



Azay-le-Rideau, Chenonceau, Ussé...

Architectural jewels of the Val-de-Loire
Pleasure, social prestige and display of power



Pierre de Rohan

The kings of France: far from being alone in building and transforming the châteaux of the Val de Loire



Georges d'Amboise

Local nobility/high-ranking Court officials



From **Charles VII** (1422-1461) to **Henri III** (1574-1589), the Valois kings **resided** in the Val de Loire



A boon for the great **trade families & local nobility**



Azay-le-Rideau

Jean Bourré: Secretary & officer of finances – Louis XI's confidant

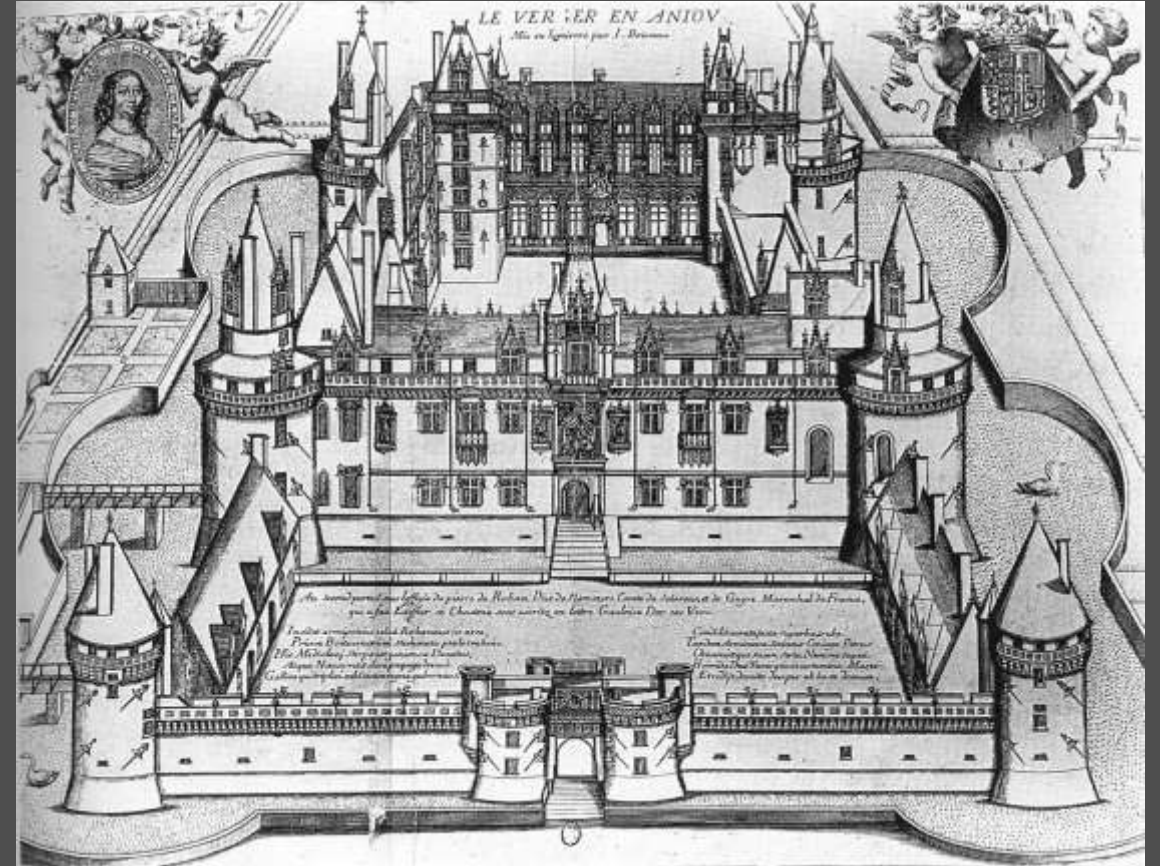
Le Plessis-Bourré (1468-1473): one of the earliest example of Pre-Renaissance style



Many Court officers from other regions of France chose to move to the Val de Loire (proximity to the king)



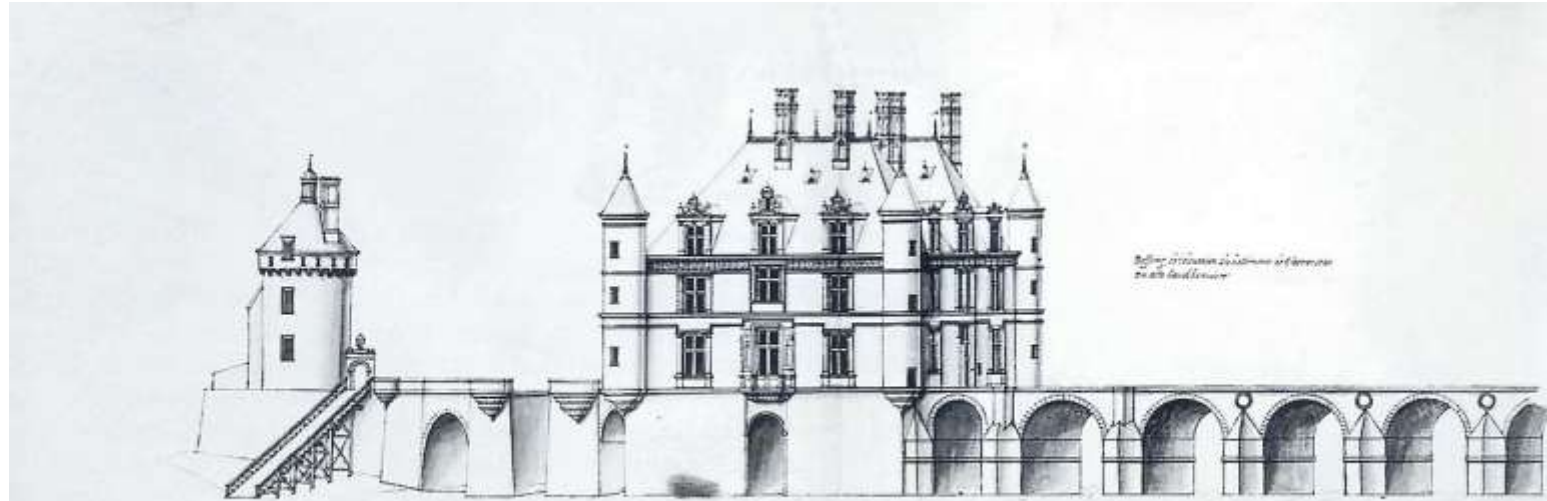
Pierre de Rohan (from Brittany) – High-ranking officer under Louis XI & Charles VIII



