THE IMAGE OF A QUEEN: THE REPRESENTATION OF CATHERINE DE' MEDICI AS PENELOPE IN THE GALERIE D'ULYSSE

by

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(Under the Direction of Shelley Zuraw)

ABSTRACT

This study explores the patronage and significance of the five sixteenth-century fresco scenes illustrating the reunion of Ulysses and Penelope designed by Francesco Primaticcio in the no longer extant Galerie d'Ulysse at Fontainebleau. Correlations are drawn between the imagery represented in the frescoes and two other works of art from Primaticcio's oeuvre: the tomb of King Henri II and Queen Catherine de' Medici of France and a painting titled *Ulysses and Penelope* in the Toledo Museum of Art. Also examined in relation to the frescoes are Catherine de' Medici's efforts to create a positive public image of herself as Regent of France following the death of Henri II. It is argued that Homer's Penelope was a suitable mythological character with whom Catherine de' Medici could identify; and that the Galerie d'Ulysse frescoes of Ulysses and Penelope were a means of public propaganda for the recently widowed queen-regent.

INDEX WORDS: Galerie d'Ulysse, Francesco Primaticcio, Fontainebleau, King Henri II of France, Queen Catherine de' Medici of France, Tomb, Ulysses, Penelope, Reunion

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The promotion of Italian art and architecture in Renaissance France can be largely attributed to King François I (1494-1547), who throughout the course of his reign summoned Italian artists to the French court and patronized their works. One of François' greatest architectural endeavors was the construction of a royal château at Fontainebleau (begun 1528), a residence that soon became a major hub of artistic production during his reign and that of his son, King Henri II (1519-1559). When François I died in 1547, Henri II's Italian-born wife, Queen Catherine de' Medici (1519-1589), continued to advocate for the artists of her native land, and her clout in the French court after Henri's death in 1559 ensured the continuation of Italian-inspired art in France well into the 1560's and 70's.

In 1530, François I hired Italian artist Rosso Fiorentino (1494-1540) to direct the interior decoration of Fontainebleau. Many French, Flemish and Italian artists were recruited to work as Rosso's assistants. When Rosso died in 1540, fellow Italian artist Francesco Primaticcio (c.1504-1570), who had accepted François I's invitation to come to work at Fontainebleau in 1532, inherited Rosso's position as master designer and supervisor of decoration of all interior spaces of the château. This melting pot of artists responsible for the château's interior decoration, which came to be known as the School of Fontainebleau, created a unique and elaborate style of ornamentation, which combined Italian Mannerism with French Classicism in an array of media including fresco, wood and stucco embellished with gilding.

The largest artistic project pursued at Fontainebleau, which sadly no longer survives, was the decoration of the Galerie d'Ulysse, a gallery in the southern wing of the château that ran along the gardens and linked a square pavilion to a constructed grotto. The walls of the Galerie d'Ulysse were decorated with fifty-eight frescoes illustrating the story of Ulysses from Homer's *Odyssey*. Five of the fifty-eight scenes depicted the story of Ulysses' reunion with Penelope, a subject that has rarely been represented in Western art. A modified version of one of these five scenes was painted on canvas by Francesco Primaticcio, who designed the entire program, and is now in the Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio (figure 1). It is the only surviving easel painting by Primaticcio that closely follows one of the fresco scenes in the Galerie d'Ulysse. Surprisingly, little is known about the patronage and function of this painting. Its peculiar subject matter suggests that Primaticcio must have produced the painting for someone who was familiar with the Galerie d'Ulysse and would have appreciated its theme. The painting has been dated to ca. 1560, sometime around the death of Henri II and Catherine de' Medici's regency.

Subsequent to Henri's death, Catherine strove to present a positive image of herself as the regent of France. It was common for people of high authority in the sixteenth century to identify themselves with popular mythological or historical figures and use attributes associated with those figures as their own personal emblems. Catherine, for example, identified with Queen Artemisia of Caria, a woman famously remembered as a grief-stricken widow, who successfully ruled her country.[1] Just as Artemisia commissioned the colossal Mausoleum at Halikarnassus for her late husband, King Mausolus, so did Catherine erect a monumental tomb and burial chapel for Henri II. The designer of the tomb was Primaticcio, and interestingly enough, some of the

[1] For further reading on Catherine's self-identification with Artemisia, see Sheila ffolliott, "Catherine de'Medici as Artemisia: Figuring the Powerful Widow," in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, et. al., (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 227-241.

imagery from the tomb is very similar to one of the five reunion scenes in the Galerie d'Ulysse. The five reunion scenes in the Galerie d'Ulysse, which are distinctive due to their unique subject matter and repetitive imagery, have only been studied as part of a larger series.[2] In the course of this paper, I will examine the five reunion scenes independently as a group in an attempt to determine their significance in the gallery's symbolical scheme. I will argue that the five reunion scenes in the Galerie d'Ulysse were an addition to the program ordered by Catherine after Henri II's death that served as an allegorical representation of the Queen and her late husband as Penelope and Ulysses, and that the Toledo painting of *Ulysses and Penelope* was commissioned by Catherine for private use as a portable reminder of the personal significance of the five reunion scenes painted on the Galerie walls at Fontainebleau.

[2] Sylvie Béguin et al., *La galerie d'Ulysse à Fontainebleau* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), 300-311, is the only source in which all five reunion scenes are discussed. It is a comprehensive study of the decoration of the Galerie d'Ulysse, in which the reunion scenes are given brief, general analyses.

CHAPTER II

THE GALERIE D'ULYSSE: PATRONAGE, PROGRAM, AND SCENES OF ULYSSES AND PENELOPE'S REUNION

The "grande galerie" at Fontainebleau, which was eventually named the Galerie d'Ulysse, was at the time the longest gallery in France, measuring one hundred and fifty meters long. Its ceiling and walls were decorated in fresco and stuccowork. The wall decoration made up the largest Ulyssean fresco cycle in the history of art, comprised of fifty-eight scenes illustrating the life of Ulysses (Appendix A). The ceiling frescoes illustrated various scenes showing the dominion of the gods of Olympus in accordance with the laws of nature.[3] Sadly, the Galerie d'Ulysse no longer exists as it was destroyed in 1738 after almost two centuries of neglect.

The program of the gallery's decoration was designed by the Italian artist Francesco Primaticcio (c.1504 – 1570). Not much is known of Primaticcio's artistic training. He was born in Bologna in 1504 and is said to have trained first with Innocenzo da Imola (c.1490-c.1545) and then with Bagnacavallo (1484-1582), both of whom were principally influenced by the school of Raphael.[4] By 1527, Primaticcio was working in Mantua as an assistant to Guilio Romano for the

[3] Few preparatory drawings for the vault decoration of the Galerie d'Ulysse survive. It is therefore difficult to reconstruct a plan of the scheme of the ceiling. Béguin's reconstruction of the gallery's ceiling decoration is the most complete attempt by scholars. See Béguin et al. (1985), 129-198.

[4] Innocenzo da Imola was a Bolognese artist, who principally painted religious scenes, mostly altarpieces but also frescoes. His first and only work of a mythological theme was begun after 1541 in Bologna. Innocenzo was commissioned to decorate the Palazzino della Viola with mythological scenes, some of which are damaged but still in situ. The scheme of the project followed the model of Raphael's fresco program in the Loggia of Leo X in Rome. See Grazia Agostini and Claudia Pedrini, *Innocenzo da Imola, il tirocinio di un artista* (Casalecchio di Reno (BO): Grafis, 1993), 11-42. Bagnacavallo, another Bolognese artist, was said by Vasari to have

decoration of the Palazzo del Té. In 1532, Primaticcio moved to Fontainebleau, accepting an invitation from François I to help decorate the royal château. Once in France, Primaticcio worked alongside Rosso Fiorentino on several different decorative projects, including the Galerie de François I^{er} (1532-39) and the Chambre du Roi (1533-35).[5] When Rosso died in 1540, Primaticcio, who at the time was in Rome making moulds of important contemporary and ancient sculptures to be cast in bronze for the King, replaced Rosso's position as director of artistic activity at Fontainebleau. Primaticcio received multiple royal honors including being named Abbé de Saint-Martin-ès-Ayres à Troyes in 1544, Surintendant des bâtiments royaux in 1559, and later Conseiller du Roy in 1562.[6]

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traveled to Rome sometime during Raphael's stay there (c.1508-1520). It has often been said that Bagnacavallo helped with Raphael's decoration of the Vatican Logge; however, this cannot be confirmed. It is certain, though, that Raphael's work was the chief influence in that of Bagnacavallo. See Carla Bernardini, *Il Bagnacavallo Senior: Bartolomeo Ramenghi, pittore (1484?-1542?): catalogo generale* (Rimini: Luis, 1990) 9-40.

[5] The plan for the decoration of the Galerie François I (*in situ*) was conceived by Rosso in 1532, and the stuccowork and painting was carried out under Rosso's supervision from 1536 to 1539. Twelve allegorical, historical and mythological themed frescoes framed by stucco grotesques were intended to honor the king's reign. See William L. Logan, *The Gallery of Francis I at Fontainebleau: a Study of l'eléphant fleurdelysé as an Example of Multilevel Allegory* (M.A. Thesis, University of Georgia, 1982), 18-28. The technique employed by Primaticcio for the stuccowork derived from what he learned from working with Giulio Romano at the Palazzo del Té in Mantua. See Egon Verheyen, *The Palazzo del Tè in Mantua: Images of Love and Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 24-38. The decoration of the Chambre du Roi (1533–5), which no longer exists, was carried out under the supervision of Primaticcio; however, final decisions about the room's decoration were probably made by Rosso. It is probable that the plan for the decoration was designed by Giulio Romano and brought to Fontainebleau by Primaticcio upon his arrival in France. The walls were decorated with frescoes representing the *History of Psyche* over wainscoting up to about two meters from the ground level. See Dominique Cordellier, *Primatice: Maître de Fontainebleau* (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 2004), 84-91.

[6] For more biographical information of Primaticcio see Cordellier (2004), 18-59; Janet Cox-Rearick, *The Collection of Francis I: Royal Treasures* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1996), 42-63, 325-334; Sylvie Béguin et al., (1985), 81-94; and Giorgio Vasari, "Francesco Primaticcio," in vol. 9 of *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters Sculptors and Architects*, translated by Gaston du C. De Vere. (AMS Press Inc., 1976), 143-150.

Primaticcio's planning for the Galerie d'Ulysse decoration was begun in the late 1530's under the patronage of François I. While the dating of the execution of the decoration remains obscure, it is certain that the ceiling frescoes were executed first. It is believed that only a few of the vault frescoes were completed when François I died in 1547. Henri II then took over the patronage of the project. The rest of the vault frescoes were completed sometime between 1547 and 1559. While it is not certain when exactly the Ulyssean program for the wall frescoes was decided upon and when Primaticcio's preparatory drawings were produced,[7] the wall frescoes were completed between 1559 and 1560 by Primaticcio's assistant, Nicolò dell' Abbate (c.1510 - 1571).[8] Primaticcio's supervision of the Galerie d'Ulysse at Fontainebleau was one of countless projects assigned to the artist by the French Crown during his stay in France between 1532 until his death in 1570. Due to the many artistic projects assigned to Primaticcio, it was typical for him to make the preparatory designs and have assistants carry out the actual execution of the work.

[7] For a discussion on the dating of the decoration of the Galerie d'Ulysse, see Sylvie Béguin et al., (1985), 95-103.

[8] Nicolò, born in Modena, is most famous for his contributions to large decorative projects. Before his arrival at Fontainebleau in 1552, Nicolò was working in Bologna frescoing various narrative and landscape scenes first (1547-c.1550) in the Palazzo Torfanini (now Zucchini-Solomei) and then in the Palazzo Poggi (c.1550-1552). His artistic experience in Bologna probably helped him obtain his position as assistant to Primaticcio at Fontainebleau. See Sylvie Béguin et al., *Nicolò dell'Abate: storie dipinte nella pittura del cinquecento tra Modena e Fontainebleau*. (Cinisello Balsamo, Milano: Silvana Editoriale Spa, 2005), 15-26, 125-132. The decoration of the Galerie d'Ulysse is only mentioned one time in the royal accounts. In a contract for the years 1559-1560, Nicolò was ordered to "faire et parfaire" (make and perfect) the decoration of the gallery. The contract specifically calls for the completion of friezes below the frescoes, eleven trompe l'oeil windows, frescoes to be painted above each of the five chimneys, and the rest of the gallery's frescoes on the west wall. This contract confirms that the gallery was completed between 1559 and 1560. See Béguin et al., (1985), 52-55.

Although the Galerie d'Ulysse is no longer extant, much can be learned about the Galerie's appearance from the surviving textual descriptions,[9] Primaticcio's preparatory drawings, and numerous copies of the fresco scenes produced in various media by admiring artists of the esteemed Ulyssean cycle.[10] The most valuable source of imagery is a collection of engravings done by the Flemish artist Theodoor van Thulden (1606-1669). Published in Paris in 1633, van Thulden's *Les Travaux d'Ulysse* contained copies after all fifty-eight fresco scenes that decorated the walls of the Galerie d'Ulysse.[11] His important publication has helped scholars to reconstruct visually the Ulyssean cycle that was once one of Primaticcio's greatest designs. As one entered the Galerie d'Ulysse, the fresco scenes began on the left or north wall with the *Embarkation of the Greeks from Troy* continuing to the end of the north wall with the twenty-ninth fresco of *Ulysses Taking Leave from Alkinoos*. One then walked across the Galerie to the south wall, which began with the thirtieth fresco of *Sleeping Ulysses Transported to his Native*

[9] Béguin et al., (1985), 365-368, printed ten textual descriptions of the Galerie d'Ulysse, including a letter written by Gaspar de Vega, ambassador of Spain, who visited Fontainebleau in 1556, a passage from Giorgio Vasari's 1568 entry on the life of Primaticcio, and several other descriptions of the Galerie from seventeenth and early eighteenth-century texts about the château at Fontainebleau.

[10] Béguin et al., (1985), 67-80, states that several artists copied scenes from the Galerie d'Ulysse, including Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), Bolognese-born and second-generation Fontainebleau artist Ruggiero de Ruggieri (c.1555-1570), French painter and engraver Jacques Belly (1609-1674), Flemish engraver Theodoor van Thulden (1606-1669), and an unidentified artist who made an album of drawings of all fifty-eight frescoes sometime at the end of the sixteenth or beginning of the seventeenth century. This work is called the Album Palange, named after the name inscribed on the title page, and is located in the British Museum. Béguin mentions another artist who copied frescoes from the Galerie d'Ulysse, whose name is given as M. Colbaey. Colbaey painted four miniatures illustrating scenes from the gallery, which were all sold at auction in 1972. Images of these artists' copies are dispersed throughout the catalog entries on the fifty-eight Galerie d'Ulysse frescoes in ibid, 201-328.

[11] All of the engravings from *Les Travaux d'Ulysse* are pictured in Béguin et al., (1985), 201-328, and several are included in Alain Roy, *Theodoor van Thulden (1606-1669): Un peintre baroque du cercle de Rubens* (Zwolle : Waanders Uitg., 1991), 122-130.

Country, and continued back toward the entrance, where the final fifty-eighth fresco of *Ulysses Receiving Homage from his Subjects* completed the narrative journey.

The appearance of the Homeric epics in France can be traced to the establishment of the *Collège des lecteurs royaux* in 1530; the demand for the sought-after epics reached its height between 1540 and 1570 with editions in French vernacular.[12] The *Collège des lecteurs royaux*, which was founded by François I, was dedicated to teaching students the ancient languages of Greek, Hebrew and Latin and was furnished with a library filled with ancient texts, including Greek and Latin editions of the Homeric epics.[13] While the *Odyssey* gained popularity during

[12] According to Philip Ford, "Homer in the French Renaissance," *Renaissance Quarterly* 59 (2006): 14-18, the Homeric epics were introduced to the French court in 1530 with the establishment of the *Collège*; however, it took some time for the texts to be assimilated into French humanist culture. The texts first appeared in the original Greek and Latin translations in France and were initially read predominantly by students studying those languages. The epic poems became more widely read beginning in the 1540's, when they were translated into the French vernacular. The first French translation of Homer was the first ten books of the *Iliad* in 1545 by Hugues Salel (1504-1553). The first French translation of the *Odyssey* appeared in 1547 by Jacques Peletier (1517-1582) but included only the first two books.

[13] French translations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were not available until the mid to late 1540's. No French translations of the *Odyssey* were published before 1547; and even then, it was only the first two books that were published in Jacques Peletier's *Oeuvres poètiques* (1547). Ford (2006), 15. It was Hugues Salel's French translation of the first ten books of the *Iliad* of 1545 that captured the attention of the royal court at the time in which the Galerie d'Ulysse was begun. In fact, it was François I who requested a French translation of the *Iliad* from Salel and who praised the work in the *privilège* of the 1545 publication: Marian Rothstein, "Homer for the Court of François I," *Renaissance Quarterly* 59 (2006): 732. It was not until 1604 that an entire edition of the *Odyssey* translated into French was published. Before Salomon Certon's 1604 publication of *L'Odysée d'Homère de la version de Salomon Certon en vers François* (Paris: L'Angelier), only the first three books of the *Odyssey* had been printed in French. The first Italian translation of the entire *Odyssey* by M. Girolamo Baccelli was not published until 1582 (Florence: Sermartelli); therefore, for his Ulyssean imagery, Primaticcio must have relied on either a Greek or Latin edition of the *Odyssey*, both of which would have been accessible to him in the library at Fontainebleau. For a list of the Homeric works recorded in the Fontainebleau library, which was started by François I in 1531, see Ernest Quentin-Bauchart, *La bibliothèque de Fontainebleau et les livres des derniers Valois à la bibliothèque nationale (1515-1589)* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1971), 122-123. Many French scholars would have been well versed in the text, and one such scholar, Jean Dorat (1508-1588), may have served as a sort of literary advisor to Primaticcio. For a chronological listing of publications of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in the

the sixteenth century, it was the *Iliad* that was more commonly represented in art. Nonetheless, the *Odyssey* became the chosen subject for the walls of the Galerie d'Ulysse and subsequently the largest Ulyssean fresco cycle in Renaissance Europe.

Marian Rothstein has posited that Hugues Salel's French translation of the *Iliad*[14] made an allusion to the monarchy of François I through the character of Agamemnon, King of the Achaeans, drawing a parallel between Agamemnon's divine authority to rule by Jupiter's sanction and that of François I's, invested in him by the Church. Rothstein goes on to say that the character of Ulysses acts as extension of Agamemnon's power, using Agamemnon's scepter while in the company of the Greeks.[15] While the Galerie d'Ulysse cycle is based on the *Odyssey* rather than the *Iliad*, it is plausible that the same association of authority between François I and Agamemnon was employed in Primaticcio's scheme as well.

The seventh and eighth scenes located at the beginning of the Galerie d'Ulysse cycle featured Agamemnon: *The Return of Agamemnon* and *The Murder of Agamemnon and Cassandra*. It is conceivable that Primaticcio's Agamemnon was an allusion to François I. Like Agamemnon, François was a warrior king, who was constantly marching off into wars against his sworn enemy, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. Agamemnon, however, is only pictured in two scenes of the large cycle. If Agamemnon indeed was intended as a reference to François

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sixteenth century, see Philip H. Young, *The Printed Homer: A 3,000 Year Publishing and Translation History of the Iliad and the Odyssey* (Jefferson, NC; London: McFarland and Company, Inc., Publishers, 2003), 177-196.

