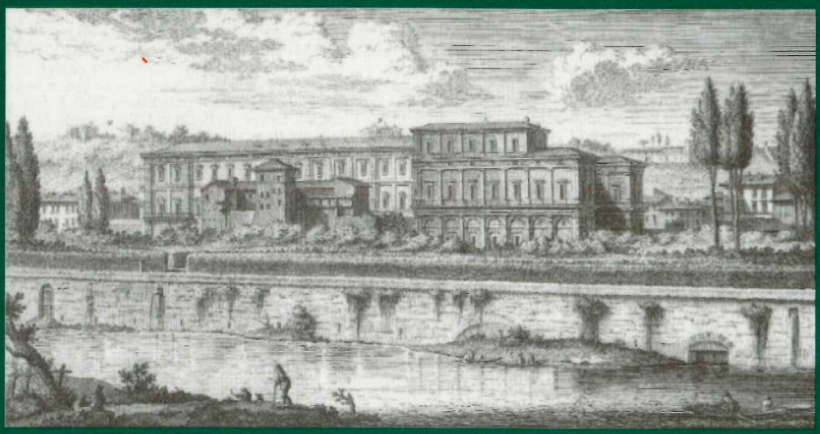
The Roman Garden of Agostino Chigi



Ingrid D. Rowland

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Cover illustration:
Villa Farnesina, Rome: *Tiber façade showing ruins of underground grottoes*

The Thirteenth Gerson Lecture
held in memory of Horst Gerson (1907–1978)
in the aula of the University of Groningen
on the 17th of November 2005

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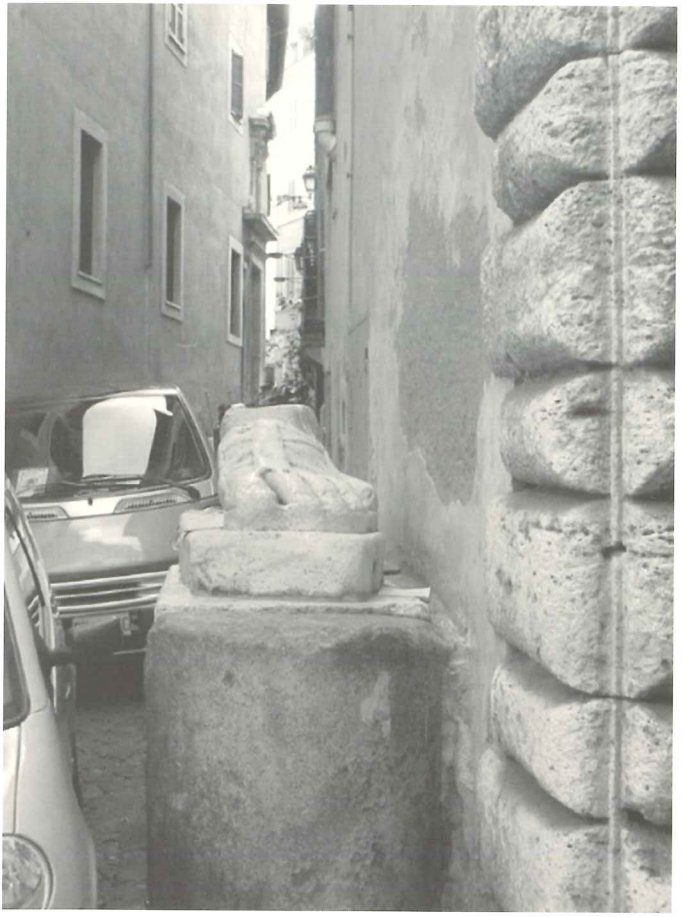
Groningen
The Gerson Lectures Foundation
2005



1 *Remains of a statue of Serapis from the ancient Temple of Isis,* Rome

It is difficult in today's Rome, a crowded, noisy capital of three million people, to imagine how the city felt in the beginning of the sixteenth century, when its population numbered only fifty thousand. The third-century fortification walls built by Emperor Aurelian, designed to protect an ancient metropolis of one million, marched like its ruined aqueducts across largely empty land, where people farmed and tended their herds beneath the ruins of ancient baths, villas, palaces, and temples (fig. 1). The city looked anything but eternal; time had treated it with cruel disdain. The melancholy description that Petrarch gave in 1367 or 1368 was still largely true two centuries later: 'Although when I first … went to Rome, almost nothing was left of that old Rome but an outline or an image, and only the ruins bore witness to its bygone greatness, nonetheless, among those ashes there were still some noble sparks; but now the ash is long extinguished and grown cold.'[1] Lime-burners loaded ancient statues into kilns in what had been the Roman Forum; now it was called the 'Cow Pasture', the *Campo Vaccino*. The site of the great ancient temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus had turned into *Monte Caprino*, 'Goat Hill'.

The city's prospects for recovery were little better than bleak. Sixteenth-century Rome's main source of income, the Church, produced careers rather than tangible goods, and disrupted the balance of local society by attracting an enormous number of single men, most of them destined never to marry. There was no rational reason, historical, economic, or social, that such a strange, desolate place should have been transformed from Petrarch's somber wreck into the Eternal City; it was entirely a matter of mind, memory, and will. The transformation of Rome began with Petrarch's lament, but it took on real momentum in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, culminating in the great urban designs of the Baroque popes in the seventeenth. Building became the city's most lucrative trade as the shabby backwater molted into a glittering European capital. The story of Rome's restoration is a remarkable one, guided by an overpowering idea, and one of the most implacable proponents of that idea, perhaps the most important proponent of all, was the pope who bribed his way into office in the final weeks of the year 1503, the *papa terribile*, Julius II.

Stubborn, ruthless, and visionary, Julius was also a practical man; he harbored no doubt whatsoever that his own election had been divinely ordained, but like Caesar before him, he smoothed the way to the office of Pontifex Maximus with generous helpings of cash. Twice in the ten years of his pontificate, he secured his authority by marching off to war, for until the end of the nineteenth century the pope commanded a state that stretched from Bologna and Ferrara in the north to the mountains of Frosinone in the south. It was Julius who first called in Swiss mercenaries to serve as the papal guard, dressed in colorful velvet skirts. An avid collector of antiquities, he also understood the persuasive power of new works of art, and became one of the very greatest patrons of the Renaissance. In Rome itself, with the help of artists like Donato Bramante, Michelangelo, and Raphael, he undertook huge projects to make the city a Christian capital as glorious as its pagan predecessor: redrawing city streets, erecting churches and *palazzi*, razing the early Christian basilica of St. Peter's to make way for a modern building. Characteristically, however, he made sure to back his gigantic plans with gigantic reserves of money. The bankers who worked with Julius II operated on his same monumental scale, legendary figures like Johann Jakob Fugger of Augsburg, nicknamed 'The Rich', and, above all, a Sienese magnate named Agostino Chigi (fig. 2).

At thirty-eight, Chigi had already made a substantial fortune by the time he supplied Julius with bribe money for the conclave of 1503. Two years earlier, in 1501, he had bought up majority shares in every alum field on the Italian peninsula, reckoning that by controlling the flow of a single scarce commodity used for dyeing cloth he could control the whole international market in textiles.[2] His reasoning, more like that of a nineteenth-century industrial baron than an early modern merchant banker, turned out to be brilliantly correct; at the same time that Agostino was offering money to the future pope he was also engaged in buying out his partners in the alum business, two actions that suggest an enormous supply of liquid cash as well as a sure head for politics. Julius seems to have understood instinctively what an economic mind like Chigi's could do for the papacy, and what the papacy could do for Chigi; soon Agostino and his associates would routinely use excommunication as a means of coercing their debtors, creditors, and business rivals. The rich man became still richer, reportedly the richest man in Italy, in Europe, or, as the Sultan Bajazet II declared, 'the great merchant of Christendom.' Chigi participated in – and on occasion guided – the pope's political plans, and paid close attention

2 Baldassare Peruzzi
Agostino Chigi as Hercules (?)

3 *Via Giulia,* Rome

to developments in art, music, and literature; he would become Raphael's most important private patron and the first publisher of an ancient Greek text in Rome. It is not surprising, then, that when Julius and Bramante conceived a grand project for redesigning the section of Rome that stretched along the river Tiber between the bankers' quarter and the Vatican, Agostino Chigi was one of the first participants in the scheme, along with several of the most ambitious cardinals in the Curia.

