Introduction

Music, Liturgy, and Power

Nature leads us to observe Ceremonies. Ceremony is the external act of Religion, the witness to the worship and private devotion that man renders to God; like joining the hands, lifting the eyes to Heaven, it is a visible sign that one recognizes God . . . ¹

Claude Villette, Les Raisons de l’Office, et cérémonies qui se font en l’Église Catholique (Paris, Guillaume de Rues, 1611)

This book considers the role that the liturgy and music of the Roman Catholic church played in mediating Louis XIII’s grip on power during the first half of the seventeenth century. It is hard to overstate the far-reaching influence of both the church and its ecclesiastical structures, not just on the king, but on the people, cities, and the state of France during this period. The daily life of a typical urban resident would have been punctuated by the regular rhythms, sounds, and actions of the church calendar – the cathedral bells ringing to call the faithful to Mass, processions of clergy and singers through and around the city on feasts such as Corpus Christi or Easter, and the regular processions of any number of religious houses or confraternities on feasts related to their orders.² The city dweller would have also experienced other processions and ceremonies for extraordinary events – the plague, harvest, or perhaps a Te Deum to celebrate a military victory by the king. If they were fortunate, they might even receive a visit from the king himself as he made a ceremonial entrée, led through the streets by the city dignitaries to the cathedral, where he would be presented with a crucifix to kiss, be blessed by the Bishop, and take an oath to uphold the liberties of the church, before entering to give thanks for his latest victory.³ In some cities, such as Angers, Le Mans, and others, the king was

¹ “Nature nous conduit à faire Cérémonies. Cérémonie, est l’œuvre de Religion extérieure, en témoignage du culte, & service intérieur que l’homme rend à Dieu: comme joindre les mains eslevant les yeux au Ciel, est un signal visible que l’on reconnoist Dieu . . .”
³ For a broad overview of the concept of “sacred space” or “ceremonial space,” see for example Andrew Spicer and Sarah Hamilton (eds.), Defining the Holy: Sacred Space in Medieval and Early
even considered to be a member of the chapter, and on entering the cathedral he was presented with the hood and surplice that signified his role as an honorary canon. His status as “sacral” monarch, a rex christissimus, was, of course, a long tradition in France: in a coronation rite dating back centuries, the king was anointed with holy oil that had (so it was told) been brought down from heaven by a dove for the baptism of Clovis, and that had served at almost every coronation since.\footnote{For an overview of the concept of the sacral monarch from a broad anthropological perspective, see Sergio Bertelli, \textit{The King’s Body: Sacred Rituals of Power in Medieval and Early Modern Europe}, trans. R. Burr Litchfield (University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001); and Sergio Bertelli, \textit{Rex et sacerdos: The holiness of the king in European civilization}, in Ellenius (ed.), \textit{Iconography}, pp. 123–46.}

The court itself was also effectively an ecclesiastical institution, with almost all the bishops of France simultaneously holding court positions, and with the most powerful figures at court, and even some of the most renowned military commanders (most notably Richelieu), being churchmen.\footnote{See Benoist Pierre, \textit{La Monarchie ecclésiale: le clergé de cour en France à l’époque moderne} (Paris, Champ Vallon, 2013). The dominance of the clergy at court was much diminished under Louis XIV, but until then the so-called prélats d’état had occupied central roles in government; see Joseph Bergin, \textit{The Politics of Religion in Early Modern France} (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 14–16.}