[14] The first two books by Salel were printed in a pirated edition in Lyon in 1542. The first ten books were printed in an authorized edition in 1545, and the eleventh and twelfth books were printed in 1554. Ford (2006), 15.

[15] Rothstein (2006), 748-750. Rothstein remarks that while Salel could have referred to Agamemnon's instrument as a "staff," which would have been a more appropriate term for the context, Salel insists on "scepter," a term with a more modern connotation for a royal apparatus. Also, the great French poet Ronsard picked up on Salel's connection between François I and Agamemnon and wrote about it in his "Epitafe de Hugues Salel," which is cited in English in Rothstein, 750.

I, his scant inclusion in the cycle would have been only a small tribute to the original patron of the artistic project. François, though he was probably responsible for approving the planning of the Galerie's scheme, died some twelve years before the completion of the wall frescoes, and the year in which the *Odyssey* was chosen as the theme for the gallery walls is unknown.[16] Therefore, it is likely that the theme was decided upon after François' death during the reign of Henri II, permitting the conjecture that the Ulyssean cycle reflected the political imagery of the French monarchy during the reign of Henri II. The inclusion of the two scenes picturing King Agamemnon would have been a clever way of honoring the Galerie's first patron. The first scene of the *Return of Agamemnon* to Mycenae shows Agamemnon kissing the earth, his crown and scepter resting on the ground. Such a scene would have symbolized François' humility and love of country. The second scene of the *Murder of Agamemnon and Cassandra* shows Agamemnon being stabbed by Aegisthus. In actuality, François was not murdered but died of syphilis. Perhaps the dramatic scene of Agamemnon's murder was meant to glorify the French king by equating François' death with the traumatic loss of a great warrior king.

The rest of the cycle revolves around Ulysses, who in Salel's *Iliad* served as an extension of Agamemnon's power. If Agamemnon was symbolic of François I in the Galerie d'Ulysse, then Ulysses, King of Ithaca, could have been emblematic of François I's son and successor, Henri II. François I was the first patron of the Galerie d'Ulysse, and it is fitting that his appearance under the guise of Agamemnon should be positioned at the beginning of the cycle. Henri II, who inherited the project after his father's death in 1547 and oversaw the majority of its

[16] See Béguin et al., (1985), 100. It is certain that the decoration of the Galerie's vault was commenced under François' reign and finished under Henri's. Since the walls of the Galerie were not finished until 1559, it could be the case that the theme for the wall frescoes was determined by Henri. Perhaps all that was accomplished under François' patronage was the scheme for the vault decoration.

enterprise, was represented emblematically as Ulysses, to whom the entire cycle is dedicated. Ulysses' adventures overseas could be imagined as a parallel to Henri II's efforts to conquer foreign territories during the Italian War (1551-1559), and the restoration of peace in his kingdom of Ithaca following his return could be equated with the restitution of peace in France after Henri signed the peace treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis that ended the war with Italy in 1559.

Perhaps one of the most striking aspects of the Ulysses cycle at Fontainebleau is the considerable amount of attention paid to the subject of the reunion of Ulysses and Penelope. Of the fifty-eight scenes representing the adventures of Ulysses, five are dedicated to Ulysses' reunion with Penelope. The scenes, which begin with the forty-sixth fresco, are as follows: *The Reunion of Ulysses and Penelope* (figure 2), *Ulysses Escorting Penelope to their Marital Bed* (figure 3), *Ulysses Recounting his Adventures to Penelope* (figure 4), *Ulysses Sleeping next to Penelope* (figure 5), and *Minerva Waking Ulysses and Penelope* (figure 6).[17]

The story of Ulysses' reunion with Penelope was masterfully complicated by Homer, who extended the narrative over five books.[18] The first ten years of Ulysses' absence were spent in Troy battling the famed Trojan foes in the *Iliad*. While trying to return home, he then endured a seven-year captivity on the island of Ogygia with the nymph Kalypso. The next three years comprised his legendary adventures during his journey home, in which Ulysses had to overcome dangerous obstacles, including the Cyclops Polyphemus, the Sirens, the Lotus-Eaters, the sorceress Circe, and Scylla and Charybdis lurking in the Wandering Rocks. In all, Ulysses was

[17] The titles of these scenes are my translations of those given in French by Béguin that follow: *Retrouvailles d'Ulysse et de Pénélope*, *Ulysse mène Pénélope au lit conjugal*, *Ulysse raconte ses aventures à Pénélope*, *Ulysse s'endort près de Pénélope* and *Minerve reveille Ulysse et Pénélope*. See Béguin et al., (1985), 300-311; cat. no. 46-50.

[18] The first reunion of Penelope and Ulysses occurs in the beginning of Book XIX. See Richard Lattimore, trans., *The Odyssey* (New York, Evanston and London: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965), 283-290. But it is not until Book XXIII (ibid, 336-344) that Penelope is able recognize the disguised Ulysses.

separated from his native land of Ithaca for some twenty years before his celebrated reunion with his wife, son Telemachus, and country.

While the reader is well informed as to the hero's whereabouts, Penelope and Telemachus are left in Ithaca without a clue as to where he is and whether or not he is still alive. To make matters worse, Ithaca's most eligible suitors have invaded Ulysses' palace, eating and drinking all of their sustenance while awaiting the faithful Penelope's decision as to which suitor will become her new husband. Day after day, Penelope weaves away at her loom, making a shroud for Ulysses' father Laertes, saying that upon its completion, she will choose a suitor. Secretly at night, Penelope unravels her day's work, prolonging her impending decision.

When Ulysses first arrives in Ithaca, Athena disguises him as an old, weathered beggar. His identity is first revealed to Telemachus, with whom he devises a plan to kill all of Penelope's unscrupulous suitors, and then to the nurse Euryclea. The disguised Ulysses spends time in his own palace playing the role of a beggar, unrecognized by everyone else including Penelope. It is not until after Ulysses slays the suitors in Book XXII that his identity is finally revealed to Penelope. Penelope is summoned by the housemaid Euryclea to greet the now undisguised Ulysses. Penelope has reservations, however, about the true identity of her guest and decides to put him to the test. She asks Euryclea to make up the bed that Ulysses built himself and place it outside of the bedchamber, knowing that the bed could not be moved as it was constructed from a rooted olive tree. A maddened Ulysses then goes on a rant about how the bed cannot be moved because of its unique construction, all the while assuring Penelope that he is indeed her beloved husband. The reunited couple embraces. Ulysses leads Penelope to their bed, where they stay up conversing until sleep falls upon Ulysses. After he has a sufficient amount of sleep, Athena summons the light of Dawn to awaken the contented couple.

The forty-sixth wall fresco in the Galerie d'Ulysse, *The Reunion of Ulysses and Penelope*, is recorded in a preparatory drawing by Primaticcio (figure 2) as well as several consistent copies, including a drawing and engraving by Van Thulden for his *Les Travaux d'Ulysse*.[19] Primaticcio's preparatory drawing shows Ulysses and Penelope embracing in the immediate foreground of a large room in the palace with a small group of spectators behind them. The corresponding text from the *Odyssey* occurs in lines 205-240 of Book XIII:

> So he [Ulysses] spoke, and her [Penelope's] knees and the heart within her went slack as she recognized the clear proofs that Ulysses had given; but then she burst into tears and ran straight to him, throwing her arms around the neck of Ulysses, and kissed his head, saying: 'Do not be angry with me Ulysses, since, beyond other men, you have the most understanding. The gods granted us misery, in jealousy over the thought that we two, always together, should enjoy our youth, and then come to the threshold of old age. Then do not now be angry with me nor blame me, because I did not greet you, as I do now, at first when I saw you. For always the spirit deep in my very heart was fearful that some one of mortal men would come my way and deceive me with words….'He wept as he held his lovely wife, whose thoughts were virtuous….so welcome was her husband to her as she looked upon him, and she could not let him go from the embrace of her white arms.[20]

In Primaticcio's drawing, Penelope, whose left hand cups the chin of Ulysses, appears to be leaning in to kiss his head. In accordance with Homer's text, Penelope's right arm is wrapped around Ulysses' neck. The gaze of Penelope's eyes extends over the tops of Ulysses' eyes, level with his forehead, perhaps the spot she intends to kiss. Ulysses' eyes are cast downward, possibly to indicate that he is weeping in accordance with the text.

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[19] Most of the copies are pictured in Béguin et al., (1985), 300-302 (Fig. 332. Primaticcio, preparatory drawing for *The Reunion of Ulysses and Penelope* for the Galerie d'Ulysse, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm; Fig. 333. T. Van Thulden, *Retrouvailles d'Ulysse et de Pénélope*, Albertina, Vienna; Fig. 334. J. Belly, *Retrouvailles d'Ulysse et de Pénélope*, Cabinet des Dessins, Louvre, Paris; Fig. 335. after Primaticcio, *Retrouvailles d'Ulysse et de Pénélope*, Cabinet des Dessins, Louvre, Paris; Fig. 336. Album Palange, *Retrouvailles d'Ulysse et de Pénélope*, British Museum, London).

[20] Lattimore (1965), 340-341.

While no drawing by Primaticcio exists for the forty-seventh wall fresco of the Galerie d'Ulysse, *Ulysses Escorting Penelope to their Marital Bed*, there are several copies after the fresco including Van Thulden's engraving and three drawings (figure 3).[21] The Van Thulden engraving depicts Ulysses and Penelope being led by a woman holding a torch to a bedchamber, where three women are pictured making up the bed. Behind the still embracing Ulysses and Penelope are two men, one of which is making eye contact with Ulysses. The accompanying Homeric text for this scene occurs in Book XXIII, lines 288-294:

> Now as these two [Ulysses and Penelope] were conversing thus with each other, meanwhile the nurse and Eurynome were making the bed up with soft coverings, under the light of their flaring torches. Then when they had worked and presently had a firm bed made, the old woman went away back to bed in her own place, while Eurynome, as mistress of the chamber, guided them on their way to the bed, and her hands held the torch for them.[22]

The Van Thulden engraving faithfully portrays the text above. Ulysses and Penelope are led by the chamber-mistress Eurynome to their bedchamber, which is being prepared by several nurses. The two men behind Ulysses and Penelope are identified as Telemachus and Eumaios, the oxherd who first gave shelter to Ulysses upon his arrival in Ithaca. Both Telemachus and Eumaios fought alongside Ulysses against the suitors and were still present at this point in the story. The beardless, helmeted figure on the right is Telemachus, and the bearded man on the left is Eumaios.

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[21] Van Thulden's drawings and engravings of the frescoes consistently look like Primaticcio's preparatory drawings, when both examples can be compared. While in the case of the forty-seventh fresco, there is no surviving preparatory drawing, there is little risk in assuming that the Van Thulden drawing is a faithful copy of the original fresco. For images, see Béguin et al., (1985), 303-304 (Fig. 338. T. Van Thulden, *Ulysse mène Pénélope au lit conjugal*, Albertina, Vienna; Fig. 339. J. Belly, *Ulysse mène Pénélope au lit conjugal*, Cabinet des Dessins, Louvre, Paris; Fig. 340. Album Palange, *Ulysse mène Pénélope au lit conjugal*, British Museum, London).

[22] Lattimore (1965), 342.

It is in the next fresco scene in the Galerie d'Ulysse, *Ulysses Recounting his Adventures to Penelope* (figure 4), that Telemachus and Eumaios take their leave. Several copies of the forty-eighth scene in the Galerie exist, including a Van Thulden drawing and engraving, several anonymous drawings, and the painting by Primaticcio in the Toledo Museum of Art.[23] The fresco was composed of Ulysses and Penelope sitting up in bed, covered in bedding from the waist down, on the left side of the immediate foreground. The figures gaze into each other's eyes. While each copy of the fresco varies slightly in regard to the exact positioning of Penelope's fingers, generally Penelope extends the index finger of her right hand toward the open palm of her left hand. Ulysses reaches with his left hand to caress the chin of Penelope.[24] Positioned on the floor next to Ulysses are his body armor, shield, sword and quiver. The right half of the drawing is composed of a group of five women holding hands and in the middle ground a partially seen man gesturing toward them with both hands. In the central background, peering through the doorway and up the flight of stairs, one can barely make out the shapes of two figures walking off into the distance beyond the doorway. The corresponding Homeric text occurs in Book XXIII, lines 295-301:

> When she [Eurynome] had brought them to the chamber she went back. They [Ulysses and Penelope] then gladly went together to bed. At this time Telemachos and the oxherd and swineherd stopped the beat of their feet in the dance, and stopped the women, and they themselves went to be in the shadowy

[23] For images of these copies, see Béguin et al., (1985), 305-306 (Fig. 341. T. Van Thulden, *Ulysse raconte ses aventures à Pénélope*, Albertina, Vienna; Fig. 342. after Primaticcio. *Ulysse raconte ses aventures à Pénélope*, The Art Museum, Princeton University; Fig. 343. Album Palange, *Ulysse raconte ses aventures à Pénélope*, British Museum, London; Fig. 344. Primaticcio, *Ulysses and Penelope*, Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio).

[24] In both Van Thulden's drawing and engraving after the fresco as well as the Album Palange drawing, Penelope extends only her index finger. In the Princeton drawing and in the Toledo Museum of Art painting by Primaticcio, Penelope extends both her index and middle finger toward the open palm of her left hand. The only copy of the fresco scene in which Ulysses' left hand actually touches Penelope's chin is the Toledo painting. In the other copies, Ulysses' thumb is not yet touching her chin.

> place. When Ulysses and Penelope had enjoyed their lovemaking, they took pleasure in talking, each one telling his story.[25]

The copies of the fresco, save the Toledo painting, all show the dancing women being sent away by Eumaios , not by Telemachus, who has been represented consistently in the fresco cycle beardless and wearing a helmet. The two figures with their backs turned toward the viewer in the distance are most likely meant to represent Eurynome and another chambermaid leaving the couple to their privacy. The nudity and hand gestures of Ulysses and Penelope suggest that they have finished their lovemaking, as the text explains that the two began exchanging stories afterwards. This fresco scene, then, shows the simultaneous narration of the attendants stopping their celebratory ritual as well as the conversation between Ulysses and Penelope after their lovemaking.

The painting attributed to Primaticcio in the Toledo Museum of Art (figure 1) shows only a portion of the forty-eighth fresco scene in the Galerie d'Ulysse.[26] While it is unknown why the painting was created and for what function it served, it is generally agreed that the painting was

[25] Lattimore (1965), 342-343.

[26] The canvas, which measures 44 ¾ x 48 ¾ inches, shows no indication of having been cut down to its current size and is dated to around 1560. Painted using oil, the artist deliberately chose pale, earthy colors, such as ocher, yellow, ivory and pink, set against deep, somber shadows. The attribution of the painting to Primaticcio is widely agreed upon by scholars and is celebrated as one of the artist's few surviving works of art. Recently, however, Béguin proposed a new authorship. Béguin, who wrote in 1972 that the Toledo painting "is the finest picture we know that reflects Primaticcio's inspiration and style and seems worthy of his hand," (*L'Ecole de Fontainebleau*, catalogue de l'exposition. Paris: Editions des musées nationaux, 1972. See Béguin's entry on Primaticcio's *Ulysses and Penelope*.), questioned the painting's attribution in 2005, suggesting that the artist could be Primaticcio's assistant, Nicolò dell' Abate (Sylvie Béguin, "Primaticcio in France," *The Burlington Magazine* 147 (2005): 243). Giancarlo Fiorenza's recent article "Penelope's Web: Francesco Primaticcio's Epic Revision at Fontainebleau," *Renaissance Quarterly* 59 (2006): 795-827, which explores the originality and technical innovation of the Toledo painting, argues for Primaticcio's authorship.

executed just after the completion of the Galerie d'Ulysse fresco cycle around 1560.[27] The painting depicts Ulysses and Penelope on their bed in the very same poses as those in Van Thulden's copy of the Galerie d'Ulysse fresco. Eumaios and the five dancing maidens have been omitted from the painting; however, the two figures standing in the doorway in the distant background are included. Even so, in this version Ulysses and Penelope are the sole focus. As mentioned earlier, Ulysses actually touches the chin of Penelope in a gesture coined as a "chin-chuck" by Leo Steinberg. Steinberg explains that in late antique art, the chin-chuck stood as an allegory for the union of Cupid and Psyche, the union of divine love (Cupid) and the human soul (Psyche).[28]

Nicolò dell' Abbate, the artist who executed Primaticcio's designs for the Galerie d'Ulysse cycle, completed a painting titled *Cupid and Psyche* (figure 7) sometime during his French period (1552-1571), which derives from Primaticcio's Toledo *Ulysses and Penelope*.[29]

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[27] Cordellier (2004), 336 has proposed that the Toledo painting was produced in the early 1540's as a prototype for the Galerie d'Ulysse, but this seems unlikely since there are no other paintings by Primaticcio that reproduce a scene from the Galerie d'Ulysse. Béguin et al. (1985), 307, and Fiorenza, 797, date it between 1555 and 1560 as an invention by Primaticcio inspired by the Galerie d'Ulysse.

[28] See Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1984), 3. The chin-chuck was also a common gesture signifying supplication in Greek and early Roman art. For examples of ancient depictions of the chin-chuck in mythological-themed works, see ibid, 4 (fig. 7: Hellenistic bronze statuette of Cupid and Psyche); ibid, 110 (fig. 125: drawing after Archaic Greek shield relief showing Priam before Achilles); ibid, 110 (fig. 126: Archaic Greek vase painting of Theseus wooing Ariadne); and Gerhard Neumann, *Gesten und Gebarden in der griechischen Kunst* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965), 53 (fig. 24: Greek painted amphora showing the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur). The tradition of the chin-chuck carried into medieval art as a signification of lovers' wooing. See Steinberg, 111 (fig. 127) for an image of a French mirror case showing *Lovers Riding to the Hunt* in which the male rider reaches over to embrace the chin of his lover.

[29] Nicolò's *Cupid and Psyche* is located in the Detroit Institute of Arts. W. McAllister Johnson, "Niccolò dell'Abbate's *Eros and Psyche*," *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 45 (1966): 27-34, dates the painting to ca.1560, the same time period in which the Galerie d'Ulysse was completed and Primaticcio's Toledo *Ulysses and Penelope* was produced and suggests that Nicolò's *Cupid and Psyche* was a privately commissioned work that reflects the late sixteenth-

Nicolò's painting shows Cupid and Psyche sitting up in a bed in the same exact manner as Ulysses and Penelope in the Toledo painting. Similarly, Cupid and Psyche are depicted nude, covered in blankets from the waist down. Cupid's wings and quiver help to identify the painting's subject. Although Primaticcio and Nicolò may not have been aware of the chin-chuck's tradition in ancient art as the symbolic union between divine love and the human soul or as a gesture of supplication, or of its tradition in medieval art as a gesture of romantic persuasion, they certainly would have been aware of its signification in Giulio Romano's *Jupiter and Olympias* (figure 8) in the Palazzo del Té. According to Bette Talvacchia, the chin-chuck used in this context is a gesture of seduction, as Jupiter, who is in the form of a serpent, attempts to lure the frightened Olympias into his arms.[30] Regarded as a gesture of seduction, the chin-chuck works well in both Primaticcio and Nicolò's paintings, as they are both representations of scenes with the subject of lovemaking.[31]

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century popularity of amorous genre scenes. Jean Adhémar, "French Sixteenth Century Genre Paintings," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 8 (1945): 191, explains that the mythological and allegorical paintings of Fontainebleau gave rise to a new interest in French and Flemish genre painting. Many paintings were produced of which few survive; however, their popularity is known from their numerous recordings in late sixteenth-century inventories. The likeness of Nicolò's *Cupid and Psyche* to Primaticcio's *Ulysses and Penelope* is discussed in Johnson (1966), 28-31; Béguin et al. (1985): 307; Cordellier (2004), 336-339; and Béguin, and Piccinni (2005), 17-19.

