

Semiotization of power in the French kings' ceremonial portraits: linguophilosophical approach

Larissa G. Vikulova – Ksenia M. Baranova – Mayya G. Merkulova –
Liudmila A. Borbotko – Ekaterina G. Vasileva

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Abstract

The purpose of the present article is to prove that the royal gala portrait makes a semiotic space, the signs of which form the image of supreme power. External symbols of monarchical power serve as the means of power semiotization in the ceremonial royal portrait. The linguophilosophical approach to the power allowed us to identify and describe the semantic characteristic of the symbolic side of power. The sword, the scepter, the Hand of Justice, and the crown symbolize three branches of power that the king received from God, particularly, religious, political, and judicial power. The methodological basis of the work is a systematic approach, which includes interdisciplinary research as well as linguo-cultural and historiographic analysis. By interpreting the signs presented in the J. Clouet's portrait of François I, in the T. de Leu's engraving of Henry IV, king of France and Navarre, and in the G. Rigo's portrait of Louis XIV in the coronation costume, the authors reveal the pragmatic dimension of the semiosis of power and the court culture. The research results in the emphasis of the idea that the state destination of the symbolic representation of the monarch is to visualize the power institution.

Key words: image of power, royal gala portrait, regalia, semiotic codes, linguophilosophical approach

Introduction

Power images represent a specific historical and cultural phenomenon (Vikulova & Vasileva, 2015: 58). However, an image of a king and its royalty depicted in a portrait is of a special interest among other kinds of power images.

Portraits have both aesthetic and social function and serve as a form of artistic speech. In other words, they served as an element of monarch's identity representing both his personality and relations with reality as a form of "interculture" (Zheltukhina et al., 2016; Ryabchenko et al., 2021). At the same time, identity as an element of dialogue of cultures and an integral part of any of them still appears an ambiguous phenomenon (Zheltukhina et al., 2017).

The official royal portrait was a traditional order at the beginning of the 16th century. This indicates that monarchs and their inner circle understood that by the means of their portraits they could positively influence on people's consciousness and behavior by arousing the feelings of sympathy and attracting them. Thereby they used portraits as an effective instrument of power legitimization.

Literature Review

Linguists have been considering the semiotics of art as a significant phenomenon since the beginning of the 30-s of the 20th century. Jan Mukařovský (1994), the famous Czech aesthetician, linguist, and literary historian, wrote that a work of art represents a sign. At the same time, it has two functions, particularly, the function of an autonomous sign and the function of a communicative or a communicable sign (Mukařovský, 1994: 194).

Political discourse in its turn represents a semiotic space which is composed of various types of signs. They could be “verbal, non-verbal and mixed” (Sheygal, 2004: 201).

There are such nonverbal signs as flags, emblems, portrait sculptures, buildings, and portraits. The ceremonial royal portrait represents “a semiotic space the signs of which create and visualize the image of the supreme power” (Vikulova & Vasileva, 2018: 63).

While interpreting it there comes “mutual penetration of two semantic floods, as it happens in any dialogical process” (Fofin, 2013: 264).

However, in our opinion, the dialogue takes place not only between a picture and its analyst, but also between a picture and any person who is observing it. In other words, between a picture and, as M.B. Yampolsky (2012) stated, its “spectator”.

In order to semiotically interpret a portrait as a complex of material and spiritual worlds’ signs (regarded both subjectively and objectively) which have become carriers of cultural narratives and owners of cultural memory, as well as representations of axiosphere (Vikulova et al., 2020; Roubalová et al., 2021), it is necessary to comprehensively study the whole extra-linguistic context, which includes historical and personal characteristics it was based upon.

Portraits of monarchs serve as an inherent part of a subject matter visual space and represent a significant source for reflections concerning the ways of power representation (Yampolsky, 2012: 4). The image of a ruler in the age of absolute monarchy is one of the most complex mechanisms of monarchical system’s representation, which is used when it is important to distantly represent the king as an embodiment of power.

The governmental purpose of power representation is reflected in the process of creating portraits, coins, medals, and statues (e.g., equestrian statues, memorial arcs etc.) to visualize the institute of power. Thus, artistic, and political discourses intercross (Sheygal, 2004: 30).

The visual sphere became significant in the period of the Renaissance, when state half-length or chest-high (*le portrait d’État*) portraits, which represent governors in their ceremonial dresses, appeared. In the Renaissance era such a portrait became an important political instrument of symbolic and ideological value and served as an instrument for monarchical power’s representation (Lambert, 2015). In seventeenth-century France autocracy was a “civilizing source and a protector of national union, which was harmonizing discordances and consolidating inconsistencies” (Borev, 2005: 391). The standards of art, morals and ethics were important to reinforce absolute monarchy.

