RUBENS AND THE HUMANISTIC GARDEN

by

MARIA LYDIA BRENDEL

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IN MEMORY OF MY MOTHER
and
M. and W. HEIMBERGER

IN HONOUR OF MY FATHER

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ABSTRACT

During his eight-year Italian sojourn (1600-1608), Sir Peter Paul Rubens became familiar with *villeggiatura*, a form of villa life (unique to Italy) modeled on the antique garden. Rubens' experience was personal, for a close examination of a select number of his works demonstrates that he fully assimilated this humanistic tradition. He participated in the intellectual currents of his time, the source of *ars hortulorum*. In his pictures, Rubens took over forms found in gardens of antiquity, the Renaissance or the Baroque and, in certain instances, recreated the mood, function and sense found in these gardens and as described by literary works. Most important, Rubens' own life of *villeggiatura* is clearly made evident in several of these paintings.

His preference for the humanistic *hortus* over the garden traditions of other countries reveals Rubens' admiration, shared with other humanists for the ancients and their culture which provided personal models for poise and enlightenment.

The result of this study focuses on a new dimension to our understanding of Rubens'*oeuvre*, his involvement with *villeggiatura* and the *ars hortulorum*.

Abrégé

Pendant son séjour de huit ans en Italie (1600-1608), Peter Paul Rubens s'est familiarisé avec la *villeggiatura*, un genre de vie associé avec les villas qui était modelé d'après le jardin antique et qui était unique en Italie. L'experience de Rubens était personelle, et un examen minutieux de certaines de ses oeuvre montre que l'artiste a complètement assimilé cette tradition humaniste. Rubens a pris part aux courants intellectuels de son temps, qui étaient la source des *ars hortulorum*. Dans ses peintures, Rubens a utilisé les formes qui se trouvent dans les jardins de l'antiquité, de la renaissance, et du baroque. De plus, quelques fois, il a recrée l'ambiance, la fonction, et le sens comme celà existaient dans ses jardins et comme celà étaient décrits dans plusieurs oeuvres littéraires. Le plus important est que la vie *villeggiatura* que Rubens a mené lui-même est évidente dans certaines de ses peintures.

Sa préférence pour le jardin humaniste plutôt que pour les traditions horticoles des autres pays révéle l'admiration de Rubens, d'ailleurs partagée avec les autres humanistes, pour les anciens et leur culture, que étaient leurs modèles personnels pour la grâce et l'édification.

Le résultat de cette étude est d'ajouter une nouvelle dimension à notre compréhension de l'oeuvre de Rubens, c'est-à-dire, sa participation à *villeggiatura* et les *ars hortulorum*.

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INTRODUCTION

Rubens initial introduction to *villeggiatura*

In the summer of 1601, Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga of Mantua sent *Piet. Paolo fiamingo il mio Pittore*, his recently employed young man at court, to Rome to deliver a letter to Cardinal Alessandro Montalto. Rubens was supposed to stay only a few weeks but extended his visit to the spring of 1602. He returned to Rome again in 1605 to remain until his final departure from Italy in the late fall of 1608. His initial contact with Cardinal Montalto was an important one. It exposed him to distinguished individuals of prominent intellectual circles in addition to the most celebrated villas in Rome of the time. As noted by Jaffe, "under Montalto's wings graciously outstretched"[1] Rubens was to explore these gardens while pursuing his own studies. His arrival in Italy was at a critical moment in the development and enjoyment of *ars hortulorum*. Montalto's villa near the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, on the Esquiline hill, was renowned for its garden's new design feature. Montalto was at that time also custodian of the villa Lante at Bagnaia[2] and of the villa Medici in Rome[3] since Cardinal Ferdinando de' Medici had left Rome and his villa on the Pincian hill near SS. Trinità.[4] An *avviso* after his departure decrees that "free use [be] given to Cardinal Montalto with all the furnishings that are there since His Highness does not expect to come anymore to dwell in Rome."[5] However, despite his departure from Rome, Ferdinando de'Medici did not lose interest in his villa since in 1594 he released a maintenance statement proclaiming:

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[1]M. Jaffe, Rubens and Italy, Ithaca, New York, 1977, p.10.

[2]This villa, located some fifty miles north of Rome, belonged to Cardinal Gambara who died in 1587. C. Lazzaro-Bruno, "The Villa Lante at Bagnaia: An Allegory of Art and Nature," The Art Bulletin, 59, 1977, p.553.

[3]The villa is situated above the current Spanish steps.

[4]He resigned from his cardinal's career to assume the new roles of husband, father and Grand Duke of Tuscany since his brother Francesco had died without leaving an heir to the Ducal line. G. Andres, "The Villa Medici in Rome," Ph.D. Diss., Princeton University, 1976, p.327.

[5]The avviso of Nov. 1587 states: "Il gran duca di Toscana ha dato ultimamente ordini alli suoi ministri qui, che faccino la fabricha del suo palazzo et giardino nel monte della Trinità, del quale ha date libero uso al signor cardinal Montalto, con tutti i mobili, che vi sono, poi che S.A. non è altrimenti per venir piu ad habitar in Roma...." Andres, p.327.

> The Very Serene Grand Duke of Tuscany, [wishes] that the garden at the Trinità dei Monti should not deteriorate, but should be conserved and renewed in all things which are recognized as necessary to maintain the beauty and reputation of the place....[6]

Rubens, then, could experience the garden in all its splendour.[7] Medici's words can also be seen as representational of attitudes towards gardens at the time and in particular the humanistic ones which the Fleming visited. During his stay in Rome Rubens was also to meet Scipione Borghese, the young Cardinal and nephew of the reigning Pope, Paul V, whose large villa complex on the Pincian hill was then being developed. This was a unique chance for the northern artist to observe the layout of the Borghese garden, one of the greatest villas in Rome. He would later pay tribute to this garden's decorative features.

In establishing a reputation in Rome and through being awarded one of the finest commissions in the city to adorn the Oratorian church with the High altarpiece in 1606,[8] Rubens came in contact with Cardinal Cesi and his villa in the Vatican Borgo. There he could experience the still existing garden (one of the early humanistic gardens in Rome) before it fell victim to Bernini's colonades (fig.1). The Vatican gardens, too, of the villa Belvedere (with its choice pieces of antique sculptures) became an important locale for Rubens. The recently developed garden of the villa Mattei on the Celian hill was another site where Rubens enjoyed *villeggiatura.* The villa Giulia outside the *Porta del popolo,* famous for its magnificent nymphaeum, was visited by him. He also went with his brother Philip and two other Flemings to Tivoli in order to visit the villa D'Este.[9] Previous to going to Rome, Rubens in the service of Gonzaga, had attended in the fall of 1600 the ten-day wedding festivities in Florence held

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[6]Ibid, p.459.

[7]J. Evelyn, who visited the villa Medici in 1644, confirms the gardens' state of preservation. Andres, p.459.

[8]Rubens' contact with Scipione Borghese surely made this commission possible, especially in Rome where competition was so fierce. In a letter to Gonzaga's secretary Annibale Chieppio, Rubens responded to a request for his immediate return to Mantua: "Therefore when the finest and most splendid opportunity in all Rome presented itself, my ambition urged me to avail myself of the chance." Further he said: "Among others, I know that Cardinal Borghese would not fail to speak on my behalf...." R. Magurn, The Letters of Peter Paul Rubens, Cambridge, Mass., 1955, No.14.

[9]H. G. Evers, Rubens und sein Werk: Neue Forschungen, Brussels, 1943, p.24. There were many more gardens visited by Rubens during the course of his stay in Italy; all of which contributed to his life of *villeggiatura.* We have mentioned above only the most important, although during the course of this thesis some of these others are discussed when appropriate.

for Maria de'Medici and Henry IV of France. During these days the artist had ample opportunity to visit the *grand duca's* villa at Pratolino[10] as well as the Boboli gardens at the Pitti Palace.

These villas mentioned by name were among the most splendid, celebrated for their unique design and decorative features. They were *loci amoenissimi* [sites of visual beauty] in the spirit of antique villas, thus within the realm of the aesthetic.[11] And as their function was like that of the gardens of the ancients, the Italian patrons adopted an old Roman custom by opening their gardens for public *passegiata*.[12] This *lex hortorum* [law of gardens], inscribed on plaques (often placed on entrance portals), designated the place, as in the case of Cardinal della Valle:

> For the restoration of damaged statues and the decoration of the . . . gardens. For the enjoymen' of friends and for the delight of citizens and strangers . . . . For the enjoyment of life as a retreat of taste and beauty. . . . For a garden of antiquities as an aid to painters and poets. In memory of our ancestors and for the emulation of their descendants.[13]

For Rubens, as we will come to know, the gardens meant exactly that. But in order for us to appreciate his expression of villa-life and the *ars hortulorum*, it is necessary to review briefly the history of the villa from the Greek garden to Rubens' age since so much of the experience was a humanistic one in emulation of the ancients. In the four paintings that are discussed in

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[10]These gardens, owned then by Ferdinando de'Medici, are located five miles outside Florence on the road to Bologna.

[11]But beauty functioned as a self justifying value rather than a superfluous adornment as noted by E. Battisti, "*Natura Artificiosa to Natura Artificialis*," Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium, The Italian Garden, Washington D.C., 1972, p.5. Not every Italian villa was to function in the humanistic sense as these gardens did. Many modest gardens are villas too, though they are outside the realm of aesthetic examination.

[12]Julius Ceasar gave his garden on the right side of the Tiber to the Roman people and Agrippa left the gardens in the Campus Martius beside the Baths to the Romans. D.Coffin, "The '*Lex Hortorum*' and the Access to Gardens of Latium during the Renaissance," Journal of Garden History, 2, 1981, p.212. This must have been an issue in antiquity which made Pliny the Elder write in his Natural History: "There exists in any case a magnificent oration by Agrippa ... on the subject of making all statues and paintings public property, which could have been a more satisfactory solution than banishing them as exiles to country villas" [XXXV, 26-28]. J. Pollitt, The Art of Rome 753 B.C.- A.D. 337, Sources and Documents, London, 1983, p.115

[13]For the full text of this *lex hortorum* of the garden of Cardinal Andrea della Valle (circa 1520) see Coffin, *Lex*, p.205. Ferdinando de'Medici bought the della Valle antique sculptures in 1580 to decorate his own garden.

this thesis, as well as in his own great garden in Antwerp, Rubens meant to include, as authentically as possible, everything that the villa encompassed. This reflects his classical learning and perhaps more importantly his personal understanding of *villeggiatura.* Rubens continued the tradition of such great masters as Mantegna, Leonardo and Botticelli who with their involvement in the *ars hortulorum* were just as multidimensional in their artistic spectrum.[14]

Ancient Precedents

The Italian humanistic garden was modeled after the antique Roman villa which in turn depended on the tradition of the Greek garden. Excavations have so far not yielded an example of private Greek gardens adjacent to domestic dwellings.[15] Yet even without such physical evidence, it is known that the development of the villa as a whole in Roman antiquity looked to the 'classical' Greek past. Indeed, Grimal has stated that no garden art worthy of the name could have ever developed in Rome without Greek influence.[16] Evidence exists about philosophical gardens which were important for the development of the Roman and the Italian villa on both a decorative and functional level. These gardens, like those of the ancients, had a restorative purpose which was both physical and intellectual.

Greek gardens, as indicated by Homer, Plato and other ancient writers were sacred places located near springs where deities were custodians of the 'sacred' water. Nymphs are most often described as presiding over springs. Rivergods are also mentioned and sculptures of both were set up in gardens.[17] Other 'embellishments' included altars and sacred verdure.[18]

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[14]Battisti writes: "It is certain that artists of the first rank were involved ... in horticultural decoration." (p.17). The interest of painters in garden art is attested to by several Renaissance masterpieces of Mantegna, Botticelli and Leonardo (for the reference to specific paintings see Battisti, p.17). A letter sent to Mantua by an agent of Gonzaga concerning the drawing for a villa states: "I did not commit Leonardo either to colour the drawing or to make ornaments of verdure in it, such as ivy, box, cypress and laurel, as can be found here, because it did not seem necessary. But if you would like Leonardo offers himself to do it either in painting or in model, as you prefer." Carlo Pedretti, A Chronology of Leonardo da Vinci's Architectural Studies after 1500, Geneva, 1962, p.26. Battisti, p.16.

[15]The courtyards unearthed in Priene all have pavements of stone. B. Ridgway, "Greek Antecedents of Garden Sculpture," Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium, Ancient Roman Gardens, Washington D. C., 1981, p.16

[16]P. Grimal, Les Jardins Romains, Paris, 1969, chpt.3, pp.63-98, Ibid, p.9

[17]"It is indeed a lovely spot .... This plane is very tall and spreading... in full bloom too, filling the neighbourhood with the finest possible fragrance. And the spring which runs under the plane; how beautiful its water is to the feet. The figures and other offerings show that the place is sacred to Acheolus [rivergod] and some of the nymphs." Plato, Phaedrus, 230, trans.

The Academy outside Athens, where Plato taught, included a shrine of the hero Academos. However, the shrine existed before the Academy, thus this place was likely chosen because of its sacredness and wisdom as it belonged to the god of learning.[19] In the Italian villa one sees the thread of continuity in this view of gardens, but with certain modifications. Another garden, adjacent to Aristotle's Lykeion, was that of Theophrastos, a pupil of the philosopher. He bought the garden after his master's death, decorating the place with statues and altars and dedicating it to the Muses.[20]

What is a Villa

The villa is, in Dörrenhaus' terms, a mediterrenean '*Archtyp*,' a *altlateinische Existenzform*[21] which developed again after the middle ages and, in particular, during the Renaissance when urban centers rose to political and economic prominence.[22] The villa, in general a country retreat, was owned by city dwellers who left their urban sphere to go regularly *'on villeggiatura.'*[23] But the villa was not necessarily a retreat far away from the city. It was, in fact, closely tied to urban life. During the sixteenth century, especially, the villa became a reflection of the magnificence of the town or city to which it belonged.[24] The

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W.Hamilton, London, 1983. For the definition of nymphs (there are five categories) and their respective habitat see F. Alvarez, "The Renaissance Nymphaeum: Its Origin and its Development in Rome and Vicinity," Ph.D. Diss., Columbia University, 1981, p.2.

[18]G. Pochat, Figur und Landschaft, Berlin, 1973, p.48.

[19]Ridgway, p.18.

[20]Ibid, (with bibliography on this reference), p.18.

[21]F. Dörrenhaus, Villa und Villeggiatura in der Toskana, Wiesbaden, 1976, p.135.

[22]D. Coffin, The Villa in the Life of Renaissance Rome, Princeton, 1988, p.11. This source is henceforth referred to as The Villa.

[23]Most early villas were simple dwellings where the fact of ownership of the land was predominant. In Rome, for instance, almost every citizen had a piece of land or *vigna* [vineyard]. The casino [building] was often secondary. Coffin, The Villa, p.16.ff. These early *vigne* were associated with the celebrations of the harvest bringing people from urban communities on regular intervals to the country. For the development of the casino see J. Ackerman, "Sources of the Renaissance Villa," Acts of the Twentieth International Congress of the History of Art: the Renaissance and Mannerism, vol.II, Princeton, 1963, pp.6-18.

[24]According to Dörrenhaus, the close contact between country and city folk was the result of land reform after the middle ages, which resulted in the inclusion of 'peasants' into urban communities. While severe feudal societies controlled men in the north, people on the Italian peninsula were by then living in 'free' communities and owned their land. People on their

humanists saw the villa within the context of the fabric of society and not as a social retreat.[25] Rome, for example, with its double society -- the papacy and the city -- had a dual system of *villeggiatura*, yet the intermingling of the two extended into villa-life.[26] The concept 'villa' in the humanistic sense, however, was mainly intellectual. "In Rome," Battisti writes, the development was "to a large degree the responsibility of a circle of humanists."[27] Their desire was to create for their own discussions the same type of environment as that which existed in the gardens of poets and philosophers of ancient times. This classical atmosphere was enhanced by the introduction of antique works in gardens, a practice which was closely related with excavations being carried out at the time that were yielding large numbers of ancient sculpture.[28] At first these gardens were 'outdoor museums'(fig. 2). But soon highly

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respective *contado* [land] belonged to urban society. This was an important factor in the development of the villa. The villa must be seen in this context since it was not a seat of a *Souverän* (as in northern traditions) but rather a place of free citizens of urban communities. The villa is the link between the two societies. Dörrenhaus further argues that the villa brought about new contacts between the country and the city. This in turn generated the enormous explosion of artistic talents among people from the 'country.' Leonardo da Vinci, for example, was born in Anchiano a *contado* of Florence (p.44 ff). *Contadi* thus became developed, resulting in cultivated landscapes and eventually in *ars hortulorum*. Dörrenhaus also stresses that the villa is a way of life understood through experience and not by formal studies alone.(p.42). The author gives more information in his excellent book on this subject.

[25]Coffin, The Villa, p.10.

[26]Ibid, p.16. The term villa is used henceforth interchangeably with gardens. Villa and garden are characterized as "one" in the Italian tradition. One does not exist without the other. This is evident from written guides to Italian villas existing since the sixteenth century: the villa was determined by its garden. In most cases the casino had a subordinate role. Heilmann, in characterizing the villa and garden, writes: "Der Begriff Villa ist ausgehend von der Guidenliteratur für die gesamte Anlage gebraucht, bedeuted also Palast oder Casino im Zusammenhang mit dem Garten." C. Heilmann, "Die Entstehungsgeschichte der Villa Borghese," Münchner Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst, XXIV, p.97. Similarly, Knopp wrote: "Die Villa ist im Italienischen Sinn verstanden als Gesamtheit von Garten und Gartencasino." N. Knopp, Das Gartenbelvedere, Munich, 1966, p.9. Dörrenhaus, in explaining the concept villa, says: "Der Begriff Villa schließt den Garten ein." p.19.

[27]E. Battisti, p.30. For other humanistic circles see L.Puppi, [Veneto] "The Villa Garden of the Veneto from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century," p.91-92; and MacDougall, [Ferrara] "Ars," p.51; all three references are in Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium, The Italian Garden, Washington D.C., 1972. Coffin, [Florence] The Villa, p.9. Alvarez, [Naples], p.237.

[28]Excavations were financed by individuals but they required permission from the *Camera Apostolica*. Ferdinando de'Medici obtained permission to conduct his own excavations in and around Rome. Andres, p.212. Cardinal D'Este employed the Neapolitan archaeologist Pirro Ligorio, who started systematic excavations in 1560 in the Tiburtine area, in particular at Hadrian's villa. Coffin, The Villa, p.207. At the same time excavations were also carried out

sophisticated iconographic programs developed which, as in painting, followed the precepts of the aesthetic theory *ut pictura poesis* the dominant doctrine of the period.[29]

Ut poesia hortis

The tenets of this *doctus poetus* included a requirement to imitate models from antiquity, and to choose subject matter from established themes or *topoi* with the purpose to delight as well as to impart wisdom.[30] This, however, caused a problem since there was hardly any evidence from which to draw. Actual remains of antique gardens were scarce: ruins permitted only some visual ideas.[31] "What remained" MacDougall writes "were the fragments of information found in ancient texts."[32]

Pliny the Younger's description of his two villas provided the most 'complete' factual information.[33] The villa dialogues found in the writings of Cicero yielded ideas as to the intellectual pursuits in gardens.[34] Among other texts were the ancient rhetorical set pieces like Homer's garden of Alcinous, Ovid's pastoral poetry, and the Claudian Love songs, which are images of idyllic nature. These sources provoked moods either of a lost paradise of the Golden Age or the garden of Venus. During the Renaissance stylistic influences seem to have derived from local traditions as expressed in the prose and poetry of writers like Boccaccio,

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on tombs on the Via Latina in search for sarcophagii and inscriptions. M. Visentini et al, Museo Di Villa Giulia, De Luca Roma, 1983, p.11.

[29]For a most informative discussion on *ut pictura poesis* becoming *ut poesia hortis* see E. MacDougall, "*Ars Hortulorum:* Sixteenth Century Garden Iconography, and Literary Theory in Italy," Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium, The Italian Garden, Washington D.C., 1972, pp.37-60.

[30]*Ut pictura poesis* is Horace's dictum (initially intended for theatre) which was at the time interpreted that poetry is analogous to painting in its aims and effects. Thus art was to have a moral function as well as to give pleasure. R. Lee, "Ut Pictura Poesis: Humanist Theory of Painting," The Art Bulletin, 22, 1940, p.261.

[31]Coffin, The Villa, p.241.

[32]MacDougall, "Ars," p.40.

[33]Pliny the Younger, The Letters, trans. B. Radice, New York, 1983. Rubens' library included the works of both Pliny the Elder and Younger. S. Macrae, "Rubens' Library," M.A.Thesis, Columbia University, 1971. The books in this thesis are listed alphabetically by author.

[34]For books on 'Villa Dialogue' modeled after those of Cicero see Coffin, The Villa, p.11.

