

Allegorical Nudity, Visual Disorder and Distraction in the French Renaissance.

An Unnoticed Painting from the Sanssouci Picture Gallery

Cornelia Logemann

*Fait ce que la Nature
Nous montre en sa vive peinture,
Et qui plus est, ce que nos yeux
Ne virent jamais sous les cieux:
Nous repaissant d'un feint image
Ou de quelque estrange paysage.¹*

When Remy Belleau described in the poem *Le Pinceau* of 1556 how images oscillate between fiction and reality, how the perception of the viewer is lead astray by the power of the brush, these lines give a sense of the complexity of visual allegories in sixteenth-century France. France seems to be an especially fruitful territory for allegory – at least in this era. The first and second school of Fontainebleau produced not only a significant number of well-known allegorical paintings but also examples that still resist a convincing art historical interpretation. One of these enigmatic and still unattributed paintings is located in the Picture Gallery of Sanssouci (fig. 1). The scarce attention paid to this example that



1 *Allegory of the Birth of the Dauphin*, GK I 5040, Oil on wood, 91 × 125 cm

forms the core of this article may partially be explained by the fact that the painting was annexed by the Soviet Union after World War II as booty, and so it was never part of any of the exhibitions on the School of Fontainebleau, never reproduced or mentioned in the catalogues.² An additional reason for the previous neglect lies in the image itself and its enigmatic subject, which seemed to have scared all interpreters.³ In three chapters, this essay attempts to offer a new approach to this painting: Firstly, I will focus on the allegorical ambiguity of the painting that seems to be a characteristic for works produced during that era. In a second step, the implicit allegorical topography will help to find new insights into the subject of the painting. Finally, the conditioning of the viewer, or the topographical ‘period eye’ – to take up and develop on the concept of Michael Baxandall – will help to find further explanations for the composition of this panel in Potsdam.⁴

1. Allegorical ambiguity

The hitherto almost unnoticed picture executed on a wooden panel shows an enigmatic composition of ten female, naked figures and a child. Differences appear between the two women with lighter skin while the others share a darker complexion. The women seemingly represent different groupings: the five women in the background on the left with the infant; the group of three on the right, accompanied by a woman behind them; and the isolated woman lying in the left foreground looking upwards. The many attributes – musical instruments, weapons, different sorts of wreaths et cetera – do not really identify any figure precisely. The only inscription on the picture, hardly visible in a photo, was added later, attributing the painting to Raphael.

The painting undoubtedly belongs to the School of Fontainebleau. Earlier attributions mention Rosso Fiorentino, but it is quite obvious that the painting must have been painted well after Rosso's death. It was made by an artist who shows strong influences from the Netherlands. Colin Eisler, arguably the last author to seriously write about it, proposed the 1560s, but also assumed a certain provincialism, which in his opinion is characteristic of the second school of Fontainebleau.⁵ Eisler repeated the traditional title of an *Allegory of the Birth of a Dauphin* canonized in Götz Eckhard's catalogue of the Potsdam picture gallery almost twenty-five years earlier.⁶ Further stylistic comparisons, however, may also hint at a production date in the 1570s, and these years seem to correspond best with the Netherlandish influence of the painting.⁷

Regarding the subject of the painting, the composition of the figures suggests that the central female figure pointing to her companion lying on the ground and turning her head towards two other women at her right side, plays a central role. Grouping three nude female figures together, each with a different sort of wreath and presenting their bodies from different sides makes the Judgment of Paris a compelling association. Pallas Athena would be identified in this composition by her armor, with Juno on the right, leaning on a cornucopia. On the left sits the radiant Venus, prominently pointing to the lying figure in the foreground.⁸ These three women each handle different types of wreaths and seem to stand in for different qualities and virtues, beauty (wreath with flowers), power and/or ingenium (laurel wreath)⁹ and fertility/wealth (it is unclear if Juno really handles a wreath – which then might be of lily leaves – or if the foliage, fruits and cornucopia should generally indicate abundance).¹⁰ The assisting maiden in the background tears away a curtain from the scene and underlines the presentation of the three women.

The motif of the Judgment of Paris was interpreted in several ways in sixteenth-century France: it was Jean Lemaire de Belges who explicitly connected this mythological scene to an allegorical interpretation



2 Master of Flora, *Birth of Cupid*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 4148, Oil on wood, 108 x 130,5 cm

of the virtues needed by a prince.¹¹ On the other hand, it would have been hard for a Renaissance beholder with some basic knowledge in classical mythology not to associate the five maidens in the left background who play instruments and caress a child with nymphs responsible for the raising of the child. Such a motif would fit several mythological incidents and can be found in various sources: The nymphs on mount Nysa were responsible for the education of Bacchus, the nymphs on mount Ida for the education of Jupiter, even Aeneas was brought up by nymphs. The fact that our painting thus represents the birth of a dauphin in allegorical-mythological disguise does not seem implausible.

This leaves the woman in the left foreground lying on an elaborate cushion and looking upwards to the group with the infant. The white color of her skin links her with the sitting goddess in the center, whose wreath we have interpreted as signal of beauty. Beyond this compositional disposition through color, these two women seem the most beautiful in the assembly. If we take this information as a starting point, a detailed analysis of this picture may narrow down the topographical and allegorical context of the painting. If we are confronted with an allegory of noble birth, at least one other comparable picture would exist in the School of Fontainebleau: In the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the *Birth of Cupid* (fig. 2) is shown in a similar composition. Both paintings present a child, its mother and several female figures. These figures in the *Birth of Cupid* have been convincingly interpreted by Harry Wehle as Venus with the three Graces and the four times of day.¹² It seems to correspond with a description of the same event from Vincenzo Cartari's mythological handbook, which was first published in Italian in 1556 and available in French translation by 1581. The comparison enhances the idea that the Potsdam painting might also visualize a birth; however, this event cannot be the *Birth of Cupid* as described by Cartari.

Another strand of casually developed interpretations from the 18th to the early 20th century describes the Potsdam painting as Venus accompanied by the Muses – but this is also not entirely convincing. It is true that there are nine figures surrounding the reclining woman; however, the seated figures in the middle differ significantly in skin color, contradicting the assumption of nine almost equal sisters. Moreover, only the characters in the background are engaged in usual occupations of antique muses, for example making music. The three figures in the center are accompanied by weapons, a baton, and a cornucopia – all attributes that do not fit any of the muses. Given the otherwise prevalent mythological-allegorical precision of the composition, such inconsistencies seem implausible. Wehle further suggests that the prominently portrayed mother could be one of the royal mistresses.¹³

It is not surprising, that an exclusively iconographical approach misses important aspects of the painting. One of its primary concerns seems female beauty and erotic attraction. Not only do the tall female bodies with their prominent thighs and small breasts correspond with an ideal described by the ‘blazon’ poems and slightly later by Pierre de Brantôme in his *Vies des Dames Galantes*.¹⁴ The graceful entanglement of the bodies, as emphasized also in the New York picture with the *Birth of Cupid*, is one of the most obvious characteristics of the paintings emerging from, and under the influence of the school of Fontainebleau. The crucial idealization of the female body between various media, as well as between different forms of allegorical and ‘real’ bodies is formulated several times in literary terms. Particularly during court festivities, mythological elements were performed by members of the court – and for the Royal family, this form of masquerade was especially important to characterize individual figures. Thus, Ronsard’s poem *La Charité* illustrates the changeability of the female body under the impact of movement by comparing the dance at court with the heavenly ballet of celestial spheres, merging the dancing Marguerite de Navarre with one of the three graces.¹⁵

