

Luxury and Loyalty:
Anne de Montmorency as Patron of the Arts

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Abstract

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This project examines the art patronage of sixteenth-century French aristocrat Anne de Montmorency. Credited as being a great diplomat, statesman, political advisor, and military leader, this aspect of his life has been neglected in the scholarship on the period. There is evidence, however, that his patronage was key in the development of what art historians today consider a distinctly French Renaissance style. This study provides a comprehensive view of one of the most influential art patrons of the late Renaissance. Chapter one addresses architecture, Chapter two sculpture, Chapter three painting, and Chapter four decorative arts media.

Current scholarship on developments in the arts of the sixteenth century focuses on Italy's influence on the rest of Europe and the New World. While this influence was significant, Montmorency's patronage also reveals a desire to maintain continuity with local French traditions. Montmorency serves as a case study in understanding the process by which powerful figures utilized the visual arts to express their identity and affirm their power in the Early Modern Era.

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List of Abbreviations

- CF:** Sylvie Béguin. *Cheminées et frises peintes du château d'Écouen*. Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1995.
- CR:** François Gebelin. *Les châteaux de la renaissance*. Paris: Les Beaux-Arts, éditions d'études et de documents, 1927.
- EF:** Sylvie Béguin. *L'école de Fontainebleau*. Paris: Éditions de Musées nationaux, 1972.
- FP:** Louis Dimier. *French Painting in the Sixteenth Century*, Harold Child, trans. New York: Arno Press, 1969.
- JG:** Pierre du Colombier. *Jean Goujon*. Paris: Michel, 1949.
- OT:** Thierry Crépin-Leblond. *Une orfèvrerie de terre: Bernard Palissy et la céramique de Saint-Porchaire*. Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1997.
- RA:** David Thomson. *Renaissance Architecture: Critics, Patrons, Luxury*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993.
- RC:** Robert J. Knecht. *The French Renaissance Court, 1483-1589*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008.
- RP:** David Thomson. *Renaissance Paris, Architecture and Growth 1475-1600*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

Introduction

In January of 1493, Christopher Columbus returned from his first voyage to the New World. The age of global exploration was dawning and within a generation, Europeans' conception of their place in the universe would be radically altered. As the world expanded, the nations of Europe experienced a kind of identity crisis. Paralleling the desire among European leaders to possess and colonize newly discovered territories was an inverse reaction to turn inward and embark on a journey of self-discovery. While these leaders began to assert their control over far-flung regions, many of them also initiated campaigns closer to home intended to consolidate their power and to formulate a distinct identity. Doing so allowed them a degree of control over their own position, or perhaps more importantly, the appearance of control.

In March of the same year, Anne de Montmorency, future Constable of France, was born. He would become a pivotal figure in the process in France of identity crafting, shaping his own image and that of the nation at the same time. For him, the visual arts were a key component in expressing his ideology. By deploying the creative dexterity of artists, he designed his own persona. Refracted through these artistic creations, Montmorency presented a condensed, focused version of himself to the world. This kind of display clarified his role in the social hierarchy and made it seem palpable and solid despite the shifting politics and geography of the era. It also allowed him to externalize his beliefs and values in a way that was aesthetically pleasurable and therefore a potent means of manipulation. This was certainly not the first time the arts had been used propagandistically; indeed, Montmorency was well aware of the extent to which past empires had succeeded in part by presenting an image of success.

As Montmorency was in a position of great influence, he was able to shape national ideals and tastes around his own. His personal ideology became that of France in general, and

the identity he crafted became a template for an emerging national identity. French national identity did not appear fully formed in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries; starting in the Early Modern era,¹ it was carefully crafted by influential individuals including the constable whose personal ambitions had far-reaching effects. Thus, an analysis of Montmorency's art patronage can shed light on how the process of nation-building unfolded.

Montmorency makes a useful case study for an investigation into concepts of cultural transmission and identity-formation in the Early Modern era. He is also of art-historical importance for the role he played in developing a national artistic style in France. While it is a well-established fact that Montmorency was greatly influential in the realm of government, he also had a great impact on French artistic developments that has yet to be addressed. The style that he cultivated was imitated by others, and several of the artists he employed would go on to have successful careers, some of them working for the Crown. He certainly helped set France on the path of becoming one of the greatest artistic capitals of the western world. Of course, Montmorency is but one example of the numerous notable art patrons of sixteenth-century France. This study will reveal the ways in which he was part of a broad movement in which his contemporaries participated, and also how he was able to make a mark that reflected his own unique character.

The present study focuses on the constable's art patronage in an effort to reveal more fully the details of this aspect of his life and of the impact he had on French artistic and cultural developments. Approaching the artworks through the methodology of patronage studies provides a context and framework that will clarify relationships among them, and illuminate how

¹ For the purposes of this study, the term Early Modern will be used to refer to the period following the Middle Ages, starting in the mid fifteenth century and spanning the sixteenth century.

art objects were used by prominent figures to affirm their own power and that of the nation.² Particularly influential in this area is the study by Janet Cox-Rearick on the art patronage of François I, king of France and Montmorency's close friend from boyhood.³ General biographies, most notably that by Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, provide excellent resources for information concerning Montmorency's life as diplomat, statesman, and military leader.⁴ By addressing his art patronage, however, we gain a clearer picture of how he defined his role within society, articulated his power, and manipulated public opinion. More broadly, this kind of approach allows us to envision how the French aristocracy attempted to create an image of cohesive, unified authority in response to the rise in power of their rivals including Spain the Holy Roman Empire. Seen this way, what begins as a tool for self-promotion coalesces into a kind of national consciousness expressed through specific signs and modes.

Montmorency's contribution to sixteenth-century French artistic developments has been largely neglected in art-historical literature on the period.⁵ This is due in part to the fact that his

² While this study can be considered one of patronage, it will examine works that Montmorency commissioned directly as well as ones that entered his collection through other means, such as objects given as gifts. All can be considered part of the environments that Montmorency curated very carefully, and that he used to express his ideology. For more on patronage and collecting, see Joseph Alsop, *The Rare Art Traditions: The History of Art Collecting and Its Linked Phenomena Wherever These Have Appeared* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982).

³ Janet Cox-Rearick, *The Collection of Francis I, Royal Treasures* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996).

⁴ Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, *Anne de Montmorency, seigneur de la Renaissance* (Paris: Editions Publisud, 1990). See also Thierry Rentet, *Anne de Montmorency, grand maître de François Ier* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2011); Albert Willox, *Anne de Montmorency, connétable de France* (Paris: Pensée universelle, 1995); Marc Blancpain, *Anne de Montmorency, le "tout-puissant"* (Paris: Tallandier, 1988); G. Ganier, *La politique du connétable Anne de Montmorency, 1547-1559* (Le Havre: M. Étaix, 1957); Francis DeCrue de Stoutz, *Anne de Montmorency, grand maître et connétable de France, à la cour, aux armées, et au conseil du roi François Ier* (Paris: E Plon, Nourrit et cie, 1884).

⁵ Two notable exceptions are Sylvie Béguin, *Cheminées et frises peintes du Château d'Écouen* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux: Musée national de la Renaissance, 1995) which focuses on the painted decoration of one of Montmorency's châteaux (hereafter cited as CF); and Musée

patronage does not conform to notions about the central role of Italian style in Renaissance art. The idea that French Renaissance style was wholly dependent on Italian influence stems from the fact that early canonical texts on the period focused on Italy; these studies became models for later scholarship.⁶ Contemporary texts on French Renaissance art frequently open with discussions of the important and complicated relationship between Italy and France during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁷ These historiographical realities make it difficult to deal with the French Renaissance on its own terms, or at least in a way that allows for deviations from Italian models. Unlike many of his contemporaries (King François I, in particular), Montmorency did not express an uncritical love of classical Italian style. Rather, he used it as a foundation on which to build an art with a native French character. To achieve this, he employed mostly French artists. These artists were often well acquainted with Italian stylistic vocabulary (some of them having traveled across the Alps), but took great license with classical rules in a way that suggests a desire to assert control over foreign influence and to appropriate artistic traditions for their own purposes. There is an implicit self-awareness in the actions of Montmorency and his artists that has gone uninvestigated. Similar developments in sixteenth-century French literature have been the subject of scholarly analysis;⁸ any discussion of the visual arts in France during this period must take into account the fact that deviations from

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Anne de Montmorency, un homme de la renaissance* (exh. cat., Montmorency: Musée de Montmorency, 1993), which focuses on a number of objects associated with the Constable.

⁶ The earliest example of this phenomenon is Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori* (Gaetano Milanesi, ed. Firenze: G.C. Sansoni, 1981); and in the nineteenth century, Jakob Burckhardt, *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1989).

⁷ See Anthony Blunt, *Art and Architecture in France, 1500-1700* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999) and Henri Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France: The Invention of Classicism* (Paris: Flammarion, 2003).

⁸ See Margaret McGowan, *The Vision of Rome in Late Renaissance France* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 187-246.

classical standards were frequently deliberate. Like some of Michel de Montaigne's writings, what appears on the surface to be a fragmented pastiche is in fact the controlled evolving of a new aesthetic, the embedding of old texts within the new with the goal of adapting an older style for a new context.⁹ If one examines French artworks using standards developed to approach Italian works, the French products seem to be lacking. In order fully to comprehend French artworks, an understanding of the milieu in which French artists worked, and of the individuals who employed them, is necessary. The notion that France was a passive, provincial recipient of Italian style is outdated.¹⁰ Montmorency's and other French courtiers' reception of Italian modes was an active process. They did not import Italian style *in toto* but also made use of native traditions and were further influenced by courts beyond Italy. The result is documentation in visual media of the shift from pan-European medieval culture with the Catholic Church as the dominant institution, to individual nations with distinct identities, ideals, and political ambitions.

As alluded to above, much of the literature on Montmorency from the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries concentrates on his political and military career. These studies are invaluable for their contribution to understanding the important role he played at the court of France. They provide an overview of his life and career, and tell us much about his political orientation. They also allow a glimpse into his psychology and opinions of him held by contemporaries. In art-historical texts, Montmorency makes brief appearances in works (including exhibition catalogs) that focus on sixteenth-century artistic developments and patronage.¹¹

⁹ See Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays of Michel de Montaigne*, Donald M. Frame, trans. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976).

¹⁰ See the introduction to Zerner's text.

¹¹ Most notably, Janet Cox-Rearick's text (see fn. 1); see also the Musée Jean-Jacques Rousseau exhibition catalog (fn. 5).

The present study is indebted to the work of these scholars, as well as to those who have worked to publish primary source material including inventories and letters written by or to the constable.¹² Also informing this study is the work of material culture specialists including David Kingery and Mihaly Csikszentmihaly, who have demonstrated how artifacts and objects, like written texts, can be used as historical documents to reveal information about a given culture.¹³ The concept of identity formation and self-fashioning in the Early Modern period is central to this study and has been addressed by Stephen Greenblatt, who sees the process of constructing one's identity and public persona as conforming to sets of socially accepted standards and bound to aesthetic media.¹⁴ The identity that Anne de Montmorency presents by way of visual media represents the kind of well-dressed, well-read, able-bodied ideal that Greenblatt identifies for noblemen during the Renaissance.¹⁵ The present study also contributes to a broader discourse on the concept of the origin of nationalism throughout history; on this topic I have been influenced by the work of Benedict Anderson.¹⁶ I have taken inspiration, especially in Chapter 4, from scholars such as Jacqueline Marie Musacchio who have focused on the importance of decorative-

¹² There is a relative dearth of sources documenting Montmorency's motivations as an art patron. This study will rely on the limited primary source material that survives, on known biographical information, and on the objects themselves as sources of information that indicate Montmorency's intentions.

¹³ See David Kingery, *Learning from Things: Method and Theory in Material Culture Studies* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996); and David Kingery, *History from Things: Essays on Material Culture* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993).

Csikszentmihaly's essay, "Why We Need Things" is published in Kingery's 1993 text, 20-29.

¹⁴ See Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

¹⁵ The standards of comportment for noblemen described by Greenblatt corresponds to those laid out by Baldassare Castiglione's *Il libro del cortegiano*, published in 1528.

¹⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

arts media in the Early Modern period.¹⁷ The principle contribution of this study lies in the fact that it will be the first comprehensive survey of Montmorency's art patronage; it is also the first English-language study on this prominent historical figure, making the topic accessible to a wider audience.¹⁸

In order to have a fruitful discussion of the works Montmorency commissioned, we must have a clear picture of his life and his place in French society. What follows is a brief account of this information, intended to bring our protagonist to life and to situate his activities within the broader cultural developments of his time.¹⁹

Montmorency was born on 15 March 1493 at Chantilly and named after his godmother, Anne de Bretagne. He was descended from an illustrious family whose lineage could be traced back to the Middle Ages.²⁰ There had been many notables in his family; they boasted four admirals, six marshals, seven constables, as well as numerous barons and dukes. They owned extensive properties, controlled numerous fiefdoms and were one of the most powerful families in all of France. Montmorency's father Guillaume was the seigniorial lord of Écouen, Chantilly, Damville, and Dammartin. He served as *écuyer* to Kings Charles VIII and Louis XII, making him one of the highest-ranking figures at court. He also accompanied Charles VIII on his first military campaign in Italy. The interaction between France and Italy that this ongoing campaign caused was to have a profound effect on the cultural developments of the next generation;

¹⁷ See Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999).

¹⁸ One short article on Montmorency in English exists. See Glenn Richardson, "Anne de Montmorency: Great Master, Great Survivor," *History Today* 52, no. 9 (2002): 47-53.

¹⁹ For this information I have relied primarily on Bedos-Rezak's biography, as well as on Robert Knecht, *The French Renaissance Court* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008, hereafter cited as RC).

²⁰ See André Duchesne, *Histoire genealogique de la maison de Montmorency et de Laval* (Paris: S. Cramoisy, 1623).

soldiers returned to France deeply influenced by Italian customs and with first-hand experience of classical artistic modes. Guillaume was married to Anne de Pot, daughter of Philippe Pot, seigneur of Rochepot and Marie de Villiers de L'Isle d'Adam. Anne de Montmorency was the second son of Guillaume and Anne de Pot and stood to inherit his mother's properties. He was thus born into a position of extreme privilege and luxury, the product and embodiment of local tradition, and would spend much of his adult life defending the way of life of his forefathers.

Along with the prestige of the family name, Montmorency inherited certain traits and interests from his father. For example, Guillaume had an enthusiasm for literature that manifested in his collection of books including French translations of Erasmus and Appian.²¹ Although his library was not of profound importance, it was sufficient to familiarize his son with a certain dimension of culture at a young age. Guillaume, then, initiated his son into a cultivated world of knowledge that was only accessible at the time to an elite, rarified group of individuals. Whether it was his father's intention or not, Montmorency was primed to become the sort of enlightened leader that would become of such importance in subsequent generations.

At the age of ten, Montmorency was sent to live at the château of Amboise in the household of Louise de Savoie, mother of the future King François I.²² Guillaume surely felt that the rustic, remote setting of the family seat at Chantilly was an environment insufficient to fully prepare his son for an inevitable career in the service of the Crown. This was a pivotal period in Montmorency's life. Not only was he introduced to court culture, but he was also raised alongside the future king, and developed a close relationship with him that was to endure for most of their lives. This friendship was the source of much of Montmorency's power, as the

²¹ Bedos-Rezak, 22.

²² Willox, 22.

king always trusted him as one of his closest advisors; already as a child he was building important alliances that would help him to shape and control France's future.

Another youth similarly raised at Amboise during the same years, Robert III de la Marck Fleurange, left a biographical account of his years spent there that reveals much about the interests and activities of the coterie.²³ He paints a picture of a group of boisterous, athletic boys playing competitive games and learning to ride, handle weapons, and hunt. Montmorency's lifelong reputation for being physically hearty and vigorous was surely shaped by these experiences. The boys also cultivated their minds by learning to recite battle narratives and by reading ancient literature. These pursuits prepared Montmorency well for a life spent alternately on the battlefield and in negotiations with powerful leaders from the various courts of Europe.

In 1510, at the age of seventeen, Montmorency left Amboise to join the army.²⁴ He embarked on his military career by participating in the Italian campaign initiated by his father's generation. He fought in the battle of Ravenna in 1512 and returned to France the following year. In 1515 Montmorency distinguished himself on the battlefield at Marignano; his courage and cunning at this battle earned him a reputation for being a great military leader. It was well timed, too, for it was in the same year that François I ascended to the throne upon his father's death. Montmorency's youthful cohort was now in a position to bestow great favors on his associates. One of the first benefits he granted Montmorency was to make him Captain of the Bastille St. Denis. In 1520 François named him the *premier gentilhomme de la chambre*, a position tasked with the day-to-day running of the king's bedchamber. He would have been

²³ Robert III de la Marck Fleurange, *Mémoires du maréchal de Florange, dit le jeune aventureux* (Paris: Société de l'Histoire de France, 1913).

²⁴ Bedos-Rezak, 23.

present at the king's *lever* and *coucher* and a constant companion to the monarch. This granted him unequaled personal access to the king and a level of intimacy enjoyed by very few.

The year 1516 marked the death of Montmorency's older brother. Anne was now the primary heir to the family name. Although he was only twenty-three years old, Montmorency had already begun to accrete great advantages. He had forged important social alliances, experienced military success, and now stood to inherit wealth so vast that he possessed an immeasurable amount of power.

In 1518 Montmorency was taken hostage in England for François's debt to Henry VIII of England for the city of Tournai. He returned to France to participate in a conference with the Holy Roman Empire with the goal of negotiating peace. While the summit was not wholly successful, Montmorency was honing his skills as a diplomat.

Montmorency's induction into the world of diplomacy began in earnest in June of 1520 when he was present at the Field of Cloth of Gold, a meeting arranged to strengthen the bond of friendship between François I and Henry VIII of England following the Anglo-French treaty of 1514.²⁵ Held near Calais, this event gave each monarch the opportunity to flaunt his clout. There were elaborate tents and other ephemeral structures, jousts, music, and an opulent parade of courtiers in dazzling costumes. Montmorency must have come away with a deep understanding of the importance of pomp and display in projecting one's power and in negotiating one's position.

Throughout the course of his life, Montmorency would be involved in many diplomatic negotiations. In 1521 was sent on his first diplomatic mission in Switzerland; the following year he was similarly occupied in Venice. When he and the king were taken captive by the Spanish

²⁵ RC, 124-31.

after the disastrous battle at Pavia, he was released relatively quickly to negotiate terms for the release of François.²⁶ For this he was rewarded with one of the highest posts in the French court, that of *grand maître*, the responsibilities of which included supervising the royal household and keeping the keys to the royal residence.²⁷ The position was mostly ceremonial by Montmorency's time, but his role at official court functions gave him a level of visibility that would have made his authority more tangible. He held the position for over thirty years.

Not all of Montmorency's diplomatic endeavors were so successful. In 1538 he began to advocate for peace between France and the Holy Roman Empire, against prevailing attitudes at the court of France.²⁸ He renewed negotiations with Emperor Charles V and invited Pope Paul II to assist in creating a settlement between the two powers. At a meeting between François I and Charles V at Aigues-Mortes in July of the same year, Montmorency brokered a deal that stipulated the emperor would grant Milan to one of François's sons as a sign of alliance. This was seen as great victory for France, but the celebration was short-lived. In the end, Charles reneged and gave Milan to his son Philip. As a result of this diplomatic failure, Montmorency fell out of royal favor and was banished from court until François's death in 1547.²⁹ He maintained a close relationship with the king's son Henri during the period of his disgrace, and subsequently returned to court upon Henri's ascension to the throne.³⁰ During the reign of Henri II, Montmorency would once again be called upon for his diplomatic expertise; for example, he negotiated the treaty for the surrender of Boulogne in 1550. As a reward Henri made him a duke and peer of France. After Henri II's premature death following a joust in 1559, Montmorency

²⁶ Ibid., 11-13.

²⁷ Ibid., 38-9.

²⁸ Ibid., 16.

²⁹ Blancpain, 94-112.

³⁰ RC, 18.

would remain a close ally and confidante to Catherine de' Medici during the period of her regency.

Montmorency experienced similar vicissitudes in his military career. After achieving success at a young age, he was entrusted with leading troops in a number of battles. In August 1521 he helped command the defense of Mézières against the Duke of Nassau, who was allied with the Imperial army. His troops were defeated at the Battle of La Bicocca in April 1522, but he was made Marshal of France in recognition of his efforts.³¹ This title was a military distinction reserved for generals of exceptional achievements.

When François invaded the Duchy of Savoy in 1536 (against the advice of Montmorency) to pressure Charles V to return Milan to him, the emperor retaliated by invading Provence from northern Italy.³² François strategically appointed Montmorency as governor of Languedoc, the lieutenant general of the southeast of France. Together they led the defense of Provence using scorched-earth tactics. By autumn, Charles was forced to retreat his army to Genoa and to lift the siege of Marseille.

Montmorency also led the French troops in 1537 when they attacked Artois and captured many towns before the ten-year truce. The following year, in February 1538, François made Montmorency Constable of France.³³ The constable was commander-in-chief of the army and as lieutenant general of the king outranked all the nobles. He was second in command only to the monarch. One of the honors of this office was to walk ahead of the king in processions bearing an unsheathed sword.³⁴ After this point, an image of a nude sword was incorporated into Montmorency's personal devices and emblazoned on his property. By virtue of the fact that he

³¹ Richardson, 49.

³² Ibid., 49; RC, 15.

³³ RC, 15.

³⁴ See Aude Bertrand, *Un château à Écouen* (Écouen: Mairie, 1974), 42.

was both *grand maître* and constable, Montmorency virtually ran the government of France until he was exiled from court in 1541.

Near the end of his life religious strife divided the country, triggering the Wars of Religion. Montmorency remained a devoted Catholic and supported efforts to stem the spread of Protestantism. In April 1561 he formed an alliance with François, Duke of Guise and Jacques d'Albon to create the Triumvirate, an association for the defense of Catholicism.³⁵ The following year, Montmorency was captured at the Battle of Dreux. His soldiers eventually won the battle, but it was one of the bloodiest of the era. He helped negotiate the Treaty of Amboise in 1563, but within a few years the Huguenots began to agitate for a fairer settlement.

On 10 November 1567, at the age of 74, Montmorency led 16,000 troops from the royal army to victory at the Battle of St-Denis.³⁶ He was badly wounded in the fight and died shortly thereafter. For a lifelong soldier, this was an honorable death. He died defending his faith, loyal to the Catholic cause as well as to the Crown, to his last breath. Although his military pursuits were not always successful, he truly lived up to the ideal of the courageous and virtuous warrior that had been a central component of French culture since the medieval era.

Montmorency also possessed an enormous amount of power by virtue of his land holdings. He was certainly born into a position that guaranteed a certain amount of privilege, but over the course of his life, he continued to augment his influence by acquiring more properties through a combination of purchases, inheritances, gifts, and advantageous alliances. His marriage to Madeleine de Savoie (daughter of the king's uncle, René de Savoie) in 1527 came with ownership of Nogent, Valmondois, the county of Beaumont-sur-Oise, and the seigneurie of Compiègne. He also received the château of Fère-en-Tardenois as a gift from François I upon

³⁵ Ibid., 248.

³⁶ Richardson, 47.

this occasion. His Parisian hôtel in St-Avoye was also gift from the king, which he received in 1535. When he was created constable, he gained the seigneuries of Méru and Préaux. Other holdings that he acquired throughout his life included the seigneuries of St-Héliier, Chateaubriant, Macy, Mesnil-Aubry, and Chauffort, and the county of Dammartin.³⁷ All told he possessed over 600 fiefdoms and 100 châteaux,³⁸ although most of them he would rarely, if ever, visit. He was unceasing in his quest to enlarge his domain and he eventually became one of the wealthiest aristocrats in all of Europe. This seemingly insatiable appetite for wealth earned him the reputation among some of his contemporaries for being rapacious, avaricious, and greedy.³⁹

Indeed, the ultimate purpose of these holdings was to generate revenue. He was not motivated solely by naked greed, however, because his accumulation of properties was in many ways justifiable for his time. He realized that it was his capital resources as much as his personal virtue that earned him a position of real influence. Likewise, he understood that a seigneur could no longer base his authority on his family name alone without constantly reminding others of his capabilities and relevance. Erecting or enlarging spectacular châteaux and hôtels and expanding his terrestrial holdings created a kind of halo of glory around him that amplified the importance of his family.⁴⁰ He had to illustrate his power by a luxurious lifestyle worthy of the world to which he belonged.⁴¹ The more wealth he accumulated, the more undeniable his influence became. He would no longer need to jockey for position with other members of the nobility. Rather, he was able to bestow favors and create a loyal following that would defend his policies.

³⁷ For a discussion of Montmorency's acquisition of properties, see Bedos-Rezak, 25-35.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 25, 38; see also Willox, 7.

⁴⁰ Bedos-Rezak, 38.

⁴¹ RC, 25; Bedos-Rezak, 68.

With so many properties, Montmorency relied on a large staff of managers and concierges to maintain them. His household, much like that of the king, consisted of numerous valets, grooms, porters, physicians, cooks, carvers, laundresses, musicians, and other servants. Montmorency always surrounded himself with his extensive clientele, as well. He was known to travel accompanied by a retinue of 800 noblemen.⁴² All of this would only have added to the august aspect of his character.

Despite this luxurious lifestyle, Montmorency also had a reputation for being severe, sober, and conservative.⁴³ He adhered to strict religious observance, and shunned many of the sensuous, frivolous pursuits of the court. Due to his close relationship with the king, Montmorency benefited greatly from the monarch's largesse; but this was not motivated solely by avarice on Montmorency's part. He understood that the benefits were mutual, and that in exchange for gifts and favors from the king, he was obligated to remain loyal to his authority. The fact that Montmorency had his own large following would ensure that the king's authority was upheld among an extensive group of people. Montmorency took this role very seriously, unlike some of his contemporaries, whose primary interests were in the pleasures offered by a life at court. The constable would have been sympathetic with medieval and early Renaissance writers criticizing the debauched lifestyle of many courtiers. Eustache Deschamps, for example, condemned them for their profligacy and for their pleasure-seeking, irresponsible ways, and he lamented the loss of chivalry and honorable values and manners.⁴⁴ That Montmorency felt this way is borne out by the details of his life. There was very little scandal attached to his name other than his political or diplomatic complications. He seems not to have had a mistress; in all

⁴² Ibid., 51.

⁴³ Willox, 25-6; Bedos-Rezak, 70-4.

⁴⁴ RC, 60.

likelihood he did engage in various dalliances (to a certain extent this was accepted), but he was evidently very discrete. His wife was a perfect match for him. She, too, was reputed to be exceedingly modest and temperate. She even prohibited balls and parties at their residences.⁴⁵ In this way Montmorency was a perfect foil to François I, who was not exactly known for his moral rigidity or austere character, but rather as a lover of sensual pleasures.⁴⁶

This is the view of Montmorency that most biographers present—that of a grave, inflexible, and severe individual.⁴⁷ The image of him left to posterity is of a cheerless, gloomy figure surrounded by the hedonistic revelry of the court of France. There is also some evidence, however, that he was not completely austere and prudish. For example, Brantôme wrote that Montmorency made a charming dinner companion; at meals he was always laughing and ready with a *bon mot*.⁴⁸ Some of the artworks that Montmorency commissioned also suggest that he was not totally lacking in levity and wit. He even expressed an interest in sensuality and eroticism with such works as the cycle of stained-glass windows depicting *Cupid and Psyche* that he commissioned for his château at Écouen (Figs. 94-97).

To reduce Montmorency to the details of his political career or to render him as having a one-dimensional, intolerant temperament is to underestimate the complexity and importance of this compelling figure. Doubtless his reputation through the ages has been tarnished in part by the corruption and decline of the later Valois era and by the harshness of the Wars of Religion in which he participated. By looking at his patronage of the arts, we get a more complete, more

⁴⁵ Bedos-Rezak, 43.

⁴⁶ See Robert Knecht, *Francis I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Claude Dufresne, *François Ier, le chevalier de l'amour* (Paris: Belfond, 1999); and Willox, 26.

⁴⁷ See Pierre de Bourdeille, seigneur de Brantôme, *Oeuvres complètes du seigneur de Brantôme* vol 2 (Paris: Foucault, 1822), 371-381. Although Brantôme cannot be considered a historian proper, his memoirs, originally published in 1665 (50 years after his death) provide a colorful account of the illustrious men and women of the court of France during the sixteenth century.

⁴⁸ Brantôme, 415.

nuanced picture of his life and of the dynamic of the world in which he lived. We can also better understand how political machinations were but one method of wielding power in the Early Modern period.

Military strength, loyalty to the Crown, personal dignity, and Catholic devotion were important parts of Montmorency's own identity. He expressed those values in luxurious art objects, the style of which achieved a synthesis of classical and native French forms. What these works reveal is Montmorency's desire to allude to the Roman imperial past as a way to express his own militarism and grandeur (and that of France), while at the same time maintaining continuity with a past of which the French were proud. He was crafting an identity and using rich traditions in the visual arts to broadcast that identity in the hope that others would readily understand his ideals and rally around his policies. In an era when the concept of the "nation" began to appear for the first time in French literature, influential figures like Montmorency were using their positions to fashion a national identity. They, like the ancient Romans before them, knew that the visual arts were a subtle but powerful force in shaping public opinion.

The style that Montmorency helped generate was (like the constable himself) simultaneously conservative and innovative, deeply rooted in local tradition and imbued with classical influence. Montmorency and his contemporaries were appropriating ancient Roman style and accommodating it to their needs. Classicism, when used by French artists in wholly unprecedented ways and in concert with local forms, expressed the view that their own heritage, while linked in important ways to the Roman past, had escaped the grip of foreign domination. The style that he cultivated with his patronage, and that others imitated, was a conscious attempt to express an ideology of triumph and of the ultimate victory of France on a monumental scale.

Chapter 1: Architecture

Any discussion of sixteenth-century artistic developments in France necessarily includes mention of the proliferation of great châteaux.¹ More than painting or sculpture, these architectural masterpieces embody the French Renaissance. These large country residences began to appear throughout the kingdom, and their style and function differed greatly from the medieval *château-fort*. This new stylistic vocabulary, coupled with the way in which the buildings were utilized by their owners and by the court reveals much about French Renaissance artistic and cultural developments.

Anne de Montmorency was an active and influential patron of architecture. He built several châteaux in the countryside around Paris and hôtels in the capital city. He also donated funds for the construction and decoration of churches. This chapter will focus on Montmorency's residential architecture, since it most strongly reflects his own tastes and ambitions; it has also, for the most part, been altered less than the churches by subsequent generations. The religious architecture associated with him, most notably the Collegiate Church of St. Martin at Montmorency, is uniformly Gothic in style and poorly preserved,² showing no trace of the spirit of innovation found in Montmorency's private projects. Most of his châteaux had private chapels that offer an opportunity to discuss Montmorency's vision for religious architecture.

¹ See for instance Monique Chatenet, *La cour de France au XVIe siècle: Vie sociale et architecture* (Paris: Picard, 2002); Anthony Blunt, *Art and Architecture in France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Henri Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France: The Invention of Classicism* (Paris: Flammarion, 2003); Pierre Du Colombier, *L'art renaissance en France* (Paris: G. Le Prat, 1945); Sir Reginald Blomfield, *A History of French Architecture, from the Reign of Charles VIII to the Death of Mazarin* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1911), vol 1.

² For information on these churches, see Willox, 275-7, 288-90; and Aude Bertrand, *Un château à Écouen* (Écouen: Mairie, 1974): 62-6.

Although Paris was the capital city and home to most government buildings, the court of France was itinerant until the end of the century. Not until the reign of Henri III (1574-89) did the court permanently settle in Paris.³ François I in particular has been described as a compulsive traveler.⁴ The peregrinations of the court meant that the king and other courtiers relied on residences throughout the kingdom during their travels. One way for an individual or family to gain importance and visibility was to have a residence large and opulent enough to accommodate the peripatetic court. It could therefore be politically advantageous to build a château, and creating a lodging place for the king could be a pretext for building a château. Designing it according to current taste and stylistic trends demonstrated that the builder was cultivated, fashionable, and affluent. A château also provided a space in which to stage events, where the French elites could be an audience to the owners' ideological messages; these were often communicated through the use of decorative iconographical programs laden with political propaganda. So while these châteaux functioned to accommodate the court, they also reflected the ambitions and aspirations of the people who built them. Many of these ambitions were shared among the families erecting châteaux during the sixteenth century, and the buildings express the collective desires of the aristocracy to glorify themselves and to affirm their power. These families, including the Montmorency, made up the ruling class of the kingdom of France and their glory and power reflected that of the nation in general. With these châteaux, a network of power was made visible throughout the kingdom, and the king, lacking modern mass media, relied on an elaborate system of proxies to communicate his power even in far-flung regions.⁵

³ RC, 32.

⁴ Ibid., 41, cites a Venetian ambassador writing in 1535 who complained of traveling incessantly during the period of his embassy.

⁵ Rebecca Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold: Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 13.

Formerly disparate territories were being unified by common goals and ideals, and national allegiance was being forged. These are some of the conditions that would later make the emergence of absolutism and nationalism possible.⁶

The interests of the ruling class were communicated through the use of particular recurrent stylistic motifs, including classical architectural vocabulary, native medieval elements such as turrets, crenellations, moats, and steeply pitched roofs, and the incorporation of personal devices or emblems. This stylistic amalgamation allowed the owners to proclaim France as a kind of new Rome, but one that was also distinctly Gallic, and one in which they personally played an important role.

Heavy artillery had rendered many features of the medieval fortress obsolete, and so these new châteaux were typically pleasure houses rather than the intimidating strongholds of previous generations. As the function of these structures shifted, so did their design. Further spurring this stylistic transformation, the military campaigns in Italy during the first half of the sixteenth century, in which Montmorency was an important participant, exposed many Frenchmen to foreign building types. Most important in the context of château-building is the Italian villa. Soldiers and government officials traveling with the army saw firsthand evidence of a kind of rural lifestyle that had its roots in the classical past, as opposed to the medieval past.⁷ In this way, Italian villas served as a source of inspiration for French soldiers when they returned home.

Soon after the military campaigns in Italy, French translations of ancient Roman and Italian Renaissance architectural texts appeared. Examples include Jean Martin's translation of

⁶ Ibid., 16.

⁷ See James Ackerman, *The Villa: Form and Ideology in Country Houses* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

Vitruvius' *Ten Books on Architecture*, which was published in 1547 with engravings by Jean Goujon,⁸ and Alberti's *De re aedificatoria*, also translated into French by Martin in 1553.⁹ The publication of these texts suggests that French artists and patrons were interested in making Italian architectural forms and building techniques more accessible in France.

However, builders of châteaux did not simply imitate Italian designs. While residential architecture in France began to have a more regularized, classical appearance, certain medieval features were retained, as mentioned above. This resulted in a distinctive style that was a synthesis of Italian and Northern elements, an entanglement of medieval tradition and humanism, of Italian art and French spirit. These medieval features had lost their original defensive function, but they were preserved in some measure because they were part of a building tradition that was deeply entrenched in French culture. Sixteenth-century French craftsmen were still part of a long tradition that connected them to the past. Stonemasons such as Pierre Chambiges, who worked for Montmorency on a number of projects including the Hôtel de Ville in Paris, were not likely to alter their tradition or to capitulate in the face of foreign designs.¹⁰ These traditions were part of their cultural heritage and identity. Indigenous medieval features were also kept for aesthetic reasons—they were familiar, and prevented the structures from looking like foreign imports. Moreover, contact with foreign cultures may have prompted French craftsmen and

⁸ See Vitruvius, *Architecture ou arte de bien bastir de Marc Vitruve Pollion auteur romain antique: mis de latin en françoys par Ian Martin Secretaire de Monseigneur le Cardinal de Lenoncourt pour le roy treschristien Henry II* (Paris: Jacques Gazeau, 1547).

⁹ See Leon Battista Alberti, *L'architecture et l'art de bien bastir du Seigneur Leon Baptiste Albert, gentilhomme florentin, divisée en dix livres, traduits de latin en françois par Jan Martin* (Paris: J. Kerver, 1553).

¹⁰ Jean-Pierre Babelon, *Châteaux en France au siècle de la renaissance* (Paris: Flammarion, 1989), 314.

patrons to maintain and assert their own identity.¹¹ Such retention was crucial at a time when national identities were being formed, and the visual arts were being utilized to express these identities to the world.

While François I and numerous courtiers were building châteaux in the Loire Valley, Montmorency focused his energies on developing his properties in the Ile-de-France. This afforded him easy communication with Paris, but also allowed him to build on a scale that was not possible inside the city walls. Nowhere is Montmorency's art patronage more obvious than in these monumental building projects. A number of scholars have focused on these projects as Montmorency's primary contributions to the development of French Renaissance style.¹² In particular, Écouen and Chantilly serve as evidence of the growing taste for classical style; however, Montmorency owned numerous properties. He may have owned over 130 châteaux.¹³ He focused his energies and wealth on developing a few of these into modern, up-to-date residences that reflected his cultivated tastes, the prominence of his family, and the glory of the monarchy.

In this chapter I will discuss the châteaux at Écouen, Chantilly, and Fère-en-Tardenois. I will also briefly discuss Montmorency's Parisian hôtel in Sainte-Avoye. I have chosen to discuss these châteaux because they are the best preserved of Montmorency's many properties. Although some documentation exists for his châteaux at Offémont and L'Isle d'Adam, there is no remaining trace of these structures. Very little remains of the Parisian hôtel, but it deserves mention because it served as a major repository for Montmorency's art collection, and was the

¹¹ See Blunt, 3-4; David Thomson, *Renaissance Architecture: Critics, Patrons, Luxury* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 125-150 (hereafter cited as RA).

¹² Albert Willox, *Anne de Montmorency, connétable de France* (Paris: Pensée universelle, 1995), 263-90; Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, *Anne de Montmorency, "le tout puissant"* (Paris: Tallandier, 1988), 243-71.

¹³ Henri Malo, *Le château de Chantilly* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1938), 33.

site of an inventory conducted upon Montmorency's death. It also gives us the opportunity to see how sixteenth-century urban residences differed from rural ones.

English language scholars have been highly critical of much of the architecture commissioned by Montmorency. In particular, Sir Reginald Blomfeld, who wrote one of the most comprehensive studies in English of the history of French architecture, disparages the use of classical vocabulary at Écouen and Chantilly.¹⁴ William Ward and Anthony Blunt repeat some of Blomfeld's criticisms, but the latter is the only scholar to admit that some of what may appear to be "clumsy" usage of classicism is in fact an early form of French Mannerism.¹⁵ I tend to support Blunt's view of the constable's architectural commissions. Some of the artists he employed had studied in Italy and displayed a level of understanding of classicism that suggests their taking license with Vitruvian rules was done in a spirit of playfulness and self-consciousness often associated with Mannerist works. Perhaps our understanding of the châteaux has been colored by criticisms such as Blomfeld's; this could account for the fact that there is little discussion of Montmorency's residences in English texts on this period. French scholars, on the other hand, have noted the importance of these structures for the development of artistic styles in France. To neglect them is to overlook some of the finest (and in the case of Écouen, best preserved) examples of early modern aristocratic architecture in Northern Europe.

The Château at Écouen

The château at Écouen is a logical place to begin a discussion of the art patronage of Anne de Montmorency given that many scholars have noted its importance (Fig. 1). For example, Jean-Pierre Babelon called the château "the most coherent ensemble of the

¹⁴ Blomfeld, 97-8; 101.

¹⁵ William Ward, *The Architecture of the Renaissance in France*, 2nd ed. (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1976); Blunt, 89.

Renaissance.”¹⁶ Such coherence is largely due to the fact that it was built from the ground up in a relatively short amount of time. Écouen did not grow and expand irregularly over many decades, as was often the case with medieval residences, or with Renaissance structures whose forms were dictated by old foundations. Rather, it was conceived as a finite entity with a cohesive iconographical program. The historian Brigitte Rezak-Bedos noted in 1990 that the history of its construction can be used to trace the evolution of French Renaissance style,¹⁷ while François Gebelin called Montmorency’s château “le plus français de notre renaissance.”¹⁸ Because of the great masters who worked at Écouen, some of them at the start of their careers, the project can be conceived as a center of artistic thought and training, second only in sixteenth-century France to Fontainebleau.¹⁹ The following analysis will corroborate these statements. A thorough discussion of the château at Écouen will reveal the emergence of a distinct stylistic mode that reflected Montmorency’s ideals—ideals that ultimately helped shape national identity in France.

Montmorency inherited the property upon which his château would be built from his father and became seigneur of Écouen in 1522.²⁰ At that time there was a twelfth-century structure on the site. Since Anne de Montmorency was one of France’s highest-ranking nobility, however, a crumbling structure from a bygone era did not befit a man of his stature. Aristotelian notions of magnificence were current at the court of France; this included the idea that noblemen required an appropriately august and luxurious environment in which to live. While some critics

¹⁶ Babelon, 332.

¹⁷ Bedos-Rezak, 302-3. “Dans le domaine de l’histoire d’art, Écouen apporte une contribution originale; sa construction, faite par étapes, permet de mesurer sur un même bâtiment les évolutions de la Renaissance française.”

¹⁸ François Gebelin, *Les châteaux de la renaissance* (Paris: Les Beaux-arts, édition d’études et des documents, 1927), 91 (hereafter cited as CR).

¹⁹ Blomfeld, 94.

²⁰ Bertrand, 34.

decried the crown and nobility for their lavish spending, others defended them by referring to the concept found in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* that the magnificent man is capable of spending large sums gracefully, with no breach of decorum.²¹ Similar ideas circulated in Italy during the fifteenth century. In 1428 Florentine Poggio Bracciolini wrote a treatise titled *On Avarice and Luxury* that attacked attempts at virtue through frugality.²² Indeed, Montmorency would have justified his immoderate expenditure by arguing that his own identity was intimately linked to that of the monarchy, that his project at Écouen would benefit the entire kingdom by beautifying it, and that one's place in the social hierarchy must be affirmed and demonstrated in order to be legitimate.²³

The history of the construction of the château at Écouen remains controversial, and due to a lack of documentary evidence, it is impossible to trace precisely.²⁴ It is generally accepted that construction began about 1535, and continued into the 1540's, with a completion date of approximately 1550.²⁵ Some of the decorative motifs on the exterior of the château, to be discussed below, assist in the dating of particular portions of the building. The château, eleven miles north of Paris, is situated on an eminence of about 150 meters overlooking a broad plain to the north. It was an advantageous location: defensible because of its elevated, formidable

²¹ Zorach, 3. See also RC, 24-5.

²² See John W. Oppel, "Poggio, San Bernardino of Siena, and the Dialogue on Avarice," *Renaissance Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (Winter, 1977): 564-587.

²³ These notions were current generally in sixteenth-century France. See RA, 28-38. For parallel concepts in Renaissance Italy, see Richard Goldthwaite, *The Building of Renaissance Florence: A Social and Economic History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

²⁴ Bertrand, 51.

²⁵ Raoul de Broglie, *Chantilly; histoire du chateau et de ses collections* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1964), 15; Bertrand, 51. Some scholars set the start date for construction earlier than 1535, e.g. Henri Lemaître, *Châteaux en France* (Paris: Librairie centrale des beaux-arts, C. Massin, 1948), 10, where the author cites 1531 as the beginning of construction.

position, and close enough to the capital city to allow Montmorency to remain involved in business there.

The motivation to complete the château quickly and on a grand scale may have lain partly in the circumstances of Montmorency's life during the late 1530s and 1540s.²⁶ After becoming Constable of France in 1538, Montmorency began to advocate for peace between France and the Holy Roman Empire, against prevailing attitudes at the French court. He arranged for a meeting between François I and the emperor Charles V that took place at Aigues-Mortes in July 1538 and brokered a deal that would have placed Milan under French control. Ultimately the emperor reneged and gave Milan to his son Philip II. In addition, a marriage suggested by Montmorency between the ruling families that would have formed a valuable alliance fell through. As a result of these diplomatic failures on the part of Montmorency, he fell out of royal favor and was banished from court in 1541. Although he remained in contact with François' son Henri (the future King Henri II), he retreated to the seclusion of the country, and turned his attention to the building project at Écouen. It is possible to read the iconography of this masterpiece of the French Renaissance as the result of a wounded pride and an attempt on the part of a formerly great courtier to prove himself relevant.²⁷

With this context in mind, let us turn to an analysis of the château itself. We will begin with a discussion of the château's layout, and then proceed to an analysis of stylistic and iconographical elements of the architecture. Finally, we will consider the roles of various architects and craftsmen who worked at Écouen.

²⁶ The circumstances related here are detailed in Marc Blancpain, *Anne de Montmorency, "le tout puissant"* (Paris: Tallandier, 1988), 94-112; Willox, chapter 8.

²⁷ Willox, 274.

One of the primary reasons that Écouen is considered so important is that it retains much of its original appearance. The original form is also preserved for posterity in Jacques Androuet du Cerceau's *Les plus excellents bastiments de France*, which contains engravings of several of the château's facades, including the entrance pavilion that is no longer extant (Fig. 2).²⁸ The exceptional state of preservation along with the documentation of demolished portions provides invaluable insights into artistic developments in Renaissance France. We will be mainly concerned with the exterior of the château, as little of the interior decoration remains intact. Chapter four will address those elements of the interior that survive.

The château consists of four wings at right angles to one another, forming a rectangular court in the center. Square pavilions project outward at the corners of the rectangle, and round turrets rise from the corners formed by the projection of these pavilions. Three sides of the château are hemmed in by dry moats, with a terrace and retaining wall articulating the north side where the ground falls sharply. This plan, with four straight *corps de logis* (or wings) forming a symmetrical, compact quadrangle reveals the influence of Italian design.²⁹ Indeed, the form of the château at Écouen is similar to that of Ancy-le-Franc designed by the imported Italian architect Sebastiano Serlio and built, like Écouen, during the 1540s (Fig. 3). The château of Fontainebleau, which François I was working on around this time, shows the sprawling, irregular form that was more typical of French designs (Fig. 4). The châteaux at Blois and St. Germain-en-Laye provide further examples of the odd, many-angled enclosures that were prevalent. Despite this element of classical regularity at Écouen, there is an undeniable lingering Gothicism

²⁸ Jacques Androuet Du Cerceau, *Les plus excellents bastiments de France, auquel sont designez les plans de quinze bastiments, et de leur contenu, ensemble les eleuations et singularitez d'vn chascun*, vol. 2 (Paris: Pour ledit Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, 1576-77). See Monique Chatenet, "Les maisons de papier de Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, une architecte modulable avant la lettre," *Dossier de l'art* 171 (2010): 32-41.

²⁹ Hubert Fenwick, *The Châteaux of France* (London: Hale, 1975), 336.

to the château. Medieval influence is omnipresent; native French tradition coalesces with imported Italian forms, creating a harmonious synthesis.

The interior layout at Écouen consists of simple *enfilades* of rooms that fill the width of each wing. This kind of arrangement was typical during the fifteenth century; corridors and double-thickness plans did not appear until the seventeenth century.³⁰ Features of the château at Écouen that were exceptional for the period during which it was built, however, were the luxurious bathrooms, installed in vaulted chambers in the basement.³¹ Montmorency was able to supply these bathrooms with water by installing a sophisticated rainwater conveyance system beneath the grounds of his château. The basement suite was dedicated to relaxation; after hunting or a game of tennis, the constable and his guests could retire to the chambers to bathe in comfort. Commodiousness of this kind, reminiscent of the infamous ancient Roman baths, was a rarity during the sixteenth century, and it epitomizes the level of refinement attained by Montmorency.

The Exterior Façades. The *corps de logis* on the south and west sides are similar in their design, and retain their original appearance more than the north and east façades (Fig. 5).³² Each consists of two stories of equal height, plus an attic with dormers. The windows are of the *croisée* type that was traditional in France, and consists of stone mullions that intersect at right angles separating four panes of glass, the lower two larger than the upper two.³³ The wings terminate with the projecting corner pavilions. On the exterior façades as well as the interior courtyard façades a stringcourse runs just above the windows of the ground floor, and a more

³⁰ Andrew Ayers, *The Architecture of Paris: An Architectural Guide* (Stuttgart: Edition Axel Menges, 2004), 298.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 298.

³² Bertrand, 54; CR, 89.

³³ CR, 77.

prominent continuous molding runs just above this, below the windows of the *piano nobile*. These features, running parallel to one another, create a horizontal emphasis and give the structure a broad, earthbound appearance. The stringcourse is repeated above the windows of the *piano nobile*. A heavier cornice runs above this stringcourse, but is interrupted by the dormers of the attic. These breaks in the cornice run counter to Vitruvian requirements but are seen frequently in France where the use of dormers is common.³⁴ A similar effect can be seen at the château of Azay-le-Rideau, built about a decade before construction began at Écouen (Fig. 6). The breaking of the cornice to accommodate dormer windows provides a good example of the synthesis of Italian and Northern elements. Dormers were the standard way in France of lighting a space roofed by sharply angled planes, and the application of classical details to these native elements often required some creativity and compromise.

The ground floor and first floor of these wings are further articulated with unfluted Doric pilasters between the windows. These *croisées* have little in the way of framing or molding, making the pilasters the key source of visual interest on these levels. A similar use of pilasters can be seen at the châteaux of Blois and Chambord, and at Serlio's Ancy-le-Franc. The Doric order must have been chosen with Montmorency in mind. According to Vitruvius, the Doric is the most masculine order, used in temples dedicated to male gods, while the more slender, ornamental Ionic and Corinthian orders were considered more feminine.³⁵ We know that Philibert Delorme took such matters into consideration later in the century when he built the Tuileries for Catherine de' Medici. In his treatise on architecture he says that he chose the Ionic order because "it is feminine and was devised according to the proportions and beauties of

³⁴ David Thomson, *Renaissance Paris, Architecture and Growth 1475-1600* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 153 (hereafter cited as RP).

³⁵ Vitruvius, *The Ten Books on Architecture*, Morris Hicky Morgan, trans. (New York: Dover Publications, 1960), 103-106.

women and goddesses, as was the Doric to those of men, which is what the ancients have told me.”³⁶ The architect at Écouen in all likelihood chose the Doric order to reflect the strong austerity of Montmorency himself. The pilasters create a subtle, restrained play of light and shadow; however, the main impression of the lower levels of the west and south exterior facades is of a massive, planar quality that has more in common with classical moderation than Gothic flamboyance.

This restraint dissipates at the attic level and roofline. Counter to the horizontality established by the stringcourses, moldings, and cornice are the steeply pitched roofs. The roofs of the *corps de logis* rise up at a sharp angle, and those of the corner pavilions soar even higher. The pointed miter roofs on the turrets, the dormers with their top-heavy carved ornament, the chimneys, and the various finials accenting the roofline at its tallest points act as foils to the classical elements below. Tension is created between the upper and lower level of the buildings, between austere, sober classicism and native exuberance.

