

their own satisfaction and salvation, in contrast with the women's more complex responsibilities.

Whose chapel was it? Cosimo's deliberate self-assertion of Medici power by means of Old Testament imagery surely formed aspects of the program, but the complexity of the iconography and visual elegance of the paintings may in time reveal the growing influence of his wife. Cox-Rearick discusses which academicians of the court may have advised Bronzino—Giambullari and Gelli being the most likely candidates—but the question remains, To whom did they respond? If Bandinelli, at first patronized by Cosimo, grew to depend particularly on Eleonora's sponsorship, the advisers for the chapel program could have likewise been increasingly subject to the will of the duchess. In conclusion, an appraisal of Eleonora as patron still remains to be written.

Sheila ffolliott

THE IDEAL QUEENLY PATRON OF THE RENAISSANCE

Catherine de' Medici Defining
Herself or Defined by Others?

Like the late twentieth century, the Renaissance produced a number of "how-to" books, many of which, like Machiavelli's *Prince* or Castiglione's *Courtier*, articulated or advocated ideal behaviors. In 1586, Nicolas Houel, the Parisian apothecary who, in 1562, had presented then queen-regent Catherine de' Medici with an illustrated "how-to" manuscript modeled on the ancient queen Artemisia, dedicated another book to the queen mother.¹ This time it was a published work: *History of the Devotion, Piety, and Charity of the Illustrious Queens of France, together with the Churches, Monasteries, Hospitals, and Colleges that they have founded and built in diverse parts of the kingdom: By means of which foundations God has given them fruitful and happy issue* (that is, children, specifically male).² Although art patronage had a place in Houel's earlier idealization of queenly life, his later book represents, significantly, the first attempt to chronicle over time the patronage activity of a group of women as a class—in this case

I would like to thank Hillary Ballon and Sheila Bonde for their helpful suggestions.

1. See S. ffolliott, "Catherine de' Medici as Artemisia: Figuring the Powerful Widow," in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. M. Ferguson, M. Quilligan, and N. Vickers, Chicago, 1986, 227-41.

2. *Les Mémoires et Recherches de la dévotion, piété, et charité des illustres Roynes de France*, . . . Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, rare book room; the translations are mine.

French queens—beginning with Clotilda, wife of Clovis, and extending to the dedicatee, Catherine de' Medici. Because Houel sought to describe and define a specifically female "queenly patronage," his text provides an excellent locus for examining Renaissance attitudes about the patronly role of women.³

I shall demonstrate here that how Houel regarded Catherine's job as a patron largely reflects and reproduces his era's notion of a particular and, I argue, limited female role in this as well as other areas of conduct. I shall then turn to some remarks about how Catherine de' Medici herself used—or did not use—patronage, which differed from Houel's ideal matronly portrait: that is, how *she* defined herself.

When Houel published this *mémoire* in 1586, France desperately needed a Valois heir to the throne. The volume's dedicatee, Catherine de' Medici, well understood this predicament, having herself been childless for the decade following her own wedding in 1534. She and Henri II eventually produced ten offspring (including four sons), but their first two sons (François II and Charles IX) died without issue, while her third son, Henri III, the current monarch, and his wife showed no signs of reproducing after eleven years of marriage.⁴ Furthermore, in 1584 Catherine's youngest son, the Duke of Alençon, last of the dynasty, died. Although dynastic changes had occurred before in French history, this particular situation posed a new problem for

3. His work is in itself an example of literary patronage, differing, generally speaking, from art patronage in that the writer presents an example of his work in hopes of receiving favor instead of responding to a patron's commission.