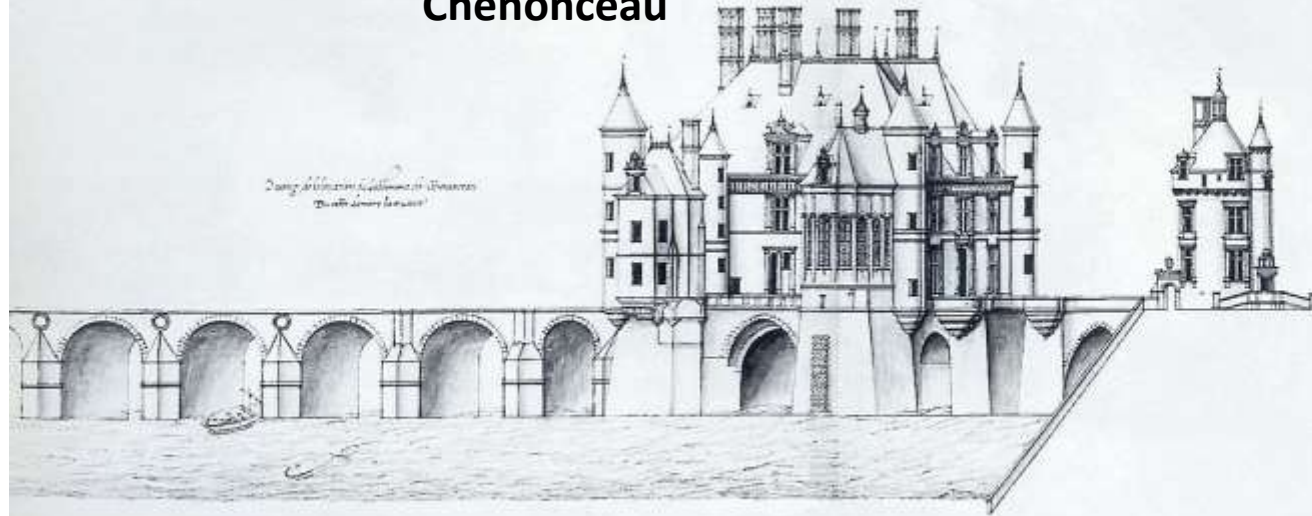
Château du Verger de Seiches-sur-le-Loir



Château du Lude



**Thomas Bohier (Charles VIII's Chamberlain):
Chenonceau**



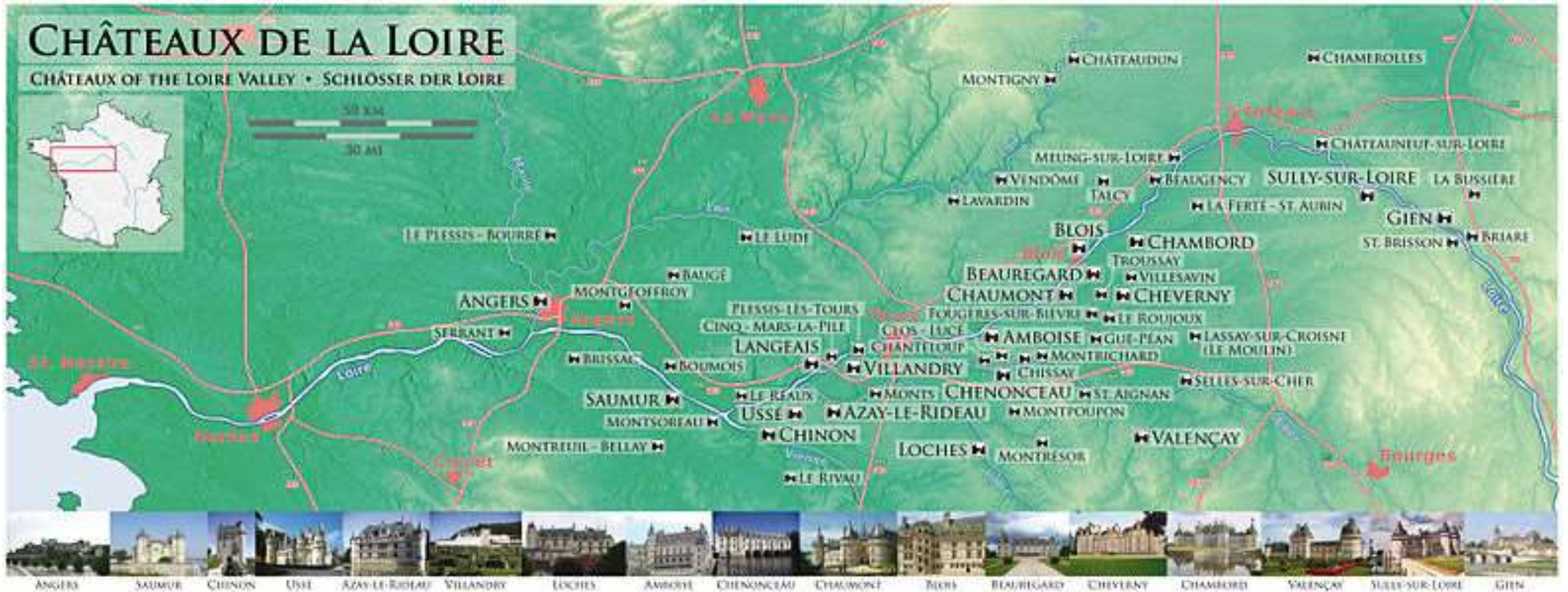
Château de Talcy (Bernard Salviati – Tradesman & banker)



General prosperity – The development of agriculture & trade: **higher revenues** to landowners



