Le lezioni della scala. Trasformazioni dell'ordine gigante da Michelangelo a Piranesi, 1536-1750. I. Dall'Italia del Cinquecento alla Francia del Seicento

Abstract

Against all academic theorization, which prescribes specific proportional schemes for each order, the giant order was codified by Michelangelo around 1540. It played a pivotal role in his new design for the Capitoline Hill, enabling him to reorganize the façades of pre-existing medieval structures. The order did not carry its own measure within itself but utilized a flexible scale for the shaft, unifying the vertical supports of façades that needed to be adjusted to buildings of different dimensions. This motif, which has left a scant theoretical footprint, drew a sharply negative response from Claude Perrault and was a point of contention in Perrault's debate with Bernini regarding the latter's Louvre of 1664 proposal where it was a key factor in his defeat in the competition for that building. Despite this setback, due to the effects of grandeur and sublimity that became closely associated with it (and especially with the idea of the sublime invoked in the period from 1543 onwards), it spread rapidly throughout Europe, becoming a signature of Baroque architecture, particularly in lavish palaces and large-scale churches.

Biography

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Lessons of Scale. Transformations of the Giant Order from Michelangelo to Piranesi, 1536-1750.
I, From Sixteenth-Century Italy to Seventeenth-Century France

Thereupon, Micromegas uttered, "I see more clearly than ever that we should judge nothing by its apparent importance. O God, Who hast bestowed intelligence upon things which seemed so despicable, the infinitely little is as much Thy concern as the infinitely great; and, if it is possible that there should be living things smaller than these, they may be endowed with minds superior even to those of the magnificent creatures I have seen in the sky, who with one foot could cover this globe upon which I have alighted".
Voltaire, *Micromegas* (1752)[1]

The truth is that the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns is permanent.
François Le Lionnais, *Lipo First Manifesto* (1973)[2]

In memory of Howard Burns

Sometime between 1536 and 1564 – the *terminus ante* and *post quem* of his work on the Capitoline Hill and Saint Peter's – Michelangelo codified what is now known as the *ordine gigante*, or giant order, which figures prominently in both of these projects, his most important architectural undertakings in Rome[3]. Within a decade of his death in 1564, numerous examples of the new order were standing or under construction, inspired by the "mighty pilasters" rising through the façades of his Capitoline palaces[4]. The following pages trace a series of varied, often contrasting receptions of Michelangelo's reinvention of this order, which served as a model for Palladio, Vignola, Alessi, Bernini, Borromini, Guarini, Juvarra, Vittone and Piranesi, across national borders into Central and Northern Europe. When analyzing its European dissemination, particular attention will be paid to Perrault and Louis Le Vau in France, Wren, Hawksmoor and Vanbrugh in Britain, Fischer von Erlach in Austria, and Santini-Aichel in Bohemia. Earlier iterations and anticipations of the order in question, starting with Alberti and extending through Bramante, Raphael, Giulio Romano and Peruzzi are also explored: but it is with Michelangelo's codification and its impact that I am chiefly concerned. Each of these receptions represents a different moment in the history of the giant order, imbued with its own internal characteristics, modes of invention, and critical stances towards inherited

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[5] One of these lessons is conceptual, aimed at clearing up a confusion that often arises in discussions of the giant order: issues of scale and size are not the same. If the first denotes modes of measurement, and the relative size of objects when they are compared to one another, the second denotes what is being measured, and refers to the physical dimensions of each single object, apart from any comparison. At the risk of sounding overly didactic, to conflate scale and size confuses cause and effect; it also implies a failure to distinguish criteria of objective accuracy in mensuration from the vagaries of subjective perception. See on these and related questions, Erwin Panofsky, "The History of the Theory of Human Proportions as a Reflection of the History of Styles," in *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Doubleday, 1955); Matthew A. Cohen and Maarten Delbeke, eds., *Proportional Systems in the History of Architecture: A Critical Reconsideration* (Leiden Univ. Press, 2018); Paul H. Schofield, *The Theory of Proportion in Architecture* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1958); Charles W. Moore and Gerald Allen, *Dimensions: Space, Shape and Scale in Architecture* (McGraw Hill, 1976).

[6] Christof Thoenes, "Gli ordini architettonici: rinascita o invenzione?", in *Sostegno e adornamento. Saggi sull'architettura del Rinascimento: disegni, ordini, magnificenza*, eds. Id. and James S. Ackerman, (Electa, 1998), 124; Christof Thoenes, "La *Regola delli cinque ordini* del Vignola," in *Sostegno e adornamento*, 77-107. In 1615, Scamozzi spoke as if the Orders, which had only been stabilized a generation earlier with Vignola, had been immutable since the time of the ancient Greeks. *Idea dell'Architettura Universale* (Giorgio Valentini, 1615), II, 15ff.

[7] John Summerson, *The Classical Language of Architecture* (Thames and Hudson, 1980), 13. This passage seems like a gloss on Alberti's plea for a non-binding, anti-legalistic and openminded approach to the columnar orders and the entire question of imitation: "Although other famous architects seem to recommend by their work either the Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, or Tuscan division as being the most convenient, there is no reason why we should follow their design in our work, as though legally obliged. Rather, inspired by their example, we should strive to produce our own inventions, to rival, or, if possible, to surpass the glory of theirs". Alberti, *De re aedificatoria*, I, 9.

[8] Monika Melters, *Die Kolossalordnung: Zum Palastbau in Italien und Frankreich zwischen 1420 und 1670* (Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2008) comes closest to a more comprehensive investigation, but it gives short shrift to a very important side of the problem, church façades, in its emphasis on palace typologies.

norms. By expanding and testing the flexibility of the *columnatio* across a wide variety of contexts, it enlarged the scope of the classical orders and, with them, the boundaries of the discipline, eliciting novel critical responses. The giant or colossal order furnished a lens through which a new conception of scale could be seen, and a novel means of mediation between urban space and architectural space. As such, it constituted a new paradigm for a monumental rereading of *all* the canonical orders, multiplying them into so many "lessons of scale"[5].

The *ordine gigante* is the ideal model of an order which continually exceeds itself: mediating between old and new, stateliness and extravagance, the authority of tradition and the radicalism of license, it preserves the form and ornaments of each orderwhile deviating from the established proportions governing the canon as a whole. These were proportions that, admittedly, varied from one theorist and epoch to another, yet were regarded as fixed from Vignola onwards[6]. As such the *ordine gigante* fits into the historical development of the orders without much difficulty: as Sir John Summerson once observed, "all through the history of classical architecture speculation as to the ideal types of each of the orders has continued oscillating between antiquarian reverence on the one hand and sheer personal invention on the other"[7]. That the genuinely innovative factor in the giant order was the leap in scale does not make it any less radical or transformative. What it transformed above all is the code of reading of the columnar orders and everything they had meant up to Michelangelo. This is another reason why he is such a pivotal figure in the history of the orders as in so many other areas.

Although the giant order has been the subject of numerous studies, its historical and formal development has never been comprehensively investigated[8]. Its importance across a wide variety of architectural contexts can hardly be doubted. The speed with which it captured the imagination of architects and was adopted in practice from the mid-16th century onwards shows that it answered a need for the renewal of ornament on exteriors and interiors. This process was accompanied by a corresponding leap in scale in the lavish new palaces and churches that marked the second half of the Renaissance and the Baroque era (itself a subset of the wider transition from the small-scaled

planar architecture of the 15th century to the monumental wall and mass architecture of Bramante and his 16th-century followers)[9]. As a result, the giant order quickly established itself as a ubiquitous element of the European Baroque vocabulary and as one of the more easily recognizable "signatures" of the style[10].

Throughout the discussion several factors that have shaped perceptions of the giant order will be considered. These include the formal problems the order resolved, its anomalous position *vis-à-vis* the canonized systems, the critical readings of theorists and architects, and the aesthetic effects of grandeur and sublimity associated with its use, along with specific period engagements of ancient rhetorical categories. Yet the most important factor to consider is the wide diversity of semantic potentials linked to this new variant of *columnatio* shaped by its unprecedented articulation of scale.

The giant order occupied an ambiguous position between the traditional columnar orders, while straddling a prestigious margin between architecture and the city. It changed the way early modern architects and observers perceived scalar contrast across built and urban contexts. It did this by adding an unexpected inflection to the problem of scalar transformation, at once too imposing to be overlooked and too flexible to be easily absorbed into any systematic theorization.

Redefining the Giant Order

So far we have noted the key role of the giant order as a site of mediation between the normative and the anomalous, but we have not yet defined it. The most concise definition is that it is an order whose columns or pilasters rise through two or more storeys. Yet the order does not simply presuppose a sudden increase in scale, allowing it to cover more surface area than previous kinds of *columnatio*. The term (and its equivalents in other European languages: *ordine gigante*, *le grand ordre*, *die Kolossalordnung*) is usually used for elongated columns, or representations thereof, often pilasters, passing through several floors of a building, a practice unknown in antiquity.

In a looser sense the term designates colossal freestanding columns, as in the case of the Louvre

[9] On this transition, see James S. Ackerman, "Leonardo da Vinci's Church Designs," in *Origins, Imitation, Conventions: Representation in the Visual Arts* (MIT Press, 2002), 72. Within just a few years of Michelangelo's codification of the giant order, Palladio's Palazzo Valmarana (1565) and Villa Serego (1560-70), and Galeazzo Alessi in Genova were using it in Santa Maria Assunta in Carignano (1552-72); Both Vignola and Sanmicheli employed it, the first in the Portico dei Banchi in Bologna, the second in the Palazzo Grimani in Venice. On Palladio's use of the giant order, see Rudolf Wittkower, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* (Warburg Institute, 1949), 76ff; Ackerman, *Palladio*, chap. 3; David Hemsoll, "Palladio's Architectural Orders: From Practice to Theory," *Architectural History* 58 (2015): 22ff; on Alessi's, Howard Burns, "Le idee di Galeazzo Alessi sull'architettura e gli ordini," in *Galeazzo Alessi e l'architettura del Cinquecento* (Sagep, 1975), 147-66. On Vignola, Richard J. Tuttle, "Vignola's Facciata dei Banchi in Bologna," JSAH 52, 1 (March 1993): 68-87; on Sanmicheli, see Norbert Huse and Wolfgang Wolters, *Art in Venice: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, 1460-1590* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1996), 24, 29, 73. On the expanded scale of princely residences and churches in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see from among a large bibliography Christof L. Frommel, *Die Römische Palastbau der Hochrenaissance* (Ernst Wasmuth Verlag, 1973); Frommel, "Living *all'antica*: Palaces and Villas from Brunelleschi to Bramante," in *Italian Renaissance Architecture from Brunelleschi to Michelangelo*, ed. Henry A. Millon (Thames and Hudson, 1996), 195; James S. Ackerman, "Architectural Practice in the Italian Renaissance," JSAH 13, 3 (Oct. 1954), 8-9; Luigi Salerno, Luigi Spezzaferro, Manfredo Tafuri, eds., *Via Giulia: Un'utopia urbanistica del '500* (Aristide Staderini, 1973); Manfredo Tafuri, *Interpreting the Renaissance: Princes, Cities, Architects* (Yale Univ. Press, 2006); Patricia Waddy, *Seventeenth-century Roman Palaces: Use and the Art of the Plan* (MIT Press, 1990); Anthony Blunt, *Art and Architecture in France, 1500-1700* (Yale Univ. Press, 1999), 21-9, 38-57; 91-3; Id., ed., *Baroque and Rococo Architecture and Decoration* (Harper and Row, 1978), 276-7.

[10] Style is neither an innocent nor a neutral concept but is imbued with theoretical and ideological connotations which are anything but inconsiderable. To reframe this concept, the following contributions have been helpful: Joost Keizer, "Style and Authorship in Early Renaissance Art," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 78, 3-4 (2015): 370-85; Svetlana Alpers, "Style is What You Make It: the Visual Arts Once Again," in *The Concept of Style*, ed. Berel Lang (Cornell Univ. Press, 1987), 137-62; Carlo Ginzburg, "Style: Inclusion and Exclusion," in *Wooden Eyes: Nine Reflections on Distance* (Columbia Univ. Press, 2001), 109-38; and the classic essays of Meyer Schapiro, "Style", in Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist and Society (Braziller, 1994), 51-103 and George Kubler, "Towards a Reductive Theory of Visual Style," in The Concept of Style, 166-73.

[11] On magnificence (*magnificentia*), among a large literature, see the recent Nele de Raedt, "Magnificence, Dignity, and the Sociopolitical Function of Architectural Ornament: Cortesi's Discussion of the Cardinal's Architectural Patronage," *Renaissance Quarterly* 76 (Spring 2023), 1-38, with its extensive bibliography.

[12] Otherwise, as in the case of Temanza and Milizia, in the era of Neoclassicism, it was criticized on a case-by-case basis, in connection with specific uses by particular architects, above all Palladio: see Tommaso Temanza, *Vita di Andrea Palladio Vicentino* (Giambatista Pasquali, 1762), XXV; Wittkower, *Architectural Principles*, 77; Ackerman, "Palladio: Classical in What Sense?," in *Origins, Imitation, Conventions*, 250, 252.

[13] As Christof Thoenes points out, the term *ordine* and its derivative term *ordinatio* in the modern sense was never used by Alberti or Vitruvius ("Gli ordini architettonici", 127). The term for what we know call the columnar orders – *columnatio* – was concrete, not abstract. No one term was used even for the groupings of the orders, but an entire slew of them: *genus, spetie, opera, ratio, figura* ("Gli ordini...", 128) Only after Vignola, did *ordinatio* come into use: it was made famous in France by Perrault's *Ordonnance* (1683) which had totally different implications as a term within the prescriptive system of the orders than earlier usages, Vignola's included.

[14] See, on the proportional systems of the orders, from a large bibliography Hanno-Walter Kruft, *A History of Architectural Theory from Vitruvius to the Present* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1994), chap. 1, 6, 11-12; Ingrid Rowland, "Raphael, Angelo Colocci, and the Genesis of the Architectural Orders," *Art Bulletin* 76, 1 (1994): 81-104; Ead., "The Genera of Things," *Log* 53 (Fall 2021): 53-6; *Le Projet de Vitruve, Objet, destinataires et réception du* De architectura (École française de Rome, 1994); Pierre Gros, "Vitruve et les orders", in *Les Traités d'architecture de la Renaissance* (Picard, 1988), 49-59; Thoenes, "Gli ordini architettonici;" James S. Ackerman, "The Tuscan/Rustic Order: A Study in the Metaphorical Language of Architecture", JSAH 52 (1983), 15-34, repr. in *Distance Points* (MIT Press, 1991), 495ff; Forsmann, *Dorico, ionico, corinzio*; Yves Pauwels, *Aux marges de la règle. Essai sur les ordres d'architecture à la Renaissance* (Mardaga, 2008); Hubertus Günther, "Serlio e gli ordini architettonici", in *Sebastiano Serlio*, ed. Christof Thoenes (Electa, 1989), 154-6; Christiane Denker Nesselrath, *Die Säulenordnungen bei Bramante* (Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1990); Scott Opler, "Palladio and Vignola on the Orders," in *Coming about: A Festschrift for John Shearman*, eds. Lars R. Jones and Louisa C. Matthew (Harvard Univ. Art Museums, 2001), 255-65; Hubertus Günther, "Palladio e gli ordini di colonne," in *Andrea Palladio: nuovi contributi*, ed. André Chastel and Renato Cevese (Electa, 1990), 182-97. For the *Letter to Leo X*, the most reliable edition is Salvatore Settis and Giulia Ammannati, *Raffaello tra gli sterpi. Le rovine di Roma e le origini della tutela* (Skira, 2022).

Colonnade. In both cases the giant order signifies the ability to adopt, in theory, any scale, in the service of an aesthetic of magnificence (*magnificenza*), usually only briefly remarked upon in the 16th- and 17th-century treatises. This uniquely flexible term has a semantic range that includes qualities as diverse as grandeur, stateliness, richness, sumptuousness and variety[11]. On this reading, the giant order helps to resolve problems posed by the expanded scale of Baroque buildings.

Of all the variants of the classical orders, the *ordine gigante* is probably the hardest to pin down, since it was almost never an object of theorization, except (to the best of my knowledge) only once, when it was condemned outright by no less figure than Perrault (an episode not without a certain paradoxical aspect discussed later in this essay)[12]. This order came into its own when, due to the scalar augmentation of palace façades, a regularized system of columns or pilasters was used to disguise irregularities in plan and section, or to accentuate the role of church side aisles in relation to the main entrance. The novel order allowed for greater control over the vertical axis by integrating surface and ornament along large wall expanses, thereby enlarging the representational scope of the columnar orders.

Given the normative concepts of measure informing the traditional apparatus of *columnatio*, proportion was fundamental from the advent of the original ancient and Vitruvian triad of Doric, Ionic and Corinthian to the subsequent academic codification of five orders (*ordinatio*), with the addition of the Tuscan and the Composite[13]. This cumulative process began in Raphael's circle around 1519, in the Letter to Leo X — the first conception of the orders' idea in its now conventional sense — and culminated in Serlio's *Regole generali dell'Architettura* (1537) and Vignola's *Regola delle Cinque Ordini* (1562)[14].

Yet the historical unfolding of the canon of the orders has a far longer temporal frame. From its ancient origins in Greece through Vitruvius, Alberti, Serlio, before Michelangelo's codification of the giant order, and after it, in Palladio, Vignola, Scamozzi and key French theoreticians, including Delorme, Perrault, Blondel, Fréart de Chambray and d'Aviler, the giant order appears as an exception that casts an unexpected light on the logic of the orders as a whole. And this highly selective enumeration only gives a skeletal idea of the complexity of the *norm-process* informing theoretical reflection on the tension between rule and exception at the heart of the classical orders[15]. Despite considerable divergences, all these theorists established fixed, *a priori* modular relationships between the orders, the ratios within each column and the intercolumniations[16]. These proportional relationships – whether metaphysically grounded, or based on averages arithmetically applied, as in the case of Perrault – ensured a precise visual impact and a harmonious organization of part/whole relationships[17].

All these systematizations – which attempted to subsume the immense variety of antique theory and practice under a single set of rules – offered different solutions to the same problem: constituting each order in relation to its specific role and to the others. Eventually, the Renaissance response led to the formulation of the five orders of architecture, achieved in the first edition of Serlio's *Regole generali* of 1537. Before then, the understanding of the orders was unsettled, with architects still striving to grasp their proportions, form, and ornamentation: a partial comprehension that was unstable, shifting between diverse perspectives and systems. By the turn of the 15th century, architectural theory was in a tenuous situation. Vitruvius provided

mixed guidance: his descriptions, at times clear and more often obscure, were little known or understood, due to his opaque Latin and to the dearth of illustrations until 1486 (Sulpizio da Veroli, *editio princeps*). Alberti's *De re aedificatoria*, completed by 1452 and first printed in 1485, also described the orders, but the fact that it only appeared in Latin limited its accessibility to architects, who frequently had no knowledge of that language, just as its lack of images limited its appeal to patrons, who often had no technical understanding, as accurate illustrations would have helped them to better grasp difficult passages in the text. Faced with the bewildering variety of antiquities and the different forms and uses of the columnar orders, Serlio, Palladio, and Vignola sought to impose a rigorous taxonomy, in part through a process of strenuous selection[18].

In the long run, however, Vignola's canon, with its fixed proportions and clear classification of the orders, triumphed and was consecrated as the academic ideal[19]. Vignola tried to impose order on a chaotic variety of inherited readings and variants of the *columnatio*, for which even a stable nomenclature was lacking. Cammy Brothers has pointed out that Vignola "massively simplified the classical orders"[20]. Yet, though Brothers is not wrong in a literal sense, her remark about Vignola being a '*terrible simplificateur*' is itself a bit simplistic, since Vignola was not an inflexible rigorist, but the proponent of an eminently workable normative approach. In the midst of an uncertainty that beset every choice regarding the orders, he faced the daunting task of reducing a contradictory set of complicated problems to a single coherent system[21]. This cleared the path for a basic canonization, for the sovereign gesture of transforming a historically layered ensemble of strategies of columnar articulation into a single *corpus* of principles specifying proportion, form, decorum and ornament for each order[22]. Vignola's canon, with its passion for *Gründlichkeit*, marked a turning point in the history of the orders, even if it built on the shoulders of his predecessors, Serlio above all, who was the first to visualize the five orders in an illustrated printed treatise[23].

