**Warrior King or King of War?**

**Louis XIII’s Entries into his *Bonnes Villes* (1620-1629)**

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In seventeenth-century France war and violence were at the very heart of the state. From 1620 to 1629, from the Béarn campaign to the peace of Alès, the country was torn by civil war. At the head of his armies, King Louis XIII tirelessly marched throughout the length and breadth of his kingdom to bring the Huguenot rebels to obedience and restore order. The last of the country’s warrior kings, and as his father Henri IV had done before him, he shared the life of his troops, spurring them on by his presence and often exposing himself to danger. Contemporaries repeatedly insisted on the fact that Louis

s’est trouvé dans les charges, sieges, assaults, & batailles avec tant de proüesses, & de merites, que les soldats ont plus emprunté de sa gloire, que sa qualité n’estoit obligée de droict à exposer aux dangers sa personne sacrée, & par son assiduité aux plus communes factions de guerre, à meriter celle des plus braves & signalez soldats.[[1]](#footnote-1)

demonstrated such prowess and merit in the charges, sieges, assaults, and battles that soldiers gained more from his glory (since his quality was such that he was not obliged to expose his sacred person to danger), and were inspired by his assiduity to the most menial duties of war to show themselves worthy of the fame due to the bravest and most distinguished soldiers.

But war was not just a repetitive form of force and violence, or a way for the king to show courage and aspire to glory. It was in reality an instrument of the new royal order being established, a tool in the construction of the absolutist state by the first Bourbon kings. War was less an auxiliary of power than a component of sovereignty, as shown by the sword given to the king on the day of his coronation and which instituted him *roi de guerre* for the defence of the realm and his subjects.[[2]](#footnote-2) In his continued presence on the battle field, the king of war assumed his function as warrior-king.

This explains why, in these years of civil strife, the French monarchy turned the royal entry into a demonstration of the military might of the monarch, either literally by a show of force, or at least by hinting at the real balance of power beneath the ritual of the entry, or metaphorically by using conventional signs and symbols of power and might. On the one hand there were ‘victorious’ entries into captured towns, such as the ones into Montpellier on 20 October 1622 or into La Rochelle on 1 November 1628, in which the ritual functioned as a way to occupy the urban space and impose royal order on it by force, in an attempt to normalize the national territory. On the other hand there were ‘triumphal’ entries given to celebrate the return of the victorious king, in which, after its unleashing on the battle field, violence appeared as controlled and force was represented as power.[[3]](#footnote-3) This was the case in Marseille, Aix, Arles, Avignon, Grenoble and Lyon in the autumn of 1622, and also in Paris on 23 December 1628. Still, whether its immediate goal were to terrorize or seduce, the royal entry was always an expression and a demonstration of power and might.

**The ‘victorious’ entry or the show/manifestation of force**

Coming as it did in the wake of a siege or a battle, the entry of the victorious king into a captured town was above all a rite of submission on the part of the town before a display of military might. Royal troops in full armour entered the city, followed a day or so later by the king himself, also fully armed, and on horseback. There was no need for ceremonies other than the ritual submission and humiliation of the inhabitants, falling on their knees and asking for mercy. Besides a more elaborate ceremonial, complete with triumphal arches and other temporary structures, would have been difficult given the circumstances [“attendu le temps de l’Estat des affaires”[[4]](#footnote-4)]. For Louis Marin,

The *particular quality* of the warrior, even in the pomp of a parade – ‘these armed troops…, the trumpets and drums that walk ahead’, the guards, the scarred veterans, the forty thousand janissaries of the Great Lord – is to signify or to recall the ‘originary’ violence of force, and even more so the absolute threat of the mortal danger that constitutes the limit of the discourse that is power. And if the king, our king, does not disguise himself, if he does not mask himself with extraordinary clothes to appear extraordinary, it is because his majesty is none other than the armed troop that surrounds him, like the discourse of signs that belong to him.[[5]](#footnote-5)

According to the author of *La Reduction de la Ville de Mont-pellier à l’obeissance du Roy*,

Monsieur le Duc D[‘]espernon, par commandement du Roy, entra dans la ville de Montpellier avec le Regiment des gardes, les Compagnies des Suisses & les Mareschaux des logis du Roy, pour s’emparer de la place, & y faire les logements de sa Maiesté, qui y entra le lendemain ensuivant 20. Octobre, en armes. [[6]](#footnote-6)

By commandment of the King, His Grace the Duke of Epernon entered the town of Montpellier, with the Guards Regiment, the Companies of the Swiss Guards and the King’s Sergeants, to seize the fortress and prepare the lodgings of the King, who entered the town fully armed, the next day, 20 October.

In the same way, Louis XIII, who had beforehand arranged for bread and other supplies to be distributed to the famished population, entered into La Rochelle on the feast of All Saints 1628, ‘sans autre ceremonie qu’à cheval avec ses armes’ [‘ without ceremony, but on horseback and bearing arms’], preceded by four companies of the Guards’ regiment, two companies of the Swiss Guards, as well as all the companies of the Household Cavalry, ‘armez de toutes pieces’ [‘fully armed’], Musketeers, and Life Guards,[[7]](#footnote-7).

An anonymous engraving of 1629, entitled ‘L’entrée dans les villes rebelles’, gives an idealised representation of this kind of ‘victorious’ entry.

