THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF TRANSFORMING
THE LANDSCAPE AT THE VILLA BORGHESE, 1606–30:
TERRITORY, TREES, AND AGRICULTURE IN THE DESIGN OF
THE FIRST ROMAN BAROQUE PARK

In the course of the decade around 1600 the landscapes of Roman villa gardens changed from what Romans and their foreign visitors called gardens (giardini, vigne, or ville) to what they termed parks (parchi). These new Roman parks were ten to fifteen times the size of the earlier giardini, of which the Villa Medici was typical. To contemporary visitors like Alessandro Tassoni, a poet and playwright, or John Evelyn, a famed antiquarian and garden connoisseur, the villa walls several miles in length — witness to their huge size and topographical scale of landscaping — were one of their most remarkable features. With the construction of the Villa Borghese from 1606 to the early 1630’s on the Pincian Hill outside its city gate, inhabitants and visitors alike could add the term parche and barche (hunting parks) to their expanding vocabulary about villas (figs 1–2). The Villa Borghese was soon followed by other large parche, among them the villas Ludovisi (1621–23) and Pamphilj (1645–70) (fig 3).

THE INNOVATIONS OF THE VILLA BORGHESE

As a villa with the configuration of a park more than of a garden, the Villa Borghese was a major new landmark in the development of the various types of Roman villas. Since the 1550’s Rome’s villas had set standards for landscape architecture in Europe, with the villas Giulia and Medici in Rome, D’Este at Tivoli, Lante at Bagnoia, to cite a few. However, in the later sixteenth-century prominence shifted to the gardens of the Italian ducal and princely courts in Florence, Ferrara, and Turin, to Spanish royal gardens at Madrid and Aranjuez, and to French royal gardens such as Chenoneaux, Fontainebleau, and, by the late 1590’s, Saint-Germain-en-Laye near Paris.

Roman patrons of villas, such as the Marchese Vincenzo Giustiniani, and the cardinals Pietro Aldobrandini, Scipione Borghese, Ludovico Ludovisi, and Camillo Pamphilj, understood that the European competition in courtly gardens was a serious matter, and the new Roman Baroque parks constituted their response in kind. They or their relatives had been on legations and tours to Paris and Madrid, and by 1600 many of them had seen for themselves that royal parks on a grand scale were becoming the special courtly loci in which kings and queens displayed their magnificence, surrounded by courtiers who promenaded, conducted diplomacy, discussed business and intrigues, and formed the court by their sumptuous presence. These Roman aristocrats also noted that such French and Spanish royal parks, although very large, were built close to, if not inside, royal capital cities, so that the monarchs and their courtiers could have easy and frequent access to them. Facts such as these must have been on Cardinal Scipione Borghese’s mind, when, as the newly appointed powerful cardinal-nephew of Pope Paul V (r. 1605–21), hence second-in-command at the Roman court, he set out in 1506 to provide himself and his papal family with a new villa garden. From 1606 to his death in 1633, Cardinal Borghese led his landscape architects in executing an innovative design for his Villa Borghese, which he ordered to be laid out as a park overall rather than simply as a grander version of the traditional Roman giardini.

For the design of the park and palace of the Villa Borghese, Cardinal Scipione Borghese availed himself, in addition to his own ideas, of plans by the architect Flaminio Ponzio. Their design consisted of two major parts: the giardini, which surrounded a palace and which were formally ordered gardens constructed on leveled ground; and the barco, adjacent to these gardens, which was a hunting park laid out on mostly unaltered terrain. Visitors were always struck by a broad contrast in the design of the two parts: level formal gardens of small fruit trees and dark green hedges were juxtaposed with rambling hunting parkland covered with grasses, pale green in spring and winter, burnt yellow in summer and
fall, and open to the sky. While the level gardens offered easy promenades, the terrain of the *barco* provided small topographical dramas with occasional steep declivities and heights for vigorous uphill and downhill walks.

