

Trinity College

Trinity College Digital Repository

Senior Theses and Projects

Student Scholarship

Spring 2020

Enigma and Assumption: A Foundational Overview of the History, Legacy and Famous Names associated with “La Galerie de François I”

Sophie Klieger
sklieger23@icloud.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/theses>



Part of the [Architectural History and Criticism Commons](#), [Art Practice Commons](#), [Historic Preservation and Conservation Commons](#), [Interior Architecture Commons](#), and the [Painting Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Klieger, Sophie, "Enigma and Assumption: A Foundational Overview of the History, Legacy and Famous Names associated with “La Galerie de François I”". Senior Theses, Trinity College, Hartford, CT 2020. Trinity College Digital Repository, <https://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/theses/840>

Enigma and Assumption: A Foundational Overview of the History, Legacy and
Famous Names associated with “La Galerie de François I”

by Sophie Klieger

Trinity College Department of Art History

Thesis Advisor: Professor Jean Cadogan

In Fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of the Bachelors of Arts

Table of Contents

Abstract..... 3

Chapter I: King Francis I.....4

Chapter 2: Rosso Fiorentino.....17

Chapter 3: Giorgio Vasari.....36

Chapter 4: The History of the Chateau at Fontainebleau.....43

Chapter 5: Erwin and Dora Panofksy.....61

Abstract

The galerie at the Chateau of Fontainebleau, the *Galerie de François I*, has presented a challenge in interpretation and study for many historians. While a complete study of the monument would take several years, the first step in understanding the galerie's narrative is to account for the intentions of the people who were a part of its creation, and then to contemplate where past studies have gone wrong. Therefore, this study is an initial and in-depth roadmap to the ideas that are essential to unraveling the extremely complex history at the *Galerie de François I*. First, looking at the intentions of the patron, King Francis I, who sought to establish a period of artistic production in France that surpassed the Italian Renaissance. Next, I consider how the artistic style of the extremely bizarre Rosso Fiorentino played a significant role in the creation of the Fontainebleau style and in the complexity of the fresco compositions. Third, I describe the way that the galerie has been discussed by historians, which has caused difficulty in understanding its history and meaning. These accounts begin with the misassumptions of Vasari in the 16th century, as he wrote his *Vita* on Rosso Fiorentino. In comparison, no single publication has created infamy and confusion more than the study done by Erwin and Dora Panofsky in 1958 based on an iconological assessment of the fresco images. While this is the most accepted and complete study on the galerie, it is single minded and lacks room for additional interpretation. Panofsky largely based his study on assumptions that are misinformed and lack clarity. There is a great deal of enigma, mystery and even misinformation that has obscured the galerie's origin and understanding, this study attempts to illuminate and dispel many of these notions by going back to the initial themes of the galerie's legacy.

Chapter I: King Francis I,

Patronage and the Formation of the Fontainebleau Style in French Renaissance Art

At the Chateau of Fontainebleau everything began and ended with the King Francis I, who would make the chateau his primary residence instead of the palace in Paris. Yet, everything that the king did was for the advancement of the French culture and state. It would be an understatement to say that the king was competitive, and desired the culture in France to be above any other. In the manner of art, he believed that the French artists lagged behind other cultures, specifically the Italian artists he became enamored with. Knowing the work of the Italian masters in the Renaissance such as Michelangelo, Raphael and Da Vinci, the king became convinced that Italian art was far superior to what any contemporary French painter could produce. It became the ultimate goal of Francis I to specifically advance French art, even create a superior style, so that his country's culture could supersede what was produced by the Italian Renaissance. Understanding that the Italian artists were better educated in the workshops of their masters, the king would strategically implement a scheme to improve the art that was produced in France. Offering the appealing life of a court artist in a wealthy state, Francis I would lead young Italian artist to his residence at Fontainebleau, which would become the center point of what would become to known as the French Renaissance; a time where French art succeeded in surpassing contemporary Italian artists. At the chateau, these artists, accumulated by the king, would showcase the new developments in figural elegance and design that were inspired by their collaborative tutelage. The pinnacle of this united style of French art was also at the heart of the Chateau itself in which the artists and the King resided. The monument that would come to

define the culture, style and patronage of the French renaissance is *La Galerie de François I*.

Despite its important role in defining the Fontainebleau style, however, the galerie's legacy has become entangled by misinterpretation.

In order to understand the true significance of the galerie, one must go back to the origins of the monument and understand the matters that influenced its creation without the enigma that has been caused by centuries of confusion. Therefore, this study will lay out these various themes that motivated the original decoration in the renovated galerie space. In laymen terms, this study is a roadmap to the very basic themes that were the original ideas behind the galerie's conception. These themes in past studies and attempts to analyze the galerie's imagery have become clouded by misinterpretation, enigma and absent minded assumptions. Hopefully, this study may play a part in helping clarify what has become so obscured within galerie, and what has made the galerie such a difficult subject to understand. In order to rewrite the legacy of the galerie, it is most significant to illuminate these central themes. First, this study will classify the patronage of Francis I, and delineate his original intentions when commissioning both the redesign of the chateau and the decoration of the Galerie. It will characterize the unselfish way that the king's patronage inspired the Fontainebleau's artists and styles. The next meaningful topic that influenced the galerie is the career of Rosso, which has been inflated to make his style appear more successful and popular than it really was during his time in Italy. One of the great factors in Rosso's legacy and that of the galerie, is the infamous retelling of its creation by Giorgio Vasari in his *Vite*. This is also the point that marks the first layer of ambiguity that has overshadowed the basic premises inside *La Galerie de François I*.

Following this theme is probably the most monumental subject that has been overlooked, that is the history of the chateau and of French galleries before the decoration. History shows that

the galerie was not intended to be a public space, a vital fact that many studies have mindlessly disregarded. This history includes the most recognized studies or descriptions that have been done, and how these studies have either aided in the misperception of the galerie, or have successfully refined the story of the galerie's narrative. Lastly, the most accepted study that has been completed also produced the most paradoxes in the legacy of the galerie, since it is extremely limited in interpretation. Erwin and Dora Panofsky's study on the iconology of the galerie is the most cited interpretation, but is limited by a single-minded interpretation that lacks sufficient grounding in the basic themes of the galerie. In the end, the Panofsky analysis doesn't take into consideration the ideals that this study seeks to illuminate and thus causes the greatest problem in the galerie's historical understanding. The perspectives of enigma and misinterpretation are the most common threads in the discussion of *La Galerie de Francois I*.

The first subject that this chapter will address is the patronage and legacy of Francis I, whose patronage became famous for inspiring the French renaissance. What is most obscured about the king's patronage are his reasons for bringing Italian artists over to the French court and allowing these artists to work at Fontainebleau. It needs to be understood first, that Francis believed that before his reign that Italian art was immensely superior to anything that was produced in France. He sought to rectify this, and his ultimate goal though patronage was to enhance the reputation of French art. In order to do so he implemented a plan to entice Italian masters to his court, beginning with Leonardo da Vinci who set the precedent, and then have these artists produce work at Fontainebleau. The Chateau would become the central point of learning and production in the art of the French renaissance. It became a living and growing display of the development of the nonpareil French courtly art. Therefore, the renovated chateau and *La Galerie de Francois* became the best example of Francis I's patronage. This chapter will

define what the King's patronage meant to the history of art, the artists he employed and to the king himself. It is misunderstood that Francis's patronage did not seek self-glorification, but rather the glorification of French art as a whole. His commissions were not solely defined by The King's desire to venerate his own image, but rather to define an entire style of French art.

Once again, it is important to note that in the mind of Francis the First, King of France from 1515 to 1547, when he came to the French throne and for the entirety of his reign was he convinced and even obsessed with the supposed superiority of Italian art to its French counterpart. It may be appropriate to overly emphasize that this idea which grew in the mind of the French king became his main motivation for the majority of his artistic patronage. Early in his time as king, Francis sought to coerce and pry the most famous Italian high renaissance masters from their homes and careers in Rome or Florence in order to create in his own court. Such artists as Raphael and Michelangelo¹ rejected the French king's offer, preferring to continue their careers where they already had established patronage. The one infamous Leonardo da Vinci would make the voyage to France at the request of the king, where he would produce various commissions for the crown and where he would eventually die. This one artists who decided to pick up his career and travel to France would inspire another generation of Italian mannerists and Renaissance styled artists to work under Francis. Therefore, it is undeniable that the collection of Francis the first bears an unmistakable Italian reference due to the Italian trained artists who would answer the call of the king.

However, as a patron, the historical significance that Francis the first served is greatly overlooked. His open invitation to the Italian artists did more than just bring a foreign style into the French royal court, but these artists would evolve within the stable and wealthy environment of the court to inspire the idiosyncratic French Renaissance. A new period in French art that

would create controversy and confusion for its foundation create by a combination of both Italian Renaissance and mannerist style. Finally, it is crucial to define the goal of Francis' patronage during the French Renaissance. While other patrons sought to develop their own image, as Francis also did, his main goal was the overall development and reputation of the French artistic style. His obsession with the art of Italy would not be satisfied until he was able to claim the superiority of French Renaissance art.

The open invitation that Francis extended to the most reputable names in the Italian renaissance art sphere was met mostly with disappointment. When he became king in 1515 the main goal for his court was to create cultural stimulation², therefore he would almost immediately attempt to commission the most famous names of the Italian renaissance. This began a series of systematic invitations and importations of foreign artist that would change the direction of French art. At first, the only artist to come at the king's request was Leonardo da Vinci in the year 1516 he would for the first time and last time travel to France. Having worked previously Louis XII, Francis' processor, da Vinci was aware of the power and wealth of the French crown. While visiting Milan in 1499, Louis had once already attempted to coerce the Italian master to the French countryside³. It was not until almost two decades later, after the death of lifelong patron Giuliano de Medici left him with less work, did Leonardo decide to venture to France rather than Rome where he would have to compete with his contemporary Michelangelo already in the employ of the Medici Pope. The decision was easy, Da Vinci sought a stable court life and a well-founded patronage relationship which he would find with Francois Ier at Chambord.

¹ Zerner, *The School of Fontainebleau*.

² Cox-Rearick, *The Collection of Francis I: Royal Treasures*, 28.

³ Cox-Rearick, 131.

While Da Vinci would die on May 2nd 1519, only three years after his arrival in France, the work that the renaissance master produced in this brief period and his relationship with the French king would play a large part in the story of his idolized career⁴. The majority of this reputation in France was created by the works that Leonardo brought with him to the French court and would end up in the collection of Francis, even eventually being hung in the Louvre museum. Such as the famous works *The Virgin of the Rocks*, *The Mona Lisa* and *The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne*. However, the masterpiece of Da Vinci that stands as a monument to both his time in France and his ingenuity for architecture is the chateau at Chambord, which was inspired by the designs of Leonardo. Despite Chambord breaking ground over a year before Leonardo's passing, it was not completed until after his death, and some critics may even argue that the chateau was not completed exactly as the architect would have desired. The chateau still stands as a trophy of Italian designs tailored into a French motif with the spiral helix staircase being the highlight of the architectural design.

The death of Leonardo da Vinci in and of itself is surrounded by a great deal of mythological legend that highlights the close relationship that the artist had with his patron Francis the First. According to the apologue, which was largely created by the passionate story written by Vasari in his *Lives of Artists*, Leonardo died in the arms of Francis near Amboise in France. Vasari weaves quite a dramatic and fanciful story that mythologizes both da Vinci and the king. The tale goes "At this point he [Leonardo da Vinci] was seized by a paroxysm, the messenger of death. The King rose and cradled his head, in order to assist him and show him favor, to alleviate his pain. His spirit, which was divine, knowing that it could not have any greater honor, expired in the arms of the king; he was in his seventy-fifth year"⁵. The tales of da

⁴ Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France: The Invention of Classicism*, 65.

⁵ Cox-Rearick, *The Collection of Francis I: Royal Treasures*, 135–36.

Vinci's death in France began with Vasari's retelling in his biography of the artist. There is however no evidence to support this story. Leonardo da Vinci did die in France and spent his last years working under the king but, as it is typical of da Vinci known for his scarce productivity, he did not produce much more during his time in France. Yet, the story of the Italian master's time in the French court would instigate the wave of a new generation mannerist painters as they traveled to France inspired by the adventure of Leonardo.

The patronage of Francis as a new form of patron also became legend, just as the journey of da Vinci to France did, through the account of Vasari's famous biographies. He was depicted as the idealized patron who developed close relationships with his artists. The story of da Vinci's death is by far one of the most colorful descriptions of an artist and patron relationship⁶. He would eventually be called "père des arts et lettres" by the historiography of the cult of Francis Ier which acknowledges the king's vast historical influence on art⁷, and will be further examined later on. To continue, it was with his new reputation established by Vasari's story of Leonardo's death that Francis Ier would bring more Italian artists to the French court and build what would become known as *L'Ecole du Fontainebleau*, a collection of artists all working under the French crown which produced and defined the works of the French renaissance. This is also when Francis' production as a patron would reach its height both in the field of architecture and painting. It was the school of the Fontainebleau that would be used as Francis' tool to set the visual taste of his French renaissance. However, it was not really until 1527, many years after Leonardo's legendary death, would Francis truly be able to start building the school, bring more Italian artists to France and carve out the style of the time due to his imprisonment in Italy⁸. The king favored the chateau at Fontainebleau often referring to the chateau situated right outside of

⁶ Cox-Rearick, 409.

⁷ Cox-Rearick, "Imagining the Renaissance," 210.

the city of Paris as his favorite residence “which he (François Ier) enjoyed so much that, when he wanted to go there, he would say that he was going home”⁹. This chateau would become the epicenter for the artistic movement of the French renaissance and give *L’Ecole du Fontainebleau* its home, all of which was incited by the patronage of the king. The school of Fontainebleau is often referenced for the king’s desire to create an *Italie Française* within his own court¹⁰. Taking the best of Italian and French culture, art and knowledge.

The artists that formed the first generation of the school of the Fontainebleau, which this study is set against, all came from various backgrounds with an array of stylistic forms which resulted in a rich collection of imagery in the French Renaissance. It is obviously impossible to deny the Italian influence on the works that were commissioned by Francis. Such artist that were among this series of artist traveling to France at the will of the king, were Rosso Fiorentino and Francesco Primaticcio, would help set the scene for Francis’s invention of the French renaissance. The artist Primaticcio was a student of Giuliano Romano and came to France after studying the works and style of the high Renaissance. The young artist was sent from Mantua to France by his teacher who was too preoccupied to travel himself¹¹. Yet Primaticcio would work under the French king for the entirety of his life, his expansive career of collaboration with Francis is well known for its lasting influence in the establishment of the school of Fontainebleau. Rosso Fiorentino is a different story, but also comes to France with his well-established style known for the strange elegance of his forms. These two artists, whose arrival in France would indicate the first period of production of the artist at Fontainebleau and set the

⁸ Henri Zerner, “Fontainebleau School | Grove Art.”

⁹ Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France : The Invention of Classicism*, 67.

¹⁰ Béguin, *L’École de Fontainebleau*, 23.

¹¹ Henri Zerner, “Fontainebleau School | Grove Art.”

precedent for other Italians working in the French court, would also collaborate on the *Galerie de François Ier*.

On a side note, this first period of artistic creation at Fontainebleau was the most elaborate in the sheer grandeur that was without precedent in France art thus far, and ended with the unexpected death of Rosso. The galerie stands as the most lasting and monumental example of the production of Francis Ier as a patron of the arts and the instigator of the French style in its own artistic renaissance. Rosso created the enigmatic program of frescoes and was placed in charge of the galerie's design, while Primaticcio would carve the elaborate stucco. These frescos found in the chateau's galerie are also the main focus of this study on French renaissance art, however, it is important to continue to emphasize the additional characteristics that defined the French King as a patron in order to aide in ones understanding of the complexity of this work.

Looking at the Italian references in the works produced for the king, one must only look at the preparation works of many of the artists in the French court. For example, Rosso himself was known for being influenced from the renaissance master Michelangelo, citing his *Leda* in the very first work that the young artist produced for the French court as well as in a sketch later attributed to Rosso for one of his references to the high renaissance master¹². This work was supposedly used as a reference in one of Rosso's painting's *Cupid and Venus* made in 1530 upon his arrival at the French court. Vasari describes it in his biography of the artist, however, the painting had been lost since its inception and one can only imagine the image as it illustrated an elegant interpretation of Venus, the goddess of love, with her son Cupid. Overall, there is a great deal of overlap between the subject matter of the Italian renaissance painters and the mythological works commissioned by Francis. These works find a comfortable place in the vast collection of the king, alongside his works by da Vinci, Rosso and Primaticcio, which would

continue to expand and fill the walls of his chateau and the Louvre as the school of the Fontainebleau also expanded to define the glory of French art.

While other kings sought to enhance their own image, Francois 1er had different motives in the commissions of his Fontainebleau artists. He sought to reimage, reinvent and outdo the Italian renaissance in France, but make it more than just a movement of artistic style. He desired to create an image of all French art and culture, instead of glorifying his own image. This goal, once achieved did cement the king's legacy as the founder of French art superiority. The one image extremely well know image that was made to promote the king's own person was made by Titian, made outside of the School of the Fontainebleau. The image which shows Francis in profile became the iconographic representation of the king and was frequently copied¹³. The lack of portraits in the commissions of the king supports the hypothesis that his main goal was to promote and enhance the reputation of French art overall, not to create art in his own image. Some critics believe in the contrary and align the personal agenda of the king to such works as the *Galerie de Francois 1er*,¹⁴ which is named after the king, but the reputation of the king as patron contradicts this base level interpretation of the galerie. Therefore, it is extremely unlikely that Francois desired the galerie in its entirety to be a monument to his own exaltation.

By now it can be undoubtedly concluded that Francois pursued the glorification and superiority of French art through the use of Italian renaissance influences, his reputable court artists and his own commissions both in smaller works or in architectural buildings. These commissions and the effort of the king did not go in vain, he was able to achieve his goal and is now recognized as the mastermind of French art. The style of work that he patronized became well known as the style of the French renaissance which combined the sensibilities of the high

¹² Carroll, "Drawings by Rosso Fiorentino in the British Museum."

¹³ Cox-Rearick, *The Collection of Francis I: Royal Treasures*, 408-9.

renaissance masters with some of the strange characteristics of mannerism for their elegant quality. This moment in the history of France is acknowledged as the moment that the French became leaders in the history of art. Francis' obsession with overcoming the previous superiority of Italian culture inspires an artistic and cultural revolution within France.

