



HAL
open science

Depictions of the Church Serpent in France: Characteristics, Uses, Symbolisms

Florence Gétreau

► **To cite this version:**

Florence Gétreau. Depictions of the Church Serpent in France: Characteristics, Uses, Symbolisms. Der Zink - Geschichte, Instrumente und Bauweise, Stiftung Kloster Michaelstein, Oct 2009, Michaelstein, Germany. pp.213-247. halshs-01098629

HAL Id: halshs-01098629

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01098629>

Submitted on 27 Dec 2014

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Depictions of the Church Serpent in France: Characteristics, Uses, Symbolisms

Florence Gétreau

Volny Hostiou was the first to devote a study to the serpent wherein he mentions a sizeable number of images.¹ The present article offers an opportunity to continue the analysis of this documentation, to broaden the corpus to include types of artwork that have not yet been mentioned (for example stone or gilded-wood relief), and to ponder the symbolic value of these depictions.

No doubt that of all the aerophones the serpent counts among those least encountered in visual sources². Indeed, its cumbersome morphology and inelegant hold did not encourage artists to include it in their compositions. It is too bulky to be grouped with other instruments in still-life scenes, and the musicians who play it, for the same reason, do not appear particularly graceful, such that they are rarely to be seen in genre painting.

It is merely as an introduction devoid of any intent to broaching the subject of the Italian origin of the serpent, that we remind the reader of the publication in 1664 by Dr Paolo Maria Terzago of the first edition, in Latin, of the catalogue of the Museo Settala in Milan³. He describes therein the “*Serpens harmonicus, quorum usus olim galliae familiaris*” (“An harmonious serpent with which use the French are long since familiar”) and refers to Mersenne’s *Harmonie universelle*. It is not known whether it was for this first edition or the second one, in an Italian translation by Pietro Francesco Scarabelli⁴, that Carolus Gallutius was assigned to prepare the plates illustrating the instruments for which fourteen drawings (signed five times with his surname and twice with “*Carolus a Sole*”), apparently never etched, have fortunately survived and may be seen at the Estense Library in Modena.

1. Volny HOSTIOU, « Le serpent dans les églises françaises : parcours historique et iconographique », *Musique-Images-Instruments*, 8, 2006, p. 139-152.

2. This can be appreciated when consulting the data base of the Institut de recherche sur le patrimoine musical en France (IRPMF), *Euterpe, la musique en images*, administered until 2012 by Nicole Lallement (<http://www.irpmf.cnrs.fr/bases-de-donnees/euterpe/>), that of the Répertoire international d’iconographie musicale (RIdIM) German Bureau, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (<http://www.ridim-deutschland.de/>), or that of the Répertoire d’iconographie de la musique ancienne à Bâle (RIMAB) (www.rimab.ch).

3. Manfredo SETTALA, Paolo Maria TERZAGO, *Museae Septalianum Manfredi Septalae Patritii mediolanensis industrioso labore constructum : Pauli-Mariae Terzagi [...] geniali laconismo descriptum [...] Dertonae, Typis Filiorum qd. Elisei Violae, 1664.*

4. Museo, *Ò Galeria / Adunata dal sapere, e dallo studio / Del Sign. Canonica / Manfredo Setalla / Nobile Milanese, Descritta in Latino dal Sig. Dott. Fis. Colleg. Paolo Maria Terzago. Et poi in Italiano dal Sig. Pietro Francesco Scarabelli. Dottor Fisico di Voghera, & dal medemo accresciuta [...], Tortona, 1666.*

One of the plates depicts no. 17 of the Italian version of the catalogue, described as “A very large serpent two ells high and nearly one span wide at the end, which makes a bass so loud that it seems to shake the rooms and walls of the churches” (*Un très grand serpent de deux aunes de hauteur et à l’extrémité large presque d’un empan, qui fait une basse tellement éclatante qu’il semble mettre les murs des chambres et des églises en mouvement*)⁵. It resembles very closely the model illustrating Mersenne’s work. Furthermore, two quite instructive details rendered by Mersenne’s illustrator seemed to have inspired Carolus Gallutius: the view in profile of the mouthpiece and a portion of its shank; and the same mouthpiece viewed from the front, also separately from the body of the instrument. Gallutius’s drawing is rather linear, with relief obtained by shading, and the holes quite undeveloped. What makes his drawing precious, however, is that both the serpent and its mouthpiece are hung separately on a panel by means of an extremely suggestive nail and lace. Although trivial, such details contribute effectively to reconstructing the genuine atmosphere of Manfredo Settala’s cabinet of instruments, with its panoply of specimens hung vertically, and very mundanely, on the walls of his gallery.

The frontispiece engraved by Léonard Gaultier (1561 ?-1641 ?)⁶ for *Les CL. Pseaumes de David et les X. Cantiques, Insérés en l’Office de l’Église* (The 150 Psalms of David and the 10 Canticles, Inserted into the Service of the Church), translated into French verse by Michel de Marillac and published in Paris by Edme Martin in 1625, confirms the ordinary use of the serpent in worship in France and represents, to the best of our knowledge, the oldest depiction of the instrument to be found in that country. On this title page it is presented as part of a trophy comprising several instruments including a bass or tenor cornett and a treble cornett (fig. 1). A copy of this volume belonging to Marie de Médicis is now in the Dutuit collection of the museum of the Petit Palais in Paris⁷, while other specimens are held at the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

The Celestial Serpent and the Serpent-playing Cherub

5. See Frank P. BÄR, « Le Museo Settala à Milan au XVII^e siècle : une collection d’instruments de musique à l’esprit français », *Musique-Images-Instruments*, 2, 1996, p. 58-87. Reprod. fig. 6.

6. Emmanuelle BRUGEROLLES, David GUILLET, « Léonard Gaultier, graveur parisien sous le règne de Henri III, Henri IV et Louis XIII », *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, vol. 135, 2000, p. 1-24. See also the *Référentiel des autorités Sudoc* (www.idref.fr/029215471) that lists an important part of his production as author, engraver, illustrator, printer and commercial publisher.

7. See *Marie de Médicis : un gouvernement par les arts*, exhibition catalog, Château de Blois, 29 November 2003-28 March 2004, Paris, Somogy, 2003, p. 223-224, no. 92. Reprod.

It is not until the 1660s that new depictions of the serpent are to be found in great ceiling decoration and church furnishings. The imposing vault of the dome of Val-de-Grâce church (fig. 2a) was painted between 1663 and 1666, around the same time that Manfredo Settala, as we have seen, printed the catalogue of his collection wherein a French serpent appears. In Val-de-Grâce, Pierre Mignard (1612-1695) produced one of his masterpieces⁸. The height of the vault makes it impossible for the naked eye to discern its details, which include a serpent-playing angel that accompanies different choirs (fig. 2b) alongside several fellow instrumentalists who play the violin and, on another part of the cupola, the flute, a positive organ, a lute, an ancient lyre, and a trumpet.

