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From Piazza to place royale: The evolution of an absolutist type

Kirk, Dayna Katherine, M.Arch.

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FROM PIAZZA TO PLACE ROYALE:
THE EVOLUTION OF AN ABSOLUTIST TYPE

by

DAYNA KIRK

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APPROVED, THESIS COMMITTEE

Richard Ingersoll, Director
Assistant Professor of Architecture

Anderson Todd
Professor of Architecture

William Cannady
Professor of Architecture

Louis DeLaura
Visiting Professor of Architecture

Steven Zdatny
Visiting Professor of History

Houston, Texas
May, 1989
ABSTRACT

FROM PIAZZA TO PLACE ROYALE:
THE EVOLUTION OF AN ABSOLUTIST TYPE

by

Dayna Kirk

In Renaissance Italy and France, newly built urban plazas were conceived of as outdoor rooms with uniform elevations and a focused monument. The coordination of planning circumstances was usually the endeavor of an aristocratic or a monarchial patron. The coherency of a plaza became a direct expression of this patron's will to express his authority.

Analyzing Piazza Ducale in Vigevano, Piazza SS. Annunziata in Florence, the Campidoglio in Rome, Piazza Ducale in Sabbioneta, Piazza Reale in Turin, and then the Places Royales in Bordeaux, Rouen, and Nancy reveals the shift from the concept to the convention of architectural representation of power.

Architectural forms possess no intrinsic political qualities. Their accomplishment or level of resolution is, however, consistently related to the political processes that facilitate their construction.
This work is dedicated to

EVAN LEWIS

whose infinite enthusiasm for living is equalled only by his loving spirit.

I am most thankful to my thesis director, DR. RICHARD INGERSOLL, for having inspired me to pursue this subject, in which I had long had the interest of a dilettante. His patience sustained me through vast self doubt, and his perceptive, scholarly insights challenged me immeasurably.

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I was fortunate to be awarded the GENE HACKERMAN SCHOLARSHIP in Architecture, which helped me to go to Italy and France in the Summer of 1988. Veritably, no photograph could ever convey the spirit of these spaces.

Finally, I owe an incalculable debt to my grandmother, OLIVIA CULVER, and my parents, DAN and GWYN KIRK.
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FROM PIAZZA TO PLACE ROYALE:
THE EVOLUTION OF AN ABSOLUTIST TYPE

From the Renaissance until the advent of the Industrial Age, urban
design in Western Europe was a byproduct of architectural principles. After
the Industrial Revolution architecture began to be seen as eminently
utilitarian rather than representative or votive. The contemporary
misconception that architecture can and should be considered independently
of its context has prompted my study, in which I shall demonstrate that
architecture is not an autonomous discipline, but that architectural forms
have an associated meaning derived from the circumstances in which they
were built.

I shall present evidence of the overwhelming importance of politics in
the evolution of the Place Royale. In the seventeenth and eighteenth
centuries, a period of French cultural and political hegemony, that country's
rulers zealously sought the appropriate architectural forms with which to
adorn their capital cities--satellites of Versailles--and to celebrate their
authority in the provinces. They found their most influential models in
symmetrically organized piazzas, which had become synonymous with ducal
(or papal) power in many of the Italian city states. Concurrently, French
architects developed a body of theory which allowed them to adapt these
models to the task of representing the authority of the French monarch. They
resisted accommodating the empirical or the particular in their designs, such
that by the middle of the eighteenth century there could be described an
absolutist type of urban space, the most compelling examples of which were
the provincial Places Royales.
My study of the design of public space begins with an investigation of the transformation of the Italian piazza, from the work by Brunelleschi on the Piazza SS. Annunziata in Florence in 1419, continuing through to Carlo di Castellamonte's design for the Piazza Reale in Turin in 1619. The study clearly defines the evolution of public space as a reflection of both the real authority and the desired political status of its patrons. It also establishes the stream of architectural influence from Italy to France. A study of the development of the place (place shall mean the French term for piazza or square), and specifically the Places Royales in Bordeaux, Rouen, and Nancy, will reveal the evolution of an absolutist type of urban space. The codification of that absolutist type will demonstrate that what had been the Renaissance priority of aspiring to an ideal political order actually became a Baroque expression of the fulfillment of that order in the person of the King.¹

EARLY THEORIES OF SPACE

Rudolph Arnheim points to Plato's Timaeus as containing one of the earliest definitions of space: "the Mother and receptacle of all created and visible and in any way sensible things."² Plato's idea of a nothingness or "the given that precedes the objects in it" runs counter to a person's experience of space, where it is perceived as the extension of material bodies or fields bordering on each other. While these definitions are not architectural, they do establish a reference from which we may proceed with a survey of the earliest conceptions of public space. The Western tradition is based on Greco-
Roman experience, and even though Agora was open, the first consciously enclosed spaces in the Western world appeared in ancient Greece and her colonies as early as the fifth century B.C., probably from the influence of Hippodamus. These Greek spaces are characterized by their clear geometric boundaries on all four sides, and their tendency to be entirely surrounded by porticoes of equal depth. aristotle imparted hierarchy to the different types of public space; the Romans subsequently conformed to his classifications to describe the major forum as the locus ad dicendum ornatissimus (place of greatest decorum) as the most honorable place for appearing in public.

Pierre Grimal wrote that the Romans developed colonial cities old and new to impose pacification after their conquests. This was often directed by retired Roman soldiers, who approached the problems of city building with a set of a priori solutions. Nonetheless the chessboard patterns of new cities reflected not only military but also religious priorities, for it was considered a sacred act to found a settlement. The presence of a forum was both necessary and sufficient to ensure the memorable spatial character and the proper facilities for the social and commercial opportunities that all towns promised. The civic forum was more formal than other Roman open spaces and tended to be ceremonial and commercial. In colder climates, civic plazas with commercial uses only were less prevalent, but there was always a civic forum that served as the site of the capitolium temple for the city gods, the

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repository for the town's soul. Such a space made an architectural statement that was both functional and symbolic. The psychological and political association with Rome was of prime importance.  

Vitruvius prescribed a ratio of 2:3 for the ideal width and length of a forum, but among ancient examples only the fora at Pompeii and Tarragona adhered to this guideline. More often the proportions of fora were in the ratio of 1:2. Although there were no codified standards, the prevalent scheme for a forum had at least two sides with porticoes, a temple, and one or more municipal buildings. Typically a forum was sited beside a major thoroughfare connected by a prominent entranceway. The area of the forum was surrounded by colonnades and depressed so that the surrounding steps served as seats and gave the spaces a fixed identity. This interesting feature (on which Michelangelo improved in the Campidoglio) contributed to the fora's seeming firmly embedded in the city. It was as though the forum was there first, and predicated the growth of the city around it.

Regardless of how thoroughly Italian Renaissance and French architects were or were not informed about the ancient Roman type, MacDonald shows us that in spite of the aforementioned preferences, practically every variation in plan (including rounded shapes), every proportion, and every disposition of major buildings had been attempted by

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6 MacDonald, op. cit., p.63.
7 MacDonald writes that the Roman forum in Paris was almost square. Although that fact was probably not known by eighteenth century architects, most Places Royales were also almost square.
the Romans in antiquity. There was then a clear type with a variety of models of ancient public space.\textsuperscript{8}

From the fifth through the eighth centuries the public square or \textit{place} as a place of assembly and representation of power disappeared in Western Europe. Doubtless there is a correlation between this and the diminished importance of cities. Much as American cities today are subdivided by freeways, cities during Carolingian times were polycentric agglomerations subdivided by walled compounds. The revival of open public space had several points of origin. Cathedral towns were centered physically around their cathedrals, which could accommodate markets with their \textit{parvis}, a likely precursor to the \textit{places}. The \textit{bourg} was a citadel, at the perimeter of which rose churches. The courtyards of these citadels became ideal proto-\textit{places}. As the introverted character of feudal estates diminished in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, these proto-\textit{places} became the center of public contact and social life.\textsuperscript{9} In addition to the legacy of Hellenistic and Roman infrastructures and the development of cathedral towns and castle-breaks turned into public space, there were many new settlements founded during the thirteenth century, such as French and English bastides, Florentine new towns, and Zähringer towns built by Teutonic Knights in southern Germany and Switzerland. All such new towns provided a public space that had a geometrically regular plan and was bounded by porticoes.

\textsuperscript{8} MacDonald, op. cit., pp. 52-53.

\textsuperscript{9} Jacques Rossiut, "La naissance de la place et son evolution au Moyen Age," \textit{Monuments Historiques}, March/April 1982, p.32.
THE FIRST MAKING OF URBAN SPACE

Although no written theory is evident, pre-Renaissance urbanism in the Italian communes of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was more conceptually developed than we typically imagine. Marvin Trachtenberg proposes that medieval planning has been overlooked by architects as a result of our "having been distracted by self-serving Renaissance propaganda about the rudeness and unsophistication of the preceding age." He describes the legislation that was introduced in cities such as Florence and Siena to govern the production of urban space as having bestowed order and meaning on scenes that might have otherwise been disordered and unfocused. Finally, he makes the point that the motivations behind this escalation of control were not much different from those in the Renaissance: there were the increasingly sophisticated ambitions of architects and patrons, the rivalries between city states, and above all a contentious political atmosphere within cities themselves. Although medieval planners were obliged to compromise between empirical and ideal solutions more than their successors, the piazzas that were visually and militarily enhanced as a result of their efforts provided a coveted symbol of stability, order and continuity.10

Of the many writings from antiquity to enjoy renewed attention in the Renaissance, Plato's Republic was translated in the early years of the fifteenth century. Plato, who was interested in the paradigmatic city led by paradigmatic guardians, did not comment on specific built forms for his ideal

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city. Nonetheless his description of why a city should be founded probably influenced Renaissance theoreticians. In Book II, 369 b-d, he wrote that the city is constructed to meet human needs, but not the happiness of any one type of person. He advised striving for the greatest possible happiness of the city as a whole, apparently in the belief that a happy city would imply happy citizens. He further explained in Book V, 461e-462e: "the greatest good for a city is what binds it together and makes it one, whereas the greatest evil is what pulls it apart and turns it into many." He believed that unity was fostered when each person felt pleasure and pain at the same things as others, or when the city functioned like a single organism.

Alberti's literary confrontation with antiquity, his direct study of ancient architecture (Bates Lowry contended incorrectly that most of Alberti's concept of the original state of Roman buildings was based on literary sources), and his awareness of Tuscan planning and architecture preceded the 1451 completion of his De re aedificatoria, many of the precepts of which were intended as a clarification of Vitruvius. Alberti's recommendations in Book VIII, 6 concerning the building of cities and the proportioning of public spaces were very explicit. He traced the evolution of the proportions of fora from the Greeks, where they were generally square, to the Romans, where the sides of fora were in proportion 2:3. He explained that these fora were elongated in plan because they had typically doubled functionally for gladiatorial events and commercial and governmental uses. Alberti

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continued by recommending that the area of the modern "fora" be a double square. Leaving nothing to chance, he explained that the surrounding buildings must have dimensions that related strictly to those of the open space, so that it appeared neither too extensive and the surrounding buildings too low, nor too confined if hemmed in by the buildings stacked up all around. To accomplish these proportional ideals, he recommended that the ideal roof height would be maximally one third and minimally two-sevenths of the width of the forum. He concluded his recommendations for the building of fora by delineating the ideal portico: it should have a base one fifth of its width high, and its depth should equal the height of the columns.\textsuperscript{14} He described cities as potentially more noble if houses on each side of streets had regulated cornice lines, and if all doors giving onto the street were built after a model, as was the case in Florence in the via Calzaioli. Leonardo Benevolo has asserted that the main object of Florentine urban improvements in the early half of the fifteenth century was to complete the designs traced and left unfinished from the century before, and that even Alberti stressed not the originality of the new process of planning, but its value as a solution to experiments already under way.

In \textit{The Architecture of the Renaissance}, Benevolo is sparing in his endorsement of Alberti's comments on cities, and specifically on the city of antiquity as a framework for the various types of building. In his opinion, Alberti sees no real difference between the cities of the classical world and those of the Middle Ages. Alberti's metaphor of the house as a little city, and

\begin{footnote}  
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\end{footnote}
vice versa, in Book I,9 demonstrates that he preceded Aldo Rossi by five hundred years in understanding the value to architects of the structure of cities.15

For the first time since the decline of the classical world, Alberti had reemphasized a theory of the city. Although not enough itself to transform the urban environment, this revitalized theory did influence transformation via social, economic, and political needs. Parallel to if not resulting from that theory, the Renaissance understanding of and subsequent change in attitude toward the subject of perspective demonstrated that it was no longer just the law of our vision. Now it could be employed as a constructive rule of space itself.16 The "tragic scene" stage set as represented by Serlio derived from this new knowledge of perspective. Anthony Vidler maintains that thereafter, architects used perspective as a means of communication and an instrument of urban control and regulation.17 Serlio's "tragic scene" has become an emblem for modern historians of the Renaissance concept of perspective.

In addition to the effect of Alberti's theory of the city, there is no disputing that sixteenth century urbanism was heavily influenced by military considerations. J.R. Hale opposes contemporary architectural historians who assume that architects during the Renaissance were necessarily accorded a high level of status. He further speculates probably accurately that architects in fact gained status during the Renaissance owing to their association with

engineers and the discipline of military engineering.\textsuperscript{18} Guidoni and Marino assert in their \textit{Storia dell'Urbanistica: Il Cinquecento} that all of the great Cinquecento architects and many of the great artists (they name Leonardo and Michelangelo), concerned themselves with issues of military engineering, an idea which substantiates Hale's theory that architects gained credibility in undertaking to solve problems of military design.\textsuperscript{19}

It would seem inevitable then that the exchange between architects and military specialists in designing bastions had its effect on urban design. When given the opportunity to plan cities, engineers and architects alike favored gridded city blocks punctuated with an open square at the center, with straight streets emanating from it. Another alternative was to superimpose streets which radiated from the open square onto the grid of city blocks. Well before Haussmann's "eventrement" (disembowling) of Paris, then, Renaissance urban spaces underwent similar transformations.\textsuperscript{20} In addition to their symbolic association with and celebration of power, urban spaces now further expressed the authority of the ruler in that they became places for the gathering and ceremonial display of soldiers and arms.

The Renaissance humanist view that the city was at the heart of an organized society implied that the city should be the visible expression of the functions of that society.\textsuperscript{21} The papal court of fifteenth century Rome offered

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{20} Spiro Kostof, "His Majesty the Pick: The Aesthetics of Demolition," \textit{Design Quarterly}, Fall 1982, p. 32.
  \item \textsuperscript{21} Argan, op. cit., p.11.
\end{itemize}
a new articulated vision of society with orchestrated rituals. Intended both to idealize and preserve the desired social order, these rituals in turn required public stages on which to act out that order.

Courtly patrons elsewhere began to desire permanent theater structures for the stately representation of their princely authority. Models for these were sought in antiquity, although contemporary usage had little to do with the theatrical practices of ancient Greece or Rome. Kurt Forster terms these Renaissance theaters "neoantique," adding that they found their place within princely residences where they served for courtly pageants. The unified but highly differentiated interior of the theater was to be treated like an exterior span, where the stage represented a grand square with a stately street. Temporary festival decorations subsequently brought the theater outdoors and into direct influence on the building of public spaces.

To support his argument about the interdependence between architectural theory and practice as of the Renaissance, Paul Zucker wrote that one belief not borrowed from Vitruvius but original among Renaissance theorists and artists was that human life could be entirely rationalized by philosophical and logical schemes. He added that their ideas for city building, which mostly symbolized the architectural program, were largely if not entirely based on a set of rational principles. It is true that for the three hundred years following, the concept of the city grew as a symbol of definite

23 Forster, op. cit., p.69.
social and governmental order, its maturity occurring at the dawn of the
Enlightenment. However, as shall be demonstrated, Zucker's
characterization of the relationship between theory and practice in
Renaissance Italy would seem to apply more to the later French theorists.

Wolfgang Lotz proposes that the interdependence of art and history can
almost always be deduced from the architectural entity of the square or
piazza.\textsuperscript{25} This contention will be substantiated in the following investigation
of five examples of Italian piazzas of the Renaissance, all of which evolved
(although at varying rates) as expressions of the will of a ruler to control
absolutely. Selected for their diversity of size and background, these five
piazzas are reflect the nature of piazzas being built throughout Italy. Piazza
Ducale in Vigevano is included as the first such space to be completed,
remarkable for the rapidity of its execution. At Piazza SS. Annunziata
Brunelleschi's brilliant first move dictated the form the piazza would take a
century later with aristocratic patronage. The Campidoglio achieved
singularity of design conception with the statue at its center. The Piazza
Ducale in Sabbioneta was but part of an enlightened despot's plan to renovate
an entire city. Finally, Piazza Reale in Turin signals the shift in the direction
of the current of urban design influence between Italy and France. The case
studies will be preceded by a characterization of piazzas in general.

Alberti made numerous suggestions throughout the fifth book of his
treatise on how to plan a city according to the nature of its government. The

\textsuperscript{25} Wolfgang Lotz, "Sixteenth Century Italian Squares," \textit{Studies in Italian Renaissance
suspicious tyrant's citadel is best sited on the upper edge of the city, while the benevolent prince's palace is sited in the city's center. To best control a city, he recommended it be divided by building walls through it, and cited the past successes of Egyptian princes who had segmented their cities with water conduits. Alberti did not however predict the effectiveness of controlling the public life of citizens by having a ruler personally dominate the "forum." This was arrived at empirically. Behind the eventual completion of piazzas in every Italian city state, there was a despot or ruler who intuited the power of using architecture in this case as open space to accomplish the goal of absolute authority.

With the exception of the Campidoglio, piazza projects were realized relatively quickly by the standards of the day. Rulers insisted that their projects be expedited so as to have record in masonry of their power. More important than the speed with which they were executed, and owing to the urgency implied by despots, most Renaissance piazzas evolved from a single design conception, with never more than three architects working in collaboration.

The desire for spatial unity dominated all other tendencies. The single most important aspect in the evolution of the urban square into an absolutist type was the authority that each of these squares portrayed and embodied. Making spatial unity and enhancing it with geometric clarity were believed to be the architectural means with which this end could best be achieved.

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The geometrically regular perimeter of the piazzas later became relentlessly formulaic in the *Places Royales*. Although Vitruvius and Alberti commented extensively on the issue of ideal proportions, and although Renaissance building concerns centered around the issues of proportion and decorum rather than on tectonics, no ideal proportional scheme can be extrapolated from the examples of piazzas. This concession suggests that Italian designers more than their French successors resisted formulas and dealt at least somewhat contextually with their environment.

The Albertian clarification of Vitruvius which influenced Renaissance piazza building most was the recommendation for encircling loggias. In Book V.2 Alberti refutes Diodorus Siculus who claimed that porticoes were reserved for servants. Instead, Alberti recommended that they are for citizens of all ranks.\(^{27}\) For the most part, the medieval square had eliminated the colonnades of antiquity, substituting in some cases the isolated three-bay loggia type like the Loggia dei Lanza in the Piazza della Signoria in Florence. It might seem that two essential privileges of a township, the right to hold a market and the right to its own judicial authority, would profit from this reintroduction of long colonnades, but the real reason for their reappearance in fifteenth century city building was more symbolic than functional.