It was however not until later did the historic role that Francis played would be recognized. During a post French revolution era, in the 19th century the full weight of Francis' role would become an ideal of patronage and collection of Italian art. This new interest in the figure of King Francois as a benefactor of the French renaissance developed into the Cult of Francois 1st as a patron. Artists of this time created romantic images of the king within his court and at the side of his artists. For example, the legacy of the death of Leonardo da Vinci reaches new infamy with the episode of fidelity being depicted in various paintings. Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres paints the scene in 1818 using the reference of Titian's iconographical portrait of the King for the figure in his depiction¹⁵. To continue, in her study of this cult of historicism, Professor Janet Cox-Rearick, who was named *Chevalier des Arts et Lettres* by the French government for this study, analyzes the fascination with Francois 1st purely for his role as patron in the French renaissance. The study rightfully concludes that his significant role comes from his ability to create an occurrence that became the renaissance itself. The "idea of a renaissance" that the king developed through the phenomenon within his court where his artists became larger than life heroes of artistic style¹⁶ due mainly to his continued patronage.

The patronage of King Francois 1er had more of an impact on the history of French art than any other figure can claim to have had on an artistic movement. His obsession with the art of Italy and its artists incited a development of a new wave of French art through his efforts to

¹⁴ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, "The Iconography of the Galerie François I Er at Fontainebleau."

¹⁵ Cox-Rearick, *The Collection of Francis I: Royal Treasures*, 409.

surpass the legend of the high renaissance artwork in Italy. The artist he would become a patron for would create the style of French renaissance art as it would be defined by later artist within the school of the Fontainebleau. As a patron, Francois was not motivated by vain desires of reputation, although he would be called “père des arts et lettres” for his intense support of Italian artists in France, but rather he was motivated by sheer desire to create purely French identity of art that was superior to its Italian processor. Taking a great deal of influence from the Italian renaissance, and literally coercing Italian artists from their homeland, Francis built his own renaissance at his home of Fontainebleau. These great works of art were commissioned by the king for the enrichment of French art as a whole, not for individual gain for the French monarchy. It is extremely rare and fascinating that a patron would almost singlehandedly seek to build a movement and an identity of national style. It has even been claimed that “before Francis I created the arts in France, our culture was sunk in the most frightful Barberism” by the founder of the Musée des Monuments Français and an advocate for the cult in historicism of Francis I¹⁷. The king, Francois I was able fulfill his desire to further the superiority and development of French art which all started with his simple obsession with the dominance of Italian art. The result was beyond his original intentions, as his patronage would come to be known as the beginning of an exclusively French renaissance of artistic prowess.

Emphasizing and noting the characteristics of Francis I as a patron in the French Renaissance and to the Italians he brought to the French court is significant because it directly impacts the creation of *La Galerie de Francois Ier*. This Patron would have also influenced the type of work and the type of artist that Rosso Fiorentino would develop during his period of production in France. Finally, the galerie is a physical symbol of the modes that the King’s

¹⁶ Cox-Rearick, “Imagining the Renaissance,” 245.

¹⁷ Cox-Rearick, *The Collection of Francis I: Royal Treasures*, 405.

patronage took to instigate the French renaissance style. The fresco cycle and the stucco in the galerie have become one of the greatest monuments that came out of the patronage of Francis I. Therefore, it is extremely important to take into consideration the role of the king as the one who commissioned the redecoration of the galerie. His motivations for his patronage and the development of French art would also hold authority over the rightful interpretation of the galerie as a whole. Keep in mind the power that the King held over the court as well as his authority as a great patron of the arts.

Chapter 2: Rosso Fiorentino

From the Estranged Italian Artist to *Maitre Roux* of Fontainebleau

By the time that Rosso Fiorentino was introduced to the French court and the King Francis I, the artist had already lived out most of his career in Italy as a well-established artist. His career had not always been extremely easy¹⁸, he did not have the innate skill set that defined him as a protégé, like many of the Italian masters of the High renaissance, rather he had to learn to develop his own artistic style. Nevertheless, he carved out for himself a niche of well-endowed patrons that never really truly appreciated the strange mannerist style that he had altered from his early education in the accepted Italian renaissance style. It was not till the 1520's, after the sack of Rome, that Rosso faced truly hard time and began to see the appeal of Court life that was offered to him in Fontainebleau and Paris, France. This life and career change, would be the unquestionable decision that would raise Rosso's legacy as an artist to the distinguished level of the High Renaissance masters. The work that Rosso left behind in France, would define not only the French Renaissance at the School of the Fontainebleau but also would identity his career as an artist. The only true contemporary account that is made of Rosso's life both in Italy and in France was written by Vasari in *Vita*, which includes many allegorical even elaborate tales of the artist's life. It is not clear how well founded Vasari's account of Rosso's life really is¹⁹, but he clearly has a great admiration for the artist for whom he personally had been able to meet. Overall, Vasari gives a very detailed account of the works that Rosso produced

¹⁸ Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France : The Invention of Classicism*, 69.

¹⁹ Carroll, *Rosso Fiorentino : Drawings, Prints, and Decorative Arts*, 13.

during his Italian period, but appears to be confused in regards to his production in France, despite establishing a clear image of luxury of the artist's life in the court.

A great deal of Rosso's life in France remains obscure, considering that many of the works that he made for the French king are lost or destroyed. A great deal of the records that we do have in regards to the work produced by Rosso in France comes from series of etchings that were produced posthumously by Rosso's assistant, Antonio Fantuzzi, during his decoration of *La Galerie de Francois I*, as well as by the other artists at Fontainebleau. These etchings are made after the preparation sketches and work done by Rosso for the galerie. None of them are exactly identical to the final fresco's in Fontainebleau, nor are any of them replicas of Rosso's drawings. They do however give an insight to the progression of Rosso's work and style at Fontainebleau. In fact, even long before Rosso arrived in France, his style had become infamous and a defining characteristic of his work that was easily identifiable. Fiorentino was a name that was associated with elegant and twisted figures with michelangesque figures arrayed in bizarre compositions. Working in Italy his style can be seen as extremely exploratory as the artist was still confined by the accepted taste of his patronages as well the competitive atmosphere for work within the major Italian cities of Rome and Florence. He often would work and find the displeasure of his patrons who were unsettled by his chaotic style²⁰. In fact, his first major commissioned piece at the age of twenty was rejected by the church that commissioned it for unknown reasons.

It is uncertain if Francis I had an idea about the true range of Rosso as an artist when he invited him to the French Court. This introductory sketch illustrating *Mars Disarmed by Cupid and Venus*, that was sent via liaison to France, is relatively tame compared to the pieces that Rosso had produced in Rome as well as subdued compared to what he would produce in the *Galerie François I*. Despite a modified introduction, Rosso Fiorentino would find that his style

was more well received at the French court than it ever was in Italy. Since Francis I sought to redefine the French style of art, no artist was better suited to the task due to his strange but extremely emotive style. The way that his style only continued to grow and develop in the ten years Rosso worked in France can be seen in the works that he produced during this short period. It is unclear how Rosso died, Vasari has his own dramatic interpretation, but the artist passed away only ten years after his arrival in France. Yet, his work done in Fontainebleau would have an impactful and lasting effect on the legacy of the French style. In France Rosso was able to reach the heroic status that he wouldn't have been able to achieve in his home country.

Born with the name Giovanni Battista di Jacopo de' Rosso in the year 1494, Rosso Fiorentino's name was later changed as a reference to his fiery red hair and his city of origin. In his very early career in Florence, he worked either as a pupil or an independent artist working in the studio of Andrea del Sarto, who at the time was considered the most respected artist in the city. Rosso would have been in Sarto's studio at the same time that Jacopo da Pontormo was also studying with the Florentine master. It is also proposed by Vasari that a young Rosso studied on his own by copying the works of the Brancacci Chapel as well as works by Michelangelo such as the *Battle of Cascina*²¹. During this time while he was still working under the classic Renaissance artist del Sarto, Rosso's own work was influenced by conventional and expressive classicism typical of Andrea del Sarto and even of Fra Bartolommeo working in the Florentine style. However, as Fiorentino continued to branch out from the shadow of del Sarto, his work begins to exhibit a chaos that was a juxtaposition to the calm and mature classicism of his contemporaries²². In addition to this change, Fiorentino also began to develop his reputation as an

²⁰ Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France : The Invention of Classicism*, 69–70.

²¹ Vasari, *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*.

²² Michael Davenport, "Rosso Fiorentino | Grove Art."

argumentative and hard to work with artist, who was extremely dead set in his own way despite the desires or requirements of his artistic patrons.

Two stories of commissions from this time illustrates the way that Rosso Fiorentino starts to build his style and reputation which greatly affected even diminished his reputation in Italy. These early moments in his career indicated the way in which Rosso would be defined against the status quo of the other renaissance artists in Italy. While still working with the studio of Andrea del Sarto, the young artist contributed to the decoration of the church Santissima Annunziata. The relationship that Rosso developed with Fra Jacopo de Firenze, who was in charge of the church's artistic decoration, would be his first patronized relationship. The Friar commissioned several different small pieces of decoration from Rosso, including various coats of arms²³, before Rosso would attempt a larger scale fresco for the church. According to Vasari, the Fra Jacopo had to convince Fiorentino to create the large scale fresco *The Assumption of the Virgin* which still exists within the atrium²⁴. Rosso was only twenty years old when the work was commissioned with payment records for the fresco existing between November 1513 and June 1515. While it appears that the fresco was well received by the church, only a year later Andrea del Sarto's studio was commissioned for the exact same religious image of the Virgin's assumption in the same place. Andrea del Sarto's contract for this commissioned stated that the Friar desire "the picture in the atrium where the Assumption of Our Lady is, to paint there the named story of the Assumption of Our Lady"²⁵. It appears that the older artist was actually commissioned to repaint the image for which Rosso had completed only a year earlier. While del Sarto never completed this commission and Rosso's image remained in the church, the news that his image had not been well received by the church impacted the young artist's reputation. It did

²³ Carroll, *Rosso Fiorentino : Drawings, Prints, and Decorative Arts*, 14.

²⁴ Vasari, *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, 356.

not help that a few of his later commissions would also cause controversial reception on the part of his patrons for his violently mannerist style. Establishing himself as an unpredictable painter, Rosso Fiorentino continued to separate himself from other contemporary renaissance painters.

The second image that highlights trouble that Rosso faced during his career in Italy would be the production of his *Allegory of Death and Fame* (1517). The image is incredibly disturbing in allegoric imagery but highly complex in composition. The highly emancipated, even skeletal figures stand gathered together in twisted positions standing over the skeletal remains of a human body which is cradled in the arms of an old bearded man. The position of the two central figures, the skeleton and bearded man, are suggestive of a religious Pieta or even a lamentation scene²⁶. The way that Rosso plays with the human form down to the skeletal base demonstrates his desire and ability to create a highly personal style of figures. His extremely bizarre style, which is on display in the allegoric image, more often than not drew the displeasure of Rosso's patrons²⁷. This drawing also emphasized Rosso's ability to create complete narrative compositions within a singular plane, which would be the basis of many of the frescos he produced in Fontainebleau many years later. On the other hand, the drawing which was recreated many times by engravers did little to help Rosso's alienated reputation. In fact, Vasari tells the tale of how one of Rosso's commissions was rejected even before it was completed due to the way that the sketched in figures appears too reminiscent of *Allegory of Death and Fame*. While Rosso struggled against the accepted high renaissance style in Italy at the time, he still managed to find additional commissions in both Florence and Rome which furthered his career and established him as a well-known artistic name.

²⁵ *Rosso Fiorentino : Drawings, Prints, and Decorative Arts*, 15.

²⁶ Carroll, 54.

²⁷ Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France : The Invention of Classicism*, 69.

The work of Rosso Fiorentino created his reputation as a rebel due to his unconventional style, but his personal interactions can attribute his name as an ill-tempered even rude person to work with. The artist found himself butting heads with many other artists of the time, including the god like artistic figure of Michelangelo himself. In a letter dated October 6th 1526, to the renaissance master, Rosso defended himself claiming that he had never slandered or criticized his fellow artist who was the dominating name of renaissance painting at the time. In reality, Rosso admired the master work of Michelangelo often citing his figures in his later French works. However, it cannot be put past Florentino's harsh personality to have made malicious remarks against the extremely sought after Renaissance Master. The letter that Rosso writes defends his admiration for the artist he asks "I beg you [Michelangelo] to forgive me, and ascribe everything to my sincere affection, and to my fear of losing what I do not deserve to lose: that is, your favor, which to me is dearer than all else"²⁸. Rosso Fiorentino, sought the good will of the Renaissance master and defended himself against rumors that he spoke ill of the Sistine Chapel frescos in Rome. He even begins the letter with "To the Magnificent [man] Michelangelo Buonarroti", as Rosso played to the ego of Michelangelo. In fact, Rosso could not afford any more enemies already having Antonino de Sangallo the Younger preventing him from receiving commissions after Rosso never finished his contract for the Cesi Chapel frescos. In his brief biography only on Rosso's time in Italy, Cellini details that antagonizing of the De Sangallo family almost starved the artist entirely. Florentino also provoked the studio of Raphael due to more critical comments on the work of another renaissance master. It is obvious that the trouble that Rosso had in his career in Italy was self-inflicted due to the extremely voile reputation that he had earned for himself.

²⁸ Carroll, *Rosso Fiorentino : Drawings, Prints, and Decorative Arts*, 22.

Another anecdote that is told in regards to the strange character that was Rosso Fiorentino, and is almost entirely accurate, is found in his biography written by Vasari. It is the story of Rosso, the monkey and the weight²⁹. Although it sounds incredible, Rosso grew fond of a monkey who he kept as a companion. The story goes that Rosso was summoned to deal with the thievery of his monkey who, was extremely intelligent, but was stealing grapes from a Friar's garden. The monkey was condemned to carry a weight around his waist to prevent him from roaming. However, the animal grew strong enough to carry the weight without hassle and continues to steal the Friar's fruit. The story begins "He [Rosso] took great fancy to a baboon, which was more like a man than an animal, loving it like himself"³⁰. Why Vasari deemed it necessary to include this silly tale is a mystery. It can be hypothesized that like many of the other tall tales that Vasari tells that this is an allegory which relates to the artist himself. This is why the writer opens the story with a reference to Rosso's love for himself which equaled his feelings for his pet. Perhaps the tale is speaking of the metaphorical weight of struggle both mentally, monetarily and ambition wise that Rosso carried with him throughout his time in Italy. A weight that was only relieved when the artist made the decision to leave his home for the French court, where he found the freedom to explore his own complex mind.

Many artists found a great deal of trouble in finding commissions after the Sack of Rome in 1527. Living in Rome at the time of the military conflict, many artists including Rosso barely escaped with their lives³¹. However, for Rosso Fiorentino who had already been lacking commissions before the sack, his instability only increased. This trouble that Rosso would undoubtedly feel greatly for the next three years would be one of the major factors in the artist seeking a position with Francis I in Fontainebleau. One of the last commissions that Rosso would

²⁹ *Ibid*, 22

³⁰ Vasari, *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, 357.

receive in Italy would be in Città del Castello Cathedral's Duomo in 1526, for which he creates the image of *Christ in Glory* that demonstrates the final stage of Rosso's style development in Italy. The commission according to Vasari, caused the artist a great deal of trouble with the ceiling collapsing during the process of creating the fresco causing damage to the painting. The composition of the painting itself shows Christ rise above the clouds with Mary Magdalene, the Virgin Mary, Saint Anne and Mary of Egypt at his side. The figures are unusual for a religious image with many of them in profile views that make them hard to identify. These figures are also twisted into uncomfortable positions with their bodies hidden by layers of elaborate drapery³². The scene is engrossed in heavy shadow making the setting dark with a hint of light placed on the heavenly figures. Below the risen Christ is there is an assorted group of figures that are well placed within the scene. These figures are similarly depicted in various positions and from various viewpoints. Many critics believe that the commission at Città del Castello was the pinnacle of Rosso's strange atypical style within his Italian career. The image that shows Rosso's finalized style and the capability of discomfort, even grace, through the placing of this figures within the composition. The commission would also bring him face to face to his biographer Vasari, who he would visit the same year during Giorgio's time in Arezzo Italy. By the completion of *Christ in Glory*, Rosso was determined to find work outside of France. Fiorentino had been inspired by the adventures of Leonardo da Vinci, who he related to as an artist with an equally incessant mind, as well as the instability that he experienced without a stable patron.

When Rosso arrived in Venice he was taken in by Pietro Aretino, the famous art critic and collector³³. It was with the help of Aretino that Rosso made a proper introduction to the French royal court and received an invitation to come work under the patronage of Francis I. The

³¹ Caron, "The Use of Color by Rosso Fiorentino," 374.

³² Carroll, "Some Drawings by Rosso Fiorentino," 144.

time that Rosso spent in France, would mark the final, most successful period of Rosso's artistic career and stylistic development. Before Rosso Fiorentino was officially invited to the French Court, it was customary that an artist seeking patronage would send example of his work abroad in order to suitably introduce the type of work that he would bring to the court. Florentino's reputation was already well established enough that his name preceded him even before this introduction. In fact, recent discoveries have suggested that even before Rosso had debated leaving the Italian cities for France, that his painting *Moses and the Daughters of Jethro* (1523) had been sent to France by the kings Florentine agent.³⁴ This fully composed painting's whereabouts had previously been unknown before it ended up at the Uffizi after Rosso's death, now it is believed to have been shown at the French court arriving before the artist himself. Documentation confirm that this piece was sent from Florence, previously overlooked because Rosso himself was situated in Venice at the time. The image of Moses is deeply representative of Rosso's innate capability to twist figures into uncomfortable compositions while retaining a sense of grace in the unnerving movement. The strong nude figure of Moses is places at the center of the close-up composition with the central point of view being his genitalia emphasizing the erotic nature of the imagery. Various other nude figures lay at the feet of Moses as they appear to break the picture plane. The tension of the musculature shows the power behind the figures despite their awkward positions. While the figures and composition of this piece are fully developed, the pigmentation and color are unfinished³⁵. The physical painting lacks the finalized brushstrokes typical of the artist's painted works, as well as remaining preparatory sketches can be seen in certain locations. Despite this, the image still gives a good indication of the artist's use of color. The underpainting is done in the final hues but lack the dimension that would have been

³³ "Aretino [Del Tura], Pietro | Grove Art."

³⁴ Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France : The Invention of Classicism*, 70.

added later with chiaroscuro. Therefore, it can be concluded that the French king was fully aware of the out of the ordinary artist for which Rosso was.