[30] Bette Talvacchia, *Taking Positions: on the Erotic in Renaissance Culture*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 45-47. The fresco was reproduced in the form of an engraving by Giovanni Battista Scultori (1503-1575) that is now in the Albertina, Vienna. See ibid, 47 (fig. 25).

[31] If the chin-chuck signifies a gesture of seduction, then the gesture of the females, Penelope and Psyche, could be symbolical of sexual consent. The females' gestures of touching two fingers to the palm of the other hand could be representative of either consent or some sort of coy response. I, on the other hand, think the gestures were simply Primaticcio's invention for the particular subject at hand, the chin-chuck solely meant to emphasize the tender moment of togetherness between Ulysses and Penelope and Penelope's gesture as representative of the excitement of the conversation taking place between the happily reunited couple. Nicolò, then, as part of his plan to copy Primaticcio's painting, adapted the subject to the story of Cupid and Psyche and retained the same gestures as a visual connection between his painting and that of Primaticcio.

The forty-ninth fresco of the Galerie d'Ulysse, *Ulysses Sleeping Next to Penelope* (figure 5), is preserved in a drawing and engraving by Van Thulden.[32] This fresco's general composition was practically identical to that of the preceding fresco. In the drawing, Ulysses and Penelope are shown in their bed. A sleeping Ulysses drapes his left arm over his forehead and lets his right arm extend outward in a pose of exhaustion. A still awake Penelope drapes her left arm over the abdomen of Ulysses and rests her head in the palm of her right hand. The rest of the room is empty; however, barely visible through the opening of a portico are two figures conversing.

The Homeric text that corresponds to this scene is found in Book XXIII lines 302-309:

> She [Penelope], shining among women, told of all she had endured in the palace, as she watched the suitors, a ravening company, who on her account were slaughtering many oxen and fat sheep, and much wine was being drawn from the wine jars. But shining Odysseus told of all the cares he inflicted on other men, and told too of all that in his misery he had toiled through. She listened to him with delight, nor did any sleep fall upon her eyes until he had told her everything.[33]

An exhausted Ulysses sleeps, while a vigilant and contented Penelope, who has just heard about all of Ulysses' trials and adventures, delicately caresses his stomach.

The fiftieth and final fresco scene in the Galerie d'Ulysse dedicated to the reunion of Ulysses and Penelope, *Minerva Waking Ulysses and Penelope* (figure 6), is known by Van Thulden's drawing and engraving as no preparatory drawing by Primaticcio survives.[34] Primaticcio flipped the previous composition horizontally so that the bed, which was placed on

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[32] See Béguin et al., (1985), 308-309 for images of the surviving copies of the original fresco (Fig. 346: Van Thulden, *Ulysse s'endort près de Pénélope*, Albertina, Vienna; Fig. 347: after Primaticcio, *Ulysse s'endort près de Pénélope*, Coll. Polakovitz, Paris; and Fig. 348: Album Palange, *Ulysse s'endort près de Pénélope*, British Museum, London).

[33] Lattimore (1965), 343.

[34] For images of two copies of the fresco, see Béguin et al., (1985), 310-311 (Fig. 349: Van Thulden, *Minerve réveille Ulysse et Pénélope*, Albertina, Vienna; and Fig. 350: Album Palange, *Minerve réveille Ulysse et Pénélope*, British Museum, London).

the left side of the two preceding scenes, is now placed on the right side, and Penelope, rather than Ulysses, is closer to the viewer. Minerva descends from above in a cloud and speaks directly to Penelope. Ulysses sits up in bed reveling in the mystical appearance of Minerva in their bedchamber. On the left side and further back in the room, a maiden ascends a stairwell that leads out of the bedchamber. With this scene, Primaticcio deviated a bit from the Homeric text found in Book XXIII lines 344-349:

> Then the goddess gray-eyed Athene thought what to do next. As soon as she thought the heart of Ulysses had full contentment of the pleasure of resting in bed beside his wife, and of sleeping, immediately she stirred from Ocean the golden throned early Dawn, to shine her light upon them, and Ulysses rose up from his soft bed, and spoke then to his wife….[35]

Instead of a scene picturing Dawn rising from the ocean spreading light upon the land, Minerva is represented waking up Ulysses and Penelope in person. Why Primaticcio strayed from representing this scene as the text describes it, one cannot be sure. It seems, though, that a scene of Dawn rising from the ocean to spread light over the sleeping couple might have been difficult to represent visually. In that case, the scene Primaticcio designed for the Galerie could have been a solution for this dilemma. The subtle change might, as Béguin has proposed, reflect a variant Ulyssean narrative in which such a scene as this took place, although modern scholars know of no such text.[36]

While the five amorous scenes of the reunion of Ulysses and Penelope must have constituted an important portion of the Ulysses story for the patrons, they make up only a small part of the entire Galerie d'Ulysse cycle. The majority of the remaining fifty-three scenes are much less tranquil and sentimental. In place of beds and richly decorated palaces, there are craggy rocks, roaring seas and frightening foes. These scenes, of course, depict the adventures

[35] Lattimore (1965), 344.
[36] Béguin et al., (1985), 311.

of Ulysses before his return to Ithaca and his violent encounters with Penelope's suitors once he arrived in Ithaca. The reunion scenes provide a distinctive, abrupt break from all of the unfolding drama that precedes them. The peculiarity of the reunion scenes' placement in the Galerie d'Ulysse cycle is a matter that will be returned to later in this thesis. What must be addressed first is the significance of the story of Ulysses to the French monarchy under François I and Henri II, the patrons of the Galerie d'Ulysse.

CHAPTER III

SORROW AND POWER:

THE TOMB OF CATHERINE AND HENRI II

The period during which the walls of the Galerie d'Ulysse were completed (1559-1560) was a rocky one for the French monarchy. The reign of Henri II, which began in 1547 --the year his father François I died-- ended abruptly on July 10, 1559 with his own sudden death. During a jousting tournament that took place on June 30, 1559, Henri's forehead was pierced by a piece of splintered wood from his opponent's lance. The king suffered on his deathbed for several days. An autopsy determined that the large splinter had pierced his brain, causing the king's untimely death. Henri's funeral celebration lasted for almost forty days.

Catherine's grief over Henri's death seems to have been immense. She is said to have mourned her loss for the remainder of her life, always wearing black. The color black, however, could signify more than suffering. For one thing, the color black was worn by many figures of the highest authority during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, including Philip the Good (1396-1467) of Burgundy, Charles V (1500-1558) and Philip II (1527-1598) of Spain.[37] Black not only represented mourning but also royal authority, and it was crucial that Catherine be taken seriously as a ruler following Henri's death.[38] After all, Catherine had to make up for her

[37] ffolliott (1986), 228, has noted that all representations of Catherine after her husband's death show her dressed in black as a sign of her perpetual mourning. She also emphasizes that black was a color worn by other royals of the period as a trend rather than as a mourning custom.

[38] When Henri II died and Catherine began her regency in 1560, the French were unaccustomed to having a female ruler govern their country. Since the early fourteenth century, the succession of the crown was deemed a strictly male establishment. Elaine Rubin, "The Heroic Image: Woman and Power in Early Seventeenth Century-France," (Ph.D. Disseration, The George Washington University: 1977), 38-40, explains that between 647 and 1655, queen mothers had been appointed regent twenty-three times, according to Pierre Dupuy's *Traité de la majorité de*

shortcomings not only as a woman but also as a foreign inheritor of the French throne, as the Medicis were thought of as no more than upstarts by the French.[39] Secondly, the color black set Catherine apart from the woman she loathed most, Henri's mistress, Diane de Poitiers (1499-1566). Henri had been enamored of the much older Diane (figure 22) even before his marriage to Catherine in 1533.[40] During Henri's reign, Diane was named official royal mistress to the king, and her influence over the king was substantial. Before Henri's death in 1559, he bestowed upon Diane the titles of Duchesse de Valentinois (1548) and Duchesse d'Étampes (1553). Henri entrusted her with the Crown Jewels and had the beautiful château d'Anet erected for her. One of Henri's first gifts to Diane as king (1547) was the royal château of Chenonçeau, a château that Catherine had always greatly admired and desired for herself. Catherine suffered her jealousy quietly, because she remained powerless to change the object of the king's affection and wanted not to give the king another reason to favor her even less.[41] Diane always wore black and white.

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nos rois et des régences… (Paris, 1655). Katherine Crawford, "Catherine de Médicis and the Performance of Political Motherhood," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 31 (Autumn, 2000): 643-649, states that the last time a woman was given political power was during François I's reign, when the King's mother, Louise of Savoy, was given authority to rule during François I's captivity in Spain between 1523 and1524.

[39] Catherine, who was the niece of Pope Clement VII, was promised to Henri in order to form an alliance between the French Crown and the papacy against the Holy Roman Emperor. The marriage contract contained secret clauses that promised support from the pope for the French conquest of Milan, Pisa, Parma and Montferrat, which in turn would be given to the newlywed couple to rule. Also, Clement VII would appoint four new French cardinals. Frederic J. Baumgartner, *Henry II: King of France 1547-1559* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1988), 29. Also, see Ivan Cloulas, "Catherine de Médicis, Dauphine et Reine," in Baudouin-Matuszek, Marie-Noélle. *Paris et Catherine de Médicis*. (Paris: Délégation à l'action artistique de la ville de Paris, 1989), 36-41.

[40] Henri first met Diane when he was eleven years old. She was nineteen years his elder and married to the Grand Sénéchal of Normandy, Louis de Brézé (d. 1531). Their relationship began with Diane serving as a maternal figure to Henri. It is uncertain when their bond changed to one that was sexual; however, it may have been somewhere around the year 1536, according to Baumgartner (1988), 31.

[41] Catherine and Henri were married in 1533. The huge dowry promised to Henri as well as the French alliance with the papacy died in 1534 along with Catherine's uncle, Pope Clement VII.

To show his allegiance to her, Henri donned black and white clothing and incorporated into his attire a crescent moon, an attribute of the goddess Diana that was the adopted emblem of Diane de Poitiers. By wearing only black, a color that elicited sympathy from her countrymen for her loss and was at the same time associated with power, Catherine distinguished herself from Diane and fashioned a look that associated her with her late husband.

Shortly after Henri's death in 1559, Catherine commissioned Primaticcio to design a funerary chapel and tomb for the king. The large, domed rotunda chapel and its tomb would serve as a grand mausoleum for Henri and Catherine's family. The Valois Chapel, as it was called, was added to the north side of the transept of the abbey of Saint-Denis in Paris. It was to be thirty meters in diameter and two stories high, each story distinguished by Doric and Ionic columns on its exterior and by Corinthian and Composite columns on its interior walls (figure 9). Work began on the Valois chapel in 1560; however, when the Queen died in 1589, the rotunda was still unfinished. By 1719, the chapel had been neglected, and due to its ruinous state, it was demolished.

The chapel was designed to have six apsidal chapels: one for an altar, one for an entryway into the abbey, and the other four for the tombs of Henri and Catherine's children. The central space of the chapel was reserved for the monumental, two-story tomb of Henri and Catherine (figure 10).[42] Work on the tomb of Henri and Catherine lasted some thirteen years. It

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In addition to Catherine's inability to bring forth that which was promised in her marriage contract, for the first ten years of their marriage, the young dauphine was incapable of bearing any children. To make matters worse in 1537, one of Henri's mistresses, Philippa Duc, gave birth to a daughter, confirming Henri's virility and therefore adding more strain on Henri and Catherine's marriage. It was not until 1544 that Catherine finally gave birth to her first child, François II.

[42] When the Valois chapel was demolished, the tomb of Henri and Catherine was moved to the main church of St. Denis. The tomb is one of three monumental tombs housed in the abbey-church of Saint-Denis in Paris. The other two-story tombs belong to Henri's parents, King

was finally completed in 1573. Primaticcio entrusted the execution of his designs to one of his assistants, Germain Pilon (1525-1590).[43] The tomb's rectangular plan (figure 11) measures twelve and a half feet long by ten feet across by fourteen feet high. Its materials consist of white, red and gray marble as well as bronze. A total of twelve composite columns are positioned around the tomb's exterior. The four innermost columns guard the open-view interior that houses a rectangular base, upon which rest the recumbent gisant figures of Henry and Catherine. Flanking the four corners of the tomb are four standing bronze statues of the cardinal virtues. Around the basement of the tomb are four allegorical scenes in marble relief, one on each of the four sides. Three scenes represent each of the three theological virtues with Charity repeated in the fourth scene. At the summit of the tomb are the praying figures of the king and queen (figure 12).[44]

Francis I (1494-1547) and Claude de France (1499-1524), and grandparents, King Louis XII (1462-1515) and Anne de Bretagne (1477-1514).

[43] Pilon was a French sculptor and medallist, who trained in Paris under his father, André Pilon. Pilon was one of the most prominent sculptors in France during the second half of the sixteenth century. In addition to Henri and Catherine's tomb, Pilon sculpted several other statues to be placed in the apsidal chapels of the Valois chapel, including a *Resurrected Christ* that was paired with two sleeping soldiers, *St. Francis* and a *Madonna de douleur*. All of these sculptures are in the Louvre and can be viewed on their online database. For more information on Pilon, see Henri Zerner, "Germain Pilon et l'art funeraire," in Geneviève Bresc-Bautier, *Germain Pilon et les sculpteurs français de la renaissance* (Paris: La Documentation française, 1993): 193-212; Mary Levkoff, "Précisions sur l'oeuvre de Germain Pilon et sur son influence," in ibid, 61-88; and Michele Beaulieu. *Description raisonée des sculptures de la renaissance française au musée du Louvre* (Paris: Édition réunion des musées nationaux, 1978), 126-151.

[44] For more information on the Valois Chapel and the royal tomb of Henry and Catherine, see Alain Brandenburg et al., *Gisants et tombeaux de la Basilique de Saint-Denis* (Seine-Saint-Denis: Archives Départmentales de la Seine-Saint-Denis, 1975), 41-43; Elizabeth Brown, *Saint-Denis: la basilique*, trans. Divina Cabo. (Saint-Léger-Vauban: Zodiaque, 2001), 429-436; Cordellier (2004), 426-437; Jeanice Brooks, "Catherine de Médicis, *nouvelle Artémise*: Women's Laments and the Virtue of Grief," *Early Music* 27 (August, 1999): 419-435; Jacques Thirion, "Observations sur les sculptures de la chapelle des Valois," *Zeitschrift fur kunstgeschichte* 36 (1973): 53-64; Mary L. Levkoff, "Remarques sur les tombeaux de François Ier et de Henri II," in *Henri II et les arts: actes du collque international, École du Louvre et Musée national de la Renaissance-Écouen, 25, 26 et 27 september 1997* (Paris, École du Louvre,

Catherine's remarkable plan for her family's burial chapel was unprecedented in France. The circular plan of the chapel, while new to the French tradition, strongly recalled Italian architectural monuments, such as Bramante's Tempietto of San Pietro in Montorio (1502) and the no longer extant chapel of Santa Petronilla, which was positioned near the south end of the transept of Old St. Peter's (figure 13) much like the placement of the Valois chapel in relation to the main church of St. Denis.[45] Surely a large part of the uniqueness of the Valois chapel and tomb was due to Catherine's desire to erect a monument that would display the prestige of Italian funerary art;[46] however, it was also extremely important for Catherine to make a public statement with Henri's monumental tomb. As Regent of France, she needed to win the hearts and support of her countrymen by constructing a tomb that would speak of her power and sorrow. The magnificence of the tomb became a public expression of her great sorrow over Henri's death,

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2003), 53-64; and Anthony Blunt, *Art and Architecture in France 1500-1700,* 5th Ed. rev. Richard Beresford. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 56-59.

[45] The chapel of Santa Petronilla was an old fourth-century Roman Imperial mausoleum that was transformed around 757 AD to function as a burial chapel for Frankish kings. It was torn down around 1517 when construction on St. Peter's began. It was the original dwelling place for Michelangelo's Roman *Pietà,* which was commissioned in 1497 as a funerary monument for Cardinal Jean de Bilhères Lagraulas, abbot of St. Denis and ambassador of the French kings in Rome. For information on the Roman *Pietà* in the context of its original placement in Sta. Petronilla and Sta. Petronilla's role in the French monarchy, see Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt, "Michelangelo's *Pietà* for the Capella del Re di Francia," in *"Il se rendit en Italie.": etudes offertes de André Chastel* (Rome: Edizione dell' Elefante; Paris: Flammarion, 1987), 77-119. The exact location of the *Pietà* within the Chapel of Santa Petronilla has been the subject of much debate. For more information regarding the possible location of the *Pietà* within the Santa Petronilla Chapel see William E. Wallace, "Michelangelo's Rome *Pietà*: Altarpiece or Grave Memorial?" *Verrocchio and Late Quattrocento Italian Sculpture* (Firenze: Le Lettere, 1992), 243-255.

[46] Italian influence was not limited to the design of the burial chapel for the Valois family. Primaticcio's roots in Italian art were manifested in the design of the tomb itself. For example, the incorporation into Henri and Catherine's tomb of bronze and three different colors of marble was a trait characteristic of monumental Italian tombs, such as the tombs of Pope Paul III in St. Peter's and of Gian Giacomo de' Medici in the Duomo, Milan, but was foreign to monumental French tombs. For the influence of Italian funerary sculpture on the tomb of Henri and Catherine, see Thirion (1973), 53-64.

magnifying her identity as a widowed mother, and at the same time, expressing her power as Regent. The tomb had a dual role. It was a monument that glorified the memory of the deceased Henri II and, at the same time, promoted the public image of the newly empowered Queen Catherine.

CHAPTER IV

A MODERN ARTEMISIA: CATHERINE AS REGENT OF FRANCE

In the wake of Henri's death, Catherine de' Medici was left as queen mother to three young princes, François II, Charles IX, and Henri III. François II was sixteen when he began his brief reign (1559-1560) that ended abruptly when he contracted a serious illness and died. His successor, Charles IX ruled for fourteen years (1560-1574); however, he was a mere ten years old when he inherited the crown and therefore too young to govern the country alone according to Salic Law.[47] When Henri III became sovereign, he was at the "right old" age of twenty-three and ruled for fifteen years (1574-1589). During the minority of Charles IX, Catherine became Regent of France. She acted virtually as absolute sovereign for four years, and even after her son's majority, her influence at court continued, ending with her death in 1589.[48]

In the course of her regency, Catherine strove to develop an image of herself as a strong, capable, and devoted ruler. To celebrate her new position as Gouvernante de France, she had a seal designed in which she was pictured in royal garb with a scepter in one hand and one of her fingers raised on the other hand to denote her dominion.[49] It had become extremely popular during Henri II's reign for royal figures to have themselves represented in art as mythological figures or employ symbols associated with mythological figures as personal emblems, such as

[47] Charles VI declared in 1407 that a government entrusted to any king under the age of fourteen must be administered by a council made up of a chancellor, constable, the king's nearest male relatives and the queen mother. See Crawford (2007), 647.
[48] Although her services were no longer required at court when Charles IX turned fourteen in 1564, both Charles IX and Henri III heeded Catherine's advice in matters of the crown until the last few months before her death in 1589. Ibid, 646-649.
[49] Leonie Frieda, *Catherine de Medici*: *Renaissance Queen of France* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2003), 144.