It is particularly significant that Vignola, in his treatise, did not account for the significant exception he put into practice in his Portico dei Banchi in Bologna: the giant order. With this conspicuous, yet undertheorized exception, the established system of normative relationships that informs this sovereign act of canonization is reversed: emphasis on sheer visual impact surpasses any traditional concern with a precise, fixed proportion which, in the process, becomes of secondary interest. With the advent of the giant order, proportionality as an overriding mathematical and aesthetic concern is not governed by an abstract measure of the column itself but extends over the entire length and breadth of the façade in which it appears.

As noted above, in contrast to the canonized systems, the *ordine gigante* does not carry its own measure in itself, but is subject to external factors that condition its scale. One can easily understand why Michelangelo's novel device is excluded from Vignola's canon, since the giant order resists every effort to impose abstract norms of proportion. This should not be taken to mean that proportional concerns were neglected; rather, they are handled in ways that depart from the rules governing the canonical orders. Here contrasts of scale between the giant order and smaller orders on the façade become crucial and may even displace the conventional analogies of proportion that govern the canonical triad inherited from Vitruvius and ancient practice and subsequent-

[15] On the notion of *norm-process*, derived from Foucault's reading of Georges Canguilhem, see my essay "Le Corbusier's Discovery of Palladio in 1922 and the Modernist Transformation of the Classical Code," *Perspecta* 35 (Jan. 2004), 20-30: 21; Michel Foucault, "Introduction," in Georges Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological* (Zone Books, 1991), 7ff.

[16] Although Palladio was surely not the only theorist to deal with this aspect of the classical orders, he brought a special clarity to this problem: see Howard Burns, "Ornamenti e Ornamentation in Palladio's Theory and Practice," *Pegasus. Berliner Beiträge zur Nachleben der Antike* 11 (2009): 37ff.

[17] Here I rely on Thoenes, "Gli ordini architettonici"; and take as my point of departure Vitruvius *De Architectura* II, 1-5.

[18] These last two paragraphs are indebted to Cammy Brothers, "Introduction," in *Variety, Archeology, and Ornament. Renaissance Architectural Prints from Column to Cornice* (Univ. of Virginia Art Museum, 2012), 5-6.

[19] On Vignola's canon and its European reception, see Frédérique Lemerle, "Les versions françaises de la Regola de Vignole au XVIIe siècle," *Monte Artium* 1 (2008): 101-21; Thoenes, "La *Regola delli cinque ordini*"; Claude Mignot, "Vignola e vignolismo in Francia nel Sei e Settecento," in *Vignola e i Farnese*, eds. Christoph L. Frommel, Richard J. Tuttle and Maurizio Ricci (Electa, 2003), 354-8; Carolina Mangone, "Vernacular Vignola," *Art in Translation* 10, 1 (2018): 30-54. On Vignola's reception of the giant order, see Wolfgang Lotz, "Sixteenth-Century Italian Squares," in *Studies in Italian Renaissance Architecture* (MIT Press, 1972), 74-116: 81-2.

[20] Brothers, "Introduction," 5-6.

[21] One must not place at his doorstep the inflexible attitude of many of his dogmatic followers, especially in the École des Beaux arts tradition, who fully deserve the excoriation Le Corbusier meted out to them: see Jean-Louis Cohen, "Le Corbusier's Modulor and the Debate on Proportion in France," *Architectural Histories* 1, 2 (Sept. 2014), 1-14, accessed Dec. 2, 2025.

[22] The classical orders are a stratified system in which atemporal and temporal planes intersect, as it is at once fixed at its inner nucleus of three (Doric, Ionic, Corinthian) and outer nucleus of five (Tuscan and Composite, variants of the Doric and the Corinthian respectively): see Thoenes, "Gli ordini architettonici".

[23] Brothers, "Introduction". For the contextualization of Serlio's treatise within the Renaissance literature: Alina Payne, *The Architectural Treatise in the Italian Renaissance* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 113-69.

[24] The *locus classicus* for the proportional control of the *genera*, before their codification as the orders, is found in Vitruvius, *De architectura* VI, 1.6-7. Christof Thoenes's contention, in a classic essay co-authored with Hubertus Günther, that the orders are constantly being reinvented, rather than being imitated strictly, is the most plausible reading among the other alternatives: "Gli ordini architettonici: rinascita o invenzione?," in *Roma e l'antico nell'arte e nella cultura del Cinquecento*, ed. Marcello Fagiolo (IEI, 1985), 261-310. Since Vitruvian proportions deviate from those used by the ancients at different phases of Roman architecture (on which see Mark Wilson Jones, *Principles of Roman Architecture* (Yale Univ. Press, 2003), and given the fact that the proportions assigned to the various orders varied considerably, from one theorist to another, in the 15th to 17th centuries, the infraction of presumably stable, but actually quite variable norms shows that the giant order was merely one site of transgression among many (albeit a very dramatic one as far as scale is concerned).

[25] Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture* (Praeger, 1982), 74-5, 152-60, Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture* (Crès, 1924,) 60; 132ff.

[26] Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, 152-60.

[27] On this passage see Alina Payne, "Michelangelo Contra Palladio. From Le Corbusier to Robert Venturi," in *Michelangelo e il Novecento*, ed. Ead. (Silvana Editoriale, 2014), 9; Jean-Louis Cohen, "Rome: A Lesson in Urban Landscape," in *Le Corbusier. An Atlas of Modern Landscapes* (MoMA, 2013), 110-118; Denise Costanzo, "Horrors and Heroes, Renaissance and Recent: Rome as Architecture School," in *Visualizing the Past in Italian Renaissance Art. Essays in Honor of Brian A. Curran* (Brill, 2021), 9-39.

[28] Perrault called it a modern abuse, to be largely avoided; on the other end of the spectrum Bernini acknowledged Michelangelo's codification of the order: we know this because of a conversation Sieur de Chantelou had with his assistant Mattia' de Rossi, v. infra n. 104. Instances of the columnar orders anticipating the gi-ant order have been identified in classical antiquity: but these are the result of a misunderstanding, a category mistake. Mark Wilson Jones has identified the Basilica at Fano (which appears to have been rediscovered just recently, and which Vitruvius was proud to design) portico in the forum in Pompeii, the columns of the Temple of Bacchus at Baalbek, and the free-standing columns in the *natatio* side of Baths of Diocletian, and the Columns of San Lorenzo in Milan, the remains of a great bath structure, as precocious instances of the *ordine gigante*. He even calls the huge columns at the Basilica of Fano actual instances of the giant order, but this identification is premature (*Principles of Roman Architecture*, 46, 117). One could also add the colossal columns that adorned the temple of Artemis at Ephesus and the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, in the diverse recon-

ly re-elaborated (with the addition of two others) from Alberti to Scamozzi. Above all, this is due to the unprecedented elongation of the columnar shaft, which upset Vitruvian proportional schemes for the Doric, Ionic and Corinthian and established a pattern of deviation affecting later additions to the triad (especially the Composite) in the architect/theorists, among others, just mentioned[24]. To more fully grasp the significance of the *ordine gigante*, however, we must also turn to modern architecture, and in particular to Le Corbusier: the Swiss-French pioneer stands out for his pronounced interest in the order, even if he never identifies it by name. This much is clear from his response to the imposing, precise and majestic form Michelangelo gave to the order on the exterior of Saint Peter's. Not only did he famously invoke the "*leçon de Rome*", comprising classical, early Christian and Renaissance architecture, but he emphasized the overwhelming importance of the contribution of Michelangelo in particular, and it is telling that he chose the two privileged sites in that architect's trajectory where the giant order played a pivotal role.

Besides Le Corbusier's profound admiration for Michelangelo's Palazzo Senatorio, his epiphany of scale in the presence of Saint Peter's, provoked particularly by the monumental treatment of the giant order on the exterior of the nave and transepts of the basilica, stands out quite clearly.[25] Without explicitly mentioning the order, yet responding to the ensemble as a whole, Jeanneret writes: "*L'architecture est chose plastique*" concluding that it contains "emotion, passion"[26]. For Le Corbusier the sculptural quality of Michelangelo's architecture was the essence of his contribution and of his significance as "*l'homme des nos derniers mille ans*", just as Phidias had been of the previous millennium. "*Tel homme, tel drame, tel architecture*"[27]. At the core of the *leçon de Rome* is, for Le Corbusier, the lesson of Michelangelo, and one large part of that lesson was the 'lesson of scale' it provided for all time, as well as for the particular moment of encounter between the modern architect and the giant order at the Capitoline palaces and at Saint Peter's. In its impressive articulation of volume and mass, the giant order was for Le Corbusier not so much a site where time and timelessness intersect but rather a point where a clamorous 'event' in the 16th-century history of the orders encounters deeper historical rhythms shaping the architectural discipline.

Given this new, monumental relation to scale, the giant order is best understood not in terms of a particular measure or proportionality of its own, but in the context of the entire organism. This reconfigures the classical problem of parts and wholes in an enlarged format. The measure of the order is no longer contained within itself but is adjusted to the entire building from the outset. This challenges widely established and even ingrained art historical and architectural historical habits of thought and perception. For the giant order asks us to strip the inherited apparatus of the orders of its self-evidence and to see the entire system anew. In so doing, the giant order provides a unique mode of exemplarity that enables a transhistorical dialogue between the ancients and the moderns, making the antiquities 'speak' through the innovations of Renaissance and Baroque and from these historical moments to the present – indeed, to *any* present. It thus brought about a dramatic new relation to scale, as the motif was never part of the architectural vocabulary of antiquity, a fact acknowledged by architects and theorists of the 17th century across a wide spectrum of positions[28].

1.3, 1.4
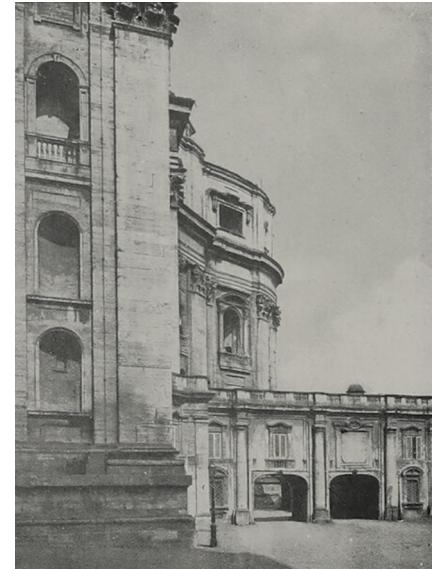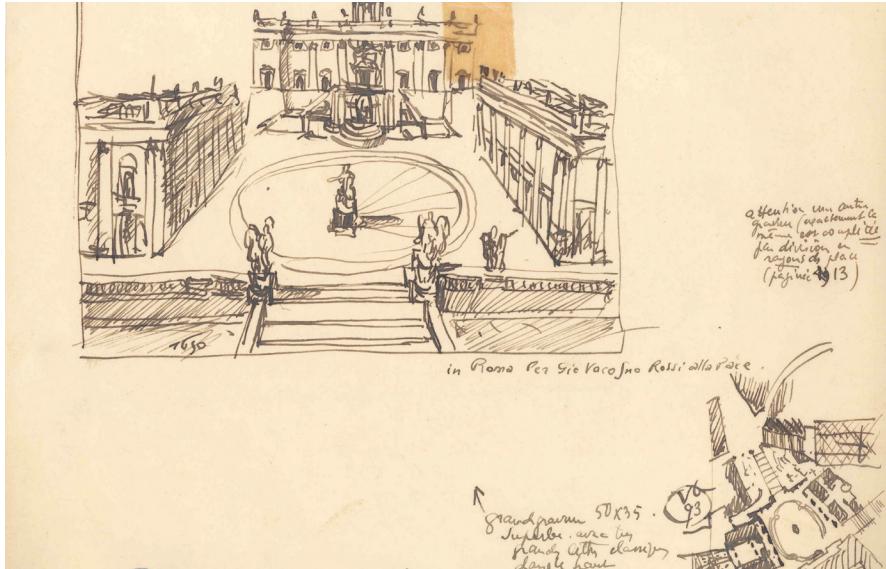
Grandiose Rhetoric: Reframing the *Ordine Gigante*

The best way to define the giant order is to identify what it *does*, rather than what it *is*. Frankl describes it as "the supports [...] that draw together the entire height of the façade in a unit"[29]. Thus, the problem of unifying private and civic façades is resolved by a leap in scale. And this dialectic drives the development of the *ordine gigante* through its entire historical trajectory. Frankl nonetheless sees the giant order as part of a wider set of formal strategies that pit vertical forces against horizontal stratification, concluding that "the interruption of horizontal layers by vertical forces effected by the giant order is only a special case of interpenetration in general, fusing originally isolated entities into a unit"[30]. The stylistic threshold ensures the dominance of formal unity over multiplicity, a hallmark of 16th century façades.

However this argument can only take us so far. The need to solve specific architectural and urban problems, in all of their formal, spatial, and functional specificity, prompted the rise of the giant order, motivating Michelangelo to rework earlier forms so as to make the orders sufficiently elastic to adjust to pre-existing structures lacking canonized, 'correct' proportions.

This becomes especially evident in the case of the decaying medieval buildings on the Capitoline Hill before 1537, which could not readily accommodate a double-tier columnar order in accordance with schemes derived from Vitruvius or from ancient practice. What started as a device for renovating difficult and disorderly urban contexts quickly became a novel 'code' that revolutionized the design of new projects, traversing national boundaries and architectural cultures through its scalar transformation of the classical language.

While fulfilling the need for pragmatic codification, the giant order also catered to a taste for the exception that more flexible uses of the classical lexicon had satisfied by the middle of the 17th century[31]. It was thus eminently suited to the non- or anti-normative component of Baroque sensibility, even as it appealed to the demand for immensity and grandeur appropriate to the propagandistic tendencies of Counterreformation and absolutist mentalities, fascinated by theatricality and spectacle[32]. In this regard, José Antonio Maravall has underscored the link between absolutism and the Baroque – one that extends, with qualifications, to Papal power as well[33].

Social values are not inscribed unambiguously in the giant order; nor do its formal configurations directly mirror the conflicts for prestige and political rivalries of the period. On the one hand, it can be seen as a vertical emancipation of the free-standing column, engaged column, or pilaster strip. On the other, its unbridled verticalism and 'heroic' scale register, if only in a mediated fashion, the

structions relying on the ekphrases of Vitruvius and Pliny and the archeological record. These intriguing suggestions do not correspond to the definition of the giant order provided by Frankl, Bruschi, Melters, and others, the key element of which is its rising through more than one storey of a façade, offering a unifying framework. These are partial precedents, rather than genuine instances of the phenomenon, given that the Renaissance and Baroque normative versions of the giant order are all a) attached to the surfaces of a façade, rather than being free-standing columns as part of a portico and b) tend to be engaged columns or pilasters, i.e. *columnatio* in a close relation to the wall mass. For an argument attempting to bridge the gap between the outsized columnar orders of antiquity, as transmitted through the Vitruvian commentaries and illustrations, and the *ordine gigante* proper in the Renaissance, see the suggestive examples, taken above all from Cesariano's illustrations of the Basilica of Fano, in his Vitruvius edition of 1521, in Adriano Ghisetti Ghiavarina, "Note sull'ordine gigante nell'illusionismo dell'architettura romana e nelle sperimentazioni rinascimentali," in *Classicismo e Modernità. Atti del convegno e presentazione della mostra L'Architettura del Quotidiano (1930-1940)*, ed. Ghisetti Ghiavarina, (dierre, 1996), 21-9. This argument is worth considering, but falls short, as it only provides one (albeit significant) source for the idea of a genuine giant order, rather than a comprehensive reading of how it developed in concrete instances in the Renaissance and Baroque periods.

[29] Paul Frankl, *Principles of Architectural History: The Four Phases of Architectural Style, 1420-1900*, (MIT Press 1968 [1914]), 116-21.

[30] Frankl, *Principles of Architectural History*, 116-21.

[31] Caroline Elam, "*Tuscan dispositions*: Michelangelo's Florentine architectural vocabulary and its reception," *Renaissance Studies* 19, 1 (2005): 46-82; and my essay "Error or Invention? Critical Receptions of Michelangelo's Architecture from Pirro Ligorio to Teofilo Gallacini," *Perspecta* 46 (2013): 76-121.

[32] On the Baroque transformation of the classical language, presupposing a delicate balance between norm and license, see above all Anthony Blunt, *Borromini* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1979), chap. 2-3, 6; Manfredo Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture* (Harper & Row, 1980), 19ff; Rudolf Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy, 1600 to 1750* (Penguin, 1958), I, 23-84, II; and my essay "Error or Invention", 111, with bibliography. On spectacle and theatricality in the Baroque, see Wittkower, *Art and Architecture*, II, 97-114; Richard Krautheimer, *The Rome of Alexander VII* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1985), chap. 4, 6; Irving Lavin, "Bernini and the Theater," in *Visible Spirit: The Art of Gianlorenzo Bernini* (Pindar Press, 2007), I, 15-32; Manfredo Tafuri, "Il luogo teatrale dall'Umanesimo a oggi," in *Teatri e scenografie* (Touring Club, 1976), 25-39; Id., *The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s* (MIT Press, 1980); Jean-Pierre Cavaille, *Theatrum Mundi. Notes sur la théatralité du monde baroque* (European Univ. Institute, 1987); Andrew Horn, "Andrea Pozzo and the Jesuit Theaters of the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 6, 2, 21 (June 2019): 213-48.

[33] José Antonio Maravall, *Culture of the baroque: analysis of a historical structure* (Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1986). Charles S. Burroughs has characterized the giant order with a touch of hyperbole, as "a motif that would become an architectural emblem for absolutist rule throughout Europe": Burroughs, "The Demotic Campidoglio," 171.

[34] Hubert Damisch, "Perrault's Colonnade of the Louvre and Functions of the Classical Order," in *Noah's Ark. Essays on Architecture* (MIT Press, 2016), 79ff; Tafuri, *Interpreting the Renaissance*, 6.

[35] The metaphor, rather straightforward at first glance, has its origins in the German Idealist theory of architecture, and more specifically in Schelling's approach to the Orders based on his idea of *Potenzen*, laid out in his *Philosophy of Fine Art*, published after his lectures on that subject in Jena and Würzburg (1802-6). On Schelling's theory of architecture and his treatment of the Orders see Petra Lohmann, "The Influences of German Idealism on Nineteenth-Century Architectural Theory: Schelling and Leo von Klenze," in *The Impact of German Idealism: The Legacy of Post-Kantian Thought*, eds. Nicholas Boyle and Liz Disley (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2013), vol. 3, 224-243.

[36] Paul Frankl, *Principles of Architectural History: The Four Phases of Architectural Style, 1420-1900*, (MIT Press 1968 [1914]), 116-21.

[37] Krautheimer, *Rome of Alexander VII*, 47-74.

[38] Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, 136-70; 193-220.

social status of patrons who made it a key element of their ideological strategy of dynastic or personal self-assertion, whether used in lavish palaces, on the façades or in the interiors of churches. Undue reliance on either the formal-optical or the social-sumptuary side of the argument can easily lead to equivocations, since the meaning of the giant order shifts considerably with architectural context and culture. At the same time, the vertical congruence of its components, along with the measured horizontal rhythms, despite the fact that neither adheres to a fixed proportion, is a constant of the giant order across time and space.

Close study of these contexts of reception sheds light on the formal means through which Michelangelo generated his innovative paradigm and how later architects took it up and transformed it. Such investigation inevitably modifies our understanding of contexts of production as well, despite – or because of – the radical alterity of Michelangelo's practice, which conditioned the multiple strata of his *fortuna critica* at different historical moments.

Receptions internal to architecture are as vital and legitimate as those external to it: the former are constructed, the latter textually articulated. The circuit between built and textual receptions is central to the present study, and whenever we choose to intervene in it we encounter different formal variations on the theme of the giant order and the specific meanings they carry.