The official introduction that Rosso sent to the French court was a sketch that doesn't fully exhibit the artist unusual working style. It may be that the artist had finally learned, or was afraid, of patrons who were more likely to not want the type of works which Rosso produced. In fact, the sketch that Rosso sends is reminiscent of the calm classical style that he would have more likely to have studied during his early years with Andrea Del Sarto. The ink drawing that Rosso sent was also in a classic subject matter representing mythological figures. The work called *Mars Disarmed by Cupid and Venus* would be presented to French king as Rosso's request, or in modern terms application, for a position under his patronage. The image represents the figures of Mars the god of War and the goddess of love as they represent the moment at soldier is disarmed by the figure of Love. The relaxed nude figure of Mars is the central figure as Venus stands to his left as she gently leans in to remove the soldier's armor. The figure of Mars is graceful while exhibiting michelangesque musculature as Venus appears soft and beautiful in comparison. Surrounding the couple are various putti, the children of Venus, and additionally graceful and soft female nudes as the graces who carry fruit. The piece is extremely sensual, peaceful and refined, unlike many of the pieces that had caused Rosso issues throughout his career. In addition, the artist may have been referencing the recent treaty signed between Emperor Charles V and Francis I by sending such a peacefully tempered image. It is evident that Fiorentino was holding back when he created this ink drawing for the French King considering that early in his career he had already created sketched that encapsulated his strange style such as *Allegory of Death and Fame* made less fifteen years before *Mars Disarmed by Cupid and Venus*. It may be that the artist having already endures so much controversy in his artistic career used

³⁵ Caron, "The Use of Color by Rosso Fiorentino," 368–69.

the image for Francis I as an allegorical representation of the peaceful life that he hoped to find in France. Despite the luxurious life and respect that was given to him in the French court, Rosso Fiorentino would remain restless and ill at ease³⁶.

By the time that the year 1530 ended, Rosso had traveled from Venice to Paris, and finally to the center of the French court at Fontainebleau³⁷. The French King soon would favor the Italian artist giving him many commissions that kept the artist busy throughout the decade that he spends in the French court. Directly upon his arrival in the city of Paris, Rosso is awarded several prominent commissions from the French King of independent smaller scale paintings. It is even believed that Rosso did a study after Michelangelo's *Leda* at this time³⁸, whose image was found in the artist's possessions after his death. In fact, these first few years saw Rosso at the height of his productive capabilities working on several projects as once while also engaging within the society of the French court. All these paintings are mythological in theme and include two images that are additionally mentioned in Vasari's biography. These paintings included Rosso's *Bacchus*, *Venus Cupid and a Satyr*, as well as *Cupid and Venus* both of which had been previously thought to have been destroyed after they were supposedly placed in the *Galerie de Francois I*. The biographer additionally mentions the work of Rosso in his account of Primaticcio, a fellow Italian working in France under Rosso. Vasari states that before the arrival of Primaticcio, "Rosso had been send to the serve the king, and had done many things, notably a *Bacchus and Venus and Cupid and Psyche*"³⁹. Both of these paintings highlighted by Vasari that represent Rosso's earliest time in France are lost and it is uncertain where they were misplaced.

³⁶ Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France : The Invention of Classicism*, 70.

³⁷ Cox-Rearick, *The Collection of Francis I : Royal Treasures*, 259.

³⁸ Michael Davenport, "Rosso Fiorentino | Grove Art."

³⁹ Vasari, *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects Vol 3*.

However, a recent discovery before the turn of the twenty-first century revealed how these images may have potentially appeared. The painting that was discovered could potentially be the *Bacchus and Venus* made upon Rosso's arrival and transformed for the galerie at Fontainebleau. This image therefore must be seen in context of both Rosso's early years in Paris as well as in the setting of the galerie iconography⁴⁰. The painting depicts the four figures against a blackened background making their pale skin appear all the more luminescent. The figure of Venus sits to the right of the composition as her body leans forward twisting only her upper torso. Her arms and torso are elongated and emphasized in graceful curves lines. Next to Venus, is the overly graceful figure of Bacchus. The figure is created first by a long diagonal line across the canvas made with his head, torso and outstretched leg. His other arm and leg jut out from his body in an obscure yet elegant gesture that appears almost impossibly supple. Like the form of Venus, Bacchus' head is proportionally small to the vast size of his body. As for the Satyr and Cupid (Amor) smaller scale figures, they are placed at the upper right and lower left corners of the composition. Their bodies are twisted in impossible movements that emphasize the overall diagonal composition by creating a line across the canvas with the arm of the figure of Venus. Rosso takes on many different techniques within this painting⁴¹ as he manipulates the figures to emphasize the forms of the composition over the narrative elements of the subject matter. The style of Rosso has developed significantly from the work that he produced in Italy, the image places a large prominence on the dramatization of the figures and the sophistication of the compositional arrangement. In comparison to the images that were previously discussed, such as the *The Assumption of the Virgin* (1515) and *Moses and the Daughters of Jethro* (1523), the paintings demonstrate how Rosso was playing it safe by trying to stay in the constraints of

⁴⁰ Beguin, "New Evidence for Rosso in France," 836.

⁴¹ Caron, "The Use of Color by Rosso Fiorentino," 378.

accepted compositions. The 1523 image pushes these boundaries more, by demonstrating the accentuated diagonal and curved compositional lines of Rosso's style, but only through the central figure of Moses. The work that Fiorentino creates in France takes this compositional form, but in addition it is created by multiple unusually placed figures that create a more complex demonstration of Rosso's style. Overall, it was not until paintings such as this example of one of Rosso's *Bacchus, Venus Cupid and a Satyr* paintings does the artist start to create images to the fullest extent of his capabilities. The move from classical idealized art in Italy to the more open field of French art under the patronage of Francis I, saw Rosso magnify the style that he wished to manifest in the establishment of the French Renaissance through his masterpiece the *Galerie de Francois I*: whose iconography and history will be further analyzed in the greater context of the French Renaissance.

As he explored and developed the characteristics of his style, Rosso in France lived the luxurious life of a court painter, who was given a large continuous salary, a chamber in the Chateau at Fontainebleau as well as the ability to be a part of the dynamic court society. It really became a safe haven for the artist who had already experienced so much turmoil in Italy. It can even be said that Rosso was the uncontested artistic master of the French court at this time; leading the development of the French Renaissance style by incorporating and developing his already bizarre motifs. He would be given the nickname *Maître Roux* which roughly translates to "Master Red hair" once again referring to his famous fiery locks⁴². Working in the environment of the French court, Rosso was able to flourish as an artist and the works that he produced illustrate how the supportive patronage of Francis I allowed him to further explore the strange mannerist style of elegant figures the artist would become known for. One of the few pieces can

⁴² Cox-Rearick, *The Collection of Francis I: Royal Treasures*, 360.

be with certainty dated to be from the time that Rosso was in France before his death⁴³ is his large-scale *Pieta* that currently is hung in the Louvre in Paris and is significant as a representation of the final stages of Rosso's artistic career.

The *Pieta* is emblematic of Rosso Fiorentino's style as it came into its full fruition in the French court and that would define the entirety of his French body of work. The image is composed around the Christ figure who takes up a majority of the image's frame and builds the diagonal line of the image's main figural arrangement. The Christ figure is emaciated and proportionally elongated, the form is resonant of the drawn figures in *Allegory of Death and Fame*, a physical representation of suffering which is also demonstrated in the expression that he wears. The face of the Christ figure is twisted in agony highlighted by his red hair and beard, the only color against the deathly grey skin. The red hair perhaps signifies the self-sacrificing relationship that Rosso believed himself to have with the martyrdom of Christ. The image is an accumulation of the artist's own torment, for which he would take his own life in 1540 in France⁴⁴. Furthermore, in death, the Christ's figure is limp leading back as he does not seem to be supported by any of the other figures against an entirely black background. Cushions with the crest of Constable Anne de Montmorency, who commissioned the work from Rosso⁴⁵, lie beneath the figure of Christ. Framing the figure of Christ are two who hold the feet and head of Christ, seen only in partial profiles these figures kneel down on their knees in lamentation at the death of Christ. These figures represent Mary Magdalene, at his feet, and St. John with his head away from the audience facing the death Christ. In the background behind the three forefront figures is the most expressive element of the image; the figure of The Virgin Mary as she sees her son in death. The Virgin's arms are spread out across the entirety of the picture's frame as

⁴³ "Pietà | Louvre Museum | Paris."

⁴⁴ Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France : The Invention of Classicism*, 70.

she falls back on the support of another female figure. This gesture, one of mourning and pain as she cannot adequately express her sadness, is accentuated by the figure's elongated arms. Proportionally, it appears as if The Virgin's wingspan is close to equal the height of the figure of Christ. Additionally, the Virgin's face is darkened by shadows as her eyes illustrate the emotional extent of the moment. The colors used by Rosso are also telling, his color pallet is extremely limited as he manipulates the same few colors multiple times⁴⁶. The overall tone of the image is extremely darkened as light falls across the canvas in no particular order but is rather very sporadic. Even the greying skin of the dead Christ is contrasted with erratic highlights falling upon the other figures. In fact, the almost self-portrait like painting illustrates the restless and tormented mind that never found ease even in France of Rosso Fiorentino

As it is the only painting which can be with total certainty be dated to Rosso's time in France as well as the only surviving stand-alone religious image made by the artist in the French court, the style of the Pietà is extremely significant in analyzing the growth of the artist towards the end of his life. The image is obvious intertwined with the mental torment that Vasari believed would lead Rosso to take his own life⁴⁷. There is a more emotional aspect to the imagery that was not evident in his work in Italy. The figures' elongated bodies not only emphasize a sense of elegance in the overly perfect curves, but in Rosso's *Pieta* the figures also express emotions of pain. The elongated forms and complex diagonal composition are not just used as skilled technical choices, but also create the poignant feeling of anguish that the audience is forced to experience. It can only be concluded that by this stage in his career, and after many years of practice allotted to him in the French court, that Rosso had finally mastered the balance of his style being able to manipulate its elements in order to create an emotive response through the

⁴⁵ "Pietà | Louvre Museum | Paris."

⁴⁶ Caron, "The Use of Color by Rosso Fiorentino," 378.

religious image. This also suggests that there must be many more works created by Rosso during this time that are lost and or unknown currently. Rosso would not have been able to achieve the emotional aspect of his *Pieta* without toying with this element in other pieces. However, in the end it will remain a mystery as to the full extent of Rosso Florentino's production in France, but his most renowned masterpiece remains almost entirely intact in the chateau of Fontainebleau in *La Galerie de François I*.

The task of decoration in the Galerie was given to Rosso almost immediately upon his arrival in France. Reconstruction of the space had already commenced some years before the artist's arrival, but decoration was placed entirely under his control from the stucco to the frescos. The reconstruction was decided upon as early as payment documents indicate in 1527 yet this was a precursor to the decoration that would begin with Rosso being allotted the task of control over the entirety of the galleries' revamp. Fiorentino, or Maître Roux as he was called, was specifically commissioned to create the frescos of the galleries himself while overseeing the rest of the decorative functions. It is unclear how much influence Rosso had in choosing the stories that would be represented in his Frescos, or even where the references for these images comes from, but this is a matter for later discussion.

These Fresco's would become the true representation of the Italian's work in France. It took Rosso up until 1535 to complete his frescos in the galerie, while the detailing of the stucco and wood work continued after this. In the years after his death, and before the writing of Vasari's biography, the circular panels placed at the center of each wall were moved around. In addition, the restoration that was attempted since the creation of the frescos has obscured their original appearance. None the less, the Galerie stands as a symbol of everything that Rosso accomplished not only in France, but throughout his entire career. It was his chance being given supposedly

⁴⁷ Vasari, *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, 364.

free reign to make a mark on French art. The next generation of artist at the *L'Ecole du Fontainebleau*, which was founded during the time of Rosso and under the guidance of François I, would look at the galerie as demonstration of the style of Rosso that he developed in France, and the career that made his legacy.

The career of Rosso in France comes to an abrupt and tragic end. Within his career and social life, Rosso was an unpredictable and unstable presence. He often lashed out at people physically as well as verbally, seen in his disputes with other artists and patrons. There are theories as to why the artist was such a capricious character. Potentially his desire to achieve recognition or his internal struggle. In the end, Vasari claims that the artists took his own life via poison in a very dramatized end to his dramatic life. There is little to no way or evidence that can prove Vasari's theory. However, it has been greatly called into question if Vasari would have any reasoning to falsify the death of Rosso. The biographer greatly respected Rosso as an artist and had personally connected with him when that had met⁴⁸. Therefore, why would Vasari dishonor Rosso by misrepresenting his untimely death? Vasari's admiration is truly shown in the last line of his biography on Fiorentino. He writes that Rosso "deserves admiration for many reasons as being truly excellent"⁴⁹. It is evident that Vasari had too much respect for Rosso to subject his late acquaintance the dishonor of slander.

The story of Rosso's demise begins with an accusation against a friend and fellow Florentine painter, Francesco di Pellegrino, the argument tormented Rosso so deeply that he ended up "proclaiming himself a bad and disloyal man. Accordingly, he determined to kill himself" Using a peasant boy on his behalf, Rosso acquired a poisonous liquor that he said would be used for paint varnish. Instead he took the poisonous drug and passed on. When news

⁴⁸ Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France : The Invention of Classicism*, 70.

⁴⁹ Vasari, *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, 364.

got to the King, he mourned deeply for Rosso Fiorentino and believing that his court had “lost the best artist of the day” he also believed that the art in France would suffer⁵⁰.. Thus, Primaticcio was placed in charge of foreseeing that the works of Rosso did not go unfinished or unappreciated. Succeeding in his task, while also taking Rosso’s place as the kings favored artist, Primaticcio preserved the reputation of Rosso’s time in France. Overall, it is impossible to discuss any aspect of *L’Ecole du Fontainebleau*, especially *La Galerie de François I*, or the beginning of the French Renaissance, without first acknowledging and understanding the career of Rosso Fiorentino. It is unsurmountable to image what the Florentine painter would have accomplished if only he had as Vasari claims, not taken his own life too soon before his time.

To Conclude, Rosso’s career in France took a path that it could never have achieved in Italy. In the early half of his career, working under the pressure, and with competition of the high renaissance artists in Italy, Rosso was unable to make a name for himself beyond a proficient painter and a rebellious young artist. The style that he began to experiment with was not accepted by the majority of his patrons, yet he still received commissions based exclusively on his skill. In the end, it is no wonder that Rosso decided to stake his claim in the French Renaissance court. Following the footsteps of Da Vinci, another similarly restless artistic mind, Rosso traveled to France at the invitation of Francis I. In France, His work became idolized as the example of French renaissance artwork. The individual works and more importantly *La Galerie de Francois I* became evidence of the capabilities of Fiorentino and would serve as examples of the new French style to the next generations of the school of Fontainebleau. In reality these works would define the heroic reputation of Rosso as he would come to be seen in the French legacy of art. Even Vasari notes that in France, Rosso found repute that he could have once only dreamed of. The biographer states that “when least expected, raised to the greatest

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 363.

honors in the sight of the world. This occurred to the Florentine painter Rosso, for if he could not obtain satisfactory recognition in Rome and Florence, he proved more fortunate in France, where the glory he acquired would have satiated the most ambitious artist”⁵¹. The biography written by Vasari, as well as his description of the Galerie created at Fontainebleau, helped the artist Rosso achieve this fame that he spoke of. In fact, Vasari had a way of shaping the legacy of an artist as well as his works which is significant to the discussion of both Rosso and the *Galerie de Francois I* at Fontainebleau.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 355.

Chapter 3: Giorgio Vasari

Inciting the Confusion with the Legacy and Fame of *La Galerie de François I*

As much as the accuracy of Vasari's Biographies has been argued, there is an elegance in the way that he was able to shape the image and legacy of an artist not only for his works but also for his person. His writings give equal significance to the anecdotal personal image of the artist as well as how this may relate to the works which such an artist was able to create. Thus, it is necessary to look closely at the writing of Vasari as it impacts the way that all these French art subjects are thought of by contemporary audiences who may not have been able to see the work in France, but none the less are in awe of its celebrity due to the author's own reflection on the work. In fact, Vasari's literature is a foundation of the study of Art History, reflecting for the first time on the lives of the artist who created masterpieces⁵², therefore his *Vite* help define how to look at the art and the artist of the renaissance. However, Vasari's accuracy has since been questioned by historians as his writings seek more to create a personal or relatable image of art, rather than an accurate timeline. Even so, it can be argued that the significance that Vasari places on the Italian artists he wrote about working in France and their relationship with Francis I inspired the next generation of *L'Ecole de Fontainebleau*. This biography on Rosso, and even so in Primaticcio's biography, was a foundation for the establishment of prestige in the French renaissance. The power of Vasari's writing on the *La Galerie de François I*, Rosso Fiorentino and the legacy of the French renaissance is an important layer to the story of this study. Without studying what Vasari wrote on these subjects, it would be impossible to deeply analyze the research that follows his *Vite*.

⁵² Barolsky, "WHAT ARE WE READING WHEN WE READ VASARI?"

The story that Vasari creates begins first with the tale of Leonardo da Vinci who seeks adventure and challenge in France, only to die in the arms of his patron King Francis I. This is the first moment that Vasari begins to mold the tale and the history of Fontainebleau and French art creating an illustrious image of the life of a court artist under the French king⁵³. This image of Fontainebleau only continued to grow as Vasari detailed the lives of other artist as they traveled to France at the influence of da Vinci's own life. Rosso Fiorentino is one of these artists who Vasari's lives use to detail the French renaissance art that was being created in France. This biography above all others helps shape the story of the Italian artists in France due to the way that Vasari highly respects and admires Rosso, but also the allure of fame that Rosso was only able to find in France. Here Vasari also details the creation of the *Galerie de Francois* that represents the galerie, although slightly misinformed, for the first time it is recognized as a masterpiece of French art. The galerie is thus greatly intertwined with the idea of the Fontainebleau school as well as synonymous with the artist of Rosso Fiorentino. It is in this manner that Vasari's interpretation of Rosso and the Galerie become essential. The story of Rosso is highlighted by his persona as an explorative often volatile personality, whose own tormented mind ended his life. This story is one of many that Vasari weaves, and may have even elaborated on. Although it is hard to see how such a tale would suffice the great appreciation that the historical biographer had for the Florentine artist. In the end, the historical reference of Vasari is one of the first indications into the prototype of the French renaissance as his history, or stories, change the narrative associated with both the famous artist and the Galerie he created at Fontainebleau for a legendary royal patron.

