

Cybele. An anachronism in
**Vasari's Biography
of Michelangelo**
and its reasons.

LUIZ MARQUES

(Part I)

Michelangelo's 1505 project for Julius II's mausoleum underwent drastic reductions before it assumed the more modest and conventional form of the tomb in San Pietro in Vincoli.¹ In the absence of a contract, of a model or other unequivocal source, attempts to reconstruct the project's upper structure are primarily based on Ascanio Condivi and Giorgio Vasari, who offered divergent descriptions of it in their biographies of the sculptor,² and on a number of drawings.

The first drawing, extremely corroded, is in the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 15305 *recto*; the Museum also contains a copy, attributed to Jacopo Rocchetti. These drawings, of little value for the problem of the top level of the monument, document either an alternative design for the 1505 project, or the second (1513) stage of the project, which generally speaking is a highly modified

¹ On this project, see August Schmarsow, "Ein Entwurf Michelangelos zum Grabmal Julius II" *Jb. der Kgl. Preuss. Kunsts.*, V (1884), 63-77; Erwin Panofsky, "The First Two Projects of Michelangelo's Tomb of Julius II". *The Art Bulletin*, XIX (1937), 561-579; Karl A. Laux, *Michelangelos Juliusmonument. Ein Beitrag zur Phaenomenologie des Genies*. Berlin: E. Ebering, 1943; Herbert von Einem, "Michelangelos Juliusgrab im Entwurf von 1505 und die Frage nach seiner urspruenglichen Bestimmung." *Festschrift fuer Hanz Jantzen*, 1951, 152-68; Charles De Tolnay, *Michel-Ange* (1951), Princeton Un. Press, 1975, 69-99; Idem, *Michelangelo. IV - The Tomb of Julius II* (1954). Princeton Un. Press, 1970; Christian A. Isermeyer, "Zur Rekonstruktion des Julius-Grabes von Michelangelo". *Kunstchronik* VII (1954), 268-270; Herbert von Einem, *Michelangelo* (1959), London: Metuhen, 1973, 39-48; Goran Lindahl, "Michelangelo erster Entwurf des Juliusgrabes". *Konsthistorisch Tidskrift*, XXXII, 3-4 (1963), 65-79; Giulio C. Argan, "La Tomba di Giulio II." *Michelangelo arqitetto*, ed. by P. Portoghesi and B. Zevi. Turin, 1964, 61-94; Martin Weinberger, *Michelangelo the Sculptor*, London: Routledge, 1967, 129-152; Frederick Hartt, *Michelangelo. The Complete Sculpture*. New York: Abrams, 1968, 116-127; A. Frazer, "A numismatic Source for Michelangelo's First Design for the Tomb of Julius II." *The Art Bulletin*, LVII, 1 (1975), 53-57; Alessandro Parronchi, "Per una interpretazione della tomba di Giulio II" (1982), *L'Opera giovanile di Michelangelo*, IV, Florence: Olschki, 1992, 23-38; Claudia Echinger-Maurach, *Studien zu Michelangelos Julius-grabmal*, Hildesheim: G. Olms Verl., 1991. Paul Joannides, "La Chronologie du Tombeau de Jules II. A Propos d'un dessin de Michel-Ange découvert." *Revue du Louvre et des Musées de France*, 1991, 2, 33-42; Dominique Cordellier, "Fragments de Jeunesse: deux feuilles inédites de Michel-Ange au Louvre". *Revue du Louvre et des Musées de France*, 1991, 2, 43-55. See also the literature quoted in notes 2-12.

² Ascanio Condivi, *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti*. Rome: Antonio Blado, 1553. Ed. by Carl Frey, Berlin: W. Hertz, 1887. Giorgio Vasari, *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti*. Ed. by Paola Barocchi, Milan-Naples: Riccardo Ricciardi, 1962: 1 volume of text (1550/1568) and 4 volumes of notes (from now on *Commento*).

version of the 1505 project, especially concerning the upper register.³

The second drawing is in the New York Metropolitan Museum, Rogers Fund, 62.9.31. In 1976, Michael Hirst attributed this drawing to Michelangelo. Influenced by its clear connection to the Berlin drawings, Hirst considered it as "the record of a hitherto unknown idea of 1513."⁴ In 1988, however, he was inclined to date it 1505. Unfortunately, this drawing also fails to answer our question since it might reflect, as the author suggests, only one of the provisional solutions considered by the artist and his patron before they choose the definitive version of the project. Its elevational design and its much more strictly Christian content in no way correspond to the plan adopted in 1505 as described by Michelangelo's biographers.⁵

The third drawing belonged to the collection of Pierre J. Mariette and today is housed in the Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe 608E *recto*.⁶ [fig. 1] This drawing ought to represent the original stage of the project, but in its present state lacks the top part and so reveals little about how Michelangelo intended to crown his monument.⁷

Thanks to De Tolnay, two more documents were incorporated into the discussion. The first is a drawing by Zanobi Lastricati for Michelangelo's catafalque in San Lorenzo, Florence, kept in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana. The inscription De Tolnay reads in this drawing certifies that it is: "a free-standing rectangular catafalque, shaped like the Septzonium of [Septimius] Severus near the 'Antoniane' as it was originally designed by Michelangelo for the tomb of Julius II in San Pietro in Vincoli..."⁸ The second document is Jacopo Sansovino's drawing for the tomb of Leo X, kept in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which, according to De Tolnay, "reflects the influence of

³ Pen, 525 x 340 mm. See Echinger-Maurach, *Studien* (1991), p. 29-31, 90-96, 101-109 and 397-438; B. Berenson, *The Drawings the Florentine Painters* (1903), Chicago, 1938, Vol. I, 205-10, 351, Vol. II, n. 1623 (School of Michelangelo); De Tolnay, *Michelangelo* (1954/1970), IV, p. 14-16; Luitpold Dussler, *Die Zeichnungen des Michelangelo. Kritischer Katalog*. Berlin: Mann, 1959, p. 204, n. 374 (as apocryphal: "um 1513-1515"). If the Berlin drawing belongs to the 1505 project, after Julius II's death, "it was revived, and altered according to changed circumstances". See Frederick Hartt, *Michelangelo Drawings*. New York: Abrams, 1971, p. 62, n.45.

⁴ Pen and brown ink, brown wash over black chalk, 510 x 306 mm.

Cf. Hirst, "A Project of Michelangelo's for the Tomb of Julius II". *Master Drawings*, XIV, 4 Winter (1976), 375-82.

⁵ Hirst, *Michelangelo Draftsman*. Washington, National Gallery of Art, 1988, p. 26, n. 9. Idem, *Michelangelo and his drawings*. Yale Un. Press, 1988, p. 82. For Howard Saalman ("Concerning Michelangelo's Early Projects for the Tomb of Julius II". *Michelangelo Drawings*. Ed. by C. H. Smyth, Washington, 1988, 89-97, n.4), this drawing would belong to the third contract, ca. 1516.

⁶ Pen and wash, red chalk, 275x365 mm. For Mariette (the earliest known owner of this sheet) it belonged to the 1505 project. Schmarsow (1884) connected it to the second project and it was then attributed to Aristotile da Sangallo by P.N. Ferri, *Disegni di architettura*. Roma, 1885, p. 175. This attribution was widely accepted, but an attribution to Giovanni Battista da Sangallo was also envisaged. Berenson (1938), n. 1632, attributed it to Michelangelo's school. Dussler (*Zeichnungen*, p.233, n. 497) enrolled it among the apocryphal drawings and so did Paola Barocchi (*Michelangelo e la Sua Scuola. I disegni di Casa Buonarroti e degli Uffizi*. Florence: Olschki, Vol. I, p. 293-95, n. 244). Finally, it was attributed again to Michelangelo by Paul Joannides, "A note on the Julius Tomb 1513". *The Burlington Magazine* 113, 816, 1971, 149-50, and by De Tolnay, *Corpus dei Disegni di Michelangelo*, I, Novara, 1975, n.56. This attribution was followed by Hirst, *Master Drawings* (1976), p. 380, Idem, *Michelangelo Draftsman* (1988) p. 52, n.20, Annamaria Petrioli Tofani, *Gabinetto disegni e stampe degli Uffizi. Inventario. I. Disegni esposti*. Florence: Olschki, 1986, 270-71 and Alessandro Cecchi, in *The Genius of the Sculpture in Michelangelo's Work*. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1992, Cat. 39, p. 214-215. For Hartt, *Michelangelo Drawings* (1971), n.45A, it is just a variant of the Berlin drawing and may be a copy of an earlier idea.

⁷ This was already Mariette's and Ferri's point of view. See Ferri, apud Tofani, *Inventario*, p. 271 and De Tolnay, *Michelangelo*, IV (1954/1970), p. 17: "Thus the first reconstruction of the Tomb of 1505, in its lower portion, is already exact (since it has been shown that the Uffizi drawing reproduces the 1505 model in its lower zone); in the upper portion it is still very capricious." See also Joannides, "Chronologie" (1991), p. 39-41: "Les deux *modelli* [Berlin and Uffizi], dessinés probablement bien avant 1513 (...).

⁸ Apud De Tolnay, (1951/1975): "catafalco quadrato in isola, alla forma del Settizonio di Severo presso a[ll]e Antoniane, e come da Mich. Angelo era stato prima disegnato il Sepolcr[o] di Giulio II in San Pietro in Vincoli...". See also Lindahl (1963), p. 74 and n.23; Echinger-Maurach, *Studien*, p. 410, fig. 43.

Michelangelo's first project".⁹

Hypothetical reconstructions of this upper register are naturally part of more comprehensive studies of the 1505 project. Within the scope of these studies, modern historiography has primarily geared its efforts into three obviously interdependent directions: defining the position of the tomb in relation to the renovation of the San Pietro basilica;¹⁰ determining the morphology of the monument and its plastic decoration;¹¹ and penetrating the various strata of the symbolic meaning of its form and iconography.

In proposing to study anew what Justi called "the core of the monument"¹² - the form and the meaning of its upper level -, this paper has two objectives. First, I will demonstrate that the presence of a statue of a mourning *Cybele* supporting the pope's bier (*bara*), as it appears in Vasari's description of the tomb, is anachronistic with regard to the beginning of the sixteenth century, but appropriate to the years in which he wrote Michelangelo's biography. My second goal is to show how *Cybele* fits Vasari's approach, reexamined in light of evidence not hitherto discussed in this context.

* * *

Among the variants introduced by Vasari (1568) in Condivi's description (1553) of this project, the replacement of two angels by two mythological figures, *Cybele* and *Heaven*, has been frequently noted. In fact, according to Condivi:

"Continuing upward, the work terminated in a surface upon which there were two angels supporting a sarcophagus: one of them seemed to smile as if rejoicing that the soul of the pope had been received among the blessed spirits, the other to weep as if grieving that the world should be stripped of such a man."¹³

Vasari countered:

"At the summit, as a crown to the work, were two figures, one of which was *Heaven*, who, smiling, was supporting a bier on her shoulder, together with *Cybele*, the Goddess of Earth, who appeared to be grieving that she was left in a world robbed of all virtue by the death of such a man; and *Heaven* appeared to be smiling with gladness that his soul had passed to celestial

⁹ De Tolnay (1951/1975), p.69. For De Tolnay (IV, 1954/1970, p. 107, n. 6), Rosso's design for a tabernacle (1529) in the British Museum (PP. 2-119) and Cherubino Alberti's engraving after this drawing bring to mind Michelangelo's plans of 1516 and 1532. But they seem, as underlines Eugene A. Carrol (*The Drawings of Rosso Fiorentino*, Thesis, Harvard Un., 1964, p. 278, note 95), more dependent on Michelangelo's 1505 project. See also Carrol, *Rosso Fiorentino. Drawings, Prints, and Decorative Arts*. National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1987, p. 166.

¹⁰ See: Heinrich von Geymuller, *Die ursprüngliche Entwuerfe fuer Sanct Peter in Rom*. Vienna/Paris, 1875-1880; Christoph Luitpold Frommel, "Die Peterskirche unter Papst Julius II im Licht neuer Dokumente". *Roem. Jb. f. Kunstg.* 16 (1976), 57-136; Idem, "'Capella Iulia': Die Grabkapelle Papst Iulius II in Neu St.Peter". *Zeitschrift f. Kunstg.* 40 (1977), 26-62; E. Francia, *1506-1606. Storia della Costruzione del Nuovo San Pietro*. Roma: De Lucca, 1977; Saalman, "Concerning" (1988), 89-97.

¹¹ For a synthesis and a critical reappraisal of these endeavours, see Echinger-Maurach, *Studien* (1991).

¹² Carl Justi, *Michelangelo. Beitrage zur Erklarung der Werke und des Menschen* (1900), 2nd ed. Berlin: Grote'sche, 1922, p. 226: "Und doch war sie [die bekroenende Gruppe] die Kern des Denkmals, und die Erfindung war eine seiner kuehnsten."

¹³ *The Life of Michelangelo*. Translated by Alice S. Wohl, ed. by Hellmut Wohl, Louisiana State Un. Pr., 1976, p.33. Ed. Frey, p. 68: "Cosi ascendendo l'opera si finiva in un piano, sopra ilquale erano due agnoli, che sosteneano un'arca: uno d'essi faceua sembante di ridere, come quello che si rallegrasse, che l'anima del papa fusse tra li beati spiriti riceuta, laltro di piangere, come se si dolesse, chel mondo fusse d'un tal uomo spogliato".

glory.¹⁴

Summarizing the critical fortune of these two descriptions, from the eighteenth-century revival of the *Condivi*/Vasari rivalry - with the reeditions of both authors respectively by Gori/Mariette [1746] and Bottari [1759-60]¹⁵ - to De Tolnay, Barocchi observed that: "Tali [Vasari's] varianti, già notate in parte dagli antichi commentatori, sono state accettate dalla maggioranza degli studiosi."¹⁶ In this context, Justi furnished possibly the boldest example of adhesion to the description proposed by Vasari.¹⁷ More recently, however, two tendencies have prevailed: either to disregard this specific divergence between Vasari and *Condivi* or to simply opt for the latter. This is due to the fact that the post-war literature was strongly influenced by Panofsky's famous 1937 article,¹⁸ in which the author proposed that a sculpture of the pope, enthroned in a litter supported by two kneeling angels, crowned his mausoleum. Such a proposal not only privileged *Condivi*'s version, but also eclipsed the Cybele question and deviated the studies to the more crucial problem of the hypothetical presence of a statue of the pope in this top register of the monument.

Thus, while historians as, for example, Von Einem and Joannides, explicitly subscribed to *Condivi*'s version,¹⁹ others like Lindahl, Isermeyer, Hibbard, De Tolnay and Baldini²⁰ preferred not to take sides on the issue or, like Hartt, insisted on generically calling the figures in question "winged caryatides".²¹ Still others preferred the Vasarian description. Weinberg's opinion - "here Vasari is probably right" - was recently supported by Echinger-Maurach and Balas, thus

¹⁴ *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, etc.* Transl. by G. du C. De Vere. London, 1912-15, Vol. 9, p. 22. Ed. Barocchi, p. 29: "e sopra era per fine 2 figure, che una era il Cielo, che ridendo sosteneva in sulle palme una bara insieme con Cibebe dea della terra, <e> pareva che si dolessi che ella rimanessi al mondo priva d'ogni virtù per la morte di questo uomo; et il Cielo pareva che ridessi che l'anima sua era passata alla gloria celeste."

¹⁵ *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti pittore scultore architetto e gentiluomo fiorentino pubblicata mentre viveva dal suo scolare Ascanio Condivi*. Second Edition by A.F. Gori with (unauthorized) notes by Jean P. Mariette. Florence, 1746. Vasari's new edition of the *Vite* by Giovanni Bottari was published in Rome, 1759-60.

¹⁶ Barocchi, *Commento* (1962), Vol. II, p. 299, n. 246.

¹⁷ Carl Justi, *Michelangelo. Beitrage* (1900/1922), p. 226: "Hier erschienen zwei Wesen als Traeger der Bahre, die *Condivi* als Engel, Vasari aber, hier ohne Zweifel authentischer, als Erde und Himmel, Cybele und Cielo bezeichnet".

¹⁸ Panofsky, "The First Two Projects" (1937), 561-79. The *abbozzo* of this sculpture would have been transformed by Nicolas Cordier in a *Saint Gregory* (1602, Oratorium of the Triclinium, S. Gregorio al Caelius, Rome). See also J. Hess, "Michelangelo and Cordier". *The Burlington Magazine*, 82, 491, 1943, 55-65 and Sylvia Pressouyre, *Nicolas Cordier*. Rome, 1984, I, 166-74 and II, p. 370.

¹⁹ Von Einem, "Michelangelos Juliusgrab" (1951) and Idem, (1959/73), p.43: "the most reasonable assumption is that the figure on the top was seated in a litter borne by two angels." See also Joannides, "La Chronologie" (1991), p. 35 and 42.