Since the canonical classical orders constitute a sign system in its own right, the giant order may be read, in a way seemingly paradoxical, both as an extension of and an exception to the canon. Like all exceptions, it discloses the meaning of the norm – that is, of the proper ratio or proportion associated with each of the canonical orders, whether three or five – through the very act of transgressing it[34]. By pursuing its unique path, the giant order came to designate a mode of *columnatio* that is liberated from canonical restraints so that it can freely traverse the vertical axis, potentially without limit. In this respect, it is a columnar order unlike any other, due to a decisive difference: an internal dynamism that allows it to move beyond Vitruvian rules and ancient built precedents alike. For this reason, it can be considered an order raised to a higher power[35].

Historiographical Overview

To the best of my knowledge, no study devoted to the history and definition of the giant order – from Paul Frankl[36], Richard Krautheimer[37], James S. Ackerman[38], Erik Forsmann[39], Arnaldo Bruschi[40], Lionello Puppi[41], Giulio Carlo Argan and Bruno Contardi[42], Anthony Blunt[43], Rudolf Wittkower[44], Sir John Summerson[45], Manfredo Tafuri[46] to more recentl works by Christof Thoenes[47], Hubert Damisch[48], Charles Burroughs[49], Anna Bedon[50], Joseph Connors[51], and Monika Melters[52] – offers a comprehensive overview of the subject, preferring to subordinate their readings to the criteria of the monographic approach. The result has been a piecemeal set of analyses, rather than a coherent understanding of the complex terrain occupied by the *ordine gigante*. With the exception of Melters and, to a lesser degree, Frankl and Forsmann, most historians have confined their efforts to analyzing the way it was handled by specific architects. Ackerman's reading of Michelangelo and Wittkower's account of Borromini are fundamental in this respect, but this focus has also produced a regrettable compartmentalization. The present study seeks at least partly to

decompartmentalize this field by adopting a geographical and reception-historical perspective that brings to light implicit and explicit interconnections, as well as deeper genealogies of the giant order across early modern Europe.

Like Melters' contribution, the present study adopts a cross-cultural and polycentric approach; yet unlike hers, it proceeds from a specific focus on the roles of Bernini and Borromini as "midwives" of a child fathered by Michelangelo, whose grandparents and great-grandparents were Bramante and Alberti, respectively. Rather than aiming at a comprehensive overview, it offers a representative cross-section that deliberately sidesteps rigid divisions between national cultures of architecture inherited from traditional historiography.

My genealogical reading builds upon the work of Frankl (who traced the way the order operates formally at different historical phases of Western architecture), Forsmann (who studied its European dissemination) and Sir John Summerson (who focused on the syntactical aspects of the classical tradition in terms of the architecture/language analogy). Although these scholars approach the giant order from different angles, they share, in varying degrees, an underlying geographic focus.

This maintains that the 'heroic' dimension of the giant order is nowhere more evident than in Rome, its birthplace, above all in the *renovatio* of key sites from Michelangelo's Capitoline palaces and Saint Peter's (the two key sites where the definitive form of the giant order first appeared in the 16th century) to the mid to late 17th-century churches of Bernini and Borromini (in which they attain exemplary Baroque forms, at least as far as the Roman context is concerned).

Polycentric Histories and Architectural Geographies: Mapping the Reception of the Giant Order

Like many other forms of architectural expression in the 16th and 17th centuries, the giant order moves within an expanded artistic geography, where the drawing of boundaries between centers and peripheries is an ongoing process . Its dissemination therefore cannot be reduced to an Italo-centric narrative, even if the European repercussions of the struggle between Borromini and Bernini over Michelangelo's legacy, and the *ordine gigante* in particular, inevitably originates in Rome.

Inspired by Manfredo Tafuri's notion of polycentric history, in what follows I seek to show how each reception – indeed, each use – of the order generates new modifications under the pressure of forces both internal and external to itself[54]. These all unfolded within the broader "project of the orders" and across diverse Italian and European architectural cultures[55].

Building on Jean Guillaume's idea of a 'polycentric history of Renaissance architecture', what is being attempted here is the extension of this approach to the Baroque, using the giant order as the focus of a study of formal and semantic transformation. At the same time, they address a recurrent discrepancy in the historiography between a close attention to the temporal aspect of architecture (one which is taken for granted in our discipline) and the spatial aspect of the succession of different projects on a single site or, alternatively, the reception and dissemination of readings of a single work in its geographical extension. This discrepancy is methodologically paradoxical, as site or locus is a specific aspect of architecture that no historian of architecture can ignore. In this sense, the choices made evident on a single site, through its architecture, as well as between sites, made evident

[39] Forsmann, *Dorico, ionico, corinzio*, 26ff.

[40] Arnaldo Bruschi, "Michelangelo in Campidoglio e l'"invenzione' dell'ordine gigante," in *Storia architettura*, IV (1979), 7-28.

[41] Lionello Puppi, "Prospetto di palazzo e ordine gigante nell'esperienza architettonica del '500," *Storia dell'Arte* 38-40 (1980), 267-75.

[42] Giulio Carlo Argan and Bruno Contardi, *Michelangelo Architetto* (Phaidon, 2004); Bruno Contardi, "Il progetto di Michelangelo," in *Il Palazzo dei conservatori e il Palazzo nuovo in Campidoglio: momenti della storia urbana di Roma*, ed. Maria Elisa Tittoni (Pacini, 1996), 51-62.

[43] Blunt, *Borromini*, 72-4

[44] Wittkower, *Art and Architecture*, II, 31, 43ff; III, 32, 114.

[45] Summerson, *The Classical Language*, 27ff.

[46] Manfredo Tafuri, "Michelangelo architetto," *Civiltà delle macchine* 23, 3-6 (1975): 49-60.

[47] Christof Thoenes, "Michelangelo e Architettura," in *Michelangelo Architetto a Roma*, ed. Mauro Mussolin (Silvana, 2009), 25-37: 33-4.

[48] Damisch, "Perrault's Colonnade".

[49] Charles Burroughs, "Michelangelo at the Campidoglio: Artistic Identity, Patronage, Manufacture," *Artibus et Historiae* 4, 28 (2003): 85-111; Id., "The Demotic Campidoglio," 171-87.

[50] Anna Bedon, *Il Campidoglio. Storia di un monumento civile nella Roma Papale* (Electa, 2008), 53, 121; Bedon. "Piazza del Campidoglio," in *Michelangelo Architetto a Roma*, 128-38.

[51] Joseph Connors, "Un Teorema Sacro: San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane," in *Il Giovane Borromini: dagli Esordi a San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane*, ed. Manuela Kahn-Rossi (Skira, 1999), 459-74: 464ff.

[52] Melters, *Die Kolossalordnung*.

[53] Enrico Castelnuovo and Carlo Ginzburg, "Center and Periphery," in *History of Italian Art* (Polity, 1996 [1979]), I, 29-112; Stephen J. Campbell, "Artistic Geographies," in *Cambridge Companion to the Italian Renaissance* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2014), 17-39; Cora Presezzi, "Policentrismo e resistenze periferiche nella storia dell'arte italiana: 'Centro e periferia' di Castelnuovo e Ginzburg," *Storicamente* 15 (2019): 1-32; A few 'a posteriori' reflections by Ginzburg can be found in his preface to the reprinted essay: Enrico Castelnuovo and Carlo Ginzburg, *Centro e periferia nella storia dell'arte italiana* (Officina libraria, 2019), 7-12. For significant contributions assessing the impact of the essay on international scholarship, see Irving Lavin, ed., "Center and Periphery: Dissemination and Assimilation of Style," in *World Art. Themes of Unity and Diversity* (Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1986), I, 43-156; Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, *Toward a Geography of Art* (Chicago Univ. Press, 2004); R. Bösel, "Found and Reshaped in Translation: Architectural Models from the Centre to the Periphery," *Citation and Quotation in Early Modern Architecture: Lost and Found in Translation*, ed. A. Hopkins (De Gruyter, 2025), v. 5, 347-78; Tafuri, *Interpreting the Re-*

naissance, chap. 5; Peter Burke, *The European Renaissance: Centers and Peripheries* (Wiley/Blackwell, 1998); Klemens Kaps and Andrea Komlosy, "Centers and Peripheries Revisited: Polycentric Connections or Entangled Hierarchies?," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 36, 3-4 (2013): 237-64; Olivier Bonfait, "Périphérie versus centre, ou problématiques de domination symbolique. L'essai d'Enrico Castelnuovo et Carlo Ginzburg," *Histoires sociales de l'art*, ed. Neil McWilliam (Les Presses du réel, 2016,), 2, 217-225.

[54] Manfredo Tafuri and Antonio Foscari, *L'armonia e i conflitti. La chiesa di San Francesco della Vigna nella Venezia del '500* (Einaudi, 1983). For methodological reflection on the idea of polycentric histories of architecture, in relation to Tafuri's response to Carlo Ginzburg's vision of microhistory, see Yehuda Safran and Daniel Sherer, "An Interview with Carlo Ginzburg," *Potlatch* 5 (2022), 21-22; and Gundula Rakowitz, ed., *Architettura e Storia: Un incontro polifonico con Carlo Ginzburg* (Bembo Officina, 2024), 37-38, 78-90.

[55] Sara Galletti, "Before the Academy: Research Trends in the History of Early Modern Architecture before the Age of Louis XIV," *Perspective* 1 (2013): 43-65.

[56] Here I have adapted the following sentence from Franco Moretti, transposing the geographical referent from the literary to the architectural and artistic field: "geography is not an inert container, is not a box where cultural history 'happens' but an active force, that pervades the literary field and shapes it in depth": *Atlas of the European Novel 1800-1900* (Verso, 1999), 3. Moretti, was following the footsteps of the *geohistoire* of the second generation *Annalistes*, e.g. Fernand Braudel (Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel*, 6). As to my own inspiration, besides Braudel, I have relied on the remarkable overview of the history and theory of geography by Franco Farinelli, *Geografia: Un'introduzione ai modelli del mondo* (Einaudi, 2000).

[57] Galletti, "Before the Academy", 44.

[58] On Wren's ability to fuse the most diverse stylistic codes and his detached, experimental attitude, a function of his

through the reception history of its earlier architectures, show that in historical as well as formal terms "geography is not an inert container, a box where cultural history 'happens', but an active force that pervades the architectural and artistic field and shapes it in depth"[56].

If the polycentric approach can help us to map the field of reception in an active, geographical sense, the architects themselves display an even greater agency when pursuing clearly opposed ways of reinventing the giant order. This was achieved by choosing to emphasize the reception paths pursued by Bernini and Borromini, aware that they were mutually exclusive options elaborated by archrivals locked in a contest with each other and with their chief precursor, Michelangelo. Although the struggle over the legacy of Michelangelo, channelled through the alternatives of these key Baroque figures, is illuminating in its own right, it has the disadvantage of obscuring other factors and filiations that weighed upon their choices. In this way, the giant order appears as an *unicum* located at the center of an entire set of proliferating relationships, making their underlying ideological, formal and theoretical tensions visible from the Renaissance to the Baroque. More precisely, when 17th-century architects of the most disparate cultural backgrounds, confessions and national origins adopted the giant order, the opposed readings of Bernini and Borromini offered a potent and almost obligatory lens through which to refract Michelangelo's innovation[57].

Their contest offered practitioners attuned to the latest innovations a choice between more normative and more licentious paths. As a result, the reading of Michelangelo's invention was a double-edged sword: although the reception of the order was wide, the choice about how to engage the order itself – and what form it would take – narrowed considerably, even if each architect who utilized this motif drew on one or the other alternative in various ways and for different reasons. Exceptions to this rule do exist: Wren, in particular, fuses elements from both Bernini and Borromini, a feat possible only for an architect with a detached, almost "scientific" attitude able to absorb the most disparate stimuli . His mature understanding of the orders was deeply informed by Perrault's theoretical approach, which, as will be seen, both dismantled the metaphysical grounding of the orders in general and criticized the pretensions of the giant order, whose break with canonical proportions had anticipated Perrault's theoretical project of demystification by over a century[59].

The diverse practical and theoretical receptions of Michelangelo's *ordine gigante* – in the built universe of forms and the textual universe of responses – yield valuable clues to this dynamic. On the one hand, they appear as specific instances of the continuous "invention of the orders" that forms part of the *longue durée* of the classical tradition[60]; on the other, they underpin the emergent stylistic and formal codes associated with the giant order on a European scale. In this respect, the formal differences between 16th- and 17th-century receptions are compounded by the geographical contrast between Italian and Northern European manifestations of the giant order. It follows that, even if Michelangelo's innovation may be credited as the major turning point, the rise of the giant order did not occur all at once, but was the cumulative result of successive reworkings and strategies of invention across generations.

Although Bernini and Borromini developed different potentials within Michelangelo's definitive version of the giant order, they faced similar problems: exercising unifying control over the vertical dimension of façades, mediating between side and frontal views, responding to the demands of different sacred and secular typologies, and negotiating the tension between the frequent interdependence and the growing autonomy of ornament and underlying structural conditions. None of these issues concern Piranesi, except in his one built project, Santa Maria del Priorato: in all other cases, he represented the order in prints, as an object of his formidable antiquarian imagination and as a salient feature of the a*ll'antica* tradition running from Michelangelo through Bernini and Borromini to himself.

15th- and 16th-Century Precedents for the Giant Order: Alberti to Giulio Romano

Let us now move farther back along the family tree of the order, away from the mid-16th century codification and the problems of definition and exegesis with which we began. This 'genealogical' move requires a shift in parameters, from attempts at definition and the emphasis on concepts and functions to the reading of concrete problems and formal proposals. Neither Alberti – generally credited with having invented in 1472 the earliest version of the giant order in the façade of Sant'Andrea in Mantua – nor Bramante, who quickly adopted the Albertian solution in the parish church of Roccaverano (1509), and then in the monumental project of the new Saint Peter's – a

"placing of architecture, like Guarini, in the context of a wide range of scientific interests", see above all Tafuri, *Theories and History of Architecture*, 24, 118ff.

[59] On Wren's reliance on Perrault, see John Summerson, "The Mind of Wren," in *Heavenly Mansions* (Cresset Press, 1949), 51-86. In an important article, Joseph A. Bennet shows that Wren owned the 1708 edition of Perrault's *Ordonnance*, and that certain aspects of his theoretical approach involving the argument for the primacy of geometry owe as much to Fréart de Chambray's *Parallèle*, rather than Perrault. Wren had access to a copy of John Evelyn's English translation of Fréart's treatise as early as 1665: "Christopher Wren: The Natural Causes of Beauty," *Architectural History* 15 (1972), 5-22: 17-18.

[60] Christof Thoenes, "Architectural Orders: Rebirth or Invention?," *Art in Translation*, 9, 3 (2017): 296-311.

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Giovanni Battista Naldini, Old St. Peter's crossing, drawing, c. 1505.

cantiere that functioned as a laboratory for both forward-looking innovations of 16th-century architecture and the more orthodox solutions that would come to fruition during the 17th century[61] – offer sufficient anchorage for a comprehensive history of scalar innovation of the orders prior to Michelangelo.

This notwithstanding, Bramante's use of the order at Roccaverano can plausibly be seen as a rehearsal for greater things: it prefigures, *inter alia*, the interlocking temple fronts of Palladio's Venetian churches, even as, in a shorter time frame, it paved the way for Bramante's own external use of four corresponding giant orders in the form of pilaster strips on the unexecuted façade design of 1506 for Saint Peter's (without the interlocking façade motif, however)[62]. These correspond to the four points of the crossing in drawings by Maarten van Heemskerck and Giovanni Battista Naldini[63]. As Tafuri noted, the motif of interlocking minor and major orders is in any case a key theme of 16th-century *all'antica* architecture, which profoundly meditated upon its consequences and implications, particularlythe idea of *consonantia*[64].

The reception of this motif was crucial for the design of 16th-century Italian church façades. Palladio was not alone in drawing on it: at S. Maria in Castello in Carpi (1515) Peruzzi adopted a double articulation between major and minor pilasters to frame his façade, expressing nave and aisles externally. This scheme developed from the interior of his unexecuted design for Saint Peter's

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[61] On this church and its place within Bramante's career, see Arnaldo Bruschi, *Bramante* (Laterza. 1973), 42, 209, 232-4, 237; Manuela Morresi, "Bramante, Enrico Bruno, e la parrocchiale di Roccaverano," in *La piazza, la chiesa, il parco*, ed. Manfredo Tafuri (Electa, 1991), 96-165; Tafuri, *Interpreting the Renaissance*, 113, 147.

[62] Bruschi, *Bramante*, 214, fig. 74.

[63] On the medal is unclear whether or not the Corinthian was intended to be used on the façade, but one could perhaps infer that it was, to match the Corinthian pilasters on the interior, whose early design is attested to by Heemskerck' *Roman Sketchbook* III, f. 52r, Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, 1532-3 (Bruschi, *Bramante*, 215, fig. 78); and Naldini's view of Saint Peter's, 1513-4 (Henry Millon and Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, eds., *The Renaissance from Brunelleschi to Michelangelo. The Representation of Architecture* (Rizzoli, 1994), 666, fig. 398).

[64] Tafuri, *Interpreting the Renaissance*, 106.

(1505), which in turn led the Bramantean scheme of the *ordine gigante* and its minor interwoven secondary order in a new direction[65].

From this perspective, our task is not only to retrace how the giant order was deployed in secular and sacred typologies between Alberti and Michelangelo, but also to understand the reasons for its use in each case. The first pioneers of this strategy – Bramante and Peruzzi above all – resolved the discrepancy between the temple front, with its privileged central entry, and the basilican plan with two side entries for the flanking aisles by interweaving major and minor orders across the different portals[66].

Yet Alberti, who carefully studied ancient triumphal arches when designing the colossal pilasters of S. Andrea, and Bramante at the parish church of Roccaverano a generation later, did not handle the giant order in the same way. Their strategies diverged above all in the treatment of the temple front rather than of the triumphal arch, so Wittkower's claim that Alberti was the first to superimpose the contradictory typologies of classical temple front and Christian basilica is not entirely accurate, for at least two reasons[67].

Wittkower's reading is imprecise first because Alberti, in Sant'Andrea, added from the outset a third type, the triumphal arch, which provided the model for a system of giant pilasters flanking two smaller ones at the central portal. Secondly, the first superimposition of this kind, expressed clearly in the synthesis of the triangular pediments, only sets in with Roccaverano, over four decades after Alberti's death, and from that point on it is further developed in Palladio's San Giorgio Maggiore and the Redentore.

The trajectory just sketched out does not only delineate the direction followed by architects in applying the giant order to church façades from Alberti to Palladio. It also contrasts sharply with secular developments in residential typologies. In palace fronts the phases of development of the giant order are more complex, both within each phase and at their junctures. The giant pilaster

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[65] On the Carpi project by Peruzzi, see Christoph L. Frommel, *The Architecture of the Italian Renaissance* (Thames and Hudson, 2007), 148.
[66] Wittkower, *Architectural Principles*, 90ff.
[67] Wittkower, *Architectural Principles*, 39ff.
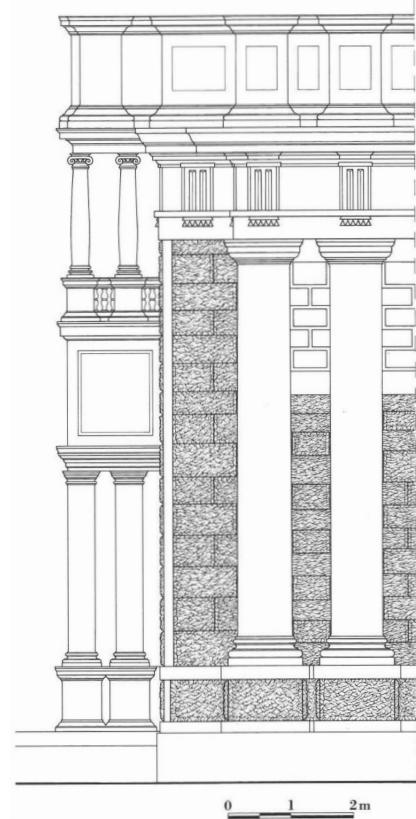
appears in straightforward form in the garden façade of the Villa Madama of 1519-21 but assumes a more complex role on the valley façade, where a series that lapses into the wall mass anticipates conditions later associated with the *Hungerbarock* in Northern Europe[68].

This increasing abstraction of the order, in which the traditional Albertian opposition between column and wall architecture is resolved by synthesizing the two, is anticipated by *modanatura*, which tends to be quite abstract and similar to applied framework of Giulio Romano's Palazzo Stati Maccarani façade of 1521: Frommel has argued that Giulio, then Raphael's young collaborator, is responsible for the valley façade giant pilasters of the Villa Madama[69].

