



1 Marten van Heemskerck, south-west corner of the Cesi garden. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, 79 D 2, vol. I, f. 25.

ON THE LAYOUT OF THE CESI PALACE AND GARDENS IN THE VATICAN BORGO

by Sabine Eiche

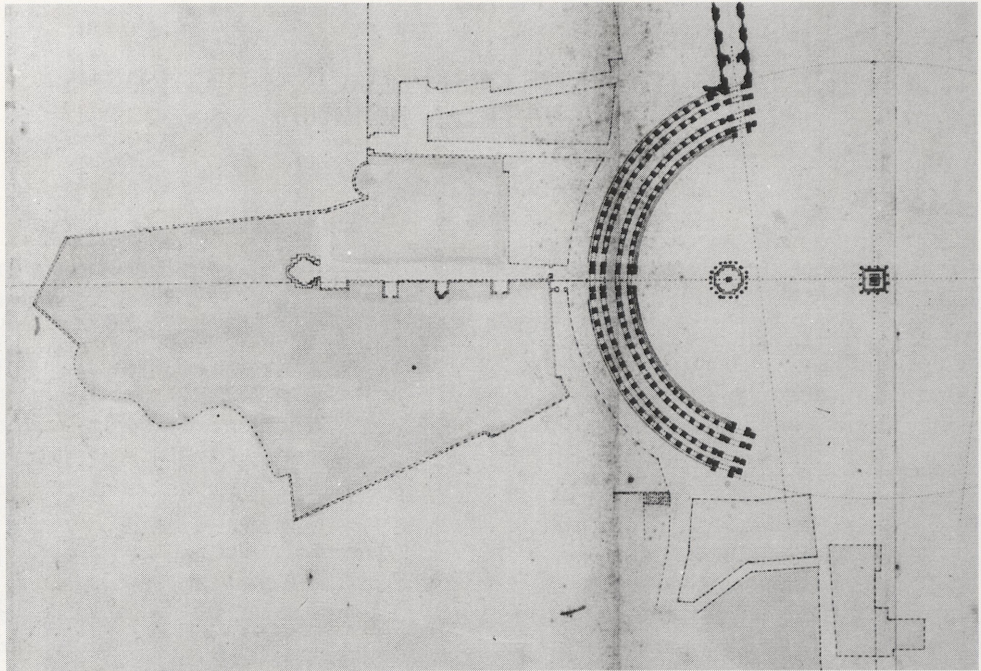
The inhabitants of Rome had been living domestically with pieces of ancient art for over 1000 years when, in the course of the 15th century, they developed a fresh appreciation of their heritage, which soon led to competitive collecting. At first, the re-discovered antiquities were set up randomly in courtyards, gardens, and vineyards; in due time, spaces in the palaces and grounds were designed specifically for their display.¹ By the middle of the 16th century, Rome could boast about 100 major and minor collections of ancient art.² That of the Cesi, if not among the earliest formed, fast became one of the largest and most famous, attracting numerous visitors who left posterity with invaluable descriptions and depictions of what they had seen. But, as is the case with so many of these collections, the history of the single pieces is much better known than that of the site where they were displayed.³

In this paper, then, the focus will be on the layout of the Cesi palace and garden. A new examination of all the known evidence, together with little-known and hitherto unpublished material, will lead to a reconstruction that is more precise and detailed than those attempted to date.

However, before launching into a topographical discussion, it will be helpful to review briefly the history of the collection. In 1517, when Paolo Emilio Cesi (1481-1537) was created cardinal, he bought the estate at the foot of Monte Santo Spirito that had belonged to Giovanni Antonio di Sangiorgio, called the Cardinal Alessandrino, who had been raised to the purple in 1493. In his will of 1505, Sangiorgio describes the property as comprising a "palatium cum vinea et stabulo et aliis pertinentiis suis quod edificavit idem testator in Burgo S. Petri de Urbe."⁴

It is uncertain when Cesi started acquiring antique sculptures and inscriptions, but a secure *terminus ante quem* is 1527, since Giacconio records that during the Sack of Rome, Cardinal Cesi was worried about the safety of his antiquities.⁵ We can imagine him keeping a fearful eye on his property from nearby Castel Sant'Angelo, where he had fled with Pope Clement VII. The next trace that we have of Cesi's collection is in a drawing by Marten van Heemskerck, who was in Rome 1532-35: he shows us sculptures and two fountains, all unrestored and informally set up along the old Leonine walls, which bounded a part of Cesi's garden (Fig. 1).

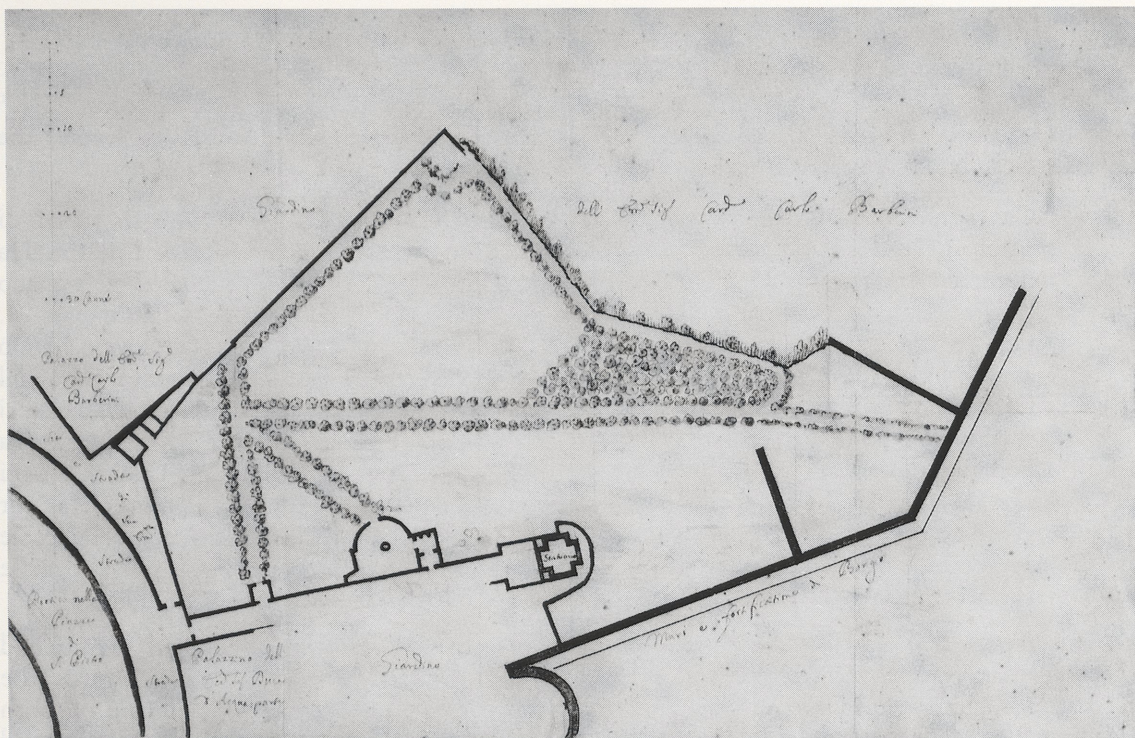
Paolo Emilio died in 1537, naming his brother, Federico (1500-65), as heir. Not long after the former's death, Pope Paul III announced his desire to see the antiquities, "che sonno le più belle di tutta Roma."⁶ Federico will have had no choice but to comply, and relinquish those sculptures that had caught the Pope's fancy, which were then quickly carted off to Palazzo Farnese.⁷ It did not turn out to be a futile investment, however, for Federico was made cardinal by Pope Paul seven years later. Reputed to be a great lover of art, Federico proceeded to assemble more antiques, re-arranging the whole collection in an expanded setting, for which he built new structures in the garden, such as the Antiquarium. In 1550, the Cesi garden and palace were toured by Ulisse Aldroandi, who composed a lengthy description of the sculptures and grounds.⁸ Federico is likely to have continued collecting in the years after Aldroandi's visit, since the latter observed that there were empty spaces in the Antiquarium, waiting to be filled with statues.⁹



2 Unknown, 17th century, plan of Bernini's piazza of St. Peter's and surrounding area, showing the Cesi palace and gardens to the south (detail). London, British Library, Map Library, King's 7 TAB 57, f. 27.

Federico's heir was his nephew, Angelo (d. 1570), who in the years 1564-65 was also in litigation over the Vigna Carpi.¹⁰ Thereafter, the property passed to Angelo's son, Giovanni, Duke of Acquasparta (d. 1630). It is believed that Giovanni's son, Federico, founder of the Accademia dei Lincei, held some of the first meetings of the academy in the Cesi gardens.¹¹ In 1622, Giovanni was compelled by Cardinal Ludovico Ludovisi, nephew of Pope Gregory XV, to sell him a considerable number of the antiquities.¹² About four decades later, the front of the palace and a substantial part of the grounds were demolished to make way for Bernini's colonnade of the new piazza of St. Peter's. At the beginning of the 18th century, the good pieces still in the collection were acquired by Pope Clement XI and his nephew, Cardinal Alessandro Albani.¹³ Around that time, the Cesi sold the palace and grounds to a religious community. Today, after various vicissitudes, and much demolition, the property is the seat of the Curia Generalizia Augustinianum, Collegio S. Monica.

