

**Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier****Feminising the warrior at Francis I's Fontainebleau**

Article. Source : Cour de France.fr

**Comment citer cet article :****Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier, "Feminising the warrior at Francis I's Fontainebleau", dans P. Ford, P. White (éd.), *Masculinities in Sixteenth-Century France : Proceedings of the Eighth Cambridge French Renaissance Colloquium*, 5-7 July 2003, Cambridge, Cambridge French Colloquia, 2006. Article édité en ligne sur Cour de France.fr le 1er avril 2008 (<http://cour-de-france.fr/article253.html>).***La liste des illustrations et la table des matières de ce volume se trouvent en fin de texte, avant les notes.***Introduction**

[Page 23 de la première édition]

In early sixteenth century France, the warrior ideal of masculinity ruled the (noble) roost. A code of military honour prevailed on the battlefield, in private quarrels and in sexual affairs. [1] Logically then, for the urban-born Humanist scholar Guillaume Budé, Louis XII's realm was a culturally backwards state in which armour and weapons set the tone. [2] It is this chivalric world view that inflects the 'male page' of two conceptually pendant manuscript illuminations that Jean Bourdichon created for Anne of Brittany around 1510 (Figs. 1 & 2). [3] Shown but quickly passing through an impermanent room, King Louis XII has stripped off his suit of armour to compose a missive to his wife. Outside, still astride their mounts, a number of his military acolytes await the instant when he will regain his saddle, clearly his natural place. In these representations made for Queen Anne, interior castellar space is projected as feminine space, and book-based culture is depicted as unequivocally belonging to the female sphere - for while both royal protagonists are shown writing, a book figures solely on Anne's sheet. Bourdichon's image thus provides a neat visual frame for [p. 24] the 'obsessional fear of devirilization through culture' that structured the imagination of the French warrior caste. [4] Two decades later, when Louis's successor Francis I began to commission his grand decorative undertakings at Fontainebleau, his political agenda would lead him to confront this fear head-on.

The golden age of Fontainebleau corresponds to the post-captivity, second half of Francis's reign, when the king's determination to impose a royal monopoly of power meant taking control of the power to fight, and when, intrinsically linked to this design, a spectacular 'cultural revolution' was underway. Rosso Fiorentino and Francesco Primaticcio were the Italians charged with radically reshaping the king's artistic programme, from shortly after the damning of the memory of Constable Charles of Bourbon (1527) to - in Primaticcio's case - the period during and after the disgrace of his successor, Constable Anne of Montmorency (1541). And by reshaping the king's artistic programme, these painters wilfully contributed to the fundamental reshaping of his tool of governance, his court. The king was labouring to transmute the traditional noblesse (potentially turbulent lords) into educated courtiers (faithful allies), as the royal secretary Jacques Colin's 1538 translation of Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* attests, and as two of Rossos's stuccoes created just slightly before imply (Figs. 3 & 4). This pair of male figures that flanks the fifth bay on the north side of the Gallery of Francis I can be read as emblematic of the king's intent. [5] The cream of his own generation of aristocrats is exemplified by the aging barbarian warrior to the left : a

wise and potent, yet [p. 25] sorely outmoded Gaul. [6] By the 1530s, a few clairvoyant nobles – including Galiot de Genouillac, Louis Du Bellay, Jean de Baïf, Louis de Ronsard – had begun to invest heavily in the education of their sons. Such men had realised that their dynastic line would be able to counter the threat posed by all-too-well-educated men of the gown, by men of the calibre of Florimond Robertet, only if their progeny received an upbringing drastically different from their own ; their descendents, they sensed, would need to wield not only the sword but also the plume. When Rosso envisioned opposite his barbarian Gaul a young ‘Roman’ who implicitly defers to the older generation to his right, the artist was invoking the valiant, learned young gentleman whose new intellectual capital had henceforth prepared him for the most prestigious positions in the realm. [7] Such was the profile of Guillaume and Jean Du Bellay, two young lords who had been intellectually armed at the Coqueret and Navarre colleges in Paris to serve magnificently both their dynasty and their king. Forward-looking youths of the noble elite, they were actively engaged in dissipating ‘the fogs of boastful ignorance’ (an expression used by Erasmus in a letter to Jacques Toussain in 1531) that had clouded the horizons of their father’s peers. [8] By the time Brantôme wrote his *Vie des grands capitaines*, Guillaume Du Bellay was but one of the author’s examples of a new race of gentlemen : eloquent warriors whose power and intellect had been harnessed to the public (monarchical) good. [9]

## **Manly comportment and Hercules at the Porte Dorée**

[p. 26]

The Porte Dorée served as the main passageway into the castle of Fontainebleau during the age of Francis I, and the king and his team of advisors no doubt reflected at length on the content of the frescoes conceived to greet his noble subjects as they rode their horses through its portico. If Ovid’s *Fasti* has long been identified as the source of the erudite tale which Primaticcio illustrated there no later than the early 1540s, [10] it has not yet been recognised that these (and other *bellifontaine*) representations were envisioned to destabilize the king’s arrogant, hyper-virile elite. Neo-Platonic thought had already begun to reign sovereign at Fontainebleau, and its interpretive thread was heat – both a structural component of the male body, and the motor of the universe in Marsilio Ficino’s cosmic view. [11] This conceptual system underlies the two-piece Hercules cycle, tailored for the lords of the realm at the moment they were leaving behind the open spaces in which they fought their battles and hunted their game, to enter a sophisticated, highly encoded royal space in which courtly ladies were perforce more at ease. Both before and after the execution of these frescoes, male writers such as Philippe de Commynes and Michel de Montaigne gave voice to the deep-seated fear of the French warrior that culture would render him soft and effeminate ; [12] and it is precisely this anxiety that drives Primaticcio’s rendition of Omphale and her assistants dressing the demi-god in female garb (Fig. 5). The artist has strategically positioned Hercules’ small genitals on the straight line that marks the vertical axis of his preparatory drawing ; and to our left, aged terms lower or hide their heads as a mature Hercules frowns at being unmanned. [p. 27] Riveted on the cross-dressing scene are the (unequal) gazes of an agitated servant who prepares the banqueting table and a nonplussed, fully nude observer – the image of the ideal youthful spectator whose masculine identity is being redefined ? To grasp fully the king’s intent, the beholder must discover the key concealed in the (seemingly licentious) fresco on the opposite wall – for these pendant frescoes were designed to place the male beholder before a choice.

The second and concluding episode of Ovid’s narration should be read as a novel modulation of the ‘Hercules at the Crossroads’ theme, in which light functions as a critical sign. In Leon Davent’s magnificent print (Fig. 6), the mythological hero has just ejected a sexually aroused Pan from the bed he shares with Omphale ; and the heat of anger has risen to his now cuckolded head. The body of Hercules, half cast in shadow, its right side alone reflecting the blinding light of the torch, reads as a binary paradigm : light/dark, right/left serve as markers of virtue and vice. Which form of heat will prevail ? ‘L’amour fole’ [13] – the lowly carnal heat of a bestial Pan-of-many-horns ? Or a higher type of heat, the multi-faceted celestial love that makes a harmonious world turn ? The illumination provided by the flame of a distressed young torchbearer, his back turned to the cool nefarious moon, is angled out from Love’s head, and two female terms absorb its glow. To Omphale’s left, the queen’s less-than-heroic aging companion retreats into the space defined by seductive female anatomy, perhaps to signify his marginalization as she thrusts her arm forth to grab Love’s bow. The gesture of the youth who plunges

forward is synchronized with hers, instead ; for she – Hercules' lion skin atop her head – is the agent charged with leading her consort along the virtuous path. But why then, in both of these frescoes, is a 'heroic' woman 'on top' ? The crucial core of Francis's new definition of aristocratic manhood was discipline ; and in a ploy to downplay military achievement and devalue the disruptive masculinity of potentially rival lords, women, conflated with culture, were being placed at the centre of the civilizing function assigned to the king's court.

