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Chapter 1

Image Battles under Louis XIV: Some Reflections

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The purpose of this essay is to offer an overview of French and foreign artistic production under Louis XIV from a historical perspective and to examine both its aims and political impact. Throughout his reign, Louis XIV promoted the diffusion of a positive image of his rank and prerogatives, as well as making a case for the justness and necessity of some of his key political and military decisions. This image of Louis XIV targeted, not just the court, but also the more remote circles of local and national elites, and the official representatives of foreign powers – both inside and outside France.

There was no need for the Sun King and his ministers to devise novel iconographical schemes to enhance the glory of that prince, or to justify and impose particular policy objectives. Louis and his ministers implemented some well-tried strategies dating back to the Valois period. These included the identification of the king with the sun, in which the sun was pictured as governing the course of other heavenly bodies, and as a source of life-giving energy. Another point worth mentioning is the building of monuments to the glory of the sovereign in the public space of French cities, a device which had come into use in the Italian city-states of the Renaissance, and which had been introduced in France by Marie de Medici. An additional consequence of the penetration of Italian art into Louis' era was the building of ceremonial rooms and the decoration of their ceilings with large paintings.

Where, however, representations of Louis broke new artistic ground was in their unprecedented centring on the sovereign's person, and in the intensity of their production. This was unique in Europe during the Sun King's reign. There is little need to be reminded of Louis' exclusive appropriation of the Sun King metaphor in the 1660s; of the building of massive royal statues across the French kingdom after 1680; of the endless works in the royal residence of Versailles, or – most famously – of the decoration of the *Grands Appartements* or the *Grande Galerie* in that palace with a series of massive paintings. All of this aimed not only at displaying Louis' magnificence, but also at offering the European public a justification for the king's wars and domestic reforms.

Neither France's neighbours (mostly enemies in fact), nor Louis' domestic opponents, contested his right to artistic self-representation. They even accepted the grand style that conformed to his rank, and that allowed him to frame foreign

and domestic policy. However, they were surprised and indignant at Louis' institutionalisation of emphatically personalised art forms that seemed to break all limits in propaganda, especially in their persistent and explicit disparagement of adversaries. The late 1660s saw the emergence of resistance, in text and image, to the methods of Louis' artistic policy. This resistance was largely born in reaction to the Sun King's approach to image building, and employed bitterly ironic devices to turn the ruler's own artistic tactics back on their author. A study of these 'image battles', that is, the opposition between Louis' official image and the debased version offered by his adversaries, can serve to uncover the many myths surrounding his power and the means by which this was carved into artistic representation.

There is another reason for showing an interest in 'image battles' under Louis XIV. Faced as he was with personal critiques, Louis was forced to adapt the official image that served to diffuse his glory by justifying his internal and external policy. The production of hostile images of Louis by his enemies – these being answers to the excessive and provocative image-production by the panegyrists of Louis XIV – had an impact on the way in which the French king conceived his personal iconography. Pressure by the opponents (both inside and outside France) led to an inflection of the royal pictorial strategies into new directions. The present analysis seeks to probe the subtle interplay – what was in effect a continuously operating feedback loop – between the production and the reception of images in favour and against the Sun King.

Recent studies in history and art history have already captured the significance of these jousts between Louis and his adversaries in the field of image production.[1] Based as they are on the careful analysis of travel guides, official descriptions of

