

Chapter 1: Monsieur de Saint-Hubert's expanded choreographic poetics

Monsieur de Saint-Hubert's *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets* was published in Paris in 1641; today, it is available in a facsimile edition preserving its original language.¹ In it, the author considers ballet and its components, ranging from dance and music to costumes and mechanical equipment. While his work is a canonical dance-historical source about European ballet history, not much is known about *La Manière de composer*'s author. He had participated as a dancer and had been implicated in the production of ballets – as he repeatedly mentions in his treatise² – but was not widely known by his contemporaries and his work was published in relatively few copies.³ His reflections are nourished by the ballet culture of 17th-century France – notably under Louis XIII, who ruled until two years after the treatise's appearance – but are not accompanied by references to specific exemplar works (only one ballet is named).

Saint-Hubert's treatise is part of a wide corpus of historical sources on 17th-century court ballet as it developed in the French court and beyond, which will be referred to repeatedly in this chapter to contextualise his text. Some of these sources take the form of wide narratives blending theoretical principles about ballet with extensive descriptions of specific works, such as Claude-François Menestrier's 1682 *Des Ballets anciens et modernes selon les règles du théâtre* [Of ballets ancient and modern according to the rules of the theatre]; others are works that pertain to dance technique applicable outside the realm of ballet, such as François de Lauze's 1623 *Apologie de la danse* [Apologia of dance]; while others focus on practical aspects of designing, producing, and performing ballets. It is to this latter category that *La Manière de composer* belongs. As such, Saint-Hubert's treatise gives threefold insight into the notion of (expanded) choreography with

1 Saint-Hubert: *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, Genève: Minkoff 1993 [1641].

2 Ibid., pp. 12, 20, 25.

3 Christout, Marie-Françoise: Introduction, in: Saint-Hubert: *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, pp. 5, 28–29; Hourcade, Philippe: *Mascarades & ballets au Grand Siècle (1643–1715)*, Paris/Pantin : Desjonquères / Centre national de la danse 2002, p. 137.

respect to 17th-century court ballet: firstly, it provides clear principles of ballet aesthetics; secondly, it includes information about production processes and the agents implicated therein; and finally, it describes traits of the resulting works. Moreover, Saint-Hubert's text places specific emphasis on multimedia aspects of ballet and contains one of the most-complete presentations of an artistic figure – the *maître d'ordre* – that is directly relevant to this multimedia nature, thus providing material particularly relevant to an “expanded” view of court ballet.

La Manière de composer is more a booklet than a book, which nevertheless manages to pack a great wealth of advice about the art of 17th-century ballet into its roughly thirty pages. This advice is at times artistic/creative; the treatise gives suggestions for inventing adequate ballet topics or choosing machines and costumes, as well as reflections upon the dramaturgical structure of ballets. Furthermore, and to a considerable degree, the treatise contains pragmatic and production-oriented suggestions – for instance how many days ballets should be rehearsed⁴ or how to approach ordering elements of the production. The author also does not hesitate to propose his own ideas about ballet, since ‘*il est licite de corriger les anciennes règles pour en faire de meilleures* [it is licit to correct ancient rules in order to make better ones]’.⁵ In these ways, Saint-Hubert offers a veritable *poetics* of ballet; a perspective on the art of creating, of *making*, ballets both as artistic process and pragmatic enterprise.

While the *poetics* of *La Manière de composer* advises about the creation of ballets, the projection of a contemporary understanding of the term “ballet” onto the text would be unfortunate, as Saint-Hubert's use of “ballet”, refers to the genre today termed “court ballet”. In this chapter, the term “ballet” is used in line with the vocabulary employed within the treatise itself, and disengages the word from the dominance of its contemporary connotations. A similar concern arises with respect to the word “choreography”, since Saint-Hubert was writing at a time when the term was not in common use (even more so in its later, dominant meanings). And just as *La Manière de composer* cannot be read through the perspective of the present-day dance-type “ballet”, this chapter argues that the treatise may only be partly readable with a notion of choreography relating to dance and the moving body. Investigating Saint-Hubert's portrayal of ballet as a multimedia, heterogeneous enterprise – emerging from interdisciplinary creative work and resulting in an anti-modernist dramaturgical assemblage – this chapter teases out its relevance for a contemporary expanded choreography.

4 Saint-Hubert: *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, p. 17.

5 Ibid., p. 24.

Of ballet and of dance

Saint-Hubert's treatise opens with a short defence of the practice of dancing. The author classifies dance as one of the three principal exercises (to be) pursued by the nobility, along with horse-riding and manipulating arms; argues that it is beneficial for increasing one's grace; counters the impression that it reduces one's valour (paralleling it with Mars' romantic entanglements with Venus which do not dampen his military ardour); and defends dance practice by referring to its preference by the nobility.⁶ These comments seem to generically refer to dance. The prominent, introductory position of such a passage in a ballet treatise is consistent with the fact that 17th-century France was characterised by a certain degree of continuity between stage/performance dance and ball dance; members of the nobility – non-professional dance practitioners – performed on stage, ballets were produced as part of court life, steps circulated from ballroom to stage and vice versa. However, at the same time that he highlights this continuity between ballet and non-performance-related dance, Saint-Hubert differentially refers to the *belle danse* – also associated with courtly social dancing – and to dancing representing specific characters (a magician, a student ...),⁷ thus introducing nuances that differentiate ball dance from ballet dancing. Menestrier, writing some forty years after Saint-Hubert, agrees with his precursor when he notes that ballets can be distinguished from other dances since they are not composed of simple corporeal positions and movements, but also include expressions “marking” different characters.⁸

Beyond its distinctions between ballet-dance and ball dance, it is important to consider that while Saint-Hubert's treatise refers to dance – including a chapter about it – *La Manière de composer* is not a text *about* dance, but about ballet. In other words, not only does Saint-Hubert not use the term “choreography”, but he also describes practices that are not exclusively assimilable to dance-making. In effect, when Saint-Hubert enumerates aspects of ballet-making, he does not treat the genre as one *only* characterised by dance. Dance is, rather, one of many – and not the first – elements he considers to be part of ballet: ‘[p]our faire vn beau Ballet, il y a six choses nécessaires, sçavoir, le Subiet, les Airs, la Dance, les Habits, les Machines, & l'ordre [in order to make a beautiful ballet, six things

6 Ibid., pp. 1, 4.

7 Ibid., pp. 12–13. Saint-Hubert adds a further consideration of ability in this distinction; he notes that good dancers should be kept for ballet portions including *belle danse*, while other parts do not require technically-accomplished practitioners.