The interchangeability of literature and painting are vividly stimulated by Ronsard and his contemporaries. Even so, this broad context still does not explain all aspects of the allegorical composition in Potsdam. One of the most striking features is the multi-dimensionality of the characters in the picture, the rotating and turning female bodies, which cast a spell over the (male) viewer.¹⁶ These bodies evoke more famous models on the one hand, but also comments on the source of female beauty, as, for example, Agnolo Firenzuola’s treatise on the beauty of women from 1548. On the move, the female body unfolds its charms, as Firenzuola writes: “When she dances, she has Venus herself as her companion”¹⁷. The ideal naked bodies were shown as if they were presented in a kind of catalogue with a maximum of different poses and views. Especially the juxtaposition of frontal and rear view for the three women on the right reminds one of Titian’s *poesie* for Philipp II, in which we know from letters that this variety of female beauty seemingly overlaid the mythological topic of the paintings.¹⁸ We might furthermore speculate about a possible eulogistic intention for the picture, like the ancient painter Zeuxis who created an ideal image of Juno or Helena (depending on the ancient source) by selecting the most beautiful body parts of the maidens of Kroton. Our painter presents the most beautiful mythological women, confronting them with the reclining woman in the foreground who is visually praised as their equal.

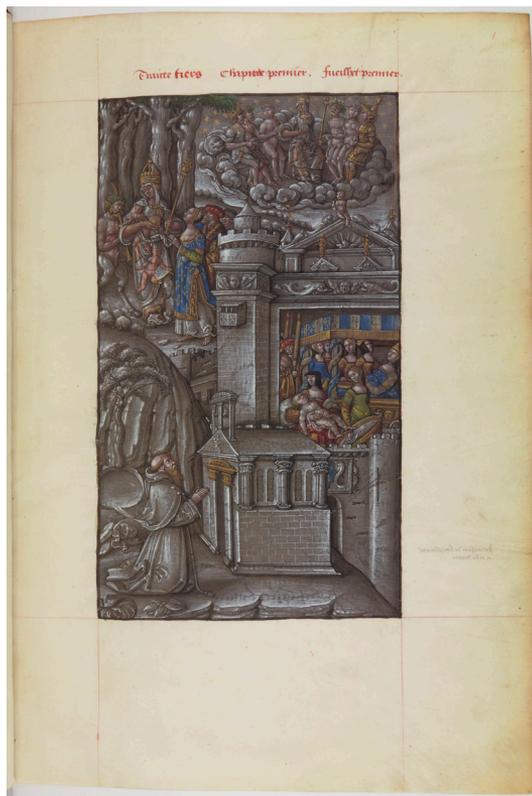
Even if we have not arrived at a definitive reading of the painting at the end of this first chapter, a structural principal of the composition becomes clearer: The scene seems to be intentionally based on an allegorical, mythological and even formal bricolage which prevents immediate understanding. This compositional principle is visibly pushed here to its outermost limits. This visual ambiguity challenging the viewer on different levels is exactly what Francois de Nouy described in 1587 as his favorite

viewing experience. In his *Discours politiques et militaires* he confesses that he needed about “deux heures à contempler quelque belle peinture” to examine the quality of a new painting.¹⁹ If this statement is symptomatic of the viewing-experience of pictures from the French Renaissance, allegorical ambiguity becomes a crucial aesthetic value.²⁰

2. The implicit topographies of allegory

If our painting is related to a noble birth – or even the birth of a French dauphin – the birth and education not of Bacchus but Jupiter would be the appropriate mythological counterpart. Jupiter was given immediately after his birth to the Corybants on Mount Ida, though several mythological handbooks and pictures replace the bacchic Corybants with nymphs who seemed a more appropriate company for an infant. Interestingly, the Judgment of Paris in which the three goddesses promised their different gifts to the young Trojan shepherd-prince also took place on mount Ida. It must be emphasized that already the Renaissance antiquarians and philologists distinguished two mountains named Ida in antiquity – one in the center of Crete where Jupiter was educated, and the other some 20 kilometers from Troy where Paris met the goddesses.

The fact that both events were located at a place with the same name, however, should have assured a contemporary viewer that his multiple associations for the figure groups might not be completely erroneous. Such implicit topographical knowledge would add another important aspect to our painting: The Mount Ida close to Troy was also the supposed place of origin of the French kings. The medieval French chronicles have invented a second child of Hector and his wife Andromache named Francus, whereas the other son Astyanax was killed during the conquest of Troy. This Francus had a renowned career: He was mentioned not only in the *Grandes Chroniques de France* but seemed to have become especially important in the 16th century. He is mentioned in Jean Lemaire de Belges's *Illustrations de Gaule et Singularité de Troie* (1513) and in Johannes Trithemius' *De origine gentis Francorum compendium* (1514). Most importantly, Pierre Ronsard composed his *Franciade* for Charles IX in emulation of Vergil's *Aeneis*. Here, the fabled king's lineage is described in the following verses: (II/17): “Muse, l'honneur des sommets de Parnasse, Guide ma langue et me chante la race/ Des Rois François yssus de Francion/ Enfant d'Hector Troyen de nation,/ Qu'on appelloit en sa jeunesse tendre/ Astyanax et du nom de Scamandre”²¹. If we look at the nymphs around the infant, the act of making music may be read in another context: “Guide ma langue



3 Birth of the Dauphin, in: Jean Thénau, *Triumphe des Vertuz*, BNF; Ms. fr. 144, fol. 1r



4 Minerva, in: *La nouvelle et ioyeuse entrée, que treshault, tresexcellent, et trespuissant Prince, le Roy treschrestien Henry deuzieme de ce nom à faicte en sa bonne ville et cite de Paris [...]*, Paris 1549

France appears as a female figure in a Fleur-de-Lis coat next to Natura, accompanying the birth of François, son of François I, born in 1517. The miniature contains one of the few early portraits of personified France outside of contemporary festive culture. Even the production of royal descendants is placed in the hands of personifications. A good example is the birth of the Dauphin in an illustration of Jean Thenaud's *Triomphe des Vertuz* where the event is enacted by various personifications in a fictitious allegorical place. Natura with painted robe and Dame France appear in a garden, while the birth of the heir to the throne is located in a building next to them (fig. 3).²⁵ In reading Thenaud's text it also becomes clear that continuous medieval traditions are invoked, as can be seen at about the reproduction of the personification of Natura that clearly follows in the footsteps of Alain de Lille.²⁶ What is relevant here, is that at this time the personifications and mythological figures still construct their own place – with its own topology and its own laws. François, son of king François I, is born in the realm of Natura and in the garden of France, and the allegorical landscape merges with Thenaud's text as an accompanying illustration. The birth of the Dauphin in Jean Thenaud *Triomphe des Vertuz* from the beginning of the 16th century shows the significance of the place for such an important event: conventional personifications of Nature and France determine the visual narrative. Here, the realm of nature meets the Garden of France to give an appropriate topographical frame for the Dauphin, in this case, of course, François I.

et me chante la race” might be an allusion to the French lineage. The most important French poet composed a *Franciade* for Charles. This fact shows how important and well known the mythological and allegorical constellations were, and a likely resource for the understanding the composition. Even if it is claimed from today's perspective that the unfinished *Franciade* was not a success, numerous works of art during that time contain references to Ronsard and other poets.²² But more specifically, the inclusion of the allegory of the birth of the French Dauphin demands topographical reference, because the relationship forged between future realm and future king must be strong.²³ This becomes clearer as we look at an earlier example of this motif.

