

The Lost Art of Naval Decoration in 18th Century French Canada

Ronald Portanier

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_____ Chair

_____ Examiner
Dr. Catherine Mackenzie

_____ Examiner
Dr. Cynthia Hammond

_____ Supervisor
Dr. Jean Bélisle

Approved by _____
Dr. Johanne Sloan, Graduate Program Director

_____ 2012

_____ Dr. Catherine Wild, Dean of Faculty

ABSTRACT

The Lost Art of Naval Decoration in 18th Century French Canada

Ronald Portanier

French Canada embarked upon a naval ship building programme between 1738 and 1759 to provide warships for induction into the French navy. Archival records mention the construction of these warships and naval dispatches report on their exploits. These warships were adorned with sculptures made by Canadian sculptors. However, the ephemeral quality of these sculptures and scarce documentation about their aesthetic appearance has resulted in an absence of scholarship on their artistic merit. The sculptures that adorned these ships were unique for every ship, with each sculpture made for the space it was meant to fill and to accommodate its viewing point. Hence, inquiring about the sculptures that adorned the warships built in French Canada requires acknowledging the type of ship they were intended for, their surrounding architectural space, and the perception they were meant to convey. This thesis reviews these three essential elements relative to the naval sculpture practiced by the Canadian sculptors of French Canada in an attempt to discover this lost art.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures.....	vi
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1. The Evolution of French Naval Sculpture	6
Chapter 2. The Practice of Naval Sculpture in French Canada	14
Chapter 3. Naval Decoration in 18th Century French Canada as a Lost Art	47
Chapter 4. In Search of the Naval Sculpture of 18th Century French Canada	65
Conclusion	76
Bibliography	85
Appendices	137

List of Figures

Figure No.	Title	Refers to page
Introduction		
1	Jean Bérain. <i>Poupe du Soleil Royal, 1670.</i> Jean Bérain. <i>Le Soleil Royal, 1670.</i>	1, 2, 19, 42
2	Jean-Baptiste Tanneron. <i>Le Soleil Royal, 1839.</i>	1, 2, 9, 19
3	Hendrick Kornelisz Vroom. <i>Prince Royal, 1623.</i>	2
4	William Van de Velde the Elder. <i>Portrait of the Sovereign, 1661.</i>	2
5	Bjorn Landstrom. <i>Wasa - The stern Reconstruction, 1980.</i>	2
6	Charles Philippe Caffieri. <i>Ornement de proue, de poupe et de boutille du vaisseau l'Actif, 1752.</i> Jacques-Etienne Collet. <i>Lion Bondissant tenant dans ses pattes la tête de Mercure, 1752.</i> Jean Bérain. <i>Esquisse d'un décor de proue avec un décor de Minerve, no date.</i> Jacques-Etienne Collet. <i>Minerve, 1750s.</i>	2, 4
Chapter 1		
7	Hubert Berti. <i>Album de Colbert, 1988. Plate 49, 50.</i>	8, 57
8	Hubert Berti. <i>Album de Colbert, 1988. Plate 48.</i>	8, 57
9	Pierre Pouget. <i>Design for the decoration of a Warship, 1650-1660.</i>	9
10	Pierre Pouget. <i>Design for a Tabernacle, 1650-1660.</i>	9
11	Charles Philippe Caffieri. <i>Design for the figurehead of the Royal Louis, 1758.</i>	10, 13, 51
12	Hyacinthe Rigaud. <i>Portrait de Louis XIV, 1701.</i>	10
13	Louis-Michel van Loo. <i>Louis XV, Roi de France et de Navarre, 1750s.</i>	10
14	Lambert-Sigisbert Adam. <i>Neptune calmant les flots, 1733.</i>	10, 35
15	André-Charles Boulle. <i>Commode, 1710-1732.</i>	10
16	Jules Hardouin Mansart. <i>Galerie des Glaces, 1678.</i>	10

Figure No	Title	Refers to Page
Chapter 2		
17	Jean-Baptiste-Louis Franquelin. <i>L'entrée de la Rivière du St. Laurent, et la ville de Québec dans le Canada</i> , 1688.	14
18	Jean-Baptiste-Louis Franquelin. <i>Carte de l'Amérique Septentrionale – Canada Nouvelle France</i> , 1688.	15
19	Louis XV. <i>Brevet de Constructeur des Vaisseaux du Roy en Canada pour sieur Le Vasseur sous constructeur</i> , 1743.	16
20	Louis Hennepin. <i>Le Griffon - Nouvelle découverte d'un très grand pays dans l'Amérique entre le Nouveau-Mexique et la Mer Glaciale</i> , 1697. <i>Album de Colbert</i> , Plate 30. Nicolas Ozanne. <i>Duc de Bourgogne</i> , 1751.	19
21	Anonymous. <i>Ex-voto Ludovicy Prat</i> , 1706.	20, 25
22	Anonymous. <i>Le Saint-Esprit de Québec</i> , 1753.	20
23	Scale Model of a Brigantine, 2012.	22
24	Scale Model of a Goélette, 2012.	22
25	Scale Model of a Flute, 2012.	22
26	Scale Model of a Corvette, 2012.	22
27	Scale Model of a Frigate, 2012.	22
28	Scale Model of a Ship-of-the-Line, 2012.	22
29	Jacques Leblond. <i>Saint Michel terrassant le dragon</i> , about 1705. <i>Ex-voto Ludovicy Prat</i> . Figurehead detail.	25
30	Jean Boudriot. <i>Frégate de VIII La Renommée 1744</i> , 2001.	31, 52
31	Nicolas de Fer. <i>Carte de l'Amérique du Nord et du Sud</i> , 1698.	34
32	L.G. Carr-Laughton. <i>French Heads and Figures</i> , 1973.	34
33	Anonymous. <i>Représentation de la bête féroce nommée carcajou</i> .	34

Figure No.	Title	Refers to Page
34	Anonymous. <i>Couples d'algonquins vers 1700 et 1720.</i>	36
35	Anonymous. <i>Couples d'abenakis vers 1700 et 1720.</i>	37, 81
36	Anonymous. <i>French frigate L'Abenakise, 1757.</i>	37, 73
37	Richard Short. <i>A General View of Québec from Point Levy. Vue Générale du Québec, prise de Pointe Levy, 1759.</i>	37
38	Pierre-Noël Levasseur senior. <i>Reredos, 1736.</i>	38
39	Pierre-Noël Levasseur senior. <i>Saint-Joseph, 1750.</i>	40
40	Pierre-Noël Levasseur junior. <i>Ornements de bouteille et de dalot d'un vaisseau non identifié, 1750.</i>	41, 42, 71
41	Pierre-Noël Levasseur junior. <i>Dessin du tableau arrière d'un navire anonyme, 1750.</i> Justin Storck. <i>Acanthe, 1900.</i>	41, 42, 71
42	Pierre-Noël Levasseur junior. <i>Dessin de motifs végétaux d'un tableau arrière, 1750.</i>	40
43	L.G. Carr-Laughton. <i>La Venus, 1973.</i> L.G. Carr-Laughton. <i>The Royal Louis, 1973.</i>	40, 42
44	Jean Boudriot. <i>Colours applicable to the French Naval and Merchant Marine – 1650-1850, 1970.</i>	44
45	Jean Boudriot. <i>Le vaisseau de 74 Canons. Figures 117, 127. 1974.</i>	44
46	Noël Levasseur. <i>Armoiries royales françaises, 1725.</i>	45, 46
47	Françoise- Noël Levasseur, Jean-Baptiste Levasseur. <i>Tabernacle, 1767.</i> Françoise-Noël Levasseur. <i>Ange adorateur, 1775.</i>	46
Chapter 3		
48	<i>Unnamed 24-gun three-masted ship. Plan named 'Dolphin's Prize Unnamed 130ft Fifth Rate (circa 1760), possibly 'Flora' captured 1761</i>	48
49	Anonymous. <i>Royal George, 1756.</i>	51

Figure No.	Title	Refers to Page
50	Anonymous. <i>Figurehead of American Privateer Rattlesnake</i> , 1781.	52
51	Anonymous. <i>Le Bon</i> , 1672. Anonymous. <i>Le Trident</i> , 1695. Jean Berrain, <i>Le Brillant</i> , 1690.	56, 57
52	Anonymous. <i>Sphère</i> , 1705. Anonymous. <i>L'Eléphant</i> , 1717.	56, 57, 58
53	Anonymous. <i>Fleuron</i> , 1729. Anonymous. <i>L'Aquilon</i> , 1731.	56, 59, 61, 62
54	Jean Boudriot. <i>Le Vaisseau de 74 Canons</i> , Plate XIX, XX. 1974.	61
55	Charles Philippe Caffieri. <i>Galathée</i> , 1744. Charles Philippe Caffieri. <i>Renommée</i> , 1744.	56, 61, 63, 75
56	Charles Philippe Caffieri. <i>La Panthère</i> , 1743. Charles Philippe Caffieri. <i>Maligne</i> , 1744.	56, 63
57	Thomas Davies. <i>A View of Fort La Galette, Indian Castle, and Taking a French Ship of War on the River Saint Lawrence, by Four Boats of One Gun Each of the Royal Artillery Commanded by Captain Streachy</i> , 1760.	63
58	Anonymous. <i>Salamander</i> , 1696.	58, 63
59	Scale Model of <i>Le Protecteur</i> , 2012.	64
60	<i>Abenakise</i> space for the figurehead.	74
61	Reduced scale model for a mock-up of the figurehead of <i>Abenakise</i> , 2011.	75

Introduction

There is nothing better with which to confront and affront the enemy than splendour and richness.

Pierre Puget, official figurehead carver for Louis XIV.¹

The Lost Art of Naval Decoration in 18th century French Canada discusses the practice of ship sculpture as applied to warships built in the king's yards in French Canada between 1738 and 1759, or right up to the British conquest of Québec City.

The art of decorating sea-going vessels is as old as the tradition of building them (Costa 8). Ship decoration as an art came into full use with the elaborate sculptures that began to embellish seventeenth century sailing ships (28). The European nations of France, England, Spain and Scandinavia rivaled one another “as to whose was the finest gilded and carved ship” (28). Sculptures of these sailing ships became complex and ornamental forms of art and as complex and ornamental as the interiors of churches and royal palaces of that time.²

An early example of lavish ornamental naval sculpture is the French chef d'oeuvre of that period the warship *Le Soleil Royal*, figures 1 and 2, built in 1670.³ Examples by other countries that vied for naval decorative splendor are the British warships *Prince Royal* built

¹ From Giancarlo Costa, *Figureheads* (Costa 32). See the bibliography for all authors referenced in the footnotes.

² Peter Norton mentions in *Ships' Figureheads* that in “France, Denmark and Sweden artists of distinction were employed to design, and to sometimes sculpt the figureheads” (Norton 10).

³ *Le Soleil Royal* was built during the reign of le Roi soleil, Louis XIV, (http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopédie/personnage/Louis_XIV/130427). Norton points out that the sculptures of *Le Soleil Royal* were done by Antoine Coysevox, chief sculpture to Louis XIV and associated with the sculptural embellishments of Versailles (Norton 63). Figure 1 shows two drawings of *Le soleil royal* made by Jean Bérain in 1670 for the decoration of the bow and gallery. Figure 2 shows a view from the starboard quarter of the wood model made in 1839 from the original ship's plans and on display at the Musée de la Marine, Paris. Central to the sculptural composition at the stern is the figure of Apollo riding his chariot being pulled by four horses. The wood model at the Musée de la Marine has no figurehead.

in 1610 and *Sovereign of the Seas* built in 1637, figures 3 and 4 respectively, and the Swedish warship *Wasa*, figure 5, built in 1628 (Soop 12-15, 28, 31).⁴ These ships of state were adorned with extravagant sculptures to showcase the superiority of the state and impress the enemy when engaging in battle.⁵

The artistic contribution of seventeenth and eighteenth century naval sculpture has been recently acknowledged in Europe and America, in particular by exhibitions in national maritime art museums.⁶ These museums typically display ship paintings and drawings of that era that show in detail what the ornamentation looked like. Figures 1 to 4 are typical. Also on display are detail drawings of the ships' sculptures and wax models of figureheads, figure 6, that were done as studies by the ships' sculptors. There are also books and scholarly articles that discuss the artistic practice of naval sculpture.⁷

Naval sculpture in French Canada was an equally thriving practice. Its existence is well documented by Jean Bélisle, Jacques Mathieu and Real Brisson, who make reference to

⁴ Figure 3 is a detail of the ship's bow from the painting *The Return of Prince Charles from Spain*, by Hendrick Kornelisz Vroom in 1623 (Costa 28, 31). Costa writes that the *Sovereign of the Seas* "with her long beak was "richly adorned by carvings to the design of Anthonius van Dyck, the pupil of Reubens and painter to the Court of Charles I" (28). Figure 4 shows a drawing of the complex adornment of the *Sovereign of the Seas* viewed from the starboard quarter. The ship was built during the reign of Charles I of England and renamed *Royal Sovereign* in 1660 (National Maritime Museum, Greenwich: <http://www.nmmprints.com/image/412471/john-payne-sovereign-of-the-seas-br-1637>). The Swedish warship *Wasa* was built during the reign of Gustav II Adolf and sank when launched in 1628 during sea trials (Soop 12-15). It was salvaged from the bottom of the sea together with its sculptures and carvings in 1961 (5, 18). Figure 5 is an illustration of the *Wasa* based on its entire salvaged parts (Soop 208).

⁵ See citation referenced in footnote 1.

⁶ These exhibits are proudly displayed in major maritime museums such as the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, Musée national de la Marine in Paris, Museo Naval in Madrid, Sjöhistoriska museet in Stockholm and in the maritime museums of other countries. The contents of these exhibits are also featured on the websites of these museums.

⁷ Examples of authors with publications of interest who write about the history of ship sculpture as an artistic practice are the American Marion Brewington, the British L.G. Carr-Laughton and Peter Norton, the Italian Giancarlo Costa, and the Swedish Hans Soop, while the French Jean Boudriot, and the Spanish Jose-Ignacio Gonzalez-Aller Hierro write about the ship specificities of their respective country. See bibliography.

it in terms of the ship building industry that prevailed at that time.⁸ However, the ephemeral quality of these sculptures and the absence of descriptive documentation resulted in no information coming forth about their existence as an artistic practice. This lack of exposure is widespread for both Canada and Québec. The National Gallery of Canada and other state art institutions ignore its past existence. The Canadian Museum of Civilization has no exhibits about ship sculpture from French Canada.⁹ The Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, the Musée maritime du Québec and the Musée naval du Québec are also lacking in this regard.¹⁰

The Canadian sculptor Pierre-Noël Levasseur junior produced three student sketches related to naval sculpture in 1745 while at the Rochefort naval shipyard in France. These were reviewed by Bélisle for their aesthetic quality (Bélisle, *La sculpture navale* 54-58).¹¹ Otherwise, the absence of artistic evidence has resulted in a want of effort by art historians to discuss the merit of Canadian naval sculpture under the French regime. By comparison, the availability of artefacts from the British period that followed has resulted in an appreciation of naval sculpture during the British regime.¹²

Hence, the purpose of this thesis is to inquire about the naval sculpture of 18th century French Canada as a lost art and showcase its past practice as an historical contribution of artistic significance to the cultural heritage of Québec and Canada.

⁸ See the titles by these three authors in the bibliography.

⁹ I personally ascertained this in recent visits I have made. One can readily confirm this by visiting the museum's website at <http://www.civilization.ca>.

¹⁰ This can be similarly ascertained by visiting the website of these museums: <http://www.mnba.qc.ca>; <http://www.mmq.qc.ca>; and <http://mnq-nmq.org>.

¹¹ These sketches are for the decoration of a ship's aftercastle and are kept in the Musée de la civilisation at Québec City. The sketches are reviewed in chapter 2.

¹² Artefacts from the British regime have been put on display and art historians have written about their aesthetic merit. See for example Bélisle in "La sculpture navale et François Baillairgé." *Neptuna*, juin 1984 (35-40) and *La sculpture navale, La sculpture ancienne au Québec*, and *Les génies de la mer* in the bibliography.

What is meant by the naval sculpture of French Canada being a lost art?

First, there is an absence of artefacts of naval sculpture made in New France. This is due to the ephemeral quality of the wooden sculptures that were usually made from a softer wood than the rest of the ship.¹³ This resulted in the sculpture deteriorating rapidly after the ship was taken out of service and broken up, unless the ship was first shipwrecked on a rocky coast, sunk in battle, or caught fire.¹⁴

Second, there is a lack of documentary evidence what these actual sculptures looked like. Sketches by the sculptor would have been normally submitted to the shipbuilder before the sculpture was begun. Although there are documents about the construction of these warships, there are no sketches, nor small scale models, to show what these sculptures would have looked like. By contrast, as already mentioned, sketches and small wax models of sculptures exist for vessels built in France during the same period, figure 6. It is possible that sketches of the sculptors' proposals and related documents were produced because these were required as part of the approval process. However, as a result of the British conquest, the change of colonial administration from France to Britain, and the resulting political and social preoccupations that followed, these documents were lost or discarded by the British

¹³ B elisle in *La sculpture navale* lists the timber used for naval ships built in New France as white pine for both the relief sculptures and sculptures in the round, especially the figurehead (B elisle 47). A study by T. L. Highley of the U.S. Department of Agriculture showed that when white pine lumber was left exposed in the open for a period of 22 years it showed 25% decay. See T.L. Highley, "Comparative Durability of Untreated Wood in Use Above Ground." *Elsevier* (1995): 409-419. Carr-Laughton states that when a ship was in for repair, "it has been found on survey that her carved works are rotten" (Carr-Laughton 18-19). It follows from this statement by Carr-Laughton and the study by Highley that the sculptures made from white pine for those ships built in New France would have similarly deteriorated.

¹⁴ The ephemeral quality of eighteenth century naval sculpture is further described by Peter Norton in *Ships' Figureheads* who writes "Figureheads are perishable objects, and even when they have survived the ship for which they were carved, they have all too often fallen to pieces themselves through neglect" (Norton 10). Norton adds "Eighteenth century examples are rare. Most of the examples are from the nineteenth century" (10). Norton writes about European sculpture, but what he states equally applies to French Canada with no surviving eighteenth century naval sculpture artefacts.

administration in Canada. There was probably no interest in keeping these documents after the British conquest because the building of ships for the French navy had come to an end.¹⁵

Third, the history of naval sculpture in French Canada as an artistic discipline has been bypassed by mainstream Canadian art historians. The art of naval sculpture as a whole became a thing of the past when sailing ships built from wood began being replaced with motor driven ships made from steel.¹⁶

This lack of visual evidence and its discontinued practice may have been contributing factors why naval sculpture in French Canada has been ignored by Canadian and Québec art historians and museum curators. There is a present trend in Europe to recognize the practice of naval sculpture on sailing ships as a fine art. Some recognition is already being accorded by the Louvre.¹⁷ Hence, this thesis intends to show that the naval sculpture of French Canada was an artistic practice of merit equal to the naval sculpture of France of that era and that the practice of naval sculpture in French Canada had its own particular Canadian theme. It is hoped that by showcasing the artistic practice of naval sculpture in French Canada will serve to acknowledge its artistic merit and spark interest amongst Canadian and Québec art historians and museum curators of its contribution to Canada's and Québec's artistic cultural heritage.

¹⁵ By comparison, government manuscripts pertaining to the French colonial administration in Canada were retained and are presently stored in the Archives nationales de France. Section outre-mer : Canada: Série C11A and B.

<http://www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/anom/fr/3_recherche/carte/canada_txt.html>.

Digitized microfiche copies are also available on line at Library and Archives Canada.

<www.collectionscanada.gc.ca>.

¹⁶ The practice of wooden sculpture to adorn ships was discontinued with the advent of the steam-engine driven ship and the discarding of wooden masts, the disuse of lumber to make the hull, which began being made from steel plate, and the introduction of the straight bow which disallowed having a figurehead (Costa 167). Also, there was a push by ship patrons in the early 1900s to economize and do away with what was considered to be frivolous sculpture, where "economy was a prime consideration" (Norton 124).

¹⁷ A good example of naval art at the Louvre is the drawing by Bérain, figure 1.

Chapter 1. The Evolution of French Naval Sculpture

Il n'y a rien qui frappe tant les yeux ni marque tant la magnificence du roy que de bien orner les vaisseaux comme les plus beaux qui aient encore paru à la mer.

Jean-Baptiste Colbert. Secrétaire d'État de la Marine, 1669.¹⁸

The sculpture of a ship is considered to be an extension of the ship's architecture and a projection of the ship's personality (Norton 8-9). The various design styles of ship sculpture were affected by the evolution of ship design and followed the various styles of land sculpture as these overtook each other (Costa 13-40) (Norton 26-87).¹⁹ Mediterranean seafarers during the time of the Phoenicians decorated the bow of their ships with the mythological seeing eye for safe passage; the Greeks and Romans sculpted the ram at the stem of their galleys with artistic motifs similar to the decoration on their armour; the Vikings carved the stem of their ship into fearful sea monsters to ward off evil and instill fear in the enemy; the medieval carrack's forecastle and aftercastle were covered with ornamental patterns for decoration; 16th and 17th century large warships had extravagant sculptures as symbols of wealth and power; and the naval sculpture of 18th century fast sailing ships evolved into simpler designs with motifs of allegiance (Costa 8, 10, 15-34, 39-40) (Norton 13, 29-109). In keeping with the sailing ship tradition, the sleeker lines of nineteenth century

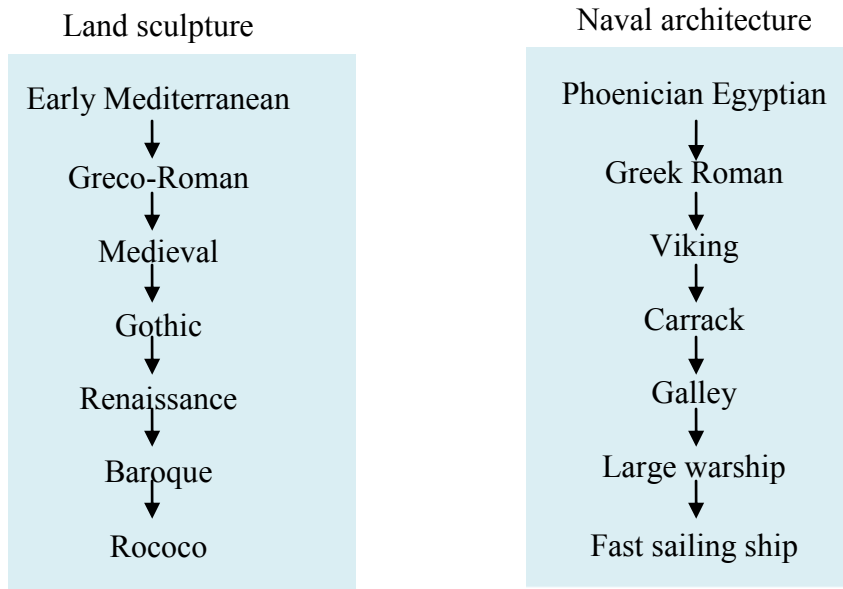
¹⁸ From Pierre Clement, *Lettres, Instructions et Mémoires de Colbert*. See bibliography. Colbert was the controller general of finance from 1665, and the secretary of state for the navy from 1668, under King Louis XIV. He carried out programs of reform and reconstruction that helped make France the dominant power in Europe. *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Victor-Lucien Tapié, "Jean-Baptiste Colbert." <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/124928/Jean-Baptiste-Colbert>>.

¹⁹ It is possible to match the various styles of land sculpture from the early Mediterranean of the Phoenician era up to the Rococo style with their ship sculpture counterparts. For example, compare the images in Costa and Norton with F.A. Brockhaus' Plates 1 to 49 in *The Iconographic Encyclopedia of the Arts and Sciences* of sculptures dating from the Egyptian era up to the early nineteenth century.

and early twentieth century sailing ships built to circumnavigate the globe retained the sculpted figurehead (Costa 57, 114).

The parallel evolution of land sculpture and naval architecture is summarized by the following simplified chart.²²

Comparison of Evolution of Land Sculpture with Naval Architecture



French naval sculpture equally responded to the evolution of the sailing ship's architecture, in particular to the changing shape of the forecastle, broadside and gallery (Carr-Laughton 42-50, 120-124, 147, 175-179, 228, 239). The figurehead at the bow began to have the most significance as the ship's identifier, and the gallery began to acquire extensive decorative scrolls and floral patterns (96-101, 122). As naval ships evolved into

²² This chart was constructed with a bias towards European naval sculpture and is based on images and text from Brockhaus, Carr-Laughton, Costa, and Norton.

larger warships, culminating in three masts and first rates, naval sculpture became more involved and elaborate, and most important, came to represent national prestige.²³

The importance national prestige placed on French naval sculpture becomes predominantly evident when under Louis XIV, Jean-Baptiste Colbert set up naval sculpture schools in the king's yards in France to teach the discipline of wood carving for use on the king's ships.²⁴ This was coupled with detailed illustrated instructions on shipbuilding that were later bound into a volume and became known as the *Album de Colbert*.²⁵ These illustrations also showed how the wood sculpture that decorated a warship was integral to the ship's design. Of particular interest to the naval sculptor in Colbert's album are plates 48, 49 and 50, which show the sculptural features of the stem and stern, figures 7 and 8.²⁶

Ship paintings, ship illustrations, artifacts and ship models from the reign of Louis XIV and Louis XV on exhibit in museums show a very high aesthetic quality of naval sculpture equal to the aesthetic value of the sculpture found in royal palaces and religious

²³ The significance that French national prestige placed on naval sculpture is emphasised by Costa who writes that in the French navy "considerable importance was attached to ship decoration and thus the craft attracted very talented artists" (Costa 39).

²⁴ Norton writes that Colbert "gave ship-carving the same attention and organization as all other aspects of sea faring" and made well known French sculptures such as Pierre Puget, Charles Lebrun, and Jean Bérain "responsible for naval decoration and by establishing schools for carvers in the dockyards" (Norton (59-62). The dockyards were at Brest, Dunkirk, Rochefort, Toulon and Marseille (60). To emphasize the importance given to naval sculpture, Norton adds that Puget was the sculptor for the king's galley *La Réale*, 1660, and he also worked on the sculptures for Versailles (60).

²⁵ The *Album de Colbert* was recently published as a loose leaf volume by Hubert Berti. See bibliography. It consists of the reproduction of 50 plates begun some time before 1667 and completed in 1679. These show how to build, rig and equip a first rate ship-of-the-line.

²⁶ Plates 48, 49 and 50 show the ship ready to sail and include the sculptured details of the figurehead and the carvings for the stem and stern. The figurehead is shown as an enormous phoenix, which is a departure from the figure in classical robes favoured by French ship sculptors (Norton 63). The use of a phoenix as a figurehead can be interpreted as the symbolic representation of the nation. Norton states that this is a jeu d'esprit rather than profundity by the draughtsman (63). The stern shows the mandatory royal coat of arms and its placement as a focal feature to emphasize its role as a signifier of the nation-state.

sculpture in churches.²⁷ Sculptors treated the production of land and naval sculpture equally as can be witnessed by the preparatory drawings by Puget for a naval sculpture, figure 9, and a religious carving, figure 10. These show that Puget exercised due diligence for both works without making any distinction about their installation.²⁸

The model of the warship *Soleil Royal* on exhibit at the Musée de la Marine in Paris, figure 2, is a prime example of the dedication exerted by sculptors on ships that were built in honor of the monarch and intended to be representative of national prestige. The *Soleil Royal* was decorated to show the king's magnificence and it followed that the king's ships would have extravagant ornamentation in honour of the king. In spite of these extensive ornaments, every decorative feature had a meaning. For example, the *Soleil Royal* has three lanterns at its stern, with the central larger lantern called the admiral's lantern, indicating that the *Soleil Royal* had an admiral at its command.

As one can deduce from these images, a ship's sculpture was taken very seriously, especially if the ship's patron was the monarch and the ship's purpose was to safeguard the nation's interests. The sculptural practice of the ships built for the French navy is best summarized by this quote from a letter that Colbert wrote to the king's naval administrator at Toulon in 1669.

Je conviens que les ouvrages de sculpture des trois grands vaisseaux bastis en dernier lieu a Toulon consomment beaucoup de temps, ...mais il n'y a rien qui frappe tant les yeux ni marque tant la magnificence du roy que de bien orner les vaisseaux comme les plus beaux qui aient encore paru à la mer et qu'il est de sa gloire de surpasser en ce point les autres nations (Clement 147-148).

²⁷ This can be readily ascertained by visiting on line the Musée de la Marine in Paris: <<http://www.musee-marine.fr/>>. Also refer to the images from the Musée de la Marine in *Les génies de la Mer*.

²⁸ Puget, as the official figurehead carver for Louis XIV, equally practiced religious sculpture and naval sculpture. Figures 9 and 10 are studies for the decoration of a warship and for the sculpture of a tabernacle, respectively.

Colbert's statement is indicative that the purpose of decorating a sailing ship with elaborate sculptures was meant to impress upon the viewer the nation-states' superiority and praise the monarch as commander-in-chief of the navy. The naval sculpture practiced under the reign of Louis XIV continued under the reign of Louis XV.³⁰ An example of due diligence is given by Norton, figure 11. This shows the design of the figurehead by the sculptor Charles Philippe Caffieri for the *Royal Louis*, built in 1758.³¹

Seventeenth and eighteenth century art led in its aesthetic quality to demonstrate the French monarch's magnificence and the superiority of France as a nation. This can be seen in the rich and vibrant pigments used in the portrait paintings of both Louis XIV and Louis XV, figures 12 and 13 respectively, the finesse and exactitude of marble sculptures, figure 14, the exquisite decoration of royal furniture, figure 15, and the architectural splendour of Versailles, figure 16.³² High artistic achievement became the state policy of France as a showcase of magnificence and superiority that was meant to

³⁰ This is of interest because it shows that the naval sculpture in French Canada under the reign of Louis XV would have similarly followed due diligence. This assumption is made on the basis that France exercised control on the building of its ships in its Québec yards, with the ships sailing to Brest on their maiden voyage for inspection and induction into the French navy.

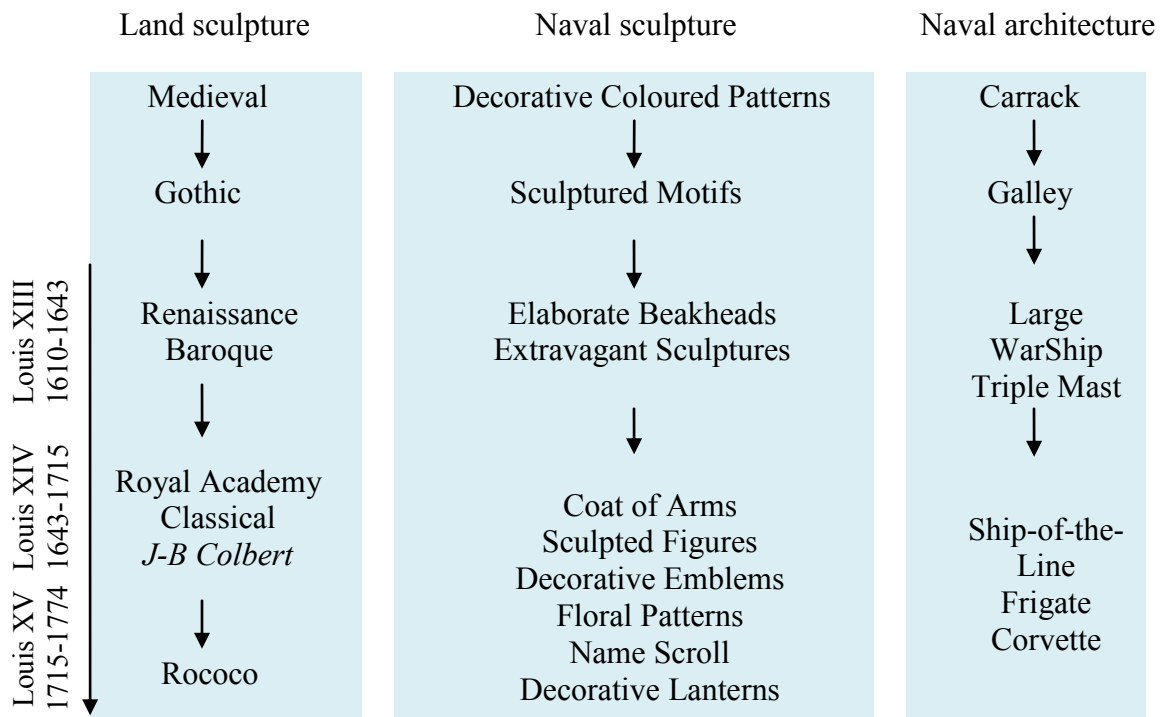
³¹ Caffieri came from an extended family of seven that distinguished themselves during the reign of Louis XIV and Louis XV in both land and naval sculpture (A Jal. *Dictionnaire Critique de Biographie et d'Histoire*. Paris: Henri Plon, 1867. 301-306). Norton writes that "the design for the figurehead of the Royal Louis (1758) by Caffieri shows that classical figures still predominated in France, even when the subject was a living person" and that "the elaborate treatment of the main rail head is characteristic of French practice at this time" (Norton figure 46). In this case, the sculpture was a representation of Louis XV. Norton adds "The French continued their style of classical figures, with few exceptions. Even contemporary monarchs wore Roman dress" (80, 81).

³² Versailles is a key example of baroque palace architecture, and many of the finest craftsmen in Europe worked on it for many years. It grew through a series of expansions around the original king's hunting lodge that began in 1661. Versailles is famous not only for its architecture and art, but as a symbol of absolute monarchy. Louis XIV moved to Versailles from Paris in 1682 and made it the location of the royal court. He also required that nobles of a certain rank reside at Versailles to prevent them from developing their own regional power and so that he could centralize the French government into an absolute monarchy. Versailles remained the centre of power in France until 1789, when the royal family was forced to return to Paris. *World Architecture Images*. "Palace of Versailles." <<http://www.paris-architecture.info/PA-043.htm>>.

impress the viewer. Here, the rich decoration of ships of the French navy provided an advantage over land sculpture because these ships sailed from one port to another, giving wider viewer exposure to the sculptures that adorned them. The sculpture of a ship became an identifier of the ship's personality and a showcase of the nation's greatness.

The evolution of French naval sculpture up to the reign of Louis XV as a result of the evolution of land sculpture and naval architecture is summarized by the following chart.

Evolution of French Naval Sculpture with Land Sculpture and Naval Architecture



As a result of the War of the Spanish Succession between 1702 and 1713, and the War of the Austrian Succession between 1739 and 1748, France was compelled to curtail its military expenditure and the extravagant amount of ship sculpture was gradually reduced and

simplified.³³ This was also in line with the introduction of the rounded bow and the ongoing simplification of the gallery (Carr-Laughton 43-51, 62, 176-178). These architectural changes reduced the amount of available sculptural space on a ship. However, naval sculpture continued to be of high quality and followed artistic trends set by land sculpture.³⁴ The king's yards continued to maintain their wood carving schools and "were at pains to engage men who were artists, both for present use and that they may hand on the torch" (96).

The high aesthetic quality of naval sculpture equally prevailed in other countries of Europe. The salvage of the Swedish warship *Wasa* from the bottom of the sea in 1961 together with its sculptures and carvings presented marine archeologists and art historians with a unique opportunity for getting to know first-hand seventeenth century naval sculpture (Soop 20).³⁵ The extent of decoration of the *Wasa* also gave insight into the dedication with which naval sculptors adorned ships for national prestige (5).

Although the sculptures of naval ships can be primarily viewed as decorative, they were also meant to express symbolic philosophical messages taken from ancient historical and biblical themes (23). They copied from the sculptures and decorations of royal palaces at a time when symbolism was widespread throughout Europe (23). As a result, the theme of a

³³ *The Canadian Encyclopaedia*. James A Ogilvy, "War of the Spanish Succession." <<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/war-of-the-spanish-succession>>. W.J. Eccles, "War of the Austrian Succession." <<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/war-of-the-austrian-succession>>. These wars equally affected Britain. Carr-Laughton states that a restrictive order was issued by the British Navy Board in 1703 for a reduction in the extravagant sculptural decorations of British warships and that a similar restrictive order was issued by France (Carr-Laughton 30, 50, 75).

³⁴ Carr-Laughton states "the French always took their ship decoration seriously from the time of Puget onwards till the debacle of c. 1835" (Carr-Laughton 96).

³⁵ The *Wasa* is also of interest because of the connection in ship design between Sweden and France. Soop writes that the *Wasa* was designed and built by the Dutch shipbuilder Hendrik Hybertszoon and the design of the *Wasa* was copied from the French warship *Le Grand Saint Louis* that was built in Holland a few years earlier (Soop 9, 14). Soop states "As the original appearance of the *Wasa* gradually became more discernible during the restoration work, it became obvious how closely related the *Wasa* was in construction" and "sculptural decoration to this vessel," that is, *Le Grand Saint Louis* (11).

naval ship's sculpture became an important part of the ship's design because the sculpture symbolically represented the nation (32). In addition, a ship's sculpture, through its iconography, was able to impart to the public the contemporary philosophical meaning that the sculptor intended (23). For example, the sculptures of Roman emperors on the *Wasa* were meant to connect the King of Sweden to the lineage of Roman emperors (Soop figures 13, 14). Eighteenth century French naval sculpture had a similar purpose of placing the monarch on the same footing as past Roman emperors, as can be seen in the classical style of figurehead wearing Roman robes of figure 11.

