

episodes of Paul's pontificate, the suppression of the rebellion over the salt tax by the Perugians in 1540.

The personifications that flank the history scenes on the walls were all derived from Roman coins and, as in the Sala dei Cento Giorni, once more show qualities appropriate to the action.¹⁴³ Thus on one side of the *Truce of Nice* Peace is represented in her habitual act of setting fire to a pile of weapons, and carrying a cornucopia, exactly following the description of a coin of Trajan given by Caro in a letter concerning this programme.¹⁴⁴ On the other side is Security, with a wreath in one hand and a spear in the other.

Of the wall subjects that have not yet been discussed, one shows the event from which the room takes its name, the Council of Trent (pl. 87). The Council itself occupies most of the composition, which owes a great deal to Raphael's *Disputa*. Paul himself appears only in a subsidiary scene in one corner, but the inscription stresses his crucial rôle in setting up the Council.¹⁴⁵ On either side are Justice, carrying a book and scales, and Religion, with chalice and cross.

The iconographer returned to the Battle of Tunis for the last scene on the walls, in which Paul was depicted welcoming the victorious Emperor to Rome. Charles is shown kissing Paul's foot in obeisance and receiving the papal blessing. After the humiliation of the Sack of Rome, and the reception of the victorious Emperor in the city, some satisfaction must have been derived from showing him in this inferior position.¹⁴⁶ The scene is accompanied by Hilaritas, who holds a palm leaf and a cornucopia, based on a coin of Commodus, and Abundance, who holds ears of corn and another cornucopia, following coins of Antoninus that show *Annona Augusta*.¹⁴⁷

The main *salone* adjoining this room takes up the rest of the family's history, but lays particular emphasis on Alessandro's contribution to the Counter-Reformation, and to the family's current prosperity. The ceiling was devoted to medieval subjects, several of which were also used in Salviati's Palazzo Farnese cycle. At one end the scenes refer to the Farnese's military achievements, while at the other we see the investiture of authority in its members by secular and ecclesiastical powers.¹⁴⁸ Partridge has suggested that in setting two scenes in cities on the very edge of the state of Castro, in Orbetello, a town with which the Farnese had had nothing to do until very recently, and in Orvieto, the patron was establishing the family's territorial claims,¹⁴⁹ and this recalls the similar claims made in the Sala d'Ercole, where several towns under Farnese jurisdiction were depicted.

On the walls, which are painted with scenes set in rich tapestry-like borders, are depicted a wholly new set of subjects, which show the actions of the youngest generation of Farnese, above all the patron. The long walls are entirely devoted to Alessandro's career. Thus we see his entry into Paris on a crucial legation in 1540 (col. pl. VI), his arrival in Worms to meet the Emperor four years later (col. pl. VII), and the resultant expedition against the Protestant Schmalkaldic League. In the *Entry into Paris* Alessandro had himself depicted beneath a baldacchino with Francis I and Charles V. The sixteenth-century viewer would surely not have missed the implied parallel with the depiction in the next room of Paul III at Nice. The inscription above the *Expedition against the Schmalkaldic League* similarly emphasises the importance of Farnese participation in these events.¹⁵⁰ Alessandro was also quite happy to manipulate history to his greater glory. Thus he had him-



88. Taddeo Zuccaro and workshop, *Julius III restores Parma to Ottavio Farnese*, 1562–3, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese, Sala dei Fasti Farnesiani (Photo: I.C.C.D.).

self portrayed at the centre of the composition of *Parma being restored to Ottavio Farnese* (pl. 88), implying that he had played a major part in the negotiations, although he had not in fact done so.¹⁵¹

A different kind of power achieved by the family is represented on one of the short walls (pl. 82), where are shown their dynastic marriages into the Habsburg and Valois families.¹⁵² Opposite are scenes of two investitures, which emphasise the loyalty of the lay members of the family to the Church: *Pier Luigi Farnese being made Gonfalonier of the Church in 1535* and *Orazio Farnese made Prefect of Rome in 1538* (pl. 89). The entire cycle seems to have been intended above all to impress on both contemporaries and posterity, the nobility and status of the present generation of Farnese, as well as stressing their glorious origins. Such self-assertion became particularly important for them after the death of Paul III. The frescoes in the Sala dei Fasti are the expression of an unshakeable confidence in the Farnese, who display to the world an unswerving loyalty first to the Church and secondly to the clan.

Once the public rooms were under way, attention turned to the Cardinal's



89. Taddeo Zuccaro and workshop, Sala dei Fasti Farnesiani, end wall, 1562–3, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese, Sala dei Fasti Farnesiani (Photo: I.C.C.D.).

private rooms. The subjects depicted here are sophisticated and witty. They are indeed ‘capricious, ingenious and most praiseworthy . . . inventions’, as Vasari described them.¹⁵³ The images are derived largely from classical mythology and ancient history, and in each room the programme is structured around a single conceit (*concreto*) related to the function of the room, following the dictates of decorum.¹⁵⁴

The first room to be planned was the bedroom, the Camera dell’Aurora, the Room of Dawn (pl. 90), for which the celebrated programme written by Annibal Caro in November 1562 survives.¹⁵⁵ The subjects are all based on ideas of night and sleep. On the oval vault Aurora is represented putting Night to flight, together with the moon-goddess Diana and Mercury, in an uncommon rôle as god of sleep. Four roundels in the corners are concerned with sleep, dreams and silence, with the obscure deities Angerona and Harpocrates over the doors warning visitors to keep silent, Ovid’s house of Sleep (pl. 91) and the goddess of dreams, Brizo.¹⁵⁶ The subsidiary decoration, even down to the grotesques, was all connected with the central theme.¹⁵⁷



VI. Taddeo Zuccaro and workshop, *Alessandro Farnese enters Paris*, 1540, 1562–3, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese (Photo: Scala).

The adjoining room, the Stanza dei Lanefici, the Room of the Woolmakers was decorated around the same time.¹⁵⁸ Although no programme has survived, circumstantial evidence and the similarities with the iconography of the Camera dell'Aurora make it likely that Caro was once more its author. This room was apparently the Cardinal's dressing-room, and so its theme is 'invenzioni di vestiti'.¹⁵⁹ All the subjects are classical images connected, at times somewhat tenuously, with the idea of clothes: Minerva first giving garments to man dominates the centre of the vault (pl. 92). Around are the myth of Arachne's disastrous spinning contest with Minerva, bizarrely represented, and Hercules and Tyro discovering the murex dye.¹⁶⁰ In a more lighthearted vein are shown Pan seducing Diana with the bribe of a basket of white wool, and the three Graces peacefully bathing while mischievous putti steal their clothes (pl. 93).¹⁶¹

The third room in this suite, the Stanza della Solitudine, the Room of Solitude (pl. 94), was the Cardinal's study and was therefore decorated with a complex scheme of Christian and pagan figures who had retreated into solitary contemplation, a subject that derives in outline, as well as in some specific details, from Petrarch's *De vita solitaria*. The iconography was devised by Caro, in conjunction with Onofrio Panvinio, and their lengthy programme survives. It was not planned until May 1565, immediately before the room was painted, although it was ready for decoration by July 1563.¹⁶² Though the decoration was executed during Taddeo's lifetime, important sections were designed by Federico Zuccaro.¹⁶³



VII. Taddeo Zuccaro and workshop, *Charles V with Alessandro Farnese at Worms*, 1562–3, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese (Photo: Scala).

The summer apartment, the *appartamento d'estate*, was completed thus far before Taddeo's sudden and premature death in September 1566. Federico wrote immediately to the Cardinal, asking if he might take over his brother's post.¹⁶⁴ He was supported by Giulio Clovio, who wrote to Alessandro a few days later, stressing that Ippolito d'Este was threatening to entice Federico to Tivoli if he did not act speedily:

besides his ability, [Federico] is as good a man as possible. I know that Your Lordship needs such a person, so do not allow him to slip through your fingers, because I think that he is greatly sought after by the Cardinal of Ferrara.¹⁶⁵

Federico, who had already worked at Caprarola under Taddeo, was the obvious choice as his successor, and Alessandro lost no time in appointing him, at the same salary as that of his brother.¹⁶⁶

Federico's first task was the decoration of the chapel. Taddeo had already painted an altarpiece for it, which depicted the dead Christ surrounded by weeping



90 (left). Taddeo Zuccaro and workshop, vault of the Camera dell'Aurora, 1562, fresco (Photo: I.C.C.D.).



91. Taddeo Zuccaro and workshop, *House of Sleep*, 1562, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese, Camera dell'Aurora (Photo: Author).

92 (right). Taddeo Zuccaro and workshop, *Minerva gives clothes to primitive man*, c.1562–5, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese, Stanza dei Lanefici (Photo: I.C.C.D.).



93. Taddeo Zuccaro and workshop, *The Three Graces bathing*, 1562–5, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese, Stanza dei Lanefici (Photo: I.C.C.D.).



94. Workshop of Taddeo Zuccaro, vault of the Stanza della Solitudine, 1565, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese (Photo: I.C.C.D.).

angels. But his brother decided to keep this for himself, and painted the same composition in the chapel in fresco (pl. 95).¹⁶⁷ Federico was assisted in the painting of the chapel by Giovanni Antinoro, a specialist in grotesque painting, who was responsible for the compartmentation of the ceiling.¹⁶⁸ The ceiling was decorated with subjects from the Old Testament, while on the walls two large scenes, of the same size as the altarpiece, depict, on one side, the three Marys lamenting, and on the other, St John the Baptist. Between these, in smaller frescoed areas and in the stained glass, are represented the twelve apostles, including portraits of Taddeo and Vignola for Sts Thaddeus and James respectively.¹⁶⁹

The chapel was followed by the *studiolo*, known as the Gabinetto d'Ermatena (pl. 96), which was begun during the winter of 1566.¹⁷⁰ It had been planned while Taddeo was still alive, although the design of the monstrous hybrid Hermathena, which is based on a misinterpretation of a double herm described by Cicero, must be entirely the work of Federico.¹⁷¹ In the corners of the room are depicted a number of scientific and musical instruments and other symbols of learning, a kind of decoration entirely suited to this type of room.¹⁷²



95. Federico Zuccaro, *Dead Christ with angels*, 1566, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese, Chapel (Photo: I.C.C.D.).

96 (below). Federico Zuccaro, vault of the Gabinetto d'Ermatena (detail), 1566–7, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese (Photo: I.C.C.D.).





97 and 98. Workshop of Federico Zuccaro, grotesque decoration, 1567, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese, *appartamento dell'inverno* (Photos: Author).

During 1567 there seems to have been relatively little painterly activity, apart from the decoration of the ground-floor *appartamento dell'inverno*, or winter apartment, with charming, but sadly, much-damaged, grotesques that pick up figures used in the decoration elsewhere, such as the figure of Vignola from the chapel and that of Fama from the Sala dei Fasti (pls 97–8).¹⁷³ At the same time the entrance loggia on this floor, the Sala delle Guardie, was decorated (pl. 99). The centre of the vault is dominated by various family coats of arms, together with small monochrome scenes of sea deities (pl. 100). The work must have been planned, at least in part, by Taddeo before his death. A double-sided drawing for the Sala delle Guardie in characteristically vigorous style demonstrates clearly Taddeo's authorship of the designs, as indeed do the inscriptions in Federico's hand confirming his brother as the 'inventor' (pls 101–2).¹⁷⁴ These motifs were incorporated into the overall design by Antinoro, as a signed drawing dated 1567 indicates (pl. 103).¹⁷⁵ The scenes on the coving have a topographical theme depicting various local towns, including two views of Caprarola itself, a type of decoration entirely appropriate to an entrance hall.