Gnoli, in 1905, was the first modern scholar to attempt to discover the layout of the 16th century Cesi garden, in which he was guided by both Aldroandi's description and the ruins then still standing.¹⁴ He was followed in 1917 by Hülsen, who undertook to amplify Gnoli's reconstruction, and to clarify some of the confusion that the latter had brought about.¹⁵ In the meantime, in 1912, Lanciani noted that he had seen a plan of the garden in the British Museum (Fig. 2), but since he gave an incorrect shelf mark, it remained unpublished until now.¹⁶ Tomei, in 1940, published an article relating to the Cesi garden, inexplicably overlooked by most historians, in which he reproduced a 17th century plan of the area (Fig. 3).¹⁷ In 1974, van der Meulen discussed a newly-discovered painting of the site by Hendrik van Cleve, which hangs in Prague (Fig. 4), and indicated another view of the



3 Unknown, 17th century, plan of the Cesi garden and vigna. Biblioteca Vaticana, Archivio Barberini, Indice II, 2974 B.

garden in the background of van Cleve's view of Rome in the Abegg-Stiftung (Fig. 5).¹⁸ Never aiming for topographical accuracy, and painting nearly 40 years after his Roman visit, van Cleve depicted the scene with ample artistic licence, though a few of the features in the views can be corroborated with reference to Aldroandi's catalogue. Since 1974, however, the Prague painting has been the point of departure for most descriptions of the Cesi garden and *vigna*.¹⁹

The reconstruction of the garden presented in this paper (Fig. 6) will be set forth following Aldroandi's itinerary. An attentive reading of his guide reveals that Hülsen's proposal, though largely satisfactory, needs to be adjusted on a number of points. Various hitherto unknown or little-known 17th century plans, as well as a 17th century view of the palace and garden, will assist us to reconstruct the site with greater accuracy and detail; and some early photographs of the architectural fragments that survived until ca. 1940 will allow us to participate more readily in Aldroandi's experience of exploring the place. Van Cleve's paintings, for all their charm, have limited documentary value.

In the interest of clarity, and since the sources of evidence for the original appearance of the palace and garden are not invariably the same, the two areas will be treated separately in the following discussion.

I. The palace

There are both visual and written documents regarding the Cesi palace. The most comprehensive account is to be found in a *zibaldone* compiled during the reign of Clement VIII.²⁰ One of the sections, dated internally 1601, is a summary of notable houses in Rome, the Palazzo Cesi being described as follows:²¹

Casa del Cardinale Cesis vecchio vicino all'inquisitione ha la facciata di nanzi di passi 60 i fianchi di passi 57. È bassa et ha un finestrato solo di nove finestre. Ha il cortile lungo passi 35 largo 33. Ha le loggie da tre lati solo à man destra, a mano sinistra, et per testa ove è la fine. La loggia di testa è larga passi 8 l'altre passi 4. Queste loggie hanno loggie di sopra, ma d'ambendue i fianchi oltre alle loggie hanno stanze à lato ad esse ma nella fine verso l'orto non v'è stanzie. Questa Casa del Cardinale ha al primo piano di verso levante nove stanze, et una Cappella, che si rinchiuggono nel passo detto di passi 57. Ha poi a Tramontana sei stanze, et a Ponente dirimpetto alle stanze del Cardinale otto stanze. A Terreno Cucine e suoi servitij Tinello Cucina Dispensa stalle. Vi sono due stanze a man ritta per gentilhuomini una stanza per i Palafrenieri a mano stanca e altre stanze sei piccole per gentilhuomini. Sopra tetto stanno i servitoi, dove nel comignolo è più alto dalle bande del Corridore si tocca con mano, e dalla banda di fuori poco meno.

This report tells us that the palace was no more than two storeys high, and that it had a rectangular courtyard with loggias on three sides (Fig. 7). The rear wing, towards the garden, was eight *passi* (ca. 5.36 metres) deep, and consisted exclusively of a loggia on both levels; in the two side wings the loggias were only half as deep, and there were rooms beyond



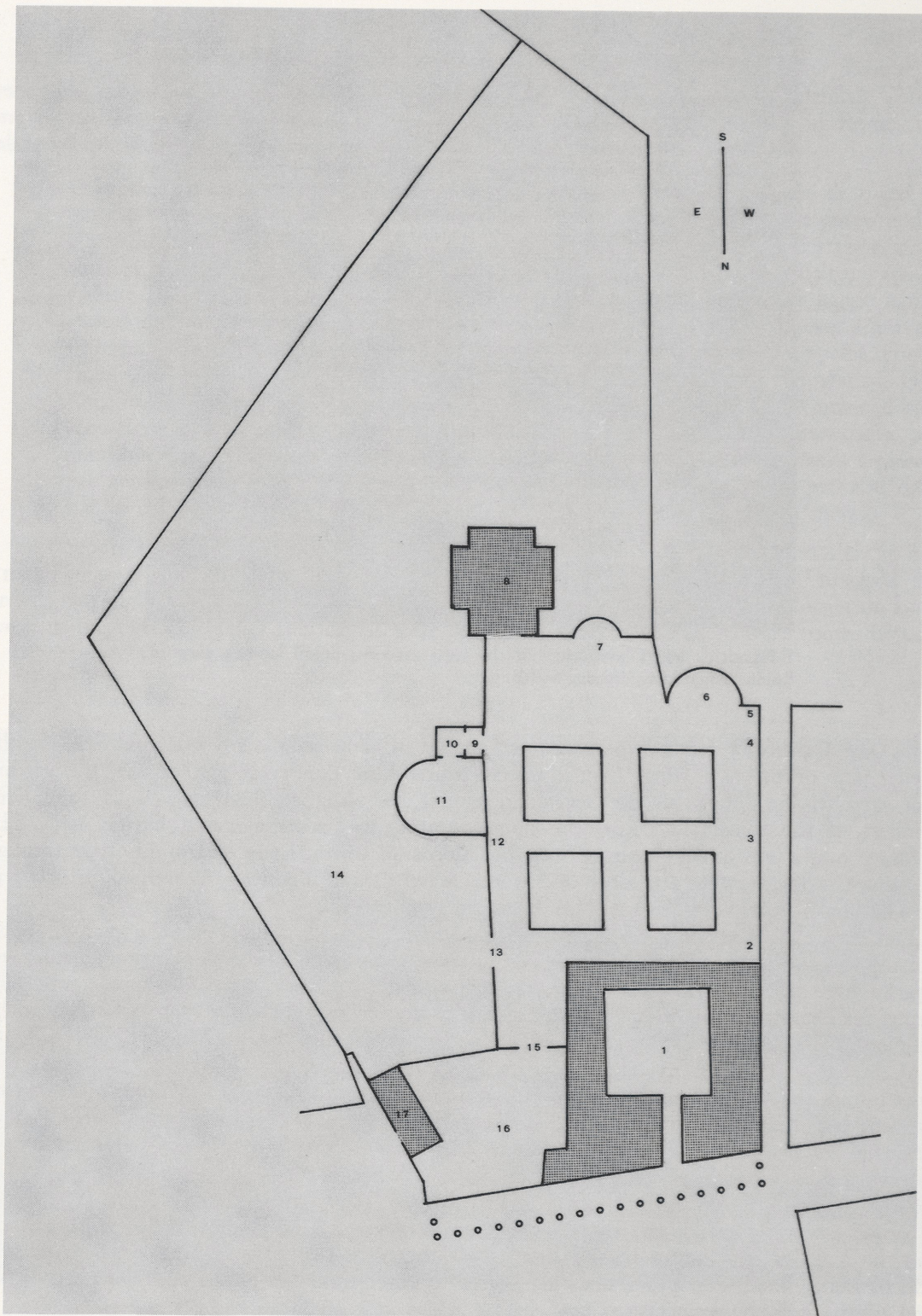
4 Hendrick van Cleve, view of the Cesi palace, gardens, and vigna. Prague, Národní Galerie.



