Translation as Violation: A Reading of Pierre Boaistuau's *Histoires tragiques*

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Summary: *This article examines Pierre Boaistuau's *Histoires tragiques*, a sixteenth-century translation and adaptation of six of Bandello's *Novelle* into French. Pierre Boaistuau is best known for the scandal surrounding his much-criticized edition of Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*, published in 1558. Presenting the novellas under the title of *Histoires des amans fortunez*, with only a veiled reference to the author herself, Boaistuau made liberal changes to the original text thus incurring the wrath and public reprimand of Jeanne d'Albret, Marguerite's daughter. This article argues that the *Histoires tragiques*, written within one year of the humiliation of this scandal, may be read as Boaistuau's literary response not only to Jeanne d'Albret's chastisement of him but also to the vision of female empowerment presented by Marguerite de Navarre in the *Heptaméron*.*

In the introduction to his edition of Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*, Yves Le Hir cannot help exclaiming over the "étrange destin d'une oeuvre parmi les plus fameuses du XVI^e siècle!"¹ Le Hir is referring here, in part, to the initial publication of Marguerite's novellas in 1558 by Pierre Boaistuau, who took great liberties in his editing of the stories. Boaistuau presented the novellas under the title of *Histoires des amans fortunez* and dedicated them to his patron's wife, Marguerite de Bourbon, with only a veiled reference to the author herself. He felt free to omit certain tales, change their original order, suppress certain other passages deemed to be either superfluous or too controversial, and to "clean up" ("servir d'esponge") what he considered to be the innumerable weaknesses

("l'infinité de fautes manifestes") of Marguerite's writing.² Like *Le Hir*, one cannot help but find it, if not "strange," at least ironic that a work in which images of sexual violation recur with haunting frequency should itself undergo such a strident textual violation.

Until fairly recently, the reaction to Pierre Boaistuau's handling of Marguerite de Navarre's text has been overwhelmingly negative and it has generally been thought that his "remaniement" went far beyond an editor's call of duty.³ Shortly after its publication, Jeanne d'Albret (Marguerite de Navarre's daughter) had Boaistuau's edition suppressed,⁴ and commissioned Claude Gruget to replace it with one which openly recognized Marguerite as its author and which was more faithful to the novellas' manuscripts or, as its title puts it, "...remis en son vray ordre, confus auparavant en sa première impression."⁵ In the dedication to his edition, Gruget takes another jab at Boaistuau's supposed shoddiness: "la première édition a caché le nom de l'auteur et quasi changé toute la forme du livre tellement que plusieurs le mescognoissoient" (Montaignon, p. 182). Besides the obvious humiliation that this public condemnation and the suppression of the *Histoires des amans fortunez* must have caused Boaistuau, it also cost him his position as secretary for François de Clèves, the duke of Nevers⁶ and earned him a certain infamy that arguably continues to present times. Ernest Courbet, for example, argues that Boaistuau was a callous opportunist and that all of his writings were done with "une arrière-pensée d'intrigue et de poursuite" (p. 278). Richard Carr, citing other critical condemnations of Boaistuau, claims that, for the most part, this image has persisted.⁷

More recently, however, there has been an attempt to revise Boaistuau's reputation and to re-examine the *Histoires des amans fortunez* in a more positive light or at least to appreciate on their own terms the aesthetic choices Boaistuau made as an editor. Michel Simonin argues that if Boaistuau omitted certain stories from Marguerite's work or suppressed certain passages, it was at least in part out of a genuine fear that without these changes the work would be censored.⁸ He also defends Boaistuau's decision to omit Marguerite de Navarre's name from the title page, suggesting that to accredit the work to Marguerite after so many alterations ultimately would have been dishonest and that, in any event, Boaistuau made it clear enough in his dedication, without actually naming her, that Marguerite was indeed the author of the work.⁹ Richard Carr also defends Boaistuau's edition, arguing that previous condemnations of Boaistuau "proviennent sûrement d'une admiration sans bornes pour l'*Heptaméron* mais ... exagèrent quand même

les faits. ...” (*Histoires tragiques*, p. xxxvi). Carr dismisses Courbet’s assessment of Boaistuau as essentially unfounded and he claims that Boaistuau’s reworking of Marguerite’s style was simply a well-meant attempt to correct one of the work’s admitted weaknesses.¹⁰ Furthermore, Carr continues, Boaistuau’s revisions technically fell within Renaissance guidelines of poetic license: “... ne parlons pas, avec Courbet, d’impertinence. Boaistuau affirme ici le droit de tout écrivain de son temps de prendre la création d’autrui et de la recréer à son goût” (*Histoires tragiques*, p. xxxviii).

Both Carr and Simonin defend Boaistuau from a primarily aesthetic standpoint. Brushing aside accusations of ulterior personal motives, they attempt to present him less as a courtier trying to curry favor with potential patrons than as a meticulous, if perhaps overzealous, artist working well within the boundaries of his craft. Yet, it is interesting to note that while both critics seem eager to deny Boaistuau any personal motives in his (mis)handling of Marguerite’s novellas, they are both quite willing to read Jeanne d’Albret’s subsequent attempt to restore her mother’s work to its intended state as a puerile or hostile act of vengeance. Simonin reproachfully comments on the fact that, until the publication of Boaistuau’s edition, “pendant dix ans cette pieuse fille s’était montrée indifférente au sort de l’oeuvre” (p. 327, n. 10), implying of course that Jeanne d’Albret’s main motivations were not literary but personal. Richard Carr echoes this sentiment, portraying Jeanne d’Albret as vengeful and confrontational: “... cette édition ... incite Jeanne d’Albret à venger cette injustice envers sa mère. On a dit récemment que Jeanne d’Albret ‘dealt with differences aggressively, turning them into bitter quarrels,’ et cette fois le coup n’a pas manqué.”¹¹ In their eagerness to defend Boaistuau’s editorial choices, both Carr and Simonin have difficulty understanding Jeanne d’Albret’s desire to preserve the integrity of her mother’s work of art.¹²

My purpose in discussing the controversy surrounding the *Histoires des amans fortunez* is not necessarily to condemn or defend the actions or intentions of Pierre Boaistuau. It is perhaps no more reasonable to argue that, as a writer/editor, Boaistuau was devoid of personal motivations than it is to reduce his work to a conscious, malicious act of male appropriation. What is revealed by both Boaistuau’s edition of Marguerite’s text and the critical debate surrounding it is, I would argue, an underlying discomfort with female authority, a discomfort or anxiety which is played out more fully in Boaistuau’s *Histoires tragiques*, the subject of this article.

The *Histoires tragiques*, a translation and adaptation of six of Bandello's novellas, was published within one year of the humiliating public reprimand Boaistuau received for the *Histoires des amans fortunez* and in many respects is a work which can be read as a response to these events. Richard Carr suggests that the very fact that Boaistuau chose another novella collection to work on so soon after the scandal indicates a desire to justify himself to the public and to reassert his place as a writer in the narrative genre: "Pourquoi les a-t-il entreprises? pour se défendre et se justifier après le scandale des *Amans fortunez*?" (*Histoires tragiques*, p. xl). If this is the case, it is nonetheless true that Boaistuau chose a much safer subject this second time around and seemingly learned from his professional blunder. While the *Histoires des amans fortunez* recklessly revised the work of a well known, well-loved and fairly recently deceased French writer and monarch and neglected to give explicit credit to the author, the *Histoires tragiques* proved to be a more cautious project. Bandello, whom Boaistuau openly acknowledges as his source in his "Advertissement au lecteur" (*Histoires tragiques*, pp. 6–7), had never been translated into French and was thus less well known in France than Marguerite de Navarre whose literary achievements were widely acclaimed well before her death. Similarly, by choosing an Italian text, Boaistuau was less in danger of censure since his source was in Italian and since, in any event, French readers would be less likely to take offense at any liberties Boaistuau might take in a "translation" of a foreign text.¹³ Finally, Bandello was a much less formidable political figure than Marguerite.¹⁴