Diane de Poitiers' emblem of the crescent moon that signified her identification with the goddess Diana. [50]

Sheila ffolliott has written extensively on the subject of Catherine de' Medici's allegorical identification with the historical figure Queen Artemisia.[51] Artemisia was the perfect symbolical figure for Catherine because of her multiple roles as ruler, widow and mother. Artemisia was the wife of the fourth-century BC ruler Mausolos, who died in 353 BC. Upon his death, Artemisia was left to rule the kingdom of Caria until her death two years later in 351 BC. Artemisia was famous for her inconsolable grief over her husband's death. She is said to have mixed her husband's ashes in a drink, which she consumed daily. Supposedly when the last of his ashes were consumed and her tears ran dry, Artemisia died. She commissioned the famous Mausoleum at Halicarnassus to be erected in her husband's memory, a monument that was listed as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World by Greek and medieval authors.[52]

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[50] Artists frequently transformed their subject matter into allegorical form, representations of the monarchial reigns of kings, of moral lessons, of France and of important individuals. See André Chastel, *French Art: the Renaissance 1430-1620*, Vol. 2, trans. Deke Dusinberre. (Paris; New York: Flammarion, 1995), 169.

[51]Sheila ffolliott, "A Queen's Garden of Power: Catherine de' Medici and the Locus of Female Rule," in *Reconsidering the Renaissance: Papers from the Twenty-First Annual Conference*. ed. Mario A. di Cesare, (Binghamton; New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1992), 245-255; idem. "Casting a Rival into the Shade: Catherine de'Medici and Diane de Poiters," *Art Journal* 48 (Summer, 1989): 138-143; idem (1986), 227-241; idem. "The Ideal Queenly Patron of the Renaissance: Catherine de' Medici Defining Herself or Defined by Others?" in *Women and Art in Early Modern Europe: Patrons, Collectors and Connoisseurs*. ed. Cynthia Lawrence. (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 99-110.

[52] Antipater of Sidon's poem dating to c. 140 BC is the earliest extant list of the Seven Wonders. "I have set eyes on the wall of lofty Babylon on which is a road for chariots, and the statue of Zeus by the Alpheus, and the hanging gardens, and the Colossus of the Sun, and the huge labour of the high pyramids, and **the vast tomb of Mausolus**; but when I saw the house of Artemis that mounted to the clouds, those other marvels lost their brilliancy, and I said, 'Lo, apart from Olympus, the Sun never looked on aught so grand." *Anthologia Graeca*: IX. 58 (*The Greek Anthology*. Translated by W. R. Paton. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: W. Heinemann Ltd., 1917-1948). All that survives of the Mausoleum's architecture at

Catherine's immense grief over her husband's tragic death and new plight as widowed queen and mother seemed to match those of Artemisia, whose good will and virtue would have been welcome associations with the celebrated Queen of Caria. Catherine's identification with Artemisia helped to promote her in her new role as sovereign by evoking sympathy for her loss and support for her recently inherited regal responsibilities as Regent and Queen Mother.

The sixteenth-century French author François de Billon told the story of Artemisia in his 1555 text entitled *Fort inexpugnable de l'honneur du sexe féminin* (*The indisputable proof of the honor of the female sex*) that was dedicated to a quintet of court noblewomen led by Queen Catherine. Billon mentioned Artemisia twice as a role model. The first instance praised her ability to govern, when Artemisia receives tribute for leading the army that suppressed the rebellion of Rhodes. The second praised her chastity and honesty in the telling of her devotion to her deceased husband. The picture Billon painted of Artemisia was of an exemplary historical female figure, who remained devoted to the memory of her deceased husband and successfully

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Halikarnassos is the rock-cutting at the foundations. Several pieces of sculptural friezes and of large statues that once adorned the Mausoleum, including horses, a male figure thought to be Mausolus, and a head thought to be Apollo, were excavated by Charles Newton in 1865 and are now housed in the British Museum. Although scholars continue to debate its appearance, an account in Pliny's *Natural History* (XXXVI; 30-31) describes the tomb as having a rectangular plan with a four hundred and forty Roman-foot perimeter at ground level. It measured one hundred and forty feet in height, including the statue of Apollo and his chariot on the roof's apex, and consisted of three main levels: a high base topped by a colonnade level and a pyramidal roof. Pliny named the sculptors as Skopas, Bryaxis, Timotheos and Leochares. The Elder Pliny. *The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art.* Translated by K. Jex-Blake. (Chicago: Argonaut, 1968), 201-203. The name Mausolos was integrated into funerary art as the term "mausoleum," which generally refers to a monumental form of a tomb. For more information on the Mausoleum, see Brian F. Cook, *Relief Sculpture of the mausoleum at Halicarnassus* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1-8.

ruled his kingdom. Billon's text may have been the inspiration for the allegorical representation of Catherine as Artemisia following the death of Henri II in 1559.[53]

In 1562, Catherine's appointed court artist, Antoine Caron (1521-1599), collaborated with the humanist author Nicolas Houel (c.1524-1587) to complete the four-volume manuscript poem *Histoire de la royne Artémise* (*The Legend of Artemisia*). Several artists, including Nicolò dell' Abbate, were responsible for illustrating the manuscript, although most of the surviving illustrations for the manuscript were drawn by Caron. Their drawings later served as cartoons for a tapestry series of the same subject.[54] Houel dedicated his project to Catherine in order to console and glorify the recently widowed queen. In his dedication to Catherine, Houel asserts that "le principal but de mon entreprise a esté de vous representer en elle (the principal goal of my project has been to represent you in her [Artemisia]).[55]" Sheila ffolliot has posited that Houel intended for his story of Artemisia to allude to the life of Catherine.[56] The death of Mausolus paralleled the death of Henri II, the grieving Artemisia alluded to the widowed Catherine, and the young prince Psyndalis represented the young Charles IX. According to

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[53] A discussion of Billon's text in relation to Catherine's self-identification with Artemisia can be found in Brooks (1999), 421.

[54] Fifty-nine of Caron's Artemisia drawings are divided between collections in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Estampes, Réserves, AD 105) and in the Louvre. For an in-depth study of Caron's drawings for the project, see Urika von Haumeder, "Antoine Caron: Studien zu seiner *Histoire d'Arthémise*," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Heidelberg: 1978), 20-129. The tapestry series was commissioned around 1607 by Henri IV. When he died three years later in 1610, the subject of the tapestry became pertinent to his widow, Queen Marie de' Medici and son Louis XIII. Ten of the tapestries survive, eight of which are located in the Minneapolis Institute of Art. For images and information on the tapestries, see Thomas P. Campbell, ed., *Tapestry in the Baroque: Threads of Splendor* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art Publications; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

[55] Translation from French into English by Brooks (1999), 422. Houel's *L'Histoire de la Royne Arthémise* (Paris, 1562) is in the Bibliothèque Nationale: ms. fr. 306. According to ffolliot (1989), 143, fn. 13, there is no evidence of Catherine's patronage for this project. Houel's dedication of the *L'Histoire* to Catherine was of his own account.

[56] Sheila ffolliott discusses the relationship between the *Artemisia Legend* and the life of Catherine at length in ffolliott (1986), 227-241.

ffolliot, little was known about Artemisia from ancient sources, so the majority of Houel's knowledge of Artemisia most likely came from Boccaccio's short account of her life as the grief-stricken widow of Mausolus in his *De claris mulieribus*.[57] Houel invented occurrences in his *Artemisia Legend* that corresponded with Queen Catherine's life in order to lengthen his extensive biography.[58] For example, the education of the young prince under Artemisia's supervision was one of Houel's inventions meant to parallel the tutelage of the young Dauphin, Charles IX. Caron's drawings further illustrate the association made by Houel between Catherine and Artemisia. Each drawing featured a decorative border containing the monogram and coat of arms of Catherine as well as symbols of Henri's death and Catherine's grief, including scythes, broken mirrors and falling rain that fails to put out rising flames.[59]

Brooks has made some fascinating observations regarding the relationship between Henri and Catherine's tomb and Catherine's self-identification with Queen Artemisia.[60] Brooks proposed that the monumental tomb that Catherine commissioned for Henri and herself could be linked to the monumental tomb Artemisia commissioned for her husband, the late King Mausolus. In fact, one of Caron's drawings for the *Artemisia Legend* (figure 14), *Le tombeau fini de Mausole*, depicts the tomb of Mausolus as a structure almost identical to the Valois Chapel designed by Primaticcio to house the tomb of Henri and Catherine. Like the Valois chapel, the mausoleum of Caron's drawing is a domed rotunda adorned with an array of columns on its exterior and interior walls, although Pliny's historical description of the monument

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[57] ffolliot (1986), 106, writes that Boccaccio's *De claribus mundi* (c. 1360-1374) was, like Petrarch's book on the most illustrious men, a collection of biographies of famous women from ancient times to the Middle Ages.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid, 234-5. The objects represented on the illustrations' borders vary; those objects listed above can be found in the last drawing of the series, *Artemisia and Lygdamis View the Completed Mausoleum* (figure 13).
[60] Brooks (1999), 419-435.

describes it as rectangular in plan. The cut-away view of Caron's mausoleum exposes the interior view, in which a large sarcophagus topped by a sculpted effigy of Mausolus is centrally situated much like the tomb of Henri and Catherine in their family chapel.

Atop the mausoleum drawn by Caron, although somewhat difficult to make out, is a sculpted ornament of a chariot drawn by horses. Pliny described the Mausoleum at Halikarnassus as having a quadriga, a statuary group consisting of a chariot and four horses. Several fragments from this colossal statuary group survive, and it is accepted that the chariot was originally occupied by either Mausolus or Apollo, the god with whom it is believed Mausolus associated himself.[61] The conviction that Apollo originally occupied the Mausoleum quadriga is more easily adaptable to the allusion made between Mausolus and Henri II by Houel and Caron. Because there does not appear to be a figure of Nike accompanying the charioteer in Caron's drawing of the completed Mausoleum, it would be reasonable to deduce that the quadriga is not a representation of the apotheosis of Henri but rather of Apollo on his chariot, a symbol that was often associated with Henri II during his reign.[62] The round mausoleum in Caron's drawing must have been an allusion to the mausoleum known as the Valois chapel that Catherine had erected to house Henri's tomb. Consequently, the tomb of Mausolus in Caron's drawing was likely analogous to the tomb of Henri II. If that were so, it appears that Catherine's

[61] If Mausolus were in the chariot, he would have been accompanied by Nike; and the statuary group would have symbolized the apotheosis of the king. For information on the sculpture fragments surviving from the Mausoleum, see Ian Jenkins, *Greek Architecture and Its Sculpture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 203-235.

[62] Apollo appeared on the shoulder decoration of Henri II's armor designed by Étienne Delaune (1518/19 – 1583), now housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY. The urn containing the heart of Henri II in the Abbey of Saint-Denis, Paris is adorned with the three Graces, who were associated with Apollo. See Victoria Goldberg, "Graces, Muses, and Arts: The Urns of Henry II and Francis I," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 29 (1966): 206-218.

self-identification with Artemisia may have led to the commissioning of the grand Valois "mausoleum" as a modern parallel to the tomb Artemisia commissioned for Mausolus.

Caron's drawings for the *Artemisia Legend* exhibit stylistic qualities reminiscent of Primaticcio's work at Fontainebleau, such as his twisting, elongated figures with tapered limbs and small, elegant heads. Before Caron and Nicolò began the Artemisia project with Houel, they were both court painters at Fontainebleau under the direction of Primaticcio.[63] The Artemisia drawings were executed just after Nicolò's completion of the wall frescoes of the Galerie d'Ulysse at Fontainebleau (1559-1560). Certainly Caron would have been familiar with the Ulyssean frescoes, considering the Galerie d'Ulysse was the longest decorated gallery in all of France to date as well as one of the most highly regarded examples of Primaticcio's oeuvre.[64]

The most significant aspects of Caron's Artemisia drawings to consider are both the time period in which they were produced as well as the attempt by the artist to associate Catherine with a legendary female figure. The Artemisia drawings were begun in 1562, three years after the death of King Henri II and almost exactly contemporaneous with the completion of the Galerie d'Ulysse frescoes at Fontainebleau. Catherine's newly developed urgency to promote a positive image of herself as ruler of France subsequent to the King's death prompted Houel and Caron to mirror Catherine in their *Artemisia Legend*. I would like to suggest that Primaticcio's Penelope of the Galerie d'Ulysse at Fontainebleau was, like Caron's Queen Artemisia of his drawings for the *Artemisia Legend*, an allusion to Catherine in a narrative series of images

[63] The royal accounts show Caron working at Fontainebleau between 1540 and 1560. Jean Ehrmann, *Antoine Caron: Peintre à la Cour des Valois 1521-1599* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1955), 9-11.

[64] The Galerie d'Ulysse was 115 meters long; and when it was destroyed in 1738, it was still the longest gallery in France. See R. J. Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior and Patron: The Reign of Francis I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 410.

produced to appeal to the viewer's sense of compassion and respect for the Queen's new responsibilities as a widowed mother and ruler.

CHAPTER V

THE IMAGE OF A WIDOWED QUEEN:

THE REPRESENTATION OF CATHERINE AS PENELOPE

Unique to the Ulyssean frescoes at Fontainebleau is the number of scenes (five) dedicated to the reunion of Ulysses and Penelope. Béguin has insisted that to execute five scenes representing the same reunion motif seems pointless, especially if the intent was to praise the virtue of fidelity. Instead, Béguin suggests that this number of reunion scenes may have been chosen in order to balance the number of scenes dedicated to Ulysses and Polyphemus, the fresco scenes that were located directly across the gallery from the reunion scenes. The violent and brutal scenes of Ulysses and Polyphemus would have contrasted well with the amorous scenes of Ulysses and Penelope that faced them.[65] There are, however, only four scenes picturing Ulysses' encounter with Polyphemus. That is one scene short of matching the number of reunion scenes.

Because the Fontainebleau cycle was an unusually large project made up of fifty-eight scenes, Primaticcio seems to have had the freedom to paint multiple scenes representing a single episode. Even so, the breakdown of the reunion narrative into five scenes still seems odd. There is a deliberate repetitiveness in the imagery that focuses around the reunited couple and their bed. The five images could easily have been condensed into two or three images. Not very much action occurs in the episode of the reunion of Ulysses and Penelope in the Homeric text in contrast to, for example, the long passage that recounts the story of Ulysses and Polyphemus. The four scenes in the Galerie d'Ulysse of Ulysses' encounter with Polyphemus are all indispensable for the visual narrative, whereas the five scenes showing the reunion of Ulysses

[65] Béguin et al., (1985), 100.

and Penelope are fairly uneventful and arguably superfluous in number. In the Polyphemus sequence, the first scene shows Ulysses and his companions disembarking from their ship onto the island of Polyphemus, the second shows Ulysses blinding Polyphemus, the third shows Ulysses and his companions fleeing from the cave and the fourth shows Polyphemus launching a boulder at Ulysses' ship. The five reunion scenes, on the other hand, show Ulysses and Penelope embracing, being led to their bed, conversing in their bed, falling asleep in their bed and being woken up in their bed. These five reunion scenes must have been significant for some additional reason other than providing contrasting imagery to the Polyphemus scenes across the hall. Besides, the reunion of Ulysses and Penelope was an episode from the *Odyssey* rarely represented in Western European art, much less given the great amount of attention paid to it in the Galerie d'Ulysse.

In Renaissance Europe, the *Odyssey* was a theme not frequently employed in fresco cycles until the middle of the sixteenth century. Even then, it was Ulysses' adventures that were the common theme, and Penelope was almost never represented. The only other Ulyssean cycles in Europe that were contemporaneous with the Galerie d'Ulysse were painted in Italy, and these were the first Ulyssean cycles to be represented in fresco in Italy.[66] These cycles include Giovanni Battista Castello's (c. 1509 – 1569) cycles in the Villa delle Peschiere in Genoa (c. 1550) and in the Villa Lanzi in Gorlago (c.1555), Pellegrino Tibaldi's (1527-1596) ceiling cycle in two rooms of the Palazzo Poggi in Bologna (c.1555), Ponsio Jacquio's (c. 1527 – 1570)

[66] Previous to 1550, the most common media for the depiction of Ulysses' deeds included tapestries, decorated cassoni, majolica ware and bread dishes. For a more detailed account including images of specific examples of such media, see W.B. Stanford, "Ulysses in the Middle Ages," in *The Quest for Ulysses* (New York: Praeger, 1974), 177-190.

Stanza di Ulisse in the Palazzo Ricci-Sacchetti in Rome (c. 1555) and Luca Cambiaso's ceiling decoration at the Villa della Meridiana in Genoa (c. 1565). [67]

Unique to the Fontainebleau cycle is its faithfulness to the *Odyssey*. Each one of the fifty-eight scenes pictured on the walls of the Galerie d'Ulysse can be linked to a passage from Homer, whereas the Italian cycles listed above include non-Ulyssean episodes drawn from Boccaccio's *Genealogia* and Natale Conti's *Mythologiae*.[68] Moreover, none of the Italian cycles

[67] For information regarding Castello's fresco decoration in the Villa delle Peschiere in Genoa, see *I Pittori bergamaschi dal XIII al XIX secolo*. Vol. 3, Pt. 2. (Bergamo: Poligrafiche Bolis, 1979), 410-427, and Giovanni Rosso del Brenna, "G. B. Castello il Bergamasco nella Villa delle Peschiere," *Arte lombarda* 14, No. 2 (1969): 111-118. Castello's frescoes on the ceiling of the Sala di Ulisse at the Villa Lanzi were moved in the nineteenth century to be preserved in the Palazzo della Prefettura in Bergamo, where changes had to be made to the original scheme. See Hugo Chapman, "A 'Modello' by Giovanni Battista Castello, il Bergamasco," *The Burlington Magazine* 137 (March, 1995): 170-172, and Giovanni Rosso del Brenna, "Le storie di Ulisse di Giovanni Battista Castello a Bergamo," *Arte lombarda* 36 (1972): 108-110. For images of Giovanni's Ulyssean scenes located in Bergamo, see *I Pittori bergamaschi dal XIII al XIX secolo*. Vol. 3, Pt. 2. (Bergamo: Poligrafiche Bolis, 1979), 404-409. For literature on Tibaldi's scenes in the Sala di Ulisse and Sala di Polifemo of the Palazzo Poggi, see Christine Baltay, "Pellegrino Tibaldi in Bologna and the Marches," (Ph.D. diss. New York University, 1984), 62-90, and Antoine Schnapper, "Les Salles d'Ulysse au Palazzo Poggi," *L'Oeil* 133 (1966): 2-9, 79. For information regarding Ponsio Jacquio's decoration of the Stanza di Ulisse in the Palazzo Ricci-Sacchetti, see Jan L. de Jong, "An Important Patron and an Unknown Artist: Giovanni Ricci, Ponsio Jacquio, and the Decoration of the Palazzo Ricci-Sacchetti in Rome," *The Art Bulletin* 74 (March, 1992): 16-17. Unfortunately, Cambiaso's Ulyssean frescoes at the Palazzo della Meridiana leave much to be desired, as they were damaged during a war. See Jonathan Bober, *Luca Cambiaso: 1527-1585*, trans. Donald Bathgate et al., (Milan: Silvano Editoriale Spa, 2006), 328-329. Cambiaso's cycle was the largest of those listed above. The *Sala principlae del piano nobile* consisted of one large rectangular scene of Ulysses' battle with the suitors bordered by twenty lunettes containing various episodes from the *Odyssey*, but it was not nearly as comprehensive as the Galerie d'Ulysse cycle. For a comprehensive study of these and other Ulyssean cycles in Renaissance Italy, see Marco Lorandi, "Sic notus Ulixes?" *Antichità viva* 26 No. 2 (1987): 19-33.

