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Marie de Medici's 1605 *ballet de la reine*: New Evidence and Analysis

Scholars have known very little about the three French court ballets for which Marie de Medici (1575–1642), queen consort to Henri IV of France, was both patron and highest ranking dancer.¹ This gap in knowledge is especially pronounced for her January 1605 unnamed *ballet de la reine* for good reason: no *récit* or verse text seems extant, while other sources confuse questions of dating or offer only scattered clues regarding the ballet's 'magnificence', its dancers' gem-studded costumes, and the remarkably large audience.² An unsigned manuscript letter authored by a spectator at the Louvre performance, however, offers significant new information. This letter, archived among the manuscripts collected by the famous seventeenth-century antiquarian Nicolas-Fabri de Peiresc, has remained unknown to *ballet de cour* scholars despite having been roughly paraphrased by Louis Battifol in 1930.³ Battifol's description of the ballet's events is incomplete and partly inaccurate,⁴ but direct study of the manuscript itself, in conjunction with readings of other neglected documents, can correct the historical record.

This essay presents the first scholarly edition of this eye-witness account, including an introduction with discussion, an edited transcription of the newly discovered seventeenth-century manuscript, and an English translation with annotations. Given the striking absence of previous work on this ballet, I first situate the letter's description of the event by clarifying questions of the ballet's dating, identifying performance venues, and describing the audience. I then offer a brief structural overview of the ballet's onstage action; notes to the edition discuss in further detail particular elements of the letter's report as clarified by comparison with other contemporary references. This edition, I hope, will help to settle basic questions such as when, where, by whom, and for whom this ballet was performed, making available a wealth of new evidence regarding specific visual iconographies, choreographed dances, musical innovations, and elements of audience response. In

addition, my discussion touches briefly on issues of authorship and reliability of the letter's narrative as historical evidence. Finally, I suggest what we can gain from studying this letter in terms of new insights regarding women's court ballet as a whole as well as individual aesthetic and socio-political contributions by Marie de Medici as patron-performer.

Discussion

Basic Questions of Performance History

Although previously known sources conflict regarding the 1605 *ballet de la reine's* date and location,⁵ Jacques Compar, duc de La Force, asserts that Marie de Medici initiated rehearsals for the women's dancing no later than 10 January 1605, with the Louvre performance occurring in the early hours of 24 January.⁶ The letter archived by Peiresc confirms this time period, specifying that an audience assembled at the Louvre late in the evening on 23 January while the ballet itself began at around one o'clock in the morning of 24 January. The Florentine ambassador in Paris, Baccio Giovannini, similarly reports that the ballet took place in the middle of the night, as does another source not previously identified, *Le romant des chevaliers de Thrace*, which offers a print description of a running at the barrier which took place in February 1605 but also briefly discusses Marie's ballet the previous month.⁷ By reading such sources together with the letter found among Peiresc's collected papers we learn, too, that this ballet was repeated at multiple Paris locations over a period of seven hours. Our letter mentions that between four and eight o'clock in the morning, after the ballet's presentation at the Louvre, it was danced again at 'other assemblies', the first being the home of 'monsieur de Rhony' (Maximilien de Béthune, duc de Rosny and future duc de Sully, who resided in Paris at the Arsenal). La Force specifies further that the ballet's final location, following the Arsenal, was the archbishop's palace;⁸ somewhat wearily, he adds, he spent the whole night scurrying about accompanying Henri IV, who wished to attend all three performances, and it wasn't until day that he with the king returned to the Louvre.⁹ In sum, we can now determine with clarity that a large crowd gathered at the Louvre on the evening of 23 January, that the ballet proper got under way at the Louvre around midnight or just after, and that performances continued into the morning at two additional noteworthy Paris residences.

The total number of people who saw this ballet at its three locations combined must have been in the thousands. Scholars have not known how many

spectators attended Marie de Medici's ballets, but we can speculate based on the fact that Louis XIII's ballets, performed in the same rooms as his mother's, attracted 'several thousand' spectators.¹⁰ Lack of sufficient space at the Louvre would soon lead Henri IV to order construction of a new room at the Arsenal designed for larger audiences; complete with two levels of gallery seating, this theatre was inaugurated on 6 December 1609.¹¹ Marie de Medici's performances at the Arsenal would have taken place before this date in a smaller room, thus putting additional pressure on the Grand Salle du Louvre to accommodate would-be spectators. If for the queen's first French court ballet in 1602 vast numbers of spectators had found themselves physically discomfited,¹² for her production three years later an even larger audience gathered: La Force states outright that he had never seen such a great assembly at the Louvre.¹³ Giovannini, who also attended at the Louvre, similarly notes the large numbers of spectators, complaining that the press and confusion interfered with his enjoyment of the ballet: 'Having seen the ballet rehearsed with costumes, I know it was very beautiful, but the ballet being around midnight and with so great a crowd of spectators and confusion of people, I have to admit that I can't stand such discomfort any more'.¹⁴ Giovannini's experience was not unique; Henri IV's secretary of state Nicolas de Neufville, seigneur de Villeroy, reported to Beaumont (the French ambassador in England) that at this queen's ballet 'the press was so great that one had little pleasure there'.¹⁵ A further sense of crowded confusion comes through in our letter, which jokingly references the dozens of cutpurses and cunning thieves of hats and cloaks who infiltrated the audience, as well as the huge numbers of horses, litters, and carriages required by those attending, including what our writer flippantly refers to as veritable 'troops' of pages.¹⁶

Spectators at this and other royal ballets were mostly of elevated social status, although ordinary Parisians could also attend. Seating was arranged by gender and rank. According to *Le romant des chevaliers de Thrace*, the assembly gathered at the Louvre for Marie's 1605 *ballet de la reine* was 'full of those whom rank, duty, and hope kept near the king' along with 'others called there by curiosity'.¹⁷ Scaffolds erected along three sides of the hall afforded good views of the dancers and allowed socially prominent spectators to display themselves as well.¹⁸ The letter archived by Peiresc further emphasizes the extent to which spectators, seated according to social status, themselves formed part of the spectacle: had his addressee been there, the writer states, 'you would have seen all the ladies of the city, well attired, seated on scaffolds made especially for the occasion, the gentlemen a little lower than

the ladies without obscuring the view of the others, and at the middle of the railing were seated all the princes and lords of the court with many jewels on their clothes, and there was nothing but diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and gem ornaments on all sides'. With the kingdom's wealth thus prominently on display, Henri IV not surprisingly went out of his way to invite to the Louvre performance every ambassador present in Paris.¹⁹

The Onstage Action

To learn what this audience saw onstage in the Grand Salle du Louvre, we must turn to the letter found among Peiresc's papers supplemented by several other overlooked documents. These sources sometimes differ regarding specifics but together they enable a reasonably accurate overview. According to the letter found among Peiresc's collected papers, the entertainment proper began only after Henri IV had brought order to the assembly and taken his place. First came thirty violins 'marching softly'²⁰ up to the king; next entered thirteen lutes; and then came the king's Music or chorus, 'well composed' of thirty voices, at the centre of which appeared an Italian woman whom our letter writer tells us was 'so remarkably dressed that it would be impossible for me to depict her'. All of these musicians wore carnation and white coloured costumes made from cloth of silver and taffeta. Once each group had come before the king to take up its appropriate position in the hall, a 'little dwarf belonging to the queen' suddenly appeared, dressed in a black taffeta cassock covered in 'tinsel' (thread of gold, silver, or other rich metal typically used for court ballet or masque costumes) which reflected the lights in the hall thus adding to the production's other stunning visual effects. Wearing a mask with 'two faces as one depicts Janus', this dwarf made 'a thousand grimaces, leaps, and capers'. Having toured the room two or three times to violin accompaniment, he then returned to the door from which he had entered, from which next appeared twelve pages, each bearing two white torches in his hands. Dressed like the musicians in carnation and white costumes with little white boots covered in 'tinsel', these pages danced 'a thousand passages and figures'. After the pages took their places, the Music then played for the entry of César de Vendôme, the king's eldest natural son, dressed as a girl ('en fille'), who bowed to Henri IV and then returned to the door, from which Marie de Medici herself finally entered the room accompanied by eleven princesses.

Richly attired, the queen and her companions marched in a grave fashion and made a little passage. When they arrived at the centre of the room, the

musicians sang the king's praises. The queen then approached her husband, the instruments ceased, and she with her companions greeted him ceremoniously. Marie then continued her ballet, accompanied sometimes by the violins, sometimes the lutes, sometimes the Music. The dancing seems to have been extensive, for the queen, eventually becoming weary, seated herself on a specially constructed chair. At this point, the musicians suddenly exited their places to come before the king, where the Italian woman previously mentioned began, in our unknown letter writer's words, to charm the ears of the company by her voice more divine than human. Following this song, the queen resumed her dancing until she and her female companions had completed her ballet.

Usually this grand ballet — the set of figured dances performed by the entire ensemble or, in a queen's ballet, the troupe of noblewomen led by the queen — ended the performance proper, which was followed directly by the revels or ball in which the ballet's noble participants favoured elite members of the audience by taking them out as partners. In this instance, however, the king seems to have found himself surprised by an additional entry. Hearing the sound of martial instruments — trumpets, oboes, and drums — at the door, the king 'not knowing what it was' seated the queen and dismissed the princesses. Next the duc de Nevers came forward mounted on a horse decorated with 'insel'; arriving at the centre of the room, Nevers played a lute passed to him by a monkey who served him as lackey. Although there is some contradiction among extant sources regarding this final entry's remaining elements, including their exact order, La Force, the anonymous *Le romant*, and our letter all mention 'Turks' and multiple camels with riders in exotic guise; they also agree that these camels got down on their knees before the king as did their riders and that Henri IV allowed the distribution of a cartel from the 'Chevaliers of Thrace' to the princes and lords in the ballet's audience, challenging them to a barriers which would be performed at court during the last eight days of carnival.²¹ Specific to the letter at Carpentras are several remarkable details concerning audience reaction. According to the letter's author, spectators at the Louvre took great pleasure in witnessing the 'cinq pas' made by the onstage entourage who, hearing the trumpets, drums, oboes, violins, lutes, and other instruments making a nightmarish din, and seeing the ladies 'pissing themselves' and the gentlemen 'shitting' from derisive laughter, were so ashamed that they found themselves completely silenced, unable to utter the planned address to the king. The entourage then exited the room 'well mocked and ashamed', going back to their residences

in order to put their harangue in writing to be delivered to Henri IV the next day. The wording in this passage renders unclear whether the 'beasts' in question were the camels, their riders (a dwarf and a Tartar whom La Force calls 'savages'), and/or the groups of 'Turks' and 'moors' who accompanied them playing trumpets, oboes, and drums.²² If the entry's letter to Henri IV was meant to be delivered orally during the ballet as a 'dict' or harangue, however, the audience's uproarious outburst scuttled this original plan, according to our letter writer, thereby necessitating presentation of the address in writing. Once the fictional visitors departed, the ballet's other performers left in their coaches for the Arsenal, where the evening's second performance would take place, while the princes among the audience initiated the 'bal' or social dancing that lasted until the king declared his need to depart the Louvre with his retinue for the ballet's next performance venue.

