

Future Present: Anachronistic Representations in 1650s Epic Poetry¹

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Indicative of the seventeenth century's interest in historical erudition, the first printed occurrence of the word "anachronism" in French only dates back to the first half of the century, when Naudé used it in his defense of Numa Pompilius in his 1625 *Apologie pour tous les grands personnages qui ont été faussement soupçonnés de magie* (Naudé 171).² Already then, anachronism had a negative meaning, pointing at a chronological error—the historically false idea that Numa Pompilius could have been a disciple of Pythagoras. Dictionaries from the second half of the century, such as Furetière's, confirm this definition:

Anachronisme, s. m. Erreur qu'on fait dans la supputation des temps. Les Poètes sont sujets à faire des anachronismes, comme on dit que Virgile a fait à l'égard de Didon...

Anachronism, masculine noun: a mistake in the estimation of historical periods. Poets are prone to anachronism, as it is believed Virgil did with Dido...

Interestingly enough, Furetière associates anachronism with epic poetry, using the example of Virgil's choice to represent Dido and Aeneas as living at the same time. On a theoretical level, because these debates were not only about chronology but also about how a poet can play with the historical knowledge of his time, the issue of anachronism is also represented in texts on poetics. Although, as Segrais wrote, "[l']exacte recherche de la vérité n'est nullement du poète" (the poet does not have

¹ This article expands on a conference paper presented at the SE17 2016 Annual Conference at Dartmouth College.

² Frédérique Fleck starts her presentation on the concepts of anachronism and anachrony by referencing this text as well. This essay benefited from her articles "Anachronisme et historiographie," "anachronisme" (<http://www.fabula.org/atelier.php?Anachronisme>), and "anachronie" (<http://www.fabula.org/atelier.php?Anachronie>).

to look for the exact truth) (Giorgi 371), poets must follow certain rules depending on the representative regime³ that prevailed at the time. In 1658 for instance, Pierre Le Moyne wrote in his “Traité du Poëme Heroïque,” prefacing his epic *Saint Louys ou la sainte couronne reconquise*:

Que l'on entende qu'il faut eviter comme écueils les
contre-temps, les antيدات & les attentats d'une Figure,
qui se donne la liberté de changer l'ordre des Siecles, &
de renverser la Cronologie. (N. pag.)

Let's not forget that chronological errors, backdates,
predates and assaults against the order of centuries and
chronology in name of a figure of speech are to be
absolutely avoided.

And yet, *Saint Louys ou la sainte couronne reconquise* is full of anachronisms. For instance, the description of a royal ceremony with an elephant and fireworks could come “directly” (Calin 240) from a 1612 carousel celebrating the wedding of Louis XIV's parents (figure 1).

Thus, when considering anachronism in seventeenth-century texts, there are two series of questions to explore: first, what was deemed anachronistic in the middle of the seventeenth century; what was the representative regime that made one mistiming an error and another a poetic license? Second, and to paraphrase the historian and defender of anachronisms, Nicole Loraux (179), which questions did poets bring to the past, if at all, and what did they bring back from the past into their present? As it will become evident, looking at epic poems from mid-century, the implications of these questions are poetical, historiographical, and political.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, the axiological duality of the notion was revived, by historians and theorists—most notably by Nicole Loraux and Jacques Rancière—who decided to argue for the historical and philosophical productivity of anachronisms.

³ On representative regimes see Jacques Rancière, *Le Destin des images*, and more precisely 128-134 on Rancière's understanding of the seventeenth-century representative regime in tragedy based on a complex balance between seeing and not seeing, saying and not saying, knowing and not knowing.

