

## The fate of Goliath: uses of history in the mazarinades

*Mazarinades* are impregnated, saturated, with history, and in them it is possible to trace many pages and myriad citations gathered from the recent past or from a more ancient (or even mythological) one. When we say “past” we refer both to history, in a real or legendary form, and to biblical motives and stories. We do not allude here simply to quotations of examples drawn from ancient works—an exercise very common at a time devoted to the remaking of classical texts through parody and camouflage—the so-called *burlesque style*<sup>1</sup>—but to those quotations that are used as themes and motives in the critique of absolute power. The *mazarinades* are the mirror of a society that wonders if the system of government inherited from Richelieu, where the use and theorization of *pouvoir absolu* is embodied within the context of the so-called *ministériat*, is legitimate; and history is naturally the key to this discussion.

In two recent and important books,<sup>2</sup> Arlette Jouanna explained to us not only the need to distinguish between *pouvoir absolu* and *absolutisme*—the first being a particular theorization of sovereignty, and the second a tendency to reinforce political authority (and not a true system that in its theoretical or pure form never fully existed). She also showed that the existence of *pouvoir absolu* is not a fixed, systematic presence in French sovereignty theory conceived as immutable from medieval times to the Revolution, but a particular construct rooted in the religious wars, and in the need to reinforce the power of the state as a guarantee against insecurity. With respect to this viewpoint, it will be useful, however, to enlarge the perspective. The *mazarinades* provide the material for an important anti-absolute discourse. This does not deny the essential performing attitude of these texts, as underlined by Christian Jouhaud,<sup>3</sup> but it is none

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\* Université de Teramo.

<sup>1</sup> Jean LECLERC, *L'antiquité travestie et la vogue du burlesque en France (1643-1661)*, Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Arlette JOUANNA, *Le pouvoir absolu. Naissance de l'imaginaire politique de la Royauté*, Paris, Gallimard, 2013; *Id.*, *Le prince absolu. Apogée et déclin de l'imaginaire monarchique*, Paris, Gallimard, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Christian JOUHAUD, *Mazarinades: La fronde des mots*, 2<sup>e</sup> éd., Paris, Aubier, 2009.

the less necessary to correct a perspective very rooted in the historiography that tends to underestimate the strength and importance of the arguments of resistance to absolute power revealed in them.<sup>4</sup> Even in Jouanna's latest books, for instance, there is little room for a discourse about *la puissance absolue* that includes a treatment of the tyranny during the wars of religion as elaborated from different perspectives by Jean Boucher or Pierre Grégoire.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the reference texts used in the historiographical tradition are often the celebrated books of Jean Bodin or Cardin Le Bret, never those of jurists (perhaps relatively less studied but none the less well known at the time) like Jacques Cujas, who established that "*hodie principes non sunt solute legibus, quod est certissimus quoniam jurant in leges patriae*"; or Guy de Faur, sieur de Pibrac, who hated, it was commonly believed, the very words *puissance absolue*.<sup>6</sup> As a whole, the mazarinades present many alternatives to the hegemonic discourse of absolute power. The fact that these alternatives were not solidly based from a theoretical point of view, and in some cases can be considered weak, is not a reason to underestimate them.

More generally, the historiographical tendency to underrate the importance and the significance of that true political earthquake called *La Fronde* is unquestionable. Classically, it was seen as an inconsequential accident, not more than a short-lived wavelet in the absolutist sea, a momentary break in the building of the French State, a reactionary shock against modernity soon recovered in the long and progressive regime of Louis XIV.<sup>7</sup> This tendency militates partially also against the mazarinades, being seen as a composite literary universe, a sort of *pot pourri* where it is possible to find everything mixed with its opposite. It is not strange, then, that in this perspective no room is left for a consideration of the use of history. There are no traces of this use in *Le labyrinthe de l'État*, the last book of Hubert Carrier.<sup>8</sup> This perspective does not mean to deny the multifaceted character of the mazarinades, but to maintain a certain point of view, a route, a *fil rouge* without which people get lost in a maze. As a consequence, it is important to underline three contributions to the public

<sup>4</sup> See Francesco BENIGNO, "Reductio ad unum: il fascino discreto dell'assolutismo", *Storica*, X (2004), n.° 29, p. 79-110.