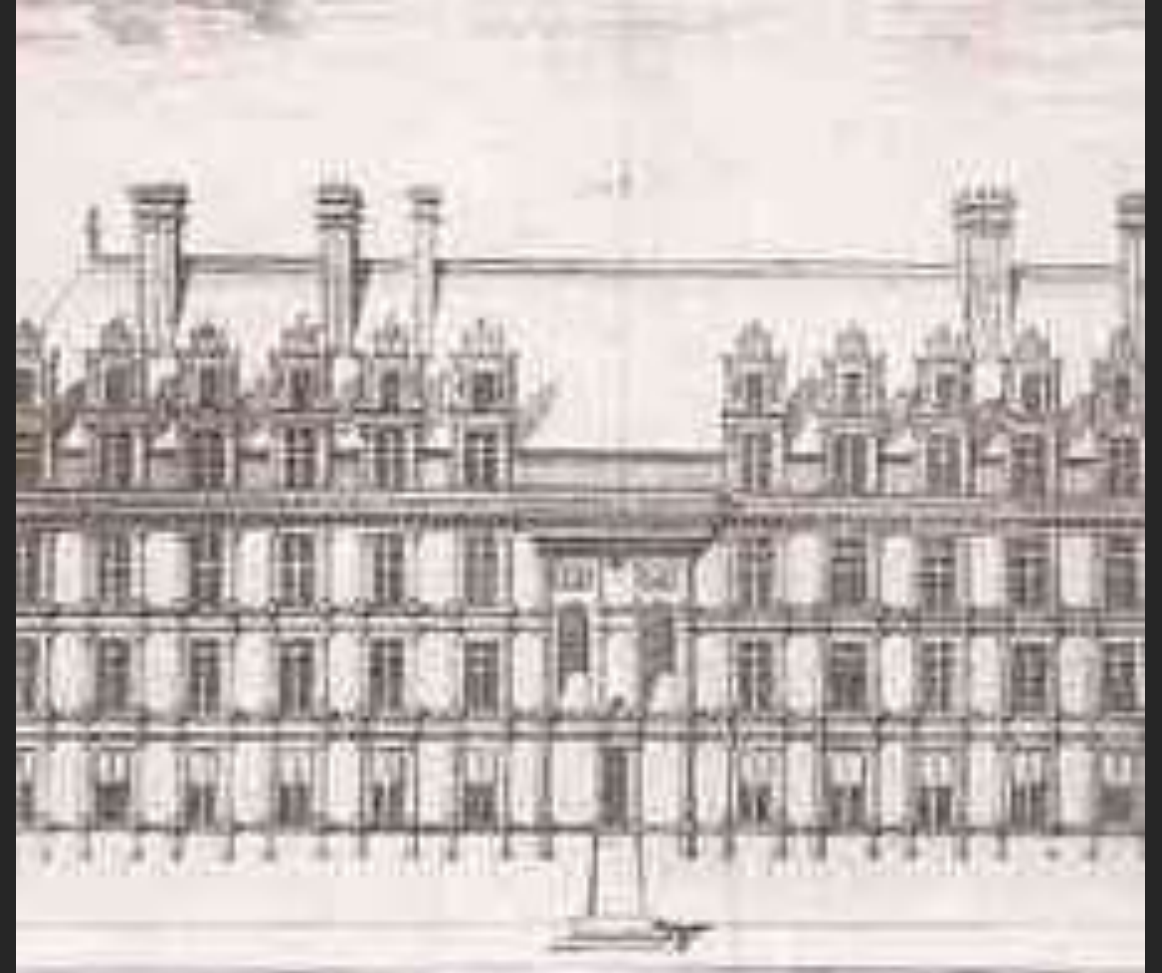
The many spectacular châteaux of the Val de Loire: no equivalent in France



In the service of the king: considerable revenues & royal gifts = prestigious architectural projects



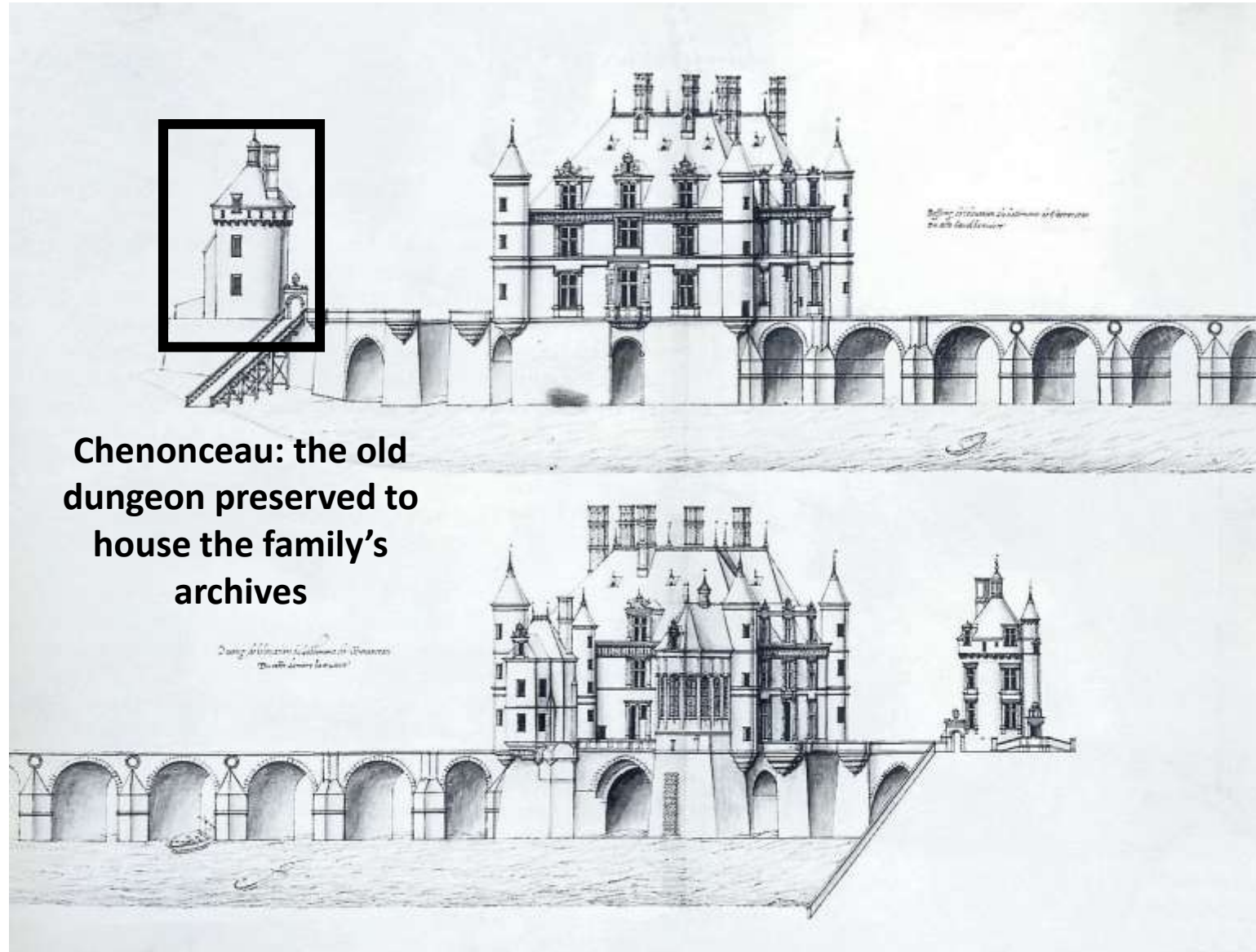
Building a château: a symbol of **political power/social prestige**