"Architected" space in general, seen here specifically in the form of the porticoed piazza may have been conceived of as "il fulcro della vita cittadina," (a fulcrum of the citizen's life) according to Guidoni and Marino, but they contended that it was really a monument in opposition to the medieval city

\(^{27}\) Alberti, 1989, op. cit., p. 119. Alberti went on to recommend that there be roofs and colonnades not only for humans but also for beasts.
and its municipality, and that it was constructed as a symbol of the upcoming demise of municipal liberties. The loggia, which was given human proportions, also signaled a conscious attempt to create uniformity and to make the new harmonize with the old. Lotz asserted that in the sixteenth century Italian piazza, Man could realize to what extent that the past conditioned his present and future existence.

The most potent spatial organizing devices with which Renaissance piazzas can be partially characterized are the statues of despots which occupied their center. The ruler's statue stood in a standoff with any citizen who might question his position in the hierarchy of the city state, for the despot, and only the despot, could occupy the central position. This new positioning of a statue at the center of a piazza, itself a microcosm of the ruler's domain, predicated a shift in the relationship between city state and the Church. Guidoni and Marino further write that the positioning of statues in Renaissance piazzas marked the beginning of the end of the socio-political microcosms called city-states, and the onset of their transformation into capital cities. It was these emerging capital cities that French Kings and architects admired and copied in the first Places Royales.

Renaissance Italy was nothing more than a collection of adamantly independent city states exhibiting no national consciousness or sentiments, and yet the degree of homogeneity found in the designs of piazzas was not remarkable. Instead, this consistency of design expression reflected how cities

28 Guidoni and Marino, op. cit., p. 188.
29 Lotz, op. cit., pp. 89-90.
30 Guidoni and Marino, op. cit., p. 30.
everywhere sought to recuperate legitimacy based on models, both of buildings and of spaces, from the classical past (that ultimately related to the order imagined in classical culture). The space for courtly representation was a necessary and accepted convention that rendered a stage as important as the palace for the representation of princely presence. This attitude was transmitted easily to seventeenth century France, where the monarch reigned without question over every city in the realm, and eagerly drew from the Italian urban precedents when searching for a formal architectural representation of his power.

PIAZZA DUCALE, VIGEVANO, 1492-1494

Patronage. Situated 35 kilometers southwest of Milan, the small town of Vigevano was once nothing more than a ring around the Sforzesco castle. Ironically it did not gain official status as a city until the old market street and the municipal palace (or town hall)—two necessary components for any Renaissance city—were being demolished to make way for the Piazza Ducale. Ludovico Maria Sforza, il Moro, built the piazza ostensibly on behalf of his nephew Gian Galeazzo, the Duke of Lombardy, but he himself resided in the Ducal Palace at its edge and stood to benefit personally from a monument to authority. Some fifty years earlier in 1447, the people of Vigevano had seized the old castle and established a municipal council which held power a scant three years. Thereafter a new civic order under the Duke controlled Vigevano for more than four decades before it finally received its exact architectural expression in the relationship of the castle to the piazza. Granted the piazza was an amenity for the community (which was obliged to
pay for it), but the height of the tower and the tenor of the 1492 inscription on it leave no doubt that piazza and tower were first and foremost an integral part of the princely residence.

Ludovico's desire to elevate the status of Vigevano from oppidum to civitas meant that the Church of Sant'Ambrogio was to become a cathedral.\textsuperscript{31} Apparently il Moro was willing to tolerate the increased prestige and power of the Church that this "upgrade" would imply. He announced his intentions for the city on 3 May 1492 in a decree that made his attitudes, desires, and methods of implementation exceedingly clear. The piazza was the place for the "continua habitatio" and "mora" of the Duke and his Court; consequently it had to be suitable to the "magnitudo" and "dignitas" of a "princeps." He stated no aesthetic, economic or practical reasons why the piazza was to be built. The impression that Vigevano was il Moro's to do with as he pleased was unmistakable.\textsuperscript{32}

\textbf{Period for completion.} A most telling detail about the motivations behind the building of the piazza was that it took no more than three years to complete. Architects, artisans and builders worked on it steadily and almost without interruption from 1492 to 1494. Ludovico had previously demonstrated an imperious attitude about demolition in Milan,\textsuperscript{33} and Bramante, who later became known as "Il Ruinante" in Rome, may well

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{31} Richard Schofield, "Ludovico il Moro and Vigevano," \textit{Arte Lombarda} nuova serie 1982/2, pp. 102-3.
\bibitem{32} Schofield, op. cit., pp. 118-9.
\bibitem{33} Schofield, op. cit., p. 135.
\end{thebibliography}
have earned that moniker\textsuperscript{34} as a result of his zeal in destroying the old marketplace and its surrounding medieval buildings in order to get the Piazza Ducale built and suitable for implying ducal authority.

\textbf{Design conception.} Although the design was the product of collaboration between Bramante, Ambrogio di Curtis, and Leonardo da Vinci, its singularity of vision and purpose were not undermined by the participation of three architects. As coherent as the space is today, W. Lotz proposes that the original church (which stood until 1532) may have conformed better still to the image of the square.\textsuperscript{35}

Bramante, also a perspective painter and set designer, demonstrated at Piazza Ducale that the design of pictorial images and architectural images was methodologically equivalent. He planned the piazza and most likely designed the decorations painted on the facades of the houses around it. As if to affirm that the present power reflected the virtues of antique exemplars, the decorations included heads of great figures from Roman history and members of the Visconti and Sforza families.\textsuperscript{36} The decorations also confirm that the architect was confronting the overlap between pictorial and architectural images, because they consisted of large triumphal arches in illusionistic perspective which made the slightly irregular shape of the piazza look perfectly regular,\textsuperscript{37} thereby augmenting the coherence of the space.

\textsuperscript{34} Lotz records that he discovered this in an unpublished note to James Ackerman's \textit{The Architecture of Michelangelo}. "Il Rvinante" is an archaic form of the word "Il Rvinante," which means "one who destroys."
\textsuperscript{35} Lotz, op. cit., p. 78. The currently existing church was not erected until the early seventeenth century.
\textsuperscript{36} Schofield, op. cit., p. 128.
\textsuperscript{37} Bruschi, op. cit., p. 59.
The theme of "triumphal arches" was doubtlessly derived from Alberti who had called them "the greatest ornament to the forum or crossroad." He ascribed their invention to those who enlarged the empire, which accounts for their later popularity as an icon of expanding absolutism. More importantly their presence, marking a cross-axis, tends to make them dominate and characterize the self-contained space. The arches emphasize the module of the repeating bay, thereby affording unity to the space. Concurrently, they diminish the significance of the corners as apertures. It is as though the void has more of a physicality than do the walls around it, perhaps the ultimate sign of its success. The commission at Vigevano and this early example of the adaptation of painterly perspective as an architectural means of "stage-managing" the urban setting (or decorating the city in a humanistic way) probably initiated Bramante's interest in the image of cities.

**Regular Geometry.** Measuring 158 by 440 feet including its bordering arcades, there were twelve bays on the western end, thirty-three on each of the north and south, with the church of Sant'Ambrogio on the east. Originally there were illusionistic monumental arches over the two main streets which led into the square from the north and west. These interrupted the continuous rhythm of the colonnades and seemed to distract from the main three triumphal arches on the north.

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39 Bruschi, op.cit., p. 115.
Proportions. The proportions of the plan of the piazza approach 1:2.8, a ratio which is considerably more elongated than the ideal 2:3 proposed by Vitruvius or the 1:2 that was common among the Roman fora. As shall be demonstrated in several of the Italian piazzas in this study, this deviation from Vitruvius' and Alberti's models was likely predicated by the fact that Vigevano's Piazza Ducale was not created anew but was carved out of an existing fabric. Specifically here, it was conditioned by topography and the distance between the location of the church and access to the castle. A typical elevational bay is three stories, with the inset loggia occupying the bottom one. Only at the triumphal arches on the north and at the east end is the roofline interrupted and heightened. When one moves through the loggia alongside the piazza, he perceives the anthropometric proportions of each cubic bay.

Loggias. The squat, baseless piers without capitals of the loggias in the piazza make it seem likely that Bramante designed them after Albertian motifs at the Tempio Malatestiano at Rimini.40 In addition to the symbolic issues, there was a strictly functionalist component to the program which informed the design of the Piazza at Vigevano. The existence of stores and workshops beneath the arcades corresponded to the Vitruvian description of the Roman forum, and ensured that the perimeter of this space would be regularly occupied.

Monuments. One instrument for asserting power to which Ludovico did not resort was erecting a statue at the center of Piazza Ducale. Since the

40 Schofield, op. cit., p. 113.
1470's, there had stood a statue of a deceased ruler in Ferrara, but it was as yet an unacceptable practice to honor living rulers with statues. Only in the sixteenth century did a Medici raise a statue of himself. By 1500 il Moro's coat of arms and devices on the piazza had lost their meaning. With the 1532 departure of the Sforzas from Vigevano, the city was granted a charter, the equivalent to a license for self rule, but the Church was mindful of the decline of ducal power and Vigevano was immediately made a bishopric. That year a cathedral was begun to replace the Church of Sant'Ambrogio, and so began the transformation of the Piazza Ducale into the Piazza del Duomo. Later church leaders followed the lead of Pope Paul III in the Campidoglio and erected symmetrical statues in the piazza at the confluence of sight lines.

Legitimacy via Classical models. Typically Lombardian municipal squares were called "Piazza del Popolo" or "Piazza Grande," and it was no accident that Vigevano's version was instead termed the Piazza Ducale. Nor was it accidental that in the tower inscription the site was designated by the classical term "forum" rather than the medieval term "platea" (from which came "piazza" and "place"). Lotz's analysis of the inscription has shown its direct relation to both Alberti and Vitruvius. The architectural

43 Lotz 1977, op. cit., p. 128. From that 1492 inscription we may read: Ludovicus Maria Sfortia . . . diritis . . . circa forum edificis aream ampliabit ac porticibus circumductis exornavit . . . whereas in Alberti's Ten Books, VIII, 6 we may read: Forum Graeci quadratum, constiuebant, porticibus amplissimis et duplicibus circumibanti, columnis et trabibus lapideis ornabant . . .
form must be acknowledged as imitative of a Roman forum, an ancient portico-ringed urban space known to these Renaissance architects and despots exclusively through Vitruvius as repeated in Alberti's *Ten Books*, which were very likely available to the humanists of the Milanese court.\textsuperscript{44} It was also representative of Bramante's continuity and rationalization of significant features of the medieval piazza. The ideas of a great tower dominating the piazza, a church occupying one side of the space, and a ring of porticoes around it were probably taken from the illustration of the piazza of Sforzinda in Filarete's Treatise,\textsuperscript{45} since Filarete is known to have made drawings and hypothesized about utopian cities in the 1460's for Duke Francesco Sforza.\textsuperscript{46} The enclosure is distinguished as having once been intended as a private forecourt to the Palazzo Ducale. By recasting that formerly private forecourt as the outdoor room for all of Vigevano, Ludovico made the city one entire ducal building. It was as if any venture in "public" by residents of Vigevano required (or implied) their acknowledgment of ducal authority. However authoritarian his political intentions, the potential for overlap of private and public spaces is one of the most compelling features of the design: the stable, symmetrical city "room" permits and conceals the necessary peripheral domestic requirements beyond. The fact that such a homogeneous space coexists with this variety around it remains one of the piazza's greatest attributes, for in the words of Michael Dennis, "the requirements of the res

\textsuperscript{44} Lotz, 1977, op. cit., p. 127.
\textsuperscript{46} Lotz, 1977, op. cit., p. 77.
publica are rarely coincidental with those of the res privata and insistence on integration of the two is as untenable as the complete hegemony of one.\textsuperscript{47}

Influence on Other Piazzas and Places Royales. Bruce Allsopp's theory is that the French first learned classical architecture from Lombardy and not Tuscany. Vigevano's Piazza Ducale was then something of a shortcut in the evolution toward an absolutist type of urban square. Even though it was always a minor city in Lombardy, it may well have been as influential as Piazza SS. Annunziata or the Campidoglio by virtue of its proximity to Milan and the Franco-Italian border. Allsopp clarifies his contention by asserting that the French espoused classical architecture as a fashion in decoration first, followed by an obsession with its theory.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{47} Michael Dennis, Court and Garden (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), p. 87.
1. Vigevano, Figure ground.
   (1) Piazza Ducale
   (2) Castello
   (3) Piazza del Mercato

2. Plan of Piazza Ducale.
Piazza Ducale, Vigevano

3. View from Church of Sant'Ambrogio

4. Western arch.
PIAZZA SS. ANNUNZIATA, FLORENCE, 1419; 1517-1525

Patronage. It can be argued that there was reciprocal influence between Bramante's Piazza Ducale and Brunelleschi's Piazza SS. Annunziata. Although Brunelleschi's project was begun in 1419, more than seventy years before Bramante's Piazza Ducale, Piazza SS. Annunziata (with the exception of its statues, which were added even later in the century) was not completed until 1525, thirty years after its Lombardian counterpart.

In its inception Piazza SS. Annunziata was a public project in that it was sponsored by citizens' organizations such as the guild that paid for the Oespedale degli Innocenti. Eugenio Battista speculates that it was in the best interests of the Foundling Hospital to represent itself not as a place of shame to be avoided, but as a lively gathering point.\(^{49}\) The completion of the Piazza a century later fell under the patronage of Pope Leo X and still later under Duke Ferdinand, both Medicis.

Period for Completion. Three issues influenced the period for completion of the Piazza. One was that patronage changed hands several times. It was probably relegated to a secondary position after the Piazza della Signoria, which had continuously since medieval times captivated the attention of Florentine rulers. Second, the land on which the piazza sits had been acquired by monks in the thirteenth century. It is easy to imagine their initial reluctance to cede that property for the increase of secular authority. Another reason why its completion may have moved so slowly is that in the

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fifteenth century, this area of Florence was relatively undeveloped. No one perceived it as a potential marketplace, nor used it as one after it was built.

**Design Conception.** Like the Piazza Ducale, SS. Annunziata has always conveyed the impression that it was a single architectural conception, but such was not exactly the case. The plan for the Piazza was part of what Richard Trexler terms the "civic cultivation of holiness," the conversion of Florence into a ceremonial center by farsightedburghers and lords. Sensing that their profits could be enlarged and the quality of the city heightened if foreigners came for worship as well as trading, they promoted civil identity through the completion of civic altars that eventually harbored statues of the patrons themselves.50

Although some scholars have argued that the loggia for the Foundling Hospital was based on a literary description of what classical buildings should look like,51 more recent scholars claim that the medieval tradition was present in Brunelleschi's work. The Vitruvian code of building must have influenced Brunelleschi here decades before Alberti had the opportunity to write his interpretation. By fixing the position of the Hospital, Brunelleschi determined the organization of the future symmetrical piazza.

**Spatial Unity.** Most of the urban design projects undertaken in Florence in the first half of the fifteenth century had actually been attempts at resolving experiments which were instituted in the thirteenth and

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fourteenth centuries. It may well be that Alberti was in part inspired to
research Vitruvius on the basis of Brunelleschi's loggia for the Foundling
Hospital. In the fourth book of his treatise Alberti stressed the value of
"planning" as a solution to experiments in city building that were already
under way. Evidently, Brunelleschi's building of the Foundling Hospital and
its precedent-setting (for the Renaissance) loggia not only dictated the
outcome for the Piazza SS. Annunziata, it also established the formal
vocabulary and forecast the desire for spatial unity for the expansion of the
piazza during the following century.

Regular Geometry. Bruno Zevi suggests that one think of the Piazza
SS. Annunziata as the "module" of Renaissance square building. Its
equivalent bay divisions (there are nine bays across the Foundling Hospital
and the Fraternita dei Servi dei Maria, and seven bays across the Church of
SS. Annunziata), axial disposition, and absolute symmetry were influential
within Italy in the short term, and in France all the way through to the Places
Royales two hundred years later. The piazza measured 192 by 250 feet, its
vertical height ranging from 47 feet 3 inches to 52 feet 10 inches at the peak of
the roof. A cubic bay of the loggia had dimensions 19 feet 9 inches wide by 19
feet 9 inches deep by 29 feet 3 inches tall. The dimensions of a bay in
elevation were 19 feet 9 inches by 26 feet.

In 1517, almost a century after Brunelleschi's brilliant early moves,
Antonio da Sangallo the Elder submitted a model for an identical loggia

52 Bruno Zevi, Architettura e Storiografia (Milan: Libreria Editrice Politecnica
opposite the original one to border and define the space. It is uncertain whether this unifying loggia was the idea of Sangallo or of the building committee.53 Whichever the case, Sangallo's design was completed in 1525, as a facade for the Fraternita dei Servi di Maria on the west, opposite the Hospital. It was not until the turn of the seventeenth century in 1604, with the enlargement of the entrance to the church of the Santissima Annunziata on the north, that the architect Giovanni Caccini added the third and final loggia thereby completing the unity of the piazza. Its south end is pierced by the straight axis of the Via dei Servi, developed during the rule of Lorenzo di Medici. Only then did the total picture of the uniformly articulated facades become more important than the individual buildings.

**Proportions.** Brunelleschi was a virtuoso with proportions, as is immediately evident when one walks through the loggia at the Foundling Hospital. As opposed to the loggias at Vigevano, which are embedded in the surrounding buildings, these in Florence are attached to the front of and consequently precede their buildings. Perhaps this has to do with the height of the buildings at Vigevano (there are a ground and two upper stories) versus that of the Foundling Hospital (which appears to be only one tall story).

The plan of the piazza has dimensions in the ratio of 4:5. It is not clear whether Sangallo acceded to Vitruvian and Albertian recommendations, or whether he responded to the constraints of the site in finalizing the

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proportions of the plan. Whichever the case, he more nearly approximates the Vitruvian recommendation of a ratio of 2:3 for the sides of the space than did Bramante at Vigevano.

The space here implied by the surrounding loggias is less an autonomous entity than is the space of the Piazza Ducale at Vigevano. At first analysis one is tempted to attribute this to the fact that the colonnade of Vigevano is uninterrupted around three sides, while in its Florentine counterpart the loggia is segmented in three pieces. However, as we shall see, this characteristic does not diminish the unity accorded the space by its proportions. (The fact that Michelangelo's Campidoglio has segmented facades, only two of which are loggias, does nothing to deter the spatial unity of the design.)

With the completion of the Piazza SS. Annunziata, the oppressive closeness and insularity of the Florentine streets was at last mediated. The well-proportioned space of the Piazza, the buildings themselves which stood in flawless equilibrium, the symmetrical plan and the three discrete but unifying loggias ensured the sense that this was a serene room.