When a few years later Jacques Colin published another translation (in 1547, the year of Francis' death), his choice had fallen upon a different [p. 28] Ovidian tale which centred around the problem of ire. Extracted from the thirteenth book of *The Metamorphoses*, the text highlighted the struggle of Ajax and Ulysses over Achilles' shield, in which the shrewdness and the eloquence of Ulysses prevail over the this-time-fatal anger of Ajax. [14] Rosso's stucco pair (Figs. 5 & 6) suggests that this concern in the 1540s with redefining manly comportment underlies the programme of the Gallery of Francis I as well. In the preceding decade, the goal had already been to prepare a re-gendered modern warrior for the treacherous road that might lead him from barbarian insufficiency to existential – and courtly – success.

### **Water, Earth, Fire...**

To penetrate the meaning of this mind-bogglingly complex gallery, an iconographical tour was an absolute must ; and His Majesty the Most Christian King himself, to whose glory this outstanding shrine was erected, was delighted to assume the role in which he was portrayed in the last main fresco – that of Enlightened Guide. So when he had deemed his guests worthy, he and his party set off from the royal chamber to work their way through the intellectual labyrinth at hand. On the narrow wall immediately to their left they discovered Rosso's *Bacchus, Venus, and Cupid* (Fig. 7), [15] a composition charged with introducing the theme of base instincts that governed the first, dismal half of the decorative cycle ; that half which was placed under the influence of the lower elements of water (on the north wall) and earth (on the south wall) ; that half which was chronologically situated before the advent of the wise prince. [16][p. 29] Rosso's depiction of terrestrial love was coloured by his own homosexual preferences, no doubt ; [17] and Cupid titillated the visiting elite by welcoming them with his buttocks. Artist was not King, however, and Rosso's personal sexual leanings did not direct the show. About to unfold was an unequivocally heterosexual program that addressed issues of noble masculine identity within the divinely monarchical, the monarchically divine, cosmic scheme of things.

In the very first eye-level scene on the south wall (most legible in the corresponding tapestry, Fig. 8), [18] a putto fondles the genitals of a little companion – bluntly trusting virility to the fore. In the adjacent fresco of *The Battle of the Centaurs and the Lapiths*, this virility then literally explodes. [19] However valiant the efforts of historians to identify bearers of civilisation amidst the battling throng (Theseus and/or Hercules), no single man is demonstrably better than the beasts he fights. Lowly animal and human buttocks command the scene, while the potentially more noble Lapith heads have been reduced to impotence on the ground. In the corresponding passage of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* the institutions of marriage and religion are cast asunder ; and there can be no glory for the warrior in a universe so devoid of respect for the gods. Rosso's earth-dominated combat offers no glimpse of the sky ; and in the stucco cartouche of the frame below, his figures turn their backs on the buildings of civilization to ensconce themselves in nature, where they descend to the level of angry and lustful beasts. [20] Even the Salamander on the central axis above, head [p. 30] lowered, seems full of rage. The sole glimmer of hope for protection from the mindless, unleashed heat of men is displaced to the sides, to the shields held by Old Testament priests, guarded by ascending angel-like lads. In conjunction with the contorted heralds above, these roundels display the royal initial and emblem, intimating some vague possibility of escape from this earthly chaos, somewhere, somehow, through King Francis I.

On the north wall, the explicit theme of problematic virility returns to colour the central fresco of the second bay (Fig. 9) in an unanticipated way. [21] *The Education of Achilles* includes a minor episode, seemingly marginalized at the back left, that has come to be known as 'the verification of the sex'. In this new instance of genital touching, positioned beneath a playful group of stucco putti fondling a companion anew, a couple of fine young boys confirm that the child on display belongs, indeed, to 'the stronger sex'.

The point may well be, however, that this child's specific male trajectory has not yet been inscribed in the books. Directly to the right of this scene is a group of older men who pay no heed, for their attention has been mustered by the fencing lesson that engages the grey-haired Chiron and the budding warrior Achilles. Was Rosso picturing the ideal education of a prince, as historians have systematically surmised, and as Francis' monogram on a pedestal seems to imply? If the answer were affirmative, why then, on the vertical axis, and in the foreground of his scene, did he give pride of place to the buttocks of the most learned, yet nonetheless bestial centaur, his tail provocatively raised? [22] Achilles' physique is surely being fine-tuned for glorious combat as master and pupil also swim, brandish a lance, or hunt. The future hero learns to play music at the top of a series of stairs, at the highest point of the composition, too. Chiron holds not his traditional lyre, though, but rather the lowliest of all musical instruments, the flute; and in a universe otherwise bereft of women, Achilles turns towards a breast-bared beauty as he strums a string instrument - amorously no doubt. Excellent corporeal training, and the element of water, cool the potentially bestial ardour of this noble youth. He manoeuvres, nevertheless, in the base realm of terrestrial love. However effective the lessons the 'male governor' Chiron has instilled in his young 'page', Achilles has faulted, for he has failed to enter into the [p. 31] superior civilization of the book. [23] As a grown warrior, 'fierce Achilles', 'wild with rage', whose 'anger blazed up, just like that of a bull in the open arena' to slay Cygnus, was destined to succumb to the wrath of Neptune. Apollo then had him mowed down by Paris, 'a coward who had stolen away from Greece another man's wife'. [24] Water, at the beginning of the gallery, is not the sacred Christian element that saves.

The moral of the story is perhaps revealed in the delicate stucco notations of the frame below. Had Ulysses not yanked Achilles out of his hiding place amongst the daughters of Lycomedes; had Achilles not hung up his girlish slippers so quickly, but rather laboured further at the 'feminine' spinning wheel and spun more weighty (intellectual) yarn; then he and his warrior peers might not risk being compared to the goat that has usurped the baby's bed; for, as Guillaume Budé contended, when the human mind is instilled with bad habits from the cradle, 'the perpetual contagion of ignorance' will forever reduce man to an animal state. [25] Young [p. 32] boys slump to either side of a little scene of combat under the weight of the central frame, while the outermost frescoes exhibit bulky, fettered, plebian brutes who almost overpower the central scene of this bay. [26] Although these Michelangelesque musclemen appear against the higher element of air, and although one is adorned with a victory crown, neither is able to break himself free from a club-like, sterile, unproductive tree. Such, symbolically, is the condition of the able-bodied, but unlettered, lord.

If the memory of the great warrior Achilles lives on to this very day, his trajectory proved that his inferior mortal heat was no match for the superior cosmic heat of the god of the sun. In the fresco known as *The Loss of Perpetual Youth*, located on the wall opposite *The Education of Achilles*, the same Apollo makes an explicit appearance, whereby he extends his displeasure to humanity as a whole. [27] Hidden within this composition, on the ill-explained left side of Rosso's image, which is best understood by scrutinizing the tapestry woven after the fresco (Fig. 10), is an Androgyne (as Frédérique Villemur first recognized) - a crucial neo-Platonic key. In fact, the French fascination with this figure emerged just as the decoration of the gallery was getting underway. In 1534, Rabelais' famed Gargantua began his literary career sporting an enigmatic Androgyne badge on his fashionable princely hat. Meanwhile, Marguerite de Navarre's 'pensionnaire' Antoine Héroët was fusing ideas from Plato's *Symposium* on the one hand, and Marsilio Ficino's *Commentarium in convivium Platonis* on the other, to compose 'L'Androgyne de Platon' which he presented in manuscript form, in 1536, to the king. When he described a four-armed, four-legged, two-headed figure that '[...] se verroit plus tost painct qu'escripte', was it not Rosso's representation of a male/female Androgyne splitting into two parts that Héroët had in mind? [p. 33] [28]

The consequences of the separation of the Androgyne, a classical stand-in for the sin of Adam and Eve, were seen as dire for mankind. For Ficino, in particular, it signified an arrogant rejection of God's grace, responsible for the loss of the specific form of light which allowed man to perceive the divine. In Rosso's fresco, Apollo drives his chariot away from the viewer above a mass of clouds that obscures the sky. To Apollo's left Mercury, the god of language, eloquence and persuasion, and as such the link between earth and the heavens, seems to be burning his caduceus in front of supplicants, a sign of his refusal to transmit their prayer to the gods on high. [29] The female half of the Androgyne points in vain towards an isolated

Muse, shown expiring alongside the abandoned tools of her trades [30] : magnificent books, which ought to allow humans to master the art of rhetoric and thus communicate with their kind ; and musical instruments, which ought to sound the harmony of the cosmos, made possible, when all goes well, by the warmth of Apollo's sun. Yet the heavy clouds, reminiscent of Erasmus' 'fogs of boastful ignorance', block the sun's rays as the Androgyne's indifferent male side walks away. In synchrony with the right-hand side of this fresco, the (actual) 'Loss of Perpetual Youth', the nearby tondo reformulates the notion that mankind is henceforth condemned to grow old and debilitated ; and even though mortals are actively preparing to pray to the earth goddess Cybele in the left-hand tondo, there is still no sign of communication between the celestial and the terrestrial domains.