When Colbert set up wood carving schools in the king's shipyards, France took a leading role in naval sculpture and began to influence other European countries.³⁶ The forcefulness with which Colbert promoted the French style of naval sculpture was carried on in the eighteenth century.³⁷ The centralization of the visual arts in France under Louis XIV continued under Louis XV and, as will be seen in the next chapter, meant that the discipline that France exercised on the design and sculpture of its naval ships was equally present in New France.

³⁶ Norton writes "The importance the French attached to the design of their ship carvings is largely due to Colbert" (Norton 59). Carr-Laughton adds that as a result of Colbert's policies the design of French ships "very quickly evolved new forms, which in their turn influenced the practice of their neighbours" (Carr-Laughton 42).

³⁷ Carr-Laughton gives as an example the figurehead of the French warship *Saint Louis*, built in 1721, where "a new form of head emerged and very shortly entirely superseded the old pattern" (47). This new form is represented by the figurehead of the *Royal Louis* in figure 11.

Chapter 2. The Practice of Naval Sculpture in French Canada

C'est moy qui ay dessin  et fait executer celle du Canada.

Ren -Nicolas Levasseur, 30 October 1742.³⁸

When France assumed direct control of New France in 1663, there was a spur in shipbuilding along the lower Saint-Lawrence River (Brisson 13, 21, 26).³⁹ Ships were built in response to commercial and travel needs by various private yards operated by families that had become proficient in shipbuilding (13, 21).⁴⁰ In 1676, Colbert pushed the governor of New France Louis de Baude de Frontenac to build ships for trade with other French possessions in America (27). As an outcome, the colonial administration began building ships in private shipyards to service the triangular trade route between New France, the Antilles and France (56). To assure the successful building of its ships in these shipyards the French government sent “charpentiers de roy,” king’s carpenters, to French Canada (26). These were paid by the state, but also took on local apprentices (26, 218). As transatlantic commerce grew, Qu bec City began to assume importance as a maritime center, figure 17.⁴¹

³⁸ Letter from Levasseur to Phelipeaux de Maurepas, ministre de la Marine about the sculptures for the first ship built under his supervision. Archives nationales de France. S rie C11A. Vol. 77. f 271. *Levasseur au ministre*, 1742.10.30.

³⁹ Prior to 1663, New France, which spread from what is now Labrador to Louisiana was run as a purely commercial venture by La Compagnie de la Nouvelle-France, also called Compagnie des Cents-Associ s. Jacques Mathieu. “New France.” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. <<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/new-france>>. When France took over New France in 1663, a governor was appointed for military matters and external relations and an intendant to oversee civilian matters (Mathieu. “New France.” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*).

⁴⁰ Brisson reports that a 1716 census shows a total of 15 shipyards, with ten of these within the proximity of Qu bec City (Brisson 50). Also, between 1663 and 1763, when France ceded French Canada to Britain, a total of 230 ships between 15 and 300 tons had been built (124).

⁴¹ Commercial ship building evolved from small inshore craft in the early seventeenth century to large triple mast ocean going vessels in the early eighteenth century (Brisson 13, 27). The building of these ships was in response to an ever increasing need for transport and commerce between France and New France and between France and the Antilles (16, 28). Figure 17 is a birds-eye view of Qu bec City and Ile d’Orl ans looking downriver. The map was drawn in 1688 by the French cartographer

Panoramic illustrations of that era began to show the maritime importance of Québec City with ocean-sailing ships berthed at its wharf. Figure 18 is typical.

In 1738, an official shipbuilding program was launched at the shipyard at Rivière Saint-Charles to build warships for induction into the French navy (Mathieu 12-13).⁴² The need for improved shipbuilding facilities resulted in the opening of a new shipyard at Cul-de-Sac in 1748 (Brisson 52). To start up and oversee the naval shipbuilding program, France sent René-Nicolas Levasseur to Québec City in 1738 from the naval shipyard at Toulon (Mathieu 12-13).⁴³ Levasseur held the post of “sous-constructeur” at Toulon and occupied the same post upon his arrival in French Canada (16). When Levasseur arrived in Québec, he found a fourth generation of ship builders active in the region responding to the needs of both the private sector and the colonial administration (Brisson 189).⁴⁴ Levasseur also found in place an infrastructure for the harvesting of timber from the forests around Lake Champlain and the Richelieu River, sawmills for turning out wood planks, iron mills for making billets and an established secondary industry for the supply of rope, sails, tar, and resin for wood

Jean-Baptiste-Louis Franquelin who took up residence in Québec City. This map is of interest because it emphasizes the location of Québec City as a strategic maritime port from its beginning with the variety of ships that sailed the Saint Lawrence River (29).

⁴² The naval programme was distinct from the building of commercial ships. The private shipyards built mostly schooners, brigantines and commercial frigates. The naval yard began building corvettes, flutes, frigates and warships of heavier tonnage (Brisson 56).

⁴³ Levasseur came from a family of respected shipbuilders and was considered to be skilled in all aspects of shipbuilding (Mathieu 13). Prior to his posting to Québec he had worked at Toulon for 12 years and in 1733 was in charge of building the warship *L'Aiglon* of 40 cannons (14). His posting to Québec reflected the seriousness that was given by the French Minister of the Navy Phelypeaux de Maurepas to have a successful shipbuilding program in French Canada (14).

⁴⁴ There was a family monopoly over shipbuilding that began in 1663, with the famille Langlois learning from the “charpentiers du roi,” followed by the famille Badeau, that took over in 1668. In turn the famille Levitre monopolized the trade in 1713, and in 1738, just before Levasseur’s arrival, the famille Corbin exercised its monopoly up to the British conquest (Brisson 84-84, 88). There were 166 ship carpenters between 1663 and 1763, with 38 active in 1738 when Levasseur arrived in Québec City (247-267).

treatment.⁴⁵ Hence, Levasseur was able to draw upon the required trade skills and use the existing infrastructure as soon as he arrived in Québec. This permitted him to readily demonstrate his capabilities in all aspects of shipbuilding and in recognition of this, he received a letter patent in 1743 from the king promoting him to “constructeur”, figure 19 (Mathieu 16).⁴⁶

The method of construction of the naval ships built in French Canada kept abreast with that followed by the shipyards of France (67).⁴⁷ The quality of their construction had to meet the same requirements of the naval ships built in France (66).⁴⁸ Once a ship was built and fully rigged, it sailed directly to France for inspection by the French naval authorities prior to induction into the French navy (66).

The building of a naval ship began in winter inside a large hanger with the laying of the keel, followed by the assembly of the stem and the stern post (66). In spring, these were moved outside to the slipway and the frame was laid out and fitted together with the lower

⁴⁵ Mathieu lists in detail the role of these secondary industries, but omits to mention the wood sculptors that worked on these ships. Mathieu reports that the Québec forge mills were able to produce surplus billets that were sent to France (Mathieu 69). The supply of tar was so abundant that it was also exported to France (74). However, it was still necessary to import from France a significant amount of items to build and equip a warship (69). These were iron nails, iron fixtures, and all the finishing equipment necessary, as well as the cannons and anchors (71).

⁴⁶ Levasseur was the driving force behind the success of the naval program in French Canada. This was readily acknowledged by Maurepas who promoted him to Inspecteur des bois de la marine au Canada in 1752 (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 141).

⁴⁷ Mathieu states that Levasseur was always adopting leading edge technologies and when Pierre Bouguer issued his treatise *Le Traite de Navire* in 1746 Levasseur began using it to build his ships (Mathieu 15). Bouguer was a French mathematician and astronomer and the first to quantify Isaac Newton’s principles of ship hydrodynamics to the principles of ship design. See Larrie D. Ferreiro *Pierre Bouguer and the solid of least resistance*. Distribution électronique Cairn pour les éditions Armand Colin. <http://www.cairn.info/resume_p.php?ID_ARTICLE=RHS_631_0093>.

⁴⁸ Mathieu states that Duhamel du Monceau, the inspector general of the French navy reported favourably about the quality of the ships built under Levasseur and considered them equal to the ships built in France (Mathieu 68). Le président du Conseil de marine wrote a glowing report to Hocquart on the frigate *Castor*, launched from the Rivière Saint-Charles shipyard in 1745 “La frégate Le Castor a été trouvée bien construite sous tous les rapports.” “Les poulies en bois de frêne sont excellentes.” Archives nationale de France. Série B. Vol. 83. f 7. 1746.03.02.

floor (66). By autumn all the planks were put in place (66). The following winter any outside work stopped and in the spring the remainder of the ship was completed (66). The long lead time to build a ship meant there was plenty of time to design and make the ship's sculpture.⁴⁹

As the naval constructor, Levasseur also became involved in the design of the sculptures that were to decorate the ships built under his supervision (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 45).⁵⁰ The continuing exchange of correspondence between Levasseur and Maurepas show that the sculptures of these ships were treated by Levasseur with the same seriousness as the rest of the ship's construction, as if these ships were being built at one of the naval shipyards in France (44).⁵¹

The first significant event of interest in ship construction in French-Canada took place in 1671 when Intendant Talon undertook the construction of a warship of 400 to 500 tons and 42 canons named *Canadien* (20).⁵² The ship was completed and launched in 1675, and

⁴⁹ Brisson mentions how the shipyards at Rivière Saint-Charles and Cul-de-Sac included sculptors amongst their workforce (Brisson 90).

⁵⁰ Bélisle states that the design of the ship's sculpture was one of Levasseur's attributes (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 42). For example in an exchange with Maurepas dated 25 October 1744, Levasseur writes about the sculptural design of the ship he was building: "J'ay tout dessine moi-même en grand Sur les pièces meme." Archives nationale de France. Series C11A. Vol.82. f320. *Levasseur au ministre*, 1744.10.25.

⁵¹ Bélisle refers to correspondence between Levasseur and France with the primary topic being the design of the sculpture of the current ship Levasseur was building (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 44-45). Bélisle states that guidance from France on the design of sculptures was lacking, and when France was asked for instructions, the reply was for Levasseur to do the designs himself. Bélisle adds that it turns out that Levasseur undertook to do the designs of the sculptures because of the absence of trained naval sculptors, and eventually sent his designs to France more for information than for approval (44, 46).

⁵² Etienne Michèle Faillon in *Histoire de la colonie française en Canada* cites the Archives de la marine: Registre de dépêches de Colbert of 1671, and writes about the shipbuilding activities in French Canada: "Par la bâtisse d'une barque que se trouve de bon service, & un gros vaisseau tout près a être mise a l'eau." Faillon adds "Dans l'état de la dépense du Roi pour l'année 1761, nous lisons cette article remarquable: Quarante mille livre pour être employée a la construction des vaisseaux qui se font en Canada & comme aussi a la coup & a la façon des bois envoyé de ce pays pour les constructions que se font dans le ports du royaume." Faillon continues "Le première de ces navires, auxquelles on travaillait l'année 1672, devait être du poids de quatre a cinq cents tonneaux, & dans le même temps, on se disposait de en construire un autre plus considérable encore, dont tous les

immediately set sail for France (20). The *Canadien* was built at the time when Colbert was exalting the decoration of naval ships to showcase the magnificence of the monarch and the superiority of the nation-state. It would be expected that this warship was suitably decorated with an imposing figurehead and intricate wood carvings. However, the ship's sculptural decorations are unknown. There are no records of that time that show any evidence of a Canadian sculptor being employed to do any naval sculpture and it may be that either the ship's carpenters and cabinet makers stepped in to make the ship carvings or these were done in France (20-22).

How was the discipline of ship sculpture that was being practiced in France followed in French Canada? This question is best answered by making a review of available documents about the figureheads and decorated sterns of merchant and naval ships built in French Canada.

The earliest tangible evidence of ship sculpture in French Canada is the 60-ton *Le Griffon* built on the banks of the Niagara in 1679 (22). *Le Griffon* was an exploratory ship built by René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle for Governor Frontenac (Brisson 30, 32). The ship's mission was to explore the surrounding land upstream of what is now The Great Lakes, to further the fur trade, and to fight the British, all at the same time (30).⁵³ The ship's sculptures are described as consisting of the full form of a griffin perched on the stem of the

matériaux étaient déjà prêt" (Faillon 256). Bélisle mentions that under Talon nine large ships were built, but with scarce documentation about them (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 21). Thereafter, there was a lull in shipbuilding (21).

⁵³ *Le Griffon* was the first ship to sail the Upper Great Lakes. It was launched at Cayuga Creek on the Niagara River on 7 Aug 1679 and sailed under the command of La Salle to Michilimackinac and Green Bay. Loaded with furs, the ship was lost on the return voyage in a storm on Lake Michigan. James Marsh, *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Historica Foundation of Canada. <<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com>>. Search: griffon.

ship as its figurehead and the full form of a raven at the stern.⁵⁴ La Salle named the ship *Le Griffon* to pay homage to Frontenac, whose armorial emblem included a griffin (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 23). The use of the raven adds a hidden secondary meaning to the ship's sculpture by possibly making reference to the Jesuits that were active in the colony.⁵⁵ A seventeenth century print shows *Le Griffon*, figure 20, while it was being built. Its hull complete, the stern has the form of a griffin in relief sculpture.⁵⁶ The ship was built by "maître-charpentier," master carpenter, Moise Hillarest (22).⁵⁷ It is conceivable that Hillarest did the wood sculptures of the ship (22-23).

There is quite a difference between the elaborate decoration of the *Soleil Royal*, figures 1 and 2, and the decorative simplicity of *Le Griffon*. This is easy to explain. The *Soleil Royal* was built for the king and as a showcase of the nation-state and *Le Griffon* was built as a commercial endeavor, several hundred kilometers away from any sizeable settlement, with all the sundry material transported by canoe to the site, and to be viewed only by those who had built it (Brisson 30). There was also an uneasy truce with the surrounding Iroquois, so that expediency was paramount.⁵⁸ Even though the ship was built

⁵⁴ In his account of *Le Griffon*, Hennepin describes the ship's sculpture as consisting of a flying griffin and a raven, and with the ship having the decorations of a warship (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 23).

⁵⁵ Bélisle explains the sculpture of the raven at the stern as a sarcastic reference by La Salle to the black habit of the Jesuits (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 24).

⁵⁶ This print was published by R.P. Louis Hennepin who accompanied La Salle in his explorations and after he returned to Europe in 1682 authored books about his North American travels. Peter N. Moogk, *The Canadian Encyclopedia 2011*. "Historica Foundation of Canada." <<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com>>. Search: hennepin.

⁵⁷ Brisson lists three ship carpenters that worked on *Le Griffon*. These were Moise Hilarest, the king's carpenter from France, and Francois Damien dit La Rose and Jean Guillot, both carpenters from Quebec (Brisson 32).

⁵⁸ A peace treaty between the Iroquois and the French was arranged in 1667. The treaty allowed the French to extend their trade further into the Great Lakes and Mississippi River. Fighting started again in 1680. *The Canadian Encyclopedia 2011*. "Historica Foundation of Canada." <<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com>>. Search: iroquois_wars.

under these difficult conditions, it shows that the discipline of ship sculpture was respected from early times even in the most remote and unexplored regions of the colony.

Two ex-voto ship paintings hanging in the Saint-Anne de Beaupré basilica museum confirm the continuing practice of ship sculpture in New France in the early to mid-1700s. Both paintings depict a merchant ship built in French Canada, with each ship having a figurehead. These are the painting *Ex-voto Ludovicy Prat*, figure 21, dated 1706, of a brigantine, and the painting *Le Saint-Esprit de Québec*, figure 22, dated 1753, of a merchant frigate.⁵⁹ The *Ex-voto Ludovicy Prat* shows a classical figurehead typical of Saint Michael the Archangel as a warrior saint (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 28).⁶⁰ The painting *Le Saint-Esprit de Québec* shows the figurehead as an upright human form that integrates into the bow of the ship, as was custom with French figureheads of that era. The figurehead in the painting *Le Saint-Esprit de Québec* is too obscure to make out any details of the figure itself. From

⁵⁹ Bélisle states that the ship of figure 21 was the *Joybert*, a privateer built in 1704. This is based on archival documents about the ship's movements (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 25-26). Bélisle adds that the build date for the ship of figure 22 is unknown (33-34). The Saint-Anne de Beaupré basilica website that displays the image of figure 22 dates the painting as 1753. There are other ex-voto paintings hanging in the Saint-Anne de Beaupré basilica museum. The *Ex-voto de Capitaine Edouin*, another frigate, and the *Ex-voto de M. Roger* and *Ex-voto Pierre Lemoyne*, both warships, show decorated sterns and were most likely built in France. These would have provided local sculptors with designs to copy from for ships that would be later built in French Canada (34).

⁶⁰ The term frigate was equally applied to merchant frigates and naval frigates and the difference was denoted by the type of rigging. Bélisle points out that Saint Michael the Archangel was considered to be a national saint in France and represented the triumph of Catholicism over Protestantism (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 26). Bélisle adds that this choice of figurehead could have to do with the ship's intended role to seek vengeance against the British Protestants for attacks they had carried out against French Catholic settlements (29). This implies that a ship's sculpture can have a secondary hidden meaning. The sculptor of the figurehead is unknown. Bélisle speculates that it could have been the Québec sculptor Noël Levasseur, not related to the shipbuilder René-Nicolas Levasseur (29-30). Bélisle adds that the figurehead on this ex-voto painting may be commemorative and was made after the ship returned from a successful mission rather than seeking divine protection before setting sail, as was the situation with other religious figureheads (28).

these two ex-voto paintings it is accurate to surmise that the practice of ship sculpture in French Canada continued to follow that practiced in France.⁶¹

Notarial and other records for merchant ships built in French Canada between 1700 and 1736 show a vibrant private ship sculpture practice (31-38, 400-figure 10). Some merchant ships had lions as figureheads, most likely the result of local ship patrons being influenced by British ships with lion figureheads that were brought to French Canada from New England (31, 400-figure 10).⁶² Their figureheads would have served as examples for sculptors to copy from (31).⁶³ The notarial records of the merchant ship *Sainte-Claire*, built in 1740, specify a full figurehead, possibly of a person, and maybe even a representation of the religious saint after whom the ship was named.⁶⁴ Some notarial records mention decorated sterns with armorial shields, decorative pillars, a cherubim, an eagle and a shell or similar decoration but fall short of describing what these had to look like (32-33, 400-figure 10).

One major aspect that determined the sculptural decoration of a ship was its architecture. The naval program instigated by Maurepas in French Canada resulted in five types of ships being built for the state between 1739 and 1759 (Mathieu 101-103). These

⁶¹ These two ex-voto paintings show merchant ships, which were not subject to the same rigour as naval ships. That is, the ship patrons were at will to forgo the expense of commissioning an elaborate figurehead, especially since France was so far away. Yet, the need for having a figurehead was so strong that it was scrupulously followed.

⁶² Peter Norton in *Ship's Figureheads* writes that the lion figurehead was common throughout the seventeenth century for British, Dutch, Scandinavian and Spanish ships and the national identification of a ship by its figurehead was not possible (Norton 53). Up to the middle of the eighteenth century, the lion figurehead dominated amongst British ships (67). In 1737 alone, French Canada ordered thirteen ships from the British American colonies (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 31).

⁶³ The lion figurehead sculpted on these ships would have been upright as shown by the wax model of figure 6.

⁶⁴ Bélisle writes “Peut-être même les portraits des saints dont les navires portent le nom” (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 32).

were; the “goélette,” “flûte,” “corvette,” “frégate” and “vaisseau de ligne,” or ship-of-the-line (Brisson 238-240). In addition, the brigantine was built as a private venture (235-237).

These ships would have all had sculptures and carvings.⁶⁵ Figures 23 to 28 show replica models that are typical of these ships. Each ship had a particular purpose, depending on its operational mission. The brigantine, goélette and flute, figures 23, 24 and 25 respectively, served as general transporters (Mathieu 85). The brigantine was also favoured by privateers because it was light and maneuverable, and only required a small crew (85). The goélette served to transport cargo in-shore. The flute was able to sail the Atlantic and was heavily armed to fend off attackers that were after its cargo (85).

The corvette, frigate and ship-of-the-line, figures 26, 27 and 28 respectively, were the mainstay of the French fighting fleet (85). The frigate and ship-of-the-line were classified into different categories or ratings, with the rating determined by the ship’s size and fire power, that is, by the number of canons on board and their caliber (86).⁶⁶ The corvette and frigate were general purpose light ships (85). The frigate was built for speed and mostly served to cross the Atlantic to escort commercial vessels (85). The ship-of-the-line was built for direct engagement with the enemy and its main advantage was its fire power, as one can see from the large number of gun ports on its decks (85-86). Its ornamentation was deliberately made to impress.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ These sculptures and carvings are reviewed in chapter 3.

⁶⁶ Duhamel du Monceau in *Traite pratiques de la construction des vaisseaux* gives the warship ratings of the French navy as vaisseau première rang with 144 cannons; deuxième rang with 80 cannons; troisième rang with 64 cannons; and quatrième rang with 50 cannons. Frigates were première rang with 26 cannons; deuxième rang with 26 cannons at the next lower calibre; and troisième rang with 20 cannons. Corvettes had 12 to 8 cannons (Monceau 61). Lesser ships are not rated.

⁶⁷ This statement can be supported by making reference to the extensive decoration for a French warship depicted in Berti’s *Album de Colbert* plates 48 to 49, figures 7 and 8.

Between 1663 and 1763 a total of 85 ships were built in French Canada either as a private venture or for use by the state that were of sufficient size to warrant a figurehead and possibly sculptural decoration at the stern, and for the larger ships, even decorated broadsides.⁶⁸ These ships were built in an ongoing sequence. At any one time there was always a ship being built, with a launch occurring every fourteen to eighteen months. This meant that those tradespersons needed to build a ship were always employed. In addition, these tradespersons were multi-skilled and many of the varied tasks for building a ship in New France were covered by the same person (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 46). Hence, it was always possible to find the required skilled persons to start and complete the construction of a new ship. This resulted in continuous employment. In France, these different tasks would have been done by tradespersons skilled in only one aspect of ship building (46). The sculptor did the figurehead and carvings during the winter months preceding the launch of the ship in the spring (413). However, it took less time to do the sculptures than to build the ship. Hence, a sculptor wanting to work on a ship would only have been employed for that period of time during the winter and up to the fitting of the ship. This meant that a sculptor willing to do the ship's sculpture and carvings had to be recruited for the winter season preceding the ship's launch. This implies that the sculptor would be doing other types of sculptures outside the winter months and for the remainder of the year.⁶⁹ This situation was

⁶⁸ This number of ships is taken from a longer inventory in Brisson of 184 entries for ships built during the French regime (Brisson 217-241). It includes sixteen brigantines weighing from 50 tons to 120 tons, eight frigates weighing from 120 tons to 350 tons, and three warships of 700 to 800 tons, with the remainder listed mostly as ships without their specificities except for their weight and size (217-241). The ships discussed in this thesis for their sculptures are those that weighed 50 tons and more. The least weight of 50 tons was chosen because it approximates the weight of *Le Griffon*, which has evidence of a figurehead and a sculptured stern.

⁶⁹ This statement is supported by Norman N. Rubin who states in *Quebec Figureheads and Ship-Carvings* that according to the data he developed "many shipyards had their own carver, usually a skilled joiner who also worked on architectural carving, cabinet work, picture frames, coach and chair

equally pertinent to the sculptor working on a merchant ship and a naval ship. The sculptor working on a naval ship was made to work in a workshop specifically set aside at the shipyard. This meant that in the meantime the sculptor had to forgo any other private work.⁷⁰

The name of the ship was usually portrayed by its figurehead. *Le Griffon* with its figurehead in the shape of a griffin is a good example. From the 85 ships built in New France between 1663 and 1763 that warranted some type of ship sculpture because of their larger size, there were 14 merchant ships with religious saints' names and 7 merchant ships with female names, most probably the daughter or wife of the ship's patron, while 13 naval ships had indigenous names.⁷¹ This suggests that for ships named after a saint the sculptor would refer to a religious image or an episode in the saint's life for the figurehead's composition, for ships with a female name the sculptor would make the figurehead in the image of the female after which the ship was named, and for ships with an indigenous name, the sculptor would make reference to the indigenous feature.

Religious sculpture was very prolific in New France with parish churches demanding the best decorative work ever in keen competition amongst them (Porter 18).⁷² Using as

work, and other items, to piece out the time between ships" (Rubin 77). John N. Porter in *La Sculpture Ancienne au Québec* adds that sculptures had to multi-task to maintain continuous employment. "Au Québec, il était courant que des sculpteurs de renom exercent également le métier de maître menuisier. De même, il n'était pas exceptionnel que des sculpteurs s'adonnent à toutes sortes d'autres activités, les unes connexes à leur métier, les autres tout à fait étrangères à celui-ci" (Porter 44).

⁷⁰ The reason for this was to have the lumber in an enclosed area in the shipyard to avoid theft (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 46-note 162).

⁷¹ The names of the saint given to these ship were *St-Louis*, *St-Jerome*, *St-Antoine*, *St-Michel*, *St-Pierre*, *St-Nicolas* (twice), *St-Francois* (three times), *St-Estienne*, *St-Gilles* and *St-Joseph* (twice). The names of females given were *L'Elizabeth*, *Marguerite*, *Therese*, *Marie-Anne*, *Angelique*, *Catherine* and *Heureuse-Marie*. The names given to the naval ships built between 1738 and 1759 are listed on pages 26 and 27. The majority of the remaining ships either had concocted names without any apparent meaning or did not have their name recorded (Brisson 217-241).

⁷² French Canada had 82 parish churches in 1722 and up to the British conquest in 1763 these had increased to 125 parish churches, providing a strong market demand for religious sculpture (Porter 47).

reference the image of the religious saint after whom the ship was named would be somewhat expected from the shipbuilder. Reference to a religious image by a figurehead sculptor can be found in the painting *Ex-voto Ludovicy Prat*, figure 21. Here, the figurehead resembles the Archangel Saint Michael wearing Roman armour and brandishing a spear. There were religious paintings and statues of the Archangel Saint Michael at that time. The statue by Jacques Leblond *Saint Michel terrassant le dragon*, about 1705, figure 29, is typical.⁷³

The naval shipbuilding program resulted in six warships built at the old yard at Rivière St-Charles between 1739 and 1748, and four warships built at the new yard at Cul-de-Sac between 1748 and 1758 (Brisson 238-241) (Mathieu 101-103). There were also two warships built at the yard in Pointe-au-Baril near Lake Ontario in 1758 and 1759 (Mathieu 103).⁷⁴

The building of these ships was authorized by Maurepas as minister of the navy and built first under Hocquart as the intendant of New France, and then under Bigot, who succeeded him as intendant in 1748 (Brisson 238-240).⁷⁵ The tables on the next two pages list the ships built.⁷⁶

⁷³ This sculpture was originally at L'église de L'Ange-Gardien and is presently at the Musée du Québec (Porter 344). There are striking similarities between the sculpture and the figurehead and it is plausible that the sculpture by Leblond could have served as reference to make the figurehead.

⁷⁴ The Pointe-au-Baril shipyard was located at what is now Maitland, Ontario. Parks Canada Directory of Designations of National Historic Interest. <www.pc.gc.ca/apps>. Search: maitland_pointe-au-baril.

⁷⁵ The ships at Rivière Saint-Charles and Cul-de-Sac were built under the supervision of René-Nicolas Levasseur by ship carpenters from France and Quebec working together (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 407). There is one exception. The *Abenakise* was built when Levasseur was away in France and sous-constructeur Louis-P. Courval was put in charge (Brisson 238-240). The ships at Pointe-au-Baril were built by sous-constructeur Louis-Pierre Poulin de Courval-Cressé from plans sent by Levasseur. Archives nationales de France. Série C11A. Vol.103. f416. *Levasseur au ministre*, 1758.10.30.

⁷⁶ Not included in the list but mentioned here for completeness are an unnamed goélette of 60 to 80 tons and the gabare *Écrevisse*, both built at Rivière Saint-Charles in 1745.

Rivière Saint-Charles Shipyard

Name	Type	Weight in tons	Overall length in feet	Number of cannons	Start of construction and launch ⁷⁹
<i>Canada</i>	Flute	500	119	40	1739 – 1742
<i>Caribou</i>	Flute	700	130	45	1742 – 1744
<i>Castor</i>	Frigate	?	115	26	1744 – 1745
<i>Carcajou</i>	Corvette	80	?	12	1744 – 1745
<i>Martre</i>	Frigate	?	?	22	1745 – 1746
<i>Saint-Laurent</i>	Ship-of-the-Line 3ième rang ⁸⁰	?	146	60	1746 – 1748

Cul-de-Sac Shipyard

Name	Type	Weight in tons	Overall length in feet	Number of cannons	Start of construction and launch ⁸¹
<i>L'Original</i> ⁸²	Ship of the Line 3ième Rang	800	175	60	1748 – 1750
<i>L'Algonquin</i> ⁸³	Ship of the Line 3ième Rang	?	?	72	1750 – 1753
<i>Abenakise</i>	Frigate	?	?	30	1753 – 1756
<i>Québec</i> ⁸⁴	Frigate	?	?	30	1756 - Not launched

⁷⁹ Under intendant Gilles Hocquart up to 1748.

⁸⁰ The ship-of-the-line ratings are applied by using Monceau as a guide. See footnote 64. The French term is used to specify the ship's rating to distinguish it from the British rating, which was different.

⁸¹ Under intendant François Bigot after 1748.

⁸² *L'Original* sank when launched (Mathieu 67) (Brisson 240).

⁸³ *L'Algonquin* was the largest warship successfully launched (Brisson 240). Its design would follow the standard design of the 74 cannon 3ième rang premiere ordre. *Saint-Laurent* and *L'Original* would follow the design for the 3ième rang deuxième ordre.

⁸⁴ *Québec* was never launched due to the British capture of Québec City in 1759 (Brisson 200).

Point-au-Baril Shipyard

Name	Type	Weight in tons	Overall length in feet	Number of canons	Start of construction and launch
<i>Iroquoise</i>	Corvette	160	?	10	1758-1759
<i>Outaouaise</i>	Corvette	160	?	10	1758-1759

These ships were built for induction into the French navy and to take part in the war against the British.⁸⁵ The ships built at the Rivière St-Charles and Cul-de-Sac yards earned a good reputation as being comparable to ships built in France (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 43). They were all built from plans of similar ships built in France at that time.⁸⁶ For example, the construction of the 500-ton flute *Canada* in 1739 would have followed the ship plans of a previous flute built in France.⁸⁷

The shipbuilder would have some leeway for making adjustments on site to the final shape of the ship so long as set proportions of hull length to breadth to depth were

⁸⁵ See appendix 1. This lists the inventory of Canadian built ships of the French navy. Instances of naval activity can be found in correspondence between the ministry of the navy in France and the colonial government in New France. Archives nationales de France Série B and Série C11A. A search by ship name will show some of the exploits of these ships. These recount how the warships built in Canada took part in raids against British colonies and served as escorts for Atlantic crossings. Records of the British Admiralty during this period report how two of these Canadian warships, *Castor* and *Abenakise*, were taken as prizes. The National Archives: The Catalogues. ADM354/137/193, ADM 354/159/137. <<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue/>>.

⁸⁶ Brisson writes “Les vaisseaux construits a Québec sont la réplique même ou a peu de choses près des modèles de bâtiments maritime de pointe fabriques dans la mère-patrie” (Brisson 126).

⁸⁷ There are three flutes whose ship plans would have served to build *Canada*. These were all built at Le Havre. These are the *Gironde*, built in 1737 and decommissioned 1748, the *Orox*, built in 1734 and decommissioned in 1745, and the *Somme*, built in 1729 and decommissioned in 1736. The plans of the *Sphere* built at Brest in 1705 and sold to Spain in 1741 would also be a possibility. The ship data was obtained from Jacques Vichot, *Repertoires des Navires de guerre Français*. See bibliography.

followed.⁸⁸ The best example of this is the frigate *Abenakise*, which was subject to local innovation to streamline its hull and proved to be faster than other frigates.⁸⁹ The shipbuilder would also decide on the ship's finishing aspects, and this would include the ship's sculpture.

The naval program instigated by Maurepas and executed by Hocquart and Bigot served to support the naval effort of France and counter the increasing naval strength of Britain. These warships were inducted into the French naval fleet, escorted merchant ships across the Atlantic and took part in sorties against British garrisons on the Atlantic coast. Secondary to this was the desire by the colonial administration to promote local industries such as iron works, and sail and rope making as an impetus into the economy (Mathieu 71-72). France also saw the need to have a stronger shipbuilding industry to stop the commissioning of merchant ships from New England and instead have them built in French Canada.⁹⁰ The building of naval ships also stimulated the practice of naval wood sculpture and engaged the sculptors of French Canada in the rigour of naval sculpture as an artistic discipline.⁹¹

How did the figureheads and wood carvings of these ships look like? Were they simply copied from previous French designs or did artistic licence in the form of local innovation play a role? Prior to investigating this question, it is appropriate to review in

⁸⁸ Robert Gardiner in *Les frégates françaises et la Royal Navy* states that French naval architecture excelled in adapting the design of a ship to its intended mission and that particular designs emerged depending of the ship's posting, for example, for crossing the Atlantic (Gardiner 24-19).

⁸⁹ The *Abenakise* was able to attain 14 knots. It was captured by the British and when put into drydock its sleek hull impressed the most senior naval architect of the Royal Navy. As a result, its design was copied into a new class of Royal Navy frigates (Gardiner 24-25).

⁹⁰ Archives national de France. Série C11A. Vol. 53. f 185-187v. *Lepage au ministre*, 1730.10.25.

⁹¹ Bélisle states that the sculpture for naval ships was more elaborate, intricate and demanding than that for merchant ships, and had to satisfy strict government written requirements, with no room for being lax; "le programme de décoration du vaisseau de guerre est beaucoup plus complexe que celui que caractérise le navire marchand" (Bélisle *La sculpture ancienne* 132-133, 221). This would have raised the level of skill of the sculptor.

summary those influencing factors that would have determined the design of the figurehead and the rest of the ship's sculpture. There were four decisive factors in the design of a ship's sculpture.

First was the ship's purpose, which was to fight the enemy and show allegiance to the monarch as the representative of the nation-state. Hence, it was mandatory for these ships to prominently display the royal shield with the fleur-de-Lys.⁹²

Second was the placing of the sculptured pieces, which was decided by the shipbuilder, who defined the ship's design, especially the shape of the stem, broadside and stern as determined by the rating of the ship. Features such as the roundness of the bow and front railings affected the placing of the figurehead, and the height of the deck and type of gallery, open or closed, affected the layout of the decorative carvings at the stern.

Third was the theme of the sculpture, which was determined by the patron or by the shipbuilder on behalf of the patron. This was influenced by the ship's given name. As previously discussed, the ship's name played a significant role in what the figurehead and the relief carvings at the stern would look like. We saw this in the *Soleil Royal*, built for Louis XIV, and *Le Griffon*, built for Frontenac, governor of New France.

Fourth was the rendition of the sculpture, which was decided by the sculptor with the approval of the shipbuilder on behalf of the ship's patron. The sculptor would submit preparatory illustrations and sometimes small scale wax models for approval.⁹⁴ Here, certain rules had to be followed for the finished piece. These were: the figurehead had to be a certain size, proportional to the size of the ship, the sculptures had to be clearly viewable from a distance, which required any form to be strongly delineated, and there were to be neither

⁹² See figure 8 *Album de Colbert* plate 48.

⁹⁴ The submission of preparatory drawings and wax models was followed in France. There is no definitive proof that this was followed in French Canada because of a lack of artefacts.

water pockets nor fragile extremities (Bélisle *La sculpture ancienne* 132).⁹⁵ The figurehead had to be as sturdy as possible to survive rough weather at sea and extended arms, wings, spears and swords could be specified as being detachable so that they could be removed at sea (Rubin 75).

This leads to the question: How does a ship's sculpture relate to the ship? Any sailor will tell you that every ship has its own personality, and sailing ships in particular demonstrate their personality even more because they rely on favorable sailing weather, which requires an element of good luck (Costa 8). Maritime tradition requires that a ship's personality is projected by its particular sculpture, especially the figurehead (10). In keeping with this naval tradition, it is expected that the naval ships built in French Canada, because they would have been based on plans of previous ships built in France, would also be decorated in a similar style to the ships built in France. The naval ships built in French Canada were approved by France and it follows that they would have sculptures and carvings done according to the French norm. This means that they were subject to the same sculptural canon with sculpted figurehead, decorated rails and broadsides, and an aftercastle with a sculpted design.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Rubin states that as a rule of thumb the length of the figurehead for ships built between 1650 and 1800 was determined according to the length of the ship divided by 12 feet (Rubin 76). Hence a ship 100 feet in length would have a figurehead of 8 feet 4 inches.