Loggias. As previously stated, the Piazza SS. Annunziata was never envisioned for use as a marketplace, unlike the Piazza Ducale at Vigevano. Consequently, it can be concluded that the decision to replicate Brunelleschi's loggia on two other sides of the space was purely an aesthetic one.

Monuments. Sixteenth century Medics had revived from classical Rome the art form of the equestrian monument. Following the successful
bronzes of Cosimo de Medici, one of the earliest such tributes to a living ruler, Ferdinand commissioned Giambologna in 1602 what was the sculptor's last work.\textsuperscript{54} The equestrian statue of Ferdinand was installed in 1608 in the Piazza, thereby ensuring the ducal imprimatur on the space. Twenty-one years later, Pietro Tacca completed two fountains in Livorno which he then installed east of and behind Ferdinand's likeness.\textsuperscript{55} That the sculpture of Ferdinand appears to be leading the Church is surely no accident. Together, the three pieces reinforce the axial symmetry and hence the overall order of the space.

\textbf{Legitimacy via Classical models.} W. Lotz underscores the significance of the fact that the Piazza SS. Annunziata took the shape of a Roman forum, and was the first Renaissance space to do so.\textsuperscript{56} The broad loggia steps in front of the Foundling Hospital were evocative of the Roman forum and imbued the space with a theatrical character. The desire to distinguish secular from religious authority was probably the original motivating factor in resorting to Classical (pre-Christian) models, particularly in this case since the buildings on the Piazza all had uses related to the Catholic Church.

\textbf{Influences on Other Piazzas and Places Royales.} The direct influence of the Piazza SS. Annunziata can be traced in two primary directions—south to Rome and northwest to Paris. The memory of the Florentine predecessor was vital to the evolution of the absolutist type of urban square. Seven years after

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\item \textsuperscript{55} Antonio Nava Cellini, La Scultura del Seicento (Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1982), p. 149.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Lotz, 1977, op. cit., p. 81.
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Influences on Other Piazzas and Places Royales. The direct influence of the Piazza SS. Annunziata can be traced in two primary directions—south to Rome and northwest to Paris. The memory of the Florentine predecessor was vital to the evolution of the absolutist type of urban square. Seven years after Sangallo's loggias were completed, Michelangelo left Florence for Rome, doubtlessly familiar with the Piazza. Also, eight years after the completion of the Piazza SS. Annunziata under the patronage of the Medicis, Catherine de Medici left Florence for Paris, where she married Henri II, future King of France. She influenced designers of public space in her new home, as shall be discussed later.
Piazza SS. Annunziata, Florence

5. Engraving looking toward the Church of the SS. Annunziata.

7. Church of the SS. Annunziata with fountain.

8. Foundling Hospital with statue of Ferdinand de Medici in the foreground.
PIAZZA DEL CAMPIDOGLIO, ROME, 1537-1654

Patronage. By the late 1520's Erasmus and northern Protestant reformers like Luther had so thoroughly discredited Rome and "la vita romana" that the notion prevailed that good Christians would be wise to stay away from the Holy City. In the reformers' eyes the affairs of Christendom were being conducted amidst a mishmash of sacred Christian customs and profane ancient models. This coupled with ongoing Roman self-criticism in the form of satirical and vitriolic publications from highly placed persons were especially discrediting to outsiders\textsuperscript{57} (i.e., pilgrims, of which there were several hundred thousand each year, and as many as half a million by 1600\textsuperscript{58}). Historian Jacob Burckhardt recognized that the devastation from the 1527 attack on Rome actually cleared the stage for a spiritual and secular renewal.\textsuperscript{59}

Sixteenth century Rome, although small in population, was the most cosmopolitan city in Europe. The majority of people there were non-Roman by birth and had come to the city for a variety of reasons. One was to take part in the papal court, another was to make the typical Christian pilgrimage. Some came to view the monuments of antiquity as tourists or to participate in the intellectual life of the city. Still others came in migration, such as the Lombards, and others to escape the persecution of the Turks, as was the case with the Slavs and Greeks who settled there. The variegated social character


\textsuperscript{58} Mark Girouard, Cities and People (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 117.

\textsuperscript{59} This is Andre Chastel's quote from Burckhardt's Di Kultur der Renaissance, Volume I, 1860. It is cited in The Sack of Rome (1983), op. cit., p. 4.
of the city was at least unwieldy if not threatening in the eyes of the papal court, itself the most efficient monarchial machine in Europe.60

The variety of rituals and ceremonies was a response by the papacy to the perceived need to forge a collective identity for the people of Rome, in the hope that this would ensure authority over them all. Understanding how these events could best be staged, the popes made the renewal and upgrading of urban space a top priority. Michelangelo’s redesign of the Campidoglio was one of the strongest expressions in architectural form of this papal will.

Two reasons explain why the climate was right for Pope Paul III to solicit Michelangelo’s work on the Campidoglio in the 1530’s. First, Paul felt the need to reaffirm the temporal authority of the Pope, to make the City of Rome and the Catholic Church appear unified and dignified to northern reformers.61 Second Paul III, a Farnese, had dynastic aspirations that included augmenting via urbanism his family’s power base in Rome. In addition to the Campidoglio, he commissioned Michelangelo to finish Palazzo Farnese, and he made additions to Castel Sant’Angelo. Two of his three immediate successors, Leo X (1513-1521) and Clement VII (1523-1534), were Medicis and had commissioned similar projects, which probably also influenced Pope Paul.

Period for Completion. Granted that the Campidoglio took more than a century to realize in its entirety--from late 1537 to 1654--Michelangelo's

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61 Chastel, op. cit., p. 5.
powerful scheme was executed almost without exception according to his specifications. His name first appeared publicly in conjunction with the project in 1537 with the erection of the Marcus Aurelius statue. The construction which began in 1561 gave the Piazza the form that it has today. In 1584 the Palazzo dei Conservatori was finished, and in 1600 the Palazzo dei Senatori stood completed. Finally, the copy of the Palazzo dei Conservatori, the Palazzo Nuovo, was completed a half century later.\footnote{Heydenreich and Lotz, op. cit., p. 250.}

**Design Conception.** It was not atypical for Florentine ideas to be borrowed and improved upon in Rome. Michelangelo probably understood that the clear set of design principles that had succeeded in Florence would again be successful in Rome, specifically that adding a loggia to the Fraternita had balanced the existing one on the Foundling Hospital, and that the three buildings had not needed to be physically connected to be able to present a concerted space. While other cities sought to be more Roman, the ancient Campidoglio lay unkempt. The relatively late start to renew the Campidoglio worked to its benefit, for it had not been until the last decade of the Quattrocento—specifically with works like Piazza Ducale at Vigevano, and others at Urbino, Mantova, Ferrara, and Pienza—that architects began to think consistently of single built elements functioning as parts in a whole. Michelangelo capitalized on this fifty years of experimentation and improvement.

**Spatial Unity.** Michelangelo ascended to a new plateau in the coherence that he achieved in the Campidoglio. There having been at least
two precedents in Vigevano and Florence to which to refer, the complex was
without question meant to be read as an outdoor room. As in the Piazza SS.
Annunziata, but even more powerfully here, the facades of all three buildings
stop short of the corners as if to signal that they are backdrops to the piazza
first, frames concealing the buildings second. One senses that the Pope
intended that the Campidoglio be the center of public events and the
terminus for triumphal processions. Equally important, he probably hoped
that the outdoor space would appear to be the ceremonial room of the
complex, as opposed to the huge council chambers inside.63

Regular Geometry. The scheme which Michelangelo produced was
very likely more encompassing than the Conservators had envisioned, but its
magnificence must have raised their expectations. The fact is that the
architect was probably obliged for economy's sake to accept the eighty degree
angle between the existing buildings. He capitalized on the potential
disadvantage of having a trapezoidal ground with which to work such that it
appeared quite intentionally chosen.64 The one precedent of a trapezoidal
piazza that might have influenced Michelangelo was at Pienza, the center of
which was renewed almost a century before for Pope Pius II by a follower of
Alberti, Bernardo Rossellino. The impetus to make its plan trapezoidal was
more obvious because of the axes of pre-existing streets on either side of the
cathedral. Rossellino, lacking Michelangelo's interest in movement through
the space, and adhering to a more traditional Renaissance treatment of
paving patterns, subverted the trapezoidal footprint by introducing a static

63 Ackerman, op. cit., p.158.
64 Ackerman, op. cit., p. 152.
rectangular paving pattern that lacked all of the dynamism of the oval "stellated" paving pattern in the Campidoglio.65

Michelangelo's oval was very innovative by Renaissance standards. Ackerman has asserted that both Michelangelo and Baldassare Peruzzi had drawn ovals for other projects, but they were rejected, probably because of a humanistic distaste for 'irregular' figures.66 The Place Dauphine was trapezoidal as a result of its location at the end of the Ile de la Cite. Otherwise, there is no evidence that French architects, very influenced by the components of this absolutist scheme, ever exhibited an attitude as complex as Michelangelo's toward figures as 'irregular' as the oval or the trapezoid. In the Campidoglio the problem was to find an organizing figure which would emphasize the statue at the center but would not counteract the directionality of the piazza and the statue itself. Only the oval combined the principles of centrality and axially,67 which were necessary but insufficient to ensure the maximum success.

The most subtle refinement of the piazza was the series of three concave recessions formed in the surrounding ring of steps which emphasized to one entering from the "cordonata" ramp the expansion of the piazza towards the rear. Such a crescendo of forms was never repeated in this complexity. Nonetheless it would be a mistake to attribute the incomparable unity of the space to anything besides its exceptionally strong organization.

65 Ackerman, op. cit., p.153.
66 Shortly after the foundation was laid for the Campidoglio, the first oval dome was built by Vignola.
67 This dual character made the figure popular in church design.
The Palazzo dei Senatori, at the head of the composition, is three stories high, or two stories atop a base. The fact that a person going into the building is forced to enter laterally on bifurcated stairs subtly emphasizes further still the theme of the composition: the Roman Emperor occupies not only the center, he also dominates the entire central axis. The act of entering the Senatori is a relegated to the overall composition. In addition to the symbolic significance of ascending to the piano nobile of the Senatori from the left or the right, this requirement engages the participant in the architecture to an unprecedented degree.

The dimensions of the trapezoidal plan of the Campidoglio were 213 feet along the edge of the Senatori, 131 feet in front at the steps, and 271 feet along the equal sides. The symmetrical palazzi each consisted of seven identical bays.

**Proportions.** If the trapezoidal plan of the Campidoglio were inscribed in a rectangle, the ratio of its sides would be 4:5, a surprising proportion since the trapezoidal plan and the oval paving pattern make the space appear much longer than it is wide. Even though the side palazzos are only two stories tall, Michelangelo's use of the colossal order of pilasters has the effect of vertically elongating their elevations. Considering the scale of the piazza alone, it would be difficult for a viewer to detect that all four angles are not equal. Michelangelo further obscured this in three ways: by implying movement with the paving pattern, by tilting the piazza up from front to back, and by focusing the space on the equestrian statue.
Loggias. Michelangelo repeated what was done with the loggias in the Piazza SS. Annunziata, in that those in the Campidoglio function both as anteooms and entrances to the buildings that they front. Concealing the entrance portals with porticoes ensures that they read more as walls to the piazza and less as entries to the individual buildings. Finally, the overwhelming verticality of the arcades implies movement around the space. This is in contrast to the effect of the arcades at Vigevano, which intensify the static balance of the space around which they stand.

Monuments. It is noteworthy that the initial commission by Pope Paul to Michelangelo was to design a pedestal and ready the space to accommodate a statue of Marcus Aurelius, which he had acquired earlier that year.68 Heydenreich and Lotz contended that by monumentalizing the scale of the equestrian statue of the Roman Emperor, i.e., by adapting it to the scale of the surrounding buildings, it became not only the theme of the composition, but a model for all figures erected as symbols of absolutist power in European capitals.69

Legitimacy via Classical Models. The Campidoglio is the only one of the five Italian case studies to have an authentic Classical pedigree. Symbol of power since antiquity, the hill on which it sits had been the site of the "Arx" and of the major temples of Imperial Rome, factors which probably influenced the decision in the twelfth century to site a communal palace on

68 Ackerman, op. cit., p. 141. Ackerman further writes in The Architecture of Michelangelo that for unknown reasons, the architect advised against the Pope's plan to erect the statue, which the medieval Roman mind had long before endowed with responsibility for sustaining the legal and imperial symbolism of antiquity.
69 Heydenreich and Lotz, op. cit., pp. 252-3.
the deserted site of the Tabularium overlooking the Roman forum. Whereas other Italian towns had grown throughout medieval times around their ancient squares, Rome had actually shrunk away from her forum—a phenomenon perhaps due to the city's challenging topography and the scarcity of water on the hills—such that this site on the Capitoline was isolated from the quotidian activities of most sixteenth century Romans. Nonetheless, legend held that the ancients had moved the umbilicus mundi figuratively from Delphi to the Forum, where it remained until it last came to rest in the Campidoglio, which in the artistry of Michelangelo re-emerged as the most profound symbol linking ancient with modern grandeur. This legend must have inspired and even compelled French architects to render in Places Royales their own symbol of their glorious past, present, and (it was assumed) future. Italy's most obvious and potent example of absolutist urban design from which the French must have borrowed is the Campidoglio, symbol of power since antiquity.

Influences on Other Piazze and Places Royales. Like between Vigevano and Florence, the influence between Florence and Rome was probably reciprocal. Once Florentine architects saw the success of the Campidoglio, there was no longer any mandate to enclose the fourth side of the space with a stretch of loggias, as had been done in Vigevano. The consistency of design execution and the rigorous geometry to which all else was subordinated forecast French thinking in the Places Royales by fifty years, even though the construction of the Place Royale in Paris was actually completed before that of the Campidoglio.

11. View toward Palazzo dei Senatori

Both items reprinted from Paolo Favole's *Piaze d'Italia*, 1971.
PIAZZA DUCALE (GARIBALDI), SABBIONETA, 1544-1588

**Patronage.** Sabbioneta remains today an obscure town in the middle of the Po valley, twelve miles southwest of Mantua, Italy. However, since Kurt Forster's studies on its planning and, more specifically, on the integration of public life and its theater, no survey of the increasingly rationalized urbanism in sixteenth century Italy would be complete without discussing this Renaissance renewal. In his various military campaigns, Vespasiano Gonzaga must have been influenced by the design of Castro and the Rocca Paolina at Perugia, both the work of Antonio da Sangallo the Younger in the 1540's. Moreover he must have planned the highly differentiated plan with an eye toward the towns of Mantua and Ferrara. Later, when Gonzaga approached the redesign of the entire town of Sabbioneta, he first envisioned three areas of concentration: (1) the establishment of a mint and of a Greek and Latin school; (2) the embellishment of the eastern gate to the city (the Porta Imperiale), the Casino, the Galleria, and the churches of the Assunta and the Incoronata; and (3) the systemization of the existing streets and squares. With the success of Sabbioneta's redesign behind him, and with his insatiable desire for yet more space for courtly pageantry, Gonzaga commissioned the architect Scamozzi to design the Teatro Olimpico which, as shall be discussed, only enhanced the significance of the city's piazza

**Period for Completion.** As was true in the case of Vigevano, the fact that Sabbioneta was originally a small country village made its switch to "ideal-city-in-the-manner-of-the-ancients"70 a more manageable feat than

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70 Argan, op. cit., p. 104.
similar undertakings were in Florence and Rome. All of the aforementioned urban improvements were completed within Vespasiano Gonzaga's lifetime, after he had retired from active military service, between 1560 and 1590. They reflected one man's consummate desire to see his authority symbolized in the city's demeanor.

**Design Conception.** Although it was earlier suggested that Bramante's work in Vigevano was influenced by Filarete's proposal to the Sforzas for an ideal city, Domenico Giunti's plan for Sabbioneta was more directly based on a theory of an ideal city, not simply on idealized urban elements. Dozens of treatises on urban planning and defense were published in Italy alone while Sabbioneta was being planned, which were likely available to Sangallo and Gonzaga. Small though the town was, it remains today the best undiluted example of sixteenth century Italian urbanism,\textsuperscript{71} singularly unified through the personal involvement of its designer and its patron. It projects in its layout and embodies in its structures not only a late humanist concept of urban life,\textsuperscript{72} but also an ideological origin in Imperium and Rome, and most immediately the political reality of Vespasiano Gonzaga's rule and dominion.\textsuperscript{73}

According to the principles of Alberti, the totally planned city of Sabbioneta was indeed transformed into a "social inside," a civitas rather than

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\textsuperscript{71} The town of Castro, redesigned in the sixteenth century by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger for Pope Paul III as the capital of a Duchy fabricated for the Pope's son, was probably the largest sixteenth century planning project outside of Rome itself. Castro was, however, completely destroyed.


\textsuperscript{73} Forster, 1977, op. cit., p. 81.
just an agglomeration of private houses. The new Sabbioneta was developed from the Ducal Rocca as extensions and specializations which opened up into the city and lead back to its foci. The three major zones of the city—the Ducal private sphere (the Rocca and the villa), the Ducal public sphere (the Palazzo Ducale, the Palazzo della Ragione, the Casa del Luogotenente, the mausoleum and the library), and the areas of communal habitation and production overlapped and interpenetrated in the large squares which were the backdrops for legal, religious, and economic interaction constituting the sphere of public life. The private sphere, masked by facades, molded the public spaces which were indeed stages for communal interaction, and above all for the actions of the absolutist Duke.

Forster has asserted that the architecture of Sabbioneta was conceived not just as a physical city but as a social organism. All metaphorical extensions conferred onto the self-contained architecture a civic and historical meaning. Rather than confining itself to nostalgic reconstructions of a remote past, urban design was understood as "political engineering."\(^{74}\)

**Spatial Unity.** Kurt Forster speculates that Gonzaga, although certainly better informed in matters of military architecture, wanted to extend his family’s emblem of the labyrinth to the layout of the streets of his town.\(^{75}\) More likely the emphasis on the streets reflected the High Renaissance concern for buildings forming a "screen" along the streets, both dividing and connecting the city’s parts. The idea of a "partial screen" was evident in

\(^{74}\) Forster, 1969, op. cit., p. 36.  
\(^{75}\) Forster, 1969, op. cit., p.17.
Vigevano—an architecture of open spaces and passages where buildings were but facades, and of an axial sequence of blocks and enclosed courts. Clearly these characteristics anticipate Scamozzi's plan for the ideal city.

**Regular Geometry.** As was the case in the design of the Campidoglio, Giunti and Gonzaga left nothing to chance in the placement of urban features in Sabbioneta. The gridiron of streets was both dominant and disrupted. The main street was designed to break twice and did not open axially onto the Piazza Grande, mannered after Alberti's recommendations of a century before that there be "planned irregularities" in a small city's street pattern. The fact that the Piazza was not at the intersection of the cardo and decumanus imparted a certain reserve, since it was after all the forecourt to the ducal residence.

