

A PARAGONE OF STYLES

THE MANNERIST CHALLENGE TO RAPHAEL AND MICHELANGELO AT THE COURT OF FRANCIS I*

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One of the most remarkable portraits of the French king, Francis I, depicts him as a rather effeminate gentleman holding his sword aloft, apparently very sure of victory (fig. 1). This highly preposterous portrait of the king is attributed to Niccolò Bellin da Modena. The text which appears in the cartouche under the figure – rather to Ronsard's discredit – explains to the viewer the portraitist's artistic process:

*Francoys en guerre est un Mars furieux
En paix Minerve & Diane a la chasse
A bien parler Mercure copieux
A bien aymer vray Amour plein de grace
O France heureuse honore donc la face
De ton grand Roy qui surpasse Nature
Car l'honorant tu sers en mesme place
Minerve, Mars, Diane, Amour, Mercure.¹*

The figure of Francis stands gracefully in an antiquising knotted garment and leans on Cupid's bow, which is dispatching its love darts. On his breast is the Gorgon head of Minerva, whilst his right arm is armoured for battle like Mars, the god of war. In his bare left hand he holds Mercury's caduceus, whose wings also adorn his feet, whilst Diana's hunting horn hangs at his right hip. The noticeably missing chairman of this assembly of gods, Jupiter, seems to be represented by Francis himself in the Clouet-esque portrait that crowns the composite body of deities – in the text, indeed, it reads: *honore donc la face De ton grand Roy*.

This portrayal of Francis I, dubbed by Erwin Panofsky a 'monstrous hybrid, his bearded and behelmed head placed on a feminine body',²

* Translated from the German by Helen Shiner.

¹ See Waddington, 'Bisexual Portrait'; Cox-Rearick, *Chefs-d'œuvre de la Renaissance*, pp. 16-18; Bardon, 'Sur un portrait de François I^{er}'.

would not, of course, have appeared to viewers of the period to be quite as absurd as it does to an audience today. They were familiar with modes of 'accumulative characterisation' not only from emblematics and from the staged sets of the festive *entrées* of sovereigns. Contemporaries were also acquainted with the tradition of *rhétoriqueurs*, the literary eulogising of rulers, in which the employment of panegyric juxtaposing as many Antique and Medieval personifications of virtues as possible sought to cast the sovereign in the most brilliant light. In an anonymous hymn to the glorious battle of Marignano of 1515, Francis's repute is compared not only to that of Caesar, Pompey and Hector, but also to King Arthur's fame. In the sixteenth century the concept of the monstrous³ invariably had a positive connotation; it referred to a being, which outdid Nature by combining the most unusual characteristics. The French court poet, Clément Marot, for instance, termed the sister of the king, Margaret of Navarre, a *monstre*, citing as justification that she possessed the body of a woman, the courage of a man and the appearance of an angel.⁴

An 'image construction' in the real sense of the term is effected in this composite portrait on the most varying of levels. An aspect of the picture, which should not be underestimated, is its erotic dimension. Even given the tradition cited above for juxtaposing virtues, it is most astonishing that the French king apparently had no objection to being depicted as a hermaphrodite with a protruding belly; indeed he even seemed to enjoy such a representation. His proclivity towards ironic portrayals of himself even *in sexualibus* must have been known throughout Europe. After his disastrous political defeat at the Battle of Pavia in 1525/26, Francis I tried to transfer to the non-political terrain his attempts to outshine his aristocratic rivals. He had applied this strategy without success within the political arena during the first ten years of his reign. Now in his patronage of art he sought to compete with other European rulers for fresh superlatives. In creating an art-centred self-image, he wished to appear as a king who valued even those works of art which mocked his authority. Thus he hoped to be seen as a perfect patron of Mannerist artists. By means of importing artists and focusing on the most modern style of the period, Francis was able to transfer *romanità* from Italy to France. He sought not only to introduce the Raphaellesque style to Fontainebleau, but also to encourage his court artists

² Panofsky, *Pandora's Box*, p. 59.

³ Compare with Michelangelo's use of the term: *ben inventado e monstuoso*, see Moffitt, 'Vasari's "Fraude"', p. 316ff.; and also that of *capriccio* (*ibidem*, p. 314).

⁴ ... *je suis serf d'un monstre fort estrange: / Monstre je dy, car, pour tout vray, elle a / Corps féminin, cœur d'homme et teste d'ange* (as cited in Walbe, *Studien zur Entwicklung des allegorischen Porträts*, p. 85).

to surpass, by means of an employment of Mannerist wit, the *maniera* of Raphael and Michelangelo. An investigation will be here undertaken into which structural elements were characteristic of the discrete development of Mannerist art at the court of Francis I, and into the manner in which imported Italian, particularly Raphaelesque and Michelangelesque, elements of style were integrated into French art politics. At court it was evidently considered a great virtue that the ruler was able to appreciate ingenious jokes, even if they were at his own expense. It was presumably thought to be politically wiser to render innocuous any potential criticism by assigning it to the realm of laughter – much as obtains in the carnival principle of a short-term, disciplined lack of restraint. The hybrid portrait exemplifies the mock praise form, in which subtle eulogy of a ruler is punctuated by ridicule.⁵ Indeed, this is also the case for the no less refined and impudent portrait by Bronzino of Andrea Doria as Neptune or his portrayal of Cosimo de' Medici as Orpheus. The form is characteristic of the innuendo-laden playing with meanings prevalent in Mannerist art.

It is widely known that Castiglione developed in his *Cortegiano* of 1528 the category of *sprezzatura*, a courtly behavioural ideal involving the taking of a posture both in a moral and an aesthetic sense, which Peter Burke appropriately terms 'coolness'. Castiglione had set out his thoughts on the ideal courtly style contemporaneously with the emergence of Mannerist tendencies in art, which research places around 1520, or else shortly after the disastrous events of the *Sacco di Roma* of 1527. In the French context, the term *manière* is notably first employed in reference to books of etiquette, which sought with some style to dictate in matters of conduct. The art of courtly conduct, or to put it briefly, courtly style, was characterised by an avoidance of the impression of artificiality. This avoidance, for those not born under a lucky star, consisted in fact of strenuous concealment. It was, nonetheless, precisely this strenuous concealment of any necessary exertion that rendered this particular manner of conducting oneself highly artificial and self-conscious. In this it was structurally similar to the Mannerist art that found its ideal audience at High and Late Renaissance courts, in particular at the French court.

A picture from Francis I's collection will be employed to elaborate in rather more detail the functional modes and structural elements of Mannerist art (fig. 2). Bronzino's so-called *Allegory of Venus* (also known as the *Triumph of Venus* or *Venus, Cupid, Time and Folly*), a painting produced circa 1545, is today held by the National Gallery in London. The multiplicity of titles already hints at the problem: Bronzino's masterpiece has always been surrounded by an eagerness to achieve an interpretation, par-

⁵ See Waddington, 'Bisexual Portrait', p. 125.

ticularly within the ranks of iconography-oriented art historians – to date with astonishingly little success.⁶ Vasari proposed a first interpretation of the picture, writing in the sixth book of his *Lives*:

*Fece un quadro di singolare bellezza, che fu mandato in Francia al re Francesco, dentro al quale era una Venere ignuda con Cupido che la baciava, et il Piacere da un lato e il Giuoco con altri Amori, e dall'altro la Fraude, la Gelosia et altre passioni d'amore.*⁷

Unfortunately, it is impossible to be sure whether the picture described by Vasari is indeed the one that was in Francis I's collection. In fact, it is conceivable that he was describing a thematically very similar picture, today in Budapest. Even if, indeed, Vasari was speaking of the picture, which was sent to France, it should be noted that twenty years lay between his viewing of the work (c. 1545) and his subsequent description of it in 1568. It is entirely possible, given this long interval, that his memory may have blurred the two images or, at least, elements of them.

As Vasari, however, was long considered an authority by art historical researchers and thus was deemed never to have erred, his reading of the Bronzino picture became the canonical basis for all further analyses of the *Allegory*. Desperate efforts have been made to assign the personifications mentioned by him to the various figures within the painting. Is *giuoco* ['play'] the small cupid strewing roses with a bell attached to his right ankle, an anklet, which could render him a fool, especially since he is stepping onto a thorn without noticing it? Is he *piacere* ['pleasure'], or does this title better correspond with the beautiful girl in the background, who is holding in her left hand a honeycomb, promising the pleasures of love? On looking more closely, however, one notices that she only half resembles an angel, being also a serpent-like being with lion's talons – in her other hand she holds a dangerous thorn. Should she be read as *fraude* ['fraud'] or *gelosia* ['jealousy']? This might also be an appropriate identification for the tortured figure on the left, who in tearing his hair might further be seen to express grief, pain or envy, since it is well known that *Amoris umbra invidia*.⁸ Who then is the figure above him or her? It has proved the most difficult to identify. Is it a mask without a corresponding back of a head, thus Deceit or Falsehood, or Night? Or Oblivion?⁹ Or is it Truth, from

⁶ For a summary of the last eighty years of interpretation see Gaston, 'Love's sweet poison'.

⁷ Vasari, *Vite* (ed. Barocchi), vol. VI, p. 234.