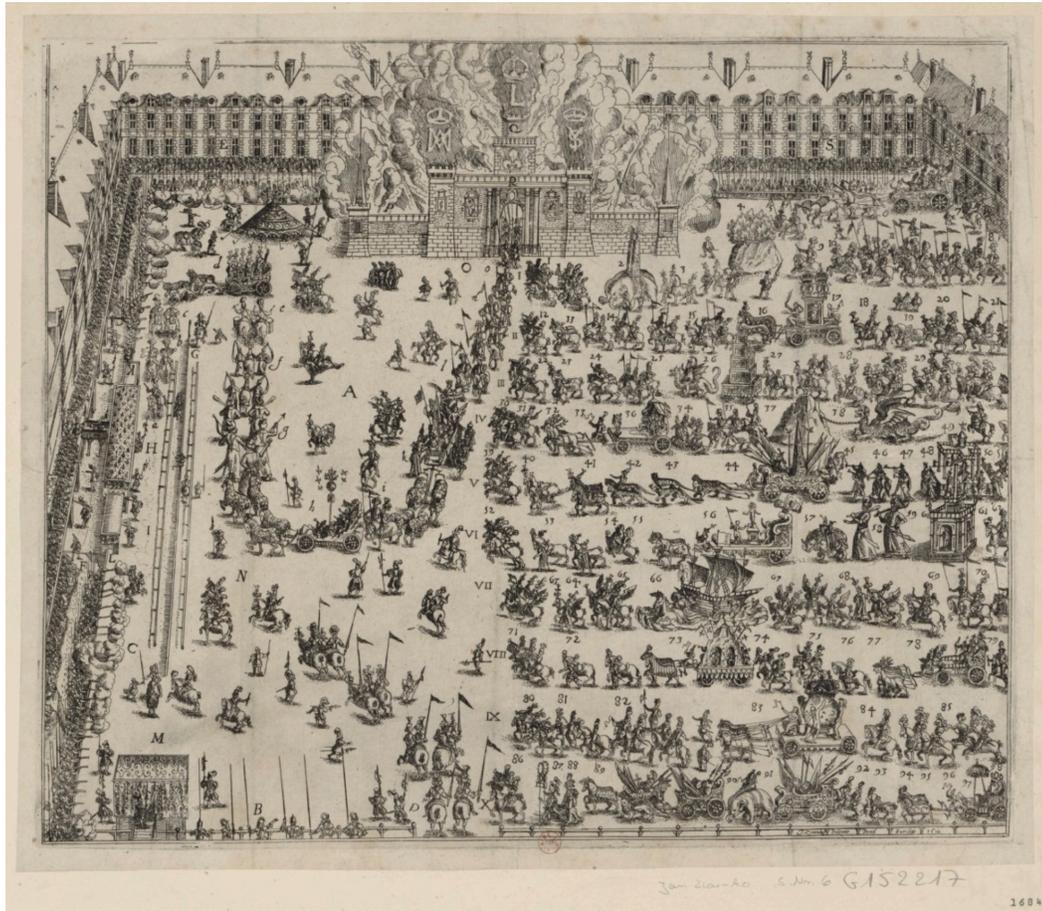


Fig. 1: Jan Ziarnko, *Le carrousel donné à la Place Royale* (1612).
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Before presenting her case in favor of anachronism in historical studies, Nicole Loraux starts her 1993 article “Éloge de l’anachronisme en Histoire⁴” by describing anachronism as a “*bête noire*” (black beast, i.e. a bugbear):

L’anachronisme est la bête noire de l’historien, le péché capital contre la méthode dont le nom seul suffit à constituer une accusation infamante, l’accusation – somme toute – de ne pas être historien puisqu’on manie le temps et les temps de façon erronée. (173)

Anachronism is the historian’s bugbear, a capital sin against the historical method, and its mention is by itself a disgraceful accusation: that one is not, all things considered, a historian, as time and historical periods are not manipulated correctly⁵.

Similarly, Jacques Rancière opens “Le Concept d’anachronisme et la vérité de l’historien” with Lucien Febvre’s warning against anachronism:

Le problème est d’arrêter avec exactitude la série des précautions à prendre, des prescriptions à observer pour éviter le péché des péchés, le péché entre tous irrémédiable: l’anachronisme. (qtd. in Rancière 53)

The challenge is to perfectly delineate the necessary cautionary steps and prescriptions in order to avoid the sin of all sins, the most unforgivable sin: anachronism.

After these seemingly mandatory warnings, both Loraux and Rancière⁶ are able to break away from this negative conception of anachronism—

⁴ Here, I quote a 2005 reprint of Loraux’s article.

⁵ All translations are mine.

⁶ Frédérique Schleck summarizes Loraux’s and Rancière’s propositions on anachronism in “Anachronisme: résumés des articles de Rancière et Loraux.” (http://www.fabula.org/atelier.php?Anachronisme%3A_r%26acute%3Bsum%26acute%3Bs_des_articles_de_Ranci%26grave%3Bre_et_Loraux).

dating from its first occurrence as we saw—and proceed with their cases, following two different paths.

Starting with a brief description of her journey as a historian, Loraux develops a methodological reflection on the productivity of anachronism. She defends the idea that there is much to gain in considering contemporary issues in the context of past times: she does not propose to judge past civilizations according to a future—from their perspective—axiology but to examine how they negotiated these issues. She takes the example of the notion of public opinion to show how it is possible to apply it to the Athenian context and which restrictions and protocols make such an application possible. Then, she asserts that the second moment of this back-and-forth dynamic between present and past is even more fertile: it is even more beneficial, Loraux writes, to shed a light from the past on the present day, to go back to the present with ancient problems. She exemplifies this assertion by exploring what she labels as “les problèmes grecs de la démocratie moderne” (Greek problems of modern democracy) (184).