The tale of Rosso Fiorentino begins as a life of woe. His career in Italy, has it was already discussed, lacked the luster of legendary fame that the artist sought as it was given to other

⁵³ Cox-Rearick, *The Collection of Francis I: Royal Treasures*.

painters of the same period. Not only his style but also his personality permitted the hardship that Rosso faced before leaving for France. Having met the artist in person almost a year before his departure for France, Vasari has an interesting perspective on the artist who he obviously highly respected despite his troubled reputation. In fact, Vasari takes a rather romantic idealized interpretation of Rosso's decision to depart for the French court. He makes the decision appear to have been the fulfillment of Rosso's lifelong appeal towards working in France. Vasari fails to mention the situation of turmoil and complete lack of work that Rosso finds himself in after the disastrous sack of Rome. The biography suggests "He always hoped to end his days in France, and thus escape the misery and poverty to which, so he said, those who work in Tuscany and in their native places are exposed, and so he determined to go there. To make himself universal he learned Latin"⁵⁴.

First, within his detailing of Rosso's decision to leave Italy, he indicates that the artist didn't believe it was his own doing for which he was not able to truly succeed as an artist in his home country. It states that Rosso believes that all "those who work in ...their native places" are subject to the same hardships for which led him to France. This is an untrue and idealized assumption about Rosso's career, for it was his reputation in Italy as well as the accepted style in the country that hurt his career. These circumstances however did change in France, indicating that the artist was right to seek repute elsewhere. Secondly, there is no way to know if Rosso had always wanted to live out the rest of his life in France, as Vasari assumes in his biography. Is it very possible that Rosso was inspired by da Vinci's death as another misunderstood Italian artist, a story that Vasari also contrived? This is extremely possible as the tale of da Vinci spread quickly after his death, or that the artist himself spoke of the French court in such a way to Vasari during their historic yet brief encounter. Nonetheless, but indicating the appeal of France and

⁵⁴ Vasari, *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, vol 3, 360.

patronage outside his home country was a lifelong appeal for Rosso Fiorentino, Vasari emphasizes the draw of the French court to Italian artists. The writer ends the life of Rosso with the promise that Rosso's career had "shown artist what advantage it is in dealing with a prince to be the universal, courteous and gentle in bearing"⁵⁵. Vasari uses Rosso's *vite* as an example to future artists detailing the advantages of working under a royal patron within their court instead of seeking out various commissions in many different locations. It saved Rosso's legacy to find himself a place at the French court. In the end, the idealistic draw, for which Vasari creates in his *Vita*, would indeed incite a growth in the number of Italians that made their way to the School of the Fontainebleau under the ideal of Rosso's legacy as their artistic guide.

The next significant note that Vasari makes in the story of Fontainebleau is Rosso's creation of the *Galerie de François I* marking it as one of the great tasks that was given to the artist under the patronage of the French King. It may be that the biographer was explaining the galerie as it was depicted in an original preparatory design, or that the Galerie itself was altered greatly once Primaticcio took over the decoration of Fontainebleau after the death of Rosso⁵⁶. The description that Vasari gives of the galerie, marks architectural and artistic masterpieces which are different than it actually stands or for which is seen in any engraving after Rosso. It is very likely that the galerie was altered from the time that Vasari initially wrote the *Vita* on the life of Rosso Fiorentino. This confusion that is demonstrated by Vasari's account of the Galerie is a great theme in the history of the *Galerie de François I* and does not end with his biography on Rosso. Rather it is a marker for how the Galerie would come to be seen in its historical context. The confusion demonstrated by Vasari began the legacy of obscurity that came to be associated with the *Galerie de François I* and its creator at Fontainebleau.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 364.

⁵⁶ Beguin, "New Evidence for Rosso in France," 829.

Looking at the passage for which Vasari details what he has so said been “rightfully informed” on the condition and appearance of the galerie at Fontainebleau, it is easy to see where his confusion is drawn from. Vasari may have been working off various accounts of the galerie, either by word of mouth or engravings. However, the description manages to elaborate the grandeur of the galerie as one of Rosso’s greatest works in France, despite the enigmatic paragraph that he writes on its creation. It also clearly is a reflection of the esteem that Vasari had for Rosso and the patron king. The description begins

In Fontainebleau... the king made him [Rosso Fiorentino] chief of all structures, paintings and other ornaments if that place. Here Rosso began a gallery over the lower court, not vaulting it, but making a flat roof open beams, beautifully partitioned. The sides he decorated with stucco and curious and fantastic panels, with several kinds of cornices carves with life sized figures, the lower part being adorned with rich festoons in stucco, others with painting of fruit and every sort of Verdure. In a large space, he had about 25 scenes painted in fresco from his design, if I am rightly informed of the deeds of Alexander the Great...At the two ends of the gallery are two oil-paintings by him, executed with such perfection that few better can be seen. One contains a Bacchus and the other represents Venus, done with marvelous art and judgement.⁵⁷

Thus, written by Vasari, the description is one of the longest given by the biographer on any one of Rosso’s works. He however is inaccurate in a few details. First, Vasari has been “rightly informed” by an outside source who may have misinterpreted the images. There is also the potential that the galerie’s organizational layout was changed. The writer would have never actually been able to travel to the chateau himself. Secondly, the subject matter of Alexander the Great is mostly inaccurate with none of the large fresco’s representing the triumphs of Alexander.

It is possible that Vasari confused this subject matter with the images that were placed in the Chamber of the Duchess Étampes, which does depict moments from the life of Alexander the Great including the pardon of Timocles. These were however painted by Primaticcio who took over after Fiorentino. Next, which is most certainly to have been moved or replaced after his death are the two oil-paintings which Vasari mentions directly. These paintings are not detailed in any of the other earliest records of the galerie. Rosso did however make individual oil paintings in these subject matters, indicated by his many prep sketches and engravings after his work. These discontinuities in the visual origination of the galerie, which are presented by Vasari, are one of the many reasons that an informed study is so difficult to accomplish. The changes to the layout which confuses Vasari, may have completely altered or obscured the true intent of the gallery⁵⁸. It is clear that the Italian writer has heard about the galerie and its magnificence as one of Rosso's greatest works in France, but he has misinterpreted the design of the galerie for whatever reason that can only be hypothesized. To continue, this confusion on the subject of the *Galerie de François I* that was most famously demonstrated by Vasari's biography would become an important thread in the study of the galerie as it is ever developing.

There are many other themes that important to acknowledge and understand when discussing how the *Galerie de François I* has thus been studied by historians thus far, beginning with Vasari. The idea of the galerie not being documented extensively, yet magnificent in appearance is one of these concepts because it lends itself to the mystery of the galerie. The desire therefore, to understand and unravel the imagery and meaning behind the galerie is immense. How Vasari analyzes the reputation of Rosso Fiorentino influences the vision of the galerie within his *Vite* as well as how it is seen by the historians who initially took up the task of

⁵⁷ Vasari, *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, 361.

⁵⁸ Beguin, "New Evidence for Rosso in France."

the galerie's enigmatic persona. The image of Rosso as the favorite of Francis I as well as an Italian artist who had always desired foreign adventure builds both the aura of the artists but also of his career in France. It forgoes mentioning that Francis I knew of Rosso's strange style, in fact may have even desires it, in addition to Rosso's invitation coming only after the disastrous sack of Rome. This highlighted the appeal of the patronage of a Royal king within his court. It would influence future artist, visitors and admirers who are taken with Rosso and the masterpiece that he crated within the Chateau by overseeing, even adding his own work, to the *Galerie de François I*.

Chapter 4: The History of the Chateau at Fontainebleau

Chronological Events and their Effect on the Galerie

It is clear what the King's reasoning were when he decided to undertake the revival of the chateau at Fontainebleau. The motives behind his commission of the decoration of the galerie to Rosso Fiorentino, an Italian artist, is also expressively clear. The French monarch had the obsession with creating a superiority in French art to the Italian renaissance art, as has already been proven in previous chapters, that motivated him to install these artistic projects at Fontainebleau, specifically the pinnacle being his self-named gallery. With this in mind, as well as keeping the reputation of the artist Rosso, the chronological history of the galerie begins to unravel from all the mystery. Despite this, the imagery and iconographical history within the galerie still remains an enigma that required a great deal of understanding before even attempting to dissolve the obscurity of the references that are illustrated by the frescos. Most of the narratives are drawn from obscure mythological references and may even include the resemblance of Francis I himself.⁵⁹ Even more confusing is the relationship, or single message that the narratives have to each other in creating what most people assume to be a consecutive plot for the galerie's audience. Thus, the history of interpretation into the *Galerie de François I* is interwoven with the chronological history as much as it is conjoined with the accepted explanations proposed as solutions to the obscurity of the galerie's meaning. Overall, it is a confusing web that needs to understand many different histories within the galerie such as the chronological history, the history of analysis and, as already discussed, the history of the individuals involved in the creation of the galerie. This chapter will touch upon these first two matters; the historical and the analytical past.

The Chateau at Fontainebleau has always been one of the primary residence for the French monarch, behind the main residence in the country's capital of Paris and Versailles. Like the residence of Versailles, Fontainebleau was once used as an escape for the court from the city of Paris. It was not until Francois I took the throne in 1515 did the residence at Fontainebleau become the favored residence of the French court. Therefore, the new king set forth a plan to architecturally build upon the Chateau as well as add to the decoration of the interior apartments.⁶⁰ It would take a total of thirteen years for Francois I to transform Fontainebleau to what he believed to be the pinnacle of design and luxury. The first design for the architectural aspect of the renovation of the Chateau was drawn up and dated to begin April of 1528. These designs were meant to make the time that the court would spend at the Chateau equal to the pleasure that they would experience in the redesigned residence. Not only was the renovation motivated by the expected luxury of court life for Francis and his courtiers, but it was once again a signal of his desire to recreate the Italian excellence of both art and architecture in his French court. The artists who designed the embellishment of the Chateau were primarily Italian in origin.⁶¹ The architect of the redesign of Fontainebleau had been greatly disputed considering the little recognition that the French architects⁶² were given in the finalized style of the Italian mannerist architecture. The designs for the renovations were mostly made by the French Gilles le Breton. None the less, the majority of the credit was given to Sebastiano Serilo, another Italian artist who was imported from the foreign country that Francis had sought to overcome in architectural magnificence. The attribution of the architectural design bears great weight of nationalism, as the French are all too happy to take the credit away from an Italian artist working

⁵⁹ Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold : Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance*, 36.

⁶⁰ Dimier, *Fontainebleau*, 9–11.

⁶¹ Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold : Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance*, 36.

⁶² Dimier, *Fontainebleau*, 12.

in France⁶³. One contemporary writer described the attribution issue “Si nous considérons, ce que Serilo a fait à Fontainebleau dans la cour de l’Ovale, et au château de Saint-Germain-en-Laye, nous pouvons faire avouer que les Italiens n’étaient pas plus savants que le Francis”. This statement summarizes the nationalist French ideal of attribution against Italian artist claiming the provenance of Fontainebleau. The statement presents an ideal which goes against the goals of Francis I who wanted to take the Italian renaissance style and transform it into a more modern French form. While it is uncertain if how much each architect contributed to the overall plans for the renovations, Serilo was the architect assigned to Rosso’s team for the interior decoration of the *Galerie François I*.

In the restoration, certain additions were made, like the addition of the passage way from the king’s chambers to the chapel, but for the most part the older hunting residence was kept intact and redesigned in the new style of the era. More than anything, practically was the deciding factor of the exterior revamp of the Chateau to make life as easy as possible for the court. The original building that represents the original chateau can still be seen in the Cour Ovale, as its irregular shape is a stark contrast⁶⁴ to the successive additions made by Francis. One of the largest additions made at this time was a long hallway that appears to be a practical connection from the original residence of the monarch to the convent of Mathurin’s at Fontainebleau. This new umbilical like wing of the chateau would appear to be insignificant from the exterior, additionally creating the Cour de Cheval Blanc by intersecting a large area on the ground. The added passageway to the Kings chambers, for which only Francis I had the key,⁶⁵ would become the wing that would house the decorative creation of the *Galerie de François I*. This creation which was supervised by the Italian artists Rosso Fiorentino under the

⁶³ *Ibid*, 12.

⁶⁴ Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France : The Invention of Classicism*, 67.

direct order of the king, would come to redefine the definition of a French *galerie*. Essentially a decorated passageway, walls which consisted of six large wall spaces on each north and south side of the *galerie*, which alternated with windows, but were separated by the entrances to the two cabinets at the central point of the walls. In the end, the *galerie* created in Fontainebleau would install the precedent of this decorative motif of interior design into the French style of architecture. Therefore, the French term *galerie* came to mean much more than a passageway due to this restoration at Fontainebleau⁶⁶.

The architectural intention of the addition to the Chateau of Fontainebleau was for the practical convenience of the royal residence and gave them easier access to the convent church as well as privacy. The passageway that would eventually be decorated under the direction of Rosso Fiorentino was not meant for public viewing, as many historians have misunderstood. The historical reference of the French *galerie* is actually significantly different to the ideal of an Italian gallery made for public attendees. People have automatically assumed that the *Galerie de François I* was made for a party hall⁶⁷, simply on the assumption that the frescos and stucco were meant to be seen by large amounts of people. It was actually not until that the *Galerie de François I* that the French *galerie* would become a public function in the circulation of the Chateau. The passage was originally only supposed to be a circulatory aspect of the chateau to create a practical movement between wings. In fact, the original 1528 contract for its construction entails the circulatory ideal of the term *galerie*. It dictates the creation of “a gallery thirty-two fathoms long or thereabouts and three fathoms wide inside the walls in order to go

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 74.

⁶⁶ Jean Guillaume, “La Galerie Dans Le Château Français : Place et Fonction - Persée.” Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France : The Invention of Classicism*, 71.

⁶⁷ Jean Guillaume, “La Galerie Dans Le Château Français : Place et Fonction - Persée.”

from the room that will be adjoining the big old tower to the abbey”⁶⁸. It is the interior aspect of design in the *Galerie de François I* that changed the meaning of “galerie” in French architecture after its celebrated reception. This a significant misstep that many historians have made when looking at the galerie since it was originally not meant to be viewed publically changing the intended audience. the king, as already mentioned would be the one who allotted only specific people into the space since he carried the key on his person. Overall, since the space lost its circulatory function under Francis I it is unclear exactly what the room was meant to be used for once the interior decoration was finalized. However, it is impractical to assume that it was used for public events due to the close quarters that it shares on one side that connects the king’s chamber, or where his chambers would have been before later additions. It has been suggested that the king himself chose who was able to see the frescos, making it a much more personal intended viewer⁶⁹. If the galerie was not meant to be seen by public audiences, as was expected due to the functionality of galerie up until the creation at Fontainebleau, how does this impact the modern interpretation of the interior narrative?

To continue in the historical characteristics of the creation of this galerie, before moving on to the analytical aspects which will be later explored, the artist behind the galerie plays a role in its place in history. Thus, this daunting task of not only redesigning the exterior style of the chateau, but also the interior visual appearance of the residence was given entirely to Rosso, with many other artists and artisans at his disposal. It was an overwhelming commission from the king to entirely design the interior of the galerie from scratch. However, Rosso was known as an artist who worked outside the boundaries of everyday figures and accepted styles of art. It is not difficult to image the way that the Italian took up this new challenging atmosphere to create such

⁶⁸ Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France : The Invention of Classicism*, 71.

⁶⁹ Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold : Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance*, Ch 2 “Blood.”

as he did. He even added his own handiwork to the masterpiece of the galerie in the Frescos that line the hall, as well as installing his individually made oil paintings. It is unclear how the solution to this task came to be in reference to the images and stories that were selected supposedly by the artist, but potentially by another mind such as the king or even another⁷⁰. Nonetheless, the result of Rosso's resolution to the king's demands for innovative decoration are astounding. The experience of the Galerie is visually stimulating unlike any other interior due to the expertly planned chaos of the imagery and decorative additions.

The supposed chronological creation of the galerie from its original idealized conception in the renovation plan of 1528, to the time that Rosso placed his frescos, is established based on the little documentation of Rosso's artistic process that survives today in addition to payment documents of the workers. It is believed that Rosso began his design for the galerie as early as 1532, since Vasari places the artist already working on the design before the arrival of fellow Italian Primaticcio. The first instance of documentation that places workers within the decorative space is in the period between July and September of 1533, which describes the activity of workers executing various "ancient and modern stories"⁷¹. This may have been anything from cartoon being placed upon the twelve individual spaces made for the frescos, as well as the two oval spaces being carved out on the east and west for the tableaux. It has also been hypothesized that the stucco was worked on before the frescos up until the year of 1535, when Rosso started the fresco work. During this time from April 1535 for the next eight months, payment documents reveal that Rosso was given more than his usual stipend for the physical work he completed on the frescos. Afterwards, the wood work designs would also be created in

⁷⁰ Zorach, 40.

⁷¹ Carroll, *Rosso Fiorentino : Drawings, Prints, and Decorative Arts*, 224.

the galerie by artists Franisque Scibec de Carpi and revised again in 1539⁷². By the end of October 1539, once the woodwork was finalized, the galerie's decoration was completed and Rosso's job as the *Maître Roux* director of the design was finished.

As for the chronology for Rosso's own work on the frescos, not including his addition job of overseeing the other aspects of the galerie, this is exclusively based on the evidence of the artist's own creative process. By the time that the actual work on the frescos began the project must have already been clearly defined in the mind of Rosso. The overall scheme of the frescos was most likely conceived long before Rosso put real pigment to the walls of the galerie, supposedly early in 1532⁷³. However, critics have argued that there were various stages of illustration and design, meaning that Rosso originally imagined created the frescos at separate times during the creation of the galerie. This may have impacted the overall narrative of the galerie as well. Taking into consideration the way that different myths may change the original intent, or obscure, the original intent of certain frescos. If one is to believe that the galerie is intended to have an overarching narrative message, it is hard to image that these different stages of creating did not alter this account or even invalidates it entirely.

Furthermore, when Rosso and his team completed the galerie, their accomplishment was publicized through the engravings that were done of the artist's work in order for the French monarchy to demonstrate its artistic superiority through the remodeling of Fontainebleau. The galerie thusly became well celebrated by foreign dignitaries who came to see the design or were able to view the engravings of the works. Not many people were able to experience the galerie within the heart of the French court. As mentioned earlier the King himself kept the only key on his person. Still, François allowed visitors to be taken on a tour of the stories inscribed on the

⁷² *Ibid*, 224–25.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 224.

wall of the galerie. One of the first descriptions or written records that details the final product of the galerie was written by a religious friar in the convent of Mathurin near Fontainebleau when he wrote an account on the holdings and treasures of the French chateau. The Friar was called Pierre Dan and his description is the earliest firsthand account of the galerie. Therefore, it is an essential piece of evidence to the reception of the art that was presented at the redesigned Fontainebleau from an inside perspective on its completion. Pierre Dan additionally gives his own view point behind the meaning of the galerie's narrative. It is unclear if this interpretation was made through the Friar's own intellectually based reading of the images in the galerie, or if by chance he was one of the visitors in the galerie who were able to be given an inside look behind the reality of the narrative message of the galerie. Even so, it is the first, although potentially without any contextualized facts, analytical interpretation of the galerie. It is certainly the only reading that is on by a first-hand visual account. Vasari may have written the more famous account that deeply lacked the visual experience of the galerie, it is Pierre Dan who has the original first person account for which later analytical descriptions would use as a starting point to their own research.