Julius and Bramante decided to overhaul one of Rome's most densely inhabited districts by subjecting it to an overall design: two parallel streets running straight along either side of the Tiber, with the river itself acting as a third corridor in between, for in those days it carried a dense traffic of cargo ships and ferries.[3] Because ancient Roman roads ran famously straight, the project restored an element of ancient Roman planning to the form of modern Rome. The street on the side of the bankers' quarter, the Via Giulia – obviously named for the pope – was to be anchored halfway along its trajectory by a huge Bramante-designed building where the offices of the curial bureaucracy and the papal tribunal would all be concentrated in one central location (fig. 3). The rest of the street would be lined by sumptuous *palazzi*: Cardinal Farnese, Raphael, and the papal librarian Tommaso Inghirami all purchased plots. On the opposite side of the river, the Via della Lungara had always connected the Vatican with the densely populated area of Trastevere, passing through an area sprinkled with convents and the small garden plots called *vigne*, grape arbors, where Romans withdrew to escape the crowds and smells of the city and to produce their own personal supplies of vegetables and wine. The pope's new plan called for villas on large plots to replace humble *vigne*, and Cardinals Farnese and Riario, the latter the pope's cousin and inveterate rival, quickly secured their place on the newly widened street (fig. 4). So, in 1505, did Agostino Chigi.

Renaissance Popes had long used competition as a way of ensuring that large projects were completed quickly; Julius' uncle, Pope Sixtus IV, had engaged a whole series of prominent artists to fresco the walls of his new Sistine Chapel in 1481, confident that their eagerness to outdo one another would make them work as fast and well as they could. They finished within two years. Twenty years before the great Sistine Chapel showdown, Pope Pius II had challenged his most ambitious cardinals to build palaces in his native town, Pienza, so that he could see it transformed from a sleepy hamlet into a Renaissance jewel

4 *Porta Settimiana and Via della Lungara*, Rome

almost before his eyes. Now Julius II and Bramante hoped that the same kinds of rivalry would speed Rome's transformation into a glorious garden city.

Agostino Chigi had more money to spend on his own contribution to the plan than most of his neighbors, but he also had a special incentive to do so. He would develop his property along the river Tiber as a concrete proof, to his cardinal neighbors, to the pope, and to the world, that he was not simply a merchant banker. In his native Siena, for a variety of historical reasons, the line between merchants and landed gentry was not drawn as finely as elsewhere in Italy, so that within the Sienese Republic, the Chigi family unquestionably belonged to the aristocracy. Agostino himself would insist upon this fact throughout his life by using the title *Patritius Senensis*, but he was never able to add on a coveted *Patritius Romanus*. In Rome, his profession placed him well below the rank of baronial families like the Farnese, Massimo, Orsini, and Colonna, who derived their income from landholdings and military commissions and looked down on merchants with conspicuous condescension, especially when those merchants were extending them loans.

Other qualities distinguished Chigi, and in a negative way, from the baronial nobility. As a boy, despite his father's best efforts, he had resisted classical studies, the training that gave the aristocracy of Renaissance Italy its distinctive style. As a result, Agostino's Latin was poor, and his writing bluntly direct. He read history eagerly, but he wrote his letters in a merchant's cursive and spouted Tuscan proverbs rather than citations from the ancient authors. To be sure, many of the nobles who disdained him as an inferior had no more than a veneer of classical learning themselves, but that veneer was enough to preserve their superior social status. When Chigi inscribed himself into the books of the posh confraternity of Santo Spirito, he wrote his tormented Latin in tiny letters instead of his usual expansive, looping hand.

The branches of learning in which Chigi is said to have been intensely interested, finance, calculation, and alchemy, were regarded in his day as varieties of technical knowledge rather than liberal arts; this was a time when a Leonardo da Vinci could describe himself as 'illiterate' because no amount of expertise in the ways of nature could compensate for a lack of Latin. Similarly, it is clear from the way that Chigi managed the alum industry that his fascination with numbers, money and markets must have had a highly theoretical as well as a practical slant, but economics would not become a recognized academic discipline for several more centuries. Hence, although Chigi's contem-

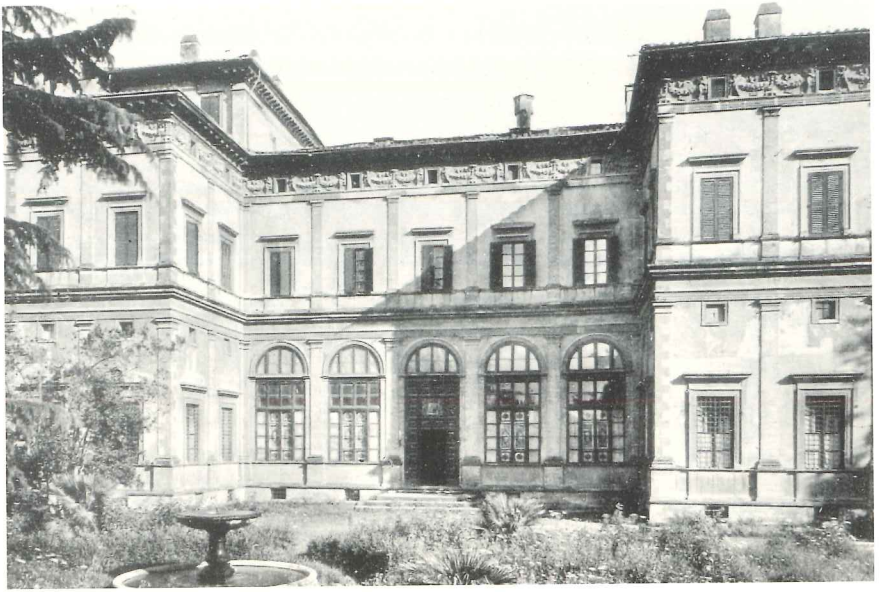
poraries often noted his extraordinary intelligence, it was an intelligence that fit none of the familiar categories, social, intellectual, or occupational. It did, however, fit that flexible instrument of social mobility that was the universal Church.

More than perhaps any other institution in sixteenth-century Europe, the Church offered opportunities to talented men and women from every kind of background, including education, employment, income, and the social benefits that these varieties of security conferred. For so collective an organization, it was often more accommodating of individual quirks than secular society, perhaps because so many of its members had renounced the conventional ties of marriage and family. It is probably no accident that Agostino Chigi achieved his remarkable status by serving as a 'banker following the Roman curia', *mercator romanam curiam sequens*; had he continued to work in Siena he would have been hemmed in by centuries of communal traditions favoring cooperation among bankers and strongly discouraging excessive independence.

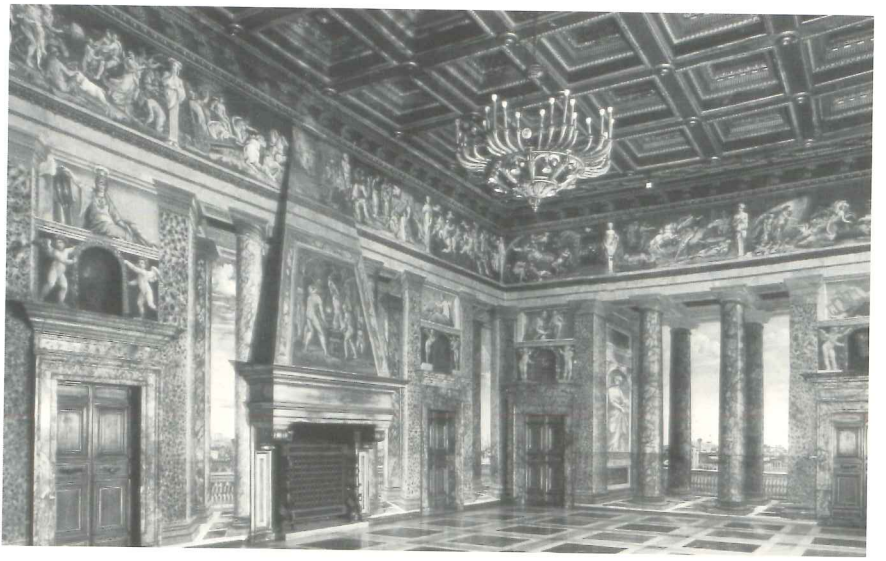
Chigi's Roman villa was designed, then, to present, and in part to explain, a complex man to a society that had no category to accommodate him other than the category he was engaged in creating for himself. Like the cardinals whose property surrounded his own on the Via della Lungara, he aspired to become, in his own way, a prince of the Church, demonstrating his nobility not through wealth, but through a quality that he and his contemporaries called *ingegno* – a word whose range of meanings included intelligence, wit, and originality – and through his undeniable taste. The success of Chigi's endeavor can be judged, among other criteria, by his villa's present name, 'La Farnesina' – for his next-door neighbor, Cardinal Farnese, a landed baron and future pope, envied it so desperately that eventually, in 1579, the Farnese family bought it, long after Agostino and his neighbor Pope Paul III were both dead.

Today the Villa Farnesina is best known for its frescoes by Raphael, Sodoma, Sebastiano del Piombo and Baldassare Peruzzi: a remarkable concentration of talent for this one private space (fig. 5). In Chigi's day, however, the villa was still better known for its grounds; indeed, it was simply called his *Viridarium*, his garden, or his *Suburbanum*, referring to the property's location just outside the city's ancient walls. It is this part of the villa, the most elusive, that I would like to reconstruct for you on the present occasion.