Significance

Eye-witness accounts of early modern performance are not always reliable, and in this case, lack of information regarding our letter's author and addressee makes such questions of authority particularly vexed.²³ It is possible, however, to make educated guesses as to the letter writer's social identity and location as well as the overall veracity of his performance descriptions.

First, whoever composed this account was somewhat learned: note the letter's classical references to figures such as Janus and the ancient Greek painter Apelles, as well as contemporary humanists and orators such as Guillaume du Vair and Blaise de Monluc. Second, the author shows familiarity with court protocols and even individual courtiers, though not likely at a level of personal intimacy: he recognizes that the king appears at the ballet dressed in his usual manner, he identifies Nevers, the princesses, and the queen's dwarf, and he even knows that the Music includes an Italian woman singer (though not her name). The writer clearly attended the Louvre performance in his own person: no second-hand description could be this detailed and include so many unique specifics corroborated by other, reliable sources. Certain information, such as this letter's report that the queen's dwarf danced in the production and that an Italian woman sang, does not appear in other extant documents, to my knowledge. Yet we know that Marie de Medici's household did include dwarfs and, as I argue elsewhere, a close look at records regarding the Caccini consort's sojourn at the French royal court for the winter 1605 festival season makes highly credible this letter's assertion that

an *Italienne* sang with a 'voice more divine than human' as part of Marie's ballet that year.²⁴

Perhaps the biggest puzzle regarding this letter's authority as evidence for the history of court ballet performance concerns its description of the Louvre audience's reaction to the ballet's final entry, specifically the report that spectators ridiculed the entry's visiting entourage causing the performers to bumble their way offstage.²⁵ No other source I know of substantiates this testimony. Our unknown author's amused, even scatological recounting of the audience's derision and its effects on the bodies of the spectators and the competencies of the entry's performers may well indulge exaggeration, yet of only a different kind, perhaps, than that found in typical royal panegyric from this period describing other court performances. Indeed, we know that Henri IV himself found it highly amusing when such productions went unexpectedly astray: in one case the king reportedly responded with great mirth when pyrotechnics designed for a barriers at court accidentally set the hall on fire, scuttling the production.

It seems prudent, therefore, to grant at least provisional authority to this letter writer's narrative, despite the as yet unsolved mysteries regarding his particular identity. Given this conclusion, what additional new insights might we gain regarding the history of royal women's *ballet de cour* in general and Marie de Medici's contributions to the genre in particular? Below, I offer three suggestions.

First, through our letter's detailed mapping of this ballet's varied and numerous entries, including moments that engage the burlesque and/or employ male performers, we may challenge previous assumptions regarding an exclusively decorous and elevated tone taken up in women's court ballet. Overall, *ballet de cour* research tends to focus on productions sponsored and performed by men, particularly during the reigns of Louis XIII and XIV. Those women's productions that have received significant scholarly attention, such as the 1581 *Ballet comique de la reine*, fall during the late Valois period. Noting women's geometric or figured dances in royal ballets from this earlier period, Mark Franko nonetheless asserts that in burlesque ballet circa 1620–36, the sub-genre he most values for its 'playful resistance' to royal ideology, no women danced: 'Unlike Valois court ballet, burlesque ballets under Louis XIII were performed by all-male casts'.²⁶ A closer look at Marie's 1605 French court ballet as it is described by our letter writer, however, shows that at the first Bourbon court of Henri IV, elements of the strange, the edgy, and the exotic could and did feature prominently in at least one royal woman's

ballet, as did performers of both sexes: such features include a queen's dwarf grimacing and leaping, a young royal male *en travesti* (César de Vendôme 'en fille'), several live animals (a monkey, camels, and perhaps even a horse),²⁷ and another dwarf who, along with the camels, seems to have enacted forms of antic bumbling our letter writer likens to a 'sink-a-pace' performed by 'beasts'. In this ballet, such burlesque elements appear side by side with graceful choreographies and 'divine' songs performed by women. Admittedly, the queen and her princesses do not adopt in their own bodily comportment the antic and strange, but the queen's ballet itself can and does.

Further aspects of our letter help us to gauge how such formal innovations impacted multiple levels of audience reception. This 1605 ballet, it seems, captured its spectators' interest through divine singing and graceful dancing; it also reduced those assembled to fits of mocking laughter. Recognition of such complex aesthetic responses in turn indicates the queen's contributions to historically specific developments regarding court ballet's composite features. During the period 1581–1610, Margaret McGowan asserts, ballet practitioners at court sought to broaden the genre's aesthetic scope and political framework in part by introducing burlesque elements.²⁸ McGowan does not discuss women's *ballet de cour* as part of this development, but based on Marie's 1605 production as outlined in this essay, we can both confirm McGowan's general hunch about changes to court ballet during the reign of Henri IV and also extend the implications of her guess to include at least one production sponsored and performed by Marie de Medici.

Second and relatedly, this manuscript letter indicates how conspicuous consumption in Marie de Medici's courtly spectacles involved not only opulent, bejeweled costumes for dancers (as frequently noted in other contemporary reports) but also 'living, breathing luxury items' such as foreign women singers and dwarfs.²⁹ As I have argued, if the Italian woman who according to our letter sang during this 1605 *ballet de la reine* was the famous Francesca Caccini or even her sister Settimia or stepmother Margherita, we may now discern Marie de Medici's direct responsibility for facilitating the integration, in France, of Italian musical innovations within court ballet.³⁰ Moreover, while English language scholars have recently mapped the participation of foreign women singers and dwarfs in court masques and plays sponsored and performed in England by Marie's youngest daughter Henrietta Maria, queen consort to Charles I, the letter archived by Peiresc and studied here now identifies specific French precedents for such casting choices within a production directly organized and danced by Henrietta's own mother.³¹

Third and finally, analysis of this letter and its provenance suggests the extent to which royal women's ballets such as this one were recognized by contemporaries as ceremonial, even political events. Scholarly consensus now asserts that early modern court spectacle was inherently bound up with local and international politics, including questions of rule within kingdoms and diplomatic relations with other courts, yet we are just beginning to map the nature and extent of women's contributions in this vein. Marie de Medici's 1605 ballet, as noted above, garnered spectators from the French court and the city of Paris but also select international spectators chosen by royal design. For some time, Henri IV had actively pursued policies designed to rebuild French financial solvency and civic unity after the wars of religion. In this particular context, public gatherings and ceremonials like this queen's ballet enabled the French crown to showcase before foreign representatives concrete evidence of the kingdom's increasing strength, most notably the wealth of its *grandeues* and prosperity of its cities.³² In 1605, according to the Medici court representative, the ambassadors in attendance at the queen's ballet included himself, the papal nuncio, representatives from Spain, Venice, and Flanders, as well as Ludovic Stuart, duke of Lennox, who had recently arrived in Paris as the extraordinary ambassador representing James I of England.³³ When these ambassadors witnessed the queen dancing alongside 'eleven princesses', literally surrounding herself with France's women of highest rank, they saw evidence, symbolically at least, of her newfound authority within the kingdom. The king, too, gained a timely occasion by which symbolically to assert himself before his own subjects as well as representatives of foreign courts. Queens' masques performed in London and Valladolid in the period 1603–5, in part by excluding Henri IV's ambassador to James I as a privileged spectator, worked against French interests by helping to foster and mark an Anglo-Spanish peace.³⁴ Marie de Medici's equivalent performance in Paris was attended by representatives of both Philip III and James I, yet in seating these ambassadors within the hall Henri IV courteously but firmly insisted on his own prerogatives as host. As we learn from our letter (and as corroborated by other documents), Henri IV entered the Grand Salle du Louvre before the ballet was to begin in order to put the assembly in order ('pour faire ranger tout le monde'). First he arranged the ambassadors' seating according to confessional stance, placing those of England on one side and the papal nuncio and the Catholic princes on the other; once this arrangement had been achieved such that 'all was so ordered that there was not any scuffle nor noise', the king then expelled other spectators from the room on the basis, it seems,

of lesser status as marked by dress.³⁵ Thus arranging his own subjects but also representatives from foreign courts, Henri IV publicly asserted mastery in his own house, both literally and figuratively.

Our letter writer's interest in these aspects of the performance helps to elucidate early modern understandings of what social and political functions underpinned such instances of royal spectacle and ceremonial; so does the interest shown by Peiresc. This document comes down to us through Peiresc's *registres* or collected papers, and specifically as part of a series of documents that are dedicated to descriptions of French court ceremonials. I discuss the archiving of these documents in more detail below; here, suffice it to note that although this letter is the only ballet description found among Peiresc's two *recueils* on ceremonial, its inclusion among documents of this type suggests that Peiresc recognized this ballet as a ritualized enactment of royal authority. So did our letter writer: although our author concludes his report of the ballet by jesting about the trivial content of his letter, his very detailed narrations concerning costumes, jewels, the orderly placement of persons both onstage and off, etc. belie such self-mockery and testify to this ballet's ultimate significance for its contemporaries as a codified staging of rule.

Textual Description and Editorial Principles

Manuscript Description

The shelfmark for this document is: Carpentras, Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine, MS 1794, ff 429r-430v.³⁶ MS 1794 at the Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine comprises a *recueil* or volume of gathered papers from the collection of Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc (1580–1637), the famous antiquarian from Provence. Peiresc 'was one of the most erudite ... collectors of *curiosa* of the seventeenth century'; along with numerous printed books, Peiresc's library included ancient and medieval manuscripts as well as personal papers (*registres*) comprised of his own notes and occasionally original documents or brief transcriptions of them, as well as numerous letters, including letters he himself had received, copies of letters sent to others, and 'other original or copied letters which had come into his possession'.³⁷ Of the approximately 120 volumes from among Peiresc's personal papers now housed in Carpentras, only two — mss 1794 and 1795 — comprise descriptions of royal and other court ceremonies such as Te Deums, processions, baptisms, royal entries, etc. One such description is our manuscript letter recounting what took place at the 1605 *ballet de la reine*.

Folio 429's watermark in the shape of a pot, discovered by Eliane Roux, helps to date the manuscript as roughly contemporary with the ballet: such watermarks are typical of paper found throughout France in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.³⁸ The manuscript itself, though, is not signed. The letter's original recipient also remains a mystery, since no evidence internal to the text names the addressee and any greeting that may have existed prior to the paper being bound does not appear; nor is there an accompanying envelope.

Battifol assumes that Peiresc himself authored the letter.³⁹ But while this document undoubtedly came into Peiresc's possession and may even have been written *to* him, close paleographic analysis fails to confirm him as author; nor does external biographical evidence seem to support Battifol's assumption. Neither of the manuscript hands are Peiresc's own; neither to my knowledge do they match the hands for any of Peiresc's known personal secretaries or copyists. Biographer Pierre Gassendi also implies that Peiresc had not yet made his first trip to Paris in January 1605, when the performance that our letter describes took place.⁴⁰ For reasons discussed above, the author of this description must have personally attended the Louvre production. Therefore, unless Gassendi is wrong regarding Peiresc's whereabouts in January 1605, Battifol's assertion regarding Peiresc's authorship appears incorrect.