The next room to be decorated was the loggia immediately above this, the Sala d'Ercole, or Hall of Hercules (pl. 104), which looks out over the town, and which takes up the topographical theme. This is particularly suitable in this location, since the room has the best views over the surrounding countryside in the villa. By April 1568 the stucco work in this room was almost finished and presumably painting started shortly after.¹⁷⁶ Its execution took some time and ran into difficulties in July 1569, when Federico refused to go to Caprarola after a quarrel with his patron, although he did send members of his workshop. This episode led rapidly to Federico's dismissal from Farnese service, for which he took his revenge by painting a *Calumny of Apelles*.¹⁷⁷

Federico was replaced by the Parmesan artist Jacopo Bertoja, who was at that time working in the Oratorio del Gonfalone in Rome. He had already worked for Alessandro's brother Ottavio, and may have entered the Cardinal's service as early as March 1568.¹⁷⁸ Interestingly, Alessandro seems to have looked to Parma for a number of artists at this period: it was presumably from there, as a result of Margaret of Austria's contacts with the Low Countries, that he was introduced to some of the many Flemish artists who worked for him. These included Bartolomeus Spranger, and two artists known as Ruberto Fiammingo and Cornelio Fiammingo. The latter was paid the not inconsiderable salary of eight *scudi* per month in 1569, which rose to eleven *scudi* the following year.¹⁷⁹ Alessandro was unwilling to pay Bertoja as much as the Zuccari: in his instructions to his majordomo he stated that he would prefer to offer him ten *scudi* per month, although he was prepared to rise to twelve, the sum that was eventually agreed upon.¹⁸⁰ The artist cannot have found this treatment altogether satisfactory, for in 1572, when Alessandro was trying to get him to return to the villa, he insisted on an increase to fifteen *scudi* per month.¹⁸¹

Cardinal Farnese had some jurisdiction over the Compagnia del Gonfalone, and he had no hesitation in depriving it of its painter.¹⁸² The tone in which he commanded that Bertoja should drop his work in the Oratory and come to Caprarola was peremptory indeed:

Let the Compagnia del Gonfalone know that since we have taken the painter Jacopo of Parma to be with us, they should be content to let him come and serve us, since they will not lack the means to find others to complete what they have begun, and we wish at any rate that he should come here as soon as possible.¹⁸³

Bertoja, in fact, appeared promptly at the villa, arriving just one week after the rupture with Federico, and a few days later the last stage of the programme was being planned by Fulvio Orsini.¹⁸⁴ Alessandro had hoped to acquire Federico's preparatory drawings for the Sala d'Ercole, presumably to ensure some stylistic continuity and to save time, but his majordomo, Lodovico Todesco, wrote that he was unlikely to succeed, because Federico would be unwilling to allow other painters the credit for his inventions.¹⁸⁵

The programme for the Sala d'Ercole has been interpreted as a complex allegory of 'a Christian and Farnese triumph over matter and time made possible by the agent of the Church and the rite of baptism', as well as of Farnese's fortune in acquiring the services of such a skilled hydraulic engineer as Vignola.¹⁸⁶ Without resorting to such contrived explanations, we may interpret the decoration of the



99 (above). Giovanni Antinoro and Federico Zuccaro, ceiling of the Sala delle Guardie, 1567, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese (Photo: Author).

101 (facing page top left). Taddeo Zuccaro, *Marine deities*, c.1566, pen and brown wash over red chalk, with white heightening (traces of squaring in red chalk), 18.8 × 14.0 cm., private collection (Photo: Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd.).

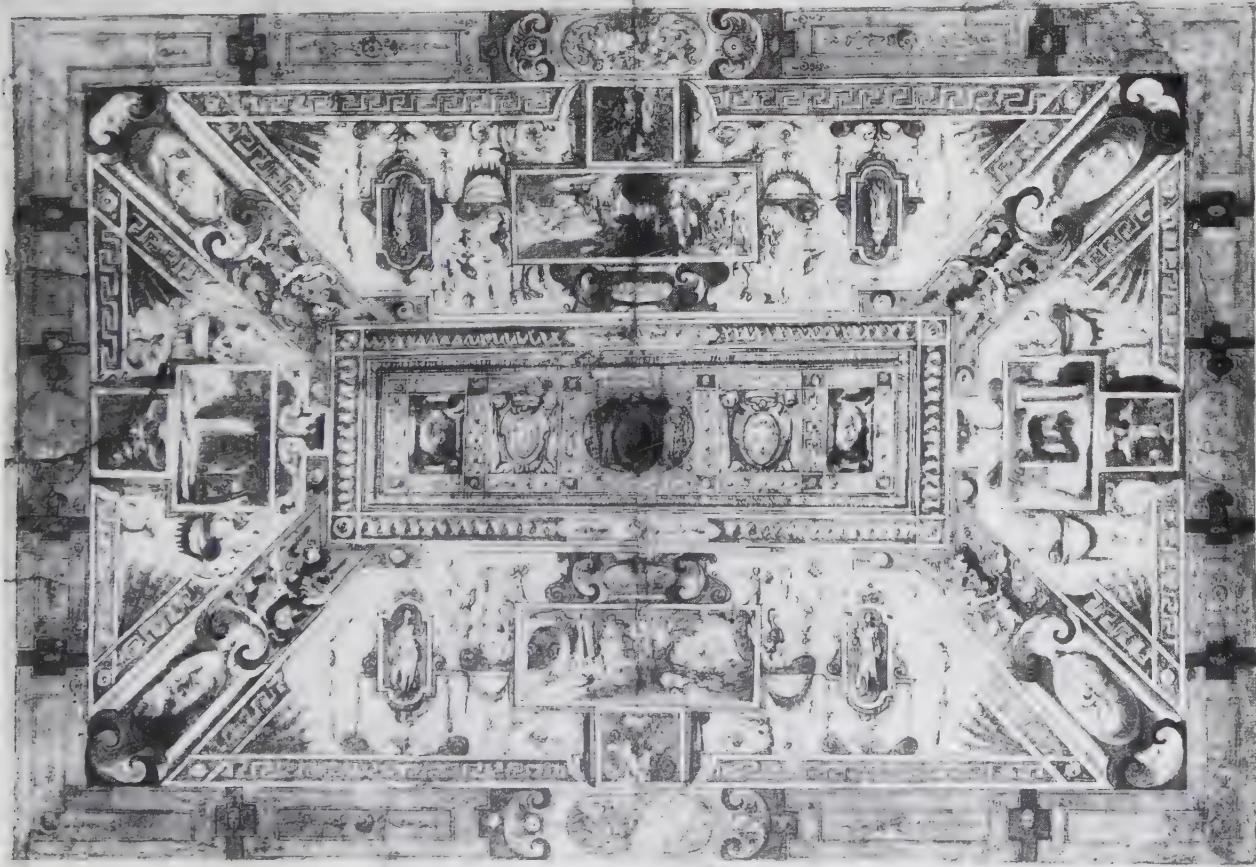
102 (facing page top right). Taddeo Zuccaro, *Marine deities*, c.1566, pen and brown wash over red chalk, with white heightening (traces of squaring in red chalk), 18.8 × 14.0 cm., private collection (verso of pl. 101) (Photo: Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd.).

100. Detail of pl. 99.





103. Giovanni Antinoro, project for the ceiling of the Sala delle Guardie, 1567, black chalk and brown wash, with colour notations in pen and brown ink, 39.8 × 56.8 cm., formerly T. Clifford Collection (Photo: courtesy of Sotheby's).





104. Federico Zuccaro and Jacopo Bertoja, vault of the Sala d'Ercole, 1568–9, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese (Photo: I.C.C.D.).

vault as essentially topographical. The subject painted there by Federico Zuccaro and Bertoja was a local myth, Hercules' creation of the nearby Lago di Vico (pl. 104).¹⁸⁷ This resulted in the building of a temple to the hero, which is also depicted on the vault, with Vignola's features being given to the architect (pl. 105). A fine preliminary study by Bertoja for this scene survives. This differs considerably from the final result in that the direction of the composition is reversed, the temple architecture is much altered, and the statue of Hercules is very much larger.¹⁸⁸

The rest of the iconography is linked in a very loose way, if at all, to the theme of the vault.¹⁸⁹ The subjects of the wall adjoining the chapel, and over the doors, take up another topographical idea, showing views of Farnese towns. The subjects of the frieze are linked to the vault, by continuing the Herculean theme, depicting other exploits of the hero, while the long wall has landscapes representing the four seasons, which are not apparently connected at all with the rest of the subject-matter.

Bertoja worked at the villa until late September 1569, finishing the painted decoration of the Sala d'Ercole in that month.¹⁹⁰ The decoration of the loggia was



105. Jacopo Bertoja, *Peasants building a temple of Hercules*, 1569, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese, Sala d'Ercole (Photo: Author).



106. Curzio Maccherone and Giovanni Battista di Bianchi, fountain, 1572, Caprarola, Villa Farnese, Sala d'Ercole (Photo: Author).

completed by a polychrome fountain (pl. 106), which would have provided the pleasing sound of gently splashing water – frequently exploited in Renaissance gardens – while the Cardinal and his friends were dining there. The fountain was constructed by the *fontaniere* Curzio Maccherone, also known as Curzio delle Fontane, who was responsible for Ippolito d'Este's fountains at Tivoli, and by Alessandro's house sculptor, Giovanni Battista di Bianchi.¹⁹¹ A remarkable stuccoed landscape with a river running through forms the background to the grotto-like fountain, which has marble putti, based on antique prototypes, pouring water into the basin, and a sleeping Cupid, who apes the pose of the sleeping nymphs so common with this type of fountain. The whole work closely resembles the fountain by Maccherone in the entrance courtyard at the Villa d'Este, which is ruled over by a nymph. The similarity again suggests the rivalry between the two Cardinals over their villa decoration.

Bertoja returned to Caprarola to paint on and off until 1572. His next task was to decorate the private rooms of the winter apartment on the *piano nobile*. He was therefore responsible during this period for the decoration of the bedroom, the Stanza dei Sogni (Room of Dreams), the study, the Stanza della Penitenza

(Room of Penitence), and the Stanza dei Giudizi (Room of the Judgements), which may have been the dressing-room, while still trying to fulfil his obligations to the Compagnia del Gonfalone.¹⁹² Several documents suggest that the artist was not entirely happy in Alessandro's service, and he eventually returned to Parma around the end of the summer of 1572, after painting the ceiling of the Sala degli Angeli.¹⁹³

The structure and layout of the *appartamento dell'inverno* are virtually identical with those of the summer apartment, but by contrast with the largely pagan programmes of the latter, the subject-matter of the private rooms in the winter apartment becomes exclusively religious.¹⁹⁴ The familiar principles governed the choice of theme, none the less: as the Camera dell'Aurora was devoted to the notion of night and sleep, so, too, the corresponding Stanza dei Sogni, as its name suggests, depicts a number of biblical dreams. In place of Aurora, the central oval vault shows Jacob's ladder (pl. 107), while the rest of the spaces were filled with such incidents as Joseph's dream of the sun and the moon, and the dream of Nebuchadnezzar.¹⁹⁵ In the Stanza della Penitenza, where Alessandro was clearly meant to meditate on repentance, the main scene is the exaltation of the Cross, while the subsidiary images represent various solitary saints.¹⁹⁶ The neat correspondences between the two apartments do not hold for the dressing-rooms. Unlike the Stanza dei Lanefici, the programme for the Stanza dei Giudizi, with its biblical scenes of law-giving and justice, is not apparently related in any way to the function of the room.¹⁹⁷ The justification given by Fabio Arditio, a Farnese courtier who wrote a long account of Gregory XIII's visit to the villa in 1578 (which is a most valuable source), is that the subject-matter of this room was intended to be read with that of the adjoining study as offering a contrast between the active and contemplative lives:

And these pictures [of the Stanza dei Giudizi] correspond to the others of the deeds of Pallas and the inventions of clothes, insofar as they are all human actions represented in these rooms for the active life, just as in the others that follow, they represent the contemplative, there being depicted in the adjoining room [the Stanza della Penitenza] many spiritual holy fathers, who have retired to hermitages and monasteries for divine contemplation.¹⁹⁸

But if this is not an *ex post facto* rationalisation, it sounds as though it reflects the plea of an unhappy iconographer, unwilling to devise a set of religious images to do with clothes.

Bertoja began decoration of the first of the public rooms in this apartment, the Sala degli Angeli, before his departure. There he painted the splendid *Fall of the Rebel Angels* (pl. 108).¹⁹⁹ After his return to Parma, work on this room was suspended. In the meanwhile, during the course of 1573 the programme for the main reception room of this apartment, the Sala del Mappamondo, was being planned.²⁰⁰ Bertoja was succeeded at Caprarola by the Tuscan artist, Giovanni de' Vecchi. The commission for the Sala del Mappamondo is Giovanni's first known work for the Cardinal, who was to be his major patron over the next fifteen years. It is not clear how Alessandro came to know Giovanni: he was by the early 1570s an established painter in Rome, having worked in the Villa Belvedere and receiving commissions for S. Maria d'Aracoeli and S. Eligio degli Orefici. He was also

107. Jacopo Bertoja, vault of the Stanza dei Sogni, 1569–71, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese (Photo: I.C.C.D.).



108 (below). Jacopo Bertoja, *Fall of the Rebel Angels*, 1572, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese, Sala degli Angeli (Photo: I.C.C.D.).





109. Giovanni Vanosino da Varese, vault of the Sala del Mappamondo, 1574, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese.

a member of the newly formed Accademia di S. Luca.²⁰¹ Possibly he came to Alessandro's attention via Fulvio Orsini, who had been adopted by Gentile Delfini, Giovanni's patron in the Aracoeli. Perhaps even more important was the fact that, yet again, Giovanni was an artist who had worked for Ippolito d'Este at Tivoli.²⁰²

De' Vecchi was assisted in both the Sala del Mappamondo and the adjacent Sala degli Angeli by the talented but short-lived Raffaellino da Reggio. According to Baglione, his career at Caprarola was cut short when the Cardinal praised some satyrs he had painted in the Sala del Mappamondo, and de' Vecchi in a jealous rage drove him away from the villa.²⁰³

The subject-matter found in the Sala del Mappamondo is quite different from that in any of the preceding rooms at Caprarola. The walls are covered with painted maps of the known world, and the ceiling has an astrological map of the heavens (col. pls VIII, IX and pl. 109). These were painted by a specialist in this genre, Giovanni Antonio Vanosino da Varese. He had already painted a very similar room for Pius IV in the Vatican, which surely provided the inspiration for the Caprarola programme. This was worked out in detail with the assistance of Fulvio Orsini.²⁰⁴ The decoration of this room was completed by a number of portraits of famous explorers, as well as an astrological frieze, devoted to the signs of the zodiac, which may represent the Cardinal's horoscope. The idea for the





110. Giovanni de' Vecchi, *Angel*, 1575, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese, Sala degli Angeli (Photo: I.C.C.D.).

