

The King's Staircase at Hampton Court Palace and the Visual Culture of Understatement

A Baroque Conversation Piece by
Antonio Verrio and Matthew Prior¹

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Most visitors to London associate Hampton Court Palace with the age of Henry VIII. In fact, the palace website promotes a visit to Hampton Court with the words: "Experience the public dramas and private lives of Henry VIII, his wives and children in the world of the Tudor court."² Behind the turreted entrance gate one hardly expects a high Baroque masterpiece. And yet Antonio Verrio's murals on the King's Staircase count among the most important Baroque paintings ever created in Britain. Before I discuss them in detail, a brief introduction regarding their architectural setting, their patrons and their function will provide the necessary background.

The Murals in the Context of Hampton Court Palace: Facts and Hypotheses

Even before their coronation in April 1689, William III and Mary II decided to make Hampton Court their main residence.³ During the Glorious Revolution, William had ousted the previous monarch, Mary's father, James II. As James's London residence had been Whitehall Palace, William and Mary wanted to make a fresh start elsewhere, away from the polluted London air. Thus they chose the Tudor palace resonating with glorious memories of the past untainted by contemporary conflicts.

Hampton Court Palace is arranged around three courts. Base Court and Clock Court have remained largely unaltered since the 16th century, while the innermost courtyard, which came to be known as Fountain Court, was completely rebuilt from 1689. It formed the centrepiece of the Baroque residence created for William and Mary.

Although the couple had been crowned as joint monarchs in 1689, Mary's claim to the throne was actually stronger than William's. Therefore she was allocated the more prestigious apartment to the east of Fountain Court, facing the main vista of the new Baroque garden. Only after Mary's premature death in 1694 did William's apartment in the south wing become the ceremonial focus of the structure.⁴

The King's Staircase, which gave access to William's apartment, was reached via the 16th-century Clock Court, a typical example of Tudor architecture. Visitors must have been highly surprised by the completely different, modern style of the murals Antonio Verrio created for the King's Staircase in 1701–1702.⁵ Verrio was an Italian artist who had been active in Naples, Rome, Florence, Toulon and Paris before moving to England in 1672, where he soon became the principal court painter. After the Glorious Revolution he lost royal favour, but from 1699 William III employed Verrio at both Windsor and Hampton Court, thus seeking to continue the grandiloquent self-fashioning of the Stuart monarchs.⁶

Upon entering the King's Staircase, visitors behold a mural depicting a fairly conventional assembly of classical gods (fig. 1). The central still life, a display of plate, refers to the banquet of the gods that dominates the neighbouring east wall and the ceiling of the staircase (fig. 2). In the painted sky several celestial gods are gathered around a large table. Various other figures point at a second, empty table that floats



1. Antonio Verrio and assistants, Mural on the north wall of the King's Staircase at Hampton Court Palace, 1701–1702. © Historic Royal Palaces. Photo James Brittain.

atop a cloud between the celestial and earthly realms. On the lowest level of the mural, numerous people in ancient dress look up at the events unfolding above. As visitors ascend the stairs even further, an ancient cityscape comes into view (fig. 3). In the foreground a man in a red cloak sits at a desk, while Mercury gestures towards the enigmatic painting on the adjacent wall (fig. 2).

The whole decoration of the King's Staircase must have been quite puzzling to Verrio's contemporaries, as these episodes had never before been the subject of a mon-

2. Antonio Verrio and assistants, Murals on the ceiling and east wall of the King's Staircase at Hampton Court Palace, 1701–1702. Photo Johanna Berges-Grunert, edited by Tatjana Sperling.



umental painting – and they never have been since. The first scholar to identify the literary source of the pictorial programme, Julian's *The Caesars*, was Edgar Wind, who claimed that the murals were meant to refer to the Glorious Revolution. In a brief article of 1940, he suggested that the earl of Shaftesbury, Lord Somers and John Locke were authors of the programme, but did not provide any firm evidence for these assumptions.⁷

Over the past 80 years, Wind's interpretation has remained largely unquestioned.⁸ I would like to take a fresh approach to the topic and will posit the following new hypotheses:



3. Antonio Verrio and assistants, Mural on the south wall of the King's Staircase at Hampton Court Palace, 1701–1702. From C. Strunk, *Britain and the Continent 1660–1727...*, op. cit., pl. 92.