²⁰ Laux (1943), p. 106 and p. 414 n.38 advances a third possibility: "eine christliche Interpretation der weinenden Erde als Jammertal, des lachenden Himmels als des Gefildes der Seligen

(...)." See also Lindahl (1963), p. 67; Hibbard, *Michelangelo*. New York: Harper & Row, 1974, p. 87: "Just how the tomb was to be terminated we do not know. *Condivi* mentions no image of the Pope, but an arca - a sarcophagus or coffin - held by two figures". Ugo Baldini, *Michelangelo*, 1981, p. 47: "This tier introduced two allegorical figures (*Angels*, according to *Condivi*, but *Heaven and Earth*, according to Vasari)."

²¹ Hartt, *Michelangelo* (1968), p. 119: "Since the sarcophagus was to be upheld by only two caryatid figures, these would in all likelihood have been represented kneeling, possibly winged in order to bridge the gap between them and the mass of the sarcophagus."

remaining, if not the view of the majority, at least unexceptional.²² This specific aspect of the Condivi/Vasari controversy has clearly lost its importance in recent literature on the 1505 project. The impossibility of a definitive decision in favor of one variant or the other in our current scholarship about the 1505 project certainly diminished historians' interest in this question.

Vasari's text however raises two questions, independent from the rivalry between the two biographers. First, this variant requires us to examine whether the presence of Cybele in the 1505 project is historically conceivable. Second, it invites us to consider the role of Cybele in Vasari's construct.

I. The invention of Cybele

Both biographers, in keeping with the funerary rhetoric of the Renaissance, wrote that images of Earth and Heaven were to crown that mausoleum. Michelangelo himself not only used this symbolism in the Medici Chapel,²³ but also wanted Tribolo to execute for the same Sagrestia Nuova:

*due statue nuove, che avevano a metter in mezzo quella del duca Giuliano che già aveva fatta egli; l'una figurata per la Terra coronata di cipresso, che dolente ed a capo chino piangesse con le braccia aperte la perdita del duca Giuliano; e l'altra per lo Cielo, che con le braccia elevate, tutto ridente e festoso, mostrasse esser allegro dell'ornamento e splendore che gli recava l'anima e lo spirito di quel signore.*²⁴

A careful examination of the historical conditions and intellectual context in which the program of 1505 tomb was formulated leads one to conclude that Vasari did not actually describe a figure of Cybele. He created it, whether *ex nihilo*, or, more likely, from a bold interpretation of one of Michelangelo's drawings. While one cannot with certainty reconstitute the configuration of the group that crowned the 1505 project, one can at least demonstrate that a figure of Cybele could not possibly have been part of this composition.

There are two possible explanations for the differences between Vasari's and Condivi's descriptions. The first alternative is that Vasari lacked a source - a drawing, a model or the artist's account - on which to base his description of the very top of the 1505 project. This would

²² Weinberger, *Michelangelo* (1967), p.133: "it is unlikely that Michelangelo used winged figures (...) And should not Earth (*Cybele*) rather than an angel mourn the loss suffered by humanity?" Weinberger is followed by Echinger-Maurach, *Studien*, p.177: "im Grunde haette Vasari ja gar nicht Unrecht, wenn ihm die Klage einer Terra ueber den Verlust des Papstes mehr einleuchtete als die eines Engels". Edith Balas, "Michelangelo *Concetti* (1505) in the Château de Blois." *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, CI, february (1983), 49-53.

²³ See Edith Balas, "The iconography of Michelangelo's Medici Chapel: a new hypothesis." *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1992, 120, 1485, 117-26. The oppositions Crepuscolo/Aurora and Notte/Giorno are also allegories of death and spiritual rebirth. They are common platonic metaphors which can be found in Ficino or in Giles of Viterbo (1506): *sapientia auroraque illis [by the Etruscans] appellata est, quae quasi solem mentibus monstraret atque ostenderet*; or yet in Raphael's Allegory of Theology on the ceiling of the Stanza della Segnatura, as suggested by Heinrich Pfeiffer, *Zur Ikonographie von Raffaels Disputa. Egidio da Viterbo und die christlich-platonische Konzeption der Stanza della Signatura*. Roma: Un. Gregoriana, 1975, p. 184. See below notes 160 and 162. Michelangelo returned to these concepts in a 1532 verse on his own death (Guasti, p. 309): *La terra piange, e 'l ciel per me si muove*.

²⁴ *Vita di Niccolò detto Il Tribolo. Scultore e Architetto*. In *Le Vite*, etc., ed. Bettarini and Barocchi, Vol. V, p. 204. Michelangelo would have created the "modelli piccoli" of these figures in 1533. A clay statue ascribed to Tribolo, in the Casa Buonarroti, is supposed to represent an allegory of Earth. But see Balas, "Iconography" (1992), p. 121. Parronchi hypothetically identified the figure of Earth in Tommaso Arrighetti's drawing (ca. 1753) housed in the Uffizi, n. 4533. "Un disegno della perduta 'Terra' e un sopravvissuto 'Reggifestone' Michelangiolesco". *Opere Giovanili di Michelangelo*. Vol. III, Florence: Olshki, 1981, 105-12. However, in a later article, Parronchi suggested that this figure belonged to a set of four reliefs representing the Four Elements. See "Proposte di Restituzione dell'Arredo scultoreo della Sagrestia Nuova". *Opere Giovanili*, Vol. IV, 1992, 39-59, p. 51-2.

also explain his silence regarding this part of the monument in the first edition of his book (1550). In this scenario, Condivi would have been Vasari's sole source; the description proposed in Vasari's second edition (1568) would then have been a masterful remaking of Condivi's text, in which the presence of the two gods would have fulfilled a double purpose: to embellish Condivi's deficient style and to cover up the evidence of his plagiarism.²⁵

The second alternative is that Condivi (1553) and Vasari (1568) based their descriptions of the very top of the monument on different sources.²⁶ This premise is by far the most probable given the amplitude of Vasari's collection of drawings and the fact that Michelangelo created "many drawings" of the pope's tomb in 1505.²⁷ In this case, Vasari would have identified a figure in the drawing selected by the pope as a Cybele.

For a man of Vasari's generation the meaning of Cybele as an allegory of Earth was, as we shall see, evident. But this meaning was not preponderant in the fifteenth century or even in the early sixteenth century. Vasari's description suffers from an obvious anachronism. In the Quattrocento, there existed no iconography - no set of clearly recognizable attributes - of the goddess.²⁸ The figure of Cybele seems to have been open to multiple interpretations in this period.

The reverse of Matteo de' Pasti's medal cast for Sigismondo Malatesta (dated 1446) features a crowned and cuirassed *Fortitudo*, seated on a throne composed of two elephants back to back. She holds a broken column suggestive of Christianity's triumph over Antiquity. [fig. 2] This figure strikingly illustrates the reception of Cybele in the middle of the century, for, as Vermeule suggests, the source for this piece would have been a coin from Hierapolis, depicting Cybele (Atargatis) riding a lion.²⁹

Similarly, Giuliano da Sangallo's drawing representing the lost intarsio (*opus sectile*) of the Basilica of Iunius Bassus (on the Esquiline) shows the arbitrary use of Cybele's image at the end of the century (1485-93). [fig. 3] At the top of the wall in Sangallo's drawing, one can clearly distinguish Cybele on her chariot. There are no serious reasons to suppose that Sangallo was unable to identify the figure of the goddess. However, her presence here (not to mention the iconography of the whole wall) is meaningless, because, as Huelsen has argued, the drawing

²⁵ This kind of "ornamentation" is discernible in other passages of this same biography, as pointed out by Barocchi, *Commento*, Vol. II, p. 77, n. 65.

²⁶ Panofsky ("The First Two Projects" [1937], p. 563) also regarded the Condivi/Vasari discrepancies as explained by these two possibilities: "The more detailed description of the upper structure [by Vasari] may be a mere amplification of Condivi's laconic *ascendendo l'opera*, or may be based on actual knowledge."

²⁷ "Ne' primi anni di papa Iulio (...), doppo molti disegni della sua sepultura, uno gniene piacque, sopra ' _ quale facemo el mercato". Michelangelo's letter of december of 1523. Cf. Milanesi, *Lettere*, p. 429 and Barocchi and Ristori, *Il Carteggio*, II, DXCV.

²⁸ Despite Julian's zeal and Nicomachus Flavianus' desperate attempt to stir up the old faith (392), representations of Cybele ceased after the fourth century. To my knowledge, Cybele's Latin mediaeval iconography is reduced to six anglo-french illuminated manuscripts of the 12th-15th centuries: the *Fulgentius metaforalis*, Vat. Pal. lat., fol. 234v, and Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, fr. 9197, fol. 176v.; the Bibliothèque Nationale manuscripts fr. 143, fol. 147r. and fr. 6312, fol. 164v. (*Ops*); the ms. Reg. lat. 1290, fol. 3v. in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (a drawing); and Rémi d'Auxerre's Commentary on Martianus Capella's *Nuptiae Philologiae*, in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Ms. lat. 14271, fol. 11r. See Jean Seznec, *La survivance des dieux antiques* (1940), Princeton Un. Press, 1972, p. 94 and 167; Pamela Berger, *The Goddess Obscured. Transformation of the Grain Protectress from Goddess to Saint*. Boston: Beacon, 1985, 35-47, and Giacomo Grimaldi (Cod. Vat. 6438, f. 43). In Byzantine art, Cybele appears only in some manuscripts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the group of St. Gregory of Nazianzus (*Contra Julianum*), in which we encounter Cybele in the *Cunning of Rhea*, a scene actually belonging to Saturn's iconography. See R. Klibansky, E. Panofsky and F. Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy. Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy Religion and Art*. London, 1964, p. 200, Pl. 14 and 17.

²⁹ See Cornelius C. Vermeule III, "Graeco-Roman Asia Minor to Renaissance Italy: Medallion and Related Arts." *Italian Medals*. Washington National Gallery of Art, 1987, 263-81, p. 273, fig. 19. Atargatis, Dea Syria and Cybele shared the same attributes in Asia Minor. See Han J.W. Drijvers, "Dea Syria". *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*. Zurich: Artemis, 1986, III, 355-358.

merely reintegrates numismatic *exempla*. Added proof of the insignificance of Cybele in this context is that Giuliano later randomly reused practically the same image to "embellish" the Malborghetto Arch, in this same Codex, fol. 36v.³⁰ Finally, the Master of the *Codex Escorialensis*, who in the 1490's reproduced with acuity some of the painted and stuccoed ceilings of the so-called Golden House of Nero, left no register of Cybele, painted twice on the Volta Dorata.³¹

Thus, as far as I know, the only true representation of Cybele in the fifteenth century is the binomial "Jupiter with Cybele" in the frescoes of the *Salone dei Mesi*, in the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara (ca. 1470). Aby Warburg pointed out the unusual closeness between both deities and considered it "a totally characteristic alliance which is not to be detected elsewhere."³² We will return to this *unicum*.

Two representations of Cybele were strictly contemporary to Michelangelo's first project. The first one is the *grisaille* that Andrea Mantegna painted for Francesco Cornaro, between 1505 and 1506, titled *The Introduction of the Cult of Cybele in Rome* and kept in the London National Gallery.³³ [fig. 4] Departing from ancient historiographical sources,³⁴ Mantegna did not intend to illustrate a specific text. He represented the goddess as a bust crowned with towers,³⁵ not as the black meteoric stone carried by the Romans in 204 a.C. from Pessinus. Moreover, he "combined into one representation the two moments of the legend - the welcome of Cybele to Rome by P. Cornelius Scipio and the miracle of Claudia Quinta" (Kristeller). Thus, Mantegna documents

³⁰ Codex Vaticano Barberiano Latino 4424, fol. 31v. For Sangallo's drawing, see Christian Huelsen, *Il libro di Giuliano da Sangallo. Codice Barberiniano Latino 4424*. Leipzig, 1910, p.47; Idem, "Die Basilika des Junius Bassus und die Kirche S. Andrea Cata Barbara auf dem Esquilin". *Festschrift fuer Julius von Schlosser*. Zurich: Amalthea, 1927, 53-68, p.63. Sangallo's prototype was the Cesi basis consecrated to the goddess at the Villa Albani. Cf. Marteen J. Vermaseren, *Corpus Cultus Cybelae Attidisque (CCCA)*, Vol. III: Italia - Latium. Leiden: Brill, 1977, Cat. 215, p.44; Stefano Borsi, *Giuliano da Sangallo. I disegni di Architettura e dell'Antico*. Rome: Officina, 1985, 169-73; Phyllis Pray Bober and Ruth Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists & Antique Sculpture*. London: Oxford Un. Press, 1986, Cat. 47 and 47a, 86-87. See also a woodcut in Jacobus Mazochius, *Epigrammata antiquae Urbis*. Rome, 1521.

³¹ See Hermann Egger, *Codex Escorialensis. Ein Skizzenbuch aus der Werkstatt Domenico Ghirlandaios*. Vienna: Hoelder, 1906, and Vermaseren, *CCCA*, III, Cat. no 214, p. 43.

³² "Italienische Kunst und internationale Astrologie im Palazzo Schifanoia zu Ferrara" (1912). *Gesammelte Schriften*, Leipzig, 1932, vol. II, p.470. See also, Kristen Lippincott, *The Frescoes of the Salone dei Mesi in the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara*. Thesis, University of Chicago, 1987, p. 40, and Carol V. Kaske, "Marsilio Ficino and the Twelve Gods of the Zodiac", *JWCI*, XLV (1982), p. 195. See also Flavia Polignano, "Mitografia palese e ficta religio: indizi, ipotesi e problemi nei Mesi di Giugno e Luglio". *Atlante di Schifanoia*. Ferrara: Panini, 1989, 85-95.

³³ Distemper on canvas, 73.5 x 268 cm. It bears the inscription: *Senatus consultu: hospes numinis idaei*. Cf. Martin Davies, *The National Gallery Catalogues. The Earlier Italian Schools* (1951), London, 1961, 330-34; Paul Kristeller, *Andrea Mantegna*, London, 1901, 361-69; E. Tietze-Conrat, *Mantegna*, London: Phaidon, 1955, 185-86; Ettore Camesasca, *Mantegna*, Milan, 1964, 44 and 126; Niny Garavaglia, *L'opera completa del Mantegna*, Milan: Rizzoli, 1967, p. 119; Allan Braham, "A Reappraisal of The Introduction of the Cult of Cybele at Rome by Mantegna". *The Burlington Magazine*, CV (1973), 457-63; R.W. Lightbown, *Mantegna*, Oxford, Berkeley, 1986, 214-18 and 451-2; G. Knox, "The Camerino of Francesco Corner". *Arte Veneta*, XXXII, 1978, 79-84; Keith Christiansen, *Andrea Mantegna*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992, Cat. n. 135, 414-16.

³⁴ The sources are Pliny, VII, 34; Livy, XXIX, 11; Appian, IX, 56; Ovid, *Fasti*, IV, 250-348.

³⁵ The ancient sources for this attribute are: Lucrece, II, 605-606; Ovid, *Fasti*, IV, 219-20 and VI, 321; Virgil, VI, 784-785. It is likely that Mantegna knew a sculpture of the goddess, since they were rather numerous in Antiquity. See Vermaseren, *CCCA*; Idem, *Cybele and Attis. The Myth and the Cult*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1977; Henri Graillot, *Le Culte de Cybèle Mère des Dieux à Rome et dans l'Empire Romain*. Paris: Fontemoing, 1912; Franz Boemer, "Kybele in Rom. Die Geschichte ihres Kult als politisches Phaenomen". *Mitt. des d. Arch. Inst., Roem. Abt.*, 71 (1964), 130-51; Robert Turcan, *Les Cultes orientaux dans le monde romain*. Paris: Belles Lettres, 1992 and Idem, *Numismatique Romaine du Culte Métrouaque*. Leiden: Brill, 1983. Mantegna had already painted a head of Cybele in the eighth of the nine canvases of the cycle *The Triumph of Caesar*, in the Royal Palace of Hampton Court, London.

three basic elements which together comprised the meaning of Cybele: a commemorative image of a religious and military episode in the history of the Roman Republic;³⁶ a testimony to the triumphs of the Cornelia clan, from which Mantegna's patron claimed to descend; and an *exemplum* of private and civic virtue, for the goddess confirmed the chastity of Claudia Quinta by allowing the vessel, carrying Cybele's image from Ostia to Rome, to overcome its immobility. This heroine occupies a central position in Mantegna's *mise en scène*, perhaps in a subtle reference (Ovid, *Fasti*, 325-26) to the theatrical performances of her feat during the April plays dedicated to the goddess, the *Megalensia*. At the turn of the century, the civic meaning of Cybele is so pervasive, that the goddess is sometimes represented simply as an attribute of Claudia Quinta.³⁷ The most cogent example of this iconographic inversion is a painting by Neroccio de' Landi (1495-96), in the Washington National Gallery of Art,³⁸ from a series of Virtuous Men and Women, undertaken for a member of the Piccolomini family.³⁹ [fig. 5] In any case, none of these three elements in Cybele's iconography bears any relationship to an allegory of the Earth.

