

VISIBLE SPIRIT

THE ART OF  
GIANLORENZO BERNINI

VOL. II

IRVING LAVIN



The Pindar Press  
London 2009

*Published by* The Pindar Press  
40 Narcissus Road  
London NW6 1TH · UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-904597-45-2 (hb)  
ISBN 978-1-904597-55-1 (pb)

*Printed by*

Estudios Gráficos ZURE  
48950 Erandio  
Spain

This book is printed on acid-free paper

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## XXIII

**Bernini's Image of the Ideal Christian Monarch\***

MY purpose in this paper is to consider three celebrated ruler portraits by Bernini in a context to which they have never been referred but which, in my view, is essential to an understanding of their form and meaning. While following traditional types, in each case Bernini introduced fundamental changes that resulted in three of the most powerful and innovative images of secular leadership in the history of European art.<sup>1</sup> The works in question are the bust of Francesco I d'Este, duke of Modena, executed 1650–1 after two painted profile portraits by Sustermans (Fig. 1); the bust of Louis XIV executed during Bernini's visit to Paris in the summer of 1665

\* Except for a few added references, this paper was first presented at the Ignatian year colloquium 'Les jésuites et la civilisation du baroque (1540–1640),' organized by Louis de Vaucelles, S.J., and held at Les Fontaines, Chantilly, in June 1991. I am grateful to Father Vaucelles for allowing me to publish my contribution elsewhere, in order to be able to include the requisite illustrations. An Italian version, accompanied by an essay and complete documentation on the creation of the bust of Francesco I d'Este, has been published: *Bernini e l'immagine del principe cristiano ideale: Appendice documentaria a cura di Giorgia Mancini* (Modena, 1998).

<sup>1</sup> This essay belongs, in part, to a series of attempts I have made to describe the nature, meaning, and development of 'illusionism' in the Italian sculptured bust since the Renaissance: Irving Lavin, 'Five Youthful Sculptures by Gianlorenzo Bernini and a Revised Chronology of His Early Works,' *Art Bulletin* 50 (1968): 223–48; 'On the Sources and Meaning of the Renaissance Portrait Bust,' *Art Quarterly* 33 (1970): 207–26; 'Bernini's Death,' *Art Bulletin* 54 (1972): 158–86; 'On Illusion and Allusion in Italian Sixteenth-Century Portrait Busts,' *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 119 (1975): 353–62; 'On the Pedestal of Bernini's Bust of the Savior,' *Art Bulletin* 60 (1978): 547. Some of the material is incorporated in a chapter entitled 'Bernini's Image of the Sun King' in my book *Past–Present: essays on Historicism in Art from Donatello to Picasso* (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 139–202, where full references to the sources will be found.

to redesign the Louvre (Fig. 2); and the equestrian monument of Louis conceived in Paris but executed after Bernini's return to Rome (Fig. 3). The equestrian group was sent to Paris years after Bernini's death, when it met with very hostile response; finally, transformed into a portrayal of Marcus Curtius hurling himself into a fiery abyss to save his people, it was installed in the garden of Versailles.<sup>2</sup> (There it remained until, in 1980, the tricennial of Bernini's death, it was brutally mutilated in an act of cultural terrorism. Cleaned and restored, it has now been installed in a new sculpture museum in the Grandes Ecuries at Versailles.)

The context in which I believe these works should be understood is the great tradition of early modern political theory and practice which since the pioneering studies of Friedrich Meinecke and Rodolfo De Mattei has come to be known as anti-Machiavellianism.<sup>3</sup> The movement began towards the middle of the sixteenth century in response to Machiavelli's devastating critique of traditional Christian political theory. The intent was to counter Machiavelli's drastically amoral realpolitik with a kind of ideal realpolitik — retaining, often even reviving essential elements of Scholastic ideology, but revised so as to make allowances for the sometimes unpleasant necessities of practical political action on which Machiavelli had insisted. Among the main proponents, particularly in Spain, were the Jesuits, who sought to provide an alternative to Machiavelli's model of cynical unscrupulousness in the worldly arena of statecraft. From the latter part of the sixteenth century

<sup>2</sup> For summary accounts of the three works, see Rudolf Wittkower, *Gian Lorenzo Bernini: The Sculptor of the Roman Baroque* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 224, 246–7, 254 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellianism: The Doctrine of Raison d'Etat and Its Place in Modern History* (1927; New York, 1957); Rodolfo De Mattei, *Il pensiero politico italiano nell'età della controriforma*, 2 vols. (Milan and Naples, 1982–4); see also A. Dempf, *Christliche Staatsphilosophie in Spanien* (Salzburg, 1937); H. Lutz, *Ragione di stato und christliche Staatsethik im 16. Jahrhundert* (Münster, 1961); M. Viroli, *Dalla politica alla ragion di stato: La scienza del governo tra XIII e XVII secolo* (Rome, 1994), pp. 155–84. The views of some of the major writers of the school, including the Jesuits Giovanni Botero, Pedro de Ribadeneira, Adam Contzen, and Carlo Scribani (also Justus Lipsius, who had close connections to the Jesuits), have recently been outlined by Robert Bireley, *The Counter-Reformation Prince* (Raleigh, N.C., 1990); although I deal with different authors and focus on a different theme, I am greatly indebted to Bireley's work. Further to the theme, see J. L. Colomer, 'Traité politique, exercice spirituel: L'art de la méditation chez Virgilio Malvezzi,' *Rivista di letteratura moderna e comparate* 45 (1992): 245–61, and '“Esplicar los grandes hechos de vuestra magestad”: Virgilio Malvezzi, historien di Philippe IV,' in *Repubblica e virtù: Pensiero politico e monarchia cattolica fra XVI e XVII secolo*, ed. C. Continisio and C. Mozzarelli (Rome, 1995), pp. 45–75, and some of the other essays therein.

on, a veritable flood of anti-Machiavellian literature defended the relevance of Christian moral principles not only to utopian visions of domestic rule and foreign diplomacy but also to practical and successful statesmanship. The key argument in this new 'reason of state' was that the best form of government, monarchy, while responsible ultimately to God, was based on the consent of the people; that the power of the ruler derived practically from his reputation; and that his reputation in turn depended on his exercise of virtue.<sup>4</sup>

I am concerned here with a particular current within this river of counter-reformatory Christian political thought, which I should call the theory of the prince-hero.<sup>5</sup> The theory defined the relation between morality and political power in such a way as to create a new, modern version of the old notion of the ideal Christian ruler. The Jesuits were also important, if not exclusive, tributaries to this current, and I suspect that, although Bernini modified it in a subtle but portentous way, the theory of the prince-hero was the *tertium quid* that linked the artist to the Jesuits in the secular sphere.<sup>6</sup>

The bust of Francesco d'Este (Fig. 1) follows a typology — the armoured military figure with the torso enveloped by drapery — that had been developed from ancient models in the sixteenth and was quite com-

<sup>4</sup> On this concept of reputation, see Bireley, *Counter-Reformation*.

<sup>5</sup> The idea of the monarch as hero was singled out by De Mattei, *Il pensiero*, I 222, II 22–3, and by S. Skalweit, 'Das Herrscherbild des 17. Jahrhunderts,' *Historische Zeitschrift* 184 (1957): 71–2.

<sup>6</sup> Bernini's relations with the Jesuits have often been stressed, sometimes overstressed, as a major factor in the development of his art in the religious sphere; see Walter Weibel, *Jesuitismus und Barockskulptur in Rom* (Strasbourg, 1909); Rudolf Kuhn, 'Gian Paolo Oliva und Gian Lorenzo Bernini,' *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte* 64 (1969): 229–33; Hask. *Patr.*, pp. 85 ff; Hask. 'Role,' pp. 56 ff; Witt. 'Prob.,' pp. 11 ff; Lavin, 'Bernini's Death,' and *Past–Present* (the chapter on Bernini's busts of the *Anima Beata* and *Dannata*); Anthony Blunt, 'Gianlorenzo Bernini: Illusionism and Mysticism,' *Art History* 1 (1978): 67–89; Joseph Connors, 'Bernini's S. Andrea al Quirinale: Payments and Planning,' *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 41 (1982): 15–37; C. Frommel, 'S. Andrea al Quirinale: Genesi e struttura,' in *Gian Lorenzo Bernini architetto e l'architettura europea del Sei–Settecento*, ed. G. Spagnesi and M. Fagiolo (Rome, 1983), pp. 211–53; I have suggested some connections with Jesuit theatre in 'Bernini and Antiquity: The Baroque Paradox — A Poetical View,' in *Antikenrezeption im Hochbarock*, ed. H. Beck and S. Schulze (Berlin, 1989), pp. 9–36. It will become evident that a major point of this paper is to suggest that the distinction between secular and religious is obscure precisely in the context of rulership.

mon by the mid-seventeenth century (Fig. 4).<sup>7</sup> With respect to such predecessors, however, the proportions of the bust have been broadened to the point that the width actually exceeds the height. The head is relatively small so that the ample, tightly curled tresses of hair and the huge torso give an impression of overwhelming mass and grandeur. The head is turned markedly to the right while the body is turned in the opposite direction, with the right shoulder forward and the left back. The sitter's attention seems to have been caught by some distant vision, towards which he turns in a pervasive and spontaneous movement. Of special concern here is the treatment of the drapery, which envelops the body and creates an uncanny illusion, or rather series of illusions. No cut edges, only folds are visible along the lower silhouette, and from the right shoulder down across the chest, the drapery is pulled tight and knotted at the lower left; as a result, the body does not appear cut off but wrapped, Christo-like, as a self-sufficient object. The folds are shaped in such a way, however, that one senses beneath the drapery the familiar form of a bust portrait with arms amputated above the elbow and torso rounded at the bottom. Finally, at the left arm and shoulder the drapery edge flares up as if caught by a rising draft of air. We are confronted not by Francesco d'Este but by a bust of Francesco, wafted aloft in and by a protective mantle. An eighteenth-century French visitor to Modena aptly described the bust as seeming to float in the air ('il semble flotter en l'air').<sup>8</sup>

Bernini has, in fact, assimilated the traditionally draped torso to an entirely different, specifically honorific tradition associated with Roman bust portraiture. The figure is placed against a cloth of honour, the so-called *parapetasma*, often held up by personifications of victory or winged putti (Fig. 5).<sup>9</sup> The device served in the ancient ancestor cult to suggest the heav-

<sup>7</sup> Algardi's bust of Lelio Frangipane, illustrated here by way of example, is dated to the mid-1630s by J. Montagu, *Alessandro Algardi*, 2 vols. (New Haven and London, 1985), II 427.