These major juxtapositions had structured the design from the start and would always remain in place. In the mid-1620’s, however, Cardinal Borghese called for a radical revision of the design that had been laid out from 1606 to 1623–24 (fig. 4). From 1624 to about 1630, he had his landscape architects and planters increase the contrast between the two different parts of the Villa Borghese by heightening their respective characters as *giardini* and *barco* at the same time he unified the two parts, contradictorily though this may sound (fig. 1). The *giardini* became tree gardens, while the *barco* was greatly enlarged and given the character of an enclosed portion of the Roman Campagna, composed of agrarian landscapes and pasturelands, which were surrounded also by rows, avenues, or groves of tall trees. Inspired and influenced by princely models, by both the Italian ducale parks with their tall trees, such as Boboli (1550’s) and Pratolino (1569–86) of the Medici (fig. 5), and by the French royal tree gardens, as at Fontainebleau and at the Luxembourg and Tuileries palaces in Paris (fig 6), Cardinal Borghese decided to emphasize the park-like character of the Villa Borghese overall. For him, this meant unifying both parts, *giardini* and *barco*, by planting them with tall trees, such as umbrella pines (*pinus pinea*), firs, and holm oaks, which formed a *leitmotif* throughout the park. Meanwhile, more than half of the *barco* was reserved as open landscape, emulating the agrarian ground of the Campagna.

By John Evelyn’s day, the new tree gardens had had twenty years to mature. Cardinal Borghese’s park, the Villa Borghese, was now competitive with the best royal parks of Europe. Evelyn had no trouble recognizing its currency as a great European park. In April of 1645, he wrote of it in his diary: “After dinner we went again to see the Villa Borghesi, about a mile without the Cittie; the garden is rather a park or paradise, contriv’d and planted with walks and shades of myrtles, cypress and other trees and groves, with abundance of fountains, statues, and bass-relieves . . . and in another enclosed part, an herd of deere . . . I often visited this delicious place.” The Villa Borghese, and its successors, the villas Ludovisi and Pamphilj in Rome, continued to speak the language of the park, understandable by mid-century to courtiers and aristocratic tourists from all over Europe. The Englishman Francis Mortoft, visiting Rome in March 1659, described the Villa Borghese thus “Wee first entered into the Garden which is very spacious and large . . . Soe walking along the garden, wee went into the Park adjoyning to it, wherein the Prince [then, Giovanni Battista Borghese] often hunts, and for that purpose keepes many Deare and other game there for his pleasure.” About ten years later, Balthasar Granger de Liverdis, a noble French traveler in Rome in 1667, found the Villa Borghese outstanding “for its great extension, its water, and the diversity of its beautiful avenues, by which it is divided,” and, “In one word, it lacks nothing of all the things that one could define to render it one of the nicest Parks of Rome.”

The innovations of the Villa Borghese, as the first *parco* in Rome as opposed to *giardini*, were several. To begin with, there was its urban location. Parks with tree-gardens, similar to those of the Medici at Pratolino, had been built in the Roman territory before, but they lay far from the city in the hilltowns of Latium, for example the ones at the Sacro Bosco of Bomarzo (ca. 1550–70’s), the Farnese palace at Caprarola (ca. 1555–85), the Villa Lante at Bagnaia (1568–78), the Villa Colonna at Marino (1580’s), the Villa Aldobrandini at Frascati (1598–1605), the Villa Giustiniani at Bassano di Sutri (1595–1606; revised 1606–38), belonging to Marchese Vincenzo Giustiniani. Cardinal Borghese’s innovation was to have an immense park just outside the city gates of Rome.

The Villa Borghese was also the first villa at Rome since antiquity to include a hunting park in a location close to the center of Rome, and one that had to be artificially landscaped at that, as there remained no forests anywhere near Rome (for at least twenty miles out, excepting the sacred ancient woods at the Caffarella farm on the Via Appia) to enclose for such a purpose. Although a few areas within the city walls of Rome had been used for hunting in the medieval and early Renaissance periods, such as the walled Vatican gardens, no estate designed for that purpose had existed either within or without the walls since antiquity. The hunting park at the Villa Borghese was begun in 1609, hence included right from the start in the design, and when purchases for its terrain had been fully completed in 1621, it occupied half, if not two-thirds, of the entire estate. After the revisions to the whole villa in the mid-1620’s, the hunting park would be called simply *parco* as well as *barco*, acknowledging that it was for more than just hunting.