8 Menestrier, Claude-François: *Des Ballets anciens et modernes selon les règles du théâtre*, Paris: Guignard 1682, p. 158.

are necessary, that is the Subject, the Melodies, the Dance, the Costumes, the Machines, and the order!'.⁹

Indeed 17th-century treatises are identifiable – such as Saint-Hubert's and Menestrier's *Des Ballets anciens et modernes* – that tend towards a focus on ballet as a type of composite spectacle, in parallel to those – such as de Lauze's *Apologie* – which focus on the steps, technique, and execution of dances. Reflecting this theoretical distinction between ballet and dance, Michel de Marolles (in a lesser-known treatise published in 1657) differentiates his work on the ballet format from those on '*la danse et [...] l'art de sauter* [dance and the saltatory art]'.¹⁰ While, then, considerations about dance and ballet were related, and while reflections on dance were necessary parts of ballet treatises, it is an error to equate ballet with dance. As Marina Nordera points out about the 17th century, '[t]he term "ballet" is used [...] to indicate both the whole piece as an entity as well as the danced portions of it'¹¹ – but the two are not identical. While a ballet may today be seen as a type of dance work, in Saint-Hubert's universe it was not fully coextensive with dance.

Rather, ballet is presented by Saint-Hubert and his contemporaries as a multimedia spectacle. For example, Saint-Hubert argues that ballet's originality can increase through the *entrées* (which include dance) and non-dance elements (such as costumes).¹² His text also places dance in a relatively inferior position compared to other elements of the ballet; for example, he states that dance steps must be "subjected" [*asubietir*] to music and to the *entrées*,¹³ thus forming a hierarchical relationship in a composite ballet *poetics* that is not dominated by dance. Other 17th-century authors align themselves with Saint-Hubert; Menestrier speaks of ballets as multi-modal entities in which '*l'esprit, l'oreille & les yeux trouvent de quoy se divertir si agreeablement* [the spirit, the ear and the eyes find agreeable entertainment]'.¹⁴ De Marolles, even though he prioritises dance, also acknowledges the ballet's multidisciplinary character, referring to it as

une Danse de plusieurs personnes masquées sous des habits éclatants, composée de diverses Entrées ou Parties qui se peuvent distribuer en plusieurs Actes et se rapportent agréablement à un Tout avec des Airs différents pour représenter un sujet inventé où le Plaisant, le Rare et le Merveilleux ne soient point oubliés [...] La Musique et la Symphonie

9 Saint-Hubert: *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, p. 6.

10 Marolles, Michel de: Neuvième discours: Du ballet, in Hourcade: *Mascarades & ballets au Grand Siècle* [1657], p. 225.

11 Nordera, Marina: Ballet de cour, in Kant, Marion (ed.): *The Cambridge Companion to Ballet*, New York: Cambridge University Press 2007, p. 19.

12 Saint-Hubert: *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, pp. 8–9.

13 Ibid., p. 12.

14 Menestrier: *Des Ballets anciens et modernes*, p. 1.

*des instruments et des voix y sont tout à fait de la bienséance, aussi bien que les Machines proportionnées aux Sujets et les changements de Scène ou de Théâtre quand il est à propos [a Dance of multiple masked persons under brilliant clothing, composed of diverse Entrées or Parts that can be distributed in multiple Acts and which are agreeably related to a Whole with different Melodies in order to represent an invented subject where the Pleasant, the Rare and the Marvellous are not forgotten [...] Music and the Symphony of instruments and voices are absolutely proper as are the Machines proportioned to the Subjects and Stage or Theatre changes when this is relevant].*¹⁵

Consistent with this multimedia nature of the genre, dance masters functioning as choreographers for 17th-century ballets were not solely dedicated to the art of dance, but were also often the composers of the music for the *entrées*.¹⁶ Contemporary historians also agree that while sets may not have been necessary for ballets, other elements rendering them multimedia – most notably masks and costumes – were important and recurring features.¹⁷ For these reasons, ballet in the mid-17th century – despite its chronological proximity to the foundation of the *Académie Royale de Danse* by Louis XIV and its contribution to a modernist¹⁸ classification of dance (in opposition to arts such as music) – was a veritably interdisciplinary genre; it was more a multi-modal spectacle including dance than a “dance” work.

Beyond presenting ballet as a multimedia, artistic genre casting doubt upon a modernist conception of any one of its components – including dance – Saint-Hubert's treatise and other sources of/on the 17th century also question the possible autonomy of ballet's “danced portions”, to use Nordera's expression. The issue of dance's autonomy in Saint-Hubert's text can be examined through

15 Marolles : Neuvième discours, pp. 201–202.

16 Christout : Introduction, p. 17.

17 Hourcade: *Mascarades & ballets au Grand Siècle*, p. 59; Prunières, Henry : *Le Ballet de cour en France avant Benserade et Lully*, Paris : Laurens 1914, p. 159.

18 The term is used here – and in the remainder of this book – in association with an attachment to medium specificity and/or autonomy. This is, however, not to imply that a pre-20th century project of dance autonomy was exclusive to Louis XIV's actions or only achievable through a singular view of medium specificity. Mark Franko's appraisal of burlesque ballet (here focusing on burlesque ballets of the 1620s), for example, also identifies a choreographic autonomy: '[t]he body became a locus of allegorical meaning not only by carrying symbolic properties, but by projecting them physically into space as extensions of itself. This displacement of the organic body is also symptomatic of the concern for choreographic autonomy: the dancing figure becomes autonomous from the 'natural' body in a project whose artistic outcome is not bound up with assumptions about psychology and human action resumed in narrative'. Franko, Mark: *Dance as Text: Ideologies of the Baroque Body*, New York: Oxford University Press 2015 [1993], p. 79.

his view on the interaction between dance and costume. As a first indication that costume may subvert dance's possibility of autonomy, the treatise suggests that dance should adapt to costume, thus introducing a potentially hierarchical relationship between the two:

Le ballet estant vne Comedie, muette, il faut que les habits & & [sic] les actions fasset recognoistre ce que l'on y represente. & le maistre à dancer doit faire les pas & les figures en sorte que l'on puisse dancer avec ce que l'on doit porter sur soy, & tout en sera beaucoup mieux. [Ballet being a silent Comedy, costumes and actions must make what is represented recognizable and the dance master must make the steps and the figures in such way that one can dance with what one needs to wear [or carry], and everything will be much better].¹⁹

A second indication is found in Saint-Hubert's treatment of dance and costume as media fulfilling the function of imitation. For the author, while dance contributes to the successful representation of characters – 'que chacun dancast suivant ce qu'il represente [that each person dance following what he represents]²⁰ – this imitative function is not achieved through movement alone, as it needs to be complemented by costume. Saint-Hubert is a strict critic of dancers who leave their accessories mid-performance in order to dance unencumbered, reducing the spectators' ability to accurately recognise their character. If they do not keep their costume accessories,

on auroit besoin de leurs mettre vn escriteau sur le dos pour les faire recognoistre, ainsi que font les mauvais peintres lors qu'ils ont fait quelque méchant tableau [we would need to put a label on their back in order to make them recognizable, like bad painters do when they've made a bad painting].²¹