While more of a symbolic than realistic idealized depiction (if we consider the morphological imprecision of the instrument, the approximation of its hold, and the incoherence of its proportion to the size of the angel), it shows in any event the sacred function of the serpent and the suavity of its celestial sound that bring to mind the preciousness evoked in Mersenne's text: "The sound can be made so soft as to be proper to join to the voices in sweet chamber music whose affectations it imitates, and the diminutions, of which it can perform thirty-two notes per bar" (*Et l'on peut tellement en addoucir le son qu'il sera propre pour joindre aux voix de la Musique douce des chambres, dont il imite les mignardises, & les diminutions, qu'il peut faire de trente-deux notes à la mesure [...]*)⁹.

Even in places remote from contact with the royal liturgy, serpent-playing angels embody the customs of the kingdom's parishes in the form of statuettes that frequently decorate the organ. Two serpent-playing angel figures can be seen on the organ case of Notre-Dame de Saint-Omer, sculpted by the Piette brothers in 1717 (fig. 3). Another example was produced around 1737 in the workshop of the builder Christophe Mouchereau (1686-1765 ?)¹⁰ for the organ case of Saint-Salvi collegiate church in Albi. Here, the nude angel incidentally appears

8. Claude MIGNOT, « L'église du Val-de-Grâce au faubourg Saint-Jacques de Paris : architecture et décor (nouveaux documents. 1645-1667) », *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français*, 1975/1976, p. 101-136 ; *Le Val-de-Grâce : l'ermitage d'une reine*, Paris, CNRS Éditions, 1994. See also Simon P. MAZIERE DE MONVILLE, *La vie de Pierre Mignard, premier peintre du roy ; avec le poème de Millière sur les peintures du Val-de-Grâce et deux dialogues de M. de Fenelon [...] sur la peinture*, Amsterdam, La Compagnie, 1731.

9. Marin MERSENNE, *Harmonie universelle*, Paris, Sébastien Cramoisy, 1636 ; facsimile reprint with an introduction by F. Lesure: Paris, Édition du CNRS, 1975, Livre cinquième, « Proposition XXIV », p. 281.

10. Christophe Mouchereau is the author of the *Mémoire instructif pour faire les devis, desseins, plans, marchez & réception des orgues*, Rodez, 1734. Former collection of Geneviève Thibault de Chambure. Paris, BnF, Music, Rés. Vmd. 53(1). Published in facsimile in *Textes sur les instruments de musique au 18^{ème} siècle*, Geneva, Minkoff, 1972.

far too plump to hold his instrument correctly (fig. 4). In any event he is hardly the only one of his kind, as another job by this same maker shows ¹¹.

The Trophy of the Gradual of Notre-Dame de Paris

In researching the organological characteristics of the serpent, the lack of still lifes (a pictorial genre found in very reduced formats in the 17th century) is compensated by the existence of other media. Artists make the most of these by including the serpent in exuberant trophies wherein it can be observed in greater detail, and discovered in the company of other instruments, which allows its diverse musical functions to be deduced.

The Gradual of Notre-Dame de Paris, held in the music department of the Bibliothèque nationale de France ¹², constitutes an exceptional visual source for our subject. In Book III, “Gradualis de tempore Ecclesiae Parisiensis pars III incipiens a dominica Resurrectionis usque ad festum Corporis Christi exclusive”, the Feria 2, the day following Easter, marks the joy that follows Lent and Holy Week, and the resumption of the use of musical instruments (fig. 5a). On folio 20, a magnificent banner of instruments including two intertwined serpents decorates the top of the leaf. The note “*manu et industria Joannis Fossard*” found on folio 3 seems to indicate that Jean Fossard was probably the copyist of the music and the text. The banner decorations are by Étienne Compardel who signed “*Compardel pinxit 1669*” on folio 2. His biography is quite well known: born in Leiden in 1640, his activities can be followed until 1692. Beginning in 1670 he was a member of the Académie de Saint-Luc, the powerful painters’ guild, and twenty-three years later was elected a member of the Académie de peinture. He was a “*peintre en miniature*”, meaning he worked in gouache on vellum and notably depicted flowers and birds ¹³.

The dropped initials of this precious gradual are by the calligrapher Étienne Damoiselet – as attests the presence of the note “*necnon Stephani Damoiselet, litterarum capitalium titulorumque scriptoris*” on folio 3 – , writing master to Louis de France (1661-1711), active between 1652 et 1677. He contributed to the manuscript of Denis Gautier’s *Rhétorique des*

11. It is appropriate to mention this other organ by Christophe Mouchereau at Saint-Just et Saint-Pasteur Cathedral in Narbonne, built from 1739 to 1741, on which a serpent-playing angel motif is found twice; another example is the organ case sculpted by Melchior Verly for the Claude Parisot organ built in 1741 in the abbey church of Mondaye.

12. BnF Music, Rés-Vma-ms-1412.

13. He is the author of two works that belonged to the purveyor of books to the king’s library, J. J. de Bure, *Occupation de l’âme pendant le St. Sacrifice de la messe*, and a *Recueil d’oiseaux*, painted on vellum. On this last, a large miniature signed “Compardel” depicts the artist painting birds in a garden. See *Bulletin du bibliophile et du bibliothécaire*, 1897, p. 164.

Dieux in 1652¹⁴, and participated in the elaboration of the *Plans des forêts de l'Île de France* (1669) wherein the illuminations are also by Étienne Compardel¹⁵.

Different authors have commented upon this exceptional gradual¹⁶. At first glance it can be discerned that the style of the dropped initials is relatively awkward as regards the rendering of the instruments, whereas Étienne Compardel's banner is the product of a totally different skill (fig. 5b).

A rather fanciful positive organ whose symbolic (sacred music), ornamental, and compositional functions are nonetheless fundamental, is placed quite symmetrically and somewhat artificially on a sort of Eden prairie. The two gilded cantorial staves decorated with fleurs-de-lis were the attributes of the cantors of this cathedral church, since they were used to direct the singing and to maintain order in the choir. Then we notice music books, a cornett, and two bouquets of enormous flowers tied with a delicate ribbon that recall the anemones and roses to be found in the same period on the sound boards of Parisian harpsichords and the vellums of the king¹⁷.

Two very large oboes, the bells of which rather awkwardly join up behind the central pilaster of the organ, are intertwined with two serpents (fig. 5c). Vincent Robin¹⁸ revealed these long oboes to be bass cromornes the characteristics of which can be discovered both on

14. Denis GAULTIER, *La Rhétorique des dieux [recueil de pièces pour luth], ca. 1652*. Facsimile of the manuscript of the Kupferstichkabinett [des Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz], Berlin, 78C12. Illustrations by Abraham Bosse, Robert Nanteuil, and Eustache Le Sueur, published by Damoiselet and Belluchau, introduction by François Lesure, Geneva, Minkoff, 1991. On Damoiselet, see also François-Pierre GOY, « Antiquité et musique pour luth au XVII^e siècle : les sources de l'iconographie et des arguments de la Rhétorique des Dieux », *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé*, 3, October 1995, p. 263-276.