[p. 34]

On both the north and the south sides of the next (the third) bay, angry gods provoke trials and tribulations to punish sorely overheated men for their venereal, hence generation-related sins. In *The Revenge of Nauplius*, to the north, the enraged goddess of civilisation, Pallas, seconded by Neptune, has drawn Ajax's fleet onto the rocks in the blackest of ill-fated moon-lit nights. [31] The empty niches of the surrounding stucco frame read as emblems of Ajax's lack of respect for the two ancient deities, for the warrior had dared to rape the Palladian priestess Cassandra in one of her temples, just as he had dared to slay a member of Neptune's dynastic line. Since the element of water commands the first three gallery bays on the north wall, Neptune - father of Nauplius, in turn father of Palamedes, whom Ajax killed - fittingly effects Pallas' revenge. [32] No half-beasts intervene to justify the violence of Rosso's shipwreck scene, yet male heat is no less savagely unleashed than during the Lapith/Centaur struggle. Once again there is no glory for the warrior here. Men betray men, and then batter away at fellow human beings to save their own skins, in a most unchristian way. [33]

Although the pendant fresco on the south wall has generally been interpreted as *The Death of Adonis*, Rebecca Zorach has argued that (at the very least) it is concomitantly a depiction of *The Punishment of Attis* (Fig. 11). [34] If, as I contend, noble masculine identity is at stake in the *bellifontain* artistic scheme, the presence of such a 'dangerously sexualised' tale makes consummate iconographical sense. While irreverent rape lies at the heart of Ajax's misdeeds on the opposite wall, the 'Adonis/Attis' bay presents a whole gamut of other forms of transgressive sex. In the lower left corner of the frame, a 'Cupid' holding a mask before 'Venus' serves to denounce as deceitful 'fol amour' the three other corner images of homosexual pairing and the coupling of human and beast. Even more [p. 35] explicitly, the large rectangular stucco to the right stages acts of sodomy and bestiality, performed outside a civilised palace to the sound of the sexually charged bag-pipe, and in the vicinity of an ominous skull (here seen through an anonymous sixteenth-century drawing, Fig. 12). Zorach has unravelled the thread that links the various scenes : the tale of the incestuous relation between the protagonist of the central fresco, Attis, and his mother Cybele, has a parallel in the little stucco below the main fresco, since its rigged chariot race is an episode from the incestuous love of Oenomaus and Hippodamia ; the tiny painted upper roundels show Attis making a vow of fidelity to his mother/lover, which he will mindlessly break, as well as a bull, to be sacrificed in the goddess' honour. In fact, Cybele on her chariot drawn by lions dominates the rectangular stucco to the left, announcing to the approaching visitor that the great ancient earth goddess direct the entire bay.

Numerous attempts have been made to conflate this death of a pagan hero (whether Adonis or Attis or both) with the death of Christ. A humanist Christian programme drives the French king's masterpiece, and the first half of the gallery does afford a number of recognizable typological models for the scenes of the second half. Yet however much this intellectual world view may be characterized by a desire for reconciliation, pagan is not equal to Christian, just as the Old Testament is not equal to the New. The little winged putti supporting the frame of *The Punishment of Attis* continue to cower under its weight ; and the standing stucco children to the left provide a new instance of genital fondling, with a most uncommon twist. As the little boy touches himself, a rare little girl putto strains her neck to watch - unless, as Zorach surmises, the second putto is in fact a castrate, like Attis himself. Yet whatever 'her' real gender identity, the infant couple is most probably meant to draw attention to the dramatic core of the central scene where, in punishment for his betrayal, Attis dies of self mutilation.

Members of the French king's Renaissance court would surely have associated Attis' genital tribulation with the fact that Attis died bereft of an heir ; and suffering in the region of the crotch must have evoked syphilis, perceived it too as a product of a (Christian) god's wrath. Yes, the theme of sacrifice is emphasized when one of the standing putti in the frame points up towards the sacrifice of a bull. And yes, in the central composition, a winged infant carries Attis' garments up towards the sky, reminding the viewer that the scene is about resurrection, too. The sacrifice of Attis/Adonis is nonetheless presented as less than the sacrifice of Christ. While the earth goddess governs appropriately this third and last bay of a trilogy dedicated to the element over which she presides, the [p. 36] season of Attis's castration is winter, and not one of these 'exorbitant sexualities' is procreative. The meagre earthly fruit in the arms of the last stucco putto of this portion of the gallery reminds us that generation is problematic under such heavy, sin-filled skies. As Venus descends earthwards in her chariot, clouds once again mask the rays of the cosmic motor, the sun. The heat of base terrestrial love offers no access to 'the wisdom that is the knowledge of the true, the honest, the useful' of which Budé spoke so highly to the king, [35] no hope of true salvation. However, for the king's select audience, the 'traversée du désert' had come to an end. A watershed awaited them in the central bays of the gallery, where Jupiter introduced his sacred heat. The passage to the higher elements of fire and air/ether was about to begin. [36]

### **Fire and Ether : From Turbulent Feudal Lord to Model Courtier**

Jupiter first 'entered' the king's gallery somewhat surreptitiously, hidden away in a cabinet that formerly opened off the north side of the gallery ; and there, symbolically positioned above a potentially burning hot fireplace, he appeared in all his divine glory to Semele. [37] Nonetheless, Davent's etching after Primaticcio's non-extant composition (Fig. 13) shows that the supreme god wields his thunderbolt in such a way that the male principle, because isolated, still bears a negative edge. A Wind blows in vain, for the contorted Semele lies inanimate on the regal bed. To the right, Love masks his eyes in despair as he leads away a heavily laden water nymph, whose very body exudes the element which formerly [p. 37] constituted the damp female essence of Semele. [38] Although the sexual union of Jupiter and Semele was procreative, its issue was only Bacchus, the god associated on the east wall with lower terrestrial love ; a god born in parthenogenesis of Jupiter's own thigh ; a god whose promise of resurrection, like Cybele's, was inferior to that of Christ.

Primaticcio's bold mythological scene of copulation reeks of tragic desolation, and despite Jupiter's flash of lightning, dark clouds obscure much of the sky. Produced at a court where powerful women were reciting on front stage, it was to be understood as a scene of rape, a metaphor for a poor choice. To be sure, the sacred heat of Jupiter was intentionally confounded with the sacred heat of the king of France. Yet the king's - and I daresay his sister's - ultimate message to the male elite of France was not lodged in this heat that destroys ; the royal aim was to subordinate the king's noble subjects through education and discipline, not to scare them away. A subsidiary stucco (known solely through a seventeenth century copy, Fig. 14), no doubt conceived by Rosso and plausibly identified as *Constantine Burning the Heretical Books*, provides a precious contemporaneous gloss on the burning of Semele. Rosso's historicized roundel was one piece of a puzzle fabricated during a period of increasingly exasperated religious oppositions, and it has been recognized as an allusion to the on-going Sorbonne-instigated burning of Lutheran books. [39] However, Constantine the Prince was shown intervening to stop priests from kindling their bonfire with books - for such omnipotent but fatal heat leaves no room for the tolerant exchange of ideas on which a harmonious society thrives. The royal goal being the latter, the king's gendered political discourse was given a radically different inflection in another scene of divine union that Primaticcio frescoed on the opposite, the south, wall.