Rancière chose a different angle in his two-fold rehabilitation of anachronism. First, he differentiates mere chronological errors from anachronism and shows that the latter is not a historical concept but a poetic one: it is defined not only in terms of chronology but also in terms of representative regimes (Rancière 64). As a case of study, he examines the Early Modern accusations against Virgil, who represented Dido and Aeneas in the same time period when three centuries should have separated them. He showed that the problem was not the historical inaccuracy but the collision of Greek and Roman cultures (Rancière 54), as it breaks the reader’s illusion, given the particular representative regime of the period based on verisimilitude. In a second and conclusive moment in his demonstration, he proposes as a subject of study what he calls “anachronies,” that is to say necessary ruptures. It refers to “des événements, des notions, des significations” (events, notions, significations) (Rancière 67) inscribed in their periods and making history (“faire l’histoire” Rancière 68): if everything always fit its time period, there would be no history. Rancière concludes that anachronism actually cannot be a risk for the historian as “il n’y a pas d’anachronisme” (there is no anachronism) (67) but only errors and improbabilities. Hence, in Rancière’s essay, anachrony is not a positive alternative to anachronism, which belongs to the representative act, as it is used to describe special phenomena out of their time. It is not a poetic

notion but an ontological one. However, his analysis of anachronism as a rhetorical notion and his examination of the seventeenth-century debate about Virgil's chronology are useful in understanding how and in which conditions writers of this time period could manipulate the historical timeline. As Frédérique Fleck also notes in her presentation of these two articles, Loraux is therefore the only one to truly attempt to rehabilitate anachronism, that is to say, to define under which circumstances it can be a productive representative practice.

This article will focus on three French poems from the 1650s glorifying—although in complex ways and not without ambiguity—the French monarchy: Chapelain's *La Pucelle ou la France delivree* (1656), Desmarests's *Clovis ou la France Chrestienne* (1657), and Le Moyne's *Saint Louys ou la Sainte Couronne Reconquise* (1658). All of these works follow a historical subject, necessitating the combination of poetic freedom and historiographical constraints. For this reason, they were immediately considered both in dialogue and apart from other epics. Charles Perrault, for instance, put them in the same group:

On peut dire également du *Clovis*, du *Saint Louis*, de *L'Alaric*, de *La Pucelle*...qu'ils ont un sujet déterminé, & qui s'accomplit avant que le poème finisse. (Perrault 234)

On *Clovis*, *Saint Louis*, *Alaric*, *La Pucelle*...it is also possible to say that they have one main action, and that it will be fulfilled by the end of the poem.

Perrault could have included other epic poems, biblical poems for instance, in his discussion. The fact that he solely mentions the only four poems published in the 1650s and labeled as heroic poems shows that they were conceived as an independent corpus. *Alaric* has been excluded from this study as it is dedicated to Christina of Sweden and praises, with very similar features, Sweden and not France. Perhaps following Boileau's condemnation of his contemporaries' epic poems, most critics have since then been harsh with these works and prefer pointing out their alleged aesthetic failures.⁷ However, a series of fairly recent studies and

⁷ Examples of this critical trend, dating back to Boileau's attack against Chapelain's *La Pucelle ou la France delivree* and well established less than a century later (see Marmontel's entry "Épopée" for the *Encyclopédie*), can be found very easily in scholarly works from the second half of the twentieth century. See Maskell; see

articles have attempted to read seventeenth-century epic poetry without making an aesthetic judgment and have explored their cultural values.⁸ In particular, they showed the connections between epic poems and political theory as well as historiography, drawing on their subjects of study. Representing historical characters and events, epics are highly indicative of the seventeenth-century understanding of history and time periods,⁹ which combines cyclical and linear paradigms – mythical and Christian representations of time and the emerging feeling that there were perhaps more differences than similitudes between historical periods.

Thus, I will first examine clear cases of anachronisms—here the term should not be understood with a connotation of condemnation but only as a descriptive statement—that is to say, the representation in a given time of an element belonging to another period. I will show how they are intertwined with the discussions about mimesis and verisimilitude, and therefore with seventeenth-century reception theories. I will then analyze narrative disruptions in the timeline, differentiating *anachronism* and *anachrony*. To define the latter notion, I will use Genette’s narratological definition, which encompasses analepses and prolepses, and not Rancière’s, a choice I will explain later. Finally, I will study how anachronies and, going back to my first examples, anachronisms fulfilled different ideological goals. Looking at connections between epic poems and visual culture, from paintings to royal ceremonies, I will show that, far from being a historical or narrative error, both anachronies and anachronisms are used to strengthen the poems’ political value and temporal grounding and suggest an evolution in historiographical thought, revealing a hybrid conception of time.

On Good and Bad Anachronisms in Epic Poems

In spite of Le Moyne’s warning, anachronisms are frequent in the heroic poems of the 1650s, from representations of battle to depictions of royal ceremonies. In Desmarets’s poem, Aurèle, Clovis’s right arm,

Himmelsbach; see Langer, pp. 208-229; and see even Csűrös, who chastises the pompous tone of these mid-century epic poems (19).