Jean Thenaud, in particular, devotes himself in his numerous writings to the three theological virtues and also to the four cardinal virtues, about which elaborately illustrated manuscripts have been preserved. He is also one of the first to prominently evoke France as a personification.²⁴ In the treatise *Triomphe des Vertuz* in BNF, Ms. fr. 144, fol. 1r of 1519,

To sum up this second chapter: The intended allegorical ambiguity of the painting's first visual level acquires a specific meaning on a second level of understanding if the viewer is able to draw an implicit topographical knowledge from mount Ida. It is important, however, to emphasize that this topographical knowledge was not visualized – the scene is staged before an undifferentiated dark background, which does not give the slightest hint about mount Ida. This neutral presentation regarding the concrete place where the allegorical scene takes place seems another decisive element for the allegorical concept. It allows the mental transposition of the scene and meaning to the painting's contemporary context in sixteenth-century France.

3. Topographical contexts or: Allegory and *Gallia fertilis*

If the infant in our picture (fig. 1) can be identified as the dauphin, then the female figure lying in the foreground – clearly the protagonist of this composition – is supposed to be his mother. Motherhood was an important aspect in court politics of the mid-sixteenth century. For a dramatically long period, the wife of Henry II, Catharina de' Medici, had seemed to be barren. Her interest to emphasize the role of motherhood was apparently high.²⁷ While the painting does not show a portrait, and the figure is not identified as Catharina de' Medici, the assumption to be made here is that the reclining woman might be understood as an allegory of the queen's maternal function at court.²⁸ For this earthbound figure, we can consider corresponding allegorical-mythological figures. Again, topography directs the allegorical interpretation. Mount Ida, having been the site of the judgment of Paris and the education of Jupiter, is in the realm of Cybele.²⁹ All these topics must have been well known to contemporaries: during the 1549 entry into Paris, some of these motifs were presented in ephemeral decorations and allegorical 'tableaux' – Paris seems an attractive alternative to Mount Ida:³⁰ At the rue de la Calandre near Notre Dame, it is Minerva, who welcomes the beholder with her naked breast, offers milk as sign of the valuable words she distributes (fig. 4).³¹ The description suggests that had Minerva been as beautiful on Mount Ida to the judgement of Paris as she is in this Entrée, the golden apple would have been hers. But mount Ida is also a reference point for other ephemeral tableaux. During the Entry, the relationship between mount Ida, Queen Catharina, France and Cybele is emphasized on several levels.³² It is the figure of *Gallia fertilis* that is represented on an arch facing Saint Jacques de l'Hôpital. Gallia is crowned with three towers – and this reminds the spectators of the goddess Cybele. The context is described in the Festival Book (fig. 5):



5 *Gallia fertilis* at the Fontaine du Ponceau, in: *La nouvelle et ioyeuse entrée, que treshault, tresexcellent, et trespuisant Prince, le Roy treschrestien Henry deuzieme de ce nom à faicte en sa bonne ville et cite de Paris [...]*, Paris 1549



6 Cybele with her divine children. Donation of the City of Paris, in: *L'ordre et forme qui a este tenu au sacre [et] couronnement de tres-haute ... princesse Madame Elizabeth d'Austriche roine de France: faict en l'eglise de l'abbaye Saint Denis en France le vingt cinquiesme iour de mars, 1571*

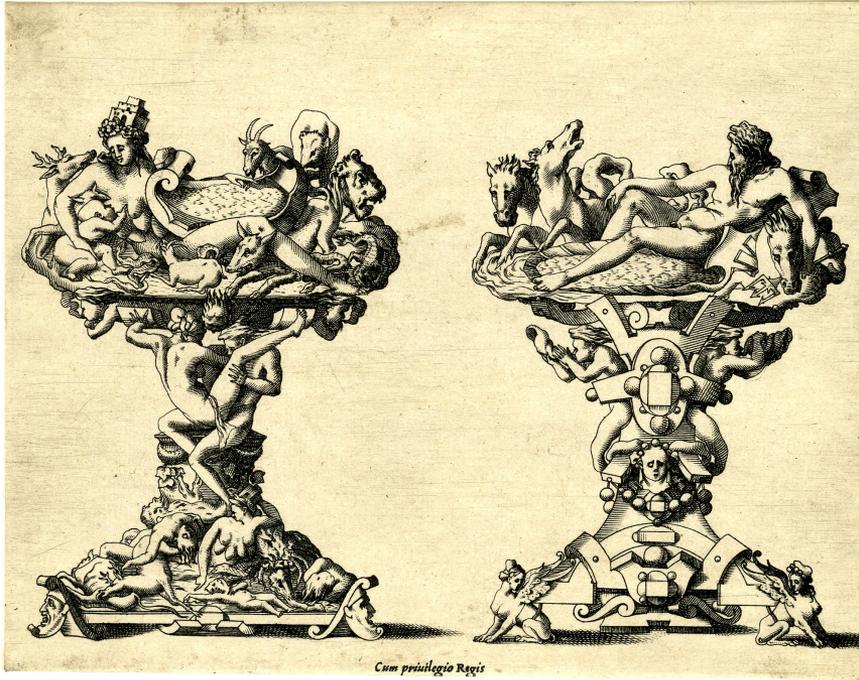
“L'antique Cybele, gloire produict aux Dieux,
Et preste abondamment substance à la nature:
Moy Gaule, ie produy honneur et nourriture
Au Roy, à ses subiects, et homes de tous lieux.
Puis en l'autre y avoit,
Flore promet par son mari Zephyre
De fruicts et fleurs heureux evenement.
Le Roy promet par son advenement
Le vray bon heur ou toute France aspire”³³.

Cybele is mentioned as well at the Entrée of Troyes in 1564.³⁴ During the Entrée of Charles IX and Elizabeth of Austria in 1571, the city of Paris donated a golden statuary group of Cybele with her divine children on a chariot pulled by lions as allusion to “la Roine mere du Roy” (fig. 6).³⁵ The mythological staging of Catharina de' Medici as Cybele was a very common motif in courtly literature as well. Ronsard wrote on several opportunities about the Queen of France and her mythological role model, the goddess Cybele. In his Ode to the Queen entitled *Pour la Royne de France* from 1559 Catharina de' Medici is characterized as “une autre mere Cybelle” and in his uncompleted *Franciade*, the role of Cybele as a prefiguration of the French queen

is described in several stanzas.³⁶ Here, Jupiter prefigures Francus, who has to be protected from the Greeks.³⁷ For the viewer, this mythological-allegorical relation was present mainly in court festivals as in *Entrées solennelles*. Such allusions to the Queen can be found at the entry to Paris in 1549, to Bayonne in 1564, but also 1571.