[insert Figure 1 here]

*L’Entrée dans les villes rebelles.* BnF, Estampes. Reproduced by permission of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. Photograph: BnF, Paris.

Louis XIII, in antique dress, a laurel wreath on his head, rides towards the gate of the city, which is wide open and where the inhabitants are waiting for him, kneeling on the ground and with outstretched arms in a gesture of supplication. Behind the king, soldiers in Roman dress with helmets and lances, can be seen. However the verse below the picture lay the stress far less on the king’s victory than on his clemency towards the vanquished, as shown by his right hand extended in a traditional gesture of greeting and pacification:

Tel entrant ce Grand Roy dans les villes rebelles

De ces cueurs révoltés faict des sujets fidèles

Un profond repentir désarme ses rigueurs.

Et quoique le soldat souspire après sa proye

Il l’apaise, il l’arreste et se monstre avec joye

Et père des vaincus et maistre des vainqueurs. [[8]](#footnote-8)

As soon as this Great King enters rebel towns,

Rebellious hearts are turned into faithful subjects.

Their deeply-felt remorse disarms his severity.

And although the soldiers thirst for blood,

He tames them, stops them and proves himself gladly to be

Both father to the vanquished and master of the victors.

Alternatively this could be read as a gesture of command and enforcement of royal will, as the king reaches out for the keys offered by the inhabitants, while the high-stepping trot of his horse would have been recognised by contemporaries as symbolising not only an acquired equestrian skill but also the ability to govern. [[9]](#footnote-9)

In Montpellier, as in La Rochelle, six years later, the inhabitants had also been expected, if not ordered, to play out the ritual of their surrender. The anonymous author of *Les Submissions faictes au Roy par le sieur Duc de Rohan* reported that, in Montpellier, ‘Le peuple cri[oit] de tous costez, *Vive le Roy et Misericorde*, avec beaucoup de tesmoignage de repentance de son obstination’ [From all sides, the people shouted *Long Live the King ! Have Mercy !* with great expression of repentance for their obstinacy’]*,*[[10]](#footnote-10) whereas, in La Rochelle, ‘suivant le commandement qui leur avoit été fait par Monsieur le Mareschal de Schomberg, ils se mirent à genoux, comme le Roi passoit, criant *Vive le Roi et miséricorde*’ [according to the order received from the Mareschal of Schomberg, they knelt as the King passed, shouting *Long Live the King ! Have Mercy !*].[[11]](#footnote-11) The behaviour and cries of the vanquished matched the equally ritualised gesture of forgiveness of the king, ‘octroya[nt] benignement’ [‘kindly granting’] his pardon[[12]](#footnote-12), or greeting them with kindness ‘voyant ce devoir & obeissance’ [‘seeing their duty and obedience’].[[13]](#footnote-13)

The lack of spontaneity of this display is obvious, even if the author of *La Reduction de la Ville de Mont-pellier à l’obeissance du Roy* saw fit to make it clear that the people’s repentance was ‘plus que l’on n’eust pas pensé’ [‘more than one would have expected’][[14]](#footnote-14). As Christian Jouhaud remarks, this was because

Louis XIII is not taking part in a ‘joyeuse entrée’. Armed, escorted by troops, he enters a defeated town. However it is important that those who have been defeated should agree to take an active part in the spectacle of their own defeat, a spectacle offered by the victors both for their own sake and also for the vanquished. [[15]](#footnote-15)

On 20 November 1632, four years after the siege and surrender of the town, the entry of Queen Anne of Austria into La Rochelle, now powerless (its walls and bastions had been razed to the ground and its privileges abolished) revived the memory of the past. The inhabitants had been ordered, yet again, to play out the ritual of their submission and the few triumphal arches erected for the entry graphically represented the gruesome reality of the siege, during which fifteen to twenty thousand people had died of starvation and epidemics. The tableaux decorating the first arch showed ‘nostre famine; (le Goufre des grands maux qui devorerent nos familles pendant l’obstination du Siege)’ [‘our famine; (the abyss of great evil which devoured our families during the obstinacy of the siege)’],[[16]](#footnote-16) in particular the acts of cannibalism to which the starving population had been reduced. But these ‘estranges et effroyables mommeries’ [’strange and horrible mummings’][[17]](#footnote-17) represented on the arch were not a denunciation of the harshness shown by the assailants, they were instead a sign of God’s judgement upon the town and a recognition that it was fully justified. The inhabitants demonstrated their adherence to the official view of the event and the image of themselves which the French monarchy had been keen to disseminate in order to guarantee its authority and legitimacy. The original sight of wasted bodies kneeling in supplication had given way to an elaborate aesthetic representation of the rebellion and its consequences. But the lesson was the same.