Unusually for suburban buildings in Rome, and especially villas, which were



5 *Villa Farnesina*, Rome: *entrance*



6 Baldassare Peruzzi
Sala delle Colonne

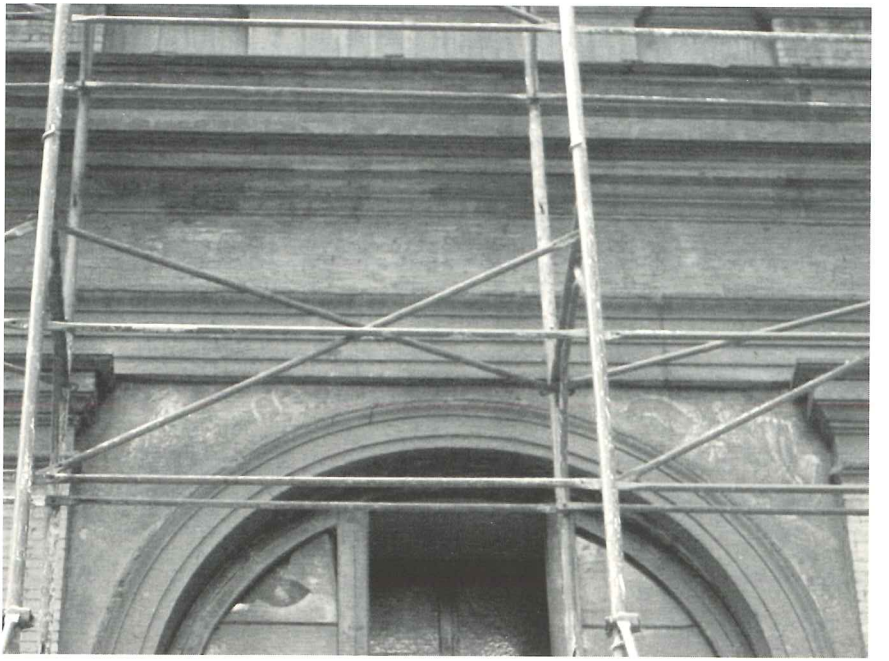
usually used only in daytime, Agostino Chigi's *Viridarium* became his primary residence. He continued to maintain his old offices and his no-nonsense *palazzo* in the Tuscan section of the bankers' quarter, where his legions of associates watched over an operation that extended from London to Constantinople, but after 1511 Agostino conducted most of his own business in the new building he had commissioned from the Tuscan architect Baldassare Peruzzi, probably in 1509. By 1504, Peruzzi had already designed a villa in the countryside near Siena for Chigi's father Mariano, the focal point of a working farm called Le Volte, and there for the first time the architect experimented with a building that featured two projecting wings flanking a loggia. Most country villas as big as Le Volte looked more like fortresses, but Mariano Chigi's portico looks expansively out over his property, proclaiming the owner's sense of security. For Agostino Chigi, Peruzzi repeated this motif again on the Via della Lungara, facing the loggia toward the Vatican rather than the Sienese countryside; as with Le Volte the idea gave a sense of openness, and of possession; urban *palazzi* in Rome also looked like fortresses, and Chigi's airy villa looked refreshingly casual by comparison. Agostino's Roman villa, set as it was just outside the city's ancient fortification walls rather than in open country, was distinctly suburban; that nearly urban condition called for a much more elaborate and orderly façade than the simple, somewhat asymmetrical design of Le Volte, striking a balance between the feel of an urban *palazzo* and a country estate.

Chigi's decision to purchase land on the Vatican side of the Tiber rather than a *palazzo* on the Via Giulia can be ascribed to a series of symbolic motives. Most romantically, the Tiber had acted in ancient times as the traditional boundary between Rome and Tuscany, so that Agostino, as a good Tuscan, could pretend that his new house stood on his own native soil. In more practical terms, the location separated him physically from his fellow bankers, setting him amid cardinals instead, and only half a mile down the road from the Apostolic Palace.[4]

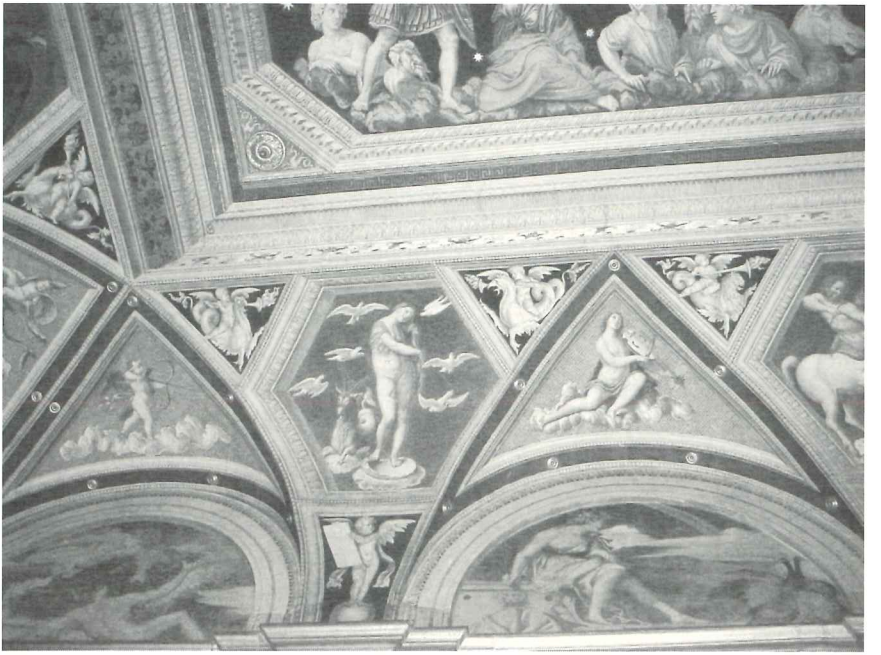
When Chigi commissioned the villa of his fellow Tuscan Peruzzi, his political influence was reaching the highest point of his career. The years between 1509 and 1511 were the years in which he and Pope Julius planned and carried out a protracted military expedition in northern Italy. The goals of that expedition were economic as well as political: the pope and his banker aimed – successfully, as it turned out – to force the state of Ferrara to stop selling salt more cheaply than salt from the papal works at Cervia, and then to garner special

concessions from Venice for the marketing of Chigi's alum from the papal mines at Tolfa. When Chigi moved into his new villa after a six-month stay in Venice, he had been living there like a lord, carrying out a diplomatic mission at the highest level. The pope had granted him the right to quarter his own coat of arms, the Chigi star and mountains, with the Della Rovere oak. When he sailed down to Rome from the Venetian port of Chioggia, his entourage included a new Venetian painter, Sebastiano Luciani, a new Venetian mistress, Francesca Ordeaschi, a Cretan printer, Zacharias Kalliergês, and thirty thousand ducats' worth of jewels from the treasury of San Marco, that is, the treasury of the Venetian state.[5] If Chigi thought he was different from the other bankers 'following the Roman Curia', he had good reason to do so.

The villa that Chigi saw in August of 1511 still lacked its famous frescoes by Sodoma (1517), Sebastiano Luciani (soon to earn the nickname 'del Piombo') (1512) and Raphael (1514 and 1518), as well as Peruzzi's dramatic decoration for the upstairs dining room now known as the Sala delle Colonne, the Hall of Columns (1517; fig. 6). Peruzzi had, however, already painted the ceiling of the downstairs dining room with an image of Chigi's horoscope as it stood at nine-thirty in the evening on the day of his birth, November 29, 1466. The artist had also created a pretty frieze around the anteroom to Agostino's new office, bustling with scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and covered the building's façade with grisaille paintings to evoke the look of ancient Roman marble reliefs. A few of these figures barely survive in faint traces, now under restoration (fig. 7): Ceres with a cornucopia (a reminder that like all merchant bankers Chigi made a steady income on grain), and Mercury, patron deity of merchants and thieves. Others scenes are known only from contemporary drawings: in one of them it is easy to recognize Mars and Venus snared in a golden net, caught in adultery by Vulcan, another scene immortalized by Ovid with mordant wit in the *Metamorphoses*. Chigi had had the same scene painted on one of the walls of his urban *palazzo* with the label *furto amoroso scoperto dal Sole* – 'an amorous theft revealed by the sun'.[6] What the scene and its motto meant to him is anyone's guess, but the symbolism probably contained elements of Christian faith, Neoplatonic philosophy, and Stoic ethics, the lively and occasionally inconsistent creed by which many of his contemporaries lived. One thing is certain: Chigi may have dealt, like Vulcan, with mines and metallurgy, but he was also a notorious womanizer, more likely to be tangled, like Mars, in the arms of the love goddess than to be standing by to watch the show



7 Baldassare Peruzzi
Traces of façade decoration



8 Baldassare Peruzzi
Venus

(fig. 8). In any event, Peruzzi's painted gods, goddesses, constellations, and heroes all emphasized the way in which Agostino Chigi's villa resurrected the atmosphere of villa life in ancient Rome. In their own way, they compensate for the lordly banker's lack of conspicuous classical erudition.

