SUMMARY

Barbara Hryszko
THE ICONOGRAPHY AND DATING
OF THREE MYTHOLOGICAL DRAWINGS
BY ALEXANDRE UBELESKI

The in-depth analysis of the form and iconography of three drawings by Alexandre Ubeleski (1649/1651–1718) allow for their grouping, the identification of their subject matter and potential sources of inspiration, their dating, and the discovery of their ideological meaning. The drawings are the designs of paintings presenting mythological lovers: Apollo and Issa (Fig. 1), Diana as Luna and Endymion (Fig. 2), and Bacchus and Ariadne (lost). Most probably, the artist prepared these scenes using François Chauveau's drawings as a model. These drawings were designs of prints (Fig. 4 and 6) used to illustrating the poem of Isaac de Benserade entitled Metamorphoses d'Ovide en rondeaux (1676). Ubeleski's drawings are related to the themes of operas composed in the second half of the 1690s, including *Ariane et Bacchus* (1696), *Issé* (1697), and *Diane et Endymion* (1698). Issé was particularly popular at that time and greatly contributed to popularising this rare Ovid's theme. This allows us to put forward the hypothesis that a series of Ubeleski's drawings could have been created at the same time. All three love stories depicted in the drawings present the unification of opposites: a god of sun and a nymph, a goddess of moon/hunting and a shepherd/hunter, and a god of wine and a girl abandoned by Theseus, and they also depict peculiar mythological "mésalliances" that link the immortal gods with beautiful yet mortal creatures. The question remains open whether the series of paintings planned by Ubeleski can be linked with the celestial bodies: the sun, the moon, and Corona Borealis, into which Ariadne's diadem - a wedding gift from Bacchus - was transformed. The analysis of the drawings treated as a series offers an insight into the nature of Ubeleski's work, and places it in a broader context of not only the arts but also the literature and music created within the culture of King Louis XIV's court.