A third innovation of the Villa Borghese was its artificial transposition of landscape types. Its rural landscape contained a lake and was partly planted with huge groves of holm oaks (*leccini*), pines, and mulberry trees, and
partly left as open meadowland for grazing deer and occasionally some sheep and cows. Vernacular and rural aspects had always been a part of Roman architecture, culture, and social life, because of the close economic ties between city and countryside. A vast amount of vineyards and pasturelands had flourished within the city walls since the medieval period as well. During the seventeenth century Claude Lorrain and his fellow artists recorded for posterity the scenes of cattle and pigs being driven through the market of the Campo Vaccino in the Roman Forum, just below the stately Farnese gardens on the Palatine. However, the artificial re-creation of *rus in urbe* in the Villa Borghese represented a typological novelty: an artificially re-created rural landscape, which imitated aspects of genuine rural landscapes situated in another zone of territory. The rural landscapes re-created *ex-novo* in the hunting park of the Villa Borghese were modeled on the grassy meadows of the huge farms in the Roman Campagna, such as the Borghese farm called Castel Campanile (fig. 7); in concept, they originated in territorial zones other than the one of traditional vineyards and *giardini*, out of which the villa had been assembled. Thus, they and their components were transposed landscapes that carried with them, in the process of transposition, a recognized territorial meaning.

What led to the choice of landscapes from the Roman Campagna and the fiefs as the conceptual models for the first hunting park laid out in a post-antique Roman villa? What were the meanings of the transposition that replaced vineyards with campagna-like landscapes? As we shall see, these meanings were social ones, and they reflected a dramatic social transformation that was taking place in the upper tiers of the Roman landowning aristocracy just in the decades around 1600, when the Villa Borghese was created. To appreciate these social meanings, which were essentially local, we must look at the Villa Borghese against the Roman tradition of garden design just prior to it, as opposed to the more broadly Italian or the European developments that we have evoked thus far.

In formal as well as philosophical and conceptual terms, the gardens and park of the Villa Borghese drew upon modes of expression that had long been used in Renaissance gardens and culture. Such modes paired or juxtaposed complementary or opposing categories like art and nature, and city and country, and they attempted to represent the multiplicity of things in the world and the various dimensions of human culture in microcosm, as was done in the contemporary cabinets of curiosities. The most striking pairing of complementsaries and oppo-
sites at the Villa Borghese was the juxtaposition of its formal gardens and its hunting park, for which different vocabularies of design were employed, in order to contrast more vividly such experiences as evocations of city and countryside.

In the particular configurations that it gave to this pairing, the Villa Borghese represents a turning point in the tradition of Roman villa garden design. On the one hand, it continued a duality of parts which had been in use since the 1540’s at least, namely the juxtaposition of a formally organized garden (*giardino*) with an informal, agriculturally planted terrain, often called a *vigna* or *the vigna* of that particular villa. Examples before the Villa Borghese include the Vigna Cesi built between the 1530’s and 1550’s, the Vigna Carpi of the mid-1540’s, the Villa Giulia (1550–55), and the Villa Montalto (1576–90). On the other hand, at his villa Cardinal Borghese introduced a new design vocabulary to this duality, by replacing each of the two traditional components with a new or altered one.

The Cardinal replaced the *giardino* component, which to that point in Rome had consisted of a grid of planted beds surrounded by hedges of waist height, with two large separate tree gardens, the *boschetti* and *boschi* of pines, firs, laurels, and holm oaks. Such large and tall trees had been found traditionally in the *bosco* (forest), or groves, or wooded areas, of Roman and Tuscan villa gardens, such as the Medici villas in Rome and at Castello and Pratolino near Florence (fig. 5), and in the *baroni* of the gardens in the fief towns. The fir trees, in particular, brought associations of mountainous and feudal landscapes with them from their homeland in the mountains around Rome or in Tuscany.