1. The King's Staircase at Hampton Court Palace was a "response" to the Escalier des Ambassadeurs at Versailles.
2. Its pictorial decoration reflected a British discourse concerning the self-fashioning of Louis XIV.
3. The pictorial programme was developed in conversations between Matthew Prior, Antonio Verrio and William III.
4. The murals were conceived as a "conversation piece" that responded to a growing demand for innovative, thought-provoking subject matter.

Following the lead provided by our conference topic, I will discuss Verrio's work as a "conversation piece" in a double sense. On the one hand, the murals intended to stimulate conversations among courtiers and visitors who sought to interpret the enigmatic subject matter. On the other hand, these paintings were the result of multiple conversations at the French and British courts. Their iconography originated from an intense discourse on monarchic representation that can be traced through numerous written sources.

Conversations Leading to the Design of the King's Staircase

In order to understand the genesis of the pictorial programme, it is first of all necessary to trace the career of a protagonist who has not hitherto been connected to the King's Staircase: Matthew Prior, a carpenter's son who excelled through his intelligence and learning and is now considered to be one of the most important British poets of the period around 1700.⁹ As he could not rely on an independent financial income, during the 1690s he made his living by serving as secretary to the British embassies in The Hague and Paris.

For most of the 1690s, Britain was involved in a war against France. In 1697, Prior assisted the English ambassador in the negotiations that led to the Peace of Ryswick. This peace ended the Nine Years' War and was perceived by William III as a personal triumph because France had been forced to accept his claim to the British crown. William rewarded Prior's good service by making him secretary to the embassy in Paris, where he spent the years 1698 and 1699. It is documented that Prior was entrusted with secret negotiations between the kings of England and France. He had several personal audiences with Louis XIV and William III, and was personally informed by William about his secret dealings with France.¹⁰

Apart from his work as a diplomat, Matthew Prior had a lively interest in the arts. From 1688 to 1690 he had had the opportunity to see Antonio Verrio at work when they were both employed at Burghley House. An inventory of Prior's personal art collection reveals that he owned a sketch by Verrio, which testifies to their close acquaintance.¹¹

During his time in The Hague and Paris, Prior continued to collect art both for

himself and for his British patrons. He also submitted reports on French cultural life. As William III was keenly interested in the art patronage of his French rival, Prior helped him procure drawings of Versailles, Marly, and the Grand Trianon.¹² William imitated French court ceremonial, and many details of the architecture and furnishings of Hampton Court Palace were inspired by French models.¹³