<sup>8</sup> J. J. L. F de Lalande, *Voyage d'un français en Italie, fait dans les années 1765 & 1766*, 8 vols. (Yverdon, 1769–90), 1452.

<sup>9</sup> On Bernini's early use of the motifs of the *parapetasma* and the image held by winged figures, see Irving Lavin, *Bernini and the Unity of the Visual Arts* (New York and London, 1980), pp. 52, 69–70. His use of the latter device for a bust 'portrait' culminated in his last work, the bust of the Saviour, which rested on a pedestal consisting of two kneeling angels; see Lavin, 'Bernini's Death,' pp. 171 ff; Irving Lavin, 'Afterthoughts on "Bernini's Death,"' *Art Bulletin* 55 (1973): 429–36; Lavin, 'On the Pedestal.' Bernini's memorials of this type

only sublimation of the soul of the deceased. Bernini had adapted this motif in the 1630s and 1640s for a number of memorials, activating the hanging cloth into a billowing emblem of transience (Fig. 6).

Bernini thus revived the classical imagery of apotheosis, but in the d'Este portrait he gave both the bust and the drapery a physical substance and function they had never had before. Nor are the bust and drapery separate and distinct elements; instead, they are bound together — literally, it seems — as one coherent form that conveys in a single dramatic act the exalted status of the sitter. The portrait of Francesco presents the ancient theme of deification in a new guise; it ennobles the individual, raising him not only to a higher level of significance but to a higher level of existence. It represents the idea of a hero, in the original, classical sense of the term. Explicitly acknowledging that it is the simulacrum of a man, the bust proclaims that the man portrayed partakes of the divine.

It is in this context that the anti-Machiavellian concept of the prince-hero becomes relevant to our subject. The concept arose, I believe, in response to a dilemma posed by the two fundamental yet seemingly incompatible political tenets of Catholicism: the spiritual power of the absolute monarch derived ultimately from God, but his effective power derived ultimately from the consent of his subjects. The key to the reconciliation of these opposing claims lay in the practice of virtue, which had been central to Machiavelli's philosophy as well. The anti-Machiavellians, however, transformed his interpretation from something approaching virtuosity, or cleverness, into a politicized equivalent of the traditional Christian virtues, especially the cardinal virtues of prudence, fortitude, justice, and temperance. By practising the virtues the ruler acquired the reputation that earned for him popular support; and it was through his exercise of the virtues that his contact with the divine was established and maintained. The paradoxical merger of the human and divine was embodied in the prince-hero. This hybrid — indeed, it was sometimes hyphenated — concept was a specific revival and adaptation of the classical demigod, half human, half divine, whose superhuman virtues merited the noble name of 'hero.' The development in the secular sphere had a close and surely related religious corollary in the theological principle of heroic virtue, an essential factor in the process

have been studied more extensively by J. Bernstock, 'Bernini's Memorial to Maria Raggi,' *Art Bulletin* 62 (1980): 243–55, and 'Bernini's Memorials to Ippolito Merenda and Alessandro Valtrini,' *Art Bulletin* 63 (1981): 210–32.



1. Bernini, bust of Francesco I d'Este.  
Galleria Estense, Modena  
(photo: Alinari 15669).



2. Bernini, bust of Louis XIV.  
Musée National du Château de Versailles  
(photo: Alinari 25588).



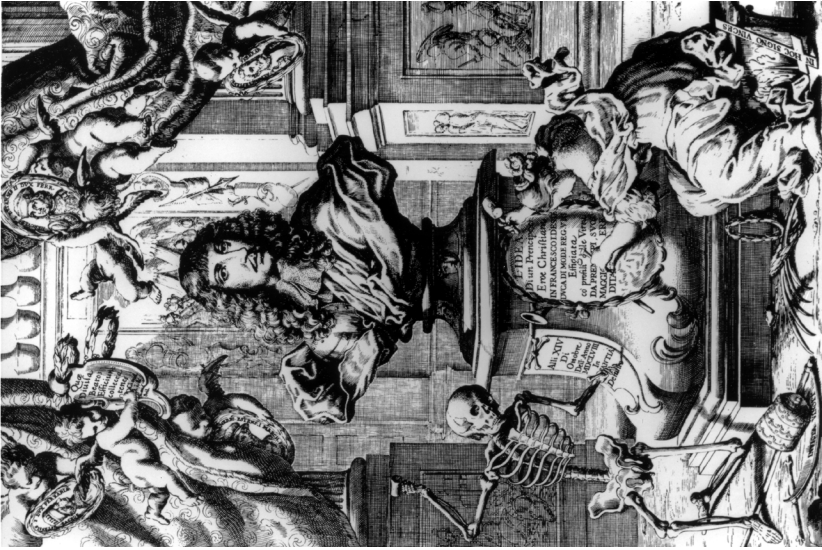
3. Bernini, equestrian monument of Louis XIV, altered by Giraudon to portray Marcus Curtius. Versailles (photo: Documentation photographique de la Réunion des musées nationaux 58 EN 1681).



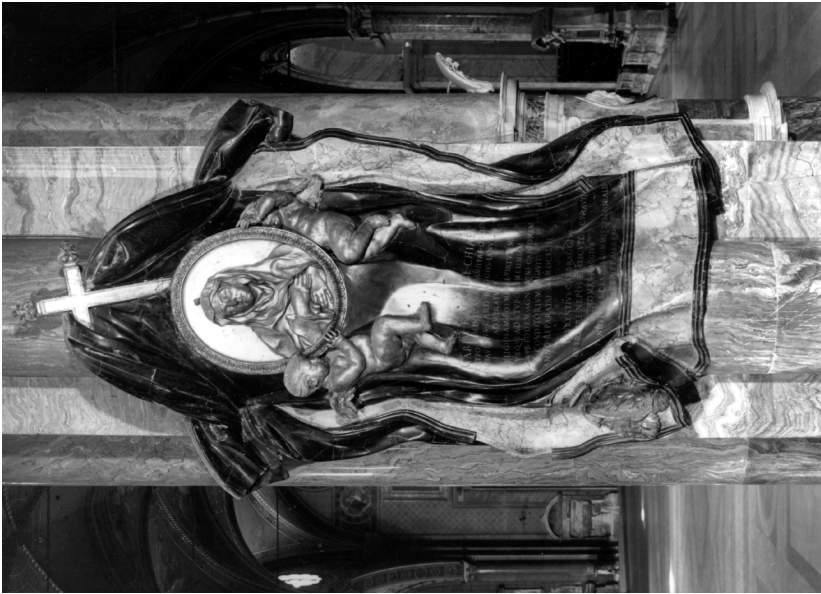
4. Alessandro Algardi, bust of Lelio Frangipane. San Marcello, Rome  
(photo: Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione, Rome E97580).