Even more than that, however, the developing notion of the absolute monarch was inextricably linked to the sacral nature of the king: in the early years of the seventeenth century, as a response to the assassination of his two predecessors, and to the new doctrines curtailing his temporal authority being embraced by the Pope and the Jesuits, jurists and courtiers around Louis XIII began to construct an identity for the king that would almost immediately refer to him as ruling “absolutely,” although the full political and financial facets of the concept would only come later.\footnote{For an overview of this process, see Fanny Cosandey and Robert Descimon, \textit{L’Absolutisme en France: histoire et historiographie} (Paris, Seuil, 2002).}
If, then, the daily life of the French people – from urban artisan to the king himself – was closely bounded by, and operated within, the framework of the Catholic church as derived from the Bible and the teachings of the Church Fathers, at the same time another ideological and philosophical frame of reference also held sway. While of course the sixteenth century (the “High Renaissance” or the “Age of Humanism”) saw the educated elite turn to the models of antiquity for inspiration in the political, literary, and other artistic spheres, in France such models were particularly influential. In political terms, the belief that the country was entering a new era that would rival both the historical reality of the Roman Empire and the mythical Golden Age had been widely embraced under Francis I, but in the second half of the sixteenth century too, such ideas were espoused by those around Henri III and Henri IV, and were reflected not just in the poetry of writers such as Ronsard and the other members of the Pléiade, but in many different aspects of court-centered artistic production. According to such a framework, Charlemagne himself had descended from Francus (son of Hector), a mythical figure who had escaped after the fall of Troy and whose descendant Pharamond had supposedly been the first king of France, a narrative that was celebrated by Ronsard in his Franciade (a reimagining of the Aeneid) in a clear attempt to frame the French monarchy as the descendants of the heroes of antiquity. Likewise, Guy le Fèvre de la Boderie’s La Galliade endeavored to link all the great civilizations of the past – ancient Gaul, Egypt (home of the Hermetic tradition), Greece (classical antiquity), Judea (the Judaeo-Christian tradition), Rome (the Roman Empire), and Italy – into a continuous descent (or ascent) that culminated in France. The whole of the sixteenth century had thus seen the French monarchy equated with the mythical (Hercules, Perseus, or Apollo) and real (Pompilius, Vespasian, or Attalus) warriors of antiquity, a practice that survived well into the seventeenth century and that was brought to life in, for example, the entrée at Arles in 1622, in which the whole program was based on the legend of Perseus (Louis) rescuing Andromeda (France) from the sea monster (Heresy), the same narrative that underpinned Persée, Lully’s tragédie en musique, some fifty

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years later. (We should of course remember that in Arles and many other cities of southern France, genuine Roman antiquities frequently dominated the cityscape.) In philosophical terms, this enthusiasm for all things classical was also reflected in the embrace of a Neoplatonic worldview in which, following Marsilio Ficino and his later French disciple Pontus de Tyard, music and poetry were the first of the four steps by which man might ascend to a more perfect state, and in which profane love was a preparation for a love of the divine. The poets and musicians of the court were therefore required to do more than just allude to a mythical past: their creations, be it poetry, measured music, a balet de cour, or some other kind of court festival, were themselves the vehicles by which France’s prosperity and well-being would be assured. Events such as the Balet comique de la Reine of 1581, or any number of royal entrées (which were celebrated until the 1660s) or other festivals, were thus replete with hidden symbolism (emblems, mottos, and devices) or recreations of ancient poetry and music – all in an attempt to invoke the powers that the ancient and occult worlds possessed and bring them to bear on the nation.

In this study I explore how the music produced as a response to Louis XIII in the context of these ideological frameworks – classical, biblical/ecclesiastical, and Neoplatonic – might contribute to the wider discourse on ceremonial, power, and absolutism in early modern France. In particular I focus on how the liturgy – typically transmitted to us as a text in normative printed sources, but in reality consisting of a much broader set of practices, beliefs, and actions that were either universally applied across Catholic Christendom or specially developed for particular circumstances – might be brought to life as an act and “read” or interpreted through the musical practices or compositions associated with it. Music, as “sounding liturgy,” could highlight liturgical acts or facets of a liturgical text that were considered significant; composers could set liturgical texts in ways that reflected underlying ideologies; and texts could be troped, centonized, modified, translated, or glossed in a musical composition to clarify and