4. She had five sons and five daughters (one son and two daughters did not survive infancy). Perhaps Houel hoped that she would remember his needs in her will (she was then sixty-seven years old and would, in fact, die three years later). Acknowledging both her patronage and her success at childbearing, Houel introduced his section on Catherine with: "This *princesse*, being issue of the illustrious House of Medici and the Dukes of Tuscany and Florence, was especially fond of the Sainte-Chapelle and the treasury there with its relics. This was the locale of important relics relating to the passion of Christ." The Sainte-Chapelle, of course, was built by Saint Louis (from whom both the Valois and Catherine's French mother descended), and it has very important associations with the French monarchy. Other aspects of her art patronage, however, seem to indicate her growing concern for her and her family's personal salvation. Ivan Cloula, *Catherine de Médicis*, Paris, 1979, 350, notes that in 1568 she instituted a perpetual service in San Lorenzo, Florence, for her mother and father; moreover, she concerned herself with the Medici papal tombs in Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome; she wanted an estimate of what work needed to be done there. In the tradition of ex voto statues in the Chiostro dei Voti at the Servite church of Santissima Annunziata in Florence, she wanted an orans statue of herself made for the Murate Convent in Florence, where she had spent part of her adolescence, and she wrote her granddaucal cousin about it: see Walter and Elisabeth Paatz, *Die Kirchen von Florenz*, Frankfurt-am-Main, 1852, IV, 344–56. For her French side, she helped endow the French national church in Rome: Saint-Louis des Français.

the Catholic monarchy, since the heretic (i.e., Protestant) Henri of Navarre was heir apparent to the French throne. Houel had come to Catherine's aid a quarter-century earlier, when she confronted regency, with his suggested guide to ruling queenship. He now proposed a remedy to the problem of the heir, urging the queen to follow a time-honored practice employed by numerous queens before her. By exercising the right kinds of patronage—namely, contributing to Houel's own Maison de la Charité Chrétienne, devoted to educating orphans in the apothecary arts—the queen mother could help ensure the continuance of the Catholic royal line. Significantly, his dedicating the book to the queen mother (now in her mid-sixties), rather than to the potential royal mother, Louise de Lorraine, consort of King Henri III, justifiably acknowledged Catherine's greater, though unofficial, power. While she had played an official role as queen-regent both during her husband's lifetime and after his accidental early death, her third son Henri III, thirty-five, now occupied the throne.

From the early Middle Ages when the genre began, the writing of queens' lives assumed an exemplary purpose beyond mere personal biography. Authors could deploy two polarized versions: either the wicked queen, illustrative of the evils of female rule, or the saintly queen, illustrative of great virtue.⁵ In culling his sources, Houel needed to make judicious choices in building his argument. As those sixteenth-century humanists who wrote advice to monarchs quickly learned in this new era of polemic, writing "history" permitted Houel at the same time to inform his potential benefactor about her time-honored role while suggesting politely her proper future direction.⁶ What composite picture of his ideal queenly patron emerges from a survey of his history?

Houel begins his discussion of exemplary female patronage with fifteenth-century (Saint) Clotilda, wife of the first Christian king of France, who concerned herself with church building and with royal tombs. So did Fastrada, one of Charlemagne's wives, who planned a tomb described as "a marble monument à l'antique with relief sculptures illustrating Christ's works."⁷ Tomb building in fact, becomes, a major theme of Houel's book:

5. Pauline Stafford, *Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages*, Athens, Ga., 1983, 30; Louise Keralio Robert, *Les Crimes des reines de France*, Paris, 1791.

6. See my "Exemplarity and Gender: Three Lives of Catherine de' Medici," in *The Rhetoric of Life-Writing in Early Modern Europe: Forms of Biography from Cassandra Fedele to Louis XIV*, ed. Thomas Mayer and Daniel Woolf, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1995, 321–40.

7. The fourth wife of Charlemagne, Fastrada was the daughter of Rodolph, duke of Franconia. Charlemagne married her at Worms in 738 to cement alliances with the eastern Franks. Einhard,

another Carolingian queenly tomb builder was Judith of Bavaria, important moreover to his own agenda because (as he stated) she demonstrated concern for widows and orphans.⁸ The antique appearance of the royal tombs clearly interested Houel, for he related the desire of Louis VI's wife, Adélaïde de Savoie, to be buried in a classically inspired tomb in the monastery she had built at Montmartre in 1135.⁹

Not surprisingly, among those queens he discusses, Houel stressed two kinds: important regently prototypes for Catherine de' Medici herself and progenitors of the Valois dynasty, to which her husband and their sons belonged. He praised a famous thirteenth-century regent, Blanche of Castille, wife of Louis VIII and mother of Saint Louis, for building the Abbey of Maubuisson, where she was buried.¹⁰ He then links her contributions to those of her son's wife, Marguerite de Provence, whose own son, Philip III, was the forebear of the Valois dynasty. Houel cements past and present and forges a queenly tradition moreover by noting that Queen Marguerite

Charlemagne's biographer, blamed her for the troubles during Charlemagne's reign. According to Houel, Fastrada founded the church of Saint-Aubin de Mayence. She had no sons, but two daughters, both of whom became abbesses: Théodule at Argentuël and Hildrude at Faremoutier. She was not, however, the mother of the heir; that was Hildegarde.