⁸ See Mathieu-Castellani; see Méniel; see Goupillaud; see Usher.

⁹ On the seventeenth century understanding of history, see Guion and Norman.

receives a superb tasset—a piece of armory protecting the thighs¹⁰—announcing the poem’s royal dedicatee’s—Louis XIV— greatness:

Sur la tasette large, est* le grand jour natal
 D’un prince incomparable, aux Rebelles fatal:
 Soit à ceux dont l’esprit contre l’ordre conspire;
 Soit à ceux qui de Christ n’adorent point l’Empire.
 *La naissance de Louis 14.¹¹ (*Clovis* 1657 15[6]-157)

On the big tasset is the great birthday represented*
 Of an incomparable prince, to Rebels fatal:
 Either for those who against order in spirit conspire;
 Or who do not love Christ’s Empire.
 *Louis XIV’s birthday.

As the marginal note reveals by highlighting the founding moment of Louis XIV’s own epic, presenting him as a gift of God as his first name—Dieudonné— suggests, this tasset is of particular symbolic importance. However, tassets were invented long after Clovis’s time, in the 14th century. Critics also noted similitude between battle strategies described in the *Clovis* and seventeenth-century military art (Wild 525). A similar representative strategy could be observed in the depiction of the royal ceremony, which is reminiscent of seventeenth-century royal entries (Wild 470).

The engravings adorning the poems duplicate the anachronistic representations, which shows that these anachronisms were not the consequence of one given poet’s ignorance but part of representative practices of the period (figure 2). For instance, in the engraving adorning book 25 of *Clovis*, Chauveau disposes the troops according to a very organized pattern typical of the engraver’s and the poet’s time (Parmentier 225).

¹⁰ Furetière defines *tasset* as follows in his dictionary: “Partie de l’armure d’un homme de guerre, qui est au dessous de la cuirasse, qui couvre les cuisses” (Piece of a knight’s armor, underneath the breastplate and protecting the thighs).

¹¹ In the original edition, this note appears in the margin.



Fig. 2: François Chauveau, in Jean Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin, *Clovis ou la France Chrestienne*. Paris: Augustin Courbé. 1657 (book 25).¹²
Houghton Library, Typ 615.57.32

¹² For all reproductions of engravings in epic poems, the pictures are mine. I took them at the Houghton Library (Harvard University) with permission of use.

In Chapelain's *La Pucelle*, Claude Vignon and Abraham Bosse did not try to create a historically accurate representation of Charles VII's reign. The King and Agnès Sorel do not resemble known portraits of the time, such as Fouquet's portraits of the king and his lover, even though the artists perpetuated the visual tradition of representing the woman with one naked breast (figures 3 and 3'). One only needs to look at the body and hand postures to realize that these portraits follow the artistic tradition of the seventeenth century. Similarly, buildings and monuments are inspired by early-modern architecture, such as a castle in the background of the engraving representing Agnès Sorel (figure 4). Jeanne Duportal compares it to a building by Mansart (274-275), but it seems more accurate to conceive it as a patchwork inspired by seventeenth-century castles and churches that Vignon could have seen at the time. Thus, neither Chauveau, Bosse, nor Vignon try to represent Clovis's time or the 15th century. Instead, they develop entirely fictitious universes, representations of past periods tailored for the imaginations of seventeenth-century readers, who were not bothered by these anachronisms. To the contrary, they are designed to reinforce the verisimilitude by following the reader's preconceptions about these historical periods.



Fig. 3 and Fig. 3': Abraham Bosse, from Claude Vignon's design, in Chapelain's *La Pucelle ou la France Delivree*. Paris: A. Courbé, 1656 (books 1 and 5).
Houghton Library, Typ 615.56.274



Fig. 4: Detail of an engraving by Abraham Bosse, from Claude Vignon's design, in Chapelain's *La Pucelle ou la France Delivree*. Paris: A. Courbé, 1656.

However, if anachronisms could be a potent representative tool to induce verisimilitude, poets had to respect certain principles. Indeed, if the aforementioned anachronistic representations did not have readers of the time raise an eyebrow, others sparked intense controversies. La Mesnardière, under the pseudonym of *Sieur du Rivage*, attacked Chapelain because of an anachronism, among many other things:

Mais quelle grace particuliere peut-il avoir trouvée,
Madame, à faire combattre tous les braves dans ce Poëme,
à coups de Rochers, de Fleaux, de Javelines, de Dards,
d’Espieux, de Grais et de Haches...après avoir parlé du
Canon dans l’Armée du Roy et au Siège de Paris, sans en
faire voir aucun effet dans tout le cours de cette guerre...
(37-38)

According to what idea of beauty, Madame, did [Chapelain] depict his brave characters fighting with rocks, flails, javelins, spears, boar spears and axes...after he mentioned the cannons in the royal army and during the siege of Paris without describing their effects during the course of this war.