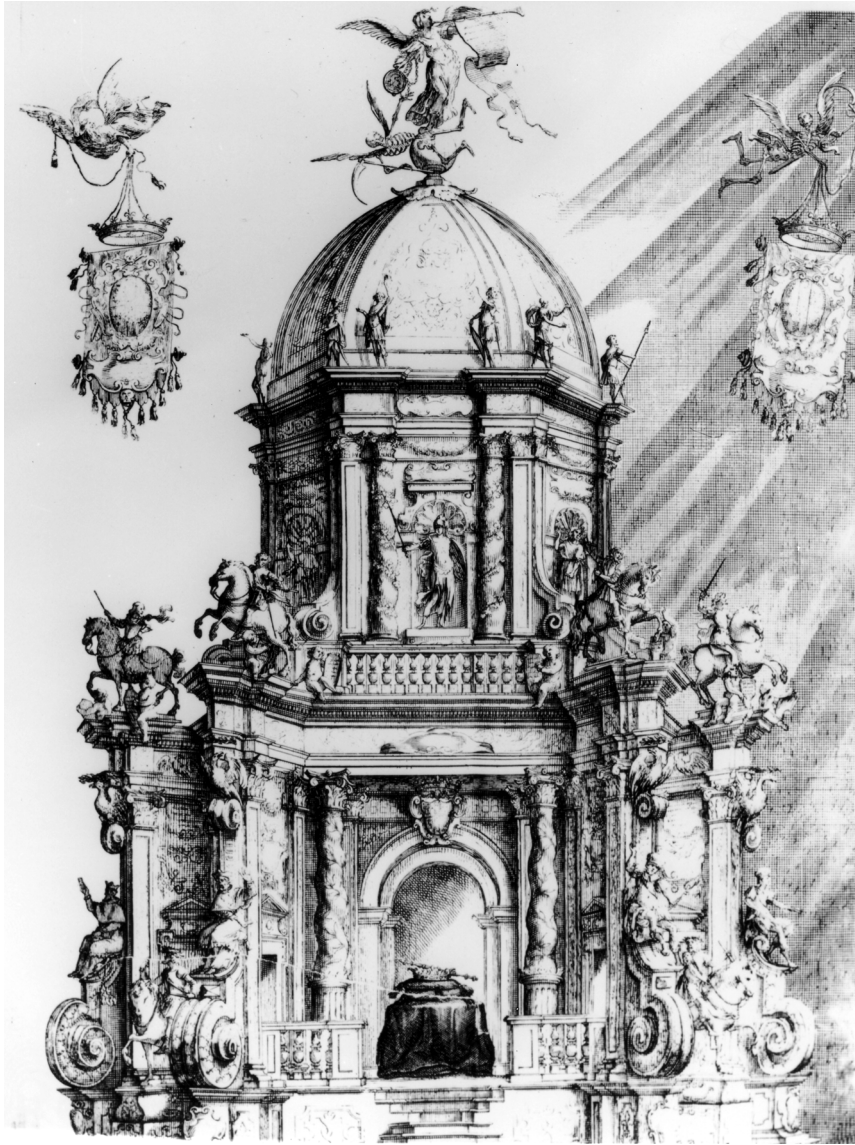
5. Roman sarcophagus with portrait busts before a *parapetasma* held by winged genii. Camposanto, Pisa (photo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome 34-700).



7. Bernini's bust of Francesco I d'Este, engraving (from Gamberti, *L'idea*, 1659, frontispiece).



6. Bernini, Cenotaph of Suor Maria Raggi. Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Rome (photo: Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo et la Documentazione, Rome E54086).



8. Catafalque of Francesco I d'Este, engraving detail  
(from Gamberti, *L'idea*, 1659, opp. p. 190).

9. Helios, denarius of Vespasian. British Museum, London.

10. Giulio Romano, *Alexander the Great*. Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva.



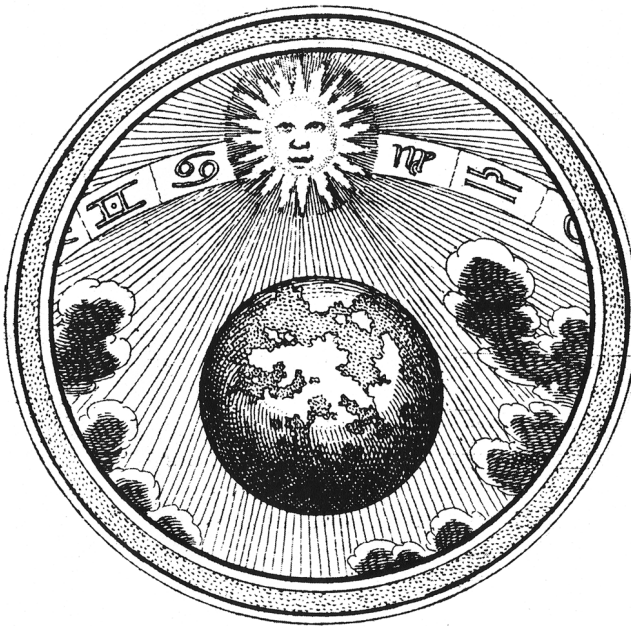


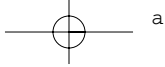
11. The Colonna Claudius, engraving by Giovanni Battista Galestuzzi, 1657.

12. Medal of Louis XIV,  
1663.  
American Numismatic  
Society, New York.



13. Peter Paul Rubens,  
device of Jan van  
Keerbergen, engraving  
(from *Biblia sacra*, 1617).

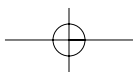




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14. Etienne Delaune, suit of armor for Henry II.  
Musée du Louvre, Paris.

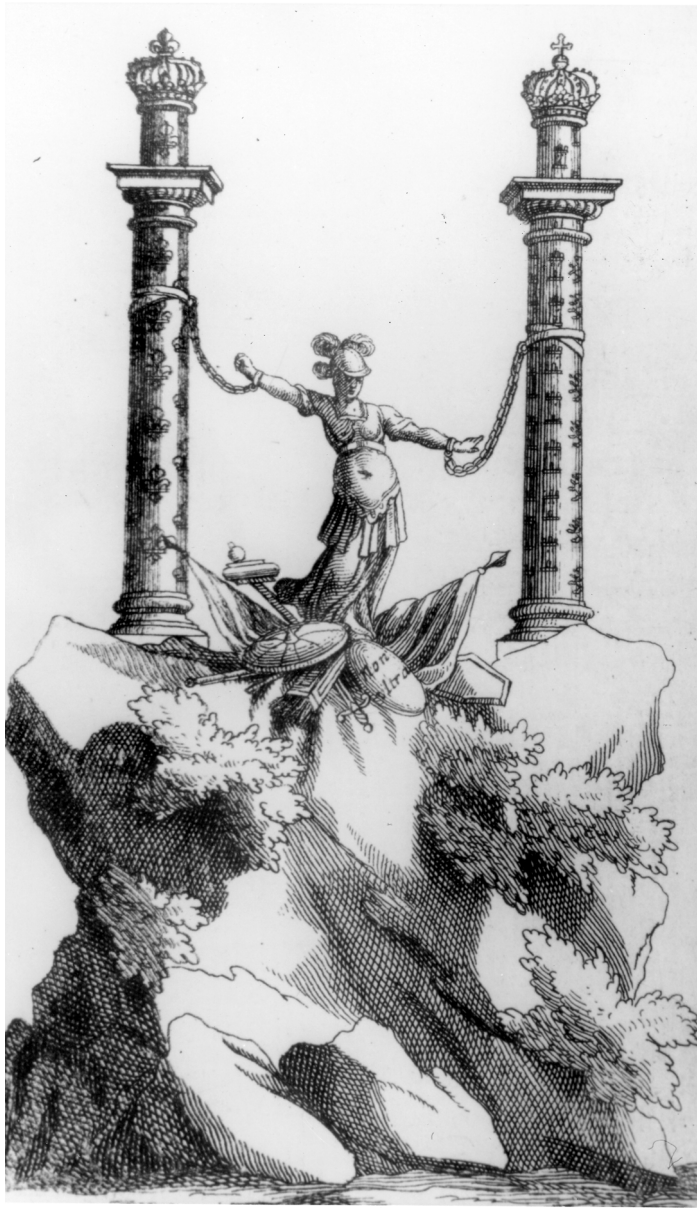




15. Bernini, study for the equestrian monument of Louis XIV, drawing.  
Museo Civico, Bassano.



16. Georg Wilhelm Vestner, medal of Charles VI, 1717.  
American Numismatic Society, New York.



17. Allegory of the Peace of the Pyrenees, engraving  
(from Menestrier, *Devise du roy*, 1660, opp. p. 54).



18. Antonio Travani,  
medal of Louis XIV.  
Biblioteca Vaticana,  
Rome.

20. Antonio Travani,  
medal of Louis XIV.  
Biblioteca Vaticana,  
Rome.





19. Erasmus Quellinus, *SIC ITUR AD ASTRA*, engraved frontispiece (from Saavedra Fajardo, *Idea*, 1649).

of canonizing saints, first introduced in 1602 and elaborately formulated later in the century.<sup>10</sup>

The theory of the prince-hero seems first to have been articulated in a clear and deliberate way around the middle of the sixteenth century by the well-known Ferrarese poet, historian, and political theorist, Giovanni Battista Pigna. Pigna was secretary to Prince Alfonso II d'Este, duke of Ferrara, professor at the university of Ferrara, and official historian of the d'Este family. Pigna was virtually possessed by the idea of the hero, about which he published two works in 1561, a treatise, *Il principe*, dedicated to Duke Emanuele Filiberto of Savoy but written for Alfonso II of Ferrara, and an epic poem entitled *Gli heroici*, dedicated to Alfonso; and in 1570 a massive history of the d'Este princes.<sup>11</sup> In effect, Pigna combined two distinct but related traditions, that of the divine right of kings, one of many aspects of medieval thought revived in the Counter Reformation, and that of the sacral rulership of antiquity enshrined in the hero as a demigod.

Pigna brought about this merger through a series of arguments that were equally novel. Among the hosts of angels those that served as guardians of princes belong to a higher order than those that guide ordinary men.<sup>12</sup> The heroic prince is so plainly blessed with the theological virtues that he may more properly be called divine than others who possess these virtues. Princes are given more divine guidance than ordinary men because they are

<sup>10</sup> See R. Hofmann, *Die heroische Tugend: Geschichte und Inhalt eines theologischen Begriffes* (Munich, 1933); *Enciclopedia cattolica*, 13 vols. (Vatican City, 1948–54), under 'Canonizzazione,' III, cols. 595–6, 605–6.