<sup>5</sup> Mario TURCHETTI, *Tyrannie et tyrannicide de l'Antiquité à nos jours*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> *Épilogue ou dernier appareil du bon citoyen sur les misères publiques*, Paris, 1649.

<sup>7</sup> I have developed this argument in my *Mirrors of Revolution. Conflict and Political Identity in Early Modern Europe*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2010, p. 137-232.

<sup>8</sup> Hubert CARRIER, *Le labyrinthe de l'Etat. Essai sur le débat politique en France au temps de la Fronde (1648-1653)*, Paris, H. Champion, 2004.

discourse involving the uses of history, points which it is possible to trace in the *mare magnum* of the mazarinades texts and can be roughly summarized as follows:

1. A different narrative about the origins and the history of the kingdom of France.
2. A process of political polarization sustaining the idea of the restoration of good government as a counter to the recent perversion of it.
3. The denunciation of the illegality of a specific form of absolute power, pivoted on the figure of the all-powerful chief minister-favourite.

1) Many of the mazarinades use history to propose an alternative story of the kingdom of France to the regime, *vulgata* which explains *la puissance absolue* as an immemorial prerogative of the kings of France. Let's look of one such pamphlet, a late one, written in 1652: *Les veritables maximes du gouvernemnt de la France justifiées par l'ordre des temps, depuis l'establisement de la monarchie jusques à present.*<sup>9</sup>

The thesis of this text is quite simple and not new. It is, in some sense, a sort of recapitulation of discourses in the public sphere during the last three years; and it is for this reason that I have chosen it as an example from many other texts. The authority of *Parlement*, it is said, is as ancient as the power of the monarch. In those ancient times, under the first race of kings, the Franks gathered each year in open assembly where the laws, and peace and war, were discussed and approved with full freedom of suffrage: "il n'y a jamais eu un gouvernement plus naturel."<sup>10</sup> Then, under the second race, this large assembly was reduced to a more restricted one, formed by the *principaux du Royaume*, who were summoned each year. This form of government, called by historians *Iudicium Francorum*, was retained also under the third race, with the sole difference that since Philip the Fair, it became sedentary, and began to hear private causes without loss of jurisdiction on the public matters.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Les veritables maximes du gouvernement de la France justifiées par l'ordre des temps, depuis l'establisement de la monarchie jusques à present: servant de response au pretend arrest de cassation du conseil du 18 janvier 1652. Dedié a Son Altesse Royale*, Paris, veuve de J. Guillemot, 1652. I quote from *Recueil de plusieurs pieces curieuses de ces temps servant d'histoire des mouvements arrivez en France, depuis le depart de Monsieur le Prince de Condé, y le retour de Monsieur le cardinal Mazarin jusques à present*, jouxte la copie imprimée a Paris, La Haye, À la Grand Sale de la Cour de la Fortune, 1652, p. 65-89.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70-71.

