modern spectacle. This chapter examines Benoist's savvy adaptation of official ceremonial forms to novel ends. Despite complaints of the lowbrow triviality of Benoist's enterprise by critics, I will argue for the historical resonance and political responsiveness of the *Cercle royal*'s shifting connotations. Benoist's wax figures were 'mutable bodies' in their ephemeral delicacy. In church ceremonies, wax's transient malleability dramatically encapsulated passage between the tangible realm of human perception and the invisibility of divine mystery beyond.[2] In Benoist's display, wax's sacred resonance overlaps with Benjamin's interest in wax as a mutable substance that could be endlessly reworked according to exigencies of political presentation and commercial interest.

[1] Grévin was located in the Passage Jouffory one of the surviving arcades of Benjamin's focus. See Buck-Morss, "The Flâneur, the Sandwichman and the Whore," 57.
[2] Velden, *The Donor's Image*, 213.

We have seen that the first surge of interest in Benoist's exhibition in the 1660s celebrated his work in terms of novelty and marvel. Novelty's thrill is necessarily short though, and Benoist's career was long. The *Cercle royal*'s documentation extends over five decades, from Bernini's reference to Flavio Chigi's 1664 visit to Benoist's death in 1717. The challenge of renewing interest and maintaining commercial viability is apparent in an overview of the exhibition included in Louis-François Dubois de Saint Gelais's obituary for the sculptor in the *Histoire journalière de Paris,* an experimental, short-lived cultural journal.[3] Saint Gelais describes Benoist's wax portraits "moulded from the natural" that "remained one of the greatest curiosities of Paris for a long time."[4] Building on this success, "he joined foreign courts to his *Cercle.*"[5] After noting the fortune Benoist gained by showing his circles of wax figures at Parisian fairs, the obituary concludes with a downturn: "In the end he showed them for free at his residence, but no one came."[6] In tracing a cycle through reputation, expansion, profit, and obsolescence, Dubois de Saint Gelais's short biography underlines the exigencies of the market that Benoist navigated as an entrepreneur.

One of this chapter's contributions is in enumerating changes to the *Cercle royal*'s configuration and plotting the timeline of this sequence. The exhibition has consistently been addressed in brief overviews that present it as a single entity rather than a shifting installation that was re-conceived in a series of iterations. There are three varieties of primary documents that ground my analysis. I have found leaflets in addition to the two discussed in the previous chapter, which map the identities of wax figures on view at distinct points. I cross-reference these previously unknown documents with published sources to establish a detailed sequence of curatorial changes. Two series of publications will be of particular importance. The first is Germain Brice's regularly updated guidebook to Paris,

[3] Dubois de Saint Gelais's journal was intended to be a tri-annual publication, offering cultural reports for each year of Louis XV's reign. The initiative was, however, abandoned. See Sgard, "Histoire journaliere de Paris."
[4] "Il avoit un talent particulier pour faire des portraits en cire qu'il mouloit ordinairement sur le naturel... l'assemblage qu'il en fit a été longtems une des curiosités de Paris." Dubois de Saint Gelais, *Histoire journalière de Paris*, 190.
[5] "il joignit au cercle dela cour ceux des cours étrangères." Dubois de Saint Gelais, 191.
[6] "Sur les fins il les montroit chez lui gratis, mais personne n'y alloit." Dubois de Saint Gelais, 191.

Description nouvelle de ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable dans la ville de Paris, which first included an entry for Benoist's *Cercle royal* in 1687. The second source to foreground is the *Mercure galant*, a monthly journal founded by playwright Jean Donneau de Visé, which promoted Benoist's exhibition in a series of articles.

Like the *Cercle royal*, the *Mercure* was an independent commercial venture that gained a degree of official recognition for the perceived political utility of its popularity. Under the guise of letters sent to a country lady, the *Mercure* integrated a diversity of topics within a stream of conversational prose. Monthly issues covered description of court festivities and news of the royal family, reports on foreign affairs, publication announcements, and literary samplings.[7] Within this diversity, the *Mercure'*s repeated praise for the *Cercle royal* over years was quite possibly paid publicity.[8] Regardless, the journal's series of notices celebrating Benoist's work underline coordination of purpose. The M*ercure*'s monthly pace engaged its readers in an accelerating news cycle. Brice's guidebook was updated through a number of expanded editions in order to maintain its relevance for travellers. The sequences of updates in series for these publications, establish a temporal framework of urban novelty that will be foundational for our examination of curatorial revisions to Benoist's exhibition.

This chapter concentrates on two arenas of royal ceremony that determined the shifting forms and connotations of Benoist's wax display beyond its initial recognition in the 1660s. I follow Benoist's trajectory from the mid 1670s into the eighteenth century. Since Benoist's *Cercle royal* was staged as a gathering of Marie-Thérèse's entourage, her death in 1683 inevitably constituted a significant change for the exhibition. In the chapter's first half, I examine Benoist's contribution to the queen's memorial services in order to underline the commemorative tradition of royal wax death masks as a ceremonial

[7] Somewhat akin to the long neglect of early modern waxwork exhibitions as a topic worthy of art historical attention, a burgeoning scholarship has centred the *Mercure galant* as an innovative media phenomenon of significance for literary studies. See for example Schuwey, *Un entrepreneur des lettres au XVIIe siècle*; Stedman, *Rococo Fiction*, 96–107.
[8] It seems that the *Mercure* occasionally incorporated paid advertisements within its stream of news and gossip. See Vincent, *Le Mercure galant*, 50. Christophe Schuwey refers to Donneau de Visé's "product placement" as an innovative commercial strategy in *Un entrepreneur des lettres au XVIIe siècle*, 258.

form that bolstered the prestige of Benoist's sculptural practice. Alongside this engagement with memorial ceremony, Benoist revised the *Cercle royal* with reference to the fluctuating cast of prominent courtly personages. The chapter's second half charts the exhibition's expansion to include diplomatic representations of visiting ambassadors to France. The *Cercle royal* was thus an urban echo of Versailles's elaborate diplomatic ceremonial. A portion of these diplomats donated the ceremonial robes from their audiences with Louis XIV to clothe their wax representations so that the *Cercle royal* preserved lingering traces of Versailles's receptions. We saw in the previous chapter that the *Cercle* royal's wax aristocrats were celebrated as marvels for evoking enlivened presence. Benoist was also beleaguered by critics who derided his waxwork illusion as trivial spectacle and his craft as uninspired manual labour. Despite the complaints of detractors, this chapter examines Benoist's tactics for enhancing the distinguished implications of his wax practice through engagements with ceremonial forms of commemorative tribute and diplomatic reception. The tactile traces of life casts and donated garments rendered the majestic grandeur of ceremony captivatingly intimate for Benoist's viewers.

Ceremonial Citation: The Queen is Dead

On July 30, 1683, Marie-Thérèse, the Hapsburg Infanta who reigned as Queen of France and Navarre, died. Her lineage had secured Spain for Bourbon heirs. Her death was a matter of consequence for state affairs and the competitive factionalism of Versailles's courtly social sphere.[9] On a less momentous scale, the queen's death was also an event of significance for Benoist's *Cercle royal*, which was staged as a representation of her courtly entourage. In an instant, the queen's wax portrait in Benoist's display room became a memorial image.

[9] At court, Marie-Thérèse's death provided an opening for Madame de Maintenon's influence following her secret marriage with Louis XIV. On Mainenon's position see Bryant, *Queen of Versailles*.

Marie-Thérèse's death inspired the most elaborate funerary rites of the reign. Commemorative ceremonies were more extensive than those observing the king's own death in 1717.[10] The queen's death provided Louis XIV the opportunity to strike the pose of grief-stricken mourner focused on godly virtues as opposed to the reputation of his seductive philandering that persisted through the years of his marriage.[11] Abby Zanger's scholarship has centred Marie-Thérèse as a problematic figure for absolutist representation. The queen's position introduced ambiguity that could undermine the political fiction of Louis XIV's sovereign autonomy, since she was a foreigner, whose reproductive body was integral to Bourbon continuity. In her complicated symbolic status, "the queen was both a malleable signifier and intractable matter that exerted force."[12] Zanger concludes, however, that Marie-Thérèse's representation provided myriad opportunities for asserting Louis XIV's domination in a dialectic of alterity and containment. This dynamic was especially apparent upon her death. In absentia, the queen was unproblematically integrated into absolutism's triumphant figurations.[13]

Of the numerous commemorative tributes staged to honour the queen, one demands our particular attention: the ephemeral monument erected in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, the Benedictine abbey a short walk from Benoist's residence. While elaborate temporary mausoleums and memorial services were organized in churches throughout the kingdom, this one was distinguished in the *Mercure galant*'s extensive reporting, as the only memorial to be documented by an illustration. An etching inserted in the November 1683 issue by Jean Lepautre depicts the platformed structure manufactured for the church's nave (fig. 2.1). The *Mercure*'s text described the display in architectural and iconographic detail. It specifies a pedestal, two-feet high, panels presenting the queen's virtues and gilded cypress branches coiling around Corinthian columns. Positioned atop the mausoleum was a

[10] Péan, "Les Décors des pompes funèbres," 2.
[11] Louis XIV's letter to the archbishop of Paris, attesting to grieving pain, was printed in the *Mercure galant*. The letter requested support in rallying public prayers for the salvation of the queen's soul. *Mercure galant* (August 1683) 82-88.
[12] Zanger, *Scenes from the Marriage of Louis XIV*, 157.
[13] Zanger, *Scenes from the Marriage of Louis XIV*, 155–56.

sculptural figure of the queen in the hand of her guardian angel, who showed her heaven's glory. The text specifies that "these two figures were moulded in wax by Benoist."[14] A pamphlet published to explain the elaborate iconography of the Saint-Germain display notes that the allegorical figure of Europe in dejection, positioned underneath, was also a wax figure fabricated by Benoist: "One does not need to say more to persuade everyone of their [the figures'] accomplishment."[15] A more detailed print by Daniel Marot describes the mausoleum's components in further specificity and positions the fabrication within the architectural context of the church's gothic interior (figs. 2.2-2.4).[16] This image reiterates Benoist's contribution with the inscription "Benoist inv." at bottom left in complement to the printer's own signature "Marot scup." at right. These signatures differentiate Benoist's creative "invention" from Marot's engraved reproduction. The identification of Benoist's commission of Marie-Thérèse's portrait alongside the allegorical figures of her guiding spirit and personified Europe is an indication of Benoist's recognition as the queen's privileged portraitist and the potential of his sculptural practice within this variety of sacred display.

There were, therefore, two wax portraits of the queen on display within the Faubourg Saint-Germain in September of 1683. It is likely that Benoist had kept his moulds for the exhibition's primary figures on hand and was thus able to duplicate his cast of Marie-Thérèse on demand. This commission positions Benoist within communal locality. In Louis XIV's era, the Faubourg Saint-Germain was an increasingly fashionable district under construction in the vicinity of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, an eleventh-century landmark.[17] As a neighbourhood attraction, the *Cercle royal* was undoubtedly familiar

[14] "Ces deux Figures avoient esté moulées en cire par le Sr Benoist." *Mercure galant* (November 1683) 90.
[15] Ces deux figures & celle de l'Europe affligée, sont des ouvrages de Monsieur Benoist. Il n'en faut pas dire davantage pour persuader à tout le monde qu'elles sont achevées." *La magnifique pompe funebre et le service solemnel qui s'est fait dans l'abbaye royale de Saint Germain des Prez*, 7.
[16] A catalogue entry for this engraving note that the Mercure's reference to "Monsieur Bullet as the mausoleum's designer could refer to architect Pierre Bullet. *La Gorce, Dans l'atelier des Menus Plaisirs du Roi*, 228.
[17] In overviewing the district, Brice described magnificent hôtels rising in the surround of the "ancient" (read: medieval) abbey. Brice, *Nouvelle description de la ville de Paris*, 3: 247. "Colin Jones presents the Faubourg Saint-Germain's striking development over the course of the seventeenth century as the trajectory from "a downmarket Marais with a still rural feel" to "the ultimate in fashionable living." See Jones, *Paris*, 141.

to the abbey's administrative monks. As they prepared a magnificent tribute to the queen's memory, they perceived potential in Benoist's representational mode that had been lost on Félibien. The insistent corporeality and ambiguous vitality that Félibien glossed with the phrase "deathly and insensible resemblance" was leveraged in this instance for an image of royal apotheosis. Morbidity was not an aesthetic liability in commemorative tribute. Moreover, counter to Félibien's effort to reduce Benoist's portraits down to the category of still life, as "dead things without movement," this display drew Benoist's figures into the realm of celestial vision and allegorical embodiment, the pinnacle of Félibien's hierarchy of genres.[18] The configuration of the mausoleum underlined the conceptual resonance of wax in juxtaposing Benoist's figures alongside burning candles, as documented in Marot's print. The *Gazette* specified the dramatic illumination by torches and candles as one of the display's noteworthy features.[19] Benoist's display suggested the allegory of mortal ephemerality and transcendent transformation in material terms.

The mortuary chapel set up in Saint-Germain-des-Prés is one example of the proliferating memorial tribute that established the queen's death as a major media event. Various commemorative services were subsequently documented in print. One almanac surveyed the queen's funerary tributes (fig. 2.5). The central image depicts Notre Dame's official state service staged by Jean Berain, Louis XIV's designer of festivities. The inset panels along the print's sides depict services held in the French provinces at right, and memorials presented in Paris at left, including an image of the Saint-Germain display that featured Benoist's figures (fig. 2.6).These displays employed the arsenal of materials and techniques drawn from theatrical scenography with scaffolded structures embellished with stucco, paper maché, and painted cloth.[20] Often the mausoleums featured impermanent trompe-l'oeil imitations

[18] The academic prestige of this genre of memorial was established by the catafalque in the *Oratoire* to Chancellor Pierre Séguier, the académie's protector. Sévigné deemed it Charles Le Brun's "masterpiece." Quoted in Fuhring and Marchesano, *A Kingdom of Images*, 282.
[19] "Le tout estoit éclairé d'une tres grande quantité de flambeaux, de cierges & de lampes." *Gazette* (September) 557.
[20]This spectacular commemorative form was in line with Italian models and influenced by Jesuit practices of devotional spectacle. See Péan, "Les Décors des pompes funèbres."

of luxurious monumental equivalents such as marble and metal.[21] The almanac's survey of commemorative services parallels The *Mercure galant'*s extensive reporting. The journal's commitment to documenting the range of obsequies led to the editorial decision to disperse them throughout the year's editions so as not to crowd repetitive descriptions in a single volume.[22] Hence the discussion of the mausoleum of Saint-Germain-des-Prés in the November issue. Benoist's wax figures were, therefore, part of a sequence of overlapping representations in performance and printed documentation. Historian Michèle Fogel has charted the proliferation of "ceremonies of information" in the seventeenth century as coordinated communications of announcements, performances, and reports that interpolated political subjects.[23] The echoes and after-echoes of memorial tribute also provided ecclesiastical institutions, journalists, publishers, and artisans, like Benoist, with the opportunity to bid for recognition in the competitive displays of devotion to the royal family.

These dramatic ephemeral displays, dispersed in chapels throughout France, overtook the significance of marble memorials in Saint Denis as monumental tributes to deceased royalty. The basilica of Saint Denis was the gothic abbey north of Paris that contained the marble tombs for generations of French royalty. The construction of a Bourbon burial chapel within the royal necropolis remained stalled, however, throughout Louis XIV's reign.[24] Official state ceremonies such as the funerary commemorations for Marie-Thérèse at Notre Dame were organized and funded by the *Menu plaisirs du roi*, the administrative office responsible for court spectacle. The resources devoted to Versailles's elaborate festivities were also applied to devotional ceremony. The luxurious theatrics of funerary pomp left this mode of display open to critique, however. The Jesuit antiquarian Claude-François Ménestrier deplored an air of festive masquerade that undermined the solemnity of Marie-

[21] La Gorce, "Les Pompes funèbres."
[22] *Mercure galant* (September 1683) "au lecteur."
[23] Fogel, *Les Cérémonies de l'information*.
[24] Numerous designs were commissioned from a range of architects including Bernini, but the renovation was continually delayed as priorities shifted. See Mazel, *La mort et l'éclat*, 194.

Thérèses's memorial at Notre Dame. He compared the rows of skulls to mannequin busts in a wigmaker's shop (figs. 2.7-2.8).[25] This ambiguity of ceremonial splendour and luxury commerce seems relevant for our consideration of Benoist's representational mode between enchanting urban entertainment and royal reverence.

While Ménestrier critiqued Marie-Thérèse's memorial in Notre Dame, he approved of the Saint-Germain display that featured Benoist's wax figures. In his treatise on decorative programs for funerals published in 1683, shortly after the queen's death, Ménestrier mentioned wax death masks as a memorial form with distinguished heritage.

> Instead of statues and portraits, we can also make use of representations from nature [représentations au naturel] with wax images dressed in the manner of living people. These were often made for our kings in funeral convoys, and since we are obligated to exhibit princes and sovereigns on their ceremonial beds [lits de parade], we made use of images since it would be difficult to conserve corpses for such a long time before they rot, no matter how much care one puts into embalming them, since nothing goes as quickly as the face [...]. At the funeral ceremony held in the abbey of Saint Germain des Prez for the Queen of France, Marie Therese, she was represented from nature with a face and hands of wax. To this wax image was joined that of an angel that showed her the sky, and that of Europe weeping, which was also of wax.[26]

The indication of wax representations displayed on *lits de parade* and then subsequently featured in royal funeral convoys references the tradition of wax effigies in monarchical funerary ritual between 1422 (the death of Charles VI) and 1610 (the assassination of Henri IV). These mannequins featuring wax heads and hands, were outfitted in ceremonial regalia. They were focal points in processions toward royal entombment at Saint Denis. Ménestrier's connection, therefore, reframes Benoist's sculptural practice of royal wax representation as the citation of past official ceremonial protocol. Ménestrier's observation undermines Schlosser's statement on the topic: "At the death in 1683 of the consort of Louis XIV, Maria Theresa of Spain, it [the wax effigy] was not used: the custom had simply

[25] La Gorce notes these comments within the history of collaboration and rivalry beteen Ménestrier and the *dessinateur de la chambre et du cabinet du roi*. See "Ménestrier et Berain," 199.

[26] "Aux Ceremonies funebres qui se firent dans l'Abbaye de S. Germain des Prez pour la reine de France Marie Therese, on la representa au naturel avec un visage & des mains de cire. A cette Image de cire on joignit celle d'un Ange qui luy montroit le Ciel, & celle de l'Europe pleurante, qui estoient aussi de cire." Ménestrier, *Des décorations funèbres*, 205.

become dated [...]."[27] Schlosser had followed nineteenth-century archivists in assuming the *Cercle* royal's protagonist queen was Louis XIV's mother, Anne of Austria, despite the *privilège*'s reference to her as Louis XIV's "beloved wife." Schlosser had no reason, therefore, to consider Marie-Thérèse's funeral commemorations in relation to Benoist.[28] Considering Marie-Thérèse's wax effigy as a revived extension of past funeral ritual nuances our sense of Schlosser's trajectory of phases in the history of wax portraiture. Benoist's sculptural practice appears at the crux of overlapping, contradictory possibilities: commemorative within a devotional presentation and commercially appealing for its striking illusion of aristocratic prestige.

Ménestrier's statement that royal wax effigies were useful as ceremonial substitutes that extended the lying-in-state beyond the timeframe of an embalmed corpse, contradicts Ernst Kantorowicz's proposal in his canonical account of early modernity's royal figuration, *The King's Two Bodies.* That study distinguishes between the body politic (the king as embodiment of state) and the body natural (the king's mortal individuality). Kantorowicz claims that in early modern France, wax effigies were vessels for the mystical force of the body politic in the fraught period of interregnum, between the king's death and the inauguration of his successor's rule. Kantorowicz refers to two distinct ceremonies conjoined in the royal funeral, one for the dead king's individual soul and the other for the immortal triumph of the body politic, contained within the wax effigy.[29] Kantorowicz's perspective on French history drew on the research of his student, Ralph Giesey, who compiled a detailed account of French funerary protocols with reference to Kantorowicz's framework.[30] Their publications have been enormously productive for approaching the complexity of early modern

[27] Schlosser, "History of Portraiture in Wax," 201. He mentions Venice and England as two exceptions when the prominence of wax effigies of doges and royalty continued to play a prominent role beyond the seventeenth century.
[28] Schlosser, 265.Anne of Austria was not included in any version of Benoist's display. For examples of the misidentification of the *Cercle royal* as Anne of Austria's entourage see Le Breton, *Essai historique sur la sculpture en cire*, 60; Montaiglon, and Guiffrey, "Antoine Benoît. Sculpteur en cire," 301; Lemire, *Artistes et Mortels*, 70.
[29] Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 425.
[30] Giesey, *The Royal Funeral Ceremony in Renaissance France*.

political representation.[31] A number of historians have, however, disproved the specific claim that the wax effigy was the mystical embodiment of the body politic in France, by demonstrating its wider range of associations.[32]

Giesey dismissed significant primary source evidence that did not conform to Kantorowicz's schema. For example, Giesey rejects the perspective the sixteenth-century jurist Jean de Tillet who proposed that the wax effigy's ceremonial prominence asserted the king's assured resurrection.[33] Giesey writes: "Du Tillet misses the point. He does not know what to make of the honours given to the effigy, and so he settles for a somewhat irrelevant reference to the future resurrection of the body. He failed to grasp the really significant fact of the ceremonial that the effigy, along with its accoutrements and props, also stood for an immortal character: the undying dignity of the King of France."[34] The only early modern source that articulated this symbolism was a failed bid for parliamentary presidents for a more prominent position in the funeral cortège of Henri IV. Giesey took parliament's argument to be definitive of the entire centuries-old tradition, though parliament's claim was rejected and ignored upon its proposal in 1610.[35] Flexibility in the symbolism of this ceremonial practice is pertinent to considering Benoist's engagement with the tradition in 1683. Du Tillet's notion of the funerary effigy as an attestation of resurrection carries through to Benoist's wax representation of Marie-Thérèse being ushered up into the heavens.

---

[31] To take but one example, Marin presented his exploration of absolutist figuration as an extension of Kantorowicz's model. See Marin, *Portrait of the King*, 9.

[32] See, in particular, Chatenet, "Les funérailles royales, Dernier triomphe des rois," 61; Boureau, *Simple corps du roi*, 19-27. Abby Zanger has aimed to complicate, what she terms, the Giesey-Kantorowicz paradigm in her scholarship on queenship. See Zanger, *Scenes from the Marriage of Louis XIV*, 35.

[33] Du Tillet, *Recueil Des Roys de France, leurs couronne et maison*, 245.

[34] Giesey, *The Royal Funeral Ceremony in Renaissance France*, 122. Giesey's interpretation relied significantly on Nicolas Rigault's historical account of Henri IV's funeral in 1610, which notably lauded Du Tillet as a definitive legal authority, Rigault, *Histoire universelle de Jacques Auguste de Thou*, 10:305.This volume was Rigault's continuation of the Latin history authored by seventeenth-century Parliamentary president Jacques Auguste Thou. It was translated into French in the eighteenth century.

[35] Giesey, *The Royal Funeral Ceremony in Renaissance France*, 124. On the circumstances of the parliamentary protest that interrupted Henri IV's funeral convoy before being quashed, see Rigault, *Histoire universelle de Jacques Auguste de Thou*, 10:304–8.

For our purposes of considering the relevance of traditional ritual for the reception of Benoist's sculptural practice in the 1680s, it is significant that a portion of past royal funeral effigies were documented as wax-cast death masks, what Ménestrier termed "representations from nature." The first known example was manufactured for the funeral of Charles VI in 1422 by François d'Orléans. The effigy was moulded in wax "on his [the king's] own face and after life [après le vif] as well as possible."[36] An expense report for François I's effigy in 1547 similarly indicates a moulded transfer. François Clouet, the most prominent court painter, travelled from Paris to the royal palace at Rambouillet, where the king had expired, in order to "mould and to take the imprint of the face [de moller et prendre le traict du visage] in order to make an effigy of the late s*eigneur*."[37] With the death-mask in hand, the painter returned to his workshop in Paris. He worked with three assistants over eight days to complete the figure. Clouet was the most celebrated artist of his milieu.[38] His responsibility for moulding the death cast as the basis for a wax portrait provides a prestigious precedent to Benoist's sculptural practice.

In 1666, Félibien dismissed the tactility of imprinted molding as merely manual procedure that profaned portraiture's ideals. Royal touch, however, retained an association with spiritual transfer in this era. In one of his reflective aphorisms of the late 1650s (collected and published posthumously as the *Pensées* in 1670), Blaise Pascal referenced the common belief that "the character of divinity is imprinted on his [the king's] face."[39] Louis Marin highlights this passage as a parodic contrast to

---

[36] "[...] et le chief et visage d'iceluy moslé et faict sur son proper visage et après le vif, le plus proprement que on a peu, et led. Chief garny de poil au plus près de la chevelure que portoit led. Seigneur, [...]." This record also states that hands and feet were molded. Giesey, *The Royal Funeral Ceremony in Renaissance France*, 100, n.94. This would seem to indicate that the imprinted face was the basis for a representation that strove for vivacity. Noa Turel sites this passage in her exploration of the terminology of lively evocation. "Living Pictures," 165.

[37] This translation is adapted from Schlosser, "History of Portraiture in Wax," 198. This translation describes "features" though the term "traict" is in fact singular. Transcriptions of the expense report from the Maison du roi are reproduced in Guiffrey, "Obsèques de Louis XII, François Ier et Henri II (1515-1569)," 13–14.

[38] François Clouet was the only painter to receive an annual pension from the *Maison du roi* between 1540 and 1545.Even when two other painters were added to the accounts, Clouet received the highest sum. See Jollet, *Jean & François Clouet*, 23.

[39] "[...] le caractère de la divinité est empreint sur son visage" quoted in Marin, *Portrait of the King*, 14–15.

Bossuet's elaboration of monarchy's sacrality.[40] The king's touch could channel divine force as in the belief that royal physical contact healed the Scrofula, known as "the king's disease." Those suffering gathered in ceremonies for the chance of being cured by Louis XIV's hands. [41] Royal touch, therefore, maintained persistent sacred implication. Though Henri IV's funeral in 1610 was the last to feature a wax effigy as the primary focus in procession from Paris to Saint Denis, Ménestrier's 1683 reference indicates ongoing interest in this tradition.

Historic funerary effigies, stored in Saint Denis's treasury, maintained a lingering presence.[42] These objects and their ritual purposes were additionally the subject of historical inquiry within Louis XIV's era, even beyond Ménestrier's antiquarian genealogy of commemorative display. In his 1688 treatise on statues, François Lemée positioned the funeral effigies of French royals within a broader historical framework by comparing them to ancient Roman displays of commemorative wax portraits. In Republican Rome, wax busts of ancestors, termed *imagines*, were "conserved in rooms and in antechambers, more or less similar to those of our kings and queens in Saint Denis in France."[43] A capacious history of the Saint Denis Abbey, published in 1706, included discussion of wax effigies within detailed accounts of royal funerals. Notably, for our purposes, this substantial study was authored by André Félibien's son, Michel Félibien, a Benedictine monk. In his dense historical account, Michel Félibien documented effigies' ritual functions with specificity. For example, he noted that meats were ceremonially presented to Henri IV's effigy before being donated to charity. He describes an additional effigy for Henri IV in 1611, prominent in the commemorative anniversary of the king's assassination.[44] Finally Félibien accounted for Louis XIII's renunciation of the effigy within

[40] See Marin, 14–15.
[41] Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*, 131.
[42] A complaint in July of 1793 objected to the daily viewings of the royal wax effigies led by the treasury's guardian, a Benedictine monk-turned-*citoyen.* The effigies were subsequently broken into pieces and the treasurer stripped of his rank. See "Délibérations et Débats Du Conseil Municipal de Saint Denis, 03/02/1793 Au 05/10/1793," f.142-44.
[43] "Les Images des Ancêtres ne se faisoient que de cire ou rarement de bronze, & c'étoit des bustes qu'on (58) conservoit dans les Sales & dans les Antichambres à peu près pareils à ceux de nos Roys & de nos Reines qui sont à saint Denis en France."Lemée, *Traité des statues*, 57–58.
[44] Michel Félibien, *Histoire de l'abbaye Royale de S. Denys en France*, 434, 436.

a commitment to devotional austerity.[45] Louis XIV himself expressed admiration for Michel Félibien's rigorous scholarship when presented with the completed volume at Versailles.[46] Whereas the elder Félibien dismissed the "deathly and insensible resemblance" of wax portraiture in 1666, four decades later, his son addressed the prestigious history of the genre within commemorative ritual.

In considering Michel Félibien's engagement with the history of Saint Denis, his affiliation with the Benedictine order of Saint-Maur is of particular significance. This monastic order, founded by Louis XIII's decree in 1618, gained prominence over the course of the seventeenth century. Saint-Maur's mission was shaped significantly by the congregation's Superior General, Dom Grégoire Tarisse, stationed at Saint-Germain-des-Prés. He established the abbey as the centre of dynamic scholarly enterprise focused on church history and archival research.[47] Indeed, Michel Félibien's extensively researched account of Saint Denis's history, published with an appendix of transcribed archival documentation, embodies the Maurists' scholarly orientation.[48] Notably, Saint Denis, a Benedictine abbey, was also under Maurist direction in this era, which accounts for the research its administrators assigned to Michel Félibien.[49] The lines of affiliation that connected the Maurist bastion of Saint-Germain-des-Prés with Saint Denis are also pertinent for considering Benoist's funeral effigy on the occasion of the queen's death. The commission of Benoist's memorial to Marie-Thérèse may have been a self-conscious reference to past traditions.

As commercial urban divertissement, Benoist's *Cercle royal* might seem far removed from wax portraiture's past ritual purposes within the sacred space of churches. The commission for Saint-

[45] Michel Félibien,*Histoire de l'abbaye Royale de S. Denys en France*, 469. Gérard Sabatier called attention to Philip II's much publicized funeral obsequies as a devotional model in opposition to Kantorowicz's claim that the sacred purpose of the effigy had been negated in 1610 with Louis XIII's early *lit de justice.* See Sabatier, "Le roi est mort," 197.
[46] Sabatier and Saule, *Le roi est mort*, 238.
[47] The Maurists' historical orientation resulted in Saint -Germain's significant library and numerous annotated editions of sacred texts. For an overview of the congrégation de Saint-Maur see Sullivan, "Maurists."
[48] A biographical notice for Michel Félibien specified that this history was commissioned shortly after he was ordained and grew out of nine years of scrupulous research. Tassin, *Histoire littéraire de La Congrégation de Saint-Maur*, 411.
[49] Erika Naginski charts the fate of Saint Denis under Maurist management in the eighteenth century to demonstrate that their antiquarian commitments folded into Neoclassicism. See *Sculpture and Enlightenment*, 31–32. The order was decimated by the revolution and dissolved by papal decree in 1811.

Germain-des-Prés elucidates the potential of prestigious historical resonance for the *Cercle royal*. The *Mercure'*s coverage of the queen's funerary commemorations in 1683 earned its founder, Jean Donneau de Visé, an annual pension.[50] As with Benoist, therefore, the queen's death presented an opportunity for positioning within a competitive media landscape. The Mercure's emotional solicitation to readers on this occasion, in descriptions of despairing grief, exemplifies Hogg's notion of "absolutist attachment." Her analysis of the political identification enabled by the affective address of print journalism is also relevant for considering Benoist's contribution to Marie-Thérèse's memorial tribute. Ceremonial grandeur and celestial vision were rendered in visceral particularity. Though we will now turn our attention from the subject of Benoist's commemorative memorial to his representations of foreign courtiers in the *Cercle royal*, we will continue to consider wax representation's particular capacity to mediate distance and proximity by inflecting ceremonial form.

Absolutist Variations: Benoist in London, London in Paris

In the notice on the *Cercle royal* in his 1698 guidebook, Germain Brice specified that Benoist had travelled to England, "where he worked on royalty that were then there" and other considerable figures of the era.[51] I have located an undated leaflet, never previously discussed, that documents this rearrangement (fig. 2.9). Whereas the first leaflet, which I have dated c. 1669, presented French courtiers surrounding the royal family, the second iteration divided to display two configurations in symmetry. The French court is now mirrored by a representation of English courtiers encircling Charles II. He is positioned between his queen, Catherine of Braganza, and his brother, James the Duke of York, next in line for the throne. Brice's attestation of direct contact with royal figures underlines the

[50] On the coordination between the Mercure's extensive coverage of commemoration of the queen's death and Donneau de Visé's pension see Mélèse, *Un homme de lettres au temps du grand roi,* 174.
[51] "Il [Benoist] a été en Angleterre, où il a travaillé Sur les Personnes Royales qui y étoient alors, & sur tout ce qu'il y avoit de considerable en ce temps-là." Brice, *Description nouvelle de la ville de Paris*, 265.

tactile indexicality in casting. On the intricately textured surfaces of Benoist's portraits, distance was condensed to render the remoteness of foreign celebrity proximately tangible.

I date this instantiation of the *Cercle royal* to the early1670s with reference to the travel account of Giovanni Battista Pacichelli, an itinerant Benedictine monk from Rome. His *Memoirs of Journeys through Christian Europe* document extensive travels as a member of the papal legation. In recollecting his time in Paris in the summer of 1674, Pacichelli deemed the *Cercle royal* to be "one of the greatest curiosities of French ingenuity" and he transcribed the entire list of figures from the leaflet that he had preserved as a memento.[52] He specified that many were posed as though conversing. The men standing behind the royal protagonists include Charles's illegitimate son, James Scott, Duke of Monmouth, and Henry Bennet, Earl of Arlington, Charles II's trusted Secretary of State, whose loyalty was manifest in a distinctive scar across the bridge of his nose from a Civil War battle.[53] The women, posed in the first row, include a number of Charles's reputed mistresses: Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland, "Marie Barclet" (Mary Berkeley, countess of Falmouth) and "Madame Lussi" (likely a representation of Lucy Walker, Monmouth's mother). This selection of figures, therefore, encapsulated some of the political and romantic intrigue of Charles II's court.

Benoist's reported opportunity to travel to London is one instance of the numerous crossings between the kingdoms as the English monarchy negotiated restoration in the aftermath of civil war. During the conflict, beginning in 1651, Charles II's exile in France has been identified as the source for the luxurious elegance and libertine culture of the court he established upon Restoration in 1660.[54] Henrietta Maria, England's deposed queen and Louis XIV's aunt, had returned to France in 1644. Her son, James, Duke of York, followed her in 1649 and served as a commander in the French army until

[52] Pacichelli, *Memorie de'viaggi per l'Evropa Christiana*, 112–13.
[53] For the wound and Bennet's distinctive patch see, for example, Peter Lely's portrait c. 1670 (National Portrait Gallery, inv no. NPG 1853). Arlington was a figure of interest in France for his role in negotiating the Treaty of Dover with Louis XIV. On the treaty see Asch, *Sacral Kingship*, 135.
[54] Strunck, *Britain and the Continent 1660–1727*, 242–43.

1656. "La belle Bretonne," in the back row of Benoist's first leaflet, referred to Louise de Kéroualle, an aristocrat from Brittany who later gained prominence in England as the Duchess of Portsmouth. In the early 1670s she played a role in brokering an alliance between England and France against the Dutch.[55] Hortense Mancini, the duchesse de Mazarin, included in the French courtly circle in the two early leaflets, relocated to England in 1675 and established herself as Charles II's mistress and an aristocratic socialite.[56] The staged juxtaposition between Louis XIV's court and England's recently restored monarchy evoked the vicissitudes of divine-right-kingship. Benoist's recalibration of the exhibition capitalized on a fascination with England as ally and complementary foil to Bourbon absolutism in France.[57]

One figure on the second leaflet deserves particular attention. Notably outside of either courtly formation, halfway down the page, is the word "Cromwel [sic.]." Brice's guidebook specifies "a very fine portrait of Oliver Cromwell enclosed within a niche."[58] The regicide's portrait, in Benoist's exhibition, was an echo of ceremonial presentations of Cromwell's corpse. Glorifying tributes on the occasion of Cromwell's death in 1658 were symbolically retracted through acts of desecration, upon the Protectorate's fall and the monarchy's return. A wax effigy had been manufactured for Cromwell's funerary obsequies in 1658 as one of a number of traditional royal rites lavished on the corpse of the Lord Protector who had refused many monarchical trappings in his lifetime.[59] An extant example of Cromwell's wax death mask has been related to the moulded cast taken from his embalmed corpse (fig. 2.10). In 1661, with monarchy restored, Cromwell's corpse was disinterred from Westminster Abbey on the anniversary of Charles I's execution to be symbolically hanged and beheaded. The severed head

[55] Lafont, "How Skin Color Became a Racial Marker," 91.
[56] The Duchess was seeking security after having escaped her abusive marriage. On her representational complexity see Shifrin and Walkling, "Performative Hybridity and the Duchess of Mazarin."
[57] On the inter-related conceptions of monarchy between the kingdoms, see Asch, *Sacral Kingship*. Ellen Welch notes that Louis XIV's protection of Charles II during the exile of civil war instilled a hierarchy of dependence in their alliance. See *A Theater of Diplomacy*, 134–35.
[58] "On y voit aussi de la mesme manière un tres-beau portrait d'Olivier Cromvel, enfermé dans une niche" Brice, *Description nouvelle de ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable dans la ville de Paris*, 222.
[59] Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell*, 153-154.

was then mounted on a pike atop Westminster Hall until it was dislodged in 1684.[60] Visiting London in the early 1670s, Benoist undoubtedly saw this gruesome display. It retained some currency and was occasionally imaged in French publications (fig. 2.11).[61] Offset from the courtly circles within a niche, Cromwell's head was a representation of relevance to sacred royalty as absolutism's antithesis.

Considering Cromwell's political charge, as monarchical enemy, Brice's praise for "a very fine portrait of Oliver Cromwell" seems quite particular. This gloss is distinct from the caption for a wax figure of Cromwell on display in the same period in Amsterdam's *Oude Doolhof* (old labyrinth), an attraction that presented waxworks alongside automata at the centre of a labyrinthine garden. The site's publicity booklet condemned Cromwell as a murderer and a tyrant.[62] He was displayed alongside enemies of the Dutch Republic such as the Duke of Alba, in contrast to a series of heroic Protestant rulers, including the martyred convert Henri IV and William of Orange, Count of Nassau. In her analysis of Amsterdam's Doolhoven as spaces of sociable encounter and reflective marvel, Angela Vanhaelen presents the wax figures as foci for collective political identification.[63] Within Benoist's *Cercle royal*, even without moralistic caption, we must imagine that Cromwell's portrait was intended to be viewed as an object of sensational fascination and revulsion. The neutral ambiguity of Brice's reference to Cromwell's "very fine portrait" appears discordant in this respect. The coincidence of wax representations of Cromwell in Amsterdam and Paris underlines the distinction between the explicit didactics of Calvinist republicanism and the postured configurations of courtly presentation in Catholic France.

Chandra Mukerji proposes silence as a definitive force of the political sphere in Louis XIV's France. Beyond discursive expression, absolutism's repressive politics were saliently embedded within

[60] Tomaini, *The Corpse as Text*, 197-98.
[61] It was included, for example in this almanac, which documents the coronation of Louis XIV's enemy William of Orange as King of England in 1688 by denouncing his demonic machiavellianism.
[62] Vanhaelen, *The Moving Statues of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam*, 190.
[63] Vanhaelen, *The Moving Statues of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam*, 190–225.

material culture: "The inarticulacy of things […] made them effective tools of power".[64] While material culture embeds political power dynamics across contexts, and absolutist morality fuelled a burgeoning, loquacious press working within the framework of censorship, Mukerji draws attention to a particular potential of material demonstration under Louis XIV. In this view, impressive works within the king's purview were not primarily prompts to discussion but sites of reverential awe (as in the Versailles gardens, Mukerji's primary case study). Benoist's exhibition positioned courtiers within the king's orbit and demonstrated the English replication of that model by juxtaposing figures in symmetrical placements. In engaging viewers in rapt wonder at sculptural workmanship, luxury apparel, and incredible illusion, the *Cercle royal* corresponds to Mukerji's observations on the potency of material demonstration and social choreography. This perspective gives a different sense to the repeated references to Benoist's sculptures lacking voice. These images of courtly attendants were resolutely silent. If not explicit in descriptions of the display, Cromwell's villainy was still undoubtedly understood. Notably, as demonstrated by Brice's reference in a publication of 1687, Cromwell's portrait outlasted the portrayal of English courtly ensemble in Benoist's display. As we shall see, the exhibition continued to change. This is one early instance of a fascination with violent criminality that would remain an established feature of wax displays.[65]

The political implications of Benoist's waxwork grouping of English figures comprised a marketing opportunity that capitalized on current affairs to draw viewers in. The leaflet that presents Benoist's representation of Charles II's entourage includes lines of information at the bottom that indicates its purpose of publicity. "They are on display every day, morning and night, even under torchlight [mesme aux Flambeaux] at the lodgings of the aforementioned Sieur Benoist, rue Saint Père

[64] Mukerji, "The Archives Made Me Do It," 308.
[65] On the early modern practice of enacting punishments on wax effigies of escaped criminals see Freedberg, *The Power of Images*, 259–62. On Philippe Curitus, *Caverne de Voleurs* in late-eighteenth-century Paris and Tussaud's 'Chamber of Horrors' in London, see Graybill, "A Proximate Violence."

near La Charité, & it costs only 10 *sols* for each person."[66] This sheet provides orientation to the exhibit with reference to the Hospital de la Charité as a landmark. It not only lists the entry fee, but also underlines this price as a *deal* in stating *"*only 10 *sols*." We are very far from Félibien's ideal of an intellectual enterprise unsullied by explicit commerce, in which munificent benefactors generously support inspired artists. In its promotion of cheap viewing and a changing format designed to entice repeat viewers, the *Cercle royal*'s sales model is more aligned with journalistic publications, like the *Mercure,* whose promotional strategies sought popular appeal.[67] In contrast to the aspirational permanence of monuments in marble or bronze, the waxwork display's temporality was impermanent by design. The installation fluctuated and expanded in reference to changing circumstances.

Ambassadors in the *Cercle royal*: Viewing Diplomatic Viewership

> If we believe those who have seen far off lands, and the report of one of this century's greatest travellers, who informed us that he had never seen anything more magnificent, placing it [the vista] third among those he had beheld, namely the entrance to the port of Constantinople, that of the port of Goa, in the Indies, and finally that of the Pont neuf in Paris.[68]
>
> -Germain Brice, *Description nouvelle de ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable dans la ville de Paris,* 1687

In attempting to evoke the Pont neuf's magnificent cityscape perspectives, Brice resorted to comparison with the prospects offered from lookouts in Constantinople and Goa and the authority of an anonymous worldly traveler. This passage demonstrates the utility of a foreigner's gaze as a literary device. French particularity gained distinctness through comparison. In its promise to survey the city's "most singular and remarkable" features, Brice's guidebook presents Paris itself as something of an

---

[66] "On les montrera tous les jours, matin & soir, mesme aux Flambeaux, au logis dudit Sieur Benoist, ruë Saint Pere proche la Charité, & l'on ne prendra que dix sols pour chaque personne."

[67] Christophe Schuwey's publications have explored the marketing savvy of seventeenth-century authors in France that literary scholars have long over looked. On the *Mercure* see *Un entrepreneur des lettres au XVIIe siècle*.*

[68]"S'il l'on en croit ceux qui ont veu les Païs éloignez; et le rapport d'un des plus grands voyageurs de ce siecle lequel nous fait connoistre qu'il n'a rien observé de plus magnifique, la mettant pour la troisiéme de celle qu'il avoit remarquées, à sçavoir celle de l'entrée du Port de Constantinople, celle du Port de Goa dans les Indes, & enfin celle du Pont neuf de Paris, qui s'entend d'un côté sur le Louvre [...]." Brice, *Description nouvelle*, 2:299-300.

expansive urban curiosity cabinet, an endless array of diverse wonders to behold.[69] Within this catalogue of rarity, Brice introduced the *Cercle royal* as an exceptional novelty for foreigners, "where they will have the satisfaction of things they could never find elsewhere."[70]

This section pursues dynamics of cross-cultural encounter and comparison with reference to the *Cercle royal'*s fluctuating installations. Beginning in the 1680s, Benoist's display incorporated portraits of the stream of dignitaries received at Versailles. A series of articles in the *Mercure* described ambassadors' visits to the *Cercle royal* as a means of promoting the exhibition as a vicarious experience of court ceremony. As we shall see, these passages of journalistic reporting were occasionally, likely, exaggerated or fabricated. Regardless of their accuracy, the *Mercure*'s scenes of visiting diplomats entranced by waxwork illusion evidence fascination with the comparative perspectives of non-Catholic viewers. Benoist's waxwork display was a site for negotiating fraught hierarchies of diplomatic relation through narratives of sculptural encounter.

In considering the tangible intimacy that inflected Benoist's wax presentations of diplomatic ceremony, we can begin with an embassy on behalf of the Tzar of Muscovy (present-day Russia), which received extensive coverage in the *Mercure'*s May issue of 1681. The cultural distinctiveness of the Muscovite ambassadors was, in the *Mercure'*s account, marked by bonds of intimacy that were quickly forged with French hosts. The *Mercure* describes the easy affection that the ambassadors displayed for their guide, Monsieur Torf and continued to describe the apparent warmth between the Muscovite visitors and Benoist as their Parisian portraitist: "They [the ambassadors] also displayed great friendship for Mr. Benoist, who made portraits of the two ambassadors and of the son; they were constantly exchanging caresses. It must also be noted that the portraits were perfectly resembling."[71]

[69]Brice's subtitle underlined his search for remarkable particularities: "Recherche curieuse des choses les plus singulieres & les plus remarquables qui se trouvent à present dans cette grande Ville."

[70] The *Cercle royal* was an attraction "que les Etrangers doivent remarquer soigneusement & où ils auront la satisfaction de voir des choses qu'ils ne trouveront point ailleurs. Brice, *Description nouvelle* , 2:20.

[71] Ils ont aussi fait paroistre beaucoup d'amitié à Mr. Benoist, qui a fait le Portrait des deux Ambassadeurs, & du Fils; ils l'accabloient à tous momens de carresses. Aussi faut-il avoüer que ces Portraits sont tout à fait ressemblans. *Mercure galant* (May, 1681)310-311. The exhibition's earliest extant leaflet already included an anonymous Muscovite within the courtly

The described physical intimacy between Muscovite visitors and their portraitist suggests sympathetic relations between perfect resemblance and tactile immediacy.

Benoist's replicative scrutiny complemented the *Mercure'*s detailed report, which promised readers an unfiltered account of the diplomats' daily itinerary. The report offered readers vicarious access to Versailles's ceremonial protocols and sumptuously renovated interiors.[72] The *Mercure* also framed its account of the embassy as an attestation of global reverence for Louis XIV. It stated that this diplomatic assignment was fiercely in demand within the Tzar's court due to France's renowned supremacy in "civility, pleasures, magnificence, and abundance."[73] The *Mercure* claimed that foreign ambassadors eagerly anticipated revelling in the sight of the greatest of all kings.[74] This alluring potential was realized in the *Mercure'*s description of the trembling ambassadors prostrating themselves before Louis XIV while declaring his unparalleled grandeur.[75] In its promise of extensive detail in descriptions of the embassy and the claims of submissive awe in Louis XIV's presence, the *Mercure* is informative to the positioning of dignitaries within Benoist's display. The *Cercle royal*'s viewers could approach and examine the ambassadors' wax representations long after their departure from France. Posed within proximity to the French court, these portraits were also suspended in a state of perpetual reverence for Louis XIV.

The *Mercure* elaborated on the exhibition's purpose as a tantalizing evocation of Versailles's ceremonial sphere in the April issue of 1684, three years after the Muscovite embassy. The article

---

entourage. The *Mercure* attests to individuated particularity for Muscovite portrayals as the exhibition expanded.

[72] The *Mercure* promised to relay "tout ce qui s'est passé depuis le débarquement des Ambassadeurs de Moscovie à Calais jusques au jour de leur depart de Paris; leurs Audiences; Ce qu'ils on veu, & ce qu'ils ont dit." *Mercure galant* (May 1681) 228.

[73] "regarder la France comme un Païs où la civilité, les plaisirs, la magnificence, & l'abondance, se trouvent au plus haut point"; *Mercure galant* (May 1681)233-234.

[74] "[…] il n'y a personne qui ne souhaite y venir, beaucoup moins pourtant pour estre témoin de toutes ces choses, que pour joüir de la veüe du plus grand de tous les Roys. Ainsi l'employ de cette ambassade fut fort brigué dans la Cour du Tzar." *Mercure galant* (May 1681)233-234.

[75] *Mercure galant* (May 1681) 305.

enthusiastically announced an updated wax portrait of Louis XIV, who was now forty six years old. One year after the queen's death, the king's portrait had aged:

> Mr Benoist, whose reputation is widespread in all European courts, from the honour of having worked on the wax portraits of several kings and several queens, has just completed a new one of his majesty, in which we can say that he has surpassed himself. Never before has he so artfully employed his fortunate talent for perfectly imitating nature as in this new portrait, for which, with particular generosity, the king certainly wanted to allow him all the time necessary to realize it. We see in it a lively and natural air to which only movement is lacking to convince that it is something more than a portrait.[76]

The passage ties a standard line of lifelike praise to an attestation of royal approval. Louis XIV's generous allowance of time is an intriguing rhetorical elision. If not specifying the tactility of a life-cast moulding, the phrase does implicate royal participation in vivacious portrayal. In this sense, Benoist's portrait realizes the ideal of the king himself as a motivating force of artistic accomplishment.[77] The article ends with the assurance that Benoist "works less for his own gain in glory than to satisfy the eagerness of those who do not have the honour of approaching the king."[78] In presenting remote figures in viewers' immediate vicinity, the *Cercle royal'*s vision of courtly glamour complements the *Mercure'*s own descriptive mode. Both the *Cercle royal* and the *Mercure galant* were venues for imaginatively participating in royal ceremony.

Benoist capitalized on his medium's capacity to render intriguing distant figures in tangible proximity in a major reinstallation of the *Cercle royal* in the mid 1680s that featured the Ottoman Sultan, his family, and their courtly entourage as a parallel to the French courtiers. In 1687, Brice

---

[76] "Mr Benoist, dont la réputation est si repanduë dans toutes les Cours de l'Europe, par l'avantage qu'il a eu de travailler aux Portraits en cire de plusieurs Roys, & de plusieurs Reynes, vient d'en finir un nouveau de Sa Majesté, dans lequel on peut dire qu'il s'est surpassé luy mesme. Jamais il m'avoit encore employé avec tant d'art le talent heureux qu'il a d'imiter parfaitement la Nature, que dans ce nouveau Portrait, par lequel par une bonté particulière. Le Roy a bien voulu luy accorder tout le temps qui luy a esté nécessaire pour l'achever. On y voit un air vif, & naturel, auquel il ne manque que le mouvement pour faire croire que c'est quelque chose de plus qu'un portrait." *Mercure galant* (April 1684) 174-76.

[77] For example, as noted above, Félibien ended his preface to the *Conférences* with the statement that painters and sculptors were like tools in Louis XIV's hands Félibien, *Conférences*, n.p.

[78] Cet Excellent Homme, qui travaille moins pour l'augmentation de sa gloire, que pour satisfaire à l'empressement de ceux qui n'ont pas l'honneur d'approcher Sa Majesté, veut bien le faire paroistre dans le Cercle Royal qui en recevra un nouveau lustre, & procurera par là un nouveau plaisir aux Curieux. *Mercure galant* (April 1684) 76.

describes the new installation: Charles II along with The Doge of Genoa, his senators, and the King and Queen of Spain were placed in a balcony overlooking the French and Ottoman courts, which were each positioned on opposite sides of the room.[79] This re-conceived version of the exhibition is documented by another promotional leaflet that has not yet been addressed in scholarship (fig. 2.12). The display has grown considerably, from forty five portraits in the second leaflet of c.1674 to seventy five wax figures a decade later. Additionally, this listing does not include the eight figures positioned in the balcony overlooking the floor, such as the Doge of Genoa. The line of practical information along the leaflet's bottom edge identifies the display in Benoist's residence on the rue Saint-Pères close to the Hotel Saint-Simon. It repeats the opening hours that extend into the evening, and specifies 15 *sols* entry, a small but notable increase.[80]

Before turning to consider the Sultan's assembly, we must note the he qualification of a "new" courtly circle of France, a designation that underlines generational turnover and shifting courtly celebrity. While the deceased queen's figure is still central, Louis XIV's young grandchildren, the duc d'Anjou and the duc de Bourgogne (three and four-years old respectively in 1687) are now included. Their significance within the line of succession is indicated in capitalized titles on the leaflet. The comte de Toulouse and duc de Maine, Louis XIV's legitimated children with the marquise de Montespan are also included, though their names are not distinguished in capitals. Lavallière's portrait has been removed, the duchess having retired to a convent in 1674. Her legitimated children maintained their place in the exhibition, however, undoubtedly in revised adult portrayals (Mademoiselle de Blois was married in 1680 to become the princesse de Conti). Charles II's figure was preserved but removed to the periphery. Cromwell's head retained its place in a niche.[81] His name is

[79] Brice, *Description nouvelle de ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable dans la ville de Paris*, 2:221.
[80] "On verra ces cercles dans la maison ordinaire du Sieur Benoist, rue saint Pere proche l'Hotel saint simon, à toutes heures du jour et mesme aux flambeaux, on prendra quinze sols pour chaque personne."
[81] Brice describes the head in a niche and indicates its placement alongside other persons of "remarkable reputation. *Description nouvelle de ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable dans la ville de Paris*, 2:221.

outside of the courtly configurations at bottom right. The circle of English courtiers has been dissolved and replaced with the Ottoman sultan's entourage. At centre is the sultan, a sultana, and their son and heir, in symmetry with the French royal family. The Grand Vizier is presented alongside them.

Benoist's full-scale rendition of the Ottoman court has significant implications for considering the representation of France's global imaginary within the exhibition space. As opposed to the British courtiers whom Benoist had supposedly encountered and moulded, in this instance Benoist applied his mode of portrayal to figures beyond reach. Dubois de Saint Gelais specified that Benoist added a representation of the Ottoman court, "which he had never seen."[82] Benoist's Ottoman portraits may have been life-casts, but if so, they were moulded from models rather than their purported subjects. Apparently, Benoist compensated for this tenuous connection by clothing his figures in imported garments. Brice's guidebook noted that opposite Benoist's representation of illustrious French courtiers in sumptuous garb was "the court of the Sublime Porte with his odalisques or sultanas in regional clothes that had been brought from Constantinople."[83] As supposedly authentic imports, these outfits made a claim of indexicality for portraits that were inventions.

As opposed to the named personalities that made up the French courtly circle, the Sultan's entourage consists primarily of types. It includes a eunuch and number of Ottoman warriors: a tartar (member of the calvary), a solak archer, and Mouzour Aga, captain of janissaries (an elite division of the Ottoman army).[84] Envoys to France from Muscovy and Morocco have been integrated into this grouping. A significant portion of figures are anonymous women identified by their distinctive regional costumes from across the Mediterranean. The leaflet indicates ladies from Greece, Turkey, Smyrna Syria, Macedonia, Constantinople, Persia, and Morocco among other locations. In its array of types

[82] "Il joignit au cercle dela cour ceux des cours étrangères, & même celui de la Porte, qu'il n'avoit jamais vue." Dubois de Saint Gelais, *Histoire journalière de Paris*, 191.
[83] "Outre cela on voit la Cour du grand Seigneur avec ses Odaliques [sic.] ou Sultanes en habits du païs qui ont est. Apportez de Constantinople." Brice, *Description nouvelle de ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable dans la ville de Paris*, 2:221.
[84] Chandra Mukerji analyzes Ottoman sartorial typologies with reference to a seminal costume book, first published by cartographer Nicolas de Nicolay in 1567 and then frequently reprinted. She overviews military uniforms including the Janissinary Aga, or captain. Mukerji, "Costume and Character in the Ottoman Empire," 156–60.

distinguished by dress, this new instantiation of Benoist's display featured personas familiar from engravings and ethnographic accounts.[85] The luxurious courtly apparel that had long been a draw of Benoist's display was extended in sumptuous samples of foreign dress. In recalibrating the exhibition to focus substantially on the Ottoman realm, Benoist adapted his sculptural mode, with its implication of replicative authenticity, to the subject of travel narratives and costume books, genres that consistently framed their depictions with claims of directly witnessed observation.[86]

The longstanding political alliance between France and the Ottoman empire was a point of vulnerability for Louis XIV's image as Catholicism's militant defender.[87] Despite ongoing diplomatic relations and trade agreements, disparaging representations of Ottoman subjects persisted in France.[88] Ellen Welch notes that a "hollow rhetoric demonizing Turks provided a useful foil against which a collective European identity could come into focus."[89] Additionally, Protestant critics derided Louis XIV's connection with a Muslim ruler as a dependence that betrayed the interests of Christian Europe.[90] As we have seen, even the earliest leaflet of the *Cercle royal* in 1669 included an Ottoman figure, a representation of "the Turkish ambassador," Suleiman Aga. The diplomatic frictions of that embassy informed Molière's satirical presentation of Ottoman customs and French fascination with them in *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme,* a comédie ballet first performed in 1670, one year after the ambassador's visit. Daren Hodson argues against the traditional view that the play mocked Ottoman strangeness by claiming that it foregrounded embarrassing diplomatic errors by French officials during Suleimen

---

[85] A series of engravings focused on the ethnic distinctions of women in the Ottoman empire, engraved by Nicholas Cochin after George de la Chapelle in 1648 presents a particularly relevant comparison, for its ethnographic overview feminine apparel. See Spencer, "Habits and Habillement in Seventeenth-Century Voyages."
[86] For example, George La Chapelle insisted that his illustrations from observation. See Spencer, 317–19.
[87] Initially forged between François I and Süleyman the Magnificent in union against of the Hapsburgs, the alliance between France and the Ottoman empire was fraught but enduring, extending into the eighteenth century. Heath, "Unholy Alliance."
[88]In addition to representations of Ottoman figures in visual media, journalism, and literature, Meredith Martin and Gillian Weiss have investigated the presence of *escalves turcs*, enslaved captives from Ottoman territories (or occasionally from North Africa) in France. See Martin and Weiss, "'Turks' on Display during the Reign of Louis XIV."
[89] Welch, *A Theater of Diplomacy*, 168.
[90]One prominent satirical tract of 1690 mocked Louis XIV's pretensions as *le Roi très Chrétien* by designating him the "most Christian Turk." Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*, 138–39.