The record written by Pierre Dan is the earliest first-hand account and description of the galerie after its creation. The religious father supposedly wrote his book *Le Trésor des merveilles de la maison royale de Fontainebleau*, which is a grand account of all the treasures that are housed at the chateau of Fontainebleau in the year 1642. This was only a century after the creation of the galleries. It is no wonder that he dedicates a chapter to the description and analysis of the narrative that is placed in the galerie, which would have been one of the more recent additions to the chateau. He begins with a description of the location and the overall image of the galerie before going into individual descriptions of the frescos.

*Cette Gallérie porte le nom de François I. ou parce qu'il fait édifier et Orner; ou bien d'autant que là en plusieurs endroit paroît son portrait en relief a demi corps sur la porte de petit cabinet et ailleurs, et que là encore par tout se voyant sa Deuise et son Chiffre ; et pour autres raisons que y touchera à la fin de ce Chapitre.*⁷⁴

Here Pierre Dan begins by introducing the subject matter of the chapter and references how the galerie received its name after its patron. Due to the additional decoration such as the Latin phrase *Francois Facorum Rex* which referenced the king's ultimate power as a ruler. His emblem of the Salamander is also a repeated symbol in the wood work of the galerie, which Pierre Dan goes on to mention before discussing the tableau. Additionally, the name is a reference to the demi portrait of the king which is illustrated in a single tableau of the galerie, which hardly glorifies the image of the king. However, François I is responsible for the establishment of the galerie, something that Pierre Dan references for attribution in the treasures and in the long history of building at Fontainebleau. As a patron, François I used these decorative details made in gold to demonstrate who is responsible for the galerie.

As for the tableaux which are analyzed by Pierre Dan, he gives them a literary, mythological or even allegorical narrative that is individually attributed. He does not attempt to discern the way in which these tableaux reference each other to create a single message, if they even are meant to be seen as one whole communicative plot. He references multiple times that the images of the frescos are derived from "*sujets d'historique, d'emblèmes, et des fictions poétiques*"⁷⁵. It is unclear if Pierre Dan came to this conclusion of the references in the fresco on his own, or if he was told so by another source. None the less, he makes the assumption that the

⁷⁴ DAN and Bosse, *Le Tresor des merueilles de la maison royale de Fontaine-bleau, contenant la description de son antiquité, de sa fondation, de ses bastimens ... Ensemble les traictez de paix, les assemblées, les conferences ... qui s'y sont faictes iusques à present. [With engravings by Abraham Bosse.]*, 86–87.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 87.

frescos do not share a single source for their imagery, but rather they are separately conceived through different sources. The description in his *Le Trésor des merveilles de la maison royale de Fontainebleau* even treats each fresco by giving them their own description. He addresses each image individually by first detailing what the historic, literary or emblematic reference is, then he, for only a few images, dictates the meaning behind the imagery. He mostly associates the imagery to the life of the king, or the characteristics of good monarchs. To reiterate, there is no way to deem if Pierre Dan was solely behind his own interpretation drawing from his own educational background, which would have been extensive in the abbey, or if a member of the royal court had previously explained the imagery to him. It has been suggested that this was the only way that one would have been able to see the interior of the galerie⁷⁶. It is undeniable due to the detailed account of the galerie that Pierre Dan was able to experience the masterpiece up-close. A privilege that many were not granted, and that allowed him to give the most accurate account of the galerie's appearance. He describes the galerie

Les ornements et enrichissements de cette Gallérie, consistent en un beau et grand plafond doré, compose de plusieurs compartiments, d'un parterre fait a parquets, et d'un lambre orné de cartouches, ou font les armes de France et de Salamandres [...] La entre les trumeaux des fenêtres, ou posent les poutres et le plafond, font quatorze Tableaux de huit pieds de haut, et dis huit de large, y comprenant les bordures et ornements, lesquels représentent divers sujets d'histoires, d'emblèmes et des fictions poétiques⁷⁷

It is easy to see how Pierre Dan was able to experience the magnificence of the galerie in a close-up experience, something that was hard to gain access to during the time when the King

⁷⁶ Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold : Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance*, 36–40.

⁷⁷ *Le Tresor des merueilles de la maison royale de Fontaine-bleau, contenant la description de son antiquité, de sa fondation, de ses bastimens ... Ensemble les traictez de paix, les assemblées, les conferences ... qui s'y sont faictes iusques à present. [With engravings by Abraham Bosse.]*, 87.

himself lives in on the other side of the galerie in the royal apartments. The description that Pierre Dan gives is more detailed and expressed a level of awe, that Vasari was unable to achieve due to have never been able to see the works in person. There is also a level of revelation that the description, for which this excerpt is only the beginning, that sheds light on how Vasari's depiction is shrouded by the paradox of second hand account. However, as historians have attempted to process and understand the narrative of the *Galerie de François I* both Vasari's diluted account, which chronologically was published first, and the elaborated description by Pierre Dan, which was written after but marks the first in person descriptive account of the narrative at Fontainebleau's galerie. Both of these accounts shape the way that the galerie has been able to be understood by future writers since they are the corner stone to understanding how the work has been perceived, as well as how the images have been interpreted by their original audience.

This account of Pierre Dan, was certainly not written before the galerie was changed in even the slightest manner. After the death of Rosso, the master behind the *Galerie de François I*, his masterpiece of design was altered several times as well as disfigured in multiple renovations by future rulers. The original frescos and stucco were even distorted in the attempted restorations of the galerie, the last restoration being attempted in the 19th century during the July Monarchy, while the very first cleaning is hypothesized to have taken place not even a few decades after the completion of the decorations⁷⁸. Not to mention the way that the tableaux in the galerie places at the middle, beginning and end of the galerie were extremely easy to move, and were misplaced supposedly around the same time that Primaticcio took over after Rosso's death⁷⁹. Each time that the galerie has been altered either in restoration attempts or in additions being made to the

⁷⁸ Lossky, "La Restauration de La Galerie de François Ier Au XIX^{ème} Siècle."

⁷⁹ Beguin, "New Evidence for Rosso in France."

chateau by French monarchs, the galerie's narrative meaning has become more and more lost. It is impossible to understand the galerie without visualizing it as it would have appeared before these alterations. Due to the many modifications that were made in the galerie it becomes extremely difficult to understand how Rosso or Francis I would have originally interpreted the interior decorations of the galerie.

By unraveling the ways that the galerie has been adapted in the past since its conception the interpretation of the galerie becomes more comprehensible. Therefore, the modifications to the chateau are an equally, if not necessarily, significant layer to the story of the *Galerie de François I*. To begin, both the east and west walls of the galerie were significantly altered before the end of the 16th century. This is evident in Pierre Dan's description of the galerie which does not mention a *Bacchus and Venus* or the *Venus* (potentially identified as *Psyche*) being placed in either position at the galerie. The inclusion of a large door at the west wall in 1639 would have misplaced the *Venus* if it had still been hanging. In spite of the fact that the *Bacchus and Venus* may have still been hanging until 1701 when Louis XIV asked for the removal of Rosso's and Primaticcio's oil tableaux in the galerie, Pere Dan still fails to mention these any of the oil paintings besides the Danae places in the center of the galerie. An addition that was made later by Primaticcio placed across from Rosso's *Nymph of Fontainebleau*. However, the more recently discovered *Bacchus, Venus and Cupid* in Luxembourg has been suggested to be the original tableau hung on the East wall of the galerie. It is easy to see how this tableau would have been modified from a suggested original oval composition seeing as the painting cut down comes very close to cropping the elongates and elegant appendages of the figures, specifically the hand of Venus. Therefore, this tableau may be included in any attempt to rebuild the image of the galerie as it was when Rosso originally designed it. These tableaux because they were so easily movable,

as they were not done in Fresco but instead oil on canvas, were the most interchangeable part of the galerie and have been moved on various occasions. In reality they were so interchangeable that the painting designated for the west wall which Vasari claims to be a female nude of either *Venus* or *Psyche* has no modern image to compare it to, since it has been lost since its removal to carve out a new larger door for the galerie. While these paintings play a role in the overall appearance of the gallery, they are simpler designs compared to the frescos and stucco work around them. They usually depict one or multiple mythological figures, but lack allegorical stories. Making them all the more interchangeable. These images have been shifted in and out of the galerie, the frescos have remained in place throughout many restorations.

The frescos of the galerie, both the larger and smaller images, have undergone many cleanings and restorations throughout the years that have not significantly changed the appearance of the images. Restoration is a significant factor for any piece of art that has survived many decades, but for the galerie frescos the only changes lie in the details of the fresco. Despite multiple attempts to help with the wearing of age on the frescos, they have still withered from the magnificence that they once were. The first major attempt to preserve the images was done during the July Monarch when King Louis-Phillip ordered in 1833 to begin restoration practices on the images and the entirety of the Chateau at Fontainebleau. The project was begun a year later and was headed by a painter, who did not specialize in restoration, named Auguste Couder (1790-1873). The artist was able to work off of images and engravings of the galerie's frescos that were pieced together by a librarian and historian at the chateau archives. He worked on the restoration passionately from 1834-1847 despite many obstacles that he faced, he would bring in experts on Italian painting, as well as study the style which he called "*Primatif*" of the fresco

works by Rosso.⁸⁰ In one report on the progress of what would be the most expansive restoration attempt on the Chateau de Fontainebleau and *La Galerie de François I*, fellow French academy artist Andre-Jacques Victor Orsel (1795-1850) writes of the efforts that Couder takes in his restoration of the galerie. Orsel also goes into depth on the past restorations that he believes occurred at various points since the creation of the frescos.

*Ces peintures étaient couvertes en partie par des retouches faites à diverses reprises et qui dans beaucoup d'endroits en dénaturaient le caractère primitif; l'exécution de ces retouches semble indiquer qu'elles ont été faites deux époques distinctes, le premières vers le milieu du 17eme siècle, les secondes sous le règne de Louis XV. [...] Pour restituer à cette salle son aspect primitif, la première opération à faire était de dégager le plus possible les peintures de Rosso des mauvaises retouches*⁸¹

The report goes on to explain the way that Couder would attempt to recapture the paintings that Rosso originally made despite two additional layers of alteration. The overall goal of the restoration was to fully reestablish the “*style due Rosso et de L'unité de la galerie*”⁸² which had been interrupted by the previous restoration projects. Previous attempts at cleaning or alteration which had actually included stylistic changes as well as censorship alterations made to the frescos⁸³. This restoration of the 1840's under the July Monarchy, like almost all restoration attempts has caused controversy most likely due to arguments on such things as adding or cleaning the different parts of the frescos. A common disagreement that critics find depending on their beliefs in regards to restoration.

⁸⁰ Lossky, “La Restauration de La Galerie de François Ier Au XIXème Siècle,” 41–44.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 43.

⁸² *Ibid*, 44.

⁸³ Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold : Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance*, 42.

However, the most modern restoration attempt that was made on the galerie was undertaken in the 1960's. In the process of cleaning the galerie restoration experts were able to document the many alterations that had been added to the surface of the frescos, both obscuring and changing their appearance. Thankfully, documentation for the frescos during their inception had been discovered through the engravings of Rosso's assistant, Antonio Fantuzzi, as well as the tapestries made after the galerie now in Vienna. This gave some indication of the original appearance of the frescos in the galerie⁸⁴. As this is the most recent restoration attempt it accounts for the current appearance of the galerie today. Unfortunately, the galerie greatly shows the wearing of time that had damaged the frescos. They no longer illustrate the poignant use of color that Rosso developed throughout his career⁸⁵, nor are the frescos easy to understand as they are muddied by washed out pigments. The many years of alterations has greatly damaged the true pigments and design of Rosso that was hidden underneath, as well as the additional damage caused by years of neglect. For example, when Louis XVI built a new wing in 1786, this allowed for new damaging light to add to the deterioration of the frescos specifically on the North facing wall⁸⁶. The successive restorations caused a great deal of debris to be left on the frescos, further obscuring the original works, this debris was however removed in the 1960 restoration. It stripped the frescos down to their original pigments, leaving only the injured images to be seen in the galerie. On the other hand, the stucco work has survived a great deal better than the frescos, which are more fragile to potential damage. These stucco carvings have lost a significant amount of their finish, leaving the surfaces dull but the carved details still intact. The disparity in damage between the frescos which almost did not survive the wears of time, to the still elaborate stucco sometimes overpowers the paintings which were originally supposed to play a more

⁸⁴ Zorach, 43.

⁸⁵ Caron, "The Use of Color by Rosso Fiorentino," 355–78.

significant role in the appearance of the galerie⁸⁷. It is imperative that a modern interpretation of the galerie take into account the fact that the space was originally meant to be perfectly controlled and designed. The space may appear to boarder the line between chaos and order, due to the way that each aspect of the design overwhelms the viewer. Yet, Rosso designed every aspect of the galerie for a reason. A conclusion that can be made due to the many engravings that were created from the initial images of Rosso's design before they were transferred to the walls of the galerie, that ended up helped the most modern restoration process in the 1960s, as they create a chronological idea of how the galerie was designed.⁸⁸

Since the restoration that most recently completed at the galerie, a series of new analyses have sprung forward in regards to the revelation of the frescos after the layers of debris had been removed. Although it is still extremely hard to interpret the imagery of the frescos, the collection of engravings and the cleaned frescos have led historians to attempt to decipher the narrative of the galerie. However, even before the restoration was attempted the first art historical interpretation which sought to define the narrative story of the galerie was published by *La Gazette des Beaux-Arts* in the year 1958 and was written by Erwin Panofsky, with help from his wife Dora Panofsky. Although the galerie was recognized as a monument in French architectural and artistic history, the attempts to explain the visual plot of this monument had not yet dealt with more than one piece of the story. Panofsky's publication, which has become the most widely accepted explanation, uses the tool of iconography to put together what he believes is every piece needed to understand the fresco cycle created by Rosso. Without the use of many other documentation, the iconological interpretation uses only the visual details of the frescos along with a historical account of the Life of Francis I. The article argues what Pierre Dan also

⁸⁶ Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France : The Invention of Classicism*, 71.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 71.

assume to be accurate for most of the frescos. Panofsky places an allegorical interpretation of each of the twelve main frescos in the galerie to directly relate to events in the life of Francis I. The rest of the frescos that surround the twelve main frames of frescos, are disregarded as being more decorative than in any means narrative in nature. The titles and myths that Panofsky places on each fresco are the accepted designations for each frame, and are even referenced as such in almost every publication since Panofsky's iconographical analysis.

While the iconographical and allegorical connection that Panofsky makes between the frescos and the life of the king, has become the most prominent attempt to untangle the confusion of the galerie, it has been criticized by contemporary historians who offer a different analytical explanation. The most likely to contest the primary acceptance of Panofsky is published by Andre Chastel who offers a humanist approach to the galerie. Believing that there was one singular author or literary publication behind the obscure stories in the galerie. He does not propose who or what publication may be responsible, but he insists that each fresco is a reference to the humanist ideals of education and good government. Meanwhile, critics have discovered evidence that completely contradicts assumptions made by Panofsky in the iconographical interpretation, since the events in Francis' life may not have yet chronologically occurred before the creation of Rosso's design. Does this change the overall message if a few allegorical connections have been disproven? Next, while very few attempts have been made to piece together every fragment of the galerie's fresco cycle, individual frescos have been high disputed. Such as the images of *Venus Frustrated* and the *Death of Adonis*, both images which have either been negated or disproven from Panofsky's original iconological attribution. Overall, the galerie's interpretation has become somewhat of a challenge for art historians who attempt to dissolve the layers of ambiguity that surround the *Galerie de François I*. Mostly due to the way

⁸⁸ Carroll, *Rosso Fiorentino : Drawings, Prints, and Decorative Arts*, 222–26.

that each layer of history, of analysis and of enigma add another threat that must be addressed. Not surprisingly, many interpretations lack or forgo mentioning many of the complications that arise in looking deeply at how the frescos may or may not have a consecutive narrative. Assumptions are made that may not be entirely well founded, and thus it creates even more abstruseness. In the end, these complications are what make the galerie's story and legacy therefore they must play a vital role in any attempt to understand the madness behind the frescos. I propose that by looking at the enigma of the galerie as it has grown through misinterpretation a non-universal narrative appears in how the frescos must be viewed and discussed in the art historical canon.

Chapter 5: The Accepted Interpretation

Erwin and Dora Panofsky the First Attempt to Fully Understand the Iconography

As it has been clearly identified, the *Galerie de François I* present many issues in its reading and interpretation that make it a daunting task for historians to tackle successfully and in its entirety. Such issues as the numerous distinct subjects that lack any literary reference, and the supposed complex relationship that is believed to exist between these subject. The tool of iconographical interpretation had inspired a breakthrough with pieces that incite these issues and many more. Using the purely visual characteristics of the galerie an iconographical interpretation requires no documentation of literary references or symbolic intent, instead it uses the images on the wall to discern allegorical content⁸⁹. Erwin Panofsky is one of the instigators of using this method to help with many of the more puzzling mysteries in art. In his initial manifesto *Studies in Iconology*, to describe the ideals of iconological interpretation he uses the famous metaphor of a man tipping a hat. He explains “When I identify, as I automatically do, this configuration as an *object* (gentleman), and the change in detail as an *event* (hat-removing), I have already overstepped the limits of purely *formal* perception and entered the first sphere of *subject matter* or *meaning*”⁹⁰. This represents the first level of interpretation that is presented in Panofsky’s manifesto, it is followed by the use of allegorical stories that figure into the interpretation at its second level. The next deeper levels of iconographical interpretation add the use of historical and social context for what is deemed the iconological analysis. This limits the interpretation to the

⁸⁹ Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France : The Invention of Classicism*; Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold : Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance*.

⁹⁰ Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*, 3–5; Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold : Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance*, 44.

simple form of “pure *form*...natural objects... events”⁹¹. Making the proposed interpretation a singular automatic response. The explanation of a work’s iconography, identified in the first stages Panofsky’s method, falls under the later iconological interpretation used in the deeper levels of Panofsky’s methods. The building of Panofsky’s interpretation in these levels allows him to develop a clear analysis of art works, but is all dependent on the initial and supposedly automatic response.