[68] Boccaccio's *Genealogiae deorum gentilium libri* was written around 1370 and printed in 1472 in Venice. The first Italian translation was published in Venice in 1547. Conti's *Mythologiae* was printed in Venice in 1551. I cannot be sure as to whether or not Cambiaso's Ulyssean frescoes in the Palazzo della Meridiana remain faithful to the *Odyssey*, as I have not been able to locate a complete list of the subjects of the twenty lunette episodes surrounding the central fresco picturing the *Return of Ulysses (Battle of the Suitors)*; however, work on this cycle was begun at

included scenes picturing the reunion of Ulysses and Penelope. The Italian cycles were chiefly dedicated to Ulysses' adventures that occurred during his ten-year absence from Ithaca following the Trojan War, such as his encounters with the Sirens, Polyphemus, the Lotus-Eaters and Circe. In fact, out of all the Ulyssean episodes pictured in the Italian fresco cycles listed above, none of them have scenes that portray any of the narrative occurring after Book XXII's passage about Ulysses' battle with the suitors. Cambiaso's fresco of the *Return of Ulysses* on the ceiling at the Villa della Meridiana in Genoa showing Ulysses and Telemachus fighting the suitors is chronologically the endmost scene from the *Odyssey*'s narrative of all the Italian cycles listed above. The battle between Ulysses and the suitors takes place in Book XXII of the *Odyssey*, before the reunion of Ulysses and Penelope, which takes place in Book XXIII. Thus, the images of the reunion of Ulysses and Penelope that were frescoed in the Galerie d'Ulysse were unprecedented in European fresco cycles.

Surviving images of the reunited Ulysses and Penelope are rare not only in the Renaissance, but in the entire history of Western art.[69] An ancient Greek Melian relief housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (figure 15) from the fifth century B.C. and one first-century Roman wall painting at Pompeii (figure 16) show Penelope and Ulysses but before her

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least five years after the Galerie d'Ulysse was completed (c.1565) and was therefore not a precedent for Primaticcio's designs.

[69] For lists of works of ancient art picturing Ulysses and Penelope, consult Ch. Hausmann, "Penelope," in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, ed. John Boardman, et al., Vol 7, Pt. 1, (Zürich: Artemis Verlag, 1994), 291-295; and Odette Touchefeu-Meynier, "Odysseus," in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, ed. John Boardman, et al., Vol. 6, Pt. 1, (Zürich: Artemis Verlag, 1992), 482-498**.** For works of art produced between 1300 and the 1990's picturing Ulysses and/or Penelope, consult Jane Davidson Reid, "Odysseus," in *Oxford Guide to Classical Mythology in the Arts, 1300-1990s*, Vol. 2. (NY; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 724-754; and idem, "Penelope," in *Oxford Guide to Classical Mythology in the Arts, 1300-1990s*, Vol. 2. (NY; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 850-857.

recognition of him as her husband.[70] Subsequent to these examples, Ulysses and Penelope are pictured in a late fifteenth-century Franco-Flemish tapestry series now housed in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (figure 17), where they are represented on individual tapestries that serve as pendants to one another.[71] Ulysses, the cunning world traveler, is pictured staring off into the distance from his ship. Penelope, the patient and faithful spouse, is represented seated before her loom engrossed in her own thoughts. Below her is a Latin inscription taken from Ovid's *Epistles* that reads, "I shall always be the wife of Ulysses." The National Gallery in London is home to a painting titled *Penelope with the Suitors* (1509) by Bernardino Pintoricchio (figure 18), which shows Penelope at her loom approached by several suitors and Ulysses disguised as a beggar. In the background, Pintoricchio included scenes of Ulysses tied to the mast of his ship as the Sirens

[70] The Melian relief dates to c. 450 B.C. and pictures Ulysses seated on the left, Penelope standing on the right, Telemachus standing in the center and nurse Euryclea kneeling in front of Ulysses. This scene represents the moment when Euryclea recognizes Ulysses (Lattimore (1965), 292-295). While bathing the disguised Ulysses' feet, Euryclea recognizes him by his scar but is ordered not to tell anyone of his identity. The Roman wall painting shows Ulysses seated, Penelope standing and Euryclea standing in the background. This scene represents the interview between the disguised Ulysses and Penelope (Lattimore (1965), 284-291). Ulysses tells Penelope that he is Aithon, grandson of King Minos of Knossos. He fabricates a story in which he encountered Ulysses during his travels, and that he would soon return to Ithaca. The imagery from both the Melian relief and the Roman wall painting occurs in Book XIX of the *Odyssey*, long before the passage in Book XXIII about the reunion of Ulysses and Penelope.

[71] These Franco-Flemish tapestries were two of eight surviving fragments of a series commissioned by Ferry de Clugny (c. 1430 – 1483) titled *The Stories of Virtuous Women* sometime between 1480 and 1483. The story of Penelope and the story of the Cimbri Women make up the imagery that survives in the eight fragments located in Boston. Several fragments show the arms and cardinal hat of Ferry de Clugny, who was the Cardinal and Bishop of Tournai. For more information on these tapestry fragments as well as images, see their entries in the Museum's website: http://www.mfa.org. The function and location for which Ferry intended his tapestries to hang is not known; however, Ferry left Tournai and moved to Rome in March of 1482 after being made a cardinal by Pope Sixtus IV in May of 1480. He was received by the pope and given his red hat in June of 1482. See Antoine de Schryver et al., *Le pontifical du cardinal Ferry de Clugny, évêque de Tournai*, (Rome: Città del Vaticano, 1989), 113-118. Because his cardinal hat was included in the imagery of the tapestries, it is likely that the series was meant to hang in his new residence in Rome. The tapestry series' subject matter could have been chosen as a tribute to Ferry's mother, who died by falling off of her horse during a falcon hunt in March of 1482. Ibid, 107.

try to entice him as well as a scene of Ulysses on shore with Circe and several of his companions that have been transformed into swine. Again, these are all scenes that take place before the reunion scene in which Penelope recognizes the undisguised Ulysses.[72]

The only image created prior to Primaticcio's Fontainebleau cycle that pictures Ulysses and Penelope reunited is Apollonio di Giovanni's (1416 - 1465) painted cassone panel showing the *Adventures of Ulysses* (figure 19) in The Art Institute of Chicago (ca. 1435-45).[73] The couple is shown together on a gold chariot at the bottom right hand corner of the panel. Their presence together, however, refers not to a specific textual passage but instead concludes the Ulyssean narrative by showing Ulysses happily reunited with his wife and country. In other words, whereas the iconography of the Galerie d'Ulysse images of Ulysses and Penelope refers to specific Homeric passages, Apollonio's image of Ulysses and Penelope works more as a sort of

[72] The painting was one of a series of eight frescoes with edifying subjects commissioned by Pandolfo Petrucci for a room in his Palazzo del Magnifico in Siena. Petrucci hired Pintoricchio (c. 1452 – 1513) and Luca Signorelli (c. 1450 – 1523) to paint the cycle. Each artist painted four frescoes. Pintoricchio's *Penelope with the Suitors* and two of Signorelli's frescoes, *Triumph of Chastity* and *Coriolanus Persuaded by His Family to Spare Rome,* are the only surviving frescoes from the series. All three are located in the National Gallery. For more information on Pintoricchio's work in Siena, see Konrad Oberhuber, "Raphael and Pinturicchio," in *Raphael before Rome,* ed. James Beck, *Studies in the History of Art* 17 (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1986), 155-172.

[73] Ellen Callmann, *Apollonio di Giovanni* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 25-30, explains that Apollonio's workshop was Florence's leading producer of cassoni, supplying over three hundred cassoni in the seventeen years of its recorded existence. The story of Penelope's loyalty to Ulysses would have been an appropriate story for a cassone, as cassoni were usually given as wedding gifts to brides. The cassone would generally hold the bride's possessions, and the painted illustration on the inside of the chest's lid would serve to remind the bride of a lesson about marriage. Paola Tinagli, *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation and Identity* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 21-46. Several cassone panels picturing the story of Ulysses that were produced in Apollonio's workshop survive. One is located in The Fogg Art Museum in Cambridge, Mass., one in the Helen C. Frick collection in New York, and the other's whereabouts are unknown; it was last located in the Lanckoronski collection in Vienna. They are all very similar to the panel in Chicago, and look as though they all derive from one template. These panels are pictured in Callmann (1974), 53-75 (cat. no. 4, 5, and 34).

visual summary of the Homeric ending to the adventures of Ulysses illustrated on the rest of the cassone panel.[74]

Thus, Primaticcio had little visual precedent when he set out to design the five distinct scenes for the walls of the Galerie d'Ulysse illustrating the reunion of Ulysses and Penelope described in Book XXIII of Homer's *Odyssey*. However, during the twenty-year span in which the decoration of the Galerie d'Ulysse was planned and executed (ca. 1540 – ca. 1560), a new approach to interpreting the *Odyssey* was being promoted by the prominent scholar, Jean Dorat (1508-1588).[75] Whereas previously the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* had been studied for their rhetorical content, political and moral significance, and philosophy, Dorat viewed them as allegorical texts that expressed sacred Christian truths about the human condition.

Dorat believed that Homer had been divinely inspired and had even received prophecies about the coming of the Messiah. Dorat interpreted the *Odyssey* as an allegory of man's journey through life, death, and afterlife. According to Dorat, Ulysses' death occurs in Book V, when Athena brings sleep over the eyes of the weary traveler who has just washed ashore on the island of the Phaeacians. The warm greeting by the Phaeacians, who provide Ulysses with a feast and transportation to his homeland, signifies Ulysses' funeral rites, and the ship in which Ulysses

[74] Other scenes represented on the panel begin in the bottom left corner with Ulysses' escape from Polyphemus. His encounter with Circe is shown at the center of the top of the panel. His struggle with the Sirens is shown at the center of the bottom of the panel. The right side of the panel shows events that occur when Ulysses returns home to Ithaca, beginning with Euryclea bathing his feet, the scene located just to the right of the Circe scene. At the top right corner is the contest of the suitors to see who can string Ulysses bow and shoot an arrow through a series of loops toward a target. The scene of Ulysses and Penelope reunited is located, as previously stated, at the bottom right corner of the panel.

[75] Dorat was a pupil of the first two *lecteurs royaux* (professors of the *Collège de lecteurs royaux*) and eventually became a *lecteur royal* of Greek in 1556. See Ford (2006), 15. For more on Dorat and Homer, see: idem. "Jean Dorat and the Reception of Homer in Renaissance France," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 2, No. 2 (Fall, 1995): 265-274.

sails home represents his tomb.[76] For Dorat, Ulysses' arrival in Ithaca and reunion with Penelope and Telemachus symbolize the eternal peace and happiness of heaven.[77]

According to Philip Ford, the original planning for the Galerie d'Ulysse was begun much too early to have been influenced by Dorat's teaching; however, during the twenty-year span of its enterprise, it is likely that the teachings of Dorat, the future royal poet and interpreter to the King, had some influence over the Galerie's program.[78] The imagery of the thirtieth scene, *Ulysse endormi est transporté dans son pays* (*Sleeping Ulysses Transported to His Country*; figure 24), supports the notion that Dorat's ideas may have informed Primaticcio's Ulyssean scheme. This fresco was the first scene that the spectator encountered on the south wall and was twice the width of any other fresco on that wall.[79] The thirtieth fresco, therefore, marked the beginning of a new journey, physically and figuratively. It was the start of the spectator's journey on the south wall back toward the entrance to the Galerie just as it was the onset of Ulysses' homecoming in Ithaca and, according to Dorat, the beginning of the afterlife.

Van Thulden's engraving of the fresco pictures a still-asleep Ulysses being lifted from the ship and laid to rest on the shore of Ithaca by a group of Naiads. The image of the limp, almost lifeless body of sleeping Ulysses being carried by a crowd of figures is undeniably a

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[76] Ulysses falls asleep in the Phaeacian ship that sails him home. The moment occurs in the *Odyssey*, Book XIII lines 78-85: "They bent to their rowing, and with their oars tossed up the sea spray, and upon the eyes of Ulysses there fell a sleep, gentle, the sweetest kind of sleep with no awakening, most like death…." Lattimore (1965), 200.

[77] Ford's explanation of Dorat's interpretation was drawn from a book titled *Novae Lectiones* (Antwerp, 1571) written by one of Dorat's pupils, Willem Canter (1542-1575). Canter wrote a chapter explaining the ideas of Dorat. See Ford (2006), 17 and idem. (1995), 265-274.

[78] Idem (2006), 17. Béguin et al., (1985), 98, briefly discusses the impact of Dorat's interpretation of the *Odyssey* on the humanist circles at court and hints at the probability of its influence on the elaboration of the program for the Galerie d'Ulysse.

[79] The twenty-ninth fresco, *Ulysse prend congé d'Alkinoos*, and the scene of *Ulysse endormi est transporté dans son pays* (figure 24) both were located on the eastern end of the walls of the Galerie d'Ulysse (See Appendix A). Each occupied an entire bay, whereas in the rest of the gallery, one bay contained two scenes.

borrowing from the second-century Roman Meleager sarcophagus of Meleager's dead body being carried by a group of mourning companions (figure 25), which was well known to Renaissance artists.[80] More importantly, the Meleager imagery was used repeatedly in Renaissance depictions of the entombment of Christ and the pietà.[81] It seems reasonable to deduce that Primaticcio's Ulysses of the thirtieth scene of the Galerie was indeed an allusion to the hero's death, relying on well known imagery of Christ's death to provoke its embedded meaning.

If indeed Primaticcio's rendering of the *Odyssey* for the decoration of the Galerie d'Ulysse relied on Dorat's interpretation of the text, then the five reunion scenes in the Galerie d'Ulysse would have been, in accordance with Dorat's interpretation, representative of Ulysses' experience in the afterlife. To Dorat, Penelope and Ithaca were symbolical of *sapientia ac felicitas* (wisdom and happiness), both gifts rewarded to those Christians who were virtuous during their mortal life.[82]

The forty-ninth fresco of *Ulysses Sleeping Next to Penelope* is interesting in this context, because it shows Ulysses sleeping. His left arm is thrown back over his head against his pillow, and his right arm is extended outward in the same direction. A still-awake, contented Penelope drapes her left arm across the abdomen of her sleeping husband, a gesture that underscores the reality that Ulysses has actually returned and that his presence can literally be felt against her own skin. The figures of Ulysses and Penelope of the forty-ninth fresco recall the set of sculpted

[80] For information on Renaissance artists' knowledge of the Meleager sarchopahgus, see Phyllis Pray Bober and Ruth Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture: a Handbook of Sources* (London: H. Miller; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 147 (cat. no. 116).
[81] Examples of such works include Raphael's *Entombment* (1507; Museo Galleria Borghese, Rome), Titian's *Entombment* (c. 1570; Museo del Prado, Madrid), Rosso Fiorentino's *Pietà* (c. 1530 - 1540) and Michelangelo's Roman *Pietà* (1499; St. Peter's, Vatican).
[82] Willem Canter employed the terms "sapientia ac felicitas" when describing Dorat's interpretation of Ithaca and Penelope. Ford (2006), 17.

gisants of Henri II and Catherine de' Medici (figure 26) located in the central interior of the royal couple's two-story tomb in the Abbey of Saint-Denis in Paris.

The gisant of the recumbent king was sculpted with Henri's head thrust backward, his eyelids closed, and his arms limp. Lying next to Henri is Catherine, her head turned slightly toward Henri, her eyes open, her arms crossed over her body, covering her chest and abdomen, much like a Venus Pudica, and her knees slightly elevated, as if she is trying to cover herself in modesty. Catherine's gisant appears awake and moving, while Henry's gisant appears flaccid and dead. Like other sculpted funerary effigies of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Henri's body is depicted as though it is a decomposing corpse.[83] His lifeless body is accentuated by a visible ribcage and sagging skin. Catherine's gisant, on the other hand, is an idealized representation of the then forty-year-old queen.[84] Her body appears soft and rounded. Her flowing curly locks of hair and attractive face hardly represent a forty-year old portrait of Catherine.[85] It would seem that Catherine's intention for the contrast between her idealized, lively gisant and Henri's naturalistic, rigid one was to be forever viewed as the young and beautiful widow lying next to her beloved deceased husband. Her gisant represents her eternally

[83] Both the two-story tombs of Henri's father (François I) and grandfather (Louis XII) had transi representations of the kings and their wives. Both tombs are also located in the Abbey of St. Denis, Paris. See Levkoff (2003), 53-64.

[84] Pilon's gisant of Catherine was not the original effigy for the tomb. In 1565, Girolama della Robbia (1488-1566) completed Catherine's sculpted gisant for her and Henri's monumental tomb, which is now housed in the Louvre. As was the current trend in French funerary sculpture, the effigy of Catherine was represented as a transi/cadaver, an effigy of the deceased as a decomposing corpse. See Kathleen Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol: The Transi Tomb in the Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 1-11, and Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 112-114. Catherine was depicted with an emaciated, skeletal-like body and aged face (figure 23). Girolama's transi was rejected by Catherine, who then had Pilon sculpt a new gisant for the tomb, which immortalized her as a young beauty.

[85] Pilon's representation of the then forty-year-old Catherine, who had by then bore ten children, was a far cry from the Queen's actual appearance. The closest visual approximation to Catherine's appearance around 1560 is Clouet's portrait of the widowed Queen (figure 20).

as a living, ageless, and chaste goddess-queen lying next to her lifeless husband to whom she is perpetually devoted. Such was the plight of the widowed Regent to continue on after Henri's death, devoting all of her energy to a successful regency and the proper rearing of her children.

The forty-ninth fresco of the Galerie d'Ulysse, showing a sleeping Ulysses and watchful Penelope, as previously stated, uncannily recalls the imagery of the recumbent figures of the royal couple on the tomb of Henri and Catherine. Though the positioning of the bodies in the fresco differs slightly from the bodies on the tomb, the overall composition of the body-pairs in both the fresco and the tomb are remarkably similar. The first notable likeness between the tomb figures and the fresco figures is the space in which they are situated. Both body-pairs are arranged atop a bed or bed-like structure. In the fresco, the figures rest upon a bed.[86] The structure upon which the figures rest on the tomb was made to look like a bed as well. The gisants recline on sculpted cushions, which are positioned on top of a large rectangular base. In both the fresco and the tomb, the figures are enveloped from the waist down in bedding, although the tomb figures' legs are more exposed than those of the fresco figures. The right leg of Henri's gisant is almost entirely exposed, as is the lower half of the left leg of Catherine's gisant. While it is hard to decipher the intertwined legs of Penelope and Ulysses under the bedding in the fresco, it is evident that two of their feet are exposed. On the tomb, all four feet belonging to the gisants are exposed.

Another noticeable similarity occurs in the settings of the tomb and fresco. In both the fresco and the tomb structure, the couples are positioned under a canopy. In the fresco, Ulysses and Penelope are sheltered by a canopy of drapery hanging above their heads that extends over

[86] The image's correlative Homeric passage quoted earlier in the paper explains that after their lovemaking, Ulysses and Penelope stayed up exchanging stories from the lapsed time of their separation. Penelope was the last to fall asleep, because she listened to Ulysses' storytelling until sleep came over him.

the upper portion of their bodies. Likewise, the gisants of Henri and Catherine's tomb are located below a ceiling that acts as a sort of canopy or protective structure that creates an intimate space comparable to a bedchamber for the royal couple.