Correspondingly, Saint-Hubert claims that if two dancers represent the same role, they must be dressed similarly,²² the costume cannot vary without varying the character. In these ways, dance does not appear to function autonomously, but, rather, in constant collaboration with costume; props and masks contribute to dancers' imitative role. Other 17th-century authors writing on ballet agree with Saint-Hubert: for de Marolles, ballet 'n'est autre chose qu'une Comédie muette où toutes les actions se représentent par la Danse et par les habits [is nothing else than a silent Comedy, where all the actions are represented by Dance and by costumes]²³; for Menestrier, 'comme le Ballet n'a que des Acteurs muets, il faut que leurs habits parlent pour

¹⁹ Saint-Hubert: *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, p. 16, emphasis added.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 12.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 15–16.

²² Ibid., p. 20.

²³ Marolles: *Neuvième discours*, p. 202, emphasis added.

eux & les fassent connoistre aussi bien que leurs mouvemens [since the Ballet only has mute Actors, their costumes must speak for them and make them recognisable as much as their motions]²⁴; for Michel de Pure, *'si les habits sont mal ordonnez, il est impossible que les Entrées experiment bien ce qu'elles doivent exprimer* [if the costumes are badly arranged, it is impossible that the Entrées express well what they have to express]²⁵.

The collaboration of gesture and costume in the imitative work of dance may lead to an amalgamation of dancer and costume. Saint-Hubert writes that it needs to be prevented

*que personne du Ballet ne paroissent dans la salle avec son habit auparauant auoir dansé [...] particulièrement en France, ou l'on ayme la nouveauté, & le changement [that someone from the Ballet appear in the room with their costume before dancing [...] especially in France, where we like novelty and change].*²⁶

This injunction exists, as Saint-Hubert notes, because of a valorisation of variety; at the same time, it suggests that costume and dance movement form a conjunction. In this perspective, the performing figure²⁷ is not a site of "competition" between body/dance and costume, but a hybrid of both. This figure does not organically express or physically convey the character it portrays, including its interiority and intentions; rather, it symbolically or synecdochally refers to this character through a combination of gesture and costume. Character representation is achieved through typified gesture and signifying elements of costume. For example, Menestrier suggested continuous agitation for the motions of the Wind-character, and he provided a whole list of typical props and accessories, such as David with a crown and harp, Apollo with a lyre, and Hercules with a lionskin; de Marolles recommended a dress with different colours to highlight the passage of time (referring to its always-changing nature) and wings attached to its back and legs (to highlight how quickly time passes).²⁸ Frédéric Pouillaude concurs:

24 Menestrier: *Des Ballets anciens et modernes*, pp. 250–251.

25 Pure, Michel de: *Idée des spectacles anciens et nouveaux*, Paris: Brunnet 1668, p. 287.

26 Saint-Hubert: *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, p. 27.

27 For the notion of the figure see Haitzinger, Nicole & Leon, Anna: The Body Suspended among Invisible Threads: Pavel Tchelitchev and the Ballets Russes' *Ode* (1928), (in preparation).

28 Menestrier, Claude-François: Remarques pour la conduite des ballets, in: Christout, Marie-Françoise: *Le Ballet de cour de Louis XIV: 1643-1672: Mises en scène*, Paris: Picard 1967 [1658], p. 223; Marolles: Neuvième discours, p. 209; Menestrier: *Des Ballets anciens et modernes*, p. 140.

If the *ballet de cour* could only imitate through the support of annexed representational elements such as costumes, masks, decor, and text, this was precisely because it did not seek to show either individuals or affect, but to produce symbolic figures, instantaneous *signs*, which spectators would take pleasure in decoding and understanding. Thus one could, without risking a failure of verisimilitude, dance the Wind, the Sun, Anger, Peace or the movement of the Stars. [...] The court ballet was not concerned with expressive utterance, with emotion shown in its temporal development, but with an image offered as a snapshot, to be decoded [...].²⁹

If dance, as it appears in *La Manière de composer* and related sources, is an important component of a multimedia whole (but not fully equivalent to ballet), and not an autonomous medium of expression (but a contributor to a not-only-human, not-only-organic figure), then a choreography conception centred on dance-making as a corporeal practice is not fully adapted to a genre that expands beyond dance. In these ways, Saint-Hubert's *poetics* point to the need for an expanded notion of choreography – one that provides tools for the description and analysis of dance's relations with, and role within, a composite whole; one that is critical about its attachment to physicality, to allow the assembled bodies of court ballets to be recognised as such.

In this framework, the maker of dance (the artist referred to as a choreographer today) may not be a ballet's principal, dominant, or autonomous creator. In the interdisciplinary enterprise of ballet production, the dance master, as portrayed in the treatise, seems to have been the recipient of advice and directives from other practitioners: the author notes that a ballet's dance master must be told 'ce qu'il est besoin qu'il facent afin de faire les pas & figures suivant le dessein [what he needs to do in order to do the steps and figures following the plan].'³⁰ Saint-Hubert also advises alternating the numbers of dancers in each *entrée*, the number of figures, their duration, and the variety of their melodies and steps,³¹ all of which begs the question of whether or not such choices were open to dance masters. Marie-Françoise Christout points out that dance masters also

29 Pouillaude, Frédéric: *Unworking Choreography: The Notion of the Work in Dance*, New York: Oxford University Press 2017 [2009, trans. Anna Pakes], p. 183. Menestrier notes that 'quand le personnage paraît une seconde fois, il n'exprime rien de nouveau quant à la figure, & il faut que les mouvements soient diversifiés, que l'on puisse entendre ce qu'il représente de nouveau [when the character appears a second time, he expresses nothing new with regards to the figure and his movements must be diversified, so that we can hear what else he can signify]', suggesting if ballet figures function as signs, a single appearance of these signs may be sufficient. Menestrier: *Des Ballets anciens et modernes*, p. 142.