<sup>11</sup> Giovanni Battista Pigna, *Il principe* (Venice, 1561), *Gli heroici* (Venice, 1561), and *Historia de principi di Este* (Ferrara, 1570). On Pigna, see De Mattei, *Il pensiero*, 133–4, II 21 ff, whose summary of Pigna's ideas I have adopted here, and the literature cited in T. Bozza, *Scrittori politici italiani dal 1550 al 1650* (Rome, 1949), pp. 38–9.

<sup>12</sup> However it may have reached him, Bernini seems to have echoed this teaching specifically when he attributed the correspondence between nobility of mind and of bearing in Louis XIV to 'the work of those two angels who according to the theologians were the guides of kings': 'Le Cavalier a dit qu'il avait trouvé ce que lui avait rapporté M. le cardinal légat, qu'il reconnaissait le roi, sans l'avoir jamais vu, entre cent seigneurs, tant sa façon et son visage avaient de majesté et portaient de recommandation. Il a dit ensuite que ce n'était encore rien; ma, *che il cervello*, pour user du mot, répondait admirablement à cet air et à cette noblesse, ne parlant jamais qu'il ne dit des chose dignes d'être notées et les plus à propos du monde . . . Le Cavalier a dit que cela venait sans doute de ce que les théologiens tiennent que les rois ont deux anges pour les conduire'; Paul Fréart de Chantelou, *Diary of the Cavaliere Bernini's Visit to France* (Princeton, 1985), p. 235, and *Journal du voyage du Cavalier Bernini en France*, ed. L. Lalanne (Paris, 1885), p. 187, 28 September.

more important, as they are more important because others depend on them. This last point is the key to Pigna's position: the divine nature of the prince derives from his duty and purpose, namely, to reach perfection and to enable his subjects to reach perfection, through participation in the political life. The prince is given sovereignty over others in order that he may be able to dedicate himself completely eradicating evil and introducing goodness among the people. In the ideal prince the heroic nature surpasses the human. The goal of the prince is not to enlarge the state but to ensure that his people live virtuously. The sacral nature of sovereignty was thus adapted to the moral and religious justification of the active life.

It should be emphasized that the issue was not merely one of abstract speculation or literary metaphor, but one with immediate, concrete significance for Pigna. His history of the d'Este, which gave rise to a veritable orgy of genealogical portraiture in the ducal palace at Ferrara illustrating the antiquity of the ancestral line, was specifically intended to establish the family's claim to dynastic precedence over the Medici — a dispute of serious contemporary political importance.<sup>13</sup> The subject also had broad implications for European political theory because the question of the role of the papacy in the affairs of state was involved. If the king's power derived directly from God, then the pope had no role as intermediary between the terrestrial and the celestial realms. If, instead the king governs by the consent of the people, then his powers are only indirectly ordained and he is answerable to the higher authority of Christ's vicar on earth.

Although Pigna was not himself a Jesuit, he was important in our context because his views were taken up and developed by a Modenese member of the order named Domenico Gamberti, who published a massive account of a huge catafalque erected in the church of Sant'Agostino in

<sup>13</sup> On d'Este genealogy and portraiture, see *Gli Estensi: Prima parte*, ed. R. Iotti (Modena, 1997), especially pp. 78–9. On the series of two hundred d'Este portraits executed in fresco during the 1570s in the courtyard of the Castello at Ferrara, see D. Coffin, 'Pirro Ligorio and Decorations of the Late Sixteenth Century at Ferrara,' *Art Bulletin* 37 (1955): 167–85, who also gives an account of the political issues, and L. Lodi, 'Immagini della genealogia estense,' in *L'impresa di Alfonso II: Saggi e documenti sulla produzione artistica a Ferrara nel secondo Cinquecento*, ed. J. Bentini and L. Spezzaferro (Bologna, 1986), pp. 151–62; on the dispute over precedence, see especially V. Santi, 'La precedenza tra gli Estensi e i Medici e l'istoria de' principi d'Este di G. Battista Pigna,' *Atti della deputazione ferrarese di storia patria* 9 (1897): 37–122. and G. Mondaini, *La questione di precedenza tra il duca Cosimo I de' Medici e Alfonso d'Este* (Florence, 1898).

Modena for the funeral on 2 April 1659 of Duke Francesco.<sup>14</sup> Gamberti used Pigna's history of the d'Este for the elaborate and comprehensive genealogy of the family to which much of the decoration of the catafalque was devoted, as well as for the eulogy of Francesco. Gamberti was intent upon applying Pigna's generalized definition of the heroic prince to Francesco, and in doing so he also specified and developed the theory itself. The idea of the heroic prince, which is incidental to Pigna's main argument, becomes Gamberti's central theme, as his book's title itself proclaims: *L'idea di un prencipe et eroe christiano in Francesco I. d'Este di Modona, e Reggio Duca VIII. Generalissimo dell'arme reali di Francia in Italia, &c.*

Gamberti develops at some length the traditional metaphor identifying the hero, and hence the ruler, with the sun. The prince-hero is repeatedly likened to the sun, his nobility with regard to his subjects resembling the nobility of the sun with respect to the planets. Gamberti also uses other suggestive metaphors such as that of a simulacrum resembling its divine sculptor and that of a small world.<sup>15</sup> He takes *idea* very seriously, following Plato's definition of it as a divine model, and the prince is indeed a model to all others.<sup>16</sup> Gamberti is also careful to define the hero, citing Lucian's apodeictic formulation, as one who is neither man nor god, but both at once ('Heros est qui neque homo est, neque Deus, et simul utrumque est').<sup>17</sup> The idea of a perfect prince-hero is fulfilled in Francesco because he unites all

<sup>14</sup> Domenico Gamberti, *L'idea di un prencipe et eroe christiano in Francesco I. d'Este di Modona, e Reggio Duca VIII. Generalissimo dell'arme reali di Francia in Italia, &c. effigiata co' profili delle virtù da principi suoi maggiori ereditate. Rappresentata alla publica luce co' l'funerale apparato sposto nelle solenne esequie dall'altezza serenissima di Alfonso IV suo primogenito alla gloriosa, ed'immortale sua memoria l'anno M. DC. LIX. alli 11. di Aprile in Modona celebrate* (Modena, 1659); Gamberti also describes the decorations for the occasion in his *Corona funerale deducta alla gloriosa, ed'immortale memoria del serenissimo prencipe Francesco I. d'Este Duca di Modona, e Reggio VIII. Generalissimo dell'arme reali di Francia in Italia, etc. nelle solenni esequie celebrategli dalla pia magnificenza dell'altezza serenissima di Alfonso IV Duca IX. suo primogenito* (Modena, 1659). Gamberti's definition of the hero is cited by De Mattei, *Il pensiero*, 11 23 n26.

The decorations for Francesco's funeral were reproduced in the complete restoration of Sant'Agostino that followed the funeral — see C. Conforti, 'Il "funeral teatro" a Modena nel Seicento,' in *Barocco romano e barocco italiano: Il teatro, l'effimero, l'allegoria*, ed. M. Fagiolo and M. L. Madonna (Rome. 1985), p. 227 — a unique instance, as far as I am aware, of such a direct perpetuation, *in loco*, of an ephemeral installation.

<sup>15</sup> Gamberti, *L'idea*, pp. 32, 33, 42.44.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 66 ff, 100–1.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102; Gamberti cites Lucian, *Dialogues* 3.

the requisite virtues in a harmonious chorus.<sup>18</sup> Basing himself on Thomas Aquinas (the most important of the Scholastic sources to which the anti-Machiavellian thinkers of the Counter Reformation returned), Gamberti divides the competencies of the prince-hero into two spheres, the civil and the military, in both of which the primary virtues are the four cardinal virtues, prudence, fortitude, justice, and temperance.<sup>19</sup> Gamberti is particularly interesting for the way in which he effectively reconciles the hereditary rights of the prince with the definition of the status of the prince-hero in terms of virtue. Especially significant is Gamberti's understanding of nobility, which, while based on family lineage, is also intimately bound to virtue. He argues that nobility derives not merely from ancient ancestry, as is popularly imagined, but also from virtue.<sup>20</sup> He alone is noble who inherits the virtues of his forebears, and the highest nobility springs from the antiquity of the family and the virtues inherited.<sup>21</sup> This theme provided the basic program of the funeral decorations designed by the architect Gaspare Vigarani, who had by the time of the funeral moved to Paris, where he later built the Salle des Machines in the Tuileries; he was succeeded as theatre architect to Louis XIV by his son, Carlo, whom Bernini met on his visit to Paris in 1665.<sup>22</sup> The decorations comprised the two sides of the nave, the façade, and the catafalque itself and included, in addition to depictions of the major events in the duke's life and his achievements, portrayals of his ancestors organized according to the virtues they represented and transmitted to the duke. This treatment Gamberti himself described as a 'retrospective idea' of the prince-hero,<sup>23</sup> thus incorporating the past in the present as the link in the union of the divine and the human, nobility with virtue.