The architectural elements of the Valois tomb hearken back to the architectural space of the bedchamber depicted in the Galerie d'Ulysse fresco. The tomb has a rectilinear plan accented by marble columns at its corners similar to the fresco of the bedchamber, which shows a rectilinear room with two fictively drawn marble columns at two of the room's visible corners. Even the cornice on the exterior walls of the tomb recalls the molding around the top of the walls of the bedchamber in the fresco. A look into the interior chamber of the Valois tomb that houses the gisants of Henri and Catherine from the side that faces the recumbent body of Henri II is not all that different from the constructed view of the Galerie d'Ulysse scene of *Ulysses Sleeping Next to Penelope* (figure 27).

The most striking similarities between the fresco and the tomb are the likenesses of the figures of Ulysses and Penelope to the gisants of Henri and Catherine, as discussed above, as well as the shared dynamic of a sleeping/dead male and a young, beautiful and wakeful female. In the fresco, Ulysses is sleeping and Penelope is awake, and on the tomb, Henri is depicted dead and Catherine is alive. Primaticcio designed both the Galerie d'Ulysse frescoes as well as the tomb of Henri and Catherine, and when construction on the tomb began in 1560, the Galerie d'Ulysse frescoes were being completed. If indeed the Galerie d'Ulysse frescoes of the reunited Penelope and Ulysses were meant to allude to Catherine and the recently deceased Henri II, the idea for the designs of the frescoes had to have been added to the scheme after Henri died. Catherine was Regent during the execution of the frescoes and likely inherited the artistic project

following Henri's death.[87] In that case, the reunion frescoes would have been an addition to the cycle ordered by Catherine in an attempt to include scenes that celebrated the enduring commitment, even in death, between her and Henri via their symbolical portrayal as Penelope and Ulysses, King and Queen of Ithaca. Primaticcio could have employed the similar imagery of the recumbent couple in bed for both the gisants on Henri and Catherine's tomb and the fresco of *Ulysses Sleeping next to Penelope* to enhance the parallels between the reunion scenes and the life of the Galerie's new patron, Queen Catherine.

An examination of the frescoed vault scenes directly above the five wall frescoes of the reunion of Ulysses and Penelope uncovers further evidence to support this theory of Ulysses as representative of Henri II and Penelope of Catherine. While the dating of the execution of the

[87] Catherine took a strong interest in art and greatly admired Italian art and architecture. Her architectural projects included the construction of a new palace at the Tuileries in Paris (begun c. 1563) and a new wing of the Louvre (begun c. 1570). See Ivan Cloulas, *Catherine de Médicis* (Paris: Cameron, 1981), 319-324, and Emmanuel Jacquin, "Le mécénat royal à Paris," in Marie-Noélle Baudouin-Matuszek, *Paris et Catherine de Médicis*. (Paris: Délégation à l'action artistique de la ville de Paris, 1989), 87-105. The inventory of Catherine's living quarters at the Hôtel de Soissons in Paris recorded at the time of her death included a collection of 129 tapestries and 476 paintings. More than two-thirds of her paintings were portraits. Francis Henry Taylor, *The Taste of Angels: a History of Art Collecting from Rameses to Napoleon* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1948), 192-194, and Edmond Bonnaffé, *Inventaire des meubles de Catherine de Médicis; meubles, tableaux, objets d'art, manuscripts* (Geneva: Minkoff Reprint, 1973), 56-169. While there is no supporting evidence that Catherine took over as patron of the Galerie d'Ulysse, it seems probable due not only to the fact that she was enthusiastic about art, but also because the artists responsible for its design and execution were both Italian. Furthermore, Columbe Samoyaut-Verlet, "Constructions royales en Ile-de-France," in Baudouin-Matuszek (1989), 150-157, explains that Catherine appointed Primaticcio *surintendant des bâtiments royaux* on 12 July, 1559, just two days after Henri II's death and soon commissioned several architectural additions to Fontainebleau that were the "plus parfaits exemples du style italien à Fontainebleau." These projects included the enlargement of the *appartement de la Reine* and the addition of a *salle des gardes* and an exterior staircase to the *appartement du roi*. In 1563, Catherine also commissioned a fresco representing the recovery of Le Havre from the English for the eastern end of the Galerie d'Ulysse, a location that would align Charles IX's victory with the heroic deeds of Ulysses. So it is evident that Catherine took an active role in artistic production at Fontainebleau, and specifically in the Galerie d'Ulysse, after the death of Henri II.

vault remains unresolved, it is certain that the vault decoration was completed before the execution of the wall frescoes. The decoration of the vault was commenced during the reign of François I and completed during the reign of Henri II.[88] The vault decoration, although difficult to reconstruct with certainty, is believed to have illustrated the dominion of the gods of Olympus in accordance with the laws of nature.

The vault was divided into fifteen compartments, each which spanned the length of two of the fresco scenes on the walls below. For example, the first vault compartment pictured the gods on Mount Olympus and extended over the first two fresco scenes on the north wall that pictured the *Embarkation of the Greeks from Troy* and *Ulysses Sacrificing to the Gods* and the last two frescoes of the narrative on the south wall, the *Escape of the Rebels* and *Ulysses Receiving Homage from his Subjects* (Appendix A). Apollo was the principal deity pictured in the vault decoration. He appears in eight of the fifteen compartments (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 and 14). Apollo, god of intellect and music, has traditionally served as a symbolical representation of French kings in art.[89] In the Galerie d'Ulysse, it is widely accepted that the Apollo of the vault frescoes alluded to King Henri II. Curiously, the three vault compartments that correspond to the five "reunion" scenes (compartments 5, 6, and 7) all pictured Apollo as well as the goddess Diana, who was commonly employed as Diane de Poitier's allegorical icon.[90] While Apollo

[88] Béguin et al., (1985), 95-100.
[89] The Sun god was most famously employed during the seventeenth-century reign of the King Louis XIV (the Sun King). It was more common in the sixteenth century to align the king with the god Jupiter; however, the Neoplatonist writing of Marsilio Ficino, *De Solo* (published 1494), placed the sun, Apollo, at the center of the universe. The sphere occupied by the sun/Apollo was equated with the Trinity, therefore bestowing upon the sun/Apollo the prestige of ruler of the universe, a position with which King Henri II could have identified with allegorically. See Goldberg (1966), 207-209.
[90] Diane de Poitiers was commonly represented in art as Diana, goddess of the Hunt and of the Moon. Her emblem, the crescent moon, became the adopted emblem of Henri II, appearing on the king's clothing, dinnerware, furniture, architectural embellishments and monograms. See

appeared in eight of the fifteen vault compartments, it was only in the three vault compartments (5, 6, and 7) over the reunion scenes frescoed on the walls below that both Apollo and Diana were pictured together. Françoise Bardon has posited that the Apollo and Diana of the seventh vault compartment were symbolical of Henri II and his mistress Diane de Poitiers.[91] This would not have been the first instance in which Diana, goddess of the hunt, was made the focus of one of Henri's artistic commissions. In fact, the decoration of the Salle de bal at Fontainebleau, which interrupted the decoration process for the Galerie d'Ulysse during the 1550's, featured a hunting theme and included numerous images of the goddess Diana that pay homage to Diane de Poitiers.[92]

If indeed the wall imagery of Penelope in the Galerie d'Ulysse was intended to allude to Catherine, it is hardly coincidental that the only wall frescoes in the entire Galerie that pictured Penelope were located directly under the three vault compartments containing the depictions of Apollo/Henri II and Diana/Diane de Poitiers. It is as if there was a direct dialogue between the wall frescoes and the ceiling decoration above them. The wall frescoes, which were completed much later than the vault frescoes, could be seen as a "pro-Catherine" response to the imagery overhead that blatantly glorified the king and his mistress.[93] It is plausible, then, to conjecture

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Françoise Bardon, *Diane de Poitiers et le mythe de Diane* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963), 39-95.

[91] Ibid, 70. Bardon suggests that the depiction of *Apollo and Diana Killing the Children of Niobe* and of *Apollo Slaying the Serpent Python* are indicative of political themes. *Apollo and Diana Killing the Children of Niobe* was representative of the spoils gained by the French monarchy from their foreign enemies in their efforts to conquer Italian territories. *Apollo Slaying the Serpent Python* symbolized the French crown's intolerability of heresy.

[92] See Anne-Marie Lecoq, "L'Iconographie de la salle de bal à Fontainebleau: une hypothèse de lecture," in *Henri II et les arts: actes du collque international, École du Louvre et Musée national de la Renaissance-Écouen, 25, 26 et 27 september 1997* (Paris, École du Louvre, 2003), 387-388.

[93] It is widely known that Catherine despised Diane de Poitiers, although she remained tolerant of Henri and Diane's relationship while Henri was alive for fear of Henri's wrath. During the

that the five frescoes depicting Ulysses and Penelope reunited were indeed commissioned by Catherine and intended as an allusion to her devotion to Henri in response to the vault frescoes above.

Following Dorat's Christian interpretation of the *Odyssey* that may very well have influenced Primaticcio's scheme for the Galerie d'Ulysse, the imagery of Ulysses/Henri II and Penelope/Catherine reunited was representative of the Queens' perpetual devotion to their husbands. The forty-ninth fresco of *Ulysses Sleeping Next to Penelope*, showing the faithful Penelope watching over her sleeping husband with whom she has been rejoined, uniquely conjured up the contemporaneous imagery of the sculpted gisants of King Henri II and Catherine de' Medici from their two-story tomb in Saint-Denis. The sleeping Ulysses of the Galerie d'Ulysse fresco can be viewed as a double allegorical representation: first, of the deceased Ulysses, who lives on in the afterlife reunited with his loyal bride Penelope, and secondly, as the deceased Henri II, to whom his devoted bride Catherine will always remain faithful and spiritually connected.

Primaticcio's *Ulysses and Penelope* in Toledo is the only painted reproduction of a scene from the Galerie d'Ulysse by Primaticcio, not to mention one of the very few surviving easel paintings by Primaticcio.[94] It is a derivation from the forty-eighth fresco in the Galerie d'Ulysse

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several days Henri spent on his deathbed after his jousting accident, Catherine refused to let Diane visit Henri, in spite of the fact that he repeatedly called for her presence. After Henri's death, Catherine banned Diane and her daughter Françoise from the court, ordered Diane to return the crown jewels given to her by Henri, and reclaimed the chateau of Chenonceau from Diane. Catherine even went so far as to deface the many ciphers on buildings that read "HD" (for Henri and Diane) to read "HC" instead (figure 28). See Chapter XX of Princess Micheal of Kent, HRH, *Serpent and the Moon: Two Rivals for the Love of a Renaissance King* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 359-365 for a detailed account of Catherine's actions against Diane de Poitiers following Henri's death.

[94] The only other non-fresco paintings attributed to Primaticcio that we know of are an altarpiece in the St. Petersburg Hermitage Museum of *The Holy Family with Sts. Elizabeth and John the*

of *Ulysses Recounting his Adventures to Penelope*, and in comparison, the Toledo painting's focus is exclusively on Ulysses and Penelope. All of the dancing maidens have been deleted, and what space remains in the background of the bedchamber has been darkened into shadow. The purpose of the Toledo painting's creation is unresolved; however Giancarlo Fiorenza has made some valuable observations that may help with this enigma. Fiorenza has suggested that the painting's low viewpoint and the monumentality of the figures of Ulysses and Penelope could indicate that it was intended to be displayed at a high elevation and was perhaps an overdoor.[95] The intimacy of the painting's imagery could be an indication that it was meant to hang in a private space, such as a cabinet.

While any attempt to assign the painting a patron would be speculation,[96] it is plausible to surmise that the patron desired a painting that would exalt Penelope's character. The brightest and most noticeable part of the painting is Penelope's face, which looks practically disconnected from the rest of her body, seemingly held up in the darkness by Ulysses' hand. Furthermore, it is the figure of Penelope that rivals that of Ulysses, as it is her profile that makes up the central

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Baptist (1541-3) and a supposed self-portrait in the Uffizi in Florence. There are no records of commissions for easel paintings by Primaticcio, and the artist's inventories mention very few easel paintings, all of which are known and definitely not by him but show his influence. See Henri Zerner, *Renaissance Art in France: the Invention of Classicism*, trans. Deke Dusinberre et al., (Paris: Flammarion, 2003), 110. None of the paintings that reproduce scenes of the Galerie d'Ulysse by artists other than Primaticcio are copies of the reunion scenes (See footnote 10).

[95] Fiorenza (2006), 802.

[96] The earliest known owner of the painting was Sir Robert Strange (1721-1792), the Scottish engraver, writer and collector, who was mainly active in England. In 1760, Strange went to Rome and stayed for five years making engravings after old Italian masters. While in Italy, Strange collected works of art, which he sold at auction in London after his return. *Ulysses and Penelope* was sold at a Christie's auction in London in February of 1772 along with a painting by a French artist: Valentin de Boulogne's (1591-1632) *Fortune Teller* of c. 1628, now in the Louvre. See Francis Russell, "Valentin's 'Fortune Teller,'" *The Burlington Magazine* 124 (August, 1982): 507. For further reading on Strange's sojourn in Italy, see James Dennistoun, *Memoirs of Sir Robert Strange, knt., engraver and of his brother-in-law, Andrew Lumisden*, (London: Longmans, 1855).

vertical axis of the painting's composition. Penelope was most widely known as a symbol of fidelity, as she remains steadfast and true to Ulysses throughout the years of his absence even in the face of Ithaca's most eligible suitors. The painting's patron must have wanted a work that would exemplify Penelope's loyalty to her husband, and faithfulness in marriage was the most important virtue a Renaissance woman could possess.[97] It would also be reasonable to infer that the patron of the Toledo painting was very familiar with the Galerie d'Ulysse frescoes, because without knowledge of them, it would be extremely difficult to recognize the subjects of the Toledo painting as Ulysses and Penelope.[98]

Because the Toledo *Ulysses and Penelope* is the only replica of a fresco scene from the Galerie d'Ulysse, it is then arguably the only authentic glimpse in color we have of what the finished gallery may have looked like and, in particular, how the painted figures would have appeared.[99] The more one studies the figures of Ulysses and Penelope in the Toledo painting, the

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[97] Joanna Woods-Marsden, "Portrait of the Lady, 1430-1520," in David Alan Brown et al., *Virtue and beauty : Leonardo's Ginevra de' Benci and Renaissance portraits of women* (Washington: National Gallery of Art; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 64.

[98] Typically, a mythological painting of a partially nude male and female reclining on a bed is a representation of Cupid and Psyche; however, they are usually accompanied by some sort of attribute, i.e. Cupid's wings, his bow, a lamp or candle, etc. See Luisa Vertova, "Cupid and Psyche in Renaissance Painting before Raphael," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 42 (1979): 104-121. In the Toledo painting of Ulysses and Penelope, there are no attributes present at all. The original fresco pictured several pieces of Ulysses' armor, but those were deleted from the Toledo painting. Johnson (1966), 30-32 suggests that Primaticcio's *Ulysses and Penelope* may have been a work commissioned by a noble patron that was part of a series of paintings that reproduced several key scenes from the Galerie d'Ulysse for a smaller, more condensed version of Primaticcio's cycle. While this is a credible postulation, there are no other scenes deriving from the Galerie d'Ulysse by Primaticcio to complete such a series.

[99] The previously mentioned drawings and engravings that represent the same fresco scene from the Galerie d'Ulysse as the Toledo canvas are expectedly much less detailed in terms of facial descriptions. It is only in the Toledo canvas that one is able to perceive a finished version of the figures represented in the drawings and engravings. Several painted copies of fresco scenes in the Galerie d'Ulysse were painted by artists other than Primaticcio; however none of them record any of the five reunion scenes. Some examples include, Ruggiero de'Ruggieri's *L'Épreuve de l'arc* (ca. 1555-1570) and *Ulysse affrontant les Sirènes et franchissant le détroit de Charbde et*

more one notices the striking similarities of the figure of Ulysses to contemporaneous portraits of Henri II. François Clouet's (1516-1572) portrait of Henri II of 1547 (figure 20) reveals the same droopy eyed, dark bearded man who appears as Ulysses in the Toledo *Ulysses and Penelope*. Even the long, sharply pointed nose of the Toledo Ulysses resembles that of Henri II in Clouet's portrait. If the portrait of Henri II as Ulysses in Primaticcio's Toledo painting is any indication of how the finished figure of Ulysses appeared throughout the Galerie d'Ulysse cycle, then it would be unquestionable that the character of Ulysses was supposed to be an allegorical representation of Henri II. As has been previously established, the Penelope of the Galerie d'Ulysse reunion scenes was in all likelihood an allegorical representation of Catherine. And since the Ulysses of the Toledo painting appears to be a portrait of Henri II, then it is distinctly possible that Penelope was intended to be a likeness of Catherine.

While the Toledo Ulysses bears a very close resemblance to Henri II, the physiognomy of Penelope is less recognizable as that of Catherine. The youthful, beautiful figure of Penelope is dissimilar to Catherine's true appearance. Catherine was not known for her looks. Contemporary portraits (figure 21) of Catherine portray her as having large, bulging eyes, pudgy cheeks and a small, shapeless chin. Giovanni Capello, a Venetian envoy to the French Court, described Catherine in her fortieth year as good-looking only 'when her face is veiled.' He proceeds, 'Her mouth is too large and her eyes too prominent and colorless for beauty, but a very distinguished-looking woman, with a shapely figure, a beautiful skin and exquisitely shaped hands….[100]' While the lovely painted hands of Penelope in the Toledo painting could have been

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Scylla (ca. 1555-1570). Both of these images are pictured in Cordellier (2004), 329 (Fig. 166) and 335 (Fig. 171).

[100] Quoted in Frieda (2003), 114.

a truthful representation of Catherine's, Penelope's exquisite face is certainly not representative of the descriptions listed above.

In the sixteenth century, portrait painters often expressed the ideal beauty of the female form over the actual likenesses of the sitter.[101] The Toledo Penelope's lovely features embody the Renaissance canon of ideal female beauty: milky, white skin; golden, wavy hair; rosy cheeks and lips; and glistening eyes.[102] To humanist scholars like Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), outer beauty signified inner beauty.[103] A beautiful woman was a virtuous woman, and a woman's greatest virtue was her chastity before marriage and once wedded, fidelity to her husband. The idealization of a woman's beauty in a portrait did more than glorify her appearance and elevate her status. It was a way for the artist to immortalize the sitter as an exemplary woman. Homer's

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[101] Gian Giorgio Trissino of Vincenza wrote a literary portrait for Isabella d'Este titled *I rittrati* ('Portraits'), in which he employed formulaic descriptions of ideal beauty to portray Isabella regardless of her actual features. According to Shearer West, *Portraiture* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 150-152, this tradition of poetry, portraiture and ideal beauty began the trend of the idealization of women in portraiture in Italy and those European countries that were affected by the Italian Renaissance. Sandro Botticelli's *Portrait of a Young Woman (Simonetta Vespucci?) in Mythological Guise* (c. 1480-85) is less concerned with likeness than with the ideal canon of female beauty. Her perfectly symmetrical face, milky skin, rosy cheeks and lips and flowing locks of elaborately coiled hair are no indication of the sitter's actual physical appearance. See David Alan Brown, et al. (2001), 182-183; cat. 28. Other well known idealized portraits of Renaissance women include Parmigianino's *Antea* (c. 1531-35; Museo di Capodimonte, Naples) and Titian's *Isabella d'Este* (c. 1534; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). See Elizabeth Cropper, "On Beautiful Women, Parmigianino, Petrarchismo, and the Vernacular Style," *The Art Bulletin* 58, No. 3 (1976): 391-393; Bruce Cole, "Titian and the Idea of Originality," in *The Craft of Art: Originality and Industry in the Italian Renaissance and Baroque Workshop,* ed. Andrew Ladis and Carolyn Wood. (Athens, GA and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1995), 100-103; and Rose Marie San Juan, "The Court Lady's Dilemna: Isabella d'Este and Art Collecting in the Renaissance," *Oxford Art Journal* 14, No. 1 (1991): 67-78.