30 Saint-Hubert: *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, p. 23.

31 Ibid., pp. 10, 16–17.

had to adapt to the skill of their noble performers,³² instead of following unrestricted creative volition. The non-dominant role of the choreographer is also illustrated by Saint-Hubert's note that one dancing master is needed to do [*faire les pas*] and teach the steps for three to four *entrées*; given that – according to Saint-Hubert himself – a ballet had a minimum of ten *entrées*, one work must have required multiple dancing masters.³³ This is corroborated by contemporary historians who point out that a ballet could have several dance masters (a similar principle of collective, multiple authorship held for 17th-century painters and composers).³⁴ Based on this information, it seems that the non-equivalence between dance and ballet can be doubled by a non-equivalence between dance master and ballet *poiesis*. In effect, Saint-Hubert's text introduces an altogether different figure that may assume both practical and artistic/conceptual authorial responsibility for ballets – one that may be seen as an expanded choreographer.

A master of order

In Saint-Hubert's list of elements necessary for creating a ballet, his last point is termed "order" – presented as foundational for the success of a ballet: '[c]e n'est pas la plus grande dépense qui rend les Ballets plus agréables, mais c'est quand l'ordre y est bien observé [it is not the greatest expense that renders ballets more agreeable, but when order is well observed].'³⁵ The author then dedicates a whole chapter to the topic of order, personified in a figure he calls the *maître d'ordre*. In the same chapter, Saint-Hubert widens the scope of "order" by referring to the ballets of 'feu Monseigneur de Nemours [the late Monseigneur de Nemours]'³⁶; this "monseigneur" is most probably Henri de Savoie duc de Nemours, who was involved in the production of ballets as their "*ordonnateur*" [roughly translated as "ordonnator"]. Indeed, Saint-Hubert's references to the *maître d'ordre* bear similarities to information about *ordonnateurs* – courtiers or artists responsible for choosing the theme of ballets and supervising their production.³⁷ This "master" acquires great importance in the treatise – possibly because Saint-Hubert may

32 Christout: *Le Ballet de cour de Louis XIV*, p. 162.

33 Saint-Hubert: *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, pp. 5, 17.

34 Franko: *Dance as Text*, p. 93; Christout: Introduction, pp. 20–21; Christout: *Le Ballet de cour de Louis XIV*, p. 13.

35 Saint-Hubert: *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, p. 20.

36 Ibid., p. 25.

37 Cf. Lecomte, Nathalie: *Ballet de cour*, in: Moal, Philippe Le (ed.): *Dictionnaire de la danse*, Paris: Larousse 1999, p. 528.

have operated in a similar role³⁸ and tended to valourise it – which states that everyone implicated in ballet-making should obey him.³⁹

The first type of work that the master of order does according to Saint-Hubert's vision is hands-on, pragmatic labour. He works before a ballet is presented, visiting the room in which it will be performed to decide issues such as where entrances will be made and where machines can be placed. He is tasked with finding the best artisans to create the machines and the best operators to use them. He is involved in the preparations of the ballet's costumes and accessories. Saint-Hubert furthermore requires that he be present at all rehearsals and that he know the names of the dancers, indicating his familiarity with the members of the production.⁴⁰ The master of order is also active during the performance itself, fulfilling tasks that can be compared to those of today's stage managers, such as timing the entrances and exits of different *entrées* or telling the musicians when to play.⁴¹ The master of order is thus implicated in multiple pragmatic aspects of the process of production, staging, and performance.

At the same time, certain passages of the treatise suggest that the *maîtres d'ordre*'s role was not limited to this. Indeed, they not only supervised the ballet's craftspeople and other artists but also mediated between them and the ballet's conception, explaining its plan and theme.⁴² What's more, Saint-Hubert's text discerns a creative space for those working on "order"; this included, for example, choosing the ballet's participating elements, such as masks and accessories.⁴³ The treatise further refers to choices made by the duc de Nemours as to whether there should be spoken word in ballet, thus indicating the *maître d'ordre*'s role in a ballet's formal and media development.⁴⁴ The master of order thus performed conceptually- and artistically-relevant work, assuming an important function of creative authority within ballet *poiesis*. Saint-Hubert goes further: '*j'ye voudrois que celuy qui a composé le subiet, prist le soin de le faire executer lui mesme* [I would like that he who composed the subject takes care executing it himself]⁴⁵ – in other words, the person who puts the ballet into practice may also develop its subject. If that person was a high-ranking member of the

38 Hourcade: *Mascarades & ballets au Grand Siècle*, p. 137

39 Saint-Hubert: *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, p. 30. This source uses the male form.

40 Ibid., pp. 26, 21, 23.

41 Ibid., pp. 23–24.

42 Ibid., pp. 22–23; Hourcade: *Mascarades & ballets au Grand Siècle*, p. 149.

43 Saint-Hubert: *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, p. 23.

44 Ibid., p. 25.

45 Ibid., p. 22.

nobility – a *grand Seigneur* – who did not wish to undertake the staging, they may delegate creative agency to a master of order.⁴⁶

This view of the master of order is compatible with the tasks of French *ordonnateurs*. For example, Nathalie Lecomte and Christout link the role of the *ordonnateur* with the selection of a ballet's general theme and the elaboration of the libretto, including choosing the poet who would write the lyrics.⁴⁷ The creativity in staging displayed by *ordonnateurs* and reflected by Saint-Hubert's *maître d'ordre* was also recognised by other 17th-century authors; for instance, Menestrier presents the *Ballet de la nuit*, performed twelve years after the publication of *La Manière de composer*, by paying tribute to its *ordonnateur*

Monsieur Clément qui étoit incomparable en tous ces ouvrages d'esprit, s'y surpassa lui-même, & il falloit posseder aussi bien que lui toute la science des Fêtes et des Representations, pour imaginer de si belles choses [Monsieur Clément, who was incomparable in all these works of the spirit, went beyond himself, and it was necessary to possess as much as he all the science of Feasts and Representations, in order to imagine such beautiful things].⁴⁸

Nordera aptly describes such figures' work when she associates the *ordonnateur* with de Pure's "poet" – who went beyond poetry-writing and 'incorporated the functions of "auteur, inventeur, dessinateur, entrepreneur [author, inventor, designer, entrepreneur]"', highlighting 'a notion of the poet, which seems to return to the original Greek meaning of the word *poein* (to make).⁴⁹ Today, court ballets tend to be attributed to their librettist, composer, and/or choreographer(s), be it because their work has left more material traces (librettos, musical scores, notations) or because of the importance that such roles have acquired. Nevertheless, this tendency conceals the potential – expanded – authorship of the master of order.

In both his more practical tasks and his more artistic/conceptual considerations, Saint-Hubert's *maître d'ordre* accomplishes interdisciplinary work, supervising practitioners from multiple fields including dance, costume, masking, music, and machinery. Sources chronologically surrounding *La Manière de composer* further attest to the master of order's multimedia creative role. An example is the libretto of *Les Noces de Pelée et de Thétis*, staged in 1654, dedicated to its *ordonnateur* (the count of Saint-Aignan); the dedication mentions the artists having worked on the verses and machines, but also

46 Ibid., p. 22.

47 Lecomte, Nathalie (referring to Christout) : *Entre cours et jardins d'illusion : Le ballet en Europe (1515-1715)*, Pantin : Centre national de la danse 2014, p. 154.