Fittingly, moreover, the villa of Agostino Chigi sits on top of an ancient Roman villa, excavated in the 1880's when the Tiber was confined within its present embankments. The exquisite paintings of the so-called Farnesina House are now preserved in the National Museum at Palazzo Massimo; their exceptional quality suggests that the Farnesina House may well be the villa that belonged to Julia, the daughter of Augustus, when she was married to the elderly general Marcus Agrippa. It is tempting to think that Peruzzi and his workmen might have come across remnants of this ancient Roman villa when they dug the foundations for the villa of Agostino Chigi; the spirit of both sets of paintings, made up of eros, divine pleasures, and antiquarianism, is remarkably similar.

By 1511, the gardens of Chigi's *Suburbanum* had also been laid out, at least in part. Perhaps that layout included some of the huge trees that still dominate the grounds, saplings then, their slender trunks and sparse leaves nothing but a promise of the magnificent ilexes we see today (fig. 9). The Chigi family maintained a close relationship with an Augustinian monastery near Siena called Lecceto, 'the ilex grove', and perhaps there is a connection with this Christian community as well as with the bucolics of Vergil in the choice of these excellent trees. Most of what we know about the gardens comes, however, from two poems composed for Chigi in the fall and winter of 1511-1512. Written in careful classical Latin, they strive, like Peruzzi's frescoes, to forge a link between the ambitious Christian Rome of Julius II and the pagan glories of the ancient city. It is unlikely that Chigi caught all the nuances of the poets' language, but anyone who dealt as routinely and as deftly as he with Latin contracts probably understood a fair amount of classical Latin, and much more than his despairing seventeenth-century biographer, the supremely learned Fabio Chigi, suggests.

The first of these works to appear was *De Viridario Augustini Chigii Patritii Senensis Vera Libellus*, written by the Roman actor and playwright Egidio Gallo and printed in autumn of 1511 by Etienne Guillery and Ercole Nani. The meaning of the poem's title is ambiguous; it may be 'True Things about the

9 *Villa Farnesina,* Rome: *garden*

Garden of Agostino Chigi, Sienese Patrician, a Booklet', or it may be 'Spring Poem, about the Garden of Agostino Chigi, Sienese Patrician, a Booklet'. Gallo had already dedicated a slender volume of Latin comedies to Chigi in 1505, whose flavor owes more to bawdy Plautus than mannerly Terence; the most amusing line comes from a smitten lover addressing his mistress in masochistic ecstasy: 'Oh my Juno, rule me!'[7] *De Viridario* sparkles with similar flashes of humor; its conceit revolves around the disgust of Venus at the Romans' continued failure to acknowledge her as their patron goddess, and at their endless devotion to Mars. She decides to teach them a lesson by withholding spring. Once an overdose of winter has finally convinced Rome to 'make love not war', Venus returns in an airborne chariot drawn by doves, alighting at last in Agostino Chigi's garden, which she singles out as the most beautiful spot in the city.

Chigi's villa, however, as the poet takes pains to point out, is not like other villas and *vigne* in Rome. Its purpose is not idle pleasure, but the cultivation of the stern virtues of the ancients. Gallo's letter of dedication addresses 'you, Agostino, who despise idle men, and favor those who are active.'[8] The poem itself begins by explicitly comparing Agostino's activities with those of an ancient Roman patrician, engaged in high matters of state, and emphasizes the need for both to rest on occasion from their duties:

> When the mind of men is troubled by various cares
> Or urges sprits to preserve the peace of the Homeland,
> Rightly the tired senses chose to compose themselves
> In the early spring: they sit under the sun,
> or in the cover beneath the shadows.
> Whatever they [Chigi's gardens] possess of spring,
> what we are promised
> By the season of the Boar, I will relate here,
> and what comforts there are
> Here where the Hero Chigi founds his Gardens.[9]

To these comforts Gallo later adds the pursuit of knowledge, describing the gatherings in Chigi's garden as given to learned discussions by *patres*, a word that applied in antiquity to senators and in sixteenth century parlance to the members of the 'Sacred Senate', the College of Cardinals. Venus, in other words, has chosen a place of sober beauty to alight from her chariot.

Still, he did not establish this [villa] as the comfort of a soft life,
Nor to offer the material for unspeakable loves...
He sits here in the presence of cultured men, the best of them all,
Serving up frugal banquets, frugal goblets of Bacchus,
Swimming in pure gold, serving up happiness.
Or perhaps the fathers exert themselves in contests of erudition.[10]

In the image of a little wine swimming in a golden goblet, Gallo has accurately captured Chigi's combination of opulence and frugality, the paradoxical product of his stern Tuscan upbringing and his fabulous wealth. The banker's preserved correspondence reveals that his own taste in food ran to such simple Tuscan fare as pears and cheese, but for the 'fathers' who came to visit, he reserved exotic delicacies like a sauce of parrots' tongues or eels from Constantinople.[11] As a result, the villa of Agostino Chigi became a byword for luxury, and, as we have already noted, his next-door neighbor Cardinal Farnese conceived an almost immediate lust to possess the *Viridario* for himself.

Ancient Romans nurtured the same volatile mixture of exoticism and stern morality, and Gallo's account of life at Chigi's villa plays knowingly on that similarity. Through visual clues, Peruzzi's design for Chigi's villa also invited guests, particularly learned guests, to see the great merchant of Christendom as an ancient Roman paterfamilias. Its sequence of rooms followed the description of suburban villas in Vitruvius' *Ten Books on Architecture*, a treatise that had been dedicated to the Emperor Augustus in the first years of his reign and therefore acted as a perfect guide to Imperial Roman values. In the sixth of his *Ten Books*, Vitruvius devoted careful attention to the layout of patrician houses, noting the way that a formal entry led directly to the *tablinum*, the ground-floor study from which the paterfamilias surveyed his household and received his guests. The placement of Chigi's office on the ground floor of his villa marks a distinct departure from normal sixteenth-century practice; the master of a Renaissance household managed his affairs from the upstairs *piano nobile* and left the ground floor to his staff. [12] All Chigi needed to complete the impression of belonging to the Golden Age of Augustus was a shave, a haircut, and a toga.

The second poem dedicated to Chigi and his villa came out in January of 1512 from the swank press of Jacopo Mazzocchi, the most stylish of the papal printers, though like Gallo's *De Viridario* it was probably composed in the fall of 1511. Gallo, who seems to have been an irritable character, always remained on

the margins of Roman cultural life, whereas the author of *Suburbanum Augustini Chisii Patritii Senensis*, 'The Suburban Villa of Agostino Chigi, Sienese Patrician', belonged to most of the city's inner circles. Biagio Pallai, who wrote in Latin as Blosio Palladio, was an aspiring cleric, a talented poet, and one of Rome's most active socialites; as a mature man, he would turn the same energies, along with an intensified Christian faith, to educating poor boys at the College of Santa Maria in Aquiro. In the first decades of the sixteenth century, however, he spent his time among the wittiest scholars in the papal bureaucracy, in the company of learned cardinals like Alessandro Farnese, learned prelates like Egidio da Viterbo, and social charmers like the painter Raphael, the Luxembourgian diplomat Johann Göritz, all of them at least vaguely associated with a learned society called the Roman Academy.

Blosio stands out among his contemporaries for his genuine sensitivity to works of art. This sensitivity appears emphatically in *Coryciana*, an anthology of poems that he edited for Johann Göritz in 1524.[13] Most of his friends celebrate paintings or statues in verse by rehearsing the standard cliché of the ancients: 'it looks as if it could breathe', 'it looks real', to the point that one wonders whether they paid any attention at all to the phenomenal works that were coming into being all around them. Blosio, however, really looked, really saw, and made sure that what he wrote was fresh. Although he modeled his account of Chigi's villa closely on the poems of the ancient author Statius (who had also written verse about his patrons' villas), he provides an extraordinarily detailed description of the famous garden and its larger symbolic meanings.

Like Egidio Gallo, Blosio acknowledges the banker's unusual social position and the difficulties he must feel in returning to Rome after several months as a feted diplomat in Venice.

> What shall I wish for you now? Wish you a kingdom?
> You are a king in spirit.[14]

As Blosio well knew, Chigi's mercantile empire came as close to a global enterprise as any in their day. But the reference to kingly spirit may also echo a line of Horace, who explicitly addressed his patron Gaius Cilnius Maecenas as the descendant of Etruscan kings, and in fact Blosio proceeds immediately afterward to note Chigi's Sienese ancestry. The line also, of course, ascribes to Chigi the nobility that Roman society had thus far denied him.