Château de BONNIVET



A question of **legitimacy**: to build new but preserve elements of the old



Political rivalries = ambitious architectural projects



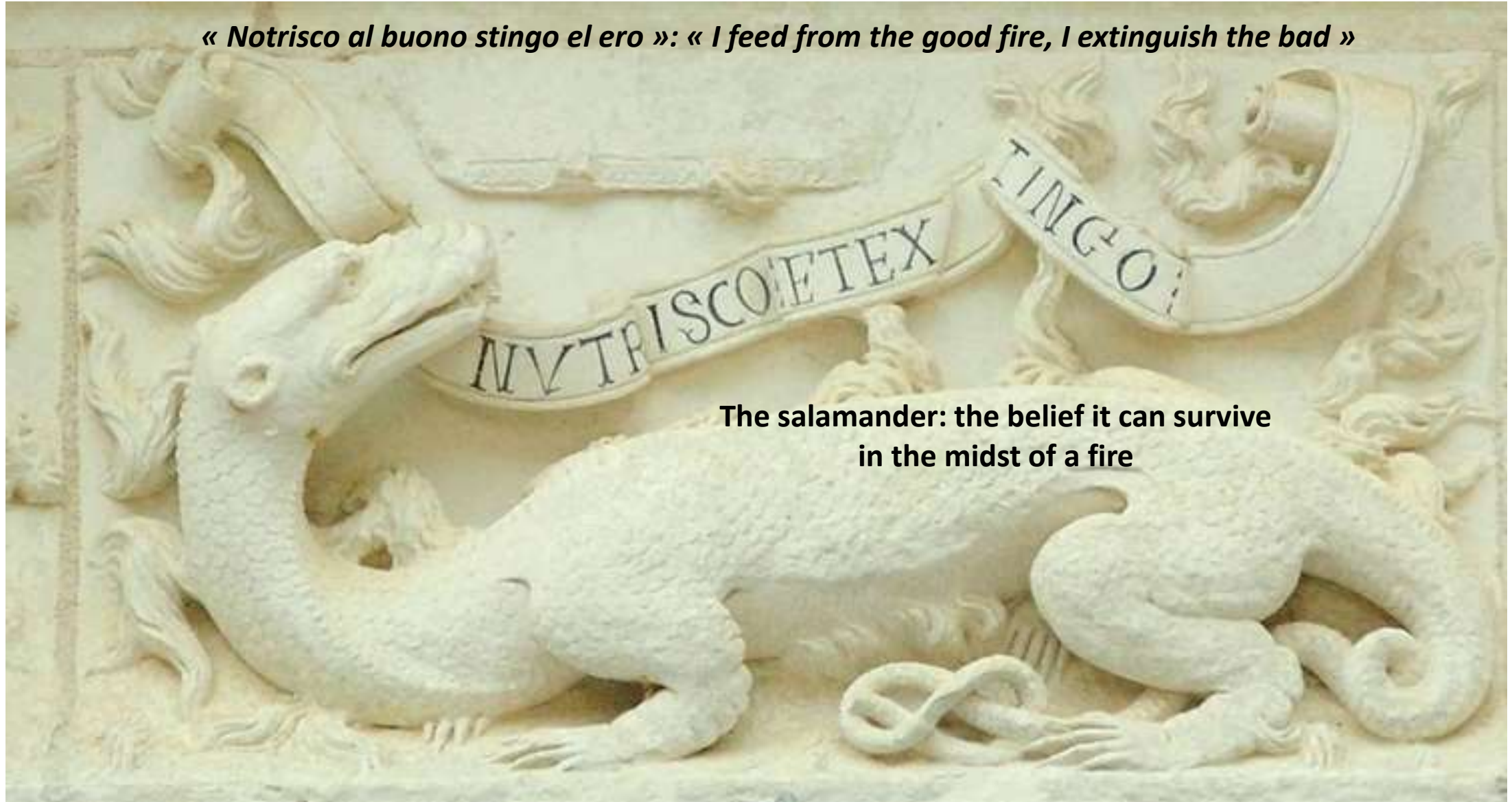
Château de Chaumont-sur-Loire
(Amboise family)

Azay-le-Rideau: built by Gilles Berthelot (Francis I's treasurer) and his wife



The salamander: Francis I's emblem – Everywhere at Azay-le-Rideau

« Notrisco al buono stingo el ero »: « I feed from the good fire, I extinguish the bad »



**The salamander: the belief it can survive
in the midst of a fire**







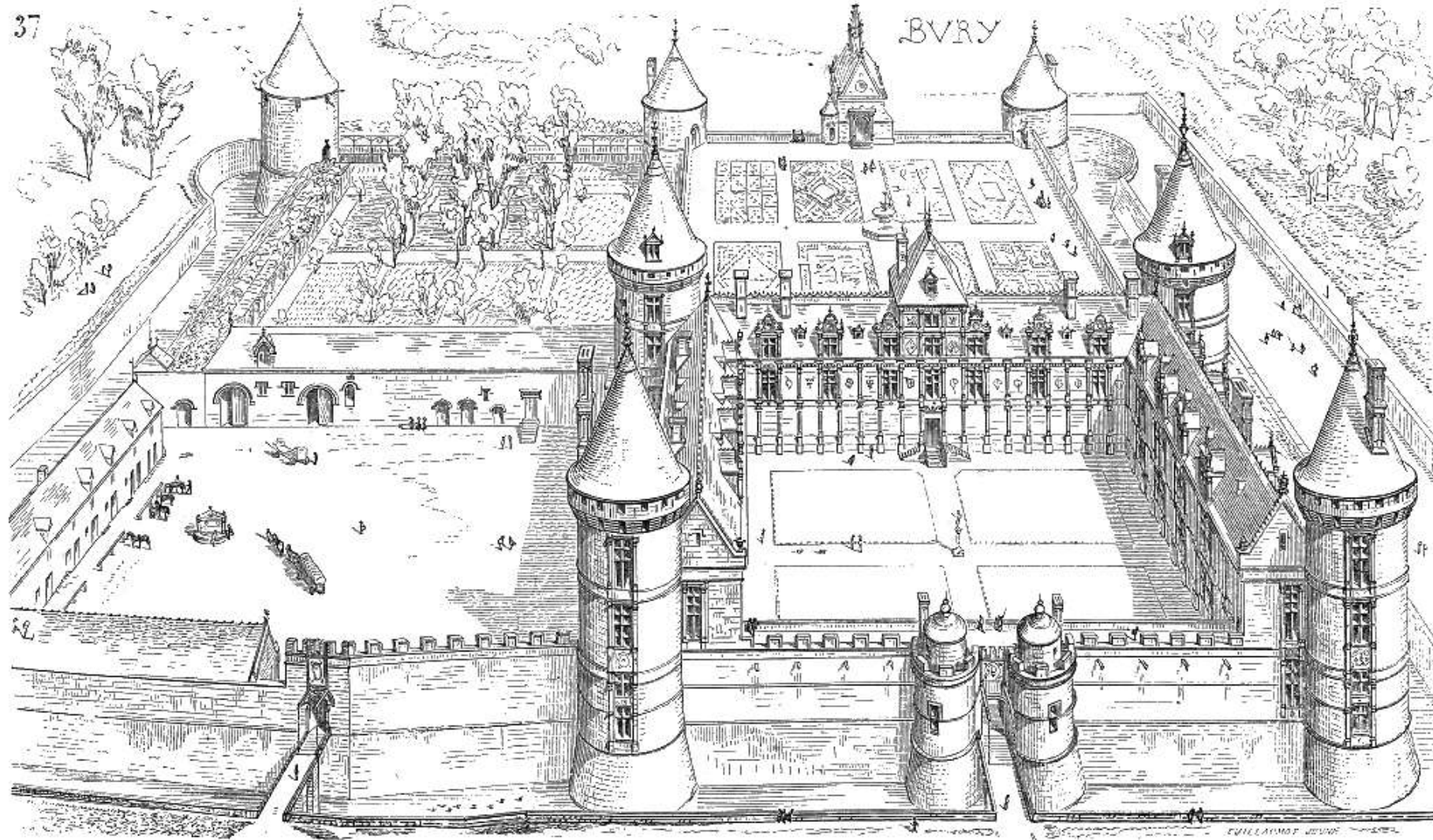
Château de Valençay: the art of imitating the king