Of course, La Mesnardière’s attack against Chapelain cannot be explained by this chronological sensitivity. Sociocritics have convincingly described the importance of quarrels and controversies to position oneself in the literary field.¹³ In this process, La Mesnardière was Chapelain’s adversary and concurrent. Nonetheless, La Mesnardière’s choice of attacking Chapelain by mocking an anachronistic representation is revealing. For La Mesnardière, the issue is the juxtaposition of two different technological ages, which aristocratic readers, well versed in the art of war, could not fail to notice. It goes along with Rancière’s proposition, for the seventeenth century at least, that that which upsets verisimilitude by going too much against the readers’ knowledge and expectations is unacceptably anachronistic.

¹³ On the importance of the quarrel to established one’s authority in the literary field, see the seminal studies by Viala and Jouhaud as well as the September 2013 issue of *Littératures classiques*, *Le Temps des querelles* (*Le Temps des querelles*, éd. Jeanne-Marie Hostiou et Alain Viala, *Littératures classiques*, n°81, 2013).

This distinction between tolerable anachronisms and errors to be avoided at all cost extended beyond the limit of epic theory and applied to the arts in general. It proves that the question of the adequate tuning (*réglages*), to use Rancière's vocabulary, when representing the past, is a general and cultural issue of the time. It is also a trace of the tension seventeenth-century France experienced between an aristocratic culture based on lineage and the strong belief in a perennial human essence, and an evolution in the conception of history creating impenetrable borders between historical periods.

Indicating the importance of art culture as a common ground, Le Moyne uses in "Traité du Poëme Heroïque" references to paintings his contemporaries may have had in mind in order to explain what he understands as condemnable anachronisms:

Ces anticipations hardies & ces contretemps licencieux, me font souvenir d'un Tableau du Guarchin, où l'on voyt un Suisse de la garde du Pape, qui assiste Paris, à l'enlevement d'Helene: & d'un autre Tableau du Lorrain, où les Hollandois venus au Siege de Troye avec les Grecs, prennent du tabac au port de Sigée. Semblables fautes, qui s'appellent beveuës en Peinture, s'appellent Figures en Poësie mais à dire vray, ces Figures ne sont gueres plus excusables que ces beveuës... (N. pag.)

These bold anticipations and this unruly mistiming remind me of a painting by Guercino, which represents a Swissman from the Pope's guard helping Paris in his abduction of Helen. It also reminds me of a painting by Le Lorrain in which the Dutch, who accompanied the Greeks to the siege of Troy, use tobacco in the Sigeion harbor. Such errors, that can be called blunders in paintings, are called figures in poetry. But to speak the truth, these figures can't be much more forgiven than those blunders.

Although it is uncertain, Lorrain's painting is most likely *Ulysse remet Chryseis à son père* (1644),¹⁴ with the Dutch men discussing in the

¹⁴ I want to give credit here to two art historians, Nicolas Milovanovic and Alain Madeleine-Perdrillat, for their insights.

foreground (figure 5). Regarding Guercino's painting, there are three possibilities. Perhaps Le Moyne's memory was blurry again and he was actually thinking of *La Morte di Didone*, with a Swiss Guard behind the column (figure 6). However, it is unlikely that Le Moyne could have seen this painting: although it was realized for the French king's mother, it was held by the Cardinal Bernardino Spada in Bologna and then in Rome after Marie de' Medici's exile (Stone 149-150).

Another and more plausible possibility would be that Le Moyne had in mind Guido Reni's *Il ratto di Elena*, exhibited by the end of the 1630s in the famous gallery of the Hôtel de La Vrillière (figure 7). Given that the regiment's uniform did not look like the one that can be seen today while walking by the Vatican, the man on Paris's left could have been easily identified at the time as a Swiss Guard. Colonel Repond, who designed the current uniform, modelling it after Raphael's frescos, and who wrote its history, mentions yellow, blue, and red as distinctive colors since the sixteenth century (57). The soldier's hat also resembles one of the most common hats the guards wore at the time (*La Divisa della Guardia Svizzera*). Finally, Swiss guards had a highly visible feather piqued in their headgear. The colors, the hat, and the feather are signs that this man could very well be a Swiss Guard represented *à l'antique*. Le Moyne's comment would then mean that this stylization was transparent for the seventeenth-century public.

These paintings and Le Moyne's commentary show that the real issue for the poet is not a lack of historical realism, since historical transpositions were common practices, from contemporaries dressed as men from Antiquity to people from the past wearing early modern clothes. However, the obvious collision of two periods in the same work could prevent the receptor's illusion as it breaks verisimilitude, based at the time on consistency within the fictitious universe and contemporary readers' preconceptions.



Fig. 5: Claude Lorrain, *Ulysse remet Chryseis à son père* (1644)
From Musée du Louvre.