48 Menestrier : *Des Ballets anciens et modernes*, pp. 176–177.

49 Nordera : *Ballet de cour*, p. 21; cf. Pure : *Idée des spectacles anciens et nouveaux*, p. 215.

Monseigneur, la richesse des habits, le choix des Airs et des Pas et l'assortiment merveilleux de tant de différentes pièces qui ont composé cet admirable tout, ne sont dus qu'à vous seul [Monseigneur, the richness of the clothing, the choice of Melodies and of Steps and the marvellous assortment of so many different pieces that composed this admirable whole, are only due to you].⁵⁰

In this interdisciplinary role, Saint-Hubert's master of order also holds a particular position in relation to dance. Beyond mediating information to the dance master, *La Manière de composer* implies that the master of order may, themselves, dance in the ballet.⁵¹ In both these ways, they display more than an observer's understanding and a practical knowledge of dance practice.⁵² The artist composing a ballet's steps and motions was therefore not its sole or principal creator, while figures not specialised in dance – but touching upon it as part of their multidisciplinary practice – accomplished central tasks of ballet-making and were recognised in their contribution to the performance. This configuration of creative roles challenges a conception of choreography that solely associates the making of ballet with the making of its dances, and thus points to the need to integrate multidisciplinary figures practicing a non-dancerly ballet authorship into our understanding of court ballet.

Beyond *La Manière de composer*, the nature of the master of order's work can be more-appropriately read as part of a constellation of different figures of European pre-18th-century spectacle, who performed comparable duties. This constellation is geographically diverse (going beyond France) and chronologically wide (extending beyond Saint-Hubert's mid-17th century) – indeed, Roger Savage suggests '[t]he idea of one man taking overall responsibility for the staging of a dramatic event' can be traced back to the Medieval period.⁵³ In France, a figure such as Balthasar de Beaujoyeulx (active as early as the late-16th century) was presented as '*l'inventeur du sujet, & en disposa toute l'ordonnance* [the inventor of the subject [who] disposed all the order]'; the only reason he did not create the *Ballet comique de la reine*'s (1581) verses, music, and decorations was, positedly,

⁵⁰ Quoted in Prunières, Henry: *L'Opéra italien en France avant Lulli*, Paris: Champion 1913, pp. 170–171.

⁵¹ Saint-Hubert: *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, p. 26.

⁵² Henry Prunières goes so far as to suggest that there are cases where members of the nobility performed functions comparable to those of Saint-Hubert's master of order – in this case, the count of Saint-Aignan – and also functioned as choreographers contributing to the work of dance masters. Prunières: *L'Opéra italien en France avant Lulli*, p. 164.

⁵³ Savage, Roger: Staging an *Intermedio*: Practical Advice from Florence *circa* 1630, in: Mulryne, J.R. & Shewring, Margaret (eds.): *Italian Renaissance Festivals and their European Influence*, Lewiston: Mellen Press 1992, p. 58.

because of a lack of time.⁵⁴ A further – and chronologically closer to Saint-Hubert – comparison is the Italian *corago*, primarily active in early opera.⁵⁵ The *corago*'s work is amply described in an anonymous treatise dating from the 1620s-1630s, in which they are attributed several spectacle-preparation tasks: command over different construction workers, knowledge about lights, production of costumes.⁵⁶ Like the *maître d'ordre*, the *corago* is also involved during the performance; the anonymous treatise ends with a “checklist”⁵⁷ of reminders to – among other things – make sure that all performers are dressed properly, machine operators are in position, extra help is available for performers with more than one role, musicians have prepared their instruments, machines are clean. The *corago* was also – like the master of order – a figure whose work spanned text, dance, music, costuming, architecture, acting, and lighting.⁵⁸ Mirroring the master of order's more creative work, the *corago* could give advice to, and collaborate with, the poet and the artists of the work they staged, in order to interpret the piece.⁵⁹ The English “Master of the Revels” (whose role was confirmed by patent in the English court in 1545) is another comparable figure, who oversaw performances, proposed ideas for entertainments, and engaged with costumes, props, constructions, transportation of materials, and lighting. Like *ordonnateurs* or the *maître d'ordre*, a revels supervisor ‘stood as producer and director who had financial, administrative, and aesthetic control under the king and council’.⁶⁰

54 Cahusac, Louis de : *La Danse ancienne et moderne ou Traité historique de la danse*, La Haye: Jean Neaulme 1754, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k108132g/f2.image> (August 2020), BnF, Tome 2, pp. 134–135. Cahusac's “information” comes from Beaujoyeulx' own account: Beaujoyeulx, Balthazar de : *Balet comique de la Royne, faict aux noces de monsieur le duc de Joyeuse & madamoyse de Vaudemont sa sœur*, Paris: LeRoy, Ballard & Patisson 1582, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k110737> (August 2020), BnF, p. 2.

55 Anonymous: *Il corago o vero alcune osservazioni per metter bene in scena le composizioni drammatiche*, Florence: Leo Olschki 1983 [1620s-1630s]. Etymological possibilities for the word “*corago*” include the Greek *choragos* – a ‘moneyed chorus sponsor’ – and the Latin *choragus* or ‘props-and-costumes-man’. The term has also been associated with Aristotle's poetics. Savage: Staging an *Intermedio* p. 60; Fabbri, Paolo & Pompilio, Angelo: Introduzione, in: Anonymous: *Il corago*, p. 10, footnote 20. According to Savage, the term “*corago*” was at times used in the 17th century to refer to Jesuit college “stagers”. Savage, Roger & Sansone, Matteo: ‘Il Corago’ and the Staging of Early Opera: Four Chapters from an Anonymous Treatise circa 1630, in: *Early Music* 17/4 (1989), pp. 498–499.

56 Anonymous: *Il corago*, pp. 22.

57 Ibid., p. 125.

58 Ibid., p. 22.

59 Fabbri & Pompilio: Introduzione, p. 11; Anonymous: *Il corago*, p. 24.

60 Streitberger, William R.: *Court Revels 1485–1559*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1994, pp. 7–8. The German figure of *Oberhofmarschall* may also be comparable to these. See Stocker, Kathrin : *L'Altérité française en Europe : Appropriations, inclusions, échanges*,

Framing the presentation of Saint-Hubert's "master" with such examples is not intended to impose continuity upon diverse genres. Rather, the contextualisation of Saint-Hubert's *maître d'ordre* with figures such as these can – beyond widening the geographic and chronological scope of the notion – function as a reminder of the multidisciplinary nature of ballet-making, rendering it comparable with fields which are not primarily characterised by dance, such as early opera. It functions as an indication that pre-18th-century European spectacle (including 17th-century French ballet) challenges the medium specificity of modernism and thus enters into an interdisciplinary history of stage performance.