The roof is the most distinctly French component of the château. Its steep pitch is typical for buildings in northern Europe where the damp climate and heavy snowfalls prohibit flat roofs. There are numerous examples of sixteenth-century châteaux with similar roofs including Fontainebleau, d’O, Azay-le-Rideau, and Fontaine-Henri. Likely of Norman origin, this building technique had become a specialty of French carpenters by Montmorency’s time.³⁷ This kind of time-honored, long-established construction method was not readily susceptible to change, even in the face of new interest in foreign forms. The pointed caps of the subsidiary circular turrets (separate from the main roofs of the rectangular wings) called miter roofs and lend a most

³⁶ Philibert Delorme, *Le premier tome de l’architecture* (Paris: Librairies-imprimeries réunies, 1894), 156-57.

³⁷ Fenwick, 23.

fantastical aspect to the château at Écouen. Hubert Fenwick has rightly pointed out that they look more like witches' hats than like those of bishops.³⁸

The turrets themselves recall medieval architecture in France (Fig. 7). Similar structures originally had defensive functions, such as the large, round towers on the keep of the thirteenth-century Château de Vincennes in Paris.³⁹ Here, and on medieval *châteaux-forts* and massive city hôtels, towers offered a vantage point from which to survey one's surroundings and to attack an approaching enemy from relative safety. In the medieval past these towers were considered to be status symbols reserved for the monarchy and upper nobility; however, by the early Renaissance smaller versions became ubiquitous on private residences in Paris and the countryside.⁴⁰ They remained expensive to build in the sixteenth century, requiring a master mason with specialized knowledge of geometry. Therefore, they were available only to the affluent and probably remained a status symbol still carrying the connotations of royalty and military defense into the Early Modern era. This is appropriate in the context of Montmorency's high position at court. The turrets at the château at Écouen, although scaled down, can be read as signs indicating Montmorency's military prowess and status, or at least his pretensions. During the period of his disgrace, he was probably anxious to proclaim his clout to the world.

The facades of the projecting pavilions on the west wing have only one window in each story, which is placed on the inner edge of the pavilion, near the turret. These *croisées*, like those of the *corps de logis*, have little in the way of ornament. Those of the attic story of the pavilions, however, are richly decorated. These dormers are framed by delicate moldings and flanked by Doric pilasters that support a blank frieze. A section of cornice projects out below a

³⁸ Ibid., 23.

³⁹ See Jean Chapelot, *Le château de Vincennes: Un residence royale au moyen age* (Paris: Caisse nationale des monuments historiques, 1999).

⁴⁰ RP, 64-7.

curiously small pediment flanked by scrolls. At the peak of the pediment and at the outer edges of the scrolls rest urns which, when viewed from directly below are silhouetted against the sky. The dormers on the *corps de logis* are variants on this motif: fluted Doric pilasters supporting a frieze with alternating triglyphs, disks, and bucrania flank many of them. These features are similar to ones found at Fontainebleau, and demonstrate a growing taste for classical motifs among the French nobility.

Adding to the variety at the attic level are the sculptural chimneys of the pavilions (Fig. 8). Placed somewhat awkwardly, being adjacent to and slightly above the dormer windows, the chimneys are faced in part with stone. The lower third of each takes on the form of a tabernacle composed of unfluted columns and a pediment capped by urns. This device becomes a frame for a shallow niche, inside of which is a relief sculpture depicting armor, swords, and a banner with the motto “APLANOS.” This Greek word was one of Anne de Montmorency’s personal devices, and can be translated as meaning “without deviation,” or “straightforward.” The motif of the arms and armor comes from ancient Rome and brings with it messages of militarism and triumph. In the context of this château, it refers to the military importance and heroism for which Montmorency was renowned in his own time. The motto, borne aloft near the sky, trumpets the estimable qualities of the property’s owner. The message that Montmorency was expressing to the world with this imagery is clear; he wanted to be seen as powerful and forthright. Montmorency proclaimed himself as the heir to Roman military might, and France as the true successor and rival to Rome.⁴¹ In addition, Montmorency’s motto may have been a

⁴¹ This idea was circulating in sixteenth-century France, and is expressed in the writings of Philibert de l’Orme, as well as in the writings of poets such as Joachim du Bellay. See Timothy Hampton, *Literature and Nation in the Sixteenth Century: Inventing Renaissance France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001); Margaret McGowan, *The Vision of Rome in Late Renaissance France* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000); and RA, 101-105.

response to Charles V whose motto was “*Plus Ultra*” (“more beyond”). Spain was rising in prominence during the 1540s and Montmorency’s choice of motto reflects the spirit of competition and rivalry between France and Spain.

The upper third of the chimney is composed of brick, and contrasts with the gray stone below. This interplay of brick and stone can be found on other sixteenth-century French residential buildings such as the château at Blois and the Hôtel de Nevers in Paris, built in 1582. Nevers boasts the earliest known example in the city of the brick and stone style developed in the Ile de France.⁴² It appears that the experiments at Blois and those of Montmorency’s architects at Écouen had an influence on stylistic developments in the capital city at the close of the century.

Although much of the vocabulary at the attic level is classical, the overall effect of the roofline betrays a love of contrast and variety that carries over from the medieval era into the Early Modern period in France. Henri Zerner states that this “taste for spectacular contrasts did not disappear with Flamboyant art, and something of it remained, even in some of the most classical works.”⁴³ The persistent assertion of a native aesthetic suggests that, despite their love of newly imported forms, the French were unwilling or unable to purge themselves entirely of native modes.

A motif that appears repeatedly as sculptural ornament on the exterior of the château at Écouen is that of an unsheathed sword. As mentioned above, this was the traditional symbol of the constable who had the honor of preceding the king in processions carrying a nude sword. Since Montmorency was granted the position of constable in 1538, any portions of the building bearing this device must date from after that point.

⁴² RP, 140.

⁴³ Zerner, 34.

Adding to the iconographical complexity of the west and south wings are sculptural relief panels between the dormer windows of the attic level. This imagery is doubly important because it tells of Montmorency's devotion to the monarchy and helps to date certain portions of the château. On the west wing, for instance, there is a salamander, which was a personal device of François I. As discussed above, Montmorency was intensely devoted to François, and knowing his conservative nature, it is likely that he continued to be loyal to the crown even during his period of disgrace. François I died in 1547, so the portions of the château bearing his emblem were likely built first.⁴⁴ Crescent moons appear in the sculptural ornament of the south, east, and north wings. This was an emblem favored by Diane de Poitiers, the mistress of Henri II. Catherine de' Medici, the wife of Henri II, is also made symbolically present at Écouen by the inclusion in relief sculpture of her initials and personal devices. We can deduce from these images that those wings were completed after the death of François I and the ascension to the throne of his son Henri.⁴⁵ During the period of his banishment from court, Montmorency had remained in contact with Henri. The new king considered the constable a close ally and confidant, and immediately welcomed him back to court. It is no wonder that Montmorency was eager to proclaim the glory of Henri II (and his wife and mistress) on the walls of his château.

The intermingling of Montmorency's personal emblems with those of the monarchs testifies to his close relationship to the king. He was not only making statements expressing his own rank and status as constable, but also proclaiming his proximity to the crown, and thereby enhancing his personal prestige. Furthermore, the somewhat obsequious use of royal imagery was intended to help him advance at court after an uneasy period.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 51.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 51.

The exterior façade of the north wing differs from the west and south wings because of the projecting central pavilion (Fig. 9). This pavilion takes the form of two superimposed triumphal arches and continues the theme of victory seen throughout the château. It was likely added to the wing during the reign of Henri II.⁴⁶ Blomfeld called this frontispiece an “incoherent jumble,” which was likely the result of Montmorency’s interfering with the architect’s designs, and thereby imposing his own desires for certain forms.⁴⁷ This theory is plausible, as documents show that Montmorency had a great interest and involvement in everything he built.⁴⁸ Indeed, the central pavilion is oddly integrated into the façade, at least by strict classical standards. Like the rest of the wing the pavilion consists of three stories, but these levels do not match up with those of the *corps de logis*. The ground floor level of the pavilion is much shorter than that of the rest of the wing; the first floor is much higher. As a result, the moldings are not continuous across the façade, and the short basement level appears too insubstantial to support the massive structure above it. The pavilion also interrupts the rhythm of the dormer windows, butting up against them in an awkward manner. On the other hand, the round-arched windows, the friezes with swags and bucrania, the Doric pilasters, and other features of this pavilion suggest an archeological interest in Roman forms that was only just emerging in France at this time. The round turrets flanking the pavilion at each end of the *corps de logis* provide a curious juxtaposition in that they reflect medieval, rather than classical, style.

The Chapel. As noted in the introduction, Montmorency was quite religious and remained a devoted Catholic during a time that saw the rise of Protestantism in France. This conservatism is reflected in the design of the chapel at the château of Écouen, which is located at

⁴⁶ Ibid., 55.

⁴⁷ Blomfeld, 97.

⁴⁸ Bedos-Rezak, 312.

the southeast corner of the building (Fig. 10). The chapel takes up the whole of the pavilion at this corner, and the architectural style differs from the rest of the château. Here the Gothic style becomes more dominant. While the windows throughout the rest of the château are rectangular, those of the chapel have pointed arches. Instead of the simple *croisée* design, the chapel windows have delicate Gothic tracery that creates a trefoil pattern under the apex of the arch. They are also more than twice the height of the *croisées* and rise through the full elevation of the pavilion, interrupting the stringcourses that run across the *corps de logis* to the pavilion and disrupting the horizontal emphasis. Although the *croisée* window was traditional in France, its rectilinear design was easily integrated into a classicizing scheme. The windows of the chapel, on the other hand, stand out for their reference to the age of church building in medieval France. Although they could be seen as simply retardataire, in this case the Gothic elements instead point to a venerable past.

These windows also differ from the others in that they are made of stained glass. This medium was a specialty of French craftsmen, and one that seems to have been of great interest to Montmorency.⁴⁹ Aside from the obvious decorative aspect of the windows, they are important for our understanding of the history of the château because one of them bears the date of 1542, and another 1544.⁵⁰

On the inside of the chapel elaborate ribbed vaulting creates an intricate pattern on the ceiling that is reminiscent of Flamboyant Gothic cathedrals (Fig. 11). The complexity of this groining suggests the presence of masons working in the local French mode. The “APLANOS” device along with other emblems of Anne de Montmorency and his wife, Madeleine de Savoie,

⁴⁹ Montmorency’s stained glass commissions will be discussed in chapter four.

⁵⁰ Bertrand, 51; Babelon, 332; CR, 87.

painted on the ceiling added the finishing touch.⁵¹ This use of dynastic imagery sends a clear message of the religious devotion of the Montmorency family. Placing family emblems at the highest point of the chapel, as close as possible to the heavens, achieves an effect similar to the iconography on the exterior façades. Just as the proximity between Montmorency's personal devices and monarchical devices speaks of the status of the Montmorency family and their loyalty to the crown, so these motifs in the chapel demonstrate their faithfulness and fidelity to God. In the context of the chapel, the motto "APLANOS" can also be interpreted as referring to the endurance of the Catholic faith, perhaps in response to growing Protestant challenges.

By the time the château at Écouen was constructed, the Gothic style had already acquired a religious connotation.⁵² It should come as no surprise, then, that a religious conservative such as Montmorency would deem it more appropriate than a classical mode for the sacred section of his château. What has surprised some is the way this Gothic chapel "has been arbitrarily inserted into the body of a building that is not at all Gothic."⁵³ We have seen, however, that the chapel is not the only place where Gothic style appears at Écouen. The insertion of these elements seems less arbitrary when one considers Montmorency's critical view of imported Italian style.⁵⁴ On the one hand, he wanted to appropriate Roman imagery because of its associations with power and might that would be legible to French and foreign audiences alike. On the other hand, he wanted to express solidarity with the Catholic faith and maintain continuity with the past, with local traditions, and with a heritage so remarkable that it was neither tied to nor dependent upon foreign influence. This was an orientation shared by contemporaries of Montmorency. For example, in his own writing scholar and publisher Henri Estienne took inspiration from

⁵¹ Bertrand, 51.

⁵² On the concept of architectural symbolism associated with Gothic style, see Zerner, 25.

⁵³ Ibid., 26-7.

⁵⁴ Montmorency's wariness of Italian influence is discussed by Blancpain, 156-7.

thirteenth-century French language and borrowed from classical models only with great restraint in order to preserve a distinct identity that would reflect native dignity.⁵⁵ The poet Joachim du Bellay, too, in his treatise *Défense et illustration de la langue françoise*⁵⁶ defended French vernacular language in a way that Henri Zerner states reflects a “dawning national awareness.”⁵⁷ These individuals, like Montmorency, were seeking sources of inspiration from within their own culture.

The persistence of the Gothic style in sixteenth-century France is one area that needs further investigation. Zerner points out that “the introduction of classic art in France was never the mere replacement of one system of forms with another” and that “the Gothic remained a viable alternative [to classicism] for a long time.”⁵⁸ Examples of Gothic style structures built during the sixteenth century are numerous and include the royal portal of Notre Dame de Louviers, Notre Dame de l’Épine, and the *jubé* of Saint Étienne in Limoges. Montmorency was not alone in his preference for the more traditional local style when constructing a religious building. The continued use of Gothic style during the Renaissance contradicts the entrenched but simplistic notion that style develops in an orderly, linear fashion. It will be impossible to investigate sixteenth-century French religious architecture sufficiently until such models of thought are challenged.

⁵⁵ See Henri Estienne, *Deux dialogues du nouveau langage françois italianisé et autrement disguizé, principalement entre les courtisans de ce temps* (Paris, 1578). Estienne (1528-1598) was from a family of French printers and scholars; he studied Greek and Latin extensively and published texts by classical authors.

⁵⁶ Joachim Du Bellay, *Défense et illustration de la langue françoise* (Paris: Arnoull’ Angelier, 1549). Du Bellay, along with Ronsard and other contemporary poets, was a member of the school of French poets known as the Pléiade.

⁵⁷ Zerner, 395, suggests that the emphasis in Du Bellay’s text on the word *patrie* indicates that the concept of nation and homeland was becoming more important in the sixteenth century.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

The Courtyard. Another noteworthy feature of the château is the portico of the southern interior façade facing the courtyard, which consists of four fluted Corinthian columns that span two stories of the building. These are notable as one of the very first uses of the colossal order in France (Figs. 12 and 13).⁵⁹ Serlio took note of these beautiful column capitals, and included a detailed drawing of one in his treatise on architecture.⁶⁰ The influence of ancient Roman architecture is evident here: specifically, the Temple of Jupiter Stator in Rome served as a model.⁶¹ Between the Corinthian columns at the ground level of the south portico are niches, within which Montmorency displayed two of the most famous works of art in his collection: two of Michelangelo's *Slaves* (Figs. 28 and 29), originally intended for the tomb of Pope Julius II and now at the Louvre.⁶² The arms of Montmorency and his wife proudly surmounted them. The columns support a frieze decorated with shields, helmets, swords, and quivers, continuing the militaristic imagery seen on the exterior facades. Montmorency would not have needed to go very far afield to find ancient Roman models for these motifs. A triumphal arch at Orange in the south of France, which Montmorency could have seen while there posted there with the military, is decorated with reliefs featuring heaps of captured arms that served as trophies or spoils of war.⁶³ Adding to this theme is an inscription that heralds the virtues of the warrior. It reads "Fidus et verax in justitia judicat et pugnat," (Sincere and loyal, he judges and fights in a spirit of justness), which would have reminded all who saw the portico of Montmorency's numerous military exploits and the importance to the nation of his valor and virtue. The Corinthian order

⁵⁹ Blomfeld, 96; Blunt, 85-7.

⁶⁰ Sebastiano Serlio, *The Five Books of Architecture: An Unabridged Reprint of the English Edition of 1611* (New York: Dover Publications, 1982), Book IX, lxiii, fig. B.

⁶¹ Lemaître, 11; Bertrand, 56. Blunt, 87, compares it to the Pantheon, which Jean Bullant had drawn while in Rome.

⁶² These sculptures will be discussed more thoroughly in chapter two.

⁶³ See Robert Amy, *L'arc d'Orange* (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique renseignements et vente au Comté technique de la recherche archéologique de France, 1962).

and large-scale figurative sculpture make the inner courtyard more lavishly decorated and less austere than the exterior facades of the château, in keeping with rules of decorum dictating that extreme opulence be kept in more private precincts, accessible to only an elite few.⁶⁴

Across the courtyard, the inner façade of the north wing has a similar portico (Fig. 14). Here we find pairs of columns and niches, a motive possibly influenced by Serlio's work at Ancy-le-Franc. This portico, unlike the one opposite, is divided into two bays instead of three, an arrangement that Blomfeld describes as "unhappy." He goes on to praise the general handling of the features of the portico, and the architect's consciousness of the "possibilities of boldly contrasted surfaces in light and shade" which is "early for France."⁶⁵ Instead of colossal Corinthian columns, this two-story portico has Doric columns at the ground level and Corinthian ones above. Also incorporated into this decoration is classical imagery including bucrania, and the devices of Henri II and Catherine de' Medici.

Contemporaries of Montmorency and modern scholars alike have commented on the beauty of the original courtyard paving.⁶⁶ Du Cerceau commented in *Les plus excellents bastiments de France* that "la court est si richement pavée, qu'il ne s'en trouve point qui la seconde."⁶⁷ Although nothing remains of the original paving, we know from contemporary descriptions that it had a labyrinth design.⁶⁸ It was supposedly of such a quality that horses were not permitted to tread upon it, requiring even the most dignified visitors to dismount and walk on foot.

⁶⁴ See RA, 28-38.

⁶⁵ Blomfeld, 98.

⁶⁶ Bertrand, 43.

⁶⁷ Du Cerceau, n.p.

⁶⁸ Bertrand, 55.

This paving may have had religious motives. Labyrinth designs were typical in Gothic cathedrals; there is one such paving, for instance, at Chartres Cathedral. These patterns were walked by the faithful to simulate a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.⁶⁹ Viewed in this context, Montmorency's patronage reflects his adherence to Catholic beliefs and practices. He fused political messages and Catholic ones, expressing his vision of France as a Catholic nation.

The Entrance. The east wing still serves as the entrance, although the structure that visitors pass through today does not date to the sixteenth century. The original entrance was demolished in the late eighteenth century, but an engraving by Du Cerceau records its original appearance (Fig. 2).⁷⁰ The gallery was lower than the *corps de logis* of the other three wings, which was typical for châteaux at this time.⁷¹ It comprised a ground-floor level lacking windows and an upper story with *croisées*. The windowless aspect of the lower façade must have added to the fortress-like appearance of the exterior of the château. In the center of this wing was a grand entrance of three stories with an open archway at the top level (Fig. 15). Pairs of fluted Doric columns supporting a frieze with triglyphs flanked the square-headed ground floor entrance. Above, pairs of Ionic columns framed a round arch. Within the archway at the uppermost level was an equestrian portrait of Montmorency attributed to Jean Goujon.⁷² Indeed the composition of the entryway bears a striking resemblance to the tomb of Louis de Brézé at the Cathedral of Rouen designed by Goujon (Fig. 31), suggesting that he may be responsible for the entire scheme. The piers flanking the archway had pairs of herms, and above them, at the very highest point, rested sphinxes. The entrance also featured an inscription from Horace that read, “aequam

⁶⁹ See Penelope Reed Doob, *The Idea of the Labyrinth from Classical Antiquity through the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

⁷⁰ Du Cerceau, n.p.

⁷¹ Ward, 49.

⁷² This portrait will be discussed in chapter 2.

memento rebus in arduis servare mentem” (In the face of adversity, maintain an unshakeable soul).⁷³ Together, this inscription and the sphinxes at the summit of the monumental triumphal arch send a message of courage and victory. This can be interpreted as a proclamation of Montmorency’s stubborn pride in the face of misfortune.

While the château at Écouen serves as an early example in France of this kind of monumental entryway, it is not the only one. Philibert Delorme inserted a similar device at the château at Anet designed for Diane de Poitiers (Fig. 16). Like the triumphal entrance at Écouen, the one at Anet is surmounted by imagery referring to the owner of the property. This feature made it clear to visitors whose property they were approaching, and what qualities the owner possessed. In the case of Écouen, visitors would have read the equestrian portrait and triumphal arch as an expression of Montmorency’s military prowess and supremacy. At the same time, they would have recognized the medieval elements of the château (the heavy fortress-like appearance of the *corps de logis* with their turrets, the Gothic style of the chapel) and would have been reminded of France’s past and the illustriousness of its nobility.

Other members of the nobility were employing the motif of the triumphal arch around the same time as Montmorency, suggesting that it had cultural currency. For instance, the Baron of Clermont erected a gateway at Surgères that resembled a Roman triumphal arch (Fig. 17). In a revealing parallel, Henri II had recently exiled him from court for criticizing Diane de Poitiers.⁷⁴ Like Montmorency, the Baron used a classical architectural monument to publicly state his prominence at a time when his reputation had slipped.

Architects and Craftsmen. Scholars formerly believed that Écouen was the product of a single architect, but Leon Palustre was the first to point out correctly that several individuals

⁷³ Willox, 269; G. Ganier, *Le château d’Écouen* (Rouen: Lecerf, n.d.), 18; Bedos-Rezak, 312.

⁷⁴ Fenwick, 188.

contributed to the design of the château.⁷⁵ Among the architects and craftsmen working at Écouen were Charles Billard, Pierre Chambiges, Antoine Mazon, Jean Allemant, Jean Bullant, and Jean Goujon. Some of these men held administrative positions, contributing plans and directing a team of workers, while others offered particular specialized skills. Documentation is sparse; thus, as with the dating of the building, there is much debate over who worked at Écouen and when. Among the few individuals we can identify with certainty is Bullant, who was at Écouen in the 1550s.⁷⁶ In addition, Jean Allemant and Antoine Mazon are recorded in the archives at Chantilly as having worked at Écouen; the latter is referred to as “contrôleur des oeuvres.”⁷⁷

It is probable that Pierre Chambiges was also present at Écouen during the early stages of building.⁷⁸ Chambiges was from a family of masons. His father worked at the cathedral at Sens off and on until 1499; Pierre was master of works and paving at Paris and contributed to the Hôtel de Ville in the same city.⁷⁹ It seems that Pierre Chambiges was a tradesman of the sort that was contracted by and worked to the instructions of a project manager or employer. He is an example of a craftsman working at Écouen who was allied to traditional French building methods. Coming from a long line of master masons, he brought with him knowledge of techniques that had been used in France for centuries. It is in part because of the contribution of individuals such as Chambiges that Écouen retains a somewhat medieval character.

⁷⁵ Leon Palustre, *L'architecture de la renaissance*, vol. 1 (Paris: Ancienne Maison Quantin, Librairies-imprimeries réunies, May & Motteroz, 1892), 176.

⁷⁶ CR, 88; Blunt, 85; Lemaître, 10; Bertrand, 51-3.

⁷⁷ Bertrand, 53.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁷⁹ Blomfeld, 27. For further information on the Chambiges family see Marius Vachon, *Une famille parisienne de maîtres-maçons aux XV, XVI, XVII siècles: les Chambiges, maîtres des oeuvres, architectes des cathédrales de Beauvais, Sens, Troyes, Senlis, des châteaux de Fontainebleau, Chantilly, Saint-Germain-en Laye, etc., de l'ancien hôtels de ville de Paris, et du Louvre* (Paris: Librairie “la construction moderne,” 1907).

Documents refer to Jean Allemant as “maître-charpentier,” or master carpenter.⁸⁰ His specialized skills would have been necessary in the construction of the roofs, which as we have seen were designed according to French tradition. Like the work of Chambiges, that of Allemant was directly tied to the medieval past. The use of Allemant provides further evidence of Montmorency’s campaign to encourage local craftworkers. He consistently upheld the capability and talent of French artists.

Several scholars believe that Charles Billard initiated construction at Écouen in the 1530s, and that the oldest parts of the château (that is, the west and south wings) can be attributed to him.⁸¹ He is described in accounts of St-Germain-en-Laye as “maître maçon,” which suggests an association with medieval building traditions.⁸²

During the 1530s, Billard probably acted as overseer of the project, contributing plans and directing workers such as Chambiges and Allemant who specialized in various trades. This arrangement allowed for the unity of design that we observe at Écouen. It is also typical of the Renaissance, when architects were the masterminds behind designs that were executed by a team of craftsmen. A similar dynamic was employed in the 1540s and 1550s at the Louvre, where Pierre Lescot directed a team of sculptors and other artists. This shift indicates that the building process was drawing away from medieval building practices in which communal effort was the driving force. Instead, we find a more modern conception where an individual’s genius dominates.

⁸⁰ Bertrand, 53.

⁸¹ Palustre, 176; Ganier, 19; Lemaitre, 10; Blomfeld, 31. There is some evidence that this work was carried out not by Billard, but by a Pierre Tâcheron; see Édouard-Jacques Ciprut, “Un architecte inconnu du Connétable Anne de Montmorency,” *Bulletin de la société de l’histoire de l’art français* (1956): 205.

⁸² CR, 88; Blomfeld, 31.

Jean Bullant was at Écouen by about 1550.⁸³ Henri Zerner refers to this native of the town of Écouen as “Montmorency’s architect” and as having a deep understanding of French traditions.⁸⁴ Bullant also traveled to Italy to study ancient monuments, perhaps at the suggestion and expense of Montmorency.⁸⁵ It seems Montmorency found in Bullant the perfect combination of native culture and classical erudition. Born into the culture of the master mason and nursed on a nascent interest in antiquity, Bullant embodied the transitional nature of sixteenth-century art in France. He would go on to have an illustrious career, becoming Comptroller of Crown Buildings in 1557, and working for Catherine de’ Medici at the Tuileries. He also wrote a treatise on architecture influenced by Vitruvius titled *La Règle générale d’architecture sur les cinq manières de colonnes* which was published at Écouen in 1564. He mentions his patron Montmorency in the dedication. One nineteenth-century scholar called Bullant “the first great classic architect of France,” and suggested that Montmorency triumphed over King François I in the quest to bring classicism to France.⁸⁶ There is some truth to this statement, since the king was relying primarily on the designs of foreigners. If Montmorency was attempting to make a statement with his art commissions about loyalty to one’s native land, he succeeded by promoting Bullant.

The portico on the interior face of the south wing modeled on the Temple of Jupiter Stator can be attributed to Bullant (Figs. 12 and 13).⁸⁷ This was probably completed after Bullant’s return from Rome, where he had seen the remains of the temple firsthand. Likewise, Bullant can take credit for the use here of the colossal order, making him among the first

⁸³ Blunt, 85-9; Ward, 147; Ganier, 18; Lemaître, 10.

⁸⁴ Zerner, 348.

⁸⁵ Blomfeld, 94.

⁸⁶ Mary F. Robinson, “Jean Bullant,” *The Magazine of Art* 8 (Nov. 1884-Oct. 1885): 298-300.

⁸⁷ Blunt, 87; Bertrand, 55; Ward, 149; Blomfeld, 98.

architects in France to build columns on a gigantic scale. He returned to France from Rome greatly emboldened, and began to build with a sense of classical grandiosity never before seen in his native country. Adding to his professional cachet was the fact that this design served as a framing device for Michelangelo's *Slaves*.

The “unhappy” portico facing the courtyard on the north side is probably Bullant's as well, since it seems that this was added during the reign of Henri II and thus after the departure of Billard from Écouen (Fig. 14). This composition has won Bullant both critical praise and disapproval. Blomfeld lauds the creativity and experimental nature of the design, but sees Bullant's use of classicism as not fluent, and perhaps a little pedantic; he admits, however, that this period of experimentation and cultivation was a necessary step to the more fully developed neoclassical style seen in France in later centuries.⁸⁸ William Ward criticizes this portico and the one facing it across the courtyard as poorly integrated into their surroundings.⁸⁹ This is reminiscent of Blomfeld's remark that the portico on the exterior of the northern wing is an “incoherent jumble,” and gives the impression that Bullant was ignorant of the proper usage of classical architecture. However, having traveled to Italy and having measured surviving monuments of antiquity, he was hardly ignorant. More helpfully, Anthony Blunt uses the term “anti-classical” to describe Bullant's use of the colossal order.⁹⁰ This is a descriptor often applied to early Mannerists, and implies an intentional, conscious turning away from the rigidity of classical formulae. It is well within the realm of possibility that Bullant was well enough acquainted with classicism to take license with the rules in the way that other Mannerists were doing at around the same time. After all, the building was obviously not built according to

⁸⁸ Blomfeld, 98.

⁸⁹ Ward, 149.

⁹⁰ Blunt, 87.

Vitruvian regulations, but with a number of French forms and techniques. This provided the perfect opportunity for Bullant to make departures from perfect formal classicism, and to experiment with style.

Another artist who worked at Écouen in the early stages of his career is the Rouenese Jean Goujon, although the precise dates of his presence there are not known. In 1545 he was working at St. Germain l'Auxerrois, but could also have been in the service of Montmorency at the same time. He left Écouen in 1547 when he became sculptor to the king and was occupied with work at the château of Anet and at the Louvre.⁹¹ In the dedication to Henri II of his translation of Vitruvius, Jean Martin refers to Goujon as “naguères architecte à Monseigneur le Connétable” (once architect of the constable). Montmorency certainly played an important role in the promotion of artists who would ultimately achieve celebrity, and who are credited with establishing a French Renaissance style.

Much of the sculptural decoration at Écouen, including that surrounding the fenestration, is likely Goujon's; the bucrania and other sculpted motifs around the windows correspond to figures in the 1547 edition of Vitruvius that he illustrated.⁹² His most spectacular contribution to the château's design is the triumphal arch and equestrian portrait at the center of the entrance wing. Goujon, like Bullant, can be credited with cultivating in France a sense of classicism, but his style also has a lightness and grace that is reminiscent of the Gothic style. We will encounter Goujon again when we discuss sculpture commissioned by Montmorency, including the equestrian portrait over the entrance of the château and some of its surviving interior decoration.

We have noted that Jean Bullant did not begin work at Écouen until about 1550, which would put him there a few years after the departure of Goujon. Goujon would instead have been

⁹¹ CR, 88.

⁹² Ibid., 90.

working under the direction of Charles Billard, unless, of course, Goujon filled an administrative position similar to that held by Bullant and Billard. Blomfeld has suggested that this was the case, and that Goujon was the director of work at Écouen between Billard and Bullant.⁹³ A most likely scenario, suggested by Colombier, is that when Montmorency decided to update the façades at Écouen just before 1550, he brought in Goujon to design the necessary decorative elements. The artist assembled a team that carried on after his departure in 1547, then working under the direction of Bullant.⁹⁴ That a man who was primarily a sculptor could hold this position is not untenable, especially considering that the structure of the château served in part as a backdrop for the sculpted imagery. This imagery delivered messages with dynastic and political significance, and so was important to the social function of the château. Without it, Montmorency's values would not come across with such clarity and force. The important role that Goujon filled at Écouen would have been good preparation for his work at the Louvre, where he collaborated with Pierre Lescot. At least one scholar even suggests that Goujon was the true architect there, with Lescot as a manager of the project.⁹⁵ Either way, it is clear that Montmorency had discovered another talent. This was a real feather in his cap during his period of exile.

Conclusion. At Écouen, we witness the burgeoning interest in antiquity that would come to dominate the visual arts in France later in the century. For Montmorency the soldier, classicism implied military valor and victory; it had associations with a vibrant culture unparalleled throughout history, in which the leaders were much admired. He was allying

⁹³ Blomfeld, 119.

⁹⁴ Pierre du Colombier, *Jean Goujon* (Paris: Michel, 1949), 52 (hereafter cited as JG).

⁹⁵ Myra Nan Rosenfeld, "The Royal Buildings Administration from Charles V to Louis XIV," in Spiro Kostoff, ed., *The Architect: Chapters in the History of the Profession* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 161-79.

himself with that great history because, as the leader of the French military, he hoped that visitors to Écouen would see a connection between him and Roman commanders. Seen in this way, Roman glory becomes a precursor to French glory. Classicism probably held different meanings for contemporaries and for others using the style later, but the fact remains that Montmorency helped establish classicism as a fashion, and as an effective means of expressing a powerful identity. As a prominent nobleman, he would have had an audience in and inevitable influence on other affluent members of the court. Once these individuals saw the work at Écouen, and witnessed how effectively classicism had been used to announce Montmorency's rank and wealth, they would have been eager to imitate the style. Although François I never saw the château, Henri II did; he and Catherine de' Medici had apartments in the north wing. It is also rumored that the first amorous encounter between Henri and his mistress, Diane de Poitiers, took place at the château.⁹⁶ Whether or not this is true, Montmorency's residence at Écouen became a center of intrigue and activity for the court.

Despite having been exiled by François I, Montmorency remained loyal to the crown, and used his château to proclaim the king's control over the Ile-de-France. The presence of the salamander emblem implied the presence of the king himself. Thus the visual arts helped the king assert his power throughout the kingdom. By association, the Montmorency family also asserted their influence and status. We have seen that Montmorency's personal devices such as the sword and the APLANOS motto were placed immediately adjacent to the royal ones. This implied Montmorency's proximity to the king that reflected the reality of the social hierarchy.

In addition to glorifying Montmorency and the king, this luxurious residence would have brought honor to the nation. It was a source of pride for the people that such affluent individuals

⁹⁶ Bertrand, 45.

ruled over the land. Henri II said that Montmorency's châteaux at Écouen and Chantilly were "deux des plus belles maisons...de notre royaume" (two of the most beautiful houses in our kingdom).⁹⁷ Although the most ornate facades and richest ornament were reserved for the courtyard façades and for the interior of the château, the building stood out prominently on its hilltop so that passersby could admire its beauty. In this way, anyone could partake of the luxury of the nobility and of France.

While Montmorency brought highly skilled artists and craftsmen to work at Écouen, the overall vision may have been at least in part his own.⁹⁸ He took the opportunity at Écouen to build an entirely new structure rather than re-fashioning an existing one, as was the case with his other residences. Bertrand says that Montmorency "voulut édifier une nouvelle résidence qui fût cette fois entièrement son oeuvre" (He wanted to build a new residence that would be this time entirely his own work),⁹⁹ which gave him the chance to build in whatever way he desired. The resulting style is an intersection of French and Italian art that parallels the numerous intersections between those two cultures during the sixteenth century. The style is also the result of the sort of artistic experimentation that was becoming common during the sixteenth century, which is considered Mannerist in other contexts.

Montmorency was not eager to abandon all indigenous tradition; he saw much in the *châteaux-forts* of his ancestors worth keeping. The turrets, for instance, had become a symbol in France representing the nobility. The pitched roof was practical for the local climate, and French carpenters had perfected the techniques necessary to build them; it was an ingrained local form.

⁹⁷ Bedos-Rezak, 303.

⁹⁸ Ganier suggests that the idea to introduce classical elements at Écouen was Montmorency's, 20. Knowing that the constable was conservative and hesitant to fully embrace Italian customs, however, it is equally likely that he wanted his château to reflect his loyalty to France as well.

⁹⁹ Bertrand, 50.

By the sixteenth century, architects such as Bullant, who knew Vitruvian modes of building, were probably using it self consciously, understanding that to a certain extent it expressed their cultural identity. These traditional French elements combine fluidly with those from classical antiquity at Écouen. The resulting style was simultaneously conservative and innovative, deeply rooted in local tradition and imbued with Italian influence. A new national style was being born. Clearly an ambitious man, Montmorency knew that harnessing the visual arts was an effective way of showing to the world that France was ascendant.

Today the château at Écouen houses the Musée National de la Renaissance. This function is appropriate, since it is one of the best surviving examples of French Renaissance architecture.

The Château at Chantilly

Like Écouen, Montmorency inherited the property at Chantilly, located 23 miles north of Paris, from his father. Pierre d'Orgemont, who served Kings Charles V and VI, had built a home there in 1386 on top of the ruins of an ancient Gallo-Roman villa built by Cantilius.¹⁰⁰ The name of the town still recalls this ancient resident. The connection that this property had to ancient Rome surely appealed to Montmorency, who, as we have seen, wanted to draw connections between France and the empire. When he developed this property, he may have envisioned it as the rebirth of imperial greatness on French soil. Perhaps because of these associations, and because the town was his place of birth, the château at Chantilly was to become Montmorency's favored residence.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ For a brief history of the property see Willox, 263; see also CR, 76.

¹⁰¹ Bedos-Rezak, 282; Blancpain, 138; Malo, 25: "il transforma [le château de] Chantilly pour lequel il éprouva toujours une prédilection marquée."

Montmorency's father, Guillaume, came into possession of the property in 1484, but made no major alterations to Orgemont's old fortress. Once Montmorency inherited it, he almost immediately began to make radical changes. He did not raze the fourteenth-century *château-fort* entirely, but refashioned much of it. Because his new structure rested atop the old foundations, it retained the irregular triangular plan of Orgemont's medieval fortress.

Building at Chantilly began in the late 1520s, so Montmorency's work there predates that at Écouen.¹⁰² It continued at least until the 1550s. Montmorency preserved the outer walls and towers of the original fortress, but opened up new windows and rearranged the layout of the house.¹⁰³ The goal was probably to give a more regularized appearance to the façades, and to free the château from its heavy, defensive character. A garden was placed on the west side of the château, extensive farm buildings and a tennis court were erected, and a long gallery was added. This gallery was called the Galerie des Cerfs after painted decoration that was added by Martin de Meille, a student of Niccolò dell'Abbate.¹⁰⁴

Documents in the archives at Chantilly reveal that Pierre Chambiges, the same mason who would later work for Montmorency at Écouen, carried out the façade restorations at Chantilly.¹⁰⁵ Unfortunately, we are unable to discuss his work in much detail because it was destroyed during the Revolution. We know from remarks made by contemporaries that it was spectacular. We have already noted Henri II's praise of the châteaux of Chantilly and Écouen.

¹⁰² The dates of construction at Chantilly are debated. Bedos, 282, gives 1522 as the date at which Montmorency announced his plans for construction. Willox, 264, places the date of the reconstruction of the façades of the old fortress at 1527, as does Fenwick, 28.

¹⁰³ Fenwick, 100.

¹⁰⁴ There is some debate over who painted these murals. CR, 75, suggests that it was Martin de Meille, a student of Niccolò dell'Abbate; Willox, 265, agrees with this attribution, as does Malo, 25. Bedos-Rezak, 100, proposes an attribution to the Italian master himself; Fenwick supports this hypothesis. See chapter 3 of this text.

¹⁰⁵ CR, 75.

In the first book (chapter 52) of his novel *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, the writer François Rabelais compares the utopian abbey at Thélème to the château at Chantilly in order to express the former's magnificence.¹⁰⁶ In 1536 Emperor Charles V stopped at the château while traveling through France on his way to suppress the insurrection at Ghent and declared its beauty.¹⁰⁷ In his text on the château at Chantilly, Henri Malo speaks at some length about the “hautes personages” that visited and commented on the place's allure.¹⁰⁸ Although Montmorency's wife Madeleine de Savoie was reportedly so conservative that she allowed no balls, comedies, or masquerades at Chantilly,¹⁰⁹ he held lavish receptions at the château and frequently hosted Henri II, Catherine de' Medici, and Diane de Poitiers.¹¹⁰ The sovereigns had their own apartments that occupied almost an entire floor.¹¹¹

Among the other features that Montmorency added at Chantilly were seven chapels scattered throughout the grounds; he received papal indulgences for this act of religious devotion.¹¹² He also cleared a star-shaped area in the gardens from which radiated twelve alleys. The enormous library that he built at Chantilly was one of the most remarkable in the kingdom. It contained numerous ancient texts, some translated into French and decorated with Montmorency's arms. In this endeavor, famed bibliophile Grolier de Servières aided him.¹¹³ Grolier was a book collector who imported many texts from Italy, but also cultivated book production in France. Montmorency's book collection was dispersed during the revolution, but

¹⁰⁶ François Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, M.A. Screech, trans. (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), ch. 1.

¹⁰⁷ Malo, 29; Willox, 266-7.

¹⁰⁸ Malo, 30-33.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹¹⁰ Willox, 266.

¹¹¹ De Broglie, 219.

¹¹² Willox, 265.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 266.

was brought back to its original home by Henri d'Orleans, Duke of Aumale, who rebuilt the château in the nineteenth century; today it houses the Musée Condé, where many of Montmorency's texts are still on view (see Figs. 107-112).

We know Montmorency's Chantilly only from engravings in Cerceau's *Les plus excellents bastiments de France*. This text includes renderings of the plan, one view of the exterior elevation, and one of the courtyard that includes the chapel (Figs. 18-20).¹¹⁴ The building we glimpse in these illustrations is more unabashedly Gothic than the château at Écouen. This is hardly surprising, since Écouen was a wholly modern construction, while Chantilly incorporated a medieval edifice.

The most prominent features on the exterior of the château are the towers (Fig. 19). If the turrets at Écouen seem like vestigial reminders of the middle ages, those at Chantilly are bold, forceful assertions of Montmorency's place in the social hierarchy. Judging by Du Cerceau's engraving, *croisées* had been inserted into the towers, rendering any defensive function of these structures obsolete. *Croisées* were also cut at regular intervals into the ground floor above the moat. The windows would have allowed light and air into the formerly dark fortress. At the upper levels, the windows become the focal points of sculptural decoration as at Écouen. This sculpture, the miter roofs of the towers, and the finials placed on top of them and along the roofline create a dazzlingly complex roofline. There is very little in the way of classical ornament. Horizontal moldings and the rhythmic placement of the windows are some of the only indications that the builder and patron had an interest in updating the medieval *château-fort* with a more classical style.

¹¹⁴ Du Cerceau, n.p. Du Cerceau's text also includes images of the Petit Château, to be discussed below.

This interest is more apparent in Du Cerceau's depiction of the courtyard, although the general impression we get of the architectural style is still quite Flamboyant (Fig. 20). The façade that Du Cerceau shows us is not symmetrical, but has a regularity and order that betrays a classical influence. It was common in France to forgo perfect compositional symmetry in order to accommodate a desired layout. In the sixth book of his architectural treatise Sebastiano Serlio praises this "*commodità francese*" and says that the interiors of Italian buildings often suffered because of the obsession with maintaining strict symmetry on exterior façades.¹¹⁵

In Du Cerceau's depiction of the courtyard, the ground floor to the right of the projecting pavilion has no large windows, but two arched portals of unequal size. Also at this level are roundels with portrait busts in relief. Above this are two stories with *croisées*, and finally an attic with dormers. As at Écouen, the dormer windows are decorated with intricate carving that rises higher than the roofline. The façade to the right of the pavilion has only two levels plus an attic, and is similarly articulated with *croisées*. Here, however, there are small colonnettes between the windows. These elements, while classical in origin, are quite dainty and diminutive. They do not give the impression of monumentality that one would expect of classical details. Adding to the texture and variety are carved reliefs placed beneath each window. There is hardly any unadorned wall surface giving a feeling of medieval *horror vacui* more than Italian murality.

The projecting pavilion at the center of the façade consists of two stories. At the ground floor level is an open arcade with two round arches framed by pairs of Corinthian columns. A frieze with carved medallions separates the two stories. The second level contains four arched windows, a quickening of the rhythm below. Above each pair of windows is a curiously small triangular pediment. The pediments are in turn incorporated into a larger one that has a rosette

¹¹⁵ Serlio, Book XI.

placed at its apex. This ensemble is crowned by a balustrade and large figural sculpture. Rising from behind the balustrade is a peaked roof carrying at its center a slender spire that rises higher than the dormers and rooflines. Again we find classical details whose proportions and combinations are decidedly unclassical. Furthermore, they are used in concert with persistent Northern European elements such as the steeply pitched roof.

An interesting feature of Cerceau's engraving is the chapel in the corner of the courtyard (Fig. 20). As at Écouen the chapel is purely Gothic in style, but unlike at Écouen, this style blends more seamlessly into its surroundings. The chapel is two bays in length and is supported by buttresses. Each bay has a large window with a pointed arch and tracery. Above the portal is a profusion of carved ornament. These lacy flourishes are of the sort found on many French Gothic cathedrals, as is the large rose window placed directly above the entrance. Squeezed between the chapel and the adjacent *corp de logis* is a small round turret with a miter roof, which adds to the medieval character of the courtyard façades.

The amalgamation of classical and Gothic elements at Chantilly is the product of the collaboration between Chambiges and Montmorency. The constable would not have chosen this craftsman, so steeped in French traditions, if he did not want his château to reflect a degree of continuity with the local past. Montmorency was proud of his origins and did not wish to completely abandon them. Considering this, the architectural style can be read as a symbol of the loyalty Montmorency felt toward his heritage, and the pride he felt in French traditions and culture. At the same time, the incorporation of elements derived from ancient Rome demonstrated Montmorency's personal ambitions. We can now interpret the architecture of the château at Chantilly not as an illiterate use of classical elements, or as the work of a provincial

craftsman “blundering about”¹¹⁶ with a style he did not understand, but rather as an intentional and fluent blending of styles. The goal was to create a coalescence of classical and native forms that would express both the identity and the power of the building’s owner. The result is elegant, creative, and serves as a relatively early indication of the development in France of an innovative and unique style.

While nothing remains of the main château or the parts of the grounds dating to the sixteenth century, Montmorency added a structure to the west that remains mostly intact. Known as the Petit Château, it dates from about 1560 (Fig. 21).¹¹⁷ For this project he hired Jean Bullant, the same architect who had worked for him at Écouen. The Petit Château is the only complete building designed by Bullant that remains today. It therefore gives us the best opportunity to evaluate his work. We also know the names of other craftsmen who worked at the Petit Château, such as Pierre Desilles, a mason.¹¹⁸ Likely part of the same local tradition as Chambiges, Desilles would have been a good foil to Bullant. Together they created a balance between French custom and imported style. Pierre Gobert was a roofer whose specialized carpentry skills were necessary to erect the pitched roof at the Petit Château. As at Écouen and the main château at Chantilly, this architectural element would make it difficult to mistake the Petit Château for an Italian building regardless of the other details of the building.

The Petit Château is truly a “*bijou architectural*.”¹¹⁹ The small scale of the structure is contradicted by the use of monumental elements, resulting in a building that is both charming

¹¹⁶ Blomfeld, vii, says that French architects in the sixteenth century “were blundering about in endeavors to grasp the spirit of the Italians which lamentably failed their purpose.”

¹¹⁷ Willox, 264, states that Jean Bullant was hired to build the Petit Château around 1560; CR, 76, suggests the same date. Babelon, 450, suggests an earlier date, giving 1557-9 as the dates of construction.

¹¹⁸ CR, 76.

¹¹⁹ Malo, 31.

and stately. The Prince Condé filled in part of the moat in 1820, but originally the Petit Château was surrounded on all sides by water and connected to the main château by a bridge. The main façade comprises a main level with entrance and two windows, and an attic with three dormers. As with Montmorency's other properties, the windows here are of the ubiquitous *croisée* type. Pairs of fluted Corinthian columns frame small niches and carry a large arch that surmounts the entrance. This structure projects outward slightly to create a portico. Beneath the arch, greeting visitors as they pass through the entrance, is Montmorency's coat of arms carried by two figures, personifications of fame. The languid grace of these figures suggests a possible attribution to Goujon; indeed, there is evidence that he worked on some of the sculpture at Chantilly.¹²⁰ As at Écouen, this grand arched entrance is reminiscent of the one that Delorme built for Diane de Poitiers at her château at Anet.

Fluted Corinthian pilasters at the outer edges of the façade also frame niches, creating contrasts of light and shadow that add visual interest to the composition. Interestingly, the columns and the pilasters span one and a half stories. This is an early adaptation in France of the colossal order that recalls Bullant's portico at Écouen, and is contemporary to Delorme's project for the queen mother's wing at Fontainebleau. Evidently Delorme and Bullant were keeping abreast of one another's work; perhaps a kind of rivalry spurred them to further stylistic innovations.

Breaks in the entablature that runs just below the roof allow the dormer windows to pass through. We have already encountered this peculiarity at Écouen. Clearly it was one of Bullant's favored ways of making a compromise between different styles, and of accommodating French elements in a scheme that is more or less classical. It was also one, however, that

¹²⁰ Willox, 266.

Blondel would decry in the eighteenth century as “the last possible barbarism in architecture.”¹²¹ Apparently this critic, encumbered by strict classical erudition, had no appreciation for the originality of sixteenth-century architects, whose aims were different from his own. Montmorency did not want his residence to be built in a purely Italian manner. He was too much of a nationalist, and too aware that his home, visited by so many important dignitaries, was an opportunity to showcase the talents of French craftsmen and artists whose works would be distinctly different from those produced by Italians. To assert this difference proudly was to carve out an identity. Montmorency wanted to incorporate classical style, but not at the expense of his own heritage. Blunt states that these breaks in the entablature can be regarded as a French form of Mannerism.¹²² Hardly a provincial bungler lagging behind and slow to comprehend classicism, Bullant was rather on the cutting edge of artistic developments, though he is seldom given credit as such.

In the spring of 1561, the constable held a celebration at Chantilly for the marriage of one of his sons to an heiress of the Humières family.¹²³ We can only imagine that this brilliant fete gave Montmorency the opportunity to demonstrate to the court his wealth and the lavishness of his favorite property. Shows of luxury such as this were necessary in order to maintain one’s status in sixteenth-century France. Visible evidence of one’s power made it more palpable. The generosity of the hosts of these events was itself a form of luxury, since it was considered a distinct privilege to receive and entertain the king and nobility in one’s home.

Events such as this are also important in the history of art as moments in which a class of potential patrons witnesses an iconographical program at work; doubtless Montmorency hoped

¹²¹ Blomfeld, 101.

¹²² Blunt, 89.

¹²³ See Joan Davis, “The Politics of the Marriage Bed: Matrimony and the Montmorency Family, 1527-1612,” *Oxford Journal of French History* 6 (1992): 63-95.

they would be influenced by it. As mentioned above, one of the reasons individuals such as he spent so much time and money building their châteaux was to create a setting for the court that would express the owner's status and ideology. The luxurious environment orchestrated by a patron and his artists became a form of political propaganda that could sway opinions and even influence government policies, all while offering a pleasurable aesthetic experience.

Montmorency's insistence on using French architects and craftsmen reflected his conservative nature, and could potentially inspire others to value their French heritage at a time when it was more fashionable to flaunt foreign influence. Along the same lines, guests at the wedding witnessed the coalescence of a new style. Judging by the subsequent trajectory of artistic developments in France, it seems they left invigorated and empowered by the possibilities offered by a mode that simultaneously reminded them of all that was great of their own history and also broadened their cultural horizons.

Fère-en-Tardenois

On 21 August 1528, in honor of Montmorency's recent marriage, François I gave him the barony of Fère-en-Tardenois.¹²⁴ This included a thirteenth-century feudal keep located on the property, which, along with Écouen and Chantilly, would become one of the constable's favorite residences.

Located to the northeast of Paris, the château at Fère that Montmorency received consisted of an irregularly shaped enclosure and seven massive towers. It sat on a prominent plateau that had been built up on one side of a deep ravine. It was a daunting site to develop, but Montmorency probably saw it as a challenge to be conquered. The dates of redevelopment are uncertain, but we know that Montmorency was making alterations to the medieval structure in

¹²⁴ CR, 95.

the late 1520s and into the 1540s.¹²⁵ Aiding in the dating of the work at Fère is an inscription above the entrance that reads 1539. As with his other properties, it seems Montmorency continued to work on the château at Fère for many years.