The second work of the same decade also confirms Vasari's anachronism. Here, the presence of the goddess is limited to one of the twenty compartments of the cycle of frescoes of Pandolfo Petrucci's Palazzo del Magnifico, in Siena, painted by Pinturicchio or under his direction between 1509 and 1512. [fig. 6] These frescoes closely reflect the aforementioned Volta Dorata of the Golden House of Nero, and even in its typology Pinturicchio's *Cybele* follows her ancient model.⁴⁰ The iconography of this cycle was recently studied by Holmquist, who concluded it offers a heterodox representation of the heavens, or rather of the cosmic forces comprising the world of celestial deities.⁴¹ Pinturicchio's work differs from Mantegna in two respects. On the one hand, the civic and political character of the Roman Cybele gives way to a theogonic meaning of the goddess, truer to her more fundamental meaning of the *genitrix fecunda deorum*, to use the words with which Claudia Quinta invokes her (Ovid, *IV*, 319). Thus, Pinturicchio deprives the *turrita mater* of her towered crown, a sign of her protection of cities and especially of Rome. On the other hand, in Pinturicchio the goddess recovers most of the other traits and attributes that classical culture and the Schifanoia fresco had lent her: her seated position, her triumphal chariot

³⁶ According to Braham (1973), p. 463, there might be in Cybele an allusion to Caterina Cornaro, Queen of Cyprus: "She had come, like Cybele, in triumph from the east, and by repudiating a second marriage she had secured Cyprus for the state of Venice."

³⁷ It has been argued that the kneeling youth is not Claudia Quinta (as held by Kristeller, Davies, Tietze-Conrat, Garavaglia and Braham), but either Scipio Nasica himself (Christiansen), or an eunuch (Lightbown).

³⁸ *Claudia Quinta* (Mellon Collection, 12), wood, 105 x 46 cm. On the pedestal, the inscription calls the goddess *mater deorum*. See Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings. National Gallery of Art Washington*. 1979, p. 345. See also Gertrude Coor, *Neroccio de' Landi, 1447-1500*. Princeton Un. Press, 1961, p. 190, Cat. 61, and Robert L. Mode, "Ancient Paragons in a Piccolomini Scheme". *Hortus Imaginum. Essays in Western Art*, ed. by Robert Enggass & Marilyn Stokstad. Lawrence: Univ. of Kansas, 1974, 73-83.

³⁹ For Braham (1973), p. 461, this iconographic inversion had already occurred in Mantegna's relief: "the central subject of Mantegna's relief is not so much the cult of Cybele (.), but Claudia Quinta." Perhaps Claudia earned further significance thanks to Boccaccio's "De Claudia Quinta muliere romana", an episode of his *De Claris mulieribus*. In the chapter on *Ops*, Boccaccio fully adheres to the Euhemeristic tradition. See Seznev, *La Survivance*, p. 11-36. A chapter on "Claudia, virgo vestalis", had already appeared in Sextus Aurelius Victor's *De viris illustribus*, XLVI.

⁴⁰ The frescoes are now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. See Bryson Burroughs, "A Ceiling by Pinturicchio from the Palazzo del Magnifico in Siena". *Metrop. Mus. Bull.*, 16 (1921), 3-10; J. Schulz, "Pinturicchio and the Revival of Antiquity". *JWCI*, 25, 1962, 48-50; Annamaria Petrioli Tofani, "Per Girolamo Genga". *Paragone*, 20 (1969), 18-36, 39-56; Federico Zeri, Elizabeth E. Gardner, *Catalogue of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Siennese and Central Italian Schools*. New York, 1980; Fiorella Sricchia Santoro, "Ricerche senesi". 2. Il Palazzo del Magnifico Pandolfo Petrucci". *Prospettiva*, 29 (1982), 14-22; Julie Bergren Holmquist, *The Iconography of a Ceiling by Pinturicchio from the Palazzo del Magnifico, Siena*. Thesis, Un. of North Carolina, 1984.

⁴¹ "If the walls of the room in the Palazzo del Magnifico reflect the terrestrial plane of human endeavor, and the spandrels and pendentives the transitional zone where divine knowledge is imparted to man, then the ceiling represents the heavens, the home of the gods, the seat of cosmic forces that ultimately determine the nature of human existence." (p. 154).

pulled by lions, her matronly aspect and her cult objects.

This cycle of frescoes and those of the Palazzo Schifanoia share little but the essence of the myth of Cybele, that is, her role as *mater deorum*. Because she was thus considered, Agrippa dedicated the Pantheon to her worship, as narrated by the *Mirabilia urbis* in some of its versions and even by the *Tractatus de rebus antiquis et situ Urbis Romae* (ca. 1411).⁴² For this same reason the goddess appears at Jupiter's side in the Ferrara frescoes, as attested by a verse from one of their literary sources, the *Astronomicon* (II, 441) by Marcus Manilius: *Iuppiter, et cum matre deum regis ipse Leonem*.⁴³

There has been some speculation concerning the presence of Cybele in two works from the second decade: the Ovidian *Feast of the Gods* (1513-1514) by Giovanni Bellini, which Wind dubiously recognizes as the feast of Cybele,⁴⁴ and its iconographic "paraphrase," the *Bacchanal* (or *The Feast of Cybele*, ca. 1515) by Dosso Dossi.⁴⁵ Admittedly, as Colantuono has noted, "the lack of a clearly identifiable, unique attribute for the female figure [i.e. for Bellini's supposed Cybele] will probably always make it impossible to arrive at a completely persuasive evaluation of her significance."⁴⁶ The riddle might be solved, however, if we accept the hypothesis that Equicola integrated the two passages from the *Fasti* in which Ovid narrates the episode of Priapus (I, 391-440 and VI, 319-348). Then the feminine figure dominating the center of the Bellinian composition could only be Cybele, the maternal hostess who, according to Ovid (VI, 321): *convocat aeternos ad sua festa deos*. In any case, based on both of the Ovidian contexts, the hypothetical Cybele could not possibly represent an allegory of Earth in Bellini's and Dossi's paintings.

The problem remains when one considers a third work of the same decade: Baldassare Peruzzi's drawing in the British Museum.⁴⁷ [fig. 7] Some coincidences between this drawing and Paolo Palliolo's description of the pageant *Cibele et Roma in una Carretta*, one of the 1513 performances on the Capitoline Hill in honour of Giuliano de' Medici, led Frommel to suggest that it could be a sketch for that performance. The hypothesis is tempting and I shall return to this point.⁴⁸ In any case, it can be shown that, contrary to the commonly held view, the globe located

⁴² This tradition goes back to the *Mirabilia urbis*, of ca. 1143, chapter IV, apud Roberto Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity* (1969), Padua: Antenore, 1989, p. 70.

⁴³ Cf. M. Manilii, *Astronomicon*. Liber secundus, ed. by A. E. Housman, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1937, p.45 and apud Lippincott, *The Frescoes of the Salone dei Mesi*, p.40.

⁴⁴ In 1511, Mario Equicola composed the *invenzione* of this work from Ovid, *Fasti* (I, 391-440, but possibly also VI, 319-347). See Edgar Wind, *Bellini's Feast of the Gods. A Study in Venetian Humanism*. Cambridge: Harvard Un. Press, 1948, 28-44; Philipp Fehl, "The Worship of Bacchus and Venus in Bellini's Bacchanals for Alfonso d'Este". *Studies in the History of Art*. Washington, D.C., 1974, 37-82; John Shearman, "Alfonso d'Este's Camerino." *Il se rendit en Italie: Etudes offertes à A. Chastel*. Rome: CNRS, 209-29; D. Bull and J. Plesters, *The Feast of the Gods: Conservation, Examination and Interpretation*. Washington, D.C., 1990, 21-50; and Anthony Colantuono, "Dies Alcyoniae: The Invention of Bellini's Feast of Gods". *Art Bulletin*, 73, 2 (1991), 237-256.

⁴⁵ London National Gallery, n. 5279. See Roberto Longhi, *Officina Ferrarese*, Rome, 1934, p. 141; Cecil Gould, *National Gallery Catalogues. The Sixteenth-Century Italian Schools*. London, 1975, p. 83, and Amalia Mezzetti, *Il Dosso e Battista Ferraresi*, Milan: Silvana, 93-94. In accordance to Stella M. Pierce, Gould dated the work ca. 1512-1516. As suggested by Wind, *Bellini's Feast of the Gods*, p.62 n.: "The crowned female figure in the background could be Cybele (*Fasti*, IV, 321) (...) It is more likely that this bacchanal by Dosso was ordered as a free paraphrase of, rather than a pendant to, Bellini's *Feast of the Gods*."

⁴⁶ Colantuono, *Dies Alcyoniae*, p.251.

⁴⁷ Inv. 1880-5-8-82. Pen and brown ink and wash, 251 x 204 mm. Cf. Philip Pouncey and J.A. Gere, *Italian Drawings in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum. Raphael and his Circle*. London, 1962, p. 141, Cat. 243; Christoph Luitpold Frommel, *Baldassare Peruzzi als Maler und Zeichner*. Vienna-Munich: A. Schroll, 1967/68, Cat. 37, 77-78. In the *Taccuino Senese*, fol. 57, Peruzzi represents Cybele without her crown of towers.

⁴⁸ Peruzzi's drawing is discussed in this context also by Vincenzo Farinella, *Archeologia e pittura a Roma tra Quattrocento e Cinquecento. Il Caso di Jacopo Ripanda*. Turin: Einaudi, 1992, p.67; L. Zentai, "On Baldassari Peruzzi's Compositions Engraved by the

at the feet of the goddess is not the Earth. It is rather a geocentric representation of the universe, very similar, for instance, to Raphael's preparatory drawing for the *Urania* (or *Astronomy*) on the ceiling of the Stanza della Segnatura.⁴⁹ It is also the *stellarum globus* with its Olympian/zodiacal dodecade, the same one which appears, for example, in an engraving after Rosso, *God the Father Seated on a Globe in Glory* (Bartsch, 33 [16, 2], 1 [376]).⁵⁰ Central to the understanding of Cybele's globe, which had already appeared in Mantegna's *grisaille*, is Ficino's metaphysical cosmology, which calls upon the equation that Plato's *Timaeus* makes between the terms *world* and *heaven*.⁵¹ In Peruzzi, once again, the globe is an attribute of Cybele's *generandi vis*, which is understood in her eminently cosmic and theogonic dimensions, so that nothing in these representations of the *mater deorum* authorizes us to reduce her to an allegory of the Earth. In fact, no deity (except maybe a minor deity such as Tellus)⁵² was reduced to this type of allegory, around 1500. And, in any event, not Rhea (or Cybele), who is conceived in Ficino's cosmology as *virtus vitalis in mundo intelligibili*.⁵³

Finally, the mysterial character of the orgiastic rites dedicated to Cybele - mystical experiences conducive to emasculation and *palingenesia* -, and Cybele's entourage of eunuch priests (favorite targets of Martial's and Juvenal's biting poems), were so ubiquitous in classical sources and in humanist commentaries on Ovid,⁵⁴ that the association of the goddess with the Earth was eclipsed. Catullus' work had great impact on humanist circles of the late Quattrocento as evidenced by the celebrity enjoyed by the most terrible of his long poems, poem 63, dedicated to the emasculation of Attis. Catullus' *Carmina* had no less than seven known editions between 1472 and 1502, the date of the first Aldine edition.⁵⁵ The release of the 1473 Parma edition was promoted by Francesco Puteolano who gave a series of lectures on the subject at the University of Bologna. Giovanni Calurnio made Catullus' writings the focus of the classes he taught at Padua, at least until 1493 and so did Antonio Partenio in Verona in the 1480's. Poliziano's courses at the Florence Studio and shortly thereafter in the Verona Studio (1479-80) greatly contributed to the expansion of this cult. The Verona courses, for instance, were attended by Partenio and were the basis for the famous Commentaries he published in 1485. Poem 63's galliambics stand out not only in these Commentaries, but also in those by Fosco Palladio (1496) and by Battista Guarino (1505, published by his son in 1521).⁵⁶ The Rome and Florence Michelangelo knew around 1500, unlike Vasari's experience 50 or 60 years later, were saturated with the *Carmina*. It is difficult to imagine that the explicit or latent meanings of Catullus's *minax*

Master of the Die." *Acta Historiae Artium*, 29, 1983, 62-63 and 73-78. See also, below, note 110.

⁴⁹ See Raphael in der Albertina aus Anlass des 500. Geburtstages des Kuenstlers. Vienna, 1983, p. 70

⁵⁰ Konrad Oberhuber rightly defined Cybele's attribute as a *Himmelkugel*, the globe of heaven. *Graphische Sammlung Albertina. III - Renaissance in Italien 16. Jahrhundert*. Vienna, 1966, p. 174, Cat. 293.

⁵¹ *Timaeus*, 28B and 30C-32B, and Ficino's commentary to *Phaedrus*, chapter 11: "Quatuor mundi sunt, sicut enim in Timeo dicitur, mundus sive celum est universitas ipsa formarum." *Marsilio Ficino and the Phadrus Charioteer*, ed. and tr. by Michael J.B. Allen. Berkeley: Un. of California Press, 1981, p. 120 and 67.

⁵² Cristofano Robetta's engraving probably representing Tellus (ca. 1505) might be considered as an allegory of the Earth. See Arthur M. Hind, *Early Italian Engraving*, Plate 289 and 291 and Jay A. Levenson, Konrad Oberhuber, Jackelyn L. Sheenan, *Early Italian Engravings from the National Gallery of Art*, Washington Gallery of Art, 1973, p. 289-302, Cat. n. 121.

⁵³ "Rhea forsan in mundo intelligibili est virtus illa vitalis; cui incubat intellectus saturnius atque iovius, primus quidem ut maritus, secundus ut filius". *Ibid.*, ed. Allen, p.117.

⁵⁴ Cf. for instance, Angelo Poliziano (*Comento inedito ai Fasti di Ovidio*, ed. Francesco Lo Monaco. Florença: Olschki, 1991), who often mentions, in this precise context, both poets.

⁵⁵ Cf. Julia Haig Gaisser, *Catullus and the Renaissance Readers*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1993.

⁵⁶ As Gaisser asserts, *ibid.*, 94-95: "Partenio is at his best in his discussion of 63." And: "Partenio had set out to bring Catullus to a wide audience, and - to judge from the many editions of his commentary - he succeeded admirably."

Cybele encompassed the allegorical image of Earth. What, then, should we think of the idea of masquerading the fierce mistress of Attis as a *pleurante* of a pontifical tomb? As far as I know, there is not a single passage in humanist literature containing such an interpretation of *Cybele's* meaning.⁵⁷

Even if we consider for a moment the implausible hypothesis that the iconography of the 1505 project strayed from the intellectual orientation of its time, a technical aspect of our problem remains unsolved: how could Michelangelo have reconciled the profile of attributes through which the goddess was then recognizable and the inherent function Vasari attributed to her? In other words, how could Michelangelo have transformed a goddess - whose visual identity was derived from such attributes as her seated position, her triumphal chariot pulled by lions and her crown of towers - into a caryatid?

There is yet another, more fundamental difficulty concerning Vasari's anachronism. The possibility of assimilating *Cybele* to *Ceres*, although plausible within Vasari's intellectual environment which was imbued with comparative approaches to mythology,⁵⁸ was implausible at the beginning of the century.

It is true that the Great Mother of the Gods has many Mediterranean equivalents. John Garstang, in his introduction to the *De dea Syria* by Lucian of Samosata, gives an extensive roster of Semitic names for the Great Mother.⁵⁹ In Asia Minor, which underwent little Semitic influence, she is remembered among the Phrygians by the name of *Agdistis*, as Strabo informs us (X, iii, 12; XII, ii, 3). Among the Greeks and Romans, *Cybele* was not only called by several names, but was linked to *Ceres*, *Juno*, *Diana*, *Venus*, *Vesta* and even *Isis*.⁶⁰ Two passages in *Lucretius* and *Pliny* would seem to allude to an affinity between *Cybele* and *Ceres*. *Augustine*, in turn, established this connection on the basis of their common relationship to the harvests. However, *Cybele* and *Ceres* could never have been *fused* into one deity in Roman religion for whereas the former was an aristocratic goddess, the latter was a minor goddess of the *plebs*. Nevertheless, a kind of kinship between them seemed inevitable since, as *Vermaseren* pointed out, it resulted from the association between the offering of the *moretum* (a mixture of white cheese and spices) during the *Megalensia*, and of corn (*frumentum*, *fruges*, *Phryges*), during the *Cerealia* feasts.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Only in *Boccaccio*, i.e., in a protohumanist context, do we observe a link between *Cybele* and the Earth. In his *Genealogia deorum* (one of the sources for the *Schifanoia* fresco, as *Polignano* pointed out, p.85), he wrote that one of *Cybele's* attributes, the *Tympani*, should be understood as the two hemispheres of the Earth. Moreover, in *Olympia*, *Silvius'* dead daughter appears in a vision to her father and says: "Exuvias quas ipse michi, venerande, dedisti, / ingenti gremio servat berecinthia mater; / has vestes formamque dedit faciemque coruscam / Parthenos, secumque fui... Cf. *Buccolicum Carmen*, ed. and tr. by P. G. Ricci, Milan, 1952, vol. 2, 674-76. However, the poet here stresses the parallel *Cybele/Parthenos*, or *Nea Kubel *, as the Christian Virgin was sometimes called during the Low Empire. Cf. *Grailot*, *Le Culte*, 559-560. In fact, this parallel, paleochristian in flavour, was not uncommon during the 13th - 15th centuries for it reappears in the *Mirabilia Urbis* (Cod. Vat. Lat. 3973, Chap. IV), in *Fazio degli Uberti's Il Dittamondo* (1355-1364) and in the *Fasti Christianae religionis* (ca.1480) with which *Ludovico Lazzarelli* tried to emulate *Ovid*: "Salve igitur Virgo (...) Sponsa Dei, genetrix et filia nomine trino / Quae gaudes, *Cybele* cedat honore tibi." (IX, 1087-1090). Ed. by M. Bertolini, Naples: D'Auria, 1991, p. 380. In 1528-31, *Giles of Viterbo* (*Scechina*, ed. by F. Secret, Rome, 1959) returned one more time to this parallel.