[Decamerone] or Colonna [Hypnerotomachia Poliphili][35] in which the idea is put forth to build an enclosure in order to contain an idealized representation of nature.[36]

Due to the lack of antique models and written treatises on iconography, the villa enjoyed a freedom from the weight of tradition and permitted the owner considerable license in design and decorations.[37]

Art vs. Nature

For humanists at the time these literary sources were essential and were looked upon as prototypes in the development of design concepts. Their artistic interpretation, however, was left to contemporary artists. The *boschetto* [grove] and nymphaeum, frequently found in gardens were expressions of the contrast of art vs. nature. *Boschetti* were meant to appear as natural, informal areas with fountains, nymphaea, woods and paths dispersed in a seemingly casual fashion in order to contrast with those areas of gardens which were entirely formal.[38] This surely derives from Pliny who described the following when speaking of the hippodrome at his villa Tusci:

> Between the grass lawn there are box shrubs clipped into innumerable shapes, some being letters which spell the gardener's name or his master's; small obelisks of box alternate with fruit trees, and then suddenly in the midst of this ornamental scene is what looks like a piece of rural country planted there.[39]

In the Italian villa this concept was continued as shown by Taegio, a visitor to a Milanese garden who wrote in his book La villa: un dialogo:

> Here art and nature, at times in rivalry show their utmost in contests; at times joined,

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[35]There was also the revival of epic poetry which included extended landscape descriptions inherited from antiquity. Its new emphasis was the relationship between action and setting, a change from medieval writings in which the landscape functioned only as a backdrop. The revival of this type of literature was fostered at the court of Ferrara [D'Este] where Torquato Tasso was supported as court poet. But the change occurred already in Colonna's Hypnerotomachia (Venice 1499) where the garden began to play an active role in the furthering of the action and the exposition of the narative. MacDougall, "Ars," p.50. Tasso wrote three madrigals (to be sung in five voices) in praise of Pratolino. W. Smith, "Pratolino," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, XX, 1961, p.165.

[36]Battisti, p.9.

[37]Coffin, The Villa, p.21.

[38]Martial described a villa as having "laurel groves, plane groves and airy pinegroves ... on every side babbles the water of a stream." (Epigrams, XII, 50) MacDougall, "Ars," p.47.

[39]Pliny, p.143.

united and reconciled together they create stupendous things.[40]

Similarly, in his guide book to the villa Borghese, Manilli noted that here: "art and nature have competed together."[41]

But the idea of art vs. nature was somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand art was made of living material in imitation of nature, as if to negate the artistic process, like nymphaea or *boschetti.* On the other hand, living material was used to create art. Boxtrees, for example, were clipped into artful shapes (as described by Pliny); water was used to bring sculptural works to life, or was made to spout in artful shapes. Some fountains were made to appear as products of nature, while others seemed to be pure artifice, without any attempt to deny the creative aspect.[42]

The visitor in the garden

This play of art and nature evoked illusions of the idyllic past, the Golden Age, a frequently recurring theme in gardens.[43] Some gardens had an overall theme where each decorative element contributed to the whole.[44] It was "a form of narrative" MacDougall writes, "with continuity provided by the spectator confronting different experiences in time

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[40](Milan, 1559) MacDougall, "Ars," p.52.

[41][habbian gareggiato insieme la Natura e l'Arte] Giacomo Manilli, Villa Borghese fuori di Porta Pinciana..., Rome 1650, p.146. Heilmann, p.117.

[42]The humanist Claudio Tolomei in a letter of 1543 speaks of: "the ingenious skill newly rediscovered to make fountains, in which mixing art with nature one can not judge if it [the fountain] is the work of the former or the latter; thus they strive nowadays to assemble a fountain that appears to be made by nature not by accident but with masterful art." MacDougall, I'Ingegnoso Artifizio: Sixteenth Century Garden Fountains in Roman Renaissance Gardens, "Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium Fons Sapientiae, Renaissance Garden Fountains, Washington D.C., pp.109-111.

[43]The *lex hortorum* of Scipione Borghese states: "I custodian of the Villa Borghese on the Pincio proclaim the following: Whoever you are, if you are free, do not fear here the fetters of the law. Go where you wish, pluck what you wish, leave when you wish. These things are provided more for strangers than for the owner. As in the golden Age when freedom from the cares of time made everything golden...." Coffin, "Lex," p.202.

[44]The themes are: villa D'Este in Tivoli: *the garden of the Hesperides* with Hercules in the center symbolizing the owner's virtues, (D. Coffin, The Villa D'Este at Tivoli, Princeton, 1960, p.88); at the villa Mattei: *the life of the hero Mattei* (E. MacDougall, "A Circus, a Wild Man and a Dragon: Family History and the Villa Mattei," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, 42, 1983, p.121 ff); at the villa Lante at Bagnaia: *The Golden Age* (Lazzaro-Bruno, p.555).

succession."[45] But not all gardens were to function in this way. The villa Medici, for example, for which initially a continuous iconographic program had been thought out, developed with "no clear cut scheme," the final outcome being "to embrace the glories of antiquity."[46] Similarly, the decoration at the villa Montalto appears to have been dominated by a passion for antique works set up in a formal context.[47] The function remained nevertheless the same: art was to delight and challenge the mind.

The learned spectator [like Rubens] familiar with antique rhetoric was able to create his own intellectual program, independent of a prescribed theme. Individual images functioning like words in a text, had to create a story or narrative which could be committed to memory.[48] The images served to recall key ideas or *topoi* which were required to organize a speech or oration.[49] This was made possible because the decorative works used in gardens consisted of readily identifiable types.[50]

Rubens was familiar with the principles of rhetoric through his sound classical education, particularly in the fields of philosophy and oration. This is exemplified by his treatise De Imitatione Statuarum.[51] In the paintings to come Rubens convincingly exercises

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[45]MacDougall, "Ars," p.46.

[46]Andres, p.294.

[47]Contemporary works were eventually added. Bernini, later in the century, installed his fountain of Neptune at the villa Montalto. It was with this villa that a new type of garden design (Baroque garden) was introduced to the villas of Rome. It was started by Pope Sixtus V, and after his death in 1590, continued by Cardinal Montalto. Its novelty lay in the large amount of land the gardens occupied and the 'casual' pattern applied. This new design moved away from the previous architectural approach which placed geometric shapes upon the land involving also a great deal of terrain engineering. This new type of garden design was followed by Scipione Borghese (except Borghese used some terrain alteration) and by gardens developed during the seventeenth century. Coffin, The Villa, pp.365-369.

[48]Under the precepts of the *doctus poeta* gardens, like paintings, were read as texts. Lee, p.258.

[49]These theories are paralleled in the treatise on rethoric Ad Herrenium (first century A.D.). MacDougall, "Imitation and Invention: Language and Decoration in Roman Renaissance Gardens,' Journal of Garden History, 5, 1985, pp.129-131.

[50]Ibid, p.131.

[51]Muller writes that Rubens applied to art the same theories used with philosophy and rhetoric. Further, he says of the master: "The distinction and judgements required by Rubens also agree with the rhetorical theory ... formulated most fully in antiquity by Quintillian and revived as a major theme of Renaissance poetics and art theory." J. Muller, "Rubens's Theory

"the orators' indispensible tool . . . memory . . . the treasure house of ideas."[52]

and Practice of the Imitation of Art," The Art Bulletin, June, 1982, pp.230-231, 245.

[52]Ibid, p.230.

CHAPTER ONE

> I do not think that of all the structures which are raised for the convenience of mankind there is any so commodious or so healthy as the villa.
>
> Alberti[1]

Odysseus on the Island of the Phaecians

In the seventeenth century, Roger de Piles described Odysseus on the Island of the Phaecians (fig.3) as "bizarre et extraordinaire,"[2] while Burckhardt spoke of it later as one of the most "splendid pictures in the Pitti Palace."[3] It is Rubens' only landscape with a Homeric theme, depicting that part of the narrative, after the shipwreck, when Odysseus was washed ashore on the island of the Phaecians to be helped first from the king's daughter and then by Alcinous himself. The story includes the most celebrated description of a garden from antiquity, though this garden had little importance in the course of events for the hero Odysseus. It was simply a place through which he has to pass in order to arrive at the king's palace. Nonetheless, this earthly "paradise" inserted by Homer into the narrative inspired Rubens to translate it in visual terms.[4] Through his own form of poetry, however, he freely interpreted Homer's vision. He includes elements from his own experience of more contemporary villas, thereby obviously building on the ancient author's description.

Contemporary adapatations

In Homer's story, the king's daughter sent Odysseus to her father's estate with these directions: "You will see near a path a fine poplar wood sacred to Athene, with a spring welling up in the middle and a meadow all round. That is where my father has his royal park . . .

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[1]Leon Battista Alberti, Ten Books on Architecture, trans. J. Leoni, London, 1955, IX, 2, pp.189-190.

[2]B. Teyssèdre, "Une Collection francaise de Rubens an XVIIe siecle: Le cabinet du Duc de Richelieu, décrit par Roger de Piles (1676-1681)," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1963, p.267.

[3]J. Burckhardt, Recollections of Rubens, London, 1950, p.157.

[4]This picture was in the later part of the seventeenth century obtained by De Piles for the Duc de Richelieu in France.

within call of the city."[5] After his arrival there "Odysseus stood before the house and eyed the scene,"[6] which unfolded before him:

> Outside the courtyard but stretching close up to the gates, and with a hedge running down on either side, lies a large orchard of four acres, where trees hang their greenery on high, the pear and the pomegranate, the apple with its glossy burden, the sweet fig and the luxuriant olive. Their fruit never fails nor runs short, winter and summer alike. It comes at all seasons of the year, and there is never a time when the West Wind's breath is not assisting, here the bud, and here the ripening fruit; so that pear after pear, apple after apple, cluster on cluster of grapes, and fig upon fig are always coming to perfection. In the same enclosure there is a fruitful vineyard, in one part of which is a warm patch of level ground, where some of the grapes are drying in the sun, while others are gathered or being trodden, and on the foremost rows hung unripe bunches that have just cast their blossom or show the first faint tinge of purple. Vegetable beds of various kinds are neatly laid out beyond the farthest row and make a smiling patch of never-failing green. The garden is served by two springs, one led in rills to all parts of the enclosure, while its fellow opposite, after providing a watering-place for the townsfolk, runs under the courtyard gate towards the great house itself. Such were the beauties with which the gods had adorned Alcinous' home.[7]

Almost from the inception of Rubens' picture scholars have commented on the importance he gave to the garden. De Piles, for example, observed "*ce dernier fait voir pour objet principal une grande montagne ornée a micoste d'une maison avec ses jardins.*"[8] Later Burckhardt wrote "in the most magical light, a mountain rises steeply with waterfalls . . . and a garden set with terraces and beautiful buildings,"[9] while Adler observed "in the center of the picture is an Italian villa with a fine formal garden."[10] Similarly, Vergara noted "Rubens isolates the estate, setting it up for display, at the center of the picture,"[11] and Bodart goes so far as to say that "*la costruzione della tavola parte da un piccolo pezzo al centro della composizione.*"[12]

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[5]Homer, Odyssey, trans. E.V. Rieu, London, 1981, book VI, p.110.

[6]Ibid, book VII, p.115.

[7]Ibid, book, VII, p.115.

[8]Teyssèdre, p.267.

[9]Burckhardt, p.157.

[10]W. Adler, Landscapes I, CRLB, Oxford, 1982, p.107.

[11]L. Vergara, Rubens and the Poetics of Landscape, New Haven, 1982, p.17.

[12][the construction of this picture departs from the small piece in the center of the composition] D. Bodart, Rubens e la Pittura fiaminga del Seicento nelle collezioni pubbliche fiorentine, Florence, 1977, p.29.

Indeed, Rubens has given prime importance to the garden which he has set up in a way such that the beholder's eyes are at once arrested by it (fig.4). But as the picture shows, the eternal growth and never ceasing harvest of the garden were of little importance to the painter. Rather, Rubens visualized an Italian villa. He had such an intimate familiarity with this tradition that it was almost natural for him to perceive the garden and its detailed components according to his own experience.

Although Rubens had never been to the Greek isles, he did have sufficient written material describing the landscape there in the form of Pausanias' travel records,[13] other sections in Homer's *Odyssey*, as well as the writings of Aristotle. He must surely have relied heavily on these ancient authors as it might be said that his picture of Odysseus on the Island of the Phaecians represents, for the most part, a Greek landscape into which is set an Italian villa.[14]

But as we have observed earlier, Rubens seems to have followed Homer's words more for the composition of this picture than for the descriptive details within the garden. This is clearly suggested through the placement of the entire 'villa complex,' as prescribed by the poet, "within call of the city" which must be understood to be located on the hill beyond. Such a locale was also followed in Roman antiquity where villas were situated in the vicinity of the city or town. Pliny writes that his villa Laurentum could easily be reached on horseback without having to cut short the day in Rome.[15] Alberti, emulating the ancients, wrote that the villa should be in easy reach of the town where people conduct their daily business:

> The great beauty of such a retreat [the villa] being near to the city, upon an open air road, and on a pleasant spot of ground. The greatest commendation of the house itself is its making a cheerful appearance . . . to invite the beholder, and for this reason I would have it stand pretty high . . . and [where] a large prospect opens to . . . view.[16]

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[13]Rubens acquired the Itinerary of Pausanias from the Plantin Moretus Press in 1615. Macrae.

[14]Homer elsewhere in the Odyssey [XVII] describes a source near Ithaca (which finds a parallel in the waterfall in the painting): "[a]... fair flowing spring, with a basin fashioned, where the people of the city drew water .... And around it was a thicket of alders that grow by the waters, all circle wise, and down the old stream fell from a rock on high, and above was reared an altar to the nymphs whereas all ... made offerings." Loeb Classical Library, p.295.

[15]Pliny, p.75.

[16]Alberti, Ten Books on Architecture, IX, chpt. 2, pp. 189-190. Vergara, p.161.

In painting Odysseus Rubens set out to portray a villa in its entirety, including the casino and the garden with its decorative elements. The beholder is meant to appreciate this formal setting from a distance, not from within the garden. Interestingly Rubens never repeats this. His other garden paintings are more intimate, for the viewer perceives the scene from the perspective of a participant. In Odysseus the observer is on the outside, distanced from the delights included in the painted realm. Perhaps Rubens did this in order to accord with the narrative of the story. However, it also permitted the opportunity to portray a complete villa setting in which is incorporated an important villa component as noted by Alberti: the *belvedere* or beautiful view.

Homer does not speak of the 'royal park' as being set on a hill overlooking the town and sea, though for the painter this seems to have been important. In fact the entire villa with its garden, levelled on terraces, is set into the landscape for a spectacular view. This design concept, employed in most Italian villas[17] as well as in Odysseus, was derived from Pliny who described the vista from his villa Tusci in the following way: "picture yourself a vast amphitheatre such as could only be a work of nature."[18] The vista from there "... seems to be a painted scene of unusual beauty rather than a real landscape, and the harmony to be found in its variety refreshes the eye wherever it turns."[19] To this, a new design possibility was introduced during the sixteenth century directing the view into a less distant 'landscape' and to a point of termination as employed in the *orti Farnesiani* in Rome. These gardens were laid out as terraces on the slopes of the Palatine hill overlooking the ruins of the Forum. From here the spectator is meant to look beyond the wall, the physical boundary of the garden, to the ideal landscape: the landscape of antiquity.[20]

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[17]There were, naturally, exceptions since not all regions included hills.

[18]Pliny, p.139.

[19]Ibid, p.140. Besides situating a garden so that the spectator could experience a circular panorama (as perceived by Pliny from Tusci) there was another design possibility. It was to incorporate landscape as a distant picture where the view experienced from the interior is channeled by architectural means. Pliny wrote that he could see three seas from his triclinium at Laurentum. Naturally, it was the same sea. What he saw were three individual pictures because he had three openings to look out from, each one individually framed by the triclinium 'window' frames and the columns in the courtyard. Pliny, p.75. Knopp, p.13.

[20]Knopp, p.125. Farnese named these gardens quite fittingly in association with antiquity *Horti Palatini Farnesiorum.* These gardens, a lavish retreat within the city, were started in 1565 after the plans of Vignola, and fully developed in the 1570's. In addition Cardinal Alessandro Farnese bought of the banker Agostino Chigi in 1584 a villa, located accross the Tiber from the Farnese palace which "... had probably been avidly desired by the Farnese for some time."

Rubens, in Odysseus has included as main decorative features two circular pavillions and a fountain,[21] set, as in the villas of his experience, on a lawn parterre. Rather than the two water sources in Alcinous' garden, of which Homer speaks, he incorporates an aqueduct spanning the crevice at the upper right of the picture, which directs water towards the garden and the 'palace' (fig.5).

The importance of water

The master knew well from his Italian sojurn that an abundant supply of water was a necessity for gardens in general and for fountains in particular. Through his close association with the Cardinals Montalto and Borghese, Rubens was made aware of the intricacies and difficulties involved in activating the ancient aqueducts for the modern Roman garden's water supply.

Water was indeed a luxury during most of the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth. Of the many conduits which brought water into the Rome of antiquity, only the *Acqua Vergine* was still in operation.[22] But water came in so sparingly on this system that it was not sufficient to operate the fountains of villas in Rome.

With the accession to the papal throne Sixtus V, Cardinal Felice Perreti Montalto[23] was presented with the opportunity to develop an adequate water supply for the Roman villas and his garden especially. Consequently, he undertook the repair and revitalization of one of the ancient ruined conduits which he named quite fittingly after himself: the *Acqua Felice*.[24] Moreover, the pope appointed Cardinal Ferdinando de'Medici (who, seemingly in competition with his brother's villa at Pratolino, also had splendid water visions for his gardens) to preside over the reconstruction. The project was a major undertaking. But after two years and many

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Coffin, The Villa, p.90. He named it: Villa Farnesina. (Alessandro also commisioned Vignola to build a villa at Caprarola [which Rubens visited] that Coffin observed was "a monument of the Farnese family." The Villa, p.299). Importantly these gardens above the Forum [still in situ] were not intended to have a casino; their location was chosen primarily to allow the spectator to behold the ruins. These *horti* like the city palace and the villa Farnesina contained a wealth of antique works which Alessandro Farnese in a letter of 1589 to Fulvio Orsini, declared as *scuola publica* to scholars. W. Prinz, "The Four Philosophers," The Art Bulletin, 1973, p.412.

[21]This is the typical freestanding *tazza* fountain.

[22]MacDougall, "L'Ingegnoso," p.88.

[23]Pope Sixtus V was the uncle of the Cardinal Montalto, whom Rubens met.

[24]Andres, p.212.

difficulties the *Acqua Felice* finally brought water into Rome in 1587.[25] Needless to say, this source, too, soon became inadequate with the enlargement of villas, in particular those developed toward the end of the century. With more fountain decoration in vogue, even more water was required. Thus another supply had to be developed.

In 1605, while Rubens was in Rome, the newly appointed Borghese Pope, Paul V, commissioned the second contemporary aqueduct, the *Acqua Paolo.*[26] It is probably safe to assume that the immediate motivation for the construction of the *Acqua Paolo* was caused by Cardinal Borghese, the pope's favourite nephew, whose desire it was to develop his expansive gardens on the Pincian hill.

To Rubens this type of water supply for a garden must have seemed logical, since most splendid villas in Italy had water brought in by aqueducts. Those outside the cities in the hill country, had their conduits built,[27] some of them underground. The account of the Scottish traveller Moryson, visiting Italy in 1594, tells us that at ". . . Pratolino, the Dukes' famous garden . . . there is a cave under the earth leading three miles to the Fountaine of water, from whence by many pipes the waters are brought to serve the works of these gardens."[28]

Water was at the core of the villa. It determined (according to its availability) the design of verdure, the planting of flowers, the design of fountains, and the very location itself.[29] But water was also central to the villa on a symbolic level. Since ancient Greek times,

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[25]Ibid, p.212.

[26]L. Gothein, A History of Garden Art, London, 1928, p.328.

[27]The villas Lante at Bagnaia, Caprarola, and Tivoli, to mention only a few, had acqueducts directing water into their gardens.

[28]He added to that "...the conduit whereof for water if a man well consider, he may justly say of the gardens of Italy ... that their water costs them more than their wine...." The Itinerary of Fynes Moryson, ed. Glasgow University Press, 4 vols., Glasgow, 1907, I. p.327. Smith, p.157. In Rome, because of the difficulties of bringing water into the city, it was traditionally used again and again. For example, run off water from Michelangelo's fountain on the Capitoline hill was directed towards the *orti Farnesiani.* MacDougall, "L'Ingegnoso," p.106 ff Andres, p 212. But water was not free. There are records of water payments Heilmann, p.102.

[29]Aristotle in his Politics [VII, x, 2] stressed as the most important requisite when choosing a site for habitation an abundant water supply together with the salubrity of the place and good communication. F. J. Alvarez, "The Renaissance Nymphaeum. Its Origin and its Development in Rome and Vicinity," Ph.D. Diss., Columbia University, 1981, p.6

it represented the source of the intellect. Further, the Greek garden was a sacred locality[30] where the gods, in sculptural form, imparted wisdom while the Muses inspired the arts.

Rubens, a learned humanist, seems to have retained this concept in his garden in Odysseus, though he has relied on the idiom of the Italian villa where this sacred aspect had been transformed. De Piles in the seventeenth century perceived the garden in Odysseus as a sanctuary and identified the architectural structures as sepulchres and temples with altars "consacrés aux divinité."[31] He clearly exaggerates. His views, however, reflect the perception at the time that gardens were seen as sanctuaries.

Rubens includes in his picture the two pavillions possibly the dwelling places of the Muses. One may recognize a link with the villa Borghese where a circular pavillion (unique to a Roman villa at the time) was being constructed and set half way into the ground with a trench around to make it appear as if it were recently excavated and ruinous.[32] Its design consisted of eight open arches resting on pillars, with the interior walls painted *al fresco*, depicting nine, lifesize Muses.[33]

The visitor in Rubens' picture was meant to enter the garden at the lowest level, by way of a staircase, to walk through the pergola, crossing the garden towards the casino. This particular access in Odysseus, at the lowest level of the villa complex, with a pergola immediately beyond the entry through which the visitor must pass, finds its precedent at the villa D'Este at Tivoli.[34]

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[30]Alcinous' garden was adjacent to a sacred wood dedicated to Athena, as indicated by Homer. The sanctuary aspect of the Greek garden is thoroughly discussed by G. Pochat, Figur und Landschaft, Berlin, 1973, pp.48 ff.

[31]His words are: "les fabriques n'y sont que temples, ... que sepultures antiques, qu'antels consacrés aux divinités...." Teyssèdre, p.267.

[32]It is still in situ near the via Pinciana. (See Di Gaddo, figs. 41-42, for full reference see Chpt. 2, note 54).