A seasoned participant in villa life, Blosio made implicit analogies between

Chigi's suburban villa and other famous country houses. A comparison with the Medici was almost inevitable, both because the Florentine family had made a successful transition from the merchant to the landed aristocracy and because Chigi had made his early career in their orbit. Furthermore, like their rival Bernardo Rucellai with his *Horti Oricellari*, they made a point of devoting their country outings to philosophical discussion.[15]

A still more important model for Chigi's villa may have come from the south of Italy, from Naples, where Agostino had maintained close commercial relationships with bankers in the Spanish sphere since the papacy of Alexander VI Borgia. The layout of his gardens seems to imitate that of the royal villa at Poggioreale. Their identification as a place for learned conversation evokes not only the villas of the Medici and the Rucellai gardens, but also the 'Porticus' of the Neapolitan humanist Giovanni Gioviano Pontano, and the villa of his friend – and Chigi's business associate – Jacopo Sannazaro at Mergellina. As eagerly as Marsilio Ficino in Florence, with whom he had some connection, Pontano tried to recreate the atmosphere of Plato's Academy at his Porticus, and thanks to his overbearing personality he may well have done so with deadly accuracy – he would greet his friends with a hale, intimidating, 'How goes it, mortals?' But the villa's name also suggests a connection with Stoicism – for the original Stoics met under a stoa or portico in the center of Athens. Sannazaro used another term to describe villa life in sixteenth-century Naples: Arcadia, also the title of his 1504 novel.

Chigi's connections to this Neapolitan circle encompassed business, religion, and culture: he leased an alum field from Sannazaro, talked theology and money with their mutual friend Fra Egidio da Viterbo, head of the Augustinian Order, and like them enjoyed the music of Serafino Aquilano, Benedetto Cariteo, and Gerolamo Borgia. Blosio's *Suburbanum* assumes that Chigi's knowledge of Pontano's Porticus comes at first hand:

> Should I be telling you about the fruits so praised by Pontano?[16]

The Latin is emphatic: *I* should tell *you*? Blosio assumes that Agostino knows far better than he what Pontano's plantings are, and perhaps with good reason. According to the seventeenth-century Sienese antiquarian Celso Cittadini, Chigi aquired a thousand 'live roots' from a patrician of Naples.[17] The banker's letters, on the other hand, request saplings from his brother Sigismondo in Siena, who also sent plants to Lucrezia Borgia in Ferrara.[18]

10 *Villa Farnesina,* Rome: *Tiber façade showing ruins of underground grottoes*

One aspect in particular suggests that the chief inspiration for Chigi's villa and its gardens comes from Naples rather than Tuscany. Neapolitan villas of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, including Poggioreale, Pontano's Porticus and Sannazaro's villa at Mergellina, are intimately connected with water.[19] The villas that ringed the Bay of Naples all boasted pools and fish ponds, inspired by the example of the ancients, attested by ancient authors and by the imposing ruins of Baia, Pozzuoli, Posillipo and Naples itself. Chigi's garden in Rome stood out among its contemporaries for its close relationship with the Tiber, enhancing its natural setting with artificial wonders.

For Blosio Palladio, as for Egidio Gallo, the most remarkable feature in Chigi's garden was a series of underground grottoes set along the river's edge and roofed by an outdoor loggia (fig. 10). One of these caverns was outfitted with a fish tank; all of them were lined with benches to provide shelter from the summer heat. The Tiber must have been much cleaner than it is today; *inter alia*, it served a far smaller population of people and rats. In any case, the city's main sewage outfall, the venerable Cloaca Maxima, first installed in Etruscan times and functional ever since, lay downstream from Chigi's villa.

Blosio provides a vivid description of wandering from one cool grotto to the next in search of refreshment and professes reluctance to leave; considering that he was writing in winter during the epoch known as the Little Ice Age, he may deserve a salute to the powers of his imagination. Damp stone and rushing water sound nowhere near as inviting as a roaring fire in Chigi's upstairs dining room.

Both Blosio Palladio and Egidio Gallo may have been leaving a good deal of their descriptions of Agostino's villa to their imaginations. In 1511 and 1512, everything, from the grounds to the furniture to the frescoes to the entertainment, must have been bare beginnings. Blosio virtually admits as much in his letter of dedication to *Suburbanum Augustini Chisii*:

> I don't want to you be surprised by the fact that I will sing about many things in this garden, like the fountain and the fruit orchards that have already been planned and set out, as if they were complete. I have judged it a small matter to describe them and treat them as if there were already created. Furthermore, because I have observed the greatness and liberality of your spirit, I have not hesitated to set in verse as if they already existed those things that you have already destined for existence in your mind.[20]

It is a perfect Neoplatonic account of artistic creation; what exists in the mind already exists in its essence, hence Chigi's brainchild, the villa, is already fully real, just as he sees it in his mind's eye. Its material embodiment is wholly secondary to the idea.

Despite the fact that Palladio admits to describing the villa and its gardens only as they shall be (or, in Neoplatonic terms, exist in the realm of Idea), his *Suburbanum Augustini Chisii* still provides an indispensable tour of one of Renaissance Rome's most influential places, a compendium of architecture, painting, sculpture, collecting, landscaping, gardening, and a setting for performances both ribald and refined. Blosio understood its subtleties as almost no other contemporary; he knew not only the text of Statius, whose writing about ancient Roman villas he could echo in refined Latin, but he also knew the places that Statius described, places like the villa of Flavius Vopiscus outside Tivoli, now beautifully restored and reopened to the public in its Renaissance guise as the Villa Gregoriana.[21] A riotous letter still preserved in the Vatican Library recounts one of Blosio's trip to Tivoli in pelting rain.

> We who returned to Rome from Tivoli yesterday may be safe, but we're not dry. The rain followed us all the way home, as if it were a shadow (*umbra*) not a shower (*imber*). You provided us with a faithful Achates, and he didn't stray from us more than a foot. Spare, O spare us those merry companions Rain Wind, and Storm. We felt (Damn!) not only windy Tivoli but rainy Tivoli, not only Tivoli but Rome, and not just Rome but also the whole stretch in between the two. The distance between Rome and Tivoli must be sixteen miles, not exactly a short distance when you're traveling in the rain. Oh good God. O good (I tell you) God. What flashes of lightning! What thunderings of the heavens! What crashes of penetrating rain! I shiver just remembering it.[22]

Furthermore, Blosio was a gardener himself, a passionate gardener if we are to judge from his surviving papers, preserved now with marvelous appropriateness in the Corsini Library of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, and therefore just across the street from the villa of Agostino Chigi.[23] With horticulture no less than Latin style, Blosio Palladio knows whereof he speaks.

Surviving archival records and Blosio's description concur in suggesting that the layout of Chigi's garden, aside from the underground caverns, followed traditional lines. One section was divided into plots fenced in by 'Long lines of

11 *Villa Farnesina,* Rome: *garden*

wooden lattices/on which the plants climb and the flowers wander'.[24] Directly behind the villa, and next to its underground kitchen, lay 'the blessed beds of vegetables and herbs arranged for industrious cultivation' and a walled garden for citrus (*citriumque nemus*).[25] The broad stretch between the villa building and the riverbank, now cut by both the Tiber embankment and the loud, traffic-choked Lungotevere, once contained a 'happily shaded woods', a vineyard, a fruit orchard with 'scented fruit beneath blessed trees', and an ornamental garden with 'topiary entwined in various ways'; here Chigi displayed some of his extensive collection of ancient sculpture (fig. 11).[26] Like its ancient predecessors, and like the *vigne* that had stood on the site before, Agostino Chigi's garden was largely a working garden.

At the same time, however, Renaissance gardens reveled in conspicuous display, and Chigi, with his international connections, could not resist exotic plants, many from the New World (perhaps these were some of the 'live roots' he acquired from Naples). Blosio Palladio describes them in some detail, in 1518, Raphael's associate Giovanni da Udine would adorn a new set of frescoes showing the story of Cupid and Psyche with garlands of plants culled, as Blosio noted, from the Orient, the New World, and the pages of Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (fig. 12).

> Whatever potent Nature has spread through all the world
> Whatever the Moors, whatever the Thracians,
> whatever the Spaniard and the Indians
> And finally whatever Pliny assembled in his golden books,
> This and more your overseer has gathered in your garden.[27]

Raphael's fresco echoed the ancient statue of Cupid and Psyche displayed in Chigi's garden. Another ancient statue showed an amorous satyr embracing a boy, not the only lascivious detail in the *Viridarium*, where Chigi would hire Pietro Aretino, destined to become the era's most outrageous erotic writer, as a seventeen-year-old houseboy. In the loggia of Cupid and Psyche, Giovanni da Udine managed to make a good many of his fruits looks obscenely ripe, nowhere more than in the stretch of ceiling above the entrance to Chigi's office, where a phallic gourd plunges into a ripe fig in an execrable pun on the slang word for female pudenda.[28] Chigi could always plead that the images of fertility and abundance applied to his business interests (just as he could plead that the loggia's abundant nudes played out an allegory about the human soul

and its search for God); in fact, by the time Raphael's workshop had finished the Loggia of Cupid and Psyche Chigi had fathered four children on his Venetian mistress, soon to become his wife.