*Parlement* is therefore described as a mixed body, consisting of the three orders of the kingdom: “C’est une Loy fondamentale, que rien ne peut estre imposé sur les sujets du roy, et qu’on ne peut faire aucun Officier en France, donner aucun titre nouveau, que par le consentement du parlement, qui represente le consentement general du peuple.”<sup>12</sup> Only the *Parlement* can judge on questions concerning feudal domains and the rights of the dukes and peers of France; and only the *Parlement* can determine the rights of the Crown. The greatest questions of state were regularly discussed there, as in the case of the trials of *lèse-majesté*; and even Richelieu turned to *Parlement* in the case of the count of Soissons. Last, but not least, the *Parlement* had the power to cancel royal edicts with the formula “La cour a ordonné qu’elle n’obtempèra point”.<sup>13</sup> This power and the antiquity of its functions contrasted with those of the *Conseil*, which was considered not a public but a private body. From recent times it is called *Conseil d’en haut*, but this appellation “est mot nouveau, que les derniers monstres ont inventé pour appuyer leur Tyrannie”,<sup>14</sup> an invention of these last years of the regency, a strange innovation indeed, produced by people who evidently do not know French history. The most important fact is that the king cannot destroy the laws of the kingdom: “sa souveraineté consiste particulièrement à les maintenir: c’est son serment, c’est le contract qu’il fait avec ses peuples”.<sup>15</sup> As a consequence, it is in the *Parlement* and not outside that the king must discuss questions in which the people have an interest: “Le Roy ne peut contracter avec son peuple que dans son *Parlement*, n’y détruire rien de ce qu’il a fait, que dans le mesme lieu”.<sup>16</sup> Le *Parlement*, where the king can use his *Lit de justice*, is in other words the *campo martio* of the first race, as ancient as the same Crown, a place where the freedom to vote is guaranteed. The consistency of the *pouvoir absolue* lies in the execution of the laws, not in the destruction of them. The sole legitimate authority lies in the King’s will, “expliqué et verifié dans son *Parlement*”.<sup>17</sup> As a consequence the *Conseil* cannot readmit Mazarin to his place: such an action would mean the obliteration of a royal edict which can only be made by the King in the *Parlement*, in a *Lit de justice*.

In addition to all this we found the affirmation that the body of the King is sacred because it is *le corps de la Royauté*, but together to it there is also something else, the soul, *l’âme de la Royauté*: “c’est la loy, c’est la justice, ce sont les ordres publiques.” In brief: “Il n’y a qu’un sceau [...], qu’une autorité,

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

qu'une puissance legitime, mais cette puissance se forme de l'union des sujets avec le souverain, et du souverain avec les sujets." As Tacitus said: "Reges ex nobilitate, duces ex virtute sumunt. Nec Regibus infinita aut libera potestas."<sup>18</sup> All the monarchies we know—excepted the Ottoman that is despotic—are tempered by the presence of a sort of aristocracy that maintains and protect them. On the contrary the ancient freedom that underpinned the kingdom of France has been changed into slavery: "Parcourez toute nostre histoire, voyez celles de nos voisins, et des nations les plus portées a la servitude, vous ne trouverez pas d'exemple d'infamie semblable à la vostre."<sup>19</sup> And today anyone who speaks of the fundamental laws of the kingdom of France is treated here as seditious and malevolent.

As this text shows, to re-present the origins and history of monarchy differently is a way to put in question the foundations of the regime. Antiquity is in this sense a crucial feature. There are texts on the Mazarin side that deny this thesis that the Crown and *Parlement* have equal antiquity. These counter-arguments will have a long persistence. In a late eighteenth century text, printed in 1771, in the days of the *coup de force* of the chancellor René Nicolas de Maupeou, these alternative views are well expounded: as it is shown in one pamphlet<sup>20</sup> which arguments that the rights of the subject are not linked to the independence of the *Parlement*, which did not exist before the kingdom of Philip the Fair. The first *Etats Généraux*, on the other hand, were not summoned till three centuries after Hugh Capet. The notion of public liberty took shape under the protection of the throne, it did not depend on acts of the *Parlement*. More explicitly, it came from the royal authority and it is simply *un bienfait*.<sup>21</sup> For these reasons there are not two masters in the kingdom of France, and the courts have tried to convert the *droit de remontrance* into a right of opposition. And again: the honour and security of each citizen cannot rely on an assembly of judges who believe that they are animated by national spirit. Following this line of argument, the text makes reference to the contemporary struggle, but also, clearly, to memories of the arguments advanced during the Fronde.

2) A great part of the most interesting tracts in the mazarinades corpus are animated by a tendency to polarization. Civil war with its self-destructive

<sup>18</sup> This famous quote is from Tacitus, *Situ, moribus, et populis Germaniae*, I.7.