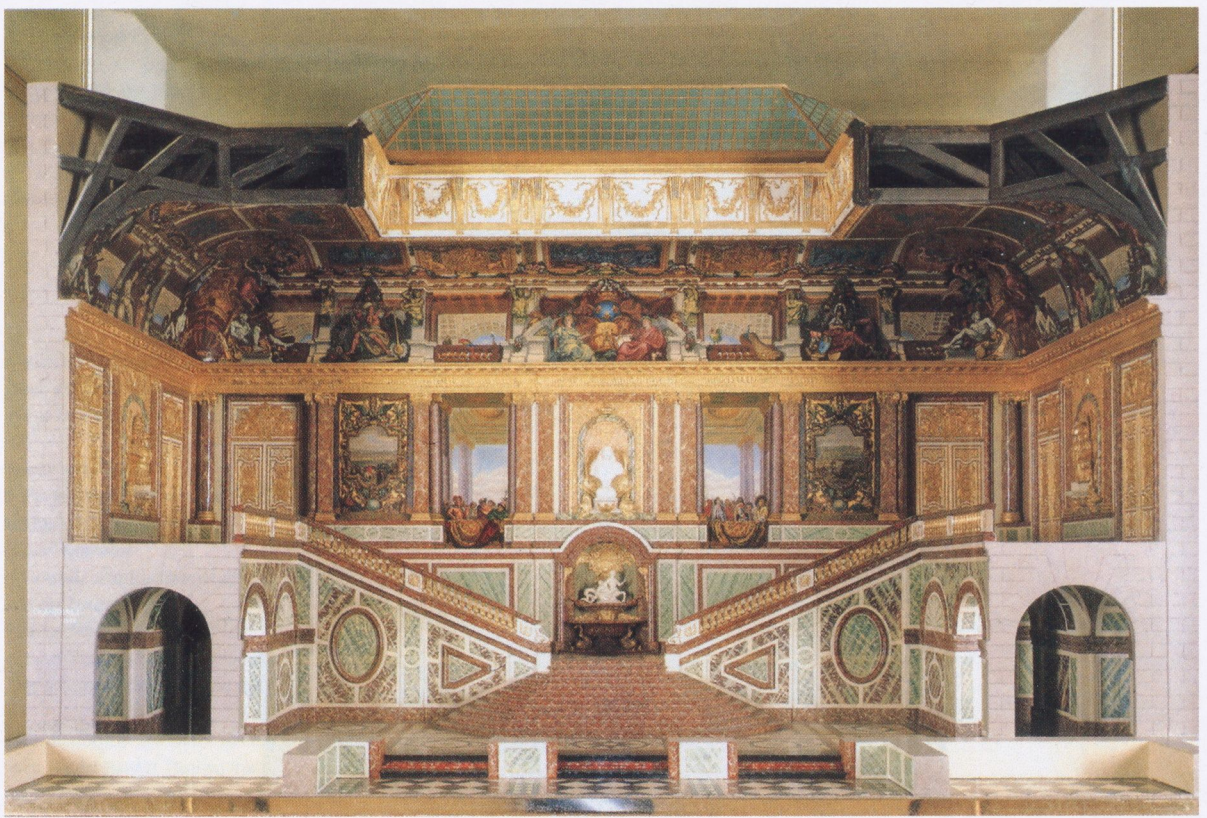
During a visit to Versailles, Matthew Prior was shown the Escalier des Ambassadeurs (fig. 4),¹⁴ a staircase specifically designed and decorated by Charles Le Brun to impress foreign ambassadors. On the first floor of the staircase, illusionistic openings filled with admiring foreigners alternated with four fictive tapestries. The tapestries represented major military victories of Louis XIV and his brother.¹⁵ Prior would have observed these paintings with particular dislike, as they immortalized battles lost by William III while he was still stadtholder of the United Provinces.

Therefore it comes as no surprise that Prior's reports from Paris often have a critical, even satirical bent. For instance, he wrote of the *château de Versailles*: "His house at Versailles is something the foolishhest in the world; he is strutting in every panel and galloping over one's head in every ceiling, and if he turns to spit he must see himself in person or his Viceregent the Sun [...]. I verily believe that there are of him statues, busts, bas-reliefs and pictures, above two hundred in the house and gardens."¹⁶

It is clear from Prior's writings that he saw French royal self-fashioning in a very critical light. However, this raised the question of how William III ought to respond to the French king's flamboyant self-praise. In fact, during his stay in France, Prior was asked about the interior decoration of the English royal palaces. He related this conversation in his autobiography, writing of himself in the third person: "We have one remarkable Story of him [Prior] at this Time, which must not here be omitted, as it contains an Instance of his delicate Satire, and gallant Loyalty to his Master. One of the Officers of the French King's Household shewing him the Royal Apartments and Curiosities at Versailles, especially the Paintings of Le Brun, wherein the Victories of Lewis XIV was beautifully described, ask'd him, 'Whether King William's Actions were also to be seen in his Palace.' 'No Sir,' answered Mr. Prior; 'the Monuments of my Master's Actions are to be seen every where but in his own House.' It was hardly possible, in so few Words, to pay a finer Compliment to King William, and at the same Time, to pass a juster and more poignant Censure upon the Vanity of the Grand Monarch, of whose Actions there were more Monuments in his own Palaces, and in the Works of Boileau, than in the whole World besides."¹⁷

This paragraph is highly relevant to royal self-fashioning at Hampton Court Palace. Prior criticizes the French king's vaingloriousness and at the same time extols William's modesty. He suggests that William does not need painted or sculpted monuments and prefers to be admired for his deeds rather than for self-glorifying images.