⁸ See Smith, 'Jealousy, Pleasure and Pain', p. 252.

⁹ Hope, 'Bronzino's *Allegory*', p. 241.

whom the old man on the right wishes to pull away a veil? Is he in fact pulling it away, or is he rather attempting to conceal his counterpart? At least he can be relatively definitively identified as Kronos, that is, as a personification of Time with his hourglass, although it must be said that he is not mentioned at all in Vasari's account.

Finally one is faced with a question, the answer to which might lead to a better comprehension of the meaning of the picture: what are Venus and Cupid actually doing? If one is to follow Panofsky, then this is Time unveiling the naked truth of Luxuria's pernicious depravity.¹⁰ According to this argument, Bronzino's painting becomes a moralising intervention on behalf of the Counter-Reformation. This is supposed to correspond to the prudish attitude of the presumed commissioning patron, Duke Cosimo I de' Medici, whose portrait some critics see in the figure of Kronos.¹¹ Such analysts are quick to see other Medici portraits in this picture. The face of the small girl on the right thus portrays Cosimo's illegitimate daughter, Bia. To give credence to this argument, however, one is required to take into consideration the passage of time, and the inevitable age difference of the child here and in the well-known portrait of her by Bronzino. There has been much speculation about the patronage of this picture. Since Vasari places it within the context of Bronzino's work for the Chapel of Eleonore of Toledo in the Palazzo Vecchio and of carnival decorations produced by him for the Medici, it has been presumed, without documentary evidence to confirm it, that Cosimo I de' Medici must have commissioned it.¹² The similarities between the protruding eyes of Kronos and those of Benvenuto Cellini's bust of Cosimo were deemed to enhance this argument. The laurel in the background and the sphere held by Venus also appear to make reference to Medici patronage. Michael Levey reads this sphere rather as a golden apple, which he interprets as a sign of victory and as the highest prize for beauty awarded to Venus by Paris. In his interpretation, the picture is a representation of the Triumph of Venus. Thus Venus can be seen to have distracted Cupid with incestuous seductive skills, in order to steal the dart, threatening also to her, from his quiver and to hold it up triumphantly.¹³ A third interpretation, which sees a representation of the horrors of syphilis in the figure writhing in pain on the left edge of the picture (*dolor*), must be considered as rather absurd. It is hardly likely that

¹⁰ Panofsky, *Studien zur Ikonologie*, pp. 120-123. See also Cheney, 'Bronzino's London *Allegory*'.

¹¹ See Mendelsohn, 'L'Allegoria', p. 158; Cox-Rearick, *Chefs-d'œuvre de la Renaissance*, pp. 227-234, especially p. 231ff.

¹² Smith, 'Jealousy, Pleasure and Pain', p. 256.

¹³ Levey, 'Sacred and Profane Significance', p. 32ff. Or is it the 'eternal struggle between Love and Time'? See Bosch, 'Bronzino's London *Allegory*', p. 32.

French self-mockery would have stretched to relishing an allusion to an illness, which after the French invasion of Naples continued to be referred to as *le mal français* or *morbo gallico*.¹⁴

All of these interpretations can be justified to some degree and yet an uneasiness remains. What is problematic is that their method of approaching the painting seems inappropriate to the structural characteristics of Mannerism. The semantic fields which open up within this picture are not unambiguous and are not mutually exclusive. It is just not possible to reduce the visual content to clear-cut interpretations *à la* Panofsky. Semantic fields are held in taut relation one to the other, and, in the process of analysis and in reference to the visual repertoire, they constantly expand in meaning. The viewer of Mannerist art is sited in dynamic relation to the work of art; he requires at his disposal a swift intelligence, intellectual flexibility, a rich repertoire of artistic precedents committed to memory, the powers of recall and a sense of humour. Paul Barolsky and Andrew Ladis are right to stress that, in the antiquarian rush to accord meaning to Bronzino's *Allegory*, a key element of the painting has almost completely been neglected, that is, its humour, irony, teasing.¹⁵ It is certainly not easy to ascertain with any precision the sorts of things the art-loving ruler or the witty courtier of the sixteenth century would have found amusing. Castiglione's *Cortegiano* again offers one some clues. In chapters 42 to 89 of the Second Book, the most varied types of jokes and pranks, the employment of which would allow the courtier to shine, are described in an almost scholarly table of categories, with examples given of each:

*Avete ancor a sapere che dai lochi, donde si cavano motti da ridere, si posson medesimamente cavare sentenzie gravi per laudare e per biasimare, e talor con le medesime parole: come, per laudar un omo liberale che metta la roba sua in commune con gli amici, solsi dire che ciò ch'egli ha non è suo; il medesimo si po dir per biasimo d'uno che abbia rubato*¹⁶

The range of variation in the shifting of, and deviations in, meaning, which Castiglione develops is remarkably broad:

¹⁴ See Conway, 'Syphilis'; Healy, 'Bronzino's London *Allegory*'.

¹⁵ Barolsky and Ladis, 'The "pleasurable deceit"', p. 36: 'Were Bronzino, Michelangelo, della Casa, and Vasari – not to speak of Berni, Molza, Folengo, and Aretino – to rise from the grave and read the solemn, moralizing, and allegorizing iconographical interpretations of Bronzino's coy, ludic London picture now current, they would no doubt smile, if not laugh, at such *goffeza* – finding it, in the root sense of *goffo*, slightly goofy'.

¹⁶ Castiglione, *Cortegiano*, p. 147.

*Delle facezie adunque pronte, che stanno in un breve detto, quelle sono acutissime, che nascono dalla ambiguità: benché non sempre inducono a ridere, perché più presto sono laudate per ingeniose che per ridicole ... Ma, perché questi motti ambigui hanno molto dell'acuto per pigliar l'omo le parole in significato diverso da quello che le pigliano tutti gli altri, pare, come ho detto, che più presto movano maraviglia che riso, eccetto quando sono congiunti con altra maniera di detti.*¹⁷

Synonyms and homonyms often underlie the structure of jokes. Appreciative laughter is most readily achieved when a familiar form is given a new, surprising meaning by means of a divergent contextualisation. We laugh not at the commonplace form itself but rather at the perceived key divergence from it. Bronzino's methodology follows identical structural laws in all the artistic media employed by him. Deborah Parker has convincingly demonstrated that Bronzino proves to be a virtuoso of ambiguity and witty allusions both in his painting and his poetry.¹⁸ Vasari had himself made reference to this:

*Ma sopra tutto (quanto alla poesia) è maraviglioso nello stile e capitoli bernieschi, intantoché non è oggi chi faccia in questo genere di versi meglio, né cose più bizzarre e capricciose di lui.*¹⁹

These are satirical comic verses, which in a burlesque style raise negative or banal things to the stuff of euphoric eulogy; examples employed include a pan, a plate, worthlessness or modesty. One only needs to read the audaciously ambiguous poem *Del Ravanello* ['On the Radish'] to question

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 158. *Signifiant* and *signifié* are separated, in that the content of the words employed is avoided: *È ancor piacevol maniera di motteggiare, quando l'omo par che pigli le parole e non la sentenza di colui che ragiona* (p. 164). Formally identical elements of speech gain new meaning by means of a differing contextualisation; they are doubled in formal terms and extended in meaning at one and the same time: *Molto servono ancor così i detti giocosi per pungere, come i detti gravi per laudare le metafore bene accommodate, e massimamente se son risposte e se colui che risponde persiste nella medesima metafora detta dall'altro* (p. 166). Laughter is raised by *capricci* of the imagination – *cose discrepanti* (p. 181) – which play a key role in the initiation of jokes. In general, however, the intention is to confound an existing prejudice, by saying or doing the unexpected: *nell'una e nell'altra sorte la principal cosa è lo ingannar l'opinion e rispondere altramente che quello che aspetta l'auditore* (p. 185).

¹⁸ It is characteristic that Parker should select from Bronzino's oeuvre as a comparative model the London *Allegory*. See Parker, *Bronzino*, pp. 128-167.

¹⁹ Vasari, *Vite* (ed. Barocchi), vol. VI, p. 237.

Panofsky's attempt to set up Bronzino as a moral apostle of the Counter-Reformation.²⁰

The double-entendre requires a recognition of modified formal patterns, even if the viewer is not able to compare them directly with their precedents. Thus patterns in current usage are employed by artists and are most familiar precisely because they represent the most highly valued patterns within contemporary art practice. Mannerist art, however, employs these patterns to produce something new and individual, always with the aim of surpassing in terms of refinement the modified precedent. The Mannerist mode is consciously created with an eye to attempting to surpass great artistic precedents. Aside from those of Antiquity, the precedents in the sixteenth century were Michelangelo and Raphael. That this contest was no exhausting hand-to-hand fight, but instead a skilful and witty game full of *sprezzatura* and *grazia*, is shown in Bronzino's no less ambiguous and risqué poem, *Del pennello* ['On the paintbrush'].²¹ In this poem the highest artistic motifs are effortlessly employed in a parodical manner for a dual purpose. On the one hand, a play is made on a sonnet by Michelangelo, in which the great sculptor says of himself: 'I am no painter' (*non sendo in loco bon, né io pittore*).²² Bronzino triumphantly transforms this into: 'and as I too am a mere house-painter (*E, perché io sono anch'io pur dipintore*), I want to show you to what purposes one can put large, middle-sized and small brushes'. On the other hand, he cites in an exaggerated manner the legendary self-confident remark that Correggio is supposed to have made in front of Raphael's *Saint Cecilia: Anch'io sono pittore* – ['I too am a painter'].²³ Mannerist art is combative art, which defines itself in its constant vying with artistic precedents.²⁴ The Mary in Michelangelo's *Doni-Tondo* and the Eve from the Sistine Ceiling's *Fall of Man* fresco have been mentioned as possible precedents for the pose of Bronzino's Venus (a kind of 'Virgin undressed').²⁵ The theme of the painting as a whole has a forerunner in Michelangelo's *Venus and Cupid* (fig. 3; executed by

²⁰ Bronzino, *Rime in burla*, pp. 395-398. See Parker, 'Towards a Reading', especially pp. 1024-1026.