Fig. 6: Guercino, *La Morte di Didone* (c. 1630)
From Galleria Borghese.



Fig. 7: Guido Reni, *Il Ratto di Elena* (attributed to Guercino during the seventeenth century)
From Musée du Louvre.



Fig. 7: Guido Reni, *Il Ratto di Elena* (attributed to Guercino during the seventeenth century)
From Musée du Louvre.

Poetical and Political Uses of Anachronistic Representations

Going back to Segrais's statement: heroic poets were not historians. To the contrary, they wrote endlessly to prove their art's political superiority as it presents the world as it should be and not as it is, referring back to Aristotle's adage rejuvenated by Tasso, whose influence on French seventeenth-century writers is well known.¹⁵ They wanted to act with their literary works in the present. To do so, anachronistic elements, when correctly used, that is to say when they do not play against verisimilitude, which would defeat their purpose, are powerful devices. They embellish the historical subject and affirm the literature's prescriptive force, creating singular connections between past, present, and future.

In addition to carefully crafted anachronisms, anachronies were more than frequent in epic poems. Here, my understanding of the notion does not come from Rancière's historiographical understanding, but from Genette's narratological definition: "les différentes formes de discordance entre l'ordre de l'histoire et celui du récit" (the various forms of conflict between the order of history and of the narrative) (79). Among these, analapses and prolepses are both prevalent in the epic genre.

Marolles (10) and Le Bossu (375-378) stated in their treatises on epic poetry that an *in medias res* beginning was preferable although not mandatory. They justified their point of view pragmatically: especially in long poems, readers would get bored if the action took too long to start. Potentially more damaging for the timeline and the suspense than this analeptic structure are the prolepses. In the poems, numerous prophecies tell characters' future up to the poets' present (i.e., the seventeenth century) and represent a cortege of kings, queens, aristocratic women, and noblemen accomplishing one great deed after the other. To take one example among many, Saint Louis, in Le Moyne's poem, is guided by Michael through heaven where he foresees his successes. Then, the archangel describes Louis's successors' victories, or, to borrow Koselleck's expression but changing its meaning, a future past from the seventeenth-century reader's perspective. Finally, Michael arrives to Louis XIV's reign, or to a future present, which Le Moyne describes as

¹⁵ See, among others, Bosco, 483-493, and Spica, 301-323.

being as providentially necessary as the future past. The poetic prophecy gives to Louis XIV a legitimacy based on the ancestral and heroic roots of his lineage. In exchange, the extradiegetic present—the first reader’s seventeenth century—gives value to the historico-fictional past. Michael explains how this exchange of glory works:

De ces grands Successeurs les Modeles illustres
 Ont leur suite & leur rang dans l’Espace des Lustres;
 Et pour t’encourager, à tracer devant eux
 Un sentier heroïque au Bien laborieux,
 Et de tes pas leur faire une piste à la Gloire,
 Je t’en veux découvrir les portaits [sic] et l’histoire.
 (233-234)

The illustrious models of these great successors
 Have their place and rank in the space of ages;
 And to encourage you to trace before them
 A heroic path working toward the Good
 And by your steps to show them the way to Glory
 I want to reveal to you their portraits and history.

In this paradoxical announcement, Saint Louis’s prowess and greatness are not inspired by his ancestors, almost never mentioned in the rest of the poem, but by his descendants. Thanks to the visual and discursive prophecy, Saint Louis admires and is inspired by the illustrious models to come, the greatest being Louis XIV. In turn, these models admire and imitate Saint Louis. This reciprocal admiration and influence creates a dynamic between past and present that can be represented as a temporal Möbius strip (figure 8). It represents time as a linear progression but with a paradoxical connection between the past and present, aligned with an aristocratic conception of glory. Such a representation allows for the combination of two major temporal models of the period—a cyclical and a Christian understanding of time—progressively challenged by the emergence of a new conception of historical periods and their radical differences (Guion 557-558).