5 Hendrick van Cleve, view of the Cesi gardens, detail from a view of Rome. Riggisberg, Abegg-Stiftung.

them. The Cardinal's private apartment, composed of nine rooms and a chapel, was on the *piano nobile* of the east wing, that is to say overlooking the secret garden. On the ground floor were to be found all the service quarters, including stables, as well as rooms for members of the Cardinal's court; the domestic staff was accommodated in the attic. The *zibaldone* omits one notable feature seen by Aldroandi towards the end of his tour through the palace: a loggia, with the floor and wood-carved ceiling identically patterned, situated in the Cardinal's apartment between his bedroom and the *sala*.²²

Further details regarding the layout of Palazzo Cesi are to be found in a plan (Fig. 8), probably drawn between 1658/59 and 1661, which shows the project for Bernini's colonnade superimposed on the Cesi site.²³ This plan, moreover, is likely to be the most precise surviving document that records the extent to which the palace and garden were demolished by the new urban scheme. The colonnade is shown extending into as much as half of the depth of the front wing, with the surrounding street protruding into a corner of the courtyard. Lost, too, is the whole north-east corner of the grounds, corresponding to the *giardino segreto*. We see that originally the palace had a deep, irregular front wing, with the main entrance somewhat to the right of centre. The two side wings were of a different depth each, the rear wing the narrowest of all. The whole front of the property, along the "Strada che da Borgo S. Spirito v' à Campo Santo" was preceded by a strip of ground, which can be discerned also on some of the Rome plans, for instance that of Dupérac (Fig. 9). We know that the level of land began to rise here²⁴, and therefore this strip is likely to have been a kind of ramp, lined with posts, allowing horses to enter from the public road into the higher level of the palace precincts.



Tomei, who had first-hand knowledge of the 15th/17th century Palazzo Cesi, destroyed ca. 1940 when via del Sant'Uffizio was widened, did not neglect to remark upon a most interesting aspect of the plan: the fact that the rear wing, beyond which lay the main garden, was narrower than the other three, consisting only of loggias, without rooms behind, an arrangement that directly linked the house to the garden.²⁵ Tomei did, however, neglect to point out that a similar layout can be found in the slightly earlier Palazzo Medici in Florence and Palazzo Piccolomini in Pienza. I have shown elsewhere that also the Sforza Villa Imperiale in Pesaro was designed following such a scheme, and have argued that the similarity in plan of these three buildings is not mere coincidence, but a deliberate choice on the part of the patrons. The palaces, in short, are related typologically.²⁶ Further information is needed about the architectural interests of the Milanese Cardinal Alessandrino before any conclusions can be drawn, but conceivably also this Roman palace is a legitimate member of the group.

Aldroandi began his tour of the Cesi collection in the courtyard. The first sculpture that caught his eye was a standing *Amazon*, which he described as located "nel frontispitio."²⁷ Throughout his guide, Aldroandi uses the term *frontispizio* to signify a crowning or culminant architectural feature, usually the focus point of a visual axis. This suggests that the *Amazon* was displayed, not within the space of the courtyard, as Hülsen implied²⁸, but rather in an elevated, prominent setting, across from the main entrance. Lieven Cruyl's 1669 view of the Cesi palace and garden, taken from the south (Fig. 10), shows an aedicule or belvedere over the rear wing, which could well correspond to the "frontispitio" of Aldroandi's description.²⁹ A comparable arrangement for the display of sculpture can be seen in Heemskerck's drawing of the antiquities in Casa Sassi in Rome, where a colossal bust is enshrined in a great niche that rises above the top of the courtyard wall.³⁰ Since the original Palazzo Cesi had no more than two relatively low storeys (note the height of the piers in Fig. 7), and given that the *Amazon* is over life-size (2.28 metres)³¹, its impact from the upper level would still be powerful to a viewer standing in the courtyard.

Support for identifying the *Amazon's* setting with the aedicule/belvedere of the rear wing is provided by Jacques's drawing of the sculpture, done ca. 1575 (Fig. 11). When giving two different views of the same statue, Jacques almost always chose the frontal and side views.³² The two views of the *Amazon*, however, are neither one nor the other. They are taken from positions slightly below, and to the right and left of the statue, suggesting that here Jacques could not draw from his preferred vantage points. He would, in fact, have been handicapped with the *Amazon* situated as in our reconstruction, for the closest positions from which to draw it would have been on the *piano nobile* loggias of the right and left wings. Van Cleve's painting (Fig. 4) offers no clues regarding the statue's location, since the artist has eliminated the whole front and most of the rear of the palace in order to reveal the garden behind.

Cruyl's representation also establishes that at ground level the rear of the palace was totally closed except for the central portal, a point on which Tomei had expressed uncertainty.³³

6 Schematic reconstruction of the Cesi palace and gardens:

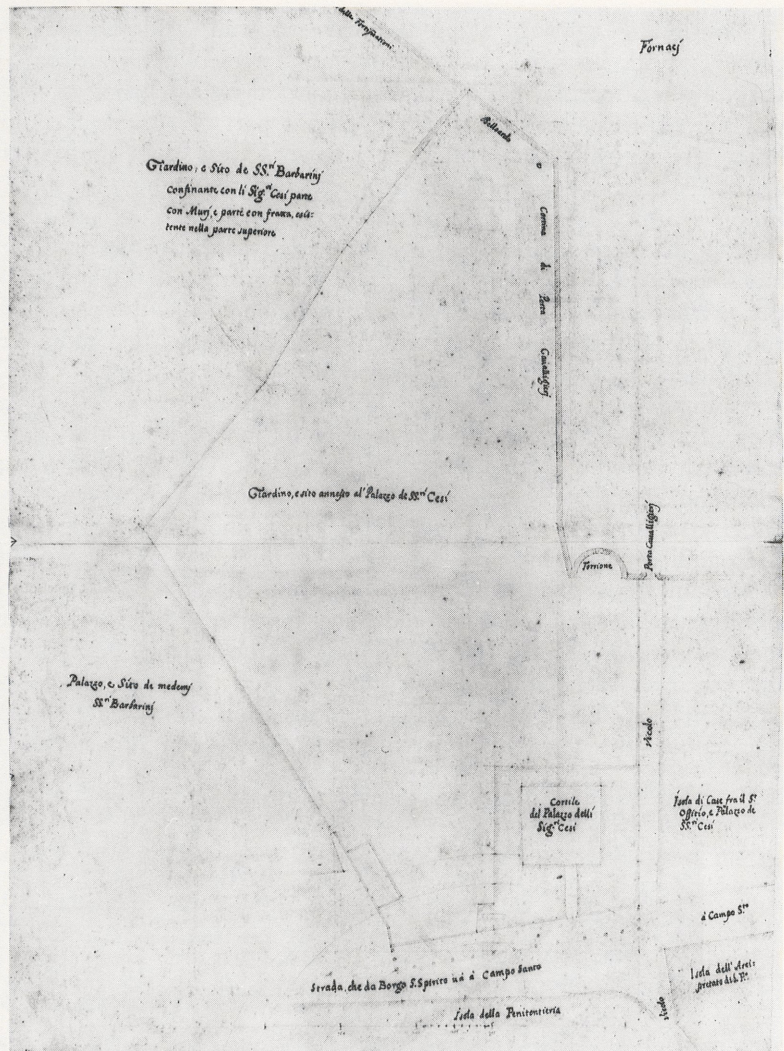
1. Palazzo Cesi; 2. Agrippina; 3. Minerva; 4. Hermaphroditus; 5. Fountain with marble snail; 6. Loggetta coperta; 7. Roma and two Captives; 8. Antiquarium; 9. Loggetta scoperta; 10. Cappelletta; 11. Cenacolo; 12. Pluto; 13. Gate into Vigna; 14. Vigna; 15. Gate into Secret Garden; 16. Secret Garden; 17. Studio of Domenico Guidi.



7 Courtyard of the Cesi palace, before 1905.

II. The garden

Aldroandi left the palace courtyard by way of the rear door, and found himself at the foot of the main garden. His eyes sweeping over the view, he was dazzled by beautiful statues everywhere, among which he counted 22 antique herms (*termini*), which Hülsen assumed, probably correctly, were installed along the edges of the garden plots.³⁴ After giving us an idea of the overall composition of the garden — four compartments with a piece of sculpture at the centre of each — Aldroandi proceeded to examine the individual pieces in the collection by walking around the perimeter of the grounds. Turning to the right, he headed towards the western garden wall, where he encountered first a statue of *Agrippina*, then one of *Minerva*, and finally one of *Hermaphroditus*. According to Hülsen, these three sculptures were installed in niches, a feature he detected on Dupérac's map (Fig. 9).³⁵ However, the marks along the wall in Dupérac's view can just as easily be interpreted as the statues themselves, and since there is no other evidence for niches we can assume that the sculptures were set directly against the garden wall. Indeed, Aldroandi describes them simply as "presso al muro", and "lungo il muro".³⁶ In his schematic reconstruction, Hülsen grouped the statues together, but a careful reading of Aldroandi's guide reveals that they were on axis with the three paths traversing the garden from west to east.³⁷ As will be seen, there was a similar concern to align statuary or structures with the main north-south alleys.



8 Unknown, 17th century, plan of the Cesi palace, garden, and vigna. Biblioteca Vaticana, Chigi P VII, 9, f. 53v-54.

9 Etienne Dupérac, detail of map of Rome showing the Cesi palace, garden and vigna, 1577.



Continuing to walk along the western wall, Aldroandi now approached the south-west corner, where he saw, “in capo di questa strada del giardino”, a fountain that received its water from a marble snail and an urn carried by a putto (Fig. 1).³⁸ To the left of the fountain was the semicircular *torrione*, a still-extant part of the old Leonine fortifications, flanking the Porta dei Cavalleggeri. Inside this tower, Cesi had built a kind of grotto, or “loggietta coperta”, in which he installed a modern marble table, the base carved with Cardinal Paolo Emilio’s arms. The table is recorded, together with its measurements, 7 x 11 *palmi* (ca. 1.56 x 2.46 metres), in a drawing attributed to Aristotile da Sangallo (Fig. 12). Three ancient busts were set above the windows of the grotto. In Heemskerck’s drawing (Fig. 1), we see the *torrione* before Cesi restructured it, when it was the setting for the tripod fountain basin and putto that subsequently, in Aldroandi’s time, decorated the centre of the south-west garden plot.