Aga's visit.[91] The ambiguous target of Molière's satire exemplifies the Ottoman visitor as a subject of problematic fascination within France. Benoist's portrait of Suleiman Aga can be related to the context of interest inTurkish masquerade and the crosscurrents of cultural perception.[92]

The fraught ambiguity of Louis XIV's association with the Sultan implies tensions of hierarchy for the *Cercle royal*'s parallel presentation of French and Ottoman courts in the 1680s. Daniela Bleichmar has described curiosity cabinets as microcosmic worlds in which European distinctiveness was consistently offset from the confused blending of other regions.[93] This perspective on comparative global modeling is informative for considering the claims for supremacy inherent in the parallel between French nobility and the array of ambassadors and mediterranean types posed in the vicinity of Ottoman royalty. The precision of identified portraits for the French figures confirms this grouping's primacy in contrast to their international counterparts. The numerous sources that mention Benoist's portrayal of the sultan never name him, though there had been a change of Ottoman rulership closely coordinated with Benoist's integration of the Sultan's 'portrait,' and therefore this identity would have been ambiguous. Suleiman II succeeded Mehmed IV in 1687.

The experience of viewing the installation of the *Cercle royal* that featured the Sultan's entourage was dramatized in a *Mercure* article of 1687. This issue was the final instalment of four supplementary volumes of the journal that charted the much-anticipated embassy from Siam (present-day Thailand) to France.[94] In the final days of the embassy, amidst a long series of ceremonial farewells from officials, the three Siamese ambassadors arrived at Benoist's residence where they were incredulous to encounter wax duplications of the French courtiers they had recently met: "In entering the room in which the two circles are displayed, that is that of France and that of Constantinople, they

[91] Hodson, "A Would-Be Turk."
[92] On the prominence of Ottoman masquerade in early modern France as a practice of identity formation through cultural differentiation see Landweber, "Celebrating Identity."
[93] Bleichmar argues that the vagueness and confusion about non-European artefacts evidences the objective to "possess, view, and register foreigness." "The Cabinet and the World," 443.
[94] On the strategic significance of this alliance for French trade see Martin, "Mirror Reflections"; Love, "Monarchs, Merchants, and Missionaries."

believed, first, that there was some sort of enchantment that caused them to find, in the same place, such different sorts of people dressed superbly and in such natural attitudes."[95] The scene of Siamese viewership thus presented an opportunity to elaborate on the established theme of the *Cercle royal*'s "enchantment."

The typical account of the suspended disbelief of waxwork illusion was, however, heightened in this instance as literal belief:

> The first ambassador [Kosa Pan] unable to believe his eyes, brought his hand to the garments numerous times in order to understand what it could be. [...] They [the Siamese ambassadors] examined all the figures with very great attention and indicated their willingness to be of their number, which led *sieur* Benoist to represent the three ambassadors in wax and in paint so that we can see them at the *Cercle* dressed as they were on the day of their first audience [at Versailles].[96]

While much is uncertain in the historical record of the *Cercle royal*'s displayed contents, the fact that ambassadors donated their ceremonial garb is repeated in numerous primary sources, indicating that these outfits were a significant feature of the exhibition's attraction.[97] By dressing his wax figures in worn clothes, Benoist fuelled the market fascination with distinctive Siamese textiles that the diplomatic mission had inspired (figs. 2.13-14).[98] Touching sculpture – as the first ambassador does in his moment of bewilderment – was a tendency typically attributed to ignorant viewers.[99] As in the

---

[95] "J'ay oublié de vous dire qu'ils ont admiré au Cercle Royal toutes les Personnes illustres qu'ils avoient déjà veuës à la Cour. En entrant (321) dans la Sale où les deux Cercles sont disposez, sçavoir celuy de France & celuy de Constantionople : Ils crurent d'abord qu'il y avoit quelque sorte d'enchantement qui leur faisoit trouver en un même lieu tant de differentes sortes de personnes habillées superbement, & dans des attitudes si naturelles." *Mercure galant*, (January 1687, *Voyage des ambassadeurs de Siam*) 4:320-21.

[96] "[...] Le premier Ambassadeur ne pouvant ajoûter foy à ses yeux, porta plusieurs fois ses mains sur les habits, pour sçavoir ce que pouvoit estre. On luy fit ensuite remarquer dans le (322) même lieu les Portraits des Ambassadeurs des Nations éloignées, qui sont venus en France depuis dix ou douze ans, avec lesquels on a mis le Doge de Gennes, & les quatre Senateurs qui l'accompagnerent. Ils examinerent toutes les Figures avec une tres-grande attention, & témoignerent qu'ils seroient bien aises d'estre dans ce nombre, ce qui a esté cause que le sieur Benoist a representé en cire & en peinture les trois Ambassadeurs que l'on voit au Cercle, habillez comme ils estoient le jour de leur premiere Audience." *Mercure galant*, (January 1687, *Voyage des ambassadeurs de Siam*) 4:321-323.

[97] Brice, Description nouvelle de ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable dans la ville de Paris., 2:221; *Mercure galant* (January 1687, *Voyage des ambassadeurs de Siam*)4: 323; Dubois de Saint Gelais, *Histoire journalière de Paris*, 191.

[98] For the impact of the embassy on Parisian fashion see Thépaut-Cabasset, "Fashion Encounters: The 'Siamoise.'"

[99] For example, Bernini had claimed that French aristocrats were prone to this impropriety as opposed to more refined Italians. He designed an elaborate custom pedestal for his bust of Louis XIV with the stated purpose of keeping groping admirers at bay Chantelou, *Journal de Voyage Du Cavalier Bernin*, 171–72.

reference to the caressing Muscovite diplomats, the *Mercure's* emphasis on Kosa Pan's questioning touch underlines the tantalizing tactility of Benoist's fabrications. The scene is subtly promotional in its implicit invitation to the *Mercure's* readers to visit the display and test their own incredulity.

The *Mercure's* description of Siamese ambassadors contemplating the *Cercle royal* displaces any discomfort with waxworks' disorienting illusion onto Buddhist observers. François Lemée's broad comparative survey of sculpture had attributed idolatrous perception to Siamese viewers: "one must admire the simplicity of the Siamese, that take certain statues for men rendered inanimate by divine virtue."[100] A 1691 publication on Siam repeated the accusation of a tendency toward naive credulity: "They understand not bodies better than souls; and in all matters their inclination is to imagine wonders and persuade themselves so much the more easily to believe them, as they are incredible."[101] These statements recall the bewilderment of the first ambassador, Kosa Pan, while inspecting Benoist's waxworks, though his supposed confusion was for petrified men rather than enchanted statues. The potential idolatrous implication of waxworks was not, however, exclusive to the Siamese ambassadors. In 1696 Louis de Sanlecque compared Benoist's fabrications to pagan idols in a satirical poem on techniques of oration. The poem's speaker issues a joking threat to stiff presenters: "this is how we saw idols in ancient times/ without animating their eyes, their speech was animated/ But if your eye remains stubbornly glazed over/ We'll have to place you in Benoist's *cercle*."[102] Idolatry was a persistent complication in sculpture's early modern reception, though it gained particular prominence in the aftermath of Louis XIV's termination of Protestant tolerance in 1685, with the revocation of the Edict

[100] Lemée, *Traité Des Statues*, 376.
[101] Simon de La Loubière's 1691 commentary on the Siamese *History of Animals* within his *New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam* (1691) is quoted in Benson, "European Wonders at the Court of Siam," 167. Loubière led the French embassy that accompanied the Siamese ambassadors home in 1687.
[102] "C'est ainsi qu'autrefois on voyoit des Idoles, /Sans animer leurs yeux, animer leurs paroles. /Mais si vôtre œil enfin s'obstine à se glacer, /Au cercle de Benoît il faudra vous placer."Sanlecque's "Poème sur les mauvais gestes de ceux qui parlent en public, & sur tout des prédicateurs" was included in Sanlecque, *Poesies heroiques, morales et satyriques*, 61.

of Nantes.[103] Rebecca Zorach identifies idolatry as a leitmotif in accounts of the Siamese embassy, which she relates with underlying anxieties over Protestant accusations of absolutism's heresy. In this case, the ambiguity of waxwork illusion presented an opportunity for parsing the contrasts of religious perceptions.

In other instances of the Mercure's report, Siamese ambassadors aesthetic responses were celebrated for their conformity with French standards of taste. During a visit to the *Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture,* Charles Le Brun had praised Kosa Pan's discerning evaluation of students' drawings.[104] Immediately following their visit to Benoist's residence, the ambassadors were escorted to visit Martin Desjardins's recently installed royal monument in the Place des Victoires. Kosa Pan's opinion is quoted in the *Mercure*'s text: "If it wasn't admirable for its beauty, craftsmanship and riches, it would be for the great king it represents, and it should also be greatly appreciated for the zeal of he who erected it."[105] Considering that this monument provoked a crisis of diplomatic relations, the presentation of an ambassador's admiration was particularly charged. Notably, Kosa Pan's reported response echoes numerous other articles in the M*ercure galant* that answered the outpouring of Protestant criticism over the heretical idolatry of the monument's dedication to Louis XIV as "the immortal man [VIRO IMMORTALI]."[106] Perhaps the *Place des Victoires* inspired the eloquent appreciation of speech while Benoist's figures provoked the groping questioning of touch. The *Mercure'*s contrasting scenes of sculptural encounter emphasize the fascinating tactility of Benoist's wax figures that could engage and confound viewers. The religious difference of Buddhist viewers could emphasize the intrigue of discrepancy between suggestive illusion and the physicality of crafted materials in tangible reach.

---

[103] On the prevalence of idolatrous association with sculpture in this period see Weinshenker, "Idolatry and Sculpture in Ancien Régime France." Caroline Van Eck has argued that defence against accusations of royal idolatry in this context opened a new comparative framework for considering sculpture. See Eck, *Art, Agency and Living Presence*, esp. 80-99.
[104] Mercure galant (September 1686, *Voyage des ambassadeurs de Siam*) 303-304.
[105] Zorach, "An Idolatry of the Letter."
[106] Ziegler, "Le demi-dieu des païens.," 51–52.

The significant shift in the exhibition's focus to include Ottoman royalty, warriors, and a range of ambassadors prompted Benoist to apply for a renewed patent. The extant *lettres de privilèges,* dated to March 31, 1688, extend Benoist's protections beyond the wax representation of Marie-Thérèse's courtiers to include "the extraordinary ambassadors of Siam, Morocco, Muscovy, Algeria, the Doge of Genoa, the court of the Ottoman sultan (*Grand-Seigneur)*and other foreign courts."[107] Robert Wellington perceptively observes that Benoist's presentation of foreign representatives as a collective of tributaries to Louis XIV echoes official strategies of royal glorification in this period. He notes, in particular, its relationship with Versailles's ambassador's staircase (1674-1679), designed by Charles Le Brun, as a prominent model of "international spectatorship."[108] Within the décor of this monumental hall, four trompe l'oeil frescos depicted representatives of the globe's four known continents to pay tribute to Louis XIV. Though Wellington correctly identifies the *Cercle royal* a noteworthy site for considering global representation under absolutism, he does not mention the configuration of Ottoman royalty and attendants that were the focal point of this instantiation of the display. Within Benoist's cabinet, moreover, the scene of gathered dignitaries and Ottoman elite was inflected in a particular way. Brice's gloss on this grouping, as the Sultan surrounded by odalisques, underlines gendered stereotypes of Ottoman society in Benoist's portrayal. Ottoman women were frequently figures of enticing mystery in early modern Europe.[109]

The schema of promotional intrigue for the *Cercle royal* through the report of supposedly superstitious perception was repeated in variation in the journal's subsequent accounts of diplomatic missions. On the occasion of an embassy from Tripoli (a province of the Ottoman empire in present-day Libya), the *Mercure*'s reporter quoted an extended tirade pronounced at the *Cercle royal* on the June 15, 1704. The ambassador, Hadgi Mustafa Aga, first stated that Benoist's portrait of the duchesse

[107] Boislisle, "Les figures de cire sous Louis XIV," 168..
[108] Wellington, "Antoine Benoist's Wax Portraits of Louis XIV."
[109] Harrigan, *Veiled Encounters*, 261–63.

de Bourgogne "lacked only speech." Apparently when Benoist encouraged him to elaborate, the Tripolitan ambassador proceeded to outline a four-tiered schema of hell. The first was for sinning Muslims, the second for Christians, Jews, and idolaters, and the third for painters and sculptors who had mimicked human and angelic forms. The fourth was for Benoist alone. The ambassador predicted that on judgment day, the wax figure of the duchess would surely demand a soul from Benoist who "would immediately be thrown into the abyss by God's fair judgment," in retribution for having made a "counterfeit without the capacity to provide a soul."[110]

The *Mercure*'s account of the ambassador's quoted reaction entangles compliment with condemnation since Benoist's offence is in succeeding above all other portraitists. Highlighting the duchesse de Bourgogne as the focal point of the display in 1704 indicates that Benoist's *Cercle royal* continued to be updated beyond the records that I have been able to locate. Marie-Adélaïde Savoy had married Louis XIV's grandson and heir, the duc de Bourgogne in 1697.[111] The ambassador's reaction presents a dramatic variation on the conventional notion of an enlivened portrait lacking speech. Here the tension between lively features and the morbid inanimacy of sculptural substance ends in a scene of betrayal and punishment in the realm of the afterlife. Hadgi Mustafa's reported response was, therefore, an ironic elaboration of the dialectics of fabricated enchantment that persisted in the reception of Benoist's exhibition.

It was also an opportunity to emphasize the intriguing distinction of Muslim viewership. Confrontation with sculpture provided a scenario to underline religious difference by bringing Islamic prohibition of figurative imagery to the fore. In describing the ambassador's attentive contemplation of *Apollo's Fountain* within the Versailles gardens, the *Mercure* specifies that Hadgi Mustafa's guide,

---

[110] "[…] il seroit aussi tost precipité dans l'abisme par un juste jugement de Dieu, qui luy reprocheroit son impudence d'avoir par son habilité & son art approché de si prés de l'œuvre de Dieu de sa creature, & de l'avoir voulu contrefaire sans luy pouvoir donner l'ame." *Mercure galant* (July 1704) 144-145.

[111] Her youthful presence at Versailles shifted the tone of the courtly sphere. Memoirists of the era described her irreverent antics as a source of delight in Louis XIV's age. Saint-Simon, *Saint-Simon at Versailles*, 168–71.

Pétis de la Croix, *sécretaire-interprète du roi*, adapted the myths to accommodate the ambassador's religious beliefs.[112] The *Mercure* claimed that "Turks and Arabs follow the Jewish and Arabic Kabbala. For example, instead of naming Apollo the sun god, he [Pétis de la Croix] told him [Hadgi Mustafa Aga] that it was an angel God tasked with guiding the sun, and so on for the other mythical deities."[113] The *Mercure*'s confusion of Jewish and Islamic theologies affirms the intrigue of religious alterity. The accommodation to the ambassador's religious sensitivities might seem exaggerated considering that in an earlier document Pétis de la Croix had stated that Hadgi Mustafa Aga converted from Christianity to Islam.[114] When listening to Notre Dame's choir, the ambassador apparently deemed the sound angelic, though he expressed regret for the inevitable damnation of those "who pray to God with so much zeal and magnificence."[115] As in the condemnation of Benoist for convincing portraits, the ambassador's backhand praise for French accomplishments was a consistent feature of the *Mercure*'s reporting.

The unreliability of the *Mercure'*s report is suggested by a similar account in the *Mercure*'s description of the Moroccan envoy, Abdallah ben Aisha, who visited Benoist's display five years prior, in 1699. According to the *Mercure, t*he ambassador apparently noted, disapprovingly, that a couple of Muslim visitors had allowed themselves to be cast in wax: "If, according to Mohamed's law, portraiture was a crime, then making wax portraits was an abomination and Mr. Benoist would be more damned than the other painters."[116] The 1699 report, therefore, provided the template for a second iteration in 1704. Perhaps there was a coincidence of disapproval from two Muslim dignitaries, as the *Mercure*

[112] On Pétis de la Croix's career in diplomacy and scholarly translation see Dew, *Orientalism in Louis XIV's France*, 28–29.
[113] "l'esprit & les superstitions Cabalistiques, les Turcs & les Arabes s'attachant à la Cabale Judaïque & Arabique. Par exemple, au lieu de nommer Apollon le Dieu du Soleil, il lui dit que c'estoit l'Ange auquel Dieu avoit donné la conduite du Soleil, & ainsi des autres Divinitez de la Fable." *Mercure galant* (July 1704) 144-145.
[114] In a report addressed to Pontchartrain as State Secretary of the Navy in 1697, Pétis de La Croix identified Hadgi Mustafa as the son of an Orthodox priest from Chios: "Il est renegat fils d'un prestre grec de l'Isle de Chyo." Berthier, "Tripoli de Barbarie à La Fin Du Xviie Siècle," 28.
[115] "j'ay bien de la peine à croire que des gens qui prient Dieu avec tant de zele & de magnificence soient damnez. N'est-ce pas une espece de Paradis en ce monde & Cette Musique resemble à celle des Anges, ell enleve le Coeur vers Dieu." *Mercure galant* (July 1704) 158
[116] "Si suivant la Loy de Mahomet la portraiture estoit un crime, celuy de faire des portraits en cire estoit une abomination, & que M. Benoist seroit encore plus damné que tous les autres peintres." This viewing likely took place within Benoist's loge at the Foire Saint-Germain, since the ambassador proceeded to view the fair's elephant. *Mercure galant* (April 1699), 62.

claimed. We might also see this repetition as the variation of a formula deemed dramatically compelling, and, therefore, effective for engaging readers and renewing interest in an attraction that was already forty years old in 1704.

The scene in the afterlife as the wax portrait of the duchesse de Bourgogne gains voice and demands her soul, parodies Benoist's funerary display for Marie-Thérèse, in which the queen approached heaven in the hand of her angel. The reverential viewership of commemorative church ceremony was replayed in a scene of superstitious mysticism. The appropriated voices of non-Europeans and the distorted representations of their religious practice could provide a foil to the decorum of sculptural appreciation. Scripting the awestruck bewilderment of non-Catholic diplomats in Benoist's display provided an opportunity to displace concerns about the impropriety of waxwork illusion. The *Mercure*'s report of Hadgi Mustafa Aga's condemnation echoes Félibien's concerns of anxious replication and soulless portraits. The *Mercure*'s editors, however, present the ambiguities of waxworks' fleeting illusion as a source of enticement for potential viewers.

As we consider the *Cercle* royal's fluctuating curation from the 1680s into the first decade of the eighteenth century, it is pertinent to note that an augmenting number of wax figures were coordinated with an increasing number of paintings and exotica that Benoist integrated into the display. In 1687 Brice's guidebook describes "considerable rarities" on display in the *Cercle royal* including Italian paintings, foreign weaponry, and examples of faience pottery.[117] In the updated 1698 edition of his guidebook, Brice edited down the commentary on wax figures and added considerable detail for the painting collection, which might indicate a shift of emphasis in Benoist's display over the last decade of the seventeenth century. Brice specified works by Raphael, Titian, Rubens, and Van Dyck.[118] In

[117] Brice, *Description nouvelle de ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable dans la ville de Paris*, 2:222. Benoist was included in Antoine Schnapper's overview of important collectors of Louis XIV's era. Schnapper, *Curieux Du Grand Siècle*, 2:403.
[118] Brice, *Description nouvelle de la ville de Paris*, 266. In a recent article Andrea Daninos scrutinizes inventory records of Benoist's paintings and traces provenance records to detail Benoist's engagement with the painting market. Daninos, "La Collezione d'arte di Antoine Benoist."

Brice's next updated edition, in 1706 he remarked that Benoist's exhibition space now featured a painted ceiling by Claude Audran, a distinct mark of refined taste.[119] Alongside these investments in European painting, Benoist accumulated an assortment of imported artefacts, which Brice also charted with increasing interest over his editions. In 1706, Brice notes works in porcelain, all manner of foreign weaponry and garments from the Mediterranean. Benoist's posthumous inventory includes Turkish swords, hunting rifles, a Chinese helmet, and a feathered costume *à l'indienne.*[120] Some of these items, such as the Janissary's helmet and the doge's hat were undoubtedly props for wax figures. Benoist's accumulated trove of painted masterworks may have leavened the accusations of his waxworks as trivial spectacle. The contrast between Brice's attentive listing of European painters with the more general evocation of diverse rarities from afar conforms to Bleichmar's observation that European distinctiveness was frequently differentiated from confused imprecision of non-European artefacts in the context of curiosity cabinets.[121] Though this mode of contrast enforced hierarchy, Benoist's collection of artefacts from afar and his fabricated portraits of diplomatic travellers and distant rulers may have been a primary draw for viewers, nevertheless.

This section has traced curatorial revisions to the *Cercle royal* over three decades, beginning in the 1680s. The expanded cast of diplomatic envoys and the integration of an array of Mediterranean figures grouped around the Ottoman Sultan attest to Benoist's effort to attract viewers by continually bolstering the exhibition's novelty. Waxworks' striking corporeality presented opportunities to highlight fascinating distinctiveness of non-Catholic modes of viewing (Russian Orthodox, Buddhist, Muslim). One final image can exemplify the *Cercle royal's* capacity to condense global networks of international relations into the embodied encounters of courtly ceremony. A well-known Dutch caricature depicts

[119] In the early decades of the eighteenth century Audran's arabesque designs featured on the ceilings of the most prominent connoisseurs including, as of c.1725, the Comtesse de Verrue, an influential collector stationed in Benoist's neighbourhood, the Faubourg Saint-Germain. See Ziskin, *Sheltering Art*, 53–54.
[120] "Inventaire Après Décès d'Antoine Benoist," f.41.
[121] Bleichmar, "The Cabinet and the World," 436.

Louis XIV in a "stolen outfit" (fig. 2.15).[122]The print shows the king in the elegant pose and attire familiar from state portraits, though he is cloaked in a map of recent European conquests.[123] Miniature architectural imagery on each garment corresponds with a key that identifies a long list of contested cities occupied during the Franco-Dutch war in the 1670s. Under the print's title, Dutch text sarcastically states that this image depicts the figure of Louis XIV precisely as he presents himself "in the royal circle of Paris [inde Crikel Rojaal tot Parys]."[124] The coincidence of a reference to the Paris's *Cercle royal* and the attention to Louis XIV's refined pose and "foreign" garments, positions this caricature as an informative 'retort' to Benoist's wax image of Louis XIV within the *Cercle royal* as a scene of networked global relations and diplomatic reverence. The satire aims to deconstruct the royal image of elegant dominance by revealing the violence of military conquests that were suppressed on the ceremonial stage of courtly performance.

Colonial Replication: Transport to Martinique

In February, 1702 the *Mercure* published a "letter from Martinique." Following descriptions of Parisian funeral services in honour of *Monsieur* (the king's brother, Philippe, duc d' Orleans) this report from the French colony assures readers that "our love was not less great, nor our pain less sensible […]."[125] The report details a service staged at Notre-Dame de Bon Port in Saint-Pierre by Jesuit fathers of Saint Dominique. At the church's centre stood a platform with nearly 300 candlesticks. These surrounded the sculptural focal point of the church's display: "One of the most magnificent and renowned representations that one can see. It was an invention of the son of Mr. Benoist, so well-known for his

[122] Peter Burke includes this image in his discussion of Louis XIV's enemy satire in *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*, 137.
[123] Kathryn Norberg highlights the satirical image's similarity to Robert Bonnart's engraved portrait of the king. Norberg, "Louis XIV: King of Fashion?," 161.
[124] "Het Kleedvan Dwinglandy De Figuur van Louis de 14de gelyk hy vertoont is inde Crikel Rojaal tot Parys."

[125] "[...] je puis vous assurer, Monsieur, que nostre amour n'a pas esté moins grand, ny nostre douleur moins sensible." *Mercure galant* (February 1702) 191.

works in the *Cercle Royal*."[126] Benoist's exhibition was thus tied to the pageantry crafted by his son across the ocean. This son was the sculptor's namesake, Antoine. He was identified as a resident of Saint-Hilaire in the colony of Martinique in his father's last will and testament.[127]

This commission for a memorial display in 1702 relates the younger Benoist's sculptural engagements in the colony to his father's celebrated funeral effigy for Marie-Thérèse decades earlier. It ties commemorative church displays to the dynamics of global representation that this chapter has been considering. I have claimed that within the *Cercle royal*, wax's fleshy materiality mediated distance by presenting remote figures in tangible proximity to viewers. The representation of Philippe d'Orléans in Martinique and its subsequent description in the *Mercure* were examples of Fogel's "ceremonies of information" as reiterations of state ceremonies that served the purpose of collective political identification for an extended audience.[128] In replicating France's obsequies for the prince in Martinique, Benoist Jr's representation served a symbolic purpose in reiterating Martinique's status as a French possession.

There is one particular interaction between Antoine Benoist and his son in Martinique that reveals legal tensions and the brutal subjection of slavery that is obscured within the *Mercure*'s narrative of loving colonial devotion. In February of 1704 a young man named Louis, enslaved to the younger Benoist, recently transported from France to Martinique, submitted a petition for freedom. The confusion and conflict that ensued is recorded in a letter from Jean-Jacques Mithon, *Conseilleur* of Martinique to Jérôme de Pontchartrain, the minister of the Navy, back in Europe.[129] The letter overviewed Louis's biography and appealed for reenforcement in disciplinary action against Benoist jr. who had flagrantly disobeyed authority. This was Louis's third transatlantic voyage. He had been

[126]" [...] une Répresentation des plus magnifiques & des mieux entenduës qu'on puise voir. Elle estoit de l'invention du fils de Mr Benoist si connu, par ses Ouvrages du Cercle Royal." *Mercure galant* (February 1702) 194.
[127] Antoine Benoist jr. Had, however, predeceased his father. His portion of the legacy is directed to his own son, the sculptor's grandson, Césare-Antoine. "Testament d'Antoine Benoist," f.387.
[128] Fogel, *Les Cérémonies de l'information*.
[129] Mithon to Pontchartrain, November 20, 1704 (A.N., Colonies, C8 A15)

abducted in Africa and transported first to the Caribbean and then to France. He remained in the service of his original captor, Captain Bernard, before being sold to a Parisian. After eight years in domestic servitude, Louis was shipped to Martinique as a 'gift' to his owner's son, a painter named Benoist.[130] This evidence indicates that Antoine Benoist Sr. Was the unspecified Parisian and that Louis was enslaved within Benoist's household in the Faubourg Saint-Germain beginning in 1696.

Louis's claim to liberty was a convention that promised enslaved people freedom by virtue of touching French soil.[131] Mithon granted Louis's freedom in order to prevent the younger Benoist from evading state jurisdiction and selling Louis on a Spanish vessel before a ruling could deprive him of human property: "I declared him free in order to thwart the evil intentions of the aforementioned Mr. Benoist."[132] In his letter, Mithon requested that the minister reprimand the younger Benoist's actions, for the painter had undermined Mithon's orders by complaining and threatening legal action. He had also continued beating Louis even after the young man's liberty was granted. Louis's freedom suit was one of the cases that motivated investigation of legal complications around the status of French soil's liberating potential. The resulting report recommended closing this loophole.[133]

Louis's story features in foundational accounts of French exploitation of colonial enslavement by Sue Peabody and Léo Elisabeth.[134] This exceptional case presses at the illogic that attempted to distinguish between the sacred territory of France proper and the violent exploitation of its colonial pursuits.[135] Mithon's letter preserves a record of Louis's biography within the colonial archive. There is

[130] "Un negre nommé Louis, mené jeune en France par le Capitaine Bernard depuis treize ou quatorze ans qu'il avoit reservé de sa carguaison sans le vendre aux Isles, estant revenu en ce Païs adressé au S^{r}. Benoist peintre dont il avoit servy le Père a Paris pendant huit ans, me presenta une requete u mois de fevrier dernier prétendant estre libre par le privilège du Royaums de France."Mithon, "Mithon to Pontchartrain, November 20, 1704," f. 348 v.
[131] Peabody, *There Are No Slaves in France*, 14.
[132] "Je le declaré libre pour obvier aux mauvais deisseins dudit. Sr. Benoist" Mithon, "Mithon to Pontchartrain, November 20, 1704," f. 349 r.
[133] Elisabeth, *La société martiniquaise aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, 268–70.Mithon's request to Pontchartrain had been, specifically, for a policy that would render standards for such circumstances clear. His suggestion was indentured servitude as a compromise. Peabody, *There Are No Slaves in France* 14.
[134] Peabody, *There Are No Slaves in France*, 13–15; Elisabeth, *La société martiniquaise aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, 268–70.
[135] Meredith Martin and Gillian Weiss have recently called attention to the category of *enclaves turcs,* enslaved men from North Africa or the Ottoman empire who rowed in galleys alongside convicts. Though periodically grounded in southern port cities, the convention of France's liberating soil was not applied. See *The Sun King at Sea*, 37.

a horror to reading Mithon's reflection on the convenience of recognizing Louis's personhood. In his study of slavery in the French Atlantic, Brett Rushforth identifies the Benoist in question as an artist, a fact that previous historians had omitted.[136] Within the context of this chapter's exploration of the *Cercle royal*'s reception, my primary question concerns the implications that this colonial connection brings to our understanding of Benoist's wax display in Paris. To begin, it underlines violent subjugation elided in the *Cercle-royal*'s spectacle of global politics through sumptuous courtly tribute.

In Benoist's posthumous inventory, a number of pages were dedicated to weaponry: helmets, shields, swords, and mail shirts. Among these items, the notary listed a clothed figure of a black man ["une figure de nègre habillée"].[137] It seems possible that this figure was a sculptural cast of Louis that served as a mannequin for weaponry. The possibility of Louis's anonymous representation within the *Cercle royal* is speculative, but worth considering with reference to the obscured presence of racialized subjects within art history's corpus. The issue of complicated visibility for enslavement has come to the fore in recent scholarship: enslaved subjects were prevalent, but often marginally placed and rendered anonymous. Considering the colonized subject requires reading against the priorities of European archiving and taking the absence of non-representation into account.[138]

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the *Cercle royal'*s changing formats and shifting implications between c.1674 (the installation of Charles II's court) and 1704 (the year of Hadgi Mustafa Aga's visit and Louis's escape from enslavement). I have underlined the exhibition's responsiveness to political situation and official strategies of absolutist presentation. While the sculptor's pursuits were diverse over these three decades, they were consistent in their engagement with absolutism's theatre of state.

[136] Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France*, 73.
[137] "Inventaire après décès d'Antoine Benoist," f.41.
[138] Within the burgeoning literature on this topic, see, especially Chowdhury, "Blackness, Immobility, & Visibility in Europe"; Lafont, *L'Art et la race*.

Benoist's wax representations bridged distances by rendering grandeur of ceremony captivatingly intimate in viscerally tangible sculptural form.

The tensions that arise in the interactions between Benoist and his son in Martinique draw this chapter's concerns together and provoke further questions. The documentation of Louis's enslavement foregrounds violent implications for the *Cercle royal*'s mediation of proximity and distance. The *Mercure galant's* description of Benoist's son's funerary display for Philippe d'Orléans in Martinique also brings colonial visual culture into dialogue with commemorative traditions of wax effigies. It underlines the adaptive possibilities of this custom. I have argued that Benoist's commissioned effigy for Marie-Thérèse foregrounded a prestigious association between his wax display and historical ritual. Two years following Marie-Thérèse's death, the Benedictine administrators of Saint-Germain-des-Prés ordered a second funeral effigy from Benoist: a centrepiece for the display commemorating the death of the chancellor, Michel Le Tellier, in 1685. The *Mercure* described a beautiful wax portrait posed in a remarkably natural attitude, fabricated by "the acclaimed Benoist, of renown for his *Cercle royal*."[139] This effigy thus enforces our sense of the associative overlap between Benoist's notorious display and memorial rites.

The commission for Le Tellier's posthumous portrait also introduces the material culture of the chancellorship, a topic of significance for upcoming chapters. Jérome de Pontchartrain, the naval minister to whom Mithon was appealing for support, was the son of the original owner of Benoist's extant wax profile, the chancellor Louis de Phélypeaux, Count of Pontchartrain. The dissertation's second half delves into the Pontchartrain's family art collection and circumstances of their particular interest in Benoist's work. In 1704, the year of Louis's escape from enslavement, Benoist was in the midst of negotiations with the Pontchartrains. The wax profile is most commonly dated to 1705. At this

[139] "le celebre M. Benoist, si connu par son Cercle Royal"; *Mercure galant* (December, 1685) 71.

point, it is worth highlighting Louis's plight and his astute negotiation as an indication of the colonial exploitation that upheld the luxurious wealth embodied in the staging of aristocratic stature.

Chapter Three
Profiling Louis XIV

It is as an icon, an other (not a self), that he gives himself over to be observed, admired, commemorated and venerated.

-Harry Berger, "Fictions of the Pose," 1994

This chapter aims to re-position Benoist's single extant waxwork within its typological convention as a medallic profile. While the portrait's striking corporeality to the point of suggesting moulded imprint has dominated its commentary, the work's reproduction of a conventional format of royal glorification has been virtually ignored. The tension, inherent in the representation's insistence on the particulars of physical defect within a format that confirms austere exemplarity, can be understood in semiotic terms. As previously discussed, a number of accounts consider Benoist's extant waxwork to be indexical to the royal body as a direct impression of Louis XIV's cast flesh.[1] However, the shallowness of this relief, which is far thinner than half a human head, complicates this possibility (figs. 3.1, 3.2). Its volumetric definition emulates, by contrast, the planar modulations of *bas-relief* medallions from which it was typologically derived. In this way, the representation's tantalizingly suggestive indexicality is constrained within the work's conventional symbolic format.[2]

While the Versailles profile is Benoist's sole extant waxwork, it is not his only surviving rendering of Louis XIV's profile in old age. Indeed, I propose that the importance suggested by the wax relief's very preservation can be related to its position within a series of Benoist's representations of the king in this format. This chapter positions Benoist's waxwork in relation to his paintings and their engraved reproductions, in order to examine the profile format's importance within a specific period of the sculptor's career. This topic draws our attention, in particular, to Benoist's pursuit of official

[1] Maral refers to the profiles derivation from a "partial imprint." His description of the work as quasi-photographic" also suggest indexicality, a point I return to below. See Milovanovic and Maral, *Louis XIV: L'Homme et Le Roi*, 226.
[2]A number of prominent thinkers have complicated Charles Pierce's semiotic categories with arguments for the fundamental hybridity of visual signs. See Leja, "Peirce, Visuality, and Art," 113–15.

commissions and his navigation of networks of patronage. The series of representations that this section aims to sequence and contextualize offer points of evidence for successful efforts of upward mobility in the last phase of Benoist's career. If the *Cercle royal* was poorly attended in the sculptor's old age, as Dubois de Saint Gelais had claimed, Benoist's efforts were equally invested elsewhere in this period.[3] Building on the prominent reputation and skill that he had cultivated in relation to the *Cercle royal*, Benoist navigated patronage networks to approach the most powerful figures of state.

The Versailles profile relief was specifically termed *une médaille* (a medal). This label described similar works by Benoist in a number of instances. For example, an object in the sculptor's possession at his death in 1717 was inventoried as "a medal in wax, square, representing the portrait of the king in its frame of gilded wood."[4] Benoist's life-scaled royal profile reliefs enlarge the miniature wax medallions that were common tokens of exchange between sixteenth-century aristocrats. These precedents engaged antiquarian interests by instilling a classical schema with delicacy and personal particularity. Pendant miniatures of the Duke and Duchess of Savoy, built up in layers of coloured wax and encased in ornamented copper containers, are two of many extant examples. They demonstrate the intricate craftsmanship of these intimate representations (figs. 3.3, 3.4). Benoist's revival and enlarged adaptation of such earlier portable wax fabrications can be related to the importance of medallic production within the context of antiquarian investments under Louis XIV's rule.[5] This chapter's central task will be to unravel the points of relation between Benoist's representations in wax and the monumental project of Louis XIV's glorification through commemorative medals.

[3] As discussed in Chapter 2, see Dubois de Saint Gelais, *Histoire journalière de Paris*, 191.
[4] "Une médaille en cire,quarré [sic.], représentant le portrait du roy dans sa bordure de bois doré.." "Inventaire Après Décès d'Antoine Benoist," f.30.
[5] With reference to architectural ornament, marbles and terracotta, Sarah Munoz notes that royal profiles were frequent under François I and Louis XIV as eras of revived antiquarian interest. See "Le Portrait royal sculpté en médaillon."

Gallery Preview

For just a few days, in September of 1699, a wax medallion of Louis XIV, fabricated by Benoist, was on display in the Louvre. The circumstance of its placement there was an exhibition of art by members of the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture. Select work by that institution's membership lined the Grande Galerie, the corridor that connected the Louvre to the Tuileries palace. The exhibition's pamphlet declared an intention to revive an "old custom" of exhibiting artistic accomplishments for public scrutiny; however, there had only been a few sporadic attempts at official exhibitions during the institution's fifty years of history.[6] This was the first one to take place in the Louvre, which was increasingly a bustling centre of artistic activity after the court's move to Versailles in 1682.[7] Benoist's wax profile received pride of place at the exhibition's ceremonial entrance. It was hung above a throne that stood on a platform beneath a velvet baldachin. This canopied structure, staged as though awaiting the monarch's arrival, consecrated the space of royal authority. It was described in the exhibition's accompanying pamphlet as "a large dais of green velvet with large braids and large fringes in gold and silver, a platform and a foot-carpet beneath […]."[8] Above the empty chair, and under the baldachin's luxurious draping, Benoist's wax portrait referenced Louis XIV's physical presence in spite of his absence.[9] Benoist's profile was, however, removed in short order.

The circumstances of the placement — and then displacement — of Benoist's wax profile are included in an account of the 1699 exhibition penned by artist and dealer Florent le Comte: "For a number of days a portrait of the king was on view, a medal of coloured wax in which the bust was clothed, the whole ornamented with a rich border and a [sheet of] crystal in front, to conserve the work

[6] Initial exhibitions (in 1667, 1671, and 1673) were held within the Palais Royale, in the outdoor courtyard of the Hôtel Brion, which had housed the Académie. See Crow, *Painters and Public Life*, 34–35.
[7] Williams, "The Other Palace: Versailles and the Louvre."The Académie had received permanent headquarters within the palace just seven years before this exhibition, in 1692.
[8] *Liste des tableaux et des ouvrages de sculpture*, 4.English translation in Berger, *Public Access to Art in Paris*, 76.
[9] Peter Burke has emphasized the role of royal portraits as substitutes of royal presence with reference to Hyacinthe Rigaud's iconic portrait of Louis XIV. See Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*, 9.This very painting filled the position initially selected for Benoist's wax profile in the Académie's next exhibition in the Grande Galérie in 1704. It was similarly displayed behind a throne on a canopied platform of green velvet.

and to render even more agreeable to the eye… this piece was from Monsieur BENOIST."[10] The object that Le Comte describes seems comparable to Benoist's extant profile of Louis XIV: a wax medallion, garmented and enclosed within a glass-covered frame. Le Comte demonstrates particular appreciation for the craftsmanship of the frame, describing the carved ornament of its wooden sides as "rich borders" and its glass sheet as "crystal." This attention can be contextualized by Le Comte's own trade in frames.[11] Le Comte states that the reason for the dismissal of Benoist's wax profile from its prominent position at the exhibition's ceremonial entrance was its human scale. Benoist's medallion "did not adequately fill the vast space" allotted to it.[12] The waxwork was replaced with a pair of painted royal portraits by Charles-François Poerson depicting Louis the XIV and Monseigneur, the Grand Dauphin.[13] These paintings' distinct formats differentiated their subject's ranks: Louis XIV was represented in a stately, full-length composition while his son was presented more diminutively at half length. What does this abrupt reversal of fortune for Benoist's wax medallion, its distinguished placement quickly overturned, indicate about the perceived capacity of a wax profile to encapsulate royal authority?

The initial prominence of Benoist's waxwork may be related to his role in organizing the 1699 exhibition. The display's accompanying pamphlet indicated that works were "arranged by the cares of Monsieur Hérault," a reference to the history painter Charles-Antoine Hérault.[14] The minutes of the Académie's meeting on August 8, 1699 specify that Hérault worked with two colleagues. Benoist as

---

[10] "Il s'y est vû pendant quelques jours un portrait du Roi, medaille de cire colorée dont le buste étoit habillé, le tout orné d'une bordure tres riche, & d'un cristal au devant pour conserver cet ouvrage, & le rendre encore plus agréable aux yeux; mais comme cela ne remplissoit pas assez ce vaste lieu, on trouva à propos d'y mettre ceux-ci; ce morceau étoit de Monsieur BENOIST." Le Comte, *Cabinet des singularités*, 3:244-45.

[11] Meyer, "Florent Le Comte et la gravure."

[12] Le Comte, *Cabinet des singularités,* 3:245.

[13] Le Comte, *Cabinet des singularités*, 3:244. This decision had been taken by the time the exhibition's pamphlet (or livret) was printed. It lists the two paintings by Poerson installed within the canopied structure: *Liste des tableaux et des ouvrages de sculpture*, 4.

[14] Berger, *Public Access to Art in Paris*, 17. This responsibility of installation would be formalized for the eighteenth-century salons under the title *tapissier*. Ryan Whyte observes that the term itself derived from the earlier practice, apparent in the 1699 exhibition, of hanging paintings atop tapestries. See Whyte, "Exhibiting Enlightenment," 531–32.

well as the sculptor Jean Le Moyne.[15] Benoist's experience curating paintings within the context of the *Cercle royal* may have positioned him to take on the task of overseeing the display of the Académie's work. We have seen that over the years Benoist integrated noteworthy paintings into the *Cercle royal*'s mise-en-scène. In his 1698 Parisian guidebook, one year before the Académie's exhibition, Germain Brice noted canvases by "first-class masters" on display in Benoist's residence, including paintings attributed to Raphael, Giorgione, the Caracci, Guido Reni, Titian, Rubens, and Van Dyck. Brice specified that the collection was assembled with "much care and discernment."[16] Such a reputation may have bolstered Benoist's bid for curatorial responsibility within the institutional context of the Académie. This role may have allowed him to give his own royal portrait pride of place within the gallery's installation.

In addition to the controversial wax profile, Benoist submitted seven painted portraits to the exhibition. Three of these depicted ambassadors from the Siamese embassy of 1686 and three portrayed representatives from the Muscovite embassy of 1681. The seventh painting represented a Carthusian monk. Hung on the window bays (*trumeaux*) closest to the throne and the wax profile's initial placement, Benoist secured a noteworthy area for his works at the exhibition's entrance.[17] We have seen that Benoist gained access to foreign dignitaries and included their wax portraits in the *Cercle royal*. Benoist's submission thus built on the notoriety of his wax exhibition. Though notably, within the institutional context of the Académie, these were painted images rather than waxworks. In his seminal account of art's public discourse in the eighteenth century, Thomas Crow cites Le Comte and mentions three wax portraits by Benoist in the 1699 display, which were the "unchallenged

[15] Montaiglon, *Procès-verbaux*, 3:275.A listing of the works that each academician proposed submitting was turned over to Hérault, "que la Compagnie a nommé conjoictement avec M. Benoist at M. Le Moyne pour avoir soin de l'ordonnance de cette feste." In her study of the eighteenth-century salon's curation, Isabelle Pichet lists all those responsible for arranging hangings, dating back to the seventeenth century. See Pichet, *Le Tapissier et Les Dispositifs Discursifs Au Salon*, 30–31. Jean Le Moyne had hung Académie's previous exhibition (1687) while Antoine Charles Herault would equally arrange the display of the subsequent exhibition in 1704.
[16] Brice, *Description nouvelle de la ville de Paris*, 266.
[17] *Liste des tableaux et des ouvrages de sculpture,* 6.

curiosity of the exhibition."[18] Both Le Comte and the exhibition *livret* confirm, however, that all Benoist's works besides Louis XIV's profile were paintings.[19] We have seen that despite Benoist's experience in wax sculpture he entered the ranks of the Académie as a painter in 1681. His primary practice of wax portraiture was incoherent for the institution's organizational framework. Benoist's attempt to include one of his wax fabrications within the official presentation of academic achievement demonstrates resistance to this stricture. The wax object's elimination, in turn, confirms the institution's rejection of Benoist's sculptural mode.

The wax profile's removal seems to support the assumptions art historians have made about Benoist's wax portraiture's opposition to stately grandeur. We have seen that canonical accounts by figures such as Julius von Schlosser and Édouard Pommier deemed Benoist's work incommensurate with painted manifestations of glorious authority or baroque theatricality. Poerson's replacement, a full-length painted portrait, would appear to embody an ideal of royal magnificence in contrast to Benoist's representation. Indeed we can see the removal of Benoist's wax profile from the 1699 exhibition as the enactment of André Félibien's theoretical banishment of wax portraiture from the canon of fine art practice. We have seen that in his *Entretiens* of 1666, a foundational theoretical text, Félibien evoked the wax portrait only in order to dismiss it. He contrasted waxworks' "deathly and insensible resemblance" with the ineffable grace of compelling, lifelike evocation.[20] Notably, his dialogue was set in the Louvre. Likewise, in the 1699 Louvre exhibition, Benoist's wax portrait was first presented as an introductory position and then, subsequently, rejected.

The aim of the 1699 display was explicitly competitive. The exhibition pamphlet stated that in exposing themselves to the public forum of judgment, artists sought to "maintain among themselves

[18] Crow, *Painters and Public Life*, 38. In passing, Meredith Martin also mistakenly refers to Benoist's "wax portraits of the Siamese ambassadors" at the 1699 salon in "Mirror Reflections," 665."
[19] Le Comte, *Cabinet des singularités*, 3:248.
[20] Félibien, *Entretiens*, 123.

that esteemed rivalry so necessary to the advancement of the fine arts."[21] Christian Michel has contextualized the competitive edge of the 1699 exhibition within the broader politics of Jules Hardouin Mansart's cultural administration as surintendant des bâtiments du roi (superintendent of king's works).[22] Mansart had stepped into this managerial role, which included oversight of the Académie as 'protector,' earlier that year. Michel overviews Mansart's oppressive authority, which included contests designed to promote artistic emulation.[23] Within this antagonistic dynamic, one could say that Poerson emerged victorious and Benoist, defeated.

It is possible, however, that this brief display of Benoist's royal wax profile within a palatial setting, had a significant impact on the sculptor's career, despite its abrupt interruption. The exhibition officially lasted 20 days, beginning on September second. While Benoist's waxwork was on display for only a fraction of that period, its creator might still have gleaned some of the benefits of exposure within an official institutional context. The representation of the 1699 exhibition most commonly reproduced in modern scholarship is a small inset scene within Nicolas Langlois's 1700 almanac whose primary focus was the installation of François Girardon's monumental equestrian in Place Louis le Grand, subsequently Place Vendôme (fig. 3.5).[24] In the Langlois almanac, the exhibition is depicted in central perspective, which focuses attention on the gallery's stately dimensions, its length lined with tiers of paintings hung atop tapestries (fig. 3.6). This illustration depicts the exhibition as a space of polite sociability and aesthetic engagement. Fashionable viewers congregate and discuss in groups. Some gesture toward works of interest with their canes or fans. Others lean over to examine painted surfaces. Notably in the foreground at left, three men are hanging a large painting.[25] One figure climbs

[21] Berger, *Public Access to Art in Paris*, 75.
[22] Michel, *The Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture,* 66.
[23] Michel, *The Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture*, 63–67.
[24] In this era, almanacs were large, lavishly-illustrated calendars. Each printed broadsheet overviewed significant events from the previous year. This genre of broadsheet is surveyed in Préaud, *Les effets du soleil*.
[25] Their number recalls the trio of exhibition organizers who designed the display's installation: Benoist, Hérault, and Le Moyne.

a ladder to secure the canvas. Another canvas, awaiting installation, is turned to the wall and propped up alongside them. This illustration implies that the exhibition was open to visitors even before installation was finalized. This possibility would mean that a number of viewers had seen Benoist's profile before it was removed. In the print's background, at the vanishing point, the draftsman has depicted the canopied platform that marked the exhibition's entrance. A single circular panel is centred above the throne. It seems likely that this tiny schematic rendering is intended to represent Benoist's medallion, since Le Comte explicitly stated that the painting that replaced it was full-length and hung alongside a bust-length portrait of the dauphin.

Another almanac of that year also included a small illustration of the Académie's exhibition. It also portrays a single, circular roundel above the throne at the gallery's far end (figs. 3.8, 3.9). A third example of a detail illustration within an almanac, similarly presents the gallery's length in perspective with groupings of viewers examining the works towering above them (figs. 3.10, 3.12). This rendering, however, depicts a long square canvas under the baldachin. It is flanked by smaller, circular works. It seems possible that this image depicts the revised installation in which a full-length image of the king was juxtaposed with a smaller depiction of his son in bust-length format, though this scene includes an additional third painting. While the accuracy of these small, schematic images can be questioned, comparing them underlines the likelihood that viewers were invited into the exhibition space even as works were still being installed and occasionally rearranged. Le Comte's recording of the initial placement and subsequent replacement of Benoist's wax profile similarly indicates viewership of the exhibition before installation was finalized. This timeline suggests that despite its early removal, Benoist's waxwork may have gained the sculptor some notoriety.

In addition to emulative rivalry, public exhibition carried the potential benefits of wider recognition and new patrons. Shortly after the 1699 exhibition, for example, Charles-François Poerson received a commission from the Académie Royale d'Architecture for a full-length portrait of Louis

XIV, the same format of the stately painting that had replaced Benoist's waxwork in the Grande Galérie.[26] This commission may have been unrelated to the exhibition, since Poerson had produced a series of stately images of Louis XIV in the past. Nonetheless the prominence of his work in the 1699 exhibition may have served as a reminder. It seems significant that in this era, the Académie Royale d'Architecture was housed within the Louvre.[27] Despite its early removal, Benoist's wax profile may also have garnered its artist some attention. Indeed, a controversial rejection could have fuelled significant discussion within the hallways of the Louvre.

Considering this chapter's primary task of elaborating context for Benoist's extant wax profile, it is pertinent to note that the sculpture's original owner, Louis de Phélypeaux, Count of Pontchartrain, was also pictured in the three almanacs discussed above. Each included an image of Pontchartrain accepting the charge of chancellorship (figs 3.7, 3.8, and 3.13). The Louvre display and Pontchartrain's prestigious promotion to the realm's chief legislative office were thus interwoven in the records overviewing the important happenings of 1699. Pontchartrain was, in fact, sworn in on September fifth, three days after the Louvre exhibition officially opened. This coincidental intersection of occurrences within the same month seems noteworthy.

There is no distinct indication that Pontchartrain saw Benoist's wax profile during its brief presentation in the Louvre's Grande Galérie in 1699. There is no evidence that this was the decisive exemplar for the wax profile that Pontchartrain acquired himself, just a few years following. Nonetheless, the controversy of Benoist's wax profile in 1699 presents a suggestive precedent. The sculptor's submission to the 1699 exhibition enlarged the typical format of intimate miniature profiles in wax to the exact correspondence of life-scale that had been the basis of the compelling presence for the *Cercle royal*'s figures. The medallic format of Benoist's exhibited waxwork may have been an

[26] Payment for the portrait was registered in the state accounts of February 1701. See Guiffrey, *Comptes des Bâtiments du Roi sous Le règne de Louis XIV.*, 4:733.
[27] The Académie royale d'architecture was relocated from the Palais Royale to the Louvre as of 1692, see Williams, *Académie Royale*, 122.

attempt to adapt his medium to an iconic schema of royal authority. Its removal and replacement centres the question of a wax medallion's potential as an embodiment of monarchical grandeur. It also broaches the issue of negotiating royal representation within institutional frameworks.

Academic Intentions

From the range of officials frequenting the Louvre in 1699, members of the Académie des inscriptions may have paid particular attention to a noteworthy medallic representation of Louis XIV on display. This committee of antiquarians was headquartered in the Louvre in this period.[28] They were responsible for Louis XIV's substantial program of numismatic commemoration. This section overviews the complicated history of the Académie des inscriptions's production of Louis XIV's medallic history, a monumental catalogue of commemorative medals intended to survey the history of Louis XIV's reign as a sequence of epic triumphs. In so doing I aim to establish the relevance of this institutional program for Benoist's medallic representation.

In his position as minister of the interior, Pontchartrain played a central role in the expansion of the Académie des inscriptions and the management of their endeavours. Pontchartrain inherited the responsibility of the royal academies after the Marquis of Louvois's death in 1691. The less formal entity of the *Petite Académie* was rebranded as the *Académie des Inscriptions*, the year that it passed to Pontchartrain's portfolio.[29] Work on a medallic history been initiated under this institution's previous supervisors, but the commitment to publish an account that spanned Louis XIV's reign was solidified

[28] The Académie des inscriptions gathered in the Louvre apartments assigned to theAcadémie française throughout the 1690s. They were finally assigned their own meeting hall in 1701, also within the Louvre. See Babelon, "Les Collections de l'Académie des Inscriptions," 72–74.

[29] The medallic history was the revival of a project conceived by Henri IV's guardian of treasure and medals, Pierre-Antoine de Rascas. The *Petite Académie* had been founded by Colbert in 1663, as a small subcommittee of the *Académie Française* tasked with antiquarian consultation for inscriptions and iconographies on coins, monuments, tapestries, and other representations. On the history of this institution and the conception stages of the medallic history, see: Jacquiot, *Médailles et Jetons*; Mosley, "Making of the Book"; Wellington, *Antiquarianism and the Visual Histories of Louis XIV*, 39–52.

under Pontchartrain's direction in 1694.[30] In his supervisory role Pontchartrain was aided by his nephew, Abbé Jean-Paul Bignon.[31] In 1699, direct supervision passed from Pontchartrain, now chancellor of France, to his son, Jérôme Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain, who succeeded his father as Minister of the Interior. In 1701, the committee's institutional infrastructure was strengthened along with the expanded title of *Académie Royale des Inscriptions et des Médailles*.[32] Finally on January 9, 1702 the elder Pontchartrain personally presented the completed edition of *Medailles sur les principaux évenements du règne de Louis le grand* to Louis XIV. This monumental volume catalogued medals that commemorated significant events from the king's reign with engraved illustrations and explanatory text. It had been intended to be a New Year's gift, or *Étrennes*, from the chancellor to the king, though the production team overshot the January 1st deadline by a week.[33] Thus despite the work's series of supervisors and large number of collaborators, it was framed at the moment of its completion, as a personal tribute from Pontchartrain to the king.[34]

Louis Marin has highlighted Louis XIV's medallic history as a privileged means of absolutist representation. His analysis proposes an association between the royal medal and the eucharist as replicative embodiments of sacred presence.[35] Yet while the medallic history's theoretical justification promised to effectively convey absolutism's ideal, the history of the project's conception and

[30] Jacquiot, *Médailles et Jetons*, xlii.
[31] On Bignon's career see Clarke, "Abbe Jean-Paul Bignon 'Moderator of the Academies' and Royal Librarian."; Sarmant, Le Cabinet Des Médailles de La Bibliothèque Nationale, 63–64, 69.
[32] This expansion resulted in forty salaried members of distinct ranks.
[33] Mosley, "The Making of the Book," 300.
[34] The *Académie des inscriptions's* official history, which was then excerpted in Diderot and D'Alembert's *Encyclopédie,* emphasized this point. This text noted that Jérome de Phélypeaux, Pontchartrain's son, officially supervised the institution as of Pontchartrain's promotion to chancellor in 1699. "But the Chancellor, much attached to the History of the King through medals, whose own insights had directed and furthered its advancement, retained oversight of this work, and had the honour of presenting His Majesty with the first examples struck and the first examples of the Book containing the designs and explanations." Benhamou, "Royal Academy of Inscriptions and Literature."
[35] Marin, *Portrait of the King*, 134.

publication was plagued by controversy and contestation. Indeed, the perceived stakes of the project as a glorious record for posterity rendered each of its aspects to be a topic worthy of scrutiny and debate.[36]

Rather than a single definitive publication, the importance of the medallic history's form resulted in a series of contested iterations each striving to eclipse preceding versions. The efforts of the academy's myriad collaborators were outpaced by Claude-François Ménestrier, a Jesuit antiquarian, who authored his own medallic history in tribute to the Sun King in 1689.[37] The perceived authority of the medallic history also made the form an alluring target to Louis XIV's enemies. In 1691, satirists in the Dutch Republic produced a counterfeit edition of Ménestrier's work with a supplement of satirical medals denouncing Louis XIV's heresy and blood-thirst. This forgery necessitated a second edition from Ménéstrier defending his reputation and denouncing the pirated publication.[38] Its title specified that it was "corrected and augmented." Ménestrier's accomplishments angered the academy's administration and spurred their progress.[39] In 1702 The academy finally published their own volume. Authorities promptly declared the work's inadequacy and ordered a process of revision. Still in progress at the time of Louis XIV's death, in 1715, this final version was released only in 1723 at the beginning of Louis XV's personal rule. In the interim, however, copies of the first edition continued to be distributed as diplomatic gifts.[40] The monograph's last phase of revision, beginning in 1702, is most pertinent to my discussion here since, as we will see, it was at the moment of transition that the trajectory of Benoist's career intersected with the efforts to realize the king's history in medals.