As for the traditional *vigna* component of the Roman garden, Cardinal Borghese and his designers reformulated it in terms of the hunting park and the Roman Campagna. Merged together, these formed a striking kind of *rus in urbe* (to borrow the poet Martial’s phrase for Nero’s Golden House in ancient Rome) that had particular meaning for the new papal aristocracy, which the Borghese family had recently joined. Enclosed hunting parks were associated with the feudal castles of the old baronial nobility like the Colonna and Orsini, whom the new papal families such as the Montalto-Pereiti, Aldobrandini, Ludovisi, Borghese, and Pamphilj, were relentlessly replacing at the top of the Roman social hierarchy, particularly after 1570. The Roman Campagna, composed of some five hundred farming estates, was literally being bought up in the same period by the new papal families, who invested in land their new wealth gained.
through papal election — in farms for their rich economic yield and in fiefs for the social power and titled rank attached to owning them. It is thus small wonder that the new papal aristocracy invented for itself a new form of villa garden, in which the traditional components of an established duality were replaced with new ones that had particularly rich and current social meanings. Our purpose here is to look at exactly how Cardinal Borghese and his designers went about translating this *invenzione* into the forms of landscape architecture.

Before studying the landscapes of the Villa Borghese, however, some clarification is needed about the social basis of Cardinal Borghese’s formulation of a new type of Roman villa. The major characteristics of the Villa Borghese, as a park composed of diverse tree gardens including rural landscapes, were shared in various ways by a group of villa gardens built in Rome between 1550 and 1650. Together they form the new type that I call the estate villa, because structurally it is configured like an estate: a landholding with main palace, subsidiary buildings and dependencies, formal gardens, parklands, and farmland. The group includes the Villa Montalto (built 1576–90; redesigned around 1618); the Villa Borghese (1606–33; replanted 1624–25); the Villa Ludovisi (1621–23); and the Villa Pamphilj (1645–70), all constructed close to or within the city walls (figs. 1–3). As a large estate, the Villa Giulia (1550–55) appears to be a significant prototype of this group, although we do not know at present just how it was planted, and there is no evidence in the documents of a hunting park. In terms of their social basis, it is significant that each of the estate villas was commissioned by the reigning pope or (as in most cases) by his principal cardinal-nephew, and each was conceived as a papal villa on a very grand scale.

The emergence of the new type of estate villa around 1570 can, I believe, be placed in direct relation to a period of strong mobility in the upper tiers of Roman society. This mobility was generated by families one of whose members was elected pope. Beginning around the mid-sixteenth century these families began to form a particular group within the Roman titled aristocracy. Cardinal Borghese’s family was among them. Since the late sixteenth century, almost every family to rise by means of the papacy had been non-Roman and a newcomer to Roman society: for example, the Peretti-Montalto were from the Marches; Aldobrandini, the Borghese, and the Barberini were all Tuscans; and the Ludovisi were Bolognese.

The wealth acquired from the papacy through nepotism permitted these new papal families to make huge investments in land, primarily in farms (called *casali*) in the Roman Campagna and in fiefs in the surrounding hilltowns. Landowning on a large scale attracted them as an economic investment, more stable than trade, but it also awarded the ideological value of lordship, which was attached to the lands by association with the feudal aristocracy. The Borghese family, for example, invested the enormous sum of about two million scudi in land during the first three decades of the seventeenth century; the investment was made possible by the pontificate of Paul V (1605–21). By the date of the tax map called the Catasto Alessandrino made in 1660–61, the Borghese family owned roughly one twentieth of the Roman Campagna and was (and would remain until the 1850’s) the largest private landowner in Rome.

The political and social power gained with each pontificate allowed the new papal families to take over the properties, and the attached aristocratic and hereditary rank, of the old baronial families. The new papal families thus retained for their descendants the prominence that one family member, as pope, had achieved through non-hereditary office. Their fortunes, lands, and titles became dynastic ones.

During the period of the Borghese family’s social rise in Rome, between about 1550 and 1600, a significant shift of lands, accompanied by a shift in aristocratic rank and titles, took place. The titled lands moved from the old baronial nobility burdened by debts to the emerging papal aristocracy, recently enriched from new financial uses of the traditional institution of papal nepotism for the social advancement of their families. Observers of Roman seventeenth-century society, such as the Flemish lawyer Teodoro Ameyden, who around 1640 began writing an “Account of all the Nobilities of Old, and Modern Families of Rome,” noted the losses of the baronial aristocracy and the gains of the newcomers. Ameyden recognized that the oldest and titled families stood socially at the top of Rome’s social hierarchy and that they were being methodically replaced by the new papal families, called “families given status by the papacy” (famiglie da papa).