⁹⁶ As evidence that the naval ships built in French Canada had sculptures and carvings, Bélisle lists the lumber that was part of the inventory for the sculpted figures and relief sculptures for four of these ships, the *Caribou*, *Castor*, *Martre*, and *St-Laurent* (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 47 figure 30). The wood is all white pine, *pinus strobus*, and their dimensions, when listed in the inventory, range from 10 inches to 17 inches in width, or 36 inches in diameter, to 13 feet to 41 feet in length (47 figure 30). The softness of white pine made it easy and fast to cut. It was also the choice of necessity because the same wood was used to make the ship's masts (Mathieu 28). By comparison, the naval sculptors in France used oak and ash (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 47). These were harder woods to cut but lasted longer.

Hence, without getting into the details of the sculptures and carvings at this stage, it is reasonable to assume that the design of the sculptures and carvings would be the same as those done in French naval shipyards during the same time period. They would have looked similar to a naval ship built at Brest or Toulon. Figure 30 shows the typical sculptured features of a French warship using the ship plans of the hull of the frigate *Renommée* launched at Brest in 1744.

The indigenous names given to the naval ships built in French Canada between 1738 and 1759 can be grouped into three categories:-

Three ships named after a place; *Canada* for the country, *Saint-Laurent* for the river, and *Québec* for the capital of New France.

Five ships named after indigenous animals; *Caribou*, *Castor*, *Carcajou*, *Martre*, and *L'Original*.⁹⁷

Four ships named after indigenous tribes living in French Canada; *L'Algonquin*, *Abenakise*, *Iroquoise*, and *Outaouaise*.⁹⁸

The use of an indigenous name would have influenced the sculptor and resulted in a local feature becoming part of the sculptural design. This would have been reflected in the design of the figurehead and the relief sculpture, especially at the stern because this related to the ship's name.⁹⁹ However, the constraints the sculptors faced would have also limited their creativity. While the naval shipyards in France had ship carving schools, none existed in French Canada. Also, ship sculpture, and in particular naval sculpture, relied on finding a

⁹⁷ These translate as follows: *Caribou*, caribou; *Castor*, beaver; *Carcajou*, wolverine; *Martre*, weasel; *L'Original*, moose.

⁹⁸ The ship names *Iroquoise*, *Outaouaise* and *Abinakise* are written as feminine and *L'Algonquin* is gender neutral. One plausible explanation that a female name was used is to point out the femaleness of the ship.

⁹⁹ This hypothesis is supported by Brisson who states "Il y eut neanmoins des influences locales" (Brisson 126).

sculptor capable in defining the design and executing the work. Levasseur overcame this restraint by tasking himself with the design of the sculptures for the ships under his responsibility and seeking religious sculptors to do the actual wood carvings.

When Levasseur was working in France as “sous-constructeur” he was in charge of the building of the warship *L’Aquila*, launched at Toulon in 1733 (Mathieu 14). A drawing of the sculptures for the stem and stern that decorated *L’Aquila* bears Levasseur’s name (Mathieu 12).¹⁰⁰ It is not certain if Levasseur did the design or if was done for him. However, this drawing shows the type of sculptural design Levasseur would be accustomed to seeing.¹⁰¹ Was there any influence by the type of sculptural design of *L’Aquila* on the sculptural designs of the ships Levasseur was to build in French Canada? This question is reviewed in Chapter 3.

When Levasseur built his first ship the flute *Canada* at the Rivière Saint-Charles shipyard, he resorted to a sculptural design based on “menuiserie,” resembling wood sculpting used on furniture.¹⁰² At the same time Levasseur also decided to bypass the approval of Paris.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ This drawing is reviewed in chapter 3 and shown as figure 53.

¹⁰¹ To ensure all possible drawing references were covered, a survey was done of the Archives centrales de la Marine *Catalogue des plans de bâtiments à voiles* for all ships built for the French navy when Levasseur worked in France. The search did not yield any other ships built by Levasseur.

¹⁰² Archives nationales de France. Serie C11A. Vol. 77. f 364 *Beauharnois et Hocquart au ministre*, 1742.09.28. The reason for this would be the unavailability of a sculptor qualified according to the French canon.

¹⁰³ This would be for expediency. The ship’s keel was laid in Sept 1739 and the ship was launched late, after three winters, in June 1742. This was the first ship entrusted to Levasseur and he would not want to delay the ship’s launch any further for lack of originality in the design of the figurehead and carvings. Hence, Levasseur bypassed the approval process of seeking the acceptance of Paris and went ahead and did the design himself. Archives nationales de France. Séries C11A. Vol. 78. f 326v. *Levasseur au ministre*, 1742.10.30. Séries C11A Vol 77. f 364. *Hocquart au ministre*. 1742.09.28. Séries B Vol. 76. f 355v. *Ministre à Hocquart*, 1743.04.11; Séries B. Vol. 76. f 363v. *Ministre à Levasseur*, 1743.04.11.

The flute *Caribou* was the second ship built. Levasseur hesitated in deciding on the sculptural design of the ship. He even went as far as describing what a caribou looked like in correspondence with Paris and requested France to submit the drawings for the sculptures.¹⁰⁴ The reply from the minister was an unequivocal instruction to follow the design of the flute *Canada*.¹⁰⁵ The minister was consistent in his replies to Levasseur that he takes charge for the design and execution of the sculpture.¹⁰⁶ A primary reason for France insisting that Levasseur does the design was because of the necessity of the figurehead and the ship's carvings to be an integral feature of the ship's architecture.

The next ship built was the *Castor*. This was the first naval frigate to be built in French Canada.¹⁰⁷ Levasseur resorted to defining the contours of the bow for the figurehead, rails and gallery, leaving blank spaces for the design of the figurehead and carvings, and asking France for the designs.¹⁰⁸ The ship was captured by the British navy in 1747 and following British Admiralty practice for war prizes, a detailed survey of the ship was made (Gardiner 21-10). This included a brief description of the figurehead which was written as follows: "Has a knee of the head with a carved figure of a Beaver let thereon his forefeet supported on a shield with three flower de lis."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Levasseur writing to the minister described the caribou as follows: "Les Caribou de ce pais sont fait à peu près comme les Daims de France, ils ont de bois plat de même." Archives nationales de France. Série C11A. Vol 77 f 326. *Levasseur au ministre*, 1742.10.30. He was hopeful that the minister would pass his description onto a French designer for execution.

¹⁰⁵ Archives nationales de France. Série B. Vol 76. f 355v. *Ministre a Beauharnois et Hocquart*, 1743.04.11.

¹⁰⁶ When Levasseur asked for instructions on the designs of the sculptures, Maurepas replied "Faites les vous memes." Archives nationale de France. Series B. Vol.85. f198v. *Ministre à Hocquart*, 1747.03.20.

¹⁰⁷ The ship plans to build the *Castor* were delivered to Levasseur in 1742. Archives nationales de France. Série C11A. Vol. 78. f 326v. *Beauharnois et Hocquart au ministre*, 1742.09.28.

¹⁰⁸ Archives nationales de France. Série C11A. Vol. 77. f 363v-364. *Hocquart au ministre*, 1742.09.28.

¹⁰⁹ National Maritime Museum Greenwich, Adm.B. Vol.137. *Survey of the Castor*, 1746.01.31.

An illustration for a map of North America done in the late seventeenth century shows some of the landscape features of New France, figure 31. Amongst these is a drawing of beavers at work and a list of their attributes as hard working animals. The beaver was valued for its pelt and it played a significant role in the economy of New France as an export commodity. The drawing of the upright beaver in the close up of the lower central portion of figure 31 can be combined with the drawing of the royal coat of arms, figure 32, to show how the composition of the figurehead of *Castor* may have looked like.

The *Carcajou* was the first corvette built. There is no information about its sculptural decoration. Bélisle postulates that this was probably a simple design because the ship exceeded its allotted building costs (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 411).¹¹⁰ Another reason would be its smaller size when compared to the previous larger ships. It may be that the *Carcajou* had a figurehead of a wolverine holding an upright royal shield. The wolverine was an astute and fierce animal that befitted having a corvette named after it. Figure 33 shows an image of a French print of that period depicting a larger than life wolverine.¹¹¹

The *Martre* was the second frigate built. Its sculptural design also bypassed the approval process in Paris.¹¹² Its name, weasel, would have been chosen to project its role as a fast ship meant to sail past the enemy undetected. Its design remains unknown (411). It may be that Levasseur instructed the sculpture of a weasel holding up the royal shield, similar to the *Castor*. However, this is also speculative.

The naming of these ships with indigenous animals shows the desire by France and the colonial administration in French Canada to identify with the Canadian wilderness.

¹¹⁰ Belisle qualifies the sculptural design of Carcajou as “probablement simple à cause de son coût (411).

¹¹¹ The scale of the wolverine in figure 33 when compared to the human figures around it would be representative of the size of the figurehead of the wolverine on *Carcajou*.

¹¹² Archives nationales de France. Séries C11A. Vol. 84. f184. *Hocquart au ministre*, 1745.11.16.

The *Saint-Laurent* was the last ship launched from the Rivière Saint-Charles shipyard and the first ship-of-the-line built. Its large size and fire power would mean that it had to be decorated more than the previous smaller warships. This observation is made following the requirement that the decorations of a ship-of-the-line were meant to impress. Bélisle postulates that the ship's decorations would have been copied from the flute *Caribou* and the frigates *Castor* and *Martre*. The ship's name after the Saint Laurence River meant that the conceptual theme of the figurehead and relief carving at the stern relative to the ship's name would show an allegorical representation of the river. A few naval ships built in France had river names. Some ships whose names could be found had the river names *Loire*, *Seine* and *Somme*.¹¹³ However, no images were found to show what their figureheads and sterns looked like.

On the basis that the figurehead and relief sculpture at the stern had to represent the ship's given name, one would anticipate having a design that referenced a sculpture with flowing water. The statue *Neptune calmant les flots*, figure 14, would have made a suitable reference for the sculptor. However, the design of the figurehead and stern for the *Saint-Laurent* remain unknown.

The next ship built was *L'Original*, also a ship-of-the-line. It was about the same size as the *Saint-Laurent* and the first ship launched from the Cul-de-Sac yard, except that it floundered and sank when launched. Its figurehead most likely consisted of a semi-upright moose complete with antlers, and with the front hooves supporting the royal shield. Bélisle postulates that the design could have been done in France (411).

In postulating the composition of the figurehead for naval ships named after Canadian animals, the description of the figurehead for *Castor* has been taken as typical and ships with

¹¹³ Vichot (*Loire* 86, *Seine* 127-128, *Somme* 130).

animal names have been considered as having their figureheads to be a representation of the animal after which they were named.¹¹⁴ Here, the ship's name would also be personified by the relief sculpture at the stern showing the animal in a composition that befitted the sculptor's imagination. Hence, *L'Original* would have had a stern carving with a composition of a moose.

The next warship was the ship-of-the-line *L'Algonquin*. It weighed about 980 tons and carried 72 canons.¹¹⁵ It had the most firepower of all ships that went into service. The name change to an indigenous tribal name may have occurred for a few reasons: A shipbuilder's belief that changing the name source will break the link with bad luck that befell the ill-fated *L'Original*; the heralding of a step change in the ship's architectural design to ensure a seaworthy vessel; a decision by Maurepas and Bigot, who had just been appointed as intendant, about choosing more suitable names for the king's warships; and the choice of a tribal name to reflect the importance that France placed on allied indigenous tribes and to demonstrate that they were recognized as such.¹¹⁷

In keeping with the previous argument that the decoration of a ship was a reflection of its name and purpose, *L'Algonquin* would have as its figurehead an Algonquin. This is speculative because no records have been found about this. If this was true, the sculptor probably made use of a live model. An image has been located of an Algonquin couple of that time, figure 34. This gives some indication of the features of the figurehead.

¹¹⁴ Drawings of naval ships built in France with animal names show the figurehead and stern carvings representing the animal after whom the ship was named. This is discussed later in the text.

¹¹⁵ This is an estimated weight derived from the weight of *L'Original* and the number of cannons of *L'Algonquin*. That is, 800 tons x 72/60 cannons = 980 tons.

¹¹⁷ The inventory of ships of the French navy specifically mentions *L'Abenakise* and *L'Algonquin* as names that were chosen because both tribes were allies of the French (Vichot 5, 9). See appendix 1.

The third frigate built was the *Abenakise*. The design of the figurehead and the decorative carvings are attributed to René-Nicolas Levasseur (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 411). The sculptor probably also made use of a live model in a similar manner as the figurehead of the *L'Algonquin*. Figure 35 shows an image of an Abenaki couple of that time. This was the second Canadian built ship that became a war prize when it was taken by the British navy taken during the seven-year war. The British admiralty ordered a survey of the ship's hull, bow and stern and these were traced, figure 36. No other Admiralty records were found that give any indication of what the ship or its decorations looked like.

The figureheads of all these ships had to fit in the space provided by the cheeks and rails above the cutwater, typical of the space shown in figure 36.¹¹⁹

The last two warships built were the corvettes *Iroquois* and *Outaouaise*. These do not have any records of their figurehead. A speculative statement can be made that both ships had figureheads that represented the indigenous tribe they were named after.¹²⁰ A British painting of the *Outaouaise* engaged in battle with British gun boats in 1760 depicts the stern of the ship in sufficient detail to be able to tell that it followed the French style of design.¹²¹

The frigate *Québec* was never completed due to the British capture of Québec City in September 1759. A panoramic illustration of Québec City by a British artist right after the capture of the city shows the ship's hull in an advanced state of completion, almost ready for launch, figure 37.¹²² The ship's construction had advanced to its spring phase, with the upper

¹¹⁹ This is discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

¹²⁰ A distinction has to be made between the size and mission of the *L'Algonquin* and the *Abenakise*, both built for Atlantic service, and the *Iroquoise* and the *Outaouaise*, built for lake service and sailing up the Saint Lawrence River. This would have affected the scope of the sculptural design of these ships.

¹²¹ A review of the ship's stern is given in chapter 3.

¹²² The ship is shown being built with its stern facing the water. This confirms that French Canada followed the French practice of launching stern first, and that Hannepin used his artistic license in

deck prepared to be fitted prior to launch for installation of the masts. Hence, the ship sculptures would be prepared indoors in winter and be in a state of completion. However, because the ship was never launched, the ship's sculptures may have remained ashore in the sculptor's workshop. Yet, these were never located.¹²³

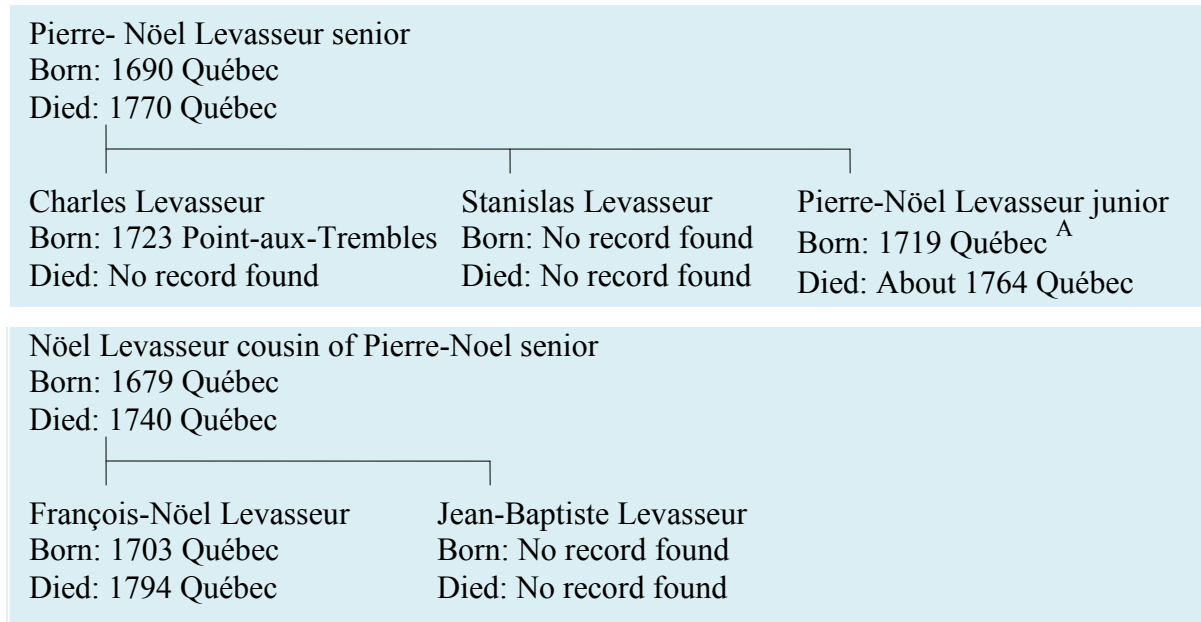
Synonymous with sculpture in New France was the Levasseur extended family, which was a Québec family of sculptors that were not related to René-Nicolas Levasseur the shipbuilder. The Québec Levasseurs were predominantly active in religious sculpture. Figure 38 shows a tripartite reredos done by Pierre-Noël Levasseur senior in 1736 and which can still be seen at the Chapel of the Ursuline Convent in Québec City. Its intricate design, aesthetic rendition and gilded finish reflect the seriousness with which religious art was taken in French Canada, and is an indication that, all things being equal, there was no degradation in aesthetic quality for the art of French Canada when compared with that of France.

The relationship chart on the next page shows those Québec Levasseurs engaged in sculptural practice during the time of René-Nicolas Levasseur.

composing the drawing of *Le Griffon*, figure 20, that shows the ship being built with its bow facing the water. It was convention to paint ships in the water showing their stern because this gave a better view. Hennepin equally applied this convention to a ship being built on land.

¹²³ The royal coat of arms would be mounted as part of the figurehead and as a centre piece at the stern. The British military officers were keen in collecting war trophies, and the wood sculpture of the ship's coat of arms was a trophy worth taking back to Britain to be discovered at a later date. This does not seem to have happened, although the royal coat of arms from one of the city gates of Québec City was taken to England to be discovered at a later date and returned to Canada. This is reviewed in chapter 3.

The Levasseur extended family of sculptors (Karel 512-513)



^A Bélisle *La sculpture navale* (53).

Some of the Levasseurs were also involved in ship sculpture.¹²⁴ Noël Levasseur may have done the carvings and ornamentation for the *Joybert* of the *Ex-voto de Louis Prat* in 1706 (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 29-30). Other ships decorated by Noël Levasseur and his cousin Pierre-Noël Levasseur were the merchant ships *Le Raudot*, *L'Imprevue*, *L'Astree*, *L'Union*, *Le Centaure*, and *L'Experience* (Bélisle *Un Levasseur* 44).

Archival records also mention Noël, Pierre and Jean-Baptise Levasseur for carvings they did between 1742 and 1745 on the ships built under René-Nicolas Levasseur. These were: Noël Levasseur for *Canada*, *Caribou*, and *Castor*, Pierre Levasseur for *Carcajou* and Noël Levasseur and Jean-Baptiste Levasseur for *Martre*.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ A sculptor crossing over from religious sculpture to ship sculpture was common. Porter states "...il n'existait pas nécessairement de coupure net entre la production religieuse et la production profane car ces deux champs pouvaient être exploités concurremment par un même sculpteur (Porter 44).

¹²⁵ These records denote payments made for the sculptures with the amount paid varying from a high of 1400 livres for the 700-ton flute *Caribou*, to a low of 200 livres for the 80-ton corvette *Carcajou* (Belilse *La sculpture navale* 412).

When René-Nicolas Levasseur came to Québec City in 1738 to take charge of the naval shipbuilding program, he put to use not only his significant shipbuilding expertise, but also his expectations of high quality for the ships under his charge. His exactitude was equally shared by Hocquart. This can be ascertained by referring to two letters written by Hocquart to Maurepas where they requested the designs of the sculptures to be simple and easy to produce so that they could be made within the capabilities of the Canadian sculptors.¹²⁶ Hocquart's complaint may have stemmed from the inability of the Levasseur sculptors to execute to his satisfaction the designs René-Nicolas Levasseur made for the ships for which he was responsible. The Levasseur sculptors were mostly active in religious sculpture. They had made a name for themselves in making wood sculptures and wood carvings for churches. Figure 39 shows a sculpture of a religious figure by Pierre-Noël Levasseur senior made in 1747 and that has survived to the present. Its aesthetic execution equals that of sculptures coming from the Royal Academy in France. Hence, is Hocquart's complaint genuine because of the lack of formal training of the Levasseur sculptors in naval sculpture, or is it one of a superior attitude by the upper class society of pre-revolutionary France that governed French Canada and looked down on everything else as colonial and inferior?

It may be that René-Nicolas Levasseur made poor designs that could not be properly executed because they did not measure up to the established canon prescribed in the naval sculpture schools in France. This may be explained by his continual requests to Paris to send

¹²⁶ The first letter is from Beauharnois and Hocquart and writes about the sculptures for the frigate *Castor*: "S'ils ne sont pas trop composés les sculpteurs que nous avons icy les exécuteront." The second letter is from Hocquart and writes about the sculptures for the ship-of-the-line *St. Laurent*: "Il conviens que les ornemens soient simple / de facile execution et proportionnée au peu d'habilité des sculpteurs de ce pays icy". Archives nationales de France. Series C11A. Vol. 77. f363v-364. *Beauharnois et Hocquart au ministre*, 1742.09.28. Vol.85. f 64v. *Hocquart au ministre*, 1746.10.09.

designs of ship sculptures (45). The refusal of Paris to send designs resulted in René-Nicolas Levasseur sending Pierre-Noël Levasseur junior to France in 1743 to study naval sculpture at the naval yard at Rochefort, with the intent that after completing his training he would return to Québec City to work as a naval sculptor (45). Here, it is necessary to point out that the planks of the wood carvings for a ship had to exactly match the curvature of the ship, especially when the ship's surface was made as a complex curve. By comparison, the planks for the woodcarvings for a church were done for a flat surface or a surface with a single curve. Pierre-Noël Levasseur junior may have been sent for training in France to also learn how to match the wood carvings for a ship prepared on a flat plank and done independently from the construction of the ship, with the complex curvature of the ship's surface.¹²⁷

Pierre-Noël Levasseur junior is attributed to having made three sketches in 1745 that he purportedly gave to his father for the sculptural design of a ship's aftercastle, (Bélisle *Un Levasseur* 45, *La sculpture navale* 53). Figures 40, 41 and 42 show these sketches. A formal and comparative review of their composition is particularly worthwhile because this will serve to benchmark the only available evidence of a study made by a Canadian sculptor for the sculpture of a ship's aftercastle.¹²⁸

No record has been found about the use of these sketches for any ship built at that time. With some alteration, figure 40 would match the aftercastle of a frigate, while figure 41 would be a good fit.¹²⁹ The design of figure 40 has several similarities to other designs of that

¹²⁷ Bélisle in *Un Levasseur* writes "Les morceaux doit avoir été sculptée avec une précision extrême, de façon a faire corps avec la structure toute en courbes du vaisseau" (Bélisle *Un Levasseur* 45).

¹²⁸ A review of these sketches is also of interest because it will uncover what René-Nicolas Levasseur may have not been able to achieve with his drawings, and why he persistently asked for help from France.

¹²⁹ At that time the frigate *Martre* was in the process of being built. Its keel was laid in 1745 and the ship was launched in 1746. Also, Noël Levasseur had been paid for doing the ship's sculptures for the aftercastle. Archives nationales de France. Série C11A. Vol. 84. f37 v. *Bordereau de dépenses*.

era. Figure 43 of the French frigate *Venus* is typical.¹³⁰ Levasseur brings an interesting innovative into this design that none of the other ship designs have. This is the sinusoidal effect created by making the top floral scroll as a reverse symmetrical design of the bottom floral scroll.

Compare Levasseur's sketch, figure 40, at the conceptual level to the fully coloured illustration of the aftercastle by Bérain in 1670, figure 1, for the decoration of the *Soleil Royal*. Levasseur's sketch follows the concept of Bérain's design. Both have a skewed layout to make them fit the frame of the ship's stern. The pronounced horizontal bands and the converging floral motifs at the top and bottom give both drawings a sense of stability. To convey a sense of cohesiveness the pattern below the rail of the *Soleil Royal's* rear upper deck is repeated in the horizontal bands of the aftercastle.¹³¹ Levasseur followed the same principles, even though his design is smaller and as a result less elaborate. He fitted the sketch onto the frame of the aftercastle and divided it into horizontal bands. The repetitiveness of the pattern makes it cohesive. The voids in the compartments replicate the window spaces of Bérain's illustration and avoid an overcrowded design. The sinusoidal floral design from the top to the bottom blends with the forward motion of the ship.

The sketch for the ship's stern, figure 41, is only a preparatory draft, but equally shows a good design. The border of the upper curvature and the flow lines of the drapery at the bottom hold the composition together, while the circular frames in the upper band appear to be supported by the rectangular window frames below them to generate a sense of

1745.07.31. From a logistical aspect, the *Martre* was the most likely candidate to benefit from the sketches of figures 40, 41 and 42.

¹³⁰ The frigate *Venus* was built at Le Havre in 1727 (Vichot 144).

¹³¹ Bérain's design differs significantly from the design of the aftercastle in plate 50 of the *Album de Colbert*, figure 7, even though both were done in 1670. Yet Bérain's design appears robust, solid and richly decorated, as Colbert would have wanted.

stability. The composition has a certain forcefulness brought about by the boldness of the floral pattern of the frame at the centre. This was the place where the royal shield would be mounted.¹³² One jarring aspect of figure 40 is that the horizontal bands are drawn straight, while on these types of drawings it was the convention to draw them slightly curved to follow the deck line.¹³³

Overall, Levasseur's studies have a cohesive and coherent composition. His style comes across as contemporary mid-18th century and shows that he had learnt the necessary rules and acquired the necessary competencies to compose an integrated artistic study (57).¹³⁴ It is unlikely that Levasseur was capable of generating a composition of such aesthetic quality by remaining in French Canada. His stay at the wood carving school at Rochefort and the exposure and interaction he had with the work of other sculptors allowed him to become a good naval sculptor.¹³⁵

An important aspect of a finished wood sculpture was its coloring. We see this in religious wood sculptures of statues and altar pieces of that era done in the Baroque style and finished in colour (Porter 359 figures 5, 6). Naval sculpture was equally subject to the discipline of colouring. Analysis of colour pigments embedded in the sculptures and carvings

¹³² See how Colbert specified the placing of the royal armorial shield at the stern in figure 8. An example of the royal armorial shield mounted on an 18th century French naval ship is given in chapter 3.

¹³³ This oversight by Levasseur could be because he was still in training.

¹³⁴ Bélisle qualifies the sketches done by Pierre-Noël Levasseur as made by someone that understood the principles of artistic design (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 57-58). Belilse compares Levasseur's sketches with previous drawings for French naval ships and shows similarity with the drawing made in 1719 for the stern of the *Sphere* (57). The stern of the frigate *Victoire* built at Dunkurqe in 1704 also follows the same design. The tail for the aftercastle of *Victoire*, as well as that of *Fleuron*, built at Brest in 1729, have the same volute as that of Levasseur's sketch. It is probable that Levasseur made reference to the drawings at Rochefort for these ships when making his composition (57).

¹³⁵ Pierre-Noël Levasseur did not return to French Canada as René-Nicolas Levasseur intended but continued the remainder of his career as a naval sculptor at Rochefort, where he earned successive promotions and increases in pay in recognition of his developing artistic skills (Bélisle *Un Levasseur* 57-59).

salvaged from the warship *Wasa* confirm this.¹³⁶ How did the colouring of naval sculpture fare in French Canada? The use of colour in the French navy was highly regulated. Only the colours of the approved colour scheme, figure 44, could be used. This shows the tight discipline in everything that was navy and the colours for painting ships and their sculptures had to conform to these regulations. This colour chart remained unchanged for 200 years, and was in use until the middle of the nineteenth century. The ships of the French fleet followed this colour scheme with designated surfaces on the outside and inside of the ship being painted according to a set of rules, figure 45.¹³⁷ It follows that warships built in French Canada would comply with the same colour regulations.

¹³⁶ Peter Tangeberg in *The Use of Colours on the Seventeenth Century Royal Warship Vasa* writes that the extensive wood sculptures that were salvaged from the *Vasa* and their polychrome treatment were influenced by Italian high Baroque and French Classicism, and represented traditions that were carried forward to 18th century European naval sculpture (Tangeberg 147). Tangeberg adds that naval sculpture was painted in a similar manner as church art. A range of green, blue, white, black, and the earth colours were used. Linseed oil was the binding agent (149). Tengeberg adds that the painting finish was done in light and shade modelling (150). Purchases by the shipyard for use on the *Vasa* included lead white, vermilion, lead-tin yellow, haematite, green and blue copper pigments and lamp black (148). Tangeberg states that twenty different types of pigments were identified from the salvaged sculptures of the *Vasa*, in line with the shipyard purchases (148-149). Tangeberg lists the surface treatment of the *Vasa* sculptures as flesh being painted pink with a mixture of lead white and red iron oxide pigment or vermilion, the hair and beards of important personages were gilded with gold leaf and those less important were painted with orpiment, *aurum pigmentum*, and water creatures painted in indigo mixed with lead white and the edges shaded with pink or pinkish violet (148-150). Orpiment was used on mouldings. A red colouring, possibly haematite, was used on the boards of the beakhead, the quarter, the galleries and the stern (149). Green modelled with yellow was used on foliage (150).

¹³⁷ Boudriot in *Le vaisseau de 74 canons* lists the colour scheme in force in the 18th century for the French navy (Boudriot 88-89). Boudriot states that the inside of the ship was usually white washed, *peints a la chaux*, the batteries were painted red ochre, the capstan was done in yellow ochre, the cabins and furniture were done in grey. The ship's boats were painted yellow ochre on the outside and red ochre on the inside. All iron was painted black. The hull of the ship above the waterline to below and above the gunwale was painted black. The gunwale was painted yellow ochre and the smooth gunwale was painted black, red ochre or yellow. The sculptures and carvings at the stem and the stern were painted a two-tone yellow, Naples yellow and yellow ochre, to augment the relief effect and also create a gilded look, with black paint used in the crevices to make the shapes more distinguishable. Warships for the high command were touched up with vermilion, ultramarine, and gold leaf. These three colours were also used for the royal emblem on the bow, on the stern, and on the ship's boats (88-89).

Use of the naval colour scheme in French Canada can be found on a royal coat of arms that was originally made in 1725 for hanging at one of the city gates of Québec City (Bélisle *La sculpture ancienne* 141).¹³⁸ This is attributed to Noël Levasseur (57-58). The sculpture shows that Levasseur, who by profession was trained in the family business as a religious sculptor was able to cross over to public sculpture and in so doing apply the naval colour scheme. This royal coat-of-arms, figure 46, was restored to its original colours and is hanging at the Musée du Québec in Québec City.¹³⁹ Its high aesthetic quality and rich color finish are indicative of the quality of wood sculpture made in French Canada at that time. This same quality would be similarly expected for any wood sculpture intended for the king's ships. The strong resemblance between the colouring of the coat of arms and the naval colour scheme is indicative that these coloured pigments were readily available, and were imported from France as part of the required sundry supplies for the building and restoring of ships.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Bélisle states that a few royal coat of arms were made that were mounted at the entrance gates of the fortifications of Québec City (Bélisle *La Sculpture Ancienne* 141).

¹³⁹ Bélisle states that the royal coat of arms of figure 46 was taken to England as a war trophy in 1760 and repatriated to Québec City in 1925 (Bélisle *La sculpture ancienne* 141). Bernard Poithier in *The Royal Arms of France and its Ancillary Artifacts* mentions two coats of arms that were repatriated from England. The one at Québec City, figure 46, and a second one presently hanging at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa (Poithier 57).

¹⁴⁰ The use of colour to decorate the naval ships built in French Canada was rigorously applied and equal to that practiced by the shipyards in France. Bélisle refers to an inventory of sundries for the decoration of *L'Algonquin* built in 1753. This lists the following colouring material: 100 livres Noir de fume, 1200 livres Blanc d'Espagne, 800 livres Blanc de ceruse, 8 douzaines de grands Livrets d'or en feuilles, 6 douzaines brosses a peindre assories, 150 livres de Lithange, 30 livres de Sangrine, 20 livres de pierre noire (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 49 notes 182, 183). Bélisle also lists the material needed to make the gilding. The blanc de ceruse and the blanc d'Espagne were used as a primer. The Litharge (Ph0) and the blanc d'Espagne were used to make the gold colouring. The gold colouring was applied to the blanc de ceruse and served as an undercoat for the gold leaf. On the basis of this inventory Bélisle concludes that the gilding as applied on exterior sculptures was oil based. When compared to gilding that was glued on, the oil based gilding is more resistant to moisture and the best suited for naval sculpture (Belsile *La sculpture navale* 49 note 185). The use of "sanguine" which is part of the recipe for making the gilding with glue indicates that this was used for applying the gilding to interior sculptures. The amount of gold leaf, 96 packs containing about 25 sheets each, is deemed insufficient for use on all the exterior sculptured features. The inventory also lists 500 pounds, livres, of yellow ochre broyée a l'huile. This inventory ties in with the colour chart of figure 44 and the

The high design quality and colorful finish of figure 46 also shows the high caliber of wood sculpture made in French Canada at that time.¹⁴¹ This same quality would have been similarly executed for any wood sculpture intended for naval ships. It is unthinkable that a sculptor would not want to continue to progress and excel in his work, especially since producing good work is the best advertisement for securing the next commission.

The British conquest of French Canada in 1760 brought an end to naval shipbuilding as practiced under the French regime, together with the practice of naval sculpture according to the French school (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 86). René-Nicolas Levasseur returned to France in 1760, after more than two decades of tireless effort towards all aspects of naval shipbuilding.¹⁴² When British rule took hold of French Canada after the peace treaty of Paris in 1763, ship building went into rapid decline (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 87).¹⁴³ As a consequence so did the practice of ship sculpture and the Levasseur family went back to making religious sculptures. Figure 47 shows two examples of a religious wood sculpture; a tabernacle by François-Noël Levasseur and Jean-Baptiste Levasseur in 1767, and a kneeling angel by François-Noël Levasseur in 1775. The advent of the American Revolution in 1775 brought a need for the construction of naval ships to defend British Canada against the invading Americans and this began a subsequent resurgence in naval sculpture (88).

description given by Jean Boudriot in footnote 128. The use of gold was only used “au décor des armes de France lorsqu’elles figurent sur le tympan du couronnement et a quelque ornement ou armes du Roi sur les canot” (Boudriot 189).

¹⁴¹ The colouring of the royal coat of arms of figure 46 shows that the gilding usually used for the crown and fleur-de-lys was substituted by yellow ochre. Bélisle points out that it was custom to reduce costs to use yellow ocher to mimic gilding and gives as an example the original paint for the figurehead of the *Joybert* in the *Ex-voto Ludovicvy Prat*, because only the king’s ships could afford this luxury (Bélisle *La sculpture navale* 28).

¹⁴² Jacques Mathieu. *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*. <<http://www.biographi.ca/>>. Search: rene_nicolas_levasseur.

¹⁴³ The capture of Québec City in 1759 was followed by the capture of Montreal in 1760 and the cessation of all French influence in what was previously French Canada. Dale Miquelon. *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. <<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/conquest>>.

Chapter 3. Naval Decoration in 18th Century French Canada as a Lost Art

Has a knee of the head with a carved figure of a Beaver let thereon his forefeet supported on a shield with three flower de lis.

Survey of the *Castor*.¹⁴⁴

There is sufficient evidence to show that several of the 230 ships built in French Canada during the French regime, that is, between 1663 and 1763, were adorned with sculpted figureheads and relief carvings. Archival records of that era mention the work done by these sculptors and the payments they received. Some records also show inventories of timber cut to size for making the figureheads and carvings of ships built under the naval program between 1739 and 1759. However, the scarce documentation that describes what these sculptures looked like has resulted in an absence of awareness about their contribution to the cultural heritage of Canada and Québec.

Significant archival documentation exists in France about the sculptural decoration of ships built for the French navy, including sketches and drawings, as well as reduced scale models and other artefacts on exhibition in maritime museums.¹⁴⁵ Yet, there are no documents that describe the aesthetic appearance of the sculptures for the naval ships built in French Canada, nor artefacts about their sculptural decoration, even though as soon as these ships were launched and fitted, they sailed directly to Brest to be inducted into the French navy.

It was British Admiralty practice to make drawings of enemy warships taken as war prizes. These drawings usually consisted of an accurate definition of the ship's hull and

¹⁴⁴ National Maritime Museum. Adm.B. Vol.137, 1746.01.31.

¹⁴⁵ Religious art also suffers from a lack of written sources about their production. However, because the art work still survives in the churches and museums, it is favoured by art historians such as John R Porter in *L'ancienne sculpture*.

included details of the figurehead and the decorations at the stern. For some unknown reason, the two ships built in French Canada that were captured by the British and became war prizes, the *Castor* and the *Abenakise*, do not have any drawings that show their sculptures, even though the British Admiralty had drawings made of similar warships built in France that became British war prizes at about the same time. Figure 48 shows two examples.¹⁴⁶

The 230 ships built in New France between 1663 and 1763 average to one ship being built every 5.2 months. This would be about the amount of time a ship sculptor would take to complete the sculptures for a ship. This applied in particular to a naval ship, were the amount of sculptural decoration was more than that for a merchant ship. Hence, it is appropriate to state that there was always a sculptor full-time at work on a ship.