⁵⁸ Cf. *Seznec*, *La Survivance*, p. 238.

⁵⁹ *Garstang*, *The Syrian Goddess*. London: Constable, 1913, 1-28.

⁶⁰ In *Apuleius' Metamorphoses*, *Isis* of many names (*cuius numen unicum multiformi specie, ritu vario, nomine multiugo totus veneratur orbis*, XI, 5) reveals herself to the writer in the following words: "The Phrygians, first born of men, call me Mother of the Gods, goddess of Pessinus; the inhabitants of Attica, *Minerva* of *Cecrops'* city [= Athens]; the Cypriots living amid the seas, *Venus* of *Paphos*; the arrow-bearing *Cretans*, *Diana* of *Dictynna*; the triple-tongued *Sicilians*, *Proserpina* of the *Styx*; the original *Eleusinians*, *Ceres* of *Attica*, some [call me] *Juno*, others *Bellona*, some *Hecate*, others the One from *Rhamnus*". Quoted from *Vermaseren*, *Cybele and Attis*, p. 10. On the primitive relationship between these goddess, see *Albrecht Dieterich*, *Mutter Erde. Ein Versuch ueber Volksreligion* (1912). Leipzig-Berlin: Teubner, 1913, chap. V, and *Vermaseren*, *Cybele and Attis*, p.50 and 71-87.

⁶¹ *Lucretius* (II, 613) and *Pliny* (XVIII, 16) suggested a link between *Cybele* and the abundance of the harvests. From whence, probably,

But the question one has to consider is whether this very connection, between Ceres and Cybele, was made in the mythological, philosophical and iconographic culture of early 16th century humanism. Pomponius Laetus' reading of Lucretius points in another direction. For Ficino, Cybele belongs to a triad of powers involving Juno and Venus. They represent in various ways what Ficino calls "the quickening" or "vital" power, and Rhea or Cybele is in this context, we have just seen, the vital power in the intelligible world of Mind, of Saturn. Even such an Augustinian as Giles of Viterbo failed to make the association between the two goddesses.⁶² Moreover, the two sources of classical mythology most esteemed by humanist culture - Cicero and Ovid - did not establish a precedent for the relationship between the goddesses.⁶³ Neither did the iconography of this period, as discussed above. Ceres belongs to a group of allegories which includes Tellus, Abundance, Charity, etc. and shared nothing with Ficino's or Laetus' triad. The frescoes of the Palazzo Schifanoia emphasize this alterity and clearly show that during the Renaissance, no less than in Antiquity, Ceres was an autonomous deity, with her own feasts,⁶⁴ endowed with attributes which linked her to the *menologia rustica* and which were, therefore, distinct from those of Cybele. Thus, Edith Balas' theory, derived from two drawings representing female figures, kept in the Château de Blois and in the Uffizi, seem unfounded.

Balas believes that both drawings, because they represent female figures which appear to be carrying cornucopias, document Michelangelo's preparatory studies for the Vasarian Cybele of the 1505 project.⁶⁵ With regard to the Uffizi drawing (251F r.), one could raise at least three objections: Michelangelo's authorship is generally disputed;⁶⁶ there is scant reason to date the drawing to 1504-1505, if we attribute it to Michelangelo; and if we date it to those years, it would be inappropriate to recognize a representation of Cybele in a figure bearing a cornucopia.⁶⁷ On the contrary, this is an attribute of Ceres/Demeter and of related allegories which appears abundantly in the Italian iconography of the Renaissance.⁶⁸

Augustine, *Civ. Dei*, VII, 16: "Matrem magnam eandem Cererem volunt, quam nihil aliud dicunt esse quam terram". Cf. Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis*, p. 125.

⁶² See Pomponius Laetus' *Vita of Lucretius* (Ms. dated 1486 from the Universiteitsbibliothek of Utrecht), ed. by Giuseppe Solaro, Palermo: Sellerio, 1993, p.48-50, where Cybele is associated with Venus, Juno and Isis: "Naturam eius [of Venus] Pythagoras Samius primus deprehendit anno Urbis conditae CXLII. Ipso nomine non caret ambitione: alii Iunonem, alii Isidem, alii Cybelem vocant". For Ficino, see again note 49 and Michael J.B. Allen, *The Platonism of Marsilio Ficino*. Berkeley, Un. of California Press, 1984, p. 129. For Gilles of Viterbo, see below note 139.

⁶³ For Cicero (*De natura deorum*, II, xxiii, 60; II, xxviii, 71; III, xvi, 40-41), Ceres is little more than an elementary image. On his conception of Ceres, M. van den Bruwaene observed that: "Cicéron, suivant la philosophie assez répandue des cercles bien-pensants, avait accepté que des noms soient appliqués à des forces panthéistes". Cf. *De natura deorum*, Bruxelles: Latomus, 1970, III, p. 69. This is precisely the idea in III, xvi, 41: "Cum fruges Cererem, vinum Liberum dicimus, genere nos quidem sermonis utimur usitato sed eequem tam amentem esse putas qui illud quo vescatur deum credat esse?" Cicero's Cybele is a much more defined character, irreducible to a rustic allegory, for she is Jupiter's

mother in the third version of his myth (III, xvi, 42): "Tertius [Iovis] est ex Idaeis digitis cui inferias adferunt".

⁶⁴ The *Megalensia* (April, 4-10) preceded the *ludi Cereales* (April, 12-19). With the *ludi Florales* (April, 28 - May, 3), these feasts opened the *Fasti*. See also Juvenal (14, 263).

⁶⁵ E. Balas, "Michelangelo *Concetti*" p. 52: "The subject matter of the Blois drawing gives a clue to the date of the original [for Balas, the Blois drawing would be a copy of a lost sketch by Michelangelo]. The Venus is a Cybele, and a figure of Cybele was planned for the Tomb of Julius II."

⁶⁶ See Ferri and Giulia Sinibaldi, who attribute it to Michelangelo's school. It is thus considered also by Annamaria Petrioli Tofani, in *Gabinetto disegni e stampe degli Uffizi. Inventario*. Vol. I, Florence, Olscki, 1986, p. 112.

⁶⁷ According to Balas, p. 52: "The cornucopia is also one of the attributes of the earth goddess Cybele".

⁶⁸ It is evidently impossible to repertoriate here Ceres' iconography, which is also related to that of Apuleius' story of Psyche (in the Farnesina, or in the Master B in the Die's engravings, for instance). See, for the Quattrocento prints, Arthur M. Hind, *Early Italian*

II. Vasari and the vogue of Cybele.

While Balas' proposal seems misleading, it does raise an unavoidable question: could Vasari possibly have misidentified Ceres as Cybele? Although in his paintings and writings Vasari is obviously aware of Ceres' attributes, such an equation, quite possible in the middle of the century, would not belittle his erudition. In 1556, for instance, Vasari himself painted a Diana of Ephesos in the Palazzo Vecchio, which he later described as a *Sacrifice to Cybele*.⁶⁹ Thus, at first sight, this hypothesis would not seem implausible. But it can be asked whether the presence of a Ceres or of a Tellus in Michelangelo's 1505 project would be possible, given that neither goddess was ever viewed in Renaissance iconography as a funerary symbol. Moreover, the question of Vasari's anachronism cannot be solved by simply changing the names of the goddesses. For this particular type of allegory, in Vasari's form of a fixed and merely decorative equivalence (Ceres or Cybele equals Earth), was not yet usual in the beginning of the century. The mythological allegory in Italian humanist culture was part of a complex structure of ideas in which an ideal of *civiltà* was interwoven with a philosophical and religious syncretism. Detached from this spiritual context, in which the allegory constitutes the ideational structure of the iconography,⁷⁰ the mythological image in the late Quattrocento has no intellectual significance. Based on this axiom, De Tolnay, as we know, proposed his unrivaled, if not entirely persuasive, exegesis of Michelangelo's 1505 project.

This is fairly well known. But to grasp the reasons for Vasari's anachronism, one must keep in mind the difference between the humanist *forma mentis* and the erudite, inventorial and neoencyclopaedic attitude which characterized sixteenth-century classical and antiquarian scholarship. The fifteenth century had not yet developed the systematic arrangement of classical mythology which would be one of the most remarkable achievements of the comprehensive compendia published in the middle of the following century.⁷¹ Seznec and others noted continuity, rather than rupture, between these treatises and the mediaeval tradition, from Martianus Capella and Macrobius to Albericus. But this revival of mediaeval tradition was in a way original. And, above all, originality is not the criterion by which we can best evaluate the impact of that new literature on Vasari's generation. Although those compendia did not always take a new approach to mythology, they did put it to new and influential uses.⁷² Around 1500-1510 even the best readers of Ficino, Laetus, Lazzarelli, Perotti or Francesco Colonna did not have at their disposal the intellectual equipment provided by the encyclopaedic surveys of Pirro

Engraving. A Critical Catalogue, etc. London, 1938-48 (and the word *Ceres* in the indexes published by Roelof van Straten, *Iconclass Indexes. Italian Prints*, vol. 1). The cornucopia is associated to a set of allegories of wide range: "Charity", "Abundance", "Spring", "Summer", fluvial deities, or "Concordia", as in a plaquette by Cristoforo di Geremia (1468?), in Wendy Stedman Sheard, *Antiquity in Renaissance*. Northampton: Smith College Museum of Art, 1978, cat. 105. It can yet symbolize the "Occasio" or the "Fortuna", as in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* and in a medal dedicated to Giuliano II de' Medici (1513). Cf. R. Wittkower, "Chance, Time and Virtue". *JWI*, I (1937-38), p.317.

⁶⁹ The equation Cybele/Diana of Ephesos had already appeared, around 1530, in Giulio Romano's and/or Primaticcio's design for a frieze in Fontainebleau, Louvre L. 1899. See *L'Ecole de Fontainebleau*, Paris, Grand Palais, 1972, p. 135 and Jean-Jacques Lévêque, *L'Ecole de Fontainebleau*, Neuchâtel, 1984, p. 275.

⁷⁰ As pointed out by Daniel Arasse: "Pour le néo-platonisme, le symbole est d'une certaine manière la chose qu'il représente et à laquelle il ressemble". *Symboles de la Renaissance*, Paris: Presses de l'Ecole Normale Supérieure, 1976, p.9.

⁷¹ The early sixteenth-century encyclopedism, differently represented by Giorgio Valla (1501) and Raffaele Maffei (1506), did not treat mythology as an independent subject. See Carlo Dionisotti, *Gli Umanisti e il Volgare fra Quattro e Cinquecento*. Florence: Le Monnier, 1968, 41-52.

⁷² As pointed out by M. Palma, the least intellectually ambitious of these treatises, Cartari's *Imagines*, has been the most influent of them, exactly because it was of easier access and provided more manageable information. See "Vincenzo Cartari". *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Roma: Treccani, 1977, 793-96.

Ligorio, Lilio Gregorio Giraldi (1548), Natale Conti (1551), Vincenzo Cartari (1556) and, outside of Italy, Guillaume Du Choul (1556).⁷³ It is to this literature that Vasari owes his invention of Cybele. But he does not owe it only to his reading, but also to a more general change in Cybele's image in the middle of the century. In fact, from the 1530's to the 1560's, Cybele enjoyed what one might call a true vogue.

IIa. The Bercyntian Rome.

Two facts can explain this vogue. The first is the development of antiquarianism, specially Roman numismatic studies and topographical researches about the Forum, the Circuses and the Palatine hill. The second fact - the subject of the next chapter -, concerns the development of the comparative studies of ancient religions.

Let us consider the topographical studies from the end of Leo X's pontificate (1519-21) to that of Pius IV (1559-1565). Topographical studies from the beginning of this period were dominated by Raphael's record of the first *regio* of Rome, (1519-20)⁷⁴ as well as by the topographical achievements of Andrea Fulvio (1513 and 1527) and Fabio Calvo (1527).⁷⁵ The end of this period was marked by Pirro Ligorio's oeuvre as artist (namely by the Casino of Pius IV, his masterpiece) and as antiquarian.⁷⁶ In the history of Roman scholarship, these forty-five years (1520-65) can be divided into two radically different phases: Raphael, Fulvio and Calvo wrote the last page in Roman humanism, which gave way to what Erna Mandowsky and Charles Mitchell called "the period of cultural consolidation that followed the Sack of Rome in 1527".⁷⁷ During this second phase Cybele became very prominent in the symbolical culture of the Renaissance.

To a large extent this prominence reflected increased knowledge of the primary sources for her cult and iconography. With regard to the latter, the drawings, manuscripts and inscriptions by Pirro Ligorio, housed in the Libraries of Naples, Turin and Vatican, give a breathtaking image of

⁷³ The importance of Du Choul for French painting until Poussin can be compared with Cartari's in Italy, from Vasari to the Carracci, and it is only matched by the influence of Philostratus's *Icones* in Blaise de Vigenères' translation (1578).

⁷⁴ Cf. Rodolfo Lanciani, "La Pianta di Roma e i disegni archeologici di Raffaello Sanzio". *Rend. d. R. Acc. dei Lincei*, Ser. V, III, 1895; Idem, *Storia degli Scavi di Roma e notizie intorno le collezioni romane di antichità* (1902), 2. ed. Rome: Quasar, 1989, vol. I, 223-270; Vincenzo Golzio, *Raffaello nei documenti, nelle testimonianze e nella letteratura del suo secolo*. Città del Vaticano, 1936, 78-92; Paola Barocchi, *Scritti d'arte del Cinquecento*. Milan-Naples: Ricciardi, vol. III, 1977. Ettore Camesasca, *Raffaello. Gli scritti*, Rome, 1994, 178-205, 257-322.

⁷⁵ Andrea Fulvio, *Antiquaria Urbis*, Roma 1513; Andrea Fulvio, *Antiquitates urbis*, Roma: Marcello Silber, 1527, 5 vol.; Fabius Calvus, *Antiquae Urbis Romae cum regionibus simulachrum*, Roma: L. Vicentinus, 1527. See Roberto Weiss, "Andrea Fulvio antiquario romano". *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, XXVIII (1959), 1-44; Vincenzo Fontana, "Elementi per una biografia di M. Fabio Calvo Ravennate" and "Opere di Fabio Calvo". In *Vitruvio e Raffaello. Il 'De architectura' di Vitruvio nella traduzione inedita di Fabio Calvo Ravennate*, ed. by V. Fontana and P. Morachiello, Rome: Officina, 45-61.

⁷⁶ For Roman antiquarianism during and after the pontificate of Leo X see note 76 and Erna Mandowsky and Charles Mitchel, *Pirro Ligorio's Roman Antiquity. The drawings in Ms. xiii. B. 7 in the National Library in Naples*. London, Warburg Inst., 1963; Roberto Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity*. London: Blackwell, 1969; P.A. Ramsey (ed.), *Rome in the Renaissance. The City and the Myth*. New York, 1982; Giuseppe Zander, "Lo studio di Roma antica". *L'Arte in Roma nel Secolo XVI*, vol. I, Bologna: Cappelli, 1990, 557-583; Marcello Fagiolo (ed.), *Roma e l'Antico nell'arte e nella cultura del Cinquecento*. Rome, 1985; Philip J. Jacks, *Antiquarianism and Archaeological Method in Renaissance Rome* Ph. D. Dissertation, The Univ. of Chicago, 1985 and Idem, *The Antiquarian and the Myth of Antiquity: the origins of Rome in Renaissance Thought*. Cambridge Un. Press, 1993.