8. According to Houel, at her request her husband, Louis I, built the Abbey of Saint-Arnould at Metz, where they are buried. In the sixteenth century, however, Charles V (Hapsburg) besieged the town and destroyed it. Houel describes her additional charity in the following terms (*Mémoire*, 7): "Besides, in her will, with an honest generosity, she gave her rings and jewels with all her effects, as dowries to help poor girls marry." Like other queens (before and after), her position as the king's second wife and stepmother to the heir made her the target of blame for situations probably not of her creation. Houel omits mention of such criticism of her.

9. Adélaïde de Savoie founded the Benedictine nunnery of Saint-Pierre-de-Montmartre in 1135. She died in 1154 and Pope Eugenius III consecrated the church itself in the presence of her son, Louis VII. The church burned in 1559 and Adélaïde's tomb was destroyed. Henri II promised the nuns that he would rebuild it, but he did not fulfill that promise (perhaps because of his accidental death that year). The church's rebuilding was finally completed under Louis XIV and Adélaïde's tombstone was placed behind the new altar; see Joan Evans, *Monastic Architecture in France from the Renaissance to the Revolution*, Cambridge, 1964, 13–22. According to Houel, at Adélaïde's request Louis VI built the Abbey of Saint-Victor in Paris, on the site of the present Faculté des Sciences near the Jardin des Plantes.

10. Constance H. Berman, "Fashions in Monastic Patronage: The Popularity of Supporting Cistercian Abbeys for Women in Thirteenth-Century Northern France," *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History* 17 (1990): 36–45. For Maubuisson, see additionally H. de l'Épinois, "Comptes relatifs à la fondation de l'abbaye de Maubuisson," *Bibliothèque de l'École de Chartes* 29 (1858): 550–67; and N. Kinder, "Blanche of Castile and the Cistercians: An Architectural Re-evaluation of Maubuisson Abbey," *Cîteaux* 27 (1976): 161–88. Berman notes that here Blanche provided the sums necessary for the construction of church, cloister, conventual buildings, and cloister wall. In 1244 she founded the royal Abbey of Lys near Melun (now in ruins), also Cistercian; Berman notes that here Blanche collaborated with other patrons. See A. Dünier and R. H. Delabrouille, *Notre-Dame du Lys*, Paris, 1960; and A. Dimier, *St. Louis et Cîteaux*, Paris, 1953.

founded a hospital now overseen by Louise de Lorraine.¹¹ Finally, because she was consort to the first Valois, Philippe VI, Houel praises the philanthropy of fourteenth-century Jeanne de Bourgogne.

As his book's title reveals, most of the queens Houel mentions were mothers of the heir, and he links their patronage activity directly with these beneficial results. For example, in his narrative Queen Bertha occupied herself with embellishing churches and hospitals and, as a result, produced Charlemagne.¹² Anne of Kiev, wife (and widow) of eleventh-century Henri I, endowed the church of Saint Vincent at Senlis and was rewarded with the birth of their heir, Philippe I.¹³ Sometimes, however, the order was reversed: after being blessed with children, late twelfth-century Queen Adèle de Champagne, third wife of Louis VII, built the Abbey of Pontigny in Burgundy.¹⁴ Once again Houel produces a contemporary parallel and evidence of the efficacy of supporting his charitable endeavors by connecting Adèle's support of religious processions and charitable contributions to that of the current queen, Louise de Lorraine, sponsor of religious processions planned by Houel himself.¹⁵