One is left with the impression that regularity in the plan of Sabbioneta was more important or perhaps somehow more attainable than geometric consistency in the vertical dimension. The buildings that define the three sides of the Piazza Grande, other than the Ducal Palace, are not surprisingly subordinated to it; but, relative to those secondary structures in the piazzas in Vigevano, Florence, and Rome, they lack rigor in their expression of unity. This may have been the result of financial constraints in such a small town as Sabbioneta.

**Proportions.** The ratio of the dimensions of the plan of the piazza was 1:3; like Vigevano's, it is considerably longer than the Vitruvian ideal. The long sides consisted of three story buildings and the Church of the Assunta
which was completed in 1580, whereas the short sides consisted of the five bay
Palazzo Ducale (1554), and opposite it the six bay Palazzo della Ragione (1560).

Monuments. Leone Leoni's bronzecast statue of Vespasiano, dressed
in Roman Emperor garb and erected in the Piazza Grande in 1588, was the
finial "atop" the city, the crowning ornament to a carefully crafted city design.
Pope Paul's plan for the Campidoglio, although still under construction, was
sufficiently influential that provincial dukes were following its lead, albeit in
less subtle ways.

Legitimacy via Classical Models. Rarely did a city go further in the
quest for legitimacy through the use of forms from antiquity than did
Sabbioneta. The sixteenth century structuring of the major public spaces in
the city after those in ancient Rome implies that Gonzaga and Giunti knew
history well, and were convinced of the power of the symbolism that they
found in it.

Once Gonzaga had remodeled the Palazzo Ducale and completed the
Piazza Grande, he enriched the likeness of the plan of the city to that of Rome
even further. He commissioned Scamozzi to design a building for the
theater, one of the first such permanent structures since antiquity. Forster has
called the theater "perhaps the ultimate solution for princely theater as public
stage."76 It rested conceptually on the existence of a privileged spectator (the
Duke) whose elevated position in the space would allow him to overlook
both the audience and the stage. The stage was kept public as much as

76 Forster, 1977, op. cit., p. 76.
possible, which in architectural terms was synonymous with *urban*. This view at the theater was substantially like the view from the balcony of the Palazzo Ducale onto the Piazza Grande. Forster points out how clear an indication it is of the Renaissance view of human affairs that the cityscape had so strong an influence on theatrical scenery.77

Scamozzi's theater was a metaphorical place of rule and a site of "heightened princely experience," as is evident in its iconography, decorations, and calculated place within the town. Perpendicular to the line that connected the ducal loggia to the stage and passing through the exact position where the duke sat in the theater, Scamozzi set up a cross axis marked by triumphal arches frescoed on the long side walls. The Campidoglio is represented on the east wall with the Castel Sant'Angelo on the west. In the plan of Rome, the line connecting these two monuments would pass through the site of the Piazza Navona. The relationship between the Campidoglio, the Piazza Navona, and the Castel Sant'Angelo was parallel to that between the Piazza Grande, the Gonzaga theater, and the area of the former fortress of Sabbioneta. The painted views of ideal Roman prototypes of the major urban foci of Sabbioneta effected a transposition which, precisely for being imaginary, established the ideological dimension of Gonzaga's urbanistic enterprise.78

The discussion of the theater is justified in order to best understand the significance of the Piazza Grande within Sabbioneta. By setting up a stage for

77 Forster, 1977, op. cit., p. 78.
life, city planning transformed life itself into a play. Secondly, the city's layout made it in the image of Rome—in its attempt to capture the imagined essence and order of antiquity. Sabbioneta was a "Nea Roma," both a city and the image of the city. 79

Influences on Other Piazzas and Places Royales. In spite of the fact that Sabbioneta was so small a town, it is difficult to imagine that the accomplishments of Gonzaga at Sabbioneta did not influence despots in other Italian cities. As shall be discussed later, the impetus to create entire "new towns" had already extended to France where François I er began Vitry-le-François.

Piazza Ducale, Sabbioneta

13. Map of city showing the streets and squares in black. Reprinted from Kurt Forster’s article "From 'Rocca' to 'Civitas': Urban Planning at Sabbioneta, L'Arte, 1969."

16. Scamozzi's theater with ducal balcony in the center. Reprinted from Kurt Forster's article "Stagecraft to Statecraft: The Architectural Integration of
Public Life and Theatrical Spectacle at Sabbioneta" in *Oppositions*, Summer 1977.

PIAZZA REALE (S. CARLO), TURIN, 1615-1638

**Patronage.** As was the case in the previously mentioned Italian cities, the piazza built in Turin in the early seventeenth century was an expression of the will of a strong monarchy in which was vested complete political and economic authority. An ironic difference is that it was a project initiated by the Duke of Savoy Carlo Emanuele I and brought to a successful conclusion by his French-born daughter-in-law Cristina. This passage of monarchial power from an Italian-born duke to a French-born princess is a symbolic parallel to the fact that in the seventeenth century the most influential urban square building began to be done in France. Beginning in 1615, Carlo Emanuele I worked with military architects Ascanio Vitozzi and the father-and-son team of Castellamontes to draw a single concept which combined defense with civil architecture to express in built form the power of the state. The actual work did not begin until 1619 when the heir to Carlo Emanuele, Vittorio Amedeo, wed Cristina, daughter of King Henri IV of France and Marie de Medici. This occasion necessitated a majestic portal for the festive entry of the newlyweds.

Cristina, half Bourbon and half Medici, headed a party which assumed control of the state upon the death of her husband Vittorio. Because her success against the party of her brothers-in-law was tenuous, and her regency was hotly disputed, the Duchess remained steadfast in extending the claim of her father-in-law Carlo Emanuele I to the "Citta Nuova." With much the
same zeal that her parents displayed in Paris, Cristina undertook to embellish the capital of her adopted state. As Henri IV had done in Paris, she encouraged private development at an unprecedented scale in Turin. Unlike her father, who turned his back on the church as an instrument through which to express the new authority of the monarch, she established a church and convent of Santa Cristina. She oversaw the rebuilding of the Palazzo Ducale, and most important to the plan of the city, she demolished the south wall and gate and replaced them with the Piazza Reale, the first so named in Italy, obviously influenced by the Place Royale in Paris. Carlo di Castellamonte designed a uniform facade for the structures surrounding the square, as was the practice in Paris, and speculators who bought the property from the crown were required to adopt that facade.80

Period for Completion. The "official" drawing from which the design for an entry portal ensued was likely made by Carlo di Castellamonte between 1615 and 1619, and that portal was begun in 1619. Most of the remaining construction of the Piazza Reale with its uniform portico and repetitive facades occurred under the authority of Cristina who assumed control in 1637. Her efforts were completed in 1638, the same year that a statue in tribute to her brother, Louis XIII of France, was erected in the first Place Royale in Paris.

Design Conception. The Piazza Reale was part of an earlier grander scheme to redesign the entire city of Turin. The first phase of that design had anticipated enclosing a larger area within the fortification with a

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continuously curved perimeter wall. It called for a more successful connection between the south wall and the citadel,\textsuperscript{81} which actually materialized with the demolition of the south wall of the original fortress and the laying out of the piazza.

**Spatial Unity.** The elongated colonnades on the east and west sides of the Piazza Reale served to create a sense of movement through the piazza. This punctuation of one's progression through the streets heightened the spatial experience and imparted hierarchy to the dominant orthogonal grid plan.\textsuperscript{82}

**Regular Geometry.** The Piazza Reale was built at the site of the old south gate to the regular pentagonal fortress that had been completed in 1564 by the architect Francesco Paciotto. Considered the perfect form for the urban fortress, it was the city's dominant geometrical model, informing future urban design works. Carlo Emanuele I's plan to enlarge the fortified area and Cristina's decision to site the piazza along the demolition lines of the old fortress forecast a similar move by Duke Stanislas in Nancy more than a century later. The Piazza Reale, with dimensions of 228 feet by 505 feet, reinforced the city center. By means of the north-south axis that bisected the space and two east-west streets that bounded it, the piazza related the ringed city to the part of Turin that had grown up outside of the fortress.

\textsuperscript{81} Pollak, op. cit., pp. 270-1.
\textsuperscript{82} Pollak, op. cit., p. 280.
Proportions. The ratio of the lengths of the sides of the piazza is 9:20, or almost 1:2. Because the short dimension is bisected by a street, the effect is that the space seems even more elongated than it really is.

Loggias. Loggias anchor only the two long sides of the piazza. The pair of churches at the north end were used as a propylaion to the old city. Rather than conveying a sense of containment, the loggias here promote a sense of movement through the space, as if to reinforce its position as a connector of formerly segregated sections of the city.

Legitimacy via Classical Models. The walled center of Turin was still determined by the orthogonal street layout of the Roman castrum Augusta Taurinorum that had been founded in 28 B.C., so this city like Rome had a physical link to classical antiquity. Neither Carlo Emanuele I nor Cristina relied as heavily on establishing a link with Turin's Roman past as had dukes in Vigevano, Florence, and Sabbioneta.

Influences on Other Piazzas and Places Royales. Martha Pollak has asserted that Turin was a prime example of a "capital city"—a fundamental innovation of seventeenth century urbanism.\(^{83}\) She is adamant that the rationalization of the city was first and foremost a reflection of the dominant military culture. She prefers speculating about the possible influence on Turin of Spanish practices in the design of colonial cities to acknowledging the obvious influence from France. The expansions in Turin, while admirable, were not as innovative as Pollak believes. Instead they reflected a

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line of Italian influences that had gone north to France and come back again. To her thinking, as of the seventeenth century in Turin the design of the "ideal city" ceded prestige to the conception of the perfect fortress. While this is in part accurate, it seems more plausible that as of the reign of Cristina, who had grown up in Paris during her parents' development of the \textit{Place Royale}, both of the concepts of the ideal city and the perfect fortress were subordinated to the representation of absolute authority. This hastened the evolution of the absolutist type that reached its final form in eighteenth century France.

\footnote{Pollak, 1988, op. cit., pp. 263-4.}

THE TRANSMISSION OF ITALIANATE INFLUENCES

Like science and art, architecture was not contained within political borders at the turn of the sixteenth century. This wealth of urban design influences began to arrive and was conscientiously disseminated in France for several reasons. According to Bruce Allsopp, French nobility and royalty moved freely between France and Italy during the early sixteenth century, and were responsible for the influx to France of a large number of printed books, engravings, and paintings from Italy, all of which piqued the interest of those who saw them. Another channel of influence came from soldiers who, returning from Franco-Italian conflicts, brought with them impressions of the fortified, rationally gridded cities that they had seen. Most significantly, François Ier was enormously effective as a ruler, and he revelled in representing himself as an afficionado of the Renaissance in Italian cities.

The King curtailed the powers of the church, nobility and parliaments, establishing instead his court as the social and cultural center of the kingdom. Like his seventeenth century successor Louis XIV, Francois I stressed the importance and complexity of life at court. He surrounded himself with Italians, from his grand equerry to artisans and artists, including Leonardo da Vinci, who spent the last four years of his life in Amboise, where he died in 1519. Doubtless François Ier anticipated that the presence of so many talented Italians would bring about a movement of ideas in all of the arts. Benevolo has asserted that it did indeed hasten the maturity of the

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85 Allsopp, op. cit., pp. 93-95.
86 Allsopp, op. cit., p. 91.
French designers involved in the "new culture," \(^{87}\) which lends credence to Joseph Rykwert's contention that the School of Fontainebleau, founded by François Ier and directed until his death by Serlio, had more of a centralizing effect on French artistic thinking than did Versailles. \(^{88}\)

In addition to founding the School of Fontainebleau where the artistic principles of city design could be promulgated, the King influenced directly two areas of building. First, he curtailed new construction of church-related structures, encouraging instead a great upsurge of secular building. Peter Murray wrote that the first Italianate impact on this architecture was decorative. \(^{89}\) Second, François Ier collaborated with military engineers and architects to design three new towns. Benevolo classifies European new towns of the sixteenth century in three categories: there were rare examples of residential towns built to house minorities expelled during religious wars, there were new capitals of small states such as Sabbioneta, and there were many fortified towns such as François Ier's Le Havre, Villefranche-sur-Meuse, and Vitry-le-François. \(^{90}\) Designed in the 1540's, all three of these towns had gridded street systems. With its sixteen square blocks and central public square, Vitry-le-François which was designed by the Italian de Marchi resembled a rationalized version of Sabbioneta. Unlike Sabbioneta, the gridiron of streets in Vitry contained almost none of the "planned irregularities" called for by Alberti a century before. The highly regularized


\(^{90}\) Benevolo, op. cit., p. 543.
square with its uniform facades surely influenced architects of the first Place Royale sixty years later.

It is critical to recognize just how wholeheartedly the French espoused history and relied on the body of theory to inform their designs. First, French Renaissance architects had their literary inspiration in Rabelais, who shared their enthusiasm for antiquity as it related to the "new culture," the "rebirth" nurtured by François 1er. Sebastiano Serlio, who came to France in 1540 and was among the first to be accorded the title of royal architect, had Books I, II, and V of his series on architecture published under the patronage of François 1er. He actually finished his sixth book on domestic architecture under the patronage of Jacopo Strada in Lyon in 1554. These texts, which influenced the shift from medieval French taste to the Italian "maniera antica," revealed influences from Alberti, Filarete, and Francesco di Giorgio. Serlio's deferential attitude toward French values probably accounted for the widespread acceptance of his works. They, coupled with Jean Martin's translation into French of Vitruvius in 1547 motivated Philibert de l'Orme, who in essence became the Alberti of France.

De l'Orme had travelled in Italy between 1533 and 1536 where he acquired a comprehensive knowledge of the monuments of antiquity and of

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92 Murray, op. cit., p. 383. Upon the death of François 1er, Serlio went into town planning at Lyon.
93 Rosenfeld, op. cit., pp. 26 and 42.
94 Benevolo, op. cit., p. 373.
the Renaissance. He was selected by Henri II to succeed Serlio at Fountainbleau in 1547; the same year he received the title of "architecte du roi." For the next eleven years, de l'Orme directed all royal building except that at the Louvre. Much like Bramante had served the Sforzas, de l'Orme staged ceremonies and celebrations for the King and Queen. A brief period of disfavor after the death of Henri II in 1559 afforded him the time to write, and in 1561 he published *Nouvelles Inventions pour bien bastir*. Perhaps it was this that drew the attention of Catherine de Medici, for two years later de l'Orme was again in royal employ. He reworked his *Nouvelles Inventions* and published them in 1567 in the *Premier Tome d'Architecture*.

According to Benevolo, de l'Orme "synthesized both the legacy of the French master builders and the data of the new culture." Writers agree that de l'Orme was rare if not unique among French contributors to the developing classicism in that he dared to contradict Vitruvian authority. The accumulation of writings in French about architecture by Serlio, Martin, and de l'Orme initiated a technical and didactic literature. Joseph Rykwert states that they, in conjunction with *Hypnerotomachia Poliphilus* (the dream of Poliphilus) and the works of Palladio and Vignola, shaped the preference for an academic classicism among practicing architects in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

95 Murray, op. cit., p. 377.
96 Benevolo, op. cit., p. 373.
97 Rykwert, 1980, op. cit., p. 121.
98 Murray, op. cit., p. 377.
The stream of influence from Italy gathered momentum with the Valois-Medici marriage of Francois Ier's son Henri II to Catherine de Medici in 1533, and culminated with the marriage of Henri IV, a Bourbon, to Marie de Medici in 1600. Henri II, who ruled from 1547 to 1559, must have been influenced by the preferences of the formidable and cultured Catherine, who continued to have influence during the reigns of Henri's three incompetent successors, Francois II, Charles IX, and Henri III. Upon Henri's death, she commissioned the Italian sculptor Giambologna to make a bronzecast of his image, but the piece was never claimed until Cardinal Richelieu went to Italy in 1622. She readied the site for the first Place Royale (which was planned as early as 1563, originally to be bordered by buildings for a silk manufactory and workers' housing),\(^99\) for she had the Hôtel Royal de Tournelles demolished after Henri II was killed there in a jousting match in 1559.\(^100\) Guidoni and Marino propose that the first proto-places took shape in Catherine's Jardin des Tuileries. It was under her influence that the "promenade publique" began to be extremely popular.\(^101\)

**THE FIRST PLACE ROYALE, 1603-1610**

Although Francois I and Henri II headed concerted administrations, the influence of their authority was lost in the years 1559 to 1589. Henri IV and his advisor Sully, who joined the government in 1596, organized the power base out of which the French monarchical absolutism of the seventeenth

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100 Girouard, op. cit., p. 174.
101 E. Guidoni and A. Marino, *Storia dell'Urbanistica: Il Seicento* (Rome: Editori Laterza, 1979), p. 289. Girouard writes that Catherine always intended that her palace should be joined to the Louvre by a gallery along the Seine, an obvious Florentine inspiration.
century was able to evolve. Henri claimed in a letter to Sully dated 22 December 1607 that he made three things willingly: war, love, and buildings.102 Sully, who held among other responsibilities those of grand commissioner of highways and superintendent of fortifications, shared Henri’s understanding as to the importance of building as physical evidence of the authority of the King.103

When Henri IV assumed the French throne in 1594, there had already been a renaissance of building activity in Paris, similar both in motivation and expression to that which had followed the return of the Popes to Rome earlier that century. Paris was a city of 500,000 (approximately five times the number of inhabitants of Rome) in 1600. Having satisfied the Huguenots with the Edict of Nantes in 1598, in 1600 Henri IV married Marie de Medici and concluded peace with Spain. On 11 March 1601, the same day that he learned that a peace treaty had been signed with Savoy, the King, convinced that his personal authority was in place, informed the Hôtel de Ville:

...qu’a present qu’il a la paix, il faut regarder a embellir le royaume, et principalement achever les ouvrages commences par ses predecesseurs104...(...since there is peace at the present, we must look to embelishing the Kingdom, and principally to achieving the works begun by our predecessors...).

Unlike the Holy City which had the room to grow, Paris was already feared too large. Mindful of the threat posed by a rapidly growing city, the King could invoke the right of compulsory acquisition in order to obtain the

102 Benevolo, Volume II, op. cit., p. 693. He
103 Ranum, op. cit., p. 87.
land for his plans to develop Paris. Benevolo wrote that the Crown was unable to proceed with the project for a semi-circular Place de France, designed in 1603 and abandoned in 1610, because of complications brought about by this process of compulsory acquisition. Fearing that repeated involvement in this activity risked rendering him unpopular, Henri IV elected to build most projects on previously open space, or in the place of buildings that were already on crown property, a factor which influenced the site of the first Place Royale.

