

Susanna Pasquali

# MARIO ASPRUCCI

Neoclassical Architecture in Villa Borghese  
1786-1796





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*Presentation*  
Francesco Leone

*English translation*  
Michael Sullivan



PRESENTATION  
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Francesco Leone

*Mario Asprucci and the making of the park of Villa Borghese: new light on the Roman neoclassical avant-garde*

*“Poor Mario Asprucci died around the age of about 40. A great loss for his family and for art, having all the good qualities, and full of merit; I am very disheartened by such a loss”.*

Sadly the sculptor Vincenzo Pacetti, one of the best-connected and most influential figures in the Roman artistic milieu between the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, recorded the premature death of this great talent in his diary on May 7, 1804. The words used – a sort of epitaph made even more moving by the intimate aspect a private diary can have – effectively portrays the esteem and high hopes that his father Antonio Asprucci (1723-1808), architect of the house of Borghese, Pacetti himself, to whom Mario was very close, and the Roman artistic world must have placed in the young architect struck down in the prime of life.

Nothing earlier presaged such a tragic end. Mario was born under a lucky star, a true child of fortune, destined for a career of great renown. His story began in the 1770s in the shadow of his father, when the latter was in charge of the striking renovation of the Casino Nobile of Villa Borghese at the behest of Prince Marcantonio IV: a true crucible, arena of strenuous competition between artists of different nationalities. He was shaped in a cosmopolitan and avant-garde city, in a period, that of the long papacy of Pius VI Braschi (1775-1799), which is now considered one of the peaks in the artistic and cultural history of papal Rome. Starting from what Susanna Pasquali tells us, one may conjecture on what Mario Asprucci might have left to the history of art and architecture had he completed his trajectory: it can be said with some certainty that with the Jacobin upheaval, the Napoleonic domination and the rebirth that ensued, Rome, the city of popes and tradition, would have found its “revolutionary” architect in him, as Paris did in Boullée and Ledoux or Milan in Antolini with the utopian design of the Foro Bonaparte. The more mature and conceptual projects for civil society architecture among those published here document, in addition to his talent, the international range of the young Asprucci and profound reflection on the themes – inspired by

the antique and focused by Francesco Milizia – of simplicity, rationality and functionalism that the great architects of neoclassical and Napoleonic Europe have in common. Like Antolini in Milan, Asprucci in Rome would have been the architect of modernity and of social shift. That is what his Jacobin convictions, shared with his friend Ennio Quirino Visconti, make clear and above all his participation as architect in the free and revolutionary association of artists set up by Felice Giani in Rome in the late 1780s and early 1790s that first went under the name of Accademia de’ Pensieri and then that of Accademia della Pace. It was a melting pot of artistic experimentation, of thematic research, of ethical reflection, of *bohémien* spirit around which, scornful of the slavishness and the prescriptions of official academic institutions, the young recruits from every nationality present in Rome challenged each other in heated evening meetings. In the nineties that workshop shaped the future leaders of Italian art and many of the European ones. And, who can say, that it would not perhaps have been to Asprucci instead of to Giuseppe Valadier that the new face of Rome was entrusted during the period of the Restoration.

Whereas – or so it was believed until the discovery of these drawings – Mario’s premature death left those potentialities substantially unexpressed or otherwise confined to the planning stage. And here lies the first crucial aspect of the finding of the sheets sets before us. The collection, relating chiefly to Villa Borghese, finally restores a real artistic countenance to a character whose creativity was until now known almost exclusively from the sources, from a few other drawings and a scattering of literary reports. We knew of Mario’s great talent – as we have seen underlined by Pacetti, and by Guattani in the elegy he dedicated to him in 1809 in the columns of the “Memorie Enciclopediche Romane” – but we could not attribute to him, except by hypothesis or indirect report, the concrete execution of any project. The many designs in this large group attributed to him with certainty in this catalogue, however, definitely clarify the leading role, among many other influential co-stars, played by Mario in the design and execution of many of the buildings in the park of Villa Borghese between 1786 and 1796: the artificial lake with the temple of Aesculapius, the temple of Diana, the piazza di Siena and more. The recovery of these drawings has finally clarified how Mario’s work fits – and then imposes itself through its innovative and European stature – within the conjoint work of a team that, when combined with the radical modernization to which the Casino Nobile had already been subject for a decade, gave rise to the



most impressive and vital Roman art workshop of the 18<sup>th</sup> century along with the contemporary Museo Pio-Clementino in the Vatican. Within this large and highly reputed team, Mario could vie at the highest level with some of the greatest exponents of that unrepeatable international milieu anchored in classical antiquity that made Rome in the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the pulsating capital of the artistic avant-gardes of the whole of Europe.

In fact in the artistic field the magical 1770s and '80s were so innovative and cosmopolitan for the eternal city as to rival the other heroic phases in the artistic history of papal Rome, from the sixteenth-century splendour of Raphael, Leo X and Michelangelo to the visionary baroque utopias of Bernini, Urban VIII and Alexander VII. At that time virtually everything happened in Rome. In 1778 Giambattista Piranesi died there, leaving an authoritative but burdensome legacy, which Asprucci himself seems to have wanted to shoulder in some of his projects published here. In close contact with the "Nordic" exponents of the so-called "Fuseli Circle" (Johann Heinrich Füssli lived in Rome from 1770 to 1778), side by side with the large colony of English artists residing in Rome, Piranesi had traced a completely new path, evangelizing Europe with his etchings and his incredible pastiches of ancient marbles. He had taught how to look at classical antiquity with contemporary eyes, treating the infinite fragments that emerged from the Roman subsoil as lemmas of a language forever lost but which then, by abandoning the worn-down pathways of copying and plagiarism, could be recomposed in a new spirit, with a modern sensibility that did not aim to ape the antique but measure itself against it by building an up-to-date idea of Beauty. This, in the 1770s and '80s, was an extraordinary conquest by the Roman neoclassical temper, given a matchless following by Antonio Canova, who arrived in Rome in 1779 to remain forever, creator of the overwhelming revelation of the *Theseus and the Minotaur* (1781-1783), and Jacques-Louis David. The French artist, after some years spent in Paris following his long stay in Rome (1775-1780), decided to return to Rome in 1784 to paint *The Oath of the Horatii*. Completed in 1785, it, together with Canova's sculptures, definitively consecrated this new synthesis of classical heritage and contemporary art.

In this context, while with the foundation of the Museo Pio-Clementino the largest collection of Greek-Roman antiquities in the world was formed, and with Germanic *Stimmung* came a deciphering of the ancient world veined with romantic sentiment (Goethe stayed

in Rome from 1786 to 1788), a decisive part was played by the intellectual nonchalance of the Anglo-Saxon world, less burdened by the overwhelming legacy of the ancients. In the last century it was Hugh Honour, not by chance, who first grasped the importance of this grafting of the Anglo-Saxon culture onto the Roman temper of that time, in 1959 coining the still effective term "Anglo-Romans" to define an artistic milieu, that consisted of Romans, Italians (mostly Venetians like Piranesi, Canova or Giovanni Volpato) and above all English, given to profound renewal. Among the greatest exponents were Piranesi, the young Canova, the Irish sculptor Christopher Hewetson, the powerful and controversial figure of the antiquarian Thomas Jenkins (he was moneylender to Pope Clement XIV) and the multifarious character of the painter, connoisseur, archaeologist and dealer in antiquities Gavin Hamilton. The new fact that should be underlined here is that in this advanced area of Roman figurative culture we must also set the work of Mario Asprucci. In her introduction to the catalogue Susanna Pasquali emphasizes some specific facts about the relations of Asprucci, then twenty years old or little more, with the Anglo-Saxon world: the acquaintance in 1784 with Joseph Bonomi, a Roman architect who had reaped success in Great Britain; his study of designs by the architect Robert Mylne in 1785; the comradeship established in the mid-nineties with the English architect Charles Heathcote Tatham come to study in Rome; even Mario's use, from a certain moment on, of graphite pencils then manufactured only in Great Britain. On the novelty of the English gardens of Villa Borghese, Pasquali points to the interest that the English-style gardens being laid out at the same time by Francesco Bettini in Villa Doria, adjacent to the Borghese Pincian estate, must have aroused in Prince Marcantonio IV, but also in the Aspruccis, father and son. Then again, Bettini had renovated the park of the villa of Prince Pallavicini on the Via Salaria.

But along with these data one can add a rather important conjuncture to open a more general context, better enabling us to chart the cultural bearings of Mario Asprucci. Among the many artists who contributed, between the 1770s and the mid 1780s, to modernising and redecorating the Casino Nobile of the villa, making it an exemplary document of synergy among the arts on themes of antiquity, and a milestone in the history and philosophy of interior design, directed by Antonio Asprucci and guided by the antiquarian erudition of Ennio Quirino Visconti, was precisely Gavin Hamilton, who in 1782 was entrusted

with the decoration of the so-called room of Helen and Paris. For the hall, Hamilton did not limit himself to painting by 1784 the eight famous canvases with the stories of Helen and Paris (now partly in the Museo di Roma), but was the director of the entire decorative installation. Between 1782 and 1784 the hall came to contain the sculptures of Helen and Paris by Agostino Penna, the marble reliefs by Vincenzo Pacetti for the door crowns, four alabaster amphorae by Guillaume-Antoine Grandjacquet on granite columns and jasper pedestals, a pair of commodes designed by Antonio Asprucci made by Yves Livinec with decorations in gilded bronze by Luigi Valadier. In those same years Gioacchino Agricola painted the mural decorations, the monochromes on Ovidian themes in the windows squinches, while Giovan Battista Marchetti made the monochrome pedestal with classical tales. The decorative ensemble was completed by the clock, decorated with a bronze sculpture inspired by Michelangelo's famous *Dusk* by Luigi Valadier, set on the mantelpiece. In his conducting of this chorus of voices Hamilton created the most beautiful room, together with the Egyptian one entrusted to Tommaso Conca, of the entire construction site wished by Prince Marcantonio IV. The first true discoverer of Canova in Rome, Hamilton passed on to him a series of significant tips on professional strategies such as that of having his works etched and published under copyright protection, and, we know from the sources, that he was much heeded by Prince Borghese, by Visconti and Antonio Asprucci himself. His weight in the definition of the new projects in the English fashion in the park of Villa Borghese, even if not precisely documented, must have been anything but marginal. And also the inclusion of Mario Asprucci in the sphere of the "Anglo-Romans" can be attributed to Hamilton's acquaintance, as can involvement in the planning of the Pincian park of the Scottish landscape artist Jacob More and Mario's introduction to his extraordinary and mythomaniacal patron Lord Bristol, for whom the architect was to provide the plans for the new residence of Ickworth. The convergence of these relationships around the mid-eighties also seems to be significant here. The configuration of these links around 1784 is also testified by Pacetti when in his diary of 29 February of that year he records: "to San Luca [Accademia di San Luca] to show the drawings of the competitions to Signora Angelica [Kauffmann] with her husband [the painter Antonio Zucchi], three English milords, Signor Bonomi [the architect Joseph], and the son of Signor Asprucci".

With their extraordinary complexity and the incredible number of artists involved, the works in the Casino Nobile – and Hamilton's Helen and Paris room was the chief exemplification – had then taught that great results could be achieved especially by working in *équipe*. And here is the other important feature that distinguishes the drawings published here. The presence, among the materials in the collection, of some sheets that Susanna Pasquali attributes to Antonio Asprucci and his atelier, to Cristoforo Unterperger, hypothetically to the English architect Charles Heathcote Tatham and to other figures who worked on the Borghese site, clarifies even more than the construction of the park that the decoration of the Casino, was a choral work, of which Mario Asprucci at one point had to become one of the chief interpreters. From when in 1786 Marcantonio IV had been impressed by the drawings presented by him for the Balestra competition of the Accademia di San Luca, of which he was the winner. Of this complex plurality of conception and execution of the park of the villa and its buildings, the history of art already knew, since there was knowledge of Vincenzo Pacetti's involvement in the creation of the temple of Aesculapius and the garden of the lake and of the complex construction of the *Fountain of the marine Horses* designed by Unterperger in 1790, translated into wax and clay models by Pacetti and made in marble by the stonemason Luigi Salimei. But, and here is the salient fact, the 43 drawings published here give a vibrant cross-section, in progress, of this collective planning. One reads between the lines all the reflections, diversity of positions, evolutions in design that must have animated the contentions among all the artists involved in the making of this renowned cynosure, guided by Visconti for the antiquarian aspects. In this sense it can be safely said that here we have much than architectural drawings. They are evidence of design in a broader perspective, in which, for example, the possible variants of the ancient and modern sculptures that were to embellish the new buildings of the park are analysed or there is a testing of the effectiveness of the different figurative repertoires, in some cases neoclassical in other heirs to the Baroque manner, that were to adorn the new fountains. One might describe some of these drawings as renderings *ante litteram*. While as a whole they lift the curtain to reveal the backstage of one of the most refined and complex artistic ensembles of eighteenth-century Europe, restoring to us a very high point in Roman figurative culture.



*. Mario Asprucci. Architect  
to The Prince Borghese at Rome .*

1. V. Camuccini, *Portrait of Mario Asprucci* (Getty Research Center, Los Angeles).

## IN SEARCH OF MARIO ASPRUCCI

### Life

Born in Rome in 1764, Mario came of a family that had practised as architects in the capital of the Papal States for two generations. He was the son of the architect Antonio (1723-1808), and nephew of the architect known as Mario *il vecchio* (doc. 1727-1750); a Tommaso Asprucci, presumably a relative, appears as early as 1725 as the winner of a competition organized by the Accademia di San Luca<sup>1</sup>. His first teacher was his father; no other teachers are known of. His training may be considered complete by 1786: at the age of twenty-two he won first prize in the Balestra Competition organized by the Accademia di San Luca with a project for an *Accademia di belle Arti* (fig. 5)<sup>2</sup>; he won on his merits, but it should be noted that from 1772 his father was one of the academicians and that second prize in the competition was given to yet another of his pupils.

Antonio inherited from his father the post of architect to the Borghese family. In the normal course of events this entailed the simple overseeing of maintenance work on their huge properties accumulated, as early as the seventeenth century, in Rome, in estates in the countryside and in the fiefdoms of Lazio<sup>3</sup>. After the election of Pope Paul V Borghese in 1620, his relatives had in fact become part of the Roman aristocracy and, thanks to the wealth ensuing, had quickly installed themselves in buildings demonstrative of their recently acquired rank: a city palace, a suburban villa and one, or more, residences in the Castelli Romani, not far from where the papal court passed part of the year. In 1763 when Marco Antonio IV inherited the princely title and especially after 1768, when he married Anna Salviati, the last member of that family and thereby heir to that fortune, Antonio Asprucci's employment had to change in purpose and scope: the new prince decided to spend lavishly on the complete renovation of his properties, focusing mainly on the Villa Pinciana. For the works inside the *Casino Nobile*, Antonio became something more than an architect: in addition to designing the new layout of each room, his task included the supervision of all the decorative pictorial

work, as well as of the transport and repositioning of the statues and ancient marbles. In terms of expenditure, of the scale of the interventions and the innovations pioneered, the Villa must in those years have been the only private construction site in Rome to match the public one of the Vatican Museums, then under construction: Antonio, the sole overseer of the work on behalf of the prince, was therefore at the centre of the group of vanguard artists of the time.

It was in that lively milieu that Mario spent his early youth. And it was among this large group of artists, always in the process of being replaced by others who had caught the interest of the Borghese Prince, that he too displayed his talents. As soon as Marco Antonio learned that the son of his architect had won the academy's prize, he asked that the drawings be brought him from the Accademia di San Luca<sup>4</sup>: he surely looked over them carefully and liked what he saw, for from that moment – without ever being given any official post in the Borghese administration – Mario was invited to participate in Marco Antonio's new enterprise: the complete redesign of the gardens of the Villa Pinciana. Thanks to the drawings presented here, we are able to document for the first time his personal involvement – completely independent of Antonio's official engagement – in all the main phases in the restructuring of the garden.

But who was Mario, out of and aside from this extraordinary building site? The English architect Tatham, in commenting on his only known portrait (fig. 1), recalled that the architect was born with a congenital malformation of the palate<sup>5</sup> such that – we deduce – he could hardly speak in public: in contrast to his father, who was a member of the literary Accademia dell'Arcadia and who was elected from 1789 to 1792 as *principe* (principal) of the Accademia di San Luca (fig. 2-3), thus representing the interests of all the city's artists<sup>6</sup>, Mario remained a self-effacing artist, secluded with his drawing board. He was however to become much more than the accommodating shadow of his father. He was certainly alert to what was happening





ANTONIO ASPRUCCI ROMANO ARCHITETTO  
FATTO ACCADEMICO DI S. LUCA NELL' A. MDCCLXXII



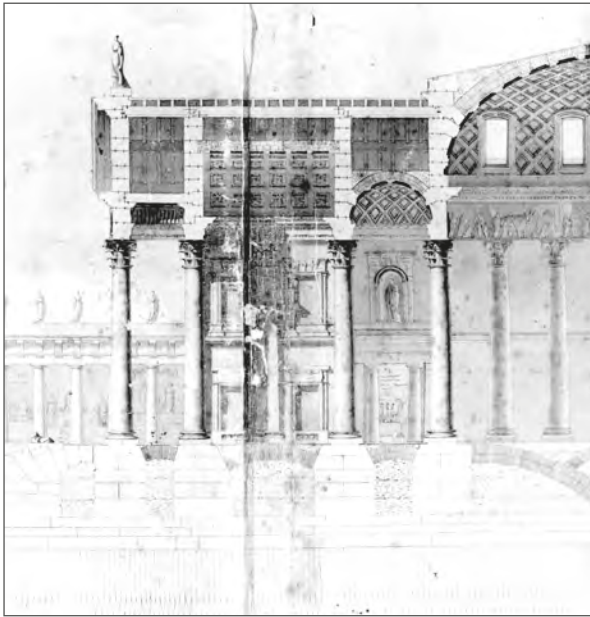
2. A. von Maron, *Portrait of Antonio Asprucci* (AASL, Roma).
3. A. Asprucci, *Autograph design for the facade of a church* (AASL, Roma, *Disegni di architettura*, n. 2108).

around and, above all, to what had happened thirty years earlier in international Rome of the mid-eighteenth-century: when barely twenty years old, in 1784 he had

had the opportunity of frequenting the architect Joseph Bonomi<sup>7</sup>, a Roman who had been successful in Great Britain and was thus able to inform him on the lively artistic scene in London; the following year, probably guided by him, before participating in the Academy competition, he studied the drawings made by Robert Mylne for a similar competition held in 1758 (fig. 4). In contrast to the late-baroque idiom transmitted by his father, from his youth Mario was thus interested in the lessons that Piranesi, the Adam brothers and the French artists had drawn in the 1750s directly from Roman antiquities. The drawings he presented to the Academy – those that the Prince was to admire – already show the result of this sort of self-mentoring: witness the clear-cut citations from the antique, including the use of superb specimens of Corinthian capital (fig. 5). And, in addition to the evident novelties displayed in the overall conception, Mario developed another attribute of those masters: excelling draughtsmanship, achieved by the practice of analytical observation of the antique. Quality and precision in the detail that, in following years, he was to consolidate and bring to new heights when, abandoning ink and watercolour, he began mainly to use the graphite pencils then manufactured in Great Britain<sup>8</sup>. In various respects, therefore, if by family tradition and training he was destined to become the most Roman of the Romans, the young architect was already gravitating towards a more cosmopolitan mind-set.

During 1791, while working on the Villa Pinciana, he entered the architectural competition organised by the Parma Academy for the design of a *Casino di campagna* and, once again, won first prize. Since the 1780s it had become common practice for the best artists residing in Rome to submit their drawings to this academy, because participation was open to all and its judgment considered fairest. However, that an architect who had completed his training time ago should so compete was very odd. This objection was answered by Mario himself in a long note accompanying the project: he had worked on the set theme out of personal interest, but a chance viewing of the drawings by a colleague come to visit his father had led to his being constrained to participate<sup>9</sup>. There are indications, however, that the young man hiding in the family studio had a network of external contacts, sometimes even antagonistic to his father's. At least as early as 1792 he had been attending the meetings of the *Accademia della pace* (fig. 6-8): an informal association of artists, founded in the home of the painter Felice Giani in open criticism of the



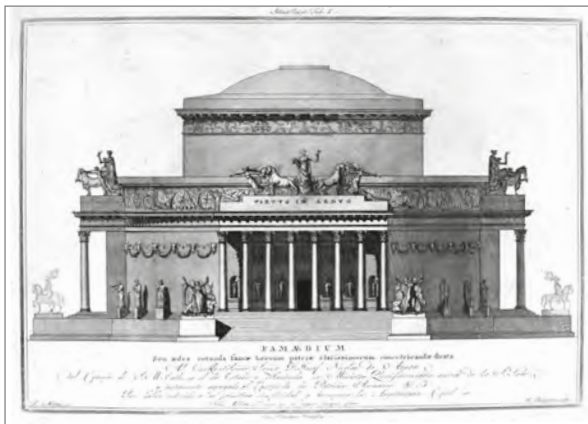
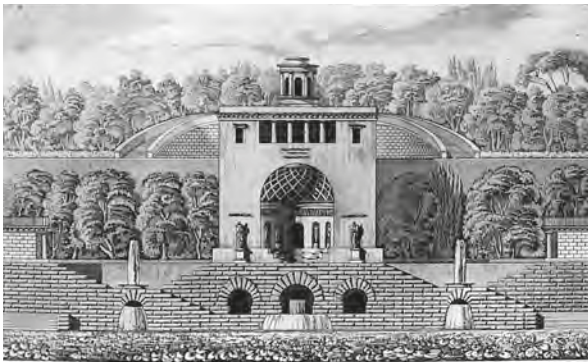


4. R. Mylne, *Progetto di una grande piazza magnificamente ornata di portici*, Concorso Clementino 1758, detail of the section (AASL, Roma. Disegni di architettura, n. 536).

5. M. Asprucci, *Accademia di belle arti*, Concorso Balestra 1786, detail of the section (AASL, Roma, Disegni di architettura, n. 1097).

traditional methods of the Accademia di San Luca. The adherents, without respect of hierarchy, together established every week a subject and freely compared each other's design in the sole purpose of progressing individually in the art. Many foreigners interested in architecture took part; Vincenzo Balestra<sup>10</sup>, a pupil of Giovanni Antonio Antolini who had won the esteem of his peers by participating in the Parma competition held in 1785<sup>11</sup> acted as director. Moreover, Mario's ambition to constantly improve his skills is documented by the anomalous pact drawn up with one of his pupils, the young English architect Charles Heathcote Tatham (1772-1842): between 1794 and 1796 Mario was indeed his mentor, but – since both felt the urge to confront what they saw as the superior authority of the antique – they went out on expeditions together as “fellow students”, scrutinising and drawing the Roman monuments inside and outside the city<sup>12</sup>. They were later joined by the Spaniard Isidro Velasquez (1765-1840), then beneficiary of a bursary from the King of Spain<sup>13</sup>.

His personal connection with Frederick Augustus Hervey (1730-1803), 4th Earl of Bristol, still needs to be teased out. The latter, a well known figure, had spent time in Rome on several occasions; during his stay in 1785-86, the painter Jacob More received several commissions, in the process of becoming his agent<sup>14</sup>. In the portrait of 1789, painted by Hugh Douglas Hamilton, the Earl is shown standing in the Villa Pinciana, in front of the *Giardino del lago* with the newly built temple of Aesculapius. No explanation has so far been found for the choice of being portrayed in the private property of a Roman prince, rather than in front of a more neutral backdrop, as any famous monument would have been; just as no evidence has yet emerged that Marco Antonio IV and Lord Bristol knew each other, nor consequently that they discussed together the English Garden project that was being laid out in the villa. What is certain is only that, thanks to the intervention of More, an artist esteemed by both, in March 1787 the shores of the lake were shaped so as to appear natural. It is thus difficult not to conjecture that, by asking for those shores to figure explicitly in the background of his portrait, Bristol meant to claim his part in the artistic choices made. This triangle, so far undocumented – centred on the lake of Villa Borghese, with the three corners occupied by the Roman prince, the English earl and the painter Jacob More – is the frame within which Mario's



6. *Raccolta di IX progetti architettonici (...)* della Accademia della Pace, Roma 1796 ca., title page.

7. M. Asprucci, *Casa di campagna per un signore letterato* (*Raccolta...*)

8. F. Albitos, *Famaedium*, prospect (*Raccolta ...*).

only great occasion materialized: the commission from Lord Bristol to design his principal residence at Ickworth (Suffolk, England).

After coming into the title in 1779, Lord Bristol had asked more than one English architect, chosen amongst those from time to time resident in Rome, for plans for the renovation of his residences; John Soane was one of these. When in 1794 he decided to rebuild Ickworth, he involved in various ways Tatham, Francis Sandys and finally Mario Asprucci in the enterprise. Keeping in mind that Sandys, later the actual executor of the building, had lived with More up to the year before and that at least one *Disegno per una Galleria di statue ideato per Villa Borghese*<sup>15</sup> by him is documented, it is evident that much remains to be clarified about the circumstances in which the choice was made to entrust the project to the only Roman architect of the group. Even Canova may have played a role: the foremost artist in Europe, for every foreigner in Rome he was the oracle to consult when commissioning artworks: it is known that the Earl of Bristol asked him at least for advice on how the very long bas-reliefs that run all around Ickworth's walls might be achieved<sup>16</sup> (fig. 9-10). That these had been foreseen incorporated in the design by Mario was no coincidence: the architect shared with the sculptor the renewed enthusiasm for the simplicity of Parthenon friezes and, in general, for a Greek architecture that banned the use of structural elements for decorative purposes, accepting only low reliefs on bare walls. In 1802, when the Accademia, reinvigorated under the direction of Canova, opened its doors again, both the Earl of Bristol and Mario were among the first to be appointed members: the former in February as an honorary academician, the latter in March as a full academician in the category of practising architects<sup>17</sup> (fig. 11-12).

This, auspicious as it seemed, was not the start of a career finally independent. Mario died young: two years later, in May 1804, coaching out of the city to inspect work for the Borghese family, he was kicked by the horse as he led it to a trough. He died shortly after and his funeral was held in the church of San Nicola dei Lorenesi<sup>18</sup>. He was not yet forty. That same day, Lucia Camuccini threw herself from a window<sup>19</sup>.

## Early death

Dying when he did, in 1804, had long lasting effects on the posthumous fame of the artist. After the Roman Republic (1798-99), the Accademia had, against all odds, reopened, but there were no longer any periodicals in Rome publishing information on the fine arts: the first consequence was that Mario received his obituary after



that devoted to his father, who was to die after him in 1808.

The publications of Antonio Guattani and other cognoscenti in fact began to reappear, with new layout and title, only in 1806. They were periodicals, paid for by the new government of Pius VII<sup>20</sup>, published in the explicit aim of exhuming – as if everything had remained unchanged – great eighteenth-century international Rome: nothing of what had happened between 1796 and 1799 was to be in any case mentioned. Not a word about the French invasion of Bologna and the consequent need to defend Rome by raising an army; a circumstance that saw Mario enlisted as lieutenant of a squadron fitted out at the expense of Prince Borghese<sup>21</sup>. Nothing on the pillage sanctioned by the Treaty of Tolentino, not a word on the flight of the Pope and the subsequent proclamation of a Republic in Rome; nothing on the fact that Mario had also held the post of ‘Edile del 2 Circondario’ of Rome<sup>22</sup>. In particular, no hint of the extraordinary *volteface* of Prince Marco Antonio, who as soon as the Republic had been proclaimed had clamorously renounced his noble titles, accepted the appointment as senator of the new state, and by dying during a brief hiatus in the rule of the Republic, failed to get himself buried as simple *citoyen*<sup>23</sup>, all in the course of the years 1799-1800. His sons Camillo and Francesco had shared, triplicating him, in all his republican enthusiasm: both embraced the new Republican army and with their assent, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the French Revolution (14 July 1798), the Villa Pinciana was endowed with a bizarre fortlet, still standing today<sup>24</sup> (fig. 57). Unreported by the press, all the statues and the marbles – some wrested by force from the very facades of the *Casino Nobile* – were sold by Camillo to Napoleon (1807). As one can see from this rough list, a great deal had to be left out, if the general aim was to celebrate the continuity of Rome.

Social propriety added its weight to the omissions of facts. In the ‘Memorie per le belle arti’ of 1808, Guattani records both the Asprucci in a long obituary of Antonio: submissive to social precedence, he esteemed the father, by the mere fact of being the official architect of the Borghese and also of having been *principe* of the Accademia for three years, as the primary figure. Though acknowledging the merits of Mario, the formulas used to describe the relationship between the two definitely vantage the father: Antonio



9. The residence built at Ickworth (Suffolk, GB) by Friedrich Hervey, 4th Earl of Bristol and Bishop of Derry.

10. Detail showing the importance of the sculpted friezes.

*‘began to devolve on his son the conception and execution of those works that had been commissioned from him by His Highness Prince Don Marco Antonio and others. These [constructions] while they are the work of the son (...), while built by him under the direction of his father, can in some way be attributed to the father, and the son’s supreme skill can justly be praised in the father’<sup>25</sup>.*

The later obituary, published in the following issue<sup>26</sup>, restored Mario’s selfhood, while dwelling only on what he had built in Rome and, thus, only in the Villa Pinciana. These two texts – written when so many fellow artists were still living and going uncorrected by them



11. M. Asprucci, *Public Manufactory on a River used as Customs* (AASL, Roma, Disegni di architettura, n. 2190).

– were thus destined to become the main sources on which every subsequent biographer was to draw<sup>27</sup>, and had important consequences for later artistic historiography: the curious formula whereby the son’s autonomy is restricted (cf. my italics), has meant that it is still the common notion today that the buildings of the Villa Pinciana are inextricably the work of both. More specific studies, based on Mario’s obituary alone, doggedly assign him only the four buildings that Guattani had attributed to him<sup>28</sup>.

### An appraisal

In the two decades between 1786 and 1804 Mario managed to assimilate and inhabit three perspectives difficult to meld in a single individual: as a retainer of a great Roman prince, he practised his profession in ways hallowed for centuries in Rome; without ever moving from the city, he was also able to frequent the new English-speaking patrons, finding new interlocutors in the Grand-Tourists. And aside from these two ways of being an architect in Rome – unified, however, by the interest shown by his Roman and foreign patrons in



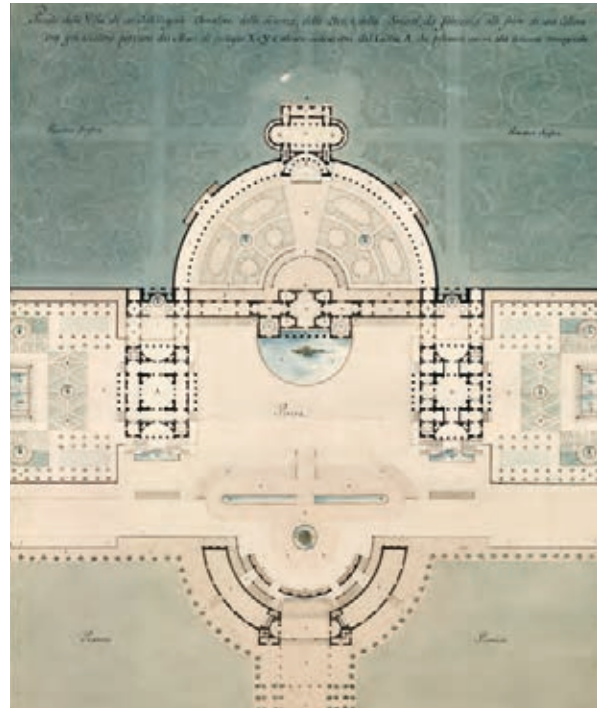
12. Note, in the detail, the presence of the statue of *Cybele enthroned* (cf. fig. 33).

the antique – from the early 1790s he assumed a third mindset, of no less interest: he had also come across the profound renewal in architecture taking place in France. The direct influence of some of the French architects sent to Rome at royal expense to further their studies<sup>29</sup>, and the reading of contemporary French publications<sup>30</sup>, had led him, as all his friends in the Accademia della Pace, to the designing of large-scale projects: explicitly intended from first conception to remain on paper, in the sole purpose of exploring the limits and possibilities of public architecture, which – after the 1789 Revolution – was now aimed at the *citoyens* (fig. 6-8). These three strands have never, in Mario's case, been teased out.

At the start of the nineteenth century, after the dramatic events of the previous decade and the consequent interruption in the flow of foreign travellers to the city, what all the Roman architects expected were new opportunities for building again, both for the newly re-installed papal court and for the private sector. Mario, however, died in 1804 and it was on his peers Giuseppe Valadier (1762-1839), Giuseppe Camporesi (1763-1822) and the younger Raffaele Stern (1774-1820), that these long awaited opportunities were bestowed. Among these artists, Stern was Canova's favourite, but since he too died young, it was Valadier who in the end became the most famous: the artist who, in the traditional narrative of European art history, was for many years considered the only exponent of Neoclassicism in Rome. The present catalogue, which comes last after many recent studies on architecture at the turn of the century, restores Mario to his rightful place.

### The fate of his papers

The Asprucci family lived in a house near the church of San Claudio dei Borgognoni: it was also the location of the studio used by the architects of the family<sup>31</sup>. Mario's papers, drawings and books, together with those of his father Antonio and his grandfather, Mario 'il vecchio', were in the process of being sold off as early as 1816. In that year, 'un signor Asprucci' – in whom we should recognize Giuseppe, the only son of the family then living<sup>32</sup> – offered to sell to the Accademia di San Luca the artistic legacy of three generations of architects: he offered 'hereditary books and drawings', but nothing was bought by the academicians<sup>33</sup>. The other half of the papers documenting the artistic activity of Asprucci met no better fate: when in 1891 and 1932 the Borghese family handed over all its historical archives to the



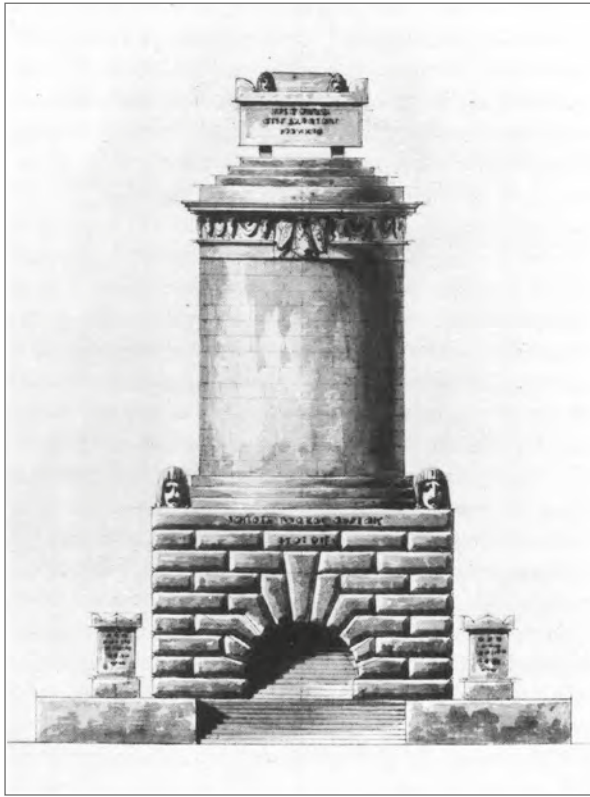
13. M. Asprucci (attr.), *Villa of an enlightened Sciences and Arts Lover* (AASL, Roma, Disegni di architettura, n. 2230).

Archivio Segreto Vaticano<sup>34</sup>, the drawings that the three architects had been making for more than a 100 years in its service had already gone missing. The dispersal of those two significant nuclei of the Asprucci drawings has hampered the posthumous fame of Mario: until twenty years ago few of his drawings were known and, for that reason, no historian of architecture was able to rebut Guattani by finally specifying in what he distinguished himself from his father, with whom he had constantly worked. Below we present a list of what is known up to now, divided into two sections: on the one hand a list of Mario's production as independent artist and, on the other, all works done by him for the Borghese under his father's direction. This will later enable a more adequate description of the general characters of the drawings presented in this catalogue.

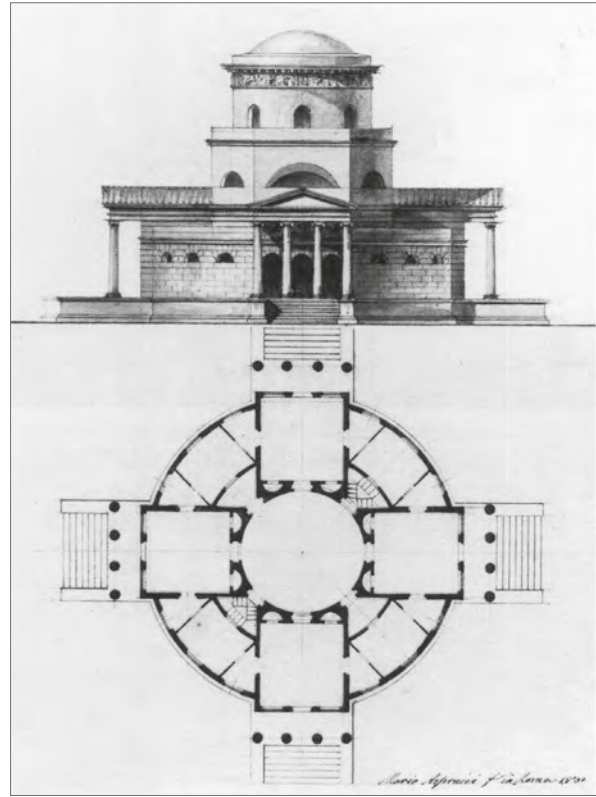
### The drawings from the antique

According to a practice of the kind established between John Soane and Thomas Hardwick, the agreement made by Mario with Tatham and Velasquez between October 1795 and 1796, provided that the three architects should go out together to draw





14. M. Asprucci, *Tomb for an Hero* (BCBo, Gabinetto dei disegni, cartella 9, n. 1371).



15. M. Asprucci, *Design for a Building with four Entrances and four Rooms around a circular Room* (BCBo, Gabinetto dei disegni, cartella 9, n. 1371).

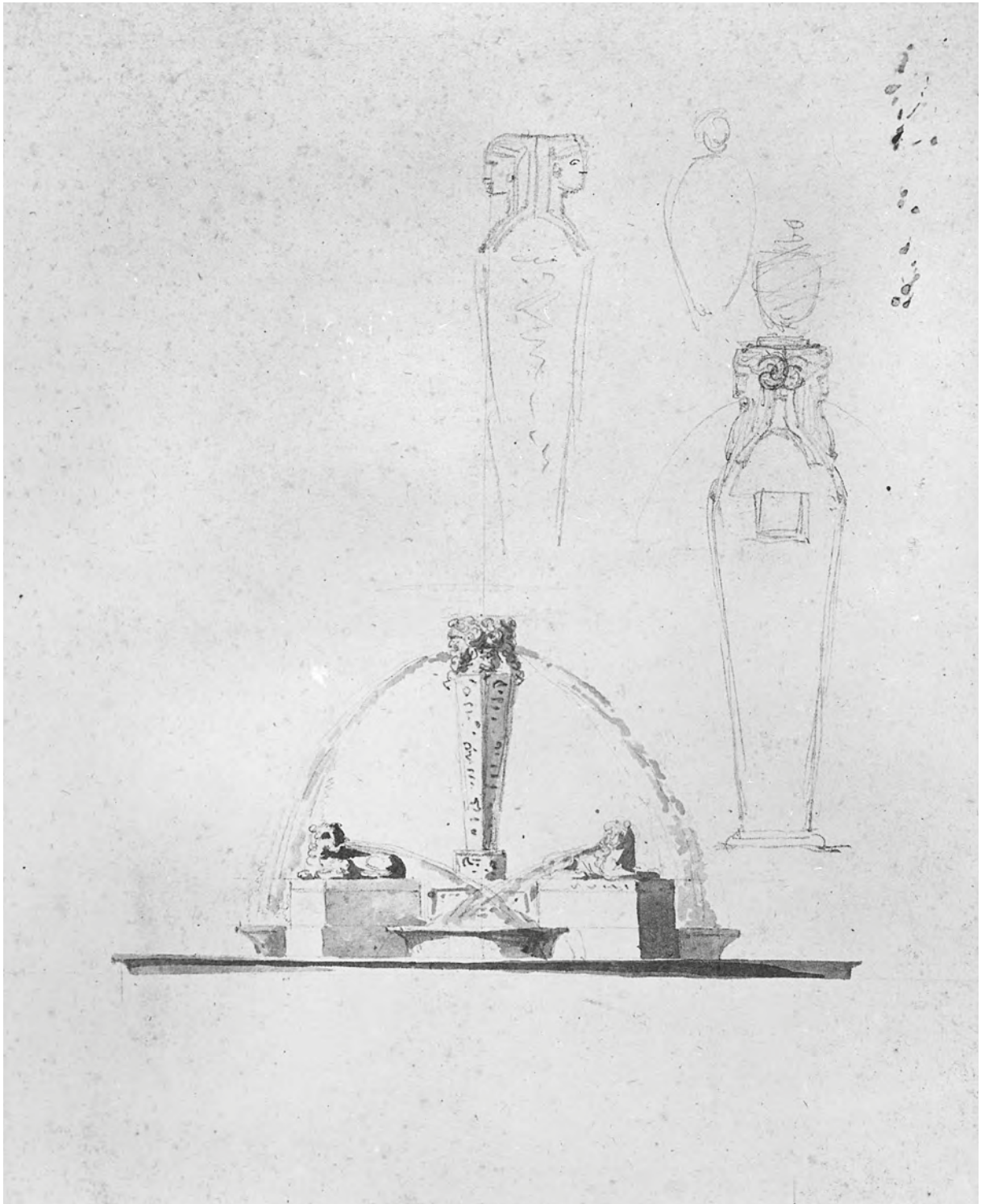
antiquities and then, through tracings, exchanged the drawings done. Each thereby obtained a complete collection of studies of the chief monuments; shortly before leaving Rome definitively, Tatham specified: 'I completed my collection of drawings with Asprucci & Velasquez, & they with me'<sup>35</sup>. Some drawings attributed to Velasquez are known, among which stands out the entablature of the temple of Antoninus and Faustina<sup>36</sup>; many others, perhaps unsigned, are to be found everywhere among the anonymous sheets of that period.