[33]The pavillion was erected in 1614 when Rubens was already back in Antwerp. He did, however, know this structure from the proposed designs. Also, his continuous correspondence kept him abreast of developments.

[34]See Duperac's engraving of the villa D'Este in Coffin's The Villa D'Este, fig.1.

CHAPTER TWO

Artes serviunt vitae, sapientia imperat.

Seneca[1]

Cimon falling in Love with Efigenia

Rubens based this picture on the tale in Boccaccio's Decamerone. In this book, written in the early fourteenth century, the author reflects on the tradition of villa-life which advocated the country retreat as the most favourable setting for poetry. Significantly the tale of *Cimon* (like the others) is recited in the country side, somewhere near Fiesole, in the hills overlooking Florence.[2] In his introduction Boccaccio speaks of the protagonists as going outside the city to a hill where they find, perched on its summit, a villa with delectable gardens, meadows, and wells of cool, refreshing water.[3] As they arrived there, tables were arranged around a fountain where the tales are recounted.

Cimon falling in Love with Efigenia is recited on the Fifth Day, First Story. The tale is meant to demonstrate the power, beneficial effects and forces of love.[4] It tells how Cimon, son of a very noble man, was considered hopeless because he rejected education and noble manners. His father, dismayed by his son's behaviour and not wishing to have him constantly before him, sends the young man to the country. But there the son experiences a transformation:

> . . . whilst going about his rustic business. . . . On his father's estate . . . he chanced to enter a wood, renowned in those parts for its beauty, the trees of which were thickly leaved as it happened to be the month of May. As he was walking he came upon a clearing surrounded by very tall trees, in a corner of which there was a lovely, cool fountain. Beside the fountain, lying asleep on the grass, he saw a most beautiful girl [Efigenia] . . . and at her feet, also fast asleep were the young ladies attendants.[5]

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[1]Seneca, Epistolae, 85, 32.

[2]It has been assumed that Boccaccio's villa is the villa Palmieri, now Schifanoia. Battisti, p.9.

[3]G. Boccaccio, The Decameron, trans. G. H. Mc William, London, 1972, p.64. The Rubens library included the Decamerone. Macrae.

[4]Ibid, p.406.

[5]Boccaccio, p.406.

Cimon, upon seeing Efigenia, is stricken by love and suddenly transformed. From that day on, he does everything required to become a true nobleman and is rewarded when Efigenia becomes his wife.

Rubens intuitively knew that this wooded area, described by Boccaccio, was not truly wild nature but rather a tamed or cultured one in the tradition of the Italian villa.[6] With this in mind, we come to understand why he has incorporated in his picture of Cimon[7] (fig.7) images from several villas, including his own.

For the sleeping figures Rubens was surely inspired by the celebrated 'reclining female' sculpture from the fountain setting at the Villa Belvedere, in Rome, as remarked by Held[8] (Fig.8). He undoubtedly knew this sculpture well in order to have incorporated it so effectively in the two sleeping figures. Efigenia is given the body and legs of the Belvedere marble while her attendant on the left takes on the arrangements and pose of its arms.[9] Rubens typically has used an antique work to create his own shapes without hiding the prototype. But he has not just taken the form alone, for he has also retained the allegorical meaning as well as the spirit of the antique. With the inclusion of the Belvedere marble, Rubens demonstrates his understanding of the reclining female sculpture in gardens and its symbolic meaning.

The sleeping nymph

In Rome in the early decades of the sixteenth century the sleeping female figure became an important element in the decoration of humanistic gardens. The villa Belvedere's overlife size antique statue had been recently excavated and installed in the garden in 1512.[10] A

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[6]Inversely, Boccaccio's gardens are not purely artistic caprice. They are most likely based on actual gardens as Pochat claims. Pochat, p.185. This assumption is confirmed by G. Villani, a contemporary of Boccaccio, who wrote in his Cronica when recording the year 1338: "In the country villas are being built, richer than those in the city, which makes foreigners believe that they have reached Florence although they are still three miles away from the city."Quoted: Dörrenhaus, p.40.

[7]I have chosen the oil sketch over the painting since it is closer in style of execution to the paintings in our discussions - all of which (except this sketch) are painted in the 1630's.

[8]Held, Oil Sketches, p.321.

[9]Held, Ibid, p.321.

[10]A letter written by Pico dela Mirandola to Lilius Giraldi informs us about the Belvedere garden: "Lilius, do you know Venus and Cupid, the gods of those vain ancients? Julius II Pontifex Maximus has procured them from Roman ruins, where they were recently discovered and has placed them in that most fragrant citrus grove, paved with flintstone, in whose midst stands also the colossal Tiber. Everywhere, however, antique statues are placed.... On one side

drawing (of 1538-39) by Francisco d'Ollanda shows the figure set against a rocky background evoking a grotto with a sarcophagus beneath it into which water trickles (fig.9). The figure has become the sleeping nymph. Two similar contemporary arrangements in Rome provide the key to this identification. Hans Goritz and Angelo Colocci, the two main humanists at the court of Pope Leo X, had "nymph marbles" in their respective gardens. In his garden on the Pincian hill near the *Fontana di Trevi* through which part of the old *Acqua Vergine* ran, Colocci fittingly set into the ruined arch of the aqueduct a relief of a reclining nymph[11] (fig.10). It was inscribed with the ancient epigram designating the nymph as custodian of the fountain.

> *Huius nympha loci, sacri custodia fontis/ Dormio dum blandae senitor murmur aquae./ Parce meum quisquis tangis cava marmora somnum/ Rumpere: sive bibas, sive lavere taces.*[12]

At his villa below the Capitoline hill, Goritz had a small building which housed a sleeping nymph fountain inscribed with the shorter version of the epigram:

> *Nymphae. Loci/Bibe. Lava/Tace.*[13]

Nymphs soon became a regular feature at villas. Those in the gardens of the Belvedere, of Goritz and Colocci may have been the first in Rome since antiquity. Later in the century

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there is the Trojan Laocoon, sculptured as he is described by Vergil, on the other you see the figure of Apollo with his quiver as he is pictured by Homer. And in one corner you also see the image of Cleopatra ... [the sleeping nymph] from whose breasts, as it were, the water flows into an antique marble sarcophagus.... I have often turned to this grove ... to meditate on philosophy ... in the shade of the plane trees by the murmuring waters .... " Translated and cited by E. H. Gombrich, "Hynerotomachiana," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, XIV, 1951, p.124. At that time the figure was believed to be Cleopatra. MacDougall compared the figure to images on sarcophagii, and convincingly identified her as the ancient Ariadne. E. MacDougall, "The Sleeping Nymph: Origins of a Humanist Fountain Type, "The Art Bulletin, 1975, p.357. There is another statue now in the Vatican Museum which likely was the true ancient nymph sculpture. Heemskerck recorded this figure in a drawing of the Cesi gardens where the figure was displayed among other antique works, seemingly unconnected with water. Berlin Sketchbook, I, fol.25r. See also MacDougall, Ibid, (fig.10).

[11]MacDougall, "Sleeping Nymph," p.357.

[12]Ibid, p.357. Alexander Pope translated the inscription as: "Nymph of the Grot, these sacred springs I keep and to the murmur of these waters sleep. Ah, spare my slumbers, gently tread the cave; and drink, in silence leave." MacDougall, "Ars," p.54.

[13]MacDougall, "Sleeping Nymph," p.357. Place of the nymph, drink, bathe, be silent. Goritz's garden [Coriccio in the italianized version] is described by D. Gnoli in "Orti letterati nella Roma di Leo X," Nouvo antologia, ser.7, 269, 1930, pp.137-140. MacDougall, "Ars," p.57. Colocci's garden had, in addition, another important element. Above the portal leading into the garden was an inscription which exhorted the visitor to leave anger and fatigue behind. MacDougall, "Sleeping Nymph," p.362.

the inscriptions changed from the ancient epigram. Moreover, not all figures had one, nor were all such sculptures installed directly in fountains.[14] Nonetheless, the fundamental idea of the nymph as the embodiment of inspiration and learning in gardens had been established. Her presence identified the gardens as places of *otium*, and *studium*.

But *studium* was not only alluded to in the form of antique works. Both Colocci and Goritz frequently assembled a group of scholars in their gardens for poetry reading, and philosophical discussions. Likewise, the Belvedere garden was used by Pico della Mirandola: "to meditate on philosophy . . . in the shade of the plane trees by the murmuring waters."[15] However, in contrast to the academies in Florence and Naples, these gardens were not used as schools in order to instruct pupils. They were gathering places for artists, poets and humanists in general.[16] As in antiquity, these gardens were celebrated in poems which honoured the place as well as the host, while also recording the atmosphere.[17]

This early humanist circle laid the foundation for all gardens to come. One other contribution to the *ars hortulorum* was the worship and interpretation of the Muses. Nymphs and Muses soon became interchangeable, as they had been in ancient times. Lilius Giraldi, a member of the Colocci circle, expressed contemporary thoughts about this in his De musis syntagma (1509). He explained that they were first called nymphs and then Muses, and were associated not only with poetry but with all the disciplines of thought.[18] Giraldi thus echoes Cicero's words, who said that to live with the Muses is to live with education and refinement.[19]

Rubens' reference to the Belvedere antique figure in his painting embodies this concept

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[14]This variant form of decoration may be explained with the dispersion of the humanist circle through the sack of Rome in 1527.

[15]See above note 10.

[16]MacDougall, "Sleeping Nymph," p.362.

[17]Colocci, Poesie italiane... ed. G. Lancelotti, Jesi, 1772; Ibid, p.363.
Tolomei describes one such meeting in a garden of Rome at the time saying: "I dined last night in the Trevi quarter in the garden of Agapito Bellhuomo, where I had three pleasures, linked almost like the Three Graces, which filled me with complete delight and contentment. The first was to see, hear, bathe myself and taste the wonderful water, which was so clean and pure that it truly seemed virginal, as it is named .... The second was [the appreciation] of the ingenious skill recently rediscovered to make fountains .... The third was a charming and courtly company ....." The complete letter, in Italian, is appended to MacDougall's "L'Ingegnoso," pp.109-111.

[18]MacDougall, "Sleeping Nymph," p.362.

[19]Cicero, Tusculum, V, 23, 66. MacDougall, "Ars," p.56.

which was meant to express Cimon's desire to change through dedicated study and effort. This intellectual play with its poignant message, must surely have been recognized by the artist's learned contemporaries.

Though it is true that by the time Rubens was in Rome the nymph fountain had been removed from the garden and placed in Bramante's corridor (which connects the Vatican Palace to the Belvedere villa),[20] he would have known of the work before coming to Italy. Recordings of the antique works at the villa Belvedere had already been circulated in the Low Countries.[21]

To the consternation of humanists and scholars, certain villas had fallen victim to the fanatical proponents during the sixteenth century in a Counter- Reformatory action. Some villas were stripped of their ancient works[22] while sculptures at other villas were dismantled or put behind shutters because they were seen as idols.[23] However, when Rubens arrived in Rome the radical Counter- Reformatory actions had abated and villas with their antique treasures were enjoyed anew.

How could the painter have studied the ancient nymph? It could be argued that d'Ollanda's drawing supplied visual familiarity but this would not have been enough for the

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[20]The figure became associated with baptism. MacDougall, "Sleeping Nymph," p.365. Surprisingly the nymph's fate continued to be favourable in the following centuries. On the occasion of the acquisition of the Mattei collection and other ancient works, in 1772, pope Clement XIV commissioned A. R. Mengs to portray his vision of the proposed *Museo Pio Clementino* in a ceiling fresco in the museum which was to house the new collection. A frescoed flying Fame points toward the new museum in which the reclining nymph is shown. The Vatican Collections, The Papacy and Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1983, pp.116-117.

[21]The Laocoon had reached Antwerp through the engravings by Marco Dente and likely the other antique works as well. Jaffe, Rubens and Italy, p.79. Also the painting by Hendrick van Cleef III (see above introduction, fig.1) depicting the papal sculpture garden (painted in 1584) must have been known to Rubens since the latter resided in Antwerp after his return from Rome. M. van der Meulen, "Cardinal Cesi's Antique Sculpture Garden: Notes on a Painting by Hendrick van Cleef III," Burlington Magazine, Jan., 1974, p.17.

[22]A letter of November 1566, written by Bishop Augustin to Fulvio Orsini expresses such actions. "I doubt it necessary to bury all the nude statues, since there is not published any reformation regarding them, but certainly those masculin herms of the vigne of Cesi and of Carpi seem bad ... and the vigna of pope Julius III [villa Giulia] with so many veneries and other lascivities that, although they are enjoyed by scholars and by artisans, bestially offend...." Coffin, The Villa, p.174.

[23]A letter of 1523 states: "Et essendoli ancora mostrato in Belvedere il Laocoonte per una cosa eccelente et mirabile disse, sunt idola antiquorum." Lettere di Principi, Venice, 1581; Gombrich, p.124.

master who in his De Imitatione Statuarum, an essay on art theory, espoused that artists be thoroughly familiar with those ancient statues which they have judiciously selected for imitation. A mere frontal drawing of the antique sculpture would not have been adequate for him.[24] However, the picture of Cimon is sufficient evidence that Rubens must thoroughly have studied the antique "nymph" in its new locality in Bramante's corridor,[25] though, it may be said that the painter's access to the Belvedere may only have been through *lex hortorum*, like that of the general public.[26] His admission to the Vatican antique collection is known to have been on more intimate terms. Johann Faber, the botanist and private physician of the reigning Pope Paul V, had, like Colocci and Goritz several decades earlier, a circle of humanists and scholars around him to which Rubens and his brother Philip belonged.[27]

Rubens and the concept of otium

During these Italian years, Rubens enjoyed the delights of *villeggiatura*. In his explorations of individual villas he always made every effort to study their antique collections. In December of 1605, while in Rome, he wrote to Annibale Chieppio at Mantua that he employed the whole summer "nei studii dell'arte."[28] This the artist confirmed years later in a letter to Peiresc in which he wrote: "I have never failed, in my travels, to observe and study antiquities both in public and private collections."[29]

From 1605 until his final departure in the fall of 1608 Rubens remained in Rome except

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[24]W. Stechow expressed the following thoughts on this."...we should not forget that he [Rubens] never neglected to study a statue from every angle, thus intensifying his knowledge of its inner coherence and the relationship of its parts far beyond simple frontal and lateral views, even when those more complicated views were unimportant to their creator. Rubens and the Classical Tradition, p.24.

[25]That Rubens was at the Belvedere is further confirmed by his six drawings of the Laocoon (Ambrosiana, Milan) and others as discussed by Jaffe in Rubens and Italy.

[26]Bramante had built a spiral staircase at the eastern end of the villa which permitted visitors to reach the statue garden without entering those areas designated for private use. Coffin, "Lex," p.216.

[27]Faber was prominent in intellectual circles in Rome. His home was a recognized meeting place. Magurn, p.438. In 1605 Philip Rubens, a pupil of the Flemish scholar Justus Lipsius was sent to present the latter's commentary on Seneca De Constantia to the pontifex to whom the work was dedicated. Prinz, p.33. Rubens later in Antwerp reminiscing about his time in Italy, wrote to Faber in order to greet: "...the other friends whose good conversation makes me often long for Rome." Magurn, No.20.

[28]Magurn, No.14. See Jaffe (Rubens and Italy, p.85) for the Italian version.

[29]Magurn, No.235.

for short visits to Genoa. On one of these occasions he accompanied Gonzaga who 'went on *villeggiatura*' to the splendid villa of San Pier d'Arena, lent to him by Giambattista Grimaldi.[30]

That Rubens studied with great intensity works which surrounded him in the eternal city is confirmed by Samuel van Hoogstraeten who recounts that Rubens was rebuked in Rome by one of his colleagues because he copied or drew after so few Italian works and only spent his precious time wandering, looking, and sitting quietly.[31] When the colleague warned the Fleming that one should be diligently toiling day and night to become a great master, Rubens answered laughingly:

I am most busy when you see me idle.[32]

With this exclamation Rubens demonstrated his total familiarity and understanding of the concept of the classical *otium*, in particular Cicero's discussion on the subject.

The ancient writer associates *otium* with study when he speaks of Scipio Africanus Maior, the first distinguished Roman whose *otium* was connected with a villa, and the first to have attached high value and importance to his private life there. Scipio had never been busier than when at his villa and was never less idle than when at leisure. For *otium* and *solitudo*, conditions which invite others to laziness, spurred Scipio on. His thoughts [like those of Rubens] were *in otio de negotiis*.[33] Also Sencea[34] asserted that as a lawyer he did more good

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[30]Jaffe, Rubens and Italy, p.11.

[31]Muller, "Rubens's Theory," p.245.

[32]Muller, "Rubens's Theory," p.245.

[33]Cicero, De Officiis, 3, 1-2. J. D'Arms, Romans on the Bay of Naples: A Social and Cultural Study of the Villas and their Owners from 150 B.C. to A.D. 400, Cambridge, Mass., 1970, p.15. Even when Scipio was alone he did not stop taking counsel.He was never unoccupied and often the only company he needed was his own. Other men are enervated by leisure and seclusion, but he derived stimulation from them. Cicero, Selected Works, trans. Michael Grant, New York, 1971, p.159.

[34]Seneca and Cicero are among the classical authors most often quoted by Rubens in his letters. He was familiar with the writings of Cicero from his early school years on, since this Roman author's writings were part of the curiculum on classical education. The only certain record we have of Rubens' acquisition of Cicero's works is the Ciceronium Opera Omnia, published in 1618 in Hamburg and purchased by Rubens in 1624. Records of the Plantin Press at Antwerp, however, attest to their earlier printings of Cicero's Epistolae familiares, Oratio pro Archia poeta, and the De Amicitia. Macrae,"Library." Rubens also owned an antique bust of Cicero which he bought from Sir D.Carleton. This purchase is elucidated below under the subheading **putto/dolphin fountain**. The bust is also mentioned by M.Rooses in Codex Diplomaticus Rubenianus, Antwerp, 1887-1909, vol.2, p.240.

in his solitary studies than he accomplished in court.[35] Similarly, Pliny wrote of his villa Tusci: "there I enjoy the best of health, both mental and physical, for I keep my mind in training . . ."[36] and of his villa Laurentum Pliny said: ". . . there I do most of my writing, and, instead of the land I lack, I work to cultivate myself; so that I have a harvest in my desk to show you in place of full granaries elsewhere."[37]

Otium was thus associated with study in the surroundings of a villa. But there was also a second meaning to *otium.* Cicero, in continuing his discussion on the subject, said that in the next generation *otium* for the Roman Laelius meant to flee the city on regular intervals to resume harmless follies of childhood: gathering shells along the seashore, flinging off restraint to relax carefree. Hence: "*verum otii est, non contentio animi, sed relaxatio.*"[38] This relaxation, in turn, could also include more intellectual pursuits because cultural entertainments were part of the activities of the Roman villa.[39] But without them being recorded, we would not know of these antique villas at all. The villa Puteolanum[40] is mentioned because Laelius wrote Terentian verses there.[41] Similarly, had Cicero not chosen the *horti Scipionis* as the dramatic setting for the discussion in his De Re Republica,[42] we would not know of the garden's existence nor of the villa's use and meaning.[43]

Through Cicero we also know that works of art, especially Greek sculpture, were part of villa decor. His personal correspondence reveals that he was an ardent collector himself,

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[35]Coffin, The Villa, p.12.

[36]Pliny, p.112.

[37]Pliny, p.112.

[38]Cicero, De Oratore, cited by D'Arms, p.13.

[39]D'Arms, p.13.

[40]Laelius was the owner of this first attested villa at Puteoli. Ibid, p.7.

[41]Ibid, p.13.

[42]The *horti Scipionis* were pleasure gardens, the earliest attested in Rome. Significantly they were inside the city walls. D'Arms, pp.13-14. See also L. Franchi dell'Orto, Ancient Rome, Life and Art, Florence, 1985, pp.82-83.

[43]It is Horace, Sallust and Cicero who in their writings discuss the antique villa as an expression of a new form of life. Catallus and Virgil, in contrast, stress the bucolic sacral in nature. This is further discussed by Pochat, p.56.

assembling choice pieces for his villa at Tusculum.[44] Also Pliny the Elder in his Natural History mentions that statues were employed in the decorations of gardens.[45]

Though these authors have supplied us with a variety of information on how villas were used and what villa-life was and should be, they hardly say anything about decoration or iconographic schemes within their gardens. There is nothing said about how fountains looked and what sculptural figures were used in such settings. Moreover, actual ancient fountains in Rome were scarce.[46] This lack of models, however, held a positive side for future artists since it left them relatively free to ponder new styles and ideas.

The Putto/Dolphin Fountain

The speed with which transformations take place under the effect of love is well exemplified with a putto and dolphin combination. The setting of the tale *Cimon* is, as we recall, in a wood or *boschetto*, outside the city (a prescription followed by Rubens in his picture). But why would he include a reference to what appears to be the white, marble fountain, normally found in formal gardens? Interestingly, this putto/dolphin fountain included by the artist in the painting of Cimon can be directly linked to Rubens' own garden in Antwerp, since it belonged to his private antique collection.

In 1618 the Flemish artist acquired more than ninety antique sculptures, the biggest collection of classical marbles outside Italy at the time, from Sir Dudley Carleton who was then

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[44]In one of the letters that Cicero wrote to his friend Atticus who was most likely in the Greek world to buy sculptures he said: "I am awaiting eagerly the ... statues and the Herms about which you wrote me. [Purchase] anything which you have in this category which seems to you worthy of the Academy [Cicero's villa] .... This sort of thing is my voluptuous pleasure. ... Lentulus promises his ships. I beg you to see to this project dilligently." In another letter Cicero expressed: "... this is the sort of decoration appropriate for my Academy. Naturally I would like ... to decorate this place with as many works of art as possible." Pollitt, p.70.