It is worth noting that, in the upper floors of the Palazzo Stati Maccarani *cortile*, Giulio employs unusually elongated giant orders spanning more than one floor and raised on high pedestals: this solution, repeated twice and subjected to intricate variations in relation to the internal fenestration and stairwells, is then brought down to earth, as it were, and placed on exterior and interior façades in syntactically complicated senses in the Palazzo Te from 1525 to 1535. There it helps to regulate pre-existing parts of the structure (the earlier stables of Duke Federico Gonzaga II) by juxtaposing the lilliputian and the gigantic, producing what is in all likelihood the greatest scalar

contrast in Italian Renaissance architecture[70].

In this sharply contrasting use of scaled orders, Giulio was both precocious and original, possibly inspiring Michelangelo to take the path that he would subsequently pursue[71]. As noted at the outset, the codification of this form took almost thirty years, from 1537 to 1564, the final decades of Michelangelo's career, even if Ackerman dates the first construction of the Palazzo Senatorio loggia – the earliest building in which the giant order appears, since the Palazzo dei Conservatori was completed later – to the beginning of this period. Diverse handlings of Michelangelo's legacy

1.10
Rome. Villa Madama, garden façade, designed by Raphael and Giulio Romano. Fratelli Alinari, 1939.

1.11
Grazia Sgrilli, The left corner of Palazzo Te's northern façade. From Tafuri, "Giulio Romano," 22.

[68] See my forthcoming article *Lessons of Scale. Transformations of the Giant Order from Michelangelo to Piranesi, 1537-1750*, II, *From Baroque Rome to Europe and Back Again*, on the next issue of this journal.
[69] C. L. Frommel, *The Architecture of the Italian Renaissance*, 123. One of the most insightful statements on *modanatura* is the essay by Luigi Moretti, "The Values of Profiles," *Oppositions* 4 (October 1974 [1952]), 109-39.
[70] Manfredo Tafuri, "Giulio Romano: linguaggio, mentalità, committenti," in *Giulio Romano* (Electa, 1989), 15ff.
[71] Giulio's experimental use of the orders appears to have sparked Michelangelo's interest, given the fact that other areas of his approach, in the Laurentian Library Reading Room, especially in the combination of the blind mezzanine windows flanked with balusters, as in earlier Palazzo Stati Maccarani cortile reveal the impact of Giulio: see Frommel *The Architecture of the Italian Renaissance*, 171-2. As Frommel put it, "Giulio's rebellious streak helped Michelangelo to find a quite novel architectural style of his own". (176).

1.12
Etienne Dupérac, *Capitolii sciographia ex ipso exemplari Michaelis Angeli*, 1569. From *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae*.

1.13
Unknown author, Capitoline Hill before Michelangelo's intervention, drawing showing Palazzo Senatorio and Palazzo dei Conservatori, 1559-61. Paris, musée du Louvre.
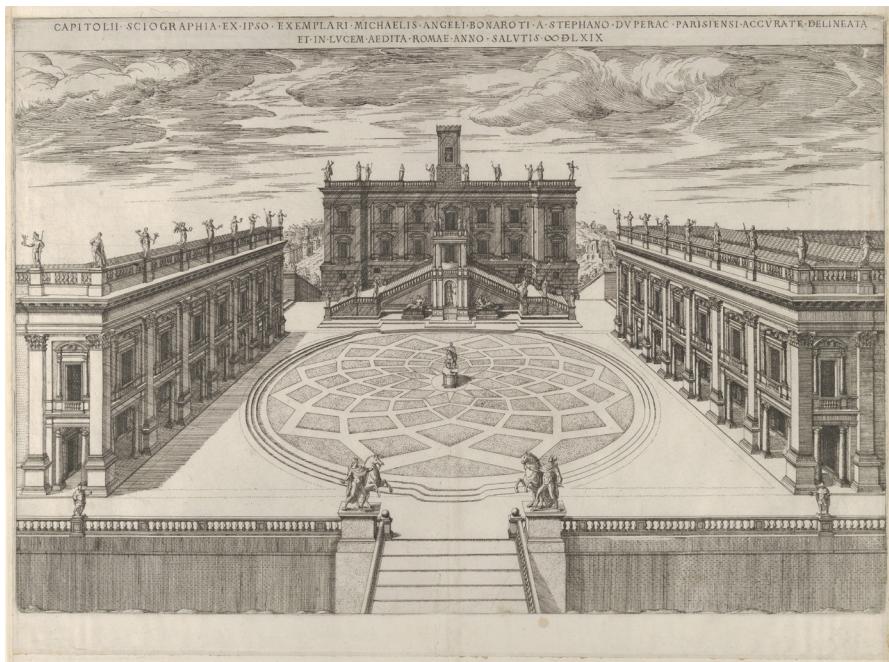
of invention presupposed different emphases, shaping subsequent readings of the 15th-century genealogies inherent in his *nuova usanza* and developing possibilities previously left unexplored. At this point, the giant order began its career – or its extended afterlife – which includes both its formal transformations and its critical and theoretical reception[72]. Yet, although Michelangelo can be credited with disseminating this colossal version of the orders, its 15th-century origins were never entirely forgotten, even as they came to be largely eclipsed by the *scala terribile*, the sovereign exemplarity of Buonarotti.

Michelangelo's Codification: From the Capitoline Palaces to Saint Peter's

We now arrive at the center of gravity of the discussion: isolating those features that attest to the formal coherence of the organism secured by the giant order in Michelangelo, the architect who codified it and ensured its dissemination in Italy and across Europe in the later 16th century. Although Sanmicheli, Vignola, Palladio and Alessi quickly adopted the giant order in works such as Palazzo Grimani at San Luca (1559), the Portico dei Banchi (1562-5), Palazzo Valmarana (1565) and Santa Maria Assunta in Carignano (1567), it was Michelangelo who, in his Campidoglio design – known throughout Europe via Etienne Dupérac's famous print of 1569) – first bound the two storeys with a single giant pilaster with the aim of organizing large expanses of façade vertically and horizontally by coordinating major and minor members.

Close coordination between the two scales is achieved by a rhythmical interweaving of levels, often extending to relations between inside and outside, so that interior and exterior are woven together by a dynamic interaction of column and wall. At the urban dimension, the use of the giant order to unify large façades on *piazze* and other public spaces invites a fresh look at the shifting relationship between Baroque urban scalar transformations of the orders and the new visibility required of architecture in Rome and other European capitals in this period[73].

In his analysis of Michelangelo's transformation of the Capitoline Hill, Ackerman describes an imposition of order on chaos[74]. The giant order was a key element of this strategy, underpinning a design that skillfully balances axiality and centrality in the articulation of architecture and urban space. By exploiting an elliptical geometry – the first use of this figure in an urban plan – Michelangelo devised a "plan that transformed the disorderly complex of the medieval site into a symmetrical composition unifying five entrances, a piazza and three palace fronts"[75]. In this ample open-air *salone*, or 'urban room', space-defining facades matter more as surfaces of an 'inside-outside space' than what lies behind them. The giant order, in relation to the minor orders interwoven with it, thereby defines and shapes the urban space, even as it visually articulates the surfaces that border that space.

As noted earlier, the sequence of giant pilasters belongs as much to the piazza as to the palaces that frame it, functioning as a conceptually detachable framework that simultaneously binds the space to the surrounding architectures. It does this even as each bay in the separate palaces defines their façades vertically over against the horizontal entablatures, generating an ideal as well as real grid of forces that fixes each front in place while dynamizing the civic space unfolding before it.

This dynamism tending towards order is a key aspect of the rhetorical force of the giant order in

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[72] Warburg's notion of survival or 'afterlife' (*Nachleben*), which occurs in his writings almost always in the phrase der *Nachleben der Antike*, proposes that the archaic or antique lives on within the modern and may erupt within it as pathology. In my adoption of the term, it is the reinvention, and codification of an archaic and/or antique earlier codification, the *genera* that were later drawn up as the orders, that lives on in amplified form in the giant order. On the idea of *Nachleben* in Warburg, see Ernst H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* (Warburg Institute, 1970), 25-42; Carlo Ginzburg, "From A. Warburg to E. H. Gombrich: A Problem of Method," in *Clues, Myths and the Historical Method* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1989), 17-59; Claudia Cieri Via, "Aby Warburg and the Afterlife of Antiquity," *Ikon*, 13, 1 (2020): 9-18.
[73] Krautheimer, *Rome of Alexander VII*, chap. 4.
[74] Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, 144-5.
[75] Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, 144-5.

B.J. Siegel, Reconstruction of Vignola's project (reproportioned) with Portico di San Petronio. From Tuttle, "Vignola's Facciata dei Banchi," 81.
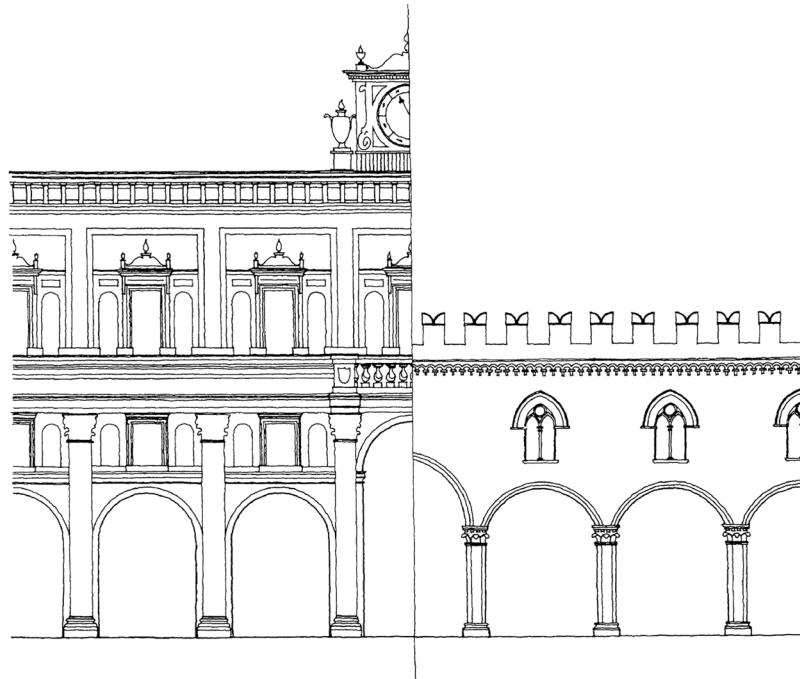
the scheme, insofar as Michelangelo's colossal pilasters mediate between the architectural and the urban scales exemplified by the piazza itself. Yet even if the *ordine gigante* appears as a purely formal invention, one can discern a specific programmatic motivation. Michelangelo combines his giant pilasters with smaller columns framing the *piano nobile* windows, thereby placing greater emphasis on the level occupied by the municipal government and symbolizing political order and civic authority, while placing the guild spaces occupy the lower floor[76]. In this way the giant order, in unifying the façades formally, produced a functional social and political differentiation that offers a vision of potential civic cohesion.

To grasp what is at stake in Michelangelo's reinvention of the giant order, a closer look at the Capitoline palaces is essential. Here, the famously un-Vitruvian architect is at his least transgressive, adhering to Vitruvian rules as decorously as possible while innovating radically in terms of scale. He chooses the most impressive of the orders, the Corinthian, and applies the pilaster in an impeccable and correct way (except for its unprecedented massive scale)[77]. This is, however, a far cry from the patently licentious impulses evident in his other works, from the Laurentian Library to the Medici Chapel to the Porta Pia, where the orders are a mixed genus, and do not conform to any one Vitruvian norm either for ornament or proportionality[78].

The *ordine gigante* occupies the limit between architectural order and disorderly, historically stratified, often chaotic urban sites. Both Michelangelo on the Capitoline Hill in Rome and Vignola on Piazza Maggiore in Bologna had to renovate palazzi with ground floor porticoes that were recalcitrant to the usual Vitruvian solutions or to ancient built precedents, both proportionally and structurally[79]. In many ways they faced comparable tasks. The clue is provided not only by Michelangelo, at the Capitoline Hill, where he had to regularize the facades of the pre-existing ruinous duo of the Palazzo Senatorio and Palazzo dei Conservatori, but also in an architect close to him, Vignola, who confronted a similar problem in Bologna slightly later, a decade or so after he had redesigned the two palaces and then the entire Roman piazza. Vignola was charged with transforming a Gothic portico with ogival arches fronting the main piazza of Bologna, just as Michelangelo had to adapt a medieval structure whose actual size and underlying proportions did not fit the Vitruvian prescriptions for the orders. Both performed with great mastery, formal imagination and technical skill, imposing a humanist vision of order on a medieval jumble that, as Ackerman notes for Michelangelo, would have defeated architects of more ordinary ability[80].

[76] Burroughs, "Michelangelo on the Campidoglio," 92.

[77] Vitruvius, *De Architectura* III, 2.7 (Temple of Artemis at Ephesus); VI, 2.17 (Temple of Jupiter Olympius at Athens; II, 8.11 (Mausoleum of Halicarnassus). On Vitruvius' description of the Mausoleum and its reception in the 17th century, see the discussion in my forthcoming essay, "Hawksmoor's St. George Bloomsbury, Hogarth's *Gin Lane* and the Reception of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus in Georgian London, 1716-1751", in *Re-Conceiving an Ancient Wonder. The Afterlife of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus*, eds. Desmond Kraege and Felix Martin (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2026).

[78] Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, 69-94; 243-59.

[79] On Vignola's solution for the Portico dei Banchi, see Tuttle, "Vignola's Facciata dei Banchi".

[80] Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, 243-59.

It is a supreme irony that Vignola, while emulating Michelangelo through his own use of the giant order in Bologna, chose to omit any mention of it from his treatise, a silence that can be read as a tacit acknowledgement that he did not regard it as part of the canon but rather as a highly effective expedient for the practicing architect. In both projects, the Capitoline and the Portico dei Banchi, the new façades look organic with respect to both the buildings they fronted and to the piazza itself, whereas from 1565 onwards the situation is reversed and the giant increasingly functions as an autonomous design instrument to compose buildings from the ground up.

From its initial instrumentality as a practical scalar tool for *a posteriori* renovation, it assumed the role of a scalar device for designing not only facades from scratch, but whole projects and urban complexes *a priori*. With this new representational autonomy came a new mimetic plasticity, as the early pragmatic device was reproduced in countless ways, rendering its original reparative purpose obsolete while enabling new formal applications across Europe.

In all of Michelangelo's Roman projects, with the exception of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini, the giant order is Corinthian, and this choice has a specific rationale. The Corinthian, the most elaborate of the orders, is usually associated with high status, so that the building expresses its dignity according to its *genus* or type[81]; 'high' here refers both to an aesthetic or stylistic register – akin to a *sermo elevatus* as opposed to a *sermo humilis*, corresponding to the Tuscan/Rustic – and, perhaps, to the vertical extension expressive of this elevation[82].

The civil and public, and hence outward-facing, character provides a clue as to why Michelangelo's Roman giant orders are the most Vitruvian among his uses of the orders, when compared to the private, inward-looking Florentine sites, where his invented orders defy Vitruvian and classical precedent. In Rome the orders had to remain conventional yet flexible in scalar terms to fulfil their task, and the solution he adopted may well have been inspired by Bramante's giant Corinthian pilasters at the four crossing piers of Saint Peter's, which, as shown in Heemskerck's and Naldini's views, were already standing around the *tegurio* by the time of Bramante's death in 1514 and clearly visible when Michelangelo became architect of Saint Peter's in 1543[83]. He could thus transpose Bramante'w Corinthian pilasters to those façade areas at the Campidoglio that required unified solutions, thereby simultaneously reinventing Alberti and Bramante's original invention and codifying the *ordine gigante* as a model destined to enjoy immense critical fortune for centuries.

[81] John Onians, *Bearers of Meaning: The Classical Orders in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1988), 186. Vitruvius, 1.4, associates the Corinthian with the delicacy of a young maiden, however, not with any robustness or grandeur.

[82] It appeared often in the most grandiose Roman architecture, as befits imperial significance, such as the porch and interior of the Pantheon and the top storey of the Colosseum, where its elevation is associated with its physical height. In general, as in Palazzo Rucellai, along with the Composite, the highest from the ground, following the succession from simplest to the most elaborate: Doric – Ionic – Corinthian or Composite (understood as a variant of the Corinthian). The elevated meaning and tone of the Corinthian would thus make it the most appropriate and decorous decorative scheme for the giant order; moreover, since Vitruvius did not give it a proportion of its own, it may in fact have been apt in that way for an order that was giant or could become so because it was elongated when necessary. On the Corinthian, see Ernst H. Gombrich, *The Sense of Order: a Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art* (Cornell Univ. Press, 1979), 188; Onians, *Bearers of Meaning*, 19-20, 25, 26, 28, 210-4. On *sermo elevatus* and *sermo humilis*, see Erich Auerbach, *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Antiquity and the Latin Middle Ages* (Princeton University Press, 1993).

[83] This hypothesis of a Bramantean root for the giant order of Michelangelo was suggested in another way by Frommel, who cites the proto-giant order on the unexecuted Palazzo dei Tribunali façade in Rome (1506) as a possible precedent: *The Architecture of the Italian Renaissance*, 108. But this is less likely, as the giant pilasters in the crossing of St Peter's already existed at Bramante's death and were incorporated into the design of Michelangelo when he was appointed chief architecture of the *fabbrica* in 1543.

1.7

In a fundamental essay, Christof Thoenes contrasts the two diametrically opposed sides of Michelangelo's architecture. These he identifies with Florentine, inward-looking experiment and hermeticism, and Roman, outward-looking '*impegno civile*':

> Vorrei intendere questo nel senso di un processo di "socializzazione" che attraversa l'architettura di Michelangelo durante gli anni quaranta: dall'ermetico, e chiuso in sé, stile personale dell'epoca fiorentina alla discussione aperta tra libertà e ordine, innovazione e tradizione, che vediamo svolgersi nella facciata del palazzo dei Conservatori o nella tribuna di San Pietro. Ciò corrisponde allo scarto tra l'autosufficienza virtuosa dell'architetto mediceo e l'attività nella sfera politico-sociale. Di fatto, mentre a Firenze l'opera architettonica era diventata un affare più o meno privato fra artista e committente, a Roma bisognava presentarsi in pubblico e, allo stesso tempo, connettersi con un contesto storicamente prestabilito, sia semantico sia strutturale[84].

The opposition between 'hermetic' and 'socialized', or then again, between 'closed in on itself' and 'open', and ultimately between hard to decipher 'license' and clearly understandable 'order' which Thoenes establishes in this passage is persuasive. The point holds even if, in the case of the Porta Pia, Michelangelo's approach is as licentious as in his Florentine works – a feature that Ackerman explains by referring to the festive character of gates[85].

Thoenes's analysis is essential reading for grasping Michelangelo's diverse modes of transgression, which break down along a division between his Roman civic architecture and his Florentine private, Medicean architecture. There is here an interplay between norm and exception, it being understood that there are diverse kinds of rules that can be broken and diverse kinds of ways of breaking them. This set of relations is visualized in the following diagram:
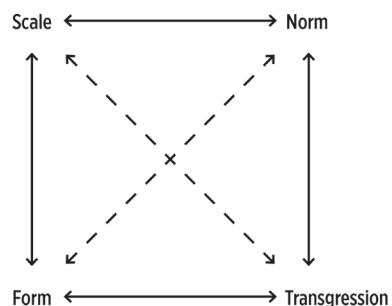
If one reads the diagram along the diagonal linking *scale* and *transgression*, crossing the other diagonal line joining the ideas of *form* and *norm*, it becomes clear that the first diagonal refers to Michelangelo's Roman giant order and its mode of transgression of traditional norms of scale, while the second refers to the Michelangelo's Florentine orders in the Laurentian Library and New Sacristy and their mode of transgression of inherited rules for the orders.

[84] Thoenes, "Michelangelo e Architettura," 33.
[85] Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, 244-5.

Michelangelo's giant order transcends the usual typological distinctions in its openness to experiment, as is made clear through this chiasmus. Formal transgression of the orders occurs both in an ecclesiastical context (in a sepulchral typology) and in a private secular context (a library vestibule), whereas the scalar transgression of the giant order is used both in a civic typology (Capitoline palaces) and an ecclesiastical typology (Saint Peter's), so that his genius for breaking rules serves to found new conventions beyond the usual constraints of type.