11 Yates, French Academies, pp. 77–94.
12 I interpret the concept of liturgy broadly to include not just “official” authorized texts, but all Latin texted chant or music performed in some kind of formalized ceremony. I exclude devotional texts in French and their musical settings, usually performed in a less formal setting.
emphasize a particular meaning or reading. At the same time, within this musical and liturgical discourse, various “voices” or subject positions might also emerge: as Carolyn Abbate has suggested, expanding on Edward Cone’s initial formulation of a single “composer’s voice,” music can be thought of as being "animated by multiple, decentered voices located in several invisible bodies."13 Although the music central to this study (including chant) was at one level performed by a variety of voices (the singers concerned, who might be paid employees of the court, priests, members of a religious confraternity, a member of an adoring crowd at a public ceremony, or a private individual in their own house), these literal, sounding voices also interacted with at least two other, underlying authorial voices: the composers of the music itself, and – central to this study – the authors of the texts they set: the Church Fathers, the Old Testament prophets, the ancient kings of France, or (most relevant) King David, the psalmist, musician-king, author of a significant proportion of the texts that make up the liturgy, and the model for the Western Christian conception of the monarchy itself.14 The psalms, while of course regularly performed as part of the regular cycle of church Offices, also took on particular meanings when set to music in a way that reflected a particular ideology. In the biblical framework, music itself – created by Jubal according to the account in Genesis, handed down to David, and preserved in the psalmody and chant of the universal Catholic church – could trace its existence to the very beginning of the Judaeo-Christian world. In this case, the authorial voice frequently belonged to David himself, inspired by the Holy Spirit and probably mediated by Saint Jerome’s translation of the Vulgate. On the other hand, in the classical or Neoplatonic framework, music was a creation of Apollo, lost during the Middle Ages but finally revived in the 1570s by the scholar performers of Charles IX’s Académie de poésie et de musique.15 In this framework, the psalms, as the most poetic and musical of all biblical texts, could still serve an important devotional role, but would now need to be considered as part of the syncretic musical-humanist tradition most


14 The literature on David’s reception in the Renaissance is extensive; see for example, Elise Boilet, Sonia Caviccholi, and Paul-Alexis Mellet (eds.), Les Figures de David à la Renaissance (Geneva, Droz, 2015); Dominique Vinay, La Couronne et la lyre: présence du roi David dans la littérature française de la Renaissance (PhD dissertation, Université François Rabelais – Tours, 2002).

15 Yates, French Academies, pp. 36–76.
famously exemplified in Mersenne’s 1623 *Quaestiones celerribimae in Genesim*, a tract that reconciled the Platonic and Mosaic accounts of creation and preserved some of the most important examples of psalms translated from the Hebrew and set anew in the rhythmic meters of antiquity. Here, David was mediated by a different voice – that of a contemporary imitator of Cicero or Horace, standing in for an ancient, humanist approach to musical composition that would have spoken to an educated audience as loudly as the musical content itself.

But how, specifically, might a “musical reading” of the liturgy or the psalms, and an exploration of the ideological framework in which it was conceived, relate to wider issues of monarchical power? The concept of “representation” has come to dominate much of the thinking around the French monarchy in the seventeenth century, a period undoubtedly overshadowed by Louis XIV and the extravagances of his artistic patronage. In this conceptual framework, while Louis XIV was widely considered to rule with divine authority, those around the king were nevertheless concerned with “representing” him to the populace in ways that enhanced his glory and power – through analogies with the heroes of antiquity or mythology, with the ancient kings of France, or with the kings of Israel, in particular David. (These analogies could be executed visually in the form of portraits, medals, sculpture; in literature; and in sacred music, opera, and ballet.) Certainly for the early and middle part of his reign, as Burke, Marin, Apostolides, and Sabatier have argued (albeit from different perspectives), the king’s absolute power was intrinsically tied up with the process of representation itself, even if, as is frequently claimed, in later years Louis’s greatness was so widely accepted and self-evident that allegorical representations were no longer required (indeed detracted from his power). In the realm of sacred music, Favier has also identified representational strategies at work in the *grand motet* produced for Louis XIV’s *chapelle royale*, in this case located in a new aesthetic, the sublime,