[45]Pliny, N.H., XXXVI,20. MacDougall, "Imitation," p.119.

[46]MacDougall maintains that it is uncertain whether any representations of actual antique fountains were known at the time. Yet some seem to be related to those later unearthed along the Bay of Naples. A possible ancient fountain may have been the *Meta Sudan (sweating spire)* near the Arch of Constantine, in Rome. "L'Ingegnoso," pp.92 ff. A Meta Sudan fountain was incorporated into the Tivoli gardens. See L. B. Dal Maso, The Villa D'Este, p.76. In antiquity, Rome had impressive public fountains the *castella* [water distribution points of acqueducts], which were highly decorative achitecturally. Of these Alvarez says: "...a type of fountain carried to its ultimate development in Rome." Alvarez, p.17. Ruins of these may have been influential in the design of wall fountains, in particular those of the early seventeenth century. Also sarcophagii reliefs may have provided ideas for the arrangement of fountains as may have been the case with with the sleeping nymph.

British ambassador to The Hague.[47] The shipment which originated in Italy was accompanied by an inventory list drawn up in Italian, the *Fattura*. It was translated into English, known as *A Note of Statuas* and endorsed by Carleton. Both the Italian and the English papers list a putto and dolphin. The *Fattura* reads: "Nella Casa no 1 sono . . . puttin sopr vn dolfin" and the *Note* states that the first box contains "a boy rydinge upon a dolphin . . . ."[48]

This must surely be the sculptural group that Rubens set up in his own garden (installed as a fountain) and included in his paintings, most prominently portrayed in the Walk in the Garden (fig.4). Likewise this fountain can be recognized in Cimon. Both the acquisition of the antique collection and the advent of the painting of Cimon occurred in 1618. Unquestionably, the picture was painted after the acquisition of the sculptures in June. But when Rubens painted the putto and dolphin group, the fountain may not yet have been installed. This is irrelevant, however, since he was primarily interested in displaying a new item of antique sculpture from his own collection in the true spirit of Italian villas (even if it meant expropriating it from its traditional environment) and secondly, in including a fitting symbolic element within the narrative.[49]

The fountain with the figure of the little love god upside down on a dolphin (whose long, vertically arranged tail twists playfully around the boy, while water gushes from its mouth) is important to the theme in the picture. Held maintains that although this symbol permits a variety of meanings "it most commonly refers to the speed, and occasionally, the impatience of love, given the traditional belief that the dolphin is both the fastest of all

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[47]This deal came about by circumstance. The shipment, originally destined for the Earl of Somerset, was sent from Italy to England. However, when the twenty-nine cases of the shipment arrived from Venice in London, Somerset was no longer in the position to afford them since he had suddenly fallen from power. The contents were thus shipped to Holland where Carleton by *mischance* (to use his own words) became the owner. He liberated himself of the collection in the deal with Rubens. J.M.Muller, "Rubens's Museum of Antique Sculpture: an Introduction," The Art Bulletin, March, 1977, p.574 ff. Carleton nonetheless drove a hard bargain as the letters of Rubens to the ambassador prove. Finally, on June first of 1618 the Flemish master, after having consented to send tapestries and "more works by his own hands" for the "trade" of antiquities, wrote to Carleton, "I have just received the marbles today...." Magurn, No.63. Eight letters by Rubens are preserved dealing with the Carleton marbles. Magurn, No.27-34.

[48]A transcribed list of both the *Fattura* and the *Note* are appended to Muller's article, "Rubens's Museum," pp.581-582. The *Fattura* also lists: "nella casa no 17 sono: Testa di Cicerone."

[49]MacDougall put forth that fountains of gardens in Rome designed in the later part of the sixteenth century had a story to tell. "L'Ingegnoso," p.99.

animals and one given to strong feelings of love."[50] In the context of Rubens' story, it is thus a most fitting emblematic condensation of the action.[51] The base of the fountain in Cimon is somewhat different from that in the Walk. This must have been a deliberate change by the artist in order to add a touch of rusticity to the fountain so that it might better suit its wooded surroundings.

Rubens also included this same fountain in the painting Bathsheba[52] and as well in the oil sketch of Cecrops Daughters discovering Erichthonius, though he excluded it in the final version,[53] likely having found it thematically unsuitable for a theme devoid of love. But this, in turn, provides the key to the allegorical significance of the fountain in the Walk, which includes the artist, his new young wife and son.

The arrangement of the putto/dolphin with water can be linked to the villa Borghese where two putti astride dolphins were set into octagonal basins and placed in front of the casino.[54] That these figures were ancient works or referred to antique fountains, remains conjectural. It is possible, that they could have been contemporary works, because gardens developed during the last decade of the sixteenth century and the early decades of the seventeenth were designed to larger scales than earlier ones and often the villa's antique collection could not supply enough sculptural decorations even if the collection was large.[55]

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[50]Held, Oil Sketches, p.321.

[51]Ibid, p.321.

[52]The picture shows that important moment when Bathseba receives king David's letter in which he expresses his love for her.

[53]He replaced the putto/dolphin with a triton pouring water from a shell. Held, Oil Sketches, p.230.

[54]A plan of the villa Borghese of 1630 [Archivio Borghese Vaticano 3001, fol.3] mentions in its legend under numbers 21 and 22: fontana del Delfino. This map is printed in B. Di Gaddo, Villa Borghese, il giardino e le architettura, Rome, 1985, p.25. Also Manilli in his guide book to the villa Borghese mentions the two fountains. Manilli, Villa Borghese..., p.146. Heilmann, p.153.

[55]The Mattei inventory catalogue, for example, (recording the decorative contents of the villa), lists two separate columns: one for antique the other for contemporay works (the latter is made of peperino, a soft volcanic stone). MacDougall, "A Circus," p.123. To this can be added Giambologna's *Appennino*, at Pratolino. Andres, p.218.

The putto/dolphin combination has its roots in antiquity.[56] Yet there is no evidence to identify antique fountains employing this sculptural group which could have served as models both for Borghese and Rubens. Thus it may well be that, like the Belvedere nymph, this group's association with water was a contemporary interpretation.[57]

[56]There are several putto/dolphin sculptures known from antiquity. Pausanias recorded in the sanctuary of Isthmia that an "Amphritrite and Poseidon stand upon a chariot, and the boy Palaimon is placed upright on the back of a dolphin.... These two are made of ivory and gold." Pollitt, p.183. Statues which have come down to us are the Medici Venus with a dolphin and putto, a Roman copy of a Greek work of the fourth century B.C., (Uffizi Galleries); and the antique, bronze Eros holding a fish, (Museo Nazionale, Naples). The latter is echoed in Verrocchio's Boy with the Dolphin (Palazzo Vecchio, Florence).

[57]One can not entirely rule out that actual models existed especially in light of the Bronze Eros found in Campagna. Surely Verrocchio's putto is related to the antique bronze version. In light of the discovery of the sculptures from the Mahida shipwreck Ridgway proposed that perhaps decorative works for villas were shipped from the Greek world to Rome (p.14). These may have continued to live on as remnants long after Rome's glory abated. Another explanation can be found in Ackerman's words which suggest that certain traditions in the visual arts are comparable to tales of mythology: they are present since ancient times without leaving a trace of transmission (p.17).

CHAPTER THREE

Art manifests immortal works,
and nature too, her knowing.
Agolanti[1]

The Garden of Love

This painting appears to be the most vibrant scene among Rubens' garden pictures. The Garden of Love[2] (fig.11) with its multifaceted allegorical content has been the subject of many interpretations. In the twentieth century the pendulum of analysis has swung widely.[3] It has ranged from: self-portraits of Rubens and his second wife (Glück, 1920); *Paradiesgarten* (Evers, 1942); Neoplatonic allegory of love (Glang-Süberkrüb, 1975); Rubens' personal allegory of rejuvenation through love (Steinberg, 1978); "modern" Graces associated with Venus (Held, 1980); to *Conversatie à la Mode* (Goodman, 1982).[4]

Evers' initial suggestion that this work represents a *Paradiesgarten* fascinatingly saturated with poetry and reality,[5] is central to our discussion. The painting can indeed be linked to actual gardens in which Rubens' shows yet other aspects of the Italian villa: the nymphaeum[6] and *boschetto.*

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[1]La Descrizione di Pratolino...da Agolanti, fol. 82v. Smith, p.167.

[2]This work, like the others, is undated; it can be placed within the early 1630's on grounds of style and subject matter.

[3]The titles given to this painting and variants of it, from the seventeenth century onward are discussed by E. Goodman, "Rubens's Conversatie à la Mode: Garden of Leisure, Fashion, and Gallantry," The Art Bulletin, June, 1982, p.249.

[4]This summary is based on Goodman's chronology. Ibid, pp.247-248. There are two versions of the Garden of Love: one in the Prado, Madrid, the other, slightly different, at Waddesdon Manor. Our discusion uses the Prado version as it is pictorially more sophisticated.

[5]Evers' words are: "Das Kultische läßt sich nur in Versen sagen, aber immer wieder erstaunen muß man, wie sehr die poetische Welt eines solchen Rubensbildes mit einfachen Wirklichkeiten durchsetzt ist." Evers, 1942, p.348.

[6]By 'nymphaeum' we mean an architectural structure associated with a fountain and sculptural work. This term is used henceforth interchangeably with grotto since most grottoes developed in the sixteenth century are similar in appearance and function to nymphaea. The

Rubens situates this garden in a southern temperate climate that he emphasizes with the cypress trees which are a typical and natural *topiaria* of Italy. To the left he provides a glimpse of the vast expanse of this garden conveying how large *boschetti* had become by his time. The nympheum, adorned with herms and a sculptural group of the three Graces, is situated against the slope of a hill adjacent to a staircase on which a couple descends to meet a group of amorous people. Over this group presides a fountain sculpture, the *Venus Lactans*, placed on a dolphin, with *putti* flying about.

The choice of location for this fashionable society echoes the words of Aldrovandi who, after denoting the villa Carpi as a *paradiso terrestre*, exclaimed that the most perfect part of the villa is the nymphaeum.[7] Similarly, Ammannati at the villa Giulia found the nymphaeum: "... the principal place,"[8] where one could "best appreciate the beauty of the whole villa among the statues and the delightful water of the *Acqua Vergine*."[9] Rubens, seemingly in accord with these observations, also suggests the grotto and its immediate surroundings as the 'perfect place' for this gallant group.

The nymphaeum

The nymphaeum, as shown by Rubens in the Garden of Love, was most often situated within the *boschetto*, the place which Neubauer named the *buon retiro* for a playful group of people.[10] Nymphaea always surprised the visitor: first in the way they were situated, in lower lying areas of gardens where it was moist and cool thus contrasting in temperature to other areas of the villa; and secondly, by way of appearance. As the epitome of *ars topiaria*,[11]

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etymology of the term is discussed by Alvarez,p.16.

[7]During a lengthy visit to Rome in 1550 the botanist Aldrovandi compiled a catalogue of antique works which were then exhibited in private and public collections. Delle Statue Antiche, che per tutta Roma, in diversi luoghi & case si veggono Di Messer Vlisse Aldrovandi, Venice, 1558, p.300. See also H.R. Ulrich "Uber die Abfassungszeit der *Statue Antiche des Ulisse Aldrovandi*, *Jahrbuch des kaiserlichen deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, VI, 1891, pp.250-51. Van der Meulen, p.18.

[8]Coffin, The Villa, p.164.

[9]Coffin points out that the nymphaeum was the umbilicus of the villa Giulia. Coffin, The Villa, p.164. For Ammannati's MS see chpt.4, note 80.

[10][Die Boskette ist das *buon Retiro* einer verspielten Gesellschaft] E. Neubauer, Lustgärten des Barock, Salzburg, 1966, p.41.

[11]N. Miller, "Domain of illusion: The Grotto in France," Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium, Fons Sapientiae Renaissance Garden Fountains, Washington D.C., 1978, p.176.

to look like a product of nature or the antique thus corroded through time, their construction embraced the use of varied material surfaces, rustic architectural components and striking decorative features like caryatids or herms, with sculptural works on the interior.[12]

The nymphaeum is, according to Alvarez, "a deliberate re-creation of a fountain type that had not existed since antiquity."[13] The center of this revival was in Rome, since the city possessed the proper intellectual environment, and the economic and hydraulic resources.[14] Greek in origin, the nymphaeum derived from natural caves which Ovid observed to be of: "porous Pumice and grainy tuff; the floor . . . damp with the soft mosses, and the ceiling paneled with inlaid purple shells.[15] Another one he described as being surrounded by cypress and pine where:

> . . . a secret grotto [was] made by no art, unless you think of Nature as being an artist. Out of rock and tufa She had formed an arch way, where the shining water made slender watery sound, and soon subsided into a pool, and grassy banks around it.[16]

These places were not merely nature's spectacles, they were consecrated to and inhabited by nymphs and Muses, and located near sanctuaries as at Delphi, where they had a hieron next to the Castalian spring.[17] Hence nymphaea were associated with inspiration, they became *fons*

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[12]Leonardo while looking at a nympheum said: " ..and after having remained at the entry some time, two contrary emotions arose in me, fear and desire, fear of the threatening dark grotto, desire to see whether there are any marvelous things within it." J. R. Richter, The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci, II, London, 1883, no.139, Quoted by Miller, p.117.

[13]Alvarez, p.237.

[14]The grotto in the villa of Poggio Reale [Naples, 1490] was perhaps the earliest, serving as a forerunner for those in Rome. Alvarez, p.237. The revival was stimulated by actual antique remains such as Nero's golden house in Rome, and Hadrian's villa at Tivoli where the water theatre in particular could have been an inspiration. Coffin, Tivoli, p.6. There were also the ruins of the nymphaeum of Domitian's palace on the Palatine hill. Ruins recognized at the time as those of a nymphaeum were on the grounds of the villa Medici, of which Ligorio made plans in the attempt to reconstruct it. Andres, p.27. Orsini desribed these ruins as "half a structure, spherical, and round like the pantheon but smaller and more ruinous." Alvarez, p.27.

[15]Ovid, Metamorphoses, VIII, 562-565.

[16]Ibid, III, 156-163. Such descriptions, in addition, influenced the intellectual currents of the play of art and nature.

[17]Alvarez, p.2.

sapientiae.[18] From here it becomes clear how the development of the nymph fountain took place visually and conceptually. Nymphaea, as the name implies, were initially places to house a nymph in association with water as custodian of the sacred spring.[19] This changed in later gardens since decorations became highly individualized, [as it also may be in the case of the Garden of Love] in order to create new allegories expressive of the owner's personal, intellectual and aesthetic pursuits.[20] In addition to the rustic mode of nymphaea as derivatives of caves and antique ruins, there were the literary works.[21]

Despite these sources, which provided stimuli for the revival of the nymphaeum, it is stylistically an invention of the Renaissance, especially the rustic mode, a type which Rubens employed in the Garden of Love. The artist knew this style of architecture well from his Mantuan years, having studied the aesthetic of Giulio Romano at the Palazzo del Tè. Serlio legitimized this new type of architecture in 1537 in his exposition on the rustic mode, in which he described the appearance of rusticated masonry as: "partly the work of nature and partly the work of artifice," a feature which he says, "occurs notably in the work of Gulio Romano...."[22] Rubens was also familiar with Ammannati's rusticated courtyard at the Pitti

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[18]Miller, p.195.

[19]The very early humanistic gardens, those of Goritz and Colocci to mention two, had decorative features which were rather homogeneous in concept - like the nymph fountains.

[20]MacDougall, "Imitation," p.128. The villa Carpi had in its nymphaeum a nymph sculpture surrounded by figures from the pastoral repertory, with Hercules at the entrance holding the apples of the Hesperides. MacDougall, "Sleeping Nymph," p.362. At the villa Giulia a nymph was surrounded by ten putti. Coffin, The Villa, p.164. The latter setting may have been inspirational to Rubens' painting of The Garden of Love. The villa Giulia, unfortunately, was stripped of some of the decorative features by the time Rubens went to Rome, as pointed out in chapter two. Yet not all was taken. Certain less "offensive" works remained. What Rubens saw when he visited the villa can not be identified with certainty but one thing is indisputable that even today the villa Giulia, in particular the nymphaeum, is impressive. How much more overwhelming the place must have been when Rubens was there.

[21]Pliny at his villa Tusci describes the following: "... opposite the middle of the colonnade is ... a small court shaded by four plane trees. In the center a fountain plays in a marble basin, watering the plane trees round it, and the ground beneath them with its light spray." Pliny, p.141. Another source was Porphyry's third century De Antro Nympharum, an exegesis of nymphaea according to platonic ideas, re-issued in Rome in 1511. Miller, p.177.

[22]Sebastiano Serlio, Regole generali di architettura..., Venice 1537, fol. 133v. Smith, p.167.

Palace,[23] and with the grotto in the Boboli gardens. Also influential were the impressive, large portals leading to villas and casini proper [in particular those of Rome] which were of the rusticated mode and are clearly reflected in Rubens' grotto[24] (fig.12).

Rubens also knew the *grotte des Pins* at Fontainbleau,[25] and was especially taken by the façade *alla rustica* with its imposing Atlantes framing, like the two herms in the Garden of Love, the grotto's entrance way[26] (fig3). That Rubens was familiar with the many nymphaea at Pratolino[27] can be recognized when we discuss *giochi*, the hidden water jets in grottoes. These places supplied him with ample factual information. But Rubens also drew on 'recent' literary sources. A great advocate of the rustic mode was the French theorist, naturalist and potter Bernard Palissy. As the "*inventeur des rustiques figulines du roi*" and designer of grottoes, he wrote and lectured on the subject.[28] His writings on nymphaea of 1563 presented the rustic mode in extremis.[29] Palissy, partaking in the philosophical currents of the time as well as in keeping the spirit of the ancients in mind, prescribed in the form of a platonic dialogue, the appearance of nymphaea. He said that they should be built and decorated with decomposed

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[23]The courtyard was built in 1558-70. F. Hartt, Renaissance Art, 3rd ed., New York, 1987, p.659. M. Botta maintains that Ammannati's rusticated masonry in the Pitti courtyard is most strongly reflected in Rubens' architectural style (like the one used in the Garden of Love). Botta, p.59 ff. This argument has validity, although Rubens sources were many, going beyond one particular style.

[24]The villas Carpi, Cesi, Giulia, Medici, Borghese, all had rusticated portals. The Montalto gardens had several, one of which was the *Porta Quirinale* (the public entry) and the *Porta Viminale*, near Santa Maria Maggiore, the private one. For a discussion on gateways to villas see Coffin, Lex, p.215 ff., figs. 5 and 9 [Medici, Carpi]; The Villa, fig.108 [villa Giulia]. These portals also influenced fountain settings. At the villa Montalto a large rusticated frame, evidently a derivative of an entrance gateway, became part of a fountain design. This is now installed in the Via Luciano Manaro, Rome. MacDougall, "L'Ingegnoso," p.101, and fig.19.

[25]Built circa 1543 and attributed to Primaticcio. Its formal appearance is a clear derivative of Giulio Romano's aesthetic. Miller, p. 190.

[26]See Miller, fig.13. Rubens either saw this grotto *en route* to Italy or during the 1620's when he delivered the paintings of the Luxembourg cycle to Maria de'Medici. Both Miller and Alvarez point out that developments of grottoes took place first in Italy and only after their *debut* there did they appear in France.

[27]He was also familiar with the grottoes of other villas, all too numerous to mention here.

[28]He designed the grottoes at the Tuilleries, in Paris under the patronage of Catherine de'Medici. Miller, p.185.

[29]A bibliography of Palissy's work is given by Miller, p.185.

herm-pilasters and distorted forms so as to appear corroded through time, or laden with moss-covered weed or ivy to denote a great antiquity.[30]

Rubens, having been to villas many times over and evidently following such prescriptions as were put forth by Palissy, accommodated his many sources well. He combined factual knowledge, actual observation and literary knowledge, blending everything into a unique style in order to achieve a natural effect in keeping with prevailing principals.[31] In looking at the Garden of Love it is obvious that Rubens did not fall short in depicting the individual components of the nymphaeum in a two-dimensional way, including a rustic architectural mode as well as what Evers humourously called *zottige Wild männer.*[32] The master was able to convey the atmosphere so astonishingly well that the humidity can almost be felt.[33] This technical feat is, no doubt, evidence of his artistic genius. I believe it is also a statement, perhaps a subconscious one, of the personal feelings Rubens had for these places.

Giochi

Another part of nymphaea were the famous *giochi* [water jets] which Tolomei described: "give birth to smiles, confusion, and pleasure for all."[34] There were very few villas without them. Even gardens with highly elevated programs used *giochi*, if only for comic relief. These were hidden in grottoes, so as to surprise the spectator. Bernardo Sgrilli speaks of the *fontanieri* whose task it was to douse strangers.[35] And it was perhaps no laughing matter for the unwary visitor who found himself suddenly drenched as recorded by the French traveller Michel Montaigne at Pratolino:

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[30]Ibid, p.185.

[31]Battisti expressed thoughts on this subject, worth quoting: "... grottoes almost became deceptions... The complete mimesis was the principal goal, but it should not be assumed that this was for reasons of modesty, because as in theatrical performances [*which were common activities in gardens*] the most faithful immitations correspond to the highest ability and the result is not banality but surprise." Battisti, p.31. The nymphaeum itself is a theatrical component in gardens. (There are records that theatrical productions were held at villas Farnesina, (Battisti, p.14) and Medici (...*una comedia in musica*, Andres, p.416).

[32][wild men] By this he meant the decomposed herms. Evers, 1943, p.337.

[33]This atmosphere, unfortunately, can not be conveyed by a black and white photographic reproduction of this *chef d'oeuvre.*

[34]"...*nasce e riso, e scompiglio, epiacer tra tutti.*" See MacDougall's Introduction to "Fons Sapientiae," p.7.

[35]Smith, p.158.