Methodology

The methodological basis of the work is a systematic approach, which includes interdisciplinary research as well as linguocultural and historiographic analysis.

A place is taken by the semiotic approach to the study of ceremonial portraits. The linguophilosophical approach contributes to the understanding of the semiotics of the portrait of a political leader. The study prompted us to turn to various methods and techniques of linguistic research: semiotic and pragmatic analysis, stylistic analysis,

contextual analysis, cognitive analysis. The analysis of power semiotization is based upon the study of three ceremonial portraits of French kings, which we consider to be non-verbal signs. The following portraits are analyzed: the portrait of Francis I of France (*Portrait de François I, roi de France*) created by Jean Clouet, the court painter (1480–1541), the print called “Henry IV in coronation robes” (*Henri IV en costume de sacre*) created by an outstanding French engraver of Flemish ancestry, Thomas de Leu (1560-1612)), the portrait of Louis XIV in coronation robes (*Portrait en pied de Louis XIV en grand costume de sacre*) created by the French artist Hyacinthe Rigaud (1659-1743).

Results and Discussion

The portrait by J. Clouet depicts the French monarch Francis I as a thirty-year-old ruler full of experience and energy. In this portrait the artist for the first time abandons the tradition of a chamber, small chest-high portrait and displays the model in a magnificent Renaissance dress at half length. The portrait was probably drawn in the period between 1525 and 1530 – a period of the king's vigorous activity.



Figure 1. Jean CLOUET. Portrait de François Ier, roi de France (Vers 1530). Musée du Louvre, Paris.

The king's images constitute “the iconic and symbolic narrative of a long power legitimizing process that was aimed at glorification of the monarchy” (Vasileva, 2017: 42). It is believed that the royal portrait first appeared during the reign of Francis I. At this time the printing industry was being developed.

New technologies made wide distribution of the king's images possible. According to some researchers, many images of Francis I were created in the XVI century, due to different complementary strategies, that was the evidence of an unprecedented interest in the appearance of the ruler, whose beautiful bearing was constantly glorified.

Francis I was one of the most frequently represented great monarchs in the art of the 16th century. His images are still easily recognizable by broad shoulders, impressiveness, short hair, beard, long nose, which was worthy of praise in those days, and a hat with a white ostrich feather. These specific features helped to identify the king of the Renaissance era. The portrait of the monarch is a sign of the triumph of humanistic culture, which prompts the individualization of royal history. The portraits of Francis I reveal the rise of the absolute royal power.

The viewer observes an image of an ideal man of that era. Describing the man's appearance, Michel de Montaigne notes the features that correspond to the harmonic

ideal: “The beauty of a man is manifested, first of all, in the beauty of height” (Montaigne, 1931: 60-62).

In the 16th century, royal glory was growing, which was reflected in increasing luxuriance, complex rituals of the court, and growing theatricalization of the king's daily life (Métivier, 2005: 59-60). The portrait of Francis I is characterized by “pompous decorativeness and typical proportions for portraits of the Mannerist style – slightly expanded shoulders, contrasting with a small head on an elongated neck”. The image of a gentilhomme king and a knight with a proud posture is endowed with grace and refinement which are not detected in other portraits of Jean Clouet.

The painting lacks the attributes of royal power, except for the crown, which is decorated by precious damask fabric. The crown is a sign of supreme power, which cannot be given to a person who does not have appropriate social status (Sannikov, 2014: 383). Its presence in the portrait is not accidental, as Michel Pastoureau notes, “Everything is said in the word and by the word” (*Tout est dit dans le nom et par le nom*), emphasizing the importance of referring to etymology in studies of symbols (Pastoureau, 2017: 15).

Thus, the word “couronne” stems from the word “corne”, expressing the idea of exaltation, power, and glow. Both the crown and the horn are depicted above the king's head and represent the insignia of power and light. The crown depicted separately from the king corresponds to the anthropocentric idea of the Renaissance, when a person becomes the center, the majestic and the highest source of life, and serves as a communicative act which shows that the physical body of the king should be distinguished from his political body (according to Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz) (Kantorowicz, 2015: 503).

The portrait of Francis I of France corresponds to the major innovation of the Renaissance state portrait. Particularly, the king is looking straightly at viewers. It is not stated when exactly the portrait was created, it could be during the king's capture in Spain or when he came back to France.