<sup>19</sup> *Les véritables maximes...*, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

<sup>20</sup> *Avis aux bon Francois ou extract d'une brochure intitulée: tres humble remonstrance d'un citoyen aux parlements de France, en 1771*, without any print indications; but see A. SARICKS, *A bibliography of the Frank E. Melvin Collection of Pamphlets of the French Revolution in the University of Kansas Library*, I, Lawrence, University of Kansas, 1960, where is advanced the hypothesis that the pamphlet could have been printed in 1788, at the eve of the Revolution.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

divisions need to be explained, and this is possible only through the building of a language of contraposition between good and evil, salvation and loss, friend and foe. The conceptual reference here is less the Schmittian antithesis Feind/Freund and more something that can be better understood through the perspective opened up by the works of the contemporary American sociologist Jeffrey C. Alexander<sup>22</sup> that show how for the great public the world is ordered through a system of symbolic dichotomies that organize in each society the perception of the right, the decent, the clean and the good as opposed to the evil, the shameful, the polluted and the bad. In our case this construction of a polarized discourse is particularly interesting because it is not the French Revolution, the master narrative that has so deeply influenced the *vulgata* of the Fronde, that provides the matrix. Instead, both the revolutions, the Fronde and the Great one, are forced into similar systems of contrapositions. In the latter case the obvious coupling is aristocrate/patriote. In the experience of the Fronde, as I have shown elsewhere,<sup>23</sup> the whole social meaning system is rearticulated through the oppositions of king and tyrant, of *princeps* and *dominus*, *monarchie royale* and *monarchie seigneuriale*, or even *monarchie, tout court*, seen as a *puissance violente*, and *royauté*, identified as *puissance légitime*. Again these contrapositions are neither new nor original (one can find a discussion of the different types of monarchy in Bodin, for instance) but now they are utilized in a different manner with greater diversity and force. They are not doctrinal disputes but battle cries, calls to assembly, systems of recognition that help to place the actors in the scene in their right place. The example of England is frequently used to contrast *une monarchie tempérée* with despotic government.

The *Manifeste au Roy contenant quel doit estre le conseil d'un prince a la gloire du Parlement*, for instance, divides the Roman emperors into good and bad.<sup>24</sup> The good emperors were those who governed through the Senate—Severus Alexander, Theodore Komnenos Doukas, Titus, Hadrian and Augustus (the latest “Comuniquoit tellement des affaires de l’Empire avec le Senat, qu’il faisoit (comme escrit Dion) un doux et agreable meslange de la Monarchie avec la Republique”)—while the bad were Caligula, Nero, and Commodus, those who governed as tyrants. By inserting a dangerous contemporary way to rule into an historical ranking qualified by its complete opposition to virtue enables the duality to be set up: the beneficent versus the depraved.

Let’s look, for example, at the case of the opposition between the *bon françois* and the *étranger*. One of the pamphlets that best represents this point is certainly

<sup>22</sup> Jeffrey C. ALEXANDER, *The civil sphere*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006; *Performance and Power*, Cambridge, Polity, 2011; *The Dark Side of Modernity*, Cambridge, Polity, 2013.

<sup>23</sup> Francesco BENIGNO, *Favoriti e ribelli. Stili della politica barocca*, Rome, Bulzoni, 2011, p. 43-62.

<sup>24</sup> Par L.S.D.T., Paris, Denys Langlois, 1649 (Moreau 2351).