This sequence of delays and contestations highlight the difficulties that impeded a single definitive version of this privileged genre of historical representation. Two aspects of this volume's fraught

[36] Even aspects of the work's formatting were subject to long discussion in committee. Pontchartrain was, for example, the ultimate arbitrator in a debate about printing on both sides of the page. See Mosley, "Making of the Book," 324–25.
[37] Ménestrier, *Histoire du Roy Louis le Grand, par les medailles*.
[38]This expanded edition was published in 1693. Ménestrier also reissued the work in 1700. On Ménestier's publication and the counterfeit edition see Charton, "Héraldique et Numismatique."
[39]Fabrice Charton notes the tension between Ménestrier and the academy. He also observes that Pontchartrain's appointment of Bignon and the dedication to the project of a monumental medallic history in 1694 were directly provoked by the second edition of Ménestrier's work one year earlier. See "Héraldique et Numismatique." 12.
[40]Mosley, "Making of the Book," 326.

history of conception, publication, and amendment are particularly important for this chapter's consideration of the role of medallic representation within Benoist's efforts to secure social status. Conflict between Ménestrier and the Academy, as well as evidence of debate within the Academy's ranks, underline tension between individual efforts and collaborative negotiation.[41] As Étienne Jollet has emphasized, a competitive diversity of interests underlay the collective project of glorifying Louis XIV's reign.[42] Sarah Grandin has recently investigated collaborative frictions that surfaced in designing the medallic history's innovative typeface.[43]

The forged satire of Menestrier's medallic history exemplifies the extent to which forgery haunts claims of authenticity. We have seen that Benoist was occasionally accused of counterfeiting appearances in wax. This chapter proceeds to address the complementary aspect of this dynamic. It investigates formation of an authenticated royal image as a process of reproductive consolidation. We will see that Benoist's participation within this negotiation of the authoritative royal image served as the currency that allowed him to secure a degree of prestige that had previously eluded him.

Framing Ambition

Two series of painted grisaille miniatures by Benoist, once displayed in Versailles's *Cabinet des médailles*, offer a starting point for an investigation of the particular position of medallic profiles within the sculptor's pursuit of official recognition. The very presence of his work enshrined in the royal collection, suggests Benoist's networked relations with powerful figures of state.[44] Each series consists of ten painted royal profiles that carefully mimic the sculptural surfaces of a medal's shallow relief in monochrome gouache. These small sheets of painted paper were then encased in elaborate ornamental

[41]An example of conflict within the ranks of the production team was the bitter rivalry between the engraver, Sebastien Leclerc and the painter Antoine Coypel. See Mosley, "Making of the Book," 304–5.
[42] Jollet, "The Monument to Louis XIV."
[43] Grandin, "The Bignon Commission's Measured Bodies."
[44]Their initial placement in the *Cabinet des Médailles* was first noted in Chabouillet, "Miniatures d'Antoine Benoist conservées au Cabinet Des Médailles à Paris."

frames of cast gilt bronze. The first frame is inscribed with the title *Portraits de Louis le Grand suivant ses ages* (fig. 3.14). It includes profiles of the king from his first year of reign as a five-year old child to his fifty fourth year of rule at age fifty nine. Its pendant frame, *Portraits de la maison royalle,* highlights a sequence of royal heredity by including portraits of the Louis XIV's parents, wife, son, and grandsons, as well as the wives of his heirs underneath an image of the king (fig 3.15).[45] This profile of the monarch, positioned at the pinnacle of the second frame's composition, presents the most elderly representation of Louis XIV within the series (fig. 3.16) and it is the most closely related to the extant wax profile.[46] This portrait represents the king in 1704, the sixty-first year of his reign when the king was sixty six years old. This is also the probable date that Benoist fabricated these small-scale paintings. A penned inscription on the verso of Anne of Austria's portrait indicates that "A. Benoist painted this portrait of the queen mother after Varin in 1704."[47]

Though distinct in scale and materiality from Benoist's life-sized wax figures, these grisaille miniatures are also at the intersection of painting and sculpture. The miniatures are sculptural paintings, conveying volume in monochrome. Benoist's waxworks were, by contrast, painterly sculptures in their incorporation of the effects of polychrome illusion to sculptural form. This sense of his artistic practice between the categories of painting and sculpture is evidenced in his acceptance to the *Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture* as a painter in1681. The artist's engagement with both painterly and sculptural media may have positioned him particularly well for the manufacture of the grisaille miniatures.

Benoist's framed assemblages are notable for their inversion of typical relations between paintings and their frames. Rather than a large polychrome painting within a thin frame of decoratively

[45]The figures include Louis XIII and Anne of Austria, Marie-Thérèse, the dauphin and dauphine, as well as their sons, the dukes of Anjou, Berry, and Burgundy, and the Marie-Adelaide, the Duchess of Burgundy.
[46] Nolhac, "Un nouveau portrait," 331.
[47]"ABenoist a pin ce portrait ci de la reine-mère d'après Varin en 1704." As quoted in Chabouillet, "Miniatures d'Antoine Benoist conservées au Cabinet Des Médailles à Paris," 310.

abstract ornament, these small-scale monochrome paintings are encased in large and colourful fabrications replete with symbolic imagery. The frames convey regal luxury in intricate workmanship of expensive materials (fig. 3.17). The imagery in gilt bronze relief was mounted on a base of cobalt-tinted animal horn. The bronze symbols complemented the portraits, which present illusions of medals' obverse profile reliefs. The frames' allegories of military triumph were typical of medals' reverse devices, which frequently commemorated military victories. The frames' bronze relief incorporates laurel vines encircling the portraits, weaponry, the draped flags, and a zodiac affixed to the top edge as an indication of the sun king's cosmological supremacy.

This interplay of material and form would have made Benoist's assemblages alluring provocations to discussion within the sociable space of Versailles's *Cabinet des médailles*. In their sumptuous materiality and glorifying symbolism, the frames would have integrated the paintings into the Cabinet's luxurious display. This collection included gems, rarities, and small-scale paintings in addition to an extensive selection of ancient and early modern medals.[48] Antoine Schnapper has presented this space as one of courtly sociability. He states that Louis XIV's collection of medals transported the topic of antiquarian numismatics from the scholarly library to "the sphere of aesthetic pleasure and royal diversion."[49] The collection was available to members of the *Académie des Inscriptions* as well as antiquarian scholars and diplomats.[50] Connoisseurial discussion could be equally tied to political tactic, as evidenced by the Abbé de Choisy's complaint that Père de la Chaize, the king's confessor, pursued expertise in medals as a pretext to be "almost always with the king."[51] This accusation highlights medallic representation as a privileged topic of interest. In their variation of

[48]The two rooms of the cabinet were next to the king's apartment suite and could be accessed from the ambassador's staircase. On the rooms' conception, décor, and contents see Wellington, *Antiquarianism and the Visual Histories of Louis XIV*, 79–106.See also Sarmant, *Les Demeures du Soleil*, 82–84.

[49]"Les médailles du roi se trouvaient à Versailles dans une situation paradoxale; arrachées à leur monde habituel des bibliothèques, elles se trouvaient mêlées à des miroirs, des tableaux, des pierres dures, dans la sphère du plaisir ésthétique et du divertissement royal." Schnapper*, Curieux du Grand Siècle*, 2:334.

[50] Sarmant, *Le Cabinet des Médailles*, 82.

[51]"Ce père aimoit fort les Médailles, il prétendoit s'y connoître. Il prit ce prétexte pour estre presque toujours avec le roi." quoted in Schnapper, *Curieux du Grand Siècle*, 2:334.

medallic conventions, Benoist's assemblages were positioned as engaging conversation pieces for displaying erudition or wit within this elite setting of courtly interaction.

Benoist's frames also work to compensate for the visual reserve and material simplicity of greyscale paintings on small sheets of paper. The paintings delicately render the illusion of sculptural effect through subtle tonal modulation, but the sumptuous, glittering complexity of their frames signal stature beyond their appearance. I propose that this indication of importance can be related to these paintings' purpose as greyscale models for engraved illustrations for the revised medallic history. This possibility, first suggested by Versailles curator Pierre de Nolhac in an article of 1913, has been contested or ignored by subsequent scholars.[52] In her 1967 study, the prominent numismatic scholar, Josèphe Jacquiot, missed Nolhac's reference to the second edition of the medallic history published in 1723 and provided documentation to prove that Benoist's miniatures were not models for the initial 1702 publication, which Nolhac had not, in fact, suggested.[53] I will outline significant evidence for Benoist's engagement as an illustrator of royal portraits for the *revised* edition of the work. Beyond a simple question of attribution, Benoist's work on this official project (and its subsequent mis-recognition) has implications for the conditions of securing artistic reputation under Louis XIV's rule.

The conjecture that Benoist's grisaille miniatures were models for engravers of the medallic history is confirmed, first, in the exact visual correspondence between the representations. This evaluation is facilitated by an engraved representation of the grisaille miniatures of the king at all ages within their frame (fig. 3.18). Comparison between each of the portraits of this engraved translation and

[52]A recent, important exhibition catalogue includes images of the royal profile illustrations from the 1723 medallic history as unattributed representations. Benoist's painted models for these engravings, the *grisaille* miniatures are, however, included within the same publication. See Milovanovic and Maral, *Louis XIV: L'Homme et le Roi*, 40, 222.

[53]Jacquiot writes: "Pourtant ni les travaux de Guiffrey et de Chabouillet, ni l'étude de Vaudin, ni non plus les dates de la frappe la première série métallique uniforme, pas plus que la publication de celle-ci, n'empêcha Pierre de Nolhac de commettre, le premier, l'erreur de voir dans les portraits peints par Antoine Benoist 'les médaillons dont l'Académie s'était servie pour guider les graveurs de l'Histoire métallique.' Cette erreur prenant bientôt valeur de vérité historique." Jacquiot, "Les Portraits de Louis XIV," 199. Nolhac's original proposition reads as follows: "Ces images [Benoist's *grisaille* profiles] ont été consideérées comme assez fidèles pour être choisies par la 'Petite Académie,' pour servir de modèles aux graveurs de la grande édition, in-folio, de cette belle 'Histoire métallique' de Louis XIV, *parue en 1723*, qui est un des chefs-d'oeuvres de la gravure et de la typographie françaises [emphasis mine]." Nolhac, "Un nouveau portrait," 331.

the illustrations of the 1723 edition of the *Médailles* reveals them to be identical (Figs. 3.19-3.38). The medallion profiles were all rendered with the same graphic conventions: striated hatch-marks differentiate the ground from the sculptural relief of the head whose volume is described in gradations of stippling. The waves of flowing hair are defined in delicate linear patterns. This exact correlation is not only in the contoured profile and proportion of features. It is also in the details of cracks and irregularities defining the reliefs' edges below the neck and in the number and placement of curls. Notably, images of Louis XIV's relatives from Benoist's *Portraits de la maison royalle* also correspond to specific illustrations in the 1723 edition of the medallic history (figs. 3.39-3.48).

Benoist's representations are distinct from Antoine Coypel's profiles, which served as illustrations for the 1702 edition of the work. In 1695, when Pontchartrain took the initiative to reissue earlier medals of various dimensions in order to have a uniform series of commemorative medallions, Coypel had been tasked with producing designs that Jean Mauger then engraved as medals.[54] The portrait illustrations for the 1702 edition reproduced Coypel's designs while Benoist's later representations were variations of these models. To clarify this process of adaptation, it is worth delineating the specific differences along the chain of translations for one medallic profile. We can compare the portrait on Michel Mollart's medal struck in honour of Val de Grâce in 1650 (fig. 3.49), Mauger's adaptation of this design for the uniform series (Fig. 3.50), Gérard Edelinck's reproduction of Coypel's drawing for the 1702 *Médailles* (Fig. 3.51), and finally Benoist's variation of the model for the 1723 edition (Fig. 3.52).[55] For our discussion of Benoist's specific contribution to the final version

[54]The series of uniform medals were reproductions of coins that had been previously issued at the consistent diameter of 41mm. The summary of the assembly on January 8, 1695 recorded Pontchartrain's resolution to re-strike earlier medals in this consistent format. See the transcriptions from *Académie*'s records included as appendices in Jacquiot, "Les Portraits de Louis XIV," 200.

[55] In addition to Mollart, other models for the uniform series were medals by Jean Varin, Jêrome Roussel, and Joseph Roettiers. The academy's minutes record the process of selection of the eight royal profiles for the uniform series. Bignon brought in many medals as options for the Academy's consideration and eight were selected and handed to Mauger for engraving. The two additional portraits, paired with events between the initial edition and the king's death (the pinnacles of each of Benoist's framed compositions) were adapted by medals designed by Roussel and Roettiers. See Jacquiot, "Les Portraits de Louis XIV," 187-92.

of the *Médailles* it is noteworthy that his rendering is discernibly distinct. Benoist reproduces the same number and positioning of ringlets, though they hang at different lengths. Most markedly, the cracked roughness of the bust's surface in Benoist's rendition is different from the smoothed contour suggesting the bust's finished edge in the 1702 portrait. While these comparisons demonstrate that the royal profiles were redrafted for the medallic history's final revision, the series of adaptations also evidence the strictures of this medallic type. Adaptations maintained the authoritative schema of precedence and varied only details.[56]

There is, additionally, documentary confirmation to the visual evidence for Benoist's painted grisaille medallions as models for the engraved illustrations of the 1723 *Médailles*. These texts both identify Benoist as a contributor to this monumental project and offer additional context for this contribution's importance within the sculptor's rising social position. In previous chapters we saw that various editions of Germain Brice's guidebook to Paris were important sources for assessing the shifting configurations of the *Cercle royal* over the decades of its display. In 1706, Brice's entry on Benoist's exhibition included a description of Benoist's painted series of royal portraits and recorded their intended function as well as their donation to the royal household. Brice writes:

> [Benoist] was, for a long time, engaged in making the portraits of the King at all ages, engraved afterwards by four of the most capable masters, the originals of which he presented himself to his majesty, who certainly wanted to keep them because of their beauty. The portraits are destined for the history of the king through medals, the impression of which was begun in the month of July in the year 1705 under the particular care of the Abbé Bignon, [...] which inspires hope that this new *Histoire* will be infinitely more perfect than that which appeared a few years ago, for this illustrious and learned abbé never puts his hand to a work without procuring something of perfection and beauty.[57]

---

[56]See Christopher Wood's discussion of "the iterable profile" in relation to renderings of Christ's profile in sixteenth-century medals and prints in *Forgery, Replica, Fiction*, 155–64..

[57]"*Antoine* BENOIST, [...] a été long-temps occupé à faire les portraits de tous les âges du Roy, gravez ensuite par quatre des plus habiles Maîtres, dont les originaux ont été presentez par luy-même à sa Majesté, qui a bien voulu les garder à cause de leur beauté. Tous ces poertraits sont destinez pour l'Histoire du Roy par les Medailles, dont l'impression a été commencée dans le mois de Juillet de l'année 1705, sous la direction particulière de l'*Abbé* BIGNON [...] qui fait esperer que cette nouvelle Histoire sera infiniment plus parfaite que celle qui a paru il y a quelques années, est que cet illustre & docte Abbé, ne met jamais la main à aucun ouvrage, que ce no soit pour luy procurer de la perfection & de la beauté." Brice, *Description nouvelle de la ville de Paris*, 2:354-55.

Brice registers the donation of a series of portraits of the king "at all ages" [de tous les ages] to the royal household. This echo of one frame's title associates these portraits with the framed miniatures. The account identifies their purpose as models for the medallic's history engraved illustrations and positions them precisely within the timeline of this work's revision. The implied deficiencies of the first edition are glossed over in the paradoxical assertion that the revision will be "infinitely more perfect" than its predecessor. Brice's entry on Benoist in 1706 is evenly divided between these painted works and a description of the *Cercle royal*. This degree of attention registers the perceived importance of Benoist's work on the medallic history for his career. It is also noteworthy that discussion of Benoist's work offered Brice an opportunity to praise the capacities and accomplishments of the learned Jean-Paul Bignon, Pontchartrain's nephew and administrative assistant. The royal appreciation that Benoist's donation is reported to have received is thus directly tied to his association with the Pontchartrain clan.

Another document further specifies the timeline for Benoist's contact with the chancellor and the sculptor's commissioned work for the medallic history. Benoist's 1717 posthumous inventory included a listing of the sculptor's personal papers. Within this outline of Benoist's files, the notary describes:

> A *mémoire* of the portraits of the king that he was able to engrave [qu'il convient graver] following the different ages in order to serve the history of his majesty, below which is *the order given on the authority of Monsieur the chancellor* to the deceased Benoist, Simmoneau and others to engrave perpetually [de graver incessement] the heads of the king included in the *mémoire*, the aforementioned order dated to September 18, 1702. Signed [by] the abbé Bignon.[58]

This notation seems to indicate that two documents were appended together: a published account containing the portrait illustrations of the king at different ages and the certificate that attested to Benoist 's right to reproduce them. This record also confirms Pontchartrain and Bignon as the source of

[58] "Mémoire des portraits du roi qu'il convient graver suivant les différents âges pour servir à l'histoire de Sa Majesté, au bas duquel est l'ordre donné *en conséquence de celui de Monsieur le Chancelier* au défunt Sr Benoist, Simonneau et autres, de graver incessement les têtes du roi mentionnées au mémoire, ledit ordre en date du 18 septembre 1702, signé L'abbé Bignon." "Inventaire après décès d'Antoine Benoist," f. 61-62.

the authorization. The recorded date of this certificate gives a sense of the pace as the Academy's officials strategized for the required revision to the medallic history in 1702. To review: Pontchartrain ceremoniously presented the published volume to Louis XIV on January 9, 1702. Bignon informed the *académie* of the requirement to revise it one month later on February 20th.[59] Seven months after that, in September, Bignon signed the order on Pontchartrain's behalf that permitted Benoist's distribution of the engravings he would design for the revised work. This sequence of events in 1702 also reveals something about the unstable dynamic of collaborative work for the state. Fluctuations of royal favour ensured competition at each level of administration and production (between courtiers, officials, pensioned writers, and artisans). The pressure of shifting demands could open entry points within the interrelated hierarchical systems of state service and patronage networks. In this case, the obstacle imposed on the *académie*'s administration in 1702 created an opportunity for Benoist.

The point that Benoist's *grisaille* miniatures were commissioned as illustrations for the royal medallic history's1723 revision might seem like quite a minor question of artistic attribution. It might seem especially insignificant considering that Benoist's renderings were derivations of Coypel's 1702 illustrations. They were translations with only slight variation and not original formulations, the primary subject of connoisseurial interest. Artistic attribution was, however, a major point of contention with reference to the perceived failure of the medallic history in 1702 and the requirement to redraft it.

One notable offence of the 1702 edition of *Médailles* had been a short preface to the work authored by the abbé Paul Tallemant. It outlined the volume's achievements and concluded by listing the accomplishments of its contributors. This acknowledgment began with Jean Anisson's exacting leadership as director of the royal press and included many of the work's designers and printers: Antoine Coypel's supreme "grace," Jean Mauger's diligence as a medallist, Jean Berain's decorative design, Philippe Grandjean's new font. Benoît I. Audran, Gérard Edelinck, and the Simmonneaus were

[59] Jacquiot, "Les portraits de Louis XIV," 192.

credited as the volume's engravers.[60] This text was, however, censored soon after publication. An unsigned note, preserved within the files of the volume's printed proofs described the king's disapproval at seeing the creators' praise mixed up with his own.[61] François Le Dieu, secretary to the powerful Bishop of Meaux, Jacques Bégnine Bossuet, complained in his memoirs of the volume's offences, declaring that "the worst was a preface in which they praise each other, starting with the Abbé Bignon and down to the book merchant Anisson." Le Dieu further claimed that their arrogance provoked such criticism that "they were forced to remove the preface from all copies that came after the first sixty-five."[62] Nevertheless the insertion of manuscript copies of the preface in many bound volumes indicates interest in its contents and suggests resistance to its suppression.[63]

This preface was not the work's only controversy nor the official reason for its required revision. Bossuet identified 24 "historical inaccuracies" in the 1702 volume.[64] Changes in the presentation of certain events between the 1702 and 1723 editions also suggest the requirements of revising official accounts as political circumstances shifted.[65] On this topic Bignon had stated: "Changes in the political situation may make it necessary to suppress or correct [information]."[66] However, within the constellation of pressures on the project and within the competing factions at Louis XIV's court, the possibility that the acknowledgment of its makers' accomplishments was a significant one is confirmed by the fact that the signatures that were originally inscribed on plates were

[60]Tallemant, "Préface [1702]," 197.
[61] Mosley, "Making of the Book," 312.
[62] Quoted in Wellington, *Antiquarianism and the Visual Histories of Louis XIV*, 128. Wellington has also pointed out that this critical report can be contextualized within the factional politics of Louis XIV's court. Bossuet was an ally of the Jesuits, Menestrier and Père de la Chaize.
[63] James Mosley notes that of the many manuscript copies of the preface were bound in folio copies of the *Médailles,* some were "written in a very expert calligraphic hand, and occasionally on paper that is printed with the engraved borders that were made for the rest of the volume, which implies a certain official connivance within the Imprimerie royale […]." See "Making of the Book," 313.
[64] Wellington, *Antiquarianism and the Visual Histories of Louis XIV*, 138.
[65] Nicolas Milovanic notes this dynamic and provides the example of *L'Établissement de la colonie de Madagascar* (1664), which was replaced by *La Fondation de la compagnie des Indes* (1665) in 1723. See Milovanovic and Maral, *Louis XIV: L'Homme et Le Roi*, 190.
[66] Quoted in Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*, 126.

"systematically effaced."[67] Through an examination of the proofs and copper plates, James Mosley has determined that the plates to numerous illustrations were cropped down with the likely goal of removing engravers' signatures. Others were scraped off. He has also observed the addition of cramped signatures in the margins of certain plates. He hypothesizes that these signatures evidence resistance of the work's artisanal producers to the official requirement of anonymity.[68] The question of credit to the individuals who worked on the project was thus a subject of controversy and debate that must have cast a long shadow over efforts to revise the volume during the decades that followed its initial publication in 1702. Le Dieu's sarcastic reference to the director of the royal press as a mere "book merchant" highlights, in particular, the pressure on professional identity within the competitive field of royal service. As in Benoist's case, official titles and claims of legitimacy were countered with the deflating assertion of fraudulent exaggeration by rivals.

Mosley has also observed the lack of scholarly attention to the 1723 revision despite indications of noteworthy changes to the work.[69] While the production of 1702 has been carefully examined in a number of insightful studies, the 1723 revision falls into an archival blind spot and has been of far less scholarly interest as a result.[70] Yet the obscurity of the revision's production was planned. At stake, quite precisely, was the perspective of future historians and the worry that their appreciation of the volume's artists and producers would diminish their appreciation of Louis XIV's glorious accomplishments. This volume was a self-conscious historical record that aimed to throw the contemporary reign into relief as a glorious era on par with the early modern reverence of classical times. Of central concern was a competition of agencies and the absolutist ideal of the king as author of

[67] Mosley, "Making of the Book," 314.
[68] Mosley, 316–19.
[69] "Je ne sache pas qu'il existe une étude adéquate sur ce sujet." Mosley, "Notes sur la fabrication du livre," 135.
[70] Jacquiot's mistaken refutation of Nolhac's attribution of the 1723 royal portraits to Benoist with a mountain of evidence related to Coypel's 1702 portraits is especially symptomatic of this dynamic wherein the 1702 edition is scrutinized and the 1723 revision, ignored.

his own history.[71] Artistic attribution — as in the ability to appreciate an individual contributor's accomplishment at historical remove — was precisely at issue. In addressing the relatively minor topic of Benoist's commission for revised versions of Louis XIV's portraits, we are approaching questions of artistic identity and dynamics of artistic strategy that were of central interest within this social sphere. The publishers' miscalculated bravura in 1702, as evidenced by their suppression into anonymity, lays bare the dilemma of the volume's contributors. For they had to weigh the potential benefits of self-promotion against the threat of overreaching. The stark contrast between the publishers' sense of justified acknowledgment and the official intended reception broadly defines the field that Benoist navigated as he pursued official patronage in the last decades of his career.

1723, the date of the revised edition's publication, was eight years after Louis XIV's death and six years after Benoist's own death. It was thus fifteen years since Benoist had received the commission (1702) and thirteen years after he completed the *grisaille* paintings (1704). This timeline is important for understanding the ways that this commission impacted the last phase of Benoist's career even while the revised volume itself remained unpublished. We have seen that, along with the other contributors to the revision, Benoist's work was not prominently acknowledged so that his participation has been obscured within the scholarly literature. In his own lifetime, however, Benoist was able to promote his contribution to this volume as a strategy of professional advancement. Benoist's donation of the *grisaille* models of the engravings to the royal household is the first indication of the sculptor's tactic of promotion. We have seen that his presentation of these small-scale works within luxurious custom frames was a way of elevating the representations to the decorative standard of palatial display. Benoist had his name engraved within the frames' design, along the ribbon of the arrow's quiver at each composition's base. He also signed every individual painted portrait with the phrase "A. Benoist pinx."

[71] Marin has drawn attention to the rhetorical challenge of suppressing the historian's position in order to present Louis XIV as the sole agent of his own history. *Portrait of the King*, 76. In corollary Ludovic Jouvet refers to Louis XIV's medals as a body of royal imagery "without artists." See "Médailleurs de papier," 140.

Each framed assemblage thus includes *eleven* signatures in total. This insistent announcement of artistry and its appreciative reception within the *Cabinet des médailles* is a notable contrast to the offensive acknowledgment of artistic contribution in the censored preface of 1702. The contrast indicates that artistic promotion was a fraught and strategic enterprise. That which was forbidden in an official historical record could be appreciated within a restricted sphere of elite sociability.

Minting Social Capital

> "Society always pays itself in the counterfeit coin of its dreams"
> Marcel Mauss, "L'Esquisse d'une théorie générale sur la magie," 1902-3[72]

The success of Benoist's donation of the *grisaille* miniatures as a specific strategic statement of royal devotion is evidenced in the phrasing of the sculptor's papers of ennoblement in 1706. As previously noted, Benoist was legally ennobled through an act which asserted a long line of noble ancestry and excused his father's trade of carpentry and wood sculpture. This document summarized Benoist's accomplishment and devotion to the crown through royal portraiture in the following terms:

> Our beloved Antoine Benoist who, through his genius and his talents, has gained notoriety in the fine art of painting, who has eleven times made after us in wax, in painting and at different ages, our portrait, five times that of our very dear son, multiple times that of our grandson, the Duke of Burgundy, the king of Spain when he was the duke of Anjou and the Duke of Berry; those of the queens, our very honoured mother and wife, and additionally those of members of the royal household and other princes and princesses of our court […].[73]

This list of elite personages that Benoist had portrayed in wax and in paint, corresponds precisely to the figures included in the framed miniature sets.[74] The specification of eleven portraits of Louis XIV, at

[72] Quoted in translation in Bourdieu, "Some Additional Notes on the Gift," 231.
[73] "Notre amé Antoine Benoist qui par son génie et ses talens s'est rendu recommandable dans le bel art de la peinture, qui a fait onze fois d'après nous, en cire, en peinture, et en diférens âges, notre portrait, cinq fois celui de notre très cher fils, plusieurs fois ceux de nos petits fils le duc de Bourgogne, le Roy d'Espagne, quand il étoit duc d'Anjou, et le duc de Berry; ceux des Reines, nos très honorées mère et épouse, encore ceux des personnes de nôtre maison royale, et d'autres princes et princesses de notre cour […] ." The text of Benoit's "Lettres de relief de dérogeance à noblesse (1706)" is transcribed in Montaiglon, and Guiffrey, "Antoine Benoît. Sculpteur en cire," 303–5.
[74] Jules Guiffrey first made this observation in his introduction to Chabouillet, "Miniatures d'Antoine Benoist conservées au Cabinet des Médailles à Paris," 307.One difference is that the Dauphin appears only once in the miniature series.

different ages enforces this connection since this is the exact number of grisaille portraits depicting the king within the two gifted frames. Ten royal portraits make up the composition of *Portraits de Louis le Grand suivant ses âges*, a title that is echoed in the certificate's reference to the monarch's portrayal at different ages [en différents âges]. The eleventh portrait of the king was placed at the pinnacle of the frame including members of the royal family. Though wax, Benoist's primary medium, is referenced, it seems that the assemblage of painted medallions were objects of immediate reference for the document's composition. The inclusion of Anne of Austria, "our royal mother," on the list of royal portraits manufactured is especially telling since, as discussed above, her representation was not indicated in documentation of any version of the *Cercle royal*'s configurations though her painted profile features in the framed series of royal family miniatures. There was possibly an aspect of convenience in illustrating Benoist's artistic accomplishments and royal service with reference to objects housed in Versailles. These works were available for consultation and were clearly testaments of royal tribute. The degree of correspondence, however, between listing of Benoist's portrait subjects and the royals included in the miniatures suggests that this commission's prominence justified the act of ennoblement. The document of ennoblement bore the signatures of both the king and Pontchartrain as well as the great royal seal (le grand sceau).[75] This seal would have been stamped in green wax to indicate its effect in perpetuity. The formality of the chancellor's signature on this legal document was part of administrative routine and not an exceptional show of favour. Together with his name on the certificate that authorized Benoist to distribute his illustrations for the medallic history, Pontchartrain's

[75] "Donné à Marly le 25e jour de juillet, l'an de grâce 1706 et de notre règne le 64e. Signé Louis et plus bas: par le Roy, Philippeaux [Sic.], et en queue scellé du grand sceau […]." This act was registered at the *Cour des Aides* in Paris one month later (28 August, 1706)." One copy of this certificate of ennoblement had been filed within the sculptor's personal archive, as noted in his posthumous inventory: "lettres de relief d'une seule dérogeance de noblesse accordées au défunt par le roi, 25 juillet 1706, et autres titres concernant la noblesse dudit Benoist." The text of this legal certificate survives in a transcription of acts registered at the *Cour des aides*. The original records were destroyed in a fire of 1776. Montaiglon, and Guiffrey, "Antoine Benoît. Sculpteur en cire," 305–6.

signature is, nevertheless, a reminder of the chancellor's role as mediator as Benoist attained the status granted by royal favour.

A number of extant engravings indicate that Benoist capitalized on the permission he had received to distribute his illustrations for the medallic history. We recall that the certificate recorded in his posthumous inventory indicated the Chancellor's permission for "Benoist, Simmoneau and others to engrave perpetually [de graver incessement] the heads of the king included in the *mémoire* […]." There are a number of preserved examples of small individual sheets featuring one of Benoist's profiles engraved by Simmoneau (Fig. 3.53) or Benoît I. Audran (Fig 3.54). Notably, both Simmonaeau and Audran were documented as contributors to the medallic history.[76] Of particular interest within this series of small-scale engravings are two examples that play on the obverse and reverse of a medal's two sides by pairing Benoist's portraits with Latin inscriptions within circular frames. One describes "France's prayer [VOTUM GALLIAE]": to always have such a king and this one for a long time (fig. 3.55). The second features similarly exalted praise by describing the king as religion's avenger and a "miracle of the world" (fig. 3.56).[77] A final phrase, in smaller font than the lines of royal glorification, indicates the image's creator and its occasion. Benoist's name is translated into a Latin formulation as "Antonius Benoist." His newly-attained status is conveyed by the phrase "restored to the nobility [NOBILITATI RESTITUTUS]." The following date of 1706 indicates the year of the print's production. Within the image's design, Benoist's status is conveyed in an appropriately diminutive font and concise phrasing in comparison to the larger type and grandiose qualities attributed to Louis XIV. The mere inclusion of this single biographical fact of Benoist's ennoblement within an image glorifying the king was, however, a means of promotion within this social context. The perceived significance of

[76] In the 1702 preface, Tallemant acknowledged the printmakers who had worked on the volume: "Les testes du Roy en taille douce sont faites au burin par le Chevalier Edelinck. Les revers sont gravez à l'eau forte par les deux frères Simmoneau, par le Sieur Audran […]." Tallemant, "Préface [1702]," 197.
[77] "sacrorum vindici/ orbis miraculo."

this statement of artistic identity is evidenced in Benoist's commission of an actual medal based on this design (fig. 3.57-58).

Benoist's engravings were also compiled as illustrations to an illuminated biography of Louis XIV. This slim volume was printed, enhanced with gouache, sumptuously bound in velvet, and trimmed with gilded ornament (figs. 3.59-60).[78] Under the title *Histoire de Louis le Grand*, it contains chapters recounting noteworthy events in every period of the king's reign. Each chapter's heading includes a printed reproduction of Benoist's portrait medallions painted in gouache. Surfaces of skin were gently tinted with flesh tone; hair was coloured golden blond for images of the youthful Louis and grey for his maturity (figs. 3.61 and 3.62). Thin, twisted swathes of drapery along the reliefs' edge suggests the collars of garments. The circular frames of coins were gilded while the grounds were painted in saturated hues and occasionally spattered to evoke polychrome marbles. The intricate craftsmanship of the binding and illumination evoke precious sumptuousness on an intimate scale. The two representations of coins with Latin inscriptions were also included (fig. 3.63, 3.64).[79] Even more apparent than on the single sheet, within this bound volume, the statement of Benoist's ennoblement is but a footnote within Louis XIV's epic biography. It is only a single line on one page. Brief and diminutive as it is, however, its inclusion exemplifies the dynamic of personal promotion through mere association with monarchical magnificence.

Indeed, this bound volume is particularly interesting for thinking about the elevation of artistic identity within the genre of royal tribute. This book was a collaborative venture, but its design and dedication concentrated on Benoist's personal gratitude. It includes the engravings by Simmoneau, Audran and Alexis Loir. Comparing the individual engravings with their painted equivalents within

---

[78] Benoist, *Histoire de Louis Le Grand.*

[79] While the single sheet engraving announcing Benoist's restituted nobility is dated 1706 (MDCCVI), in the painted version within the bound volume of *Histoire de Louis le grand,* two additional 'I's have been added to indicate 1708 (MDCCVIII). This alteration likely indicates that the bound volume was completed two years after the initial image was engraved (compare figs. 2.48 and 2.54).

Benoist's book makes it clear that the printer' signatures were obliterated with gold leaf in the compiled volume. Benoist's own name, by contrast, was carefully re-inscribed over the gold application (compare Figs. 3.65, 3.66). The author of the book's text is uncredited, but the text is identical to a volume that was published four years later, in 1712, by Michel-David de la Bizardière.[80] In Bizardière's publication, chapter headings were marked with abstract decorative ornament rather than with Benoist's portrait illustrations. Compare, for example, the contrasting headings for chapter eight, which addresses victories over Genoa, Tripoli, and Tunis as well as the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (Figs. 3.67, 3.68). It is possible that Benoist originally commissioned text for his volume from Bizardière who later published it under his own name. These circumstances are unclear. Nevertheless, it seems noteworthy that the collaboration of engravers and author was withheld in the presentation of Benoist's small book to render it a personal tribute from one gratefully-ennobled sculptor to his monarch.

As a token of gratitude, this book completes a cycle of exchange that began with Benoist's donation of the *grisaille* miniatures to the Cabinet des médailles. We have seen that Benoist's gift was rewarded with the royal endorsement of his ennoblement two years later. The specific references to this series within Benoist's papers of ennoblement, illustrate this pattern of donation and reciprocity that characterize gift exchange.[81] Indeed, the dynamic of humble tribute that was rewarded by the magnanimous generosity of a powerful figure was definitive for the bond of ancien-régime patronage.[82] The book that Benoist assembled then responds within this patterned sequence as a tribute in thanks for the "restituted" nobility. The precision of the wording that states that Benoist's nobility was restored

[80] Bizardière, Histoire de Louis le Grand, depuis le commencement de son Règne Jusques En 1710..Bizardière's work received a royal privilege on 14 May, 1710 and was dedicated to Adrien-Maurice de Noailles. The author's previously published works concerned the history of Poland.

[81] The canonical analysis of gift exchange as a series of reciprocal obligations is Mauss, *The Gift*.

[82] Mauss's insights have been applied to patrimonial networking in early modern France in Kettering, "Gift-Giving and Patronage in Early Modern France." It is noteworthy that Jacques Derrida prefaced his deconstructive analysis of the gift with a discussion of Louis XIV's era. Madame de Maintenon's statement that the king takes all her time offsets Derrida's discussion of generosity's fundamental philosophical impossibility. See *Given Time*, 1–5.

rather than simply bestowed relates to a rhetoric that upheld the standard of social rank as something inherent rather than invented. However, the legal "restitution" of the sculptor's status also enforces the sense of reciprocal exchange between Benoist and Louis XIV. By surrounding his images of the king and royal family with laudatory imagery and text, Benoist performed the role of subordinate tributary, which justified the royal recognition of his ennoblement.

These medallic profiles were not Benoist's first royal portraits and the letters of ennoblement were not the first indication of official state recognition for his work. We have seen that the *Cercle royal* first received the protection of a royal patent in 1668, five months before Louis XIV himself visited the display. However, Benoist's medallic representation and ennoblement in the first decade of the eighteenth century had a significantly different tenor and impact on the sculptor's career. The *privilèges* for the *Cercle royal* received the yellow seal for temporary legal acts and operated for limited periods. Their justification was explicitly economic. They protected Benoist's rightful profit from his endeavour and promised him sums of damages in the event of counterfeit infringement. The letters of ennoblement, by contrast, addressed Benoist's biography and personal worth. Their green seal would have confirmed their effectiveness in perpetuity over generations of Benoist's descendants. The distinct emphases and parameters of these legislative certificates, correspond to the works they relate to. The full-scale wax figures of the *Cercle royal* were the basis of the sculptor's wealth and reputation. Benoist built on this foundation to secure a prestigious official commission. These medallic profiles served as the lynchpin for Benoist's navigation of the prestige economy of official royal service and patrimonial relations.

Benoist's transmutation of wealth into prestige might appear seamlessly progressive. However, the challenge of securing social capital is perceptible in the contrasting defamatory characterizations of Benoist that previous chapters addressed. Descriptions of the sculptor as a deceitful illusionist peddling alluring spectacle aimed to delegitimate the source of his wealth. As we have seen, the accumulation of

a fortune in small denominations of entry fees offended the ideals of liberal artistry and ennobled status. And yet these very coins of 10 and 15 *sols* that Benoist accrued (Figs. 3.69, 3.70) shared significant formal characteristics with the commemorative medallions that he rendered for the medallic history. The question of Benoist's legitimate status or illegitimate wealth played out in the exchange of different varieties of medallic representations.

Indeed, the fraught criteria for distinguishing between the form and function of money and commemorative medals was a significant topic of antiquarian concern. Tallemant's scandalous 1702 preface opened with an assessment of this very question. He stated that the differentiation between coins and medals was a subject of ongoing debate.[83] With reference to ancient examples, he distinguished currency's uniformity from the unique designs of medals that commemorated specific events. Marin's analysis of this passage highlights the medal's perceived effectiveness for absolutist representation because of its ancient origin.[84] I would emphasize, by contrast, Tallemant's acknowledgment of the troubled distinction of functions within the variations of medallic form. Tallemant frames his distinction between currency and commemorative medal as one perspective within an undecided debate. Tallemant noted that many ancient coins were originally currency and then rendered commemorative with the passage of time. Thus, currency could gain interest as an historical relic in obsolescence. Moreover, the controversial position of Tallement's preface as a text that provoked censure undermines its value as an authoritative source. The idea of commemorative medals as derivations of currency that act on a different plane of social exchange and according to a different timeframe, positions the medallic form as central for a consideration of the troubled transposition of economic to social capital. This is particularly apparent in Benoist's case.

The sequence of interchange wherein Benoist's tributes were recognized and rewarded demonstrates the process of converting economic to symbolic capital. Pierre Bourdieu has positioned

[83] Tallemant, "Préface [1702]," 180–81.
[84] Marin, *Portrait of the King*, 129.

the gift economy as central to the accumulation of symbolic capital, which he defines as "a capital of recognition, honour, nobility."[85] This form of prestige can be consolidated in particular "through the transmutation of economic capital achieved through the alchemy of symbolic exchanges."[86] The coin and the question of its authoritative replication was central to Bourdieu's articulation of social capital's troubled economic basis. Bourdieu draws on Marcel Mauss's statement that "society always pays itself in the counterfeit coin of its dream" in order to describe the "collective self deception" that occludes social capital's subtle commerce.[87] The notion of the social bonds forged by gift exchange as "counterfeit" versions of the economy centres attention on the materiality of currency and the question of authoritative replication. Mauss's ironic metaphor of forgery highlights the extent to which distinctions between counterfeit replication and authoritative legitimacy can be thought of as arbitrary social constructs. Considering the numismatic imagery within this discussion, it seems noteworthy that medallic representation was of central importance in Benoist's negotiation of rank and legitimacy. His case allows us to trace the 'alchemical' process of heightening social capital through distinct material translations and formal correspondences. He accumulated a fortune's worth of coins and then converted this wealth to ennobled prestige through his manufacture of medallic profiles. These royal representations served as a different form of currency that facilitated his participation in the prestige economy of patrimonial relations and honorific titles.

Thus, even though the medallic history remained unpublished in Benoist's own lifetime, the sculptor was able to leverage his work on this official volume in his efforts of advancement. He distributed the images he had produced, first by donating the painted models to the *cabinet des médailles* and then by disseminating engraved reproductions of them in different configurations. Benoist's case also highlights a broader dynamic wherein the protracted timeframes of Louis XIV's

[85]Bourdieu, "Some Additional Notes on the Gift," 234.
[86]Bourdieu, 235.
[87]Bourdieu, 235.

monumental works were frequently punctuated by the distribution of images of a monument's provisional states. A steady output of previews, announcements, models, and proofs kept ambitious projects of glorification in the public eye. Such reminders could be tangible compensations for yet unrealized intentions when monumental ambitions were beleaguered by technical challenges and factional controversy (as the medallic history was). The often experimental nature of such trials was obscured by the official strains of rhetoric that framed each iteration with reference to the supreme project of glorification.[88] This dynamic is particularly apparent in cases in which provisional prototypes were substantially altered or rejected. For example, the king's admiration of the plaster model of Desjardins's centrepiece of the *Place des Victoires* was announced in the M*ercure Galant* of December, 1681. This initial prototype for a marble figure was subsequently re-conceptualized as a bronze colossus.[89] Another example is the medal featuring Bernini's design for the Louvre's façade (Fig. 3.71), a model that was eventually abandoned.

This dynamic of provisional iterations within broader monumental frameworks is important for our understanding of Benoist's extant wax profile of Louis XIV. As the sculptor's unique surviving waxwork, it has understandably been viewed as an exceptional royal representation. Benoist's engagement with medallic portraiture, however, relates his wax profile to a broader body of work, which was conceived with reference to institutional demands. The following section proceeds to examine this object's typological convention in relation to its remarkable wax materiality.

---

[88] Marin's discussion of Tallemant's 1702 preface as evidence for an official strategy of ideological interpolation despite the text's controversy and rejection is symptomatic of this dynamic. Claire Goldstein notes the power that "the Sun King's own discourse... has held over even brilliant modern critics such as Louis Marin[...]." See, Vaux and Versailles, 23.

[89] The *Mercure galant* of December 1681 described the King's admiration of Desjardin's prototype: "ce que le roi alloit voir n'étoit qu'un modèle." For this text see Boislisle, La Place des Victoires et La Place de Vendôme, 34–37.A year later, Desjardins signed a new contract for a bronze centrepiece for this site. The initial marble version was donated to the king and installed in the *Orangerie* at Versailles. See Gaehtgens, "La Statue de Louis XIV," 12.

Scarred Surfaces

> His white skin, more perfect than that of the most delicate women, is combined with the most rosy tint and has only been somewhat changed by smallpox. It has retained its whiteness and shows not the slightest trace of yellow.
> -Guy-Crescent Fagon, 1693[90]

> His face is notably changed; it is barely recognizable, every day it wrinkles more.
> -Elisabeth of Bavaria, Duchess of Orléans, 1694[91]

The previous sections have sought to establish the state's investment in the medallic form as a strategy of royal glorification. We have noted Pontchartrain's initiatives in steering this venture through his direction of the A*cadémie des inscriptions*. We have also seen that Benoist promoted his participation in the medallic history as a mark of official recognition that could attest to social standing. The stakes of medallic commemoration for the absolutist state, for Pontchartrain's administrative career and for Benoist's artistic reputation alert us to the likelihood that the wax relief's format as a medallion was crucial to its initial meaning within Pontchartrain's collection.

It is striking, from this point of view, that the wax relief's typology as a medallic profile has rarely been considered as one of its significant features.[92] Though authors consistently note in passing that the work is a profile relief, critical assessments have focused almost exclusively on this representation's exceptional qualities: its assemblage of materials and its attentive rendering of aged, scarred flesh. Scholars have frequently proposed subversive implications for the wax relief's minute examination of bodily particularity. Pommier's assessment of "physical decrepitude" is echoed in a number of more recent publications.[93] This sense of abject corporeality would seem to contradict the royal portrait's primary purpose of exaltation. Indeed, Benoist's wax profile has been taken as a revelation of profane humanity in contrast to glorifying representations that were laden with symbolism

[90]Fagon's comment from Louis XIV's *journal de santé* is quoted in translation in Marin, "The Pathetic Body," 238.
[91]"Le visage est singulièrement changé; à peine s'il est reconnaissable, journellement il se ride davantage." Letter of May 9, 1694, excerpted in Orléans, *Corréspondance*, 1:102.
[92]As discussed above, Pierre de Nolhac's 1913 article is a noteworthy exception.
[93] Pommier, *Théories du portrait*, 269; Sarmant, *Louis XIV: Homme et Roi*, 419; Delalex, *Louis XIV Intime*, 180.

or antique reference. In certain descriptions, Benoist's profile strips Louis XIV of his symbolic armour and reduces him to humble mortality.[94] As one historian has bluntly stated of Benoist's wax relief: "there is nothing official about the portrait."[95] Maral's comparison to politically subversive satire similarly offsets Benoist's waxwork from official royal imagery.[96] Yet the work's format as a medallion profile and its connection to the significant project of Louis XIV's medallic commemoration indicate a more complex relation between the work's intricately textured, fleshy substance and the conventions of official royal imagery.

In order to assess the implications the wax profile's evocative corporeality in relation to the medallic profile's glorifying aims, the present section proceeds to frame Benoist's wax profile in relation to broader questions in Louis XIV's portraiture. In our attempt to grasp the work's range of potential implications within its original context, we must overview pertinent aspects of royal imagery in which its initial viewers were steeped. I chart interrelated issues in Louis XIV's portraiture in reference to a series of comparative examples. We will consider the representation of bodily specificity, the symbolic potential of the king's skin, and the challenges of Louis XIV's old age before turning our attention to medallic materiality. Of particular interest in this investigation will be the textured particularity of skin and medals as meaningful surfaces.

Though streamlined within typological patterns, Louis XIV's portraiture was an expansive genre. In its myriad formats and media, the king's image could be adapted to effectively convey authority in wide-ranging contexts. Emmanuel Coquery states, for example, that Louis XIV's representation was characterized by its extreme variety.[97] Moreover, the political stakes of the absolutist portrait as an attestation of perfect equivalence between one human body and the divinely-

[94] Bluche, *Louis XIV*.
[95] Chaline, *Le Règne de Louis XIV*, 230.
[96] Maral in Milovanovic and Maral, *Louis XIV: L'Homme et Le Roi*, 226.
[97] Coquery, "Le Portrait de Louis," 76. For an analysis of the variety of formats and functions of Louis XIV's portraits see Sabatier, "Le Portrait de César."

sanctioned monarchy meant that there was a paradox at the core of royal representation. The strategic rhetorical negotiation of this central paradox forms the backbone of Louis Marin's canonical analysis of Louis XIV's portraiture.[98] The vociferous insistence on Louis XIV as definitive ideal masked the instability of the royal portrait's central axiom. René Démoris asserts that the royal portrait's inadequacy was inevitable considering its task of materializing omnipotence.[99] This inherent instability opened up this supremely privileged genre to variation, debate, and contestation.

Indeed, the royal portrait's function of presenting one man as the manifestation of the divinity instilled in sacred monarchy meant that the particularities of Louis XIV's appearance were subjects of fixation. Discussion of Bernini's marble bust of Louis XIV in 1665 (Fig. 3.72), for example, revolved around questions of accurate specificity and idealism. Paul Fréart de Chantelou reported that Bernini's "secret" for portraits involved diminishing or even omitting "that which is ugly or small."[100] Indications of Louis XIV's small pox scars, wrinkles, and stubble would seem to be exactly the kind of blemishes that could distract from the beauty and grandeur that were Bernini's stated priorities. And yet the sculptor's revelation of portraiture's "secret" was articulated defensively in response to criticism of his formation of the king's features.[101] Bernini's asymmetrical rendering of Louis XIV's nose, for instance, provoked significant complaint. When the court poet Francesco Butti reported the king's displeasure with its crooked form, the sculptor claimed that he had merely shaped it as he perceived it.[102] Numerous viewers deemed the king's forehead to be exaggeratedly sloped. These critics included the medallist Jean Warin, an esteemed royal portraitist. Bernini insisted that this slope was both accurate

[98]In Marin's semiotic formula, the royal portrait is a "sacramental body" that mediated "exchange without remainder" between "physical historical "and "juridico-political" bodies of kingship. See *Portrait of the King*, 14.

[99]René Démoris suggests this tension in his reading of André Félibien's ekphrastic essay, *Le Portrait du Roy*: "l'échec est inévitable, puisque les conditions matérielles de la représentation picturale empêchant que soit traduit en peinture le corps-partout du roi." See "Le Corps Royal," 23.

[100]"Le secret dans les portraits est d'augmenter le beau et donner du grand, diminuer ce qui est laid ou petit ou le supprimer quand cela se peut sans intérêt de la complaisance." Chantelou, *Journal de voyage Du Cavalier Bernin*, 205.

[101]Bernini expressed this in response to the Abbé Butti criticism of the forehead's form. Chantelou, 205.

[102]"qu'il le voyait de la sorte," Chantelou, 205.

and a salient evocation of the grandeur of antique prototypes.[103] Another close observer of the king's appearance, the portrait engraver Robert Nanteuil, observed disproportion in Bernini's rendering of the king's left cheek.[104] Chantelou's report of the debates that Bernini's portrait engendered reveals the extent to which ideals of royal representation were topics of dispute. While the tenet of idealized grandeur was unquestionable, the means of conveying Louis XIV's supremacy was a subject of ongoing debate.

Within the possibilities of royal idealism, which glorifying mode could accommodate the pock-marked scars of Benoist's wax profile? These tiny abrasions to the surface of wax were traces of Louis XIV's childhood small pox. They seem like a flagrant foregrounding of triviality and ugliness that Bernini would have deemed incompatible with grandeur. Indeed, the sixteenth-century jurist, Jean Bodin, had compared the "smallest vice" in a prince to "a boil in a very beautiful face."[105]This physiognomic logic underlines the potential symbolism of blemished skin. Yet Louis XIV's smallpox scars were, on rare occasions, represented. There were, for example, a number of poems penned in celebration of the young king's miraculous ecovery from smallpox in 1647.[106]

Jean Martinet's 1659 literary portrait of the king is an instructive comparison to Benoist's wax representation for its minute examination of the textured surface of Louis XIV's head.[107] Martinet notes recent baldness resulting from typhoid fever in 1658. He also bemoans the king's lost hair and describes "precious roots" vigorously spouting from the royal scalp. Light traces of the smallpox that plagued the nine-year-old monarch are described as attestations of the indiscriminate power of disease,

---

[103]Chantelou assured Varin that the incline of the forehead was purposeful and commensurate with the manner of the most beautiful antiques. Chantelou, 128.

[104] "[...] que la joue gauche était trop grosse." Chantelou, 201.

[105] Quoted in Johannesson, "The Portrait of the Prince as a Rhetorical Gesture," 19.

[106] Stanis Perez notes that these texts concentrated on the scars rather than the excruciating symptoms of the disease. See *La Santé de Louis XIV*, 343.

[107] Martinet, "Portrait de sa Majesté."This text was included in a compilation of literary portraits of courtiers. Martinet identified himself as *aide des cérémonies* of the royal household.

though Martinet assures that these scars detract nothing from Louis's vivacious complexion.[108] Martinet proceeds to expound Louis XIV's superlative qualities: modesty and generosity, courage and piety. The text imagines the king enthroned in majesty, commanding troops on horseback, and dancing in the guise of a mythological hero.[109] Notably, Martinet's introduction opposes great painters who have corrected their sitters' flaws with truthful, unembellished portraits. In his granular scrutiny of the king's physical head, small scars and individual hair follicles serve as avowals of truth as opposed to the exaggerated fantasies of great painters. The details of blemishes are documentary anchors that attest to the veracity of Martinet's hyperbolic accolades: Louis XIV as "masterpiece of the heavens" and "God's gift to France."[110] This integration of minute blemishes into a glorifying representation presents a noteworthy precedent to Benoist's work.

The king's old age posed additional challenges to royal representation. As a youth he could be characterized as a virile hero. He could seduce in mythological guise, as he had in Versailles's first festivities, or present himself as the reincarnation of Alexander the Great.[111] In old age, after his body was ravaged by illness, his symbolic personification as embodiment of the body politic required other modes of representation. Hyacinthe Rigaud's portrait of 1701 is an iconic image of Louis XIV's old age (Fig. 3.73).[112] The painting presents the king's body as an armature for the apparatus of ceremonial garb and sacred instruments of royal ritual.[113] Louis is draped in a voluminous velvet coronation robe, the bejewelled hilt of Charlemagne's sword is visible at his side.[114] Notably, the formal costume and ritual

[108]Martinet, "Portrait de sa Majesté,"10–11.
[109]Emmanuel Coquery notes that in this way, Martinet surveys the conventional formats of painted royal portraits. See "Le Portrait de Louis," 76–78.
[110]Martinet, "Portrait de sa Majesté," 14.
[111]The literature on Louis XIV's mythological guises and historical models is vast. On the initial enthusiasm and subsequent contention of Alexander the Great as model see Grell and Michel, *L'école des princes*.
[112] This work was initially commissioned to accompany Louis XIV's grandson, the duc d'Anjou, to Spain where he would be crowned Philip V. The painting was retained at Versailles, however, and a copy was commissioned for Madrid. Myriam Tsikounas overviews the substantial literature dedicated to this painting in "De La Gloire à l'émotion."
[113] Marin, "The Portrait of the King's Glorious Body," 200.
[114] Called *le joyeuse,* Charlemagne's sword was stored in the treasury of Saint Denis and central within the coronation ritual of the *sacre*. Musée de Louvre, inv no. MS84; D934.

objects are displayed with the graceful elegance that was the hallmark of Louis XIV's courtly protocol. He holds Henri IV's sceptre, the Hand of Justice, upside down and at a jaunty angle as though it were a cane.[115] While the king's face shows signs of age, the balletic pose compensated for the king's weakness and infirmity in this period. The operation on Louis XIV's anal fistula in 1686 as well as worsening gout had severely impaired his mobility.[116]

The royal portrait's theoretical equivalence between actual and ideal is thus manifest in the distinct combinations of Rigaud's painting. Within this representation, the wrinkled face instils a degree of documentary plausibility to the statement of courtly grace and robust authority (fig. 3.74). In 1702, the *Mercure galant* reported the acclaim of the painting's initial presentation to the court by stating: "nothing is more resembling."[117] A 1707 guidebook to Versailles similarly highlighted the work's striking resemblance.[118] In addition to such printed descriptions, the painting's prominent display in Versailles's throne room and wide circulation in painted copies ensured its status as a canonical representation.[119] The king's elderly appearance within this widely distributed authoritative image establishes the representational codes that can contextualize the clinical specificity of Louis XIV's aged image in Benoist's wax profile. Rigaud's portrait was notably integrated into the frontispiece of the medallic history (fig. 3.75). It is also significant that Pontchartrain also owned a painted copy of Rigaud's iconic portrait.[120]

---

[115]Numerous authors note parallels between this pose and the gentlemanly informality of Anthony Van Dyck's *Charles I at the Hunt* c.1635. See, for example, Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*, 33.

[116]Tsikounas observes thatLouis XIV was racked by the pains of gout's swelling at the very time of the painting's creation. "De La Gloire À L'émotion," 61

[117]The *Mercure galant* of January, 1702 is quoted in Milovanovic and Maral, *Louis XIV: L'Homme et Le Roi*, 168, n.6.

[118]Piganiol de La Force noted the painting's position on the chimney of the Salon d'Apollon and praised its resemblance, as quoted in Milovanovic and Maral, *Louis XIV: L'Homme et le roi,* 166.

[119]Numerous painted copies were commissioned by the *Bâtiments du roi*. The state also commissioned an engraved reproduction from Pierre Drevet, completed only after Louis XIV's death, in 1716. See Fuhring and Marchesano, *A Kingdom of Images*, 60. Rigaud's account books evidence the numerous copies ordered by courtiers. See Coquery, "Le Portrait de Louis," 82.

[120] Benisovitch, "Peintures et Sculptures Au Chateau de Pontchartrain," 102.

The king's elderly image could also confound, however. Martin Lister, an English physician who published accounts of his Parisian travels of 1698, expressed puzzlement at the king's depiction at the age of sixty: "All the Paintings and Prints made of late years of the King make him look very old; which in my mind, is not so; for he is plump in the Face, and is well coloured, and seems healthy, and eats and drinks heartily, which I saw him do."[121] The physician thus cast his clinical eye on Louis XIV's countenance and deemed him robust. Lister hypothesized that the exaggerated frailty of Louis XIV's depictions might be a form of pandering to the Dauphin's aspiration to replace his father. Lister considered the potential political motivation of this breach of decorum to be "the meanest Compliment I have known the French guilty." He contrasted Louis XIV's aged image to the youthful ideals of Roman emperors such as Augustus.[122] Lister could have been promoting his own proximate encounter with French royalty, an eye witness to the king's meals whose observations could vie with the painters of highest courtly status. We might be swayed by Lister's skepticism that deemed aged frailty an insult. However, like the suggestions that Benoist's wax profile was primarily subversive or satirical in its initial context, this seems incompatible with strictures imposed on the depiction and circulation of the royal image. Instead, our interpretive challenge is to understand the ways in which this elderly representation encapsulated a form of ideal in the last phase of Louis XIV's reign.