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16 While the Church Fathers, such as Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome, and many others, referred to the psalms as poetry or lyric verse, and while they are certainly organized into lines (one of the defining features of poetry), psalm texts do not typically obey any metrical pattern. It is partly this lack of number and organization that prompted the production of numerous metrical translations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; see F.W. Dobbs Allsop, ‘Poetry of the psalms’, in William Brown (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014). See also the discussion in Chapter 1.

introduced into the motet by Lalande and taken up by his successors well into the eighteenth century.\(^\text{18}\) In this approach, according to Favier, the older linear, rhetorical compositional technique that dutifully worked through successive verses of the psalm text was replaced with a dazzling and overwhelming presentation of ideas, a painting-like image of the battles, conquests, and the greatness of King David that the psalm texts frequently recounted. Yet the mechanism by which the ‘representation’ described by Favier (and indeed Burke et al.) actually confers real power is not clear, especially as he points out that Lalande’s motets presented many situations that “illustrate not so much David’s temporal power but rather God’s power over David’s destiny and that of his nation.”\(^\text{19}\) Favier’s discussion is also bounded primarily by a concern for the “musical work,” an approach that leaves less room for a consideration of the role of the liturgy and practices of the chapelle royale more broadly, or for the role of liturgy across the church and nation of France, in which the liturgical performance of a grand motet was a relative rarity.\(^\text{20}\) Montagnier’s study of the grand motet, by contrast, is situated in a more explicit reading of the psalter, but again, in both this article and his other contributions, the mechanism by which the representational strategy he also sees functions, is largely taken for granted.\(^\text{21}\)

To explore the relationship between music, liturgy, and power during the reign of Louis XIII, then, we might profitably turn to one of Max Weber’s formulations – that the concept of power is a social construct, the


“chance, within a social relationship of enforcing one’s own will.” As Weber explains, while it is possible that those in a subordinate position might acquiesce to the dominance of the ruler through fear, self-interest, or affection for the monarch, rulers typically attempt to foster the idea that their power is “legitimate” – that the conceptual framework that supports the power relation is accepted by those in the subordinate position so that they obey appropriate commands from the dominant. The concept or mechanism of “representation” clearly falls under Weber’s category of “charismatic rule” – that the ruler is considered to be legitimate through the possession of exceptional personal qualities (often military prowess) or supernatural abilities (the royal touch, for example). Yet, as David Beetham has argued, Weber’s definition of the three different types of rule (“charismatic,” “rational,” and “traditional”) fails to recognize the significance of the actions of the subordinate in the legitimizing process. In particular, situating his critique in the broader observation that Weber focused solely on whether those in subordinate positions believed in the legitimacy of the system (rather than any rational assessment of whether it was indeed legitimate), Beetham instead argued not that there are three different types of legitimate rule, but that there are three interlinked factors (nevertheless related to Weber’s categories) that are all necessary to render power legitimate: viz., that it conforms to established rules; that the rules are justified by reference to belief systems shared by both dominant and subordinate; and that there is evidence of consent between the ruler and people, typically shown through action. Specifically, “It is in the sense of the public actions of the subordinate, expressive of consent, that we can properly talk about the ‘legitimation’ of power, not the propaganda or public relations campaigns, the ‘legitimations’ generated by the powerful themselves.”