Even on the more normative, 'socialized' side of his practice, Michelangelo shows his inventiveness with the orders, precisely in three variants, of the *ordine gigante*. The elongated pilaster spanning both storeys of the Capitoline palaces gives way first to the giant pilaster, confined to a single storey at San Giovanni dei Fiorentini (1559), and finally to the clustered orders at the corners of the massive, articulated body of Saint Peter's (1546-64), where the vertical thrust of great height is set against the dense, partly exposed superimposition at the corners to create a sense of restless movement.

It is not so much the initial impression that the order exists in its clustering of the supports, which partly conceal one another – a condition implying the *concetto* of a series of screen-like pilasters pulled out of the wall mass from a relatively shallow point of origin – but rather another reading that takes on a new cogency here. Anticipated in Raphael's Palazzo Jacopo da Brescia of 1515-1519 and Giulio's Villa Lante of 1520, this layered articulation of the pilaster, which gives the impression of being extracted from different depths within the wall mass, is a complex fiction proposed by Michelangelo. What results is an overlapping rhythmic organization that differs from the multi-bay unity in the Capitoline palaces which, by eschewing the clustered form of the orders, allows each bay to be grasped more clearly as a unit, rather than as an interwoven synthesis.

In privileging the clustered scheme, the exterior of Saint Peter's is composed of giant pilasters that dramatize the vertical axes. These counteract the single horizontal axis of the entablature, thereby escaping the logic that subordinates each bay to the measure of the whole, as in the Capitoline palaces.

A secondary reading, grounded in processes of lamination, works against the primary effect of upward thrust in Saint Peter's, engaging the closely linked values of *amplificatio* and *magnificentia*. In this respect, Michelangelo's columnar innovation at the Capitoline palaces follows a new direction when it is applied to the exterior of the basilica, enhancing its majesty through the layered impact of the clustered travertine strips – where one pilaster seems to emerge from another – and through the greater scale required by the church's immense dimensions (approximately 46.2 meters for the nave)[86].

The intermediate step between the non-layered giant order in the Capitoline palaces and the layered imbrication in Saint Peter's is the clustering of pilaster triads on the top tier of the Palazzo Farnese *cortile*[87]. Symmetrically organized like the Capitoline pilasters, these triads anticipate the asymmetrical clustering and hence also the layering of the pilasters on St. Peter's exterior, even if they do not rise up through multiple floors[88].

Among these treatments of the giant order, a specific relationship of continuity emerges: they are not mere variants on the same theme, but solutions linked by a common logic, inflected by requirements specific to each project. These requirements are at once visual and conditioned by the idea of decorum. In the Capitoline palaces and Saint Peter's, the dialectic of the mid- and far view predomi-

[86] For the dimensional measurements of St. Peter's, see Richard J. Betts, "Structural Innovation and Structural Design in Renaissance Architecture," JSAH 52, 1, (1993): 5-25; Paul M. Baumgarten, "Basilica of St. Peter," *Catholic Encylopaedia* (Robert Appleton, 1912), XIII.
[87] Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, 180.
[88] Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, 204ff.

nates, while in the Palazzo Farnese *cortile* the near to mid-view matters most[89]. And all three cases, but especially at Saint Peter's – the order is conditioned by the trope of *amplificatio*, serving to assert a level of *magnificentia* adequate to the political, religious and symbolic center of the Catholic world. Two further traits mark the more normative side of Michelangelo's use of the giant order. Quantitatively, as Summerson points out, it fully deserves its name, as the pilasters are very tall indeed, of about forty-five feet. At Saint Peter's, they are simply immense: ninety feet high[90]. Qualitatively speaking not only do the giant orders rise through two or more storeys – a feature, as mentioned above, unknown in antiquity – but they also simplify the reading of the palatial block, in the case of the Capitoline palaces, lending it more cohesion – or as Frankl puts it, making it read as a unit, as the upper wall rests on an entablature supported by Ionic columns, two to a bay. This intertwined rhythmic arrangement, making two scales of the order work together to organize a façade of a two-storey building, is one of Michelangelo's most powerful and, at the same time, most compelling inventions[91]. And its effects are largely due to its sheer scale, in conjunction with the sense of grandeur conveyed by the vertical congruity of its components, and the overall commensurability of its horizontal rhythms[92].

In this regard, although the *ordine gigante* is not as patently radical and hybridized as his Florentine vocabulary of the orders, as a key element of his Roman idiom, it enabled Michelangelo to question the inherited grammar and rhetoric of the columnar orders transmitted by Vitruvius, the antique, and previous Quattrocento and Cinquecento practice. He thereby used the colossal scale of the order to bring into focus both the parameters of his radical approach to architecture and the power of his original conceptions. In addition to providing different manifestations of the 'colossal code' in the same urban context, both Michelangelo's Capitoline palaces and Saint Peter's inspired a wide range of architects and projects. Ultimately, this code proved unusually fertile, if only because, when inaugurating it, Michelangelo managed to straddle a fine line between the demands of rule and the powers of license. In so doing, the *ordine gigante* occasioned a subtle, yet decisive shift in the center of gravity of the system of the orders.

Michelangelo's inventive practice and context-sensitive rethinking of space and surface contributed to readings that stressed the giant order's masking or representational character and its deceptive, illusionistic potentials. This is hardly surprising, given that this order enabled new methods of design to emerge and be applied within a flexible yet broadly traditional framework. Its scalar versatility drew out new powers of invention, with the aim of conferring an overall effect of grandeur on the built project. Put differently, the giant order is an *emphatic* use of *columnatio*, a built approximation of the Ciceronian trope of *amplificatio*, notably elaborated in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and *De Oratore*[93].

The Use and Abuse of Scale. Claude Perrault's Criticism of the *Grand Ordre* (1683)

To the best of my knowledge, the term *ordine gigante* did not exist in Italian during the 15th and 16th centuries, and no corresponding term exists in Latin[94]. Its origin is French, and 17th century – the *grand ordre* – and it owes its earliest iteration, in print, to the broader context of the *Querelle des anciens et modernes*, the focus of intense debate in learned circles in France from 1682 to 1694,

[89] Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo*, 171ff.

[90] Summerson, *The Classical Language*, 27-28.

[91] Summerson, *The Classical Language*, 27-28.

[92] Tod Marder and Mark Wilson Jones, "Introduction," in *The Pantheon from Antiquity to the Present*, eds. Marder and Wilson Jones. (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2015), 28, 34.

[93] On *amplificatio* see Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric* (Brill, 1990), 220ff; Lucia Calboli Montefusco, "Stylistic and Argumentative Function of Rhetorical *Amplificatio*," *Hermes* 132, 1 (2004): 69-81.

[94] Nothing even remotely like it turns up in Francesco Maria Grapaldi's *De partibus aedium* (1516), Daniele Barbaro's edition and commentary on Vitruvius (1567), or in the *Vocabolario della Crusca* (1612).
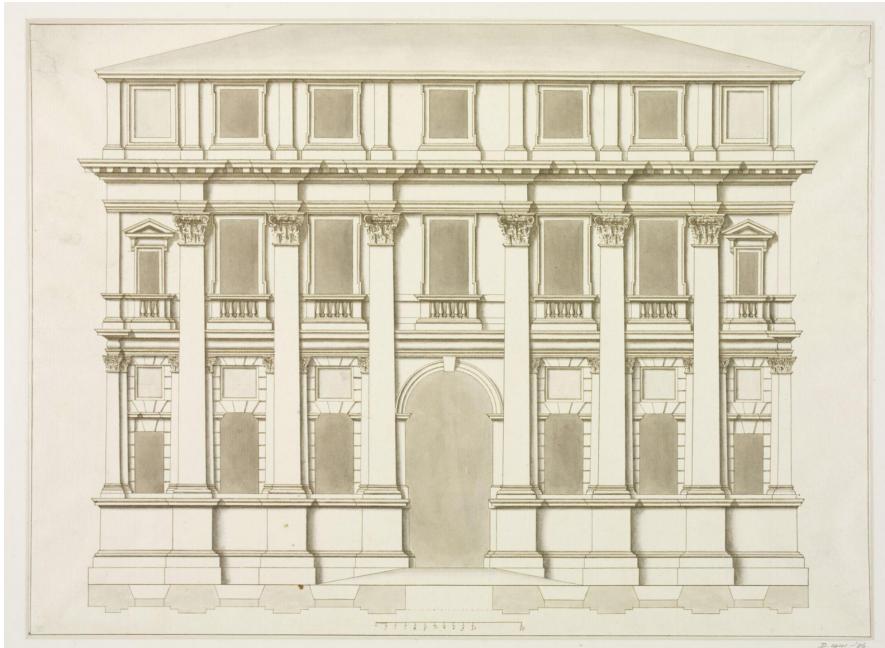
touched off by Charles Perrault's polemical text, the *Parallèle des Anciens et modernes* (1682), with the author militating in favor of the moderns. The term seems to be coined by his brother Claude, who identifies it as one of the lamentable abuses introduced by the moderns, an error unknown among the ancients. And here we confront the most significant instance of a theoretical and textual reception of the giant order in the 17th century, before we can turn to the built receptions.

In his *Ordonnance des cinq espèces des colonnes* (1683), Claude Perrault identifies the *grand ordre* as the sixth abuse perpetrated by the *modernes*[95]. In the process, he associates it with what the ancients and Vitruvius called the *cavaedium*, a courtyard area ringed by giant Corinthian columns[96]. There, the entablature of the surrounding building was supported by columns extending from the bottom to the top over several stories. Palladio, both in the incomplete cavaedium, ringed by giant pilasters, of Palazzo Valmarana, and in the half-*cortile*, surrounded by a walkway supported by giant rustic columns, of Villa Serego, seems to interpret this passage from Vitruvius a *modo suo*[97]. Although Perrault says that the intention behind the extension of the *grand ordre* through several storeys is to increase magnificence, as is the use of enormous columns lending stateliness to buildings such as temples, theaters, baths and the like, it often has the opposite effect, giving "a mean and paltry appearance to the building"[98].

When Perrault found fault with the giant order, Bernini was high on his list, and perhaps the very

[95] Claude Perrault, *Ordonnance for the Five Kinds of Columns After the Method of the Ancients* (Getty Center for the History of the Arts and Humanities, 1993), 171-2.
[96] Perrault, *Ordonnance*, 171; Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, VI, 3.
[97] Palladio, *Four Books of Architecture*, II, xv.
[98] Perrault, *Ordonnance*, 118-9.

[99] Paul Fréart de Chantelou, *Diary of the cavaliere Bernini's visit to France* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1985), 47-78; Carolina Mangone, *Bernini's Michelangelo* (Yale University Press, 2020), 130.

[100] Blunt, *Art and Architecture in France*, 220ff; Wittkower, *Art and Architecture*, II, 31-2, 73-4; Mangone, *Bernini's Michelangelo*, 130; Daniela Del Pesco, *Bernini in Francia: Paul de Chantelou e il Journal de voyage du cavalier Bernin en France* (Electa Napoli, 2007); Steven F. Ostrow, "Bernini's Voice: From Chantelou's Journal to the *Vite*," in *Bernini's Biographies: Critical Essays*, eds. Maarten Delbeke, Evonne Levy and Steven F. Ostrow (Pennsylvania Univ. Press, 2006), 111-42.

[101] See my essay "Error or Invention," 94ff. One might ask: if Perrault had no qualms about attacking Bernini, why did he spare Michelangelo? The answer seems clear: Bernini was a direct, living threat to the cultural dominance of French architecture; Michelangelo, however famous, was far less so. In any case in Perrault's time Michelangelo found an influential and powerful champion in André Félibien, the historian of art, academician and court historian to Louis XIV: Geneviève Bresc-Bautier, "*Reinvestire nel Barocco?*" in *La Francia nel Grand Siècle e il Barocco: fortuna e sfortuna di una nozione*, ed. Olivier Bonfait (Sagep, 2022), 127. At least part of Félibien's reverence for Michelangelo is caught with, one can surmise, for his admiration for Vasari, who was the inspiration for the French historian's *Entretiens sur les vies et sur les ouvrages des plus excellents peintres anciens et modernes* (1666-88). On Félibien and Vasari, see Olivier Bonfait, "Vasari e Félibien: due storie dell'arte a confronto," in *Vasari als Paradgima*, eds. Fabian Jonietz and Alessandro Nova (Kunsthistorische Institut, 2016), 257-64.

[102] Perrault, *Ordonnance*, 171-72.

[103] Forsmann, in his discussion of Perrault's critique of the *grand ordre* emphasizes not only the negative side of the French theorist and architects' attitude towards it, which he deems a 'curious explanation' but also underscores the fact that Perrault did not reject the use of the order outright, allowing its adoption for certain determinate purposes, such as those or religious architecture ("Dorico, ionico, corinzio," 39 and no. 47).

highest, among those who spread this modern abuse. Indeed, the specific complaint that the Italian architect/sculptor refused the advice of others, particularly Colbert, that the Louvre façade was too high, that it dwarfed the adjoining buildings, and the columns would seem disproportionate when seen from a distance, indicates quite strongly that the giant order, in Bernini's handling of it, was to blame, along with the *hauteur* and stubborn intractability of Bernini himself[99]. This hypothesis is supported by his sharp critique of the Italian architect's 1664 proposals for the Louvre, which contributed to their rejection[100]. And though Perrault does not identify Michelangelo by name as the *fons et origo* of the problem (as is also the case in Palladio's lively chapter on *abusi* – the broken pediments, excessive garlands and *cartocci* and so on – that Michelangelo invented), this silence is preserved for reasons of prudence, most probably, one of the recognized virtues of the architect in this period[101]. The sharp polemic against the *grand ordre* by one of the 17th-century French architecture and theory's protagonists was thus accompanied by a caustic parable about the decadence of great families. Significantly, this kind of order is listed as an 'abuse', that is

> the extending of a larger order over several storeys, instead of giving each storey its own order as the Ancients did [...]. Even though a large order gives stateliness to temples, theaters, porticoes, peristyles, reception rooms, entrance halls, chapels, and other buildings that can sustain, or even require, great height, we may say that the practice, on the contrary [...] has something mean and paltry about it. It is as if private individuals had taken up lodging in a vast, abandoned half-ruined palace, and finding it inconvenient or wishing to save space, they had a series of mezzanines built[102].

This 'parable' is remarkable for many reasons, yet above all for the fantasy it offers of persons, aristocratic or not, in possession of a large ruined palace, altering it by means of the *grand ordre* so as to give the impression, through the ostentatious effect thereby obtained, of being higher up the social ladder than they really are. This account engages the theme of a pervasive anxiety concerning social status, which the giant order is called upon to overcome. At the very least, it points to the existence of genuine tensions surrounding the use of this order. One might call this cautionary tale Perrault has spun about the *grand ordre* a socially mediated imaginary of scale, informed by an acute awareness of the decadence implied in a precipitous fall from the heights of *gloire*[103].

Here we confront a situation that is quite different than that of 17th-century Rome, which took the rhetorical power and grandiose effect of the giant order for granted, along with its symbolic capital as marker of exalted rank and guarantor of social distinction: indeed, in Paris, the giant order signifies the attempt to mitigate and cover over disgrace, not the realization of personal or familial glory, as it did in Rome. While offering a window into the mental universe of an insightful theorist, Perrault's remarks on the giant order register a discernible ambivalence about the dissemination of the order. On the one hand, it is taken for granted that the extensive spread of this 'abuse' made it a force to be reckoned with; on the other, he maintained that in trying to impress, it fell flat. Perrault's reading of the giant order offers evidence of a crisis of architectural signs. The *punctum*

dolens resides in the fragility of a situation in which the meaning (and the theoretical basis) of all architectural conventions rests on a social consensus that could be abrogated at any moment. The rhetoric/architecture analogy, adopted by Perrault when theorizing the columnar orders, breaks down precisely when the pretensions to grandeur associated with the *grand ordre* do not live up to expectations, and signify the precise opposite of what they claim.

Given the grounding of a considerable aspect of his theory in custom (*acoûtumance*), the sources of this crisis are partly social, clearly linked to a decline in *mores*. Perrault's critique of the giant order as an 'abuse' of the normal apparatus of columnar articulation balances formal and social assumptions about ostentation in architecture in unique ways in 17th-century French architectural thought. This is partly due to its association of formal motifs with specific social classes, a fact which has received insufficient scholarly attention to date. Unique in French theory – but not in Italian, insofar as, in an even more literal and systematic way, Serlio provides different 'ascending' typologies of residences, equipped with orders and their ornaments, for different social classes, from the well-to-do peasant and merchant all the way up to royal personages[104].

To more thoroughly examine this link between formal articulation and social meaning, a focus is needed on the assumptions in the language/architecture analogy, which involves a key operative distinction: if the orders constitute a set of grammatical rules inwardly focused on the functioning of this specific architectural element, the giant order can be seen as a rhetorical mode outwardly directed at the observer, seeking to enhance the affective impact of the *all'antica* lexicon.

Yet to maintain that the giant order is merely a device which one might fall back upon to obtain spectacular results, often with relatively poor materials (i.e. pilaster strips instead of real columns) – is clearly unsatisfactory, both from a hermeneutic and a theoretical point of view. Moreover, even if architecture, and the giant order in particular, can be considered a language or, as Hubert Damisch has argued, a signifying system in its own right, this should not be construed as indicating that tensions between theory and practice did not often destabilize the analogy, rendering it problematic[105].

The giant order is both a grammatical feature and a rhetorical instrument, and was understood mainly in its rhetorical dimension by Perrault. Not surprisingly rhetorical concepts were applied to problems of classical architecture in late 17th-century France, as they contributed to a closely related yet even larger view comparing architecture to language, encompassing notions of grammar and rhetoric in various forms in the early modern period[106]. Such a linguistic orientation was well established from the humanist era, since Alberti's *De re aedificatoria* (1452), which made extensive use of Ciceronian models of rhetoric[107].

The use of rhetorical tropes as a framework for the theory of painting underwent a resurgence at the same time, particularly in the color theory of Roger de Piles enunciated in the *Dialogue sur le coloris* of 1673, and in a related academic and aristocratic milieu in which the giant order came to be sharply criticized by Claude Perrault, partly on rhetorical, partly on social grounds (distinct criteria, though ultimately inseparable in his view)[108].

Moreover, it was during this conjuncture in the historical development of French society and

[104] Sebastiano Serlio, *Tutte le Opere dell'Architettura e Prospettiva* (Francesco de' Franceschi, 1584), VI; and Myra Nan Rosenfeld, *Sebastiano Serlio on Domestic Architecture: Different Dwellings from the Meanest Hovel to the Most Ornate Palace* (Architectural History Foundation, 1978).

[105] Damisch, "Perrault's Colonnade," 79ff.

[106] Here a passage from Charles Perrault's *Parallèle* is particularly eloquent: "Figures of rhetoric are available to all, and just as they offer an equal advantage to all those who desire to speak, so it is that the five orders of architecture are equally in the hands of all architects. The merit of an architect therefore is not to use columns, but to place them with judgment, and to compose beautiful buildings with them": *Parallèle des anciens et des modernes en ce qui regarde les arts et les sciences* (Jean-Baptiste Coignard, 1688), 128-9. On early modern architecture and the traditions of classical rhetoric, see from a large bibliography Caroline Van Eck, *Classical Rhetoric and the Visual Arts in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2014), with bibliography.

[107] On Alberti's reliance on classical rhetorical categories in his architectural and pictorial theory see now Caspar Pearson, *The Chameleon's Eye: Leon Battista Alberti* (Reaktion, 2023); and my review in JSAH 82. 4 (2023), 70-95; Hans-Karl Lücke, "Alberti, Vitruvius, and Cicero," in Anne Engel, *Leon Battista Alberti* (Electa, 1994); Michael Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators. Humanist Observes of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition, 1350-1450* (Clarendon Press, 1971), chapter 3.