In questioning the modes of Louis XIV's portrayal in old age, Lister's reflection signals a "crisis of representation" manifest in the textured surface of the king's face. Peter Burke proposes a "crisis of representation" for Louis XIV's sacred monarchy with reference to Max Weber's model of seventeenth-century "disenchantment."[123] Gérard Sabatier takes up the question of a "crisis" in Louis XIV's royal figuration, which he relates to Michel Foucault's schema, in which the epistemological

[121] Lister, *A Journey to Paris in the Year 1698*, 220. Lister penned his memoir while he was attendant to England's ambassador.
[122] Lister, 220–21.
[123] Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*, 125–33.

authority of 'resemblance' expires in the seventeenth century.[124] These epochal historical negotiations were arguably manifest symptomatically in the representation of Louis XIV's face. The folds and creases of this skin, its degree of tautness or flaccidity, its plumpness or flab took on significance as commentary on the body politic. The symbolic potency of the king's skin exemplifies Mary Douglas's observation that a human body's surfaces are boundaries that can offer a salient model for thinking about broader questions of social definition.[125] While the representative significance of the royal body is explicit in primary sources and prominent in the scholarly literature on absolutism, Douglas's perspective is valuable here for her emphasis on the particular relevance of corporeal boundaries.

Elisabéth Charlotte of Bavaria, duchess of Orléans, or "Madame," Louis XIV's sister-in-law, associated the wrinkled texture of Louis XIV's flesh with diminished majesty. In a letter of 1694, she stated that though Louis XIV primarily maintained face ["a très bonne mine encore"] in moments of release, "he appears most fat and old, it is as though his majesty has become smaller. The face is substantially changed; it is barely recognizable, every day it wrinkles more."[126] This unflattering portrayal is striking for its scalding candour.[127] Her statement is also noteworthy for associating the figurative maintenance of 'face' or appearance ["bonne mine"], as in the convincing performance of dignified authority, with the literal substance of the face's wrinkling skin. The scrutiny of the face's creased surface foregrounds the extent to which Louis XIV's majestic courtly demeanour was slipping away. The French term "mine" had physiognomic implications in period dictionaries. Antoine Furetière provided the example of a counterfeit coin as an example of a false face ["mauvais mine"]. [128]

---

[124]Sabatier, *Versailles, ou, La figure du roi*, 558.

[125]Douglas argues: "the body is a model which can stand for any bounded system. Its boundaries can represent any boundaries which are threatened or precarious." See *Purity and Danger*, 142.

[126]"Notre roi, cela est vrai, a très bonne mine encore, quand Sa Majesté le veut; mais il se alisse aller trop souvent. Alors le roi s'affaisse, il paraît gros et vieux, c'est comme si Sa Majesté était devenue plus petite. Le visage est singulièrement changé; a peine s'il est reconnaissable; journellement il se ride davantage." Letter of May 9, 1694, excerpted in Orléans, *Corréspondanc*e, 1:102.

[127]A recent study states that in Madame, "the royal family harboured a particularly persistent, vituperative, and possibly dangerous critic."See Rule and Trotter, *A World of Paper*, 136.

[128]"Ce Louis d'or à la *mine* d'étre faux, il a bien mauvaise mine." Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, s.v. "MINE.

Other sources, however, present official complimentary alternatives to Madame's unflattering portrayal of Louis XIV's aged skin. Guy-Crescent Fagon, Louis XIV's chief physician (*premier médecin*), presented a very different description of Louis XIV's face in 1693, just one year before Madame's harsh comments. Within the king's medical diary, Fagon claimed: "His white skin, more perfect than that of the most delicate women, is combined with the most rosy tint and has only been somewhat changed by smallpox. It has retained its whiteness and shows not the slightest trace of yellow."[129] The question of pale or sallow complexion was important since Fagon was arguing against his predecessor's treatment program for purging Louis XIV's excess bile.[130] As opposed to the jaundiced appearance of a bilious temperament, Fagon insisted on the feminine delicacy of whiteness that was only subtly tinged by small pox scars.[131] These marks were, therefore, acknowledged but minimized. It is crucial here that Louis XIV was the principle reader of his own medical diary.[132] Its clinical assessments, therefore, had to be articulated in appropriately obsequious rhetoric. As opposed to Madame's critical evaluation, which was a private communication within a letter, Fagon's description was a performance for royal approval.[133]

If the doctor's clinical scrutiny was addressed primarily to the king, the court artists' dilemma was to mediate between the decorum of a royal ideal and Louis XIV's physical appearance, with which courtiers could easily compare his portrayals.[134] An encounter between the king and his first painter,

---

[129] Vallot, d'Aquin, and Fagon, *Journal de Santé de Louis XIV*, 273.English translation in Marin, "The Pathetic Body," 238. Authored by Louis XIV's chief physicians, the medical diary charted the king's symptoms, diagnoses, and treatments.

[130] Fagon, worked under Antoine d'Aquin, contributed to his supervisor's downfall and then replaced him. Marin points out that after arguing against d'Aquin's assessment of excess bile, Fagon proposed thesame melancholic temperament for Louis XIV. Fagon frames this diagnosis, however, in glorifying terms by proclaiming: "the king's temperament is that of heroes[...]." "The Pathetic Body," 239. On d'Acquin disgrace see Perez, *La Santé de Louis XIV*, 158–65.

[131] Perez points out that Fagon's assessment of Louis XIV's white complexion was contradicted in other sources. Vallot, d'Aquin, and Fagon, *Journal de Santé de Louis XIV*, 273, n.1. One naval officer described Louis XIV's sallow colouring in memoirs of 1690: "Le visage plein et majestueux, mais fort brun de visage ainsi que des mains, les yeux noirs, petits, mais vif […]." Lagrange-Chancel, "Portrait et gestes du roi," 268.

[132] Marin emphasizes this point in "The Pathetic Body," 230.

[133] Madame accused Louvois and Colbert de Torcy, of spying on her by intercepting her correspondence. See Rule and Trotter, A *World of Paper*, 136–37.

[134] Perez, "Les Rides d'Apollon," 79.

also in the 1690s, exemplifies figurative potential for Louis XIV's wrinkles in contrast to Madame's unflattering assessment.[135] When Louis XIV remarked on his own aged appearance in Pierre Mignard's work in progress, the portraitist supposedly confirmed the king's observation with the phrase "I do see some additional campaigns traced on your majesty's forehead."[136] This deft complimentary qualification identifies wrinkled creases of skin as indexical to events of military history rather than simply the effects of passing time. This anecdote was included in Mignard's biography as a demonstration of the first painter's mastery of courtly gallantry. It highlights the rhetorical effect that signs of age could convey – not unsightly blemishes but testaments to the endurance of a monumental reign. The figuration plays on the correspondence between the king's physical body and the territorial boundaries that wars sought to expand. This correspondence was visually foregrounded in the many portraits of Louis XIV dominating landscapes under siege, including Mignard's equestrian image of Louis XIV at Namur (fig. 3.76, see also fig. 3.77).[137] Might the textured surface of Benoist's wax skin have carried such implications? Might the delineation of wrinkled creases and the stippled indentations of scars, or the contour of a toothless jaw have been prompts for celebrating the long preservation of the king's glorious reign through divinely-favoured healing from illness and excruciating surgeries? As in the case of Mignard's response, were the accomplishments of a monumental era incorporated in a fragmentary representation of a singular frail body?

The work's medallic format is fundamental for our consideration of these questions. It is notable that the king's aged appearance was a common feature of coins and medals late in the reign. We have seen that the series of commemorative medals that were catalogued in the A*cadémie*'s history featured profiles ranging from Louis XIV's childhood to old age. Benoist's task as an illustrator for the

[135]Mignard was *premier peintre* from 1690 (Charles Le Brun's death) to 1695 (Mignard's own death). It is thus a particularly relevant comparative to the assertions of Fagon and Madame, both articulated within that period of five years.
[136] Mazière de Monville, *La Vie de Pierre Mignard*, 174.
[137]Félibien made this association clear. In describing Charles Le Brun's lost equestrian, Félibien proposed that the landscape suggested an open field for further conquest. See Félibien, "Le Portrait du Roy (1663)," 79.

revised version was to adapt Coypel's initial eight images and extend this series by adding portraits that depicted progressively more pronounced, aged features. According to a number of scholars, Louis XIV's elderly depictions in coin served to undergird historical veracity. Stanis Perez observes the particularly explicit elderly features of Louis XIV in his later coins.[138] With reference to such imagery, he proposes that as an aged Louis XIV distanced himself from mythological comparison, he "prepared himself to be positioned in history."[139] Robert Wellington has argued that Louis XIV's elderly images "make a claim to the truth that relies on a slippage between pictorial and historical accuracy." [140] These insights allow us to refine our driving concern with the relationship between wax materiality and medallic typology. Did Benoist's wax relief intensify or enhance a medal's sense of documentary plausibility in its life-scaled, textured scrutiny of the king's elderly profile? Or did its visceral qualities disrupt or negate the medal's claim to historical eminence?

The question of medallic commemoration and frail physicality can be framed in relation to Marin's terms of analysis. His writing on Louis XIV's medals emphasizes their capacity to consolidate the king's person with the broader figurative entity of his realm. In the medal's combination of Louis XIV's profile with the commemoration of a significant event on its reverse, it was the paradigmatic example of "remainderless exchange" between the king's natural body and the conceptual figuration of the body politic.[141] The "remainder" that medals worked to repress was, however, manifest in representations of the king's suffering, ailing body. Marin observed this in his analysis of Louis XIV's medical diary, which included Fagon's description of Louis XIV's radiant skin, referenced above. While medals incorporated the king's image into glorious history, representations that foregrounded illness and pain threatened to corrupt absolutism's sacred economy. Marin opposed "the misfortunes

[138] Perez, "Les Rides d'Apollon," 87. Perez notes, in particular, coins engraved by Joseph and Norbert Röettiers.
[139]Perez, 87–88. Perez includes Benoist's wax profile alongside the portraits included in the 1702 medallic history, but does not address their relationship.
[140] Wellington, *Antiquarianism and the Visual Histories of Louis XIV*, 177.
[141] Marin, "The Pathetic Body," 220.

that besiege the organic body" to Louis XIV's commemorative medals, which "constitute the eternal revelation of the royal substance in historical time."[142] Indeed the intimate history of Louis XIV's body, "opaque with all the heaviness incumbent upon flesh, with all the viscosity of blood and humours" presented a troubling undercurrent to official historical glorifications.[143] While medals celebrated victories, Louis XIV's medical diary – perhaps like Benoist's waxwork – present the royal body as a battleground itself.[144]

The charting of Louis XIV's volatile symptoms in his medical diary threatened to reveal "a body too much," a distraction that could shatter a viewer's suspended disbelief in the fiction of absolutism's divine supremacy. Film theorist Jean-Louis Comolli coined the phrase "a body too much" to describe the fictional dynamics of historical films, in which actors impersonate historical figures.[145] It foregrounds the paradox of a literal body (for Comolli, the actor's own person) that functions as an avatar of characterization. This concept highlights the representative basis of monarchy that is central to Marin's analysis, in which royalty manifests primarily in portraiture. Indeed this concept for film theory is particularly pertinent to Marin's cinematic language in which Louis XIV's "real natural" body is the "representative screen" for the absolutist fantasy of illustrious royal eminence[146]. Though for Marin, the transparency that undergirded Louis XIV's incarnation of royal supremacy could be interrupted by evidence of his physical suffering. Benoist's evocatively fleshy wax with its traces of accident and illness potentially evokes this subversive, abject physicality that threatened to undermine absolutism's ideal. Yet its medallic format and its relation to the medallic history would have framed its

[142] Marin, "The Pathetic Body," 232–33.
[143]Marin, 230.
[144]Marin, 223.
[145] Comolli, "Historical Fiction: A Body Too Much." It is noteworthy that Comolli's specific focus is on the portrayal of French absolutist monarchy in Jean Renoir's *La Marseillaise* (1938), specifically Pierre Renoir's performance as Louis XVI. The question of fascination with experiences of royalty is noteworthy for the academic discipline of early modern French history, which similarly seeks intimacy with sacred monarchy in order to deconstruct its foundations and reveal its underlying mechanisms.
[146] Marin, "The Pathetic Body," 223.

reception and may have mitigated such an implication. Thus, Benoist's profile presses at the tensions that Marin perceived with reference to the king's medical diary.

As we consider the king's visceral physicality in contrast to his representational ideal in medallic commemoration, it is pertinent to examine the physicality of medals themselves. As self-conscious historical records, Louis XIV's medals drew on ancient typologies to claim relevance on par with antiquity. In addition to their information and imagery, ancient medals were potent encapsulations of enduring legacies in the very fact of their existence far beyond the periods of their initial circulation. The names and dates impressed into their surfaces identified these remote contexts of origin. As such, they were tangible fragments from lost worlds. Medals were particularly prized as archeological artefacts that corroborated historical sources. Francis Haskell has observed that for early modern Europe, ancient coins "remained pre-eminently important for the reassurance they could offer that the past recorded in books really had existed […]."[147] The medal's capacity for testamentary confirmation was explicitly articulated by Charles Patin, a prominent seventeenth-century antiquarian, who stated that without medals, history would be "stripped of her evidence."[148] This sense of medals' evidentiary potential was echoed in a beginner's guide to numismatic connoisseurship first published in 1692 by the Jesuit scholar Louis Jobert. His preface stated that for great events and figures that lacked more solid monuments, medals "justified the truth of events." Medals instil history with "certainty."[149] If medals lacked the impressive stature of monuments, their particular commemorative efficacy was in the dissemination that their small size enabled. As portable multiples, ancient coins were objects that could be handled and possessed. Medals were tangible testaments of historical truth that offered a grasp on the abstraction of historical absence.

[147] Haskell, "The Early Numismatists," 23.
[148] "l'on peut dire que sans les médailles l'histoire [est] dénuée de preuves." Quoted in Jones, "L'histoire Métallique de Louis XIV," 55.
[149] Jobert, "avertissement," *La Science des médailles*, n.p. Stanis Perez draws attention to this preface in *La Santé de Louis XIV*, 362 n.3. Jobert's text had significant circulation with additional editions throughout the eighteenth century and an English translation first published in 1697.

Ancient coins were fascinatingly obsolete, in the sense that they were no longer current nor currency. As such they could be focal points for considering the dialectics of endurance and transience. Coins were frequently included as indications of worldly ephemerality in *vanitas* still lives.[150] The painted still life's solicitation to reflect on temporality was apparent on a different scale within official royal histories. For example, Ménestrier introduced his revised version of Louis XIV's medallic history with reference to the tension between history's commemorative intentions and time's destructive force. His frontispiece (fig. 3.78) reproduced Domenico Guidi's marble monument, *The King's Renown* (Figs. 3.79, 3.80), which had recently been installed at Versailles.[151] Ménestrier's short summary of the marble's allegory identifies its figures and introduces the medal's function of salvaging reputation in the face of obscurity. History, represented as a winged woman, records Louis XIV's accomplishments by tracing her quill over the king's profile. Louis XIV's medal rests on a substantial volume recording his accomplishments. Time, portrayed as an elderly man, strains to uphold these weighty items. Envy, defeated underfoot, attempts to divert History's noble enterprise. Acclaim's struggle against oblivion thus played out in the embodied drama of History's heroism and Envy's thrashing protest.

Ménestrier's description draws attention to details in Guidi's carving that betrayed the precarity of honorific intentions: "The medals of Alexander, Scipio, Julius Caesar, and Trajan are at History's side, slightly bitten along their edges [un peu rongées sur les bords] because Time always leaves some dents in the accounts of great men and would inflict more significant ones if History was not careful to preserve the memory of their actions." [152] Time's trajectory toward the obscurity of neglect subtly bolsters Ménestrier's own purpose as a historian. It is also notable that this question of historical self-consciousness and transience manifests itself in relation to medals' textured materiality. These small

[150] Sarmant, *Le Cabinet des médailles*, 89.

[151] The sculpture itself had been commissioned by the French state in 1677, designed by Charles Le Brun, carved by Guidi's workshop in Rome, and then shipped and installed in the *orangerie* of the Versailles gardens in 1686. On the sculpture's history and installation see, especially Maral, "'La Renommée du roi' de Domenico Guidi."See also Berger, "Bernini's Louis XIV Equestrian," 232.

[152] Édouard Pommier draws attention to Ménestrier's emphasis of this singular detail. See *Théories du portrait*, 269.

grooves are like physical manifestations of doubt to the overall allegory's confident prediction of eternal glorification. Like Envy's restrained fury, the damage to ancient coins heightens History's dramatic triumph by referencing the destructive forces that have been suppressed. Ménestrier's reference to the ancient medals "bitten" edges, also echoes the sculpture's consumptive imagery since Envy devours her own heart in frustration (Fig 3.81).

Within this struggle between memorial and decay, Louis XIV's medal, the symbol of his projected commemorative triumph, was a portrayal of significant concern. In 1684 the Marquis of Louvois, *surintendant des bâtiments du roi*, shipped a profile relief carved by Girardon to Guidi's workshop in Rome. In letters to the director of the French Academy in Rome, Louvois indicated his distrust of Guidi's capacity to execute this specific feature of the marble sculpture. He identified the king's portrait as a crucial aspect and specified that it should be fabricated in France rather than Rome.[153] Instead of incorporating the profile relief that had been provided for him, Guidi used it as a reference to carve his own. A visitor to Guidi's studio in 1685 noted that the king's face was carved "akin to the one that Girardon had made."[154] The appearance of Guidi's initial profile is recorded in his terracotta model (fig. 3.82) and also in an image engraved in Rome by Nicolas Dorigny upon the sculpture's completion (fig. 3.83). This portrait presents Louis XIV in antique garb and crowned by a laurel wreath. Soon after the sculpture's installation at Versailles, however, Girardon's workshop was charged with altering Guidi's work. This second version presented a more specific and elderly king without classical accoutrements.[155] The revision was carried out alongside the remodelling of Bernini's equestrian of Louis XIV to be a more generic representation of Marcus Curtius. A single payment to

[153]Two letters between Louvois and La Teulière are quoted in Maral, "La Renommée du roi" 150. My overview of Guidi's work follows Maral's detailed account. See also Wellington, *Antiquarianism and the Visual Histories of Louis,* 175.
[154]Michel Germain, a maurist associated with Saint-Germain-des-Prés made this comment after visiting Guidi's studio in Rome. Quoted in Maral, "La Renommée du roi"150.
[155]Distinctions enumerated in Berger, "Bernini's Louis XIV Equestrian," 241.

Girardon's workshop covered the adjustments to both marble monuments.[156] In these two cases we see fraught negotiation with celebrated Italian sculptors, antique references, and the strict typology of Louis XIV's portrayal at Versailles.

The appearance of Girardon's profile is recorded in the frontispiece to Ménetrier's publication (fig. 3.84). This representation, an adaptation of Dorigny's engraving, is one of the few records of Girardon's version of the profile, which was destroyed a century later. In 1792, the revolutionary administration engaged sculptors to deface Louis XIV's image on Guidi's work. Though they were cautioned to preserve sufficient marble so that other revolutionary emblems could be carved as replacements. Guidi's drama of historical triumph seemed pertinent for new circumstances. The sculpture's current profile of Louis XIV is an 1816 restoration, carved by Jean-François Lorta (fig. 3.85).[157] This series of replacements of Louis XIV's image, which extends beyond our period of investigation, exemplifies the tension between efforts of historical preservation and time's potentially destructive force, which Ménestrier had initially emphasized in his reading of the sculpture. While Ménestrier highlighted damaged edges of ancient medallions as indications of history's protective purpose, his publication's engraved frontispiece is one of the few records of the intended image of Louis XIV for this work. In other words, the sculpture's afterlife demonstrates the extent to which the best-laid plans of historical commemoration were tenuous. Faith in the medal's capacity to endure was haunted by its vulnerability to unpredictable vicissitudes of circumstance.

The chips along the contours of Guidi's ancient Roman medals prompt us to return to Benoist's illustrations for the revised medallic history. We have seen that these grayscale paintings were models for the publication's engravers. Benoist's paintings adapted Coypel's profiles, which had been reproduced in the volume's first edition. Within the variations of this established schema, one of

[156]Berger, "Bernini's Louis XIV Equestrian," 235, n.22. Berger hypothesizes that the medallion of *La Renommée* was carried out by David de Cazenove, one of Girardon's assistants.
[157] Maral, "La Renommée du roi," 150.

Benoist's innovations was the inclusion of cracks and abrasion along the relief's' surface. The bottom edges of Coypel's profile reliefs were smooth. Benoist's translations, by contrast, depict roughness and dents along the lower edge of each relief (compare figs. 3.86 and 3.87). These cracks are paradoxical details. Their fiction of accidental damage suggests that these coins that bear Louis XIV's image were artefacts that pre-existed their illustrator who documents the surviving ruins of a past era. Unlike Guidi's upbraided medals from ancient times, however, Benoist's cracks were applied to representations of his own, contemporary monarch. These tiny marks of damage have the provocative salience of details that demand account. They engage the questions of Daniel Arasse's hermeneutics, in which minor features can encapsulate and enhance, or disturb and fragment principal meanings.[158] In their suggestion of accidental damage of objects that have been long circulated, Benoist's small indications of roughness foreground the medal's testamentary materiality.

I believe that this extended consideration of medals' damaged surfaces and the rhetorical potency of ruination can inform our understanding of the textured materiality of Benoist's extant wax profile. Like wrinkles, the cracks puncturing Benoist's medallic illustrations are linear marks incised within the surface. Like scars, these cracks trace the damage of beleaguered endurance (fig. 3.88). These textured elements of each representation thus index time's passage. [159] I propose a related rhetorical purpose for the small cracks in Benoist's illustrations and the detailed texture of aged skin in the wax relief. Both the indications of minor damage, in the grisaille paintings, and the punctured marks of scarred and wrinkled skin, in the wax relief, fulfil the conditions of Roland Barthes's "reality effect." In an essay of 1968 Barthes defined the "reality effect" as a rhetorical mode of verisimilitude in

[158] Arasse, *Le détail : pour une histoire rapprochée de la peinture*.

[159] Furetière stated that the term 'medal' could also satirically refer to old and ugly people and their portraits: "Medaille, se dit encore des personnes veilles & laides, & des figures ou bustes qui les representent." Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, s.v. MÉDAILLE.\Though this satirical sense of the term is not applicable to the royal portrait, the personified figuration in which the medal could reference an elderly person enforces the link between the medal's ancient origins and historical implications with the physicality of old age.

which descriptive details accumulate to index 'the real' within the realm of artistic representation.[160] The inclusion of seemingly arbitrary particularities serve to suggest reliable veracity. Barthes's terms of analysis for texts are particularly apt for our interest in Benoist's works. Barthes describes the details that punctuate the "surface of narrative fabric."[161] While these are metaphorical terms in relation to the literary prose that he investigates, the reality effects of Benoist's medallic illustrations are manifest within surfaces, as small dents or cracks. In the case of the wax profile this effect is heightened by the work's combination of materials. The inclusion of locks of human hair and swathes of fabric within the frame of artistic representation exemplify Barthes's semiotic analysis of the "concrete detail" in physical terms. Such features are "constituted by the direct collusion of a referent and a signifier."[162] In this sense, the wax relief heightens a sense of tangible evidentiary materiality. It promises contact with the king as it exalts its royal subject to the plane of historical eminence. It is significant that for Barthes, the reality effect's aesthetic has the capacity to ground historical truth claims and emerges in relation to self-conscious historical discourse.[163]

To be sure, Barthes's investigation of nineteenth-century academic history, a genre developed in coordination with literary realism, is significantly distinct from the epic chronicles composed in tribute to Louis XIV, like the medallic history.[164] History's epistemological foundations had changed fundamentally between these two eras.[165]Despite definitive differences, however, historians in each context faced a related rhetorical dilemma. Their common challenge can be illuminated by comparing Barthes's analysis of nineteenth-century history to Marin's scrutiny of historical ideology under Louis XIV. For Barthes, the reality effect of historical narration requires the suppression of the

[160] Barthes, "The Reality Effect."
[161]Barthes, "The Reality Effect," 141.
[162]Barthes, "The Reality Effect," 148.
[163] Barthes, "The Discourse of History," 139.
[164]Though his primary focus is the nineteenth century, Barthes proceeds to state, "our entire civilization has a taste for the reality effect." 139. A number of early modern art historians have productively employed this concept. See, for example, Olson, "The Street Has Its Masters"; Moxey, "Reading the 'Reality Effect.'"
[165]Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison's volume is a touchstone for objectivity's multivalence across eras. See *Objectivity*.

authorial position. In this context, effective historical narration primarily frames the irrefutable truth of evidence.[166] Marin focuses on the threat of a historian's position as creator to the fiction of royal omnipotence within the absolutist era.[167] Both perspectives present the historian's authoritative position was as passive witness rather than a motivated designer. Ludovic Jouvet's reference to Louis XIV's medals as royal imagery "without artists" is relevant to this question of the suppressed agency of Louis XIV's historical documenters.[168] Barthes claims that the reality effect is defined by "the omnipotence of the referent."[169] While nineteenth-century historians identified that omnipotence in the irrefutable objectivity of historical documentation, for absolutist historians, this omnipotent referent was personified in Louis XIV as protagonist. These authors from different eras thus faced related rhetorical problems despite wholly distinct ideological motivations.

The comparison between a medal's cracks and a king's blemishes clarifies the potential relationship between the visceral corporeal specificity of Benoist's wax relief and its medallic form. As we have seen, ancient coins were a means of historicizing the present by framing it in relation to antiquity's enduring legacy. Fascination with medals derived, in part, from their status as evidentiary remnants of revered past times. The textural specificity of weathered skin was evidence of experience endured. In tandem, the minutely described body and the medallic form conveyed some of the paradox of presenting a living monument to an era. In a sense, Benoist's wax representation stages the temporal conversion of contemporaneity into history. It suspends Louis XIV's transition between two states. Its pigmented and textured flesh evoke the tangible immediacy of corporeality, though this visceral substance is compressed into the form of a medallic profile, a schema that conveys the glorifying

[166]"On the level of discourse, objectivity – or lack of signs of the "speaker" – thus appears as a special form of image-repertoire, the product of what we might the *referential illusion*, since here the historian claims to let the referent speak for itself. Barthes, "Discourse of History," 132.
[167]Marin, *Portrait of the King*, 74.
[168]Jouvet, "Médailleurs de papier," 140.
[169] "Objective" history, the "real," is never anything but an unformulated signified sheltered behind the apparent omnipotence of the referent. This situation defines what we might call the *reality effect.*" Barthes, "The Discourse of History," 139.

remoteness of the antiquated past. Within its material and its form Benoist's wax profile engages the contradictory complexities of the future perfect, which determined the laudatory tone of Louis XIV's historical discourse.[170] By casting contemporaneity in retrospective terms, historians and artists relied on the projective fantasy of future audiences who would admire this bygone era in awe.

Guidi's marble allegory is a particularly informative reference for our consideration of the wax profile's substance in relation to its form. This monument positioned Louis XIV's medal as the embodiment of legacy caught in a conflict between history's glorification and destructive obliteration. The epic turmoil between allegorical forces of preservation and destruction is manifest on a different scale in Benoist's wax relief. Such tension could have been discernible, I propose, within the object's inherent materiality. Wax's precarious solidity could have been a prompt to address an exalted legacy surpassing transience, which was also the narrative drive of Guidi's work. If the cracked abrasion of medals in Guidi's marble and Benoist's illustrations confirmed duration in spite of time's corroding force, this dynamic was discernible within the very substance of Benoist's wax relief. The triumphant tone of Guidi's marble and Ménestrier's reading of it provide an alternative to the assumptions of tragic despair that have been attributed to the ephemerality of waxworks.[171] As in Guidi's depiction of Envy as a monstrous antagonist, the assertion of glorious reputation was forcefully engaging in relation to its threatening opposite. The preservation of Benoist's wax profile over centuries encapsulates something of a victory over the ephemerality of organic matter.

This analysis provides us with a different lens with which to approach André Félibien's accusations of wax portraits' "deathly and insensible resemblance," explored in previous chapters.[172] While Félibien's dismissal presented wax portrayal as incommensurate with the art theorist's vision of

[170]Louis Marin makes this observation in his analysis of Paul Pellison's 1670 proposal for a history of Louis XIV. See *Portrait of the King*, 74. Marin's insight is developed in Wellington's analysis of antiquarian projections into a "future past," in *Antiquarianism and the Visual Histories of Louis XIV*.

[171]See, for example, Didi-Huberman existential reading of wax materiality is in reference to Jean-Paul Sartre's notion of "viscosity" in "Viscosities and Survivals."

[172] Félibien, *Entretiens*, 123.

art's lively ideal, the suggestion of morbidity could also have a rhetorical function. Glorification's anticipated memorial aimed beyond the lifespans of Louis XIV and his subjects. It is significant that medallic profiles were common forms of commemoration on tombs.[173] Barthes writes that reality effects can instil something of the potency of relics, which encapsulate "the enigma of what has been, is no more, and yet offers itself as a present sign of a dead thing."[174] In other words, the suggestion of mortality could undergird historicity. Rather than arbitrating between sources who considered Benoist's portraits to be animate wonders or deathly disappointments, in this case it is important to foreground the wax relief's mediation of lively and morbid qualities. Both its relevance as a glorifying representation and its intrigue as a remarkable conversation piece derived from tension between the visceral suggestion of bodily flesh and the medal's anticipation of commemorative memorial.

This section has aimed to situate Benoist's exceptional representation within the fundamental problematics of absolutist royal portraiture. Over the course of Louis XIV's reign, the royal portrait's function of exaltation worked to accommodate or encompass Louis XIV's physicality. Like Martinet's acknowledgment of scars within a laudatory text or Mignard's association of wrinkles with military triumphs, the body's textural details could lend plausibility to glorifying claims. To modern scholars, the visceral fleshy evocation of Benoist's wax and its blemished bodily specificity have seemed exceptional to the point of subversion. I have attempted to emphasize, however, the significance of the work's conventional glorifying format as a medallic profile. If this object strained at the bounds of expectation or introduced tensions in its intriguing materiality, the established reverent implication of its typology must be the starting point of analysis. The object's testamentary materiality had the capacity to underline the medallic implication of historical acclaim. Its tangibility and specificity may have inspired reflection on the era's assured significance despite its inevitable passage into history.

[173]Munoz, "Le Portrait royal sculpté en médaillon."
[174]Barthes specifies that reality effects can be manifest in 'secularized' relics. Barthes, "The Discourse of History," 139–40.

This analysis has arguably downplayed this portrait's capacity for provocation. The previous chapters' evidence of dismissal and derision for Benoist's *Cercle royal* indicates a controversial strain to this sculpture's reception. Furthermore, as in Madame's private comment on Louis XIV's wrinkled skin and compromised bearing, Benoist's wax portrait may have inspired unsanctioned responses. I believe that my emphasis on the likely intended reception of Benoist's wax profile is warranted, however, because this possibility has been largely invisible to the work's modern commentators. I have argued that the object's capacity to stage a narrative of history's eminent triumph was inherent within its materiality and form. The work's potential as a focal point for an official venerated reading undoubtedly justified its display and appreciation. Furthermore, in this representation's relation to the medallic history, it stood as an encapsulation of that substantial honorific effort.

Remnants of the Real

The testamentary materiality of Benoist's wax profile is confirmed in an unexpected way. We have seen that modern references to the wax profile frequently suggest that it demystified the royal ideal by preserving a documentary alternative to Louis XIV's exalting imagery. Even such assessments, however, rely on the assumption of the wax profile as an accurate record of Louis XIV's appearance in old age and, therefore, a reliable historical testament. Modern commentators' confidence in the wax profile's documentary accuracy suggests that this object remains salient as a historically significant artefact. This section examines prominent historiographic patterns in order to chart an ironic trajectory in the wax profile's reception. Though initially a glorifying tribute to Louis XIV's magnanimous legacy, it came to be perceived as a revealingly deflating image of the king. The wax profile's initial testamentary materiality is perceptible, however, even in this inverted reassessment.

There is a notable difference in the vocabulary of early modern texts and twentieth-century authors who have addressed the wax profile. Primary sources consistently discuss Benoist's works in

terms of life, truth, or resemblance. Modern scholars, by contrast, repeatedly describe the work's 'realism.' Michel Lemire considers Benoist's wax profile to be evidence of "extraordinary realism and truth."[175] Simone Hoog writes that it evidences the sculptor's "surprising realist talent."[176] For Maral, as we have seen, the object's "realism" betrays the king's official courtly image.[177] Perez references "gripping realism."[178] Hélène Delalex proposes "clinical realism."[179] For Wellington the wax profile is both "grotesque" and "super real."[180] Realism and its cognates have thus significantly defined the wax profile's modern reception. In part this pattern simply marks a shift in aesthetic vocabulary. The insistence on realism conveys some of the implications of resemblance or truth.

Arguably, however, the aesthetic category of realism interposes itself between the wax profile's initial reception in the first decade of the eighteenth-century and our perspective as modern viewers. Numerous sources have cautioned against an unqualified application of "realism," a concept from nineteenth-century aesthetics, to early modern art.[181] Despite potential points of correspondence between realist work and earlier precedents, the term's origin within a distinct artistic discourse carries associations and expectations that have the potential to mislead. The possibility of realism's mistranslation is discernible in the case of Benoist's wax profile. Within its polemical context of nineteenth-century aesthetics, Realist art opposed the classical ideal. As a mark of avant garde positioning, the label inherently implied an inversion of academic stricture. I would propose that Realism's antagonistic undercurrent is manifest in the references to Benoist's wax profile as decrepit, grotesque, or politically transgressive.[182] The term "realism" does not simply convey visual qualities. It

[175] Lemire, *Artistes et mortels*, 70.
[176] Simone Hoog's catalogue entry in Gaborit and Ligot, Sculptures en cire de l'ancienne Egypte à l'art abstrait, 98.
[177] Maral's entry in *Louis XIV: L'Homme et le roi*, 226.
[178] Perez, "Les Rides d'Apollon ," 78.
[179] Delalex, *Louis XIV intime*, 180.
[180] Wellington, *Antiquarianism and the Visual Histories of Louis XIV,* 175.
[181]Smith, "Realism and the Boundaries of Genre in Dutch Art," 82. In her canonical overview of nineteenth-century Realism, Linda Nochlin distinguishes the formal Realist movement from early modern painters occasionally deemed realist. See *Realism*, 20.
[182]The historiography of painting in the Dutch Republic presents a relevant comparative case. Angela Vanhaelen observes that the label of realism allowed historians to present Dutch painting as a precedent for the democratic political ideals of

is freighted with a sense of resistance to institutional ideals and hierarchical authority in a mnner that is problematic in the case of Benoist's commissioned royal portrait.

Occasionally, Benoist's waxwork has been deemed simultaneously horrific and truthful. It presents "gruesome fidelity;"[183] or it documents veristic "decrepitude."[184] The assumption that ugliness assures truth results from the opposing possibilities of unreliable flattery and exaggerated beauty. This was, indeed, a common tenet of nineteenth-century Realism.[185] Wellington has proposed that the wax relief's "eschewal of flattery" confirms its accuracy.[186] Maral writes that a direct imprint of Louis XIV's face allowed Benoist to reproduce features exactly to the point of traces of small pox on the king's skin.[187] The affirmation of the wax relief's accuracy or the assertion of its imprinted contact, demonstrate the rhetorical mechanics of "reality effect." Barthes describes the operation of "referential illusion," which relies on the inclusion of seemingly meaningless minutia (in our case, blemishes such as Louis XIV's scars): "Just when these details are reputed to denote the real directly, all they do — without saying it is signify it."[188] In other words, what purports to be self-evident truth is, in fact, the consequence of persuasive rhetoric. We have seen that Barthes's insights have some relevance for our consideration of Benoist's work within its early modern context. Barthes's deconstruction of realism's aesthetic into its component parts is, additionally, useful for historiographic assessment, since his perspective attunes us to the specific features that evoke realism's sense of credible correspondence.

The concept of realism, though problematic, can also yield insight in its application to early modern material. In early modernity, the term "real" rarely appeared in art theoretical texts. Though not

---

nineteenth-century Realism. See "Boredom's Threshold," 1022, n.14.
[183]Wellington, "Antoine Benoist's Wax Portraits of Louis XIV."
[184]Pommier, *Théories du portrait*, 269.
[185]Michael Fried cites a salient example of this pattern in his analysis of Adolph Menzel's reception in France. One critic described Menzel as "the champion of extreme realism" for his unflattering portrayals. See *Menzel's Realism*, 125.
[186]Wellington makes this statement in comparing Benoist's relief, to the image of Girardon's revised profile for Guidi's marble allegory as represented in Ménestrier's frontispiece. *Antiquarianism and the Visual Histories of Louis XIV*, 175.
[187]"La technique de mise en oeuvre de la cire, probablement à partir d'une prise d'empreinte directe partielle, a en effet permis de reproduire exactement les traits du visage, jusqu'aux traces laissées sur l'épiderme par la petite vérole. Maral' entry in Milovanovic and Maral, *Louis XIV: L'Homme et le roi*, 226.
[188]Barthes, "The Reality Effect," 148.

directly applied to Benoist's wax profile in its initial context of reception, I would propose that the contemporaneous historical sense of "the real" can still inform our understanding of Benoist's wax profile. Joseph Koerner observes that in the early modern era, the connotation of "reality" can be best translated as "thing-ness," which implies literalness and tangibility.[189] For French dictionaries of the late seventeenth century, the primary reference for the solidity of the "real" was Christ's substance within the sacrament. In the dictionary of the *Académie Française*, the first example of "a real being" or "real existence" was "the real presence of the body in the altar's holy sacrament."[190] Subsequent examples include "real payment." Similarly, Antoine Furetière's dictionary stated: "Jesus Christ is really and corporeally within the holy sacrament."[191] He next describes coins really in the king's coffers. These examples, which foreground the eucharist and reference currency, return us to the terms of Marin's central problematic for royal representation. As we have seen, Marin posited that royal medals effectively interpolated subjects in parallel to the sacrament. The king's "real body," in its suffering, was the remainder that threatened this mystical equivalence.[192] In an early modern sense, however, "the real" and the sacred were not necessarily opposed. The semantic interrelation of reality's perception and a beholder's faith suggests that the 'truth-seeming' aesthetic of verisimilitude is, at its core, a matter of belief.[193] The exact correspondence of the verifiably real relies on metrics deeply

---

[189] Koerner, "Impossible Objects: Bosch's Realism."
[190] *Dictionnaire de L'Académie française*, 1st ed. (1694), s.v. "réel."
[191] "JESUS-CHRIST est reellement & corporellement au St. Sacrement." Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, s.v. "reellement'.
[192] Marin's sense of "the real" as repressed and potentially disruptive derives from lacanian theory, in which the real is latent but imperceptible within symbolic and imaginary orders. For Lacan's conception, see Julien, "Toward the Real."
[193] Carla Benzan demonstrates that perceptions of early modern sculptural verisimilitude could be inter-related with questions of devotional attention. See "Coming to Life at the Sacro Monte of Varallo." Nochlin proposes that questions of faith distinguish the Realist movement from early modern predecessors. She contrasted nineteenth-century "epistemological agnosticism" (George Lukacs's term) with painters occasionally deemed realist, such as Van Eyck and Caravaggio, who were "steeped in a context of belief in the reality of something beyond that of the mere external, tangible facts they beheld before them."See Realism, 45. In the face of such "context of belief," however, Itay Sapir argues that epistemological uncertainty enveloped the caravagesque visual field. See *Ténèbres sans leçons*.

embedded within culturally-subjective criteria.[194] Historians' repeated affirmations of the wax profile's realism can, therefore, enjoin us to examine historically-specific evidentiary drives.

One significant strand of the discourse of Benoist's realism has been the assertion of the wax profile's photographic resonance. This connection is interrelated with the possibility that Benoist's relief derives from a lifecast. It enforces our sense of this issue's significance beyond the specifics of early modern sculptural technique. This question centres on the evidentiary status of Benoist's extant waxwork and the possibility that it preserves the direct trace of a magnanimous figure. Maral both asserts that Benoist's wax profile derives from a life cast and describes it as "quasi-photographic."[195] In a subsequent publication Maral enforces this connection by describing the profile as a three-dimensional photograph derived from an imprinted mould.[196] This photographic comparison enforces his claim of indexicality as it opens myriad questions about mediality across eras.[197] A number of authors have followed suit in asserting the photographic quality of Benoist's wax profile. Delalex takes up the work's designation as a three-dimensional photograph.[198] Thierry Sarmant writes that Benoist's profile preserves an almost photographic imprint.[199] The persistence of photographic comparison is interesting because it encapsulates a claim for historical technique within an anachronistic technological comparison. Photography is, in a sense, a triangulated term between early modern sculpture and historians' desire for intimate access to their remote subjects of study. Photography's own

[194] For example, though the eucharist was Furetière's example for the real, he also noted that this sense of reality was contested: "Les Protestans nient la *realité* du cu corps du Sauveur en l'Euchariste." Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, s.v. "realité."
[195]Maral, *Louis XIV: L'Homme et le roi*, 226.
[196] "S'il reproduit les moindres traits de son royal modèle, le portrait de Benoist le doit à sa technique de mise en oeuvre. Il s'agit, pour ainsi dire, d'une photographie en trois dimensions. Le visage du souverain a ainsi fait l'object d'une prise d'empreinte directe, au moins partielle, probablement à la terre." Maral, "Le Portrait En Cire Par Benoist," 38.
[197] For the semiotician Charles Sanders Peirce, the photograph was a paradigmatic index, a sign causally derived from its referent. A photograph's iconic resemblance derives from production "under such circumstances that they were physically forced to correspond point by point to nature." Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic," 11.
[198] Delalex*, Louis XIV intime*, 180.
[199]Sarmant, *Louis XIV: Homme et Roi*, 419.

reckoning with assumptions of evidentiary truth and irrefutable accuracy should alert us to complexities underlying documentary aesthetics and indexical truth claims.

Recently, the perceived photographic resonance of Benoist's profile has been asserted prominently by an artist rather than a historian. A photograph of Benoist's wax profile was positioned centrally within an exhibition of work by contemporary Japanese photographer, Hiroshi Sugimoto at the *Musée de château de Versailles* in 2018 (figs. 3.89, 3.90). Alongside his photograph of Benoist's wax profile, Sugimoto displayed his previous images of Madame Tussaud's wax celebrities within the estate of the petit Trianon on Versailles's grounds. Under the title *Surface of Revolution*, the exhibition was framed as an evocation of Versailles's 'ghosts.' The portraits presented individuals who had passed through Versailles in its various eras.[200] Sugimoto's images are grey-scaled gelatine silver prints produced from large-format negatives. This technical apparatus provides detailed renderings but eliminates the colour that might aid our differentiation of sculpted form from living beings. These still photographs can, therefore, obscure the crafted inanimacy of Sugimoto's wax sitters. In their inter-medial translation, Sugimoto's photographs of waxworks evoke potentially disorienting "mimetic ambiguity."[201] This wax series extends Sugimoto's ongoing self-conscious reflection on the technicalities of chemical photography through subjects that echo the medium's indexicality. Sugimoto has previously imaged light's emanation in lightening fields and projected films. His photographs of fossils aimed to underline the procedure of material imprint.

Sugimoto presented his discovery of Benoist's wax profile as a fateful encounter. Unaware of its existence when he first conceptualised his Versailles installation, the wax profile provided an unexpected keystone to the photographer's sense of the relevance of his waxwork photographs for the

[200] Eighteenth-century figures such as Napoleon, Benjamin Franklin, and Voltaire were included alongside more recent rulers, such as Queen Victoria, Fidel Castro, and Elizabeth II.
[201] Panzanelli, "The Body in Wax," 3.

site.[202] In the exhibition's catalogue the photographer's first glimpse of Benoist's profile was narrated with the heightened cinematic sense of dimmed light and romantic destiny:

> The encounter between Hiroshi Sugimoto and this History might have taken place at the end of a day bathed in glorious sunshine, where, in the shadows of a deserted gallery, the artist would come face-to-face with the wax portrait of Louis XIV created by Antoine Benoist 10 years before the monarch's death. Louis XIV was the missing figure in Madame Tussaud's gallery of ghosts, the wax effigies that inspired Sugimoto's photography for 25 years. The tale of historical turmoil it reveals begins there, with the image of the great Sun King already tarnished – appearing to us as an obvious connection but one that the artist himself may never have imagined.[203]

Akin to Jules Michelet's physiognomic reading of Benoist's work, here the wax profile is presented as an emblem of absolutist corruption that foreshadows revolutionary turmoil.[204] If Louis XIV's historians were invested in the medallic form as an assertion of historical significance, this was not the variety of historical relevance that the work's early modern viewers could have envisioned. It is, nonetheless, an indication of this particular object's continued, evocative testamentary materiality, though without the contextual specificity that this concept conveyed in its initial period of reception.

Sugimoto's fascination with Benoist's wax profile was founded on his assumption that the sculpture derived from a life cast. This belief instilled a sense of direct contact with a long-departed monarch through transferred imprints. Sugimoto stated: "By photographing a wax relief made from a mould taken ten years before Louis' death, I have reproduced via photography a living likeness of the king. It is as if Louis XIV was photographed more than 100 years before the invention of the medium."[205] In presenting his image of Benoist's sculpture as a miraculous image extracted from a pre-photographic era, Sugimoto integrated the wax profile into a mythological narrative of technological

---

[202]The photographer's initial surprise was in the realization that many of the Tussaud figures he had previously photographed had connections to Versailles. Madame Tussaud's tale of her own time at the palace as tutor to Louis XVI's sister, similarly underlined the unexpected relevance of Sugimoto's work for this installation.

[203]Catherine Pégard 's "Preface" in Loisy and Pacquement, *Sugimoto Versailles: Surface de Révolution*, 7. Elsewhere the encounter was presented in more mundane coincidence asVersailles's staff brought this wax object to Sugimoto's attention. See Sato, "Hiroshi Sugimoto Summons the Ghosts of Celebrities."

[204] Michelet, *Louis XIV et le duc de Bourgogne*, 150.

[205] Loisy and Pacquement, *Sugimoto Versailles: Surface de Révolution, 21*.

alchemy.[206] When Sugimoto's reviewers mentioned the wax profile, it was consistently as a lifecast and as an uncanny prefiguration of photographic vision.[207]

There is inherent circularity within this discourse. The work's supposed origin as a life cast instils it with photographic resonance and its photographic quality confirms its origin as a moulded trace of Louis XIV's body. There is evidence one could point to in order to support the lifecast hypothesis. I have overviewed sources that implied that the *Cercle royal*'s portraits were largely derived from lifecast moulds. I have noted, however, this possibility is complicated for the extant profile, because of the work's compressed relief. The photographic comparison deftly bypasses any potential debate or ambiguity. Its assertion presents the object's status as a direct, imprinted trace as obviously and intuitively discernible. Beyond the question of this particular sculpture's actual technical origin, I am interested in this representation's perceived capacity to self-authenticate, to persuasively assert its own truth. Indeed, this object's evidentiary salience is significant in its own right. The wax profile's position within Sugimoto's photographic practice and the discourse of photographic genealogy that surrounds his work indicates the waxwork's compelling testamentary materiality, a "reality effect" that has extended far beyond initial intentions for the work.

Sugimoto is specifically interested in reverberations of his photographic practice across cultural spheres and time periods and, therefore, in consistency rather than in subtle distinctions of cultural context. In statements, he sweeps across eras to present the pursuit of lively illusion as a universal phenomenon. Benoist, Tussaud, early photographers, and the traditional Japanese practice of Noh theatre are all presented as precedents to Sugimoto's own project of photographic revivification.[208]

---

[206] The photographer's assertion echoes previous statements that similarly claim photographic legacy through anachronistic resonance. Sugimoto has, for example, referred to his photographs of fossils as "a set of fossils." Quoted in Michaels, "Photographs and Fossils," 432.

[207] See, for example, Sato, "Hiroshi Sugimoto Summons the Ghosts of Celebrities."

[208] Perhaps unsurprising, for an exhibition titled "Surface of Revolution," which deliberately blended historical eras, Louis XIV was occasionally misidentified in reviews. One critic described Sugimoto's discovery of "a wax bust of Louis XVI [sic]." Fraser-Cavassoni, "The Time of Sugimoto."

Sugimoto's claim to be a dedicated "anachronist." evokes Georges Didi-Huberman's proposal for wax's anachronistic provocation.[209] For Didi-Huberman, wax encapsulates temporal paradox in its constant potential for revision or deformation. The recurrent functions for wax forms across centuries can also evoke anachronistic echoes.[210] In Sugimoto's appropriative view of Benoist's sculpture, the photographer foregrounds this representation's potency for temporal dislocation. Sugimoto's response highlights an important aspect of the work's salience in its initial context of reception: its capacity to provoke self-conscious reflection on the materiality of historical remnants. In embodying this dialectic of absent presence, the wax profile intensified the medal's evidentiary implication for early modern viewers.

In presenting waxworks as photographic prefigurations, Sugimoto echoed an established line of critical discourse. The trajectory from wax to photographic portraits was initially asserted in Julius von Schlosser's foundational study. Indeed there are numerous points of connection between Sugimoto's insistence on waxworks as ghostly in their pre-photographic indexicality and Schlosser's interest in the fluctuating "afterlives" of cultural forms.[211] Schlosser presented the line from waxworks to photographs as a plot of political appropriation, tracing how the aristocratic privilege of veristic portraiture gained far broader dissemination. For Schlosser, Benoist's work presents the pinnacle of waxworks as "courtly art."[212] This esteemed mode of portrayal shifted status over centuries as it filtered into photographic images. Schlosser states that "the old colourful art that had its roots in a totally different milieu finally capitulated before the sober, grey-toned bourgeois craft that was the daguerreotype."[213] This aspect of Schlosser's analysis has been particularly interesting to scholars theorising broad media trajectories. Hans Belting drew attention to this feature of Schlosser's analysis in his model of imagery's migration

[209] Sugimoto stated "I am an anachronist, not an anarchist." Quoted in Fraser-Cavassoni, "The Time of Sugimoto."
[210] Didi-Huberman, "Wax Flesh, Vicious Circles."
[211] I address the theoretical construct of "afterlives" more thoroughly in this dissertation's conclusion.
[212] Schlosser, "History of Portraiture in Wax," 266–67.
[213] Schlosser, 267.

across media. He described obsolete wax figures as a noteworthy aspect of photography's inheritance.[214] Philippe Alain Michaud references Schlosser in stating that "the wax portrait found in photography a last, fleeting manifestation of itself."[215] While historians of wax have turned to photography to suggest the transformed relevance of this ancient sculptural practice, photographic theorists have also referenced historical practices of sculptural casting in order to underscore the morbidity of a photograph's suspended temporality. In particular, wax has made appearances in studies that relate photographs to death masks.[216] The encounter between wax and photography has, therefore, been a productive one for theoretical consideration.

The points of illuminating resonance between wax casts and photographic images might, however, be more fraught than the reciprocal references between sculptural historians and photographic theorists would initially suggest. If the photograph's relative familiarity for modern viewers might illuminate something of the rhetorical force of indexicality, the comparison of sculptural casts to photographs can also undermine contextual specificity. Patrick Crowley, for example, has observed that the reference point of photographic procedures has overdetermined and obscured our perception of earlier historical practices of cast sculpture. Crowley's interest is specifically on the photographically-inflected vocabulary of negative moulds and positive casts in the case of ancient Roman death masks.[217] In her analysis of death masks, Marcia Pointon similarly emphasizes the distinction between the objecthood of sculptural casts and photographic images.[218] Such a discrepancy is apparent, in Allison Goudie's analysis of a late eighteenth-century wax portrait bust of Maria Carolina of Naples. While the sculpture's cropped photographic documentation "anticipates" Sugimoto's work and evokes convincing

[214] Belting, "Toward an Anthropology of the Image," 47.
[215] Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion*, 122.
[216] Jean Luc Nancy drew on Martin Heiddeger's example of a photographed death mask in order to address representational dynamics of temporal dislocation. See Grootenboer, *Treasuring the Gaze*, 120–21.The question of the photograph's resonance with a death mask is also addressed by foundational photographic theorists such as André Bazin and Susan Sontag. See Kaplan, "Photograph/Death Mask."
[217] Crowley, "Metaphorics of the Negative."
[218] Pointon, "Casts, Imprints, and the Deathliness of Things," 176.

trompe l'oeil, its sculptural objecthood presents only a partial illusion.[219] In Goudie's analysis, this interruption to *trompe l'oeil*'s suspended disbelief is key, since it forces viewers to grapple with questions of corporeal presence and historical representation.[220] This broader discussion of points of relation and tension between wax and photography can inform the descriptions of Louis XIV's wax profile as a 'photographic' representation.

For my own interests, it is significant that discussion of Benoist's waxwork in relation to photographic impression undercuts the importance of its typology as a medallic profile. Sugimoto's photograph elides the specificity of the relief's format by translating the work into an image of a head with seemingly convincing depth. In this way it enhances the work's illusion of volume by obscuring the restriction of its limited relief. The framing that enforces the relief's suggestion of depth justifies the easy claim that it was a life-cast imprint. A view that revealed its constrained relief would necessitate some qualification of this assumption. As a prominent contemporary artist, Sugimoto's photograph of Benoist's waxwork draws our attention to the way in which the object's photographic representation has unobtrusively delimited its interpretation by reinforcing its illusion of verisimilitude and minimizing the significance of its format as a medallic relief.

From an early zincographic rendering, an illustration for an 1886 journal article (fig. 3.91), to its position in Sugimoto's series, the wax relief's reproductive documentation has significantly defined its modern reception.[221] In modern historical accounts, Benoist's wax profile is consistently discussed in terms of accuracy and verisimilitude and never in terms of distortion, though the relief's volume substantially compresses facial proportions. Like Sugimoto's photograph, publications consistently reproduce the frontal image of the work (the face's side). This makes sense, of course, as the work's intended viewpoint presents maximal illusion. Additionally, the profile's encasement in glass

[219] Goudie, "The Wax Portrait Bust as Trompe-l'oeil?," 57 n.3.
[220] Goudie, "The Wax Portrait Bust as Trompe-L'oeil?"
[221] Geraldine Johnson has analyzed the effect of photographic documentation on sculpture's interpretation in a series of publications. See, most recently: Johnson, "Photographing Sculpture, Sculpting Photography."

determines this perspective for viewers. Other angles, however, reveal the extent to which the head's proportions are distorted to accommodate the limited depth of relief (figs. 3.1, 3.2). Lighting can also highlight the relief's planar distortions rather than its illusionistic verisimilitude (fig. 3.92).

As I have argued, in its initial period, the wax profile's relief was one of the work's significant features. As a medallic profile it fit into the broader context of royal glorification through medallic commemoration. More specifically this format related the relief to Benoist's work for Pontchartrain as an illustrator for the revised medallic history. Initial viewers were immersed in the modes and possibilities of royal glorification. For modern viewers, who lack such investments, the wax's medallic format has barely inspired comment. Indeed, I would propose that the litany of complaints of the representation as horrific, grotesque, or decrepit can, in part, be related to the portrait's unacknowledged proportional distortions. The face's features are minutely described, but the head's shape is flattened within the constraints of relief. The representation's combination of exactitude and distortion are integrated in tension. The face seems like an *almost* perfect replica and this grips modern viewers with the provocative irresolution of the uncanny. As I have argued, however, initial viewers would have understood this formatting with reference to the dense associations with classical schemas and the materiality of antiquity's fragmentary ruins.

Thus, the common framings of the wax profile's modern reception offer only a limited sense of the work's possible associations within its initial era. This is the case for literal viewpoints in photographic reproduction and broader conceptual framings in historical studies. In a sense, I have charted 'insightful misreadings' of this singular sculpture. Benoist's wax relief presents a particular methodological challenge to art historians, since our discipline enjoins us to prioritize the visual particularities of art objects. In concentrating on this sculpture's exceptional materiality and aesthetic, however, we risk being ensnared within the grip of its compelling "reality effect."[222] In succumbing to

[222] Alfred Gell's reflections on artworks as traps is relevant to this problematic. See Gell, "Vogel's Net."

the object's "referential illusion" we might miss the historical concerns that gave this convincing aesthetic its initial rhetorical force.

Conclusion

This chapter has investigated the context of Benoist's medallic renderings of Louis XIV in order to foreground the typological significance of the sculptor's extant waxwork. I have argued that the wax relief's format as a medallic profile was crucial to its initial reception. I outlined the evidence for Benoist's engagement as an illustrator of royal portraits for the revised medallic history. In the last phase of his career, Benoist promoted his participation in this monumental publication by distributing images of his illustrations. He donated painted renderings of his images to the royal household and disseminated printed reproductions. Even before the publication's completion, therefore, Benoist leveraged his participation in this monumental collaboration as a means of consolidating royal favour and gaining broader recognition.

The context of Benoist's participation in Louis XIV's official veneration through medallic representation informed our understanding of the extant wax profile's engagement with glorifying conventions. Benoist's wax medal has typically been considered as a deflating image that undermined royal exaltation. In contrast I have argued that its format implicated it within the medallion's problematics of commemorative glorification and ancient ruination. Within this framework the blemishes of wrinkles and scars were testamentary anchors to aspirations of historical reverence. Finally, I charted the ironic inversion of the wax profile's testamentary materiality in its modern reception. For modern commentators, the wax profile's evidentiary accuracy occluded any implication of royal glorification. A glimmer of its initial honorific implication is discernible, nevertheless, in its assured status as a historically significant artefact.

This chapter has introduced us to Louis de Phélypeaux, Count of Pontchartrain, an important figure within the Académie des inscriptions and the original owner of Benoist's extant waxwork. Having established the wax profile's relation to the monumental project of medallic glorification, we now turn to consider its specific implications within Pontchartrain's personal sculptural collection. This wax object's exceptional conservation implies that its testamentary materiality had particular salience within its initial site of reception.

Chapter Four
Pontchartrain's Possessions

Moreover this Monsieur de Pontchartrain was another kind of genius; as loyal and at least as disinterested, indefatigable at work, who sees everything, who is capable of everything, who found the means to procure, for eight years, one hundred and fifty million a year with parchment and with wax.
François Timolèon de Choisy, *Mémoires*,1727[1]

Thus, in his memoirs, did the Abbé de Choisy characterize Louis de Phélypeaux, Count of Pontchartrain as astute to the point of omniscience. The lucrative scheme, which Choisy claims generated huge annual sums for the crown, entailed Pontchartrain's invention and sale of offices and honours over his decade as Controller-General of Finances (1689-1699).[2] In 1695, for example, Pontchartrain initiated the *capitation,* a tax indexed to social rank.[3] He was also instrumental in the edict of 1696 that required the registration of arms for a fee.[4] Many took the opportunity to purchase arms, including, as we have seen, Benoist.