Nonetheless, despite the relative caution practiced by Boaistuau, the *Histoires tragiques* are, as a whole, unabashedly reminiscent of his botched edition of Marguerite's text. Boaistuau seems less interested in putting the *Histoires des amans fortunez* and the scandal it occasioned behind him than in purposely, even defensively, evoking this work. This is perhaps most evident in his "Advertissement au lecteur" in which Boaistuau expresses the importance of acknowledging one's literary debts: "Bening Lecteur, à fin que je recognoisse par qui j'ay proffité et que tu resentes de ta part à qui tu es tenu du plaisir ou contentement, lequel tu pourras recevoir de cest oeuvre..." (p. 6). Yet, what seems at first to be a humble corrective to the approach taken in his previous work, ends up undermining any credit due to Bandello. Boaistuau begins by thanking not Bandello (his true source) but Belleforest who assisted him in his translation of the novellas: "je t'ay bien voulu advertir que le seigneur de Belleforest, gentilhomme de Commingeois,

m'a tant soulagé en ceste traduction ... pour tirer le sens des histoires Italiennes ... que nous serions ingrats toy et moy si nous ne luy en sçavyons gré" (*Id.*).¹⁵ Any gratitude expressed in the "Advertissement" goes to Belleforest. Boaistuau mentions Bandello only once and in such a way as to distance himself from his source and to assert the superiority of his own adaptation: "Te priant au reste ne trouver mauvais si je ne me suis assubjecty au stile de Bandel, car sa phrase m'a semblé tant rude, ses termes impropres, ses propos tant mal liez et ses sentences tant maigres, que j'ay eu plus cher la refondre *tout de neuf* et la remettre *en nouvelle forme* que me rendre si supersticieux imitateur" (p. 7, italics are mine).

What is perhaps most striking about this "Advertissement" is not only the resemblance it bears to the "Avis au lecteur" of the *Histoires des amans fortunez* in which Boaistuau expresses in very similar terms the weaknesses of his source and his compulsion to rewrite it from scratch ("tout de neuf"¹⁶), but also his stubborn insistence on artistic freedom and his right as a translator to make any changes he wants: "... *je ne me suis assubjecty* au stile de Bandel ... Au reste, j'ay intitulé ce livre de tître Tragique, encore que (peut estre) il se puisse trouver quelque histoire, laquelle ne respondra en tout à ce qui est requis en la tragedie; neantmoins, ainsi que *j'ay esté libre en tout le subject*, ainsi ay-je voulu donner l'inscription au livre *telle qu'il m'a pleu*" (p. 7). In short, there seems to be little repentance on Boaistuau's part for his handling of Marguerite's text. Rather, if one takes him at his word in the "Advertissement," one could read the *Histoires tragiques* as a recalcitrant response to the chastisement he received for the *Amans fortunez* and an attempt to reassert his own rights and authority as an adaptor/innovator of novellas.

Boaistuau's commitment to innovation is evident not only in his prefatory insistence on artistic freedom but also in his choice of stories which, thematically at least, are again reminiscent of Marguerite's novellas. Boaistuau chooses stories from the wide variety of Bandello's *Novelle* that deal with such themes as the psychological and physical ravages of love, the relationship between sex and violence, and the differences between male and female honor and power. Thus, written so soon after the *Amans fortunez* scandal and published in the same year as Gruget's edition of the *Heptaméron*, the influence of these events on the *Histoires tragiques* is obvious. Yet, Boaistuau's treatment particularly of issues pertaining to sexuality is quite different from Marguerite's, as are his attitudes toward storytelling and the novella in general. The *Heptaméron* illustrates the subversive power of storytelling. By manipulating the various levels of narration and the diversity of voices in

her text, Marguerite creates a work that “provides opportunity to present a different vision of the female experience.”¹⁷ If the dominant recurring image in the *Heptaméron*’s tales themselves is rape or female resistance, what occurs on the level of the actual storytelling becomes in itself an act of female resistance and, subsequently, a means by which the female *devisants* may integrate themselves into the public realm of the court. “Au jeu nous sommes tous esgaux,”¹⁸ admits the male *devisant* Hircan in the Prologue, and indeed, what the *Heptaméron* presents, perhaps more than anything, is a vision of female power, a vision made possible, one might argue, by Marguerite’s confidence in her own privileged position in the court of Francis I.¹⁹

However, what one finds in the *Histoires tragiques*, despite any superficial thematic similarities that may exist between it and the *Heptaméron*, is a startlingly different and specifically *male* vision of power, one which is reflected in the text’s repeated references to various forms of public, physical chastisement, especially dismemberment and decapitation.²⁰ I contend that one may read the *Histoires tragiques* as a response to the empowering female vision of the *Heptaméron*. Boaistuau, in the discomfortingly dependent position of having to answer to women of power,²¹ presents his own utopian vision of male power in the *Histoires tragiques*. The art of storytelling — far from being a subversive act — represents for Boaistuau a castigatory gesture, an attempt to sustain the patriarchal, monarchical order and to regain the lost sense of authority he so obviously took for granted in his editing of Marguerite’s novellas but which ultimately failed him. When, in the second story of the *Histoires tragiques*, the emperor Mahomet publicly decapitates the woman he loves in order to regain imperial authority over his subjects, Boaistuau refers to the act as a “chef d’oeuvre.”²² In many ways Boaistuau creates his own brutal “masterpiece” in the *Histoires tragiques*. His literary dismembering of Marguerite de Navarre’s text having brought him little glory, Boaistuau sets out in this text to legitimize patriarchal authority and to ensure or reinforce his own authority as a male writer.

Most of the critical work dealing with the *Histoires tragiques*, which is sparse to begin with, tends to focus primarily on the stylistic elements of Boaistuau’s text rather than on its ideological thrust. One of the first critics to examine the work in any detail, René Sturel, categorizes the changes Boaistuau made on Bandello’s text, concluding that Boaistuau’s goal was less moralistic than aesthetic: “Boaistuau, à vrai dire, ne paraît pas avoir été guidé dans sa traduction par la préoccupation morale, que nous rencontrons au contraire chez Belleforest ... il semble ... avoir cherché surtout à plaire

à son lecteur" (p. 6). Richard Carr, a more recent critic of Boaistuau, takes a similar approach. His main interest in the *Histoires tragiques* is to show how it "reflects Boaistuau's conception of narrative art."²³ Like Sturel's, Carr's concerns are primarily stylistic; his reading of Boaistuau's version of the Italian tales focuses on Boaistuau's attempt to "tell a better story, not necessarily to advance any particular moral or didactic message."²⁴ Thus, Carr discusses such aspects of Boaistuau's work as the psychological complexity of its characters, the richness of its rhetorical style and the development of its plots.²⁵

This critical attention to stylistics is not surprising, especially since Boaistuau himself describes the changes he made on Bandello's text as mainly cosmetic. In his "Advertissement" he blatantly criticizes Bandello's style: "... sa phrase ... tant rude, ses termes impropres, ses propos tant mal liez et ses sentences tant maigres" (p. 7) and he virtually invites the reader to compare the two versions from this perspective: "... si tu es curieux de conferer mon stile avec le sien" (7). Yet, when one reads the *Histoires tragiques*, it becomes immediately obvious that Boaistuau is not merely interested in polishing up Bandello's supposed technical shoddiness and that even his seemingly most insignificant changes reveal more than just his storytelling capabilities. Again, Boaistuau insists upon his artistic freedom in the "Advertissement." He will not, he says, be a "superstitious imitator" of Bandello. In fact, most critics of Boaistuau have seen his changes of the Italian stories as transgressing the reasonable boundaries of a "translation." It is precisely for this reason that a reading of Boaistuau's text that attempts to place its revisions in a larger context is justified.

