

HUNCH

The Berlage Institute Report on Architecture, Urbanism, and Landscape No. 14

THE SIGNIFICANCE
OF ARCHITECTURE
IS CONSTRUCTED
PUBLICITY
IN THE COLLECTIVE
IMAGINATION.

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Italian Cowboys Go France: Some Remarks on the *Diary of the Cavaliere Bernini's Visit to France*

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Article

78

Gian Lorenzo Bernini arrived in Paris in 1665 on a commission to design the new Louvre for King Louis XIV. Reading Paul Fréart de Chantelou's diary—the detailed public record of Bernini's visit—**Pier Paolo Tamburelli** reveals how the failure to build Bernini's design was positioned at a pivotal transition between an autonomous architecture of the past and a technocratic architecture of modernity. Bernini stumbles as his design becomes increasingly mediated and obligated to public demands.

1. History

In April 1664, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, superintendent of buildings for Louis XIV, requests Italian architects to submit designs for the Louvre. The superintendent obtains drawings from Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Pietro da Cortona, Carlo Rainaldi, and the unknown Candiani. Bernini is asked to submit a second design, which he submits by February of 1665. In April 1665, Bernini leaves for France. According to Domenico Bernini, son and biographer of Gian Lorenzo, Pope Alexander VII is forced to offer the expertise of his architect to the king of France as a reparation included in the secret agreements of the Treaty of Pisa.¹ Bernini arrives in Paris on June 2, 1665. At the time, Louis XIV is twenty-six years old, Colbert is forty-five years old, and Bernini is sixty-six years old. While in Paris, Bernini produces a third design for the Louvre and executes a marble bust of the king. Paul Fréart de Chantelou keeps a detailed diary of the four-and-a-half month visit. Bernini leaves Paris on October 20, 1665.²

Bernini is a celebrity in his day, and he is treated as such by the royal court. He is consulted about several unexecuted designs, and his opinions are requested on all artistic subjects. Bernini meets VIPs; visits fancy buildings, which he usually dislikes; and views famous art collections, which he finds crowded with imitations. Everything he does is immediately mirrored and distorted into gossip. Bernini is always on a stage.

All that is recorded in Chantelou's diary is public. The diary itself is an official document, which becomes a piece of literature only after Bernini's dismissal as the architect of the Royal Palace.

2. Mistakes

Bernini develops his two commissions—the portrait and the palace—in the same way. He understands both tasks as public events involving the person of the king and the person of the artist. The bust and the building are the two sides of the same theater of power, two bodies immediately—even physically—related to the bodies of the king and of the artist. What Bernini does not understand regarding the palace is that he has to consider not only the king, but also his bureaucracy. Bernini understands what is *public*, but misses what is *official*. In other words, the role of modern bureaucracy escapes Bernini. He only wants to talk to the king; he can only talk to the king. He applies in Paris the same strategies that were effective in Rome. Arrogance and provincialism repeatedly appear throughout Chantelou's narration. At times, Bernini looks like an dunce.

The conversation between Bernini and the bureaucracy in charge of the Louvre—Colbert and his staff led by Charles Perrault—never starts. Although Colbert and Bernini meet almost every day, they never find a way to speak about the designs, in part due to the fact that they do not speak each other's language. Their ridiculous first meeting on June 3, in the sleeping room of the Cavaliere, who cannot renounce his afternoon nap, foretells some kind of endless misunderstanding.

In Paris, some implicit presuppositions of Bernini's architecture become apparent, but not in a theoretical showdown between him and his French colleagues. Instead a series of minor, everyday events reveal the distance separating Bernini from the local bureaucracy. The conflict is not between Bernini and rival architects, but between Bernini and the superintendent

They bring tramps, poor wretches, or simply mediocre individuals onto a strange stage where they strike poses speechily and declaim, where they drape themselves in the bits of cloth they need if they wish to draw attention in the theater of power. At times they remind one of a poor troupe of jugglers and clowns to deck themselves out in makeshift scraps of old finery to play before an audience of aristocrats who will make fun of them. Except that they are staking their whole life on the performance.
—Michel Foucault

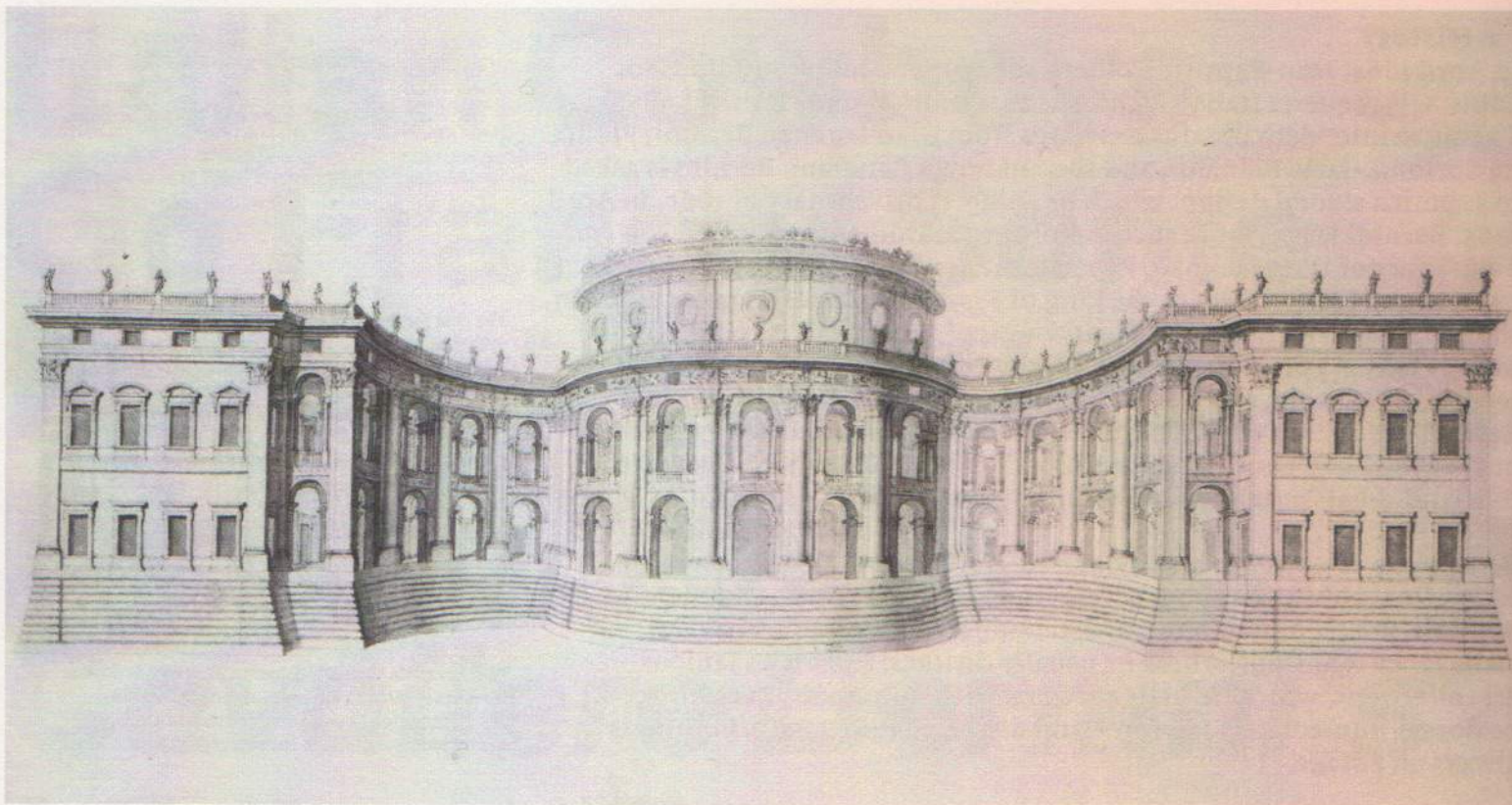
The title for this article is inspired from Aki Kaurismäki's 1989 film entitled *Leningrad Cowboys Go America*, which tells the story of a rock band comprised of young Russian farmers that travel to the United States in order to become famous. The title deliberately quotes Marx Brothers' *Go West* film of 1940. Special thanks are owed to Salomon Frausto, Kersten Geers, Vittorio Pizzigoni, Oliver Thill, and Ioanna Volaki.
—P.P.T.

1
Domenico Bernini, *Vita del Cavaliere Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini* (Rome: 1713; Rome: Perugina, 1999): 116.

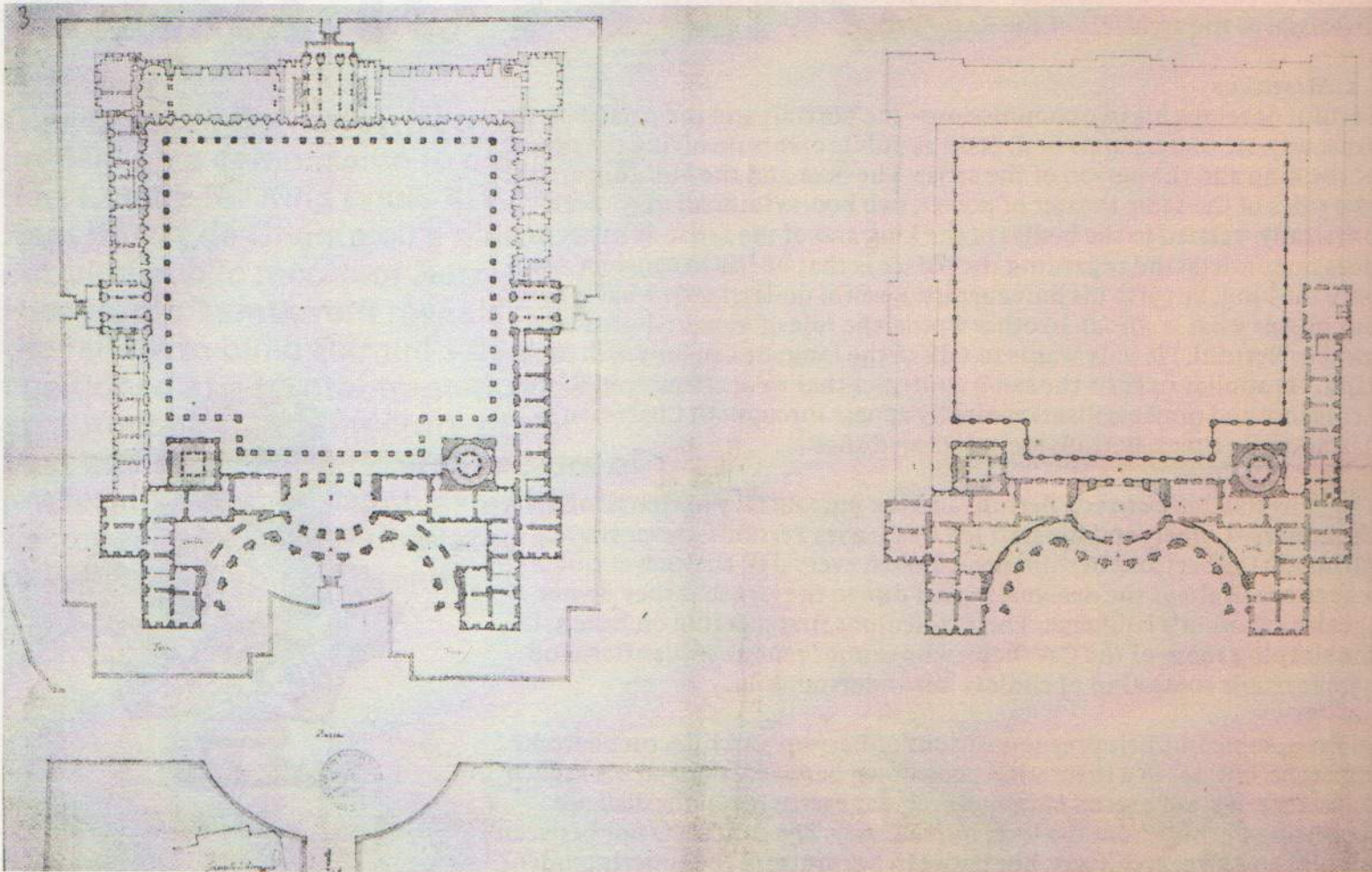
2
Paul Fréart de Chantelou, *Journal du voyage du Cavalier Bernin en France*, ed. Ludovic Lalanne (Paris: 1885). For information about contemporary editions, see the introductory note to the succeeding text.