²¹ Bronzino, *Rime in burla*, pp. 23-26. See Parker, *Bronzino*, p. 133ff; Plazotta and Keith, 'Bronzino's "Allegory"', p. 99; Gaston, 'Love's sweet poison', p. 271.

²² *Rime*, vol. V, p. 4ff.

²³ Parker ('Towards a reading', pp. 1021-1022 and 1034-1036) identifies many other examples of satirical vying with the greatest poetic precedents, above all Dante's *Divina Commedia*.

²⁴ See Maurer, 'Notizen zur Formensprache', p. 121.

²⁵ See Parker, *Bronzino*, p. 153.

Pontormo),²⁶ which also features two masks. The Herculean form of Kronos is generally deemed to stem from Michelangelesque figural types.

There is, nonetheless, as Leatrice Mendelsohn correctly notes, another rather more telling precedent.²⁷ Since 1518, Francis I had owned a picture which had arrived in France as a diplomatic gift on the occasion of the marriage of Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, to Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne (fig. 4): Raphael's *Holy Family*, today in the Louvre, which was executed in part by Giulio Romano. It appears that Bronzino may well have attempted to stage a contest within the confines of the French king's collection and to this end chose a work by Raphael. In its dramatic lighting and movement, this painting already contained Mannerist effects, as was noted by Sebastiano del Piombo in a letter to Michelangelo on the subject of the *Holy Family*:

*Duo[l]mi ne l'animo non sette stato in Roma a veder dua quadri che son iti in Franza, del principe de la sinagoga, che credo non vi possete imaginar cossa più contraria a la opinion vostra de quello haveresti visto in simel opera. Io non vi dirò altro che pareno figure che siano state al fumo, o vero figure de ferro che luceno, tutte chiare et tutte nere, et desegnate al modo ve dirà Leonardo. Pensatte come le cosse vanno; dua bravi hornamente ricette da' Franzesi.*²⁸

Painted in a few months in the spring of 1518, the work's subsequent journey to France was interrupted by a brief halt in Florence. It may well have made a formative impression on the fifteen-year old Bronzino. He may perhaps also have known Raffaellino del Colle's fresco for the Oratorium Corpus Domini in Urbana,²⁹ which is closely related to Raphael's picture, or, indeed, the engraving dating from before 1524 by Gian Jacopo Caraglio, which, nonetheless, only shares the main figural arrangement.

²⁶ Gould, *The sixteenth-century Italian Schools*, p. 42.

²⁷ Leatrice Mendelsohn follows Levey, Freedberg and Smith in pointing to the Raphael picture as a source for Bronzino's *Allegory* and identifies visual elements in her interpretation of the picture as a carnivalesque vice versa version of the Raphael: *Se il bacio di Venere e Cupido fosse una sorta di parodia di quello tra Gesù Bambino e la Madre, il Battista sarrebbe sostituito dal Gioco, e la Gelosia e Saturno sostituirrebbero rispettivamente Sant'Anna e San Guiseppe* ('L'Allegoria', p. 157). Cox-Rearick attempts to trace a definitive shift in the taste as a collector of the French king from religious to erotic painting by means of these two pictures. She thereby ignores their internal aesthetic connection, however (Cox-Rearick, 'Sacred to Profane: Diplomatic Gifts').

²⁸ As cited in Cox-Rearick, *Chefs-d'œuvre de la Renaissance*, p. 204.

²⁹ See Ciardi; Dal Poggetto, *Urbino e le Marche*, p. 424.

Bronzino's method of 'over-painting' the Raphael picture can be convincingly reconstructed. It is relatively easy to identify the trio of Mary, Christ Child and Joseph as Venus, Cupid and Kronos. The pair of angels in the background has swapped sides. The function of flower-bearer has been taken over by the small cupid, and the right-hand angel, who in the Raphael is marked out from the group by his gaze into infinity, has mutated into the face of a girl, staring out of Bronzino's picture. The angel has arms crossing above his breast, whereas the girl's arms, as Panofsky noted, have swapped sides: her left one grows out of her right-hand side and vice versa.³⁰ Saint Anne has become the figure of *Gelosia* on the left-hand side of the Bronzino. The most problematic and puzzling transformation is that of the infant St John. Here it is immediately obvious that more can be gained from an analysis of the significant deviations from the original, rather than a superficial identification of the similarities. This figure, for which only the mask-like person above left can be the 'fit' in Bronzino's group of seven, has been split into several parts. It has given its hair colouring to Cupid, its cross-turned-dart to Venus, its praying gesture to the small cupid, who makes something quite different of it. Even Raphael's virginal bouquet of flowers seems to have been strewn throughout the whole Bronzino painting. The small cupid holds roses, right in the background one can make out laurel, and on the left we find myrtle, which is the flower of Aphrodite. Haloes become pearl diadems or even bald heads. The expressive gesture of the left-hand angel is given to Kronos, and wings even grow from his back. The innocent-looking white cushion from the Christ Child's crib has been tinged with red and is now used by Cupid to rest upon. Mary's blue cloak lies under the disrobed Venus, and Raphael's curtain is being fought over by Kronos and the mask-woman. The brown tints of Raphael's garments seem to have been taken over by the flesh itself of Kronos and *Gelosia*. Unfortunately, five centimetres have been cut away from the bottom of Bronzino's painting,³¹ so that the hem of the cloak, which formerly belonged to the Madonna, is now only partially visible. It would have been illuminating to be able to view the spot, which corresponded to that of Raphael's signature. Or did Bronzino turn his name into a colour signature in giving Kronos such a bronzed face? In any case, this dismemberment and recasting of parts indicates an extremely sophisticated and autonomous referencing of artistic precedents, which deserves to be termed 'modern'. The developing subjectivity of the artist permits the creation of something genuinely new, something which cannot be understood by iconographical diligence and the scouring of emblem books alone. The dynamic, by which

³⁰ See Panofsky, *Studien zur Ikonologie*, p. 122.

³¹ Plazotta and Keith, 'Bronzino's "Allegory"', p. 91.

the eye is led over the painted surface, pulls the viewer into a never-ending circuit of possible meanings.³² Every time he thinks he recalls a point on this circuit, a point already visited, the meaning of this element, which he thinks he has already interpreted, seems to have shifted in the most surprising manner.³³

Intellectual sparring and the artistic attempt to surpass precedents are strategies which themselves become the themes of this painting. They do not merely reside in the allegorical representation of Venus's successful outwitting of Cupid. Bronzino concerns himself above all with the comparison, the *paragone*, between painting and sculpture.³⁴ His painted figures, in fact, give the effect of sculpture. In this picture, as Sydney Freedberg has so pleasingly noted, the painter becomes a reverse Pygmalion in that he allows his figures to petrify into sculpture.³⁵ Even the argument, usually raised in such comparisons, that sculpture can offer multiple viewpoints is playfully trounced here. Each figure represented has multiple 'viewpoints' in terms of its symbolic content, in that it combines several meanings at once. The viewer prepared to admit the painting's multiple parallel meanings is immediately cheekily teased by being proffered the rump of Cupid's *figura serpentinata*. Thus Bronzino's picture is a carnivalesque parody and, at the same time, a profanation of Raphael's *Holy Family*,³⁶ whilst managing also to transcribe several Raphaellesque visual ploys into elements which can be identified as unequivocally new. Bronzino's *Allegory* plays, in every respect, with the possibilities of painting; its meta-pictorial theme is Mannerist painting itself. Perhaps this picture was, in fact, a response by Bronzino to Benedetto Varchi's general inquiry of 1546, his definitive painterly overturning of the supposed superiority of sculpture.³⁷

³² See Parker, *Bronzino*, p. 153ff.: 'His commitment to ambiguity in poetry and painting creates a field of meaning, one whose possibilities allow the reader or viewer to participate in the playful sensibilities of the work. Rather than decipher, the reader must participate in the production of meanings that are ultimately unstable'.

³³ See Frangenberg, 'Der Kampf um den Schleier', especially p. 382.

³⁴ See Mendelsohn, *Paragoni*.