the *Raisons d'estat, contre le ministre étranger*,<sup>25</sup> which is a sort of catalogue of all the nations who prohibited the admittance of foreigners in the core of government: the Parthians, the Athenians, the Spartans, the Egyptians, the Romans, the German Empire, Venice, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and then the Polish, Scots, and English. The pamphlet sets out to show that history teaches us that as all these nations (as well as the French) have been accustomed to live under their liberties and never accepted foreign ministers. When this does happen—as in the case of Charles of Burgundy and the count of Campobasso, or Queen Maria de' Medici and her favourite Maréchal d'Ancre—it is not without consequences, it causes reactions. It should be said in this last case, that the story of the rise and fall of the marquis d'Ancre was mainly perceived through the "Conjuration de Conchine" by the historian Pierre Matthieu.<sup>26</sup> Matthieu himself was one of the old councillors of Henry IV (at the time of Louis XIII called "les vieux barbons"), who returned to power after the end of the regency, he was also author of a best-selling life of Aelius Sejanus.<sup>27</sup> The position of Matthieu, a disapproving one, would then be challenged by works more favourable to the role of a favourite minister like those of Silhon<sup>28</sup> and de Combault Auteuil.<sup>29</sup>

History, but not only. Another pamphlet, *L'anatheme et l'excommunication d'un ministre d'estat estranger*,<sup>30</sup> says that God in the Old Testament ordered Israel to exclude foreigners from government and also to limit marriage to within a tribe. There is only one other category of persons more dangerous than the favourites, says another pamphlet—*les reines amoureuses*.<sup>31</sup> The reference here, obviously, is to the rumours about a *liaison* between the Queen Mother Regent and Mazarin. Comparing present and past experiences, that is to say through an historical perspective, the contrast of opposites—the just and the illicit, the moral and the indecent—is set up.

<sup>25</sup> Arnould Cotinet, Paris, s. d. (Moreau 2962). For attribution see Moreau 2510.

<sup>26</sup> Pierre MATTHIEU, *La coniuration de Conchine ou l'histoire des mouvements derniers*, Paris, M. Thevenin, 1619.

<sup>27</sup> Pierre MATTHIEU, *Histoire d'Aelius Sejanus*, 2<sup>e</sup> éd., J. Besongne, Rouen 1618. But on the parallel between Sejanus and Mazarin see *L'ambitieux ou portrait d'Aelius Sejanus en la personne du cardinal Mazarin*, Paris, Pierre du Pont, 1649.

<sup>28</sup> Sieur de SILHON, *Le ministre d'Etat, avec le veritable usage de la politique moderne*, Paris 1639; *Esclaircissement de quelques difficultez touchant l'administration du cardinal Mazarin*, Paris Imprimerie Royale, 1650.

<sup>29</sup> Charles de COMBAULT AUTEUIL, *Histoire des ministres d'Etat, qui ont servi sous les Roys de France de la troisieme ligne*, Paris, Antoine de Sommaville, 1642.

<sup>30</sup> *L'anatheme et l'excommunication d'un ministre d'Etat étranger. Tirée de l'Écriture Saincte*, Paris, Mathieu Colombel, 1649 (Moreau 81).

<sup>31</sup> *La France et les Royaumes ruinéz par les favoris et les reines amoureuses*, [s. l. s. d.] (Moreau 1429); I quote from a copy of the pamphlet conserved in the Cambridge University Library (F.164.c.4.2).

But above all the theme of foreigners' participation in government is linked to a conception that the customs and laws of France can really be known and understood only by French people. To be a foreigner means to be someone who is fatally flawed by the lack of a close understanding of a country that comes with birth, something similar to *cultural intimacy*, the category elaborated by Michael Herzfeld to define a people's identity.<sup>32</sup>

Polarization is the *modus operandi* of a large number of pamphlets: it is also the dominant perspective of the past that aimed to show that the kingdom of France suffered an involution, a sort of tumble. The present can be understood only if de-naturalized, by being confronted with an ideal past (naturally imaginary) that allows the creation of a tension. There is not room here to delineate all the systems of these radical contrapositions that permit good government to emerge, the desirable versus its inverse, the abhorred. It is interesting anyway that there is a substantial convergence in a large proportion of the mazarinades about the timing of the corruption of the kingdom of France, which is made to coincide with the importation of a foreign system of government through favourites.