[102] Numerous treatises on love and beauty as well as lyric poems from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries record the idealistic characteristics of feminine beauty. See Paola Tinagli, *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation and Identity* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 85-86.

[103] Ficino expressed in his writings that a woman's spiritual virtue was exhibited by her physical beauty. See Mary O'Neill, "Virtue and Beauty: The Renaissance image of the ideal women," *Smithsonian* 32, No. 6 (2001): 62-69.

Penelope was a model of feminine virtue because of her fidelity to Ulysses, and it is this quality that is the emphasis of her presence in the Toledo painting. The patron of the Toledo painting was able to portray her virtue in two ways: the idealization of her physiognomy in accordance with the Renaissance canon of ideal beauty as well as the allusion to herself as the mythological character of Penelope, who was celebrated as the quintessential faithful wife.

I would like to suggest that it was Catherine who commissioned the Toledo painting from Primaticcio as an overdoor for her bedchamber.[104] The subject of the painting would have been dear to her heart as the patron of the five additional reunion scenes to the program of the Galerie d'Ulysse. Catherine probably would have hung the painting in her bedchamber --a space in which only privileged people were allowed to enter-- for several reasons, the most obvious being that the scene represented is also set in a bedchamber and contains subject matter that alludes to her husband. In addition, the Toledo painting would have been especially treasured by Catherine because of its derivation from the Galerie d'Ulysse imagery that signified her devotion to Henri and was therefore deserving of being kept in the most personal of spaces occupied by the Queen.

[104] This would not have been the only instance in which Catherine commissioned an idealized portrait of herself. See footnotes no. 84-85 on Catherine's rejection of Girolama della Robbia's sculpted transi for the Valois tomb and her patronage of a new, idealized gisant by Germain Pilon.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The five reunion scenes in the Galerie d'Ulysse were a telling set of images for the monarchic situation at hand. Henri II's death in 1559 may have prompted Catherine, the likely inheritor of the fresco cycle's patronage, to commission a modification of the program's scheme with the insertion of five scenes dedicated to Ulysses and Penelope's reunion as a sort of visual eulogy for her marriage to Henri. Like the Artemisia/Catherine de' Medici analogy in Nicolas Houel's literary project, Penelope represented Catherine in the five reunion scenes located toward the end of the fresco cycle. An interesting idea that needs further research is Catherine's decision to identify with a mortal mythological figure instead of a goddess. Most mythological portraits of sixteenth and seventeenth-century royal females represented the women as pagan deities or allegorical figures, such as Chastity and Prudence. Minerva, Diana, and Juno seemed to have been favored deities for mythological paintings of royal women in the sixteenth century.[105] Even Catherine was represented in the guise of several goddesses, including Juno and Ceres.[106] Penelope was a mythological character who was rarely represented in art; however, according to McAllister, the most common scene in which she is portrayed is her working at her loom. Colin Bailey has related that before 1729, when François Lemoyne (1688-1737) completed two overdoor paintings for the *salon ovale* of the hôtel Peyrenc de Moras in Paris representing *The Work of Penelope* (Penelope is represented working at her loom) and *The Return of Ulysses* (Ulysses is represented stringing his bow amongst the suitors), not a single

[105] See Suzanne Higgott and Isabelle Biron, "Marguerite de France as Minerva: A Sixteenth-Century Limoges Painted Enamel Painted by Jean de Court in the Wallace Collection," *Apollo* 504 (February, 2004): 21-30.
[106] Ibid, 28 (footnote 13).

representation of either of these scenes is known in French painting since the Galerie d'Ulysse cycle of the sixteenth century.[107] It seems that the choice of Catherine as Penelope, a mortal mythological figure, was a unique and therefore carefully calculated selection.

Catherine had to be cautious with the way she presented herself to the public, especially when she assumed her regency. As was discussed in Chapter III, Catherine was faced with the challenge of being a female and "foreign" ruler of France. The five reunion scenes, which were, as I have argued, a later insertion into the Galerie d'Ulysse fresco cycle under Catherine's patronage that alluded to the lives of Catherine and Henri through the characters of Penelope and Ulysses, can be seen as imagery meant to promote Catherine as a virtuous and upstanding woman. The fresco cycle as a whole was meant to glorify Henri as it was dedicated to the story of Ulysses; however, the reunion scenes constituted a peaceful break in the adventurous visual narrative of Ulysses and conveyed a message about Catherine's character, not as a ruler but as a faithful wife. The objective of Catherine's representation as Penelope in the reunion scenes seems not to have been an attempt at glorifying her power or honoring her as a ruler, because Penelope was not a character known for her regal power or influence over her country. Penelope was a character most famous for her fidelity to Ulysses. Had Catherine wanted imagery that would speak of her power, she might have chosen instead to be represented as a goddess, like the representation of Diane de Poitiers as Diana in the ceiling frescoes above.

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[107] Colin B. Bailey, *The Loves of the Gods: Mythological Painting from Watteau to David* (New York, Rizzoli, Fort Worth: Kimbell Art Museum, 1992), 272. While there is a fresco cycle in the Galerie d'Ulysse showing the competition between the suitors, when the disguised Ulysses is able to win by stringing his tricky bow and shooting the target, there is no representation of Penelope at her loom. Nonetheless, Bailey's argument in which this example is employed is that Odyssean-themed paintings, particularly those showing scenes of Ulysses in Ithaca after his famed adventures, were uncommon for much of the seventeenth century in France.

Catherine chose Penelope because of her reputation as a dutiful widow-queen and mother, and perhaps because of her status not only as a mortal but also as a secondary figure in the *Odyssey*. Ulysses is the hero of the *Odyssey*, and Penelope is described as his lamenting, faithful wife. Penelope's fear and grief over Ulysses during his lengthy absence consumes her for the majority of the narrative. From the very beginning, it is Penelope's sorrow that distinguishes her character. Her first appearance occurs in Book I when she descends from her bedchamber upon hearing the music being played to entertain the suitors, which saddens her heart. The scene unfolds in lines 336 to 364:

> All in tears she [Penelope] spoke then to the divine singer: Phemios…but leave off singing this sad song, which always afflicts the dear heart deep inside me, since the unforgettable sorrow comes to me, beyond others, so dear a head do I long for whenever I am reminded of my husband….and she went back to the upper story with her attendant women and wept for Ulysses, her beloved husband, until gray-eyed Athene cast sweet slumber over her eyelids.[108]

Throughout the rest of the *Odyssey*, Penelope is usually portrayed in domestic situations, weaving at her loom while lamenting over Ulysses. She is given her due as a smart, resourceful woman, when she tests Ulysses' true identity by tricking him into describing their famous bed, which could not be moved due to its construction from a rooted olive tree. For most of the Homeric text, however, Penelope is a minor character. French queens were arguably considered secondary royal figures as well, especially in the cases of "foreign" queens. A quotation from an anonymous pamphlet written in 1617 that is included in a dissertation regarding images of French queens in the seventeenth century by Elaine Rubin deserves to be considered here:

> Kings are on earth that which the Sun is in the Heavens…and Queens themselves even do not have any splendor except through the goodwill of Kings; thus, the

[108] Lattimore (1965), 35-36.

> Moon does not have any brightness except by the distribution which the Sun makes to it.[109]

By associating herself with a celebrated quasi-widow figure of the past, Catherine promoted her status by demonstrating her eternal affiliation with her husband, whose tragic death gave rise to her accession to the throne.

Perhaps it was Catherine's intention to be equated with a famous mortal woman as a sign of her humility. Catherine was not of royal blood; she married into her royal position. She was not French, an issue that would have concerned members of the French court who worried about the state of their monarch being in the hands of a "foreign" woman.[110] Catherine was aware of the public's rightful perception of her as an interim inheritor of the throne as opposed to a royal descendant. Leonie Frieda has posited that Catherine was initially discontented with her assumed regency. It was not a position that Catherine happily accepted but one that she took on as her duty to her country and to her sons. Catherine wrote in a letter to her daughter, Queen Elisabeth of Spain, a few days after François II's death:

> …I shall govern myself in such a manner that God and the world will have cause to be pleased with me, since my principal aim is to honour God in everything and to preserve my authority, not for myself but for the conservation of this kingdom and welfare of all your brothers, whom I love as springing from the same source whence you all came….God has taken him [Henri II] from me and, not content with that, has deprived me of your brother whom you know how I loved, and has left me with three little children and a divided kingdom, where there is not one man whom I can trust, who is not governed by private passion of his own.[111]

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[109] This English translation of the quotation from the pamphlet titled *Le Roy hors de page à la royne mere* can be found in Elaine Rhea Rubin, *The Heroic Image: Women and Power in Early Seventeenth-Century France, 1610-1661,* (Ph.D. Dissertation, The George Washington University, 1997), 95.

[110] See Géraldine A. Johnson, "Imagining Images of Powerful Women: Maria de' Medici's Patronage of Art and Architecture," in Cynthia Lawrence, ed. *Women and Art in Early Modern Europe: Patrons, Collectors, and Connoisseurs* (University Park, PN: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 129-131.

[111] This portion of the English translation of the letter can be found in Frieda (2003), 146.

Catherine states in the letter that her duty is to her kingdom and to her sons, and she humbly accredited even her own accomplishments as regent to the young Charles IX. For example, in July of 1563 Catherine sent French troops to Le Havre, a French region that had been occupied by the English for one year, where they succeeded in driving away the English invaders. In commemoration of the event, Catherine commissioned a painting of the conquest that glorified Charles IX, the French king who, although he was in his minority, reigned at the time of the victory.[112] Perhaps a similar gesture of humility was Catherine's objective with the symbolical representation of herself as Penelope in the Galerie d'Ulysse. References to Catherine in the fresco cycle that was emblematic of the reign of her husband seem not to have been made to exalt her new power as regent. It seems instead that her representation as Penelope commemorated her devotion to Henri, whose memory she wished to perpetuate. Through the symbolic imagery of the reunion frescoes, Catherine created an image of herself that reminded the viewer of the tragic loss of her husband that led to her inheritance of power, evoking sympathy for her situation. It seems likely that, had Catherine chosen imagery that would exalt her power as regent, such as the representation of herself as an immortal mythological character, it could have resulted in a reaction of indignation from a court that would view a "foreign" female regent with suspicion.

[112] The painting no longer exists, as it was frescoed on the eastern-most wall of the Galerie d'Ulysse. See Samoyault-Verlet (1989), 157. Béguin et al. (1985), 331-334, discusses the decoration of the eastern extremity of the gallery. Included in Béguin's discussion are three seventeenth and early eighteenth-century written accounts of the decoration of the east wall. All three descriptions are congruous with one another. The fresco depicted Charles IX as Saint-Martin sitting on a throne surrounded by kneeling inhabitants of Le Havre, who present him with keys. A black marble table supported by two large relief stucco figures representing Ceres and Flora was positioned below the fresco. The table was engraved with Latin text describing the fresco scene above. The engraved passage explained that the victory over the English at Le Havre was merited by Charles IX with the counsel of his prudent mother, Queen Catherine.

Similar circumstances to those in which Catherine found herself in 1560 befell another French Medici queen, Maria de' Medici (1575-1642), a half a century later in 1610, when her husband Henri IV (1553-1610) was assassinated. Maria similarly served as regent for four years, until Louis XIII (1601-1643) reached his majority in 1614. Rubin has written extensively on the difficulties Maria encountered when trying to create an image of herself by identifying with a famous historical female.[113] Maria tried to associate herself with illustrious women of the past, including the ancient Assyrian Queen Semiramis, who was said to be a legendary widow and ruler, and with mythological women, such as Astraea, the last goddess said to live amongst humans during the Golden Age. Maria even tried aligning herself in imagery with her predecessor to whom she was a distant relative, Catherine.[114] Rubin's discussion of Maria's struggle to find a famous widowed female figure with whom she could identify is one that can be applied to Catherine as well, with the difference that Maria sought symbolism that would legitimate her power, while Catherine sought one that would provoke empathy and trust in her reign.

As I have argued, the painting of *Ulysses and Penelope* in the Toledo Museum of Art, the only reproduction we have by Primaticcio's hand of a scene from the Galerie d'Ulysse, which derives

[113] See Rubin's chapter titled "Marie de Médicis (1610-1617): Heroic Imagery and the Power of Monarchy" in Rubin (1997), 48-95.

[114] For specific examples of Maria's allusions to Catherine, such as the tapestries based on Caron's Artemisia drawings for Catherine that were woven for Maria, see Deborah Marrow, *The Art Patronage of Maria de' Medici* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1982), 60-65. In a letter of 1622 written by Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc to Peter Paul Rubens concerning a new project commissioned by Maria for eight large statues of illustrious women to be placed around a dome of her palace, Peiresc suggests possible women to be sculpted. Rubens suggests three more possible women in a response letter to Peiresc: Semiramis, Dido, and Artemisia. Peiresc responded that Artemisia would be inappropriate due to the fact that Maria never had a tomb erected for Henri IV. Johnson (1997), 142-143, suggests that the reason why allegorical figures were finally chosen for the eight statues is because of the difficulties faced by Maria in her attempts to identify with women with whom negative connotations could not be associated.

from the reunion scene of *Ulysses Recounting his Adventures to Penelope*, was commissioned by Catherine to serve as a portable reminder of the significance of the reunion scenes to her new plight as widowed Queen Mother of France**.** Catherine was well aware of her transient position as a female ruling member of the French royal family and perhaps ordered an easel painting of this rather unique subject to remind her of her royal patronage of the decoration of the Galerie d'Ulysse as well as her life as Queen of France. The painting likely served as a treasure to hang in her home away from court once her regency ended.

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APPENDIX A

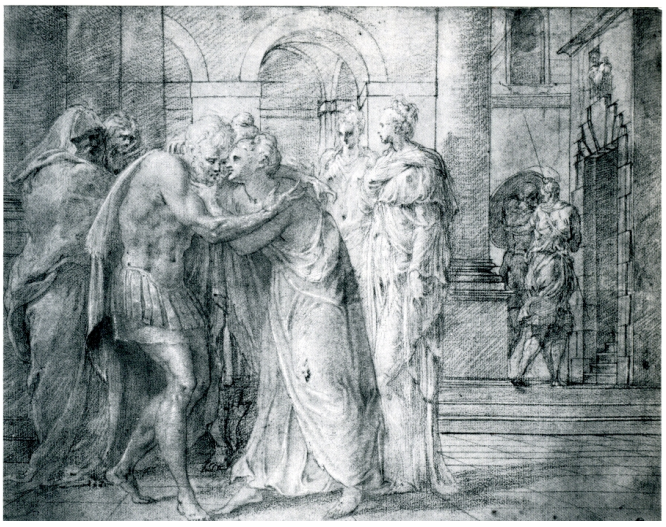
"Concordance Voûtes/Parois"
(Diagram of the Vault and Wall Frescoes of the Galerie d'Ulysse)
Extracted from Sylvie Béguin, Jean Guillaume, Alain Roy. *La galerie d'Ulysse à Fontainebleau.* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985): 126-27.

PAROIS		VOUTE	PAROIS
Ulysse prend congé d'Alkinoos	29	XV – FLORE Nymphes et enfants Jeux d'enfants	30 Ulysse endormi est transporté dans son pays
Ulysse Chez Calypso	28	XIV – APOLLON, LES CRACES, LES MUSES, JUPITER ET JUNON Sacrifice d'un belier, Sacrifice d'un enfant, Sacrifice d'un taureau, Sacrifice d'un cheval, Deux ovales couches (sujets inconnus)	31 Minerve éveille Ulysse
Vol des bœufs du Soleil	27		32 Minerve apparaît à Ulysse sous les traits d'un jeune prince
Ulysse et les sirénes	26	XIII – MINERVE VISITANT JUPITER ET JUNON Hylas retenu par les nymphes Naïades et autres figures	33 Ulysse se fait reconnaitre par son porcher Eumée
Ulysse chez Circé brûle le corps d'Elpénor	25		34 Ulysse reconnu par son chien
Entretien d'Ulysse avec Hercule aux enfers	24	XII – MINERVE PORTEE AU CIEL Polymnestor, roi de Thrace, tuant Polydore, fils de Priam (?), La Charité romaine, Polyxène immolée par Pyrrhos, Achille et Briséis (?), Deux ovales couches (sujets inconnus)	35 Ulysse et la servante (?)
Ulysse et les ombres des morts	23		36 Ulysse transformé en mendiant observe les prétendants
Ulysse sacrifie des boucs noirs à Pluton	22	XI – NEPTUNE SUR SON CHAR Flore, Bacchus, Saturne, Cérès	37 Combat d'Ulysse et du mendiant Irus
Ulysse aborde au rivage des enfers	21		38 Minerve incite Ulysse à prendre part au concours de tir à l'arc
Ulysse quitte l'île de Circé	20	X – LES HEURES ENVIRONNANT LE CHAR DU SOLEIL Le Nil, La Gange, La Plata, Le Danube	39 Epreuve de l'arc
Ulysse protégé des charmes de Circe par Mercure	19		40 Ulysse et Télémaque attaquent le prétendants
Ulysse dans l'île de Circé	18	IX – LE TRIOMPHE DE MINERVE La Charité / La Tempérance, La Prudence / L'Espérance, L'enlèvement des Sabines, Les Romains contre les Sabins, Le triomphe de Romulus, Romulus bâtissant un temple à Jupiter	41 Combat d'Ulysse et de ses fidèles contre les prétendants
Ulysse chez les Lestirgons	17		42 Ulysse condamne les servants coupables
Les compagnons d'Ulysse ouvrent l'outre des vents	16	VIII – LA RONDE DES HEURES Le festin des dieux Le Parnasse	43 Ulysse se purifie après le massage des servantes
Poursuite du voyage grace aux vents favorables	15		44 Euryclée reconnaît Ulysse
Le zéphir pousse la flotte d'Ulysse	14	VII – APOLLON DANS LE SIGNE DU LION Diane et Pan / Orphée Esculape / Latone, Diane et Apollon Apollon et Diane tuant les enfants de Niobé, Niobé suppliant Apollon et Diane, Mercure et Batos, Apollon tuant le serpent Pithon	45 Minerve veille à toilette d'Ulysse
Ulysse reçoit d'Eole loutre des vents	13		**46 Retrouvailles d'Ulysse et de Pénélope**
Polyphème jette un rocher vers Ulysse	12	VI – JUPITER, NEPTUNE ET PLUTON Apollon et Pégase, Diane, Venus, Mercure	**47 Ulysse mène Pénélope au lit conjugal**
Ulysse et ses compagnons s'enfurient de l'antre de Polyphème	11		**48 Ulysse raconte ses aventures à Pénélope**
Ulysse aveugle Polyphème	10	V – DIANE ET APOLLON, MINERVE ET L'AMOUR OU LATONE, DIANE ET APOLLON ? L'Hiver, Le Printemps L'Automne, L'Eté	**49 Ulysse s'endort près de Pénélope**
Ulysse débarque dans l'île de Polyphème	9		**50 Minerve reveille Ulysse et Pénélope (?)**
Meurtre d'Agamemnon et de Cassandre	8	IV – VENUS ET LES PARQUES AVEC LE SIGNE DU TAUREAU La France victorieuse, La France fertile, Calliope et deux autres Muses, genie tenant une lyre, Erato, deux autres Muses et un genie, Terpsichore et deux autres Muses, genie jouant des cymbals, Apollon et Pan, genie jouant de la trompe	51 Ulysse et Télémaque se rendent chez Laërte
Retour d'Agamemnon	7		52 Ulysse donne ses armes à Eumée
Ulysse dans l'île des Cyclopes	6	III – LES ANTIPODES Apollon, Pallas, Neptune et Pluton, Cérès, un amour et deux déesses, Vénus, Eros et Aneros (?), Junon (?) et une déesse, Hercule, Bacchus, Pan et Saturne	53 Ulysse et Laërte
Ulysse chez le Lotophages	5		54 Ulysse salué par le vieux Dolios
Ulysse au pays des Cyconiens	4	II – NEPTUNE DECLENCHANT LA TEMPETE Vénus et l'Amour endormis avec un petit Cupidon, Vertumne et Pomone, Minerve, Vulcain, Mercure, Eole	55 Les corps des prétendants sont enlevés pour être ensevelis
Neptune déchaine la tempête	3		56 Soulèvement du people d'Ithaque
Ulysse sacrifié aux dieux	2	I – L'OLYMPE Amour tenant un carquois, Amour tenant un casque, Mercure et Bacchus, Junon et Cybèle, Diane et Cérées, Mars et Saturne	57 Fuite des rebelles
Embarquement des Grecs après l'incendie de Troie	1		58 Ulysse reçoit les hommages de ses sujets