Gamberti's work was published years after Bernini's portrait was made, but he illustrated the bust as the frontispiece and in such a way as to suggest that it was the commemorative sculptural equivalent of his subject (Fig. 7): an allegorical figure actually inscribes the title of the work on the

<sup>18</sup> Gamberti, *L'idea*, p. 113.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 115, 118.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 125, 133.

<sup>22</sup> On Vigarani, see Gamberti, *Corona*, p. 5, and *L'idea*, p. 17; Chantelou, *Diary*, p. 81 n 144; J. Southorn, *Power and Display in the Seventeenth Century: The Arts and Their Patrons in Modena and Ferrara* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 56–8.

<sup>23</sup> Gamberti, *L'idea*, p. 139.

pedestal as an emblem of the Christian ruler's victory over death.<sup>24</sup> Although there is no reason to suppose that the two men ever met, the link between them is also evident from the fact that the rearing equestrian figures of Francesco d'Este's ancestors shown on the catafalque with paired spiral columns (Fig. 8) strikingly anticipate Bernini's project for the equestrian monument of Louis XIV. We know that Bernini was asked to provide a model for an equestrian monument of Francesco shortly after the duke's death.<sup>25</sup>

In part, however, the community of thought between Gamberi and Bernini was probably based on a common source. One likely possibility was Tarquinio Galluzzi, a distinguished professor of rhetoric at the Jesuit college in Rome, the Collegio Romano, in the first half of the seventeenth century, whom Bernini must have known well.<sup>26</sup> (Galluzzi delivered the funeral oration for Robert Bellarmine, for whose tomb in the Gesù Bernini executed his famous portrait bust, the image of fervid devotion.) Galluzzi was a seminal figure in the development of Jesuit drama. He wrote several important tragedies in the classical style on Christian subjects, as well as theoretical treatises and commentaries. In a lengthy commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* he cites the passage in the *Politics* (III.xiv.11.14) that may be the ultimate source of the idea of the prince-hero: here Aristotle describes the earliest phase of monarchy, which was the age of heroes when there were gods among men, whom they ruled by common consent.<sup>27</sup>

Bernini's projects for the Modenese court, which besides the bust and equestrian portraits of Francesco included plans for refurbishing the ducal

<sup>24</sup> The design of the pedestal is reflected in that of the portrait bust of Mazarin in Giovanni Francesco Grimaldi's 1661 funerary catafalque for the cardinal in SS. Vincenzo and Anastasio in Rome; see M. Fagiolo dell'Arco, *La festa barocca* (Rome, 1970), ill. p. 401. A figure inscribing the pedestal of a bust also appears in the scene representing the princely virtue of *Scienze*; see Southorn, *Power and Display*, pp. 58–9. Pl. 58.

<sup>25</sup> The projected equestrian monument to Francesco I is the subject of correspondence in June 1659, published by S. Fraschetti, *Il Bernini: La sua vita, la sua opera, il suo tempo* (Milan, 1900), p. 226.

<sup>26</sup> On Galluzzi and his possible relevance for Bernini, see Lavin, 'Bernini and Antiquity,' p. 28.

<sup>27</sup> Tarquinio Galluzzi, *In aristotelis libros quinque . . . nova interpretatio . . .* (Paris, 1645). p. 527: 'Quartam [Regalis Politiae, vel Monarchiae species] facit eam quae fuit Heroum tempore Saturni, Neptuni, Herculis, Thesei . . . Videbantur enim velut inter homines Dii. Itaque species haec ideo dicta Heroica est, quod Heroes illo regni genere volentibus populis secundum probatum morem, ac secundum legem dominarentur'; cf. De Mattei, *Il pensiero*, II 23 n25.

palace, profoundly affected the precisely analogous works he undertook for Louis XIV.<sup>28</sup> The bust of the king (Fig. 2) resoundingly echoes that of Francesco, but carries its innovations a significant step further — and not simply because fifteen years had passed but also because Louis XIV was not a duke but *Le Roi Soleil*. The differences are profound. The vigorous side-ward turn of the head and eyes has a distinct upward cast suggestive not of arrogance but of an ardently inspired and noble *hauteur*. The ebullient per-ruque engulfs the face in an aureole of loose, twisting, and lambent curls, highlighted by deep undercutting and flickers of drillwork, that cascade 'earthward' in a coruscating flood. These changes serve to assimilate the features of Louis to those commonly associated with the greatest of the ancient monarchs, Alexander, whose pathetic expression and 'leonine mane' had in turn been assimilated to the fiery-locked sun god Helios (Fig. 9). The resemblance to Alexander was remarked by contemporary viewers and emphasized by Bernini himself. The bust now includes an implicit lower right arm that bends back across the torso, counteracting the forward thrust of the shoulder. The model for this vigorous *contrapposto* was again Alexander, whose portrait by Giulio Romano Bernini evidently adapted to his purpose (Fig. 10). The lower edge of the torso is now completely dissimulated by the drapery and no trace of the conventional bust form remains, so that the body and arms seem to continue in the mind's eye — not the image of Louis but Louis himself.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, the drapery now flows to one side as if it were truly a magic carpet bearing the living figure forward and upward.<sup>30</sup> This last, and ultimate, illusion must be

<sup>28</sup> The Paris–Modena connection has recently also been emphasized by Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven and London, 1992), pp. 187–8. On Bernini's work for Modena, see Frascchetti, *Il Bernini*, pp. 221–9; L. Zanugg, 'Il palazzo ducale di Modena: Il problema della sua costruzione,' *Rivista del r. Istituto d'Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte* 9 (1942): 212–52; A. M. Matteucci, 'Il palazzo ducale nel dibattito sulle residenze di corte,' in *Il palazzo ducale di Modena: Sette secoli di uno spazio cittadino*, ed. A. Biondi (Modena, 1987), pp. 83–121; Southorn, *Power and Display*; O. Rombaldi, *Il duca Francesco I d'Este (1629–1658)* (Modena, 1993), pp. 69–74.

<sup>29</sup> This effect was appreciated by contemporaries: the Venetian ambassador 'à fort loué le buste, et a dit que le Roi était comme en action de donner quelque commandement dans son armée . . . qu'encore que ce buste fût sans membres, il semblait néanmoins avoir du mouvement'; Chantelou, *Journal*, p. 102. cited by Rudolf Wittkower, *Bernini's Bust of Louis XIV* (London, 1951), p. 17.

<sup>30</sup> It should be noted that the upward flare of the drapery at the front revealing the curved edge of the base suggests another ancient commemorative portrait form, the herm, in which there is an imperceptible transition from the torso to an abstract support.

understood in relation to the equally extraordinary pedestal Bernini intended for the work but never carried out. The bust would have rested on a terrestrial globe of gilded and enamelled copper, bearing the ingenious inscription PICCIOLA BASA, 'small base'; the globe in turn would have rested on a copper drapery emblazoned with military trophies and virtues — these last, no doubt, a specific reference to the attributes of the prince-hero; and the whole was to be set on a platform.

In part, Bernini invoked an ancient type of portrait bust mounted on a (celestial) globe to suggest apotheosis. He must particularly have had in mind a splendid bust monument of the emperor Claudius that included a base with a globe and a panoply of military spoils (Fig. 11); in the mid-seventeenth century the ancient bust and base had been placed on a sculptured platform, as well.<sup>31</sup> I am convinced, however, that Bernini's chief purpose was to create in his portrait of the king what might be called a living analogue of the ubiquitous device that Louis had adopted two years before, in 1662, as his personal emblem and which had become practically synonymous with his name (Fig. 12). The device showed the sun as a radiant face, floating high above the clouds and a spherical earth, with the motto NEC PLURIBUS IMPAR, 'not unequal to many.' The conceit and image seem to have originated in a book of 'ethico-political' emblems, first published in 1619, in one of which (Fig. 13) the sun dispelling the clouds around the earth 'illuminates everything with its rays,' the motto derived from Claudian's panegyric on the emperor Honorius; so, the explanation goes, the majesty of a king might expand his radiance so far as to be recognized by everyone.<sup>32</sup> Louis's motto, however, was the subject of heated geopoliti-

<sup>31</sup> Lavin, 'Bernini's Death,' pp. 180 ff; 'Afterthoughts,' pp. 435 ff; *Past–Present*, pp. 163–5. The doubts concerning my dating of the transfer of the Claudius to Spain, expressed by Dent Weil in *Orfeo Boselli: Osservazioni della scultura antica dai manoscritti Corsini e Dorin e altri scritti*, ed. p. Dent Weil (Florence, 1978), pp. 83–4, have been dispelled by Carinci in F. Carinci *et al.*, *Catalogo della Galleria Colonna: Sculture* (Rome, 1990), pp. 21–4. Striking evidence of the importance of the Colonna Claudius in Bernini's circle is provided by the grand imitation in wood that served as the pedestal of a bust of Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, the father of Queen Christina, displayed in her palace in Rome, which must have been made before the original went to Spain in 1664; by 1756 the copy had been moved to Bologna and was being used for a bust monument now housed in the Academia della Scienze there; *I materiali dell'Istituto delle Scienze* (Bologna, 1979), pp. 144–5.