The preponderance of such creative roles attests to the formal and media characteristics of pre-18th century performance, as well as the social status of certain practitioners related to order. It was indeed often members of the nobility and/or court who organised and staged ballets. The power associated with such a position is illustrated by the case of the duc of Saint-Aignan who, after having functioned as an *ordonnateur*, was appointed by Louis XIV as the "*vice-protéteur*" [vice-protector] of the *Académie Royale de Danse*.⁶¹ (As with many *ordonnateurs*, the *corago* was also required to be related to the court.⁶²) Whether noble status allowed them to take a role *already* highly respected or the role *became* highly respected because of the noble status of most of its practitioners, 17th-century ballet-making included highly regarded, non-dance-specific makers. In this way, Saint-Hubert's *maître d'ordre* explicitly manifests the importance of looking for the interstices of historical works and creative processes in which social and political power may be lodged – and of acknowledging that this power is not exclusively exercised through choreographic instructions geared towards dancing bodies.

The distinction between ballet and dance shows that a more recent, dance-focussed conception of choreography is not fully applicable to Saint-Hubert's views. The master-of-order figure correspondingly indicates that a more recent, dance-focussed conception of the choreographer as sole or principal creator is not applicable to the ballet poetics that *La Manière de composer* proposes, either. Shifting the focus of creative work from any one medium to the pragmatic, but also artistic, and conceptual coordination between several media, the master of order performs work comparable to today's expanded choreographic practice.

in : Fabbricatore, Arianna Béatrice (ed.) : *La Danse théâtrale en Europe : Identités, altérités, frontières*, Paris : Hermann 2019, p. 121.

61 Gatulle, Pierre : Le Corps guerrier, le corps dansant et l'esprit galant. François de Beauvilliers, duc de Saint-Aignan (1610-1687), in : *Bulletin du Centre de recherche du château de Versailles* (2013), <https://journals.openedition.org/crcv/12191> (August 2020).

62 Fabbri & Pompilio : Introduzione, p. 9.

The subject of ballet

Given a ballet is not strictly a dance work, and as multidisciplinary figures like the *maître d'ordre* participate in its creation in central ways, Saint-Hubert's treatise refers to a ballet-making that is neither primarily dance-based nor solely dance-oriented. This kind of making may be further understood through an element positioned at the very foundation of Saint-Hubert's *poetics*: the *sujet*, the first to be mentioned in his list of ballet's necessary elements. The subject is the topic of Saint-Hubert's first chapter after the introduction (the chapters follow the order of the list), which starts with a clear affirmation of its importance:

*Je commenceray par le sujet, duquel depend tout le reste, & a qui il faut exactement s'asubietir, aussi estce le principal pour faire vn beau Ballet, que de chercher vn beau subiet, qui est la chose la plus difficile [I will start from the subject, from which everything else depends, and to which one must be exactly subjected, so it is principal in order to do a beautiful Ballet to look for a beautiful subject, which is what is most difficult].*⁶³

It is not only the beauty and success of the ballet that depend on its subject, but its originality too:

*Quand ie dy qu'il faut faire vn Ballet, qui n'aye iamais esté veu, j'entends parler du corps du subiet seulement, car pour les entrées il est impossible d'en faire que fort peu qui n'ayent esté faites [...] Ce ne sont plus celles representées aux autres subiets, mais celles necessaires au vostre, qui est tout contraire aux precedens, & vous vous en seruez parce quelles sont du corps de vostre subiet, & non parce quelles ont esté faites. [When I say that one must make a Ballet, which has never been seen before, I only mean to say this in relation to the body of the subject, since for the entrées it is impossible to make more than few that have not been done [...] It is not those that are represented in other subjects, but those necessary to your own, which is completely contrary to anterior ones, and you use them because they are of the body of your subject, and not because they have been done before.]*⁶⁴

Saint-Hubert thus suggests that his readers look for a '*beau subiet* [beautiful subject]' of their own invention '*puis que c'est la mode maintenant; & que l'on ne dance plus les Metamorphose [sic] d'Ovide comme l'on faisoit le temps passé* [since it is fashionable now and we don't dance Ovid's *Metamorphoses* anymore like we did

63 Saint-Hubert: *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, pp. 6–7.

64 Ibid., p. 8.

in the past]'.⁶⁵ The importance of the subject is coupled by difficulty in selecting and developing it:

*Je trouue quantité de parfaits Musiciens pour les Airs, d'excellés danseurs pour les entrées, des bons designateurs pour les habits, des ouvriers extremement adroits pour les machines, mais fort peu de gens qui sachent accomoder un beau sujet, & y observer l'ordre nécessaire [I find quantity of perfect Musicians for the Melodies, excellent dancers for the entrées, good designers for the costumes, extremely skilled workers for the machines, but only very few people who know how to accommodate a beautiful subject and observe the necessary order in it].*⁶⁶

The subject indeed forms a “rule” in ballet-making, as illustrated by the author’s treatment of mascarades: ‘*estant ordinairement sans sujet, aussi sont elles sans régle* [being ordinarily without subject, they are also without rule]’.⁶⁷

Saint-Hubert’s attention to the subject is shared with other authors in the field of 17th-century ballet. Menestrier considers that ‘[t]out le secret de la conduite d’un Ballet consiste donc au choix du sujet [the whole secret of the direction of a Ballet therefore consists in the choice of the subject]’ and, like Saint-Hubert, ranks its invention first in the list of elements making up a ballet.⁶⁸ de Pure expresses his agreement in a wonderful passage:

*Le Sujet est l’Ame du Ballet, qui fomente la première Idée que le Poète peut avoir conceue, qui communique les esprits aux diverses parties, & qui leur donne enfin & la nourriture & le mouvement. Ce n'est pourtant pas une Ame parfaite qui soit toute, & toute entière en chaque partie. C'est plutôt une seve materielle & interieure, secrètement & séparément répandue dans chaque membre du corps, qui lui communique toute la chaleur nécessaire pour vivre, & toute la vigueur pour agir. [the Subject is the Soul of the Ballet, which incites the first Idea that the Poet may have conceived, that communicates the spirits to the diverse parts, and that finally gives them both nourishment and movement. It is not however a perfect Soul that is in its entirety in each part. It is rather a material and internal lifeblood, secretly and separately spread in each member of the body, which communicates to it all the warmth necessary for life and all the vigor for action].*⁶⁹