⁷⁷ Cf. *Roman Antiquities*, p. 7.

the goddess.⁷⁸ Although these drawings recall those by Giuliano da Sangallo (1485-93) [fig. 3] and Baldassare Peruzzi (1513?),⁷⁹ [fig. 9] they are very different in spirit. Ligorio's drawings demonstrate a genuinely erudite involvement with the goddess, betray the very typical sixteenth-century blend of archeological description and imaginary reconstitution⁸⁰ and establish a *ne variatur* model, which would be adopted in Boissard's *Romanae urbis topographiae et antiquitatum*, 1597, III, pl. 47) and, later, in the *Symbolici Deae Syriae Simulachri Expositio* by Giovanni Pietro Bellori.⁸¹ [fig. 8]

Sculpted in marble, this model was, then, displayed in the most conspicuous place of Rome, the loggia of the Casino designed by Ligorio for Pius IV in the "Boschetto del sacro palazzo Apostolico", in the Vatican Gardens (1558-1564).⁸² As Graham Smith observed, the grandeur of Cybele's monumental statue was dramatically diminished by the goddess' loss of her "eminente scoglio" (Chattard, 1767) and of her entourage of herms. But in its original aspect - for instance, in Giuseppe Vasi's engraving -, the ancient fragment, transformed under the direction of Ligorio into a Cybele,⁸³ had a commanding influence over the sculptural decoration and the *limphaeum* below the loggia. [fig. 9] With a mind to what the restoration of Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli had taught him, Ligorio sought to reproduce the same ambiance of Hadrian's *nymphaeum* in the Casino, closing with this *tour de force*, a whole cycle of Renaissance Ville "sympathetically involved with water."⁸⁴ Presiding over this aquatic program,⁸⁵ Cybele was in fact the emblematic figure, the *genius loci* of the Casino. It is perhaps impossible to establish the ultimate reasons for Ligorio's choice. It was certainly conditioned by his antiquarian and archeological background. But these reasons should lie yet deeper, for, as we know, Cybele was also made the *genius loci* of the *Sacro Bosco* of another contemporary villa, that of the Orsini in Bomarzo, which has been dated 1552 by Battisti.⁸⁶ Thus, these reasons concern not just Ligorio's personal sensibility, but a

⁷⁸ *Libro X. dell'Antichità di Pyrrho Ligorio, nel quale si tratta de alcune cose, et imagini ornamenti degli dii de gentili, et delle loro origini, et di chi primale mostro almondo symbolicamente adorarli oreverirli.* See Mandowsky, Mitchell, *Roman Antiquities*. Cat. no. 5, 17, 18, 27, 28, 50, 51, 103, 105 and 106.

⁷⁹ They were almost certainly based on the same source, the Villa Albani relief. Cf. Bober-Rubinstein, 1986, Cat. 47, 86-87.

⁸⁰ Robert W. Gaston has observed that "there is a strong element of idealizing fantasy in Ligorio's vision of ancient Rome, but it is curiously linked with his view of the achievements of his own culture." See "Ligorio on Rivers and Fountains: Prolegomena to a study of Naples XIII.B.9." Robert W. Gaston (ed.), *Pirro Ligorio Artist and Antiquarian*. Milan: Silvana, 1988, p. 184.

⁸¹ See Mandowsky-Mitchell, p. 109. Another iconographic example of Cybele after ancient *exempla* is Francisco de Hollanda's drawing of the Volta Dorata, 1539-40, known from a copy housed in the Biblioteca del Escorial. See Tormo, *Os Desenhos*, p. 210f.

⁸² Cf. Graham Smith, *The Casino of Pius IV*. Princeton Un. Press, 1977; Idem, "The Stucco decoration of the Casino of Pius IV". *Pirro Ligorio Artist and Antiquarian*, ed. by Robert Gaston, Milan: Silvana, 1988, 209-215; Robert Gaston, "Pirro Ligorio, the Casino of Pius IV, and antiques for the Medici: some new documents". *JWCI*, XLVII (1984), 205-209.

⁸³ In Marten van Heemskerck's drawing, in Berlin, Kupfer- stichkabinett, 79D2, vol I, f. 52b, the sculpture, which was formerly in Palazzo Venezia, is represented without the head. Cf. Christian Huelsen and Hermann Egger, *Die roemischen Skizzenbuecher von Marten van Heemskerck*. I, Berlin, 1913; II, 1916; Facsimile ed. Soest, 1975. It is reasonable to conjecture that the restoration of the sculpture was executed by Giovanni Antonio Dosio.

⁸⁴ On the connection between the Casino of Pius IV, Hadrian's Villa and other Quattrocento and Cinquecento Ville, see Graham Smith, *The Casino*, 20-30. According to the author, "the Casino of Pius IV should be considered a fountain house". *Ibid*, p. 54. See also Marcello Fagiolo, "Il significato dell'acqua e la dialettica del giardino. Pirro Ligorio e la 'filosofia' della villa cinquecentesca." M. Fagiolo (ed.), *Natura e artificio. L'ordine rustico, le fontane, gli automi nella cultura del Manierismo europeo*. Rome, 1979, 176-189.

⁸⁵ In one of the Turin manuscripts (Archivio di Stato, MS J. a. ii, l) Ligorio wrote that "fountains were dedicated to Asclepius, Hygieia, Nature-Generatrix, the Graces, the nymphs of Diana and the Muses". Apud Graham Smith, *The Casino*, p. 55.

⁸⁶ As pointed out by Eugenio Battisti, the *Sacro Bosco* of Bomarzo: "è, in certo senso, consacrato a Cibebe, la dea della terra, che infatti

broader phenomenon of taste, i.e., the fact that the figure of Cybele was in vogue.

In the context of Paul III's policy regarding the image of ancient Rome, celebrated in the *Urbis Romae renovatio* by Girolamo Borgia (Roma, 1542),⁸⁷ we can observe an increased research on the topography of Cybele's cult⁸⁸ and on her key-position in the *pompa circensis*. This research equally contributed to the emergence of this vogue. In the *Mirabilia Urbis* or in Fazio degli Uberti, the references to the goddess - the origin of the Pantheon and the site on which Santa Maria Maggiore was erected - had a legendary aura.⁸⁹ Based on the interpretation of archaeological remains and on ancient epigraphical and literary descriptions, the successive reconstructions of the Palatine restored Cybele within the *pomerium*, on Romulus' sacred hill.⁹⁰ Thus, Rabelais' great project of "drawing the visage of the city" (*Urbis faciem calamo perinde ac penicillo depingere*) was advanced in 1534 by Bartholomeo Marliano, who wrote:

*"Il tempio de la gran madre, era similmente in questo contorno è fu edificato essendo censori Marco Iunio & C. Claudio, dedicollo Iunio Bruto, & ne la dedicatione, vi furno celebrati i giochi Megalensi, i quali erano honesti, solenni è religiosi. Questo tempio fu fatto perché l'immagine di questa gran Madre, fu portata da Pesinunte, & tolta dal tempio de la Vittoria, & quando tra i Romani si concludeva alcuna cosa bene, & à tempo fatta; se ne attribuiua tutto l'onore a questa Dea".*⁹¹

These words echo Cicero, who considered the Megalesian feasts *maxime casti, solemnes, religiosi*.⁹² But, as humanists knew by the late fifteenth century, Aulus Gellius (*Noctes Atticae*, II,

accoglie, con la sua faccia mostruosa, sormontata da un globo turrato, subito il visitatore". See *L'Antirrinascimento*, Milan, 1962, p.126. See also Mario Praz, "I mostri di Bomarzo". *Illustrazione Italiana* (1953), 8, 48-51 and Maurizio Calvesi, "Il Sacro Bosco di Bomarzo". In *Scritti di Storia dell'Arte in onore di Lionello Venturi*, I, Rome, 1956, 369-402.

⁸⁷ One need only recall, for example, Latino Giovenale Manetti's general policy towards Roman antiquities and his interventions in the Septizonium and in the forum for Charles V's triumphal entry in Rome in April 5, 1536. And Michelangelo's 1546 project for the Capitoline Hill. See Maria Luisa Madonna, "L'ingresso di Carlo V a Roma". *La città effimera e l'universo artificiale del giardino*, ed. by M. Fagiolo. Roma, 1980; Marcello Fagiolo, Maria Luisa Madonna, *Roma 1300-1875. La città degli anni santi. Atlante*. Roma: Mondadori, 1985, p. 160; Gérard Labrot, *L'Image de Rome. Une arme pour la Contre-Réforme. 1534-1677*. Seyssel: C. Vallon, 1987.

⁸⁸ To my knowledge, we lack a monographic study on this particular aspect of Roman ancient topography during the Renaissance. For a general approach, see Amato Pietro Ferraz, *Le Piante di Roma*, Rome: Istituto di Studi Romani, 1962 and Jacks, *Antiquarianism and Archeological Method in Renaissance Rome* (1985).

⁸⁹ *Mirabilia Urbis Romae*. ed. *Codice Topografico*, III, Rome, 1946, 17-65, p. 54; *Mirabilia Urbis Romae. The Marvels of Rome*. Ed. and translated by F. M. Nichols, New York: Italica, 1986, chap. IV and XIV. See also Silvia Maddalo, *In figura Romae. Immagini di Roma nel libro medioevale*. Rome: Viella, p. 120 and 160.

⁹⁰ To the best of my knowledge, the only comprehensive representation of the Palatine before these efforts is the Santarelli drawing in the Uffizi, ascribed to Simone del Pollaiuolo, called il Cronaca. However it is not yet an archaeological map, but a remarkable view of the Severan slopes of the hill. Gabinetto dei Disegni e Stampe, Santarelli, 163. If the attribution is correct the drawing may be safely dated to 1497. See Alfonso Bartoli, *Cento Vedute di Roma Antica*. Florence: Alinari, 1911, Plate XXV; Idem, *I monumenti antichi di Roma nei disegni degli Uffizi di Firenze*. Rome, 1914, I, fig. 24; Maria Fossi Todorow (coll.), *Disegni Italiani della Collezione Santarelli: Sec. XV-XVIII*. Florence, 1967, p.30-32.

⁹¹ *Topographiae antiquae Romae*. Rome (Blado) and Lyon (Gryphius), 1534. Rabelais explained the method he used for topographical description, involving the use of a sundial (probably influenced by Calvus' circle), in an epistle dedicatory to Jean Du Bellay which was published in the Lyon edition. See Richard Cooper, "Rabelais and the *Topographia Antiquae Romae* of Marliani." *Etudes Rabelaisiennes*, XIV, 1977, 71-87. I quote from the edition of 1548, fol. 30, translated from the improved edition of 1544, Rome. See also Jacks (1993), p. 206.

⁹² In his *Oratio de aruspicum responsis*, XII, against Clodius, Cicero defended the agalesia ludi, *qui sunt more institutisque maxime casti, solemnes, religiosi*, and which had been profaned by slaves.

24) explicitly denied that such games remained *honesti, solenni è religiosi*, two centuries after Cicero. Thus, Marliano's emphasis seems to indicate a strong desire to remove blame from the goddess, whose cult and feasts had always included aspects that were frankly shocking to Christian mentality.⁹³ Yet the location of the temple was still undetermined, as can be deduced from the expression *in questo contorno*, and from the map of the Palatine that Marliano published in fol. 4. It remains undetermined in the map enclosed in the editions of 1544 and 1550 (*Urbis Romae topographia*) as well as in the description of the Palatine furnished by Lucio Fauno in 1549.⁹⁴ As far as I know, a first hypothesis as to the location of Cybele's temple appeared in 1551, with Leonardo Bufalini's *Pianta di Roma*. Bufalini situated the *Templum Matris Deorum* very close to the *Templum Liviae Augustae*. This could be due to Cybele's central role in Livia's apotheosis. / [fig. 10] Bufalini was mistaken, however, since the templum was actually located on the Germalus, the western side of the hill.⁹⁵ But his hypothesis was not arbitrary. It was possibly based either on Augustus' phrase "aedem Matris Magnae in Palatio feci,"⁹⁶ or on some hint about the *sacellum Magnae Matris* which was located at the center of the hill, very close indeed to Bufalini's location.⁹⁷ The second hypothesis, proposed by Pirro Ligorio in his 1553 map of ancient Rome, seems much closer to the real location of Cybele's temple on the Germalus.⁹⁸ It is difficult to establish Bufalini's and Ligorio's sources. They could have gathered different information about it from the excavators who worked during the pontificate of Paul III on the Palatine. In any case, Bufalini's map either reflected or produced a consensus, for in 1552 the temple was similarly located by Lucio Fauno, in his popular *Compendio di Roma Antica*.⁹⁹

⁹³ Even for Giovanfrancesco Pico della Miranda, Cybele and her feasts were forms of demonism "per inganare ogni sesso et ogni età colli simulacri e varie imagini". *Libro della Strega o delle illusioni del Demonio*, translated into Italian in 1523 by F. Leandro degli Alberti. Apud E. Battisti, *L'Antirinascimento*, Milan, 1962, p.144.

⁹⁴ *De Antiquitatibus Urbis Romae ab antiquis nouisque auctoribus exceptis*. Venetijs, apud M. Tramezinum, 1549, fol. 55-56. See also the Italian version, *Delle Antichità della città di Roma*. Venetia: Michele Tramezzino, 1553. For the *Compendio di Roma Antica*, Roma, 1552, by the same author, see the next note. According to Mandowsky and Mitchel, *Roman Antiquities*, p. 19, Fauno published his *Delle antichità di Roma* in 1548.

⁹⁵ See Vermaseren, *CCCA*, Cat. 1; L. Richardson, jr, *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*. The John Hopkins Un. Press, p. 242-43. Systematic excavations on the Palatine only began in the early eighteenth century. See Henry A. Millon, "Reconstructions of the Palatine in the Eighteenth Century." *Eius Virtutis Studiosi. Classical and Postclassical Studies in Memory of Frank Edward Brown (1908-1988)*. Washington, 1993, 479-93.

⁹⁶ This phrase has been interpreted as meaning that Cybele's temple was in the central part of the hill, called Palatium. See Lanciani, *The Ruins and Excavations of Ancient Rome* (1897). New York: Bell, 1967, p. 133.

⁹⁷ Bufalini's engraved map (Rome: Blado), the first complete map of ancient Rome after the Severan *Pianta Marmorea*, was republished in 1560 (Rome: Antonio Trevisi). See Francesco Ehrle, *Roma al Tempo di Giulio III. La Pianta di Roma di Leonardo Bufalini del 1551 riprodotta dall'esemplare esistente nella Biblioteca Vaticana*. Città del Vaticano, 1911; Frutaz, *Le Pianta di Roma*, pp.168, Pl. CIX, 14; Mandowsky and Mitchel, *Roman Antiquities*, 7-28; Zander, "Lo Studio", 557-75. For the *sacellum* dedicated to the Magna Mater, see Christian Huelsen, *The Forum and the Palatine*. New York, 1928.

⁹⁸ Rome: Michele Tramezzini. This map was preceded by Ligorio's map of 1552 [Idem]. Ligorio's huge *Imago* of 1561, as far as I can discern, did not represent Cybele's temple on the Palatine Hill. These magnificent images of Rome have been severely criticized by Marliani and, again, by Lanciani, who considered them the work of a "sagace impostore." "Intorno alla grande pianta di Roma antica. *Atti d. R. Acc. dei Lincei*, CCLXXIII, Ser. 2, V. III, 1876, p. 297. See also Ehrle, p. 26. The issue is comprehensively discussed by Howard Burns, "Pirro Ligorio's Reconstruction of Ancient Rome: the *Antequae Urbis Imago* of 1561." Robert W. Gaston (ed.), *Pirro Ligorio Artist and Antiquarian*. Milan: Silvana, 1988, 19-92.

⁹⁹ *Compendio di Roma Antica raccolto e scritto da M. Lucio Fauno con somma breuità, & ordine con quanto gli Antichi ò Moderni scritto ne hanno*. Venetia: Michael Tramezinus, s.d., but 1552:

"Dove è la chiesa di S. Andrea in Pallara, fu il luogo del Palladio; e secondo alcuni altri, il uico de le Curie. Più oltre fu il tempio di Cibebe" (f. 8). Lucio Mauro gives further information on this emplacement in *Le Antichità della Città di Roma breuiss. raccolte da*

The topographical visualization of both the goddess' palatial character and of the fundamental importance of her cult in Roman society was a decisive step towards her consecration, assured by the *Delle Antichità di Roma, Circi, Theatri, Amphiteatri d'essa città*, etc. by Pirro Ligorio (Rome, 1553).¹⁰⁰ [fig. 11] In light of Tertullian's *De spectaculis*,¹⁰¹ Ligorio for the first time showed an *image* of the Roman Circus in all its splendor and religiosity. The engravings of the Maximus and Flaminius Circuses show the intimate relationship between the patron deity of the *ludi circenses*, i.e., *Sol Indiges*, and Cybele; in both reconstructions, monumental sculptures of Cybele riding lions figured on the *spina* (axial rib of the Circus enclosure), next to Apollo's temple. Moreover, Cybele was similarly depicted in the reconstruction of Maxentius' Circus on the Via Appia, proposed by Onofrio Panvinio in 1557 and also illustrated in the 1580 engraving in the Lanciani collection.¹⁰²

In addition, the numismatic material collected and published for the first time in the *Illustrium Imagines* (apud Jacobus Mazochius) by Andrea Fulvio (Rome, 1517) demonstrates the initial interest in the *Imperatorum & illustrium Virorum ac Mulierum uultus ex antiquis numismatibus expressi*.¹⁰³ The cult of the numismatic effigy (present in the later and more ambitious works of Ligorio, Hubert Goltzius, Enea Vico, Panvinio, Augustin, etc.) is surely important given Cybele's strong presence in certain phases of Roman numismatics. During the late Republican period, she was associated with the *gentes* Volteia, Plaetoria, Fabia e Metelli.¹⁰⁴ Until 222 A.D., imperial strikings associated Cybele with the *Conservatrix* of some emperors (Trajan, Commodus, Antoninus Pius?) or linked her to the *consecratio* of several empresses - Livia, Faustina Senior, Faustina Junior, Lucilla, Julia Domna, Julia Soaemias, etc. - based on the equivalence of MATER SENATUS, MATER AVGUSTORUM or MATER CASTRORUM and MATER DEORUM. The images of Cybele riding a lion that Pirro Ligorio introduced in the Maximus and Flaminius Circuses might be derived from such models of imperial numismatics as the reverse of Sabine medallions or the reverse of a sestertius with an effigy of Commodus (British Museum).