Chigi's surviving letters, which represent only a tiny fraction of a correspondence that must have run to tens or even hundreds of thousands, also refer to *annesti*, plant grafts. Blosio notes that these were almost a specialty in his garden – and apparently not only the garden in his mind:

> Shall I number the numberless fruits
> That hang from alien branches,
> The work of grafting? With mixed flavor
> And borrowed color, unfamiliar burdens on different trunks?[29]

Attentive as he is to every detail, Blosio cannot disguise a recurrent concern as he surveys Agostino Chigi's suburban garden: namely, that the ingenious underground caverns will never be able to withstand the full force of the river in flood. Any longtime resident of Rome like Blosio or Chigi knew that the Tiber burst its banks with depressing regularity, and a truly devastating flood could be expected about once every ten years, filling the streets of Rome with mud and debris. Blosio therefore imagines himself wandering along a path in the garden, pleading that such a disaster will never occur:

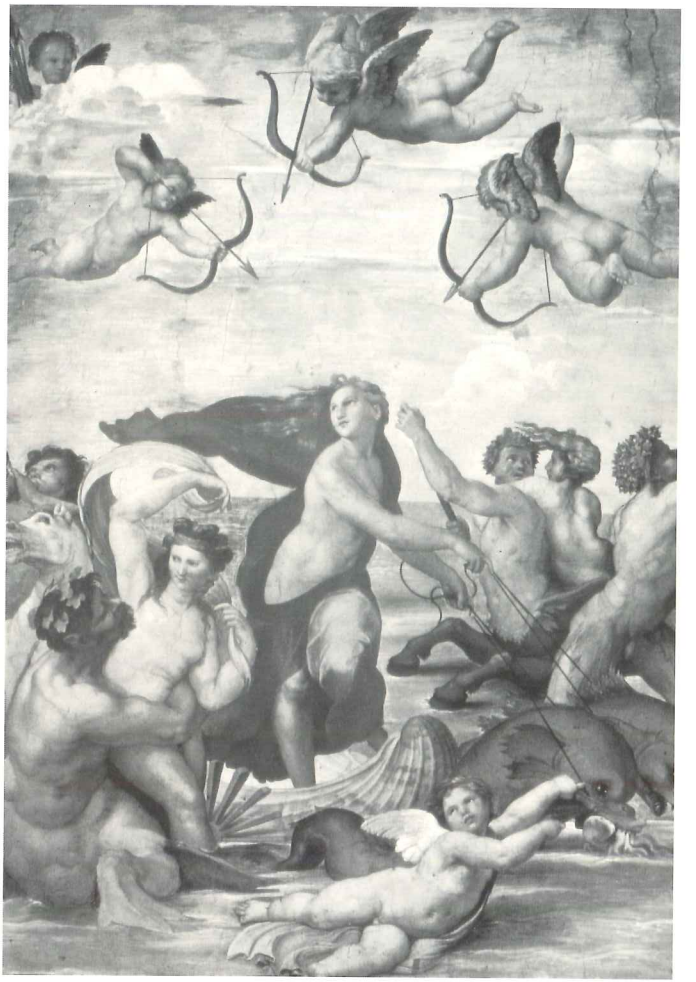
> Here I'll talk to the placid waters, and water the gardens
> With gentle floods. May the gardens never be muddied
> by bank-bursting waves
> We will hold back the torrents of spring.[30]

Sadly, however, Blosio's fears were all too real. On November 15, 1514, the swollen Tiber swept away Chigi's riverside loggia, and with it, probably, the grottoes and fishery beneath. Notice of the disaster reached Siena, where the local chronicler Sigisimondo Tizio lamented the damage to Chigi's *Viridarium*:

> On the fifteenth a huge overflow of the Tiber submerged a third of the city, inflicting tremendous damage ... the church of San Giacomo della Malva swam in the surging waters and the palace and garden of Agostino Chigi, the Sienese merchant, were transformed into lakes. The whole earth was covered by the raging waters.[31]

The raging waters did spare the fresco Raphael had just painted for Chigi's

12 GIOVANNI DA UDINE, *Exotic plants in festoons*, detail of the painted decoration of the Loggia of Cupid and Psyche, designed by Raphael



13 RAPHAEL, *Galatea*

summer dining room, an image of the nymph Galatea scudding over the sea in a seashell drawn by dolphins (fig. 13). It is still the most famous painting Chigi ever commissioned. But he never replaced the damaged loggia or the underground grottoes; that delightful part of his suburban *palazzo* had lasted only three years.

The flood of 1514 was not the only setback to batter Chigi in the years after his villa's auspicious inauguration. In the autumn of 1512 one of his most important political allies died: Pandolfo Petrucci, who had held virtual dictatorial power for decades in the Republic of Siena. He was replaced by his son Borghese, whose known mental instability would only increase when he was charged with real responsibility. In March of 1513, Pope Julius died, succeeded by the former Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, who took the name Leo X. As with the conclave of 1503, Chigi had supplied bribe money to the winning candidate; he also supplied funds to the first runner-up, Raffaele Riario. Yet despite Chigi's long cooperation with the Medici bank and its agents, he knew that he could never expect the same level of political support from Leo that he had enjoyed under Julius. Leo was lazy, fat, and unhealthy; he lacked the energy to pursue aggressive policies and spent money more quickly than it came in. Within a few years he had exhausted the treasury that Julius had so carefully built up with the help of Chigi, Fugger, and the other merchants 'following the Roman Curia'.

Agostino therefore had no choice but to pull in his political involvements. He collaborated in the coup d'état that removed Borghese Petrucci from power in Siena in 1516 and substituted Borghese's cousin Raffaele Petrucci, he continued to solicit excommunications against his competitors, but with increasing determination Agostino Chigi began to exchange his life as a banker for that of a landed gentleman.[32]

The villa that had served him as a business office now became the theatre for a different kind of life: a life in which Chigi exerted his influence as a patron of the arts rather than a captain of industry. His relationship with Raphael grew closer – indeed, Leo seems to have bored Raphael as much as he did Chigi. In addition to the frescoes of *Galatea* in 1514 and *Cupid and Psyche* in 1518, Raphael designed two chapels for Chigi, as well as a stable in Bramantesque style to house Agostino's horses alongside his villa. The ruins of that building can still be seen today along the Via della Lungara; its foundations proved inadequate to its weight and it crumbled fairly quickly (fig. 14).[33] However, the

presence of a stable on the grounds of the *Suburbanum* reinforced its similarities with Poggioreale in Naples, the royal lodge that was outfitted, according to the sixteenth-century architectural writer Sebastiano Serlio, with 'gorgeous gardens with different plots for vegetables, for every kind of fruit in great abundance, for fisheries with running water, for streambeds, places for various birds, large and small, and stables furnished with every kind of horse.'[34]

In these years, too, Chigi staged the elaborate banquets whose reports are recorded in Siena by Sigismondo Tizio, in Venice by Marin Sanuto and Pietro Aretino, and in the seventeenth century by Agostino's descendant Fabio Chigi, with cardinals as guests, and on various occasions, Pope Leo himself. In the days of Julius II, Chigi's parties had served to promote ambitious political and economic agendas; under Leo, Chigi aimed pointedly at advancing his own social position, and especially that of his growing family of illegitimate offspring. The most famous banquet of all must date to the first year of Leo's pontificate, for it took place on the riverside loggia above the grottoes and the fish pool. Chigi served his cardinal guests delicacies from their native lands, on golden plates embossed with their individual coats of arms – and then threw the plates into the river after every course. Ever thrifty, he had stretched nets under the water to recover his stock. The grand gesture also guaranteed that the cardinals would not walk out with the plates tucked under their robes; Chigi had lost eleven silver vessels at an earlier banquet.