[108] Jacqueline Lichtenstein, *La couleur éloquente, rhétorique et peinture à l'âge classique* (Flammarion, 1989); Bernard Teyssèdre, *Roger de Piles et les débats sur le coloris au siècle de Louis XIV* (Bibliothèque des arts, 1957); Thomas Puttfarken, *Roger de Piles's Theory of Art* (Yale Univ. Press, 1985).

culture that the class which, more than any other, theorized architecture, exemplified by Perrault himself, was marked more by the ascension of the *noblesse de robe* than by the rearguard actions of the *noblesse d'epée*[109]. Perrault's critique of the giant order, which is shot through with ironic barbs directed at those aristocratic or *haut bourgeois* families, who, having fallen into disrepute, vainly try to use the giant order to cover up their disgrace by seeming greater than they are, should be seen against this background.

But the question must be placed within a wider context. What matters most in this regard is not that Perrault belongs to a certain high-ranking echelon of 17th-century French society whose class position provides, at least in part, an adequate basis for reading his theoretical attack on the order, but the other way around: the attack reveals something that Perrault was not necessarily aware of: namely, the objective social content of his own critique of the aspiration to use it as a specific technique of classicizing, yet not ancient representation. In fact, Perrault saw it as a modern abuse of classicizing representation that had no precise parallel in ancient theory or practice, and no place in modern practice either.

As such the giant order flies in the face of the project of comparing ancients and moderns that he and his brother Charles were pursuing – one which ideologically expressed their own social ascent by supporting the moderns, as they did not belong to an established aristocratic family, but to the class of upwardly mobile *haut bourgeois* who achieved distinction as members of an intellectual elite with access to royal favor. On this reading, it comes as no surprise that Claude understood the *grand ordre* to express the ruin of great families pretending to still be great, in its status as 'reversed signifier' of a downwardly mobile aristocracy (most probably a financially ruined representative of the *noblesse d'epée*) who are trying desperately, through an architectural conceit of scale, to cover up their fall from the heights of glory. The paradox here is that the higher the order becomes, the more it signifies the actual depths of the misfortune of those who utilize it.

One might object that, rather than the giant order *per se*, it is the façade, primary focus of appearance in the 17th century palace, that is the wider object, albeit unconsciously articulated, of Perrault's critique of the flawed and deceptive rhetoric of the *grand ordre*. Certainly, Perrault takes it for granted that the order only makes sense in such a context.

Unexpected support for this argument is provided by Riegl, who pointed out that with such works as Peruzzi's Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne or Sangallo and Michelangelo's Palazzo Farnese, the façade declares its status as illusion masking an indeterminate space behind, exactly as Perrault himself argued. Riegl noted: "The façade lets slip that there is something behind. The architecture of classical antiquity did not have façades; it was self-contained, was not intended to recall anything invisible. The façade recalls something that cannot be immediately seen, much less touched"[110]. According to Matthew Rampley, the prominence that Riegl gives to the extended façade as a characteristic feature of Baroque architecture might be fruitfully compared to the wider recognition of the inherent theatricality of Baroque culture, most obviously apparent in the literary motif of the world as a stage, at the center of the fictive universes of Shakespeare and Calderon[111].

[109] Albert Cremer, "La genèse de la notion de noblesse de robe," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, 1, 46 (1999), 22-38; Robert Descimon, "The Birth of the Nobility of the Robe: Dignity versus Privilege in the Parlement of Paris, 1500-1700," in *Changing Identities in Early Modern France* (Duke Univ. Press, 1997), 95 123; Brian Sandberg, *Warrior Pursuits. Noble Culture and Civil Conflict Early Modern France* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2010); Norbert Elias, *The Court Society* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1983).

[110] Alois Riegl, *The Origins of Baroque Art in Rome* (Getty Research Institute, 2010), 59. On the theme of the illusionistic power of façades in the Renaissance, Charles S. Burroughs, *The Italian Renaissance Façade: Structures of Authority, Surfaces of Sense* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002); Ackerman, "Palladio, Michelangelo and *publica* magnificentia".

[111] Matthew Rampley, "Subjectivity and Modernism: Riegl and the Rediscovery of the Baroque," in *Framing Formalism: Riegl's Work*, ed. Saul Ostrow (G+B Arts International 2001), 272.

Yet one must be careful not put the cart before the horse. The giant order, in regulating the façade's illusionistic, and in a wider sense, representational function, fulfills the double task of keeping up aesthetic and social appearances, framing and organizing it both as an integrated formal organism and as a specific mode of ornament. In Baroque architectural culture, as much or possibly even more so than in the Renaissance, artifice – or illusion – matters, and this tendency already arose, as Riegl notes, with Peruzzi, Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, and Michelangelo (he does not mention, strangely, Bramante and Raphael)[112]. Yet only Michelangelo fully developed a device to regulate the illusion, the giant order itself, which as it turns out, when exported abroad, did not have the same representational value it did in Italy. So even if ample palace façades existed before Michelangelo, they did not function with the same degree of representational efficacy, nor with the same illusionistic logic, in other national cultures, so that this logic did not prove to be 'exportable' in all cases.

In his most famous urban palace in Rome, Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne (1532-6), Peruzzi, moreover, did not take the momentous step that Michelangelo took; but this palace in any case makes a powerful impression, with its large columns not yet gigantic, which seem to be waiting in the wings to take over the leading role in façade articulation of the secular palace type on the eve of Michelangelo's intervention at the Capitoline Hill. On the other hand, Peruzzi did develop Alberti's and Bramante's uses of the giant pilaster in an ecclesiastical context in Santa Maria in Castello in Carpi (1515), whose façade is a tightly controlled, impressive composition that paved the way for later developments. There, Peruzzi takes a step beyond both of his precursors towards the kind of double articulation, with a giant order framing a smaller one, that one will later find in Palladio's Venetian churches. What is more, the crossing has four Corinthian giant pilasters at each corner, which seem to respond to Bramante's built giant pilasters for the crossing of Saint Peter's, as seen both in the Heemskerck and Naldini drawings[113]. As noted, Perrault first used the term giant order (*le grand ordre*) in print. It seems to have been used in conversation in Italian even earlier, in 1665, as reported by the *Diary* of the Sieur de Chantelou, in a way that shows conclusively – as opposed to the strategic silence of Perrault himself on the origin of the colossal order in Michelangelo – that Bernini himself and those in his immediate circle were acutely aware that Bernini was emulating and attempting to surpass Michelangelo when adopting the giant order. In a diary entry from 20 August 1665, Chantelou recounted a conversation with Bernini's assistant, Mattia de Rossi, regarding the most recent design for the elevation of the Louvre façade, particularly Bernini's employment of a colossal order. Mattia justified his master's use of these giant pilasters by referring to Michelangelo, who, he claimed, "was the first to use the colossal order in this way, there being no example of it in ancient buildings"[114].

With his severe judgment on the *grand ordre*, Perrault proposed that the latter was a specific kind of error, and more precisely a specific abuse of the orders. This comes closest to his own medical gaze as pathologist: instead of elevating it to a genuine alternative way of handling the orders as such, defined by its scalar 'gigantism', an option imbued with its own potential rhetorical force, he sees it as invariably falling into the opposite extreme, an impression of puniness,

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[112] Tafuri, *Interpreting the Renaissance*, chap. 1.
[113] Claudio Franzoni, "Alberto III Pio, Baldassarre Peruzzi e la Sagra di Carpi: la messa in scena del Medioevo," *Opus Incertum* 8, 1 (2022): 80-85; Tafuri, *Interpreting the Renaissance*, 151-52, fig. 85.
[114] Chantelou, *Diary of the cavaliere Bernini*, 133; see the discussion of this passage in Mangone, *Bernini's Michelangelo*, 159 and no. 2.
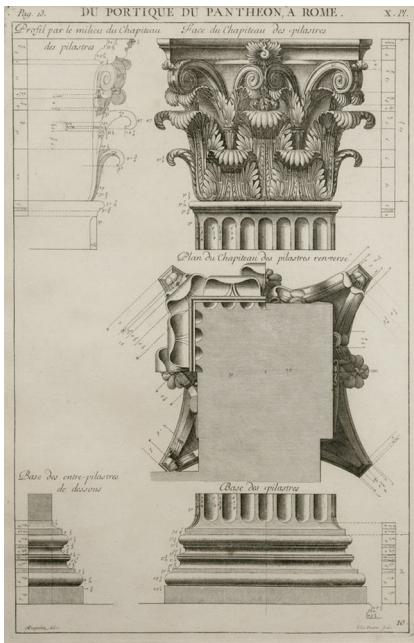
1.17
Antoine Desgodetz, Measurements from the Corinthian Order of the Pantheon. From *Les edifices antiques de Rome dessinés et mesurés très exactement* (Jean Baptiste Coignard, 1682), 13, pl. X.

[115] On Desgodetz and his impact on Perrault, see Lucia Allais, "Ordering the Orders. Claude Perrault's Ordonnance and the Eastern Colonnade of the Louvre," *Thresholds* 25 (2008): 67ff; Sigrid de Jong, "Subjective Proportions: 18th-Century Interpretations of Paestum's 'Disproportion'," Architectural Histories 4, 1 (2016), 2ff; Wolfgang Hermann, "Antoine Desgodetz and the Académie Royale d'Architecture," *The Art Bulletin* 40 (1958): 3-53.
[116] Antoine Picon, *Claude Perrault 1613-1638, ou la curiosité d'un classique* (Picard, 1988); Picon, *French Architects and Engineers in the Age of Enlightenment* (Cambridge Univ. Press), 47-98; Kruft, *A History of Architectural Theory*, 124-8; Tafuri, *Interpreting the Renaissance*, 1-22.
[117] Tafuri, *Interpreting the Renaissance*, 8ff.

or laughable meagerness, and a decided lack of such force. At best one might think of it, along these lines, as nothing more than an affront to the normative principles governing the classical orders, but even that option is too sanguine, since Perrault had already deprived that domain of any *fundamentum inconcussum*. Eliminating any metaphysical basis and cosmological justification, his judgment carries the weight of what the violation of custom (*acoûtumance*) and nothing more. All this also means that for Perrault the giant order does not even belong to the realm of *beauté arbitraire*, arbitrary beauty, to say nothing of *beauté positive*, as it offends against customary measure, even if measure is guaranteed only by the consensus of the powerful. At best, in showing what is wrong, rather than corresponding to something that is right, it could be said to illuminate *ex negativo* what is correct and beautiful about those uses of the orders which are guided by positive and arbitrary criteria. Any other extrapolation from other areas of Perrault's theoretical reflection would appear to be unwarranted.

As already indicated, the giant order was invented and deployed to enhance the grandeur of various projects, primarily those belonging to palatial and ecclesiastical typologies. Along with this, its use secured formal unity, articulated both vertically and horizontally from 1550 to 1700, at a moment of transition when, especially in France, the entire notion of a fixed proportionality among the orders was thrown into crisis. This transpired in the first instance due to Antoine Desgodetz's comparative study of ancient monuments, which showed that no single proportional system was used by the ancients and, more decisively, because of the revolutionary theoretical approach undertaken by Perrault[115].

Taking as his point of departure Desgodetz's inquiries, Perrault stripped the orders of metaphsical or cosmological foundation in harmonic proportion[116]. Yet the decoupling of the system of the orders from their grounding in established canons of proportion, of whatever kind or origin, whether Vitruvian or those advanced by Serlio, Vignola, or Palladio, was already accomplished by the giant order, which in some sense anticipated Perrault's critique. At the same time, Perrault's critique of the giant order, more than any other period treatment of the problems raised by this columnar system, exposed how suspect and even questionable were the claims put forward by the exaggerated scale of the order. The adverse effects of this device were attacked on social, not metaphysical or mathematical grounds: the question of the foundations of harmonic analogism, which had hitherto informed the various systems of the orders, did not even enter the picture[117].

Without being directly or negatively affected by Perrault's opposition of *autorité* and *acoûtumance*, the giant order spread widely and quite rapidly. Its popularity may have reinforced the suggestion among many architects, if only at a barely conscious level, of the growing irrelevance of the idea of a fixed proportion for each columnar order within the consolidated canonical systems. This is the case even if, as already indicated, each individual work in which the giant order appeared was governed by its own internal proportionality. At the same time, the notion of precedent was not disregarded when Perrault dismantled the metaphysical foundations of the orders. When dealing with the giant order, the precedent in question for the French theoretician was ultimately Michelangelo himself (even though his example was often cited second-hand)[118].

The Politics of Sumptuary Display: Contexts and Implications of Perrault's Critique

Another way to look at Perrault's denunciation of the *grand ordre* is to see it in terms of the eccentric position of the latter relative to the general theory of the orders (*ordinatio*), rather than simply as a practical application of scalar expansion in the column (*columnatio*)[119]. As a baseline for the discussion, it is taken for granted that the orders, under the abstract concept of *ordinatio*, correspond to a broader theoretical category than the giant order: this category includes the giant order, but is not reducible to it. Thus the giant order is also and must be considered a variant of all the classical orders, modulated solely by scale.

The giant order's *démarche* in Michelangelo's wake does not imply a radical contradiction to the idea of a system of the orders (*ordinatio*), nor is it simply a new way of translating the theory of the orders into built reality of columnar articulation (*columnatio*); nor does it only mark the emergence of a parallel history of proportional ideas, but presupposes instead the occupation of a position, an epistemic space, tangent to, or in the margins of, the normative placement of the orders in their traditional series. The order has a scalar pertinence, not categorical: it cuts across the existing categories, though it favors the upper end of the traditional hierarchy of the orders (Corinthian and Composite). This occupation of a shifting yet persistent margin can be seen as part of a wider process that Yves Pauwels has described as a noteworthy change in scope in the theoretical construction of rule. This opened a peripheral zone of acceptability, a kind of penumbra around the norm, initiated in the treatises with Serlio, though in practice this widened margin had already set in with Bramante, Raphael and above all Giulio Romano: "*la Renaissance a formalisé à la fois la règle et ses marges audacieuses, ces dernières ayant occupé dans la production architecturale une place de choix pour ces artistes inventifs*"[120].

In addition to the idea of expanded theoretical margins, we are now dealing with the fraught situation of *overlapping or contested jurisdictions* which such an expansion makes possible: a state of affairs in which the orders in general and the giant order in particular enter a complex negotiation whose outcome cannot be taken for granted. By enlarging the Corinthian and the Composite, and less frequently the Ionic, Doric, and Tuscan, only in terms of scale, but not usually in terms of formal or ornamental components, the giant order represents a modulation or parallel development of the canonized system of the orders, rather than an autonomous or novel order in the traditional sense.

It seems that we have arrived at the right moment to refer to a closely related epistemic model, namely medical epistemology, one of Perrault's areas of strongest competence[121]. In this respect, the giant order is a condition with which all the other orders (but, more often than not, the most grandiose and ornate, the Corinthian) may at some point in their trajectories be afflicted. From this perspective, a kind of *gigantism* can happen to *any* order under specific circumstances. Of course, these analogies are a kind of approximations, yet it is not the first time that epistemic models pertaining to medicine, physiology and, in particular, pathology enter the domain of architectural theory[122]. After all, Perrault, the only theorist to write about the giant order at any length before Temanza and Milizia, was trained as a physician, and was a physiologist and anatomist who taught

[118] The impact of the giant order should be seen not only on its own, in light of a convention that had become separate from the question of the impact of Michelangelo, but also in terms of precisely the opposite, namely, of the reception of his art and architecture in France. Frequently Michelangelo was regarded not only with suspicion, but condemned outright, as responsible for the excesses (*libertinage*) of Borromini and Guarini: see the minutes of the academic meetings convened by the head of the Academy, Fréart de Chambray (*Procès-Verbaux de l'Academie Royale d'architecture 1671-1793*, ed. Henri Lemonnier (Jean Schemit, 1911), I, VIff), cited in Kruft, *A History of Architectural Theory*, 129 and n. 12. See on the reception of Michelangelo's architecture in France, Claude Mignot, "MichelAnge et la France: libertinage architectural et classicisme," in *Il se rendit en Italie: études offertes à André Chastel* (Edizioni dell'Elefante/Flammarion, 1987), 523-36; André Chastel, "Influence de Michelange en France," *Bulletin de la Societé des Antiquaires de France* (1964), 103; Sabine Frommel, ed., *Primaticcio Architetto* (Electa, 2005), 150-85; Blunt, *Art and Architecture*, 26ff; Henri Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France. The Invention of Classicism* (Flammarion, 2002), 61-7; Bresc-Bautier, "Reinvestire nel Barocco?", 127. This as much as anything else belongs to the history of strong critical condemnations elicited by the radical *licenza* of Michelangelo *architetto*, which is traced in Italian criticism and theory in my essay "Error or Invention".

[119] '*Ordinatio*' was usually translated in English as 'order', when not as 'fitness': see Claude Perrault, *Les dix livres d'architecture de Vitruve* (Jean-Baptiste Coignard, 1673), 9. On *ordinatio* vs. *columnatio* see Kruft, *A History of Architectural Theory*, chap. 4-6, 10; Summerson, *The Classical Language*, 10; Cosmin Ungearanu, "The Idea of a French Order. Ribaut de Chamoust and the Questioning of Architectural Origins," in *New Europe College Stefan Odolbleja Program Yearbook,* ed. Irina Vainovski-Mihai (New Europe College, 2013), 253ff.

[120] Denyse Rodriguez Tomé, review of Yves Pauwels' book *Aux marges de la règle*, in *Documents pour l'histoire des techniques* 18, 2 (2009): 228-230.

[121] Tafuri, *Interpreting the Renaissance*, 9.

[122] On architecture and medicine, see my remarks, and the exchange with Carlo Ginzburg regarding the classification of the arts and sciences discussed by Robert Klein, in Rakowitz, *Architettura e Storia*, 90ff. On Perrault's physiological research and his scientific activities, see Picon, *Claude Perrault*; Tafuri, *Interpreting the Renaissance*, 8ff.

[123] Sherer, "Error or Invention"; Alina Payne "Architectural Criticism, Science, and Visual Eloquence: Teofilo Gallaccini," *JSAH* 58, 2 (June 1999), 146-69; Payne, *The Telescope and the Compass: Teofilo Gallaccini between Architecture and Science in the Age of Galileo* (Olschki, 2012); Payne, ed., *Teofilo Gallaccini: Selected Writings and Library* (Olschki, 2012); Ackerman, "Palladio: In What Sense Classical?" 242ff.

both physiology and pathology at the University of Paris. Coming from this background, it makes sense that he approached the problem presented by the *grand ordre* as an anomalous case, to be resolved in terms of the social body, rather than in terms of the physical body of architecture. On the other hand, Perrault never compared the *grand ordre* to a disorder or illness, as the Sienese physician and architectural critic Teofilo Gallaccini did when criticizing the other licentious abuses that Michelangelo perpetrated in reinventing the orders and in his entire attitude to the classical language more generally[123]. Instead, Perrault saw the giant order as an imposture, a social or class deception, which he associated with Italian architectural excess, and hence as a kind of metaphor for what he regarded to be the disordered style of the Baroque. We shall have more to say on this tendency to pomposity of the order later in our reading of the uses of architecture for the cultural domination of French modes over Italian ones at the court of Louis XIV. Whether we consider the giant order to be a magnified problem-solving device aimed at unifying the otherwise unwieldy and disparately organized façades of palaces and churches, or alternatively as some sort of pathological gigantism of the orders, or yet again as the translation into scalar terms of the will to power of socially elevated protagonists in an age of princes (ecclesiastical princes included), one must be sure not to omit an emphasis on its uniquely expressive aspect.

This search for new modes of expression is implicit in all of these readings: for with reference to the problem-solving option, which presupposes a masking function that compensates for the irregularity of the plan (effected by the imposition of the primary rhythm in the colossal pilasters dividing up the façade and the secondary order threaded through the first one), a new power of expression is unleashed by the vertical thrust of the giant pilasters. Melters identifies this process as a novel form of self-referential signification, arising from the symbolic form given to programmatic elements, drawing on a commonplace of Enlightenment French theory associated with Ledoux: the '*motif parlant*'.