Although the letter may have been written to Peiresc, the hand for this document does not seem to match that for any of Peiresc's known correspondents. How exactly this document came into Peiresc's possession thus remains unclear. Is this an original letter or a copy? The text itself includes two hands, the first encompassing the document's title and part of the first sentence only. The rest of the document contains several corrections but these are not overly remarkable or numerous. The document presents no characteristic physical features common to letters written and delivered during this period (crease marks, seals, notes on reverse sides of the paper indicating details of the date, sender, or recipient, etc.).

My best guess regarding provenance is that this document comprises a copy made at the request of Peiresc himself, close to the date of the ballet performance, for inclusion among a series of texts that describe royal ceremonials. For this argument, I rely heavily on insights by Eliane Roux communicated in personal correspondence. We may surmise Peiresc's interest in ceremonial descriptions such as these near the time of Marie de Medici's ballet by analyzing the manuscript, placed immediately following our document

within the same *recueil*, which describes a royal ‘Carouzère’ or carrousel performed in Paris in February 1606. As is well known, Peiresc traveled to Paris as secretary to Guillaume du Vair in August 1605.⁴¹ The hand for the document describing the carrousel is definitely Peiresc’s, and although at least one printed catalogue indicates that Peiresc is this document’s copyist,⁴² Roux contends that Peiresc himself must have been the author: not only did he correct the content of the description as he was writing (see for example f 431r), interrupting some words, cancelling others, and adding lengthy descriptions of particular performance elements, but François de Malherbe, who consulted Peiresc when composing verses for the production, expressed in a letter to Peiresc his satisfaction that his friend had been able to attend the carrousel.⁴³ If MS fr 1794’s ‘Carouzère’ description is indeed an original report authored by Peiresc himself, it shows that Peiresc was personally interested in court ceremonial, and in recording its descriptions, very early on. This information in turn suggests that Peiresc in all likelihood entered into possession of the 1605 ballet letter within a reasonably short time after the event took place. It is also likely that Peiresc himself organized the *recueil* of ceremonial descriptions in which this letter is placed. Like the other volumes that comprise Peiresc’s *registres* at the Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine, this one was bound after Peiresc’s death by his friend and correspondent Pierre Dupuy. Peiresc himself, however, sorted his documents by subject matter and organized them in packets; these ‘fagots’, as he called them, correspond more or less to the volumes into which Dupuy then placed them.⁴⁴ From this history, it is safe to conclude that the organization of volumes at Carpentras likely corresponds with the general order given by Peiresc.

Editorial Principles

In editing this letter with French transcription and English translation, my goal is to make the narrative, with all of its idiosyncracies, available for both anglophone and francophone researchers. My translation aims above all to clarify the information provided in the letter’s narrative account of the ballet event for a scholarly audience, but where possible I have also attempted to convey the letter’s tone and replicate its figures of speech with English equivalents.

I confine glosses in the French transcription to extremely fundamental orthographic clarifications and limit longer explanatory annotations to the edited translation. I have not needed to collate variants since this manuscript is to my knowledge a unique extant copy; where helpful, however, my notes

to the translation indicate relevant sections from Jolly's manuscript, either because his transcription helps to make sense of a confusing letter or word in the seventeenth-century document or in order to alert readers to discrepancies between my own transcription and Jolly's that may be important to the text's meaning.

In keeping with *Early Theatre's* practices, my transcription follows REED guidelines, which strictly limit modernization and other emendations that would otherwise be standard according to L'École nationale des chartes.⁴⁵ Following REED, for example, I transcribe dittography, indicating relevant instances in notes; I also enclose cancelled text in square brackets ([]), mark illegible text by angle brackets enclosing a stop for each illegible letter (<...>), and indicate interlineations above the line by enclosing them in upper half brackets (⌈ ⌋). I do not correct inconsistent scribal use of upper versus lower case; I insert no punctuation marks, apostrophes, or hyphens; and with the exception of expansions, which I italicize, my transcription consistently reproduces original spelling. In this instance, painstaking transcription of the letter's original orthography, which is unusual even by seventeenth-century standards, may help others to narrow the unknown author's identity (by region of origin, for example); in the few instances where scribal spelling might cause significant confusion for readers, however, I modernize in notes. Where necessary to comply with regular usage, my transcription separates clustered words or combines words separated by spacing (for example, rendering 'voie la' on f 429r as 'voielà'). I significantly depart from REED practice, however, regarding accents and cedilles. In this case, I follow Bernard Barbiche and Monique Chatenet's *L'Édition des textes anciens, XVIe–XVIIIe siècle* and Barbiche's revised online guidelines for editing seventeenth-century documents; specifically, I have inserted accents to indicate the relevant sounds for the letter(s) e and ee in final syllables only, and have employed the accent grave for the letters a, e, and u in prepositions and monosyllabic adverbs in order to distinguish homographic words (eg. *à, où*).⁴⁶

Transcription

Carpentras, Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine, ms 1794, ff 429r–430v

/f 429r/

Le Balet de la Reine
dansé à Paris le 23 janvier
1605

Le ballet de la Reyne se dança le 23. de ce moys de Ianvier où vous eussies veu toutesⁱ les dames de la ville bien parées assizes seur des echefaux que lon auoyt fait exprès les gentils hommes un peu plus bas que les dames sans que les uns empechassent de uoier les aultres et au millieu de la barrière tous les princes et soyneurs de la cour auec force pïrrarieⁱⁱ sour leur habis et nes-toyt que diamans que rubis quemeraudes quenseignes de tous costés le temps du ballet s'approchant environ une heure apres mynuyt le [Rq] roy habillé à lacoustumée aiant une enseigne et une plume au chapeau une chayne de senteur en escherpe son espée au costé son manteau sur le bras gauche et un baston a la main sortit de sa chambre et uint dans la Grand salle du Louure pour faire Ranger tout le monde les ambassadeurs danglaterre 「dun」 costé le nonce du pape de lautre et les princes de mesme bref tout estoyt tellement ordonné quil ny auoyt point de presse ny de bruit et pour noblier renⁱⁱⁱ des des^{iv} particulliarités du ballet après quil eut fait rangé tout le monde luy mesme commança à faire le tour de la salle et commil feut auprès de moy qui estois dernier monsieur le chevallier rompit son baston sur mon uoiesin et en fit sortir deus ou trois Dieu sçait sy iauois grande peur mais il ne mosa rien dire car il recogneut bien que Iauois aussi bonne minne que luy sans comparaison comme donc il feut retourné à sa place uoiela antrer trante uiollans habillés de taphetas incarnat couuert de toielle d'argent le bas de soye incarnat et les solliers blancs ils marchent doucement et comme sont arriüés audeuant [le roy] du Roy le *maistre* de seremonie leur donne leur place après cella antrarent treze uestus du toielle d'argent auec chascun son lut à la main et eurent leur place comme les autres après eus la musique du roy entra qui estoyt bien compozée de trante voix au millieu desquelles y auoyt

i *toutes*: a second hand begins here and continues to the end of the letter.

ii *sic* for *pierreries*.

iii *sic* for *rien*.

iv *des des*: dittography.

vne Italienne si bien atifée quil me seroyt <.> impossible de uous la depeindre bref tous ceux que le uous ay là nommés estoient habillés dincarnat et blanc mais après que chascun eut son ordre les uiollans commençarent à jouer et soudain entre un petit nain de la reyne avec une soutane de taphetas noir couverte de clinquans aiant deux visages comme on depeint / f 429v / Ianus faisant milles grimaces cabriolles et entrechats il eut fait deus ou trois tours de salle reuint à la porte où entrarent douze pages avec deus flambeaux blancs chascun en leur mains uestues dincarnat et blanc portant de petites botines blanches couvertes de clinquan faissant mille passages et figures comme cella feut faict pour couper court ils eurent leur place et les viollans les luts et la musique commançarent à jouer tous ensemble et antra monsieur de vandome habillé en fille qui vint [fa<...>] faire la reueranse au Roy et après Retourna à la porte doù sortit la reine accompagnée de unze princesses marchant dune façon grave faisant des petis pasages et comme elle feut au millieu de la salle les musiciens chantarent les louanges du Roy et estant auprès du Roy tous les instrumans cessarent et la reine avec ses princesses sallua sa magesté après cella elle continua le ballet et tantot les viollans tantot les luts tantot la musique jouoit jusques à ce quiⁱ la reine feut lassé qui sassit dans une cheze de satin incarnat toute couverte de clinquans et soudain les musiciens sortirent de leur place pour ce venir mettre au deuant du roy où ceste fame itallienne commança de charmer les oreilles de la compagnie par sa voix plustot divine que humayne après cella la reine sota de sa place et recommansa à danser jusques quelle eut finy le baleⁱⁱ de vous dire de la fasson quelles estoient habillés le pinceau d'Apelles [de uous dire la façon quelles estoient] ne seroyt pas suffisant de les pouuoier depeindre ie vous diray bien que sur leur habis qui estoient incarnas et blancs on ne uoioit que diamans que perles quenseignes que joyaux que pierraries uous eussies dict à le uoier quelles estoient couvertes destoilles ce nestoyt *que* lumière que clarté que flambeaux que des soleil bref les rayons de leur habits offusquoient la ueue des assistans enfin comme la Reine eut achevé de danser on entendit douze trompettes à la porte de la salle autant dhaubois et tambours et le Roy ne sçachent que sestoyt donne sa place à la reine et fit conger toutes les princesses et commanda que personne ne quitte son ordre et setant mis à vn coin uoilla entrer monsieur de nevers dans la salle monté sur un petit bidet tout couuert de Clinquans qui se uint *mettre* au millieu de la salle où il Comança de iouer du lut *quun* petit cinge qui lui

i *sic* for *que*.

ii *sic* for *ballet*.