In satire, Choisy positioned Pontchartrain as an influential arbitrator of rank. Choisy foregrounds the fraught relationship of economic and social capital in an assessment of Pontchartrain's character and his administration. His claim that Pontchartrain conjured vast sums "with parchment and with wax" presents something of a satirical seventeenth-century equivalent of Pierre Bourdieu's 'alchemy' of conversion from economic to social capital.[5] Choisy's joke plays on the seeming inequivalence in terms of exchange: the relatively flimsy materiality of legal orders — parchment certificates with wax seals appended — in comparison to the substantive impact these acts could

[1] "Or, ce M. de Pontchartrain étoit bien un autre génie; aussi fidèle et pour le moins aussi disinteressé, infatigable, au travail, qui voit tout, qui peut tout, qui a trouvé le moyen de fournir depuis huit ans cent cinquante millions par an, avec du parchemin et de la cire […]." Choisy, *Mémoires*, 201. This compilation of Choisy's memoirs was first published in 1727.
[2] According to Choisy, Pontchartrain generated this revenue "en imaginant des charges et faisant des marottes qui ont été bien vendues."Choisy, 201..The term "marotte" refers to a fool's sceptre and therefore, in this context, an absurdly insubstantial privilege. Choisy was comparing Pontchartrain to Claude Le Peletier, the preceding Controller-General.
[3] Guéry, "État, classification sociale et compromis sous Louis XIV."
[4] Charton, 'Héraldique et Numismatique', 175.
[5] As addressed in the previous chapter. See Bourdieu, "Some Additional Notes on the Gift," 235.

generate. As controller-general and then subsequently as chancellor (1699-1714), Pontchartrain was a significant legal authority, shaping policy with parchment and wax.[6]

Following from Choisy's biting comment, this chapter considers points of connection between trajectories of rising social stature, Pontchartrain's legal authority, and the materiality of wax. We have seen that Pontchartrain played an important mediating role in Benoist's advancement. The sculptor's efforts to navigate the prestige system that could secure his status were supervised and enabled by Pontchartrain in significant ways. I have identified the chancellor and Jean-Paul Bignon, his nephew and administrative proxy, as sources of authority on the documents that attested to Benoist's participation in the medallic history. Pontchartrain's signature subsequently accompanied the royal seal on the sculptor's papers of ennoblement in 1706. I now turn to investigate the other side of this relationship by considering Pontchartrain's own process of self-fashioning and the role that Benoist's commissioned works played within that pursuit.

Specifically, this chapter explores the possibility of a connection between Pontchartrain's legal authority, literally materialized in wax seals, and Benoist's wax profile of Louis XIV within Pontchartrain's possession. Pontchartrain's particular appreciation for this wax representation is suggested by the fact that this wax sculpture is uniquely conserved in contrast to the large number of Benoist's destroyed waxworks. In order to address the question of the wax profile's particular meaning for its initial owner, I consider Pontchartrain's and Benoist's inter-related modes of royal representation: Pontchartrain's bureaucratic representation of Louis XIV as an administrative intermediary and Benoist's artistic representation of the king as portraitist.

---

[6] Jean-Baptiste Colbert had established the stature of Controller-General (*Contrôleur général des finances)* as a principal position in Louis XIV's administration. The controller's duties encompassed a significant portion of the responsibilities that had belonged to the *Surintendant des Finances* before this position was eliminated after Nicolas Fouquet's disgrace. Colbert also appropriated domains that had previously belonged to the chancellor. Colbert was succeeded by Claude le Peletier in 1683 and then Pontchartrain in 1689. See Harouel, "Contrôleur général des finances," 402–3.

First, I overview Benoist's bronze sculpture for Pontchartrain in order to establish the medallic history as the foundation of Benoist's work for the chancellor in the first decade of the eighteenth century. Integrating the wax profile within this series of lost-wax bronzes, including a notable memorial for the chancellor's sister, allows us to reconsider this singular object within the framework of a relationship between sculptor and patron. These royal portraits were focal points within luxurious residential displays that aimed to confirm stature as attestations of royal devotion and favour. Accordingly, the next section examines curated installations within Pontchartrain's residences in order to appreciate sculpture's potential to embody key aspects of Pontchartrain's administrative identity within his domestic realm. We then turn to examine the seals themselves. The word 'seal' refers to both the metal matrix and its wax impression.[7] The undifferentiated term underscores a claim for inalienable correspondence between the formative silver stamp and its inverted imprint. This replicative authority presents a significant reference point for our understanding of Benoist's work for Pontchartrain: sculptural portraits cast in metal and wax.

Bronze for the Chancellor of France

As Benoist's sole surviving wax fabrication, his profile of Louis XIV is an exceptional, fragile object. As a royal profile relief owned by Pontchartrain, however, the wax medallion fits into a body of work that Benoist produced for one patron. This section overviews the series of Benoist's bronze portraits for Pontchartrain in order to position the wax profile within broader dynamics of patronage, as a work of distinct significance for its owner. I have argued for the wax profile's capacity to embody an enduring legacy in its testamentary materiality. I now elaborate an additional dimension of that claim. Embedded within that commemorative glorification of Louis XIV was an attestation for Pontchartrain's own posterity as a high-ranking administrator within the king's retinue.

[7]Marcia Pointon makes a similar observation about the term "death mask," which can reference either moulds or imprints. See "Casts, Imprints, and the Deathliness of Things," 173. See also Crowley, "Metaphorics of the Negative," 67.

Benoist's skill and experience as a wax sculptor will be of ongoing relevance in our investigation of bronzeworks since these objects were fabricated through lost wax casting. In this technique of replication, a wax prototype is enclosed in a mould, melted in a furnace, and funnelled out through tubing so that molten bronze can be poured in to coat the mould's hollow interior and take shape. Alternately, wax can be painted or poured into a plaster mould that is then filled up with a core of plaster or clay.[8] As a placeholder for the liquid metal that then formed the final bronze representations, wax's function was temporary, but crucial. For bronze monuments, the engineering challenges of scale instilled the procedure of lost wax casting with dramatic potential.[9] The metal founder could boast alchemical prowess.[10] For Benoist, expertise in moulding and casting wax forms meant that primary materials were at the ready for bronze translation through collaboration with metal founders.

Two bronze reliefs of Louis XIV provide a starting point for considering interrelations between wax and metal in Benoist's work (figs.4.1, 4.2). Like the wax profile, these bronze portraits were fabricated by Benoist for Pontchartrain. The portraits' designation of creator and intended recipient were explicitly articulated in phrases embossed along the sculptures' bronze surfaces. A signature along each relief's bottom edge reads: "A. BENOIST FECIT AD VIVUM 1705" [A. Benoist made to the life 1705] (figs. 4.3, 4.4). A second inscription on each profile's reverse indicates that both were crafted as donations to Pontchartrain: "PRO D[OMIN]O COMITI DE PONTCHARTRAIN FRAN[CIAE] CANCELL[LAR]IO" [For the Count of Pontchartrain, chancellor of France]. These dedications are

[8] Conservators Francesca G. Brewer, David Bourgarit, and Jane Bassett overview procedures for bronze casting with a focus on early modern France. They note that many early modern French bronze casts "have the characteristic flowing, soft internal contours of the liquefied wax that hugged the mold, and the occasional drip mark that was translated from the wax model into bronze." See "Notes on Technique" in Bresc-Bautier, Scherf, and Draper, *Cast in Bronze*, 31.
[9] François Girardon's monumental equestrian of Louis XIV for the Place Vendôme provided the touchstone of lost wax casting as a colossal feat of engineering well into the eighteenth century. See Jollet, "The Monument to Louis XIV."
[10] The sixteenth-century sculptor Benevuto Cellini provides a strikingly flamboyant account of the life and death stakes of casting bronze. In his memoirs, Cellini staged a scene in which the achievement of his bronze *Perseus and Medusa* is coordinated with his own miraculous recovery from a deathly fever. His account includes explosions and the smelting of the household's entire set of pewter dishware. See Cole, "Cellini's Blood," 221–22.

obscured by their placement on each relief's reverse, and thus turned to the wall. They are now hidden by mounting.[11]

The fact that Benoist's bronze profiles are duplicates is noteworthy. Cast from the same mould, these two bronze replications are nearly identical. The only distinction between them is that some curls are missing from the back of Louis XIV's wig in the copy currently in Versailles's collection. Upon its acquisition in 1913, museum director Pierre de Nolhac authored a study examining this sculpture and noted the existence of a second example. He hypothesized that the museum had purchased an initial, incomplete prototype. A technical difficulty would have prevented liquid bronze from coating the mould's full contour, hence the missing ringlets at the relief's edge. This oversight would have necessitated the second attempt.[12] Rather than an initial compromised version that was rejected and a second realized rendition, it is possible, however, that two copies were required for two distinct purposes. The provenance records of Benoist's bronze profiles support this possibility. While one can be traced to Pontchartrain's personal collection, Versailles's bronze was once displayed within the chambers of the Académie des inscriptions in the Louvre.[13] We have considered Pontchartrain's significant investment in this institution's projects and his commission of Benoist's illustrations for the medallic history. On display within the académie's assembly room, Benoist's profile referenced this monumental venture and Pontchartrain's dedication to it.

The process of casting duplications brings us close to the purpose of wax within the formation of metalwork. These bronze doubles underline the technical means of metallic casting: the interaction of materials between states of softness and solidity. While Benoist's expertise in wax fabrication accounts for his capacity to design lost-wax bronzes, Pontchartrain's acquisition of the extant wax

[11] Nolhac, "Un nouveau portrait," 324; Sotheby's France, *Bel ameublement et objets d'art*, 21.

[12] Nolhac, "Un nouveau portrait," 323–24.

[13] This object's origin within the collection of the Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres is indicated in a catalogue entry from the database of artworks once included in Alexandre Lenoir's Musées de Monuments Français initiated by France's Institut national de l'histoire de l'art. See Chancel-Bardelot, "Médaillon- Louis XIV- Benoist, Antoine." Under Alexandre Lenoir's effort to reclassify French heritage following the revolution, Benoist's bronze bust was installed within the seventeenth-century galleries. See Lenoir, *Musée des monuments français*, 5:48.

portrait as a completed multimedia assemblage alongside the commissioned bronze profile is still noteworthy. Why might the chancellor have requested two similar representations in different materials? One initial possibility is that owning versions in different states would have had particular interestfor a connoisseur's discerning eye. In this period, theorist Roger de Piles was addressing the significance of variations of repeated subjects within an artist's oeuvre for cultivating perceptive aesthetic appreciation.[14] Viewing related interpretations of the king's profile could have provided Pontchartrain and his entourage with the opportunity to consider implications and effects of distinct sculptural modes. Indeed, the comparison of Benoist's wax and bronze profiles may have been an intriguing pair precisely for their contrasting materialities. Bronze could be associated with the permanent grandeur of monuments while wax could evoke vivacious immediacy and sensational novelty. Bronze was the principal medium of Versailles's statuary in the last decades of the seventeenth century.[15] We have seen that wax figures could be purchased in Parisian grocers' stalls. The bronze relief's Latin inscriptions underlined the *gravitas* of its medium while the gilding recalls the relief's derivation from the forms of commemorative medallions.

Moreover, these works have been treated quite differently in scholarly literature. Like his extant wax medallion, Benoist's bronze portrait depicts an elderly Louis XIV in profile relief. Like the waxwork, it includes the delineation of wrinkles gathered at the corners of the king's eyelids and mouth as well as indications of the king's small pox scars. Nolhac noted these points of correspondence between the wax and bronze versions.[16] He raised the possibility that the wax prototype for the bronze

[14] De Piles was commenting specifically on distinctions inTitian's compositions of the same subject. Piles, *Abrégé de La Vie des Peintres*, 254.
[15] In the 1680s, Versailles's lead fountains were largely replaced with bronze statuary. In fact, bronzeworks proliferated in the Versailles gardens under the direction of the Marquis of Louvois, who was appointed Surintendant des Bâtiments in 1686. Bresc-Bautier, Scherf, and Draper, *Cast in Bronze*, 230–32.
[16] Nolhac deemed this detailing to be an indication of perfection in the modelling of flesh. He further identified a similar commitment to "extraordinary truth" in features designed specifically for the adapted bronze casting, such as the specificity and complexity of the figure's curled wig. See Nolhac, "Un nouveau portrait," 322.

cast had been adapted from the same mould that formed the extant wax profile.[17] More recently, the significance of the bronze portrait as a reference point for the wax profile is implied in the shifted date for the wax profile to match the year inscribed on the bronze, 1705.[18] Despite this tacit acknowledgment of correspondence, Benoist's bronze relief has not been taken up as an object of scholarly interest alongside the extant wax profile. The bronze profile of Louis XIV conforms to a more conventional sculptural mode and has barely inspired scholarly comment. While the wrinkles and scars grounded the claim that Benoist's wax portrait was cast from life, no equivalent proposal has been articulated for the bronze profile, though it includes the same blemishes. This distinction in reception indicates that the waxwork's suggestive tactile contact is related to the illusion conjured by its compelling wax flesh and combined treated surfaces, rather than its marks of anatomical specificity. The contrast between the persistent possibility of lifecast imprint for the wax profile without any equivalent interest in the bronze is particularly noteworthy considering that it is the bronze versions that bear the explicit indication that they were rendered "to the life" (fecit ad vivum) in inscriptions.

The phrase *ad vivum* was ubiquitous within the visual cultures of early modern Europe. Though often translated as "from life," a number of studies have proposed that the phrase can most accurately be translated as "to the life."[19] In correspondence with this shifted sense, recent perspectives have re-examined assumptions that representation from life referred primarily to an artist's direct observation. Scholars focused on a range of early modern contexts have highlighted the possibility that *ad vivum* and its vernacular variants primarily indicated lively illusion, a vivid effect rather than a recording that was exactly observed. This is particularly apparent in analyses of the Italian and French equivalents to

[17] "Les deux portraits étant à peu près de même date, les cires ont pu être exécutées ensemble; celle qui fut sacrifiée pour le bronze était pas de qualité inférieure à celle que l'artiste a conservée." Nolhac, "Un Nouveau portrait," 322.
[18] In a recent exhibition catalogue, Alexandre Maral stated that 1706 was the profile's traditional date, though his footnote indicates the wax profile's correspondence to Versailles's bronze profile of 1705. See Milovanovic and Maral, *Louis XIV: L'Homme et Le Roi*, 226. In a subsequent publication, Maral states that the 1705 bronze can be "easily related" to the wax: "On peut cependant le rapprocher aisément du portrait en bronze doré réalisé." Maral, "Le Portrait En Cire Par Benoist," 38. This assertion has justifies the museum's current official date for Benoist's wax sculpture as c. 1705.
[19] Vredeveld, "'Lend a Voice,'" 525; Balfe and Woodall, "From Living Presence to Lively Likeness," 9–10.

the Latin *ad vivum*. Carla Benzan and Frederika Jacobs have examined the Italian vocabulary of lively aesthetics to underline *al vivo*'s potential implication of evocative presence.[20] Noa Turel and George Hoffmann have scrutinized French texts to argue that phrases such as *au vif* and *sur le vif* suggest animate illusion rather than a portraitist's observation in live modelling sessions.[21]

Yet the label *ad vivum* on Benoist's bronze profile complicates associations with either direct observation or vivacious illusion. We have seen that Benoist's medallic portraits of Louis XIV were variations of established numismatic schema. Benoist's illustrations for the medallic history were translations of Antoine Coypel's initial designs, which were themselves adapted from other sources. Deriving from this body of work, Benoist's bronze profile of Louis XIV was undoubtedly not the result of a live posing session. As a label on the portrait itself, the phrase was not intended to assert the sculpture's lively effect either. If the representation evoked compelling presence, this sense would not require the redundant echo of an inscription. Nevertheless, I propose that the statement of representation *ad vivum* could have rhetorical force as an attestation of authenticity and a suggestion of contact with the monarch. We have seen that journals such as the *Mercure galant* described Benoist's wax figures of Louis XIV as striking duplications, so that visiting the *Cercle royal* could be a vicarious experience of court. Benoist's legally protected sphere of royal portraiture in wax and his past examples of lively depiction may have justified his claim to lifelike portrayal of Louis XIV even in a distinct format. Additionally, however, the phrase positioned this representation within a chain of authoritative replicas of the king's medallic likeness.

Indeed, the phrase *ad vivum* could have particular utility in asserting faithful translation between copies. The label of direct contact could, in fact, compensate for distance between a depiction and its model. In a sense, the explicit statement of correspondence to life inherently suggested a tenuous connection that required reinforcement. Thomas Balfe and Joanna Woodall note that a

[20] Jacobs, *The Living Image in Renaissance Art*; Benzan, "Coming to Life at the Sacro Monte of Varallo."
[21] Turel, "Living Pictures"; Hoffmann, "Portrayal from Life, or to Life?"

declaration of lively contact occasionally served the purpose of rhetorical compensation. The label *ad vivum* can inherently acknowledge "the potential *inadequacy* of the image, whose truth-claims are important and therefore need to be buttressed by a verbal supplement."[22] Christopher Wood's discussion of "the iterable profile," within the broader category of replica chains, offers a relevant framework for this consideration. Insistent reference to an origin occasionally offset authenticity's uncertain grounds.[23] The *ad vivum* label could serve the purpose of validating a copy's reference back to a prototype. In her investigation of sixteenth-century botanical illustrations Claudia Swan observes that the inscription of *ad vivum* was frequent even when images were copied from previous volumes. The assertion tied the derivatives to authoritative precedents and assured correspondence to original specimens even through the mediation of replication.[24] With reference to an engraved portrait of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Louis XIV's industrious minister, Tatiana Senkevitch has observed that the inscription *ad vivum* assured correspondence between the printed copy and the painted original.[25] These perspectives shed light on Benoist's claim to have crafted Louis XIV's likeness *ad vivum*. This authenticating qualification associated Benoist's portrayal with a body of official numismatic imagery as it highlighted the sculptor's expertise and privileged contact with the exalted figure of his portrait. Even beyond its meaning, the Latin text itself enforced a reference to the antique prestige of medallic representation.

Benoist's bronze profiles of Louis XIV provide a particularly intriguing case study for the implications of *ad vivum* because of these portraits' correspondence with the wax version. The statement that Benoist fabricated his bronze image of Louis XIV *ad vivum* is embedded within the

[22] Balfe and Woodall, "From Living Presence to Lively Likeness," 5.
[23] With reference to early modern medallic representations of Christ, Christopher Wood highlights negotiations within typology as printmakers attempted to preserve definitive attributes despite interpretive variation. See, *Forgery, Replica, Fiction*, 15–24, 155–64.
[24] Swan, "Ad Vivum," 363.Despite obvious differences between the fields of sixteenth-century botany and Louis XIV's numismatic portraiture these two areas approach certain related issues of replicative authority. Within both areas, definitive specimens (or models), were broadly disseminated within the conventions of schematic canons.
[25] Senkevitch, "Portrait of the King's Minister," 34.

waxwork's compelling corporeality. In the waxwork, pigmented skin is marked with the details that suggest exact correspondence with Louis XIV's own aged body. I have claimed that the punctured marks of scars on the wax surface of the profile were tiny truth claims to the long-standing legacy that the medallic form promised. Coins mark eras, either as valid currency within defined locales or as commemorative tributes. The wax profile materialized an aspiration for Louis XIV's magnanimous legacy by literally 'fleshing out' the medallic image of honorific magnanimity. Benoist's bronze profile presents a variation of the waxwork's testamentary materiality. As a ruler's profile defined in metal, labelled with Latin text and dated, the bronze portrait enlarged and adapted standard numismatic features. We have seen that Benoist's wax profile has been recently re-dated to 1705 in correspondence with his bronze profile. Beyond the question of the exact year that this specific waxwork was cast, the sense of an originary timestamp is arguably apparent within the waxwork's suggestion of temporal specificity. Details such as Louis XIV's stubble insistently assert momentary suspension. This implication of exactitude conveys some of the evidentiary implications of a definitive date.

The bronze inscriptions can also guide our reading of the waxwork's testamentary materiality. The indications of Benoist and Pontchartrain as the bronze medallions' creator and recipient implicate them within the waxwork's evidentiary claim. We have seen that Benoist positioned his signatures in diminutive but significant ways. Likewise, for the bronzes, inscriptions are discretely positioned but noteworthy for their explicitness. Michael Baxandall has famously described an artwork as the "deposit of a social relationship."[26] Yet not all crafted objects indicate the names of those contacts. We can see the bronze labels as an attempt to fix a specific representation as testament of a particular nexus of contact between a magnanimous ruler, his loyal administrator, and a virtuosic sculptor.[27] By extension, the wax relief implied these same lines of affiliation. In addition to being Benoist's singular medium,

[26] This assertion is the opening proposition of Baxandall's canonical volume on Renaissance painting. See *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*, 1.

[27] The 'nexus' is a key term for Alfred Gell's anthropology of art. With some parallel to Baxandall, though with a far broader scope, Gell's model considers artworks as encapsulations of intersecting social relations. See *Art and Agency*, 28–50.

wax was a substance of legal authority, integral to Pontchartrain's positions. The posterity of royal minister and royal portraitist were thus subtly folded into a striking representation of Louis XIV. The intimate particularity of the king's bodily depiction might have implicated Pontchartrain and Benoist's honour of proximity to the royal body at the centre of their social order.

Analyzing Benoist's wax profile with reference to its bronze correlates also ties this exceptional sculpture more definitively to the body of work that Benoist produced for the medallic history. Pontchartrain's direction of this commemorative project has already suggested its relevance to the wax medallion he owned. Focus on Benoist's bronzeworks confirms the centrality of the medallic history for the series of works fabricated for Pontchartrain. We have seen that one of Benoist's bronze medallions of Louis XIV was held in the collection of the Académie des inscriptions and displayed within their chambers in the Louvre. After sharing space dedicated to the Académie française for many years, the Académie des inscriptions received designated rooms for assembly in April of 1702 (mere months after Pontchartrain's presentation of the medallic history's first edition in January). Jean-Pierre Babelon has documented the subsequent pursuit of a decorative program that could encapsulate this institution's ideals. For my purposes, it is particularly noteworthy that Bignon, Pontchartrain's nephew, was personally involved in the curation of this space. Despite other proposals for the panels over the assembly room's doorways, he insisted on portraits depicting selected members of Louis XIV's descendants: *Monseigneur* (the dauphin) and Louis XIV's grandsons, the king of Spain (the duc d'Anjou), the duc de Bourgogne, and the duc de Berry.[28] In 1703 Bignon commissioned painted copies of Hyacinthe Rigaud's portraits of these royals.[29] This decision underlines the institution's investment in iconic royal portraiture. Bignon's curatorial decisions for the académie's assembly hall presents the possibility that he played a role in positioning Benoist's bronze profile in this institutional space.

[28] Babelon, "Les Collections de l'Académie Des Inscriptions," 79.
[29] Babelon, 80.The duc de Berry was not included within this record of commission. It is uncertain whether this responsibility fell to another painter or whether the initial selection of figures was modified.

Even within Pontchartrain's own collection, Benoist's bronze medallion of Louis XIV was contextualized with reference to the sculptor's work for the Académie des inscriptions. This bronze sculpture was one of a series of medallic profiles in bronze, each of which adapted one of Benoist's designs for the medallic history's profile illustrations. Extant examples from this series include enlarged representations of Louis XIII, the dauphin, the duc and duchesse de Bourgogne and others (figs. 4.5-4.11).[30] Benoist's initial designs in paint and their engraved rendering implied medals' surface relief in monochromatic tones. The sculptor's series of bronze profiles translated these images to actual sculptural mass and enlarged them to approach human scale. Positioning Benoist's bronze Louis XIV within this series grounds this portraits's connection to the sculptor's engagement with the Académie des inscriptions more directly. In turn, the suggestive correspondence between Benoist's 1705 bronze representations of Louis XIV and the extant wax profile implicates the waxwork more explicitly in relation to the monumental commemorative project of the medallic history. Our sense of the waxwork's testamentary materiality can be inflected by the commemorative weight of this monumental venture and its extended timeline.

I have emphasized Pontchartrain's recognition as a crucial support for Benoist's rising stature in the last decade of his career. Evidence for the chancellor's protective patronage and Benoist's reciprocal dedication indicates the importance of their relationship. It was not, however, an exclusive one. There is evidence that Benoist took advantage of the replicative capacities of casting to distribute copies of Pontchartrain's medallions beyond the sphere of their primary recipient. The sculptor's posthumous inventory in 1717 listed profile reliefs of Louis XIV in both gilded bronze and wax together in sequence.[31] This suggests that additional copies of the profile reliefs may have been manufactured and sold. Additionally, there are a number of extant examples of Benoist's bronze relief

[30] I have followed the identification of figures proposed in Sotheby's France, *Bel ameublement et objets d'art*. In keeping with early modern patterns, the male figures are significantly more distinctive than the women. While the features of Louis XIII, the dauphin, and the duc de Bourgogne are unmistakable, their female pendants are more schematic.
[31] "Inventaire Après Décès d'Antoine Benoist."f.30.

of the dauphin, Louis de France (figs. 4.12, 4.13, compare to fig. 4.8).[32] While these examples indicate broader interest in Benoist's medallic representations, it is noteworthy, nonetheless, that Pontchartrain's reliefs were preserved as a series and can be traced back to the chancellor's collection.

Considering Benoist's waxwork in relation to this body of bronze reliefs foregrounds Pontchartrain and Benoist's distinct but inter-related strategies of self-promotion. Their status claims were subtly articulated within the genre of royal glorification. We have seen that Benoist distributed engraved images of his illustrations and donated his painted models to the royal household to promote involvement with the medallic history even in the absence of the finalized publication. Benoist's sculptures for Pontchartrain similarly replicated this set of images in the same period. Within Pontchatrain's possession, Benoist's profile reliefs offered the chancellor an opportunity to position himself within the overarching project of epic tribute.

Lost Wax Memorial

While Benoist's engagement with the medallic history was seminal for the series of sculptures that Pontchartrain acquired in the early eighteenth century, it was not the sculptor's first encounter with this patron. In 1690, prior to his chancellorship and before he engaged Benoist's contribution to the medallic history, Pontchartrain commissioned a bronze bust of his recently deceased sister, Suzanne, from Benoist (fig. 4.14). The sculptor incised his signature delicately along the figure's right shoulder: "A. BENOIST EQUEUS FEC AD VIVUM 1690." [A. Benoist, squire, fabricated to the life 1690] (fig. 4.15). The attestation of this bust's representation *ad vivum* takes on particular significance when we

[32] Two examples appeared on the market recently. Though they are exact replicas of Benoist's bronze relief of the dauphin, neither has been correctly attributed. An article surveying medallic portraits of the dauphin includes a replica of Benoist's bronze, though it is attributed to Jean-Baptiste Poultier. This sculpture was held by Galérie Steinitz at the time of publication. See La Moureyere, "Médaillons Sculptés Représentant Monseigneur, Louis de France." This work was purchased for the collection of the newly-founded Musée du grand siècle. See 'Premières acquisitions de Musée du Grand Siècle', 21. The dealership Auguste Antiquités marketed and sold a second copy of the same bronze relief that was incorrectly identified as a representation of Louis XIV from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries. See "Grand médaillon portrait Louis XIV."

consider the work's production on the occasion of Suzanne's death in 1690. In addition to the artist's signature, further information on the sculpture's fabrication is contained in a copper plaque soldered along the surface of the work's hollow interior (fig. 4.16-17). Also in Latin, this second inscription identifies the portrait's subject by name, family affiliation, and with reference to an earlier wax portrait fabricated by Benoist: "SUZANNA PHELYPEAUX/ FRANCIAE CANCELLARII SOROR;/ MDCC./ EX ARCHETYPPO CEREO, ANNI. M.D.C.LXX [Suzanne Phélypeaux/ Sister to the Chancellor of France;/ 1700/ after the wax model, 1670]." Like Benoist's bronze relief of Louis XIV, then, this portrait's inscriptions interrelate the sculptor's contact with his subjects *ad vivum* and Pontchartrain's stature as chancellor.

Of particular interest is the notation of material translation and timeline. The inscriptions specify an original wax portrait commissioned during the sitter's lifetime in 1670, the bronze adaptation twenty years later, in 1690, on the occasion of Suzanne Phélypeaux's death, and finally Pontchartrain's status as chancellor, which was inaugurated in September 1699, a decade after the portrait was completed. The year 1700 on the copper plaque might be an indication of this promotion rounded up to chart the portrait's history in a sequence of round numbers.[33] Though Suzanne was married to Jêrome Bignon, *Garde de la bibliothèque du Roi,* the plaque identifies her according to the posthumous stature of "sister to the chancellor of France." The plaque's selective priorities thus complicate its purpose of straightforward identification. it positions the memorial bronze between an original wax representation and a brother's honour bestowed years after her death. The plaque acknowledges sculpture's portability in its attempt to impose a reading that guards against the uncertainties of contextual displacement.[34]

[33] It also seems possible that 1700 dates the plaque itself and that it was ordered by Pontchartrain in the first year of his chancellorship.

[34] Christopher Woods provocatively employs the anachronistic term "metadata" in relation to the circulation of early modern artefacts. Unidentified origins allowed for mistranslation as objects travelled between contexts. In this case Woods's comment is pertinent as a contrast. See 'Flood et al., "The Global Before Globalization," 8.

This section considers the plaque's caption as a *parergon*, a supplement that upon further scrutiny reveals overlooked complications.[35] The copper plaque's placement was likely intended to be inconspicuous. Fused with the metal of the portrait itself, this label also inadvertently draws attention to the sculptural head as a hollow object. Rather than merely a surface beyond representation's focus, one that a viewer might skim over, the label invites scrutiny of the sheet of metal bearing the reversed planar contours of definition. This is not simply the sculpture's reverse but its underside, the negative of sculptural representation.[36] Drawing attention to this hollowness foregrounds the visual evidence of the work's fabrication: a sheet of metal formed as the hardened liquid coating of a moulding container.

The indication of a wax prototype for Suzanne's bronze bust provides noteworthy precedence for Pontchartrain's possession of wax and bronze versions of Louis XIV's medallic profile. Here the sequential translation of wax to bronze was explicitly documented. The specification that Suzanne's bronze image derived from a wax original invites viewers to speculatively translate the metal portrait back to its initial form. Benoist's extant wax profile provides some guidance for this consideration. In both cases, Benoist undoubtedly worked with a founder to adapt his initial moulds for bronze. The sculptural translation was from a multimedia assemblage incorporating a variety of textured materials and colours to the solidity of monochrome bronze. Hair and costume would have required the collaboration of a wig maker, a jeweller, and tailor.[37] While the bronze bust simulates textures of hair gathered, braided, and curled, the original would have featured an actual wig styled and intertwined with ribbon. The bronze bust ends at the swooping curve of a neckline, an unconventional contour

---

[35] In a seminal essay, Jacques Derrida overturned Kant's notion of frames as *parerga* that neatly demarcate art from surroundings. See Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, 15–147. Paul Duro contextualizes Derrida's analysis within the broader interest of the term in "What is a Parergon?"

[36] Contemporary sculptor Elizabeth King notes the particular fascination of the interior cavities of hollowed portraits in "Notes from the Field: Anthropomorphism."

[37] The expense report from Condé 's commission is once again a relevant reference for the waxwork's initial combination of materials. This wax bust possibly drew on the same artisanal team of Papon the tailor, Sehent the wigmaker, and Levesque the jeweller. Macon, *Les Arts dans La maison de Condé*, 57.

since garmented torsos offered sculptors the opportunity to elaborate a sitter's stature.[38] Initially, the collar of a gown likely overlapped the original wax chest. While glass eyes were undoubtedly inset into the pigmented flesh of the wax original, the pupils and irises of Suzanne's bronze portrait are lightly incised in the bronze .While Louis XIV's profile reliefs in wax and bronze foregrounded the problematic of documentary testament on an epic scale, this earlier example addressed questions of transience and remembrance in a distinct, intimate mode.

As a token of mourning, Suzanne's memorial bust conforms to a prominent strain of early modern reflection on portraiture and materiality. In its classic formulation, the portrait mediated affective ties of loss and yearning. Pliny's account of a potter's daughter who traced her lover's shadow before his departure for battle, was painting's primary origin myth in early modern art theory.[39] This stencilled profile was subsequently the outline of a clay relief.[40] In the story, the tangible transfer derived from a living body was a memento of threatened intimacy that drove technical experimentation (fig. 4.18).[41] Suzanne's memorial bronze is noteworthy for its indication of different versions rendered before and after the subject's death, each in a distinct medium. This contrast is akin to the two representations evoked by Pliny in his myth of portraiture's origin. The potter's daughter drew a profile outline in the presence of her beloved. Following the soldier's departure, her father, Butades, translated this contour sketch into a more stable form in fired clay.[42] Likewise, in the case of Suzanne's busts,

[38] We can compare Benoist's bust to iconic sculptural portraits of female subjects: Antoine Coysevox's bust of his mother, Marie Serre (Louvre, inv. no LP 502) or François Girardon's rendition of Marie Thérèse (Versailles, inv. no MV8920). Both delineate elaborate garments by including shoulders and torsos.

[39] Pliny's anecdote was prominent in early modern theory, though Alberti was an exception in highlighting Narcissus as painting's mythical progenitor. See Damisch, "The Inventor of Painting," 307–8.

[40] Pliny identifies the potter as Butades, an inhabitant of Corinth. The relevant passages from Pliny's *Natural History* are quoted in English translation in Stoichita, *A Short History of the Shadow*, 11.

[41] The myth's validation of portraiture held interest for portraitists in Benoist's milieu. For example, Robert le Vrac de Tournières, Pontchartrain's own preferred portrait painter, submitted a depiction of Pliny's narrative as a second *morceau de réception* when he applied to upgrade his rank in the Académie royale from portraitist to History Painter in 1716. In celebrating portraiture's significance in the guise of a History painting, the subject encapsulated Tournières's metamorphic process of academic reinvention. For the record of Le Vrac's submission see Montaiglon, *Procès-verbaux*, 4:232.

[42] Victor Stoichita's reading of Pliny's passage emphasizes the substitutive function of the clay memorial. The sculpture serves as the vessel for an unfettered soul. See *A Short History of the Shadow*, 17–20.

absence inspired an attempt at greater permanence. Once Suzanne died, her wax portrait gained solidity in its conversion to a more durable medium, as though compensating for the fragility of mortal flesh.

The reasons for the waxwork's replication in bronze are not documented. It seems possible that this duplication was a means of distributing mementoes of a deceased relative in more than one location. Bronze's monumental association may have been deemed appropriately dignified for commemoration. Its expense and heft embodied the density of *gravitas*. In mourning, Suzanne's family may have sought the distance of muted resemblance rather than a striking evocation of presence. Frank Fehrenbach has associated monochrome with "the emergence of life" in early modern sculpture.[43] I would propose that his emphasis on the anticipatory tension of monochrome representation is equally relevant to a memorial's receding vivacity. Suzanne's wax bust may have been an incongruent memento to her mourning relatives. Consider the reported horror of Christina of Lorraine upon encountering the wax bust of her recently deceased son, Cosimo II, in Pietro Tacca's studio.[44] If bronze's subdued monochrome was more appropriate to the purpose of memorial, its derivation from wax was, nevertheless, deemed significant to document. The plaque's reference to an earlier wax bust provokes questions of representative correspondence and commemorative materiality. It opens the conceptual complexity of Titian's iconic *La Schiavona* (fig. 4.19), a layered reflection on temporal paradox in artistic representation.[45] Like Titian's doubled subject, presented in both vivid colour and muted monochrome, Suzanne's bronze memorial gained its salience as a commemorative trace with reference to the wax's forceful grip on life.

The copper plaque's explicit terms of memorial connect the statement of the bust's material origin with a specific, noteworthy epithet for its portrait subject as sister to France's chancellor

[43] Fehrenbach, "Coming Alive," 47–55.
[44] The anecdote was reported by Filippo Baldinucci. See Schlosser, "History of Portraiture in Wax," 248, 282 n.4.
[45] This painting has inspired vast commentary. Most pertinent here are readings that emphasize the portrait's's meta-commentary on the process of becoming an image. See Berger, "Fictions of the Pose," 116.Maria Loh positions this work as a statement of painterly creation in *Titian's Touch*, 23–25.

[FRANCIAE CANCELLARII SOROR]. Suzanne's identification in reference to Pontchartrain is underlined by the inclusion of her birth name, Phélypeaux, whereas elsewhere she was identified by her married name as Madame Bignon. These phrases inflect our sense of the bust's memorial particularity: not simply as a memento of a deceased individual, but as a testament of a brother's loss, described with reference to Pontchartrain's administrative achievement. In fact, a number of historians have noted Pontchartrain's particular devotion to this particular sister (he had two).[46] The primary source for this sibling bond is the Duke of Saint Simon's statement that Suzanne "did not live to see her brother's fortune, who loved her so tenderly that he always treated her children like his own, and made two of them state counsellors and another one state counsellor of the church […]."[47] Notably, Saint Simon's brief but evocative sketch of affectionate siblings echoes the terms of the plaque on Benoist's bronze bust. This inscription similarly commemorates its subject posthumously and in relation to the achievement of Pontchartrain's chancellorship, which she did not live to witness. Saint Simon's evidence for Pontchartrain's fraternal bond to Suzanne is in the favour he bestowed on her sons. We have seen that the Abbé Jean-Paul Bignon, a "state councillor of the church," as Saint Simon notes, was Pontchartrain's close collaborator who wielded significant authority under his uncle's supervision. A maternal uncle's protection was a common patrimonial mechanism in the *ancien régime*. The historian Sara Chapman designates the Pontchartrain-Bignon alliance as a particularly noteworthy example of this pattern. She emphasizes that mediating such relationships was one way that aristocratic women could play prominent roles in maintaining patron-client networks.[48]

We can trace the role of Suzanne's bronze bust in consolidating family alliance by charting its series of placements. Louvre curator Geneviève Bresc-Bauthier has identified this bronze bust of

[46] Sara Chapman, for example, refers to Suzanne Bignon as Pontchartrain's "favourite sibling" in "Patronage as Family Economy," 22.
[47] "L'autre [Suzanne] mourut en 1690 et ne vit point la fortune de son frère l'aimait si tendrement qu'il a toujours traité ses enfants comme les siens, et en a fait deux conseillers d'État, et un autre conseiller d'État d'Église[...]." Saint-Simon, Mémoires, Vol 2, chapter 18.
[48] Chapman, "Patronage as Family Economy," 22–23.

Suzanne Phélypeaux in the possession of the Bignon family a century after its fabrication. A 1772 inventory of Armand-Jérôme Bignon, Suzanne's great nephew, recorded a bronze bust of "the late madame Bignon" in the bedroom of his widow.[49] It is additionally notable, however, that in this space Benoist's work was placed alongside a plaster bust of "the late Monsieur Bignon."[50] The incongruent pairing of materials suggests an attempt to retroactively present Benoist's bust as a pendant within a display of Bignon lineage. In addition to her identification as the chancellor's sister, the paired position of Suzanne's bronze alongside an effigy of her husband foregrounded her place within a patriarchal network. The Bignon family's alliance to the Phélypeaux de Pontchartrains through Suzanne was a significant asset in their own efforts to secure social position. The inscription's emphasis on Suzanne's prominent family of origin may have been appreciated for this reason.[51] Before this portrait was in the hands of the Bignon descendants in the late eighteenth century, however, it was recorded in Pontchartrain's possession, within Pontchartrain's *cabinet a*t the château de Pontchartrain.[52] The *cabinet* was a space of aristocratic retreat that frequently contained a carefully curated display of luxuries.[53] Its walls featured painted portraits of Pontchartrain's relatives as well as Bourbon royals. Though congruent with this theme, Suzanne's bust was notably prominent as a sculptural portrait.[54]

The portrait of Suzanne Phélypeaux materialized a crux of patrimonial relations clustered around an aristocratic matriarch. As sibling to a powerful minister who fostered her children's

---

[49] Bresc-Bautier., "Antoine Benoist, cet illustre inconnu qui sculptait "sur le vivant," 17.
[50] "buste en plâtre de feu M. Bignon." "Inventaire après décès de M. Bignon."
[51] David J. Sturdy notes the "eminent marriage" between Jérome II & Suzanne Sturdy, *Science and Social Status*, 224.Representatives of the Kugel gallery, which sold this work to the Louvre in 2014, believed that "the plaque was commissioned afterwards by Jérôme III Bignon as a sign of his family's social ascent..." Demarle, "A Bronze Bust by Antoine Benoist Acquired by the Louvre." Curators and gallerists quoted in this article were, however, unaware of the bust's initial placement. Other examples of labelled bronzes within Pontchartrain's collection make it more likely that it was the chancellor who commissioned the copper plaque.
[52] As noted in a 1714 inventory. On the cabinet's décor see Healey, "Ennobled Lives," 243.
[53] Furetière defined the *cabinet* as "le lieu le plus retiré dans le plus bel appartement des Palais des grands maisons." Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, S.V. Cabinet.
[54] Six years later, the 1720 inventory of *Château de Pontchartrain* includes "a bust of Madame Bignon with its pedestal of gilded wood" in a hallway alongside the mansion's bedrooms. "Un buste de Madame Bignon avec son pied de bois doré." Benisovitch, "Peintures et Sculptures Au Chateau de Pontchartrain," 97.This shift of placement for Suzanne's portrait may be related to a makeover in the château in the aftermath of Pontchartrain's resignation from the chancellorship in 1714. These circumstances are addressed below.

administrative careers, Suzanne was a central figure within the patron-client network even without official status as a political player. Hannah Williams has described the ancien-régime family as "an ever-expanding legal assemblage of people, brought together by contracts, ratified by property exchanges, and maintained by social obligations."[55] Notably, she demonstrates that the display of portraits could be significant for negotiating these points of connection. Indeed, the links that extended the familial network were potentially vulnerable and arguably required the reenforcement of symbolic imagery and ritual exchanges. In our case, a knot of alliance between members of the Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain and Bignon families was folded into the single figure of Suzanne Bignon in bronze. As it was passed from the Pontchartrain collection to the Bignon's at some point before the middle of the eighteenth century, the bronze sculpture was also itself an example of property exchange that underlined a familial bond.

There is an informative precedent to the strategy of labelling sculpture within Pontchartrain's collection. An early-seventeenth-century bronze bust attributed to Francesco Bordoni, bears a small, inscribed square sheet of metal soldered inside the head(figs. 4.20, 21).[56] This label, similarly positioned to Suzanne's, identifies its subject as Pontchartrain's grandfather, Paul de Phélypeaux. It also records his aristocratic title and administrative position: ["SEIGNEUR DE/ PONTCHARTRAIN/ SECRETAIRE DESTAT/ 1610] (fig. 22).The year marked Paul de Phélypeaux's promotion to Henri IV's secretary of state. Paul de Phélypeaux had been the first member of the family to enter royal service, first as *sécretaire des commandements de la Reine* in 1600 before his promotion into the king's retinue in 1610, a mere three months before Henri IV's assassination.[57] Paul's experience as Marie de Medici's administrator positioned him particularly well for an influential governmental role under her

[55] Williams, "Academic Intimacies," 343.
[56] When it was on the market in 2019 Bordoni's bust was the subject of substantial research by sculpture specialists at De Baeque, Alexandre Lacroix and Élodie Jeannest de Gyvès. See De Baecque and Drouot, *Estampes, dessins, et tableaux anciens*, 51–63.
[57] Chapman, *Private Ambition and Political Alliances*, 14.

regency.[58] The commemorated date of Paul's administrative promotion is pertinent in relation to Suzanne Phélypeaux's identification as the chancellor's sister. Labels for the chancellor's statuary charted familial stature with reference to bureaucratic rank.

This portrait was, like Suzanne's, a memorial effigy. Bordoni's bronze had originally topped the tomb within the Phélypeaux family chapel, the C*hapelle des Trépasseés* in Saint Germain Auxerrois. This church, adjacent to the Louvre, had been the parish church for the communities within the palace's employ such as administrators and artists. The bronze bust's presence there is recorded in a drawing by the architect Robert de Cotte, whom Pontchartrain had engaged to renovate the family sepulchre in 1694 (figs. 4.23, 4.24). The series of extant sketches document options for the chapel's designed renovations.[59] The bust's initial placement at the pinnacle of a multi-storied monument accounts for its downcast gaze and size, above life scale.[60]

Pontchartrain, however, chose to remove this bronze from the family chapel and transport it to the Château de Pontchartrain. This sculpture'a presence was recorded in the 1720 inventory of Pontchartrain's property.[61] The brass plaque was undoubtedly appended in this new location since it would have been invisible at its initial height. This inscription was, moreover, particularly pertinent to its new site of display. Paul de Phélypeaux had himself purchased the estate of Pontchartrain in 1609. He thus gained the hereditary aristocratic title of Seigneur de Pontchartrain. Within its new setting in mansion of the family seat, Bordoni's bust performed a variation of its original memorial function. Rather than a gravesite monument within the sacred space of a church, it now marked the location of aristocratic legitimation. The chapel's statuary was a resource to be mined. In addition to relocating Paul de Phélypeaux's bronze bust, Pontchartrain commissioned a plaster cast of Bordoni's sculpture.

---

[58] Charles Perrault's account of Paul de Phélypeaux's accomplishments highlighted Marie de Medici's longstanding trust in him. See *Les Hommes illustres*, 35.
[59] Fossier, *Les dessins du fonds Robert de Cotte*, 218–19.
[60] De Baecque and Drouot, Estampes, dessins, et tableaux anciens, 53, 57–58.
[61] "Un buste de Monseigneur Paul Philypeaux [sic.] aussi de bronze sur son scabellon de marbre blanc" was listed in the lower gallery. Transcribed in Benisovitch, "Peintures et Sculptures Au Chateau de Pontchartrain," 100.

This plaster copy was painted to resemble its bronze original and integrated into the family chapel in close proximity to the château, within the church of Saint-Martin at Jouars-Pontchartrain (fig 4.25).[62] The plaster copy, therefore, had a wider viewership beyond the château's restricted sphere.

The relocation of Bordoni's bronze from the chapel to the château, and its subsequent replication, underline Pontchartrain's awareness of the malleability of heritage through the presentation of sculptural heirlooms. The examples of Bordoini's portrayal of Paul Phélypeaux and Benoist's depiction of Suzanne Phélypeaux establish Pontchartrain as a collector attuned to sculptural materiality and display. In acts of replication, relocation, and labelling we see Pontchartrain as a savvy curator of sculpture, moving his art objects around with purpose and redefining their meanings in new contexts.

Dwelling on Display: Curating Identity at the Château de Pontchartrain

> Power served pomp, not pomp power.
> Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali*, 1980

Closely coordinated with Pontchartrain's appointment as chancellor was the gift of a sculpture from Louis XIV. Pontchartrain made a particular point of witnessing the statue's installation on the grounds of his estate in June of 1700.[63] Previously placed within the Tuilleries gardens, the work was a marble allegory of Time uplifting Truth, carved by Pierre de Franqueville for Henri IV in the first decade of the seventeenth century (fig. 4.26). The sculpture depicts Time as a muscular, bearded hero rescuing Truth, a young female figure, from a confused jumble of hybrid monsters, including a crouching satyr.[64] Franqueville''s signature inscribed at Time's foot implicates the sculptor's legacy

[62] The château's inventory of 1720 included the family chapel in L'Église de Jouars. It recorded "un buste de platre de m. Paul Phelypeaux." Transcribed in Benisovitch, "Peintures et Sculptures Au Chateau de Pontchartrain," 102.
[63]Apparently Louis XIV had to reschedule the engagement of Pontchartrain's cousin to ensure his chancellor's availability. In his diary entry for June 9 1700, the Marquis de Sourches also mentioned that Jules Hardouin Mansart, had advocated for this gift for Pontchartrain from Louis XIV. See Sourches, *Mémoires*, 6:264.
[64]The sculpture's subject has been variously identified. Brice identifies the work as "la statüe de marbre de la vérité" Brice, *Description Nouvelle de La Vile de Paris*, 2:420. In the later eighteenth-century, Dézallier d'Argenville assumed that the figure of Truth was actually a personification of France, see Dézallier d'Argenville, *Voyage Pittoresque Des Environs de Paris*, 187. The Bibliothèque nationale's catalogue for drawings of Franqueville's work identifies the subject as the

within the allegory's assurance of redemptive honour. Franqueville carved the phrase "*Petri A Francavilla cameracens anno MDCIX*" [Pierre de Franqueville from Cambrai in the year 1609].[65] Pontchartrain sought to mitigate the statue's explicit eroticism by commissioning designs for drapery to cover Time's genitals. Extant drawings by Robert de Cotte feature a flap that folded over to show the proposed addition of a loincloth (figs. 4.27, 4.29).[66] This paper model underlines Pontchartrain's involvement in questions of sculptural display. As in the project to relocate Bordoni's bust, the chancellor worked with De Cotte to examine options and present monumental works in new places.

This instance of Louis XIV's favour embodied in a sculptural presentation brings us to the question of the initial placement of Benoist's royal reliefs. While the original location of Benoist's wax profile remains unknown, the sculptor's series of bronze reliefs based on the medallic history were recorded in the gallery of the Château de Pontchartrain. The inventory of 1720 lists "twelve medallions with their frames of gilded wood representing the royal family."[67] I have claimed that within Pontchartrain's collection, Benoist's series of medallic representations implicated the chancellor within the monumental legacy of Louis XIV's magnanimity. How might their original placement have framed this tributary reception?

This section contextualizes Benoist's series of royal profiles in bronze relief within the gallery of the Pontchartrain château (fig. 4.30). It argues that these sculptural works contributed to a domestic display that aimed to articulate the family's stature and the chancellor's professional accomplishment in

---

abduction of Orithea (an Athenian princess) by Boreas (the north wind), see Fossier, *Les dessins du fonds Robert de Cotte*, 332. The work is most often titled *Le Temps enlevant la vérité.* I have translated the term "*enlevant"* as 'uplifting' rather than 'abducting' since the implication is that Time is rescuing Truth from the destructive demons below.

[65] In its new location, the year 1609 may have gained additional implications, since it was also the year Paul de Phélypeaux acquired the property of Pontchartrain. The Latin text is pertinent for thinking about Pontchartrain's embedded labels on sculptural works.

[66] Fossier, *Les dessins du fonds Robert de Cotte*, 332. Two overlapping flaps depicted two different options for Time's loincloth for Pontchartrain's consideration (figs. 4.30-32).

[67]"Douze médaillons avec bordure de bois doré représentant la famille royale" transcribed in Guérin, "Le Mobilier Du Château de Pontchartrain," 174.While the inventory records twelve, only eight remain extant, as discussed above. It seems possible that four additional bronze profiles originally reproduced other examples of Benoist's illustrations for the medallic history.

precise material terms. In order to establish the circumstances of reception for Benoist's sculptural works within Pontchartrain's collection, we will consider the function of his château within a constellation of family residences, the importance of residential displays in the articulation of aristocratic identities, and the conventions of display for galleries. In elaborating these degrees of context for Benoist's works (within the gallery of a manor house, within a wider family collection dispersed between residences) this section aims to grasp the specific role of Benoist's works within a curatorial rhetoric of identity.

In the telling of Pontchartrain's friend, Louis de Rouvroy, Duke of Saint Simon, negotiations for Pontchartrain's promotion to the chancellorship focused substantially on the question of where he would live.[68] In his memoirs, Saint Simon recorded an initial conversation between Louis XIV and Pontchartrain as the then chancellor, Louis de Boucherât, lay on his death bed. In response to Pontchartrain's stated willingness to accept the position, the king apparently replied:

Do not speak to anyone without exception. But if the chancellor dies, as he is perhaps dead at this very hour, you will be made chancellor and your son will be named secretary of state and he will exercise that office. On this journey you will continue to reside in your current lodgings because I gave out the residence of *la chancellerie* when I noticed that the chancellor would not come, and it would be difficult for me to relocate those who I've placed there.' Pontchartrain embraced the king's knees, and took the opportunity to request and obtain permission to maintain his lodgings in Versailles, within the palace […].[69]

In this scene we see Louis XIV managing interrelated logistics of administrative personnel and living quarters. This gives us a sense of the significance of domestic spaces for elite governmental officers.[70]

---

[68] Saint Simon transcribed his and Pontchartrain's declarations of loyal friendship to each other. Saint Simon and Pontchartrain were allied through the prestigious marriage of Pontchartrain's son, Jérôme de Phélypeaux to Eléonore de la Rochefoucauld-Roye, a cousin of Saint Simon's wife. Chapman, "Patronage as Family Economy," 25.

[69] "Eh bien! dit le roi, n'en parlez à personne sans exception; mais si le chancelier meurt, comme il est peut-être mort à cette heure, je vous fais chancelier, et votre fils sera secrétaire d'État en titre, et exercera tout à fait. Vous continuerez, pour ce voyage, à loger dans votre appartement ordinaire, parce que j'ai donné les logements de la chancellerie où j'ai bien vu que le chancelier ne viendrait pas, et que cela m'embarrasserait à reloger ceux que j'y ai mis. » Pontchartrain embrassa les genoux du roi, saisit l'occasion de demander et d'obtenir de conserver son logement de Versailles au château […]." Saint Simon concluded this scene by relaying that Pontchartrain was especially overjoyed to be relieved from the odious responsibilities of *controleur générale*. Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, Vol. 2, chapter 18.

[70] Saint Simon himself was preoccupied by apartment assignments within the palace as indications of stature. He even stayed in the Pontchartrain apartments for some months in 1710. See Lemoine, "Les logements de Saint Simon," 24.

The initial Versailles residence that Louis XIV refers to is the former Hôtel de Luxembourg, which Pontchartrain had purchased and renovated the previous year.[71] The desire to keep apartments within the palace complex in addition to a magnificent household within walking distance, indicate the distinct spatial requirements for a powerful royal administrator. A mansion was a stage for presentation of the chancellor's stature, while a foothold within the palace itself could be both convenient and strategic for courtly optics.[72]

In addition to negotiating domestic fronts at Versailles the family held a number of other residences over the years of Pontchartrain's courtly career. Shortly after being named chancellor, in 1703, he purchased the Hôtel de Lionne in Paris.[73] The family also maintained a household at Fontainebleau, which allowed Pontchartrain to accompany the court's travels there. Of central importance within this series of residences was the estate of Pontchartrain. Situated in the present-day region of Yvelins, the property was a short journey away from both Paris and Versailles. We have seen that the acquisition of this land had been an important asset for Paul de Phélypeaux, Pontchartrain's grandfather.

The timeline of Pontchartrain's professional achievements can be charted in relation to his acquisition of properties and his projects of architectural renovation. After a significant administrative career in Brittanny, Pontchartrain was appointed Louis XIV's *Controlleur des finances* in 1689 and Secretary of state for the navy in 1690. In the immediate aftermath of these promotions, he acquired a number of seigneuries neighbouring the estate of Pontchartrain and converted his enlarged property to a county the following year, in 1691.[74] He thus established himself as the Count of Pontchartrain. In 1692. He engaged André Le Nostre, Louis XIV's eminent retired gardener, to design Pontchartrain's

[71] Healey, "Ennobled Lives," 272.
[72] Sarmant and Stoll, *Régner et gouverner*, 501.
[73] This mansion on Rue Neuve-des-petits-Champs, in proximity to the *Palais Royale*, was built in 1661 by Louis Le Vau for Hugues de Lionne, the Marquis of Bernis. Kimball, *The Creation of the Rococo*, 94.
[74] Healey, "The Gardens of Pontchartrain," 53.Healey notes that the patent letters for this conversion emphasize ancestral land holdings despite the fact that the family's possession of the Pontchartrain estate extended only two generations back.

landscapes on Versailles's model (figs. 4.31, 4.32).[75] Ponthartrain purchased the Hôtel de Luxembourg in Versailles in 1698 and the Hôtel de Lionne in Paris, in 1703. The substantial renovation on this urban property, an early residential interior by De Cotte, was noted in Germain Brice's Parisian guidebook.[76] The interior's experimental features became established standards of rococo design in subsequent decades.[77] In this series of residential investments, Pontchartrain set up a constellation of sites that fulfilled the diverse requirements of his station. In addition to the administrative duties of Pontchartrain and his son Jérôme Phélypeaux, their wives' participation in courtly life was crucial to the management of patron-client networks that permitted the men to maintain royal favour and accomplish their work.[78] In negotiating their proximity to the courtly centre through travel between sites, the Pontchartrains were balancing the requirements of duty, the strategic participation in court society, and the aristocratic privilege of leisure and retreat.

The coordinates of multiple family dwellings yielded particular insights into the aristocratic networks of Louis XIV's courtiers in Norbert Elias's canonical analysis of this social sphere. The travel of courtiers, alternately gathered at Versailles and then dispersed in Parisian *hôtels* and seigneurial properties, presented a 'tangible' map of the court's interdependent social frameworks.[79] In this view, as members of the Pontchartrain family travelled between residences they were engaged in the process of forging aristocratic identity through movement. This understanding of identity formation through patterned travel is an important foundation to my argument that Pontchartrain's sculptures played significant roles in visualizing a network of courtly alliance. These residences were not simply points

[75] In 1692 André Le Nostre was paid for seven trips to Pontchartrain. He was paid for four additional visits in 1693 and two more in 1695. Healey, "The Gardens of Pontchartrain," 58.
[76] Germain Brice described Le Vau's structure as "beautiful and magnificent." In the editions of his text that followed Pontchartrain's purchase of the property, Brice noted the chancellor's "substantial repairs and embellishments." See *Description de la Ville de Paris, et de tout ce qu'elle contient de plus remarquable*, 183–84.
[77] Kimball, *The Creation of the Rococo*, 94–95.
[78] Chapman, "Patronage as Family Economy."
[79] Elias builds his formulation of correspondence between dwellings and social structure on the early modern *topos* of patriarchal replication that positioned the monarch as lord in analogy to heads of the household. The network formed a "vastly extended house and household." Elias, *The Court Society*, 43.

on maps of social geography, but inhabited spaces whose materiality– in the particularity of their construction and the curation of their contents – established their relevance as sites for the cultivation of identity and status.