111. Raffaellino da Reggio, *Angel*, 1575, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese, Sala degli Angeli (Photo: I.C.C.D.).

horoscope may have been suggested by Peruzzi's frescoes in the Villa Farnesina, which Alessandro was subsequently to acquire. This frieze was painted by Raffaellino and de' Vecchi, and the latter was, in addition, responsible for the personifications surrounding some of the maps.

De' Vecchi also painted all the *storie* and most of the beautiful standing angels, set against dramatic black backgrounds, in the Sala degli Angeli (pls 110–11). The subject-matter of the Sala degli Angeli concerns miraculous interventions by angels in both biblical and historical events. These include Habakkuk being brought to rescue Daniel from some very friendly lions (pl. 112), and the apparition of the angel over Hadrian's mausoleum in AD 590, the event that led to its being renamed Castel Sant'Angelo. Another version of this scene was painted again by de' Vecchi in S. Maria d'Aracoeli in 1579–80.²⁰⁵ The standing angels flank these scenes, occupying the equivalent positions to the classical personifications in the Anticamera del Concilio.

The Sala degli Angeli is the only public room at Caprarola to have a programme of religious subjects. While we have seen that the decoration of the private rooms in the two apartments corresponds closely, the attempt to extend such equivalences to the public rooms breaks down. Nevertheless, this did not stop Fabio Arditio from trying to draw out correlations with the scheme for the Anticamera del Concilio:

The proportion which the pictures of this antechamber [of the Angels] have in relation to those of the other [antechamber, i.e., of the Council] can be easily understood, because the creation of cardinals who would succeed to the ponti-



112. Giovanni de' Vecchi, *Habbakuk visits Daniel in the lions' den*, 1575, fresco, Caprarola, Villa Farnese, Sala degli Angeli (Photo: I.C.C.D.).

ficate, which Paul III made in the other room, the introduction of peace between two such great monarchs as Charles V and King Francis, the celebration of the Holy Council, the separation of the heretics from the bosom of the Holy Church, the pardoning of those who repent of the error they have committed, what else are these than angelic actions?²⁰⁶

This is not, however, entirely convincing. It reads rather like the explanation of an ingenious courtier determined to find a 'proportion'. Still less plausible is the link that he creates, despite the admission that there is 'no small diversity', between the Sala dei Fasti and the Sala del Mappamondo as showing 'patrons of the world' and the 'world' itself respectively.²⁰⁷ Perhaps more relevant here is the influence of the latter room's prototype in the Vatican. One can well imagine Alessandro's desiring to have his own version of this novel kind of decoration.

The last stage of painting in the villa was the decoration of the staircase with landscapes by Antonio Tempesta and his workshop. The small landscapes in the Stanza del Torrione (Room of the Tower), which may have been a library, have also been attributed to Tempesta.²⁰⁸ The decoration of the villa was thus finally completed by 1579.

* * *

Although the history of the decoration is well documented, our knowledge of the planning of the subject-matter for the frescoes is uneven. For two rooms the programmes themselves survive, but for the others it is necessary to reconstruct the iconographers' intentions from the rather fragmentary documentation, such as the contemporary descriptions of Aurelio Orsi and Fabio Arditio, and from the frescoes themselves, a task not without hazard.²⁰⁹ But we may be certain that the patron and his advisers did not embark on the decoration of Caprarola with a unified overall scheme for the *piano nobile*. Such Renaissance examples as there are of continuous sequences of imagery from room to room are of a quite different kind from those at the Villa Farnese. In Palazzo Vecchio, for example, the 'parallel' genealogies of the gods and of the Medici are on different floors, and do not in any case have firm correspondences, while the history of the Obizzi at the Villa Cathaio depicts events in a continuous temporal sequence, rather than relating conceptual images to the functions of the rooms as at Caprarola.²¹⁰ It has, none the less, been suggested that at Alessandro's villa the choice of imagery was determined by a preconceived structure, in which the iconography of the *appartamento d'estate* represented aspects of the active life, and those of the *appartamento dell'inverno*, the contemplative.²¹¹ But this notion is entirely inapplicable to the frescoes at Caprarola and seems to have arisen from a misreading of a passage of Arditio's description, which contrasts adjacent rooms, not whole apartments.²¹² As the preceding survey has indicated, individual programmes were in fact devised immediately before the room in question was to be painted. That they were not fitted into a preordained system is suggested by a perceptible change in the type of image used in the rooms decorated during the 1570s.

In accordance with standard practice at this period, different kinds of imagery are to be found in the public and private rooms. In the summer apartment, decorated during the 1560s, two types of iconography, topographical and historical, are to be found in the public rooms. Of the former, the simplest example is the Sala delle Guardie, with its views of Caprarola itself. More sophisticated and witty examples are the schemes for the Sala d'Amalthea and the Sala d'Ercole. The extensive treatment of family history in the Anticamera del Concilio and the Sala dei Fasti represents the latter type of imagery. The subjects of the private rooms in this apartment were, as we have seen, largely derived from classical mythology and structured cleverly around the function of the room. A major change is perceptible in the kinds of subject chosen for the winter apartment, decorated during the 1570s, in which the iconography became largely religious. Such correspondences as there are between the rooms of the two apartments are the result of the application of the principle of decorum. But more significant is the alteration in the subject-matter of the later programmes, which possibly reflects Alessandro's new preoccupation with Counter-Reformation values and his apparently increased spirituality.²¹³ Religious subjects admittedly started to appear in secular contexts rather after Alessandro's 'conversion', but during the second half of the 1560s his attention was understandably directed primarily to public religious commissions. Only later did he start to follow an established, though not universal, trend of decorating villas with Christian iconography. Yet although one can point to certain possible influences, no evidence in fact permits us to assess the extent to which the change in the type of iconography was conditioned by overt public

pressure or by Alessandro's own religious inclinations, or indeed by more banal considerations, such as the need for *varietà*, or a change of adviser. How far the patron himself intervened in the choice of subject-matter at Caprarola is difficult to determine.²¹⁴ Other evidence suggests that he was generally more concerned with iconography than with stylistic issues.²¹⁵ However, the detailed working out of the programme was invariably left to the advisers.²¹⁶

I have endeavoured thus far to suggest that the choice of subject-matter for the rooms at Caprarola was governed by several considerations: besides in every case being appropriate to the purpose of the room, great pleasure was evidently gained from the selection of somewhat *recherché* subjects, whose identification could provide entertainment and the opportunity for the courtly beholder to show off his erudition.²¹⁷ The decorations might also in some way make reference to either the place or the patron, but always in a straightforward and accessible manner. Elsewhere, it has been suggested in discussions of some of the rooms at Caprarola that the imagery was meant to be interpreted on a number of levels, all of which alluded to the patron in different ways. For example, according to this view, the myth of Hercules in the Sala d'Ercole has not only a superficial topographical sense, but a political and religious message as well.²¹⁸ So too, even the visual panegyric of the Farnese family in the historical cycles has a further dimension, transforming Caprarola into 'a New Rome and a New Jerusalem, or the microcosm of the Christian commonwealth'.²¹⁹ It seems to be maintained in addition that the substructural messages of these images are of greater significance than the subjects depicted.

That such meanings were not built into the instructions given to the painter nor expressly intended by the adviser who composed the iconographic programme is ultimately unprovable, and the issue must be argued in terms of context and plausibility.²²⁰ To assert that such allegorical significance is present seems similarly to be a profession of faith, rather than an affirmation of fact. But the evidence that survives suggests that the multiplication of ambiguities and levels of symbolism is not appropriate to sixteenth-century visual imagery, even though there did exist a long tradition of literary exegesis of this kind, of which the educated Renaissance viewer could not fail to be aware.²²¹ There is thus a total absence of reference to secondary meaning and of any attempt to relate the symbol to its disguised significance in the programmes that survive from the Cinquecento. Moreover, in one instance Annibal Caro specifically denied that allegorisations of myths could be painted.²²² Nor does the theory of metaphor on which sixteenth-century iconographers drew permit this kind of multi-layered reading, as Gombrich has demonstrated.²²³

The twentieth-century iconographer has justified his allegorical readings of these frescoes by reference to two contemporary phenomena: first, the courtly practice of flattering the patron by devising secondary, allegorical interpretations of visual imagery that complimented him; and second, the fashion for *imprese*. With regard to the former, there is evidence that this type of interpretation was *ex post facto* rather than inherent in the original programme. The contrast between Cosimo Bartoli's programmes for Vasari's frescoes in Palazzo Vecchio and their courtly elaboration in the artist's *Ragionamenti* is instructive in this respect: in the latter Vasari first describes the iconography in words lifted directly from the pro-

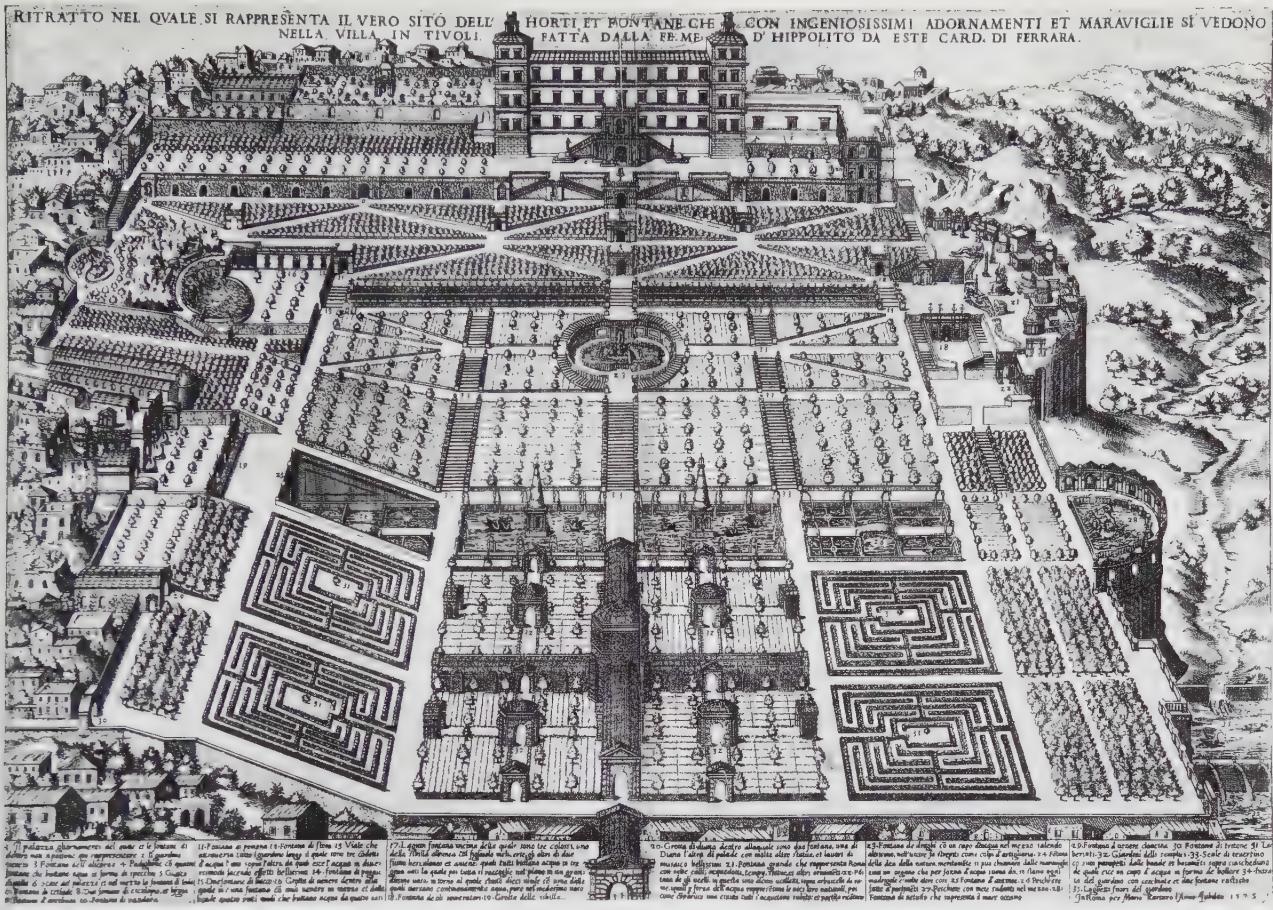
gramme, and then compliments his patron by interpreting it in terms of Medici history. This, however, is evidently not essential to the imagery, since it is frequently self-contradictory and on occasion breaks down altogether.²²⁴ This is not, of course, to claim that the iconographer was unaware of the potential for patronal allegorisations when he devised a programme. Vasari, indeed, as a skilled courtier and an accomplished iconographer, must surely have considered the possibilities as he painted his frescoes, rather than inventing his Medicean interpretations wholly after the event. But, though every myth will possess multitudinous potential symbols, because of the nature of the visual image, these cannot all be intentionally built into the programme.²²⁵