Fragments are all that remain of the château today; much of it was demolished in 1779 (Fig. 22).¹²⁶ We can assume that the alterations that Montmorency made, like those at Chantilly, consisted of refacing the interior courtyard façades and opening new windows.¹²⁷ Judging by fragments of expensive ceramic tiles imported from Anvers that have been found at the site, Montmorency must have transformed the fortress into a commodious and opulent abode (see Fig. 92).¹²⁸ The principal challenge was creating easy access to the château from across the ravine. To accomplish this, Montmorency erected a colossal bridge that was a truly impressive feat of engineering. Much of this monumental structure still stands, although it now leads only to a ruin.

The bridge is 200 feet long and rises over 100 feet above the gorge (Figs. 23 and 24). It is carried on towering stone piers that are twenty-two feet thick and culminate in five semicircular arches. Above this was a two-story gallery measuring nine and a half feet wide, although little remains of the upper gallery.¹²⁹ Moldings articulate the curve of the arches, adding a delicacy to the massive structure, and pairs of square windows pierce the lower gallery

¹²⁵ Willox, 279, states that Montmorency began construction in 1523. This is four years before the constable's marriage and therefore probably inaccurate. CR, 95, gives 1529 as the date of construction of a large wall that still stands at the site. Babelon, 451, gives the date of 1537 as when Montmorency began to "modernize" the château. Marie-Françoise Poiret, in a discussion of the decoration, of the château, gives the dates 1537-41, in *Images du pouvoir* (Paris: Réunion des Musée Nationaux, 2000), 149.

¹²⁶ Babelon, 452. The author discusses in some detail the work done at Fère.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 451.

¹²⁸ Poiret, 149. Some of these ceramic fragments are located today in various public and private collections, including a notable group at the Rijksmuseum; see Claire Dumortier, *Céramique de la renaissance à Anvers* (Paris: Les Editions de l'Amateur, 2002), 100; fig. 43.

¹²⁹ The measurements are given by Blomfeld, 99.

above the piers. All that remains of the upper gallery is a portion of the wall with rectangular windows separated by similarly shaped panels and shallow niches. The refinement of these details suggests the involvement of Goujon at Fère.¹³⁰ This attribution is purely conjectural; however, knowing that Goujon did not enter the service of the king until 1547, it is entirely possible that he worked for Montmorency at Fère. This project was, after all, contemporaneous with the work at Écouen.

The bridge inevitably calls to mind Roman aqueducts, including the Pont du Gard near Nîmes in the south of France. Like the ancient Romans, Montmorency forcefully dominated nature, asserting his influence over the landscape as he did over the army and even over the king. He made a statement of control and power that would be clearly visible from a distance. In this way the bridge became a kind of victory monument celebrating Montmorency's authority. A millennium and a half before the constable's time, the Romans were constructing edifices both utilitarian and symbolic throughout the French countryside; now it was a Frenchman. Victory and triumph are continuous themes running throughout Montmorency's architectural projects. Although using foreign stylistic elements, he made a clear statement about his own personal victories, and what he saw as the inevitable triumph of France.

The bridge probably dates from between 1552 and 1562,¹³¹ and its authorship is unknown. A likely candidate is Jean Bullant, whom Montmorency had employed at his other properties.¹³² There is a purity of classical form here that can be attributed at this point in the sixteenth century only to a very few men, Montmorency's architect among them. The bridge begs a comparison to the nearly contemporaneous one at Chenonceau designed by Delorme.

¹³⁰ Willox, 280; Babelon, 451.

¹³¹ CR, 95.

¹³² CR agrees with this attribution, 96; as does Willox, 280.

Babelon even suggests that the structure at Montmorency's property predates the one at Diane de Poitiers', and that Bullant's work therefore influenced Delorme's.¹³³ We have already seen Bullant and Delorme engaged in a kind of mutual inspiration, which makes it all the more believable that Bullant is the architect behind the bridge at Fère; a spirit of competition may have spurred both men in their building of the bridges. While the gallery over the river at Chenonceau has an undeniable elegance and grace, the structure at Fère is heroic, strong, and imposing. Each structure reflects the nature of its owner, or at least the persona they wished to express.

The entrance to the château consists of a familiar juxtaposition of styles (Fig. 25). Wedged between two of the immense towers is an arched opening framed by two slender colonnettes. These support a short section of entablature, and roundels ornament the spandrels above the arch. This brief nod to classical style, inserted into a larger medieval fabric, gives an indication of the ways in which Montmorency "modernized" the *château-fort* at Fère. Despite these limited insertions, it is apparent that the château always retained its medieval character.

Another imposing structure is the pavilion at the entrance to the bridge on the opposite side of the ravine from the château (Fig. 26). Placed on the side nearest the village, this feature would have been the only glimpse many people would have had of Montmorency's property. The pavilion takes the form of a triumphal arch, repeating the motif used at Écouen. Pairs of Doric columns flank niches and support a frieze with triglyphs and laurel-wreath reliefs. A *croisée* interrupts the frieze in the center above the entrance, and is capped by a round arch. The use here of a *croisée* is somewhat strange. It is as though the architect (and probably Montmorency himself) stubbornly refused to purge an otherwise classical structure of all Gallic elements. At the top of this ensemble is a triangular pediment. Running along the inside of the

¹³³ Babelon, 306.

pediment, as well as above the frieze, are dentils and an egg-and-dart molding. Rectangular panels above the columns are surrounded by a scrolling foliate pattern. Much of the rest of the relief sculpture is badly abraded, but still visible are the remains of trophies in low relief. The Montmorency coat of arms supported by female personifications of Fame still greets visitors, repeating the themes of military triumph and of the renown of the Montmorency family seen at Écouen (Fig. 27). Citizens of Fère-en-Tardenois would have been privy to the messages communicated via the iconography of the portico. It would have reminded them of the power and wealth of the aristocracy, of the monarchy, and of France. As mentioned above, this was a primary function of châteaux—to spread a common ideology to people throughout the kingdom.

The fineness of detail on this portico contrasts with the simplicity of the entrance to the château at the opposite end of the bridge, indicating that it may have been built a few years later, when knowledge of classical ornament had advanced along with the ability of French sculptors to replicate such details. This development parallels that at Écouen, where the porticoes added during the reign of Henri II reveal a growing interest in classical forms. Likewise, the contrast between these two entrances is similar to that between the main château at Chantilly and the Petit Château.¹³⁴ Thus Fère, like Écouen and Chantilly, can be used to trace the development of Renaissance style in France.

Members of the court visited the château at Fère frequently: François I came in 1535 and 1536, Henri II in 1547 and 1557.¹³⁵ The repeated visits of the sovereigns were due to the fact that the property was excellent for hunting, a favorite pastime of the nobility. Catherine de' Medici also stayed there in 1552.¹³⁶ The remains of the château at Fère are truly remarkable, and

¹³⁴ CR, 96.

¹³⁵ Willox, 283.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 283.

it is a wonder that they have not received more attention in discussions of artistic developments in France. Questions remain, and a more thorough, dedicated study of the château is needed.

The Hôtel of Sainte-Avoye

In addition to his country residences, Montmorency maintained several residences in Paris. Four are recorded, all of which were located in the Marais district. Three of these hôtels were family properties; François I gave him the fourth, Sainte-Avoye, in 1535, after it was confiscated from the financier Lambert Meigret.¹³⁷ This hôtel comprised for the most part the old fifteenth-century Hôtel de Braque, and the plot was defined by the Rue du Temple, Rue des Archives, Rue de Braque, and the old wall of Philip Augustus.¹³⁸ Almost nothing remains of the hôtel today, and our knowledge of it is completely dependent upon archival evidence.¹³⁹

When Montmorency acquired the hôtel, it consisted of a *corps de logis* fronting a court that had access to the street through a narrow passage in the *corps*. A second wing opened onto a garden. Each wing was three stories in height. It seems Montmorency made few changes to this arrangement until 1553, at which time he bought neighboring lots on the Rue de Braque to enlarge his façade along that street. In 1557 he made further additions following plans drawn up by Bullant and executed by Barthélémy de Beaulieu consisting of a large ballroom and a new gallery that stretched across the courtyard and connected the two older wings.¹⁴⁰ Apparently the old fifteenth-century residence did not meet with the constable's approval. Lengthening the

¹³⁷ Bedos-Rezak, 307. Of the other three hôtels so little is known that a discussion of them here is not possible.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 307. See also Léon Mirot, "L'hôtel et les collections du connétable de Montmorency," *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes* 80 (1919): 152-229.

¹³⁹ There is archival evidence for painted decoration at the St-Avoye residence; I will discuss this in chapter 3.

¹⁴⁰ Bedos-Rezak, 307.

façade along the Rue de Braque would have made the luxuriousness of Montmorency's residence more apparent from the outside and would have increased his presence in the city.

An inventory conducted at the hôtel upon Montmorency's death reveals a supremely opulent interior, outfitted with every imaginable luxury.¹⁴¹ Among the constable's possessions were antiquities from Italy, tapestries, fine tableware and table linens, furniture inlaid with ebony and ivory, leather-bound books, panel paintings, enameled objects, swords, and objects imported from the Ottoman Empire. The inventory gives a rare glimpse of the riches of the aristocratic class in France in the early the modern era.

All that remains today of Montmorency's opulent hôtel is a pair of fluted Doric columns that have stood in the courtyard as the surrounding structure grew and changed over the centuries.¹⁴² These finely carved fragments suggest that the constable's urban residence, like his châteaux, was updated with classical details. Since we know that the layout of the hôtel was highly irregular they also reveal how, in Montmorency's time, classical details were not always viewed as antithetical to or irreconcilable with medieval forms. Their incorporation into an older fabric reflects his desire to claim the splendor of ancient Rome for sixteenth-century France, while retaining the splendor of the French past.

Conclusion

The châteaux discussed in this chapter are the most monumental products of Montmorency's art patronage. Écouen, in particular, is of great importance because it is so well preserved. Visitors can still view Bullant's imposing porticoes, Goujon's elaborate sculpted iconography, and the soaring turrets of Billard's period. It provides a rare opportunity to experience sixteenth-century architecture largely intact. The role that Écouen played as a

¹⁴¹ Mirot, 152-229.

¹⁴² See RP, 158, fig. 121.

training ground for some of France's most celebrated artists of the period is often overlooked. Goujon and Bullant were able to work side-by-side with local carpenters and masons, experiment with their own personal styles, and ultimately contribute to the development of a national style by working for the Crown. One can therefore speak of a School of Écouen similar to the better-known School of Fontainebleau.

Although much of Montmorency's château at Chantilly has been destroyed, the engravings demonstrate the extent to which he desired to preserve some traditional medieval elements in his homes. Unlike Écouen, Chantilly was not built from the ground up; instead, it incorporated features of the older *château-fort* that occupied the site. The decision to retain large portions of the somewhat outdated design coincides with Montmorency's reputedly conservative character. This was one of his favorite residences, and he used it as an opportunity to showcase features of France's exalted past. A sense of nationalism was germinating, and Montmorency communicated his proto-patriotic impulses through the vocabulary of architectural style. At the same time, with the Petit Château Montmorency acknowledged the growing fashion for classicism. Again employing Bullant, he erected a structure that incorporated classical elements, but transformed them to accommodate French features such as the dormer windows; the use on such a small building of a variation on the colossal order is tongue-in-cheek. The inventiveness and playfulness of the Petit Château is indicative of the genius of French artists such as Bullant, who are often unjustly derided as mishandling classical style.

Fère-en-Tardenois, like Chantilly, is an amalgamation of medieval and classical style. We are reminded that the stylistic categories we observe today did not exist in Montmorency's time. Furthermore, the shift from medieval Gothic style to the more stringent classicism of the eighteenth century in France did not happen abruptly. The development was gradual, and

resulted in juxtapositions that may appear awkward to twenty-first century viewers.

Montmorency and his contemporaries did not deem it contradictory to join a fortified medieval château with a Roman aqueduct-like bridge. The former was a reference to their native heritage, while the latter was a way to appropriate the glory of the ancients for themselves. Since Fère served primarily as a hunting lodge, it is also a reminder of the extreme luxury in which figures such as Montmorency lived. The aristocracy of sixteenth-century France enjoyed a level of wealth that is almost unimaginable, sometimes owning numerous residences that each served a distinct function.

It was necessary too that Montmorency maintain residences in Paris in order to be close to offices of government administration. Sadly, because of the constantly changing nature of this vibrant urban center, little remains of these hôtels. However, we have seen that there are fragments documenting the decoration of the hôtel in St. Avoye that are sufficient to suggest it was just as luxuriously outfitted as all of Montmorency's other residences. The inventory taken there in the 1560's is especially revealing in terms of the information it provides regarding the kinds of objects Montmorency possessed. Since the furniture and other movable decoration have long since been removed from aristocratic dwellings from the period, this document gives an invaluable glimpse into the material lives of courtiers.

One can draw parallels between Montmorency's activities in the realm of architecture and contemporary developments in literature. Some early French nationalist literature from the sixteenth century, such as the works of du Bellay, Ronsard, and other members of the Pléiade, focused on the French language as a source of pride and identity, while playing down the fact

that it had its roots in Latin.¹⁴³ A similar phenomenon can be observed with the Maison Carrée. Montmorency actively participated in the preservation of this Roman temple in Nîmes, dedicated in the first decade, CE.¹⁴⁴ In the fourth century the temple had been converted to a Christian church. It had been stripped of its original pagan function, and proponents of French nationalism such as Montmorency were also equally enthusiastic to rid it of its foreign connotations. For Montmorency and his contemporaries, it stood as a symbol of the illustriousness of France's past, and served as proof that the Gallic people were the inheritors of Roman greatness. They were claiming Roman architectural monuments and Roman architectural style as their own and accommodating them to their needs. Classicism, when used by French artists in wholly unprecedented ways and in concert with local forms, expressed the view that their own heritage, while linked in some ways to the Roman past, had escaped the grip of foreign domination. The style that Montmorency cultivated with his architectural commissions was a conscious attempt to express this ideology of triumph and of the ultimate victory of France on a monumental scale.

¹⁴³ See Timothy Hampton, *Literature and the Nation in the Sixteenth Century: Inventing Renaissance France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001). See also above, notes 55 and 56.

¹⁴⁴ Bedos-Rezak, 271.

Chapter 2: Sculpture

As discussed above, Anne de Montmorency understood that the visibility and large scale of architectural works offered the opportunity to express one's ideology and to make bold political statements. Therefore he lavished a great amount of wealth on the construction of his châteaux and hôtels, hiring talented architects and craftsmen to contribute to their design. Montmorency's selection of these men was very deliberate; he was cultivating in France the abilities of local masters in order to develop a new style that would suit his own character as well as that of his country. While the Renaissance in France has traditionally been associated with the importation of Italian artists and Italian style, Montmorency made an effort to balance foreign influence with native custom. A similar phenomenon can be observed in Montmorency's commissions for sculpture. While Italian influence persists, it is checked by messages of French supremacy, and by other stylistic influences.

Montmorency's architectural masterpieces required equally admirable, and often monumental, ornamentation. Sculpture had been a primary form of ornament for the ancients, and this tendency continued during the Gothic period in France; thus there were French artists capable of creating sculpted works on a scale and of a quality that were appropriate for Montmorency's residences. The persistence of classical elements in sculptural decoration through the Middle Ages allowed him to incorporate classical influence without abandoning native traditions and local craftsmen. These sculpted works reinforced the themes established by the style of Montmorency's buildings, which included his status, military strength, and Catholic devotion; the glory of the monarchy; and France's usurpation of Roman preeminence. In this chapter, I will discuss sculpted works owned or commissioned by Montmorency including two of Michelangelo's *Slaves*, sculpted elements from the entrance at Écouen, the altar and four

figures of saints from the chapel at Écouen, the sculpted fireplace in the *salle d'honneur* of the same château, and the *Phaeton* panels. There is very little evidence for specific works of sculpture that Montmorency may have owned aside from these, and all of the works included here were associated with the château at Écouen. This common provenance helps to explain why Écouen is seen as having a more clearly articulated iconographical program than his other residences.

Many of these works do not fit tidily into traditional surveys of French Renaissance sculpture, which typically focus on funerary monuments or on the contributions in France of foreign artists.¹ An exception is the emphasis placed on the works of Jean Goujon, although rarely do scholars address the important role that Anne de Montmorency played in his career. As with architecture, the constable's contribution to the development of sculpture in France has been underestimated. Sometimes mentioned as an aside, he was in fact a major arbiter of style. He influenced other courtiers and members of the royal family, most notably Catherine de' Medici. To overlook Montmorency in the arena of sculpture is to have an incomplete picture of the development of that art form in sixteenth-century France.

Michelangelo's *Slaves*

Perhaps the most famous objects in Montmorency's collection, the *Slaves* by Michelangelo have been the subjects of much scholarly debate. The two works, individually titled the *Dying Slave* (Fig. 28) and the *Rebellious Slave* (Fig. 29), were carved between 1513 and 1516 for the proposed splendid funerary monument of Pope Julius II.² The planning for the

¹ See Zerner, chap. 10; Blunt, 16-32.

² For the history of the *Slaves*, see Jean-René Gaborit, *Michel-Ange: Les esclaves* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2004); John Pope-Hennessy, *Italian High Renaissance and Baroque Sculpture* (New York: Phaidon, 1970), 81-109; L. Dorez, *Nouvelles recherches sur Michel-Ange et son entourage* (Paris: Daupelley-gouverneur, 1918).

tomb was fraught with difficulties, and the original design for a freestanding monument underwent several modifications. For financial reasons the project ultimately was reduced to a smaller wall tomb that did not include the *Slaves*. Michelangelo gave the two marble statues to Florentine exile Roberto Strozzi, who in turn presented them as a gift to King François I of France. Upon François's death in 1547 the *Slaves* became the property of his son, the new sovereign Henri II. At least one scholar has suggested that Henri was not as enthusiastic about the arts as his father had been, and that he was not entirely aware of the importance or the value of these works.³ As a result, he gave them to his close friend and advisor, Montmorency, who had already cultivated a reputation as an avid art collector. It seems doubtful that Henri would have been unaware of the importance of works by Michelangelo, and it is more likely that Henri passed the works to Montmorency as a sign of respect and favor for him.

Several scholars have written histories of the *Slaves*,⁴ but none focus on the period during which they belonged to Montmorency. These same scholars have debated the meaning and symbolism of the sculptures, without any discussion of what they might have meant in the context of his collection. To do so will shed light on how they were understood in Michelangelo's own lifetime.

Both statues depict fully nude male figures that are over life-size and carved from white marble. Neither is fully completed, but each have roughly carved sections left unfinished by Michelangelo. The one known as the *Dying Slave* (Fig. 28) represents a handsome youth in the throes of death, or perhaps awakening from, or falling into, a deep slumber. His left arm is raised to expose his flank, and bent at the elbow so that his hand falls behind his head. His right hand rests on his chest in a gesture that suggests pain, faintness, or debility. A band across the

³ Gaborit, 10.

⁴ See n. 2.

chest indicates that he is fettered and constricted. The general impression the figure gives is one of vulnerability and languidness rather than intense suffering. On the base of the statue is a roughly carved form usually identified as a monkey or ape.

The *Rebellious Slave* (Fig. 29) is a somewhat stockier figure in the midst of a violent struggle, as indicated by the straining of his muscles and the torsion of his body. He is also more constrained, with both arms tightly bound behind him. Unlike the somewhat lax band across the chest of the *Dying Slave*, that around the *Rebellious Slave* is tight enough to cut into the flesh of his arms, further emphasizing his exertion. The figure's right leg is bent at the knee as his foot rests on a block. His torso twists to the right, while his head strains to the left. The figure is much more active than his companion, and does seem to be rebelling actively against subjection. Here too the sculpture is buttressed by a roughly carved support, but no clearly legible form can be discerned on it.

At the time he acquired them, Montmorency was in the midst of construction at Écouen (see Chap. 1). Jean Goujon had just left to enter the service of the new king, and Jean Bullant was carrying out modifications to the château's façades. These included the south interior façade to which Bullant added a portico modeled on the Temple of Jupiter Stator in Rome, with columns of the colossal order. It is here that Montmorency ultimately decided to place the *Slaves* (Figs. 12 and 13). There is some debate over whether the portico was designed in such a monumental fashion in order to provide a grand setting for these new additions to Montmorency's collection. Jean-René Gaborit states that the portico was indeed created as a framing device for the works.⁵ This seems entirely possible, considering they seem to have entered Montmorency's possession in the late 1540s and the portico was not constructed until the

⁵ Gaborit, 10.

1550s. We do not know, however, the exact year in which Montmorency came into possession of the *Slaves*, nor the precise date of the portico's construction. As an alternative scenario to Gaborit's hypothesis, one could imagine that Montmorency decided to place these new acquisitions in Bullant's imposing portico because the setting was most appropriate for them. Indeed the niches between the columns of the portico on the opposite side of the courtyard seem too small to contain the *Slaves*, and it is hard to imagine that Montmorency would have placed such valuable works of art on an exterior façade. Whether the portico was designed to frame the statues, or the statues were placed in the space that most befit them may never be known.

Either way, we do have a sixteenth-century source that depicts the *Slaves* flanking the entrance at the center of the south portico. This is Jacques Androuet Du Cerceau's *Les plus excellents bastiments de France*, published about ten years after Montmorency's death.⁶ An engraving in the text shows the *Rebellious Slave* in a niche on the left side of the entrance, and the *Dying Slave* similarly placed on the opposite side (Fig. 30).⁷ Du Cerceau's depiction shows how seamlessly they are integrated into the architectural composition. We can also see how, if they are interpreted as captives or prisoners of war, they continue the theme of militarism found in the trophies and armor sculpted above.

This brings us to the thorny topic of how to read these sculptures. There are conflicting explanations of the iconographical theme that date from the sixteenth century.⁸ In his biography of Michelangelo, Ascanio Condivi states that these captives are personifications of the Liberal Arts that Julius II had so famously patronized; he further tells us that Michelangelo intended

⁶ Jacques Androuet Du Cerceau, *Les plus excellents bastiments de France* vol 2 (Paris: A. Lévy, 1868-70), n.p.

⁷ This is the reverse of how reproductions of the *Slaves* are placed at Écouen today. A copy of the *Rebellious Slave* is to the right of the entrance, with the *Dying Slave* to the left.

⁸ For a discussion of the various interpretations, see Gaborit, 31-42.

them to denote all of the Virtues that had become prisoners of death along with the pontiff, since they would never again find someone to nourish them as Julius had.⁹ Thus we could read the *Dying Slave* as a representation of the arts falling into a mournful sleep upon the death of their chief patron, marking the end of an era. The *Rebellious Slave* could be interpreted along similar lines as depicting the last powerful gasp of life breathed into the arts by Julius II, and their struggle against an inevitable denouement. John Pope-Hennessy argues that this is not so, as the Pope had clearly opened a new era of art patronage and the Arts continued to flourish after his death.¹⁰

An alternative interpretation can be found in Vasari's life of Michelangelo. He tells us that the *Slaves* represent the provinces subjugated by Julius II.¹¹ This seems unlikely, since the design for the tomb that included the *Slaves* was created in 1505, and therefore well before the start of the campaigns that earned Julius the sobriquet of the "Warrior Pope."¹²

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century interpretations are equally variable. Oscar Ollendorf, writing in 1898, argued that the statues portray the human soul on earth as though in prison, bound by physical limitations.¹³ More recently, Erwin Panofsky suggested a similar meaning, explaining that the *Slaves* represent the human soul on earth enslaved by matter.¹⁴ These explanations involving the purity of the soul and the baseness of bodily existence are based on Neoplatonist theories that were circulating in the sixteenth century and therefore could have

⁹ Ascanio Condivi, *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti* (Rome: Blado Stampatore, 1553), 16.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹¹ Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, Gaetano Milanesi, ed., vol. 7 (Firenze: G.C. Sansoni, 1881), 164.

¹² *Ibid.*, 83.

¹³ Oscar Ollendorf, "Michelangelos Gefangene im Louvre," *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 9 (1898): 273-81.

¹⁴ Erwin Panofsky, "The First Two Projects of Michelangelo's Tomb of Julius II," *The Art Bulletin* 19, no. 4 (1937): 561-79.

informed Michelangelo's ideas. It is also possible that even Michelangelo may have been uncertain as to their meaning, or that he intended them to be evocative and interpretive, without a fixed symbolism.¹⁵

A final theory centers on the ape carved at the base of the *Dying Slave*, and what could be an incomplete version of the same creature at the base of the *Rebellious Slave*. Some scholars have taken this to mean that the figures personify the art of painting and sculpture, respectively, since art is the "ape of nature" and seeks to imitate nature.¹⁶ This is informed in part by Condivi's explanation of the figures as personifications of the arts, and in the context of Julius's tomb could be a reference to the Pope's promotion of painting and sculpture.

But what significance did these works possess for Anne de Montmorency? There was obvious value in owning works by the great Italian master. The prestige they would have brought surely appealed to Montmorency, but their use at Écouen suggests that they also held a deeper meaning for him. While they never fulfilled their function as part of a funerary monument, he appropriated them for his own purposes. In light of the iconographical themes present at the château at Écouen, the figures may have acquired a new meaning when they were put on display in France.

As noted in Chap. 1, the style and decoration of the architecture at Écouen present themes of triumph, militarism, and French sovereignty. It is worth pointing out that in Roman art, prisoners were nothing more than prisoners, and their meaning was relatively straightforward. Pope-Hennessy tells us that when the motif was used in the Renaissance, it was often employed

¹⁵ Pope-Hennessy, 97.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 91. See also H.W. Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore in the Middle Ages* (London: Warburg Institute, University of London, 1952), 295.

in a similarly restricted manner.¹⁷ This is not to say that Michelangelo's figures are devoid of other meanings, such as ones based on Neoplatonic concepts, but their association with military conquest was well established. Gaborit points out that, thanks to greater knowledge in the sixteenth century of ancient Roman art (due in part to translations of Vitruvius), images of captives were strongly associated with notions of military triumph and conquest.¹⁸ As mentioned above, this linkage coincides with motifs sculpted in relief on the portico at Écouen where the *Slaves* stood, including shields, helmets, quivers, and other arms. Similar imagery can be found on ancient artworks, where they often represent trophies or spoils of war. An example (discussed in Chap. 1) is the relief sculpture depicting piles of captured armor that decorates the triumphal arch at Orange in southern France.

Militaristic themes would have had personal relevance for Montmorency, who joined the army at the age of 17. He fought with French forces during the campaigns in Italy, distinguishing himself at Marignano. He commanded the Swiss in Italy in 1521, and he was named Marshal of France in 1522 for his courage on the battlefield. By that time he even had personal experience with being a prisoner of war. In 1518 he was taken hostage in England for François's debt to Henry VIII for the city of Tournai, and returned to France the following year. Montmorency was a soldier to the death, dying from a wound suffered at the Battle of St. Denis.

With these facts in mind, the most logical conclusion is that Montmorency read the *Slaves* first and foremost as symbols of military conquest. His interest in ancient Roman art would have reinforced this understanding of the figures.¹⁹ While criticisms of Montmorency as

¹⁷ Pope-Hennessy, 91.

¹⁸ Gaborit, 33.

¹⁹ Montmorency was reportedly interested in antiquities from a young age. See Bedos-Rezak, 314-17; Willox, 262.

unlettered and as not particularly scholarly have been overblown,²⁰ he would have certainly understood a militaristic interpretation more readily than a Neoplatonic one. Statues of prisoners of war would have fit perfectly into the iconographical scheme at Écouen. The theme of military victory seen in the trophies on the portico would have been made more powerful and moving by the addition of large-scale human figures whose expression of torment is clear. They would have served as a palpable reminder of Montmorency's strength as a soldier, and would have intimidated any potential opponents. Ancient Roman precedents for figures of prisoners of war symbolizing triumph existed. During the Renaissance, two figures of barbarian prisoners, now at the Museo Nazionale in Naples, stood in the Piazza dei Santi Apostoli in Rome, where visiting artists frequently sketched them.²¹ Another example, a figure of Victory with trophies and a barbarian prisoner, is now located at the entrance to the Boboli Gardens in Florence. Originally part of the arch of Diocletian, during Montmorency's time the Victory was in the collection at the Palazzo Valle-Capranica. Gabriele Simeoni inspected it there in 1557 and left descriptions in Italian and French.²² Thus, the French had access to classical models for images of human war trophies through sketches and written descriptions. Montmorency was tapping into this tradition when he inserted the *Slaves* into the environment of his château at Écouen.

The concept of France as the new Rome presented at Écouen would have been aided by the presence of the *Slaves*. Although they had come to France as gifts, and not as spoils of war,

²⁰ Bertrand tells us it was said that Montmorency could neither read nor write (“*On a dit aussi que le Connétable ne savait ni lire ni écrire...*”), 37. This is unimaginable, considering that he was raised in the household of Anne of Brittany where he received a similar education to that of François I. His proficiency in ancient languages may have been somewhat lacking, since he had many Greek and Latin texts translated into French, but his extensive library suggests that he was not illiterate.

²¹ Catherine Grodecki, *Histoire de l'art au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Archives Nationales, 1985-86), 306.

²² *Ibid.*, 306.

they represented the appropriation of valuable cultural products. The fruit of Michelangelo's genius now belonged to Montmorency, and to France.²³ He was using the visual arts to symbolically proclaim dominion over Italy. For Montmorency the soldier, Michelangelo's bound slaves thus became symbols of France's eventual political control of Italy. For Montmorency the art collector and patron they represented France succeeding Italy as artistic capital of the world.

The *Slaves* remained at Écouen for less than a century before Cardinal Richelieu took them to his château in Poitou. They were seized during the Revolution and entered the Louvre in 1794, where they remain today. The brevity of their stay at Écouen may explain why scholars have neglected this period of their life, but their function in the context of Montmorency's residence helps to clarify their meaning.

Sculpture from the Entrance at the Château of Écouen

The entrance wing at the château at Écouen has traditionally been attributed to Jean Goujon, and was likely executed under the direction of Jean Bullant by a team of artists and craftsmen Goujon had assembled.²⁴ This wing was on the eastern side of the château, and is the only wing to have been completely demolished. It was razed at the end of the eighteenth century and replaced by a new structure that still serves as the entrance today. There are clues, however, to how the entrance wing originally looked. One is Du Cerceau's *Les plus excellents bastiments de France*, which contains an engraving by depicting the monumental entryway modeled on a triumphal arch (Fig. 15). The engraving gives a good impression of what must have been an impressive structure, and shows the sculpted ornament in some detail, including an equestrian

²³ For further discussion of Michelangelo's works in France, see Paul Joannides, "Michelangelo's Lost Hercules," *The Burlington Magazine* 119, no. 893 (Aug., 1977): 550-55.

²⁴ See Chap. 1 of this text.

portrait of Montmorency by Goujon at the top of the composition. In addition, two allegorical figures of Fame survive from the entrance and are preserved today at the Louvre.

Part of the significance of the château at Écouen lies in the fact that it remains almost entirely intact, and the loss of the entrance wing was a tragedy. An analysis of some of the sculpted elements from the wing will shed light on one of the most important and dramatic parts of the château, and help us to understand how the building and its iconographical program functioned in Montmorency's time. Furthermore, it will provide insight into the early phase of Goujon's career, before he created for the crown the works for which he is most famous. In this way the sculpted decoration at Écouen acts as an important marker in the development of the arts in France as they emerged from a predominantly Gothic style to a unique classicism that would dominate in later centuries.

The Equestrian Portrait. Du Cerceau's engraving shows the monumental entryway at Écouen surmounted by an equestrian portrait of Montmorency (Fig. 15). The statue appears to be sculpted in the round and is placed under an arch. This work does not survive today, so we are dependent on Du Cerceau's depiction for knowledge of its appearance. There is no way to know whether the engraving was completely true to the appearance of the statue. The portrait was likely designed by Jean Goujon, but executed after his departure from Écouen in 1547 to work for King Henri II. The attribution of the ensemble to Goujon is based not only on knowledge of Goujon's presence at Écouen, but also on comparisons to other works by him. Anthony Blunt and William Ward point out similarities between the entryway at Écouen and the funerary monument of Louis de Brézé in the Rouen Cathedral (Fig. 31).²⁵ Both consist of paired columns flanking a straight entablature on the bottom level and an arch above; each also has an

²⁵ Blunt, 78; Ward, 126. Zerner is more tentative in his attribution of the Brézé monument to Goujon, 394, fig. 425.

equestrian portrait, although the one on the Brézé monument is less adventurous than that at Écouen. If the engraving is faithful to the portrait as it appeared at the château, the sculpture was a truly remarkable work.

According to the engraving, the equestrian portrait showed Montmorency mounted atop a rearing charger. He grips the reins with his left hand, while the right reaches skyward, brandishing a sword. He wears a helmet, and is shown charging into battle. The pose of the horse is astonishing. It rears up and bears all of its weight on one of its hind legs, creating a sense of dynamism and movement. It is as though we have caught Montmorency in the midst of dramatic action. He appears valiant and in control of the beast he rides; he also looks as though he is equally dominant over his opponents. One can easily imagine a fallen enemy below the raised front legs of the horse. This kind of pose, with the weight of the entire statue balanced precariously on the horse's hind legs, would have been very difficult to achieve in either bronze or marble.

Equestrian portraits had a rich history in Europe by Montmorency's time.²⁶ The most famous example, and one that sixteenth-century visitors to Rome would have seen, was the bronze portrait of Marcus Aurelius (Fig. 32). This statue had been moved from the Lateran Palace to the Capitoline Hill in 1538 during Michelangelo's redesign of the Piazza del Campidoglio.²⁷ It therefore may have been a subject of discussion and admiration for artists during the time that Montmorency was building Écouen. Aside from being one of the only full-size bronze statues preserved from the ancient world, the sculpture was admired for its technical

²⁶ See Walter Liedtke, *The Royal Horse and Rider: Painting, Sculpture, and Horsemanship, 1500-1800* (New York: Abaris Books, 1989).

²⁷ See Anna Sommella Mura and Claudio Parisi Presicce, *Il Marco Aurelio e la sua copia* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 1997); and Rossella Magri, *La Piazza del Campidoglio dal medioevo al rinascimento* (Rome: F. Palombi, 1993).

artistry. Although the horse stands with one leg raised, the artist achieved perfect balance. When large-scale bronze-casting was revived in the fifteenth century, Donatello would have difficulty employing the same pose. His equestrian portrait of *Gattamelata* shows the horse in a similar stance, but he had to place an orb beneath the horse's raised foot in order to help support the statue (Fig. 33). Clearly, the portrait of Marcus Aurelius had set a standard for equestrian portraits in later periods.

Although few equestrian portraits were produced in the Middle Ages, examples in the tradition of the Marcus Aurelius existed that carried the type through to the Early Modern era. An example is the portrait of Bernabò Visconti executed by Bonino da Campione, today at the Castello Sforzesco in Milan (Fig. 34). This statue portrays Visconti mounted on horseback. King Louis XII of France had laid claim to the duchy of Milan in 1492. After the victory of François I (Louis's successor) at the Battle of Marignano, where Montmorency distinguished himself on the battlefield, the duchy was promised to the French king. Thus, the French had close ties with Milan, and it is possible that soldiers, diplomats, and other travelers to the city had seen this equestrian portrait.

Montmorency's portrait bears little resemblance to that of Bernabò Visconti, which is rather stiff and static. It has more in common with another equestrian monument that dates from the late fifteenth century. In the 1480s, Leonardo da Vinci designed a colossal bronze monument that was to feature Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, on horseback.²⁸ At twenty-four feet high, the Sforza monument would have been an impressive feat of engineering, especially considering that Leonardo planned to use a daring rearing stance. Although the monument was never executed, Leonardo did create a clay model and drawings for the design. The invading French

²⁸ See Diane Cole Ahl, *Leonardo da Vinci's Sforza Horse Monument: The Art and the Engineering* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1995).

army destroyed the model in 1499-1500, so it is possible that some knowledge of it had made its way to France, where it would have been of interest to artists such as Goujon. A drawing executed in silver-point on blue paper, preserved today in the British Royal Collection depicts a composition that clearly served as an inspiration for Goujon at Écouen (Fig. 35).²⁹ The similarities between Leonardo's design and Goujon's are many. Both show a strong, muscular soldier mounted on a rearing stallion and wielding a sword. Both suggest the power of the human body in motion and in control of opposing forces. Goujon was among the first of many artists inspired by Leonardo's Sforza monument. Even in Jacques-Louis David's *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*, painted in 1800 and currently at the Musée national du Château de Malmaison, the influence of Leonardo lingers (Fig. 36).³⁰

Marcus Aurelius, Bernabò Visconti, Gattamelata, and Francesco Sforza were all renowned military leaders, and their equestrian portraits show them in that role. Because of examples such as these, the motif of the equestrian portrait had come to represent a militaristic ideal by the sixteenth century. Andrea Alciati's *Emblemata* of 1531 further popularized the symbolism of equestrian imagery.³¹ An image of a rider mastering a rearing horse was used to indicate rulership in this widely popular text. Anne de Montmorency's portrait fit perfectly into the same tradition. Those familiar with the tradition of equestrian portraiture would have seen Montmorency as part of an elite group of soldiers. When approaching his château, it would have been clear to visitors that they were entering the property of an exalted military leader.

²⁹ Ahl, pl. 11. Royal Library, Windsor, 12358r.

³⁰ See Luc de Nanteuil, *Jacques-Louis David* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1990), 100, pl. 27.

³¹ The statue most closely resembles the emblem for *In adulari nescientem* in Alciati's text. See Andrea Alciati, *Emblemata* (Lugduni: Apud haeredes Gulielmi Rouilij, 1614), pl. XXXV.

Montmorency, who led French military forces throughout his life, was intentionally assuming the role of a Roman emperor and proclaiming his might to the world.

Montmorency's equestrian portrait differs from most of the examples mentioned above in the pose of the horse. While Marcus Aurelius, Bernabò Visconti, and Gattamelata all ride relatively calm steeds, Montmorency's is in a more active stance. The Sforza monument provided one example of this kind of pose, but Goujon may have been looking at other models as well. The rearing pose was used frequently on Roman coins that featured images of the emperor on horseback.³² Ancient coins were popular among collectors of antiquities in France, including Montmorency, so it is possible that Goujon could have seen some in various collections and been inspired by the imagery. The column of Trajan, too, features rearing horses in the relief sculpture that decorates it. This monument was a main attraction to visitors traveling to Rome during the sixteenth century, some of whom made sketches after it. A drawing by Jean Cousin of two children frolicking among ruins shows the column in the background, and one can faintly make out the detail of a rider on a rearing horse.³³ Antoine Lafréry also made engravings after sketches of the column that would have enabled a wider audience to see the sculpted imagery.³⁴

Most unusual about Du Cerceau's depiction of Montmorency's equestrian portrait is the fact that it appears to be sculpted in the round. This illusion is largely due to the way the sword that he holds overlaps the vault of the arch above. The shading makes the space under the arch appear quite deep—so deep, in fact, that a relief sculpture would be difficult to see from the ground. Is it possible that Goujon was able to construct a sculpture in the round of a horse supported on only one leg? Such an accomplishment would be nearly miraculous at such an

³² Ibid., 52.

³³ This drawing, titled *Enfants jouant*, is currently at the Louvre in the Cabinet des dessins, 95CN19432.

³⁴ McGowan, 335; fig. 100.

early date. More likely, Du Cerceau is taking some license with his rendering of the sculpture. In an effort to make Montmorency's portrait appear as moving as possible, he appears to have distorted some of the details. In all likelihood, this portrait was done in relief. The pose of the horse is remarkable, nonetheless.

By placing his portrait in a triumphal arch, Montmorency made the message one not just of military strength, but also of victory. By the time the entrance façade was being completed in the 1550s, Montmorency had been welcomed back to court by King Henri II after a period of disgrace. The arch and portrait made a conspicuous statement of triumph. The iconography of the ensemble expresses Montmorency's glorious return to favor and the vanquishing of his enemies. This theme was continued, as we have seen, in the sculpted decoration of the courtyard façades. The trophies and the *Slaves* of the south portico greeted visitors as they passed through the entrance into the courtyard, and left no doubt that Montmorency was a figure of vital importance to the court of France.

Two Figures of *Fame*. While the equestrian portrait does not survive, making it impossible to evaluate its style or technical aspects of its execution, two works of sculpture from the entrance wing at Écouen do survive. They are housed today at the Musée national de la Renaissance. Each depicts an allegorical representation of Fame (Figs. 37 and 38). The figures are winged and crowned with laurel wreaths. They are each seated with one arm propped up and the other supporting an unsheathed sword—Montmorency's emblem.³⁵

These figures are not present in Du Cerceau's engraving of the façade, but their pose and the shape of the fragment of stone to which they are attached suggest placement in the spandrel of an arch. One possible position for them to have occupied is flanking the arch at the level just

³⁵ See Pierre Du Colombier, *Jean Goujon* (Paris: Michel, 1949), 51, pl. XL (this text is hereafter cited as JG); Zerner, fig. 179.

above the square-headed entrance of the ground floor and below the arch containing the equestrian statue. Alternatively, they could have framed a shield displaying Montmorency's coat of arms. No such coat of arms appears in Du Cerceau's engraving, leaving uncertainty whether these figures were on the façade.

The figures of *Fame* refer to Montmorency's status by holding a sword, but there is another detail that denotes his rank. Carved in high relief just to the left of the right-hand figure is a string of cockleshells connected by a rope or chain (Fig. 38). This closely resembles the collar worn by members of the prestigious Order of St. Michael, a French chivalric order founded in 1469 by King Louis XI. The goal of the Order was to confirm the loyalty of its knights to the king. This was the highest order in France until it was superseded by the Order of the Holy Spirit in 1578, and its members were the highest-ranking noblemen in the country. This honor was conferred on Montmorency in 1522. He also wears the pendant of the Order of St. Michael in an enamel portrait by Léonard Limosin (Fig. 93).³⁶ Together with the motif of the unsheathed sword and the figures of Fame, the string of cockleshells left no doubt in the minds of visitors approaching Écouen that the owner of the château was one of France's most celebrated men.

The figures of *Fame* suggest an attribution to the team assembled at Écouen by Jean Goujon.³⁷ They must have been executed after the master's departure, since the entrance façade seems to date from the 1550s. Their style, while finely detailed and with a certain ease of pose, lacks the graceful fluidity of works by Goujon's own hand. Zerner points out, however, that they bear some resemblance to the illustrations for Jean Martin's translation of Vitruvius that Goujon

³⁶ This portrait is discussed in chap. 4 of this text.

³⁷ JG, 50.

had executed.³⁸ This could be the result of craftsmen following designs in a graphic medium left by Goujon.

The twisted scroll adjacent to the cockleshell collar is similar to the strapwork details seen in Rosso Fiorentino's stucco decorations of the Gallery of François I at Fontainebleau. After the use there of strapwork motifs their popularity was facilitated by the dissemination of prints by artists including Antonio Fantuzzi, Jean Mignon and René Boyvin.³⁹ This type of ornamentation became ubiquitous in the sixteenth century, and the author of the *Fame* figures at Écouen was clearly up-to-date on this current fashion. Although the artists Montmorency employed were often local and little known, their designs were not provincial or outmoded. They were instead rather cosmopolitan and part of a style associated with court culture that scholars now refer to as Mannerism. This strapwork detail is incorporated into an iconographical scheme extolling the virtues of Montmorency. In addition to having rank and position, he was also fashionable.

Although we may never know exactly what the east façade of the château at Écouen looked like, there is enough surviving evidence to suggest that the statements of militarism and victory seen on the other façades were made most forcefully there. Incorporated into a scheme with superimposed triumphal arches, the equestrian portrait and the images of *Fame* asserted Montmorency's importance and served as markers of his return to royal favor.

Montmorency could easily have circulated word of his return to court by way of letters and written proclamations, but he understood the visceral impact that the visual arts could have. At his château he was utilizing this force to demonstrate his place in the social hierarchy. He

³⁸ Zerner, 175.

³⁹ On the dissemination of decorative motifs from Fontainebleau through prints, see Zerner, 125-145.

wanted the foreign and domestic dignitaries visiting his home to recognize him for his great military conquests and for his cultivation of the arts. He intended to emphasize that the era of medieval warlords and diffuse, decentralized power had passed; he was expressing his desire to usher in a period of cultural rejuvenation, in which the leaders of nations were refined, dignified, and part of a tradition strongly connected to Imperial Rome.

Two Figures of Fame, West Courtyard Façade

As visitors pass through the entrance of the château at Écouen, they are greeted from across the courtyard by another triumphal arch, albeit a more understated one than marks the entryway (Fig. 39).⁴⁰ The structure is placed at the center of the west wing, and is the only element to break the austerity of that *corps de logis*. The south and north wings have more elaborate classical porticoes, making this one seem humble in comparison. By looking closely at the details of the structure on the west wing, however, one finds that it is anything but humble.

In chapter one we saw how the various façades of the château at Écouen are elaborated with classical porticoes and *avant-corps*. The structure added to the interior west façade does not make the same bold statement as the addition to the exterior north façade or the one designed to frame Michelangelo's *Slaves*. But since it was to be the first thing visitors saw upon passing into the courtyard, it needed to tie in the messages of militarism and triumph seen in those other parts of the building. In fact, it dates from before the other porticoes and so may have set the tone for the alterations carried out by Bullant during the 1550s.

The triumphal arch on the west courtyard façade is a simple one-story structure, one bay in width, composed of Doric columns carrying a short section of entablature and framing a round arch. It is the relief sculpture contained in the spandrels of this arch that interests us here. The

⁴⁰ See JG, fig. 33.

space is constricted and shadowed by the projection of the entablature, and the sculpture could go unnoticed were it not for the striking beauty of the figures carved there. In each spandrel is a figure of Fame, winged and bearing laurel branches. With languid grace they reach up to place the branches at the peak of the arch. Swords and armor, the accoutrements of the soldier, accompany them. Their drapery swirls around them and fills the spandrels with a texture that contrasts with the severity of the blank walls of the *corps de logis*. While not lacking mass or a sense of corporeality, the figures appear as though floating in water, suspended in fluid motion. Their lithe ease makes the figures of Fame from the entrance appear somewhat stocky in comparison.

For these reasons, Pierre Du Colombier suggests that the figures are by the hand of Jean Goujon, and not the team of assistants that would execute so much of the sculpture at Écouen.⁴¹ He sees them as the antecedents of the nymphs from Goujon's *Fontaine des Innocents* in Paris, a project for which his swimming contours were perfectly suited. They are also strikingly similar to two figures of Fame in the spandrels above an arched entrance at Diane de Poitiers's château at Anet.⁴² Because of the prominent placement of the *Fame* figures immediately opposite the entrance, Montmorency may have requested that the master carve them himself. He wanted to make a bold statement to visitors, one that simultaneously expressed his role as triumphant soldier as well as patron and discoverer of a new artistic talent. Moreover, the classical style of the monumental entryway is continued here. It is important to note that Montmorency did not hire Italian artists to create these Roman-influenced works. Rather, he chose a native Frenchman who, under his patronage, was working out the style that would become so closely associated

⁴¹ Ibid., 47-8; fig. VIII.

⁴² Ibid., fig. XLV.

with the French Renaissance. At Écouen Goujon was exploring the mode that would be favored later by the king and by Catherine de' Medici.

The Sculptural Fireplace

Although little remains of Écouen's interior decoration, one element survives *in situ* that suggests that the theme of militarism and triumph continued inside the walls of the château. The grand *salle d'honneur* is located on the first floor in the north wing. One of the principal features of this room that remains is the elaborate fireplace surround (Figs. 40 and 41). The château at Écouen is famous for its painted fireplaces, but this one, located in the same wing as the suite of rooms belonging to Henri II, stands out for being sculpted from polychrome marble and Italian slate.⁴³

This very large, ostentatious work is decorated with egg and dart moldings, garlands, swags, rosettes, and all manner of classical details. Just above the mantle on each side of the fireplace, resting on plinths, are helmets carved in deep relief. At the center of all of this, in a large rectangular panel, is an image of Victory. She is winged and carries in her right hand an unsheathed sword, a double allusion to both Montmorency and to Victory. Drapery flutters about her body as she strides forward and raises a laurel wreath above her head with her left hand. Her head turns sharply to our left giving us a profile view of her face. This twisting pose brings to mind the *figura serpentinata*, a characteristic trait of Mannerist art.⁴⁴ The posture of the Écouen *Victory* can thus be interpreted not as an awkward imitation of Jean Goujon's facility of pose, but as a response to contemporary stylistic developments.

The animated dynamism of the *Victory*, the plethora of classical adornments, and the various colors of stone create an impression of cacophony, of multitudinous members vying for

⁴³ Ibid., fig. XXXIX.

⁴⁴ John Shearman, *Mannerism* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 81.

attention. Each element asserts itself aggressively. Despite that fact, a sort of luxurious harmony is achieved. There is a cohesive richness of effect in the variety that recalls what John Shearman calls “an all-over interwoven consistency of emphasis.”⁴⁵ This love of variety and complexity is typical of Mannerist art in Italy and by the middle of the century this fashionable court style was taking hold in France as well.

The iconographical message of this work, like so many other elements of the decoration at the château at Écouen, is the military power and triumph of Montmorency. By the inclusion of the unsheathed sword it emblemizes his place in the hierarchy of the French court, making his status visible. Because he led the army and helped shape government policies, his own triumphs were those of the kingdom and his own power reflected that of the French. The victory is both personal and collective. Through the use of classical motifs the work continues the appropriation of Roman glory for French purposes.

Willox states unequivocally that this work is by Jean Goujon, but there is reason to doubt this attribution.⁴⁶ It is unlikely that this room was decorated before 1550 when Montmorency made major alterations to the north wing. This is three years after Goujon’s departure from Écouen. Moreover, the style of the sculpture casts doubt on the idea that it is by Goujon’s hand. The pose of the figure, though not without boldness and vigor, lacks the elegant simplicity of Goujon’s works. There is also a jagged rigidity, a restlessness to the *Victory* that one would not expect in a work by the master. The proportions of the figure are somewhat inelegant; the wings appear too diminutive and cramped by the framed space. Nevertheless, there are some similarities between the Écouen *Victory* and particular figures on Goujon’s Louvre façade.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Ibid., 149.

⁴⁶ Willox, 272.

⁴⁷ JG, 48-9.

Two such examples are the personifications of War and Peace flanking a circular window on the façade of the Cour Carré designed by Lescot (Fig. 42). Each has a somewhat contorted pose and wings that seem under-scaled; however, the fluidity and transparency of the drapery is more effortless there. Some of the spirit of Goujon's original design seems to have been achieved at Écouen, but the masterly handling of the medium is absent.