Rebecca Zorach has already pointed to the significance of the mythological figure of Cybele as symbol of fertility and the relationship between this earthbound goddess, personified nature and Gaul: It is not only the splendid entry of 1549 where the figure with three towers on its crown is presented as *Gallia fertilis*.³⁸ In sixteenth-century France, the viewer is confronted with the figure of *Gallia fertilis* in various contexts. We remember that the earthbound goddess can be seen on Benvenuto Cellini's *Saliera* – here under the name *Berecynthia*. It may be noticed that the position of this lying female figure is in some ways analogous to our painting in Potsdam.³⁹ An engraving from René Boyvin after a drawing of Léonard Thiry indicates the popularity of the figure of Cybele/Berecynthia (fig. 7).⁴⁰ Furthermore, several engravings based on designs by Giulio Romano for the Palazzo del Te in Mantua, transmit motifs that can also be seen in the Potsdam painting.⁴¹

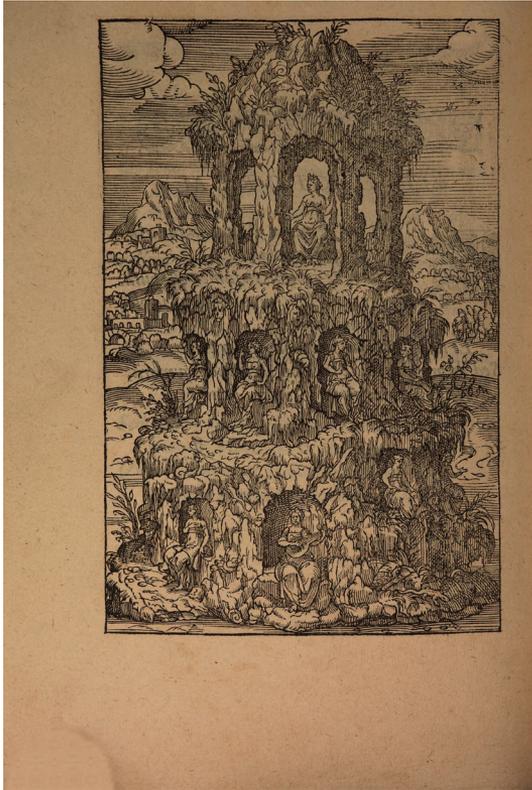
The mythological-allegorical components of the Potsdam painting are not accidental: Several entry ceremonies give a prominent place to this earthbound goddess with her many faces. If the



7 Covered cup, René Boyvin after a drawing of Léonard Thiry

lying figure in the foreground of the painting in Potsdam can be interpreted as Cybele, it seems probable that other elements in the composition may refer to mythological elements located on mount Ida. So, the female figures playing instruments around the child may be read as an allusion to the corybants who played music in order to make such noise that Saturn did not hear the cries of the infant.⁴² It is, we remember, also on mount Ida where the roots of the Trojans are to be found. So, the mother-goddess prominently arranged in this painting might also be interpreted as an allegory of place. Admittedly, the interpretation of the allegory becomes speculative for the modern viewer.⁴³ Hence, the topographical conditioning of a contemporary viewer might offer a solution.

The composition in different groups allows a complex mythological interpretive potential, but keeps its ambiguity and simultaneity. In fact, the Potsdam painting reveals several parallels to the eclectic use of mythology and the allegory structure of the Pléiade poets. At the same time, the irritation of the undisguised presentation of female bodies awakens an interpretative potential of this image, which updates old habits of seeing for its own purposes. The barely comprehensible complexity in the allegorical picture mode is invigorated through sensuality. Thus, the painting seems to confirm: "Painting is naked poetry", as Petro Mexya formulated in 1540.⁴⁴ To read them, to become master of the allegorical-mythological disorder, obviously takes some time – the entanglement of various sources, the citation of certain forms, all of which evoke a complexity that seems worthy even of Ronsard's pictorial creativity. From the perspective of this Potsdam picture, many other examples from the school of Fontainebleau assume new meanings. The compounded significance of Cybele as Goddess, the personification of Nature and of *Gallia fertilis* is a perfect example for the boundaries of allegory in sixteenth-century France. The earthbound goddess was



8 *Gallia fertilis*, in: Jean Dorat, *Magnificentissimi spectaculi a regina regum matre in hortis suburbanis editi, in Henrici regis Poloniae ... nuper renunciati gratulationem, descriptio*, Paris 1573

nymph Gallica appears. This eroticized figure describes herself as god's oldest daughter: "Je suis des Dieux la fille aînée / De cent Lauriers enuironnée, La bonne Nympe des François, Qui d'armes et d'hommes feconde, Ay tousiours fait trembler le monde Sous la puissance de mes lois. Mon heur ne porte point d'enuie A l'Afrique ny à l'Asi, Tant abondante ie me voy En chasteaux, en ports, et en villes: Et mes terres sont si fertiles, Que les Cieux sont ialoux de moy. C'est moy qui ay donné naissance A tant de Monarques de France, A Clovis, à Charles le grand, Et à ce Charles que l'honore, Qui me commande, et qui redore Ce siècle, qui de luy depend. Sous luy ie me voy bien traittée, Sous luy ma gloire est augmentee Sous luy j'ay reueu la claret Par la conduite de sa mere [...]"⁴⁷

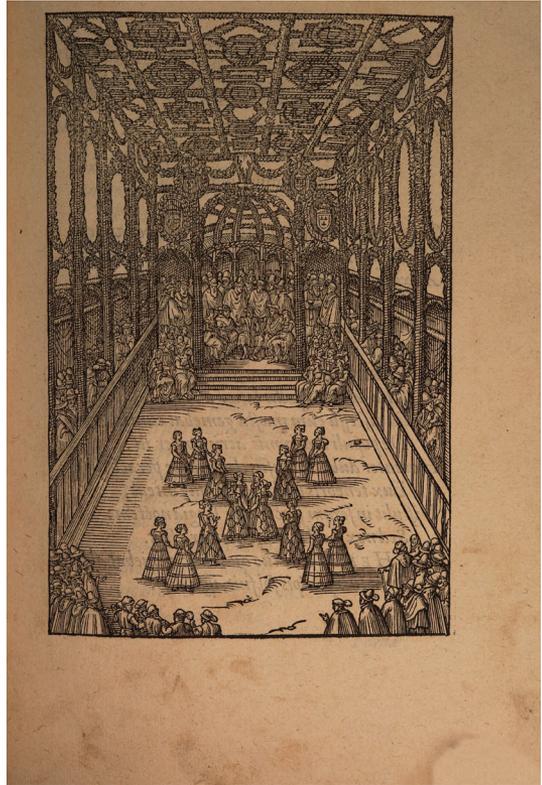
After the presentation of further nymphs which personify the provinces of France, an ephemeral mountain is installed in the room, where all sixteen nymphs are assembled – at the top of this construction sits *Gallica*.⁴⁸ In the following performance, this nymph sings hymns written by Ronsard for about an hour.⁴⁹ An extended *Montis nympharum descriptio* follows a self-presentation of the nymph *Gallica* and contains a panegyric to Catharina de' Medici, who in the same text is compared to the goddess Cybele. Moreover, her son, the king, is addressed as Jupiter. The complex iconography is presented with remarkable technical effort. An artificial mountain was erected in a pavillon in the Tuileries, and, as sources testify, six strongmen (invisible to the audience) moved

a very popular and multifaceted theme that emerged in art and literature – under different names and varying forms. Given that an allegorical painting can also be a subversive topographical allegory, the same conflation can also be assumed for other examples of the School of Fontainebleau, if we follow the interpretation of Rebecca Zorach, who links the famous portrait of the Estrée-Sisters to the allegorical figure of *Gallia fertilis*. Zorach proposes that the enigmatic nakedness of the two figures can be read as an allegory of France.⁴⁵

So, if we consider the visual experience of a contemporary beholder, the prominent naked women in the foreground of our painting from Potsdam might function as a mythological figure of the goddess Cybele on mount Ida, but also as an allegory of *Gallia fertilis*. As the ancient Goddess, the artificial figure of *Gallia fertilis* needs a place – or better: a realm or kingdom. Previous examples portray Gallia personified seated on a mountain, as seen in the year 1573 (Fig. 8).⁴⁶ During a ballet performed at the court of Catherina de' Medici on the occasion of Henri III's accession to the French throne, the

this ephemeral building across the stage.⁵⁰ The female figures mentioned in this festivity were performing dances in the 'sale' (fig. 9). The attractiveness of the women performing as nymphs is stressed in several sources.⁵¹ However, the examples of the court ballet from 1573 shows that the complex mythological allusions must have been very common within the court society. The allegorical complexity or even disorder of our picture can be understood as a parallel phenomenon to literary concepts of allegory as the Pléiade authors and first and foremost Ronsard demonstrate in their writings. However, even in this context, the 'erotic naturalism' of the female personifications irritates the beholder and indicates a new concept of allegorical bodies that varies between the properties of goddesses, nymphs, personifications and historical persons.