Even more important and frequent, the *contornianti* medals featured images of Cybele until the second half of the fourth century, a sign that the goddess was firmly rooted in the senatorial tradition of the *mos majorum* and of her fundamental participation in the myth of Rome's Trojan origins.¹⁰⁵ Probably one of the main forces behind Cybele's vogue in the Cinquecento stemmed

chiunque hà scritto, ò antico ò moderno, ed. and bound up with Ulisse Aldovrandi's *Tutte le Statue antiche, che in Roma e in diversi luoghi, e case particolari si veggono, raccolte e descritte*. Venice: Giordano Ziletti, 1556. See the 3rd edition of 1562, p.16. This location does remain in the later dialogue between Alessandro Leone and Lodovico Bembo, written by Luigi Contarino, *L'Antiquità di Roma, Sito, Imperadori, Famiglie, Statue, Chiese*, etc. Venice: Francesco Ziletti, 1575, p.58.

¹⁰⁰ Ed. by Daniela Negri. Rome: E & A, 1989. There were strong links between Cybele's temple on the Palatine and the Megalensia. First the position of the temple, on the western hill-top, which surveyed the Circus Maximus. Second, the two commemorations of the Megalensia - 4 and 10 April - fell respectively on the *dies natalis* of the order for the construction of the temple on the Palatine, and on the day of the dedication of this temple. On 4 April the statue of Cybele was carried from the temple to the Circus Maximus (*pompa*) and from her throne she could then watch the games held in her honour. Cf. Vermaseren, *Cybele and Attis*, 51 and 124.

¹⁰¹ *De spectaculis*, 8, 5: "Frigebat daemnonum concilium sine sua Matre Magna; ea itaque illic praesidet euripo." Euripus means in Tertullian's language *spina*. See Emanuele Castorina (ed.), Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1961, p. 183.

¹⁰² See Onofrio Panvinio, *De Triumpho et de ludis circensibus* (1557), in Jules César Boulenger, *Liber de spoliis bellicis*, etc., Paris: B. Macacum, 1601; and *Veduta prospettica e pianta del circo di Massenzio*. In, Lanciani, *Storia*, III, p. 23, fig. 16.

¹⁰³ *Illustrium Imagines Et Nomina Eorum. Romae apud Iacobum Mazochium*, 1517. Fulvio's small book is, as wrote Roberto Weiss, the first published numismatic repertory. *Illustrium Imagines di Andrea Fulvio...* Roma, 1967; Idem, *Annali d. Scuola Norm. Sup. di Pisa*, 1959, 1-43; Idem, *The Renaissance Discovery*, 1989, 209-210.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. P. Lambrechts, "Cybèle, divinité étrangère ou nationale", *Bull. Soc. royale Belge d'Anthropologie et de Préhistoire*, LXII (1951), 44-60.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. M. Bieber, "The images of Cybele in Roman Coins and Sculpture", *Hommages M. Renard*, III (1969), 29-34; Maarten J. Vermaseren, *CCCA*, III, 1977; Idem, *Cybele and Attis*, 1977, 75-76; Robert Turcan, *Numismatique romaine du culte métrouaque*.

precisely from the revival of the Troy/Rome parallel. When, on 13-14 September 1513, Leo X's brother and nephew (Giuliano and Lorenzo) were made citizens of Rome, the celebrations held on the Capitoline Hill suggested the idea that the Etruscans had mediated the parallel Troy/Rome, since Etruscan soldiers were shown welcoming Aeneas to Italy and helping him to found the Empire (*Aeneas Hetruscorum Armis Fundamenta Imperii laicit*). In a successive pageant, this meeting was placed under the protection of Cybele, who pacified a quarrel between Florence (i.e., Etruria) and Rome.¹⁰⁶ Since 1506, this parallel had been celebrated in some well-known poems dedicated to the Laocöonte, and it was soon to be restated by Raphael in *The Fire in the Borgo* (1514-1517).¹⁰⁷

Plenty of sources authorized the connection between Cybele and Aeneas: Aeneas' Phrygian origins (Ovid, *Fasti*, IV, 251ff), or the omen of Aeneas' ships turned into nymphs by the goddess (Virgil, *Aen.*, IX, 79ff.), etc.. Moreover, Propertius' formula *Phrygius Aeneas* exerted a lasting influence on this parallel, for it was later adopted by a popular guide of Rome, published by Georgius Fabricius.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the strong osmosis between Cybele and Venus *caelestis*, present in their Roman cult and witnessed by Roman inscriptions as well as by Tertullian and Augustin, certainly underscored the association between Cybele and the *Aeneadum Genetrix*.¹⁰⁹

Thus, two *pendants* by Garofalo in the Palazzo Barberini, *Picus transformed into a bird* and *Story of the Vestal Claudia*,¹¹⁰ both painted around 1530, bear witness to the idea that the goddess' arrival in Rome echoed that of Aeneas and signaled a second encounter between Latium and Troy. Garofalo's major literary sources were, once again, Virgil and Ovid (*Met.*, XIV, 320ff.). The iconographical meaning of pendants usually lies less in the theme of the individual paintings, than in their nexus. The relationship between the first King of Latium and Cybele was one of *syngeneia*, of consanguinity, given that Picus' father was Saturn (*Aen.* VII, 49), Cybele's "husband". Likewise, the relationship between Cybele and Picus in Garofalo's paintings is symmetrical, for just as Cybele was the divine protector of Aeneas due to their shared Phrygian origins, Picus was the father of Latinus, the king who received Aeneas in Latium. Picus, transformed into a bird, witnessed the sublime encounter (*Aen.* VII, 148-285). And his form,

(*Etudes préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'empire romain* 97). Leiden: Brill, 1983. Mentioned by Filarete in 1464, Livia's *consecratio* in the *Gemma Augusteae* of the Vienna Kunsthistorisches Museum is one among several examples of the parallel Rome-Troy, which had a lasting appeal for Roman culture in Antiquity and again in the Renaissance. See P. Lambrechts, "Livie-Cybèle". *La Nouvelle Clío*, IV (1952), 251-260 and Arnaldo Momigliano, "La leggenda di Enea nella storia di Roma fino ad Augusto". *Saggi di Storia della Religione Romana*, Brescia: Morcelliana, p.174.

¹⁰⁶ On these pageants see the letters by Paolo Palliolo and Marco Antonio Altieri: *Le feste pel conferimento del patriziato romano a Giuliano e Lorenzo de' Medici, narrate da P.P. fanese*. Ed. by O. Guerrini, Bologna: Romagnoli, 1885, and *Giuliano de' Medici eletto cittadino romano*. Roma, L. Pasqualucci, 1881, respectively, reedited by Fabrizio Cruciani, *Il Teatro del Campidoglio e le Feste Romane del 1513*. Milan: Il Polifilo, 1968, p. 52. See also Vasari, ed. Barocchi-Bettarini, IV, p. 320.

¹⁰⁷ This scene was promptly understood as an allusion to the parallel Troy/Rome. Some contemporary engravings by Giovanni Jacopo Caraglio, Ugo da Carpi, Maestro del Dado and, at least, one panel, attributed to Lambert Lombard or to Jan van Scorel (Utrecht, Centraal Museum) reproduced the left-hand part of Raphael's fresco under the title of *The Fire of Troy* (1523). See Alba Costamagna, "Pittori stranieri a Roma e Raffaello." *Aspetti dell'arte a Roma prima e dopo Raffaello*. Rome, Palazzo Venezia, 1984, Cat. no. 48. See also Bernard Andreae, *Laokoon und die Gruendung Roms*. Mainz: Ph. von Zabern, 1988, p. 41.

¹⁰⁸ Propertius (IV, 1, 1-2): "Hoc quodcumque vides, hospes, qua maxima Roma est;/ ante Phrygem Aeneam collis et herba fuit". Apud *Georgii Fabricii Chemnicensis Roma*. Basileia, 1551, p. 21. There is a second edition in the same year.

¹⁰⁹ See *Apolog.*, 12, 4 and *Civ. Dei*, 2, 4. See also Robert Schilling, "L'évolution du culte de Vénus sous l'Empire Romain."

Dans le Sillage de Rome. Religion, Poésie, Humanisme. Paris: Klincksieck, 1988, p. 176-178.

¹¹⁰ 1,29 x 1,95 m., Inv. F.N. 3571 and 3572. Cf. Nolfo di Carpegna, *Catalogo della Galleria Nazionale Palazzo Barberini*, Rome: Del Turco, 1953, p.29, fig. 87/88; B. Berenson, *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance*, I, London: Phaidon, ed. 1968, p.157; Alberto Neppi, *Il Garofalo*. Milan: Silvana, 1959, p.32; Amalia Mezzetti, *Girolamo da Ferrara detto da Carpi*. Milan: Silvana, 1977, Cat. 124-125.

alluding to his prophetic powers, was an augur or omen (VII, 174, but also 146) of the unfolding Roman victories, confirmed in the end by Cybele's coming to the Temple of Victory on the Palatine Hill, which allowed the Romans to defeat the Carthaginians.

It is difficult to determine how much the renewed enthusiasm for Virgil dominant in the Roman culture of those years contributed to the prestige of Aeneas' guardian goddess. Around this time, the image of Cybele was so closely identified with the myth of Rome's origins that the goddess Berecynthia became the emblem of the city, of its fecundity and of the magnificence of its towered walls. This identification between the goddess and the city had already been suggested by the numismatic parallel *Mater Deorum/Mater Senatus*.¹¹¹ But around 1535-1540 they manifestly shared their attributes, if not their identities, as it appears in two remarkable engravings. The first one is Master B in the Die's *Cybele-Rome*, after the aforementioned Peruzzi drawing in the British Museum. [fig. 12] I have mentioned Frommel's hypothesis according to which Peruzzi's drawing could be a sketch for Camillo Portio's *farsa: Cybele et Roma in una Carretta*, which was performed in 1513 on the Capitoline Hill. In Palliolo's contemporary description, Cybele was the *gran matre delli dei*, who opened the globe of Earth and exclaimed: "Presto vien fora delle tenebre, o Roma gloriosa, et fruisce il desiderato cielo." But in Master of the Die's engraving Cybele actually *becomes* an allegory of Rome, as ascertained by the inscription added by the artist, probably for editorial reasons,¹¹² under the goddess' image. (Moreover, it is evident and, as we will see, symptomatic, that, around 1540, Cybele was no longer represented as the *mater deorum*, but rather as an allegory of Earth).

The second engraving is Francisco de Hollanda's allegory of Rome bearing Cybele's crown, in front of the Pantheon (1539-40).¹¹³ [fig. 13] Thus, it can be assumed that in his delicate paraphrase of Virgil - the sonnet 7 of the *Antiquitez de Rome* -, Joachim Du Bellay sanctioned at the middle of the century a well-established *topos* of Roman culture:

*Telle que dans son char la Berecynthienne,
Couronnée de tours et joyeuse d'avoir
Enfanté tant de Dieux, telle se faisait voir
En ses jours plus heureux cette ville ancienne:
Cette ville, qui fut plus que la Phrygienne
Foisonnante en enfants, et de qui le pouvoir
Fut le pouvoir du monde, et ne se peut revoir
Pareille à sa grandeur, grandeur sinon la sienne.*¹¹⁴

.....

¹¹¹ Furthermore, goddess and city shared the sign of their universal empire, the Lion, which in Honorius d'Autun's words "ceteris bestiis quasi rex preest". We could yet recall the Urbs' thirteenth-century emblematic shape *amudo de liono* or the fact that it was again represented on a fourteenth-century ghibellin "gonfalone" seated between two lions. See Frutaz (1962), vol. I, p. 18 and Cola di Rienzo's anonymous biographer: *stava penta Roma, e sedea in mieso a doi lioni*. For the fortune of this emblem, see also Jacks (1993), p. 54-67.

¹¹² See Frommel, *Peruzzi* (1967/68, p.78). The engraving belongs to the *Speculum Romanae Magnificentia*, edited by Antoine Lafréry between 1544 and 1575, but it bears the initials of Antonio Salamanca and might, thus, have been engraved at an earlier date. For Stefania Massari (*Giulio Romano pinxit et delineavit. Opere grafiche autografe di collaborazione e bottega*, Roma, 1993, p. 56), it was executed "su richiesta di Lafréry". See again note 48.

¹¹³ See *Os Desenhos das Antigualhas que vio Francisco d'Ollanda, Pintor Português (1539-1540)*, ed. by E. Tormo, Madrid, 1940, p. 43.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Virgil, VI, 784:... *qualis Berecynthia mater / inuehitur curru Phrygiæ turrata per urbis/...* On Du Bellay's *Antiquitez de Rome*, written during his stay in Rome (1553-57) and published in Paris, 1558, see Henri Chamard, *Joachim du Bellay. 1522-1560*. Lille: Université de Lille, 1900, 271-357; George Hugo Tucker, *The Poet's Odyssey. Joachim Du Bellay and the Antiquitez de Rome*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1990.

Such an identification marked, along with Pius IV's Casino, the apex of Cybele's vogue during the Renaissance. One must ponder on the role of this identification in the triumph of Cybele as allegory of Earth, in the same terms in which Rome's unrivaled world dominion led Martial to proclaim:

*Terrarum dea, gentiumque Roma
cui par est nihil, et nihil secundum.*¹¹⁵

Iib. - Cybele, the Earth Goddess.

The second fact responsible for Cybele's vogue in the middle of the century concerns the development of comparative studies of ancient religions, which not only broadened the knowledge about the goddess but above all greatly transfigured her image.¹¹⁶ It was not by chance that the first two Latin translations of Lucian's *De Dea Syria* - by Jorge Coelho, in Portugal, and by Oto Lupano, in Italy - were undertaken in the 1540s, while so many other works of the Satirist had already been translated as early as the first half of the previous century. They were immediately disseminated. Pirro Ligorio, for example, enthusiastically quoted Lucian in a description of Cybele (ca.1553):

*Statua dela Dea Syria. In molte et infinite et variate forme veggiamo la imagine d'Iside. Et con molti simboli intorno come à madre de gli Iddij chi dimostra dagli Egyptij Isis et dagli Assiri detta Dea Syria. Mà s'alcuni volessen sapere come fusse quella imagine principale, che già era nel Tempio in Syria Luciano La discrive in una sua operetta, dicendo haver veduto in Syria una statua nel Tempio d'una Dea con varie forme, quale era Juno, mà che haveva un' poco di sumiglianza di Pallade, di Venere, et della Luna, et di Rhea; et di Diana, Nemesi et delle Parche.*¹¹⁷

Likewise, Bartolomé de Las Casas drew on the *Dea Syria* to preach religious tolerance in relation to the exotic religious rituals of the heathens.¹¹⁸

For Vasari, Cybele's prestige was most evident in the surge of mythography during this period. Let us go back to the above-cited compendia by Giraldis (1548), Conti (1551), Cartari (1556) and Du Choul (1556). A fundamental change in the treatment of the allegory as an *autonomous* element, which is inserted in a kind of correspondence function/domain, had obviously occurred. The equation Cybele/Earth became in this context perfectly functional. More significantly, three new elements in Cybele's image appeared: her explicit equivalence to other

¹¹⁵ Epigram, XII, 8, 1-2.

¹¹⁶ There are many examples of this comparative approach in the studies on history of religion during those years: Clenardus' lectures on the religion of the Etyopians, or Damião Goes' work on the same subject published in 1540. Oto Lupano's dialogue, *Torricella*, was also published on that year, with a great excursus on the diffusion of religious images from the Etyopians to the Egyptians and the Greeks. As pointed out by Paola Barocchi, who partially edited it, the question reaches back to Diodoro, *Bibl*, III,4 and is re-examined by Vasari (1550, p.113). Cf. *Scritti d'Arte del Cinquecento*. Naples-Bari: Ricciardi, Vol. II, 1973, p. 1184. Ligorio's approach to Cybele (Ms. Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, XIII.B.3 Book 10, 558-559: "De Corybanti et di Iside óvero Opi") is another good example of this method.