The central authoritarian method of government imposed by France at that time ensured that the stipulated naval conventions of sculpture applied in the naval shipyards of France were equally followed in the naval shipyards of French Canada. It will never be possible to find out from the known sources available what the Canadian naval sculptures looked like. However, it is possible to create a portfolio of images in terms of theme, style, appearance, and colouring by making reference to the naval sculpture of France for similar ships built around the same time.

Exposure by the sculptors of French Canada to the rigorous requirements of church art would extract from these same sculptors a high aesthetic level of finish which they would equally apply when they made naval sculpture.¹⁴⁷ Hence, by referring to the wood sculptures

¹⁴⁶ The drawings in figure 48 are of two French frigates taken as war prizes by the British in 1760.

¹⁴⁷ Rubin writes about Québec sculpture in British North America that “as a rule, prior to the clipper era the carving of the figurehead was artistic” (Rubin 75). Rubin adds: “The grain of the wood was used as part of the design, and the painting was life-like” (75). Although Rubin alludes to Québec naval sculpture after the British conquest, the previous generation of naval sculptors of French Canada would similarly produce these artistic figureheads. Rubin also writes about available data on

for churches made by the same sculptors that made naval sculptures, it is possible to visualize how the naval sculptures were rendered.¹⁴⁸

The choice of indigenous names for the naval ships built at the shipyards of Rivière Saint-Charles, Cul-de-Sac, and Point-au-Baril is an attestation of indigenous culture being absorbed into the culture of the French colonial administration. How much did the influence exerted by the indigenous culture affect the sculptures of these naval ships? Chapter 2 reviewed how the theme of a ship's sculpture was determined by the shipbuilder on behalf of the ship's patron, and how the given name of the ship influenced those involved in creating the figurehead and the relief sculpture at the stern. Hence, a given name with an indigenous connotation would influence the sculptural design that the patron, the shipbuilder, and the sculptor had in mind. It is not certain who was responsible for coming up with the ship's name and who ultimately approved it.¹⁴⁹ A hierarchy in decision making existed. Did intendant Hocquart first come up with the name and have it approved by the minister of the navy Maurepas? Or was it the other way around?¹⁵⁰ Regardless, René-Nicolas Levasseur, having been exclusively in charge of the building of these ships, would be influenced by the

the church sculpture of French Canada serving as a substitute to the lack of data on naval sculpture: "In the Québec area there has not been any published data on ship-carvers or carvings, and we shall develop our own data" (Rubin 77).

¹⁴⁸ In chapter 2, five members of the Levasseur extended family were identified as being involved in doing the ship sculptures for the naval program under René-Nicolas Levasseur. The aesthetic rendition of the religious wood sculptures and carvings the Levasseurs did can be read across to show what the naval sculptures and carvings they did may have looked like, especially in terms of stylistic finish. Examples of religious sculpture by the Levasseurs are shown later.

¹⁴⁹ The ship was named after its construction began. Levasseur writing to Maurepas states that he cannot start the sculpture until he knew the ship's name. Archives nationales de France. V99. f 509v. *Levasseur au ministre*, 1754.10.15.

¹⁵⁰ An examination of several drawings made in France for the sculptures of ships built in France show that Maurepas personally signed his approval on these drawings. See for example the drawings by Caffieri for *Galathée*, *Renommée*, *Panthère* and *Maligne*, approved and signed by Maurepas. These drawings are reviewed later.

indigenous name that had been chosen for the ship, and in directing the design of the sculpture.¹⁵¹

The given names of the ships under Levasseur's charge can be grouped into three categories. The first category consists of the place names *Canada*, *Saint-Laurent* and *Quebec*. These place names are associated with colonial rule in French Canada. They show the European-colonial attitude to dominate by superposing their own place names over existing indigenous names. The second category of names, *Caribou*, *Castor*, *Carcajou*, *Martre* and *L'Orignal*, refers to indigenous wild animals, reflecting a desired affinity with the wilderness that prevailed in New France. The third category of names, *L'Algonquin*, *Abinakise*, *Iroquois* and *Outaouaise*, refers to indigenous tribes, the trading partners of the French colonialists, sometimes their former enemies but their allies in the wars against the British, expressing a desire to bring together as a unity the French-European and aboriginal inhabitants.

From the twelve ships listed above, those ship names associated with an indigenous wild animal and an indigenous tribe would have been reflected in an indigenous theme for the figurehead and the relief carving at the stern. However, convention dictated that ships belonging to the state must have the royal coat of arms. This resulted in a sculptural theme that married the French-European requirements with the indigenous elements. There is one record for a ship that has this, the frigate *Castor*, which is described as having a figurehead of a beaver holding up the royal shield.

The figurehead of an animal on a French naval ship was not unusual. The illustrations in *Album de Colbert* of plates 49 and 50 show a figurehead of an enormous phoenix standing

¹⁵¹ Indigenous influence is also evident in American ship sculpture of the mid-eighteenth century and continued up to the nineteenth century (Brewington 14-15, 39, 97).

erect on the head of the ship's bow.¹⁵³ Seventeenth century animal figureheads were usually associated with classical mythology, as aptly shown by the figurehead of the phoenix in Colbert's album.¹⁵⁴ Eighteenth century animal figureheads showed a straightforward physical representation, but their use was scarce.¹⁵⁵ This scarcity of animal figureheads in French naval ships did not preclude Levasseur from having sculptures of indigenous animals as figureheads. Levasseur, writing to Maurepas for the figurehead design of *Caribou*, went as far as to describe what a caribou looked like, in the hope that someone in France would somehow produce the drawing.¹⁵⁶

Having animals for figureheads that are large and clumsy such as the moose for *L'Original* may seem unusual. However, this is not a farfetched possibility. The best example is the British ship-of-the-line the first rate *Royal George* launched in 1756. This shows an overly elaborate figurehead of two horses standing erect and holding up the British monarch's shield with their front hooves, figure 49 (Norton 64). This figurehead shows that it was possible for a sculptor to conceptualize a large four-footed animal holding up a royal shield.

A similar discussion can be had for the figureheads of the indigenous tribes. French figureheads excelled in representing proud classical personages in Roman robes and armour and holding up the royal coat of arms. Figure 11 showing Louis XV with the royal shield is

¹⁵³ See figure 7, *Album de Colbert* Plates 49, 50. During this time, British figureheads were dominated by the crowned lion. Norton writes about the British lion: "The lion remained the normal figurehead" (Norton 67). "In the bigger ships he was a fine monster overlapping two decks in height" (69).

¹⁵⁴ Norton reports that in 1626, the figureheads for two French warships were "based on classical mythology - Jupiter reading his eagle and Neptune driving a pair of sea horses" (Norton 59).

¹⁵⁵ See for example figure 58.

¹⁵⁶ This did not materialize and Levasseur was told to do the design himself. Besides the reasons already given earlier in the text, one reason for France being reluctant to produce sculptural designs for the ships built in French Canada would be that no one in France was sufficiently familiar with the choice of names with indigenous themes to confidently produce the designs.

the best example. It does not require much to visualize a figurehead of a proud and erect indigenous person from French Canada holding up the royal coat of arms of France. There are also ships built in America that show a figurehead representing an indigenous person, figure 50.

The style of naval architecture in French Canada followed that of France with ship plans from France used to build naval ships in French Canada. These ship plans show the style of sculpture in use in France at the time the plans were drawn. The ship plans for *Renommée*, figure 30, built at Brest at the same time the *Castor* was built is a suitable reference to show the typical sculptural ornamentation of a ship.

The practice of church art by the Canadian sculptures would also affect the rendition of their naval sculpture. The religious art of French Canada was synonymous with Catholic France (49). Religious sculpture in French Canada had its beginnings in the early 1600s with the need to decorate newly built parish churches and chapels to accommodate the religious needs of the expanding population (Porter 45, 47). The interior of churches made from wood resulted in the use of wood for religious sculpture.¹⁵⁷ The religious form of wood sculpture was always a statue in the round of a religious personage on a pedestal or a high relief of a biblical or religious episode or symbolic animal.¹⁵⁸ There was also wide use of low relief wood panels carved mostly into patterns of foliage and fruit to adorn the otherwise flat surfaces of church walls and church furniture.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Beda Kleinschmidt, "Wood-Carving." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 15. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912. <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15698b.htm>>.

¹⁵⁸ As above.

¹⁵⁹ As above.

The early wood sculptors of French Canada initially followed the style that prevailed in France.¹⁶⁰ However, sculptors in French Canada worked mostly in wood in comparison to the sculptors in France that worked in stone. As a consequence, Canadian sculpture began to acquire a distinctive Canadian style as the richly delineated forms of the French baroque gave way to a subtle robustness that was probably done to overcome the fragility of the wood fibres when the surface of the wood was being cut.¹⁶¹

Richly ornamented church altars were made jointly by the carpenter and wood carver, especially when these became very ornate shrines.¹⁶² It is conceivable that the ship carpenter and ship sculptor also worked together to make the sculptural ornamentation for a naval ship when this became very ornate.

Early examples of religious sculpture made in French Canada show a high aesthetic rendition, equal to the sculptures found in the churches of France.¹⁶³ The religious sculptors of New France apprenticed with immigrant French sculptors to learn their skills resulting in a seamless transition from France to New France (Porter 162). This was not the same for naval

¹⁶⁰ Jean Bélisle. "Sculpture." *The Canadian Encyclopaedia*. Search: sculpture_in_new_france. <<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/>

¹⁶¹ Bélisle "Sculpture." *The Canadian Encyclopaedia*.

¹⁶² Beda Kleinschmidt, "Wood-Carving." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. The work of the carpenter and wood carver in French Canada would have equally been done by the same person for the same reason given in chapter 2. That is, there was not enough work to sustain separate full-time employment for the two different trades.

¹⁶³ See for example the image in Porter of the sculpture *L'ange a la trompette de la chaire de l'église de Saint-Romuald d'Etchemin*, 1697 (Porter 80). The sculpture is done in the Baroque style with a gilded finish. Its very realistic and highly artistic rendition is an attestation to the high level of religious art being practiced in French Canada at that time. This same sculpture was done around the same time as the building of *Le Griffon* in 1679. All things being equal, the figurehead of *Le Griffon* would have been done in the same style. There are also examples by Porter of relief sculptures that have a similarly high artistic rendition as an attestation to the high level of religious art in 18th century French Canada. See the image in Porter titled "Soeur Marie-Anne Guenet-Varin, *Reliquaire*, avant 1755" (Porter 29).

sculpture. There was a complete absence of naval sculptors from France and a lack of expertise and knowledge amongst the prospective naval sculptors of New France.¹⁶⁴

René-Nicolas Levasseur attempted to bridge this gap by seeking help from France, which was never provided, by doing the designs of the sculptures himself, by resorting to the most simplifying designs that could be done by a cabinet maker, as opposed to requiring the skills of a trained naval sculptor, and by asking religious sculptors to make the ship sculptures.

The carved woodwork of religious sculpture in French Canada followed the same process as that of France. The sculpture was done as an unfinished surface that showed the chip marks of the cutting blade. The surface was then covered with a coating of chalk, which was either richly painted or gilded. Patterns or inscriptions were impressed upon the seams of the robes and nimbi. This made it unnecessary for the religious wood carver to finish the work to the finest detail. Any surface flaws were corrected by the coating of chalk and painted over or gilded. As a result, the religious sculptor did not intend to make a detailed exact rendition, but instead strove to provide an overall effect by the impression made as a whole.¹⁶⁵

It is possible to read across religious sculpture to naval sculpture by comparing a religious sculpture in the round to a ship's figurehead, the high relief sculpture of a biblical narrative to the high relief sculpture of the aftercastle, and the low relief carving of foliage and fruit in the church to the low relief carving of patterns of foliage for the ship's rails.

¹⁶⁴ The skill of naval sculpture was acquired by the sculptor who learnt intuitively when doing the sculpture on the ship.

¹⁶⁵ Many wooden altars excite a feeling of joy and produce a mystical effect by the richness of their ornamental carving, the scenes presented by the figures, and the brilliant decoration of paint and gold. Bede Kleinschmidt, "Wood-Carving." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*.

The chart below makes a correlation between religious sculpture and naval sculpture and how a sculpture trained to work in church sculpture would cross over to work in naval sculpture.¹⁶⁶ Hence, appreciating the religious sculpture of that time will help visualize the artistic merit of the ship sculptures that were made by these same sculptors in terms of rendition, and style.

Comparison of Religious Sculpture to Naval Sculpture

Religious sculpture to encourage prayer in a place of worship	Naval sculpture as a showcase of allegiance to the state
Full figure statue in the round mounted on a pedestal	Full figurehead in the round mounted on the head of the bow
Finish richly painted	Finish painted to naval scheme
Full surface gilding	Selective gilding
High relief of biblical narrative	High relief of small decorative figures
Low relief with decorative motifs	Low relief with decorative motifs
Shrine	Stem
Altarpieces and Reredos	Stern
Organ pieces	Cathead and Broadside
Baptismal fountain	Deck accessories
Confessional	Gun ports
Pews	Railings and Balustrades
Pulpit	Gallery
Wall panels	Name scroll
Candelabras and lamps	Lanterns

The design of ship sculpture followed the French manner and was affected by the available space provided by the ship’s architecture. This can be readily observed in the different gallery designs that were a function of the type of ship and its size, that is the

¹⁶⁶ One can make a comparison between religious sculpture as a sign of spiritual devotion to the catholic church and naval sculpture as a sign of secular devotion to the monarch and nation-state.

number of decks as determined by the ship's rating. Six different types of naval ships were built in French Canada. These all warranted an aftercastle design tailored to their size. The brigantine and goélette, because of their low deck and the absence of a gallery had limited scope for a unique aftercastle design and were confined to a straightforward cabinet style pattern. The corvette and frigate, because of a larger aftercastle, and with the frigate having an aftercastle with a twin deck, offered scope for innovation in the design of the sculpture. The ship-of-the-line with an aftercastle that had multiple decks and a gallery offered the maximum scope for an elaborate individualistic sculptural design.

Figures 51 to 53, 55, 56 and 58 show a selection of drawings for the sculptures of warships built in France at about the same time as the warships built in New France. The types of drawings shown are for the stern and the stem.¹⁶⁷

The intent of showing these images is to relate them to their equivalent for a warship built in French Canada that had the same space for its sculpture. The purpose is to illustrate what the sculptures for the warships built in French Canada would have looked like. The criteria used in selecting these images were; the year the drawing was made had to preferably be as close as possible to the launch date of the ship built in French Canada; there had to be some commonality in the theme of the given name for the ship on the drawing and the ship built in French Canada; and there had to be some similarity between the type of ship on the drawing and the ship built in French Canada. That is, the date, features of the ship and number of cannons had to approximately match so that the selected sculptural drawing from

¹⁶⁷ The designs of the broadside are not discussed in this thesis. These are considered as stable features in the architectural design of the ship, immune to independent innovation, and can be readily reviewed by referring to any book on ship sculpture or museum ship model of French shipbuilding of that era. See for example Carr-Laughton who also discusses French naval sculpture in his book and any title by Boudriot.

France can be superposed over the space meant for the sculpture of the ship built in French Canada.¹⁶⁹

The first ship reviewed to reference drawings for its decoration is the *Canadien* of 42 cannons weighing 400 to 500 tons and launched in 1675.¹⁷⁰ Figure 51 shows the closest drawings that were found. These are the drawing of the stern for *Le Bon*, a ship-of-the-line 3ième rang of 54 cannons, weighing 800 tons and built in 1693 at Brest, and the drawing for *Trident*, a ship-of-the-line 3ième rang of 60 cannons, weighing 1000 tons and built in 1695 at Toulon. Both drawings show features that are typical of stern decoration of the mid- to late-1600s and line up with the style of Colbert's album of plate 48, figure 8. Also shown is the drawing of the stem for *Brillant*, a ship-of-the-line 3ième rang of 66 cannons built in 1690. Although *Brillant* is larger than *Canadien*, the drawing of its stem is of relevance because its cutwater and the curvature of the cheek and rails copy from Colbert's album, plate 50, figure 7. The profile of the stern and stem for *Canadien* would follow suit.

The stern decorations of *Le Bon* and *Trident* are read across to construct a composition of those for the *Canadien*. Starting from the top, there would be a single lantern with a bulbous top; the tafferel would have a relief carving related to the ship's name, possibly flanked by two figures; the upper quarter gallery would be adorned with a figure or similar form made in high relief at both the port and starboard side; the royal coat of arms would be centrally placed above the upper gallery as a shield with the three fleur-de-lys topped with a crown and circled with a design of foliage or laurels, and the balustrades and spurs of the gallery finished with fluted or spiral carvings; the lower gallery railing wall would have the

¹⁶⁹ The drawings used for reference were found to be the most suitable in terms of their applicability for size and type of ship and were short listed following a review of an inventory of ships of the French navy built between 1663 and 1763.

¹⁷⁰ See page 17 for first mention of this warship.

ship's name plate in the middle framed in a wreath together with low relief forms that made reference to the ship's name and anagrams that made reference to the king.¹⁷¹

The stem drawing of *Brillant* is similarly read across to construct a composition of the sculptures of the stem for the *Canadien*. The figurehead of *Brillant* of an erect winged female with the tail of a fish to show the ship's connotation with the sea is a suitable reference for the figurehead of the *Canadien*. The space between the lower and upper cheek would be similarly decorated with a low relief design and the shape and decorative carvings of the main rails, joined with a spiral at the front and tied together at their end with sculptured foliage would be similar to those of the *Canadien*. The cathead bracket would have a similarly sculpted miniature sea creature.

The two flutes *Canada* of 40 cannons, weighing 500 tons and launched in 1742, and *Caribou*, of 45 cannons, weighing 700 tons and launched in 1744 are next reviewed. Two possible references are shown in figure 52. The first reference is a drawing of the stern for the flute *Sphere* of 36 cannons, weighing 500 tons and built in 1705 at Brest. The second reference is a drawing of the stern and stem for the flute *L'Eléphant* of 48 cannons, weighing 600 tons, and built in 1717 at Brest. The purpose of the flute was to transport cargo and the ship's design would not evolve as much as that of a ship-of-the-line or frigate, so that reference to a drawing of an earlier date for comparison carries less risk.¹⁷²

The design of the stern for both *Canada* and *Caribou* would follow that of *Sphere* and *L'Eléphant*. Again starting from the top, the lantern's design would have changed from the previous drawings so that the bulbous top is now truncated with an elongated cover; the relief composition of the tafferel would consist of a representation of Canada flanked by two

¹⁷¹ See figure 30 for the location of the typical sculptured features of a ship. This nomenclature was taken from Carr-Laughton (102).

¹⁷² Drawings for flutes built closer to the launch date of *Canada* could not be found.

supporting figures or forms similar to that of *Sphere*, the top rail of the taffarel would be decorated with miniature shapes similar to the design of *L'Eléphant* and the upper quarter gallery either adorned with a figure in high relief at both the port and starboard side or have a low relief panel of a composition; the royal coat of arms will be absent since this was reserved for warships; the balustrade of the single gallery would have the ship's name plate set in a decorative frame, flanked with low relief compositions that made reference to the ship's name and the balustrades finished with fluted and spiral carvings.

The stem drawing for *L'Eléphant* can be read across to construct a composition of the stem decorations for *Canada*, with the exception of the figurehead of the elephant's head which is not a suitable reference. The cutwater of *L'Eléphant* is closer to the lower cheek when compared to *Brillant*, but this has not disturbed the curvature of the cheeks and the space available for a figurehead has remained the same. Hence, the figurehead of *Brillant* is an appropriate reference for *Canada*. The miniature shield at the figurehead of *L'Eléphant* is also an appropriate reference for a figurehead detail for *Canada*. The low relief carvings between the lower and upper cheeks of *L'Eléphant* would be similar for *Canada* and so would the shape and decorative carvings of the main rails.¹⁷³

The *Saint-Laurent* and *L'Original* are next. Both were ships-of-the line 3ième rang 2ième ordre and were launched within two years of each other. Two drawings of warships built in France, figure 53, are referenced. These are *Fleurion*, a ship-of-the-line of 64 cannons, weighing 950 tons built in 1729 at Brest and *L'Aquilon*, a ship-of-the-line of 56 cannons, weighing 800 tons and built in 1731 at Toulon. *L'Aquilon* is of particular interest because it was built by René-Nicolas Levasseur.

¹⁷³ The middle and lower rails of *L'Eléphant* are truncated at the cathead bracket resulting in an economy of material. This has not translated into an economy of design, with the upper rail ending in an elaborate sculpture.

The designs of the stern for *Saint-Laurent* and *L'Original* would copy from these two warships built in France, with their stern being wider at the top than the earlier warships *Le Bon* and *Trident* because of the additional space created by the extension of the balcony around the quarter gallery.¹⁷⁴ This would result in a more complex sculptural decoration mainly because of the additional space provided. Again starting from the top, the design of the lantern has changed and this now flares out and has a pointed lid; the relief composition of the tafferel will possibly have an analogy to the Saint Laurence River for *Saint-Laurent* and a representation of a moose for *L'Original*. Both would be done as compact compositions that spill onto the top rail of the tafferel; the figure at the upper quarter gallery would be replaced with a panel carving that makes reference to the ship's name or be solely decorated with floral shapes; the royal coat of arms would follow the standard design and continue to occupy a central position on the upper gallery railing wall; the balustrade of the lower gallery would have the ship's name plate set in a decorative shield frame; and there would be a decorative anagram at each end of the lower gallery. The overall design of the stern would abound with low relief floral compositions on every available surface.

The stern design of *L'Aquilon* is simpler than that of *Fleuron*, with the tafferel of *L'Aquilon* left blank. Correspondence between Hocquart and Maurepas about the decorative designs for the *Saint-Laurent* and *L'Original* shows a preference for a simpler design. This can be interpreted as the design of the stern favouring the simplicity of *L'Aquilon*.

The drawing of the stem for *L'Aquilon* is similar to that of *Brillant* with the exception of the figurehead, and can be similarly read across to the *Saint-Laurent* and *L'Original*.

¹⁷⁴ Carr-Laughton writes that “at the end of the seventeenth century French ships had their galleries, from the middle deck upwards, all entirely open but, with the side heavily ornamented” (Carr-Laughton 176).

The next warship to review is *L'Algonquin*, a ship-of-the line 3ième rang premiere ordre. The closest match is *Trident*, a ship-of-the-line 3ième rang of 64 cannons, weighing 1200 tons and built at Toulon in 1740. However, the decorative drawings for *Trident* could not be located. The 72 cannon rating for *L'Algonquin* equates it to the 74-cannon design defined by Boudriot. Figure 54 shows the stern and stem of this ship and a read across can be made similar to the read across made between *L'Aquilon* and the *Saint-Laurent* and *L'Orignal*.

The frigates *Castor*, 26 cannons, *Martre*, 22 cannons, *Abinakise*, 30 cannons and *Québec*, 30 cannons are next referenced to the drawings for the frigates *Galathée* with 24 cannons and weighing 248 tons, and *Renommée* with 30 cannons and weighing 588 tons, with both launched at Brest in 1744, figure 55. Both show what the design of the stern and stem would look like for the four Canadian built frigates. However, the drawings of the stern for *Galathée* and *Renommée* have differences that need to be pointed out. *Renommée* has a larger stern because of its larger capacity and a higher gallery with a balustrade. *Galathée* has a smaller stern and its gallery is without a balustrade. This difference in size is also present between the larger frigates *Abinakise* and *Québec* and the smaller frigate *Martre* and possibly *Castor*.

Beginning with the drawings for the stern and starting from the top, the design of the lantern would be identical to the design of the lantern for the earlier ships of figure 53. *Martre*, and possibly *Castor*, because of their smaller stern, would resemble *Galathée* and have the royal coat of arms under the top rail of their tafferel as the central object of a composition with relevance to the ship's name. Their name scroll, framed in a sculpture of elaborate foliage, would take the place of the central window of the gallery.

Abinakise and *Québec*, because of their larger stern would resemble *Renommée* and have their tafferel with an elaborate composition that alludes to the ship's name. Their name scrolls, similarly framed with an elaborate sculpture of foliage, would be placed under the central window as part of the balustrade. There is a noticeable feature common to both *Galathée* and *Renommée*, which shows the design of their gallery to be fully closed and providing less space for sculpture. This results in a reduction of the overall design when compared to larger ships. The galleries of *Abinakise* and *Québec* would have the spurs holding up the tafferel with shallow flutes or low relief foliage as shown for *Renommée*, but there is not enough space to have figures at the quarter gallery. The top rail of their tafferel would be left plain with some floral decoration at the ends similar to the design of the stern for *L'Aquilon* in figure 53. Overall, the sculptures at the stern will shift from forms and figures in high relief to carvings of foliage and repetitive geometric patterns in low relief.¹⁷⁵

The stem drawings of *Galathée* and *Renommée* are remarkably similar and can be read across to show what the stem of all four Canadian built frigates will have looked like. The curvature of the lower and upper cheek would be similar and the space in-between decorated with a low relief design; the shape and decorative carvings of the main rails would also be similar; the figurehead would be held by the main rails at the front and the upper rail have at its end either sculptured foliage or some similar design. The cathead bracket would be sculpted with a simple motif. For *Abenakise* and *Québec*, the royal coat of arms also became part of the figurehead sculpture, as shown by the stem drawing of *Renommée*. Otherwise, the

¹⁷⁵ Beauharnois writes to Maurepas to inform him about the intention to have a simple sculptural decoration for the *Castor*. "Contenteront de faire faire un simple / ornament de menuiserie comme / a la flute Le Canada avec quelques / feuilles de refente a la Poupe, et une / figure a l'avant." Archives nationales de France. Séries C11A. Vol. 77. f364. *Beauharnois et Hocquart au ministre*, 1742.09.28. Beauharnois' statement must be put into context with the overtly elaborate decorations being carried out by the sculptors in the French shipyard at that time, as shown by the decoration of the aftercastle of *Le Fleuron*, figure 53.

figureheads for *Castor* and *Martre* would be done as an animal and the figureheads for *Abenakise* and *Québec* would be done as an erect figure, as shown in figure 55.

The corvettes *Carcajou*, 12 cannons, and *Iroquois* and *Outaouaise*, 10 cannons, are similarly referenced. The drawings for *Panthère* and *Maligne*, figure 56, both launched at Brest in 1733 and 1734 respectively, also show what the sculptures of the stern and stem for the Canadian built corvettes would look like. The stern drawings of *Panthère* and *Maligne* are similar to the stern drawing of *Galathée*. Hence, the review for the stern of *Galathée* can also be applied for the stern of *Carcajou*, *Iroquois* and *Outaouaise*. The stern drawing of *Maligne* is more ornamental and it would apply to *Carcajou*, which was built at Rivière Saint-Charles, where better resources were available, while the simpler stern drawing of *Panthère* would apply to *Iroquois* and *Outaouaise*, which were built at the remote shipyard of Point-au-Baril with limited resources. This would equally apply to the stem. The *Outaouaise* was engaged in a battle with several British gunboats and captured. A British painting depicting the battle, figure 57, shows the *Outaouaise* under assault with its stern facing the viewer. Although the details of the stern are not discernible, its overall form is similar to that of *Panthère*.

To complement the comparison of the sculptural theme of a naval ship with its given name, the drawings of the stern and stem of the frigate *Salamander* are presented, figure 58. These drawings show how the sculptor handled the space offered by the stem for the figurehead and the space offered by the stern to compose the relief sculpture of an unusual animal. The drawing of the stem shows a figurehead sculpture of a larger than life salamander slithering on its stomach between the cheeks above the cutwater. The drawing of the stern shows the animal in a floral frame. From these two drawings, the figureheads and sculptures of

those ships built in French Canada with animal names would not have presented any unusual difficulty.

The colouring of the sculptures and carvings of naval ships was reviewed in chapter 2. This section of the thesis discussed the naval colour scheme enforced at that time. What has not yet been discussed is the overall finish. Religious art relies on an overall effect to create a spiritual experience, as opposed to other types of art that are decorative or commemorative. The colour scheme applied to naval sculpture served two purposes, to have an embellished sculpture that created a sense of pride of ownership, and to regulate the use of colours and demonstrate a sense of naval discipline. The colour scheme applied to the ships built in New France would be indistinguishable from the ships built in France. Hence, it is appropriate to make reference to the painted scheme of a ship built in France to show what the colour scheme of a ship built in New France would look like.

The painted scale model of the warship *Protecteur*, figure 59, which was a ship-of-the-line built in 1760, is a suitable example to show the combination of decorative carvings and rich colouring of the stern of a ship of the French navy. This rich colouring would be similarly applied to the naval ships built in French Canada and instilled pride in those connected with the naval program, especially during the launch of a ship. It would have equally instilled pride with the crew who sailed the ship on its maiden voyage to France. This pride would change into valour when the crew on board sailed across the Atlantic knowing that had to affront the enemy.

Chapter 4. In Search of the Naval Sculpture of 18th Century French Canada

A Pierre Levasseur Sculpteur pour le prix / Des ouvrages de sculpture faid a Lad,^e
corvette / Le Carcajou pour ...200...

Bordereau de dépenses, 31 July 1745.¹⁷⁶

The naval program instigated by France in the shipyards of New France between 1738 and 1759 resulted in the construction and successful launching of ten naval warships from the Rivière Saint-Charles and Cul-de-Sac shipyards and two naval warships from the Point-au-Baril shipyard. These warships were subsequently inducted into the French navy. These were the flutes *Canada* and *Caribou*, the frigate *Le Castor*, the corvettes *Carcajou*, *Iroquoise* and *Outaouaise*, the frigate *Martre*, the ship-of-the-line 3ième rang *Saint-Laurent*, *L'Orignal* and *L'Algonquin*, and the frigates *Abenakise* and *Québec*.

The absence of the ship plans for building these warships suggests that these were built from copies of existing plans of ships built in France. The same cannot be stated for the absence of preparatory drawings for the sculptures of these ships. The records of the Archives centrales de la Marine contain drawings of naval sculpture made by the French naval shipyards for approval by the ministre de la marine, as was the established practice at that time.¹⁷⁷ Yet, none seem to exist for the naval ships built in French Canada although archival manuscripts stored in the Archives nationales de France confirm that the naval ships built in French Canada had their sculptures made in French Canada by Canadian sculptors.

Correspondence instigated by Levasseur and Hocquart, and later by Bigot, with Maurepas discusses the naval shipbuilding program underway in French Canada from its

¹⁷⁶ Archives nationales de France. Série C11A. Vol.84. f37 v. *Hocquart. Bordereau de dépenses*, 1745.07.31

¹⁷⁷ Archives centrales de la marine. *Catalogues des plans de bâtiments a voiles conserves dans les archives de la Marine*, 2010.

inception in 1738 to its interruption in 1759. Some of this correspondence includes the design of the sculptures for these warships. This correspondence is vibrant under Hocquart and confirms that a synthesis of some sort took place to define the design of the sculptures, notably the design of the figurehead and sculpture of the gallery.¹⁷⁸ However, this ongoing exchange of correspondence between Levasseur and Hocquart in Québec with Maurepas in Paris about the design of the ship sculptures is terse and cryptic and does not give any information about the rendition of the sculptures. Similarly short on information are the inventories of timber cut to size for making ship sculptures and records of payment made to the Canadian sculptors for work done on these ships.

The absence of any preparatory drawings for the sculptures of these ships negates any discourse on their aesthetic merit as works of art. Also absent is any descriptive detail of these sculptures at that time that would have permitted a synopsis of their artistic rendition. The archival documents that are available deny the reader any glimpse into the aesthetic aspect and artistic quality of the naval sculpture of Canada during the French regime.

A review of the correspondence between Québec and Paris that mentions the sculptural design of these ships shows that the discussions consisted in either the status of the design of the sculpture, or in the absence of a definitive design, the status of the synthesis of the design, or the progress achieved in making the sculpture and its installation on the ship. Hocquart in his report to Maurepas about the final stages of the building of the flute *Canada* writes “...toute son œuvre morte / est fait, la sculpture posée, on travaille / actuellement aux soutes et a quelques / aménagement ;...”¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ By comparison, there is scant evidence of this synergy after Bigot became intendant in 1748.

¹⁷⁹ Archives nationales de France. Série C11A. Vol.77. f 271v. *Hocquart au ministre*, 1742.06.11. Similar progress reports are made for the other naval ships.

Levasseur was at the forefront in the design of the ship sculptures under his charge. He carried out the role of the draughtsman who would have done the drawing for approval by Maurepas. Levasseur reports to Maurepas on the first flute built under his charge *Canada*: “...c’est moi qui ay dessiné et / fait executer celle du Canada...”¹⁸⁰ Beauharnois and Hocquart, in a communication to Maurepas, report on the intention to have a similar design as that of *Canada* for the sculptures of the second flute *Caribou*.¹⁸¹ In their report to Maurepas for his approval they write; “...nous nous /contenteront de faire faire un simple / ornement de menuiserie comme / a la flute Le Canada avec quelques / feuilles de refente a la poupe, et une / figure a l’avant. / Nous sommes avec un très profond / respect / Monseigneur / vos très humbles et très / obéissant serviteurs / Beauharnois Hocquart.”¹⁸². In his reply Maurepas states “Le Roy ne juge point a propos de f^e la depense s’un / ornement en sculpture pour ce v^{au}; Et son intention / est qu’il lui sois donne seulement un ornement en / menuiserie tel que celui que vous avez marque avoir este / donne a la flute Le Canada. C’est au S^R. Levasseur a / y pourvoir sur ce qui a la d’une manière convenable; / Raporte a lui aussi pour le dessin de la figure du / Caribou.”¹⁸³ To ensure that his orders are understood, Maurepas writes directly to Levasseur to instruct him in the execution of the ship sculpture of *Caribou*: “Il ne dois estre donné qu’un simple ornement de / menuiserie au v^{au} Le Caribou tel que celui qui a este / fais pour la flute Le Canada.”¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ Archives nationales de France. Série C11A. Vol.78. f 326 v. *Levasseur au ministre*, 1742.10.30.

¹⁸¹ Charles de Beauharnois was Governor of New France from 1726 to 1747. The governor was primarily responsible for military matters and had limited authority and fewer responsibilities than the intendant. *New France New Horizons*. “Administration.” <<http://www.archivescanadafrance.org/>>.

¹⁸² Archives nationales de France. Série C11A. Vol 77. f 364. *Beauharnois et Hocquart au ministre*, 1742.09.28.`

¹⁸³ Archives nationales de France. Série B. Vol 76. f 355v. *Ministre a Beauharnois et Hocquart*, 1743.04.11.

¹⁸⁴ Archives nationales de France, Série B. Vol 76. f 363v. *Ministre a Levasseur*, 1743.04.11.

The decision by Maurepas to delegate responsibility of the design for the sculpture of the second ship *Caribou* to Levasseur is an indication that the sculpture for the first ship *Canada* was done to the satisfaction of the naval authorities in France and the simplicity of the design done in relief sculpture, “menuiserie,” as opposed to the elaborate sculptural ornamentation of French ships built in France prior, was also to the satisfaction of the naval authorities in France.¹⁸⁵

The correspondence from Beauharnois and Hocquart to Maurepas for the sculpture of the frigate *Castor* brings a new element in the discussion. Beauharnois and Hocquart exercised caution by not taking the initiative to define the sculpture. This was the first frigate to be built in French Canada for induction into the French navy and Maurepas was sent the ship plans for his review prior to starting construction. Here, Beauharnois and Hocquart point out to Maurepas the empty spaces in the ship’s plan designated for the sculpture: “Dans les plans que nous vous / avons envoyé jusques a present / des vaisseaux a construire en Canada / vous aurez pu remarquer, Monseigneur, / qu’il n’a point de sculpture ; si vous ordonnez qu’on y en fasse, ayez / agréable de nous envoyer les dessins / que vous voudrez que l’on suive ; s’ils/ ne sont pas trop composer les / sculpteurs que nous avons ici les / Exécuteront ; ou si vous voulez rien / vous en rapporter a nous ; nous nous / contenteront de faire faire un simple / ornement de menuiserie comme / a la flute Le Canada avec quelque / feuilles de refente a la pouppe, et une / figure a l’avant. / Nous sommes avec un très profond / respect /

¹⁸⁵ J. Justin Storck in *Le Dictionnaire Pratique de Menuiserie, Ebénisterie Charpente* describes “menuiserie” as that trade particular to decorative wood sculpting mostly of furniture, but which included door frames and structural supports for buildings, and different from “ébénisterie,” cabinet making. Justin Storck adds that the use of leafs in “menuiserie” favoured the acanthi which was rendered light and mannered during the reign of Louis XV. The stern drawings of the two flutes in figure 52 are examples of the “ébénisterie” decoration of the stern. The correspondence from Maurepas emphasizes simplicity for the sculptures of *Canada* and *Caribou*, which meant they had to be less ornate than ships built in the French shipyards, but not devoid of sculptural ornamentation. .