Although it was such a large city, turn-of-the-seventeenth-century Paris was still medieval in character, fortified with a ring of ten miles of walls and full of labyrinthine streets.\textsuperscript{105} The city had only two public squares—the Place de Greve and the parvis of Notre Dame. Neither of these approximated the popularity of the promenade in the Cours la Reine, an elm-tree-lined axial parkway extending west from the Tuileries along the Seine, and a derivative, influenced by Marie de Medici, of the Florentine Cascine.\textsuperscript{106} Smart Parisians were said to be crazy about the Cours (which was located alongside the Jardin des Tuileries), apparently because of the pomp, the view of the Seine, and the opportunities to see and to be seen. Girouard records that on the occasions when the King himself came out, carriages might number in the thousands and be jammed immovably from head to tail.\textsuperscript{107} This is significant in establishing the French taste for choreographed urban

\textsuperscript{105} Ranum, op. cit., p. 9.
\textsuperscript{106} The name Cours la Reine survives but is attached to a riverside high road that runs nearly a mile along the Seine by where the Grand and Petit Palaia now stand.
\textsuperscript{107} Girouard, op. cit., pp. 166-7.
space as well as for arguing the timeliness of the decision to build the first
*Place Royale*.

A. E. J. Morris emphasizes that Henri's structuring of a formal
residential square in the Marais was a viable way to make the aristocracy
support the monarchy. The idea was to unify and conquer: by bringing the
galaxy of petty princes together, Henri diminished the chance that they would
oppose him, and he made their collective presence a part of the pageantry of
the court.  

*Place Royale* (now the Place des Vosges) was begun in 1603, situated
near but not at the major intersections of the east-west running rue St.
Antoine, the rue des Tournelles and the rue St. Louis (also known as the rue
de Turenne). Louis Hautecoeur claimed that Claude Chastillon liked to take
credit for the design of the space, but that it was probably the work of Louis
Metezeau.  

Both Louis' father Thibault, and his younger brother Clement
were "architectes du roi" before and after Louis. Probably after having seen
Louis' drawings for the *Place Royale* in Paris, the youngest Metezeau designed
the Place Ducale at Charleville, on which work began in 1608.  

It bears a
close resemblance both architecturally and spatially to its Parisian cousin.

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Extant French precedents to which Chastillon or Louis Metezeau might have referred were the aforementioned Place Ducale at Vitry-le-François,111 and the newly built Place Dauphine. The fact that there were so few French squares with similar spatial concepts is evidence that the designer of the first Place Royale was versed in the Italian examples before him, or at least that he had the direct input of the Italian-born Queen.

Henri had the insight and Marie had the will to publicly guide the private development of the Place Royale. Together with their financial advisors they conceived of a plan whereby the infrastructure for the Place was implemented at the expense of the crown.112 Parcels of land around the future square were then sold to private developers, most often noblemen themselves, or possibly members of the haute bourgeoisie. Their agreements stipulated that the actual process of building had to be undertaken immediately upon tendering the sale, and that any facade on the square must conform to the standard design established by the King's architect.

The idea of a centralized authority's controlling the private sector expansion of an urban area was not new. As early as the 1480's in the neighborhoods around St. Peter's in Rome, development was strongly encouraged, as long as it was upscale. Owners of derelict buildings were required by law to sell to anyone proposing to upgrade the quality and value of a site. By the middle of the sixteenth century the privilege of this version of eminent domain was limited exclusively to those who intended to build

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111 Dennis, op. cit., p. 6.
112 This included importing and lodging foreign builders and craftsmen who actually built the Place Royale.
splendid houses which would embellish the quarter. It would seem likely that Henri IV was aware of the earlier success in Rome of this approach. He modified it to suit his needs by installing an infrastructure and imposing code-like guidelines to building in the Place Royale.

The silk manufactory that was previewed in the sixteenth century was actually built without the planned accompanying workers' housing. Once the idea of bringing the nobility to the Place Royale seemed viable however, Henri had no trouble in having it demolished, making way for a socially upgraded commercial-free version. The space, which is almost square measuring approximately 416 feet by 460 feet, was surrounded by thirty-six unified buildings, each distinguished by its own "proto-Mansard" roof and three stories. Vestigial arcades survived without the shops, clearly a concession to maintaining the overall unity of the space. Their presence cutting into the ground floor of the surrounding houses prevented the opportunity for any residence to have an imposing entrance that might distract from the pavilions of the King and Queen on the south and north. Girouard describes the Place as though it were the setting for a royal tournament or pageant, with King and Queen in pavilions of honor, which had been turned into permanent architectural forms.

Because the Place Royale was conceived of as an aristocratic residential quarter, carriages entered only along the northern boundary, on what is known today as the rue du Pas de la Mule, parallel to and north of the rue

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113 Girouard, op. cit., p. 116.
Saint Antoine. The inner esplanade encircled by the road was originally paved in gravel but was planted with grass in 1663. Access originally belonged only to house owners,\textsuperscript{115} but was probably granted to the public in 1639 after the statue of Louis XIII was erected.

The development of the \textit{Place Royale} went so well that it inspired the team of Henri IV, Sully, and Marie to plan similar programs for several other \textit{Places} in Paris. Even though he had no part in their actual execution (which took place in the reign of Louis XIV), Henri envisioned before 1610 that the Place des Victoires and the Place Vendome specifically, would be developed along lines similar to the \textit{Place Royale}.\textsuperscript{116} Whether there were enough monied or interested nobles who would be in a position to flock to the newest \textit{Places} was apparently not an issue.

Henri's untimely death left Marie to rule during the regency of their son Louis XIII. Regrettably for the direction of public works projects she dismissed Sully, for whom Marie is reported to have had animosity since her arrival in 1600 to a scantily furnished Louvre.\textsuperscript{117} His departure gave her carte blanche to spend liberally the money over which Henri had gained control when he married her. Much of that lavish spending went toward honoring the memory of her husband, which she accomplished by continuing his building programs and erecting a statue of him. During the

\textsuperscript{115} Benevolo, Volume II, op. cit., p. 699.
\textsuperscript{117} Ranum, op. cit., p. 91. The author elaborates on this animosity between Marie and Sully, suggesting that the two disagreed on the renovation of apartments and the expansion of new galleries in the Louvre.
period of her authority, there were two lateral squares envisioned—the Place d'Alliance and the enhanced Place de Grève—to anchor the *Place Royale* and give it command over the new parts of Paris.118 Marie deserves acknowledgement for continuing to lay the groundwork for other *Places* in Paris, which are no less spectacular for their time than the interventions of Haussmann.119

The very proposition of a sculpture to honor a living monarch was unprecedented in France. Recall that from 1602 to 1608 the sculptor Giambologna was under commission to execute an equestrian statue of Marie de Medici's uncle Ferdinand de Medici. Her uncle graciously agreed to put Marie's wishes for a statue of the French king ahead of his own. Giambologna died in 1608 without having cast the sculpture. It was not until 1614 when an alternative piece, the work of Pietro Tacca, was sent to Paris and installed at the Pont-Neuf. The French had previously embellished tombs and porches with equestrian statues, but this posthumously placed bronze of Henri IV was the first in the long series announcing the apotheosis of the sovereign.120

With Louis XIII's majority and his assumption of responsibility from his mother there was a slackening off of royal urban design projects. Nonetheless, it was during his reign that the final mark was made on the *Place Royale*. Long before Louis XIII was born, Catherine de Medici had

120 Hautecoeur, op. cit., p. 300.
solicited her brother Francesco to release Daniele da Volterra to sculpt her husband Henri II. He refused, and Giambologna was denied the opportunity to execute a design that was believed to be by Michelangelo.\footnote{121} In 1622 the riderless horse was brought to Paris by Cardinal Richelieu, where the sculptor Pierre Briard made a likeness of Louis XIII. The piece was not erected until 7 September 1639, the twenty-ninth birthday of Louis XIII. Originally intended as a likeness of Henri II, who was killed in a jousting match on the site and had been succeeded by five kings as of 1639, the sculpture upon installation was a tribute to and likeness of Louis XIII. The aforementioned transition in attitude toward the sovereign was here substantiated by the fact that in the \textit{Place Royale} of the deceased Henri IV, a statue glorified the \textit{living} monarch, Louis XIII. What mattered was obviously not who was king but that there was a king. The institution of the King, always receptive to further justification, seemed to get just that in the completion of the \textit{Place Royale} with its statue of the sovereign.

Two signs that Henri IV's and Marie's intentions in transforming Paris were accomplished is that by mid-seventeenth century writers expressed amazement at how fast the city was changing, and they began to compare the city to ancient capitals. The poet Pierre Corneille wrote in 1643 in \textit{Le Menteur}:

\begin{quote}
'Paris semble a mes yeux un pays de roman; 
J'y croyais ce matin voir une ile enchantée 
Je la laissai déserte et la trouve habitee.
(Paris looks to me like a land out of a novel; 
Only recently I believed that it was an enchanted island
\end{quote}

\footnote{121} Avery, op. cit., p. 159.
That I left desserted and now I find inhabited.)\textsuperscript{122}

In his 1652 book \textit{De l'Antiquite, grandeur, richesses, gouvernement de la ville de Paris}, Jacques Gomboust called Paris a "miniature world" and asserted that even when the court was at Versailles, the city remained its diametrical opposite, emblematic of the voice of the public in opposition to the absolutist monarch. If the whole city represented the people, then spaces such as the \textit{Place Dauphine}, the \textit{Place Royale}, and the \textit{Place desVictoires} represented the mark of the monarch on the people.

\textbf{Place Royale, Paris}

\textsuperscript{21} Drawing by Mathie Merian showing the inauguration of the Place Royale in April of 1612. Reprinted from Robert Cameron's \textit{Above Paris}, 1984.

\textsuperscript{122} Benevolo, Volume II, p. 704.
CONTINUED RATIONALIZATION OF FRENCH ARCHITECTURE

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were marked by the undisputed cultural hegemony of France. Absolutist monarchial intentions were the dominant but not the only influences on the continuing rationalization of the country's architecture and urbanism. Advances in military engineering, specifically in designing bastions, inevitably resulted in Vauban's and his engineers' becoming urbanists. Whenever they were given their choice they preferred to arrange streets in a gridiron around a central square with a garrison church and a governor's hotel. They even detailed building setback lines and recommended heights of elevations according to the part of the city in question.\footnote{Christopher Duffy, The Fortress in the Age of Vauban and Frederick the Great 1660-1789 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), p. 74.} Engineers' skill at generating more accurate city plans meant that the city acquired a certain recognizability. It was available as never before to be used for the representation of political power, whether imagined or real.

Just as there were no sharply defined borders between city building and architecture, by the middle of the seventeenth century when the first Place Royale was being completed, there were none between architecture and decoration, between decoration and stage design, or between stage design and landscape architecture. This confluence of disciplines had begun with Serlio's depiction of the new baroque spatial perspective in a painted street scene in the theater, and the new city itself was in fact becoming an essay in formal scenic design. There is certainly room to dispute the claim of the skeptical
Modernist Lewis Mumford, who criticized what he termed "the typical baroque mind" for subordinating the contents of urban life to their outward form, rendering the city a backdrop for absolute power.124 As shall be discussed, Colbert would have liked to render Paris a backdrop for absolute power but Louis XIV, fearing his proximity to the people of Paris, forsook the French capital city with its Places Royales to establish his center of power at Versailles. There he instructed Le Nôtre to assert power over Nature, to make of the gardens a kind of city plan that represented a controlled environment for the centralized power of the Court. It seems as though it was initially much easier to attain uniformity of spatial enclosure in the design of gardens than in that of buildings. The landscape architect's pursuits first at Vaux-le-Vicomte and then at Versailles advanced the absolutist vocabulary of symmetry, axiality, uniform facades and the iconography that was explicit in the Places Royales.

The population of French cities grew rapidly throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Arlette Farge has asserted that most Parisians were poor, having arrived in the city destitute from the country.125 which left them with little choice but to find work immediately. In some cases, this move from the country to the city enabled people to join (albeit at the low, slow moving end) the ranks of the steadily growing bourgeoisie. This extruding of a middle class was a decisive move in the long struggle

125  Arlette Farge, Vivre Dans La Rue a Paris au XVIIIeme siecle (Paris: Editions Gallimard/Julliard, 1979), p. 22. Farge extracted from Parisian police records of a given period in the early eighteenth century that two-thirds of the people arrested for violating the royal injunction against being broke had just arrived in Paris from farms in the countryside.
between town and country that had been waged in Europe since the revival of urban production and trade in the eleventh century. The urban needs of this predominantly mercantile class required urgent attention; for the first time the King and ideologues saw urbanism as a vehicle to provide citizens with a better life, and in turn ensure their loyalty. Descartes contended that "la ville doit être œuvre non du hazard, mais de la raison et de la volonté humaine."126 This new society-in-the-making swelled with theoreticians and planners.

The promotion of the theory of architecture was part of the extended process of the secularization of culture. French theoreticians led the world in this search for a set of rules by which to govern architectural decision-making. Architecture like art and literature became a matter of public interest, in which the educated world had never been so thoroughly involved. To organize this theory of the arts, Colbert resorted to the system of academies which had already been successfully used in Italy. In 1671 he founded the Academie Royale d'Architecture where scholars were challenged to formulate an absolute architectural aesthetic, the mirror-image of an encompassing national-cultural absolutism.

Orest Ranum argues convincingly that there prevailed a conscious desire to make of Paris "La Nouvelle Rome," culturally, artistically, and urbanistically. Cardinal Mazarin, Nicholas Fouquet,127 and Colbert

127 Nicholas Fouquet was Minister of Finances to the young Louis XIV and patron of Vaux-le-Vicomte.
composed a triumvirate of the most powerful advisors to Louis XIV. Mazarin was chiefly responsible for introducing the cultural atmosphere of Rome to Paris. In the last nine years of his life he grew rich enough to acquire a palazzo in Rome, along with a formidable collection of paintings and sculpture which was brought to France upon his death.\textsuperscript{128} Mazarin exalted to a new level the issue of diplomacy and ambassadorial exchange.\textsuperscript{129} Like in Rome a century before, this evolution of a new type of ceremony necessitated a specific architectural setting. Mazarin's aesthetic interest in Roman culture and what he saw in Italy pervaded his every decision in modeling the trappings of French absolutism.

The death of Mazarin and the fall from grace of Fouquet cleared the way for the rise of Colbert who in turn orchestrated the rise in personal power of Louis XIV. Unlike his predecessor Mazarin, Colbert understood the value to an increasingly absolutist monarchy of controlling Paris. Moreover to Colbert, the end to which the arts had to be applied was the glorification of the King and the creation of a suitable setting for him. This makes his predilection for Roman culture easier to interpret than that of Mazarin. Although he was not the diletante "latinist" that Mazarin had been, he did read ancient writings in translations. He knew enough Latin that he was an indefatigable observer of engravings, statues, medallions, monuments and tomb inscriptions. Colbert stubbornly argued in favor of inscribing in Latin contemporary French monuments such as a triumphal arch intended to commemorate French losses in a war with Holland. This fixation with the

\textsuperscript{128} Raman, op. cit., pp. 297-8.
language of the ancient Romans, coupled with Colbert's knowledge of their monuments, inspired and challenged him as he set out to restore royal authority to Paris, to make it eclipse Rome as the greatest imperial capital of all time.130

From their Italian predecessors; French architects inherited improvements in building fortifications, the ability to generate more accurate plans, and the principles of ideal city planning, all of which shaped their concept of city building. This concept was sustained and augmented by French experiments in the design of the landscape and the refinement of architectural theory. It became the basis for the social, artistic, and above all political character of Paris and provincial capitals.131 The new configuration for the political Places was to unite the arts and the military in an expression, not of the authority of the church or the municipality, but of the authority of the absolutist monarch. 132 According to Mark Girouard the difference in French urbanism and that preceding it in Italian or Flemish cities was that the ideology of power always dominated the design decisions of the French. I refute his contention that there had occurred a transition of aesthetics from ornamental to absolute before the building of the first Places Royales.133 The transition of aesthetics to an expression of absolutism did not occur until the reign of Louis XIV during which time they were without exception symbolic first, and functional (a distant) second.

130 Ranum, op. cit., p. 299 and pp. 304-5.  
131 Argan, op. cit., p. 107.  
133 Girouard, op. cit., p. 125 and p. 137.
SATELLITES OF VERSAILLES

The *Places Royales* were an architectural testimony to the Grand Siecle of France, the ideal "aire symbolique" of the classical French city, as termed by Daniel Rabreau.\textsuperscript{134} Two prerequisites to understand in clarifying their position as paradigms of an absolutist type of public space are the prevalent attitude in the visual arts under the virtual dictatorship of Colbert, and the negative political impact of his successor Louvois.

"Le bon goût" referred to French artists' tempering the Italian Baroque, which Louis XIV admired for its exuberance and monumental scale, but which he could not wholeheartedly endorse, as it had been formulated to satisfy religious needs. The tradition of classicism that was by this time ingrained in the French prevailed against what Anthony Blunt calls "the more bizarre qualities" of the Italian Baroque.\textsuperscript{135} Since all of the great commissions were granted by the Crown or one of the Intendants, an efficient body who exercised the power of the King in the provinces, the standards of Paris and Versailles were imposed uniformly all over France.

Similar to how Pope Paul III had done a century before in Rome, Louis XIV (with the able assistance of Colbert) was intent on destroying opposition among the nobility to his autocratic ideals. One avenue through which he accomplished this end was by conducting his court amidst a relentless series


of ceremonies and rituals, which centered around Versailles. Being in or at
the court of Louis XIV was to participate in a spectacle, to play a part at once
dignified, important, and (it was hoped) entertaining to spectators. The
English surgeon Martin Lister marvelled in A Journey to Paris in 1698 at how
much Paris had changed in the last forty years of that century. He called the
Places "few but beautiful," and in describing what he saw of the court of Louis
XIV, recorded that "there are no people more fond of coming together, to see
or be seen." The style and manners of the Court were even imitated in countries
like Holland and England which were politically opposed to Louis XIV. Blunt
cites several reasons why the artistic relations between Paris and Rome began
to change: up until this time students went to Rome to study, and French
kings sought to attract the best Italian artists to their court. The fact that the
plans of Bernini, the greatest living Roman architect, were rejected in favor of
those of a Frenchman was one indication that French architects were now
considered sufficiently sophisticated in their own right. Le Brun's
appointment to the post of President of the Academy of St. Luke was
astonishing considering that he had not been to Rome in thirty years. As
Colbert had desired, Paris superceded Rome as the capital of the artistic world.

The rival and successor to Colbert, Louvois encouraged the reactionary
tendencies of the aging Louis who had grown increasingly unable to cope

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136 Girouard, op. cit., p. 170.
137 Martin Lister, A Journey to Paris in 1698 edited by Raymond Phineas Stearns (Urbana,
with opposition from ministers or subjects. In the short term the King's power grew yet more absolute, but opposition to his capricious style, on which the government of the entire country depended, could not be quelled. It is significant that Colbert had apparently felt no need to undertake the building of any new Places, but that in 1685, two years into the tenure of Louvois, work began (albeit by private interests) on the Place des Victoires and the Place Vendôme. Even more than had been the case in Vigevano, Florence, Rome, Sabbioneta, Turin, and Henri IV's Paris, the building of these spaces was the concerted use of architecture to strengthen what was (or equally importantly, what was feared to be) a faltering political profile.