Our example also reflects topography (fig. 1). The details of this enigmatic composition with its irritating erotic appeal are discernible only for those beholders who are fully aware of the mythological-allegorical dimensions of the painting. For them it was tempting to interpret the scene as an allegory of *Gallia fertilis*. This knowledge was mediated by festivities and ephemeral activities in several urban spaces of Gallia-Francia. If we consider this in relation to the painting, it becomes clear that such an image eternalizes the idea of *Gallia fertilis* as descendant of Francus and mount Ida and at the same time was understandable exclusively in the topographical frame of France. Beyond the borders of France, beyond the limits of the French court festivities which have established this iconography, the viewers would not and could not recognize *Gallia fertilis* – they see only ten naked women and an infant in this painting.



9 *Nymphes dancing*, in: Jean Dorat, *Magnificentissimi spectaculi a regina regum matre in hortis suburbanis editi, in Henrici regis Poloniae ... nuper renunciati gratulationem, descriptio*, Paris 1573

Notes

- I would like to thank Erin Giffin for very helpful comments and support.
- 1 Remy de Belleau, *Les Odes d'Anacreon Teien, poete grec; Avec quelques petites Hymnes de son invention, et autres diverses poesies: Ensemble une Comedie*, Paris 1578, p. 35. On this citation, see Françoise Joukovsky, *Le bel objet: Le paradis artificiels de la Pléiade*, Paris 1991, p. 62.
 - 2 The painting is not mentioned in several catalogues about sixteenth-century French art as *L'École de Fontainebleau. Catalogue d'exposition*, ed. by Sylvie Béguin, Paris 1972, neither in further publications – see Henri Zerner, *L'art de la Renaissance en France: l'invention du classicisme*, Paris 1996; *Renaissance en France, renaissance française? Actes du colloque Les Arts visuels de la Renaissance en France (XV^e–XVI^e siècles)*, ed. by Henri Zerner and Marc Bayard, Rome, Villa Médicis 7–9 juin 2007, Rom/Paris 2009; *Fontainebleau et son rayonnement* (Peindre en France à la Renaissance 2), ed. by Frédéric Elsig, Milano 2012.
 - 3 Bildergalerie Potsdam, GK I 5040, Oil on wood, 91 × 125 cm. J.G. Puhlmann, *Description des Tableaux qui se trouvent dans la Galerie du Château royal à Berlin*, Berlin 1790 interprets this painting as the birth of a prince of France. The painting is part of the galerie since 1763. Götz Eckhart, *Die Gemälde der Bildergalerie von Sanssouci*, Potsdam 1975, p. 39, no. 79. After World War II it was located in the UDSSR, until 1964 when it was brought back to Potsdam. *Die Bildergalerie in Sanssouci; Bauwerk, Sammlung, und Restaurierung. Festschrift zur Wiedereröffnung 1996*, ed. by Claudia Sommer, Geneva 1996, p. 242, mentions an engraving from J. G. Seuter who documented the painting in 1770.
 - 4 Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, Oxford 1988.
 - 5 Colin Eisler, *Meisterwerke in Berlin. Die Gemälde vom Mittelalter zur Moderne*, Cologne/Ostfildern 1999, pp. 155 and 158.
 - 6 Eckhart 1975 (as note 3), p. 39.
 - 7 A relationship to the paintings of Jacob de Backer can be assumed, see Eckhard Leuschner, “Defining De Backer. New Evidence on the Last Phase of Antwerp Mannerism before Rubens”, in: *Gazette des beaux-arts* 6/137 (2001), pp. 167–192. See also Hans Kaufmann, “Der Manierismus in Holland und die Schule von Fontainebleau”, in: *Jahrbuch der preußischen Kunstsammlungen* 44 (1923), pp. 184–204.
 - 8 The variety of wreaths and flowers in this painting might also be interpreted as a poetical allusion – it is Ronsard who in his poetry emphasizes the various colours and material in painting, comparing it to a bouquet of flowers, as in *La defloration de Lede*, “Paint de diverses couleurs,/Et paint de diverse sorte” – see Roberto E. Campo, *Ronsard's Contentious Sisters. The Paragone between Poetry and Painting in the Works of Pierre de Ronsard*, Chapel Hill 1998, p. 126. See Elizabeth Hyde, *Cultivated Power: Flowers, Culture and Politics in the Reign of Louis XIV*, Philadelphia 2005, pp. 112f, who describes the significance of flowers as shown in several paintings of Flora personified (for example by Primaticcio). An engraving from Giulio Bonasone after a design of Giulio Romano for Mantua, Palazzo del Tè, Sala dei venti, shows similar motifs: Wreaths are handed over, Flora and various nymphs are depicted in the picture. In particular, the reclining figure in the foreground is reminiscent of the Potsdam painting (see <https://www.rct.uk/collection/search#/14/collection/851831/the-wreath>; 17th September 2021).
 - 9 At least the woman in the middle with the darker skin seems to be copied by Marten van Heemskerck's *Judgement of Paris*, from ca. 1545–1550, today in Amsterdam, Miep and Loek Brons Collection. See for further examples Laura Kopp, *Das Urteil des Paris. Eine ikonologische Untersuchung des Paris-Mythos in den Niederlanden des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Karlsruhe 2017, Hubert Damisch, *Le jugement de Paris*, Paris 2011. Also Marcantonio Raimondi represents Minerva as the only back figure in an engraving from 1517/1520, after a drawing from Raffael. The motif of the Judgement of Paris was often linked to the three graces as an opportunity to display female beauty, see Alexander Nagel, “Art as Gift: Liberal Art and Religious Reform in the Renaissance”, in: *Negotiating the Gift. Pre-modern Figurations of Exchange*, ed. by Gadi Algazi, Valentin Groebner and Bernhard Jussen, Göttingen 2003, pp. 319–360, here p. 348.
 - 10 Rebecca Zorach, *Blood – Milk – Ink – Gold. Abundance and Excess in the French Renaissance*, Chicago 2005, p. 114, mentions as a common motif in entrance ceremonies the horn of Almathea as “a learned name for a cornucopia, specifically the miraculous horn of plenty that nourished Jupiter after he was hidden from his cannibalistic father.” Vincenzo Cartari, who was translated into French in 1581 by Antoine de Verdier, gives several details about the appearance and ancient sources about Juno and the other goddesses – Vincenzo Cartari, *Les Images des dieux des anciens, contenant les idoles, costumes, cérémonies et autres choses appartenans à la religion des payens, recueillies en italien par le sieur Vincent Cartari,... et traduites en françois, et augmentées par Antoine Du Verdier, seigneur de Vauprivas, etc., augmenté en cette édition de la généalogie et origine d'iceux* (par E. Laplonce-Richette), Lyon 1610, and Guillaume Du Choul, *Discours de la religion des anciens Romains... illustré d'un grand nombre de medailles et de plusieurs belles figures retirées des marbres antiques, qui se trouvent à Rome et par nostre Gaule*, Lyon 1556, p. 47, shows some Roman coins with Juno, attributed by a peacock and a wreath. R. D. Weigel, “The Duplication of Temples of Juno Regina in Rome”, in: *Ancient Society* 13/14 (1982/83), pp. 179–192, here p. 181, mentions roman coins with a representation of Juno as Juno Pronuba or Juno Regina with cornucopia or peacock. But beyond a specific attribute, the cornucopia can be read as an ubiquitous symbol in sixteenth-century France, as Zorach shows in her study. However, in a sketchbook of Frans Floris, a figure of Juno Pronuba with a cornucopia can be found as well, see Carl van de Velde, “A Roman Sketchbook of Frans Floris”, in: *Master Drawings* 7/3 (1969), pp. 255–286; 312–326, here p. 266.