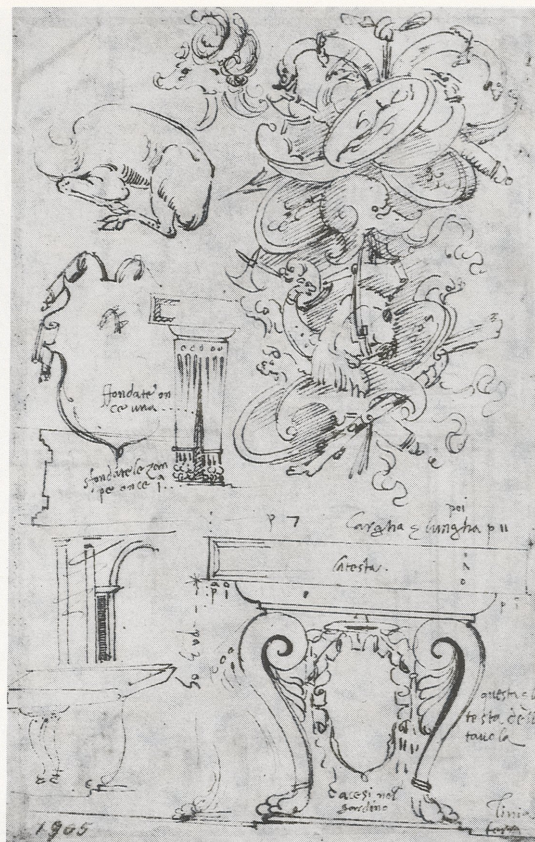
Coming out of the grotto, Aldroandi turned towards the east to walk along the upper alley of the garden. He arrived at a point in line with the central garden alley and the rear palace door, where he admired, to his right, a statue of *Roma*, flanked by two *Captives*. Aldroandi describes them as situated “nel frontispicio del giardino, al dritto della prima porta, onde vi s’entra”.³⁹ Van Cleve’s paintings show the sculptures in the position noted by Aldroandi, but lacking any sign of a *frontispicio* (Figs. 4, 5). Since Aldroandi does not tend to use this term arbitrarily, we can assume that the *Roma* group originally was placed in an architectural setting, which would have appeared as a culminant feature (hence “frontispicio”) for anyone entering the garden by way of the palace door. Tomei, who was able to examine the site prior to its total destruction, detected traces of a triple-niche wall against the hillside to the left of the *torrione*.⁴⁰ His reconstruction shows all three niches the same size, though the central one (for *Roma*) is likely to have been larger than the two side ones (for the



10 Lieven Cruyl, the Cesi garden and palace, detail from a view of St. Peter’s from the south, 1669. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum.



11 Pierre Jacques, Amazon statue in the Cesi palace, ca. 1575. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Estampes.



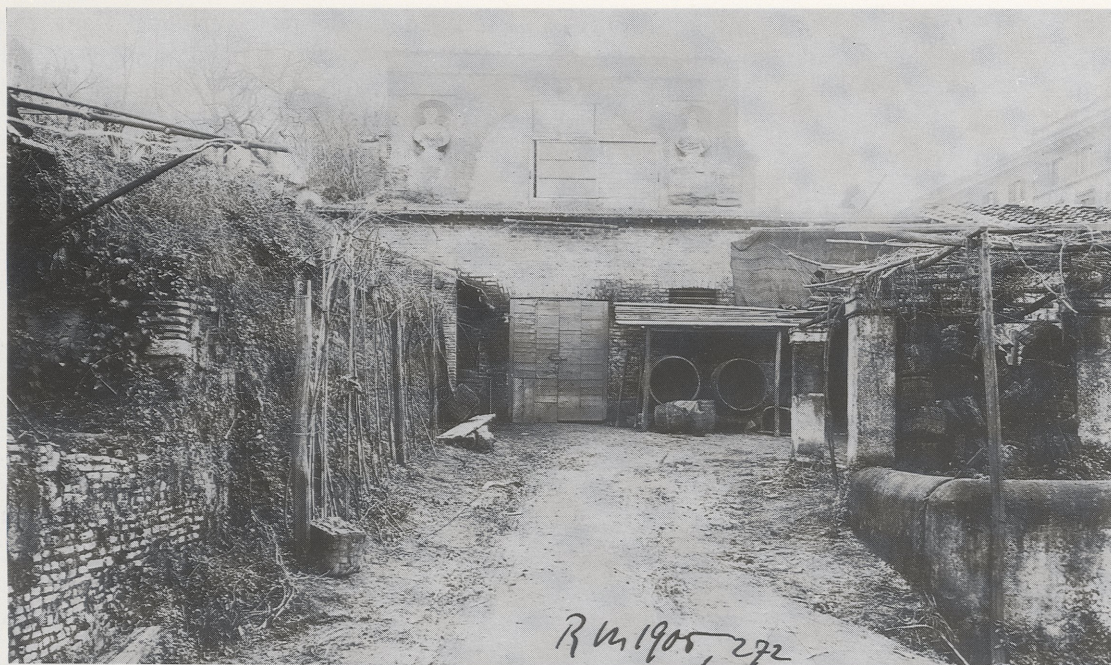
12 Aristotile da Sangallo, dining table in the *torrione*. Florence, GDSU, 1905 A verso.

Captives). In fact, on Dupérac's view, we see only a single monumental niche, higher than the wall to either side of it (Fig. 9). Furthermore, Cruyl, who depicts the palace and garden from the back, shows a roofed structure where the *Roma* would have been located, which could be interpreted as the rear of the prominent middle niche (Fig. 10).

Aldroandi left the "frontispicio del giardino", and continued walking eastward. At the south-east corner of the garden, he turned right and walked up the slope to arrive at the Antiquarium, a centralized pavilion with a Greek-cross plan, intended for the display of antiquities (Figs. 13, 14, 15).⁴¹ Before entering, Aldroandi listed the sculptures on the facade: an over-lifesize porphyry bust of Jupiter was set "Nel frontispicio ... dell'Antiquario"⁴², *frontispicio* here referring to the triangular pediment that originally crowned the facade, visible on most views of the garden. To right and left, just below the pediment, he noted busts of Otho and Poppea, which were still in place when the Antiquarium was photographed some time before 1905 (Figs. 14, 15). Along the upper edge of the pediment stood five more figures. Inside, Aldroandi must have felt exhilarated. There he saw, among other outstanding pieces, the group of *Pan and Daphnis*, which he thought might be one of the three versions of the sculpture mentioned by Pliny.



13 Interior of the Antiquarium, before 1905.



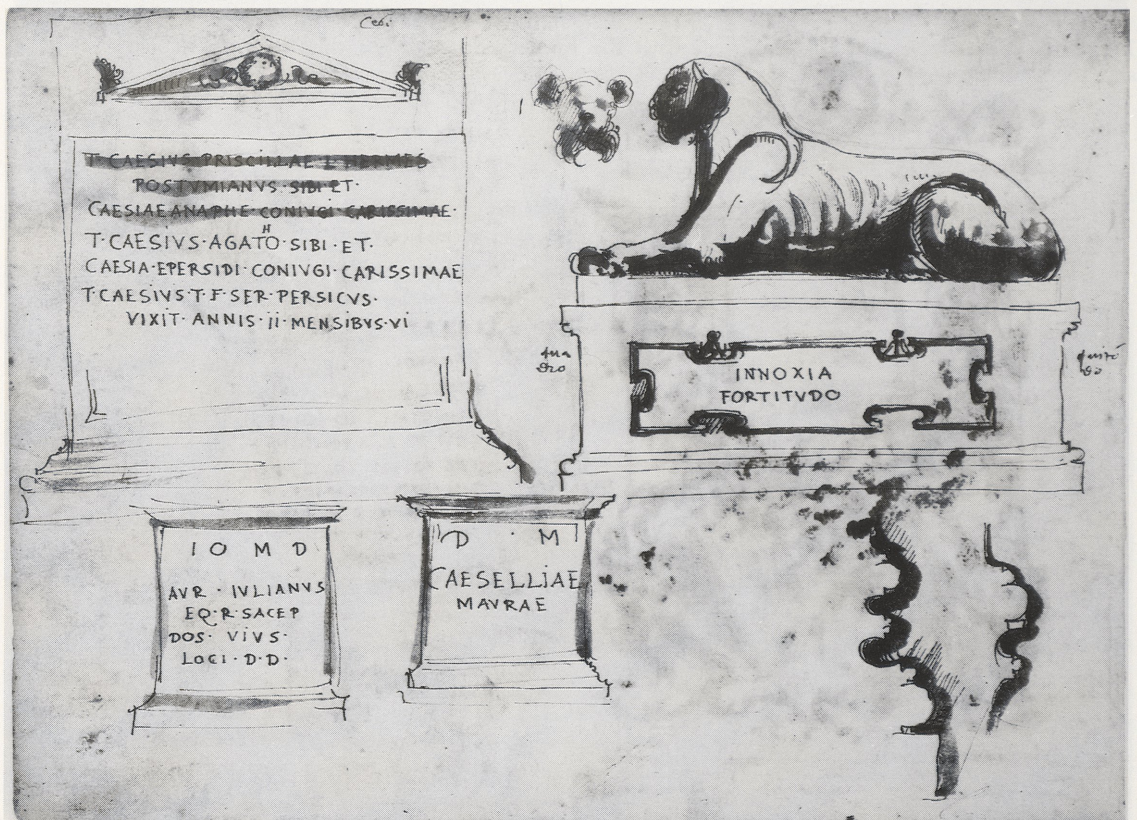
14 South-east corner of the Cesi garden, with the former entrance into the “loggietta scoperta” at left, and the Antiquarium, before 1905.