Gian Lorenzo Bernini, engraving of bust of Louis XIV, originally published in the first French edition of *Journal du voyage du Cavalier Bernin en France*, by Ludovic Lalanne in 1885



Gian Lorenzo Bernini, first design for the east elevation of the Louvre, Paris, 1664



Gian Lorenzo Bernini, two plans for the first design of the Louvre, Paris, 1664

of buildings. It is not a conflict happening *inside* of architecture but rather a conflict about the *autonomy* of architecture.

Bernini loses, and his design will not be realized. The eastern facade of the Louvre will be later completed according to a less expensive design produced by Le Brun, Le Vau, and Claude Perrault. Here it is not so important to understand why Bernini's design was not built, but rather to observe the architectural principles that emerge and decline in response to these events.³

It is possible to read the conflict between Colbert and Bernini as a conflict between the bourgeoisie and aristocracy, technocracy and rhetoric, modernity and *passatismo*. Bernini fights for the past, while Colbert fights for the future. Yet, there are architectural details related to this change of paradigm that deserve some attention.

3. Autonomy

Colbert asks Bernini very precise questions and receives very general and often generic answers. Colbert asks him how to introduce the machines for spectacles in the court (July 15), and Bernini replies that it is easy to disassemble and reassemble such machines. Colbert asks for sufficient space for parking carriages and for military exercises in the square in front of the palace (July 30), and Bernini states that carriages can be parked in the internal court (August 11). Colbert asks how the king can be protected from insurgents hiding in the darkness of the loggias (June 19) and what fire protections the building will have (August 11, October 11), and Bernini gives no answers. Colbert asks about how the rooms will correspond to the etiquette of the court, and Bernini directs him to seek an answer from the Maréchal de Logis (July 30, August 21, October 6). Colbert wants a reason for every single design decision at every location, and moreover he wants a reason that is not just formal, but one founded in reality: a scientific, natural reason. Architecture should be accountable, and most of all it must submit to a larger rationality that embraces all possible fields of knowledge.

Colbert continuously asks for justifications, but for Bernini there is nothing to explain. *Das Rätsel gibt es nicht*. According to Bernini, the questions listed in the *Cahier de difficultés* presented by Perrault on October 6 are simply not questions. Bernini refuses to adhere to the preventive quality check of the French bureaucracy. To Bernini, architecture does not need to be accountable. It can only be miserable if forced to be accountable. Bernini explains that the arrangement of rooms changes with every new pope at the Vatican (October 6), and so architecture is simply what remains once all functional issues are omitted. Form endures beyond function, and space influences movements regardless of programmed activities. The implicit functionalism of Colbert, apparent in contrast to the implicit formalism of Bernini, is a tool to control architecture and to reduce it to administrative common sense—a way to get rid of the autonomy of architecture.

For Colbert, unity is produced through the correct assemblage of the components of a building. For Bernini, unity is not the product of a process; it is an original relation among a series of gestures: the glory of the King, understood as a series of performances and a certain set of measurements. Decisions about design are part of a general formal problem that cannot be considered apart from its totality. According to

*For an answer which cannot be expressed,
the question too cannot be expressed.*

The riddle does not exist.

*If a question can be put at all,
then it can also be answered.*

—Ludwig Wittgenstein

*The truth is the whole. The whole, however, is merely
the essential nature reaching its completeness through
the process of its own development. Of the absolute
it must be said that it is essentially a result, that only
at the end is it what it is in very truth; and just in
that consists its nature, which is to be actual, subject,
or self-becoming, self-development.*

—Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

3

The main reason is that Colbert realizes the new Louvre will not be enough to bring back the King to live in Paris, and so he avoids a useless investment.



Gian Lorenzo Bernini, second design for the east elevation of the Louvre, Paris, 1665

4
 Charles Perrault, *Les Dix Livres d'architecture de Vitruve, corrigez et traduits nouvellement en françois, avec des notes et des figures* (Paris: 1684; Paris: Bibliotheque de l'Image, 1995), 178. For a reconstruction of the history of the Louvre, see Roberto Gargiani, *Ideae costruzione del Louvre* (Florence: Alinea, 1999).

5
 The *querelle* are conventionally said to start in 1687, with the presentation to the Academie Française of Charles Perrault's *Le Siècle de Louis XIV*, but the origins of the debate are deeply rooted in the Renaissance. For more information about the *querelle*, see Marc Fumaroli, "Les abeilles et les araignées" in Marc Fumaroli ed., *La Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001). According to Fumaroli, what is at stake in the *querelle* is the "autonomy" of literature from the modern State. The *Ancients* need an alternative place and alternative time in order to measure the century of Louis XIV. On the other hand, the *Moderns* prevent any escape.



PORTRAIT DE BERNINI.
 (D'après une gravure du XVII^e siècle.)

Engraving of Gian Lorenzo Bernini, originally published in the first French edition of *Journal du voyage du Cavalier Bernin en France*, by Ludovic Lalanne in 1885



CHARLES PERRAULT, D'APRÈS UNE GRAVURE D'ADELINCX.

Engraving of Charles Perrault, originally published in the first French edition of *Journal du voyage du Cavalier Bernin en France*, by Ludovic Lalanne in 1885

Bernini's instinctive Hegelianism: *das Wahre ist das Ganze*. Bernini subsumes separate questions into an overall solution concerning only scale and space. Claude Perrault, in his characteristic mediocrity, recognizes this about his approach: "Le dessin que le Cavalier Bernin avait donné pour le Louvre était de cette espèce, n'ayant rien de grand, que la longueur, la largeur et la hauteur."⁴

4. Abstraction

Bernini understands architecture as rhetoric, as propaganda. Yet architecture can perform as rhetoric only because it relies on a given grammar, because it works inside a closed, abstract system without relations to any pre-defined "content." Bernini uses as a precondition the abstraction and the autonomy of the architectural grammar of the time: the "five orders" in their late Renaissance form. To Bernini, the five orders stand for architecture. They do not mean anything inherently, and they are already given—with no need for reinvention. The abstract rigidity of the architectural *langue* based on the five orders allows architecture to establish a detached and free relation with the gestures inside the spaces. The lack of content in these architectural elements is a precondition for architecture to record events, to accumulate traces, and to protect memories. In order to accept rituals and to nourish desires inside of space, architecture needs to be hollow, empty, and ready to receive. Perfect abstraction creates a space that can accommodate ceremonies and emotions. The five orders come first before any possible reality. They are the very tool that allows a free investigation of spatial experiences.

In his speech at the Academy (September 5), Bernini argues that students have to study the ancient masterpieces first and only confront nature afterwards. When he is asked to compare St. Peter's and the Pantheon (September 19), Bernini states that there are hundred errors in St. Peter's and none in the Pantheon. In these glimpses of the *querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, Bernini takes side with the ancients, in favor of autonomy and abstraction.⁵ The gap between architecture and nature—the world—is given and unbridgeable. Architecture needs to communicate through it.

Bernini did not invent the abstraction of the architectural language he uses, but rather received it from the Renaissance. And while he is not even particularly conscious of this, still he is not ready to renounce to it. Bernini knows that his research on the relation between bodies, gestures, and spaces needs the abstraction that has been attributed to Renaissance architecture by the strictly formal interpretation of the Roman ruins advanced by Bramante. The so-called *classicism* of Bernini's architecture—as opposed to his *baroque* sculpture—comes from the fact that rhetoric needs a stable grammar. Bernini does not want to compromise the grammar. Indeed, he does not investigate variations or alternatives; he simply uses it. Bernini uses a language that is based on nothing, but this is not a problem for him. Bernini is not interested in the lack of foundations of his architecture, so he cannot even defend this aspect of it. Maybe Bramante could have consistently answered to Colbert that "the question was wrong," and be disappointingly proud of the uselessness of his architecture. Instead Bernini just replies to Colbert that "he should ask somebody else".

5. Content

The cultural operation initiated by the superintendent of buildings—later perfected by Perrault and Laugier—aims at reducing architecture to an

entirely utterable, unidimensional ratio, replacing the inborn dualism of Renaissance architecture with a unique, scientific rationality. It is a twofold operation: curbing the abstraction of the formal code by providing a “content” for the five orders, and systematizing the correspondence between activities, spaces, and formal resources, or creating a taxonomy based on “character.”

A new need for justification arises in architecture, and a new reading of the ornamental tales of Vitruvius regarding the origin of the five orders emerges. The logical abstraction of the orders is replaced with a new, *natural* content. Claude Perrault even proposes and develops a national content in the form of a sixth, *French* order for a competition proposed by Colbert in 1672. All of this would have sounded insane to Bernini.

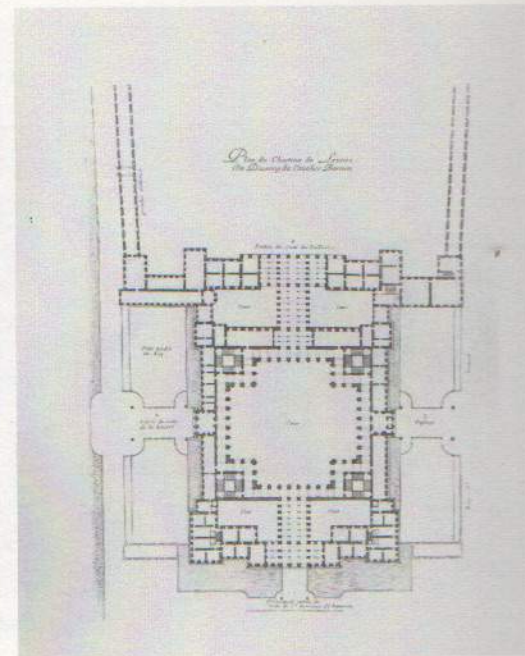
Creating a taxonomy of activities was a tool to establish an unequivocal relation between spaces and the operations they contain. The formal code and the spaces no longer run parallel; what for Bernini is still a dialectic turns into a correspondence. An architecture that describes activities replaces an architecture that enables gestures. The need to have an argument for everything turns architecture itself into an argument. The order is deprived of independence, and space is deprived of the unconscious. Now, architecture is produced according to “character”: a certain figure corresponds to a certain function. “Character”—the word with a soft, bourgeois tone—involves a ridiculous essentialization of building functions that ends up making architecture as predictable as a sitcom. The prison has to scare, and the library has to teach. It is the contemptible search for “character” that leads to the design of a library in the form of four open books.