[1] Friedrich Polleross, '*Sonnenkönig und österreichische Sonne. Kunst und Wissenschaft als Fortsetzung des Krieges mit anderen Mitteln*', *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, 40 (1987), 239–56 ; Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven and London, 1992) ; Christoph Frank, 'The Mechanics of Triumph. Public Ceremony and Civic Pageantry under Louis XIV', (Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, Warburg Institute, London, 1993), 2 vols ; Dietrich Erben, '*Die Pyramide Ludwigs XIV in Rom. Ein Schanddenkmal im Dienst diplomatischer Vorherrschaft*', *Römisches Jahrbuch der Biblioteca Hertziana*, 31 (1996), 427–58 ; Dietrich Erben, *Paris und Rom. Die Staatlich Gelenkten Kunstbeziehungen unter Ludwig XIV* (Berlin, 2004) ; *Krieg der Bilder. Druckgraphik als Medium politischer Auseinandersetzung im Europa des Absolutismus*, dir. de Wolfgang Cilleßen, Deutsches Historisches Museum, 1997–1998, (Berlin, 1997); Jutta Schumann, *Die andere Sonne. Kaiserbild und Medienstrategien im Zeitalter Leopolds I* (Berlin, 2003); Sibylle Appuhn-Radtke, '*Sol oder Phaethon ? Invention und Imitation barocker Bildpropaganda in Wien und Paris*', in Wilhelm Hofmann and Hans-Otto Mühleisen (eds), *Kunst und Macht. Politik und Herrschaft im Medium der bildenden Kunst* (Münster, 2005), 94–127; Charles-Édouard Levillain, '*Stetit sol in caelo. Les préparatifs de la guerre de Hollande à l'aune d'un incident diplomatique (1669–1670)*', in Lucien Bély and Géraud Poumarède (eds), *L'incident diplomatique (XVI^e^-XVIII^e^ siècle)* (Paris, 2010), 261–80 ; Hendrik Ziegler, *Louis XIV et ses ennemis. Image, propagande et contestation* (Paris, 2013).

Louis, rule, and pictorial productions, studies of the reception and perception of state-sponsored artistic creations have yielded significant results. Two issues can be raised. First, how popular and accessible were particular paintings, gardens, collections or cycle of paintings in the time of Louis XIV? Second, if special instructions about the presentation of rule were circulated by the crown, how were they perceived or understood?[2] As source material, pamphlets have already attracted considerable attention for the way they mirrored the battles between Louis and his European adversaries.[3] However, much remains to be said about medals and tokens, whose importance in the Baroque period has been overlooked.[4] The scholarship referred to in this essay constitutes only one aspect of the considerable research that has been undertaken in the past 20 years on the arts under Louis XIV. The existing studies have gone a long way towards acknowledging the existence, in late-seventeenth-century France, of an interconnection between the production and the reception of images. What is missing from the literature, however, is a full-fledged analysis of French and of foreign responses to Louis' staging of his *gloire*, and the way this was engineered by his entourage. By the same token, the written and visual responses to the king's art of self-representation remain under studied. The onus is now on art historians to outline the chronology and establish the true significance of the battle of images that raged against Louis XIV between 1661 and 1715. Due to constraints of space, the present essay will only offer an overview of the shifting struggles that surrounded the image of Louis XIV in late

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[2] R.W. Berger, 'Tourists during the Reign of the Sun King: Access to the Louvre and Versailles. An Anatomy of Guidebooks and Other Printed Aids', in George Mauner et al. (eds), *Paris: Center of Artistic Enlightenment* (Abington, 1988), 126–58 ; Stefan Germer, *Kunst – Macht – Diskurs. Die intellektuelle Karriere des André Félibien im Frankreich von Louis XIV* (Munich, 1997); Gérard Sabatier, *Versailles ou la Figure du Roi* (Paris, 1999) ; Katharina Krause, *Wie beschreibt man Architektur? Das Fräulein von Scudéry spaziert durch Versailles* (Fribourg-en-Brisgau, 2002).

[3] Hubert Gillot, *Le Règne de Louis XIV et l'opinion publique en Allemagne* (Nancy, 1914) ; Joseph Klaits, *Printed Propaganda under Louis XIV : Absolute Monarchy and Public Opinion* (Princeton, 1976) ; Jean Schillinger, *Les pamphlétaires allemands et la France de Louis XIV* (Berne, 1999) ; Martin Wrede, *Das Reich und seine Feinde. Politische Feindbilder in der reichspatriotischen Publizistik zwischen Westfälischem Frieden und Siebenjährigem Krieg* (Mainz, 2004). For an overview of the pamphlet literature in France, Hélène Duccini, 'Regard sur la littérature pamphlétaire en France au XVII[e] siècle', *Revue historique*, 260 (1978), 313–39.