In any case, the aim of the portrait of Francis I was to represent the might and power of the monarch. According to this, the image of the monarch should be analyzed in conformity with the existing political context. Thus, the figure of the king acquires identifying and legitimizing value (Lambert, 2015).

At first sight a viewer is amazed by the luxuriance of king's dress.

Thus, it is how a realistic aspect of this semiotic act is realized.

Jean Clouet clearly traced and drew precious fabrics; therefore, a viewer is able to distinguish silk, sateen and velvet. The fabrics symbolize royalty by giving the king's dress a stature of insignia or the sign of power and emphasizing the mightiness of the king. In his everyday life, Francis I preferred to wear fur-lined clothes which completely covered his body.

However, such dresses were also worn by guardians of justice and servants of financial authorities, therefore, it could not correspond to the majesty of the king. Color acts as another significant feature of the king's dress. Black, white, and brown are personal king's colors, even though in everyday life Francis I worn clothes of absolutely different colors, but mostly black clothes because of Spanish the fashion influence.

The king dressed in bright clothes and distinguished by a strong build, was engaged into non-verbal communication not only with his people but also with Charles V, who was his main competitor.

Thus, with the help of royal dress, the French monarch exercised a semiotic act. His portrait enhanced cultural authority of France, which was necessary for political immortalization of the king's image.

It is only after the incident when a hot smoldering piece of wood burnt his face, Francis I started to wear a beard and short hair. This way he introduced a new fashion

which came from Italy and was copied by courtiers with pleasure. The 16th century in France was distinguished by Italianization of French society due to the result of Italian wars. Dynastic marriages between French kings and Italian princesses from the house of Medici also influenced the process of Italianization. Around the entire kingdom there were built gorgeous buildings decorated by Italian craftsmen. For instance, Francis I invited Leonardo da Vinci to his castle Cloux near Amboise in 1516 (Skrelnina & Stanovaya, 2001: 295).

Following the example of the king of England Henry VIII, Francis I introduced the tax on beard for the clergy, therefore, poor monks had to shave their beards. This resembles the period of Merovingians' rule, when long hair had a sacramental value for the royal dynasts and because of that all Merovingian rulers were called "long-haired kings" (reges crinitos) (Sannikov, 2011: 129).

The king's chest holds a custom ceremonial chain with St. Michael's image which is a rare and prestigious honorary distinction, a symbol of loyalty to the king and monarchy. It is necessary to emphasize that the Order of St. Michael is the first order of chivalry in France, which was founded by king Louis XI in the castle of Amboise in 1469.

The image of St. Michael, who was supposed to be the patron saint of France, was placed on the pennon of Charles VII and, therefore, Charles instructed Louis XI to found such an order. The order finds Archangel Michael portrayed on the cliff, which is a symbol of order's headquarter, particularly, the holy hill Mont Saint-Michel.

This way, Louis XI chose St. Michael as the patron of France instead of St. Dionysius, as in that time the Brits occupied Paris. St. Michael conquered the serpent, which came from the seaward just as the Brits did. The chain is composed of the golden shells of scallops and St. Michael is portrayed on the medallion defeating the serpent with his sworn.

Overall, we must admit that the portraits of Jean Clouet serve as historical documents of the 16th century. All the details of the French king's portrait ranging from the background, appearance and gorgeous dress to the sword and jewelry are symbolic and demonstrate might and power of the monarch.

In this study we also analyzed the print called "Henry IV in coronation robes" (*Henri IV sur son trône en costume de sacre*) created by Thomas de Leu. This print portrays the first dynast of the House of Bourbon, particularly the French monarch Henry IV (1553-1610) who ruled the country for more than 20 years (1589-1610).



Figure 2. Thomas de Leu. Henri IV sur son trône, en costume de sacre (4^e quart du XVI^e siècle). Musée national du château de Pau, Pau

The age of Reformation in France still saw the images of people as a rare phenomenon. Only a small number of people had a chance to see royalty in person. However, portraits presented an opportunity to see the high and the mighty. The word *portrait* (portraict) is the result of the nominalization of past participle which stems from the verb *portraire* (Dictionnaire Historique de la langue française, 2010: 1715).

In the 16th century the verb *portraire* was used in the wider sense and meant *to draw up an outline, to depict*. The noun *portrait* stood for *an esquisse, outlines, a picture, a depiction* (Chevalier, 2008).

Only in the 17th century the word *portraict* was mainly defined as *an image of a person*. In addition to paintings, prints also were of a great popularity. Prints represent the form of graphic art and are created by pressing the pattern or so-called matrix on the paper.