¹¹⁷ Apud Mandowsky, Mitchell, *Roman Antiquities*, Cat. 17, p. 63.

¹¹⁸ On the first translation into Latin of this work, in 1540, Michael O. Zappala wrote: "The Latin *De Dea Syria* of the Portuguese Humanist, Jorge Coelho (...) does reflect the interest in comparative religion present in a special way in the Portugese court of his day." Cf. *Lucian of Samosata in the Two Hesperias. An Essay in Literary and Cultural Translation*. Potomac (Ma): Scripta Humanistica, 1990, p.2. In Italy, simultaneously, Oto Lupano published the *Commentaria opus Luciani de Dea Syria*. For Lupano, cf. Barocchi, *Scritti d'Arte del Cinquecento*, II, p.2364.

goddesses,¹¹⁹ the increased importance of her image (also due to these equivalences), and, above all, the emergence of allegorical meanings directly identifying her with the element or planet Earth. This explicit allegorical equation - Cybele equals Earth - to which Vasari subscribed, surfaced for the first time in Renaissance mythography in a passage from *De deis gentium* (Basel, 1548) by Lilio Gregorio Giraldi:

*Haec quidem dea curru vehi dicebatur, quia ipsa
credebatur terra, ut ait Seruius, quae pendet in
aere* (186b - 187a).¹²⁰

The same meaning resurfaced in Natale Conti, in the chapter dedicated to Rhea from the *Mythologiae sive explicationes fabularum*, the first three editions of which were published in 1551, 1561-64 and 1568.¹²¹ Like Giraldi, Conti "demonstrated" the equivalence of Cybele/Earth with the help of sources alien to humanist culture such as Demetrius Byzantine and Alexius, the Greek poet.

A few years after the publication of Giraldi's and Conti's compendia, which consolidated the identification of Cybele with Earth, Vincenzo Cartari finally took this identification for granted. In his *Imagini delli Dei de Gl'Antichi* (1556), he began the chapter on "La Gran Madre" without the authority of a classical source:

*La Terra fu creduta de gli antichi essere stata la prima
di tutti i Dei, & perciò la chiamarono la gran Madre, e la
Madre di questi.... Et fu questa la medesima, che Ope,
Cibele, Rhea, Vesta e Cerere, e altre ancora dimostratrici
delle diverse virtù della Terra.*¹²²

¹¹⁹ See, for instance, Jacopo Zucchi, *Discorso sopra li Dei de' Gentili, e loro Imprese*. Roma: D. Gigliotti, 1602, but written in ca.1586, ed. by Fritz Saxl, *Antike Goetter in der Spaetrenaissance. Ein Freskenzyklus und ein Discorso des Jacopo Zucchi*. Berlin: Teubner, 1927, p. 63: *Hora tornando a ragionare dell'altra Vesta maggiore, che per la terra, e madre di Saturno è tenuta, anzi spesse volte per la gran madre delli Dei inuocata, la finsero gli antichi, (...) inuocandola sotto diuersi nomi, come Cibele, Berecinthia, Vesta, Opis, Tellure, Gran Pale, & simili. And p. 53: Questa adunque infame Deità [Venus] non si vergognorno spesse volte coprirla, & ornarla con il nome di Giuno, Iside, Cibelle, & sino co'l nome della Luna.*

¹²⁰ Giraldi's source is Servius Grammaticus' *In Vergilii Carmina Commentarii*, X, 252-56 (*Alma parens Idaea Deum*, etc.). On these verses, Servius writes: "Alma proprie est tellus ab eo quod nos alat (...) Terram autem ipsam constat esse matrem deum." See Mary Maury Fiala, *The Gods in Servius' Commentary on Virgil's Aeneid, VII-XII*. (Thesis), University of Chicago, 1934, p. 82. Grammaticus' *ed. princeps* is dated from 1532 (Paris, Robertus Stephanus) and access to his rare manuscripts was not easy for Quattrocento scholarship. See Georgius Thilo (ed.), *Servii Grammatici...in Vergilii, etc.*, Leipzig: Teubner, p. XCIII.

¹²¹ For the edition of 1551, cf. F. L. Schoell, *Etudes sur l'Humanisme continental à la fin de la Renaissance*. Paris, 1926, p.27 and P. Guillon, "Natale Conti", in *Biographie Universelle*, Paris, IX, 1854, *ad vocem*. In addition to these three editions, R. Ricciardi ("Natale Conti", in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 28, 1983, *ad vocem*) lists eighteen italian editions until 1653, and a French translation, with 5 editions between 1604 and 1627.

¹²² Not long after 1555 (the date of pope Marcellus' death), Onofrio Panvinio, then under the protection of Alessandro Farnese, wrote *De ludis circensibus libri duo* (Paris: Barth. Macaeum, 1601). Describing Cybele's statue on the *spina* of the Circus Maximus, he remarked the change in the symbolical meaning of the goddess and equated her globe, a sign of divine universal energy, with nature: "Ab alio Obelisci latere erat Isidis siue Cybeles Deorum matris symulachrum, quae diademate turrato caput cinctum habens, Leoni insidebat, altera manu sistrum Aegyptum instrumentum, altera vero mali figura pallam rotundam, siue orbem tenens, per quam rerum naturam designabant, quo in orbe vis illa diuina sit, quam naturam dicimus." (p. 123). I would like to thank Prof. F. Achcar for helping me to understand Panvinio's Latin.

The same year, as we know, Cosimo Bartoli sent Vasari his *Inventioni di Opi* for the frescoes in the *camere principali* of the Palazzo Vecchio. It is hardly surprising that Bartoli's Cybele perfectly corresponded in nature, character and function to an allegory of Earth. Faithful to their source, Vasari and Cristofano Gherardi created in the Room of Ops an image of the goddess which represents one of the most interesting phenomena of iconographic change in Renaissance.¹²³ Fully to describe this change would lead us far beyond our purpose, since its laboratory was the new culture born out of Mantua and Fontainebleau after 1527.¹²⁴ In any case,

at the time Vasari painted his *Ops* at the Palazzo Vecchio, the way was already paved for a new consensus about the allegorical meaning of Cybele, from Veronese's *Cybele* in the Salla dell'Olimpo in Villa Maser (1560-1561) and Taddeo Zuccaro's *The Infant Bacchus restored to Life by Rhea* in the Stanza della Solitudine at Caprarola (1565), to Zucchi's *Elements* at the Palazzo di Firenze (Ministero di Grazia e Giustizia) in Rome (1574-75) and Toussaint Dubreuil's *Cybele and Morphaeus* (Fontainebleau).

* * *

Cybele's vogue, together with her new symbolical meanings greatly influenced Vasari and led him to have recourse to the image of the goddess to interpret an iconographically obscure aspect of Michelangelo's 1505 project. Vasari's use of icons from his own time to interpret iconography from the past is understandable. He had apparently already done so regarding another unclear aspect of Michelangelo's project: the interior of the tomb. Weinberger has demonstrated that the plan of the 1505 project could not be developed, as wrote Vasari, in the manner of a temple of oval shape.¹²⁵ In fact, whereas this shape had not yet surfaced in Renaissance architecture in 1505, its presence enjoyed a great prestige by the middle of the century, mostly after Michelangelo and Vignola had introduced the oval in architecture.¹²⁶

I would argue that Cybele's "case" is not substantially different from that of the implausible use of the oval shape. This kind of anachronism was probably not unusual in Vasari's work or in that of other historians of his time. To consider this particular case as a methodological error on his part would obviously be a much greater anachronism.

¹²³ See Alessandro del Vita, *Lo Zibaldone di Giorgio Vasari*. Arezzo, 1938, p. 70-77; Paola Barocchi, *Vasari Pittore*. Milan: Barbèra, 1964, 38-42; Ugo Muccini, Alessandro Cecchi, *The Apartments of Cosimo in Palazzo Vecchio*. Florence: Le Lettere, 1991, 69-75. Cybele is represented also in the aforementioned *Sacrifice to Cybele* under the semblance of a Diana of Ephesos. See Vasari's *Ragionamenti*: "Look at her with her full breasts to feed all living things...Cybele represents the provisions and presents that His Excellency [the Duke] gives to all his servants". Quoted from Muccini's and Cecchi's translation, p. 58.

¹²⁴ The *équipes* of Palazzo Té and Fontainebleau, as well as their engravers (Fantuzzi, Ghisi, etc.), not only dealt abundantly and with this iconography, but were indeed greatly responsible for its adaptation to the new international culture of the courts.

¹²⁵ Vasari, ed. Barocchi, p. 29.

¹²⁶ Weinberger, *Michelangelo* (1967), p. 133-135. There were no earlier oval architectures but only plans for them, such as Peruzzi's drawing of 1532-36 in Uffizi, arch. 531. According to Wolfgang Lotz ("Die ovalen Kirchenraeume des Cinquecento." *Roemisches Jb f. Kunstges.* 7 (1955), p. 11), this drawing: "zeigt in der abend-laendischen Kunst den unseres Wissens fruehesten Versuch, die Ellipse geometrisch, d.h., als Flaechenform, zu zeichnen..." It is true that painting and some decorative motives had preceded architecture in the oval shape. As pointed out by Harmen Thies (*Michelangelo. Das Kapitoll*. Munich: Bruckman, 1982, p. 66), oval motives can be found already in some decorative elements of Michelangelo's Piccolomini altar in Siena, and in Peruzzi's fountain in the Villa Le Volte (1504). We could also remind Michelangelo's sketch for the scheme of the Sixtine ceiling, housed in The Detroit Art Museum. See Erwin Panofsky, "Die Michelangelo-Literatur seit 1914." *Wiener Jb. f. Kg.* 1, 1921-1922, Beiheft, p. 38, and Ingrid Preussner, *Ellipsen und Ovalen in der Malerei des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*. Weinheim: Acta humaniora, 1987, p. 74. But these decorative motives do not invalidate Weinberger's thesis, which actually concerns the architectural plan of the mausoleum.

III - The place of Cybele in Vasari's description.

In fact, Vasari's anachronism had its reasons. His choice of Cybele was not merely the result of a more or less involuntary adaptation of that iconography to the symbolic culture of the middle of the sixteenth century. Cybele's appearance in Michelangelo's project corresponds to a subtle interpretative strategy of the very meaning of the mausoleum.

Let us return to Condivi's and Vasari's descriptions of Michelangelo's 1505 project. Panofsky and later historians established a detailed inventory of the differences separating the two texts. The cause of much of the discrepancy between the two probably stems from the fact that the descriptions of each biographer was based on different drawings. However, this hypothesis fails to address the essence of the question: the basic disagreement between Condivi and Vasari does not result from the fact that they described different things, but rather from the fact that they described the same things *differently*. What separates such descriptions is a profound divergence in the perception of the ultimate meaning of the monument.

To Condivi, guided by an aging and profoundly religious Michelangelo, the meaning of the 1505 monument - barring its gigantic scale - was not substantially different from that of Sixtus IV's tomb, executed by Antonio Pollaiuolo. In both, the predominant motif of the iconography was the rich link connecting the pope to the Virtues and to the Liberal Arts. Certainly, in Michelangelo, the theme of Arts Bereft, to use Panofsky's words, was more evident than in Pollaiuolo. Even more important was the fact that, contrary to what occurs in Pollaiuolo's static bronze, the Virtues and Liberal Arts in Michelangelo's project expressed a struggle, a moral conflict, perhaps in some ways reminiscent of the tradition of the Psychomachy. In sum, Michelangelo's project, in Condivi's interpretation, projected an overwhelming *terribilità* onto the traditional iconography, without however changing its essence.

This is not what happened in Vasari. Vasari believed the 1505 monument was based on two ideas: Michelangelo's transcendence of the classical paradigm and the monument's ostensibly military and deific character. I will argue that, though written more than fifty years after the project, Vasari's tightly-constructed interpretation not only possess a rigorous logic, but also reveals a sharp perception of what was at stake in Julius II's pontificate. It is remarkable how Vasari's two basic ideas engendered, implied and justified each other: the central axiom of Vasari's interpretation was that Michelangelo had once again surpassed the classical paradigm with his 1505 project,¹²⁷ i.e. *ogni antica e imperiale sepoltura*. But the Roman Emperor's mausoleum was by definition a military and deific monument. On what basis could Vasari have established a *paragone* with the Antiquity, if the terms of comparison were different? One of Vasari's shrewdest strategies concerned his notion of *paragone* in his description of the pope's mausoleum. This notion determined *a priori* the military or deific character of each of this monument's motifs. Every detail of the monument's iconography unfolded from this initial interpretative strategy.

Given this, one must investigate how the "Cybele equals allegory of Earth in mourning" motif

¹²⁷ This is, as a matter of fact, the basic axiom on which is based the whole structure of Vasari's *Vita di Michelagnolo*. But, in Vasari's time this idea was already three generations old. Even older than Raphael/Castiglione's letter to Leo X, it had already appeared, for example, in Sigismondo de' Conti: "Il disegno dell'opera [Bramante's design for San Pietro] accenna di vincere per bellezza e dimensioni ogni altro monumento dell'antichità. Sull'alto della Basilica si lancerà una volta più ampia ed elevata del Pantheon." Cf. *Historiarum sui temporis libri* (1477-1512), Ital. transl., Roma, 1883, p. 1506; and in Paolo Cortesi's *De Cardinalatu* (1510). Cf. Gennaro Savarese, "Antico e moderno in umanisti romani del primo Cinquecento", *Roma e l'Antico* (1985), p. 29. See also Barocchi, *Commento*, II, p. 211f.

was integrated into this Vasarian construction. By substituting Condivi's *Angel* for *Cybele*, Vasari strengthened his own interpretation by discarding the troublesome image of religious piety and in its stead placing a motif with military overtones. It is not surprising that, in Vasari's eyes, Cybele had a marked military meaning. The traditional image of the goddess was not devoid of martial connotations: Aeneas called her *pugnae princeps* (X, 254), she appeared in Roman mythology in the context of the Trojan War and likewise entered Roman history during a moment of military crisis. To a certain extent, she was, for the Romans, an icon of their mythic military origins and of their victory over Carthago. However, as we have seen, such vague and generic connotations, however important, did not mold the goddess' profile during the initial years of the sixteenth century. One of the most important contributions of Cartari's *Imagini* to the transfiguration of the goddess' image was precisely her militarization. With Cartari, Cybele lost her defensive quality as protector of the cities, as classical sources had characterized her, and took the offensive. Writing about the meaning of her towered crown, Cartari was, as far as I know, the first among both classical and modern mythographers to assert:

*La quale sorte di corona era data anticamente dall'
Imperatore à chi prima fosse montato per forza su le
mura de i nemici* (p. 116).