³⁵ Freedberg, *Painting in Italy*, p. 299. This particular aspect of the picture has led Anderson ('A "most improper picture"', pp. 23-24) to the plausible view that Bronzino might have employed an Antique sculptural group in his conception of the key figural grouping of Venus and Cupid.

³⁶ That Bronzino was no stranger to almost blasphemous parody can be seen, for instance, in the infant St John's index finger in the *Holy Family with St Elizabeth and St John the Baptist* in the Louvre. See Parker, *Bronzino*, p. 156.

³⁷ As is well known, his letter to Varchi ends abruptly at the point where he might have introduced the argument for the superiority of painting. A detailed analysis of

As if on a stage, Mannerist game playing is offered up to the viewer, and he thus becomes an integral part of the subterfuge. The serpent with the sweet girl's face on the right of the Bronzino painting has been appropriately compared to a sphinx.³⁸ She seems to question the viewer as to the meaning of the painting, and he must expect the worst, as is always the case with sphinxes, if he does not solve the puzzle. At the same time the girl serpent is an incarnation of the *scherzo di fantasia*, of the *capriccio*, which unites disparate parts to create an entirely new whole. Ambiguities, paradoxes are clearly intentional here. The absurdity of this game of meaning is directly encoded in the figure of a hermaphrodite, borrowed from the repertoire of the grotesque, which is placed on Venus's diadem.

It is precisely in this insolubility, in this avoidance of fixity of meaning, that not only this painting, but Mannerist painting in general, demonstrates its claim to superiority. Art is more than the imitation of nature. It is perhaps for this reason that the traditional attributes of *imitazione*, that is to say, the masks, paradoxically appear to be more real than the faces of the living characters in this Bronzino painting. Both of the cooing doves at the bottom left of the picture, which traditionally stand for innocence and naiveté, are being trodden upon – and one might by extension apply this metaphor to the viewer as well. If, indeed, Bronzino is here trying to teach us a lesson in symbolic form, then it is probable that virtuous deception is the highest form of art. It makes the greatest claims on the fantasy of the viewer and yet, at the same time, promises him the most exalted pleasure by means of aesthetic experience. Venus offers her tongue lasciviously to her son, in order to beguile and outwit him with the arts of love. Nonetheless, she might also be said to be sticking out her tongue in a mocking manner at the viewer, who repeatedly tries to unravel the mystery of her beauty. And yet he must despair – like the figure on the left – of ever finding a convincing final solution, even if he had all the time in the world to come upon it.

It would have been well known that one could afford the French king particular pleasure with such an enigmatic visual puzzle. After all, he commissioned a complete *Kunstkammer* of such allegorical *quadri riportati* for his Gallery at Fontainebleau from Rosso Fiorentino.³⁹ Some remarks about Francis I's Gallery may serve to illustrate the methods by which the

the text and of the picture as a painted *paragone* will be given in my habilitation thesis on Mannerism and the practice of sovereignty at the court of Francis I.

³⁸ See Moffitt, 'A Hidden Sphinx' and *idem*, 'An Exemplary Humanist Hybrid'. Leatrice Mendelsohn, on the other hand, identifies her as a siren. ('L'Allegoria', pp. 160-162).

³⁹ See Hall, *After Raphael*, pp. 121-127.

king integrated this erratic, satirising, evasive Mannerist art into his self-presentation as a ruler. The year 1530, when Rosso was called to the French court and rose to the rank of artist-prince within the shortest space of time, was in political terms anything but a successful year for Francis I. After his defeat at the battle of Pavia in 1525 and his humiliating captivity in Madrid in 1525/26, the French king was forced to give up all claims to political power in Italy in the so-called 'Ladies Treaty' of Cambrai, and to agree to marry the widowed sister of his main opponent, Emperor Charles V. During this grave political crisis, Francis I made three decisive interventions in the cultural arena. In 1528, in a building and decorative programme, he began to turn Fontainebleau, until then an insignificant hunting lodge, into his main residence. In the spring of the same year he sent his art agent, the Florentine Battista della Palla, to Italy to acquire for him as many antiques, paintings and modern sculptures as possible. Then in 1529 he invited Michelangelo – the most modern and advanced artist of the classical High Renaissance generation – to settle at the French court, albeit without success.⁴⁰ The quantity of works to be transported to France as a result of Pallas's mission was as decisive as was their quality: *provedergli grosse quantità et eccellente d'antichaglie di qualunque sorte di marmi et bronzi et medaglie et pittura di maestri degni di sua Maestà*.⁴¹ It appears that the French king wished to compensate for the enforced renouncing of territorial claims in Italy, as demanded by the 'Ladies' Treaty', by means of a systematic plundering of Italian artworks, that is *40 casse di pitture, sculpture, antichaglie et altre gentilezze*.⁴²

The extremely difficult decision, highly explosive in art-political terms, of which artist to appoint to decorate his main residence had also to be faced by Francis I. He decided upon Rosso Fiorentino, from whom he primarily expected the provision of artworks, which would not only deliver to France a sense of Italian *romanità*, but would even surpass this quality –

⁴⁰ See Cox-Rearick, *Chefs-d'œuvre de la Renaissance*, p. 73; Hall, *After Raphael*, p. 120. Francis I had approached Michelangelo as early as 1519/20. The second approach mentioned here was initiated by Michelangelo himself, who was keen to escape the insecure political situation in Florence. After things there had calmed down, however, he showed no interest in expatriation to the French court, despite the offer of his own home and an annual remuneration of 1200 *livres*.

⁴¹ Letter from Battista della Palla to Filippo Strozzi dated 21.01.1529, as cited in Elam ('Art in the service of liberty', p. 88). See also other excerpts: *in qualità et in quantità degna d'uno tale principe (ibidem)*; *che lo provedessi d'ogni sorte d'antichaglie et maxime eccellenti (ibidem, p. 90)*; *luoghi ne' quali sono assai cose eccellenti come à il bisogno nostro, il quale non è minore della quantità di moltissime mediocri purché antiche che la qualità delle eccellentissime (ibidem, p. 91)*.

⁴² Elam, 'Art in the service of liberty', p. 107.

in line with the structural characteristics detailed above, in their reworking of specific Roman precedents. Rosso's highly ambivalent relationship with the art of Raphael and Michelangelo cannot be given detailed consideration here. One striking example of Rosso's strategy of combining, and vying with, the work of both artists must serve as an indication of his attitude towards his predecessors. This was his first (and only) great Roman commission, the decoration of the Cesi Chapel in S. Maria della Pace of 1524 – although only two of the cycle's frescoes were actually carried out by him (fig. 5). Vasari writes: *Quivi fece nella Pace, sopra le cose di Raffaello, un'opera, della quale non dipinse mai peggio a' suoi giorni*, and accounts for the supposedly poor artistic quality of the frescoes by reference to the superiority of the surrounding Roman art and specifically the overwhelming precedent of Michelangelo (fig. 6):

*Il che poté intervenire al Rosso nell'aria di Roma, e per le stupende cose che egli vi vide d'architettura e scultura, e per le pitture e statue di Michelagnolo, che forse lo cavarono di sé; le quali cose fecero anco fuggire, senza lasciar loro alcuna cosa operare in Roma*⁴³

He thus misunderstands Rosso's intention in vying with this art. It appears that the painter sought to employ Michelangelo's stylistic over-emphasis as an antidote to the neighbouring work by Raphael. In this, Rosso was entering into an already existing *paragone*. The Chigi Chapel frescoes by Raphael, immediately adjacent to the Cesi Chapel, had been conceived to compete artistically with Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel sibyls and prophets. Perhaps Rosso deliberately designed his frescoes in a Michelangelesque manner in order to reconstruct the pre-existing context, which had been surpassed by Raphael; in other words, by means of his stylistic referencing, to return it to its source: Michelangelo's sibyls. Yet at the same time he makes reference to one of Raphael's own supreme achievements at the Vatican, the Attila from the Stanza d'Eliodoro.⁴⁴ Rosso was consciously attempting to surpass all of the great precedents of his work, although this says little about the actual artistic value of the poorly preserved frescoes. It is not surprising that, as Benvenuto Cellini reports, Rosso came into conflict with the pupils of the here challenged Raphael. According to malicious rumours spread by precisely these pupils, he is supposed, on entering the Sistine, to have said of Michelangelo's frescoes: *non volevo pigliar quella maniera*.⁴⁵ In this remark, which was retailed as if Rosso's intention had

⁴³ Vasari, *Vite* (ed. Barocchi), vol. IV, p. 480.

⁴⁴ See Ekserdjian, 'Rosso Fiorentino and Raphael', pp. 36, 38.

⁴⁵ Buonarroti, *Carteggio*, vol. III, p. 236. See Joannides, "... non volevo pigliar

been to denigrate Michelangelo's artistic abilities, the painter had sought instead to express his wish not to exploit or plunder the latter's *maniera*, but to surpass it.