Admittedly, the notion of what constitutes a "faithful" translation was being hotly disputed in France particularly during the first half of the sixteenth century.²⁶ The debate centered primarily around Scriptural translation but had general implications for translation theory. Two opposing beliefs toward translation existed in the Renaissance. On the one hand, Church theologians believed that, at least as far as the Holy Scriptures were concerned, only one true, authoritative translation was possible. On the other hand, and conversely, it was thought that ever since Babel, language (and, necessarily, translation) had come to be seen as unstable and susceptible to constant reinterpretation.²⁷ As Glyn P. Norton points out "early Renaissance humanism sees translation as an act of rewriting and rethinking. By implication, each new translation refutes the authority of the preceding one because it is compelled to see the myth of Babel as an unfinished process" (p. 13).

Thus, humanists such as Joachim Du Bellay and Jacques Peletier advocated translations that captured the spirit of the originals, and that rendered them more comprehensible to a French audience, rather than word-for-word fidelity to the text.

Within the context of this debate over translation, however, Boaistuau's revision of Bandello's novellas seems to exceed even the more liberal humanist standards for translation. René Sturel has said that "sa liberté à cet égard dépasse de beaucoup celle à laquelle nous ont habitués les traducteurs d'oeuvres anciennes au XVI^e siècle, du moins en prose" (p. 10). Richard Carr agrees: "These tales are not mere translations. Boaistuau accepts the general story line, but beyond that, he allows himself an absolute freedom" (Carr, *Pierre Boaistuau's Histoires tragiques*, p. 45). While Boaistuau certainly shares the humanist love for Italian culture and literature, his "translation" does not simply attempt to render its original more accessible or comprehensible to his French audience. Rather, Boaistuau violates the spirit and the word of Bandello's text and he does so as deliberately as he had the *Heptaméron*.

In addition to the interpretive problems posed by this very "loose translation,"²⁸ another immediate difficulty of reading the *Histoires tragiques* is the fact that Boaistuau supplies his readers with a most elusive authorial voice and few clues as to how to read his text. He all but removes the diegetic narrative level by omitting a frame narrative for his tales, a well-known convention of Renaissance novella collections. Thus, in the *Histoires tragiques* not only are there no fictional storytellers to justify, contextualize or even interpret the tales (as do, say, the *devisants* in the *Heptaméron*), there is also little trace of an explicit narrator of the tales since Boaistuau omits Bandello's dedicatory introductions to the stories and almost all of his overt narratorial interventions.²⁹ As Richard Carr says, "The author is beginning to disappear from the realm of the narrative. He no longer maintains a directive function such as Des Périers and Noël du Fail assumed by allowing their words to be interspersed in the story."³⁰

The removal of a strong narratorial presence is one of the most obvious changes Boaistuau makes in Bandello's text and what remains in the *Histoires tragiques* is a particularly inconspicuous authorial voice, one which, in fact, relies on its inconspicuousness to present a more "persuasive" story to its readers. However, despite the pains Boaistuau takes to methodically extract the Bandellian narratorial voice from the stories, his text is not devoid of its own, strong authorial voice with its own, at least implicit moral. This voice makes

itself heard repeatedly through the numerous editorial changes Boaistuau made on Bandello's text.

One such change is his choice and placement of stories. Boaistuau himself gives little or no explanation as to why he chose these six particular tales in the *Histoires tragiques* over others or why he chose to put them in the order he did.³¹ He affects a certain arbitrariness in the choice and order of his tales since, he says, Belleforest will complete the translation.³² By mentioning Belleforest's continuation of his work, Boaistuau seeks to undermine any presupposed internal unity to the *Histoires tragiques*. René Sturel has suggested that Boaistuau chose these particular stories primarily for their tragic or even violent nature and that their order was indeed arbitrary.³³ Sturel thus accepts without question Boaistuau's authorial assertion of a disinterested ordering. Richard Carr, on the other hand, argues that Boaistuau's choice of stories has less to do with their depiction of violence than with their presentation of love. As he puts it, "Boaistuau is less concerned with these manifestations of cruelty, which he nevertheless depicts graphically, than with the sobering realization that emerges from these descriptions: man's helplessness before passion" (*Pierre Boaistuau's Histoires tragiques*, p. 49).³⁴ According to Carr, the individual tales of the *Histoires tragiques* may be divided into two groups, tragical or sentimental, depending upon "their proximity either to the pole of violent passion or to that of noble selfless love" (*Id.*).

While it is true that the tales in the *Histoires tragiques* are linked thematically through their presentation of the ravishing effects of love or passion, one might add another unifying factor. That is, all of the stories in Boaistuau's "translation" illustrate, in one way or another, the threat that women pose to male power. Interestingly enough, there are no women monarchs in Boaistuau's collection.³⁵ Rather, the stories present a series of portraits of male monarchs or aristocrats who jeopardize their kingdom, lineage or social standing for the "love" of a woman and the whole gammit of happy or tragic results that are incurred depending on the ability of the monarch himself or the woman involved to overcome this passion. Laura Tortonese has argued that Boaistuau's work was directed toward a specifically aristocratic public:

... le modifiche che Boaistuau apporta al testo italiano si rivelano, a mio avviso, estremamente significative. Esse fra l'altro palesano la maggiore omogeneità del pubblico cui il testo dell'autore francese intende rivolgersi: un pubblico che l'esito punitivo della vicenda tranquillizza ed appaga e che trova nella tensione di un codice stilistico e

letterario sostenuto e ambizioso ... motivi di profondo compiacimento, la conferma della propria natura di *élite* dominante, di cerchia privilegiata e superiormente dotata ...³⁶

If, as Tortonese argues, the *Histoires tragiques* were aimed at soothing or reassuring its aristocratic readers, Boaistuau's work must have been particularly gratifying to its male readers. Boaistuau's objective in the *Histoires tragiques* is, I would argue, explicitly and deliberately misogynous and this is immediately evident in the brief "sommaires" that precede the stories themselves. As I have said, Boaistuau defies convention by omitting a framestory from his collection and he even removes the rather lengthy courtly dedications Bandello had used to introduce his stories. Besides his dedication to Matthieu de Mauny and the previously discussed "Advertissement au lecteur," these "sommaires" constitute, therefore, the only extra-diegetic element of the *Histoires tragiques*. For the most part, the "sommaires" serve the fairly conventional function of briefly presenting or summarizing the subject matter of the individual tales and, perhaps not surprisingly, critics such as Carr and Sturel make little or no mention of them. Yet, these "sommaires" set the tone for the stories about to be told and this tone is, in many cases, substantially different from that set by Bandello. More often than not, Boaistuau uses the "sommaires" as an opportunity to launch attacks against women in general, to implicitly or explicitly cast blame on the female characters of his stories. In some instances, these attacks represent a complete reversal of the didactic direction of Bandello's introductions.

One of the most striking examples of this is Boaistuau's "sommaire" to *Histoires tragiques* IV, the story of the Seigneur de Piedmont who brutally punishes his adulterous wife. In his version of the tale, Bandello introduces the story by speaking in very general terms about the dangers of extreme passion: "l'uomo non sa amare ... se l'uomo come si sente al senso inviluppare adoperassi gli occhiali de la ragione, egli più perfettamente amarebbe ..." (II, 12, p. 788). If anything, Bandello expresses here at least an implicit note of sympathy for the female character of the story he is about to recount since it is the Seigneur de Piedmont who is by far the more irrational of the two characters. Boaistuau, on the other hand, very clearly places the responsibility for the tragic ending of this story on his female protagonist by focusing specifically on the evils of female adultery, or as he says, "la plus grande, cruelle et atroce injure que peut recevoir l'homme bien né" (14).³⁷ Boaistuau even praises as "certainement tresequitable" the ancient Roman law that permitted husbands to murder their wives as punishment for adul-

tery.³⁸ Thus, Boaistuau deliberately alters the introductory tone of his story to justify in advance the Seigneur de Piedmont's actions themselves as being, we may assume, "tresequitable."