> By a single movement the whole grotto is filled with water, and all the seats squirt water up to your bottom, and as you fly from the grotto . . . a thousand jets of water...will bathe you. . . .[36]

A similar account of Pratolino is given by the poet de'Vieri of the *mount Parnassus* which he said housed a:

> bronze Cupid, which through ingenious artefice, sometimes turns around and squirts water through his torch at this and that. This grotto is all tricks, for those who enter, therein unaware find themselves bathed, whether they sit or stand.[37]

Importantly, these water jets are also recorded by Rubens in both the painting of the Garden of Love and in a derivative drawing for a preparatory design for Christoffel Jeghers' woodcut.[38] The drawing clearly depicts the water jets in action as the spectators flee the unexpected drenching (fig.14). In the painting, the action is slightly advanced: the nymphaeum's visitors are in flight but the *giochi* have already been turned off. The inclusion of the water spouts adds to our presumption that Rubens not only observed such unexpected surprises, but actually experienced *giochi* in action. Beside water jets, grottoes were also sought after by visitors for the sculptural works that they contained within.

The Venus Lactans

One such work was surely the *Venus Lactans* which Rubens placed on the exterior in the Garden of Love in order to be seen by us, the viewers (fig.15). Rubens' figure sitting on a dolphin must be related to love. She looks onto the amorous society among which putti are busy at their tasks. This fountain sculpture can be linked to those Rubens had seen at Italian villas, as this figure had long become a traditional decorative component in gardens. Since there were several artistic interpretations, many versions appeared of this sculpture.

Pico described, as we recall, the Belvedere nymph: "from whose breasts as it were the water flows."[39] This was, of course, poetic license because Pico perceived the surroundings at the Belvedere as a grove of Venus, which indicates the role played by literary works in the

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[36]Montaigne, Journal, p.186, see note 31.

[37]Smith, p.157.

[38]The drawings were executed on two folios. The composition was rearranged so that it could be printed in two halves. For the other sheet see fig. 172/b in J. Rowlands, Rubens Drawings and Sketches, British Museum Publications, 1977, p.126.

[39]See above chpt.2, note 10. This sculpture clearly has no orifices as I have observed at the Vatican Museum.

diffusion of ideas and themes. One such source was Colonna's Hypnerotomachia Polophili in which Venus, lying in a cove, is the *mammis destillat.*

Rubens' *Venus Lactans* may be linked to a painted version set into a fantastic landscape in Guilio Romano's frescoed room of Psyche at the Palazzo del Tè[40] (fig.16). Despite the fact that the sculpture in the Garden of Love is seated upright in comparison to the frescoed one, Rubens adapts the figure's robustness, the position of the head and facial expressions (figs.15 and 17).

By 1550 the gardens at the villa Farnesina were adorned with a female figure pressing water from her breasts into a basin.[41] A slightly variant, and older type of sculpture situated in a niche grotto was the *Artemis Ephesia* at Tivoli, from whose multiple breasts water flowed.[42] Also there was Ammannati's large fountain, which during Rubens' Italian time stood in the Boboli gardens. It included in the center a standing marble figure from whose breasts rays of water emanated[43] (fig.18). She likely represented Ceres the goddess of the earth's abundance. At the villa Lante at Bagnaia a grotto of Venus consisted of three small rooms. The side chambers each housed a reclining nymph in relief. The central chamber had a standing female figure pressing water from her breast. She was at the time identified as Venus. But since this figure was accompanied by dogs she can be equated, according to Coffin, with Ops who, like Ceres, is a symbol of fertility of the land.[44] Rubens' with the *Venus Lactans* may

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[40]This Palazzo was a villa on the outskirts of Mantua.

[41]Coffin, The Villa, p.98. Rubens had visited the villa Farnesina as noted by Jaffe who observed that: "...a memory of the harpy in flight which he had seen frescoed in the Farnesina loggia...provoked the drawing of the harpy who was to wing her way through the lower zone of The Duke of Buckingham, assisted by Minerva triumphing over Envy and Anger, (p.26). In the same villa he also drew the full length Silenus. Jaffe, Rubens and Italy, p.82, fig.298. That Rubens knew the villa Farnesina well is expressed in his Palazzi di Genova, see below chpt.4, under the subheading **Rubens and Gentilhuomini.**

[42]This figure by the Fleming Gillis van den Vliete is based on the ancient fertility goddess, formerly in the Farnese collection. Her contemporary symbolic meaning that of fortune and fertility is documented as Coffin pointed out.Tivoli, p.18. Rubens included this figure, without the flow of water, in an oil sketch of Cecrops' Daughters discovering Erichthonius. Held, Oil Sketches, fig.240. For a picture of the renovated figure with the water flowing see L.B.Dal Maso, The Villa D'Este at Tivoli, Florence, 1987, p.56.

[43]Ferdinando de'Medici had ordered the fountain to be brought from Pratolino to the Boboli gardens. D.Heikamp, "Ammannati's Fountain for the *Sala Grande* of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, "Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium, Fons Sapientiae Renaissance Garden Fountains, Washington D.C., 1978, p.133.

[44]Coffin, The Villa, p.348-349.

have also meant to include an allegorical significance of a personal nature. But since she belonged to the cast of characters in gardens, this sculpture can securely be interpreted in the context of prevailing themes in analogy to those figures mentioned above.

Within the theme of love this *Venus'* proximity to a grotto finds parallels in a passage in Claudian's Epithalamium . . . Palladio in which:

> It chanced that Venus had one day retired into a cave overgrown with vines to woo sleep amid its alluring cool, and had laid her goddess limbs . . . [where] the vine branches stir gently in the breeze. . . . Round her lie too the nymphs of Ida and hard by beneath a lofty . . . tree the three Graces sleep . . . while the other trees swarm with amorini at play.[45]

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[45]Claudian, Epithalamium dictum Palladio..., trans. M. Platnauer, Loeb Classical Library, New York, 1922, II, p. 205.

CHAPTER FOUR

> *You know the number of lines Homer and Vergil devote to their descriptions ... yet neither passage seems long because both poets are carrying out their original intention. ... It is the same with me, if I may compare small things with great. I am trying to set my entire house [garden] before your eyes.*
>
> **Pliny the Younger**[1]

Walk in the Garden

The above passage from Pliny might as well apply to Rubens' Walk in the Garden[2], (fig.6) in which the artist painted a panegyric to himself combining elements of the Italian villa and contemporary currents, summing up personal happiness and the delights of *villeggiatura*.[3]

The picture clearly represents a *locus amoenus* where everything is in bloom, suggesting spring, the season traditionally synonomous with gardens, love and youth. Spring is also the season under the reign of Venus, which according to traditions in the Low Countries, makes lovers promenade.[4] Unmistakeably, it is Rubens himself strolling with his young wife and son.[5] The artist looks out at the beholder and gestures towards the garden behind him. In this

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[1]Pliny, p.144.

[2]Like most of the master's oeuvre the painting is not dated. But since Rubens was newly married for the second time in December 1630 Rooses and Evers have both proposed 1631 as a date for this work. M. Rooses, L'Oeuvre de P.P.Rubens, Antwerp, 1888, vol 4, p.262. Evers, 1943, p.337.

[3]The painting has been the focus of controversy regarding its authenticity due to what has been called "sketchiness" and "incomplete appearance." Vlieghe, however, in Portraits (1987), accepted it as a work by Rubens. This picture, in fact, is too strong pictorially and iconographically for it not to have been painted by Rubens. A so-called 'finished appearance' was unnecessary because of the personal nature it had for the artist. It has been observed that works belonging to the later years of an artist's *oeuvre*, as this one does, often differ in appearance to earlier ones. Many great artists changed their style in the later years. It may suffice to recall Titian and Michelangelo whose later works in comparison to earlier ones appear 'sketchy' or 'incomplete.'

[4]K. J. Hellerstedt, Garden of Earthly Delight. Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Netherlandish Gardens, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1986, p.7

[5]Based on biographical data and comparable portraits, the boy is the younger son from his first marriage.

'self portrait' Rubens depicts himself somewhat younger than he actually was at the time.[6] This may be due to the fact that he wished to look young beside his wife. However, a more likely reason may have been that Rubens wanted to suggest the Golden Age since a characteristic of this Age is eternal youth.[7]

In the Walk we are looking at the painter's own grounds adjacent to his urban 'villa'[8] in Antwerp. The garden shows all the components of the Italian villa though the whole is smaller and more compact. In the center right is a flower garden, the *giardino semplice*, in which tulips are the predominant flower. This tulip garden is separated from the rest of the grounds by a gate, covered with ivy (fig.19). This garden also contains a mountain ash tree, identifiable by its blue leaves. Branches of a peach tree, in full bloom, extend from beyond the mountain ash. Rubens points to the larger formal garden, consisting of lawn *parterre*, clipped box hedges and putto/dolphin fountain at the far left. Behind the painter's hand, in the center, stands a crabapple tree, while beyond the fence lies the *boschetto*, indicated by rows of Dutch elm trees. Before these stands a sycamore tree with a magpie sitting on its upper branches.[9] Included to the left is a small pavillion. At its side grows a fig tree creeping from underneath the stones.[10] In the Italian manner, small citrus trees in pots are lined up in *espalier* along the walk where birds, in particular peacocks, are fed by an older woman. Although orange trees and fig trees are not native plants to the Low Lands, Rubens had both in his garden.[11]

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[6]This is again gauged from biographical data and from comparable self portraits. Discussions of the painter's portraits are given by M. Jaffe, "Rubens to Himself: The portraits sent to Charles I and to N. C. Peiresc, "Rubens e Firenze, ed. Mina Gregori, Florence, 1983, pp.19-32. H. Vlieghe, Portraits II Antwerp-Identified Sitters, CRLB, XIX, London, 1987.

[7]See Giamatti for Pindar's work related to this subject, pp.20-21.

[8]The word villa is applied here for the painter's palatial house including his studio since it resembles both in appearance and in use a suburban villa rather than an urban *palazzo*.

[9]To E.and F. Brown, who kindly helped me identify the trees in this picture, I extend my thanks.

[10]This particular growth is typical of the fig tree (and familiar to travellers to mediterrenean countries).

[11]In a letter from Steen (August 17.1638) Rubens wrote to his assistant Lucas Fayd'herbe: "... remind William the gardener that he is to send us ... figs if there are some, or any other delicacy from the garden." Magurn, No.244. Payments for orange plants are recorded in Rubens inventory of 1640. Evers, 1943, p.338.

Giardino Semplice

The flower garden, behind the gate, especially, caused scholars to doubt the authorship of the painting because of the prominence it has in the garden. Krempel thought that Rubens did not finish the picture "the tulip field, being particularly weak."[12]

The dominant presence of only one kind of flower may be explained through the artist's interest in the tulip, one of the most popular horticultural species at the time. This flower, indeed, had become a sensation in Europe since its importation from Turkey. As Stern describes:

> never before or since has there been such a sudden astonishing influx of colourful strange plants into European gardens, as when in the second half of the sixteenth century importations of unpromising onion-like bulbs . . . from Constantinople brought forth tulips.[13]

Antwerp, an international port, was among the first cities to receive exotic flowers. An account is given of a merchant who had been sent tulip bulbs in a consignment of cloth from Constantinople.[14] To the Viennese Carolus Clusius (after whom a tulip was named) a shipment was also sent by Busbeck, then ambassador to the Turkish court.[15] After their introduction to Antwerp and Vienna, tulips spread rapidly all over Europe. This "oriental" influx generated an enormous interest in exotic *simples* [samples] among noteable villa owners, who all shared

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[12]This information is recorded in Vlieghe, Portraits II, p.167. Evers, doubting also the authenticity of this painting, asked was Rubens such a friend of tulips as to fill an entire garden with them? Evers, 1943, p.338.

[13]The information is taken from a lecture by Stern to the Royal Horticultural Society in 1965. G.Masson, "Italian Flower Collector's Gardens", Italian Garden Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium, Washington D.C., 1972, p.64.

[14]R. Bowlby, "The Tulip as a Garden Flower," The Garden, 109, April, 1984, 190. This information was given by Rupert Bowlby in a series of two lectures to the Royal Horticultural Society in May 1983.

[15]After the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 diplomatic efforts were made on behalf of Western rulers in fear of further Turkish advancement toward the West. On one of his diplomatic missions to the court of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent, the ambassador Angerus Ghislari von Busbeck sent in 1572 tulip bulbs from Constantinople to Clusius in Vienna. Neubauer, p.17. Clusius took his original stock from Vienna to Leyden (Netherlands) where he went as Professor of Botany in 1593. Bowlby, p.191.

an enthusiasm for flowers.[16] The gardens of Europe, including that of Rubens, were thus stocked with flowers.

During this time some collectors had their plants painted and the results bound into books. One of the most beautiful of these is the *Florilegium Hortus Eystettensis* by Basil Besler,[17] which records among its flowers and plants the *tulipa clusiana*.[18] Rubens obtained this book in 1615 through the Plantin Moretus Press.[19]

With the growing enthusiasm for exotic plants, commercial interests also flourished.[20] Prices were on the increase and a 'gambling fever' arose. Bulbs were sold at auctions for huge profits. The height of 'tulip mania,' using Bowlby's words, came in the 1630's.[21] Significantly, it was during this time that Rubens painted the Walk.[22]

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[16]The most complete information about the importation and exchange of flowers is given in the observation books by Ulisse Aldrovandi in which the Bolognese botanist kept notes and lists of seeds and bulbs sent to a vast circle of people. The books record in 1593 his correspondence with the director of the gardens of Maria de'Medici and Henry IV at the Louvre, requesting seeds. In 1598 among the names of aristocrats, ecclesiastics, and humanists are noted Ranuccio Farnese and Fulvio Orsini. Another entry records also the name D'Este. Masson, "Italian Flower," p.79 ff.

[17]In this book, the Nuremberg Apothecary, Basil Besler documented the contents of the garden of the Archbishop of Eistatt over a period of seventeen years, producing the finest botanical illustrations. *Kershaw Old Maps and Prints*, p.4. The book contained originally seventy-seven plates, entitled Hortus Eystettensis sive diligens et accurata omnium plantarum, florum...delineato et ad vivum representatio. Nuremberg, 1613. Unfortunately, this book has been taken apart because of the aesthetic appeal of the plates, which are now collector's items. Another horticultural book, published in Rome in 1633 was Battista Ferrari's De Florum Cultura Libri IV. Other floral books of that time are listed by Masson, "Italian Flower", pp.63-80.

[18]This folio is pictured by Masson, "Italian Flower," fig.8.

[19]Macrae.

[20]A letter written in Rome in 1620 mentions that Flemish and German plant dealers were active in the city. From the Florentine plant dealer Matteo Caccini letters are preserved which he wrote to Clusius between 1606-1609. Masson, "Italian Flower," p.79.

[21]Bowlby, p.192. In 1620, twelve scudi were paid for three bulbs of tulips, a sum equal to a head gardener's pay for three months. Masson, "Italian Flower," p.77.

[22]As could be expected after years of upsurge, a "tulip crash" was inevitable. It occurred in the winter of 1636/37. Bowlby, p.192.

Although *giardini semplice* are generally neglected in the scholarship on Italian villas, Masson at least has convincingly shown their weight and prominence in gardens.[23] In fact, *giardini semplice* had a significant part in garden design. The Villa Medici had a flower garden as shown on the Falda map of 1614, which indicates a *giardino delli semplice*, and at Pratolino area specifically identified as *giardino di fiori* [garden of flowers] was part of the design.[24] Villas, indeed, had become famous for their rare plants. The books of Pighius and Schott[25] mention gardens with exotic plants. Likewise, John Evelyn during his sojourn in Rome[26] admired the "exotic simples" at the villa Borghese.[27] This must have been the "tulip garden" with a "hedge of Roses" of which Manilli speaks in his guidebook of 1650 to that same villa.[28]

The arrangement of Rubens' garden

Two engravings of the artist's property exist, one executed in 1684 (the court), the other in 1692 (the garden), long after the time of Rubens and his family.[29] But these two plates are important for our study, since they provide information as to the layout of the grounds. Further, these engravings record the visual decoration that Rubens chose for the exterior walls

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[23]Masson in "Italian Flower," pp.63-64 points out that for a long time Italian villas were understood as having been "flowerless." This is due to the fact that *giardini semplice*, although part of villas as maps indicate, were perceived as gardens of herbs and medicinal plants rather than as flower gardens. Nor were they researched by scholars with horticultural interests. Also, their contents were recorded in books under botanical rather than horticultural labels. Another reason which upheld the notion of "flowerlessness" was the romantic mode which saw these gardens touched by the hands of time (although neglected through circumstance), which produced picturesque scenes. In fact, fortunes had changed and gardens for a long time could not be kept up by later generations.

[24]This is indicated on Sgrilli's map in *annotazzioni* no.14. W.Smith, p.156.

[25]Stephanus Vinandus Pighius' book Hercules Prodicus, a travel record of his trip to Italy in company with the Prince of Cleves in 1574-75, was published in Antwerp in 1587. Francois Schott's guidebook to Italy Itinerario d'Italia first appeared in 1600. D. Coffin, "John Evelyn at Tivoli," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, 19, 1956, pp.157-158.

[26]D. Coffin, The Diary of John Evelyn, ed. E.S. de Beer, Oxford, 1955, pp.157-158.

[27]Masson, "Italian Flower," p.67.

[28]Manilli, Villa Borghese..., pp.117-172; Masson, "Italian Flower," p.67.

[29]The House was inhabited from 1649 on by William Cavendish, Duke of New Castle, who apparently had fled from England. F.Baudouin, Rubens House, p.5.

of his studio, which he adorned with a painted frieze still intact at the time the drawings for these engravings were made (figs.20-21).[30]

While we use these plates in our discussion we are not applying them rigidly to the Walk with regard to the composition. Rubens had a personal perception of his garden as well as a profound iconographic scheme. Both of these aspects are represented in this painting. In order to convey his message Rubens had to take 'artistic liberty' which is seen, especially, in his arrangement of the pavillion and walkway in the painting. Also, the wooded area stretching behind the flower and formal gardens as represented in the Walk may in actuality have contained in the distance architectural outlines, as this area of the garden looked out onto neighbouring town properties. The inclusion of such *props* would have been disturbing compositionally and iconographically. It was not necessary for Rubens to make them part of the picture. What concerned him was not the topographical accuracy of the garden but the representation of the typical elements within it. Rubens emphasizes the pavillion so as to assure the viewer that he has painted in the Walk his own garden.[31]

The Pavillion

The elegant structure of the pavillion is presented so as not to obscure the view of the formal area (fig.22). Like the garden, it is designed in the Italian manner and features the familiar Serlian façade.[32] Within this prominent structure, Rubens has included statues of

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[30]Rubens most likely painted the frieze between 1618 and 1621. Its appearance is preserved, at least in outline, in the two engravings by Jacob Harrewijn after drawings by Jan van Croes. E. McGrath, "The painted Decoration of Rubens House, "Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes," 41, 1978, p.247. To adorn the exterior of houses was a common practice especially among painters. For example in Ital, Andrea Mantegna and Guilio Romano had exterior frescoes on their houses as did Giorgio Vasari. Northern artists, too, painted their exterior walls despite the fact that the northern climate was unfavourable. Hans Floris' house had a magnificent frieze as did that of Quentin Metsys (the former is pictured in Tijs, Rubens and Jordaens barok, p.57). Rubens fresco, perhaps painted in grisaille, may not have lasted past the seventeenth century. F. Mols, with the engraving in hand, visited the Rubens House in 1763 looking for the frieze in vain. But he records a big painting of *Perseus and Andromeda* hanging on an outside wall painted *"en naturelles."* Rooses Oeuvre, II, p.145.

[31]The formal garden of the engraving which is laid out in the French mode of *broiderie*, generally made of low cut verdure, coloured pebbles and coloured sand, (Neubauer, p.37) reflects contemporary tastes, that of the current occupants.

[32]This architectural motif is the arch flanked by two columns, a familiar façade from antiquity. It was used already by Bramante but popularized by Sebastiano Serlio in his architectural treatises especially the third and fourth books published in Venice in 1537. Hence the name. Rubens had Serlio's book bound in 1616 at the Plantin Moretus Publishing house. Tijs, p.97. Giulio Romano used this motif for the secret grotto at the Palazzo del Tè in Mantua. Andrea Palladio also favoured it especially for the basilica in Vicenza

Ceres and Bacchus.[33] Above, in a pediment niche is the figure likely of *Abondatia*, holding a *cornucopia*.[34] Together, these three allegorical sculptures symbolize fertility and abundance of the land. But different from the loggia at the villa Medici (fig.23) or the *mansiones musarum* at the villa Lante (fig.24) both of which had the Serlian façade, this garden structure is not designated as a place for nymphs or Muses. For instead, Rubens has given the entire villa to the Muses. This is suggested through the large picture of *Pegasus and Andromeda* on the exterior garden wall of his house (fig.26).

It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that the whole concept of the villa was to indicate a means of access to antiquity, to revive a form of life - the villa ideal - of the ancients. In fact, could Rubens have meant to recreate a *paradiso terrestre*, looking towards antiquity as the Golden Age?[35] He shared the thought that antiquity was the "heroic age" expressed most succinctly in his De Imitatione Statuarum in which he wrote:

> . . . we of this erroneous age are so far degenerate that we can produce nothing like them: Whether it is that our grovelling genius will not permit us to soar to those heights which the antients attained by their heroick sense. . . .[36]

One way to attain this ideal age, at least superficially was to collect antique sculptures and to create 'ancient ruins' in the garden. Both sculpture and ruins became essential garden features, especially in Rome. We may recall the garden of Colocci and the *orti Farnesiani* with their ruins respectively of the *Acqua Vergine*, and Forum.