According to *La Manière de composer*, the subject should influence how many entrées a ballet will contain; Saint-Hubert gives “standard” numbers of entrées for different kinds of ballets – thirty for a “grand” royal ballet, twenty for a

65 Ibid., p. 9.

66 Ibid., p. 7.

67 Ibid., p. 5.

68 Menestrier: *Des Ballets anciens et modernes*, pp. 92, 55–56.

69 Pure: *Idée des spectacles anciens et nouveaux*, p. 216.

“beautiful” ballet, ten to twelve for a “small” one – but stresses that this rule is not strict, since it is the subject that will form the final criterion.⁷⁰ It is the subject that also decides the ballet's content; Saint-Hubert writes that no *entrée* should lie outside the subject, all of them have to be appropriate to it.⁷¹ Moreover, it is implied that the subject can help “make sense” of this content; Saint-Hubert suggests that the ‘*discours du sujet du Ballet, soit en Prose, ou en Vers* [discourse of the Ballet's subject, either in Prose or in Verses]’⁷² be given to the spectators, in order to increase their pleasure, and understanding, of the work. Selecting the number of *entrées* and determining their content, the subject therefore assumes a dramaturgical role in Saint-Hubert's text.

Other 17th-century authors further imply that the subject's dramaturgical function concerned how contents of the ballet should be combined. Menestrier writes that ballet does not require unity of action, time, or space – like tragedy does – but does require that everything relate to the same theme;⁷³ “[*la Fable des ballets [...] ne demande point d'autre unité, que celle du dessein, afin que les entrées différentes se rapportent à un Sujet* [the Fable of ballets [...] only requires the unity of plan/goal, so that the different *entrées* relate to one Subject].”⁷⁴ He gives examples of how different parts of ballets can result from their subjects: a ballet on the world divided into sky and earth, a ballet on time divided into seasons...⁷⁵ De Pure similarly writes of the subject of spectacular entertainments (in this case, entries for kings and queens):

*Il faut qu'il y ait un dessein, un poinct principal, un noeud mysterieux qui d'une façon ou d'autre appartienne si precisement au sujet, & s'étende si naturellement à toutes les parties qui le composent, qu'il ne puisse estre appliqué à autre chose qu'à ce qu'il est destiné [there must be a plan, a principal point, a mysterious knot which in one way or another belongs so precisely to the subject, and stretches out so naturally to all parts composing it, that it can only be applied to that for which it is destined].*⁷⁶

De Pure agrees that there is a difference between the scenes of drama and the *entrées* of ballets, since scenes need to be relate to each other while *entrées* need only be related to the subject.⁷⁷ In these authors' perspective, the subject provides a specific kind of dramaturgical coherence – one in which parts

⁷⁰ Saint-Hubert: *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, p. 5.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 7.

⁷² Ibid., p. 11.

⁷³ Menestrier: *Des Ballets anciens et modernes*, p. 54.

⁷⁴ Menestrier: *Remarques pour la conduite des ballets*, p. 222.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 225.

⁷⁶ Pure: *Idée des spectacles anciens et nouveaux*, p. 205.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 241. Cf. also Franko: *Dance as Text*, p. 84 for an elaboration on Pure's positions on the subject and the *entrées*.

(entrées) are not linearly articulated with each other but where a transversal topic guides their choice and common presentation. Saint-Hubert insists upon both the subject and the entrée-unit, although he does not describe specific ballets' structures sufficiently to allow a more explicit understanding of his dramaturgical model. On the one hand, he considers ballet themes that can be staged in a plot-based way (e.g. Homer's *Iliad* – despite never bringing it to the stage because of practical reasons) and refers to potentially-linear aspects of dramaturgy (such as the 'suite du sujet [the continuation of the subject]'⁷⁸). On the other hand, however, his text subverts this possibility of linearity; it stresses the importance of alternating between grotesque and serious entrées and between different numbers of dancers in them,⁷⁹ freeing the entrées from a linear progression of plot or character development. He urges that inventing hitherto-unseen entrées can enrich a ballet,⁸⁰ indicating variability in the staging of the subject beyond a linearly-defined narrative. An entrée-based dramaturgical model formulated around a subject did indeed permeate 17th-century ballets, in particular the period between 1620 and 1650 when *La Manière de composer* was written.⁸¹ In her analysis of the treatise, Nicole Haitzinger speaks of a 'lose Handlungsdramaturgie [loose plot dramaturgy]' – with the subject at its hierarchical top – as characterising the 17th century.⁸² For these reasons, there is support for the idea that the subject in Saint-Hubert's ballet *poetics* influences not only the selection, but also the combination and articulation, of ballet contents.

The idea that the subject might function as a guarantor of dramaturgical coherence in Saint-Hubert's – and his context's – ballet *poetics* is also supported by the role the sujet assumes in the ordering of a ballet's diverse media components. The ballet of *La Manière de composer* had (as already described) a heterogeneous, multimedia nature; dance, text, music, costumes, and machinery came together into a colourful whole, resulting in works that Mark Franko has described as 'potentially chaotic'.⁸³ Such a product was the result of not-always-organised interdisciplinary collaboration. Georgie Durosoir presents early 17th-century ballet-making as a wonderfully informal procedure – hinted at by

78 Saint-Hubert: *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, pp. 8–10.

79 Ibid., pp. 7, 10.

80 Ibid., pp. 8–9.

81 Paquot, Marcel: *La Manière de composer les ballets de cour d'après les premiers théoriciens français*, in: *Cahiers de l'Association internationale des études françaises* 9 (1957), p. 192.

82 Haitzinger, Nicole: *Vergessene Traktate – Archive der Erinnerung. Zu Wirkungskonzepten im Tanz von der Renaissance bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Munich: epodium 2009, p. 106.