seruoyt de lanqué luy donna et aussitot on uoyt entrer sept chameaux montés de sept turcs quy s'en viendrent deuant le Roy le premier desquels portoyt en sa bouche un panier plain de cartels & defits aux princes et aux soineurs de la court pour courre les ioustes les huict derniers jours du Carnaval et Comme feut au deuant de sa magesté Commança à se *mettre* à genoux et luy presanter / f 430r / son panier quy feut pris du roy et ietta les cartels aux princes cestoyt le plus grand plaisir du monde de uoier faire les cinq pas à ces bestes qui oians les trompetes tambours haubois viollons [lut] luts et autre sorte dinstrumans menoyent un bruyt un tintamarre et uoiant que les dames pissoient soubs elles et que la pluspart des gentilhommes estoient disposés à couchierⁱ le balet de rire [ils] ils feurent si honteux quilz firent comme lassesseur deuant le Roy sans pouoir Iamais dire un mot on auoyt beau à leur donner du uin et du vinaigre ils ne pourent iamais rien dire et perdirent la parolle tout à fait ce que feut Cause queⁱⁱ sa magesté leur commanda de *mettre* leur dire par escrit cest la choze la mieus faicte du monde les laquais la crient par paris si ieusse heu de largent ie uous en eusse envoyé une copie pour conclure donc comme dict monsieur du vair les chameaux sortirent de la salle bien mocqués et honteux et le meilleur expediant quilz eurent ce feut dentrer chascun dans son carrosse et aller escrire leur arangue pour la faire voier le landemain au Roy cependant le bal se dressa et les princes commencerent à danser pendant que ceux du ballet entrent en carrose pour aller ches monsieur du Rhonyⁱⁱⁱ alors le Roy commanda quon cessa car il estoit temps daller aux autres assemblés il estoyt quatre heures quant le balet sortit du louure et huict lorsqu'il Retourna de uous peindre asture combien il a cousté combien valloyt ce quelles portoient combien il y auoyt de flambeaux des chevaux de litières de carrosses combien de suises des soldas de gardes des cossois^{iv} combien des douzaines de copeurs de bourses des charretées des laquais des troupes de papes^v et des fripons des chapeaus et manteaus ie dirois tout & ne garderois rien pour le Retour cependant sy quelque faux messenger vous le contoyt autrement nen croies Rien et sil ueut dire le contraire donnes luy ardimant une demantie car come dict monsieur de monluc en son commantaire Iy estoys mon capytaine au reste si vous recognoisses que iaye pris trop de peine de uous escrire ce petit tiercellet de poulles et que vous desires recompanser mon travail ie ne

i *sic for conchier.*

ii *sic for ce qui fut cause que.*

iii *sic for Rosny.*

iv *Alternatively: des soldas de gardes d'escossois (as in garde écossaise).*

v *sic for pages.*

vous demande autre choze cest bien peu qun escu de chasque mot pour [po] moy ie ne metz poinct la main en la plume à moins sy cestoyt un autre ie luy en ferois paier davantage prepares donc vos lunettes pour les conter pendant que ie me disposeray à chercher le someil car il est temps.

Translation with Annotations

The queen's ballet
danced in Paris the 23rd of January
1605

The queen's ballet was danced on the 23rd of this month of January, where you would have seen all the ladies of the city, well attired, seated on scaffolds made especially for the occasion, the gentlemen a little lower than the ladies without obscuring the view of the others,ⁱ and at the middle of the railingⁱⁱ were seated all the princes and lords of the court with many jewels on their clothes, and there was nothing but diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and gem ornamentsⁱⁱⁱ on all sides.

The time of the ballet approaching around one hour after midnight, the king — dressed as usual having a gem ornament^{iv} and a feather on his hat, a sash over his shoulder,^v his sword at his side, his cloak on his left arm, and

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- i The men's seating was arranged so that the women's view of the ballet would not be blocked and/or so that the women could themselves be seen by others in the audience: both meanings are appropriate.
- ii According to Battifol, a barrier or rectangular railing framed the centre of the hall (*Le Louvre*, 112). This railing would have demarcated the performance space from the sections occupied by spectators.
- iii *enseignes*: jewels; also gem ornaments in the sense of specially shaped arrangements of precious stones worn as accessories. Such gem ornaments included elaborately designed jeweled hat badges for men worn especially by French courtiers and kings; see Yvonne Hackenbroch, *Enseignes* (Firenze, 1996), 2–87, esp. 2. According to Hackenbroch, *enseignes* were starting to become less fashionable by the early seventeenth century.
- iv See fn iii above.
- v *chayne de senteur en escherpe*: a cloth band, ribbon, or sash draped over one shoulder and across the chest as a mark of rank. Battifol's paraphrase describes the king with 'la poitrine barrée par une écharpe blanche' [his chest crossed by a white scarf] (*Le Louvre*, 113). Our letter makes no reference to the sash's colour but given its assertion that the king appears dressed according to custom, the inference seems fitting. Several contemporary portraits feature Henri IV wearing a white sash crossing his breast from shoulder to waist; see for example Pourbus's early seventeenth-century portrait at the Musée national du château de

a baton in his hand — left his chamber and came to the Great Hall of the Louvreⁱ to have every one arranged in their places, the English ambassadors on one side, the papal nuncio on the other, and the princes too. In brief, all was so ordered that there was not any scuffle nor noise.

And so as not to forget the particular circumstancesⁱⁱ of the ballet: after the king had arranged everyone in their places, he himself began to tour the hall, and when he was near me who was last, monsieur le chevallier rapped his baton on my neighbour and made two or three leave.ⁱⁱⁱ God knows I was greatly afraid, but he didn't dare say anything to me because he recognized that I carried myself^{iv} as well as he without any comparison.^v

Pau and the portrait of Henri IV in breastplate and white feather hat at the Musée des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon.

- i Also called by contemporaries the Salle des États, now known as the Salle Lacaze, the Grand Salle du Louvre was located on the palace's first floor (what in English we call the second floor). Henri IV's chambers and antechamber were positioned directly adjacent to the Salle des États. For a map of the Louvre during this period, see Battifol, *Le Louvre*, unnumbered figure between pp 24 and 25.
- ii *particularités*: distinctive traits or details; the sense of 'specific circumstances' comes into parlance in 1579. *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*, ed. Alain Rey (Paris, 1998; rpt. 2006), 2589.
- iii *monsieur le chevallier*: seemingly a jocund reference to Henri IV himself as 'mister knight'. Battifol also interprets this phrase as indicating the king (*Le Louvre*, 112). The term might conceivably indicate Jacques Amelot Chevalier, premier president of the Cour des Aides, a financial high court in Paris; on this individual, see Sharon Kettering, *Power and Reputation at the Court of Louis XIII: The Career of Charles d'Albert, duc de Luynes (1578–1621)* (Manchester and New York, 2008), 74. Another identification might be the Charles Chevalier who arranged parts for court ballet dance music, including for Marie de Medici's 1609 *Ballet de la Reine représentant la Beauté*, but if so, the 'le' in 'monsieur le chevallier' makes no sense. On Charles Chevalier, see Ms fr 15057 entry 283 [np], Michel Henry's table of royal ballet music in Ms fr 24357, np, and Monique Rollin, 'La musique de ballet dans les tablatures de luth: souvenir et source d'inspiration', *Le ballet aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles en France et à la cour de Savoie*, ed. Marie-Thérèse Bouquet-Boyet (Genève, 1992), 56. In our letter, Henri IV himself is described two sentences earlier as appearing with a baton in hand, while this 'monsieur le chevallier' also singles out with his baton those spectators who must leave the hall. In addition, the same pronoun ('lui') indicates this 'monsieur le chevallier' and the king who returns to his place in the next sentence. Either way, Henri IV visibly participates in selecting several spectators for exclusion from the assembly.
- iv *iauois aussi bonne minne*: *mine* indicates appearance and allure, representing social status; *avoir bonne mine* means to carry oneself decorously and to be dressed well, according to high social rank.
- v Battifol says that 'Peiresc' dissembled and hid his head when the king approached, but our narrator gives no such indication. Rather, the tone is that of mock self-aggrandizement: since

When he had returned to his place, behold there entered thirty violins dressed in carnationⁱ taffeta covered in cloth of silver with carnation silk stockings and white slippers. They marched softlyⁱⁱ and as they arrived in front of the king, the master of ceremonies gave them their place. After this there entered thirteen dressed in cloth of silver each with his lute in his hand, and they had their place like the others. After these the king's Musicⁱⁱⁱ entered, well composed of thirty voices, in the middle of which there was an Italian woman^{iv} so well decked out^v that it would be impossible for me to describe

no French subject equals the king in status, the letter's author must be joking about his own elevated appearance and comportment.

- i *incarnat*: also flesh coloured, rose coloured.
- ii *ils marchent doucement*: they dance making walking steps. *Marcher doucement* can mean to adopt an ordinary walk with emphasis, putting first the toes on the floor followed by the rest of the foot, or to move or walk delicately, quietly, peacefully, or slowly. Given the ceremonial nature of the violins' arrival and movement toward the king and their assigned position in the hall, the phrase seems to indicate that these musicians moved purposefully as a group, most likely stepping delicately in a slow, controlled fashion. I am grateful to David J. Buch for discussing with me the various meanings this phrase may evoke.
- iii *Musique* here means the group of musicians specifically patronized by the king for performance at court. In this case the royal Music encompassed a chorus.
- iv *une Italienne*: my forthcoming essay 'Marie de Medici's 1605 *ballet de la reine* and the virtuosic female voice', *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 7, offers a detailed argument identifying this Italian woman singer as a member of Giulio Caccini's famous vocal consort and analyzes what was at stake for the queen, socially and politically, in this casting choice. Cf. Jean-François Dubost, *Marie de Médicis. La reine dévoilée* (Paris, 2009), 239, who asserts as fact that Francesca Caccini sang in Marie's 1605 ballet with no explanation save a citation to Battifol's paraphrase. Battifol uses the phrase 'une célèbre cantatrice italienne' (Battifol, *Le Louvre*, 113) and presumably Dubost bases his claim on this wording. But neither extant manuscript — Jolly's eighteenth-century transcription nor the seventeenth-century document at Carpentras — mentions this Italian singer's renown nor identifies her by name.
- v *attifée*: past participle (feminine form) of *attifer* meaning to dress, adorn, decorate, deck out, or trim up; usually applied to women, often in reference to their coiffure, and by the later seventeenth century holding a mocking connotation. *Dictionnaire de l'académie française* 1st edn (1694), 4th edn (1762), 5th edn (1798), and 6th edn (1832–5), in the ARTFL Project's *Dictionnaires d'autrefois. French dictionaries of the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th centuries*, <<http://artflx.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/dicos/pubdicollook.pl?strippedhw=attifer>>. Especially given animosity to Italians at the French court during this period, it is possible that the phrase *si bien attifée* holds the derogative connotation that it would definitely acquire by the end of the century. Note, however, that the author describes the woman's singing voice in glowing terms as 'more divine than human'.

her to you. In brief, all those I've previously mentioned to you were dressed in carnation and white.