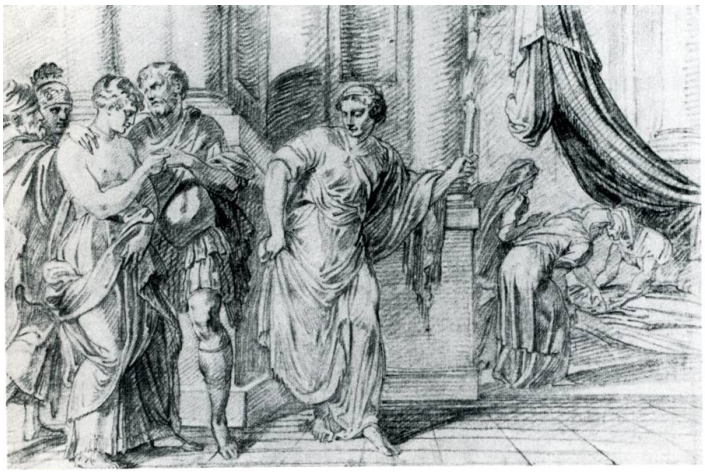
FIGURES

1. Primaticcio. *Ulysses and Penelope*. oil on canvas.
ca. 1560. Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio.

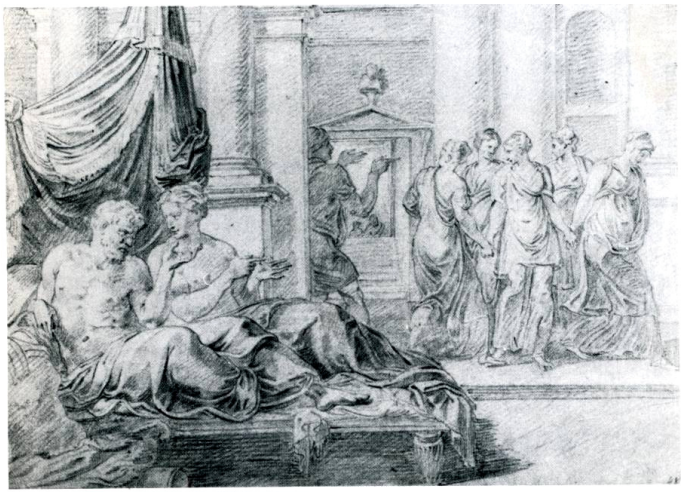
2. Primaticcio. *Retrouvailles d'Ulysses et de Pénélope*
(The Reunion of Ulysses and Penelope). red chalk with white highlights.
Nationalmuseum, Stockholm: Inv. 835/1863.



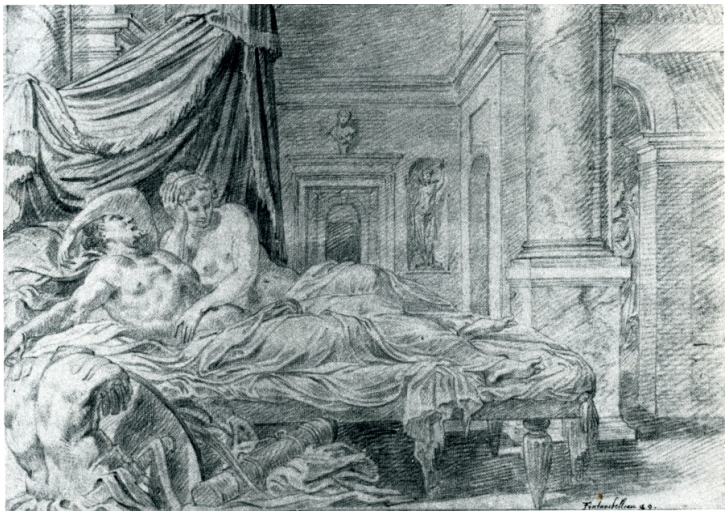
3. Theodoor Van Thulden. *Ulysse mène Pénélope au lit conjugal*
(Ulysses Escorting Penelope to their Marital Bed).
black and red chalk drawing for engraving. c. 1633. Albertina, Vienna: n˚8986.



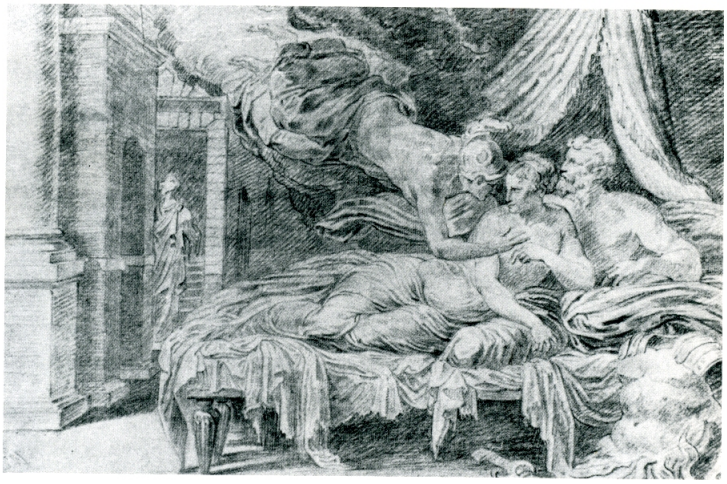
4. Theodoor Van Thulden. *Ulysse raconte ses aventures à Pénélope*
(Ulysses Recounting his Adventures to Penelope). black chalk drawing for engraving.
c. 1633. Albertina, Vienna: n˚8988.



5. Theodoor Van Thulden. *Ulysse s'endort près de Pénélope*
(Ulysses Sleeping Next to Penelope). black and red chalk drawing for engraving.
c. 1633. Albertina, Vienna: n˚8989.



6. Theodoor Van Thulden. *Minerve reveille Ulysse et Pénélope*
(Minerva Waking Ulysses and Penelope). black and red chalk drawing for engraving.
c. 1633. Albertina, Vienna: n˚8990.

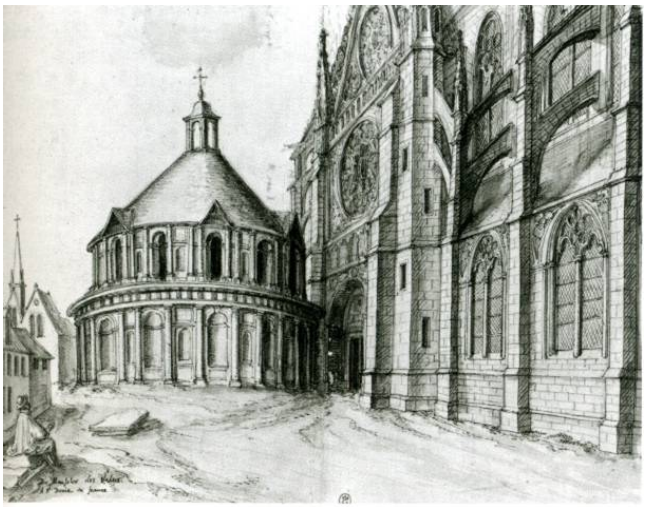


7. Nicolò dell' Abbate. *Cupid and Psyche*. oil on canvas.
16th Century. Institute of Art, Detroit.

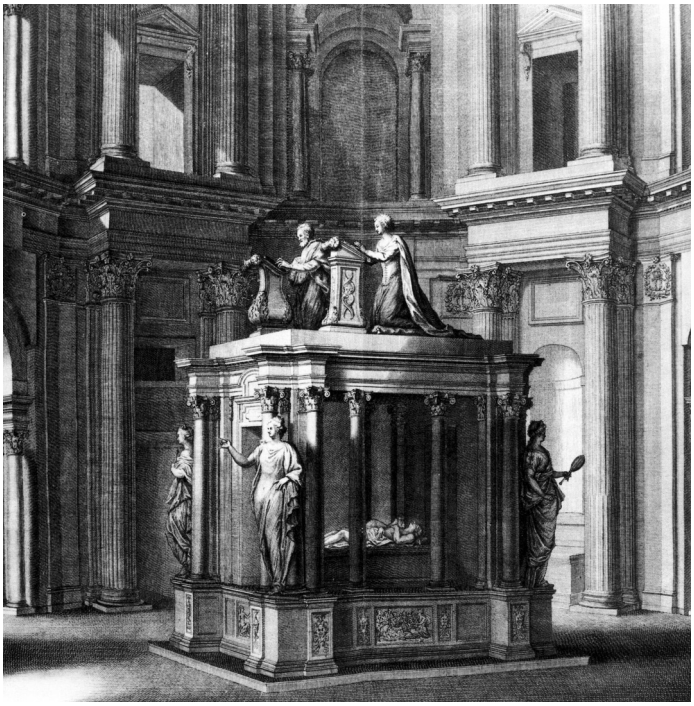
8. Giulio Romano. *Jupiter and Olympias*.
fresco. Sala di Psiche, Palazzo del Té, Mantua. 1527-28.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

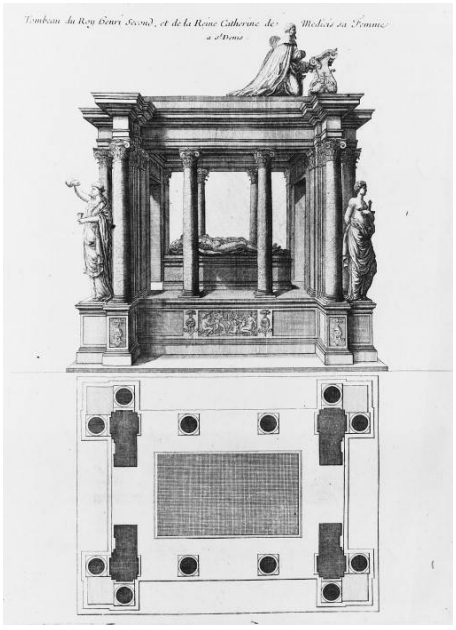
9. Etienne Martellange. *La capella dei Valois vista da nord-ovest*
(Northwest view of the Valois Chapel). pen and ink.
ca. 1625. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris



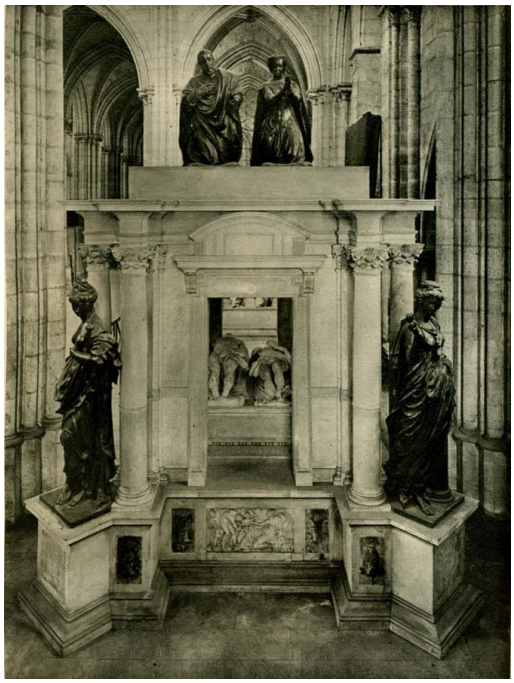
10. Alexandre Leblond after Pierre Giffart. *Tombeau des Valois*.
Extracted from J. F. Félibien's *Histoire de l'abbaye royale de Saint Denis en France* (Paris, 1706). ca. 1706. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.



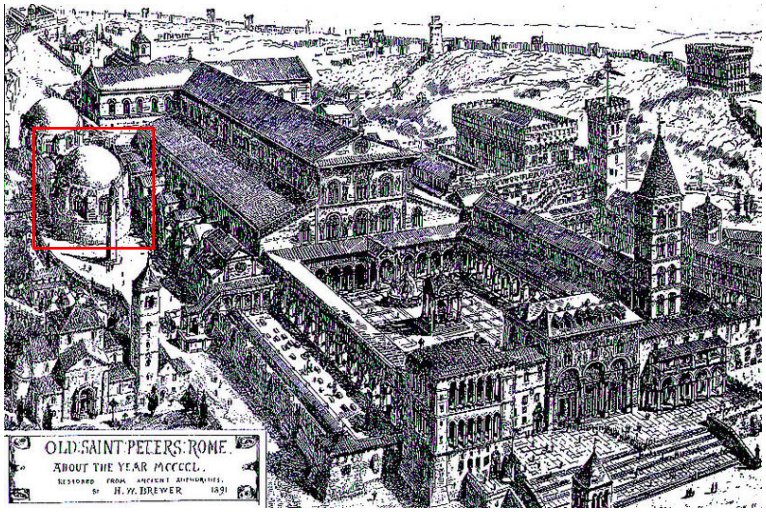
11. Jean Marot.
Plan and View of North Side of Tomb of Henri II and Catherine de' Medici.
ca. 1670. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



12. West and East Views of the Tomb of Henri II and Catherine de' Medici. Saint Denis, Paris.



13. H. W. Brewer. Old St. Peter's, Rome. drawing. 1891. (Valois Chapel)



14. Antoine Caron. *Le tombeau fini de Mausole*
(Finished Tomb of Mausolus). pen ink and brown wash.
ca. 1563-70. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Estampes, Rés. Ad 105, f. 43.

15. *Return of Ulysses*. Melian terracotta plaque. ca. 150 BC.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

16. *Ulysses and Penelope*. Roman wall painting. 1st Century AD. Pompeii VII, 9, 4-12, Macellum.

17. *Ulysses* (left) and *Penelope* (right). Franco-Flemish wool tapestries. 1480-83. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

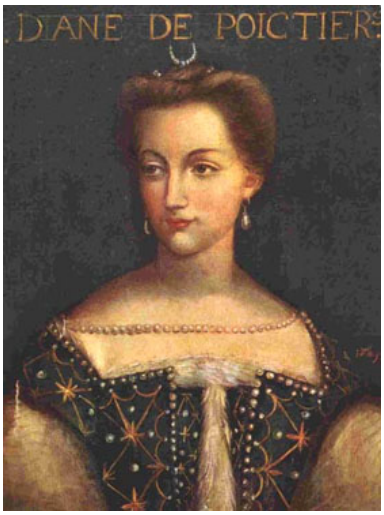
18. Bernardino Pintoricchio. *Penelope with the Suitors*. fresco, detached and mounted on canvas. 1509. National Gallery, London.

19. Apollonio di Giovanni. *Adventures of Ulysses*. tempera on wooden cassone panel. ca. 1435-45. The Art Institute, Chicago.

20. François Clouet. *Portrait of Henri II*. oil on canvas. c. 1547. Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti, Florence.

21. François Clouet. *Portrait of Catherine de' Medici*. oil on canvas. c. 1559-1589. Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

22. French School. *Portrait of Diane de Poitiers*. oil on canvas.
16th Century. State Collection, France.



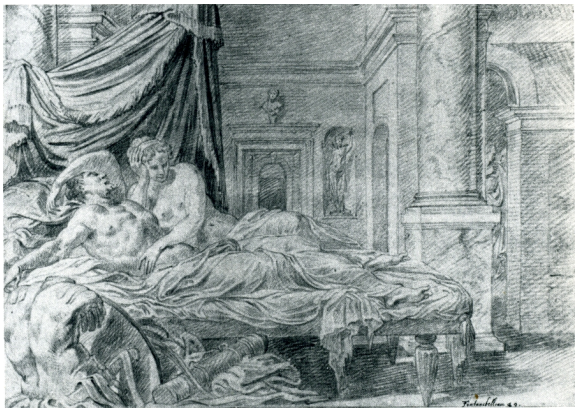
23. Giorlamo della Robbia. *Catherine de Medicis*. Marble.
c. 1565. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

24. Theodoor Van Thulden. *Ulysse endormi est transporté dans sons pays*
(Sleeping Ulysses is Transported into his Country).
black pencil drawing for engraving. c. 1633. Albertina, Vienna: n˚8954.

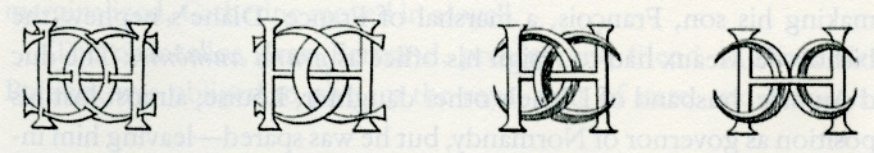
25. Fragment of a Dying Meleager Sarcophagus. Marble.
Roman, 3rd quarter of 2nd century (mid-Antonine).
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

26. Germain Pilon. *Henri II* and *Catherine de Medicis*. marble. c. 1565-67. Gisants from Tomb in Saint Denis, Paris.

27. Above: Duplicate of Figure 5.
Below: Views of Henri II and Catherine de' Medici gisants,
Interior of their Tomb in St. Denis, Paris.



28. a. "HD" and "HC" Ciphers Showing Alterations Made to the "HD" of Henri and Diana so They Would Read "HC" for Henri and Catherine.
Private Collection.
Illustration from Princess Micheal of Kent, HRH. *Serpent and the Moon: Two Rivals for the Love of a Renaissance King.* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004): 362.



28. b. Front Binding Boards of 2 volumes (8 in entire series) of a 1524 publication of the *Iliad, Odyssey and Batrachomyomachia* in Greek (Venis: Aldi and Andrea Asulani). Edited by Aldus Manucius.
Wood Boards Covered in Leather with Guilding.
Showing Henri II's coat of arms with crescent moon emblems and "HD" ciphers in the corners.
BnF, Réserve des livres rares, Rés- Yb- 505-506.