Arguably, the most scathing attack against women that Boaistuau makes is in the "sommaire" preceding the story of Violente and Didaco. In some respects, this is to be expected since Violente, though technically chaste, is the most brutal and unruly female character in the entire *Histoires tragiques*. Bandello's version of the story which, as Laura Tortonese has argued, depicts Violente as being even more ferocious than Boaistuau's,³⁹ is preceded by an introduction that nonetheless attempts to justify her actions. Bandello points out the societal inequities that might provoke someone like Violente to respond in the way that she did: "È ben vero che per il più de le volte gli uomini fanno de le vendette che a le donne non è così lecito fare" (II, 42, p. 495). Boaistuau, on the other hand, makes no attempt to defend his female character. Rather, his entire "sommaire" is dedicated to listing famous examples of great men who were undone by women⁴⁰ and his version of the Violente story simply provides further proof that "il ne se trouve rien plus traictable et humain que les femmes" (*Histoires tragiques*, p. 137).

In short, despite Boaistuau's attempt to otherwise undermine the narratorial voice in the *Histoires tragiques* by removing almost all narratorial interventions from the stories themselves and by omitting the frame story, he nonetheless manages, in these summaries, to cast a tone of misogyny over the work as a whole. One could argue that the very infrequency of such overt interventions only serves to strengthen the overall impact of the "sommaries" on the reader. Boaistuau's authorial "je" is not unlike the voice of the blatantly misogynistic Hircan in Marguerite's *Heptaméron*. However, in the *Heptaméron* Hircan's voice is counterbalanced by the presence of nine other narrators, not to mention the more elusive authorial voice.⁴¹ Boaistuau's work allows for no such plurality of voices.⁴² In the literary realm of the *Histoires tragiques* only one voice reigns and it is, as the "sommaries" suggest, decidedly male.

It is not only in Boaistuau's choice and presentation of Bandello's tales that this voice makes itself heard; within the individual tales themselves, he makes numerous, liberal changes, dramatically altering the tone and moral thrust of Bandello's work. The very first story of the *Histoires tragiques* provides an excellent case study for examining Boaistuau's narratorial voice. Story I differs substantially from its original. A close examination of the tale's revisions disproves the longstanding notion that any changes Boaistuau made

to Bandello's tales were merely stylistic or random. Rather, the overall effect of these revisions is to consistently emphasize the tenuous nature of female power in an indomitable male monarchy. The kinds of changes that Boaistuau makes to this particular story are consistent not only with his earlier treatment of Marguerite de Navarre's text, but also with revisions made in the five other tales of the *Histoires tragiques*. On the other hand, this tale warrants special attention for at least two reasons. First, as Carr's concordance shows, it is the lead story in a collection that has been deliberately reordered. In a work so thematically preoccupied with social hierarchy and order, Boaistuau's decision to place this story first can hardly be considered a casual one. Second, in addressing the issue of royalty, this tale has particular resonance with Boaistuau's conflicted relationship to regal patronage.

The plot of Story I is simple: King Edouart of England falls in love with Ælips, the wife of one of his vassals, the Count of Salberic. When the count dies, King Edouart tries everything in his power to persuade Ælips to sleep with him, but she steadfastly refuses. Eventually, the king decides to rape Ælips and has her brought to his court. Ælips is determined to preserve her chastity and, just when Edouart is about to rape her, pulls out a knife and threatens to kill herself. Edouart is so impressed by this act that he is instantly "converted," and decides that, instead of raping Ælips, he will marry her. The story ends with the marriage of Edouart and Ælips, a marriage that Ælips readily accepts. Richard Carr categorizes this story as a "sentimental" tale, one which "sings lyrically of the ennobling force of love" (*Pierre Boaistuau's Histoires tragiques*, 78). Yet, despite this story's ostensibly "happy" ending (with Ælips winning the crown of England), Boaistuau's revisions illustrate how the preservation of Ælips' sexual integrity is important only insofar as it serves to protect the political or social integrity of the monarchy or to preserve the patriarchal status quo.

From the very first scene of the story, Boaistuau seems determined to undermine Ælips's power in the court and to emphasize not only her passivity but also her complete acceptance of the role she has been assigned. In both versions, the story begins with an announcement of this role. Ælips, we are told, has been given by King Edouart, along with the county of Salberic, to Guillaume de Montagu in recognition of his wartime services. Both versions present Ælips, from the very beginning as little more than a war prize, a piece of property.⁴³ At best, her role is to provide the king a means by which he may do his kingly duty and fairly compensate his subjects. As the two versions progress, however, it becomes increasingly clear that Boaistuau's

Ælips is a far more subservient character than Bandello's. The very next detail Bandello gives us about his heroine is that, left alone at the castle of Salberic, it is Ælips who leads the fight against the Scottish army. Bandello stresses her strength and her ability to defend what, one would assume, is rightfully hers:

In questo tempo gli scocesi assediarono il castello di Salberí, ove la contessa non si portò mica da giovanetta delicata e timida donna, ma si dimostrò esser una Camilla o una Penthesilea, perché con tanta prudenza, animosità e fortezza governò i suoi soldati e di modo i nemici offese, che furono astretti, intendendo il re venir al soccorso del luogo, levarsi da l'assedio (p. 1058).

Bandello emphasizes here Ælips's more "masculine" qualities as a warrior and mitigates her initial passive, compensatory role. Ælips actively participates in and positively contributes to the kingdom of which she is a subject.

Boaistuau places Ælips in a metonymic relation to the castle of Salberic. Far from defending her own property, Ælips, like the castle, becomes the object to be defended. In Boaistuau's version, the Scottish army's goal in attacking the castle was to seize Ælips: "Les Escossais ... comme la Comté de Salberic estoit desnüée de seigneur, dresserent promptement une armée, et s'en vont assieger le chasteau de Salberic avec la deliberation de prendre la Comtesse prisonniere, demolir le chasteau et de faire butin des richesses qui y estoient" (12–13). Both the castle and Ælips become fair game in the absence of the lord and, in sharp contrast to Bandello's tale, Ælips plays no part in the defense of the castle. Rather, according to Boaistuau's text, the Count of Salberic arranged to have the castle — and his wife — well protected before his departure.⁴⁴

Any power Ælips has in Boaistuau's story is based on her familial status, on the "maison" to which she is attached. At the beginning of the story, when she goes from being the property of her father to being the property of the Count of Salberic, Boaistuau stresses the tenuousness of Ælips's position at the moment of the Count's death: "Et parce qu'ils n'avoient eu enfans, la Comté de Salberic retournoit au Roy d'Angleterre qui la luy avoit donnée. Et après avoir lamenté par plusieurs jours la mort de son espoux, se retira à la maison de son pere. ..." (19). The power that Ælips had as the Countess of Salberic was temporary and illusory, for as soon as her husband dies, and with no children as inheritors, Ælips is herself "disinherited" of the castle and sent back to her father. Her position in the patrilineal chain of power is at best adjunctive and dependent on her ability to have children, perpetuate the family line and thus assure herself a place in the "maison."⁴⁵ Throughout

the course of the story, Ælips's situation never really changes; she is simply passed from one house to the next. As Boaistuau says at the end of the tale, "... la Royne fut amenée de la maison de son pere, parée d'habits royaux, jusques au palais" (p. 46). The story ends exactly as it begins, with Ælips being led from the house of her father to the house of her new husband.