<sup>32</sup> J. W. Zingref, *Emblematum ethico-politicorum centuria* (Heidelberg, 1619), no. 38, ed. D. Mertens and T. Verwey, 2 vols. (Tübingen, 1993), 190–1; A. Henkel and A. Schöne, *Emblemata: Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts* (Heidelberg, 1967), col. 14.

cal controversy. Its meaning — that the king, like the sun, is capable of ‘illuminating’ more than one empire — was explained by Louis XIV himself in his memoirs and by one of the outstanding French Jesuits of the day, Claude-François Menestrier. Menestrier wrote many works on numismatics, heraldry, emblematics, funeral ceremonies, and all sorts of public spectacles including fireworks. In 1679 he published a whole book on the king’s device, *La devise du roy justifiée*, which is of fundamental importance for an understanding of its true implications and, by extension, those of Bernini’s portrait. The tract was intended to counter a statement by an earlier writer that the device had been employed by Philip II of Spain in reference to the Spanish conquest of the New World.<sup>33</sup> Menestrier showed conclusively that this prior use was a pure fabrication.

There can be no doubt, however, that the device invented for Louis XIV was indeed a response to the long familiar Habsburg emblem of two columns symbolic of the pillars Hercules erected at the end of the earth, with the inscription NON PLUS ULTRA, ‘not (or nothing) beyond.’ The emblem might refer either to an unsurpassable achievement, physical or spiritual, or to a limitation imposed by prudence; for the Habsburgs, the device also connoted the geographical extent of the empire. Louis replaced the Habsburg boast to rule to the limits of the known world by his claim that his power radiated beyond his own domain. This implication, and hence the motivation for Louis’s device, can have originated in only one context, that of the Peace of the Pyrenees of 1659, by which the power of Habsburg Spain was broken and peace between the two ancient enemies was established. Spain ceded large territories to France; the boundary between the two countries was drawn; Louis’s marriage to Maria Teresa of Austria, daughter of Philip IV, joining the two families, was arranged; and Louis agreed not to pursue his expansionist design beyond the Pyrenees. In countless eulogies, Louis was hailed as the harbinger of peace, and his success in this respect was specifically attributed to his having voluntarily refrained from a war in which, had he pursued it, he would have conquered

<sup>33</sup> The subject of Menestrier’s rebuttal was a statement by F. Picinelli, *Mondo simbolico* (Venice, 1670), p. 17; Claude-François Menestrier, *La devise du roy justifiée* (Paris, 1679), preface and pp. 4, 32, reproduces an exemplar of the medal with the date 1662 and attributes the invention of the device, as well as the title ‘Grand,’ to a certain M. Douvrièr — Louis Douvrièr, concerning whom see J. F. Michaud, *Biographie universelle*, 55 vols. (Paris, 1811–62), XI 626; *Dictionnaire de biographie française* (Paris, 1933–). XI, col. 709: *l’académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres: 1663–1963* (Paris, 1963). exhib. cat., p. 4. no. 3.

even Spain and its possessions. This noble self-control is suggested in Bernini's portrait by the action of Louis's right arm, bent back in a commanding gesture of restraint. The bust-monument incorporates the apotheosis of the prince-hero in the 'disembodied' image of the king floating on drapery above a globe labelled PICCIOLA BASA, just as in Louis's emblem the sun floats over clouds above an earth that is, in effect, much smaller than it might be. The historical concatenation of these observations is evident from the fact that in another work Menestrier speaks specifically of Louis's heroic virtues precisely in the context of explaining the NEC PLURIBUS IMPAR emblem; and he was intimately familiar with Gamberti's work, from which he quotes at length.<sup>34</sup>

Bernini's debt to the anti-Machiavellian prince-hero, to Menestrier, and to the emblematics of Louis XIV is most emphatically and most spectacularly displayed in his equestrian portrait of the king (Fig. 3). The work departs as radically from its predecessors as had the bust monument. In the portrait bust, as in that of Francesco I, the ruler is portrayed without any allegorical paraphernalia: the king is shown wearing his own — not classical — armour, and his own Venetian lace collar, in an action that looked to one observer as if he were about to issue a command.<sup>35</sup> All this was changed in the equestrian monument, where Louis was shown in antique guise, austere and unadorned; his features, as we know from the sources, are utterly transfigured into those of a radiantly smiling, Alexandrine youth; he grasps his baton as an emblem of power, but not in a gesture of command. The work is, moreover, the first monumental free-standing marble statue of an equestrian on a rearing horse since antiquity. It is also well over life-size and is carved from a single block, reputedly the largest such monolithic sculpture since antiquity. It is thus heroic in scale as well as technique.

<sup>34</sup> Claude François Menestrier, *L'art des emblemes* (Lyon, 1662), pp. 129 ff.

<sup>35</sup> On all these points, see Wittkower, *Bernini's Bust*, p. 18. It is worth noting in this context that Bernini was given as a model — which he conspicuously did not follow — a famous suit of armour with elaborately embossed reliefs representing the history of Caesar and Pompey, thought to have been designed by Giulio Romano for Francis I (Chantelou, *Journal*, p. 49, 9 July; p. 151, 10 September; p. 258, 21 October). The harness, which is still to be seen in the Louvre (Fig. 14), was actually made by Etienne Delaune for Henry II; *L'Ecole de Fontainebleau* (Paris, 1972), exhib. cat. pp. 420–1, no. 582, with bibliography. I am greatly indebted to Stuart W. Pyhrr of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, for his expert knowledge and kind response to my inquiry concerning the harness. On Louis's action, see n29 above.

The full import of Bernini's sculpture becomes apparent only when one understands the context in which it was to be seen. It was to have been placed not on a traditional architectural base, but atop a rocky peak, supported by a swirl of windblown flags symbolizing the conquest of the summit (Figs 15, 18, 20). Like the drapery of Louis's bust, the unfurling banners would seem to bear the portrait aloft. In fact, one realizes that the equestrian monument was also in its way a living re-creation of the king's personal emblem, the flags substituting for the clouds as mediators between the earth below and the sun above. In addition, two monumental spiral columns recalling both the pillars of Hercules and the triumphal Roman columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius were to have flanked the sculpture, which would have borne the inscription NON PLUS ULTRA (*cf.* Fig. 16).<sup>36</sup> Here the reference to the Habsburg device — NON PLUS ULTRA with paired columns — is explicit and complete, and the message is obvious. Having reached the summit of glory, Louis stops and goes no further. In this case, we know Bernini's specific source. In 1660 a lavish celebration was held at Lyon for the Peace of the Pyrenees and the marriage of Louis to Maria Teresa of Austria, which joined the two monarchies. The political implications of the event were epitomized in one of the temporary structures erected at strategic points throughout the city. A personification of war, Bellona, stood on a pile of military spoils that bore the inscription NON ULTRA, between two columns to which her arms are bound by chains (Fig. 17).<sup>37</sup> One column was decorated with the emblem of France, the other with those of León and Castile, and the whole was placed atop a craggy two-peaked mass referring to the Pyrenees. The Jesuit Menestrier, who was a native of Lyon and published a lengthy description of the celebrations, may well have been responsible for the allegory. He provides an

<sup>36</sup> The medal of Charles VI shown in Fig. 16 clearly reflects Bernini's project except that the flanking columns are not spiral but return to the form normally used for the Habsburg device, and the base is the traditional oblong block.

<sup>37</sup> First published in Claude François Menestrier, *Les reioüissances de la paix* (Lyon, 1660), pp. 54–5. After this essay was completed it came to my attention that the twin columns motif has been studied in relation to Bernini's projects and their subsequent influence by Karl Mösender, '“Aedificata poesis”: Devisen in der französischen und österreichischen Barockarchitektur,' *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 35 (1982): 158 ff (but following an unfortunate error concerning the origin and date of Menestrier's image; *cf.* Lavin, *Past–Present*, p. 298 n90), and Friedrich Polleross, 'Architecture and Rhetoric in the Work of Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach,' in *Infinite Boundaries: Order Disorder and Reorder in Early Modern German Culture*, ed. Max Reinhart (Kirkville, Mo., 1998), pp. 130 ff.

explanation which, along with the image itself, must have affected Bernini deeply:

It is often desirable for the glory of heroes that they themselves voluntarily put limits on their designs before Time or Death does so of necessity . . . The grand example [of Hercules, who raised the columns, then stopped to rest after his victories,] makes all the world admire the moderation of our monarch, who, having more ardour and courage than any of the heroes of ancient Greece and Rome, knew how to restrain his generous movements in the midst of success and victories and place voluntary limits on his fortune . . . The trophy that will render him glorious in the history of all time will be the knowledge that this young conqueror preferred the repose of his people to the advantages of his glory and sacrificed his interests to the tranquillity of his subjects.<sup>38</sup>

Menestrier's emblem helps to explain several important points concerning Bernini's conception of the equestrian portrait in particular and of the nature of kingship generally. With regard to the first point, we have a remarkable statement by the artist himself describing the meaning, quite unprecedented in the history of equestrian portraiture, he intended the work to convey. He said:

I have not represented King Louis in the act of commanding his armies. This, after all, would be appropriate for any prince. But I wanted to represent him in the state he alone has been able to attain through his glorious enterprises. And since the poets imagine that Glory resides on the top of a very high and steep mountain whose summit only a few climb, reason demands that those who nevertheless happily arrive there after enduring privations [*superati disaggi*]