### The visionary paper architecture

The Accademia di San Luca in Rome has held since they were entrusted to it a group of Mario's autographs: the eight drawings presented for the Balestra Competition (1786), the extraordinary pencil project (fig. 11-12) offered following his appointment as academician (1802), and various other anonymous drawings that can

be attributed to him<sup>37</sup> (fig. 13). Whereas the drawings presented for the Accademia di Parma competition (1791) are lost.

There are two small groups of his drawings, which were intentionally gathered while he was alive, or in the year of his death. His English pupil Tatham, as early as his departure from Rome in 1796 set up what may be defined as a paper monument to his beloved mentor: he commissioned the aforementioned portrait of Mario from Vincenzo Camuccini (the only one known), asked Mario for some of his concept designs and copied others on tissue paper; on some he also wrote notes after hearing of the artist's death. In 1982 John Harris, who consulted Tatham's papers while they were still in the hands of his heirs, described this small private collection, including two autograph sheets by Mario<sup>38</sup>. Following the dispersal, some of the drawings are today held by the Soane Museum<sup>39</sup> and the National



16. M. Asprucci, *Design for a Fountain for Villa Borghese* (Photo Archive Galleria Carlo Virgilio, Roma).



Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh<sup>40</sup>; the portrait is with the Getty Research Center<sup>41</sup> and copies of a Mario project executed by Tatham are at the RIBA in London<sup>42</sup>. Independently of this nucleus, three of his drawings for concept projects, once belonging to the collection of the painter Giovanni Piancastelli (1845-1926) at the end of the nineteenth century in Rome, are now at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, New York<sup>43</sup>. The few loose sheets that are in the Kunstbibliothek, Berlin<sup>44</sup> and one at Chatsworth<sup>45</sup> are of uncertain provenance.

The second collection that testifies to a deliberate intention on the part of one of his pupils to establish and preserve a private memorial of the artist has a more recent history. Two years ago, in 2016, thanks to Alistair Rowan's personal commitment, a group of drawings donated by the Papafava dei Carraresi family of Padua became part of the collections of the Centro Palladio in Vicenza: gathered in Rome in 1804 by a member of the family, Alessandro (1785-1862), a devotee of architecture. They consist of various hitherto unknown sheets by Mario of extraordinary importance. Because of their wide variety in size, in the techniques used, in the subject and in the level of definition – many are sketches or unfinished drawings – it is possible to suppose that these were part of the personal papers of the architect, relating to the Bristol commission and projects, mostly visionary, on which he had worked since the 1790s<sup>46</sup>. The collecting of them in Rome, in 1804, the year of the artist's untimely death, was probably young Alessandro's heartfelt way of preserving his memory.

Other drawings by Mario, showing completely different features, emerged in 2004. In that year 49 sheets held by the Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio di Bologna were made known by Silvia Medda<sup>47</sup>: signed by Mario and dated between 1801 and 1802, they are all in the same small-format and present small buildings or pavilions; their fine geometric construction is in pencil and the final draft in black ink (fig 14-15 e 17). In all probability they are the proofs of a book of notional projects that Mario had in mind to print, modelled perhaps on the one published by Giuseppe Valadier in the late '90s<sup>48</sup>. It is likely that the intermediaries for publication may have been Giovanni Antonio Antolini or Vincenzo Balestra, since both were in Bologna in the early eighteenth century.



17. M. Asprucci, *Design for a Room housing a Fountain with a lying Leda*, (BCBo, Gabinetto dei disegni, 9, n. 1371, f.18).  
 18. *Lying Leda* (Galleria Borghese, sala I, Roma).

### In the service of the Borghese

Drawings, relating to Borghese commissions, came onto the market as early as 1981-82 and again in 1989. A voluminous group of them is now held by the Getty

Center<sup>49</sup>. Made known by Carola Paul, those drawings probably come directly from the Borghese archives: for the most part the sheets in fact relate to projects carried out by various artists for the renovation of the *Casino Nobile* of the Villa Pinciana in the 1770s. The presence of some drawings attributed to the painter Tommaso Conca, who was officially engaged with Antonio for the re-arrangement of the interiors and collections, reinforces this assumption. Other drawings from the same Borghese group probably found other buyers: the 1981-83 sale catalogues<sup>50</sup> documents various projects pertaining to the Villa Pinciana: records or projects for gateways dating from the time of Scipione Borghese, projects of fountains and items of furniture from the late eighteenth century, an early project for the Temple in the lake and more (fig. 16). I have no information on all the current owners.

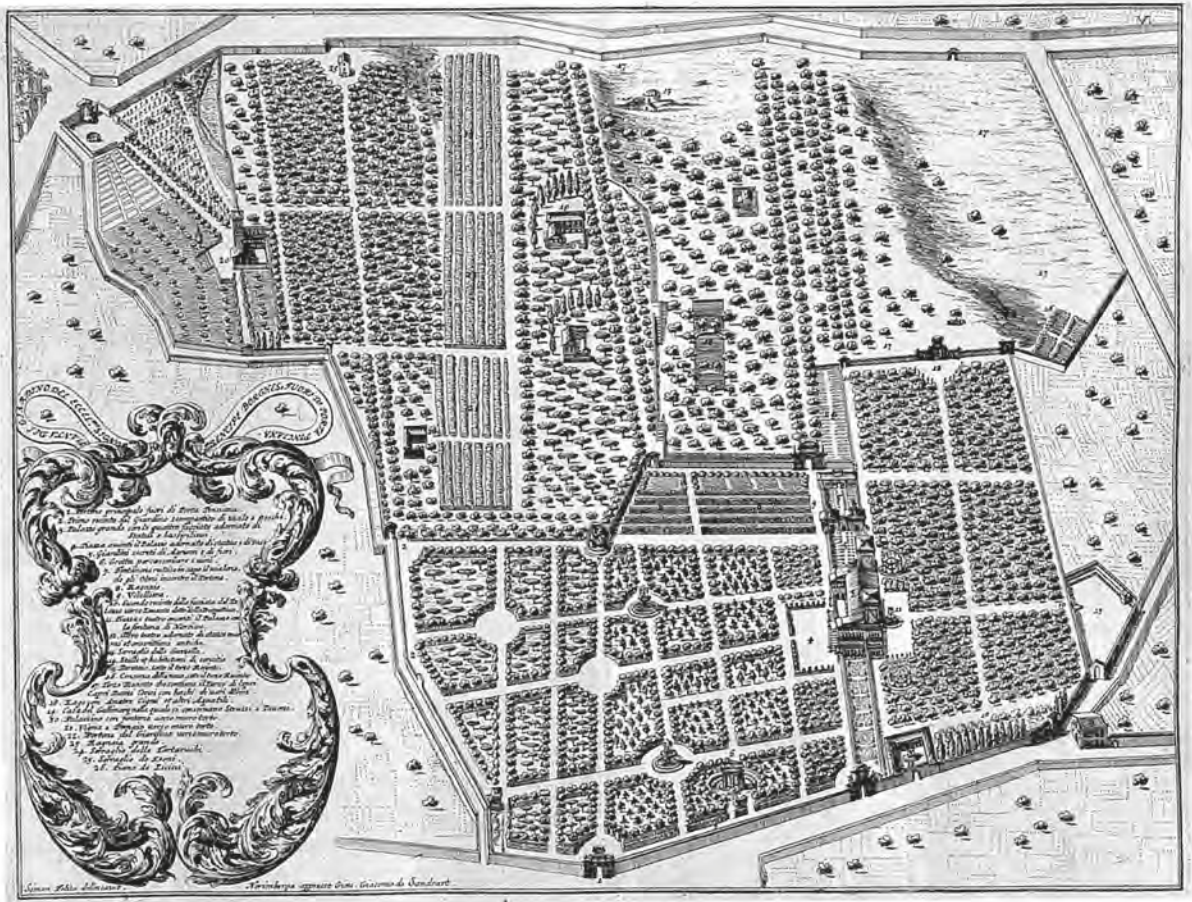
The last group of drawings that can be linked to the Asprucci which, in chronological order, has come to light is described in this catalogue. It consists of 43 sheets, presenting different subjects, but nevertheless attributable – as made out in the following pages – mainly to the Borghese commission for the Villa Pinciana. In my opinion, Mario's hand is evident in many of the sheets (nos 1-27); some may have been drawn by his father Antonio, or by a larger group of Asprucci collaborators to whom we are so far unable to give a name (nos 28-38); while others may be the work of the painter Cristoforo Unterperger, or one of his draughtsmen (nos 11-12). The basis of attribution to Mario – *caveat lector* – was the simultaneous presence of two specific elements: recognition of his hand – when the drawing is not done in graphite pencil or when given a wash, it remains debatable – and an assessment of the architecture shown. Hence, when a drawing presents a construction innovative because experimental both in idiom and in modality of presentation, I have attributed it with certainty to Mario. I have adopted this narrow scope so as to contribute to the construction of a corpus of his projects, rather than of his autograph drawings. It should however be noted that, among the drawings presented here, many others may be from the hands of Mario (they have been indicated by the addition of a question mark): working in his father's employ, he may well have developed ideas of that same father, or of the other artists involved; hypothetically, if Mario was the best draughtsman of the group, all the sheets relating to the buildings of Villa Borghese might be his. There are,

however, limits: out of the indications available, I have recreated the years of the Villa Borghese building yard, highlighting the friendships and enmities between the artists. At the moment, I am convinced that there was no fellow – feeling among the architects traditionally entitled to engage in the profession – that are the Aspruccis – and all those who, in one way or another, usurped such entitlement to involve themselves in the layout of the grounds: the architectural competence that the Prince began to find in Unterperger from 1790 must have been a hard blow to Antonio Asprucci: it is hard to believe – as I see it – that his son Mario would have drawn his projects.

The homogeneity of the subjects, the presence of drawings by other artists employed by the Prince and, at least in one case, the obvious link between some texts still conserved in the Borghese Archives and some of the drawings presented here<sup>51</sup>, lead to the conclusion that this group also, like that in the Getty Research Center, originally belonged to the family archives – with an important distinction: here the main subject is the layout of the villa's gardens, whereas in the drawings today in Los Angeles it is the renovation of the *Casino Nobile*.

Some of these drawings have, on the recto, modern explanatory text or explicit attributions to Mario Asprucci: written in pencil and in English, they are evidence of a passage through some collections or the international market, capable of appreciating the draughtmanship of this artist. The activity of the collector Giovanni Piancastelli (1845-1926) is not sufficiently known for one to be able to affirm that this group of drawings has also, like the one today at Cooper Hewitt, passed through his hands. However, it must be remembered that from 1871 he was in the service of the Borghese family and it is documented that, when the family fell on hard times, he was paid by the cession of works of art, which he then sold. He may, therefore, be responsible for the dispersal, in several stages, of all the drawings made by a host of artists when at work for Prince Marco Antonio in Villa Pinciana<sup>52</sup>. The majority of the sheets presented here bear a stamp in the form of an heraldic shield enclosing the initials AM. They are those of the last owner, the collector Andrea Manto: an Italian, a resident of Asti in Piedmont, who presumably acquired this group of drawings on the international market.





19. S. F. Delino, *Pianta del Giardino dell'Ecc.mo Signor Principe Borghese fuori di Porta Pinciana*, 1667, etching.



A: *Primo recinto*  
 B: *Secondo recinto*  
 C: *Terzo and quarto recinto*

- n. 1, Main gateway outside Porta Pinciana
- n. 2, Porta delle Cavalle
- n. 18, Lake with geese, swans.
- n. 19, Gallinaro
- n. 20, Casino dei giuochi d'acqua
- n. 22, Gateway of the garden towards the Muro Torto
- n. 25, Lions' cage



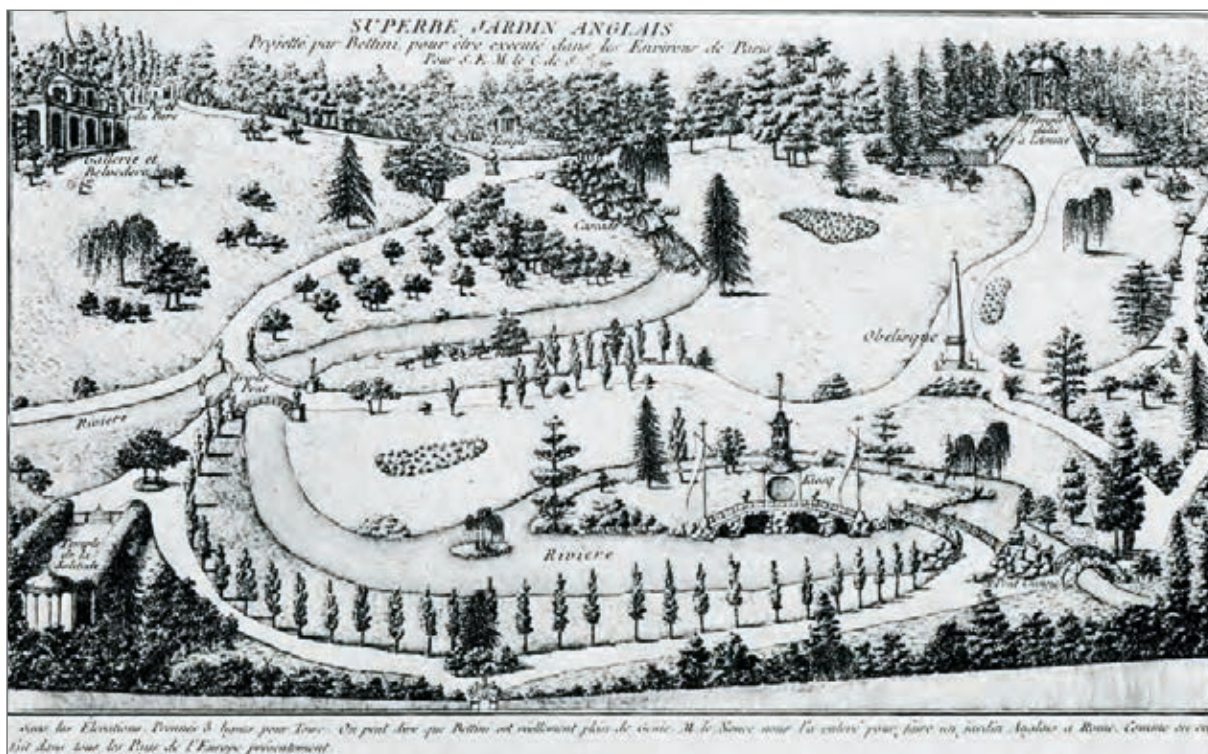
## THE PRINCE AND THE VILLA: OPEN QUESTIONS

The Villa Pinciana dates back to the early decades of the seventeenth century, when the Church and the families of the popes were the leading patrons in the capital of the Papal States. It was established, at great expense, by Cardinal Scipione Caffarelli Borghese, the nephew of Pope Paul V (1605-1621), through the purchase of some small vineyards and villas, located in a large hilly area close to the walls of ancient Rome; on his death it was inherited by his family, elevated by the pope himself, as then was common practice, to princely rank. The *Casino Nobile* was built to house the ancient and modern works of art collected by the cardinal; part of the surrounding land, thanks to the granting of an extraordinary quantity of water from public conduits<sup>53</sup>, had been transformed into magnificent gardens. The map of Simone Felice Delino published in 1676 shows the division of its area into four distinct enclosures or *recinti* (fig. 19)<sup>54</sup>: in the first, in front of the Casino, a formal garden had been laid out, in the second there was a wood of holm oaks populated by fallow deer. In the third and fourth enclosure, which together were larger, the orography was more varied, because most of the land descended on two distinct slopes, towards the Porta del Popolo and towards Villa Giulia. Here, the large pond for breeding fish, the *ragnaie* for netting small birds, the tillage and the large areas left wild for horse-riding, had a more utilitarian character. The boundaries of the villa remained unchanged for almost two centuries; its internal layout – especially in the *terzo* and *quarto recinto* – was instead to change radically, thanks to the works engaged in by Prince Marcantonio IV at the end of the eighteenth century.

Marcantonio IV was born in 1730 and succeeded his father to the title of Prince of Sulmona at the age of 33; in 1768 he married the young Anna Maria dei duchi Salviati (b.1752), the last of her line and, consequently he added to his property that, no less conspicuous, of his wife; the two sons who reached adulthood, Camillo and Francesco, were born in 1775 and 1776. Aiming to update his inheritance to the new taste of the century, he renovated the interior decoration of his city palace and the *Casino*

*Nobile* of the Villa Pinciana, added new acquisitions to the already imposing family gallery, enlarged and gave a new layout to the collections of antiquities<sup>55</sup>. From the 1780s – then in his fifties – he began to devote all his enthusiasm and requisite money to the layout of the rest of the villa, transforming a large part of the farmland and wild, until then enclosed in the *terzo* and *quarto recinto* into park. This latter activity was documented, one may say, day by day: since he belonged the small group of high-ranking aristocrats, the Roman press of the time regularly reported the events that took place in his villa. The great feasts organized there are therefore known, as are the relative preparations and the names of guests attending; among the notables who came more than once were various members of the Court of Naples, with which the Borghese had long-standing connections<sup>56</sup>. With equal enthusiasm, especially at the beginning, the Roman press that covered artistic production celebrated the prince's every commission and every new building<sup>57</sup>. And in more than one case specific information did not come from the periodicals' staff but was contributed by the artists themselves, who offered to the press articles describing what they themselves were doing<sup>58</sup>. But if in this way it is possible to recover the voice of the artists, it does not apply to the patron: all the news published on the Villa Pinciana reiterates, more or less in the same turn of phrase, a simple but generic concept: Marcantonio IV was a great patron and a lover of the fine arts.

If one is dissatisfied with this definition – apt for an equally generically narrative celebrating the international Rome of the fine arts, reiterating unchanged the rhetoric of the periodical press of the time of Pius VI – many questions arise. The prince's personality, in fact, remains elusive: for the period of years during which the works were ongoing in the villa, no letter of his, nor any transcription of conversations about it, is known. In the accounts of the many foreign travellers who visited the villa in the 1780s and 1790s, no mention is made of the specific ideas or aspirations of its owner; if anything – see



20. F. Bettini, *Superbe Jardin Anglais*, in G.L. Le Rouge, *Jardins anglo-chinois ou détails des nouveaux jardins à la mode*, Paris 1770-1788).

the *Journal* of Mary Berry – surprise is expressed at the poor match between the person of the prince and what he was pursuing:

*‘The ornamenting the rooms all done by the present prince, who though, I am told, not a man of taste, has now a sort of pride in making it the first thing of the kind in Europe’*<sup>59</sup>.

Examination of the context alone provides few and contradictory facts that hardly enable us to get any clear idea of the reasons behind his choices. It is known that as a young man Marcantonio had made a journey to France with his brother Giovanni Battista; having among his titles also that of prince of Rossano in Calabria, he was regularly invited to hunts organized by the King of Naples<sup>60</sup>: in Caserta he would have had the possibility of noting what Queen Maria Carolina had been accomplishing since 1786 in her *English Garden*<sup>61</sup>. Whereas the family library contains no interesting clue: even though seen at a remove of a hundred years, there is no eighteenth-century book that suggests an interest

in contemporary architecture or the European garden<sup>62</sup>. At least for the layout of the ‘terzo recinto’, the most substantial evidence, highlighted by Minna Heimburger Ravalli and Alberta Campitelli<sup>63</sup>, leads rather to the nearest Roman context: Marcantonio very carefully observed the transformations that next to his own villa, Francesco Bettini was imposing on that of Cardinal Giuseppe M. Doria from 1784 onwards. This gardener – from whom the prince Borghese repeatedly asked for explanation in person<sup>64</sup> – had spent years in France, had been in England and collaborated with Le Rouge in spreading a new understanding of the picturesque garden (fig. 20): he was thus one of the artist most knowledgeable about the success – from the late 1770s – of English models with the French aristocracy in search of novelty<sup>65</sup>. And it was in this version – not without the attraction that any new fashion might exert have on a courtier – that the picturesque garden came to Prince Borghese. He was not the only one: in those same years, Prince Pallavicini too was tempted by this expensive novelty, through Bettini again, for his villa on the Via Salaria<sup>66</sup>.





21. C. Percier, *Plan of Villa Borghese*, before 1809 (Museo di Roma, Roma).

The Villa Pinciana was renovated in the ten years between 1786 and 1796 (fig. 21). The notable first act was the demolition of the wall that from the seventeenth century had separated the formal garden from the farmland, done in order to obtain a much

larger park; whereas there was no last act marking completion: all the works ended abruptly in the first months of 1797 with the French invasion of Italy. After Napoleon's troops entered the Papal States, the Pope signed a treaty at Tolentino that conceded



22. G. Cades, *Prince Borghese, accompanied by his family and friends, is escorted by Gavin Hamilton on a visit to the excavations at Gabii* (National Gallery of Scotland, Edimburgh).

enormous war damages to the new French Republic. In addition to the cession of the most famous masterpieces of painting and sculpture belonging to the Pope, heavy exactions were imposed also on the great families, thus sounding the death knell for all the Villa Pinciana projects still in progress. However, on the basis of various attempts to sell ancient marbles already in 1796, it can be hypothesized that even without the French Revolution and its dire consequences, the prince was already on verge of bankruptcy<sup>67</sup>. However, during the twelve years in which renovation work was going on, his Villa was to become one of the most extraordinary places in the Rome of the time; even today, much of what was then built suggests to the modern visitor the scale and novelty of the enterprise.

Despite the number of studies published to date on this well known phase of the Villa Borghese<sup>68</sup>, the drawings that appear for the first time in this catalogue call back considerably more. They are new

to scholars, who did not know of their very existence: the drawings now enable us to restore much of the process that led to the choices made by a patron so far only known from what he achieved. Or, to be more precise: their combination enable us to examine many of the options that, on different occasions, the prince weighed up. And if this is not yet enough to restore the full man, it at least gives new information on the procedures, the timing and the artists he involved. One fact is confirmed: everything took place in an atmosphere of great, almost feverish enthusiasm; the ideas examined by the prince for an individual site were many, contradictory and in competition with each other. A second element that finds confirmation is the importance of the collection of Classical marbles: as had happened with the layout of the rooms of the *Casino Nobile*, certain specific statues gave life – one can say – to the whirligig of ideas for the garden: for each of them, in fact, more than one pavilion was proposed to house it; it was mainly in relationship to the subject personified by the statue –

a Hercules or a Venus – that a new building to enhance its specific worth was erected. And this occurred in a fashion quite opposed to that practised in the famous parks of Stowe, Ermenonville or other European park whatsoever: there, a literary or political programme made for the choice of a specific divinity to whom a small temple should be dedicated; in Rome, the site of the largest quarry of antiquities, the opposite happened. Often it was the latest statue, which the prince had barely managed to lay hands on<sup>69</sup>, that casually got its temple, accompanied by its impeccable antiquarian programme<sup>70</sup>. What the prince celebrated was the newly acquired possession, especially if it had been contended for by others.

All this could not have been pursued without the assistance of an antiquarian. In 1784, when the sculptor Pacetti first recorded in his diary the interest of prince Borghese in the statue of Aesculapius, Ennio Quirino Visconti (1751-1818) was little more than thirty years old (fig. 23); the year before he had refused to be ordained priest and because of thereon temporarily relieved of his duties in the Vatican Museum and Library by the pope: thus at that moment he had much time to make available to Prince Borghese. His documented presence in the Villa Pinciana coincides with the entry, carried out or only planned, of old and new statues into the gardens under renovation. The most brilliant classicist then in Rome, he was keen to identify the subject of each statue, to establish its quality and therefore its worth<sup>71</sup>; in the villa, he was chiefly responsible for bringing the ancient marble statues out of the closure of the Casino or from storage, to populate the garden. His work is testified by the three books he wrote on the antiquities of the Borghese<sup>72</sup>. Others, of writings addressed to the prince, preserved in the Borghese Archive, show him also interested, in a broad sense, in architecture<sup>73</sup>. More than any architect who had gone through traditional professional training, thanks to his ability to read Vitruvius and every other classical author, Visconti was in fact the aptest person to find a suitable location for each statue. And when necessary, he would even play the architect: he showed no hesitation in proposing, directly from the illustrations in the famous books of Stuart and Revett or from images on ancient coins, the model of an ancient building that would best fit the situation of the villa.

These are the circumstances in which Mario Asprucci took his first steps: working in his father's



23. Portrait of Ennio Quirino Visconti, Consul of the Repubblica Romana, 1798-99 ca., etching.

studio, but also heeding to what Visconti proposed. Over the next twelve years, other artists, including Jacob More and Cristoforo Unterperger, would be engaged by the prince to work alongside him in the Villa Pinciana and, therefore, he was to absorb other influences. It is nevertheless indisputable that the interest in ancient architecture – so fruitful for the many European artists who came to study in Rome – first presented itself to Mario in the person of the then most famous living antiquarian. Two significant outcomes are presented in the following pages: by correlating two previously unknown drawings with Visconti's texts it has been possible to clarify some of his proposals, benefiting from the occasion to correct some over-hasty interpretations. The second important outcome concerns Mario: the emergence of his autograph designs for the two Borghese temples, and of many other projects by his hand, enabled us to present his career as an individual artist, completely independent of his father, when apparently working with him on Villa Pinciana.





24. *The Piazza di Siena, Villa Borghese.*

Previous literature, from the seventeenth-century visitor's guides onwards<sup>74</sup>, describing what might be observed directly on the spot, has favoured a presentation of the villa by site. In the following pages, chronological presentation has seemed suited

for the best possible rendering of the erratic prince's wishes, Visconti's involvement, Mario's progressive self-achievement and, in general, the competitive atmosphere in which all the working artists found themselves involved.

# CATALOGUE





## *Introductory note*

The 43 architectural drawings presented here all belonged till recently to a private collection in Asti (Italy), the size and history of which is unknown (cf. p. 21). A group of drawings incontestably relates to Villa Borghese and its two architects Antonio and Mario Asprucci. Other drawings, linked in some way to Borghese commission, date to the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; two or three sheets, finally, even if of presumable Roman provenance, may have no connection with this princely dynasty. The original captions are few and not significant; those in a modern hand, mostly in English and always in cursive, were inserted in the purpose of attributing a drawings to 'Asprucci' or 'Mario Asprucci': the date of this occurrence – whether when the drawings went on sale for the first time, or later – is not known. These anonymous attributions are not always accurate.

The nature of the material prompts that the catalogue be divided in four sections.

1 – The first (pl.s 1-19) presents, in chronological order, unpublished drawings relating to the known and unknown pavilions of the Villa Pinciana. Thanks to the contribution of additional research (cf. pp. 35-37), this section offers a reformulation of the history of the Villa Pinciana, in which Mario's role is followed from debut to maturity.

2 – The second section (pl.s 20-27) presents drawings attributable to Mario, or to his pupils, relating

perhaps to commissions from the Borghese of which little is known so far. The drawings were made for the Villa Pinciana itself, or for other estates outside of Rome.

3 – The third section (pl.s 28-40) groups drawings that, because of the type of architecture shown, cannot be attributed to Mario. When they date to the end of the eighteenth century, they were presumably drawn by Antonio Asprucci. But one hesitates to attribute them directly to him, since an architect of his status, with much work on his hands, had a number of assistants in his employ; the formula: 'Atelier Asprucci' has therefore been chosen. The formula 'artist in the service of the Borghese' is instead used when it is uncertain that the draughtsman was an architect, therefore employed by Antonio, but was nevertheless in the prince's service. From 1818 to 1858, the family architect was Luigi Canina: none of the well known projects commissioned from him by Prince Camillo or his brother, Prince Francesco Aldobrandini Borghese, and executed in the villa, are represented here.

4 – This last section (pl.s 41-43) comprises three drawings on which there is little information. Without knowing the stages through which the Asti collection passed, it is impossible to say whether these three architectural drawings – very different one from the other – ever shared in the history of those of Borghese origin.

Part I  
THE VILLA PINCIANA, 1784-1793

*From the purchase of a statue to the erection of a temple, 1784-1786.*

1. Mario Asprucci, *Project for the temple of Aesculapius, side and rear view*

Pen in brown ink, watercolour on manilla paper given a cardboard support, 280 × 417 mm, overall size 292 × 431 mm

Inscribed in the centre in pencil: Mario Asprucci Arch. / Villa Borghese / Giardino del Lago

Bottom left: black ink collection stamp: AM

In Pacetti's *Giornali* we read that Prince Borghese first visited the sculptor's studio in June 1784 and a few days later expressed interest in the purchase of the large statue representing Aesculapius, the god of medicine. Restored in Pacetti's studio during the summer, it also

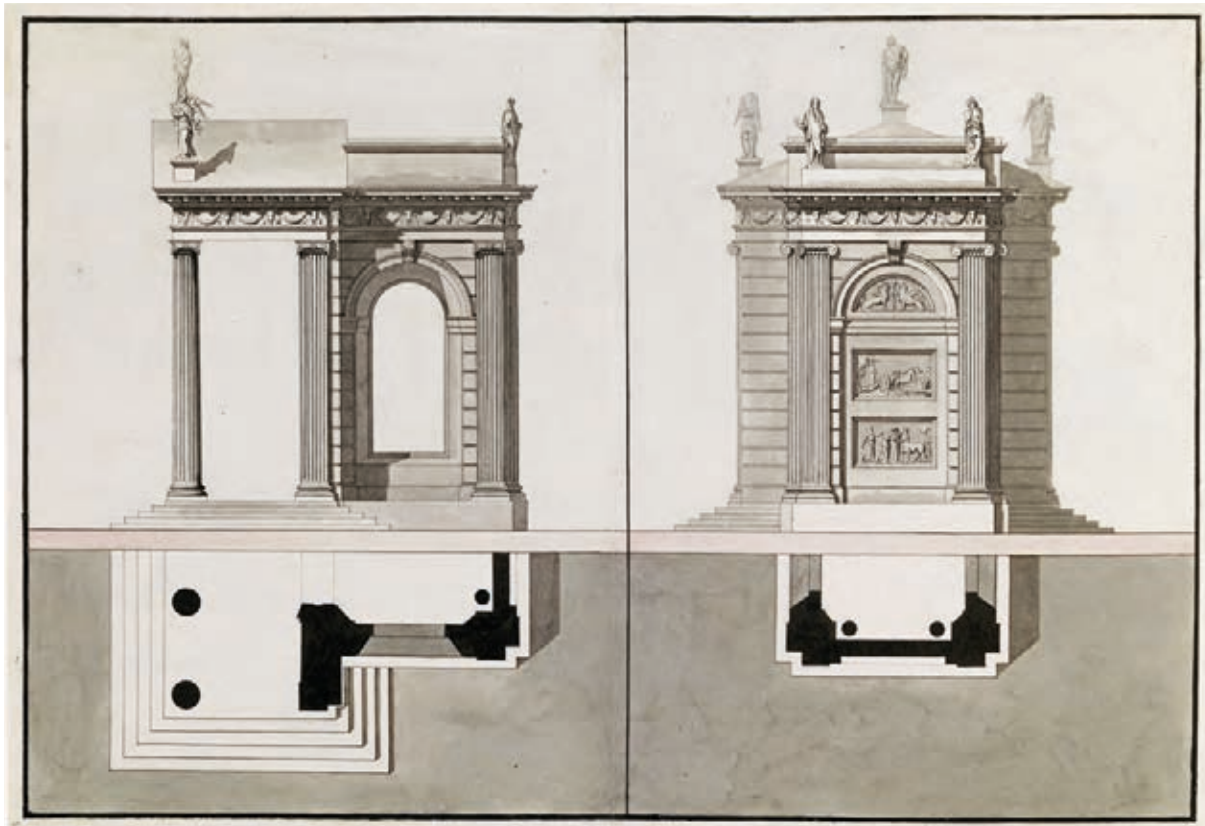


Detail of pl. 1

stirred the interest of Ennio Quirino Visconti, who on behalf of the pope had the task of acquiring antiquities for the Museo Pio-Clementino<sup>1</sup>. In October, Pius VI went himself to the sculptor's studio to inspect the statue: the empty space of one of the exedras in the new *Sala Rotonda*, then under construction, seemed the most fitting destination. A few months later, however, in June 1785, the prince, having learned that nothing had been yet decided by the museum, agreed on a price with Pacetti, and bought it<sup>2</sup>. Possession of the great statue, more than m. 3.50 tall, added a premium to its antiquity, its great size and the rarity of the subject by having been contended between a pope and a prince. But where was it to go? Just before the purchase, and probably in reference to the rooms of the *Casino Nobile* of the Villa Pinciana where he was giving a new layout to the family collection, the prince had declared 'there is no site capable': there was – he meant – no large space comparable to that boasted by the new edifices *all'antica*, modelled on the architecture of the imperial baths and Fora, that the pope's architects were then building in the Vatican. The decision was therefore to house it in a new pavilion, to be built in the *Terzo recinto*, third enclosure, of the villa.

The chosen site was in an orderly wood, where stood a small building used in former times as a lions' cage (fig. 19, n. 25). It was in September 1785 that for the first time Pacetti described what was to replace it as a "templet"; at the end of August he had received from Ennio Quirino Visconti a note listing "no. 7 subjects belonging to the Aesculapius", followed by the invoice for 'wax models' and two 'bassirilievetti', representing the god 'pouring balm on the wounds of Hippolytus inflicted in the siege of Troy' and 'Aesculapius reared by the centaur Chiron'<sup>3</sup>. In March 1786, Pacetti also noted in his diary that two Victories "with the symbols of Hygieia", daughter of Aesculapius, were to be set "over the facade of the new temple". On March 21, when the statue was placed inside the cell, the temple could be considered almost finished and the Roman press did not take long to celebrate it: in April 1787 a detailed description was published<sup>4</sup>.

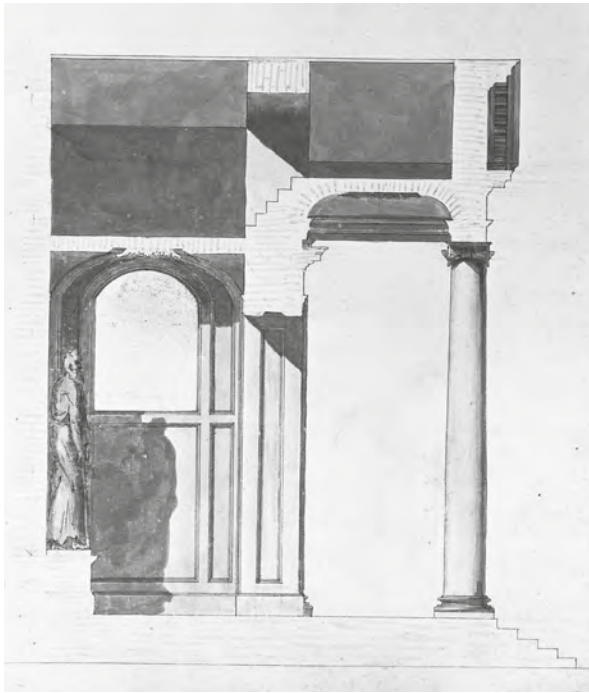
To date, two sections of the temple were known along the two main orthogonal axes<sup>5</sup>: from these we can deduce that even the missing elevations were not dissimilar, in general, from what was finally built; the graphic quality is modest, all decorative elements, if any were foreseen at this preliminary stage of the project, have been omitted (fig. 25-26). The sheet published here for the



first time is instead a presentation drawing, a fair copy, made expressly for the final approval of the patron. It shows, set into two distinct rectangular frames, the side elevation and the back of the temple, both furnished below with the corresponding portions of the plan (pl. 1). Of the original full documentation, a sheet is evidently missing; it would have shown, in addition to the main elevation, the entire plan. The architecture shown here coincides, more accurately, with what was built. Only the rear elevation is different, because it has a filled-in wall between the two Ionic pilasters, instead of an open arch: the arch is therefore blind and hosts a lunette decorated with two facing griffins and, immediately below, the two bas-reliefs representing the deeds of Aesculapius commissioned – as mentioned – from Pacetti. From the press of the time we know that this alteration was made during construction: the rear arch was opened to show the back of the statue, restored *in situ* after December 1787<sup>6</sup>; the two now lost bas-reliefs, of which this drawing offers the only testimony, were then placed at the base of the side arches and successively lost. The drawing is therefore the original project and can be dated to 1786.

In the more detailed description, published by the “Giornale delle belle arti” in April 1787<sup>7</sup>, Antonio Asprucci is indicated as the only architect; other articles written after his death, presented the temple as the result of participation in the project by the son, or identified in the latter the sole creator. In 1786 Mario had won first prize in the Accademia di San Luca competition: the fact that Prince Borghese had asked that, after the official celebrations, the drawings of the winner be brought to his residence<sup>8</sup> was a milestone. It was not the prince’s architect who decided to be helped by his son: it was rather the patron who, impressed by the latter’s drawings, from that moment on identified the young twenty-two year old artist as capable of designing *all’antica*; conceiving a modern architecture, according to what the antiquarian Visconti might suggest. Evidence for this comes from the article in the “Giornale delle belle arti”, where the theoretical principles underlying the project are presented. On the basis of the authority of Vitruvius and Palladio, the only unit of measurement used in conceiving the temple front was the base diameter of the columns. The order is Ionic: the height of the columns, the distance





25. Atelier Asprucci, *Longitudinal section of the Temple of Aesculapius* (Photo Archive Galleria Carlo Virgilio, Roma).



26. Atelier Asprucci, *Cross section of the Temple of Aesculapius* (Photo Archive Galleria Carlo Virgilio, Roma)

between them and the dimensions of the entablature were established on the basis of modular relationships considered among the best by the ancients. Following these strict rules, the base and height of the entire porch, excluding the tympanum, can be circumscribed by a square.

Behind the perfect temple front, however, little resembled the ancient models. The small building is not a true temple; nor is it, as proudly stated in the 'Giornale delle belle arti', 'in the taste of the ancient temples of Greece'. Behind the screen of four-pillars, the back wall has no anta, but two pilasters at the

corners, following Roman rather than Greek tradition. The cell that houses the statue, on the other hand, is the fruit of pure invention: it is a sort of light box, equipped with its own covering and conceived in this form in the sole purpose of giving the best light possible to the statue. From a distance the temple might have evoked the classical world only if the whole building were seen, as had been initially proposed, at the end of a narrow tree-lined avenue<sup>9</sup>. Seen close to, however, it was extraordinary: as can be judged from the level of detail in the drawing here presented, Mario Asprucci's mastery was capable of re-evoking the most refined Roman architectural decoration.

### *Setting a lake on top of a hill, 1787*

After Aesculapius had been placed in his cell, the sculptor Pacetti was occupied, along with other artists, in arranging the statues, antique or modern, which were to be set like acroterions on the roofs, or around the temple itself<sup>10</sup>. The sculptor, however, was hoping to do something much more important: in the August of 1786 Antonio Asprucci had asked him to make a model 'for a great fish-pond that Prince Borghese wants in front of the temple of Aesculapius'. The affair went on throughout the month of September: Pacetti's dairy jottings speak, at the start, of 'a boat for Villa Pinciana'; thereon of a coloured model made by him, which he took to Palazzo Borghese, because 'the Prince certainly wanted to make it'; then Antonio Asprucci asked him, more explicitly, for the design for 'a fountain to be made for the temple of Aesculapius'. At the end of the month the work stopped: he was told, to his great regret, that the 'boat to be made in Villa Pinciana has gone up in smoke'<sup>11</sup>. No image is known of this failed commission; but it is certain that the boat, connected to a fish-pond or fountain, would have been an illustration of the myths surrounding Aesculapius, which – on Visconti's probable suggestion – had been extensively presented in the aforementioned description of the temple in the "Giornale delle belle arti": the Greek Aesculapius had found his Roman dwelling on the Tiber Island; the island had therefore been consecrated to him and turned into a stone boat. Pacetti had, in some way, shaped an iconographic programme of classical tradition, which already had its most authoritative Baroque model in Pietro Bernini's *Barcaccia*.

It is from the correspondence of Cardinal Doria's gardener<sup>12</sup>, that the cause for this refusal come to light. Instead of a fountain, Francesco Bettini reported, the prince now had in mind a true and proper lake, the bed of which had to be dug deep after the cutting down of many trees in the wood, and having the excess soil carried away by hundreds of diggers. Described in the early reports as rectangular in shape, it took on a completely different form with the involvement of the English painter Jacob More. In March 1787, Bettini wrote that 'Prince Borghese's lake now takes on another look, and I believe it will become one of the most beautiful garden decorations in Rome': breaking its geometrical lines, its new form was conceived by the landscape painter to give it the look of a completely natural formation. As a result, the temple



27. F. Bettini, *Veduta del Lago di Villa Borghese* (Doria Pamphilj Archive, Roma).

of Aesculapius came to stand in the middle of a small island, and within a short time the temple and the lake in which it was reflected became one of the great sights of the Rome of the end of the century, if not of the whole of Europe. Dozens of paintings and drawings of the period depict this new *locus amoenus* (fig. 27).