**The triumphal entry : from *roi de guerre* to *roi de victoire***

The dominant theme in the royal entries following the siege and surrender of Montpellier and La Rochelle was the triumph once awarded to the victorious warrior. Hence their focus on images and symbols of military might. The return journey to Paris of the victorious Louis XIII in the autumn of 1622 was punctuated by a series of triumphal welcomes in Aix, Arles, Avignon[[18]](#footnote-18), Valence, Grenoble and Lyon. Paris also staged a lavish entry for the king in December 1628 on his return from La Rochelle. As the *prévôt des marchands* declared in Lyon, ‘Les entrees [du roi] en ses villes [...] sont autant de triomphes deubs à ses signalees victoires’[‘the [King’s] entries into his cities [...] are like so many triumphs due to his signal victories’].[[19]](#footnote-19) This explains some of the more common allegorical representations of Louis XIII on the various structures built for the entries. In one of the tableaux decorating the *Théâtre de la Force et de la Piété* in Avignon, he appeared

comme le Mars de la France, assis sur un char triomphant, tout composé industrieusement de divers trophées d’armes, & tiré de quatre grands coursiers qui galoppoient d’une estrange roideur, & sembloient plustost voler que courir sur la terre, pour marque de la soudaineté de ses victoires.[[20]](#footnote-20)

like the Mars of France, seated on a triumphal chariot, which was ingeniously constructed from war trophies, and drawn by four big steeds, who gallopped with a strange stiffness, and seemed to be flying rather than running on the ground, to signify the swiftness of his victories.

In another tableau, painted on the arch of the *Clémence du Roy* in Paris, Louis XIII was similarly portrayed in martial guise, sitting in a triumphal chariot, drawn by four white horses, and preceded by standards depicting ‘les principaux exploits de la guerre’ [‘the main exploits of the war’]. Behind the king’s chariot were several vices chained together, which epitomised ‘l’esprit des rebelles’ [‘the spirit of rebellion’], i.e. Impiety, Perfidy, Audacity, Fury, Cruelty, and Pride.[[21]](#footnote-21)

[insert Figure 2 here]

*Triumphal Arch 1 (Clemency)*, Abraham Bosse (?). Engraving from *Eloges et Discours sur la triomphante Reception du Roy...* (Paris, 1629)*.*

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Finally the inscription on the first triumphal arch in Aix-en-Provence reminded the spectactor that Louis ‘en sa premiere jeunesse passant comme un foudre de guerre, [s’est] glorieusement ouvert les portaux de cent villes inforçables et rebelles’ [‘in his early youth, striking like a thunderbolt, gloriously forced open the gates of a hundred rebellious and impregnable towns’].[[22]](#footnote-22)

Portraits and comparisons of the French king with the ancient god of war were frequent. On the arch dedicated to Mars for Louis XIII’s entry into Toulouse, on 21 November 1621, could be seen a tableau in which

sur [une] montagne paroissoit un guerrier en armes & posture de Mars, assis, sur des canons fleurdelisez au milieu d’un grand monceau d’armes, tambours, trompetes et autres instrumens de guerre: il sembloit à son geste & à l’action de son bras qu’il menaçoit ceste ville, & qu’il vouloit prononcer ces vers escrits dans la grande frize [...] *Les Dieux m’appellent Mars, et les hommes* Louys.[[23]](#footnote-23)

An armed warrior with the bearing of Mars could be seen on top of a mountain. He was sitting on cannons decorated with fleurs-de-lis, amid a great pile of weapons, drums, trumpets and other instruments of war: he seemed to be threatening the town by his gestures and was saying the verse inscribed in the main frieze: *The Gods call me Mars, and men LOUIS*.

But the object of celebration in the 1622 *Provençal* entries was less the terrifying god of battles and war than a more serene representation of the god, seen to parade through the town in triumph. In other words the *roi de guerre* had become a *roi de victoire*. A number of triumphal arches and other structures, dedicated to the royal victory, bore witness to this transformation. An arch d*es Victoires, & Trophees de sa Majesté* was built in Lyon to celebrate the Military Prudence of the king in Lyon, which  ; [[24]](#footnote-24) A statue of Victory stood on pedestal on the back façade of the arch of Mars (one of Force was similarly placed at the front) in Toulouse; and in Grenoble, too, a statue of Victory stood in the middle of the *place du Bon Conseil*.

Louis XIII entered his *bonnes villes du Midi* riding a white horse and under a magnificent canopy. He was no longer fully armed but wore clothes said to be ‘pacifiques, comme ceux qui ont plus de splendeur & d’autorité’ [‘such as worn in peace-time, as they have more splendour and authority’][[25]](#footnote-25). Ahead of him went the distinctive signs (‘marques & enseignes’ [‘signs and insignia’][[26]](#footnote-26)) of sovereignty, i.e. the crown, the seals and of course the great sword of France, solemnly carried by the *connétable* to signify the king’s right to wage war. To put it differently, ‘c’est la main du Roy, à qui seul appartient le droit du glaive’ [‘the right to wield a sword only belongs to the King’s hand’], as was made clear in Arles by an emblem depicting a hand driving a sword into the ground, while the fog lifted.[[27]](#footnote-27) Whereas the sword had originally represented the king’s duty to enforce justice and the law, it had eventually become an image of his exclusive right to wage war, his monopoly of violence, before it came to symbolise royal sovereignty in general. As the sign of force, the sword complemented the signs of justice, be they the royal seals, also carried in front of the king, or the many allegories and symbols decorating the triumphal arches. But none were as significant as the scales featuring in an emblem to be found on one of the arches in Lyon and originally derived from Colonna’s *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*.[[28]](#footnote-28) Within a circle it showed ‘une balance pendante avec une espee nue, portant sur sa pointe une Coronne’ [‘hanging scales with an unsheathed sword holding a crown on its tip’], which the author of the *Soleil au signe du Lyon* glossed as meaning

que le seul appuy d’une Monarchie, pour la maintenir au rond de sa perfection, & en la brillante gloire de sa Coronne, est la Justice du Roy, & la force de ses armes.[[29]](#footnote-29)

that the King’s Justice and the strength of his arms are the only support of a Monarchy. Only they can keep the circle of its perfection and the splendour of its crown.