The combination of Raphaelesque grace (above all in the female figures like the *Vénus frustrée*) with Herculean expressivity and *terribilità*, is typical of Rosso's integrative vying technique employed in the Gallery at Fontainebleau. Even here, however, there is ambiguity; it is hardly possible to determine whether Rosso's graceful female heads imitate Raphael's ideal of *grazia* or, indeed, make reference to Michelangelo's *teste divine*. Nonetheless, it is precisely this ambiguity which forms the chief characteristic of Rosso's adaptive technique. Its seemingly modern, often hypertrophic, multilayered meanings were deemed far superior to dull unambiguity.⁴⁶ Rosso's intellectually highly charged technique of referencing combines the most varying of allusions to meaning, so that, for instance, a reference to the antique is at one and the same time a play on Michelangelo and an erotic representation of a naked female figure. To attempt a *paragone* with Michelangelo's sculpture by painterly means, with the aim of vying on a plastic level, such as in the case of the fresco *Le Combat des Centaures et des Lapithes* with its two-dimensional, almost fragmentary figures, was futile. The painted figures are abstractions of sculptural masses;⁴⁷ they have been transferred from the three-dimensionality of sculpture into the two-dimensionality of painting and are deliberately rendered in a shallow plane (fig. 8). The internal space of the fresco as a whole is not uniformly structured as a pre-existing entity; it is solely by means of the volume-creating figures that it gains materiality. As Arnold Hauser has noted, the figures can thus be said to make a claim for 'autonomy' – one sees this, above all, in the arm of the Lapith stretched out on the ground, which lies parallel with

quella maniera".

⁴⁶ See, for instance, the very apposite criticism by Rebecca Zorach ("The Flower that falls before the fruit", pp. 70-72) of Panofsky's unequivocal decoding of the *Grande Galerie* (Panofsky, 'The Iconography of the Galerie François I^{er}') and its iconography (p. 71): 'The response to the Lövgren thesis points to a significant weakness in Erwin Panofsky's method of iconographic analysis ... the treatment of ambiguity and the possibility of iconographic hybrids'.

⁴⁷ The same treatment of figures can be found in Rosso's picture, *Moses defending the Daughters of Jethro*, the painting which can be deemed to have been his *entrée billet* to the French court (fig. 7). See Haitovsky, 'Rosso's Rebecca and Eliezer', p. 114; Joannides, "... non volevo pigliar quella maniera", p. 137ff., who even goes as far as to interpret the Moses image as a de/reconstruction of the pictorial space of Michelangelo's *Tondo Doni*. Unfortunately, he precludes himself from having to provide a detailed analysis of this process of appropriation with the revelatory remark: 'To contemplate the full implications of such stylistic wit is to begin to appreciate the extraordinary intellectuality of Rosso's artistic temperament'.

the frame, effectively marking the edge of the picture's internal space.⁴⁸ Thus out of two-dimensional flatness, three-dimensional space is created. The real battle for artists operating within the framework of Mannerist attempts to outdo their predecessors, however, is not about creating three-dimensional illusions – this fresco does not claim to demonstrate an ability to paint sculpture more effectively than a sculptor can carve. Instead, Rosso indicates that his painting is capable of achieving a greater expressivity and modernity of form, and a more successful representation of the most varied temporal and psychic states, than Michelangelo's sculpture and painting.

Precisely this admixture of intellect and senses would have been to the taste of the French king and would have seemed appropriate in terms of art politics. Francis I consciously chose a site not yet ideologically charged for the *mise en scène* of his art and a demonstration of power. Not only was he thus able to avail himself of the symbolic arsenal of the ruler, but was also able unrestrainedly to employ a symbolic system of his own creating.⁴⁹ Like Bronzino in his *Allegory*, Rosso and his assistants developed in the programme for the Gallery a multidimensional nexus of connections, which passed on formal and subject-related motifs from painting to painting.⁵⁰ This permitted them constantly to shift the parameters of comparison and thereby the levels of meaning, so that a perfect unity might never be achieved. Evidence of the employment of the principle of vying with great precedents is found throughout the Gallery. The *Piété filiale* (or *Twins of Catania*) (fig. 9) makes reference to the group of carriers in Michelangelo's *Flood*, as well as simultaneously mirroring Raphael's Aeneas and Anchises group from the *Borgo Fire* in the Stanza dell'Incendio in the Vatican (fig. 10). A technique of doubling motifs is more fruitful quantitatively and qualitatively in that it permits the possibility of variation, of an increase in expressivity and of the representation of varied psychological states. Rosso uses this ploy to demonstrate that not only can he replicate Raphael's group in mirrored form, but that he is also capable of surpassing with greater virtuosity the Master's formal grouping, as can be seen in the group at the rear of his work. There is also an echo of the founding myth of the French nation here, which is allowed to compete for attention with the Roman founding legend by stealing its origin from the Trojan people. The picture as a whole takes on a note of self-mockery by means of a depiction on the right of children carrying a puppy. This contrivance overplays the *paragone* and yet simultaneously shifts it into the realms of virtuosity.

⁴⁸ See Hauser, *Der Manierismus*, p. 189.

⁴⁹ See Arasse and Tönnemann, *Der europäische Manierismus*, p. 376.

⁵⁰ See McAllister Johnson, 'Once more the Galerie François I^{er}'; *La Galerie François I^{er} au Château de Fontainebleau*.

Vasari termed Fontainebleau, which he himself had never seen, a 'new Rome'.⁵¹ The palace had become an *altera Roma, una nuova Roma*, in particular by means of the complete arsenal of Roman *maniera* which Rosso was able to provide the French king, with its references to Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling, Raphael's *Loggie* and *Stanze*, and to the Farnesina. A noticeable reduction in the papal display of political power after the *Sacco di Roma* was further diminished by the housing of Primaticcio's casts of the ideologically highly charged Belvedere antiquities in the Gallery at Fontainebleau (fig. 11).⁵² Francis thereby demonstrated his sovereign ability to avail himself of all art media, indeed, that he could have his authority conveyed in any conceivable medium. His artists were able to mirror, duplicate and increase the forms of expressivity of their forebears, as and when it suited the ruler's need for display. Thus one rediscovers the Belvedere antiquities rendered in the medium of painting in Rosso's frescoes, where the gesture of the so-called Sleeping Ariadne (or Cleopatra) in the *Jeunesse Perdue* enters the realm of the eccentric in its caricature-like departure from the Roman original (fig. 12). Ancient Rome is omnipresent in the *Grande Galerie*, for instance, in the representation of Caritas Romana below the fresco of *Cléobis et Biton*, or in the Roman architecture in the adjacent stucco cartouche. It is here evident that it is not a question of mere citations, but of refined mutations of pre-existing models; the spiral of the Trajan Column given in relief is the mirror image of the actual antique column. The fresco, *L'Unité de l'État*, which depicts Francis I in person centre stage, shows him dressed in an antique imperial armour thus representing Caesar-Augustus (Hall, fig. 5). The specific form taken by Francis I's assertion of his sovereignty is based in equal measure on traditional French founding myths and on antique Roman sources.⁵³

The Gallery's programme as a whole is based around an aesthetic intended to overwhelm the viewer intellectually by means of iconographical sophistry, subtle citations and consciously employed hermetics to counter-balance a rich blend of material. This trend towards a phenomenological overloading of the visitor to the Gallery is perhaps the reason why there are

⁵¹ Vasari, *Vite* (ed. Barocchi), vol. VI, p. 144: *...fu richiamato da Roma il Primaticcio. Perche imbarcatosi con i detti marmi e cavi di figure antiche, se ne tornò in Francia, dove innanzi ad ogni altra cosa gettò, secondo che erano in detti cavi e forme, una gran parte di quelle figure antiche; le quali vennero tanto bene, che paiano le stesse antiche, come si può vedere là dove furono poste nel giardino della reina a Fontanableò, con grandissima sodisfazione di quel re, che fece in detto luogo quasi una nuova Roma.*

⁵² See Haskell and Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, pp. 1-6; Pressouyre, 'Les fontes du Primaticcio'; Cox-Rearick, *Chefs-d'œuvre de la Renaissance*, pp. 325-361.

⁵³ See Joukovsky, 'L'Empire et les Barbares'.

hardly any detailed descriptions of its decorative programme dating from its early phase (the second half of the sixteenth/the first half of the seventeenth century). Intellectual sparring and attempting to surpass one's predecessors are political as well as artistic categories. The Gallery display was a highly subtle *mise en scène* of his sovereignty by the king. It served him not only as a witty means of entertaining his courtiers, but also as a vehicle for diplomatic purposes.⁵⁴ Entrance to the Gallery was via his private chamber and he constantly carried its key with him. Conceived to give the appearance of a private room, only a chosen few were permitted by him to view what functioned, in fact, as a chamber for public display.⁵⁵ The king alone held sway over the transmission of meaning in 'his' Gallery; he determined the route taken and the time guests were permitted to spend in front of the pictures. He limited the chance of comprehension for the viewer and was thus able to rule out unwanted meanings. Visual reference to this aristocratic justification of power by means of education and Mannerist style is found in the figure of the priest in the fresco, *Le Sacrifice*. Horapollo's interpretation of hieroglyphs is brought to mind: the semioticians

⁵⁴ See Weislogel, *Rosso Fiorentino*, p. 63. The author underestimates the political use to which the Gallery was put by classifying it as part of the *Studiolo* tradition. One can be absolutely certain that Francis I did not retire to his Gallery, 'to stretch his legs or divert his busy mind'. The 'solitary musing over the gallery's mysteries' would have been a waste of time for the king, since he was the only one who knew that the secret of the Gallery lay in its role as an insoluble visual puzzle, without a set programme.