In this period, aristocratic interiors were particularly significant arenas of self-presentation. While residential architecture was an established means of communicating rank throughout the early modern period, Meredith Martin observes that in French architectural literature, beginning in the seventeenth century, attention shifted from the exterior facade to the architectural interior in a substantial way. Increasingly, in the *ancien régime*, "residential spaces offered elite clients a means to express social identity and shape the self."[80] In keeping with this observation, the Château de Pontchartrain's insides were dramatically transformed over the course of Pontchartrain's courtly career, while the building's exterior structure was little altered during these same decades.[81] These substantial renovations included the divisions of interior space into distinct smaller rooms with specialized functions. Inventories also evidence the acquisition of new furnishings and luxuries purchased in coordination with the family's rising station.[82] Cast in 1705, six years after Pontchartrain's promotion to chancellor, Benoist's bronze reliefs were part of this upgrade as the Pontchartrain household transformed.

Within this society's fluctuating, but intricately graded scale of social hierarchy, in which minor distinctions of status were conveyed in distinctions of privilege, domestic interiors were scrutinized for their perceived correlation to rank. Katie Scott has described such luxurious domestic spaces as "theatres of distinction."[83] She highlights the perceived public impact of these restricted spaces. Degrees of conspicuous consumption were marks of rank, so that appropriately lavish display was

[80] Martin, "The Ascendancy of the Interior," 15.
[81] Healey, "Ennobled Lives," 229.
[82] These shifts can be charted in a series of inventories with notable contrasts between one written in 1689, at the time Pontchartrain took the position of *controleur générale*, and the château's inventories from the early eighteenth century. The distinction in décor between the two inventories is foregrounded in A. Guérin's introduction to excerpted transcriptions from these inventories in, "Le Mobilier Du Château de Pontchartrain."
[83]Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, 81–117.

essentially a "public act of social responsibility; public because it offered itself to the scrutiny, judgment and even regulation of society […]."[84] Renovations and decorative programs could be a salient way of communicating shifts in status. Possessions on display were not incidental accoutrements, but the substance of status itself.[85]

Degrees of conspicuous consumption were also differentiated within a family's series of residences. Catherine Healey observes that the Hôtel de Pontchartrain in Paris was the primary site for showcasing the family's most impressive artworks. For example, a Rubens painting in the chancellor's cabinet was the most valuable object inventoried within the hôtel.[86] Veronese's *Presentation at the Temple* was displayed in the council chamber, in which members of government gathered for official business.[87] This display of wealth and taste was in keeping with the mansion's function as a frequent location for administrative business and occasional venue of magnificent courtly entertainments.[88] This degree of ostentation communicated rank, but its purpose was not merely symbolic. In its urban context, the display of expensive art also served as tangible evidence of assets, which were essential for maintaining a substantial credit rating.[89] Artworks at the estate château fulfilled a different aspect of aristocratic self-fashioning. This collection had more restricted viewership compared to the family's works in Paris and Versailles. Guests consisted of relatives, close family associates, and patrimonial clients. (The household's numerous servants were also, of course, viewers.) The château was, however, no less important as a location for negotiating aristocratic identity. As the family seat, it was also the

[84] Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, 81.
[85] Chandra Mukerji's perspective on the political value of courtly display offers a relevant point of reference. See *Territorial Ambitions and the Gardens of Versailles*, 231–39. Clifford Geertz's reversal of the means and ends of display and political power within the context of a 'theatre state,' also provides an important theoretical foundation for the political currency of possessions on display. See Geertz, *Negara*, 13.
[86] It was inventoried at 8000 livres. Healey, "Ennobled Lives," 277. For comparison Benoist's wax and bronze profile reliefs were each valued at 40 *livres* in the sculptor's posthumous inventory."Inventaire après décès d'Antoine Benoist." f.30.
[87] Healey, "Ennobled Lives," 278.
[88] The Pontchartrains hosted one particularly magnificent festivity in honour of the duchesse de Bourgogne, which was celebrated in memoirs and covered in the Parisian press. See Chapman, "Patronage as Family Economy," 11–12.
[89] Healey, "Ennobled Lives," 281; Dessert, *Argent, pouvoir et société au Grand Siècle*, 112.

site for curating the family legacy. The château's artworks were overall less valuable than the works in Paris, but Healey has observed their greater "thematic coherence."[90]

Portraits, which were displayed in most every room of the Pontchartrain château, articulated a map of the family's associations on two axes: lineage and royal alliance. In their selection and their placement, the display of portraits made a network of relations tangible. Family portraits were concentrated in the bedrooms and private *cabinets.* Reception areas such as the gallery, salon, and dining hall featured Bourbon rulers. Images of Louis XIV were interspersed throughout the house.[91] One notable exception within this scheme was the absence of Pontchartrain's own father, Louis I Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain (1613-1685).[92] A president of the Chambre des comptes, the kingdom's central body of financial administration, Pontchartrain's father incurred Louis XIV's disfavour as one of the judges who voted against Nicholas Fouquet's execution in 1664.[93] The notable omission of this significant patriarchal figure's image within his son's château speaks to the foundational narrative of Bourbon loyalty that underlay the curation of familial identity through portraits on display. This obstacle to the family's advancement also throws the stakes of luxury and patronage into relief. As a reference point for the peril of inappropriate ostentation, Fouquet's Vaux le Vicomte emphasizes the political implications of decorative magnificence. This extreme of offensive exhibition contextualizes expectations of a calibrated scale between stature and luxury.[94]

Within this scheme, Pontchartrain's gallery was a focal point for the articulation of inalienable loyalty to Bourbon rulers through the display of portraits. Lining the gallery's wall, Benoist's medallic

[90] Healey, "Ennobled Lives," 255.
[91] In this respect, the décor followed the established conventions for ministers. Thierry Sarmant and Mathieu Stoll note the proliferation of royal portraits throughout the residences of Louis XIV's high-level administrators*Régner et Gouverner*, 423.
[92] Healey, "Ennobled Lives," 253.Healey also notes that Pontchartrain's father's name was omitted in official family documents.
[93]Saint Simon celebrated Pontchartrain's father's resistance to the powers that demanded Fouquet's final condemnation: "Sa probité fut inflexible aux caresses et aux menaces de MM. Colbert, Le Tellier et de Louvois, réunis pour la perte du surintendant. Il ne put trouver matière à sa condamnation, et par cette grande action se perdit sans resource." See Saint-Simon, *Mémoires,* Vol 2, chapter 18.
[94] Scott notes that the censure of Fouquet's ostentation and his disgrace cast a long shadow over aristocratic architecture in *The Rococo Interior*, 83.

profiles contributed to the opulence of a space saturated with royal imagery in bronze. In addition to Benoist's works, the gallery contained bronze busts of Henri IV, Louis XIII and the Grand Dauphin, Monseigneur, as well as an equestrian figure of Louis XIV in bronze.[95] There was additionally a bronze reproduction of Bernini's marble portrait of the king from 1665 (fig. 3.72). This item is indicated with the phrase "1 buste de Louis XIV en bronze, par le chevalier Berlin (sic.)."[96] There were, therefore, multiple images of Bourbon royals in the same room. There were at least four images of Louis XIV, including Benoist's reliefs, Bernini's bust, and the equestrian model, and two representations of Louis XIV's father and son in bronze — again, busts in addition to Benoist's profile reliefs. Displaying the line of Bourbon kings promoted the eminent positions of the Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain family over generations, beginning with Paul de Phélypeaux's engagement to Henri IV. The inclusion of Louis XIV's heirs implied aspirations of continued commitment to royal service.

The particular significance of a mansion's gallery for the presentation of family status was underlined in Louis Savot's analysis of aristocratic dwellings, a work first published in 1624 and reprinted in 1673.[97] Savot observed that the gallery was an appropriate venue to exhibit aristocratic lineage: "Within a house of ancient and illustrious nobility, one can decorate the gallery with such pieces that the ancient Romans once placed within their atriums."[98] Notably, considering this dissertation's primary subject, the portraits displayed within the atria of the Roman Republic were wax effigies of ancestors.[99] In the early modern period this ancient practice of display was known especially from Pliny the Elder's account of it.[100] Obliquely, then, the long history of wax portraiture's

[95] As evidenced in the 1720 inventory transcribed in Guérin, "Le Mobilier du Château de Pontchartrain," 174.
[96] Guérin, "Le Mobilier du Château de Pontchartrain,"174.
[97] Meredith Martin notes that Blondel's late seventeenth-century revival of Savot's work was part of burgeoning field of architectural publications aimed at ambitious patrons including "recently ennobled administrators." "The Ascendancy of the Interior," 17.
[98] "On la peut orner en une maison d'illustre & ancienne noblesse, des pareilles pieces que les anciens Romains mettoient en leur Atrium." Savot and Blondel, *L'Architecture françoise des bastimens particuliers*, 101–2.
[99] Displays of such wax portraits, or *imagines,* were attestations of inclusion within the class of senatorial nobility in the Roman Republic. They were carried out for procession during family funerals. See Kaplow, "Redefining Imagines."
[100] In his *Natural History,* Pliny the Elder evoked this practice of display in contrast to his perception of later decadence. See Schlosser, "History of Portraiture in Wax," 181.

commemorative function is relevant for considering the position of Benoist's reliefs within Pontchartrain's gallery.

Savot specifies the seventeenth-century equivalents of such ancient displays of lineage in a footnote: "That is to say, family trees, busts and portraits of ancestors, indications of their alliances, their dignities and their great actions."[101] Scott delineates a shift in the conventions of fulfilling this objective from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries. While cycles of battle paintings were an established strategy of commemorating military achievements in royal service, by the eighteenth century, many patrons adopted less explicit means of presenting their aristocratic status and galleries became extensions of the *cabinet des tableaux*. Artworks stood in as "surrogates for symbols of nobility" and the gallery, "ceremonial by size, location and traditional association," increasingly became, in the eighteenth century, an "ambiguous sociable space."[102] In other words, literal references to a family's lineage were replaced with artworks as markers of status and cultural prestige. In the very period in which Benoist's bronze reliefs were installed in Pontchartrain's renovated gallery, galleries themselves were areas in which shifting strategies for communicating rank through displays of artwork could be charted.

Indeed, within the first decade of the eighteenth century, the gallery at Pontchartrain was at the intersection of these distinct possibilities of self-presentation. The curation of this space fulfilled both Savot's suggested tribute to the family's "allegiance" and the presentation of impressive artworks as a display of refined taste. The consistency of bronze can also be related to the growing trend of uniform decorative series within luxurious interiors. Mimi Hellman has demonstrated that matched sets became a standard of elite interior design in the eighteenth century: "a sustained interest in matching first emerged in upholstery design during the seventeenth century, and by the early eighteenth century it was

[101]"C'est à dire des tables Genealogiques, des bustes & des portraits des Ancestres, des marques de leurs alliances, de leurs dignitez, & de leurs belles actions." Savot and Blondel, L' *Architecture françoise des bastimens particuliers*, 102.
[102] Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, 113.In his article for the *Encyclopédie*, Louis de Jaucourt described a palace's gallery as a space to convey magnificence through the display of fine art. Jaucourt, "Galérie," 7:441.

a widely practiced formal strategy that also extended to carved and veneered furniture, metalwork, porcelain, and wall decoration."[103] The collection of works in bronze fulfills this trend of aesthetic coherence via material consistency. In addition to the series of bronze sculptural works, the length of Pontchartrain's gallery was punctuated by uniform sets of furniture and coordinated ornamentation. The château's 1720 inventory listed sixteen plush armchairs, each upholstered in red leather with gilded stripes, a series of carved marble tables, and numerous vessels in blue and white porcelain.[104] Included within these series of objects, Pontchartrain's bronze portraits of Bourbons kings contributed to a sumptuous and aesthetically coordinated interior.

The identification of a bronze replica of Bernini's iconic portrait bust of Louis XIV offers a comparative reference point for our consideration of the meaning of Benoist's bronze reliefs within this initial context of reception. Bernini was the only artist identified by name in the château's 1720 inventory, a specification that justifies its valuation.[105] It seems possible that the bronze replica of Bernini's portrait in the collection of Washington's National Gallery, a work of undetermined provenance, was initially exhibited in Pontchartrain's gallery (fig. 4.33).[106] This origin would be difficult to establish with certainty considering the potential multiplicity of reproductive metal casts. The association is informative, nonetheless. The extant sculpture offers an example of the materiality of the work initially positioned within Pontchartrain's gallery. While the *Maison du Roi* ordered numerous plaster casts of Bernini's marble bust in the decades following its creation, curators have proposed that the Washington replica is unlikely to have been cast from one of these moulds due to distinctions in the pattern of the lace ascot and the hair's texture.[107] Technical analysis indicates that it was produced in a

[103] Hellman, "The Joy of Sets," 130.
[104] Guérin, "Le Mobilier du Château de Pontchartrain," 173–74.
[105] As transcribed in Guérin, 174.
[106] An initial proposal that the National Gallery's bronze may have been a gift to the Duke of Orléans lacks documentary confirmation. See Anne-Lise Desmas's discussion of this work in Bacchi et al., *Bernini and the Birth of Baroque Portrait Sculpture*, 268.
[107] Anne-Lise Desmas surveys plaster casts of Bernini's bust commissioned by the *Maison du roi*. Shes also notes two unfaithful bronze copies of Bernini's work. Bacchi et al. *Bernini and the Birth of Baroque Portrait Sculpture*, 267-268, 269, n.11. Once returned to Rome, Bernini mentioned requests for bronze replicas of Louis XIV's bust in letters to Chantelou and

French foundry around 1700.[108] This date, close to Pontchartrain's appointment as chancellor, the casting of Benoist's bronze reliefs, and the major decorative makeover of the château adds evidence to the possibility that the National Gallery's bronze was initially Pontchartrain's.

Like Bernini's bronze copy, Benoist's bronze reliefs replicated objects exhibited within Louis XIV's palace. Bernini's original marble was on display within the king's apartments at Versailles, in the *Salon du Diane*.[109] Likewise, we have seen that Benoist's bronze reliefs were enlarged versions of his painted medallions that were on display in Versailles's *Cabinet des médailles.* These connections emphasize sculptures' role in establishing links between Pontchartrain's château and royal space. Elias's model of "spatial correspondence" is a relevant framework for grasping this dynamic. In Elias's foundational analysis, the nobility's replication of palatial architecture in their own residences was a salient articulation of membership within the king's vast extended household.[110] As replicas of works on display within the palace, these sculptures by Benoist and Bernini in Pontchartrain's gallery were focal points for such spatial correspondence. Pontchartrain's gallery united works of distinct material qualities and statures in bronze translation. In addition to being iconic representations of royalty, Benoist's and Bernini's bronzes were meaningful as copies that forged links to royal space.

Within the gallery's selection of iconic royal representations in translated scale, another informative inclusion was a model of Girardon's monumental equestrian for Place Louis le Grand, present day Place Vendôme (fig. 4.34). Pontchartrain's 1720 inventory described "the equestrian figure of Louis XIV on horseback, the whole in bronze with its base of wood painted as marble and gilded."[111] When Pontchartrain's son, Jérôme Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain, died in 1747, a portion of the family

---

boasted of his capacity to produce an exact copy without reference. There is no indication, however, that he made the attempt See Berger, "Les bustes de Louis XIV," 55.

[108] Bacchi et al. *Bernini and the Birth of Baroque Portrait Sculpture*, 268.

[109] As of 1684, Bernini's bust was on view in the king's apartments inVersailles, in the *Salon du Diane.* It had previously been displayed in the Louvre and in the Tuileries. See Berger, *Versailles: The Château of Louis XIV*, 50.

[110] Elias, *The Court Society*, 41–49.

[111] "La figure equestre de Louis XIV à cheval, le tout en bronze avec son pied de bois peint en marbre et dorure." Guérin, "Le Mobilier du Château de Pontchartrain," 174.

collection went up for sale, including this sculpture. Pierre Jean Mariette's catalogue described the model executed "with all possible care and art" under Girardon's own direction on a "magnificent pedestal of gilded wood" that was of the grand manner, ornamented, and similarly designed by Girardon himself.[112] The object had been a gift to Pontchartrain from the *Maison du Roy* in recognition of Pontchartrain's support of the construction of the Place Louis le Grand.[113] Its position in Pontchartrain's gallery echoed its inclusion within Giradon's *galérie* fig. 4.35, 4.36), a series of prints that presented the sculptor's own work and esteemed collection within an idealized gallery setting.[114] It also recalls the display of a similar model of Girardon's equestrian within the Louvre's *grande galérie* during the 1699 exhibition of the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture, the very display that had briefly featured Benoist's wax profile of Louis XIV.[115]

As in the case of Benoist's medallic portraits, Pontchartrain's involvement with Girardon's equestrian was related to his role in the direction of the Académie des inscriptions. This committee had been tasked with composing a text for the monument's base, an assignment of high stakes for the crown's international relations. On May 26, 1699, Bignon relayed a letter from his uncle, Pontchartrain, to the members of the Académie that requested text for the monument's pedestal and appealed for a balance between magnificence and measured restraint: "The king wants only grandeur, but nothing, at the same time, but wisdom and reasonableness, and nothing, in a word, that conveys the idea of the reliefs, slaves, and inscriptions on the statue in the *Place des Victoires*."[116] As in the case of Benoist's

[112] "La Statue équestre de Louis XIV [...] exécutée en bronze avec tout le soin & l'art possible, sur le modèle & sous la direction du sieur Girardon [...] posée sur un magnifique piédestal de bois doré [...] dont le dessein a pareillement été donné par ledit sieur Girardon." Mariette, *Catalogue des tableaux*, 18.
[113] Françoise de La Moureyere, "Louis XIV on Horseback," in Bresc-Bautier, Scherf, and Draper, *Cast in Bronze*, 330.
[114] On this series of prints see especially Desmas, "The 'Gallerie Du S.r Girardon Sculpteur Ordinaire Du Roy.'"
[115] "Vis à vis, & au milieu de la Gallerie, est la Statuë Equestre du Roy, faite de bronze, de trois pieds deux poulces de haut [...]." *Liste Des Tableaux et des ouvrages de sculpture*, 7. This model is currently in the Louvre (Inv. No MR 3229).
[116] "Le roi ne veut rien que de grand, mais rien, en même temps, que de sage et raisonnable, et rien, en un mot, qui tienne de l'idée des bas-reliefs, esclaves et inscriptions de sa statue de la place des Victoires. Je vous donne le bonsoir Monsieur." Boislisle, *La Place Des Victoires et La Place de Vendôme*, 148.

reliefs, Girardon's model commemorates the chancellor's participation in directing the composition of official versions of the reign's history through management of the *Académie des inscriptions*.

Reduced and integrated into the decorative scheme of Pontchartrain's gallery, Girardon's work follows the trajectory of the souvenir, according to Susan Stewart, wherein monumental landmarks are replicated in miniature to fit into personal collections. Stewart's discussion is relevant here since both Girardon's model and Benoist's reliefs functioned as literal 'souvenirs' in the sense that they were mnemonics of Pontchartrain's administrative accomplishments. Stewart writes that within the context of a collection, treasured objects require a supplementary "narrative of the possessor." Such mementos can be prompts to reflection or discussion that authenticate an owner's experiences and thereby confirm identity.[117] Stewart's emphasis on "the narrative of the possessor," as a discourse that serves a role in authenticating identity, complements Savot's early modern perspective on galleries as spaces to exhibit aristocratic lineage and alliance. As tangible testaments of royal favour and administrative efforts, Pontchartrain's bronzes were effectively positioned to fulfill this function. Distinct strategies and scales of royal commemoration — the published historical record of the medallic history or Girardon's colossus — were integrated in scale and material to provide both a unified aesthetic and coherent statement of personal accomplishment and familial status.

In their accumulation within the gallery, these bronze translations of iconic royal images suggest the salience of replicative sculptures as encapsulations of Pontchartrain's position as a powerful administrator. As a manager within the vast bureaucracy of the absolutist state, he acted in the king's name. I propose that these sculptural replicas conveyed something significant about Pontchartrain's representative position in their status as copies. We can clarify this dynamic by considering a brief discussion of Bernini's marble portrait of Louis XIV in an important essay by the anthropologist Alfred Gell. In this broad discussion of art's potential to mediate social relations, Bernini's marble bust

[117] Stewart, *On Longing*, 136–39.

exemplifies an artwork's capacity to present a tangible metaphor of more abstract power dynamics. For Gell, Bernini's technical virtuosity in carving, akin to "magical power over marble" offers a "physical analog" to the king's authority, so that the sculptor's creative agency is subsumed into the impression of the monarch's supreme eminence.[118] By extension, Pontchartrain's bronze version of Bernini's work presents a different "physical analog" in its distinct history of manufacture. The copyist's added intermediary steps of scrutinizing the original, modelling a copy, and casting it presents a less direct trajectory between Bernini's creative agency and his subject's royal power. As the copy of an original it materially embodies Pontchartrain's position of subsidiary authority, at one remove from the ruler.

While the rhetoric of the period and certain canonical assessments of absolutism collapsed the machinations of state to the individual agency of the king, recent perspectives have increasingly drawn attention to the specific positioning of administrative intermediaries. Étienne Jollet's focus on the various interests of Girardon's supervisors and collaborators urges us in this direction.[119] Thierry Sarmant and Mathieu Stoll note that Louis XIV's ministers were keenly aware of their borrowed authority. Officials "modelled" themselves in the king's image and sought to fuse their identity with his.[120] In a study of the political rhetoric of royal representation, Ellen McClure positions theatre as a relevant site for considering Louis XIV's diplomacy since both theatrical performers and emissaries of the crown played representative roles. Diplomats, like actors, did not speak in their own name but as surrogates. The comparison between ambassadors and actors allowed seventeenth-century authors to characterize diplomacy as scripted oration in order to mitigate worry of "troubling improvisation."[121] In foregrounding historical reflection on the administrative practices of substitutive representation, McClure's analysis presents a noteworthy parallel to our consideration of Pontchartrain's sculpture

[118] Gell, "The Technology of Enchantment," 52.
[119] Jollet, "The Monument to Louis XIV."
[120] "Les grands serviteurs de Louis savent qu'ils n'ont pas d'autorité propre et doivent se modeler sur le souverain jusqu'à se confondre avec lui. […] Cette fusion des ministres dans le roi n'est pas une diminution: car servir le roi, c'est servir l'État tout entier." Sarmant and Stoll, *Régner et Gouverner*, 423–24.
[121] McClure, *Sunspots and the Sun King*, 141. See, additionally, McCulre's discussion of actors as mediators 209-221.

gallery. For like bronze replicas, which were derivatives of original royal portraits, the chancellor served as royal substitute.

A number of insightful studies have signalled art history's persistent disciplinary challenge in addressing replications. The museological priority of artistic originality can obscure our grasp of the importance of re-iterative or repetitive form in historical contexts.[122] We have seen, however, that copies can be meaningful for their capacity to suggest links through correspondence. The replicative procedures that were inherent to early modern sculptural practice established sculptural replicas as effective reference points for presenting such relationships in material form. Indeed, Jacqueline Lichtenstein has proposed that common practices of copying, casting, or adapting the models of antique statuary meant that early modern sculptures were often considered in relation to a dense network of formal references. Sculptures were "plural objects" as prototypes of canonical schema.[123] In this particular case, I am arguing that sculptural 'plurality' offered a particular opportunity for Pontchartrain to convey his proximity to the monarch in the literal physical procedure of these portraits' manufacture.

This section has sought to establish the ways in which sculptural works were significant features within curatorial schemes that articulated social position within Pontchartrain's residences. Artworks were focal points within sumptuously fashioned interiors. Within Pontchartrain's château's gallery specifically, they were also tangible mnemonics for the chancellor's familial legacy and personal accomplishments. The substance of wax, this dissertation's primary focus, has figured into our investigation of Pontchartrain's bronzes primarily inconspicuously as a material used in the preliminary stages of reproductive casting in bronze. The utilitarian purpose of wax, as a substance that was conveniently malleable and then expendable, was essential to the techniques of sculptural replication.

---

[122] Hellman articulates this problem cogently in "The Joy of Sets," 130. Maria Loh notes scholarly resistance to the possibility that early modern practices of copying were meaningful in their own right and demonstrates that early modern viewers were attuned to the complex referential possibilities of visual citation. See *Titian Remade*. Another important early modern study that aims to displace the primacy of 'originality' is Wood, *Forgery, Replica, Fiction*.

[123] Lichtenstein, *The Blind Spot*, 25–26.

The very material properties that made wax useful in the intermediary stages of sculptural reproduction – its malleability relative to temperature and its adhesiveness – also determined its long historical utility for seals of authentication.

Authentic Impressions

If it please you that, yellow wax
on a parchment of one arm's length
be applied in my favour
The sacred portrait of my king […]
And I promise you, but not in wax
that having painted you feature for feature
You will have portrait for portrait.
Edmé Boursault, *Placet au Roi,* 1665[124]

At the conclusion of one of his rhyming newsletters of 1665, Edmé Boursault included a direct appeal to Louis XIV.[125] He requested the *privilège* that would authorize his publication and promised royal glorification in return. This commitment was playfully framed as an exchange of portraits: Boursault requested the king's own portrait in the form of a royal seal. This "sacred portrait" in yellow wax (an indication of its limited duration) would be gratefully reciprocated with a heroic literary portrayal of Louis XIV. Boursault plays on the seal's materiality when he assures that this promise is not "of wax." As a journalist, Boursault was embroiled within the competitive politics of securing *privileges* for publication. Indeed, one year later, in 1666, the Chancellor Pierre Séguier would revoke the *privilège* for Boursault's rhyming newsletter.[126]

[124] "Plaise à vous que, de cire jaune,/ Sur un Parchemin long d'une aulne/ On applique, en faveur de moy,/ Le sacré Portraict de mon Roy/ […] Et je promets, non pas en Cire,/ Que, vous ayant peint trait pour trait/ Vous aurez Portrait pour Portrait."
[125] There are two extant variations of this rhyming newsletter. One Dated July 19, 1665 and addressed to the Duchess of Enghien. The other dated August 1, 1665 and dedicated to the queen. The two variants are transcribed alongside each other in Rothschild, *Continuateurs de Loret*, 1: cols. 115–30.Both versions include a concluding section entitled "Placet au Roi" (cols 127-130) with only minor differences between them.
[126] Pierre Séguier revoked the *privilège* for Boursault's newsletter at the behest of the Fransiscan *cordeliers*. In 1691 Boursault announced a revived weekly rhyming gazette. The publication *privilège* was bestowed by Pontchartrain's predecessor as chancellor, Louis de Boucherat, but then withdrawn even before the first issue was printed. Boursault's offence was possibly an ill-timed attack on William of Orange following the treaty with England. Another possibility for this rejection is the protests of rival journalists. See Rothschild, *Continuateurs de Loret*, ix–x.

As Boursault states, the royal seal was itself a portrait. Louis XIV's great seal (*grand sceau)* had been commissioned from the metalsmith Didier Favière in 1643. Chancellery's account books register payments for Favière's silver and his engraving of the matrices authorized by Séguier.[127] The imagery of the seal commemorated the inaugural point of Louis XIV's monarchy by depicting him as an enthroned child (figs. 4.37-4.40).[128] Angels pull back curtains to reveal the young king in ceremonial regalia. Two lions lie at his feet. A scroll labels the first year of rule, 1643. This representation adapted Louis XIII's seal which similarly featured an enthroned portrait, angel attendants, lions, detailed depictions of coronation garments and props, and a scroll labelling the inaugural year of reign (fig. 4.41).[129] In its close adherence to Louis XIII's model, the new royal seal asserted continuity despite the replacement of a successor. The seals' profusion of overlapping symbols and textures presented an accumulation of icons of royal authority. This intricacy also yielded an image of sufficient complexity to impede forgery.[130]

Boursault's promise to trade "portrait for portrait" is all the more relevant for Benoist's royal representations. Benoist's wax portraits of the king were also authorized by the wax seal as royal 'self portrait' stamped on the *privilèges* that patented his exhibition. Boursealt pairs *sire* (the monarch's appellation) with *cire* (wax) in a rhyming couplet similarly to the poems documenting Louis XIV's visit to the *Cercle royal* in 1669, as discussed above. This link between royalty and wax suggests an association between the authority of royal seals stamped in wax and Benoist's sculptural figures. This relation to the royal seal, furthermore, presents an alternative to the accusations of Benoist's counterfeit

[127] The payment was registered on July 21, 1643. It consisted of 700 livres "sur l'ordonnance de monseigneur le Chancellier." See La Forest dArmaillé, "Proces verbal de Me Amelot."
[128] Douët-d'arcq, *Collection de Sceaux*, 1:282.
[129] Three different versions of Louis XIII's *grand sceaux* had been fabricated over the course of his reign. See Douët-d'arcq, *Collection de Sceaux*, 1:281.
[130] As I elaborate below, my thinking on this subject has been informed by Jennifer Roberts' studies of paper currency. Roberts draws on Alfred Gell's discussion of ornamentation and entrapment in her discussion of the quest for sufficiently intricate convolution to prevent forgery. See "The Currency of Ornament," 317.

figures. While the sculptor's critics derided his works as deceitful imitations or mere mechanical imprints, replication in wax could be the mark of inalienable authority.

As utilitarian objects of bureaucratic procedure, seals are outside the traditionally prescribed field of art history.[131] In this case they are, however, particularly informative for an examination of the purposes of royal portraiture and the broader material culture of administrative authority. This section highlights the seals' function of authentication. In investigating the chancellor's duty of supervising the application of seals, the shaping of royal images in wax relief, I aim to develop the claim that Benoist's wax profile had distinct material significance for Pontchartrain's professional identity.

As chancellor, Pontchartrain was the kingdom's chief officer of justice and supervisor to the system of councils and courts.[132] As keeper of the royal seals he hosted and presided over the weekly meetings in which legislation was authenticated through the act of stamping wax seals.[133] Pontchartrain had already played a significant role within legislative audiences over the decade in which he had served as *controlleur général.* Once he assumed the primary authority over this procedure as Chancellor, the instruments and media of legislation became particularly identifiable attributes of his position. This is apparent in commissioned portraits of Pontchartrain during the years of his chancellorship. In Robert Tournières's painting, Pontchartrain rests one hand on the chest of seals and gestures toward a ratified document with the other (fig. 4,42). In a variation of this composition, Pontchartrain similarly demonstrates his guardianship of the royal seals by placing his hand on their gilt silver container (Fig. 4.43). This version features numerous legal documents with their seals decorously hanging, as well as

[131] There are some notable exceptions in medieval studies. On the emergence of seal imagery as a means of articulating individual authority in the thirteenth century see Perkinson, *The Likeness of the King*, 91–98. Michael Camille states that seals were a primary aspect of self-presentation in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, though "stamped images have tended to be downplayed in art history." Camille, "Before the Gaze," 209–10. With reference to medieval theology, Georges Didi-Huberman states that the seal "incarnates the symbolic power." See "Wax Flesh, Vicious Circles," 69.
[132] The chancellor's function in early modern France was documented in Miraulmont, *Traicté de la Chancellerie*. See also Boucher d'Argis, "Chancelier de France." The *Encyclopédie*'s purpose of definitive particularity makes Boucher d'Argis's series of articles on jurisprudence significant sources for understanding the legal system of the ancien régime.
[133] Procedural protocols of legislative authentication under Louis XIV are overviewed in Tessier, "L'audience Du Sceau." Olivier Lefèvre, Count of Ormesson noted weekly sessions in 1672. The relevant passage from his journal is quoted in Brière, "Recherches d'iconographie historique," 53.

the silver matrices of the royal seals themselves. The adherence of these representations to established conventions for a chancellor's presentation can be observed by comparing them to portraits of Pontchartrain's predecessors under Louis XIV: Louis de Boucherât (fig. 4,44), Michel le Tellier (fig. 4.45, 4.46), Étienne Aligre (fig. 4.47) and Pierre Séguier (fig. 4.48). Each stately presentation varies the formula slightly, but they consistently feature wax sealed parchments as indications of their subject's position.[134] As attributes of the chancellor's office, documents authenticated with wax seals present the chancellor's position as chief justice in synecdoche.

Though these portraits depict the chancellors' personal authority over the materials of legislation, the act of authenticating laws required a committee of officials who played prescribed roles in ritualistic protocol. A key figure in the technical procedure of legislation was the *chauffecire* (wax-heater) whose role was to stamp and affix the wax seals. This position was closely associated with the chancellor. Letters of *privilège* for the four *chauffecires* of France stated that each must reside in proximity to the chancellor.[135] Assemblies began with the *chauffecire* presenting the silver gilt chest of seals to the chancellor to be unlocked. The chancellor kept the keys to both the outer chest and the locked containers that contained pairs of seals within it, in a velvet pouch around his neck (a vestige of an era in which the chancellor wore the royal signet ring as a pendant). The *chauffecire*'s valet softened discs of wax in heated water that the *chauffecire* could then impress with the silver seal. The controller general was required to present documents to the *chauffecire* face down so that he could not read the

[134] In his depiction of Aligre, Pierre Mignard positions the key to the seal coffers in his hand to indicate his guardianship of these precious instruments. Portraits of administrators within the chancellors' orbit emphasize the particularities of the chancellor's iconography in contrast. Claude Le Pelettier, Pontchartrain's mentor and predecessor as Controller General was depicted by Pierre Mignard in the act of writing (fig. 4.49). Though his role was integral to legislative protocol his quill encapsulated his administrative status. François Michel le Tellier, Minister of War and son of the chancellor Michel le Tellier, also presented managerial authority in the act of writing (fig 4.50).

[135] The traditional formula for the chauffcire's letters of confirmation were reproduced in Miraulmont, *Traicté de la Chancellerie*, 24. This text specified the chauffecire's obligation of residing in proximity to king and chancellor and serving them in each district ["de quartier en quartier"]. The encyclopédie article on the chauffecire emphasized this point by stating that each chauffecire must serve in a district and be perpetually in the Chancellor's retinue. Furthermore, "lorsqu'il avoit son logement en la maison du Roi, ils avoient leur habitation auprès de lui." See Boucher d'Argis, "Chauffe Cire," 3:256.

laws he was authenticating.[136] A seventeenth-century treatise on legal procedure indicated that the ideal c*hauffecire* would be illiterate, so as to be oblivious of the laws he stamped.[137] Working blindly in this way, *chauffecires* were valued for being trustworthy implements in the hands of their supervisors and not for their knowledge or evaluation of legal content.

The *chauffecires* occupied a particular and problematic position of agency. Their responsibility was manual and repetitive, but also of decisive significance for the administration of justice. Their status was registered in a myth that the four hereditary *chauffecire* positions had originally been established for four sons of Saint Louis's wet-nurse as an honour to this caretaker.[138] Though *chauffecires* were obedient subordinates in relation to the supervising administrators who determined legal content, the *chauffecires*' exclusive access to implements inalienably related to the king's authority instilled their position with status. The particular ambiguous status of this position is a relevant point of comparison to contested considerations of Benoist's artistry. The *chauffecires* occupied official administrative royal positions, unlike Benoist. Like the sculptor, however, they shaped royal representations in heated wax. Thus, despite the claims of Benoist's detractors, his practice carried the potential echo of this official administrative procedure.

A rare depiction of the *audience du sceaux* foregrounds the *chauffecire*'s central role (fig. 4.51). This drawing, attributed to Charles Le Brun, depicts an exceptional period in legislative protocol. For three months in 1672, following Séguier's death, the king himself performed the chancellor's duties.[139] Louis XIV's royal presence justified visual documentation of the restricted assembly. The draftsman concentrated on the *chauffecire*'s actions in the foreground. While Louis XIV is sketched in lightly at the composition's centre, the *chauffecire* is reinforced with overlapping gestural strokes. This density of

[136] Georges Tessier details these interactions. See "L'audience du Sceau,"especially 91.
[137] "L'on dit que le Chauffecire ne doit sçavoir lire, ny escrire, afin de ne cognoistre, ne descouvrir le secret des letters qu'il scelle." Miraulmont, *Traicté de la chancellerie*, 23.
[138] Boucher d'Argis presented this origin as hearsay. The positions were subsequently sold. "Chauffe Cire," 3:256.
[139] Étienne Aligre was finally appointed keeper of the seals on April 23, 1672.

evocative marks suggests the figure's movement as he leans over the table to apply the seal to wax. This emphasis also registers the artist's scrutiny of this figure, the focal point of the drawing. The king could be schematically evoked in this preliminary work since there were myriad pictorial models of him. The *chauffecire*'s activity, by contrast, would have been novel and may have demanded the artist's more focused observation in anticipation of the requirement of a reference for the final composition.[140] Nonetheless, in emphasizing the *chauffecire*'s gestures, this sketch suggests his agency as the individual responsible for literally performing the action that authenticated royal commandment.

A painting of a similar assembly enforces the trajectory running from the king's intention to the *chauffecire*'s decisive act by presenting the administrative assembly lined up along a table's length (fig. 4.52). Basked in light and gesturing elegantly, Louis XIV presides at the table's head in the company of seated councillors of state and standing masters of petition (*maîtres des requêtes*). Behind them are gathered other royal secretaries.[141] The scene takes place under towering allegories of Justice and Prudence. The physical business of legislation is enacted at the far end of the table. The chest that holds the royal seals has been opened alongside documents in parchment, some of which already have the royal seal appended (fig. 4.53). Directly across from the king, an officer of the chancellery is transcribing legislation. To his right the *chauffecire* leans over to impress the matrix into heated wax to form the seal. Like Le Brun's drawing, this painting documents ceremonial administration in Louis XIV's presence and, in doing so, presents the cause-and-effect relation – from one end of the table to the other – of a royal speech act.[142] The king's will is rendered official through material means.

A painting of this very subject was recorded in the *Salle du Sceau* [chamber of seals] of the Château de Pontchartrain in 1714.[143] Though, as we have seen, this property was largely a retreat from

[140] Gaston Brière attributed this drawing to Charles Le Brun's workshop and posited it as a preliminary study for *l'Histoire du Roi*, a tapestry cycle highlighting the king' s great deeds. Sketches and paintings were presented to Louis XIV for consideration. See Brière, "Recherches d'iconographie Historique," 55.
[141] Tessier, "L'audience du Sceau," 59–60.
[142] On the definition of a speech act as an utterance that compels action see Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 5–7.
[143] Healey, "Ennobled Lives," 254.

the immediate demands of administrative duty during the years of Pontchartrain's chancellorship, the *Salle du Sceau* was reserved for official state business. This space was outfitted with imagery that reflected the significant duties of the chancellor's office. Painted allegories of Force, Virtue, Temperance, and Justice were displayed alongside the canvas of *Louis XIV Holding the Seals.*[144] I would argue that part of this subject's particular significance for Pontchartrain was its emphasis on the underlying substitutive logic of the chancellor as royal representative. In deigning to undertake the duties normally ascribed to an underling for three months, Louis XIV briefly eliminated the requirement of administrative representation with his actual bodily presence. In displaying painted documentation of the king performing duties of chancellorship, Pontchartrain drew attention to his own status as proximate royal representative.

Under absolutism, administrative accomplishment was encapsulated in pervasive personification. The chancellor's juridical authority was embodied in his description as "the king's mouth and the interpreter of his wishes"[145] Designating the royal advisor a prosthetic appendage to Louis XIV's own body presents a specific historical sense for the seal as a "speech act." The seal featured a schematic representation of his figure. It was also corporeal as the physical authentication of Louis XIV's articulated intentions as commandments. The seal was attached to text drafted in the first person plural of Louis XIV's voice. The king's signature was most often inscribed by a *sécretaire du main*, an official trained to duplicate the royal signature.[146] Each legal certificate was, therefore, a site of "distributed personhood' as a compilation of references to royal subjectivity.[147]

This potential for identifying the chancellor as a metaphoric extension of the king's physical body is important for our consideration of Pontchartrain's investment in Benoist's wax representation

[144] By 1720, this painting had been relocated in the billiards room. See the selection of transcribed inventory in Guérin, "Le Mobilier Du Château de Pontchartrain," 173. It seems possible that following Pontchartrain's retirement from the chancellorship, the Salle de Sceau's contents were redistributed.
[145] "Il est la bouche du Roi, & l'interprete de ses volontés." Boucher d'Argis, "Chancelier de France," 3:86.. See also "Chancelier" in Harouel et al., *Histoire Des Institutions*, 321.
[146] Jean-Louis Harouel, "Actes Royaux," 40.
[147] Alfred Gell elaborated the concept of "distributed personhood" in *Art and Agency*, 96–99.

of Louis XIV with its scrutiny of the king's physicality. In Benoist's profile, the wrinkled flesh of the king's lips close over a sunken toothless jaw.[148] This rendering of the royal mouth has been a particular provocation to historians. In the nineteenth century, Jules Michelet described the king's thick lips betraying his love of flesh.[149] More recently, Yann Lignereux describes Benoist's profile depicting a "tired and swollen" figure: "his mouth, reduced to a line, is drawn on his profile like a deep and sour fold."[150] The insistent particularity of aging appearance can, however, be understood in reference to the chancellor's corporeal identification with the king in his capacity as administrative intermediary. This association suggests a different perspective on two inter-related senses of royal representation that we have been tracing: Pontchartrain's managerial duties and Benoist's royal portraiture.[151]

Pontchartrain's ownership of Benoist's wax relief prompts us to think about the function of legislative seals in relation to the form of commemorative medals. This waxwork integrates typological reference to Louis XIV's medallic history (one of Pontchartrain's proud commitments) with the physical substance that evokes the chancellor's legal authority. These two varieties of royal image were connected on the level of artisanship. Numismatics and engraved seals required related technical skill-sets in intricate metallic craftsmanship. For example, some decades after our period of inquiry, the *encyclopédie* presented tools for engraving seals and minting coin together (figs 4.54, 4.55). Medallists accepted into the Académie royal de peinture et de sculpture were frequently assigned to engrave seals as their *morceaux de recéption*.[152] In our particular case, legislative seals and commemorative medals both referenced aspects of Pontchartrain's accomplishments and official persona.

Considering this combination of associations to Pontchartrain's position, it is relevant to examine the account of Louis XIV's period as interim chancellor within the medallic history itself (fig.

[148] On Louis XIV's dental surgeries see Jones, "The King's Two Teeth."
[149] Michelet, *Louis XIV et le duc de Bourgogne*, 150.
[150] "[...] Antoine Benoist, montre un roi fatigué et bouffi, sa bouche reduite à un trait, dessinant sur son profil comme un pli profond et amer." Lignereux, *Les rois imaginaires*, 270.
[151] The interrelated senses of these two varieties of representation was conveyed in the expression of a 'painted king' which referred to a monarch who abdicated responsibilities to his officials..Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, s.v. "peinture" 3:84.
[152] Williams, "Portrayal and Commemoration."

4.56). The medal commemorating this period translated the events of 1672 into an allegory that efficiently asserted the perfect justice of royal will. It featured a crowned figure of equality holding a scale in one hand and the coffer of royal seals in the other. There were notable distinctions between the text in each edition. In 1702, Louis XIV's participation in the legislative process was framed as an act of generous protection of his subjects. The revised edition of 1723 presented an expanded historical account. It described the king's vigilant effort to understand the chancellor's important administrative function through his own experience. It also detailed the terms of Louis XIV's occupation of the position. The text specifies that Louis XIV's legislative assemblies were weekly, that he assembled a council of ministerial advisors to support him, and that Louis XIV wrote in his own hand. Distinctions between the 1702 and 1723 entries thus remind us of the effects of revision between the two editions. Both versions emphasize the stature of the chancellor's position. As official historical accounts, they explicitly state that which was merely implied in Pontchartrain's painting of Louis XIV holding the seals. Namely that this reversed substitution, in which Louis XIV performed duties normally fulfilled by his representative, confirmed the chancellor's importance. The varying accounts in each edition of the medallic history, therefore, provide reference points for 'possessor's narratives' that Pontchartrain's painting may have evoked. Benoist's profile illustration alongside this text in the 1723 publication also reminds us of the points of connection between the artist, the medallic history, and Pontchartrain's chancellorship (fig. 4.57).

The exceptional circumstances in 1672, as Louis XIV delayed the selection of a replacement for Séguier, also suggest instabilities in relation to the chancellor's position, as Louis XIV and his advisors negotiated the path of absolutist sovereignty.[153] Séguier had originally been appointed keeper of the seals in 1633 by Louis XIII and then chancellor in 1635. He had weathered a series of tumultuous political circumstances over the course of a long career. In particular, the seals were withdrawn from

[153] Thierry Sarmant and Mathieu Stoll note the reduced import of the chancellor's position in the second half of the seventeenth century. See *Régner et gouverner*, 34.

Séguier during the crisis of the *fronde* in the regency of Louis XIV's minority. While the chancellorship was a lifelong appointment, power could be curtailed by withdrawing the seals.[154] Responsibility for the seals was first entrusted to Charles de l'Abespine, marquis of Chateauneuf and then to Mathieu Molé, the first president of parliament.[155] They were returned to Séguier only upon Molé's death in 1656. As the first of Louis XIV's chancellors and a prominent protector of arts and letters, Séguier is a particularly noteworthy reference point for our consideration of Pontchartrain's efforts of self presentation and artistic patronage.

We have seen that unexpected circumstances in 1672 inspired exceptional representations that featured the seals. Likewise, the *Fronde*'s interruption to Séguier's legislative powers, as his possession of the seals was lost and then regained, provoked a particularly noteworthy presentation of the royal seal itself. A portrait of Séguier shortly after he reclaimed the seals is particularly informative for the ways that these instruments and their replicative materiality could be of significance within a chancellor's presentation (fig 4.58). This elaborate thesis print was designed by Charles Le Brun and engraved by Robert Nanteuil.[156] It features the chancellor surrounded by attributes of his patronage of the arts and sciences as well as the official paraphernalia of his office. Within the print, Séguier turns toward a substantial volume lying beneath a caduceus. It seems possible that this positioning indicates that the thesis being defended was within a faculty of medicine. Indeed in a letter of 1657 Guy Patin, a professor in the medical faculty of the Collège de France referenced the upcoming defence of a thesis on the subject of tea that would be dedicated to the chancellor.[157] Patin specified that the chancellor's portrait had been commissioned from Nanteuil, "one of the most excellent printers who ever was."[158]

---

[154] Barbiche, "De la commission à l'office de la couronne," 359.
[155] Barbiche, 370.
[156]This print is included in Audrey Adamczak's catalogue of Nanteuil's work. See *Robert Nanteuil*, 172. Portraits of the high-ranking figure of a thesis's dedication were often displayed above the print of a thesis's postulates. See Meyer, "Le Portrait gravé sous le règne de Louis XIV," 172.
[157] Patin, *Lettres.*, 359. The defendant was the son of a prominent Parisian surgeon named Pierre Cressé. This event would be of such significance that Séguier himself was expected to attend the defence.
[158] "[...] un des plus excellents calcographes qui aient jamais été." Patin, 359.

Damien Bril has proposed that this engraving's stately formality and its detailed accumulation of the ritual object's associated with Séguier's office underlined the chancellor's newly renewed status as keeper of the seals.[159]

Of particular note is the prominent display of both the silver seal and its wax impression amidst the ceremonial instruments of the chancellor's office scattered along the upper shelf. A wax seal hangs off a legal certificate in the upper right of the engraving. Almost symmetrically juxtaposed with it, on the composition's opposite side is the silver seal, propped up so that its imprinting surface is visible. The counter-seal hangs off the ledge right next to it. The contrast of this second silver stamp, angled downward so that its three f*leurs de lis* are only faintly discernible, emphasizes the prominence of the royal seal itself. In their frontal positioning, the silver matrix and the wax imprint are punctuations of emphasis within this complex composition. Objects are strewn about on every surface. The scales of justice are casually collapsed on a shelf. The seal and its imprint are upright and rendered with sufficient clarity to discern that as a negative matrix, the silver seal presents a reversed image of its wax imprint (compare figs. 4.59, 4.60).Such emphatic contrast of the negative silver matrix and positive wax imprint gains particular relevance within a printed image. The engraving is itself an inked imprint of a negative copper matrix. The final print also reverses the orientation of its metal plate. The insistent frontal positioning of both seal and imprint emphasize these shapes as focal points for reflection on the process of an image's engraved reproduction.

This emphasis on the procedures of imprint is particularly relevant for considering the chancellor's identity within an elaborate image of stately self-fashioning. It is noteworthy that Le Brun's composition echoes the presentation of the young king within the seal itself. Both present their portrait subjects alongside symbols of stature and the ceremonial regalia of position. Most prominently, however, Séguier is standing under the same variety of baldachin that was featured within the seal. In

[159] Bril, "Le Brun et le portrait équestre."

Nanteuil's print, ermine fur drapes down from the halo-like frame above the chancellor's head. In depicting his portrait subject beneath this variety of ceremonial canopy, Le Brun draws an explicit link between Séguier's own person and the royal seals for which he was responsible. We saw, in the previous section, that replicative sculpture could be an effective material encapsulation of the substitutive position of Pontchartrain's royal representation. In this case, Le Brun and Nanteuil's image is a salient example of a replicative artwork that encodes a chancellor's position as royal representative by foregrounding the mediation of the royal image through copy. The prominent display of the silver seal draws attention to an official legislative instrument that had been originally commissioned under Séguier's authority and recently restored to him.[160] In its display of the silver matrix and wax imprint together, the engraving prompts us to scrutinize the seal's technical means of reproduction.

As material manifestations of legal authenticity, the seals were replicative matrices that required strict controls. Security measures imposed on the process of fabrication were documented in a report by Denis Amelot, a state councillor who headed the committee responsible for commissioning and approving Louis XIV's seals in 1643.[161] Favière, the silversmith, was required to craft the seals within Amelot's residence rather than his own workshop. The document emphasized this point by repeating it.[162] Once Favrière's silver seals were completed, the metalsmith was tasked with destroying Louis XIII's seals in the presence of the commissioning committee. This act staged a definitive moment of transition by eliminating the possibility of overlap between functional seals. In this same assembly, Favière was also required to destroy the primary materials and moulds that he had used to fabricate the new silver seals. The report specifies that Favière broke "wax effigies" as well as plaster and copper

[160] A 1643 report by Denis Amelot that documents the production of the new seals and their gilt silver chest specifies that the commission was initiated by Séguier. La Forest dArmaillé, "Proces verbal de Me Amelot."
[161] See the transcription of this document as well as Solène de la Forest d'Armaillé's informative notes in "Proces verbal de Me Amelot."
[162] Amelot initially states that Didier Favière was summoned to Amelot's own residence: "la dite ordonnance est en suivant de se rendre en nostre hostel pour travailler continuellement […]." The text subsequently reiterates: "Ledit scel & contre-scel nouvellement faict et fabriqué par ledit Favière en nostre hostel[…]." La Forest dArmaillé, "Proces verbal de Me Amelot."

moulds into numerous pieces. These wax effigies were likely the trials of seals imprinted for approval. The fragments of debris were entrusted to Bernard Labbé, the representative *chauffecire* on the committee. This transfer underlines the *chauffecire*'s accountability for the material substance of law.[163]

The wax seal's impression was the punctuated conclusion of two varieties of sequence. We have seen that within absolutist legal rhetoric the stamped seal was the act that solidified royal intention as commandment. Theoretically, this trajectory extended from the king's will through the mediating command chain of chancellor and ministers, to culminate with the *chauffecire*'s action of impressing the seal. In counterpoint to this schema of transfer from the ruler through a hierarchy of administrative representatives, was a sequence of material transfers that began with Favière's craftsmanship. The process of designing, modelling, and casting consisted of a series of interchanges between formative solid moulds and receptive liquids that coated the surfaces of moulds and congealed in order to inverse their shape. We have seen that plaster, copper, and wax were primary materials as Favière shaped and tested Louis XIV's silver seals. As stamps, the silver seal's purpose was reproductive. Wax imprints indexed the authority of one singular matrix. This legal function positioned stamped seals within a dynamic of anxious replicability. Controls and restrictions attempted to impose exclusivity on a reproductive process that had the potential to be extended and coopted. The required destruction of primary materials and proofs and the chancellor's exclusive access to the seals' locked coffer were protective measures. The cross reference of counter-seals impressed on each seal's reverse also served to confirm authenticity (fig. 4.38). Layers of restrictive protocols were required to protect the chancellor's exclusive authority over these reproductive matrices.

[163] The donation of broken remains of Louis XIII's seal to the *chauffecire* was significant enough to be documented in the article defining the keeper of the seals for Diderot and D'alembert's *encyclopédie: "*Lorsque Louis XIV fut parvenu à la couronne, les sceaux furent refaits à l'effigie de S. M. par l'ordre du chancelier Seguier, lequel, après qu'ils furent achevés, fit rompre les vieux en plusieurs pieces, & les donna aux chauffes-cire, comme leur appartenant*." Boucher d*'Argis, "Garde des Sceaux de France," 7:503.

The fraught replicative dynamics of the seals can be illuminated by Jennifer Roberts' conception of "nonreproductive reproduction."[164] In investigations of currency's design, Roberts has addressed the specific problem of authentic multiples. As emblems of official state sanction, insignia such as seals and currency provoke technical challenges and conceptual paradoxes: they demand the "simultaneous origination and termination of reproductive chains."[165] Such attempts at restricting reproducibility provoke reflexive consideration of the technical specifics of reproduction. Roberts writes that "currency printing is inherently a kind of meta-printing." I would extend this insight to the operations of legal seals which similarly "required a high degree of self-consciousness about complex problems in referentiality, symbolization, abstraction, materiality, and fluidity."[166] As a material echo of legal seals, Louis XIV's wax profile in Pontchartrain's collection may have approached related questions.

In considering this parallel, we must acknowledge significant technical distinctions between Benoist's cast profile and the imprinted seals. There is a bluntness to the seal's stamp. The instrument's function required the convenient simplicity of impression for seconds at a time in order to strike a series of identical replicas. In its immediacy of imprint it is notably distinct from the careful craftsmanship required to form the wax profile and prepare it for presentation. Moreover, in its life-scaled replication of anatomical features and searing detail, Benoist's profile is far from the small iconic images of the Louis XIV that adorned the seals. Their intricacy was not in the detailed texture of flesh but in layered royal symbols, including the king's figure, within the seal's limited surface. Benoist's wax Louis XIV is exceptional for its particular marks of time's passage: scars and wrinkles. The seals featured an eternally youthful monarch as they were impressed over the course of the reign. Their purpose demanded such consistency.

---

[164] Roberts, "The Veins of Pennsylvania," 53.
[165] Roberts, *Transporting Visions*, 122.
[166] Roberts, "The Veins of Pennsylvania," 54.

The stamped seals were, nevertheless, portraits of Louis XIV in wax relief. As such, despite significant distinctions in form and function, the seals are relevant for grasping potential associations for Benoist's profile within Pontchartrain's collection. Michael Baxandall has proposed that early modern viewers especially appreciated art that offered playful variation on the requirements of daily obligations.[167] This insightful identification of indirect lines between realms of aesthetics and business can inform our consideration of the material echo between Benoist's profile and the seals. The issues of authenticity and indexicality that were inherent to the seals' utilitarian purpose were pertinent to Benoist's portrait, but differently. In a sense, the seals' official assertion of replicative authority resounded as suggestive implication or probing interrogation in relation to the wax profile.

The resonance between Benoist's profile and the chancellor's seals, therefore, illuminates a distinct associative framework for this object. We have seen that the initial reception of Benoist's portraiture was entangled within thorny debates on the aesthetics of verisimilitude. Reference to his waxworks revolved around questions of truthful mimesis and deceitful illusion. Embedded within this discourse were issues of artisanal skill and status. In counterpoint to art theory's defensive preoccupation with the shame of rote manual labour, legal practice relied on procedures of replication and copy for coordination and authentication. After being ratified with wax seals in the presence of chancellor and officials, documents were collected by the controller general in a coffer. These legal certificates were then transcribed and registered at a later session. These procedures of transcription and registration preserved records of certificates that were distributed. For example, Benoist's *privilèges* are not extant, but transcriptions of these records were preserved.[168] The material culture of administrative bureaucracy relied on a different set of relations between reproduction and authenticity than the one

[167] Baxandall focused on cognitive habits acquired through training and professional routine in fifteenth-century Italy. When viewing paintings "we particularly enjoy the playful exercise of skills which we use in normal life very earnestly." See *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*, 34.

[168] The originals were recorded in the sculptor's personal archive in 1717.

consistently rehearsed in early modern art theory.[169] In the case of Benoist's profile within the chancellor's collection, the sphere of legal practice offers a particularly relevant contextual frame.

The question of Benoist's profile as lifecast takes on a different valence in light of its association with the royal seals. Regardless of whether Maral is correct in his proposal that the work results from "a partial imprint" of the king's face, his assertion attests to the representation's persuasive suggestion of indexicality.[170] For this present discussion, the true technical process is less important than the visual effect that evokes this possibility. The *implication* of direct contact is sufficient to establish a compelling resonance between Benoist's work and the technique of stamping seals. This tactile sense can be related to the mystical potency of the royal body. For this specific work within Pontchartrain's possession, however, the suggestion of indexical imprint might have also evoked the chancellor's own position as a legal arbitrator. The material consonance of Benoist's profile with the substance of legislative sealing specifies our sense of the "possessor's narrative" that this object enabled.

The statesman faced a particular dilemma in self-presentation, for his status derived from royal proximity within a hierarchy of administrative subordinates. His claim was to a secondary position. While an active bureaucratic force managed governmental affairs, rhetoric and images focused insistently on Louis XIV's singular body. Occasionally administrators were depicted as a conglomerate mass to offset the king's prominence through contrast.[171] In the previous section we saw that the display of sculptural copies of iconic royal images was one way in which Pontchartrain could lay claim to his position as an important intermediary. The consideration of Benoist' wax profile in relation to the procedure of stamping seals specifies the terms of this dynamic. As chancellor, Pontchartrain's legal

[169] Roberts's analysis of paper currency is also relevant to this point. In her estimation, reproducible images that require protections reveal a "conundrum that is not well theorized." She demonstrates that functional, bureaucratic priorities are significantly distinct from Benjamin's canonical analysis of reproduction, which posited replication's threat to art's authenticity. See Roberts, "The Currency of Ornament," 374.
[170] As discussed in the previous chapter. See Maral, "Le Portrait en cire par Benoist." See also Milovanovic and Maral, *Louis XIV: L'Homme et le roi*, 226.
[171] Sarmant and Stoll, *Régner et gouverner*, 423.

authority was encapsulated in his responsibility for the procedure of imprinting seals. His own power as a statesman was, therefore, invested in procedures of material replication in wax. Benoist's wax profile offered a potentially salient evocation of this procedure of authentication.