The scene at Salberic sets the tone for the rest of the story. Having survived the attack of the Scottish army, Ælips is subsequently confronted with a series of attacks on her chastity. Both versions of the story depict Ælips struggling to preserve her chastity and both texts suggest that what is at stake in these attacks is not simply the preservation of Ælips's sexual integrity, but rather, the preservation of monarchical fealty and patriarchal order. In this way, they simply reflect the prevailing socio-legal discourse concerning chastity at the time both versions were written. Yet, whereas Bandello's narrative focuses on Ælips's strength as a character and paints her as an active participant in that narrative, Boaistuau uses the story to opposite ends. His recounting of Ælips's ascent to the throne ends up paradoxically reinforcing monarchical dominion over women and highlighting the tenuous nature of Ælips's crown. In Boaistuau's tale, it is less a question of what Ælips will *do* than what will *become* of her.

What is perhaps most striking about Boaistuau's revision of the Edouart and Ælips story is the absolute consistency of the characters' perspectives and motivations. Literally everyone in the story, with the exception of King Edouart who, we know, temporarily is *not himself*,⁴⁶ acts in what they consider to be the best interests of the Monarchy. Thus, Edouart's relentless pursuit of Ælips is never interpreted as a threat to Ælips herself but rather as a perversion of the bonds of fealty. The indignation Ælips herself expresses at the King's behavior is based on what she too perceives to be his betrayal of her husband and father, to whom the King is indebted for their past services. As she says to the King at Salberic, "... je ne me sçaurois persuader que vous teniez si peu de compte de mon pere ou de mon mary, qui est prisonnier pour vostre service entre les mains des François, noz ennemis mortels, que de leur procurer tel scandale et diffame en leur absence" (p. 18).

In Boaistuau's version of the story literally all of the characters (not just Ælips) seem to understand that what is at stake in the preservation of Ælips's chastity is the cohesion of the monarchy. When, for example, Edouart seeks the advice of a servant about whether he should enlist her father's help in persuading Ælips, Bandello's servant responds by saying that it would be "fuor di ragione in simul materia voler usar l'opera del padre a corromper la

figliola" (p. 1070). His primary consideration is the "corruption" of Ælips. Boaistuau's servant has far different concerns. He too tries to dissuade the King from approaching Ælips's father but his reasons seem to have far more to do with the "corruption" of the King's responsibility toward his subject: "... remonstrant fidelement au Roy le grand scandale et diffame qui s'en pourroit ensuyvre, tant pour les anciens services que le pere avoit faicts à ses ancestres que pour la grande prouesse aux armes de laquelle il estoit tant recommandé" (pp. 22–23). Not surprisingly, Boaistuau omits an authorial intervention immediately preceding this scene in which Bandello openly condemns the treatment of women as pieces of merchandise to be bought or sold.⁴⁷ Rather, Boaistuau's narrative implicitly accepts the treatment of Ælips as property, just as Ælips herself accepts her place in the castle. What it rejects is the King's attempt to seize this property from its rightful owner.

Whereas Bandello's story is critical of a monarchical system in which women are treated as pieces of merchandise, there is no trace of this criticism in Boaistuau's text. Unlike Bandello, Boaistuau never questions the passive role Ælips plays in the monarchy; all of his characters (including Ælips and her parents) accept this passivity as a given. His is simply a portrait of a *bad* monarch, one who (temporarily at least) forgets his role as the ultimate guardian of his people and their property. Thus, at many points in Boaistuau's tale, the characters express their disbelief at Edouart's very *unkingly* behavior. In particular, both Ælips ("La Comtesse, qui n'eust jamais pensé qu'un tant deshonneste vouloir eust trouvé place au coeur d'*un tel Roy* ..." [p. 16]) and her father ("... le bon vieillard de Comte, qui n'eust jamais sceu imaginer ne comprendre qu'une si injuste et deshonneste requeste eust sorty de la bouche d'*un Roy*" [26]) have this reaction. It is similarly significant that in Boaistuau's version of the story, the Count is depicted as an old man. The Count represents an older notion of monarchy, one in which the king recognizes his responsibilities toward his subjects. In this respect, the portrait of Edouart presented by Boaistuau contains an implicit criticism of changes that were taking place in the monarchy in the sixteenth century; that is, the transition from a feudal monarchy to a more absolutist conception in which the king was *de jure* and *de facto* less responsible to his subjects.

Not surprisingly, the one character in the Edouart and Ælips story who is viewed in a more positive light by Bandello is the king himself who is depicted less as a tyrannical villain than as a heartsick lover. The purpose of Bandello's more sympathetic portrayal of King Edouart is, one may assume, to prepare the reader for the conclusion of the story which, in Boaistuau's

version, comes much more as a surprise. It is easier for the reader to understand the “infinite happiness”⁴⁸ of Ælips at being married to the king who, in Bandello’s version, will not only bring her wealth and status but who genuinely loves her after all. Furthermore, Bandello stresses throughout the story differences in social class, suggesting that the main reason Edouart did not marry Ælips to begin with was her inferior social status.⁴⁹ When Ælips finally does become the queen of England, Bandello informs us that the ceremony is as sumptuous as if “una figliuola di re o imperadore fosse stata la moglie” (1109), and that the English subjects, with time, accept this as an suitable match.⁵⁰ The implication of this acceptance is that Ælips has somehow overcome her social background and has earned her place as queen. The rather sudden “conversion” of King Edouart is based on his eventual realization that Ælips is, after all, worthy of his love: “A la fine considerata il re la costanza, la fermezza ed *il valore* de la sua donna che egli piú che se stesso amava, e fermissima openione tenendo che pochissime si sarebbero così da bene ritrovate e che d’ogni onore e riverenza era *degn*...” (1105, italics are mine). Bandello’s version of the story of Edouart and Ælips paints a picture of two lovers who overcome adversity to be united and the end of the narrative is filled with details about the joy and festivity of the wedding and about Edouart’s ever-growing love for his new bride.

The wedding in Boaistuau’s version is not nearly as joyous or festive as Bandello’s. Boaistuau seems far more concerned with describing the public nature of the ceremony and his wedding is a much more somber event than Bandello’s.⁵¹ In Bandello’s version, the initial vows between Edouart and Ælips are exchanged privately.⁵² Boaistuau’s version specifically changes this detail. From the moment Edouart makes his decision to marry Ælips, everything is done in the presence of the entire court and, it would seem, for the benefit of the public eye. The last sentence of Boaistuau’s text, indeed the last word, emphasize Boaistuau’s focus on the public: “Le jour venu, la Royne fut amenée de la maison de son pere, parée d’habits royaux, jusques au palais, *et conduite par une infinité de seigneurs et dames* à l’Eglise où, le service accomply, le Roy de rechef *publiquement* l’espousa, et le mariage solennisé, conduite au lieu *public*, fut proclamée Royne d’Angleterre avec un contentement extreme et joye incredible de *tous ses sugects*” (p. 46, italics are mine). Boaistuau’s wedding between Edouart and Ælips is a spectacle put on for the benefit of the English people, a public display of monarchical will, rather than a private expression of love.