Imprese are explicitly distinguished as a separate genre from painted images, with different rules of interpretation, by Ripa in 1593, and this must reflect the practice of the earlier part of the century.²²⁶ Essentially the *impresa* was intended to be ambiguous and to offer numerous potential explanations. They have, however, often been taken by modern scholars to provide the key to the meaning of decorative cycles. Thus a contemporary explication of the Farnese device of the lily and the rainbow has been seen as indicating the notion of grace, and thence we proceed to the view that the Sala dei Fasti really conveys a message about the Christian Commonwealth, because the device is illustrated there.²²⁷ A closer examination of the distribution of *impresa* throughout the rooms at Caprarola rather suggests that they have no more significance than the family coats of arms that are painted as subsidiary parts of the decoration, to remind the viewer of who the patron is. If their presence is crucial to the meaning of the programme, we must presumably conclude that in the Camera della Primavera the subjects are really about Alessandro Farnese, but that those of the Camera dell'Autunno are not, since there are no *impresa* in the latter room. We would, moreover, expect contemporary descriptions to devote rather more attention to their presence, not to mention their meaning. Instead, Vasari entirely fails to mention an *impresa* at any point in his extended discussion of the frescoes at Caprarola, while Arditio describes them only in the Sala del Mappamondo, and even there does not suggest that they form an integral part of the programme.²²⁸

In short, the historical Farnese cycles comprise no more than a straightforward celebration of the family's exploits, while the decorative imagery of the private rooms provided enjoyable intellectual entertainment as well as pleasing the eye. They do not convey political or religious messages in disguise.

Caprarola: gardens

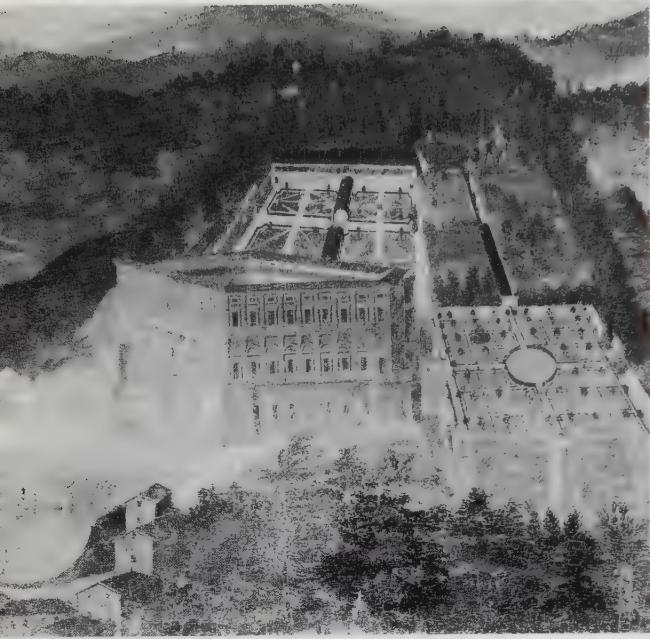
Once construction of the villa was underway, attention was turned to the gardens. Laying these out was to continue over the rest of Alessandro's life. The development of extensive gardens was an essential aspect of villa building in Central Italy at this period, with patrons vying with each other to produce ever more spectacular gardens. One may speculate whether the spur of rivalry with Ippolito d'Este in particular once more lay behind the constant expansion of the gardens (pl. 113), although the results at Caprarola and Tivoli are very different. The gardens at Caprarola have close connections with those of the Villa Lante (pls 114–15),



113. M. Cartaro, *View of the Villa d'Este gardens, Tivoli*, 1575, engraving (Photo: Trustees of the British Museum).

114 and 115. Bagnaia, the Villa Lante gardens, from 1568 (Photos: Author).





116. Raffaellino da Reggio, *View of Caprarola*, c.1575, fresco, Bagnaia, Villa Lante.



117. Giovanni Battista di Bianchi, *Hora*, 1576, Caprarola, Villa Farnese, garden (Photo: Author).

which were being laid out at nearby Bagnaia by Alessandro's good friend Cardinal Gianfrancesco Gambara, often in consultation with Alessandro.²²⁹ The two formal *giardini segreti*, adjacent to the villa were, as already mentioned, designed by Vignola, but they were not completed until well after his death.²³⁰ They have suffered from many years of neglect, but their original appearance may be reconstructed from a number of sources, visual and documentary. Most useful is a fresco in the Villa Lante, which probably dates from the 1570s (pl. 116).²³¹ Details of the sculpture and the fountains are given in Arditio's description and in Aurelio Orsi's epigrams, as well as a number of letters.

Access to the gardens was gained from the Stanza dei Lanefici and the Stanza dei Giudizi, via drawbridges. At the entrance to each were two statues of hours or *Hore* (pl. 117), bearing three-sided sundials on their heads.²³² Each garden was laid out with straight avenues, and adorned with statues, at least some of which were antiques, restored or adapted by Giovanni Battista di Bianchi.

The fountains were constructed by Curzio Maccherone. Curzio worked at

Caprarola over a number of years. He was evidently in great demand from other patrons, above all at Tivoli, and a recurrent theme of Alessandro's *carteggio* during these years is the difficulty of actually getting him away from his other commitments. Thus one of Alessandro's advisers wrote, 'It is so difficult to get hold of him that he does little more than make me lose patience.'²³³ Curzio first worked at the Villa Farnese in July 1568, presumably on the fountains for the garden.²³⁴ Later that summer, Alessandro wrote to Paolo Vitelli, who had asked to borrow Curzio, to excuse himself for not sending the *fontaniere* to work for him.²³⁵ Curzio apparently worked (or was meant to work) at Caprarola in 1570, probably in the garden.²³⁶ In 1572 he returned to build the fountain in the Sala d'Ercole.²³⁷ He was there throughout the summer intermittently: late in September Alessandro's majordomo reported that the mosaic tesserae ordered by Curzio had arrived but that, characteristically, Curzio himself was absent at Tivoli.²³⁸ The Cardinal was trying once more to get him to Caprarola in August 1578, probably to work on the garden again.²³⁹

The first garden to be constructed was that of the summer apartment. Arditio states that there were three fountains there. The first was the elaborate Fountain of Venus (Fontana di Venere), at the far end, opposite the entrance.²⁴⁰ He describes this in some detail:

Within a little square loggia, covered over by a pavilion, all painted, with three doors to close it, there is a most beautiful niche and in it a marble nude Venus with two little figures on either side in the form of terms. She is placed above a mount decorated with pumice, corals and various sea-shells, and, holding a chain with both hands, from which surges a huge bubbling stream of water, she is completely bathed. This water, running down over the mount, which also spouts three more great streams, falls into a big basin made of coloured marble and mosaic, which appears to be in the form and colour of a marine conch. From the sides two unicorns lean in, wanting to drink. Outside the niche, on the level of the Venus, are two great satyrs made of the same mosaic as the conch, with vases of lilies on their heads, and a bunch of them in their hands. Above the unicorns in two more niches are two more statues of women with urns under their arms, and these, together with the terms and the satyrs' lilies, throw a great abundance of water into the conch, around which, on the ground, jets of water are cleverly made to burst out suddenly, to drench the bystanders.²⁴¹

The iconography of the fountain thus presents an elegant compliment to the patron, since both lilies and unicorns were Farnese emblems. The statue of Venus herself, which sounds like a restored antique rather than a new work, should have been sent in July 1562. But, as Tizio Chermadio reported, Guglielmo della Porta had pronounced on inspection that it needed further work, and it was not sent until September that year.²⁴²

The other fountains were in the forms of a Triton supporting a giant conch, and a woman, doubtless a nymph, with an urn, a common antique fountain type.²⁴³ Although, as we have seen, a number of Farnese *imprese* were incorporated into the main fountain, it is unlikely that we should seek an iconographic programme of any complexity for this garden, since all the elements were standard in garden ornament at this period.²⁴⁴



118. Curzio Maccherone,
Fontana dei Tartari, c.1579,
Caprarola, Villa Farnese,
garden (Photo: Author).

The winter garden was not completed until rather later. It does not appear to have been finished when Arditio described it in 1578. The main fountain, corresponding to the Fontana di Venere, was the Fountain of Rain, or the Fontana dei Tartari (pl. 118). Here a continuous stream of water flowed through rusticated caverns beneath a pergola, which was supported by six satyrs and 'wild men'.²⁴⁵ Orsi dedicated one of his epigrams to a *Fons Laedae*, which is not mentioned by Arditio.²⁴⁶ The construction of this fountain can be dated to 1579, the year after Arditio's visit. On 7 August Fulvio Orsini informed his patron that a statuette of Leda and the swan had been discovered in Alessandro's collection. Orsini regarded this as being entirely suitable for the fountain, though it needed restoration. But in case this was not suitable, he had located another similar work, which had formerly belonged to Cardinal Borromeo.²⁴⁷ The sculpture the Cardinal already owned was probably the one eventually chosen: Giovanni Battista di Bianchi, to whom it was entrusted, wrote to him a few days later, stressing that 'there was no other statue more suitable to fulfil your wishes'.²⁴⁸ Restoration was rapidly finished, and by 22 August the sculptor reported that he had just packed it up to send to Caprarola.²⁴⁹

Besides these works, the garden contained several minor fountains, and numerous 'waterjets to soak the less cautious viewers'. These were thoughtfully marked by Vasi on his engraving of 1746 (pl. 65), but many visitors must have been caught unawares by this favourite Renaissance joke.²⁵⁰

The area of woodland rising behind the villa from the angle between the two gardens was left relatively uncultivated. Much further up the hillside, close to the

site where the Palazzina was to be built, was located the Fountain of the Goat, built in 1562. This had as its centrepiece a terracotta statue of a goat which, like the programme for the Sala d'Amalthea, alluded to the supposed etymology of 'Caprarola'. It was surrounded by putti whom the goat suckled, her 'milk' being the water of the fountain.²⁵¹

The Palazzina was built between 1584 and 1587, and was an afterthought. Its setting is now greatly altered, after the modifications of Girolamo Rainaldi, although the casino itself, designed by Giovanni Antonio Garzoni is little changed. The casino (pl. 73) is a simple two-storey structure, with a double loggia at both front and back, each decorated with grotesques.²⁵² The emphasis on *logge* reflects the Palazzina's chief function, as a shady place for outdoor entertainment. Cardinal Alessandro had originally envisaged just an open-air picnic spot in this part of the woods, where he had a new fountain, the Fountain of the Vase, constructed. But he eventually followed the advice of his friend Cardinal Gambara, that at their age it was wiser to have some shade in which to eat. The elaborate water-chain flowing down the hill also owes much to that at Gambara's Bagnaia.²⁵³

* * *

The Villa Farnese was regularly used for large-scale entertainment, culminating in the visit of Gregory XIII in 1578, described in such detail by Arditio.²⁵⁴ It was widely admired by contemporaries. S. Carlo Borromeo, indeed, was moved to ask how Paradise could surpass it.²⁵⁵ Tiburzio Burzio appended a long description of it to his account of Alessandro's life, while another of Alessandro's majordomos related how two cardinals had discoursed on the villa with such enthusiasm and in such detail, that not even Vignola could have described it better.²⁵⁶ Bartolomeo Ammannati wrote a long letter of praise, and in an extensive and sycophantic letter of 1587, Federico Zuccaro recounted how he had described the beauties of the villa, and especially of the Sala dei Fasti, to Philip II. According to Zuccaro, Philip was highly impressed, though he would not have been pleased to learn that both Gregory XIII and, later, Clement VIII described Caprarola as far superior to the Escorial.²⁵⁷

Despite the magnificent scale of his own villa, Alessandro occasionally found it necessary to borrow the nearby villa and *vigna* belonging to Raffaele Riario, and by 1585 was attempting to buy them for 5,000 *scudi*.²⁵⁸ He did not, however, succeed, since the following year he was again asking to borrow the house.²⁵⁹

Quite apart from the villa itself, the Cardinal had still more grandiose schemes for Caprarola. It may well have been his idea to have an impressive approach made by creating the long straight road through the centre of the town, on axis with the villa, together with a monumental gateway at the bottom, which has now been demolished.²⁶⁰ The effect thus created was very similar to that of the approach to Palazzo Farnese in Rome, but all the more dramatic because of the steep slope on which Caprarola is built. Alessandro was prepared to go to considerable lengths to achieve visual impact. The approach road to the town had previously run alongside the villa, but he had Vignola design a new road about sixteen miles long, to ensure that the villa was first seen from the bottom of the hill.²⁶¹ The creation of this new access necessitated much rebuilding in the town, which Alessandro

persuaded the Priori of Caprarola to undertake, at their own expense, but under Vignola's direction.²⁶² There survive in Parma a number of the architect's drawings for buildings in the town: these were all executed within a relatively short period, from 1568 to 1572, and they include projects for a new hospital and a ball-court, as well as a number of private houses.²⁶³ A contract indicates that Vignola also designed the church of S. Marco at Caprarola.²⁶⁴ In 1574, after Vignola's death, Alessandro also had an inn built, under the direction of Giovanni Antonio Garzoni.²⁶⁵

Secular architecture in Lazio

The way in which the Farnese left their mark on their territory in Lazio, where they built not only palaces and forts, but also churches, hospitals, fountains, gateways and more, all identified by the ubiquitous Farnese lily, has been vividly characterised by Federico Zeri.²⁶⁶ He rightly considered the whole enterprise to be a deliberate revival of feudalism, and went on to suggest that this was reinforced visually by a neo-gothic style. This architectural style might indeed be interpreted as stemming from the need of the Farnese, a parvenu family in comparison with the established Roman nobility, to consolidate their authority. But the thesis that the very forms of their architecture also looked back to ancient feudal society is perhaps open to question. The transformation of Farnese territory, begun under Paul III when he set up the Duchy of Castro, and carried out by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, followed in Alessandro's time by Vignola, seems on the contrary to belong very much to its own stylistically classicising period.