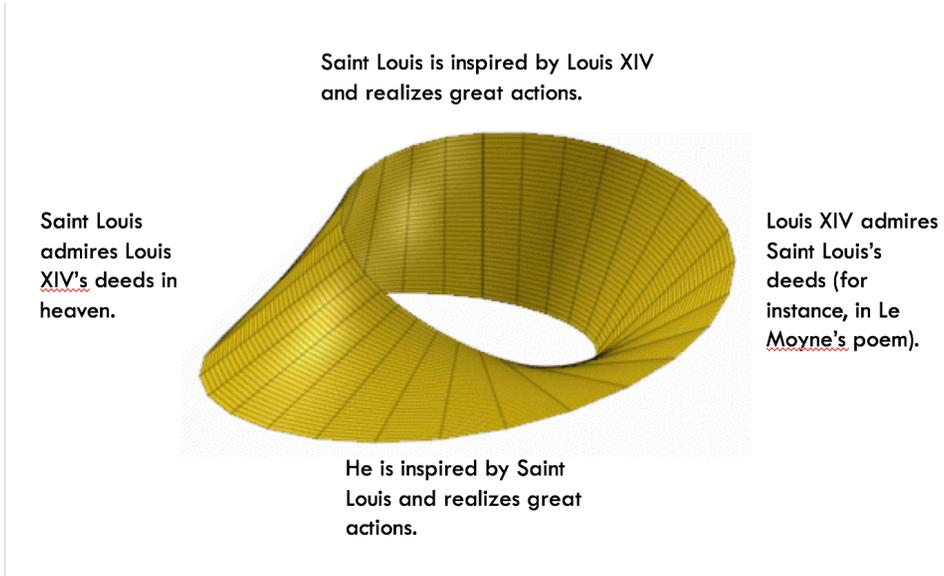


Fig. 8: The temporal Möbius strip in *Saint Louys*.

In addition to this epideictic role, prophecies are used to expurgate history from problematic events with a clear ideological perspective. This gesture is anachronistic as well, but *en négatif*: it is anachronistic not by the presence of something that belongs to another time but by the obvious absence of something that should be there. In Le Moyne's ekphrasis, when Michael arrives to the kings following Francis I, he erases traumatizing events such as the Saint Bartholomew Massacre and the actions of the Catholic League (239), perhaps because the Society of Jesus, Le Moyne's society, was close to this party.

Opposing—at least in discourse—this practice, Chapelain asserts in *La Pucelle* that the artist, poet, or painter should be first an honest witness. In book 7, a character guides visitors through a gallery representing the Hundred Years' War. He explains that it was painted under the patronage of the evil—according to the poem's axiology—Philip The Good of Burgundy. Unlike Le Moyne, the painter refused to change history or omit an event. Therefore, he represented the assassination of Louis of Orleans, the king's brother, by John the Fearless, Philip the Good's father. The guide explains to the visitors:

On tient qu'en cet endroit le Peintre inimitable
 Eut ordre d'oublier cet acte détestable,
 ...Mais l'esprit de l'Ouvrier, amy de la Justice,
 Laissa, contre cet ordre, agir son beau caprice,
 S'attacha, plus qu'à tout, à cette indigne mort,
 Et de son Art, pour elle, employa tout l'effort.

(Chapelain 306)

It is known that here the inimitable painter
 Received the order to omit this spiteful action.
 ...But the Artist's mind, friend of Justice,
 let his beautiful will go against this order,
 Worked more on this shameful death than anything,
 And for it, used all of his artistic skills.

Of course, this representation insists on the evilness of the house of Burgundy, the enemies the eponymous character, Joan of Arc, is confronting, and participates in the glorification of the French kingdom. But on a metapoetic level, this excerpt also suggests that for Chapelain the artist could have an ethical responsibility to historical truth even more important than his duty to the patrons. On a sociological level, it is

inscribed in a seventeenth-century trend of writers' professionalization and progressive independence.¹⁶

Perhaps following a similar conviction, Desmarets did not shy away from mentioning in his poem *le Grand Condé's* defection or his revolt against the crown during the Princes' *Fronde*. In the Temple of Truth, where Clotilde was brought by Mary, she sees Condé's famous victories but also:

Mais qu'après les prisons, les soupçons, les dangers,
 Les vents l'emporteroient dans les bords estrangers:
 Que pour les Ennemis sa valeur occupée,
 Leur serviroit un temps de bouclier & d'épée.
 Ah! Dit-elle, o mon sang, invincible Guerrier,
 Sois plustost de ton Roy l'épée & le bouclier...
 (Clovis 1657, 67)

That after imprisonments, suspicions, dangers,
 Winds would take him to foreign shores:
 That his virtue, devoted to enemies,
 Would be for a while their shield and sword;
 Alas! She said, O my blood, invincible warrior,
 Instead, may you be your King's sword and shield...

Desmarets displays a representation of the future past to express, through Clotilde's voice, the hope of a reconciliation between the crown and Condé. Desmarets is the only poet of the period to use anachronistic prophecies so boldly: he gives them an almost prescriptive value. Indeed, they do not stop with the beginning of Louis XIV's reign as in the other poems.¹⁷ On the tassets mentioned earlier, the French's greatest victories are represented. On the right one, Aurèle admires the French kingdom's history up to Louis XIV's birth. And:

Sur la tassette gauche, après mille beaux faits,
 Ce Roi donne à l'Europe et ses lois & la paix.
 Puis seul & digne chef des Chrestiennes armées,

¹⁶ Chapelain represents within the poem the importance of the artist for society and therefore implicitly defends the artist's social position and funding.

¹⁷ Méniel showed that in Early Modern epic poems, "le temps de l'histoire vient presque toujours rejoindre le temps de l'écriture et de la lecture" (468).