Once the distance between the formal code and the family of gestures within is lost, the application of rules only grows more fanatical. Everything has to follow from a single argument. Architectural rules, now understood as natural laws, lead to extreme intolerance in their application. For instance, Perrault argues against the lack of symmetry of the southern facade of Bernini’s palace (October 6). Perrault does not understand how the city requires this design; he does not accept this freedom.

6. Propaganda

Colbert and Louis XIV hire Bernini as the great master of propaganda. Colbert wants every single column to declare the glory of France and the king of France. The superintendent desires a building that describes the state as a transparent bureaucratic machinery. He wants the building to be isolated and the square to be large enough for disciplined visitors to stand facing the building and carefully read its facade. For him the palace should be a set of signs, entirely legible without experiencing its spaces. Indeed, Colbert does not want the populace to experience the building. He wants to avoid any legal complications with the neighbors; he desires absolute safety and perfect isolation. For Colbert, the square always seems too small. Colbert worries the palace is dangerously close to the city, but for Bernini, the building needs the city. For him, the primary view should be an oblique one, from the Pont-Neuf, so that the building is experienced and understood through the city.

Bernini’s propaganda and Colbert’s agenda are incompatible. For Bernini, the palace cannot describe the king’s glory, but can only enable the rituals declaring his glory. What relates to the king, to his body and glory, is not



Jean Marot after Gian Lorenzo Bernini, engraving of the ground level plan of the third design for the Louvre, 1665

A trend emerged in the eighteenth century in architecture discourse and writing—especially visible in France—that depicted buildings literally speaking to announce their intentions, like characters in a play. The idea of *architecture parlante* arose due to failure of faith in architecture as a form of public expression, as well as the emergence of a virtual consumption of architecture through print media, a new public realm without a place. In 1794, Leon Dufourny writes:

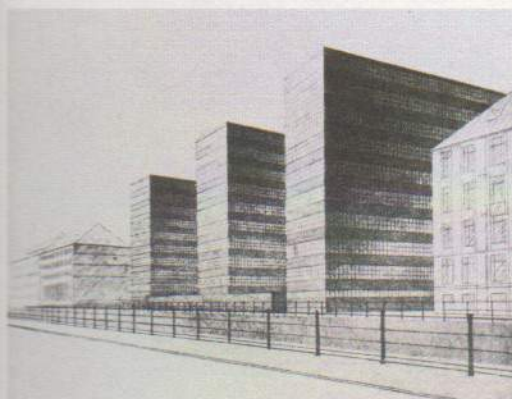
Great monuments must make great impressions; the walls must speak; multiplied sentences must render our edifices Books of morality.... Each part must announce itself and speak to the eyes; each part must also have the particular character appropriate to it, like the stables, the infirmary, the manege, and yet the ensemble must still say to us: *Here is a barracks.*¹

Richard Wittman, "Architecture, Space, and Abstraction in Eighteenth Century French Public Sphere," *Representations*, no. 102, spring 2008: 1-26.

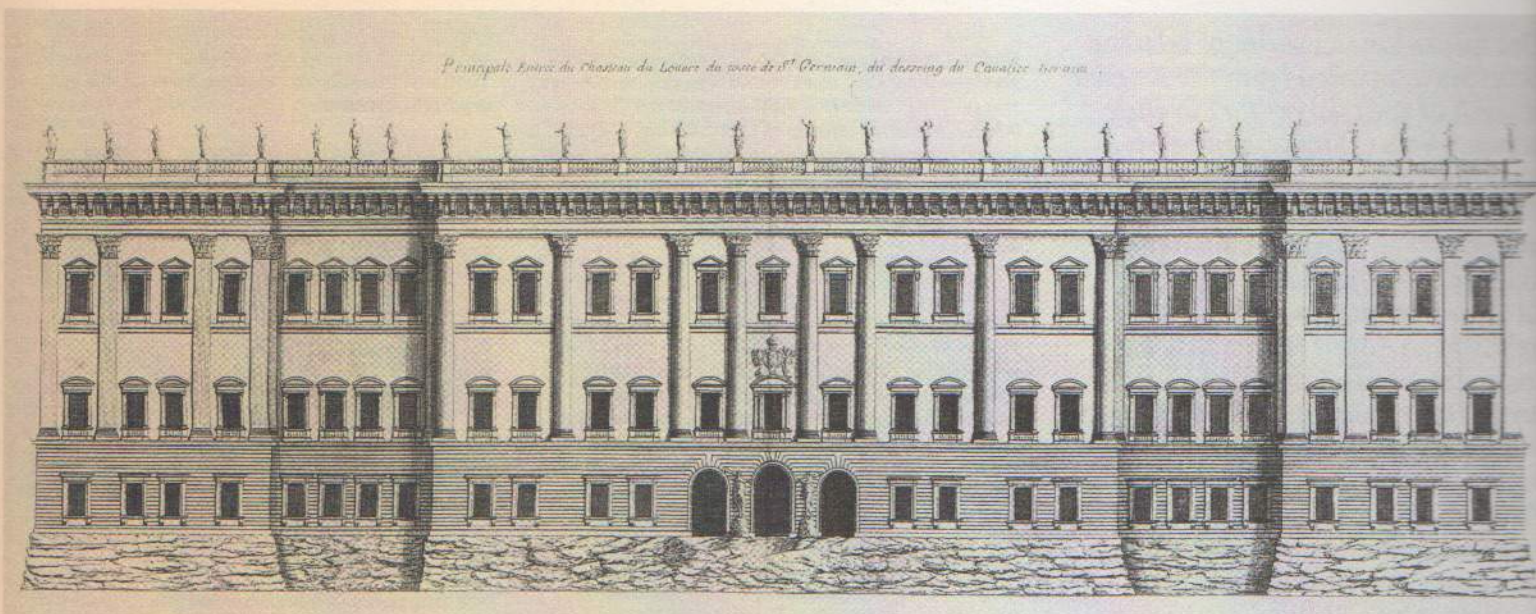
the building, but the voids it produces: the court inside, the new eastern square, and the new immense space between the palace and the Tuileries. Bernini's propaganda works not through didacticism but by amazement and movement. Rhetoric in architecture to Bernini is just the rhetoric of space, the choreography of void. Architecture's relation to gestures, rituals, and ultimately the epiphanies of power are possible only because of architectural language's absolute autonomy. Architecture only speaks through its indifference. Architecture is as eloquent and as silent as a scene. Nothing is more remote from Bernini than *architecture parlante*.

Bernini's design for the Louvre is usually overlooked in the epoch-making record contained in Chantelou's diary. But it is an amazing design that is humble and contextual. Bernini's Louvre has typically been disqualified as megalomaniac, yet it is quite reasonable compared to the contemporaneous designs and investment for Versailles. Once in Paris, Bernini abandons the generic grandiosity of his first and second design and develops a precise, contextual solution. Bernini's third design for the Louvre is in fact a subtle elaboration on the idea of the castle. The minimal variations of the volume in the corners and at the centers of the four sides affiliate Bernini's Louvre to the French castle tradition without abandoning the monumental autonomy of an Italian palazzo. The result is a surprising hybrid. Despite all the contempt he exhibits for French architecture, Bernini is much more receptive of the local tradition than he himself claims to be.

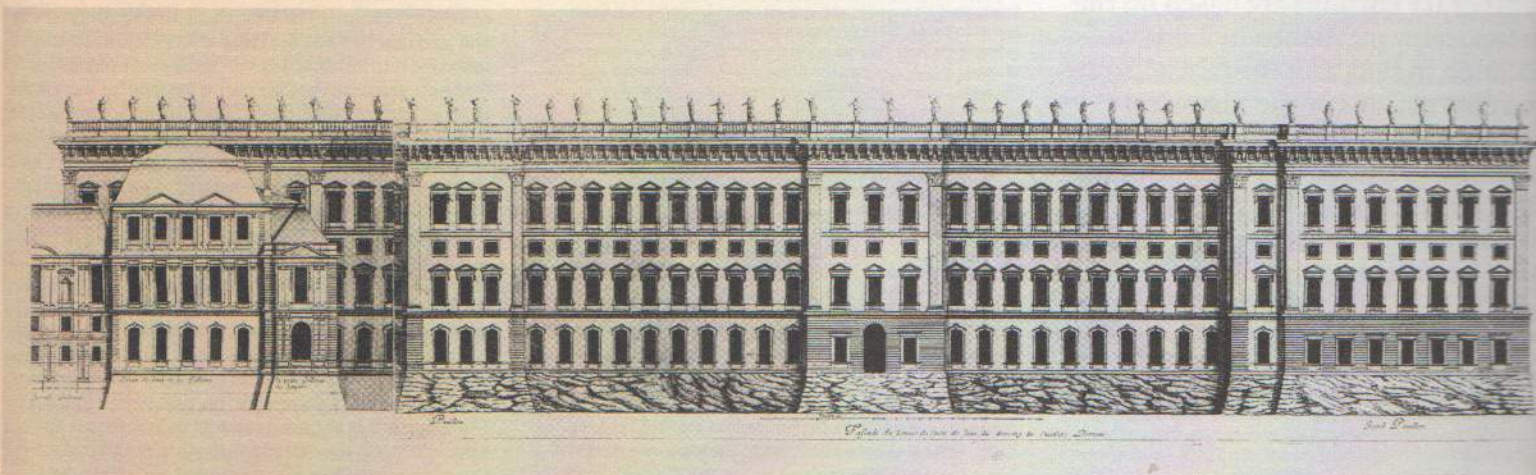
Contrary to Perrault's flat colonnade, Bernini's building is a volume. Even the facades are volumetric. The design is particularly beautiful in the southern facade—the most criticized at the time—along the river. Here, the projecting volumes of Bernini's Louvre produce a sequence that challenges the surrounding city in manner similar to Mies van der Rohe's 1933 design for the Reichsbank in Berlin. In both cases, the voids between the projecting volumes define an urban rhythm that expands into the surrounding city. Both buildings discover a strange affinity with the river in front of them. The voids between the smooth slabs of the Reichsbank, as well as the voids trapped inside of the Bernini's deep facade slowly flows into the city. Bernini is very careful in accommodating these voids into his building. Contrary to the French tradition where corner pavilions are domed, and have an order that is different from the rest of the facade, Bernini's building has the same order all over its southern elevation. The building becomes a background and records inside its facade the voids that float into the city (in a far less naïve way than in Bernini's first and second proposal). The building remains abstract and absolute, and yet it is able to suggest an accumulative process and thus to relate to the older parts of the complex (such as the Grande Galerie). The Royal Palace is in itself city, and challenges the city as a gigantic urban cogwheel. The plasticism of Bernini's urban architecture operates in Paris with solutions that are completely different from the ones used in Rome. The sensual curves of Rome give place to a more robust, rocklike geometry. Still, it is the city that produces, by means of *contrapposti*, its own architecture.