Jupiter's more felicitous sexual performance with Danae marks the conceptual climax of the Gallery, its true turning point. In this, the supreme god's second metamorphosis, his fire no longer annihilates but [p. 38] mutates instead into a fertile golden rain (Fig. 15). Wedged in between the king's 'F' below and his salamander above, at the precise mathematical centre of the royal passageway, the concord of the opposites is assured : fire flanks water (a feat made perfectly explicit only in the sixteenth century tapestry reproduced here) ; male flanks female (with all due respect) ; and Apollo flanks Diana on the upper rim of the main scene, for the moon occupies a salient place in the cosmic cycle alongside the sun.

Terrestrial Love buries his head in defeat as his celestial brother, wings raised for action, prevents an ugly aging woman positioned on the nefarious side of the gallery from disrupting his winning game. Fruitful abundance invades the upper half of the bay, [40] and birds soar triumphantly into the heavens at the very moment that the ineffectual old system, driven by hapless masculinity, is harnessed to engender a promising new race. Apollo's rays single out the young and beautiful Danae – the female agent of change who reclines over a symbolic wing which Sylvie Béguin has judiciously linked to both Louise de Savoie, begetter of the fine new prince Perseus/Francis I, and Queen Leonora of Austria/France, whose marriage to Francis served as a potent emblem of peace. [41] Under the leadership of the new prince, and thanks to his self-sacrificing marriage to the sister of his most relentless enemy Charles V, cosmic harmony could henceforth foster prosperity, tolerance and intellectual exchange. For the first time in the Gallery, little boys converse lovingly in pairs, song books in hand, or play instruments, both low and high, as they exhibit to the beholder both front and rear. [42] The heretofore tortuous path would henceforth be put straight by a charitable Christian world view, for the association [p. 39] of water and sacred fire was surely meant to evoke baptism, too. Under such auspicious skies, our aging barbarian – who figures in the very next bay on the north side of the gallery – could but cede his place to a more civilized courtier youth, better outfitted to serve his kingdom and his king (Fig. 16). [43]

These dissimilar male companions buttress the standard centre-of-the-bay salamander, and in this particular incarnation s/he stands erect in the midst of flames. [44] Aligned with burning towns, both in the subsidiary painting at the bottom of the frame and in the main fresco where a blaze consumes Catania/Troy, the salamander promulgates the good news that the superior element of fire will preside over the last three northern bays. The Renaissance was a troubled and pessimistic age, and even the finest of realms was perforce fraught with trials and tribulations. Yet thanks to the guidance of a wise Christian prince, culture could help keep the never-disappearing barbarian threat at bay ; the renewed moral stance of the noble caste could provide a stronger link in a more sturdy monarchical chain. Little matter that a city is burning to the ground ; in the face of disaster, positive neo-Platonic heat has fostered the unity of a heroic few. Circumspect adults, whom Philip Ford relates to the king and his sister, have turned their backs on material goods to save the eldest of their line ; [45] and even more importantly in the eyes of worthy lords, they have bequeathed their laudable respect for dynasty to the infants who open the way. At the core of this ancient lesson of familial piety lies the comprehensive understanding that Budé refers to as 'une certaine disposition juste et parfaite de l'esprit et de l'intellect', which the merely physical instruction that Chiron dispensed to Achilles could not provide. [46] Furthermore, [p. 40] like the quality teaching of the masterful Louise of Savoy, in homage of whom this fresco was most likely conceived, this sober – and witty – lesson was directed not only at little boys, but at little girls too.

On the opposite wall, under the influence of the highest element, air, youths strain selflessly to serve their mother, and in return for their devotion they receive the unanticipated gift of death (Fig. 17). In ancient and 'modern' times, the pestiferous air of a plague could very well kill animals and men. [47] Yet when Cydippe's exemplary sons die, Cybele's chariot soars towards the heavens this time : in a model Christian realm, resurrection rewards the virtuous terrestrial conduct of the truly noble few. *Cleobis and Biton* almost certainly alludes to the two sons of Francis I who, as hostages, paid dearly for the release of their father the king. How then should we interpret the 'F' that adorns Cydippe's cart ? Is Cydippe – an aged female figure whose arms open in the form of a cross – a stand-in for both the captive Francis and his war-weary, ransom-burdened realm of France ? If so, here as on the north wall, gender slippage has seeped into the most poignant of royal messages, ones pregnant with uplifting historicized meaning. [48]

The degree to which shifting identities structure the king's iconography is heretofore remarkable, but the very best is yet to come. To top off the then highly popular (and instructive) stories excavated from the ancient Roman past, Renaissance addenda to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* were written for both sides of the next bay. Even in the supposedly licentious, semi-public secular arena of Fontainebleau, the passionate male fire of the pagan gods begged being reined in ; so when Jupiter and Saturn perpetrate [p. 41] erotically charged divine rapes in the shapes of a bull and a horse, they are relegated to the margins of the north bay. In the fresco between them triumphs living animal proof of the Most Christian King's superiority over the turbulent immortal pagan lot. The god-like King Francis is metamorphosed into a tame civilizing elephant, 'F' and salamander-laden, and charged with assuring the social stability for

which, in unison, three generations of his dynasty had toiled. A Jupiter in imperial guise (an allusion to Charles V ?) recognizes defeat by depositing his thunderbolt at His Master's feet. The Good Prince's rise to glory proceeds unimpeded from this point on.

After musing over a modern metamorphosis with what may well have international implications, the royal party turned to the opposite wall to behold the fresco known as *The Unity of the State* (illustrated by the corresponding tapestry, fig. 18). At first sight, issues of political unity seem to prevail as representatives of the Orders of the realm come together around the king. The crux of the matter lies beneath the surface, though, invisible to the human eye. Mercury, mediator of discord because god of eloquence, has henceforth restored his power to mankind, thus enabling cosmic heat to circulate freely, through untainted air, to promote communication and foster rational problem-solving around an eminently approachable king. [49] Closest to Francis, on his left side, stand representatives of the Third Estate. A barbarian in the second row listens attentively to a magnificently dressed peer - a man of letters of the likes of Budé ? Thanks to the mastery of language and culture, this learned soul has stripped off his uncouth breeches and has captured the ear of his prince, who in gratitude has elevated him above his estate. [50] The orator's extraordinary gift - which has materialized as the pomegranate of unity, but also resurrection - can position the human race amongst the immortal gods. [51] Francis responds magnanimously by pointing to his Court : the faithful servants, priests and warriors alike, who flank him on his more favourable, palatial right ; will they too benefit from 'prudence lettrée chose précieuse et don de Dieu inventé pour suppléer les fautes de nature [p. 42] humaine'. [52] On the left margin a finely dressed, but unlettered barbarian noble can only turn away. In the tapestry only, his face mirrors that of another barbarian - a peasant, or a 'sorbonnaire' priest ? - while his gaze seems rivetted on the men who struggle in the large oval to his right. Their fate is his. Like them, he will forever remain fettered and earthbound. Never will he accede to the Word of Mercury, which binds heaven to earth.

The enigmatic little fresco below the main scene encapsulates the neo-Platonic movement that, from left to right, traverses this entire bay. Men imprisoned in closed spaces give way to a messenger whose action is a function of the prince he serves. Saddled horses allude to the frenetic diplomatic activity made possible by Mercury, the divine messenger's, return. The nature of the progression of the large-scale figures in the side ovals and central composition is exactly the same. The men in the oval to the left struggle to become one, yet remain grounded in the terrestrial realm despite their positioning against an open blue sky. In the central scene, a magnificent architectural setting proclaims that raw nature has ceded to civilisation under the aegis of the king and his court. Even the marginal figures to the right form pairs ; and while bare-breasted beauties enter a palace directly above the humanist busy engaging the king, the proximity of such a learned court seems to have propelled even a lowly sinful monkey to new heights. The ascension reaches its climax in the oval to the right : as Mercury's acolyte Charon transports a soul to God, his and his passenger's profiles fuse. The Androgyne crosses the Christian waters of baptism, achieving the difficult union of body and soul. Its heads in the clouds, it has managed to break free.