As with other elements at Écouen, including the entrance façade, it is more likely that Goujon designed this work and that the team of craftsmen he assembled executed it after his departure.⁴⁸ Goujon may have supplied the model for this chimneypiece, but the author of the work was also inspired by engravings produced by Domenico del Barbieri (also called Dominique Florentin) that depicted the decoration of the château at Fontainebleau.⁴⁹ These engravings, widely circulated and easily accessible, would have kept Montmorency and his team of craftsmen at Écouen abreast of stylistic developments at other centers of the court.

Pascal Julien has recently suggested that the chimney was actually a gift from Henri IV to Montmorency's son Henri I de Montmorency upon the latter's promotion to the role of constable.⁵⁰ This would obviously rule out an attribution to Goujon or his team, but suggests that the iconography Anne de Montmorency established at Écouen was powerful and effective enough to be continued by his son, and that his use of artworks to express his persona shaped that of a subsequent generation.

The Phaeton Panels

The figures of *Fame* and *Victory* serve as examples of Montmorency's use of classically inspired allegorical personifications to express his character. He also demonstrated his deeper

⁴⁸ Paul Vitry, *La sculpture française classique de Jean Goujon à Rodin* (Paris: A. Morencé, 1934), 17; see also JG, 49.

⁴⁹ JG, 49.

⁵⁰ Pascal Julien, *Marbres: de carrières en palais* (Manosque: Le bec en l'air, 2006).

knowledge of classical culture by commissioning works with mythological subject matter. He owned a number of classical texts, many of them translated into French allowing him familiarity with even the most esoteric narratives (see Chap. 4). During the mid-sixteenth century in France knowledge of ancient works of literature was still limited to the nobility and upper classes. Reference to these works in decorative programs heralded the patron as part of an elite class in possession of a valued cultural commodity. It also denoted an enlightened individual, one capable of leading the people into an era of refinement and civility.⁵¹

Montmorency would have been mindful of the cultural cachet of classical mythology when he commissioned two panels of relief sculpture to decorate the landing of the grand staircase at Écouen. Carved in low relief, they depict the story of Phaeton, which Montmorency had most likely encountered in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Book II) or Plato's *Timaeus* (the dialogue with Critias). The panels, one depicting the *Departure of Phaeton* (Fig. 43), the other the *Fall of Phaeton* (Fig. 44), have been removed from their original context, but are preserved today at the Musée Condé at Chantilly.⁵²

According to the myth, Phaeton seeks confirmation of his mother's claim that he is the son of Apollo. He visits his suspected father in heaven who tells him that he would grant Phaeton anything he desired as proof of his paternity. Phaeton wants to drive his father's chariot of the sun for the day. Apollo refuses at first, but seeing that Phaeton is adamant, agrees, warning him that the chariot is fiery hot and the horses breathe out flames. Once in the chariot, Phaeton is unable to control it. He veers too high, causing the earth to freeze; he then veers too

⁵¹ See Martin Gosman, Alasdair MacDonald, and Arjo Vanderjagt, *Princes and Princely Culture, 1450-1650* (Leiden: Brill, 2003). Vol. 1 focuses on Renaissance ideologies as expressed in cultural products such as literature, politics, and fine arts of the courts of northern Europe.

⁵² See Musée Condé, *François Ier et l'art renouvelé dans le XVIe siècle dans les collections du château de Chantilly* (exh. cat., Senlis: Impr. réunies de Senlis, 1974), cat. nos. 178-79.

low, scorching the earth and its vegetation and causing rivers to dry up. Eventually Zeus intervenes, striking the chariot with a lightning bolt and plunging Phaeton into the river Eridanos, killing him.

In the panel depicting *Departure of Phaeton* the youth is standing in his father's chariot at the center of the composition. He is nude save for a length of drapery slung over his arms. The emphasis on his muscled torso gives the impression of strength and invulnerability. This is contrasted, however, by the use of a slightly larger scale for the sun god, Apollo, just to the left of his son. Apollo, with his beard and massive proportions seems to embody wisdom and fortitude. This is somewhat unusual, since Renaissance depictions of Apollo typically show him as androgynous, with an emphasis on sensuality. He and Phaeton are in profile, speaking to one another. Apollo raises his right hand to admonish his son, but Phaeton appears defiant, clutching the reins. To the right of the chariot young women representing the Hours are dressed in drapery that falls in cursive folds, while the horses drawing the chariot rear with fiery energy. The backdrop is a cityscape made up of soaring classical buildings. There is a feeling of reckless intensity to the scene that suits the subject matter.

The *Fall of Phaeton* is calm in comparison. The damage done, the Earth scorched, Phaeton is relegated to a marginal position. Off to the left side of the composition he is pitched violently out of the chariot and the horses scatter, disoriented by the commotion. Directly below this, sitting amongst rushes and reeds, is the god of the river Eridanus, personifying the body of water in which the burning body of Phaeton was to be extinguished. At the center of panel, with his back to us, stands Neptune. He is knee-high in the waves and making a sign toward Zeus, who sits in the clouds with an eagle at his feet.

One wonders what relevance this subject had for Montmorency. Knowing that he was the commander of the army, the message of the importance of a rational and capable leader is apt. Only the right individual can fill the role. He would want to avoid the brash, heedless impudence that led to Phaeton's downfall. Indeed, in the writings of Renaissance authors including Montaigne and Ronsard, allusions to Phaeton were used to condemn the arrogance of those who waged and lost a battle or political contest.⁵³ Perhaps the more masculine Apollo type of Montmorency's panels represented a kind of virile heroic ideal, a type less prone to fallaciousness and vain hubris. Giving a beard to the typically more androgynous, youthful Apollo would also make the god resemble Montmorency. It is conceivable that this was intended as a kind of portrait of the constable, especially since there are other examples of artworks that use his likeness to represent a deity.⁵⁴ Each time the constable passed these panels on the stairs he would have been reminded of the vulnerability of those who rush headlong into situations for which they are not prepared, and the danger that unfounded confidence can bring.

The panels are unattributed. They are remarkable stylistically for their use of subtle gradations of surface recalling Donatello's *relievo schiacciato*, which gives the impression of pictorial space, allowing the artist to produce spatial effects similar to those found in painting. The technique appeared in France around the turn of the sixteenth century in works such as Michel Colombe's *St. George and the Dragon* now at the Louvre and dating from the late fifteenth century (Fig. 45). The artist of the Phaeton panels also made an attempt to construct his compositions with linear perspective but failed to fully apply the technique. The poses and

⁵³ See Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays of Michel de Montaigne*, Donald M. Frame, trans. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976), 399; and Pierre de Ronsard, *Remonstrance au peuple françois* (Paris: G. Buon, 1563), n.p. See also Madeleine de L'Aubespine, *Selected Poems and Translations: A Bilingual Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 15.

⁵⁴ See the section in Chap. 4 of this text on Limoges enamels.

anatomy of the figures reveal knowledge of antique art that was likely transmitted through drawings and engravings of decorative sculpture including that found on Roman sarcophagi. There is a lingering medievalism, however, in the crowding of the figures and the artist's inability or refusal to integrate them fully into the spatial construction.

The resulting artwork is a hybrid one revealing the combination of new techniques with Gothic sensibilities. To view the work as merely transitional however, as though it were neither here nor there, is to deny its significance, its validity. True, it is neither fully Gothic nor classical, but these discrete stylistic categories often fail to account for the artistic products of sixteenth-century France. This was indeed a time of change and transition, but to view the period and its art exclusively in those terms is to suggest that they were vacillating, even capricious, with completely unstable meanings and stylistic uncertainty. Such a conception strips them of their ability to make bold assertions. It is a mindset that makes it difficult to understand the Phaeton panels (and many other sixteenth-century French artworks) as legitimate, fully formed works of art. It is doubtful that Montmorency viewed them as a stepping-stone to a fully realized style.

More than just transitional, indecisive, or inchoate, the style signals the fact that the French desired to sustain some of their identity while opening up to the potentialities offered by a broader frame of reference. We are not witnessing a haphazard accretion of stylistic elements, but an assertive declaration of uniqueness. This was a period in which, as Zerner puts it, French culture was seeking "to convince itself that its values were stable and faithful to the past—a past that it chose from among various possibilities."⁵⁵ The Phaeton panels are not stylistically weak,

⁵⁵ Zerner, 422.

but rather embodiments of a time during which the French were forging a national identity out of carefully chosen elements.

The reliefs have been declared “sans valeur,”⁵⁶ and indeed they lack the superb handling of a work by masters such as Donatello, Colombe, or Goujon. The Phaeton panels cannot escape a certain amount of criticism, but they should be acknowledged as significant for their early adoption north of the Alps of Donatello’s carving technique. More importantly, they shed light on the pursuit of a French visual language. One would hate to think that works such as this have been neglected because they have been relegated to the liminal category of “transitional.” Their amalgamated style makes them difficult to confront if one expects all artworks to fit tidily into ready-made groups, but in dealing with the challenge they pose we can observe the limits of the methods traditionally used to approach the art of the past. Is it the panels that are failures, or overly rigid modes of evaluating them?⁵⁷

Sculpture from the Chapel at Écouen

Montmorency was loyal to the Catholic faith and his home would not have been complete without a chapel for religious observances. Aside from day-to-day prayers and regular masses, the chapel had a symbolic function. Its presence in their home demonstrated the faith and devotion of the Montmorency family; it expressed the role that the Church played in their everyday lives. It is important to note Montmorency’s adherence to Catholic tradition. He lived during a period that witnessed the birth of Protestantism. Although the Wars of Religion would not commence until the very last years of his life, the burgeoning movement caused

⁵⁶ See Musée Condé, cat. no. 178-79.

⁵⁷ Recent art-historical studies have done much to challenge these kinds of hegemonic and exclusive norms and master narratives. See Donald Preziosi, *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); and Andrew Edgar and Peter R. Sedgwick, *Cultural Theory: The Key Thinkers* (London: Routledge, 2002).

traditionalists such as Montmorency vocally to defend their faith. The visual arts too were wielded as a method of expressing allegiance. The altar can thus be read as an expression of Montmorency's Catholic ardor.

The architecture of the chapel was more purely Gothic than the rest of the château, with pointed-arch windows, ribbed vaults, and polychrome wooden statues. The altar, however, shows the classical influence found on the château's façades.⁵⁸ The decoration of the chapel thus reveals the duality of the role played by Montmorency as an art patron: that of the Catholic humanist and the reverent Catholic. Based on the style of particular features within the chapel, some scholars have suggested that Rosso Fiorentino played a role in the design of its decoration.⁵⁹ Since he died in 1540, another artist would have continued the work. As discussed below, however, some surviving aspects of the sculpture in the chapel suggest that the second artist retained some of Rosso's designs.

During the revolution, parts of the chapel of the château at Écouen were taken to Chantilly; the altar is on display there at the Musée Condé today. A drawing of the chapel at Écouen by Percier before it was disassembled allows us to reconstruct the original arrangement.⁶⁰

Entrance Surround. As visitors approach the chapel in the southeast corner of the château at Écouen, they encounter a stately entrance articulated by an architectural surround (Fig. 46).⁶¹ Fluted Doric columns rest on tall plinths and support an entablature carved with triglyphs and metopes; this classical device frames an arched entrance. The use of the Doric order here, as in other parts of the château, may be an allusion to the qualities of strength and

⁵⁸ See Musée Condé, cat. no. 180.

⁵⁹ Cécille Scailliérez, *Rosso: Le Christ mort* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2004), 30-4.

⁶⁰ JG, 42; Scailliérez, 23, fig. 13, cat. no. 4.

⁶¹ JG, 42, fig. XXXIV.

vigor that Montmorency embodied. The details of the surround reveal a level of familiarity with ancient Roman architecture seen only rarely in sixteenth-century France. Like Bullant's pavilions on the château's exterior façades, this ensemble appears to be the work of an artist who was capable of handling classical architectural vocabulary in a competent manner. In fact, the entrance surround is so similar to Bullant's work at Écouen that it is entirely possible the work is his; however, the majority of the decorative interior carving and architectural ornament such as the window surrounds on the château's exteriors were designed by Goujon, so the chapel entrance could just as well be attributed to him. Du Colombier includes the entrance in his monograph on Goujon,⁶² but as there is no document that definitively reveals the identity of the master responsible for the entrance surround, a concrete attribution is not possible.

As discussed in Chap. 1, the interior of the chapel features many Gothic elements, such as complex ribbed vaults and pointed windows with trefoil details. The entrance surround would therefore appear to contradict the medieval style of the sacred space. It can, however, be interpreted as a reflection of Montmorency's multifarious interests. While remaining loyal to the Catholic faith and to the traditional French mode for expressing spirituality, he was also drawn to classical antiquity and its associations with imperialism and intellectual refinement. Rather than viewing the pairing of the two styles as an awkward inconsistency, he and his contemporaries probably would have understood the dual modes as allusions to different strains of culture that coexisted at the time. Style was used as a means of expressing one's values, and a single style would have been incapable of communicating the broad range of ideologies in which Montmorency was invested.

⁶² Ibid., 42.

Door Panels. The wooden doors that open onto the chapel were originally entirely carved by Jean Goujon, although all that remains today are the uppermost panels (Fig. 47).⁶³ The semicircular arched form of the panels conforms to that of the entrance. Facing one another from each panel are winged figures seated on plinths, their elbows resting on scrolls. The opposite hand of each figure holds a branch. The graceful twist of the figures' torsos is similar to that of the figure of Fame from the entrance to the château (Fig. 38) and characteristic of Goujon's style. While they have much in common with the classically-inspired allegorical figures found on the château's façades, including their harmonious bodily proportions and clinging drapery, the figures on the door panels represent heavenly messengers that herald the sacred nature of the space behind the doors. As noted above, many of the architectural features of the chapel are Gothic in style, but rather than opting for a medieval mode on the doors, Goujon used the graceful, almost balletic kind of classicism that would make him one of the most sought-after sculptors in France. The figures thus harmonize with the architectural surround of the entrance to the chapel; the contrast created with the vaulting and pointed windows of the space recalls the synthesis of medieval and classical elements of the château's exterior façades.

These panels are especially remarkable because they are rare examples of Goujon's work in wood. He is known for his stone sculpture, but the survival of these panels attests to his fluency in other media.

The Altar. The altar consists of a main central panel depicting the *Sacrifice of Isaac* in relief (Figs. 48-50). A decorative molding frames the scene. Pairs of unfluted black marble columns on either side of this focal point stand out starkly against the white stone of the rest of

⁶³ Ibid., 42, fig. XXXIV.

the altar. They support an entablature with alternating triglyphs and metopes. An image of God the father dominates the center of the entablature. Just below the central panel is the projecting surface of the altar upon which the host was placed. The imagery of the story of Isaac would have paralleled the symbolism of the sacrificed body of Christ during Communion. Just above the floor, the lower portion of the altar is decorated with rectangular panels containing the Evangelists separated by pairs of pilasters and allegorical figures of Virtues. The altar appears massive and compact with a regular outline. It lacks the complicated profiles of medieval retables with their Gothic pinnacles and crockets. It is more restrained, but not wholly spare. The decorative details of the moldings and column capitals lend luxuriousness to the ensemble. After all, the monument was built to honor God; it was therefore appropriate to embellish it richly.

Unsurprisingly, there is also an element of self-aggrandizement. Carved on the sides of the altar so as not to compete directly with the religious imagery are figures of Fame carrying the unsheathed sword of the Constable and the baton of the Grand Master of France, another of Montmorency's titles. By incorporating his personal imagery into the scheme, Montmorency conveys his piety; he is constantly present in the chapel through these devices, constantly observant of the faith. While humble enough to place these emblems at the lowest level, he asserts his close relationship with God depicted above in the entablature. Proximity worked in the same fashion as on the château's facades, where adjacency between the king's devices and those of Montmorency implied an intimate relationship between the two. We are left with the impression that God bestowed these titles on Montmorency, or at least approves of the constable's rank. Statements of divine right such as this had a long legacy in Western Europe by Montmorency's time. For instance, the Roman Emperors claimed to be descendants of the gods.

We see this concept in the *Augustus Primaporta*, where Cupid supports the Emperor and reminds viewers of Augustus's divine ancestry. In the sixteenth century it would have been inappropriate for the king or other nobility to make such a claim, but the idea still lingered in a somewhat different form. Montmorency was not claiming descent from God, but rather that his high rank and privilege was the will of God. No one could contest Montmorency's position when viewed in this light. The constable had learned well the effectiveness of Roman propaganda. He had learned how to harness the power of spiritual faith to bolster his own authority. After Montmorency's time, the concept of divine right became increasingly important for the French monarchy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The central panel featuring the *Sacrifice of Isaac* in relief has been the subject of scholarly criticism (Fig. 49). Du Colombier comments on the "gaucherie" of the sculpture and notes that the figures are stiff, the composition poorly organized, and the sheep amongst the bushes absurd.⁶⁴ These remarks are justified; the awkward inelegance of the relief panel stands out all the more because of the refinement of the altar as a whole. Each element of the sculptural narrative—the angel, the sheep, Abraham, and Isaac—appears as a disparate entity, as though they have little to do with one another, creating a disconnection that disrupts the integrity of the narrative.

The Evangelist figures are of a higher quality (Fig. 50). Each is contained within a rectangular frame and fills the space without feeling crowded. The allegorical personifications of the Virtues also have a suppleness and grace that is lacking from the *Sacrifice of Isaac*. They are placed in the narrow rectangular areas between the Evangelists and respond to the space with their elongated proportions.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 44: "*Les personnages sont raides, la composition dispersée, à gauche l'unique mouton, dans les arbustes, est tout à fait ridicule.*"

These differing qualities of execution suggest that multiple hands contributed to the creation of the altar. Although the whole ensemble has been attributed to Goujon,⁶⁵ most scholars agree that assistants executed it after his designs. As Du Colombier states, “The impression that one has of the altar is contradictory: on the one hand the spirit corresponds to that of Goujon’s known works, on the other the execution of even the best parts does not seem worthy of him.”⁶⁶ Du Colombier goes on to suggest that one assistant carved the *Sacrifice*, while a more capable one did the Evangelists and Virtues. He sets the date of completion at 1545-47. Anthony Blunt agrees that the panels are the work of pupils, but argues that they date from 1543.⁶⁷ At this somewhat earlier date Goujon was present at Écouen, and would have been able to supervise his team directly. At least one other scholar sees the influence of Rosso here, and suggests that Goujon picked up the project after the Italian master’s death in 1540.⁶⁸ For example, the Evangelist figures can be seen as a variation on Rosso’s style in their combination of three-quarter and profile views; the angularity of these figures’ drapery is also reminiscent of Rosso’s mode. Moreover, the cartouches below the Evangelists are quite similar to a device on Rosso’s illustration of a sonnet by Petrarch.⁶⁹

Regardless of precisely when they were completed, it is clear that assistants, and not the master himself, executed the panels. Yet, there are certain parallels with Goujon’s oeuvre that reveal his role as their author, even if he was working under the influence of designs left by Rosso. This is most obvious in the Evangelists (Fig. 50), whose postures are strikingly similar to

⁶⁵ De Broglie, 15.

⁶⁶ JG, 45: “L’impression que l’on reçoit de cet autel est donc fort contradictoire: d’une part un esprit qui correspond bien à tout ce que l’on sait de Goujon, d’autre part une exécution qui, même dans les meilleurs morceaux, ne paraît pas digne de lui.”

⁶⁷ Blunt, 78.

⁶⁸ Scailliérez, 30-4.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 27-8; figs. 20 and 21. Eugene Carroll, *Rosso Fiorentino: Drawings, Prints, and Decorative Arts* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1987), cat. no. 67.

those on the rood screen at St. Germain l'Auxerrois in Paris (Fig. 51). According to Zerner, these were executed in 1544.⁷⁰ Both sets of figures have the same compact, somewhat contorted movements. As the Écouen Evangelists predate those in Paris, they can be seen as precursors to Goujon's more well-known work. Strengthening the case for attribution of the design to Goujon is the similarity between the figure of *Charity* (the Virtue at the center) and the allegorical figures that flank a circular window at the Louvre (Fig. 42). Both possess the liveness and spontaneous grace for which Goujon was famed.

It is clear that Goujon played an important part in the creation of the altar. His role as director and supervisor at Écouen, while allowing him to create designs for façades and decorative details, would have made it impossible for him to execute all of the work himself. This situation would explain why the altar is so reminiscent of his style but lacking his masterly handling. Montmorency gave Goujon a certain amount of artistic freedom, and the breadth of the artist's responsibilities at Écouen allowed him at this early point in his career to express his genius and to forge a style that would become highly influential later in the century. Again we see how Écouen became a kind of wellspring of French Renaissance stylistic developments. Montmorency allowed Goujon to take a lead role in the design and decoration of his château, and can therefore be credited as playing a key role in the development of the arts in France.

The Church Fathers. While the altar in the chapel at Écouen reflects Montmorency's taste for classicism and Goujon's experience with classical vocabulary, there are other elements of the chapel that reveal the constable's more conservative tendencies. Just as the architecture of the chapel follows local traditions for religious architecture, with ribbed vaults and pointed

⁷⁰ See Zerner, 160-65.

windows, some of the sculptural decoration also expresses the lingering taste for medieval styles.

Placed in niches at the springing of the vaults are four polychrome statues of saints, each resting in its own niche: St. Jerome, St. Gregory, St. Ambrose (Fig. 52), and St. Augustine (Fig. 53). The use of polychrome for these figures lends a vividness that would have contrasted with the stark black and white of Goujon's altar below. The color draws the eye upward toward the vaults emblazoned with Montmorency's personal devices (Fig. 11) and toward the heavens.

Instead of the influence of Italy and classical antiquity, these statues reveal the influence of Northern European artistic traditions that remained prevalent throughout Montmorency's lifetime. Polychrome statuary had been popular in the Rhineland for centuries, and artists working in this mode were in France by the sixteenth century.⁷¹ French sculptors had also taken up this colorful technique. Because of this, it is possible that the four saints were the work of local artists whose style and technique had yet to be impacted by classicism. Bedos-Rezak suggests that this is the case,⁷² but the figures remain unattributed. If they were produced before the arrival of Goujon at Écouen in 1543 and before the introduction of more classical elements, it is significant that more "modern" works did not replace them. Clearly Montmorency had no concerns about maintaining stylistic purity, no qualms about blending the old and the new. This reveals conceptions about artistic style that are very different from our own in which "Gothic" and "classical" are seen as antithetical to one another. Traditional northern modes could be used side by side with imported classical ones. This was especially true for a patron who wanted to express his loyalty to tradition as well as his erudition and worldliness.

⁷¹ See Alicja Karłowska-Kamzowa, *Les relations artistiques entre la Pologne, la France, la Flandre, et la Basse Rhénanie du XIIIe au XVe siècles* (Poznan: Wydawn, 1981).

⁷² Bedos-Rezak, 302.

We have already seen this juxtaposition of medievalism and classicism in the architecture of the chateau at Écouen (see Chap. 1). Billard's older, more austere structure with turrets was not changed entirely when Goujon and Bullant entered the scene. Instead, classical elements were added to the scheme. A similar phenomenon can be observed in the decoration of the chapel. The Gothic style was used there mainly because of its spiritual connotations. The polychrome statues were probably added during an early phase in the design and decoration of the space, that is, before 1543. At that time, there would have been relatively little Italian influence to be found at the château. Once Goujon took control of work at the château he began to introduce classically-inspired works such as the altar. Especially in the chapel, however, it would have been important to keep some of the Gothic elements intact. The style had been developed over centuries because it expressed the spirituality and ideals of the Church. These were values that Montmorency wanted to preserve in this sacred space. The vividness of the polychrome statues lends a kind of immediacy that would have enhanced the worshippers' experience, heightening their devotion and feeding their faith.

Because of the emphasis on classicism in scholarship devoted to the Renaissance, works such as these often go unnoticed. It is difficult to account for their appearance in the sixteenth century if one expects Italian influence to be completely pervasive. Yet this kind of traditional medieval artwork was far from rare in Renaissance France. To neglect it is to neglect a considerable portion of the works that sixteenth-century French patrons chose to decorate their homes, churches, and cities. These works express a side of Northern European culture that cannot be understood by looking at Italian influence alone. True, by Montmorency's lifetime these patrons had begun to import artists and stylistic modes from Italy, but they did not abandon other modes or give themselves over entirely to classical culture. These sculptures and others

like them warrant further investigation. A comprehensive study of polychrome statuary in sixteenth-century France would contribute to a greater understanding of the complex nature of the Renaissance in Northern Europe.

The iconography of these statues is important for understanding Montmorency's position at the dawning of the Protestant movement. Sts. Jerome, Gregory, Ambrose, and Augustine are the four Latin Church fathers who attained the honor of Doctor because of the importance of their doctrines and writings. Each was concerned with Catholic orthodoxy and so received special emphasis during the sixteenth century with the emergence of Protestantism.⁷³ By placing these figures in his private chapel Montmorency was allying himself with the movement to preserve Catholic tradition.

Further emphasizing this statement of loyalty to the Catholic Church, Montmorency's *APLANOS* motto appears on an escutcheon below each figure. His message comes across clearly. In the face of challenges made to the Church, he remains steadfast and loyal to the doctrine of these four Church fathers. He was using the decorative program of his private chapel to make a political statement, just as he did with the decoration on the exterior façades at Écouen. Montmorency understood the power of the visual arts to express one's ideology, and he employed the capacity of different media and different stylistic traditions to fully communicate of his viewpoint. There would have been no question upon entering his chapel where his loyalties lay.

Stone Drain Cover

As noted in Chap. 1, a particularly ostentatious feature of Montmorency's château at Écouen was the suite of bathrooms in the basement. To supply these chambers with water, and

⁷³ See Larissa Juliet Taylor, *Heresy and Orthodoxy in Sixteenth-Century Paris: François le Picart and the Beginnings of the Catholic Reformation* (Boston: Brill, 1999).

to aid in the removal of waste, he installed a complex water conveyance system. Fresh rainwater collected from the grounds was directed into the château, and sewage was flushed out via drainage channels. Most of this complex system was hidden underground, beneath the floors and behind the walls, but direct openings into the spaces of the château were necessary. These apertures offered yet more space for elaborate decoration.

On display at the Musée national de la Renaissance is an example of a drain cover from the château at Écouen that dates from about 1540 (Fig. 54). The cover is carved from stone and takes the form of a startling face with emanating rays. Openings carved in the eyes, the mouth, and between each ray would have allowed the free flow of water. The animated face calls to mind personifications of river gods. The drain cover was utilitarian first and foremost; it allowed water to flow through, but stopped large obstructions from clogging the system. It had an undeniable aesthetic function, too. While the conduits and pipes could be concealed, the visible portions of the system such as the drain covers were designed in such a way as to reflect the level of luxury such a system offered. Unadorned metal grates would not suffice in this context, when part of the point was an ostentatious show of wealth and extravagance.

Conclusion

As with architecture, Montmorency was an enthusiastic patron of sculpture. His activities in this arena were important for the development of the plastic arts in France. Firstly, he hired the Rouenese Jean Goujon at an early date in the artist's career. He gave Goujon an important role in the design of his château at Écouen, thereby allowing him a space to mature artistically and to develop the style that would come to define the French Renaissance. Later Goujon would work for the crown, possibly at the suggestion of Montmorency, or at least as a result of the exposure that the constable's commissions won him.

Montmorency also owned works by the famous Italian Michelangelo. These works, prominently displayed in the courtyard at Écouen, helped spur the taste for classicism in France. Upon seeing the *Slaves* in the collection of so important a Frenchman, other influential French patrons would have understood that classicism was *de rigueur*, and was a powerful mode of expression.

Using Montmorency's art patronage as a case study is also enlightening because it allows us to see how artworks of differing styles were employed side-by-side in sixteenth-century France. Surveys of the period's sculpture are often divided into stylistic categories that downplay the adjacency of modes in real world settings. The château at Écouen did not have some rooms decorated exclusively in a classical style and others in a medieval style. Instead, these styles were used simultaneously in the same spaces. This disrupts our notions of the purity and discrete nature of styles and of a seamless transition from one style to another, but it brings us closer to understanding how art was used in the Early Modern era.

All of the works discussed in this chapter, and the vast majority of sculptures commissioned or owned by Montmorency that remain today, are from the château at Écouen. The fact that it was new construction gave him the opportunity to lavish his wealth on an environment that would have brought him prestige. Sculpture was a key component of this luxurious setting. The preservation of so many works from this château helps to explain why it is seen as having a clearly articulated iconographical program. This program included the repeated appearance of allegorical figures of *Fame*, references to militarism and imperialism seen in the *Slaves* and the equestrian portrait, and the expressions of Catholic devotion evident in the sculpture of the chapel. When these works are viewed as a whole, we have a clear picture of the persona that Montmorency wanted to project, a better understanding of his aspirations and

values. As a leader of the people, his ideals, by extension, were those of the French people. It is in these artworks that we witness a man defining himself and a nation forging its own identity.

Chapter 3: Painting

While the sixteenth century in France witnessed rapid developments in the arts of architecture and sculpture, painting evolved more slowly. Architects such as Jean Bullant demonstrated the ability of French architects to explore the possibilities offered by Italian models without resorting to unsophisticated imitation. Likewise, sculptor Jean Goujon helped create a new national style founded on classical principles, but not constrained by them. At a time when the taste for classicism among native artists began to have a marked influence on the style of building and carving, painted works revealed how strong the ties to the medieval past remained; surviving works also show patrons' dependence on Italian artists for the creation of classically-inspired works.

When it comes to a discussion of sixteenth-century French painting, there seems to be a dearth of individuals comparable to Bullant and Goujon. Many scholars have pointed out the different rates at which the arts developed during the period under discussion;¹ they have also pointed out the relative lack of celebrated French painters. For instance, Henri Zerner acknowledges that, with the exception of portraiture, the French seem to have had a weak interest in painting.² More than architecture and sculpture, the field of painting was dominated by foreign artists such as Rosso Fiorentino, Nicolò dell'Abbate and other Italians whose presence at Fontainebleau overshadowed native painters.

While Anne de Montmorency's painting commissions reflect this situation, there is also evidence that he was interested in employing French artists and French techniques. Many of the panel paintings that he owned were by Italians, but the most elaborate of his painting

¹ See Blunt, 22; and Louis Dimier, *French Painting in the Sixteenth Century*, Harold Child, trans. (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 3-15 (hereafter cited as FP).

² Zerner, 145.

commissions, the mural sequence at Écouen, remains unattributed and suggests French authorship. Once again, an examination of his patronage will clarify our understanding of sixteenth-century artistic developments.

Scholars have focused on royal patronage in the field of painting,³ but this emphasis does not give a full picture. While those studies are invaluable for our understanding of the patronage of the most elite members of society, they leave room for further investigation. By looking at patrons such as Montmorency, we are able to fill in some of the lacunae. The perception of French painting as lagging behind and lacking native protagonists is due in part to the limitations of studies whose sole emphasis is the royal family. The murals at Écouen, for instance, are a masterwork of sixteenth-century French painting, but have received too little attention because of this emphasis on royal commissions.

In this chapter I will discuss Montmorency's religious painting commissions including Rosso's *Pietà*, Jean Gourmont's *Nativity*, and Marco d'Oggiono's copy of Leonardo's *Last Supper*. I will also address a portrait of Montmorency after François Clouet, and the magnificent painted chimneys and friezes at the château at Écouen. Although Montmorency's Parisian residence in St. Avoye is no longer extant, there is evidence that it too was decorated with murals that I will discuss here. Finally, I will examine the *Hours of Anne de Montmorency*, which have been attributed to Geoffrey Dumoustier.

³ An example is the recent exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago (February 27-May 30, 2011), which focused solely on the royal family. See Martha Wolff, ed. *Kings, Queens, and Courtiers: Art in Early Renaissance France* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011).

Rosso Fiorentino's *Pietà*

In his *Life of Rosso*, Giorgio Vasari states that while the artist was in France he painted a *Pietà*, for Montmorency, who placed it at Écouen.⁴ This painting is the only surviving panel from Rosso's period in France that is securely attributed to him.⁵ The work is thus invaluable as one of the only documents from this period of the artist's life. Along with his work in the Gallery François I at Fontainebleau, it contributes greatly to our understanding of the kinds of work that Rosso produced for French patrons. Due to a lack of documentary evidence, however, there are many unanswered questions surrounding this panel. For example, when was it made? For where precisely was the painting intended? How did Montmorency use it? The following analysis will address these conundrums and shed light on the relationship between the artist and his patron.

Rosso's *Pietà*, today at the Louvre, depicts a fully nude Christ seated on a cushion and flanked by Mary Magdalene on the viewer's left and Saint John the Evangelist on the right (Fig. 55). The Virgin swoons with outstretched arms above. A clear antecedent for this work is the 1528 *Deposition* that Rosso painted for the Confraternity at Santa Croce in Sansepolcro. In this *Deposition* the nudity of the body of Christ marked a break with tradition and added a visceral emphasis also present in the Louvre panel. The angularity of the drapery worn by the female figure supporting the Virgin in the *Pietà* recalls works from earlier in Rosso's career as well. Michelangelo's influence is suggested by the musculature of St. John's back and in the face of the Virgin which recalls that of *Dawn* from the tomb of Lorenzo de' Medici. The work bears

⁴ Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, Gaetano Milanesi, ed. vol. 5 (Firenze: G.C. Sansoni, 1880), 171. "Il Rosso al connetable fece una tavola d'un Cristo morto, cosa rara che è a un suo luogo chiamato Ceuan."

⁵ Roberto Paolo Ciardi, *Rosso Fiorentino: Catalogo completo dei dipinti* (Florence: Cantini, 1991), 136. See also Cécile Scailliérez, *Rosso: Le Christ mort* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2004).

little relation to contemporary French painting and one is left to wonder how it was incorporated into its surroundings.

An important detail betrays the identity of the French patron. The cushion upon which the body of Christ rests is decorated with a blue and orange motif that is difficult to see due to the shadows that partially obscure it. In 1972 Sylvie Béguin identified the design as the *alerions* (heraldic eagles) featured on Anne de Montmorency's coat of arms.⁶ Rosso also includes a glimpse of the underneath side of the cushion which reveals a white stripe. This is probably a reference to the coat of arms of Montmorency's wife Madeleine of Savoy.⁷ As we have seen, the constable's heraldic devices appear frequently in architectural reliefs, as they do in stained glass windows, manuscripts, and ceramic objects, to be discussed later. They proclaim his ownership of the object, his status, and his pretensions.

In Rosso's painting, however, the personal devices of the patrons are incorporated into the scene in an innovative and wholly unprecedented way. This is very different from the more traditional and easily readable placement of a patron's heraldic devices on a blank field within the painting. The result is a more seamless integration of Montmorency and his wife into the scene. This close relationship between the figure of Christ and the patrons' personal devices suggests the extreme religious devotion of Montmorency and his wife. It is as though through their intense piety they are permitted to participate directly in the mourning over the deceased Christ. This fervent spirituality is a theme that recurs in many works that Montmorency commissioned. In this way the *Pietà* fits into the body of works associated with him even if it reveals little in the way of French influence.

⁶ Sylvie Béguin, *L'école de Fontainebleau* (exh. cat., Paris: Éditions des musées nationaux, 1972), 177 (hereafter cited as EF).

⁷ Scaillièrez, 13.

Aside from the coats of arms, there are other elements in the painting that reveal the identity of the patrons as well as their closeness to Christ. Mary Magdalene and St. John were the patron saints of Madeleine of Savoy and the constable, respectively, and they appear in other works commissioned by Montmorency. For instance, the stained glass windows featuring dynastic imagery at the collegiate church of St. Martin at Montmorency show the saints protectively accompanying the couple and their children (see chap. 4). In Rosso's panel Mary Magdalene and St. John are thrust out into the viewer's space. This implies a continuity of real and fictive space and a connection between the viewer and the action of the painted scene. In prayer before the painting, Montmorency and his wife could easily envision themselves participating in the lament over the body of Christ. Their spiritual experience would have been heightened and intensified.

Despite the highly personal elements of the painting and the way in which it facilitated the direct involvement of the patrons, its large size (1.27 m x 1.63 m) suggests that it was not a private devotional panel.⁸ Such a monumental work must have been placed in a prominent position rather than being tucked away in a place where it would have been inaccessible to visitors. Part of Montmorency's motivation for hiring Rosso in the first place must have been to make an impression on guests to his château at Écouen and to prove that this residence was comparable to the king's magnificent Fontainebleau, where Rosso had also worked.

Vasari states that the picture was at Écouen in the sixteenth century; it was still there in 1793 when officials of the revolution visited the château.⁹ Several scholars have argued that it

⁸ Scailliérez, 17.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

was created specifically for the chapel there.¹⁰ Indeed there is no evidence today to suggest that the *Pietà* was created with another location in mind.¹¹ As seen in chapter 2, Rosso appears to have had a role in the design of the chapel at Écouen, so it is logical that his *Pietà* was created for that space. Estimated dates for the painting range from 1537 to 1540.¹² This is significant because it is during the earliest stages of building at Écouen, when Rosso was most likely present at the château.

But where in the chapel did it appear? One nineteenth-century scholar states that the panel hung over a door there.¹³ Subsequent authors have repeated this claim.¹⁴ More convincing is Cécile Scailliérez's argument that the panel was originally designed for a more prominent place within the chapel.¹⁵ She focuses on the relationship between the *Pietà* and the chapel's sculpted altar (Figs. 48 and 49), and considers the possibility that the panel was intended as the central altarpiece. Indeed, the *Sacrifice of Isaac* relief that occupies the main panel of the altar today is an unconventional subject for that position. During this period, Eucharistic New Testament scenes appear more commonly on altarpieces, because the subject matter was a direct reference to the Host that would be placed on the altar during Mass. A nearly contemporary example is the altar at Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois in Paris, attributed to Jean Goujon. The sculpted altar (dismantled in the eighteenth century) featured a *Deposition* above and Evangelist

¹⁰ FP, 89-90; André Chastel, *L'art français, temps moderne* (Paris: Flammarion, 1993), 226; Claude Phillips, "Il Rosso (Fiorentino) by himself (?)," *Burlington Magazine* 20 (Dec 1911-12): 140-6.

¹¹ See Scailliérez, 20-1.

¹² Kurt Kusenberg, *Le Rosso* (Paris: A. Michel, 1931). Kusenberg dates the panel between these dates. See also Eugene Carroll, *Rosso Fiorentino: Drawings, Prints, and Decorative Arts* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1987), 31; the author suggests a more precise date of 1538.

¹³ F. de Lasteyrie, "Un grand seigneur au XVIe siècle, le connétable de Montmorency," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* vol. 1 (1879): 305-20.

¹⁴ Ciardo, 136.

¹⁵ See Scailliérez, 24-37.

figures below. Given the similarities between the altar at Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois and that at Écouen (mentioned in chapter 2), it is reasonable to conclude that an image of the dead Christ originally accompanied the Evangelist figures at Écouen as well. Likewise, the Bâtie d'Urfé, which Claude d'Urfé was building at that same time that Écouen was going up, included a chapel whose altar was decorated with a *Last Supper* at the center. An image of the *Sacrifice of Noah* is placed above and therefore complementing, but not in place of, the central New Testament imagery. D'Urfé and Montmorency were close allies (the constable was the godfather of one of D'Urfé's grandsons), and the two maintained regular correspondance in the period during which Montmorency was decorating his chapel.¹⁶ Given Montmorency's conservative nature it is unlikely that he would have wanted to stray from tradition or experiment with innovation in religious imagery.

Rosso's panel also relates to other elements of the sculpted altar. For instance, the gaze of the Virgin Mary is directed upward. If the painting occupied the place that the *Sacrifice of Isaac* fills today, her eyes would be turned in the direction of the image of God the Father carved into the entablature above.

Most convincing is Scailliérez's observation that the dimension of Rosso's panel precisely fit those of the central panel of the altar. She creates a photomontage to demonstrate the appearance of the altar with Rosso's *Pietà* in the center.¹⁷ Furthermore, Du Colombier has noted the awkwardness and underwhelming quality of the Isaac panel.¹⁸ It is surprising to find this mediocre relief as the central work in such a lavishly decorated environment.

¹⁶ V. Guichard. *Claude d'Urfé et la bâtie, l'univers d'un gentilhomme de la renaissance* (Saint-Etienne: Conseil Général de la Loire, 1990), 25.

¹⁷ Scailliérez, fig. 16.

¹⁸ JG, 44.

Rosso's work at Écouen would have been cut short by his death in 1540, when another team, most likely led by Jean Goujon, would have continued the project, possibly after Rosso's designs. It is not known why Rosso's panel was replaced on the altar by the relief sculpture. Perhaps a marble relief sculpture was deemed more luxurious and desirable than a panel painting. It could also be that his forceful style was too incongruous with the more traditionally French mode that Montmorency preferred in his religious settings. Indeed, the team of decorators that took over after Rosso was dominated by Frenchmen whose tastes were not in perfect alignment with Rosso's. Traces of his influence are still evident in the chapel, suggesting that Goujon's team did not entirely scrap the earlier designs, but the modifications they made included marginalizing the Rosso's panel. One can easily imagine that this move to centralize the work of native artists at the expense of a foreign one was done at Montmorency's request. His personal chapel thus became a space in which to make a political statement about the primacy of France and the great skill of local craftsmen.

This would not be the only instance of a shift on Montmorency's part away from the use of Italian artists in favor of French ones and his attempt to cultivate the arts locally.¹⁹ Over the course of his life he favored local artists more and more. This pattern cannot be because of a dearth of Italian artists working in France; many were available to someone of Montmorency's rank and wealth. His choice was deliberate, his intentions clear. He desired to make France the artistic capital of the world and his own residence became a kind of testing ground in this endeavor. Unlike François I and other contemporaries, his vision of France's domination in the realm of the arts necessarily required native protagonists. This was the only way the French

¹⁹ See the section on ceramic in Chap. 4 of this text.

could truly claim supremacy. The constable had a naturally competitive nature and this drove him in his art patronage just as it motivated him on the battlefield.

Possessing a work by Rosso would have appealed to Montmorency in part because of the artist's connection to the royal residence at Fontainebleau. It would have demonstrated his discerning taste as well as his closeness to the royal family. Montmorency was always eager to assert his status and his use of one of the king's artists was a way to accomplish this goal. Furthermore, it would have made the château at Écouen seem on par with Fontainebleau as a hub of artistic activity and as one of the most opulent residences in the kingdom. Beyond these personal ambitions, the opportunity to appropriate one of Italy's greatest artists for French purposes would have attracted Montmorency. Just as Michelangelo's *Slaves* became symbolic spoils of war in France's triumph over Italy, Rosso would be engaged in the process of bringing the glory of Rome to France.

Montmorency brought in a new team of craftsmen to update the château during the 1540s and '50s.²⁰ He clearly wanted to make some changes to the work that had been done up to that point. Billard's more old-fashioned architectural mode was modified by Bullant's additions, while Rosso's panel was displaced in the chapel. Montmorency's tastes were developing with time and his ambitions as an art patron were becoming clearer. If he wanted to make a statement about the artistic greatness of France, the work of an Italian artist could not take center stage in his château's chapel.

²⁰ See chapter 1 of this text.

Marco d'Oggiono's *Last Supper*

Adding to the decorative ensemble of the chapel at Écouen was a copy of Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* executed in oil on canvas by Marco d'Oggiono (Fig. 56).²¹ The son of a goldsmith, d'Oggiono was a Milanese artist who forged a successful career collaborating with followers of Leonardo and working independently in the style of the master.²² His exact relationship with Leonardo is undocumented. While d'Oggiono painted a few church altarpieces, he seems to have profited primarily from small-scale works on canvas, often repeating the same subject numerous times for different patrons. The *Last Supper* was especially popular; aside from the copy located today at the Musée National de la Renaissance at Écouen, two other versions by d'Oggiono survive, one at the Royal Academy of Arts in England and the other at St. Petersburg.

On 16 June 1506, Gabriel Gouffier, an honorary prelate, commissioned the copy of the *Last Supper*. The arms painted on the legs of the table belong to him.²³ Gouffier then gave the painting to Cardinal Georges I d'Amboise, who had appointed Gouffier as a dean of the cathedral at Sens in 1504. It is recorded in two inventories of the cardinal's château at Gaillon that date from November 1540 and August 1550. Renée d'Amboise, sister of Georges II d'Amboise (who was nephew of and heir to the cardinal) received her brother's belongings in 1550, and then sold many of them to Montmorency in 1555.²⁴ The painting is recorded as having been placed in the chapel at the château at Écouen; it was still there as late as 1606.²⁵

²¹ Willox, 274; Bertrand, 58.

²² See Domenico Sedini, *Marco d'Oggiono: Tradizione e rinnovamento in Lombardia tra Quattrocento et Cinquecento* (Milan: Jandi Sapi editori, 1989).

²³ Thierry Crépin-Leblond, "L'Origine de la copie de la Cène de Léonard par Marco d'Oggiono à Écouen," *Revue de l'art* 123 (2000): 60-2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 60.

The acquisition of this painting may be seen as contradicting the usual pattern of Montmorency's collecting, which demonstrates a shift over time from works by Italian artists to ones by French artists. Like many of the soldiers returning to France from the wars being waged in the Italian peninsula early in the century, Montmorency was indelibly influenced by Italian culture. Thus, early in his life, he was more likely to import works and artists from across the Alps (or to employ Italian artists who had come to work for the court of France); one example is his interest in the 1530s in the work of Rosso Fiorentino, another is his collection of Italian maiolica that dates from the same decade. By the 1540s, however, he began to show a marked preference for artists from closer to home. This is most obvious in his replacement of Rosso with Jean Bullant and Jean Goujon as head of the team of craftsmen at Écouen, but it is also apparent in his burgeoning interest in locally produced ceramic products (see Chap. 4).

D'Oggiono's painting was part of a large purchase made by Montmorency that included a number of other items, and so it does not necessarily indicate a departure from the general shift in his patronage toward a preference for works by French artists. Rather, it suggests his highly opportunistic and acquisitive nature. The desire to amass a large collection of luxurious objects is similar to his lifelong ambition to accumulate more land holdings. It is not surprising that some of Montmorency's contemporaries saw him as rapacious and greedy. Although Montmorency was part of a nascent nationalist movement promoting French language, arts, and identity, not all of his art collecting conforms to that mindset. In this case, it provides an example of how he could leverage his vast wealth and use it to bolster his image of power. By acquiring part of the cardinal's art collection, he enhanced his reputation as an individual with enviable privilege. As seen in chapter two in the discussion of Montmorency's acquisition of Michelangelo's *Slaves*, acts of appropriation afforded him the opportunity to overwrite his own

identity onto an extant object, and thereby demonstrate his superiority. This kind of gesture of power worked hand in hand with Montmorency's activities as a diplomat and military leader to impose his will on the world around him.

D'Oggiono's painting is not especially remarkable, but it is one of the few artworks to remain *in situ* at Écouen. While many of the fixtures of the chapel and other wings of the château have been dispersed, many going to Chantilly, the *Last Supper* remains as a reminder of the character of the original décor.

Jean de Gourmont's *Nativity*

Montmorency displayed at least one work by a French painter in his chapel at Écouen. Jean de Gourmont's *Nativity* was painted between 1525 and 1550; it is located today at the Louvre (Fig. 57). The artist is known primarily for the engravings he made in Lyon showing small-scale figures in space defined by imaginary, classically inspired structures.²⁶ The semi-ruined, fantastical architectural setting in the Écouen *Nativity* bears a striking resemblance to that of an engraved version by Gourmont, as well as to his other works, including the *Child Among Ruins* (Fig. 58).

The *Nativity* depicts the holy family surrounded by celebratory *putti*, some of which are holding musical instruments. Shepherds look on from the left. The scene takes place in an unorthodox setting that somewhat resembles a crumbling cathedral. The main figures are located under the vaults of the nave, and livestock occupy the space of the apse. On either side of the central space are bizarre spiral staircases. Classical details including columns (some broken off near the base), coffers, and triangular pediments articulate the structure. There is so much detail in the architectural setting that the human figures seem relatively insignificant.

²⁶ Zerner, 326.

This interest in ruins was a common thread running throughout sixteenth-century French culture. It was spurred largely by the numerous travelers to Rome who returned to France with stories and sketches of the antique buildings that had fallen into disrepair over the centuries.²⁷ The Roman ruins, half-buried and concealed under creeping vines, were tantalizing. They kindled the imagination. Many French artists made them the subject of their artworks. Engravings, such as those by artists in the workshop of Antoine Lafréry, made their way to France, where others could be inspired by the magnetic power of the ancient buildings.²⁸ Some of the renderings of ruins showed them in their true state, with a kind of objective distance. Just as often, however, artists took advantage of the ambiguity of the incomplete structures and transformed them into romantic, imaginary curiosities. A particularly enigmatic drawing by Jean Cousin depicts a group of nude children frolicking amongst ruins; some of the elements, such as the Column of Trajan, are identifiable, but in general the scene seems capricious and chimerical.²⁹

Works such as Cousin's and those coming from Lafréry's workshop were circulating in France, where they piqued the imagination of Jean de Gourmont. It is easy to see the influence of these visions of Rome in his *Nativity*; however, not all of the architectural elements in the painting are derived from Roman ruins. The ribs of the vaults, for example, carry less of a Roman connotation than a medieval French one. Furthermore, the staircases flanking the nave, with their sharply sloping moldings and balustrades are analogous to staircases appearing at châteaux throughout France including those at Chambord, Blois, and Chateaudun. (Figs. 59-61)

²⁷ See Margaret M. McGowan, *The Vision of Rome in Late Renaissance France* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000). See also Charles L. Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 148-151.

²⁹ This drawing is illustrated in McGowan, fig. 51.

Although some of these stairways, particularly the double-helix stairs at Chambord, reveal the influence of Leonardo da Vinci's staircase designs,³⁰ they have little in common with the Roman ruins that inspired the general tone of Gourmont's setting. Francis Geck notes that spiral staircases of the type seen in Gourmont's painting had been built in France for centuries.³¹ Therefore, the setting of the painting is an imaginative amalgamation of ancient Roman elements and components of traditional French architecture. The overlapping and combining of Gothic and classical style was common in sixteenth-century French architectural design,³² as in the aforementioned châteaux built during Montmorency's lifetime. A synthesis of Italian and French architectural elements can also be observed in the chapel at Écouen in which Gourmont's painting hung. While the vaults and windows of the chapel conform to Gothic aesthetics, the altar and wooden screens reveal the influence of Italian art. This eclectic combination occurs throughout the château, often creating curious juxtapositions of style. Not satisfied with mere imitation of Italian modes, Montmorency desired to assert native customs as well. He observed his contemporaries' lust for all things Italian, and sought a way to incorporate them without annihilating local traditions. His use of Italian elements, sublimated within a French context, feels more like appropriation than imitation. Perhaps Gourmont was responding to his patron's urge to absorb Italian influence.

Murals and Friezes at the Château at Écouen

Among the most remarkable and ambitious products of Anne de Montmorency's art patronage are the painted fireplaces and friezes at the château at Écouen. A total of twelve

³⁰ Ludwig H. Heydenreich, "Leonardo da Vinci, Architect of Francis I," *Burlington Magazine* 94, no. 595 (October, 1952): 277-285.