15. Étienne COMPARDEL, *Plans des forêts, bois et buissons du département de la grande maîtrise des eaux et forêts de l'Île de France, Brie, Perche, Picardie et Pays reconquis / Les plans enluminés par Compardelle en [...] 1668 et les tables écrites par E. Damoiselet*, 63 velum leaves, Paris, Bnf, Maps and Plans, GE DD-4728 (RES). See *Collections de Louis XIV : dessins, albums, manuscrits*, exhibition catalogue, Roseline BACOU, Marie-Rose SEGUY (eds.), Paris, musée de l'Orangerie, Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1977, p. 249, no. 247.

16. Jean VEZIN, « Le graduel exécuté au XVII^e siècle pour Notre-Dame de Paris », *Scriptorium. Revue internationale des études relatives aux manuscrits*, 1^{re} année, vol. 1, fasc.1, 1946, p. 352-360 ; *Bulletin du bibliophile*, 1969, p. 84 ; *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, vol. 66/1, 1971, p. 257 (« The decoration of the work is by Étienne Compardel [...], assisted by Léonard Blondeau for the line drawing (and the staves?) and Étienne Damoiselet for the execution of the titles and the initials » [La décoration de l'ouvrage est due à Étienne Compardel [...], aidé de Léonard Blondeau pour le tracé des lignes (et des portées ?) et d'Étienne Damoiselet pour l'exécution des titres et initiales]); *Archives de l'art français*, 26, 1984, p. 103 ; *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur gegenwart*, Ulrich Thieme, Felix Becker (eds.), Leipzig, E.A. Seemann Verlag ; reprint : Munich, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1992, t. 7/8, p. 283 ; Harry BLÄTTEL, *International dictionary : miniature painters, porcelain painters, silhouettists*, Munich, Arts & Antiques edition, 1992, p. 232 ; *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon: die bildenden Künstler aller Zeiten*, begründet und mit herausgegeben von Günter Meissner, Munich, K.G. Saur Verlag, 1998, vol. 20, p. 467.

17. Aline RAYNAL-ROQUES, Jean Claude JOLINON, Monique DUCREUX, *Les peintres de fleurs. Les vélins du Muséum*, Paris, Bibliothèque de l'image, 1998.

18. Vincent ROBIN, « Hautbois et cromorne en France aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles. Essai de clarification terminologique », *Basler Jahrbuch für Historische Musikpraxis*, XXVIII, 2004, p. 23-36.

the frontispiece of Borjon de Scellery's *Traité de la musette*, published in Lyons in 1672¹⁹, and in Garsault's *Notionnaire* of 1761²⁰. These bass cromornes are very well individualized since one seems to be of ebony, in three joints with ivory or bone collars, and equipped with a crook ending in a pirouette and a reed; the other is of light brown wood, in four joints with ivory or bone collars. Note that its bell is decorated with a ratcheted ring in bright metal and acanthus motifs. This sort of decoration is undeniably reminiscent of the pewter inlay motifs visible for example on the preparatory cartoon by Charles Le Brun (1619-1690) for the Gobelins tapestry *Les mois : Avril ou le Château de Versailles*²¹. This tradition of pewter inlay would be continued on the large bagpipes of central France of which numerous specimens from the end of the 18th century are extant²².

Before examining the serpents, let us continue our evaluation of Compardel's capacity for observation and restitution by turning our attention to the two string instruments lying on both sides of the composition: the lute and the bass viol. The realism of the first (fig. 5d) is striking and it exhibits the characteristics of the all-too-rare extant instruments from the years 1660-1670: its body is made up of nine wooden ribs²³ the flame of which is visible, its neck is fitted with the usual eight frets, eleven double courses and one single course, that is to say, twenty-two pegs, all of ebony or stained wood, with that of the highest-pitched string on a pulley. Notice the precision of the eight frets around the neck, and with what sense of detail Compardel has graced with a ravishing knot the red rope for maintaining the lute to the buttoning of the musician's clothing.

As for the bass viol, (fig. 5e), it seems to be constructed in a warm brown wood reminiscent of the materials employed by Michel Collichon one generation later in Paris²⁴. It

19. Charles-Emmanuel BORJON DE SCELLERY (1633-1691), *Traité de la musette, avec une nouvelle méthode pour apprendre de soymesme à joüer de cet instrument facilement et en peu de temps*, Lyons, Jean Girin and Barthelemy Rivière, 1672 ; facsim. reprint : Geneva, Minkoff, 1972.

20. François-Alexandre-Pierre de GARSULT (1693-1778), *Notionnaire, ou Mémoires raisonnés de ce qu'il y a d'utile et d'intéressant dans les connoissances acquises depuis la création du monde jusqu'à présent [...]*, Paris, G. Desprez, 1761. Plate XXXVI.

21. Paris, Mobilier national, Inv. GMTT 108/4, musée national du château de Pau, P. 2337 (Inv. 1896). See Bruce HAYNES, *The Eloquent Oboe. A History of the Hautboy from 1640 to 1760*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 33 and 34, Pl. I.14.

22. *Les cornemuses de George Sand. Autour de Jean Sautivet, fabricant et joueur de musette dans le Berry (1796-1867)*, exh. cat., Musées de Montluçon, 22 June 1996-7 October 1996, commissioner: Sylvie Douce de LA SALLE, Marie-Barbara LE GONIDEC, Jean-Jacques SMITH. See particularly "Boîtiers de cornemuses incrustées", p. 64-66.

23. See Joël DUGOT, *Les luths (Occident). Catalogue des collections du musée de la Musique (vol. 1)*, Paris, Cité de la Musique, 2006, p. 92 (Les cahiers du musée de la Musique 7), lute by Jean Desmoulin, Paris, 1644.

24. Tilman MUTHESIUS, « Collichon, premier facteur de violes à sept cordes ? », *Musique-Images-Instruments*, 2 1996, p. 40-52. The author identified the wood of the body as mahogany. Recent research at the university of Montpellier has shown that it could be "Guyana mahogany", known as *Cedrela odorata*. My thanks to Joël Dugot for this information.

has six strings. Its neck, tailpiece and hook bar are of stained wood or ebony veneer. The rendering of the wide (braided?) purfling on the edge of the top is remarkable. The pattern of the bow in black wood (ironwood?) – short, arched, with a wedged frog and ivory counterweight button – is highly interesting and quite different from that seen in the portraits of the violists of Marin Marais's generation²⁵. The peg box, with its extravagant Iroquois head, recalls the fantasy of Collichon's viol heads, which include Bacchus, a pirate, and a cherub. Finally, we believe the perspective view of the bridge to be a unique case in French painting that could serve as a source of inspiration to today's luthiers.

Lingering over all these details will enable us to appreciate the two serpents depicted in the middle of the banner (fig. 5c). Their crosswise and symmetrical presentation allows the instrument to be shown front and back. Notice the wide brass ferrule with ratcheted edge that surrounds and reinforces the bell. Notice also the flat ring, placed on the second fold, equipped with a carrying ring for installing a strap. Lastly, the socket receiving the crook and the colourless mouthpiece (in horn or ivory?) are also very well observed details.