Significantly, Prior defines his own approach as "delicate Satire" and mentions



4. Charles Arquinet, Reconstruction of the Escalier des Ambassadeurs at the Château de Versailles, 1958. From C. Constans, *L'Escalier des Ambassadeurs...*, op. cit., p. 10.

the French court poet Boileau in this context. From his youth, Prior had excelled at writing satires both in English and in Latin. One of his most famous satires was directed against an ode authored by Boileau in 1692 to celebrate the taking of Namur by Louis XIV. When William III conquered Namur in 1695, Prior wrote a ballad that mocked Boileau's text.¹⁸ His and Boileau's poems were set on facing pages so that readers could amuse themselves by comparing Boileau's far-fetched metaphors with Prior's satirical reworkings of them.¹⁹

The staircase paintings at Hampton Court Palace are based on a satirical text as well. Two guide books from the mid 18th century document that the writer at his desk (fig. 3) represents the Roman emperor Julian, also known as Julian the Apostate.²⁰ This led Edgar Wind to identify Julian's satire *The Caesars* as the basis of the pictorial programme – a text never before nor after illustrated in monumental painting. As Julian claimed his text was “an invention of Hermes,” this explains Mercury's presence next to the portrait of the author.²¹ Mercury points towards the main scene that illustrates Julian's satire (fig. 2).

The Caesars describes a banquet of the ancient gods to which the Roman Caesars were invited. The gods on the ceiling of the staircase correspond to the cast of characters mentioned in Julian's text. Further down, Diana points to an empty table reserved for the mortals, who compete for admission. Romulus, standing on a cloud, approach-

es the table and intercedes for the Roman emperors, who are positioned below him. Julian makes fun of each of the Caesars as they enter the heavenly banqueting hall.²²

The second part of the satire consists of a rhetorical battle between the finalists, among them Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great. Julian emphasized Alexander's superiority to Caesar and pointed out that Alexander followed the example of Hercules.²³ Accordingly, the military commander on the left side of the mural must be Alexander, accompanied by his promoter Hercules, who floats on a cloud above him. As William III often associated himself with Hercules, Edgar Wind was certainly correct to suggest that Verrio's mural casts Alexander as William's "alter ego."²⁴ But who is Caesar on the right side of the painting meant to represent?

I disagree with Edgar Wind both about the identification of the second protagonist and about the authors of the programme. As Wind claims that the painting refers to the Glorious Revolution, in his view Julius Caesar must be understood as a reference to the Roman Catholic James II, who was ousted by William III. In order to buttress his argument Wind quotes two treatises on the emperor Julian which were, however, written almost a decade before the Glorious Revolution and mention neither William III nor Julian's satire on the Caesars. Wind attributes one of these treatises to John Locke and therefore argues that Locke, his pupil Shaftesbury and their friend Lord Somers co-authored the pictorial programme.²⁵

However, Wind completely overlooked the role of Matthew Prior and his acquaintance with Antonio Verrio. Both men knew each other very well since they had both worked at Burghley House; moreover it is documented that William III, Verrio and Prior spent the summer of 1700 at Hampton Court Palace.²⁶ Prior had just received another promotion from King William for his diplomatic negotiations with France, and Verrio had been commissioned to decorate the Banqueting House in the palace gardens. Therefore it is most likely that Prior and Verrio met at Hampton Court and discussed the pictorial programme for the King's Staircase, which was then approved by the king and carried out in 1701–1702.