The image of Henry VI has been ingrained in art since the beginning of his reign (Fedotova, 2016: 159). Even before the coronation, which took place on February 27, 1594, the face of Henri de Navarre had been already known among French people because of the great number of various prints, sculptures, medallions which were spread across the country. That illustrated the high position of a person who won his way in cultural and historical processes in the country.

The credibility of Henry IV was boosted by the means of “portraying him together with such figures as Caesar, Alexander the Great, Carolus Magnus and even Hercules, the captions to the pictures saying the following ‘The gorgeous among the best’ or ‘Gallic Hercules’” (Pleshkova, 1999), thus, the French monarch was compared to the greatest warriors and heroes.

At the same time, the archetype of a valiant knight is typical for the conceptual framework of the French language. Henry IV could be called as *héros combattant* or a fighting hero, as he committed heroic acts and was a noble, principled, and heroic personality able to overcome his fear and perform a feat.

Voltaire devoted his heroic poem “Henriade” to the French monarch Henry IV. It was originally published in 1723, or 113 years after king’s death. Voltaire glorified the French king as an ideal governor and highlighted such duties and traits of the monarch as tolerance, protection of social freedom, civil rights; his obligations as well as ability to maintain peace and security; his patronage of art and science.

As a theorist of the «enlightened absolutism», the French sophist put a lot of effort into the development and creation of an image of the regal power. Voltaire perceived Henry IV not just as a role model of the monarch but also as a hero, a winner, and a patron of the French nation (Voltaire, 1728).

Even today Henry IV is respected in France as a national hero. Therefore, it is possible to emphasize that one of the major portrait’s functions is to represent a role model of a hero.

A ceremonial portrait should be perceived as a form of political communication which represents institutional discourse. Institutionality stems from the manifestation of the French king as a bearer of supreme power, being on the top of the social ladder, which in turn demands compliance with role-based and situation-driven communicative norms (Chudinov, 2008: 54).

Thus, in accordance with norms of a ceremonial portrait, the print represents the greatness of the king. Each element of the portrait matters and creates a coherent image of the regal power. Semantics of power includes the following elements:

- 1) semantics of social stratification;
- 2) aesthetic semantics;
- 3) spiritual semantics (Kovshova, 2015: 24).

Semantics of social stratification is represented by such elements as the throne, the laureate wreath carried by two angels. In the center of the wreath there are also two palm branches crossed.

The print also demonstrates such regalia as the scepter on the top of which there is an armorial lily, the Hand of Justice and the dalmatic decorated with lilies and minever. All of these are the external signs of regal power which a monarch receives in the process of coronation.

Instead of the royal crown, Henry IV is wearing the laureate wreath. Another element of social stratification semantics' is the throne which is a symbol of supreme power.

This significant royal attribute is situated on the estrade under the awning made of expensive fabric, which is a sign of spiritual protection of its owner (Vovk, 2006: 494). The throne is an important semiotized material evidence of power (Vikulova & Vasileva, 2018: 66).

Henry IV is wearing a coronation robe decorated with armorial lilies and minever. In his right hand he is holding the scepter on the top of which there is Bourbons' lily, while in the left hand he has the Hand of Justice which is the symbol of supreme justice.

The hand of Justice has a form of hand with a sign of the cross made with two fingers (Vovk, 2006: 493). According to the famous French medieval historian and armory specialist M. Pastoureau (2017), "the Hand of Justice serves both as an emblematic attribute, which identifies the king of France distinguishing him out of other sovereigns who had never used it, and a symbolic item expressing the very idea of the French monarchy" (Pastoureau, 2017: 9-10).

As for the armorial lily, Pastoureau also states that the flower is "a truly historical object which has a political, dynastic, artistic, emblematic and symbolic function". It represents the symbol of the French monarchy and reflects such symbolic characteristics as purity, fertility, and superiority (Pastoureau, 2017: 102-103).

The floral ensign which the king shares with the Blessed Virgin demonstrates that the French monarch serves as an intermediary between God and the people of France. M. Pastoureau (2017) highlights that while many Western kings were crowned in robes spangled with stars, sometimes in combination with crescents (which is also a cosmic pattern), the king of France did not follow this rule as he was crowned in a robe spangled with lilies as a lily was his personal emblem. This robe provided him with the patronage of the Queen of Heaven and represented the French king as the one and the only sovereign (Pastoureau, 2017: 108-109). All the above-mentioned items represent semantics of social stratification.