Small temples set in surroundings carefully crafted to make them appeared completely natural were certainly no novelty at the end of the eighteenth century in Europe. In the 1780s, the landscaping of large parks in the United Kingdom and in France was an activity well known of in Rome, not least through Bettini himself<sup>13</sup>. What, however, was quite new was the siting of the lake: instead of being dug in a damp valley bottom, like the old fish pond of the villa, it was set on top of a hill, in an area that up to that moment had been irrigated only by wells. To set a lake in that quite unsuitable location was a demonstration that, in the mid 1780s, everything was possible to Prince Marcantonio: the great body of water and the spectacularization of what was needed to make it work – such as the artificial waterfall<sup>14</sup> and, later, the long aqueduct on arches<sup>15</sup> – were, as a whole, a clamorous celebration of the availability of a large quantity of water, brought by public aqueducts<sup>16</sup>. In addition to what had already been won in the seventeenth century, when the first owner of the villa was the nephew of the reigning pope, Marcantonio got himself assigned a goodly supply of the Acqua Vergine<sup>17</sup>, which came from Termini, with which in early September 1787 he finally filled the lake. He shared this supply with his neighbour, the Cardinal Giuseppe M. Doria who was thus able to get Bettini set up his own little lakes and *jeux-d'eau* in his villa.

*The hundred rods added that made the difference, January-July 1788*

In 1784 the Cardinal Doria bought some land close to the walls to site his villa, where in the years immediately following Francesco Bettini was to lay out the first English garden in Rome<sup>18</sup>. The new situation led Prince Borghese to ally with the cardinal to get a different arrangement of the old winding road that separated their two properties and connected, outside the circuit of the walls, Porta Pinciana with Porta del Popolo (fig. 28). From documents in the Borghese Archives it appears that the two landowners jointly presented a petition to the pope in January 1788 and obtained official confirmation in July through a decree of the Presidency of Roads; from the map attached, it is evident that, in addition to placing gates at both ends, so as to control access, the two neighbours agreed above all on abolishing a long section of the said road, then annexed to their respective villas<sup>19</sup>. From the letters that Bettini regularly wrote to his cardinal, it emerges that as early as 1787 the plan had been repeatedly discussed and the two landowners were waiting only for favourable opportunity to obtain approval. The same letters also

show that Prince Borghese was, from 1787, the principal proponent; even in the months between January and July 1788, reporting from time to time on his meetings with the *Maestro di Casa* Borghese, Francesco Posi, Bettini makes clear how determined the prince was to reap all the benefits for his villa<sup>20</sup>. Thanks to these circumstances, only the perimeter of the Villa Pinciana was enlarged: the entire section of road which, bending at right angles, was about a hundred rods (220 metres) long<sup>21</sup>, with a width corresponding to the now erased roadway, was in fact annexed. A long and narrow strip of land, about 6-8 metres wide, had thus been added: not much, but nevertheless a great deal when one sees how ingeniously it was used.

Two reasons made the acquisition of this area fundamental for the overall layout of the villa. First of all, the annexed terrain enabled the design – already conceived in 1787 when the appropriation was first contemplated – of a new way of circulating by carriage in the park: having walled up two entrances that had opened on the now decommissioned road, the entrance from the Muro Torto now became central. Starting from this entrance a new network of wide carriageways

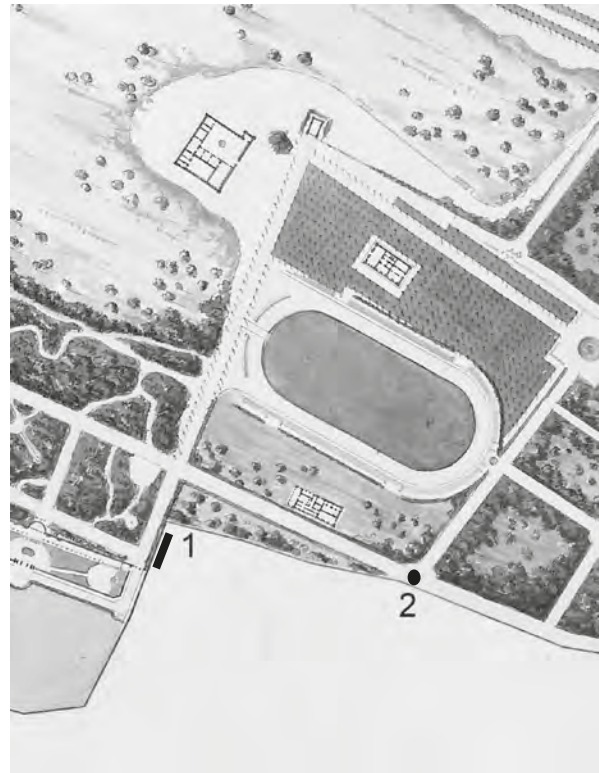
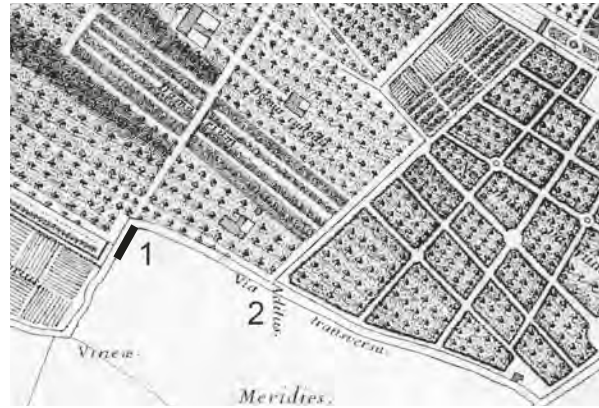


28. Right of the city walls, the stretch of road that was closed in 1788 can be seen in yellow (G. B. Nolli, *Pianta di Roma*, 1748).



was laid down which facilitated approach to the old *Casino Nobile* from Piazza del Popolo, instead of Porta Pinciana. The other reason, of equal importance, is that the moving of the boundary walls by a few metres, made available the two sites necessary to provide fitting prospects views along the two avenues that had just been then laid out in the Giardino del Lago (fig. 29-30). In the absence of the original drawings – presumably made by Antonio Asprucci and approved by the prince – the plan of the villa, drawn by the French architect Charles Percier during his stay in Rome (1786-91) and published by him in 1809 (fig. 21), is the most reliable representation of this general layout<sup>22</sup>: the wall of the *Secondo recinto* was knocked down, cancelling both the prospects at the end of the avenues, and the gateways that separated this area from the rest of the villa; a network of a few wide and comfortably graded driveways was laid out through the *Terzo* and *Quarto recinto*.

It was in this space, which did not exist before the end of 1787, that all the major new pavilions found their place: once the main drive was laid down, the ceremonial approach rising from Porta del Popolo to the *Casino Nobile* had to offer views to those looking out from a carriage; as well as providing – in line with the precepts of the treatises on gardening then being published – strollers on foot with an equally rich series of surprises. At the end of each route new attractions were therefore necessary: the following drawings presented belong, in the majority of cases, to the tumultuous and contradictory phases to which the architect Mario, the antiquarian Visconti and, from 1791, the painter Unterperger provided responses to the various challenges that this new layout posed. They document, for the first time, how, before the various buildings took their solid form on individual sites, many other ideas were taken into consideration.



29. The future site of the Acqua Felice show-piece (1) and the Porta delle Cavalle (2) in a 1776 plan of the villa (Di Gaddo 1997, p. 102).

30. The Acqua Felice show-piece (1) and the round temple (2) on the plan by C. Percier, 1809 (detail of fig. 21).

*The round temple: from Septimius Severus to Diana, 1787-89*

2. Mario Asprucci, *Project for the round temple, Villa Pinciana, Rome, plan and elevation*

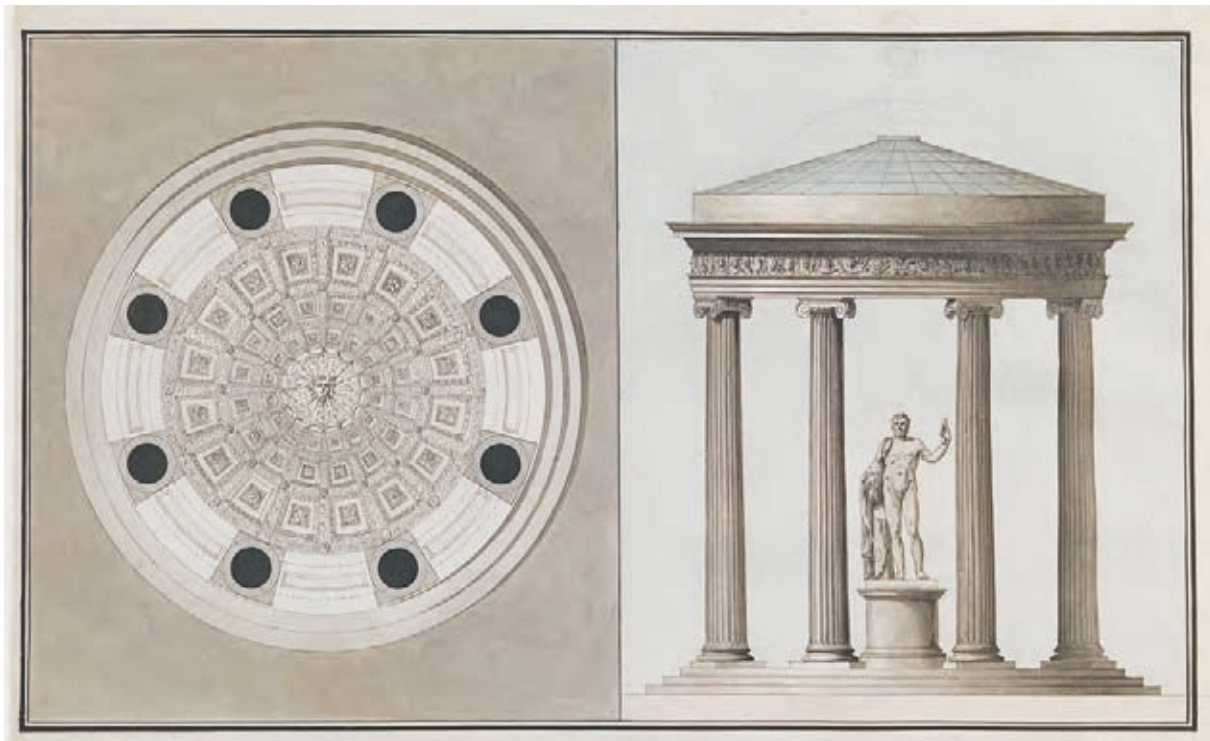
Pencil, pen in black ink, grey, pink and sky blue wash, 284 × 437 mm

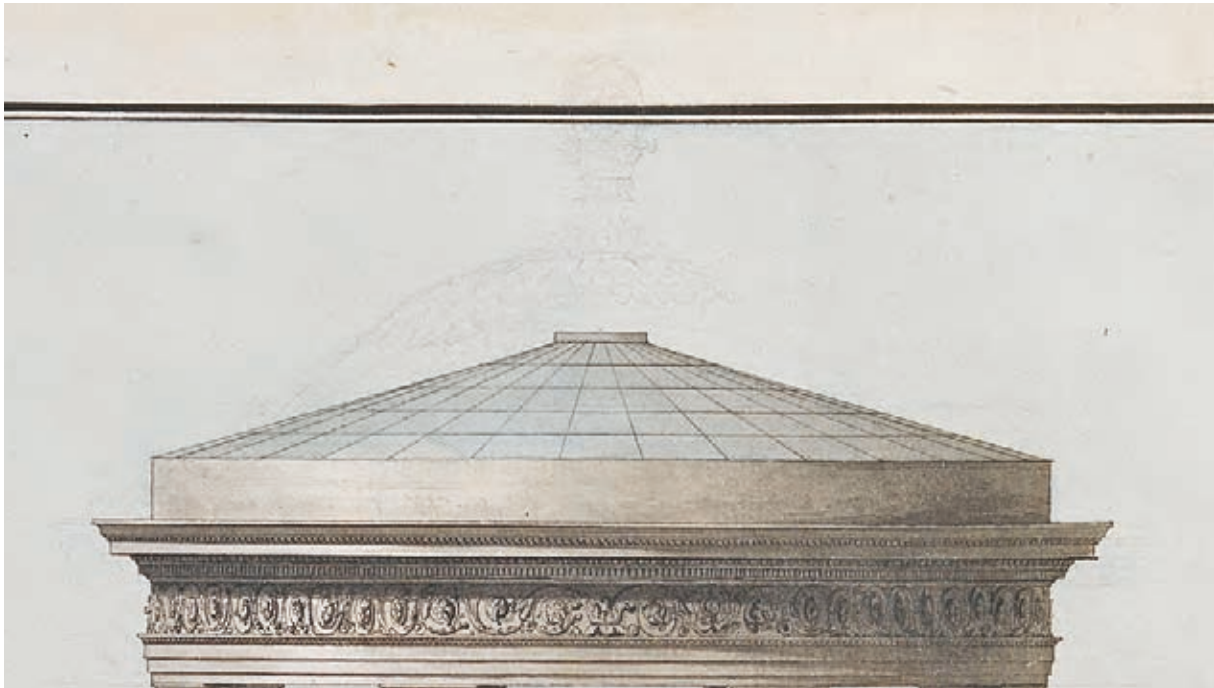
In the ruling whereby the Presidency of Roads ceded the stretch of road to the two neighbouring landowners, it was specified that, in the obliterated road area, the prince might also close the entrance to his villa until then known as *Porta delle Cavalle* (fig. 19, n. 2), and shift it to Porta Pinciana, on the axis of the *Casino Nobile*<sup>23</sup>. The reasons were not merely functional: running from this secondary entrance, in fact, there was an ancient access road which, in the new layout, found itself aligned with the temple in the lake; this meant that those returning in the opposite direction from the lake would see in the distance a banal open gate. That did not suit the projectors of a new garden intent on having a carefully studied picturesque show-piece at the end of each avenue. Thus in the area of the old gate, close to the adjoining enclosure wall now

blocked and straightened in its course, a round temple was built (figg. 29-30). The original drawing proposing it (pl. 2) – shown here for the first time – is of extreme interest for several reasons. The sheet is of the same size and presents the same division into two panels as the sheet relating to the Temple of Aesculapius: both are presentation drawings, done by Mario for the prince. Because of the great similarity in appearance, it is probable that they were both drafted in 1787. The statue that appears inside is that of Septimius Severus: a work that came to light in 1762, it was restored by Cavaceppi, and through Pacetti became Borghese property only after March 1787<sup>24</sup>. When the temple was actually built in 1789 – after the site became available – a decision, instead, was made to place in the centre a statue of Diana, smaller in scale and therefore set above a shapely ancient altar showing the personification of the Moon, *Esperus et Phosphorus*<sup>25</sup>.

The drawing shows the elevation of the building and the projection, in plan, of its coverings; presumably there was another drawing now lost, of the same size, with the plan and the section. The quality of the lines, especially in the details, is so very high that the attribution of the sheet to Mario is safe. As for the

pl. 2





Detail of pl. 2

architecture, the temple dedicated to Septimius Severus falls into the type identified by Vitruvius as *monopteros*: circular in shape, with a perimeter of columns around, but without a cell; the height of the order (including the entablature) is equal to the width of the temple base<sup>26</sup>. The order is Ionic: so are the capitals and the fluted shafts; all the elements of the entablature and the bases are Attic. The continuous frieze presents an elegant motif with vegetable spirals. What makes it completely different from the circular temples that from the beginning of the eighteenth century had been erected in parks throughout Europe, is its roof, rather flat and in the shape of a truncated cone. In none of the surviving round temples, in Rome and Tivoli, had the roof of the cell been preserved and, from the Renaissance on, there were many hypotheses on how any circular temple, with or without a cell, may have been roofed originally: in all the proposals, however, architects and antiquarians had always assumed a domed termination. It is therefore likely that this temple project is the result of close collaboration between the young Mario – who was about 23 years old – and the antiquarian Visconti: it is to the latter that we must attribute this attempt to design a round temple that harks directly back to Greece, authoritatively setting aside centuries of post-Renaissance interpretation.

Somewhat later, a more traditional dome covered with scales and crowned by a pine cone was sketched in pencil over the severe *à la greque* roofing; the correction – because that is what it is – encroaches on the frame of the drawing and goes beyond it (pl. 2, detail). This circumstance suggests that it was drawn in the presence of the prince: unhappy with this temple, so different from the ones universally known, he may have required something more recognizable.



31. The interior of the dome





32. M. Asprucci, *Definitive Project for the Temple of Diana*, section (Private collection, London).

A section drawing, attributed to Mario and now in a private collection<sup>27</sup>, shows the new version (fig. 32): the roof is consistent with that sketched in pencil. But other changes are equally relevant: in the centre there is a statue of Diana, set on a circular altar; the columns are of the Doric order, modelled on those of the portico of Gaius and Lucius from the Augustan age. This is the temple that was actually built, most of the ancient marbles being bought from Pacetti: the Venus came into the prince's possession in 1787, the hound that accompany her was commissioned that same year from the sculptor Franzoni. The eight shafts in *bigio* marble, also bought from Pacetti, were crowned with recycled capitals<sup>28</sup>: however, the mismatch in size of the two elements is evident. The quality of the decoration, to be seen in the continuous frieze and in the underside of the roof coffered with octagons, is comparable to the initial drawing; evident above all is the attention given to the most minute details of an ancient temple, such as the gargoyles and antefixes. What it lost in the novelty of the general design, it recuperated in the quality of the materials, recycled and thus ancient, and in the learned details of modern workmanship (fig. 31).

*Variations on the Acqua Felice show-piece*

37. Mario Asprucci (?), *Project for the Acqua Felice Show-piece, Villa, Pinciana, Rome*

Pen in brown ink, brown ink wash and pencil marks,  
285 × 415 mm

Bottom left: black ink collection stamp: AM

3v. Mario Asprucci, *Project for the Acqua Felice Show-piece, Villa Pinciana, Rome*

Pencil on white paper

Inscribed in the upper right: Mario Asprucci Arch. /  
Villa Borghese / Opposite the Giardino del Lago

Bottom left: black ink collection stamp: AM

4. Anonymous, *View of the Felice Aqueduct, Villa Pinciana, Rome*

Pencil on white paper, 370 × 290 mm

Inscribed along the conduit: Ne Quem Mitissimus  
Amnis Impediat

Inscribed in the lower centre: in Villa Borghese

Bottom left: black ink collection stamp: AM

5. Mario Asprucci (or copy from), *Studies for the fencing of the Garden of the Lake, Villa Pinciana, Rome*

Pen in brown ink on manilla tissue paper fixed on  
white cardboard, 383 × 332 mm, irregular

Inscribed in the centre in pencil: Mario Asprucci Arch.  
/ Villa Borghese / Giardino del Lago

Bottom black ink collection stamp: AM

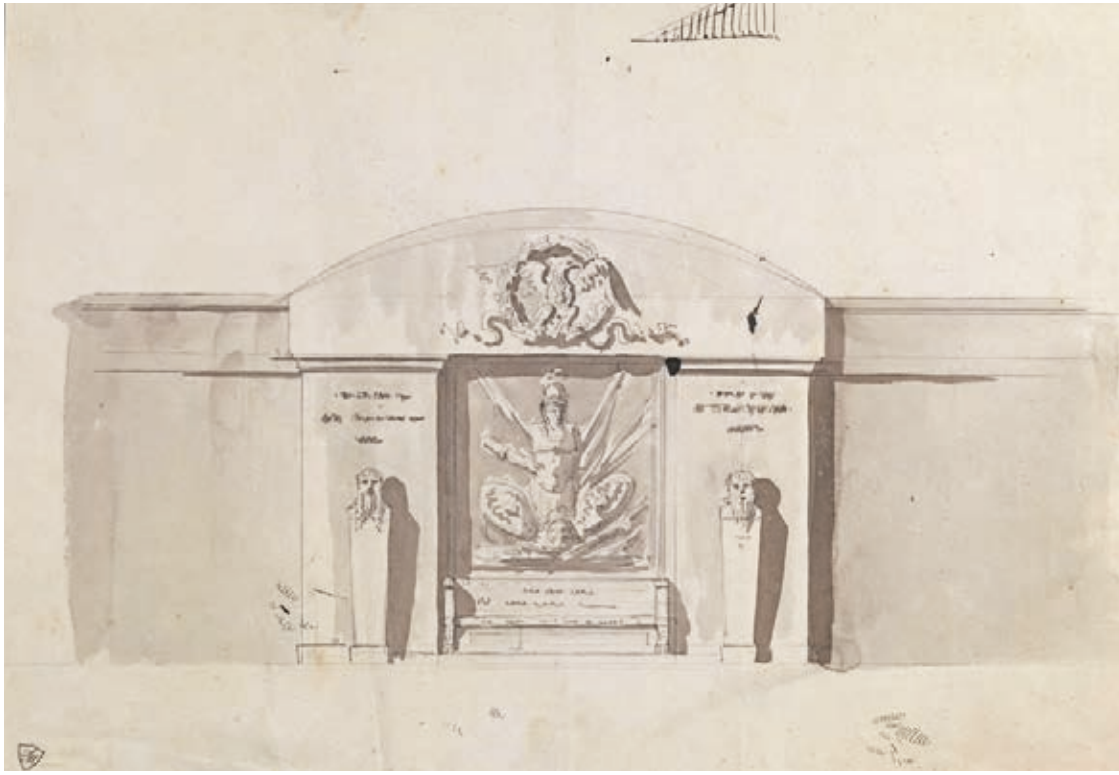
Equally imposing was the end-piece set as prospect closure on the axis to the other straight avenue surviving in the Giardino del lago after the laying out of the English garden (pp. 36-37). Here was built a fountain, later known as the *Mostra dell'acqua Felice*, which still partly exists (fig. 36). In this case, too, the documents for the cession of land in 1788 show that the terrain necessary for building it was taken over from the closure of the public road<sup>29</sup>: the exact site of the old road became an avenue that, bordering the *Giardino del lago* was a vital part of the new road system; the stretch of wall that separated the old road from the land of Cardinal Doria became the perspective backdrop on which a show-piece was designed, to be enjoyed by those coming from the lake. There are several drawings, so far never studied, that testify to the ideas that followed one another for this site just after July 1788.

One sheet has a proposal on the *recto* and one on the *verso*; on the *recto* (pl. 3 *recto*) the idea is to set on the wall a kind of bas-relief *aedicula*, formed of three simple elements that suggest the post and lintel system<sup>30</sup>. On the tympanum there is a copy of the famous Imperial eagle from the portico of the church of SS. Apostoli: a citation from Roman art referring to the family's heraldic arms. At the centre, inspired by other ancient reliefs, is a panoply, perhaps alluding to the military glories of the family; more incongruously, just below this, is placed a bench with an inscription (illegible) on the back. On each side, under the inscriptions engraved on the wall and equally illegible, there are two bearded herms. The composition is quite traditional: the sheet may be the work of Antonio Asprucci, but it is not a true and proper architectural project, and may have been drawn by some other artist. That this idea was soon discarded, however, is evinced by the fact that

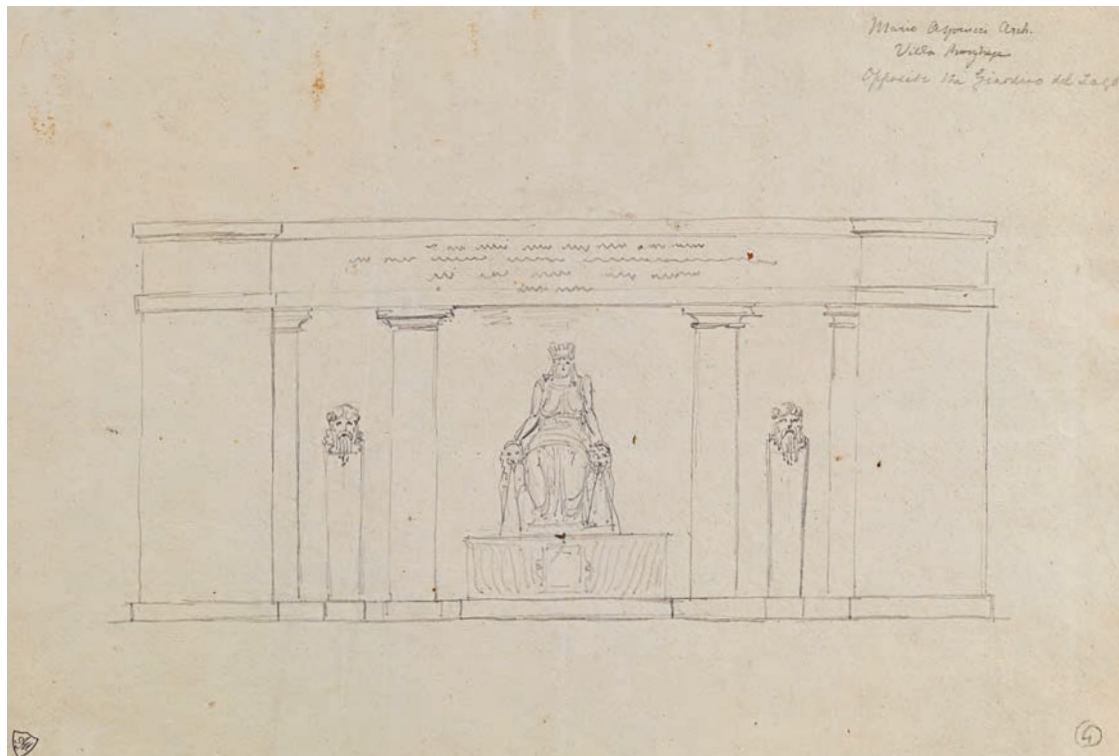


33. *Cybele enthroned* (Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Napoli).

pl. 3r



pl. 3v

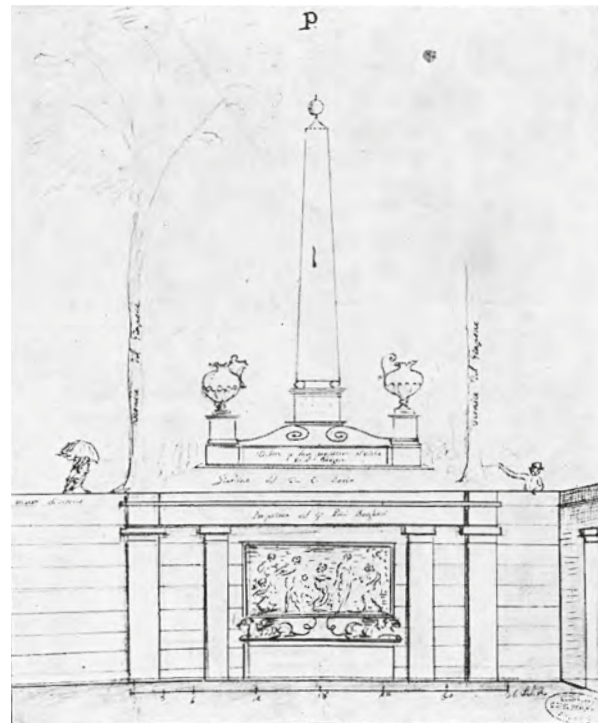




this side of the sheet was later used for doodles. Much more interesting is the *verso*<sup>31</sup>, where an alternative arrangement is presented, in Mario's hand (pl. 3 *verso*): it has his pencil stroke; his style of figure drawing. Here, for the first time, we see two elements destined to last: the Doric order and the celebration of the arrival of water. The wall presents, encased between two large pilasters, an architectural framework consisting of square Doric pillars surmounted by a simple architrave; two pilasters frame the central span, two half-pilasters the minor ones. But what of the water?

That a simple stretch of rectilinear wall, which somewhat earlier separated the Villa Doria from the roadway (fig. 29-30), should become a site from which water pours, was the other outcome of the agreement made between neighbours in the course of 1787 and 1788: having obtained for his villa 3 *oncie* of water from the Termini public aqueduct, Cardinal Doria asked and was granted that they be conducted through the branch of the private aqueduct which the Borghese had constructed at their own expense when they first built the Villa Pinciana<sup>32</sup>. Between 1610 and 1611 the family obtained as many as 40 *oncie* from the Felice aqueduct, a grant fully restored in 1787 following large restoration works at the springhead, Salone. As documented by the letters of Bettini to his cardinal, since the elimination of the road made it necessary to redirect the conduit, this suggested to the engineer in the service of the prince<sup>33</sup> to have the aqueduct enter the villa at the height of this wall. Bettini wrote: 'as of now [the Prince] seems desirous of propping it on Your Excellency's wall'. From that moment on this site became, even iconographically, a display of water: the place from where water was led to the new fountains and above all to keep the lake alive. In Mario's first design (pl. 3 *verso*) the two bearded herms already seen are set at the sides; in the central span, framed by a pair of pillars, is a statue in which a *Cybele enthroned* can be identified, flanked by the two lions<sup>34</sup> (fig. 33): water spurting from the open jaws of the animals falls into a strigilated sarcophagus transformed into trough.

The relations between Cardinal Doria and Prince Borghese, at least in the intentions of Francesco Bettini, also provided for coordination of the layouts of each of the estates: after the elimination of the public road, he later suggested that the cardinal erect an obelisk observable also from the top of the wall separating the two neighbouring properties. The rough design with which he illustrated his proposal (fig. 34), also documents



34. F. Bettini, *Design for placing an obelisk in Villa Doria, so that it shows on the axis of the new Acqua Felice show-piece in Villa Borghese* (Archivio Doria Pamphilj, Roma).

35. Current state of the Acqua Felice show-piece, Villa Borghese.

the effective arrangement given to the Acqua Felice wall in 1793: within the architectural framework described, one can observe the front of the sarcophagus and the two griffins still existing today<sup>35</sup>. This drawing by Bettini, as well as a view by Cristoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg of a few years later<sup>36</sup> (fig. 36), also makes evident that water, in the







36. C. W. Eckersberg, *View of the Doric aqueduct in Villa Borghese*, 1815 (Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen).

final version, was to play an absolutely spectacular role, even if no longer expressed by statuary and mythology<sup>37</sup>: according to the proportions of the same Doric order, an aqueduct, supported by two columns, comes out at right angles to the wall and runs towards the lake; on each of the two faces of the architrave can be read the inscriptions recording the origin and destination of the water. Chronology proves, however, that the lake had already been filled the previous year (October 1787) through other conduits<sup>38</sup>: it was therefore a narrative fiction, made up to give the impression that the lake was fed by an incongruous ‘à la greque’ aqueduct, put together from individual elements copied from Greek temples. To lift the level at which the water ran became indeed necessary, in order to feed a large waterfall beside the lake that the prince decided on when renovating the *Aranciera*. It functioned, however, only for a short time.

An anonymous view (pl. 4), shows the Doric aqueduct running towards the lake<sup>39</sup>. Since just beyond the aqueduct, the prospect end-piece of the *Tre fiere* – consisting of a sphinx, a lion and an elephant – was built shortly after (1793-1794) by Unterperger<sup>40</sup>, and it is not shown in this drawing, it is likely that it dates from later, when the three animals had changed site, though, nevertheless earlier than 1849 when the aqueduct was damaged and then demolished.

An ink drawing on tissue paper, later glued on to another support (pl. 5), presents what is described as two variants for the new entrance gate to the *Giardino*



37. The present position of the two fountains with the obelisks.

*del lago*: a caption in a modern hand attributes it to Mario<sup>41</sup>. In a view by Ippolito Caffi, the garden is shown to be fenced by a wooden palisade, built to keep horses out<sup>42</sup>, while the present iron fence turns out to have been commissioned only in 1854<sup>43</sup>. Nevertheless, that does not prevent this from being an unexecuted project of Mario's, since it presents two alternatives, only one of which built<sup>44</sup>: in both there are fountains that compete to celebrate the arrival of the *Acqua Felice* in the villa, in one case they are surmounted by statues, in another by obelisks (fig. 37).



## *The shifting location of Septimius Severus*

### 6. Mario Asprucci (?), *Project for the placement of the statue of Septimius Severus in the Giardino del Lago, Villa Pinciana, Rome*

Pencil and pen in black ink and black ink wash on white paper, squared, 275 × 374 mm (drawing 189 × 290 mm)  
Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM

The statue of Septimius Severus was owned by the sculptor Bartolomeo Cavaceppi: he sold it in 1787. It was Pacetti, as sculptor, who dealt with this and other of his marbles: he bought them himself in partnership with Prince Borghese, then agreeing with the latter to take his quota in the business as a life annuity<sup>45</sup>. Cavaceppi was later to leave all his belongings, including many other statues and ancient marbles, to

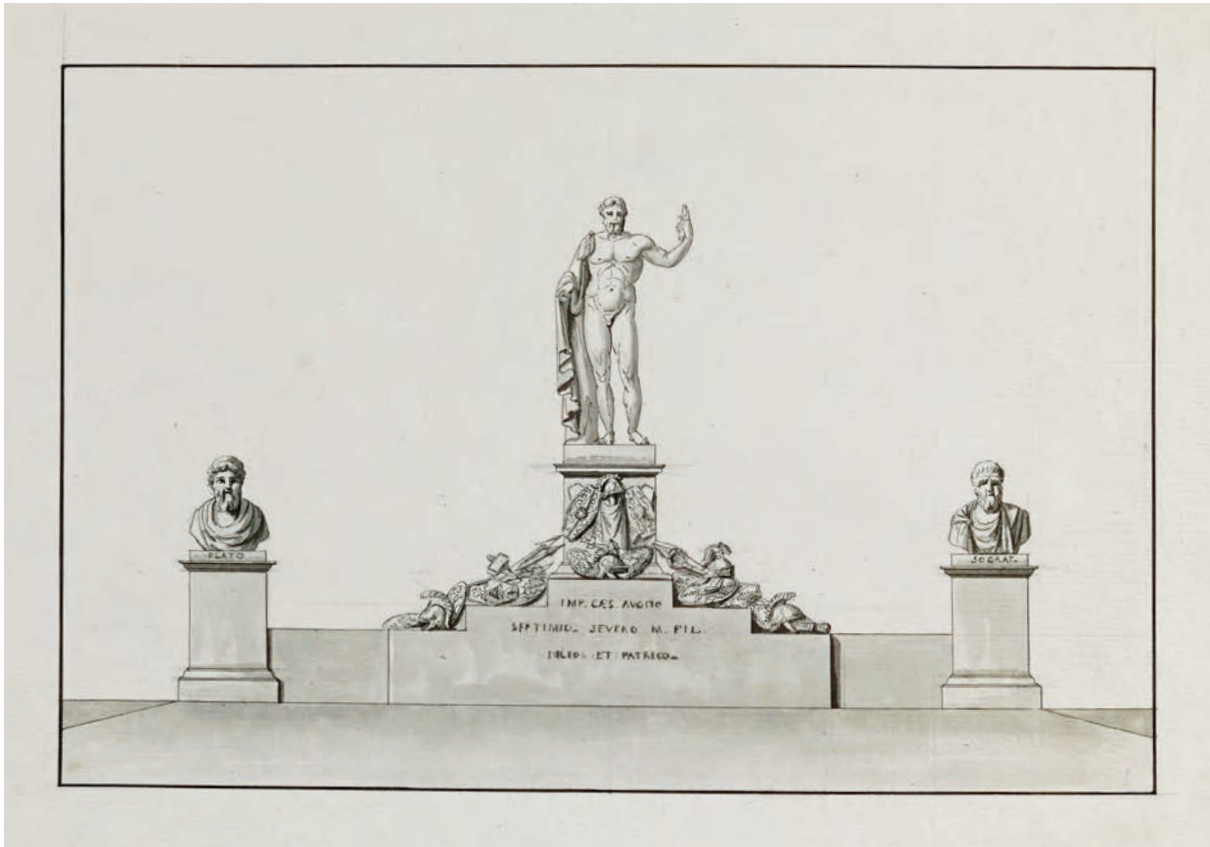


38. L. Canina, *New entrance to the Giardino del Lago*, 1828.

the Accademia di San Luca (1799). But, as we know, instead of keeping what they had been bequeathed, the academicians decided to sell off everything. The way in which the dispersal of the bequest took place – including paintings, drawings and other artworks – was considered underhand by many. While in the periodical press – then subject to strict censorship – nothing is to be read on the matter, detailed criticism appeared as soon as it was licit to express it. In the *Storia dell'Accademia di San Luca* (1822), sponsored by Antonio Canova, not only Pacetti, but Antonio Asprucci also was accused of the dispersal of these assets and harshly blamed for it: “It is for sure that Asprucci was no star architect. He was employed in the service of the genteel house of Borghese, and built many things for them, but of no great importance”<sup>46</sup>. Working for private patrons, both Pacetti and Asprucci had put their interests before those of their academy.

The statue entered the villa after march 1787. In this drawing the emperor, here equipped with a cape, is set on a complex three-tiered base (pl. 6). Above the inscription – IMP(ERATORI) CAES(ARI) AUGUSTO/ SEPTIMIO SEVERO M(ARCI) F(ILIO)/IULIO ET PATRICO – there is the pedestal, decorated with a panoply of weapons, conceived on the model of the base of Trajan’s Column; on the sides, along the steps, the military theme is reiterated by a series of emblems, to be done in the round. At each end of the base, on simple pedestals, are set two busts identified by their inscriptions: Plato and Socrates. It is difficult to name the creator of this project, since there is no written mention of it; however, even if this arrangement is not explicitly described in Pacetti’s *Giornale*, it is likely that it was proposed by him, perhaps with the help of Antonio Asprucci.

Three substantial questions remain unanswered. The first concerns the overall meaning: based on what we know of the emperor’s life it is impossible to deduce a connection with the two philosophers; nor is it possible to make out why they should appear beside Septimius Severus in a composition that has an explicit military connotation. Nor is it clear why an emperor born in Africa, with no connection to the Borghese narrative of their family origins, appeared first at the centre of the round temple (pl. 2), whose Ionic order, according to Vitruvius, was more suited to the celebration of maiden grace than martial prowess. A second question concerns Socrates and Plato: since



their heads, without the bust, are probably the same ones that appear in the form of herms in the two versions for the *Mostra dell'Acqua Felice* (cf. pls 3r and 3v), one may wonder why they migrate from one project to another. Is there a meaning that escapes us, or is it simply the result of the generic wish to furnish the garden with ancient marbles at haphazard? The third question, finally, concerns the final site chosen for the statue of Septimius Severus. Thanks to Alberta Campitelli, the location and final arrangement, which took place before July 1788, are known: the stepped base remained the same and so did the inscription;

on each side of the pedestal (here with heraldic eagle) supporting the emperor, were set two travertine statues of *prigioni*, commissioned in 1788 and modified when already *in situ*<sup>47</sup>. The group had been erected inside the *Giardino del lago*, on the axis of the *Mostra dell'Acqua Felice* (fig. 21), at the end of the avenue then known as the '*Prospettiva di Settimio Severo*'; the exact position, however, is difficult to establish, since in 1788 that avenue was partly obstructed by a navigable canal<sup>48</sup>. In 1828 the group was finally positioned by Luigi Canina above the new entrance arch to the garden<sup>49</sup> (fig. 38).

*Proposals for the renovation of the Casino dei Giuochi d'acqua, or Aranciera, 1790c*

7. Atelier Asprucci, *Projects for a fountain with Palemon and the dolphin, to be built over the Aranciera, Casino dei Giochi d'acqua, Villa Pinciana, Rome*

Pencil, pen in black ink, black ink wash, 349 × 257 mm  
Bottom left, collection stamp: AM

8. Atelier Asprucci, *Two alternative proposals for a fountain with Palemon and the dolphin, to be built over the Aranciera, Casino dei Giochi d'acqua, Villa Pinciana, Rome*

Pencil and ink wash, 257 × 384 mm, irregular  
Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM

9. Atelier Asprucci, *Two proposals for a fountain to be set over the Aranciera, Casino dei Giochi d'acqua, Villa Pinciana, Rome*

Pen in black ink, black ink wash, pencil marks on white paper, 257 × 390 mm, irregular  
Inscribed in pencil at the bottom right: (...) in Museum  
Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM

10. Atelier Asprucci, *Two proposals for a fountain to be set over the Aranciera, Casino dei Giochi d'acqua, Villa Pinciana, Rome*

Pencil, pen and grey wash on paper (perhaps it is paper given a very light greenish grey wash), 258 × 385 mm

In his 1700 guide to the Villa Pinciana, Domenico Montelatici devoted many pages to the “description of the *Casino* in the centre of the *Quarto recinto*”<sup>90</sup>. Recent studies by a group of authors, coordinated by Alberta Campitelli, have reconstructed the complex history of this building, which was partly demolished in 1849 and stands today in a different form (fig. 40) The four drawings, presented here for the first time (pls 7-10), bear witness to a phase hitherto unknown, which obliges us to rethink what has been so far published on the two distinct building campaigns conducted on this *Casino* by Marcantonio Borghese<sup>91</sup>.