The decisive proof of Prior's authorship of the programme consists in his *Carmen Seculare*, written at the end of 1699.²⁷ The poem was set to music and performed for William III at the beginning of January 1700.²⁸ It celebrates the start of a new century and contains the main pictorial motifs of the King's Staircase. The opening stanzas are in fact modelled on Julian's satire *The Caesars* and evoke a contest of rulers in which William III triumphs over his predecessors. A similar contest was then visualized on the main wall of the King's Staircase (fig. 2), while the "prologue" on the entrance wall expands on bucolic motifs from the *Carmen Seculare*²⁹ (fig. 1). Prior's writings also provide clues for identifying Alexander's adversary in the main mural, as will be discussed presently.

During the first half of the 18th century polite conversations became a hallmark of elite society and were immortalized in a particular type of group portrait, the so-called “conversation piece.”³⁰ Although the main mural of the King’s Staircase depicts a debate among members of ancient high society, it is certainly no conversation piece in the common sense of the word. However, its function as promoter of conversations (rather than its subject matter) deserves this epithet.

Treatises from the 18th century like Henry Fielding’s *An Essay on Conversation*, Henry Ozel’s *The Art of Pleasing in Conversation* and the anonymous publication *The Conversation of Gentlemen Considered* codified an art of conversation that had been developed well before.³¹ For instance, Henry Peacham’s manual *The Complete Gentleman* of 1622 contains quite a few paragraphs on matters of style in social interaction. Moreover, Peacham’s text posited that every true gentleman had to be able to talk about poetry and the visual arts.³² In that sense, Verrio’s combination of painting and poetry provided ample ground for conversational exercise.

As the King’s Staircase was the most public space of the King’s Apartment, accessible to courtiers and visitors alike, the murals were certainly intended to stimulate conversations about their highly unusual iconography. In order to help viewers unravel the enigmatic scenes, the painter provided a number of visual clues. For instance, the image of the emperor Julian and Mercury (fig. 3) alluded to the frontispiece of a recent French edition of Julian’s text where Julian sits in the foreground, attended by Mercury (fig. 5).³³ The rest of the frontispiece, namely the banquet of the gods with the Caesars below, appears on the adjacent wall (fig. 2). Those conversant with the latest productions of the French book market were therefore able to identify the main figures.

Hercules and an allegory of Victory serve as further pictorial clues that can guide viewers in the process of interpretation. While the Caesars form a compact group, Verrio emphasized Alexander the Great on the opposite side of the wall by isolating his particularly dynamic figure. As Hercules, who floats above Alexander, was often associated with William III, this configuration suggested that Alexander should be identified with King William.³⁴ Moreover, Verrio coupled Alexander with a personification of Victory, who crowns him with a laurel wreath. Verrio’s contemporaries would certainly have thought of William’s recent victories and especially of the Peace of Ryswick (1697). Therefore it was logical to identify Alexander’s opponent Caesar with Louis XIV, who had been William’s archenemy for over 25 years.³⁵ This parallel was perfectly borne out by Julian’s satire, which described Julius Caesar as a particularly boastful, self-glorifying person.³⁶ Caesar thus personified the same characteristics that Prior had ridiculed in his texts on Louis XIV.

As we have seen, Matthew Prior visited Versailles several times and had first-hand

knowledge of the Escalier des Ambassadeurs, a centrepiece of royal self-fashioning; he even owned a book on this important monument that glorified the victories of Louis XIV (fig. 4).³⁷ The King's Staircase at Hampton Court also alluded to William's victories, but in a much more subtle and intelligent way. Prior clearly understood that it was impossible to outdo Louis XIV by imitating him. The number of monuments that had already been raised to him could not be surpassed. As Prior found the French king's grandiloquent self-representation nauseating, he sought to magnify William III by belittling his enemy through a painted satire. Louis XIV appeared as the boastful Caesar who was outdone by Alexander the Great, William's "alter ego."

In conversations with Antonio Verrio and his patron, King William, Prior developed a new culture of understatement. Rather than trumpeting William's glory to the four corners of the world, the murals suggest the king's superiority in a clever, understated manner. By basing the programme on Julian's satire *The Caesars*, Prior and Verrio created a "conversation piece" that tested its viewers' wits. As Julian's text had never before been represented in mural paintings, viewers were faced with a real challenge that went far beyond conventional Baroque allegories.