Monseigneur / Vos très humbles et très / obéissent serviteurs / Beauharnois Hocquart.”¹⁸⁶

The archives also contain a manuscript that gives the inventory and the payment made for the wood to make the sculpture for the *Castor*, which include a section of timber 12 feet long and 28 inches diameter for the figurehead.¹⁸⁷

The description of the sculpture for *Castor* is limited to a short paragraph of the figurehead when the ship became a British prize. This short description does not provide any information about the artistic rendition of the figurehead. *Castor* was not purchased by the British Admiralty because it was considered that it had deteriorated too much to warrant the expense of a retrofit. What is interesting is that the British surveyor put in charge to describe the state of the ship must have found the figurehead sufficiently interesting to include a short description in the report about the ship’s seaworthiness.

There is no mention in the archives for the sculpture of the corvette *Carcajou* except for payment made to Pierre Levasseur for the sculptures.¹⁸⁸ There is activity reported about the sculpture for the frégate *Martre*. Hocquart writing to Maurepas requests to know what the name of the ship will be so that he can instruct the sculptor: “Je vous prie Monseigneur de m’instruire / du nom que sa Majesté aura donne a la / fregate de 22 canons qui est sur le chantiers, / pour la faire decorer d’une sculpteur / convenable et pour l’expédition des descharges / Hocquart.”¹⁸⁹ The record of expenses, “bordereau de dépenses,” signed by Hocquart show the purchase of white pine from Jean-Baptiste St-Martin for making the sculpture, including the figurehead, and payment made to Noël Levasseur for the sculptures

¹⁸⁶ Archives nationales de France. Série C11A. Vol 77. f 363v-364. *Beauharnois et Hocquart au ministre*, 1742.09.28.

¹⁸⁷ Archives nationales de France. Série C11A. Vol 82. f 70. *Bordereau de Dépense pour le Castor*, 1744.10.16. Vol 82. f 91. *Inventaires des bois*, 1744.10.20.

¹⁸⁸ See footnote 167.

¹⁸⁹ Archives nationales de France. Série C11A. Vol 84. f 184. *Hocquart au ministre*, 1745.11.06.

of the aftercastle, and to Jean-Baptiste Levasseur for sculpting the decoration of the stem, the frieze at the front of the forecastle, and for making the lantern at the stern ¹⁹⁰

The *Saint-Laurent*, a ship-of-the-line 3ième rang, was the largest naval ship built up to then. This would mean that it would be required to have a higher quality of sculpture than the previous ships. This is reflected in a letter that Hocquart sent to Maurepas where he bluntly asked for the drawings of the sculptures that were to adorn the ship: “Je vous prie, Monseigneur de m’envoyer / un dessin pour la sculpture du S^t Laurent. / Il convient que les ornemens soient simple / de facile execution et proportionnee au peu d’habilité des sculpteurs de ce pays cy ; / le s. Levasseur veillera a l’ordinaire / sur l’ouverage. Hocquart.” ¹⁹¹ In this letter, Hocquart asked for a simple design that was within, what he considered to be the limited capabilities of the sculptors. Upon receiving Maruepas’ reply, Hocquart deemed it necessary to repeat them back to Maurepas: “Monseigneur / J’ay reçu la lettre que vous m’avez fait / l’honneur de m’ecrire le 20 mars d.^{er}. / J’ay fait part au S^r. Levasseur de votre / decision sur la sculpture du S^T. Laurent / que vous souhaitez ester simple et / dans le meme gout de celles de Caribou / et des autre fregattes construits icy. / Vos orders seront executer. / Je suis avec un tres profond respect / Monseigneur / votre tres humble et tres / obeisant serviteur / Hocquart.”¹⁹² When delivery of the *Saint-Laurent* was due, Bigot, having just arrived in Québec, wrote back to Maurepas that the sculptures were not yet mounted: “J’ai trouvé a mon arrivée ice le / S^T. Laurent a la mer et son armament étoit bien avancé. J’espere

¹⁹⁰ Archives nationales de France. Série C11. Vol 85. f 426v. *Hocquart*, 1746.10.20 and Vol 85. f 432-432v. *Hocquart*, 1746.10.20.

¹⁹¹ Archives nationales de France. Série C11A. Vol 85. f 64v. *Hocquart au ministre*, 1746.10.09.

¹⁹² Archives nationales de France. Série C11A. Vol 88. f 76-76v. *Hocquart au ministre*, 1747.10.07.

/ qu'on en sera content dans las port. La sculpture n'est point / faite on n'en a pas eu le temp.¹⁹³

The ship-of-the-line 3ième rang *L'Original* was of similar size, although not identical in size and shape, to its predecessor *Saint-Laurent*. Levasseur writing to Maurepas about the ship's plans, leaves an empty space for the sculpture drawings: "Je n'ya tracé qu'au crayon les traits des bouteilles et / de l'Eperon de vaisseau, de 72 canons afin de laisser la facilite de mettre la sculpture. / Je suis avec un profond respect, / Monseigneur, / votre tres humbles et tres obeissant serviteur / Levasseur."¹⁹⁴

The instructions from Maurepas emphasize a sculptural design that is simple. The reply by Levasseur was to follow Maurepas' instruction but use the style of the "menuiserie" of France, with acanthi foliage in relief.¹⁹⁵ This suggests that drawings like those of *Fleuron* are too elaborate to be considered as examples of the ship sculpture executed in the Québec shipyards, and the simplified sketches of figures 40 and 41 by Pierre-Noël Levasseur are closer to what was practiced.

The three sketches that Pierre-Noël Levasseur junior sent to his father in 1745 while training to be a naval sculptor at Rochefort, are student exercises produced outside French Canada and intended as an art student study. Although these three sketches were done by a Canadian sculptor, there is no evidence that they were actually used on a ship built in French Canada. The design of these three sketches suggests that they would be useful as a preparatory scheme for the forecastle of a corvette or light frigate that did not have a middle

¹⁹³ Archives nationales de France. Série C11A. Vol 92. f79. *Bigot au ministre*, 1748.10.10.

¹⁹⁴ Archives nationales de France. Série C11A. Vol 92. f 311. *Levasseur au ministre*, 1748.10.10. Levasseur reports to minister Maurepas that *L'Original* is complete and ready to launch. Archives nationales de France. Serie C11A. Vol. 96. f 193. *Levasseur au ministre*, 1750.08.05. There are no records of any mention about the sculpture.

¹⁹⁵ The pattern with acanthi foliage can be seen in the insert from Storck in figure 41. Compare this to the less elaborate floral arrangement in the sketch by Pierre-Noël Levasseur also in figure 41.

gallery. The logistics suggest that the only ship that was a likely candidate for these designs was *Martre*. The ships that followed, the *Saint-Laurent*, *L'Original* *L'Algonquin*, are too large and it is practically impossible to fit the sketches by Pierre-Noël Levasseur on the aftercastle of these three ships, which had double decked galleries.

Correspondence between Québec and Paris for the ship-of-the-line 3ième rang 1ière ordre *L'Algonquin* does not mention the design of the sculpture. This was the largest ship ever built and the importance accorded its sculpture would exceed that of any previous ship built in French Canada.¹⁹⁶ Does this mean that Levasseur undertook the design of the sculpture without having to revert to Maurepas for review?

Correspondence from Levasseur to Maurepas on the next ship that was built, the frigate *Abenakise* launched in 1756 shows that Levasseur took personal charge of the sculptural design of the ship before the ship's name was even known.¹⁹⁷ Levasseur wrote “j’eusse à chercher à le décorer de mon mieux, mais ne sachent pas son nom, il m’est impossible d’orner son éperon d’une figure.”¹⁹⁸

The last ship mentioned in correspondence between Québec and Paris was the frigate *Québec* which was left incomplete even though in an advanced state of construction. Construction on *Québec* was stopped when Levasseur had to send the workers to Lake

¹⁹⁶ Bigot writing to Maurepas simply states “Il y reste à faire son éperon / ses bouteilles, ses troisièmes allongés et / aiguillettes de porque, les guirlandes de la calle et tous l’aménagement du / fond du calle.” Archives nationale de France. Série C11A. Vol.98. f 253. *Bigot au ministre*, 1752.10.21. There is no mention of the ship’s sculpture. Similarly for correspondence from Levasseur who strictly reports about the readiness of the ship “Le vaisseau L’Algonquin est bordé depuis son / platbord jusqu’a sa lisse des façons; ses ponts et / partie de son francbord sons calfatte; il ne lui / manque pour être entièrement fini que son éperon, / ses bouteilles, parties de ses porques, et lentier / aménagement de sa calle. Levasseur.” Archives nationale de France. Série C11A. Vol.98. f 368. *Levasseur au ministre*, 1752.10.31.

¹⁹⁷ This precludes the possibility that the three sketches by Pierre-Noël Levasseur junior were used by René-Nicolas Levasseur for the *Abenakise* when they were given to Pierre-Noël Levasseur senior in 1745.

¹⁹⁸ Archives nationale de France. Série C11A. Vol 99. f 509 v. *Levasseur au ministre*, 1754.10.15.

Ontario to help in the construction of two warships. Levasseur, writing to Maurepas, states “Nous avons été obligés d’abandonner les travaux / de cette frégate en faisant partir nos ouvriers / partie pour le lac Ontario, ou le S^e Cresse sous / constructeur est alle construire deux goellettes / dont je lui ai remis les plans. Levasseur.”¹⁹⁹ This last statement by Levasseur about sending the ship plans to build these two ships suggests that he had become autonomous and taken charge, without needing the permission of Maurepas to approve his decision.

The absence of any discussion about the ship sculpture for *L’Algonquin*, *Abenakise* and *Québec* suggests that Levasseur had also taken charge of the design of the sculptures and did not need any intervention from Paris. Levasseur had gone to France when *Abenakise* was being built, and he may have been empowered to take charge of operational decisions because of the war.

The design of the sculpture for a ship is specific and unique for the space it fills. Hence, in reviewing the sculpture of naval ships built in French Canada requires acknowledging their surrounding architectural space and the possible viewing angles.²⁰¹ The only available source of information for investigating the specificity of a ship built in French Canada for its sculpture is the take-off drawing of the frigate *Abenakise* which was done when the ship became a British prize in 1757, figure 36 (Vichot 5). This drawing shows the ship’s hull, but also includes the bow and stern.²⁰² This plan was obtained after a search in the archives of the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich and the Public Archives at Kew

¹⁹⁹ Archives nationales de France. Série C11A. Vol 103. f 416. *Levasseur au ministre*, 1758.10.30.

²⁰¹ Here one can add that the successful rendition of a sculpture takes into account its viewing space. Jay S Hanna in *Marine Carving Handbook*, explains that the edges of a carving have to consider the viewing angle and corners are to be made to appear round or sharp depending on the line of sight and the desired effect (Hanna 39). This rule equally applies to ship sculptures.

²⁰² This plan was done by the British Admiralty as a study of the ship’s capability “as a very fast sailer” (Chapelle 137).

for any documentation that may reference the sculptures of the *Castor* and *Abenakise* as British prizes.²⁰³

This plan is primarily of interest to the naval architect but it is also of interest to the naval art historian who inquires about the sculptural space available at the stem of the ship. The configuration of the bow and the curves of the cheeks and rails define the allowable space available to fit the figurehead. The overall length of *Abenakise* is stated as being 141 feet.²⁰⁴ Rubin in *Quebec Figureheads and Ship-Carvings* posits that the length of the figurehead for ships built between 1650 to 1800 was set by the ratio of the ship's length in feet divided by 12 (76). This ratio can be applied to the length of the *Abenakise* of 141 feet to obtain the length of the figurehead of $141/12 = 11\text{-}3/4$ feet. This length is marked out in figure 60. Another restriction imposed upon the sculptor was the narrow space and vertical entry between the lower rail and upper cheek. This limited the available space and resulted in a figurehead with a narrow body and an upright back. This is not different than the other frigates built in France at that time. Hence, the figurehead of *Abenakise* would have to

²⁰³ Other documents that were found about the two war prizes dealt with administrative and similar issues by the British admiralty. As part of the search, a list of French prisoner-of-war ship models at the National Maritime Museum was also reviewed, but this did not reveal any ship models made by the French crew of the *Castor* and *Abenakise* while they were in captivity. See *Ship Models. Their Purpose and Development from 1650 to Present*. Brian Lavery and Simon Stephens, London: Wilson, 1995.

²⁰⁴ The take-off drawing of *Abenakise* is drawn on a square ruled sheet with each square measuring 1/4 inch. The take-off lines represent the water side of the plank. Chapelle reports in *The Search for Speed Under Sail 1700-1785* that the extreme beam width of *Abenakise* was 39 feet. The extreme beam width on the take-off drawing measures 9-11/16 inches. With this dimension it is possible to deduce the scale of the drawing to be 39 divided by 9-11/16, which equals 4.025. The standard scale for naval architecture is 1 inch = 1 foot and this slight difference between the measured scale and the standard scale is attributed to paper shrinkage over time. Hence, for this exercise, the standard scale of 1 foot length equals 1 inch, or 4 square lengths, will be used to mark the overall length of the figurehead on the drawing.

somehow fit in the same space as the space for the figureheads of the frigates *Renommée* and *Galathée*, figure 55.²⁰⁵

These two French built ships have three rails leading to the front while *Abenakise* has two rails. An alternative comparison can be made by making reference to the figurehead drawings of a French built frigate that approximate the type of front rail of *Abenakise*.²⁰⁶

Figure 48 shows the two frigates that became British prizes and were renamed by their British captors as *Dolphin's Prize* and *Flora*. The figureheads of these two ships can be read across to the *Abenakise* as actual drawings of how they looked after they were built, whereas, the two prior drawings for *Renommée* and *Galathée* were drawings prepared for approval.

It is befitting to end this chapter by making reference to an exercise that conceptualized a figurehead design for the *Abenakise* using the space at the stem of the plan.²⁰⁷ This resulted in a full-size mock-up of a female standing proudly upright with black flowing hair, donning a western robe, holding firmly onto a shield carved with the royal coat of arms, and with a wampum strung across the front of her shoulders as an offering of friendship and alliance. The production of the figurehead followed the procedure in use at that time, from the submission of a conceptual sketch, to the making of a reduced scale model, and to the final sculpting of the figurehead and its polychrome finish, including gilding. Figure 61 shows the reduced scale model of the figurehead that was made prior to making the full-size mock up.

²⁰⁵ *Renommée* and *Galathée* were launched in 1744, twelve years before *Abenakise* was launched, in 1756.

²⁰⁶ Carr-Laughton describes the evolution of the front rails of French ships: “At first all three rails went to the boss: then from about 1750 two only” (49). Carr-Laughton adds “The French did not adopt this distinction but – as the reduced freeboard of a frigate did not give room for a normal three-rail head, they got over the difficulty by putting the rails very close together and making the whole head very light” (50).

²⁰⁷ This was done by a research group working under the supervision of Prof. Jean Bélisle, Concordia University, Montreal in 2011.

Conclusion

The ephemeral quality and scarcity of information of naval decorative sculpture in eighteenth century French Canada has resulted in a lack of awareness about its cultural and historical merit. In addition, the absence of artefacts and descriptive documentation about its aesthetic aspect has also resulted in its practice being overlooked by art historians and museum curators.

These sculptures were made for warships built in French Canada under a naval program funded by France. As soon as these warships were launched and fitted, they sailed directly to Brest for inspection and induction into the French naval fleet.

The construction of these ships was done according to specifications set by the French navy. This included the requirement for decorating them with wood sculptures and carvings following the practice of the naval shipyards in France.

The sculptures and carvings that adorned these naval ships occupied a public space on the ship, with every sculpture and carving peculiar for the space it filled, and designed to accommodate the vantage space occupied by the viewer.

It is not possible to reconstruct what the sculptures and carvings that adorned the naval ships built in French Canada looked like because of a lack of pertinent information. However, it becomes possible to visualize what these would have looked like by making reference to sculptures and carvings of naval ships of similar rating built in France around the same time.

Naval sculpture was an integral feature of the sailing ship's architecture and the leading European navies of the seventeenth century competed amongst themselves to excel in its aesthetic appearance. France led in the practice of ship sculpture with naval sculptors

appointed by the king and with French naval shipyards setting up wood sculpture schools to ensure the sculptures made for naval ships were done to a high artistic quality. These naval sculpting schools had been set up by Jean-Baptiste Colbert, secretary of state for the navy under Louis XIV. They followed the same type of training as the sculpting school of the Royal Academy and fitted into Colbert's policy of creating an academia with a standard set of rules for all branches of art.

Colbert was a firm believer that the warships of France had to be richly sculptured to showcase the magnificence of the monarch and impress upon the enemy the superiority of France as a powerful nation-state. There were nine warships built in 17th century French Canada during the reign of Louis XIV when Colbert's policy was in effect. These ships would have had extensively decorated sculptures, although no records have been found of what these would have looked like.

Colbert's policy of decorating ships with sculptures continued under the reign of Louis XV with ministre de la Marine Pheilipeaux de Maurepas equally enforcing this requirement upon all newly built naval ships. This included those ships built in French Canada as part of the French naval program of 1738 to 1759. However, the cost of the war with Britain imposed a certain amount of restraint on the money spent on naval sculpture. The extravagant sculptures under Louis XIV showing the magnificence of the monarch gave way under Louis XV to simpler sculptures showing allegiance to the state.

The launch of the naval program in French Canada was entrusted to intendant Hocquart. To ensure its success, Maurepas sent the king's shipbuilder René-Nicolas Levasseur to French Canada in 1739 to take charge of the construction of these ships. However, French Canada did not have a training school for prospective naval sculptors, as

had been done in the shipyards in France. There weren't even any sculpting schools in French Canada at that time and sculptors acquired their skills by apprenticing in the family. In the absence of trained naval artists, Levasseur resorted to sketching the design of the sculptures and left it up to the Québec Levasseur extended family of religious sculptors to produce the ship sculptures.

The building of these naval ships in French Canada included a winter period before launching when the design and production of the ship's sculptures would have been done. Archival manuscripts of correspondence from Maurepas to Hocquart and Levasseur show that when the time came to make the sculptures for these ships, Levasseur was always asking his superiors in France to supply the designs of these sculptures, but the reply was consistently the same, where Levasseur was told to take charge of the designs himself.

The primary reason for this would be that these sculptures had to be designed as integral features of the ship's architecture. In addition, the theme of the figurehead at the bow and the relief sculptures at the stern were made to tell the ship's given name so that their design was unique for every ship.

The total absence of artefacts and scarcity of documentation about what these sculptures looked like made it necessary to carry out a comparative analogy with the sculptures of similar ships built in France during the same time for their design, theme, style, and colour scheme.

The ship's sculptural decorations typically consisted of a fully sculpted figurehead that stood in front of the ship's bow as an extension to the cutwater, high relief carvings of symbolic figures at the forecastle and aftercastle, and low relief carvings of decorative floral motifs and geometric patterns of the rails at the stem and the gallery and stern. The design of

the sculptures and carvings for both the stem and the stern were determined by the ship's architecture. That is, the space allocated for the sculptural decoration of the ship's forecastle and aftercastle was determined by the plan to which the ship was built. The warships built in French Canada consisted of the ship-of-the line 2ième rang and 3ième rang, flutes, frigates, corvettes and goélettes. The larger the ship, the higher the top deck and the more space available for the sculptures and carvings.

The naval ships built in French Canada followed the plans of ships built in France. However, there was no set requirement for the ships to be built exactly to the plans from France to the last detail as long as shipbuilding practices were properly followed and the ship's seaworthiness requirements were met. This allowed for some innovation that sought improvement. This becomes evident with the frigate *Abenakise* that was built to a modified hull and turned out to be a fast sailer when compared with other French and foreign frigates of that era.

The ship's given name directed the sculptural theme, in particular the composition of the figurehead and the relief carvings at the stern. Here, the original indigenous names given to the ships built in French Canada would present opportunities for local innovation. It is not clear if these names were decided by Maurepas or by Hocquart or Bigot. When one considers the controlling style of government exercised by France over its colonies, these names would have at least been approved by Maurepas.

The indigenous names given to the ships built in French Canada can be grouped into three categories, that is, ships named after animals, aboriginal tribes and local places.

The figurehead of ships built in France that had animal names simply showed a realistic sculpture of the animal made to fit between the allowable space at the ship's bow,

namely in the forward space between the front rails and the upper cheek above the cutwater. It follows that the ships built in French Canada would do the same and the sculptor would make a figurehead of the indigenous animal after which the ship was named. Hence, the ship *Caribou* would have a caribou, *Castor* would have a beaver, *Carcajou* would have a wolverine, *Martre* would have a weasel, and *L'Orignal* would have a moose.

The ships built in French Canada named *L'Algonquin*, *Outaouaise*, *Iroquoise* and *Abenakise* refer to the indigenous tribes that lived within the boundaries of French Canada. The figureheads of these ships would be representative of a personage from that aboriginal tribe as was the practice for naval ships built in France that were named after personages. Here, it was normal practice for the ships built in France to have the figurehead wear a Roman cloak or Roman armour. However, the concept for the figureheads with an aboriginal tribal name for the ships built in French Canada would have been done to an original theme because of the uniqueness of their name. Hence, a direct read across as was done with animal names from ships built in France is not possible.

The names *Outaouaise*, *Iroquoise* and *Abenakise* are written as female. This suggests that these figureheads would show a female person. The women of the Abenaki tribe were made to wear a loose fitting plain robe somewhat patterned after a European woman's dress as part of their Christianization. This suggested that the female figurehead of *Abenakise* would have had a similar type of robe.

The naval ships built in French Canada with place names, *Canada*, after the country, *Saint-Laurent*, after the Saint Lawrence River, and *Quebec*, after the capital city of New France would all have an allegorical figurehead representation of the place name. Figurehead images for naval ships built in France that were given place names referenced subjects from

Greek or Roman art and were depicted as romanticized figures wearing Greek or Roman robes or armour. It is possible to visualize the ships named *Canada* and *Quebec* having similar romanticized figureheads. There were ships built in France named after a river, but no images of their sculptures were found. A close representation as a conceptual theme is the sculpture *Neptune calmant les flots* by Lambert-Sigisbert Adam. As a consequence, the conceptual design of the figurehead for *Saint-Laurent* remains unknown.

It is possible to postulate that the figureheads of the ships built in French Canada followed the practice of the French naval shipyards, but the indigenous names given to the ships built in French Canada introduced an original uniqueness in the figurehead's concept. This uniqueness would have been present in the theme of the sculpture, the design of the subject that was represented, and possibly in the composition, with indigenous motifs creeping into the design detail, as suggested with the wampum belt for the figurehead of *Abenakise*.

The sculptural decoration of a French naval ship had to follow the strict requirement of displaying the royal coat of arms as part of the figurehead or at the stern. The royal coat of arms would be displayed upright as part of the figurehead and also as a focal area at the stern of the ship. This equally applied to the ships built in New France and simplifies the supposition of what this part of the design looked like.

A comparison between the ships built in France and French Canada for the relief carvings of the aftercastle, especially for the gallery and the stern shows that the relief carvings would be different solely where the given name of the ship became part of the theme and the design had to pictorially define the ship's name. For example, the relief

carving at the stern for *Castor* would be a beaver in an oval frame below the circular shield of the royal coat of arms.

The Canadian sculptors that made ship sculptures also made religious sculptures for churches. The primary purpose of these religious sculptures was to produce a strong visual impact that conveyed a religious experience upon the viewer. This was achieved by means of a colourful chromatic finish and by gilding. The details of the sculpture were given secondary importance and imperfections were hidden under the surface preparation for the final finish. Naval sculpture had a similar purpose, that is, to project an overall impression of awe to the viewer as opposed to having a realistic finish as was the practice of the Royal Academy with marble and stone statues admired for their anatomical exactness.

Reading across as appropriate the practice of naval sculpture in France to that of French Canada suggests that the technique, design and theme would copy that of France, but that some local difference would have been involved. This difference would be due to the following factors:-

The Canadian sculptors were versed in religious sculpture and used this skill to learn the sculpting technique of naval sculpture by intuition and by observing the sculptures of ships built in France that were in harbour.

The absence of a naval sculpting school would result in the Canadian sculptors applying their own sculpting technique, which they had learnt through their apprenticeship in religious sculpting within their family. There was no formal training in naval sculpture with a standard set of rules and there was no supervising naval master sculptor to enforce them.

The sketches made by René-Nicolas Levasseur were transformed into sculptures according to the Canadian sculptor's interpretation of the sketch and cut into the wood following the sculptor's personal style.

The unique indigenous names given to the ships built in French Canada would have resulted in some deviation in the design of the sculpture from the standard followed by the French naval shipyards.

The use of indigenous names suggests that indigenous culture had caught the imagination of the administration in France, which in turn, condoned the composition of the sculpture reflecting an indigenous theme.

Overall, there was significant leeway given to the naval shipbuilder, allowing decisions about the ship's sculpture to be made locally. There was no central approving authority dictating what the sculptures had to look like.

A comparison was also done for the colouring finish of these sculptures. Reference was made to the French naval colour scheme in force at that time; the colour scheme of a wooden sculpture of the royal coat of arms that has survived since when it was made at about the same time by one of the Levasseur sculptors; and to Boudriot's description of the colour scheme for an eighteenth century French warship. The colour scheme illustrations in Boudriot are particularly indicative of how the surfaces of French warships were painted and this would equally apply to the sculptures and carvings of the naval ships built in French Canada.

The design style of these sculptures would follow the same style applied to the sculptures of the ships built in France. The figurehead would be relatively upright and set over the cutwater between the upper cheek and the front rails. The relief carvings would

follow the style in force at that time, whether it was seventeenth century Baroque or eighteenth century Rococo. The floral decorations that adorned the frame of the royal coat of arms, the picture frames at the stern, and the rails would have the same “menuiserie” acanthus floral decorative motif as their counterpart in France.

French naval records about sea trials and the inspection of these ships before they were inducted into the French navy do not mention the ship sculptures or carvings. This suggests that the quality of the sculptures and carvings of the ships built in French Canada were as expected and in line with that of ships built in France. When the British took the frigates *Castor* and *Abenakise* as war prizes, from the available documentation reviewed, there is no mention of any particularities about their sculptures and carvings, suggesting that these were as to be expected for a French warship.

In conclusion, it has been the intent of this thesis to discover the genre of naval sculpture practiced by Canadian sculptors in eighteenth century French Canada and to show that the naval sculpture that followed the convention set by France also had room for a Canadian indigenous element. These naval sculptures were made by the same sculptors that were prolific in decorating churches with religious sculptures and carvings. The preservation of religious sculptures in the churches where they were installed has resulted in awareness amongst art historians about their aesthetic and cultural merit and they are considered as part of the cultural and historical heritage of Québec and Canada. It is hoped that this thesis has been able to show that the genre of naval sculpture practiced in eighteenth century French Canada is also part of our cultural and historical heritage, and reviewing the many elements relative to its practice in this thesis has been successful in creating awareness about discovering this lost art.

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Figure 1. Top. Jean Bérain. *Poupe du Soleil Royal*, 1670. Musée du Louvres. Copied from Wikipedia <http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fichier:Aft_of_Soleil_Royal_238728.JPG>. Bottom. Jean Bérain. *Le Soleil Royal*, 1670. Civico Museo Navale, Milan. Copied from Costa (29).

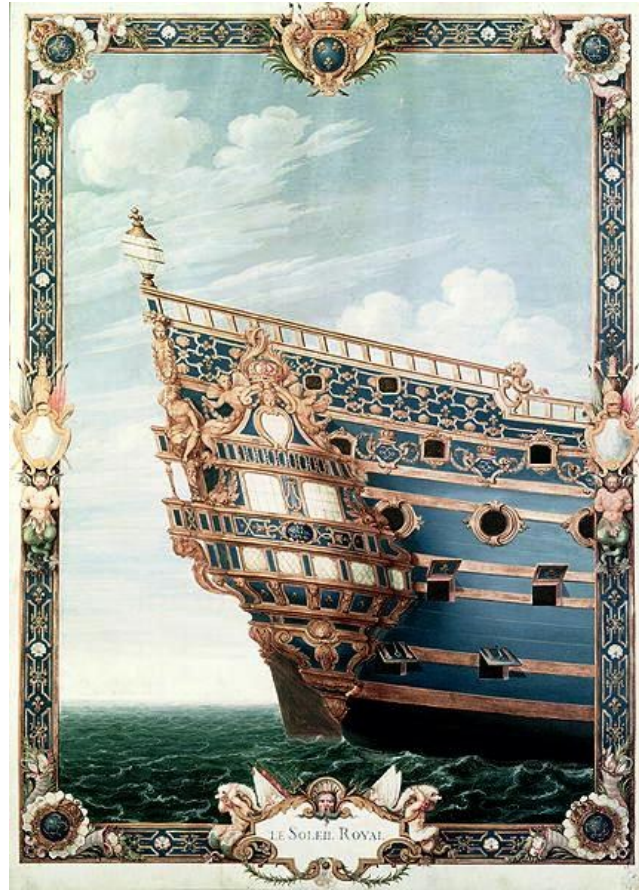


Figure 2. Top left. Jean-Baptiste Tanneron, *Le Soleil Royal*, 1839. Musée de la Marine, Paris. Top right. Close up. Bottom right: Detail of stern carving. Bottom left: Plaque. Copied from Musée de la Marine <http://www.modelships.de/Museums_and_replicas/Musée_de_la_Marine_Paris/Photos_Soleil_Royal>. ^A



^A The inscription at the Musée de la Marine reads: “Jean-Baptiste Tanneron (Toulon 1807- Paris 1852). Model making workshop at the Maritime Museum at the Louvre, Paris. LE SOLEIL ROYAL. Model of a 100-gun ship, scale 1/60. 1839 reconstruction of a 1689 or 1693 vessel. Walnut (planking and deck), boxwood (sculptures), ebony (gunwale and handrail). Legendary vessels from Louis XIV’s navy, the two successive Soleil Royal were ambitiously decorated, the creation of draughtsman Jean Bérain in 1689. Jean-Baptiste Tanneron used the same drawings to make the model 150 years later. The result was a remarkable miniature sculpture, particularly at the stern, which is dominated by the allegorical figure of Apollo on his chariot.”

Figure 3. Hendrick Kornelisz Vroom, *Prince Royal* from the painting *The Return of Prince Charles from Spain*, 1623. National Maritime Museum Greenwich. Detail. Copied from Costa (31).

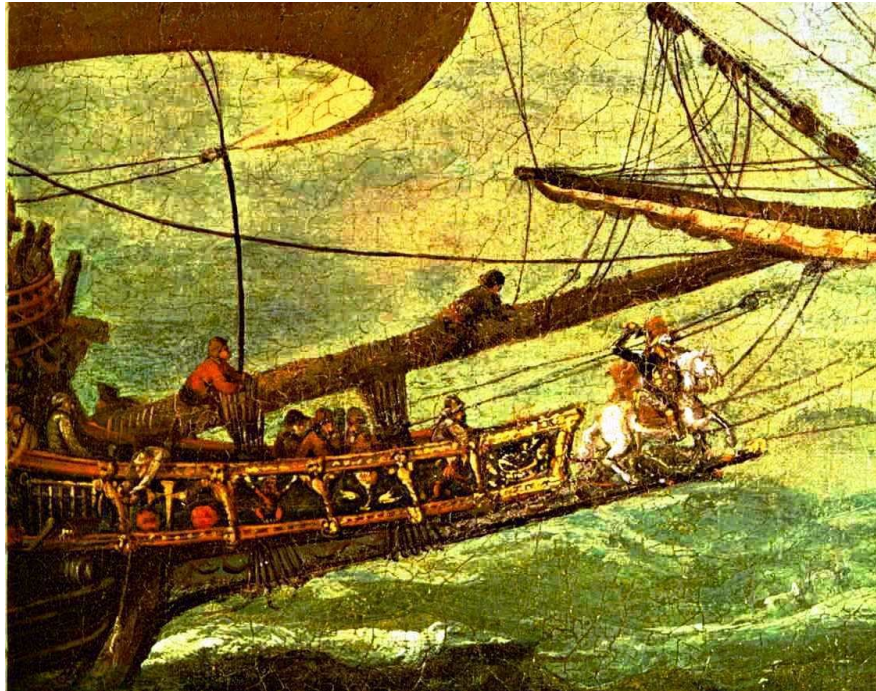


Figure 4. Willem Van de Velde the Elder. *Portrait of the Royal Sovereign*, about 1661. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. Repro ID: PAI7257. Copied from the National Maritime Museum <<http://www.nmm.ac.uk/collections/explore/object.cfm?ID=PAI7257>>.

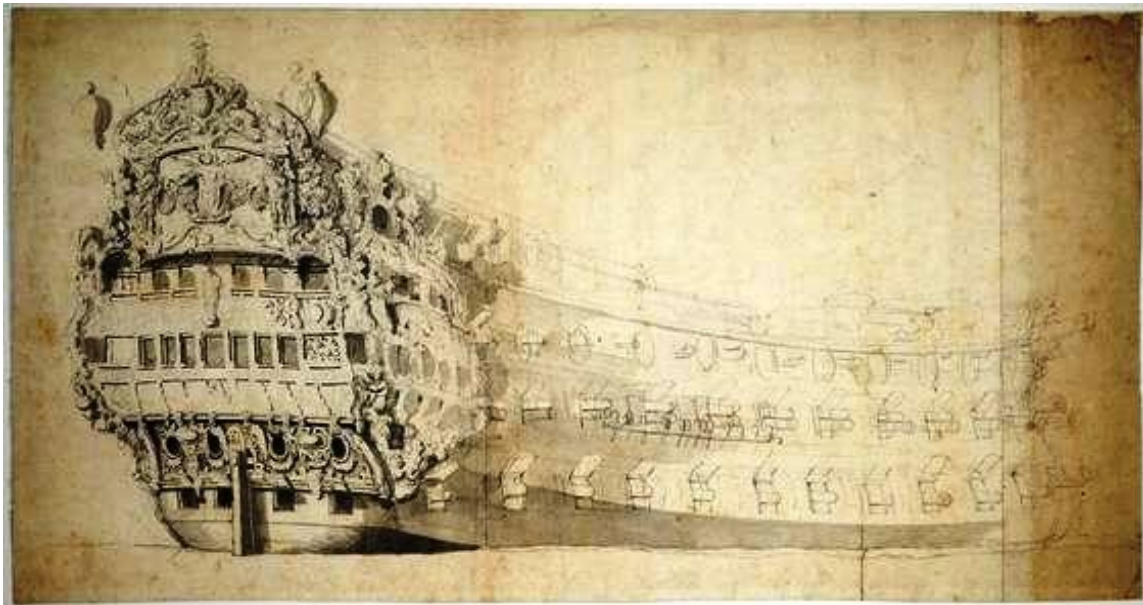


Figure 5. Bjorn Landström. *Wasa. The stern Reconstruction*, 1980. Copied from Soop (208).



Figure 6. Top left: Charles Philippe Caffieri. *Ornement de proue, de poupe et des bouteilles du vaisseau l'Actif*, 1752. Service historique de la Marine, Vincennes. Copied from *Les génies de la mer* (55). Top right: Jacques-Etienne Collet. *Lion bondissant tenant dans ses pattes la tête de Mercure*, 1752. Musée national de la Marine (55). Bottom left: Jean Bérain. *Esquisse d'un décor de proue avec un décor de Minerve*, no date available. Service historique de la Marine, Vincennes (72). Bottom right: Jacques-Etienne Collet. *Minerve*, mid-eighteenth century. Musée national de la Marine (72).



Figure 7. Hubert Berti. *Album de Colbert*, 1988. Top: Plate 49 detail. Bottom: Plate 50 detail. Copied from Berti.