15 South-east part of the Cesi garden, with the “appartamento del giardino” at left, and the Antiquarium at right, before 1905.

Coming out of the Antiquarium, Aldroandi descended to the alley running along the eastern edge of the garden. Immediately to the right he encountered “uno appartamento del giardino”⁴³, an area open to the sky, raised above the garden level, and cut back into the hillside (Figs. 15, 17). It consisted of a “cenacolo in forma quasi d’un mezzo cerchio” at the left, and a smaller, subdivided space at right, which Aldroandi refers to as “loggietta scoperta” and “cappelletta”.⁴⁴ This layout can be seen clearly on a 17th century drawing of the site (Fig. 3), first published by Tomei in 1940.⁴⁵ The British Library drawing mentioned by Lanciani (Fig. 2)⁴⁶, appears less accurate than the Vatican plan in its representation of the “appartamento del giardino”, since it lacks the “cenacolo”, and separates the “loggietta scoperta” and “cappelletta”, which were in fact one behind the other.

Hülsen located the entrance into the “appartamento” at the centre of the “cenacolo”⁴⁷, but Aldroandi unequivocally states that he entered by way of the “loggietta scoperta”, noting furthermore “è questo di rincontro à l’Hermafrodito”, the statue that was set at the western end of the upper alley.⁴⁸ The 17th century Vatican plan (Fig. 3) confirms that access to the “appartamento” was by way of the subdivided area at right. Flanking the entrance were sculptures of a ram and lion, set on bases with inscriptions. A mid-16th century drawing of the lion (Fig. 16) specifies that the front of the base was flat (“qua/dro”), and the end curved (“qui ton/do”).⁴⁹ Hülsen proposed to locate the sculptures at right angles to the garden wall, with the result that they partially obstruct the alley.⁵⁰ The curved form of the rear of the base, however, and the location of the inscription, strongly suggest that the lion (to the right



16 Giovanni Colonna, lion sculpture flanking the entrance into the “loggietta scoperta”. Biblioteca Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 7721, f. 14v.



17 View from St. Peter's of Monte Santo Spirito, with the Cesi palace, garden, and vigna at centre, late 19th century. Rome, private collection.

of the entrance) was facing northwards. The ram, to the left of the entrance, would then have been facing southwards, in other words the two sculptures were placed parallel to and against the garden wall.

Having entered the “*loggietta scoperta*”, Aldroandi's eye was immediately caught by a statue of the Emperor Elagabalus, which was enshrined in the central niche of the “*cappelletta*”, the space beyond the “*loggietta*” (“*Entrandosi per quivi nella loggietta scoperta, si vede nel mezzo della cappelletta, che s'incontra la statua di Heliogabalo intiera*”).⁵¹ The articulation of the rear wall of the “*cappelletta*” — a large central niche flanked by columns or pilasters, with smaller niches to the sides — is documented by an old photograph (Fig. 15).

Traces of the nearly semicircular form of the “*cenacolo*” can be discerned in early photographs of Monte Santo Spirito (Fig. 17). At the centre of the curved wall was what appears to be a deep niche (Fig. 15), which must correspond to the passage into the *vigna*, indicated on the 17th century plan (Fig. 3). We know from Aldroandi's description that various pieces of statuary and many inscriptions adorned the “*cenacolo*”, and that a mulberry tree and well were also to be found there.⁵² Cruyl's drawing of the Cesi garden (Fig. 10) includes what seems to be the well of the “*cenacolo*”, which we can make out just to the right of the Antiquarium.



18 Gate formerly leading from Cesi garden to giardino segreto, before 1905.

Aldroandi left the “appartamento del giardino” by way of the passage through which he had entered. Back on the garden path, he turned northward and encountered a statue of *Pluto*, which he notes was placed in line with the *Minerva* standing at the western end of the central garden path (“Ritornando giù à dietro là dove erano i simulacri del Montone, e del Leone, & passando oltra si truova un Plutone in pie mezo vestito, e posto sopra una base marmorea; & questa statua è di rincontro à quella di Pallade, che era la seconda girandosi il giardino piano.”).⁵³ Hülsen mistakenly set the *Pluto* in the left corner of the “cenacolo”, presumably to achieve a more balanced composition.⁵⁴ A little ways further on Aldroandi came to a gate, flanked by two lions, which led into the *vigna*. He observes that “Al dritto di questa porta su nel frontispicio del giardino alto si vede una Pomona vestita in piè.”⁵⁵ The description of *Pomona* in a “frontispicio” higher up the slope suggests that

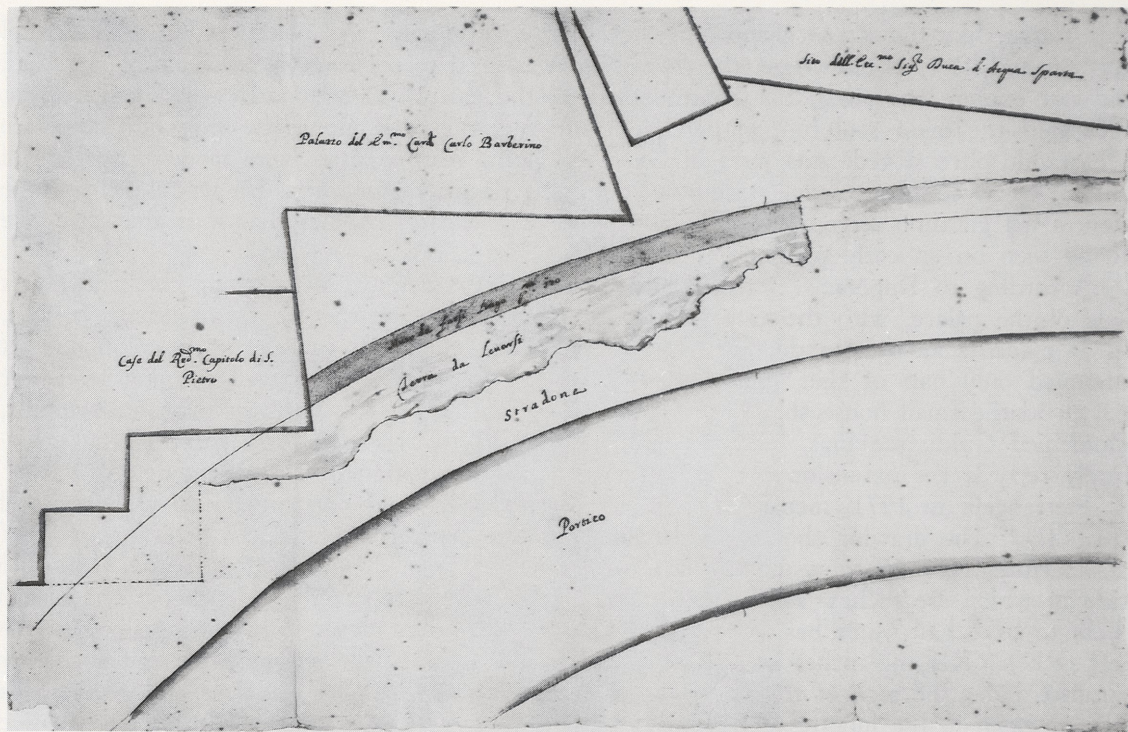
this statue, like the *Roma* group and the *Amazon*, originally was placed in an architectural setting; and here, as elsewhere, the *frontispizio* was used to reinforce a visual axis. Aldroandi did not explore the *vigna*, but continued along the eastern alley to arrive at the gate that separated the main sculpture garden from the secret garden along the side of the palace ("Passando oltre si vede una testa di Giove col petto vestito posta sopra un gran portone di stucco, che è all'incontro dell'antiquario, del quale s'è già ragionato ... Et per questo portone s'entra nel giardino secreto").⁵⁶ His description of the gate suggests that it is the same one to be seen on an early photograph (Fig. 18).