In a way, the structure of Verrio's painting echoes Prior's *Ballad on the Taking of Namur*.³⁸ Just as Prior staged a satirical confrontation of Louis XIV and William III on opposite pages, at Hampton Court the two kings appear on opposite sides of the mural. Verrio juxtaposed Alexander and Caesar in a rhetorical battle – which could in turn be re-enacted by the viewers who discussed the meaning of the painting.

While Louis XIV confronted his foreign visitors with a straightforward celebration of his military triumphs, the King's Staircase at Hampton Court is characterized by noble restraint. It demonstrates superiority through understatement – only for those who are able to recognize the subtle signs of distinction. After William's earlier commissions had imitated the self-fashioning of Louis XIV,³⁹ he finally came to ridicule his boastful rival. Thereby Verrio's Hampton Court murals may even have initiated a new trend for monumental paintings with an ironic twist – but that is another story (or rather, a matter for further conversation).⁴⁰

5. Pierre Le Pautre (inventor and engraver), Frontispiece to *Les Césars de l'Empereur Julien*, Paris 1696. Washington, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection.



Petrus le Pautre invenit et fecit

¹ This article draws on research published in my monograph: C. Strunck, *Britain and the Continent 1660–1727. Political Crisis and Conflict Resolution in Mural Paintings at Windsor, Chelsea, Chatsworth, Hampton Court and Greenwich*, Berlin-Boston 2021, pp. 248–263. However, the conference topic inspired me to look at the material from a new angle, interpreting it as a “conversation piece.” I am grateful to Harriet O’Neill, Caterina Volpi, Francesco Freddolini and above all Francesca Cappelletti for having given me the opportunity to explore these new facets.

² <https://www.hrp.org.uk/hampton-court-palace/#gs.818lw3> (last accessed 8 August 2022).

³ S. Thurley, *Hampton Court. A Social and Architectural History*, New Haven-London 2003, p. 151. While Hampton Court was intended as the grand ceremonial reception space, William and Mary used Kensington Palace for their London business. See S. Edwards, “Very noble, tho’ not great.” *The Making of a New Court for William, Mary and Anne*, in *Kensington Palace. Art, Architecture and Society*, ed. O. Fryman, New Haven-London 2018, pp. 64–91.

⁴ On questions of precedence in William and Mary’s residences see C. Strunck, *Britain...*, op. cit., pp. 237–242.

⁵ On the building history of the staircase see H.M. Colvin, J. Mordaunt Crook, K. Downes, J. Newman, *The History of the King’s Works*, vol. 5, 1660–1782, London 1976, pp. 160, 163; S. Thurley, *Hampton Court...*, op. cit., pp. 184, 194. The payments regarding the murals are transcribed by S. Jenkins, “A Sense of History. The Artistic Taste of William III,” in *Apollo*, 140, 390, 1994, pp. 4–9, esp. pp. 6, 9 and notes 24–25.

⁶ Detailed analyses of Verrio’s previous works for the crown can be found in C. Strunck, *Britain...*, op. cit., pp. 87–145.

⁷ E. Wind, “Julian the Apostate at Hampton Court,” in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 3, 1939–1940, pp. 127–137.

⁸ The following authors have quoted Wind’s interpretation to various extents: E. Croft-Murray, *Decorative Painting in England 1537–1837*, vol. 1, London 1962, p. 59; F. Portier, “Un mécène anglais et des artistes italiens au début du XVIII^e siècle. Lord Shaftesbury, Antonio Verrio et Paolo de Matteis,” in *Études Anglaises*, 42, 4, October 1989, pp. 403–406; A. Guarino, “La presenza del Verrio e del Gennari presso la corte inglese alla fine del Seicento,” in *Kronos – Supplemento*, 1, 2004, pp. 94–95; M. Pasculli Ferrara, *Londra e il suo hinterland. I cicli decorativi di Antonio Verrio nelle residenze reali di Windsor Castle e di Hampton Court*, in *Londra tra realtà e invenzione*, ed. M. Basile Bonsante, Venezia 2005, pp. 114–118; F. Druffner, *Unter Legitimationszwang. Wilhelm III. von Oranien und Maria II. Stuart, in Bourbon - Habsburg - Oranien. Konkurrierende Modelle im dynastischen Europa um 1700*, ed. C. Kampmann et al., Köln-Weimar-Wien 2008, pp. 82–84; B. Dolman, “Antonio Verrio (c. 1636–1707) and the Royal Image at Hampton Court,” in *The British Art Journal*, 10, 3, 2009, pp. 22–24; R. De Giorgi,