<sup>38</sup> Menestrier, *L'art des emblemes*, pp. 129–30: 'Il seroit souvent à souhaiter pour la gloire des Heros qu'ils missent eux mesmes des bornes volontaires à leur desseins avant que le Temps ou la Mort leur en fissent de nécessaires . . . C'est ce grand Exemple, qui doit faire admirer à tous les Peuples la moderation de nostre Monarque qui ayant plus d'ardeur & de courage que n'en eurent tous les Heros de la vieille Grece & de Rome, à sceu retenir ces mouvements genereux au milieu du succez de ses victoires, & donner volontairement des bornes à sa fortune . . . Ce sera aussi ce Trophée qui le rendra glorieux dans l'histoire de tous les siècles, quand on sçaura que ce ieune conquerant à préféré le repos de ses Peuples aux avantages de sa gloire, & sacrifié ses interests à la tranquillité de ses Sujets.'

joyfully breathe the air of sweetest Glory. which having cost terrible labours [*disastrosi travagli*] is the more dear, the more lamentable the strain [*rincrescevole . . . stento*] of the ascent has been. And as King Louis with the long course of his many famous victories has already conquered the steep rise of the mountain, I have shown him as a rider on its summit, in full possession of that Glory, which, at the cost of blood [*costo di sangue*], his name has acquired. Since a jovial face and a gracious smile are proper to him who is contented. I have represented the monarch in this way.<sup>39</sup>

Menestrier's comment on the emblem at Lyon explains why Bernini did not show Louis commanding his troops, for while the sculpture is a portrait of a soldier it is ultimately an image of peace. in this way, too, may be understood Bernini's emphasis on the 'privations,' the 'terrible labours,' the 'lamentable strain,' and the 'cost of blood' Louis suffered for his greatness. Bernini, in effect, universalized Menestrier's thought; the Pyrenees became

<sup>39</sup> The translation, with some alterations, is from Rudolf Wittkower, 'The Vicissitudes of a Dynastic Monument: Bernini's Equestrian Statue of Louis XIV,' in *De artibus opuscula XL: Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky*, ed. Millard Meiss (New York, 1961), p. 503. I quote the whole passage, which concerns an 'ingegnoso cavalier Francese. che assuefatto alla vista del suo Rè in atto Maestoso, e da Condottiere di Eserciti, non lodava, che quì allora coll'armatura pur'indosso, e sopra un Cavallo medesimamente guerriero, si dimostrasse nel volto giulivo, e piacevole, che più disposto pareva a dispensar grazie, che ad atterrir'inimici, e soggiogar Provincie. Poiche spiegògli a lungo la sua intenzione, quale, benché espressa adeguatamente ancora nell'Opera, tuttavia non arrivò a comprendere il riguardante. Dissegli dunque. Non haver'egli figurato il Rè Luigi in atto di comandare a gli Eserciti, cosa, che finalmente è propria di ogni Principe, mà haverlo voluto collocare in uno stato, al quale non altri, che esso era potuto giungere, e ciò per mezzo delle sue gloriose operazioni. E come che fingono i Poeti risieder la gloria sopra un'altissimo, ed erto Monte, nella cui sommità rari son quelli, che facilmente vi poggiano, ragion vuole, che quei, che pur felicemente vi arrivano doppo i superati disaggi, giocondamente respirino all'aura di quella soavissima gloria, che per essergli costata disastrosi travagli, gli è tanto più cara, quanta più rincrescevole gli fu lo stento della salita. E perche il Rè Luigi con il lungo corso di tante illustri vittorie haveva già superato l'erto di quel Monte, egli sopra quel Cavallo lo collocava nel colmo di esso, pieno possessore di quella gloria. che a costa di sangue haveva acquistato il suo nome. Onde perche è qualità propria di chi gode la giovialità del volta, & un'avvenente riso della bocca, quindi è, che tale appunto haveva rappresentato quel Monarca. Oltracche, benché questo suo pensiero si potesse ben ravvisare nel Tutto di quel gran Colosso, tuttavia molto più manifesto apparirebbe, quando collocar si dovesse nel luogo destinato. Poiche colà doveasi scolpir in altro Marmo una Rupe proporzionata erta, e scoscese, sopra cui haverebbe in bel modo a pasore il Cavolla con quel disegno, ch'ei fatto ne haverebbe'; Domenico Bernini, *Vita del cavalier Gio. Lorenzo Bernino* (Rome, 1713), pp. 149–50.

the mountain of virtue, and territorial containment became victory over the self, the ultimate achievement of the true hero.<sup>40</sup> He thus managed to incorporate both meanings of the *non plus ultra* / Pillars of Hercules tradition, expressing Louis's attainment of the extreme limit of glory through victories achieved at great self-sacrifice. The essence of Bernini's conceit lies in the poignant irony of the great hero reaching the heights of spiritual triumph by limiting earthly ambition. The equestrian monument becomes thereby a vision not only of military but of moral force, a vehicle not only of political but also of ethical precept. Bernini's image, above all, is that of potentially overwhelming power held in firm and benign restraint.

I hope it will have become clear that Bernini was profoundly indebted to the vital, predominantly Jesuit tradition of moral statesmanship represented by the anti-Machiavellian movement, to the idea of the prince-hero, and to Menestrier's explanations of the emblematic imagery of Louis XIV. The extent, but also the limit, of Jesuit involvement in the development of Bernini's ideas on the subject, and the political significance the order itself attached to the equestrian monument, may be gauged from a letter of great subtlety and perspicuity written by Bernini's good friend Gian Paolo Oliva, superior general of the Jesuit order. Oliva had been instrumental in persuading Bernini to undertake the trip to Paris in the first place, and in 1673, having recently seen the sculpture in Rome, he wrote to his Jesuit cohort in Paris, Jean Ferrier, who had earlier assumed the critical post of confessor to the king. Oliva encapsulates the self-sacrificial theory of rulership, and turns it specifically to the struggle against heresy, notably the Jansenist movement then much in vogue at the French court, and the Turkish menace.<sup>41</sup> Oliva was also preacher to the pope, and his remarks suggest that Bernini's visit to Paris may itself have been part of Alexander VII's strategy to enlist the king's support in the face of these threats to the church:

<sup>40</sup> This self-sacrificial understanding of Bernini's concept, developed by me in *Past–Present*, pp. 176–96, has recently been appropriated by K. Hermann Fiore in *Bernini scultore: La nascita del barocco in casa Borghese* (Rome, 1998), exhib. cat., p. 326.

<sup>41</sup> On the situation at this time, see Ludwig von Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, 40 vols. (London, 1923–53), XXXI 482 ff. Others have suggested the not incompatible theory that the pope gave his permission as part of the settlement of the troubled relations with France in the wake of the Peace of Westphalia: Ludovici in F. Balduino, *Vita del cavaliere Gio. Lorenzo Bernino* (Florence, 1683), ed. S. S. Ludovici (Milan, 1948), p. 249, and R. Krautheimer, *The Rome of Alexander VII* (Princeton, 1984), p. 141.

I congratulate the city of Paris, which will soon admire in its most famous place a monument of which none better may be seen or will be seen in Europe, for the object it represents and for the art with which it is portrayed. The acclaimed miracle lacks nothing except the crown on the head of the Prince it represents. Of the two crowns we venerate in commanders, that of glory was given to the king by the birth that revealed him to the world as Prince of so many lands; the other of laurel is offered to him by so many heretical places expunged by his sword. There remains the last, of olive, most glorious of all and desired by all, in which the king is ringed by the universal peace among faithful princes; it alone remains to add to his praises, nor can there be greater decoration for his splendour. Such a garland is not worked by tools, hence the Cavalier has not placed it on the portrait's head, and only a King loaded with so many trophies may assume it by overcoming himself after having overcome the enemies of the faith . . . It is your responsibility to offer with the holiness of your counsels to such a potent King the branches of a crown that with God and the Good takes precedence over any diadem . . .<sup>42</sup>

In one important respect, however, I believe Bernini went beyond his predecessors. It is a striking fact that Bernini's works for Louis XIV — the designs for the Louvre as well as the portraits of the king — are almost devoid of any royal or dynastic references such as crowns, ancestor portraits,