It was here that the prince invited his peers to banquets. The accounts prove that he first had this *Casino* extended for the purpose between 1775 and 1779, while the great renovation work was under way also on the *Casino Nobile*, and then a second time between 1790 and 1793. Observing the main facade of the building, as it

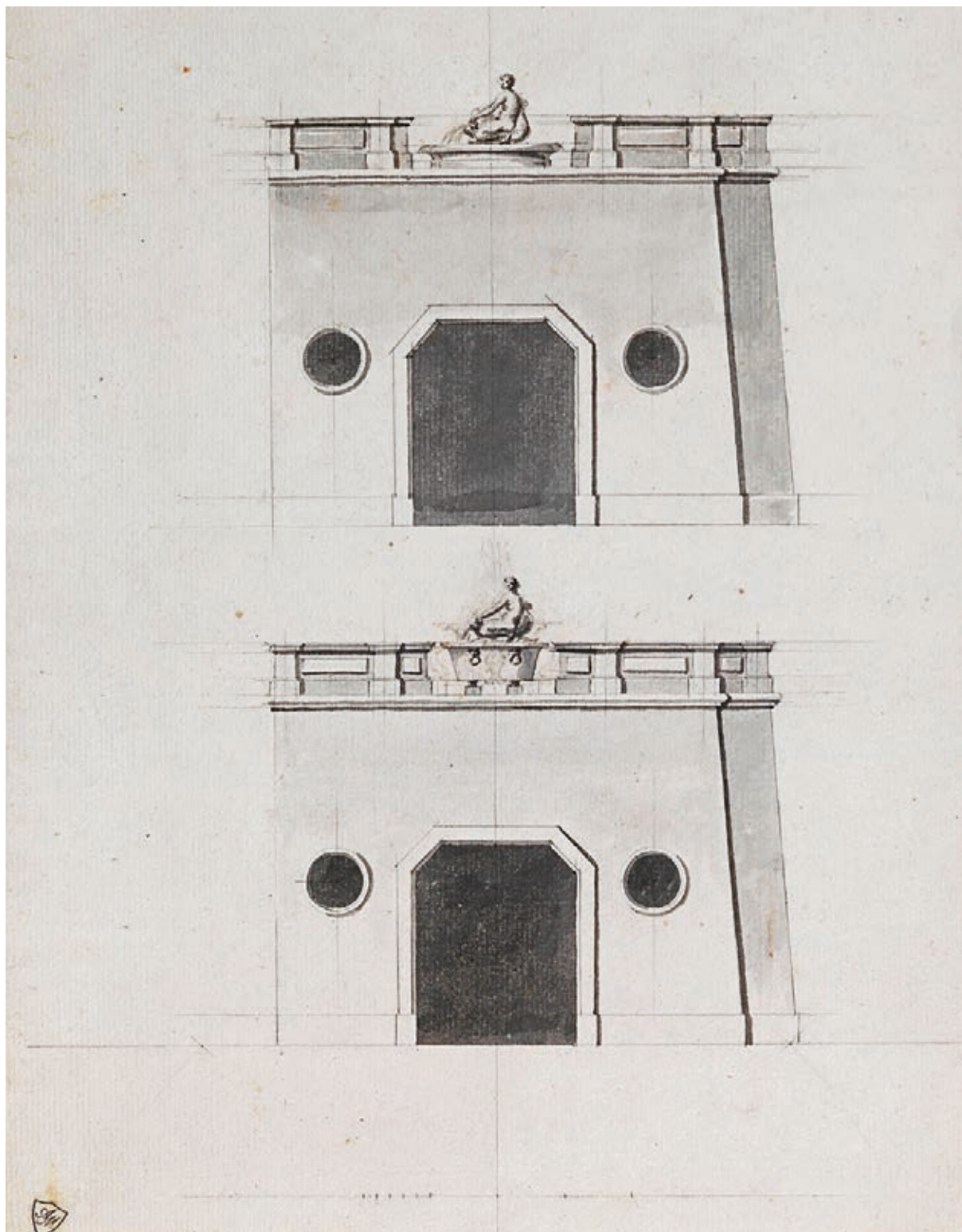
appeared towards 1816-19<sup>92</sup> (fig. 39), one can – in my opinion – distinguish the two building campaigns. The part corresponding to the first six windows from the left, unevenly spaced because of what pre-existed, date to the 1770s: the overall design and, in particular, the form of the window surrounds, present analogies with other Roman palaces of the time<sup>93</sup> and thus suggest this date, and no later. On the right, above the building that housed the old orangery (the *Aranciera*), the simple two-storey facade opened by three windows is the more recent<sup>94</sup>. That part had been built to house the hall painted by Unterperger: in October 1791 the *Diario romano* reported that the painter “has enlarged the *Casino* with a large hall (...) which is so artfully worked and painted, that in the distance it appears a round room, although it is an oblong one, it has also painted vases, seats, walls and pillars with fruits, fronds and other things, all in the latest taste”<sup>95</sup>. Because of the damage inflicted on the



39. G.B. Cipriani, *View of the Casino dei Giuochi d'acqua* (Id., *Degli edificj antichi e moderni di Roma. Vedute in contorno...*, 3 voll., Roma 1816-19).

40. Museo Carlo Bilotti, Aranciera, Villa Borghese.

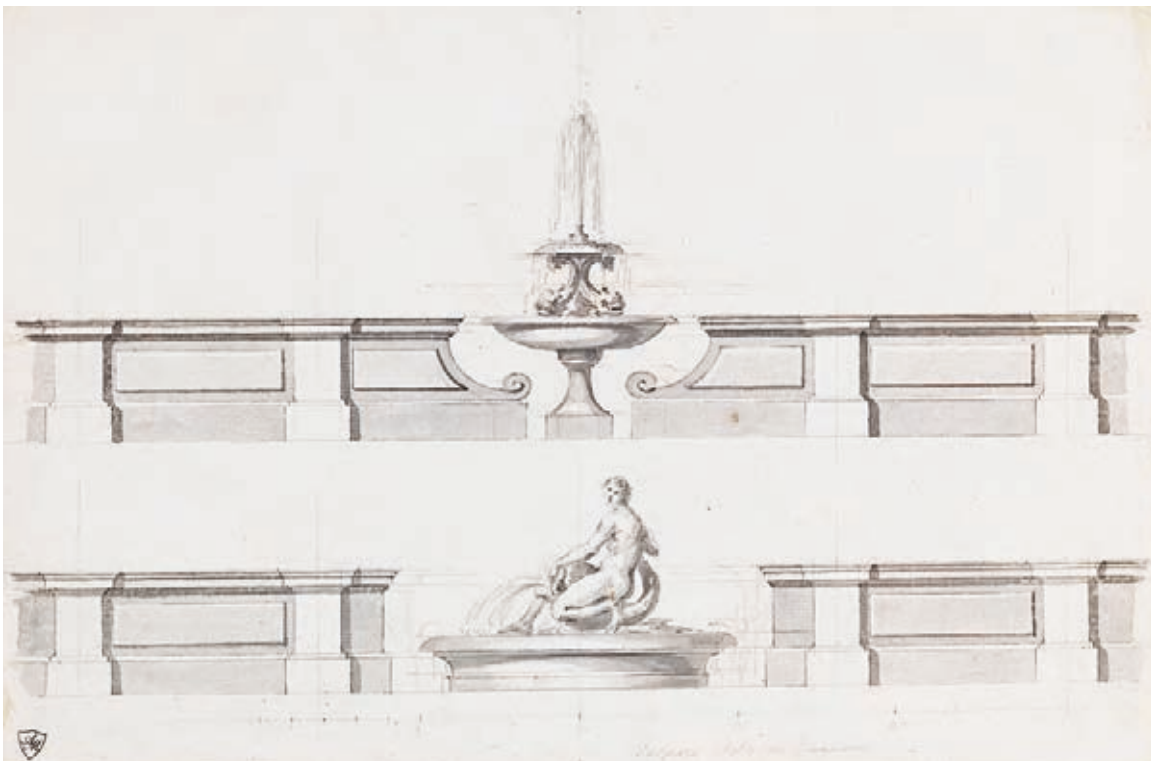




pl. 8



pl. 9



building by the French during the 2nd Roman Republic (1849), it has been unanimously asserted that all trace was lost of the extraordinary decoration that made the room appear round, without being so. Scrutiny, however, of an historical photo, showing the state of the building immediately after the shelling<sup>56</sup> provides a glimpse through the collapsed roof on one of the short sides of the rectangular room: here, where the *tromp-l'oeil* is still intact, we can see the screen of fictive columns opening onto a large, equally fictive, semicircular exedra (fig. 42). At least a trace is preserved.

The four drawings presented here were conceived between the first and the second campaign of building, when the new banquet hall had not yet been built. The first drawing (pl. 7) makes it possible to situate the other three (pls 8-10): of the entire *Casino* only the prospect of the orangery is presented twice, recognisable from the characteristic shape of the gateway and the circular openings for ventilation. On the flat roof, there is what, after the building campaign of the 1770s, was called “the open loggia”: a terrace that could be accessed from the rooms on the first floor decorated by Gioacchino Agricola (1777-79)<sup>57</sup>. In both versions, the loggia is equipped with balustrades: in the upper version, there is a statue set within a basin; in the lower, the same statue is set above an ancient Roman bathtub. The drawing thus illustrates, with two variations, the intention of building a fountain on the open loggia, fed by a branch of the *Acqua Felice*.

The statue it is to be identified as *Palemon and the dolphin*<sup>58</sup> (fig. 41), here endowed with a cloak puffed out forcefully by the wind. The following drawings, showing only the upper level of the loggia, seem intended for comparison with other ideas then competing for the same site: the second drawing presents two variants that differ only in the form of the basin (pl. 8); in the third, the composition with Palemon is matched against a fountain with a rising series of basins, of which the highest is supported by dolphins (pl. 9). In the fourth (pl. 10), the two proposed models are more traditional: in the upper one, the water gushes from an antique vase set on a rocky crag; in the one below a modern vase supported by two cherubs is set on the same crag. In the last proposals we see a lively upward spurt of water, made possible by the height of the recently built aqueduct along which the water ran towards the lake<sup>59</sup>.

There was easy access from the first floor of the *Casino delle Acque* to the ground level of the *Giardino del lago*:

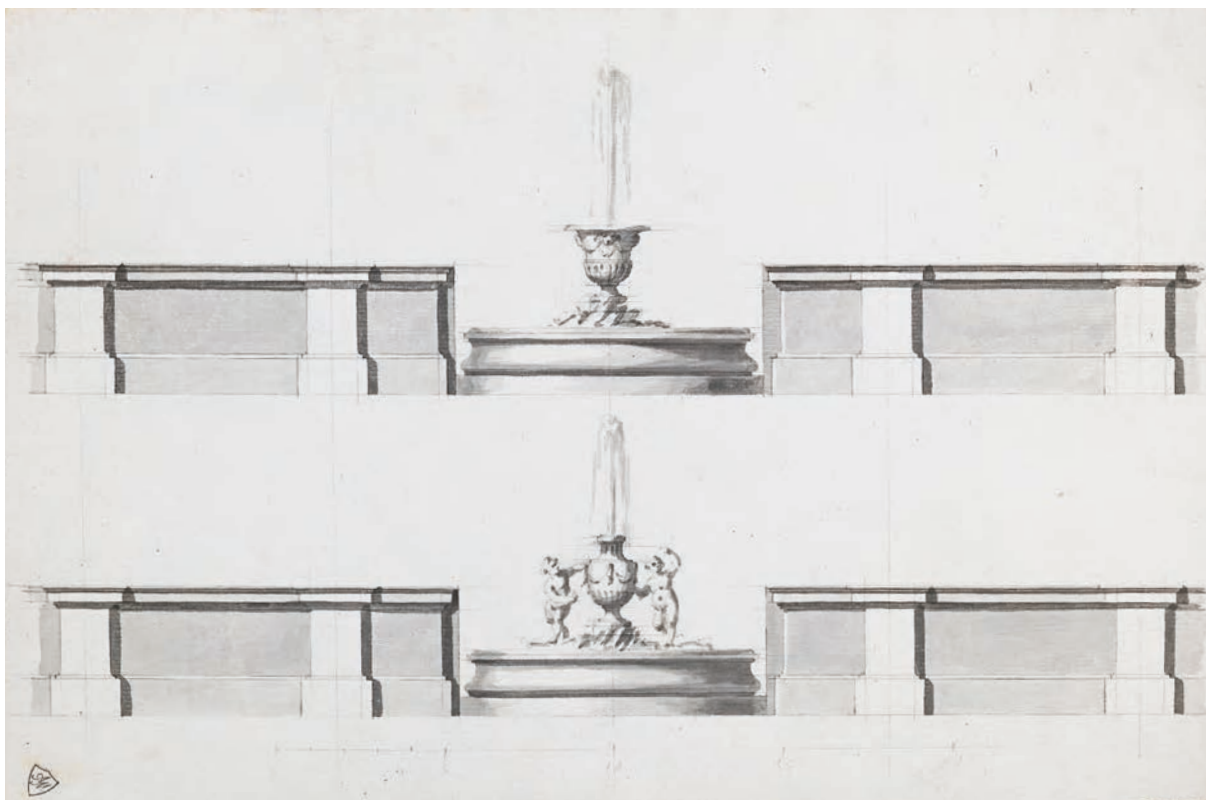


41. *Satyr on dolphin, or Palemon on the dolphin* (Galleria Borghese, sala VII, Roma)

it is evident that once this new garden was landscaped, in the late 1780s the prince meant to link the two places better. We know of the attempt he made by digging a canal leading from the lake to the *Casino*, to bring his guests to the banquet hall directly by boat<sup>60</sup>. That is why the *Casino* itself became his chief interest at a moment, and a letter written in January 1791 by a friend of Cristoforo Unteperger reveals the climate of competition that the prince had created the year before among the artists working for him. The painter, he reports,

*“has for the last year been more involved in Architecture than in painting at the behest of the Prince Borghese, who wishing to build a Fountain that had individuality and a Games room in one of the ‘Casini’ of the Villa Pinciana, which today we may call the emporium of the most beautiful rarities of Rome, did not find in the idea of his architect Asprucci nor in those of others that beauty and novelty he saw in that of Sig. Cristoforo”*<sup>61</sup>.





42. S. Lecchi, *Aranciera after the shelling of 1849*, calotype (Museo di Roma, Roma).

The fountain mentioned here is that of the *Cavalli Marini*, unanimously attributed to the Tyrolean painter, which stands however in another part of the villa; the ‘Games room’, where he conceived the *trompe-l’oeil* described was what was finally built in October 1791 over the *Aranciera* (fig. 42). It is therefore possible to date these four drawings to around 1790, before the prince decided to go along with Unterperger’s ideas. What I have italicised in the quotation suggests it is very likely that the proposals to build a fountain on the loggia came from Antonio Asprucci, perhaps with the help of Pacetti. A patent failure: the idea did not please and it was from then on that the painter began to take on the guise of architect.

*Suggestions from the Triopaeion of Herodes Atticus: Cristoforo Unterperger and Ennio Quirino Visconti in competition*

11. Christopher Unterperger's Atelier, *A project for a ruined temple, to be built in the Villa Pinciana*

Pencil on grey paper, 312 × 465 mm, squared  
Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM

12. Mario Asprucci as collaborator of Ennio Quirino Visconti (?), *Projects for a pavilion for the group of Hercules, Telephus and the hind (above), and for the Silenus lying, for Villa Pinciana, Rome*

Pencil on white paper, 434 × 295 mm  
Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM 11

13. Mario Asprucci (?), *Projects for the layout of the external spaces in front of the rear façade of the Casino della Cappella*

Pencil, pen in grey ink, grey and pink ink wash, 374 × 591 mm

In February 1790 Bettini reported to cardinal Doria that Prince Borghese intended to enlarge the gateway of the villa from *Porta del Popolo*, so that two carriages going in opposite directions could easily pass each other<sup>62</sup>; as a result, in that month the prince bought from a private individual the tiny piece of land necessary to move the entrance next to the ancient public *via delle Tre Madonne*<sup>63</sup>. From this new gate, a wide uphill avenue was laid out, partly taken from the area of the public road that had been closed in 1788. Where the line – still following the old route of the road – bent at right angles, the *Mostra dell'Acqua Felice* had been set against the wall of Villa Doria. From here, Bettini reported in December 1791, the prince had made a straight 'superb avenue'<sup>64</sup> this, bending again at right angles, would finally rejoin the avenue approaching the villa from the direction of *Porta Pinciana*. Described in words, it looks complicated: seen on a map, the avenue in fact follows the easiest line for carriages to take from the plain up the hill (fig. 21).

The consequent layout of all portions of the garden crossed by this new route was entrusted to Unterperger: after 1791, against the proposals put forward by other artists, the ideas chosen by the prince were all his. His design for the expansion of the

*Aranciera* was executed, as were those for two more delicate sites. His was the design for the *Fontana dei Cavalli marini* (1791), set up at the point of crossover to the ancient formal garden once the wall of the *Primo recinto* had been demolished; whereas for the end of the main ascending avenue, he proposed a small temple dedicated to Antoninus and Faustina: a folly, a mock ruin, consisting of a simple temple frontage and very little of a cell behind (fig. 43). It was built mostly in 1792-93 out of recycled Roman marbles and on each side had a stele displaying the famous inscriptions from the *Triopaeion* of Herodes Atticus on the Appian Way<sup>65</sup>.

Two letters addressed to the prince, conserved in the Archivio Borghese, give a clear picture of the atmosphere of competition that the artists found themselves embroiled in for the layout of the site. In the two texts – one in draught and the other definite – the painter Unterperger employs various arguments to illustrate his design, which was then built<sup>66</sup>. He opens the letter as follows: "I flatter myself that the Public, impartial censor of the products of the fine Arts, will not be disposed to scorn some remains of a Temple of the Corinthian order"<sup>67</sup>, thus revealing that he consider himself as participating in a contests of ideas shaped also by public opinion. In the central part of the letter, he shows, instead, just how well acquainted he was with the most recent theories on garden layout:



43. *Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, Villa Borghese.*

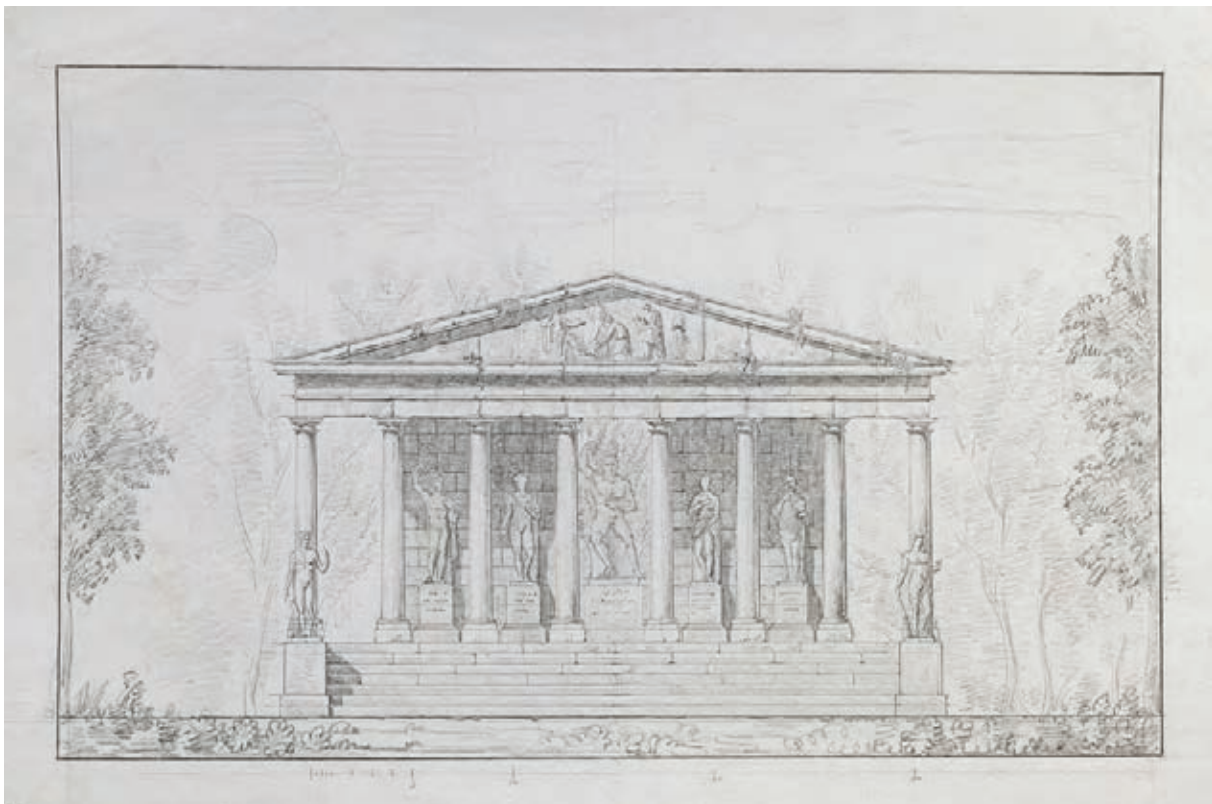
*“With the lightness of the building I procure the most gracious spectacle to the eye of the beholder, and the beauty of the prospect, given the openness to the air through the intercolumnar spaces, and delight in what suits villas, in which more than elsewhere one seeks for variety, beauty and pleasure. I note that in addition to the advantage of the harmony which it makes with the adjacent buildings and the façade that gives on the avenue corresponding to the facade of the temple, we will have so much around it, and behind so many and various pictorial features as will form as many points of most delightful prospect, and all this would be achieved with the thinning out of the thickest branches of the contiguous grove, that is, only behind the columns”.*

The means for communicating his ideas, as for any landscape gardener *à la page*, was a ‘colourful drawing with adjacent inscriptions [captions] and greenery’. But a drawing of this kind, showing “the remains of a Temple of the Corinthian order” – thus relating to what was built – is not attached to the letter: a great loss, since we know of no other autograph design by

the artist of this type, nor do we know whether he availed himself of the help of an architect.

A drawing presented here for the first time (pl. 11) might be an early notion of the painter’s, in which he presents a temple of larger size. Here the temple, set on a podium seven steps high, is typically Tuscan: the shafts of the columns are smooth and so is the frieze of the entablature. There are eight columns and statues set in the five central intercolumnar spaces. In the middle, however, all masonry has disappeared: a large statue of Bacchus emerges against a natural landscape, in the fashion already illustrated referring to the Corinthian temple. In addition to the Bacchus, a Venus is recognizable on its right and perhaps another Bacchus to the extreme left; on each side of the podium there are two males statues. In the tympanum, the bas-relief shows Priam in the act of begging Achilles for the return of Hector’s body. The other key feature that links it to the temple of Antoninus and Faustina is the ruined state: the entablature and tympanum are intact, but their badly connected blocks and vegetation in the cracks suggest impending ruin. This too, therefore, is a fictive temple ruin; a perspective backdrop.

pl. 11









44. *Ludovisi Silenus* (Palazzo Ludovisi, US Embassy, Rome)  
 45. Pillared sarcophagus with the exploits of Hercules (Galleria Borghese, sala II, Roma).

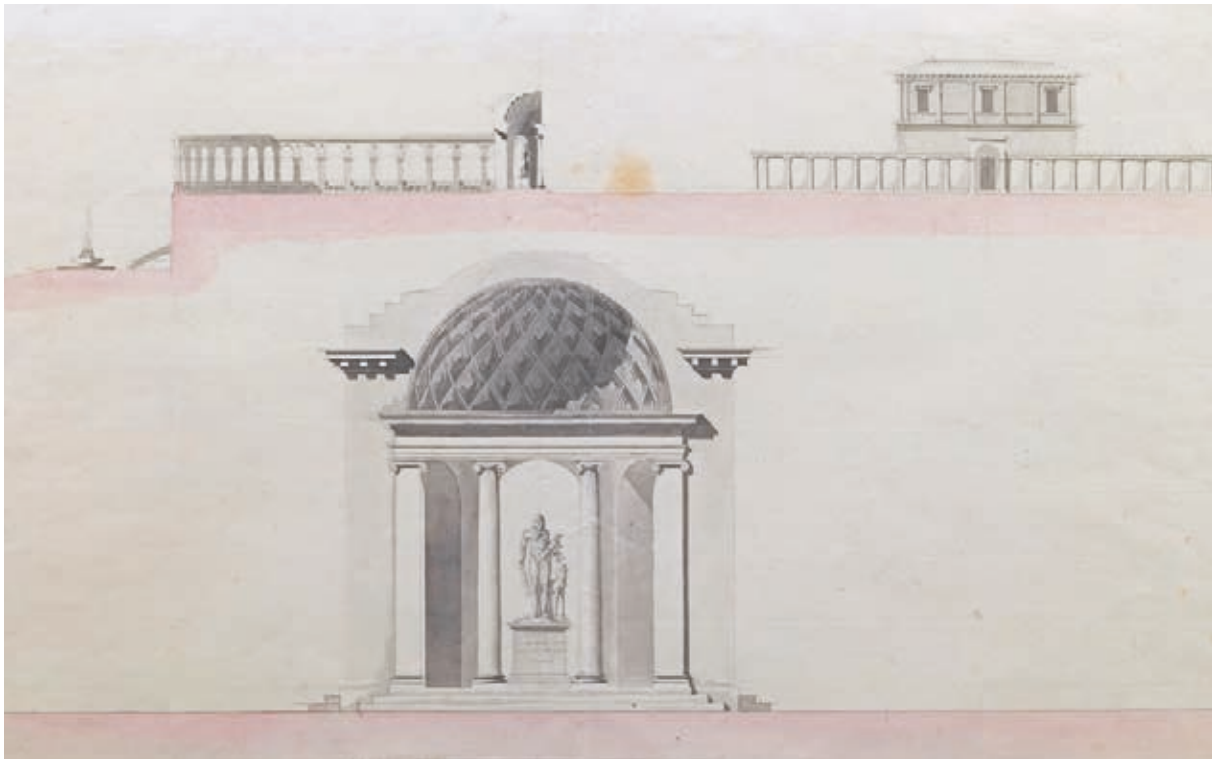
Ennio Quirino Visconti also presented some ideas for the same site, probably in competition with the painter. Various of his letters, autographs or copies, gives us back the extraordinary inventiveness with which, through his knowledge of Classical literature, he could propose buildings to house the statues he propose to remove from the garden. Inspired by one of the volumes of Stuart and Revett on the Greek monuments, he proposed to build, at the end of the new avenue, a reproduction, appropriately adapted, of the famous monument to Philopappos in Athens<sup>68</sup>. In another autograph text he illustrates the best arrangement to be given to the inscriptions of the *Trioieum*. Pointing out that the monument to Annia Regilla was not a temple, but rather ‘a kind of fane or rural shrine’ – and bearing in mind that ‘it is not a matter of reconstituting the *Trioieion of Regilla*, but of designing an architecture with which only those Greek poems are fitting’<sup>69</sup> – the antiquarian proposed first a simple building for the villa, then went on to discuss the statues to be set inside, among them the famous Silenus with the child Bacchus, now in Paris. For at least one of his proposals we can now link



46. *Hercules and Telephus* (Musée du Louvre, Paris).

the text describing it to a drawing. We do not know which artist gave form to his ideas: the architectural part is barely sketched in pencil, only the statue of the *Ludovisi Silenus* is redrawn, perhaps by another hand (cf. pl. 11 below and fig. 44). At the bottom one of the sarcophagi with columns in the Borghese collections<sup>70</sup> is recognizable (fig. 45). Here is Visconti’s text describing it:

*“He had planned to have in the centre a well-known figure of blithe subject, instead of the recumbent Bacchus, to make a plaster copy of the again recumbent, and almost colossal, Silenus of the Villa Ludovisi. The felicity of the situation*



would make this copy appear much more than its original. He is crowned, has a goblet in his hand, and a wineskin under his arm, inebriation and cheer are visible in the expression of his face. (...)” Since Silenus mentor of Bacchus was understood by the ancient mythologists as a cosmological divinity: it would not be unfitting to copy the constellations figured in the Farnese Atlas to the vault of the large niche below, in mock mosaic with turquoise background, (the stars could also be done in gold), since Virgil himself in the Eclogue entitled *Silenus has him speak of the stars and sky and the formation of the Universe*<sup>71</sup>.

The upper half of the sheet (pl. 11 above) presents another idea for setting in another pavilion the well-known group of *Hercules, Telephus and the Doe*, sold in 1807 to Napoleon and now in the Louvre Museum<sup>72</sup> (fig. 46). The presence of the two drawings on the same sheet suggests that this proposal was also made by Visconti.

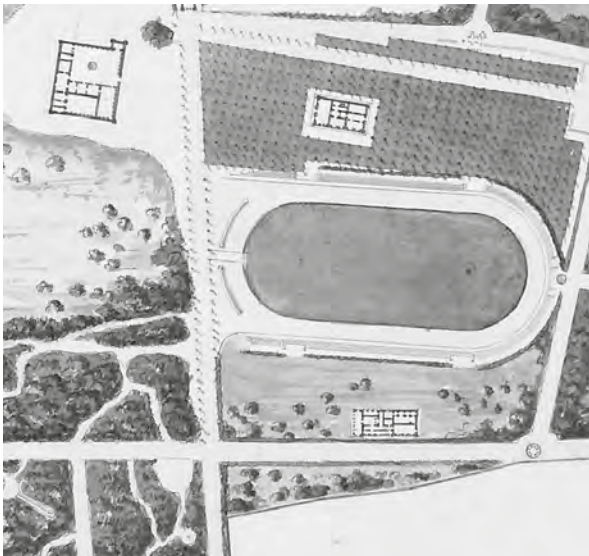
Finally, the group of *Hercules and Telephus* appears in another drawing, in an architect’s hand (pl. 12), but of problematic interpretation. At the top right,

the presence of the rear facade of the *Casino della Cappella* (fig. 47), built to the design of Mario Asprucci<sup>73</sup>, dates the sheet to 1793 or later, after the completion of building; the statuary group, as just mentioned, belonged to the Borghese family only until 1807. In the period between the two dates, however, the boundary wall of Villa Pinciana was almost adjacent to the *Casino* (fig. 48): it was therefore not possible – as the section of terrain in pink wash seems to suggest – to place an edicule to house the statue to the left of it and, beyond that, to have yet enough space to place both a floored area surrounded by arches and furnished with benches, and a fountain. From the prospect (below), one deduces that the edicule is semicircular in plan and that the statue would have been amply lit by the three large curved openings: an artifice that had already been used in the *Temple of Aesculapius*. Its general form has been conceived as half of an ancient *rotonda*, such as could be seen in Roman baths: viz on its facade, the recognizable stepped profile of the basin, screened by Ionic columns and pillars. It is harder to recognize the two simple enclosures that appear in the upper part of the drawing as Mario Asprucci’s ideas. Nor is it clear where that featuring





47. Rear facade of the *Casino della Cappella*, Villa Borghese an abrupt downslope and ending with the fountain was to be placed.



48. C. Percier, *Plan of Villa Borghese*: of the three buildings near the new stadium, the *Casino della Cappella* is the one below (detail of fig. 21).

*Statues in fountains*

14. Atelier Asprucci, *Project for a fountain with the statue of Hecate Triformis, plan*

Pencil and grey and blue wash on paper, 269 × 38 mm

15. Atelier Asprucci, *Projects for two fountains for the Villa Pinciana, Rome*

Pen in black ink and watercolour on white paper, 252 × 370 mm

At the bottom centre a measurement scale

Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM

16. Mario Asprucci (?), *Project for a fountain with the Faun playing the scaballo and four Egyptian lions, for Villa Pinciana, Rome*

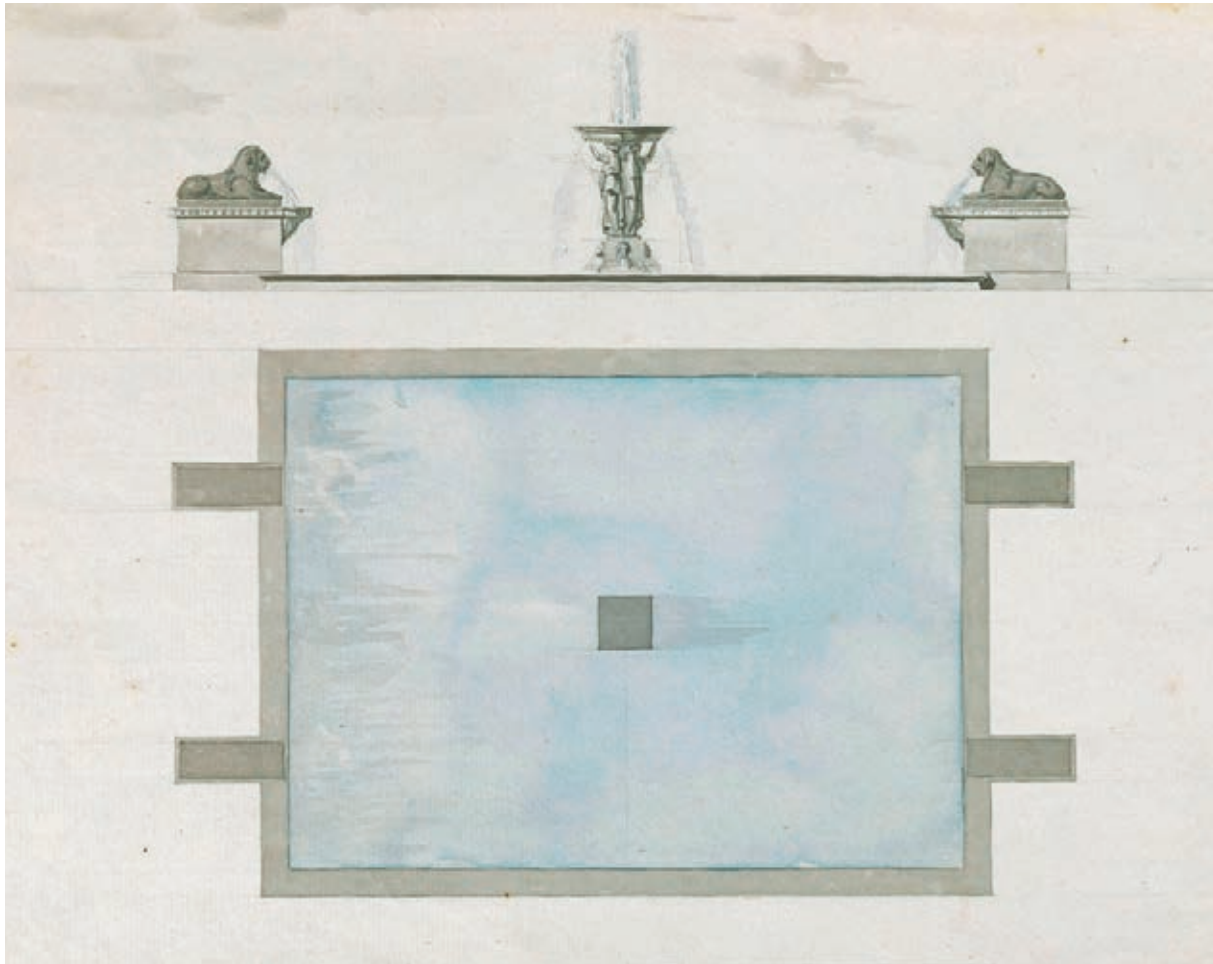
Pen in black ink, watercolour on white paper, squared,

272 × 449 mm, irregular, drawing 220 × 435 mm

Inscribed in pencil at the bottom centre: This fountain was behind the Gallery. The statue was sold to the Boncompagni

Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM

Three of the four proposals for large fountains presented here may have been prepared for the site where, in 1791, the prince finally decided on Unterperger's design for the *Fontana dei Cavalli Marini*<sup>74</sup>. An element in favour of this hypothesis is that, as in the one built, the edges of the basins are flush with the ground, or very low down. In these drawings, however, instead of proposing works of modern sculpture, the anonymous creator planned to use ancient sculptures from the Borghese's collections. Two drawings show, in the centre, the statue of *Hecate Triformis* (fig. 49) surmounted by a basin<sup>75</sup>. In the first version, the only one of the set

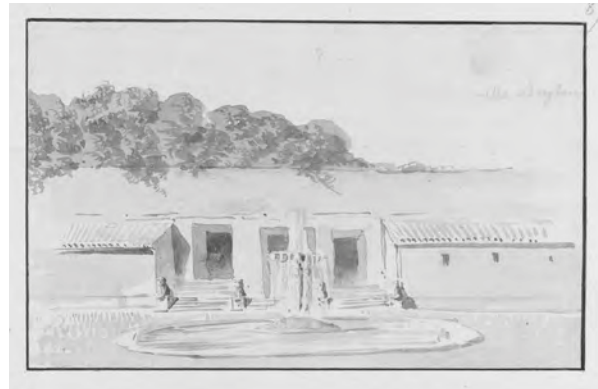


pl. 14



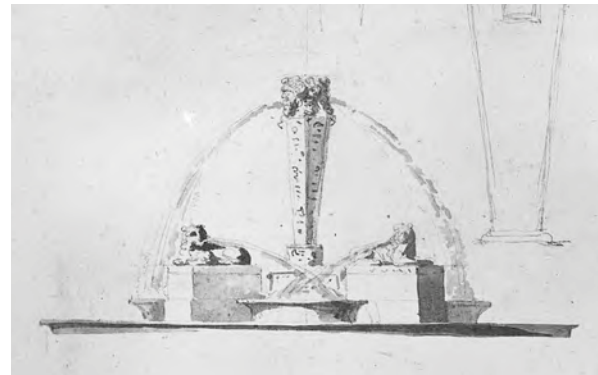
49. *Hecate Triformis* (Galleria Borghese, sala VI, Roma).

to be given both plan and elevation (pl. 14), the basin is rectangular and on each short side two spurting Egyptian lions are mounted on pedestals; at the top of another sheet, the same statue appears at the centre of an apparently circular fountain (pl. 15 above). An alternative design appears at the bottom: here the basin of the same shape has a group – of modern invention? – of three *erotes* playing with dolphins (pl. 15 below). The four Egyptian lions on pedestals already described are found in a fourth drawing (pl. 16), which differs from the others in the smaller size of the circular basin: in the centre there is the *Fauno che suona lo scabillo*, a musical instrument played with the foot. At the end of the eighteenth century this statue was reported inside the *Casino*, whence it was removed to Paris after 1807<sup>76</sup>. The writing in the lower centre, in English in a modern hand, specifies: ‘This fountain was behind the Gallery. This statue was said to be Buoncompagni’: both mistaken assertions<sup>77</sup>. At the end of the eighteenth century, only the *Hecate Triformis* and the four lions seem to have found a place in the garden: Charles



50. C. Percier, *View of the Hecate Triformis Fountain, Giardino dei Cedrati, Villa Borghese, Rome* (BIF, Paris, ms. 1008).

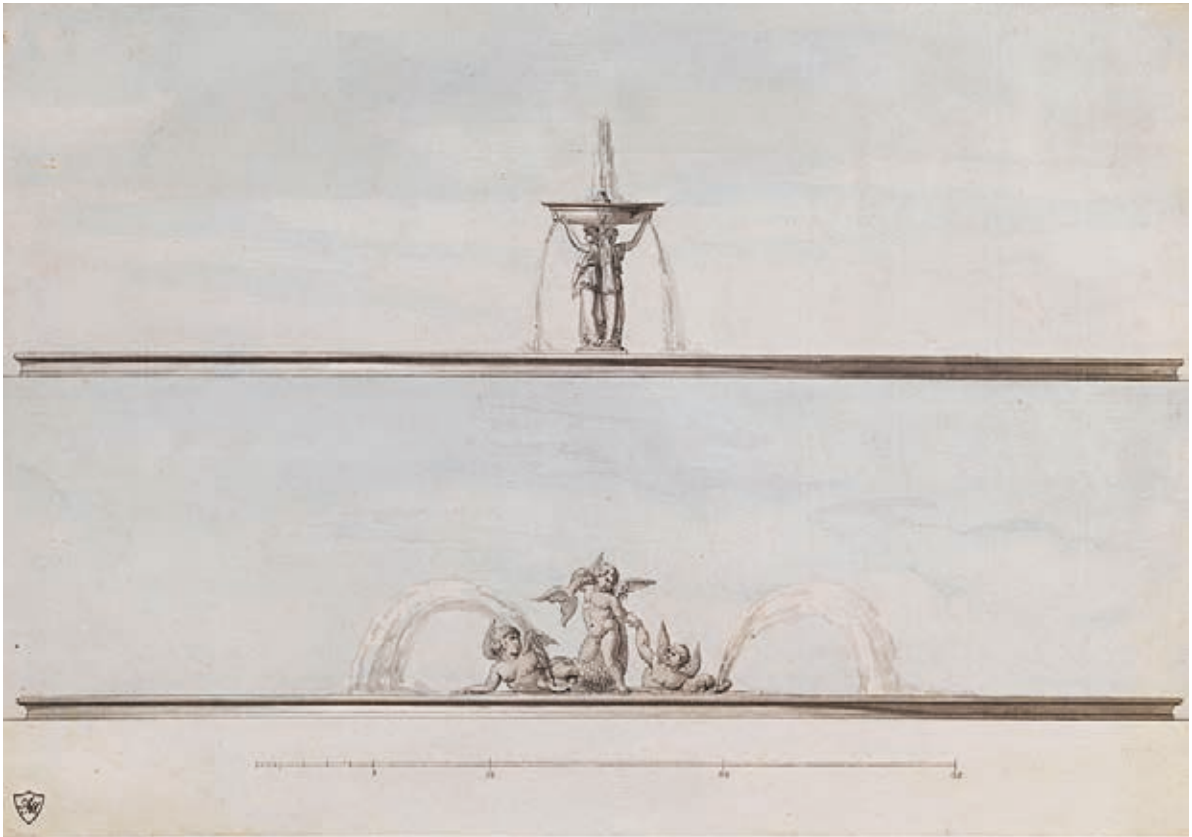
51. M. Asprucci, *Design for a fountain with the four Egyptian lions* (Photo Archive Galleria Carlo Virgilio, Roma, detail of fig. 16).