83 Franko: *Dance as Text*, p. 1.

Saint-Hubert when he criticises spontaneous ballet creation practices (implying these were common practice) or when he suggests the number of days needed to rehearse a ballet (which seem strikingly short by contemporary standards).⁸⁴ Against this background, Saint-Hubert's text makes it clear that the subject should function as a directive towards multiple of the work's media. The subject directs costumes; one should, writes Saint-Hubert, focus less on the luxuriousness of the clothing than on their resemblance and suitability for the subject to be represented.⁸⁵ Similarly, the subject directs the choice of machines:

*Qvand aux Machines, elles seruent d vn grand ornament aux Ballets, & les decorent extremement lors quelles sont belles, bien conduites, & misse à propos dans le subiet, de donner l'inuention de les faire cela ne se peut, que lors que le subiet est parfait, & que l'on scait ce que l'on veut representer avec icelles [as for Machines, they serve as a great ornament to Ballets, and they decorate them extremely when they are beautiful, well conducted, and relevant to the subject, to give the invention to make them can only be done when the subject is perfected, and that we know what we want to represent with them].*⁸⁶

Here, it is suggested that no task should be undertaken before the subject is finalised; if the artists or artisans start work without a complete idea of the subject, they will work randomly without being directed by what the subject demands. This is also applied to music; the treatise suggests that composers do not start their work before the subject is perfected and the *entrées* prepared, so that the music can follow the planned actions:

*[L]e Musicien reussira bien mieux de cette sorte, que de lui faire faire quantité d'Airs que l'on a apres bien de la peine à accomoder aux entrées & au subiet [the Musician will succeed much better in this way, than asking him to make a quantity of Melodies which afterwards we struggle to accommodate to the entrées and to the subject].*⁸⁷

(This point, it is important to note, is *all* that *La Manière de composer*'s chapter on music contains.) In these cases, the subject's guidance upon ballet media is translated into the practical unfolding of the production process. The subject also directs the choice of whether the spoken word is accepted within the ballet; while some approve of its use and others do not, for Saint-Hubert this

84 Durosoir, Georgie : *Les Ballets de la cour de France au XVIIe siècle ou les fantaisies et les splendeurs du Baroque*, Genève : Papillon 2004, p. 11; Saint-Hubert: *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, pp. 17–18.

85 Saint-Hubert: *La Manière de composer et faire réussir les ballets*, pp. 18–20.

86 Ibid., p. 21.

87 Ibid., p. 11–12.

choice is dependent on the subject.⁸⁸ Dance, finally, also serves the subject; for Saint-Hubert, the large numbers of dancers available in *grands ballets* ‘decorent extremement vn subiet y estant bien appropiez, & lors qu’ils y sont necessaires pour faire voir la conclusion du Ballet [extremely decorate a subject, being well adapted to it and when they are necessary in order to make the conclusion of the Ballet visible].’⁸⁹ Guiding the choice and creation of such diverse elements as costumes, machines, music, text, and dance – the whole multimedia range of ballet – the subject (itself, crucially, not medium-specific) thus brings together the different art forms implicated in ballet-making.

A court ballet was an assemblage of dance, music, words, costumes, and complicated machinery, as well as – if not always coherently-connected – of scenes. This composite nature renders it indispensable to include, in ballet *poetics*, agents that can assume a compositional role – keeping these diverse parts of the assemblage together, guaranteeing its unity while preserving its heterogeneity. The master of order is, to a great extent, such an agent, but so is the subject; it is a pivotal element, a guiding principle whose “rule” concerns *how* and *what* the different *entrées* will represent, as well as, in great probability, how this content should be dramaturgically ordered. With this in mind, Saint-Hubert’s choice to title his final chapter ‘Of order’ is enlightening – while the chapter focusses on the personification of order in its master, it may be the art and act of ordering itself, via the subject, that is characteristic of Saint-Hubert’s ballet *poetics*. It is indeed telling that the rule of the subject has one striking exception for Saint-Hubert; before the ballet proper starts, the master of order can make an entrance ‘*hors du subiet* [out of the subject]’ and circle around the dancing space, as if to mark the ballet’s territory.⁹⁰ To those who pain to guarantee the subject’s application, Saint-Hubert offers an exception. It is also telling that Saint-Hubert chose to title his treatise by reference to the “composition” of ballets; his treatise describes a type of making underlied by com/position, putting together, ordering. Through the importance of the subject, ballet *poetics* may be understood as an art intertwined with invention and ordering, the latter two complementing each other, or even, at times, becoming one. The word “assemblage” in the opening of this paragraph is indeed not used anachronistically (despite its preponderance, with different connotations, in contemporary choreographic discourse). It is, rather, directly related to the treatise’s insistence on order; the 1694 (and first) edition of the Académie Française’s dictionary defines “ordre” as ‘arrangement, disposition des choses mises en leur rang [arrangement, disposition of things put in their place]’

88 Ibid., p. 24.

89 Ibid., p. 10–11.

90 Ibid., p. 26.

and “composition” as ‘assemblage de plusieurs parties [assemblage of multiple parts]’.⁹¹ Court ballet may thus be seen as an anti-modernist, dramaturgical, intermedia assemblage, a choreographic composition that is ungraspable through a conception of choreography specifically attached to the discipline of dance – but that can enter into juxtapositional dialogues with contemporary expansions that challenge that very same specificity.

Conclusion

Poiesis refers to the art of making – and Monsieur de Saint-Hubert's treatise is an exploration of the making of (court) ballets. It is an exploration of *what* is made in creating a ballet; not, strictly speaking, a dance, but a multimedia entity in which dance participates and interacts with other components. It is an exploration of *who* makes a ballet: a dance master – or several – to be sure, but also costume and scenography craftspeople, musicians, poets, as well as an interdisciplinary figure called “master of order”, who contributes both practically and conceptually. It is, as well, an exploration of *how* ballet is made – not through autonomous artistic practices, but in an interdisciplinary mix which creates a series of *entrées*, the heterogeneous whole held together by the subject. And it is, finally, an exploration of the *act* of making: of the construction and creation of costumes, masks, dance steps, but also, crucially, the praxis of com/posing, and ordering the dramaturgy of an assemblage.

A (court) ballet, in the present reading of *La Manière de composer*, was not solely characterised by dance. And, if choreography is equivalent to dance-making, the treatise's ballet-*poetics* is not about choreography. But, considering that its ballet was not choreographic because it was not principally characterised by dance presupposes that choreography is essentially associated with dance-making – an idea that both expanded choreography and Saint-Hubert's non-use of the term call into question. From this viewpoint, the perceived distance between Saint-Hubert and choreography only exists because of historically-subsequent associations of choreography with dance. An expanded choreographic perspective on his treatise, therefore, removes the focus from dance-making and pluralises an understanding of 17th-century ballet as a multimedia *choreographic* enterprise with interdisciplinary creative forces – a non-medium-specific approach to an assemblage-like entity.

De-centralising dance from the quest for the choreographic in Saint-Hubert's ballet also points to the striking relevance his treatise may have for a contem-

⁹¹ *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, 1694, <http://artfl-project.uchicago.edu/node/45> (August 2020).

porary expanded choreography. *La Manière de composer* is an example of interdisciplinary performance and authorship before the historical construction of rigid disciplinary boundaries; of a non-autonomous dance embodied by hybridised figures before the strict physicalisation of dance; of dramaturgy and intermedia com/position as core elements of ballet-making before the reduction of the choreographic to dance steps. In these ways, Saint-Hubert's treatise is a reminder of the very constructability and contingency of the essentialisms that contemporary expanded choreography also upsets.