[4] Josèphe Jacquiot, *Médailles et jetons de Louis XIV d'après le manuscrit de Londres Add. 31.908.* (4 vols., Paris, 1968) ; Mark Jones, *Medals of the Sun King* (London, 1979); Mark Jones, 'The medal as an instrument of propaganda in late 17th and early 18th century Europe (Part 1)', *Numismatic Chronicle,* 142 (1982), 117–26 ; Mark Jones, 'The medal as an instrument of propaganda in late 17th and early 18th century Europe (Part 2)', *Numismatic Chronicle,* 143 (1983), 202–13. For a recent study of tokens, see Thierry Sarmant and François Ploton-Nicollet, *Jetons des institutions centrales de l'ancien r*égime : C*atalogue. Tome premier (n° 1 à 825), Assemblée du clergé de France, ordres du roi, maisons du roi, de la reine, du dauphin et de la dauphin* (Paris 2010).

seventeenth century Europe. A tight selection of representative examples will be used to shed light on the production of images and counter-images.

The written and visual attacks that Louis XIV was exposed to throughout his reign were driven, in most cases, by the contingencies of political and military events. Based on the rate of production of medals, pamphlets, and libels, the debunking of pro-Louis XIV iconography seemed to reach its peaks in the early stages of the Sun King's great military campaigns. Of course, hasty generalisations need to be avoided, but one may distinguish three different phases during which anti-Ludovican images proved particularly violent and intense. First there were the years 1668–74, between the peace treaties of Aachen and Westminster; second, the years 1686–93 during the early stages of the Nine Years' War, between the signing of the League of Augsburg and the second devastation of the Palatinate by French troops; and, finally, the years 1706–09, a period when the French suffered the heaviest losses of the War of Spanish Succession. This barrage of anti-Ludovican protests and satires became a complicating factor in diplomacy. It also forced the Sun King into constant revision of his artistic creations, as he responded to each new wave of attack. As a result, some major artistic projects never came to fruition in their original form. Moreover, the Sun King was gradually led to adjust his image as a sovereign to the changing realities of domestic and foreign policy. There were, in fact, two periods in which there was such a rapid change in the presentation of Louis that it is appropriate to describe them as paradigm shifts in royal propaganda.

The style of Louis' propaganda in the early parts of his reign was perhaps clearest during the first tight confrontation between France and the Dutch Republic, which occurred between the War of Devolution in 1667–68 and the early stages of the *guerre de Hollande* in 1672–74. In these years, the two sides responded to each other's medals and lampoons by producing 'counter medals' that mocked the other side's efforts, as well as with a wide array of commentaries, both written and illustrated. A significant moment in this exchange came in 1668, when the Dutch first used a satirical medal aimed at Louis' pose as the Sun King, and so targeted his favourite emblem (Figure 1.1). The main message of this medal was that the Dutch had put an end to the French conquest of the Spanish Netherlands, and had paved the way for the peace of Aachen which they imposed on the French King in 1668. The medal made this point by drawing a parallel with Joshua, the Ancient Testament prophet. With God's assistance, Joshua had managed to bring the sun and the moon to a standstill during a battle fought at the doors of Gabaon. Using this analogy, the Dutch boasted of their power over the sun. Affronted, the partisans of Louis XIV fired back by rehearsing a standard anti-Dutch metaphor: the coastal inhabitants of the Dutch Republic were mockingly compared to the frogs of a swamp soon to be dried up by the 'French' sun.

Figure 1.1 *Médaille sur la paix d'Aix-la-Chapelle*, 1668, silver, ø 46 mm, Leyde, Geldmuseum. By permission of the Geldmuseum, Leiden.

Yet, only a few years after 1672, this pattern of mutual mockery changed, as the initially successful French offensive in the Low Countries ground to a halt. Peace was slow to come, and as the conflict bogged down, the battle of images which had surfed on the tide of political news was brought to an end by Louis himself.[5] In the first paradigm shift of his reign, the Sun King gave up on the tit-for-tat smear campaigns that had been his favourite strategy to counter the deprecating images peddled by his enemies. Louis shifted his focus to a more positive approach. Now he concentrated on extolling his grandeur, dignity, victories, and military successes, placing special emphasis on his claim to be the 'Most Christian King'. This new line was evident in such works as the *Histoire métallique*. By the time it was completed in the 1690s, this itemised over three hundred items in its official history of French medals under Louis XIV, and the vast bulk of them lauded the monarch, rather than deprecating others. In the early 1680s, however, France's enemies were surprised that Louis XIV retreated from the image and pamphlet battle that was raging in Europe.[6] In the final phase of the *guerre de Hollande*, the enemies of France honed their anti-Ludovican strategy by conjuring up the Ovidian image of the fall of Phaeton or Icarus. This bore a strong connection

[5] For similar conclusions on the pamphlet literature, see Klaits, *Printed Propaganda* 86; Wrede, *Das Reich und Seine Feinde*, 451.