Percier depicts this statue in the centre of a fountain near the *Casino dei Giuochi d’acqua*, while the lions are on the staircase behind (fig. 50); the portico above has not yet been built.

The graphic quality of the four drawings, especially in the human figures, is variable; only the fourth is good. However, an attribution of the design to Mario Asprucci is to be excluded: in fact, in matching these sheets against a comparable drawing – a fountain by him that was to re-utilise the lions and one of the statues then in the *Parco dei Daini* – the differences are evident (fig. 51). Also drawing for the installation of the *Leda sedente* in a four-columned room<sup>78</sup> shows decidedly superior inventiveness and graphic quality (fig. 17).





*The outcome of competition: the Museo Gabino, October 1792*

17. Mario Asprucci, *project for the new Museo Gabino, prospect*

Pencil on manilla paper, 303 × 435 mm, squared  
Inscription: Monumenta E. Municipi Ruderibus  
Lacum Adspectantibus In Fundo Suo / Tablino. A  
Fundamentis Extructo Marcus. Antonius. Burghesius  
Musis Et Artibus Dat. Ci I cc Lxxxii

Horses were a great passion with the aristocracy of the time and the Borghese were no exception. It was tradition in Rome that every year at Carnival there should be a race of riderless horses. The scions of the great families, among whom prince Sigismondo Chigi distinguished himself, entered favourites from their stables; the young sons of Prince Borghese, as their subsequent military careers in the cavalry shows, were also very interested (fig. 52). The fact is that in February 1792 the Roman press announced that Prince Marcantonio, on his return from Siena where he had attended the Palio, had conceived the idea of laying out a racecourse in his villa on which the horses would run on a circular track<sup>79</sup>; the architecture of the structure, if not the modality of the races, was to be taken from the circuses of ancient Rome<sup>80</sup>. The decision to build this great track, accompanied by tiers for the spectator, went hand in hand with another project, altogether different, but which nevertheless found itself linked: the building of a space for the display of the statues from Gabii.

In November 1791 the painter Gavin Hamilton reported that he had gained the prince's permission to excavate for antiquities on the total expanse of his country properties<sup>81</sup>. It was a common practice in the Rome of those years, when the 'marbles fever' reached its height, that a would-be excavator paid the costs, contracting with the landowner to share any eventual find<sup>82</sup>. Less common, as Hamilton himself noted, was to obtain such a large concession: a clear sign that, despite the extraordinary collection of family marbles, the prince was interested in enlarging it further. As we know, the excavation at Pantano was very lucky: bringing to light the remains of the forum of the ancient city of Gabii and recovering a large number of statues and marbles<sup>83</sup> (fig. 22). Marcantonio IV, in addition to deciding to keep all the antiquities for himself, took a second equally unexpected

decision: to build a museum to house them in the villa. It is evident that at least three factors contributed to distinguish the prince's behaviour from that of his peers, the other Roman grandees. It was Grand-Tourists who bought ancient marbles in Rome to show off when they returned home in the halls of their residences, or in purpose-built buildings: the prince was the only Roman who behaved like them. Next, by gathering the marbles together in a new building, he deliberately distinguished them from the rest of a collection, enlarged over the centuries by the addition of individual pieces of various provenance: the prince – at the suggestion of the antiquarian Visconti? – thereby intended to preserve the unity of the finds. Last, but no less important, was his stated wish to build from the foundations a personal museum, with a long Latin inscription brandishing only his name. If what spurred the prince every time to a new enterprise in his villa was the desire to compete and win against any other Roman aristocrat, one may well wonder whether he was not stirred in this by the urge to vie even with the pope: in those years the acquisitions and building works for the completion of the Museo Pio-Clementino were still ongoing.

As reported by Francesco Piranesi in October 1792 at the court of Sweden<sup>84</sup>, the prince had stirred a sort of competition between his architect and the painter Cristoforo Unterperger<sup>85</sup>; the object was to design the museum and, at the same time, identify the site in the villa most suitable for building it. Piranesi reported: "*Le Museum Gabien que le prince Borghese a établi de faire bâtir dans sa Villa Pinciana (...) c'est un*



52. G. Cades, *Visiting card of Camillo Borghese* (Caracciolo 1992, cat. n. 228).



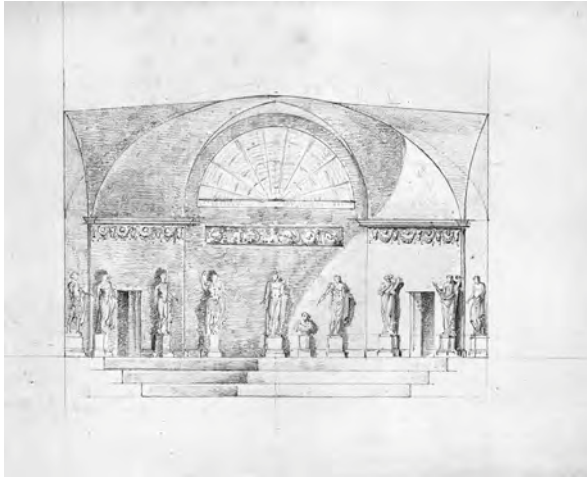
*curieux et élégant objet de disputes d'architecture, et des differents desseins*". These words make clear that the competition was in some way taking place in the presence of an audience<sup>86</sup>: if, before the prince had made any decision, Piranesi was in fact able to describe in detail the original drawings, in plan, elevation and section, these designs were available to everyone. And if he could also report that, although Unterperger "s'entend beaucoup dans l'architecture", Asprucci's design 'a plu universellement', it also means that many of the artists and connoisseurs then in Rome had the opportunity of inspecting the drawings and expressing their opinion.

Unterperger, Piranesi specified, had chosen to site the new building at the western end of the stadium, above an underground passage that gave direct access to the track. The entire project, presented in the form of an album of water-coloured plates, was identified by A. Campitelli<sup>87</sup>: it presents an Ionic colonnade on the façade, with a loggia above offering a privileged view of the horse races. His rival's project was described by Francesco Piranesi as follows:

*"La première pensée d'Asprucci architecte du Prince a été celle d'ériger ce nouveau édifice dans le fond de l'Ippodrome (...) L'endroit parvissoit assez à propos pour donner un beau coup d'oeil au bâtiment, qui selon le dessin devoit être de manière suivante. Une portique d'arcades plaines [= avec architrave], soutenu par six colonnes plaines avec deux corps lateraux de fabrique chacun d'un arc tourné sur des piliers. Ce morceaux [sic] formait l'atrium composé du meme portique, et de deux corridors lateraux. Dessous était une terrasse avec des balustrades. Le corp principal de l'edifice devoit s'élever, et qui contenait une grande salle octagone ouverte dans le sommet de la voute, comme le Panthéon, et de cette manière aurait donné aux statues disposées à l'entour de la salle une lumière très favorable pour les effets du clair obscur assez commode aux dessinateurs"*<sup>88</sup>.

This project is known only through sketches and variants dispersed in several locations: two sections are now at the GRI, Los Angeles<sup>89</sup> (fig. 53-54); a copy of the project, documented by elevation, plan and section, made by C. H. Tatham in 1795, today at the

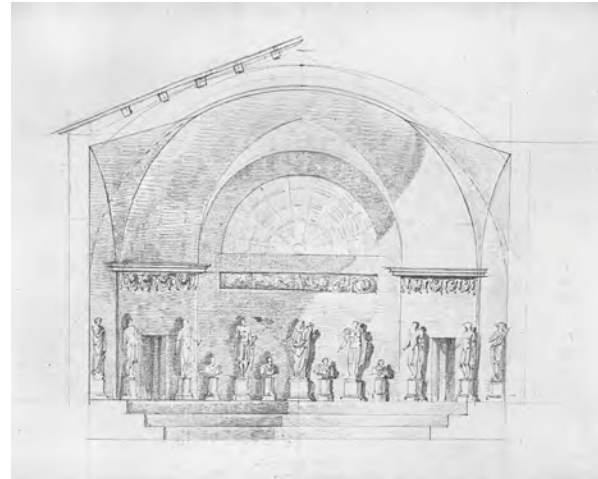




53. M. Asprucci, *Variant of a design for the Museo Gabino* (Photo Archive Galleria Carlo Virgilio, Roma).

RIBA, London<sup>90</sup>, is more in keeping with Piranesi's description. From scrutiny of the original drawings and the type of project that emerges, it is clear that by 'Asprucci architecte du Prince' Mario, rather than Antonio, is intended.

The drawing presented here for the first time (pl. 17) is another Mario's variant, with circular plan, for the same *Museo Gabino*. The inscription that runs along the wall, at the height of the architrave frieze – "MONUMENTA E. MUNICIPI RUDERIBUS LACUM ADSPECTANTIBUS IN FUNDO SUO/TABLINO. A FUNDAMENTIS EXTRACTO MARCUS. ANTONIUS. BURGHESIUS MUSIS ET ARTIBUS DAT. CI ICC LXXXII" – is identical to that in Unterperger's design and in Mario's known proposal, with octagonal plan, just described. Many details of the project, especially in the atrium, are shared by the two proposals. The sheet, traced only in pencil, presents the building's façade. Mario's characteristic 1790s mode of expression is here at its best: all he offers is a strict geometric representation of the architecture<sup>91</sup>, without any attempt at ambiantation. So much stronger, then, must have been the contrast with the rich drawings of coloured buildings and all fronds presented to the prince by the painter. The attempt to construct a cylindrical building, within which an entrance portico opens, is the result of the experimentation, typical of



54. M. Asprucci, *Another variant, with the uppermost room* (Photo Archive Galleria Carlo Virgilio, Roma).

the 1790s, aimed at reconstructing a hypothetical Ionic architecture, based on general principles rather than on fragmentary archaeological knowledge. It is somewhat reminiscent of the equally abstract experiments of Giuseppe Camporese with circular Doric temples<sup>92</sup>.

Both this museum and the octagonal one were rejected in favour of Unterperger's. The fact that the painter had the opportunity, as an expert in garden layout, to express his opinion on the impact that the site chosen by Asprucci would have on the villa also weighed in the prince's judgment: Francesco Piranesi reports that, according to Unterperger, building the museum at the back of the stadium would require the demolition of too many ancient trees. The theorist of fictive ancient temples, artfully ruined so that they might function as transparent screens framing the landscape, could hardly have accepted that such an imposing landscape be blocked by the presence of a massive building. But none of this helped Unterperger: the prince had run out and in 1794 the *Museo Gabino* was actually laid out in the existing *Casino dell'Orologio* to a design ascribed to Antonio Asprucci and the engineer Nicola Fagioli<sup>93</sup>; as early as 1799, during the Roman Republic, prince Borghese agreed to sell all the statues from Gabii to a wealthy Dutchman<sup>94</sup>.

*From the Gallinaro to the Fortezzuola, 1793*

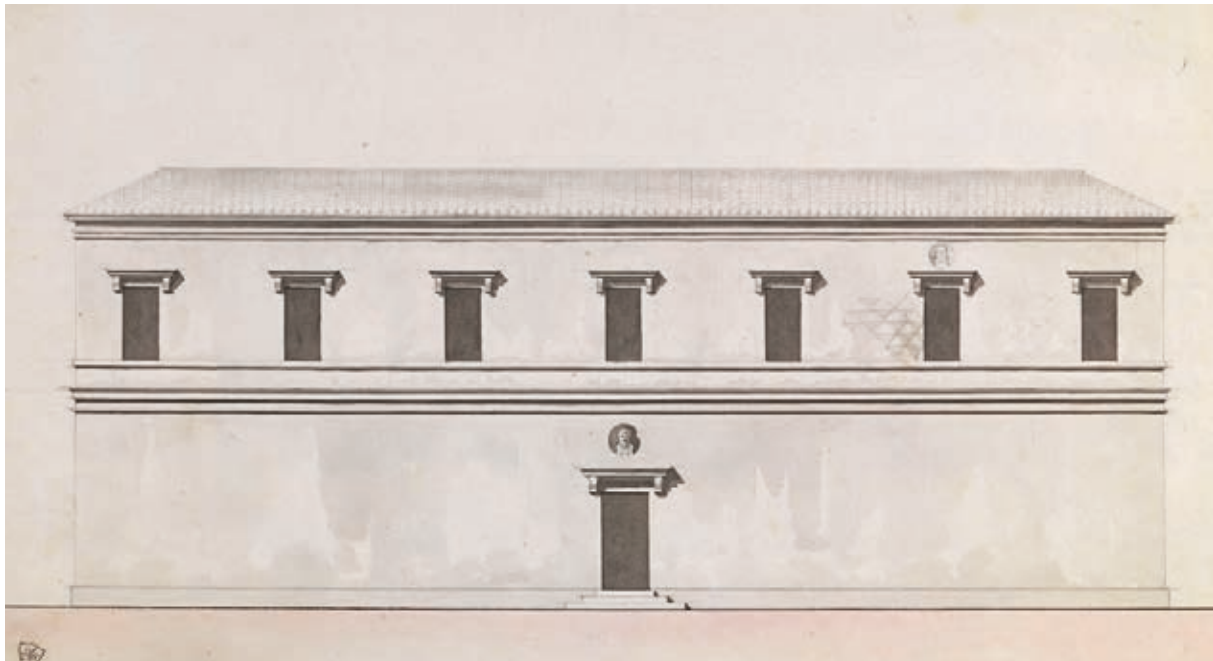
18. Mario Asprucci, *Project for the renewal of Gallinaro, for Villa Pinciana, Rome*

Watercolour on white paper, 243 × 465 mm  
Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM

From surveys of the current building and Charles Percier's documentation on its appearance prior to the works undertaken by prince Marcantonio<sup>95</sup>, it is known that the old *Gallinaro* had been a walled enclosure accessed by a gateway; inside there were some buildings and a courtyard. Percier's drawings, made during his stay in Rome (1786-1791), give an apparently accurate picture of it: one can see the access gateway open in the boundary wall and, inside the enclosure, a building (fig. 56). This main block, long and narrow, had two storeys; on the upper floor, in the façade towards the entrance, there were some windows, irregularly spaced. However, as Percier's intention was not to report exactly the buildings he saw but merely to provide views of them, the verisimilitude of his representation is problematic. Of the fine gateway, flanked by two benches and two niches hosting statues, no other image is known, but only a description dating back to 1700 and not perfectly correspondent<sup>96</sup>. In the interior of the court, because of some farm buildings abutting it

on the left, the main façade could not be seen along its entire length. Moreover, since this building is very narrow, the façade of the short side could hardly have three axes and, consequently, a door in the central one (fig. 56 bottom). It is therefore very unlikely that the exterior of the *Gallinaro* ever looked exactly as Percier represented it during his stay in Rome.

Whatever the appearance of this old enclosure, it is clear that following the renovation of the villa, a fresh design had become necessary: the enclosure of the old *Gallinaro* now appeared in plain sight of those now walking or coaching along the newly laid out avenues, where the new temple of Faustina (1792-93) marked the right angle turn. Some construction work was carried out in 1793, since in that year Felice Giani was paid for the execution, *en-trompe-l'oeil*, of 'eight large heads acting as *Cariatidi* [sic] over the windows and doors' of the main building; decoration that has, in part, survived<sup>97</sup> (fig. 55). This fact can, as I see it, be related to an unpublished drawing, in which I suggest to identify a contemporary project for the restoration and harmonization of the enclosure's main building. The façade of a two-storey building is shown on the sheet (pl. 18), probably in Mario's hand, in which the ratio between the length and height of the building is congruent with the pre-existing one, as Percier shows it. On the ground floor there is only one entrance



pl. 18



55. F. Giani, *Male head*, fresco 1793 ca., *Casino della Fortezzuola, Villa Borghese* (Campitelli 2003, p. 343).

56. C. Percier, *View of the Gallinaro* (the entrance is shown above) (BIF, Paris, ms. 1008).

and the upper floor has seven windows: the simple surrounds are enriched by a cornice supported by corbels; the only decoration, above the entrance, is a circular niche with bust.

It should also be noted that in an area of the façade, above the drawing made in ink and grey wash, a proposed variation was added later in pencil: the otherwise bare wall is decorated with rhombs, following a style adopted in early sixteenth-century



57. *La Fortezzuola, Villa Borghese*

Rome on painted facades; above a window there is a circular niche with bust, similar to the one over the main door (pl. 17, right). If this painted decoration had been extended to the entire façade, the number of roundels would amount to eight: not far removed, both in number and positioning, from the *Cariati* commissioned in 1793 from Giani. It should also be noted that the surround of the central door, which survives today, is identical to that shown in Mario's drawing. It is not a casual form: it is the result of a simplification of the sixteenth-century Roman models proposed by Palladio for the Villa Pojana, a motif that was to be cited in many innovative buildings of the late eighteenth century<sup>98</sup>.

Between 1793 and 1799, the enclosure of the *Casino* had been transformed into the *Fortezzuola* that we know today<sup>99</sup>: it was probably conceived on the lines of the *Castelluccia*, a small fort that while still a minor Ferdinand of Bourbon had built in the gardens of Caserta for staging military exercises<sup>100</sup>. In July 1799, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the storming of the Bastille, the government of the Roman Republic organized here a mock battle between the French troops and a regiment of Polish volunteers then stationed in the city. The walled enclosure was at the centre of the spectacle: 'After various feats of arms with artillery, the French took refuge in a casino in the guise of a fortress there. The Poles attacked and took it.'<sup>101</sup>

A view dating from 1816-19<sup>102</sup> presents the exterior walls perfectly restored after the mock battle staged almost twenty years before. One cannot but observe, however, that the medieval aspect of the small fortress (fig. 57) is completely incongruent with all other renovated buildings in the rest of the Villa; and it is also inconsistent with the aspect that Mario Asprucci would have given to the two-storey casino.



*Epilogue: the Roman Propylaea, 1790-93*

197. Mario Asprucci, *Study after G. B. Piranesi of a Sepulchro antico (...) on the road to Tivoli*

Pencil on manilla paper, 284 × 416 mm, irregular  
Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM

19v. Mario Asprucci, *Studies for the Propylea of Villa Pinciana*

Pencil

Inscribed below on the right: First idea for the gate at Muro Torto

Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM

In 1786, when he began to build the temple of Aesculapius, Mario was 22 years old; in 1793, when the construction of the two entrance *Propylaea* from the *Muro Torto* was finished, he was almost thirty. Between those dates the prince's entire project had been accomplished: on the occasion of every reception offered he had inaugurated something new, gradually accumulating in the Villa Pinciana ever more spectacular attractions to show off to his noble peers, visiting foreigners and, not without a good deal of paternalism, even the people of Rome<sup>103</sup>. Foreseeing ever more visitors, he had redesigned the road layout of the Villa, privileging the entrance from *Porta del Popolo*. In the course of 1790, a transaction with a private landowner, approved by the Presidency of the Roads, enabled him to enlarge the area available by shifting the entrance of the ancient lane *delle Tre Madonne*<sup>104</sup>. The project for a new and more magnificent entrance to the Villa was entrusted to Mario Asprucci and was carried out over the next three years: it was finished in time to be inaugurated when for the first time horse racing was held in the stadium known as *Piazza di Siena* (figg. 21-24).

Over the years, the prince had made those who had ideas to propose to him, whether painter, antiquarian, or architect, vie one against the other; even his majordomo Francesco Posi, as master of ceremonies, had pertinent opinions on the layout of the park<sup>105</sup>. Antonio Asprucci, however, was the only retainer of Casa Borghese skilled in architecture and in the 1790s he was entrusted with the reconstruction of the three old farmhouses that were now in full view of the racegoers sitting in the tiers of the new stadium: his son Mario worked for him on the drawings for the redevelopment of the farmhouse (pl. 18) that would later be known as the *Fortezzuola*, as well on for the restructuring of the

casino that was to house the Chapel. After the rejection of Mario's ideas for the *Museo Gabino* (pl. 17), the role he played in the renovation of what became known as the *Casino dell'Orologio* is less certain. At all event, it was a matter of imaginatively reusing large part of the walls of each extant building. Whereas for the entrance from *Porta del Popolo* the situation was different: the two small temples of Aesculapius and Diana had been created out of nothing more than eight years before. And if in that case the young Asprucci, guided by Visconti, had consulted the ten books of Vitruvius in search of rules governing the Classical orders, in this case he acted with much more freedom.

The sheet presented here is rare for more than one reason. The drawings are done on both sides in pencil, consistent with the habits of Mario who in the 1790s



Fig. 58. G. B. Piranesi, *Veduta di un sepolcro antico ... per la strada di Tivoli* (G.B. Piranesi, *Le antichità romane*, t.II, tav. XXXIX).





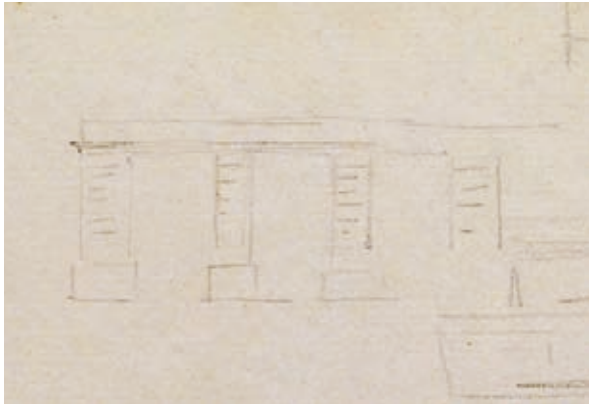
used almost only this medium. One side shows the transposition, on very general lines, of the upper part of the ‘ancient Sepulchre (...) on the way to Tivoli’ (pl. 19 *recto*), as it had been given by Giovanni Battista Piranesi in an engraving published in 1784<sup>106</sup> (fig. 58); in the other side, used breadthwise, Mario drew various possibilities for the Borghese Propylaea (pl. 18 *verso*). In the lower right corner, in a modern hand, is written: ‘First Idea for the Gate at *Muro Torto*’. That he was inspired for the new entrances by two tombs on the *Via Tiburtina*, believed by Piranesi to be the remains of a monumental entrance to the Villa Adriana, has been known for some time<sup>107</sup>; it is extraordinary to observe here, by turning from one side to the other, phases in Mario’s creative process. Until now, no presentation drawing was known, still less any sketches of this subject.

Piranesi provoked, as were all his contemporaries, by the advances in knowledge of the propylaea of the Acropolis of Athens made by Leroy, Stuart and Revett<sup>108</sup>, had mistakenly identified the two funeral monuments as the entrance pillars to Hadrian’s Villa. No wonder that it was Piranesi, the defender of the primacy of Roman architecture over Greek<sup>109</sup>, who

identified a building comparable to those among the antiquities of Rome: Roman propylaea had to exist somehow and were therefore readily found. Mario saw the two ancient monuments through the eyes of Piranesi and no longer through those of Vitruvius: the analysis of the material structure of every Roman building was in fact the most innovative and important part of the Piranesi’s approach to all ancient remains.

But there is more: following the publication by Francesco Milizia of his *Principi di architettura civile* (1781), these two curious constructions became interesting for another reason. In his book, which in the 1790s was to become the new *Vitruvius* for every architect, Milizia reiterated that antiquity was the source of inspiration for new architecture, but also spoke against mere copying<sup>110</sup>. Classical architecture did not constitute an immutable normative authority – over which to squabble as Piranesi had with Leroy in the 1750s – but was made up of a series of temporally sequential buildings that could be categorised by the constructive principle that, from case to case, lay at their base. The architecture of Greece, according to this scheme, was characterized by the post and lintel system





Detail of pl. 19v

(columns + architrave), and that of Rome by the use of the arch and the *opus caementicium*. In consequence the architect who intended to practice radical Neoclassicism was no longer to imitate the single forms of individual buildings: instead he was invited to use the two ancient structural schemes in new buildings, thus banning all element of an order that were merely decorative (such as semi-pillars and half-columns)<sup>111</sup>. The identification of the two monumental pieces in travertine as two of the entrance pillars to the villa of the Emperor Hadrian did not just mean identifying a Roman propylaeum whatsoever. It meant identifying it above all where the constructive principle that, according to Milizia, distinguished the entire architecture of ancient Rome was expressed with the utmost clarity: in the two small constructions, 3 × 3 metres approximately, built in *opera quadrata*, where the arch and the internal vault were solid blocks of travertine radially arranged.

On the top side of the sheet under examination (pl. 18 verso), to the left there is the prospect of one of the two pylons, characterized by three registers of large blocks of travertine placed above the cell and, for that reason, very close to the original model. To the



59. F. Gilly, *Drawings for a mausoleum* (Oncken 1981, p. 20).

right, that part is lightened in a version of the prospect almost identical to what was actually built in 1793: the blocks surfaces are given a rustic treatment and above the abacus stands the heraldic eagle of the Borghese. Of great interest is also the sketch drawn by Mario on a smaller scale between the two elevations: it is the first idea for the portico behind the entrance, later built in other forms<sup>112</sup>. It is a post and lintel system at a level of radical simplification: simple square pillars, equipped with equally simple bases and lintels, bearing resemblance to those which, on an equally experimental level, Friedrich Gilly proposed in those same years in Berlin<sup>113</sup> (fig. 59). According to the predictable formulas used by Unterperger to describe a late eighteenth-century garden, in the Villa Pinciana there were 'various buildings finished in all their parts, and other buildings of sepulchral monuments, cliff faces, and fictive cliffs *expressing the character which recurred in different period of architecture*'. Did the prince ever realize that he had also sponsored and financed, in the form of expensive blocks of travertine<sup>114</sup>, the only actual building in Rome of the architectural type theorized by Milizia and the Accademia della Pace?

## Part 2

### OTHER DRAWINGS BY MARIO OR LINKED TO HIM

#### *Variations on Mario Asprucci's designs for propylaea*

20. Mario Asprucci pupil (?), *Variations on Mario Asprucci's designs for propylaea, side elevation, central front, plan*

Pen in black ink on white paper, black ink wash, pencil marks, squared, 655 × 460 mm

21. Mario Asprucci pupil (?), *Variations on Mario Asprucci's designs for propylaea, side elevation, central front, plan, side elevation, central front, plan*

Pen in black ink and black ink wash on white paper fixed on blue cardboard, whole sheet: 650 × 490 mm, drawn sheet 589 × 430 mm, squared in black ink

In the body of the drawing the inscriptions: *Idea per un ingresso di un grande giardino / Aspetto interno / Pianta*

Left: A. Grande ingresso / B. Ingressi particolari per i pedoni

Right: C. Camere per i custodi / D. Portici per trattenimento delle vetture

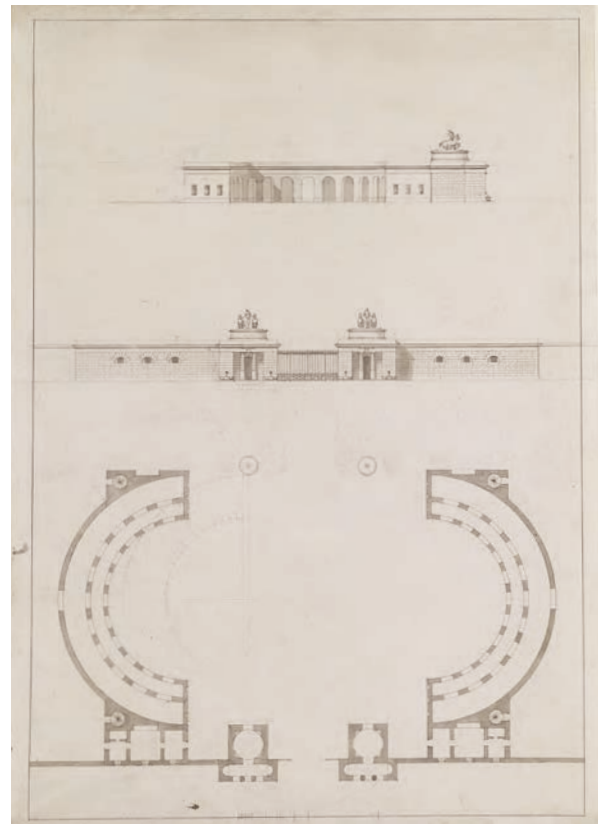
In the centre two scales in Parisian feet

Propylaea, linked to those built in the Villa, appear on two other sheets. One is the preparatory drawing (pl. 20), the other the final one (pl. 21): the differences between the two projects, shown in section, elevation and plan, lie mainly in the form given to the boundary wall. In the first, in which the construction lines and some rethinking can be seen, the entrance is opened in a simple straight wall: it gives access to an internal court that houses the stables, laid out as two semi-circles. In the second case, the shape of the same internal court determines the curving line of the corresponding enclosure wall. This later drawing has the following Italian captions: 'Idea for the entrance / to a large garden'; 'internal side view'; 'external view'; 'plan'. The letters, from A to D, respectively designate: 'Grand Entrance', 'Special entrances for pedestrians', 'Rooms for caretakers', 'Porches for vehicle maintenance'. Various features evoke the enclosed garden: on the plan, a round temple, an outdoor theatre, other monuments and fountains can be identified among the vegetation.

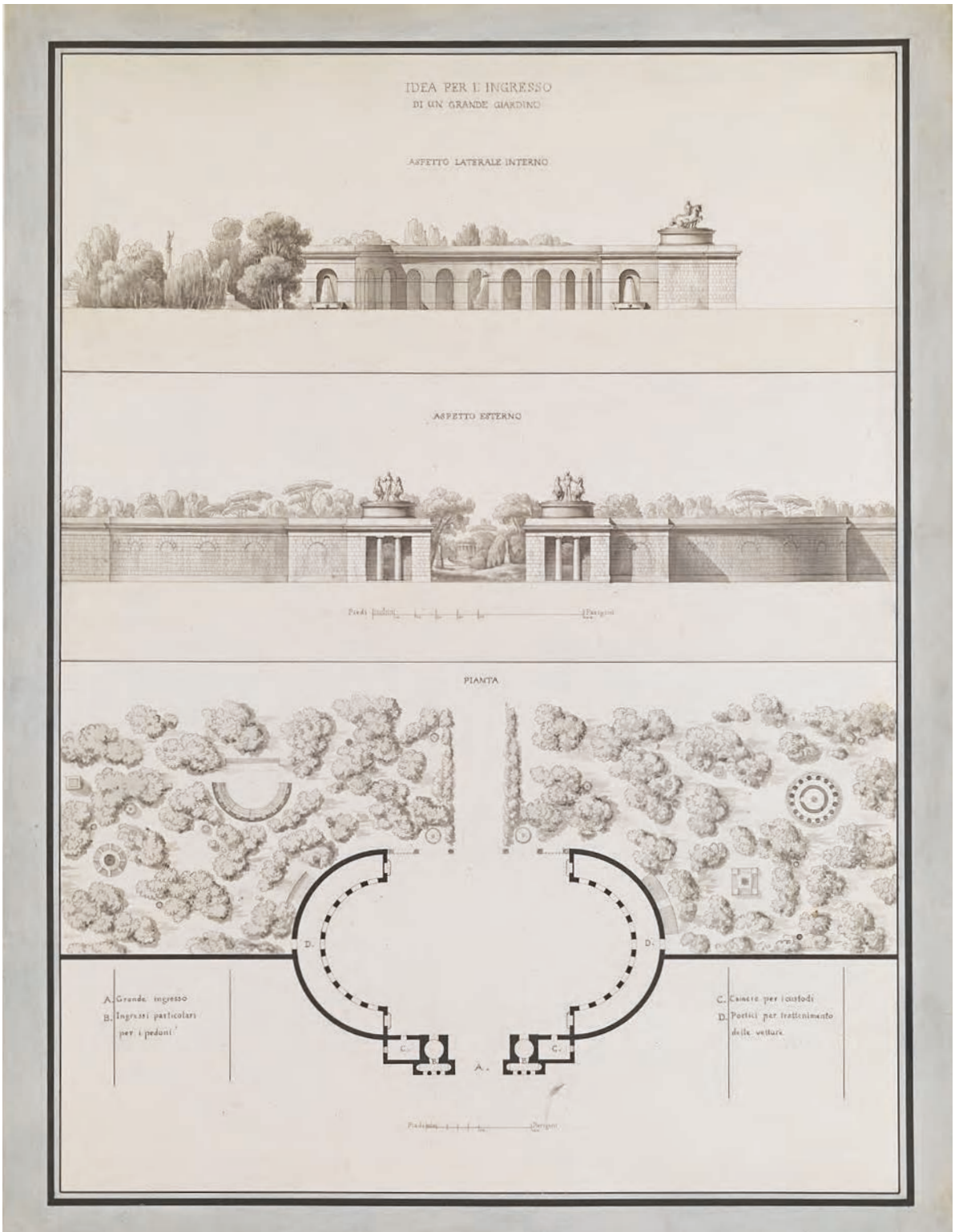
In the elevation, in addition to seeing the tops of the trees waving above the wall, the gate wide-open in the middle gives attractive sight of what one might then expect of a fashionable garden: a round templet and various ancient statues immersed in greenery (pl. 21, detail).

This entrance has only generic reference to the propylaea of the Villa Pinciana. The facade of the two pylons is inspired by the shape of a Doric temple *in antis*. In each of them, the dome covering the circular space behind is masked outside by a cylinder that acts as pedestal to a *Dioscuri* accompanied by two horses. When matched against the Castor and Pollux group atop the Quirinale, the positioning of the horses and the demigods is exactly that proposed by Antonio Canova in 1802. The combination of these features renders this a conception independent<sup>15</sup> of the propylaea actually built and, nevertheless, because of the features mentioned, inspired by them: it is very likely that Mario had a part in the conception.

The title of the sheet (pl. 21), quite generic and without



pl. 20





reference to the Villa Borghese, combined with the framing in grey wash, suggests that this is a drawing made for some academy competition. If this be true, in the transition from the preparatory to the final drawing, the modification of the alignment of the wall betrays a precise intent: it is a simple ruse to give a more graceful layout to the project within the aforementioned frame. The scale in 'Parisian feet' enables us to date the project to before 1795 (year III of what was then the French calendar), when the metre replaced every other unit of measurement in France<sup>116</sup>; however, other features make this dating problematic: Roman capital fonts were not much used in Italy for the captions of academy drawings in the 1790s<sup>117</sup>; nor was the word '*pedone*' usual to indicate a pedestrian<sup>118</sup>.

Given all the features listed, two hypotheses are possible. If the two sheets can actually be dated to the mid 1790s, they may be by the hand of a pupil of Mario, Charles Heathcote Tatham<sup>119</sup>: a comparable framing in grey wash and use of Roman characters are to be seen in the drawing the English architect donated to the Accademia di San Luca in 1796<sup>120</sup>. The extravagances in the Italian captions would thus also be explained: the '*pedone*' and '*il trattamento delle vetture*' (vehicle maintenance) could well be the result



Detail of pl. 21

of off-the-cuff translations from English, or more likely, French. Another hypothesis is that these are drawings prepared for the press, to be included in some book on architecture: in this case, the use of Roman characters prefigures the use in print. The draughtsman might be Luigi Canina who, employed after 1818 by the Borghese, had many of Mario's drawings at his disposal.

*Polledrara and vaccheria: a new image for farm buildings.*

22. Mario Asprucci, *A stud farm, elevation*

Pencil, pen and brown watercolour, 323 × 451 mm

Signed, or written on the lower left and centre: Asprucci

23. Mario Asprucci, *A stock farm, elevation*

Pencil on paper, 237 × 325 mm

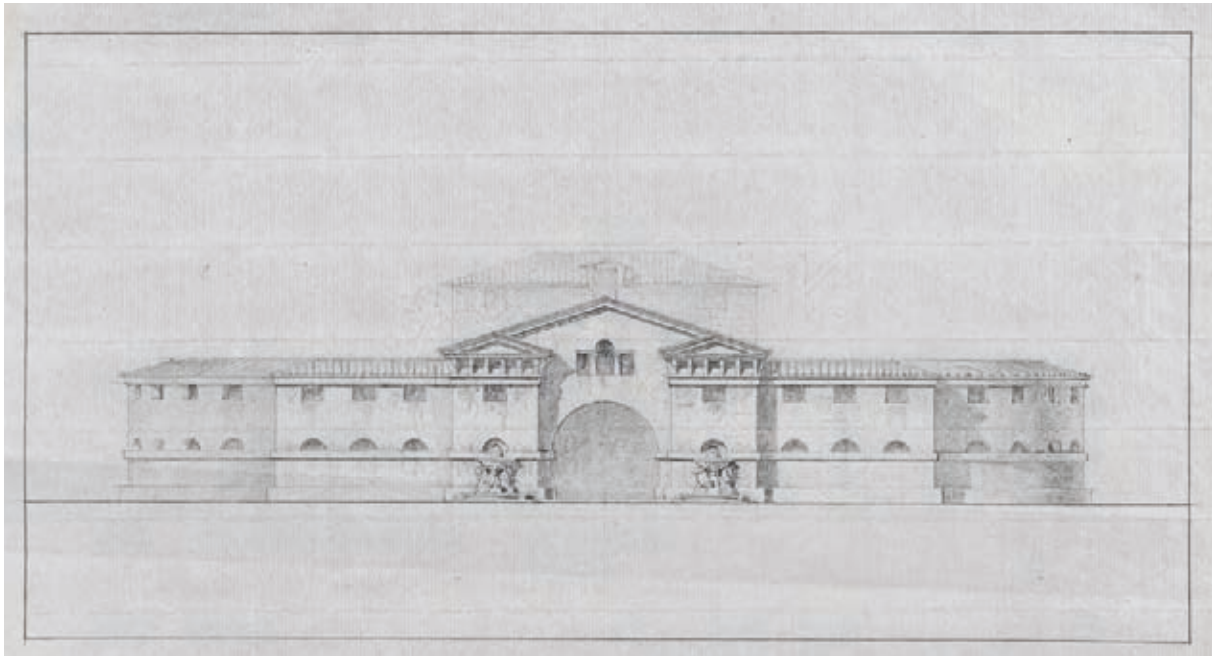
The projects for a *Polledrara* (pl. 22) – a stud farm – and for a *Vaccheria* – a stock farm – (pl. 23) are documented only by the main prospects. They are both large buildings, devoid of any element that would enable the identification of a specific site; however, considering the numerous farms owned by the Borghese around Rome and the specific interest of the males of the family in the breeding of horses for racing in *Piazza di Siena*, it is possible that the projects were subject to the inspection of Marcantonio Borghese. The designer, in both cases, is Mario Asprucci<sup>121</sup>: one recognizes many of the features of the architecture of the late 1790s,

common to other members of the *Accademia della Pace*. In addition, the use of pencil on laid paper is a trait shared by the *Vaccheria* project with the drawings signed and dated by Mario, now held by the Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio, Bologna<sup>122</sup>.

In the *Polledrara* drawing the purpose of the building is manifest in the four large sculptures, symmetrically arranged and devoid of any iconographic link with the classical past. Two horses, set on equally imposing pedestals, are shown in the act of rearing<sup>123</sup>; two large troughs on each side of the entrance are decorated with a female figure feeding hay to a pair of colts. In the *Vaccheria* drawing, instead, the basins of the fountains flanking the large entrance arch are supported by two pair of oxen. In both projects the general layout may be divined from the fall of the shadows on the walls: the main building is laid out along the central axis and on either side, covered or uncovered as the case may be, the space extends into two exedras<sup>124</sup>. It is important to note in the background of the *Vaccheria* the presence of a pre-existing building: a hay barn traditional in the Roman countryside. This reinforces the hypothesis that at least in this case it was a project for the

pl. 22





renovation of one of Prince Borghese's properties, if not commissioned by him, at least shown to him.

A monumentality is here given to farm buildings, until then scarcely considered by architects as subjects worthy of attention. In contrast to the experiments in *architecture parlante* proposed in the 1780s in France, in which inscriptions had a prominent position<sup>125</sup>, Asprucci used sculpture as the most effective means

to 'give voice' to his buildings. The austere character of the facades – left intentionally without columns or other features of the Classical orders – derives from the preponderance of smooth walls; the Palladian window, centrally present in both projects, and the shape of the corbels supporting the cornices under the roof adopt features of Roman baths, but have intentionally archaïcising ratios.