In the construction of the villa Giulia, marble blocks and columns (from an ancient temple) were incorporated into the design.[37] Cardinal Scipione Borghese, too, adorned his villa

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[33]Both Ceres and Bacchus are listed in the inventory of Rubens' estate, drawn up upon Rubens' death. F.Baudoin, Rubens House: A Summary Guide, Antwerp, 1971, p.28.

[34]This figure must have been part of the Carleton marbles. The *Fattura* lists in box twelve *a Figuretta de l'abondatia*. Muller, "Rubens's Museum," p.582. In the painting this sculpture is not entirely visible, though the cornucopia is.

[35]A thorough discussion on the paradiso terrestre had already been given in 1550 by Agostino Gallo in his book Dieci (vinti) giornate della vera agricoltura e piaceri della villa. These ten [twenty] days' work begin and end with the praise of villa-life in analogy to a terrestial paradise. Bentmann and Müller, p.73.

[36]J. R. Martin, Baroque, London, 1977, p.272.

[37]Also from Hadrian's villa herms were brought in and placed at several intersections in the garden; inscriptions were incorporated which came from newly excavated tombs on the Via Latina. Visentini, p.11.

with columns from San Giovanni in Laterano, which had originated in pagan buildings.[38] Further he had in his garden, as mentioned earlier, a circular pavillion constructed to look 'ruinous.' Ciriaco Mattei decorated his garden with an ancient obelisk, setting it up in the *Prato* the flat area stretching before the casino;[39] and Ferdinando de'Medici, besides having remnants of an antique nymphaeum on the grounds of his villa, also incorporated part of the Aurelian wall which ran along his garden by building an apartment, his private study, into the postern.[40] Cardinal d'Este at Tivoli commissioned Ligorio to build the Rome of antiquity in miniature: the *Rometta.*

Rubens in Antwerp, far removed from the architectural ruins of the "antients", also sought to bring antiquity to his villa. He, too, thus created his own in the pavillion.

These 'ruins' were perceived as evocations of the spirit of antique culture. They were seen to provide access to qualities which the ancients possessed. Already Petrarch had recorded that he climbed many times to the top of the Baths of Diocletian to meet there Cicero, Hortensius, and Crasus, claiming that the meeting was evoked through the ruins.[41] In a similar spirit Palladio in the introduction to his Quattro Libri (1570) speaks of antique architecture [and subsequently its ruins] as: "*testimonio della virtu e della grandezza Romana.*"[42] Likewise, Vincenzo Scamozzi in Idea dell'Architectura Universale (1615) praises the ancients as being the "*Sapientia veterum.*"[43]

Surely, Rubens was aware of this traditional use of classical architectural vocabulary. He did not merely imitate, but rather interpreted stylistically. He was eclectic and used antique motifs derived from his own experiences during his Italian years. For example, he raised the columns of the pavillion noticeably, placing them on high bases, with their shafts tapered toward the top. They are capped by a variant type of the Doric rather than the Ionic

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[38]Six columns were brought to the villa in 1608. Heilmann, p.102.

[39]MacDougall, "A Circus," p.121.

[40]For which he was given permission by the city. Coffin, The Villa, p.226.

[41]This issue is further discussed by Bentmann and Müller (p.59), including sources. Heemskerck on folio 87v of his Roman Sketchbook (which shows ruins of Rome) wrote: "Roma Qvanta Fuit Ipsa Ruina Docet" [the ruins still witness the greatness of Rome]. Serlio used the same sentence on the title page of his Terzo Libro. More information on this subject can be obtained from the same authors, p.50 ff.

[42]This topic is further discussed by Bentmann and Müller, p.51 ff.

[43]Bentmann and Müller, p.22. Rubens aquired Scamozzi's work in 1617. Macrae.

capital (normally associated with the Serlian façade). Finally, the entire structure is decorated with classical motifs of triglyphs, shells and bucrania *all'antica* so as to give the tempietto a pictorial surface similar to Roman triumphal arches.[44] In using such antique architectural vocabulary, Rubens meant to evoke the *virtus romana* and the *sapientia antica.*[45] To architecture was added a moral and ethical dimension.[46] Antiquity thus became present in *Gestalt* and spirit.

The new Apelles

With the addition of bucrania to the Serlian arches, Rubens includes antique triumphal motifs.[47] Bentmann and Müller have pointed out that the use of *'Triumphalmotive'* in Italian villas at the time were indicative of the status of the owners as Lords of the house.[48] These triumphal motifs likely also held meanings for Rubens since he, too, experienced 'victories' at this time.

In 1630 he returned home to Antwerp from his weary diplomatic missions. He longed for a private life again. We know that from a letter he wrote from London shortly before in which he said: "best of all, I should like to go home and remain there all my life."[49] Once home, Rubens' life came under the wings of *Fortuna.* As already mentioned he married for the second time,[50] and was also knighted in recognition for his skills as a diplomat, scholar and

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[44]An ornate style was at the same time used by Scipione Borghese for the facade of his casino.

[45]"The heroic race" Muller writes "that stands at the center of his art can be seen as Rubens' re-creation, through the meditation of ancient [works], of the physically, and by implication, morally and intellectually superior past." Muller, "Rubens's Theory," p.237.

[46]Bentmann and Müller, p.51.

[47]This motif, for example, is part of the *Ara Pacis Augustae.*

[48]Bentmann and Müller, p.93

[49]Magurn p.358.

[50]Magurn, p.1. In a letter Rubens informs Peiresc of his new wife: "I have made up my mind to marry again...I have taken a young wife of honest middle-class family, although everyone tried to persuade me to make a Court marriage. But I feared commune illud nobilitas malum superiam praesertim...[pride that inherent vice of the nobility...] and that is why I chose one who would not blush to see me take my brushes in hand." Magurn, No.235.

painter.[51] This last is significant for it also advanced the position of art.[52] Even the art critic Giovanni Bellori who depreciated the emergence of the *courtier artist*, recognized the value of such honours. By elevating the artist, he said, painting was also elevated, thus the esteem bestowed to the painter reflected on the arts themselves.[53]

Rubens now held a place like Apelles. Bellori compared him to the Greek painter saying that Rubens, like the Greek before him, brought glory again to painting.[54] His position finds further parallels with Apelles and his friendship with Alexander the Great, since the Flemish artist's relationship with his patrons was similar.[55] Within the hierarchy of

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[51]This was a special achievement for a painter in the seventeenth century. In 1624 Rubens was raised to the lower aristocracy by the Spanish king Philip IV. The citation given at that time was drawn up by Don Inigo de Brizuela, bishop of Segovia and chairman of the council of Flanders at Madrid, who spoke of Rubens as a European celebrity "who beside his rare talent as a painter is skilled in letters and history and knows many languages; he has always lived in a grand style, and can afford to maintain his rank." F. Baudouin, "The Rubens House at Antwerp," Apollo, March, 1977, p.185. In March 1630 the painter was knighted (in Whitehall) by the British king Charles I. In July 1631 Philip IV, too, knighted the Fleming. Evers, 1943, p.72. In addition to his dual knighthood Rubens also held the honourable title of *Magister Artibus* which was given to him in 1629 by the University of Cambridge. Gelder, p.13. Rubens also received from his royal benefactors precious gifts. G. Gelder, "Das Rubensbild. Ein Rückblick," Peter Paul Rubens Werk und Nachruhm, Augsburg, 1981, p.13 ff.

[52]Official recognition of the visual arts had begun only recently in Italy. The painter and nobleman Paggi of Genoa initiated in 1591 his famous and successful campaign to have painting recognized as a Liberal Art. Dempsey, p.557. Similarly, stirrings in Bologna gave rise to the first academies which accepted the fine arts as intellectual and theoretical disciplines, rather than manual occupations. F.P. Dreher, "The Artist as Seigneur: Chateaux and Their Proprietors in the Work of David Teniers II," The Art Bulletin, 60, 1978, p.684. It was Cardinal Montalto, who as papal legate, licensed the Bolognese *Accademia degli Incamminati*. Jaffe, Rubens and Italy, p.55.

[53]Bellori's words are: "Egli e da lodarsi, l'esempio degli antichi pittori Zeusi, Parrasio, Apelle, e fra'moderni l'onore di Rafaelle, e di Tiziano, per non dire ultimamente la splendidezza dell Rubens e del van Dyck mentre essi con la famigliarità de'regi e de'grandi apportarono estimazione ed utilità alla pittura, innalzandola di nuova al pionorato pregio dell' arti liberali e facendola oggetto della beneficenza." G. Bellori, Le vite de'pittori..., ed. E. Borea, Turin, 1976, p.83. Dreher, p.684.

[54]See above note 53.

[55]Stechow voiced his thoughts on this subject when he wrote: "The relationship between Rubens and Maria de'Medici is one of the most extraordinary examples between a great artist and a great patron." Stechow, p.78. Rubens' artistic greatness was also recognized by the Prince of Wales (who two years later became King Charles I) in 1623 when he commissioned the Flemish artist to paint a self-portrait for the prince's gallery. Rubens signed and dated this painting and inscribed even his age (45 years old). Rubens must have been flattered by the insistence of the Prince to have a picture of him, the painter, in the private, royal gallery.

seventeenth-century society the Flemish artist, occupied, indeed, the prestigious position of a modern Apelles.[56] De Bie in his epigram on Rubens, refers to the master's enoblement as "still nobler through his art."[57] By this he meant to suggest that painting is as fit an occupation for a gentleman as farming, soldiering, or church work.

It is thus perhaps not surprising that the exterior paintings running along the wall of Rubens' workshop represent in one picture the *Crowning of Alexander* and in another *Calumny and Apelles.* The other scenes are *Iphigenia and Agamemnon, Zeuxis painting Helen,*[58] *and the Drunken Hercules* (fig.25). The garden wall is decorated with three paintings depicting *a Chariot Race, Triumph of Apollo, and a Sacrificial Scene*[59] (fig.27). While some of these pictures are unquestionably reworkings from classical texts and ekphrases paying homage to ancient authors and painters (Apelles and Zeuxis), for Rubens some of these also held symbolic references to contemporary currents in gardens.

The hippodrome in gardens

One picture in particular (and its two companions) seems to have defied interpretation hitherto in terms of its position on the garden wall. This is the *Chariot Race,* which can be identified with certainty with the help of an engraving of a quadriga in a hippodrome.[60] The engraving is based on a drawing by Rubens[61] for an illustration in Philip's book Electorum

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Jaffe, "Rubens to Himself," pp.21-22.

[56]Gelder, "Das Rubensbild," p.12.

[57]Dreher, p.688.

[58]The meanings of the pictures were commonly understood by learned individuals. Caspar Gervartius, for example, wrote in latin an *Epithalamium* [love song], for Rubens and his new wife, mentioning the lucky new Zeuxis [Rubens] who had found his ideal in one, single, natural Helen [while Zeuxis needed five]. J. de Bie "Latina Rubeniana," Hermeneus, xlix, pp.217-28. McGrath, p.270.

[59]The identifications are according to McGrath. Her study of the frieze on the garden wall is the first one published as far as I know. Earlier discussions concentrated only on the pictures along the wall of the court and differ slightly in interpretation, see F. Prins, Het Rubenshuis gids bij de Mythologische en Humoristische versieringen, Antwerp, 1947, pp.21-23.

[60]McGrath, p.262.

[61]The drawing, as McGrath points out, is no longer traceable.

Libri II[62] (fig.28). The plate has a close formal relation with the scene in the frieze yet a few differences exist. In the *Chariot Race* the vanquished contender is fully represented crouching beneath a single quadriga. The engraved version, in contrast, shows only the feet of the prone figure lying on the ground in defeat.[63] Rubens' choice to condense the scene (yet still include the contender) was made to facilitate comprehension. In this way he made it clear to the viewer that the picture was to represent a Roman circus.

The next scenes to the right, which McGrath identified as the *Triumph of Apollo* and a *Sacrifice*, can surely be linked thematically with the *Chariot Race*. I am inclined to believe that the picture next to the circus race can be read as the '*Crowning of the Victor*' in which Victory crowns the seated conqueror, in front of whom the defeated contender kneels.[64] The following picture, showing a sacrifice being prepared, thus also fits in. A priest invokes the gods as he stands next to a blazing tripod, while a strongly foreshortened ox awaits the axe held out by an assistant.[65] Lyttelton and Forman have noted that sacrifices and circus performances were linked in ancient Rome because: "on many special religious occasions sacrifices were followed by the holding of public games, such as horse or chariot races."[66] McGrath, who compared the individual scenes of the frieze to Rubens' other works, drawings and paintings, tried to

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[62]The book was published in Antwerp in 1608. Philip Rubens intended with this plate (which is possibly based on a damaged Roman Circus relief from the time of Julius Ceasar, now in a storeroom in the Vatican Museum) to demonstrate the starting signal for a race of charioteers, with the umpire letting fall the mappa [cloth] from his raised right hand. McGrath, pp.261-262.

[63]McGrath, p.262.

[64]What appears to be pointed ears on the figure standing behind the kneeling person could be the result of the extreme compression caused by perspective in Harrewijn's engraving. If Rubens intended this figure to have pointed ears, it could then represent a satyr who took part in circus games which were held in honour of distinguished citizens. See below note 73. That the kneeling figure could be Marsyas beside a victorious Apollo, as suggested by McGrath, does not seem plausible because of the paintings' situation on the garden wall, and its relationship to the other two pictures. Also the frieze on the garden wall appears to be unconnected with the scenes on the court wall, since there is a definite separation made with the portico. (This is apparent even though the portico was omitted in the garden engraving in order to accommodate the frieze of both walls). Hence the pictures on the garden wall were a totally different visual unit and were surely not meant to be seen as single pictures like those on the courtyard wall.

[65]In Roman times oxen were often sacrificed to Jupiter (while other animals were offered to other gods). M. Lyttelton and W. Forman, The Romans, Their Gods and Their Beliefs, London, 1984, p.38.

[66]Ibid, p.40.

establish thematic identifications but of the picture on the garden wall she wrote: "What antique painting Rubens meant his *Chariot Race* to recall is not so easy to decide."[67] However, this exterior painting, because it is on the garden wall, can be seen in the context of *ars hortulorum* and interpreted accordingly.

Rubens had to abstract certain decorative elements in his garden since his space within the town was limited in comparison to villas in Italy. As a result, he has included garden features which he had observed and experienced in Italian villas in three dimensions, in his own garden in a pictorial two-dimensional way.

This frescoed picture of the *Chariot Race* (with the addition of the *Drunken Hercules*,[68] [courtyard]) can be linked to the villa Mattei in Rome.[69] Ciriaco Mattei, like Rubens, was an exception to the rule among notable villa owners. Mattei, like the painter, was not a born aristocrat nor did he belong to the papal court. But, like Rubens, he too was ennobled (in 1592 by Pope Clement VIII).[70] The construction and embellishment of his villa coincided with Mattei's emergence into the upper aristocracy of Rome. The splendid collection of *antiques* as well as the elaborate allegory in Mattei's villa was, like that of Rubens, a statement about his position. It appears that a sophisticated decorative program was thought out for the garden which included the *Prato*, shaped like an antique circus or hippodrome with a curved stepped

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[67]McGrath, p.262.

[68]This *Drunken Hercules* is formally related to an antique Roman relief which was part of the Mattei collection. Rubens used this motif more than once; it is also echoed in his oil paintings. There is no drawing by the artist of the relief. But as Rubens said to a rebuker in Rome: "I believe that I have better retained that which I have looked at, than you who have drawn it." This is recorded by van Hoogstraeten, cited in Flemish by Muller, "Rubens's Theory," p.245. The Hercules relief which is no longer traceable is pictured in Monumenta Mattheiana (1778) and in Stechow.

[69]That Rubens had spent time at the villa Mattei is further attested to by his sketch (Chicago Art Institute) of a relief from a sarcophagus depicting a poet flanked by two Muses, one of which is the Polhymnia type. The artist drew the latter and the poet, humorously adding on the sheet Socrates procul dubio [Socrates without doubt] Xantippe qua stomachatur [Xantippe by whom he is wexed]. According to Held, Rubens' anotation was a learned joke. He could not have mistaken the poet for Socrates nor the Muse for Xantippe. Stechow who recorded the interpretation by Held added in praise of Rubens: "Archaeology, philology, high artistry, and a subtle sense of humour - what an extraordinary combination." Stechow,. pp.33-34.

[70]He was granted the fief of *Rocca Sinibaldi* and given the title *Marchese*. MacDougall, "A Circus," p.130.

exedra.[71] This hippodrome was the most prominent part in the garden adorned with an obelisk[72] and other ancient works, among them satyrs and lions (fig.29). In ancient Rome distinguished citizens were given honour in the form of circus games with gladiatorial contests. Hence the *Prato* in the form of an ancient circus at the villa Mattei in addition to its antique decorations, was a symbolic identification of the owner with notable citizens of ancient Rome, which Mattei [like Rubens] could claim in light of his ennoblement as reward for his services.[73]

The designs of *Prati* in gardens were influenced by Pliny's hippodrome at his villa Tusci which served as a prototype.[74] The Boboli gardens adjacent to the Pitti palace in Florence incorporated a *Prato* immediately behind the *palazzo*.[75] Likewise the villas Cesi and Belvedere[76] had areas for equestrian spectacles[77] (fig.1). The villa Lante at Bagnaia incorporated a semicircular, stepped fountain, the *Cavea*, which was named the *teatro* even if

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[71]The word *Prato* appears on legends of maps of villas and was contemporarily used to identify a flat area, shaped in the form of the Roman *circus or hippodrome*. The latter word is a derivative from the Greek word hippodromus. Ibid, p.130. Mattei may have found inspiration visually for the decoration of his *Prato* from a Roman relief in his collection depicting a gladiatorial performance at which spectators, standing on a curved, stepped exedra, cheer. The relief also gives information about the decoration of the Roman circus including an obelisk placed on a spina [the narrow central platform of a circus] with other art works adjacent to it. Pictured in MacDougall, "A Circus," fig.7.

[72]The obelisk was given to Mattei, in 1582, for his services to the city as *Conservatore*. It stood at the Capitoline hill but it is believed to have come from the ancient *Circus Flaminius*. Ibid, p.130.

[73]The *Prato* could also allude to honourific funeral games given in ancient Rome to selected citizens where satyrs and dancers participated. MacDougall, "A Circus," p.129.

[74]Pliny, p.142. Actual remains of a hippodrome garden from the palace of Domitian existed on top of the Palatine hill but may not have been recognized as such because the Duperac map of Rome (1576) describes it as an atrium. MacDougall, "Ars," p.40, note 6.

[75]The word *palazzo* commonly used for the Pitti palace is not entirely correct because it was both villa and *palazzo* due to the Pitti's location across the Arno outside the city. It was used both as a retreat and as a domestic dwelling (like Rubens' villa). This was pointed out to me by Professor P.Morselli of Florence to whom I extend my thanks. The *Prato* at the Pitti, as the lunette by Giusto Utens of 1599 shows, was not decorated with sculptural works linked traditionally with the Roman hippodrome as at the villa Mattei. The only indication was the shape. G. Sciolla, Ville Medicee, 1982, pp.46-47. Heikamp, p.146, and figs. 26-27.

[76]See engraving of the Belvedere *Prato* in Coffin's The Villa, fig. 146.

[77]In these early Roman villas of the Cesi and Belvedere, the *Prati* were not well assimilated with the horticultural areas as in later gardens.

it was not used as such.[78] At the villa Giulia the casino and court were designed with an ancient theatre in mind which Ammannati described fittingly in theatrical terminology: "... the pathway represents a type of stage, the courtyard the orchestra, the semicircular form of the palazzo the theatre, and the other three sides of the courtyard provide the scenery."[79]

Mattei's *hippodrome*, only recently designed, was a novelty in villas of Rome at the time. It was distinct due both to its prominence within the horticultural and decorative scheme, and to its importance in the gardens' allegorical program. Rubens surely also wanted to include in his garden, even if condensed, a *hippodrome* in the tradition of the Italian villa. Perhaps this, one of Rome's most recent designs, was appealing to him especially since he experienced the garden during the villa's height rather than decline.[80]

Rubens and *Gentilhuomini*

Another possible link between the Flemish painter and the villa Mattei can be found in a statement Rubens made in his book Palazzi di Genova. Splendid and on a grand scale as generally only villas of "rulers" were, Mattei's was indeed comparable to those of princes and rulers, but was so remarkable because Mattei was not one of them. He was merely a private *gentilhuomino*, the type of distinguished individual that Rubens admired. Although there is no explict mentioning on Rubens' part of a preference for Mattei and his villa over others, it is inferred, however, in the opening page of his book where he discerned between certain villas, palazzi and their owners.

In Palazzi di Genova Rubens addresses the benign reader [al benigno lettore], voicing his personal opinion of Italian villas which was likely based on a careful assessment of the places he knew well. He states that those villas of princes like: "the Palazzo Pitti in Florence, the Farnesina in Rome... Caprarola and infinite other examples all over Italy ... exceed in space, expense and power those of *Gentilhuomini privati.*" Evidently Rubens enjoyed exploring these places thoroughly. In concept, however, he preferred the villas of the "*Gentilhuomini*

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[78]Lazzaro-Bruno, p.559.

[79]This description is recorded in a letter Ammannati wrote to his Paduan Patron M. Mantova Benavides. Visentini, p.8. A copy of the letter is preserved in Pesaro Bibl. Oliveriana, codex 374/II. MacDougall, "Imitation," p.133.

[80]Ciriaco Mattei in his will, of 1610 assessed the villa and wrote that the: "garden has been of great recreation and entertainment to [him] and of enjoyment of virtuosi and men of reputations the house being seen often and being visited daily not only by persons of note and of Rome but by foreigners." Coffin, Lex, p.208.

particolare."[81] These words indicate that Rubens at the time identified himself with distinguished individuals who aspired to becoming *gentilhuomini particolare.* Of course, this he achieved several years after writing this opening page, when he was knighted.

Immediately following the aforementioned passage Rubens made an even more revealing statement:

> But I like to serve and be of use to the community and give a lot of joy to many than to a few.[82]

These last words provide the key to the purpose of Rubens' 'villa.'