Alessandro continued the family tradition on a grand scale. Other towns were not modernized as radically as Caprarola, though our information is somewhat fragmentary and uneven. Ronciglione received an elegant fountain, which is supported by unicorns and decorated with lilies, both Farnese devices (pl. 119). According to Baglione, this was designed by Antonio Gentile, who took over from Manno Sbarri as Alessandro's chief goldsmith during the 1570s.²⁶⁷ Baglione implies that Gentile was a specialist in fountain design, and it may have been through this skill that he became known to Farnese. The Ronciglione fountain dates from 1566, and is certainly Gentile's first recorded work for the Cardinal. A letter from Tizio Chermadio records that the execution was delayed by shortage of metal.²⁶⁸

The Farnese had long had connections with Viterbo, and Paul III was particularly devoted to the nearby sanctuary of the Madonna della Quercia, to which he donated a richly carved coffered ceiling in 1538.²⁶⁹ Alessandro continued the tradition of patronage, especially after he was appointed papal legate to the city in 1564. He had the Palazzo della Rocca restored and, in 1566, a fountain, designed by Vignola, constructed in the piazza outside (pl. 121).²⁷⁰ In 1568 the Porta Faulle was built (pl. 120). This bears Alessandro's arms and an inscription praising him. It has been attributed to Vignola on stylistic grounds.²⁷¹ The Cardinal also had a public hospital erected in the city in 1575 and, at an unknown date, a prison. This building is not recorded in any document, but bears the Cardinal's coat of arms (*stemma*).²⁷² Alessandro also had the streets reorganised, encouraging the building



119. Antonio Gentile, fountain, 1566, bronze and peperino, Ronciglione (Photo: Author).



120. Jacopo Vignola, Porta Faule, Viterbo, 1568 (Photo: Author).

121. Jacopo Vignola, fountain, Viterbo, 1566 (Photo: Author).





122 and 123. Isola Farnese, Castello Ferraioli, formerly Farnese (Photos: Author).

of a central street from the Fontana Grande to the main piazza from 1573. This apparently followed an idea of Paul III and may be compared with the opening of the Via de' Baullari in front of Palazzo Farnese in Rome, and that of the main street at Caprarola.²⁷³ It necessitated extensive demolitions, including that of the church of S. Martino, which was to be replaced by a new church dedicated to S. Giacomo.²⁷⁴ The Viterbesi recorded their gratitude to Alessandro for his projects of urban renovation in an inscription set up over the Porta S. Sisto, which described him as no less than *pater patriae* because he had 'kept the region in a state of tranquillity and embellished and adorned the city'.²⁷⁵

Vignola was asked also to restore and enlarge the castle at Isola Farnese, some fifteen miles out of Rome on the Via Cassia (pl. 122). Alessandro bought this from the Orsini in 1567 for 16,000 *scudi*.²⁷⁶ It was one of the many baronial castles belonging to this family in the area. It is not entirely clear why Alessandro should have wanted another property here. It was conveniently situated halfway from Rome to Caprarola, but that was no more than a day's ride from the city in any case. Conceivably he intended to use it as a base for hunting.

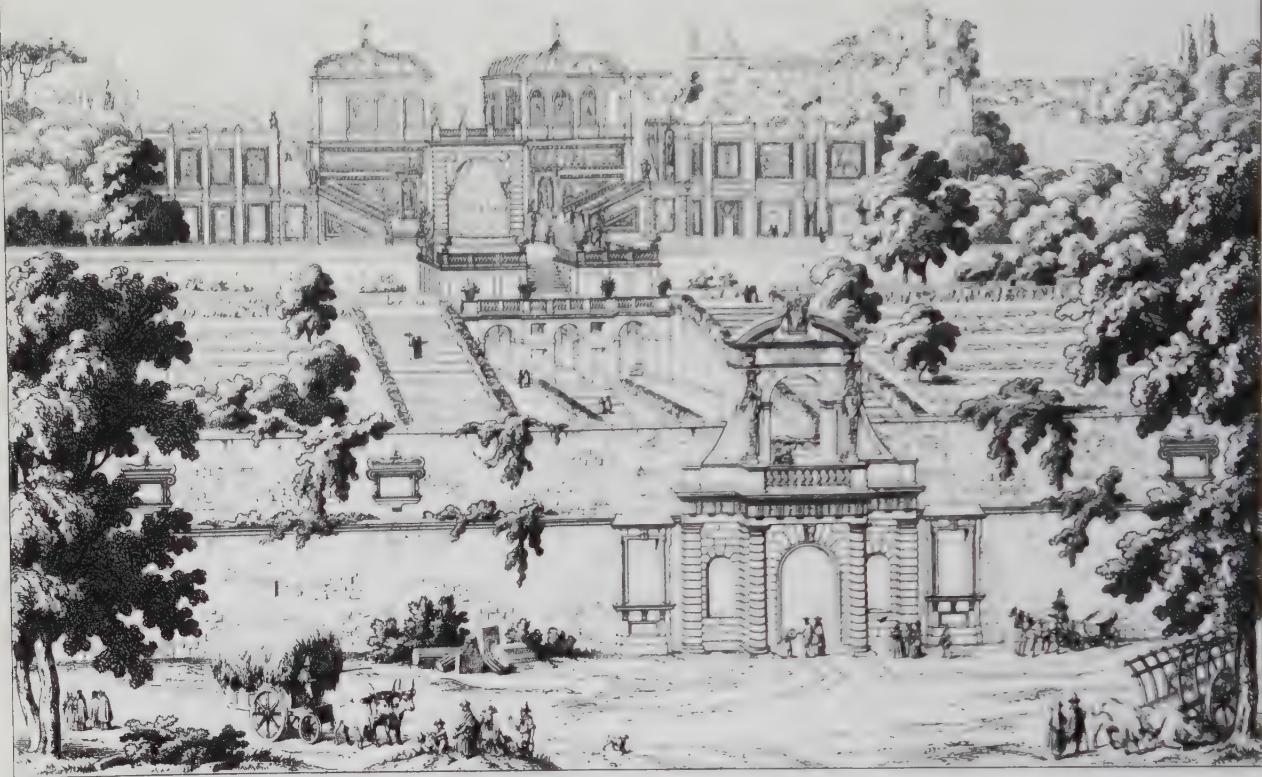
The alterations that Vignola was called upon to make were relatively minor but were evidently done with a view to making the castle into a more comfortable, modern residence. The architect's ground plan is preserved, but it has been suggested that the project was not executed.²⁷⁷ Some work was, in fact, done there: Alessandro's account books for 1567–8 record many payments for building

materials and for ‘works’, which were estimated by Giacomo della Porta.²⁷⁸ Besides this evidence, a number of reports from Alessandro’s *familiari* indicate that work was being carried out on the foundations, as well as on a wooden ceiling, windows and doors in the castle.²⁷⁹ The Cardinal’s *stemma* may still be seen over the main entrance (pl. 123). Minor work continued throughout 1569 and 1570: during 1569 a ‘chamino alla franzese’, a French-style fireplace, was installed,²⁸⁰ and in the following year an oven and stables were built, as well as ‘various walls, staircases and roofs’.²⁸¹ Otherwise, it is difficult to determine precisely which parts of the castle were constructed at this time and to what extent Vignola’s plan was followed, since it has been greatly altered more recently, and now comprises a number of luxury apartments.²⁸² Some decoration was evidently carried out: late in 1567 one Francesco da Savona was paid fifteen *scudi* for the ‘painting on the ceilings of the rooms, which he has to do at the Isola’. Other decoration or construction was evidently intended: Alessandro’s majordomo Tiburzio Burzio stated that work there was unfinished at the Cardinal’s death.²⁸³

In 1573, only five years after his purchase of Isola Farnese, Alessandro took a long lease on another Orsini castle, that at Palo, the Roman Alsium, on the coast near Ladispoli, for which he paid 25,000 *scudi*.²⁸⁴ This included possession of whatever sculpture might be excavated on this ancient site.²⁸⁵ The castle had been popular as a hunting lodge under Leo X, and extensive alterations were carried out then.²⁸⁶ Alessandro, too, went there chiefly to hunt, usually during the winter, on one occasion acquiring an unexpected bag in the form of a barrel of precious Ischian wine, which had been washed up on the shore.²⁸⁷ Paolo Giordano Orsini had evidently been anxious to dispose of the castle for some time: in 1570 he had offered it to Alessandro’s cousin Guid’Ascanio Sforza, who had refused it;²⁸⁸ the following year he had tried to sell it to the Medici for only 20,000 *scudi*.²⁸⁹ The only documentary evidence about Alessandro’s contribution to the architecture is tantalising. An *avviso* of 27 November 1574 states: ‘On Monday Farnese went to Palo and he returned yesterday evening, having taken an architect to give order to a superb building there.’²⁹⁰ The building was extensively altered during the seventeenth century and it is unfortunately no longer possible to determine what the ‘superb building’ looked like. By 1576 a loggia was being decorated, but nothing is known of either the artist or the subject-matter.²⁹¹

Gardens in Rome

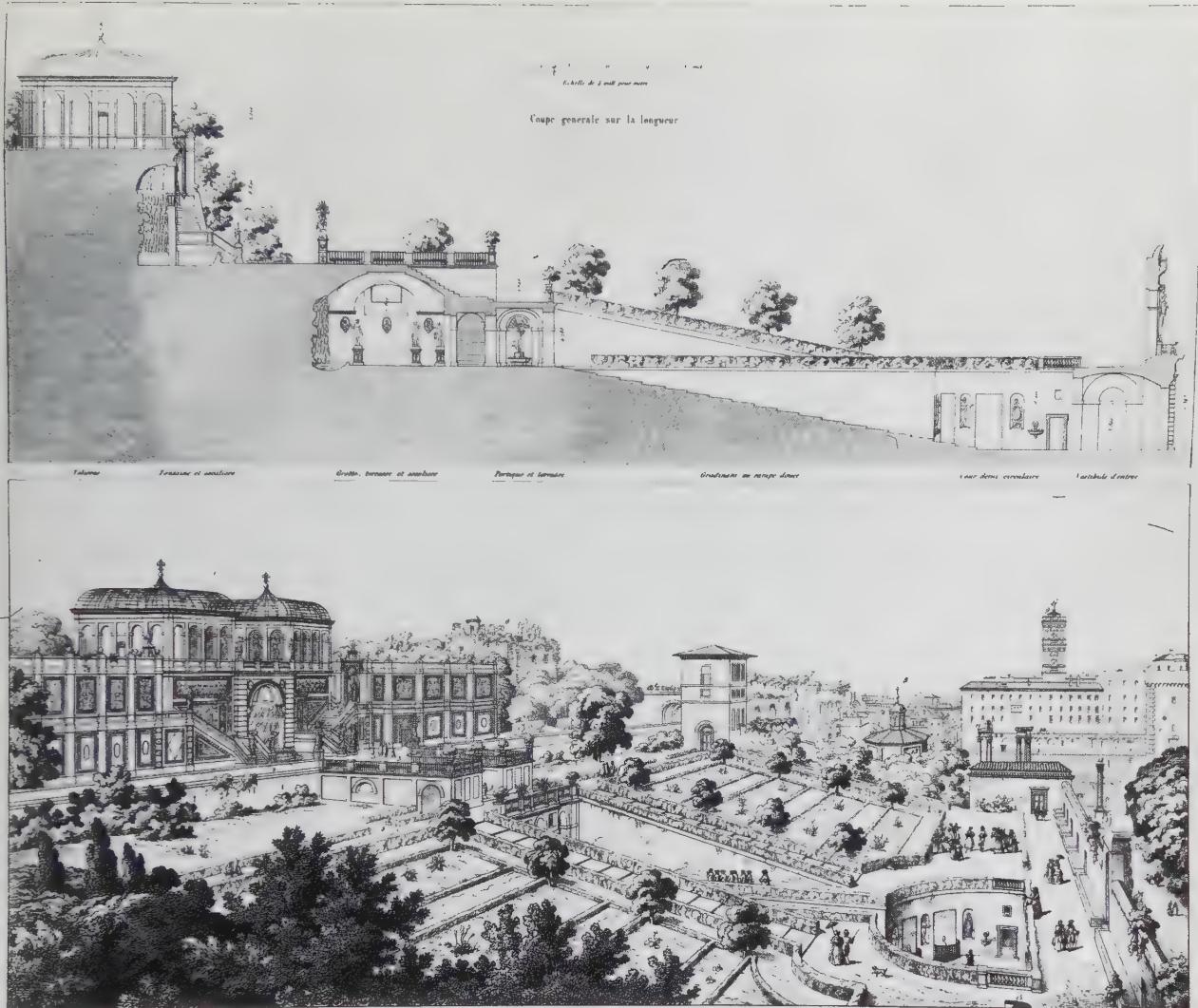
Such impressive acquisitions and commissions demonstrate vividly that Alessandro had inherited his grandfather’s taste for *villeggiatura*. During the latter part of his career Alessandro would habitually spend about five months of the year out of Rome, mostly at Caprarola, but also at his other castles or at Grottaferrata.²⁹² But he also felt a need for gardens in Rome itself, and he acquired or had constructed a remarkable number. He had inherited Paul III’s *vigna* in Trastevere.²⁹³ This had been designed by Jacopo Meleghino and housed some of the less important parts of the family collection of sculpture.²⁹⁴ During the 1560s Alessandro undertook a major reorganisation of this garden. In 1564–5 a little garden was constructed by