*Variations on the archaic Doric: ideas for a jeu-d'eau on a slope*

24r. Mario Asprucci, *Fountain with nymphaeum, section*

Pencil marks, pen and in grey ink wash, signed or inscribed in the centre: "Asprucci", 378 × 641 mm

24v. Mario Asprucci, *Fountain with nymphaeum, facade*

Pencil

25r. Atelier Asprucci, *Record or project for an exedra for a garden*

Pencil and grey wash on manilla paper, signed or written on the lower left: "Asprucci", 226 × 353 mm

25v. Atelier Asprucci, *Schematic plan of the enclosure in front of the Casino Nobile*

Pencil, 226 × 353 mm

In 1780 a young Parisian won first prize in the architectural competition held by the Academy of Fine Arts in Parma: the theme was 'a water tower decorated with a public fountain'. The design presented was particularly praised by the jury because, taking as a model ancient Greek models, it used only the Doric order (fig. 60). The artist was Auguste Cheval de Saint Hubert (1755-1799)<sup>126</sup>. Also winning the *Grand Prix de Rome* of the *Académie Royale d'Architecture* in 1784, he moved to the capital of the Papal States and from there made a trip to the south to make studies of the temples in Paestum<sup>127</sup>. In all probability, it was his studies of the most archaic Doric that attracted the attention of Prince

Pallavicini, when – in competition with Cardinal Doria and Prince Borghese – he was landscaping his garden on the Via Salaria<sup>128</sup>: Hubert (as the French architect then called himself) in 1787 built for the prince a *Temple of Flora*, using the Doric order he had recently studied on site (fig. 61). Within the next ten years, the then ambassador of the king of Spain, José Nicolas de Azára, also built a Doric temple in the garden of his residence in Rome<sup>129</sup>. Both temples intentionally used the more archaic version of this Classical order: the columns had no base, their shafts were stocky and had the characteristic sharp-edged fluting. In the drawings presented here, Mario Asprucci also tried his hand – presumably in the late 1790s – with this particular form of Doric, very different in form and proportions from what he had proposed when a little over twenty years old for the *Tempio Rotondo* (pl. 1).

The section, located along the median axis (pl. 24r), and a slightly sketched version of the elevation (pl. 24v) survive. 'Asprucci' is written in pencil in the lower centre of the section. Independently of which, we can attribute this sheet to Mario on the basis of the quality of the pencil drawing, which can be seen under the parts washed in grey, or reworked in black ink; in particular, the decorated vault of the nymphaeum show the architect's characteristic accuracy and quality of figurative detail (pl. 24r detail).

From the section and sketch of the elevation it is possible to derive an hypothetical plan<sup>130</sup> (fig. 62) and describe the design as a late eighteenth-century version of the *jeux-d'eaux* common in Italian Renaissance and Baroque gardens: there is a steep slope down which a large amount of water runs – in the section



60. A. Hubert (or Cheval de Saint Hubert), *Water tower decorated with a public fountain, prospect* (Istituto d'arte Paolo Toschi, Parma)

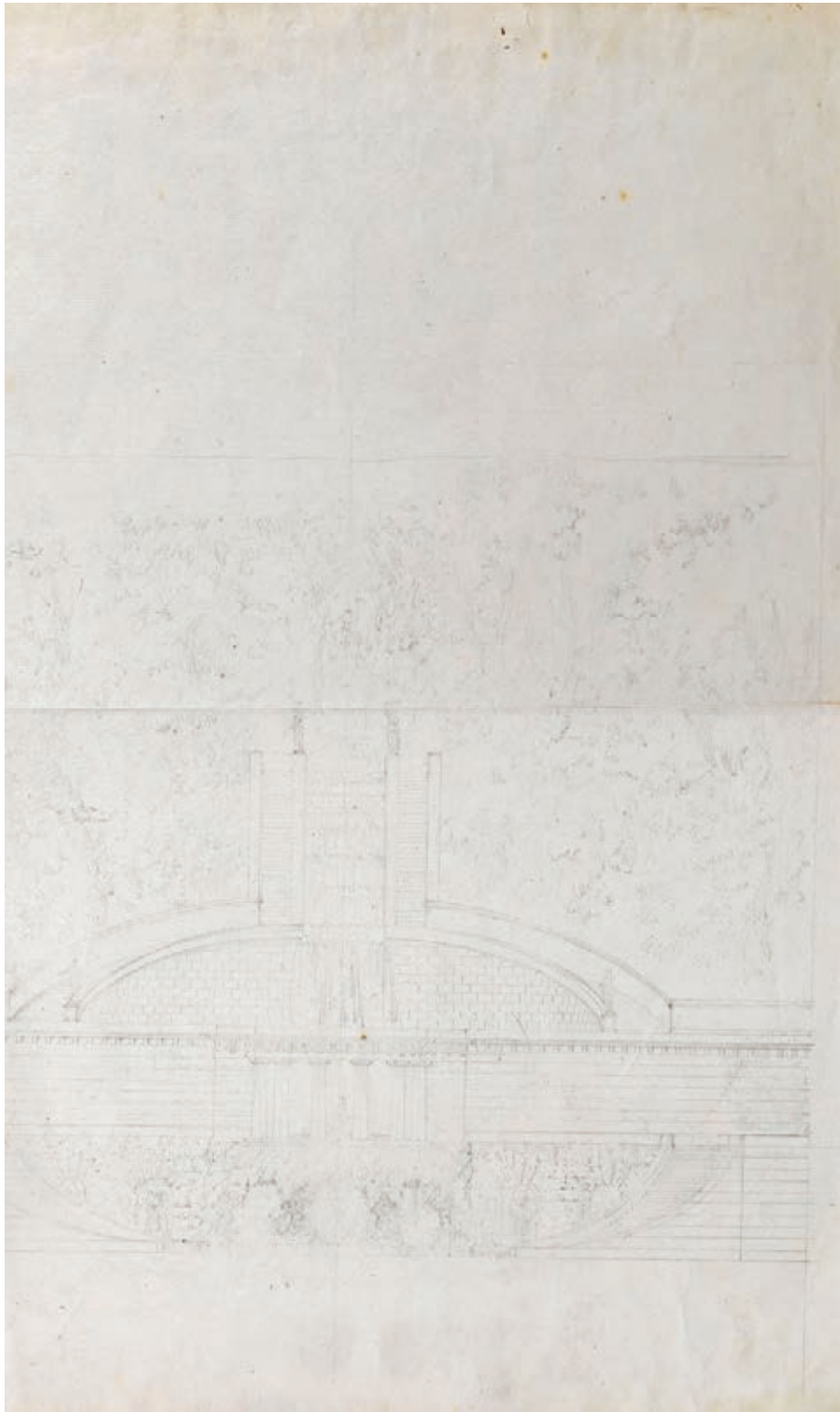


61. The *Casino di Flora* designed by Hubert, Villa Ada formerly Pallavicini, Roma

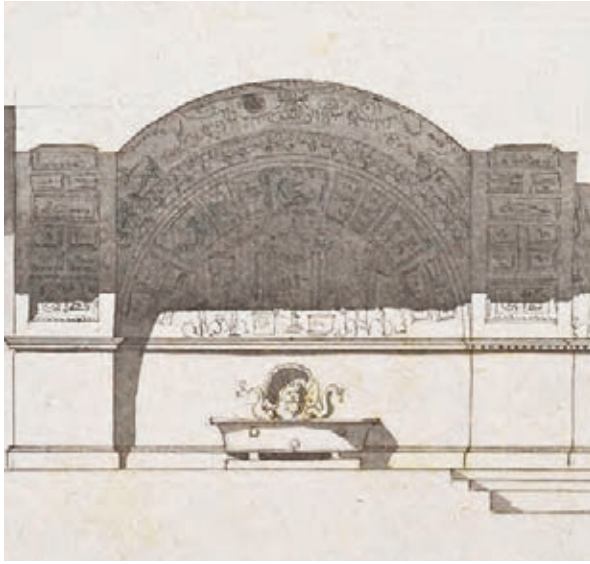
drawing, from right to left – accompanied by a series of flights of steps enabling the stroller in the garden to follow its course. From above the water arrives with such pressure as to crown a fountain, with three superimposed basins on top, with a high jet; just below, by two symmetrical C-shaped flights of steps, the viewer reaches a first grotto, with a basin at floor level. The shelf below is the most spectacular part: eight Doric columns compose an imposing trabeated peristyle, presumably circular and without roof; in the centre of the paved space so circumscribed there is a second fountain with superimposed basins. From the slope side of this sort of great open air Doric temple, the spectator enters an underground chamber. Passing a Doric colonnaded atrium where an exedra opens on each side, he enters a large nymphaeum: the vaulted roofs are covered, replicating the Renaissance tradition, with pebbles and shells; on each side there is an ancient sarcophagus surmounted by mascarons flanked by dolphins, from which water falls; the exedra at the back is entirely occupied by a basin fed by a spring.

The section and sketch of the elevation do not perfectly match: the stretch of the shelves and the shape of the ramps varies. From both drawings it is nevertheless possible to get an idea of the extraordinary impact

pl. 24v

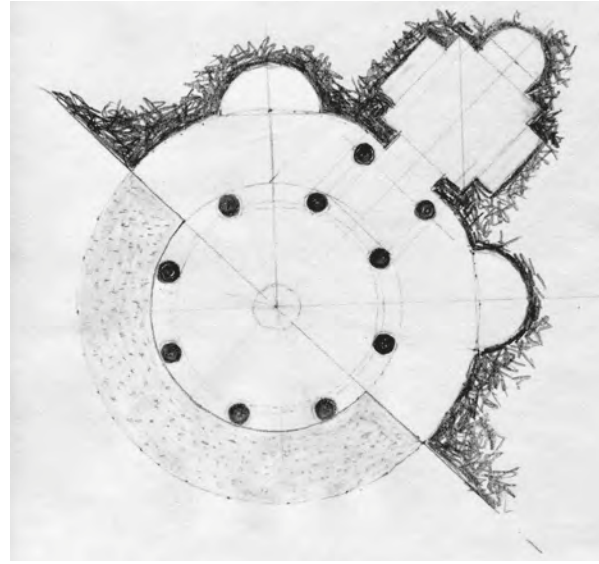






Detail of pl. 24r

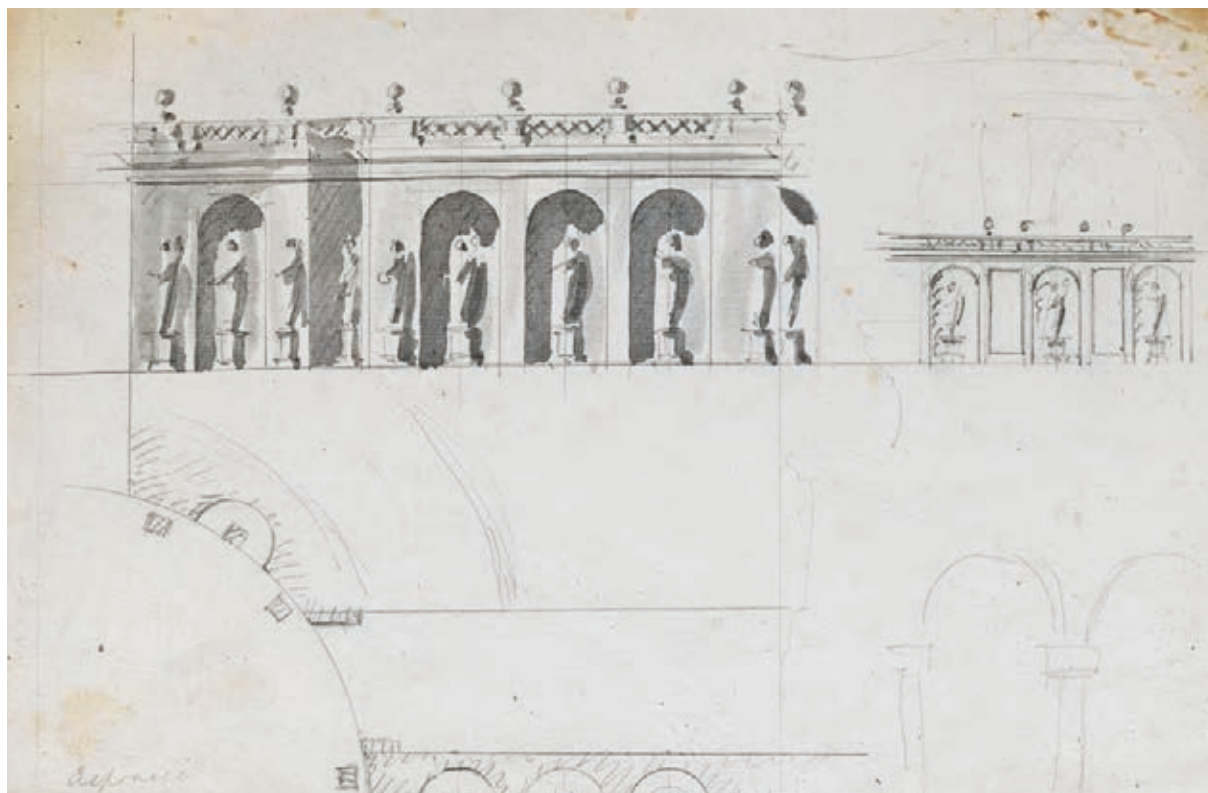
that the Doric peristyle would have made when seen from below. Over the stylobate, and therefore at the base of the shafts of the columns, the water ran freely into the lower basin through a waterfall; there Nature finally took the upper hand, thanks to the stalactites and aquatic plants set in three small grottoes (pl. 23v). The similarities with Hubert's Parma entry of 1780, which Mario may have seen when the French artist lived in Rome, are evident (fig. 60): the round Doric temple, of which only half could be seen, with water that fall further down running across it, is certainly a suggestion from that project. The association between the unstoppable impetus of falling waters and ancient temples may also have been suggested by the famous round temple of Tivoli. But it is certain that here Mario proposes a Doric of decidedly archaic proportions: the shaft is little more than 4 diameters high.



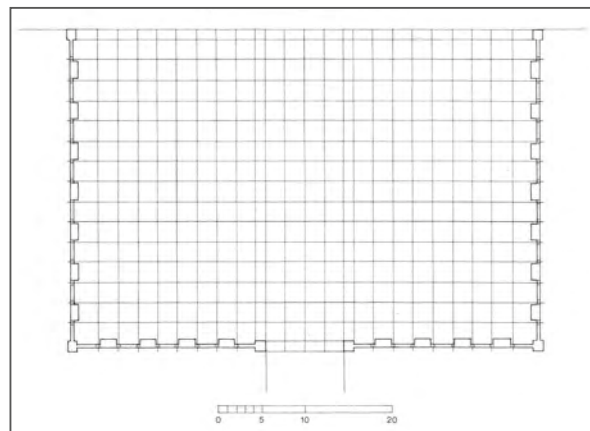
62. Restitution of the inferior plan of the fountain.

Within the bounds of the Villa Pinciana in Rome there is no such steep slope, nor the water to supply such cascades. It is probable that the project was designed for one of the gardens of the family villas in the Castelli Romani, or is a fancy conceived from a comparable situation. There is also a sketch of a design (pl. 25r) of a comparable subject showing half an exedra, within which niches populated with statues open up: an arrangement, with a variation alongside, not far removed from the one present in the great exedra of Villa Aldobrandini in Frascati. Also on this sheet is written, in pencil and modern hand: 'Asprucci'; its link to Borghese patronage is however reinforced by what is shown on the back (pl. 25v): a plan of the balustrade enclosing the square in front of the main *Casino* of the Roman villa<sup>131</sup> (fig. 63).

pl. 25r



pl. 25v



63. Plan of the original balustrade in front of the *Casino Nobile* (Di Gaddo 1997, p. 46).

## A rotunda *all'antica*

### 26. Mario Asprucci, *A rotunda all'antica*

Pencil, pen in black ink and black ink wash on white paper, 462 × 370 mm, irregular  
Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM

This sheet shows the elevation and a portion of the plan of a small cylindrical building; in the absence of the section, it is impossible to determine the form of roofing (pl. 26). The graphic quality of the drawing is high; the references to ancient architecture are evident. Without being an imitation of the specific shapes of any known Classical building, it shows a rotunda characterized by a perfectly homogeneous wall structure: on a two tiered base stands a cylinder with a smooth surface, crowned at the top by a frieze free of decoration and a cornice. At least two equal entrances open into the cylinder body, or – if this is not a project, but a geometric representation made for didactic purposes – the elevation and side of the same opening are shown simultaneously: through the cornice of classical design, three steps rise to the interior. The elegant *tabula ansata* above the central entrance holds an inscription, illegible because fictive, as is often the case in Mario's autograph drawings.

In its general shape the small building is similar to a Roman mausoleum, of the Cecilia Metella kind on the Appian Way<sup>132</sup>, but its presumed size, hypothetically derived from that of the entrance, is certainly too small to fit it for such a purpose: there would be no room for a sarcophagus. However, it is possible to link it to the theme of the mausoleum by comparing it to the general design of the tomb of Clement XIII Ganganelli in the basilica of the SS. Apostoli<sup>133</sup>: here the ratio between the apparent entrance and the central body supporting the statues is comparable; the Classical frame of the door and, in general, the smooth wall of the cylinder suggest a likeness between the famous work of Antonio Canova inaugurated in 1787 (fig. 65) and this drawing.

In the *Terzo recinto* of the Villa Pinciana there was a small round two-story building used by bird-netters as a hide: a Goethe's drawing from 1786-88 convey its surroundings<sup>134</sup> (fig. 64). Driven by the urge to disguise every pre-existing construction, it is possible that

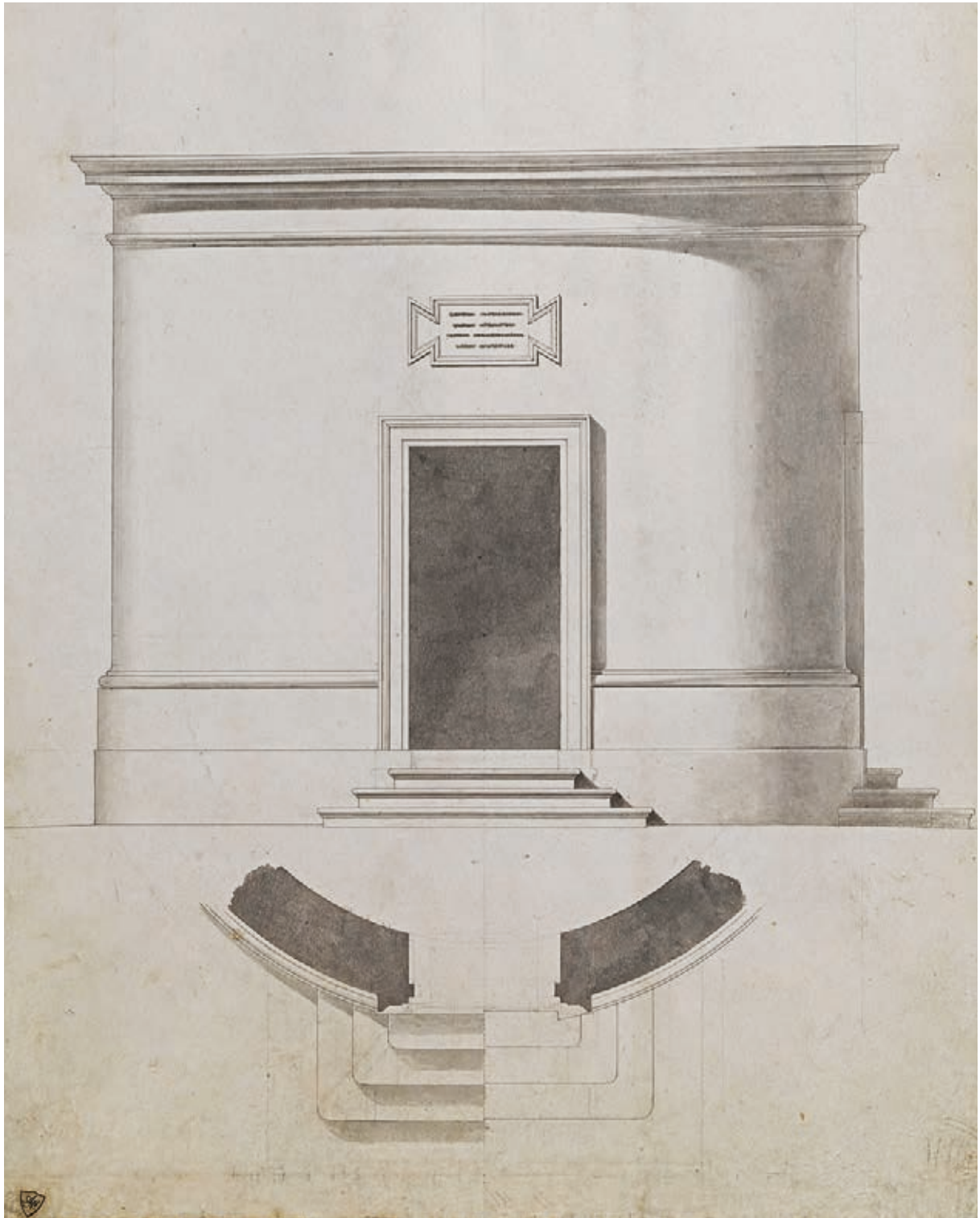


64. J.W. Goethe, *View of Villa Borghese, towards the Ragnaia* (Corpus 1960, vol. 2, pl. 58)

65. A. Canova, *Funerary Monument of Clement XIV*, detail, SS. Apostoli, Rome

Mario proposed to modify the appearance of this small rural building also, drawing inspiration from Canova's mausoleum, turning it into a pavilion consistent with the new landscaped garden. There are two small indications why this drawing may be linked to a specific commission from Marcantonio Borghese: the size of the old cylindrical turret is comparable to the rotunda shown in this drawing and, above all, the pre-existence of two doors in the upper room of the turret give a possible explanation for the curious presence of two doors oriented at right angles.





*A pavilion suggestive of a Roman ancient house*

27. Mario Asprucci, *A pavilion suggestive of an ancient Roman dwelling, section*

White paper, 200 × 570 mm

Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM

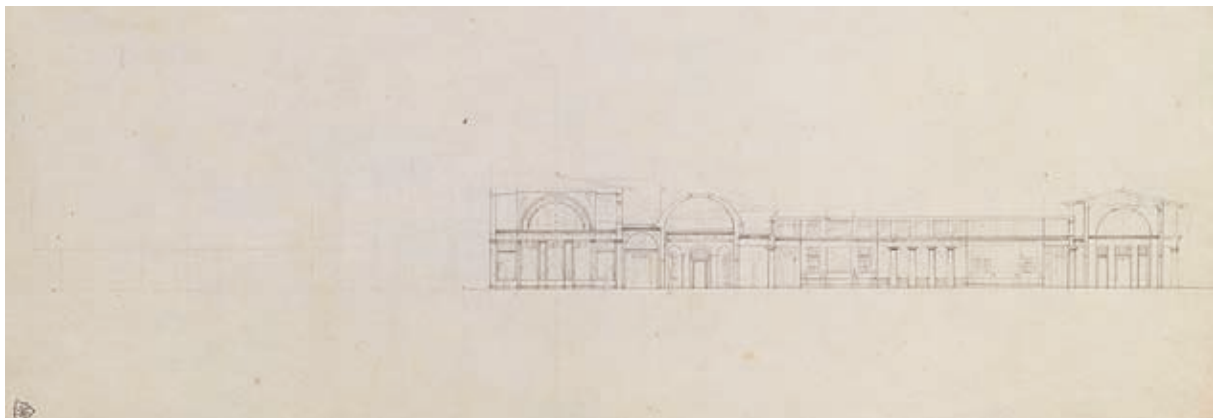
A long sheet of paper has been used for a drawing in pencil of the coordinates necessary for the section of a very long, low building, but only the right-hand half has been completed (pl. 27). The drawing is in pencil and only partially retraced in pen; in pencil are added, in freehand, the decorative features. It is impossible from this single section to imagine what the plan might be. Examination of some of the roofing nevertheless gives some idea of the character, and therefore of the use, of the spaces shown. All portion of the building have one storey. There is a room in the middle covered by orthogonal barrel vaulting; this, modelled on Roman baths, is lit by Palladian windows. Another circular room, is covered by a dome which, like the Pantheon, takes light from an oculus at the summit. Where no specific roof shapes are indicated, it is likely that the space was intended to remain uncovered. The unifying element is the Doric order of the temples of Paestum: columns, or pillars of the same type and height are present everywhere. The furniture, later drawn over the ink, includes various busts set on pedestals.

In 1773 the architect Charles Louis Clérisseau had proposed to Catherine II of Russia a project for a *Maison des Anciens* to bring together what Vitruvius had written about Roman dwellings, the new knowledge brought by the unearthing of the city of Pompeii and the extraordinary grandeur to be observed in every single

pavilion of the imperial villa of Hadrian in Tivoli<sup>135</sup>. In 1795, the devotee of architecture Gaudenzio Honorati, for his part, had seen in Rome an anonymous project with a comparable programme<sup>136</sup>: that of enabling the moderns to house themselves like the ancients. This project (pl. 27), of which we know little, has all the features to suggest such an intent. Attribution to Mario Asprucci is based on the innovative choices made, both in the layout of spaces, and in the use of load-bearing columns. To this it should be added that at least one project of the same character was presented by him to the prince: it has so far passed unremarked that in a pencil drawing showing the south front of the *Casino Nobile* (fig. 66), where the walls enclosing the *Giardini Segreti* stood<sup>137</sup>, new entrances are proposed. The drawing is thus in no way a record: it is a project of Mario's presumably presenting the idea of transmuting the old gardens into reception rooms 'all'antica', that would be entered through pairs of severe Doric columns.



66. M. Asprucci, *Proposal for building new rooms in the Giardini segreti set at the sides of the Casino Nobile* (Photo Archive Galleria Carlo Virgilio, Roma).



pl. 27

### Part 3

#### DRAWINGS RELATING TO BORGHESE COMMISSIONS, BEFORE AND AFTER THE WORK OF MARIO ASPRUCCI

##### *The use of columns and pillars*

28. Antonio Asprucci, *Project for a loggia on pillars and columns, section and side elevation*

Pencil markd, pen in black ink, pink, brown and grey wash, 242 × 457 mm

29. Antonio Asprucci, *Project for a loggia on Tuscan pillars and columns*

Pen in black ink and black ink wash, pencil marks, 334 × 417 mm

Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM

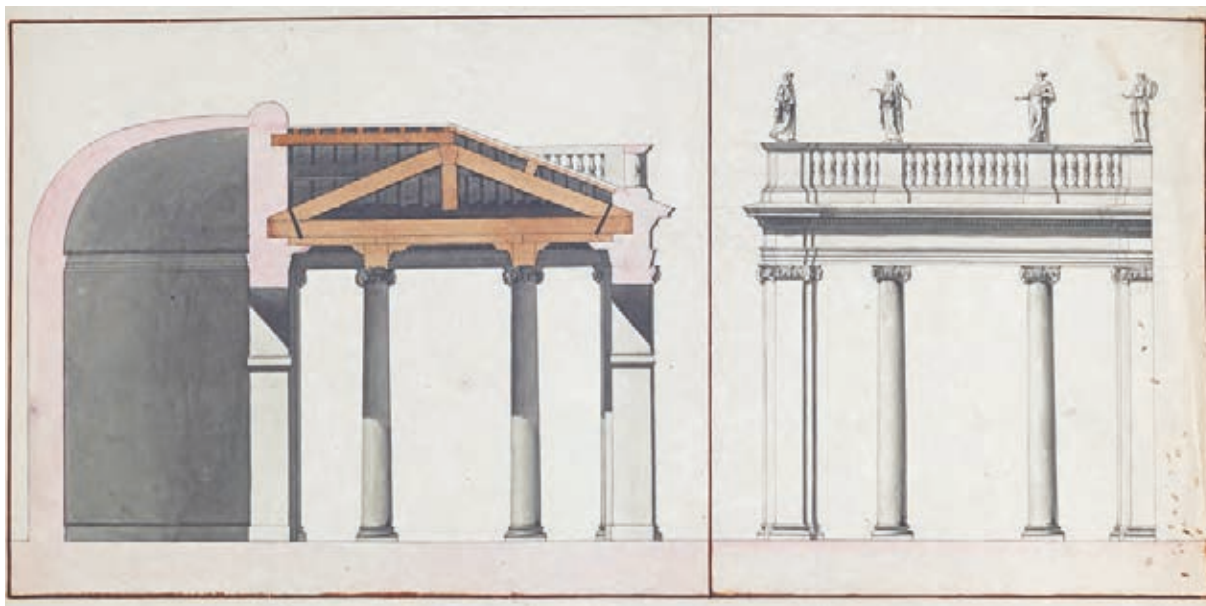
In the Corinthian capitals of the Roman Imperial Age, or more often in the Composites, the traditional volutes could be replaced by figurative elements: in the first drawing presented here, all the volutes are replaced by ram's heads (pl. 28). However, also in line the image that Giovan Battista Piranesi had given of the ram's heads in his *Diverse maniere* (1769)<sup>138</sup>, the entire original figured capital, which consisted of two distinct superimposed blocks, is not taken as model but

only the upper block (fig. 67); the result is a drawing for a modern four-sided Ionic capital. This choice, an uncommon one, reveals considerable antiquarian knowledge, or the presence in the Borghese collections of an ancient example. Two further points of different nature may be added on this matter.

It should be noted that out of the total of 43 drawings described in the catalogue, this one has a black ink frame enclosing two distinct images, comparable to those framing both the posterior and lateral elevation of the Temple of Aesculapius (pl. 1), and the plan and prospect of the Round Temple (pl. 2): it is therefore possible that the sheet belongs to the same group of early projects proposed for the villa in the late 1780s. A section is shown in the left-hand panel; on the right, the side elevation of part of the building. As for the two temples, the documentation is thus incomplete: there must presumably have been a front elevation and a plan. It is of a colonnaded portico, set in front of an apse and crowned by a balustrade: its presumable plan, however, does not correspond with anything that can be recognized within the confines of the Villa Pinciana. The figurative part does not add much: the apse is empty and the four female statues set on the balustrade are not identifiable.

The second point concerns the ways in which the Ionic order is used. Instead of constructing the portico of columns only, there are heavy square pillars at the

pl. 28







corners, which are decorated with pilasters, flanked by semi-pilasters. The outcome is an arrangement of the elements set on different planes, a gradation reiterated in the entablature and, above, on the stretch of the balustrade. Such an artifice, endowing the surfaces with delicate vibrations of lighting, is typical of Baroque architecture and would therefore be used by an architect who had received his training in the Rome of the early eighteenth century. If it can ever be shown that this

construction was intended for the Villa Pinciana, its creator should be identified as Antonio Asprucci.

Some of the features also appear in another drawing (pl. 29) showing the prospect of a pavilion that was perhaps intended to house a statue in the middle. The columns, here Tuscan, are flanked by heavy piers decorated with pairs of pilasters. The balustrade is more simply crowned.



Detail of pl. 28



67. G. B. Piranesi, *Design for a mantelpiece* (Piranesi, *Diverse maniere*, 1769, pl. 33)

*Two mantelpieces*

30. Antonio Asprucci, *Mantelpiece*

Pencil, pen in black ink and black ink wash on white paper, 376 × 264 mm

Below scale: scale in Palmi / Roman

31. Antonio Asprucci, *Mantelpiece*

Pencil on white paper, 287 × 435 mm, irregular

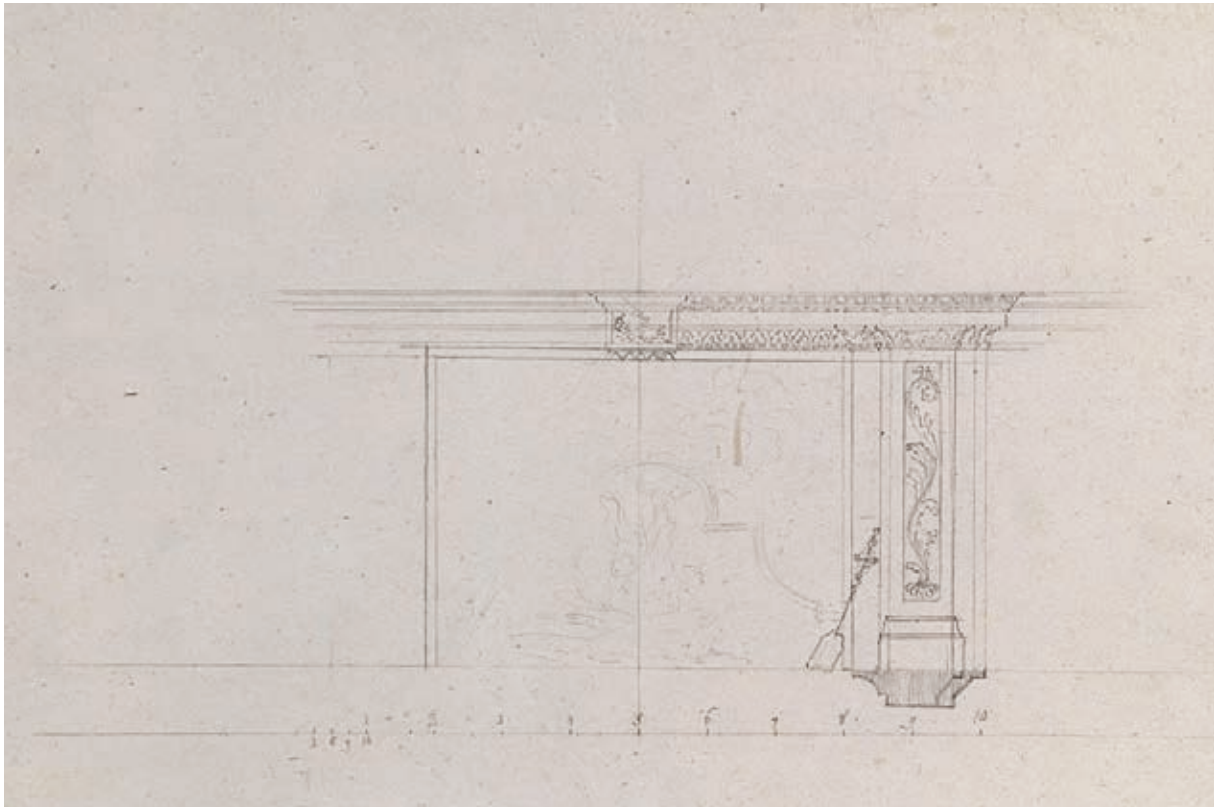
Bottom centre scale

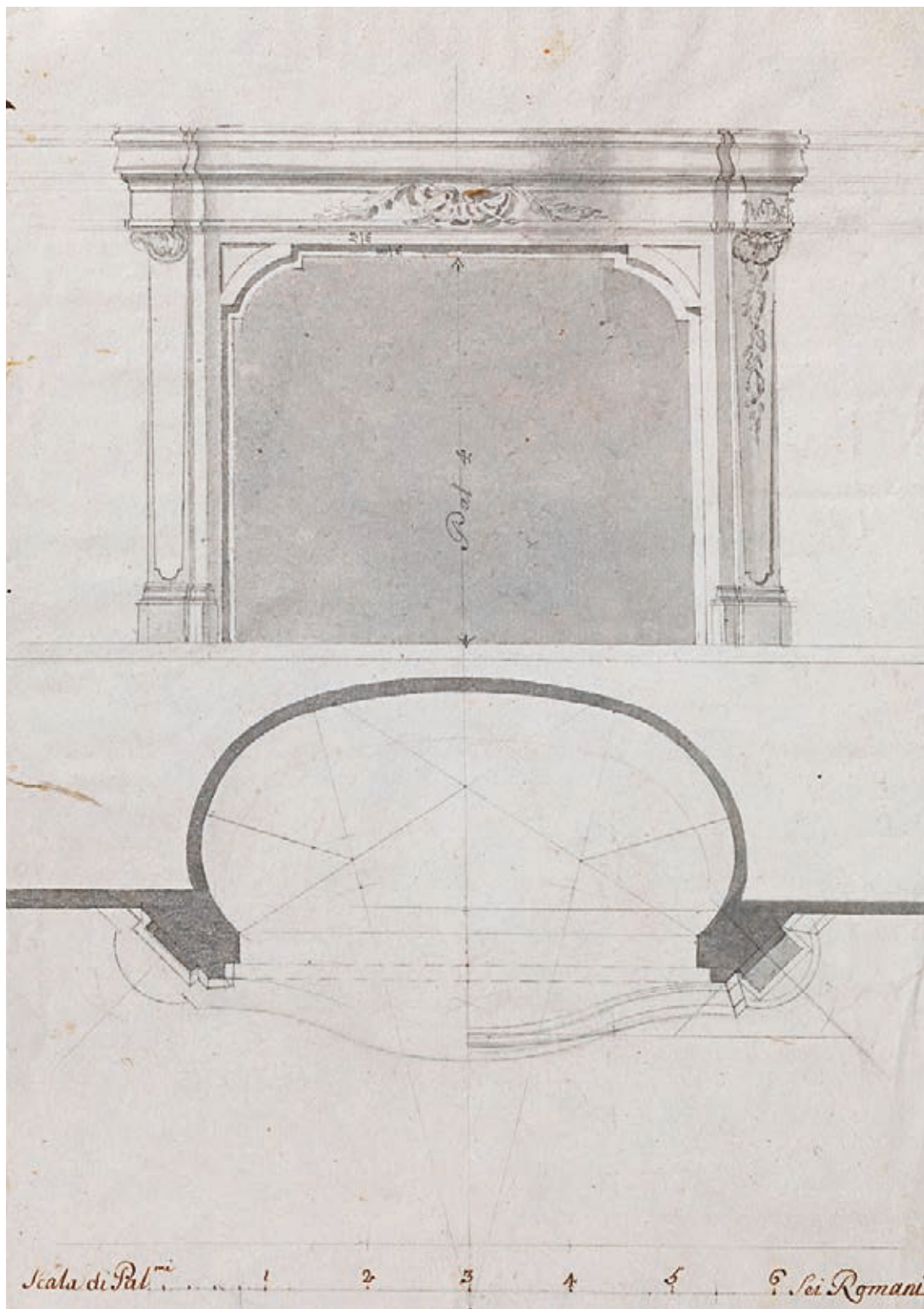
Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM

Verso, doodle of a fireplace flank

The two sheets both have the same subject: mantelpieces. The first is a presentation made for the patron: it is done in pencil and then given watercolour. Apart from presenting its external appearance, the function as mantelpiece is also shown in the plan of the rear chamber, of complex geometric construction (pl. 30). The other is a pencil drawing left in a provisional state (pl.31): here the mantelpiece is more rigid in form; only the projection of the side uprights is indicated in the plan. Comparison with a mantelpiece design, signed by Mario Asprucci and dating to 1801<sup>139</sup>, makes clear that these two drawings cannot be attributed to him: the elegant curved line that characterizes the first of these two mantelpieces derives from the figurative culture of his father Antonio.

pl. 30







*Three gateways*

32. *Atelier Asprucci, Two projects for a monumental entrance*

Pencil, pen in brown ink, grey wash on brown paper, squared, 481 × 260 mm

33. *Atelier Asprucci, Project for a gate between supporting pillars and retaining walls, elevation and plan*

Pencil, pen and grey ink wash, mm. 389 × 256

Signed or written on the lower left corner: Asprucci; bottom right collection stamp: "AM"

34. *Atelier Asprucci, Project for a gate between supporting pillars and retaining walls, elevation and plan*

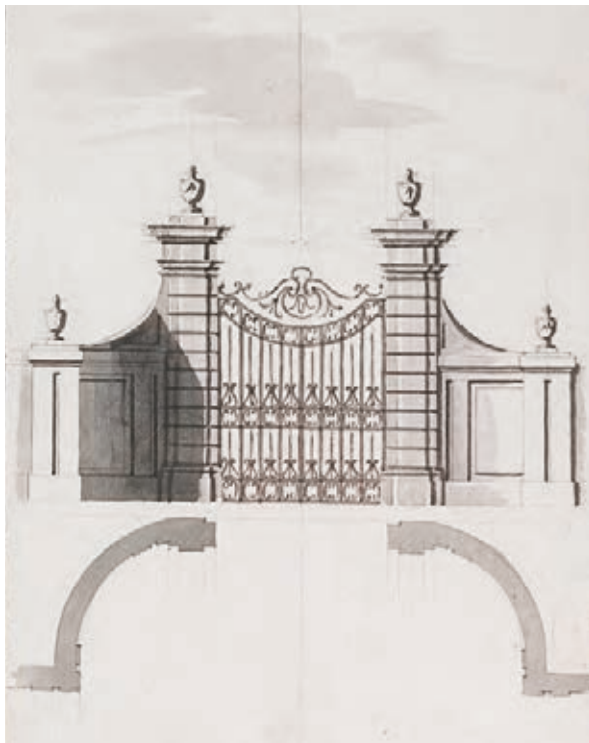
Pencil and pen in brown ink and brown ink wash, 386 × 255 mm

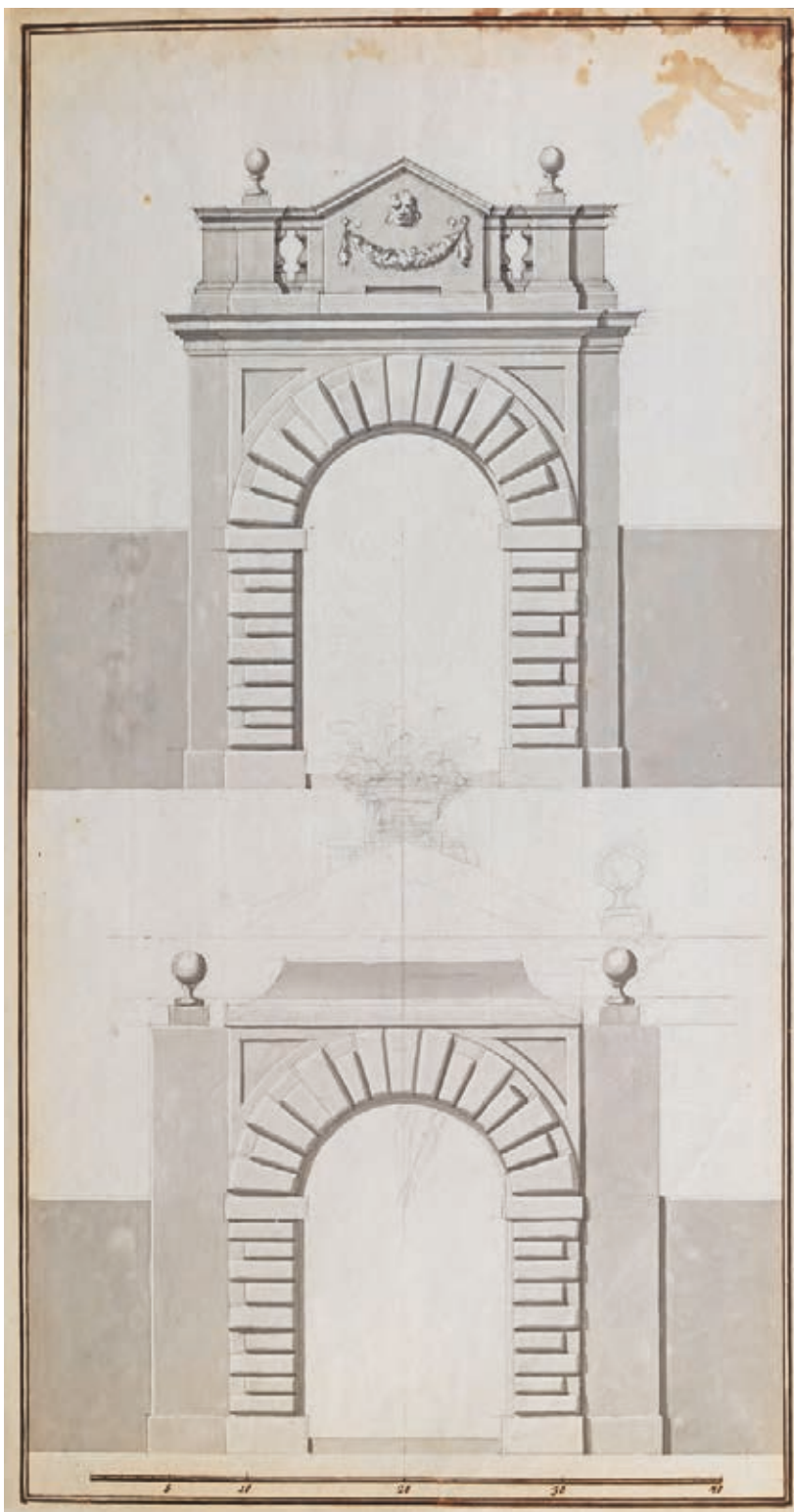
Inscribed in the lower left corner: Asprucci

Bottom right black ink collection stamp: AM

From the accurate description of each part of the Villa Pinciana that Domenico Montelatici published in 1700, we know that every entrance from the road, large or small, displayed the coat-of-arms of the Borghese family<sup>140</sup>. The three sheets presented here show none of the heraldic elements that would make it possible to identify them as entrances closed or transformed during the works commissioned by Prince Marcantonio in the Roman villa<sup>141</sup>. They were not therefore records to keep track of what was about to be demolished, but projects or records of gateways giving access to other properties, perhaps located outside Rome. As a consequence, the dating of the sheets is uncertain, not least because the architectural forms hark back to the previous century. On the first sheet two massive gateways are shown, in which the blocks of stone of the arches are set in the same fashion (pl. 32): above the bottom one can be seen, in pencil, the proposal for an alternative finial, still at the sketch level. Other sheets show two gateways, differing from each other only in minor details (pl.s 33, 34). On all the sheets there is written attribution to Asprucci, in pencil and a modern hand: presumably it refers to Antonio, or one of the draughtsmen who worked for him.

pl. 32, 33





*The survey of a granary*

pl. 35

35. Anonymous, *The survey of a granary*, plans and section

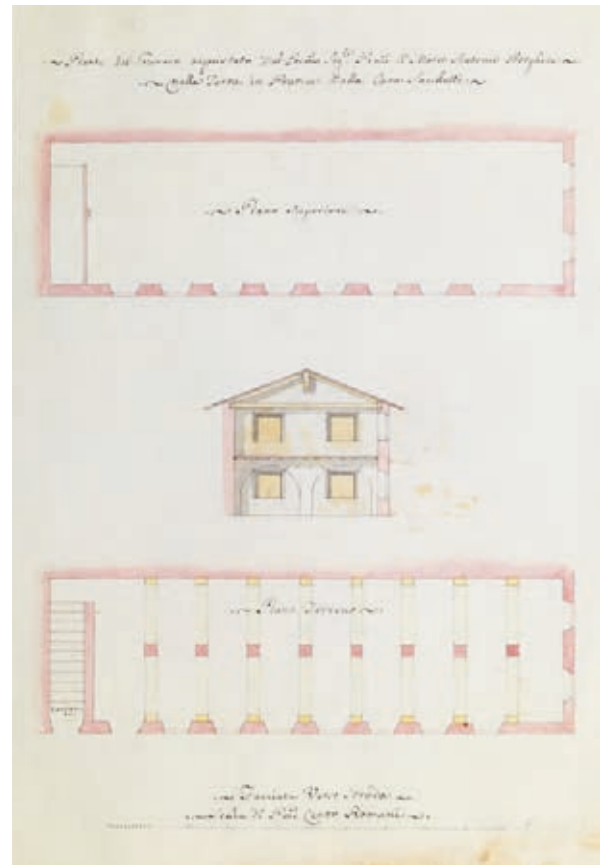
Pen in brown ink and watercolour on manilla paper, squared, 461 × 320 mm

Inscribed in the upper middle: 'Pianta del Granaro acquistato dal Sig.re D.Marco Antonio Borghese / nella Terra di Practica di Casa Sacchetti.