- 11 Judy Kern, *Jean Lemaire de Belge's Les illustrations de Gaule et singularitez de Troye: The Trojan legend in the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance*, New York 1994, p. 67, referring to Jean Lemaire de Belges, *Les Illustrations de Gaule et Singularitez de Troye de Jean Lemaire de Belges and his passage about the judgement of Paris*: "Qui veult tirer ceste matiere a sens moral, on la peult appliquer a l'instruction et doctrine d'un chacun jeune Prince de maison Royale." See also Françoise Joukovsky, *Paysages de la Renaissance*, Paris 1974, p. 45; Laurence Gavarini, *La distance pastorale: usages politiques de la representation des bergers (XVIe–XVIIe siècles)*, Paris 2010, p. 48. In the context of royal image politics, the three goddesses are found in allegorical portraits with Elizabeth I, as in a painting of Hans Eworth representing a triumph of Elizabeth I over Venus, Juno and Minerva from 1569, today in the Royal Collection, Hampton Court Palace. See Helen Hackett, "A New Image of Elizabeth I. The Three Goddesses Theme in Art and Literature", in: *Huntington Library Quarterly* 77/3 (2014), pp. 225–256. – Also other mythological allusions might be connected to the three women, see Malcolm Quainton, *Ronsard's Ordered Chaos: Visions of Flux and Stability in the Poetry of Ronsard*, Manchester 1980, p. 209, mentions the motif of the three Parques in several works of Ronsard, especially in relationship to the King (or Dauphin), Ronsard assembles the Parcae around the cradle of Charles IX.
- 12 Harry B. Wehle, "A Painting of the Fontainebleau School", in: *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 37/2 (1942), pp. 25 and 27–30.
- 13 Wehle 1942 (as note 12), p. 30.
- 14 See Katherine Crawford, *The Sexual Culture of the French Renaissance*, Cambridge 2010; Robert D. Cottrell, *Brantôme. The writer as portraitist of his age*, Geneva 1970.
- 15 Campo 1998 (as note 8). For the relationship of Ronsard and Du Bellay to art, see Margaret McGowan, *Ideal Forms in the Age of Ronsard*, Berkeley 1985; *Ronsard: la trompette et la lyre*: [Paris] Bibliothèque nationale, [12 juin – 15 septembre] 1985; Philip Ford, "Ronsard the Painter: A Reading of 'Des Peintures contenues dedans un tableau'", in: *French Studies* 40 (1986), pp. 32–44. Philip Ford, *Ronsard's Hymnes: a literary and iconographical study* (Medieval and Renaissance text and studies 157), Tempe 1997. Another important purpose of these comparisons with the gods was the judgement of feminine beauty, because in contrast to the bloodless personifications [not sure what you mean here] that dominated the visual arts in the decades before, the masks of ancient figures could convey a certain sensuality. Numerous comparisons of the beauty of the Queen of Navarre with Venus, written by Ronsard and others, use this association.
- 16 Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier, "Women on Top at Fontainebleau", in: *Oxford Art Journal* 16/1 (1993), pp. 34–48
- 17 Agnolo Firenzuola, *Dialogo delle bellezze delle Donne*, Venedig 1552 [Florence 1548], fol. 25v: "Se ella balla ha Venere in compagnia". The first French translation appeared in 1578.
- 18 We could also think about the frescoes at Château de Tanlay, where members of the French court are presented as nude gods and goddesses – especially the female figures are copied after current engravings, for example the series of the gods in niches by Guiseppe Caraglio.
- 19 François de la Noue, *Discours politiques et militaires*, Repr. F. E. Sutcliffe, Geneva 1967, p. 182, Discours VII: "Quand vous vous promenez au Palais de Paris, & passez devant les boutiques des peintres, vous-vous arrêtez bien deux heures à contempler quelque belle peinture, qui y sera deployee, ce qui vous induit souvent à louer l'ouvrage & l'ouvrier. Beaucoup plus devriez-vous faire le semblable en ce beau pourtrait de vous mesmes, revestu de tant d'ornemens, de crainte que l'ignorance ou la legereté ne vous face accuser le souverain peintre, qui donne à chacune de ses oeuvres la perfection qui luy est propre & convenable. Et comme c'est luy qui a formé les rois & les princes, que le vulgaire va adorant, aussi de la mesme main a-il moulé ceux que la pauvreté travaille; laquelle diversité si disproportionnée n'empesche pas que le vaisseau de terre ne soit aussi utile, pour son bas & mécanique usage, que celui d'or trespur, & bien élaboré, pour le sien haut & magnifique."
- 20 Especially in printmaking, this ambiguity of motifs and iconographies can be observed – see Henri Zerner, *École de Fontainebleau, Gravures*, Paris 1969; Catherine Jenkins, *Prints at the Court of Fontainebleau*, 3 volumes, Ouderkerk aan den IJssel 2017.
- 21 Pierre Ronsard, "Franciade", in: i.d., *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. by Paul Laumonier, vol. 16, Paris 1950, p. 29. About the role of Ronsard's Franciade see Philip John Usher, *Epic Arts in Renaissance France*, New York 2014, p. 120–159. See also Barbara Hochstetler Meyer, "Marguerite de Navarre and the Androgynous Portrait of François Ier", in: *Renaissance Quarterly* 48/2 (1995), pp. 287–325, here p. 299.
- 22 Philip John Usher refers to Goujons Façade of the Louvre and its representation of Calliope, which seems to be a reference to Ronsard's work. See Usher 2014 (as note 21), p. 129. Usher mentions a conversation of Lescot and the king, describing the muse Calliope in context of Goujons work.
- 23 A Sonnet by Jean Dorat also mentions similar motifs, see his "Paeon ou Chant Triumphal sur la victoire de Charles Neuviesme Roy de France. France, et le Poëte chantent par refrain", in: *Renaissance Latin Poetry*, ed. by Ian Dalrymple McFarlane, Manchester 1980, pp. 171 and 174: "Iupiter ut tu alter, sic est tua, Carole, mater altera nunc Cybele, genetrix fecunda deorum: cuius consilii tot monstra rebellia vincis."
- 24 For earlier examples of France see Thierry Lassabatère, "La personification de la France dans la littérature française du Moyen Âge. Autour d'Eustache Deschamps et Christine de Pizan", in: *Contexts and Continuities. Proceedings of the IVth International Colloquium on Christine de Pizan (Glasgow 21–27 July 2000)* Published in Honour of Liliane Dulac, ed. by Angus J Kennedy et al., vol. 2, Glasgow 2002, pp. 483–504.