This raises the question, what is the order speaking of? The most direct answer is power itself. Through its sheer scale and grandeur, it expresses *auctoritas*, more than *potestas*, even in those cases where the plan is disordered, the materials inexpensive or 'poor', and the fortunes of the patron compromised or even endangered. This signifying power becomes particularly evident when we recall that for Alberti, and indeed for much French academic theory, the orders were seen as a form of dressing, as an ornament to the body of the structure in keeping with Vitruvius' basic distinction between *fabrica* and *ratiocinatio*, utilizing a well-defined system simultaneously emphasizing and covering up their relationship[124]. From this standpoint the giant order is bound to disclose its sumptuary character: in this respect it functions as a paradigm of *controlled excess*, similar to the flowing robes that the *noblesse d'épee* and their apogee, absolutist monarchs, wore as signs of their elevated status, whether this takes the form of the elaborate royal attire worn by Louis XIV in his imposing portrait by Hyacinthe Rigaud (1701), or the equally lavish dress of his Spanish or Austrian Habsburg rivals in their aristocratic portraits.

A close examination of Rigaud's portrayal of the King may be useful in this regard[125]. A significant feature, often overlooked in the literature on this painting, is its architectural setting: a partly dra-

[124] Vitruvius, *De Architectura* I, 1.1; Alberti, *De re aedificatoria*, VI.
[125] Myriam Tsikounas, "De la gloire à l'émotion, Louis XIV en costume de sacré par Hyacinthe Rigaud," *Sociétés & Représentations* 2, 26 (2008): 57-70; Charles Maumené and Louis d'Harcourt, *Iconographie des rois de France* (Colin, 1931), V, 91-5. On state portraits and their conventions, see in general Édouard Pommier, "Le portrait du pouvoir de la norme à la réalité', in *Les portraits du pouvoir*, eds. Olivier Bonfait, Brigitte Marin and Anne-Lise Desmas (Somogy, 2003), 3-17.

ped single colossal column, reminiscent in some ways of the *Cour de Marbre* in Versailles, but most probably representing a generalized idea of the vast interior of a palatial *demeure*. In 1682, Louis installed his court and government in Versailles, which from that point onwards became his central and preferred residence and the nerve center of power in France. Louis XIV, as is well known, used the *ballet de cour* as a way of controlling his fractious aristocrats, threatening with banishment and disgrace those who did not attend the *ballet de nuit* where he was star performer[126]. When Louis XIV was dancing before the court, he quite literally performed his power. Overuse and illegitimate extension of the idea of the 'performative' in art, architectural and cultural history, not to mention literary theory, has been in recent decades out of control; but it is appropriate in this case, because there is a one-to-one correspondence, an almost literal homology between the King's dance performances and his strategy of subjugation of his courtiers, whose clear traces are evident in this painting. Within this context the architectural element of Rigaud's portrait is not simply a neutral backdrop, but effectively frames the body of the monarch in a proud and slightly confrontational ballet pose in what is certainly one of the most powerful and memorable images of his rule – capturing his presence with a grandeur meant both for the gaze of the court and for the eyes of posterity. This image shows us the King as he wished to be seen at the time the portrait was painted for posterity: stately, placed on a diagonal line extending from the partly veiled colossal column to his turned-out muscular legs, covered in gleaming white silk, which are at once the living equivalent of that column (part of the overall architectural apparatus of the grandeur of his courtly setting) and testimony to his skill as master of ballet. A subtle analogy between the body of the monarch and his architecture is represented here: like the legs of the King, the giant column is sumptuously 'dressed', even provocatively so.

The columnar shaft reveals more of its heft than the limb of the monarch, who shows off his muscular, youthful dancing legs – shown in the *quatrième position* – in contrast to his aging face[127]. The message here is clear: the King's mortal body may grow old, but he is always able to perform the dance of power, reminding us that he is bearer of the immortal *Dignitas* or Crown. In light of the preceding, this portrait implicitly registers the venerable trope of the King's Two Bodies, not as an intended or explicit reference, but as a political ideology or *réprésentation collective* shared by this portrait and many other cultural phenomena in this period, especially French royal tombs and funeral ceremonies[128].

Rigaud's visual registration of this ideology is achieved by emphasizing the explicit proximity, as well as the latent analogy, between the human figure of Louis XIV, who represents the Body Natural of the King, and the architectural figure of the giant order, representing, if only obliquely, his Body Politic, just as the robes – in fact coronation robes – emblazoned with the fleur-de-lys of France do: if the background represents the Crown and his domain, here architecturally expressed by the colossal column, metonym of authority and of Versailles's splendid construction, the foreground shows the aging but still very capable and deft body of the mortal Louis Bourbon. But here we are not only confronted by the part/whole logic of metonymy: the whole/whole logic of comparison is just as crucial to this mode of representation, as the giant order becomes a metaphor for

[126] Elias, *The Court Society*, 85-127; Elias, *Power and Civility* (Blackwell, 1982), 196-201; Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (Yale Univ. Press, 1982), 90-110.

[127] The same dialectic of covered and uncovered is evident not only in his literal clothing, but in the fashion of the aristocratic wig, came to be used first at the court of Louis XIII and was considered *de rigueur* in the fashion at the court of Louis XIV: at the time it was thought – and here we must rely on the late testimony of Diderot– that the ancient Gauls were long-haired warriors, and that their primitive kings should be emulated by the modern monarchs of France. See Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, eds., "Cheveu," in *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts, et des métiers* (Paris, 1751-65), III, 317-319. On wigs at the court of the Sun King and in the 18th century more generally, see Michael Kwass, "Big Hair: A Wig History of Consumption in Eighteenth Century France," *American Historical Review* 111, 3 (2006): 631-59.

[128] Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1957). On French royal funeral ceremonies and tombs and their gisants representing the King's Two Bodies, see Ralph E. Giesey, *The Royal Funeral Ceremony in Renaissance France* (Droz, 1960), chapters 1, 4,7; ; Erwin Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture. Four Lectures on its Changing Aspects from Ancient Egypt to Bernini* (Harry N. Abrams, 1964), 63-67.

1.19
Gian Lorenzo Bernini, First project for the eastern facade of the Louvre, 1664. Paris, musée du Louvre, CPVA 217.4r.

[129] Elias, *The Court Society*, 127ff. My understanding of the giant order, and the classical orders more generally, as metaphors for society, for power, and for social and political relations, relies on the groundbreaking work of Christof Thoenes, in particular "*Sostegno e adornamento. Gli Ordini architettonici come simbolo sociale*", in Sostegno e adornamento, 67-75. On the column in state portraits of the early modern period as a symbol of monarchical or Imperial power, and hence of the *Dignitas*, see Emilia Olechnowicz, "The Queen's Two Faces: The Portraiture of Elizabeth I of England," in *Premodern Rulership and Contemporary Political Power. The King's Body Never Dies*, ed. Karolina Mroziewicz and Aleksander Sroczyński (Amsterdam University Press, 2017), 217ff.
[130] Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, 423, fig. 26.
[131] On the *gemina persona* or *persona mixta*, see Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, 49ff.

court society itself, for the *Höfische Gesellschaft*[129]. The column, like the palace of which it is a part, thus represents enduring Sovereignty, whereas the particular mortal person Louis Bourbon – the individual, as opposed to the institution called Louis XIV, the *Dignitas* of the Crown – ostensibly the only focus of the portrait, represents the mortality, ephemerality, and decay of the human body which occupies the royal office.

It is important, here, to signal the limits and purpose of such a reading, to avoid any misunderstandings. I am not claiming that Louis XIV or Rigaud consciously intended to include references to this key concept of period political theology in this portrait. What I am saying is that traces of this ideology are present in all representations of the King, in varying degrees, as the King's Two Bodies was a paradigmatic conception of the royal power, and in fact the principal one. Kantorowicz points out that one of two the main birthplaces of the ideology is the medieval French monarchy, along with the English one, and it comes as no surprise that he includes, as part of his demonstrative discourse, an 1840 caricature by the great Victorian novelist and cartoonist William Makepeace Thackeray of Rigaud's portrait of Louis XIV with and without his wig and royal trappings, next to a dummy of the said monarch, "juxtaposing the final pompous state portrait and its two components: the king's pitiful body natural and a dummy decorated with the regalia" as a vivid illustration of the ideology of the *gemina persona*[130]. There is a sense, then, that real subject of the Rigaud portrait is not Louis XIV, but his *gemina persona* or twin role as King of France, bearer of the royal Dignitas, and as the individual person Louis Bourbon[131].

At this point it is relevant to recall the central oval pavilion in the form of a crown in Bernini's

drawing of 1664 for his design of the Louvre: the Italian architect explicitly identified the form of the central oval pavilion, supported by the giant order, with the Crown of France so as to refer to the second body of the King, the *Dignitas* or Crown. Here, grandiose architecture too is mobilized as part of the ideologization of the *Dignitas* and enters the orbit of the King's Two Bodies by that symbolic route. This led to total failure due to the resistance of Perrault and Colbert and, more generally, to the atmosphere of tension fostered by the intense Italo-French contest for cultural dominance on the European stage. That said, it still provides a useful clue, by showing that in Louis's immediate milieu, and before his royal gaze, architecture and regality, the art of building and the art of ruling, were intercommunicating metaphors of sovereign power. And if it is likely (as I am arguing) that the giant order is an architectonic metaphor not only for the court society, but for the figure occupying its royal zenith, just as the classical orders, in providing an image of a hierarchical system in transformation, function as the architectural equivalents of a wider, rigidly hierarchical society at whose summit is perched the court society, it becomes necessary to ask: how could Perrault mock and degrade the order? He did so precisely because of its metaphorical efficacy – he took it down one or several notches because, in his view, the wrong class of persons appropriated this tallest of all the orders to make themselves seem to be of a more elevated social status than they merited.

Ultimately, in light of this reading, the partly exposed columnar shaft and the entirely clothed royal leg thrust out from beneath the ermine-trimmed blue robe of state, studded with fleurs-de-lys reveal new semantic dimensions. The King, dressed and yet partly showing his body in a provocative but dignified pose, is an object-lesson in political representation, through his evoked presence, and an artistic lesson in grandeur, in terms of the portrayal itself: through this technique of doubling of areas covered and less-covered the royal figure is disclosed and concealed at the same moment, thereby playing up the half sacralized, half secular/political *arcanum* or mystery of his dual constitution, half-mortal being, half immortal Crown. This last, in the end, is given its place by the column that duplicates the monarch's presence and underscores its strategic role as a reiteration of the familiar trope of the body/column analogy found in the treatises of the period. The contours of this argument can be brought into clear relief when we bear the following points in mind. The undressed column vs. the dressed or partly dressed monarch: the dialectic of the veiling and showing of power is contained in this potent image in which culture and politics intermingle. In addition to giving the architect a design instrument of great flexibility, the order in question also enabled, through an intensification of the visual impact of the *columnatio* of the façade, an insistent reminder, as seen already in the depiction of the column as analogue to the monarchical figure in the interior, that every political authority has a need for self-representation, whether it is in the language of the visual arts in general or architecture in particular.

In this context a certain 'thick description' of the social behavior of the aristocracy, involving an attention to the sumptuary uses of luxurious dress, pomp, and decoration, and ultimately an approach used to describe the 'techniques of the body' as theorized by Marcel Mauss, offers an interpretive lens for the practices and codes of adornment aimed at covering and ornamenting

not only the actual bodies of the King and the nobles, but also the constructed bodies of the *corps de logis* of immense complexes such as the Louvre and Versailles[132]. Utilizing such strategies, these centers of power of the *gloire* of the King were ultimately successful in their attempt to bring the aristocracy to heel, making all of its illustrious members quite literally into royal servants through a meticulous orchestration of the arts of spectacle and protocol in which Louis XIV served both as principal instigator and radiant center[133].

The objective of such modes of artifice, practices and codes of hierarchical reinforcement is to enhance the status of those persons and buildings that are so 'dressed': something that was strictly regulated in early modern Europe, and Italy and France in particular, on which one should recall the incisive comment about the dialectic of rule and transgression in Michel de Montaigne's essay *On Sumptuary Laws*:

> The way by which our laws attempt to regulate idle and vain expenses in meat and clothes, seems to be quite contrary to the end designed [...]. For to enact that none but princes shall eat turbot, shall wear velvet or gold lace and interdict these things to the people, what is it but to bring them into a greater esteem, and to set every one more agog to eat and wear them?[134]

In such cases, what we are dealing with, in terms of the expanded margin of a normative area of theoretical regulation, is a classic instance of excessive expenditure or *potlatch*, an ornamentation of the body generated by the rivalry between powerful individuals and social groups. Ultimately, this object, corresponding to the ethnographic and historical category of the sumptuary, presupposes a symbolic deployment of luxurious attire: its field of action is preeminently social and its aim is the preservation or enhancement of status; moreover it is driven forward by the same center/margin dialectic that shaped the orders and that permitted the valorization and use of excess in the giant order that such a dialectic enables.

Here an important distinction needs to be borne in mind. Usually error in the classical tradition of architecture, in the norm/exception dialectic common to all normative systems, is conceived of as an active instance of potentially dangerous heterogeneity, or, alternatively, as a passive moment, a lack, a failure to live up to the letter of the law, or – even more egregiously and perilously – as a limit-case of monstrosity, that blends positive and negative until their edges are blurred in a process of hybridization.

One of the most prominent errors mentioned in Vitruvius and the architectural treatises of the 16th and 17th centuries is the mixing of parts from different orders (*mescolanza*), whether one is speaking of Vitruvius, always attentive to the scope of normative principle, or Serlio, who popularized the term, or of strict rigorists like Teofilo Gallaccini. Vitruvius sharply criticized that kind of error by referring above all to the architectural ornament found in Pompeiian Second Style painting, with its grotesques, but more specifically Gallaccini called attention to that situation by labeling it as totally unacceptable, found above all in Michelangelo's Florentine *columnatio* in the Medici Chapel and the Laurentian library, which in his view are instances of

[132] "Techniques of the Body," *Economy and Society* 2 (1973), 70-88; William Beik, *Louis XIV and Absolutism: A Brief Study with Documents* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

[133] Elias, *The Court Society,* chap. 2-3; Burke, The Fabrication of Louis XIV; Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Saint-Simon and the Court of Louis XIV* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2001); Robert W. Berger, *Versailles: The Château of Louis XIV* (Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1985), 3 vols.; Ralph E. Giesey, *Cérémonial et puissance souveraine: XVᵉ — XVIIᵉ siècle* (Armand Colin, 1987), 85.

[134] Michel de Montaigne, "Of Sumptuary Laws" (1595), in *The Essays of Michael Seigneur de Montaigne* (J. Pote *et alii*, 1759), 339-41.

[135] V. *supra*, no. 123. On *mescolanza*, see Sebastiano Serlio, *Regole generali di architetura sopra le cinque maniere de gli edifici* (Francesco Marcolini, 1537), c. 5v; Tafuri, *Interpreting the Renaissance*, 11; Sergio Bettini, "La mescolanza nel trattato di Sebastiano Serlio," in *Leggere le copie: critica e letteratura artistica in Europa nella prima età moderna (XV-XVIII sec.),* ed. Carla Mazzarelli and David G. Cueto (Artemide, 2020), 29-47. On Serlio's codification, composite ornament, and license, see Thoenes and Günther, "Gli ordini architettonici"; Onians, *Bearers of Meaning*, 263-86; Sherer, "Error or Invention"; Ackerman, "The Tuscan/Rustic Order"; Elam, "Tuscan Dispositions".

an offense against the discipline of architecture itself, and not only the classical language[135]. The giant order does not pertain to this most dangerous category of *mescolanza*, which may also be described as monstrous offenses against the norm. The proof of this is that it has left all other substantive part/whole relations, and above all, the iconography and symbolism of the ornamentation of the orders, especially in the capitals, wholly intact.

Earlier, we asked what the giant order, once seen as an instance of 'speaking' architecture, spoke about. The answer given, power itself, is too general: it is, to be more precise, power in the formal and legal sense, the royal power, the ultimate and absolute source of *potestas* in the era of Louis XIV. Yet there is also a question of what might be termed not cultural power but cultural authority (*auctoritas*), an informal cultural reserve of power that conditions the contest between Italian and French cultural dominance. The giant order, as it was invented by a great Italian architect (Michelangelo) and 'imported' to France, where it played a key role in the proposed designs for the Louvre façade by one of his greatest admirers (Bernini), could not but be perceived as a signifier or token within the Italo-French contest for cultural superiority on the European stage[136]. There it could only be disputed, an object of fierce polemic in its role as the potential reserve of cultural *auctoritas* that could be drawn upon by those with *potestas*, namely, the Sun King and his ministers.

But we can go further in this direction. The entire condemnation of the giant order by Perrault is rooted in the wider period of Franco-Italian rivalry – a theme which is not as frivolous as it might initially seem to be: it ended up, just before and immediately after the death of Louis XIV, embracing not only architecture and the visual arts, but also the musical and theatrical debates that resonated through the *Grand siècle* and beyond and absorbed the likes of figures like Rousseau and Melchior Grimm, the Baron d'Holbach, and Rameau (e.g. the *Querelle des Bouffons*, the controversies over operatic style, over the relative – or absolute – merits of French and Italian opera, and the problem of Italianisms in the French language)[137]. In connection with the acrimonious debates over Italian music and acting, 'Baroque' came to be a term of opprobrium: according to a well-known etymology which refers to its origin to a word describing irregular pearls, it had a negative connotation associated with Italian 'extravagance', whereas, generally speaking, French art and architecture was seen as more severe, classical and restrained. This much is clear from the critical assaults on Italian music during the *Querelle des Buffons*[138].

The Bernini-Perrault conflict can be seen as an opening salvo in this wider cultural dispute over cultural dominance. In his polemic against the *grand ordre*, Perrault's message was distinctly pro-French, and reflexively anti-Italian, a tendency which was only sharpened by his animus against Bernini on the personal level and the tensions between what the Italian architect stood for, given his connection to the cultural politics of Alexander VII, and what the French theorist represented on the cultural and political level[139].

What we are dealing with, as far as Perrault's attitude towards the giant order is concerned, is not so much the detached scientist and physiologist as the theoretician of *autorité* and *acoûtumance* who acknowledged the glory of Louis XIV and the French cause in architecture, and who

[136] Jeanne Morgan Zarucchi, "Bernini and Louis XIV: A Duel of Egos," *Source: Notes in the History of Art 25*, 2 (2006): 32-38; Jeanne M. Zarucchi, "Perrault's Memoirs and Bernini: A Reconsideration," *Renaissance Studies* 27, 3 (2013): 356-70; Cecil Gould, *Bernini in France: An Episode in Seventeenth-century History* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1982).

[137] In the field of architecture, in a parallel case contemporary with the Perrault/Bernini *scontro*, Le Vau was criticized for relying too heavily on Italian Baroque style and models in the College des Quatre Nations: see Hilary Ballon, *Louis Le Vau: Mazarin's College, Colbert's Revenge* (Princeton Univ., 1999); Alexandre Cojannot, *Louis Le Vau. Les débuts d'un architecte parisien (1612-1654)*, PhD Thesis, École nationale des Chartes, 2000; Blunt, *Art and Architecture*. More generally, on proposals for a French order, see Françoise Lemerle, "Antiquity to Modernity. Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century French Architecture," in *The Quest for an Appropriate Past in Literature, Art and Architecture*, ed. Karl Enenkel and Konrad Ottenheym (Brill, 2019), 187-209; Picon, *Claude Perrault*; Joseph Rykwert, *On Adam's House in Paradise, the Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History* (MoMA, 1972), 77ff ; Kruft, *A History of Architectural Theory*, chap. 12; Manfredo Tafuri, "*Architectura artificialis*: Claude Perrault, Sir Christopher Wren e il dibattito sul linguaggio architectettonico," in *Barocco europeo, barocco italiano, barocco salentino*, ed. Pier Fausto Palumbo (Centro di Studi Salentini, 1970), 375-98. In the field of music, the *querelle des bouffons* took place a generation later, in the reign of Louis XV: Richard Taruskin, *Music in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2011), 277ff; William Brooks, "Louis XIV dismissal of the Italian actors: the Episode of 'La Fausse Prude'," *Modern Language Review* 91 (1996): 840-7. On the debate about the intrusion of 'Italianisms' into the French language in the 17th century, see Mario Mormile, *Storia polemica tra italiano e francese, 1200-1800* (Bagatto, 1986); Pierre Scavée and Pietro Intravaia, *Langues en contact: Français et Italien* (Klincksieck, 1979); Alan Patten, "The Humanist Roots of Linguistic Nationalism," *History of Political Thought* 27, 2 (2006), 221-62.