According to Dupérac's view (Fig. 9), the secret garden extended along the whole east side of the palace, with the gate situated at the south-east corner of the building. In fact, as is made clear by the documents regarding the demolition for Bernini's colonnade, it occupied only half of that site, being bounded at the south by a wall running from the palace to the small house that in the mid-17th century served as the studio of the sculptor, Domenico Guidi (see Figs. 3, 8, 19, 20).⁵⁷ Ironically, it is van Cleve's painting that accurately records the extension of the secret garden and position of the gate (Fig. 4).

Pietrangeli, in 1971, mentioned but did not reproduce a design for a Cesi garden portal (Fig. 21).⁵⁸ The drawing shows a garden wall, at the centre of which is a gate consisting of an aperture, 10 x 15 *palmi* (ca. 2.23 x 3.35 metres), framed by a rusticated arch, to either side of which are niches, similarly rusticated, with bases supported by brackets. The niches seem to have had water basins behind the seats ("sedino et canale[tu]re" is inscribed in the left niche). Over the niches are simple keystones and a plain cornice, which becomes slightly curving under the arch of the doorway. A shield with the Cesi coat-of-arms and a cardinal's hat is drawn in the lunette of the doorway. The top of the portal has an elaborate, massive frontispiece, in two versions. A central, projecting tablet carries the inscription: CAESIORVM ATQVE E(O)R(VM) AMICORVM / VIRIDARIVM. Beneath the tablet are two monumental nudes, crouching to either side of the arch. Huge indented scrolls hug the lower portion of the frontispiece, and crowning the whole are two large spheres to either side of a scrolled element supporting a plaque inscribed "super" (the paper is trimmed at top, so there may originally have been more to the inscription). The garden wall is pierced also by two windows with grilles, above which are pyramidal bases carrying shrubs in vases, labeled "solito arboretto".

Although there is no documentary evidence for the commission, the cardinal's hat above the coat-of-arms points to Paolo Emilio (d. 1537) or Federico (d. 1565) as the patron. Stylistically, the architecture of the portal is consistent with a date early in the second half of the 16th century, and therefore it is likely to have been designed for Federico. The unusual form of the doorway's slightly curving cornice, for instance, recalls the depressed arch used by Serlio in a couple of his gate designs published in 1551. Since some of the architectural motifs, such as the projecting tablet and the indented form of the scrolls, seem to be inspired by the Porta Pia, begun 1561, the date for the Cesi drawing can be narrowed down to the period between 1561-65.⁵⁹

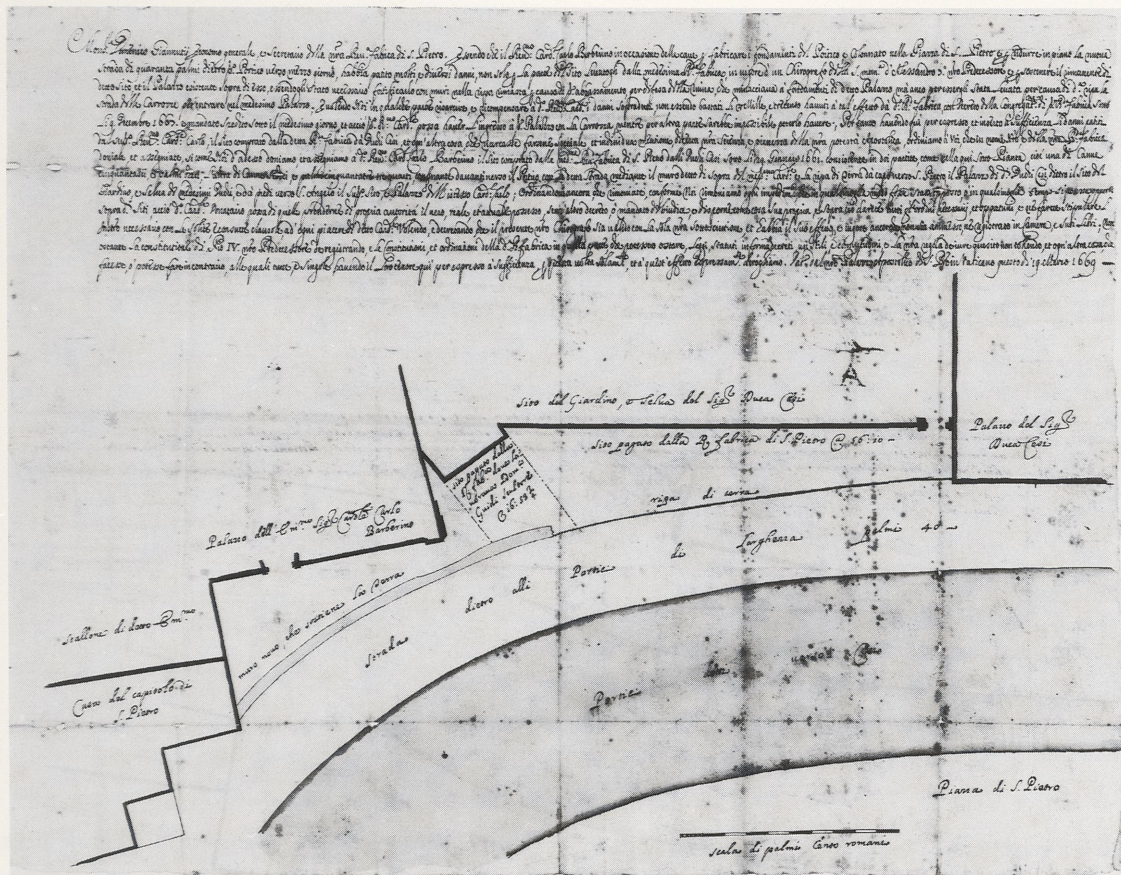
Pietrangeli suggested the drawing was by Ammannati, an attribution that is untenable on the basis of style. Several features of the drawing point, instead, to Giovanantonio Dosio as the draughtsman. The steady, fine lines, reinforced by bold shading in brown ink wash, can be seen in numerous drawings after antiquities in the Berlin album (Kupferstichkabinett, 79 D 1). Dosio's handwriting is easily recognizable, and well documented: to cite only one example, on Uffizi 1772 A we can find the same numbers, the identical abbreviation for *palmi*, and the distinctive form of the *b*, *d*, and *s*. Dosio is known to have been active in Rome during the years proposed for the garden gate drawing, 1561-65, and like many other artists, he visited the Cesi garden to draw the antiquities.⁶⁰



19 Unknown, 17th century, plan showing the Barberini and Cesi properties fronting the street around Bernini's piazza of St. Peter's. Biblioteca Vaticana, Archivio Barberini, Indice II, 2974 A.

III. Summary

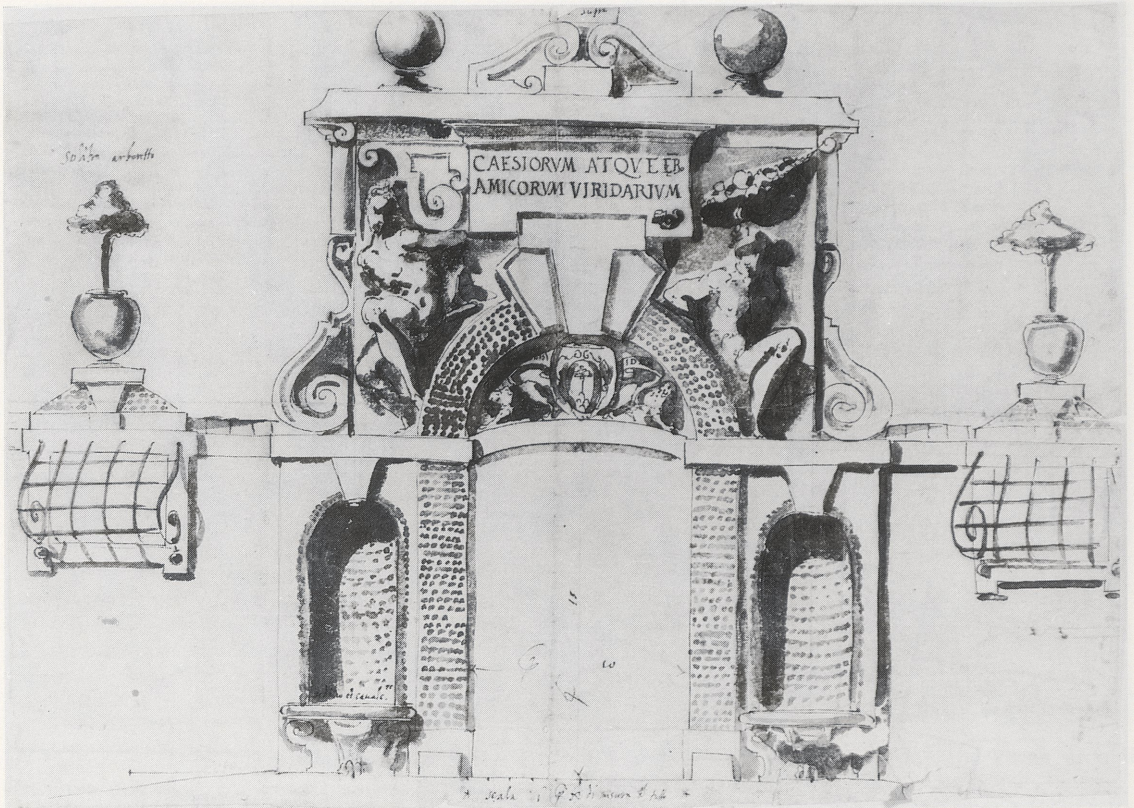
What, to conclude, has emerged from our investigation of the Cesi palace and garden? It was pointed out that the late 15th century palace had a plan recalling that of three earlier, typologically related palaces, in which the narrower rear wing was directly linked to the main garden. By attentively following Aldroandi's tour, we discovered that the grounds, laid out mainly by Cardinal Federico Cesi, were organized according to a clear grid pattern, with sculptures or garden structures marking the ends of the three main and three transverse axes, thus becoming focus points of the composition. The *Amazon* was the introductory signal, as it were, which caught Aldroandi's eye the moment he entered the palace courtyard, and drew him through the loggia of the rear wing into the garden. Climax of the tour was the Antiquarium, situated outside the perimeter of the garden proper, though not off-axis, on a rise of land appropriately dominating the whole. It is most interesting that Aldroandi rarely failed to remark upon the alignment of the garden features (e. g., the *Roma* group was in line with the central alley and the main door; the *Pluto* was at the opposite end of the middle transverse axis from the *Minerva*; the gate into the secret garden was at the other end of the alley from the Antiquarium, etc.). The Cesi collection is the only one among all those visited by Aldroandi in which he emphasized these axial inter-relationships, suggesting that he perceived the organization as something extraordinary. It is tempting to wonder if Cardinal Ippolito d'Este and his architect, Pirro Ligorio, were remembering walking through these grounds when they began to work on the plans for the Villa d'Este gardens at Tivoli.