It is no wonder that he took up the challenge of the galerie at Fontainebleau due to its enigmatic reputation. The publication in which Panofsky uses the iconographic to understand the *Galerie de François I* was co-written with his wife Dora Panofsky in the fall of the 1958 edition of the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* and has since become the most prominently read analysis of the frescos at Fontainebleau. Thus, the iconographical method has become the premier way to interpret the frescos. The Panofskys begin their article by establishing different assumptions that are necessary for an iconographical interpretation, but highlight the necessity of these assumptions and the necessity of an iconology for the galerie specifically. Next, they present the summary ideal that precedes their allegorical interpretation of the galerie; that this piece was meant for the glorification of the life of Francis I the patron and king of the galerie. Another assumption that may hold little background substance and fails to hold up to other ideas of the patronage of Francis. Finally, the article addresses each individual of the twelve main frescos, it forgoes mentioning the tableaux painted by Rosso due to their tendency to be moved within or from the galerie’s walls. Many of the ideals presented by Panofsky do hold a great deal of merit as both authors read critically into the background of the galerie and the life of Francis as a monarch. However, many holes have been found in the work of the Panofskys’ iconological interpretation that leads one to second guess the interpretation despite it being the most widely

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 7.

accepted and praised attempt at a whole understanding of the galerie. Personally, this research has highlighted the issues that Panofsky fails to address as well as the flimsy assumptions that are made at the very beginning of the Gazette article. There are some extremely significant ideas that helped create the galerie, which are not mentioned within the article and may alter the way that an iconographical interpretation would be addressed. In the end, despite any holes that may be found in such an argument, the hypothesis that Erwin and Dora Panofsky make in their article must influence if not at least be considered in any future academic attempts to outline the challenges of the *Galerie de François I* interpretation. The Panofsky article may not be a perfect interpretation, but as the most prominently known it influences the current understanding of the galerie's narrative.

There are a few assumptions that Panofsky admits to making in his extensive study of the galerie that stem from other more well documented monuments in art. There are also the assumptions that Panofsky does not realize he is making which also stem from these precedents, that may or may not be accurately applied to the galerie at Fontainebleau. Before that, Panofsky referenced the established works that have already been written in regards to the galerie. Although they are more limited discussions on the narrative of the images, these works still stand as the precedent for understanding the galerie, just as Panofsky's article does today. To begin he reaches towards the initial ecclesiastic studies done by Pere Pierre Dan in his account of the treasures at Fontainebleau which is not an interpretive description but more formalistic in point of view. Panofsky then references that there have been individual interpretations that have been published on specific frescos, but notes that the only full attempt to explain the frescos was taken by Guy de Tervarent in his books *L'Egnimes de L'art* written in the 1940s, in a series of several books that looks at the mysteries in art, such as the galerie. The historian only dedicates a chapter

of his four series books to the galerie, and is now is not prevalent to interpretation of the galerie due to its lack of detailed research on the subject and considering Panofsky comes to extremely similar conclusions through his own methods. In fact, Tervarent also takes on the same two assumptions that proceeds the study of iconography written by Panofsky. Additionally, after the Panofskys published their own article, Guy de Tervarent writes a review on the study and a response to the ways that the study uses even adds to his own explanation of the galerie. He writes “*J’ai hâte de gagner la deuxième travée de de me trouver en plein accord avec Panofsky*”⁹². Overall, Tervarent takes into consideration the additions that Panofsky made and believes they are in agreement with his own ideals. The two studies are extremely similar considering that they take into account the same assumptions in order to interpret the visual evidence that is presented by the frescos and their accompanying cartouches, engravings and mythological or historical tales.

The first assumption follows the logic that even before the beginning of the French renaissance, which Panofsky modestly sees as synonymous with the mannerism of the time, that patrons using allegorical meaning would use it as a means for personal glorification. He writes that “allegorical ensembles may be invested with a number of superimposed symbolical meanings that may be intended to bear witness to patron’s moral attitudes and philosophical convictions”⁹³. Panofsky therefore proposes that this same assumption about patronage representation much be applied to king Francis in his chateau galerie. He defends this assumption by referencing several pervious and well know commissions that were made for the idealization of the patron. This type of flattery that is relevant in almost all movements of art for

⁹² de Tervarent, “Review of The Iconography of the Galerie François I Er at Fontainebleau, *Gazette Des Beaux-Arts*, 1958,” 531.

⁹³ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, “The Iconography of the Galerie François I Er at Fontainebleau,” 114.

which he calls in mannerism “allusive correlation” Which indicates that the same connection between art and patronage are made, but done in an extremely obscure manner. This does seem to adequately applies to his interpretation in explaining the reasoning behind the galerie’s obscure references. The second assumption that Panofsky and Tervarent make is that the frescos within the galerie are meant to be read in a series of two. Meaning that each fresco and *travée* is meant to be read as a whole in connection to the fresco which it faces across the galerie. Tervarent who first noticed this relationship writes that “*Les fresques de la Galerie de François Ière [...] s’apparentent deux par deux*”⁹⁴, due to the way that the frescos are seen as one moves down the hallway. This means that both authors work in allegorical messages created by two frescos to understand the whole plot of the galerie. These two assumptions lay the ground work for the interpretation created by Tervarent which is then solidified even established through the research and iconography presented by Panofsky. He does conclude however, that both of these assumptions “cannot claim either completeness or finality”⁹⁵ admitting that while Panofsky believes that they are well founded in historic precedent they are not definitive. Seeking answers through iconographical interpretation, especially when assumptions must be made, cannot answer all the questions that remains surrounding the galerie. Panofsky claims that he does not seek to know everything about the frescos or the galerie, instead he desires to continue the discussion by adding his own ideals. He is compelled by the fact that the galerie and all attempts to understand it have only been met with perplexing results. Since this has been due to the lack of literary evidence for any iconological interpretation, therefore his solution is in the iconographic use of the visual data. To support these theories with are spun from the visual appearance of the galerie, or as it would have been, Panofsky uses what they call “indirect

⁹⁴ Guy de Tervarent, *Les Énigmes de l’art*, 28–45.

⁹⁵ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, 115.

illumination”⁹⁶. This form of evidence relies on extraneous sources that may or may not have a connection to the piece. It is therefore mostly conjecture, but in a case like this which is extremely rare for a major monument to have such minuscule documentation it is a necessity; especially considering the extreme complexity of the visual program.

Despite everything about the galerie that the Panofsky article acknowledges, there is one assumption that is repeatedly made which does not get referenced; the belief that there is one narrative program that should encompass the entire monument. This narrative, that the Panofskys believe to be overarching is stemmed from their other assumptions specifically the idea of patron intent. Believing that the galerie was deemed as a tool to promote the self-image of the patron takes two things for granted; not just the existence of an absolute message, but also the purpose of the space. A monument for the glorification of a monarch, would have to be widely viewed not just for the royal household. However, in French architecture, before the term galerie was later redefined, the space would have been a passageway only used to enter the royal chambers. Therefore, it was not a public space, rather a small locale that only the King quite literally held the key to⁹⁷. When Panofsky defends the idea of pure self-gratification for the patron as a key ideal necessary to the deciphering of the galerie, many of the other works he quotes are public spaces that cannot be compared to the *Galerie de Françoise I* simply because it is the first of its kind defined in French architecture. Yes, it takes precedent from potential Italian sources, but it is also a result of the original French galerie. All these assumptions that the Panofskys make pile up onto each other, and may not take into account different aspects of the galerie that are essential to its history. None the less, through the use of visual interpretation, the Panofskys’ hypothetical interpretation of the galerie has become all but truth for modern historians despite the holes that

⁹⁶ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, 116.

⁹⁷ Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France : The Invention of Classicism*, 70–72.

are discovered upon critical analysis. Therefore, looking at the individual frescos as this iconographical approach is a great necessity in studying the galerie's life.

In this interpretation of the galerie is it significant to know which pieces face each other in regards to the physical appearance and experience of being in the space. Panofsky uses a diagram of the galerie so the reader is easily able to understand the layout of the galerie, which was already looked at in the introduction to this study but will be equally useful in discussing iconographic ideals. This diagram helps one visualize the analysis of Panofsky in regards to his “*Deux par deux*” theory which suggests that each fresco is paired with its opposing image. It also highlights the experience of the galerie, which becomes Panofskys’ argument describes as “we end the Gallery from the vestibule in the West and permit our glances to shift back and forth between the longitudinal walls as we proceed”⁹⁸. The article suggest that this is the natural way that a visitor would view the galerie, and therefore the theory of paired *travées* makes logical sense. Other historians have argued that while this is the natural experience of seeing the frescos it may suggest a diagonal zigzag progression between the narrative images⁹⁹. None the less, the Panofskys commence their analysis through the first initial fresco on the right-hand side of the entrance; the fresco representing the allegory of “*L’ignorance Chassée*” or *Ignorance Dispelled*.

According to the Panofskys using their iconographical understanding of imagery this fresco presented at the entrance to the galerie “presents no difficulties: even the smallest iconographic detail can be accounted for”¹⁰⁰. The central figures are blindfolded as they attempt to move towards the grandiose building in the background of the image. Figures representing the Vices are also blindfolded as they fall in tangles across the composition, intertwined in the chaos

⁹⁸ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, 119.

⁹⁹ *Renaissance Art in France : The Invention of Classicism*, 75.

of unseeing. The figures are complexly arranged, a skill that is extremely evident in Rosso's work that emphasizes the chaos of the scene. Ignorance, is identified at the central figure also blindfolded dressed in yellow attempting to move towards what is identified as the Palace of Jove by the Latin inscription "*OSTIUM IOVIS BONA MALA*"¹⁰¹ on the gates. Which is from the stories of Homer identifying the measures indicating good and evil. There stands one singular figure on the steps of these gates to the palace. Panofsky identifies this figure as the "grand François" a personification of the idealized image of the king who carries both a sword and a book; symbolic of the characteristics of intelligence and protection. Surrounding the image are caryatids that fill the frame of the frescos with symbols of untruth, worldliness and fraud¹⁰². In an effort to support this assessment of the imagery, the article using the indirect source of Joachim du Bellay's description of the frescos who connects the image to the vision of France. Du Bellay writes "*ostant aux yeux des bons esprit de France / Le noir baneau de l'aveugle ignorance*". Thusly, this initial symbolic image deals with the morals of the French King symbolizing the way that Francis I is above ignorance, leading France without being blinded by it.

While the Panofskys found the symbolism in *L'ignorance Chasée* easy to identify, the paired image is equally obscure as *Ignorance Dispelled* is easily read. This image on the left of the entrance to the gallery is *The Sacrifice*, which was misinterpreted by Tervarent in his own interpretation of its symbolic story. Panofsky suggests instead a new reading of the image believing that the bearded figure placed in the center of the gathering of figures who appear in distress to be the historic figure of St. François de Paule. Like many other young women who could not conceive, Louis de Savoie mother of Francis I, sought the help of St. François de Paule

¹⁰⁰ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, 119–20.

¹⁰¹ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, 120.

¹⁰² Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, "The Iconography of the Galerie François I Er at Fontainebleau."

who was known for his methods as the “*fraiseur de miracles*”¹⁰³. Louis held a great debt of gratitude to Francois de Paule, who predicted that she would be the mother of the next king of France¹⁰⁴. One of the Saint’s many talents for miracles was the way he helped women produce the heirs and heiresses, therefore many of the noblewomen who sought his help would name their children François, after the saint just as Louis de Savoie had done so. Therefore, the fresco is a homage to the man that Francis I owed his existence and crown to. It is argued by Panofsky that it may also be a symbol of the auspicious birth and life of Francis, which was predicted by the old “*fraiseur de miracles*” when Louis sought his help. Furthermore, not only does the image indicate the history of the patron’s namesake, but also is an allegory of fertility and the restoration of vigor. The members of the congregation of figures represent mothers given children, and the old tossing away their crutches healed through sacrifice for a miracle such as the vase bearers offering wine. Next, the small cartouche under the main fresco also supports this narrative. Panofsky connects the image of dancers, potentially dryads, surrounding a large tree as in seen in the engravings of the image. The indirect reference that Panofsky makes is a connection to the sacred oak of the goddess of life, prolific marriages and the harvest Ceres, as described in Ovid’s story of *Metamorphosis*¹⁰⁵. Overall, the image of *The Sacrifice* is actually a homage to the things that gave life to the king and references to life itself.

The third fresco that is address in the Panofsky’s article is *L’Unité de l’État*, which is once again they believe needs little explanation or little evidence to understand symbolically. The main picture is identified as a portrait of Francis I, with an exact likeness indicated by his famously pointed nose and full beard, as an idealized Roman emperor. He holds a pomegranate

¹⁰³ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, 122.

¹⁰⁴ Patricia Francis Cholakian, *Marguerite de Navarre : Mother of the Renaissance* (New York: New York : Columbia University Press, 2006), 8–9; Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, 122.

in his left hand as established symbol for concord and unity. However, Panofsky finds trouble in the interpretation of the narrative in which the symbol of Francis I as emperor is placed. It is therefore suggested that there was a different symbolic meaning that may have been originally intended by the image. In an engraving after Rosso, done by Antonio Fantuzzi his assistant, which is a copy of *L'Unité de l'État* but rather shows a statue in place of the central figure of Francis, and instead of a roman emperor he is symbolically represented as the Gaulic ruler Vercingetorix. This representation, if it was the intended association that was supposed to be made in the fresco, would make logical sense due to the history of Vercingetorix as the unifier who brought the different tribes of Gaul under one ruler for the first time. Similarly, Francis I was considered a ruler who unified the French nation under one court at Fontainebleau. If the correlation to be made, as suggest by Panofsky, is between the French ruler and Vercingetorix, then the cartouche images fall into place as a part of the Gaul rebellion under Caesar. The bottom image which represents what is called the "Arrival of a Messenger", would be the instance that Caesar was notified of the victory that Vercingetorix had over the roman army¹⁰⁶. In the end, Panofsky believes that this allegorical analysis taken from another engraving explains how such a chaotic composition, with a clear allegorical central figure can be an example of *The Unity of the State*. Instead of a symbol of roman absolute power as it may first appear, it is a representation of unifying power under a single figure such as the Gaulic King or Francis I.

In a pairing with the image of *L'Unité de l'État* is the fresco of *L'Éléphant Fleurdelysé* which is more symbolic than narrative in the interpretation explained by the Panofskys. However, they believe that Tervarent explained the meaning behind the fresco so expertly that their article has little else to decipher regarding this image. Through the presentation of symbolic

¹⁰⁵ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, "The Iconography of the Galerie François I Er at Fontainebleau," 125–26.

imagery both the Panofsky article and Guy de Tervarent propose the same representational conclusion. This is due to the seemingly established symbol of the elephant, which has always stood as a symbol of superiority in size as well as in goodness. The animal is associated with such qualities as benevolence, foresight, unfailing memory, gentleness, generosity, consideration of others, temperance, and chastity that it has become a symbol of wisdom synonymous with invincible power¹⁰⁷. To support this symbolic representation of the elephant, Panofsky references such literary examples as Plutarch's *Gryllus*, a tale of the witch Circe, and Horapollon's *Hieroglyphica* both which reference the elephant as a king like Figure. Thus, as first suggested by Tervarent, the Elephant in the fresco, which wears the *fleur-de-lis* and royal salamander on his headpiece is indeed the king himself symbolically represented as the magnificent animal. However, two questions still remain after this assessment has been made regarding how the main fresco may relate to the sequential images around it and the mysterious *mise-en-scene* nature of the principal picture¹⁰⁸. To continue, the two framing images that surround *L'Éléphant Fleurdelysé* represent two stories where godlike figures reduce themselves to the lowly level of animals in order to manipulate humans. The first is the image of the Rape of Europa which is the tale of Jupiter becoming a bull in order to seduce and abduct Europa. The second similar tale is of Saturn and Philyra, where the god Saturn becomes a stallion to seduce another young woman. In both these tales, gods use animal forms in order to trick humanity, Panofsky concludes that these tales are used as contradictory moral images. The Elephant is a true representation of the King, without any tricks or manipulations due to the moral characteristics that this animal

¹⁰⁶ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, 126–28.

¹⁰⁷ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, 131; Guy de Tervarent, *Les Énigmes de l'art*.

¹⁰⁸ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, "The Iconography of the Galerie François I Er at Fontainebleau,"

embodies unlike the gods who use lower animals for deception¹⁰⁹. The lower cartouche demonstrates the image of Alexander the Great Cutting the Gordian Knot, potentially a relation made to the discovery of Elephants in Alexander's eastern military campaigns. Next, Panofsky addresses the second questionable aspect of the principle image the bizarre setting and or tale that the elephant is placed in. The large animal stands alone in the center of what appears to be an amphitheater. Three figures, that Panofsky identifies as statues, surround the elephant that represent gods of the various elements. All but the element of air which is represented by fourth statue figure that is placed above to the right of the elephant. Therefore, Panofsky suggests that the image is not only a symbolic image of the king but also a "threefold encomium. It celebrates the King as most wise and virtuous ruler. It represents him as master of all elements but one"¹¹⁰. Finally, in relation to the image's paired *travée* which is *L'Unité de l'État* of Francis I as Vercingetorix the old Gaul ruler and across represented by the elephant and Alexander below as the "new Alexander". These first four unified *travées* represent what Panofsky believes to be the first chapter of the galerie that exalts Francis I as a miracle heir to the throne, the patron of art and intellect as well as the wise unifier of the nation.

The second chapter, as Panofsky identifies it, begins by illustrating the life events of the Francis I that have defined his character, even representing the king's realistic faults. The next two frescos Panofsky compares are done in unison since they are closely related in his interpretation of the myths and their allegorical message. These two frescos are of *Cleobis and Biton* and *The Twins of Catania*, Panofsky argues that these images must be treated together due

¹⁰⁹ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, 133.

¹¹⁰ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, 135.

to the similar subject matter; *Pietas* the virtue of unselfish devotion¹¹¹. Once again Panofsky humbly references the work of Tervarent, and only desires to add clarity to an already thorough analysis. Returning to the allegorical interpretation of these two images, they are what the Panofsky iconographical ideals defines as *exempla*; stories that are known to illustrate the characteristics of a specific quality. For the myth of Cleobis and his brother Biton, the two sons carry their mother the Priestess Cydippe to her temple of Juno when her animals are unable to undertake the task¹¹². The Priestess' oxen had died in an epidemic, but through the help of her sons she is able to carry on to her duties at the temple of the goddess. A representation of familial piety and duty. The next image similarity represents the ideals of loyalty to one's family. *The Twins of Catania*, otherwise known simply as *Filial Piety* in recent discussions of the fresco, shows the story of Amphinomus and Aenapias. When their town of Catania is destroyed by the eruption of Mt. Aetna, they carry their parents on their backs to safety refusing to leave them behind in the destruction. The image demonstrates the physical toll of saving the twin's parents as their heavy bodies are contorted as their sons carry them. The figures of Amphinomus and Aenapias strain against the weight of the parents, determined to carry the burden as Rosso represents the stretched muscles of the twins in their loyal task. Below the fresco is a cartouche that represents the fiery destruction of the town of Catania. Such an emotional image of these figures as they quite literally carry their family's past with them is a stark symbolism of Francis' own familial life. The twins are representations of the "*pietas*" and mutual responsibility that Francis feels throughout with his sister, Marguerite de Navarre. The king developed a truly

¹¹¹ Guy de Tervarent, *Les Énigmes de l'art*; de Tervarent, "Review of The Iconography of the Galerie François I Er at Fontainebleau, *Gazette Des Beaux-Arts*, 1958"; Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, "The Iconography of the Galerie François I Er at Fontainebleau," 135.