[138] Bresc-Bautier, "Reinvestire nel Barocco?", 124-35. On the term 'Baroque' deriving from the Portuguese word for irregular pearls, see Erwin Panofsky, "What is Baroque?," in *Three Essays on Style*, ed. Irving Lavin (MIT Press, 1995), 19ff.

[139] For French/Italian rivalry as a context for Bernini's fortune in the France of Louis XIV, see the discussion in Claudia Lehmann and Karen J. Lloyd, "Introduction: Stars, Water Wings, and Hairs. Bernini's Career in Metaphor," in *A Transitory Star. The Late Bernini and His Reception*, ed. Lehmann and Lloyd (De Gruyter, 2015), 9-11. I have been unable to consult Daniela Del Pesco, *Il Louvre di Bernini nella Francia di Luigi XIV* (Fiorentino, 1984).

owed his position, as did his brother Claude, to the favor and support of the Sun King's power-ful *Surintendant des Bâtiments*, from 1664, Jean-Baptiste Colbert[140]. The anti-Italian sentiment expressed by Perrault against the Michelangelo-inspired *grand ordre* discloses the full measure of its cultural significance and rhetorical impact in this milieu, which dovetails with that of the rise of the academies in the field of the visual arts in the 1660s in France and the consolidation of absolutism, which made this institutional structure and activity possible[141]. In this context, the giant order acted as a potent signifier in the lively, vituperative Italo-French cultural debate, a highly contested element in the disputes carried out under a purely theoretical disagreement over architecture, inscribed within the increasingly volatile cultural politics of the day. Specifi-cally, this context is important for the polemical exchange between Bernini, on the one hand, in his capacity as *de facto* artistic representative of the Papacy, and Perrault, on the other, in his capacity as *de facto* architectural and political representative of the Crown of France.

Architecture thus becomes an index of the wider struggle for cultural hegemony. A complex sort of political struggle, performed by way of a mandatory detour, was fought out on the level of otherwise purely formal debates. Perrault's polemic against the giant order attacked the Italian incursions into French cultural territory, not denying, but rather tacitly admitting that a feature of such scale posed a potential cultural risk, as it carried specific stakes for the politics of culture from 1660 to 1715.

To drive this point home all we need to do is recall how the emerging layers of the giant pila-sters at the colossal corners of the Palazzo Chigi Oldescalchi, one of the most impressive works of aristocratic residential architecture by Bernini, is strongly reminiscent of the similar clustering of the giant order in the corners of his Louvre façade in the 1664 drawing mentioned above. Once we do this, we can immediately see that neither Perrault nor Colbert, nor Louis XIV, could imagine having a Roman Baroque palace in the middle of Paris. It was far too Italian, not even far too Baroque (even though the two terms were often used interchangeably).

In other words: Bernini's project was *insufficiently French*. In opposition to that identifiably French colonnade and façade which was so afterwards designed and executed largely by Per-rault, with the assistance of Le Vau and Le Brun, for the same building whose coupled giant columns, freestanding, offer a sharp response to the single Roman-style giant pilasters, which seem meager by comparison. For this reason, it never had a chance. Add to this the fact that 1.19, 1.20 Perrault saw the doubling as a subtle reference to the thing hated most in Italy by Baroque classicists like Bernini – the Gothic double columns – and we can see that in fact nationalism in architecture had arrived with the East façade of the Louvre, in the wake of the defeat of Bernini, one of the greatest setbacks of his otherwise triumphant career[142].

By the latter half of the 18th century, this cycle of cultural competition was already ending. Yet it is precisely this integration of the *ordine gigante* into wider political, social, economic and cultural spheres, as much as its purely aesthetic resources, the main reason for its flourishing from the inception of the Baroque to the end of the Enlightenment.

Architecture, when conceived at the scale the giant order demanded, is inextricably bound

[140] Cf. the remark of his brother Charles: "*La belle Antiquité fut toujours vénérable, mais jamais je ne crus jamais qu'elle fut adorable*", the implication being that though Antiquity was venerable, the moderns, under the Sun King, can rival and outdo anything the ancients ever accomplished (*Le Siècle de Louis-le-Grand. Poëme* (Jean-Baptiste Coignard, 1687), 3). On this passage in light of the *querelle des Anciens et Modernes*, Antoine Picon, "Erudition et polémique. Le Vi-truve de Claude Perrault," in Claude Perrault, *Les dix livres d'architecture de Vitruve, facsimilé de la première édition de 1673* (Bibliothèque de l'Image, 1995). On the contentious exchange between Perrault and Bernini, in which the latter responded to the former's criticisms of his design for the Louvre by saying that that Perrault was not worthy of licking his boots, see Chantelou, *Diary of the Cavaliere Bernini*, 197.

[141] Kruft, *A History of Architectural Theory*, 128.

[142] On the reference to the Gothic in classical garb in the Lou-vre east façade, see Alexandre Cojannot, "Claude Perrault et le Louvre de Louis XIV. À propos de deux livres récents," *Bulletin Monumental* 161, 3 (2003): 231-9; Blunt, *Art and Ar-chitecture*, 188ff.

up with power relations and the question of the representability of power, and hence within the dialectics of representation, sociability, and culture at all levels. This is the case with every mode and convention of the *res aedificatoria*: but given its rhetorical reach and unique capacity to link architecture and urban space, this observation applies to the giant order with special force. In studying this process, my aim is not to reset the balance between the ideological and the aesthetic dimensions of the *ordine gigante*. My objective is more modest: to show how the advent of the giant order provoked new reactions that drew on an aesthetics of the sublime and, in so doing, changed the way that the entire apparatus of the orders was perceived in the early modern period.

Fuori Scala *and* Terribilità: *The Giant Order as Herald of the Sublime*

The colossal or 'heroic' scale assumed by the coupled columns of the *grand ordre* on the Louvre in the closest that Perrault ever came to the sublime, a topic very much in fashion in the intellectual discourse in his immediate circle, just as the colossal or 'heroic' scale the giant order at Saint Peter's is perhaps the closest that *Michelangelo architetto* ever came to the concept (and to the aesthetic experience) of the sublime, along with the notion of *terribilità* associated with his artistic personality[143]. Vasari, too, in the thick of Michelangelo's immediate intellectual and cultural milieu, was exposed to Longinus's idea of the sublime, as recent research has shown[144]. But the connections are stronger to the discourse of the sublime in Perrault's case. And indeed the potential scalelessness – the impression of being so immense that neither the eye nor the mind can grasp it – of this order in both works, the Louvre and Saint Peter's, not to mention the Capitoline Hill, skirts the terrain of this category, or, if one prefers, may enter into some meaningful tangency with it. Here we confront a complex relationship which inevitably involves a disproportion between the viewing subject and the powerful visual impact of the order itself, a δύναμις that can be understood both quantitatively and qualitatively[145].

The concept of the sublime has played a fundamental role in the tradition of classical rhetoric since antiquity and was revived most significantly by Burke and Kant in the 18th century. Burke, before Kant, seems to have been the first to articulate a specific conception of the architectural sublime, probably the first in Western philosophical aesthetics, of a completely scalar mathematical nature. In his *Philosophical Enquiry* (1757), the sublime in architecture required for Burke 'magnitude in building': "To the sublime in building, greatness of dimension seems requisite; for on a few parts, and those small, the imagination cannot rise to any idea of infinity"[146]. Such musings read like a gloss on the giant order and seem to evoke Piranesian immensities or ancient monumentality. Kant, picking up on Burke, will speak of the mathematical sublime, in terms of scale that will overwhelm our imagination, but inspire and give a powerful impetus to our reason, as it is only through our rational faculties, rather than our sensory and imaginative faculties, that we can truly grasp an idea of the infinite, the very touchstone, or core of any aesthetic theory of the sublime since Longinus[147].

Gombrich maintains that the focus of the rhetorical tradition is the effect on the beholder, more

[143] Martin Gaier, "*Terribilità*," *Kritische Berichte* 3 (2007): 18-22; David Summers, *Michelangelo and the Language of Art* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1981), 234-41.

[144] V. *infra*, n. 151.

[145] Notions of the sublime were a commonplace of Michelangelo criticism from Vasari onwards, but became most frequently utilized in English criticism after Burke, in the Romantic period: see Michael H. Duffy, "Michelangelo and the Sublime in Romantic Art Criticism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56 (1995): 217-38.

[146] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. James T. Boulton, 1759 (Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1968), 74-6, 139-42. On this passage, see Richard A. Etlin, "The Pantheon in the Modern Age," in *The Pantheon from Antiquity to the Present*, 418ff.

[147] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), II, 23-30.

than on the powers of the artist[148]. And in fact, in the context of this tradition, the only way to measure the former is by concentrating on the latter[149]. He continues:

> Burke as a student of emotional effects is indebted to the tradition of ancient rhetoric, to which he also owes the concept of the sublime. It centers on the power of the poet, the musician and the painter to arouse or to calm the passions. What psychological disposition enables the artist to play on the keyboard of the soul is much less at issue. M.H. Abrams in his classic study The Mirror and the Lamp has described the decisive reorientation that led from the aesthetics of effect to the aesthetics of self-expression at the time of Romanticism and its after-math in our age[150].

Although rather schematic, Gombrich's observation is worth bearing in mind when approaching the conceptual parameters of the Baroque reception of the giant order. I say 'schematic' because even if Gombrich's account gives the main lines of development in question, it overlooks other significant moments in the genesis and diffusion of the sublime. Another way to say this is to observe that reference to both Burke and Kant is essential, but it does not exhaust the problem of assessing the impact of the sublime in the early modern period. Here, a reconsideration of the primary sources and their chronology is necessary. Boileau's translation and paraphrase of Longinus in France preceded Burke's in Britain by three-quarters of a century (Burke's *Essay* is published in 1756, Boileau's translation and adaptation of Longinus appears in 1674) – a chronological fact whose wider implications for the perception of the giant order will be dealt with in a moment. Notwithstanding the well-grounded arguments of Gustavo Costa, who suggests that the circulation of Longinus' treatise in the Farnese milieu at the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th could have played an important role in Michelangelo's art, especially in connection with the notion of *terribilità*, nothing in Michelangelo's restricted corpus of theoretical writings on architecture would seem to suggest, however, that he was interested in problems of the sublime, the *terribile*, or the cultivation of similar aesthetic or rhetorical effects[151]. His main text of architectural theory, a letter written to an unknown recipient (most probably Cardinal Rodolfo Pio) of ca. 1540, Michelangelo is preoccupied instead with problems of symmetry, balance and body/architecture analogism, that is, with the side of the aesthetic spectrum concerned more with beauty than with the sublime[152]. On the other hand, it is hard to accept that those who experienced his work, both architectural and artistic, had no exposure to the Longinian aesthetic category (his close friend and champion, Vasari, being a case in point)[153].

The complexity of this situation requires attention to both tangencies and disparities between production and reception. Even if one wished to elaborate a Longinian reading of Michelangelo's architecture based on the concept of the sublime, and the giant order in particular, that would be anachronistic, from the point of view of production (though not from that of reception, or at least not in its entirety). Although it is true that the translations of the text of Longinus, Περὶ Ὕψους, circulated extensively among scholars in Italy and on the wider European scale in the latter half

[148] Ernst. H. Gombrich, "Verbal Wit as a Paradigm of Art: The Aesthetic Theories of Sigmund Freud," in *Tributes: Interpreters of Our Cultural Tradition* (Cornell Univ. Press, 1984), 93-4; also compare the same art historian's account of the historical development of the ideas of the sublime in *The Preference for the Primitive* (Phaidon, 2002), 45-86.

[149] Gombrich, "Verbal Wit," 93-4.

[150] Gombrich, "Verbal Wit," 93-4.

[151] Gustavo Costa, "The Latin Translations of Longinus's *Peri hupsous* in Renasissance Italy," in *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Bononiensis*, ed. Richard J. Schoek (Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1985), 225-38. For a contrasting, more plausible position, see Eugenio Refini, "Longinus and Poetic Imagination in Late Renaissance Literary Theory," in *Translations of the Sublime: The Early Modern Reception and Dissemination of Longinus' Peri Hupsous in Rhetoric, the Visual Arts, Architecture and the Theatre*, ed. Caroline Van Eck et al. (Brill, 2012), 36, asserting "Michelangelo's possible acquaintance with Longinus [does] not reveal a conscious knowledge of Longinus' categories", regarding especially the notion of sublime and terrible beauty."

[152] Cited in Ackerman, *Architecture of Michelangelo*, 37 (Michelangelo writes: "He who has not been a master of the figure, and above all of anatomy, will understand nothing of it [architecture"). On the paucity of theory of architecture by Michelangelo, which have led posterity to have little more than tantalizing and fragmentary views of his ideas on that art, see David Summers, "Michelangelo on Architecture," *Art Bulletin* 54, 2 (1972), 146-57.

[153] V. *infra*, n. 164.

[154] Bernard Weinberg, "Translations and commentaries of Longinus On the Sublime to 1600: a Bibliography," *Modern Philology* 47, 3 (1950): 145-51; Weinberg, "ps. Longinus, Dionysius Cassius," in *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum: Medieval and Renaissance Latin Translations and Commentaries*, ed. Paul Oskar Kristeller and F. Edward Cranz (Catholic Univ. of America Press, 1971), II, 193-8; Refini, "Longinus and Poetic Imagination". On Bembo's text and its reliance on Longinus, see Jan Blanc, "Sensible Natures: Allart Van Everdingen and the Tradition of Sublime Landscape in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting," *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 8, 2 (Summer 2016), 1-35.

[155] Hana Gründler, "*Orrore, terrore, timore*, Vasari und das Erhabene," in *Translations of the Sublime*, 81-116.

[156] See on Vasari's judgments of Michelangelo's architecture my essay "Error or Invention," with bibliography, to which one should add Alina Payne, "Vasari, Architecture, and the Origins of Historicizing Art," *Res* 40 (Autumn, 2001): 51-76.

[157] On the *Kunst-und Wunderkammer* and their role within the wider culture of curiosity in the late Renaissance and Baroque periods, see Horst Bredekamp, *The Lure of Antiquity and the Cult of the Machine* (Markus Wiener Publishers, 2016); Laura Findlen, *Possessing Nature. Museums, Collecting and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Univ. of California Press, 1994); Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1998); Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosity in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2001); Krzysztof Pomian, *Collectioneurs, Amateurs, Curieux, Paris-Venise XVIᵉ-XVIIIᵉ siècles* (Gallimard, 1987); Julius von Schlosser, *Die Kunst-und Wunderkammer der Spätrenaissance* (Klinkhart und Biermann, 1908).

[158] On Cassiano dal Pozzo and Borromini, see Joseph Connors, "Virtuoso Architecture in Cassiano's Rome," in *Cassiano dal Pozzo's Paper Museum* (Olivetti, 1992), II, 23-40; David Freedberg, *The Eye of the Lynx: Galileo, His Friends, and the Beginnings of Modern Natural History* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2002), 15-64; Ingo Herklotz, *Cassiano dal Pozzo und die Archaeologie des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Hirmer, 1999).

[159] Susanne Berger, *Deformations. Attention and Discernment in Catholic Reformation Art and Architecture* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2025), 39.

[160] Clelia Nau, *Le Temps du Sublime, Longin et le paysage poussinien* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2005). On Allacci see Carlo Ginzburg, "Clues: Notes Towards an Evidentiary Paradigm," in *Clues, Myths and the Historical Method* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1985), 111fff.

of the 16th century, including some of the most distinguished humanists of the period (Francesco Robortello, Paolo Manuzio, and Francesco Porto), not to mention a 1524 critical text dealing with Longinus' ideas by Pietro Bembo, only the most bold interpretive leap would be necessary (and not very convincing) when trying to bring this textual reception into some kind of pertinent connection with Michelangelo's working methods and general approach, not to mention his conception of the orders[154].

On the other hand, Vasari, who could have transmitted critical ideas linked to the sublime to his friend Michelangelo, does seem to have had a certain familiarity with the text of Longinus, as Hana Gründler has argued[155]. However, Michelangelo's artistic theory has an entirely different aesthetic orientation in line with what we tend to identify with the beautiful, rather than with the sublime: a divergence suggests, in a paradoxical sense (starting with Vasari), that the work could be considered to be beautiful by the artist who made it, but the effect of the work itself is not beautiful but is rather sublime[156]. The divergence here is not only between the categories used to understand and conceptually frame the work, but also, and most crucially, between the artist's own productive understanding of the work and its reception by other viewers. A certain asymmetry between production and reception is registered in this complex art-historical situation, one that justifies the idea of 'tangency' between art and its critical and theoretical understanding.

The conditions of reception at first change gradually, then more rapidly once we cross the threshold of the 17th century: from that point forward concepts of awe, wonder, the marvelous, and terror play a greater role in the response to works of nature and art collected in *Kunst- and Wunderkammer,* and, in different registers, in relation to the impact of painting, sculpture, and architecture, to say nothing of the question of the range of affective response to specific architectural conventions such as the giant order itself[157]. Each cultural phenomenon and artistic field in this constellation of *artificialia*, *naturalia* and the affective dimensions of reception that linked them can help us historically situate and better understand the parameters of reception of any of the others.

At this juncture, it is pertinent to recall that Borromini cultivated a small but significant *Wunderkammer* of his own and was close to Cassiano dal Pozzo, whose name conjures up a highly ramified culture of curiosity in which ideas of the sublime, closely related to notions of the marvelous and the awe-inspiring, could be seen as part of his conceptual universe[158]. He too participated in a wider culture of curiosity that Susanna Berger, in her recent book on the cognitive value of deformed perspectives, anamorphoses, optically manipulated architectures and spatially tricky colonnades like that of Palazzo Spada, has summarized in the following way: "Wonder stimulated attention, and attention in turn stimulated the curiosity required for prolonged inquiry"[159]. In 1635, nearly forty years before Boileau's French translation of Longinus (1674), and almost eighty years after Robortello's *editio princeps* of the Greek original (1554), the Vatican Librarian Leone Allacci produced an unpublished translation of the Greek original into Latin, which circulated in Roman artistic milieux at that time[160]. In the circle of Bernini as well, architectural and artistic judgment was caught up with both negative and positive conceptions of the sublime, the former being

linked, more or less ambiguously, with notions of what has been designated by Marten Delbeke as the 'vicious sublime', including effects of fear, repulsion and horror, not unmixed with astonishment, fascination, awe and wonder[161].

One would search in vain for a genuine, verifiable and precise parallel between the parameters of reception of the period impact of the giant order and the category of the sublime[162]. Such precision is not being sought here. What is being sought is nothing more than rough approximations, tangencies, and overlaps of categories of aesthetic perception in the visual arts and rhetoric. Even these margins or points of interference between expressive domains contribute to our understanding of the conditions of the giant order's reception. What is more, this sort of approach, however approximate, has the merit of casting an unexpected light on the sublime as an aesthetic category and its historical contexts, while throwing into question what we thought we knew about the temporal extension of the concept of the sublime, and the aesthetic, or purely formal effects connected with it. Finally, we cannot exclude the possibility, which to the best of my knowledge has not been considered up to now by any historian, that the proliferation of the giant order all over Europe – the order which mathematically is similar to the idea of that which overwhelms the spectator with its sheer immensity – did not only register an interest in the idea of the sublime but may have actively contributed to it.

[161] Marten Delbeke, "Elevated Twins and the Vicious Sublime: Gianlorenzo Bernini and Louis XIV," in *Translations of the Sublime*, 117-37.

[162] The most accurate mapping of the aesthetic effects and category of the sublime onto Baroque architecture is found in Guarini. See the discussion and documentation in the thorough and well-researched MA thesis by Carol A. Goetting, *Guarini: His Architecture and the Sublime*, (Univ. of California at Riverside, 2012): Guarini's openminded view of the orders is discussed 70ff. Vittone, in his *Architettura Civile*, identified Guarini's architecture with the sublime: "*essendo tale l'intenzione di formare un architetto, lo va innalzando a poco a poco dale cose più facili e piane alle più difficili e sublimi*". Moreover, Guarini uses the word to describe his perception of a cornice in the Roman Colosseum (Guarini, *Architectura Civile*, III.V.8, 98; Goetting, *Guarino Guarini*, 91-2). These passages and others discussed in Goetting, *Guarino Guarini*, 78ff, demonstrate that the notion of the sublime was an integral part of Guarini's critical vocabulary and the way of thinking about his architecture by his contemporaries and in his circle.