Yet Compardel's know-how feels the effects of the constraints the banner format imposes, and also has its limitations: perspective is sometimes uncertain; aside from the inexact number of finger holes on the cromornes, it can be observed that the viola da gamba is set up backwards, as though strung for a left-handed player, that the number of its pegs does not correspond to the instruments made at the time, and that it is vocal music that is noted in the music books, but also that the detailing of all these can hardly be treated further. Finally, if the finger holes on the large reed instruments on Compardel's banner are examined closely, their number is obviously imaginary.

In any case this trophy of instruments confirms at a glance the richness of the instrumentarium to which the serpent belongs, in the context of the cathedral: bass cromorne, treble cornett, recorder, oboe, lute, and bass viol.

Allegories of Air in the form of trophies

In 1668, one year before the confection of the Notre-Dame Gradual, the king ordered from Jacques Bailly a decorated title page, also painted on parchment, meant to introduce the *Devises pour les Tapisseries du Roy où sont représentez les quatre Éléments et les quatre Saisons de l'Année* (Slogans for the King's Tapestries whereon the Four Elements and the

25. Florence GETREAU, « Les archets en France aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles : quelques repères iconographiques », *Musique-Images-Instruments*, 4, 1999, p. 118-131.

Four Seasons of the Year are depicted). The texts were by Claude Perrault, François Charpentier, and Jacques Cassagnes²⁶. At the top left of the composition (fig. 6a et b) *L'Air* (Air) is represented by a medallion filled with clouds, surmounted by an eagle spreading its wings over a trumpet of Renown. This first group is placed over an organ, another trumpet fitted out with a banner, and diverse wind instruments: a bass cromorne, an oboe, a recorder of which only the extremity is visible. A serpent, covered in its characteristic blackened leather, presents a relatively precise lead pipe and finger holes.

This surprising trophy painted on parchment continues an iconographic tradition developed to contribute to the glorification of the monarchy, to be seen in the hanging *les Quatre Éléments*, woven by the Gobelins after the cartoons by Charles Lebrun that were first produced by Jean Lefevbre's workshop in 1666, and etched by Sébastien Leclerc in 1670 and 1679 (fig. 7a). The borders of *L'Air* were an ideal pretext to assemble a great variety of wind instruments. These offer a wealth of insights into the typology of the reed, lip-reed, and fipple aerophones at the height of Louis XIV's reign²⁷. Placed at the bottom of the composition, the serpent, far from the noise of war and the hunt (fig. 7b), makes up a trophy alongside several types of oboes and flutes.

Stone relief sculptures of cascades of instruments for the Chapel Royal at Versailles

Let us now turn to another particularly fertile source, representing a completely different technique with quite different proportions: the large relief sculptures, forming eight cascades of instruments, that decorate the musicians' gallery of the Chapel Royal at Versailles, on either side of the organ (fig. 8a and b). These cascades of instruments were sculpted in mid-relief by six artisans, Jean de Lapierre, Jean de Dieu, Jean Voiriot, Nicolas Montéan, Pierre Varin, and Denis Martin, between 1708 and 1709.

Alexandre Maral's monumental monograph on the architecture and furnishings of the Chapel Royal affords numerous insights into this decorative program:

It was to Lapierre, remunerated beginning January 1708, that were assigned several reliefs in the musicians' gallery, including a large trophy of musical instruments. Considering that the sculptors of the other six large trophies by Lapierre were paid afterwards, at a price of

26. Paris, BnF, Manuscrits, Ms. français 7819. See *Collections de Louis XIV : dessins, albums, manuscrits*, *op. cit.*, p. 238, n°233 ; see also Émilie HAMIKA, Marie-Pierre LAFFITTE, « L'enluminure tardive à Versailles », *exh. cat., Louis XIV. L'homme et le roi*, Nicolas MILOVANOVIC, Alexandre MARAL (eds.), Paris, Skira/Flammarion, 2009, p. 298, cat. 178.

27. B. HAYNES, *The Eloquent Oboe*, *op. cit.*, p. 30-32.

less than one hundred *livres* per trophy, it can be supposed that Lapierre's mission was to establish a model²⁸.

C'est à Lapierre, rétribué dès janvier 1708, que furent confiés plusieurs reliefs de la tribune de la Musique, dont un grand trophée d'instruments musicaux. Dans la mesure où les sculpteurs des six autres grands trophées de Lapierre furent rétribués par la suite, et pour un montant inférieur de cent livres par trophée, on peut supposer que Lapierre a eu pour mission de définir un modèle

Maral reprints the "Invoice for the sculpture of two groups of children and groups of cascades of music trophies made in *bon banc* and *banc royal* limestone above and below the fanlight on each side of the circular part of the gallery of the new chapel of Versailles palace by order of Mr Mansart [...] the said groups made by Jean de Lapierre, sculptor, in the year 1708" (*Mémoire de la sculpture de deux groupes d'enfants et groupes de cheutes de trophées de musique faites de pierre de bon banc et banc royal faite au-dessus et dessous de l'imposte de chaque costé de la partie circulaire de la tribune de la chapelle neuve du chasteau de Versailles par ordre de Monsieur Mansart [...] lesd. Groupes faits par Jean de Lapierre, sculpteur, en l'année 1708*)²⁹. The text of this invoice is far from clear and it remains rather difficult to understand which cascades are ultimately by Lapierre or by his collaborators. Lapierre does not seem to have been able to complete the ensemble of trophies according to the program he had conceived as described above, which explains the confusion between several of the motifs³⁰ in the invoice: the sums therein are modified since it seems, from the amount ultimately paid, that he only produced two. Whereas an examination of the trophies shows that six of them use the serpent motif, this instrument is itemized only once in Lapierre's long invoice:

Firstly. A large group [...] comprising two children [...] holding diverse musical attributes, seated on a pedestal [...].

Plus, above the fanlight supporting the said group, is wrought a large cascade of music trophies fourteen and a half feet high by five wide, arranged in two groups of which the first is filled with a large lyre [harp] five feet long enriched with cherub heads, acanthus, mouldings and other ornaments, accompanied by lutes, bassoons, oboes, flutes, and other musical instruments enriched with large palm branches, as well as a garland of flowers that intertwine the whole from top to bottom. The second group comprises a *basse de violon* with its bow, four and a half feet long. Accompanied by a finely treated theorbo, bassoon,

28. Alexandre MARAL, *La Chapelle royale de Versailles. Le dernier grand chantier de Louis XIV*, Château de Versailles/Arthena, 2011, p. 62.

29. A. MARAL, *La Chapelle royale*, op. cit., p. 244, note 231. AN, O¹ 1784. This document is already mentioned in the *Comptes des Bâtimens du roi*, published 1881-1901, V, col. 215.

30. The *simballon* certainly refers to the hammered dulcimer also called *tympanon*, *cymbalom* or *pantaléon* at the time. In fact a specimen appears on the trophy that we have numbered "7" and which Maral does not attribute to Lapierre even though it is listed in his invoice.

flutes, oboes, music books, and other instruments enriched with laurel branches and the spaces of the said groups filled by a *simballon* [dulcimer] with laurel branches, as well as the said garland of flowers that intertwines the second group of trophies and ends with a large fringed tassel that finishes the bundle from which is suspended all the said trophies, and attached to a large ornate button at the top of the work accompanied by a large ribbon knot by way of drapery of which the ends are trimmed with fringes, the whole very richly wrought and in perspective with much care. For having made the said works and the necessary models, the sum of ~~1700~~ 800 *livres*.