Va délivrer du joug les tertres Idumées.
 ...Vois sa taille, son port, sa douce majesté,
 Quand soumettant sa gloire à son humilité,
 Pour marquer les débris d'une secte estouffée,
 Il plante en mille lieux la Croix pour son trophée.
(Clovis 1657, 157)

On the left tasset, following thousands of great deeds,
 This king gives Europe laws and peace.
 Unique and well-suited head of the Christian armies,
 He goes on to free the mounts of Idumea.
 ...Look at his height, how he carries himself, his kind
majesty,
 When he subjugates his glory to his humility,
 In order to mark the remnants of a smothered cult,
 And plants in a thousand places the Cross as his trophy.

Through this ekphrasis, Desmarets announces an event yet to happen from the seventeenth-century readers' perspective: a successful crusade led by Louis XIV. During a good portion of the century, this idea of a new crusade to retake Jerusalem was frequently represented in literature, in court ballets (Hall 286-287) and political theory. It was most notably defended by Père Joseph (Thuau 282-285), Richelieu's *éminence grise*. In spite of the schism of the sixteenth century and the power and stability of the Ottoman empire, especially since Suleiman the Magnificent's reign, these recurring mentions of crusades show that the dream of a unified and catholic Europe had not yet completely vanished, especially in some aristocratic circles gathering old and powerful families. With this prophecy, Desmarets extends the temporal model presented earlier to the future future: Clovis and the seventeenth-century reader's future. Through the prophetic ekphrasis, it is depicted as necessary as the future past and the future present: there is, in the poem's universe, an ancient representation of Louis XIV's victories yet to come. In the epic poem, the successful crusade will happen just as Clovis's and Louis XIII's successes did. This anachrony hints at a belief, or a hope, that epic poetry could influence the political decisions of the king to whom Desmarets dedicated his poem. However, when he republished *Clovis* in 1673, the present had caught up with the future and Desmarets replaced this passage with an allusion to Louis XIV's early victories on the Rhine, going back to a more traditional and epideictic use of anachrony (*Clovis* 1673, 145-146).

Conclusion

Now that it has been established how anachronistic representations in seventeenth-century epic poems used the contemporary reader's conceptions and experience as a vanishing point, it is possible to go back to the initial question: when and for what purpose could heroic poets "mistime" something? As long as they respected verisimilitude, anachronistic scenes were not "*Beveuës*," or blunders, as Le Moyne put it, but potentially useful anachronies. With an ideological purpose varying from author to author depending on their religious and political alliances as well as their social allegiances, poets created an exchange of glory between historical times. They used anachronies to rewrite a future past and erase events that could tarnish the glory of the present king, to praise the future present, Louis XIV's time, representing his military victories as ineluctable. Finally, going a step further, when extending to the future future in the case of Desmarets, the poet claimed with these anachronies a prescriptive role. This use of literary representation to influence the political sphere can be understood as a remnant of the tradition of mirrors of princes, which multiplied during the seventeenth century in reaction to the rarefaction of the institutions wherein subjects could express their concerns to the King (Jouanna 224).

However, after 1661, when Louis XIV decided to rule alone after Mazarin's death, the terms of this exchange of glory between past and present changed drastically. In 1657, Desmarets urged Louis XIV to follow "...les traces de S. Louïs, ...et...celles du grand Clovis, dont je luy propose l'exemple" (...Saint Louys's and Clovis's footsteps, whose example I offer his Majesty) ("Au roy" 1657 n. pag.). In 1673, the poet did not dare repeat this and he gave only a memorial goal to his epic poem:

Mais j'ai cru que les tableaux de vostre incomparable vie
... meritoient d'estre enchâssés dans le plus riche Poëme
que j'entreprendrai jamais ... où je laisse en garde pour la
posterité vostre portrait ... qui peut-estre se fust perdu, si
je me fusse contenté d'en faire un ouvrage passager. ("Au
roy" 1673 n. pag.)

But I thought that the paintings of your incomparable
life...deserved to be encased in the richest poem I will
ever undertake...Your portrait I enshrined in it for

posterity might have been lost if I only realized a passing work.

The poem was not meant to guide the king anymore but became a frame-story for Louis XIV's own epic. In this process, the ideological value of anachronistic representations shifted and became purely encomiastic and monumental. The political exchange between an admirable past and an admirable present through anachronistic scenes was not deemed as ideologically efficient as before because Louis XIV was becoming the king without example. Although its use had a different pragmatic purpose, anachronism was still emblematic of "un concept et un usage du temps où celui-ci a absorbé, sans trace, les propriétés de son contraire, l'éternité" (of a conception and use of time in which it absorbed, without a trace, its opposite's proprieties, eternity) (Rancière 65): the eternity of the French Monarchy incarnated by Louis XIV, who was believed to signal the end of history.

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