124. P. Letarouilly, *View of the Farnese Gardens*, from Letarouilly, *Edifices de Rome Moderne*, 1868–74, pl. 264 (Photo: Warburg Institute).

the sculptors Giovanni and Fioretto Franzesi.²⁹⁵ A travertine gateway was built, and many statues were restored. This work was done under the direction of Guglielmo della Porta, together with one Santi Fiammingo.²⁹⁶ But not content with this, Farnese coveted the magnificent Chigi villa next door (pl. 60), with its frescoes by Raphael, Peruzzi and Sodoma, and he finally succeeded in purchasing it in 1579.²⁹⁷ The villa has been known as the Farnesina ever since.

The most important Roman gardens commissioned by Alessandro were the Orti Farnesiani, also known in documents as the Vigna del Palazzo Maggiore, on the Palatine hill (pls 124–5). The problem of reconstructing their appearance during Alessandro's lifetime is considerable. The gardens themselves were largely destroyed during the nineteenth century, and documentation is seriously lacking. Before their destruction they had, like the upper garden at Caprarola, been expanded and altered by Rainaldi, who received the commission from Cardinal Odoardo Farnese.²⁹⁸ Unfortunately, no visual records survive of the gardens as Alessandro had them built.²⁹⁹ What can be determined is that the gardens were constructed on a series of terraces, rising from a grand gateway. A central casino with a frescoed loggia provided shade. Cardinal Odoardo was later to establish a



125. P. Letarouilly, *View of the Farnese Gardens*, from Letarouilly, *Edifices de Rome Moderne*, 1868–74, pl. 265 (Photo: Warburg Institute).

zoo in the gardens, as well as a botanical garden, filled with exotic and rare specimens, but it is not known whether Alessandro had had similar designs.³⁰⁰

Various members of the family had acquired land on the lower part of the hill between 1542 and 1564, probably motivated by its potential as a source of antiquities.³⁰¹ Building apparently began around 1567, though large sums were not spent on construction until 1570.³⁰² How much was achieved before Vignola's death has been a matter of some controversy. All scholars have agreed in attributing to him at least the lower part of the monumental gateway, originally located on the Nova Via of the Forum. This was dismantled in 1883, when the lower area of the gardens was destroyed, and re-erected in Via di S. Gregorio in 1959 (pl. 126).³⁰³ It can be seen in its original location in an engraving by Piranesi of about 1771 (pl. 127). What else might have been built under Vignola's direction cannot be determined. It has been proposed that everything behind the portal that

126. Jacopo Vignola, gateway to the Farnese Gardens, 1567–73, Rome, Via di S. Gregorio (Photo: Author).



127 (below). G.B. Piranesi, *The Arch of Titus and the entrance to the Farnese Gardens*, c.1771, engraving, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum (Photo: Ashmolean Museum).



was built during Alessandro's lifetime – the semi-circular *cortile* with its sunken court, filled with statues in niches, which recalls the *nymphaeum* of the Villa Giulia, the casino and the ramp joining them – should be attributed to Giacomo del Duca.³⁰⁴ But the amount of building that can be documented up to 1570 does suggest that perhaps rather more was constructed before Vignola died. Unfortunately, the documents are not specific enough to resolve this question. Had Alessandro's household accounts survived for the last three years of the architect's life, it might more easily have been settled.³⁰⁵

The casino must have been built by 1577, when a loggia was decorated.³⁰⁶ Apart from grotesque decoration, of which a drawing was sent to Alessandro in August of that year, the subject-matter was devoted to *historie palatine*.³⁰⁷ As so often in Alessandro's iconography, it has a topographical significance, illustrating myths concerned with the locality. In this case the story depicted was that of Hercules and Cacus, the events of which were supposed to have occurred on the Palatine. In one scene was shown Cacus stealing Hercules' cattle, and in the other, the hero's revenge.³⁰⁸ Fulvio Orsini devised the programme and was also involved in the choice of painter. Unfortunately, there was a serious confusion over the selection of the artists as a result of Alessandro's making an over-hasty decision, an episode that reflects poorly on his artistic judgement.³⁰⁹

The last garden acquired by Alessandro belonged to one of the greatest Roman Cinquecento villas, Raphael's unfinished Villa Madama, where he was to keep part of the family collection of antique sculpture. It was given to him in 1555 by Caterina de' Medici. Margaret of Austria, as the widow of Alessandro de' Medici, had originally brought it as part of her dowry when she married Ottavio Farnese, and the Farnese had had use of the villa during Paul III's lifetime, but it had reverted to the Medici on his death.³¹⁰ The Cardinal made few alterations, but there are references to repair work done there under Giacomo della Porta's direction.³¹¹

Palazzo Farnese

Alessandro inherited the still unfinished family palace (pls 8–9) in Rome in 1565, on the death of his brother Ranuccio, but it was to be another ten years before he decided to have the rear part of the building completed. This was not an urgent priority, since he could continue to live in the Cancelleria. It is unlikely, moreover, that even a man of his wealth could have afforded the project at this time, since during the late 1560s and early 1570s he was paying for the extremely costly construction of Caprarola and the Gesù.³¹² But around 1574, he at last considered finishing the building.

Ranuccio had had relatively little work done on the building of the palace, preferring minor works and decorative enterprises in the parts already completed, such as the commission to Salviati to paint the *salotto*. Ranuccio's tenure of the palace probably saw the completion of the main façade and the sides, but not the rear.³¹³ Ranuccio did commission a number of fireplaces from Vignola during this period, one of which the architect published in his *Cinque Ordini*.³¹⁴ He also had a little courtyard laid out with a fountain and some antique sculpture on the



128. T. Calcagni, project for a statue court in Palazzo Farnese, 1564, pen and ink and wash, 32 × 25 cm., Florence, Uffizi 220A.



129. Palazzo Farnese, mezzanine *cortile*.

mezzanine storey, opening off the main staircase. Although Vignola was signing himself as Ranuccio's architect at this time, it is possible that the sculptor and architect Tiberio Calcagni was also involved in the project. A drawing by him, which once belonged to Vasari, shows two elaborate basins crowned with antique statues in a setting that corresponds to the architecture of the mezzanine court (pls 128–9).³¹⁵ One of the sculptural groups depicted is the Farnese *Pan and Olympos*, while another shows a variant on the *Crouching Venus*, two versions of which belonged to the Farnese.³¹⁶

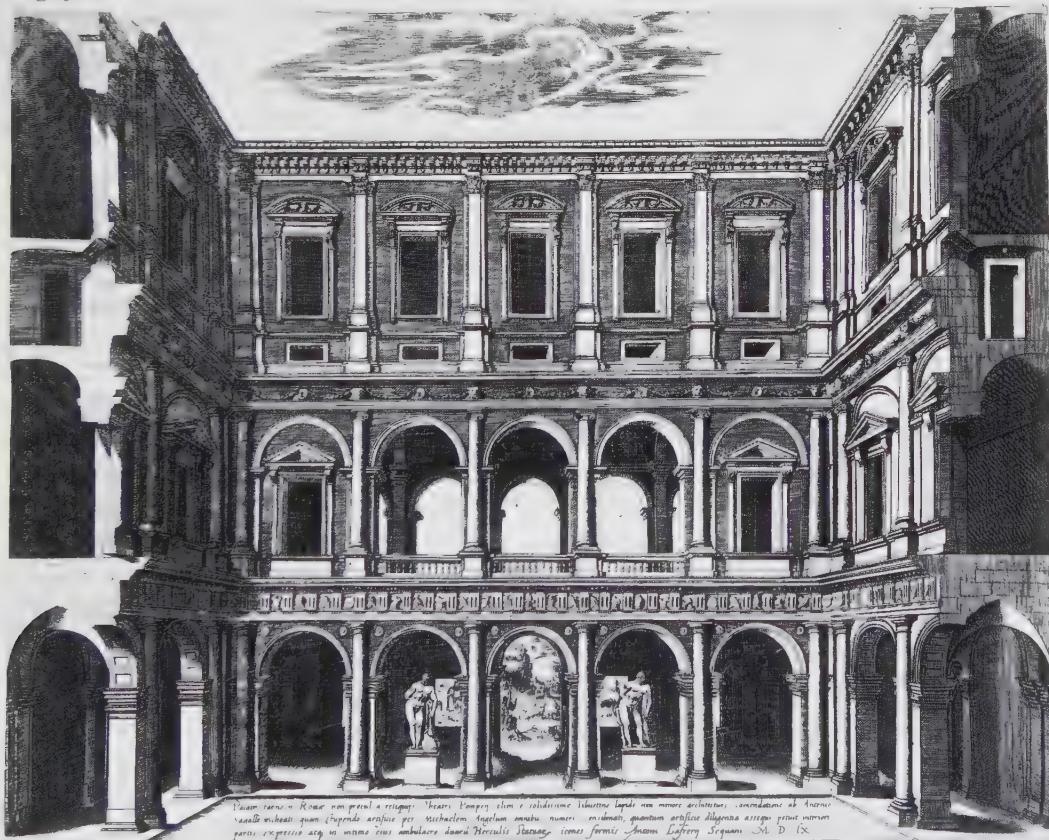
In addition to his ambitious plans to link Palazzo Farnese to Paul III's Trastevere villa, Michelangelo had produced a grandiose, but immensely costly scheme for the garden wing of the palace. While Ranuccio was alive there had been some discussion of the feasibility of executing this project, but nothing had been resolved. Michelangelo's scheme for the completion of the *cortile* is known from an engraving by Lafréry dated 1560 (pl. 130).³¹⁷ On the ground floor the garden was approached via a single arch, which was flanked by two of the most important antique sculptures in the collection, the *Farnese Hercules* and its twin, the *Hercules Latinus*, which were placed before two large rectangular openings. Further to avoid a dark, closed-in effect, more light was let into the court by opening up the arches

of the three central bays of the *piano nobile* to form a double-sided loggia, where the Farnese Gallery now stands.³¹⁸

It is more difficult to reconstruct Michelangelo's intentions for the rear façade. It has been convincingly suggested that on the garden side two wings would have projected backwards in the manner of the Farnesina, an association that cannot have been accidental, and there would have been open *logge* on their ground floors.³¹⁹ But, during Ranuccio's lifetime, it was objected, as we learn from a long memorandum by Guglielmo della Porta, that these *logge* would be highly inconvenient, because 'they cannot be enjoyed either in summer or winter'.³²⁰ Della Porta also stressed the enormous cost of this scheme.

Alessandro seems to have consulted Guglielmo della Porta, around 1574, about how to finish the palace. The sculptor was trying at this time to complete the tomb of Paul III. His alternative plan for the completion of the palace is hard to reconstruct in detail, but he apparently favoured extending the main *cortile* backwards, or adding another courtyard at the rear, as a solution to the problem of light there.³²¹ But his suggestions were not in the event adopted. Instead the commission was awarded to Giacomo della Porta, who had just succeeded to Vignola's post as the Cardinal's architect-in-chief.³²²

130. A. Lafréry after Michelangelo, project for the *cortile* of Palazzo Farnese, from *Speculum romanae magnificentiae*, Rome, 1560 (Photo: Trustees of the British Museum).