The best representation of war and sovereignty in the *Provençal* entries of Louis XIII is perhaps to be found in the equestrian statues of the king which lined the route of his triumphal progress through the towns. Once within the city walls the king came face to face with heroic images of himself, on horseback, ‘armé à la Royale’, that is in full armour, with a sceptre or baton in his hand as a sign of *imperium*, and a laurel wreath on his head as a sign of victory and triumph. Such a statue of the king, holding a sceptre in the guise of a thunderbolt, stood at the top of the column erected in the middle of the *place Saint-Étienne*, in Toulouse.Another one could be seen above the pediment of the sixth triumphal arch in Aix, with various military trophies on either side;

[insert Figure 3 here]

*Triumphal Arch 6*, Maretz. Engraving from *Discours sur les arcs triomphaux...* (Aix, 1623).

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a third statue, showing Louis in antique dress this time, was placed on a square pedestal just beyond the *Portail de Félicité* leading to the *porte du Ravelin* in Avignon.

[insert Figure 4 here]

*Equestrian statue of Louis XIII*. Engraving from *La Voye de Laict...* (Avignon, 1623).

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According to Annibal Géliot, the author of *La Voye de laict*, this statue had been designed to ‘representer naïfvement la grandeur de ses Heroiques Vertus & de son Royal courage’ [‘as a true-to-life representation of the greatness of his heroic virtues and royal courage’].[[30]](#footnote-30)

In all these, the image of the sovereign ruler, self-confident and certain of his authority, has been superimposed on the image of the warrior king, ‘tout chargé de Lauriers, tout rayonnant de gloire’ [‘laden with laurels and radiant with glory’],[[31]](#footnote-31) whose horse in Avignon rears up as if in battle.[[32]](#footnote-32) As Joël Cornette remarks, in the statue of the ‘roi-cavalier’ (rider-king), Louis XIII combined together ‘the aristocratic and heroic nature of the knight’, as illustrated by the numerous representations of himself as Alexander, Bellerophon, Perseus and other figures from Greek and Roman antiquity, and ‘the oneness of political command’.[[33]](#footnote-33) War was truly a component of the exercice of power, of ‘la plus grande puissance de commander’ [‘the greatest power to command’].

**‘Mars pacifer’**

The *Te Deum* which traditionally concluded the entry endorsed the transformation of the *roi de guerre* into a *roi de victoire*. It gave it as it were the stamp of divine approval, the sanction needed to justify and fully legitimate royal policies. The *roi de guerre* waged war in the sight of God and God alone could pass judgment on his actions. But because the king was chosen and guided by God, his actions were divinely inspired and therefore right. Political expediency concurred with the will of God. Besides a war waged for the defence of the realm and subjects could only be a just war.[[34]](#footnote-34) Louis XIII’ military successes against the protestant rebels proved it. In other words,

Dieu qui a tiré V. M. du soin de sa Providence eternelle, pour estre son Image vivante en terre, ne pouvoit estre mieux representé le Dieu des armees, que par vous qui estes le Roy des Victoires, couronnant vos Royalles entreprises de si favorables succez, que là où V. M. a faict paroistre le desir de combattre, elle a veu naistre quant & quant le bon-heur de vaincre, pour asseurance infaillible, qu’estant nee pour les combats, elle est aussi destinee pour les triomphes.[[35]](#footnote-35)

God, who in his eternal Providence, has chosen Your Majesty to be his living image on earth, could not be better represented as the God of armies than by yourself, who are the King of Victories, and whose royal undertakings are crowned with such favourable success that wherever Your Majesty expressed the desire to fight, you conquered straightaway as an infallible sign that being born to fight, you are also destined to triumph’.

The king’s war was a form of violence but it was an authorized form of violence. It was also a restrained form of violence, a form of violence attenuated by the innate gentleness (‘douceur’) of the king, naturally inclined to indulgence and clemency. Defos, the author of the *Relation à l’Entrée de la Reyne à La Rochelle* reminded his reader of the truly divine ‘kindness’ (‘bonté’) of the king, whose justice had ‘foudroy[é] de l’espee d’indignation les [seuls] Boulevarts’ [‘str[uck] down with her sword of indignation the bastions’] of the town, but whose clemency had ‘fai[t] grace à leurs Habitans’ [‘spared the inhabitants’].[[36]](#footnote-36) The roaring lion, which was represented in one of the emblems decorating the *Portique de la Paix* in Lyon, contented himself with frightening the animals cowering before him (as expressed by the motto *Solo terrore coërcet*):

Aussi nostre Roy, vray Lyon en generosité & grandeur de courage, voyant ses subjects prosternez aux pieds de sa Majesté, trembler au son de sa Royalle voix, s’est contenté de leur avoir donné l’apprehension de la rigueur de sa Justice, leur faisant, au lieu d’icelle, gouster la douceur de sa clemence.[[37]](#footnote-37)

In the same way our King,, a true lion in his generosity and the greatness of his courage, seeing his subjects prostrate at the feet of His Majesty and trembling at the sound of his royal voice, was content to make them fear the severity of his justice, letting them taste the sweetness of his clemency instead.