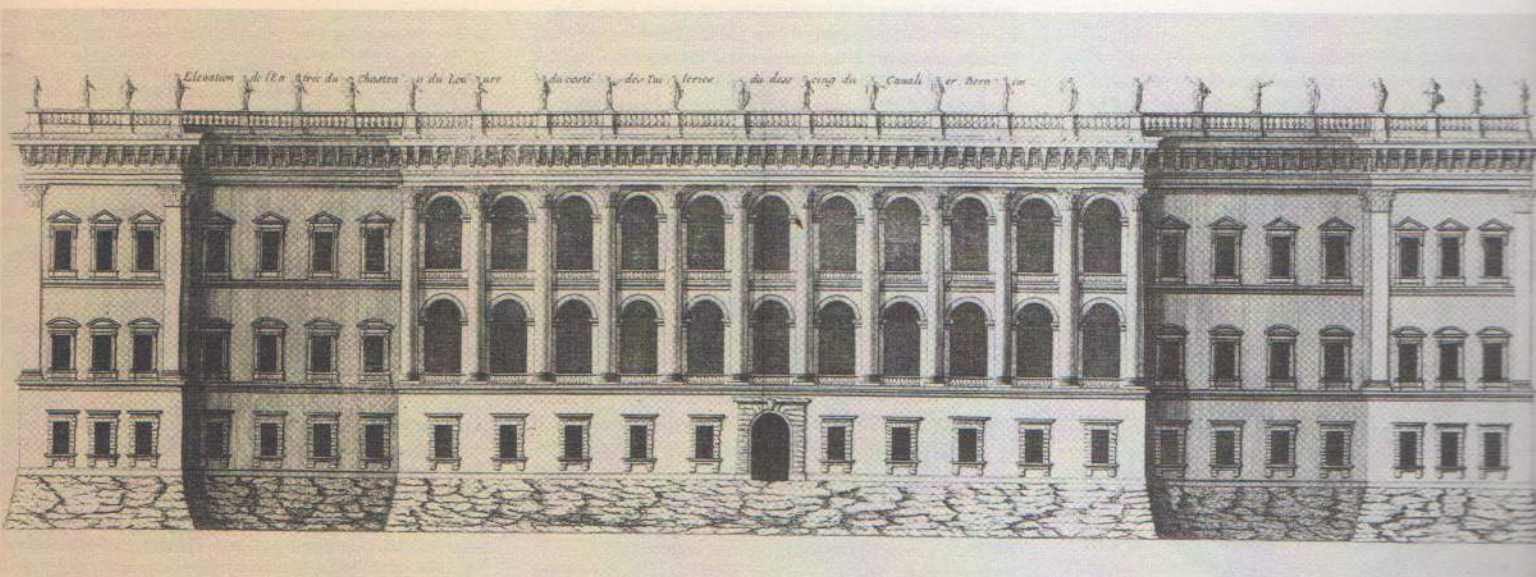
Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, design for the Reichsbank, 1933



Jean Marot after Gian Lorenzo Bernini, engraving of the east elevation of the third design for the Louvre, east elevation, 1665



Jean Marot after Gian Lorenzo Bernini, engraving of the west elevation of the west elevation of the third design for the Louvre, 1665



Jean Marot after Gian Lorenzo Bernini, engraving of the south elevation of the third design for the Louvre, 1665

The following is a series of selected excerpts as printed from the English edition of the *Diary of the Cavaliere Bernini's Visit to France*, edited by Anthony Blunt (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). Other contemporary editions of Chantelou's diary include *Journal du voyage du Cavalier Bernin en France*, edited by Milovan Stanic (Paris: Macula-Insulaire, 2001); *Viaggio del cavalier Bernini in Francia*, edited by Guglielmo Bilancioni (Palermo: Sellerio, 1988); *Bernini in Paris: Das Tagebuch des Paul Fréart de Chantelou über den Aufenthalt*; and *Gianlorenzo Berninis am hof des Ludwigs XIV*, edited by Pablo Schneider and Philipp Zitlperger (Berlin: Akademie, 2006). All contemporary editions are based on the manuscript published by Ludovic Lalanne in 1885 and contain accurate reconstructions of the historical context and of the contemporary architectural debate. Only the notes that are immediately necessary for the understanding of the text have been reproduced.

June 1

During the evening one of the minister's servants was sent to look for me. I went over to him, and he told me that the King had chosen me to welcome the Cavaliere Bernini, not in my capacity as maître d'hôtel⁶ but as a special emissary to entertain and accompany him while he was in this country.

6
That is, one of the royal stewards responsible for serving the King's table.

June 3

In the morning I went to see him to ask whether there was anything he required. He asked me for drawing boards and drawing materials, which M. Du Metz, who happened to be there, ordered at once. After dinner M. Colbert arrived.²⁵ The Cavaliere was lying down after the meal according to the Italian custom and wanted to get up at once, but M. Colbert would not allow it. Addressing him as he lay in bed, the minister first conveyed to him his great pleasure at his safe arrival and good health.

25
According to Baldinucci (Vita, p. 52) and Domenico Bernini (p. 127), Colbert had already visited the Cavaliere the night before; and a letter of Mattia de' Rossi (Miroir, p. 205, n. 3) indicates that Chantelou, who had not yet begun to keep his journal, simply transposed his memory of the event to the following day. In his report to Rome, the Papal Nuncio wrote: "The Cavaliere Bernini arrived here Tuesday evening in the best of health. He was visited the same evening by my Lord Colbert, and on Wednesday morning the same Colbert showed him the Palace and all of the streets opening on the Louvre. After dinner, he saw all the Louvre and from what he said to me, he thinks that what has been built can be of little use" (Schiavo, p. 32). In an age when elaborate displays of courtesy were the counterpart of jealously guarded claims to precedence, Colbert's refusal to allow Bernini to leave his bed was a pretty piece of deference.

June 4

When the King was dressed, M. Colbert took [Bernini] into the bedchamber and presented him to His Majesty, who was standing at the window with the First Gentleman of the Bedchamber and the Master of the Wardrobe. The maréchal de Gramont had also entered. The Cavaliere made his speech with perfect assurance and told the King, as he had told M. Colbert, the reasons which had persuaded him to come to France. Turning to the question of the designs for the Louvre, he said to His Majesty; "Sir, I have seen the palaces of emperors and popes and those of sovereign princes which lie on the road from Rome to Paris, but a palace for a king of France, a modern king, must outdo them all in magnificence." Then addressing the circle around the King, he added, "To my mind there must be nothing trivial in connection with this building."²⁹

29
This proud statement recalls the confident assertion made in not dissimilar circumstances by Bernini's great contemporary, Peter Paul Rubens: "I confess that I am, by natural instinct, better fitted to execute very large works than small curiosities. Everyone according to his own gifts; my talent is such that no undertaking, however vast in size or diversified in subject, has ever surpassed my courage" (The Letters of Peter Paul Rubens, trans. R. S. Magurn, Cambridge, Mass., 1955, p. 77) Bernini's previous comments, however, show that here he is not referring to the exigencies of his own genius, but to those of a great king.

June 19

M. Colbert called on the Cavaliere before I got there. Signor Paolo told me when I arrived that the Cavaliere had shown him the plan of the Louvre and that he had not liked it because he had placed the block containing the King's suite in the pavilion near Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois so that the King would be exposed to all the noise that occurred at the Port de l'Ecole.¹¹³ Moreover, the arcade which he had designed so that the King could get in and out of his carriage under cover would serve as

a hiding place for anyone intending assassination, and so would the columns carrying the vestibule.¹¹⁴ The Cavaliere said nothing to me about all this but appeared depressed.

113
That is, Bernini placed the King's apartment opposite the mediaeval church of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois and closest to the docks on the bank of the Seine. From the time of his first design, Bernini "was convinced that because the most noble part of the palace was the principal facade, it was here that the King must have his apartment" (Miroir, p. 178, n. r). As we have seen (above, 9 June), no criticism of this location as being noisy and unhealthy (Clément, pp. 247-48) could shake this conviction, and the placement of the royal apartments remained a problem (below, 7 Oct. and p. 334)

114
The plan of Bernini's third project (fig. 8), engraved by Jean Marot (below, 20 and 21 Sept.), shows a hypostyle atrium parallel to the facade on the ground floor. It is joined to the main courtyard of the palace by a colonnade with three courses, which divides a subsidiary courtyard into two equal parts. Colbert's aversion to the plan arises from the fact that both Henry III, in 1589, and Henry IV, in 1610, had been assassinated. Cf. below, 15 Oct., where the minister, haunted by the unsuccessful regicide of James I in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, objects to having cisterns in the palace.

June 20

The King noticed among other features the rock-like base on which the Louvre was to rest; this was covered by a sheet of paper with a drawing showing this story rusticated, as an alternative because the rock would be difficult to execute. The King considered both carefully and said that he liked the rocky effect very much and asked for it to be carried out. The Cavaliere explained that he had drawn the alternative because he was afraid that the entirely novel idea of the rock might not please, but also because if it was to be carried out in accordance with his intention he himself would have to do it. The King repeated that he was extremely impressed by the rock design.¹¹⁵ To this the Cavaliere answered that it was a great pleasure to see what a delicate and discriminating taste the King had, there being few, even among the profession, who would have decided so judiciously. ... I forgot to mention that the King had asked him to undertake his portrait. The Cavaliere had replied that it was a most difficult thing to do and would cause the King a certain amount of inconvenience, as he would need twenty sittings, each of two hours.¹¹⁶ I also learnt that the same evening before supper the King had taken the designs to the Queen and had said again how extremely pleased he was with them, but that he had not explained them to her because he had discussed them so much that his jaws ached.

115
Bernini was led to a rough-hewn, rocklike basement because he had decided to use the existing ground floor as the base for a colossal order (above, 9 June). But if this base was rusticated, the basement in the moat below would then have had to appear even more crude in keeping with the traditional progression from the simple and rough to the rich and refilled in the several stories of the Renaissance facade (cf. Tessin, p. 159). The effect sought by Bernini in this rocky foundation was evidently the combination of awe, wonder, and formidable beauty that Vasari recognized in Michele Sanmicheli's fort of S. Andrea al Lido in Venice, which appeared to be cut from living rock (Vasari-Milanesi, VI, p. 348). Such ideas had been popularized by Vitruvius' account of the architect Denocrates, who wished to carve Mt. Athos into an image of Alexander the Great holding a city in his hand (*De arch.*, II, preface) and had already entered into Bernini's design of the Four Rivers Fountain (Wittkower, *Bernini*, cat. no. 50), where he reputedly also insisted on carving the rocky mass supporting the obelisk (Baldinucci, Vita, p. 38, and Dom. Bernini, p. 89). Typically, however, Bernini informed his design with a conceit that metaphorically particularized it in relation to the King. "Above the great mass of rock," Mattia de' Rossi wrote in his description of the elevation (fig. 9), "instead of ornamenting the principal portal with two columns, he has placed there two Herculean figures, which seem to guard the palace and to which the Cavaliere has given a meaning; he says that Hercules, in his fortitude and labor, is the image of Virtue that resides on the mountain of effort, which is the mass of rock described above; and he says that whoever wishes to reside in this realm must attain it by virtue and labor" (Miroir, p. 217, n. I, which also contains an account of Bernini's presentation of his designs to the King). It is this same conceit that was later used by Bernini for his equestrian portrait of Louis XIV (cf. below, 13 Aug., and R. Wittkower, "The Vicissitudes of a Dynastic Monument. Bernini's Equestrian Statue of Louis XIV,"



PAGANA DU LOUVRE, D'APRES LE PROJET DE BERNINI.
(Médaille de Veit.)