The Place des Victoires was planned by the Duc de la Feuillade as what Blunt termed "an exaggerated piece of flattery to the King." Both it and the later Place Vendôme were designed by Mansart and were fraught with financial setbacks. The King once intended to house the Royal Library and the various academies in the Place Vendôme, but it was eventually ceded to the City of Paris with the stipulation that the authorities erect the facade as planned by Mansart. In the same way that Henri IV's Place Royale was built, they could then sell the plots behind the facade to private interests to develop as they wished.

Both Places were envisioned to contain statues of the King. The sculpture for the Place des Victoires, by Desjardins, reputedly pleased Louis XIV so much that the Duc de la Feuillade gave it to him and commissioned another one for the space.139 Lister wrote that the sculptor Girardon worked

139 Blunt, op. cit., p. 367.
regularly for ten years on the bronze that was erected in the Place Vendôme. Lister was sympathetic to the French taste for architectural forms from antiquity, but laughed derisively at the statue of the King in the habit of a Roman Emperor with a French periwig on his head. Calling this costume "no more than the weak fancy of the people," he thought it ironic that Louis XIV would be dressed to lead any army, Roman or contemporary.\textsuperscript{140}

Recall that these sculptures were among the first to have been commissioned of a living, ruling monarch and to be erected during his reign in France. The incisive physician-writer Lister struck at the heart of the French obsession, not only with finding legitimacy via classical models, but with establishing an overriding legitimacy through the image of the Sun King. Placing these statues in the center of exquisitely set stages became the sacred raison d'être for the stages. There is no mistaking that these were stage sets first, and not public works projects. To emphasize any other functional consideration for the spaces would have been heretical. The Parisian Places and their later provincial counterparts were the city altars in a society where the King intended to supercede the Church in authority.

Louis XIV did not die until 1715, but the turn of the eighteenth century coincided with the end of an epoch. Kalnein and Levey record that the King himself had grown weary of the pomp of Versailles, and that he spent most of his time at the Trianon and Marly. He left the few remaining royal building projects exclusively in the hands of the Service des Bâtiments du Roi. As

\textsuperscript{140} Lister, op. cit., pp. 28-9. He was complimentary of the statues of Henri IV at the Pont Neuf and Louis XIII in the Place Royale because they represented the Kings clothed in contemporary garments.
shall be explained, royal architects in turn devoted themselves more and more to private practice, a tendency that continued throughout the regency and the early years of the reign of Louis XV, since early on he demonstrated little interest in building.

The Dauphin was five years old when he assumed the throne. It seems likely that the country was relieved to be rid of Louis XIV, but the years of the regency of Louis XV were tumultuous, characterized by the financial operations of the Scotsman John Law. Based on the state taxation system, it was intended to restore national finances; however after a brief period of successes it ended in a crash. The system left some penniless, others extremely fortunate.

These nouveaux riches married into the aristocracy and were enthusiastic about displaying their wealth. The control of the arts shifted from the Crown to this new hybrid class of haute bourgeoisie. At every level of detail, from interior decoration to urbanism, the focus turned to accommodating the ideal dwelling of this new ruling class: a private mansion in an exclusive suburb such as the newly created Faubourg St. Honoré in Paris. Subsequent town planning activities, specifically the Places Royales in Paris and the provinces, functioned dually. They promoted the bourgeois standard of living with the gentrification of surrounding quarters while reaffirming the authority of the King with the installation of his image in bronze.

142 Kalnein and Levey, op. cit., p. 236.
Well after Louis XV assumed responsibility for the affairs of state, authority for the arts remained with the bourgeoisie who, because of its new, relatively insecure status, was preoccupied with the issue of taste. Kalnein and Levey assert that "nowhere else was such importance attached to taste, which now superceded Vitruvius and Palladio as the mark of the new age." By this time the "grand goût" was exercised only in public buildings such as those surrounding Places Royales. It was distinguished by its continued adherence to classical dictates from the predilections in private buildings, whose plans were a long way from having any classical ambitions.

A question remaining then, is why thirty years after the completion of the Place Vendôme, under a new monarch and in an era with an ostensibly much more relaxed spirit, did provincial capitals undertake to build their own Places Royales? As previously stated, the wealth and numbers of the bourgeoisie rose to unprecedented levels during the early reign of Louis XV. Probably for the first time, private building exceeded public building. The reintroduction, after thirty years, of city building projects in the form of Places Royales signified a the will of the Crown to symbolically reiterate its preeminence over the steadily growing, increasingly powerful bourgeoisie.

There were two channels through which the Crown never ceased to exercise control over cities. One was by installing in as many provincial capitals as possible an Intendant, a person in charge of the public works of the

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143 Kalnein and Levey, op. cit., p. 238.
144 Kalnein and Levey write that ground plans in bourgeois houses were extremely flexible, incorporating geometrical shapes of every kind—circles, octagons, ellipses, and trapeziums.
region. Essentially he acted as prefect, controlled the city finances, and could be trusted to represent the King's interests. If it was not politically expedient to have an Intendant in a provincial city, Louis ensured that he had some other sympathetic figure, for example the nephew of Jules Hardouin Mansart (in Chateaudun) or the King's own father-in-law (in Nancy). The other method of control was by supervising the accumulation of a body of theory on urbanism. As shall be explored, stalwart theorists in service to the Crown were hardly creative. They mocked experimenters and innovators as though in the dictates of good taste there was no room for geniuses.

With the control by Intendants and theorists on the issue of urbanism, it is preposterous that Louis Hautecoeur's analysis would ignore the complex political environment of the eighteenth century. He has preferred instead to term it "un siècle republicain" devoted to public works for the well being of citizens. The lack of interpretation of the political history of this period is indicative of the formalist attitude taken by most architectural historians.

The theoretician-architect most closely associated with French Places Royales was Pierre Patte. A devoted student of Blondel, Pierre Patte shared his teacher's concern for urban issues above those of mere decoration. In Monumens, Patte praised the enormous amount of building undertaken in the reign of Louis XV for two seemingly paradoxical reasons. He recognized that their existence implied an amelioration in the overall standard of living

for city dwellers, and he advocated the use of architecture to express the absolute authority of the monarch.

Patte's theory of the city as a body in varying states of disease and sickness cast the architect as a social redeemer, whose designs were now instruments of social change.\textsuperscript{147} He therefore distinguished the urbanism that included the \textit{Places Royales} as responsible for improving the quality of life of even the average city dweller.

Whereas the five \textit{Places Royales} in Paris\textsuperscript{148} really only implied "spot renewal" in an ongoing stream of urbanism, those in the provincial cities leveraged all of the urban renovation there. Each one constituted a "noyau central d'embellissements" (a kernel of embellishments) the influence of which extended to the entire city and served as a pretext for a large scale operation of urbanism.\textsuperscript{149} Each provincial \textit{Place} stood out in contrast to the surrounding city fabric, forming a buckle which linked or separated different quarters of the city.\textsuperscript{150} The urban population of France was the largest in sheer numbers of that in any European nation, and France was becoming an urban nation. Consequently urbanism became an important and even fashionable social issue, as evidenced by Patte's assertion in describing the monuments of a city: "On cesse d'envisager les objets en maçon pour les

\textsuperscript{147} Anthony Vidler, 1978, op. cit., p. 39.
\textsuperscript{148} Henri IV's Place Dauphine, \textit{Place Royale} (now Place des Victoires, Louis XIII's Place Vendome, and Place Louis XV (now Place de la Concorde),
\textsuperscript{150} Thomas Joest and Claudine de Vaulchier, "Davioud et les places haussmanniennes," \textit{Monuments Historiques}, March/April 1982, p. 76.
considerer en philosophie." (One ceases to envision objects [monuments] in masonry in order to consider them philosophically.)

He apparently saw no inconsistency in the social reformer architect's using architecture to represent absolutist power. Patte, the sycophant, asserted that under Louis XV Paris was the modern equivalent of Athens and Rome, thereby borrowing the *umbilicus mundi* argument: "... Les Français peut passer a bien des egards, pour le peuple roi de L'Europe ..." (Loosely translated as "the French could easily be considered the master race of Europe.")\(^{151}\)

Having established that seventeenth century authors were incredulous at the speed with which Paris was changing, it is worth considering why he wrote a century later that no "edifice recommandable" outside the Palais des Tuilleries was built between the reigns of Francois Ier and Louis XIII.\(^ {152}\) It seems highly unlikely that he did not consider *Places Royales* "édifices recommandables," since his book *Monumens érigés à la gloire de Louis XV* was written largely to champion eighteenth century examples of them. Perhaps Patte took exception on specific architectural terms to the *Places* that were built before the reign of Louis XIV. Certainly during the century that he discounted, from 1547 to 1643, the royal coffers were consistently depleted for matters of war. This condition reduced the opportunities for building construction on a grand scale, but it is difficult to accept Patte's assessment when one recalls the chateaux of the Loire such as Chambord and

\(^{151}\) Patte, op. cit., p. 68.

Chenonçeaux, military new towns, and finally Henri IV's Place Royale. He wrote his rhetorically exaggerated claim in the shadow of Louis XV, in a declining post-Sun King France where the Crown clung tenaciously to the memory of its late seventeenth century grandeur. Not only did there seem to be the need to dominate the French bourgeoisie, around 1715 London had begun asserting its position in Europe, owing to its economic successes and its large population. Kalnein and Levey's were correct in reasoning that the Places Royales were the last Bourbons' perpetual monuments to themselves.\textsuperscript{153} Moreover, the building of the eighteenth century Places Royales and Patte's pedestalizing of them in writing were twilight efforts to assert the continued primacy of the French myth of power.

Patte's unifying argument for his social reform ideals and the representation of absolute authority came with his belief that Places Royales were repositories for statues to honor monarchs for accomplishments past: he contended that great men glorify the state and in turn should be recognized, because this elevates the souls of the citizens.\textsuperscript{154} The most valuable contributions of Patte's Monumens are then the lovingly painstaking descriptions and drawings of the Places, all dedicated to the glory of Louis XV and in turn to the French people.

His collection was by no means exhaustive, but its examples demonstrate that eighteenth century Places Royales or "satellites of Versailles" were the last and most formulaic models in a three-hundred-year

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[153] Kalnein and Levey, op. cit., p. 273.
\item[154] Patte op. cit., p. 71.
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evolution of urban space into an absolutist type. This will be substantiated by examining cases, according to criteria similar to those used to study the Italian piazzas, in the three provincial cities of Bordeaux, Rouen, and Nancy. Just like the Italian city states, the three provincial capitals were vastly different in origin, organization, and purpose, but each one satisfied its own desires for identity within the kingdom by adapting the Place Royale, the "mark of the monarch," which in turn implied the hierarchy and reminded the world of the absolutist order at the center.

PLACE ROYALE, BORDEAUX, 1728-1755

Patronage. As of 1700, Bordeaux was still effectively a medieval city (as were most provincial French cities), separated from the river Garonne by its own walls. Although the "style Louis XIV" was on the wane, the earlier mentioned "grand goût" had trickled down into the provinces and was firmly ensconced there. François-Georges Pariset records that as early as 1688, this attention to the "grand goût" had precipitated discussion on constructing a Place to honor Louis XIV, but officials never decided on a site and the issue was dropped.

In 1720, the King named Claude Boucher to the prestigious post of intendant, the regional official most closely allied with the the Crown. Boucher proposed in 1726 to the Parlement de Bordeaux the idea of regularizing the buildings at the Quai de la Douane for the purpose of making

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155 Rabreau, op. cit., p. 51.
156 Kalnein and Levey, op. cit., p. 238.
a space regal enough to contain an equestrian statue of the young King Louis XV. Boucher and the architect, Héricé, conceived of the first plan for the Place Royale at Bordeaux, which some historians report was a half oval, others a semi-circle.\textsuperscript{158} They did not propose to relate the Place formally to the Garonne. On 24 February 1728, work was authorized to begin according to their plans, only to be ordered halted in September of that year. The Parlement protested presumably because architects "closer to the King" had not been consulted. Thereafter Boucher ceded the responsibility for the design and became the patron representative on behalf of Louis XV.

Officials then solicited the opinion of Robert de Cotte, the brother-in-law and immediate successor of Mansart to the post of Premier Architecte. De Cotte criticized Héricé's scheme for its mean proportions, and enlarged the space to its actual dimensions to accommodate circulation. He also broached the subject of relating the Place to the Garonne, in keeping with Vitruvian recommendations about open spaces' giving onto rivers. De Cotte proposed his idea for a scheme not unlike the Place des Victoires, in which he envisioned three stories: a "foundation" of arcades for the rez-de-chaussée, which would support a piano nobile, crowned by an attic. The two upper stories would be unified by colossal ionic pilasters. De Cotte was also the first to repropose for a public works project a flat roof "à l'italien," complete with a balustrade and vases, in a period when the Mansard roof had become synonymous with monumental French buildings.

\textsuperscript{158} Hautecoeur called the first scheme a half oval, Kalnein and Levey referred to it as a semicircle.
The following year Louis XV charged Jacques Gabriel (who was aspiring to the post of Premier Architecte, held by his aging cousin, J. H. Mansart) with resolving the design issues. Believing that a spectacular design for the Place Royale might secure the coveted post, Gabriel came to Bordeaux on 19 May 1729 and deftly related the new Place along the Garonne to the city's unplanned street pattern. Not normally inclined to experiment, he advocated the half-octagon plan that had been successful in the Place Vendôme. It is not surprising that he added the Mansard roof that De Cotte had omitted. Two other of Gabriel's proposals were never realized: after Vitruvian recommendations, he advocated erecting a triumphal arch to relate the city to the Quai de la Garonne, and a bridge which would have replaced in plan the small pavilion at the center of the Place.

Period for Completion. The construction of Gabriel's scheme began in 1731 under the supervision of André Portier. Hautecoeur and Kalnein differ slightly in their accounts of exactly when the Hôtels were finished, but it seems likely that only the Hôtel des Fermes was completed by the time that Gabriel died in 1741. His son Ange-Jacques Gabriel assumed responsibility for his projects, and fourteen years later in 1755 the center pavilion and last building of the project was complete. Parenthetical to this period of construction, the elder Gabriel approached Lemoyne, sculptor of the Académie Royale, on behalf of the Bordelais about the design of the

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161 Hautecoeur, op. cit., pp. 482-3.
equestrian statue that was to become the heart of the composition. The statue was begun in 1733 during the service of Boucher and was dedicated in August 1743, less than a month after de Tourny had assumed the office of Intendant.162

The unblemished splendor of the Place Royale was amazingly short lived. In spite of the fact that it was unfathomable that design concessions would be made in order for the space to double as a marketplace, just as construction on the central pavilion was being completed in 1755, Intendant Robert de Tourny authorized the construction of temporary boutiques in the Place. It is not known to what interests he was conceding, but this measure lasted for eighteen years until 1773, when the Council d'Etat authorized that they be built as permanent structures surrounding the statue of Louis XV. 163

Design Conception. Unlike seventeenth century Parisian predecessors, which were often isolated from the city as much as possible, eighteenth century provincial Places Royales were well integrated with the city's streets. Gabriel's plan for relating the Place to the Garonne stipulated that the façades of the principal buildings, the Hôtel des Fermes (now the Hôtel de la Douane) and the Hôtel de la Bourse, be set at the perimeter of the former city wall. It was as though the Place was a set of outstretched arms toward the river from that ancient wall. The Place was anchored by the "avant corps," slightly advancing end bays of the two hôtels at the left and right of the Place nearest the river. There were private residences in the remainder of the buildings.

163 Pariset, op.cit., p. 553.
On either side of the central pavilion ran two diverging streets—the rue Royale and the rue Saint-Remy. Subtly set back into the city, the facade of the pavilion mirrored the hôtels up near the Garonne. Its position as a jewel in the crown best enabled the Place to relate to Bordeaux’s ungridded street system.

While De Cotte’s specific plans for the Place were not enacted, his intentions for the elevations clearly influenced the realized scheme. This classically inspired way of organizing buildings vertically came to be synonymous with the Places Royales. A colossal order of two-story ionic pilasters sat atop a one story base, all of which were crowned by a balustrade supporting trophies and vases. The base was articulated by arches which framed pairs of vertically stacked windows instead of occupiable loggias. They were absent lest there be any doubt that the first function of the space was to glorify the monarch.

Triangular pediments topped the two hôtels and the central pavilion. The Hôtel de Fermes had two, which bore the work of the sculptors Verberckt and Van der Woort, winners of first prize at the Académie Royale de Peinture et Sculture in 1728.¹⁶⁴ Minerva, protectress of the arts, looked into the Place and Mercury, protector of commerce on the Garonne, faced the river. The Hôtel de la Bourse featured a bas-relief entitled "le grandeur des Princes" on the side of the Place. Looking out to the river sat Neptune, also a protector of

¹⁶⁴ Hautecoeur, op. cit., p. 483 and Pariset, op. cit., p. 545. Pariset further recorded that Gabriel passed over local sculptors in favor of Verberckt and Van der Woort, both natives of Anvers. Gabriel held them in high esteem because they had worked with him at Versailles, they had won first prize at the Académie, and because they had studied in Italy.
commerce. Finally the bas-relief on the side of the Hôtel opposite the Place but facing the Château Trompette expressed "La Libéralité." Patte considered these classically disposed bas-reliefs justifiably grand and of the utmost necessity to enhance the intent of the Place.

Three lanterns sat atop Gabriel's mansard roof, above the avant-corps of the hôtels and the central pavilion. As no Place Royale would ever have included a church among its member buildings, perhaps these lanterns replaced bell towers in the similar way that they embellished the space.

**Geometry.** The plan measured 360 by 300 feet with forty-five-degree champhored corners at the northeast and southwest. The long edge of the space paralleled the Garonne. As previously stated, the footprint was a half octagon, resembling composition of the Collège des Quatre Nations or half of the Place Vendôme. Gabriel used one bay size of 10 feet 6 inches throughout the project. The dimensions of the standard arch were 7 feet 6 inches wide by 15 feet high. The colossal orders were 27 feet 6 inches, whereas the height of the entire building was 55 feet. As shall be demonstrated, these dimensions took on canonical significance since they were repeated not only in the designs for the Places Royales in Rouen and Nancy but in all of the ones described by Patte.

**Proportions.** The sides of the plan were in ratio 5:6, or slightly longer than the Vitruvian recommendation of 2:3. The ratio of the height of the

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166 The eighteenth century unit of measure was a "toise," equal to six feet. In this discussion dimensions will be stated in feet.
base to the height of the building (including the balustrade but not the roof) was 1:3. The ratio of the height of the colossal order to the height of the entire building was 1:2, and the ratio of the width to the height of the arches in the base was also 1:2. These and many other proportions appeared repeatedly in \textit{Places Royales}, a fact which substantiates that after initial considerations, empirical conditions impacted the overall design very little.

The governing taste dictated the concepts of "convenience," the right relation of the parts of a building to one another and to their purpose, and "bienséance," the right relation of the purpose of a building to its form.\textsuperscript{167} The fact that it was believed that there existed the right relation between building parts and between buildings and their purposes completely dictated architects' thinking and controlled their output.