Aesthetic semantics of Henry IV ceremonial portrait is enclosed in festive, praising intonation. The king was perceived by his people as one of the most beautiful men in the kingdom. According to the French historian S. Perez (2003), this perception was absolutely natural as the beauty was traditionally included into the list of virtues which were glorified in the texts of eulogists and court nobility. There is no doubt that the gorgeous figure of the monarch and splendid decorations were supposed to impress and arise the feelings of respect and adoration. Semantics of spirituality is primarily represented by the insignia of the Order of the Holy Spirit, which symbolizes the cohesiveness among the nobility in support of the king. It is not occasional that the motto of the Order sounds like "*Duce et Auspice*" and means "*Under his guidance and auspices*" (Vikulova & Vasileva, 2018: 67). The motives of goodness and evil, life and death, victory and defeat are also represented by the weapons which Henry IV is treading under his foot. Just as palm branches in the hands of angels, it symbolizes his military success. Among French people the king is renowned as a great military leader. Soldiers called him «the king of brave hearts» (Le Bun, 2002: 191). Possessing spiritual semantics, these regalia portray the king as a protector supervising the peace in his kingdom. The above-mentioned identifying elements of power which are represented in the portrait of the king Henry IV, serve as

a significant factor of power legitimization. Apparently, the aim of creating Henry's IV ceremonial portrait was to demonstrate his altitude, and this aim was achieved. The print, alongside with other pictures, portrays Henry IV with a smile. However, according to the French historian Yann Lignereux, traditionally kings depicted in the portraits are serious and do not smile with some rare exceptions. For instance, we can notice a smile on the face of Henry III, however Henry IV is portrayed with a more sincere smile and Francis I is always depicted with a smile on his face. Traditionally, a smile is not a typical feature of royal ceremonial portraits, especially if the aim of a portrait is to create the image of a sovereign and present it to the people (Lignereux, 2010). In the novel "Young Henry of Navarre" by Heinrich Mann we can find the following statement "A king is, as on his portrait, unapproachable, and stands aloof from men by his attitude and gait and his habit of peering at the world from the corners of his eyes" (Mann, 1991: 224). However, the French monarch was known for his kind, cheerful nature. Thus, Yann Lignereux refers to the words of the famous legal adviser and poet of the 16th century, Pierre Constant who wrote in 1592 that goodwill and cheerful nature of the king reflected on his face were able to get over the barriers of a person denying listening to the voice of reason and justice:

Je veux, Ligueur, te depeindre
 Le Monarque des François,
 Pour te forcer à le craindre,
 Et fléchir dessous ses loix,
 Puisque ce Prince sublime,
 Ton vray Roy&legitime,
 Ne peut entrer en ton cœur,
 Je feray par ma peinture,
 Que ta perverse nature /
 Regorgera ton erreur [...].
 Or vois tu sa face peinte,
 D'un vermillon Jovial,
 Toute notoire, & non feinte,
 Sous un front hault& royal,
 Et ce nez Persan encore,
 Qui, comme un beau mont, decore,
 Entre deux soleils rians,
 Ceste genereuse face,
 Et dont l'agreable audace

Domte les plus foudroyants (Pierre CONSTANT, *Portrait du tres-auguste Henry III Roy de France et de Navarre, Dedié à sa tres-chrestienne Majesté*, A Chaalons, chez Claude Guyot, Imprimeur ordinaire du Roy, 1592, in-8°, 6 ff. – BNF, Rés. YE 3756) (Cit. ex: 45).

Thus, it is possible to conclude, that all elements of the portrait analyzed as a non-verbal sign of political discourse, construct elitism of the depicted monarch by revealing his hierarchical status and mightiness. His image is primarily distinguished by heroism and is complemented by such features as cheerfulness and engagement with people.

The image of the French king's power in the portrait stems from the typical features of political culture that existed in France during the reign of Henry IV. At the same time, the portrait reveals personal characteristics of Henry of Navarre, who is remembered by the people of France both as a great ruler and as *le bon roi Henri* or "Good King Henry".

Finally, let us turn to the famous portrait of the French monarch Louis XIV. The portrait was created by an official court portrait painter whose name was Hyacinthe

Rigaud (1659-1743). This work brought glory to the 43-year-old painter. The portrait of Louis XIV made a symbol of the French monarchy, while Rigaud became the founder of the ceremonial portrait genre. Even after many years the work of Rigaud prompts the sincere interest among the researchers belonging to various fields of studies (Polyakova, 1984; Perez, 2003; Triquenaux, 2015).

The full-length portrait depicts the monarch standing against the background of a monumental column and gorgeous drapery. In the process of portrait creation Rigaud used various Baroque painting techniques and portrayed the king in all his glory. In the figure (picture), the monarch is leisurely leaning on the scepter choreographically demonstrating his leg.