De Artibus Opuscula XL: Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky, ed. Millard Meiss, New York, 1961, pp. 497–511. See, too, the verses written in praise of Bernini's work by the abbé Buti (below, 20 Aug.), which are published in Schiavo, p. 41. Bernini had used similar figures flanking a portal in his earlier design for the Ludovisi palace at Montecitorio.

116

Bernini's unusual and demanding procedure for making the King's bust (fig. 4) from selecting the marble block to finishing the final details from life is minutely documented in the pages that follow and has been carefully analyzed by Rudolf Wittkower, *Bernini's Bust of Louis XIV*, London, 1951. However, the special nature of the commission in Bernini's mind appears in his agitated conversation with Chantelou of several days earlier (II June) when he himself brought up the question of the bust. On other occasions, when properly persuaded, he was willing to work from painted portraits provided by the sitter (Wittkower, *Bernini*, cat. nos. 39, 42, 54), and although the lifelike results were considered all the more amazing for having been done in this way (cf. Bauer, p. 44), the artist himself found such work extremely difficult ("The Notebook and Account Book of Nicolas Stone," ed. W. L. Spiers, Walpole Society, VII, 1918–19, pp. 170–71). Altogether, the bust required seventeen sittings: five during which Bernini drew the King and twelve during which he worked on the marble. By way of comparison, the diary of Alexander VII records only four sittings for a bust of the Pope, although there may have been others and Bernini, of course, knew his features well (Krautheimer and Jones, pp. 199–225).

June 29

Feast of St. Peter. After prayer we drove to Auteuil where we met M. Du Metz and many others who tried him considerably by their conversation. He said to me, "I have one great enemy in Paris, but a great one"; he repeated, "the idea they have of me."¹³¹

131

Bernini's comment is in Italian in the manuscript.

July 1

My brother⁴ and I went to the Tuileries to await M. Colbert who was expected there. When he arrived we accompanied him over the whole building. While in the gallery that leads off the end of the Long Gallery, he asked me what the Cavaliere had been doing. I said that he had been working at the rear facade of the Louvre. He asked me whether he had made it as high as the one for the front. "Yes," I said. "It won't be successful then," he replied.⁵ He enquired whether the Cavaliere had seen anything by Mansart.⁶ I said no; it had been proposed to arrange discussions between them in Paris, but in fact they had not met: ... From the Tuileries he went to visit the Cavaliere, who showed him the design for the facade on the service court. On first seeing it M. Colbert said it was the same as for the front. The architect answered that there was a considerable difference and to demonstrate it he had the other design brought in. Then M. Colbert acknowledged the difference and remarked on the height and told the Cavaliere that the facade should have been adapted so as to fit in with the Long Gallery and the other buildings adjoining, which would appear smaller in comparison with the height of the new facade; on the main front there were not these difficulties. The Cavaliere replied that they existed no more at the back than at the front; the galleries were like the arms in relation to the head, and should not therefore be so high; in any case the roofs of these buildings would be level with the facades. He took a pencil to show what he meant. He said that only once had he had to face this problem, at St. Peter's in Rome, because there the facade seemed to everyone to be too low. To remedy this fault he had advised the Pope to build two colonnades, one on either side of the facade to make it appear higher than it was. He showed what he meant with a pencil and compared the effect to that of the arms to the head, saying it would be the same with these two galleries and the facade;⁸ architecture consisted in proportions drawn from the human body, and the reason why painters and sculptors succeeded better than others in that art was their constant study of the human form.⁹

4

Roland Freart de Chambray (1606–76), author and critic, who was active with Chantelou in the King's Works under Sublet de Noyers. His works included translations of Palladio (1650), Euclid (1662), and Leonardo's *Trattato della pittura* (1651), as well as the *Parallele de l'architecture antique avec la moderne* (1650) and the *Idee de la perfection de la peinture* (1662).

5

As appears immediately below, because it would then be higher than the adjoining galleries connecting the Louvre with the Tuileries (cf. fig. 1J).

6

François Mansart (1598–1666), the celebrated architect whose works are usually seen as the purest manifestation in architecture of 17th-century French classicism. His difficult temperament and a restless creativity not unlike that described by Bernini above (6 June) seem to have deprived him of commissions in later life without affecting the esteem in which his works were held. Thus the plans he made at the request of Colbert for both the Louvre and the Bourbon chapel at Saint-Denis remained on paper. For a full account of Mansart and his work, see P. Smith and A. Braham, *François Mansart*, London, 1972.

8

The reference to two galleries presumably implies that Bernini was already contemplating a second gallery to the north linking the Louvre to the Tuileries, as shown in one of Marot's engravings (fig. 8).

9

As Chantelou remarks above (2 June), the anthropomorphic basis of architectural proportions was a theoretical commonplace, but the conclusions to be drawn from it were not always the same. Michelangelo, for example, had deduced from the relationship of architecture and the human body the lesson of organic unity. He replaced the traditional notion of fixed relationships derived from the geometry of a static, symmetrical figure with dynamic ones based on the figure in action (cf. Condivi, *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti*, ed. by E. S. Borelli, Milan, 1964, pp. 76–77). From this conception of the architectural work as an organism composed of mutually interdependent parts, he naturally deduced that painters and sculptors, who were most familiar with the human body, would make the best architects (Ackerman, pp. xxxiv, 1–10). That Bernini understood the analogy in the same way appears not only from what has been said above (notes to 14 June), but from his example of the colonnades at St. Peter's. He had already compared the colonnades to the arms of the Church in a memorandum on his design for the piazza (Brauer and Wittkower, p. 70, n. 1), and his comments here and later (below, 15 July) show he intended it to be taken as a meaningful conceit that would illuminate his architectural aims and ideas, rather than as a literal, descriptive metaphor. By contrast, a naive interpretation of the comparison appears in a "counter proposal" for the piazza, which criticizes Bernini's plan and argues for a circular one (R. Wittkower, "A Counter-project to Bernini's 'Piazza di San Pietro'," *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, III, 1939, pp. 88–106). On the other hand, Borromini's application of the same metaphor to the very different facade of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri in Rome can only be understood in the same sense intended by Michelangelo and Bernini (*Opus architectonicum equitis Francisci Borromini*, Rome, 1725, p. 11).

July 8

Soon afterward the Cavaliere came in and showed [Colbert] the elevation of half of the court facade of the Louvre, which the minister greatly praised. The Cavaliere told him that he himself was very satisfied with the work; he hoped its execution would be a great success, and that there would be nothing like it in all Europe. M. Colbert replied that he was impatient to see the foundations laid. The architect informed him that the design would be finished by Sunday together with the one for the riverside facade, for which the King had already asked twice; he intended to take everything to His Majesty on Sunday.

July 15

Then M. Colbert asked whether [Bernini] could find a means of providing a courtyard where horse tournaments could be held and devise some way of getting stage properties in. He replied that it was impossible to make entrances sufficiently large for the latter, but that on the occasions when these pieces were used it was customary to construct them in different bits which could be easily assembled, and space should be provided for making and keeping them. M. Colbert then began to discuss with him the square in front of the Louvre, whereupon the Cavaliere took a stick of charcoal and sketched it on

the floor, using a compass to mark a distance one and a half times the height of the facade, and said that this would be sufficient to get a perfect view of the facade with yards to spare⁵⁰ and that further, as the church of Saint-Germain⁵¹ was only on the one side, it would leave space for a large approach sixty or seventy feet across, leading up to the principal entrance, along which the facade would be visible from any point one chose. Then for the two sides of the square he marked two arcs of circles. M. Colbert said that the guardroom and other apartments, which must be near the Louvre, could be placed there. The Cavaliere remarked that it might turn out to be like the Piazza of St. Peter's, the facade of which he sketched, adding that when it had been executed during the pontificate of Paul V, Michelangelo's design had not been followed and the facade had always been found too low in relation to its width. This was the reason why suggestions had often been made to pull it down, both Urban VIII and Innocent X after him having had this in mind, but as popes only assumed office late in life, they did not care to undertake this great work which would have had to begin with extensive demolition. The present Pope having consulted him, he studied the problem and found that by adding a low colonnade on either side the facade could be made to appear higher by contrast and the fault was thus corrected.⁵²

50

Attempts to fix the minimum distance from which a work of art will not appear distorted by the effects of foreshortening go back to Piero della Francesca. The distance of one and one-half times the height of the facade proposed by Bernini is rather less than that usually recommended. See E. Panofsky, *La prospettiva come forma simbolica*, Milan, 1966, pp. 110–11, n. 69.

51

The mediaeval church of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, which was the parish church of the Louvre, stood to the east of the Square Court of the Louvre. It was necessary to incorporate it into any scheme for the square in front of the east facade, and this problem presented difficulties because the axis of the church was not at right angles to the line of the facade.

52

See above, 1 July, where Bernini also attributes this visual effect to the colonnades and cf. his statement below, 28 July, that the lack of alignment in the doors of the palace might be corrected by means of "perspective," a procedure that recalls the Scala Regia (E. Panofsky, "Die Scala Regia im Vatikan und die Kunstanschauungen Bernini," *Jahrbuch der preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, XL, 1919, pp. 241–78). Urban VIII had been dissatisfied with Maderno's facade of St. Peter's when still a cardinal, and there are projects by Bernini of 1645 (under Innocent X) and 1659 (under Alexander VII), which, if built, would have radically altered the facade in the direction of Michelangelo's design. See Brauer and Wittkower, pp. 39–43, 83–84.

July 28

It was [the Commandeur de Souvré] who wished to entertain [Bernini] to dinner, in order to ask his advice on what he wished to have done in the Temple.¹⁵⁶ He answered that he wanted to go nowhere; people asked his advice only to annoy him by not following it, as in the case of the altar of the Val-de-Grâce and the staircase of the hôtel d'Aumont; he was sure that it would never be carried out.

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The establishment, including house and grounds, possessed at Paris from 1211 by the Order of the Temple, from which it took its name. When the Templars were disbanded in 1312, the Temple passed, along with its rights of legal jurisdiction and sanctuary, to the Knights of Malta, who made it the residence of the Grand Prior of France. The commandeur de Souvré wanted to build a house at the Temple and later asked Bernini to make a design. As in the case of the Louvre, however, the Cavaliere's project proved far more grand and costly than was desired (below, 2 Oct.), and the hotel was later built on the designs of Pierre de Lisle-Mansart, who was given the commission in 1667.