Although she presents an exception to Houel's stated purpose of demonstrating the efficacy of patronage in producing male children, Houel brings up Marie of Brabant, second wife of thirteenth-century Philippe III, because she "spent all her time in charitable endeavours."¹⁶ Although

11. Furthermore, according to Houel, Marguerite left her precious personal effects to the Hôtel Dieu in Paris.

12. Bertha, called "au Grand Pied" because one foot was larger than the other, was first the concubine and then the wife of Pepin the Short. Bertha herself is reported to have given embroideries to Saint-Denis. More important, however, according to Houel, at her urging, Pepin built a Benedictine abbey at Saint-Jean d'Angély (between Poitiers and Saintes), placed a relic of the head of Saint John the Baptist there, and required the monks to pray for the protection of his realm. The abbey had important resonance in the late sixteenth century, for it had become a Huguenot stronghold and was destroyed during the religious wars.

13. According to Houel, she contributed to the monastery of Saint-Martin-des-Champs in Paris (now the Musée National des Techniques); see Evans, *Monastic Architecture*, 13. To combat her inability to produce an heir, she took a vow and founded the Abbey of Saint-Vincent at Senlis. After her widowhood in 1065, she retired there. The church was rebuilt in the twelfth century; see Marcel Aubert, *Senlis*, Paris, 1922, 101.

14. But she was not its most important patron; according to Houel, she also founded a college at Blois and a hospital at Amboise.

15. Houel had already praised Queen-Regent Anne of Kiev for founding a college in Paris for poor orphans (note, significantly, the exact parallel to Houel's own desires). Although Houel does not mention it, Pope Nicholas II wrote to Anne in 1059 to congratulate her for her charity.

16. She married Philippe le Hardi in 1274. Her story is typical of the legend building surrounding queens, particularly those who were also stepmothers (see note 8 above). She was accused of poisoning her stepson. Her husband, who wanted to believe her innocent, summoned a Béguine

somewhat problematic as a prototype, since she was accused of having poisoned her stepson, she was, like Catherine de' Medici, a long-term widow; and like earlier queens mentioned—and like Catherine, as we shall see—she built a tomb in memory of her husband, described as being “in excellent black and white marble.”¹⁷

Another Houel topos is praise for those queens who persuaded their husbands to assign the much greater resources at their disposal to charity. One example among many is fifteenth-century Charlotte de Savoie, second wife of Louis XI, who induced her husband to build Nôtre-Dame-de-Cléry and a hospital.¹⁸

When Houel historicizes Catherine herself, however, he departs somewhat from his earlier narrow definition of queenly patronage: “This queen compares favorably with the other queens, because she made architecture, painting, and sculpture flourish in France, with the allied arts like goldsmithing, embroidery, tapestry, and others. She embellished Paris with many memorable works and encouraged letters in imitation of Jeanne, wife of Philippe le Bel.” Houel singles out the late thirteenth-century founder of the Collège de Navarre, since her position as mother of three French kings corresponds to that of Catherine de' Medici, and, thinking of his own self-interest, because she lavishly rewarded her sage advisers.¹⁹ Houel continued, “[Catherine] searched out rare books and built in her house

with sibylline skills and she succeeded in shifting blame for the poisoning to the king's male favorite. Marie died in 1321; her heart was buried in the Jacobins and her body at the Cordeliers in Paris.

17. He died in 1285 at the age of forty-one. His tomb was located in Narbonne, but his bones were later transferred to Saint-Denis and his heart to the Jacobins, as were hers. She was successful as a dynast, for her children married into both the Austrian and English royal houses. Similar to the treatment Catherine de' Medici later received, Marie's biographers attributed many poisonings to her. Houel, however, emphasized what for him were her praiseworthy qualities, crediting her with helping her mother-in-law build a hospital at Noyon and the (still extant) Hôtel of Tournus in Burgundy.

18. This church, in the Loire Valley, was rebuilt by Louis XI in fulfillment of a vow made at the Siege of Dieppe; it contains his tomb. Much earlier (according to Houel), likewise Queen Richildis, second wife of Charles the Bald, convinced her husband to build the Abbey of Saint-Corneille-aux-Bois in Compiègne, in which were placed many relics brought by Charlemagne from Constantinople—the Virgin's veil and Veronica's scarf—but no trace remained after the ninth century. Charlotte emulated her predecessor's model to help her produce a son. After her husband's death, she returned to her native Lorraine.