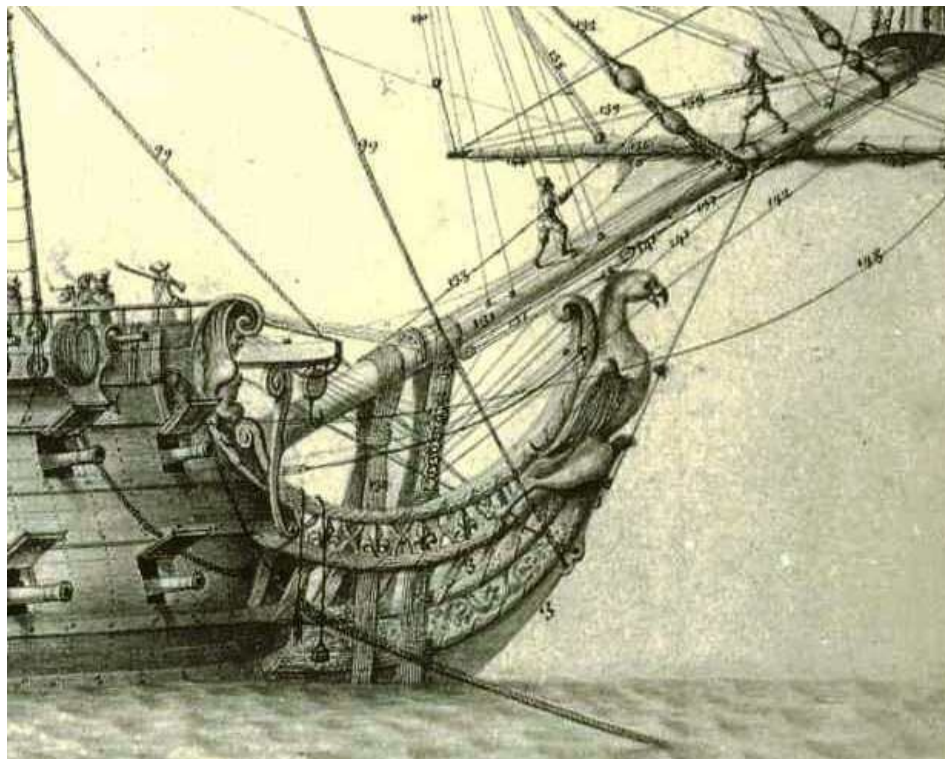
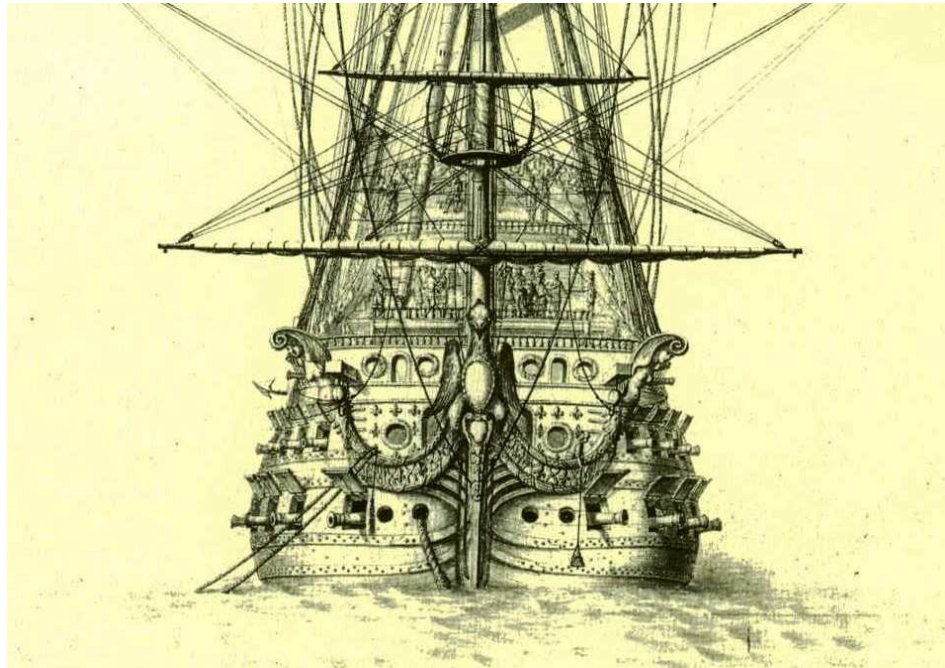


Figure 8. Hubert Berti. *Album de Colbert*, 1988. Top: Plate 48 detail. Bottom: Plate 50 detail. Copied from Berti.

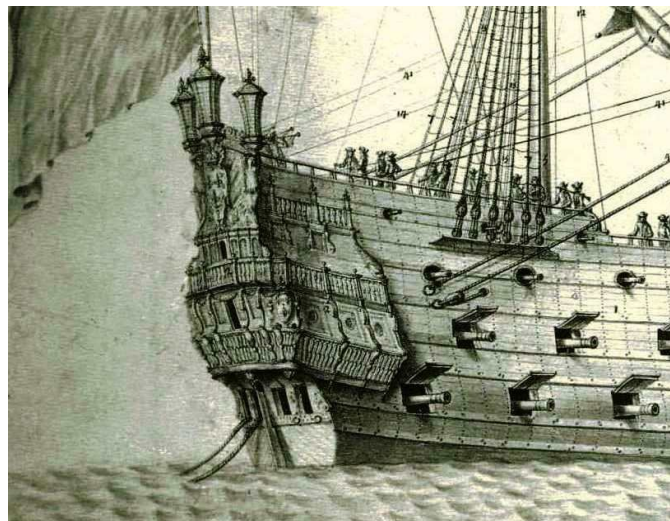
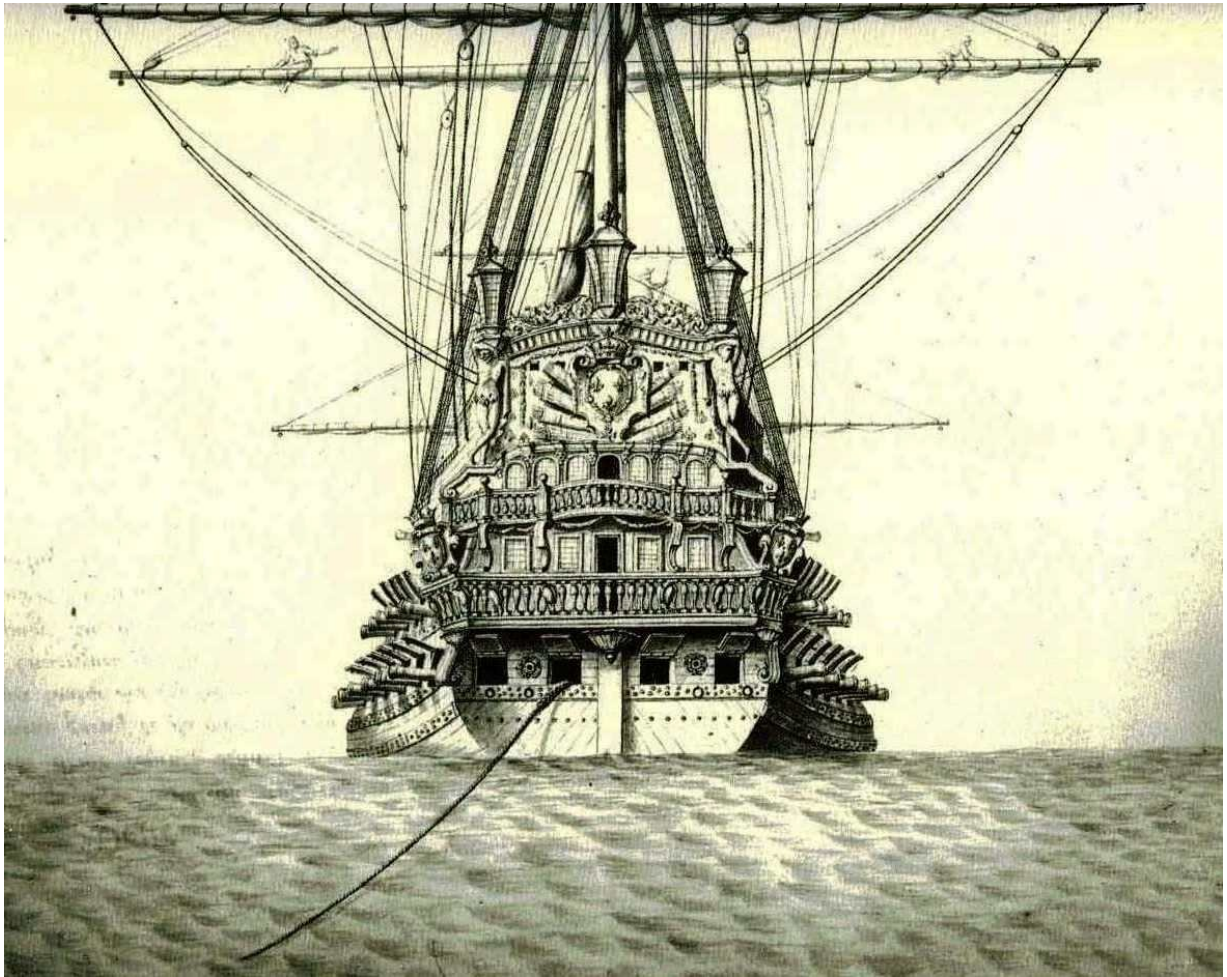


Figure 9. Pierre Puget. *Design for the decoration of a Warship*, about 1650-1660. Copied from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. <<http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/search-the-collection/90006746>>.

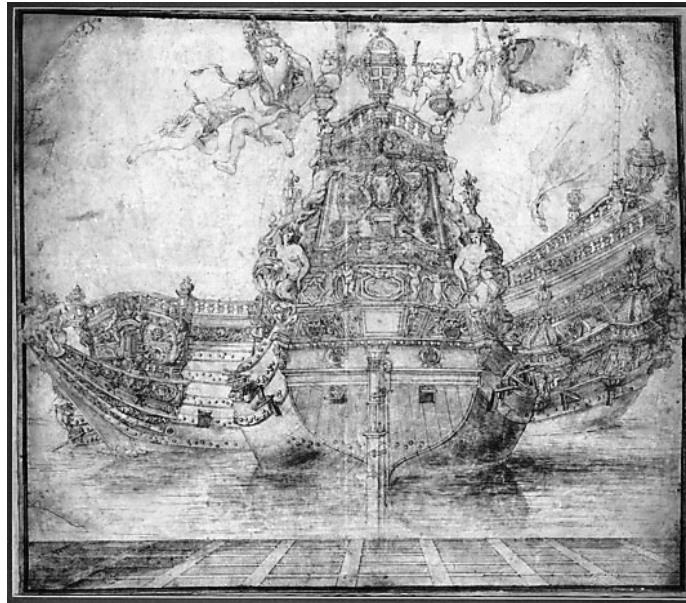


Figure 10. Pierre Puget. *Design for a Tabernacle*, about 1650 – 1660. Copied from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. <<http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/search-the-collection/90002956>>.

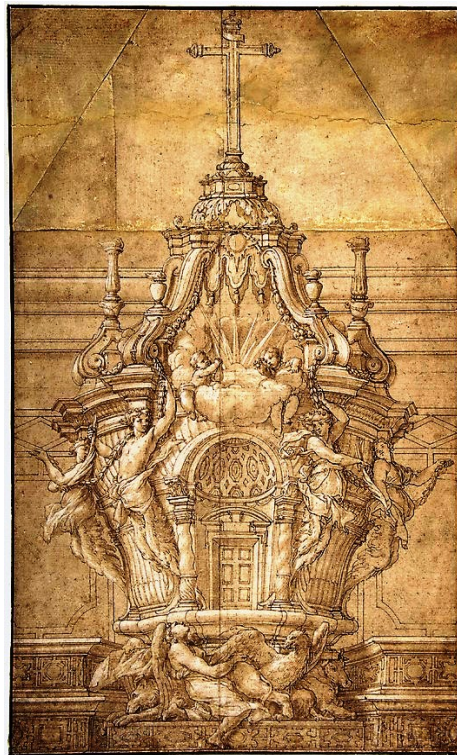
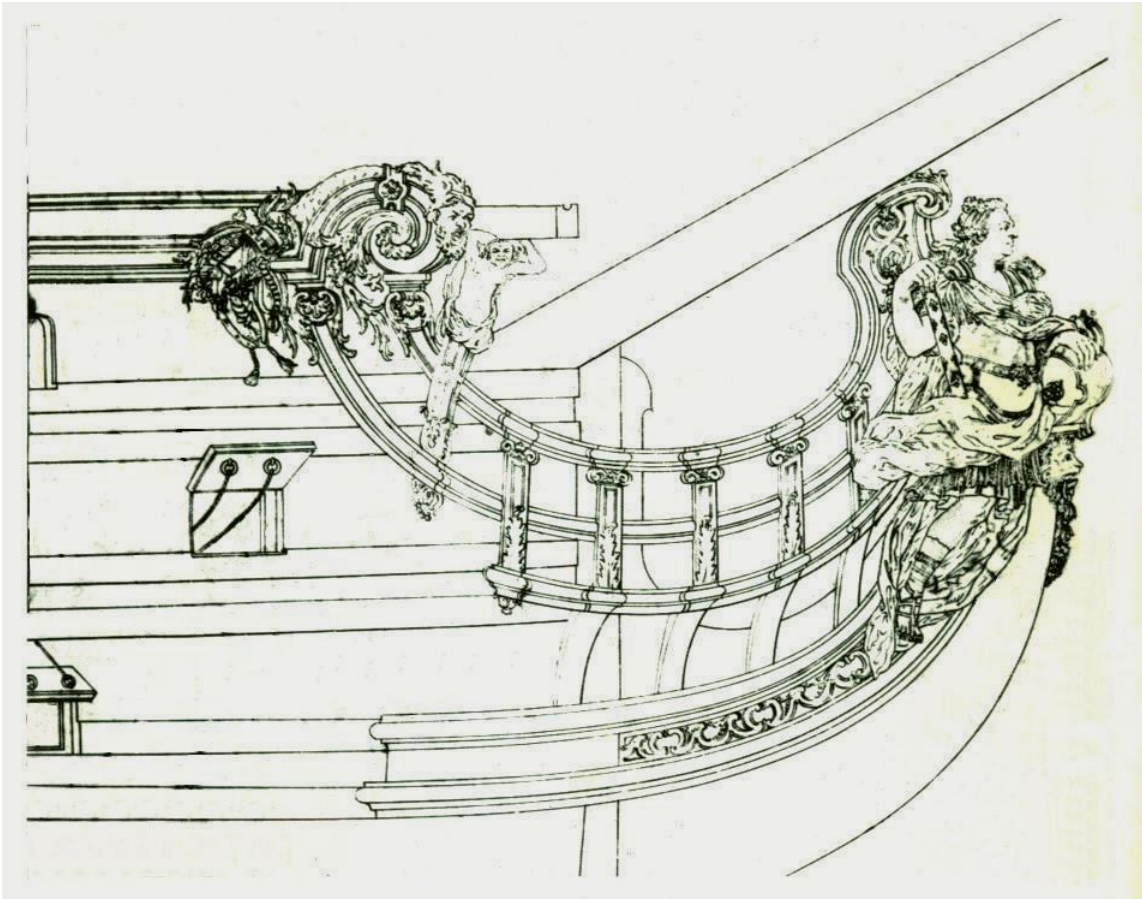


Figure 11. Charles Philippe Caffieri. *Design for the figurehead of the Royal Louis*, 1758. Peter Norton, *Ships' Figureheads*. Copied from Norton (81).^B



^B The figurehead is a representation of Louis XV.

Figures 12. Hyacinthe Rigaud. *Portrait de Louis XIV (1638-1715)*, 1701. Copied from the Louvre website.
<<http://www.louvre.fr/llv/oeuvres/>>.
Search: Louis XIV.^C



Figures 13. Louis-Michel van Loo *Louis XV, Roi de France et de Navarre (1710-1774)*, about 1750s. Copied from Jaconde, Portail des collections des musées de France, French Ministry of Culture.
<<http://www.culture.gouv.fr/public/mistral/joconde> />. Search: Louis XV.



^C “This portrait was commissioned as a gift for Philip V of Spain. It was such a success at court that it was never sent to Spain. Every detail of the work is aimed at producing the quintessential image of absolute power; the nobility of the antique setting, the crimson curtain, and the solemnity of the Sun King wearing his coronation robes embroidered with the royal fleur-de-lys” (Louvre).

Figure 14. Lambert-Sigisbert Adam. *Neptune calmant les flots*, 1733. Copied from the Louvre website. <<http://www.louvre.fr/llv/oeuvres/>>. Search: neptune_calmant_les_flots.^D



Figure 15. André-Charles Boulle. *Commode*, about 1710–1732. Copied from *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000. <<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/1982.60.82>>.^E



^D Lambert-Sigisbert Adam was born to a family of sculptors from Lorraine and studied in Italy where he underwent the influence of Bernini (Louvre). This marble sculpture representing Neptune calming the waves was Adam's admission piece to the Royal Academy (Louvre).

^E André-Charles Boulle was appointed *ébéniste du roi*, royal cabinet maker, in 1672 (Heilbrunn). This commode is of the same design and construction as the pair that was made by Boulle for the bedchamber of Louis XIV at the Grand Trianon in 1708. It is made from walnut veneered with ebony and marquetry of engraved brass and tortoiseshell, gilt-bronze mounts, and verd antique marble top (Heilbrunn).

Figure 16. Jules Hardouin Mansart. *Galerie des Glaces*, 1678. Château de Versailles. France. Copied from Wikipedia.^F <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Chateau_Versailles_Galerie_des_Glaces>.^G



^F Note that the statues can be referenced as models for ship figureheads and the arched ceiling decoration can be referenced as a template for the design of a ship's aftercastle.

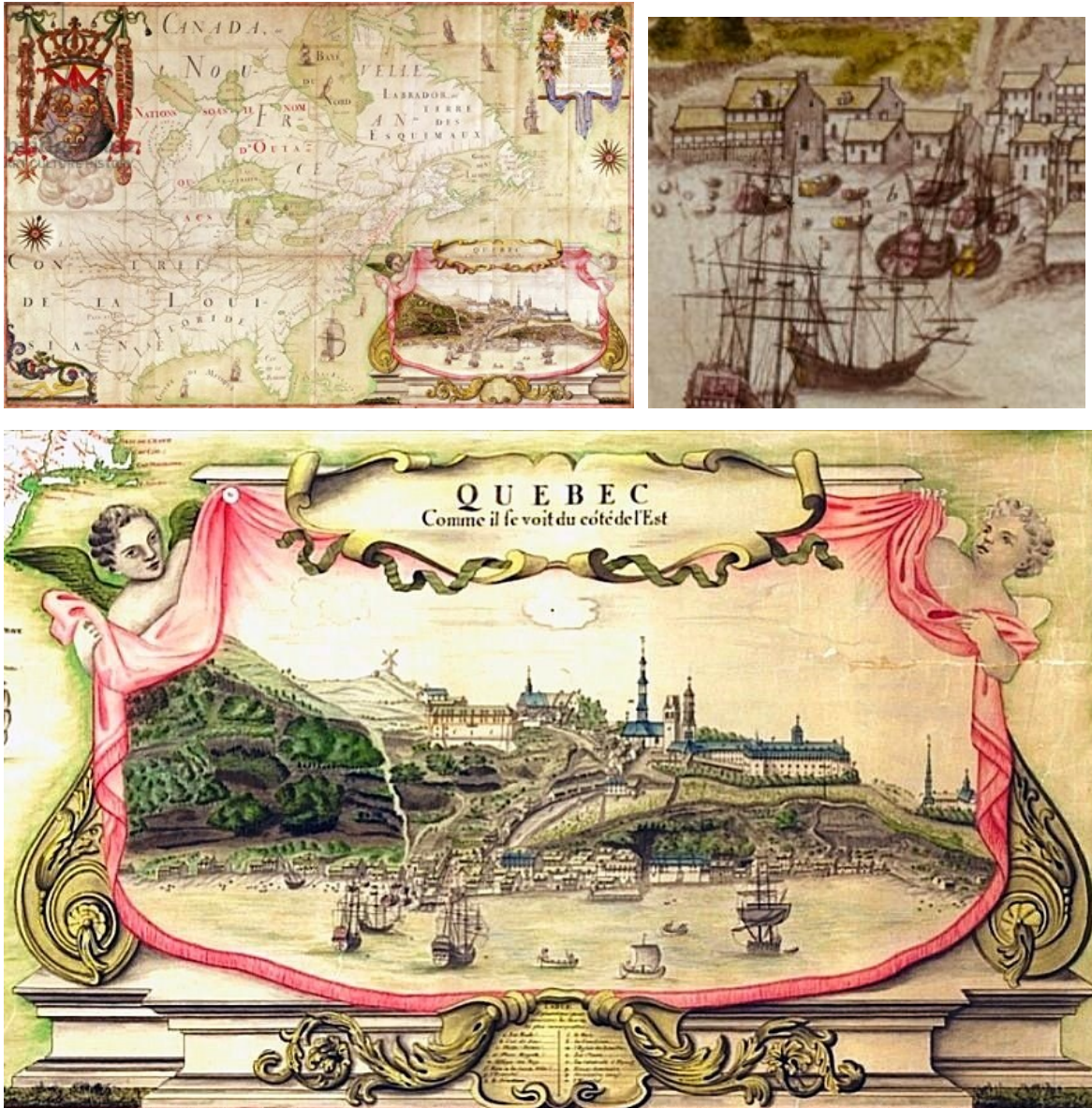
^G Photo attribution: Myrabella / Wikimedia Commons / CC-BY-SA-3.0. Taken on 13 July 2011 as a partnership between the Château de Versailles and Wikimedia France (Wikipedia).

Figure 17. Jean-Baptiste-Louis Franquelin. *L'entrée de la Rivière du St Laurent, et la ville de Québec dans le Canada*, 1688. Bibliothèque National de France. Notice n°: FRBNF 41301166. Copied from Bibliothèque National de France <<http://catalogue.bnf.fr/>>.^H



^H The grid numbers and letters are added to locate items on the map. Québec City is at 3E. Small ships for inshore use are at 4F, 12F, and large ships for ocean crossings at 4E, 13F, 15D. Brisson points out that the Rivière Saint-Charles shipyard is located where the river bank forms an elbow at 3D.

Figure 18. Jean-Baptiste-Louis Franquelin. *Carte de l'Amérique Septentrionale - Canada Nouvelle France*, 1688. Service Historique de la Marine, Vincennes, France. Copied from Bridgeman Art Library, London. <<http://www.bridgemanart.com/image/Franquelin-Jean-Baptiste-Louis-17th-century/Cartouche-of-Quebec-from-Carte-de-l-Amerique>>.¹



¹ Top left: View of the entire map. Bottom: Detail of the framed panorama at the bottom right-hand quadrant of the map. The framed quadrant is titled *Quebec Comme il se voit du cote de l'Est* and shows a view of Québec City from the opposite east bank of the river. Three flutes and a merchant ship are at anchor in the river. This image complements the previous image by Franquelin of Québec City and emphasizes its strategic importance as a maritime commercial centre. Top right: Magnified detail of the area around the Cul-de-Sac shipyard with a small cluster of ships at berth and a few small ships under construction.

Figure 19. Louis XV. *Brevet de Constructeur des Vaisseaux du Roy en Canada pour sieur Le Vasseur sous constructeur*. Copied from Library and Archives Canada. Archival reference number CA ANC MG18-H58. <http://collectionsCanada.gc.ca/pam_archives/>.

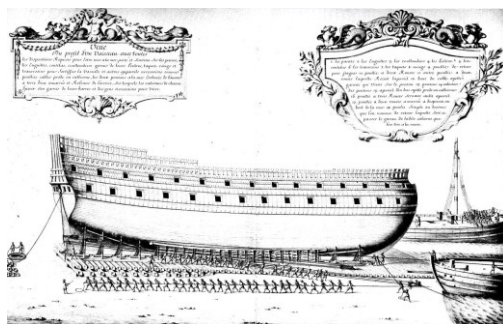
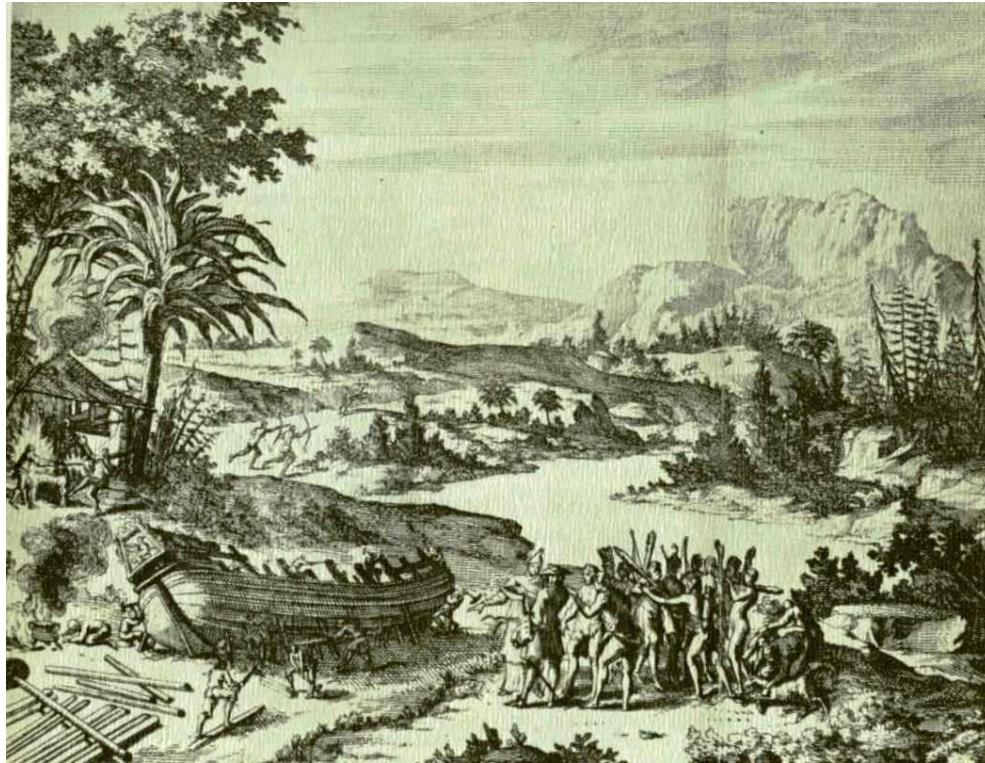
Brevet de Constructeur des Vaisseaux du Roy en Canada
 Pour le Sr. Le Vasseur sous constructeur

Aujourd'hui premier avril mil sept cent quarante trois Le Roy
 etant a Versailles voulant commettre une personne capable et experimentee en ce qui regarde
 la construction de ses Vaisseaux de guerre et chacun que le Sr. Le Vasseur s'est acquis
 l'experience necessaire pour s'en bien acquiesse, Sa Majeste la reine et ordonne et ainsi et
 ordonne Constructeur en Canada pour en lad. qualite en faire les fonctions et en la dite
 dite Sr. Hocquet Intendant de la Nouvelle France et pour de appointement qui lui seront donnez
 par les Lettres et ordonnances qui en seront expediez. Mandes Sa Majeste au Sr. Intendant
 de faire reconnoitre le Sr. Le Vasseur en lad. qualite et choses concernant le Sr. Le Vasseur
 et pour l'execution de Sa Volonte Sa Majeste ma commande de lui expedier le present
 Brevet qu'elle a voulu signer de son main et être contre signé par moy Con. Secrétaire d'Etat
 et des finances Commandeur en chef et finances.

1743

A Voltaire

Figure 20. Top: Louis Hennepin. *Le Griffon - Nouvelle découverte d'un très grand pays dans l'Amérique entre le Nouveau Mexique et la Mer Glaciale*. Utrecht: 1697. Copied from Bélisle *The Decoration of Ships in Québec* (Figure 1).^J Bottom left: *Album de Colbert* Plate 30. Bottom right: Nicolas Ozanne. *Duc de Bourgogne, Rochefort, France, 1751*.^K



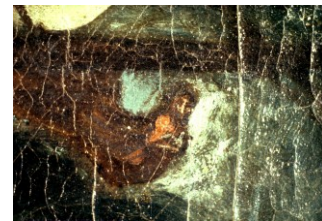
^J Hennepin applied his artistic licence to convey information rather than provide an accurate depiction. He has the ship's bow pointing towards the water to show the relief carving of the griffin at the stern. Although this method of construction is the same as shown by Colbert, it is contrary to the practice of building a ship with its stern facing the water as shown in the image above for a ship launched in France. Hennepin's artistic license is also shown by the two hunters in the mid-ground making an attempt to aim their arrows while running. Any hunter will point out that this is an impossible action. The image is still credible because the depiction of the ship and its method of construction are accurate.

^K Print copied from Jan Hendrik Niemeyer, Art Trader. Its title block reads *Vüe du Vaisseau du Roy le Duc de Bourgogne, Lancé a la Mer dans le Port de Rochefort le 20 Octobre 1751*.
 <http://www.marine-niemeyer.com/prints/28913_e.php>.

Figure 21. Anonymous. *Ex-voto Ludovicy Prat*, 1706. Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré. Musée de la Basilique. Copied from the Faculty of Fine Arts Slide Library, Concordia University, Montreal.



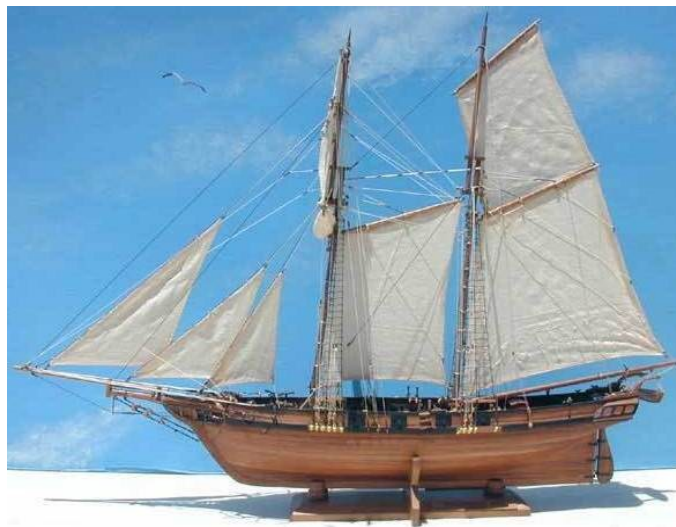
Figure 22. Anonymous. *Le Saint-Esprit de Québec*, 1753. Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré. Musée de la Basilique. Right: Close up of figurehead. Copied from the Faculty of Fine Arts Slide Library, Concordia University, Montreal.



Figures 23. Scale Model of a Brigantine. Copied from <<http://www.modelshipworld.com>>



Figure 24. Scale Model of a Goélette. Copied from <<http://www.ship-models.com>>.



Figures 25. Scale Model of a Flute. Copied from <<http://www.finemodelships.com/>>.



Figures 26. Scale Model of a Corvette.^L Copied from <<http://www.finemodelships.com/>>.



^L The model is shown without the upper masts and partly rigged.

Figures 27. Scale Model of a Frigate. Copied from <<http://www.finemodelships.com/>>.



Figure 28. Scale Model of Ship-of-the-Line 64-cannon 3ième rang. Copied from <<http://www.finemodelships.com/>>.

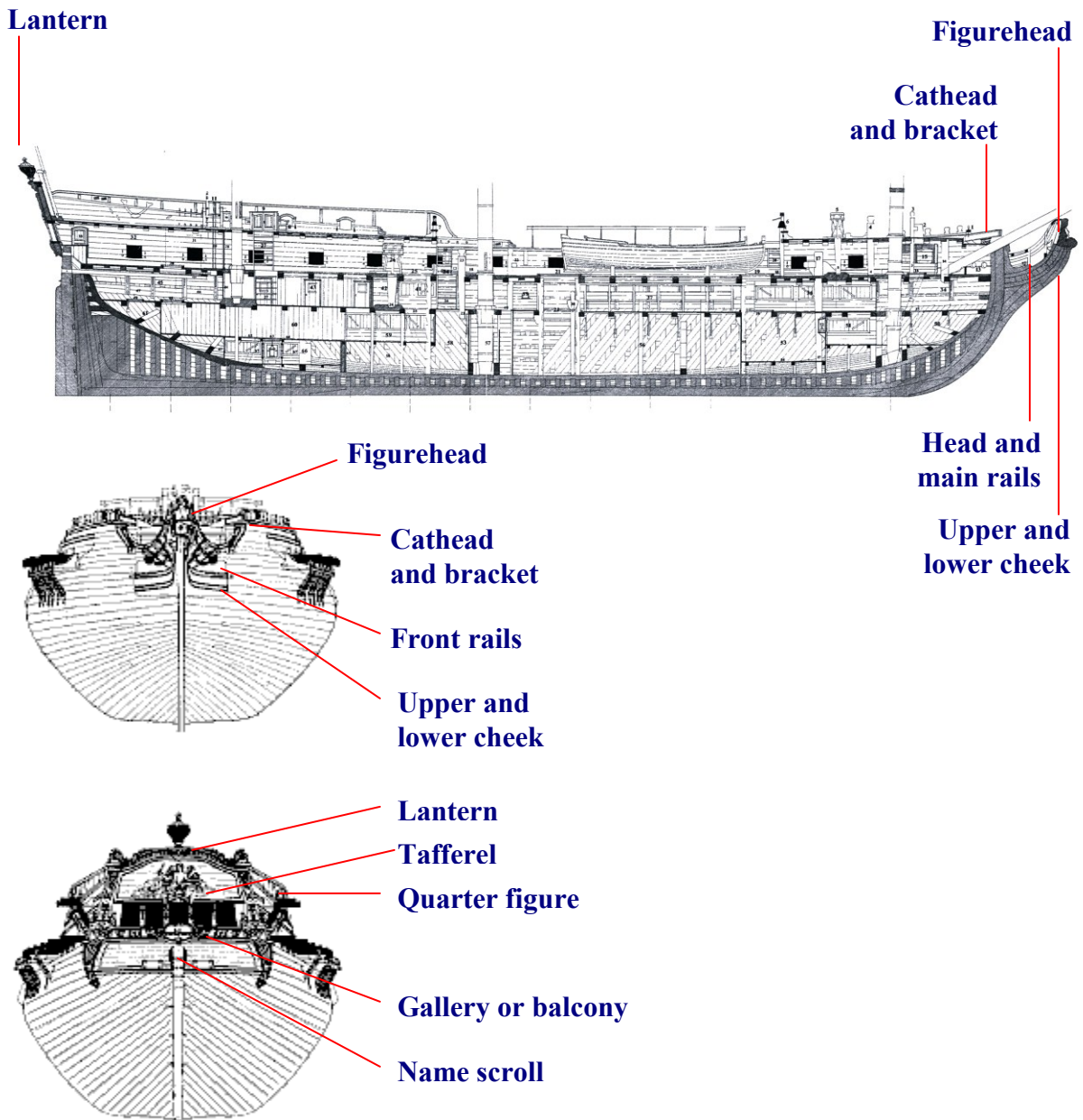


Figure 29. Top: Jacques Leblond de Latour. *Saint Michel Terrassant le dragon*.^M Musée de Québec, about 1705. Copied from Porter (Figure 429). Bottom: *Ex-voto Ludovicy Prat*. Figurehead detail of figure 21.



^M The sculpture of the Archangel Saint Michael was made for the church of L'Ange-Gardien. It is made from wood, finished in polychrome and gilded.

Figure 30. Jean Boudriot. *Frégate de VIII La Renommée 1744*, 2001. Copied from Boudriot.^N Major decorated features for a typical warship as defined by Carr-Laughton (32, 102).^O



^N Jean Boudriot. *Frégate de VIII La Renommée 1744*. Nice: Ancre, 2001. Planche 4. Elévation boisée <http://www.ancre.fr/Renommee/Renommee_2.htm>.

^O See appendix 2 for a complete list of all sculptured features for a French warship.

Figure 31. Top: Nicolas de Fer. *Carte de l'Amérique du Nord et du Sud*, 1698. Copied from Bibliothèque et Archives Canada. www.collectionscanada.gc.ca. Bottom: Upper left detail of *Carte de l'Amérique du Nord et du Sud*. Copied from *Nouvelle-France Horizon nouveaux: Exposition - Commerce*. <<http://www.archivescanadafrance.org/francais/accueil.html>>.



Figure 32. L.G. Carr-Laughton, *French Heads and Figures*. Top: From the *Pic* model, 1755. Bottom: From the *Vaisseau à Rames*, 1785. Copied from Carr-Laughton (48).

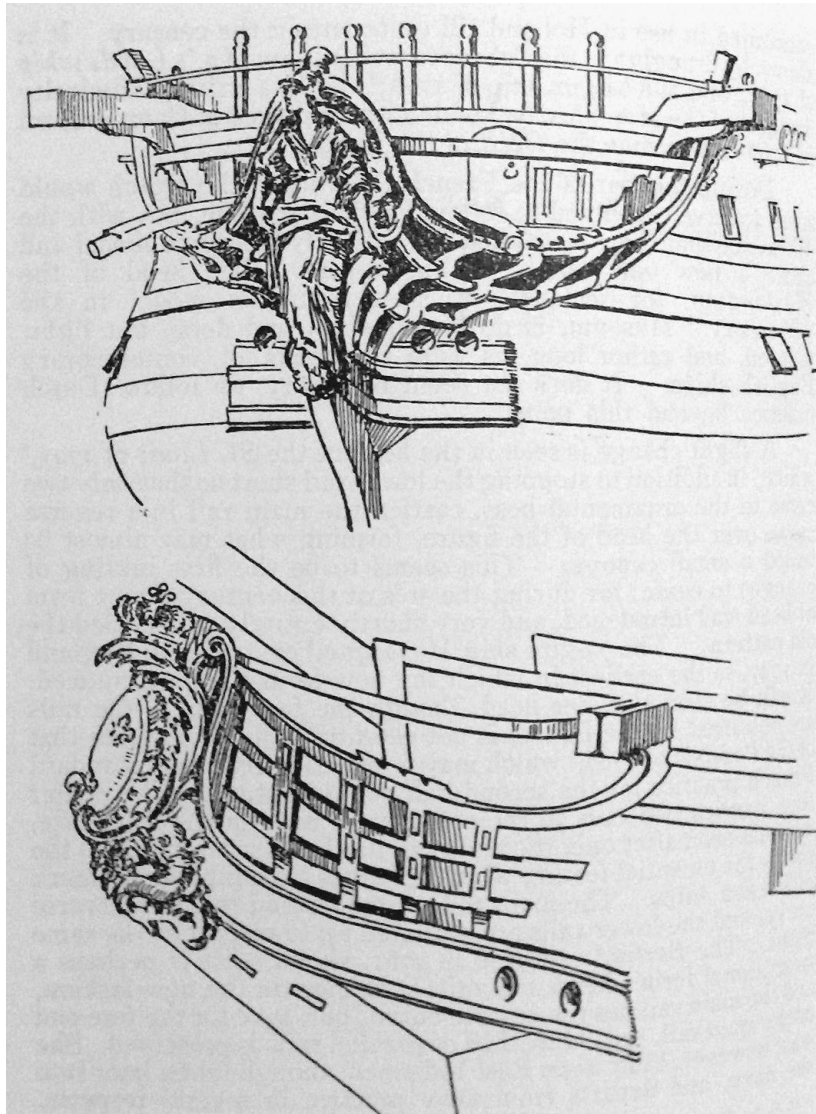


Figure 33. Top: Anonymous. *Représentation de la bête féroce nommée carcajou*. Source unknown.^P



^P Copied from Marylou Garou, faunologue québécoise. *Contre-analyse du rapport d'autopsie de la Bête de Roch Etienne Marin – 1958*. <<http://uberfrak.com/analphabetevaudan.html>>.