[6] For more details on this point, see Erich Everth, *Die Öffentlichkeit in der Außenpolitik von Karl V. bis Napoleon*, (Iena, 1931), 230 ; Markus Baumanns, *Das Publizistische Werk des Kaiserlichen Diplomaten Franz Paul Freiherr von Lisola* (1613–1674). *Ein Beitrag zum Verhältnis von Absolutistischem Staat, Öffentlichkeit und Mächtepolitik in der frühen Neuzeit*, (Berlin, 1994), 333.

with the sun metaphor: so Louis' entourage tried to convince him to counter by smearing the image of his adversaries. Yet, the Sun King was reluctant to go down this road. This may be explained partly by the fact that, as instruments of political communication, satirical medals and illustrated libels were not as popular in France as they were in the Low Countries, the British Isles, and large segments of the Holy Roman Empire: but it was almost certainly also the result of a new caution on the part of Louis about initiating direct battles over particular pieces of enemy propaganda.

The caesura of the mid-1670s prepared the way for the second shift in Louis' staging of his image. Part of the reason for this shift can be traced back to the controversial building of a twelve metre high bronze monument Place des Victoires in Paris. This provoked uproar in 1685–86, and further damaged France's image abroad. Many details of the monument caught people's attention, but the one that caused the greatest sensation was the image of the bronze captives chained to the foot of the statue of Louis. The attributes of these figures identified them as the nations defeated by France. The slaves decorating the monument clearly depicted the Empire, Spain, Holland and Brandenburg. As a consequence of such insults, the Parisian monument came under a rolling barrage of fire. No other monument in the history of early modern art caused so much controversy: satirical representations of this monument can be found from the moment of its construction, right through to the middle years of the War of the Spanish Succession.

Three brief examples will be cited here. First, in 1689, the phrase *VIRO IMMORTALI* ('to the immortal man'), which had been added in capital letters onto the statue's pedestal, was taken up by a satirical medal. This emphasised the parallel between devotion to the Ottoman Sultan, and the personality cult the French king appeared to be imposing on his subjects through the monument. Second, a pamphlet of the late 1690s mocked the Sun King for his insistence that his statue be illuminated night and day by four lanterns set up on pylons at each corner of the square. The engraving on the pamphlet shows a little devil cheekily fanning the 'idolatrous' fire (Figure 1.2). A third reference to the monument can be found on a satirical medal that began circulating in 1708, after the taking of Lille by the Anglo–Dutch forces under the Duke of Marlborough. On the statue of the Place des Victoires, the king receives a crown from Victory; on the medal, by contrast, the same allegorical figure removes the crown from the monarch's head. The inscription runs *AUFERT NON DAT*: [Victory] offers not but rather takes away.

LA VISION DU MARECHAL
de Sellon en Provence.

VEut-on ſavoir ce que je vis?
C'eſt la Statuë de Louis,
Foulant aux pieds toute la terre.
En ſe plaignant elle diſoit,
Que ſous ſes pieds elle ſentoit,
Un Leopard dompté, qui lui faiſant la Guerre,
D'une chute le menaçoit:
De maniere qu'elle craignoit,
De n'eſtre pas toûjous à l'abri du tonnere.
Que l'Aigle & le Lion percez de part en part,
D'accord avec le Leopard,
S'eſtant mis tous trois à ſes trouſſes
Lui donnoient cependant de ſi rudes ſecouſſes
Qu'elle apprehendoit tout de bon.
Un Phantome parut. Va, dit-il, Forgeron,
Aprendre à Louis à Verſaille,
Ce que je te dirai derriere une Brouſſaille.
Lors parut encor D'Aubuſſon,
Sortant des fatales Cavernes:
Mais le Spectre malgré tout ſon hardi jargon,
Lui ſouſla ſes quatre Lanternes.

Sur la Copie imprimée à Paris.