Inscribed in the body of the drawing: Pianta Superiore – Piano Terreno

Inscribed in the lower centre: Facciata verso strada / Scala di P.mi cento romani.

In the group of drawings here examined, there is also a sheet of modest importance: the survey of a granary, presumably drawn by a simple surveyor for attachment to a deed of sale (pl. 35). The captions are explicit; from top to bottom it reads, in translation: 'Plan of the Granary purchased by the Most Excellent Prince of D. Marco Antonio Borghese / in Terra in Pratica of Casa Sacchetti'; 'Upper floor'; 'Ground floor'; 'Facade towards the road'; 'Scale in 100 Roman palms'; 'Asprucci' is added in pencil. The Borghese family property in Pratica di Mare (south of Rome) is well documented: the hunting lodge designed for the prince by Antonio Asprucci is depicted in a painting by Jacob Philipp Hackert<sup>142</sup> (fig. 68). That this sheet ended up among the others confirms the hypothesis that the whole group was kept in the offices of the managers of the Borghese family real estate.



68. J.P. Hackert, *The Casino Borghese at Pratica di mare*, 1780, detail (Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin).



*A fountain in the city*

36. Atelier Asprucci, *A fountain in the city*

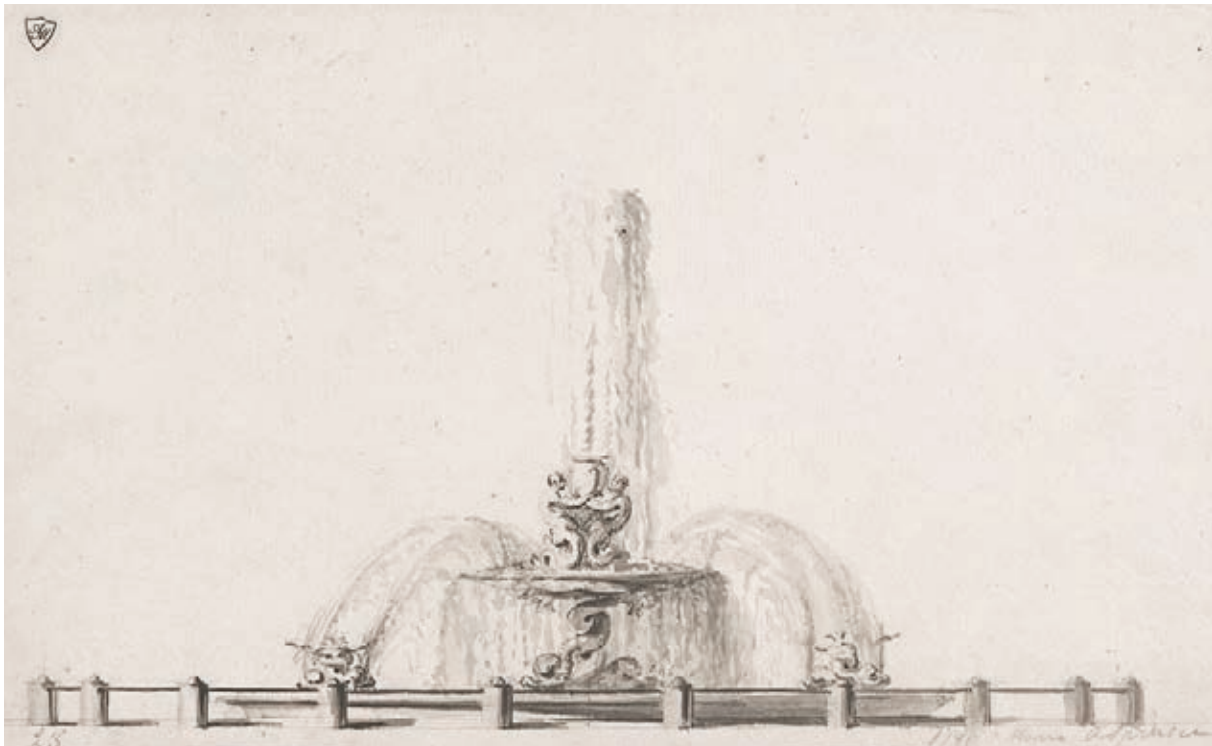
Black ink wash, pencil marks, 223 × 371 mm, irregular  
Bottom right, date and inscribed in pencil: 1786 Mario  
Asprucci

Top left collection stamp in black ink: AM

The drawing presents the project, or record, of a large fountain (pl. 36). The presence, around the basin, of 18 bollards connected by iron bars makes it clear that it is not a fountain in a villa: the basin is protected against possible damage from carriage wheels because it is in a city street or square. At the bottom right of the sheet, is written: '1786' and then, in a different hand, 'Mario Asprucci'; on the left one reads: 'L. 8'.

The presence of a date and the explicit name of Mario makes this sheet unique; but it is not easy to draw any certain conclusions from it. The features of the fountain are decidedly baroque: they resemble well-known

Roman examples, including Bernini's *Fontana del Tritone* in Piazza Barberini (1642-43) and that on the same theme subject built later in the *Foro Boario* by the architect Carlo Francesco Bizzaccheri (1715). The motif of the pair of intertwined dolphins<sup>143</sup> is present here twice: in two groups around the edge of the main basin and, in larger form, when supporting the upper basin. Above this sits a pair of kneeling Tritons embraced in the act of supporting a vase from which, in turn, a jet of water spurts. It was in 1786 that Mario won the first prize in the competition organised by the Accademia di San Luca: a comparison of those drawings with this sheet reveals no similarity in the manner of drawing, nor in artistic reference. The design is nevertheless effective in suggesting the individual figurative elements and rendering, through the use of watercolour, the rise and fall of the powerful jets of water: the technique used here is comparable to that of some of the watercolour design, relating to the reconstruction of the *Casino Nobile*, today at the Getty Research Institute<sup>144</sup>.



pl. 36

*Four executive drawings*

37. Mario Asprucci (?), *One of the edicules of the Sala Egizia, Casino Nobile, Villa Borghese*

Pencil and pen in brown ink on white paper, 370 × 258 mm

Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM

Verso: project for an altar, elevation ?

Pencil on white paper

Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM

38. Antonio Asprucci, *Project for a new layout of the ground floor of a building*

Pencil on white paper, 380 × 610 mm

Inscribed in the centre: mezzo del portico and technical enumerations

Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM

39. Anonymous, *design for a room overlooking a balcony*

Pencil and pen in black ink on white paper, 266 × 384 mm

Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM

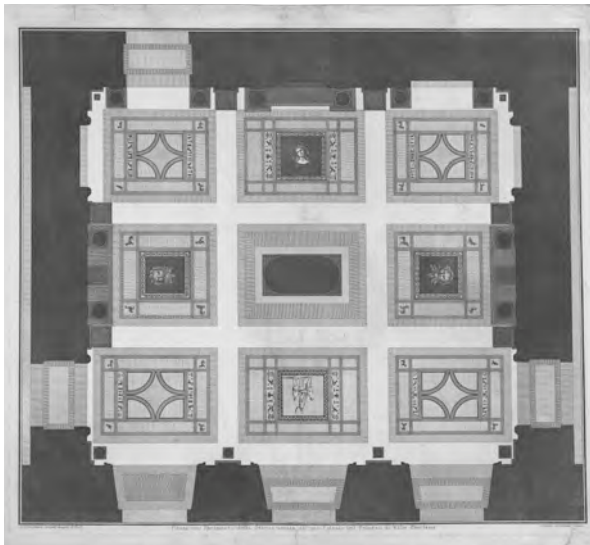
40. Anonymous, *Elevation of the side of a building with two turrets and large windows (greenhouse?)*

Pencil on white paper, 260 × 375 mm

Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM

In the group of drawings attributed to the Antonio Asprucci, held by the Getty Research Center, there are many sheets that document, in detail, the final design choices for the renovation of the *Casino Nobile*<sup>145</sup>: they are geometric drawings, made using compasses, set-squares and rulers, showing a building, or its parts, in plan, elevation or section; the coefficient of reduction from the actual – the scale – allowing for easy measurement of each part of them, is also often indicated. These are executive drawings, made for guiding the workmen in the actual building prefigured in the project. Only two of those presented here have any of these features; it is therefore likely that, originally, these were part of the most substantial group now in Los Angeles.

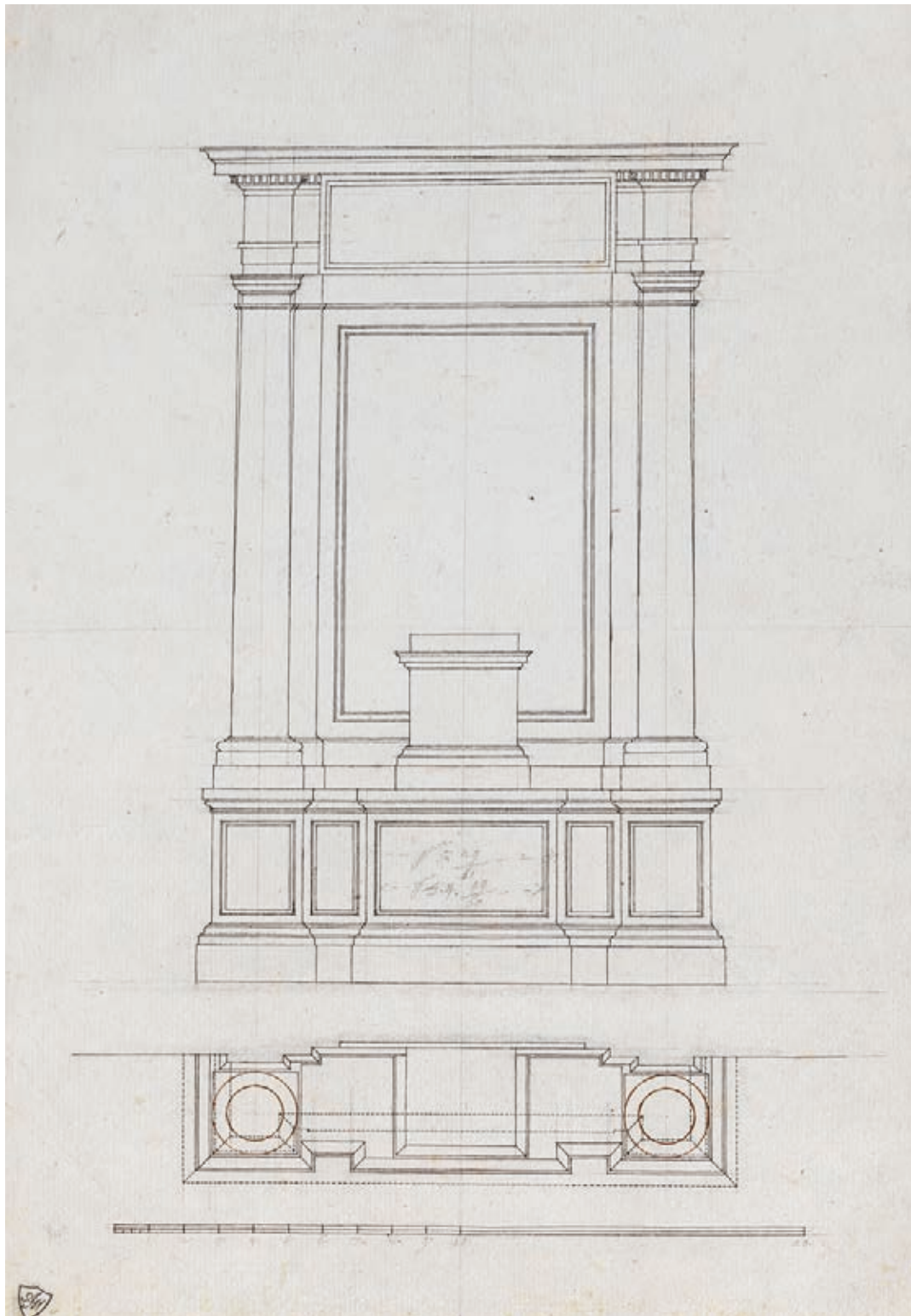
In the first (pl. 37) one can see one of the edicules of the *Sala Egizia* of the *Casino Nobile*<sup>146</sup> (fig. 69-70), shown in elevation and plan. It is drawn with great precision in pencil and gone over with black ink; information on the measurements of a slab has been added in pencil. The second drawing (pl. 38), entirely in pencil, is more interesting: the sheet, of great size, presents at the top the prospect of the ground floor of the interior of a building, lacking the presumable portico in front of it<sup>147</sup>; at the bottom, where the plan should have appeared, the sheet is blank. The measurements of each of the parts and the inscription ‘*mezzo del Portico*’ can be read at the base of the elevation. The cornices, which link doors and overdoors, show various afterthoughts, thus revealing the process whereby the architect came



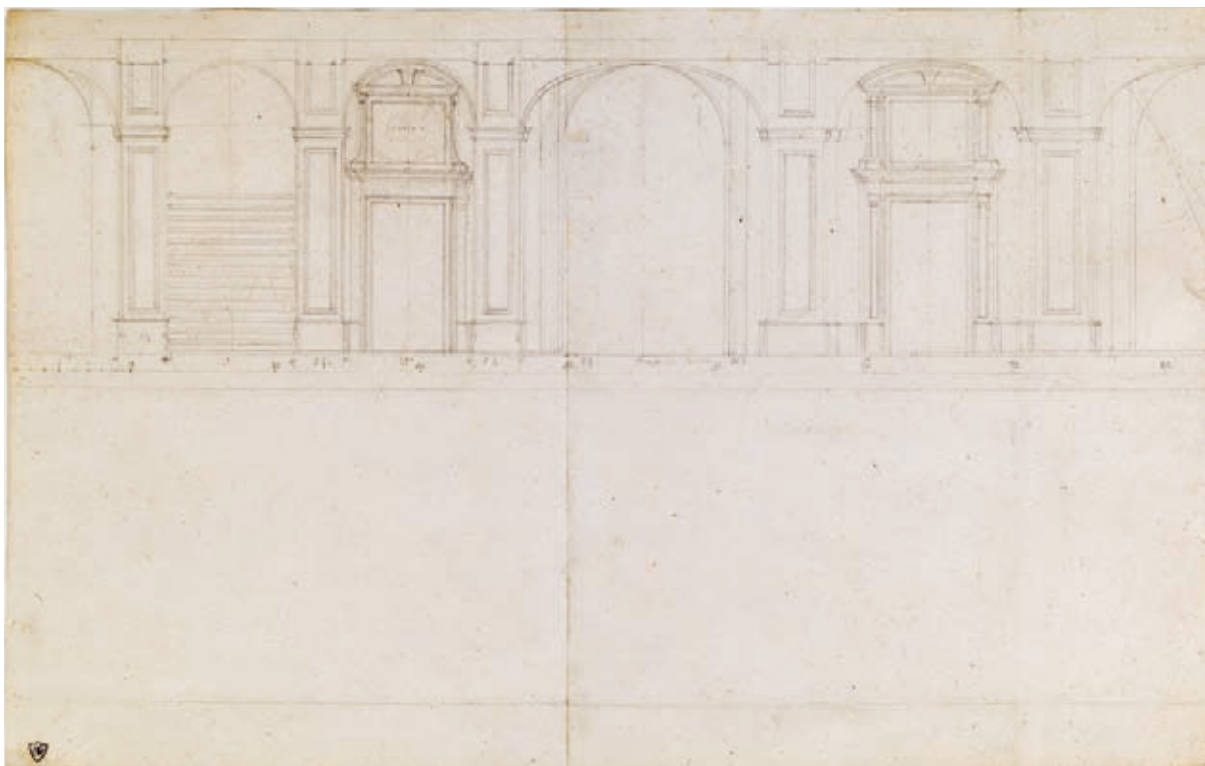
69. Plan of the Sala Egizia, etching (Private collection, Bologna).



70. Atelier Asprucci, *One of the walls of the Sala Egizia of the Casino Nobile* (Photo Archive Galleria Carlo Virgilio, Roma).

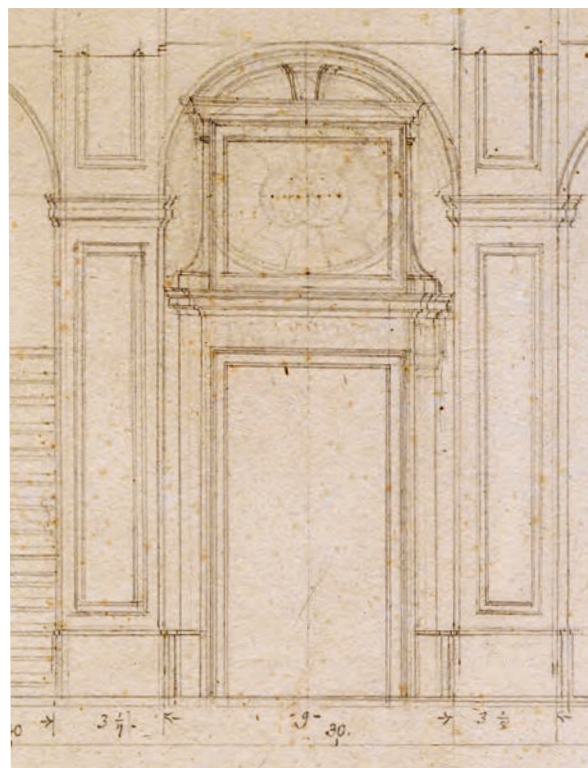






to define of the final form; the evident analogies with the cornices proposed by Antonio Asprucci for the entrance hall of the *Casino Nobile*<sup>148</sup> suggest this fine drawing should be attributed to him.

Two other sheets, following the usual conventions of architectural drawing, are later instead; it is impossible to know whether they were ever in the Borghese Archive and if so, whether, they relate to commissions by the family. The way in which the decorations inserted in the two *tondi* are drawn, makes evident that the third drawing dates to the early decades of the nineteenth century (pl. 39). It shows the section of a large room (for use as theatre?), laid out on two levels: a sort of balcony, marked by three large arches on pillars, overlooks a space below. It is a not a definitive drawing: as against what has been gone over in ink, afterthoughts, especially on the size of the arches, are evident in the pencil markings. Finally, the fourth drawing was also done by an architect, but does not seem to refer to a building to be built in masonry (pl. 40): it has a windowed wall and, at the two ends, two turrets each crowned by a four-layered roof. The two windows shown with the open leaves make it clear that this is a small and presumably wooden construction: it is possible that it is a design, left unfinished, for a greenhouse.





## Part 4

### OTHER DRAWINGS

#### *Project for the choir-stalls of a church*

41. Anonymous, *Project for the choir-stalls of a church*

Pencil on white paper, 376 × 240 mm

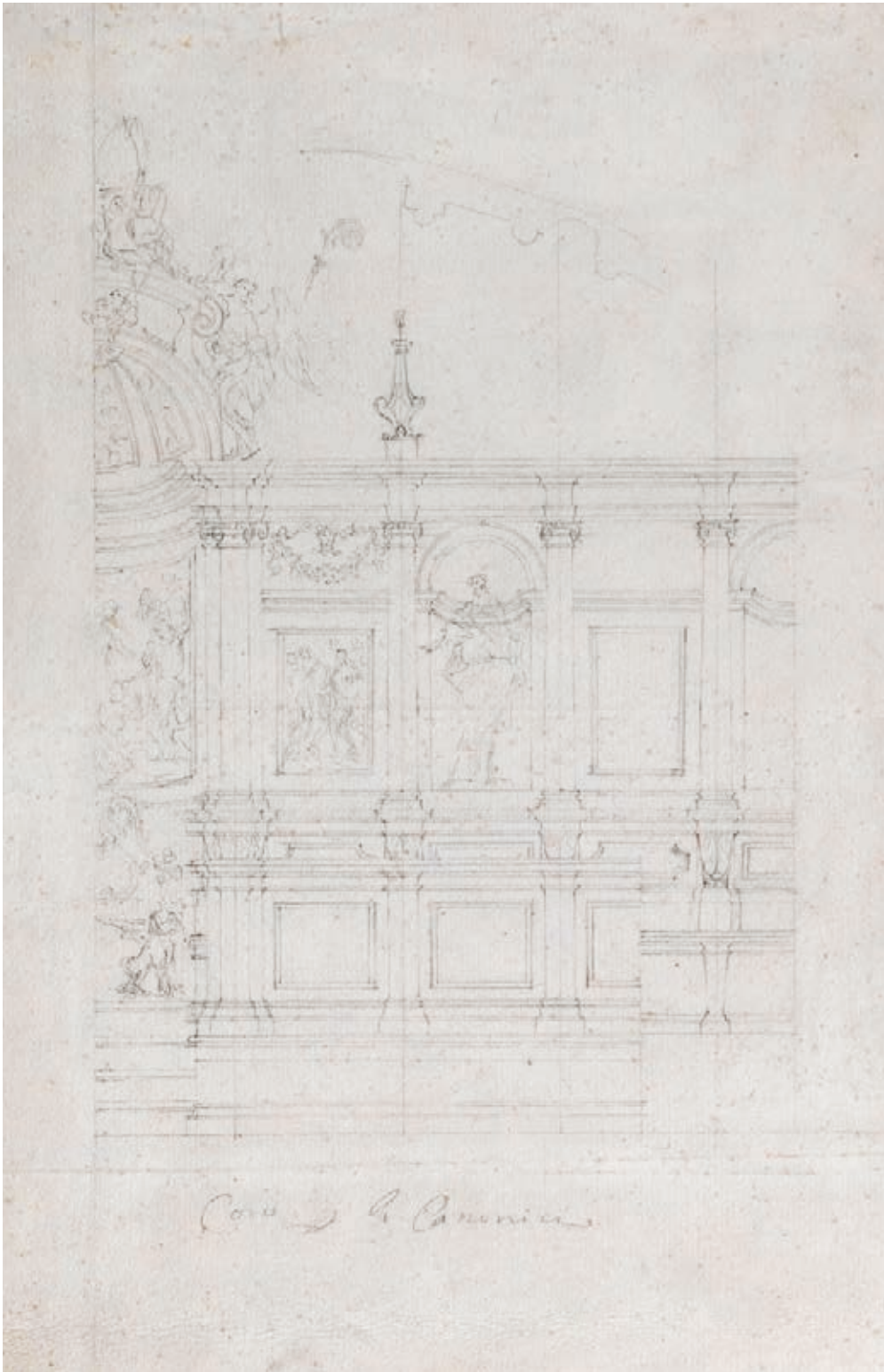
Inscribed in lower centre: *Coro per i Canonici*

Bottom left ink collection stamp: AM

In the middle below the drawing is written: '*Coro p [er] li Canonici*'. From the script and abbreviation used, this caption was written during the eighteenth century, when the drawing was made, or shortly thereafter (pl. 41). In fact, the drawing shows a half stretch of a choir-stall, of which a schematic partial plan is also given at the top right. The drawing is done entirely in pencil, according to the usage of architects, rather than of other categories of artists or craftsmen: on the right, the continuity of

the lines is broken to show the stalls and their backrests beyond the balustrade. Although probably belonging to the group of drawings of Borghese provenance, it is not easy to say more. No direct commission by the family for a work of this kind, a piece of carpentry to be set in an apse of quite modest dimensions, is known of; nor is there any commission of the kind among the works of Antonio or Mario. In addition, productions of this sort, constructed in wood within existing churches, and therefore for the most part ornamented with baroque forms, are difficult to date with any precision, not least because they tended to reiterate almost unchanging forms for a long time; only with nineteenth-century neo-Gothic did any significant changes come to Rome. Within what was to be built by the carpenters, the spaces reserved for painters and sculptors are also indicated: paintings in frames, statues in niches and figures peopling the central pediment, crowned by a cardinal's hat. These figurative panels, where a propensity to elongate human proportions is evident, in no way match Mario's style in drawing comparable subjects.





## A Cemetery chapel

42. Anonymous, *A Cemetery chapel, section*  
Pencil on white paper 405 × 613 mm  
Inscribed in the lower centre: Asprucci  
Bottom left black ink collection stamp: AM

The pencil drawing, done according to the conventions used by architects, presents the section of a building cut along the longitudinal axis (pl. 42). It is a chapel, inside a cemetery: behind the apse we can see part of a colonnaded portico which has at least three wall tombs; at underground level one can see the crypt, where there is an apparently ancient sarcophagus and various niches with other tombs. The obligation to bury the dead outside churches was established in France in June 1804 and was extended to the Kingdom of Italy in September 1806; in Rome it became law only after 1808, when the city was annexed to the French Empire by Napoleon<sup>149</sup>. Although 'Asprucci' appears in pencil on the sheet, the drawing cannot be attributed to Mario for the obvious reason that he died in 1804.

The presence of this unfounded attribution to Asprucci, written in an Italian hand that appears on other drawings (cf. pl. 36), confirms, however, that the sheet comes, like the others so identified, from the Borghese Archive. Taking into account that only Napoleon's first edict prescribed that the tombs should all be the same, it is clear that this design presenting various individual tombs dates to the early nineteenth century when these strict Jacobin measures were mitigated. It is therefore likely that the drawing was made by Luigi Canina, who was the family architect's from 1818.

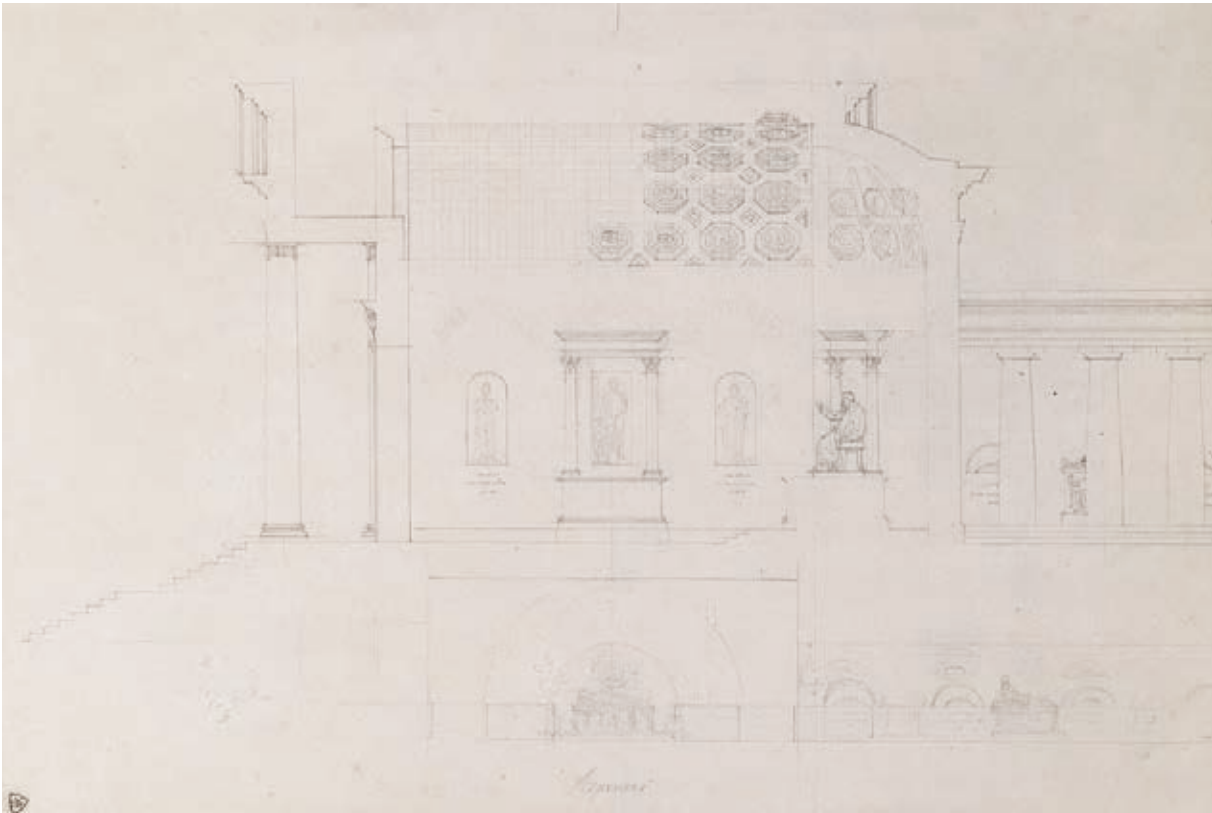
The chapel is an interesting exercise in Neoclassicism, academic and not very creative: all the features that characterize the Christian church are drawn from a small number of authoritative ancient examples accepted since the Renaissance. On the figurative level, the statue on the main altar recalls that of the *Seated Greek scholar*<sup>150</sup> (fig. 72) today in the *Casino Nobile*; the other statues that should represent other saints, are presented – as in pagan temples – in niches or edicules.



71. *Basilica of Maxentius, Roma.*

72. *Among the statues belonging to the Borghese Collection, the Seated Greek scholar* (Photo Archive Galleria Carlo Virgilio, Roma)

From the section, we can infer that the building has an Ionic temple front, with tympanum; the roofing, as represented, suggests the Roman *opus caementicium* technique: a barrel vault covering the hall and a half-dome covering the apse. The suggestion is enhanced by the design of the coffering, taken from that of the surviving vaults of the Basilica of Maxentius (fig. 71).





*A large U-shaped building*

43. Anonymous, *Drawings for a large U-shaped building, studies for the prospect*

Pencil on manilla paper, 194 × 376 mm

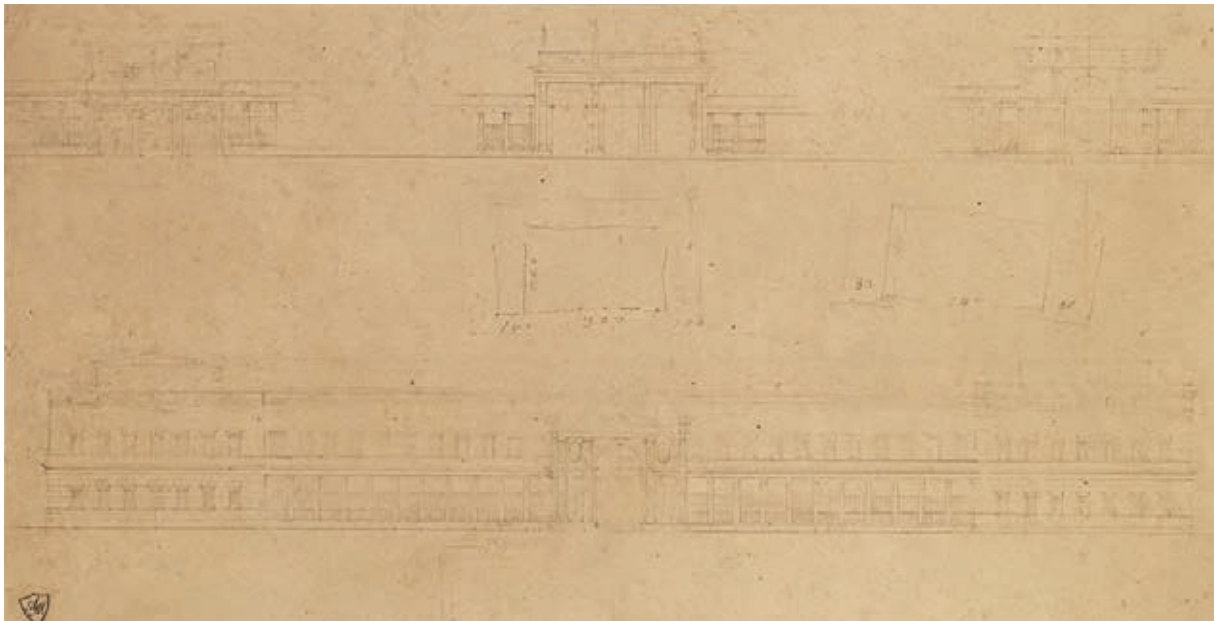
Irregular, various measurement notes

Bottom left: black ink collection stamp: AM

The sheet presents, in sketch form, variants for a large building (pl. 43). In the centre, in reduced scale, the plan is shown schematically twice: three wings are laid out in a U-shape; the enclosed court is cut off from the road by a gated fence. The two plans differ only in

the size indicated; however, the unit of measurement is not specified. On the lower part of the drawing an overall view is shown: the building is uniformly two storeys high. The main wing has more than twenty windows; the orthogonal ones are long enough to accommodate seven. The forms are generically neo-Renaissance. At the top some variants for the gate from the road are sketched. Given the size of the building it is to be excluded that this was a project commissioned by a member of the Borghese family or some other Roman patron; between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries such large Italianized buildings were designed only by Giacomo Quarenghi for the city of St. Petersburg<sup>151</sup>.

pl. 43



SEQUENCE OF THE DRAWINGS IN CATALOGUE



I



2



3r



3v



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11

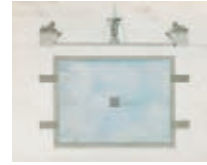




12



13



14



15



16



17



18



19r



19v



20



21



22



23



24r



24v



25r



25v



26



27



28



29



30



31



32



33



34



35



36



37



38



39



40



41



42



43



For what is not specified in note on Mario Asprucci, refer to: Pasquali 2003, pp. 77-88; Pasquali 2006, pp. 123-127; Pasquali 2007<sup>c</sup>, pp. 357-364.

<sup>1</sup> AASL, *Disegni di architettura*, nn. 319-320 (Cipriani-Marconi-Valeriani 1974, vol. 1).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, nn. 1091-98.

<sup>3</sup> Pescosolido 1979.

<sup>4</sup> Pasquali 2018, note 34.

<sup>5</sup> Tatham, who had commissioned it in the '90s, comments of the portrait: "The above is a perfect portrait, he had a hair [sic] lip, and was drawn expressly for me by the present Chevalier Camuccini, who is prince of the Academy of St Luke at Rome, and in the zenith of his fame as an historical painter".

<sup>6</sup> On the social importance of belonging to both academies, cf. *Aequa Potestas* 2000.

<sup>7</sup> Pasquali 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Given Canova's documented interest in 1796 in getting pencils from England through Tatham (Pearce-Salmon 2005, pp. 1-91; *The Autobiography*, p. 88), one may wonder whether Mario's choice – to use graphite pencil instead of ink in his presentation drawings – was not linked to the arrival in Rome of this new instrument, of English manufacture. When in Rome, Charles Percier also made use of graphite pencils.

<sup>9</sup> Mambriani 2007, p. 115; for the letter, 28 May 1791: FMLPr, *Belle Arti*, b. 63, fasc. 27/2/11.

<sup>10</sup> Pasquali 2007<sup>d</sup>, pp. 365-370.

<sup>11</sup> Mambriani 2007, p. 123.

<sup>12</sup> Pearce-Salmon 2005, pp. 1-91; *The autobiography*, p. 82.

<sup>13</sup> Moleón Gavilanes 2009, pp. 26-38.

<sup>14</sup> Andrew 1989, pp. 88-94; Ingamells 1997, *ad nomen*; Andrew 2003, pp. 95-97.

<sup>15</sup> Pasquali 1989, pp. 265-277, note 21.

<sup>16</sup> Hussey 1955; Tudor-Craig 1973; Jackson-Stops 1990, pp. 118-129.

<sup>17</sup> Pasquali 1989, notes 1 and 28.

<sup>18</sup> A detailed account of the incident is given in Falconieri 1875, pp. 124-125; on the basis of information that reached him after his departure from Rome, Tatham has a different version: he 'died from unskilful treatment of a bilious fever' (Pearce-Salmon 2005, pp. 1-91; *The autobiography*, p. 82). The choice of church, outside the jurisdiction of his own parish, has not yet been explained.

<sup>19</sup> She was the sister of the painters Pietro and Vincenzo and lived on paralysed until 1813 (Falconieri 1875, pp. 124-125).