- 25 Jean Thénaud, *Triomphe des Vertuz*, BNF, Ms. fr. 144, fol. 1r. About Dame France see Gilbert Cadoffre and Jean Céard, *La révolution culturelle dans la France des humanistes: Guillaume Budé et François Ier*, Geneva 1997, p. 39.
- 26 Jean Thenaud, *Le Triomphe des Vertuz*, vol. 3: *Le Triomphe de Justice*, ed. by Titia Schuurts-Janssen, Geneva 2007, p. 14: "Description de Nature: Ceste avoir la teste coronee destoilles entre lesquelles sept estoient tresclaires que par leur lumiere les autres estoient presque eklipsees. Soubz celle coronne avoit en son chief ung fin voile de couleur changeant ou quel estoient peinctz plus de deux cens espees doyseaux qui sembloient voler soy coubler chanter."
- 27 Catherine Crawford, "Catherine de Medici and the Performance of Political Motherhood", in: *Sixteenth Century Journal* 31/3 (2000), pp. 643–673, describes the female roles at court that seemed appropriate for Catherine de Medici.
- 28 Stephen Murphy, "Catherine, Cybele, and Ronsard's Witnesses", in: *High Anxiety: Masculinity in Crisis in Early Modern France*, ed. by Kathleen Long, Kirksville 2002, pp. 55–70. Una McLivenna, *Scandal and Reputation at the Court of Catherine de Medici*, New York 2016; Isidore Silver, *Ronsard and the Hellenic Renaissance in France*, vol. 2, Geneva 1985, p. 43–45. Ewa Kociszewska, "War and Seduction in Cybele's Garden: Contextualizing the Ballet des Polonais", in: *Renaissance Quarterly* 65/3 (2012), pp. 809–863. – The French translation of Vincenzo Cartari, *Les Images des dieux des anciens* (as note 10), p. 271 mentions for the Goddess Ops/Berecynthia: "Les anciens faisoient aussi à ceste Deesse, des chapelets et couronnes de chesne, pource que iadis les hommes vivoient de la gland qu'elle produit, comme auiourd'huy ils se nourrissent du bled, et des autres fruicts qu'elle mesme apporte. Lon faisoit aussi les ghirlandes, et chapelets des rameaux du Pin, pource que cest arbre estoit consacré à icelle [...]". This passage could be aligned with the cornucopia and the wreaths offered. See also Giglio Gregorio Giraldi, *De Deis Gentium [gentium] uaria [varia] & multiplex Historia: Libris siue Syntagmatibus XVII comprehensa: in qua simul de eorum imaginibus & cognominibus agitur, plurima[que] etiam hactenus multis ignota explicantur, & pleraque clarius tractantur*, Basle 1560, pp. 134–137.
- 29 The entry from 1549 also stresses mount Ida and – in that case – the special role of Minerva, see Lawrence Bryant, *The King and the City in Parisian Royal Entry Ceremony: Politics, Ritual and Art in the Renaissance*, Geneva 1986, p. 123. Bryant mentions Edgar Wind who labeled this scene of the judgement of Paris as "a fixed formula of Renaissance euphuism" (see Bryant, p. 123, note 88). As Bryant emphasizes, the judgement of Paris became "the source of highest wisdom".
- 30 See Gerhart von Graevenitz, *Mythos. Zur Geschichte einer Denkgewohnheit*, Stuttgart 1987, p. 146. Graevenitz describes the development of the idea of *Gallia fertilis* in the tableaux at the Fontaine du Ponceau – a motif that is also used in 1571 during the Entrée.
- 31 *C'est l'ordre qui a este tenu a la nouvelle et ioyeuse entrée, que treshault, tresexcellent, et trespuissant Prince, le Roy tresbrestien Henry deuzieme de ce nom à faite en sa bonne ville et cite de Paris [...]*, Paris, Jehan Dallier 1549, fol. 27v, "Sur le piedestal de celle du milieu iaspe comme ses collateraux seoit une Minerve de relief tant exquise en sa forme, que si elle eust este telle en Ida, le berger Phrygien n'eust adiuagé la pomme d'or à Venus: Toutefois elle estpot vestue en deesse digne de grande veneration. dessous ses pieds avoit un tas de livres pour donner à entendre qu'elle est tresoriere de science: et de sa main gauche espraingnoit sa mamelle droite dont il sortoit du lait, signifiant la douceur qui provient des bonnes lettres [...]".
- 32 Zorach 2005 (as note 10), p. 125, describes the difficulty of the self-representation of Catherine de Medici: "It is a little wonder that Catherine was at such pains to depict herself as the personification of France." About the figure of *Gallia fertilis* at the Entrée to Paris 1549 see Bryant 1986 (as note 29), p. 160; Robert W. Berger, *Public Access to Art in Paris: A Documentary History from the Middle Ages to 1800*, Pennsylvania 1999, p. 42.
- 33 *C'est l'ordre qui a este tenu [...]*, Paris 1549 (as note 31), fol. 9r; Luisa Capodiecì, "Sic itur ad astra. Narration, Figures Célestes et Platonisme dans les Entrées d'Henri II (Reims 1547, Lyon 1548, Paris 1549, Rouen 1550)", in: *French Ceremonial Entries in the Sixteenth Century: Event, Image, Text*, ed. by Nicolas Russel and Hélène Visentin, Toronto 2007, pp. 73–109, here p. 87.
- 34 Jean Passerat, *Chant d'allegresse pour l'entree de tres chrestien, treshault, trespuissant, Tresexcellent, Tresmagnanime, et Tresvictorieux Prince Charles IX de ce nom, Roi de France, en sa ville de Troie*, 1564. p. A II: "Quand Cybele du tout desploie sa richesse: Et que l'on oit du ciel les temples azurés [...]".
- 35 See Susan Saward, *The Golden Age of Marie de Medici*, Ann Arbor 1982, p. 279 and Bryant 1986 (as note 29), p. 33, note 50. This donation is described in the festival book from 1571, Simon Bouquet, Estienne Pasquer: *C'est l'ordre et forme qui a este tenu au sacre [et] couronnement de tres-haute ... princesse Madame Elizabet d'Austriche roine de France: fait en l'eglise de l'abbaye Sainct Denis en France le vingt cinquiesme iour de mars, 1571*, Paris, Olivier Cordoré, 1572, n. p.: "C'estoit un grand pied d'estail soutenu par quatre Daulphins, sur lequel estoit erigé un chariot triomphant, embelly de plusieurs ornementz, et enrichissementz, trainné par deux Lions aians les armoiries de la ville au col. Dans ce chariot estoit assize Cibelle mere des Dieux, representant la Roine mere du Roy, accompagnée des Dieux Neptune, et Pluton, et deesse Junon, representans Messeigneurs frere et Madame seur du Roy. Ceste Cibelle regardoit un Iuppiter, representant nostre Roy esleuë sur deux colonnes, l'une d'or et l'autre d'argent, avec l'inscription de sa devise, Pietate et Iusticia. Sus lequel estoit une grande coronne Imperiale, soutenue d'un costé par le bec d'un Aigle posé sur la croupe d'un cheval sur lequel il estoit monté. Et de l'autre costé du sceptre qu'io tenoit, et ce comme estant deifié. [...]". In the inscriptions, Cybele is also named Berecynthia.