In the last bay to the north, the fire of pagan sacrifice (on the sides) yields to the sacred fire of Christianity (in the center), with its true promise of procreation and salvation in the confines of the king's civilized realm. Below, the Muses dance a round, for 'circular knowledge', 'the harmony of the sciences', has enabled mankind to reach Wisdom and communicate with the divine. [53] Finally, in the very last fully extant bay, stucco barbarian followers of Bacchus and their no-future progeny share the margins with hopelessly carnal humans and exotic painted animals [p. 43] while the Enlightened Guide steals the show, abandoning a hoard of gesticulating monstrous personifications of the vices on their ignorant (cold) fogs. The just and learned leader - empowered by the cultural revolution underway, and sure of his role as the wisest defender of the true faith - strides self-confidently into the superior element of ether, where he knows that he, more than even the immortal Jupiter, belongs. In the little stucco below (known through an etching by the Master I.♀. V, Fig. 18), a celestial Venus, aided by favourable winds and her celestial son whose huge wings are opening for flight, was preparing to rejoin the king. A mere instant later, she would have handed over her theoretically female realm of water to a little troop of too muscular, clearly unlearned, men.

Having reached this hard-to-scale iconographical peak, poorly schooled noble visitors, silenced by the eloquence of their flesh-and-blood sovereign, were surely forced to concede defeat. Nevertheless, a brilliant cultural display and a profound political transformation are two very different things.

## The Politics of Androgyny at Fontainebleau

At the south centre of the Gallery of Francis I, the king presented his male heat, equated with that of the sun, as positively counterbalanced by the cold nature of the female moon. Yet following a major administrative crisis that led in 1541 to Constable Montmorency's fall, the sun at times exerted its heat to the detriment of the moon - for in 1536 the cold planet had become the emblem of the new dauphin Henri, a close friend of Montmorency. [54] The lessons proffered to the courtier were instinctively rejected by this high-ranking member of the king's barbarian generation, this all-too-powerful feudal lord. As a result, Francis felt obliged to reiterate the monarchical fact of life that the king's 'bon plaisir' alone bestowed grace and disgrace. A drawing Primaticcio made for the vault of the king's Gallery of Ulysses illustrates the new royal message with brio (Fig. 19). As the glorious sun, confounded with the frontally displayed male genitals of Apollo and his horses, rises to transmit its heat to the cosmos, Diana and her horses descend with the moon into obscurity, their base rear ends turned towards the viewer as a polemical sign of the subordinate [p. 44] status of the moon/dauphin. Additional female figures, metaphors of the king's monopoly of favour, rise and fall with the sun and the moon.

The idea of 'feminizing the warrior' through culture was hatched during Francis' reign to serve as a tool to draw courtiers into the service of the king. When ineffectual, as in the case of Montmorency, the king was not loath to elevating a real woman to serve as living proof that he alone was in control. Such is the sense of the grandiose decorative cycle which the king had Primaticcio undertake in honour of the duchess of Étampes, his mistress and his (wilful) creature, in the former lodging of Montmorency ; and such is (one of) the meaning(s) of another androgynous figure which Primaticcio concocted for the king (Fig. 20). Executed for the non-extant Diana fresco cycle that adorned the king's baths, this *Jupiter as Diana* went a full step further than the earlier, well-known *Androgynous Portrait of Francis I* (Fig. 21), in which the king's identification with both male and female gods positions Diana on his sinister side. In Primaticcio's androgynous figure, female (Diana) appears 'unnaturally' positioned above male (Jupiter), as a forceful statement that the king was powerful enough, literally, to turn the world upside down. Yet during this culturally extraordinary reign, even when, as was the case here, the aging father was furious with his rebellious son, his ultimate message was one of tolerance and concord. Jupiter assumes a position of subordination under Diana, the ambiguously gendered allusion to his son, as an emblem of the king's recognition that if his body was sacred, it was unfortunately mortal too.

At Fontainebleau, male can be portrayed as female, but the corollary that female can be portrayed as male is also true. Himself the son of a strong, politically engaged mother, Francis I never hesitated to lay real power in the hands of the ladies in whom he placed his trust. Despite, but no doubt also because of the lack of heat that kept them off the battlefield, women were endowed with, and able to nourish, the two natural prerogatives of intelligence and language that Budé so highly esteemed. From the day he was born, the king had understood that women were capable of contributing to the decision-making process, and his mother entered his privy council as soon as he became king. I would argue that Margaret of Navarre - his intrepid diplomat and open-minded 'minister of the cult', she who so thoroughly confounded his masculine and her feminine self - played one of the major roles in elaborating the gender-unstable cultural system scrutinized here. In turn, the duchess of Étampes came to reside on the *étage noble* at Fontainebleau, on the same level as both Queen Eleanor and His Majesty the King, and it was in her chamber that Primaticcio was charged with actualising the story of Alexander the [p. 45] Great. Above her fireplace, the artist represented Alexander and his captains vacillating at the arrival of a hoard of Amazon queens (Fig. 22), ingeniously equating the virility of the Amazons with overheating from the logs below. No message could be more destabilizing for unruly captains of war than this representation which intimated that women could be valorous too. In fact, by empowering a real Omphale, a real Thalestris, the king was playing his trump card in a tough political game.

The symbolic system which underpins the unique artistic achievement of Francis I's reign flirts with, but

cannot be reduced to mere sexual licence (as historians have almost unanimously supposed). [55] The fascination with Ovid's *Metamorphoses* should be read as a symptom of highly unsteady times ; and rarely have such elaborately gendered body politics been put so boldly in the service of political change. The final results were perhaps no less ambiguous than gender at Fontainebleau. In subsequent decades, the wars of religion would demonstrate that the destabilizing of aristocratic masculinity was an overwhelmingly difficult task for even an increasingly assertive Most Christian King. Present-day critical thinking continues to elaborate on the humanist politics of education and tolerance embedded in the figurative system which the king set in place with the help of his male and female allies, nevertheless.

## Illustrations

[p. 46]

Fig. 1, Léon Davent after Francesco Primaticcio, *Hercules, Omphale and Pan* (engraving, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France).

[p. 47] Fig. 2, Rosso Fiorentino (?), *Bacchus, Venus and Cupid* (oil on canvas, Collection Musée National d'histoire et d'art, Luxembourg)

[p. 48] Fig. 3, Tapestry after *The Battle of Centaurs and Lapiths* bay of the Gallery of Francis I, 1540s (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum).

[p. 49] Fig. 4, Rosso Fiorentino, *The Education of Achilles* bay, 1530s (Gallery of Francis I, Castle of Fontainebleau)

[p. 50] Fig. 5, Tapestry after *The Loss of Perpetual Youth* bay of the Gallery of Francis I, 1540s (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum)

[p. 51] Fig. 6, Rosso Fiorentino, *The Punishment of Attis (The Death of Adonis)* bay, 1530s (Gallery of Francis I, Castle of Fontainebleau) Photo RMN © Peter Willi

[p. 52] Fig. 7, Léon Davent after Francesco Primaticcio, *Jupiter and Semele*, etching (Albertina, Vienna)

[p. 53] Fig. 8, Anonymous seventeenth century drawing a tondo by Rosso for the King's Cabinet, *Constantine burning the heretical books* (location unknown)

[p. 54] Fig. 9, Tapestry after the *Danae* bay of the Gallery of Francis I, 1540s (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum)

[p. 55] Fig. 10, Rosso Fiorentino, *The Fire of Catania/Troy* bay, 1530s (Gallery of Francis I, Castle of Fontainebleau)

[p. 56] Fig. 11, Rosso Fiorentino, *The Cleobis and Biton* bay, 1530s (Gallery of Francis I, Castle of Fontainebleau) Photo RMN © Peter Willi

[p. 57] Fig. 12, Tapestry after *The Unity of the State* bay of the Gallery of Francis I, 1540s (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum)

[p. 58] Fig. 13, Francesco Primaticcio, *The Antipodes*, early 1540s (Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, Inv. 8512) Photo RMN © Michèle Bellot