Plus another similar group, eight feet high and five wide, situated on the fanlight of the passage of the sacristy of the gallery, comprising two children [...] holding different musical attributes [...].

Plus, above the fanlight bearing the said group, is wrought a large cascade of music trophies comprising a large harp five feet high, decorated with a cherub's head and very rich foliage, grouped with violins, **serpents**, bassoons, oboes, books and other musical instruments enriched with large palm leaves, olive branches, and a garland of flowers that intertwine the said group from top to bottom, the whole suspended by a large bundle trimmed with fringe, attached to an ornate button and the bottom ending in a fringed tassel, the said group eight feet high and five feet wide, the whole wrought with much care and precision, for the sum of ~~1050 livres~~ 450 *livres*.

Total: ~~6 250~~ 2 650 *livres* ³¹.

Premièrement. Un grand groupe [...] composé de deux enfants [...] tenans divers atributs de musique, assis sur un pied d'estail [...].

Plus, au-dessous de l'imposte qui porte led. groupe, est travaillé une grande cheutte de troffées de musique de quatorze pieds et demy de haut sur cinq de large, composée en deux groupes dont le premier est rempli d'une grande lire [une harpe] de cinq pieds de long enrichis de testes de chérubins, feuilles d'acantes, moulures et autres ornemens accompagné de luts, bassons, aubois, flûtes et autres instrumens de musique enrichis de grandes branches de palmes, ainsi que d'une guirlande de fleurs qui entrelasse le tout depuis le haut jusques en bas. Le second groupe est composé d'une basse de violon avec son archet, de quatre pieds et demy de long. Accompagné d'un t[h]éorbe fort soigné[,] de basson, flûtes, hautbois, livres de musique et autres instrumens enrichis de branches de lauriers et les intervalles desdits groupes sont remplis d'un simballon avec des branches de lauriers, ainsi que laditte guirlande de fleurs qui entrelasse le second groupe de trophées et va se terminer avec une grosse oupe à frange qui termine la liasse d'où est suspendu tout lesd. trophée et attachée à un gros bouton orné au haut de laditte ouvrage acompagné d'un grand neud de ruban en manière de draperie dont les bouts sont ornés de franges, le tout très richement travaillé et en perspective avec beaucoup de souin. Pour avoir fait lesd. ouvrages et les models requis, la somme de [1700 livres : barré et remplacé par] 800 livres.

Plus un autre pareil groupe, haut de huit pieds et large de cinq, situé sur l'imposte du passage de la sacristie de la tribune, composé de deux enfants [...] tenant divers attributs de musique [...].

*Plus, au-dessous de l'imposte qui porte led. groupe, est travaillé une grande cheutte de trophée de musique composé d'une grande harpe de cinq pieds de haut, orné d'une teste de chérubin et de feuillage très riche, groupé avec des violons, **serpans**, bassons, hautbois, livres et autres instrumens de musique enrichis de grandes palmes, branche d'oliviers et d'une guirlande de fleurs qui entrelasse led. groupe depuis le haut jusques en*

31. A. MARAL, *La Chapelle royale*, op. cit., p. 336-337.

bas, le tout suspendu par une grande liasse ornée de frange, attachée à un bouton orné et le bas terminé par une houpe de frange, led. groupe a huit pieds de haut et cinq pieds de large, le tout travaillé avec beaucoup de souin et d'exactitude, pour la somme de [1050 livres : barré et remplacé par] 450 livres.

Total : [6250 : barré et remplacé par] : 2 650 livres

To make sense of this long invoice, it must be compared with the “General account of the expenditure for the construction of the new chapel [...] of Versailles palace from the year 1689 [...] until the end of the year 1710” (*Estat général de la dépense faite pour la construction de la chapelle neuve [...] du château de Versailles depuis l'année 1689 [...] jusqu'à la fin de l'année 1710*), since this reveals that Lapierre was also paid “The invoice for two low reliefs of children and music trophies between the columns of the apse of the gallery, amounting to the sum of 6 250 *livres* according to the invoice of the sculptor and settled at 2 650 *livres* [...]” (*Le mémoire de deux bas-reliefs d'enfants et trophées de musique entre les colonnes du chevet de la tribune, montant à la somme de 6 250 livres suivant le mémoire du sculpter et arrêté à celle de 2 650 livres [...]*)³².

Furthermore, Monthéan, Voiriot, Dedieu, Varin, Bercher, and Marin were paid the sum of 2 300 *livres* on the basis of an “invoice for six low reliefs and six music trophies in the spaces between the columns of the apse amounting to 9 000 *livres*” (*mémoire de six bas-reliefs et six trophées de musique dans les intervalles des colonnes du chevet montant à 9 000 livres*)³³.

Referring to our diagram showing the placement and the structure of these trophies starting from the south³⁴ (fig. 8), we observe that six of them (trophies 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8) include a serpent motif (fig. 9a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h), which underscores to what point this instrument must have been omnipresent in the music of the Chapel Royal.

Among the specimens depicted, four have a reinforcing ferrule decorated with geometric motifs on the bell. Several also have reinforcing rings on certain folds, also decorated. Lastly, four display a sort of festoon (branded in the leather, as on the outside curve of 16th-century cornetti). The crook is also visible several times, but posed problems of perspective to the sculptors. The refined workmanship that these makers lavished on their representations of the

32. A. MARAL, *ibid.*, p. 360. AN, O¹ 1784.

33. A. MARAL, *ibid.*, p. 362. See also p. 244, note 232: *Mémoire des ouvrages de sculpture fait en pierre de bon banc de la carrière royale au chevet de la chapelle du château de Versailles par l'ordre de Monseigneur le marquis d'Antin [...] par Dedieu, Voiriot, Monthéan, Varin, Bercher et Martin, sculpteurs* (Invoice for works of sculpture made in *bon banc* stone from the royal quarry in the apse of the chapel of Versailles palace by order of His Grace the Marquis d'Antin [...] by Dedieu, Voiriot, Monthéan, Varin, Bercher, and Martin, sculptors) AN, O¹ 1784. *Comptes des Bâtimens*, published 1881-1901, V, col. 217 ; Marta-Mel EDMUNDS, *Piety and politics. Imaging Divine Kingship in Louis XIV's Chapel at Versailles*, Newark, Londres, University Press, 2002, p. 163.

34. Our diagram is laid out in the opposite direction from the reproductions in A. MARAL, *op. cit.*, p. 282, fig. 535 to 542. We have decided to number the trophies as they appear on each side of the organ, starting from the south wall, on the right when viewing the organ.

instruments for the Chapel Royal can be seen by comparing them to extant contemporaneous specimens.

Notice here also, grouped around the serpent, the great variety of instruments: violins and viol of different ranges, lute and theorbo, guitar, dulcimer, harp, numerous wind instruments – recorder, flute, different models of oboe, bassoons, trumpets – small cymbals³⁵, and triangles.