¹¹² Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France : The Invention of Classicism*, 84. Note: Zerner references this fresco as both *The Burning of Catania* and *Filial Piety* instead of *The Twins of Catania* as Panofsky does.

Roman sense of loyalty that valued blood relationships over all else¹¹³, except his responsibility to the state.

In reflection of Francis' relationship with his sister, the accompanying fresco of *Cleobis and Biton* is an allegory of the bond between the King and his mother Louise de Savoie. Just like the Priestess in the myth, Louise de Savoie carried on her responsibility as regent during the three years that Francis spent as hostages in Spain with the Dauphin and future Henri II. Panofsky describes this mother-son relationship as almost an idolization of Francis' mother and her role in his life. Specifically, the way that both Louis de Savoie and Marguerite de Navarre were able to save the king's life by bargaining for his freedom during his imprisonment in Spain. The cartouche below this awe-inspiring image similarly reinforces the idea of fidelity as the main allegorical meaning shared between the two frescos which reflects the familial legacy of Francis I. The relief is surrounded by two faithful dogs, symbols of loyalty and an image of the subject of *Caritas Romana* or better known as the story, if true, of Cimon and Pero showing the aged father, Cimon being nursed in prison by his faithful daughter Pero¹¹⁴. While this shows filial piety instead of sisterly devotion, most all examples of this in mythology are ill fated such as the relationships that Electra and Antigone, have with their brother, both of whom try but fail to save their sibling. Francis modestly recognizes that he was saved by his mother and sister in these images, recognizing his own need to be rescued in Spain. Thusly, Marguerite de Navarre and their mother Louise de Savoie are held up to the idolized standards associated with familial "pietas" as is represented by the two mythological references of *Cleobis and Biton* and *The Twins of Catania* in addition to their supporting cartouches and reliefs. Panofsky argues that the

¹¹³ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, "The Iconography of the Galerie François I Er at Fontainebleau," 136–37.

¹¹⁴ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, 137–38.

next fresco in his analysis, also a part of the chapter relating to the life of King Francis I, continues to explore the relationships and experiences of the royal family at Fontainebleau.

The Death of Adonis as it is identified by the Panofskys' is the next fresco in the cycle created by Rosso, is one of the most consistently controversial images in the galerie. The image is additionally one of the most damaged, with few references to identify the obscured details of the image. Here, the Panofsky interpretation also pushes the interpretation of the galerie as a sort of "*roman du roi Français*"¹¹⁵ to its very limits. The interpretation relates the image of tragedy to the most grief-stricken moment in the King's life; the sudden and young death of his son the Dauphin of France in August of 1536¹¹⁶. While this seems like an easy association to make between the beautiful young Adonis and the young prince who would have become Francis II, the Panofsky's unjustly make this leap. Like Adonis, the favorite son of Francis was often called "*le plus beau des beaux*"¹¹⁷ The image shows the twisted figure of supposedly Adonis supported by some grieving figures, one appearing to be an angel, in a position that is more reminiscent of Michelangelo's *Pieta* than a classically idealized image of Adonis. In the background, there appears to be a chariot which is identified as Venus, coming to mourn the beautiful Adonis. To make this allegorical reference Panofsky had to justify less than thought out or well referenced imagery of the composition. Claiming that there may have been some episodes that were decided upon as the galerie was still in the process of creation¹¹⁸. Due to the impact of the death of the Dauphin on the life of the King, the Panofsky's believe it reasonable that the scheme of the galerie would be interrupted in the middle of its decoration, by an image that could not possibly fit more perfectly into the biographical itinerary of their interpretation.

¹¹⁵ Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France : The Invention of Classicism*, 87.

¹¹⁶ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, "The Iconography of the Galerie François I Er at Fontainebleau," 142.

¹¹⁷ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, 143.

It is extremely unlikely that such a drastic change would have been made in what many deem to be an extremely well planned selection of imagery. It is an apparent paradox that the Panofsky's would claim that the galerie's iconography is expertly planned in three chapters relating to the King, but that this one fresco, which is a perfect point in the analysis of the second chapter, was whimsically replaced at the sentiment of the king. Both of these facts cannot be true, as has been pointed out by many interpretations relating specifically to *The Death of Adonis*. One, if not the, most controversial interpretations that has been seemingly accepted despite its problematic inconsistencies.

In Guy de Tervarent's response to the Panofsky publication, he discusses *The Death of Adonis* attribution more than others. He conceded that there is a very appealing logic to the connection that the Panofsky's make between the figure of Adonis and the extremely admired Dauphin. However, he argues that there is no way that the Adonis figure could be a representation of the very young prince.

Quelles raisons pouvait avoir Rosso de faire figurer en ce lieu et place. A cette question Panofsky répondent. Ils y voient une allusion à la mort du Dauphin, beau comme Adonis et comme lui orné aux sports [...] Je crois qu'il faut choisir et voir le Dauphin en Adonis ou en Achilles, mais non dans l'un et l'autre de ces personnages. Nous optons pour Adonis ou le pensons qu'Achilles représente le roi François Ière le lui-même.¹¹⁹

He insinuates that while you may try to believe that the figure of Adonis, in comparison with the figure Achilles as is later done, may represent the Dauphin before his death. The contradiction that de Tervarent finds is a disconnect between the two young figures. He does not rationally think that the figure of Adonis nor the figure of Achilles, both of who he believes are identical in

¹¹⁸ *Renaissance Art in France : The Invention of Classicism*, 87.

their appearance, would represent different historic figures. While Panofsky, attributes this once again to the potential late addition of the Adonis myth to the fresco cycle which would have disrupted the original relationship between the figures. Additionally, Guy de Tervarent states it would be impossible to identify both as the Dauphin due to the lack of military training that the to be Francis II would have had before his death. Therefore, he argues that both figures represent the king being that the death of Adonis is an allegorical representation of Francis' military experience which illustrates the potential price of war. Another flimsy connection that would not make sense with the usual meanings behind the Adonis myth, which is fitting due to the unusual visual representation of the myth that Rosso illustrates.

The only thing that has been little contested is that many believe to be the most easily identifiable myth in the galerie. Very few people have argued the subject of the image as *The Death of Adonis*, a well-known story in mythology¹²⁰. Another way that *The Death of Adonis* analysis made by Panofsky has been argued is that the myth of Adonis was incorrectly attributed to the image. The first documentation of the galerie, specifically by father Pierre Dan explains the image as “*Tableau adonis mourant assisté des Grâces, de petite amours, et de Venus qui partait au-dessus dans son chariot*”¹²¹. This analysis becomes the basis for future interpretations and since its creation no one has questioned the subject matter of the fresco. But what if the tableau was never meant to represent Adonis at all, but rather a more obscure myth? One expert who has repeatedly tried to dissolve the obscurity related to this very specific fresco is Professor Rebecca Zorach, of Northwestern University, who argues that the fresco was originally

¹¹⁹ de Tervarent, “Review of The Iconography of the Galerie François I Er at Fontainebleau, *Gazette Des Beaux-Arts*, 1958,” 533–34.

¹²⁰ Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold : Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance*, 60–61.

¹²¹ DAN and Bosse, *Le Tresor des merueilles de la maison royale de Fontaine-bleau, contenant la description de son antiquité, de sa fondation, de ses bastimens ... Ensemble les traictez de paix, les assemblées, les conferences ... qui s’y sont faictes iusques à present. [With engravings by Abraham Bosse.]*, 90.

misinterpreted to represent Adonis. She believes that the original subject matter of the fresco is the *Punishment of Attis* a lesser known mythological story¹²². A hypothesis which if true would make Panofsky's argument null and void. Zorach begins her interpretation with a scathing disavowal of the Panofsky interpretation again noting as many have also done, that the argument grasps at the treads of the notion that the galerie is a commentary on the life of the king. Well aware that an image having to do with tragedy of a young man being punished for infidelity is out of place in the biography of Francis, unless it was about the tragic loss of his beautiful Dauphin. Instead Zorach proposes a wildly radical interpretation of the image.

Going off the idea, for which Zorach's overall interpretation of the galerie relies, she believes that the galerie "produces a multilayer of meanings, they need not be seen as contradictory"¹²³ but rather in an overall aesthetic of sacrifice. The fresco which has become known as *The Death of Adonis* actually appears to be a hybrid of two tales that often overlap. The second myth being the story of Attis, the son-lover of the goddess Cybele who is tricked by lust for a nymph to forget his promise to protect the temple of Cybele. The details of the tale are constantly changing, but the main image of the myth, the death of Attis for breaking his promise, is always the same¹²⁴. The female figure in the chariot is therefore identified as the figure of Cybele coming to punish Attis, while the figure that flees from the scene of the sensual death of Attis is the nymph lover that enticed him to break his vows. This would stand to find reason behind the strange portrayal of the main dying figure. The figure of Attis, and the cult of Attis, was known as a symbol of expressive sexuality and inspiring the "orgiastic rites of his

¹²² Zorach, "« THE FLOWER THAT FALLS BEFORE THE FRUIT »"; Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold : Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance*, 59–66. Note: these two publications are almost identical in message and wording with the article relating less to the overall interpretation of *La Galerie de François I*

¹²³ Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold : Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance*, 66.

¹²⁴ Zorach, 62.

followers”¹²⁵. To continue, the two myths of Attis and Adonis are often compared due to a variation of the story where Attis similarity dies at the hands of a wild boar, as does Adonis in Ovid’s account of the myth¹²⁶. Both tales also share the allegorical allusion to fertility as the blood of both Adonis and Attis fall from their wounds as they die on the ground flowers magically grow where the blood lands. Although there is a lack of blood in the fresco, which is a result of the idealism of mannerism and Rosso’s own style which is related to his other image of Christ in the pieta. This still plays into the representational argument that Zorach makes through her own analysis of overall the intentions of the galerie. She does admit that it is extremely likely that there is no consecutive or singular memorandum that was intended by the frescos and additional decoration in the galerie. However, if there is Zorach suggest an overall allegory of death and rebirth; all encompassed in the ideal of Blood. Thusly, the image of Adonis could be a combination with the tale of Attis, indicating one of the themes of sacrifice.

In the end, Zorach makes a very convincing argument for a non-consecutive theme within the galerie due to acknowledging the multiple layers that may be seen within each fresco, especially *The Death of Adonis* which has been so distorted in an attempt to create a singular message of the galerie. The theory of a singular reading of the galerie mostly perpetrated by the iconographical ideals of the Panofsky publication. This method of analysis deems that it would be impossible for a single image, or for the fresco cycle as a whole to have multiple layers of meaning. This goes back to Panofsky’s initial definition of the iconographic approach, Using the metaphor of a man with a hat, Panofsky automatically assumes a single solution, an answer that “reduces the formal aspects of identification to the realm of the ‘automatic’, technical, non-

¹²⁵ Zorach, “« THE FLOWER THAT FALLS BEFORE THE FRUIT »,” 67.

¹²⁶ *Ibid* 67.

interpretative”¹²⁷. However, everything that Zorach has researched, as well as all the information accumulated in this study, suggest that there must be not be a single cumulative message intended by the galerie, but more on this subject later.

To return to the narrow-sighted interpretation of the Panfoskys, the next fresco in their cycle of iconological interpretation, still in the second chapter of the galerie, is *The Revenge of Nauplis* also known as *Shipwreck*. The connection is made through indirect illumination between the image and two consecutive chapters in Hyginus’ *Fabulae* which tell the stories of the death of Ajax and the revenge against Odysseus of the King of Euboea, Nauplius. After the events of the Trojan War, the crew of Odysseus and the rest of the Greeks led a difficult journey home as they were persecuted by each god or goddess that they had offended¹²⁸. In the myth, Ajax is struck by lightning from Athena, the goddess for whose temple he used to violate Cassandra, his body is then taken by the sea in the wreck as it is broken against the jagged cliffs of the island of Euboea. The figure to the far left of the composition that is draped against the rocks almost unrecognizable as a human form, is identified as Ajax’s corpse. While Ajax dies at the hands of Athena, the rest of the ship is led to disaster in the revenge of King Nauplius for the wrongful execution by Odysseus of his own son. The king lights a fire on the coast of the island, Odysseus believing that the fire is a signal of safe passage follows it only to be led to the rocky shoreline where his ship and crew are decimated. At the center of the image, in the background a tall towering structure is lit at the top by the flame, the signal created to trick the Greek ship. The only survivor, according to Hyginus, is Odysseus himself, the only one for who Nauplius truly sought revenge upon. In the end, Nauplius also kills himself for his failure. Therefore, the story of Nauplius is significant because both the perpetrator of the tragedy as well as the victims are

¹²⁷ Zorach, *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold : Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance*, 44.

destroyed¹²⁹. While Guy de Tervarent also identified these figures within the fresco, Panofsky answers what allegorical message could be made in connection to the life of Francis I from these myths. Since the fresco faces the image of *The Death of Adonis* which represents the greatest loss in the life of the king, that of the Dauphin, it is only logical that this allegory would make a connection to another tragedy in his life. They argue that the figure of Nauplius represents the Connétable Charles de Bourbon, and his defection against the French crown. At one point, Charles de Bourbon was one of Francis' most trusted vassals, but due to the hostility of Louise de Savoie, he fell from grace. Determined not to lose everything, the French Connétable, sided with Charles V, the holy Roman emperor, in the assaults of Pavia and in the Sack of Rome¹³⁰. Charles de Bourbon would eventually die in the assault of Rome, killed by his own betrayal just as Nauplius died because of his own mistakes. This moment in Francis I's life symbolized hard learned lessons such as "denoting defeat, remorse and the retribution of sin"¹³¹. Lessons that the King learned from one of the greatest misfortunes of his life, the loss of his close confidant and vassal Charles de Bourbon, which is depicted as an extremely humbling moment that obviously impacted the moral viewpoint of the King as the fresco *Revenge of Nauplius* depicts a scene of human suffering at the hands of another human.

This ends the second chapter of the galerie, as Panofsky breaks the frescos into four chapters that all relate to the period and life of King Francis I. This last chapter marks a more drastic shift in the type of allegorical meanings that are associated with the frescos. Instead of relating to direct moments in Francis' life or kingship as the first two chapters did, the last one

¹²⁸ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, "The Iconography of the Galerie François I Er at Fontainebleau," 144–45.

¹²⁹ *Ibid* 145.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 145–46.

¹³¹ *Ibid* 147.

looks at moral humanism or “*la condition humaine*”¹³² for which the king valued in the arts and education. The galerie ends on a note of moral standpoint that can relate to all of humanity, but has a deep connection to the values of the King himself.

The first fresco in this chapter is called *La Fontaine de Jouvenece* or its English title *Perpetual Youth Lost by Men*, a fresco that relates the moral of the inevitability of time and ageing. As it is identified by previous authorships such as description from Charles Tereasse and Guy de Tervarent, the image is almost an exact replica of the anecdote written in Nicodorus of Colophon’s *Theriaca*, which is a sometimes-dry poem that mostly dictates the cures for poisonous animals¹³³. One of these animals being the snake for which he also tells the fable of how the snake gained eternal youth, as they will yearly shed their skin, by tricking men into giving them this heavenly gift. The fable goes that men having betrayed Prometheus, who stole fire for humanity, by giving him to the punishment of Jupiter. For this betrayal, Jupiter gave men the gift of eternal youth. In Rosso’s depiction of the tale, eternal youth is symbolically represented as a beautiful young woman who is carried on the back of a horse. These men, after being given this gift, for which they did not truly understand its power, continued on their path. Along their way home they came across a body of water, either a pond or river, and driven by thirst they sought a drink of the fresh water. However, the water was guarded by a snake-like reptile creature, which is represented in the fresco as a mutation between snake, dragon and even resembling a salamander. In order to quench their thirst the men traded Eternal Youth for a drink of water for them and their horse. Thus, the reptile came to possess eternal youth, meanwhile the men to the right of the water are depicted as young and those who cross the water are figures of old age. The fable recalls the moral for which all of humanity must face; the inevitability of

¹³² *Ibid* 148.

youth lost. Which is additionally emphasized by the flanking cartouches of the fresco as well as the carved reliefs. Below, the images show a mastiff as a small baby, in the prime of his youth and as an old greyhound. While the two framing images depict the personification of Summer, young, beautiful and strong against the personification of Winter who is withered grey by age. These images show the varying realities of “youth and old age, vigor and weakness, light and dark, reason and folly”¹³⁴. Which is also darkly contrasted with the symbol of Francis I, the Salamander a representation of perseverance as it is the only animal able to survive through fire¹³⁵ a descendant of mythological dragons and a reptile who obtained eternal youth. A representation that was extremely sentimental to Francis I who spent a great deal of his youth, after the age of five, extremely sick and weak. Therefore, the choice of this allegorical moral through the fable of *La Fontaine de Jouvence* is extremely logical as it is a value which the older understand, but that the King himself came to understand deeply at a young age.

The image that is placed across from the *Loss of Eternal Youth* is the representation of the *Education of Achilles*, which is an image that the Panofsky’s argue must be read in agreement with its paired fresco. They state one must

“convince the thought of including the *Education of Achilles* in the program of the Gallery; and we believe that it – like its *vis-à-vis*, the *Fontaine de Jouvence* – must be read as a human document rather than a mere piece of court history. To the idea of youth foolishly forfeited it opposes, as we phrased it, the idea of youth wisely guided”¹³⁶

¹³³ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, 148; de Tervarent, “Review of The Iconography of the Galerie François I Er at Fontainebleau, *Gazette Des Beaux-Arts*, 1958,” 533; *Les Énigmes de l’art*.

¹³⁴ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, “The Iconography of the Galerie François I Er at Fontainebleau,” 149.

¹³⁵ André Chastel, “La galerie François Ier au château de Fontainebleau; la salamandre,” 1972.

¹³⁶ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, “The Iconography of the Galerie François I Er at Fontainebleau,” 153.