It might seem arbitrary to say that Cybele's appearance in Vasari's text was inspired by this very passage. But such a militarization of Cybele was surely present in Vasari's frescoes in the Palazzo Vecchio as well, since Cybele is preceded, for the first time in her modern iconography, by armed corybants, who demonstrated, in Bartoli's words: *che a ciascuno buono si appartiene il pigliare le armi per difesa della terra o Patria sua*. It is, in any event, undeniable that, with this new martial character, Cybele became perfectly functional within the realm of Vasari's interpretation.¹²⁸ Cybele lamenting the departure of her *Imperator* was an Earth of both victors and losers, of the *prigioni* and of the pope's victories over enemy walls, or, in Vasari's words, over *tutte le provincie soggiogate da questo pontifice e fatte obediente alla Chiesa apostolica*. And we know, finally, that this passage of Cartari's text influenced Vasari so profoundly that he paraphrased it in his *Ragionamenti*, as Sez nec has shown.¹²⁹

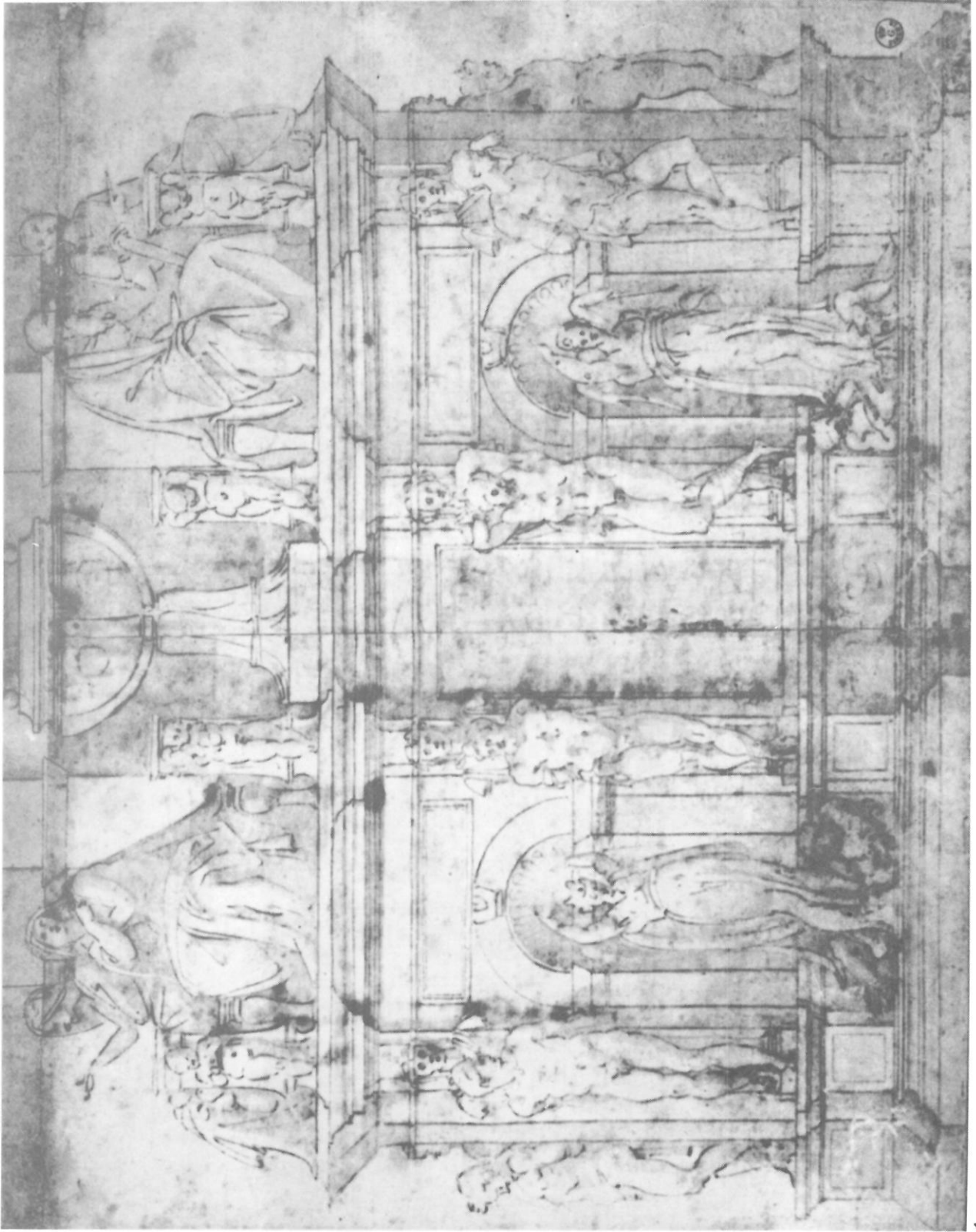
Luiz Marques, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Brasil.

¹²⁸ Accordingly, Catherine of Medici was often styled Cybele by French court poets, as Ronsard and Dorat, simply because she was the mother of Charles IX, whose alleged military role in the Third Civil War against Condé and Coligny deserved some celebratory poems. See, for example, Jean Dorat's *Paeon ou Chant Triumphant sur la victoire de Charles Neuvieme Roy de France* (1569), vv. 77-79: "Si tu es Iuppiter, aussi par sa semence/ Ta mère est la Cybele enfantant les grands dieux./ Qui te faict par conseil vaincre monstres hideux." In *Renaissance Latin Poetry*, ed. by I.D. McFarlane, Manchester Un. Press, 1980, p.174.

¹²⁹ See Sez nec, *The Survival*, Part III, mostly, p. 288-90.

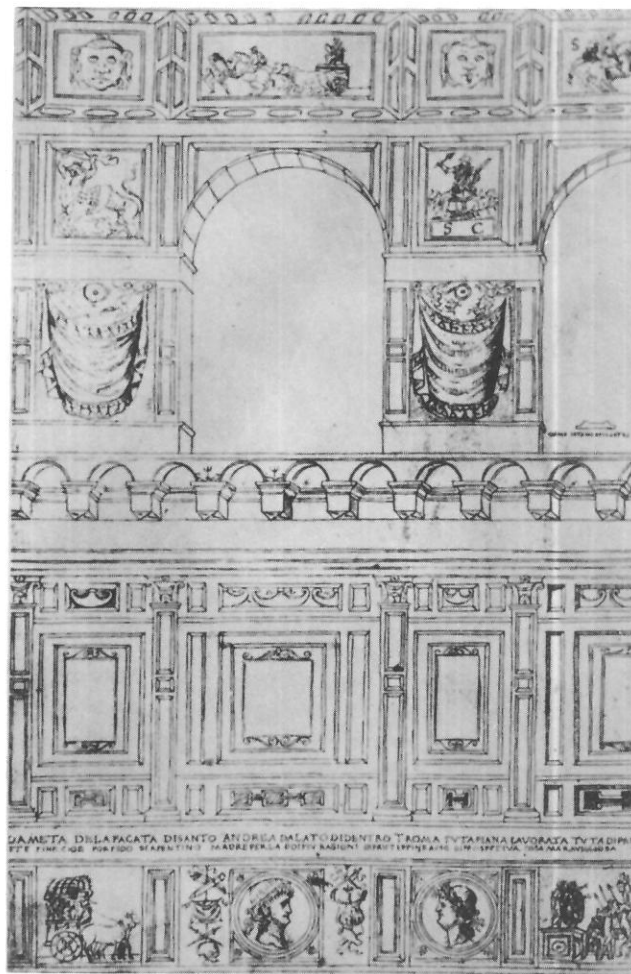
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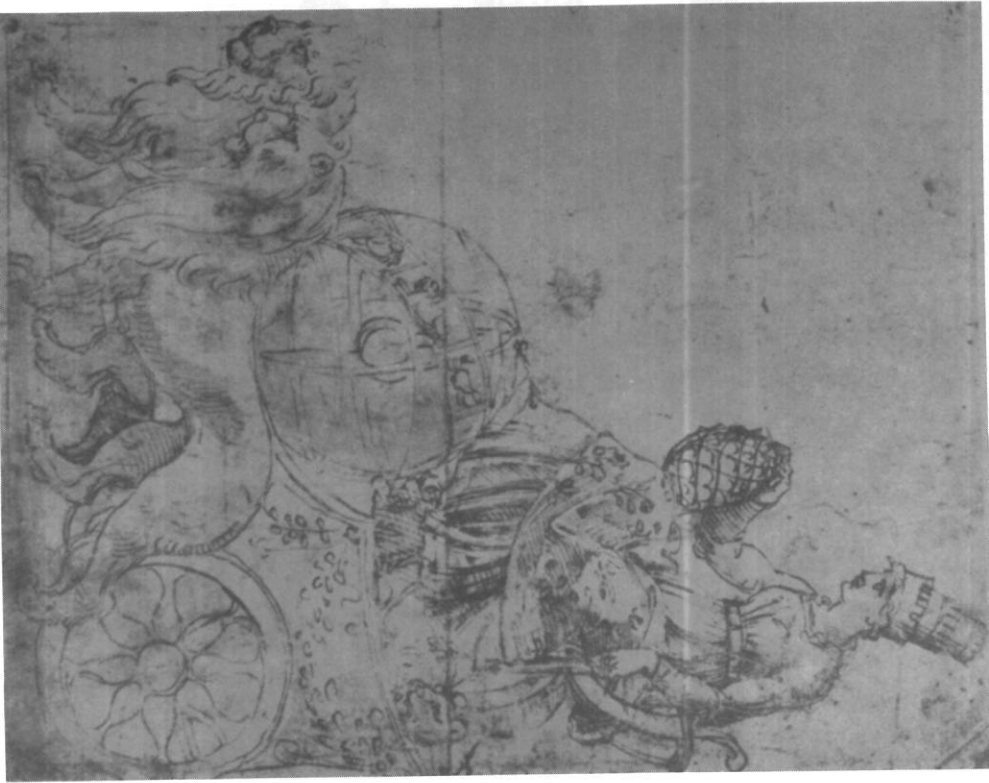


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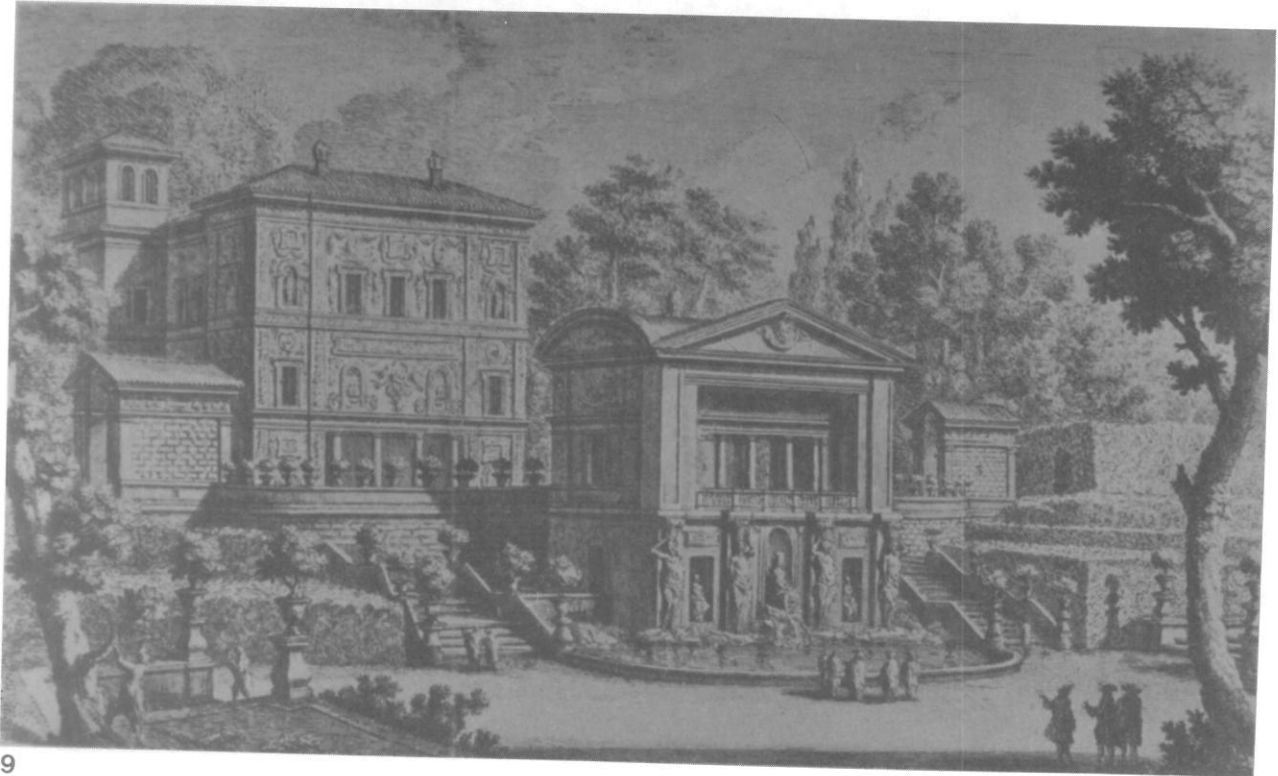


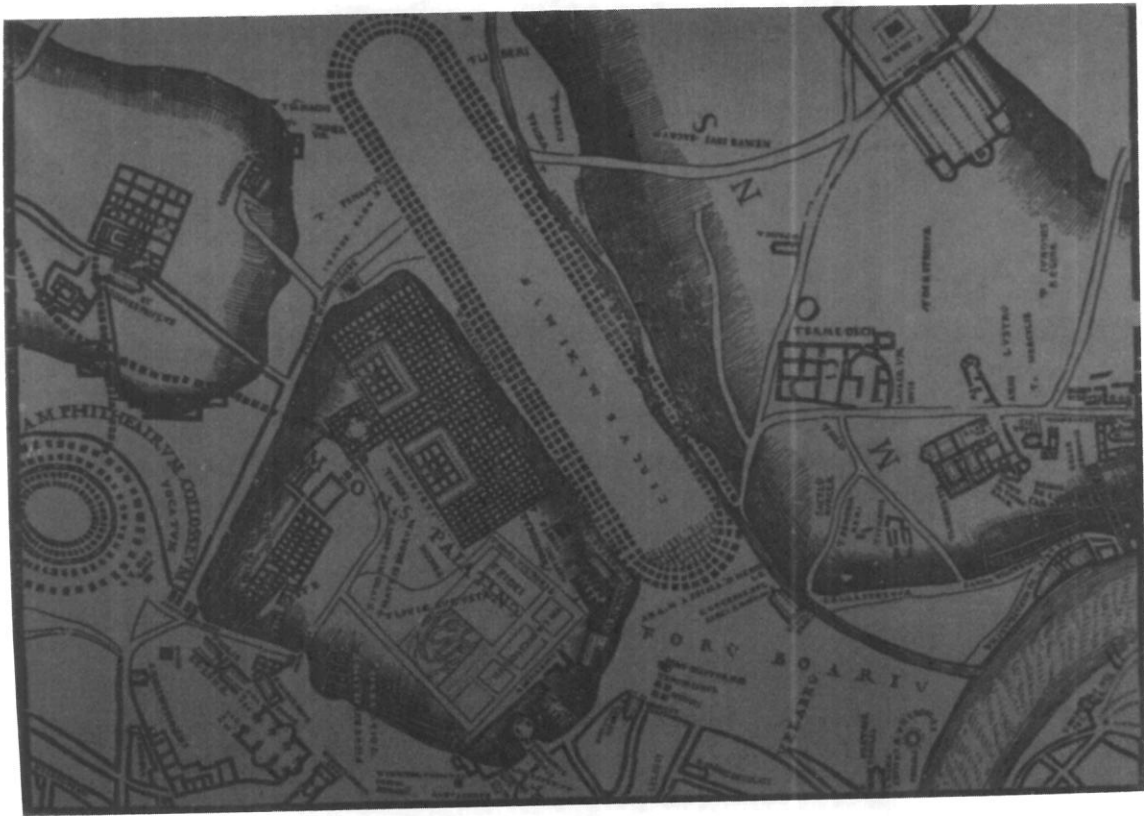
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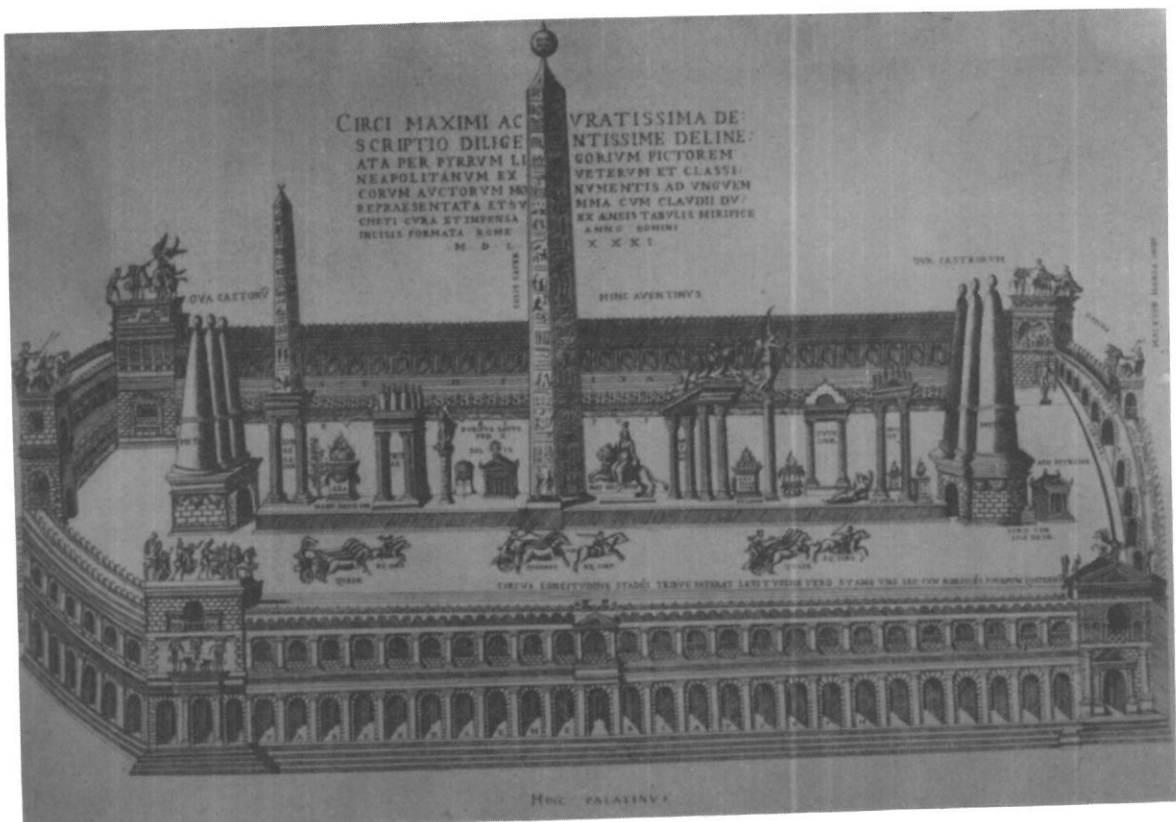


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