19. She, with her husband's support, built the great Collège de Navarre in Paris, founded in 1304. Her sons were Louis X, Philip V, and Charles IV. Moreover, according to Houel, she built the infirmary of the Châteaux and founded a monastery on the site of the house of the Jew who pierced the Host, near the Cemetery of Saint John. Furthermore, she built a hospital in the Faubourg of Château-Thierry. She died at the age of thirty-three and was buried in the Cordeliers; she is eulogized in Ravisius Textor's *De Claris Mulieribus* (Paris, 1521). Houel's probable source:

at Orléans [the Château of Saint-Maur] an excellent library where she put the books of Leo X and Clement VII.²⁰ She cared for children and encouraged her husband to contribute alms. She helped the Maison de la Charité Chrétienne (Houel's charity) and built the house of the Capuchins in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré as a retreat for all devout persons.”²¹

What characterizes Houel's ideal queenly patron? His title elucidates his purpose. First, the queens' primary patronage responsibility lay in charitable works to benefit others: churches, monasteries, hospitals, and colleges. Second, the imperative to bear male children principally motivated queenly patronage. Belief in the efficacy of this practice continued beyond Houel's time, evidenced by Anne of Austria's seventeenth-century patronage of the Parisian church complex of the Val-de-Grâce, in gratitude for the birth of Louis XIV. Third, the queens did well to extend the effect of their own good works by cajoling their husbands. Finally, if they did anything at all for themselves, it was their tomb. This view of patronage corresponds to prescriptions for women's behavior in general, privileging demonstrations of piety, charity, and devotion to husband, the same qualities that contemporary authors of conduct books constantly reinscribed as desirable in women.²²

How does Catherine's own patronage compare with Houel's contextualization of what he sees as the proper queenly role? Unlike the earlier queens he discusses, he notes the complete range of Catherine's activity, whether or not it was specifically intended to benefit charity. He acknowledges her patronage in a general way but does not specify any secular work of painting, sculpture, or architecture (for example, the Tuileries). Only what might seem (in other patronage contexts) a minor structure—the Capuchin Church—appears by name. In this book, therefore, Houel not only emphasizes those aspects of Catherine's patronage that match his

20. According to Cloulas, *Catherine de Médicis*, 336, the city of Orléans was hers as widow's dower. Her library had 4,500 volumes, including 776 manuscripts, most having come from Piero Strozzi, Catherine's cousin, who, in turn, got them from Cardinal Ridolfi, nephew of Leo X (another relative). This library, much of which eventually went to the Bibliothèque Nationale, was kept at Saint-Maur.

21. According to Joan Evans, *Monastic Architecture*, 119, the first Capuchin church in Paris was built in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré; it was completed in 1610. Nothing remains, but it is said to have been very simple; see Louis Hauteceur, *Histoire de l'architecture classique en France*, Paris, 1943–48, 1, 548. The Capuchin order (an austere branch of the Franciscan order established in Italy in the 1530s and officially recognized in 1538) observed rigid discipline.

22. This is certainly the clear message of works like the Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives's *Instruction for the Christian Woman*, composed in 1519 for the education of Princess Mary Tudor and later widely disseminated.

gendered ideal, but he virtually erases all other areas. Because Catherine de' Medici lived a long and active life as consort, regent, and dowager queen mother, she had the opportunity to exert patronly influence on a scale and in an arena heretofore not possible for a woman in France.

For traditional views of the French sixteenth century, Francis I represented the first truly "Renaissance" king of France because of the extent and vision of his secular patronage activity, together with his interest in things Italian and his departure from medieval models. In the same spirit, Catherine de' Medici can be said to represent the first truly "Renaissance" queen. More sophisticated analyses of nationalism have tempered such simplistic views of the dominance of Italian culture in sixteenth-century France, the national meanings of "Renaissance" and of the relationship to antiquity, and the problematic nature of cultural exchange.²³ Catherine's assertion of her own native culture within her patronage must be similarly scrutinized. In this brief overview of some of her patronage projects, we shall see that some situations called for her to do things "à la Française," while other opportunities presented more scope for "all'italiana."