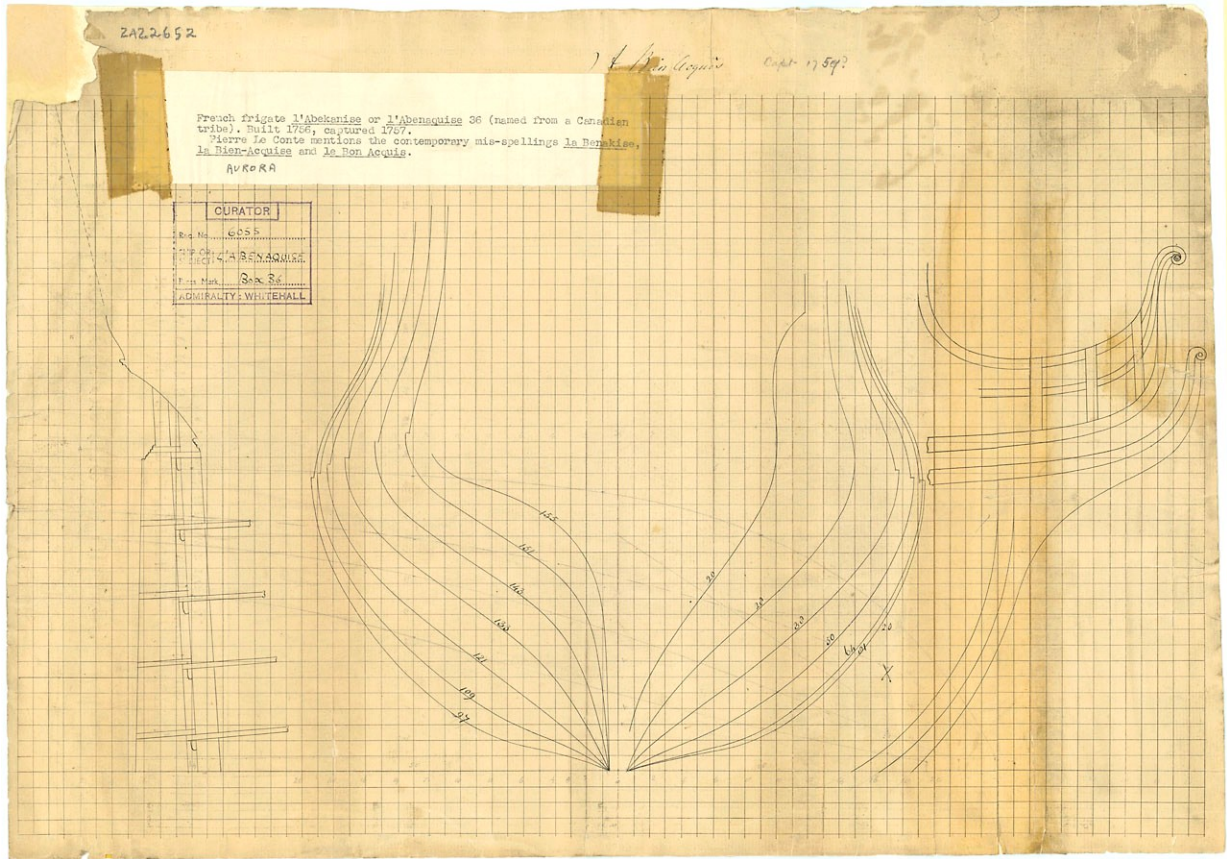
Figure 34. Anonymous. *Couples d'algonquins vers 1700 et 1720*. Bibliothèque de la ville de Montréal, salle Gagnon. G4592. Copied from en.wikipedia.



Figure 35. Anonymous. *Couples d'abenakis vers 1700 et 1720*. Bibliothèque de la ville de Montréal, salle Gagnon. G4592. Copied from en.wikipedia.



Figure 36. Anonymous. *French frigate L'Abenakise*, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. No. 6055 Box 36.^Q Copied from the original.



^Q The label on the drawing reads: “French frigate L’Abenakise or Le Benaquise 36 (named from a Canadian tribe). Built 1756 captured 1757. Pierre Le Conte mentions the contemporary mis-spelling la Benakise, le Bien Acquisse and le Bon Aquis.”

Figure 37. Richard Short. *A General View of Québec from Point Levy. Vue Générale du Québec, prise de Pointe Levy, 1759.* Musée du Québec.^R Copied from *The Canadian Encyclopaedia* < <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/lower-canada>>.



^R Note the hull of the frigate *Québec* in the background.

Figure 38. Top : Pierre-Noël Levasseur senior. *Reredos*, 1736.^S Altar of the Ursuline Chapel, Québec. Copied from the Musée des Ursuline de Québec <http://museedesursulines.com/en/the_ursulines_chapel>. Bottom : Close up of the *Reredos*.

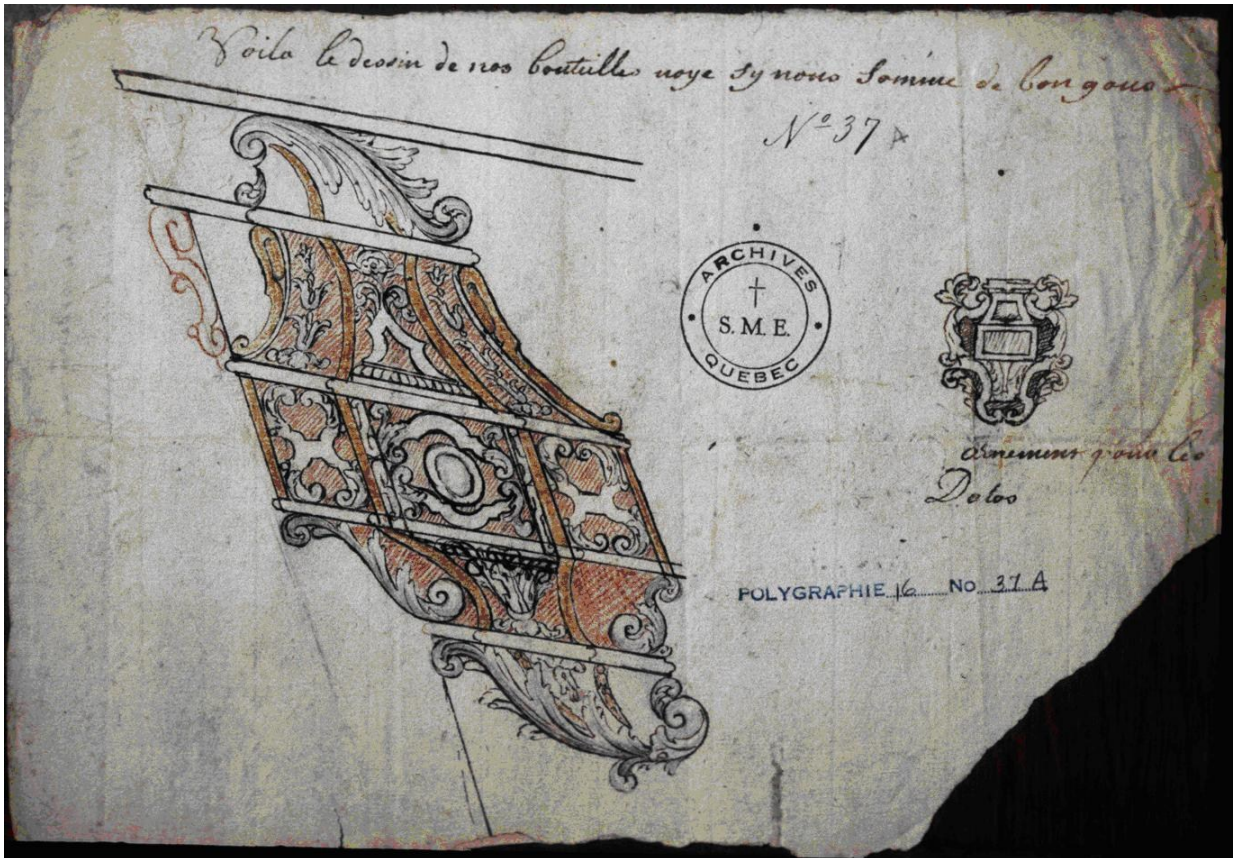


^S The gilding was done by the Ursulines between 1736 and 1739. The decor was reinstated in 1901 (Musée des Ursuline de Québec).

Figure 39. Pierre-Noël Levasseur senior, *Saint Joseph*, about 1750. National Gallery of Canada. No. 9995. Copied from National Gallery of Canada <<http://www.gallery.ca/en/see/collections/artwork>>.



Figure 40. Pierre-Noël Levasseur junior. *Ornements de bouteille et de dalot d'un vaisseau non identifié*, 1745 or 1746. Musée de la Civilisation, Québec. Polygraphe 6 no.37a. Archives of the Séminaire de Québec.^T Copied from Bélisle *La sculpture navale* (414).



^T The handwritten note across the top reads “Voila les dessins de nos bouteilles voye sy nous somme de bon gous.” The note on the right reads “Ornement pour les Dalos.” Compare the similarities of Levasseur’s sketch with the design by Jean Bérain for the Soleil Royale, done in 1670, figure 1. Although almost a century apart, and Levasseur’s style is distinctively mid-18th century as opposed to the Rococo design by Bérain, the floral details in Levasseur’s sketch retain Bérain’s style, especially for the centre band. Levasseur’s composition also bears some similarity to the geometrical layout by Bérain. The differences between both designs can be attributed to the simplification of the aftercastle over the decades and Levasseur’s design being meant for a smaller ship.

Figure 41. Top: 1750. Pierre-Noël Levasseur junior, *Dessin du tableau arrière d'un navire anonyme*, 1745 or 1746. Musée de la Civilisation, Québec. Polygraphe 6 no.37b. Archives of the Séminaire de Québec.^U Copied from Bélisle *La sculpture navale* (414). Bottom: J Justin Storch, “Acanthe” *Dictionnaire Pratique de Menuiserie*, Figure 51. Copied from Storch.



^U The image is oriented to how it would be seen on the ship. As a result the handwritten notes are upside down. The note on the left reads “Voila le couroneman du derier qui a ete desine bien a la ate.” The note on the right reads “Point sy elleve que cela.” his sketch for a ship’s stern is the result of a synthesis derived from previous designs for earlier ships. Yet, it shows originality in its simplicity. The design is divided into three horizontal sections, with the middle section sub-divided into seven vertical sections. The upper horizontal section is filled with floral motifs that resemble the arrangement by Storch. The central horizontal section, which is meant to accommodate the three windows of the gallery, typical for a frigate or corvette, alternates between areas with a floral motif and areas that are void. The empty space of every window is countered with a medallion motif. The lower section shows a curtain on each side. The line drawings of the infant Jesus, Saint Joseph and the Virgin Mary were added by someone at the Séminaire du Québec later (Bélisle *Un Levasseur a Rochefort*).

Figure 42. Top: Pierre-Noël Levasseur junior, *Dessin de motifs végétaux d'un tableau arrière*, 1745 or 1746. Musée de la Civilisation, Québec. Polygraphe 6 no.37c. Archives of the Séminaire de Québec. Copied from Bélisle *La sculpture navale* (415). Bottom: Detail of top left hand corner with a floral motif that resembles the arrangement by Storch in figure 41.



Figure 43. L.G. Carr-Laughton, Left: *La Venus*, Early 18th Century. Right: *The Royal Louis*, 1758. Copied from Carr-Laughton (Plate 54).

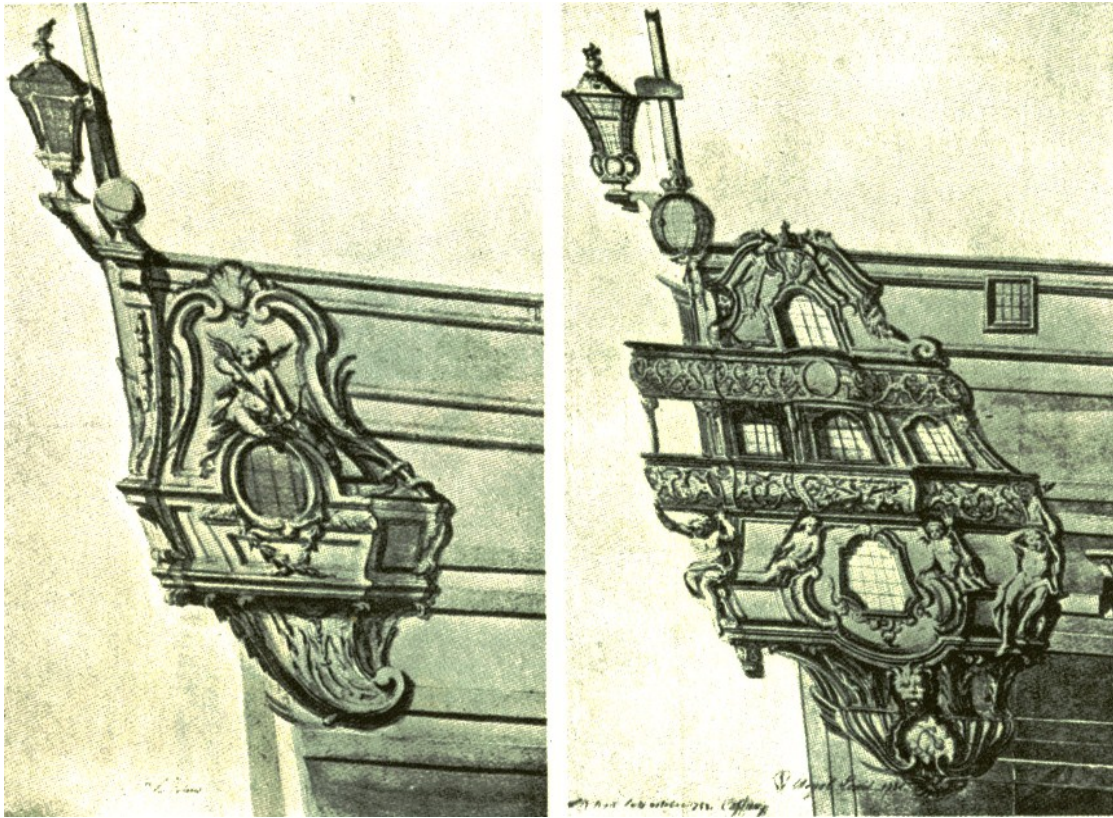


Figure 44. Jean Boudriot, “Colours applicable to the French Naval and Merchant Marine – 1650-1850.” *Le Vaisseau de 74 Canons*. Insert. Copied from Boudriot.



Figure 45. Jean Boudriot. *Le Vaisseau de 74 Canons*, 1974. Top: Stem. Bottom: Stern.
Copied from Boudriot (Figures 117 and 126).

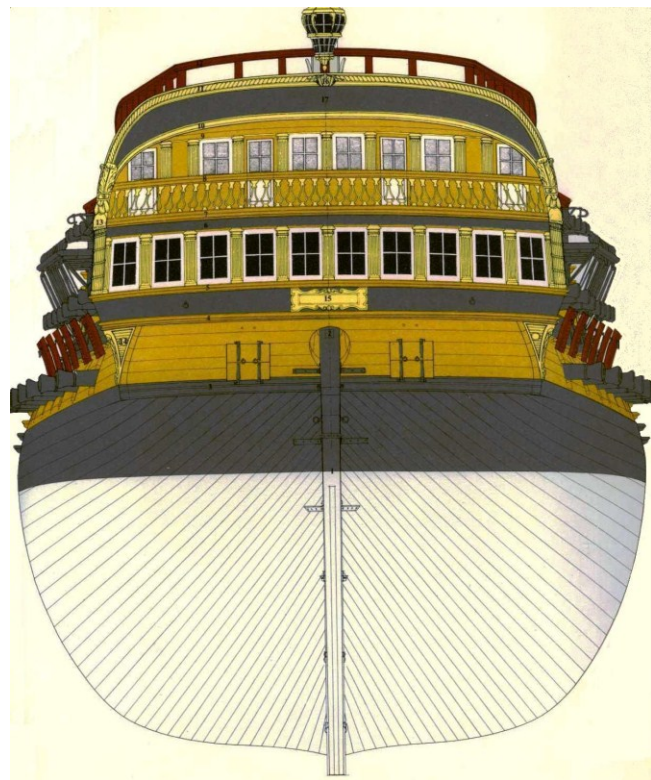
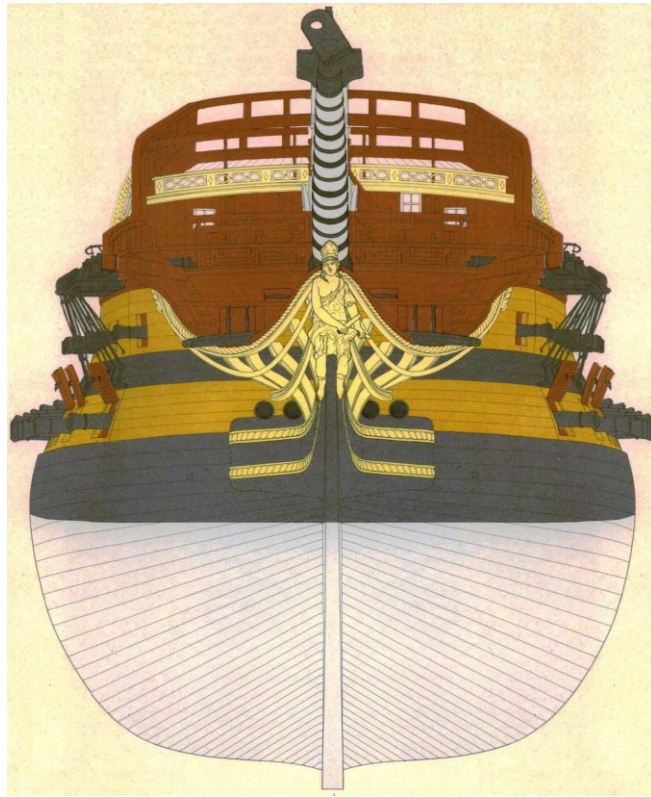


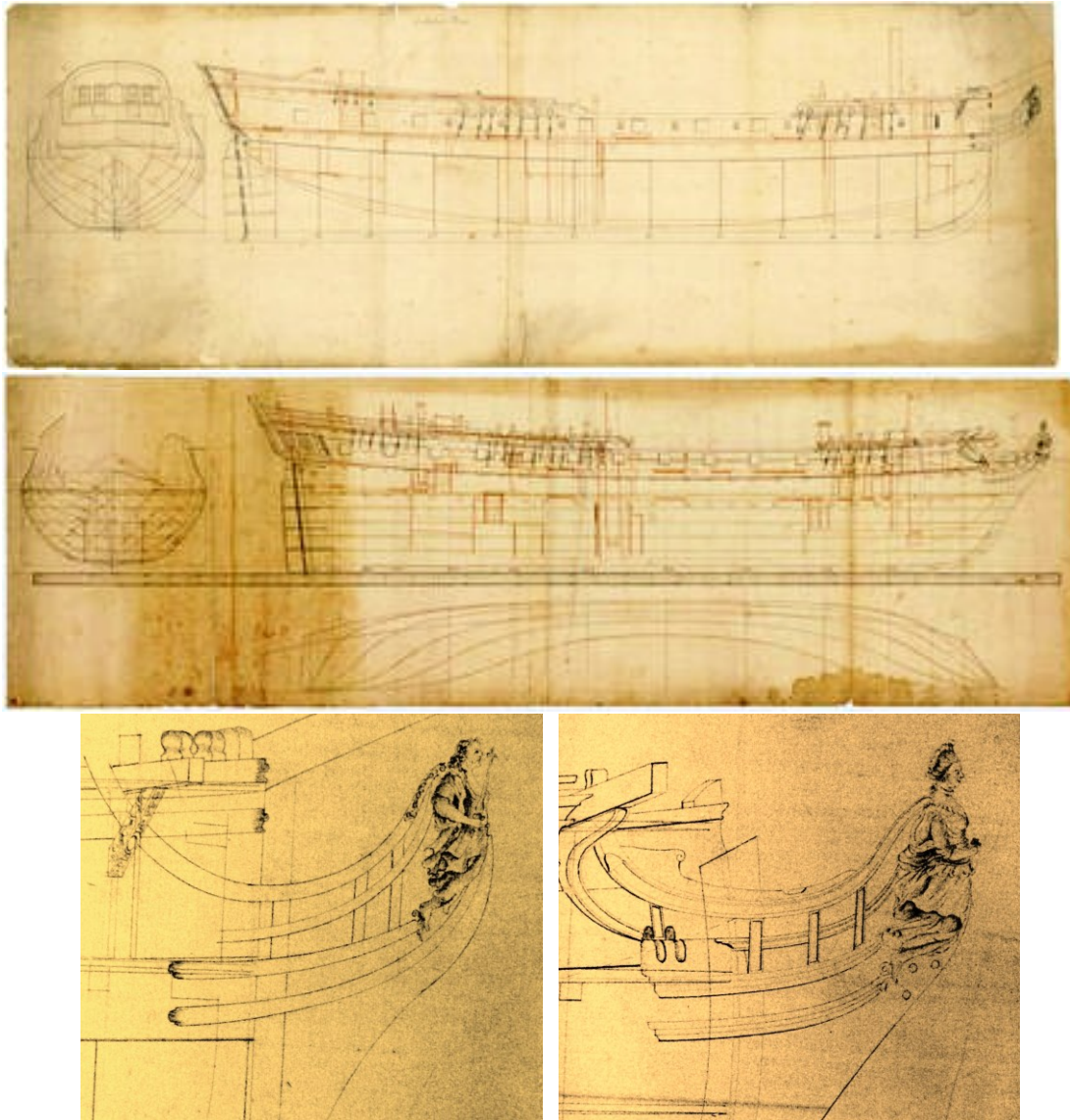
Figure 46. Top: Noël Levasseur. *Armoiries royales françaises*, 1725. Copied from Bêlisle *La sculpture Ancienne* (386 figure 16).



Figure 47. Top: Françoise-Noël Levasseur and Jean-Baptiste Levasseur. *Tabernacle*, 1766-1767. National Gallery of Canada No. 14669. Copied from the National Gallery of Canada. <<http://www.gallery.ca/en/see/collections/artwork>>. Bottom: Françoise-Noël Levasseur. *Ange adoreur*, 1775. National Gallery of Canada No. 7792. Copied from the National Gallery of Canada.



Figure 48. Top: *Unnamed 24-gun three masted ship. Plan named 'Dolphin's Prize.'* National Maritime Museum. Image J8276.^V Copied from the National Maritime Museum <<http://www.nmmprints.com/image/453126>>. Middle: *Unnamed 130ft Fifth Rate (circa 1760), possibly 'Flora' captured 1761.* National Maritime Museum. Image J8115.^W Copied from the National Maritime Museum <<http://www.nmmprints.com/image/452540>>. Bottom left: Figurehead of *Dolphin's Prize*. Bottom right: Figurehead of *Flora*.



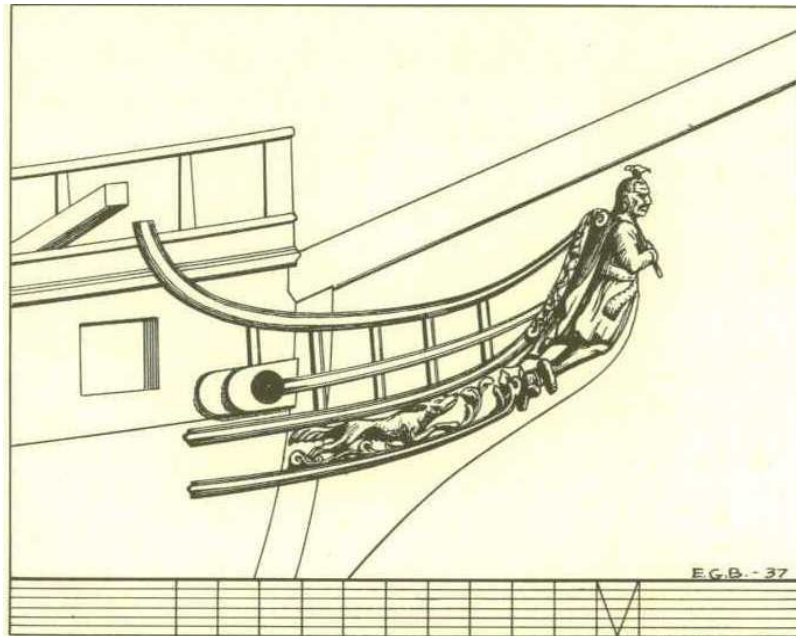
^V The museum caption reads “No scale. A plan showing the body plan with stern board details, sheer lines (no water lines) with inboard detail and figurehead for a 118ft 24-gun three masted ship.” The text further describes the ship as being French in construction.

^W The museum caption reads “Scale: 1:48. A plan showing the body plan, sheer lines with inboard detail and figurehead and longitudinal half breadth for an unnamed 130ft French Fifth Rate (circa 1760), as taken off prior to fitting as a British frigate. The *Flora* (1761), a 32-gun fifth rate, ex-French frigate *Vestal* (1757) has similar dimensions.”

Figure 49. Anonymous. *Royal George*, 1756. Peter Norton *Figureheads*. Greenwich: National Maritime Museum, 1972. Copied from Norton (10).

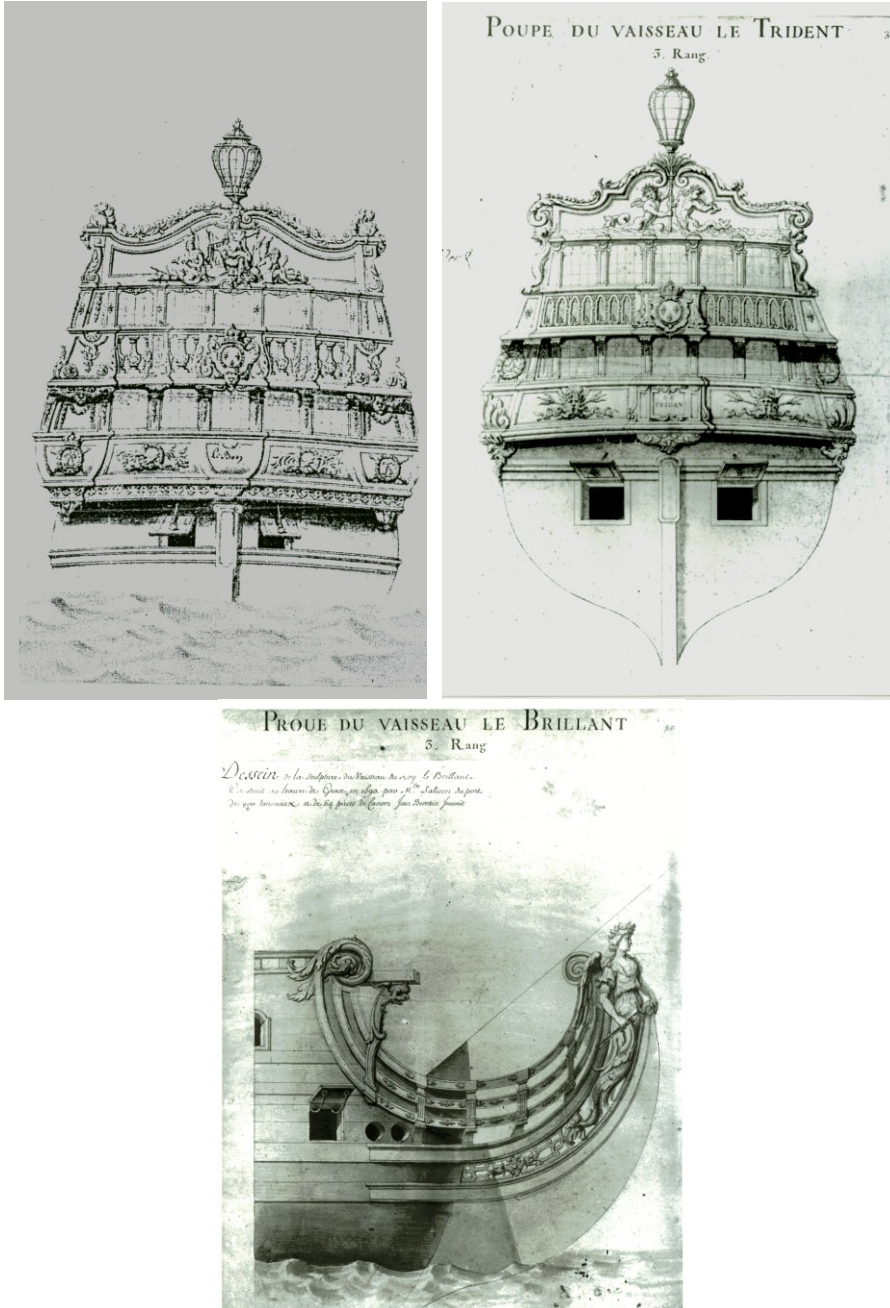


Figure 50. Anonymous. *Figurehead of American Privateer Rattlesnake*, 1781. Admiralty Collection. Copied from Brewington (15).^x



^x Brewington writes that the Indian was a favourite motif for American shipcarvers and “thanks to the Royal Navy’s capture of the privateer Rattlesnake, a head on the same theme, cut just a few years later, 1781, has come down to us” (Brewington 14). Brewington describes the figurehead as “a full length statue of an Indian, possibly symbolizing in the carver’s mind something equally as American as this reptile, or possibly the actual portrait of an aborigine of that name” (14).

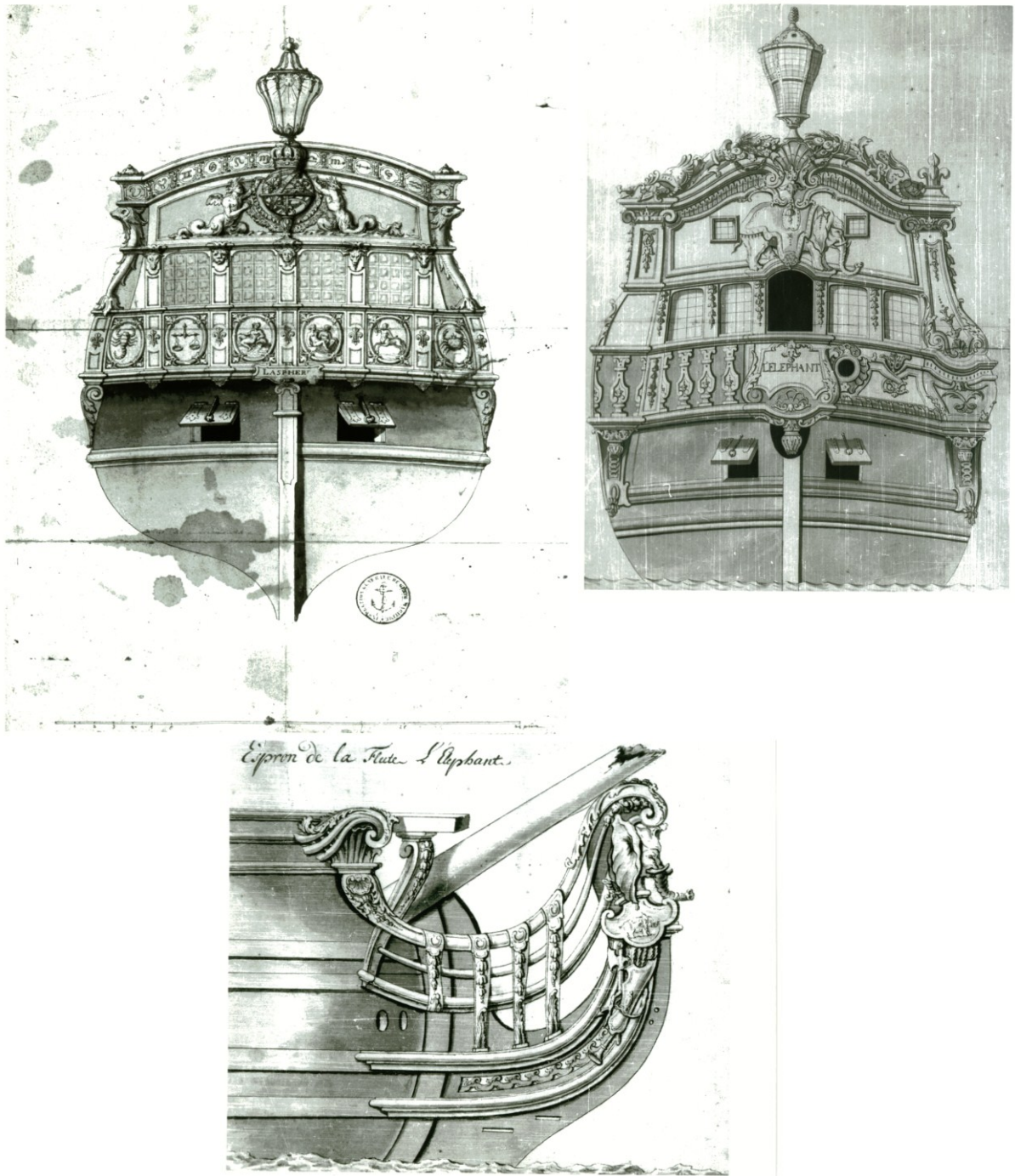
Figure 51.^Y Top left: Anonymous. *Le Bon*, 1672. Ship-of-the-line 3ième rang of 54 cannons. Brest. Top right: Anonymous. *Le Trident*, 1695 Ship-of-the-line 3ième rang of 60 cannons. Toulon.^Z Bottom: Jean Berrain. *Le Brillant*, 1690. Ship-of-the-line 3ième rang 64 cannons. Havre.



^Y Figures 51 to 53, 55, 56 and 58 are copied from the Musée de la Marine, Palais de Chaillot, Paris. See Appendix 3 for the extracts from the catalogue in the Archives Centrales de la Marine.

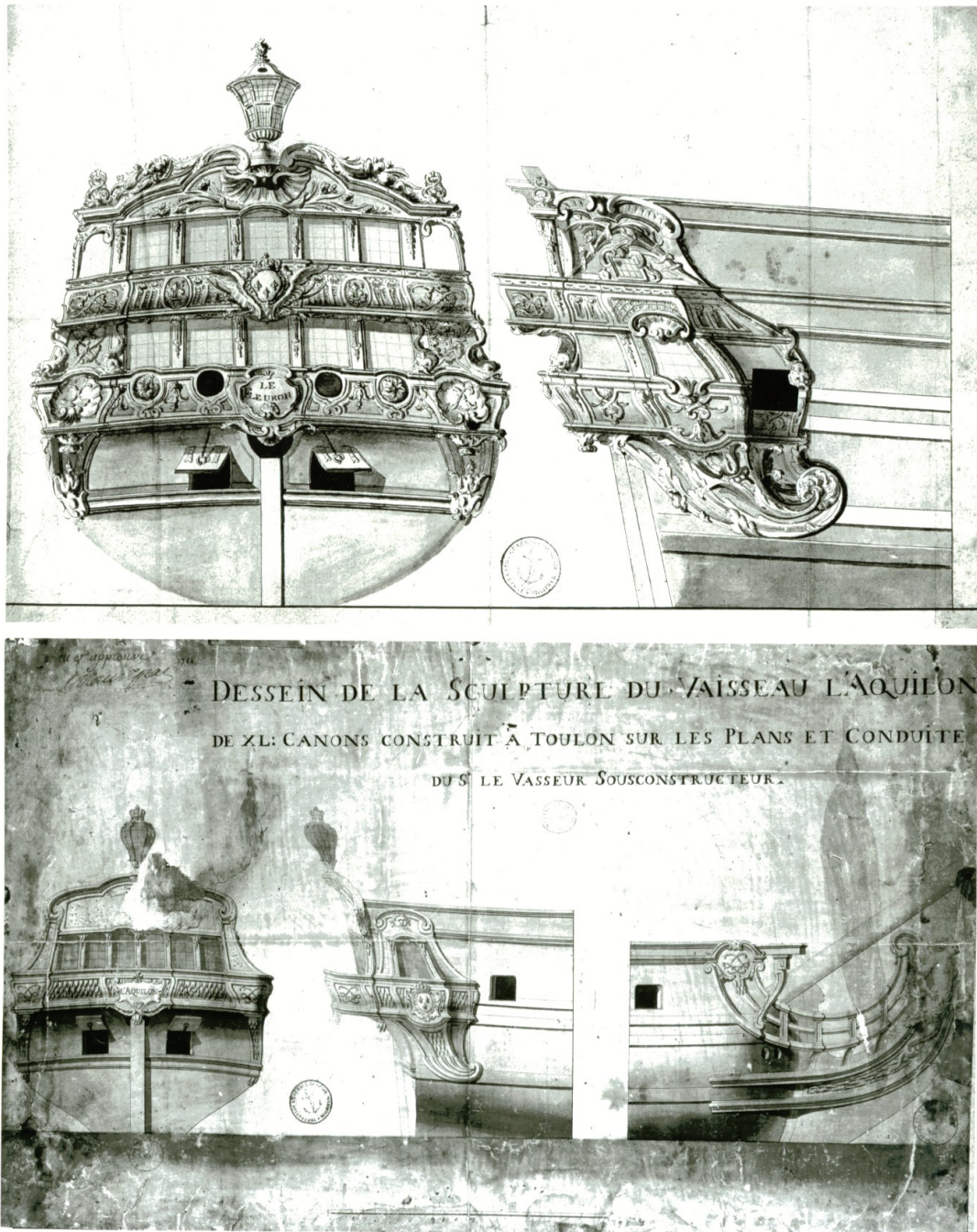
^Z Although the drawings of *Le Bon* and *Le Trident* are 23 years apart, and come from two different shipyards, they have significantly common features. This reinforces the premise that the stern of *Canadien* would have a similar design.