But after each of these was correctly ordered,ⁱ the violins began to play and suddenly there enters a little dwarf belonging to the queen,ⁱⁱ with a robeⁱⁱⁱ made of black taffeta covered in tinsel^{iv} having two faces as one depicts Janus,^v making a thousand grimaces, capers, and entrechats.^{vi} He made two or three tours of the room [and] returned to the door, where twelve pages entered,

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- i Battifol, *Le Louvre*, 113, says they went to a corner assigned to them, though the document specifies only a place assigned.
- ii Likely Jean Mauderon, dit Maudricart, a dwarf who prior to 1617 held the office of usher of the queen's cabinet. On Mauderon see Edouard Garnier, *Nains et Geants* (Paris, 1884), 102.
- iii *soutane*: cassock or robe such as that worn by priests or by members of the parlement de Paris.
- iv *clinquant*: tinsel, in the sense of thread of gold, silver, or other rich metal woven through the fabric in performers' costumes and specifically designed to reflect the lights of the hall. *Dictionnaire de l'académie française*, 1st edn (1694); see also the explanation 'On appelle aussi *Clinquant*, Des lames ou feuilles de cuivre qui brillent beaucoup. *Les habits de masques, de ballets, sont ordinairement chargés de clinquant*' in *Dictionnaire de l'academie française*, 4th edn (1762), both in *Dictionnaires d'autrefois*, <<http://artflx.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/dicos/pubdico1look.pl?strippedhw=clinquant>>.
- v Battifol states that the dwarf was 'affublé d'un masque ridicule à deux visages' and performed a clown-like function (*Le Louvre*, 114); he does not mention the letter's comparison between the two faces on the dwarf's mask and those of the Roman god Janus. The god of beginnings and endings, Janus presided over the new year and particularly the month of January, named after him; his appearance would thus have been appropriate for this ballet performed in January 1605. A familiar figure from Renaissance statuary, medals, and emblem books, Janus made frequent appearances in the period's court festivals; for example, one of the ten costumed tournament masquerades for a 1596 Stuttgart christening witnessed by Thomas Platter featured Janus on horseback in the form of conjoined twins, preceded and followed by two additional figures each having two faces. See M.A. Katritzky's forthcoming book *Healing, Performance, and Ceremony in the Writings of Three Early Modern Physicians: Hippolytus Guarinonius and the Brothers Felix and Thomas Platter* (Burlington, VT, 2012); I am grateful to Dr Katritzky for this reference.
- vi This reference to the entrechat — a jump during which the legs beat against each other rapidly in the air before the dancer lands on one or two feet, also known as a capriole — is to my knowledge the first known use of this specific dance term, preceding the 1609 reference to *entre-chat* cited in the *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française* (1255–6) and explained there as a francization of the Italian *intrecciata* (past participle of *intrecciare*). The term's appearance in this 1605 letter also precedes the *livret* or printed brochure for the *Ballet de Monseigneur le duc de Vandosme* (Paris, 1610) which references *entrechats* performed as part of an exuberant, antic set of figured dances by eight skilled dwarfs personating servants to the sorceress Alcine: 'Ils étoient tous petits et choisis pour les plus dispos hommes de la Cour, et faisoient (presque toujours à saults, capriolles, et entrichats) les figures biens marquées'. I am grateful to Rebecca Harris-Warrick for drawing my attention to the use of *entrechat* in the

each holding two white torchesⁱ in his hands, dressed in incarnat and white, wearing little white boots covered in tinsel, making a thousand passages and figures. When that was done, to cut things short, they had their place and the violins, lutes, and Music began to play all together.

And Monsieur de Vendômeⁱⁱ entered dressed as a girl,ⁱⁱⁱ who came to make a bow^{iv} to the king, and after this he returned to the door from which came out the queen accompanied by eleven princesses walking in a grave fashion and making little passages,^v and once she was in the middle of the room, the musicians sang the praises of the king, and [the queen] being near the king, all the instruments ceased and the queen with her princesses greeted His Majesty. After that, she continued the ballet, and sometimes the violins, sometimes the lutes, sometimes the Music played until the queen became

1610 *Ballet de Monsieur de Vendosme* and discussing with me several other dance terms found in this letter.

- i *flambeaux*: portable lights such as torches or candles typically carried by pages during torch dances. See for example the twenty-four masked pages carrying lanterns in the 1605 *sarao* or masque performed at the Spanish court in Valladolid, discussed in Mark Hutchings and Berta Cano-Echevarría, 'Between Courts: Female Masquers and Anglo-Spanish Diplomacy, 1603–5', *Early Theatre* 15.1 (2012), as well as their 'The Spanish Ambassador and *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*: A New Document', *English Literary Renaissance* 42.2 (2012), 223–57. In the early *ballet de cour* variation known as *ballet-mascarade*, pages carrying lights typically arranged themselves collectively around the space reserved for performers; see Henri Prunières, *Le ballet de cour en France avant Benserade et Lully* (Paris, 1914; rpt New York, 1970), 100. Held by the pages throughout the spectacle, the candles or torches presumably helped to illuminate the playing space and provided the light which then reflected off the *clinquant* that decorated performers' costumes, such as in this 1605 *ballet de la reine*.
- ii César de Bourbon, duc de Vendôme, 1594–1655, eldest 'natural' (bastard) son of Henri IV. Vendôme was legitimized in 1595 and made duke in 1598. In 1602 he appeared as Cupid in Marie de Medici's *Ballet représentant les 16 Vertues*; see Claude Malingre, *Annales générales de la ville de Paris* (Paris, 1640), 481.
- iii *en fille*: in the Inguibertine manuscript, *fille* appears at the far right margin of f 429v and is difficult to make out because the page is tightly bound, so much so that Jolly marks his own transcription with a question mark. Battifol, who depends on Jolly, does not mention Vendôme's costume (*Le Louvre*, 114).
- iv *reueranse*: a reverence in the sense of a formal choreographed bow that initiated social dances between mixed-gender partners; also a ceremonial salute. *Dictionnaire du français classique: le XVIIe siècle*, ed. Jean Dubois et al. (Paris, 1992), 442. The reverence was one of the first dance steps learned by children. Fabrizio Caroso's dance treatise *Nobiltà di dame* (1600) outlines several variations, including reverences specific to women or to be used particularly when greeting the king.
- v Likely these movements were choreographed, like those of the musicians who entered earlier walking 'doucement'; see p 127 fn ii.

wearⁱ and seated herself in a chair of carnation satin all covered with tinsel. And all of a sudden the musicians came out of their place to position themselves before the king, where this Italian woman began to charm the ears of the company by her voice more divine than human.ⁱⁱ

After that, the queen left her seat and again began to dance until she had finished the ballet. To tell you the fashion in which theyⁱⁱⁱ were attired: even the paint brush of Apelles^{iv} would not suffice to be able to depict them. I will tell you that on their costumes, which were carnation and white, one saw only diamonds, pearls, gem ornaments,^v precious stones, and jewels. Seeing it, you would have said that they were covered with stars. All was only light, brightness, flames, suns. In brief, the rays from their costumes blinded the eyes of the spectators.

Finally, when the queen had finished dancing, one heard twelve trumpets at the door of the room [and] as many oboes and drums,^{vi} and the king not

i *lassé[e]*: past participle of *lasser*, to tire or weary.

ii On the performance values for this woman's song, see Gough, 'Marie de Medici's 1605 *Ballet de la Reine* and the virtuosic female voice'.

iii The queen and princesses.

iv *Apelles*: famous painter from ancient Greece known for his verisimilitude in portraiture and highly praised by Pliny the Elder.

v *enseignes*: see p 125, fn iii.

vi Battifol indicates that the drums and trumpets began to play 'une marche guerrière' [a warrior march] 'de façon terriblement bruyante' [in a very loud fashion] (*Le Louvre*, 114). Drums and trumpets were indeed used for martial music, as were oboes, and their sound would have been much louder than that of the violins, lutes, and voices that performed earlier. Two other extant sources describe this ballet and help to clarify that these trumpets and oboes were played by a group of Turks and moors who would soon enter the playing space. See Jacques Compar, duc de La Force's letter dated 25 January 1605, which mentions the trumpets [*Mémoires authentiques de Jacques Nompars de Caumont duc de La Force maréchal de France*, Le Marquis de la Grange (ed.), 4 vols (Paris, 1843), 1.390–1] and the anonymous *Le roman des chevaliers de Thrace* (Paris, 1605), 5–8, especially 6, which specifies ten Turkish slaves playing the oboe ['dix esclaves Turcs sonnans du haut bois'] with eight moors following them. It is likely, then, that both the Turks and moors who accompanied the camels and their riders played musical instruments. Prunières surmises that exotic musical effects accompanied the ballet entries that featured African and Eastern foreigners such as Turks and moors (*Le ballet de cour en France*, 218). Applied to the 1605 queen's ballet, this suggestion indicates that this final entry produced a sense of exotic strangeness through costume but also music. The casting of musicians as Turks and moors in Marie's 1605 production looks forward to the 1610 *Ballet de Monsieur de Vendosme* in which the three Turkish slaves to Messire Gobbemagne, servant to the enchantress Alcine, play the violin while dancing and are followed by twelve other Turkish slaves performed by musicians in

knowing what it was,ⁱ seated the queenⁱⁱ and dismissed all the princesses, and ordered that no one leave his place, and having placed himself in a corner,ⁱⁱⁱ behold Monsieur de Nevers^{iv} enters the room, mounted on a horse^v all covered in tinsel, who came to put himself in the middle of the room where he began to play the lute given to him by a little monkey that was serving him as lackey. And immediately one saw enter seven camels mounted by seven Turks^{vi} who came before the king, the first of which carried in his mouth a basket full of cartels^{vii} and challenges, and when he was in front of His Majesty, [he] began

costume; all of these characters then mount scaffolds to play dance music for the rest of the ballet.

- i Battifol does not mention Henri IV's surprise at this final entry.
- ii *donne sa place à la reine*: presumably the king seated the queen in 'her' place, i.e. one reserved especially for her, most likely the special decorated chair near to his in which Marie had sat previously when resting. Alternatively 'sa place' may reference the king's own seat which he gave to her.
- iii *l'estant mis à un coin*: alternatively, being placed in a retired spot not exposed to the audience's view or simply in a corner of the room. The ambiguous syntax and lack of punctuation in the manuscript mean that grammatically this phrase could modify either the king or Nevers. But since Henri IV is subsequently given the basket of cartels by a camel and throws the cartels to the princes in the audience, his position in the room necessarily remains a highly visible one. The clause in question thus works much better to modify Nevers, who may be understood to have been waiting in a retired space in the hall or near it before riding forward into view.
- iv Charles de Gonzagues, duc de Nevers et Rethel and future duke of Mantua and Montferrato (1580–1637). Son of Louis de Gonzague (Ludovico de Gonzaga, younger son of Guglielmo de Gonzaga, duke of Mantua and Montferrato) and Henriette de Clèves, duchess of Nevers, Charles de Gonzague-Nevers performed frequently in court ballets during the reigns of Henri IV and Louis XIII.
- v *bidet*: horse, particularly an ordinary horse of small stature especially designed to carry knights on their voyages (a palfrey) or a courser specially bred as a fast carrier of messages between armies or kingdoms.
- vi Together, the other two extant sources that describe this ballet's onstage action indicate clearly that there were two camels (not eight) and that they were mounted by two 'savages', specifically a dwarf and a Tartar. See La Force, *Mémoires authentiques*, 1.390–1, and *Le romant des chevaliers de Thrace*, 6. La Force and the anonymous author of *Le romant* also describe ten Turkish slaves sounding their oboes and wearing golden chains at their necks, arms, and legs, together with eight well-dressed moors, all of whom got down on their knees (as did the two camels) before the king; on their music and its likely effect on the audience, see p 130, fn vi.
- vii *cartels*: in court ballets, according to Mark Franko, cartels were 'small scrolls handed or thrown, and sometimes shot with an arrow, by the performers to members of the audience for them to read aloud'; these texts often commented on characters personated by dancers.

to get down on his kneesⁱ and presented to him his basketⁱⁱ which was taken by the king, and threw the cartels to the princes.ⁱⁱⁱ

Franko also notes the ‘discrepancy between the *cartel*’s historical function as challenge to battle and its balletic function as conveyer of a *récit*. The *cartel* inevitably suggested a *scheda provocatoria* or *provocatoria charta*, a written challenge to duel’. Mark Franko, *Dance as Text: Ideologies of the Baroque Body* (Cambridge, 1993), 80, 101. On the specific texts circulated through the cartels during the 1605 queen’s ballet, see fn iii below.