The case for the symbolic but also very real predominance of the serpent in the gallery of the Chapel Royal is made persuasively by the north panel of the base of the organ, built by Clicquot and Tribout in 1709-1710³⁶, adorned with doubtless the most magnificent depiction ever of a serpent used in the king's service (fig. 10)³⁷. Neither the "Invoice of sculpted woodworks made for the service of the King [...] according to the drawings and models of Monsieur de Coste [...] by Desgoulos, Belan, Taupin, Legoupil, and Lalande, sculptors, in the year 1710"³⁸, nor its pay statement³⁹ allow the sculptor of this ornamental panel to be identified. The instrument presents a beautiful pelmet decoration around the bell, as well as a reinforcing ring with pearl motifs in simplified form at the narrowest end of the bore wherein the crook is inserted. The mouthpiece is turned slightly towards the viewer, which does not allow for its characteristics to be established with precision.

Panels in Churches

Around 1730, Gilles-Marie Oppenord (1672-1742) and Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier (1693-1750) perpetuated a Versailles tradition⁴⁰ by realizing, for the sacristy of Saint-Sulpice church in Paris, an imposing sculpted oak panel that presents a cascade of trophies symbolizing the *Attributs de l'Église et du culte catholique* (Attributes of the Church and the Catholic Faith) (fig. 11a), amongst which the serpent and two music books accompanied by

35. In the *Journal concernant le gardemeuble de la couronne [...] Commencant le Deux janvier 1705 et finissant le 31 décembre 1710*, we found a record of the delivery "for the new chapel of Versailles palace" (*pour la nouvelle chapelle du château de Versailles*), on 4 June 1710, of "ten brass cymbals, by Pezart" (*dix cimbales de cuivre jaunes, par Pezart*) who was purveyor of copperware since 1685. AN, O¹ 3450, f. 2.

36. Marina TCHEBOURKINA, « L'orgue de la chapelle royale de Versailles : à la recherche d'une composition perdue », *L'Orgue. Bulletin des Amis de l'orgue*, 208, 2007-IV, p. 3-112. AN, MC, I, 240, p. 4-17.

37. A. MARAL, *op. cit.*, p. 321, fig. 845.

38. AN, O¹ 1784, *Mémoire des ouvrages de sculpture en bois faits pour le service du roy [...] suivant les desseins et modèles de Monsieur de Coste [...] par Desgoulos, Belan, Taupin, Legoupil et Lalande, sculpteurs, en l'année 1710*, partially published by Jean-Marc BAFFERT, « L'orgue de la chapelle du château de Versailles : glanes et images (1710-1937), *L'orgue francophone*, 22/23, December 1997, p. 14-21.

39. A. MARAL, *op. cit.*, p. 366. *Mémoire des ouvrages de sculpture en bois des portes de lad. Chapelle [...] du buffet d'orgue, des lambris de sacristie [...], montant à la somme de 113 571 livres* (Invoice for works of sculpture in wood for the doors of the said Chapel [...] for the organ case, for the panels of the sacristy [...] amounting to the sum of 113 571 livres), AN, O¹ 1784. See also in his work the fig. 845.

⁴⁰ A. MARAL, *op. cit.*, p. 109, fig. 169 and 170.

an oboe (fig. 11b) support emblems of the papacy⁴¹. The serpent is equipped yet again with a finely worked ring around the bell, consisting of a chevron and a frieze of four-lobed flowers, as well as a serrated ring reinforcing the crook and the mouthpiece. The same quality of detail is to be found in the ovum motifs decorating the bell and the upper bulb of the oboe.

The panel that adorns the choir of Marmoutier Abbey Church (Bas-Rhin), sculpted between 1761 and 1768, shows a trophy consisting entirely of instruments, including a serpent and bassoon as well as three different-sized violins⁴² (fig. 12).

Fashion Plates and the Serpent Player's "Outfit"

The famous print by Nicolas de Larmessin (1684-1725) of the *Habit de Musicien* (Musician's Outfit) (fig. 13) is one in a series of fashion plates depicting the trades in Paris⁴³. These prints, sold on the rue Saint-Jacques, enable us to remark how the cumbersome serpent rubs shoulders with another equally unwieldy instrument, used in the Horse Guards as well as in the convents: the marine trumpet. The sheet of music placed on the left arm of the musician near the violin bears the title "*Le Dieu des eaux*". The one above the spinet reproduces the notation of a "*Sarabande*", a frequent dance movement in keyboard suites, while that near the marine trumpet is a lute or guitar tablature. There is no connection to church music in these notations intended to symbolize the diverse forms of music-making. For once the serpent's bulk is a real advantage for the engraver seeking "grotesque" and varied motifs as well as cover for his plate.

No doubt contemporary with this well-known outfit that embodies the height of versatility, is an earthenware tile from Rouen held in the Musée Carnavalet in Paris (fig. 14). It perhaps came from the workshops of Louis Poterat, who carried on in Rouen with royal letters patent between 1673 and 1696⁴⁴ and was the only earthenware employer at that time. This blue

41. Émile MALBOIS, « Oppenord et l'église Saint-Sulpice », *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1933, p. 34-46. We thank Douglas Yeo for his generosity in obtaining this photograph for us.

42. Alphonse WOLLBRET, « Les boiseries du chœur de l'abbatiale de Marmoutier », *Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Saverne et Environs*, 1958/1-2, p. 7-19, and « Propos sur les boiseries du chœur de Marmoutier », *Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Saverne et Environs*, 1961/1-2, p. 30 ; Victor DELBA, « Notes sur le mobilier du chœur de l'ancienne église abbatiale de Marmoutier », *Pays d'Alsace*, 85, 1974/1, p. 13-15.

43. Paul AHNNE, *Les costumes grotesques et les métiers de Nicolas de Larmessin. XVII^e siècle. Habits des métiers et professions*, Paris, Veyrier, 1974. See also, among many others, the trophies of instruments on the organ case of Saint-Éloi church in Rouen.

44. Chantal SOUDEE LACOMBE, « L'apparition de la porcelaine tendre à Rouen chez les Poterat. L'hypothèse protestante ? », *Sèvres*, 2006, p. 29-35.

earthenware tile shows a serpent player in street clothes. Is the border of the tile, with its large fleurs-de-lis, intended to establish a connection with the officers of the Chapel Royal? It is tempting to make the suggestion. In any case it remains, along with a detail on the early 18th-century Corpus Christi screen held in the Musée du Vieil Aix ⁴⁵, one of the few images of a musician at work in the period of the Ancien Regime.

Commercial Images for Publishers and Dealers

The serpent appears elsewhere in publishers' frontispieces and in the advertisements circulated by music dealers. A future systematic investigation should no doubt yield new surprises that will complement these few examples. The frontispiece by Claude Roussel (1655?-172?) for Marc-Antoine Charpentier's (1643-704) *Motets Melez de Symphonie*, published in Paris by Jacques Edouard in 1709 (fig. 15), uses the same cartouche that three years before adorned the title page of Jean-Philippe Rameau's *Premier livre de pièces de clavecin*. It was reused in 1713 for the opera *Médée et Jason* by Jean-François Salomon (1649-1732) (fig. 16). It presents a trophy of wind instruments wherein the serpent is placed alongside a trumpet and a hunting horn, a bass viol, a violin, a guitar, a theorbo and a lute, and an oboe and flute, which strongly recalls the ensembles present on the trophies of the Chapel Royal. This instrumental variety would allow a single cartouche to frame the titles of highly diverse sacred or secular musical works.