³¹ Francis Geck, *French Interiors and Furniture: The Period of Henry II* (Boulder, CO: Sturck Educational Services, 1985), 71.

³² See Zerner, chap. 1.

painted chimneypieces and decorated soffits can be found; they are in every major room. Unlike the decorative program at Fontainebleau executed just a few years earlier, that at Écouen has seen few alterations and is mostly in an excellent state of preservation.³³ It is therefore one of the most complete painting cycles from sixteenth-century France. Despite this fact, the murals have received little scholarly attention,³⁴ once again as the result of a disproportionate focus on royal commissions; Écouen has been overshadowed by Fontainebleau. A familiarity with the decoration at Fontainebleau is necessary for a complete understanding of the work at Écouen; to neglect the latter is to overlook perhaps the most spectacular masterpiece of sixteenth-century French painting and Montmorency's role as a pioneer in the development of a new style of French décor. Indeed, the murals put Écouen at the avant-garde of sixteenth-century taste.

As with much of the work at Écouen, there is little surviving documentation on the murals. An analysis of the iconography was initiated in the nineteenth century and continued by later scholars, but there is still room for discussion as to how these paintings can be interpreted in the context of Montmorency's position and role at court. Some of the paintings are dated and many include imagery related to Henri II and Catherine de' Medici that makes it possible to establish a range of dates for completion. Authorship is also unclear, but an examination of stylistic models and of techniques suggests likely candidates. In this section I will consider these issues and shed some much-needed light on this magnificent ensemble.

³³ For a discussion of the various campaigns of restoration see Anne-Marie Lecoq, "Les peintures murales d'Écouen: présentation et datation," *Actes du colloque international sur l'art de Fontainebleau* (Fontainebleau and Paris 18-20 October, 1972), 161-73.

³⁴ An exception is the excellent text by Sylvie Béguin, *Cheminées et frises peintes du château d'Écouen* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1995) (hereafter cited as CF).

The château at Écouen served as a school for the daughters of the chevaliers of the Légion d'Honneur from 1807 until 1962.³⁵ Because of this, access to the building was limited. This partially explains why scholars are silent on the topic of the murals during that period. This silence must also be attributed in part to the obscurity of some of the subjects of the murals, which defy easy interpretation. One study, however, was conducted during the nineteenth century by the canon of Gallet, and provided invaluable insights that formed the basis for later scholarship.³⁶ All of the scenes feature Biblical subject matter, for the most part from the Old Testament, which is hardly surprising given what we know about Montmorency's fervent Catholicism; the same predilection for little known episodes and rarely represented biblical subjects is evident in the *Hours of Anne de Montmorency* from about 1550,³⁷ as discussed later in this chapter. Given the penchant during the sixteenth century for complex iconography and symbolic language, we are compelled to seek interpretations of the subjects beyond their biblical meaning. The narrative scenes were not selected at random, nor are they simply an example of a love of anecdote and arcane subject matter. They are charged with familial, social, and political significance that can help us understand court culture in early modern France.³⁸

First a general description of the murals is in order (Figs. 62-64). Most of the twelve murals consist of a central cartouche featuring Old Testament imagery and framed with elaborate decorative motifs, including caryatid-like figures, masks, putti, fruit, scrolls, strapwork and the personal devices of Montmorency, Madeleine de Savoie, King Henri II, and Catherine de' Medici. In every case, the framing device is related thematically to the central subject and each

³⁵ See Rebecca Rogers, *Les desdemoiselles de la Légion d'Honneur: La maison d'éducation de la Légion d'Honneur au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Plon, 1992).

³⁶ A. Gallet, *Les peintures du château d'Écouen* (Paris: E. Plon et Cie., 1882).

³⁷ Lecoq, 162.

³⁸ CF, 8.

framing motif is different, demonstrating the period's love of variety and complexity. In a few cases the central scene dominates the composition, leaving little room for surrounding ornamentation.

The influence of the decoration at Fontainebleau is clear, but the differences in medium are also striking. The chimneypieces at Écouen are entirely painted, eschewing stucco sculpture seen at the king's château, and unlike the traditional fresco technique used for wall painting in Italy during the sixteenth century, the murals are done in oil.³⁹ The avoidance of stucco elements could have been for economic reasons; however, given Montmorency's lavish expenditure in the building and embellishment of the château at Écouen, it is doubtful that he would have observed that kind of moderation in the most elaborate decorative program of the château's interior.⁴⁰ The sculpted chimneypiece on the first floor discussed in Chap. 2 attests to Montmorency's willingness to reject painted decoration for relief sculpture when he so desired. Sylvie Béguin considers the possibility that stucco decoration had passed out of fashion by the time Montmorency was finishing his château.⁴¹ In support of the argument that stucco had become passé by mid-century, there are very few known examples of stucco fireplaces after Fontainebleau. Known examples of fireplace decoration from later in the century use only painted decoration. Examples include a painted fireplace that is still extant in the gallery at the château at Beauregard and one at the hôtel Sardini at Blois that does not survive; likewise, the château at Anet contained fireplaces decorated with painted landscapes and the château at Oiron has painted decoration similar to that at Écouen.⁴² Another possibility is that Montmorency wanted to avoid being entirely in the shadow of Fontainebleau. The use of paint would give his

³⁹ See Franziska Hourrière in CF, 116-19.

⁴⁰ CF, 34.

⁴¹ Ibid., 34-5.

⁴² Ibid., 58.

fireplaces a different character and the imitation of the king's residence would be less obvious. Also worth considering is the fact that the stuccoists working at Fontainebleau were Italian. Perhaps Montmorency viewed it as an Italian art form, and one with an insufficiently French character.

The subjects featured on the ground floor are as follows.⁴³ The Salle des Armes is decorated with *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* (Fig. 64). The fireplace in the room in the southwest corner of this floor features the *Tribute to Caesar*, and that of the Chambre de Catherine de' Medici features *Elijah and the Challenge of Baal*. The room at the east end of the north wing on the ground level contains a mural that is only partially preserved. It has been tentatively identified as *The Adoration of the Golden Calf*.

Subjects on the first floor include: *Esau at the Hunt* in the Chambre du Connétable (Fig. 63), *Jacob Keeping the Flocks of Laban* in the Antichambre du Connétable, *Jacob Leaving Laban's House* in the Antichambre de Madeleine de Savoie, *The Meeting of Jacob and Esau* in the Chambre de Madeleine de Savoie, *Abigail Begging Forgiveness from David* in the southwest pavilion, *Saul Butchering the Cattle* in the Chambre d'Henri II (Fig. 62), and *The Judgment of Solomon* at the east end of the north wing. This last scene was incorrectly identified during the nineteenth century as one from the life of the Carolingian king Pepin le Bref.⁴⁴ The room in the northeast pavilion on the first floor features *The Sacrifice of Saul*.

The succession of stories from one room to the next does not follow a clear internal logic. There are relationships, however, between particular themes and the function of the rooms that

⁴³ For illustrations of each mural, see CF.

⁴⁴ Gallet, 11, identified this scene as *Ahab and Jehosaphat*. For more on the iconography of this obscure scene see Robert Turcan, "Sur une cheminée peinte du château d'Écouen (Val d'Oise)," *Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 141e année, no. 2 (1997): 465-73.

they decorate. There are also connections between the biblical episodes and the contemporary political situation in France. The meaning that these murals held for sixteenth-century audiences is difficult to retrieve, but an examination of their physical and temporal context may clarify their significance.

One example of a subject that reflects the function of the room can be found in the anti-chamber of the constable's private room. This space would have been more accessible than the most private rooms of the château; here Montmorency would receive his clientele and visitors. The subject of *Jacob Keeping the Flocks of Laban* (Genesis 30: 25-43) would evoke thoughts of the wisdom of the Hebrew patriarch and, by comparison, of Montmorency himself, alluding to the constable's ability to oversee his domain with vigilance.⁴⁵

Anne-Marie Lecoq has interpreted these Old Testament episodes as allusions to sixteenth-century French politics.⁴⁶ For instance, the *Adoration of the Golden Calf* (Exodus 32:1-19) can be interpreted as alluding to the problem of heresy in early modern France, a matter with which religious conservatives such as Montmorency were highly concerned. Likewise, the scenes centered on Jacob and Esau deal with matters of succession that would have been relevant to the royal family in the 1550's. François I's eldest son, destined for the throne, had died before the king. Henri II thus assumed his brother's birthright. The favorite son now deceased, the younger one is left to rule in his stead.

Jacob can also be read as an allusion to Montmorency.⁴⁷ As related in the Biblical passage (cited above), Jacob, too, was a younger son of a cadet branch, who by a series of

⁴⁵ This Biblical passage describes the deal that Jacob strikes with Laban to oversee the latter's flock in exchange for all of the spotted sheep.

⁴⁶ Lecoq, 166.

⁴⁷ See Hervé Oursel, "Le sujet d'une cheminée peinte du château d'Écouen identifié," *La revue de Louvre* no. 1 (1993): 19-23.

favorable circumstances finds himself at the head of his illustrious family. Montmorency experienced a period of disgrace, like Jacob, and his return to royal favor is comparable to Jacob's reconciliation with Esau. Jacob's numerous offspring, depicted in the apartments of Madeleine de Savoie, become an allusion to Montmorency's own thirteen children. This dynastic imagery is fitting in the room belonging to the his wife, as ensuring the continuation of the bloodline was her central role.

There is thus a double allusion that simultaneously references both the royal family and the Montmorency family. Aside from alluding to the families' trials, tribulations, and triumphs, the murals encourage the viewer to draw parallels between the Valois family and the Montmorency family. This is one of many instances in which Montmorency utilizes the visual arts to demonstrate his connection to the royal family. The coinciding of their families' experiences creates a bond between them that would have enhanced his prestige and legitimized his status. By yoking his family to the Crown, he is also demonstrating how his own identity is intimately bound to that of the nation.

As at Fontainebleau, elements that surround the central scenes and seem purely decorative add to the symbolic content of the murals. Thus the fruits and garlands that adorn the scenes involving Jacob become a reference to his future riches and fruitfulness. By extension these motifs also call to mind the prosperity of the Valois and Montmorency families, and of France in general. Hence, what may appear to twenty-first-century viewers as purely ornamental, or merely as byproducts of style, actually contribute to the meaning of the murals.

Fertility symbols in the form of fruit, cornucopias, and exposed breasts appear frequently during this period. Rebecca Zorach has discussed their relevance to sixteenth-century France

and to the process of the formation of national identity.⁴⁸ She points out how “language has often been understood to be a vehicle for national identity, but art has less frequently been recognized for its analogous role.”⁴⁹ Fruit and cornucopia imagery was often incorporated into ephemeral artworks created for ceremonial royal *entrées* (including that of Henri II), and thus became part of a larger symbolic framework in which the wealth and abundance of the nation were bound to the monarch. The imagery would dazzle spectators and enhance their devotion to the king. That Montmorency was employing the same imagery at Écouen (see fig. 64) suggests that he too played an active role in the galvanizing of national identity around such concepts as prosperity, fecundity, wealth, and the magnificence of the monarchy. He was also suggesting that his own family was an exemplar of these ideals. Montmorency was clearly a key player in the development of French national identity during the early modern era, although rarely has his patronage of the arts at Écouen been cited as evidence of this process.

Because of the relationship between the murals at Écouen and motifs used in the royal *entrées* of Henri II, the whole ensemble can be interpreted as a kind of tribute to the king.⁵⁰ In this way, the painted decoration at Écouen becomes a pendant to the spectacular entries staged for the new monarch throughout the kingdom. The theme of abundance was central at the ceremonial entries and is likewise of central importance in the imagery of the Écouen murals. The crescent, one of Henri II’s personal devices, appears numerous times in the murals at the château (see figs. 62 and 64). The king visited the château at Écouen early in his reign⁵¹ and

⁴⁸Zorach, 4-7.

⁴⁹Ibid., 6.

⁵⁰CF, 65. See also I.D. MacFarlane, *The Entry of Henri II into Paris, 16 June 1549* (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1982); and François Gebelen, “Un manifeste de l’école néoclassique en 1549: l’entrée d’Henri II à Paris,” *Bulletin de la société de l’histoire de l’art* 51 (1924): 35-45.

⁵¹Bedos-Rezak, 13, 279.

would have recognized the painted imagery as a continuation of the spectacular *entrées* staged to celebrate his ascension to the throne. Montmorency had great cause to celebrate Henri's ascension to the throne, since the two had remained on good terms during the constable's period of disgrace. The king's celebratory *entrées* also heralded Montmorency's return to royal favor.

A close examination of one of the murals will shed light on the cycle as a whole, and how the scenes functioned for audiences at Écouen. *Esau at the Hunt* (Genesis 25:27-29) appears in Montmorency's chamber in the south wing of the château (Fig. 63).⁵² The fireplace is flanked on each side by a painted herm figure that reaches up to support the mantle and chimneypiece. The lowest level of the chimneypiece, just above the mantle, is decorated with putti riding atop hunting dogs and bearing trumpets. Between them are decorative motifs related to the theme of the hunt including quivers, strapwork, and at the very center, a stag's head with a crown of antlers. Above, framed in the center of the chimneypiece, is the principal subject showing Esau in a vast landscape. His pose is dynamic and animated, but there is as much detail in the natural setting as there is in the human figure. The foreground is filled with a tangle of verdant greenery, with trees looming tall over Esau's head. Beyond, through a blue, hazy atmosphere is a large fortified structure sitting on a citadel. This detail places the biblical story in a medieval European setting, playing up the connections between the Hebrew hunter and Montmorency the seigneurial lord.

An oval frame, painted white to appear as though made out of stone or stucco, contains the central scene. On either side are large lateral figures; these figures are also painted white to create the illusion of three-dimensional sculpture. They are mostly nude, except for swaths of drapery, and each carries in its arm closest to the oval frame a nude sword, symbol of the

⁵² This passage describes Esau, the brother of Jacob, as a skilled hunter who loved the outdoors.

constable. With the other arm the figures reach up to lift a bright golden cloth that is festooned with the blue *alerions* of Montmorency's coat of arms. This imagery leaves no doubt as to the identity and high status of the property's owner. The hunting theme also points to Montmorency's elevated rank, since only seigneurs were permitted to engage in this favored pastime.

Above the oval frame is a pair of masks, a common motif in sixteenth-century decorative artworks. Tumbling down below them as well as hanging above them are garlands of fruits and leaves. References to the king are minimal here, because we are in Montmorency's private chambers. The emphasis is instead fully on the constable, and the work is an expression of his knowledge of scripture (and identification with biblical figures), and his role as seigniorial lord.

The painted decoration reaches to the ceiling and so the scale of the composition gives an impression of grandeur and augustness. Montmorency would have succeeded in overwhelming his guests with these awe-inspiring murals. Their utility lay not only in their decorative function, to make the constable's residence more sumptuous and luxurious, but also in their ability to communicate Montmorency's ideals and ambitions. He is expressing his own carefully crafted identity through these murals. As part of the ruling class, his identity was allied to that of the nation. Visitors to the château would have been for the most part members of an elite and rarefied group as well. This audience would have been encouraged by the imagery at Écouen to continue this process of identity formation in a similar vein. Thus, the emergence in the early modern era of a concept of national identity in France can be traced to the activities of individuals including Montmorency who used the visual arts to project a vision of themselves to the world.

Given the use of the devices of Henri II, we can date many of the murals (or at least many of their details) to after his ascension to the throne in 1547. The updating of some of the exterior façades and the addition of other important decorative elements, including stained-glass windows and faience tile floors occurred around 1550. It is likely that the murals were produced around the same time as part of the completion of the château's décor.⁵³ Catherine de' Medici's rainbow device appears numerous times in the painted decoration, (Fig. 65) which establishes a *terminus ante quem* for the murals, since she ceased to use that particular image upon the king's death in 1559.⁵⁴ The fireplace on the ground floor featuring the *Tribute to Caesar* includes a painted base that is dated 1542. This scene, however, is also decorated with the crescents of Henri II, who became king in 1547. Indeed, a project of this scale would certainly have continued for several years. It is possible that, like the exterior façades of the château, the murals underwent changes in design over the course of their production. Begun in the early 1540s, they were altered to include the new King's devices upon his ascension to the throne. The murals were begun as Montmorency's personal variant of Fontainebleau-style décor, and then were reimagined as a tribute to the new King.

As stated above, there is no secure attribution for the murals. Subtle variations in style (along with the scale of the project) suggest that multiple hands were at work. In all likelihood, Montmorency also consulted with humanists and other scholars in his entourage concerning the selection of themes. The similarities between the murals at Écouen and portions of the decoration at Fontainebleau are unmistakable, which has led some scholars to assume that the murals were executed by a team connected to the one working at the king's château and probably

⁵³ Oursel, 19-23.

⁵⁴ CF, 62. Marie Lecoq, 167, agrees with a date in the 1550s.

in the entourage of Nicolò dell'Abbate.⁵⁵ Although there exists no documentation on the authorship of the murals, there is reference to a “maestro Nicolò” executing painted decoration in the eastern gallery at Écouen (which was demolished in the eighteenth century).⁵⁶ There are indeed strong stylistic similarities between works by the Italian master and the murals at Écouen. For instance, the figures have the elongated proportions and tapering limbs of Nicolò’s painted figures, and the landscape passages in the murals recall the settings that he used increasingly after his arrival in France.⁵⁷ The overall conception of the murals, with central scenes surrounded by specific types of decorative motifs that gloss them, betrays an intimate knowledge of compositions at Fontainebleau. Similarities in style and composition are not proof of authorship, however. It is entirely possible that the team at Écouen was working from some of the same sources and prototypes as Nicolò, including the work of Primaticcio and Parmagianino that would have been accessible through prints and drawings. On the other hand, to strengthen the case for Nicolò’s presence at Écouen, we know that Montmorency employed the artist years later in his Parisian residence in rue St. Avoye.⁵⁸ Another possible attribution has been raised by Sylvie Béguin, who points to similarities in style between the murals and the art of Rosso Fiorentino;⁵⁹ she suggests that the works at Écouen are the product of collaborators who had worked directly with the master.

⁵⁵ Babelon, 338; FP, 187; Lecoq, 170.

⁵⁶ In a letter dated 1606 A. Peiresc mentions murals in the east wing of Écouen by a “maestro Nicolò.” See Gobat Faujas de St. Fond, *Oeuvres de Bernard Palissy* (Paris: Chez Ruault, Libraire, Rue de la Harpe, 1776), 123.

⁵⁷ See Bert Meijer, “Nicolò et il Nord” in Sylvie Béguin, ed., *Nicolò dell'Abbate: storie dipinte nella pittura del cinquecento tra Modena et Fontainebleau* (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2005), 146-53.

⁵⁸ See the section below on the hôtel in St. Avoye.

⁵⁹ CF, 46.

Much of this evidence is circumstantial, however. There is always difficulty in attributing anything related to the School of Fontainebleau, partly due to the fact that the motifs at Fontainebleau rapidly became popular through the wide dissemination of prints by artists working there, including Antonio Fantuzzi and René Boyvin. Thus the similarity of a sixteenth-century artwork to the decoration at Fontainebleau does not prove it was executed by one of the king's artists. It is possible, given the quality of the murals at Écouen, that artists within Nicolo's circle, perhaps individuals who had worked under him at the king's château, executed the paintings. Given his immense wealth and prestige, Montmorency would have had little difficulty in attracting the greatest artists to his project at Écouen. It is doubtful that he would have needed to rely on artists whose connection to Fontainebleau was indirect.

There is some evidence that the team working at Écouen was dominated by French artists. Given Montmorency's life-long predilection for local talent, it is highly probable that he would have sought natives for his project. Béguin cites the unusual medium as evidence of French authorship and points to similarities in style to the work of Geoffrey Dumoustier.⁶⁰ In the nineteenth century Léon Palustre attributed the murals to Jean Cousin;⁶¹ however, this seems like a case of one of the few celebrated French painters from the period becoming a magnet for any unattributed work of significance. Louis Dimier also believed the paintings to be the work of French artists, and turned to the royal Comptes des Bâtiments for likely candidates; he suggested that they may have been Claude Badouin, Charles Carmoy, Germaine Musnier, or Michel Rochetel, artists who achieved success in their own time, but whose works are little known

⁶⁰ Ibid., 46, 61.

⁶¹ Léon Palustre, *La renaissance en France* (Paris: A. Quantin, 1884), 53-4.

today.⁶² The lack of known works by these artists makes it difficult to compare their *oeuvres* to the paintings at Écouen.

Another likely candidate is Antoine Caron, who was known to paint uncommon biblical scenes.⁶³ Caron's whereabouts for the period of 1550-59 are unknown; perhaps he spent those years in the employ of Montmorency. Later in the century, he was called by Diane de Poitiers to create decorations for the Porte St. Denis. He also contributed to the decorations for the royal *entrée* of Charles IX and designed cartoons for a cycle of tapestries on the life of Artemesia for Catherine de' Medici. He could only have gained such prestigious commissions by having previous experience working for elite patrons. Working in the service of Montmorency would certainly have been a way to establish his career. As with Jean Goujon, Montmorency may have discovered Caron early in the artist's life and helped propel him to success.

A final possibility is Charles Dorigny, who had worked as a painter and stuccoist at Fontainebleau. He contributed to the decoration of the Gallery François I in 1534, the Porte Dorée in 1540-50, and the Salle Haute in 1540.⁶⁴ He also collaborated with Goujon and Jean Cousin for the royal *entrée* of Henri II at Paris. The connections between this royal event and the painted imagery at Écouen make it even more likely that Dorigny played a role in creating the murals. He died in 1551, however, so he cannot be solely responsible for the work at Montmorency's château.

The likeliest scenario would involve some combination of the artists considered above. As at Fontainebleau, a team of artists would have been necessary to complete such a large project. One of the more established masters such as Nicolò dell'Abbate or Jean Cousin could

⁶² Louis Dimier, *Le Primatice, sculpteur et architecte des rois de France* (Paris: A. Michel, 1928), 127.

⁶³ CF, 77.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 77.

have created the basic conception for each mural and led a team of painters in their execution. This would have given lesser-known artists an opportunity to learn from a master and to gain experience working for a prominent patron. Given his proclivity for French artists, Montmorency would have encouraged the head of the project to assemble a team that included local painters. It is unthinkable that he would have entrusted such a conspicuous commission entirely to Italian artists.

Unless some obscure, previously unknown document comes to light, secure attribution for the murals at Écouen may never be possible. Style and technique can aid in an understanding of where the murals fit into wider artistic developments, but our relative ignorance regarding the authorship of these paintings is in part the result of our fragmentary knowledge of sixteenth-century French painting. Until this broader topic is fleshed out, it will be difficult to approach the murals at Écouen with information sufficient to formulate an accurate attribution.⁶⁵

In addition to the narrative murals at the château, decorative painted friezes adorn the beams, soffits, and window embrasures of the prominent rooms (Figs. 65-68). These friezes include a plethora of fantastical and imaginative details, such as masks, torches, trophies, moths, owls, satyrs, fruit, candelabra, framed vignettes, and all manner of creatures and grotesques. This is a universe of diversions unto itself, whose variety is truly astonishing. Unlike the erudite, sacred narratives of the chimneypieces, the friezes are light-hearted and whimsical, with humorous elements. They serve as a reminder of Montmorency's multi-faceted character—rigorously conservative, but no stranger to the levity of life at court. They also add a feeling of gaiety to the spaces and would have offered myriad delights to visitors. The richness of the

⁶⁵ Recent scholarship in this area will shed much-needed light on developments in sixteenth-century French painting. See Frédéric Elsig, *Peindre en France à la renaissance* (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2011).

visual experience made Montmorency's home (and the constable himself) all the more wondrous.

There is some evidence that a specialist in this sort of decoration painted the friezes. Documents show that a Jacques Patin received payments for paintings completed at Écouen in 1564.⁶⁶ Little is known of this Parisian painter aside from the fact that he worked mainly as a designer of ephemeral decorations for parties and ceremonies and that he often used *grotesquerie* similar to that at Écouen.⁶⁷ His father, Jean Patin, was among the artists who worked on the temporary structures and decorations for the *entrée* of Henri II. It is unlikely that Patin would have been creating decorations for a reception at Écouen, since Montmorency spent most of the year 1564 away from the château. Further complicating Patin's connection to the friezes is the fact that Catherine de' Medici's rainbow device appears on a painted beam in the northwest corner pavilion of the ground floor. This could not have been painted as late as 1564. Perhaps Patin was brought in to complete the friezes or to elaborate them with his grotesques. Given the number and extensive detail of the painted friezes, they must have been the work of more than one artist.

These murals and friezes were first and foremost a colorful testament to the wealth and taste of the constable, but they were also a form of adulation for the king. The monarch's emblems and those of his wife were everywhere, reminding visitors of Montmorency's affiliations. Thus, the murals were more than a feast for the eyes; they were also an elegant form of propaganda. When Henri II visited Montmorency at Écouen early in his reign, the murals

⁶⁶ Lecoq, 164. See also Catherine Grodecki, *Histoire de l'art au seizième siècle, 1540-1600* (Paris: Archives nationales, 1986), 806-21; and Gustave Macon, "Les architectes de Chantilly au XVe siècle," *Mémoires du comité archéologique de Senlis* 4, no. 4 (1900): 121.

⁶⁷ L. de Laborde, *La renaissance des arts à la cour de France: Études sur le XVIe siècle*, vol. 1 (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970), 521.

were underway, allowing him at least a partial view of the ensemble; he must have been greatly pleased by the panegyric in painting offered to him by the imagery. Fruit imagery symbolized the fecundity of his nation. The Valois dynasty was celebrated as resembling the Old Testament patriarchs. Bizarre, outlandish figures brought to mind the exuberance and pleasures of the court. Montmorency, one of the wealthiest and most influential individuals in Europe, expressed his loyalty and submission to the crown, which would have inspired his extensive clientele to behave with similar reverence for the king. The experience of observing Montmorency's delightful, larger-than-life paintings would have overwhelmed the senses and inspired devotion, operating in a similar fashion to large, ornate altarpieces; one stimulates secular ardor, the other sacred. In this way the artworks that Montmorency commissioned helped to shape the behavior and attitudes of his contemporaries.

Our knowledge of the painted decoration at Écouen is fragmentary at best, which is unfortunate because, like Fontainebleau, Écouen was a veritable “school” of talent. If we could retrieve the identities of the artists who worked there, our understanding of developments in sixteenth-century French painting would expand greatly. Such knowledge would help to rectify the problem, pointed out by Louis Dimier many years ago, of scholars filling in the gaps of French painting by focusing on foreign painters.⁶⁸ Dimier also suggested that the “Renaissance [in France] was really...but the destruction—or rather, since it was welcomed by the French, the heedless and barbarous immolation—of the national genius on the altar of the foreigner.”⁶⁹ This would indeed appear to be the case if one focused exclusively on works that François I commissioned. If French painters executed Montmorency's murals as some evidence suggests, then the dependence on foreign (mostly Italian) artists was not as total as it might otherwise

⁶⁸ FP, 3.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

appear. Once again, Montmorency's commissions hold an important key to unlocking some of the mysteries of French art in the Early Modern period.

Even without knowing the identities of the artists working at Écouen, visitors to the château can still witness one of the most spectacular and well-preserved embodiments of the taste of the era. In the words of Béguin, the complex is composed of “épisodes sacrés, encadrés, selon le goût de l'époque, de figures mythologiques d'inspiration païenne, correspondant à un programme rigoureusement établi par un homme de son temps, grand seigneur cultivé, catholique convaincu et courtisan avisé.”⁷⁰ Montmorency's role as a patron of the arts has long been acknowledged, but his importance to French painting specifically has been largely overlooked. His desire to foster the talents of local artists has been overshadowed by the numerous royal commissions from Italians. The result has been an exaggeration of the idea that the French were totally dependent on foreigners in the realm of painting. Of course, this viewpoint does not negate the fact that there is a relative dearth, not just of documentation, but also of actual paintings from French artists during the period. Perhaps Montmorency was fighting the tide in his quest to encourage the development of a local school of painting. This only makes the murals all the more important, as they constitute a rare example of an extensive painted cycle created in large part by French artists and motivated by a desire to promote a local school. Unfortunately, his push to encourage the art of painting locally never really caught on. The artists he employed remain in obscurity, and as a result, his spectacular murals remain in the shadows.

⁷⁰ CF, 112.

Other Murals

During the 1520s and '30s Montmorency was engaged in making alterations to the medieval château at Chantilly that he had inherited. His goal was to update and modernize the structure to reflect current tastes. Part of this project included erecting a long gallery to enclose the new garden on the west side of the château. The gallery was destroyed in the late eighteenth century, but it was originally decorated with murals that depicted the story of Psyche; they are attributed to Nicolò dell'Abbate.⁷¹ This subject also appears in the cycle of stained-glass windows at Montmorency's château at Écouen (see Chap. 4) and must have been one of his favorites. A drawing at the Ashmolean Museum by Nicolò dates from the artist's period in France, and may be associated with his work at Chantilly (Fig. 69).⁷²

In the same gallery, Martin de Meille painted stags bearing Montmorency's arms and those of his allies on escutcheons around their necks.⁷³ The gallery is frequently referred to as the *Galerie des Cerfs* after these paintings. The stags, as noted earlier, are a reference to the aristocratic pastime of hunting, an activity in which Montmorency was greatly interested. He passed this passion to his son Henri I, seigneur of Damville, who was such an ardent enthusiast for the hunt that, even when he was unable to mount a horse due to infirmity, he would be carried into the field on a litter.⁷⁴ Montmorency, too, was known to have used one for this purpose at the age of seventy-two.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Musée Condé, 36; EF, cat. no. 13; Blomfeld, 100.

⁷² EF, cat. no. 13; Sylvie Béguin, *Mostra di Nicolò dell'Abbate: Catalogo critico* (Bologna: Alfa, 1969), cat. no. 59; K.T. Parker, *Catalogue of the Collection of Drawings in the Ashmolean Museum*, vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), cat. no. 65, pl. XXIII.

⁷³ Malo, 26; CR, 75.

⁷⁴ Hector La Ferrière-Percy, *Les deux cours de France et d'Angleterre* (Paris: P. Ollendorff, 1894), 120.

⁷⁵ RC, 44.

The use at Chantilly of both Italian and French artists is typical for Montmorency. Nicolò dell'Abbate was a painter to the king, and the constable's ability to secure an artist of his caliber would have reflected well on the Montmorency family. On the other hand, Martin de Meille was a lesser-known French artist whom Montmorency presumably hoped to promote. In this way the constable was able to accommodate the tastes of the court while giving local artists an opportunity to prove their ability.

Montmorency also hired Nicolò dell'Abbate to decorate a gallery at his Parisian hôtel in St. Avoye. Almost nothing remains of the structure as it existed during the sixteenth century, so the murals are no longer extant. There are, however, documents dating from the seventeenth century that record their appearance. Theodore van Thulden, a Dutch artist, was in Paris in the 1630's and drew portions of the frescoes in his album.⁷⁶ There also exists a drawing at the Louvre by Nicolò that was most likely associated with this project.⁷⁷

From van Thulden's drawings and Nicolò's preparatory sketches we can partially reconstruct the murals.⁷⁸ Four elongated female personifications of Virtues flanked an oval medallion depicting a landscape in which *putti* frolicked. A *putto* at the base of the medallion brandished the nude sword of the constable. The entire scheme was framed by pilasters in front of which were allegorical figures of Victory and Fame. The lower corners were painted with nymphs bearing cornucopias.

From the surviving evidence of the painted decoration at Chantilly and Paris we can assume that the two residences were as lavishly outfitted as the château at Écouen. These were homes in which Montmorency spent a great deal of time, where he received visitors and held

⁷⁶ EF, 484. The drawings are preserved in the Bibliothèque Royale Albert I in Brussels.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 484, cat. no. 7; Bedos-Rezak, 308.

⁷⁸ See Bedos-Rezak, 308. Portions of the murals are also recorded in engravings by de Guérineau.

receptions. Because he was such a high-ranking member of court, it was necessary that his personal life, too, be conducted in an appropriately stately manner. His residences were thus spaces of importance to the kingdom where official and unofficial business took place. By creating a luxurious environment for both his daily routine and for state events, Montmorency demonstrated the wealth of the kingdom of France. His lifestyle was a kind of microcosm that reflected the French way of life. As the power of the monarchy consolidated, individuals such as Montmorency came to embody the ideals of the nation. He knew the importance of leveraging his wealth and using the visual arts in order to project his desired identity.

Portraits

Judging by the relative paucity of paintings from sixteenth-century France, one might come to the conclusion that the French were disinterested in the medium. One type of painting appealed to them greatly, however. Portraiture was very much in vogue at the court of France during the sixteenth century. In addition to numerous official portraits of the king and royal family, there is an abundance of portraits of members of the court. Jean and François Clouet served as official portrait painters to the Crown during the period under consideration in order to fill the demand for this type of painting.⁷⁹ There is a formulaic quality to the portraits. Most of them show the sitter in a three-quarter view and are bust- or half-length. The details tend to be precise, even rigid, and the finish exquisite. As Henri Zerner points out, this uniformity has a way of highlighting individual characteristics among the sitters.⁸⁰ Compared to the dynamic type of portrait being developed in Italy during the same period, French portraits may seem outmoded or monotonous, but conformity to a standard type was the ideal. A comparison with Italian

⁷⁹ Etienne Jollet, *Jean et François Clouet* (Paris: Editions de la Lagune, 1997); M. Jean Adhémar, *Les Clouets et la cour des rois de France: De François I à Henri IV* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1970); see also Zerner, 195-204.

⁸⁰ Zerner, 195.

portraiture does not reveal the shortcomings of French artists so much as it reveals the difference in tastes and customs between the Italians and the French. Moreover, the French can be credited with developing the genre at a very early date. The first known independent portrait since antiquity is a panel depicting King Jean le Bon executed around 1360 (Fig. 70).⁸¹ The French apparently felt that such an enduring tradition needed little updating or input from Italian sources.

Whether or not portraiture is a typically French genre can be debated, but for someone such as Montmorency who actively sought to emphasize local traditions, it would have had a special appeal. The Musée Condé possesses a magnificent portrait of him (Fig. 71). It is a copy after the original by François Clouet that has been lost.⁸² The details of the commission, whether Montmorency ordered it himself or whether it was made for another patron, are unknown. Because the portrait offers an unparalleled view of the constable's appearance and bearing, it is worth considering.

The bust-length portrait shows Montmorency in the standard three-quarter view descended from Van Eyck that allows the viewer to penetrate his psychology more easily than older profile-view portraits such as Jean le Bon's. As is typical, his figure fills the frame and the background is obscure. The amount of detail put into the costume is also conventional. Montmorency wears a rich garment trimmed in white fur over his shoulders and a high-collared black doublet with a white ruffle accenting the neckline. The costume is further embellished with gold buttons and a long gold chain that is cropped by the bottom of the frame. A studded

⁸¹ Ibid., 195.

⁸² Musée Condé, cat. no. 13. See also François-Georges Pariset and Raoul de Broglie, *Inventaire des collections publiques françaises, Institut de France, Chantilly, Musée Condé. Peintures de l'école française. XVe à XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Éditions des Musées Nationaux, 1975), cat. no. 24; and Marcel Aubert and Henri Malo, *La collection de Poncins-Biencourt au musée de Chantilly* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1947), cat. no. 591.

black hat rests at an angle on his head. The portrait depicts Montmorency at a somewhat advanced age, probably painted around 1560. He looks directly out at the viewer with an affable expression that recalls Brantôme's description of him as convivial more than the reputation for severity and harshness that is attached to him.⁸³ At the same time the portrait depicts his poise and dignified mien; the details of the wrinkles around his eyes and on his forehead suggest sagacity and experience. He is the embodiment of the keen, focused military leader and the genial courtier. He certainly possesses Castiglione's *sprezzatura*.⁸⁴

There are numerous similar portraits of other French elites; being the subject of such a portrait became a "mark of prestige, a sign of belonging to the world of the court."⁸⁵ Portraits rarely deviated from the Clouets' template. An exception is the portrait of François I in the Louvre that is traditionally attributed to Jean Clouet (Fig. 72). The dimensions of the monarch's portrait are much larger than those of the standard courtier portrait, and the focus is more on the elaborate costume than on the face. The disparity is likely due to the status of the sitter. Thus, portraits became a way of illustrating the social hierarchy. Montmorency's portrait is more humble than the king's, but he occupied a prominent place at court and his portrait was a necessary component of illustrating his role.

Original painted portraits by the Clouets were costly and labor-intensive. As a result, a profusion of copies, usually drawn in chalk, appeared. This allowed individuals to collect representations of the members of court and to organize them into albums.⁸⁶ Drawn portraits were often finished works, as opposed to preparatory sketches made for a painted version. They

⁸³ Brantôme, 415.

⁸⁴ See Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, Charles S. Singleton, trans. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), 32.

⁸⁵ Zerner, 201.

⁸⁶ Sylvie Béguin, *Portraits du cour* (Paris: Bibliothèque du CNAM, 1992), n.p.

played a role similar to that of modern-day photographs, as they could be sent to distant family members and friends. Although they do not fall under the category of painting, the several known chalk drawings of Montmorency are noteworthy. (Fig. 73) They give glimpses of him at different stages in life, from youth to old age, making it possible to trace the development of his physiognomy over the course of many years.⁸⁷

Portraiture was one of many telltale signs of membership in the ruling class in early modern France. Along with having a château, works by Italian artists, expensive tableware, and numerous other status symbols, having a portrait (preferably by Jean or François Clouet) was a requisite part of being a courtier. The genre would open up to the bourgeoisie later, and those aspiring to imitate the court would commission portraits that adhered to the Clouets' formula. We can still see the impact of sixteenth-century style on modern portraiture. The bust-length, three-quarter format remains ubiquitous in part because tastemakers such as Montmorency established the preference for it at the dawning of the modern era.

The Hours of Anne de Montmorency

With the advent of the printing press and the rapid development of engraving, printed books began more and more to supplant the expensive illuminated manuscripts that had been so popular throughout the Middle Ages. For elite clientele, however, luxurious one-of-a-kind manuscripts were still available. The rare individual who could afford such a unique object could take pride in knowing that it was made especially for him. The value of a handmade

⁸⁷ See Raoul de Broglie, *Les Clouets de Chantilly—catalogue illustré* (Paris: Gazette des Beaux Arts, 1971), cat. nos. 21, 29, 30; Peter Mellen, *Jean Clouet: Catalogue raisonné des dessins, miniatures et peintures* (London: Phaidon, 1971), cat. no. 41; Louis Dimier, *Histoire de la peinture de portrait en France au XVIe siècle* (Paris: G. van Oest et Cie., 1924), cat. nos. 62, 182, 357; and Etienne Moreau-Nélaton, *Le portrait à la cour des Valois: Crayons français du XVIe siècle conservés au musée Condé à Chantilly* (Paris: Librairie centrale des beaux-arts, 1908), cat. nos. 145, 146, 147.

manuscript lay partly in its being a singular, original work. For Anne de Montmorency, there was also an allure to an art form with such a rich tradition in France.⁸⁸

The *Hours of the Constable Anne de Montmorency* (Figs. 74-77) is a magnificent example of the kind of sumptuous manuscript that was available to a rarefied group of patrons during the sixteenth century. The book, held today at the Musée Condé in Chantilly (Ms. 1476), comprises 118 vellum pages with fourteen painted miniatures.⁸⁹ Some of the pages are dated 1549, but the volume could not have been completed before September 1551, as can be deduced from the presence on folio 79 of the ducal crown.⁹⁰

In reaction to the rise of Protestantism, the Catholic orthodoxy of some members of the court of France during the mid-sixteenth century may have inspired a renewed interest in books of hours.⁹¹ Typically these volumes were illustrated with scenes from the Gospels, as was the case with the books of hours made for the Dinteville family, who were cousins of Montmorency.⁹² The constable's book, however, featured mostly Old Testament imagery. There is an image of *Christ in Glory* near the beginning of the book, but the pages are filled with subjects including *The Sacrifice of Abraham* (f. 5v), *Moses and the Burning Bush* (f. 13v), *Esther and Ahasuerus* (f. 58v), *Jonah and the Ninevites* (f. 62v), *Abigail Begging for Clemency from David* (f. 27v), and *Judith and Holofernes* (f. 58v.). As with the Old Testament scenes

⁸⁸ See Valérie Auclair, *L'art du manuscrit de la renaissance en France* (Paris: Somogy éditions d'art, 2001), 4.

⁸⁹ Musée Condé, Ms. 1476. See Musée Condé cat. no. 32; Thierry Crépin Leblond and Myra Dickmann Orth, *Livres d'heures royaux: la peinture de manuscrits à la cour de France au temps de Henri II* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1993), cat. no. 23, 57-8. L. Delisle, "Les Heures du connétable Anne de Montmorency au Musée Condé," *Revue de l'art ancien et moderne* 7 (May-June, 1900): 393-404.

⁹⁰ Montmorency was awarded the title of Duke at that time after negotiating the treaty for the surrender of Boulogne in March 1550. See Auclair, 58.

⁹¹ Auclair, 58.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 58.

decorating the chimneypieces at the château at Écouen, it is possible that these scenes were of special importance to Montmorency, and may have been used as allusions to his own life. An illustration of *Chaste Susannah* (f. 40v), for example, can be read as a reference to his innocence, despite accusations, during his period of banishment from court.⁹³ Similarly, the story of Judas Maccabeus can easily be interpreted as an allusion to Montmorency's valor and military victory.⁹⁴ An illustration of Montmorency's coat of arms (f. 79) faces the scene with Judas, making the connection between the two individuals obvious.

In addition to the colorful miniatures, numerous prayers personalized the volume. One addressed to St. Christopher asks for protection against enemies. This same prayer, evidently dear to Montmorency, also appears in his psalter.⁹⁵ There are also prayers dedicated to St. Anne, patron saint of Montmorency, his godmother Anne de Bretagne and his mother Anne de Pot. Highly personal prayers and devotions such as these allowed Montmorency to express his piety in an individualized manner.

Several individuals appear to have worked on the miniatures. Béguin has pointed out that, while most of the illustrations are the work of Flemish artists, the scene illustrating the Story of Samuel and the Story of Elisha (Fig. 74, f. 48v) reveals the influence of Rosso Fiorentino; she suggests that a student of the master such as Geoffrey Dumoustier executed it.⁹⁶ Two other scenes, the story of Susannah and that of Judas Maccabeus, may have been completed by Nicolò dell'Abbate (Fig. 75, f. 40v and Fig. 76, f. 78v).⁹⁷ Béguin points to similarities

⁹³ Ibid., 60.

⁹⁴ Judas led the revolt against the Seleucid Empire and is acclaimed as one of the greatest warriors of Jewish history (2 Maccabees 8: 1-36).

⁹⁵ Auclair, 58.

⁹⁶ EF, 47.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 64; Auclair, 62-3.

between these two miniatures and Nicolò's work at the Palazzo Zucchini-Solimei in Bologna.⁹⁸ This attribution is by no means secure, but the scenes have a genre-like character that Nicolò often applied to religious subjects; the lithe, elongated body proportions are also reminiscent of his style. More recently, scholars have suggested that some of the work may be due to an artist known as the Master of the Getty Epistles, whose work has been connected with that of Noël Bellemare of Antwerp.⁹⁹ Cécile Scailliérez, invoking analogies with drawings at the Louvre and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, considers the miniatures to be the work of Jean Cousin the Elder.¹⁰⁰

Regardless of who was directly responsible for the creation of the miniatures, the artists were certainly acquainted with the decorative vocabulary used by the Italians at Fontainebleau that included motifs such as strapwork, grotesques, masks, cornucopias, and garlands. One frequently hears of the influence of the School of Fontainebleau in all manner of media, from paintings to tableware, but it is seldom considered in the production of manuscripts. The influence is also apparent in an illuminated volume, dating from about 1550, of Euripides' *Tragedies* translated by Jacques Amyot and illuminated by the Master of the Psalter of Claude Gouffier.¹⁰¹ Montmorency's and Gouffier's books of hours demonstrates the extent to which the style developed at Fontainebleau truly saturated the arts during the sixteenth century.

The influence of the School of Fontainebleau is most obvious in the framing devices surrounding the miniatures in Montmorency's book of hours; the design for these has been

⁹⁸ Sylvie Béguin, "Niccolò dell' Abbate en France," *Art en France* 2 (1962): 113-146.

⁹⁹ Auclair, 60; Guy-Michel Leproux, "Un peintre anversois à Paris sous le règne de François Ier: Noël Bellemare," *Cahiers de la Rotonde* 20 (1998): 125-154.

¹⁰⁰ Auclair, 63.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, cat. no. 12.

attributed to Luca Penni.¹⁰² Take, for example, a page at the beginning of the book that declares the identity of the owner (Fig. 77, f. 2v). In the center of the painted image is the constable's nude sword floating against a blue, star-studded sky. Surrounding it are four banners bearing Montmorency's APLANOS motto. An empty sheath decorated with golden fleurs-de-lis rests below, perpendicular to the sword. An equal amount of detail is put into the framing device. Strapwork, cartouches, masks, curious creatures, and tiny vignettes recall the ornament of the Gallery of François I. A profusion of secular imagery in the margins of sacred texts was also common during the Middle Ages.¹⁰³ Here, however, they distinctly reflect the taste of the court during the reign of the Valois.

As with the murals at Écouen, elements echoing Fontainebleau commingle with details that recall imagery from the royal entrées of Henri II that took place around the time the manuscript was created. Bunches of plump, ripe fruit hang from crimson fabric on either side of the sword at the lower part of the frame. Similar to their use on the chimneypieces of Écouen, these symbols of the prosperous fecundity of France act as reminders of Montmorency's role in the flourishing of the nation.

For Montmorency, an illustrated book of hours was more than a status symbol; it was also an expression of his religious piety. As a conservative Catholic, he would have been expected to observe prayers at regular intervals throughout the day. As noted in the introduction, Brantôme described Montmorency as particularly devoted to this practice.¹⁰⁴ This manuscript would have acted as an aid to religious meditation, with the absorbing, vivid illustrations inspiring stirring reflection. Montmorency's commission of a unique illuminated manuscript

¹⁰² Ibid., 62.

¹⁰³ See Margot McIlwain Nishimura, *In the Margins* (Los Angeles: J.Paul Getty Museum, 2009).

¹⁰⁴ Brantôme, 371-72.

allowed him to express his personal spirituality. Furthermore, he preferred to adhere to tradition in religious matters. Generations of French Catholic patrons before him had possessed richly illustrated books of hours. Commissioning one of his own made him a part of that illustrious tradition. While fewer and fewer of his contemporaries invested in this type of manuscript,¹⁰⁵ Montmorency apparently felt a need to preserve the art of illumination. His book of hours is a splendid example of his lifelong desire to maintain local customs while simultaneously updating them to reflect the dynamism of his era.

Conclusion

As with other media, Montmorency employed painting as way to express his identity. We can see manifestations of his conservative Catholicism, his obligation to the Crown and kingdom, and his familial pride. There is also evidence that he used painting to express an interest in classical antiquity and mythology. In addition to the destroyed *Psyche* cycle at Chantilly, the inventory of his apartments in St. Avoye includes several panels with mythological subject matter that no longer survive, including a *Venus and Adonis* that is mentioned as hanging above a fireplace, a *Reclining Venus*, and a painting of *Diana*.¹⁰⁶ Not one to shun fashion entirely when it could benefit his image, Montmorency found a way successfully to navigate the middle ground between the vogue for classicism and the preservation of local medieval traditions.

At least as much as those in architecture, sculpture, or decorative arts, Montmorency's commissions for painting can offer invaluable insights into artistic developments in sixteenth-century France. His activities in this arena are perhaps even more important because of the scarcity of information regarding French painting from the era. Many of the works associated

¹⁰⁵ See Auclair, 4.

¹⁰⁶ Mirot, 161-2; 191.

with Montmorency, the murals at Écouen in particular, can aid scholars in an understanding of the evolution of a French school of painters. The work currently being carried out by scholars such as Sylvie Béguin and Thierry Crépin-Leblond at Écouen will be instrumental in redressing the former neglect of this topic.¹⁰⁷ Their work will surely temper the “recrimination, almost amounting to spite” with which past histories have approached the subject.¹⁰⁸

Montmorency’s tastes were highly influential. Together with Fontainebleau, his château at Écouen established a mode of interior decoration that would inspire future generations in France. There are echoes of the same sense of opulence, political and social propaganda, and self-eulogy found at Vaux-le-Vicomte (1658-61) and later at Versailles (ca. 1669-85). The former was, like Écouen, the residence of a high-ranking government official whose wealth and influence rivaled that of the King’s. Nicolas Fouquet, who built Vaux-le-Vicomte, found a compelling model in Anne de Montmorency, and used his home in a similar fashion to vie for the admiration of the kingdom.¹⁰⁹

Many of Montmorency’s painted works survive in remarkably good condition. They serve as colorful reminders of the richness of the environments in which the court conducted its business. They can help recreate the *mise en scène* of court life and perhaps, with further study, help repopulate the cast of characters that has been lost to posterity.

¹⁰⁷ Crépin-Leblond, curator of the Musée national de la renaissance at Écouen, is currently working on a project to assemble all of the available documentation, which will give a clearer idea of the interior design of the château.

¹⁰⁸ FP, 6.

¹⁰⁹ See Jean-Christian Petitfils, *Fouquet* (Paris: Perrin, 1998) and Georges Fessy and Marc Fumaroli, *Vaux le Vicomte* (Paris: Editions Scala, 1997).

Chapter 4: Decorative Arts

The objects discussed in this chapter are frequently categorized as “applied arts” or “minor arts,” and as such are often excluded from art-historical texts. This tendency suggests a number of historiographic observations. First, it implies that their utilitarian function dominates their aesthetic value. It also suggests that they are in some way inferior to the traditional fine arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture, or that they play a subordinate role as historical documents. During the sixteenth century, however, there existed no such clearly defined hierarchy of the arts. Anne de Montmorency lavished large sums of money on decorative objects and a survey of his art patronage would be incomplete without addressing them. His patronage of architecture, painting, and sculpture was a way of demonstrating his rank and power. Likewise, the decorative objects he acquired provided evidence of his social status. His residences were completely saturated from top to bottom with these often small creations, which served as reminders of his identity. In this chapter I will discuss Montmorency’s commissions in decorative arts media including ceramics, enamels, stained glass, bookbindings, furniture, and fixtures.

Montmorency had a keen interest in decorative arts media that challenges twentieth- and twenty-first-century conceptions of art. Henri Zerner traces the negative connotations of the decorative arts to the early twentieth century and the introduction of abstraction.¹ Consistent with the expressive intensity of painting from that era, anything ornamental was seen as lacking in meaning. While this judgment still informs our way of thinking about art, Montmorency would have seen it very differently. A man of his great wealth was able to command artistic creations of the highest quality, by the artists most in-demand. As a result, it may come as a

¹ Zerner, 294.

surprise that he devoted so much attention to seemingly mundane items such as candlesticks, locks, and windows, but there is evidence that during the sixteenth century objects such as these were viewed as contributing equally to a refined environment.² This is proven in part by the fact that artists were expected to have some skill in a variety of media, including some addressed in this chapter.³ Moreover, in order to have a sufficiently luxurious backdrop for the important social exchanges and events that took place in his homes, paintings and sculptures alone were not enough. Every recess of his physical surroundings was an opportunity to express his ideology, to clarify his place in the world, and to offer an enlightening and aesthetically pleasing experience to visitors.