3) Many pamphlets are full of accusations against and insults to the chief minister-favourite, a man variously described as “celerat, traître, voleur, tyran, sacrilege, perturbateur du public, sorcier, magicien, pipeur, monopoleur, bardache & monstre espouvantable et abominable de Iullio Mazarini, italien, renegat, porte-enseigne de l'Anti-Christ”.<sup>33</sup> But all these accusations need to be explained, and history is a way to clarify them. Many pamphlets contain lists like *Liste des empereurs et des roys qui ont perdu la vie et leur Royaume par la malice de leurs favori et de leurs Ministres d'Etat*,<sup>34</sup> and again, *Chronologie des Reynes malheureuses par l'insolence de leurs favoris*.<sup>35</sup>

A very interesting example of a pamphlet which deals with the problem of the role of chief minister-favourite is certainly *Le miroir a deux-visages opposez*.<sup>36</sup> The purpose of the mirror is to show, on one side, “les hommes qui ont toutes les parties du Ministres Conseiller du Prince tres-accomplis, et qui sont dignes d'estre appellés aux charges plus honorables de l'Etat”, while on the

<sup>32</sup> Michael HERZFELD, *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation State*, London and New York, Routledge, 1997.

<sup>33</sup> *Troisième affiche posée a Paris, le 19 juillet 1651* (Moreau 3889).

<sup>34</sup> Paris, veuve de André Musnier, 1649 (Moreau 2311).

<sup>35</sup> *Dédié a la Reyne regente, pour luy (sic) servir d'exemple et de miroir*, Paris, Claude Morlot, 1649 (Moreau 698).

<sup>36</sup> *Le miroir a deux visages opposez, l'un louant le ministere du fidele ministre, l'autre condamnant la conduite du mechant et infidele usurpateur et ennemy du prince et de son estat*, [s. l.], 1644 [sic] (Moreau 2477).

other side, to show “la conduite du Ministère du Cardinal Mazarin [... et] de Seian de Stelico, Olympius et Jovius ministres & conseillers de Tybere et d’Honorius empereurs”.<sup>37</sup> It is the old theme of the contrast between the good and evil councillor, rooted in its biblical prototypes of the Book of Esther, Haman/Mordecai, but there is also more.

The example of Sejanus is central. The European resurgence of interest for this figure, especially after the European success of *Sejanus his fall* of Ben Jonson (1603) is clearly connected to the emergence of the minister-favourite.<sup>38</sup> So it is used to read the acts and the behaviours of Mazarin: “fait connoistre la conduite du ministère du Cardinal Mazarin par celle de Seian.” Just as Sejanus, “esprit violent” and powerful, directed the tyranny of Tiberius, so Mazarin followed in his steps as he imposed his own power. And in the same manner, the case of Olympius, the minister of Honorius, is used to explain Mazarin’s appetite for war: “Il semble qu’il a imité Olympius, qui rejecta la paix faite avec Alaric, avec des conditions avantageuses, engageant ainsi son Maître en une forte guerre.” The practice of tyranny, driven by favourites, means the breaking of the covenant between the king and his subjects.

The interplay between past and present is frequent: the stories of the favourites of the past are narrated to draw attention to the dangers created by them for monarchies, ancient and contemporary. Thus, the stories of the favourites of Louis XI (amongst them the cardinal d’Amboise), Francis I, or Charles VI, all illustrate the nature of these men as “torrens qui ne rencontrent point de digues”<sup>39</sup> or “desolateurs des princes”.<sup>40</sup> The narration of their sad fates, inevitably ending in punishment, is intended as a clear warning. In *Le tableau des tyrans favoris*, France and Spain reciprocally confess that these “harpies insatiables” have been the true cause of their dissensions. Many of these favourites, both in the case of Spain and France as well as England, have been bishops or cardinals—for example, Cisneros in the Spain of Ferdinand (who had sought his cardinal’s hat from pope Julius II)—thereby reinforcing the sense of similarity between then and now, the faults of yesterday and the evil of today. In the case of Cisneros, Mazarin is credited with consciously following his steps as, for instance, in the move of filling the court of Orléans with his clients and servants.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>38</sup> Blair WORDEN, *Favourites on the English stage*, in J. H. ELLIOTT and L. BROCKLISS, *The World of the Favourite*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1999, p. 160-183.