I should state at the outset, however, that Catherine did not totally reject a gendered model. Her first patronage underscored her continued devotion to her deceased husband. She planned a public equestrian monument to Henri II and wanted Florentine sculptors to execute it.²⁴ She asked Germain Pilon to make a monument for Henri II's heart, following French funerary tradition. She planned the first independent structure to contain royal tombs, called the Valois Chapel, to be appended to the Abbey church at Saint-Denis, which served as the French royal mausoleum. The Italian Francesco Primaticcio furnished the first design that, as I have argued elsewhere, for contextual reasons imitated ancient Christian imperial tombs attached to Saint Peter's in Rome.²⁵ The building of Artemisia's mausoleum, corresponding formally more to Catherine's

23. I made these arguments in "Italianness and 'Frenchness' as Concepts in Cultural Exchange," a paper presented at the Sixteenth-Century Studies Conference, St. Louis in 1993. See also Janet Cox-Rearick, "Sacred to Profane: Diplomatic Gifts of the Medici to Francis I," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 24 (1994): 239-58, and Caroline Elam, "Art and Diplomacy in Renaissance Florence," *Royal Society of Art Journal* 136 (1988): 813-26.

24. This monument was commissioned shortly after his death in 1559; see Malcolm Campbell and Gino Corti, "A Comment on Prince Francesco de' Medici's Refusal to Loan Giovanni Bologna to the Queen of France," *Barlington Magazine* 115 (1973): 508. She wished Michelangelo to make it, and he made drawings but passed them on to Daniele da Volterra, who died in 1566. Catherine then tried for Giambologna, but her Florentine cousins would not spare him.

25. In "Catherine de Medici's Mausoleum," a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians in 1985, I argued, for personal and public reasons, that Catherine wished the Valois Chapel to demonstrate an affinity between Paris and Rome. To

Valois Chapel than to the ancient wonder at Halicarnassus, figured prominently in Antoine Caron's drawing made to accompany Houel's earlier Artemisia biography. While funerary sculpture and architecture was an approved route for female patronage, it could, on occasion, provide room for personal expression. Catherine built the Valois Chapel ostensibly in her husband's memory, but it is important to stress that the chapel's design provided for the eventual placement of her own tomb at its center, together with that of the king. Moreover, radiating out from their central tombs would be those of their children, who continued the dynasty. Such a design gave Catherine and Henri II, equal, as well as central, positions in the representation of their dynasty—the dynasty that she expected to continue to rule France.²⁶

As a long-lived widowed queen mother, Catherine differed from many of her queenly predecessors. At her accession, the Louvre was still the Parisian "palace of prestige" for the French monarchy. Catherine retained *appartements* on the ground floor, while the *reine regnante* lived upstairs in the corresponding apartment on the *piano nobile*.²⁷ Foreign-born queens were expected to renounce their native lands and conform to the French court's way of life. It seems as though only in their widowhood, when they no longer represented the vessel containing the future of France, could they come into their own and reassert their personal identity. Catherine took advantage of her authoritative position to provide spaces—both indoors and out—identified with her personality, where she could be in control. Domestic/palatial architectural patronage provided the means to her own space and she commissioned Philibert de l'Orme to build a new palace at the Tuileries, near (but separate from) the Louvre.²⁸ Although by the time of his death only a small portion of the building was complete, in his 1567 architectural treatise, de l'Orme remarked (somewhat sardonically

summarize: one of the round fourth-century imperial tomb chapels appended to Saint Peter's was known as the Chapel of the Kings of France because of associations dating back to Charlemagne. More recently the French Cardinal Jean de la Groslaye commissioned the young Michelangelo to execute a *pietà* for his tomb located within that chapel. As Catherine began the Valois Chapel at Saint-Denis, the new fabric of Saint Peter's rose and these two old tombs were torn down. The antiquizing Valois Chapel at Saint-Denis symbolically replaced the old Chapel of the Kings of France at Saint Peter's.