July 30

Then M. Colbert told me to inform [Bernini] that he was worried about two things; one, the square in front of the Louvre which ought to be big enough to hold the regiment of guards, the light and heavy cavalry, and be

used sometimes to conduct exercises with the troops arranged in battle formation; secondly, to see the lines of the foundations, in order to know exactly which houses would have to be pulled down. He knew it would not be possible to keep the Cavaliere longer than October and that much time would be needed to get out the people who were occupying them; they could not be put on the street in one day; he had no idea what was done in Rome, but that was not the custom in France; ...on the subject of the foundations [Bernini] said he had not been able to finish them earlier; Signor Mattia had worked without stopping; when he had plotted the lines of the Louvre he had found that some were out of the true, and he had had to work hard to put this right, for although it was only about fifteen inches it made a noticeable difference to the line of the doors; the one already in existence was on the straight, but, as the line of the river facade made an obtuse angle instead of a right angle, the new doorway, the foundations of which were laid in the center of the front facade, would not have its center exactly opposite the other entrance; he illustrated this with a piece of charcoal on the floor; would it not be a great pity to have it thus in a palace on which so much money had been lavished? ...During the evening on our drive I told the Cavaliere that from what I had seen and from what M. Colbert had said he was impatient for the work to be begun on the foundations and therefore the lines should be marked out, so that it could be seen which houses would have to be purchased, for which of course the formalities would have to be observed. He replied that I knew very well that no time had been lost; in three days it would be two months since he had arrived in Paris; first of all he had had to set out his plan, he had then made four different elevations, he had then worked on the interiors in order to complete the preparations, which was in itself a six months' task; afterwards, to avoid any mistakes, he had taken the alignments of the existing buildings and had found the angle out of the true; he had striven to put it right and fortunately had succeeded; besides that he had worked at the portrait of the King, which was very trying for him, as it required a state of intense exertion; as regards the houses that would have to be demolished, he said that it was none of his business and he would never have spoken about it; it was quite sufficient that he should apply himself only to that part which concerned the design. These other matters were not in his sphere, and it would be to the detriment of the more important part if he were to give them his attention; in Rome there was a prelate in charge of buildings with the power necessary to carry out their execution; he could not and ought not to take on such duties;...

August 5

Then we went to see the lines of the foundations, and the Cavaliere pointed out where the trench would come to. M. Colbert continually expressed his fear that there would be too little room for the square in front of the Louvre, although M. Mattia had said that there would be between eighteen and twenty-four feet more than what was shown on the plan that had been sent to Rome.²⁴

24

That is, the original project by Le Vau, which Colbert had first subjected to the criticism of the French architects and then sent to Rome for comments by the Italians, with the additional request that they submit designs of their own. See Mirot, pp. 171-72.

August 6

At about two o'clock M. Boutard²⁹ came to see me and said that he knew on good authority that there was a certain cooling off with regard to the Cavaliere's designs: the way things were going, the Louvre would be finished as it had been begun; the disposition of the King was one in which a melancholy humor predominated. He was always drawn to what was new; then to distract him

something else was brought along, and he would become interested in it, and whatever decision he may have come to before was imperceptibly altered. I replied that I found the King's disposition quite the opposite and I could not believe that they could wish to go on making mistakes and refuse to profit by the work, experience, and genius of the Cavaliere, particularly after all the expense, which still continued; M. Colbert was too clever for that.

29

Lalanne noted that a Boutard, who must be the same as the Boutart who appears below, is listed as *auditeur des comptes* in the *État de France* of 1665.

August 10

On my return home I learned from Mme. de Chantelou, who had come from M. Renard's, that he had told her that there was a cabal of architects intriguing against the Cavaliere and among a large gathering of the profession, only the younger Anguier had taken his part.⁶⁵

65

Three members of the Anguier family were active as artists at this time. François (1604-69) and Michel (1612 or 1614 to 1686) were sculptors; Guillaume (1628-1708) was a painter of architectural views and ornaments. It is uncertain whether Chantelou is here referring to Guillaume, actually the youngest, or to Michel, the younger sculptor and most gifted of the three. From 1663 Michel had been working on the sculptural decoration of the Val-de-Grace, and he later carved the Nativity for its high altar (today in Saint-Roch), so he would presumably have seen himself as Bernini's rival. On the other hand, he ha



August 14

While [Bernini] was lying down, Mme. de La Baume⁸⁷ arrived and told us she had some business with the King and would take this occasion of approaching him. ...As soon as His Majesty entered, Mme. de La Baume presented herself in the antechamber and spoke to him at great length while the King listened most attentively, smiling now and again. The Cavaliere, seeing that the time allotted to the sitting was going, appeared once or twice before His Majesty, showing visibly that he wished this audience could be shorter, but it had no effect, and Mme. de La Baume was with him nearly half an hour, which made everyone think that the matter could not be disagreeable to the King. Then he came into the room, and the Cavaliere began to work, looking at the King from many different angles, from below, from the side, from near, and from far; for this reason many of the young people, present there for the first time, seeing the Cavaliere look at the King in so many ways and with so great a show of energy, wanted to giggle; the King had difficulty in preventing himself from laughing, but he restrained himself and so did the others, so that the Cavaliere noticed nothing. He worked at the right cheek, the mouth, the right eye, and the chin.

87

Catherine de Bonne d'Auriac (d. 1692), comtesse de Tallart and marquise de La Baume, wife of Roger d'Hostun (d. 1692), marquis de La Baume, Seneschal of Lyons (1641) and Marshal of the Camp.

August 19

On going to the Cavaliere's, I learnt that M. Colbert had just left, having brought back the drawings for the Louvre and with them a memorandum¹²⁵ giving a full description of everything necessary for the comfortable accommodation of His Majesty, the two Queens, the Dauphin, and the members of their households; for the chief officials of the kitchens, the table, the buttery, and the five catering departments; offices and rooms for the tables of the master of the household, the chamberlain, the *maîtres d'hôtel*, and others; for a storage tank of water from which water could be pumped off in the event of fire and a room to put other necessary apparatus for such contingencies; for ballrooms and banqueting halls and for the alteration of the playhouse; for a large armory inside the Louvre; inside or outside, to find a place for the construction of a large and magnificent library, for which the Cavaliere was asked to make designs for the woodwork; a theatre for public displays, musical rides, tournaments, and other festivities, which should hold a large gathering of the people. In the memorandum it was pointed out that in the French climate there were only four or five months of summer, which the King spent in the country, so that he was only in Paris in the winter; the apartments in the front of the Louvre were not suitable for the King because of the noise of the square and because it faced east and north, while those at the back faced north and west; the expense was all unnecessary as only the apartment facing south should be used, which had nevertheless been left as it was; some kind of window should be found for the larger and smaller rooms which could be easily closed and opened, otherwise it would be impossible to use them in winter, apart from the fact that the rain and snow would ruin the ceilings; it would be advisable to decide early where the pipes carrying water to the Louvre were to run and where they could be discharged, so that the foundations should not be harmed by installing them later; the arrangement of cisterns suggested by Bernini was good and a site for them should be found; the King wished the four Secretaries-of-State to have apartments in the Louvre, also the three financial offices, the council, the high Steward of France, the colonel of the regiment of guards, and many others.

125

This memorandum (incorrectly dated 1664) is in Clement, pp. 251-58, where, however, it seems to be run together with a memorandum given to the artist on an earlier date (above, 1 July).

August 20

M. Mattia worked at a design for reducing the height of the main floor in the facade for the front of the Louvre, following the wishes of M. Colbert, who wanted to make the rooms more comfortable, their excessive height being unusual in France. I told M. Mattia that it was not for me to speak of such matters in front of the very masters of the profession, but had I dared, I should have said at the time he was working at his first facade that I had liked it extremely, except in that one respect; it seemed to me there was too great a space between the second and third floors which is a result of the height given to the main floor, and it seems too empty. He replied that the Cavaliere had been obliged to give it this height so as to obtain the right proportion for the spaces between the columns which should be at least twice as high as they are broad. For the same reason he was adding bands in the design on which he was now working in order to arrive at the correct proportions. This is the problem that arises if one uses an order running through all floors.

August 21

When they had gone, Signor Mattia told the Cavaliere that he had settled the placing of some of the apartments according to the instructions given in M.

Colbert's memorandum. He replied that this work was quite useless and that the distribution lay with the *marchal des logis*,¹³⁶ who would not bother with any of their plans.

136

That is, a member of the chamberlain's department responsible for the distribution of accommodation.

August 23

Vigarani said it was essential for an architect to have a sound knowledge of geometry and perspective. The Cavaliere added that one of the most important things was to have a good eye in assessing the *contrapposti*¹, so that things should not only appear simply to be what they were, but should be drawn in relation to objects in their vicinity that change their appearance. ...As another example of what he meant, he mentioned the facade of St. Peter's and the much lower colonnades he had placed on either side of it in order that the facade should look taller in contrast. This design had succeeded just as he had imagined.

1

Contrapposti literally means "opposite", it might here be translated as "dialectic oppositions".

August 25

On our way back he asked me how M. d'Harcourt was addressed. I said he was called *His Highness*. "Heavens, I did not know that," he exclaimed. "I only called him Excellency," whereupon he begged me to convey to him his apologies, or at least to have them conveyed through his secretary. "I shall call upon him and address him as *Highness*," he added.

August 30

When they came out and M. Colbert saw my brother and Madiot, he suggested we should all assemble in a room where there was a table. ...Then M. Perrault sat down at the other end of the table with pen, paper, and ink; a moment later the abbé Buti arrived and sat down beside M. Paolo. Then M. Colbert spoke, saying we must consider all the possibilities and examine the best means of succeeding in an undertaking of such importance as the Louvre: as the Cavaliere himself could not remain in France to supervise its construction, he had chosen my brother to take his place; he would go down to the site from time to time to relieve M. Mattia, and he himself would too, most gladly, if he had the time. M. Madiot would attend regularly to see that all the materials were of the quality they should be. Now was the time to consider in which way the work should be organized. ...The Cavaliere said that work by the day was best; his interest was to see that the Louvre was properly built, otherwise his design would not succeed. M. Colbert agreed but said there was one great disadvantage; there could be a great deal of swindling as no one felt any loyalty under those conditions, also there could be no planning, as there was in the case of contracts being given for piece-work. For some time everyone argued; ...On our return he asked me who were all these *sovvrastanti*,²⁰⁹

209

That is, "superintendents."

September 1

M. Perrault and his brother came to see the portrait and told my brother, who was there, that cartloads of ashlar and rough stone had been brought into the courtyard at the back of the hotel Mazarin with various kinds of sand and lime, so that the proposed tests could be carried out. I told the Cavaliere who said to me, "This is a miracle," because he believed we could not be punctual in France. M. Perrault asked why he said that.

My brother intervened, saying he had said, "This is no miracle," lest he should be forced to enlighten him.¹

1

Bernini had said in Italian, "e meraviglia." Chantelou's brother changed it into the negative, "non e meraviglia."

September 2

Then [M. Mattia] told [Bernini] that the men working on the foundations did nothing, they turned over no more earth than hens scratching about. ...When we were in the coach he said he realized more and more that the nation was fickle; he noticed that even the King's enthusiasm for his portrait seemed to have grown less, and instead of the King being eager to see it finished, it was only he, Bernini, who still had some interest left, and many other things besides.

September 3

Then the King said of Bernini, "He praises very little here," and I rejoined, "He also finds little fault; he has seen nothing yet worthy of praise because he has been hard at work since he arrived in France." His Majesty asked me what he thought of Vincennes. I said he had admired it very much and as it had grown late before we had finished looking at it, he had asked to go back another time. I then asked the King to whom I should give the account for the Legate's visit. He told me to take it to M. de Niert.¹⁴ When I gave it to him, he asked me if it were true that on the day when the Cavaliere had visited the King in bed he had remarked of the royal apartments, "There are no rooms here to masculine taste." I retorted that what he had said had not been heard correctly, or had been distorted by someone who wished to do him harm.

14

Francois-Louis de Niert (1647–1719), son of Pierre (1597–1681), the well-known singer and musician. At five years of age he received the reversion of his father's office as premier valet de la garde-robe and later succeeded him as premier valet de chambre.