Louis XIV is rolling in royal ermine robe and his head is overshadowed with purple draperies behind of which it is possible to see the fragments of the architectural background.

The combination of red, blue, white, and golden colors creates an impression of a deliberate scenic action. Rigaud succeeded in combining this circumlocutional grandiosity with a realistic image of the senescent «Sun King». He depicted king's baggy cheeks, fleshy nose, and small swollen eyes. The ability to portray both the mightiness of the monarch and the lifelike appearance motivated Rigaud's contemporaries to declare this portrait as the most realistic portrait of Louis XIV (Polyakova, 1984: 172-174).



Figure 3. H. Rigaud. Le portait en pied de Louis XIV en grand costume de sacre (1701). Musée du Louvre, Paris.

E. Polyakova (1984) points at the theatrical characteristics of the portrait made in the Baroque style. This style is distinguished by grandiosity, dynamic and complex shapes, and forms as well as by picturesqueness, increased theatricality, excessive expression and the domination of senses and emotions. All these features were embodied in the state portrait.

The portrait of Louis XIV in his coronation robe is a perfect example of the reality theatricalization when an artist projects theatrical codes such as the principle of spatial organization (Vikulova et al., 2018) on reality.

Therefore, “reality is transformed into representation intended for contemplation”, in which theatre as a semiotic system provides the perception of life as a spectacle, and of a person as an actor. According to M.B. Yampolsky (2012: 16), “the 17th and 18th centuries saw theatrical codes projected within the framework of the most semiotized culture, particularly the court one”.

Then it was extremely important to attract the interest of public, as *to be in the public eye* meant *to be interesting to Another*. The major role in this perspective was given to self-presentation.

The French society is historically distinguished by its theatricality. Researchers highlighted that the rise of king’s power was reflected in luxuriance, court complex rituals as well as in the growth of king’s daily life theatricalization (Métivier, 2005: 59-50). Not coincidentally, researchers define the French society of that period as *une société de spectacle* (Kovshova & Gudkov, 2017).

The famous French writer and historian Max Gallo wrote in his book devoted to Louis XIV:

Louis aime cette comédie qu’est la Cour.

Les acteurs sont à ses ordres et c’est lui qui les dirige, qui conçoit le ballet réglé de l’étiquette et le décor (Louis enjoys this comedy theater which is represented by his Court. The actors obey his orders, he controls them, he creates the ballet in compliance with etiquette and environment) (Gallo, 2009: 367).

Apart from theatricality, the portrait of Louis XIV is also characterized by such a systemically important feature of political discourse as remoteness (Fofin, 2013: 59-60).

The distance between the ruler and the viewer appears in the following aspects:

- 1) physical/ spatial distance, which is reflected in a position of the king in the portrait, particularly, the king is staying on an estrade and his figure is in the center of the picture;
- 2) symbolic distance, which is reflected in the king’s exclusive right to possess such symbols of power as the crown, the scepter, the Hand of Justice etc.

There is *elitism* of the person depicted, which combines the following characteristics: the prestige of the monarch, his influence and publicity, inaccessibility to the society in case of indirect communication, the idea of being the chosen one, as well as the right to deviate from the norm. Under the conditions of external observation by potential viewers and considering the status of the monarch, there is the standard of superficial vision or the *strategy of pretense (stratégie du paraître)* which dominates. In the society of that era, court life was subject to the standards of *superficial vision* (Vikulova, 2017: 51).

At the same time, according to the French literary critic M. Triquenaux (2015), the portrait of Louis XIV creates a dual impression. On the one hand, the lower body of the king is the body of a young man with slender legs of a dancer. The legs of the king froze up in the fourth position, which lays stress on the pause made during action. It looks like he made ‘a pause in a pose’.

As Louis XIV, who was a passionate admirer of ballet, had not danced since 1670 for more than 30 years, his image could be interpreted as a communicative act, which ensures the viewers that the physical body of the king should be perceived apart from his political body (according to the terminology of E. Kantorowicz, 2015: 503).

On the other hand, the critic ironically notices that the depicted face belongs to a man of 60 years old, who suffered from numerous illnesses, lost all his teeth, and soon may have to move around in a wheelchair (Triquenaux, 2015).

Such a critical opinion of the modern and educated viewer considering the portrait of the key person in the state, does not consider the fact that this is neither a personal portrait nor a gerontological image of a particular man. The historical background is ignored, as well as the aspiration of the artist and Philip V of Spain, who was the king's grandson and who ordered the portrait to portray a powerful statesman, a bearer of the great power.