“Couleur, couleur!” Antonio Verrio. *Un pittore in Europa tra Seicento e Settecento*, Firenze 2009, pp. 136–143; C. Brett, *Antonio Verrio à Londres. Une carrière triomphale*, in Antonio Verrio. *Chroniques d’un peintre italien voyageur (1636–1707)*, ed. G. Ponselle and A. Hémy, Toulouse 2010, p. 96; L. Hamlett, *Mural Painting in Britain 1630–1730. Experiencing Histories*, New York-London 2020, pp. 78–79; J. Farguson, *Visualising Protestant Monarchy. Ceremony, Art and Politics after the Glorious Revolution (1689–1714)*, Woodbridge 2021, pp. 172–174. Although Farguson acknowledges Matthew Prior’s role as an intermediary between Paris and London, she interprets Caesar in Verrio’s mural conventionally as James II: *ibid.*, pp. 170, 172. An entirely different interpretation was given by T.R. Langley who proposes that we see the king’s “alter ego” in a figure in the far right corner of the mural (supposedly Marcus Aurelius): T.R. Langley, *Image Government. Monarchical Metamorphoses in English Literature and Art, 1649–1702*, Pittsburgh (Pa) 2001, pp. 145, 150–154, 181, 198.

⁹ The following paragraphs are based on L.G. Wickham Legg, *Matthew Prior. A Study of His Public Career and Correspondence*, Cambridge 1921; F.M. Rippey, *Matthew Prior*, Boston 1986; Ead., *Prior, Matthew (1664–1721)*, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H.C.G. Matthew and B. Harrison, Oxford 2004, vol. 45, pp. 416–422; H. Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power. The Material World of the Stuart Diplomat, 1660–1714*, Oxford 2011, pp. 186–207.

¹⁰ L.G. Wickham Legg, *Matthew Prior...*, op. cit., pp. 67, 73–74, 88–89, 102–103, 105, 114–117.

¹¹ H. Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power...*, op. cit., pp. 187–188.

¹² C. Strunck, *Britain...*, op. cit., pp. 242–243, 258–259.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 242–243.

¹⁴ M. Prior, *The History of His Own Time: Compiled from the Original Manuscripts of His Late Excellency Matthew Prior, Esq; Revised and Signed by Himself, and Copied fair for the Press by Mr. Adrian Drift, His Executor*, Dublin 1740, pp. 29–30.

¹⁵ A. Marie, *Naissance de Versailles. Le Château – les Jardins*, Paris 1968, vol. 2, pp. 266–267; C. Constans, *L’escalier des Ambassadeurs*, in *Charles Le Brun 1619–1690. Célébration du tricentenaire de la mort de l’artiste. Le décor de l’escalier des Ambassadeurs à Versailles*, Paris 1990, pp. 29–39.

¹⁶ L.G. Wickham Legg, *Matthew Prior...*, op. cit., p. 68.

¹⁷ M. Prior, *The History...*, op. cit., pp. 29–30. See also H. Ziegler, “His house at Versailles is something the foolishness in the world.” *La Grande Galerie de Versailles à travers les récits de voyageurs et d’ambassadeurs étrangers autour de 1700*, in *Europäische Galeriebauten. Galleries in a Comparative European Perspective (1400–1800)*, ed. C. Strunck and E. Kieven, München 2010, pp. 351–382, here p. 379.

¹⁸ *The Literary Works of Matthew Prior*, ed. H. Bunker Wright and M.K. Spears, Oxford 1959, vol. 1, pp. 140–151.