The Tuscan painter and biographer Giorgio Vasari tells a rollicking story of how Chigi induced Raphael to concentrate on his painting when he was distracted from work by the charms of a baker's daughter, 'La Fornarina', who lived on the Via della Lungara; Agostino, according to Vasari, simply kidnapped her and locked her into the villa until Raphael had finished the Loggia of Cupid and Psyche. Despite the fact that the Fornarina's house is a local landmark (fig. 15) and her putative portrait a staple of the Galleria di Arte Nazionale in Palazzo Barberini, Vasari's story, like many of his best stories, is pure fiction. In the first place, it is unlikely that Raphael ever put a hand to the frescoes of Cupid and Psyche; he designed them and left their execution to his assistants. Personally, I doubt that Raphael ever put a hand to the portrait of the Fornarina either; it looks to me like one of the many portraits of courtesans the Raphael workshop was said to have produced – the source for that report is, however, the not always reliable Vasari. The important moral of Vasari's story about Raphael and the Fornarina – and Vasari's best stories always have a moral

14 Raphael,
Stables for Agostino Chigi

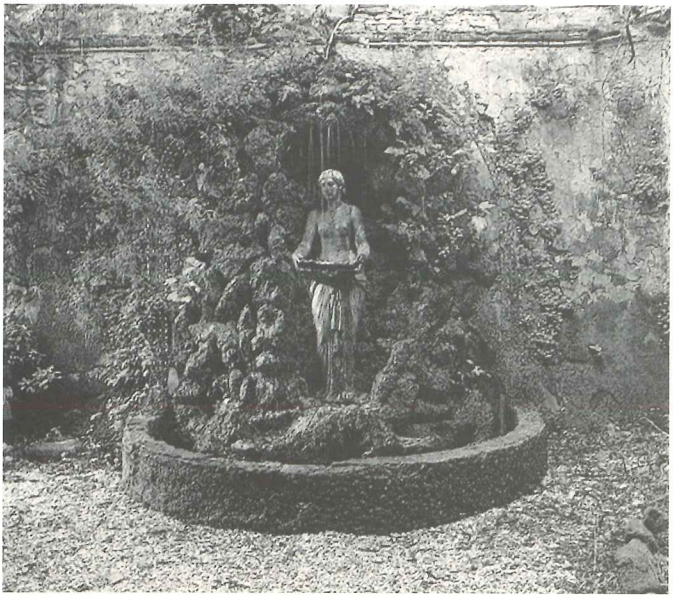
15 *The House of the Fornarina, Rome*

– is that Agostino Chigi's villa was a sexy place. Vasari was not alone in that judgment. Many subsequent buildings, from Giulio Romano's Palazzo del Te in Mantova, to Versailles, try to evoke the same sense of pleasure in life and nature that people found in Agostino Chigi's villa.

Remarkably, none of this voluptuary life appears in Chigi's surviving letters: no Fornarina, no parrots' tongues, no golden plates, no concerts; they concentrate with relentless focus on business. Chigi was a man who, for all his extravagant gestures, maintained an iron reserve. So, too, his garden, with its intimate recesses, its grottoes, pergolas and benches, where conversations were drowned in the splash of water or the singing of birds, acted, like many Renaissance gardens, as a repository of secrets (fig. 16). One wonders, then, what the meaning can be of that obscene gourd by Giovanni da Udine, eternally poised for action over his office door. The contrast with Peruzzi's monumental Fame who trumpets Chigi's coat of arms from the ceiling of the loggia next door suggests that a good deal must have happened in the seven years that separate one from the other. Perhaps Chigi no longer needed to insist on sobriety in his villa as Leo chipped away at the papal treasury and the voice of Martin Luther began to thunder from distant Wittenberg.

At the last banquet of which we have any record, that of August 28, 1519, Pope Leo presided in person over the marriage of Agostino Chigi and Francesca Ordeaschi, a ceremony followed by a reading of Agostino's will. The bride, already the mother of four, was pregnant with a fifth child. At fifty-three, the groom may well have begun to feel the first premonitions of his final illness.[35] The move was hardly unexpected; for several years Chigi had begun to assemble dowries for his two daughters, Margherita and Camilla, and purchase real estate in the names of his two sons, Lorenzo Leone and Alessandro Giovanni, named after members of the Medici family.[36] A grave illness struck him down in March of 1520, painfully swelling his limbs and tongue. His death on April 10 was as predictable as the death of Raphael one day later was not; at 37, the artist succumbed to a sudden fever. Their funerals followed one upon the other, together signaling the end of an era in Renaissance Rome.

In the decade that followed upon Agostino's death, his villa became the object of fierce contention, first between his younger brother Sigismondo and his widow Francesca; when Francesca herself died six months after her husband – some said reeking of poison – the property passed to Sigismondo and his wife Sulpizia Petrucci, resourceful daughter of the late resourceful



16 *Villa Farnesina,* Rome: *garden*

Pandolfo, who cared for Agostino's four surviving children along with nine of her own. Another of this generous woman's house guests at the villa was her sister Porzia, abandoned by her first husband, Ludovico Orsini. Sometime before 1527 one of the two sisters, probably Sulpizia, ordered a necklace from a young Florentine jeweler named Benvenuto Cellini, who left a breathless description of the villa and its chatelaine: 'that woman was as refined as can be, and extraordinarily beautiful.'[37]

Sulpizia Petrucci was more than extraordinarily beautiful; she was also extraordinarily intelligent. Widowed in 1526 – Chigi men did not live long – she watched over the final disintegration of Agostino Chigi's financial empire. In 1527, when German mercenaries overran Rome, she barely escaped capture; Agostino Chigi's son Lorenzo Leone was taken for ransom and Sulpizia duly redeemed him, although he proved to be a singularly useless young man. Her great-great grandson Fabio, the future Pope Alexander VII, preserved her letters as she had preserved those of Agostino and her own husband Sigismondo; it is through Sulpizia and Fabio that Agostino Chigi's letters survive to this day in the Vatican Library. Fabio Chigi also understood, as perhaps only Agostino himself, the symbolic importance of the villa on the Via della Lungara to the Chigi family's identity. When they went into bankruptcy in 1542, she was able to save only three of their properties: the ancestral home in Siena, the Villa le Volte, and the Villa Suburbana.[38] Had she lived another twenty-two years – she died of a sudden stroke in 1557 – the Farnese would surely have had to do without their Villa Farnesina, and its legendary garden might have survived in the material world as well as the Platonic realm of idea. On the other hand, the real essence of gardens is change; the cycles of the seasons, the life patterns of plants, the shifting moods of the weather. For the nine years that Agostino Chigi occupied his villa, it was never really the same place, even from one day to the next; like Chigi himself, it was terribly fragile, and it is a small miracle that we still have as much of them both as we do.

1 Francesco Petrarca, *Letter to Guido Sette*, circa 1367-1368, 'Inde autem...primum Roman adii; que, etsi iam tun multoque prius nichil aliud quasi quam illius Rome veteris argumentum aut imago quedam esset, ruinisque presentibus preteritam magnitudinem testaretur, errant tamen adhuc ciniere in illo generose alique faville: nunc extinctus et iam gelidus cinis est.' Cited from Emilio Bigi (ed.), *Opere di Francesco Petrarca*, Milan, 1979, p. 952.

2 Felix Gilbert, *The Pope, his Banker, and Venice*, Cambridge, 1980, pp. 70-85; Ottorino Montenovesi, 'Agostino Chigi, banchiere e appaltatore dell' allume di Tolfa', *Archivio della R. Società Romana di Storia Patria* 60 (1937), pp. 111-140; G. Zippel, 'L'allume di Tolfa e il suo commercio', *Archivio dell R. Società Romana di Storia Patria* 30 (1907), pp. 389-482; Jean Delumeau, *L'alun de Rome*, Chambèry, 1962, pp. 97-105, and, with a conspicuous Fascist agenda, Gino Barbieri, *Industria e politica mineraia nello Stato pontificio dal '400 al '600: lineamenti*, Rome, 1940, pp. 112-161.

3 Christoph Luitpold Frommel, 'Papal Policy: The Planning of Rome during the Renaissance', in Robert I. Rotberg and Theodore K. Rabb (eds.), *Art and History: Images and their Meaning*, Cambridge, 1988, pp. 39-66.

4 Ingrid D. Rowland, 'Render Unto Caesar the Things which are Caesar's: Humanism and the Arts in the Patronage of Agostino Chigi', *Renaissance Quarterly* 39 (1986), pp. 673-730.

5 Gilbert (as in n. 2); Staffan Fogelmark, 'The Anonymous Rome 1522 Chrysoloras: A Newly Discovered Greek Press', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 97, (2003), pp. 5-42.

6 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chigi P.VII.10.

7 Aegidius Gallus (Egidio Gallo), *Comoediae*, Roma, 1505. A modern edition has been published by Mary Quinlan-McGrath, 'Aegidius Gallus, *De Viridario Augustini Chigii Vera Libellus*. Introduction, Latin Text and English Translation', *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 38 (1989), pp. 1-99.

8 Gallus, *De Viridario* (as in n. 7), p. 11 v: 'tu Augustine qui ociosos homines despicis foves negociosos'.

9 Gallus, *De Viridario* (as in n. 7), p. 111r:
Dum variis hominum mens fertur in ardua curis:

Sollicitatve animos Patriae servare quietem:
Iure fatigatos optant componere sensus
Vere novo: subeunt solem: vel opaca sub umbris.
Quantum habeant veris: Quid polliceamur Aprici
Temporis/hic igitur referam: et solatia quae sint
Hic ubi molitur Viridaria Chigius Heros.

10 Gallus, *De Viridario* (as in n. 7), p. XXIIIIr:
Non tamen hanc posuit mollis solatia vitae:
Nec quae materiam infando praeberet amori:
Hic inter bene culta virum sedet optimus ora:
Frugalesque dapes: frugalia pocula Bacchi
Laetitiam apponens/puro natantis in auro ...
At potius surgunt docta in certamina patres.