The fresco that represents various scenes in which the young hero Achilles is taught by his teacher the centaur Chiron, who is both described as a drill sergeant and patient teacher, represents youth properly taught. The idea that the youth of Achilles is guided and properly put to use through his education in not only the physical but also the intellectual. It is in this way that Achilles is guided by the wisdom of his teacher. The image can be read as a representation of the humanist ideals of education and youth in regards to its moral message. The flanking images represent similar symbols that enhance the reference to guided youth that is made in the fresco of Achilles. Below, the cartouche shows two young male figures fighting as a potential reference to the future heroic deeds of Achilles. The framing images depict two almost identical figures of giants as they seem to strain against their frames with their muscular figures forced into the small spaces. The giants are identified as symbols of brute strength, but are constrained to show the influence of discipline on strength. Meanwhile the reliefs at first glance seem out of place with their feminine representations of such symbols as spinning yarn, a spinning wheel and a cradle, but they may be references to the strange lapse in time when Achilles hid disguised as a woman among the daughters of Lycomedes¹³⁷. The youth of Achilles is an allegory that demonstrates that youth is not something that should be foolishly mistreated, but it is a time for education, discipline and strength only if one is guided by wisdom instead of folly. This moral lesson is learned through what Panofsky calls a “human document” which illustrates the significance of youth. The only question is to whose youth does the *Education of Achilles* refer? It is concluded by the Panofsky’s that the image is either a personal image of either Francis I or his son the Dauphin, but they believe that there is more visual evidence to suggest that it is the Prince. In fact, it is suggested that the figure of Achilles is a reflection of the Dauphin and Chiron, his

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 151–52.

beloved teacher, is his father Francis. Making the fresco an additionally personal image that correlates to their relationship as father and heir, “teacher and pupil”¹³⁸.

Guy de Tervarent argues against this analysis of the image of Achilles as a symbol of youth as it should be guided and taught, as well as the identification of a relationship between Achilles and Chiron as the Dauphin and Francis. He makes the claim that the fresco *Education of Achilles* is an of introduction or even transition from the morals of *La Fontaine Jouvence* to the images of military triumph shown in the final two frescos. He states that,

*Les dernières fresques sont en effet consacrées à sa carrière militaire. Il semble dès lors naturel qu’elles s’ouvrent sur son éducation à la matière. Il y est comparé à Achille, lui, et non le Dauphin qui n’a jamais fait la guerre.*¹³⁹

These final frescos depict the military career of Francis the first, therefore de Tervarent concluded that this is a transitional image from the education of Francis in battle to his actual military career. It connects the ideas of youth that are conveyed in *Loss of Perpetual Youth* with the next fresco that depicts a scene of great military violence. This theory also disproves the idea that the image could be Dauphin, since he was never educated in military fighting having died too young. In the end, for the Panofskys; the image of Achilles causes argument over how the representation of youth may pertain to the rest of the galerie’s narrative relating to the life of Francis I, but it does present itself as a representation of mortal values on the purpose within the time of one’s youth.

As Guy de Tervarent has already identified it, as well the Panofskys’, in agreement, the last fresco pairing are images that denote the effects and the experiences of war. The first image in this pair certainly illustrates the chaos that is understood and felt in the midst of battle. The

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 154.

fresco has been titled *Battle of the Centaurs and Lapinths* after the myth retold in Ovid's *Metamorphosis* for which the scene is taken from¹⁴⁰. As the graphically detailed story goes, the battle was drunkenly instigated by the Centaurs at the marriage feast of Pirithous and Hippodamia. In the fresco, Rosso's skill at illustrating contorted figures locked in motion is put on full display as the human and half human figures are composed in the confusing mass of battle. The figures are defined by their musculature that reflects the strength required for such a grueling fight. In the end, the Lapinths, the more civilized humans, are victorious over the Centaurs due to the help of the hero Theseus. The cartouche below represents a complementary scene as identified by a French dignitary named Abbé Guilbert "the effects of wrath and drunkenness"¹⁴¹. The smaller image represents an older man who is reduced to a drunken stupor who begins to fight against another figure who represents youth who continues to drink despite the ill effects. Surrounding both allegorical figures are animals who the Panofskys identify as the Vices. For example, a bear that represents anger, and a donkey to personify stubbornness. This complements the image of the Lapinths' due to the wedding celebration causing both sides to become drunk in anger and initiating the battle. Both scenes represent moments of fighting caused not by noble motives but by corrupt incentives.

Many have tried to attribute this scene to a specific battle that would have occurred during the reign of Francis I, thus making it a symbol of the King's own military victories. For example, Pere Pierre Dan originally believed that the scene was meant to represent the Battle of

¹³⁹ de Tervarent, "Review of The Iconography of the Galerie François I Er at Fontainebleau, *Gazette Des Beaux-Arts*, 1958," 534.

¹⁴⁰ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, "The Iconography of the Galerie François I Er at Fontainebleau," 155.

¹⁴¹ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, 156.

Ceroiles¹⁴², which is one of the limited real victories that Francis achieved. However, this battle did not take place till 1544, after the completion of the galerie and the Death of Rosso Fiorentino. The only battle that may have fit into the timeline of the creation of the galerie would be the battle of Marignano, which took place in September 1515. Yet, the Panofsky's do not believe that this fresco represents a specific battle especially the battle of Marignano due to the insignificant impact that the victory would have had in longer war¹⁴³. Panofsky proposes that the scene does not actually represent a singular battle rather an important moral of war. The image that was chosen to represent in the fresco is at the very middle of the fight with the centaurs and the humans. The cause of the fight, Hippodamia herself is also not included in the scene. Overall, there is an excess of chaos as no side appears to have gained the upper hand yet and no side remembers what triggered the battle. The fresco does not allude or make apparent to which force will inevitably win the battle, rather the struggle to be superior despite not knowing if victory is possible. It is the "wild, chaotic conflict of opposing forces locked in an internecine and seemingly senseless struggle"¹⁴⁴. This is the exact moment and situation that the Panofskys' interpret as the moral message of the fresco as it related to international relations at the time. Believing that the image relates to the military struggle between Francis I and Charles V throughout their reigns, it is easy to understand the valuable lesson that is taught by this mythological conflict. After the "Ladies of Peace" of Cambrai treaty was signed by Louise de Savoie and Margerite of Austria, on behalf of Charles V, on August 3, 1529, war once again recommenced by 1536¹⁴⁵. The constant battle between the two opposing countries continued for

¹⁴² DAN and Bosse, *Le Tresor des merueilles de la maison royale de Fontaine-bleau, contenant la description de son antiquité, de sa fondation, de ses bastimens ... Ensemble les traictez de paix, les assemblées, les conferences ... qui s'y sont faictes iusques à present. [With engravings by Abraham Bosse.]*

¹⁴³ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, "The Iconography of the Galerie François I Er at Fontainebleau," 155.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 155.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 155.

so long that it was difficult at any one moment to see who would come out victorious. It was a prolonged and desperate battle, ultimately reminding both sovereigns of the pandemonium of war. A reminder that is immortalized by the fresco *the Battle of Centaurs and Lapinths*.

For the final fresco, Panofsky proposes a new interpretation and rejects the previously accepted attribution of the image. Instead, the article proposes a new allegory that can be illustrated in the fresco, one that relates to a previous composition that was made by Rosso and suggest that the interpretation is determined by the figure who is excluded from the image. This fresco is identified as *Venus Frustrated*, and continues the previous fresco's military commentary in a complementary allegorical message. Guy de Tervarent also suggested a similar meaning and debunks the previously associated myth that was related to the fresco. Originally, the fresco was seen as Venus chastising Cupid for his relationship with Psyche¹⁴⁶, as her son has abandoned Psyche despite their love. However, both agree that the fresco's message relies on the figure of Mars whose presence Venus waits for in anticipation shown in the image. The figure of Venus stands in her toilette waiting for the God of War to come and leave again for battle. The putti and his horse stand in the background of the image equally excited in the anticipation. The myth relates to a previous work made by Rosso Fiorentino, in fact the piece used as an introduction to the French court, *Mars Disarmed by Cupid* which shows the reluctant Mars being disrobed of his armor by Cupid as his helmet and shield are set aside on. In the fresco, there is a similar scene that is censored for what Panofsky presume is a public setting¹⁴⁷, thus making the scene more relating to the loyalty of Venus than the sensual action of seducing him to stay. The expression of Venus expresses the helplessness, or frustration as the title suggests, that she feels when Mars goes off to fight leaving her and the home behind. It is the fate of Mars to leave Venus for war,

¹⁴⁶ Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky, 157.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 158.

and she cannot alter this path. Therefore, the allegory relates to as de Tervarent phrases it as an “allusion à François Ier, à son gout des femmes, qui ne l’empêche pas de leur préférer, quand il le faut les combats”¹⁴⁸. This may be another commentary on the situational peace that began in 1529 created by the singing of the “Ladies of Peace” when Francis returned to Fontainebleau abandoning his military endeavors even planning to marry Charles V’s sister to ensure peace. Yet, another possible allusion is to the intellectual and artistic ambitions that the king returned to once peace began not just the power of love and home. While the *Battle of Centaurs and Lapinths* comments on the realities of the struggle without success in the midst of battle, its commentary paired fresco *Venus Frustrated* demonstrates what is left behind for war and what can be returned to in peace. In this way, the galerie’s imagery had come full circle. The original image is identified by the iconological interpretation as a connection made between Francis I and a roman leader in *L’ignorance Chasée*. The imagery begins with the king recognized as a roman Caesar figure, but ends with a message regarding the reality and life left behind in war. The Panofsky’s admit that this is a curious connection but do not elaborate on how this may relate to the overall interpretation of the frescos.

This ends the interpretation that the Panofsky’s developed via their iconological methods. Although this has become the most widely accepted version of analysis that has been done on *La Galerie de Francois I*, it is extremely narrow sighted. The iconological method fails to take into account many of the themes that this study has illuminated as the most important factors that effected the origins of the galerie. Panofsky is also extremely stubborn in concluding that there must only be one analytical narrative in the entirety of the galerie. Completely disregarding any attempts to further the discussion of the galerie through additional interpretations. Especially when the iconological may be challenged by other features of the

¹⁴⁸ Guy de Tervarent, *Les Énigmes de l’art*, 40.

galerie even when it is a chronological fact. In the end, the study by the Panofsky's is a perfect example of what would occur if the galerie was studied without taking into effect all the various features of its history and themes, many of which have been clarified in this paper. Such topics as the motives of Francis I's patronage have been simply assumed by the Panofsky interpretation. While the first chapter illuminated the verity of the King's true motive of patronage as advancing the superiority of the reputation of French art, the Panofsky interpretation assumes otherwise. Making the jump to conclude that Francis' commission of the galerie was on the basis of pure self-glorification, despite his consistent persistence to inspire and develop French art. In regards to the artist Rosso Fiorentino, the iconological interpretation fails to acknowledge the artistic process that followed Rosso from his Italian career. In chapter two, the drawing process, which took many years, is established as a characteristic of Rosso's work. A process that could not have been changed in the midst of working on the piece. Panofsky disregards this and presupposes that the frescos could have been altered or switched after the designs had already been commenced. An idea that is disproven by the proven and deliberate stages taken by the artist, even when it was not approved by the patron. Next, the iconological interpretation presented by Panofsky falls into the hole of mystery that was started by Vasari's own description, the article boasts that despite all the enigma associated with the *Galerie de François I* they have discovered the one true narrative that dispels all the paradoxes discussion on the challenge of interpreting the complex monument. Not to mention, the biggest conjecture that the Panofsky's interpretation relies on is the belief that the galerie was meant as a public space. After its creation, *La Galerie de François I* changed the precedent for galleries in French architecture, but it was designed in the light of the original purpose of a galerie in a French chateau. This purpose had nothing to do with public appearance, but was a personal space used by the inhabitants of a chateau in order to

go from one place in the complex to another¹⁴⁹. The wing that houses *La Galerie de François I* was designed in this way. Not as a public space, but as a private passage for the king, and whoever he chose to show it to, as a path between his chambers and the abbey of the Chateau. However, the Panofsky's claim that this space was meant for publicized glorification of the King's own life to a large public. This hardly coincides with what this extensive study has found to be true about these basic themes regarding the creation of *La Galerie de François I*.

The iconological attempt of Erwin and Dora Panofsky while extremely far reaching is immensely misguided. While a total study of the galerie would take many years to accomplish, any narrative interpretation must take into account the main themes that have been laid out in this paper. However, the most disturbing and foolish aspect of the Panofsky narrative is the way that it completely discounts any attempts to continue the discussion on the galerie. For the Panofsky's the iconological narrative is all powerful and the only right answer. There cannot be multiple interpretations or even additional storylines that potentially add to the narrative. One historian concludes and interesting theory that is extremely compelling in the case of the narrative in *La Galerie de François I*. Rebecca Zorach after an all-encompassing study on the French renaissance including all the themes of the galerie, hypothesizes that there are multiple and different narrative in the galerie. These narratives are all based on the individuals that Francis I would allow into the space at his own discretion. She spins a story that is based entirely on factual evidence concluding that each time Francis toured the galerie he would elaborate on the frescos, as he saw fit to do so, in order to display the humanist depth of the French painters. Elaborating on the fresco's tales made each story a mystery to outside viewers that could only be interpreted by the King, and the superior artists who worked at Fontainebleau. This theory plays upon every aspect that has been characterizes as a crucial theme of the galerie, and is most likely

¹⁴⁹ Jean Guillaume, "La Galerie Dans Le Château Français : Place et Fonction - Persée."

closer to the truth behind the enigma that has been inspired by the complexity of the decoration. It is a mystery that can only be divulged by the people who created it, and the select few who were allowed to be brought into the extravagant but secluded space. As much as historians try to, and desperately desire to understand the entirety of the galerie's composition, I do not believe it is truly feasible. One can only hope to understand the complexities and paradoxes that are presented by the various threads that have influenced the legacy of *La Galerie de François I*, from its original inception to its current reputation for its supposedly unsurpassed ambiguity.

Bibliography

- “Aretino [Del Tura], Pietro | Grove Art.”
- Auclair, Valérie. “L’invention Décorative de La Galerie François Ier Au Château de Fontainebleau.” *Seizième Siècle*, no. 3 (2007): 9–35.
- Barolsky, Paul. “WHAT ARE WE READING WHEN WE READ VASARI?” *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 22, no. 1 (2002): 33–35.
- Béguin, Sylvie. *L’École de Fontainebleau*. Paris: Paris, Éditions d’art Gonthier-Seghers, 1960.
- Béguin, Sylvie. “New Evidence for Rosso in France.” *The Burlington Magazine* 131, no. 1041 (1989): 828–38.
- Caron, Linda. “The Use of Color by Rosso Fiorentino.” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 19, no. 3 (1988): 355–78. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2540468>.
- Carroll, Eugene A. “Drawings by Rosso Fiorentino in the British Museum.” *The Burlington Magazine* 108, no. 757 (1966): 168–80.
- Carroll, Eugene A. *Rosso Fiorentino: Drawings, Prints, and Decorative Arts*. Washington: Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1987.
- Carroll, Eugene A. “Some Drawings by Rosso Fiorentino.” *The Burlington Magazine* 103, no. 704 (1961): 446–54.
- Chastel, André. “La galerie François Ier à Fontainebleau: Le System du Galerie.” *Bulletin de la Société nationale des Antiquaires de France* 1968, no. 1 (1970): 186–88. <https://doi.org/10.3406/bsnaf.1970.1704>.
- . “La galerie François Ier au château de Fontainebleau; la salamandre.” *Revue de l’art / Ministère de l’Education Nationale, de la Recherche et de la Technologie; Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. ... publ. sous l’égide du Comité Français d’Histoire de l’Art, avec le concours du Ministère de la Culture.*, 1972.
- Cholakian, Patricia Francis. *Marguerite de Navarre: Mother of the Renaissance*. New York: New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.
- Cox-Rearick, Janet. “Imagining the Renaissance: The Nineteenth-Century Cult of François I as Patron of Art.” *Renaissance Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (1997): 207–50. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3039334>.
- . *The Collection of Francis I: Royal Treasures*. New York: New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996.
- DAN, Pierre., and Abraham Bosse. *Le Tresor des merueilles de la maison royale de Fontainebleau, contenant la description de son antiquité, de sa fondation, de ses bastimens ... Ensemble les traictez de paix, les assemblées, les conferences ... qui s’y sont faictes iusques à present. [With engravings by Abraham Bosse.]*. Sebastien Cramoisy: Paris, 1642.
- Dimier, Louis. *Fontainebleau*. Paris: Paris, H. Laurens, 1908.
- Dora Panofsky, and Erwin Panofsky. “The Iconography of the Galerie François I Er at Fontainebleau.” *Gazette Des Beaux-Arts* 6th ser., no. 52 (September 1958): 113–77.
- Erwin Panofsky. *Studies in Iconology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1939.
- Guy de Tervarent. *Les Énigmes de l’art*. Paris, France: Les Editions d’art et d’histoire, 1940s.
- Havard, Henry. *La France Artistique et Monumentale*. Vol. 2. 6 vols. Paris: Paris, Librairie illustrée, 1892.

- Henri Zerner. "Fontainebleau School | Grove Art." Accessed February 16, 2020.
<https://www.oxfordartonline.com/view/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.001.0001/oao-9781884446054-e-7000028818>.
- Jean Guillaume. "La Galerie Dans Le Château Français : Place et Fonction - Persée." *Revue de l'Art*, no. 102 (1993): 32–42.
- Lossky, Boris. "La Restauration de La Galerie de François Ier Au XIXème Siècle." *Zeitschrift Für Kunstgeschichte* 37, no. 1 (1974): 40–51. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1481855>.
- Michael Davenport. "Rosso Fiorentino | Grove Art." Accessed February 25, 2020.
<https://www.oxfordartonline.com/view/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.001.0001/oao-9781884446054-e-7000074062>.
- "Pietà | Louvre Museum | Paris." Accessed February 29, 2020. <https://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/pieta>.
- Tervarent, G. de. Review of *Review of The Iconography of the Galerie François I er at Fontainebleau, Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1958*, by Dora Panofsky and Erwin Panofsky. *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 21, no. 2 (1959): 530–35.
- Vasari, Giorgio. *The Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*. London : New York: London : J.M. Dent & Sons, 1927.
- Zerner, Henri. *Renaissance Art in France : The Invention of Classicism*. Paris: Paris, 2003.
- . *The School of Fontainebleau*. New York: New York, H.N. Abrams, 1969.
- Zorach, Rebecca. *Blood, Milk, Ink, Gold : Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance*. Chicago: Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- . "« THE FLOWER THAT FALLS BEFORE THE FRUIT »: THE GALERIE FRANÇOIS I Er AT FONTAINEBLEAU AND ATYS EXCASTRATUS." *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 62, no. 1 (2000): 63–87.