20 Unknown, plan showing the Barberini and Cesi properties fronting the street around Bernini's piazza of St. Peter's, 1669; the site of Domenico Guidi's former studio is traced in dotted lines. Biblioteca Vaticana, Archivio Barberini, Indice II, 2970.

Though the positioning of the sculptures in the grounds seems to have been determined to a certain extent by their size, condition, and beauty, several of the pieces were undoubtedly given symbolic overtones, and placed in a site that reinforced the message. It is thought, for instance, that Federico Cesi intended the over life-size figures of *Roma* flanked by two barbarian *Captives* to celebrate imperial conquest, and the group was prominently displayed at the head of the central garden alley, immediately and strikingly visible to whoever entered the garden from the palace courtyard.⁶¹ Another example of symbolism and site effectively combined is provided by the *termini*, which decorated the edges of the garden compartments, an arrangement that underscored their role of protectors of boundaries of fields. A particular significance was also attached to the many ancient inscriptions relating to the *gens Caesia*, from which the Renaissance Cesi claimed descent.⁶² Most of these were displayed on the rear wall of the "cenacolo", an inviting place to pause, and take refreshment, offering the visitor the leisure to read.

It used to be said that the Cesi palace and collection alone were worth the journey to Rome.⁶³ Tangible signs of this former glorious tourist attraction survived into our own lifetime, but sadly the fate of the site was entrusted to individuals who were totally unappreciative of their magnificent and irreplaceable heritage.⁶⁴



21 Giovanantonio Dosio, project in two versions for a Cesi garden gate. Rome, Gabinetto Comunale delle Stampe, GS 4474.

NOTES

I should like to thank Paul Barolsky, David Coffin, Luigi Fiorani, Peter Honegger, Anita Margiotta, Henry Millon, Andrew Morrogh, Olga Puymanová and Padre Fernando Rojo for their help and advice.

- ¹ For a summary of this development see now David R. Coffin, *Gardens and gardening in Papal Rome*, Princeton 1991, pp. 17-27.
- ² See *Ulisse Aldroandi, Delle statue antiche, che per tutta Roma, in diversi luoghi, & case si veggono, in: Lucio Mauro, Le antichità della città di Roma*, Venice 1562, pp. 115-315.
- ³ For the Vigna Carpi site see now *Sabine Eiche*, Cardinal Giulio della Rovere and the Vigna Carpi, in: *JSAH*, XLV, 1986, pp. 115-133.
- ⁴ See *Domenico Gnoli*, Il giardino e l'antiquario del Cardinal Cesi, in: *Mitteilungen des deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung*, XX, 1905, p. 270. *Christian Hülsen*, *Römische Antikengärten des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, Heidelberg 1917, p. 1, states that the palace was unfinished when acquired by Cesi, though the evidence on which he bases his assumption (the Cesi rather than Sangiorgio coat-of-arms carved on the capitals of the north wing piers) is given a more plausible interpretation by Tomei: see *Piero Tomei*, Il palazzo del Cardinale Alessandrino poi dei Cesi, in: *Illustrazione Vaticana*, I, January 1938, p. 18; *idem*, *L'architettura a Roma nel Quattrocento*, Rome 1942, p. 201.
- ⁵ See *Hülsen* (n. 4), p. 1.
- ⁶ ASF, Ducato di Urbino, Cl. I, Div. G, Fa. 133, cc. 859v-860; letter from Giovanmaria della Porta, Rome, unaddressed and undated, but 1537: "Il Papa havea mandato per il Vescovo di Todi [*Federico Cesi*] successore di tutta l'intrata del Cardinale [*Paolo Emilio Cesi*] oltra gli ufficij circa trenta milia scudi che ha in persona sua, et tenutolo longamente in ragionar' li concluse voler veder' l'antiquità c'haveva il Cardinale che sonno le più belle di tutta Roma, ma le male lingue dicono che S. S.ta non se contenterà de statue e che vorà la grossa Badia di Chiaravalle appresso Milano."
- ⁷ See *Ferdinand de Navenne*, Rome. Le palais Farnèse et les Farnèse, Paris [1914], p. 457.
- ⁸ *Aldroandi* (n. 2), pp. 122-138.
- ⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 131.
- ¹⁰ See *Eiche* (n. 3), pp. 118-119.
- ¹¹ See *J.A.F. Orbaan*, Documenti sul barocco in Roma, Rome 1920, pp. 211, 286, citing an *avviso* of 14 August 1613 from the Urbino Ambassador.
- ¹² See *Beatrice Palma*, I marmi Ludovisi: Storia della collezione, Museo Nazionale Romano. Le sculture, ed. *Antonio Giuliano*, I, 4, Rome 1983, pp. 11-13, 36-37, doc. 5; and *idem*, ed., *La collezione Boncompagni Ludovisi*, exh. cat. Rome, 1992-93, Venice 1992, *passim*. See also ASF, Ducato di Urbino, Cl. I, Div. G, Fa. 160, c. 49; letter from Ansovino Martiniano to the Duke of Urbino, Rome 3 August 1622: "Il Duca Cesarino ha donato al Cardinale Ludovisi tutte le statue, che havea nel suo giardino, sicome ha fatto il Duca di Cesi di quelle che havea nel suo Palazzo."
- ¹³ See *Carlo Pietrangeli*, Le antichità dei Cesi in Campidoglio, in: *Boll. dei Musei Comunali di Roma*, n. s. III, 1989, pp. 51-63.
- ¹⁴ *Gnoli* (n. 4), pp. 267-276.
- ¹⁵ *Hülsen* (n. 4), pp. xi-xii, 1-35.
- ¹⁶ *Rodolfo Lanciani*, Storia degli scavi di Roma, vol. IV, Rome 1912, p. 108. The plan is in the British Library, Map Library, King's 7 TAB 57, f. 27. It is composed of two sheets joined vertically, measuring 413/416 x 737/738 mm, and drawn in pen and brown ink, with washes in green, yellow, pink and grey.
- ¹⁷ *Piero Tomei*, Guido Guidetti, in: *Riv. del R. Istituto d'Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte*, VIII, 1940, p. 69 fig. 5. The plan is to be found in the Biblioteca Vaticana, Archivio Barberini, Indice II, 2974 B. Measuring 271/272 x 420/418 mm, it is drawn in pen and brown ink, the walls given red wash, the garden area green wash; the inscriptions are in black chalk.
- ¹⁸ *Marjon van der Meulen*, Cardinal Cesi's antique sculpture garden: Notes on a painting by Hendrick van Cleef III, in: *Burl. Mag.*, CXVI, 1974, pp. 14-24.
- ¹⁹ See, for instance, *Claudio Franzoni*, «Rimembranze d'infinita cose». Le collezioni rinascimentali di antichità, in: *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte italiana*, ed. *Salvatore Settis*, vol. I, Turin 1984, pp. 328-331; *Isa Belli Barsali*, I giardini di statue antiche nella Roma del '500, in: *Gli Orti Farnesiani sul Palatino* (Acts of the Congress, Rome 1985), Rome 1990, pp. 354-357; *Claudia Lazzaro*, The Italian Renaissance garden, New Haven/London 1990, p. 110; *Coffin* (n. 1), pp. 22-24.