In this revised model, then, the representation or portrayal of the monarch as a charismatic leader with supernaturals powers (and the belief in those powers by the people) is not in itself sufficient to grant legitimacy to that monarch: indeed, if such representation is simply an attempt to
persuade the subordinates of something that the dominant does not actually believe in, such rule is, on the contrary, illegitimate. In that sense, as Burke cautioned, the representational strategies around Louis XIV, some of which may well have been put into place cynically, with rituals of state seen merely as calculated theatrical performances, and with the king “playing” his part, may not (in Beetham’s framework) have granted legitimacy to his rule.26 And in a similar way, both Marin’s and Apostolidès’s formulations, that either the “portrait” of the king or a “machine” that takes his place (both of which are controlled by others) were in reality the driving force of power, also point to a disconnection or lack of legitimacy that is perhaps reflected in subsequent critiques of these representational strategies themselves.27

But it also alerts us to numerous observations that scholars have made about ritual and ceremonial before the reign of Louis XIV – that such ceremonies were, by contrast, not “representational” or intended to persuade, but, in the eyes of those present, “performative,” i.e. they made what they enacted real. More than that, however, they also reflected a world in which resemblance and analogy were not, as Foucault argues, just simple linguistic, rhetorical, or logical processes, but a boundless and complex array of relationships and symbols that fundamentally underpinned the thought and epistemologies of the sixteenth century.28 In this magical world, those present at court or religious ceremonies were not part of an asymmetrical relationship, either active “players” on a stage or part of a passive audience observing the representation: on the contrary, all were participants, all had to genuinely subscribe to the underlying belief system, and all were necessary for the ritual to have meaning. In that sense, as Gomes has argued, such ceremonies can be considered as “reminiscent,” an opportunity for all those present (across the entire spectrum of power) to

27 Referring to the demise of Neoplatonic ideology in the 1660s, Cowart argues that “With that rupture came a profound crisis in the role of the arts vis-à-vis the king, as the arts could now be perceived as serving a degraded form of propaganda in the modern sense, rather than the eternal truth they had been believed to reflect.” See Georgia Cowart, The Triumph of Pleasure (Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2007), p. 48.
reflect on and work through the reality of their beliefs, rather than necessarily to admire their leader. 29

If then (as will become apparent in the rest of this book), the reign of Louis XIII at least partially fell into such a “magical” (or to use a musical cognate, “enchanted”) age, the way that we might understand the role that liturgy and music played in legitimating royal power is clear. 30 Liturgy – as a reflection of the teachings and practices of the universal Catholic church (or perhaps more accurately, the Gallican church) – is a manifestation of the shared conceptual framework that unites the king with his people (and, just as importantly, the nobility and bishops who make up his court) and which teaches that the anointed king reigns with God’s express consent. 31

Liturgy structures the extraordinary ceremonies and actions (the coronation, the funeral, the entrée, the Te Deum, the induction of the Knights of the Holy Spirit, and many others) that, through their participation, indicate the consent of the people and their acceptance of that framework – in Villette’s contemporary words, events that are “the external act of religion, the witness to . . . the private devotion that man renders to God.” Liturgy also provides numerous opportunities to restate a common trope – though one which we should now reinterpret through Beetham’s framework as simply another shared belief rather than as “representation” – that the temporal king could be identified with the biblical King David (or as Foucault would put it, there was a fundamental “resemblance” between the two), since both were chosen by God, and that the psalms (which make up the bulk of texts performed in a liturgical context) spoke not just for David, their author, but for Louis himself, especially when (as King David had famously done) these psalms were performed to musical settings by the king’s musicians or when Louis himself sang them.32

29 See Rita Costa Gomes, *The Making of a Court Society: Kings and Nobles in Late Medieval Portugal* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 356–69. Favier’s identification of grand motet texts that reveal David’s faults or weaknesses imply that this model was still in play in at least one sphere during the latter part of Louis XIV’s reign; see Favier, ‘The French grand motet’, p. 196.

30 The whole of this period can be seen in terms of Max Weber’s famous process of “disenchantment” and Crouzet’s conflicting state of “overenchantment”; see Denis Crouzet, *Les Guerriers de Dieu* (Paris, Champ Vallon, 1990), Vol. 1, p. 143.


32 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 17.