<sup>20</sup> Rolff Ozvald 2012.

<sup>21</sup> He was lieutenant of the 'Compagnia sotto la Famiglia Borghese', Rione Campo Marzio ('Diario di Roma', 1798),

<sup>22</sup> Among his colleagues were the Prince Pallavicini and the architect Giuseppe Barberi ('Gazzetta di Roma', 1798). It is barely probable that – like many during the Republic – he adopted deism, since Tatham wrote of him: 'he never failed attending Mass, & often put down his pencil for that pious purpose in the midst of the most interesting pursuits' (Pearce-Salmon 2005, pp. 1-91; *The autobiography*, p. 82).

<sup>23</sup> Galimberti 2004, vol. 2, 24 March 1800.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, vol. 1, c. 121r, 14 July 1799.

<sup>25</sup> Guattani 1808 [1809], III, pp. 86-89.

<sup>26</sup> Guattani 1809, IV, pp. 122-125.

<sup>27</sup> De Tipaldo 1834-45, vol. II, pp. 427-435.

<sup>28</sup> He explicitly lists: the Templet of Aesculapius, the templet of Diana, the monumental entrance from the Muro Torto and the Chapel. The mention of templets dedicated to false gods, counterposed to the description of the more recent Chapel, is a sign of the times.

<sup>29</sup> In 1788 more than thirty student of Antoine-François Peyre were in Rome (Bergdoll 1991, p. 17; Bergdoll 1994, p. 12); their concern for ancient architecture – reinforced by new guidelines emanated in 1790 – changed the way of surveying these buildings.

<sup>30</sup> The printed circulation of the designs presented for the competitions organised by the Académie Royale d'Architecture was the extraordinary medium through which the image of this new academic architecture was made known in Europe. (Rosenau 1960, pp. 17-180).

<sup>31</sup> Micalizzi 2003, vol. II, p. 27, n. 2, related to 1767.

<sup>32</sup> Antonio's known children, apart from Mario, were Giuseppe and Vincenza. Like Mario, Giuseppe probably had no children, resulting in the extinction of the line. The daughter married Pietro Jacobini and their secondborn, Camillo (n. 1791) – given the same name as the firstborn of Marco Antonio Borghese – became minister of Public Works and Fine Arts when, in the reign of Pius IX, laymen for the first time entered the government (Bianchini 1858).

<sup>33</sup> AASL, vol. 58, ff. 42v-43 (*Registro delle Congregazioni*, 28 aprile 1816).

<sup>34</sup> Pagano 2014, p. 58 e sg.; Romanelli 2014, pp. 261-274.

<sup>35</sup> Pearce-Salmon 2005, pp. 1-91, n. 44, pp. 43-46, Letter to Holland, 25.X.1795; *The autobiography*, p. 82.

<sup>36</sup> *Isidro Velázquez* 2009, Drawings from the antique: nn. 34-61, 63-74. On Villa Borghese: a generic view of the Temple of the Lago (n. 73) and a fine pencil drawing centring on the stadium and the Casino della Cappella (n. 62).

<sup>37</sup> Pasquali 1997, pp. 265-277; Pasquali 2007<sup>c</sup>, p. 361, notes 44-45.

<sup>38</sup> Harris 1982, pp. 52-63.

<sup>39</sup> Soane Museum, London, p. 341.

<sup>40</sup> National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, D 5530 and D 5531 (*Bernard Quaritch* 2001, no.s 4-5, p. 4).

<sup>41</sup> GRI, Los Angeles, 2002.M5 (provenance: *Bernard Quaritch* 2001, n.3, p. 4).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Tatham papers (Pearce-Salmon 2005, pp. 1-91).

<sup>43</sup> Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, no.s 1938-88-7170, 1938-88-7171 and 1938-88-7172 (Ickworth main facade), provenance Giovanni Piancastelli (*Crosscurrents* 1978, no.s 3 e 5).

<sup>44</sup> Kunstbibliothek, Berlin, no.s 4593-94 (*Architekten-Zeichnungen* 1979, p. 156) and a fine project for a city gate, n. 7599.

<sup>45</sup> Jackson-Stops 1990, p. 124.

<sup>46</sup> An exhibition, curated S. Pasquali and A. Rowan, is planned at the CISA for autumn 2019.

<sup>47</sup> Medde 2004, pp. 29-40.

<sup>48</sup> Valadier-Citeroni 1799ca.

<sup>49</sup> Fuhring 1989, pp. 113-121; Paul 2000.

<sup>50</sup> *Carlo Virgilio* 1981-82, n. 3; *Carlo Virgilio* 1983.

<sup>51</sup> cf., in this catalogue, pl. 12.

<sup>52</sup> The painter Giovanni Piancastelli (1845-1926) was engaged by the Borghese in 1888 to compile an inventory of their art collections and remained in the family's service as collection keeper; Carlo Piancastelli (1867-1938), of the same surname but no kin, was a bibliophile and collector with whom the painter was long acquainted, giving him pointers to bargains on the Rome market (Ficacci 2003, pp. 31-47 and bibl. cit.).

<sup>53</sup> Campitelli 1986.

<sup>54</sup> S. F. Delino, *Pianta del Giardino dell'Ecc.mo Signor Principe Borghese fuori di Porta Pinciana*, 1667, etching.

<sup>55</sup> On the renovation of the interior decoration of the city palace: Fumagalli 1994, p. 104-186; on the *Casino Nobile*: Paul 2000; Paul 2008.

<sup>56</sup> For some months of 1721 Marcantonio III Borghese was viceroy of Naples. The title Principe di Rossano (Calabria) came to the Borghese through inheritance from the Aldobrandini, who had held it since 1612.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. in the following pages of this catalogue. A collection is in Vicchi 1886.

<sup>58</sup> The presence of identical texts, published in almost identical form in several competing newspapers, leads one to think that it was the artists themselves who wrote the press communiqués. It should be noted on this point that, apart from the Roman periodical known for their interest in artistic productions ('Diario ordinario', 'Giornale delle belle arti, e dell'antiquaria', 'Memorie per le belle arti'), the periodical of Michele Mallio ('Annali di Roma') also published a long article on the statues around the Temple of Aesculapius. Other Italian periodicals sometimes published news about Villa Borghese ('Gazzetta di Parma', 'Gazzetta universale, o sieno notizie istoriche, politiche').

<sup>59</sup> Berry 1865, 2 January 1784.

<sup>60</sup> In the spring of 1791, the King and Queen of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies visited Rome and were received by the Borghese; cf. also note 56 *supra*.

<sup>61</sup> Knight 1986.

<sup>62</sup> *Biblioteca Burghesiana* 1892. Whereas Giovanni Battista Borghese Aldobrandini, brother of Marcantonio IV, who from Pacetti's *Diario* appears to have played a role in the artistic choices, had a better library: 'La bibliothèque du prince Aldobrandini n'est presque composée que de livres français et de dictionnaires à commencer par l'Encyclopédie' (Montègre 2011, p. 417).

<sup>63</sup> Heimbürger Ravalli 1981, chap. IV; Campitelli 2006, pp. 59-74.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibidem* 1981, pp. 76-81.

<sup>65</sup> Bettini had befriended George-Louis Le Rouge (1712 ca.-1790) in Paris and contributed with some of his designs to his main oeuvre: *Jardins anglo-chinois ou détails des nouveaux jardins à la mode*, Paris 1770-1788 (Heimbürger Ravalli 1981, pp. 50-51, figs 29-34).

<sup>66</sup> Pasquali 2008, pp. 75-90.

<sup>67</sup> Pearce-Salmon 2005, pp. 1-91.

<sup>68</sup> By inserting 'Villa Borghese' in the title search tool of the catalogue of the Bibliotheca Hertziana-Max Planck Institut' (biblhertz.it), one can get an idea of the number of recent studies on this argument.

<sup>69</sup> Pacetti's acquisition of the statue of Aesculapius, previously taken into consideration for the Vatican Museums, immediately gave rise to the building of a temple dedicated to this deity; Cavaceppi's acquisition of the statue of Septimius Severus gave rise, just as quickly, to various projects. The finding, during excavation of the lake, of other ancient marbles, including a head, was greeted as a good omen.

<sup>70</sup> Cf., in this catalogue, cat. n. 12

<sup>71</sup> Rossi Pinelli 2003, pp. 123-130.

<sup>72</sup> On the inscriptions of the *Triopieion* of Herode Atticus, belonging to the Borghese. See Visconti 1794; on the sculptures of the Casino Nobile, see Visconti 1796; on the sculptures from the Gabii excavations, see Visconti 1797 (the architecture of the Forum is shown in a drawing by Mario Asprucci).

<sup>73</sup> Cf. *infra* pp. 53-58.

<sup>74</sup> Montelatìci (1700) adopted the topographical approach in his description of the sites to be seen in the Villa, and was followed thereafter.

#### Notes, pp. 31-100

<sup>1</sup> *I Giornali* 2011, cc. 37v-41r e 53v (Campitelli 1993, pp. 141-149).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 54v.

<sup>3</sup> *I Giornali* 2011, 1785 *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> "Giornale delle belle arti, e dell'antiquaria", 7 April 1787, pp. 106-108; "Memorie enciclopediche romane sulle belle arti ...", March 1787, III, pp. 57-60; Campitelli 1993, pp. 45-58.

<sup>5</sup> *Galleria Carlo Virgilio* 1982-83, nos. 28 (mm. 310 × 232) - 29 (mm. 310 × 247), pls. II-III.

<sup>6</sup> *I Giornali* 2011, 7 December 1787: 'I went; again on 23 March 1788 the work should have been finished (f. 86r); Campitelli 1993, pp. 45-58.

<sup>7</sup> The "Giornale delle belle arti, e dell'antiquaria", 7 April 1787, pp. 106-108; Campitelli *ibidem*.

<sup>8</sup> *I Giornali* 2011, f. 70v, 24 July 1786; Pasquali 2018.

<sup>9</sup> "Although the temple was imagined by him [Mario] as sole end-piece of an avenue, and hence be seen only from the front, yet, when the work was all but complete, he managed to make it elegant from every side, thus serving the wishes of the Prince who wanted it isolated in the lake that then took shape" ("Memorie enciclopediche romane sulle belle arti ...", 1809, pp. 122-125).

<sup>10</sup> For a documented description of all the statues of the temple: Campitelli 2003<sup>a</sup>, pp. 272-301.

<sup>11</sup> *I Giornali* 2011, cc. 70v-74v (15 September 1786).

<sup>12</sup> Heimbürger Ravalli 1981, pp. 76-81.

<sup>13</sup> Bettini collaborated, with drawings and projects to the books devoted by the cartographer George-Louis Le Rouge, between 1775 and 1789, to gardens (Heimbürger Ravalli 1981, cap. III).

<sup>14</sup> A waterfall, that sprang from an artificial crage to fill the

lake, already existed on 19 December 1787: it is mentioned in an account in terms of ‘caduta d’acqua che riempie detto Lago’ (Campitelli 1993, p. 21, nota 18).

<sup>15</sup> The aqueduct running over arches, presumably of brick, was built in 1789 at the same time as the work of enlargement of the *Casino dei Giochi d’acqua*: it ran in fact from there towards the lake and was presumably connected to the layout of the new canal (cf. note 60 *infra*). The arches are shown in Percier’s 1809 plan and appear in the following years in many views; they were badly damaged in 1849.

<sup>16</sup> Campitelli 1986, pp. 213-219 (the study does not, however, cover the 18<sup>th</sup> century). The long stretch running from the Termini cistern to the villa was partly underground and partly raised: neither its precise route nor its appearance is known.

<sup>17</sup> Important restoration work on the public aqueduct in 1786-88 provided a greater flow of water (Fea 1832, pp. 80 and ff, Editti n. XVI, 1-2). There is no specific study on the argument.

<sup>18</sup> Heimbürger Ravalli 1981, pp. 76-81; Campitelli 1995, pp. 58-74.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Instrument of the closure of the Lane that leads from Muro Torto to Porta Pinciana’, 17 July 1788 (BAV, *Archivio Borghese*, b. 1006, fasc. 220; a topographic map is attached).

<sup>20</sup> ADPRm, Scaffale 53, b. 41.

<sup>21</sup> A surveyor’s rod is equal to 2.23 mt. circa.

<sup>22</sup> Charles Percier (1764-1838) lived in Rome between 1786 and 1791; it is clear from the drawings he made in Villa Borghese (BIF, Paris, ms. 1008) that he went there to draw several times; no relationship between him and Mario Asprucci, his contemporary, is documented. The general plan of the villa was made years later, in view of the publication of the work devoted to all the Roman villas (1809): we do not know on the basis of what plan, presumably owned by the Borghese, it was drawn; the original Percier’s drawing is held by the Museo di Roma.

<sup>23</sup> ‘The same Lord Prince may consequently remove at his pleasure the gateway of his villa, known as *delle Cavalle*, close to the gateway of Villa Bernini, and set it precisely on the site marked on the map by the letter F’ (BAV, *Archivio Borghese*, b. 1006, fasc. 220).

<sup>24</sup> Napoletano-Santolini 2011, inv. VB 150; on the current whereabouts cf. fig. 38 and note 49 *infra*.

<sup>25</sup> Fabrèga-Dubert 2009, vol 2, n. 664, Altar of the Moon with Hesperus and Phosphorus.

<sup>26</sup> Vitruvius, book IV, 8, 1 (Vitruvio 1997, book IV, pp. 359 e 393-94).

<sup>27</sup> *Temple of Diana in the Gardens of Villa Borghese*, exhibited recently by the Fondation *Drawing matter* (drawingmatter.org).

<sup>28</sup> Campitelli 2003<sup>a</sup>, pp. 344-350.

<sup>29</sup> ADPRm, Scaffale 53, b. 41, 14 marzo 1787: ‘The Lord Prince Borghese had his majordomo ask me whether I believed it difficult to obtain from His Eminence a little land nearby the road near the small gate letter N [the plan is missing] because with that he would like to make a *prospect*. Cfr. fig. 29, n. 1.

<sup>30</sup> On his return from Orient, Louis-François Cassas lived in Rome from 1787 to 1791 (Gilet 1994, pp. 12-13): among the drawings he showed (*‘tout le monde se porte en foule chez moi pour voir mes dessins’*), there was the Lyon Gate at Mycenae,

with the bow-shaped upper profile of the lintel.

<sup>31</sup> Above, right, in pencil in modern calligraphy, is written: ‘Mario Asprucci Arch./Villa Borghese/Opposite the Giardino del Lago’.

<sup>32</sup> The contract licensing Cardinal Doria to run the water for his villa through Borghese conduits is dated 1787 (ASV, *Archivio Borghese*, b. 1007, s. 286. That after 1787 the water arrived from Termini on the Doria wall is documented in ADPRm, Scaffale 53, b. 41, 14 aprile 1787: ‘The Lord Prince Borghese has suspended the water conduit in site O as far as the letter P because by managing to close that road, he *would carry the conduit on the back of Your Excellency’s wall*’.

<sup>33</sup> ADPRm, Scaffale 53, b. 41, 14 febbraio 1787 and successive letters. There is no study on Nicola Fagioli (Milan 1722 - Rome 1804), as fountain builder and expert in hydraulic machinery. The list of what he built for the Borghese can be reconstructed from the accounts in ASV, *Archivio Borghese*: ‘To Nicola Fagioli Engineer in full payment of all The Projects, Modell, Levelling, and assistance to the new Water Conduit for the Lake scudi 800. 626’. In Pantanella 1995, pp. 225-237, and Pantanella 2006, pp. 269-71, there is information above all on his work as an architect; an interesting list of books and surveying instruments is given in his will (Pantanella 1995, note 41).

<sup>34</sup> No such statue is known to have belonged to the Borghese; a Cybele was in the Farnese Collection, taken to Naples in 1787. A similar statue, working as well as a fountain, was suggested by the architect Peter Joseph Krahe in 1784-85 during his stay in Rome for a grotto in a villa (Dorn 1969, cat. 283, p. 228, fig. 105).

<sup>35</sup> ‘Veduta in prospettiva della decorazione fatta dal Sig. Principe Borghese addosso al muro di S[ua] E[ccellenza] il sig. Card[ina]le P. G. Doria, con il progetto della decorazione da farsi negl’Orti di Raffaello’ (Heimbürger Ravalli 1981, fig. 63). That the arrangement of the prospect, already being considered 1787, was only effectively completed in 1793 is documented by the payments to the artists (Campitelli 2003).

<sup>36</sup> Staten Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen (Hornung-Monrad 2005, p. 137; Campitelli 2003<sup>a</sup>, p. 369).

<sup>37</sup> It is on this site where the water was arriving from 1787, I believe that one of Visconti’s proposals presented to the prince could be located: ‘in the centre of the new space’ he proposed – on the basis of Pausanias, *Attica*, para. 2 – a reconstruction of the grotto where Creusa conceived Io and from where welled a spring; above the grotto, he proposed to arrange the group of *Apollo with Io* (BAV, *Archivio Borghese*, b. 1006, f. 261, ‘Memoria su d’un gruppo singolarissimo scoperto nella Villa Pinciana e progetto per la collocazione del medesimo’; Pasquali 2003, p. 83, note 78).

<sup>38</sup> Heimbürger Ravalli 1981, p. 76-81.

<sup>39</sup> At the bottom, perhaps in the hand of the anonymous creator of the drawing, can be read in Italian: ‘a Villa Borghese’.

<sup>40</sup> Letter of Francesco Posi, 30 October 1793, who speaks of the lion, the elephant and the sphinx set as decoration, on a proposal of Unterperger’s, in the right-angle or dog-leg corner (BAV, *Archivio Borghese*, b. 61; Campitelli 2003, pp. 367-68, nota 283).

<sup>41</sup> In the centre of the sheet, in pencil in a modern hand: 'Mario Asprucci Arch./ Villa Borghese/ Giardino del Lago'.

<sup>42</sup> I. Caffi, *View of Villa Borghese*, in front of the entrance to the Giardino del Lago.

<sup>43</sup> Di Gaddo 1997, p. 184.

<sup>44</sup> There are two fountains in the Villa crowned with obelisks, built according to one of the variants of this design: from 1842 they are documented near the *Palazzina della Meridiana* (Di Gaddo 1997, p. 191). We do not know whether they were built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and came here from elsewhere, or whether Canina had them made after 1818 on the basis of the project presented here.

<sup>45</sup> The agreement between Pacetti and the prince was reached between January and March 1787 (Campitelli 1994, pp. 51-56; Campitelli 2003, p. 266, note 61-62). On the bequest to the *Accademia di San Luca* and its sad destiny, cf. Gasparri 1994, pp. 57-63.

<sup>46</sup> Missirini 1823, p. 289.

<sup>47</sup> 30 July 1788: Pacetti went with Antonio Asprucci 'to Villa Pinciana to see whether the slaves in travertine on the *Prospettiva di Settimo Severo* can be given an addition of drapery to make them more grouped on the pedestal of the statue' (Campitelli 1994, p. 52-53; Campitelli 2003, pp. 446-448, note 140-141).

<sup>48</sup> On the new canal, cf. note 60 *infra*.

<sup>49</sup> The group was moved above Canina's arch in 1828, flanked by two slaves in travertine (Campitelli 2001, pp. 179-181; Campitelli 2003, pp. 446-448).

<sup>50</sup> Montelatici 1700, pp. 122-127.

<sup>51</sup> Presented here a reconstruction of the two building campaigns, 1775-79 e 1790-93, different from that proposed in Campitelli-Santolini 2006, pp. 94-98, and earlier in Campitelli 1998, pp. 102-105.

<sup>52</sup> The view is in G.B. Cipriani, *Degli edifici antichi e moderni di Roma. Vedute in contorno...*, 3 voll., Roma 1816-19.

<sup>53</sup> The window surrounds can be compared with those of Roman palaces built or renovated in the '70s.

<sup>54</sup> The 1790-93 documents speak explicitly of the building of a 'Salone ove era la loggia scoperta' (Campitelli-Santolini 2006, p. 95, note 50), that is, in my opinion, above the *Aranciera*.

<sup>55</sup> 'Diario ordinario di Roma' (Chracas), n. 1785, 5 novembre 1791 (Campitelli-Santolini 2006, p. 96, nota 51).

<sup>56</sup> S. Lecchi, *Aranciera dopo il bombardamento del 1849*, calotype, Museo di Roma, Roma.

<sup>57</sup> Between 1777 and 1779 Gioacchino Agricola painted 'a large picture in the vault' next to the *loggia scoperta* (Campitelli-Santolini 2006, p. 95, nota 42).

<sup>58</sup> Moreno-Viacava 2003, n. 236: torso restored as satyr on dolphin. In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century this statue, 'A naked Narcissus in marble sitting on a Dolphin likewise', is reported in the storehouse.

<sup>59</sup> Cfr. p. 35 *supra*.

<sup>60</sup> This is how Bettini commented on July 4, 1789: the Prince 'is now making a canal that goes from the lake and ends at the new casino where he usually gives lunches. It is about 36 palms wide and has a bottom able to carry a loaded barge (...). However, I wanted this canal to start by moving the

waterfall that now stands at the Lake, I wanted it to be placed near the Casino and that the canal originate from it and then discharged the water in the aforementioned Lake, but they are doing this quite contrary because they are making the canal end as I said near the Casino' (ADPRm, Scaffale 53, b. 41).

<sup>61</sup> Letter from P. Antonio Longo to A. Rosmini, 30 January 1791 (Mich 1996, pp. 353-396; *Cristoforo Unterperger* 1998, Appendice documentaria, n. 125, p. 281).

<sup>62</sup> ADPRm, Scaffale 53, b. 41, 20 February 1790. "The Lord Prince Borghese is building a gateway on the Muro Torto which will serve as entrance to his Villa. It is of a great magnificence wide enough for two carriages abreast."

<sup>63</sup> ADPRm, Scaffale 53, b. 41, 20 February 1790 "Since His Excellency Prince Don Marcantonio Borghese for the convenience of his villa has had to occupy with due permission a portion of the public road, which from Muro Torto leads to the *Tre Madonne* he asked her [Elena Virgili] to be willing to sell him a small area of the aforementioned vineyard, precisely where lies the canebrake alongside the road occupied by it so as to open the new road there in place of the old".

<sup>64</sup> Heimbürger Ravalli 1981, p. 80, nota 50.

<sup>65</sup> Fabrèga-Dubert 2009, vol. 2, nn. 691-692; Campitelli 2003, pp. 374-378, note 296-305.

<sup>66</sup> Letter signed by Unterperger (ASV, *Archivio Borghese*, b. 1005, f. 150); it seems to be a copy, however, since it is undated, the paper has not been folded and there is no return address; there is also a second copy of the text, with fewer misspellings.

<sup>67</sup> In Sacchi Lodispoto 1997, pp. 63-66, this sentence has been misunderstood as follows: "mi lusingo che il Pubblico Censore imperiale [?] dei prodotti di belle Arti, non sia per disprezzare qualche avanzo di Tempio d'ordine corintio".

<sup>68</sup> "In the general form of this Mausoleum, it is proposed to imitate the ruin of that of Philopappos still existing in Athens on the Museion hill and that is out of the ordinary, and extremely beautiful. Adapting, however, its parts, its ornaments, and the fictive devastation to the precise site of the Villa, without disturbing the prospect, suiting it to its destined site" (ASV, *Archivio Borghese*, b. 1005, f. 150; Pasquali 2003, p. 83, note 77 and fig. 11).

<sup>69</sup> ASV, *Archivio Borghese*, b. 1005, f. 150. This text and the others in Busta 1005, cf. there notes 66-68 and 71, deserve to be studied carefully: it is still to be understood which are to be attributed to Unterperger and which to Visconti, making clear also when it is a draft and when a fair copy. In Sacchi Lodispoto 1997, pp. 63-66, only a few are transcribed and all of them are forcibly linked to the *Temple of Antoninus and Faustina*: the texts, on the contrary, refer to buildings different from the one then built.

<sup>70</sup> Moreno-Viacava 2003, n. 135, Sala II.

<sup>71</sup> ASV, *Archivio Borghese*, b. 1005, f. 150.

<sup>72</sup> Fabrèga-Dubert 2009, vol. 2, n. 661. As a result of dubious restoration, the hind suckling Telephus, son of Hercules, was transmuted into a bitch; before its removal to Paris, it was displayed in the garden.

<sup>73</sup> Campitelli 2003, pp. 326-336

<sup>74</sup> Campitelli 1988, pp. 161-170; Campitelli 2003, pp. 360-365.



<sup>75</sup> Moreno-Viacava 2003, n. 213: *Statua di Hecate Triformis*, doc. nel 1762.

<sup>76</sup> Visconti-Lamberti, 1796, vol. I, Stanza II, n. 8; Fabrèga-Dubert 2009, n. 350; *I Borghese* 2011, cat. 12. On this typology: Haskell Penny 1981, pp. 205-208, no 34.

<sup>77</sup> During the 17<sup>th</sup> century a metal copy was made by Guglielmo Bertolot, set in the fountain at the rear of the *Casino Nobile* (*I Borghese* 2011, cat. 12).

<sup>78</sup> Pasquali 2005, pp. 131-141, fig. 3.

<sup>79</sup> "Diario ordinario" (Stamperia Cracas, Roma), n. 1786, 11 febbraio 1792, pp. 21-22. The same information is given in: "Gazzetta di Parma", 1792, p. 61.

<sup>80</sup> Bianconi 1789.

<sup>81</sup> Letter from Hamilton to Townley, 18 November 1791 (Bignamini-Hornsby 2010, vol. 1, pp. 77, 1).

<sup>82</sup> *Ibidem*, 2010, vol. 1, pp. 17-30.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 76-85. Tommaso Puccini, in a 1798 letter to the prince from Florence, takes some merit for it: he recalls the 'very happy times in which he the said excavation Gabino suggested by me the first was done, and in which you often chose for me your companion in that most pleasant site of Pantano' (ASV, *Carte Borghese*, pacco n. 49).

<sup>84</sup> Francesco Piranesi, 'Feuille des beaux arts', octobre 1792 (Caira Lumetti 1990, pp. 311-312).

<sup>85</sup> A design now lost, known as 'Galleria di statue per Villa Borghese', the work of the English architect Francis Sandys, companion of Jacob More and preferred architect of Lord Bristol, may have links to this competition (Pasquali 1997, 265-277; Pasquali 2003, p. 82, nota 72).

<sup>86</sup> It should be remembered that in Rome there was a lively periodical press devoted to artistic production, but also a censorship active on such matters, if the censors thought that the *querelles* generated by the various opinions might have repercussions on public opinion. Consequently, unlike what happened in those same years in Paris (Wittman 2007), the printed news carried only praise of the work of art described. So all the more important is this report from Piranesi, testifying to public participation in the artistic choices of a patron. Cf. also Unterperger addressing to the public opinion, p. 53 *supra*.

<sup>87</sup> Campitelli 1998, pp. 37-48; Campitelli 2000, pp. 145-165.

<sup>88</sup> Francesco Piranesi, 'Feuille des beaux arts', octobre 1792 (Caira Lumetti 1990, pp. 311-312).

<sup>89</sup> *Villa Borghese. I principi* 2003, n. 139, p. 329.

<sup>90</sup> Plan, section, and elevation of portico, designed by M. Asprucci in 1792, drawn by Tatham, intitled: 'A Design made for Prince Borghese at Rome for a temple to be built in the gardens of his villa, to receive the collection of Antique Statues found at Gabii by Gavin Hamilton; 1796, Mario Asprucci Architect. Harris 1982, figs. 21-23. The plan and elevation are now in the Riba drawing collections in Victoria and Albert Museum, London (nos. E 1331-48-2001; E 1331-49-2001). All three are presented in *Villa Borghese. I principi* 2003, fig. 9, p. 82; figg. 1-2, pp. 146-147.

<sup>91</sup> In the text of November 7, 1796 which presents the projects of the *Accademia della Pace* – published in the periodical of Michele Mallio, 'Annali di Roma' 1796 (and taken up by the

'Giornale letterario di Napoli') – the participating architects explicitly state that 'they almost always express themselves *geometrically*', in plan, elevation and section, thus rejecting the use of perspective.

<sup>92</sup> Di Marco 2007, pp. 431-437.

<sup>93</sup> Campitelli 2003, pp. 319-326.

<sup>94</sup> Contratto di vendita dei marmi a Henry Hope 1799 (ASV, *Archivio Borghese*, b. 1005, f. 3. 185 (Campitelli 1998<sup>a</sup>, p. 45, nota 35; Campitelli 2003<sup>a</sup>, nota 205).

<sup>95</sup> BIF, Paris, ms. 1008; Di Gaddo 1997, pp. 152-153.

<sup>96</sup> Montelatici 1700, p. 112; Di Gaddo 1997, note 34.

<sup>97</sup> In 1793, Felice Giani was paid for having painted 'large heads for the use of *Cariati* [Caryatid?] above the doors and windows' (Campitelli 2003, 339, note 234 and fig. 343).

<sup>98</sup> The Villa Pojana, among all the villas of Palladio, is distinguished by the extreme simplicity of the forms used in the facades to decorate doors and windows; it became known, even to those who had not visited the Veneto, through the work of Ottavio Bertotti Scamozzi (Bertotti Scamozzi 1776-83, t. 2).

<sup>99</sup> Campitelli 2003, pp. 336-344.

<sup>100</sup> The *Castelluccia* is a miniature fort, with crenellated walls, a moat and a drawbridge, which Ferdinando IV had built in the gardens of the Royal Palace of Caserta by the architect Francesco Collecini in 1769, not long after he reached the age of majority: he organised small military manoeuvres there.

<sup>101</sup> Galimberti 2004, c. 121r, 14 luglio 1799.

<sup>102</sup> Cipriani 1816-19 (Campitelli 2003, p. 338). Just after the death of Antonio Asprucci (1808) and before the nomination of Luigi Canina (1818), Giuseppe Camporese (Campitelli 1998) was appointed architect to approve payments.

<sup>103</sup> Vicchi 1886

<sup>104</sup> Cf. above, note 63.

<sup>105</sup> According to what Bettini wrote in July 1789, in matters pertaining to the layout of the garden Jacob More was replaced by the Majordomo Francesco Posi (Heimbürger Ravalli 1981, p. 80, notes 46-47); he, as far as it is possible to make hypotheses from the available documentation (ASV, *Archivio Borghese*, b. 61, *Atti di famiglia*, Lettere di Francesco Posi, 1783-1786-1793), seems to have mainly backed Unterperger's ideas.

<sup>106</sup> G. B. Piranesi, *Veduta di un sepolcro antico ... per la strada di Tivoli* (G.B. Piranesi, *Le antichità romane*, t.II, tav. XXXIX); Pasquali 2003, pp. 84-85, fig. 13; Pasquali 2014, pp. 15-23.

<sup>107</sup> 'The [Villa] Borghesiana by the Asprucci has its entrance decorated in the same way as the [Villa] Adriana' (Canina 1828): Luigi Canina is the first to affirm that the Villa Borghese's Propylaea derive from what were believed to be the Propylei credite of Villa Adriana: it is very likely that the architect, who had succeeded Antonio Asprucci in Borghese service, had access to the drawings kept in the family's archive, among which was also pl. 19 presented here.

<sup>108</sup> Stuart e Revett 1762-1816 (Wiebenson 1969); Pasquali 2003, p. 83, nota 87 e fig. 11.

<sup>109</sup> G.B. Piranesi, *Della magnificenza ed architettura dei Romani* (Wilton Ely 1972).

<sup>110</sup> Milizia 1781.

<sup>111</sup> Pasquali 2012, pp. 183-200.

<sup>112</sup> The definitive construction of coachhouses just behind the entrance can be seen in an anonymous engraving, entitled 'Sottoportico all'ingresso di Villa Borghese (Campitelli 2003, p.335)

<sup>113</sup> Friedrich Gilly 1984, page 52, fig. 26 (the whereabouts of the drawings are unknown).

<sup>114</sup> The costs of transporting large quantities of travertine blocks are documented in 1791.

<sup>115</sup> Anonymus, *Conghiatura sopra l'aggruppamento dei Colossi di Monte Cavallo...*, attr. to Canova in Mellini 1999, pp. 111-114.

<sup>116</sup> It is not clear, however, that the new units of measurement were immediately accepted outside of France, especially by the French driven into exile by the Revolution.

<sup>117</sup> The sole exception is *Progetto per un padiglione di caccia*, 1796, by Charle Heathcote Tatham (AASL Roma, Disegni di architettura n. 2149; Marconi Cipriani Valeriani 1974, nn. 2148-49). Cf. the database *Lineamenta* (lineamenta.biblhertz.it)

<sup>118</sup> In the period it was the foot soldier who was so designated.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. *supra* p. 13.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. note 117 *supra*.

<sup>121</sup> 'Asprucci' is written on the first sheet in a modern hand.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. *supra* p. 20, note 47.

<sup>123</sup> The statue of Peter I in Petersburg, the work of E.-M. Falconet, dates to 1782.

<sup>124</sup> The presence of large exedras, covered or uncovered, shows how important for the architects working in the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, was the model of the great imperial baths of Rome. Giacomo Quarenghi used it, as did the students of the Académie d'Architecture of Paris and, in Rome, the young men gathered in the *Accademia della Pace*.

<sup>125</sup> Kaufmann 1955, part. 3, France. The expression *architecture parlante* was however coined, in retrospect, to criticize the excess of symbolism in late 18<sup>th</sup> century architecture (L. Vaudoyer, *Les bizarreries de Ledoux*, in 'Le Magazin pittoresque', 27, 1859, pp. 27-29; Bergdoll 1991, p. 19).

<sup>126</sup> *Un castello d'acqua decorato da una pubblica fontana*, 1780 (Istituto Paolo Toschi, Parma, *Disegni e stampe di architettura*, inv. 106-110; Mambriani 2007, p. 118).

<sup>127</sup> *Correspondence*, XV, 1906, pp.174-175, doc. 8845.

<sup>128</sup> Pasquali 2008, pp. 75-90.

<sup>129</sup> The Doric temple was built by de Azára in a garden he had near Porta Pia: leaving Rome he endowed its property to the princess Giuliana Falconieri Santacroce, a widow from 1797 (F. Gasparoni in "L'architetto Girovago", 1841); no images are known. The architect Isidro Velásquez, who in 1794 accompanied Mario and Tatham on surveys of Roman antiquities (see p. 13 *supra*), had just studied the three temples of Paestum in 1793; his study had been encouraged by de Azára himself (Moleón Gavilanes 2009, p. 32 e pl. 74).

<sup>130</sup> Given the notable differences between the two versions of the design, I have followed what the section suggests.

<sup>131</sup> For the dimensions of the original balustrade, cf. Di Gaddo 1997, p. 46.

<sup>132</sup> von Hesberg 1992, pp. 113-134.

<sup>133</sup> Pavanello 1976, scheda 24, p. 92.

<sup>134</sup> *Corpus* 1960, vol. 2, 1960, fig. 58; Di Gaddo 1997, p. 92, nota 65; Campitelli 2003, pp. 161-162.

<sup>135</sup> McCormick 1990, pp. 179-181, fig. 146.

<sup>136</sup> Pasquali 2007<sup>a</sup>, p. 32, fig. 9.

<sup>137</sup> Paul 2000, fig. 17, p. 38.

<sup>138</sup> G.B. Piranesi, *Diverse maniere...* (Wilton Ely 1972).

<sup>139</sup> Design for a mantelpiece in Chinese taste, 1801 (Pasquali 2005, pp. 131-141, fig. 1).

<sup>140</sup> Montelatici 1700, *passim*.

<sup>141</sup> *Galleria Carlo Virgilio* 1983.

<sup>142</sup> De Seta-Nordhoff 2005, n. 34 a-b, p. 147.

<sup>143</sup> Those set around the edge of the fountain in Piazza Colonna date from 1830.

<sup>144</sup> Paul 2000, pl. 6-7.

<sup>145</sup> Paul 2000, pp. 110-143.

<sup>146</sup> Arizzoli-Clémentel 1978, pp. 1-32; for a comparison between the drawings: Paul 2000, nos. 40-43.

<sup>147</sup> The sequence of spaces represented rules out that it is Palazzo Borghese in Rome (Fumagalli 1994).

<sup>148</sup> Paul 2000, fig. 20.

<sup>149</sup> The French army entered Rome during 1808; the provisional government lasted until 1810 and from 1811 the city became the second capital of the Empire of France.

<sup>150</sup> Moreno-Viacava 2003, n.249, Room VIII.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. for example the project for the Smolny Institute, St. Petersburg, 1806-1808 (*Disegni di Giacomo Quarenghi* 2003, p. 68).

## Abbreviations

AASL: Archivio dell'Accademia di San Luca, Roma  
ADPRm = Archivio Doria Pamphilj, Roma  
ASL: Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, Roma  
ASRm = Archivio di Stato di Roma, Roma  
ASV: Archivio Segreto, Città del Vaticano  
BCBo: Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, Bologna  
BIF: Bibliothèque de l'Institut de France, Paris  
CISA: Centro Internazionale di Studi Andrea Palladio, Palladio Museum, Vicenza  
FMLPr: Fondazione Maria Luigia, Parma  
GRI: Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

General bibliography

Analysis of the drawings would have been impossible without the aid of the studies published on the changing appearance of Villa Borghese during the eighteenth century; among these, an important place belongs to all the writings that Alberta Campitelli, an art historian and responsible on behalf of the Comune di Roma for the conservation of the villa, has devoted to this matter over the last thirty years.

- 1700 Montelatici = D. Montelatici, *Villa Borghese fuori di Porta Pinciana con l'ornamenti, che si osservano nel di lei palazzo e con le figure delle statue più singolari*, G.F. Buagni, Roma 1700.
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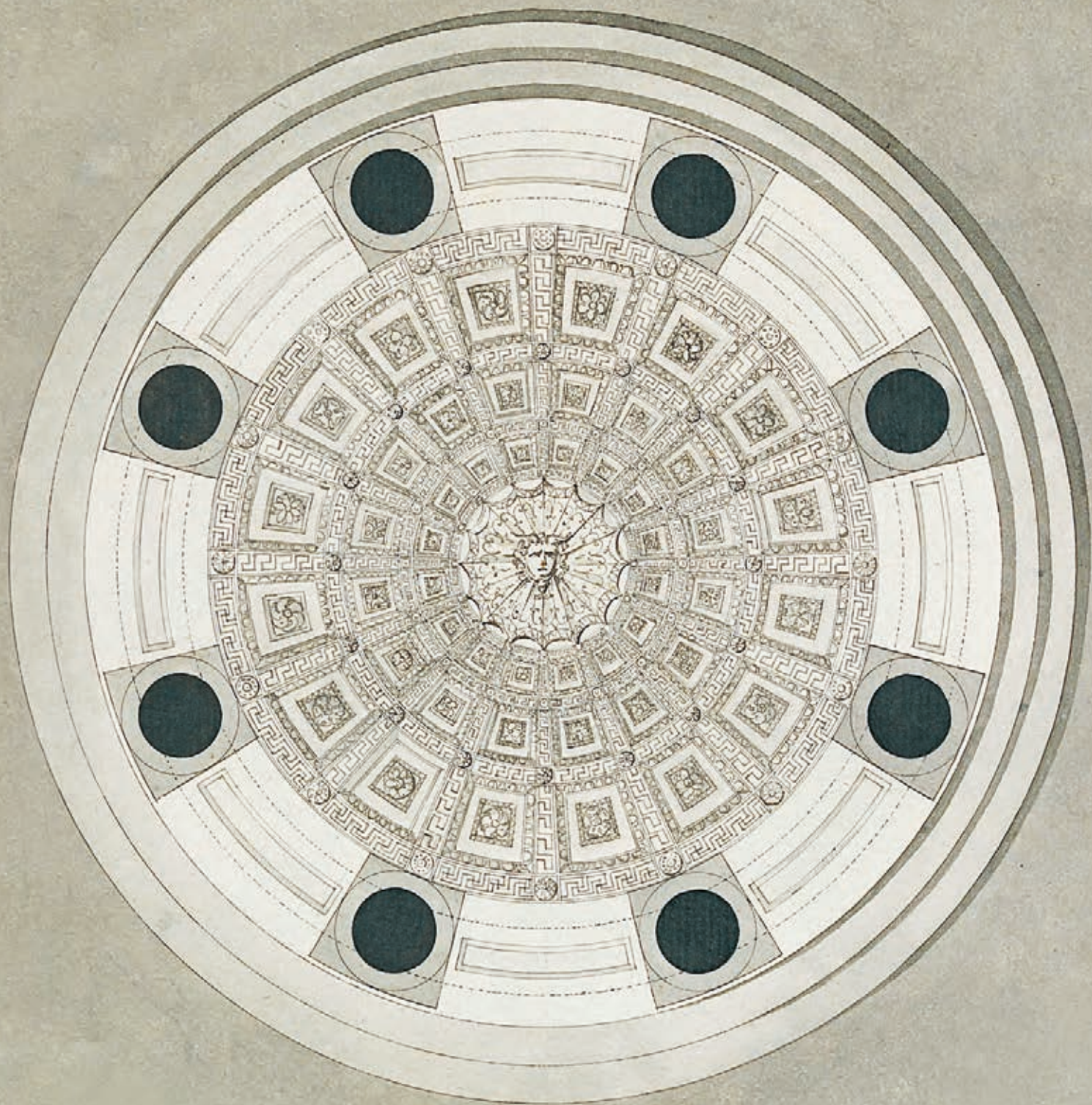


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