- 36 Isidore Silver, *Ronsard and the Hellenic Renaissance in France*, Geneva 1987, p. 139; Usher 2014 (as note 21), p. 143, mentions the *Franciade* with further descriptions of Cybele in the context of the French court, referring to Ronsard, *Franciade*, I, pp. 393–416.
- 37 See Denis Bjaï, *La Franciade sur le métier: Ronsard et la pratique du poème heroïque*, Geneva 2001, p. 102.
- 38 Zorach 2005 (as note 10), p. 105; Luisa Capodiecì, *Medicæa Medæa. Art, astres et pouvoir à la cour de Catherine de Médicis*, Geneva 2011, p. 434; Bryant 1986 (as note 29), p. 160. Ian Dalrymple McFarlane, *The Entry of Henri II into Paris, 16 June 1549*, Birmingham/New York 1982, p. 33, emphasizes that in Parisian entrance ceremonies, there is always a tendency of binary organization of themes and figures.
- 39 For Cellini's saltcellar see Bertrand Jestaz, "Benvenuto Cellini et la cour de France (1540–1545)", in: *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 161/1 (2003), pp. 71–132, here p. 96; Christine Tauber, Manierismus und Herrschaftspraxis. *Die Kunst der Politik und die Kunstpolitik am Hof von François Ier* (Studien aus dem Warburg-Haus 10), Berlin 2009, pp.171-177; Gabriele Helke, "Prekäre Balance. Der König und la Dame France", in: *Cellinis Saliera. Die Biographie eines Kunstwerks*, ed. by Rainer Paulus and Sabine Haag, Vienna 2018, pp. 159–178. For the similarities of Berecynthia and Cybele, there are several examples in literature, see John C. Lapp, "Mythological Imagery in Du Bellay", in: *Studies in Philology* 61/2 (1964), pp. 109–127, here 125.
- 40 Zorach 2005 (as note 10), p. 94. Also Guillaume du Choul describes the cult of Cybele (and Attis) and mentions several medals located in Reims, see Zorach, p. 101. – Joachim Du Bellay mentions the mother goddess under the name Cybele in a sonnet in his *Antiquitez de Rome*, see Barbara Vinken, *Du Bellay und Petrarca: Das Rom der Renaissance*, Tübingen 2001, p. 218; Deborah Lesko, "Baker du Bellay's Double Eternity: Two Sonnets from the 'Antiquitez de Rome'", in: *Neophilologus* 73/3 (1989), pp. 350–357.
- 41 An engraving by the Master of the Die from the first half of the 16th century (after Giulio Romano) shows Cybele on her chariot with several fertility symbols, cornucopia etc. (<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/396171>; 17th September 2021), and so does the allegory of birth in an engraving of Giorgio Ghisi after Giulio Romano's design for the Loggia della Grotta in Mantua, showing Cybele with the newborn child (<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/367538>; 17th September 2021). This engraving was produced for the French King (cum privilegio regis) in 1558, see Suzanne Boorsch, *The engravings of Giorgio Ghisi, Catalogue raisonné by Michal and R. E. Lewis*, New York 1985, p. 107. On the influence of the court in Mantua on Fontainebleau et al. see Tauber 2009 (as note 39), p. 196; pp.319-327.
- 42 This motif is to be found in the *Franciade* as well; Pierre Ronsard, "Franciade", in: i.d., *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. by Paul Laumonier, vol. 16, Paris 1950, p. 139: "Sa femme Rhée à l'autre bord estoit/ Qui pour son fils un caillou presentoit A ce vieillard, les appas de son ventre/ Dessous ses pieds se herissoit un antre/ Où Jupiter vivoit emmailloté,/ Du laict divin de la Chievre allaitté:/ Autour du bers les anciennes races/ Des Corybans, bien armez de cuiraces, /Targes, boucliers, se choquans d'un grand son/ Rendoient sans bruit la voix de l'enfançon,/ Craignant Saturne, affamé de nature,/ Qui ses enfans devoit pour pasture." Some of these motifs also appear in Giulio Romano's Sala di Giove in Mantua, see also Larry Keith, "Giulio Romano and 'The Birth of Jupiter': Studio Practice and Reputation", in: *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 24 (2003), pp 38–49.
- 43 If the painting can be interpreted as an allusion to Catherine de Medici, there would be another possibility to contextualize the Dauphin, surrounded by musicians. Ronsard describes – considering the education of noble kings, those who let "nourrir leurs enfants en la maison des Musiciens" – in allusion to the education of Achilles with Kheiron. In this case, the Galerie of Fontainebleau offers an iconographical example. See Jeanice Brooks, *Courty Song in Late Sixteenth-Century France*, Chicago 2000, p. 140.
- 44 Pedro Mexia, *Silva de varia lexiòn*, Sevilla 1540, fol. 152r, related to the 'imitatio naturæ'. – Christine Pigné, *De la fantaisie chez Ronsard*, Geneva 2009, p. 251, describes how Ronsard interprets painting as a measure for lovesickness.
- 45 Zorach 2005 (as note 10), p. 124.
- 46 Jean Dorat, *Magnificentissimi spectaculi a regina regum matre in hortis suburbanis editi, in Henrici regis Poloniae ... nuper renunciati gratulationem, descriptio*, Paris 1573, about this event see Ewa Kociszewska, "War and Seduction in Cybele's Garden: Contextualizing the 'Ballet des Polonais'", in: *Renaissance Quarterly* 65/3 (2012), pp. 809–863.
- 47 Jean Dorat (as note 46). The mountain where Gallica is enthroned was designed by Bernard Palissy. The engraving shows the nymph on top of the mountain while in the text it was Henry III with the lyre of the gallic Apollo, see Léonard N. Amico, *À la recherche du paradis terrestre. Bernard Palissy et ses continuateurs*, Paris 1996, p. 80. – A personification of France is also described by Estienne Jodelle, *Le Recueil des inscriptions, figures, devises et mascarades ordonnées en l'hostel de ville à Paris, le... 17 de février 1558. Autres inscriptions en vers héroïques latins, pour les images des princes de la chrestienté*, Paris 1558, p. 7.
- 48 Jean Dorat (as note 46).
- 49 As Kociszewska 2012 (as note 46), p. 816, describes, the part of Gallica was sung by a castrato.
- 50 Kociszewska 2012 (as note 46), p. 816.
- 51 Kociszewska 2012 (as note 46), p. 831: "The allegorical illustration of the Mountain of Nymphs presents voluptuous female bodies covered by sheer textiles exposing breasts, bellies and legs."

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- Fig. 1: *Allegory of the Birth of the Dauphin*, GK I 5040, Oil on wood, 91 × 125 cm; © Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg / Photo: Roland Handrick
- Fig. 2: Master of Flora, *Birth of Cupido*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 4148, Oil on wood, 108 × 130,5 cm; © Metropolitan Museum of Art
- Fig. 3: *Birth of the Dauphin*, in: Jean Thénaud, *Triumphe des Vertuz*, BNF; Ms. fr. 144, fol. 1r; © BNF
- Fig. 4: *Minerva*, in: *La nouvelle et ioyeuse entrée, que treshault, tresexcellent, et trespouissant Prince, le Roy treschrestien Henry deuzieme de ce nom à faicte en sa bonne ville et cite de Paris [...]*, Paris 1549; © BNF
- Fig. 5: *Gallia fertilis at the Fontaine du Ponceau*, in: *La nouvelle et ioyeuse entrée, que treshault, tresexcellent, et trespouissant Prince, le Roy treschrestien Henry deuzieme de ce nom à faicte en sa bonne ville et cite de Paris [...]*, Paris 1549; © BNF
- Fig. 6: *Cybele with her divine children. Donation of the City of Paris*, in: *L'ordre et forme qui a este tenu au sacre [et] couronnement de tres-haute ... princesse Madame Elizabet d'Austriche roine de France: fait en l'eglise de l'abbaye Saint Denis en France le vingt cinquiesme iour de mars*, 1571; © British Library
- Fig. 7: Covered cup, René Boyvin after a drawing of Léonard Thiry; © British Museum
- Fig. 8: *Gallia fertilis*, in: Jean Dorat, *Magnificentissimi spectaculi a regina regum matre in hortis suburbanis editi, in Henrici regis Poloniae ... nuper renunciati gratulationem, descriptio*, Paris 1573; © Bavarian State Library, Munich
- Fig. 9: *Nymphes dancing*, in: Jean Dorat, *Magnificentissimi spectaculi a regina regum matre in hortis suburbanis editi, in Henrici regis Poloniae ... nuper renunciati gratulationem, descriptio*, Paris 1573; © Bavarian State Library, Munich

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