In Boaistuau's version, Edouart's change of heart takes place "in an instant" and therefore with a lot less thought than in Bandello's text. It seems to have little to do with any real esteem for Ælips. In contrast to the Italian version, once Edouart decides to marry Ælips, any mention of his "passion" for Ælips disappears from the text. Whereas Bandello's Edouart thoughtfully realizes Ælips's real value despite her social class, Boaistuau's character seems motivated solely out of pity for Ælips: "Le Roy ... advisant ce *piteux* spectacle ... vaincu d'un remors de conscience, accompagné d'une juste *pitié* ..." (p. 44, italics are mine). In the French text, Boaistuau removes nearly all of Bandello's references to class and social status has very little to do with Edouart's decision to marry (or not marry) Ælips. Edouart's subjects *instantly* accept Ælips as their queen; she does not have to prove herself or overcome her class status. She is worthy of her position as queen by virtue of the fact that Edouart has chosen her. Ælips's worth, in other words, is determined by Edouart and if Edouart did not initially offer to marry her, it was because he did not have to, for, as king, he could ultimately claim her as his property. By the same token, his final decision to marry Ælips is less a sign of his love for her than it is a spectacular gesture of royal magnanimity and power.

The story of Edouart and Ælips is, of course, hardly a tragic one and it ends "happily" for all involved; for Ælips, her family, the king and his subjects. This is true for Boaistuau's version as well as Bandello's. Yet, the changes Boaistuau made to the original are far from superficial, particularly concerning issues of female power. In Bandello's text, Ælips defends her sexual integrity as virulently as she defends the castle of Salberic, she claims it as her own. Bandello openly criticizes the treatment of Ælips as an object of merchandise, elevating her to the status of queen as if to legitimize her right to inviolability. What Boaistuau presents to his readers (among whom, most importantly, was the "virgin queen" herself, Queen Elisabeth) is the portrait of a female figurehead. The changes he makes on Bandello's text purposely stress the very tenuous nature of female power. Boaistuau's Ælips, alternately the property of her father, her husband or the king, depends on men to protect her sexual integrity and it is only when she is completely abandoned by her male protectors that, in a grandiose display of mercy by Edouart, she is granted a place in the Monarchy. Yet, despite Ælips's ostensible happiness with her lot, her wedding is a sobering one for women. It illustrates the ultimate tenuousness of women's place in the monarchy and serves as a reminder that any real power in a monarchy is held by men. By

making Ælips his queen, Edouart is less concerned with respecting her sexual integrity as a woman than in reaffirming his own stature as a good king.

As a writer, Boaistuau's own unenviable position was, ironically, not unlike that of Ælips whose place in the court was completely dependent on the generosity and, in this case, the fairly capricious magnanimity of the monarch. In the *Histoires tragiques* Boaistuau reveals anxiety over his own tenuous position within the system of court patronage. In writing a tale that, in essence, puts a woman "in her place," he also manages to put a woman in *his* place. Still smarting from his recent falling out with a female monarch, he constructs a tale — and indeed, an entire work — that at once reproduces male power and, at the same time, articulates his own perceived victimization at the hand of the queen. Ultimately, Boaistuau presents a nostalgic vision of monarchy in the *Histoires tragiques*, inverting the terms of victimization. According to his (re)vision, the *king*, as opposed to the queen, learns to respect his subjects as part of a reciprocal feudal relationship, repays his political debts and, perhaps by extension, protects the place of writers (like Boaistuau himself) in the court, that which Jeanne d'Albret, the castigating female monarch, had so obviously failed to do.

Gender is a structuring absence in twentieth-century criticism of the *Histoires tragiques*. In focusing on stylistics, criticism has allowed itself to be guided by — and has ultimately reinforced — the authorial male voice that Boaistuau so arduously worked to construct. By foregrounding gender, this article has attempted to reorient the discussion of a work that, if not canonical, continues to have an impact on how we view literature and its reproduction of power in the Renaissance.

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Notes

1. Marguerite de Navarre, *Nouvelles*, ed. Yves Le Hir (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967), p. v.
2. Le Roux de Lincy and Anatole de Montaiglon, eds., *L'Heptaméron des Nouvelles*, by Marguerite de Navarre (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1969), vol. 1. The first volume of the edition of the *Heptaméron des Nouvelles* published by Le Roux de Lincy and Anatole de Montaiglon includes fairly extensive information about Boaistuau's *Histoires des amans fortunez*. This edition includes, for example, Boaistuau's "dedicace" to Marguerite de Bourbon and his "Avis au lecteur" (from which the above references and others in the course of the article are taken, p. 181), as well as a concordance of the order of the tales from the two editions, 176–185.

3. Pierre Jourda, *Marguerite d'Angoulême, Duchesse d'Alençon, Reine de Navarre (1492–1549), Etude biographique et littéraire*, 2 vols. (Paris: Champion, 1930). According to Pierre Jourda, sixteenth-century editors were in the habit of taking certain liberties with texts, making changes as they saw fit: “Qui n'en prenait pas [des libertés] au XVI^e siècle?” (vol. 2, p. 659). Yet Jourda himself does not forgive Boaistuau on this basis and he calls the *Histoire des amans fortunez* “une outrageuse falsification” (vol. 2, p. 658).
4. As Ernest Courbet says, “L'édition des *Histoires des amans fortunez* fut anéantie. Quelques exemplaires seulement échappèrent à la destruction,” (Ernest Courbet, “Jeanne d'Albret et l'Heptaméron,” *Bulletin du Bibliophile et du Bibliothécaire*, 1904, p. 284).
5. The full title of the Gruget edition is *L'Heptaméron des Nouvelles de tres illustre et tres excellente Princesse Marguerite de Valois, Royne de Navarre, remis en son vray ordre, confus auparavant en sa première impression, et dedié à tres illustre et tres vertueuse Princesse Jeanne de Foix, Royne de Navarre, par Claude Gruget*. The Montaignon edition of the *Heptaméron* also includes Gruget's dedication to Jeanne d'Albret, p. 182.
6. Richard A. Carr, ed., *Histoires tragiques*, by Pierre Boaistuau (Paris: Champion, 1977), p. xxxix.
7. “Ernest Courbet a même reconstruit un portrait de Boaistuau qui fait toujours autorité” (*Histoires tragiques*, p. xxxvi). Relatively little critical attention has been paid to Boaistuau's work although his writings (and, in particular, the *Histoires tragiques* and the *Histoires prodigieuses*) were immensely popular in the sixteenth century. Until the fairly recent works of René Sturel and Richard Carr, Boaistuau was primarily known for the *Histoires des amans fortunez* controversy. See René Sturel, *Bandello en France au XVI^e siècle* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970) and Richard A. Carr, *Pierre Boaistuau's Histoires Tragiques: A Study of Narrative Form and Tragic Vision* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979).
8. Michel Simonin, “Notes sur Pierre Boaistuau,” *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, XXXVIII (1976), pp. 327–28.
9. Qu'on relise la dédicace à la duchesse de Nevers où Boaistuau rend hommage à l'auteur du texte qu'il procure, personnage féminin de haut lignage qui a su si bien exprimer “la sincérité de sa doctrine, la vivacité de sa foy et l'intégrité de ses mœurs que les plus doctes hommes qui ont régné de son temps n'ont point eu honte de l'appeler *prodige et miracle de nature*.” Allusion, transparente pour les contemporains, à l'*Oraison funèbre de la mort de l'incomparable Marguerite, Royne de Navarre*: “‘Marguerite de France ... sembloit plus un *prodige de Nature*’ écrit le ‘docte’ Charles de Sainte-Marthe” (Simonin, p. 329).
10. “... s'il se permet même de retoucher le style de Marguerite, c'est qu'il veut corriger une des faiblesses avouées du recueil ... Boaistuau, qui affectionne un style ample et éloquent, orné de tournures latines, n'a pas hésité à corriger un écrivain qui se souciait si peu du rythme de la phrase” (*Histoires tragiques*, p. xxxviii).
11. *Histoires tragiques*, pp. xxxv–xxxvi. Further on in his introduction, Carr speaks of Jeanne d'Albret in equally harsh terms when he discusses the lasting effects of her actions on Boaistuau's reputation: “Les repréailles de Jeanne d'Albret ont écrasé ces efforts, et sa voix retentit depuis” (pp. xxxviii–xxxix).