⁵⁵ One of the very rare descriptions of the Gallery dating from the sixteenth century is by Henry Wallop, an ambassador of Henry VIII's, who visited Fontainebleau in 1540 and was shown the Gallery by the King. Francis seems not to have rated particularly highly the artistic sensibility and iconographical knowledge of his visitor; his tour appears to have concentrated rather more on the material worth of the Gallery than the artistic value of the frescoes: [*He*] *took grete pleasure to commen with me therin, showing me He hard saye that Your Majestie [i.e. Henry VIII] did use muche gilding in your said howses ... He in his buylding used litle or none, but made the rowffes of tymbre fyndly wrought with dyvers collers of woode nautrall, as ebeyne, brasell, and certayne other that I can not wel name to Your Majestie, whiche He rekeneth to be more riche then gilding, and more durable.* This text also demonstrates that the king was not only the sole keeper of the meaning of his Gallery but also of the rights to reproduction of the artworks commissioned by him: *...and if it pleased Your Majestie to send for any of it [i.e. marbell], Ye shuld have the same at your commaundement, and cost You nothing; as also dyvers mowldes of anticke personages, that He hathe nowe commyng owte of Ytalye ...He ... brought me into his gallerrey, keping the key therof Hym self ... An in the gallerrey of S' James the like wold be wel made, for it is bothe highe and large. Yf your pleasure be to have the paterne of this here, I knowe right wel the Frenche King woll gladly geve it me.* As cited in McAllister Johnson, 'On some neglected Usages', p. 53.

of the Renaissance considered the Egyptian priesthood capable of interpreting hieroglyphic symbols. By this means their special religious status and political power were increased – they became, to some extent, priest kings.⁵⁶ Knowledge is power and the exclusive keeping of meaning is an exercise in power. In the last picture in the Gallery, the so-called *Ignorance chassée*, we see Francis as a Roman Emperor entering the Capitoline Temple of Jupiter (fig. 13). He alone has access to the Arcana Imperii, because he is master of the meaning of Mannerist encoding. He holds a sword aloft as a symbol of sovereignty, whilst carrying in his other hand a book, which perhaps holds the key to meaning. The viewer, however, remains in the company of the blind ignoramuses in the foreground, who like him have sought to decipher the symbols without success and who now can only reach out their hands impotently and pleadingly to their Emperor and *Pontifex maximus*.

⁵⁶ Caesars of Antiquity also held the title of *Pontifex maximus*, something which is particularly evident in the Augustan ideal of a political and religious restoration of the state. See Joukovsky, *A travers la galerie*, p. 33.



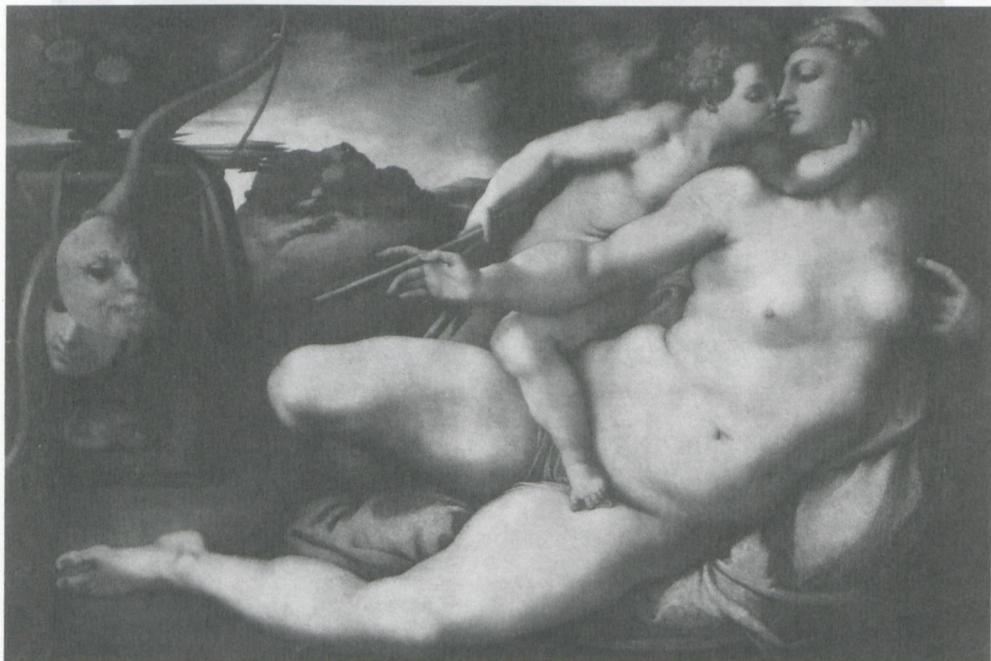
François en guerre est vn Mars fureux
En paix minerve & diane a la chaste
Abien parler mercure copieux
Abien aymer vray Amour plein de grace
O France heureuse honore donc la face
De ton grand Roy qui surpasse Nature
Car honorant tu sers en meisme place
Minerve Mars Diane Amour. mercure

1. Niccolò Belin da Modena, *François I^{er} en Minerve et Mars*, c. 1532/37, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale: Cabinet des Estampes. Photo: Bildarchiv des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Bonn.



2. Agnolo Bronzino, 'Allegory', c. 1545, London, National Gallery. Photo: Bildarchiv des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Bonn.

4. Raphael and Giulio Romano, *Holy Family of St. George I*, 1511, Paris, Louvre.
Photo: Bildarchiv des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Bonn.

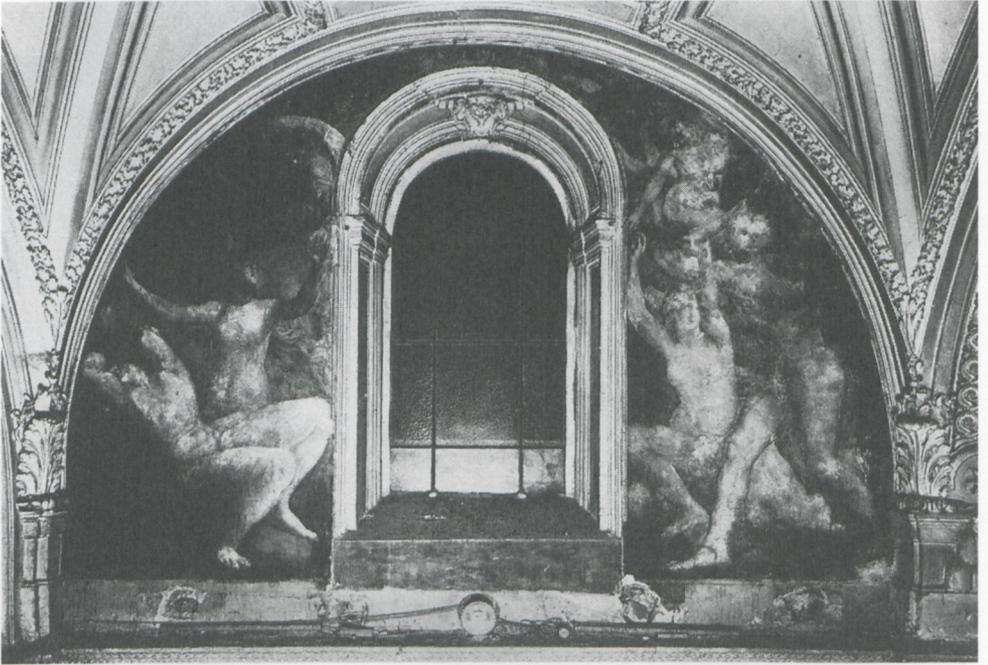


3. Jacopo da Pontormo (after Michelangelo), *Venus and Cupid*, 1532, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi. Photo: Bildarchiv des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Bonn.