To tell the truth the royal lion had savagely hit out at his enemies and the devastation, massacres and summary executions carried out by the royal troops were certainly not forgotten. But the rebels had surrendered and in his mercy the king had granted them peace.

Just as much as a military triumph, the royal entry was a celebration of peace, or rather it was a celebration of the restoration of peace. Significantly a *Portique de la Paix* was erected in Lyon, and in Montélimar the king was lavishly praised for having ‘avec l’espée de [sa] Puissance Royale [...] tué le demon de nos infortunes, donné la paix à nos iours, & nos iours à une felicité perdurable’ [‘with the sword of [his] royal power, killed the demon of our misfortunes, and gave our lives peace and lasting happiness’].[[38]](#footnote-38) Moreover the king was frequently said to have waged war with the sole purpose of restoring peace. Thus in Lyon, the motto *Pacem armatus amabat* which accompanied an emblematic olive-tree reminded the spectator that

jamais l’on ne voyoit en campagne les victorieux lauriers du Roy, sans les rameaux de l’olive pacifique, parce que la force des armes Royalles ne se doit manifester que pour le solide establissement d’une heureuse paix. [[39]](#footnote-39)

the King’s victorious laurels were never seen in the field without also the olive branch of peace, because the strength of the royal arms may only be exercised to bring about a solid and happy peace.

Similarly, for Machaud, ‘la Guerre mesme ne se doit entreprendre que pour donner plus d’assiette & d’establissement à la Paix’ [‘one should only go to war to secure and bring about peace’] et ‘l’on ne dissout jamais la Paix, que pour la rejoindre mieux, l’affermir, & cimenter’ [‘one should never break the peace except to restore, strengthen and cement it’], .[[40]](#footnote-40) Saint Augustine acknowledged that, in order to be just, war had to be absolutely necessary and aim at a better peace, more in accordance with the *ordo naturalis* willed by God. [[41]](#footnote-41) As invited by the Dean of the *Église Saint-Jean* in Lyon, it was to the ‘grand Dieu des armees, batailles, & victoires, qui est aussi le vray Dieu de paix’ [‘great God of armies, battles and victories, who is also the true God of peace’], that Louis XIII had to dedicate his trophies.[[42]](#footnote-42) In other terms Mars was *Mars pacifer*. Such was the epithet given to the Roman god on a French medal dating from 1617. Another medal, dating from 1604, and later catalogued by Jacques de Bie in *La France métallique* in 1636,[[43]](#footnote-43)called him *Mars de paix*.

**‘For the defence of the honour of God’: the *roi de croisade***

But Louis XIII waged war not only to protect the security of the French state, but also to defend the Catholic faith, as he was bound to by one of his coronation oaths. On 17 October 1610, with his hands on the Gospels, he had promised his people peace, justice, mercy, and the banishment of heretics, in compliance with a decision taken at the fourth Council of Lateran in 1215:

Outre, je tacheray à mon pouvoir en bonne foy, de chasser de ma jurisdiction et terres de ma sujétion, tous hérétiques dénoncez par l’Eglise: promettant par serment de garder tout ce qui a esté dit. Ainsy Dieu m’ayde, et ces Saincts Evangiles de Dieu.[[44]](#footnote-44)

Moreover, I will endeavour to the best of my ability and in good faith to expel all heretics condemned by the Church from all lands subject to my power and jurisdiction, promising under oath to keep my word. So help me God and these holy Gospels.

Unsurprisingly the Jesuit Annibal Géliot reminded the king in Avignon, then a Papal city, that the sword given to him at his coronation was to be used ‘pour la defense de l’honneur de Dieu, de l’Eglise, du Royaume & des pauvres & orphelins’ [‘for the defense of the honour of God, the Church, the Realm, the poor and the orphans’].[[45]](#footnote-45) The latest wars against the Huguenots had to be seen from this perspective. So, far from advocating ‘douceur’ and leniency towards the rebels, Géliot emphasized the need for salutary state violence against them:

L’amour d’un Prince envers ses sujets n’empesche pas que la Justice ne se joüe de son glaive, quand il en est temps; c’est une espece de Clemence & de misericorde d’user de severité envers ceux qui se perdent par trop de douceur, pour les remettre au chemin de l’obeïssance d’ou ils se sont fouvoyez ; celle-cy les fait ranger dans le debvoir, & les rend souvent meilleurs sujets, qu’ils n’ont pas esté mauvais rebelles. [[46]](#footnote-46)

A prince’s love for his subjects does not stop Justice from wielding her sword, when it is timely; it is a kind of clemency and mercy to use severity towards those who lose their way through too much gentleness, in order to bring them back onto the path of obedience from which they have strayed; severity makes them comply with their duty and often turns them into better subjects than they were wicked rebels.

The war against the Protestant rebels was most certainly a just war, since it was waged to punish them for their audacity and presumptuousness (‘la Justice luy a mis les armes en la main pour punir ceste outrecuidée audace’ [‘Justice armed him to punish such a presumptuous daring’][[47]](#footnote-47)); but it was also a war in which the rebels should be shown no mercy. As Géliot remarked, ‘Il falloit bien aussi un deluge & un baptesme de sang pour purger la France de tant de crimes dont elle estoit pollue’ [‘a deluge and baptism of blood were needed to cleanse France of all the crimes with which she was polluted’][[48]](#footnote-48).