[p. 59] Fig. 14, Francesco Primaticcio, *Jupiter as Diana*, early 1540s (Paris, Ecole des Beaux-Arts, M. 1155)

## Masculinities in Sixteenth-Century France

### Table des matières

Introduction (pp. ix-xi)

1 : A Prototype of the Modern Man : Saint Joseph in France, c. 1400-1650

GARY FERGUSON, University of Delaware (pp. 1-21)

2 : Feminising the Warrior at Francis I's Fontainebleau

KATHLEEN WILSON-CHEVALIER, American University of Paris (pp. 23-59)

3 : Situating the Masculine : Gender ; Identity, and the Cosmos, in Maurice Scève's *Délie*, Marsilio Ficino's *De amore*, and Leone Ebreo's *Dialoghi*

KATHRYN BANKS, University of Durham (pp. 61-84)

4 : Rhetoric and Virility in Ronsard's *Folastries*

CATHY YANDELL, Carleton College (pp. 85-101)

5 : Re-Reading Platonic Sexuality Sceptically in Montaigne's 'Apologie de Raimond Sebond'

TODD W. REESER, University of Pittsburgh (pp. 103-126)

6 : *Betwixt and Between : Hermaphroditism and Masculinity*

JOHN O'BRIEN, Royal Holloway, University of London (pp. 127-146)

7 : *Masculinité et virilité : récits d'un roi sans enfants*

GUY POIRIER, University of Waterloo (pp. 147-165)

8 : *Men are from Mars : Jean de Sponde's Homeric Heroes and Vision of Just French Leaders*

MARC BIZER, University of Texas, Austin (pp. 167-179)

9 : *Éros masqué : figures mythiques de l'homosexualité*

GISÈLE MATHIEU-CASTELLANI, Université de Paris 7 (pp. 199-197)

---

## Notes

[1] On the French warrior in general, see *L'Homme de guerre au XVIe siècle* (Actes du Colloque de l'Association RHR, Cannes, 1989), G.-A. Pérouse, A. Thierry, A. Tournon eds., (Université de Saint-Etienne, 1992). For aggressive sexual prowess seen through the eyes of Marguerite de Navarre - '[...] vostre plaisir gist à deshonorer les femmes, et vostre honneur à tuer les hommes de guerre', see Christine Martineau's essay : 'L'Homme de guerre au XVIe siècle dans L'Heptaméron', pp.312-324. The conceptual framework of my essay owes a debt to Eugene Giddons, 'Honourable Men : Militancy and Masculinity in Julius Caesar', in *Renaissance forum* (Vol. 5, n°2, Winter 2001, 1-33).

[2] See Gilbert Gadoffre, *La Révolution culturelle dans la France des humanistes*. Guillaume Budé et François Ier (Geneva, Droz, 1997),

'Introduction', pp.13-41, for Budé's analysis of the then oft-denounced 'ignorance française'.

[3] From the *Épîtres des poètes royaux*, St. Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Fr. F.v. XIV, 8, f. 1v° and f. 51v°. See François Avril and Nicole Reynaud, *Les manuscrits à peintures en France 1440-1520* (Paris, Flammarion-Bibliothèque Nationale, 1993), no. 168, 303-305.

[4] Gadoffre, op. cit., p. 23.

[5] For a thorough study of the literary sources of the iconography of the fifth bay in its entirety, see most recently Philip Ford, 'Pietas à Fontainebleau : Valère Maxime, Oliviero d'Arzignano, et la Galerie François Ier', in *Le Dialogue des arts* (n° 18) : *Littérature et peinture du Moyen Âge au XVIIIe siècle*, Jean-Pierre Landry & Pierre Servet eds. (Lyon, C.E.D.I.C., 2001), I, 85-102. For global interpretations of the Gallery, see Dora and Erwin Panofsky, 'The Iconography of the Galerie François Ier at Fontainebleau', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, LII (1958) ; S. Béguin, O. Binenbaum, A. Chastel, W. McAllister Johnson, S. Pressouyre, H. Zerner, in *La Galerie François Ier au château de Fontainebleau*, *Revue de l'Art*, numéro spécial 16-17 (Paris, Flammarion, 1972) ; Eugene A. Carroll, *Rosso Fiorentino. Drawings, Prints, and Decorative Arts* [exh.cat.] (National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1987-1988), 222-97 ; Pierre and Françoise Joukovsky, *À travers la Galerie François Ier* (Paris, Honoré Champion), 1992. Rebecca Zorach has made a series of important remarks on the functioning of the 'overarching system' of the gallery in '« The Flower that Falls Before the Fruit » : The Galerie François Ier at Fontainebleau and Atys excastratus', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, LXII (2000-1), 63-87.

[6] The Gaul's two-pronged beard, a standard sign for Old Testament figures, affords a supplementary allusion to old and new. The young female terms to either side and the abundant fruit over his head express his potency.

[7] The young Roman's left elbow aggressively repels a naked (and discontent ?) barbarian term who looks back nostalgically towards the first half of the gallery, while a pendant term gazes ahead, instead, towards the wiser and nobly clothed, if still barbarian, Gaul.

[8] For the quotation, see Gadoffre, op. cit., 45-6. All the preceding examples are taken from Gadoffre's chapters IV & V, which provide a detailed analysis of 'le moment où la noblesse d'épée, beaucoup

moins sotte qu'on a voulu le croire, commence à comprendre avec quelles armes soutenir la concurrence de la classe administrative' (p. 121).

[9] 'M. de Langeais, certes, a esté un grand, sage et tres politicq capitaine ; aussi avoit-il les deux, et l'espée et la plume, qui ayde fort à parfaire un grand capitaine'. Brantôme could affirm that 'les lettres et les armes maryees ensemble font un beau lict de noces' (as quoted by Gadoffre, op. cit., 128 & 159).

[10] See Raymond Lebègue, 'Un thème ovidien traité par le Primaticcio et Ronsard', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, LV, 1960, 301-306 ; K. Wilson-Chevalier, 'Women on Top at Fontainebleau', *Oxford Art Journal*, XVI-I, 1993, 34-48 ; Suzanne Boorsch, in *The French Renaissance in Prints from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, Los Angeles, Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, UCLA, 1994, no. 45, 248-249 (who notes the importance of light and shade) ; Philip Ford, 'Hercule et le theme solaire à Fontainebleau : la Porte dorée et Le Satyre de Ronsard', in *Cité des hommes, cité de Dieu Travaux sur la littérature de la Renaissance en l'honneur de Daniel Ménager* (Genève, Droz, 2003), 245-258 (who cites Dorothee Herrig's - convincing - suggestion that these frescoes were executed in the early 1540s [Fontainebleau : Geschichte und Ikonologie der Schlosslage Franz I., Munich, Tuduv, 1992, p. 165]). My iconographic interpretation of what Philip Ford refers to as 'deux scènes burlesques, voire même scabreuses', draws yet also differs from all of the above.

[11] Gadoffre notes that in the teachings of Robert Gaguin at the Sorbonne in the 1490s, Ficinian neo-Platonic thought had already crossed into France (op. cit., p. 57).

[12] See Gadoffre, op. cit., p. 23, who quotes Montaigne's assertion (Book II, chapter X) that 'l'estude des sciences amollit et effemine les courages, plus qu'il ne les fermit et aguerrit'.

[13] The term is used by Ronsard in a work addressed to Marc-Antoine Muret in 1553, in which he evokes Hercules and Iole (quoted by Ford, 'Hercule et le soleil...', p. 248, n. 11). In his later poem *Le Satyre*, Hercules - as in Primaticcio's fresco, 'se colere, / S'enfle de fiel' ; and further along in the poem, Hercules is compared to a beast : 'Le feu venu, Hercule se colere [...] ainsy qu'un grand taureau' (ibid., 246 & 251). Ford aligns the numerous terms Ronsard invokes to suggest Pan's heat : 's'allumer, luire, chandelle, ardre, flammes, allumé, enflammer' (p. 250).

[14] Jacques Colin, *Le proces d'Aiax, et d'Ulisses pour les armes d'Achille, contenu au treziesme livre de la Metamorphose d'Ovide, translattée en langue françoise* (Lyon, Pierre de Tours, 1547).