Valençay: an immense rectangle surrounded by moats – Circular towers



Château de Bury: innovating design and the introduction of symmetry



Château d'Oiron



The introduction of painted galleries





Italian-style cabinets superbly decorated – The best artists hired





The private châteaux of the Val de Loire: the
potential of a **reversal of fortune**
Château de Bonnivet



Château de Semblançay: Jacques de Beaune accused of embezzlement



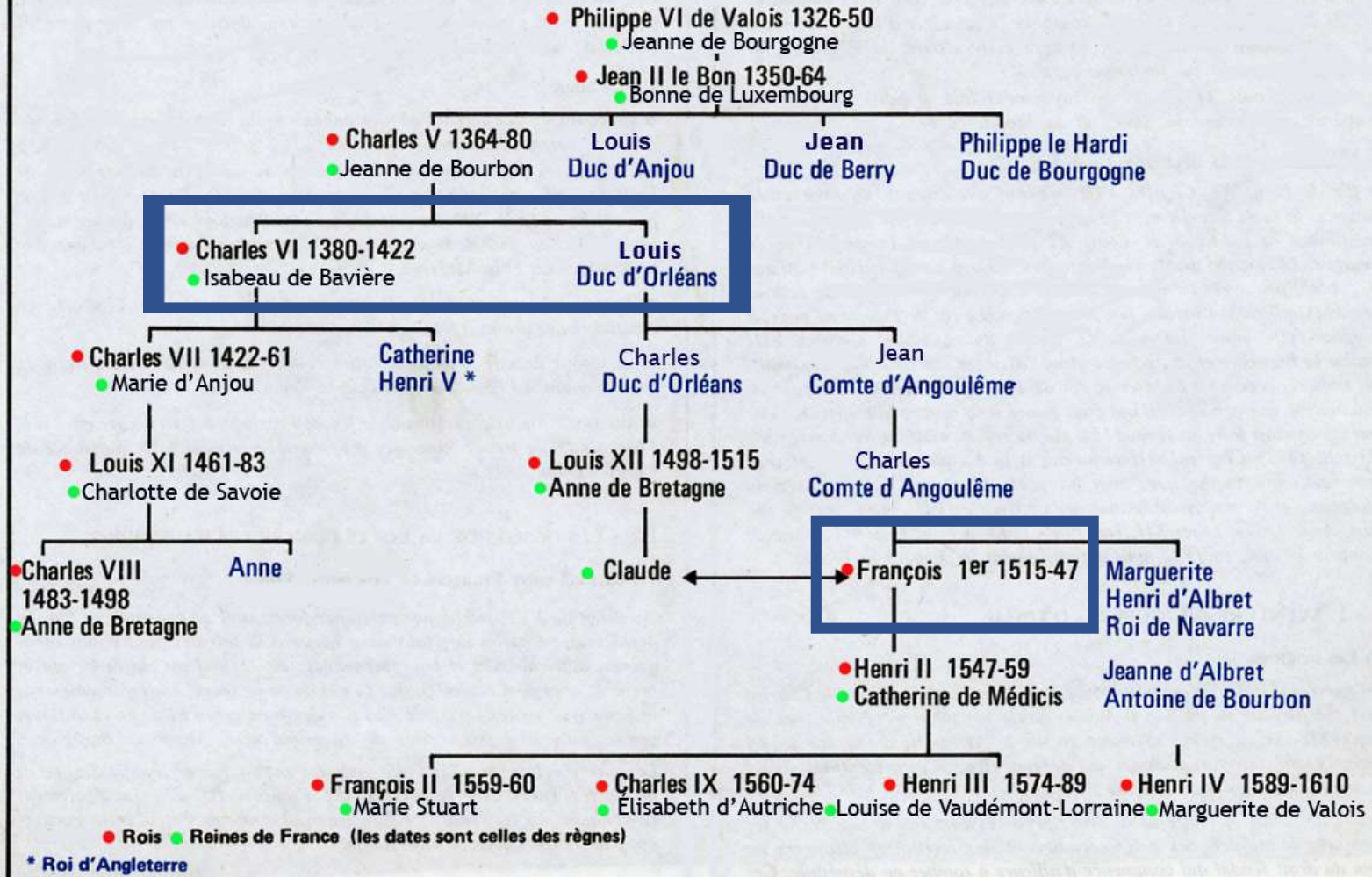
Azay-le-Rideau **confiscated**



Le Clos Lucé (Manoir du Cloux) sold to Charles VIII



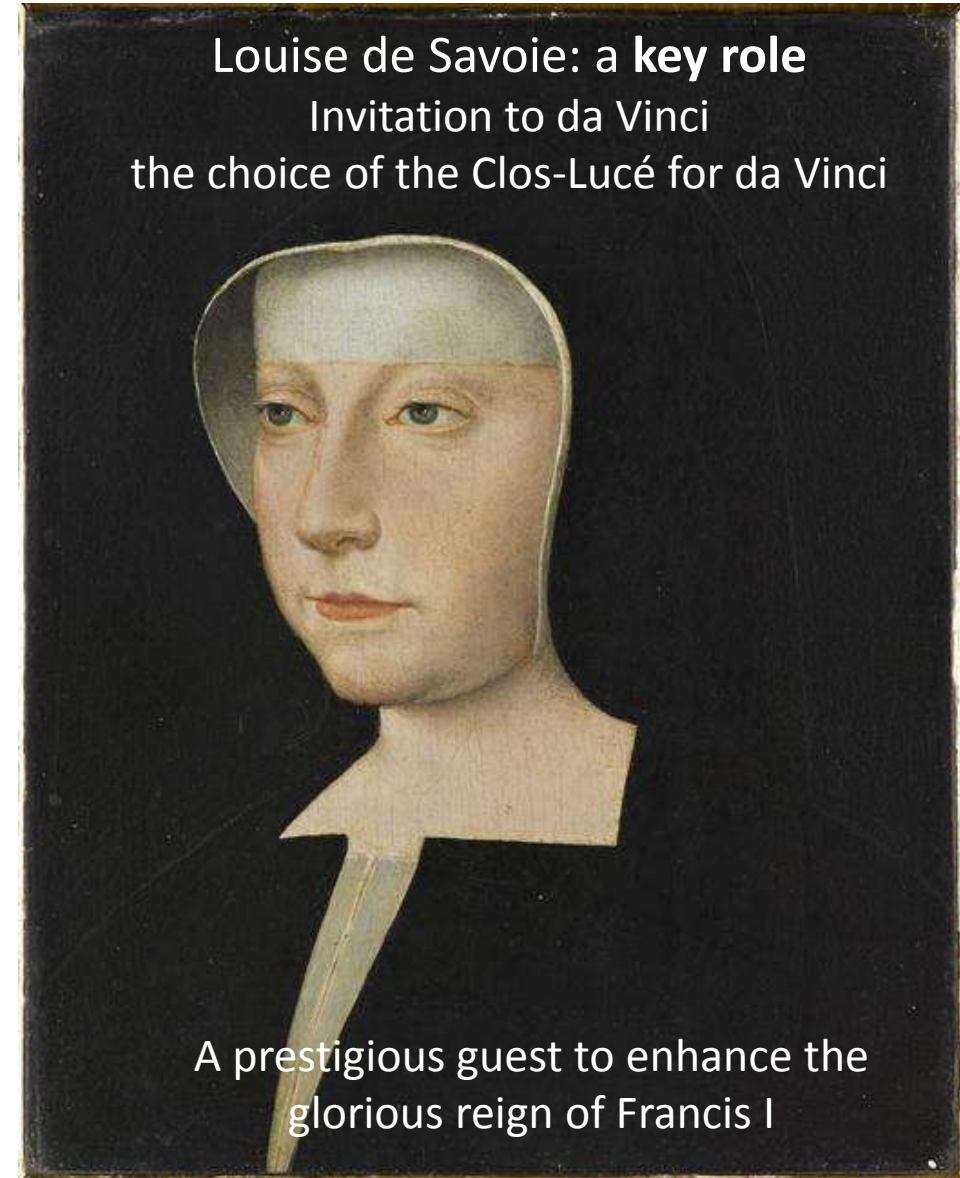
LES VALOIS





Louise de Savoie – Her lifetime ambition: to make her son (Francis I) the greatest king in Europe

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519): the reputation of a talented painter, architect & engineer





Why did Leonardo agree to come to France ?

Leonardo and the French kings: a long lasting relationship

First Italian campaign (1494-1497): Charles VIII allied to the Duke of Milan