Conclusion: Inheritance

As Benoist's sole extant wax fabrication, his profile of Louis XIV cannot help but be a sample of the techniques and aesthetic of the figures that once made up the *Cercle royal*. In the colouring and intricately textured detail of the wax surface and in the incorporation of glass eyeballs and hair, the representation is a shard of evidence for the materiality and effect of the figures that earned Benoist both reputation and scorn. However, as a medallic profile relief, within the Pontchartrain collection, the waxwork also had distinct implications. I have argued that this work's format and material made it an effective and precise encapsulation of Pontchartrain's royal service. As a medallion profile it referenced his long support of a monumental medallic history. Pontchartrain appended his own legacy to his ruler's in foregrounding his participation in this project. The wax relief's substance effectively referenced his eminent privilege of keeping the royal seals as Chancellor of France.

Pontchartrain has previously only appeared as a footnote in the provenance record of Benoist's wax profile. In this chapter, I have presented evidence that justifies positioning him centrally in an assessment of this work and in the last decades of the sculptor's career at the turn of the eighteenth century. It is notable that almost all of Benoist's extant work can be related to Pontchartrain's patronage.[172] Suzanne Bignon's bust presents the first indication of contact between the sculptor and

[172] To my knowledge, there are only four extant works by Benoist that are unrelated to Pontchartrain's commissions. Two are the painted portraits Benoist submitted to the Académie royal de peinture et de sculpture as *morceaux de réception.* There are additionally two engravings by Gérard Édelinck that include the inscription "Benoist pinx." One represents the Marquise de Montespan (British Museum, 1870,0514.1415). The other, is of the jurist and translator, Jacques de Tourreil (Musée de Château de Versailles, LP45.116.2).

Pontchartrain. This work is exceptional since the remainder of Benoist's work for the chancellor was related to the medallic history. Pontchartrain and Benoist's efforts to consolidate social position, therefore, extended substantially from this ambitious project of royal commemoration. I have aimed to demonstrate that both Benoist and Pontchartrain assumed deferential positions in order to subtly make claims for their own reputations within the overarching frame of Louis XIV's monumental glorification. It is not mere coincidence that this body of work was preserved while the remainder of Benoist's sculpture was lost. These representations were produced with an eye toward history.

Texts on waxwork have frequently noted its degree of delicacy that suspends it on the edge of ephemeral dissolution. In its precarious solidity, wax mimics the glistening softness of human flesh. Wax's vulnerability to damage and liquidation encapsulates mortal frailty. In Georges Didi-Huberman's assessment, this correspondence instills wax representations with existential pathos. He draws on Jean-Paul Sartre's notion of viscosity to present wax as a haunted substance.[173] Hanneke Grootenboer builds on this discussion in describing wax's fragility, malleability, and "tendency to decay."[174] Despite its trajectory toward disappearance, wax form resurges in the echoes of "survival." Didi-Huberman observes that Aby Warburg and Julius von Schlosser adapted Edward Burnett Tylor's anthropological concept of "survival" in their foundational studies of waxworks.[175] This theoretical lens focused on the shifting status of form between contexts. It drew attention to processes of appropriation and archaism as cultural forms were translated and adapted. In the case of Benoist's profile, however, I am interested in a more literal sense of wax's survival. This chapter's evidence demonstrates the degree to which wax's cycles of transience are variable according to the shifting circumstances of purpose and setting. Dissipation was by no means inevitable.

[173] Didi-Huberman, "Viscosities and Survivals," 154–55.
[174] Grootenboer, "On the Substance of Wax," 6.
[175] Though Tylor's thinking was rooted in assumptions about civilized evolution and cultural degeneration, in Didi-Huberman's assessment, the complex sense of temporality and cultural transfer inherent in Tylorian 'survival' enabled something else for Schlosser and Warburg. It offered an alternative to assumptions of artistic influence and stylistic evolution that were fundamental to art historical thinking. See "The Surviving Image."

The endurance of Benoist's profile relief in the hands of Pontchartrain's descendants attests to the possibility of preserving a wax object over centuries given concerted efforts, fortuitous circumstances, and a desire to do so, in contrast to neglect, accident, or wilful disposal that eliminated all of the sculptor's other work in wax. For Édouard Pommier, the frailty of Benoist's wax profile embodies human mortality in contrast to Charles Le Brun's ideal of eternal royal supremacy, as exemplified in the iconic equestrian painting of Louis XIV that had been celebrated by Félibien.[176] But Benoist's profile relief remains extant and Le Brun's painting is gone. To be sure, the wax relief's conservation is due, in part, to arbitrary luck. The wax profile was important enough to be preserved by its owners in a setting of sufficient unimportance to be protected from revolutionary iconoclasm.[177] Nevertheless, in over-emphasizing the wax relief's impermanence and organic vulnerability we risk eliding its capacity to encapsulate an enduring legacy. Indeed, waxwork's delicacy instills its conservation with heightened salience.

The notion of an object's "cultural biography," formulated by anthropologist Igor Kopytoff, provides a relevant framework for considering the wax relief's enduring relevance within the Pontchartrains' collection. This perspective foregrounds the way that shifting perceptions of an object over time can serve as a vector of cultural analysis. Kopytoff insightfully foregrounds the instability of meaning over time.[178] As circumstances shifted and the period of Pontchartrain's chancellorship receded into the past, Benoist's wax relief maintained sufficient interest to merit preservation. What were the associations for Benoist's wax profile that justified its exceptional preservation in the hands of Pontchartrain's descendants?

---

[176] Benoist, en utilisant le matériau fragile de la cire pour une image qui traduit avec une vérisme impitoyable les symptômes de la décrépitude physique, caricature invonotairement le portait que Félibien avait donné, quarante ans avant, du portrait du roi de Le Brun." Pommier, *Théories du portrait*, 269.
[177] As noted in chapter 2, wax effigies of early modern monarchs did not fare well under the revolutionary regime.
[178] Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things."

The precarity of status for the highest tier of *ancien régime* statesmen is apparent in the case of the Phélypeaux de Pontchartrains. Though generations of Pontchartrain men occupied high-ranking ministerial positions over the course of two centuries, the family confronted competition and setbacks that demonstrate the uncertainty of position in the upper echelons of administration. Though the chancellorship was a lifetime appointment, Pontchartrain resigned in 1714 in the midst of controversy over *Unigenitus*, the 1713 papal bull that targeted the Jansenists.[179] In the administrative upset of the regency, following Louis XIV's death in 1715, Jérôme de Phélypeaux, the chancellor's son, lost his position of naval secretary along with the wider "purge of Louis XIV's royal ministers."[180] Jérôme was, however, able to transfer the *survivance* of his secretariat to his teenage son Jean-Frédéric Phélypeaux, Count of Maurepas, who worked under guardianship until his majority. The Pontchartrain family thus maintained a foothold in government.[181] Maurepas emerged as a powerful administrator under Louis XV. He was, however, disgraced for composing scandalous verse and then, eventually, reinstated as a minister under Louis XVI. Pontchartrain's chancellorship was, therefore, a highpoint within the subsequent unstable circumstances of his son and grandson. An object that attested to their patriarch's intimacy with Louis XIV may have maintained particular value for the wax profile's subsequent owners.

In 1747, upon Jérôme de Phélypeaux's death, a significant portion of the family art collection was prepared for sale. The catalogue included antiquities and early modern emulations of classical sculpture as well as paintings of religious and mythological themes.[182] It also lists certain images of Louis XIV such as the model of Girardon's equestrian and the copy of Rigaud's portrait, both of which

[179] Saint Simon attributed his friend's unconventional resignation to devastation at the passing of Marie de Mauepou, the chancellor's wife, three months prior. By contrast, Montesquieu's commentary on Pontchartrain's retirement emphasized increased mistrust and conflict. Charles Frostin's historical assessment of these circumstances details Pontchartrain's position within conflictual church politics culminating with *Ugenitas.* See Frostin, "De la démission du père à la chute du fils, 1712-1715," in *Les Pontchartrain, ministres de Louis XIV*.
[180] Chapman, *Private Ambition and Political Alliances*, 179.
[181] Chapman, 179–80.
[182] Mariette, *Catalogue des Tableaux*.

had once been displayed at the Pontchartrain estate. The decision to withhold Benoist's wax profile may have been due to its perceived low market value. At that moment, it may also have seemed like an object of interest to Maurepas, Jérome's heir and the grandson of Louis XIV's chancellor. Regardless, the preservation of this work within Maurepas's collection stands out against the broad "history of disappearance" that characterizes historical waxworks and Benoist's wax oeuvre in particular.[183] I would like to suggest that as Maurepas's inheritance, Benoist's medallic portraits may have effectively evoked a grandfather's esteemed legacy. These sculptures may have fulfilled their promise of embodying Pontchartrain's posterity.

For this consideration, it is relevant to note that like his father and grandfather before him, Maurepas served as director of the *Académie des inscriptions* (known as the *Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres* as of 1716). In this capacity, like his forefathers, he oversaw designs for the king's medals. In a biography of the sculptor Edmé Bouchardon, the Comte de Caylus noted Maurepas's commission of a particularly noteworthy portrait of Louis XV for the *académie*:

The king certainly wanted to provide a number of sessions for Bouchardon to make his portrait; & this study, after having served for medals and for money was employed to execute a medallion that M. de Maurepas had cast in bronze. This medal has, as its pendant, the portrait of M. le Dauphin that Bouchardon also made. These two works are the ornament of a cabinet at Pontchartrain, and merit being seen. [184]

These two bronze medallions remain extant (fig. 4.61, 4.62). In acquiring these works, Maurepas effectively extended the series of Benoist's bronze reliefs that he had inherited with the Château de Pontchartrain. Caylus emphasizes Louis XV's live posing sessions as an example of Bouchardon's royal recognition (fig 4.63).[185] This detail underlines the medallic claim to documentary accuracy and

[183] Roberta Panzanelli istates that "the history of wax is a history of disappearance." "The Body in Wax," 1.
[184]"Le Roi voulut bien donner quelques séances à Bouchardon pour faire son portrait; & cette étude, après avoir servi pour les médailles & la monnoie, a été employée pour exécuter un médaillon que M. de Maurepas fit jetter en bronze. Ce médaillon a pour pendans, le portrait de M. le Dauphin, que Bouchardon fit encore. Ces deux ouvrages sont l'ornement d'un cabinet à Pontchartrain, & méritent d'être vus."Caylus, *Vie d'Édmé Bouchardon*, 42–43. The circumstances of this commission are addressed by Édouard Kopp in Desmas et al., *Bouchardon*, 166–67.
[185] Kopp, "Bouchardon's Drawings for Medals and Jetons," 199.

monarchical contact that enhance the medal's evidentiary impact. It presents a variation of the *ad vivum* inscription of Benoist's bronze profile of Louis XIV.

As additions to the series of Benoist's medallic reliefs, Bouchardon's royal portraits attested to Maurepas's own accomplishments in line with familial expectations. In an overview of the château de Pontchartrain's architecture and grounds in a late-eighteenth-century guidebook to Paris's surrounding regions, Antoine Nicolas Joseph Dézallier d'Argenville highlighted the same two bronze reliefs by Bouchardon: "In a cabinet are conserved two works of Bouchardon that merit being viewed. One is a medallion in bronze of Louis XV, after the model of this sculptor, the other is a portrait of the late M. le Dauphin."[186] Bouchardon's bronze profiles remained, therefore, identifiable attributes of the Pontchartrain château. Édouard Kopp writes that Bouchardon was the first of a series of sculptors to serve as official draftsmen to the académie des inscriptions. In this capacity he "transform[ed] the function of the *Dessinateur.*"[187] The institution's earlier draftsmen included the engraver Sébastien Leclerc and the *premier peintre* Antoine Coypel. Though not designated an official academic *dessinateur,* I propose that Benoist was, nevertheless, an important early figure within this lineage as a sculptor who produced numismatic illustrations for the Académie. If initially Benoist's series of medallic reliefs for Pontchartrain were encapsulations of the chancellor's accomplishment, this value may have been heightened over the course of the eighteenth century as testaments of a paternal legacy.

In its various periods of ownership, the wax relief anchored a series of different possessor's narratives. The waxwork's connection to Pontchartrain, its first owner, may have initially raised its value for the chancellor's descendants. In its subsequent contexts, however, this association faded from view. The work took on a more general significance as an exceptional representation and a historical relic of an era. Paulinne Knipp, a noted ornithological illustrator, acquired the relief from Maurepas. In

[186] "Dans un cabinet sont conservés deux ouvrages de Bouchardon, qui méritent d'être vus; l'un est le médaillon en bronze de Louis XV, d'après le modèle de ce sculpteur, l'autre est le portrait de feu M. le Dauphin." Dézallier d'Argenville, *Voyage pittoresque des Eenvirons de Paris*, 185.
[187] Kopp, "Bouchardon's Drawings for Medals and Jetons," 199.

1856 she sold it to the fairly recently-established museum of Versailles. It was thus enshrined as an object of significance in a state collection and protected by museological protocol. Pontchartrain's omission from previous historical accounts of the wax relief's significance alerts us to the unexpected instabilities of commemorative strategy. This trajectory underscores the threat of oblivion that subtly haunted the medallic form, even in its early modern context.[188] In this new museological placement Pontchartrain's wax relief acquired a different range of associations. The object's compelling verisimilitude was no longer evidence for an administrator's dedicated service to his ruler nor the chancellor's legislative authority. Its corporeal evocation and suggestive indexicality were alluring for other reasons. Namely, stripped of its initial context, this portrait seemed to promise access to the human Louis XIV normally concealed by royal mythology. It fed nineteenth-century viewers' scepticism of ceremonial grandeur and their physiognomic faith.

[188] Maria Loh has proposed that anxieties of disparagement or neglect haunted portraiture for the artistic giants of early modern Italy. Her emphasis on the perceived pressures of history for artists has much relevance to the questions of commemorative strategy discussed here. See *Still Lives*.

Conclusion
History's Uncanny

In the end, Félibien won. The "deathly and insensible resemblance" he ascribed to Benoist's wax heads was an early articulation of a view that would come to dominate modern understandings of the medium's limited artistic potential. For their ambiguous, compromised vitality, waxwork exhibitions became paradigmatic examples of uncanny experience. In seminal texts by Ernst Jentsch and Sigmund Freud, wax figures joined the uncanny's eccentric canon alongside automata, dolls, doppelgangers, corpses, demons, and the observation of epileptic seizures and fits of madness.[1] The trajectory from Félibien's statement of "deathly and insensible resemblance" to uncanny aesthetics has overdetermined the interpretation of Benoist's extant profile in significant ways. Delineating this discursive ground, therefore, offsets this dissertation's contribution as a thorough investigation of the initial reception of Benoist's wax profile.

This conclusion begins with the disassembly of Benoist's *Cercle royal* and charts the exhibition's passage into cultural memory in the eighteenth century. I underline, in particular, the increased relevance of Félibien's initial suggestion of wax's "deathly resemblance" with reference to the growing field of anatomical modelling. Charting Benoist's integration into the uncanny's fold is informative to his sculptures' historiographic frame. It also offers relevant contrast for focusing this dissertation's primary claims. In its modern reception Benoist's wax profile has been almost consistently cast in the role of documentary foil to absolutism's inflated ideals. By contrast, I have argued that Benoist's wax representation engages dynamics of commemorative ambition in its wax materiality and its medallic form. I have proposed that the wax profile's ambiguous vitality carried honorific potential in its original context. Its documentary implications undergird this possibility rather than undermining it. The distress of uncanny that colours the wax profile's modern perception is, in my

[1]Jentsch's initial musings on the uncanny sense of disturbed familiarity provided the basis for Freud's elaboration of the concept. In his psychoanalytic schema, Freud posited that uncanny distress was triggered by the eruption of terrifying repressions. See Jentsch, "On the Psychology of the Uncanny (1906)"; Freud, "The Uncanny [1919]."

view, an echo of another variety of morbid resonance: a desire for historical endurance despite mortal passage. In short, this waxwork was an image of aspiration. Its very preservation carries through its potential as a self-conscious embodiment of historical evidence.

Final Scenes

Some months after Antoine Benoist's death in April 1717, his eldest son, Gabriel, secured a *privilège* in his own name that transferred the permissions that had protected his father's display.[2] The document reproduced the legal terms of 1688 and it repeated the list of representations that included the late-queen's courtiers, ambassadors, and other foreign figures. But this patent also cast its net widely. It prepared for potential additions to the *Cercle royal* by listing the continents of Asia, Africa, and America alongside Europe. While no previous iteration had included figures from the Americas, as of 1717, the known world's populace was identified for inclusion in a projected expansive display of waxworks. Counterfeiters risked the standard fines of 6000 *livres*, to be divided in thirds between the usual parties: state, charity, and would-be plaintiff (a fine to the crown, a donation to the Hôtel Dieu hospital, and compensation for Gabriel himself).

This particular patent describes Gabriel Benoist's long experience working alongside his father. It emphasizes his singular knowledge of the art, and, therefore, his singular position as the only one who could revive it ["Le seul qui le puisse remettre en vigeur"]. This presentation of wax portraiture as an art-form in need of a saviour offers credence to Dubois de Saint Gelais's claim that the appeal of Benoist's show waned over time.[3] In Benoist's obituary notice Saint-Gelais had stated that even after gaining a fortune from his exhibition, the sculptor opened up the *Cercle royal* for free in his last years,

[2] This *privilège* was issue on December 21, 1717. It is transcribed in Guiffrey, "Gabriel Benoist: Privilège," 266–68.
[3] This evidence contradicts the assumption of Jules Guiffrey, the archivist who published a transcription of this document in 1890. By way of introduction he wrote: "le nouveau privilège permet de supposer que l'exhibition de ces figures n'avait cessé d'être fructueuse depuis son debut." Guiffrey, 164.

"but no one came."[4] Further evidence for decreased interest in the *Cercle royal* is the fact that it was edited out of Brice's guidebook in 1717, the year of Benoist's death. After its various characterizations in four editions between 1687 and 1713, it was gone.[5] The uneven evidence for the *Cercle royal'*s prospects under Louis XV's rulership suggests Gabriel Benoist's thwarted ambition to extend the exhibition's viability.

By 1729, twelve years after Antoine Benoist's death, his *Cercle royal* was a distant memory. As prelude to a notice of a travelling wax exhibition on view, the *Mercure de France* recalled a display of life-sized figures in coloured wax within the home of a painter who had been named Benoît "about thirty years ago."[6] The text described representations of Louis XIV, princes and princesses of the royal house and grand officers of state portrayed with such resemblance that "it was impossible not to be deceived."[7] Though inaccurate, the estimate that three decades had passed since the *Cercle royal*'s existence confirms the display's disappearance in the years immediately following Benoist's death.

The *Mercure de France* was itself a re-calibrated version of the *Mercure galant*, which had celebrated Benoist's works in the 1680s. As of 1724, the first year of Louis XV's personal rule, a government-appointed editor position accompanied the journal's new title. This shift of form evidences the volatile conditions of a changing media market alongside the change of regime that required adaptation and reinvention. It was a grinding competitive dynamic to which the *Cercle royal* had fallen victim. Dubois de Saint Gelais's text is also relevant for thinking about competitive media cycles, failed projects, and adapted forms. As we have seen, Saint Gelais's *Histoire journalière de Paris* was

---

[4]" Sur les fins il les montroit chez lui gratis, mais personne n'y alloit." Dubois de Saint Gelais, *Histoire journalière de Paris*, 190–91.

[5] The only reference to Benoist in Brice's subsequent editions was the questionable attribution of a terracotta memorial effigy of the ascetic priest Claude Bernard in the chapel of Hôpital de la Charité an institution in close proximity to the *Cercle royal*. The chapel also featured a crucifix painted by Gabriel Benoist. Brice, *Nouvelle description*, 3: 202-3.

[6] "il y a environ 30 ans"; *Mercure de France*, (July, 1729) 1680.The notice primarily concerned Isaac Gossset's display depicting the courtly circle of George II, which had travelled from London and been installed in the Hôtel de Longueville in Paris before being transferred to Marly for Louis XV's enjoyment.

[7] "[...] dont chaque portrait étoit si ressemblant, qu'il n'étoit pas possible de n'y être pas trompé." *Mercure de France*, (July, 1729) 1680.

intended to be a tri-annual publication for every year of Louis XV's reign, though it was quickly discontinued.[8] A decade later, in 1725, Saint Gelais was elected *historiographe* to the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture. In this capacity he was charged with compiling biographical records for academicians dating back to the institution's foundation. He began by repurposing the obituaries from his short-lived journal published years earlier. Benoist's was recited aloud to an assembly of academicians on February 3, 1725.[9] Thus Benoist's art was not quite forgotten in spite of the exhibition's disappearance.

Enlightened Error

Even in the eighteenth-century, however, Benoist's legacy was being distorted and redefined. The article on wax in Diderot and D'Alembert's encyclopédie was authored by the Chevalier de Jaucourt, the project's most dedicated contributor.[10] After outlining the ancient purposes of wax in Greek writing tablets and Roman death masks, Jaucourt stated that the art form had developed significantly and then inserted Savary de Bruslons text from the *Dictionnaire du commerce* without amendment or citation.[11] Reframed, therefore, within the encyclopédie, a seminal beacon of enlightenment scholarship, were Savary's observations on Benoist's practice: the assertion that the sculptor's circles were ingenious inventions and that Benoist had discovered a secret for life casts without danger to his models' health or beauty. Also repeated was Savary's opinion that the wax masks cast from Benoist's moulds resembled their sitters so strikingly that viewers could not help but believe them to be alive. Jaucourt capped this plagiarized paragraph with a single additional sentence of his own: "But the anatomical

[8] The reason for the project's abandonment is unclear, though it most likely resulted from either poor market reception or the author's preoccupation with administrative responsibilities. See Sgard, "Histoire journaliere de Paris. 1716 [1717]."
[9] Lichtenstein and Michel, *Les conférences*, 2:252.
[10] Jaucourt's article addressed wax's history and use: Jaucourt, "Cire (Hist. Anc. & Mod.)." Another entry, authored by Jean-Marie Daubenton offered a scientific perspective on the science of wax.
[11] Savary was, as we have seen, a contemporary of Benoist who died in 1716. His text was then published posthumously ten years later, as discussed in Chapter 1, above.

figures made in wax by the same Benoît, are even more unforgettable than the beauty of his portraits."[12] This statement is of interest since it can easily be demonstrated to be false.

Not only is there no evidence for such anatomical engagements in primary source material related to Benoist, but in 1701 *Lettres patentes* for anatomical modelling in wax were awarded to Gaetano Giulio Zumbo. The Italian sculptor had arrived in Paris a year earlier and received significant acclaim.[13] A wax fabrication representing the musculature of the human head had been lauded by the Académie des sciences as a stunning accomplishment with significant potential for the future of anatomical study. A flurry of recent publications have addressed Zumbo's wax fabrications as a means of examining overlapping visual cultures of morbidity.[14] Scholars have positioned these works at the intersection of theological preoccupations of *memento mori*, particularly Jesuit rites of existential meditation, and medical investigation. They have thereby demonstrated less differentiation between orientations of religion and science then we might assume.

Notably, in Paris, Zumbo's trajectory intersected with Benoist's. Following a period of prestigious patronage in Florence, Zumbo's collaborative work on wax anatomies with a French surgeon, Guillaume Desnoues, in Genoa ended in bitter rivalry. But it connected Zumbo to a network of French officials, which oriented the sculptor to France and facilitated his recognition there. It was likely the protection of Chevalier de Montmort, Intendant General of the King's Galleys that brought him to the attention of Pontchartrain who was still a significant figure in that sphere, having acted as State

---

[12] "Mais les figures anatomiques faites en *cire* par le même Benoît, peuvent encore moins s'oublier que la beauté de ses portraits." Jaucourt, "Cire (Hist. Anc. & Mod.)," 391.

[13] Zumbo received two *privilèges* in quick succession in August of 1701. The first, drafted on August 4th specified natural representation in coloured wax. The second, a couple of weeks later on August 27th, extended Zumbo's protected purview by substituting the more general phrase of 'particular preparation" without specified restriction to wax. This quick revision speaks to burgeoning competition. In particular, Zumbo was being pursued, by the enraged Desnoues, his former collaborator. Zumbo's second *privilège* is transcribed in Boislisle, "Les figures de cire sous Louis XIV," 171–72.

[14] See, for example: San Juan, "Gaetano Zumbo's Anatomical Wax Model"; Utro, "Gaëtano Giulio Zumbo à la cour des derniers Médicis"; Ehrhart, "Microcosme et immersion"; Taddia, "Une teste de cire anatomique."Primary focus has been on Zumbo's extant works fabricated for Cosimo III, Grand Duke of Tuscany in the 1690s. A series of miniature dioramas as well as a strikingly tortured anatomical head remain preserved in La Specola.

secretary of the Navy before his chancellorship.[15] Interestingly then, like Benoist, Zumbo's institutional recognition was enabled by Pontchartrain and Bignon in their capacity as supervisors of the academies. It was Bignon who presided over the meeting of the Académie des sciences on May 25th, 1701, in which Zumbo's wax model was celebrated.[16] Intriguingly, the excitement for Zumbo's accomplishments in that setting preceded Benoist's engagement with the Académie des inscriptions. Pontchartrain and Bignon's support of Zumbo's wax practice may have informed their interest in Benoist's representational mode one year later, when they commissioned his illustrations for the medallic history's revision. In fact, upon Zumbo's untimely death in 1701, Benoist was tasked with appraising the anatomical wax model that had remained in Zumbo's possession.[17] This assignment acknowledged a shared realm of accomplishment. The legal protections of patent letters, however, clearly delineate distinct realms of expertise between the two waxworkers. We have seen that Benoist's *privilèges* preempted the approval of other applicants with related proposals. Zumbo's patent therefore offers firm evidence against the possibility of Benoist's "unforgettable anatomical figures" that Jaucourt highlighted in his *Encyclopédie* entry. More than simply catching the prolific Jaucourt in an error, identifying his slip indicates something of the shifting position of wax representation within enlightenment culture. For Jaucourt, the prominence of anatomical modelling in wax seemed obvious and intuitive enough to be assumed even without evidence.

In erroneously ascribing accomplishment in anatomical modelling to Benoist, Jaucourt confirms the triumph of Félibien's "deathly and insensible resemblance" by the mid-eighteenth century. It was not only Félibien's 1666 dismissive statement. This opinion was already gaining ground in Benoist's lifetime. There is a notable example in the published work of Nicolas Boileau, literary theorist and one of Louis XIV's esteemed historiographers. An annotation to the discussion of tragic form in the *Art*

[15]Lemire, *Artistes et Mortels*, 33.
[16] Lemire, 33.
[17] The waxwork that Benoist appraised was an antomical head with one removable brain hemisphere. See "Inventaire après décès de feu sieur Gaetan Zombaut," f.38.

Poétique addressed the horrors of wax representation. This footnote related the perfect imitation of cadavers in wax to the excessive resemblance of wax portraits.[18] Boileau's disciple and editor, Claude Brossette, transcribed notes for the conversation on October 22, 1702 that served as the basis for this footnote. Boileau had specified that it was Benoist's wax portraits specifically that disappointed for their exact, unmediated resemblance.[19] Boileau was a member of the Académie des inscriptions in 1702, the year Benoist gained his commission as medallic illustrator for this institution. Despite the disapproval of this influential theorist, however, the commission evidences recognition for Benoist's mode of representation.

The anatomical specificity of wax skin had been a liability for Félibien and Boileau, a visceral morbid failing. Writing in the mid-eighteenth century, however, with reference to Zumbo's preserved wax head, the naturalist Jean-Marie Daubenton stated that coloured wax had previously only been used to describe the exterior surfaces of the human face in "portraits most beautiful and most resembling."[20] The history of wax portraiture, therefore, was reconfigured as prelude to the practice of anatomical representation of internal bodily structures. Within these differing time periods and disciplinary positions, the standard associations of wax representation had reoriented toward the models of dissected cadavers.

Corpus Vile

In coordination with the proliferation of anatomical modelling in wax over the course of the eighteenth century, the association of wax figures as morbid spectacle outside the realm of art gained traction.

---

[18] Boileau-Despréaux, *Oeuvres*, 2:213.Claude Brossette's annotated compendium of Boileau's works were published posthumously following the poet's death in 1711. *Art poétique* was initialy published in 1674.
[19] Brosette, "Mémoires de Brosette sur ses relations avec Boileau-Despréaux. (1702)," fol.100.
[20] Buffon and Daubenton, *Histoire naturelle générale et particulière avec la description du Cabinet du Roy*, 3:214.Buffon and Daubenton, *Histoire naturelle générale et particulière avec la description du Cabinet du Roy*, 3:214.Daubenton reviewed the evidence in the rivalry between Zumbo and Desnoues to conclude that despite a surgeon's role of preparing anatomical specimens as models, the completion of the model in intricate exactitude relied on sculptural skill.

Schlosser elaborated on this point in the final chapter of his study of wax portraiture's history. He charted waxworks' prominence as paradigmatic foils of philosophical aesthetics in the wake of Kant's pronouncements on artistic imitation. Kant's philosophic successors fastened on wax figures as negative exemplars for unartistic replication. In Schlosser's words, the illusionistic wax figure emerged as "the classic deterrent example held up by the aesthetic school, the *corpus vile* that was to serve as the demonstration of the difference between art and non-art."[21] Schopenhauer, most pointedly, claimed, that rather than evoking greater eternal truths, "the wax figure causes us to shudder since its effect is like that of a stiff corpse."[22] Something akin to Félibien's "deathly resemblance," therefore, filtered through philosophical discourse. It continued to serve a definitive purpose by delineating the realm of art in its contrast.

The association of waxworks as disturbingly deathly was only strengthened in subsequent years. Nineteenth-century viewers who encountered Benoist's wax profile were at pains to distinguish it from the disturbing spectacles of wax figures with which they were more familiar: the displays presented by Philippe Curtius, Marie Tussaud, Pierre Spitzer and the Grévin museum. Such comparison often served to differentiate the quality of Benoist's work from the sad state to which the genre had fallen. In 1874, one archivist stated that Benoist's appreciation need be acknowledged regardless of the contemporary discredit of waxwork exhibitions.[23] Curitus's wax portraits had gained notoriety as props in violent revolutionary demonstrations.[24] His apprentice, Tussaud, staged French revolutionary horrors as titillating spectacle in her iconic London display, established in 1835.[25] In gruesome tableaux of

[21] Schlosser, "History of Portraiture in Wax," 298.
[22] Quoted in Schlosser, "History of Portraiture in Wax," 299.
[23] Boislisle, "Les figures de cire sous Louis XIV," 168.B.See also Blondel, "Les modeleurs en cire," 438.The Versailles curator, Eudore Soulié contrasted Benoist's artistry from the industrial ventures of boulevards, fairs, and barbershops. Louis XIV, Médaillon en cire, 4. In 1906, the sculptor Stanislas Lami described Benoist as the precursor of Curtius, Tussaud and Grévin. Lami, Dictionnaire des sculpteurs de l'école Française, 2:2:27.
[24] Adhémar, "Les Musées de cire en France, Curtius, le 'banquet royal', les têtes coupées." Eugène Vaudin evoked these circumstances particularly in "Antoine Benoist de Joigny," 318.
[25] Born Marie Grosholtz, Tussaud arrived in England in 1802 and managed a travelling exhibition of wax figures transported from Paris, before opening her establishing her permanent venue on Baker street.

decapitated aristocrats and revolutionaries, she inverted portraiture's traditional objective to approach life and "brought the dead back to death."[26] Opening in 1856, Pierre Spitzer's display of anatomical models in wax was promoted as both sensational curiosity and pedagogical experience.[27] Publications associated with this collection of oddities plotted the long history of wax sculpture and mentioned Benoist.[28] As of 1882, the Musée Grévin's waxwork dioramas featured a number of dying figures in grim and salacious scenes.[29] The Hôpital saint Louis assembled life cast wax moulages to catalogue dermatological conditions in the late nineteenth century.[30] These specimens of suffering and disfigurement present a particularly noteworthy parallel to Benoist's descriptive specificity of Louis XIV's aged skin.

Sensational nineteenth-century wax displays filtered into the formal classification of uncanny horror in the twentieth century. For Jentsch and Freud, waxworks' sensational impact derived from their ambiguous vitality. They strain the credulity of our perceptive capacity to distinguish living beings from crafted representations. The imperfect correspondence to expectations introduces creeping doubt that undermines our confidence in our own observations. The excitement and distress of uncanny experience is in throwing a beholder's own sense of subjective coherence into question. This uncanny response to waxworks as fascinatingly repulsive or familiar but subtly disturbing resonates strikingly with Félibien's notion of wax portraiture's inherent, distressing morbidity.

Félibien's pronouncement of the "deathly and insensible resemblance" of Benoist's wax portraits would even seem to anticipate the modern designation of waxworks as uncanny, an aesthetic notion that pervades our own contemporary sensibility. Interest has been surging recently in relation to

[26] Huet, *Monstrous Imagination*, 205. See also Graybill, "A Proximate Violence."
[27] It was eventually reconfigured as a travelling exhibition.
[28] These publications are noted in Didi-Huberman, "Viscosities and Survivals," 166 n.32.
[29] Vanessa Schwartz draws attention to the frequency of death scenes in the museum's early tableaux. In her analysis, these deaths, extended in theatrical suspension instilled passing current events with a more enduring monumentality. See "Museums and Mass Spectacle," 22–23.
[30] Mechthild Fend argues that indexical particularity strains the classificatory function of Saint Louis's dermatological moulages. See Fend, "Order and Affect."For an interpretation of gendered medical epistemology in relation to the Saint Louis's wax models documenting venereal disease see Hunter, "Effroyable réalisme."

investigations of the 'uncanny valley,' a schema that posits a threshold after which increasingly detailed hyper-realism flips from engaging observers to revolting and alienating them.[31] Keeping pace with advances in digital imaging technologies and robotics, this discourse is of ongoing significance to the industries of animation and game design. As in Félibien's polemic, the notion of an uncanny valley focuses on the eerie near-perfection of technological automatism. In Félibien's description, moulded wax replicates human form with intricate precision but nevertheless misses some crucial but elusive quality (not so much a distortion as a nearly unaccountable absence). This sense of perfect replication, subtly disturbing in its exactitude, corresponds quite precisely with the jarring effect of uncanny doubling. It is not that modern commentators of Benoist's wax profile necessarily reference the uncanny specifically, but that the sense of this object as disturbingly decrepit, jarring, grotesque, or abject subtly reveals the underlying orientations of our own period eye. The uncanny's hold on our aesthetic perception can be difficult to see past.

Embodied History

In many ways this dissertation has been long grappling with Félibien's pronouncement of wax portraiture's deathly and insensible resemblance. My aim is not to disprove the claim, as much as it is to draw it out and elaborate historical context around it. The statement offers an informative reference point for centring wax portraiture at the crux of compelling dilemmas of artistic representation in its day. Despite Félibien's assertion that ambiguous vitality and replicative exactitude were anathema to insightful artistic accomplishment, this dissertation reveals the extent to which the reception of Benoist's sculptural practice in wax was varied and complex. Beyond Félibien's particular preoccupations (connoisseurial refinement in the mode of scholarly humanism) other early modern observers perceived opportunity in Benoist's replicative practice. Chapter One demonstrates that a

[31]This concept, pervasive within discussions of technological aesthetics, was formulated by the Japanese robotics researcher Masahiro Mori. See Mori, "The Uncanny Valley [1970]."

thriving print media, which was invested in offering readers intimate access to aristocratic celebrity, promoted the Cercle royal as a vicarious experience of attending court. Such authors highlighted wax's compelling illusion of royal presence. That mere artisanal labour could conjure such striking effect heightened rather than diminished Benoist's accomplishment. Some celebrated Benoist's craftsmanship as miraculous alchemy. The striking replicative illusion of Benoist's wax figures also opened into broader discussions such as that of deceptive appearance and dissimulative social rank. I have presented this dimension as a notable undercurrent to Félibien's anxiety over wax replicability. Benoist's commissioned funerary effigies for Saint-Germain-des-Prés, addressed in Chapter Two, also prompts a reconsideration of Félibien's "deathly resemblance." The traditional prestige of wax effigies in royal funerals underlines the commemorative potential of wax representation's suspended morbidity.

Subsequent chapters elaborate crucial contextual frames for grasping the early reception of Benoist's extant wax profile that were previously overlooked in scholarship. I present evidence for Benoist's commission of illustrations for the Académie des inscriptions' revised medallic history. Engagement with this institution's project of epic commemoration has significant implications for our consideration of the wax profile. The historiography of Benoist's wax profile has been preoccupied exclusively with its suggestive indexicality and striking bodily evocation. Foregrounding the representation's typology as a medallic profile, however, allows us to reconsider its exceptional materiality with reference to the dynamics of numismatic memorial. My claim is that in its initial era of reception, the extant wax profile embodied a dialectic of tangibility and remoteness in its integration of insistently tactile corporeality within an exalting medallic format. Its compelling material variation on commemorative convention positioned Benoist's profile to provoke reflection on the dynamics of memorial. I have termed this engagement with glorifying documentary 'testamentary materiality.'

Chapter Four builds on this claim to propose that the wax profile had particular resonance for its first owner, Louis de Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain, since he was deeply invested in the medallic history

over his years of supervising the Académie des inscriptions. Alongside a series of bronze medallions that translated Benoist's illustrations, the wax profile encapsulated the medallic history's monumental aspirations. I also argue that Benoist's wax profile resonated with the royal seals which embodied Pontchartrain's legal authority as Louis XIV's chancellor. Thus the thoughtless quality that offended Félibien, a waxwork's evocation of unmediated tactile contact, potentially instilled Benoist's fabrications with authoritative association and commemorative impact.

The dissertation's elaboration of context for Benoist's extant waxwork, therefore, opens possibilities of interpretation beyond an intuitive sense of decrepit uncanny. While Félibien's pronouncement of wax's "deathly and insensible resemblance" filtered into the mainstream of aesthetic thought, my analysis reveals the complexity of the discursive sphere in which Félibien originally sought to intervene. Benoist's practice of wax portraiture was, to be sure, not Félibien's priority. Rather its dismissal was but collateral within the theorist's broader project of differentiating spheres of cultural decorum and modes of aesthetic address. The way in which Félibien's opinion of waxworks' "deathly and insensible resemblance" would seem to be accepted and amplified in the twentieth-century uncanny signals one of this dissertation's interests from a methodological point of view: the problematics of "period eye." Faith in our discerning visual perception is fundamental to art historical inquiry. Baxandall's articulation of a "period eye" to encapsulate the differentiation of contextually-specific modes of visual attunement has been a touchstone of historicist interpretation.[32] Seeing beyond our own en-cultured perception is challenging, however, and necessarily speculative.[33] My attempt to elaborate historical reception of wax portraiture in Benoist's lifetime foregrounds the effort of translating between aesthetic spheres. Qualities within the uncanny's conceptual field, such as morbid

[32] Baxandall developed this concept with particular reference to sculptural form in *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany*, 43–63.
[33] In the introduction to a volume on historically-diverse visualities, Robert Nelson signals this problem cogently. He remarks on the insightful potential of partial knowledge in our effort to gain understanding of alternative historical perspectives. See Nelson, "Descartes's Cow and Other Domestications of the Visual," 3."

evocation and duplication, had different early modern configurations. Uncanny prefigurations are arguably discernible in associations of idolatry, the discourse of counterfeit appearances, or the vocabulary of vivacious memorial.

Finally, with regard to the limitations of modern aesthetic orientations, the very format of the portrait as medallic profile has rarely been recognized as a significant feature worthy of interpretation. This blind spot is surprising since much of the sculptor's limited extant oeuvre is portraiture in the format of medallic profiles. I claim that the wax profile's relevance to medallic commemoration initially motivated its preservation by Pontchartrain's descendants. Beyond the period of the ancien regime, however, it was solely its exceptional materiality that fascinated and provoked. Indeed, the modern reception of Benoist's wax profile presented it quite consistently as irreverent documentary, an accurate image in counterpoint to the pervasive, glorifying exaggerations of Louis XIV's imagery. Scholars have perceived it as a salvaged truth that betrayed the intentions of absolutist ideals. I have identified this dominant interpretation in the consistent qualification of the wax profile's 'realism,' which culminates starkly in Sugimoto's claim to have extracted a photograph of Louis XIV himself by photographing Benoist's waxwork. This claim most forcefully encapsulates underlying faith in this representation's veracity as a documentary trace. It ignores the rhetorical salience of the portrait's format as medallic profile and the particular sense of this numismatic reference in relation to Pontchartrain. This certainty in the wax profile's encapsulation of truth inherently reveals, however, the persistent force of 'testamentary materiality' though dissociated, for modern viewers, from royal reverence. The inversion of wax materiality's testamentary implications underlines the instability of evidentiary claims, whose tenor shifts in reference to changing contexts.

Hideous Document

The integration of Benoist's wax profile into a public museum display in 1856 introduced the artist to

modern historical scholarship. A postcard of 1910 documents the profile's initial placement within the musée de château de Versailles (fig. 5.1, 5.2). Within a display replete with luxuries, Benoist's waxwork is visible alongside the canopied bed or *lit de parade*. At the height of the mattress, the profile evokes the scale of the human Louis XIV within the sumptuous grandiosity of his royal stage set. Over its first decades the museum's core purpose and curatorial modes fluctuated.[34] Even in its first museological installation, however, the *chambre du roi* was staged as a period room evoking sumptuous ancien regime luxury and featuring royal regalia.[35] In the publication marking the wax profile's entry into Versailles's collection, curator Eudore Soulié underlined this representation as an exceptionally truthful image of the king that deserved consideration above the vast array of Louis XIV's monumental representations. Soulié claimed it as the only surviving visual representation of Louis XIV's smallpox scars and described it as compellingly "real" to the point of palpitating.[36] In an overview of the bedroom display in his museum guidebook, Pierre de Nolhac, described "the realism of this old man's head" as an essential complement to the king's idealized image.[37] The vocabulary of realism and the profile's designation as a documentary contrast to absolutist grandeur were foundational in the work's early curatorial framing. This contrast between the profile's revealing truth and the ideals of royal supremacy extended, as we have seen, through its historiographic reception.

Taking up Soulié's proposal of the wax profile's exceptional documentary value, the eminent historian Jules Michelet turned to Benoist's portrait in his epic chronicle of French history. For Michelet, Benoist's waxwork prompted "strange ideas" as to the king's state of mind in old age.[38] In contrast to the performance of sobriety and devotional fervour, the wax medallion "bears telling traces

[34] Jones, Versailles, 109–45.
[35] This space was reconfigured as Louis XIV's centred bedroom in ta major renovation in 1701. Within Louis Philippe's Versailles its curatorial mode was exceptional since most exhibitions had overt didactic intent in narrating France's history. On the history of the room's display see Meyer, "L'ameublement de la chambre de Louis XIV."
[36] Soulié, Louis XIV, *Médaillon en cire*, 8.
[37] In the guidebook, this ideal was manifest in Coysevox's marble bust, on display within the suite of the king's apartments in the Chambre de l'Oeil de boeuf. Nolhac, *Versailles and the Trianons*, 76.
[38] "L'important médaillon de cire, que très heureusement M. Soulié a retrouvé (Versailles), donne là-dessus des idées étranges." Michelet, *Louis XIV et le duc de Bourgogne*, 150.

of the base sensualities of the era."[39] Michelet further observed rigidity and moral lassitude in this wax representation. Thick lips apparently suggest Louis XIV's enduring carnal preoccupation. In this physiognomic reading of the wax profile, the material's evocative corporeality encapsulates bodily lust. Michelet was one of a number of early commentators that relished describing the elderly king's ugliness and condemning the depravity of his era with reference to Benoist's extant work. One article of 1906 described the portrait as a ghostly nightmare, but also as a "document of forceful hideousness."[40]

Michelet's interest in Benoist's wax profile might not be surprising considering his oft-quoted recollection of the inspiration of ancien regime sculpture in the Musée des monuments français for his vocation of historian.[41] Michelet's reference to Benoist's profile underlines its appeal as revealing historical evidence. I have argued that this variety of faith in the wax profile's documentary accuracy ironically reveals the potential of its initial glorifying testamentary materiality. Outside Michelet's purview and, indeed, omitted in the subsequent scholarly reception of the wax profile, is the scrutiny of its initial context and meaning. The significance of its medallic form and its relation to Benoist's work for the Académie des inscription's commemorative ambitions are barely mentioned in the record of its scholarly consideration. Pontchartrain's specific investment in this object as its patron has not been broached. For Michelet the wax profile presents itself as irrefutable fact and prompt to fantasy. It "bears telling traces" and provokes "strange ideas." This oscillation between documentation and disturbance, which subsequently plays out in the wax profile's modern reception could have broader implications, however. It might suggest the inherent uncanny preoccupations of historical study, a discipline fixated on fragmentary remains and departed subjects.

---

[39] Il porte la trace parlante des basses sensualités du temps." Michelet, 150.
[40] "Cette cire d'Antoine Benoist est un document d'une hideur puissante." "En Marge."*Le Temps*, February, 12 1906.
[41] Stara, "National History as Biography," 274. This recollection is also the starting point of a recent account of the significance of art to Michelet's historical thinking, see Hannoosh, *Art and History in Nineteenth-Century France*, 1–2.

Archival Sources

Archives nationale de France, Paris

Minutier central (MC)

ET/IV/395 May 3, 1717 “Inventaire après décès d’Antoine Benoist.”

ET/ XC II/317 December 30, 1701 “Inventaire après décès de feu Sieur Gaetan Zombaut,”

ET/XCVII/469.March 31, 1772 “Inventaire après décès de M. Bignon.”

ET/XXVII/71 April 29, 1712, “Inventaire fait apres le deces de Dame Antoinette Oudaille épouse de Mons. Benoist."
e
ET/IV/385 December 13, 1714. “Testament d’Antoine Benoist.”

Colonies C
Mithon, Jean-Jacques. “Mithon to Pontchartrain, November 20, 1704,Colonies,C8 A15

Archives municipales de Saint Denis, Saint Denis
1 D 1/2, 03/02/1793 - 05/10/1793, “Délibérations et débats du conseil municipal de Saint Denis."

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris
Benoist, Antoine. “Histoire de Louis Le Grand,” 1708. Manuscrits. Français 13775.

Brosette, Claude. “Mémoires de Brosette sur ses relations avec Boileau-Despréaux” 1702. MS. 15275.

Souillard, "Factum pour Jean Simon, garde à cheval des plaisirs du roi,” 1688. FRBNF36759083.

Hozier, Charles-René d’. “Armorial Général de France, dressé, en vertu de l’édit de 1696, XXIII Paris, I.” 1701. Manuscrits. Français 32250.

Periodicals

Gazette de France
Mercure de France
Mercure galant

Bibliography
(* including historical printed sources)

Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres. *Medailles sur les principaux evenements du regne entier de Louis Le Grand, avec des explications historiques.* Paris: L'imprimerie royale, 1723.

Adamczak, Audrey. *Robert Nanteuil ca. 1623-1678*. Paris: Arthena, 2011.

Adhémar, Jean. "Les Musées de cire en France, Curtius, le 'banquet royal', les têtes coupées." *Gazette des beaux-arts* 92 (1978): 203–14.

Agamben, Giorgio. "Bartleby, or On Contingency." In *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, edited by Daniel Heller-Roazen, 243–71. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Alpers, Svetlana, Emily Apter, Carol Armstrong, Susan Buck-Morss, Tom Conley, Jonathan Crary, Thomas Crow, Tom Gunning, Michael Ann Holly, and Martin Jay. "Visual Culture Questionnaire." *October* 77, (Summer 1996.): 25–70.

Apostolidès, Jean-Marie. *Le Roi-Machine: spectacle et politique au temps de Louis XIV*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1981.

Appadurai, Arjun. "Archive and Aspiration." In *Information Is Alive*, edited by Joke Brouwer and Arjen Mulder, 14–25. Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 2003.

Arasse, Daniel. *Le détail : pour une histoire rapprochée de la peinture*. Paris: Flammarion, 2008.

Asch, Ronald G. *Sacral Kingship between Disenchantment and Re-Enchantment the French and English Monarchies 1587-1688.* New York: Berghahn Books, 2014.

Austin, J. L. *How to Do Things with Words*. Edited by J. O Urmson and Marina Sbisà. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975.

Babelon, Jean-Pierre. "Les salles de séances et les collections de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres sous l'ancien régime." *Journal des savants* (1964): 65–101.

Bacchi, Andrea, Catherine Hess, Jennifer Montagu, and Anne-Lise Desmas. *Bernini and the Birth of Baroque Portrait Sculpture*. Los Angeles; Ottawa: J. Paul Getty Museum ; National Gallery of Canada, 2008.

Baker, Malcolm. "Limewood, Chiromancy and Narratives of Making: Writing about the Materials and Processes of Sculpture." *Art History* 21, no. 4 (1998): 498–530.

———. "The Materiality of the Sculptural Object." In *The Lure of the Object*, edited by Stephen Melville, 119–34. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.

Balfe, Thomas, and Joanna Woodall. "Introduction: From Living Presence to Lively Likeness - the Lives of 'Ad Vivum.'" In *Ad Vivum? Visual Materials and the Vocabulary of Life-Likeness in Europe before 1800*, 1–43. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019.

Baraton, Martin. *Poesies diverses… par M. Baraton*. Paris: Jean-Baptiste Delespine, 1705.

Barbiche, Bernard. "De la commission à l'office de la Couronne : les gardes des sceaux de France du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle." *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 151, no. 2 (1993): 359–90.

Barthes, Roland. "The Discourse of History." In *The Rustle of Language*, translated by Richard Howard, 127–40. Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989.

———. "The Reality Effect." In *The Rustle of Language*, translated by Richard Howard, 141–48. Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989.

Baxandall, Michael. *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983.

———. *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.

Belting, Hans. "Toward an Anthropology of the Image." In *Anthropologies of Art*, edited by Mariët Westermann, 41–58. Williamstown: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2005.

Benhamou, Reed, trans. "Royal Academy of Inscriptions and Literature." In *The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project*. Ann Arbor: Michigan Publishing: University of Michigan Library, 2003. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.217.

Benisovitch, Michel. "Peintures et sculptures au Château de Pontchartrain en 1689 et 1720." *Commission ses antiquités et des arts de Seine-et-Oise* 48 (1939): 92–102.

Benson, Sarah. "European Wonders at the Court of Siam." In *Collecting Across Cultures: Material Exchanges in the Early Modern Atlantic World*, edited by Daniela Bleichmar and Peter C. Mancall, 155–74. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.

Benzan, Carla. "Coming to Life at the Sacro Monte of Varallo: The Sacred Image al Vivo in Post-Tridentine Italy." In *Ad Vivum? : Visual Materials and the Vocabulary of Life-Likeness in Europe before 1800*, edited by Joanna Woodall, Claus Zittel, and Thomas Balfe, 224–46. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019.

Berger, Harry. "Fictions of the Pose: Facing the Gaze of Early Modern Portraiture." *Representations* 46, no. 1 (1994): 87–120.

Berger, Robert W. "Bernini's Louis XIV Equestrian: A Closer Examination of Its Fortunes at Versailles." *The Art Bulletin* 63, no. 2 (1981): 232-48.

———. "Les Bustes de Louis XIV par Le Bernin et Warin : Marbres, bronzes et copies." *Revue de l'Art* 190, no. 4 (2015): 49–58.

———. *Public Access to Art in Paris: A Documentary History from the Middle Ages to 1800*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999.

———. *Versailles: The Château of Louis XIV*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1985.

Berthier, Annie. "Tripoli de Barbarie à la fin du XVIIe Siècle d'après un mémoire inédit de François Pétis de La Croix." *Anatolia Moderna. Yeni Anadolu* 6 (1996): 13–30.

Bertucci, Paola. *Artisanal Enlightenment: Science and the Mechanical Arts in Old Regime France*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017.

Bizardière, Michel David de LA. *Histoire de Louis Le Grand, depuis le commencement de son règne jusques En 1710*. Paris: F. Barois, 1712.

Bjørnstad, Hall. *The Dream of Absolutism: Louis XIV and the Logic of Modernity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021.

Blegny, Nicolas de. *Le Livre commode contenant les adresses de la ville de Paris*. Paris: Chez la veuve Denis Nion, 1692.

Bleichmar, Daniela. "The Cabinet and the World: Non-European Objects in Early Modern European Collections." *Journal of the History of Collections* 33, no. 3 (2021): 435–45.

Blondel, Spire. "Les modeleurs en cire." *Gazette des beaux-arts* 26 (1882): 429–39.

Bluche, François. *Louis XIV*. Paris: Fayard, 1986.

Boileau-Despréaux, Nicolas. *Oeuvres de Mr. Boileau Despréaux avec des éclaircissements historiques donnéz par lui-même.* Edited by Claude Brossette. 5 vols. Geneva: Fabri & Barrillot, 1716.

Boislisle, Arthur de. "La Cérographie et les figures de cire sous Louis XIV." *Annuaire-Bulletin de La Société de l'histoire de France* 11 (1874): 167–72.

———. *La place des Victoires et la place de Vendôme, Notice historique sur les monuments élevés à la gloire de Louis XIV*. Paris: Nogent-le-Rotrou, 1889.

Bosse, Abraham. *Discours tendant a desabuser ceux qui ont creu, que l'auteur d'un traité qui a pour titre "Entretiens sur les vies et les ouvrages des plus excellens peintres anciens et modernes" avoit prétendu m'attaquer dans sa preface*. Paris: Chez A. Bosse, 1667.

Boucher d'Argis, Antoine-Gaspard. "Chancelier de France." In *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert, 3:86–90. Paris: Briasson et al., 1751-72.

———. "Chauffe Cire." In *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert, 3:256. paris: Briasson et al., 1751-72.

———. "Garde Des Sceaux de France." In *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert, 7:495–505. Paris: Briasson et al., 1751-72.

Bourdieu, Pierre. "Marginalia -- Some Additional Notes on the Gift." In *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, edited by Alan D. Schrift, 231–41. New York, 1997.

Boureau, Alain. *Le simple corps du roi: l'impossible sacralité des souverains français XVe-XVIIIe Siècle*. Paris: Les Éditions de Paris, 1988.

Bresc-Bautier., Geneviève. "Antoine Benoist, cet illustre inconnu qui sculptait "sur le vivant." *Grande Galerie: Le Journal du Louvre* 24 (2013): 16–17.

Bresc-Bautier, Geneviève, Guilhem Scherf, and James David Draper. *Cast in Bronze: French Sculpture from Renaissance to Revolution*. Paris: Somogy, 2009.

Brice, Germain. *Description de la ville de Paris, et de tout ce qu'elle contient de plus remarquable*. 3 vols. chez François Fournier, 1713.

———. *Description nouvelle de ce qu'il y a de plus remarquable dans la ville de Paris*. 2 vols. Paris: Nicholas Le Gras,, 1687.

———. *Description Nouvelle de La ville de Paris, et recherche des singularitez les plus remarquables qui se trouvent à present dans cette grande ville*. 2 vols. Paris: Nicholas Le Gras, 1706.

———. *Description nouvelle de la ville de Paris ou recherche curieuse des choses les plus singulieres & les plus remarquables qui se trouvent a present dans cette grande ville*. 2 vols. Paris: Nicolas Le Gras, Nicolas, Le Clerc, Barthelemy Girin, 1698.

———. *Nouvelle description de la ville de Paris et de tout ce qu'elle contient de plus remarquable*. 3 vols. Paris: chez Julien-Michel Gandouin, 1717.

———. *Nouvelle description de la ville de Paris et de tout ce qu'elle contient de plus remarquable*. 4 vols. ed. Paris: Theodore Le Gras, 1725.

Brière, Gaston. "Recherches d'iconographie historique I: Louis XIV tenant le sceau (1672)." *Bulletin de la société de l'art Français* (1925): 51–58.

Bril, Damien. "Le Brun et le portrait équestre." *Bulletin du centre de recherche du château de Versailles.*, November 14, 2017. https://doi.org/10.4000/crcv.14512.

Bryant, Mark. *Queen of Versailles: Madame de Maintenon, First Lady of Louis XIV's France*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020.

Buck-Morss, Susan. "The Flâneur, the Sandwichman and the Whore: The Politics of Loitering." In *Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, edited by Beatrice Hanssen, 33–65. New York ; London: Continuum, 2006.

Buffon, Georges Louis Leclerc de, and Jean-Marie Daubenton. *Histoire naturelle générale et particulière avec la description du Cabinet du Roy*. Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1750.

Burke, Peter. *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994.

Camille, Michael. "Before the Gaze: The Internal Senses and Late Medieval Practices of Seeing." In *Visuality before and beyond the Renaissance*, edited by Robert Nelson, 197–223. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Caylus, Anne Claude Philippe de Tubières de. *Vie d'Édmé Bouchardon, sculpteur du roi*. Paris, 1762.

Chabouillet, Anatole. “Miniatures d’Antoine Benoist conservées au cabinet des médailles à Paris.” *Nouvelles Archives de l’art Français* (1872): 306–11.

Chaline, Olivier. *Le Règne de Louis XIV*. Paris: Flammarion, 2014.

Chancel-Bardelot, Béatrice de. “Médaillon- Louis XIV- Benoist, Antoine.” AGORHA: Bases de donées de L’Institut national d’histoire de l’art, November 13, 2015. https://agorha.inha.fr/inhaprod/ark:/54721/003135857.

Chantelou, Paul Fréart de. *Journal de voyage du cavalier Bernin en France* [1665]. Edited by Milovan Stanic. Paris: Macula, 2001.