[15] See Sylvie Béguin, 'New evidence for Rosso in France', *Burlington Magazine*, CXXXI (Dec. 1989), 828-38.

[16] See my complementary essay 'La représentation de la lectrice bellifontaine et le système de civilité à la cour de François Ier', in *Lectrices d'Ancien Régime*, Isabelle Brouard-Arends ed. (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2003), 493-522. A passage in Claude Chappuis' *Discours de la Court* (Paris, André Roffet, 1543) offers an interesting addition to the neo-Platonic analysis of the iconography of the first bay on the north side of the Gallery proposed therein (496-7), which I see as dominated by cold water, in the absence of male heat and cosmic Love - and to the interpretation of the gallery which follows herein. Chappuis presents Fontainebleau as a 'fontaine de civilité' (being abandoned by men in this fresco, I believe) : 'Si feiz ie tant qu'au donion me gectay / Et au meilleu ie vys une fontaine / .../ C'est celle la ou pour aprendre a vivre / Parmy le monde, en grand civilité, / Puyser se peult parfaicte honnesteté, / Grace agreable, ung maintien asseuré, / Ung attraict doux, discret & mesuré / Et qui en boit il vomist bien soubdain / Rusticité, & devient tout mondain — / Et ne fault point a aultre escolle aller / Affin d'apprendre a bien dire & parler.'

[17] I read Rebecca Zorach's comment that '[s]ensual male nudes are central to Rosso's œuvre' as allusion to this penchant (op. cit., p. 63).

[18] On the six tapestries woven in the 1540s after each of the south wall frescoes, with the exception of the very last, see Sylvia Pressouyre in *Revue du Louvre*, op. cit., 106-11 ; Gerlinde Gruber, 'Les tentures à sujets mythologiques de la grande galerie de Fontainebleau', *Revue de l'Art* (1995, n°108), 23-31 ; and Andrea Stockhammer, in *Tapestry in the Renaissance. Art and Magnificence*, Thomas P. Campbell ed. (New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002), 465-76.

[19] See *Revue du Louvre*, op. cit., 49-52, 126-7 , and Joukovsky, op. cit., 20-4. Carroll, op. cit., 232-5, reproduces an engraving that singles out the genital-fondling putti of this bay : in one instance a putto seems to pull another towards him 'as though to kiss him' ; in the scene corresponding to my Fig. 8, a putto 'tickles the reclining putto's scrotum'. Carroll reads these scenes as suggesting 'lust, but of a playful and perverse kind', and attributes to their 'perversity' their 19th century replacement by garlands (p. 235).

[20] See Carroll, op. cit., 232-4, for the corresponding anonymous etching.

[21] *Revue du Louvre*, op. cit., 53-6, 126-7 ; Joukovsky, op. cit., pp 101-2.

[22] See *Revue du Louvre*, op. cit., p. 55, fig. 74, for a reproduction of the nineteenth century repainting of the buttocks and tail, clearly aimed at making them less 'offensive'.

[23] This reading is consonant with Erasmus' hesitation to recommend to the young prince Plutarch's *Lives* : 'Un garçon batailleur et impétueux de nature pourrait être incité à la tyrannie en lisant sans précautions les histoires d'Achille, d'Alexandre le Grand, de Xerxès ou de Jules César' (quoted by Gadoffre ; op. cit., p. 61).

[24] All citations are from Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book XII (Mary M. Innes' Penguin translation). Tellingly, the tale of Achilles' death frames Ovid's narration of the combat of the Lapiths and the Centaurs. Also of interest for the reading of the stuccoes which follows : during a respite in the fighting, on a feast day when Achilles 'was propitiating Pallas with the sacrifice of a cow', he turned to Nestor, 'the wisdom of our times, ripe in years and rich in eloquence', to understand why Caeneus, a countrywoman of his, changed to the opposite sex. Having been raped by Neptune, who promised her whatever she wished, she asked : 'Grant that I not be a woman, and you will have given me all.' Caeneus was then one of the Lapiths who participated in the battle against the centaurs. The centaur Latreus first assaulted Caeneus verbally, saying : 'Consider what you were born or, if you prefer, what you suffered, and go, take up your distaff and baskets of wool, twist the threads with your thumb, and leave war to men !' In the ensuing battle, although all the centaurs fell on Caeneus ('We, a whole people, are worsted by a single man, and scarcely a man at that ! Yet truly he is a man, and we, by our weak efforts, are mere women, such as he used to be. '), s/he ultimately escaped into the air : "Hail to you, Caeneus, glory of the Lapith race, once a most mighty hero, and now a bird unique.' Had Achilles resembled the male/female Caeneus he inquired about, he might have escaped being ingloriously slain by a weakling and thus risen unfettered, he too, into the noble element of air.

[25] He states in his *De studio litterarum* that '[...] l'esprit humain, pénétré, dès le berceau et l'apprentissage de la vie, d'habitudes erronées et vicieuses, ne s'aperçoit même pas que, sous la perpétuelle contagion de l'ignorance, partout répandue, il est retombé au rang de leurs autres animaux' (, cited by Gadoffre, op. cit., p. 276). Italians today still use the expression 'ignorante come una capra'.

[26] Earlier in the same passage, Budé asserts that 'ceux qui avaient passé leurs années d'enfance et de jeunesse dans la promiscuité de la foule et loin de l'étude des lettres, ou bien ressemblaient à des bêtes, ou restaient si grossiers qu'ils en étaient presque incapables de parler... l'usage de la langue se détériore progressivement, et de patricien, pour ainsi dire, devient insensiblement plébéien...'

[27] For this scene, see *Revue du Louvre*, op. cit. , pp 57-60, 128-9 ; Joukovsky, op. cit., 34-8.

[28] Frédérique Villemur, 'Eros et Androgyne : la femme comme un autre "soy-mesme"', in *Royaume de fémynie. Pouvoirs, contraintes, espaces de liberté des femmes de la Renaissance à la Fronde*, E. Viennot and K. Wilson-Chevalier eds. (Paris, Champion, 1999, 237-260. See also Marian Rothstein, 'Mutations of the Androgyne : Its Functions in Early Modern French Literature', in *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, XXXIV-2 (Summer 2003), 409-37. Rothstein quotes the passage I cite (p. 414) without linking it to Rosso's image.

It was thanks to female patronage that Héroët emerged at the French court (Raphaël Valéry, "Qui était Antoine Héroët ? Biographie provisoire en attendant un colloque", *Bulletin d'art et d'histoire de la Vallée du Loing* [2002, n°5], 147-58). After entering the service of (the future) Margaret of Navarre in 1524, he became 'pensionnaire extraordinaire' of Margaret and her mother Louise of Savoy in 1529. That the theme of the Androgyne was of particular interest to Margaret is confirmed by the French translation of Ficino's Commentary which she commissioned in 1546.

[29] According to Guillaume Budé, for whom Mercury is a fundamental reference : 'sans ce médiateur et cet interprète, la terre n'aurait eu nul commerce avec le ciel, les mortels nul gage de leur parenté avec les puissance d'en haut [...] ; entre les hommes eux-mêmes ne se serait pas établi le droit des gens, d'où sont sortis, comme d'une source d'humanité, les pactes, traités, alliances, [...] - ciment des cités - d'où sont nées à leur tour les lois et les institutions politiques...' (from *De contemptu rerum fortuitarum*, as translated by Marie-Madeleine de La Garanderie, in *Christianisme & letters profanes*, Paris, Honoré Champion, 1995, 282-3).

[30] Is Discord emerging from her flank as the Androgyne splits ?

[31] See *Revue de l'Art*, op. cit., 61-2, 129-130 ; Carroll, op. cit., 238-41 ; Joukovsky, op. cit., 70, 73-5 (who noted, 73, the importance of the 'double punishment of the impious' Ajax).

[32] The theme of dynastic issue seems to reappear in the stucco and fresco putti of the frame. Genealogy, again, and revenge, are alluded to in the small oval fresco set below the main scene, in which Neptune is represented, the prow of a ship in his hand, along with Nauplius's mother Amymone. The central importance of lineage for the noblesse helps to explain the unbounded passion that irrupts in this scene. Yet in the global economy of the gallery, anger as a response to anger has undeniably negative overtones - no matter its structural roots.