NACHT-VERTOOG VAN DEN SMIT
van Sellon in Provence.

IK wil hier brengen voor den dach
Wat nacht vertoog ik onlangs ſach,
Het was het Afbeelt van die Vorſt
Die nâer veel Volks ruine derſt.
Hes treed de Weereld met de Voet
Maer wat ſach ik daer tel Verwoed?
Een Luypaerd, die met vreemd geklank
Hem dreygde ſynen Ondergank.
Hy vol van wonder gans verbaeſt
En als een Dwaeſe tiert en raeſt,
Vreeſt dat de Luypaerd vreest van haest
Sig met de Leeuw en Arent paert,
Om haer te wreken vanden Hoon
En hem te ſtekes vanden Throon.
Mits quam een Spook, 't bid hier op lit
En ſeyt tot my gaet heuren Smet,
En haeſtig naer Verſailles treke
En aen Louis precis ondeke,
All 't geene dat gy hebt geſien
En wat ik voorder ſal gelien.
Flux hoorsmen d'Aubuſſons geſpreek
Maer 't Spook dat hielt hem voor de Gek,
Het blies ſyn vier Lanteernen uyt
En jaeg hem voort naer Carons Schuyt.

Figure 1.2 Anon., *La vision du Marechal de Sellon en Provence/Nacht-Vertoog van den Smit van Sellon in Provence,* Copy printed in Paris, 1697–1698 [?], engraving and printed text, 27.8 × 21.3 cm, Paris, BnF, Est., Va 230[e]. By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum

Thus by the late 1680s, Louis may have reached the climax of his quasi-hegemonic power in Europe, but this was seriously impacting upon his propaganda. The promotion of his image in his iconography had reached such proportions that it elicited a dramatic backlash on the part of European pamphleteers and publishers. This new wave of protests, in text and in image, gathered pace as a reaction to the burgeoning struggle that was to burst out in 1688: the bloody and crucial Nine Years' War (1688–97). As this conflict wore on, three factors may have encouraged Louis XIV to draw political and artistic conclusions from this situation. First, there was the continuous and mounting pressure exerted by foreign powers since the 1680s. As we have seen, this extended to the ideological sphere, and Louis may have begun to feel that his existing strategies, in image-making as much as military tactics, were causing him to lose the European struggle. Second, there was Louis' political isolation. This may have stimulated reflection by the king on whether it was wise to antagonise others through iconography. Third, perhaps, there was a religious conversion. Around this time – and possibly as a result of his political misfortunes – Louis appears to have begun to take the strictures of his Christian faith much more seriously, so may have become far more uncomfortable with vainglorious depictions of his rule. Whatever the exact reasons for the change in Louis' attitude, and whenever its exact timing, it was at the end of the Nine Years' War that it became apparent. In the second paradigm shift in Louis' self-presentation, he changed his policy towards monuments and dramatically reduced his reliance on solar symbolism.

Thus, for example, in the summer of 1699, a bronze equestrian statue of the king carved by François Girardon – a work that had begun in 1685 – was inaugurated Place Louis-le-Grand (Place Vendôme). Located in the heart of Paris, this second royal square built in honour of Louis XIV was still under construction when the mounted figure of the monarch was put in place. Dressed as a hero of antiquity, the Sun King assumed the same majestic and imposing posture as in his Place de Victoire incarnation, but great care was taken in stripping the 1699 pedestal of any offensive ornaments. There were no slaves: only plaques bearing broad and generalising inscriptions. No reference was made to the most recent political news. Instead, compliments were showered on the ruler for his deeds in the general fields of military endeavour and domestic policy, as well as his religious achievements.

As for solar imagery, this took a different turn after 1700, having once been wedded very closely to the person of Louis XIV. From the late 1680s, there had been a growing scepticism as to the utility and robustness of the identification between the sun and the King of France. This was probably influenced by the triumph of philosophical and scientific rationalism in the late seventeenth century, but by the start of the eighteenth there was an even clearer break with the past as political circumstances seemed to force a clear retirement of solar imagery from Louis' iconographic armoury.