Montmorency's time was awash with material goods.⁴ One testament to this flood of luxurious objects is a drawing by Leonardo da Vinci dated circa 1510 now in the collection of H.M. Queen Elizabeth II at Windsor Castle (Fig. 78). The drawing depicts storm clouds raining all manner of objects down to the earth. At the bottom is an inscription in the artist's hand that reads, "Oh human misery, how many things you must serve for money." Leonardo was obviously critical of the materialism he observed among many of his contemporaries. Others equated acquisition and splendor with virtue. Leon Battista Alberti, for instance, wrote in his treatise *Della famiglia* that material wealth showed social and moral worth of an individual and

² See Cox-Rearick, 67; Rudolf Distelberger, *Western Decorative Arts* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, Cambridge University Press, 1993), xv.

³ See Timothy Clifford and J.V.G. Mallet, "Battista Franco as a Designer for Maiolica," *The Burlington Magazine* 118, no. 879 (June, 1976): 386-410.

⁴ See Richard Goldthwaite, "The Empire of Things: Consumer Demand in Renaissance Italy," in F.W. Kent and Patricia Simons, eds. *Patronage, Art, and Society in Renaissance Italy*, (New York: Humanities Research Centre Australia, Oxford University Press, 1987), 153-175; and Evelyn Walsh, *Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy, 1400-1600* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005). Goldthwaite and Walsh focus on consumer culture in Italy; a comparable study on French consumer culture is needed.

reflected on the larger community.⁵ In this way the burgeoning consumer society offered opportunities to demonstrate the richness of one's inner character. Material objects became referents to one's value and helped to objectify the self.⁶ This is undoubtedly the way the constable viewed his collection of luxurious possessions. His conspicuous consumption was an assertion of his power, an exteriorization of his innate wealth, and an assertion of his moral character.

Although many of the types of objects discussed in this chapter are small in scale, they were an important part of the Renaissance interior. Furthermore, they played a central role in the process of identity-formation and expression for Anne de Montmorency specifically and for the Early Modern era in general. Finally, an examination of Montmorency's patronage practices in the decorative arts supports the notion that he was attempting to have France displace Italy as the artistic capital of Europe.

Ceramics

Montmorency demonstrated a keen interest in ceramic objects. His pattern of consumption of these items offers evidence of his desire to promote the arts in France and to engender production that would rival that of Italy. In the mid-1530s, he acquired a fashionable service of maiolica from a renowned workshop in Urbino. Later in the century, however, he turned his attention to French ceramics, patronizing workshops in Rouen and supporting the production of the so-called St. Porchaire pottery. Not content with importing his luxury objects from across the Alps, Montmorency's patronage of ceramics became a kind of political statement of loyalty to his native land.

⁵ Leon Battista Alberti, *The Albertis of Florence: Leon Battista Alberti's Della Famiglia*, Guido A. Guarino, trans. (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 1971), 160-173.

⁶ Mihaly Csikszentmihaly, "Why We Need Things," in David Kingery and Steven D. Lubar, eds. *History from Things* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 23.

The sixteenth century witnessed a proliferation of types of tableware. Leading artists including Rosso Fiorentino often devoted their energies to designing such objects as pitchers, wine coolers, and flatware.⁷ It became standard practice for someone as prestigious as Montmorency to have large and elaborate collections of ceramics, as a result of the elaboration of cooking and dining practices at courts throughout Europe during the sixteenth century. One of the best sources on this development is Bartolomeo Scappi's *Opera dell'arte del cucinare*, published in 1570.⁸ Scappi served as the personal cook to Pope Pius V and was responsible for the preparation and display of food at the Papal Court. From this text we learn that the emphasis at formal meals was on display and elaborate presentation. Circumstances were similar in Northern Europe. One image from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* shows the household of John, Duke of Berry at table with guests, surrounded by elaborate serving pieces (Fig. 79).⁹

As court life became more refined and increasingly ritualized during the sixteenth century, formal dining evolved into a highly complex affair. This shift is one facet of the desire during this period of individuals such as Montmorency to transform their society into one that was more refined and civilized, with a greater emphasis on formality and decorum than was typical during the Middle Ages. Rules of etiquette and complex customs indicated a high degree

⁷ See Cox-Rearick, 395; fig. 447; Thierry Crépin-Leblond. *Une orfèvrerie de terre: Bernard Palissy et la céramique de Saint-Porchaire* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1997), 18 (hereafter cited as OT).

⁸ Bartolomeo Scappi, *Opera dell'arte del cucinare* (Pavia: Cyrano, 1998). See also Ken Albala, *The Banquet: Dining in the Great Courts of Late Renaissance Europe* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Robert Sauzet and Jean Claude Margolin, *Pratiques et discours alimentaires à la renaissance* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1982).

⁹ Musée Condé, Ms. 65, f.1v. See also Timothy Husband, *The Art of Illumination: The Limbourg Brothers and the Belles Heures of Jean de France, Duc de Berry* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008); Rob Dücker, *The Limbourg Brothers: Nijmegen Masters at the Court of France* (Nijmegen, Holland: Ludion, 2005); Raymond Cazelle, *Les très riches heures de Duc de Berry* (Tournai: Renaissance du livre, 2001).

of sophistication and an exceptionally advanced civilization.¹⁰ One can easily see how this kind of elaborated protocol resulted in the rigid routines of daily life at Versailles in subsequent generations.

Montmorency's Italian Maiolica Service

Tin-glazed earthenware known as maiolica had been produced in Italy since the Middle Ages, but by the sixteenth century it had matured as an art form and had become a sought-after commodity throughout Italy and Western Europe.¹¹ In Montmorency's time, Italian ceramics were frequently decorated with narrative scenes taken from classical literature, thus becoming an opportunity for the owner to display his knowledge of the ancient world. These beautiful objects are particularly valuable to art historians because, due to the nature of the glaze with which they are coated, they retain the brilliance of their hues much better than easel paintings or murals. Thus, they provide an unparalleled glimpse of Renaissance artworks as they appeared in the sixteenth century.

Ceramic objects, even beautifully decorated ones, were not expensive during the Renaissance, especially compared to the traditional luxury tableware made of silver.¹² Although made of humble clay, Italian maiolica was considered a luxury because of the artistic skill each piece displayed and because of the cultural cachet of an object decorated with erudite subject matter. Ownership of such an object showed taste and an interest in humanist culture. During the sixteenth century, painters of maiolica began to sign and date their works, indicating that they

¹⁰ For a discussion of the impact of the transformation of dining practice on tableware, see W. David Kingery, "Painterly Maiolica of the Italian Renaissance," *Technology and Culture* 34, no. 1 (Jan. 1993): 28-48.

¹¹ For a history of the production of maiolica see Howard Coutts, *The Art of Ceramics, European Ceramic Design 1500-1830* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001); Bernard Rackham, *Italian Maiolica* (New York: Pitman, 1952); Alan Caiger-Smith, *Tin-Glazed Pottery in Europe and the Islamic World* (London: Faber, 1973).

¹² Kingery, "Painterly Maiolica," 32; 47.

thought of themselves as full-fledged artists. Around this time prominent figures such as Matthias Corvinus of Hungary and Isabella d'Este acquired maiolica services and Lorenzo de' Medici compared a gift of tin-glazed earthenware to the work of silversmiths or jewelers.¹³ In this context we can understand the value Montmorency's service would have had. It would have indicated his participation in a wider cultural milieu and placed him among the most influential leaders in Europe. At a time when power was being consolidated and nations formed, this kind of visible display was crucial.

No document has come to light indicating whether Montmorency commissioned this armorial service for himself or it was a gift; however there is reason to believe that the service was a diplomatic gift from an Italian dignitary. Montmorency was deeply preoccupied during the years of 1533-1535 with negotiations concerning the fate of the duchy of Milan and the implementation of agreements between François I and Pope Clement VII during their meeting at Marseilles in October 1533.¹⁴ Analysis of Montmorency's extensive diplomatic correspondence from this period suggests that the service may well have been a gift from the Pope or from a member of the Curia.¹⁵

Another reason to suspect that Montmorency did not directly commission the service is the fact that his heraldry is imprecisely rendered.¹⁶ The cross dividing the coat of arms into quarters does not touch the borders of the shield; furthermore, the collar of the order of St. Michael is absent. In artworks for which Montmorency's direct involvement is known, the

¹³ Wendy Watson, *Italian Renaissance Maiolica from the William A. Clark Collection* (London: Scala Books, 1986), 29.

¹⁴ Thierry Crépin-Leblond and Pierre Ennès, *Le dressoir du prince* (exh. cat., Écouen: Musée National de la Renaissance, 1995), 56-7.

¹⁵ Decrue, 227-241.

¹⁶ Crépin-Leblond and Ennès, 56.

appearance of his heraldry is systematic, suggesting that he provided a precise drawing of his coat of arms.

We know from markings on the reverse of the dishes that the set came from Guido Durantino's workshop in Urbino in 1535.¹⁷ This makes it one of the first services of historiated Italian maiolica owned by a non-Italian.¹⁸ In this way, Montmorency became a kind of tastemaker and created a pattern of art patronage that others would imitate.

J.V.G. Mallet compiled a list of all of the surviving pieces of Montmorency's service; they are currently widely dispersed among different collections in Europe and the U.S.¹⁹ All together there are eleven plates, three candlesticks, three bowls, and one flask. The painting style varies from one piece to the next, suggesting that there were multiple hands at work under the direction of the master.²⁰ Indeed, Durantino's workshop was very active during this period, necessitating a team of craftsmen to meet the high demand for the fashionable objects. Most of the pieces are decorated with a scene from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and all bear Montmorency's coat of arms. Ovid's work provided a vast store of narratives for artists and patrons, and it is worth considering why Montmorency (or the individual commissioning the service for him) selected certain subjects. It is unlikely that they were chosen at random, and a close examination of the subjects offers insights into how these decorative objects functioned in the context of Montmorency's art collection.²¹

¹⁷ Coutts, 23-4; Musée Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 39; Distelberger, 219-221.

¹⁸ Distelberger, 246.

¹⁹ J.V.G. Mallet, "In bottega di maestro Guido Durantino in Urbino," *Burlington Magazine* 129, no. 1010 (May 1987): 284-298.

²⁰ Catherine Join-Dieterle, *Musée du Petit Palais, Catalogue des céramiques I* (Paris: Musée du Petit Palais, 1984), 206.

²¹ On iconography in maiolica, see Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, *Marvels of Maiolica: Italian Renaissance Ceramics from the Corcoran Gallery of Art Collection* (Charlestown, MA: Bunker

Subjects featured on Montmorency's service include *The Wars and Troubles of the Trojans by Land and by Sea* (Books XII and XIII), *The Daughters of Minyas* (Book IV), *Alpheus and Arethusa* (Book V), *King Minos at Megara* (Book VIII), *The Sacrifice of the Greeks at Aulis* (Book XII), *Jupiter and Semele* (Book III). Such a broad range of narratives from Ovid reflects the general interest in this particular work of classical literature among maiolica painters and patrons. More than any other work, painters quarried Ovid for tales that would suggest an interest in humanist scholarship;²² patrons believed that demonstrating a familiarity with classical literature bestowed upon them an air of sophistication and refinement. Montmorency was no exception; his maiolica collection showed his desire to participate in the renewed interest in ancient literary works that was so essential during the sixteenth century.

The narratives listed above can be considered set pieces that appear frequently on Italian maiolica from the period, and were selected largely because of the cultural cachet offered by scenes from the *Metamorphoses*. Others had more specific relevance to a French patron. Narratives concerning the Labors of Hercules appear on two surviving plates. One featuring *Hercules Slaying the Hydra* (Book IX) is currently held at the Ashmolean Museum;²³ the location of the other, noted by Mallet as decorated with *Hercules, Cacus, and Cerberus* (Book IX), is unknown.²⁴ The Ashmolean plate depicts the god killing the Hydra with a flaming club (Fig. 80). The king of Lerna is seated above on a rock watching the scene. A cityscape rises in the distance. A shield bearing Montmorency's arms hangs from a tree on the left. The

Hill Publishing, Inc., 2004), 18; and Françoise Barbe and Thierry Crépin-Leblond, *Majolique: La faïence au temps des humanistes* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux-Grand Palais, 2011).

²² Timothy Wilson, *Ceramic Art of the Italian Renaissance* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1987), 137.

²³ Ashmolean Museum, Fortnum Collection, *Descriptive Catalogue of the Maiolica and Enamelled Earthenware of Italy* (Oxford, Clarendon Press: 1897), cat. no. 508, pl. XV; Crépin-Leblond and Ennès, cat. 25; Musée Jean-Jacques Rousseau, cat. no. 30.

²⁴ Distelberger, 221.

composition of this scene is copied directly from an engraving by Jacopo Caraglio after Rosso.²⁵ Many painters of maiolica during this period relied on prints in the decoration of their wares, as did artists in other media.

Subjects involving Hercules had significance for Montmorency aside from their straightforward classical appeal. In sixteenth-century France, Hercules was linked to the monarch and to the Gallic people in general.²⁶ This was based in part on a reference in Lucian's *Heracles* to a picture of the deity that the author had seen while in Gaul. Hercules was, according to Lucian, depicted as aged, and thus both wise and physically strong. Renaissance mythographers and historians, citing Lucian and sources of varying credibility, claimed that the Gauls were descended from Hercules who had visited that part of Europe during his travels. For instance, Joannes Annius of Viterbo published a text in 1498 that told of Hercules' marriage to the daughter of a Gallic king and their subsequent offspring.²⁷ Likewise, Jean Lemaire de Belges in his *Illustrations de Gaule et singularitez de Troye* demonstrated the "extraction Herculienne et Troyenne de la nation Gallicane et Française."²⁸ The Gallic Hercules became a "ready-made literary and artistic device to glorify their language, their literature, and their monarchy...[T]he ancients, by making Hercules Gallic, thus admitted the Gallic tongue and hence the French to be superior to their own."²⁹

The myth of Hercules became emblematic of French superiority, and depictions of the demigod in Renaissance France became referents to the impressive ancestry of their monarchy.

²⁵ Crépin-Leblond and Ennès, 59.

²⁶ See Robert E. Hallowell, "Ronsard and the Gallic Hercules Myth," *Studies in the Renaissance* 9 (1962): 242-255.

²⁷ See Johannes Annius, *Auctores vetustissimi* (Rome: Eucharius Silber, 1498).

²⁸ Jean Lemaire de Belges, *Illustrations de Gaule et singularitez de Troye* (Paris: Petrus Lavinus, 1529), n.p.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 250.

Depictions of the god appeared as part of the ephemeral artworks constructed for the ceremonial royal entrance of Henri II into Paris in 1549. The king entered the city through a temporary arch at the Porte Saint Denis; upon the arch stood a statue of Hercules that corresponded to Lucian's description. Images of Hercules were also incorporated into the decorations for the monarch's entry into Paris in 1549.³⁰

Montmorency's own reputation depended in part on that of the king to whom he was a close advisor; it was in his best interest to exalt the leader of the French people. By the 1530s references to the Labors of Hercules had become allusions to the strength of the French monarch. The incorporation of the Montmorency coat of arms into the scene of *Hercules Slaying the Hydra* is a reminder of his close to the king. References to the power of the monarchy and the alliance between the king and the Montmorency family can be found throughout the architectural and painted decoration of the constable's residences (see Chaps. 1 and 3). On a smaller scale, this maiolica service expressed similar messages. Even a piece of tableware became a vehicle for political propaganda.

Erudition was highly valued among sixteenth-century courtiers and complex or obscure subject matter provided an opportunity for learned guests, aware of contemporary developments in literature and the visual arts, to recognize the reference to Hercules as an allusion to the king of France and the distinction of the French people. Perhaps an even more important audience would have been ambassadors and dignitaries visiting from foreign courts. One can easily imagine the host using this plate to initiate such guests into the myth of Gallic Hercules. The use of a visual aid would spur a lively debate on the nature of Hercules and of the Gallic people.

³⁰ See I.D. MacFarlane, *The Entry of Henri II into Paris, 16 June 1549* (Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1982); Hallowell, 252.

This is but one example of Montmorency's interest in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid. Others appear in artworks throughout his collections. This work of classical literature had wide appeal during the sixteenth century due to the appearance of numerous editions and translations.³¹ For Montmorency it may have held a deeper significance. More than demonstrating his interest in current literary trends, Montmorency's use of the *Metamorphoses* can be read as a reference to what he saw as the cultural changes taking place around him, many of them the product of his own actions. While the military campaigns that he led in Italy transformed France's political standing, his patronage of the arts was an attempt to bring greater refinement to the court of France. No longer a remote medieval hinterland, France was being refashioned, metamorphosing into a dignified modern nation. Montmorency saw himself as an agent of change for the nation of France and as such his interest in the *Metamorphoses* makes sense. These ceramic objects became signifiers not only of Montmorency's erudition and wealth, but also of his power to change and direct the fate of France.

Two candlesticks now in the Lehman Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art bear Montmorency's coat of arms and appear to be part of the same service, although they lack the markings seen on the other pieces that identify them as products of Durantino's shop.³² Instead, the undersides of these candlesticks are inscribed with the numerals 11 and 23. A third candlestick from Montmorency's service now located at the Victoria and Albert Museum is marked with the number 16. Mallet surmises that this can mean that there were originally as

³¹ See Ann Moss, *Ovid in Renaissance France: A Survey of the Latin Editions of Ovid and Commentaries Printed in France Before 1600* (London: Warburg Institute, 1982).

³² Mallet, 289.

many as twenty-three candlesticks in the service.³³ Indeed, the service must have been much larger than the nineteen pieces that remain today.

It is worth noting that another Frenchman acquired a service from the same Italian shop around the same time as Montmorency. High-ranking Church official Cardinal Antoine Duprat was the only other Frenchman to receive a full service of Italian maiolica at such an early date. Appropriately, his pieces are all decorated with Old Testament subjects.³⁴ While Montmorency had a reputation for being a staunch, conservative Catholic, however, not one of his pieces features a religious subject. If these two services were diplomatic gifts from the same individual or group, as some evidence suggests, Duprat was obviously seen as embodying the power of the Church, while Montmorency represented secular French culture. Just as the cardinal played an important role in affecting Church policy in France, the constable influenced the direction of public policy and cultural developments. The gift was an appeal to Montmorency's sophisticated taste, a somewhat obsequious attempt to flatter him in an effort to facilitate negotiations. Thus, luxury objects of this sort were not mere decorative baubles. They certainly had aesthetic value, but they were also an essential part of the most important political negotiations of the period.

Saint-Porchaire Pottery

Judging by the excellent state of preservation of Montmorency's maiolica service, he valued these objects highly. He did not, however, continue to patronize the makers of these fashionable Italian wares after 1535. Instead, he turned to local pottery manufactories.

One bit of evidence that French patrons were interested in perfecting the art of ceramics in their own country is the manuscript prepared by Cipriano Piccolpasso of Castel Durante for Cardinal François de Tournon of Lyons. Apparently at the cardinal's request, Piccolpasso

³³ Ibid., 289.

³⁴ Coutts, 23-4; Distelberger, 219.

created a work entitled the *Arte del vasaio*, which detailed the potter's art. Ronald Lightbown tells us that the cardinal is "unlikely to have commissioned the text out of simple curiosity. More probably he intended to use it either to improve or encourage the craft of pottery in France."³⁵

There were already numerous Italian potters working in France at mid-century, especially in the city of Lyon where many of them settled.³⁶ Their presence in France may have spurred a spirit of competitiveness among French artists and patrons who wanted to cultivate native talent rather than relying on foreigners.

In addition to perfecting the art of ceramics, French patrons exhibited an interest in creating high-quality porcelain-like objects in imitation of wares being imported from the Far East. That the Italians were similarly preoccupied is proven by the attempts of the Medici family to create fine-paste porcelain at a workshop in Florence.³⁷ The product of these attempts in France is the so-called Saint-Porchaire ceramics. Little is known about these enigmatic objects; one nineteenth-century scholar referred to them as the "sphinx de la curiosité."³⁸ Among the mysteries surrounding Saint-Porchaire ceramics are questions of provenance and authorship. Although there are fewer than seventy known examples, a number of them bear Montmorency's heraldry. A closer look at Montmorency's involvement in the production of Saint-Porchaire ceramics will aid in an understanding of these curious objects.

³⁵ Cipriano Piccolpasso, *The Three Books of the Potter's Art*, Ronald Lightbown and Alan Caiger-Smith, trans., vol. 1 (London: Scolar Press, 1980): xxiv.

³⁶ See Jacqueline Boucher, *Présence italienne à Lyon à la renaissance* (Lyon: LUGD, 1994), 67-72.

³⁷ See Marco Spallanzani, *Ceramica alle corte dei Medici nel cinquecento* (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini, 1994).

³⁸ Louis Clément de Ris, "Les faiences de Henri II," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 1, no. 5 (1860): 32. For a review of the literature on Saint-Porchaire ceramics, see M. Brunet, *The Frick Collection: An Illustrated Catalogue, Vol. VII: Porcelains* (New York: Princeton University Press, 1974), 161-73.

While the location of the manufactory responsible for Saint-Porchaire pottery is unknown, the clay from which they are made came from the southwest provinces of France. This region is known for its deposits of kaolin-rich white clay necessary for approximating porcelain.³⁹ This key ingredient is absent from Medici porcelain, making Saint-Porchaire pottery chemically more similar to Chinese hard-paste porcelain. Because of the highly fashionable design of Saint-Porchaire pottery, some scholars have assumed it must have been produced in the cosmopolitan center of Paris out of materials brought in from western France.⁴⁰ It has also been suggested that Bernard Palissy was the creator of the wares.⁴¹

I would posit that a workshop located in a major urban center was not necessary for the creation of Saint-Porchaire ceramics. Royal or aristocratic patrons could have provided examples of court fashions in the form of prints or actual objects for craftsmen to follow. While Paris was the metropolitan hub of France, the court was itinerant during the sixteenth century. Artists and craftsmen did not necessarily need to be present in the capital city to produce fashionable artworks for aristocratic patrons. In fact, Catherine de' Medici was undertaking an effort to integrate the provinces into court culture.⁴² Subsequently we find the promotion of the arts and the spread of court fashions in regions outside of the Ile-de-France. Indeed, archeological discoveries in the region of Poitou in western France suggest that the pottery was

³⁹ Ian Wardropper, "The Flowering of the French Renaissance," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 62 (Summer, 2004): 39. See also Pierre Ennès, "Saint-Porchaire, la porcelaine des Valois," *L'Estampille-L'Objet d'art* no. 298 (Jan. 1996): 24-39.

⁴⁰ See Pierre Ennès, "De 'Saint-Porchaire' ou d'ailleurs," in Daphne Barbour and Shelley Sturman, eds., *Saint-Porchaire Ceramics* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1996), 17-25.

⁴¹ See OT: 43-55; and Leonard N. Amico, "Bernard Palissy and 'Saint-Porchaire Ceramics,'" in Barbour and Sturman, 27-51.

⁴² See *Ibid.*, 47.

produced in Deux-Sèvres, near the towns of Bressuire and Saint-Porchaire.⁴³ The Montmorency family owned land in Deux-Sèvres,⁴⁴ so it is entirely possible that the constable could have been involved directly in the founding of a manufactory there. In the Early Modern period in France, patronage often plays a more important role in determining style than does the location of production. One can easily imagine Montmorency supporting the queen's endeavor to unify the disparate regions of France under a common culture. In this way Saint-Porchaire ceramics can be understood as a manifestation of the drive to unify the nation and the use of visual arts to express national identity.

Similarly, there is little evidence to suggest that Palissy is responsible for the objects under consideration. As he is one of the only well-known potters of sixteenth-century France it is unsurprising that attributions would cluster around him, but analyses of Palissy's Saint-Porchaire-like products reveal his lack of understanding of the structural complexity of authentic examples.⁴⁵

An inventory conducted at Montmorency's Parisian residence after his death includes several objects that are thought to be Saint-Porchaire pottery. There are "*deux bassins de terre esmaillez de blanc façon de Poitou avec ung vase de mesme et ung chantellier...coupes couvertes, gobellet courvert, buire, esguyère, le tout de terre esmaillée de blanc et noir et de mesme façons de Poitou.*"⁴⁶ There are also surviving examples decorated with Montmorency's coat of arms.

⁴³ Musée Georges Turpin, *Renaissance de la faïence de Sainte-Porchaire* (exh. cat., Parthenay: Musée Georges Turpin, 2004), 83. See also Wardropper, 39; OT, 23.

⁴⁴ Distelberger, 245.

⁴⁵ OT, 53-4.

⁴⁶ Léon Mirot, "L'hôtel et les collections du connétable de Montmorency (suite et fin)," *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes* 80 (1919): 152-229. See also Musée Georges Turpin, 21.

One such example is a candlestick now located at the Petit Palais in Paris (Fig. 81).⁴⁷ This exquisite object features many of the details that make Saint-Porchaire ceramics unique. The candlestick stands just over a foot tall and is decorated with common Mannerist motifs including expressive masks enclosed in crescents, shells, garlands, crests, and arabesques. There are multiple tiers of various sizes and shapes, and even entire nude figures. The sources for these design motifs are for the most part Italian, making their way into French artistic vocabulary through the school of Fontainebleau. These elements are very similar to those used by contemporary goldsmiths, as are the forms of many examples of Saint-Porchaire pottery. It is entirely possible that these objects were intended to imitate more expensive metal wares. An example of the fashionable dishes that goldsmiths were producing during the sixteenth century can be seen in a design by Rosso for François I drawn by his pupil Léonard Thiry.⁴⁸ Rosso, as one of the most renowned Italian artists of the era, obviously saw it within his purview to design luxury tableware, reinforcing the notion that these sorts of objects can be considered works of art and not merely mundane, utilitarian articles.

The shape of the candlestick also recalls that of bronze ones of French and Nordic origin from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁴⁹ While the taste for Italian style is pronounced, there is also a lingering influence of Northern European modes.

The surface of the candlestick is also adorned with elaborate interlace patterns popularized by books such as Francisque Pellegrin's *La Fleur de la science de portraicture* [sic],

⁴⁷ OT, cat. 10. Carle Delange, *Recueil des fayences dites de Henri II et Diane de Poitiers* (Paris: n.p., 1861), cat. no. 20.

⁴⁸ Cf. Emmanuelle Brugerolles, *Le dessin en France au XVIe siècle: Dessins et miniatures des collections de l'École des Beaux-Arts* (exh. cat., Paris: École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, 1994), 104-7. cat. no. 36.

⁴⁹ OT, 82.

published at Fontainebleau in 1530.⁵⁰ The ultimate source for these types of interlocking bands is a bit more exotic, however. They recall the arabesques seen on Saracen metalwork and popularized by the makers of bookbindings in Venice.⁵¹ Considering the diplomatic dealings between France and the Ottoman Empire in which Montmorency played a key role, one wonders whether French patrons such as he recognized these motifs as “exotic,” or at least as non-Italian. If the development of Saint-Porchaire pottery were motivated by a desire to create a new type of luxury ceramics that differed from Italian maiolica, it would have been important to develop a stylistic vocabulary that was not wholly dependent on Italian motifs. This possibility would surely have appealed to Montmorency whose antagonistic feelings toward Italy are well documented. Although Italians incorporated these interlace patterns into bookbindings, they take on a different meaning in Saint-Porchaire pottery because there is reason to believe that the creation of the latter was motivated in part by an incipient nationalistic ambition. The incorporation of the designs of Muslims into their “nationalistic” ceramics takes on a curious political dimension that parallels the unexpected alliance between France and the Ottomans that scandalized all of Europe.⁵²

The taste for variety seen in other media of the period is pronounced here. The artist responsible for this object clearly had access to design models that Montmorency could have provided from his own collections. In addition to his coat of arms, the candlestick also features

⁵⁰ Francisque Pellegrin, *La fleur de la science de portraicture* (Paris: J. Schemit, 1908).

⁵¹ Coutts, 40. See also P. Ward-Jackson, “Some Main Streams and Tributaries in European Ornament 1500-1700; Part 2: The Arabesque,” *Victoria and Albert Museum Bulletin* 3, no. 3 (July 1967): 90-103.

⁵² On the Franco-Ottoman alliance, see Tekin Ç. Beyza, *Representations and Othering in Discourse: The Construction of Turkey in the EU Context* (Philadelphia, PA: John Bejamins Publishing Co., 2010), 29-35; Robert Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire 1526-1918* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974), 62; Roger Bigelow Merriman, *Suleiman the Magnificent, 1520-1566* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1966), 133.

the coat of arms and monogram of Henri II, demonstrating the alliance between the Montmorency family and the monarchy in a similar way to the use of their respective emblems on the façades at the château at Écouen (see Chap. 1). It is worth pointing out that Montmorency's coat of arms (which appears on the pedestal of this candlestick) is rendered correctly, unlike on his Italian maiolica service. It includes the collar of the Order of Saint Michael and the baron's crown. This suggests that Montmorency was more directly involved in the commissioning of the candlestick than he was in his maiolica service.

The structure of this and other examples of Saint-Porchaire pottery is highly complex; scholars have only recently discovered how these objects were constructed.⁵³ Elements molded in relief, such as the nude figures, masks, and garlands, are applied to the body of the object. The two-dimensional patterns are stamped from hollow molds either directly onto the object or onto a thin skin of clay, which is then wrapped around the body. This is a technique unlike any other used in the creation of ceramics; no parallel is known in Europe. It appears to be an entirely original approach and serves as a testament to the ingenuity of French potters.

Like most gold or silver plate, Saint-Porchaire ceramics were strictly ceremonial. Their design often renders them unusable except for display. A large and colorful miniature decorating the frontispiece of Montmorency's edition of Cicero's *Discourses* translated by Etienne Le Blanc depicts the constable receiving the text; this image reveals how owners of decorative tableware may have exhibited such items (Fig. 82).⁵⁴ Behind Montmorency is a kind of credenza with an array of elaborate pitchers, ewers, and other dishes. While the objects in the drawing appear to be metal, his Saint-Porchaire ceramics would have harmonized with them in design.

⁵³ OT, 30-4.

⁵⁴ Thierry Crépin Leblond and Francis Salet, *Livres du connétable, la bibliothèque d'Anne de Montmorency* (Chantilly: Musée Condé, 1991), 16.

This candlestick (and Saint-Porchaire ceramics in general) is a manifestation of the development in the sixteenth century of what can be called the art of the table. While cuisine did not change radically during this period, the way in which the food was presented and served did. Meals, especially for the cultural elite such as Montmorency, became important social affairs. While providing the opportunity for conviviality, they also allowed for the expression of one's status through hierarchical seating arrangements and general pomp. Erasmus, in his *De civilitate morum puerilium*, professes that formal meals are an elevated form of social interaction.⁵⁵ This coincides with the tendency during the Renaissance for aristocrats to exteriorize their role within society at ritualized events including meals. Elaborate tableware, even (or especially) if not strictly utilitarian, was yet another means of embodying one's wealth and authority, of making ideology visible. Montmorency hosted the most powerful men and women of Europe in his homes. Even seemingly insignificant objects such as this candlestick became vehicles to express his extreme wealth and power.

Saint-Porchaire pottery is unique in the history of European ceramics. With a complex convergence of design sources ranging from Italian, to Islamic, to French, they represent the cosmopolitan court culture of sixteenth-century France. Just as Montmorency endeavored to develop an architectural style that would be uniquely French, these ceramic objects represent his desire to set France apart as a capital of artistic production and cultural achievement.

Works in Faience

In some ways Montmorency was quite conservative (in his strict adherence to the Catholic faith, for example), but he displayed a curiosity for new techniques and new artists that placed him at the forefront of the artistic developments of his time. As part of the decoration at

⁵⁵ Desiderius Erasmus, *A Handbook on Good Manners for Children*, Elenore Merchant, trans. (London: Preface, 2008), 49.

the château at Écouen taking place in the 1540s and '50s, Montmorency brought in Rouenese potter Masseot Abaquesne to create colorful tile floors for a number of rooms. Little is known of Abaquesne aside from his work for Montmorency and for Claude d'Urfé, his creation of pharmacy vessels, and his work at the Cathedral at Langres.⁵⁶ Along with the better-known Bernard Palissy, Abaquesne was one of the first French artists to work in the medium of tin-glazed pottery, known as faïence, similar to Italian maiolica. Abaquesne was not the only Rouenese artist to leave his mark at Écouen, as Jean Goujon had been employed there in the preceding years. The Montmorency family possessed the fief of Préaux at Rouen; it is likely that this personal connection to the city led the constable to support the development of faïence workshops there. If the city were prosperous and cultivated it would reflect well on him. We saw above how Montmorency may also have aided in the founding of a ceramics manufactory near another of his properties at Deux-Sèvres. Through the act of funding workshops near their various fiefs, aristocratic patrons such as the constable could spur artistic developments throughout the provinces. This kind of activity would have further unified the nation by spreading a common visual language and a standard set of forms and symbols.

At this point in his life, Montmorency had a distinct preference for French artists. Had he desired to feature the work of a prominent Italian ceramicist at Écouen, he could easily have commissioned the floor tiles from Girolamo della Robbia, who was in France at the time.⁵⁷ He certainly had the clout and the wealth to do so. His choice of Abaquesne suggests that he wanted to encourage the development of the arts locally. Ever wary of excessive Italian influence, he used his personal power to foster cultural developments in France. Montmorency was politically

⁵⁶ See Louis Oliver, *Masseot Abaquesne et les origines de la faïence de Rouen* (Rouen: Éditions Lecerf, 1952).

⁵⁷ Wardropper, 4; see also Allan Marquand, *The Brothers of Giovanni della Robbia: Fra Mattia, Luca, Girolamo, Fra Ambrogio* (London: Oxford University Press, 1928).

shrewd and would not have missed an opportunity to prove France's independence and prosperity.

After his visit to the château in 1777, Faujas de Saint-Fond, French geologist and traveler, remarked, "*Dans deux Galleries, l'une appelée de Psyché et l'autre la seconde Galerie, on admire les carreaux de la fayence...qui surpasse infiniment celles du même genre qu'on peut voir dans la Flandres et la Hollande. Ce pavé et bien conservé, les couleurs sont vives, tout l'ensemble offre un genre de beauté qui est foiblement rendu par les magnifiques tapis de Turquie et de la Savonnerie.*"⁵⁸ The author refers to the Gallery of Psyche, named for the stained-glass windows that ornament the west wall of the room, but his reference to a "second gallery" is more vague. There are other contradictory reports as to the location of these magnificent tiled floors, but recent studies have provided conclusive evidence as to their placement.⁵⁹ Catherine Leroy has shown that marks on the reverse of each tile indicated their place in the composition; Bernard Palissy used a similar system for his work at the grotto at the Tuileries.⁶⁰

Today one of the tile ensembles has been reconstructed in the north wing of the château, adjacent to the suite of Henri II (Figs. 83-85). This is likely to be the earlier of the two pavements, designed by Abaquesne in 1542 and originally placed in the Gallery of Psyche.⁶¹

The tiles are dated on the reverse, making this date secure.

⁵⁸ B. Faujas de Saint-Fond, *Oeuvres de Bernard Palissy* (Paris: Chez Ruault, 1777), 466.

⁵⁹ See Arnauld Bréjon de Lavergnée, "Masséot Abaquesne et les pavements du château d'Écouen," *Revue du Louvre* 5, no. 6 (1977): 307-15; Catherine Leroy, "Avers et revers des pavements du château d'Écouen," *Revue de l'art* 116 (1997): 27-41; Marie-Françoise Poiret, *Images du pouvoir: pavements de faïence en France du XIIIe au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Bourg-en-Bresse, 2000), 150-53.

⁶⁰ Leroy, 28.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

The ensemble consists of five columns and fourteen rows of heraldic imagery, boasting the emblems of Anne de Montmorency and his wife Madeleine of Savoy. Montmorency's coat of arms, his monogram and the motif of the unsheathed sword are intermingled with his personal mottoes: "*Aplanos*," "*Fidux et verax in justitia judicat et pugnat*," and "*Arma tenenti omnia dat qui justa negat*." Each heraldic image comprises a square of sixteen tiles and is framed by a blue border. Between each square and enclosing the whole ensemble is a garland of fruits, flowers, and leaves. Startling masks articulate the outer corners. Because of the medium, the color of the tiles remains astonishingly brilliant. Abaquesne had clearly mastered the range of colors that made Italian maiolica so desirable during the sixteenth century.

Rebecca Zorach has discussed fruit symbolism in French art of the sixteenth century.⁶² More than just decorative space-fillers, these images represent ideas about the regenerative capacity of French wealth and power. Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier also argues that a distinctly French ornamental vocabulary of fruits and garlands appeared in works of the school of Fontainebleau and spread with the dissemination of prints.⁶³ Montmorency's floor, then, uses this new visual language in which the fecundity and richness of France was embodied in fruit imagery. The grapes, pears, pomegranates, oranges, and squash become emblems of France's infinite abundance and potency. Art, like language, can be a vehicle for national identity. Montmorency was a frequent visitor to Fontainebleau and even employed artists who had worked there in his own projects; furthermore, he was a leading architect of French government policies. As such, he would have been keenly aware of attempts to galvanize a sense of national identity as well as the language and imagery used to do so. The tile pavement, placed in a semi-

⁶² Zorach, 4-7.

⁶³ See Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier, *Fontainebleau et l'estampe en France au XVIe siècle* (Nemours: Château-Musée Ville de Nemours, 1985), 223.

public space within the château at Écouen, continued this theme of France as a bountiful, plenteous place. By embedding his personal emblems in a wreath of fruits, he also implied that he was of central importance to the flowering of the nation.

The gallery adorned with these luxurious tiles was used as a reception hall, where guests would have waited to be received by Montmorency. In addition, ceremonial events such as the reception of members of court and foreign dignitaries would have taken place in the gallery. If not already familiar with the meaning of fruit imagery at the court of France, they would have been invited by the beauty of the tiles to contemplate their potential significance. Even if they did not arrive at the conclusion that France was a fruitful nation, they could not have missed the close relationship between the teeming verdure and the personal emblems of their host.

Obviously a tile pavement this ostentatious was more than utilitarian. It, along with the stained glass (discussed below), tapestries, and other decorative elements within the gallery, helped create “*une oeuvre d’art totale*.”⁶⁴ Each element was equally important in the creation of an environment that would express the status and refinement of the owner. Personal emblems had been used in the bicolor floors of the thirteenth century, so the idea of embedding one’s identity in that surface was not new.⁶⁵ In this way, Montmorency was drawing on tradition; however, his use of tin-glazed ceramic and the new wide range of colors mark this monument as innovative. The château at Écouen is in fact the only monument of the French Renaissance to make such extensive use of faience in the paving of floors.

A second faience pavement dating from 1551 has also been partially reconstructed as well (Fig. 86).⁶⁶ Only a portion of the tiles survives, but Catherine Leroy has created a

⁶⁴ Poiret, 195.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 195.

⁶⁶ Leroy, 29-32.

hypothetical reconstruction of the entire composition as it probably appeared in the sixteenth century.⁶⁷ The surviving tiles comprise two long rows of alternating square and circular panels bearing the emblems and mottoes of Montmorency, Madeleine de Savoie, King Henri II, and Catherine de' Medici.

Leroy estimates that in its original state, the pavement measured approximately 350 square meters.⁶⁸ There are few spaces within the château large enough to accommodate a pavement of that size, but descriptions of visitors to the château in the seventeenth century provide clues as to its original location. Representatives of the Royal Academy of Architecture, after a visit on 4 August 1678, left the following account: "*La gallerie haute, attendant la chapelle et qui tient toute la face de l'entrée du bastiment, est pavée de carreaux de mesme façon représentant divers chiffres, armes et devises de la maison de Montmorancy...Il y a de l'autre costé, et à l'opposite, une autre gallerie de mesme grandeur qui est pavée de carreaux de mesme matière, mais differemens émaillez.*"⁶⁹ This suggests that the pavement was situated in the gallery of the entrance wing on the east side of the château (perhaps Faujas de Saint-Fond's "second gallery"), destroyed at the end of the eighteenth century. This would explain why the ensemble is only partially preserved. Furthermore, this wing was completed after the death of François I (see Chap. 1), so any decorative ensemble placed there would feature the emblems of Henri II.

Also from the Rouenese workshop of Masseot Abaquesne, this later ensemble reveals more than the first the artist's mastery of the ornamental repertoire of his time. A winding blue band forms square and circular frames for the heraldic imagery. In the white background outside

⁶⁷ Ibid., figs. 12 and 13.

⁶⁸ Leroy, 29.

⁶⁹ H. Lemmonier, "Procès-verbaux de l'Académie Royale d'Architecture 1671-1793," *Archives de l'art français* 1 (1911): 197-8.

of this bold frame are delicate grotesques. These are similar to the painted motifs decorating Nero's *Domus Aurea* in Rome, which had been excavated in the 1490s. The uncovering of that structure provided artists with new models of decoration that quickly became popular at the court of France.⁷⁰ Jacques Androuet Du Cerceau published a book titled *Grotesques* in 1550 that spurred the trend at the court.⁷¹ Once again we find Montmorency at the forefront of taste. His château, like Cerceau's text, help set the fashion that the court of France would follow. By the time this pavement was installed, Montmorency had returned to court favor, his power had been fully restored and his influence in the arts as well as politics had become immeasurable.

In addition to these two relatively well-documented faience pavements, there are fragments of tiles in various collections as well as documentary evidence that suggest other rooms were similarly paved. Antoine-Nicolas Duchesne, a visitor to the château in the late eighteenth century, remarked, "*Toutes les belles pièces et même une des deux galeries sont entièrement carrelées en faïence, les autres ne sont que plancheyées comme dans les châteaux d'Angleterre.*"⁷² Several sources mention that the sacristy was paved with faience tiles depicting scenes from Roman history.⁷³ This was likely the original location of two panels preserved today at the Musée Condé in Chantilly featuring *Mucius Scaevola* and *Marcus Curtius*, both attributed to Abaquesne.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ See Virginia Tuttle Clayton, *Fanciful Flourishes: Ornament in European Graphic Art and Related Objects, 1300-1800* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1993), 83; Nicole Dacos, *La découverte de la Domus Aurea et la formation des grotesques à la Renaissance* (London: Warburg Institute, 1969); Ward-Jackson, 58-70.

⁷¹ Jacques Androuet Du Cerceau, *Grotesques* (Orléans, 1550).

⁷² Comte E. de Ganay, "Les voyages d'Antoine-Nicolas Duchesne à Écouen, Chantilly, Ermenonville, Choisy, Brunoy etc. en 1780, 1786, 1791," *Revue de l'histoire de Versailles et de Seine-et-Oise* 23 (Jan-Mar, 1921): 37.

⁷³ Leroy, 37.

⁷⁴ Poiret, 152; Musée Condé (1974), cat. no. 182, 183.

The panel depicting Mucius Scaevola shows the legendary Roman hero thrusting his right hand into a flaming torch as a gesture of bravery before his Etruscan enemies (Fig. 87). The story is from Livy's *Ab urbe condita* and tells of a Roman soldier who, during the war between Rome and Clusium, is sent to assassinate the Clusian king. He mistakes a scribe for the king and kills the wrong man, but proves his valor to his enemies by placing his right hand in a fire. The king is so impressed with Mucius's bravery that he allows him to return to Rome. After this, all of Mucius's descendants bear the cognomen Scaevola, meaning left-handed. Montmorency, himself a loyal soldier, would have identified with this story of valor and self-sacrifice. The theme of strength during times of adversity was a favorite of the constable's. As this panel dates to 1542, during the period of his disgrace, the subject would have held personal meaning for him. He paved the very floors of his residence with imagery he felt expressed his fortitude during a period of personal tribulation. He allied his persona with a figure from Roman history famous for being a paradigm of heroism. In this way he utilized the power of the visual arts as a means to shape his identity and his public image.

Similarly, the panel featuring Marcus Curtius depicts the moment when the soldier throws himself into a chasm that opened spontaneously in the Roman forum (Fig. 88). According to the story, also recounted in Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*, the chasm could only be closed by putting inside of it the most precious thing belonging to the Romans. Curtius realizes that the most valuable thing the Romans possess is the courage and strength of their soldiers. After he hurls himself into the pit, it closes. As with the story of Mucius Scaevola, the emphasis is on the bravery and self-sacrifice of a soldier. Much of the iconography at Écouen dating from the period of Montmorency's disgrace centers on dignity in the face of misfortune. It is as though he wanted to erect a monument that would achieve a kind of damage control at a time

when his position in society was precarious. Once Henri II restored Montmorency's power in 1547, the monument became one of jubilant triumph.

Montmorency's interest in the ancient world and his use of Roman imagery to allude to his own time is well known, but as a deeply devout Catholic he also displayed religious subject matter in prominent places within his château. A faience triptych currently on display at the Musée national de la renaissance illustrating scenes from the story of the Deluge (Genesis chapters 6-9) is believed to have decorated the chapel at the château at Écouen (Figs. 89-91).⁷⁵ The entire ensemble comprises three separate panels with two narrower ones flanking a large central panel. The panel on the left depicts the *Building of the Ark*, the one in the center the *Embarking of the Animals*, and the one on the right the *End of the Deluge*. These panels are remarkably well preserved. This fact, along with the triptych format, suggests that the ensemble never served as a pavement, but as wall decoration.⁷⁶ In this way the panels would have supplanted more traditional wall adornments such as painting and tapestries. Montmorency's interest in the ceramic art led him to employ the medium in innovative and unexpected ways.

The design of these panels reveals the influence of Luca Penni, a student of Raphael, as well as the works of engraver Bernard Salomon.⁷⁷ Abaquesne's workshop probably had access to printed works that kept them abreast of the latest artistic developments. As with the other ceramic works that Montmorency owned, the color of these panels remains astonishingly vivid. As opposed to tapestries or even paintings, they serve as a reminder of just how colorful and vibrant sixteenth-century aristocratic interiors were.

⁷⁵ Leroy, 37.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁷⁷ See Dominique Cordellier, *Luca Penni, un disciple de Raphael à Fontainebleau* (Paris: Somogy Editions, 2012).

There is evidence that other residences belonging to Montmorency were similarly outfitted with ceramic ornamentation. For example, his château at Fère-en-Tardenois, despite its function as a hunting lodge and reputation for always retaining a rustic character, had faience pavements (Fig. 92).⁷⁸ The ensemble is octagonal in shape, with a square tile at the center surrounded by four elongated tiles. The square tile depicts a nude boy seated on a bucranium; the outer tiles are decorated with scrolling foliage and stylized flowers.

Montmorency played an important role in the development of the ceramic art in France. Fellow courtier and government official Claude d'Urfé hired Masséot Abaquesne to create tiles for his residence, the Bâtie d'Urfé, in the 1550's. It was surely Montmorency who recommended Abaquesne to d'Urfé. Not only were Montmorency and d'Urfé associates, but d'Urfé also used the same individual as Montmorency, André Rageau, as a go-between in financial dealings with Abaquesne's workshop.⁷⁹

Montmorency was also a patron of the most renowned ceramics master in France, Bernard Palissy. Palissy had a role in designing a grotto for his château at Écouen.⁸⁰ Although nothing remains of the grotto today, it was surely decorated with the kinds of motifs taken from nature for which Palissy is known. Ceramic panels decorated with rock forms, lizards, frogs, fish, snakes and all manner of aquatic life would have lined the walls and floor of the grotto. The dim light of the subterranean space would have reflected off the rippling water, creating the illusion of movement and life in these clay creatures. Later, in 1570, Palissy worked on a grotto

⁷⁸ Poiret, 149-50. One group of these tiles was sold by Christie's at auction on 1 November 2005 in Amsterdam (lot 28, sale 2690).

⁷⁹ Poiret, 153.

⁸⁰ See L.M. Solon, *History and Description of the Old French Faience* (London: Cassell and Co., Ltd; 1903), 33; Willox, 271; Bernard Palissy, *Oeuvres de Bernard Palissy* (Paris: Chez Ruault, 1776), 123. On Palissy's career see Leonard N. Amico, *In Search of Earthly Paradise* (Paris: Flammarion, 1996).

for Catherine de' Medici at the Tuileries.⁸¹ After the premature death of Henri II in 1559, Montmorency and Catherine remained close, he often acting as her advisor as he had done for the king. It is surely Montmorency who recommended Palissy to her. She was a frequent visitor to Écouen, and would have been familiar with Palissy's work there. Montmorency is partially responsible, then, for the royal patronage that would propel Palissy to the fame and reputation that he holds today.

In subsequent generations, France would become renowned for its fine ceramic and porcelain manufactories. Montmorency seldom receives credit for his role in this development, but he certainly helped to foster an interest in the medium that would lead to the flowering of the ceramic art in France. His patronage of local craftsmen helped him realize his goal of making France an artistic capital of the world.

Although ceramic objects are not placed at the top of the hierarchy of art forms by today's standards, it is often in such seemingly inconsequential places that we find the stuff of history. Every detail of his residence was an opportunity for Montmorency to manipulate his image, to express his ideals to his retinue and to the parade of individuals that visited him. From these works we can learn about the vicissitudes of Montmorency's life and how he responded to them. Easel paintings and large figural sculpture were not the only art forms the constable utilized in order to communicate his ideals. These intimately scaled, relatively modest artworks made of humble clay lack the pretensions of a magnificent marble or a vast canvas, but they possess an inherent charm that is captivating. Montmorency's maiolica service served as a stimulus to conversation and debate as effectively as a traditional painting, and the skill of the craftsmen responsible for his Saint-Porchaire ceramics was equal to any highly regarded master.

⁸¹ See Zerner, 311, fig. 326.

In the case of the faience pavements, the act of treading on such beautiful surfaces must have inspired reverence and amazement, persuading visitors of Montmorency's exceptional nature. After all, in the Renaissance, outer beauty was considered to be a reflection of one's inner virtue. If one were to judge by the magnificence of the constable's châteaux, he was righteous indeed.

Limoges Enamels

Enamel products had been produced in the city of Limoges, France since the twelfth century. Vitreous enamel is a material made by heating powdered glass until it is in liquid form that can be used to coat metal or leather.⁸² By Montmorency's time, the products made at Limoges were highly sought-after luxury objects; the chief uses of enamels in the sixteenth century were images of devotion, objects of display for the table or sideboard, jewelry caskets, and portraits.⁸³ Like ceramic wares, enamels retain their vivid range of colors because of the nature of the firing process used to create them, and therefore offer twenty-first century viewers the opportunity to enjoy the original colorful appearance of Early Modern artworks more than panel painting or fresco.