Leonardo in Milan: first contact with Charles VIII

1507: Louis XII commissioned Leonardo





Virgin of the Rocks



*La Belle Ferronnière (ironmonger)
Portrait of an unknown lady*



1515: Francis I victorious at **Marignan** – Leonardo invited to go to France (14 March 1516)

“The king said he did not think a man who knew as much as Leonardo had never existed” (Benvenuto Cellini)



A comfortable & studious life at the Clos-Lucé – Annual royal pension of 2 000 livres (\$180,000)





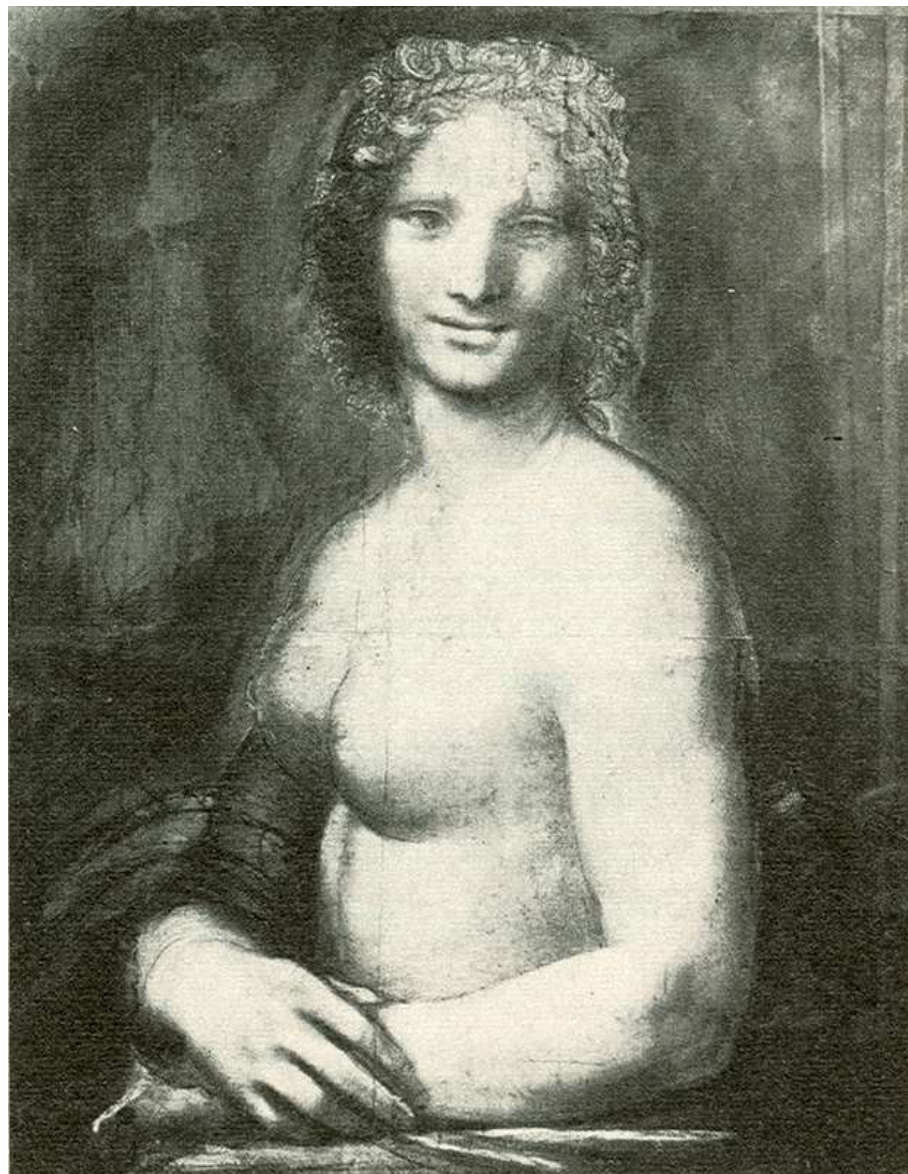


Virgin & child with Saint-Anne

No new
masterpieces
produced at
Amboise

Previous work
brought from Italy
reworked





Francis I next to da Vinci receiving a painting by Raphael at Fontainebleau (by Lemonnier, 1814)



The death of Leonardo da Vinci in the arms of Francis I – A moving scene that never happened

Francis I was in residence at Saint-Germain (near Paris)

The King's presence emphasizes **the prestige of the French Court** and the image of Francis I as a great **patron of the arts**



A great friendship between Leonardo and Francis I?