Giacomo wished to finish the interior of the *cortile* in a way that mirrored as far as possible the façades of the other three sides, with a narrow vestibule on the ground floor leading to a loggia which opened onto the garden (pl. 131). To some extent this plan returned to Sangallo's original idea.³²³ Giacomo's precise intentions for the garden façade are more difficult to determine, but it is almost certain that his earlier conception for the first and second floors was different from the existing structure. Very probably the *piano nobile* was meant to have an open loggia where the Carracci Gallery is now located, with a terrace above.³²⁴ Whatever the reason for closing the arcades of the first-floor loggia, the decision must have been taken during Alessandro's lifetime: it appears thus on Tempesta's plan of 1593, only four years after his death, and somewhat before his heir, Odoardo, had contemplated the Gallery's decoration.³²⁵ It is likely that the second-floor loggia, which has an inscription recording its completion in 1589, was, as Lotz has suggested, built to compensate for the loss of that on the first floor (pl. 132).³²⁶

Alessandro also considered reviving Michelangelo's plan for the bridge across the Tiber. This is implied in a posthumous summary of the Cardinal's architectural patronage, written in 1627, by Tiburzio Burzio, his majordomo during the last years of his life, which describes the project in detail.³²⁷ Evidently the scheme came to nothing, perhaps because of the cost, but possibly because of the Cardinal's death. It may have been with this plan in mind that restoration work was done on the *Farnese Bull* (pl. 10) in 1567–9.³²⁸ According to Burzio, the garden was also to have had a fountain centred on an antique group of the *Horatii and Curiatii*.³²⁹

Alessandro undertook no painted decoration of the interior after he had inherited the palace. Vasari suggests that he had already been responsible many years earlier, probably around 1547–8, for commissioning the decoration of the bedroom with scenes from the myth of Bacchus by Daniele da Volterra. Indeed, he attributed Daniele's subsequent patronage and assistance from the Cardinal to his success on this occasion: 'This work was the reason why that Lord, who has always been an admirer of all rare and skilful men, always favoured him.'³³⁰ But even if we accept Vasari's account at face value, the decoration of this room probably belongs to the group of works that Alessandro had executed on behalf of Paul III, or possibly even Pier Luigi, rather than being an individual commission. By the time the next room in the palace, the Sala dei Fasti Farnesiani or *salotto dipinto*, came to be decorated, Ranuccio was living there and was old enough to take charge of his own commissions, though it is likely that he consulted his older brother.³³¹

After Alessandro gained possession of the palace, his major contribution to the interior was the installation in four rooms of wooden ceilings which bear his arms, and the organisation of the *studiolo*.³³² Otherwise, any changes regarded the content and display of the collection, largely under the direction of Fulvio Orsini. To reconstruct the distribution of the collection during Alessandro's lifetime poses formidable difficulties. It is not easy even to decide which of the paintings and statues known to have a Farnese provenance actually belonged to him. The obstacles are twofold. Firstly, the surviving documentation for the collection during the sixteenth century is exiguous. The Farnese collection as a whole survives largely intact in Naples, at Capodimonte and the Museo Nazionale, and in the Galleria Nazionale at Parma. But these works include many that were acquired either by the Parma branch of the family or after Alessandro's death. Apart from



131. Giacomo della Porta, courtyard of Palazzo Farnese, garden side, 1574–89.



132. Giacomo della Porta, Palazzo Farnese, garden façade, 1574–89 (Photo: Author).

two inventories of sculpture dating from 1566 and 1568, no detailed record of the palace's contents survives from before 1641.³³³ A reconstruction of the works acquired by the Cardinal himself can be only partially achieved from scattered references in his correspondence and in sources such as Vasari. In addition, works known to have entered the collection later or from other sources can be eliminated. These include those in his brother Ottavio's collection, of which part of an inventory dated 1587 is known, Fulvio Orsini's collection, which was bequeathed to Odoardo in 1600, and paintings confiscated from rebel Parmesan families in 1612.³³⁴

The second problem arises directly from this shortage of evidence. It has recently been suggested that Alessandro was the only Farnese to benefit from the definitive arrangement of the family collection.³³⁵ But any arrangement which Alessandro may have made was short-lived. The mid-Seicento inventories can tell us little about the disposition of the collection before his death, since his successor, Cardinal Odoardo, undertook a major reorganisation of the palace, probably during the late 1590s or the first years of the new century.³³⁶ This in itself, to-

gether with the fact that the palace was completed only months before Alessandro's death, argue against any extensive programme for the display of painting and sculpture together of the kind that Odoardo was to implement. Quite apart from the decoration of the Carracci Gallery, the other principal rooms on the *piano nobile* were furnished almost exclusively with works by the Bolognese masters, whom Odoardo was so influential in promoting, while most of the Cinquecento and earlier paintings were consigned to a group of rooms on the second floor near the library, known as the Stanze dei Quadri, or to the *guardarobba*.

It is marginally easier to reconstruct Alessandro's collection of antique sculpture and its disposition in the palace because of the survival of the 1566 and 1568 inventories.³³⁷ These can be supplemented with references in other late-Cinquecento documents.³³⁸ We may therefore make some inferences about the use Alessandro made of his collection to decorate the palace. Following contemporary fashion, the Cardinal had already been collecting antiquities for some years before he inherited Palazzo Farnese, either by purchase, such as that of the Del Bufalo collection, or from excavations, as with the *Forma Urbis*, although the golden age for excavation had occurred earlier, while Paul III was still alive.³³⁹ The differences between the 1566 inventory of the palace, which was taken on Ranuccio's death, and that of 1568 suggest that Alessandro had moved much sculpture into the palace during the intervening two years, presumably mainly from the Cancelleria.³⁴⁰

Much remained in deposit 'al torro', in the temporary room behind the palace where the *Farnese Bull* was housed, and in a mezzanine room known as the *camerino secreto*.³⁴¹ The rest was displayed mainly in two places. The first was the newly completed Sala Grande.³⁴² There is evidence that the decoration of this room had been discussed about a year before Ranuccio's death, and that he had intended to have a programme of recent events in the family's history, creating with Salviati's *salotto* next door a pair of rooms of Farnese deeds, very similar in subject-matter to the Anticamera del Concilio and the Sala dei Fasti at Caprarola. On 5 October 1564 Annibal Caro wrote to Fulvio Orsini, who was then Ranuccio's librarian, requesting a copy of a note from Fulvio of the 'istoria della sala' to give to Taddeo Zuccaro.³⁴³ The only Farnese room in need of decoration at this date which could be described as a 'sala' is the Sala Grande. Another letter of the following year gives a clue to the subject-matter: Caro alludes to 'the two stories of weddings', which must be the marriages of Ottavio and Orazio, also represented at Caprarola, as well as to Paul III's munificence towards artists, an image not represented at Caprarola.³⁴⁴

The Sala Grande was fated never to receive any painted decoration (in spite of an attempt by Odoardo to revive and update Ranuccio's plan by having the *fasti* of his father, Duke Alessandro, depicted – the scheme for which he originally invited the Carracci to Rome³⁴⁵). Cardinal Alessandro's motive for having the project abandoned may have been that he required Taddeo's full attention to be directed towards the work at Caprarola, the more so since he had just had to release him to complete Salviati's *salotto*.³⁴⁶ Instead he had installed there a number of pieces of antique sculpture, as well as twelve modern busts of Roman emperors.³⁴⁷ The latter may be identified with the set of twelve marble busts that Alessandro bought from Tommaso della Porta in 1562.³⁴⁸ He was evidently a specialist in reproduction antiques and was rewarded by Alessandro for this commission with the huge

sum of 900 *scudi*, as well as a Cavalierato di S. Pietro.³⁴⁹ Vasari describes a set of such busts, which the sculptor made for Julius III, but this is not Alessandro's.³⁵⁰ The question of identification is further complicated by the fact that the Cardinal commissioned another set of twelve emperors for Caprarola. According to Baglione, these were sculpted by Tommaso's nephew, Giovanni Battista della Porta, who was also rewarded with a Cavalierato, in this case, that of the 'speron d'oro'.³⁵¹

Under Odoardo all the sculpture in the Sala Grande, apart from Tommaso's busts, was removed and replaced with other works, including Moschino's monumental allegorical group of *Duke Alessandro conquering Heresy and the River Scheldt* – now at Caserta, which was intended, as so often in Odoardo's arrangements, to complement the projected frescoes³⁵² – and the *Horatii and Curiatii*, which Alessandro had planned to turn into a garden fountain.³⁵³ In 1628, two years after Odoardo's death, these works were joined by two of the personifications from Guglielmo della Porta's tomb of Paul III, the *Peace* and *Abundance*, which remain *in situ*.³⁵⁴ While all these statues must have entered the room after Alessandro's death, it is impossible to tell whether he himself had others installed there before 1589.

Like the pictures, much of the sculpture was moved around the palace after the rear wing was completed, though some statues remained where they had been during Alessandro's lifetime. For example, many major antiques were displayed during the sixteenth century in the room known as the Galleria, whose name suggests its prime function.³⁵⁵ Among these were fifteen busts of Roman emperors, including the famous *Caracalla*, and two statues of Venus. These remained there under Odoardo, to be joined by a red marble *Adonis* and two busts of Paul III, which are probably to be identified with those by Guglielmo della Porta (pl. 12).³⁵⁶ We have no evidence to determine whether Alessandro had pictures hung in this room, with subjects to complement those of the most important statues there, as was done systematically by Odoardo in most of the rooms where antiques were displayed. Thus Odoardo had Alessandro's Galleria hung with copies of Titian's famous Emperor series, originally painted for the Gonzaga, and the room was rechristened the Sala degli Imperatori.³⁵⁷

Two other rooms that were important for the display of sculpture during the Seicento had only just been built at Alessandro's death. In the case of the Carracci Gallery we know that the entire arrangement was made under Odoardo.³⁵⁸ It is very likely that this also holds for the contiguous Sala dei Filosofi, which contained much sculpture, including eighteen busts of ancient philosophers from which it took its name, as well as the *Callipygian Venus* and the two versions of the *Crouching Venus*, one of which had been first in the Salone and later in the Galleria during Alessandro's lifetime.³⁵⁹

Evidence about the arrangement of paintings in the palace during Alessandro's tenure is even more scanty than that for the sculpture. But we find an unusual emphasis on fresco decoration at the expense of easel painting in Alessandro's patronage as a whole. The only significant group of the latter consists of portraits, some of which have been examined above.

Four portraits of Alessandro himself can be traced from the Farnese collection, in addition to Titian's triple portrait. The earliest is that by Innocenzo da Imola, which shows the young prelate seated before an open window, with an open

Greek text in front of him, together with a number of other books. This was probably painted when Alessandro was studying in Bologna in 1534–5, but nothing secure is known about the circumstances of the commission.³⁶⁰

Apart from the Titian-workshop portrait (frontispiece) at Capodimonte and the Muziano, already discussed, the final portrait known is by Scipione Pulzone. This is probably to be identified with the superb portrait of the Cardinal as an old man, with its glittering red silk, dated 1579, now in the Galleria Nazionale in Rome (pl. 134).³⁶¹ Some doubt must remain over whether this was in fact the painting recorded in the Farnese collection in the seventeenth century, since another version of the work exists. This much damaged work is now in the Pinacoteca Civica at Macerata, but its provenance is unknown.³⁶² Pulzone was an extremely fashionable portraitist in Rome during the 1570s; indeed, Raffaello Borghini cites this painting in *Il Riposo* as an index of his success.³⁶³ The work may have led to other commissions from Alessandro: it is possible that he ordered also the three portraits of women now at Burghley House, which originally belonged to a set of seven by Pulzone, and which have recently been shown to have a Farnese provenance.³⁶⁴

Not surprisingly, given the importance accorded to portraiture in sixteenth-century courtly circles, a very large number of portraits of other figures belonged to the Farnese collection. These were presumably acquired in various ways, though there does not seem to have been any systematic attempt to collect images of *uomini illustri* in the way that Alessandro's *familiare* Paolo Giovio did. In general, the portraits in the Farnese collection were of contemporaries: members of the family, those of other European ruling families, with whom the family had connections, and various popes. Some of these were obtained as diplomatic gifts as, for example, when the French king Charles IX sent Alessandro a portrait of himself in 1562.³⁶⁵

On another occasion a portrait of the King of Spain arrived unsolicited. In 1579 the Spanish court painter Alonso Sánchez Coello sent this work in the hope of obtaining in return benefices for his sons.³⁶⁶ It was to be the first in a series of works that Alessandro received from him, none of which, sadly, can now be traced. The following year, when a benefice that had belonged to the Inquisitor of Córdoba fell vacant, Sánchez Coello, who had lived for many years in Portugal before settling at the Spanish court, sent the Cardinal a portrait of the recently deceased King of Portugal, Don Sebastiano d'Aviz.³⁶⁷ Alessandro was well disposed to help, as we learn from a letter of Lodovico Bianchetti of August 1580.³⁶⁸ Two portraits of Don Diego of Spain arrived in 1582 and 1583, and another portrait of the Spanish monarch came in 1585.³⁶⁹

There is no evidence to suggest that Sánchez Coello ever actually met his Roman patron. Possibly he first became known to the Cardinal via his connection with Alessandro's nephew, the future Duke Alessandro. This is, however, difficult to determine. A magnificent portrait of him, wearing a richly embroidered outfit in gold and silver with an ermine-lined cape, of about 1559 was formerly attributed to Sánchez Coello, but the attribution is no longer acceptable (pl. 134).³⁷⁰ Contact with the Cardinal may have been effected by Sánchez Coello's brother, who was in Rome in 1575.³⁷¹ The artist continued to cultivate Farnese assiduously, often writing merely to enquire after his health.³⁷² The cordiality of their relations is indicated in a letter of recommendation that Alessandro wrote to the Papal Datary



133. Scipione Pulzone, *Alessandro Farnese*, 1579, oil on canvas, 135 cm. × 107.5 cm., Rome, Gallerie Nazionale d'Arte Antica (Photo: Soprintendenza per i Beni Artistici e Storici, Rome).