<sup>39</sup> *La decadence des mauvais ministres d’estat et les fruicts qu’ils ont receus pour leur salaires. Dedié aux amateurs de la paix*, Paris, veuve d’Antoine Coulon, 1649 (Moreau 865), p. 4.

<sup>40</sup> *Le tableau des tyrans favoris et la description des malversations qu’ils commettent dans les estats qu’ils gouvernent. Envoyé par l’Espagne a la France*, Paris, François Noel, 1649 (Moreau 3746).

In another case the slipping between past and present is created through the stratagem of an afterlife world where the dead meet the living, and ancient favourites, following the example of Traiano Boccalini, discuss important political questions with present favourites and politicians. Thus Richelieu is obliged to discuss matters with the Maréchal de Marillac, his victim. In *L'enfer revolté*, all the favourites examined have abused their masters' confidence. Richelieu, often present in these dialogues, is used ambiguously as a touchstone against Mazarin, or as the creator of the system of spoliation that Mazarin continues.<sup>41</sup>

4) The last consideration about the use of history in the mazarinades concerns the story of the term Fronde ("sling") itself. As is well known, the term *frondeur*, from which the use of *fronde* as a generalized protest or revolt is derived, indicates someone who is engaged in a dangerous but in the end futile exercise. This expression comes from a violent game played with slings and stones by the boys of Paris in the moats next to the city walls. Because of the inevitability of injury and even death, this sport was forbidden by the authorities. So the expression *frondeur* was an insult, because it conjured up a stupid, childish person, a sort of ragamuffin engaged in a dangerous but, all considered, ineffectual activity. As you can observe, this meaning of the expression is very different from that conserved till today in the common language, a posterior one that reads the *frondeur* like a person who discretely or even in secret weaves politically. If this second version of the meaning of *fronde* is clearly anachronistic because it suggests an obscure conspiracy or even a dumb dissent whereas the Fronde was an open and violent rebellion, the first one is practically the sole meaning to have been retained and transmitted in the historiographic tradition extending from Voltaire to Lavissee and then to our times.<sup>42</sup>

Paying even brief attention to the sources it is possible to observe that the historical actors from the losers' side tell us another story. In the *Apologie des frondeurs*, a text of 1650, this other meaning is attached not to disorderly rioters that resemble bad boys, but to a party which "ne s'est formé que pour la deffense

<sup>41</sup> *L'enfer revolté sur l'estrange desordre qui y est arrivé depuis peu, par les tyrans et les favoris des premiers siècles ou par une merveilleuse application, toute l'histoire du temps present, se trouve parfaitement bien représentée*, Paris, Pierre Variquet, 1649 (Moreau 1218).

<sup>42</sup> In a recent handbook on the Fronde, devoted to large public, the term is so explained: "Il serait communément admis que le terme de Fronde appliqué à notre révolte s'inspire des jeux guerriers – parfois meurtriers – pratiqués à coups de fronde par les écoliers parisiens dans les fossés, sous les remparts de la capital du royaume. Les adolescents se battaient et disparaissaient quand les sergents de la ville venaient les disperser. Ces jeux furent interdits par le Parlement de Paris, mais n'en continuèrent pas moins": Jean-Marie MONGIN, *La Fronde 1648-53. Pouvoir, argent et trahison*, Paris, 2013, p. 14.