¹⁹ T. Claydon, C.-E. Levillain, *Louis XIV Upside Down? Interpreting the Sun King’s Image*, in *Louis*

XIV *Outside In. Images of the Sun King Beyond France, 1661–1715*, ed. T. Claydon and C.-E. Levillain, New York-London 2016, pp. 1–24, here p. 21; C. Strunck, *Britain...*, op. cit., pp. 259–260.

²⁰ G. Bickham, *Deliciae Britannicae; Or, the Curiosities of Hampton Court and Windsor Castle, Delineated, with Occasional Reflections; And Embellish'd with Copper-Plates of the Two Palaces, &c.*, London 1742, pp. 25–29. Julian is also mentioned in the guide book *Apelles Britannicus* (published without date or place, but which can be dated to c. 1737–1760 on the basis of internal evidence), p. 3.

²¹ E. Wind, “Julian the Apostate...,” op. cit., pp. 127–128.

²² *Die beiden Satiren des Kaisers Julianus Apostata (Symposion oder Caesares und Antiochikos oder Misopogon): Griechisch und deutsch mit Einleitung, Anmerkungen und Index*, ed. F.M. Müller, Stuttgart 1998, pp. 79–89, § 308 C–315 C.

²³ *Die beiden Satiren des Kaisers Julianus Apostata...*, op. cit., pp. 99–105, esp. § 324 D–325 A.

²⁴ E. Wind, “Julian the Apostate...,” op. cit., pp. 128–129.

²⁵ My detailed refutation of Wind’s arguments can be found in C. Strunck, *Britain...*, op. cit., pp. 248–253.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 248, 258–259.

²⁷ M. Prior, *The Literary Works...*, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 161–181.

²⁸ F. Rippy, *Matthew Prior*, op. cit., p. 64.

²⁹ C. Strunck, *Britain...*, op. cit., pp. 260–262.

³⁰ M. Hallett, *Hogarth*, London 2000, pp. 54–68; W. Brassat, *Das Bild als Gesprächsprogramm. Selbstreflexive Malerei und ihr kommunikativer Gebrauch in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Berlin–Boston 2021, pp. 409–412.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 54–55.

³² H. Peacham, *The Complete Gentleman, The Truth of Our Times, and The Art of Living in London*, ed. V.B. Heltzel, Ithaca–New York 1962, pp. 54–66, 90–107, 127–130.

³³ *Les Césars de l’Empereur Julien, Traduits du Grec, avec des Remarques & des Preuves illustrées par les Médailles, & autres anciens Monumens* [sic], Paris 1696.

³⁴ E. Wind, “Julian the Apostate...,” op. cit., pp. 128–129.

³⁵ For a concise biography of William III see T. Claydon, *William III and II (1650–1702)*, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H.C.G. Matthew and B. Harrison, Oxford 2004, vol. 59, pp. 73–98.

³⁶ C. Strunck, *Britain...*, op. cit., pp. 253–255.

³⁷ H. Jacobsen, *Luxury and Power...*, op. cit., p. 202.

³⁸ See note 18 above.

³⁹ On William’s earlier commissions in the style of Louis XIV see C. Strunck, *Britain...*, op. cit., pp. 242–248.

⁴⁰ Lydia Hamlett interprets Giannantonio Pellegrini’s *Fall of Phaeton* at Castle Howard (painted somewhat later, in 1709–1710) as ironic mockery of Louis XIV: L. Hamlett, *Mural Painting...*, op. cit., pp. 91–94, 99. However, the story of Phaethon had long been employed as a warning against hypocrisy (see for example C. Strunck, *Identità vere e finte nel programma decorativo del palazzo di Bassano. Albani, Domenichino, Tempesta, Castello e Guidotti dipingono per Vincenzo Giustiniani*, in *La Villa di Vincenzo Giustiniani a Bassano Romano, dalla Storia al Restauro*, ed. A. Bureca, Roma 2003, pp. 147–193, esp. pp. 178–179, 184–188). Therefore it cannot be taken for granted that each of the examples quoted by Hamlett was meant to convey a political message.