On the official webpage of Versailles there is another view on the portrait of Louis XIV presented, which enters discussion together with an opinion of M. Triquenaux's: "*Si le visage est celui d'un homme âgé, ses jambes, en revanche, sont celles d'un jeune danseur. Elles donnent à la silhouette royale une allure efféminée qui ne compromet pas sa 'royale virilité', car cette somptuosité est toute politique*" (If the face belongs to an old man, the legs, on the contrary, belong to a young dancer. The legs give the king a feminine look, which, however, does not undermine his 'royal masculinity', as all this magnificence has an exclusionary political meaning) (**Pomarède**).

Researchers highlight the idea that ethnic and cultural nature of French people stems from their desire to impress. According to the French writer and historian J. Roe, the age of Louis XIV stated that to carry the face, to adopt, to be well-liked and to captivate meant to ceaselessly play a part. Therefore, it was necessary to simulate passions and conceal thoughts, desires, and intentions.

Louis XIV successfully managed to succeed in all of that. The French historian believes that the king was a success because of his ability to faultlessly identify himself with his part and his ability to let his people play their parts.

That could be traced in a strict submission to the ceremony.

For Louis XIV to be a king meant to be able to command the play both at the court and on the global arena (Rohou, 2002: 386). This is depicted in the portrait by such visual signs of social differences as a wig, the whitened face and such fashion items as hoopskirts and laces (Yampolsky, 2012: 37).

Louis XIV is calmly looking at his viewers, demonstrating his manhood, wisdom and experience. Rigaud portrayed Louis XIV with all his royal regalia, which represent visual and symbolic signs that play the key role in the formation of the system. Firstly, it is the *crown*, the major symbol of the king's power, which is lying on an elegant velvet cushion embroidered with golden *lilies*. The flower of golden lily decorated the emblems of French kings of all dynasties embodying the three virtues, particularly, justice, mercy, and compassion (Gaborit-Chopin, 1987: 85). *The Hand of justice* (main de justice) is also lying down on the velvet cushion.

On the bas-relief of a column there is Themis portrayed, the Greek goddess of justice. She is holding scales and a sword in her hands. Her being painted emphasizes the king's right to act as a judge. A bright red baldachin (le dais) is hanging above the king's head. Since Antiquity this color has symbolized wealth and power.

Behind Louis XIV there is the dark blue velvet *throne* embroidered with golden lilies. A throne is an important semiotized material symbol of power.

Researchers suppose that the honor of a king's throne dates to the earliest stages of German politogenesis.

A throne (*bregostól*) as a symbol and a synonym of king's power is mentioned in the North German saga «Beowulf».

Describing the actions of a konung (a sovereign ruler) aimed at the realization of his power, the author of the saga used such a phrase as "to hold the throne" (*bregostól healdan* or *épelstólas healdan*).

For Scandinavian konungs a throne was of a special symbolic meaning (Sannikov, 2011: 131).

The concept of *throne* came to the French language from Greek. In Greek the word *thronos* stands for "ceremonial seat" (*siège d'apparat*) (Picoche, 2006: 561).

In the portrait we can also see the sword of Charles the Great or Jouiuse / Joyeuse (joyful). The sword of Charles the Great is a symbol of the ancient monarchy and the succession of power from the king to the king, who is a defender of the church and the kingdom. This is one of the major regalia which was used in the process of the coronation ceremony.

Initially a sword was a personal weapon of Frankish kings and had its own proper name which characterized it. Such a tradition could be traced in the epic "Song of Roland". A sword is a symbol of the king's military success and symbolizes the military power of the state (Yampolsky, 2012). It is supposed that Louis XIV claimed himself to be the king bringing peace and stability to the state (Bourgeaux, Bénédicte & Renaudin, 2005: 4), therefore, the portrait shows only the hilt of a sheathed sword hidden in a royal robe.

The magnificent Royal vestments include purple robes and miniver which represent a semiotic code and a cultural sign of power.

The *mantle*, embroidered with Golden lilies, highlights the king's greatness, and indicates the divine nature of royal power. The lily symbolizes the Virgin Mary, prompting that the king is a protege of God here below, and the mantle corresponds to the mantle of the Great high Priest, Jesus, the son of God. The royal portrait adds cultural prestige to the court of France, which is necessary to perpetuate the political image of the ruler (Vasileva, 2017: 41-47).