\textbf{Statue of the King.} The raison d'être for the entire project was to provide a suitably noble space in which to feature a bronze equestrian statue of Louis XV. It was true that Bordeaux was a prosperous commercial center. Boucher, one of several Intendants in service to the Crown, recognized the potential power in spearheading the move to erect a statue of the King in a provincial capital. He could capitalize on the city's desire to affirm itself in order to advance his own position and ultimately that of the King.

The first stone of the pedestal was laid on 8 August 1733, amidst great fanfare including several maneuvers of musketry and canons. The cornerstone contained a lead case which housed a cedar box lined in blue

\textsuperscript{167} Kalnein and Levey, op. cit., p. 238.
satin and ornamented with golden braid. Both boxes were constructed to house six medallions, one gold and five silver, struck to commemorate the occasion. Each of the coins depicted the statue of the King on its pedestal with the legend "Civitas Burdigal. Optimo Principi. M.DCC.XXIII." on one side. The other side of all six coins bore a perspective view of the envisioned Place with the words "Praesidium et Decus" around the edge. Each of the six coins bore the names of one of the six men or groups responsible for the project: Boucher the Intendant, the Sous-Maire, the Jurats, the Procureur-Syndic, the Secretaire de la Ville, and the architect.

Lemoyne had agreed to complete in four years a bronze equestrian statue of Louis XV, at a cost of 130,000 livres (francs). The commission came after a forty year hiatus in bronze casting equestrian statues. Germain Boffrand had passed on to Lemoyne the drawings from the casting of the statue in the Place Vendôme, but there was no replacing experience with theory. Already four years late in February 1739, the first attempt at casting failed miserably. It took two years to prepare to recast the sculpture. In July 1741 Lemoyne and his founder Varrin produced a piece which, although criticized by some because of the obvious bar holding the waving tail of the horse, was generally favorably regarded.168 Perhaps because it depicted a living monarch, Lemoyne imbued the piece with more vivacity than even its predecessor in the Campidoglio.

In spite of protestations over it by a courtier, Louis XV took a very personal interest in the piece, and even visited the foundry in the Roule

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168 Patte, op. cit., p. 140.
section of Paris where it was cast. Upon its completion in May 1743, he offered his personal ship for the transport to Bordeaux. The piece went on the Seine to Rouen where it was put on the "La Grive." The ship arrived on 12 July 1743 to a harbor that had been ordered empty in honor of the occasion. Twelve days later the statue was erected by the use of a machine that had been designed and built by Varrin.

The formal dedication of the statue took place on 19 August 1743, complete with trumpeteers, fireworks, and an unparalleled show of artillery. Louis XV attended the first pageant on Bordeaux's new stage for only about thirty minutes, but this did not dampen the celebrants' spirits. It is ironic that for this occasion and for the following twelve years, the statue of Louis XV, clad in the garb of a Roman Emperor, sat atop the unclad structure for its pedestal. Gabriel had envisioned a bronze base, but the new Intendant Tourny insisted on white marble which he finally obtained from Carrara. Coincident with the completion of the central pavilion, the pedestal was realized in 1755.

In keeping with the wishes of the long deceased Colbert the pedestal bore, in Latin, inscriptions on two sides offering to Louis XV the peacemaker this statue from the people of Bordeaux. The other two sides of the pedestal bore bas-reliefs which depicted the success of Louis XV in the Battle

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169 Kalnein and Levey, op. cit., p. 51 and Patte, op. cit., p. 139.
170 Patte recorded that a "procès-verbal" of the ceremony was prepared and sent to the King.
of Fontenoy, the most popular victory in his reign, and the Seizure of Port-
Mahon, which honored the current governor of the region, Richelieu.\textsuperscript{172} In
assessing the significance of the equestrian statue to asserting absolute
authority, it is helpful to know that prior to the reign of Louis XIII, it had not
been the custom for French kings to erect statues of themselves except at their
tombs. Nor had it been the custom for them to commemorate military
victories in bas-reliefs and paintings. To celebrate their successes, they sooner
founded religious organizations or made offerings to the Church that were
tributes both to their valor and their piety. Inasmuch as it was designed to
educate and inspire its viewers, the equestrian statue at Bordeaux had
replaced several Church icons.

\textbf{Spatial Analysis.} Contemporaries more objective than Patte heralded
its buildings, which both beckoned to the river and contained the space up to
it, as among the finest built during the reigns of Louis XIV and Louis XV.
The space, although not anchored by any axes, was distinguished because it
was nonetheless able to inlay itself gracefully and effectively in the fabric of
the city.

To the northeast of the Place on the other side of the Hôtel de la Bourse
the City planted an allée of trees which, while formally disposed, served as a
counterpoint to the rigidity of the \textit{Place}. The allée also supplied another
opening from the city to the Garonne. Recalling that Bordeaux was second
only after Rennes of provincial cities to build a \textit{Place Royale} suggests why it
was so physically localized, why this allée was not better integrated with the

\textsuperscript{172} Pariset, op. cit., p. 550.
space itself. With precedents on which to draw, subsequent architects used progressively more dramatic means to ensure the fit of their *Places* within the city. They incorporated allées more clearly into their designs, and they experimented with axes and gardens, all of which strengthened the demeanor and the implied political commentary of the spaces.

25. Elevation of the Place Royale onto the Garonne. Reprinted from Pierre Patte's *Monumens érigés à la gloire de Louis XV*, 1765.
PLACE ROYALE, ROUEN, 1749-1804

Patronage. By the middle of the eighteenth century Rennes, Bordeaux, Orleans, Reims and Nancy had major urban renovations completed or underway. Of these cities, only in Orleans had the works not initiated from the building of a Place Royale dedicated to Louis XV. Even in Paris, there were plans in progress for the Place Louis XV (now the Place de la Concorde) to honor the King. Its size and its dramatic position along the Seine suggest that it was intended to eclipse the Place Vendôme, which had been dedicated to Louis XIV. The success of these projects in urbanistic terms, Louis XV's personal enthusiasm for them, and the fact that the city of Rouen was bursting forth from its ramparts surely prejudiced the people of that city to favor building a Place Royale.

No modernization or embellishments to the city had been made for over two hundred years, Rouen having been obliged to cope with wars of religion and the fact that the commercial center of gravity was changing from cities on inland waterways to those on sea lanes, i.e., Amsterdam, London, and Le Havre, and Bordeaux. This combination of factors rendered the city even more medieval in form than had been Bordeaux. in 1728.173

Also unlike in Bordeaux where the intendants Boucher and de Tourny were both instigators of issues of city design, in Rouen the intendants seem to have exercised comparatively little authority over the plan of the city. Depending on whether a region of the country was a Pays d'état or a Pays

d'élection, the authority of the intendant would vary. The region of Guyenne where Bordeaux was located was a Pays d'élection, which implied a more direct connection to the King and therefore that the Intendant had a greater degree of control over local matters. Normandy, on the other hand, was a Pays d'état, which accounted for the strength of Rouen's local government vis-à-vis a Crown-implanted intendant. This lack of a controlling figure with close ties to the King probably accounted further for why the city's plan and buildings had hardly changed at all since medieval times. Wherever applicable in his Monuments, Patte never failed to credit the Intendants, but in his account of the proceedings in Rouen, he named no Intendant in charge and mentioned only the "Magistrats Municipaux." as having had the authority to approve the plans for such a space.

Louis Hautecoeur credited the governor of Normandy and the duc de Luxembourg with deciding to relocate Rouen's Hôtel Dieu and the Hôtel de Ville, and to update the city's plan. The architect Matthieu Le Carpentier responded to the desires of his patrons with a proposal for a Place Royale. He suggested regularizing the Place du Vieux Marché which would give on to the Place Royale at its southeast corner,\(^\text{174}\) relating the new Place Royale to the existing Place de la Pucelle to the northwest via the angular rue Cochoise, and finally establishing an east-west axis between the Place Royale in the west and the cathedral in the east via the rue de la Grosse Horloge.\(^\text{175}\)

\(^{174}\) The Place du Vieux Marché was the site where Joan of Arc had been burned at the stake in 1492.

\(^{175}\) Hautecoeur, op. cit., pp. 496-7.
Period for Completion. Le Carpentier, formerly a student of Jacques Gabriel, probably had made a plan for the project as early as 1749. Sources vary as to when the Magistrats actually authorized that construction commence: Chirol reported that it was on 18 November 1756; Patte reported 3 April 1757.\textsuperscript{176} The first stone for the Hôtel de Ville was laid on 8 July 1758. Shortly thereafter work was interrupted, only to be resumed in 1779, six years after the death of Le Carpentier. The project was definitively abandoned in 1804. It is ironic that all of the best intentions of a distinguished architect were not as powerful as the will of a good Intendant.

Design Conception. Le Carpentier combined shrewd judgment with creativity in his design for what would have been another exquisite Place Royale. Unlike in Bordeaux or Nancy, it was not sited along the medieval wall in order to link old and new parts of the city. Instead, Patte explained that it was placed such that those who entered Rouen on the ordinary route from Paris would find themselves on an axis that terminated in front of the Hôtel de Ville.\textsuperscript{177} This move underscored the importance of the Place Royale and ensured that it would supercede both the Vieux Marché and the cathedral as the new symbolic center of town.

On the back of Hôtel de Ville off of the Place there were two north-extending arms which embraced a court that gave on to an allée. This promenade was bisected cross-axially by the Rue de la Ville Neuve. Its north end constituted the south side of the Place de Luxembourg, on which no

\textsuperscript{176} Pierre Chirol, \textit{Bulletin des Amis des Monuments Rouennais}, and Patte, op. cit., p. 179. \textsuperscript{177} Patte, op. cit., p. 178.
public buildings were envisioned. Instead, Le Carpentier probably projected that this western extension would be the basis for a new bourgeois neighborhood as in Paris and more recently Bordeaux. Although the Place de Luxembourg was essentially square and was bisected by streets on all four sides, a north-south directionality prevailed because of the promenade to the south and the Lieu de Santé to the north, fronted by its own circular tree-edged forecourt.\textsuperscript{178} In giving the Hôtel de Ville two fronts, Le Carpentier intended to double the possibilities of inlaying the \textit{Place Royale} in the old city fabric. Had it been built, such a scheme would likely have promoted growth both east and west of the Hôtel de Ville.

With minor variations, he employed the same colossal order of ionic pilasters atop a single story rusticated base that Gabriel had used at Bordeaux. The balustrade with which Gabriel had united the three sides of his Place was intended only for the Hôtel de Ville in Le Carpentier's scheme. Likewise none of the six secondary buildings (all intended to be private residences) on the Place had any avant-corps or triangular pediments: these elements were reserved exclusively for the Hôtel de Ville. Finally, the Hôtel was envisioned to have a dome topped by a campanile with a clock and an obelisk.

Patte's engravings suggest that relative to other \textit{Places Royales}, there would have been competition between the equestrian statue and the elevation of the Hôtel de Ville in the Rouenaise Place. Perhaps because there was no Hôtel de Ville in the Bordeaux scheme, there was no hierarchy to the buildings surrounding the space. Instead they were all equally subordinated

\textsuperscript{178} Hautecoeur, op. cit., pp. 496-498.
to the statue at the center. Thus the issues for Le Carpentier to balance were more complicated than they had been in Bordeaux. Normally it would be considered advantageous to impart hierarchy to the buildings in a space; however, in the case of a Place Royale that was intended to glorify the King with a statue at its center, it may have been more effective for the surrounding buildings to be as homogeneous as possible. As shall be discussed, the architecture of the Place in Nancy best balances this issue of hierarchy among the buildings with dominance of the statue.

Geometry. The plan measured 330 by 288 feet, with streets coming into the Place at three of the corners and the Place du Vieux Marché giving on to it at the fourth and southeast corner. The Hôtel de Ville occupied the entire west side looking toward the cathedral; streets bisected the other three sides of the space. The elevation of the Hôtel de Ville consisted of nineteen equal bays (of 10 feet 6 inches). Like their predecessors in Bordeaux, the arches were 7 feet 6 inches wide by 15 feet high. The colossal orders were 27 feet 6 inches tall, whereas the height of the entire building excluding the roof was 57 feet tall. The remaining three sides of six identical residential hôtels consisted of seven equal bays, and the streets that divided them were equivalent to three bays wide. Whereas the elevations in Bordeaux's Place Royale were extended along the river only, Le Carpentier proposed that the elevations on the Place be repeated along all of the incoming streets in either three, four, or seven bay increments to establish the approaching order to those entering the space.

Proportions. A review of the proportions used by Le Carpentier confirms that there was evolving an absolute aesthetic. The sides of the plan
were in approximately the same ratio as those of Bordeaux and Nancy, 5:6. One deviation in the plan from examples in Paris, Bordeaux and Nancy, however, was that Rouen's Place Royale was intended to be deeper than it was wide. Le Carpentier may have departed from the existing models in orienting the Place this way in order to minimize the necessary demolition on its north and south sides. Such a premise would have directed that the north-south dimension be the smallest.

The ratio of the height of the base to the height of the whole building (again, including the balustrade but not the roof) was 1:3, identical to the case in Bordeaux. The ratio of the height of the colossal order to the height of the whole building was slightly less than 1:2, also identical to the case in Bordeaux. Since Le Carpentier planned exactly the same sized bays and arches that Gabriel had used in Bordeaux, their proportions were also equal. Having been a student of Gabriel's, he had probably seen and was apparently influenced by the drawings for the Bordeaux scheme, which was under construction when he made his design for Rouen.

**Statue of the King.** Le Carpentier had plans and a model of the statue to accompany the plans for the Place, all of which the King personally reviewed and endorsed in 1757. To have been executed by Lemoyne, the design for the bronze was immediately distinguished for two reasons. Forsaking for the first time in France the garments of Roman antiquity, it represented Louis XV in a modern royal manteau. Moreover, rather than being on horseback, the King was to be depicted standing on the shields of

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179 Hautecoeur, op. cit., p. 498.
three soldiers who would kneel on the pedestal. Patte recorded that the
inscription on the pedestal, "Si non jus, eveheret amor," was deep in the
hearts of all Frenchmen. Le Carpentier must be credited for having made
the leap into the eighteenth century with regard to representing the monarch.
A King who had been termed peacemaker and who ruled absolutely would
have no need to affirm his potence via military imagery from ancient
historical sources.

Patte heralded the statue for its modernity and realism. He wrote that
no one would complain that the statue represented the King as a Greek or
Roman war hero, which strongly suggests that among his contemporaries
there was spoken opposition to the unchecked use of the imagery and
symbols of antiquity. Ironically he added that he hoped that the statue would
be executed soon after his writing (1765), and speculated that it would be since
France was in a time of peace.

Spatial Analysis. Kalnein and Levey cited the design for the Rouenaise
Place Royale as an important example of how the "grand goût" had
prevailed. It is true that there were strong reminiscences of Le Vau in Le
Carpentier's use of a stricter, more somber ornament, and as previously
mentioned some of the dimensions and all of the proportions of the
elevations were essentially identical to those in other Places Royales.

The hallmark of Le Carpentier's design was its plan. He proposed a
freestanding Hôtel de Ville with which he made not one but two Places, and

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180 Patte, op. cit., p. 181.
he did this without compromising the primacy of the Place Royale. If, as Christian Norbert-Schulz has contended, the identity of a settlement depends primarily on its figural character in relation to the landscape,\(^\text{182}\) then Le Carpentier's axis from the cathedral to the Hôtel de Ville and on west to the Place du Luxembourg would have boldly refigured the medieval profile of Rouen. By virtue of its ability to fit so securely in the existing city while opening up possibilities for future growth gave his proto-modern scheme implications that were much further reaching than those of Gabriel's scheme in Bordeaux.

27. Plan of Rouen showing the proposed relationship between the cathedral, the Place Royale, and the Place du Luxembourg. Reprinted from E.A. Gutkind's *International History of City Development, Volume V*, 1970.
29. Proposed Hôtel de Ville.
30. Proposed elevations for flanking buildings to the Hôtel de Ville. Both items are reprinted from Pierre Patte's *Monumens érigés en France à la gloire de Louis XV*, 1765.
PLACE ROYALE, NANCY, 1752-55

Patronage. Generally considered the supreme example of eighteenth century urban design, the Place Royale of Nancy was part of an ensemble of three Places that were the product of the two artistic minds Stanislas Leczinsky, the Duke of Lorraine, and Emmanuel Héré de Corny, the leading architect of the region. Kalnein and Levey have contended that the architecture of the first half of the eighteenth century can be characterized by its nostalgia for the grandeur of the age of Louis XIV.\textsuperscript{183} Indeed, Stanislas and Héré were significantly influenced by their predecessors. Nonetheless they must be credited with having synthesized and surpassed the designs of the best French urbanists. Only in the ensemble at Nancy did the French approach the perfect expression of absolutism in Michelangelo's Campidoglio.

Since a conflict between the dukes of Lorraine in 1633, Nancy had been divided into two parts, both of which were amply fortified until the walls were partially demolished in 1697.\textsuperscript{184} Prince Leopold and Germain Boffrand, Premier Architecte to Leopold as of 1711,\textsuperscript{185} made the first architectural gestures toward unifying the city, which included rebuilding the Louvre (the ducal palace) in the old town. Boffrand also designed and built the new Hôtel de Beauvau-Craon (1712-13), a mansion on the east side of the Place de la Carrière\textsuperscript{186} that ultimately determined both the building type and the

\textsuperscript{183} Kalnein and Levey, op. cit., p. 300.
\textsuperscript{184} Morris, op. cit., p. 169.
\textsuperscript{185} Kalnein and Levey, op. cit., p. 208.
\textsuperscript{186} Patte recorded that the Place de la Carrière was the site of a seventeenth century palace of the old order of Dukes of Lorraine.
elevational details of the designs by Stanislas and Héré. Just as Brunelleschi had done in the Piazza SS. Annunziata, Boffrand set the architectural standard for the Place Royale, although that space did not take form until mid century.

In 1737 Louis XV deftly took control of the City of Nancy from the Dukes of Lorraine and gave it to Stanislas, his father-in-law and exiled King of Poland. As was the case in Rouen, Lorraine was a Pays d'état, which meant essentially that the writ of the Crown was not as absolute as it could have been. The Intendant could exercise relatively little power over the affairs of the capital of the region, but by seating his father-in-law at the center of the local power structure, Louis XV ensured sympathy for the interests of the Crown. Patte credits Stanislas with having conceived of the scheme to ennoble the settings for public life in Nancy, partly out of a desire to endear the residents, who were probably understandably skeptical about their new ruler. His efforts were also a show of gratitude to his son-in-law Louis XV.