A three-dimensional, painted wood shop-sign for a music and instrument dealer, held at the Musée de la Musique (fig. 17), is more surprising. It presents a very stylized serpent. Attempting to date it is no easy matter. The model of bassoon with keys (only one is visible) could have been made around 1700. The proportions of the violin could make it a viola (*quinte de violin*). Considering that the screw-and-eye tensioning system only appears in archival documents and visual sources after 1740, is the bow really equipped with a button? ⁴⁶ As regards the oboe, it still has a fontanelle, a detail which connects it with the only extant model by the Parisian maker Dupuis, active in the last decades of the 17th century ⁴⁷. But its construction is too rustic to allow a precise analysis and consequently a dating. Although this sign until now has been dated to the end of the 18th century, we believe it to be much older.

45. For a reproduction of the entire screen, see Luc-Charles DOMINIQUE, *Les Ménétriers français sous l'Ancien Régime*, Paris, Klincksieck, 1994, plate between p. 176 and 177.

46. F. GETREAU, « Les archets en France aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles », *op. cit.*

47. See B. HAYNES, *op. cit.*, p. 30-33 : "The Protomorphic hautboys", and Philipp T. Young, *4900 Historical Woodwind Instruments*, London, Tony Bingham, 1993, p. 67.

A cartouche for a music dealer, engraved by Christophe Guérin (1758-1831) after Joseph Melling (1724-1796), shows a shop window filled with instruments (fig. 18). The three-coil orchestral horns are to the fore, the double bass and the new pedal harp also. At the back can be glimpsed a bassoon and a serpent that could represent church as well as military music. A mandolin lying on a pianoforte also shows how fashionable all these newcomers are. Decrypting the titles on the drawers of music helps to date this document. Thereon can be read: *Quatuor de Boccherini* (the first ones published in Paris were in 1767)⁴⁸; *Symphonies de Haydn* (the first ones were printed in the capital in 1769)⁴⁹ and *Opéra de Gluck* (his *Alceste* was available from Marchand in December 1776)⁵⁰. The appearance of this commercial cartouche can thus be situated after this last date. Its motifs seem to corroborate the plate, etched by Robert Bénard (1734-1786), for *l'Art du faiseur d'instruments de musique et lutherie* (The Art of the Musical Instrument Maker and Instrument-Making), the supplement to Diderot's *Encyclopédie* printed in 1785 by Charles Joseph Panckoucke (1736-1798). Titled *Luthier, Ouvrages et outils* (Instrument-Maker, Works, and Tools), this illustration shows a serpent hanging at the back of the workshop. Yet none of the known inventories of the workshops of Parisian instrument-makers in the 18th century mentions the serpent, whether in the shop or in the stock of the craftsmen⁵¹, and no serpents are offered for sale⁵².

While virtually nonexistent at the Conservatoire in the first years after its foundation, the serpent seems to have contributed on the other hand to the education of the young blind, as can be seen in this Masonic frontispiece (fig. 19) intended for the *Notice sur l'instruction des jeunes aveugles* (Manual for the education of the young blind) published by Sébastien Guillié (1780-1865) in Paris in 1819. It is filled with educational symbolism and is perfectly in tune with the times: the Turkish crescent placed behind the young man naturally recalls the military music of the First Empire, in the same way as the pedal harp that adorned the imperial and royal residences. The placement of the serpent near a military drum indicates its new function, far from the Church.

Revolutionary Imagery: the Allegory of Concord

48. See Anik DEVRIES-LESURE, *L'édition musicale dans la presse parisienne au XVIII^e siècle. Catalogue des annonces*, Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2005, p. 57-58.

49. A. DEVRIES-LESURE, *op. cit.*, p. 248-251.

50. A. DEVRIES-LESURE, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

51. Sylvette MILLIOT, *Documents inédits sur les luthiers parisiens du XVII^e siècle*, Paris, Société française de musicologie, 1970.

52. Eugène de BRICQUEVILLE, *Les ventes d'instruments de musique au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, Fischbacher, 1908.

Revolutionary imagery also conveyed unambiguous social symbolism. Notice that the third estate plays the violin, an instrument which despite its career at the court of the French kings continued to be associated with the village fiddler. The nobility, because it made its career in the army, enjoys the use of the “eloquent oboe” (as Bruce Haynes might have said) which was associated with the *Grande Écurie du Roi*, while the Church is once more here symbolized by the serpent.

These repetitive and stereotyped images keep trotting out an improbable desire for harmony, in a tone still conciliatory before the final rupture would occur. In *Le Concert* (fig. 20), the commentary is highly moral: *Sachons nous accorder, et banissons l’envie, Pour jouir des plaisirs de la bonne harmonie* (“Let us tune, and banish envy, To enjoy the pleasures of good harmony”). Another variant, also anonymous, titled *Bon nous voilà d’accord* (“Right! Now we’re in tune”) ⁵³ is already toned down graphically but is also less expressive. Finally, in *Le Concert, L’Essentielle est d’accorder nos instruments pour que l’harmonie produise son effet*⁵⁴ (fig. 21) (“The main thing is to tune our instruments so that the harmony makes an impression”), the motif is reversed and its graphic qualities further toned down. While the commentary insists on the instruments, the message remains quite stereotyped.

Cathedral, Parish, and Village Serpent Player

The use of the serpent in the Church became more discreet at the height of the Revolution and the Convention, and, although churches were authorized to open again in Paris on 31 May 1795, would remain all the more so after the royalist insurrection of 4 September 1797 until the Concordat of 1802. Bearing witness to the revival of the great religious ceremonies is the *Procession à Saint-Sulpice*, painted by Pierre-Joseph Bazin (1797-1866) in 1816 and still held in the parish hall of Saint-Sulpice church in Paris (fig. 22). In the imposing architecture of the edifice, this picture offers all the details of an official ceremony where two serpent players can be noticed amongst the officiating priests in surplices. A student of Anne-Louis Girodet-Trioson (1767-1824), Bazin specialized in miniature and developed a commemorative and finely descriptive painting technique, as attests the *Création de la Maison d’éducation de la*

⁵³ Colour etching, 1789, Paris, BnF, Prints, Recueil. Collection de Vinck. Un siècle d’histoire de France par l’estampe, 1770-1870. Vol. 12 (pièce 1934-2080). 2051. IFN-694 3280.

⁵⁴ Colour etching, 1789, Paris, BnF, Estampes, QB-1 (1789)-FOL.

Légion d'Honneur, painted in 1811. In 1824, he continued in this vein by depicting *La communion de la Reine à la Conciergerie*.