Let us take just one example of this shift. When a near eclipse of the sun occurred in the critical juncture of May 1706, with French armies facing great

tests on the battlefield, the French court construed the celestial event as a strictly scientific phenomenon. The king observed the eclipse from the Château de *Marly*, where his astronomers provided him with all the necessary information on its course and causes. This was despite the fact that Louis XIV had so long been identified with the sun, that many believed there was a connection between the appearance of the solar disc and the monarch's destiny on earth. Both inside and outside France, much was made of the eclipse of the Sun by Louis' enemies. Unlike the monarch himself, who attributed no political significance to the conjunction of the heavenly bodies, opponents saw it as a heavenly sign that the final defeat of the Louis was near. A clear reference to the eclipse of 12 May 1706 can be found on the inside rim of a French shaving bowl. This shows a mocking picture of Louis XIV, sitting at the centre of a sun-crown, every shining ray of which itemises the King's crimes and vices (Figure 1.3). The maker of this everyday item took his cue from an engraving of 1705, a libel that had circulated in French, Latin and Dutch (Figure 1.4). This is a typical example of a 'pattern transfer' from one media to another, that characterised anti-French satire.

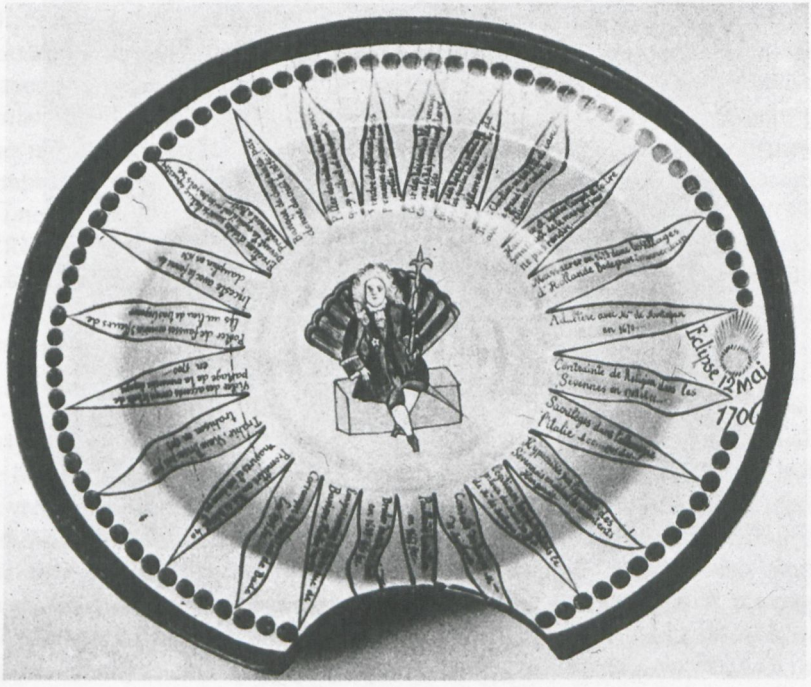

Figure 1.3 French shaving bowl, 1706, ceramic, unknown location, reproduced in: Robert Mandrou, *Propyläen Geschichte Europas*, t. III : *Staatsraison und Vernunft, 1649–1775*, Francfort-sur-le-Main, 1976, ill. p. 118. Personal collection Hendrik Ziegler

Figure 1.4 Anon., *Kalendarium regium solis cursum perfecte indicans/ de Koninglyke Almanach, den Loop der Zon duidelyk vertonende/ Almanach royal ou est remarqué parfaitement le cours du soleil*, 1705, engraving, 26.9 × 18.6 cm, Paris, BnF, Rés., François Ignace de Puechemeck (baron), *Receuil [sic] de pièces héroïques et historiques pour servir d'ornement à l'histoire de Louis XIV. Dédié à MM. Racine et Boileau, historiographes de France*, 2 vol., Gisors, J. de Montespant, 1693, t. II, fol. 1. By permission of the BNF, Paris.

Thus two contradictory and overlapping changes can be noted from the late 1680s and early 1690s. Louis XIV still proved very keen to offer a lofty image of his grandeur through a wide array of visual devices. Yet he turned away, if only gradually (and never entirely), from an image of himself as a war-hungry sovereign aiming at humbling his enemies through artistic means. This is roughly the time when the number of debasing portrayals of Louis XIV reached their peak, before attaining a new climax between 1706 and 1709, during the War of the Spanish Succession. In this phase, the sun metaphor was heavily used against Louis XIV at a time when, on the French side, it had ceased to play any strategic role. Insofar as it survived in Louis propaganda, it remained in use out of habit, rather attempting to make new or politically pertinent points. By the 1690s it was Louis' enemies who had most recourse to solar imagery.