The ‘crimes’ referred to by the Jesuit were represented allegorically as the ‘excesses of peace’ in the decoration of the royal barge in Lyon. One of the emblems showed a royal sword pruning the ‘superfluities’ of an olive-tree, with the motto *Pinguem pacis purgabit olivam*.[[49]](#footnote-49) Even more significantly, on the *Théâtre de la Force et de la Piété* in Avignon, Mars was depicted carrying a fiery thunderbolt in his hand while, on his head, he wore

pour pennache un long comete chevelu d’une flamme sanguine, qui menaçoit de faire ardre les Villes, d’embraser les Citez, & les ensevelir soubs leurs cendres, de faire couler des rivieres de sang, & joncher les campagnes des cadavres de ses ennemis. [[50]](#footnote-50)

the long blood-red fiery tail of a comet in lieu of a plume, which threatened to set fire to towns, burn cities down and bury them under their ashes, make rivers run with blood and litter the countryside with the corpses of his enemies.

In the minds of the Jesuits, Louis XIII was transformed into a fearsome god of war, a vivid image which overshadowed his representation as a ‘Mars de paix’ in the other entries. However this was a more appropriate image for a monarch who had recently ordered that the rebel town of Négrepelisse should be put to fire and the sword.[[51]](#footnote-51) The extreme retribution visited on the town had not been the result of an outburst of uncontrolled violence, but a deliberate choice, a calculated expression of royal justice.

The victories won by Louis XIII, their alleged suddenness and relative ease were the unquestionable proof that Heaven approved and supported the bloody policies of the French king. The wars against the Huguenots were justified, legitimated. The quelling of dissent in Béarn, the capture of fortified towns in Languedoc and Guyenne, the siege and surrender of La Rochelle were seen by some to serve as ‘tesmoignages visibles, que Dieu n’oublie jamais de favoriser les Rois qui ne s’oublient point parmy les grandeurs & les pompes de la Royauté’ [‘visible testimonies that God never forgets to favour kings who do not forget themselves in the midst of the grandeur and pomp of royalty’].[[52]](#footnote-52) Pierre Saxy commented on one of the emblems which decorated the fifth triumphal arch in Arles, ‘la victoire est infallible au Roy, puis qu’il combat pour la querelle de Dieu, & que Dieu mesmes est de la partie’ [‘the king will inevitably win, because he fights for God’s cause and God himself is on his side’].[[53]](#footnote-53) In other words, war was not only a form of the *potestas* embodied by the king, it was also the sign of God’s intervention in the affairs of the realm. But God was shown to be a fearsome god of justice and retribution, who acted through his representative on earth, the king as *roi de guerre*. The angry Mars depicted on the *Théâtre de la Force et de la Piété* in Avignon was less a ‘Rodomont, ou [...] quelque esprit furieux, qui jure par ses armes [...] & croit qu’il ne doit rien espargner’ [‘a Rodomonte or some other furious being, who swears by his weapons and believes he must not spare anything’], [[54]](#footnote-54) and whose mindless violence could lay the country waste, than a pagan image of the *Deus irae* of the Old Testament.

The recent royal victories were also the sign of a providentialism which helped to justify the image of Louis XIII as a *roi de croisade* and to legitimate French claims to universal monarchy. One of the emblems on the arch of Mars in Toulouse represented an arm holding a sword decorated with *fleurs-de-lis*, with the motto *Co questa conquista* to say that ‘C’est à l’espée de LOUIS le Juste qu’appartient la conqueste du monde’ [‘the conquest of the world belongs to the sword of Louis’].[[55]](#footnote-55) As for the Jesuit Géliot, he placed the king under the sign of the celestial Argo,

qui le doibt porter à la conqueste d’une plus noble & plus pretieuse toison d’or, comme est la terre saincte, [...] & l’Empire des Ottomans, que tant d’oracles ont promis à la valeur, & à la Pieté de ce grand Roy des fleurs de lis.[[56]](#footnote-56)

which will lead him to the conquest of a more noble and precious golden fleece, such is the Holy Land, [...] and the Ottoman empire, which have been promised to the valour and piety of this great French monarch by so many oracles.

As a result of its association with the story of Gedeon,[[57]](#footnote-57) the voyage of the Argonauts was often seen to adumbrate the war against all heretics and infidels. To follow suit, the Dean of the *Église Saint-Jean* in Lyon predicted the ‘recouvrement de l’Empire d’Orient, & de la Terre saincte, qui est entierement destiné aux Vertus, & bonne Fortune de vostre Majesté’ [‘the recovery of the Eastern Empire and the Holy Land, which have been marked out for the virtues and good fortune of Your Majesty’].[[58]](#footnote-58)

These messianic predictions constrasted with the more secular ones intended for the king’s descendants in Paris six years later. Machaud foretold them an impressive future of wordly conquests as a way to ensure the eternal glory of Louis XIII, whose heroic deeds they were called upon to imitate:

& en renouvelant son triomphe, dans le leur; comme celuy qui leur ouvre le chemin des victoires, & leur rendant ce Grand Estat paisible, les met au choix des Royaumes & des Empires, qu’il leur plaira de subjuguer & soubmettre à leurs Sceptres. [[59]](#footnote-59)

and, like him, to emerge triumphant, as this will open the path to further victories and, bringing peace to this great country, will allow them to choose kingdoms and empires to subjugate and subject to their rule.