Throughout the 19th century, prints spread images that were sometimes a little naive but are today rich in insight, like the one Charles Wild produced around 1826 when visiting Amiens cathedral.

The use of the serpent continued in village churches but with much less solemnity (fig. 23 and 24). Whether in popular painting or in regionalist photography spread through postcards⁵⁵, these images, along with contemporaneous caricatures, confirm the survival of this centuries-old rustic figure until the First World War.

Last Gasp

Our attempt at a typology shows that learned artworks predominate before 1789, while in the century thereafter, popular images spread more simplistic models, a phenomenon which can be understood as a symptom – even limited to the Church – of the multiple musical and social functions of the instrument in the course of its career.

Yet was the serpent not already breathing its last when the reptile reasserted itself and unleashed its fury on France? (fig. 25).

Translation : Michael Greenberg (september 2014)

⁵⁵ *L'instrument de musique populaire. Usages et symboles*, exh. cat., Paris, Musée national des Arts et Traditions populaires, Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1980, p. 145, reprod. and p. 146, no. 269.

Illustrations

1. Léonard GAULTIER (1561 ?-1641 ?), frontispiece to *Les CL. Pseaumes de David et les X. Cantiques, Insérés en l'Office de l'Eglise. Traduits en vers françois par M^e Michel de Marillac*, Paris, Edme Martin, 1625.

2a. Pierre MIGNARD (1612-1695), *La Gloire Céleste* (Celestial Glory), fresco, 1663-1666, Paris, Val-de-Grâce Church, general view of the cupola.

2b. P. MIGNARD, *La Gloire Céleste*, *op. cit.*, detail of the group of angels singing and playing instruments.

3. Workshop of the brothers PIETTE, *Ange jouant du serpent* (Angel Playing the Serpent), wooden statuette adorning the organ case of Notre-Dame de Saint-Omer, 1717.

4. Workshop of Christophe MOUCHEREL (1686-1765 ?), *Ange jouant du serpent* (Angel Playing the Serpent), wooden statuette decorating the organ case of Saint-Salvi collegiate church, Albi, circa 1737.

5a. Étienne COMPARDEL[LE], *Graduel de Notre-Dame de Paris*, 1669, gouache on vellum, Musée de l'œuvre de Notre-Dame de Paris, deposited at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Music department, Rés-Vma-ms-1412. Livre III, p. 30, general view of the leaf.

5b. É. COMPARDEL[LE], *Graduel de Notre-Dame de Paris*, *op. cit.*, general view of the banner.

5c. É. COMPARDEL[LE], *Graduel de Notre-Dame de Paris*, 1669, *op. cit.*, view of the central part of the banner.

5d. É. COMPARDEL[LE], *Graduel de Notre-Dame de Paris*, *op. cit.*, detail of the lute.

5e. É. COMPARDEL[LE], *Graduel de Notre-Dame de Paris*, *op. cit.*, detail of the bass viol.

6. Jacques BAILLY (1629-1679), frontispiece to *Devises pour les tapisseries du Roy, où sont représentés les quatre Éléments et les quatre Saisons de l'année*, gouache on parchment, 1668, Paris, BnF, Manuscripts.

7. Sébastien LECLERC (1637-1714) after Jacques BAILLY (1629-1679), inspired by the cartoon by Jean I LE FEBVRE (fl 1662-1700) after Charles LE BRUN, *Tenture des Éléments. L'Air* (Wall-Hanging of the Elements. Air), print, 1668, Paris, BnF, Prints and Photography, AA-9-FOL, f^o 4.

8. Chapel Royal of Versailles, stone reliefs in the musicians' gallery. Diagram of the layout of the cascades of trophies of instruments.

9a. Jean de LAPIERRE, *Chute d'instruments de musique* (Cascade of Musical Instruments), musicians' gallery, eighth relief above the door of the sacristy.

9b., c, d, e, f, g, MONTHÉAN, and his associates VOIRIOT, DEDIEU, VARIN, BERCHER, and *Chute d'instruments de musique*, *op. cit.*, musicians' gallery, seventh, sixth, fifth, fourth, third, and second reliefs on either side of the organ starting from the north.

- 9h. Jean de LAPIERRE, *Chute d'instruments de musique*, musicians' gallery, first relief starting from the south.
10. Jules DEGOULLONS, and his associates Marin BELAN, Robert de LALANDE, André LEGOUPIL, Pierre TAUPIN, Versailles, Chapel Royal, musicians' gallery, organ case (base, west side), gilded wood, 1708-1709.
- 11a and b. Gilles-Marie OPPENORD (1672-1742) and Juste-Aurèle MEISSONNIER (1693-1750), *Attributs de l'Église et du culte catholique*, mid-relief sculpted wood panel, c. 1730, sacristy of Saint-Sulpice church, Paris.
12. *Trophée d'instruments avec serpent* (Trophy of Instruments with a Serpent), mid-relief sculpted wood panel, between 1761 and 1768, choir of Marmoutier Abbey Church (Bas-Rhin).
13. Nicolas de Larmessin (1684-1725), *Habit de Musicien*, print, Paris.
14. *Serpentiste en habit de ville* (Serpent Player in Street Clothes), Rouen manufactory ceramic tile, late 17th century, Paris, Musée Carnavalet.
15. Claude Roussel (1655 ?-172 ?), frontispiece to the *Motets Melez de Symphonie* by Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643-704), Paris, Jacques Édouard, 1709.
16. Claude Roussel (1655 ?-172 ?), frontispiece to *Médée et Jason* by Jean-François Salomon (1649-1732), Paris, C. Ballard, 1713.
17. Anonymous, [shop-sign of a music and instrument dealer], France, c. 1700, carved wood, Paris, Musée de la Musique, inv. E. 996.15.1.
18. Christophe Guérin (1758-1831) after Joseph Melling (1724-1796), *Étiquette de marchand de musique* (Label of a Music Dealer), after 1776, Paris, Musée du Louvre.
19. Frontispiece to the *Notice sur l'instruction des jeunes aveugles* by Sébastien Guillié (1780-1865), Paris, Imprimerie des enfants aveugles, 1819, © BnF.
20. Anonymous, *Le Concert. Sachons nous accorder*, print, 1789, Paris, Prouté collection.
21. Anonymous, *Le Concert. L'Essentielle est d'accorder nos instruments pour que l'harmonie produise son effet*, colour etching, Paris, BnF, Prints, QB-1 (1789)-FOL.
22. Pierre-Joseph BAZIN, *Procession à Saint-Sulpice*, oil on canvas, 1816, parish hall of Saint-Sulpice church, Paris, photo: Michel Levassort courtesy of Douglas Yeo.
23. *En Normandie. Le serpent du village* (In Normandy. The Village Serpent Player), postcard, private collection. © RMN.
24. Anonymous, *Le joueur de serpent* (The Serpent Player), oil on canvas, 19th century, Paris, Musée national des Arts et Traditions populaires, E. 983.1.1.

25. *La Rage souffle par sa bouche et l'Enfer est dans son cœur* (« Fury blasts from his mouth and Hell is in his heart »), colour print, ca. 1790-1793, Paris, musée Carnavalet.