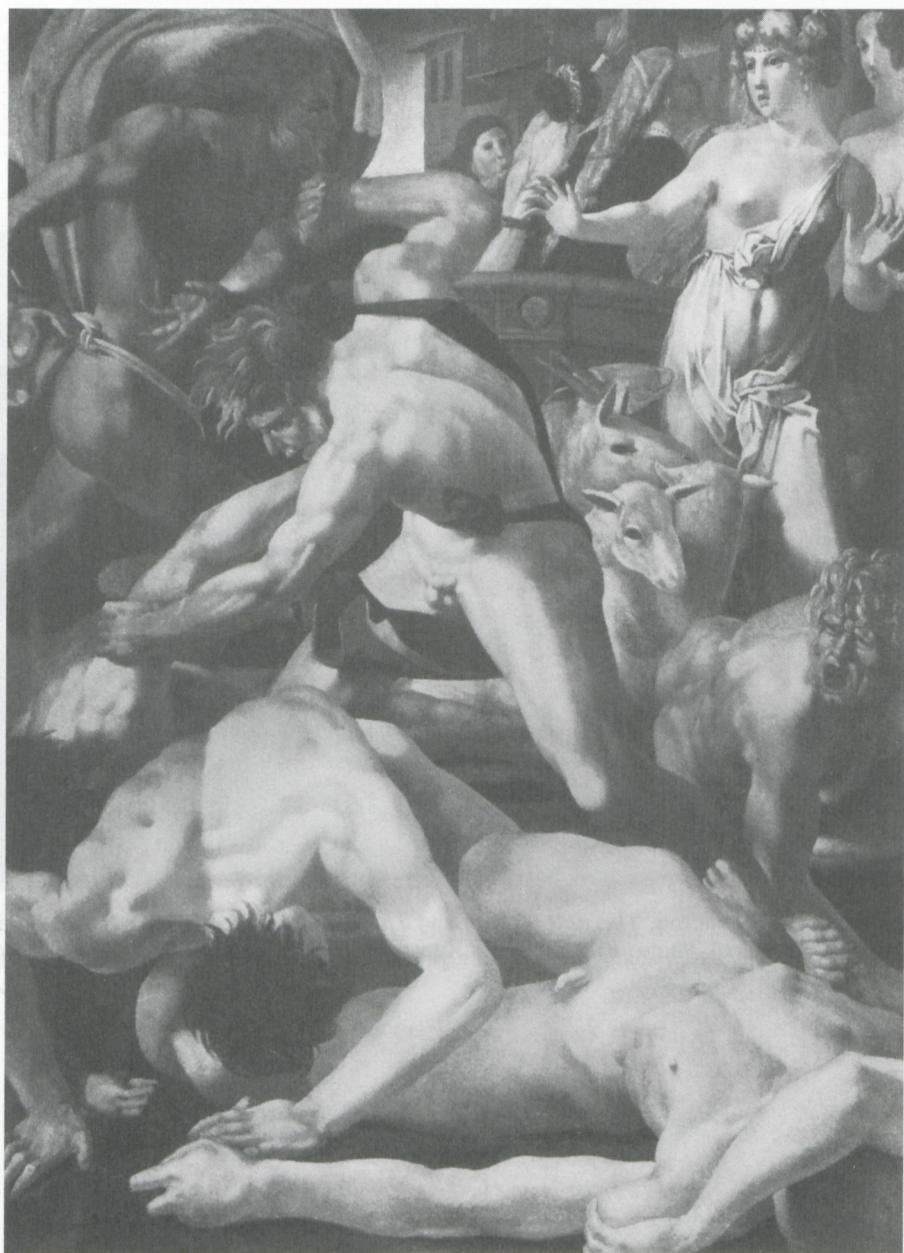
1. Niccolò Beato da Modena, *François I en Minerve et Mars*,
c. 1532/37, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Cabinet des Estampes.
Photo: Bildarchiv des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität
Bonn.



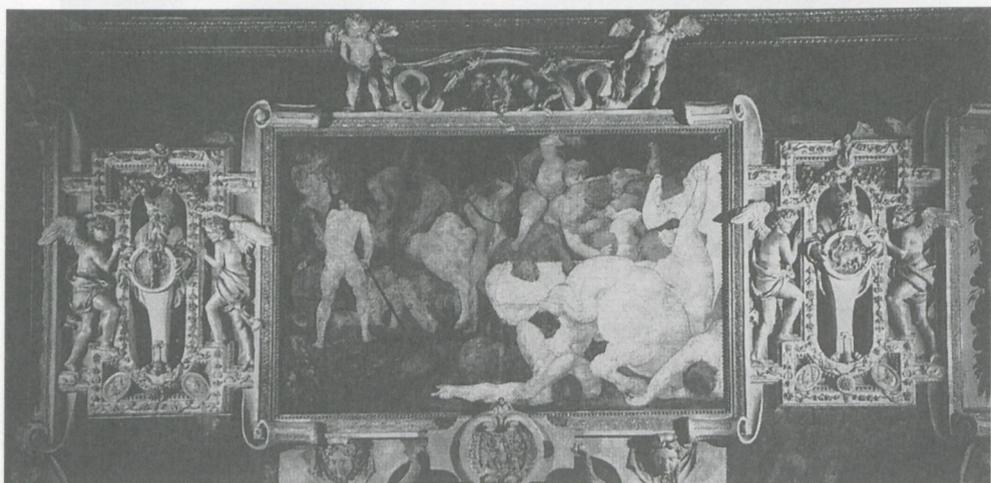
4. Raphael and Giulio Romano, *Holy Family of Francis I*, 1518, Paris, Louvre.
Photo: Bildarchiv des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Bonn.



5. Rosso Fiorentino, *The Creation of Eve and The Fall of Man*, 1524, Rome, S. Maria della Pace: Cesi Chapel. Photo: Bildarchiv des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Bonn.

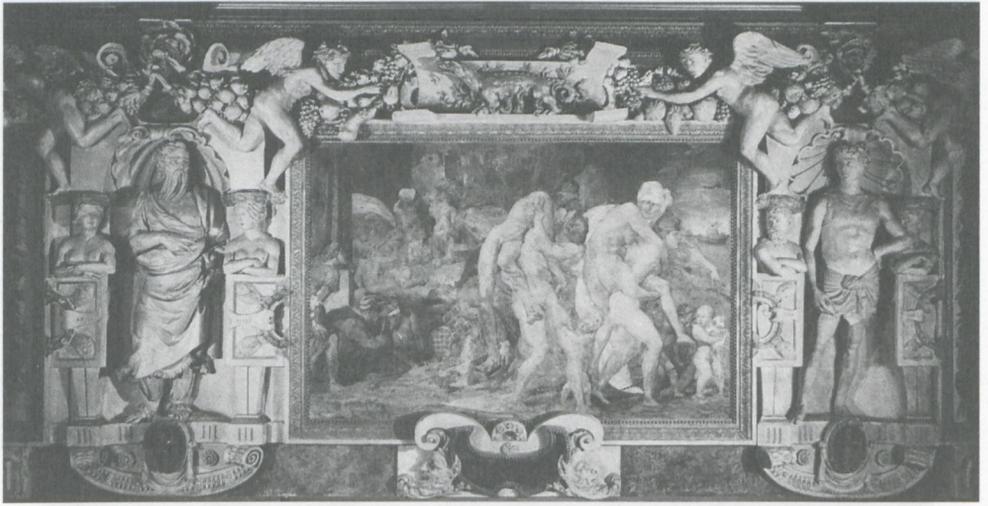


7. Rosso Fiorentino, *Moses defending the daughters of Jethro*, 1523, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi. Photo: Bildarchiv des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Bonn.



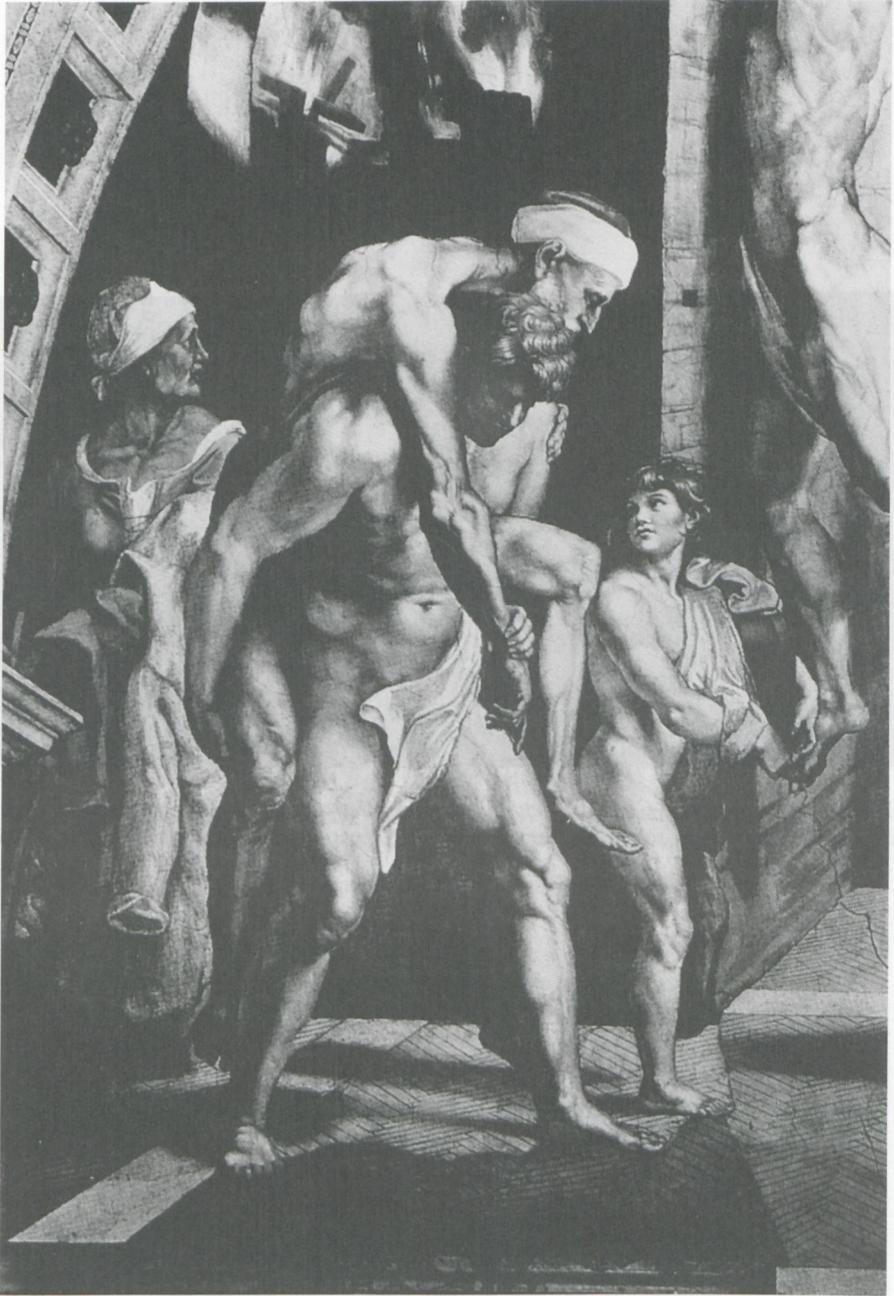
8. Rosso Fiorentino, *Le Combat des Centaures et des Lapithes*, c. 1534/39, Fontainebleau: Grande Galerie. Photo: Bildarchiv des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Bonn.