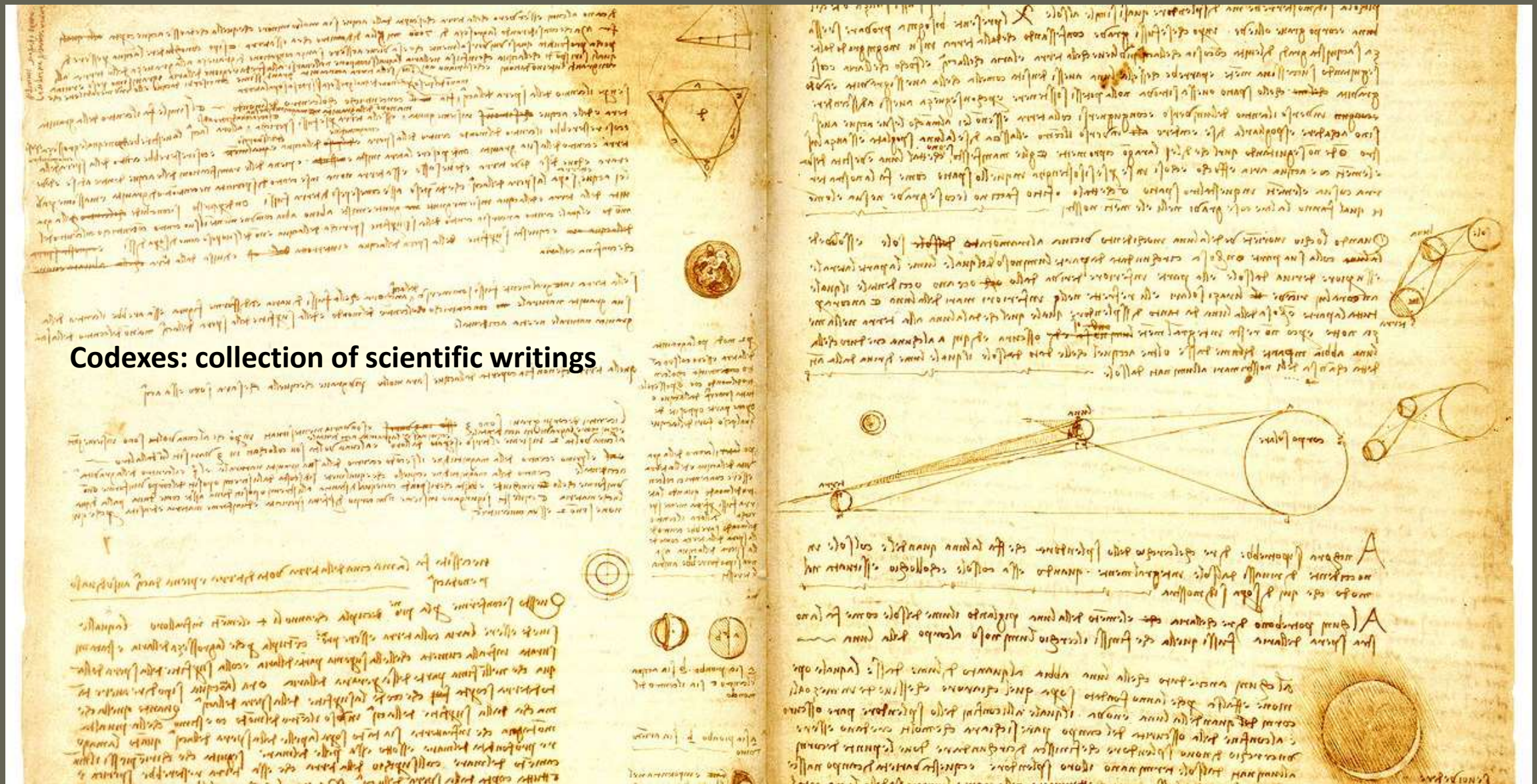




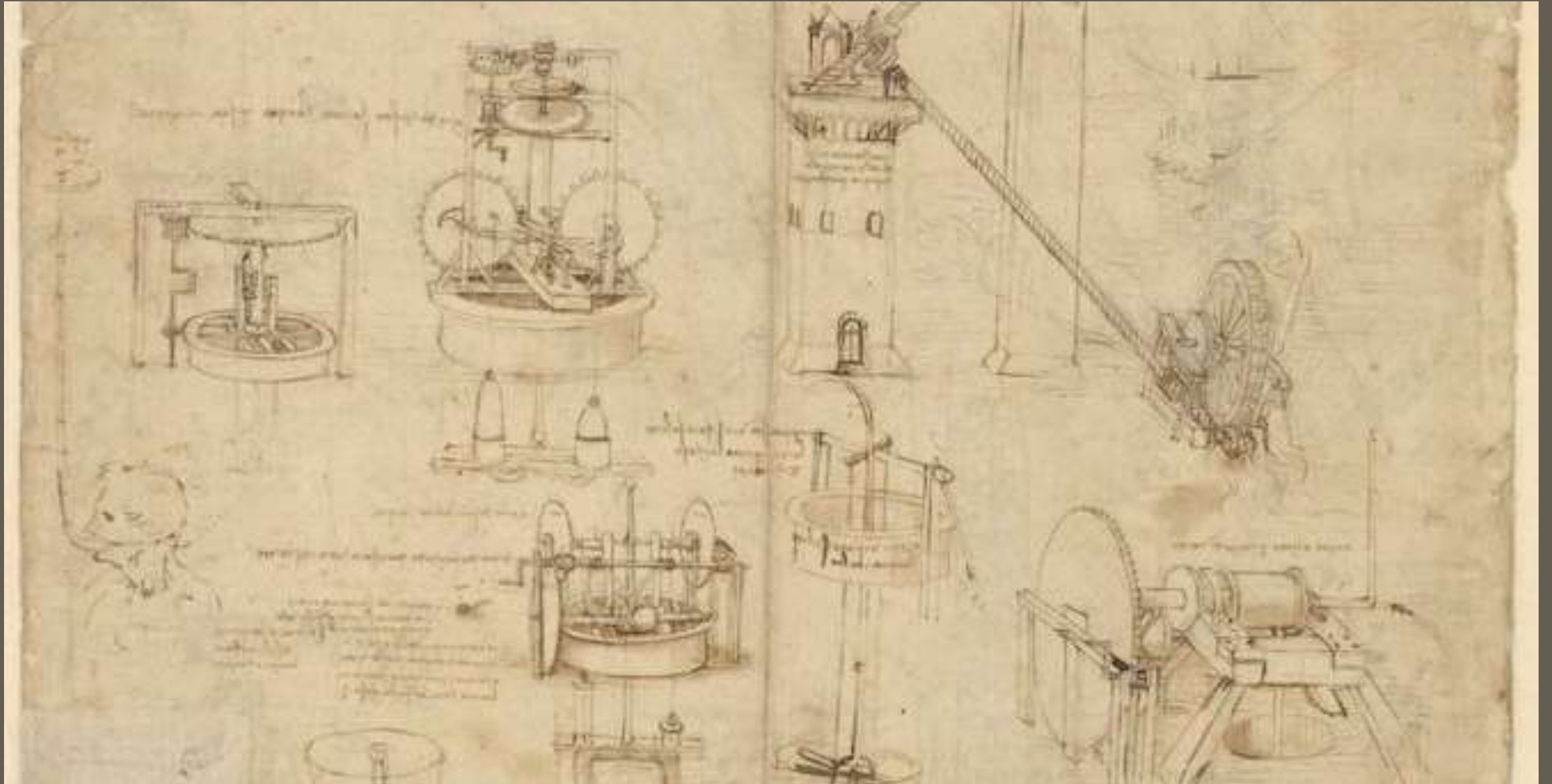
A secret tunnel between the Clos-Lucé
and Amboise?