Another material symbol of power is represented by the *scepter* in the king's right hand which is a symbol of the sovereign power of the monarch. It symbolizes the right of the king to govern the state and control the people.

On the king's chest there is a gold chain with *the Order of the Holy Spirit* (Ordre du Saint-Esprit), founded by Henry III of Valois (1551-1589) in the XVI century as a symbol of the French nobility alliance in support of the king.

The Order's motto was: "*Duce et Auspice*" (*Leading and patronizing*). Upon the cross and medallion there is the symbol of the Holy Spirit placed, which is a dove flying down with outstretched wings. The Order on the monarch's chest serves as evidence of a dynastic heritable monarchy (Tsikounas, 2008).

The head of Louis XIV is covered with a splendid wig (*allonge* in French), curled long hair falls to the shoulders. The fashion for wigs spread after 1630, when Louis XIII began adding artificial strands to his hair to look natural (Dictionnaire Historique de la langue française, 2010: 1602).

This object became an illustrative symbol of the era of absolutism and the image of Louis XIV. The wig became a symbol of the sun, showing the whole world the greatness, power, and splendor of the monarch (Quand les Bourbons portaient perruques, 2016). For a long time, the wig had remained one of the main characteristics of the French kings' appearance. Louis XIV even had a collection of wigs. In everyday life he wore short wigs, but he wore a splendid long-haired wig on official ceremonies. It is not surprising that ceremonial portraits show his head crowned with a gorgeous wig: Histoire de la mode: les perruquiers du roi,

White knitted stockings, which became fashionable at this time, show the beauty of king's legs as well as protect him from cold, considering that it was rather chilly in the royal residence of Versailles in winter. The king is dressed in fashionable elegant *shoes with red heels* that distinguish the nobility from other classes. It is believed that it was Louis XIV, who introduced the fashion for heels among men as the king was not very tall (160 cm). Thus, he intended to look higher and more impressive. The shoes are decorated with diamond buckles and make a symbol of court culture.

Special attention should be paid to the main colors of the portrait created by Rigaud. To be more precise, they are blue, white, red, and gold. The blue lily is associated with Virgin Mary. White is associated with the idea of the monarchy. Since antiquity

red has been linked to the idea of power. Finally, gold is a symbol of wealth and noble origin. At court, only the elite had the right to wear clothes embroidered with gold. Royal attributes are mandatory during the coronation ceremony. They symbolize the «material or actional code of ritual forms of behavior» (Kovshova & Gudkov, 2017), the code of 'ideologeme' of the age of absolutism. Louis XIV was crowned on June 7, 1654, thus, in the ceremonial portrait created by G. Rigaud, he is presented in the coronation costume which he wore 47 years ago. The portrait of the monarch represents a cultural symbol of the era of absolutism.

Conclusion

Within the framework of the linguo-philosophical approach to power, we managed to establish that, external symbols of monarchical power serve as the means of power semiotization in the ceremonial royal portrait.

The sword, the scepter, the Hand of Justice, and the crown symbolize three branches of power that the king received from God, particularly, religious, political, and judicial power.

They transmit glory and mightiness of the French monarch and serve as symbols of royal power legalization.

In addition, the regalia, as well as other details of the ceremonial royal portrait depicted in the portraits of French kings, reflect the principle of dynastic monarchy and, from a more general point of view, highlight the principle of hereditary succession of supreme power.

Visual representation of power makes it possible to create and distribute the image of the ideal ruler used to justify the legitimacy of his rule.

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Prof. Larissa Georgievna Vikulova
Department of Romance Philology
Institute of Foreign Languages
Moscow City University
5b Maly Kazenny per.
105064 Moscow
Russia
vikulovalg@mgpu.ru

Prof. Ksenia Mikhailovna Baranova
Department of English Philology
Institute of Foreign Languages
Moscow City University
5b Maly Kazenny per.
105064 Moscow
Russia
baranovkm@mgpu.ru

Prof. Mayya Gennadyevna Merkulova
Department of English Philology
Institute of Foreign Languages
Moscow City University
5b Maly Kazenny per.
105064 Moscow
Russia
merkulovamg@mgpu.ru

Acc. Prof. Ekaterina Gennadyevna Vasileva, PhD
Foreign Languages Department
Karelia branch of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public
Administration
6A Chapayeva street
185002 Petrozavodsk
libellule_26@mail.ru

Acc. Prof. Liudmila Alexandrovna Borbotko, PhD
Department of Linguistics and Translation Studies
Institute of Foreign Languages
Moscow City University
5b Maly Kazenny per.
105064 Moscow
Russia
borbotkola@mgpu.ru