Catherine de' Medici is known to have collected Limoges enamels, including some decorated with portraits.⁸⁴ Montmorency's collection of luxury objects would not have been complete without similar items. He too owned examples of portraiture in this medium executed by the master Léonard Limousin, including likenesses of former *grand écuyer* Galiot de Genouilhac and Henri d'Albret, king of Navarre.⁸⁵ Limousin had been introduced to the court of France by Jean de Langeac, Bishop of Limoges and counselor-at-large to François I. In 1548,

⁸² See Wardropper, 13.

⁸³ Distelberger, 82.

⁸⁴ Bedos-Rezak, 317.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 317.

Henri II named him official “*esmaileur peintre*.”⁸⁶ This put him in a position to respond to the growing demand among courtiers for portraits, and he created numerous small, decorative enamels that were easily portable and could be displayed in a variety of ways.

A remarkable portrait of the constable attributed to Limousin is located today at the Louvre; this serves as an excellent example of the enamel art form, and provides one of very few full-color examples of Montmorency’s appearance (Fig. 93). Executed in 1556, the portrait shows the constable against a bright blue background in a three-quarter view looking directly out at the viewer with an affable expression. His beard and shortly cropped hair are painted with delicate shades of gray; of a similar coloration is the white fur garment draped over his shoulders. His costume is otherwise a somber black, enlivened with a row of buttons and a gold chain and pendant.

In 1559, Montmorency acquired an enamel plaque executed by Pierre Courteys that depicted the *Laocoön*.⁸⁷ The original sculpture had been unearthed in Rome in 1506 and enjoyed immediate celebrity resulting in numerous copies in different media.⁸⁸ Although it has been lost, Montmorency’s version is reported to have been of an exceptional size. Unable to purchase the original sculpture, a colorful enamel version would have been a satisfactory substitute. Another example of the art of enamel in the constable’s collection was a dish commissioned from Limousin that featured the *Feast of the Gods*.⁸⁹ The imagery painted on the platter contained an amusing twist: each of the gods was shown with the features of a member of the court. A portrait of Henri II was used for Jupiter, a likeness of Diane de Poitiers served for Venus, and

⁸⁶ Distelberger, 90.

⁸⁷ Jean-Marc Ferrer, *L’art de l’émail de Limoges* (Limoges: Culture et patrimoine en Limousin, 2005), 47.

⁸⁸ See Margarete Bieber, *Laocoön: The Influence of the Group Since its Rediscovery* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967).

⁸⁹ Distelberger, 94; Bertrand, 38.

Montmorency became Mars. This dish shows a lighthearted and playful side of the constable that seldom emerges in documents from the period.

Stained Glass

In a letter to Count Ercole Contrari of Ferrara, Torquato Tasso described his impressions of the land and customs of France where he was visiting for several months in 1572.⁹⁰ He remarked on the numerous and vast cathedrals in France, but disapproved of their barbaric Gothic architectural style. One aspect of these structures that he admired, however, was the beautiful stained glass; he commented that this was the one domain in which the French clearly surpassed the Italians. These windows would indeed have been remarkable to an Italian, or to any foreigner for that matter, as the art of stained glass flourished more in France than anywhere else. More than any other medium, stained glass can be considered natively French.

This product of French artistic genius first appeared in the ninth century at Saint-Bénigne in Dijon and in the tenth century at Reims.⁹¹ Throughout the Middle Ages, the art of stained glass thrived in France, becoming a requisite part of the decoration of cathedrals. The making of stained glass became a specialized craft with its own guild and the production of a stained-glass window often involved complex negotiations between a patron, painter, and glazier.⁹² While the art flourished during the Middle Ages, it underwent stylistic changes during the Renaissance that parallel developments in other media. By the time Montmorency was commissioning works in stained glass, the impact of the era's classicizing tendencies was felt in these colorful windows.

⁹⁰ See John Black, *Life of Torquato Tasso*, vol. 1 (London: J. Ballantyne, 1809), 165-9.

⁹¹ Jacques Bacri, "Vitreaux de France du XI au XVI siècles," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 15, no. 3 (1953): 351-8. Although some ancient sources mention colored glass in the basilicas of ancient Italy and Gaul, the windows at Dijon and Reims are the first known examples to include figurative scenes.

⁹² Zerner, 283-6. Some glaziers designed their own compositions, but more frequently they worked from a cartoon drawn by a painter. See also Guy-Michel Leproux, *Recherches sur les peintres-verriers parisiens de la renaissance* (Geneva: Droz, 1988), 47.

Prominent painters who embraced classical style such as Jean Cousin and Geoffrey Dumoûtier created cartoons for windows, resulting in designs that differed from those of previous generations. Even with Italian style becoming more prominent, something of the “flamboyant” character of French medieval art remains in windows from the sixteenth century. The result is often an amalgamation of innovation and tradition; this would have appealed to Montmorency in his quest to develop a unique visual language that would express both France’s native customs and the omnipotence of its future.

Despite the rich history of stained glass in France, it, like ceramics, has hovered at the margins of art history. It is rarely addressed in any depth in survey texts on Medieval and Renaissance art. Scholars who do treat the subject focus almost exclusively on its use in religious architecture.⁹³ By Montmorency’s time, however, stained glass began to appear with increasing frequency in private aristocratic residences as well. While the constable commissioned windows for churches in Montmorency and Écouen, his most magnificent commissions for stained glass were for his château at Écouen. It is unsurprising to find Montmorency patronizing an art that was considered even in his own time to be characteristically French.

Perhaps it is because stained glass has been relegated to the status of a “decorative art” that it has been neglected in the literature of sixteenth-century art. This arbitrary banishment from the realm of high art is regrettable because stained glass was, during Montmorency’s time, considered an integral part of a larger ensemble. Could it also be that stained glass is not given its proper due because it is an art form of French invention, popular during an era associated with

⁹³ See for instance Lucien Magne, *L’œuvres des peintres verriers français* (Paris: Firmin Didot et cie, 1885). This seminal text, which focuses primarily on churches, became a model for subsequent studies of stained glass.

Italy's domination of the arts? Either way, a discussion of stained glass cannot be bypassed in a discussion of Montmorency's art patronage. An examination of the works he commissioned in this medium will shed light on the important role it played in the Early Modern era.

In this section I will address the only extant windows associated with Montmorency's patronage: the Psyche Gallery at the château at Écouen, heraldic windows from the same residence, and the dynastic windows that Montmorency commissioned for churches in his domains.

The Psyche Windows

One of the most remarkable products of Montmorency's art patronage is the cycle of forty-four stained glass windows executed in 1542-44 for the gallery in the west wing of the château at Écouen. Visitors to the château over the course of many years noted these spectacular windows.⁹⁴ At some point during the eighteenth century they were removed from the château; Alexandre Lenoir, an artist in charge of a state-run facility in Paris that housed historical materials, obtained them shortly after the Revolution. The facility eventually became the Musée des Monuments Français, and Lenoir exhibited the windows there before returning them to the Prince Condé in 1816 (Condé was the owner of the château in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries).⁹⁵ Today they are on display in Chantilly at the Musée Condé.⁹⁶ The windows are astonishingly well preserved; in fact, they are especially valuable as they are the

⁹⁴ See in particular A. N. Dezallier d'Argenville, *Voyage pittoresque des environs de Paris* (Paris: Debure l'aîné, 1749), 396-99; J. A. Dulaure, *Nouvelle description des environs de Paris*, vol. 1 (Paris: Debure l'aîné, 1786), 153.

⁹⁵ See Michael Archer, "Montmorency's Sword," *The Burlington Magazine* 129, no. 1010 (May 1987): 298-303.

⁹⁶ See Musée Condé, cat. no. 188.

largest cycle of stained-glass windows from the sixteenth century to remain intact.⁹⁷ Lucien Magne, in his text on stained glass states, “*Il n’existe dans aucun pays une suite de vitraux civils comparable à la légende de Psyché.*”⁹⁸

The windows illustrate the mythological tale of Cupid and Psyche as recounted by Lucius Apuleius in *The Golden Ass*. The story of Cupid and Psyche became popular during the sixteenth century, perhaps because it had been resuscitated in 1517 by Raphael at the Villa Farnesina and again in the Brussels tapestries created for François I in the 1520s. The numerous printed translations of Apuleius’ text in the sixteenth century contributed to its popularity; by 1550 it had been printed in Italian, German, French, and Spanish translations.⁹⁹ Woodcut illustrations enlivened many of these early translations.

The windows lit the western wall of the gallery in the west wing of Montmorency’s château. As discussed above, this gallery was also richly paved with colorful faience tiles featuring the heraldic imagery of the constable and his wife. The windows and the tiles were installed before the death of François I and therefore date from before the additions and alterations made to the château in the 1550s. Thus, unlike much of the decoration of the château, the iconography of this room differs in that it does not focus on the theme of triumph. Rather, it reflects Montmorency’s state of mind during his period of disgrace from court and his resulting attempts to preserve his dignity.

The windows are done in grisaille, a method that became popular in stained glass starting in the fifteenth century; they are painted on the surface in black with only small touches of

⁹⁷ There have been numerous restorations to the windows, but they remain largely faithful to the original appearance. See *ibid.*

⁹⁸ Magne, 162.

⁹⁹ Julia Haig Gaisser, *The Fortunes of Apuleius and the Golden Ass: A Study in Transmission and Reception* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 275.

yellow and orange. Each window depicts one scene, and so the story unfolds slowly as one walks across the gallery (Fig. 94). Along with the figurative scenes illustrating the myth, the windows have lines of verse (quatrains or octaves, depending on the panel) that gloss the scenes. Several of them are also dated with either the year 1542 or 1544.¹⁰⁰ No document survives to identify the artist responsible for the Psyche cycle, but many of the scenes correspond directly with engravings of c. 1530 designed by the so-called Master of the Die and executed by Flemish painter Michel Coxie that illustrate the Psyche myth.¹⁰¹ Little is known about the Master of the Die, although he was alleged to be the son of Raphael's engraver, Marcantonio Raimondi. Indeed, the figures in the windows reveal the influence of Raphael's circle. The Duc d'Aumale, who inherited the château at Chantilly in the nineteenth century, suggested that Coxie created the cartoons for the windows.¹⁰² Coxie and the Master of the Die had worked in partnership before on the engraved series, but whether they collaborated on this project for Montmorency remains unknown. Also in doubt is the role of a *maître verrier* whose specialized skills may have been required for the execution of the windows. Since the making of stained-glass windows was often a collaborative effort, it is most likely that a painter and glassmaker worked together on the windows at Écouen.

A drawing preserved in the collection at the Louvre attributed to Geoffrey Dumoûtier shows a design for a stained-glass window with five lancets.¹⁰³ As with the Psyche windows,

¹⁰⁰ Françoise Perrot, "Les vitraux du château d'Écouen. Contribution à l'étude du vitrail civil de la Renaissance," in André Chastel, ed., *L'art de Fontainebleau* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1975), 176.

¹⁰¹ Russell J. Ganim, "Through the Talking Glass: Translucence and Translation in the Condé Museum's Psyche Gallery," in Anne L. Birberick and Russell J. Ganim, eds., *The Shape of Change: Essays in Early Modern Literature in Honor of David Lee Rubin* (New York: Rodopi, 2002), 53-89.

¹⁰² Magne, 130.

¹⁰³ EF, cat. no. 118; and Zerner, 288, fig. 293.

there is a marked Italian influence in Dumoûtier's design. He may have worked for Montmorency at Écouen on other projects (see Chap. 3), so it is possible that he had a hand in preparing the cartoons for the Psyche cycle. Knowing that the two had a working relationship, and that Dumoûtier had experience designing cartoons for stained-glass windows, it would not be unreasonable to suggest an attribution to the artist. More investigating is needed to support this attribution.

Many of the windows feature a profusion of decorative motifs such as strapwork, scrolls, masks, scrolls, fruits, natural fauna, and fantastical creatures (Figs. 95, 96). The influence of the School of Fontainebleau is evident. Whatever the identity of the artist who adapted the Master of the Die's prints for the windows, he was clearly abreast of current tastes. Many of the same designs would appear later when Montmorency commissioned paintings to decorate the numerous chimneypieces at the same château (see Chap. 3). By the end of the 1550s, the decorative scheme of the entire residence would be unified and cohesive. Rather than the accretive nature of decoration during the Middle Ages, this scheme reveals a shift toward rationality and harmony during the Renaissance.

This combination of the stained-glass medium and mythological subject matter is somewhat unusual. Throughout the Middle Ages, the medium had been associated almost exclusively with religious subject matter and appeared mostly in religious architecture. Only in the mid- to late-sixteenth century did stained-glass windows with secular imagery appear.¹⁰⁴ This coincides with the use of stained glass in civic architecture and private residences. That Montmorency would want to decorate his gallery with stained glass is not surprising, as spaces

¹⁰⁴ Ganim, 60.

dedicated to important social exchanges were often decorated particularly lavishly.¹⁰⁵ But why did he select the story of Psyche? What relevance did this myth have for him? Russel Ganim argues convincingly that Montmorency used the myth of the love affair between Cupid and Psyche as a political allegory that alluded to his disgrace and exile from the court of France.¹⁰⁶

According to Ganim, Montmorency's "choice of Psyche lies in the desire to illustrate his struggle via a character who will elicit sympathy in a profound but discreet manner."¹⁰⁷ While Psyche incurred the wrath and envy of the goddess Venus, the constable fell prey to the jealousy of François I's mistress, the Duchess d'Etampes, who was resentful of Montmorency's influence over the king. The vindictive role played by Venus in the myth parallels that of Madame d'Etampes. According to the myth, Psyche was rejected and punished by the gods for raising the ire of Venus, but he did not strike out in retaliation. Similarly, Montmorency accepted his exile with dignity and respect for the king's wishes. He remained loyal to François I, as demonstrated by his use of the salamander imagery in the sculptural decoration on the exterior of the château even after alterations were made to the structure. Montmorency, like Psyche, complies with the demands imposed from above. In Ganim's words, "Through Psyche, Montmorency shows not anger toward his adversaries, but a desire to attain a kind of redemption with respect to a higher power."¹⁰⁸

By portraying himself as the victim of conspiratorial machinations, Montmorency could gain the sympathy of any number of potentially supportive nobles visiting the château, such as the Dauphin and his mistress Diane de Poitiers. Individuals who, like them, were already critical of the Duchess d'Etampes would have been greatly moved by this portrayal of Montmorency as

¹⁰⁵ Leproux, 26.

¹⁰⁶ Ganim, 60.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 59.

guileless and untarnished; they would have been more inclined to support him during his disgrace. Montmorency knew that maintaining a close network of allies was necessary if he ever hoped to regain his former power.

Read this way, the Psyche windows become a proclamation of his innocence as well as his obedience to authority. Therefore the west gallery not only displayed his wealth and magnificence with its ostentatious embellishment, but it also reflected the political backdrop by expressing his long-suffering honor in the face of intrigue and his continued loyalty to the king. The constable rarely used the visual arts for aesthetic purposes alone. Beautification of his living environment was important, but he also saw the propagandistic potential offered by the arts; he could use them to shape his public persona and strengthen his ties with allies.

Admittedly, Psyche makes a strange parallel with Montmorency. The significance that this particular story had for him is not known, although it appears again in the form of murals at his château at Chantilly (see Chap. 3). In order to build on Ganim's interpretation, further work is needed to understand Montmorency's preference for the story of Psyche.

The constable had a reputation in his own day as being prudish and conservative. This is rather at odds with some of the imagery displayed in the Psyche windows. For example, the window illustrating the consummation of Cupid and Psyche's love affair shows the two reclining fully nude on a bed, caressing one another, their faces pressed close together (Fig. 97). The open eroticism of the scene is surprising in such a prominent place in Montmorency's home, given his reputation as a *reître*, or "thuggish soldier."¹⁰⁹ As Aude Bertrand puts it in her text on the château at Écouen, the suite of windows is "*choquante d'impudeur à faire rougir Rabelais.*"¹¹⁰ Montmorency was certainly orthodox in his Catholicism and stridently militaristic, but one

¹⁰⁹ Bedos-Rezak, 268.

¹¹⁰ Bertrand, 45.

should be careful not to oversimplify his character. He understood the power of sensuality and was not opposed to using it for political gain. While indicating to a certain degree his conniving nature, this use of titillating eroticism also shows his willingness to abandon modesty and to appeal to carnality. Delectation and salaciousness were not off limits under the right circumstances. Especially during his period of exile, he had little to lose. The threat of disapprobation did little to deter him from taking advantage of the allure of sexuality. It is important to note, however, that Montmorency placed this cycle of windows at the very back of his château, where only invited guests would be able to view it. In this way, he was able to make an appeal to sensuality without affronting those with more delicate sensibilities.

This cycle of windows demonstrates Montmorency's respect for medieval tradition as well as his finesse at incorporating Italianate style. The medium of stained glass was of French invention, independent of foreign influence. Since the constable's art patronage shows his marked preference for French craftsmen, it is unsurprising that he would make use of this native art form as a testament to the pride and loyalty he felt for France. On the other hand, the proportions of the figures, the construction of space, and the ornamental motifs in the scenes reveal that the classicizing tendencies of the sixteenth century impacted the art of stained glass. As these tendencies became fashionable at court, Montmorency could not reject them completely without seeming intractable and outmoded. His participation in (or even anticipation of, as he was on the forefront of developments in the visual arts) this trend showed that he was still part of court culture even in exile. It also became a way for him to claim some of the glory of Rome for himself.

Heraldic and Dynastic Windows

The description of the château at Écouen made on 4 August 1678 by the Academy of Architecture includes the following tantalizing statement: “[Dans] *La galerie haute attenant la chapelle et qui tient toute la face de l’entrée du bastiment...les vitres sont toutes de grisailles et couleurs representans des grotesques.*”¹¹¹ This is in reference to the entrance wing demolished in 1787, of which we have no visual record aside from Cerceau’s engravings. His engravings do not include any details of ornament on the windows, but the Academy’s description, coupled with surviving stained glass with grotesques and Montmorency’s devices, suggest that this wing was originally outfitted with beautiful glazing. This wing would have given visitors their first impression of the Montmorency’s residence, and opulent stained glass would have added to the spectacular effect of the architecture and sculpture. The entrance wing was the public face of the château, so these windows were in a less restricted space than the Psyche cycle. The message of the heraldic windows was for general consumption; not only did they identify the owner of the great edifice, but they did so in an exceedingly ostentatious and colorful fashion. The château itself was arresting enough, and the act of emblazoning it with his personal devices was a way to make his power visible and to inspire reverence in visitors.

These windows, along with other decorative elements from the château’s façade, were put into storage upon the demolition of the entrance wing. In 1798 Alexander Lenoir bought “*quarante panneaux de verre peinte représentant des arabesques, achetés à la Veuve Pétrée à*

¹¹¹ Lemmonier, 197. For further descriptions of the stained glass at Écouen given by eighteenth-century visitors to the château, see also Perrot, 178-84.

*Écouen. Ces vitraux décoraient une ancienne galerie détruite avant la Révolution.*¹¹² This must represent the lion's share of the heraldic windows that decorated the entrance wing at Écouen. Lenoir sold several panels to English collectors and so they are dispersed today among several different European collections.

A stained-glass panel located today at the Victoria and Albert Museum probably came from the entrance wing at Écouen (Fig. 98). Like the Psyche windows, this panel is painted in grisaille with green and yellow silver stain. In the center of the panel the nude sword of the constable impales the initials AM; a wreath punctuated by a bucranium frames the device. It is here that the green and yellow colors appear, drawing the viewer's eye to the heraldic imagery. Surrounding Montmorency's monogram are nude putti, garlands, cornucopias, birds, and grotesques, all supported by a structure of *ferronnerie*. These are the same characteristic mannerist motifs that appear in the Psyche windows as well as in the painted decoration of the walls of the château's interior.

The theme of the panel is one of fecundity and the constable's bountiful riches. Even the grotesques, with their limbs trailing off into flowering vines, call to mind endless propagation. As with the fruit imagery decorating the faience pavements of the château's interior, cornucopias were utilized more and more throughout the sixteenth century as symbols of the thriving of the nation.¹¹³ When incorporated into the decorative programs for royal *entrées*, they represented the infinite fertility and wealth of the French monarchy and, by extension, the French nation. As a member of the upper nobility, Montmorency's personal wealth was an important part of the nation's power as well. Thus, he allied his own monogram with the national symbols of

¹¹² Françoise Perrot, "Vitraux héraldiques venant du château d'Écouen," *La revue du Louvre et des Musées de France* 2 (1973): 77-82.

¹¹³ Zorach, 7.

abundance. In this context, the sword imagery also becomes an obvious symbol of potency and virility.

A similar window is currently on display at the Musée national de la renaissance. Like the example at the Victoria and Albert Museum, this one is decorated with Montmorency's initials and characteristic mannerist motifs. The museum at Écouen also possesses two windows that feature royal imagery (Figs. 99, 100). On stylistic grounds, these must have been part of the same decorative ensemble originally located in the gallery of the east wing of the château at Écouen.¹¹⁴ One has at its center Catherine de' Medici's rainbow;¹¹⁵ the other features the interlocking crescents of Henri II. We can thus date the ensemble to after 1547, when Henri ascended to the throne. This coincides with the date of construction of the east wing and supports the argument that the windows were originally located there.

There is no secure attribution for these panels, although Henri Malo suggests that Montmorency commissioned his heraldic windows from Parisian glassmaker Jean Chatelain.¹¹⁶ Françoise Perrot states that Chatelain and another glassmaker named Jean de la Hamée worked for François I at Fontainebleau, and then for Montmorency at Chantilly and the church at Villiers-le-Bel.¹¹⁷ Knowing this, it is probable that one or both of these masters had a hand in the work at Écouen. Whatever his identity, the master responsible for these panels was well acquainted with the stylistic vocabulary of his time. Once again the influence of the school of Fontainebleau is apparent; engravings by René Boyvin, Cornelis Bos, and Cornelis and Jakob

¹¹⁴ Archer, 301-2.

¹¹⁵ EF, cat. no. 493.

¹¹⁶ Malo, 27.

¹¹⁷ Perrot, 77.

Floris after Rosso and his pupil Léonard Thiry may have served as models for the cartoons used for these windows.¹¹⁸

One window currently in the collection at Écouen clearly predates the ones discussed so far. It is similar in many ways, with putti, fruits, masks, and a framework of *ferronnerie*, but at the center, against a flame-red background, is the salamander of François I (Fig. 101). This panel is dated 1544 and its style and execution are closer to the Psyche cycle of the west wing.¹¹⁹ By this date Montmorency was in exile. This window serves as further evidence of his abiding loyalty to the monarch who had banished him from court. Françoise Perrot, the director of research at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique, suggests that this window must have been intended for the west or south wings, since construction on the east entrance wing did not begin until several years after 1544.¹²⁰

One final example of Montmorency's heraldic windows comes from the Sainte-Chapelle de Vincennes. This Gothic chapel within the fortifications of the royal château at Vincennes near Paris underwent renovations during the reigns of François I and Henri II. Montmorency paid for a window for the chapel that is now on display at Écouen (Fig. 102). This window differs from those discussed so far in that it contains a broader range of colors including red, yellow, green, orange, and blue. The panel features two winged Victories supporting a shield that is decorated with Montmorency's arms, circled with the collar of the Order of St. Michael and surmounted with the Baron's coronet. A scroll at the bottom of the composition features Montmorency's motto: APLANOS. In other words, this window recreated in transparent glass the same imagery carved in stone on the exterior walls of the château at Écouen (see Chap. 1).

¹¹⁸ Archer, 302.

¹¹⁹ Perrot, 80.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

Although this window was created for a religious building, Montmorency chose to feature his personal imagery. This way, onlookers would be reminded of his generosity and piety.

Montmorency also commissioned windows with dynastic imagery to decorate the chapel at the château at Écouen. Like most of the original windows from Écouen, these have been removed from their original location; they are displayed today at the Musée Condé.¹²¹ One window shows Montmorency's five sons accompanied by Saint John the Evangelist (Fig. 103-104). From right to left are François, the eldest, who wears armor and a cloak emblazoned with his family's coat of arms; Henri, who would inherit the duchy of Montmorency after the death of his brother in 1579; Charles, future duke of Damville; Gabriel, future seigneur of Montberon; and Guillaume, who would become seigneur of Thoré. Each kneels in prayer facing the right. The details of the boys' faces show an interest in the art of portraiture, which (as discussed above) was fashionable at the court of France in the sixteenth century. Saint John stands behind them holding a chalice and gesturing toward them with an open palm. Originally, this window was to the immediate left of the altar.

An elaborate architectural surround frames the group. Behind St. John are two rectangular windows that open onto a landscape. To the right and left of the figures are niches containing flaming braziers, and above them is a round arch festooned with a garland and hanging clusters of fruit. The space below the ledge on which the boys kneel is also brimming with fruit and flowers. In this image of the constable's progeny the fruit and flower imagery becomes an obvious reference to the fecundity and abundance of the Montmorency dynasty. In line with the contemporary use of this sort of imagery as a reference to the nation's fruitfulness, the regenerative capacity of the aristocracy was an essential component to the flourishing of

¹²¹ Musée Condé, cat. no. 184, 185.

France. Above the arch, set in a broken pediment, is a brilliant blue shield covered with yellow fleur-de-lis. The emblem of the monarch and of France occupies the loftiest, most exalted position, above all else.

The classical style of the architectural surround contrasts with the Gothic architecture of the chapel that the windows decorated. Other elements of the chapel, such as the stone altar, display the influence of the Italian Renaissance, but the dominant mode of the chapel, with its pointed windows and ribbed vaults, is medieval and Northern European. Even the use of stained glass windows to light the space is characteristic of French design. This synthesis of Italian and French modes is characteristic of the unique style that Montmorency cultivated. Although this may seem like an unpleasant disparity or inelegant juxtaposition to twenty-first century viewers, the constable viewed the windows as seamlessly integrated into an expressive new manner. They conveyed his desire to maintain continuity with a past of which the French were proud while appropriating classical culture and its imperial associations.

At the very bottom of the composition is an escutcheon bearing the date 1544. This window may be the product of the same individual or team of craftsmen that created the Psyche windows in the west gallery, since the latter bear the same date. The chapel is in the south wing of the château, which, along with the west wing, was built first. These dated windows aid in understanding the timeline for the construction and decoration of the oldest parts of the château.

In a window originally placed on the opposite side of the altar, Montmorency's daughters kneel in a line (Figs. 105, 106). From left to right are Eléonore, Anne, Jeanne, Catherine, and Louise. St. Agatha presents the girls, carrying in her right hand a pair of pincers that hold her mutilated breast. The girls are enclosed in the same type of structure as their brothers, and similarly surrounded by a plethora of vegetation.

Like the Psyche windows, these heraldic and dynastic panels represent a synthesis of medieval and Renaissance modes. The medium was traditional, but the restrained grisaille and the classical motifs were new. More than the mythological panels, however, these windows illustrate the importance of projecting one's identity and status. During the sixteenth century, there was virtually no power without a visible manifestation of that power. A requisite part of wielding authority was creating and broadcasting a carefully crafted image of oneself that would inspire admiration and loyalty. This ceremonial self-presentation was highly effective and would lead in later generations to the complicated social rituals that reflected the hierarchy of the French nobility.

Bookbindings

The advent of printing and the diffusion of printed books was a major development of Montmorency's time. King Louis XII had established a library at Blois,¹²² and famous bibliophiles such as Claude Gouffier collected fine printed editions bound in exquisite leather covers.¹²³ Over time Montmorency built up an extensive library of his own, one of the largest in the kingdom. It was dispersed during the Revolution, and now many of his books survive in the collection at the Musée Condé at Chantilly.¹²⁴ Books became a necessary component of the collections of cultivated men. Noblemen wanted to be seen as civilized and enlightened leaders; they wanted to express facets of their identities other than that of the thuggish warmonger. One way to accomplish this goal was to show that they were acquainted with the great literary works of antiquity and their own time. The former would put them on par with ancient Roman

¹²² Cox-Rearick, 368.

¹²³ Musée national de la renaissance, *Les trésors du grand écuyer: Claude Gouffier, collectionneur et mécène à la renaissance* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1994).

¹²⁴ See Crépin-Leblond and Salet's text on Montmorency's library, and Musée Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 55.

cognoscenti, while the latter would prove them to be actively engaged with contemporary thought.

Although many of Montmorency's volumes are still extant, documentary evidence suggests that his library originally comprised an even larger number of books. The inventory conducted at his Parisian hôtel includes mention of 174 volumes, some of which are described in detail.¹²⁵ Of course, this inventory is limited to the volumes that Montmorency kept at his Parisian residence. It is impossible to reconstruct the constable's personal library completely, but the astounding number of surviving examples provides insight into his collection of books. He inevitably would have had libraries at other residences where he spent much of his time.

Many of the books were made at Montmorency's request. Despite the fact that he had been raised in the household of Louise of Savoy and had been given an education of the highest quality, he struggled to read Latin. Anyone in the constable's position of power would have had many antagonists; his harshest critics accused him of being completely unlettered and illiterate.¹²⁶ Given the circumstances of his upbringing, this is highly unlikely; however, as a result of his struggle with Latin, he commissioned French translations of works by ancient Roman authors, which would have been an important part of his quest to Gallicize Roman culture. Now Roman works, and thus Roman ideas, would be more accessible to Frenchmen. Several of his translated editions have dedicatory introductions praising his magnanimity. Other volumes in his collection were gifts from various individuals vying for Montmorency's attention and good graces. These portable, desirable objects made excellent diplomatic gifts because they could provide a vehicle for communicating political theories that was subtle and refined. Indeed,

¹²⁵ References to printed books appear throughout the inventory published by Mirot.

¹²⁶ Bertrand, 37.

the majority of the works in Montmorency's collection are on political theory and history. Surprisingly few are on religious subjects.¹²⁷

The decoration of surviving examples of Montmorency's volumes provides an exemplary sampling of the history of sixteenth-century bookbinding. This art form flourished in France under the influence of bindings being produced in Italy, especially in Venice, where Saracenic motifs, such as interlace patterns, appeared frequently. These books were imported into France or made their way there as gifts from foreign dignitaries. Some of the most common decorative motifs that occur on leather bookbindings from this era are interlace patterns similar to those that appear on St. Porchaire pottery, foliate designs, and heraldic imagery. Unfortunately, in the vast majority of cases, the identity of the artist responsible for these bookbindings is irretrievable. Individual schools and stylistic lineages can sometimes be established, but more work in this area is necessary to allow a better understanding of the development of this particular art form.¹²⁸

Montmorency owned a three-volume edition of the *Nine Books* of Valerius Maximus (Figs. 107-109).¹²⁹ The French translation by Nicolas de Mailly includes a dedication to the constable and is dated Bailleul-sur-Esche (today Fosseuse) 10 March 1544. Each volume is covered in brown calfskin with gilded decoration. The volumes each have different decorative patterns, showing the variety of motifs employed by the bookbinders of the sixteenth century. The first volume features delicate interlace designs at the center, surrounded by a more substantial interlace framework. The design is dotted with graceful leaves and fleurs-de-lis. The second volume is decorated with similar interlace patterns, but at the center of the cover, framed

¹²⁷ Crépin-Leblond and Salet, 10.

¹²⁸ See Stéphanie Deprouw, *Geoffroy Tory, imprimeur de François I, graphiste avant la lettre* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2011); Anthony Hobson, *Humanists and Bookbinders: The Origins and Diffusion of the Humanist Bookbinding 1459-1559* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

¹²⁹ Musée Condé, cat. no. 174; Crépin-Leblond and Salet, cat. no. 30.

in a gilded oval, are the words “Connestable de France.” Montmorency’s motto “APLANOS” appears on all four edges of the cover. The gilded decoration of the third volume is somewhat different in that it features strapwork in place of interlace patterns. Strapwork is a common decorative feature that appears in many media during the sixteenth century. Several of the painted chimneypieces at the château at Écouen include strapwork designs (see Chap. 3). At the center of the cover in a circular frame is the “APLANOS” motto.

The use of Montmorency’s devices and titles on the covers of these volumes personalized the text. The works of the Roman author were marked as property of the constable and individualized for him. The identity of the books’ owner, rather than the author of the text, is emblazoned on the cover; Montmorency’s possession of the book becomes more important than the author’s identity. In the first half of the sixteenth century, possession of ancient works, especially ones translated into a modern language, was indeed of great significance. Montmorency, along with a few other influential figures, was bringing classical antiquity to France, and they wanted credit for their contribution. These bookbindings become a kind of celebration of the individuals responsible for bringing knowledge of classical culture to France. In addition to his interest in ancient Roman literature, however, Montmorency’s French identity and his loyalty to the Crown were made evident by the inclusion of the fleurs-de-lis on the book covers.

Montmorency was also aware of contemporary Italian literature and owned a personalized copy of Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, translated into French by Jacques de Vintimille (Fig. 110).¹³⁰ The cover is made of olive-colored leather with an incised interlace pattern in black; the central medallion is stained a contrasting yellow. The central section features

¹³⁰ Musée Condé, cat. no. 175; Crépin-Leblond and Salet, cat. no. 31.

exquisite floral and foliate patterns, and “APLANOS” appears four times on the cover.

Montmorency’s role as leading diplomat and statesman would have required him to be abreast of developments in contemporary political theory. Access to this text in his native language would have made full comprehension possible, and Montmorency would have been able to participate in the discussions among Europe’s most powerful men concerning Machiavelli’s ideas.

Another beautiful volume in the constable’s library is a work entitled *Apologie, faite par un serviteur du roy, contre les calomnies des Impériaux: sur la descente du Turc* by Pierre Danès (Fig. 111).¹³¹ This fascinating book, published in Paris in 1551 by Charles Estienne, takes as its subject the role that Montmorency played in negotiations with Suleiman the Magnificent in 1534 and in the preparation for renewed war against Charles V. This interesting episode in the history of French politics, and specifically Montmorency’s role in it, is deserving of an in-depth study. The highly controversial alliance with the Ottoman Empire was formed in an effort to thwart the spread of the Habsburg Empire.¹³² Montmorency had charge of diplomatic negotiations with the Turks, and so he had a relationship with the “infidels” that was the scandal of Europe. Negative propaganda against the actions of the French included caricatures showing François I colluding with the Muslim enemy, which was derided as “the sacrilegious union of the Lily and the Crescent.”¹³³ This text was doubtless an attempt to counter such propaganda; it clarified and justified the constable’s position and countered the criticisms that were coming from all sides.

The volume is covered in brilliant red leather. Two straight gilded lines form a simple frame at the edge of the cover, punctuated at each corner with a fleur-de-lis. At the center of the

¹³¹ Musée Jean-Jacques Rousseau, cat. no. 64; Crépin-Leblond and Salet, cat. no. 19.

¹³² See Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, *Orientalism in Early Modern France* (New York: Berg Publishers, 2008); and Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1955), 150-9.

¹³³ Merriman, 133.

cover, a single curving gold line creates a polylobed shape around a banderole with the APLANOS motto. Similar polylobed forms appear on bookbindings attributed to Claude de Picques in other contemporary collections, such as that of Jean Grolier.¹³⁴ This cover, however, has a remarkably restrained and sober character compared to other bookbindings attributed to Picques. Even next to the other volumes that Montmorency owned, it has a severe aspect. It testifies to the broad range of designs employed by bookbinders and the different aesthetic veins that were popular in the sixteenth century.

That Montmorency owned a text with this sort of subject matter demonstrates his desire to regulate his public image. His attempt to fashion his own identity required him to counter negative accounts of his deeds. He must also have been aware that any criticism aimed at the actions of the French must be addressed if France were to maintain a reputation as a dignified nation. The beautiful but spartan decoration of this bookbinding would have given the text itself an air of gravity and solemnity.

One of the constable's sacred texts also survives. The psalter is covered in a binding of black leather decorated with a delicate gilded vine and leaf pattern (Fig. 112). The initials A and M are scattered throughout the scrolling tendrils of the vine, as are four *alerions*, his heraldic eagles. Montmorency's Catholic piety is well documented, and this volume attests to the daily devotions that he observed. Indications of the days of the week were added to the pages of the volume by hand, suggesting that the constable used the book daily. This calls to mind Brantôme's description of him as observing religious devotions and prayers constantly.¹³⁵

Once again, the main decoration of this bookbinding (aside from the vine pattern) is made up of references to the owner's identity. At a time when Protestantism was on the rise,

¹³⁴ Crépin-Leblond and Salet, 34.

¹³⁵ Brantôme, 371-2.

Montmorency was eager to make a public show of his loyalty to the Catholic faith. By using this volume daily and by emblazoning the covers with his personal emblems, he made his loyalty known. Whether receiving guests at one of his homes, meeting with the king and other courtiers, or leading his troops on horseback, his perpetual devotion would be evident. In any context and in any company his religious practice would appear to be an immutable part of his identity.

Montmorency's vision of French national identity included Catholicism as an essential component. At this point in the Early Modern era, when the concept of the individualism of nations was emerging, the personalities of influential individuals helped shape national identities. Montmorency saw himself as a model after which to fashion a French national identity. The act of using his psalter constantly thus became as much a political maneuver as a manifestation of his religious fervor.

With his vast collection of beautifully decorated volumes, Montmorency embodied the new ideal of the enlightened leader. Brute strength and force worked in concert with wisdom and eloquence. The traditional virtues of the brave soldier were allied with a kind of moral force that made the aristocratic class appear more civilized. This too was part of a push to consolidate the nation's power, to elevate the status of the nobility above that of knightly protectors of the populace to that of moral and ideological guides. They were the keepers of all the knowledge of the ages; under their guidance, the French would evolve into an exceptional society surpassing even the ancients.

Fixtures and Furniture

During the sixteenth century Montmorency's residences were outfitted with all manner of accoutrements deemed necessary for the commodious lifestyle of the upper nobility. Although little of it survives, especially *in situ*, there are some extant examples of furniture and fixtures

that further enriched the luxurious environment of his châteaux. These objects were conceived as necessary parts of an elaborate whole. Each component contributed to create a rich environment that would inspire confidence in the ruling class.

Iron Bolts and Locks

As was the case with most media, the art of ironworking underwent radical changes during the Early Modern era as the result of new techniques and technologies coupled with a shifting aesthetic. One product that was transformed as a result of these changes was the door lock.¹³⁶ Although increasingly complex locks were being used during this period, the simple bolt remained ubiquitous. In previous generations, bolts consisted of iron bars that slid back and forth in two staples fastened to the door. These bolts were quite large and heavy, but they formed the basis for the more decorative versions used on cabinets and room doors that began to appear during the early Renaissance. In these later forms, the sliding bar was reduced in size and was often made in flat rectangular cross section (as opposed to earlier round ones) and the entire mechanism, staples and all, was mounted onto a back plate to make a single object that could be nailed to the door. These back plates quickly became the object of fashionable ornamentation. During the late medieval period this ornament consisted of Gothic motifs, often pierced into the iron plate. By the Renaissance, however, ironworkers began to decorate their wares with classical motifs. One school of locksmiths worked from designs by Jacques Androuet Du Cerceau.¹³⁷

François I was one of the first to make extensive use of this new art form. By this point, most Gothic ornament found on the hardware of the recent past was replaced with more modern

¹³⁶ See Geck, 65-7; Edgar Block Frank, *Old French Ironwork* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950); Charles Frémont, *La serrure: origine et evolution* (Bourges: A. Tardy, 1924); Henry Harvard, *La serrurerie* (Paris: Librairie Charles Delagrave, 1897).

¹³⁷ Geck, 65.

motifs. These designs were usually embossed rather than pierced, and consisted of moldings, shields, caryatids, and a vast array of patterns. He filled his châteaux from top to bottom with hardware in which the *leitmotiv* was heraldry.¹³⁸ The next king, Henri II, displayed a similar interest in hardware and changed almost all the locks and bolts on the doors of the numerous royal castles. In the château at Anet, which he built for Diane de Poitiers, he expressed his affection for his mistress in hardware; many of the locks there featured their initials entwined. This property became a veritable museum of the new locksmith's art.¹³⁹

In a similar fashion, Montmorency put bolts with the initials *AM* on all the doors of his château at Écouen.¹⁴⁰ These iron objects were small in scale, but were a most essential item in an era "when only force could distinguish between mine and thine."¹⁴¹ The constable was marking and protecting his property in a most forceful and literal way. One example features an interlace pattern similar to the designs used on St. Porchaire pottery and bookbindings.¹⁴² Above the bolt, framed in this network of tangled bands, is a lively dolphin figure; Montmorency's initials appear below the bolt. A second example is decorated with an ornate curving molding that surrounds the constable's initials below and those of Henri II above (Fig 113).¹⁴³

The front plate of an iron lock from the château at Écouen features elaborate decoration in relief (Fig. 114).¹⁴⁴ The lock plate takes the form of a rectangular plaque framed by a garland. Just above the keyhole the initials *AM*, impaled by a sword, appear in a cartouche. Around the cartouche are four nude figures luxuriating in a plethora of fruit and vegetation. These symbols

¹³⁸ Frank, 131.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 132; fig. 220.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁴² Frank, pl. 47, fig. 218.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, pl. 47, fig. 220.

¹⁴⁴ Musée Jean-Jacques Rousseau, cat. no. 27.

of abundance and fecundity can be found in all manner of artworks, both large and small, in Montmorency's collection. The imagery of this lock plate conveys the message that he was a protector and guardian of the nation's prosperity.

By installing these bolts and locks at Écouen, Montmorency demonstrated that he was abreast of current trends in the art of ironwork; he was participating in the same fashion as the king. More importantly, these bolts gave an impression of security and power. Their presence throughout the château signified that the constable's spaces were private and his possessions were valuable enough that they required protecting. An abundance of iron locks would have produced a psychological effect on visitors. These visitors would have viewed Montmorency's property as a mighty stronghold of untold riches. By extension, the constable himself would be viewed as a man of vast wealth. The locks would inspire confidence that he, like the iron, was a strong and capable protector. More numerous inaccessible spaces also show a shift in mentality in which private wealth was increasingly valued over communal interest. While the lords of the Middle Ages were valued for the aid they provided the lower classes (usually in the form of military protection), those of the Renaissance were also valued for the image of prestige and fortune they offered the kingdom.¹⁴⁵

Furniture

Visitors to the château at Écouen today may be struck by the expanses of empty space and lack of furnishings. Indeed, sixteenth-century residences were not so full of furniture as modern homes are; however, the château would originally have contained a variety of chairs, tables, beds, chests, and all manner of appointments. Furniture was often moved about, not only

¹⁴⁵ On these shifting values during the Early Modern period, see Richard Goldthwaite, *Private Wealth in Renaissance Florence: A Study of Four Families* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968); and Robert Knecht, *The Rise and Fall of Renaissance France: 1483-1610* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001), 8-9.

from room to room, but also from one residence to another as the need arose; the French word for furniture, *meubles*, is related to “mobile, movable.” Little remains of the furniture that belonged to Montmorency, but one wooden table gives an indication of his taste (Fig. 115).

The *table de cep vigne*, as it is called, is currently on display at the Musée Condé.¹⁴⁶ The rectangular walnut table was originally part of the furnishings at the château at Écouen and is astonishingly well preserved. At the bottom of the table is a broad platform that supports four legs. Each leg takes the form of a herm; a head at the top carries a gadrooned crown and the section below the head tapers to a narrow foot. Between the legs, on each short end of the table is a graceful scrolling frame reminiscent of the strapwork seen in other parts of the château’s decoration. All around the surface of the tabletop just below its projecting ledge are alternating triglyphs, wreaths, and bucrania.

Clearly the taste for classical style had impacted carpentry and furniture design by the time Montmorency commissioned this table. Similar designs can be seen in the furniture from the royal households of sixteenth-century France.¹⁴⁷ To personalize it, the craftsman also decorated the table with the constable’s devices. It also features the arms of the dauphin Henri and fleurs de lis. The emblems of the dauphin allow us to date the table before 1547. In a frame around the surface of the tabletop is an inlaid inscription reading “*Dieu et mon grand service.*” Although the overall design is restrained, the ornamental motifs of the table present a variety of complex allusions. Firstly, the table reveals the fashion for classicism that Montmorency frequently utilized as a way to reference imperial grandeur. In his private residences this allusion to ancient Rome made his own magnificence all the more palpable. Secondly, the insertion of his and the dauphin’s devices demonstrated his allegiance to the royal family. Placing their

¹⁴⁶ Musée Condé, cat. no. 177.

¹⁴⁷ See Geck, 72-98.

personal emblems in close proximity to one another was a rather literal way of showing their close relationship, which we also saw in the sculptural decoration on the exterior the Montmorency's châteaux (see Chap. 1). The fleurs de lis showed his loyalty to France. Finally, the inscription is a reminder of Montmorency's Catholic devotion. The table thus becomes a kind of vehicle for communicating all that the constable held dear: his imperial ambitions, his relationship with the royal family, and his personal piety.

The center panel of the tabletop is made of one remarkable piece of grapevine wood (*cep de vigne*). A slab of grapevine wood of this size would have been exceedingly rare and costly. Judging by the scarcity of the materials used and the complex carved iconography, this table would not have served strictly utilitarian purposes. Its primary function would have been ceremonial, and it could have had a performative role in receptions where Montmorency would have been eager to express his ideology to guests.

Conclusion

The surviving objects discussed in this chapter give an indication of the luxurious material surroundings of sixteenth-century courtiers. Tableware, tiles, windows, furniture, bookbindings, and the like were all part of an opulent whole, and offered opportunities to express personal ideologies and attitudes. By displaying these objects prominently in his homes, Montmorency was able to remind guests at every turn of his own magnificence and the splendor of the French kingdom.

There are some objects that cannot be discussed here due to low survival rates and lack of documentary evidence. Most notable is the absence of surviving tapestries that must have adorned the walls of his favorite châteaux. These were considered to be among the most prized and luxurious art forms of the sixteenth century. Made of expensive dyed wool, tapestries were

more costly than any other single decorative item. Like paintings, they would have enlivened the walls with colorful figurative scenes from history, mythology, or the Bible. Scholars have referred to a manuscript in the archives at Chantilly that mentions a “tapisserie faicte de la fable de Cupido et Psyché”; this has been taken to mean that Montmorency owned tapestries illustrated with the myth,¹⁴⁸ which is entirely possible given the obvious interest he had in this particular story. Lucien Magne, however, suggests that the term “tapisserie” in the manuscript actually refers to the stained-glass cycle at Écouen, and that the use of this word to denote works in several media demonstrates the close relationship that existed during the sixteenth century between all of the decorative-arts media.¹⁴⁹

The decorative arts worked on a subtler level than architecture, painting, or large-scale sculpture. On the one hand, they were present to beautify the environment, to allow visitors to revel in Montmorency’s material wealth and comfort. On the other hand, while guests were partaking in this aesthetic experience, they would also be absorbing the same ideological messages that were made in larger-scale works. Even the act of dining became an event at which to surround a captive audience with objects that, while delighting the eye, would also make bold political statements.

Montmorency filled his homes with luxury objects; he lavished great sums of money on them and he proudly displayed his personal emblems and those of the monarchy on them. This practice defies the notion that these objects were of lesser importance, or that they were somehow inferior. Some of the artists who worked for Montmorency in these media would go on to have illustrious careers working for the King and Queen. Their products were highly

¹⁴⁸ Willox, 265; Malo, 26.

¹⁴⁹ Magne, 130.

esteemed and completely necessary in creating an environment that was saturated with luxury as well as with the owners' identity.

Conclusion

In his essay “Why We Need Things,” Mihaly Csikszentmihaly focuses on why people need things to objectify the self, to demonstrate power, and to symbolize their place in society.¹ He points out that the self is a fragile construction of the mind, and without external props our personal identity fades and goes out of focus; we transform the precariousness of consciousness into the solidity of things. Objects give concrete evidence of one’s place in a social network, provide evidence of valued relationships, mementos of the past, and signposts to future goals. Much of this material culture theory is borne out in the art patronage of Anne de Montmorency. From large-scale commissions such as his châteaux to decorative ceramics, the constable used material objects to communicate his role as one of the most powerful men in Europe. From the works that he commissioned we are able to discern many details of his character, including his Catholic devotion, his loyalty to the kingdom of France, his familial pride, and his admiration of imperial Rome.

There was a sense among Montmorency’s contemporaries that there was no power without visible affirmation of that power.² This concept was informed by ancient attitudes, but was also nourished throughout the Middle Ages. The kings of France had used the arts to promote their ideologies for many generations. What made the sixteenth century different from the medieval era was the consolidation of the king’s power and the evolution toward absolutism. The shift from feudalism toward a more centralized government had begun, and the role of noblemen such as Montmorency was changing. The principle of absolute monarchy began to

¹ Mihaly Csikszentmihaly, “Why We Need Things,” in David Kingery, ed., *History from Things: Essays in Material Culture* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 20-29.

² Bedos-Rezak, 13.

erode the power of the feudal lords.³ More than ever, these wealthy individuals felt the need to assert their wealth, their illustrious lineage, and their steadfast allegiance to the Crown. Perhaps the latter motivated Montmorency's choice of the APLANOS motto; if translated as "without deviation," it expresses his loyalty generally, but more specifically his interest in maintaining the *status quo* in which he was greatly invested. His family had benefited from the feudal structure more than anyone but the king, and his conservative nature seems to have resulted from awareness that he had much to lose from the transformation of old power structures. At the same time, if he could sufficiently prove his relevance, he could retain an important role despite the inevitable shifts taking place. The visual arts were one important component of his display of power.

As discussed in chapter one, Montmorency's châteaux provided an opportunity to express his ideologies on a monumental scale. He employed French craftsmen and architects who were able to develop a style that was reminiscent of France's medieval customs but simultaneously responded to the fashion for classicism. In this way, Italian influence was absorbed and refigured to suggest an appropriation of imperial eminence for the kingdom of France. In addition to the architectural style, decorative relief sculpture on the surfaces of the châteaux communicated the constable's identity and his intimate closeness to the crown. Because Montmorency was an important government official, his residences were often used as the setting for events of the court. The presence at these affairs of other influential aristocrats ensured that the constable's messages could be read by individuals with the power to affect national policies. In this way, Montmorency utilized the visual arts as a form of propaganda to shape the mindset of his contemporaries.

³ Zerner, 7.

Sculpture was often an integral part of Montmorency's architectural schemes, as seen in chapter 2, and often worked in a similar way to instill national pride. Italian types, such as the equestrian portrait, and works by Italian artists, such as Michelangelo's *Slaves*, were displayed at the château at Écouen alongside medieval turrets and a Gothic-style chapel. The theme of appropriation emerges again, contributing to the constable's lifelong crusade to reclaim the glory of Rome for France. Of course, some works of sculpture, most notably the saint figures in the chapel at Écouen, were reminders of the constable's adherence to the Catholic faith during a time of religious factionalism. Sculptural works also endowed Montmorency's residences with the requisite air of luxury; if courtiers lived in splendor, the image of the entire kingdom benefited.

As seen in chapter 3, painting too provided opulent decoration to the interiors of Montmorency's residences. They enlivened wall surfaces and engaged viewers with their vivid colors. Early in his life, the constable responded to prevailing trends at court by collecting works by Italian artists, but for the ambitious cycle of chimney paintings at Écouen, he turned to local painters. His growing preference over time for French masters was in contrast to the tendency at court, especially during the reign of François I, to promote Italian artists. The choices Montmorency made regarding his art patronage can thus be read as taking on a political dimension, as the constable used the visual arts to advocate for French excellence and sovereignty.