Figure 52. Top left: Anonymous. *Sphère*, 1705. Stern. Flute of 36 cannons. Brest. Top right: Anonymous. *L'Eléphant*, 1717. Stern. Flute of 48 cannons. Brest. Bottom *L'Eléphant*. Stem.^{AA}



^{AA} Both ships have a similar architectural design typical for a flute. Although they were done much earlier than the launching of *Canada* in 1742, only details concerning style would have changed in the decoration for the stern of *Canada*.

Figure 53. Top: Anonymous. *Fleuron*, 1729. Ship-of-the-line 3ième rang of 64 cannons. Brest.
Bottom. Anonymous. *L'Aquilon*, 1731. Ship-of-the-line 3ième rang of 56 cannons. Toulon.^{BB}



^{BB} Both drawings are several years earlier than the build dates of *Saint-Laurent* and *L'Original*. The purpose of showing these two drawings is to give an example of the scope of sculptural decoration for the space provided by a warship of their size and which would be applicable to the two warships of similar size built in French Canada.

Figure 54. Jean Boudriot. *Le Vaisseau de 74 Canons*, 1974. Copied from Boudriot (Plates XIV, XX).

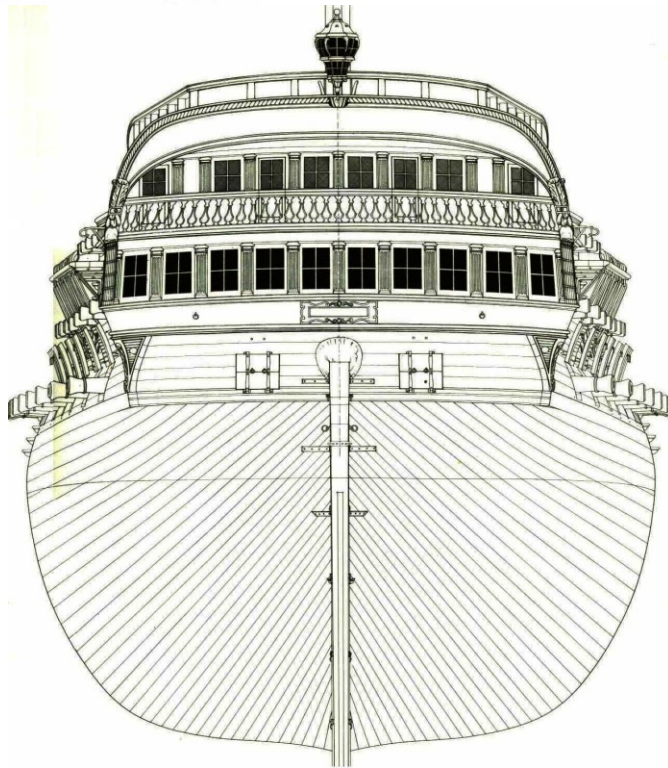
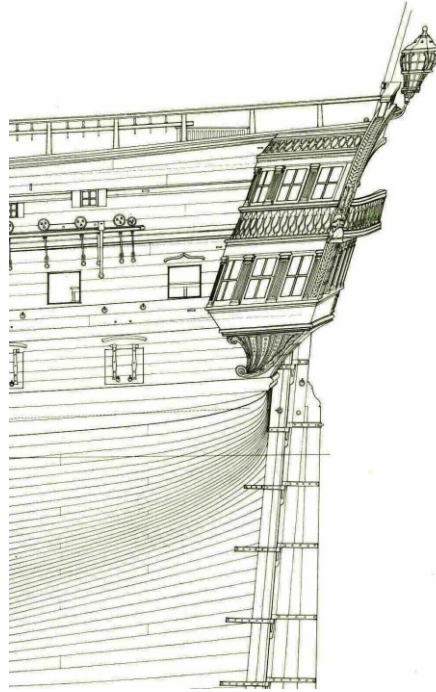
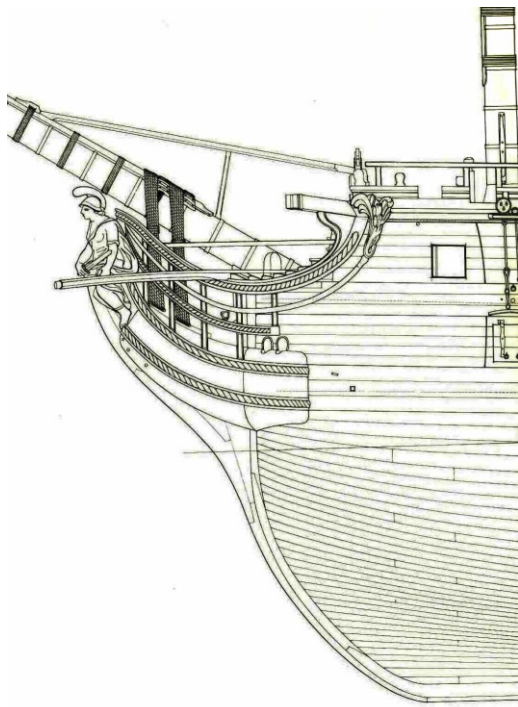


Figure 55. Top: Charles Philippe Caffieri. *Galathée*, 1744. Frigate of 20 cannons. Brest.
Bottom: Charles Philippe Caffieri. *Renommée*, 1744. Frigate. Brest.

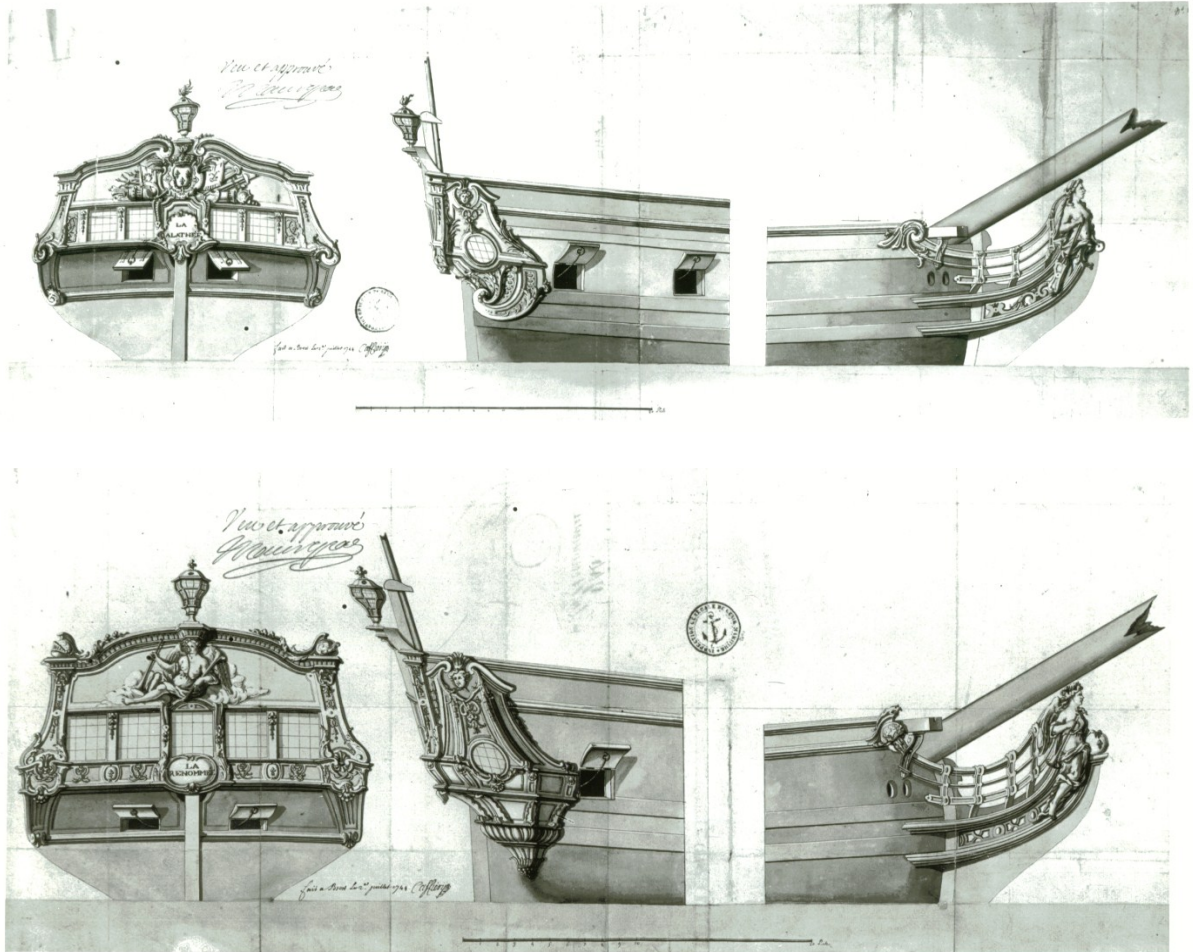


Figure 56. Top: Charles Philippe Caffieri. *La Panthère*, 1743. Corvette or frégate légère of 20 cannons. Brest. Bottom: Charles Philippe Caffieri. *La Maligne*, 1744. Corvette. Brest.

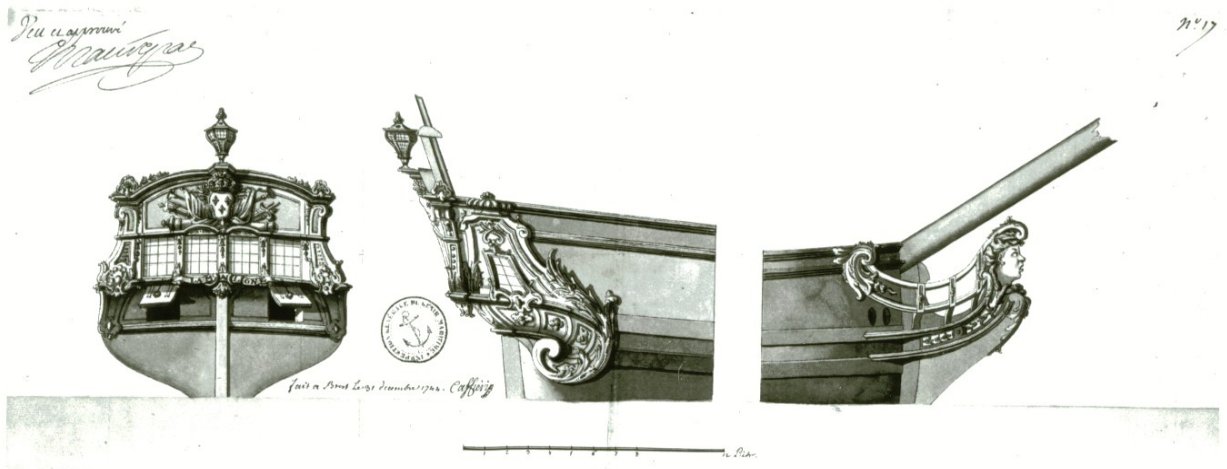
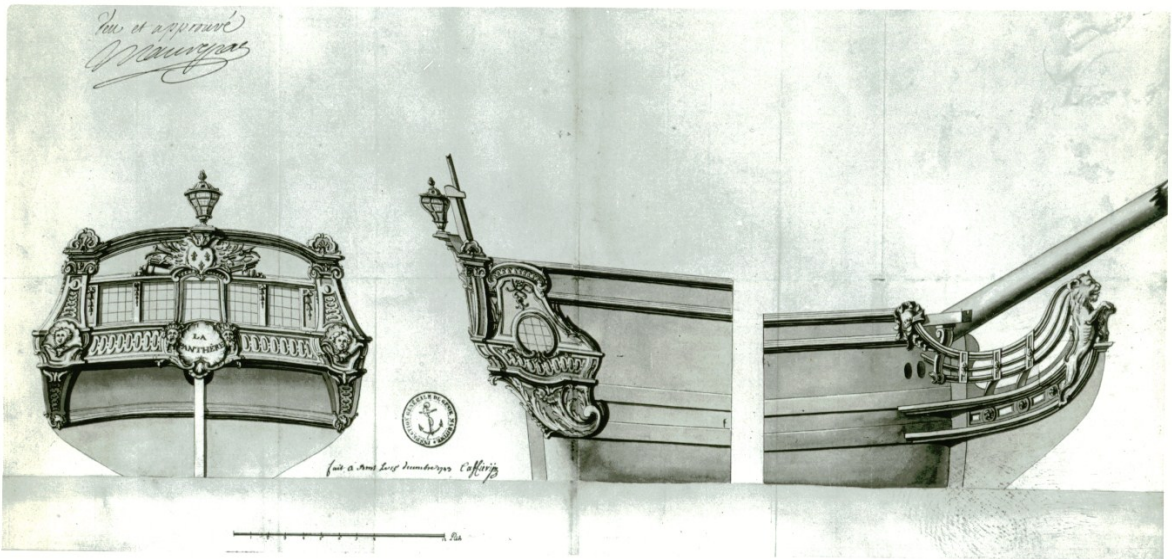


Figure 57. Thomas Davies. *A View of Fort La Galette, Indian Castle, and Taking a French Ship of War on the River Saint Lawrence, by Four Boats of One Gun Each of the Royal Artillery Commanded by Captain Streachy*, 1760. National Gallery of Canada. No.6271. Copied from the National Gallery of Canada. <<http://www.gallery.ca/en/see/collections/artwork>>. ^{CC}



^{CC} A plaque commemorating the battle by Historic Site Monuments Board Canada, next to the site of engagement at Maitland, Ontario, names the French warship under attack as the *Outaouaise*.

Figure 58. Top and Bottom left: *Salamandre*, 1696. Stern. Frigate of 20 cannons. Toulon.
Bottom right: *Salamandre*. Stem.

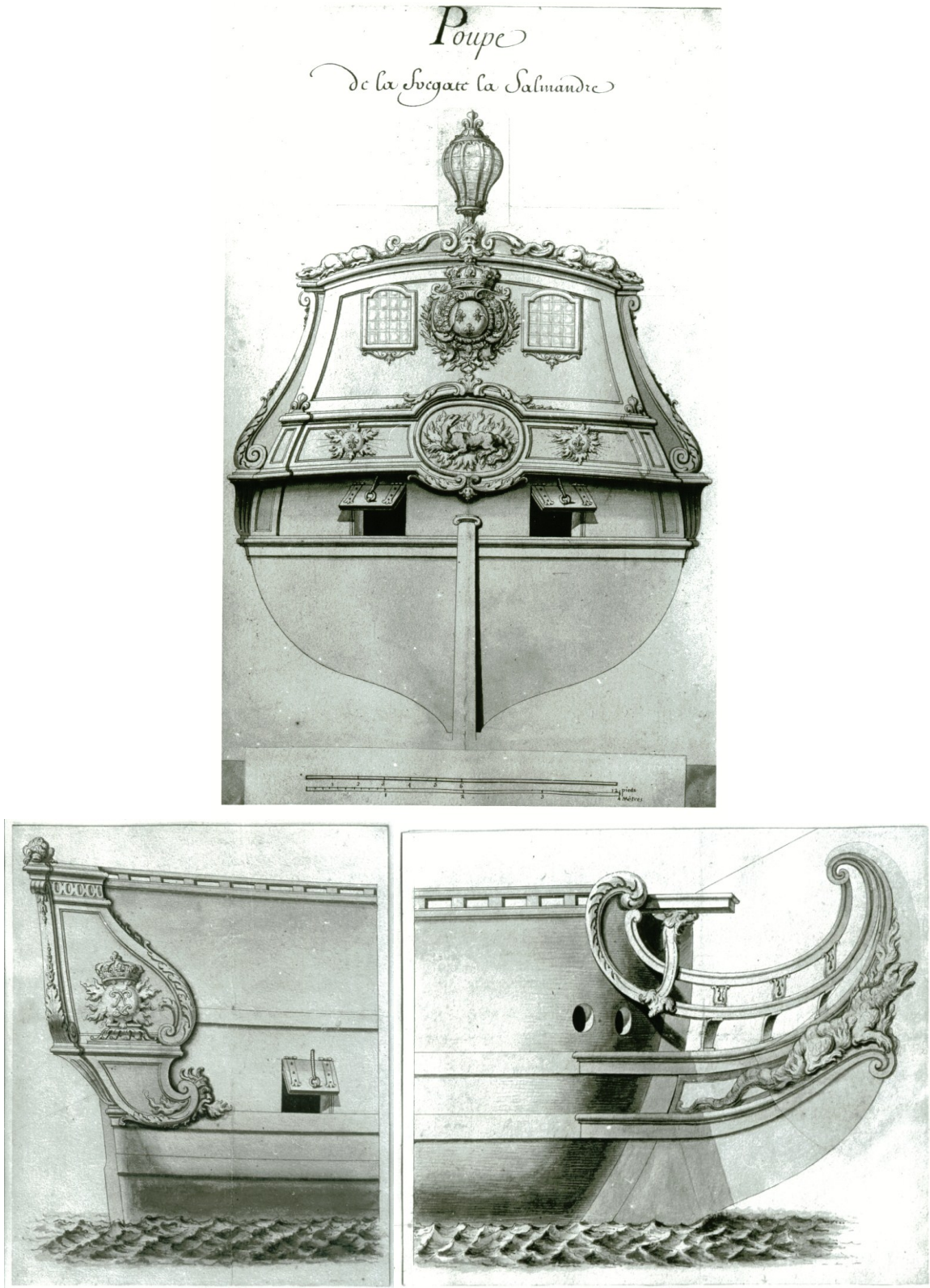


Figure 59. Scale model of *Le Protecteur*, 2012. Ship-of-the-line of 64 cannons, built in 1760 at Toulon.^{DD} Copied from <<http://www.finemodelships.com/>>.



^{DD} The purpose of this image is to show the colour scheme of a French warship as a whole composition. The amount of gilding shown on the model would have been imitated by using yellow ochre on the actual ship.

Figure 60. *Abenakise* space for the figurehead, from figure 36 and the figureheads of the frigates *Galathée* and *Renommée*, from figure 55.

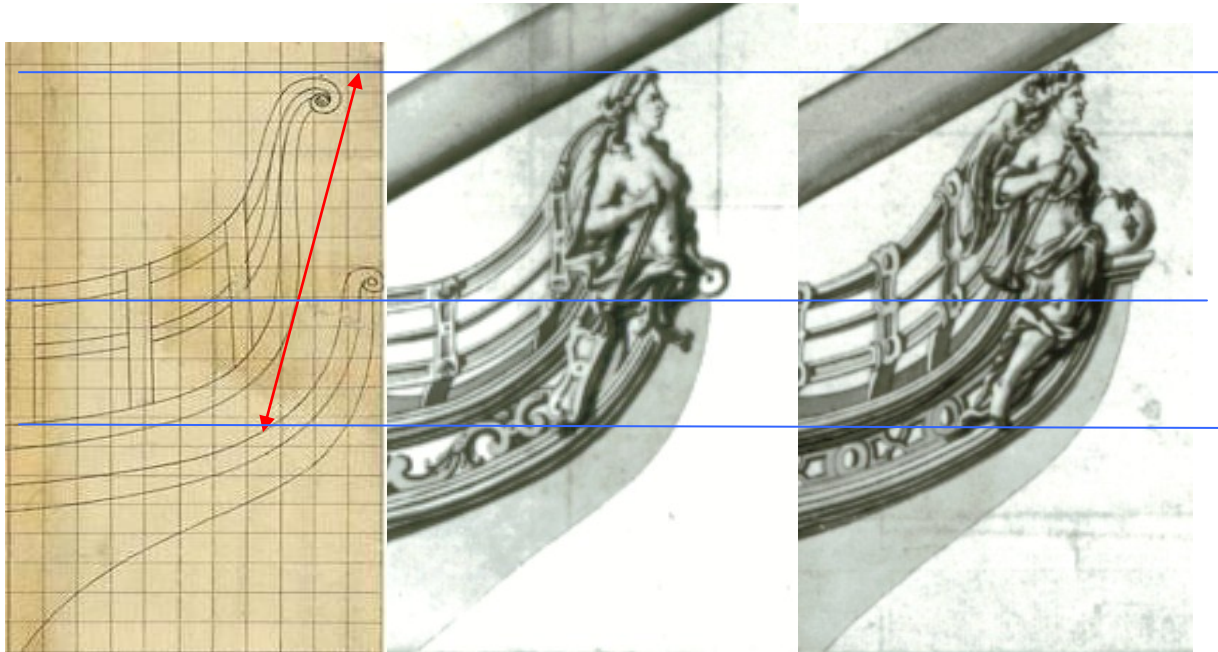
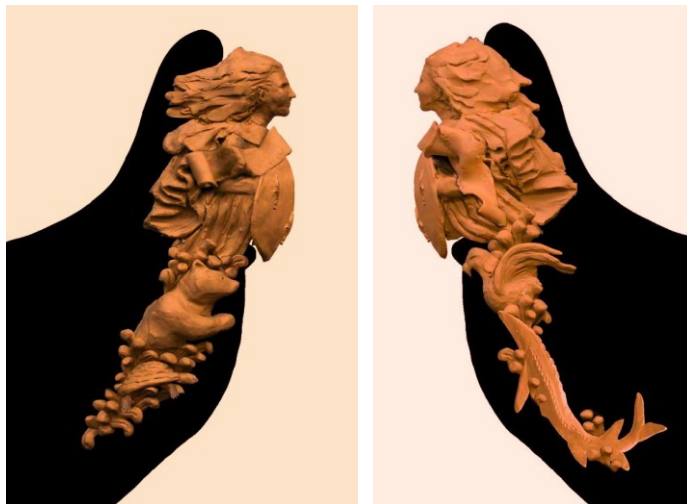


Figure 61. Reduced scale model for a mock-up of the figurehead of *Abenakise*, 2011.^{EE}
Left: Starboard side. Right: Port side.



^{EE} From project undertaken by Prof. J. Bélisle and J. Alstom-O’Conner, R. Coles, L. Cory, S. Kestenberg, J. Lemon, P. Maranda, C. May, V. Mc Gowan, J. Paré-Julien, O. Pipe, R. Portanier, P. Sheppard, S. Wilkinson. *Seminar in Canadian Architecture: Shipbuilding*. Department of Art History, Concordia University, Montreal, 2011.

Appendix 1

REPERTOIRE DES NAVIRES DE GUERRE FRANÇAIS

Jacques Vichot
1967
Musée de la Marine
Palais de Chaillot
Paris

Extract

l'Abenakise - ce nom rappelait la tribu canadienne des Abenakis favorables à la France; frégate (Québec 1756-63). 23-11-57 prise par H.M.S. Unicorn → H.M.S. Aurora.

l'Algonquin - tribu indienne qui fut notre alliée au Canada ; vaisseau (Québec 1750-52). 1757 Ponton à Brest.

le Canada – flûte (Québec 1743-86) transport de poudre.

le Canadienne – vaisseau (Québec 1671-75-76) 1676 → le Lion.

le Caribou – vaisseau (Québec 1743-45-57) 1749 ponton.

le Castor – frégate (1744-47) 30-10-1747 prise par H.M.S. Hampshire.

le Martre – frégate (1746-54).

l'Original – vaisseau (Québec 1749-50) 2-9-1750 brisé a son lancement.

l'Outaouaise – probablement l'Ottawaise (Canada 1759-64). 1760 prise par les anglais → H.M.S. Johnson ; 1764 naufragé.

le Carcajou – corvette (1744) oct. 1745 perdue sur les Glénans.

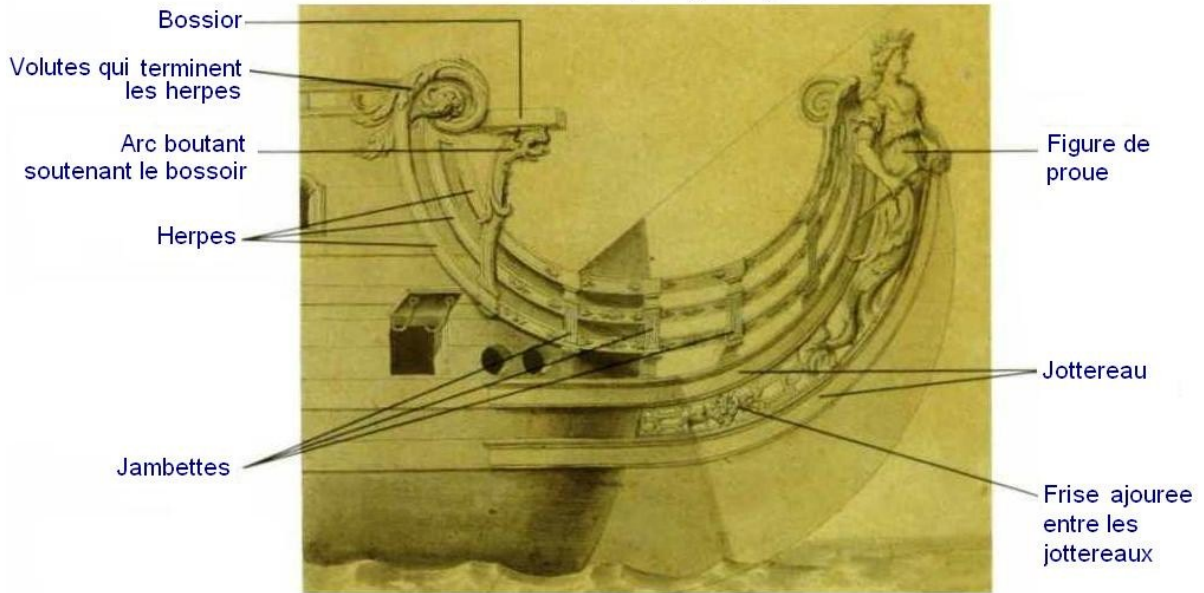
le Saint-Laurent – vaisseau (Québec 1748-53).

le Québec – frégate (1757-63) en projet.

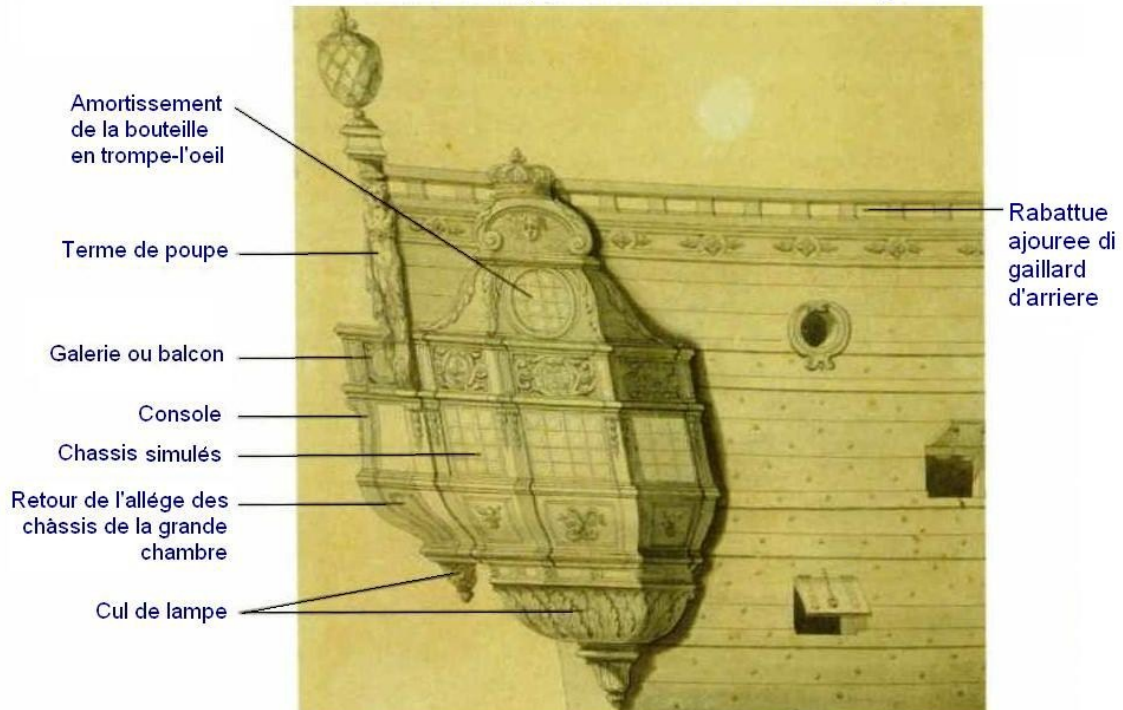
Appendix 2

LES GÉNIES DE LA MER MUSÉE DE QUÉBEC/MUSÉE NATIONALE DE LA MARINE Chef-d'œuvre de la sculpture navale du Musée nationale de la Marine à Paris 2003

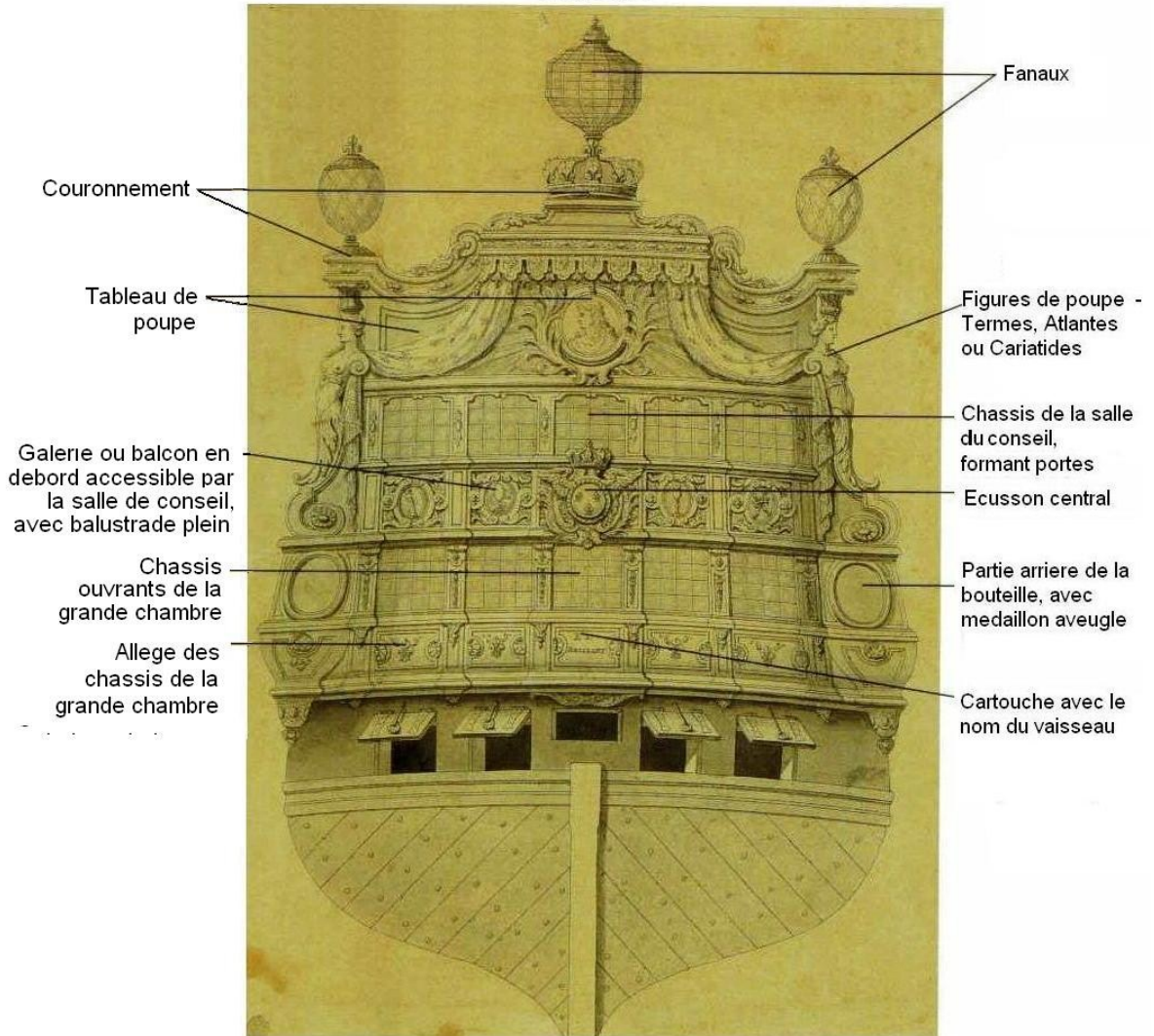
LES TROIS PRINCIPALES PARTIES SCULPTÉES D'UN VAISSEAU La proue (ou eperon)



Les bouteilles (ou commodites de l'etat-major)



La poupe



Appendix 3

ARCHIVES CENTRALES DE LA MARINE
CATALOGUE DES PLANS DE BÂTIMENTS À VOILES CONSERVÉS
DANS LES ARCHIVES DE LA MARINE

Alain Erlande-Brandenburg et Catherine Vich
Service historique de la Défense
2010

<<http://www.servicehistorique.sga.defense.gouv.fr>>.

15. Dessin de la sculpture du vaisseau l'*Aquilon* de XL canons construit à Toulon sur les plans et conduite du Sr Le Vasseur, sous-constructeur. Vu et appr. par Maurepas, ministre de la Marine, 17--. Éch. Ornaments de poupe, proue et bouteille. Lavis gris et brun. Dim. 0,78 x 0,46. D1 67, f° 8 cl. 738.

31. Vaisseau le *Bon* de 3^e rang. Vu par Desclouzeaux, intendant de la Marine, Brest, le 24 avril 1693. 1. Ornaments de la poupe. Éch. Lavis gris. Dim. 0,39 x 0,54. 2. Ornaments de la proue. Éch. Lavis gris. Dim. 0,40 x 0,56. D1 69, f^{os} 14-15 cl. 7061-706.

43. Dessin de la sculpture du vaisseau du Roy le *Brillant* construit au port du havre de Grâce en 1690 par le Sr Salicon, M. charpentier, du port de 800 tonneaux de 64 pièces de canon. Jean Berrain innovit [sic] P. Caffierry fecit.. Signé Caffieri, sculpteur, 1690. 1. Ornaments de la poupe. Éch. Lavis gris. Dim. 0,29 x 0,44..G 187, fos 18 v°-19 cl 7232-7231.

94/2. Le *Fleuron* vaisseau du troisième rang de 64 canons construit à Brest l'an 1729 par les sieurs Ollivier père et fils. Devis et plans écrits et dessinés de la main de Joseph Blaise Ollivier. Ms 273.

523. Frégate la *Galathée*. Signé Caffieri, sculpteur, Brest, le 2 juillet 1744. Vu et appr. par Maurepas, ministre de la Marine. Éch. ornaments de poupe, proue et bouteille. Lavis gris et vert. Dim. 0,95 x 0,33. D1 68, f° 1 cl. 728.

580. Frégate la *Renommée*. Signé Caffieri, sculpteur, Brest, le 2 juillet 1744. Vu et appr. par Maurepas, ministre de la Marine. Éch. Ornaments de poupe, proue et bouteille. Lavis gris et vert. Dim. 0,84 x 0,33. D1 68, f° 1 cl. 728.

730. Corvette la *Maligne*. Signé Caffieri, sculpteur, Brest, le 31 décembre 1744. Vu et appr. par Maurepas, ministre de la Marine. Éch. Ornaments de poupe, proue et bouteille. Lavis gris, vert et rose. Dim. 0,64 X 0,25. D1 68, f° 13 bis cl. 730.

734. Corvette la *Panthère*. Signé Caffieri, sculpteur, Brest, le 15 décembre 1743. Vu et appr. par Maurepas, ministre de la Marine. Éch. Ornaments de poupe, proue et bouteille. Lavis gris et vert. Dim. 0,73 x 0,35. D1 68, f° 1.

1105. Flûte la *Sphère*. Non signé ni daté [vers 1705]. Éch. Ornaments de la poupe. Lavis gris. Dim. 0,40 x 0,55. D1 68, f° 10 cl. 729.