Because it was waged to avenge ‘l’injure faicte à Dieu’ [‘the offense to God’] and had ‘pour object que son honneur, & pour intention que sa gloire’ [‘no other aim and objective but his honour and glory’],[[60]](#footnote-60) the ‘holy’ war against the Huguenot rebels was on the verge of becoming a ‘war of honour’, waged only for the greater glory of the king. Increasingly, in the reign of Louis XIV, this type of war would go hand in hand with the extravagant praise of the qualities and superior powers of the monarch and aim at self-aggrandizement and territorial expansion. Once the realm was pacified, violence could and should be exported abroad.

**Conclusion**

The military deeds and victories celebrated by Louis XIII’s entries into southern towns served a dual purpose. On the one hand they served as an instrument and a catalyzer of royal absolutism and the reinforcement of the state in the first decades of the seventeenth century. On the other hand, they led to celebrations which were the pretext for a propagandist discourse in which the image of the triumphant ruler parading the streets of a jubilant city replaced that of the military leader in full armour, entering captured towns at the head of his troops. The show or manifestation of force gave way to ‘the placing in reserve of force’[[61]](#footnote-61) in the symbolic signs of power and might. As *roi de guerre*, Louis XIII was shown to be the master of force, but force was only resorted to to punish the wicked, the enemies of God and the realm. State violence was said to be legitimate and was represented as both salutary and vengeful.

 But war was also shown to be a necessary component of sovereignty. The exercice of power relied on the *ius gladium*. Hence the combined images of the warrior and the ruler in the equestrian statues of Louis XIII which lined the streets of his *bonnes villes* in anticipation of the more permanent ones of bronze and stone later erected in public squares all over the kingdom by Louis XIV.[[62]](#footnote-62) In the absence of the king, who no longer toured the provinces and increasingly delegated the war effort to his generals, these monuments no doubt helped to maintain the symbolic merging of war and sovereignty in the eyes of the population.