Chapter four addressed decorative objects such as ceramic wares, stained glass, furniture, and ironwork that, although often small-scale, were integral parts of the larger environment that Montmorency crafted so carefully. They extended his ideological messages to every surface of his residences and saturated his dwellings with propaganda that he hoped would reach the audience of influential figures that visited him. Montmorency's patronage in the realm of

ceramics was especially pivotal, since he encouraged local manufactories at a time when Italian maiolica was widely popular. By the eighteenth century and the creation of the factory at Sèvres, France became a preeminent capital of the manufacture of fine porcelain, doubtless influenced by the experiments of the makers of St. Porchaire pottery in Montmorency's time.⁴

In discussing the impact Montmorency had on artistic developments, one must first compare his activities to his contemporaries. Another sixteenth-century patron of the arts was Claude Gouffier, whose second wife was an aunt of Montmorency's. Like the constable, Gouffier possessed vast territorial holdings and thus the wealth necessary to commission artworks that would express his status. His collection included paintings by Italian artists, books with decorative bindings, sculpture, and ceramics. His château at Oiron has been called the "*Fontainebleau Poitevin*."⁵ Montmorency's and Gouffier's tastes were quite similar, although one important difference was the constable's distinct preference for French artists. Inspired by François I's use at Fontainebleau of Italian artists, Gouffier employed Florentine craftsmen, who had established an atelier in Tours in the construction of the Château d'Oiron.⁶ More than Gouffier or any other sixteenth-century French patron, Montmorency sought artists locally and promoted them before foreigners. While most nobles, like Gouffier, were eager to emulate François I by conforming to the fashion for Italian artists and Italian style, Montmorency made a kind of campaign of nationalism out of his patronage. He may well have felt that if he were on the forefront of the process of consolidation of power and the development of a national identity, he would be more likely to retain significance at court.

⁴ See Svend Erikson, *Sèvres Porcelain: Vicennes et Sèvres, 1740-1800* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987).

⁵ See *Les trésors du grand écuyer: Claude Gouffier, collectionneur et mécène à la renaissance* (exh. cat., Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1994).

⁶ Fenwick, 89.

The promotion of French artists was perhaps Montmorency's greatest contribution to the arts. Starting in the 1550s, some of the French artists that he had discovered were working on highly prestigious commissions. Jean Goujon, for instance, left Montmorency's employ at Écouen to work on projects for the royal *entrée* of Henri II and subsequently at the Louvre. When Catherine de' Medici needed ceramic decorations for her grotto at the Tuileries, she hired Bernard Palissy on Montmorency's recommendation. Jean Bullant, whose trip to Rome Montmorency had funded, also worked for the queen at the Tuileries. His discovery of artists such as these set developments in motion that would eventually lead to France's position as the artistic capital of Europe by the eighteenth century.

Although Montmorency was among the first individuals to advocate actively for local artists, he was also one of the first in France to collect Roman antiquities. He benefitted from his numerous diplomatic contacts in Rome by using them to gain information about items being discovered and brought to market. He could use his position of influence to extract desired artifacts from owners who might be eager to win the constable's gratitude. His château at Chantilly became a showplace of ancient objects. By 1554 Montmorency already had an international reputation as a collector, because in autumn of that year the brother of the bishop of Pavia sent him two marble busts, one of Severus, the other of Caracalla.⁷ In 1556, the Cardinal d'Armagnac "was busy ensuring that a consignment of architectural and marble materials, including two marble busts of emperors together with half a dozen other good heads, was safely on its way to Chantilly."⁸ Montmorency was busy transforming the château at Chantilly

⁷ Letter from the Cardinal d'Armagnac to Montmorency dated 20 November 1554 cited in Charles de Grandmaison, "Bustes antiques envoyées de Rome au connétable de Montmorency, 1554-1556," *Archives de l'art français* 4 (1855-6): 69-71.

⁸ McGowan, 65.

throughout his life, and he must have used the “architectural and marble materials” in the construction of the structure.

The incorporation of Roman artifacts serves as an excellent example of Montmorency’s lifelong desire to absorb elements of antiquity into his own surroundings. He did not just display whole sculptures (although he did that as well); he incorporated fragments of the Roman past into a whole that, judging from du Cerceau’s engravings of Chantilly, was in a decidedly French vein. This spirit of appropriation, absorption, and transformation of Italian elements is a constant theme running throughout Montmorency’s art patronage. Henri Zerner states that “[t]his original and sumptuous manner, both antique and innovative, this art at once universal and incontestably French is a proclamation of sovereignty.”⁹ Once again we encounter the idea that, through the use of the visual arts and the development of a new style, the French illustrated the formation of a consolidated power, distinct from other European nations. There is a degree of inventiveness in this process that is not often associated with the French Renaissance. More often, this period in France is viewed as an offshoot of the Italian Renaissance, but individuals such as Montmorency challenge such notions, and suggest that a more nuanced consideration of artistic developments north of the Alps is necessary.

Contemporaries of Montmorency considered him a man of taste, which is demonstrated by the fact that François I put much stock in Montmorency’s advice. The monarch was an avid collector of Italian art objects, both ancient and modern, and Pietro Aretino served as his artistic agent starting in 1529.¹⁰ As the king was exceedingly busy, he used Montmorency as a go-between with Aretino, entrusting him to consult with the Italian on acquisitions. Montmorency

⁹ Zerner, 193. The author is speaking here of Lescot’s work at the Louvre, but his ideas apply equally well to Montmorency’s Chantilly.

¹⁰ RC, 196.

also communicated directly with Italian artists on the king's behalf. Vasari claims that he corresponded with Andrea del Sarto concerning the purchase of a painting of St. John the Baptist for François.¹¹ The king's choice of Montmorency for these dealings suggests his confidence not only in the constable's negotiating skills, but also in his taste; he clearly saw Montmorency as an artistic ambassador.

Although he was engaged in acquiring Italian artworks for himself and for the king, Montmorency was on the forefront of a movement that was exceedingly wary of Italian influence. This movement would gain momentum after his death in 1567.¹² Erasmus, too, was critical of the excessive praise of antiquity and satirized those who fetishized ancient Rome.¹³ The writings of Henri Estienne proclaimed the expressive power of the French language, and his *Deux dialogues du nouveau langage françois italianizé et autrement desguizé*, published in Paris in 1578, targeted the nefarious influence that Italian speech and behavior had on French courtiers.¹⁴ Montmorency would surely have agreed with the humanist Guillaume Budé who, at the end of his life, partially renounced classical studies and warned of the danger they could pose to Christian faith.¹⁵ Hostility and growing antagonism toward Rome would increase after the outbreak of civil war in 1560 when many, particularly Protestants, began to push for the removal of Italian advisors to the crown. It is as though Montmorency's circumspect view of Italian influence became a widely held attitude.

In addition to Erasmus, Estienne, and Budé, some French artists sought ways to transcend Italian influence. Philibert de l'Orme, for example, possessed extensive knowledge of ancient

¹¹ Cox-Rearick, 123.

¹² See chap. 7, "Negative Responses and Reverse Appropriations," in McGowan, 251-282.

¹³ Anthony Herbert Tigar Levi, *Collected Works of Erasmus*, Betty I. Knott, trans. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 431-2.

¹⁴ McGowan, 402-3, note 5.

¹⁵ Zerner, 119.

models, yet remained somewhat detached from strict classicism.¹⁶ The Gothic style was a viable alternative for him, as can be seen in his work at the chapel at Vincennes. In fact, many architects continued to work in a Gothic mode during the sixteenth century; the continuation of this older style during a period associated with classicism is an area that needs further exploration. De l'Orme also designed a special French Order for the Tuileries, which suggests his desire to adapt classical models to French contexts. Although de l'Orme never worked for Montmorency, the two were part of the same cultural network that sought expressions of national culture.

The dominance of Italian artists at the court of France had already begun to wane after the death of François I. Henri II was not as keenly interested in the arts as his father had been, and he was more susceptible to the influence of Montmorency's advice. His ascension to the throne marks a turning point. More and more, French artists rather than Italians began to be appointed to top positions.¹⁷ This change is not an accident; the new king took Montmorency's opinions very seriously, and the constable was able to impose his will, as well as his concepts of national identity, at the highest level.

Montmorency continued to play an important role in the development of French national identity after the premature death of Henri II and that of his son François II. In August of 1563, Charles IX's majority was proclaimed at Rouen, and soon afterwards Catherine de' Medici took him on an extended progress through the kingdom.¹⁸ The main goal of the tour was to ensure that the Edict of Amboise was being applied. This treaty, created in 1563, was an attempt to restore peace and unity after the first phase of the Wars of Religion. A broader goal was to

¹⁶ Ibid., 402-420.

¹⁷ Ibid., 8.

¹⁸ Jean Boutier, Daniel Nordman, and Alain Dewerpe, *Un tour de France, le voyage de Charles IX 1564-1566* (Paris: Aubier, 1984); RC, 259-265.

expose all of the provinces to a common royal culture, to spread a kind of shared identity through the presence of the king and court. In other words, the furthest corners of the kingdom were brought together in peace and united by their sovereign. Catherine appointed Montmorency to lead the progress; he was in charge of maintaining discipline and rode ahead of the main company to ensure that the towns were ready for the king's reception.¹⁹ She must have seen Montmorency as a kind of domestic cultural ambassador whose endeavors to promulgate a national identity aligned with her own.

In the dedication of his translation of Herodian's *Histories*, Jacques de Vintemille reminded Montmorency to esteem history as highly as the statues, medals, and other treasures being found in Rome.²⁰ This kind of awareness of one's place in history informed Montmorency's outlook and that of many of his contemporaries. Robert Mandrou says that "[I]orgueil de ces hommes de la Renaissance, qui ont senti mieux que beaucoup de leurs contemporains l'approche de temps nouveaux et d'une grande victoire des hommes d'Occident, cet orgueil éclate dans tous les comportements."²¹ Much of Montmorency's art patronage, therefore, centers on the concepts of victory and pride, as though he was celebrating the triumph of a new, enlightened age that he helped bring about. At the same time, though, he wanted to demonstrate that his values were stable and faithful to the past. In the end, he helped to create the concept of nationalism that informs our own identities today.

Montmorency's character, through the visual arts, had an indelible impact on his contemporaries. This powerful and assertive figure played an important role through his

¹⁹ RC, 260.

²⁰ McGowan, 193. Jacques de Vintemille's text, *L'histoire d'Herodian*, was published in many editions in Paris, 1529, 1539, 1544, and 1551.

²¹ Robert Mandrou, *Introduction à la France moderne, essai de psychologie historique, 1500-1640* (Paris: A Michel, 1998), 229-30.

diplomatic and military endeavors that has been well documented by numerous historians and biographers. The influence he had through the arts was more inconspicuous, and perhaps because of that, even more compelling. Montmorency knew that artworks were a subtle tool, and he was able to wield them effectively to create a national identity that was ultimately a reflection of his own desires and fantasies.

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Fig. 1 Château d'Écouen, *View from the Northeast.*

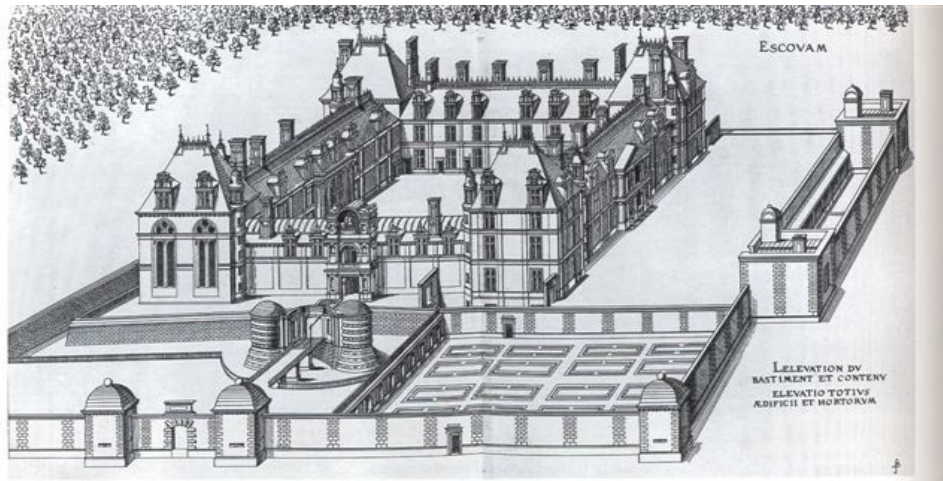


Fig. 2 Jacques Androuet Du Cerceau, *Écouen: Elevation of the Château.* Engraving from *Les plus excellents bastiments de France* vol 1, 1576.



Fig. 3 Ancy-le-Franc, *View of the Chateau from the Southwest.*



Fig. 4 Fontainebleau, *View from the West.*



Fig. 5 Château d'Écouen, *West Façade*.



Fig. 6 Azay-le-Rideau, *View from the South*.



Fig. 7 Château d'Écouen, *Turret on the South Façade.*



Fig. 8 Château d'Écouen, *View of the West Façade with Chimney and Dormer.*



Fig. 9 Château d'Écouen, *North Façade*.



Fig. 10 Château d'Écouen, *East Façade with a View of the Chapel*.



Fig. 11 Château d'Écouen, *Interior View of the Chapel Vaults.*



Fig. 12 Château d'Écouen, *View of the Courtyard (South Façade).*

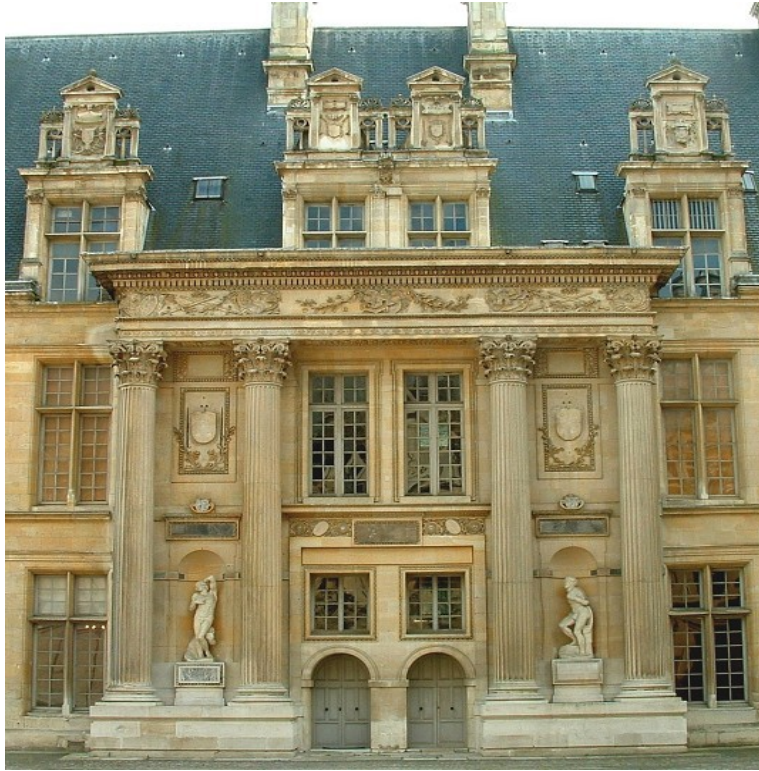


Fig. 13 Jean Bullant, *Château d'Écouen, Portico (South Courtyard Façade)*, c. 1555.



Fig. 14 Château d'Écouen, *View of the Courtyard (North Façade)*, c. 1555.

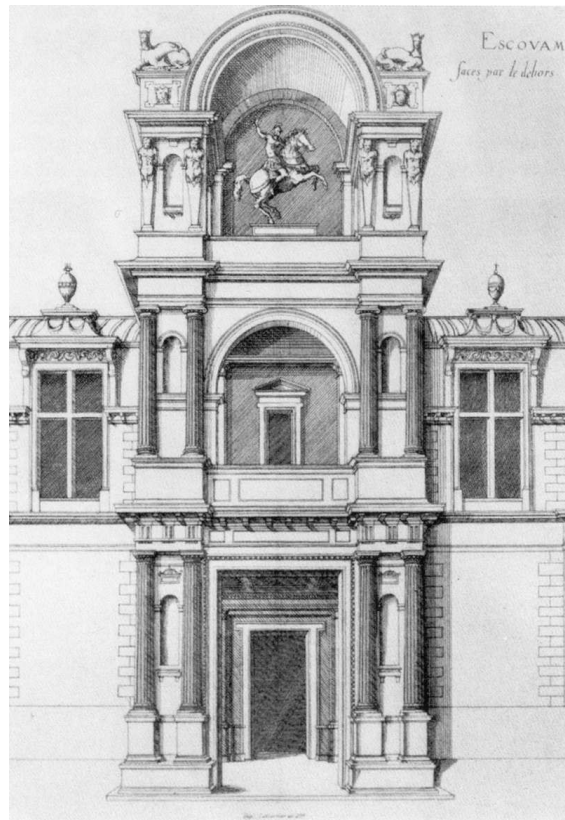


Fig. 15 Jacques Androuet Du Cerceau, *Écouen: Entrance Portico of the Château*.
Engraving from *Les plus excellents bastiments de France* vol. 1, 1576.



Fig. 16 Philibert Delorme, *Château at Anet: Entrance Portico*, c. 1550.



Fig. 17 Château at Surgères, *Gateway*.

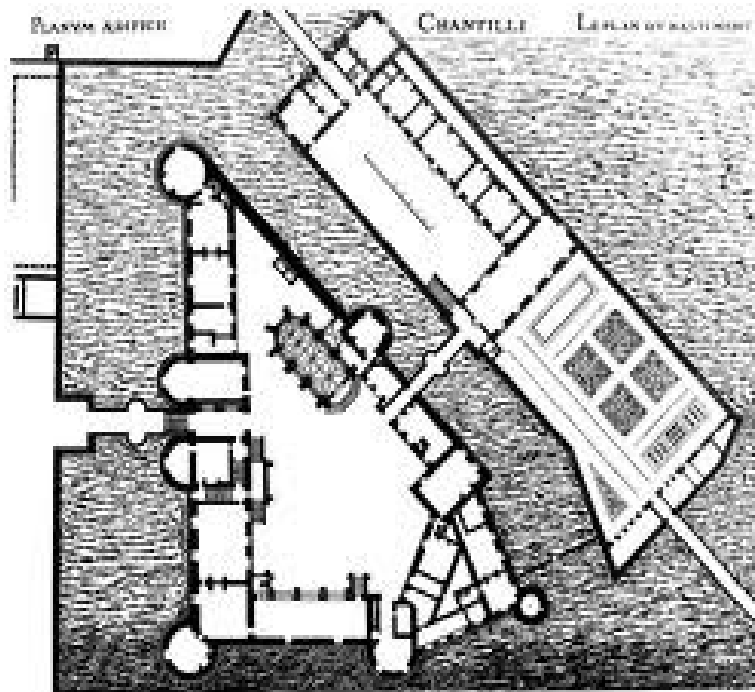


Fig. 18 Jacques Androuet Du Cerceau, *Chantilly: Plan of the Château*. Engraving from *Les plus excellents bastiments de France* vol.1, 1576.

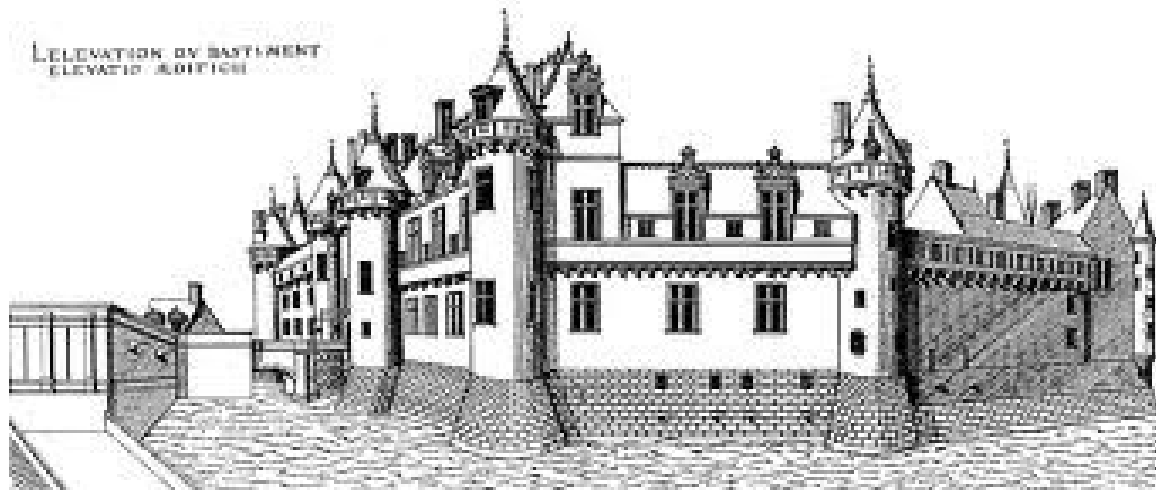


Fig. 19 Jacques Androuet Du Cerceau, *Chantilly: Elevation of the Château*. Engraving from *Les plus excellents bastiments de France* vol.1, 1576.

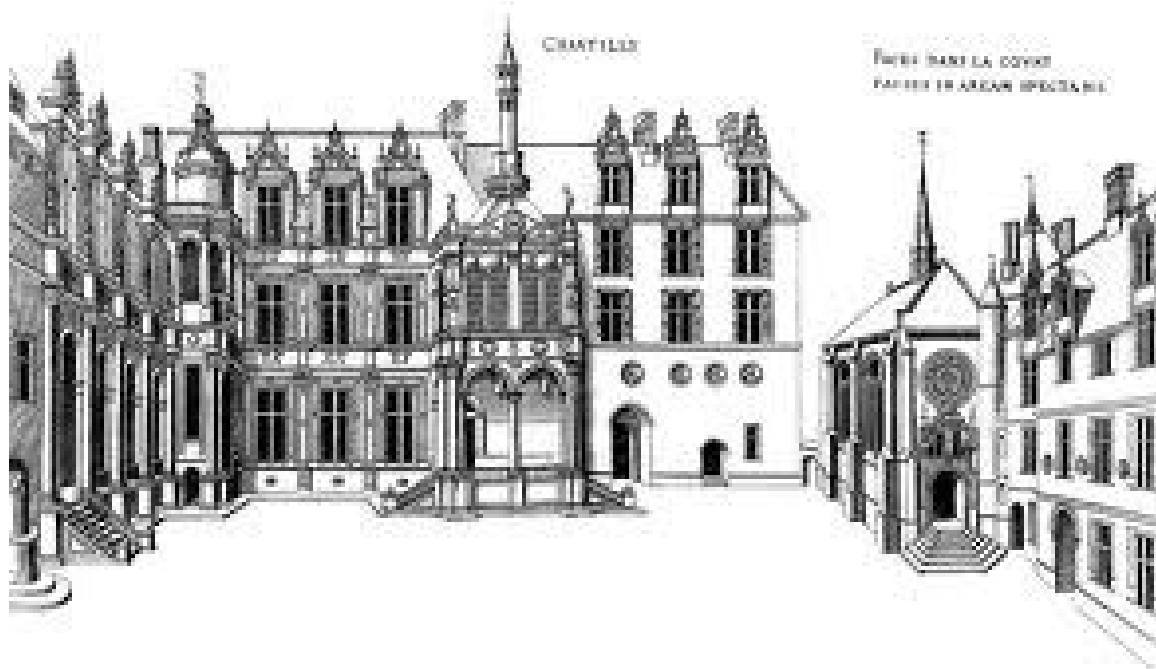


Fig. 20 Jacques Androuet Du Cerceau, *Chantilly: Courtyard Elevation*. Engraving from *Les plus excellents bastiments de France* vol.1, 1576.



Fig. 21 Château de Chantilly, *View of the Petit Maison.*



Fig. 22 Château de Fère-en-Tardenois, *View from the South.*



Fig. 23 Château de Fère-en-Tardenois, *View of the Bridge.*



Fig. 24 Château de Fère-en-Tardenois, *View of the Bridge.*

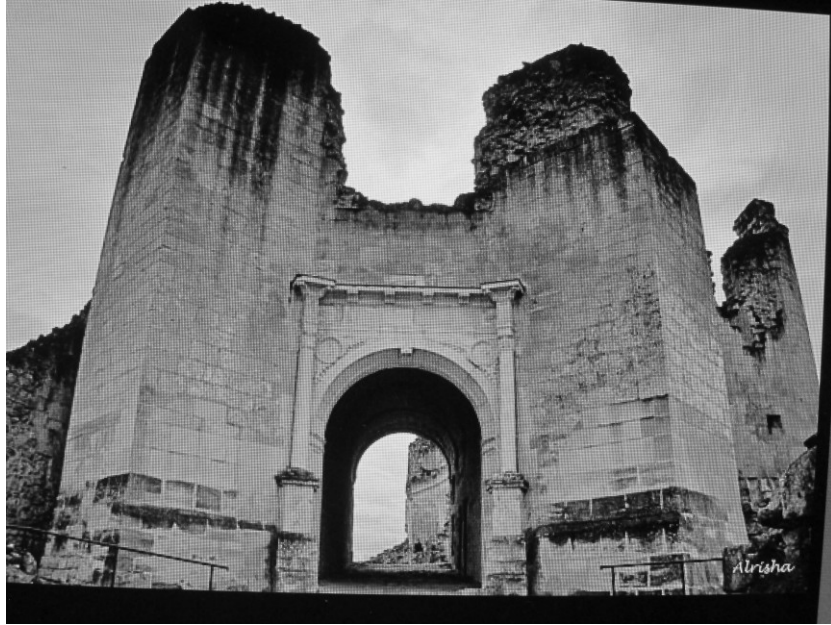


Fig. 25 Fère-en-Tardenois, *Entrance to the Château.*

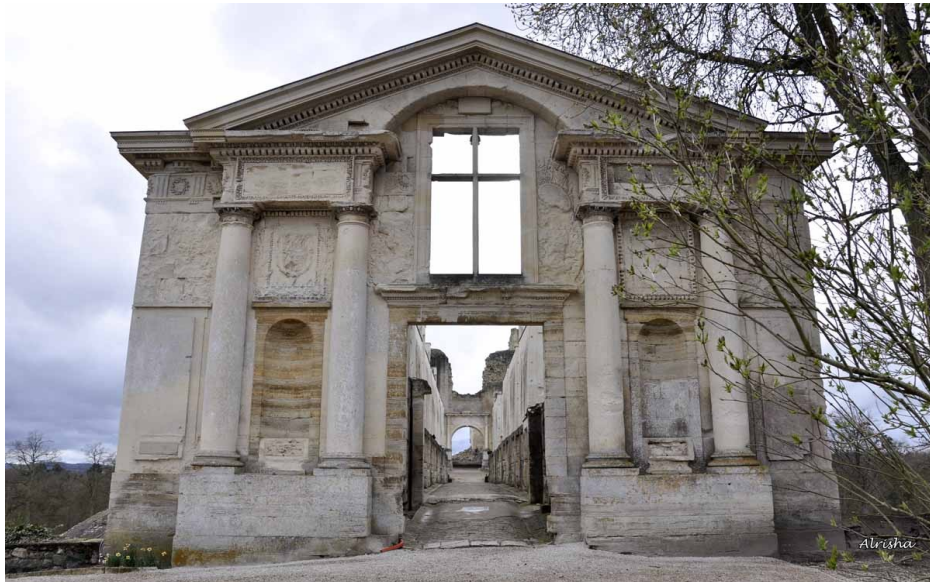


Fig. 26 Fère-en-Tardenois, *Entrance to the Bridge.*

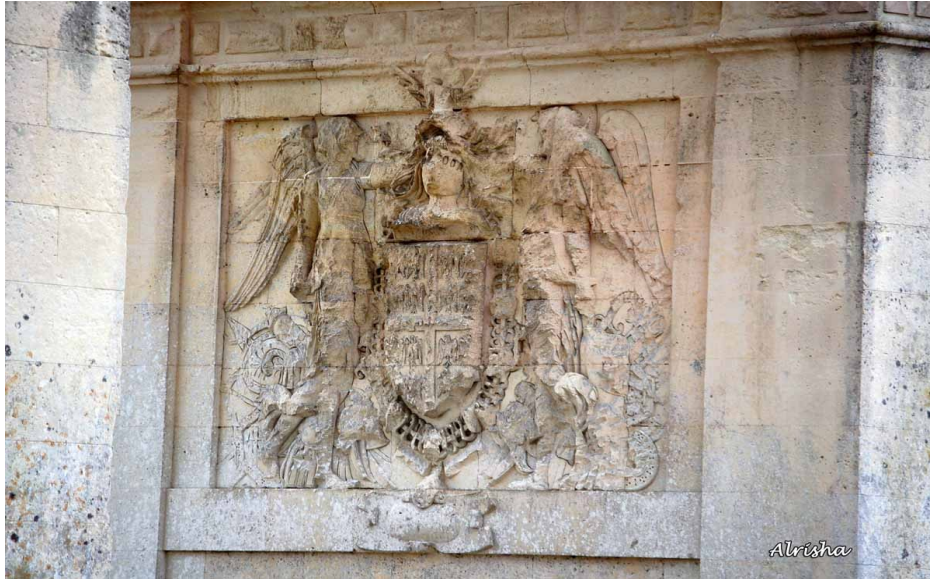


Fig. 27 Detail of Fig. 26.



Fig. 28 Michelangelo, *Dying Slave*, 1513-1516. Marble. Louvre, Paris.



Fig. 29 Michelangelo, *Rebellious Slave*, 1513-1516. Marble. Louvre, Paris.

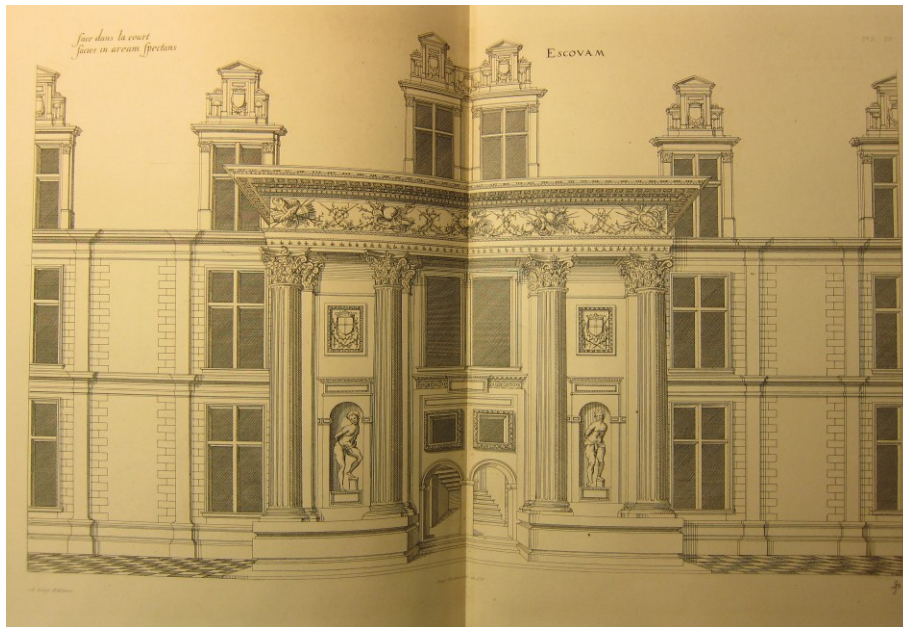


Fig. 30 Jacques Androuet Du Cerceau, *Écouen: South Courtyard Portico*. Engraving from *Les plus excellents bastiments de France* vol. 1, 1576.



Fig. 31 Jean Goujon, *Tomb of Louis de Brézé*, c. 1544. Stone. Notre Dame Cathedral, Rouen.



Fig. 32 *Equestrian Portrait of Marcus Aurelius*, c. 175. Bronze. Musei Capitolini, Rome.



Fig. 33 Donatello, *Gattamelata*, 1453. Bronze. Piazza del Santo, Padua.



Fig. 34 Bonino da Campione, *Portrait of Bernabò Visconti*, 14th century. Stone. Castello Sforzesco, Milan.



Fig. 35 Leonardo da Vinci, *Study for Sforza Monument*, 1488-89. Drawing. London, Windsor Castle.



Fig. 36 Jacques-Louis David, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*, 1801-05. Oil on canvas. Château de Malmaison, Rueil-Malmaison.



Fig. 37 *Fame*, c. 1550s. Stone. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen.



Fig. 38 *Fame*, c. 1550s. Stone. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen.



Fig. 39 Château d'Écouen, *Figures of Fame* (Portico: West Courtyard Façade), c. 1540s.



Fig. 40 Château d'Écouen, *Sculptural Fireplace*, c. 1550s. Stone. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen.



Fig. 41 Detail of Fig. 40.



Fig. 42 Jean Goujon, *War and Peace*, c. 1549. Stone. Louvre (Cour Carré), Paris.



Fig. 43 *Departure of Phaeton*, c. 1540s. Stone. Musée Condé, Chantilly.



Fig. 44 *Fall of Phaeton*, c. 1540s. Stone. Musée Condé, Chantilly.



Fig. 45 Michel Colombe, *St. George and the Dragon*, 1509-10. Stone. Louvre, Paris.



Fig. 46 Attributed to Jean Goujon, *Entrance to the Chapel, Château d'Écouen*, 1544-7. Stone. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen.



Fig. 47 Attributed to Jean Goujon, *Door Panels from the Chapel at Écouen*, 1544-47. Wood. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen.



Fig. 48 *Altar from the Chapel at Écouen*, c. 1545-50. Stone. Musée Condé, Chantilly.



Fig. 49 Detail of Fig. 48



Fig. 50 Detail of Fig. 48



Fig. 51 Jean Goujon, *Four Evangelists from the Altar at St-Germain l'Auxerrois*, 1544. Stone. Louvre, Paris.



Fig. 52 Chapel at the Château d'Écouen, *St. Ambrose*, c. 1540. Painted Wood. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen.



Fig. 53 Chapel at the Château d'Écouen, *St. Augustine*, c. 1540. Painted Wood. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen.



Fig. 54 Château d'Écouen, *Drain Cover*, c. 1530's. Stone. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen.



Fig. 55 Rosso Fiorentino, *Pietà*, c. 1537-40. Oil on wood transferred to canvas. Louvre, Paris.



Fig. 56 Marco d'Oggiono, *The Last Supper*, 1506. Oil on wood. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen



Fig. 57 Jean de Gourmont, *Nativity*, c. 1525-50. Oil on wood. Louvre, Paris.



Fig. 58 Jean de Gourmont, *Child Among Ruins*, early 16th century. Engraving. New York Public Library (Kennedy Fund), New York.



Fig. 59 Attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, *Staircase at Chambord*, c. 1530s.

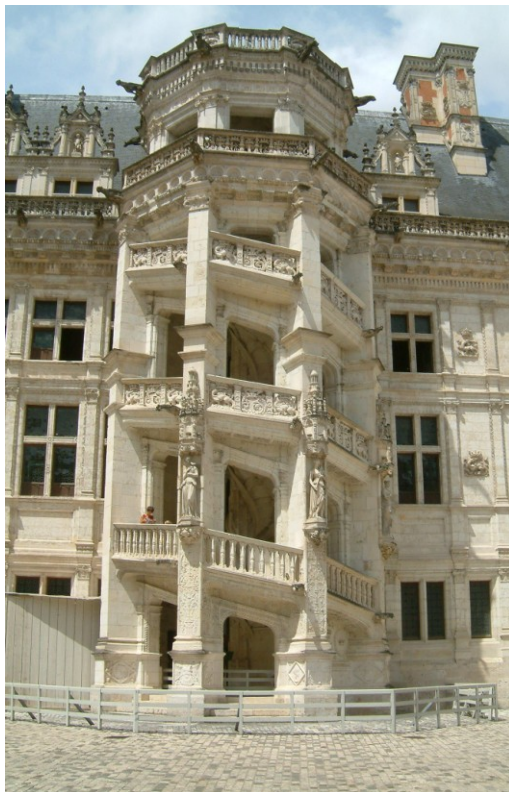


Fig. 60 *Staircase at Blois*, c. 1520s.



Fig. 61 *Staircase at Chateaudun*, early 16th century.



Fig. 62 *Saul Butchering the Cattle*, c. 1555. Painting. Château d'Écouen, Chambre d'Henri II.



Fig. 63 *Esau at the Hunt*, c. 1555. Painting. Château d'Écouen, Chambre du Connétable.



Fig. 64 *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*, c. 1555. Painting. Château d'Écouen, Salle des Armes.



Fig. 65 *Painted Frieze with the Device of Catherine de' Medici*, c. 1555. Painting. Château d'Écouen, Chambre de Catherine de' Medici.



Fig. 66 *Detail of Painted Frieze*, c. 1555. Painting. Château d'Écouen, Chambre du Connétable.



Fig. 67 *Detail of Painted Frieze*, c. 1555. Painting. Château d'Écouen, Grand Salle.



Fig. 68 *Detail of Painted Frieze*, c. 1555. Painting. Château d'Écouen, Salle des Armes.



Fig. 69 Nicolò dell'Abbate, *Zephyr and Psyche*, c. 1555. Drawing. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.



Fig. 70 *Portrait of Jean le Bon*, c. 1360. Wood Panel. Louvre, Paris.



Fig. 71 After François Clouet, *Portrait of Anne de Montmorency*, c. 1565. Oil on panel. Musée Condé, Chantilly.



Fig. 72 Jean Clouet, *Portrait of François I*, 1525-30. Oil on panel. Louvre, Paris.



Fig. 73 Jean Clouet, *Portrait of Anne de Montmorency*, c. 1530. Drawing. Musée Condé, Chantilly.



Fig. 74 *Elisha Revives the Son of a Shunammite*. Miniature from the *Hours of Anne de Montmorency*, 1549. Musée Condé, Chantilly, Ms. 1476, f.48v.



Fig. 75 *Chaste Susannah*. Miniature from the *Hours of Anne de Montmorency*, 1549. Musée Condé, Chantilly, Ms. 1476, f. 40v.



Fig. 76 *Judas Maccabeus*. Miniature from the *Hours of Anne de Montmorency*, 1549. Musée Condé, Chantilly, Ms. 1476, f. 78v.



Fig. 77 *Emblem of the Constable*. Miniature from the *Hours of Anne de Montmorency*, 1549. Musée Condé, Chantilly, Ms. 1476, f. 2v.



Fig. 78 Leonardo da Vinci, *Rain of Goods*, 1510. Drawing. London, Windsor Castle.



Fig. 79 Limbourg Brothers, *Feast in the House of the Duke of Berry* (detail). Miniature from the *Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry*, 1412-16. Musée Condé, Chantilly, Ms. 65, f. 1v.



Fig. 80 Workshop of Guido Durantino, *Plate with Hercules Slaying the Hydra*, 1535. Ceramic. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

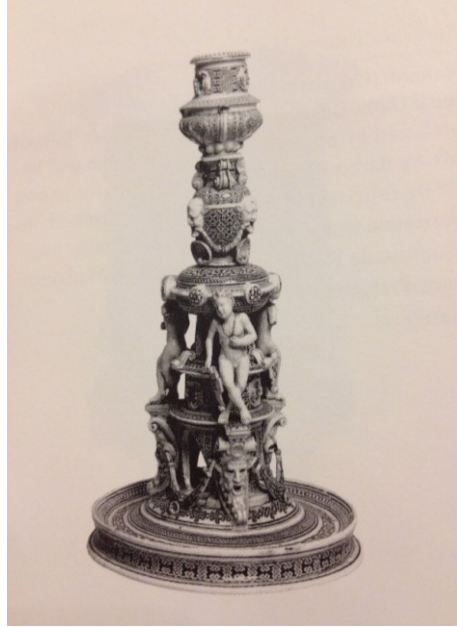


Fig. 81 *Candlestick*, c. 1540s. Ceramic. Petit Palais, Paris.



Fig. 82 *Frontispiece*. Miniature from Cicero's *Discourses* translated by Etienne le Blanc, c. 1541. Musée Condé, Chantilly.



Fig. 83 Masseot Abaquesne, *Tile Floor, Château d'Écouen (Originally in the Gallery of Psyche)*, 1542. Faience. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen.



Fig. 84 Detail of Fig. 83.



Fig. 85 Detail of Fig. 83.



Fig. 86 Masseot Abaquesne, *Tile Floor, Château d'Écouen (Originally in the East Wing)*, 1551. Faïence. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen.



Fig. 87 Masseot Abaquesne, *Mucius Scaevola*, 1542. Faïence. Musée Condé, Chantilly.



Fig. 88 Masseot Abaquesne, *Marcus Curtius*, 1542. Faïence. Musée Condé, Chantilly.



Fig. 89 Masseot Abaquesne, *Building of the Ark*, c. 1540s. Faience. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen.



Fig. 90 Masseot Abaquesne, *Embarking of the Animals*, c. 1540s. Faience. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen.



Fig. 91 Maseot Abaquesne, *End of the Deluge*, c. 1540s. Faience. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen.



Fig. 92 Tiles from *Fère-en-Tardenois*, c. 1540s. Faience. Private Collection.



Fig. 93 Léonard Limousin, *Portrait of Anne de Montmorency*, 1556. Enamel. Louvre, Paris.



Fig. 94 *Pysche Gallery Windows*, 1542-44. Stained Glass. Musée Condé, Chantilly.



Fig. 95 Detail of Fig. 94



Fig. 96 Detail of Fig. 94



Fig. 97 *Cupid and Psyche*, 1542. Stained Glass. Musée Condé, Chantilly.



Fig. 98 *Heraldic Window*, c. 1550s. Stained Glass. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

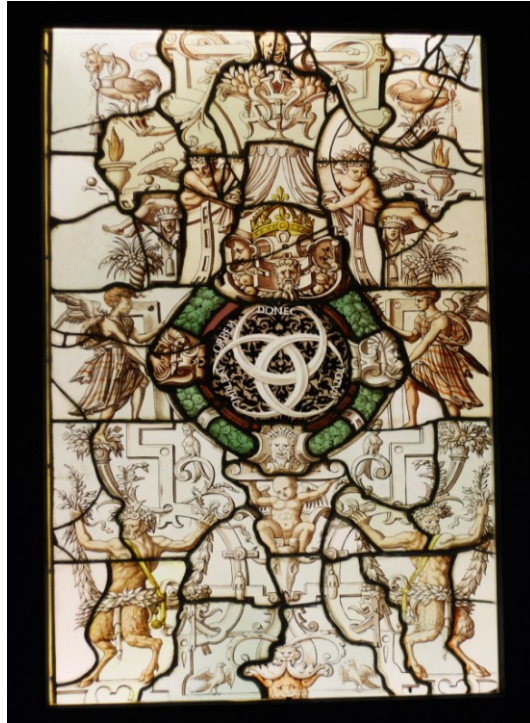


Fig. 99 *Window with Device of Henri II, c. 1550s.* Stained Glass. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen.



Fig. 100 *Window with Device of Catherine de' Medici, c. 1550s.* Stained Glass. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen.



Fig. 101 *Window with the Device of François I, 1544.* Stained Glass. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen.



Fig. 102 *Window with Anne de Montmorency's Coat of Arms, c. 1540s.* Stained Glass. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen.

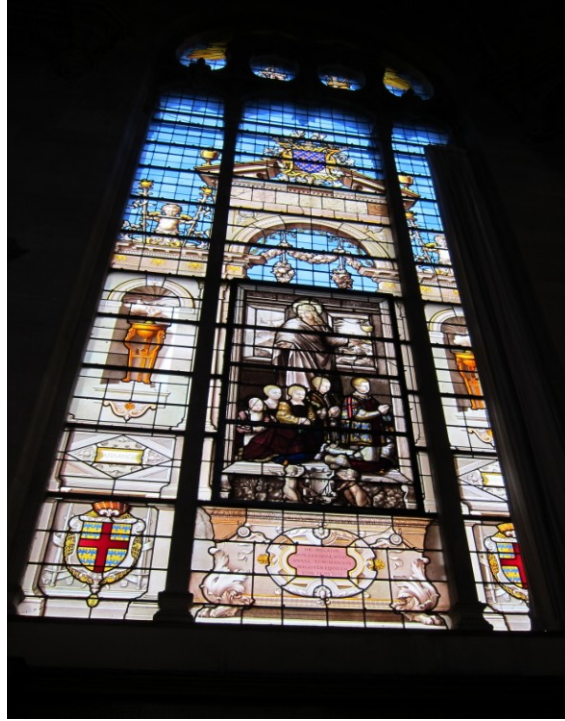


Fig. 103 *Window with the Sons of Anne de Montmorency, 1544.* Stained Glass. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

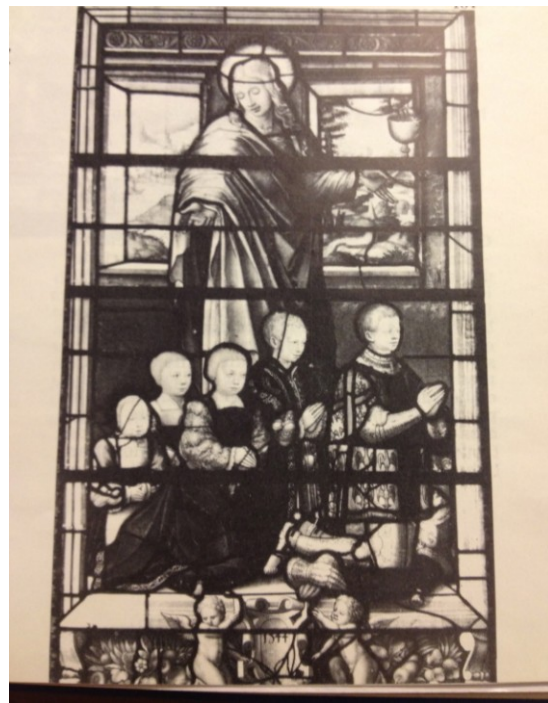


Fig. 104 Detail of Fig. 103

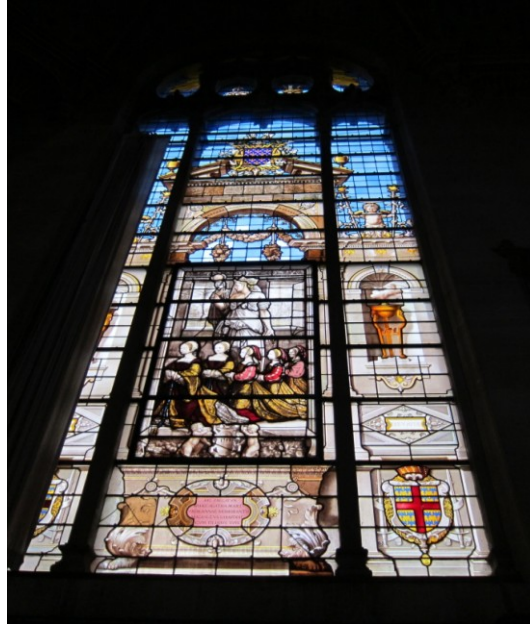


Fig. 105 *Window with the Daughters of Anne de Montmorency*, 1544. Stained Glass. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

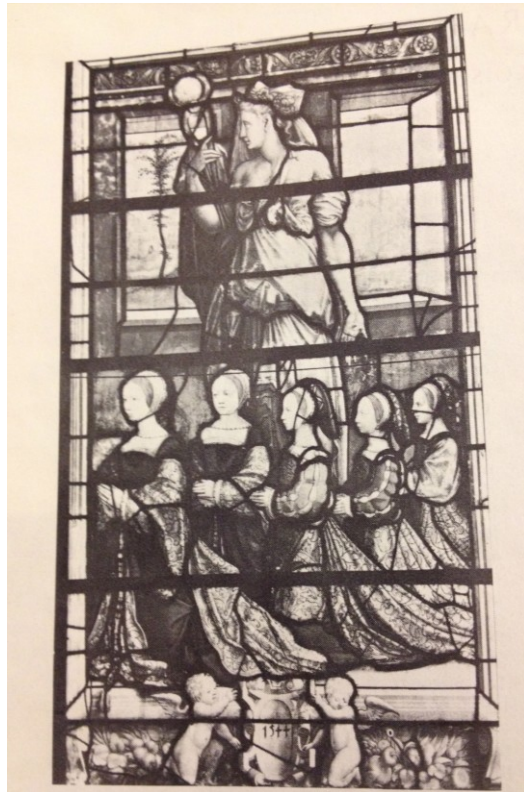


Fig. 106 Detail of Fig. 105



Fig. 107 *Nine Books of Valerius Maximus* vol 1, translated by Nicolas de Mailly, 1544.
Leather. Musée Condé, Chantilly.



Fig. 108 *Nine Books of Valerius Maximus* vol 1, translated by Nicolas de Mailly, 1544.
Leather. Musée Condé, Chantilly.



Fig. 109 *Nine Books of Valerius Maximus* vol 3, translated by Nicolas de Mailly, 1544. Leather. Musée Condé, Chantilly.



Fig. 110 Machiavelli, *The Prince*, translated by Jacques de Vintimille, mid-sixteenth century. Leather. Musée Condé, Chantilly.



Fig. 111 *Apologie, faite par un serviteur du roy, contre les calomnies des Impériaux: sur la descente du Turc*, by Pierre Danès, c. 1551. Leather. Musée Condé, Chantilly.



Fig. 112 *Psalter of Anne de Montmorency*, c. 1540s. Leather. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

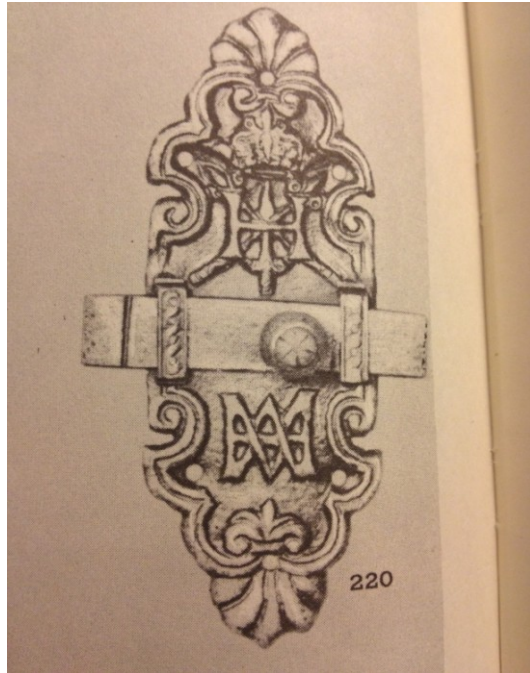


Fig. 113 Bolt from the *Château d'Écouen*, c. 1550. Iron. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen.



Fig. 114 Lock Plate from the *Château d'Écouen*, c. 1550. Iron. Musée national de la renaissance, Écouen.



Fig. 115 *Table du cep vigne*, c. 1545. Wood. Musée Condé, Chantilly.