The use of Rubens' garden

The artist, indeed, shared his 'villa' with many individuals and for all sorts of occasions. It served for the reception of official dignitaries. One foreign person of eminence received at Rubens' place (to mention one name only), was the Queen mother Maria de'Medici of France.[83] This indicates that his garden had a representational and official function like the many villas of Rome. Rubens' garden was also a place where master and pupil laboured and studied in the spirit of the ancient tradition. The artist had many students,[84] which were placed under his

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[81]Rubens' words, written in Italian, are: "Perche si come quella Republica propria de Gentilhuomini particolare ... che di una Corte d'un Principo assoluto. Come si vedere per essempie nel Palazzo de Pitti in Fiorenza, & il Farnesiano in Roma, la Cancelleria, Caprarola, & infiniti altri per tutta l'Italia, si comme ancora la famosisima fabrica della Regina Madre nel borgo di S. Germano a Parigi. Li quali tutti eccendono di grandezza, d' sito e spesa, le faculta di Gentilhuomini privati. Ma io vorrei servire al uso commune, e piu tosto giovare a molti ch'a pochi." Pietro Paolo Rubens, Palazzi di Genova, Antwerp, 1622. The opening page is printed in Tijs, p.20. Significantly Rubens dedicated this book to the Italian gentleman Giambattista Grimaldi, in whose villa he accompanied Gonzaga.

[82]See above note 81.

[83]For the visitors to Rubens' villa see Baudouin "The Rubens House at Antwerp," p.184 ff.

[84]Rubens was sought after for the education of many pupils. In a letter to Jacob de Bie (1611) who, judging from Rubens' reply, requested a place in the master's studio for a student, to whom the artist responded: "I am very glad to see you place such confidence in me that you ask me to render you a service, but I regret from the bottom of my heart that I have no opportunity to show you by deeds rather than words my regard for you. For it is impossible for me to accept the young man whom you recommend. From all sides applications reach me. Some young men remain here for several years with other masters awaiting a vacancy in my studio.... I can tell you truly, without any exaggeration, that I have had to refuse over one hundred, even some of my own relatives or that of my wife's and not without causing displeasure among many of my best friends. Magurn No.22.

care to form them artistically and humanistically.[85]

In the picture Rubens also wanted the onlooker to be part of his garden. As is well known in the master's *oeuvre* nothing is accidental and gestures are never superfluous. Hence Rubens eye contact with the beholder (whereby he looks out at the viewer to make him an active participant in the garden) is his personal invitation. It is his *Lex Hortorum.* This is further emphasized by the painter's gesture, pointing with his right hand towards the formal garden and towards the fountain to which the promenaders and ultimately, we, are directed.

Golden Age

The artist enjoyed his garden also on a private level. His picture which so clearly represents a *locus amoenus,* shows Rubens' experiencing the Golden Age personally.

The underlying principle of the humanistic garden was, as pointed out earlier, the attainment of an ideal place, re-creating a surrounding in which the Golden Age is recalled through aesthetic means, providing the proper setting and stimulation for intellectual pursuits. In the time of Rubens, as pointed out earlier, this "heroic age" was seen to have occurred in ancient Rome. But Pliny, too, looked back to a Golden Age[86] thus pushing the ideal era even further back in time.[87] Such a place has been described as "blessed with nature's bounty" which Homer set forth in the description of Alcinous' garden.[88] Later writers associated the Golden Age with moral values, which is open to all those who deserve it by their just and virtuous lives. Their land is rich, and their families happy. The Golden Age is then an existence as a reward for virtue.[89] Further it is a blessed spot, where old age does not exist.[90]

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[85]In this way Rubens' garden was used like Greek Academies. Socrates met his friends in a garden (*Phaedrus*,230), and Plato taught in a grove. Alexander the Great was taught in a garden by Aristotle. Plutarch, Lives..., Alexander, VII, p.3. Also "the private Roman villa served as schools" as D'Arms noted (p.15). These villas [like that of Rubens] were places for instruction and culture to form the complete man. Miller, p.187.

[86]Pliny, p.173.

[87]Giamatti pointed out that this ideal age is firstly [pseudo] historical, remote in space and time (in mythological terms it is under the age of Cronos). It is a place different from the hardship of real life, thus external. Secondly, the Golden Age is internal, related to a way of life. Giamatti, p.20.

[88]This garden, according to Giamatti (p.35), does not represent the Golden Age proper since it is void of moral implications.

[89][Hesiod] This implies that it can be achieved by men and not only by mythical heroes. It is a desirable way of life. Giamatti, pp.18-20.

[90][Pindar],Ibid, p.21.

This surely accounts for Rubens' selfportrayal in this picture as a younger man.[91] The Golden Age is also characterized as eternal spring, further social harmony, natural fecundity (all concepts reflected in the Walk) and political peace.[92]

In sum it is a *locus amoenus*, a beautiful spot, a place of perfect repose and bodily ease, seen in a garden because that is how man could perceive it tangibly. The moral implications which developed in literary works, associating the Golden Age with virtue, were at the heart of *ut pictura poesis*, and consequently of *ut poesia hortis*.[93]

There was also another meaning to the garden within the context of the Golden Age as symbolizing internal standards. The garden signaled the proper harmony between internal standards and exterior surroundings, or just the opposite. A well kept garden, full of plants and rushing water, reflected the inner state of man.[94] A withered garden, in contrast, in which trees and flowers were let to ruin was not a measure of melancholy, but rather a symbol of the owner's interior disintegration.[95] Thus the garden becomes a 'painting' of one's interior 'landscape,' the state of one's soul.[96] In addition the garden also reflected a man's industry and taste[97] which Rubens, as we have come to know, shows subtly in his picture. His garden proves his worth. An analogy can be seen in the shepherd Astacus, who in competing for the love of a maiden offered her his best: his garden. That is all he could do because the garden was most expressive of himself.[98]

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[91]Rubens is not portrayed as a 52-year-old man.

[92][Ovid], Ibid, p.30. Rubens, in discussing political notions about Europe wrote in Ovidian terms to Pierre Dupuy, in 1627: "For my own part, I should like the whole world to be in peace, that we might live once more in a golden age...." Magurn, No.106.

[93]In the case of the Walk in the Garden, it must have been the other way around. Rubens surely first experienced *ut poesia hortis* while on *villeggiatura* which he then translated into *ut pictura poesis*.

[94][Ovid], Giamatti, p.42.

[95]Ibid, p.42.

[96][Horace], Ibid, p.43-44.

[97][Calpurnius Siculus], Giamatti, p.46.

[98]Ibid, p.46.

Another embodiment of the Golden Age was the presence of the Muse, who in Pindar's words was "never absent."[99] For Rubens the Muse may have been Hélène, his young wife. Of course, this was to some extent the Golden Age internally and very personal, since officially, the Muses' representative in his villa was *Pegasus.*

Disguised Symbolism

This picture, full of allegory, contains what may have been absent from Italian gardens: plant and animal symbolism.[100] In applying disguised symbolism in the Walk, Rubens made use of his Flemish heritage, thus adding another expressive feature to this painting.[101] The picture as such can be paralleled to Venus' bower (Claudian's Epithalamium), which is located in a garden[102] where "Zephyr is husbandman...." and where "the very leaves live for love and in season every happy tree experiences love's power...," and in the garden "... spring fountains ... and in the streams 'tis said that Cupid dips his arrow."[103]

Rubens' trees in the Walk are, indeed, more than decorations. He selected them carefully making them, as in Venus' bower, part of the theme of love. Thus the fig tree, growing in the vicinity of the two sculptures and the pavillion, signifies fertility and fruitfulness[104] which may carry a double meaning both for Venus, Rubens' companion, and the garden.[105] The ivy growing over the entrance to the *giardino semplice* is symbolic of wedded love and fidelity.[106] The crabapple tree to which Rubens points is emblematic of feminine

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[99][Pindar], Ibid, p.21.

[100]MacDougall has pointed out that a Medici document has been discovered in which plants are given allegorical significance. "Imitation," p.132, note 10.

[101]Rubens, in fact, revived this medieval tradition using it especially in his sacred paintings as explored by T. L. Glen, "Rubens and the Counter Reformation. Studies in His Religious Paintings between 1609 and 1620," Ph.D. Diss., Princeton University, 1975, or Garland 1977.

[102]The villa Farnesina was celebrated in a poem as a bower of Venus (a hidden *Epithalamium*, modeled after Claudian) by Egidio Gallo. Coffin, The Villa, p.100.

[103]Claudian, Epithalamium...Augusti, I, trans. M. Platnauer, Loeb Classical Library, New York, 1922, pp.247-248.

[104]S. Olderr, Symbolism a Comprehensive Dictionary, New York, 1986, p.48.

[105]This is even further emphasized with the shell motifs on the pavillion which are emblems of the birth of Venus as well as fertility. J. E. Cirlot, Dictionary of Symbols, London, 1962, p.294.

[106]Ibid, p.72.

beauty.[107] The peachtree blossoms are symbolic of marriage. The mountain ash is a sign of nobility while the elm trees in the back are emblems of longevity[108] which Rubens surely wished for. The sycamore is a symbol of love and the magpie stands for mischief, and subsequently youth.[109] The two peacocks, male and female, are the birds of Hera the goddess of marriage.[110] The old woman likely represents Vertumnus, the god of the changing seasons, who disguised as an old crone won the heart of Pomona the goddess of gardens.[111] This surely parallels Rubens who won the heart of the young Hélène.[112]

Pegasus

The Muses' visual portrayal and representation in villas, as mentioned in chapter two, could take various forms. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the most popular representation was the sleeping nymph. Later designs either included a small mountain representing Parnassus, the home of the Muses,[113] or designated architectural structures as their dwelling place.[114]

Another concept closely related to nymphs and Muses was the winged horse Pegasus who kicked the earth on Mount Helicon while flying to Mount Parnassus creating, for the Muses, the Hippocrene spring.[115] Pegasus became the beloved servant of the Muses.[116] The concept

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[107]Olderr, p.30.

[108]Ibid, p.44.

[109]Ibid, p.134.

[110]Ibid, p.84. Held, "Zwei Rubensprobleme," p.41. Upon his brother's marriage Rubens wrote to Faber in Rome that Philip is favoured by Juno, Venus and the Cupids. Magurn, No.29. Rubens also used peacocks as symbols of Hera (Venus) in his epic cycle of Maria de'Medici (and in other works). Martin, Baroque, (Penguin edition), pp.141-142.

[111]Interestingly, at the entrance to the Borghese gardens a figure of Pomona greeted the visitor and Ceres was represented *al fresco* on the end-wall of the *giardino segreto*. Heilmann, p.115. Vertumnus is an Etruscan or Italic deity who presides over the changing seasons in gardens and orchards. Ovid, Metamorphoses, XIV, 623-771.

[112]Hélène's costume consisting of dress, apron and straw hat (adorned with tulips), may underline this thought.

[113]Like at Pratolino and the villa Medici.

[114]Villas Lante at Bagnaia, and Borghese.

[115]Coffin, Tivoli, p.87. Which is the source of poetry and the other arts.

[116]Andres, p.222.

of Mt. Helicon and Pegasus was always present in gardens, only the visual portrayal of the winged horse seems to have been less popular at the beginning of the century, appearing with much greater frequency in later gardens. Pegasus was usually set into a fountain to underline the connection with the Hippocrene spring, although there were exceptions. Both Parnassus and Helicon were related and became interchangable as places from which inspiration and learning emanated. This notion was expressed early on in a poem by Blosius Palladius who celebrated his 'choice gardens' with his poetry. In one of the poems (1524), dedicated to Goritz's garden and the nymph fountain, the poet wrote that in this particular place learned men engage, aided in their humanistic endeavours by the Muses who descend from Mt. Helicon (implying Pegasus) and Mt. Parnassus.[117]

Notably, at about the same time, Polidoro da Caravaggio painted in the del Bufalo garden *al fresco* pictures of the Perseus legend and a Parnassus with Pegasus and the Muses.[118] In these paintings Rubens may have found a stimulation for his large work of *Perseus and Pegasus*,[119] the picture, that he arranged on the exterior wall above the official entrance to his villa.[120]

Other Italian villas with their placement of Pegasus at the entrance may have further inspired Rubens' painting and ultimately its location. Ferdinando de'Medici originally planned a fountain of Pegasus in his garden which was to have been placed on a lower garden area beneath the casino. Several ramps were to provide direct access to the villa and the Pincian hill from the much lower lying plane of Rome. Thus the spectator in his climb would have first

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[117]Goritz named himself Coryciana hence the name of the title. The following is the excerpt of the poem: "...emporiumque doctrinarium possi videri illo die includere et musas de Helicone et Parnasso deductas...tuis hortis imminentis trasferre...." Blosius Palladius, Coryciana, Rome, 1524, from the introd., cited by MacDougall, "Sleeping Nymph," p.362. More poems concerning Muses and gardens are given in the latter source.

[118]These are of the early painted examples known to us. Polidoro left Rome in 1527 never to return, hence the cycle was painted prior to that date. Oxford Dictionary of Art, Oxford, 1986. The scenes are discussed by R. Kultzen, "Die Malereien Polidoro da Caravaggio in Giardino del Bufalo in Rom," Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Instituts in Florenz, 19, 1959-60, pp.90-120. The garden was adjacent to the one of Colocci near the Trevi fountain. MacDougall, "Imitation," p.119.

[119]That this painting lasted longer than the painted frieze may be due to the fact that Rubens painted it with oil on slate. He had painted on slate before while in Rome when he executed the second altarpiece for the church of Santa Maria in Valicella. Magurn No.17.

[120]There was a second entrance which was most likely a service entry to Rubens' villa. Tijs, p.152.

been confronted with the fountain of Pegasus.[121] A view of the villa with the projected design was painted in the private study of the Medici Cardinal to whom Rubens must have had access through his contact with Montalto (figs.30-31).[122] Similarly, at the villa d'Este in Tivoli one of the upper transverse axes was to start with the Pegasus fountain leading from there along the path of the hundred fountains to the *Rometta*.[123] A Pegasus was also located near the entrance to the *boschetto* at the villa Lante at Bagnaia, set into a basin with a jet of water shooting up from beneath its hoof, thus representing the Hippocrene spring[124] (fig.32-33).

The representations of Pegasus all had similar locations, close to the entrance of the gardens. While Pegasus or the Muses were often set up so as to introduce a narrative,[125] they were always used to designate the garden as a place of inspiration and, moreover, to equate villas with Mt. Helicon or Parnassus. Ruben's placement of the large picture of Pegasus over the principal entrance way to his villa was therefore no accident.[126]

He did not incorporate the painting with a fountain but placed it over the doorway to ensure the presence of the Muses. Here the picture's function was not to introduce a narrative,

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[121]Andres, p.293.

[122]The luxuriant terrace and Pegasus fountain was not carried out at the time. Instead a mount Parnassus was built on the grounds of the villa. Lazarro-Bruno, p.555. Although the projected approach to the villa (situated some eighteen meters above the level of the city) and the Pincian hill was realized with the Spanish Steps in the eighteenth century. Coffin, The Villa, p.226-228.

[123]MacDougall, "L'Ingegnoso," p.104. A description of the visitor Zappi in 1576 to Tivoli considered the hill on which the horse is placed as Parnassus when he wrote: "... posandose a piedi al monte Parnasso ove fermo il piede, nacque una fonte." This indicates that the learned contemporary visitor understood the symbolism of Pegasus. Coffin, Tivoli, p.87. This quote further implies that the two mountains Parnassus and Helicon were equated.

[124]Lazarro-Bruno, p.555.

[125]The one at the villa Lante was to introduce the theme of the Golden Age. Lazarro, p.555. Likewise a sarcophagus with a relief of five Muses was located at the entrance to the Mattei garden to introduce the narrative. MacDougall, "Imitation," p.129.

[126]McGrath in her article on the exterior frieze accepted all scenes as the master's work but attributed, unconvincingly the Pegasus painting to the artistic fancy of the engraver Harrewijn. She writes: "This picture which so awkwardly breaks through the harmonious order of Rubens' architecture, was clearly never part of the artist's decorative plan." McGrath, p.270. I believe that Rubens had this particular spot in mind when he set out to paint the picture.

but rather to make the place equivalent to Mt. Helicon with Pegasus as the representative.[127] The inclusion of the Muses *identified* Rubens' villa with those of learned individuals. In addition they made his garden complete in the humanistic sense, because without their presence, the very essence of the villa would be missing. And since men's quest for learning, the aspiration for higher things, is at the root of the garden so are the Muses who bestow inspiration. Rubens could now side with Pliny who said of his villa that it is: "truly [his] private Helicon."[128]

[127]Thus was poured forth the drink of the Muses for all those who frequented Rubens' garden, a notion most fittingly expressed in an epigram by Nestor of Loranda: "Pour for me, Muses a draught of clear delightful song, the rain of Heliconian melody sweetened by your lips. For all, for whom is shed the drink of the fountain that gives birth to poets delight in the clear song of your verse." Palatine Anthology, trans. W. R. Patton, Loeb Classical Library, New York, 1917, p.199. Quoted by MacDougall, "Ars," p.57.

[128]Pliny of his villa Laurentum, p.43.

Brief Summary

The ideas addressed in the paintings discussed in this thesis may be further recognized in a number of other works of similar subjects. One, would, of course, expect this if, indeed, Rubens meant to include such concepts in his *oeuvre*. In looking at the four pictures it would appear that Rubens' references to his life of *villeggiatura* and his involvement in the *ars hortulorum* are profound. At times allusions are bold while in other instances they are more subtle.

In Odysseus, despite the painting's mythical subject matter, Rubens has incorporated his personal perception of a villa. In fact, he has deliberately deviated from Homer's rhetorical set piece in order to accomplish this. Formal properties including the compositional organization of this picture are expressions of Rubens' profound knowledge of the Italian [and antique] villa and its related design-components which include: the very situation itself on a hill for the *belvedere*, the villa's closeness to the city, the society to which villa owners belonged, the proper relation to the surrounding landscape and the supply of water by means of an *aqueduct*. All of this, like the garden's decorative features, represents adumbrations of actual villas of his time.

Alternatively, in Cimon, Rubens has focused on the importance of the nymph as the symbolic representative of intellectual endeavours in gardens. He has applied the form of the Belvedere 'nymph' sculpture in a unique manner, emphasizing both the value of this ancient work (within the precepts of *ut poesia hortis)* and its weight as a decorative element. Moreover, by using the shape of the marble in a composition based on a narrative devoid of such specifications, he alludes to the Muse as an inspirational force. This also expresses the intellectual concept of *otium* which is the restorative withdrawal experienced in gardens. In addition, Rubens incorporates in this picture of Cimon the putto/dolphin group, an antique work from his own collection in Antwerp. With the inclusion of this sculpture, he has continued a custom in the tradition of notable villa owners who set up their choice pieces in gardens.

In the Garden of Love other design components of gardens -the nymphaeum and *boschetto*- are exemplified as idioms of both prevailing intellectual currents [art vs nature], and stylistic architectural trends [the rusticated mode] propagated at the time through theoretical means and as seen in actual villa structures. The main sculptural decoration of the *Venus Lactans*, included by Rubens in this picture, was a common decorative type in Italian gardens. The other sculptural group of the three Graces is, in addition to the *amorini*, echoed in a

Claudian *Epithalamium*, one of the antique theoretical works consulted by artists of horticultural designs for prevailing themes in gardens.

Rubens' involvement in the *ars hortulorum* is most succinctly recognized in the Walk in the Garden, in which he provides the viewer with a glimpse of his own garden in Antwerp. This painting can be seen as most expressive of his perception of villa-life and the importance he attached to it, personally. This intimate picture has the effect of a photographic snapshot. In it Rubens has brought together major interior design features of gardens [among them the formal parterre with its freestanding fountain, the *boschetto*, as well as citrus trees and other southern vegetation] while also including himself with family members. Two design-elements of the garden, the *giardino semplice* and the tempietto are given prominence in the composition. The elegant structure, in particular, with its distinct antique architectural vocabulary including the 'Serlian façade', [used in several Roman villas], can be seen as representative of antique architecture [and subsequently its ruins] both in *Gestalt* and spirit. But since the picture also functions as a family portrait at least in part, theoretical connotations can be attached to the Walk in relation to the most frequent recurring theme in notable gardens at the time, the Golden Age. This theme is enhanced with the use of plant, flower and animal symbolism, with which Rubens pays homage to his own northern tradition, thus completing the picture's poetic perception as a *locus amoenus*.

With the help of two engravings, this garden may be understood in yet another fashion. Rubens' studio was adorned with an exterior painted frieze in which three scenes faced the garden. These pictures further allude to a unique design-property, the hippodrome, a concept taken directly from Pliny's description of his villa and adapted later in some Italian gardens. One other picture on the exterior wall situated over the entrance to Rubens' 'villa' was of the winged horse Pegasus. This image, in painted form or sculpture, functioned in Italian villas (in addition to nymphs) as a representative of the Muses. In Rubens' vision the Pegasus picture may here be understood in the same way in analogy to those gardens.