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2. According to Joël Cornette, this custom originated from and found its legitimacy in the *Ius Gladii* of the Romans, a constituent of *imperium* (*Le Roi de guerre. Essai sur la souveraineté dans la France du Grand Siècle* [1993] (Paris: Éditions Payot & Rivages, 2010), p. 21). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Louis Marin, *Portrait of the King*, translated by Martha M. Houle (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), p. 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
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5. Marin, *Le Portrait du roi*, p. 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
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7. *Le Mercure françois* (25 vols, Paris: Estienne Richer, 1629), vol. 14, p. 709. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
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12. *La Reduction de la Ville de Mont-pellier à l’obeissance du Roy*, p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. *Le Mercure françois*, vol. 14, pp. 709-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
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15. Jouhaud, ‘Imprimer l’événement’, p. 384. My translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Daniel Defos, *Relation de ce qui s’est passé à l’Entree de la Reyne en la Ville de la Rochelle. Au mois de Novembre mil six cens trente-deux* (La Rochelle: Mathurin Charruyer, 1632), p. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. *Ibid.* [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. See Margaret M. McGowan, ‘Les Jésuites à Avignon. Les fêtes au service de la propagande politique et religieuse’, in *Les Fêtes à la Renaissance*, ed. Jean Jacquot (3 vols, Paris: Éditions du C.N.R.S., 1975), vol. 3, pp. 153-171. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
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20. Annibal Géliot, *La Voye de laict, ou le chemin des Heros au Palais de la Gloire. Ouvert à l’entree triomphante de Louys XIII. Roy de France & de la Navarre en la cité d’Avignon le 16. Nov. 1622* (s.l.n.d.), p. 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Machaud, *Eloges et discours*, p. 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Jean Gallaup de Chasteuil, *Discours sur les arcs triomphaux dressés en la ville d’Aix à l’heureuse arrivée de tres-Chrestien, tres-Grand, & tres-Juste Monarque Louys XIII. Roy de France, & de Navarre* (Aix: Jean Tholosan, 1623), p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. *Entrée du Roi à Tolose* (Tolose: Raim. Colomiés, 1622), pp. 79-80. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. ‘La victoire n’est point incertaine entre les mains de la force, accompagnée de la vigilance, & des salutaires conseils de la sagesse’ [‘Victory in not in doubt when in the hands of force, accompanied by vigilance and the profitable advice of wisdom’] (*Le Soleil au signe du Lyon. D’ou quelques paralleles sont tirez avec le tres-Chrestien, tres-Juste, & tres-Victorieux Monarque Louys XIII. Roy de France & de Navarre, en son Entree triomphante dans sa Ville de Lyon* (Lyon: Jean Jullieron, 1623), p. 75). [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. André Du Chesne, *Antiquitez et recherches de la grandeur et Majesté des Roys de France* (Paris: Jean Petit-Pas, 1609), p. 490. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Du Chesne, *Antiquitez*, pp. 429-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Pierre Saxy, *Entrée de Loys XIII. Roy de France & de Navarre, dans sa ville d’Arles, le vingt-neufiesme Octobre mil six cens vint-deux* (Avignon: Jean Bramereau, 1623), p. 20 (first arch). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. This emblem is in Book I, fo 85 vo of the French translation of the *Hypnerotomachia* (*Discours du Songe de Poliphile*, revised by Jean Martin (Paris: Kerver, 1546). But Colonna gives it a different interpretation (*Justitia recta, amicitia et odio evaginata et nuda, ponderataque liberalitas, regnum firmiter servant* [‘Upright and naked Justice, stripped of Hatred and Love, and well considered Liberality firmly keep kingdoms whole’])*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. *Le Soleil au signe du Lyon*, p. 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Géliot, *La Voye de laict*, p. 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Galaup de Chasteuil, *Discours sur les Arcs Triomphaux*, p. 43. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. An image of war, the figure of the rearing horse demonstrated the horsemanship of the rider, whose relationship to his horse was seen as a metaphor of the relationship between the ruler and the state. It gave an impression of authority and command. This was a popular topic with emblematists, notably Alciati: ‘Sed velut ingenuus sonipes dorso excutit omnem,/ Qui moderandi nesciat hypocomum’ [‘Like a noble stallion, it [the land of the Insubres] throws from its back every horseman who does not know how to control it’] (‘In Adulari Inscientem’, in *Emblemata* (Augsburg: Heinrich Steyner, 1531)). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Cornette, *Le Roi de guerre*, p. 317. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. See Cardin Le Bret, *De la souveraineté du Roy* (Paris: J. Quesnel, 1632), book II, chap. 3, ‘Qu’il n’appartient qu’au Roy de faire la guerre, & des Offices Militaires’: ‘Puis donc que toutes les affaires de la guerre dependent de la seule authorité du Prince; il est obligé de prendre garde à ne les point entreprendre que justement, à les conduire avec prudence, & les faire reüssir au bien de son Estat, & à la gloire de ses armes’ [‘since all matters relating to war are dependent upon the sole authority of the king, he must take care not to undertake war unjustly, but to wage it prudently and for the greater good of the state and the glory of his arms’] (p. 168). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. *Le Soleil au signe du Lyon*, ‘Au Roy’, n.p. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Defos, *Relation [...] à l’Entrée de la Reyne*, p. 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. *Le Soleil au signe du Lyon*, p. 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. *Mercure françois* (Paris: Jean & Estienne Richer, 1626), vol. 8, p. 888. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. *Le Soleil au signe du Lyon*, p. 56. In the same way one could read in the account of Louis XIII’s entry into Avignon that ‘il faut que la force ouvre le passage à la paix & à la tranquillité de vostre France’ [‘it is necessary that strength should open a way to peace and tranquillity in your France’] (p. 203). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Machaud, *Eloges et discours*, p. 62. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Saint Augustine was the originator of the just war theory, later adapted by Saint Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologiae* and still adhered to in seventeenth-century France (‘A just war [...] is justified only by the injustice of an aggressor’, *The City of God*, part five, book XIX, chap. 7, p. 440; ‘Peace, then, is the purpose of waging war’, part five, book XIX, chap. 12, p. 445; ‘This does not mean that war as war involves peace; but war, in so far as those who wage it or have it waged upon them are beings with organic natures, involves peace - for the simple reason that to be organic means to be ordered and, therefore, to be, in some sense, at peace’, part five, book XIX, chap. 13, p. 450, ed. Vernon J. Bourke (New York: Image Books, 1958)). [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. *Reception,* Lyon, p. 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Mentioned by Françoise Bardon, *Le Portrait mythologique à la cour de France sous Henri IV et Louis XIII* (Paris: Éditions A. & J. Picard, 1974), p. 161. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Quoted by Cornette, *Le Roi de guerre*, p. 259. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Géliot, *La Voye de laict*, p. 204. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Géliot, *La Voye de laict*, p. 170. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Géliot, *La Voye de laict*, p. 166. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Géliot, *La Voye de laict*, p. 206. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. *Reception*, p. 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Géliot, *La Voye de laict*, p. 206. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. An anonymous pamphlet published in Paris, entitled *Le grand et juste châtiment des rebelles de Negrepelisse mis et taillés en pièces, et leur ville réduite à feu et à sang*, related the bloody events of 10 and 11 June 1622. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Cardin Le Bret, *De la souveraineté du Roy*, livre IV, chap. 15, ‘Que les Roys sont subjects à la puissance & à la justice de Dieu’, p. 708. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Saxy, *Entrée de Loys XIII [...] dans sa Ville d’Arles*, p. 57 [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Machaud, *Eloges et discours*, p. 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. *Entrée du Roy à Tolose*, p. 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Géliot, *La Voye de laict*, pp. 250-51. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. *Judges*, 6-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. *Reception*, pp. 20-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Machaud, *Eloges et discours*, p. 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. ‘Harangue faite au Roy par Messire Pierre Scarron, Evesque & Prince de Grenoble pour l’entrée du roi dans Grenoble’, in *Le Mercure françois*, vol. 8, p. 889. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Marin, *Portrait of the King*, p. 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Before the extensive programme initiated by Louis XIV in 1685, there were only two such statues: one of Henri IV, erected on the *Pont-Neuf*, in Paris, in 1614, and one of Louis XIII, erected in the middle of the *Place Royale*, also in Paris, in 1639. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)