The shift can be illustrated through two examples. As early as 1690, anti-Louis XIV visual propaganda twisted the Sun King's famously cryptic motto *NEC PLURIBUS IMPAR* [On a par with other princes]. Poking fun at the sinking of the flagship *Le soleil royal* in 1692, a medal bore the following words: *NUNC PLURIBUS IMPAR* [Now less than the others]. As part of this satire, sunsets and eclipses were introduced in the iconography. Referring to Louis' unexpected retreat from the front in the summer of 1693, a satirical medal took its cue from François Girardon's and Thomas Regnaudin's *Apollo Served by the Nymphs*, a famous sculpted group that had been built in the Versailles gardens (Figure 1.5). The medal showed the Sun King sitting lasciviously between some preying nymphs in front of a setting sun: a clear reference to his military defeat. According to one's understanding of the word *SOLIS*, the caption *SOLIS LAUTRICIBUS SERVATIS* can be translated in two different ways: 'Only the nymphs were saved' or, alternatively, 'The sun's nymphs were saved'. Along with the stress on military defeat, the message was that the Sun King had preferred to remain safely at Versailles with his mistresses rather than face his enemies on the front.

Representations of Louis XIV thus followed a divergent path to that of his adversaries, reflecting a shift in European power relations. In the late 1680s and early 1690s, the Sun King was to acknowledge the failure of his political aims. He had not established France as a protector of anti-Hapsburg states, nor had he prevented the Emperor joining an anti-French coalition.[7] The Emperor Leopold I had managed to defeat the Empire's pro-French lobby, and had successfully re-established good relations with most of the states of Germany, which came to accept his leadership against Versailles.[8] Louis had also finally and completely alienated the United Provinces in the mid-1680s, whilst in 1689 he saw the Stuart realms come out definitively against him after the Glorious Revolution. As a result

[7] Janine Fayard, 'Attempts to Build a Third Party in Germany, 1690-1694', in Ragnhild Hatton (ed.), *Louis XIV and Europe* (London, 1976), 213–240 ; Klaus Malettke, *Les relations entre la France et le Saint- Empire au XVII^e Siècle* (Paris, 2001), 491.

[8] Anton Schindling, *Die Anfänge des Immerwährenden Reichstags zu Regensburg. Ständevertretung und Staatskunst nach dem Westfälischen Frieden* (Mainz, 1991), 224–26.

of this shift in power relations, the allies' critique of Louis' image gathered even greater force during the Nine Years' War and the War of the Spanish Succession; and the French king himself abandoned some of his most trusted ideological techniques in order to reduce the animosity that was now aimed against him.

Figure 1.5 Anon., *Médaille satirique sur le retour de Louis XIV à Versailles après sa compagne avortée en Flandre*, 1693, reproduced in: Gerard van Loon, *Histoire métallique des XVII provinces des Pays-Bas, depuis l'abdication de Charles Quint jusqu'à la paix de Bade en 1716,* 5 t., Den Haag 1732–37, t. IV, p. 135. By permission of the BNF, Paris.

To conclude briefly, a qualitative and quantitative study of the royal iconography of Louis XIV and the battle of images it brought about demonstrates the utility of art history in helping us reach a better understanding of the shifts in the power relations of European states in the early modern period. Iconography reflected shifting patterns of geopolitics, and rulers adapted their approach in the light of changing circumstances. Most dramatically, we find that the image that of the Sun King – that has come to define Louis XIV, was in fact only used energetically in the early decades of his reign. Sometimes, also, iconography may have helped to bring about those political changes. In toning down his propaganda in the two paradigm shifts of his reign (the abandonment of mocking satire of enemies in the later 1670s, and the pivot away from grandiloquent and solar imagery in the 1690s), Louis was perhaps acknowledging the role of his own image in his political defeat. His earlier iconographic bombast had consolidated the alliance that later came to be ranged against him.