[33] See note 40 for the use of the metaphor of a storm to signify the state of France during the king's captivity at Eleanor of Austria's entry into Lyon in 1533.

[34] Op. cit. The interpretation that follows is consonant with Zorach's reading.

[35] Such is one of Guillaume Budé's definitions of wisdom in his discussion with Francis I (*Philologie De Philologia*, M. M de La Garanderie ed. & trans., Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2001, 18).

[36] This reading corroborates Sylvie Béguin's observation that the first important visitor who inaugurated the Gallery was Charles V, and that : 'Entreprise après la libération de François Ier, dès 1528, la Galerie apparaît comme la revanche sur l'adversité' (S. Béguin, 'François Ier, Jupiter et quelques belles bellifontaines', in *Royaume de fémynie*, op. cit., 197). The problem at hand, after defeat and captivity, was to 'muer un destin contraire en gloire' (Gadoffre, op. cit., 218).

[37] On the iconography of this cabinet, see the contributions of Sylvie Béguin : 'Two notes on Decorations in the Galerie François I at Fontainebleau. A Religious Theme in the Cabinet of Semele', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, LVII, 1994, 271 ; *Royaume de fémynie*, op. cit., 193-4 ; and, most recently, 'Un modello pour la Galerie François Ier ?', in *Les Cahiers d'Histoire de l'Art* (2003-1), 19-24.

[38] The nymph (whose water cascades near Jupiter's thigh, depicted as if an extension of Semele's

body) may also refer to the waters of the Styx, where Juno dispatches Semele out of revenge in Book III of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

[39] See note 36. Clément Marot also used water and fire as metaphors for religious conflict in a 1533 rondeau which R. Cooper ('Humanism and Politics in Lyon in 1533', in *Intellectual Life in Renaissance Lyon*, Philip Ford and Gillian Jondorf eds. [Cambridge French Colloquia, Cambridge, 1993], 19-20) reads as a 'reply to Sorbonne intégrisme' : 'En l'eau, en l'eau, ces folz seditieux.../ Ilz ayment tant les vins delicieux/ Qu'on peult nommer cabaretz leurs escholles/ Mais refroidir faudroit leurs chaudes colles, /Par rebours de ce qu'ilz ayment mieulx, / En l'eau.'

[40] In the tapestry, a suggestively phallic fruit extends over the frame, it too on the negative side, near a column with isolated flames.

[41] S. Béguin, *Royaume de fémynie*, op. cit., 194-201. The pun on Leonora's name which appeared in the Queen's entry into Lyon of 1533 - A lié en or - confirms Béguin's hypothesis. Moreover, Queen Leonora was compared to Juno, whose wedding torch 'quenches the flames coming from a fountain - "Amour qui fond haine" ; animals symbolising the royal couple included the salamander and the ostrich (Austria), 'one cold, one hot' ; and the marriage was presented as bringing an end to the age of Iron and calm after the storm - neatly parallel to the Gallery iconography - with the return of the King and the enfants from captivity and the restoring of a pilot to the ship of state (R. Cooper, op. cit., 26-7).

[42] In conjunction with Leonora's entry into Lyon in 1533, the Queen was identified with the Ark of the Covenant as a sign of the new alliance which had made possible the King and the royal children's return from captivity. Pairs of putti at each end of the chariot that bore the Ark actually stood for the hostage children of France (Cooper, op. cit., 29-30). This historical sub-text may well be hidden in the cheerful putti of the Danae bay.

[43] The content of the bay will make it clear that this young man has the profile of Margaret of Navarre's 'seigneur de bonne maison, qui estoit aux escolles, desirant parvenir au sçavoir par qui la vertu et l'honneur se doibvent acquerir entre les vertueux hommes' (quoted by Gadoffre, op. cit., 162, from the thirteenth novel of *The Heptameron*).

[44] Because 'la salamandre' spits fire and water, it reads as the perfect emblem of a henceforth male, but also - because all powerful - androgynous king.

[45] For the literary sources of both sides of this bay, see Philip Ford, *Pietas*, op. cit., who sews large and small scenes together with threads from Oliviero d'Arzignano and Valerius Maximus. He identifies the twins of Catania, Emantia and Crito, with Francis I and Margaret of Navarre, which helps explain both the sexually ambiguous treatment of the adult who leads the way, and the precedence given to the old woman she bears. There could well be an allusion to the leading roles the king's mother and sister played saving the realm after the disaster of Pavia.

[46] See Gadoffre's sub-chapter : "L'histoire comme pédagogie royale' (op.cit., 253-7) ; for Budé, History is 'une grand maistresse qui équipole toute seule à plusieurs grans precepteurs ensemble'. Jacopo Sadolet's book on the Education of Children, which he dedicated to Guillaume Du Bellay in 1533, bears witness to broad interest in this theme in the royal circle (*De liberis recte instituendis liber* ; Cooper, op. cit., 12-3).

[47] The plague hit France hard between 1531-1533, and R. Cooper (op. cit., 1-3) provides historical evidence of the gloomy outlook that characterized the years when the Gallery programme was initially being conceived. He also supplies the specific reference used in the Lyon entry of 1533 to link Valerius Maximus' reference to young men sacrificing themselves for their country and the Dauphin (p. 28).

[48] The spirit of this bay reflects Margaret of Navarre's fascination with a perfect mystical union,

based on a 'don total qui supprime les existences particulières', a 'sacrifice' 'en martyr Et en malheur' (K. Wilson-Chevalier, 'La représentation de la lectrice bellifontaine et le système de civilité à la cour de François Ier', in *Lectrices d'Ancien Régime*, Isabelle Brouard-Arends ed., Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2003, 500-501) – all of which I take as a sign of Margaret's greater involvement in the programme of the Gallery as a whole. See also *Cléobis et Biton un mythe oublié*, exh. cat, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Carcassonne, 1995.

[49] On this theme, see *Mercure à la Renaissance*, Marie-Madeleine de La Garanderie ed. (Paris, Champion, 1988).

[50] The Third Estate breeches seem to function as a sign for Etienne Dolet's horror of 'la tourbe rustique et quasi barbare des médocastres et juristes qui ne pensent qu'au profit' (Gadoffre, op. cit., p. 27).

[51] '...les gens de lettres et mesmement ceulx qui ont grace d'elegance en histoire sont ceulx qui font la mémoire des princes immortelle, et à bien parler, qui ont pouvoir de les rédiger au catalogue des dieux (L'Institution du Prince, fol. 38 r° ; cited by Gadoffre, op. cit., p. 254).

[52] From L'Institution du Prince (cited by Gadoffre, op. cit., 255).

[53] In his *Institution du Prince*, Budé refers to a 'savoir en cercle' : 'faisans un cercle des arts liberaulx et sciences politiques, ayans connexité et coherence de doctrine qui ne se doibt ne peut bonnement separer par estude, pour ce que toutes ces sciences s'entretiennent comme font les parties d'un cercel qui n'a commencement ne fin (Gadoffre, op. cit., 256 ; see also 296-8).

[54] On this theme, and the drawing that follows, see my article 'Les déboires de Diane au château de Fontainebleau', in *Le mythe de Diane en France au XVIe siècle*, Actes du colloque de l'E.N.S. Bd Jourdan, Paris, Jean-Raymond Fanlo and Marie-Dominique Legrand eds., *Albineana* 14 (2002), Paris, 409-441.

[55] In his 1554 *Mémoires*, however, Arnould Du Ferron had described the king's system with remarkable clairvoyance : 'Ainsi meslait-il tellement la sévérité de la Philosophie avec les jeux amoureux qu'il pouvoit sembler, que ceux-ci empruntassent de l'autorité de celle-là, et tirast réciproquement de la gaillardise de ceux-ci' (as quoted by Gadoffre from a seventeenth century translation from the Latin, op. cit., 198). Need I underline the extent to which Gadoffre's project and my own have proceeded on parallel tracks ?