- i La Force similarly mentions prostrating camels (*Mémoires authentiques*, 1.390–1). Battifol assumes that individuals in costume personated these camels, whose riders were mounted ‘on ne sait comment’ (*Le Louvre*, 114). But the camels must have been real animals: according to *Le romant des chevaliers de Thrace*, the dwarf who kneeled at the king’s feet had just descended from a camel who also ‘got down on its knees, *having thus been trained*’ (emphasis mine) [‘le Chameau (qui s’agenouilla, ayant esté ainsi dressé)’] (6), and from a pamphlet published the same year as this ballet performance we know that the duc de Nevers had himself acquired camels, perhaps for a menagerie of exotic animals designed to advertise his sovereign status as a *prince étranger*; see *La response de Maistre Guillaume au soldat François. Faite en la presence du Roy, à Fontainebleau, le huitiesme Septembre 1604* (Paris, 1605), 44, where Henri IV’s fool Maistre Guillaume includes among a series of gossipy questions the query ‘Monsieur de Nevers a-[t]-il hardé ses chameaux?’ [Monsieur de Nevers, has he leashed (i.e. trained) his camels?]. The use of live animals during the ballet entry involving Nevers solves the problem of how these onstage camels could have been mounted by riders, a point over which Battifol expresses puzzlement. One precedent for the entry of a mounted camel was the banquet of the ‘Voeu de Faisan’ during the famous 1454 ‘entremets de la Croisade turque’ performed in Lille just months following the fall of Constantinople; during this Burgundian entertainment, Sainte-Eglise entered mounted on a camel led by a man ‘habilliet en Sarasinois’ to complain of ‘le Turcks et mescreans’. Clarence Dana Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature (1520–1660)* (Paris, 1940), 624.
- ii The syntax leaves the referent uncertain, suggesting that since the camel carries the basket in its mouth, it was this animal who delivered the cartel to Henri IV. La Force, however, describes the cartel as being given to the king by the camel’s ‘savage’ rider (*Mémoires authentiques*, 1.391).
- iii Battifol asserts that the king himself threw the cartel but according to *Le romant des chevaliers de Thrace*, 8, Henri IV permitted the dwarf to present this cartel, in French and Spanish, to the princes and lords in the audience. The cartel’s text also circulated more widely in print via *Le romant* where it is reproduced in both French and Spanish; it was presumably a copy of this same cartel that La Force sent to his wife along with his letter describing the queen’s ballet. The text, issued by the duc de Nevers and his party under the guise of Chevaliers of Thrace, challenges the other princes and lords of the court to run the jousts the eight last days of carnival as part of the February 1605 barriers (a genre of court entertainment featuring costumed knights performing feats of arms separated at a barrier).

It was the greatest pleasure in the world to see the sink-a-paceⁱ made by these beasts who, hearing the trumpets, drums, oboes, violins, lutes, and other sorts of instruments, made a noise, a great discordant din,ⁱⁱ and seeing that the Ladies pissed themselves and that the majority of gentlemen were disposed to shit from laughter over the ballet,ⁱⁱⁱ they were so ashamed that they acted like the *assesseur*^{iv} before the king, unable to speak a word. They

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- i *de voier faire les cinq pas à ces bestes*: the construction *voir faire X à quelqu'un ou à quelque chose* means 'to see a person or thing do X'. Here the phrase indicates that the audience took great pleasure in seeing the performers that our writer calls 'beasts' (the camels and/or their riders, the dwarf and Tartar) 'dancing' a confused kind of *cinq pas* or 'sink-a-pace'. The *cinq pas*, also known as the galliard, was a dance step performed by male courtiers and required considerable training, agility, and strength. On the skill required by elite dancers, see for example Jennifer Nevile, 'Dance in Europe 1250–1750', Nevile (ed.), *Dance, Spectacle, and the Body Politick, 1250–1750* (Bloomington, 2008), 35.
- ii Battifol assumes that all of the ballet's musicians together — the royal lutes and violins but also the visitors playing oboes, tabors, and trumpets — sounded this cacophony (*Le Louvre*, 115). But the 'qui' combined with the past tense of the verb form — third person plural imperfect — suggests a different order of events: first the instruments played (the royal lutes and violins but also the visiting 'Turks' and 'moors') and then the 'beasts' — the camels and/or their riders — made ['menoient'] this nightmarish din. Perhaps the camels, who were live animals, started braying?
- iii Alternatively, 'couchier le ballet de rire', with the verb being *coucher* in the sense of *renverser* or *envoyer promener*. In this case, the phrase 'couchier le ballet de rire' would indicate that the gentlemen were disposed to ruin the ballet or 'put the ballet to bed' with laughter, causing an end to the performance before it was properly completed. More likely, though, the verb is *conchier*; Jolly's transcription indicates that he reads the manuscript hand this way as well. *Conchier*, a transitive form of *chier* dating back to the twelfth century and deriving from the Latin *concacare*, means to soil with excrement (*Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*, 737). In this context, 'conchier le ballet de rire' means literally to soil the ballet with excrement and metaphorically to dishonour and show disdain for it, ridiculing the ballet with derisive laughter. The scatological tone that attends *conchier* is fully in keeping with this passage, since just previously the letter's author indicates equally crudely that the women 'pissed themselves' with laughter. Whatever the exact translation, the women and men both shame the performers through excessive laughter, helping to explain the 'vin et vinaigre' that the audience gives them thereafter and the performers' debilitating sense of shame.
- iv *assesseur*: magistrate's assistant. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, royal entries often included ceremonial greetings (harangues) delivered publicly to the monarch on behalf of the hosting city, often by an *assesseur*. The reference in our letter may be to a previous incident, known to the author and perhaps more widely, when an *assesseur* who was to give such a harangue unexpectedly remained speechless out of embarrassment or 'stage fright'.

were given wine and vinegar yet they [still] couldn't say a thingⁱ and lost their voices completely, which caused His Majesty to command them to deliver their speech in writing. It is the best made thing in the world; the lackeys cry it throughout Paris. If I had had some money, I would have sent a copy of it to you. To conclude therefore, as Monsieur du Vair says:ⁱⁱ the camels exited the room well mocked and ashamed, and the best way they had of ending this embarrassing situation was that everyone got in his coach and went to write their speech in order to have it seen the next day by the king.ⁱⁱⁱ

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- i *On avait beau à leur donner du vin et du vinaigre*: 'They were given' could also be translated as 'one gave them' or 'we gave them', given that the letter's author was a member of the ballet audience. *Avoir beau de* followed by the infinitive means *s'efforcer en vain de*, ie, to strive or endeavour to do something, but unsuccessfully. The expression *donner du vin et du vinaigre* [to give wine and vinegar] is obscure but likely has the sense of giving sweet things (to convince with gifts or beautiful words, compliments) and sour things (insults, cutting remarks), wine and vinegar being two chemical states of the same product. *Vin* can have the sense of *pourboire* meaning tip or gratuity — hence the expression *recevoir des pots de vin*; *vinaigre*, composed of the words *vin* and *aigre* has the figurative sense (mid-seventeenth century) of *propos, comportement qui blesse* [comments or behaviours that wound]. *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*, 361, 4078. In this context, the 'beasts' were ridiculed but also encouraged, yet the latter efforts did not work, since they still could not perform as intended.
- ii Guillaume du Vair (1556–1621), humanist, first president of the parlement de Provence in the early seventeenth century, and friend to Peiresc and his correspondent, the court poet François de Malherbe. Du Vair's 1595 *De l'éloquence française et des raisons pour quoi elle est demeurée si basse* addresses questions of contemporary oratory and rhetoric. Highly respected as a writer and speaker, du Vair gave the harangue at Marseilles for Marie de Medici's arrival from Florence as new queen consort.
- iii Cf. *Le romant des chevaliers de Thrace*, which states that the dwarf presented a letter addressed directly to the king and which Henri IV read before he allowed the dwarf to deliver a cartel to the princes in the audience, in French and Spanish (7–8). Given its panegyric tone, it is not entirely surprising that *Le romant* fails to record the less elevated details found in our document, ie, that during the ballet performance this dwarf was meant to deliver a 'dict' or harangue to the king but that the audience's uproarious outburst, by shaming the performer(s), necessitated instead a later presentation of this speech in written form. *Le romant* prints both the letter from the Thracians to Henri IV (7–8) and the cartel from the Thracian challengers to the French princes in the ballet audience — the latter in both French and Spanish versions (8–10). Possibly this letter reproduced in *Le romant* was the same 'dict' that the dwarf had been meant to deliver aloud during the ballet on behalf of the Thracian knights for whom he and the rest of the entourage served as messengers.

Meanwhile, the ball began and the princes began to dance, during which those involved in the balletⁱ got into coaches to go to Monsieur Rosny's.ⁱⁱ Then the king ordered that the dancing cease because it was time to go to the other assemblies. It was four o'clock when the ballet left the Louvre and eight when it returned.

To describe to you now how much it cost, how much the women's outfits were worth, how many were the torches, the horses, the litters, the carriages, how many the Swiss guards, Scottish soldiers,ⁱⁱⁱ how many the dozens of cut-purses, the great quantity of lackeys, of pages,^{iv} and of cunning thieves of hats and cloaks, I would tell you everything and keep nothing for the return. Yet if some false messenger would recount it^v to you otherwise, don't believe any of it and if he wants to tell you the contrary,^{vi} ardently contradict him since, as Monsieur de Monluc says in his *Commentary*, 'I was there, my captain.'^{vii}

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- i The performers (ie, musicians, singers, and dancers).
- ii *Rhony*: Maximilien de Béthune, duc de Rosny and future duc de Sully (1560–1641). Sully's Paris residence was the Arsenal. According to La Force (*Mémoires authentiques*, 1.391), this queen's ballet was performed first at the Louvre and then at two other locations, the Arsenal and the *Evêché* (the bishop's residence). La Force, who accompanied Henri IV to the other assemblies, corroborates our letter writer's assertion that the festivities went on all night (*ibid*).
- iii Alternatively, 'Swiss, soldiers, guards, Scots'. Cf. Battifol, who renders the phrase 'de soldats des gardes, d'écoissais' (*Le Louvre*, 115). Henri IV did employ companies of Scottish and Swiss guards at his court, but there were also visitors from Scotland in the audience: the English extraordinary ambassador, Ludovic Stuart, duke of Lennox, was a Scot and his entourage which attended the ballet included others.
- iv The manuscript clearly reads 'papes' but I concur with Jolly, who emends to 'pages'. The papal nuncio and his entourage did attend the ballet, but in this sentence the letter's author is listing a series of young and/or disreputable types of persons in the audience, including lackeys. The ballet performers included a group of dancing pages, and others would have been present in the audience among the entourages for the princes and lords of the court.
- v This story of the ballet.
- vi A story that challenges the letter writer's.
- vii This phrase references the well-known war memoir, *Commentaires de messire Blaise de Monluc, maréchal de France, où sont décrits tous les combats ... esquels ce grand & renommé guerrier s'est trouvé durant cinquante ou soixante ans, qu'il a porté les armes* (published posthumously in 1592). As its title indicates, Monluc's memoir purports to describe the many places and battles where its author saw military action; this is quite the spirit of Monluc's expression 'j'yétois' as reported in our letter.

