

## The resurrection of Antiquity

Like his contemporaries, Caron was interested in Antiquity, yet he never left France. He sought to compete with the art of the Ancients, especially by reviving one of the great types of Antiquity, the equestrian monument.

In prints and in the Fontainebleau *Belle Cheminée*, created from his designs, Henry IV is shown as an emperor on his mount, like the bronze *Marcus Aurelius* visible in Rome.

For Caron, Antiquity also served as the pretext for showing magnificent triumphs. In his *Seasons*, the painter gathered together the divinities of Olympus and placed them on magnificent chariots led by nymphs, satyrs... These reconstructions also served for the exaltation of the Valois dynasty in erudite allegories of the golden age and eternal abundance.

The source of Caron's ancient imagery is very often in books. The project to illustrate *Philostratus*, which occupied him at the end of his life must have represented an exceptional opportunity to emulate his illustrious predecessors who are referred to in the long descriptions of their works.