26. By 1615 the king, queen, and eight of the ten children were buried there (not Elizabeth, Queen of Spain, and Claude, Duchess of Lorraine); see Cloulas, 351.

27. Hillary Ballon, *The Paris of Henri IV: Architecture and Urbanism*, New York and Cambridge, 1991, 15, 18.

28. Ballon, 19, and Anthony Blunt, *Philibert de l'Orme*, London, 1958, 88; see also my "Casting a Rival into the Shade: Catherine de' Medici and Diane de Poitiers," *Art Journal* 48 (1989): 138-43.

perhaps?) to his dedicatee that he constantly followed her wishes.²⁹ For example, she apparently insisted that there be sufficient facade space for decorative panels for the display of mottoes, a means of personalizing her space (as her deceased husband had done in the Cour Carrée of the Louvre with his ambiguous cypher, uniting him visually with the crescent alluding both to him and to his mistress, Diane de Poitiers).³⁰ Moreover, de l'Orme claimed that he chose the Ionic order for the palace "because (as he read in Vitruvius) it is feminine and was devised according to the proportions and beauties of women and goddesses."³¹

In 1572, the superstitious queen mother wanted to move away from the Louvre parish church, Sainte-Germain l'Auxerrois, near which she had been forecast to die.³² She asked Jean Bullant to build her own house, called the Hôtel de la Reine, and bought sufficient surrounding land for a large palace and garden.³³

Catherine also planned for the architectural needs of her children, buying de l'Orme's Italianate Château of Saint-Maur for Charles IX in 1563 and, beginning in 1575, enlarging it.³⁴ Not emphasizing a probable and important gender connection, Anthony Blunt simply noted that the layout of the apartments at Saint-Maur influenced the building of a later Parisian queenly residence, the Luxembourg, built for Catherine's cousin and successor, Marie de' Medici, a seventeenth-century French widow, regent, and queen mother.³⁵

In 1576 Catherine decided to enlarge Chenonceaux, the Loire château she reclaimed, after Henri II's death, from his mistress, Diane de Poitiers.³⁶ Whether or not Du Cerceau's engraving illustrating a grandiose scheme for its enlargement represents Jean Bullant's or his own ideas is less important

29. Philibert de l'Orme, *Traité d'Architecture*, ed. Jean-Marie Pérouse de Montclos, Paris, 1988, 98.

30. Mariana Jenkins, "The Imagery of the Henri II Wing of the Louvre," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 7 (1977): 289–307; Ifoliotti, 1989.

31. Philibert de l'Orme, 104.

32. As was the case for most prophecies, she interpreted specifically what was said generally. Saint-Germain could have referred to several buildings connected with the French court, including one of the royal palaces, Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

33. According to Cloulas, 323, she bought the land in 1570. Called later the Hôtel de Soissons, the typology of this building resembles those in du Cerceau's *Livre d'Architecture*.

34. Blunt, *Philibert*, 91; she bought it from the heirs of the Cardinal du Bellay.

35. Anthony Blunt, *Art and Architecture in Italy, 1500–1700*, Harmondsworth and Baltimore, 1973, 93–94. Here too the building's design has been related to that of the Florentine Palazzo Pitti, another example of how queens must wait until their widowhood to come into their own.

36. She had already executed some improvements to it. Philibert de l'Orme had built a bridge spanning the Cher for Diane de Poitiers and Bullant added a gallery to it.

in this context than the way—seemingly—the queen mother wanted it enlarged.³⁷ In 1563 the château provided the setting for one of the first court fêtes—arguably her most innovative form of patronage—in whose planning Catherine de' Medici took an active role. Her proposed additions would have enhanced the ceremonial power of the building, creating a large enclosed forecourt and interesting elliptical midsection.

Catherine began to see the potential in these new indoor and outdoor spaces as stages for the rituals of courtly life, especially the fêtes, in which her sons and daughters, together with other courtiers, performed metaphorical reconciliations of hostile Protestant and Catholic factions.³⁸ In 1573 she astonished the Polish ambassadors, who had come to offer their new elective crown to her third son (the future Henri III), with a ballet extravaganza performed in the *parterres* of her new Tuileries gardens. Instead of withdrawing to a convent that she had founded, in imitation of several of the queens Houel discussed in his book, Catherine remained at the center of court life and threw her energies and resources into planning and supporting the creation of an arena in which she herself could exercise active representational control as choreographer.