10. Raphael, *L'Incendio del Borgo*, detail: *Arconte e il suo figlio*, 1514, Roma, Vatican Palace, Stanza dell'Incendio. Photo: Bildarchiv des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Bonn.

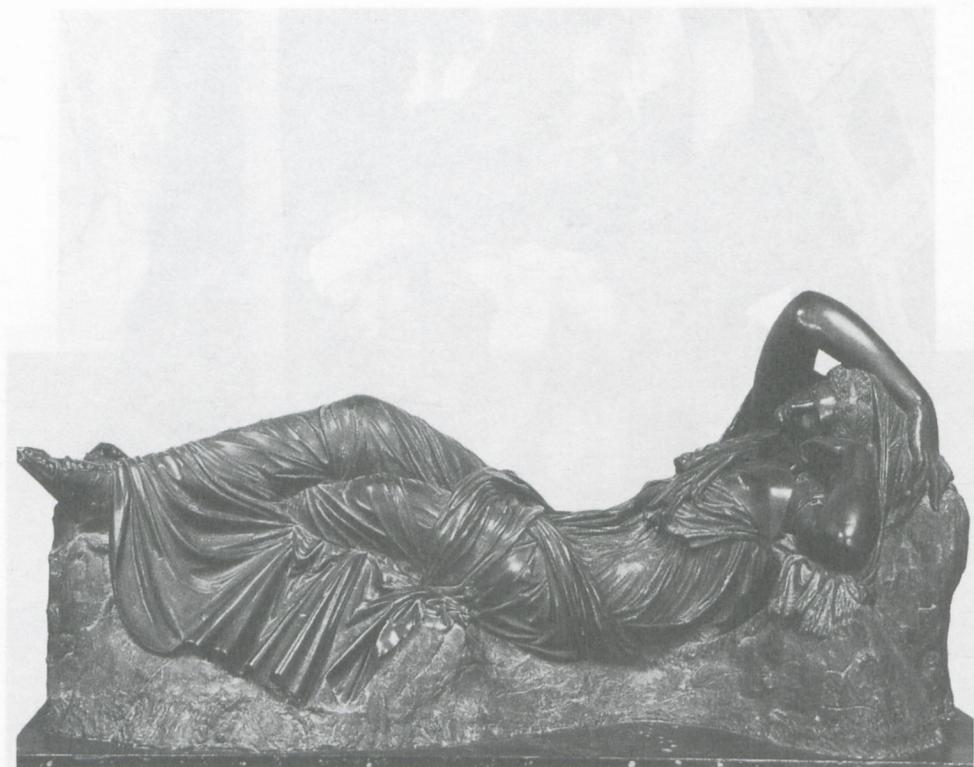


9. Rosso Fiorentino, *La Piété filiale*, c. 1534/39, Fontainebleau: Grande Galerie. Photo: Bildarchiv des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Bonn.

7. Rosso Fiorentino, *Moses defending the daughters of Jethro*, 1523, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi. Photo: Bildarchiv des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Bonn.



10. Raphael, *L'Incendio del Borgo*, detail: *Aeneas and Anchises*, 1514, Rome, Vatican Palace: Stanza dell'Incendio. Photo: Bildarchiv des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Bonn.

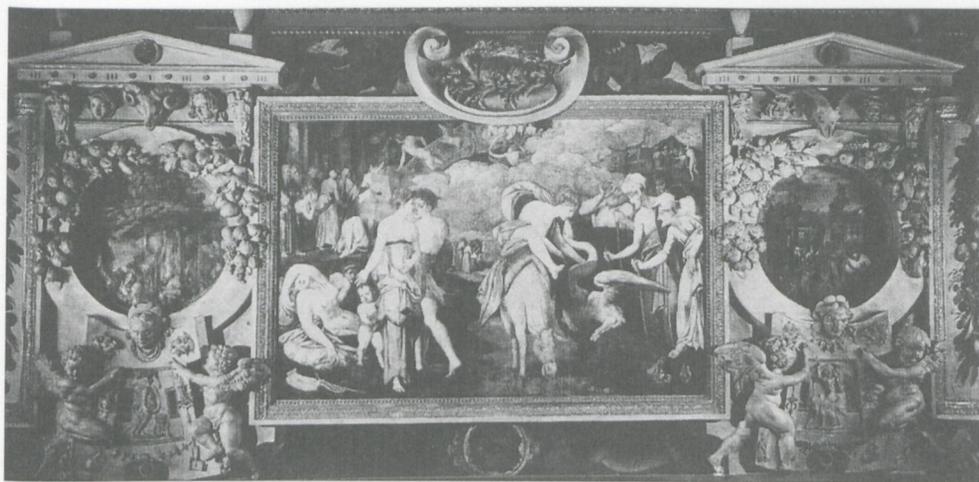


11. Francesco Primaticcio, *Cast of Sleeping Ariadne (Cleopatra)*, 1543, Fontainebleau: Galerie de la Diane. Photo: Bildarchiv des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Bonn.

HISTORY PAINTING AT THE FARNESE COURT

GIORGIO VASARI, FRANCESCO SALVIATI AND TADDEO ZUCCARO

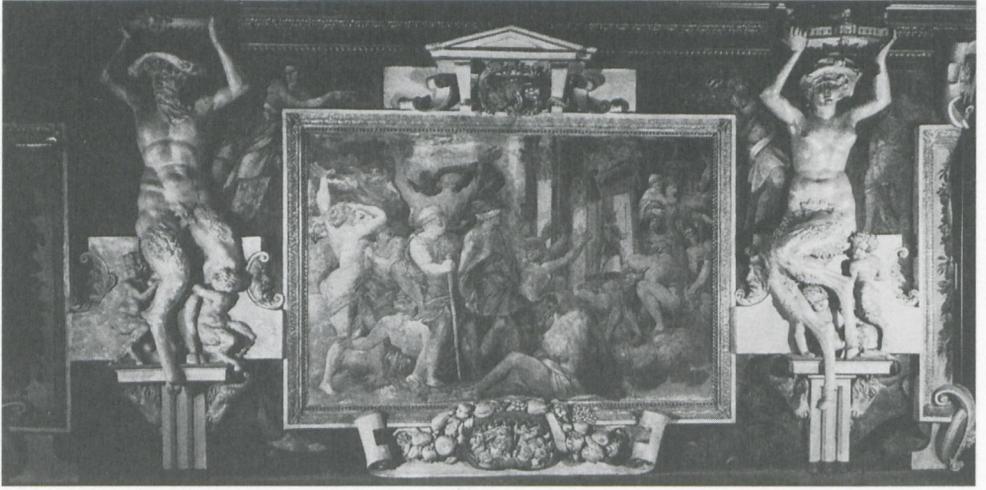
Jan L. de Jong



12. Rosso Fiorentino, *La Jeunesse Perdue*, c. 1534/39, Fontainebleau: Grande Galerie. Photo: Bildarchiv des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Bonn.

paintings by their master – in particular from his paintings in the Vatican sense – and they thus created pictures that seem more Raphaelesque than Raphael's own works. The picture of *The Denunciation of Constantine* (fig. 3), for example, shows on both sides people clinging to a column in order to obtain a better view of what is happening. This motif already occurred before Raphael, but he was the first to use it on an extended scale. The same is true for the motif of mothers, children and other people in the foreground, who are pointing out to each other what is going on. These 'common' people are contrasted with the protagonists of the story in order to bring out the solemnity and importance of the historic event. Again the origins are to be found in the work of Raphael. Other similar motifs include portraits of well-

¹ The most extensive information on the Sala di Costantino and its decoration is in Quenou, *Sala di Costantino*, who discusses the skill of emphasis in the subject matter on p. 386ff. and p. 487ff. See also Hall, *After Raphael*, pp. 42–48.



13. Rosso Fiorentino, *L'Ignorance chassée*, c. 1534/39, Fontainebleau: Grande Galerie. Photo: Bildarchiv des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Bonn.