<sup>42</sup> 'Però mi congratulo con la Città di Parigi che presto ammirerà nella sua più famosa piazza una macchina di cui l'Europa non ne vede, nè vedrà miglior, e per l'oggetto che rappresenta e per l'arte con cui è figurata. Non altro manca à l'acclamato miracolo fuorchè la corona sul capo del Principe rappresentato. Dalle due corone che veneriamo comandati, quella di gloria al Re la diede il nascimento che l'espose al mondo Principe di tanti Stati, l'altra di lauro a lui la porgono tante piazze eretiche espugnate dalla sua spada. Resta l'ultima dell'olivo più gloriosa di tutte e da tutti sospirata, ove in essa con la pace universale fra Principi fedeli si cinga sua Maestà, nè a suoi preghi rimane che aggiungere, nè può accrescersi freggio per cui risplende. Tale Ghirlanda non si lavora dal ferro, e però dal Cav.re non si è sovrapposta alle tempie del simulacro e solo un Rè carico di tanti Trofei può caricarsene col superar se stesso sopra d'haver superati i nemici della fede mentre trionfa di nazione tronfante con tanto danno della Religione fin nell'ultimo oriente. Appartiene a V. R. offerire con la santità di suoi consigli a sì potente Rè i rami d'una corona che presso Dio, e presso i Buoni precede à qualunque diadema, e la prego di suoi santi sacrificij.' For the full letter, see A. Venturi, 'Lorenzo Bernini in Francia,' *Archivio storico dell'arte* 3 (1890): 143, and Frascchetti, *Bernini*, p. 360 n2; and see Wittkower, 'Vicissitudes,' pp. 527–8, for a version among Bernini's papers at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

and fleurs-de-lys. Colbert complained bitterly about this austerity even while Bernini was in Paris. But there is more here than meets the eye (or rather than does not meet the eye), for implicit in this 'heredity-restraint' is the subversive view of the ruler as a man endowed with noble ideals but whose merit derives not merely from his noble birth but from his heroic virtue and labours. Bernini had the temerity to say precisely this to Louis himself on the eve of his departure from Paris to return to Rome. The two men had taken an immediate liking to each other, and the young king wished the aging artist could stay to finish his various projects. Having put the finishing touches to the bust, Bernini said that his only regret was 'that he was obliged to leave; he would have been happy to spend the rest of his life in [the king's] service, not because he was king of France and a great king, but because he had realized that [Louis's] spirit was even more exalted than his position.'<sup>43</sup> Both aspects of this provocative combination of values — a God-given right to rule vested in one who earned it through the exercise of virtue — were stated *expressis verbis* on two complementary medals commemorating the statue that were struck in Rome, doubtless under the aegis of the pope.<sup>44</sup> One bears the inscription HAC ITER AD SUPEROS, 'this way to the gods,' in allusion to the arduous peak of virtue and self-conquest which the victorious hero surmounts (Fig. 18). This was a pre-emi-

<sup>43</sup> 'Il s'estimerait heureux de finir sa vie à son service, non pas pour ce qu'il était un roi de France et un grand roi, mais parce qu'il avait connu que son esprit était encore plus relevé que sa condition' (Chantelou, *Journal*, p. 201, 5 October; translation, with modifications, from Chantelou, *Diary*, p. 254). A version of Bernini's remark was repeated by Oliva in a letter written to the Marquis de Lionne, Louis's foreign secretary, shortly after the artist's return to Rome. Oliva reported that in praising the king Bernini had deprived him of his noble birth and his empire, insisting that he was more elevated by the capacity of his mind and other virtues; the king was not great for the vastness of his domain or the force of his arms: 'E giunto in Roma il Cavaliere Bernino, trasformato in tromba del Rè Cristianissimo, che di Scultore l'ha renduto quasi Sasso, tanto si mostra attonito alle Doti incomparabili di S. M. Questo stupore nell'eccesso, sì della gratitudine a gli onori inauditi e a' grossi soccorsi, come dell'ammirazione alla grandezza e alla magnanimità d'un tanto Rè, l'ha precipitato in una prodigiosa ingratitudine: mentre, per celebrare Monarca di tanto merito, l'ha spogliato del Nascimento e dell'Imperio; protestandolo assai più sublime, per la capacità della mente, per la prudenza della lingua, per la splendidezza della mano, per la generosità del cuore, per la riverenza voluta a' divini Scarifici ne' Templij, e per la maestà d'ogni sua parte; che non è grande, per quella vastità di Dominio e per quella potenza d'Armi, che l'agguagliano a' Rè più celebri degli Annali antichi'; Gian Paolo Oliva, *Lettere*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1681). II 71–2. and Baldinucci, *Vita*, pp. 125–6, for the whole letter; reprinted in part by Bernini, *Vita*, pp. 144–5.

<sup>44</sup> On the medals, see *Bernini in Vaticano* (Rome, 1981). exhib. cat., pp. 308–9.

nently Herculean sentiment, associated especially with the theme of Hercules at the Crossroads; the hero chooses the difficult path of righteousness over the easy road to pleasure, thereby expressing the supreme Stoic virtue, conquest of the self.<sup>45</sup> Bernini had himself invoked the idea in his plan to place guardian figures of the demigod, identified with fortitude and labour, flanking the entrance to the Louvre. He explained to the king that Hercules 'by means of his fortitude and labour is a portrait of virtue, which resides on the mountain of labour, that is, the rocky mass; and he says that whoever wishes to reside in this palace must pass through virtue and labour. This thought and allegory greatly pleased His Majesty, to whom it seemed to have grandeur and sententiousness.'<sup>46</sup> In architectural terms, Bernini here referred to one of the most illustrious Roman structures, the double temple of Honour and Virtue — so arranged that one had to pass through the one to reach the other.<sup>47</sup> The image that echoed in Bernini's mind must have resembled the frontispiece of the most popular of all the Jesuit tracts on Christian political theory, Diego de Saavedra Fajardo's *Idea principis christiano-politici*, published in the Brussels edition of 1649 (Fig. 19).<sup>48</sup> Hercules guides the armoured Christian prince, who crushes the Hydra of heresy underfoot, through an honour guard of virtues along the path that leads up to the temples at the summit, inscribed HAC ITUR AD ASTRA, 'This way leads to the stars.'<sup>49</sup> The other medal (Fig. 20) carries the

<sup>45</sup> 'Virtus in astra tendit' (Seneca. *Hercules Oetaeus*, line 1971); see Lavin, *Past–Present*, pp. 175–6.

<sup>46</sup> 'Sopra detto scoglio dalle parte della porta principale invece d'ornamento di doi colonne, vi ha fatto due grandi Ercoli, che fingono guardare il palazzo, alle quali il sig. caval. gli dà un significato e dice Ercole è il retratto della virtù per mezzo della sua fortezza e fatica, quale risiede su il monte della fatica che è lo scoglio . . . e dice chi vuole risiedere in questa regia, bisogna che passi per mezzo della virtù e della fatica. Qual pensiero e alegoria piacque grandamente a S. M., parendogli che avesse del grande e del sentesioso'; L. Mirot, 'Le Bernin en France: Les travaux du Louvre et les statues de Louis XIV,' *Mémoires de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Île-de-France* 31 (1904): 218n; Bernini's remarks were quoted in a letter from Paris to Rome by his assistant Mattia de' Rossi, 26 June.

<sup>47</sup> Lavin, *Past–Present*, pp. 157–61.

<sup>48</sup> Needless to say, the hyphenated term in the title is of interest in our context. On Saavedra, see the chapter in Bireley, *Counter-Reformation*, pp. 188–216. The frontispiece, designed by Erasmus Quellinus, was noted and reproduced by Judson and van de Velde, *Book Illustrations*, p. 239 n7, Fig. 188. Bernini may well have known Saavedra, who spent many years in Rome until 1633, as a diplomat at the Spanish envoy.

<sup>49</sup> Bernini surely also knew the very similar treatment of the Hercules-Temple of Virtue and Honour theme by Federico Zuccaro in his house in Rome, where the allegory is applied to the artist himself (Lavin, *Past–Present*, p. 160, Fig. 211); and the motto SIC ITUR AD

sharpest challenge to princely rule, in the motto inscribed on the flags that would have wafted the bounding equestrian heavenward: ET MAIOR TITULIS VIRTUS, 'Virtue is greater than titles' — astonishing on a monument to Louis XIV, the Sun King.

Underlying all these conceits one can discern a radical principle that the true basis of just rule lay in individual virtue and self-control rather than in inherited rank and unbridled power. While giving form to the concept of the prince-hero Bernini defined it in a way that challenged the very foundations of traditional monarchist theory, including even that of the anti-Machiavellians.<sup>50</sup> In his works of political intent, he created a revolutionary new means of visual expression to convey a revolutionary new social ideal.<sup>51</sup>

ASTRA, as applied to Giovanni Bologna's 'equestrian' group of Hercules overcoming Nessus (*ibid.*, p. 174, Fig. 230).

<sup>50</sup> It is interesting and important to note that Bernini's conscious effort to infuse the resemblance of portraits of the sort required by Louis with 'that which belongs in the heads of heroes' was embedded in his very method of creating them: after studying the 'sitter' carefully in action he worked almost always from the imagination, looking only rarely at his drawings, but inward to the 'idea' he had of the king: 'Jusqu'ici il avait presque toujours travaillé d'imagination, et qu'il n'avait regardé que rarement les dessins qu'il a; qu'il ne regardait principalement que là dedans, montrant son front, où il a dit qu'était l'idée de Sa Majesté; que autrement il n'aurait fait qu'une copie au lieu d'un original, mais que cela lui donnait une peine extrême et que le roi, lui demandant son portrait, ne pouvait pas lui commander rien de plus pénible: qu'il tâcherait que ce fût le moins mauvais de tous ceux qu'il aura faits; que, dans ces sortes de portraits, il faut, outre la ressemblance, y mettre ce qui doit être dans des têtes de héros' (Chantelou, *Journal*, pp. 72–3, 29 July).

<sup>51</sup> The underlying deflation and moralization of conventional social values implicit here in the domain of official portraiture has its counterpart in Bernini's creation of the private caricature portrait of exalted and high-born personages; see Irving Lavin, 'High and Low before Their Time: Bernini and the Art of Social Satire,' in *Modern Art and Popular Culture: Readings in High and Low*, ed. K. Varnadoe and A. Gopnik (New York, 1990), pp. 19–50.