Large-scale mythological decorative painting was not Catherine's great priority. Although she appointed Antoine Caron and others to the post of official painter, once on her own she preferred family portraits, including her granddaughters and Medici relatives, in the decoration of her domestic spaces.³⁹ One of the most important artistic products to be associated with Catherine de' Medici were the Valois Tapestries, monumental records of the festivals she supervised with herself and her family members prominently displayed. These permanent reminders of events she shaped provided the decoration for important public spaces in her *hôtel*.⁴⁰

Catherine also helped inaugurate a new queenly tradition: she left possessions she owned outright to female relatives. Louise de Lorraine, for

37. Du Cerceau was supported by Catherine de' Medici, to whom he dedicated several of his books; Blunt, *Art and Architecture*, 141. He originally dedicated *Les plus excellents Bastiments de France*, published in 1576, to Renée de France, dowager Duchess of Ferrara, but she died in 1575 and he changed the dedication to Catherine de' Medici.

38. I discussed the symbolic significance of certain aspects of these fêtes in a paper presented at the 1994 meeting of the College Art Association: "Make Love, Not War": Images of Peace Through Marriage in Sixteenth-Century France."

39. A famous Limoges enamel family portrait (Ecouen, Musée Nationale de la Renaissance) was originally in her oratory at the Hôtel de la Reine. She collected tapestries, including a twelve-piece Hannibal series, and twenty-four others are mentioned in the inventories as "bearing her arms."

40. Frances Yates, *The Valois Tapestries*, London, 1959.

example, received Chenonceaux, where she lived as a widow after the death of Henri III.⁴¹ The precious Valois Tapestries represent Catherine's symbolic triumphal return to Florence, for she bequeathed them to her favorite granddaughter, Christine de Lorraine, bride of the Medici Grand-duke Ferdinando I. She brought them, together with some of Catherine's court dresses, to Florence in her trousseau. Another granddaughter, the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia of Spain, regent of the Netherlands, as well as her Medici cousin Marie, wife of Henri IV, later king of France and the first of the Bourbon dynasty, continued her new type of queenly patronage, both making good use of Rubens's talents for secular as well as sacred subjects.

Catherine de' Medici occupied an anomalous position: first regent, for a short time, and then influential queen mother (for largely ineffectual kings) for a total of forty years. Her public career (if we can call it that) coincided with a particularly unstable period of religious and civil war. Thus she transcended the limited public role generally conceded to royal women during this period. By choosing to commission secular architecture and gardens—living spaces—she approached the kingly patronage tradition, with important queenly modifications, in which the rituals of courtly life, as well as specially staged festivities—her ideal reality—could be acted out under her supervision. She thereby eclipsed, the narrow matronly patronage role envisaged for queens by Houel and his ilk.

Alice T. Friedman

WIFE IN THE ENGLISH COUNTRY HOUSE

Gender and the Meaning of Style in Early Modern England

When Joan Kelly first asked the question "Did women have a Renaissance?" in the mid-1970s, historians were forced to reexamine conventional period labels in light of gender difference.¹ Kelly suggested that the cultural life of the European court in the sixteenth century represented a step backward for women, a retreat from the medieval period's relatively equitable notions about men's and women's status in society and in the family. Despite advances in education and intellectual life for men, the options for upper-class women were in fact more limited than they had been a century earlier. That Kelly ultimately answered her question in the negative suggests the need for a further inquiry into the relationship between gender and other forms of culture, notably art and architecture, in which meaning is mediated through categories of difference. Paying particular attention to changes in style, to historical context and audience, this reassessment underscores the significance of gender as a factor in creating significant variations in the experience and interpretation of works of art.²

1. Joan Kelly, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" in *Women, History, and Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly*, Chicago, 1984, 19–50. The essay was first published in 1977.

2. For an extended discussion of this subject, see my "Architecture, Authority, and the Female Gaze: Planning and Representation in the Early Modern Country House," *Assemblage* 18 (Fall