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Fig.1 GARDEN OF CARDINAL CESI/ROME

Fig.2 GARDEN OF CARDINAL DELLA VALLE/
ROME

Fig.3 ODYSSEUS ON THE ISLANDS OF THE PHAECIANS

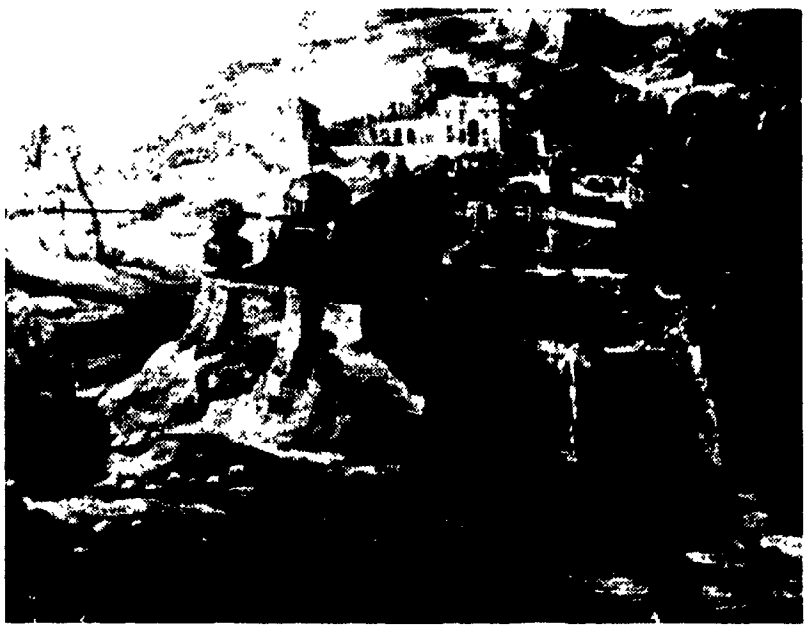


Fig.4 ODYSSEUS/DETAIL

Fig.5 ODYSSEUS/DETAIL

Fig.6 WALK IN THE GARDEN

Fig.7 CIMON FALLING IN LOVE WITH EFIGENIA

Fig.8 NYMPH SCULPTURE FORMERLY IN THE CLEOPATRA FOUNTAIN

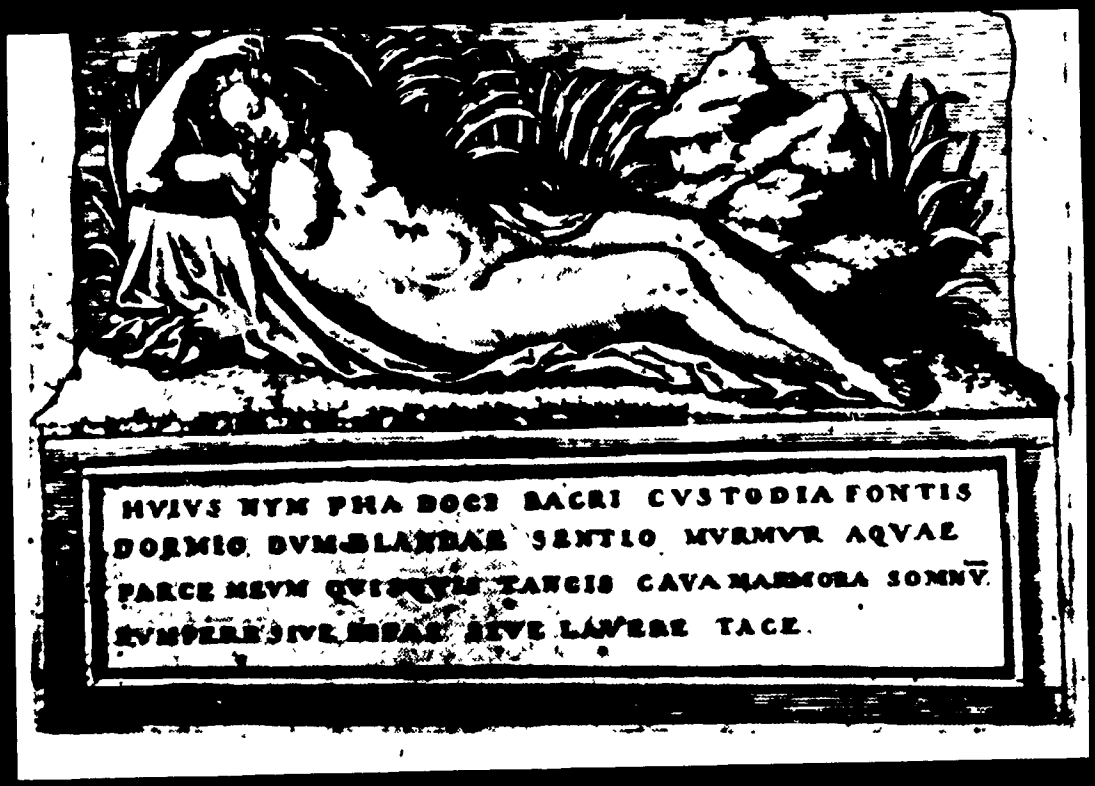


Fig.10 NYMPH IN COLOCCI'S GARDEN

Fig.9 DRAWING OF CLEOPATRA FOUNTAIN IN BELVEDERE GARDEN

Fig.11 GARDEN OF LOVE

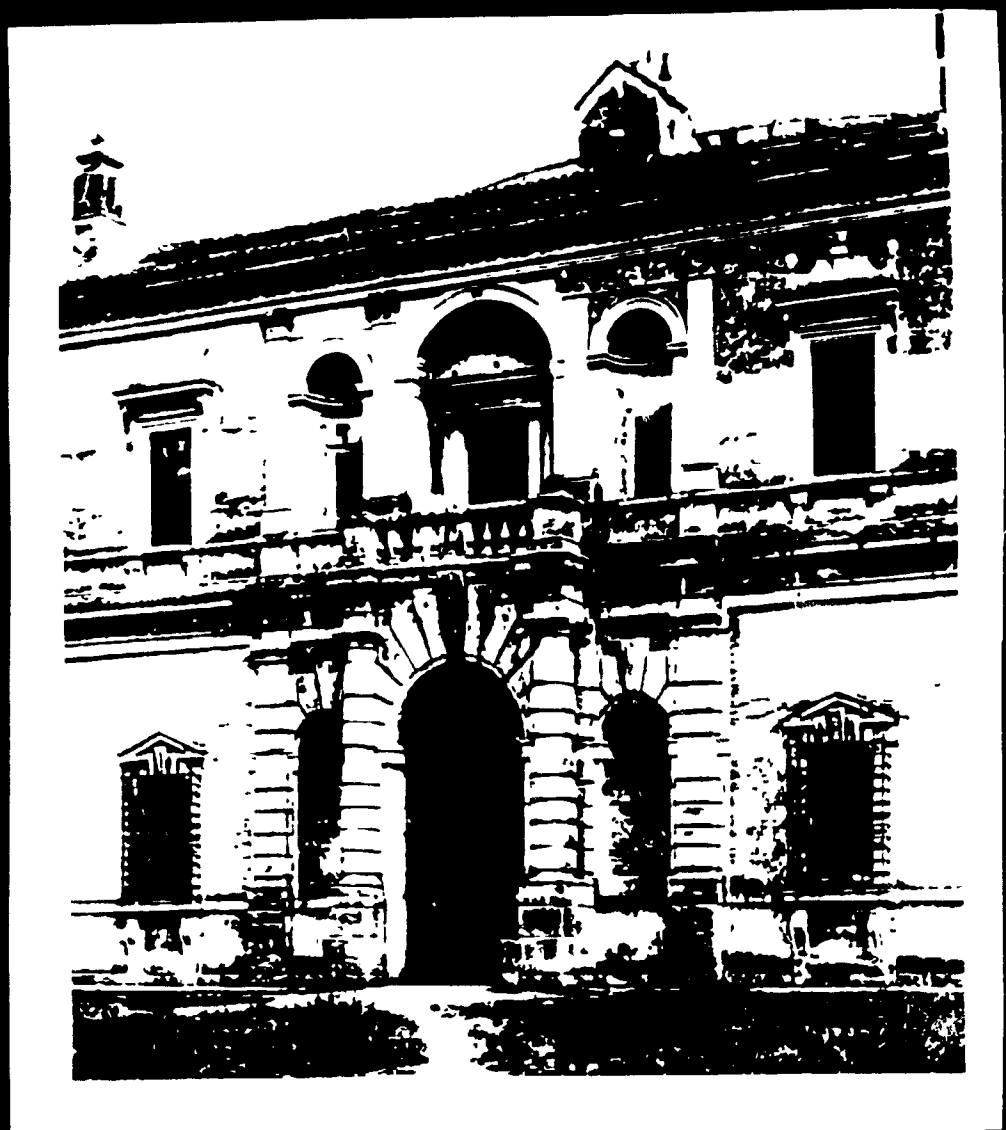


Fig.12

ENTRANCE PORTAL TO VILLA GIULIA

Fig.13 GROTTE DES PINS

Fig.14 GARDEN OF LOVE/DRAWING

Fig.16
ROOM OF PSYCHE

Fig.17
ROOM OF PSYCHE
-DETAIL-

Fig.15

GARDEN OF LOVE/DETAIL

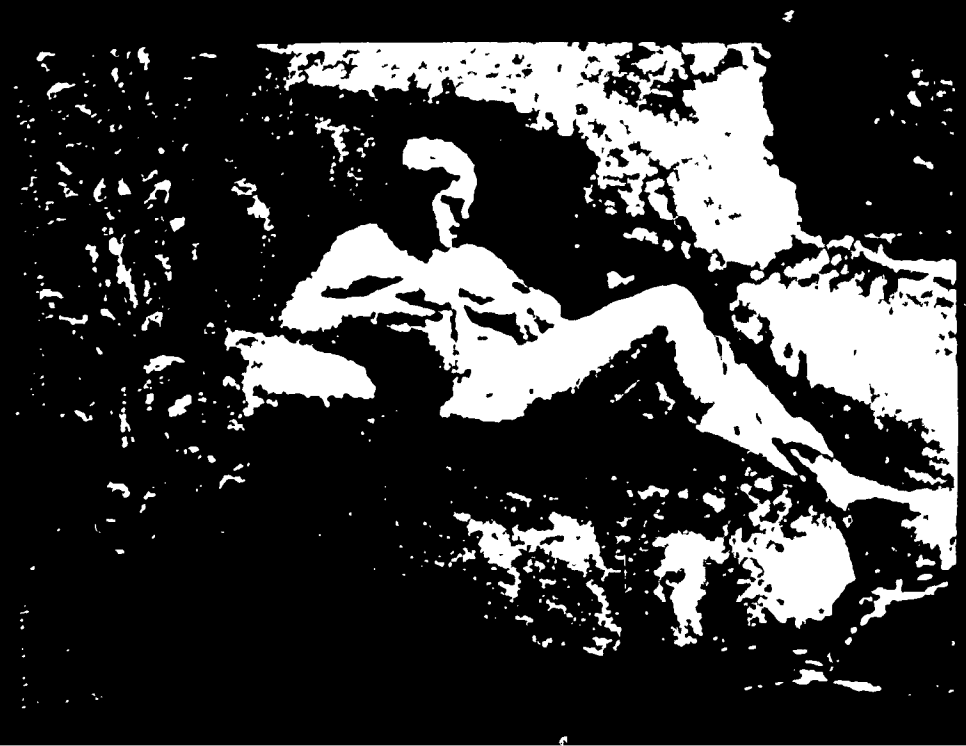
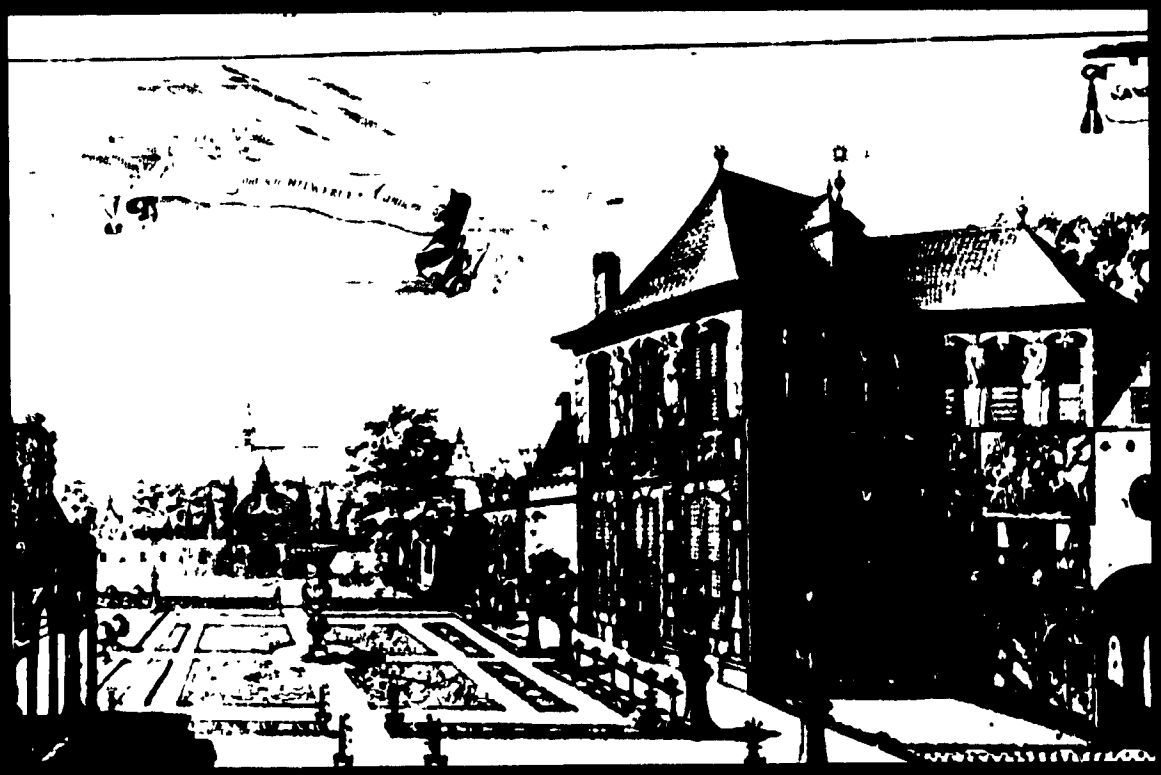


Fig.18
AMMANNATI'S
FOUNTAIN

Fig.19
WALK IN THE
GARDEN /
DETAIL

Fig.20 RUBENS' HOUSE/COURT

Fig.21 RUBENS' HOUSE/GARDEN



22 WALK IN THE GARDEN/DETAIL

23 VILLA MEDICI/ LOGGIA

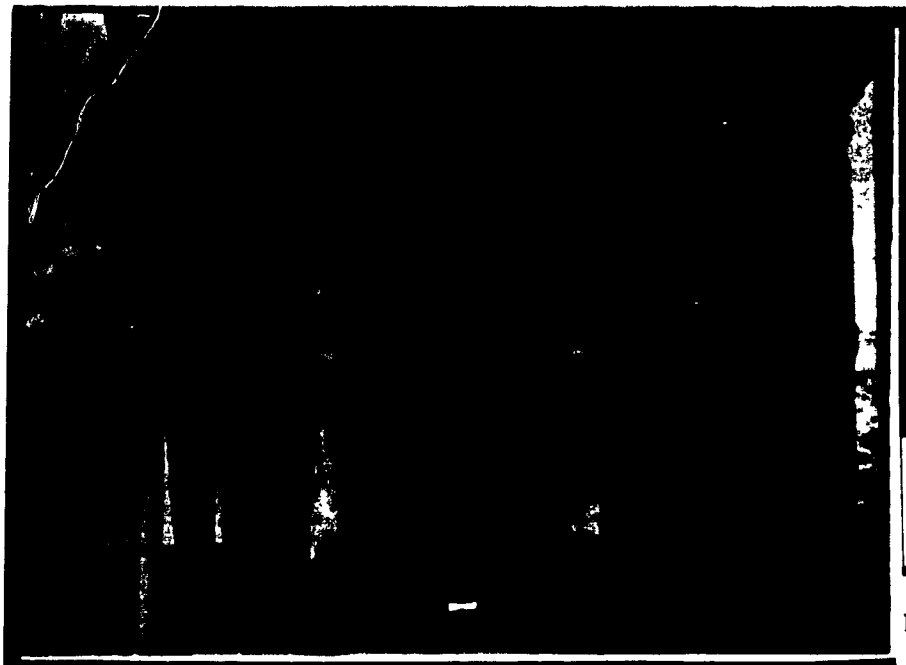


Fig.24 MANSIONES MUSARUM/VILLA LANTE BAGNAIA

Figs. 25-26 RUBENS' HOUSE COURT/ DETAILS

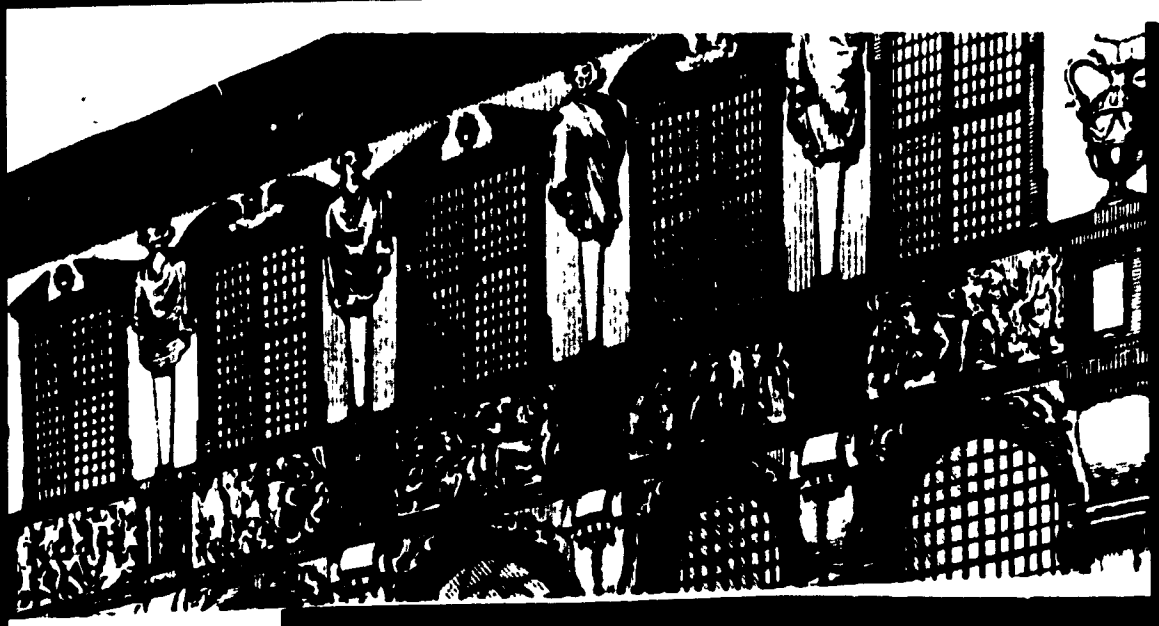


Fig.27 RUBENS'HOUSE/GARDEN WALL/ DETAIL

Fig.28 CHARIOT RACE/ ELECTORUM LIBRI

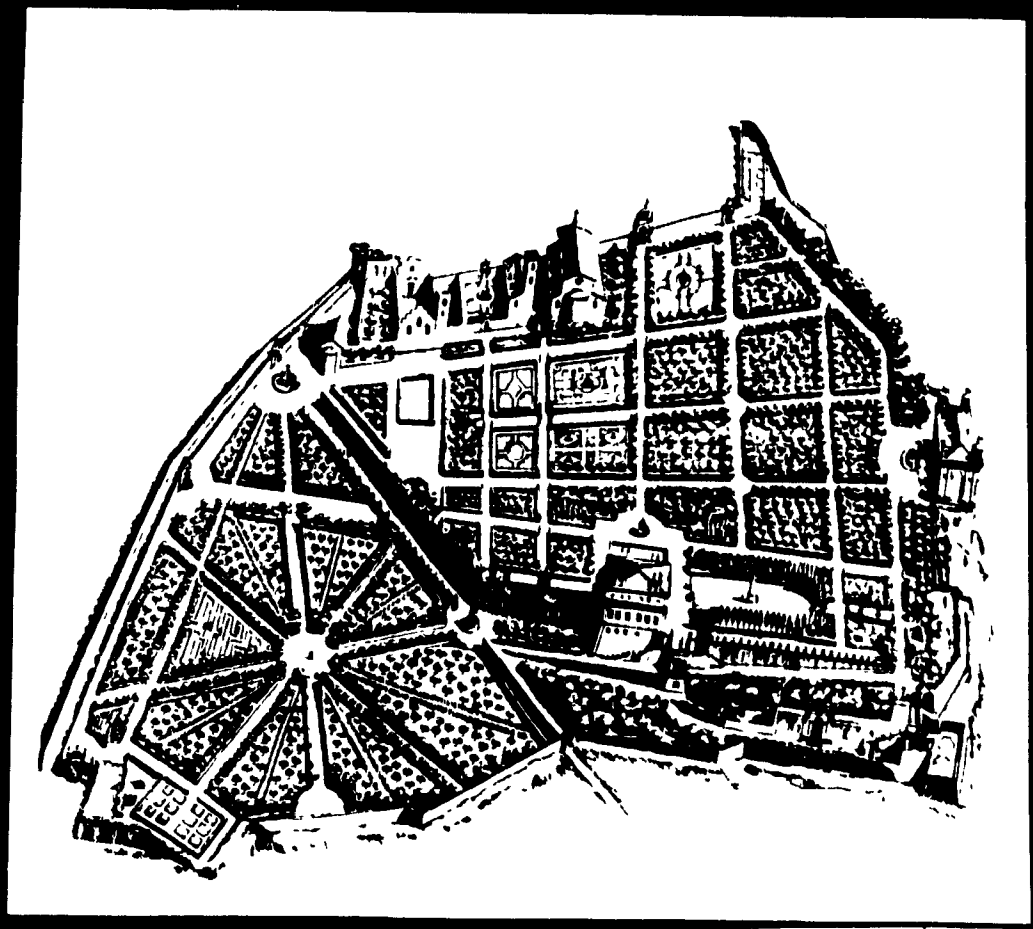


Fig.29 VILLA MATTEI/ROME

Figs. 30-31

VILLA MEDICI/ROME

Figs. 32-33
VILLA LANTE/
BAGNAIA

Fontana del Pegaso