Period for completion. Reminiscent of the case in Vigevano, the design and construction of the Place Royale were accomplished in a remarkably short four years, from 1752 until 1755. Only Hautecoeur contradicts this time frame, alleging that the "Basses Faces," (literally the "low sides"), the one story buildings opposite the Hôtel de Ville and along the moat that divided the old and new cities of Nancy, were completed several

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years later. Such speed of execution was rare, even in France with its strong central authority. There were no extensive demolitions to effect, but more than ever, was reflective of the will of the patron and the complete cooperation of the attendant designers.

**Design conception.** At the beginning of this time the two towns were separated by a moat and connected by no more than a road passing under the site of Stanislas' future triumphal arch (reminiscent of the Arch of Severus). Stanislas and Héré skillfully used their design for a *Place Royale* to connect the old town of Nancy to the north, founded by the Dukes of Lorraine in the twelfth century, with the new town established by the Grand Duke Charles III of Lorraine. The *Place Royale* completed the procession south from Boffrand's *Place Carrière* (immediately north of the arch and across the moat). It is interesting to note that although the *Place Royale* was meant to link the old and new towns, it was actually built in the south or new town, to symbolize the shift of the center of gravity to that side. By building a *Place* and erecting a statue to Louis XV in the new town, Stanislas also symbolized the transmission of authority from the local government to the French monarch over this *Pays d'état*.

Stanislas had originally intended to offer the city a statue of Louis XV, only to conclude that there was no public place worthy of such an honor. By 1752, he and Héré, who had studied under Boffrand, conceived of a plan for a *Place Royale* in which to feature the statue. Similar to its predecessor *Place* in

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188 Hautecoeur, op. cit., p. 490.
189 Hautecoeur, op. cit., p. 276.
Bordeaux, the Nancy scheme was situated along the dilapidated fortress walls at the "fossés de la ville" (city moat) on the side of the new town of Nancy.

The plan also called for three sets of triumphal arches: the main set located on the north side of the moat from the Place Royale, and two others at the ends of the rue Stanislas and the rue Ste. Catherine, east-west running streets which bisected the sides of the Place Royale and were perpendicular to the moat. Plans for the two secondary arches were changed in 1761 to alternative "portes," the Porte Stanislas and the Porte Catherine.

The sculptor Jean Lamour designed and oversaw the execution of an entire system of guilded forged iron grilles which distinguished Nancy's Places from all others in France. Lest an architect's inclination be to disparage the idea that iron grilles could improve the organization of space, it is worth noting that Lamour's work probably better defines the Place Royale than does the architecture. The grilles were so integral to the concept because Stanislas and Héré consulted Lamour from the outset of the project, and because they were actually executed along with the buildings from 1752 to 1755, as opposed to being applied to them once the architecture had been completed.

There were curved iron fences at all four corners of the Place Royale. The two on the south admitted pedestrian and carriage traffic to the space, whereas the two on the north featured fountains that overlooked the moat. Similar examples outlined the allée that connected the Carrière to the Hémicycle. All of them were set on an eighteen inch plinth of stone and were punctuated by iron pilasters that were capped by guilded vases. The pilasters, which were adorned by laurel and palm branches and fleur de lys,
supported gilded coqs (the symbol of Louis XV) from whose beaks hung lanterns. On the lanterns were cartouches which read "S. M. T. C" ("Sa Majesté Tres Cretien"—his very Christian majesty). The coqs bearing lanterns symbolized the new beacon of authority of France over Lorraine.\(^{190}\)

The precocity of Lamour's contours reached its zenith in the bronze fountains on the north side of the Place. Neptune, the Roman god of the sea, trident in hand, guided a chariot of seahorses and was accompanied by Tritons, Nayades, Fleuves and Dragons, all of which sprayed water and formed a cascade which emptied into a huge basin.\(^{191}\) Perhaps these were intended to evoke the desire of the French to keep up with the English in their power over the seas.

On the south side of the Place stood the Hôtel de Ville. Héré's elevations were very similar to Gabriel's in Bordeaux and Le Carpentier's in Rouen. Atop the requisite rusticated base rose a colossal order of corinthian pilasters which framed first and second story windows. The arched first story windows were ornamented with Lamour's forged iron "banquettes," unoccupiable versions of the balconies on the avant-corps. The whole building was crowned by a balustrade with vases and groups of children. The building reflected the Italianate influence of Boffrand in that there was no mansard roof. Its ends were marked by avant-corps with a single window per floor, each supported by four pilasters. The center of the building was a three-bay avant-corps, the first story windows of which were embellished with the

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\(^{190}\) Hautecoeur, op. cit., p. 491.

\(^{191}\) Patte, op. cit., p. 159.
same balconies as on the end avant-corps. The coat of arms of Nancy appeared over the center window of the first floor with the motto "Non inultus premor" (translated as: []). There was also a clock ensconced in volutes that did not appear in Patte's engravings.\textsuperscript{192} The one pediment in the scheme crowns the central avant-corps and features two seated figures on either side of the coat of arms of the former King of Poland. It seems significant that Stanislas' emblem from Poland sat above the escutcheon for the city of Nancy.

The east side of the \textit{Place} contained the Hôtel des Fermes and the Hôtel de M. Alliot, a private residence. Opposite but identical in elevation to these Hôtels stood the Royal College of Physicians in one building, a comedy theater and the residence of a certain Sieur (Sire) Jacquet. These buildings were architecturally equivalent (even in the number of bays) to the segments of the Hôtel de Ville that were not avant-corps.

On the north side of the \textit{Place}, Héré masked the old ramparts and the moat with single story gallery buildings which were called the "Basses Faces." Patte claimed that these buildings were intended to house private residences,\textsuperscript{193} whereas Kalnein and Levey wrote that typical of the approaching Age of Enlightenment, they were planned to contain a cafe and reading room.\textsuperscript{194}

\textsuperscript{192} Hautecoeur, op. cit., p. 490. He does not cite the source of this information, but Hautecoeur's observation is true for the current Hôtel de Ville.
\textsuperscript{193} Patte, op. cit., p. 157.
\textsuperscript{194} Kalnein, op. cit., p. 276.
The focus of this north elevation was a triumphal arch that resembled the Arch of Severus. It was not in the same plane with the basses faces, but was actually extruded north to the location of the medieval wall. Héré acknowledged inspiration by the arch of San Gallo, erected in Florence between 1738 and 1745 by a fellow citizen of Lorraine, J. N. Jadot. The subtly trapezoidal plan of its flanking arcades accounted for the slight skew of the moat off of due east-west. This concession to empirical conditions was mediated visually by advancing the arch on the south side such that it alone was parallel to the north elevation of the Place.

The arch consisted of a pedestal out of which rose a colossal order of corinthian columns. These supported an attic which was adorned on the left and right with the medallion of the King. At left sat Louis XV, represented as Apollo, the Roman god of science and art, with the nine muses. The center contained a depiction of the union of Peace and Victory, and the right relief showed Louis XV successfully battling Discord. Above the bas-reliefs on the south side were four figures representing Abundance, Valor, Force and Wisdom whereas on the north side there was a balustrade and trophies. These sculptural tributes to the glory of Louis XV took on special significance in a province that had theretofore had a degree of independence from France.

On the west side of the Place de la Carrière, Héré erected a stock exchange that was identical in elevation to Boffrand's Hôtel de Craon of forty years earlier. Extending due north of the Place de la Carrière, the architect created a promenade lined with linden trees. Much longer than but

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195 Hautecoeur, op. cit., p. 493.
analogous to the one northeast of the Place Royale in Bordeaux, and the one that would have stretched west behind the Hôtel de Ville in Rouen, the allée attained a much more important position in the ensemble at Nancy. An open iron fence without gates defined and ornamented the space, and separated it from the roads on either side. Coveted town houses and private offices occupy the perimeter today, whereas in 1752 Héré adapted the Boffrand design for the Hôtel de Craon for government offices on the east side. He then followed Sangallo's precedent in Florence and Michelangelo's in Rome by mirroring the existing structure on the west side. The two buildings extended all the way to the north end of the Carrière.

In equilibrium with the Place Royale in the new town, Héré planned the Hémicycle to the north of the Carrière. Evocative of the Piazza of St. Peter's, the space was ringed by a péristyle which was pierced on its semicircular east and west ends to establish a cross-axis toward la Pépinière in the east and la Place St. Épure in the west. Boffrand's renovated Louvre (ducal palace) would have faced south onto the Hémicycle had it not been destroyed in 1749. In its place Héré designed the Palais de l'Intendance, the ground floor of which connects with the péristyle. The building had the same volume as the Hôtel de Ville, but the disposition of masses was different. Rather than being united by colossal pilasters, the upper stories were divided by an entablature that actually repeated the delineation made by the

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196 Patte wrote that Lamour also planned a fountain for the Hémicycle which for unknown reasons had not been erected as of 1765. The piece, which was never erected, was planned to go on the longitudinal axis but not along the longer axis of the Hémicycle. It was designed as an obelisk out of which sprang "Victories" which proclaimed the successful conquests of Louis XV.
balustrades on top of the colonnade. This organizing device clearly subordinated the building, making it appear attached to the space that was defined first.

Enclosed on all floors today, Patte's engravings reveal that the Palais was designed to be open at ground level to facilitate passage through to the garden to the north. Héré must have meant for his north-south axis to be perceived as extending infinitely. It began with the equestrian statue in the center of the Place Royale, passed through the ground floor of the Hôtel de l'Intendance. Finally, it stretched to the horizon beyond the garden.

Geometry. Identically to the Place Royale in Bordeaux, the one in Nancy measured 360 by 300 feet. It seems unlikely that there were empirical conditions which dictated that this space be precisely the same size as the one in Bordeaux, particularly since the Place was built at the site of partially demolished fortifications. All four of its corners were champhored at an angle of forty-five degrees.

The elevation of the Hôtel de Ville consisted of two avant-corps—one at either end, a three-bay avant-corps in the center and fourteen bays of 10 feet 6 inches each. Similarly also to the designs for Bordeaux, Nancy, et als., the colossal order had dimensions of 28 feet, and the height of the overall building was 59 feet. The four identical hôtels on the east and west sides consisted of seven identical bays each, just like the Palazzo dei Conservatori and the Palazzo Nuovo in the Campidoglio. The same elevations spilled

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197 Hautecoeur, op. cit., p. 494.
down the incoming streets to the Place in either one or three bay increments, both to establish the order and create a sense of depth to the buildings on the Place. Opposite it looking south were the Basses Faces of nine equal rusticated bays each.

The plan of the Place de la Carrière excluding the allée measured 180 by 204 feet. The identical buildings on the east and west sides of the Place de la Carrière consisted of fourteen bays each. One deviation from Gabriel's massing at Bordeaux for which Boffrand was responsible was the two entries in bays 6 and 9 of the central avant-corps of these buildings. Arcades on either side of the triumphal arch gave the south end of the Place a bay rhythm where the central bay was oversized. Including the allée which contained 134 trees (31 rows by 4), the entire Place de la Carrière measured 180 by 744 feet.

The Hémicycle was not an ellipse as Hautecoeur claimed, but a composite figure of a rectangle with semi-circles attached to its ends. The semi-circles had a radius of 60 feet and the rectangle had dimensions 120 by 168 feet. The total figure measured 288 by 120 feet. The semi-circular sections of the péristyle had thirteen bays each, and the Palais de l'Intendance was fifteen bays wide. Like the Hôtel de Ville it had avant-corps at its ends and in its middle. The primary functions of this building were to anchor the Hémicycle and to symbolize the authority of the King through the Intendant, as is evidenced by the facts that it was only three bays deep, and that the three bays on either end (or forty percent of the building) were consumed by stairs.

**Proportions.** Since it had the same dimensions, the plan of the Place Royale necessarily had the same proportions as the one in Bordeaux, 5:6. The
ratio of the height of the base to the height building was again 1:3. The height of the colossal corinthian order was slightly less than half of the height of the entire building, making their ratio 1:2, like in Bordeaux and Rouen. Stanislas and Héré used Boffrand's bay size in the Hôtel de Craon to inform their choice for the Hôtel de Ville and it was also the same bay size that Gabriel and Le Carpentier had used in Bordeaux and Rouen, respectively. The dimensions of the blind arches on the ground floor were in ratio identical to the ones in the other provincial Places Royales, 1:2

The ratio of the dimensions of the Place de la Carrière excluding the allée was slightly more than 5:6. Only with the addition of the allée and then the Hémicycle did Héré venture out of the proportions that had become formulaic for Places Royales. The proportions of the sides of the entire Place de la Carrière were 1:4. Since neither the proportions of the Place de la Carrière nor those of the Hémicycle approached the Vitruvian ideals, it seems that they were concessions to contextual factors.

The ratio of the dimensions of the Hémicycle was 2:5. Patte did not include drawings of the Palais de l'Intendance in his Monuments, but it is known from observation that Héré employed essentially the same proportions there as throughout the project. There was no colossal order dominating the three story Palais since, as Hautecoeur has pointed out, Héré reorganized the massing to account for the dominance of the péristyle at that end of the ensemble.

Statue of the King. If the earlier mentioned grilles, bas-reliefs and fountains alluded to the new relationship of France to Lorraine, it was
trumpeted in the statue of Louis XV at the center of the Place Royale. Kalnein and Levey have feebly reminded us that as long as Lorraine was technically independent of France, a statue to Louis XV was only "so appropriate." They either did not understand or chose not to recognize the implications of Stanislas' erecting this statue on behalf of Louis XV.

Stanislas entrusted the design for the statue to the King's sculptors Guibal and Chifflet. Although the King personally approved Le Carpentier's scheme for the statue at Rouen to depict him in contemporary clothing, the sculptors at Nancy elected to represent him dressed as a triumphant Roman with a royal robe around his shoulders. Perhaps this reflected the King's own wishes more than had Le Carpentier's scheme. Guiban and Chifflet did, however, design Louis standing rather than riding. A possible reason for the shift away from equestrian statues was that it exchanged the image of the military hero for that of the superhuman with god-like characteristics. The bronze figure of the King towered eleven feet four inches, and behind him at his feet there was a globe covered with fleur-de-lys. Also a symbol of France, the fleur-de-lys covering the globe symbolized the imagine d dominion of France over all of the earth. Louis' head was turned toward France and his right hand held a commanding baton pointing toward Germany, an obviously aggressive gesture.

Like the pedestal of the Bordelaise statue, the one in Nancy was of white marble from Carrara. It seems possible that there was reciprocal influence between the decisions of the Intendant de Tourny and Guibal and

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198 Kalnein and Levey, op. cit., p. 276.
Chifflet to use white marble, since both of the pedestals were completed in 1755, and since de Tourny was reported to be opposed to A. J. Gabriel on the use of bronze for that purpose.

Sitting on an octagonal plinth, the pedestal was square, with eight-feet-six-inch tall bronzes of females at its corners representing the royal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Valor and Clemency. Each of the four faces of the pedestal featured a bas-relief. There was the marriage of Louis XV to Marie, daughter of Stanislas, there was an allegorical description of the peace achieved at Vienna, there was a depiction of Louis' taking of Lorraine, and there was a likeness of the Académie des Sciences et Belles-Lettres of Nancy.199

The piece was finished in Lunéville on 15 July 1755 at a cost of 161,453 livres (francs). It was sent to Nancy where preparations were already underway for the dedication ceremonies that took place the following November. On the evening of 25 November a prayer was read for "his very Christian majesty" in the Primatial church. In that prayer, Louis was termed the "Rois des Rois" and the "Soutien de tous les Empires" (Keeper of All Empires). As the king of earthly kings, he deserved all of the glory afforded by the dedication of the statue. The following day Louis XV and Stanislas, who was now termed "Le Bienfaisant," appeared publicly at the Place Royale to witness a comedy in their honor, written by Palissot and Montenoy. The King attended a masquerade ball later in the day, at which time there was a medallion offered to him to commemorate the Place Royale of Nancy, which its patrons believed was the most glorious architectural tribute to him ever.

There followed in the late evening a fireworks show where, according to Patte, Counselors of the King threw pieces of silver from the windows of the Hôtel de Ville and the Neptune fountains sprayed wine. It was no accident that the implication of water's being turned into wine could be made on this day to honor the King of Kings.

Spatial Analysis. Although it was a positive influence on the plan, the Place Royale at Bordeaux was but a spot in the city, not linked to any axis, and the one in Rouen was contained within a segment of the city that was punctuated at its endpoints. The tripartite ensemble at Nancy had one closed end-point and an open end (the garden north of the Palais de l'Intendance). The arch, the layers of iron grilles and the open story at the Palais de l'Intendance actually identified each space but at the same time encouraged movement through them, allowing for a double reading of definition and flexibility.

It is obvious that Héré meant for this north-south axis to be perceived as extending infinitely. It began with the statue in the center of the Place Royale, passed through the ground floor of the Hôtel de l'Intendance, and became imperceptible beyond the garden. There was a downward change of grade at the north end of the garden, and its semicircular perimeter wall was pierced at its northernmost point. With the formal opposition of the Place Royale on the side of the new town and the Palais de l'Intendance on the side of the old one, Héré had brilliantly symbolized the two authorities (Stanislas and the Intendant) over the city. By extending the axis indefinitely through

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200 Patte, op. cit., p. 162 and p. 165.
the garden to the north, he had perfected the emblem of the limitless authority of the King, who himself now personally symbolized the ideal political order.

The retrospective viewer is tempted to conclude that the *Places Royales* (and to a lesser extent Italian piazzas) were built in an age when extravagance and luxury at state expense knew no limits, although that would suppose an unreal picture of royal finances. Since the monarch imagined his authority to be boundless, it followed necessarily that no price to affirm that authority was too high. The Crown had come to regard regional capitals and parliamentary centers like Bordeaux, Rouen and Nancy as microcosms of the kingdom, and their public spaces were the perfect mechanisms through which to glorify the realm.
32. Plan of the Place Royale.
34. Elevation looking west.
37. Aerial view looking north at the three Places.
CONCLUSION

Establishing the characteristics of the eighteenth century type of urban space and clarifying the circumstances in which it arose substantiates that the process of accomplishing urban space in the *ancien régime* was primarily political. To the contemporary scholar and architect who look to Italian or French Renaissance urban spaces for precedents, the message is, then, not to minimize the profound influence of politics in the formulation of these spaces. Not only did designers devote their energies to formal analysis of the structure of cities, they did not lose sight of the fact that architecture particularized a specific social condition in a specific time and place.201

Architectural forms are not inherently political. All the same, when they are selected from the fabric of a city, forms do not exist, however dismembered, deprived of their previous political and social meaning. It may have been possible three thousand years ago to regard forms independently of any body of accrued meaning, but what Vidler terms "the original sense of the form, the layers of accrued implication deposited by time and human experience" cannot be discounted.202

In his essay "On Imitation," Lucien Steil has summarized the designer's responsibility to depend on tradition as incorporated by imitation. He goes on to say that any project in any historical period necessarily deals with time and place and expresses its contemporary or modern [political] situation. Tradition is the history of a project, but history is not an


202 Vidler (1979), op. cit., p. 3.
undifferentiated description of the past. Architects need only refer to the political evolution of Italian piazzas through to the *Places Royales* to substantiate Steil's remarks.

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