For the rest, if you acknowledge that I've taken far too much trouble to write you this insignificant letterⁱ and if you desire to recompense my labour, I ask of you nothing else but — a tiny sum — one écu per word.ⁱⁱ For myself, I never put pen to paper for any less; if my addressee were any other, I would make him pay far more. Therefore, prepare your glasses so that you can count themⁱⁱⁱ while I will dispose myself to look for sleep because it is time.

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- i *tiercellet de poulet*: the phrase 'tiercelet de X' is used derisively to indicate a person greatly inferior to the importance he gives himself; see *Dictionnaire de l'académie française*, 1st edn (1694) and Émile Littré, *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (1872–77), both in *Dictionnaires d'autrefois*, <<http://artflx.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/dicos/pubdicollook.pl?strippedhw=tiercelet>>. *Poulet* can mean a love letter (as in *billet gallant* or *billet doux*) and by extension serves as a familiar term meaning a letter. The author here jestingly raises the notion that his addressee may find the letter itself a trifling matter, and continues the joke by requesting a large payment for his time and effort in writing it.
- ii Another jest. As of 1602, with the Edict of Montceaux, the écu was valued at sixty-five sols (just over three livres, since one livre equalled twenty sols); see Vincent J. Pitts, *Henri IV of France: His Reign and Age* (Baltimore, 2009), 260. Had the addressee paid the letter writer one écu per word, the 'fee' for receiving this letter would have been astronomical.
- iii The words.

Notes

I am extremely grateful to Eliane Roux, who has advised me throughout on questions of manuscript provenance, transcription, and translation. This essay would not have been possible without her many sage contributions. I also thank Nicola Courtright for so generously alerting me to Jolly's transcription and sharing her research notes on it. For her kind advice and mentorship, I am grateful to Mary O'Connor, and for help with linguistic, paleographic, and performance history matters, I am indebted to James K. Farge, David J. Buch, Rebecca Harris-Warrick, Gabriel Moyal, Anne Mary of the Occidental Manuscripts department at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and Patrick Gregory. For guidance researching and accessing the Carpentras manuscript I thank Laurence LeBras at the Occidental Manuscripts department at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and staff members at the Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine, especially the library's director Jean-François Delmas.

- 1 Scholarly tradition has attributed to Marie de Medici three major ballets in 1601, 1605, and 1609. For a summary of this research and a discussion of published scholarship on Marie de Medici as patron-performer, see Melinda J. Gough, 'Marie de Medici's 1605 *ballet de la reine* and the virtuosic female voice', forthcoming in *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 7.
- 2 Margaret McGowan's *L'art du ballet de cour en France, 1581–1643* (Paris, 1963), 262, lists several relevant source documents for a 'Deuxième Ballet de la Reyne le 13 janvier', but unfortunately the manuscript she references for this ballet's verses — 'Malherbe. ms fr. 24357, f. 177v' — lists Malherbe's verse for a different production: Marie's third ballet in 1609 (the manuscript itself misidentifies this verse as for a queen's ballet for the year 1610). McGowan also lists as a contemporary source for Marie's 1605 ballet the *Mercure français* tome I, 1605, 5, but this newspaper does not describe this performance (in this volume or elsewhere); rather the ballet described is that year's *sarao* or masque performed at the Spanish court in Valladolid in honour of the peace treaty signed between Spain and England. On this Spanish masque see Mark Hutchings and Berta Cano-Echevarría, 'Between Courts: Female Masquers and Anglo-Spanish Diplomacy, 1603–5', *Early Theatre* 15.1 (2012) and their 'The Spanish Ambassador and *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*: A New Document', *English Literary Renaissance* 42.2 (2012), 223–57. For Marie's 1605 ballet, McGowan (262) also cites Auguste Laugel's study of Henri de Rohan, which mentions the duc de La Force's letters and quotes from two missives that mention preparations for and performance of this queen's ballet; see Laugel, *Henry de Rohan*,

- son rôle politique et militaire sous Louis XIII (1579–1638)* (Paris, 1889), 35. La Force's letters mention the ballet's date and its large audience, elements corroborated in diplomatic correspondence from the period, including a missive to the Tuscan court from Baccio Giovannini, the Florentine ambassador in Paris (Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Mediceo del Principato, filza 4860, unpaginated, letter from Paris dated 6 February 1605) and a letter from Henri IV's secretary of state Nicolas de Neufville, seigneur de Villeroy, to Christophe de Harlay, comte de Beaumont, the French king's ambassador in England, 26 January 1605, King's MSS, cxxvii, f 143, cited and quoted in Mary Sullivan, *Court Masques of James I: Their Influence on Shakespeare and the Public Theatres* (New York and London, 1913), 197.
- 3 Louis Battifol, *Le Louvre sous Henri IV et Louis XIII* (Paris, 1930), 112–15. Battifol's source for the letter, I believe, is François-Antoine Jolly's eighteenth-century manuscript transcription, now at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. On Jolly and Battifol's use of him, see n 39 below.
 - 4 For notable omissions and errors, see the notes to my translation.
 - 5 Philidor and his workshop, for example, transcribed music for two *entrées* (the second being multipart) and a grand ballet performed during a *ballet de la reine* that they believed took place in 1606, while Michel Henry's table of ballet music lists a 'Deuxième Ballet de la Reine' with six airs, the fifth being 'la Gaillarde', under the erroneous date of 13 January 1605. The 'ballet de la reine dansé l'an 1606' to which Philidor, working later in the seventeenth century under Louis XIV, assigned this music seems not to have existed. André Philidor, *Recueil de plusieurs anciens ballets dansez sous les regnes de Henri 3. Henri 4. Et Louis 13. depuis l'an. 1575. jusqu'à 1641. Recherchez et mis en ordre par Philidor l'ainé ordinaire de la Musique du roy, en 1690*, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Collection Philidor, Rés. F-496, ff 40–1. This source may also be accessed in digital format via Gallica, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France's digital text database; see <www.bnf.fr>. For Henry's reference, see Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms fr 24357, f 313v, as well as François Lesure, 'Le Recueil de Ballets de Michel Henry', *Les fêtes de la Renaissance*, ed. Jean Jacquot (Paris, 1956), 205–19, especially 209–10. According to McGowan, Henry was one of the twenty-four *violons du roi* and a player for the city of Paris (*L'art du ballet de cour*, 50).
 - 6 *Mémoires authentiques de Jacques Nompar de Caumont duc de La Force maréchal de France*, Le Marquis de la Grange (ed.), 4 vols (Paris, 1843), 1.389–91 (letters dated 10 and 25 January 1605).
 - 7 Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Mediceo del Principato, filza 4860, unpaginated, letter from Paris dated 6 February 1605; Unknown, *Le romant des chevaliers de Thrace*

- (Paris, 1605), 5. For an explanation of the term ‘barriers’ and further information on the barriers for February 1605, see n 21 below.
- 8 According to Battifol, the *Évêché* of Paris was located beside Nôtre-Dame cathedral, and its ‘vieille salle voûtée du temps de Saint Louis’ was ‘la plus grande de Paris après la salle des pas perdus du Palais de justice’ (*Le Louvre*, 112).
 - 9 ‘Le Roi s’y voulut trouver partout, de sorte que nous n’avons fait que trotter toute la nuit, et étoit jour quand le Roi a été de retour au Louvre’. La Force, *Mémoires authentiques*, 1.390–1.
 - 10 On audience size, see Marie-Françoise Christout, ‘The Court Ballet in France, 1615–1641’, *Dance Perspectives* 20 (1964), 5–37, especially 5, 7; Christout, ‘Les Ballets-Mascarades des “Fées de la Forêt Saint-Germain” et de la “Douairière de Billebahaut” et l’Œuvre de Daniel Rabel’, *Revue d’histoire du théâtre* XIII (1961), 9; and Sharon Kettering, *Power and Reputation at the Court of Louis XIII: The Career of Charles d’Albert, duc de Luynes (1578–1621)* (Manchester and New York, 2008), 39. Louis XIII’s ballets most often took place first in the Grande Salle du Louvre or the Petit Bourbon and then at various Paris hotels, including those at which his mother had danced her ballets. Christout asserts that ‘even making allowances for chroniclers’ natural tendency to exaggerate, it is certain that several thousand people’ viewed them (‘The Court Ballet in France’, 7), while Battifol (*Le Louvre*, 21, 110, 229) claims that according to official accounts, ballet audiences at the court of Louis XIII could be as large as four thousand people.
 - 11 Battifol, *Le Louvre*, 116; see also Louis Battifol, *La vie intime d’une reine de France au XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1906), 127.
 - 12 On the audience members at the 1602 ballet’s various locations as ‘fort incommodés et mal à leur aise’ due to their large numbers, see Pierre de l’Étoile, *Journal de l’Étoile pour le règne de Henri IV*, André Martin (ed.), 3 vols (Paris, 1958), 2.65.
 - 13 ‘Je n’ai jamais vu une si grande assemblée dans le Louvre, car la Cour est fort grande’. La Force, *Mémoires authentiques*, 1.390–1.
 - 14 ‘Il Balletto fù assai bello, havendolo io visto provare con li habiti, che su la meza notte et in tanta frequenza et confusion di popolo simil disagi non son piu da me’. Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Mediceo del Principato, filza 4860, unpaginated, letter from Paris dated 6 February 1605.
 - 15 ‘J’entens que la presse fut si grande que l’on y eût peu de plaisir’. Villeroy to Beaumont, 26 January 1605, King’s mss, cxxvii, f 143, in Sullivan, *Court Masques of James I*, 197.
 - 16 For additional discussion, see p 125, fn iv. Christout also mentions ‘pickpockets’ and ‘scoundrels’ among the period’s ballet audiences (‘The Court Ballet in France’, 5).