Chapman, Sara. “Patronage as Family Economy: The Role of Women in the Patron-Client Network of the Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain Family, 1670-1715.” *French Historical Studies* 24, no. 1 (2001): 11–35.

———. *Private Ambition and Political Alliances in Louis XIV’s Government: The Phélypeaux de Pontchartrain Family 1650-1750*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2004.

Charton, Fabrice. “Héraldique et numismatique à l’académie royale des inscriptions et belles-lettres au XVIIe et Au XVIIIe siècles.” In *Héraldique et numismatique : Moyen Age, Temps modernes*, edited by Yvan Loskoutoff, 128–37. Mont-Saint-Aignan: Publications des universités de Rouen et du Havre, 2013.

Chastel, André. *French Art*. 4 vols. Paris: Flammarion, 1994.

Chatenet, Monique. “Les funérailles royales, dernier triomphe des rois: de Charles VI à Henri IV.” In *Le Roi est mort: Louis XIV - 1715*, edited by Gérard Sabatier and Béatrice Saule, 61–69. Paris: Tallandier, 2015.

Choisy, François Timolèon de. *Mémoires de l’Abbé de Choisy: pour servir à l’histoire de Louis XIV,*. Edited by Mathurin Lescure. Paris: Jouast, 1888.

Chowdhury, Zirwat. “Blackness, Immobility, & Visibility in Europe: A Digital Collaboration.” *Journal18*, September 25, 2020. World. https://www.journal18.org/nq/blackness-immobility-visibility-in-europe-a-digital-collaboration-by-zirwat-chowdhury/.

Clarke, Jack A. “Abbe Jean-Paul Bignon ‘Moderator of the Academies’ and Royal Librarian.” *French Historical Studies* 8, no. 2 (Autumn 1973): 213–35.

Cohen, Sarah R. *Art, Dance, and the Body in French Culture of the Ancien Régime*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Cole, Michael. “Cellini’s Blood.” *The Art Bulletin* 81, no. 2 (1999): 215–35.

Cole, Michael, and Rebecca Zorach. *The Idol in the Age of Art: Objects, Devotions and the Early Modern World*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009.

Comolli, Jean-Louis. “Historical Fiction: A Body Too Much.” *Screen* 19, no. 2 (Summer 1978): 41–54.

Conches, Félix Sébastien Feuillet de. *Causeries d’un curieux: Variétés d’histoire et d’art tirées d’un cabinet d’autographes et de dessins*. Paris: Plon, 1862.

Coquery, Emanuel. “Le Portrait de Louis.” In *Visages du Grand Siècle: le portrait français sous le règne de Louis XIV, 1660-1715*, edited by Emanuel Coquery and Alain Daguerre De Hureaux, 75–90. Paris: Somogy, 1997.

Crow, Thomas. *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.

Crowley, Patrick R. “Roman Death Masks and the Metaphorics of the Negative.” *Grey Room* 64 (Summer 2016): 64-103.

Damisch, Hubert. “The Inventor of Painting.” Translated by Kent Minturn and Eric Trudel. *Oxford Art Journal* 33, no. 3 (2010): 301–16.

Dancourt, Florent Carton. *La foire Saint Germain*. Paris: chez Thomas Guillain, 1696.

Daninos, Andrea. “La Collezione d’arte di Antoine Benoist.” *Prospettiva* 167/168 (October 2017):156–75.
———. “Wax Figures in Italy: Outline for a Story yet to Be Written.” In *Waxing Eloquent: Italian Portraits*, edited by Andrea Daninos. Milan: Officina Libraria, 2012.
———, ed. *Waxing Eloquent: Italian Portraits in Wax*. Milan: Officina Libraria, 2012.
Darby, Delphine Fitz. “Ribera and the Blind Men.” *The Art Bulletin* 39, no. 3 (1957): 195–217.
Daston, Lorraine, and Peter Galison. *Objectivity*. New York: Zone Books, 2007.
Dauvois, Daniel. “Beauté et grâce chez Félibien.” *Nouvelle revue d’esthétique* 4, no. 2 (December 2009): 41–47.
De Baecque and Drouot. *Estampes, dessins, et tableaux anciens et du XIXe siècle, archeólogie et sculpture, arts d’Asie, orfrois, mobilier et objets d’art.* Paris: De Baecque, 2019. http://catalogue.drouot.com/pdf/266/100059/catadebaecque_20191120_bd.pdf?id=100059&cp=266.
Dear, Peter. *Revolutionizing the Sciences: European Knowledge and Its Ambitions, 1500-1700*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
Del Pesco, Daniela. “La légation de Flavio Chigi à Paris en 1664 : Mémoire et documents nouveaux (avec quelques observations sur le journal de voyage du cavalier Bernin en France de Paul de Chantelou).” *Mélanges de l’École Française de Rome* 123, no. 2 (2011): 475–512.
Delalex, Hélène. *Louis XIV intime*. Paris: Gallimard, 2015.
Demarle, Julie. “A Bronze Bust by Antoine Benoist Acquired by the Louvre.” *The Art Tribune*, March 6, 2014. http://www.thearttribune.com/A-Bronze-Bust-by-Antoine-Benoist.html.
Démoris, René. “"Le corps royal et l’imaginaire du XVIIe siècle: le portrait du roy par Felibien.” *Revue des sciences humaines* 44, no. 172 (1978): 9–30.
———. "La grâce, ou Vénus et ses masques dans les *Entretiens* de Félibien." *Romanistische Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte* 13 (1989): 74-86.
Derrida, Jacques. *Given Time: I Counterfeit Money*. Translated by Peggy Kamuf. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
———. *The Truth in Painting*. Translated by Geoff Bennington and Ian Mcleod. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
Descartes, René. *Meditations and Other Metaphysical Writings*. Edited by Desmond M. Clarke. London; New York: Penguin, 1998.
Desmas, Anne-Lise. “The ‘Gallerie du Sr. Girardon sculpteur ordinaire du Roy.’” In *Sculpture Collections in Europe and the United States 1500-1930: Variety and Ambiguity*, edited by Malcolm Baker and Inge Reist, 157–73. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2021.
Desmas, Anne-Lise, Édouard Kopp, Guilhem Scherf, and Juliette Trey. *Bouchardon: Royal Artist of the Enlightenment*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2016.
Dessert, Daniel. *Argent, pouvoir et société au Grand Siècle*. Paris: Fayard, 1985.
Dew, Nicholas. *Orientalism in Louis XIV’s France*. Oxford: Oxford University press, 2009.
Dézallier d’Argenville, Antoine Nicolas Joseph. *Voyage pittoresque des environs de Paris.* Paris: Dubure l’aîné, 1779.
Didi-Huberman, Georges. “The Surviving Image: Aby Warburg and Tylorian Anthropology.” *Oxford Art Journal* 25, no. 1 (2002): 59–69.
———. “Viscosities and Survivals: Art History Put to the Test by the Material.” Translated by Jane Marie Todd in *Ephemeral Bodies: Wax Sculpture and the Human Figure*, edited by Roberta Panzanelli, 154–69. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008.
———. “Wax Flesh, Vicious Circles.” In *Encyclopedia Anatomica*, 64–74. Köln; New York: Taschen, 1999.

Douët-d'arcq, Louis. *Collection de Sceaux*. Vol. 1. 3 vols. Archives nationales: Inventaires et documents. Paris: Plon, 1863.
Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger An Analysis of Concept of Pollution and Taboo* [1966]. London; New York: Routledge, 2002.
Du Tillet, Jean. *Recueil des roys de France, leurs couronne et maison*. Paris: Jacques du Puy, 1580.
Dubois de Saint Gelais, Louis François. *Histoire journalière de Paris* [1716-17]. Edited by Maurice Tourneux. Paris: Société des bibliophiles françois, 1885.
Duchêne, Roger. *Madame de Sévigné et la lettre d'amour*. Paris: Bordas, 1970.
Düring, Monika von von, Georges Didi-Huberman, and Marta Poggesi. *Encyclopaedia Anatomica: A Complete Collection of Anatomical Waxes*. Cologne: Taschen, 1999.
Duro, Paul. *The Academy and the Limits of Painting in Seventeenth-Century France*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
———. "What is a Parergon?" *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 77, no. 1 (2019): 23–33.
Dutilleux, Adolphe. "Antoine Benoist: premier sculpteur en cire du roi Louis XIV (1632-1717)." *Revue de l'histoire de Versailles et de Seine-et-Oise (*1905): 81–97, 198–213.
Eck, Caroline van. *Art, Agency and Living Presence: From the Animated Image to the Excessive Object*. Boston; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015.
Ehrhart, Liliane. "Microcosme et immersion : Les teatrini de Gaetano Giulio Zumbo." Edited by Noémie Étienne and Nadia Radwan. *Culture & Musées. Muséologie et recherches sur la culture*, no. 32 (December 31, 2018): 53–79.
Elias, Norbert. *The Court Society*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1983.
Elisabeth, Léo. *La société martiniquaise aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles: 1664-1789*. Fort-de-France: Karthala, 2003.
"En Marge." *Le Temps*. February 12, 1906.
Étienne, Noémie, and Meredith Martin. "Introduction: Lifelike" *Journal18 3* (Spring 2017) https://www.journal18.org/past-issues/3-lifelike-spring-2017/.
Farago, Claire, ed. *Leonardo Da Vinci's Paragone: A Critical Interpretation with a New Edition of the Text in the Codex Urbinas*. Leiden: Brill, 1992.
Fehrenbach, Frank. "Coming Alive: Some Remarks on the Rise of 'Monochrome' Sculpture in the Renaissance." *Source* 30, no. 3 (2011) 47–55.
———. *Quasi vivo: Lebendigkeit in der italienischen Kunst der Frühen Neuzeit*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021.
Félibien, André. *Conférences de l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture, pendant l'année 1667*. Paris: Frederic Leonard, 1668.
———. *Entretiens sur les vies et les ouvrages des plus excellents peintres anciens et modernes, Livres I et II* [1666]. Edited by René Démoris. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2007.
———. "Le portrait du roy [1663]." In *Recueïl de descriptions de peintures et d'autres ouvrages faits pour le roy*, 68–98. Paris: Veuve de S. Marbre-Cramoisy, 1689.
Félibien, Michel. *Histoire de l'abbaye Royale de S. Denys En France*. Paris: Léonard, 1706.
Fend, Mechthild. "Order and Affect: The Museum of Dermatological Wax Moulages at the Hôpital Saint-Louis in Paris." In *The Agency of Display : Objects, Framings and Parerga*, edited by Johannes Grave, Valérie Kobi, and Caroline Van Eck, 79–98. Dresden: Sandstein, 2018.
Flood, Barry, David Joselit, Alexander Nagel, Alessandra Russo, Eugene Wang, Christopher Wood, and Mimi Yiengpruksawan. "Roundtable: The Global Before Globalization." *October* 133 (2010): 3–19.
Fogel, Michèle. *Les Cérémonies de l'information dans la France du XVIe au XVIIIe Siècle*. Paris: Fayard, 1989.

Fossier, François. *Les dessins du fonds Robert de Cotte de la Bibliothèque nationale de France: architecture et décor*. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1997.
Fraser-Cavassoni, Natasha. "The Time of Sugimoto." *Sotheby's Magazine*, December 19, 2018. https://www.sothebys.com/en/articles/the-time-of-sugimoto.
Freedberg, David. *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.
Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny [1919]." In *The Standard Edition o f the Complete Psychological Works o fSigmund Freud,* translated by James Strachey, 17:218–54. London: Hogarth Press, 1955.
Fried, Michael. *Menzel's Realism: Art and Embodiment in Nineteenth-Century Berlin*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2002.
Frostin, Charles. *Les Pontchartrain, ministres de Louis XIV Alliances et réseau d'influence sous l'Ancien Régime*. Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2006.
Fuhring, Peter, and Louis Marchesano, eds. *A Kingdom of Images: French Prints in the Age of Louis XIV, 1660-1715*. Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2015.
Furetière, Antoine. *Dictionaire universel*. 3 vols. Rotterdam: Arnout et Reinier Leers, 1690.
Gaborit, Jean-René, and Jack Ligot, eds. *Sculptures en cire de l'ancienne Egypte à l'art abstrait*. Notes et documents des musées de France 18. Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1987.
Gaehtgens, Thomas W. "La statue de Louis XIV et son programme iconographique." In *Place des Victoires: histoire, architecture, société*, 9–36. Éd. de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2003.
Gaehtgens, Thomas W. "Le Musée historique de Versailles." In *Lieux de mémoire*, edited by Pierre Nora, 2:1781–1801. Paris: Gallimard, 1988.
Geertz, Clifford. *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.
Gell, Alfred. *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1998.
———. "The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology." In *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*, edited by Jeremy Coote and Anthony Shelton, 40–67. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.
———. "Vogel's Net: Traps as Artworks and Artworks as Traps." *Journal of Material Culture* 1, no. 1 (1996): 15–38.
Germann, Georg. "Les dictionnaires de Félibien et de Baldinucci." *Revue d'esthétique: la naissance de la théorie de l'art en France: 1640 - 1720* 31/32 (1997): 253-258.
Germer, Stefan. *Art, pouvoir, discours: la carrière intellectuelle d'André Félibien dans la France de Louis XIV*. Translated by Aude Virey-Wallon, Paris, Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2016.
Giesey, Ralph E. *The Royal Funeral Ceremony in Renaissance France*. Geneva: Droz, 1960.
Goldstein, Claire. *Vaux and Versailles: The Appropriations, Erasures, and Accidents That Made Modern France*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.
Goudie, Allison. "The Wax Portrait Bust as Trompe-l'oeil? A Case Study of Queen Maria Carolina of Naples." *Oxford Art Journal* 36, no. 1 (2013): 55–74.
Grandin, Sarah. "The Bignon Commission's Measured Bodies: Inventing Typeface and Describing the Mechanical Arts under Louis XIV." *Journal18*, no. 9 *Field Notes* (Spring 2020). http://www.journal18.org/4814.
Graybill, Lela. "A Proximate Violence: Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors." *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 9, no. 2 (2010). http://www.19thcartworldwide.org/autumn10/a-proximate-violence.

Greenblatt, Stephen. “Resonance and Wonder.” In *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, edited by Steven D. Levine and Ivan Karp, 42–56. Washington: Smithsonian Press, 1991.

Grell, Chantal, and Christian Michel. *L’ecole des princes ou Alexandre disgracié : essai sur la mythologie monarchique de la France absolutiste*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1988.

Grootenboer, Hanneke. “Introduction: On the Substance of Wax.” *Oxford Art Journal* 36, no. 1 (2013): 1–12.

———. *Treasuring the Gaze : Intimate Vision in Late Eighteenth-Century Eye Miniatures*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.

Guérin, A. “Le mobilier du Château de Pontchartrain en 1689 et en 1721.” *Revue de l’histoire de Versailles et de Seine-et-Oise* (1936): 169–78.

Guéry, Alain. “État, classification sociale et compromis sous Louis XIV: la capitation de 1695.” *Annales* 41, no. 5 (1986): 1041–60.

Guiffrey, Jules, ed. *Comptes des bâtiments du roi sous le règne de Louis XIV.* 5 vols. Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1881.

———, ed. “Gabriel Benoist: privilège pour montrer en public le ‘Cercle de la cour.’” *Nouvelles Archives de l’art Français* 3, no. 6 (1890): 164–68.

———, ed. “Obsèques de Louis XII, François Ier et Henri II (1515-1569).” *Nouvelles Archives de l’art Français* (1879): 11–32.

Guiffrey, Jules, and Émile Champardon, eds. “Anécdotes inédites sur la vie et les moeurs des artistes français: Saisie de figures de cire par les maîtres et gardes des arts de peinture et sculpture de la ville de Paris.” *Courrier de l’art*, 1883, 271–74.

Hannoosh, Michèle. *Jules Michelet: Writing Art and History in Nineteenth-Century France*. University Park: Penn State University Press, 2019.

Harouel, Jean-Louis. “Actes Royaux.” In *Dictionnaire du Grand Siècle*, edited by François Bluche, 40. Paris: Fayard, 1990.

———. “Contrôleur Général des finances.” In *Dictionnaire du Grand Siècle*, edited by François Bluche, 402–3. Paris: Fayard, 1990.

Harouel, Jean-Louis, Jean Barbey, Eric Bournazel, and Jacqueline Thibaut-Payen. *Histoire des institutions de l’époque franque à la révolution*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1993.

Harrigan, Michael. *Veiled Encounters: Representing the Orient in Seventeenth-Century French Travel Literature*. Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2008.

Haskell, Francis. “The Early Numismatists.” In *History and Its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past*, 13–25. New York; London: Yale University Press, 1995.

Healey, Catherine. “Ennobled Lives: The Phélepeaux de Pontchartrain 1609-1727.” PhD Dissertation, John Hopkins University, 1987.

———. “The Gardens of Pontchartrain: Embellishment of an Ile de France Estate in the 1690s.” *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes* 18, no. 1 (1998): 52–65.

Heath, Michael. “Unholy Alliance: Valois and Ottomans.” *Renaissance Studies* 3, no. 3 (1989): 303–15.

Hecker, Sharon. “‘Sealed between Us’: Wax and the Role of the Viewer in Luciano Fabro’s ‘Tu.’” *Oxford Art Journal* 36, no. 1 (2013): 13–38.

Heinich, Nathalie. *Du peintre à l’artiste: artisans et académiciens à l’age classique*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1993.

Hellman, Mimi. “The Joy of Sets: The Uses of Seriality in the French Interior.” In *Furnishing the Eighteenth Century: What Furniture Can Tell Us About the European and American Past*, edited by Dena Goodman and Kathryn Norberg, 129–53. New York; London: Routledge, 2006.

Hodson, Daren. “A Would-Be Turk: Louis XIV in Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme.” *Seventeenth-Century French Studies* 32, no.1 (2010): 90–101.
Hoffmann, George P. “Portrayal from Life, or to Life? The Essais’s Living Effigy.” *French Forum* 25, no. 2 (2000): 145–63.
Hogg, Chloé. *Absolutist Attachments: Emotion, Media, and Absolutism in Seventeenth-Century France*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2019.
Holly, Michael Ann. *The Melancholy Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.
Huet, Marie Helene. *Monstrous Imagination*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.
Hunter, Mary. “‘Effroyable réalisme’: Wax, Femininity, and the Madness of Realist Fantasies.” *RACAR* 33, no. 1/2 (2008): 43–58.
Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.
Isherwood, Robert M. “Entertainment in Parisian Fairs in the Eighteenth Century.” *Journal of Modern History* 53, no. 1 (1981): 24–48.
———. *Farce and Fantasy: Popular Entertainment in Eighteenth-Century Paris*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.
Jacobs, Fredrika. *The Living Image in Renaissance Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
Jacquiot, Josèphe. “Les portraits de Louis XIV gravés sur les médailles des séries métalliques uniformes.” *Bulletin de la societé nationale des antiquaires de France*, 1967, 185–201.
———. *Médailles et Jetons de Louis XIV, d’après Le Manuscrit de Londres*. Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1968.
Jaucourt, Louis, Chevalier de. “Cire (Hist. Anc. & Mod.).” *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d’Alembert, 3:390–93. Paris: Briasson et al., 1751.
———. “Galérie.” In *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d’Alembert, 7:441–43. Paris: Briasson et al., 1772 1751.
Jentsch, Ernst. “On the Psychology of the Uncanny [1906].” *Angelaki* 2, no. 1 (1997): 7–16.
Jobert, Louis. *La Science des médailles, pour l’instruction de ceux qui commencent à s’appliquer à la connoissance des médailles antiques et modernes*. Paris: L. Lucas, 1692.
Johannesson, Kurt. “The Portrait of the Prince as a Rhetorical Gesture.” In *Iconography, Propoganda, and Legitimation*, edited by Allan Ellenius, 11–36. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
Johnson, Geraldine A. “Photographing Sculpture, Sculpting Photography.” In *Photography and Sculpture: The Art Object in Reproduction*, edited by Sarah Hamill and Megan R. Luke, 277–91. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2017.
Jollet, Etienne. *Jean & François Clouet*. Paris: Lagune, 1997.
Jollet, Étienne. “The Monument to Louis XIV at the Place Vendôme (1699) as a Technical Achievement: A Question of Interest.” *Art History* 39, no. 2 (2016): 318–39.
Jones, Colin. *Paris: Biography of a City*. London: Penguin Books, 2006.
———. “The King’s Two Teeth.” *History Workshop Journal* 65, no. 1 (2008): 79–95.
———. *Versailles*. New York: Basic Books, 2018.
Jones, Mark. “L’histoire métallique de Louis XIV.” In *Les Médailles de Louis XIV et leur livre*, edited by Yvan Loskoutoff, 53–76. Mont-Saint-Aignan: Presses universitaires de Rouen et du Havre, 2016.
Jossier, S. “Antoine Benoist de Joigny, peintre ordinaire et premier sculpteur en cire du roi Louis XIV.” *Bulletin de la societé des sciences historiques et naturelles de l’Yonne* (1862): 10–26.

Jouvet, Ludovic. “Médailleurs de papier: les graveurs et les livres de médailles de Louis XIV.” In *Les Médailles de Louis XIV et leur livre*, edited by Yvan Loskoutoff, 137–49. Mont-Saint-Aignan: Presses universitaires de Rouen et du Havre, 2016.

Julien, Philippe. “Toward the Real.” In *Jacques Lacan’s Return to Freud: The Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary*, translated by Devra Beck Simiu, 105–52. New York: New York University Press, 1994.

Kantorowicz, Ernst. *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaval Political Theology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

Kaplan, Louis. “Photograph/Death Mask: Jean-Luc Nancy’s Recasting of the Photographic Image.” *Journal of Visual Culture* 9, no. 1 (May 2010): 45–62.

Kaplow, Lauren. “Redefining Imagines: Ancestor Masks and Political Legitimacy in the Rhetoric of New Men.” *Mouseion* 8, no. 3 (2008): 409–16.

Keating, Jessica, and Ellery E. Foutch. “Introduction: Sculpture, Animacy, Petrification.” *Sculpture Journal* 32, no. 2 (2023): 147–55.

Kettering, Sharon. “Gift-Giving and Patronage in Early Modern France.” *French History* 2, no. 2 (1988): 131–51.

Kimball, Fiske. *The Creation of the Rococo*. Philadelphia: Philadephia Museum of Art, 1943.

King, Elizabeth. “Notes from the Field: Anthropomorphism.” *The Art Bulletin* 94, no. 1 (March 2012): 11–13.

Knoppers, Laura Lunger. *Constructing Cromwell: Ceremony, Portrait, and Print 1645-1661*. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Koerner, Joseph. “Impossible Objects: Bosch’s Realism.” *Res* 46 (Autumn 2004): 73–97.

Kopp, Édouard. “Bouchardon’s Drawings for Medals and ‘Jetons’: Making History at the Petite Académie (1737-62).” *Master Drawings* 47, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 191–220.

Kopytoff, Igor. “The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process.” In *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, edited by Arjun Appadurai, 64–92. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

La Bruyère, Jean de. *“Les Caracteres de Theophraste traduits du Grec. avec les caracteres ou les moeurs de ce siecle et la clef, en marge & par ordre alphabetique*. 2 vols. Michallet, Estienne, 1697.

———. *Les caractères ou Les moeurs de ce siècle*[1688]. Edited by Antoine Adam. Paris: Gallimard, 2005.

La Forest dArmaillé, Solène de. “Le procès-verbal de la destruction des sceaux de Louis XIII et de la fabrication des Grands sceaux de Louis XIV.” Trésors de cire: Sceaux et actes scellés de la Bibliothèque nationale de France, September 20, 2016. https://sceau.hypotheses.org/592.

La Gorce, Jerôme de. *Dans l’atelier des menus plaisirs du roi: spéctacles, fêtes et cérémonies aux XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles*. Paris: Artlys, 2010.

———. “Les pompes funèbres de Paris et de Saint-Denis sous le règne de Louis XIV: L’avènement de la grandiloquence.” In *Le Roi est mort: Louis XIV-1715*, edited by Gérard Sabatier and Béatrice Saule, 92–101. Paris: Tallandier, 2015.

———. “Ménestrier et Berain.” In *Claude-François Ménestrier: Les Jésuites et le monde des images*, edited by Gérard Sabatier, 195–204. Grenoble: Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 2009.

La Gravette de Mayolas. *Recueil de Lettres En Vers et En Prose, Dédiées Au Roy, Par Le Sr Lagravète.* Paris: G. Adam, Pierre Colin, 1669.

La magnifique pompe funebre et le service solemnel qui s’est fait dans l’abbaye royale de Saint Germain des Prez, pour le repos de l’ame de tres-haute, tres-excellente & tres-pieuse princesse

Marie Therese d'Autriche, infante d'Espagne, reyne de France et de Navarre. Avec l'explication des figures & des devises. Paris: De l'imprimerie de François Muguet, 1683.
La Moureyere, Françoise de. "A Propos de Médaillons Sculptés Représentant Monseigneur, Louis de France, Dit 'le Grand Dauphin' (1661-1711) et Autres Portraits." *La Tribune de l'Art* (January 17, 2018). https://www.latribunedelart.com/a-propos-de-medaillons-sculptes-representant-monseigneur-louis-de-france-dit-le-grand-dauphin-1661.
La Restauration Du Portrait de Cire, 2009. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpukvtYO-XQ.
Lafont, Anne. "How Skin Color Became a Racial Marker: Art Historical Perspectives on Race." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 51 (2017): 89.
———. *L'art et la race: l'Africain (tout) contre l'œil des Lumières*. Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2019.
Lagrange-Chancel, Louis de. "Portrait et gestes du roi Louis quatorze décédé le premier septembre 1715, agé de 77 ans, ou ses vertus et ses vices sont naifvement depaints." Edited by A. Dujarric-Descombes. *Revue Des Etudes Historiques* 85 (1919): 267–83.
Lami, Stanislas. *Dictionnaire des sculpteurs de l'école française*. Vol. 2. 8 vols. Paris: H. Champion, 1906.
Lamoignon de Basville, Nicolas de. *Plaidoié pour le Sr Girard Vanopstal un des recteurs de l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture*. Paris: Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1668.
Landweber, Julia. "Celebrating Identity: Charting the History of Turkish Masquerade in Early Modern France." *Romance Studies* 23, no. 3 (November 2005): 175–89.
Larmour, Ronda. "A Merchant Guild of Sixteenth-Century France: The Grocers of Paris." *The Economic History Review* 20, no. 3 (1967): 467–81.
Le Breton, Gaston. *Essai historique sur la sculpture en cire*. Rouen: Imprimerie Espérance Cagniard, 1894.
Le Comte, Florent. *Cabinet des singularités d'architecture, peinture, sculpture et gravure, ou introduction à la connoissance des plus beaux arts*. 3 vols. Paris: Estienne Picart &Nicolas Le Clerc, 1699.
Leja, Michael. "Peirce, Visuality, and Art." *Representations*, no. 72 (2000): 97–122.
Lemée, François. *Traité des statues*. Paris: Arnould Seneuze, 1688.
Lemire, Michel. *Artistes et Mortels*. Paris: Chabaud, 1990.
Lemoine, Pierre. "Les logements de Saint-Simon au château de Versailles." *Cahiers Saint-Simon* 12, no. 1 (1984): 17–35.
Lenoir, Alexandre. *Musée des monuments français, ou description des statues bas-reliefs et tombeaux des hommes et des femmes célèbres, pour servir à l'histoire de France et à celle de l'art*. Vol. 5. 8 vols. Paris: Guilleminet, 1806.
Leroux, Flavie. *Les maîtresses du roi: de Henri IV à Louis XIV*. Ceyzérieu: Champ Vallon, 2020.
Lichtenstein, Jacqueline. *The Blind Spot: An Essay on the Relations Between Painting and Sculpture in the Modern Age*. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008.
———. *The Eloquence of Color: Rhetoric and Painting in the French Classical Age*. Berkeley University of California Press, 1993.
Lichtenstein, Jacqueline, and Christian Michel, eds. *Les conférences au temps d'Henry Testelin, 1648-1681*. 2 vols. Paris: École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, 2006.
———, eds. *Les conférences1712-1746*. 2 vols. Paris: École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, 2010.
Lignereux, Yann. *Les Rois imaginaires: une histoire visuelle de la monarchie de Charles VIII à Louis XIV*. Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2016.
Liste Des Tableaux et Des Ouvrages de Sculpture , Exposez Dans La Grande Gallerie Du Louvre, Par Messieurs Les Peintres, & Sculpteurs de l'Académie Royale, En La Presente Année 1699. Paris: Jean Baptiste Coignard, 1699.

Lister, Martin. *A Journey to Paris in the Year 1698*. London: Jacob Tonson, 1699.
Loh, Maria H. *Still Lives: Death, Desire, and the Portrait of the Old Master*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015.
———. *Titian Remade: Repetition and the Transformation of Early Modern Italian Art*. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2007.
———. *Titian's Touch : Art, Magic and Philosophy*. London: Reaktion Books, 2019.
Loisy, Jean de, and Alfred Pacquement. *Sugimoto Versailles: Surface de Révolution*. Paris: Flammarion, 2018.
Love, Ronald S. "Monarchs, Merchants, and Missionaries in Early Modern Asia: The Missions Étrangères in Siam, 1662-1684." *The International History Review* 21, no. 1 (March 1999): 1–27.
Macon, Gustave. *Les arts dans la maison de Condé*. Paris: Maison J. Rouam et Cie, 1903.
Maral, Alexandre. *Girardon (1628-1715): Le Sculpteur de Louis XIV*. Paris: Arthena, 2015.
———. "'La Renommée du roi' de Domenico Guidi." *Versalia* 12 (2010): 145-57.
———. "Le Portrait en cire par Benoist. Louis XIV plus vrai que nature." *Château de Versailles: de l'ancien régime à nos jours* 19 (2015): 36–38.
Mariette, Pierre Jean. *Catalogue des tableaux, des bustes, et autres ouvrages de sculpture en marbre, et des bronzes, du cabinet de M. Le Comte de Pontchartrain*. Paris: P.J. Mariette, 1747.
Marin, Louis. *Portrait of the King*. Translated by Martha Houle. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988.
———. *Sublime Poussin*. Translated by Catherine Porter. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.
———. "The Pathetic Body and Its Doctor: The 'Medical Diary of Louis XIV.'" In *Food for Thought*, translated by Mette Hjort, 218–42. Baltimore; London: John Hopkins University Press, 1989.
———. "The Portrait of the King's Glorious Body." In *Food for Thought*, translated by Mette Hjort, 189–217. Baltimore; London: John Hopkins University Press, 1989.
Marolles, Michel : de. *Le livre des peintres et graveurs*. Edited by Georges Duplessis. Paris: Paul Daffis, 1872.
Martin, Meredith. "Mirror Reflections: Louis XIV, Phra Narai, and the Material Culture of Kingship." *Art History.* 38, no. 4 (2015): 652–67.
———. "The Ascendancy of the Interior in Eighteenth-Century French Architectural Theory." In *Architectural Space in Eighteenth-Century Europe: Constructing Idenitites and Interiors*, edited by Denise Baxter and Meredith Martin, 15–34. Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2010.
Martin, Meredith, and Gillian Weiss. *The Sun King at Sea: Maritime Art and Galley Slavery in Louis XIV's France*. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2022.
———. "'Turks' on Display during the Reign of Louis XIV" *L'Esprit Créateur* 53, no. 4 (2013): 98–112.
Martinet, Jean. "Portrait de sa Majesté, fait par Monsieur Martinet." In *La Galerie des peintures ou recueil des portraits et éloges en vers et en prose*, 7–19. Paris: Charles de Sercy, 1663.
Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* [1925]. Translated by W. D. Halls. New York: W.W. Norton, 1990.
Maza, Sarah C. *Private Lives and Public Affairs: The Causes Célèbres of Prerevolutionary France*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
Mazel, Claire. *La mort et l'éclat: Monuments funéraires parisiens du Grand Siècle*. Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2019.
Mazière de Monville, Simon-Philippe. *La Vie de Pierre Mignard, premier peintre du roy, avec le poëme de Moliere sur les peintures du Val-de-Grace*. Paris: Jean Boudout, Jacques Guerin, 1730.

McClure, Ellen. *The Logic of Idolatry in Seventeenth-Century French Literature*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2020.
McClure, Ellen M. *Sunspots and the Sun King: Sovereignty and Mediation in Seventeenth-Century France*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006.
McPhee, Sarah. *Bernini's Beloved: A Portrait of Costanza Piccolomini*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012.
McTighe, Sheila. *Representing from Life in Seventeenth-Century Italy*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020.
Mélèse, Pierre. *Un homme de lettres au temps du grand roi, Donneau de Visé: fondateur du Mercure galant*. Paris: Droz, 1936.
Ménestrier, Claude-François. *Histoire du roy Louis Le Grand, par les medailles, emblèmes, devises, jettons, inscriptions, armoires et autres monuments publics*. Paris: Nolin, 1689.
———. *Des décorations funèbres, ou il est amplement traité des tentures, des lumières, des mausolées, catafalques, inscriptions et autres ornemens funèbres*. Paris: Chez Robert J. B. de La Caille, 1683.
Meyer, Daniel. "L'ameublement de la chambre de Louis XIV à Versailles de 1701 à nos jours." *Gazette Des Beaux-Arts* 113, no. 1441 (1989): 79–104.
Meyer, Véronique. "Florent Le Comte et la gravure." *Nouvelles de l'estampe*, 261 (January 2018): 44–62.
———. "Le Portrait gravé sous le règne de Louis XIV." In *Visages du Grand Siècle: Le Portrait français sous le règne de Louis XIV 1660-1715*, edited by Emmanuel Coquery and Alain Daguerre De Hureaux, 163-180. Paris: Somogy, 1997.
Michaels, Walter Benn. "Photographs and Fossils." In *Photography Theory*, edited by James Elkins, 431–50. New York: Routledge, 2007.
Michaud, Philippe-Alain. *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion*. New York: Zone Books, 2004.
Michel, Christian. *The Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture: The Birth of the French School, 1648–1793*. Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2018.
Michelet, Jules. *Louis XIV et le duc de Bourgogne*. Histoire de France. Paris: Charnerot, 1862.
Miller, Daniel. "Materiality: An Introduction." In *Materiality*, edited by Daniel Miller, 1–50. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.
Milovanovic, Nicolas, and Alexandre Maral, eds. *Louis XIV: L'Homme et le Roi*. Paris: Skira, 2009.
Miraulmont, Pierre de. *Traicté de la Chancellerie, avec un recueil des chanceliers, & gardes des sceaux de France.* Paris: F. Huby, 1610.
Molinier, Émile. *Les Meubles Du Moyen Age & de la Renaissance. les sculptures microscopiques. les cires*. Paris: E.Lévy, 1897.
Montagu, Jennifer. *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.
Montaiglon, Anatole de, ed. *Procès-verbaux de l'Académie Royale de peinture et de sculpture (1648-1792)*. 10 vols. Paris: J. Baur, 1875.
Montaiglon, Anatole de, and Jules Guiffrey, eds. "Antoine Benoit, sculpteur en cire. lettres de relief de dérogeance a noblesse (1706), et débat sur un portrait de Mademoiselle de Noailles (1711)." *Nouvelles Archives de I'art Francais* (1872): 303–6.
Mori, Masahiro. "The Uncanny Valley [1970]." In *The Monster Theory Reader*, edited by Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, 89–94. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020.
Mosley, James. "Médailles sur les principaux évènements du règne de Louis Le Grand (1702): The Making of the Book." *Bulletin Du Bibliophile* 2 (2008): 296–350.

———. “Notes sur la fabrication du livre.” In *Les Médailles de Louis XIV et leur livre*, edited and translated by Yvan Loskoutoff, 129–36. Mont-Saint-Aignan: Presses universitaires de Rouen et du Havre, 2016.

Moxey, Keith. “Reading the ‘Reality Effect.’” In *Pictura Quasi Fictura: Die Rolle Des Bildes in Der Erforschung von Alltag Und Sachkultur Des Mittelalters Und Der Frühen Neuzei*, edited by Gerhard Jaritz, 15–21. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademic der Wissenschaften, 1996.

Mukerji, Chandra. “Costume and Character in the Ottoman Empire: Dress as Social Agent.” In *Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories, 1500–1800*, edited by Paula Findlen, 151–69. New York: Routledge, 2013.

———. *Territorial Ambitions and the Gardens of Versailles*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

———. “The Archives Made Me Do It.” *Qualitative Sociology* 43, no. 3 (September 2020): 305–16.

Munoz, Sarah. “Le portrait royal sculpté en médaillon en France Aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles: de François I à Louis XIV.” *Les Cahiers de Framespa: nouveaux champs de l’histoire sociale* 11 (2012). https://journals.openedition.org/framespa/1953.

Naginski, Erika. *Sculpture and Enlightenment*. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2009.

Nelson, Robert S. “Descartes’s Cow and Other Domestications of the Visual.” In *Visuality before and beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*, edited by Robert S Nelson, 1–21. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Nemeitz, Joachim Christoph. *Séjour de Paris,*. Leiden: J. Van Abcoude, 1727.

Nicholson, Kathleen. “Fashioning Fashionability.” In *Fashion Prints in the Age of Louis XIV: Interpreting the Art of Elegance*, edited by Kathryn Norberg and Sandra Rosenbaum, 15–54. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2014.

Nivelon, Claude. *Vie de Charles Le Brun et description détaillée de ses ouvrages*. Edited by Lorenzo Pericolo. Geneva: Droz, 2004.

Nochlin, Linda. *Realism*. London: Penguin Books, 1990.

Nolhac, Pierre de. “Un nouveau portrait de Louis XIV au musée de Versailles.” *La Revue de l’art Ancien et Moderne* 200, no. 34 (November 10, 1913): 321–32.

———. *Versailles and the Trianons*. Toronto: Musson, 2018.

Norberg, Kathryn. “Louis XIV: King of Fashion?” In *Fashion Prints in the Age of Louis XIV: Interpreting the Art of Elegance*, edited by Kathryn Norberg, Sandra Rosenbaum, and Françoise Tétart-Vittu, 135–65. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2014.

Norberg, Kathryn, and Sandra Rosenbaum, eds. *Fashion Prints in the Age of Louis XIV: Interpreting the Art of Elegance*. Texas Tech University Press, 2014.

Olson, Todd. “The Street Has Its Masters: Caravaggio and the Socially Marginal.” In *Caravaggio : Realism, Rebellion, Reception*, edited by Genevieve Warwick, 69–81. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006.

Orléans, Charlotte-Elisabeth. *Correspondance de Madame, Duchesse d’Orléans*. Edited by Ernst Jaeglé. Translated by Ernst Jaglé. Vol. 1. 3 vols. Paris: Émile Bouillon, 1890.

Pace, Claire. *Félibien’s Life of Poussin*. London: A. Zwemmer, 1981.

Pacichelli, Giovanni Battista. *Memorie de’viaggi per l’Evropa Christiana, scritte a diversi in occasion de’suoi ministeri dall’abate Gio: Battista Pacichelli*. Naples: Giacomo Raillard, 1685.

Panzanelli, Roberta, ed. *Ephemeral Bodies: Wax Sculpture and the Human Figure*. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008.

———. “Introduction: The Body in Wax, The Body of Wax.” In *Ephemeral Bodies: Wax Sculpture and the Human Figure*, edited by Roberta Panzanelli. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008.

Pascal, Blaise. *Pascal’s Apology for Religion: Extracted from the Pensées*. Edited by H.F. Stewart. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Patin, Guy. *Lettres de Gui Patin.* Edited by J.-H Reveillé-Parise. Paris: Chez J.-B. Baillière, 1846.

Peabody, Sue. *There Are No Slaves in France: The Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancien Régime*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Péan, Anne. “Les décors des pompes funèbres en France (1643-1683): naissance d’un genre.” In *Actes Du Ve congrès national d’archéologie et d’histoire de l’art*. Bordeaux: Publications de l’Institut national d’histoire de l’art, 1-9. http://inha.revues .org/2467.

Peirce, Charles S. “Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs.” In *Semiotics: An Introductory Antholog*, edited by Robert E. Innis, 1–23. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.

Perez, Stanis. *La Santé de Louis XIV: Une biohistoire du roi-soleil*. Paris: Perrin, 2010.

———. “Les rides d’Apollon : L’évolution des portraits de Louis XIV.” *Revue d’histoire Moderne & Contemporaine* 50, no. 3 (2003): 62–95.

Perkinson, Stephen. *The Likeness of the King: A Prehistory of Portraiture in Late Medieval France*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Perrault, Charles. *Les hommes illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce Siecle. avec leurs portraits au naturel*. Paris: Antoine Dezallier, 1696.

Petitfils, Jean-Christian. *Madame de Montespan*. Fayard, 2014.

Pichet, Isabelle. *Le Tapissier et les dispositifs discursifs au salon (1750-1789): expographie, critique et opinion*. Paris: Hermann, 2012.

Piles, Roger de. *Abrégé de la vie des peintres*. Paris: J. Estienne, 1715.

———. *Cours de peinture par principes*[1708]. Paris: Gallimard, 1989.

Pointon, Marcia. “Casts, Imprints, and the Deathliness of Things: Artifacts at the Edge.” *The Art Bulletin* 96, no. 2 (July 2014): 170–95.

Pomet, Pierre. *Histoire générale des drogues*. Paris: chez Jean-Baptiste Loyson et Augustin Pillon, 1694.

Pomian, Krzysztof. *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500-1800*. Translated by Elizabeth Wiles-Portier. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990.

Pommier, Edouard. *Théories du portrait: de la Renaissance aux Lumières*. Paris: Gallimard, 1998.

Potts, Alex. *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

Poussin, Nicolas. *Correspondance de Nicolas Poussin publiée d’après les originaux*. Edited by Charles Jouanny. Paris: J. Schemit, 1911.

Préaud, Maxime. *Les effets du soleil: almanachs du règne de Louis XIV*. Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1995.

“Premières acquisitions du Musée du Grand Siècle.” *L’Objet d’art,* 57 *(*October 2020): 20-22.

Proantic. “Grand Médaillon Portrait Louis XIV.” Catalogue d’antiquités. Accessed January 11, 2020. https://www.proantic.com/display.php?mode=obj&id=53724.

Rigault, Nicolas. *Histoire universelle de Jacques Auguste de Thou*. Vol. 10. 15 vols. The Hague: Jean Louis Brand Muller, 1742.

Roberts, Jennifer L. “The Currency of Ornament: Machine-Lathed Anticounterfeiting Patterns and the Portability of Value.” In *Histories of Ornament: From Global to Local*, edited by Gülru Necipoğlu and Alina Payne. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016.

———. “The Veins of Pennsylvania: Benjamin Franklin’s Nature-Print Currency.” *Grey Room* 69 (2018): 50–79.
———. *Transporting Visions: The Movement of Images in Early America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014.
Robinet, Charles. *Lettre En vers à Madame*. Paris: C. Chenault; F. Muguet, 1669.
Rothschild, James de, ed. *Continuateurs de Loret*. 3 vols. Paris: Damascène Morgand et C. Fatout, 1881.
Roujon, Henry. “Figure de cire.” *Le Figaro*, July 11, 1908.
Roukhomovsky, Bernard. “Le Montreur de Caractères: La Bruyère et l’imginaire de La Foire.” In *La Bruyère:le métier du moraliste*, edited by Jean Dagen, Élisabeth Bourguinat, and Marc Escola. Paris: Champion, 1996.
Rule, John C., and Ben S. Trotter. *A World of Paper: Louis XIV, Colbert de Torcy, and the Rise of the Information State*. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2014.
Rushforth, Brett. *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012.
Sabatier, Gérard. “La Gloire du Roi. Iconographie de Louis XIV de 1661à 1672.” *Histoire, Économie et Societé* 19, no. 4 (2000): 527–60.
———. “‘Le Portrait de César, c’est César’: lieux et mise en scène du portrait du roi dans la France de Louis XIV.” In *L’image du roi de François Ier à Louis XIV*, edited by Thomas W Gaehtgens and Nicole Hochner, 209–44. Paris: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, 2006.
———. “Le Roi est mort.” In *Le Roi est mort: Louis XIV-1715*, edited by Gérard Sabatier and Béatrice Saule, Tallandier., 16–31. Paris, 2015.
———. *Versailles, ou, La figure du roi*. Paris: Albin Michel, 1999.
Sabatier, Gérard, and Béatrix Saule, eds. *Le roi est mort: Louis XIV, 1715*. Paris: Tallandier, 2015.
Saint-Simon, Louis de Rouvroy. *Mémoires complets et authentiques du duc de Saint-Simon, sur le siècle de Louis XIV et la Régence*. Edited by Pierre-Adolphe Chéruel. 20 vols. Paris: LHachette, 1856. http://rouvroy.medusis.com/.
———. *Saint-Simon at Versailles*. Edited by Lucy Norton. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1980.
San Juan, Rose Marie. “Gaetano Zumbo’s Anatomical Wax Model: From Skull to Cranium.” In *Imagining the Brain: Episodes in the History of Brain Research*, edited by William F. MacLehose and Chiara Ambrosio, 75–105. Cambridge: Elsevier, 2018.
Sanlecque, Louis. *Poesies heroiques, morales et satyriques*. Harlem: Van-den-Dael, 1696.
Sapir, Itay. *Ténèbres sans leçons: esthétique et épistémologie de la peinture ténébriste romaine 1595-1610*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2012.
Sarmant, Thierry. *Le cabinet des médailles de La bibliothèque nationale: 1661-1848*. Paris: école des chartes, 1994.
———. *Les demeures du soleil: Louis XIV, Louvois et La Surintendance des bâtiments du roi*. Paris: Champ Vallon, 2003.
———. *Louis XIV: Homme et Roi*. Paris: Tallandier, 2012.
Sarmant, Thierry, and Mathieu Stoll. *Régner et Gouverner: Louis XIV et ses ministres*. Paris: Perrin, 2010.
Sato, Kuriko. “Hiroshi Sugimoto Summons the Ghosts of Celebrities of All Ages for an ‘Evocation’ Ceremony in Versailles.” *RealTokyo*, December 19, 2018. https://www.realtokyo.co.jp/en/interview/hiroshi-sugimoto-sugimoto-versailles-surface-of-revolution/.
Sauval, Henri. *Histoire et recherches des antiquités de la ville de Paris*. Paris: chez Charles Moette et Jacques Chardon, 1724.

Savary des Brûlons, Jacques, and Philémon-Louis Savary. *Dictionnaire universel de commerce contenant tout ce qui concerne le commerce qui se fait dans les quatre parties du monde ...* 3 vols. Paris: J. Estienne, 1723.

Savot, Louis, and François Blondel. *L'Architecture françoise des bastimens particuliers*. Paris: Chez La Veuve & C. Clouzier, 1685.

Schlosser, Julius von. *Histoire du portrait en cire*. Translated by Edouard Pommier. Paris: Macula, 1997.

———. "History of Portraiture in Wax." Translated by James Michael Loughridge in *Ephemeral Bodies: Wax Sculpture and the Human Figure*, edited by Roberta Panzanelli, 171–314. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2008.

———. *Storia Del ritratto in cera : un saggio*. Edited by Andrea Daninos. Translated by Davide Tortorella. Milan: Officina Libraria, 2011.

———. *Tote Blicke: Geschichte Der Porträtbildnerei in Wachs. Ein Versuch*. Edited by Thomas Medicus. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 1995.

Schnapper, Antoine. *Curieux du Grand Siècle: collections et collectionneurs dans la France du XVIIe Siècle*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Paris: Flammarion, 1994.

———. *Le métier de peintre au Grand Siècle*. Paris: Gallimard, 2004.

Scholar, Richard. *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe: Encounters with a Certain Something*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Schuwey, Christophe. *Un entrepreneur des lettres au XVIIe siècle: Donneau de Visé, de Molière au Mercure galant*. Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2020.

Schwartz, Vanessa R. "Museums and Mass Spectacle: The Musée Grévin as a Monument to Modern Life." *French Historical Studies* 19, no. 1 (1995): 7–26.

Scott, Katie. *Becoming Property: Art Theory and Law in Early Modern France*. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2018.

———. *The Rococo Interior: Decoration and Social Spaces in Early Eighteenth-Century Paris*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

Senkevitch, Tatiana V. "The Portrait of the King's Minister and the State of Collaboration." *Early Modern French Studies* 37, no. 1 (2015): 29–48.

Sévigné, Marie de Rabutin-Chantal marquise de. *Lettres de Madame de Sévigné*. Edited by Louis Jean-Nicolas Monmerqué. 12 vols. Paris: L. Hachette et cie, 1862.

Sgard, Jean. "Histoire journaliere de Paris. 1716 [1717]." In *Dictionnaire des journaux, 1600-1789*, edited by Jean Sgard. Paris: Universitas, 1991. https://dictionnaire-journaux.gazettes18e.fr/journal/0612-histoire-journaliere-de-paris.

Shifrin, Susan, and Andrew R. Walkling. "'Idylle En Musique': Performative Hybridity and the Duchess of Mazarin as Visual, Textual, and Musical Icon." In *"The Wandering Life I Led": Essays on Hortense Mancini, Duchess Mazarin and Early Modern Women's Border Crossings*, edited by Susan Shifrin, 48–101. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009.

SIGILLA: Base numérique des sceaux conservés en France. "Louis XIV- Grand Sceau." Accessed July 11, 2020. http://www.sigilla.org/fr/sgdb/sceau-type/12867.

Smith, David R. "Realism and the Boundaries of Genre in Dutch Art." *Art History* 32, no. 1 (2009): 78–114.

Sotheby's France. *Bel ameublement et objets d'art*. Paris: Sotheby's France SA, 2002.

Soulié, Eudore. *Louis XIV, Médaillon en cire par Antoine Benoist*. Versailles: Imprimerie de Montalant-Bougleux, 1856.

Sourches, Louis François du Bouchet marquis de. *Mémoires du marquis de Sourches sur le règne de Louis XIV*. 13 vols. Paris: Hachette, 1882.

Spencer, Justina. “Habits and Habillement in Seventeenth-Century Voyages: Georges de La Chappelle’s Recueil Des Divers Portraits Des Principals Dames de La Porte Du Grand Turc.” In *Artes Apodemicae and Early Modern Travel Culture, 1550–1700*, edited by Karl Enenkel and Jan L. Jong, 312–34. Boston: Brill, 2019.

Stara, Alexandra. “National History as Biography: Alexandre Lenoir’s Museum of French Monuments.” In *Museums and Biographies : Stories, Objects, Identities*, edited by Kate Hill, 265–76. Woodbridge: Boydell, 2012.

Stedman, Allison. *Rococo Fiction in France, 1600-1715: Seditious Frivolity*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2013.

Stein, Henri. “Nouveaux documents sur le peintre sculpteur Antoine Benoist.” *Réunion des sociétés des beaux-arts des départements* 19 (1895): 797–800.

Stewart, Susan. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993.

Stoichita, Victor. *A Short History of the Shadow*. Translated by Anne-Marie Glasheen. London: Reaktion Books, 1997.

Strunck, Christina. *Britain and the Continent 1660–1727: Political Crisis and Conflict Resolution in Mural Paintings at Windsor, Chelsea, Chatsworth, Hampton Court and Greenwich*. Walter de Gruyter, 2021.

Sturdy, David J. *Science and Social Status: The Members of the Academie Des Sciences 1666-1750*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995.

Sullivan, Donald D. “Maurists.” In *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, edited by William M. Johnston, 837–38. London: Routledge, 2013.

Swan, Claudia. “Ad Vivum, Naer Het Leven , from the Life: Defining a Mode of Representation.” *Word & Image* 11, no. 4 (1995): 353–72.

Taddia, Elena. “Une teste de cire anatomique.” *Bulletin du Centre de recherche du château de Versailles. Sociétés de cour en Europe, XVIe-XIXe siècle - European Court Societies, 16th to 19th Centuries (*September 9, 2016). https://doi.org/10.4000/crcv.13864.

Tallemant, Paul. “Préface [1702].” In *Histoire critique des journaux*, edited by Denis François Camusat, 180–97. Amsterdam: Bernard, 1734.

Tassin, René Prosper. *Histoire littéraire de la congrégation de Saint-Maur, ordre de S. Benoît*. Paris: Humblot, 1770.

Tessier, Georges. “L’audience du sceau.” *Bibliothèque de l’école des Chartres* 109 (1951): 51–95.

Thépaut-Cabasset, Corinne. “Fashion Encounters: The ‘Siamoise,’ or the Impact of the Great Embassy on Textile Design in Paris in 1687.” In *Global Textile Encounters*, edited by Marie-Louise Nosch, Zhao Feng, and Lotika Varadarajan, 165–70. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014.

Thuillier, Jacques. “Pour André Félibien.” *XVIIe Siècle* 138 (March 1983): 67–95.

Tomaini, Thea. *The Corpse as Text: Disinterment and Antiquarian Enquiry, 1700-1900*. Boydell & Brewer, 2017.

Torche, Antoine. “Dialogue d’un curieux & d’un peintre.” In *La Toilette galante de l’Amour*, 35–43. Paris: Estienne Loyson, 1670.

Tsikounas, Myriam. “De la gloire à l’émotion, Louis XIV en costume de sacre par Hyacinthe Rigaud.” *Sociétés & Représentations* 26, no. 2 (November 2008): 57–70.

Turel, Noa. “Living Pictures: Rereading ‘Au Vif,' 1350-1550.” *Gesta*, 50, no. 2 (2011): 163–82.

Utro, Chiara. “Gaëtano Giulio Zumbo à la cour des derniers Médicis.” *Hypotheses* 20 (June 2016). https://124revue.hypotheses.org/2382

Vallot, Antoine, Antoine d’Aquin, and Guy-Crescent Fagon. *Journal de Santé de Louis XIV*. Edited by Stanis Perez. Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 2004.

Vanhaelen, Angela. “Boredom’s Threshold: Dutch Realism.” *Art History* 35, no. 5 (2012): 1005–23.
———. *The Moving Statues of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam: Automata, Waxworks, Fountains, Labyrinths*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2022.
Vasari, Giorgio. *Vasari on Technique*. Edited by G. Baldwin Brown, translated by Louisa S Maclehose. London: J.M. Dent, 1907.
Vaudin, Eugène. “Antoine Benoist de Joigny: peintre et sculpteur en cire de Louis XIV.” *Bulletin de la societé des sciences historiques et naturelles de l’Yonne.* 40 (1886): 313–38.
Velden, Hugo van der. *The Donor’s Image: Gerard Loyet and the Votive Portraits of Charles the Bold*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2000.
Vincent, Monique. *Le Mercure galant: présentation de la première revue féminine d’information et de culture, 1672-1710*. Paris: H. Champion, 2005.
Vredeveld, Harry. “‘Lend a Voice’: The Humanistic Portrait Epigraph in the Age of Erasmus and Dürer.” *Renaissance Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (2013): 509–67.
Warwick, Genevieve. “‘The Story of the Man Who Whitened His Face’: Bernini, Galileo, and the Science of Relief.” *The Seventeenth Century* 29, no. 1 (2014): 1–29.
Welch, Ellen R. *A Theater of Diplomacy: International Relations and the Performing Arts in Early Modern France*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017.
Wellington, Robert. *Antiquarianism and the Visual Histories of Louis XIV: Artifacts for a Future Past*. Farnham ; Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2015.
———. “Antoine Benoist’s Wax Portraits of Louis XIV.” *Journal18*, no. 3 Lifelike (Spring 2017). http://www.journal18.org/1421. DOI: 10.30610/3.2017.6.
Weststeijn, Thijs. “‘Painting’s Enchanting Poison’: Artistic Efficacy and the Transfer of Spirits.” In *Spirits Unseen: The Representation of Subtle Bodies in Early Modern European Culture*, edited by Christine Göttler and Wolfgang Neuber, 141–77. Leiden: Brill, 2007.
Whyte, Ryan. “Exhibiting Enlightenment: Chardin as Tapissier.” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 46, no. 4 (2013): 531–54.
Williams, Hannah. “Academic Intimacies: Portraits of Family, Friendship, and Rivalry at the Académie Royale.” *Art History.* 36, no 2 (April 2013): 338–65.
———. *Académie Royale: A History in Portraits*. Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2015.
———. “Portrayal and Commemoration: Medal Engravers at the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture.” Presented at *The Full Circle: The Medal in Art History*, New York, September 8, 2017. https://www.frick.org/interact/miniseries/scher_medals/hannah_williams_portrayal_commemoration_medal_engravers_french.
———. “The Other Palace: Versailles and the Louvre.” In *The Versailles Effect: Objects, Lives, and Afterlives of the Domaine*, edited by Mark Ledbury and Robert Wellington, 13–32. London, Bloomsbury, 2020.
Wilson, Bronwen, and Angela Vanhaelen. “Making Worlds : Art, Materiality and Early Modern Globalization.” *Journal of Early Modern History.* 23, no. 2/3 (2019): 103–20.
Wood, Christopher. “Aby Warburg, Homo Victor.” *Journal of Art Historiography*, Vol. 11, (2014): 1-24.
———. *Forgery, Replica, Fiction : Temporalities of German Renaissance Art*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
———. “Introduction.” In *The Vienna School Reader: Politics and Art Historical Method in the 1930s*, 9–72. New York: Zone Books, 2000.
Yonan, Michael. “Toward a Fusion of Art History and Material Culture Studies.” *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture* 18, no. 2 (September 2011): 232–48.

Zanger, Abby E. *Scenes from the Marriage of Louis XIV: Nuptial Fictions and the Making of Absolutist Power*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.

Ziegler, Hendrik. "Le demi-dieu des païens. la critique contemporaine de la statue pédestre de Louis XIV." In *Place des Victoires: histoire, architecture, société*, edited by Isabelle Dubois, Alexandre Gady, and Hendrik Ziegler, 49–66. Paris: Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2003.

Ziskin, Rochelle. *Sheltering Art: Collecting and Social Identity in Early Eighteenth-Century Paris*. University Park: Penn State Press, 2012.

Zorach, Rebecca. "An Idolatry of the Letter: Time, Devotion, and Siam in the Almanacs of the Sun King." In *Ut Pictura Meditatio: The Meditative Image in Northern Art, 1500-1700*, edited by Walter S. Melion, Agnes Guiderdoni-Bruslé, and Ralph Dekoninck, 447–79. Turnhout: Brepols, 2012.

Figures

Images witheld due to copyright.