de l'Etat et pour la protection des biens des veritables françois". This party, it is assumed, must make itself worthy of "un nom que l'on nous a donné par derision et que nous avons rendu illustre par nostre vertu inesbranlable et par une fermeté que la calomnie n'a pu terrasser".<sup>43</sup> This process—to convert an expression conferred in mockery into a sign of distinction, an identity tool, a symbol—is not a new one. An early example is the well-known case of the label Huguenot, originally used in a derisory sense, it was then claimed as a symbol of courage and honour. Again, the case of the so-called Gueux, the rebels of the United Provinces, who were so qualified in the first instance to mark them as social outcasts,<sup>44</sup> but which took on new meaning inspired by the Christian maxim that the last will be the first (Matthew 20.16). And in Naples, in one of the so called "six contemporary revolutions", a similar process can be observed. The Spanish authorities called the Neapolitan rebels *lazaros*, meaning something like beggars (but also with associations with leprosy and infection), and very close to *gueux*. The term of abuse was transformed when, as *lazzari*, it was taken up as a title of prestige by a group of butcher-boys who had enlisted in the revolutionary ranks and connected to the most radical faction of the anti-Spanish front. Here, again, the religious discourse took up the field, as *lazzaro* is not only a leper but also, as Lazarus, the miraculous survivor, given life by Jesus Christ, truly born again.<sup>45</sup>

With the term Fronde the process was the same. Take for example the 1649 pamphlet *La fronde du parlement fatalle au Mazarin*.<sup>46</sup> In this text the main characters are the heroes of Antiquity, armed with different sorts of weapons: "On a baillé des lances aux uns des boucliers, des Picques & de massuës aux autres, mais il faut que toute la France advouë que nos braves Senateurs ont plus fait d'un coup de Fronde que les Achilles, les Ulisses, les Ajax et les Hercules n'ont fait avec toutes leurs armes & leurs massuës." And more explicitly: "L'ange gardien de la France reside au milieu de cet Auguste Senat qui se sert de leur bras et de leur Fronde, comme de son tonnerre pour abattre la tyrannie, punir les coupables & sauver les innocents."<sup>47</sup> Not only is being called a *frondeur* not an insult but, on the contrary, to be called *Le Roy des frondeurs* becomes a dignity, and indeed "la plus glorieuse de toutes les dignitez de la terre". This is possible through analogy between the vulgar slingshots

<sup>43</sup> Moreau 112. The author of the text is the cardinal de Retz.

<sup>44</sup> But see the pamphlet *Avis aux grands de la terre: Sur le peu d'assurance qu'ils doivent avoir en leurs Grandeurs*, Paris, veuve d'Antoine Coulon, 1649 (Moreau 487), p. 5, where the term *gueux* is used against the favourites, called *gueux enrichi*.

<sup>45</sup> Francesco BENIGNO, "Trasformazioni discorsive e identità sociali: il caso dei lazzari", *Storica*, XI (2005), n. 31, p. 7-44.

<sup>46</sup> Paris, Pierre Sevestre, 1649 (Moreau 1448).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

and the regal, mystical Fronde, the Fronde of the Kings of Israel, the Fronde of David: “Les histoires saintes & sacrées nous font mention que David, fils d’Isaï Bethlemite, fut eleu de Dieu, entre les Bergers, pour gouverner le peuple d’Israël: car apres que ce Createur eut rejetté Saül, il fit oindre ce divin Psalmiste, par Samuel son Prophete. De sorte qu’apres cela, allant au combat pour la deffense du peuple israélite, il tua Goliath, geant d’une prodigieuse grandeur, d’un grand coup de pierre qu’il luy lança sur la teste avec sa fronde, parce qu’il avoit blasphemé contre Dieu, et défié en combat singulier tous les Israelites.”<sup>48</sup>

With this example we return again to the process of polarization: on one side there is the tyrant, who as Ezekiel says is “un loup ravissant, pret a resprendre le sang de tous le monde”, and with him the enemies of heaven and of the homeland; on the other side, evidently, there is David, the sacred root of the French monarch, that king who, with his glorious *fronde*, frees Israel “exactly as our generous frondeurs actually do”.

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<sup>48</sup> *Le Roy des frondeurs: et comme cette dignité est la plus glorieuse de toutes les dignitez de la terre. Contre le sentiment des esprits du Siecle*, Paris, s. n., 1649 (Moreau 3556), p. 5.