- 17 'La grande salle du Louvre estoit pleine de ceux que la qualité, le devoir & l'espérance retiennent aupres du Roy, & d'autres que la curiosité y avoit appellez'. *Le romant des chevaliers de Thrace*, 5–6. For the queen's 1602 ballet, L'Étoile notes similarly that the various assemblies included persons ordered there by the king but also 'plusieurs curieux de le voir' (*Journal*, 2.65).
- 18 As La Force explains to his wife, because their three children and a companion had wanted to be present at the event, he reserved for them an elevated spot opportunely placed for viewing 'Nos trois petits, avec celui de M. de Saint-Angel, eurent envie de s'y trouver, je leur fis garder un échafaud dans la salle fort à propos, d'où ils virent le tout bien à plaisir'. Letter dated 25 January 1605, in La Force, *Mémoires authentiques*, 1.391.
- 19 'Le Roi avoit convié tous les Ambassadeurs à s'y trouver' (ibid). For the papal nuncio's attendance at this performance, see Giovannini's letter for Paris dated 6 February 1605, Mediceo del Principato, filza 4860, np, as well as our letter, f 249r.
- 20 The phrase used is 'marcher doucement', which can indicate both marching softly and a specific dance step. For this and other quoted passages in French and for explanatory annotations in English, see my manuscript transcription and English translation.
- 21 On the connection between the barriers and this ballet's final entry involving Nevers, a dwarf and 'Tartar' mounted on camels, and musicians dressed as 'Turks' and moors, see the notes to my edition here. Known in England as the lists and in Italy as a *barriera*, the barriers was a genre of court entertainment which featured 'small-scale chivalric battles between opposing squads of costumed "knights" who were separated by a barricade erected across the performance space'. Suzanne Cusick, *Francesca Caccini at the Medici Court: Music and the Circulation of Power* (Chicago, 2009), 351 n 41. Cusick is here describing an entertainment at the Tuscan court in 1607. In the eighteenth century Pierre Godard de Beauchamps references in passing another such performance; see his *Recherches sur les théâtres de France*, 3 vols (Paris, 1735), 3.48–9 (also Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms fr 24357, f 132r). On the running at the barriers or lists and its popularity in England under Elizabeth I and during the early seventeenth century at the court of Henry, prince of Wales (son of James I and Anna of Denmark), see for example Roy Strong, *Henry Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance* (London, 1986) and his *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London, 1997).
- 22 On the likelihood that the camels were live animals, see my translation, p 132, fn i.
- 23 On the author and addressee, see the section 'Manuscript description' in this essay.
- 24 Gough, 'Marie de Medici's 1605 *ballet de la reine* and the virtuosic female voice'.

- 25 Other extant sources locate camels, a dwarf, and ‘savages’ — otherwise referred to as ‘Turks’ and ‘moors’ — among the final ballet entry’s messengers from the fictional Chevaliers of Thrace, yet none registers Henri IV’s surprise at the music that marks their seemingly unexpected appearance in the hall. *Le romant des chevaliers de Thrace*, however, helps to explain the king’s startled reaction by clarifying that Nevers’s initiative for the Louvre performance was at least partly impromptu. Indeed, as Henri Prunières explains, the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century hybrid genre he terms *ballet-mascarade* could be mounted with little preparation; see his *Le ballet de cour en France avant Benserade et Lully* (Paris, 1914; rpt New York, 1970), 99–100. With the addition of Nevers’s final entry, this queen’s ballet seems to merge the more elaborate, opulent, and studied performances that would soon become the norm for royal court ballets with earlier, more spontaneous forms of danced, masked entertainment such as the *mascarade*.
- 26 Mark Franko, *Dance as Text: Ideologies of the Baroque Body* (Cambridge, 1993), 66, 86. Franko’s research does consider women in relation to burlesque ballets during this period but only as members of the audience, for example analyzing addresses to women spectators as vehicles whereby a courtier’s political submission to his king might playfully be figured as erotic submission to a lady or mistress.
- 27 For the argument that these camels were likely live animals, see my translation, p 132, fn i.
- 28 McGowan, *L’art du ballet de cour en France*, 49–67, especially 61, 67.
- 29 This phrase, used in relation to the function of dwarfs throughout the courts of early modern Europe, is from Bernadette Andrea, ‘Elizabeth I and Persian Exchanges’, *The Foreign Relations of Elizabeth I*, ed. Charles Beem (New York, 2011), 169–200, especially 184.
- 30 Gough, ‘Marie de Medici’s 1605 *ballet de la reine* and the virtuosic female voice’.
- 31 On participation by Henrietta Maria’s dwarf Jeffrey Hudson in the queen’s dramatic and masque productions see for example Barbara Ravelhofer, ‘Bureaucrats and Courtly Cross-Dressers in the Shrovetide Masque and *The Shepherd’s Paradise*’, *English Literary Renaissance* 29.1 (1999), 75–96. Karen Britland suggests that *Tempe Restored*’s singer Mistress Shepherd was a dwarf, the young Anne Sheppard; see her *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria* (Cambridge, 2006), 96–8. On the foreign woman singer Madame Coniack in Henrietta Maria’s masque *Tempe Restored*, see for example Suzanne Gossett, ‘“Man-maid be gone”: Women in Masques’, *English Literary Renaissance* 18 (1988), 96–113; Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare’s England* (Cambridge, 1996), 6; Peter Walls, *Music in the English Courtly Masque 1605–1640* (Oxford, 1996), 4; R. Booth, ‘The First Female Professional Singers: Madame Coniack’, *Notes and Queries* 44 (1997),

- 533; James Knowles, 'Can ye not tell a man from a marmoset?: Apes and Others on the Early Modern Stage', in *Renaissance Beasts: Of Animals, Humans and Other Wonderful Creatures*, ed. Erica Fudge (Illinois, 2004), 138–63; Sophie Tomlinson, *Women on Stage in Stuart Drama* (Cambridge, 2005), 52–8; Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria*, 90–110; Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture* (Cambridge, 2008), 156–7. On the connections both material and thematic between Henrietta Maria's patronage of female singers in *Tempe Restored* and her mother Marie de Medici's 1609 *Ballet of Beauty* see Melinda J. Gough, "'Not as myself": the Queen's Voice in *Tempe Restored*', *Modern Philology* 101.1 (2003), 48–67.
- 32 On Henri IV's ceremonial entries and his efforts to gain and then consolidate authority in part by building strong urban centers, see S. Annette Finley-Croswhite, *Henri IV and the Towns: The Pursuit of Legitimacy in French Urban Society, 1589–1610* (Cambridge, 1999).
- 33 As noted in my edition, our letter similarly records that the English and the papal nuncio attended. The regular English ambassador in France at the time, Sir Thomas Parry, states that he was not himself present at the ballet, so the 'English ambassadors' in question must have been Lennox and his entourage. As Parry writes to England's secretary of state Robert Cecil, Viscount Cranbourne: 'What happened at the Queenes Balle, because I could not be at it my self, I forbear to write, and leave it to yr relatis of my Lshsoph: Howard at his retour, who was present, and behaued hiself lyke a noble ma of his place'. Sr Thomas Parry to Cranbourne, Paris 29 January 1604 [1605], National Archives, SP 78/52 (State Papers France, 1605), ff 20–3, here f 21v. The 'Howard' in question, as Pauline Croft has helpfully clarified for me in private correspondence, is the young courtier Theophilus Lord Howard de Walden, eldest son of Thomas Howard, first earl of Suffolk. Parry suggests that Howard upon his return to England would personally describe the ballet to Cecil, with whom the Suffolks were friendly at court. According to Croft, both Lord Howard de Walden and Lennox were back at court by March when they participated in the 1605 Accession Day tournament.
- 34 Hutchings and Cano-Echevarría, 'Between Courts' and 'The Spanish Ambassador'. See also Mary Sullivan, *Court Masques of James I*, especially 8–29 and 194–7, and Maurice Lee Jr, *James I and Henri IV: An Essay in English Foreign Policy, 1603–1610* (Urbana, 1970).
- 35 On Henri IV's 'dexterous' interventions when arranging the ambassadors, particularly Lennox, see also Baccio Giovannini, letter dated 6 February 1605 from Paris, Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Mediceo del Principato filza 4860 (unpaginated).

- 36 Under the title 'Le balet de la reine dansé à Paris, le 23 janvier 1605' (this title is also written at the top of the manuscript document itself), two printed catalogues reference this document: the *Catalogue descriptif et raisonné des manuscrits de la bibliothèque de Carpentras*, C.G.A. Lambert (ed.), 3 vols (Carpentras, 1862), 2.135, and the *Catalogue general des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France. Départements*, XXV (Carpentras, ed. Mm. Duhamel and Liabastres), 2 vols (Paris, 1899), 2.358. Neither catalogue entry includes information regarding the scribal hand, or whether this document is an original or a copy. On the portion of Peiresc's manuscripts and collected papers now held at Carpentras, see Francis W. Gravit, *The Peiresc Papers* (np, 1950), 8–13.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 1–2.
- 38 Eliane Roux, personal correspondence.
- 39 Battifol's assumption that Peiresc is the letter's author suggests that he did not consult the letter at Carpentras. Instead, I believe, Battifol relied on the only other known document that includes the information he paraphrases: an eighteenth-century manuscript transcription of the Carpentras letter by François-Antoine Jolly. Jolly transcribed this letter in his manuscript 'Nouvelle collection de cérémonies et de festes, depuis Clovis jusqu'à la mort de Louis XIII, avec des notes et des remarques critiques, des dissertations, des observations, et des éclaircissements sur quelques points de la chronologie', Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms fr 10428, ff 119r–120v. Jolly's ms fr 10428, which is the fourth of five volumes (ms fr 10424–9 inclusive), covers the reigns of Henri IV and Louis XIII. Although the material in these five manuscript volumes was never published, Jolly's table for his projected work appeared in print under the title *Project d'un nouveau ceremonial françois, augmenté d'un grand nombre de pièces qui n'ont pas été publiées par M. Godefroy* (Paris, 1746). Jolly's printed inventory, however, does not include the document about the 1605 queen's ballet transcribed in ms fr 10428, ff 119r–120v. In ms Fr 10428, Jolly makes a general reference to his source as being from the manuscripts of Peiresc, and Battifol may well have been misled by Jolly's ambiguous phrase 'extrait des mss de Peiresc', which fails to clarify whether his source is manuscripts written by Peiresc himself or his collected papers (the manuscript *registres*).
- 40 Guillaume du Vair, who met with Peiresc often in Aix, took Peiresc with him to Paris in August 1605; according to Pierre Gassendi, this was Peiresc's first visit to the capital. *Vie de l'illustre Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc conseiller au parlement d'Aix par Pierre Gassendi*, trans. Roger Lasalle with Agnes Bresson (Paris, 1992), 78–9. Peiresc also wrote a letter from Aix dated 15 February 1605 to one Monsieur Clusius at Leyden; see *Lettres de Peiresc à divers, 1602–1637*, vol. 7 in *Lettres de Peiresc*, ed. Philippe Taimizey de Larroque (Paris, 1858?), 955–6.

41 See n 40 above.

42 *Catalogue general des manuscrits*, 2.358.

43 Malherbe to Peiresc, undated letter from February 1606, in M.L. Lalanne (ed.), *Oeuvres de Malherbe*, 5 vols (Paris, 1862–9), 3.2.

44 Gravit, *The Peiresc Papers*, 4–5.

45 Bernard Barbiche and Monique Chatenet, *L'Édition des textes anciens, XVIe–XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1993); see also the updates to this framework outlined by Barbiche on the school's website in 'Conseils pour l'édition des textes de l'époque moderne (XVIe–XVIIIe siècle)', <http://theleme.enc.sorbonne.fr/cours/edition_epoque_moderne/edition_des_textes>.

46 Ibid.