12. Pierre Jourda finds the reaction of Jeanne d'Albret to Boaistuau's edition perfectly justifiable: "On conçoit le déplaisir de Jeanne d'Albret à voir pareillement dénaturer un livre à la naissance duquel, peut-être, elle avait assisté, et qui ne pouvait, ainsi publié, faire honneur à sa mère" (Jourda, vol. 2, p. 657).
13. As I discuss briefly earlier in this article, the notion of what constituted a "faithful" translation was a subject of dispute in Renaissance France.
14. In fact, Bandello was in a political position not unlike that of Boaistuau. As Christian Bec says, "son itinéraire 'professionnel,' de moine dominicain, puis de secrétaire et courtisan, enfin d'évêque par intérim de l'évêché d'Agen, porte témoignage des avatars subis par le statut socio-professionnel des écrivains italiens de la première moitié du XVI^e siècle." ("Justice et libéralité: le projet courtisan de Bandello," *Le Juste et l'injuste à la Renaissance et à l'âge classique*, eds. C Lauvergnat-Gagnière and B. Yon [Paris: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 1983]), p. 190. It is perhaps for all of these reasons that the *Histoires tragiques* were much better received in France than were the *Histoires des amans fortunez*.
15. By expressing gratitude to Belleforest here, Boaistuau may also have hoped to ward off any potential negative criticism of the *Histoires tragiques* by associating himself with a writer who was, by Boaistuau's own admission, well-loved: "... je me deporteray de faire plus long discours de ses louanges, lesquelles (pour ses merites) je desirerois estre aussi bien publiées par tout, comme elles me sont cogneues et à tous ceux qui le frequentent" (pp. 6-7).
16. As already mentioned, Boaistuau complains of the "infinité de fautes manifestes" of Marguerite's novellas; he continues "Je te puis assurer qu'il m'aurait esté moins pénible de bastir l'oeuvre *tout de neuf* que de l'avoir tronqué, en plusieurs endroits, changé, innové, adiouté et supprimé en d'autres, ayant esté quasi contraint luy donner *nouvelle forme*" (Montaiglon, p. 181, italics are mine).
17. Deborah Losse, "Authorial and Narrative Voice in the *Heptaméron*," *Renaissance and Reformation*, 11 (Summer 1987), p. 239.
18. Michel François, ed., *Heptaméron*, by Marguerite de Navarre (Paris: Editions Garnier Frères, 1967), p. 10.
19. This is the subject of my doctoral dissertation. See Nancy E. Virtue, "Representations Of Rape in the Renaissance Novella," diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1993.
20. *The Histoires tragiques* is filled with both literal and figurative images of physical mutilation or the threat of mutilation. For example, in Bandello's version of the tale of Romeo and Juliet, when Giulietta's mother suggests that she marry Paris, Giulietta's response is the following: "—Io non vo'altrimenti maritarmi, —rispose ella a la madre, soggiungendo che se punto l'amava e di lei le caleva, che non le favellasse di marito." (Matteo Bandello, *Tutte le opere*, ed. Francesco Flora [Milan: Mondadori, 1952], II: 9, 745). Boaistuau, on the other hand, cannot help describing Julliette's resistance in terms of dismemberment: "Mais Julliette (qui eust plustot consenty d'estre desmembrée toute vive que d'accorder ce mariage) luy dist..." (*Histoires tragiques*, p. 95).

21. Boaistuau presented a special edition of his *Histoires tragiques* in 1559 to Queen Elizabeth of England in hopes of assuring its success. Richard Carr emphasizes Boaistuau's eagerness to please the queen: "Le texte est légèrement modifié là où il aurait risqué de mécontenter la reine ... En tête du volume, Boaistuau a mis une lettre qui chante les vertus politiques et intellectuelles de la jeune reine et où il promet de lui apporter l'été suivant 'quelque oeuvre de plus grand poix' si son 'petit traicté d'histoires' lui fait 'tant soit peu de plaisir'" (*Histoires tragiques*, xlii). Obviously, Boaistuau's dependency on the favor of women monarchs had not ended with Jeanne d'Albret.
22. "Ces propos finiz, print incontinent d'une main la Grecque par les cheveux, et de l'autre tira le cymeterre qu'il avoit au costé; et ayant les mains lacées à la blonde trace de son chef, d'un seul coup luy trencha la teste, avec une espouventable treneur d'un chacun; puis ayant mis fin a ce chef d'oeuvre, leur dist: 'Cognoissez maintenant si vostre empereur sçait commander à ses affections ou non'" (*Histoires tragiques*, p. 59). This is not the only time Boaistuau refers to acts of extreme physical violence and chastisement as a work of art. In the fifth story, after Violente has slit her husband's throat and stabbed him ten or twelve times, Boaistuau also refers to Didaco's mutilated body as a "chef d'oeuvre" (p. 162). And again, in the fourth story, Boaistuau refers to the murder of the adulterous wife's lover as "l'accomplissement de ce chef d'oeuvre" (p. 133).
23. Carr, *Pierre Boaistuau's Histoires tragiques*, p. 35 n.9.
24. In fact, according to Carr, Boaistuau purposely removes any *explicit* ideological or moralistic statements: "... the story ... begins to exist by and for itself regardless of the particular persuasion of the author whose views, by virtue of the structuring of the tale, remain implicit rather than being stated openly" (*Pierre Boaistuau's Histoires tragiques*, p. 47).
25. This is not to say that Carr sees the *Histoires tragiques* as being devoid of any ethical dimension. In fact, Carr sees the *Histoires tragiques* as challenging "many of the myths and hypotheses posited by the early sixteenth century" (*Pierre Boaistuau's Histoires tragiques*, p. 20). However, his is a primarily generic study.
26. The source for my brief overview of Renaissance translation theory is Glyn P. Norton's article "The Politics of Translation in Early Renaissance France," *Die literarische Übersetzung: Fallstudien zu ihrer Kulturgeschichte*, ed. Brigitte Schultze and A.P. Frank (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1987). For a more detailed discussion, see Glyn P. Norton, *The Ideology and Language of Translation in Renaissance France and Their Humanist Antecedents* (Geneva: Droz, 1984).
27. "... Du Bellay calls attention to a problem: all translation, while carried out under the guidelines of fidelity, is essentially an act of *interpretation*. He does not let the issue rest there, however. He goes on to tell us that in the matter of Holy Scriptures, there are two diverging points of view: on the one hand, the belief that the "mysteries of theology" are closed to interpretation/translation, and on the other hand, the opposing view the the Scriptures are like any other text, subject to the scrutiny of philology (Norton, p. 3).
28. That is, a translation in which there is a sort of co-authorship, with the "translator" insinuating his/her voice at certain points in the text and not others.

29. One of the few places in Boaistuau's text where the authorial "je" *does* appear is in his brief "sommaires" that precede each text.
30. Carr, *Pierre Boaistuau's Histoires tragiques*, p. 47. Hermann H. Wetzel argues that the abandonment of the framestory device has profound historical ramifications: "La perte d'une possibilité de coopération politique et finalement d'une foi dans un ordre raisonnable du monde mène à la réduction ou bien à l'abandon du cadre." ("Éléments socio-historiques d'un genre littéraire: L'Histoire de la nouvelle jusqu'à Cervantès," *La Nouvelle à la Renaissance*, ed. Lionello Sozzi [Geneva and Paris: Slatkine, 1981], p. 52).
31. The following is a concordance of Boaistuau's *Histoires tragiques* and Bandello's *Novelle* as supplied by Richard Carr in *Pierre Boaistuau's Histoires tragiques* (p. 25):
HT I (Edouart et Ælips)	N II.37
HT II (Mahomet et Hyrenée)	N I.10
HT III (Rhomeo et Julliette)	N II.9
HT IV (Le Seigneur du Piedmont)	N II.12
HT V (Didaco et Violente)	N I.42
HT VI (Mandozze et la Duchesse de Savoie)	N II.44

As this concordance illustrates, Boaistuau did not simply start translating at the beginning of Bandello's text and work chronologically. Whatever his reasons, he chose specific tales from throughout the work and established his own order.