September 6

The Cavaliere gave a further couple of strokes with the chisel and then stopped working and began to walk up and down. He opened the conversation by telling me that things were not being done as promptly or as correctly as they should be; he repeated that the houses should have been demolished to facilitate the work on the foundations. The impatience that M. Colbert had shown on the—²⁸ as if he were accusing him of being behind-hand, although he had done all that was humanly possible, had very much annoyed him, for the simple reason that the pulling down of the houses and what Le Vau had built should have been done before the pegging-out of the ground plan if they really intended to carry out his design; nevertheless, in spite of the difficulties he had plotted the lines two days later; he had written a note to M. Colbert on the...²⁹, and since then, almost a month ago, no progress had been made;...

28

The date is missing in the manuscript, but Bernini must be referring to the discussion of 30 July.

29

Again the date is missing in the manuscript.

September 7

I forget to note that he had asked me to speak well of his work, and when I told him it spoke for itself, he answered that the princes had so much in their heads one had to call their attention to things and remind them of them;...

September 16

The Cavaliere asked me to accompany MM. Mattia and

Madiot to view the foundations of the facade begun by Le Vau, which I did. They were no good. This is partly due to the poor quality of the mortar, there being apparently no lime mixed with it, partly to the nesting of rats in between the stones.

September 17

I forgot to mention that M. Desfontaines, who had come with Mme. de Lionne, said to me, "I fear that these Italians will be put off by the slowness of the work."



BERNINI.
(D'après la médaille de Chéron.)

September 19

[The Nuncio] added that when the Louvre was finished, other buildings would be erected in the same style. I answered that I could easily believe it would become the fashion; all that we needed in France was a good model. In Rome it was the remains of ancient art that served sculptors and architects as a guide from one age to another, and that were always there to help them to maintain their excellence. He did not agree with me and asserted that there was nothing to rival St. Peter's in antiquity. "If you mean in the extent of its site and the amount of masonry, I will not argue with you, but in grandeur of style, St. Peter's is smaller than the Pantheon,¹⁵⁰ and the work is less fine, less exact, less careful; and do you not think, Monsieur," I asked, "that there were ancient temples in Greece and Italy that would have equalled St. Peter's in size and grandeur." He stuck to his own opinion and appealed to the Cavaliere, asking him whether it was not true that St. Peter's far excelled the Pantheon in nobility of style. He replied frankly, no, that the most perfect forms were rounds, squares, hexagons, octagons, etc.;¹⁵¹ the cupola of St. Peter's was beautiful, it was true, and there was nothing like it in antiquity, but there were a hundred errors in St. Peter's and none in the Pantheon; Michelangelo had not wanted there to be a nave at all; Baldassare Peruzzi had made a design for St. Peter's, included in Serlio's book, which is much more beautiful than the one that was carried out. ...As my brother and I were returning, he told me that he had been to see M. Perrault that morning. He had sneered at the Cavaliere's design and had tried hard to push him to say that he did not admire it either; among other things he had found fault with the projecting base of the facade which carries the columns, and also with the cornice of the entablature which juts out so much that the balustrade would not be seen. "What is the good of making a balustrade," he said, "if it is to be invisible."

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The Pantheon in Rome. Originally built by Agrippa in 27 B.C., it owes its present form to the Emperor Hadrian. In 609, with the permission of the Emperor Phocas, it was consecrated as a church under the title of S. Maria ad Martyres, but was popularly known as S. Maria Rotonda.

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An old idea, still common in the Renaissance. See Wittkower, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, pp. 27–30.

September 28

When I went to the Cavaliere's, he drew me aside and told me that he had made a memorandum concerning the allowances to be made to Pietro Sassi, etc., and to—;²²⁷ he had suggested amounts that would have been suitable had it been I who had sent for them from Rome; they were in fact sent for by the King of France, which was quite another thing, but he would not touch on this point;²²⁸ to Pietro Sassi and his wife he suggested 300 livres a month, and to each of the others 200 livres. They were all people who had left their businesses and their homes, and he told me in confidence that the Pope had shown his displeasure that he, the architect of St. Peter's, should take away men who were working there. ...[Bernini] had been astonished, at the time when he had first presented his design for the Louvre, to see how the King had appreciated its merits at once; for a knowledge of those sciences was acquired only after long study, which of course the King had never undertaken, or by being accustomed to things of beauty around one, as in Rome, where there were not only the remains of classical buildings, but also many wonderful modern works; this experience the King had not had either; on the contrary, he was surrounded by petty and fiddling designs, so that his sureness of taste was astonishing, if not miraculous. ... He then went on to explain something about the habit of seeing and described how the eyes grew accustomed to extravagant forms. The first time he saw a Frenchman wearing the long collar that covered the shoulders and stretched down to the belt he happened to be in the neighborhood of a barber's shop, and he thought for a moment that he had walked off with the barber's towel round his neck after being shaved, but looking more closely he saw that it was a collar. Two or three months later he did not notice it any more, having seen so many similar collars, just as now he was used to the low hats that were in fashion in place of the high pointed ones of yesterday.²³⁵

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Bernini had been asked to recommend allowances for the Italians on 25 Sept. (above).

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Although the idea may have been losing ground in the 17th century, by and large the Aristotelian virtue of magnificence was still considered a necessary attribute of the great prince. Thus Queen Christina, when she learned that Bernini's estate was worth 400,000 scudi at his death, is said to have remarked, "Had he served me and left so little, I should be ashamed" (Dom. Bernini, p. 176, and Baldinucci, *Vita*, p. 71). The appeal to the King's magnificence was therefore the great weapon wielded by Bernini in furthering his own grand conception of the Louvre (above, 4 June), and it explains why the Italian workmen should be paid more if they came to work for the King (cf. Mancini, I, pp. 139–40). Similarly, when it is later rumored that Bernini has scorned his own reward, the angry reaction of the French arises from this apparent denial of the King's virtue.

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Cf. Bernini's comments on the high roofs of the Tuileries, above, 7 June.

September 29

The Cavaliere said he would rough-out some of the rocky foundation for the Louvre, which would serve as a model. M. Colbert asked him to be so good as to look at the memorandum he had sent him on the plans for the royal kitchens and butteries, the council rooms, and those required by the other royal officials.

October 2

When the Cavaliere came down, he gave [Mattia de Rossi] the facade of the courtyard of the Louvre to copy; then he had the bust put on a stand and draped the shelf round it with a piece of velvet. Immediately afterwards the Nuncio, accompanied by the abbé Buti arrived and saw it like this; he begged me and my brother to tell no one about it, so that the King should be more surprised when he saw it.

October 5

...[H]e requested me to ask M. Colbert whether the King was coming or not, because if he was not coming he would arrange to do something else. I went to M. Colbert's, who had just come from the Gobelins, where the King had also been. He told me the King would come as soon as he had dined, and in fact he arrived soon after. Directly he saw the bust on the stand, draped round with the velvet, he showed his delight. He studied it for some time and made them all do the same. The duc de Mercoeur, who accompanied the King, admired it extremely, and everyone vied with each other in praising it. His Majesty then placed himself in the usual position and asked if work was being done on the pedestal. The Cavaliere replied that it was not being worked on yet, and leading the prince de Marsillac,³⁹ who stood near him, to a place where the King could turn his eyes on him, he took a piece of charcoal and marked the pupils on the bust. That done, he said to His Majesty that the work was finished and he wished that it had been more perfect; he had worked at it with so much love that it was the least bad portrait he had done;⁴⁰ one thing only he regretted, that he was obliged to leave; he would have been happy to spend the rest of his life in the King's service, not only because he was King of France and a great king, but because he had realized that His Majesty possessed a spirit even more exalted than his position; he could hardly speak and, unable to say more, he broke down and withdrew.

39

Francois VII de La Rochefoucauld (1634–1714), prince de Marsillac, then in 1680 duc de La Rochefoucauld in succession to his father, the author of the famous *Maximes*. He became Governor of Berry in 1671, Grandmaster of the Wardrobe in 1672, and Grandmaster of the Hunt in 1679.

40

Bernini had coined this modesty formula for the St. Teresa. See Domenico Bernini, p. 83.

October 6

The Cavaliere opened the conversation by saying that he hoped the foundations would be ready by Saturday for the laying of the foundation stone. M. Perrault replied that the medals would not be ready by that day. The Cavaliere said they could be put under other stones, since he wished to leave by Tuesday as the weather was getting cold; as regards the foundation they should not have to excavate any lower than the foundations of the pavilion, "not more than that," he said, showing his spectacle case. M. Perrault replied that so far they had never had buildings subsiding in Paris. Then he brought forward a number of things on which he wanted enlightenment before the departure of the Cavaliere, all of which seemed trifling matters, such as the arrangement of quarters below, really the business of the *maréchal des logis*, as the Cavaliere said; it was quite enough if he made a plan for the *piano nobile*, as he had said in the beginning, when he and Signor Mattia were working on it, and he added to M. Perrault, "Every time there is a new pope all the apartments in the Vatican are rearranged, according to the wishes of the new papal officials who want everything changed to suit them." Then M. Perrault brought up the question of the arches in the facade towards the service courtyard, saying that there would be a difficulty in closing them. The Cavaliere took a pencil and showed him how it should be done. I repeated that these were all small difficulties about which there was no urgency; "they could be settled in three or four years" time; anyway in the Queen Mother's new apartments there were similar arches for which shutters had been made. He replied that it had caused a lot of trouble. I repeated again that these were all little things that did not matter now, and that everything was clear on the plan. He then told me that he had a notebook with all the difficulties he wanted to bring forward. The Cavaliere had the plans brought in so that he could show him the problems. Whereupon he said there was

one thing that required explaining; not only he himself but a hundred others wanted to know why that part of the new wing that runs along the riverside is shorter than the other, it being quite against the laws of symmetry, as each should be in relation to the cupola which is in the center of this facade.⁵⁷

M. Perrault demonstrated what he meant, and from this and from the few words that he understood in spite of knowing little French, the Cavaliere realized he was talking about his work and suggesting there were faults in his design. He told two Italians, who were standing by, to leave the room. Then taking a pencil he said that if he had extended this pavilion to the line of the return of the main block of his facade, it would have been a great error of judgment; it was only necessary for this part of the pavilion to correspond with the other, although it was not so long. He would like M. Perrault to know that it was not for him to make difficulties; he was willing to listen to criticism in what concerned matters of convenience, but only someone cleverer than himself could be permitted to criticize the design; in this respect he was not fit to wipe his boots; anyway the matter did not arise as the designs had been passed by the King; he would complain to the King himself and was going now to M. Colbert to tell him how he had been insulted. M. Perrault, seeing what effect his words had had, was very much alarmed. He begged me to soothe the Cavaliere and to say that he had not wished to be critical of his work, but had merely wanted to have something to reply to those who raised this particular objection. I told the Cavaliere this and added that if he carried things so far, he would ruin the career of a young man, and I was sure that he would not wish to be the cause of his downfall. His son and M. Mattia, who were there, tried to calm him down but without success. He went into the next room saying at one moment he was going to M. Colbert, at the next, he would go to the Nuncio, and meanwhile M. Perrault was beseeching me to tell him that he had not intended to offend him. "To a man like me," the Cavaliere was saying, "whom the Pope treats with attention and to whom he even defers, such usage is a gross insult, and I shall complain of it to the King. If it costs me my life, I intend to leave tomorrow, and I see no reason after the contempt that has been shown me, why I should not take a hammer to the bust. I shall go to see the Nuncio." He seemed to be really going off, and I begged M. Mattia to stop him. He replied it would be better to let him unburden his heart; in the end, this would help to soothe him, and I could rely on him to handle the matter. Signor Paolo was also trying to make excuses for M. Perrault, who had besought him to do so, repeating that what he had said was not intended to offend him. Finally instead of going out they took him upstairs, and my brother and I accompanied M. Perrault as far as M. Colbert's. He said he was going to tell him about the outburst. I told him to be very guarded; it would be as well to know first whether the whole business could be hushed up; it would be better if he mentioned it to no one, and my brother and I would also keep quiet about it, which he entreated us to do.⁵⁸

57

This passage is not altogether easy to interpret, but it appears that Perrault was criticizing the fact that as shown in the plan (fig. 8) and the elevation (fig. 11) the river facade was not symmetrical, having a much larger pavilion on the right than on the left. Perrault's reference to the dome in the middle of the front is puzzling because in the elevation as engraved this would have disappeared. This almost suggests that even at this late stage Bernini was considering incorporating at least the central pavilion of Le Vau's river front (fig. 16).