What did Leonardo work on at Amboise?

Codex: collection of scientific writings



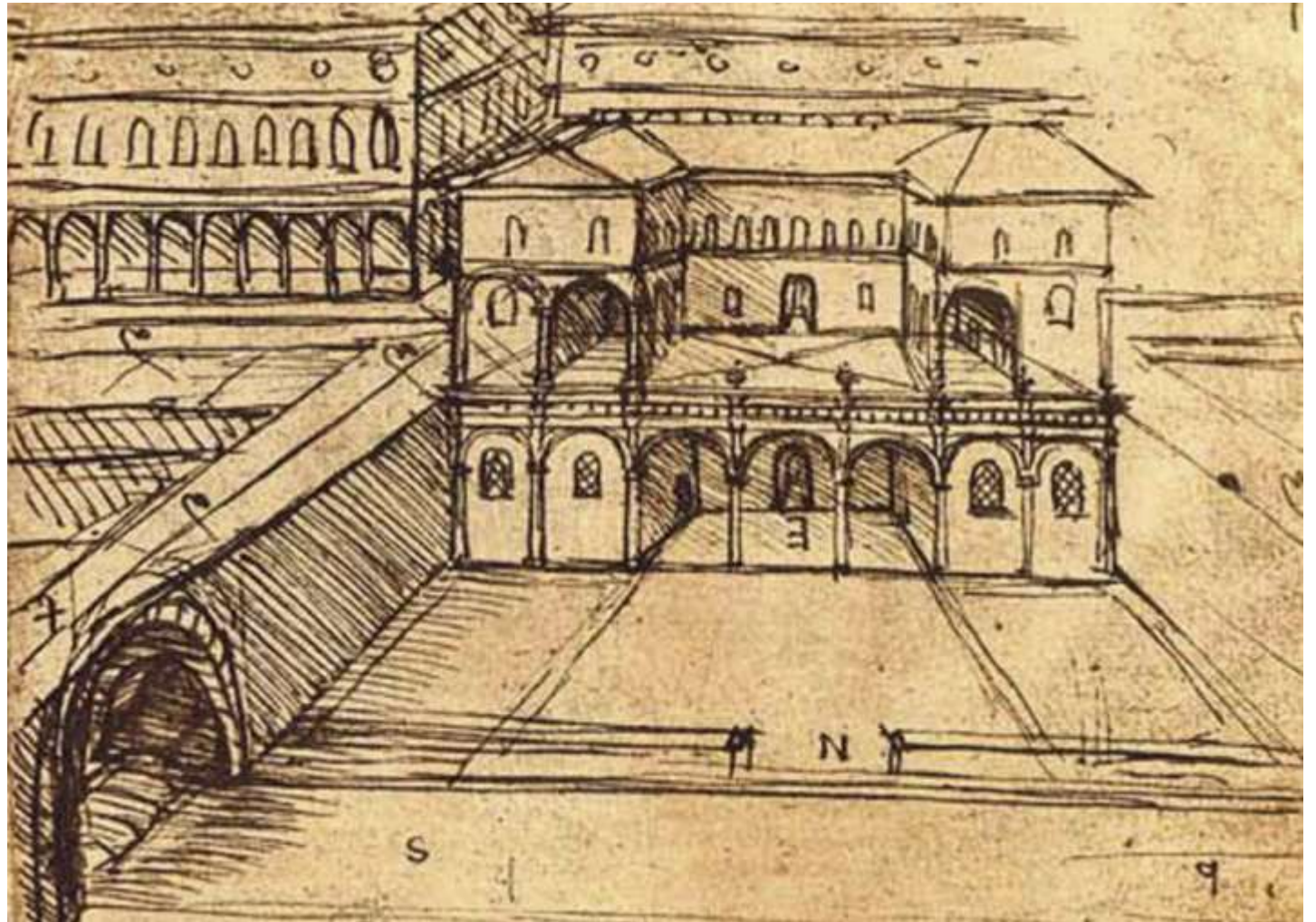
When Leonardo imagined how to divert a river



Romorantin: Leonardo's forgotten massive project



Romorantin: a new capital for France?



A new “ideal” city located next to a river (better hygiene)

Swamps: a complex **network of canals** imagined by Leonardo (hydraulic engineer)



Réalisation : Frank SCHILDKNECHT (57 FRANCE) - Tous droits réservés

Chambord: a display of power



The ascending double spiral central grand staircase



A double helix staircase (designed by Leonardo da Vinci)



Two intertwining spiral staircases that go all the way up to the castle's terrace

Design to allow visitors to the castle to ascend and descend without obstruction

And watch the festivities

Leonardo: a master in the art of entertainment - The organizer of prestigious ceremonies at Court



A **robotic lion** presenting fleurs de lys: a technological marvel



1518: a night fairy-tale – The celestial sphere reproduced (movement of planets) with the help of 400 candelabras

1518 (birth of a Dauphin): the re-enactment of the battle of Marignan
10 000 extras dressed as soldiers



1530-1540: the King and the Court back in Paris - The Val de Loire no longer at the heart of artistic creation



Fontainebleau: the other Renaissance

**From Louis VII to Napoleon III: the favorite residence of the French sovereigns
Multiple transformations**



**Fontainebleau close to Paris – Hunting grounds
Francis I: to transform Fontainebleau into one of the most important Renaissance château in France**



The prestigious châteaux of the Val de Loire as models – Another **display of power**



Mythological figures and allegories to emphasize the king's glory – The duties of a good prince



The laws of “good government” on display – The king has the duty to fight wars and overcome disasters



The salamander



Versailles