32. "... j'espère qu'il te fera voir le second Tome bien tost en lumiere, traduit de sa main" (*Histoires tragiques*, p. 6).
33. "On peut se demander tout d'abord ce qui a guidé Boaistuau dans le choix des nouvelles qu'il a traduites, puisqu'il n'a pas suivi l'ordre de l'édition italienne. La réponse est assurément hasardeuse. Pourtant, il paraît avoir cherché des nouvelles assez longues et dont l'amour faisait les frais. De plus, le titre même d'*Histoires tragiques* qu'il a substitué à celui de *Novelle*, et qui d'ailleurs a eu une assez grande vogue aux environs de 1600 montre qu'il a été frappé par ce caractère de certains récits de Bandello et ceux qu'il a choisis en effet par l'horreur ou le pathétique des situations, et en général par la cruauté du dénouement, répondent bien à cette nouvelle appellation" (Sturel, pp. 10–11).
34. Carr groups tales II, IV, and V in the tragical category and I, III, and VI in the sentimental category.
35. There are women who *become* monarchs (like Ælips in story I and the Duchesse in story VI) but only after suffering great adversity and proving themselves as models of chastity and real "nobility."
36. Laura Tortonese, "Bandello, Boaistuau e la novella di Didaco e Violante," *La Nouvelle en France à la Renaissance*, ed. Lionello Sozzi, pp. 469–470.
37. By putting the act of adultery in these terms, Boaistuau automatically undercuts the impact of the punishment inflicted by the Seigneur de Piedmont (himself, "un homme bien né").
38. "... les anciens Romains, voulans refrener l'incontinence des dames, permirent aux mariz qui les trouveroient en faute d'user de severe correction jusques à les priver de vie: loy certainement tresequitable, laquelle borne si bien les affections desordonnées de celles qui

sont dissolues et lascives que quelque fois la craincte de supplice amortist et esteinct le desir” (p. 14).

39. “Nella versione italiana Violante si accaniva su ogni membro del corpo di Didaco procurandogli atroci sofferenze prima di ucciderlo. Meno crudele è la vendetta della Violante di Boaistuau, che prima uccide l’uomo che l’ha ingannata e poi si accanisce sul suo corpo” (Tortonese, p. 468). It is important to add, however, that Tortonese interprets this difference as proof that Bandello’s text was more “feminist” than Boaistuau’s. As she puts it, “In questo tentativo di eliminare gli aspetti più impressionanti della vendetta attenuando la crudeltà di Violante, si può forse intravedere un atteggiamento più benevolo, forse di solidarietà maschile, nei confronti di Didaco da parte di Boaistuau, contrapposto alla dignità della Violante di Bandello che nasce proprio dalla forza e dalla ferocia della sua vendetta. È in questo senso che, nonostante la precedente osservazione, credo si possa parlare, nell’insieme, di un più preciso femminismo dell’autore italiano, femminismo non recepito, forse non condiviso e comunque non riproposto ai suoi lettori dall’autore francese” (pp. 468–69).
40. Most of the examples Boaistuau gives are biblical, with the exception of the reference he makes to the legendary “Papesse Jeanne” who, as Richard Carr points out, allegedly occupied the papal seat in the ninth century. What apparently qualifies Jeanne for this list of cruel and malicious women was the threat she posed to male papal authority. As Boaistuau says “Qu’y a-t-il de plus reveré que le siege Papal? Toutefois la femme par son astuce y a monté” (p. 137). Boaistuau may also be making an oblique reference here to Jeanne d’Albret.
41. Deborah Losse says of the *Heptaméron*, “If the voice of the public narrator declines to assume a marked personality, the private narrators assume each one a distinctive character, and it is here that we find the female voice” (p. 239).
42. Richard Carr confirms this in his discussion of Boaistuau’s *Theatre du monde*: “Boaistuau cannot deal with diversity in any other way than to condemn it as a sin. He makes no effort to reconcile or to synthesize. Very simply, disparity of opinion has caused the convulsive upheaval of all order and its effects are everywhere” (*Pierre Boaistuau’s Histoires tragiques*, p. 173).
43. Bandello, p. 1058, Boaistuau, p. 12.
44. “... le Comte de Salberic avant son departement y avoit donné si bon ordre que l’issue ne fut pas telle qu’ils [the Scots] esperoient car ils furent si vivement repoussez par ceux qui estoient dedans que, ne pouvans endurer leur fureur, au lieu de faire leurs approches, furent contraincts de s’eslongner” (Boaistuau, p. 13).
45. Of course, Ælips’s situation merely reflects prevailing Salic law regarding the inheritance of property by women. Since Guillaume de Montagu received the castle of Salberic in recognition of his service to the King, it would qualify as *terra salica* and Ælips would, legally, have no right to inherit it. This is according to Title LXII, article VI of the *Liber legis Salicæ* (“Lois des Francs, contenant La Loi Salique et La Loi Ripiaire, ed. and trans. J.F.A Peyré [Paris: Imprimerie de Firmin Didot, 1828], p. 210).

46. We are told repeatedly throughout the *Histoires tragiques* that the King is behaving in a very *unkingly* manner, precisely because of his obsession for Ælips. He is described as “quasi ravi d’une incroyable admiration” (p. 14), “hors des gonds de raison et quasi transporté” (p. 22), “hors des loix d’honneur et de raison” (p. 27), “hors de soy” (p. 40), etc. Even the king himself has moments when he realizes this and tries to recover from this loss of self. He says to himself at one point “te recognois toy mesme” (p. 31).
47. “Ecco a che cecità e a che enorme errore induce l’uomo, che da lui ingombrato si ritrova, questo concupiscibile e mal regolato amore, che gli fa credere esser cosa facil a persuader ad un padre che de la propria figliuola faccia mercanzia e, come se fosse una cavalcatura, quella presti a vettura” (p. 1069).
48. “contentezza infinita” (p. 1107).
49. For example, at a certain point in Bandello’s story, Ælips deliberately dresses “molto bassamente” (p. 1068) in the hopes of deterring the King’s attention. This detail is omitted from Boaistuau. Bandello also repeatedly refers to the “grado” of his characters. When Edouart is trying to forget Ælips in the Italian version, we are told that he tries to distract himself with other women: “a tutte le dame molto s’inchinava e tutte riveriva secondo che il grado loro meritava. Ma sopra tutte e molto più di tutte la bella Aelips era da lui riverata e adorata” (1067). In Bandello’s version, Edouart loves Ælips *in spite of* her social class.
50. “La reina venne in poco di tempo in tanta grazia del popolo e baroni, che ciascuno sommamente lodava il re che sí buona elezione di moglie avesse fatta” (p. 1109).
51. As this passage reveals, Edouart immediately convenes the entire English nobility to announce his marriage plans: “Et pour mieux solenniser les nopces, le Roy reist convoquer toute la seigneurie d’Angleterre et divulguer son mariage, et leur feist enjoindre de se trouver à Londres le premier jour de Juillet pour assister aux nopces et coronnement de la Royne” (p. 46).
52. “Il re aveva pensato a la presenza di tutti far ciò che poi fece; ma cangiato d’openione, non volle altri testimonii che quelli del camerino” (p. 1106).