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Cf. the account of this incident in Perrault, *Mémoires*, pp. 73–74.

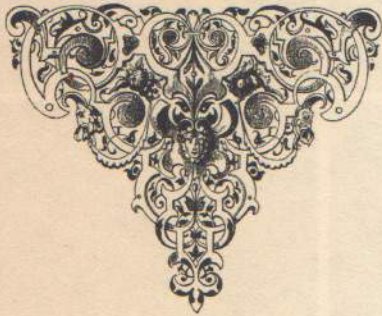
October 8

When he came down, we walked to and fro in the room for a little while, and I brought up again the need we had of him in France to carry out the grand schemes of

the King; what had been done so far did not express his magnificence at all; in fact, it might even be said that it had been better left undone. He agreed, "True it is that buildings are the mirror of princes."⁷⁴ It was better to do nothing than something that lacked grandeur.

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This statement, which is quoted in Italian in the manuscript, perfectly expresses Bernini's attitude towards the design of the Louvre, and if it is a typically Baroque sentiment, it nevertheless has its roots in the 15th century. From the Neoplatonic notion that matter is informed by spirit and the soul is mirrored in the body, Marsilio Ficino had already drawn the corollary that the same relationship obtains between an artist and his work: "In paintings and buildings the wisdom and skill of the artist shines forth. Moreover, we can see in them the attitude and the image, as it were, of his mind; for in these works the mind expresses and reflects itself not otherwise than a mirror reflects the face of a man who looks into it" (trans. E. H. Gombrich, "Botticelli's Mythologies," *JWCI*, VIII, 1945, p. 59). Then under the impact of the Aristotelian concept of magnificence and the pervasive acceptance of a formal decorum that defined the fitting and proper, the notion was extended to a patron and his building projects (A. D. Fraser Jenkins, "Cosimo de' Medici's Patronage of Architecture and the Theory of Magnificence," *JWCI*, xxx, 1970, pp. 162-70). The Grand Duke Cosimo, Vasari wrote, "displays a most happy genius and the greatest judgment in the government of his people; he spares neither expense nor anything else, in order that all the fortifications and buildings, public and private, correspond to the grandeur of his spirit (*animo*) and are not less beautiful than useful" (Vasari-Milanesi, IV, pp. 451-52). Thus great architecture became the measure of a great prince, as Colbert, writing to dissuade Louis XIV from his predilection for Versailles, argued: "Your Majesty knows that outside brilliant feats of war nothing marks so well the grandeur and spirit (*esprit*) of princes than buildings; and all of posterity measures them by the standard of the superb houses that they have erected during their lives" (Clement, p. 269). Such ideas, although undoubtedly welcome to architects, were nevertheless readily manipulated and could easily lead to pompous ostentation; for magnificent architecture not only perpetuated virtue, it also bestowed it: "because building is one of the things in which princes and great lords are largely accustomed to distinguish themselves and to derive glory and applause... one cannot err in making the building majestic and magnificent, since for many reasons it will yield no small praise of Your Most Illustrious Lordship such as for having adorned the city with it and for having made most resplendent your most excellent house" (o. Pollak, "Brief eines anonymen Florentiner an den Fürsten Bar-berini, betreffend den Bau des Palazzo Barberini," *Jahrbuch der königlich preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, XXXIV, 1913, Beiheft, pp. 65-66). Moreover, as an accepted material reflection of intangible qualities, architecture could be used for purely political ends, as Colbert suggested to Bernini in a memorandum on his first plan for the Louvre: "It is necessary to observe well that in disagreeable times, which always occur during minorities, not only must the kings be secure in their palace, but even the quality of their palace must serve to hold the people in the obedience they owe them and that the whole structure instill respect in the spirit of the people and leave some stamp of their power" (Depping, p. 246).



October 17

At the same moment the King sent to ask if all was ready and was told that it was. Warin was there, holding his medal. He had that morning shown it to the Cavaliere, who had told him it was in too high relief. He had replied that was how M. Colbert liked it, but was delighted to hear the Cavaliere say that it should be in lower relief as that was his own opinion. He also had the two copper plates, on which were written the inscriptions. They were placed side by side in a square piece of marble, and in between them was the medal, which is valued at five

hundred crowns. There was also a silver trowel, the royal coat-of-arms, a hammer and two pairs of pincers. M. Colbert held on to a six-foot rule for some time, but then handed it to M. Perrault and did not ask for it back. The King greeted the Cavaliere and looked at the instruments for the ceremony. M. Colbert showed His Majesty the medal. He looked at it and passed it round to several other people and then put it back in its place. The Cavaliere then handed the King the trowel with mortar on it taken from a big silver bowl. The King took it and put the mortar in the setting made in the piece of marble. The maréchal de Gramont then arrived, and the medal had to be taken out again to show him, and for this a pair of compasses was necessary so that it could be levered out with the point. The maréchal looked at both sides, and then the King put it back and laid a large stone on top of the marble, on which the Cavaliere put several trowelfuls of mortar. Villedot handed the King a hammer, with which he made several strokes, and the stone was then adjusted over the marble block with the pincers. The ceremony being over, the King took his departure. The Cavaliere and Signor Mattia, who had stood near him all the time, went to the carriage with the abbe Buti. Meanwhile trouble arose over the tools. Pietro, who is a servant of Signor Mattia, was holding the trowel and was struggling to get the hammer from Villedot. Bergeron wanted to get the trowel from him, but was prevented by the Cavaliere's footman. Then a lot of men acting on behalf of the contractors arrived; I told them that M. Colbert would decide everything, and that mean-time they should leave the things with the Cavaliere's servants, but they refused to do this. Then I asked them to leave them with me, and I would look after them until M. Colbert should have made a decision. So I put them in the Cavaliere's coach. This argument was followed by others, for the King had distributed a hundred pistoles in pieces of thirty, fifteen, and five sous, which he threw into the foundations, and there ensued a furious scramble among workmen, navvies, and even soldiers to get this money.

October 18

Then M. Colbert took his leave and I went to hear Mass at his house, as it was one o'clock. As we were going up the stairs, he remarked to me, "The Cavaliere is angry." I told him, "Someone with a volatile nature such as his, who thinks quickly and is prompt to find expedients, is likely to be disheartened sooner than another if these do not meet with approval."...As soon as we were alone together, [Bernini] shut all the doors and told me in a rage that he now wished to leave, that they were making fun of him, that M. Colbert treated him like a small boy; he took up whole meetings with long and useless discussions on privies and water pipes; he wished to show off his knowledge and he understood nothing at all; he was a real c—; he would go without telling anyone; he had noticed in the last few days that he wanted to force him to make a *faux pas*;²¹⁰ they had egged him on but reason had restrained him. I conveyed to him as gently as I could that it would be grossly impolite to do as he threatened to do, and as M. Colbert asked him to stay only two days longer, he must wait; the King had treated him so well that if only for that reason he should do nothing that could displease him; it would cause a sensation; I advised him that as M. Colbert had suggested building a church separate from the Louvre that could be reached by a kind of bridge, he should work at it and make a plan; afterwards he could say that he had done it to comply with his wishes, and then tell him it spoilt the symmetry and say whatever was in his mind. He said he would not bother about that, he would do nothing more and wanted to leave tomorrow. I tried to soothe him, but he said he needed nothing; he was a great deal better off than those who sought to slight him. I reminded him of the welcome the King had always given him, how as late

as yesterday the King had been more gracious and smiling to him than to anyone else; if he went off after that without seeing His Majesty, he could imagine how it would be interpreted. He replied that it was more than thirteen days since he had had anything to do, that the Pope's permission lasted only until the end of August and if he stayed longer His Holiness might be displeased; they had done nothing for him; the Pope could easily ruin him; many of the problems that were now being discussed could well be brought up again in two or three years;...

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The phrase is in Italian in the manuscript.

October 19

When I got to the Cavaliere's he drew me to the window and said to me, "There is one thing I want to know, and I ask you to tell me on the honor of a gentleman." I promised. Then he said, "Yesterday, when you left here, did you not go to M. Colbert's about the conversation we had together?" I was astonished and told him he must have a poor opinion of me; I perceived he did not know my character at all, that when anyone told me something in confidence I was not in the habit of betraying it. When he saw that I was angry he said he was sorry; I must not take what he said in that way; he had not doubted that I had been there as a friend. I told him that I did not like any action of mine to give rise to such thoughts and I would sooner go all the way to Rome than to enter M. Colbert's house two doors away from him.

October 20

When I went to the Cavaliere's, I found he had gone to M. Colbert's. I followed; he was saying goodbye to him. M. Colbert told him he would always remember the benefit he derived from his discussions with him, which would be a very great help to him in carrying out the task imposed on him by the King of supervising the royal buildings. The Cavaliere replied that, on the contrary, M. Colbert had given him ideas that he would not otherwise have thought of. ...When we got to Villejuif, we had to wait at least an hour for Signor Paolo and the rest of his suite. They finally arrived, and the Cavaliere, turning to my brother who had come with us, told him that he was an old debauchee, and begged him to say an Ave Maria for him. Then he got into his coach and had the abbé de La Chambre placed next to him. When I embraced him I saw that his eyes were wet, and I was very much touched, and so left him. The Nuncio got back into his coach, and I into mine.

October 26

Monday. I was quite near the King at supper, and he asked me if it were true that the Cavaliere had given 30 sous to the serving woman in the palais Mazarin. I replied that I had heard nothing about it. But the King continued in a low voice, "Is it true that he left so dissatisfied?"

This collection of thought-provoking contributions by leading and emerging architects, critics, and scholars explores how architecture and urbanism are received and delivered into the public sphere, mediated through citizens, politicians, professionals, consumers, and others with a stake in crafting the collective built environment. From the multivalent roles played by architects, the symbolic form and function of public space, and rethinking what it means to make “public” architecture today, to the mediation of design with popular demands, strategies for selling architectural and urban design in the global marketplace, and the proliferation of media exposure, the authors focus on how architecture culture engages with the public dimensions of contemporary life. Along with these topical contributions—which are supplemented by marginalia of citations, explanatory notes, and references—the issue also presents a series of recent snapshots capturing urban environments in Agadir, Beijing, and Vrsar, and a visual essay and text on the use of digital imagery in architectural representation.

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