- ²⁰ See *Piero Tomei*, Contributi d'archivio. Un elenco dei palazzi di Roma del tempo di Clemente VIII, in: Palladio, III, 1939, p. 165. Tomei based his transcription on Ms. 721, Fondo Vittorio Emanuele, in the Biblioteca Nazionale "Vittorio Emanuele", Rome. There is another copy of this *zibaldone* in the ASF, Carte Strozziiane, 1^a serie, Fa. 233, in which the description of the palace is somewhat clearer.
- ²¹ ASF, Carte Strozziiane, 1^a serie, Fa. 233, c. 89.
- ²² *Aldroandi* (n. 2), pp. 136-137. Symeoni's guide, though interesting for its discussion of the antiquities in the palace, does not contribute any details regarding layout: *Gabriel Symeoni, Illustratione de gli epitaffi et medaglie antiche*, Lyons 1558, pp. 40-45. *Hülsen* (n. 4) does not cite this guide.
- ²³ For the dates see *Timothy Kitao*, Circle and oval in the Square of St. Peter's, New York 1974, pp. 15-16, 18, 49. The plan is in the Biblioteca Vaticana, Chigi P VII, 9, f. 53v-54. It is on paper, drawn in pen and brown ink. The sheet, with a strip added at right, measures 724/734 x 546/545 mm.
- ²⁴ See *Tomei*, 1938 (n. 4), p. 18; *idem*, 1942 (n. 4), p. 200; see also figs. 19 and 20.
- ²⁵ See *Tomei*, 1938 (n. 4), p. 18; *idem*, 1942 (n. 4), pp. 201-202.
- ²⁶ See *Sabine Eiche*, The Villa Imperiale of Alessandro Sforza at Pesaro, in: *Flor. Mitt.*, XXIX, 1985, pp. 266-269.
- ²⁷ *Aldroandi* (n. 2), p. 122.
- ²⁸ *Hülsen* (n. 4), p. 11.
- ²⁹ The drawing is in Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, P I, 120; see *K.T. Parker*, Catalogue of the collection of drawings in the Ashmolean Museum, vol. I, Oxford 1938, p. 50. There is a copy, dated 1672, in Florence (Poggio Imperiale, Soffittone dei Quadri, inv. 1836 Imperiale 57), which is less damaged than the Oxford drawing, but also less accurate. The Florentine view, part of a series, was published by *Karla Langedijck*, Eine unbekante Zeichnungsfolge von Lieven Cruyl in Florenz, in: *Flor. Mitt.*, X, 1961, p. 69, fig. 1. On Cruyl see now *Barbara Jatta*, Lievin Cruyl e la sua opera grafica, Brussels 1992.
- ³⁰ Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, n. 2783, reproduced in *Christian Hülsen/Hermann Egger*, Die römischen Skizzenbücher von Marten van Heemskerck, vol. I, Berlin 1913, pl. 81.
- ³¹ *Francis Haskell/Nicholas Penny*, Taste and the Antique, New Haven/London 1981, pp. 242-243.
- ³² See *Salomon Reinach*, L'Album de Pierre Jacques, Paris 1902, figs. 8 bis, 9 bis, 10, 11 bis, 16 bis, 17, 41 bis, 67, 68, 82, 88 bis.
- ³³ *Tomei*, 1942 (n. 4), p. 201.
- ³⁴ *Hülsen* (n. 4), p. xii.
- ³⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. xi, 4.
- ³⁶ *Aldroandi* (n. 2), p. 124.
- ³⁷ *Hülsen* (n. 4), p. 7 fig. 4; and see text below.
- ³⁸ *Aldroandi* (n. 2), p. 125.
- ³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 126.
- ⁴⁰ *Tomei* (n. 17), p. 70 fig. 6.
- ⁴¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 73-78, provides a modern plan, elevation and section, as well as a detailed discussion of the Antiquarium, which he was still able to examine in person. *Franzoni* (n. 19), p. 359 suggests, by way of hypothesis, that the so-called *studio* of Marco Varrone's villa, near Cassino, was the prototype for the Cesi Antiquarium.
- ⁴² *Aldroandi* (n. 2), p. 127.
- ⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 131.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibidem*.
- ⁴⁵ See n. 17.
- ⁴⁶ See n. 16.
- ⁴⁷ *Hülsen* (n. 4), p. 7 fig. 4.
- ⁴⁸ *Aldroandi* (n. 2), p. 131.
- ⁴⁹ The drawings in the sketchbook Vat. Lat. 7721 have all been published by *Maria Elisa Micheli*, Giovanni Colonna da Tivoli: 1554 (Xenia, Quaderni, 2), Rome 1982; for f. 14v see pp. 62-63.
- ⁵⁰ See n. 47.
- ⁵¹ *Aldroandi* (n. 2), p. 131.
- ⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 132.
- ⁵³ *Ibidem*.
- ⁵⁴ See n. 47.
- ⁵⁵ *Aldroandi* (n. 2), p. 133.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 133.
- ⁵⁷ See *Roberto Battaglia*, Il Palazzo di Nerone e la Villa Barberini al Gianicolo, Rome 1943, pp. 13-14 n. 19.

- ⁵⁸ Carlo Pietrangeli, *Il Museo di Roma*, Bologna 1971, p. 40. The drawing is in the Gabinetto Comunale delle Stampe, Rome, inv. no. GS 4474. It is executed in pen and brown ink, wash, with underdrawing in black chalk, on thin paper attached to a secondary support. The sheet measures 222/220 x 313/310 mm; it was folded in half horizontally and three times vertically, as though enclosed with a letter.
- ⁵⁹ Sebastiano Serlio, *Extraordinario Libro di architettura di Sebastiano Serlio architetto del re christianissimo nel quale si dimostrano trenta porte di opera rustica mista con diversi ordini et venti di opera dilicata di diverse specie con la scrittura davanti che narra il tutto*, Lyons 1551, see pls. 24 and 30. I am grateful to Andrew Morrogh for his observations on the Gabinetto Comunale drawing. The scrolls of the Porta Pia can be seen clearly on a drawing in the Uffizi, 2148 A, by Dosio, which records a final stage of the design: see Elisabeth B. MacDougall, *Michelangelo and the Porta Pia*, in: *JSAH*, XIX, 1960, p. 103.
- ⁶⁰ On the Berlin album see Christian Hülsen, *Das Skizzenbuch des Giovannantonio Dosio im Staatlichen Kupferstichkabinett zu Berlin*, Berlin 1933. On Dosio in general see Carolyn Valone, *Giovanni Antonio Dosio and his patrons*, Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University 1972. On Dosio's drawing style see most recently Andrew Morrogh, ed., *Disegni di architetti fiorentini 1540-1640*, exh. cat., Florence 1985. A related drawing in the Gabinetto Comunale delle Stampe, Rome, inv. no. GS 4475, showing a project for a fountain with the arms of Pope Pius IV, is likewise to be given to Dosio rather than Ammannati, the repository's attribution.
- ⁶¹ See Haskell/Penny (n. 31), p. 171.
- ⁶² Aldoandi (n. 2), p. 132.
- ⁶³ See Orbaan (n. 11), p. 245 n. 1, citing Hermann Bavinck, *Wegzeiger zu den wunderbarlichen sachen der heidnischen etwann, nun Christlichen stat Rom ...*, Rome 1625, p. 34.
- ⁶⁴ On the urban history of this area see now Lorenzo Bianchi, *Le fortificazioni del monte di Santo Spirito e il bastione di Antonio da Sangallo*, in: *Studi Romani*, XLI, 1993, pp. 243-277.

RIASSUNTO

Il presente articolo offre una rassegna di tutte le testimonianze a noi note sul disegno di giardini e villa Cesi nel Borgo Vaticano, a cui si aggiunge materiale poco conosciuto e non pubblicato in precedenza. Ripercorrendo attentamente la visita dell'Aldroandi a questo sito, ed esaminando gli elementi tratti dalle testimonianze documentarie (perlopiù figurative), risulta possibile giungere ad una ricostruzione più precisa di quella proposta dallo Hülsen nel 1917.

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Staatliche Museen (J.P. Anders), Berlin: Fig. 1 - *British Library*, London: Fig. 2. - *BAVR*: Figs. 3, 8, 16, 19-20. - *Národní Galerie*, Prague: Fig. 4. - *Abegg-Stiftung*, Riggisberg: Fig. 5. - *Author*: Figs. 6, 17. - *Deutsches Archäologisches Institut*, Rome: Figs. 7, 13-15, 18. - *Bibliotheca Hertziana*, Rome: Fig. 9. - From H. Egger, *Römische Veduten*, Vienna 1911-31, vol. I, pl. 27: Fig. 10. - From Reinach (n. 32), fig. 14: Fig. 11. - *Soprintendenza*, Florence: Fig. 12. - *Gabinetto Comunale delle Stampe*: Fig. 21.