11 Ingrid D. Rowland, *The Correspondence of Agostino Chigi*, Vatican City, 2001, pp. XVII, 2, 6, 12, 21, 102, 116, 224, 227, 230, 231, 247, 250.

12 Rowland (as in n. 4).

13 Blosius Palladius (Biagio Pallai) (ed.), *Coryciana*, Roma, 1524.

14 Blosius Palladius (Biagio Pallai), *Suburbanum Augustini Chisii Patritii Senensis*, Roma, 1512, p. C III 3 r. A modern edition has been published by Mary Quinlan-McGrath, 'Blosius Palladius, *Suburbanum Augustini Chisii*. Introduction, Latin Text, and English Translation', *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 39 (1990), pp. 93-156.

15 Gustavo Uzielli, 'Accademie platoniche in Firenze', *Giornale di erudizione* 6 (1896), pp. 227-235, 262-270, 295-304, 335-342; James Hankins, 'The Myth of the Platonic Academy of Florence', *Renaissance Quarterly* 44 (1991), pp. 429-463.

16 Palladius (as in n. 14), p. 7r : 'Vos ne ego Pontano multum cantata poete/Poma loquar?'

17 Fabio Chigi (Pope Alexander VII), *Chisiae familiae commentarii*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chigi a.I.1, 33v-34r: 'Celsus quidem Cittadinus vir eruditissimus narravit [34r] mihi malorum medicorum limoniorumque extitisse olim copiam immensam, audisseque se dictitatum a suis maioribus Augustinum portulasse a patritio quodam Neapolitano L. vivi radices'.

18 Agostino Chigi ordered *piante* ('plants') from Sigismondo Chigi on October 15,1513; 'qualche pianta di fruti boni' ('a plant with good fruit') on September 39, 1516; Rowland (as in n. 11), pp. 172, 227. On September 15, 1515, he wrote: 'Ricordati che s'acosta il tempo dele piante, le quali à da fare che sieno belle e bone a mandarle, manda, che sarebe spesa getata fare come l'altre volte.' ('Remember that the time for plants is approaching, and make

sure that if they are attractive and suitable for shipping you ship them, because otherwise it will be a wasted expense to do as you have the other times.'); *ibidem*, p. 247; on September 22: 'ancora mandane e li arboli al tenpo.' ('send the saplings on time again.'), p. 250. For the shipments to Lucrezia Borgia, see *ibidem*, p. 228, n.4.

19 Anna Giannetti, *Il giardino napoletano dal Quattrocento al Settecento*, Naples, 2004.

20 Palladius (as in n. 14), p. A ii v: 'Illud vero ne admirari te quidem velim: quam in hortis pleraque/ ut fontem et pomaria/iam inchoata et affecta/ceu effecta cecinerim. Parvi enim referre arbitratus sum pro iam factis habere: quae tu tantum mente concaepisses. Atque ut ego tui animi magnitudinem liberalitatemque perspexi: non dubitavi carminibus intexere/ut iam extantia: quae tu animo destinasses futura'.

21 Michael J. Dewar, 'Blosio Palladio and the *Silvae* of Statius', *Res Publica Litterarum* 13 (1990), pp. 59-64; *idem*, 'Encomium of Agostino Chigi and Pope Julius II in the *Suburbanum Augustini Chisii* of Blosio Palladio', *Res Publica Litterarum* 14 (1991), pp. 61-68.

22 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. Lat. 2847, c. 175r-v: 'Ita nos pluvia domum usque nostram prosequuta est, quasi ea umbra non hymber fuerit. Fidum Achatem dederatis, a nobis pedem latum non discessit. Apage a nobis apage istos festivos comites hymbrem Ventum procellam Sensimus (pol) nos, non ventosum modo Tybur sed pluviosum neque Tybur modo, sed Romam, neque eam modo sed quicquid agri inter eas Urbes interiacet: et est (opinor) XVI Millia: passuum: non omnino brevissimum iter in pluvia ambulantibus. Bone deus, Bone inquam Deus Que fulgurum Lampades? Que caeli tonitrua? Qui tum fragores irruentis pluviae fuerit? Horresco etiam nunc memorans.'

23 Biblioteca Corsiniana, Santa Maria in Aquiro, Filza 8. My thanks to Jan de Jong for this information.

24 For the design of Chigi's garden, see Christoph Luitpold Frommel, *Die Farnesina und Baldassare Peruzzis Architektonisches Frühwerk*, Berlin, 1961, pp. 163-170. For a general discussion of Italian garden design, see Giannetti (as in n. 19). Palladius (as in n. 14), p. 7v: 'longo retia tractu/ Lignea: queis herbae serpunt floresque pererrant.'

25 Palladius (as in n. 14), p. 7v : 'tractusque beatos/Hortorum et positas operosis cultibus herbas.'

26 Palladius (as in n. 14), p. 7v:
Nunc varias miror Topiaria texta per artes.
Umbrarumque nemus foelix/et odora beatis
Poma sub arboribus.

27 Giulia Caneva, *Il Mondo di Cerere nella Loggia di Psiche*, Rome, 1992. Palladius (as in n. 14), p. 8r:
Quot Natura potens toto diffudit in orbe:

Quot Mauri/quot Thraces habent/Quot Iberus et Indi:
Denique Quot libris collegit Plinius aureis/
Tot/pluresque tuo congessit villicus horto.

28 Chigi (as in n. 17), c. 33v: 'Neque vero conticescam quam plurimis refertos fuisse statuis, ac preciosis antiquitatis marmoribus, ut familiares epistolae abunde testantur, nec non purae latinitatis Inscriptionibus. Lascivum sane satyrum marmoreum puero blandientem laudat Petrus Arretinus in epistula ad Baptistam Zattum Brixianum at. Ant. MDXXXVII R. Inscriptionum vero aliquas affert Iacobus Mazzocchius in libro, quem inscripsit Epigrammata antiquae Urbis, in Regione Transtiberina. Nec forsan plures tunc temporis aderant, quando editus fuit liber anno 1517. A quo tempore hisce antiquitatis argumentis aedes ornare prosequutus fuit, cum praecipue omnia inscripta marmora e ruinis eruta.' Published with commentary by Giuseppe Cugnoni, *Agostino Chigi il Magnifico*, Roma, 1878.

29 On November 7, 1510, he wrote to Sigismondo: 'Li annesti mandinsi a Roma con ogni presteza perch´hormai passa el tempo di piantarli e le fronti so' un pezo che cascano.' ('Send the grafts to Rome as soon as you can, because already the time to plant them is passing, and the brances have been dropping now for a while.'); Rowland (as in n. 11), p. 105. Typically, he needs to repeat the order four days later: 'a Roma manda quelli anesti.' ('send those grafts to Rome'.), p. 116, and again the next day : 'L'inesti a roma si ma[n]dino quanto prima si può, che oramai pasa il tempo.' ('send the grafts to Rome as soon as possible, as time is passing by now.'), p. 123. Palladius (as in n. 14), p. 7v:
Quid poma per partem
Innumera enumerem externis pendentia ramis
Insitionis opus? Mixtoque sapore colori
Non sua in Alterutris/alienaque pondera truncis?

30 Palladius (as in n. 14), p. 10v:
Heic placidis famulabur aquis: hortosque regabo
Lenibus allu[v]iis. Ne ve excrescentibus undis
Horti oblimentur: vernas cohibebimus undas.

31 Sigismondo Tizio, *Historia Senensium*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Chigi G.II.37, c. 333r: 'pluvie ad diem quintamdecimam accessere qua sane die tiberis excrescentia ingens Rome facta est ita ut tertiam urbis partem allueret et iacturam ingentem inferret: ausum est invadere: ... [333v] Divi tamen Jacobi ecclesia multis affluebat aquis Augustini Chisii mercatoris senensis edes et viridaria in lacunas converse videbantur, tegebatur omnis [334r] tellus furentibus aquis.'

32 Ingrid D. Rowland, 'Agostino Chigi e la politica senese del '500', in Fabrizio Nevola and Julian Gardner (eds.), *Siena nel Rinascimento*, in press.

33 Frommel (as in n. 24), pp. XXX.

34 Sebastiano Serlio, *Il terzo libro di Sebastiano Serlio Bolognese, nel qual si figurano, e descrivono le antiquità di Roma, e le altre che sono in Italia*, Venezia, 1540, p. 122; quoted by Giannetti (as in n. 19), p. 23.

35 Rowland (as in n. 11), p. 275, with bibliography.

36 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Archivio Chigi 11453, c. 384 sqq. (from 1517 onward).

37 Benvenuto Cellini, *Vita* I.4; Cellini calls her Porzia, however.

38 Chigi (as in n. 17), c. 57r; Rowland (as in n. 11), pp. 150-151, 244.

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ISBN -10: 908016917X
ISBN -13: 9789080169173

Stichting Gerson Lezingen
Oude Boteringestraat 34
9712 GK Groningen

Production/Distribution:
Primavera Press, Leiden
www.primaverapress.nl