134. Anonymous Italian artist, *Duke Alessandro Farnese*, c.1559, oil on canvas, 167 × 79 cm., Dublin, National Gallery of Ireland (Photo: National Gallery of Ireland).

in 1585 on behalf of the painter's son, Juan: 'he is a great friend of mine, and very well-deserving, and he was particularly loved by Gregory [XIII] of sacred memory for the excellence of his art'.³⁷³

Several of the twenty-one miniature portraits now in Parma are closely related to Sánchez Coello's work, or that of his teacher Antonis Mor.³⁷⁴ These fall into two groups: portraits of members of the Portuguese royal family, with which the Farnese were connected by marriage, and portraits of the Farnese themselves. Alessandro's Portuguese connections were strengthened by the fact that he had been Bishop of Viseu until 1552 and was Cardinal-Protector of Portugal in Rome.³⁷⁵ All twenty-one portraits seem to derive from full-scale originals, many of which can be identified, and they are probably by several Flemish artists. Their formats vary slightly, and it is not clear whether they were all executed to form one or two sets, or over an extended period of time. Nor do we know who commissioned them, since the earliest mention of them is in the 1641 inventory of Palazzo Farnese.³⁷⁶ The latest prototype seems to be a portrait of Duke Alessandro which, to judge from his age – perhaps forty – and the costume, must date from the mid- to late 1580s. It certainly cannot be later than 1592, when the Duke died. This portrait (pl. 135) is derived from an image attributed to Otto Vaenius. The



135–40. Anonymous Flemish artist(s), miniature portraits of the Farnese family, probably 1580s, oil on panel, each 10.5 × 8.5 cm., Parma, Galleria Nazionale (Photos: Soprintendenza per i beni artistici e storici, Parma). Top row, left to right: *Duke Alessandro Farnese*, *Pier Luigi Farnese*, *Cardinal Alessandro Farnese*; bottom row, left to right: *Cardinal Ranuccio Farnese*, *Ottavio Farnese*, *Orazio Farnese*.

whole group could thus conceivably have been commissioned by Alessandro shortly before his death, though this must remain hypothetical. At any rate, the works are in keeping with his taste for miniatures.³⁷⁷

Among the Portuguese miniatures related to the work of Sánchez Coello and of Mor are a portrait of Catherine of Portugal, which is derived from a painting by Mor in the Prado, and one of Joanna of Austria, based on a Sánchez Coello.³⁷⁸ It is tempting to suggest that the portrait of King Sebastiano might have been based on that sent to Alessandro by Sánchez Coello in 1580. Two portraits from the Farnese group, both of Margaret of Austria, are likewise derived from works by these artists: one is after a portrait by Mor, now in Berlin, while the other may be based on a Sánchez Coello.³⁷⁹

The other Farnese portraits in this series derive from a number of sources. Several, including those of Pier Luigi (pl. 136), and Paul III, are based on works



141. Gianfrancesco Penni, *Madonna del Divino Amore*, 1517–18, oil on panel, 141 × 111 cm., Naples, Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte (Photo: Soprintendenza per i beni artistici e storici, Naples).

by Titian.³⁸⁰ A portrait of Cardinal Alessandro is closely related to Pulzone's portrait of him (pl. 137). One of Cardinal Ranuccio is based on a work now at Caserta, identified by Bertini, which is a welcome addition to our knowledge of the younger Cardinal's adult appearance, despite the fact that he did not live up to his youthful prettiness (pl. 138).³⁸¹ Prototypes for some of the others are harder to identify. These include a portrait of Ottavio, aged perhaps in his thirties (pl. 139), and a sensitive portrait of Orazio (pl. 140).³⁸²

Under the influence of Fulvio Orsini, Alessandro purchased a small number of valuable paintings other than portraits. These included a 'Giorgione', which Orsini urged him to buy in 1579. This must actually have been one of the many versions of Titian's *Christ carrying the Cross* in S. Rocco.³⁸³ That the picture was acquired primarily for the prestige of owning a rare work by the Venetian master is suggested by the fact that Orsini did not feel it necessary to inform the Cardinal of the subject-matter until several days after he had suggested its acquisition by the 'patron of so many precious things'.³⁸⁴ Another important work purchased by Alessandro for similar motives was Gianfrancesco Penni's *Madonna del Divino Amore*, which was then considered to be by Raphael (pl. 141). This was bought from the Carpi collection in November 1565 for the considerable sum of 343 scudi,

shortly after Orsini had come to work for Alessandro.³⁸⁵ The esteem in which it was held is indicated by the fact that it was hung in the Cardinal's *camera propria*, as an improbable companion to Titian's *Danaë*, as well as by the flood of requests to make copies of the work.³⁸⁶

As far as one can tell, the impetus to acquire these works came primarily from Orsini, rather than from Alessandro, confirming the impression given by the scarcity of easel pictures in his collection and by the emphasis of his patronage, that the Cardinal was more interested in commissioning new works, and above all magnificent frescoes to enhance his splendour, than in collecting pictures by acknowledged masters.³⁸⁷ Alessandro's interest apparently lay more in the decoration of his surroundings with witty and ingenious subject-matter, than in the qualities of the execution itself, let alone the cult of the artist *qua* artist. The number of easel paintings that Alessandro commissioned or bought is strikingly small when one contrasts the acquisitions of comparable patrons such as Cosimo I de' Medici, who was commissioning frescoes on a similar scale to Alessandro, Philip II of Spain or Francis I of France.³⁸⁸ His interests also seem very different from those of figures such as Isabella d'Este, or her nephew Alfonso, with their commissions for series of canvases intended to hang together as a presentation of the best of contemporary artists, or even of one artist alone.³⁸⁹ Apart from the acquisition of his 'Giorgione', Alessandro shows far less concern with this new attitude towards the 'masterpiece'.

We have seen in this chapter how Alessandro's tendency to specialize in the commissioning of buildings decorated with extensive frescoes grew from relatively modest beginnings during the reign of Paul III, expanding dramatically during the 1560s and 1570s, above all with the building of Caprarola, not to mention the other castles in Lazio that he acquired and modified for *villettiatura*. Even more striking than the small number of commissions for easel paintings is the almost total absence of commissions for sculpture. But this is easily explained when one considers not only the number of antiques from the family collection that were restored and adapted for the decoration of rooms and gardens, but also the greater prestige generally accorded to antique sculpture at this time. Interestingly, the period of real expansion in Alessandro's secular commissions coincided with the still greater burgeoning of his public religious patronage. In the latter case the pattern seems to be governed by a much more deliberate politico-religious programme, which is entirely absent from the secular commissions, devoted as they are largely to the construction of places of pleasure, decorated with erudite, *all'antica* imagery.

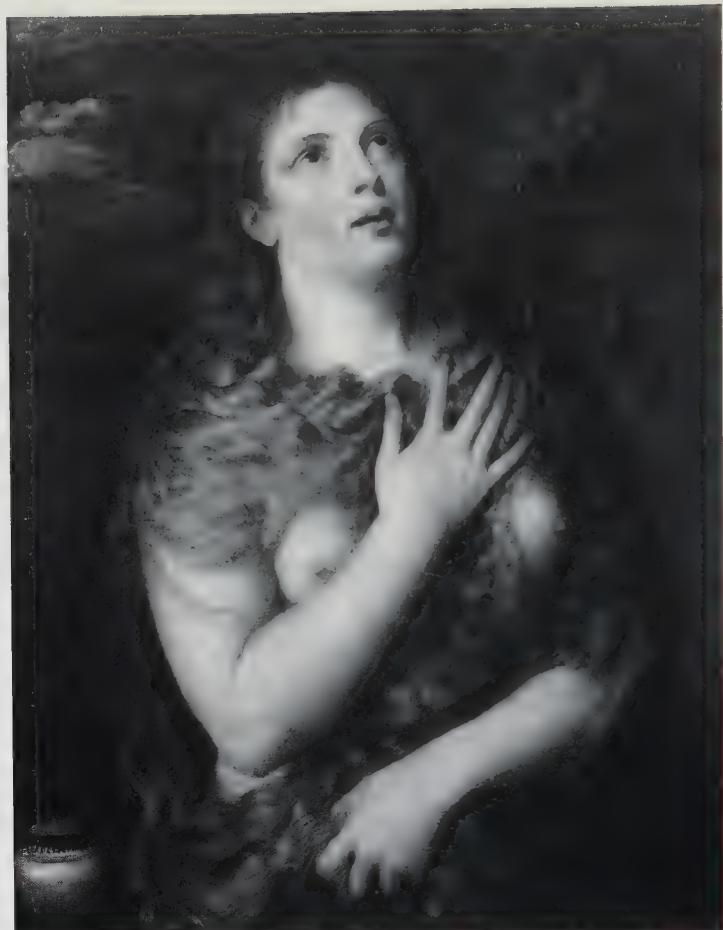
IV

ALESSANDRO AND THE ART OF THE COUNTER-REFORMATION

And just as he was singular in so many holy works, and superior to all the other Cardinals and great men who were in the Roman court during his time, so he exceeded all of them in the grandeur of outstanding works, such as buildings, and other famous things . . .¹

MID-SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ITALY witnessed an extraordinary flourishing of sacred art and a huge renewal of religious patronage which grew out of the demands for reform both from the Protestants and from within the Catholic Church. These culminated in the recommendations of the Council of Trent (1545–64), which engendered a new spirituality throughout Italy. The ways in which the Counter-Reformation affected art have occupied art historians for over a century. The pioneers in this area, Charles Dejob and Emile Mâle, attempted to find a direct relationship between the decrees of the Council of Trent and the ‘New Iconography’ that resulted.² Sacred images were dealt with only in the last session of the Council. The decrees pronounced that no church should contain any image that ‘inspires erroneous doctrine and that could mislead the uneducated; . . . that all lasciviousness should be avoided, so that no figure should be painted or adorned with a beauty inciting to lust’.³ There are numerous examples of the kind of image that the members of the Council had in mind. Devotional pictures like Titian’s *Penitent Magdalen* (pl. 142), a more restrained version of which was sent to Cardinal Farnese in 1567, were hardly likely to inspire devout thoughts.⁴ Vasari’s *Lives* frequently relates tales of the unfortunate distractions provided by such images as Fra Bartolommeo’s nude *St Sebastian*.⁵ The repeated calls for the destruction of Michelangelo’s *Last Judgement* and the notorious trial of Veronese by the Inquisition in 1573 for the inclusion of ‘dwarfs, buffoons, a man with a nose bleed and German soldiers’ in the *Feast in the House of Levi* further exemplify the attitude encouraged by the Council.⁶

The Tridentine decrees have seemed too unspecific to subsequent scholars to have had much effect in themselves on artistic production. That contemporaries felt the same is suggested by the appearance of several treatises, one dedicated to



142. Titian, *Penitent Magdalene*, c.1535, oil on panel, 84 × 69 cm., Florence, Pitti Palace (Photo: Soprintendenza per i beni artistici e storici, Florence).

Alessandro, which expanded in considerable detail the ways in which religious images should and should not be painted.⁷ But these were invariably written by theologians rather than by practising artists. They certainly bear witness to the extent to which artists were depicting heterodox or apocryphal ideas in religious scenes, or treating their material in an unduly secular and irreverent manner. But even taking these as a gloss on the Tridentine view, it has proved difficult to demonstrate that any change that came about in artistic production was the direct result of the Council's decrees. Much recent research has therefore concentrated on artistic response to the religious crisis in the years leading up to the Council.⁸ As one scholar has put it, 'the more we learn about the Counter-Reformation the more Trent turns out to have been not so much the initiator of reform as the codifier of it'.⁹

Much discussion has centred on the notion that there was a recognisable style that might be called 'Counter-Reformation art', but little consensus has emerged as to what it might actually be.¹⁰ As a result, art historians have increasingly come to accept that both artists and patrons responded to the new religious climate in a variety of ways, allowing quite different styles to coexist in any particular