I propose to demonstrate that the dramatic and rapid transfer of lands and attached aristocratic titles that occurred in Rome between about 1570 and 1670 was related to the creation of these new estate-villas such as the Villas Borghese and Pamphilj and to show how this relationship can be read in their forms. Without going so far as to claim that the agrarian landscapes of the Roman estate villas were miniaturized representations of the huge landholdings — particularly the *casali* — of the
new papal patriciate, it is likely that the artifice of re-creating familiar aspects of the Roman Campagna landscapes stressed the economic and symbolic bases of this new social group's power in Rome. Power and wealth had been handed to them by papal election, and in turn they grounded their families' dynastic roots in Rome through landowning and symbolic representations of the lifestyle of the highest-ranking propertied class. This hypothesis of the relationship between the new papal patriciate and its forms of symbolic social representation through villa design can be strengthened by noting that none of the older baronial families in Rome — for example, the Colonna, Caetani or Orsini — redesigned their earlier villa gardens during this period in the new style of estate villa. Nor did they create new estate villas. It appears that in this regard they kept socially distinct from the new papal patriciate.

THE DESIGN AND REDESIGN OF THE VILLA BORGHESE

The Villa Borghese was built by Cardinal Borghese and his family on land put together through the purchase of some fifteen adjacent vineyards, ranging in size from a few to thirty acres. The cardinal began planning his villa soon after the election of his uncle as Pope Paul V in 1605. The nucleus was a vineyard bought around 1550 by the pope's father on the Pincian hill, on a spot named Muro Torto after the nearby ancient city walls at Porta del Popolo. The other vineyards were acquired between 1606 and 1621, when, having reached the surrounding major roads, it assumed its final shape. It was then completely enclosed by walls.

The rich source materials on the construction of the Villa Borghese in the first half of the seventeenth century include two watercolored plans of the estate, discovered by Christoph Heilmann in the Borghese archives some twenty years ago (figs. 8, 9), a guidebook to the Villa Borghese published in 1650 by its guardian, Jacopo Manili; and Giovanni Battista Falda's bird's-eye view, made around 1675 for his platebook, Li Giardini di Roma (fig. 1). Falda's view shows the completed villa, which had not changed in superficies since 1621 and would retain its landscape design until it was redone in the English style in the 1770's. We will refer to all of these sources throughout the following discussion.

The earlier of the two watercolored plans, dated to about 1618–20 by Heilmann (fig. 8), records the construction of Villa Borghese to that time. On the left half is the layout of the formal gardens, for which earthworks had been begun in 1608–9, and the plan of the new palace, or casina, built in 1612–13 at the center of these gardens. On the right is the irregularly shaped baro, labeled "Barco" above its long straight avenue. The baro was set up on land bought in 1609 and 1615. On this plan, it is shown surrounded by plots belonging to different owners. These plots include vineyards not yet owned by Cardinal Borghese, for example, the large Pescini vigna below (to the north of) the baro and the Capranica vigna to its right, as well as several owned by the Borghese family since 1606 but rented out until 1615. The latter are labeled by the renters' names, "[Monsignor] Cennino" and "[Monsignor] Costaghuto" (fig. 10). The plan thus also constitutes a record of the territorial strategy of the Borghese for the villa. Cardinal Borghese would not have to wait long to achieve the final shape of the villa in the landscape, as from March to June of 1620 the owners of the outlying vineyards, such as the Pescini and Capranica, would rapidly, though reluctantly, cede their plots.

The two halves of the plan of 1618–20 graphically represent the division between an architectural concept of the garden, on the palace side of the wall, and a perception of the baro as a natural agrarian landscape, essentially unaltered, on the other (fig. 8). To express the distinction, two different methods of representation were chosen for the construction of the plan: an orthogonal projection for the geometric layout of palace and gardens and a bird's-eye view, with indications of topography and anecdotal perspectives of individual rustic houses, for the baro and the adjacent undesigned plots.

On both halves of the plan, the hands of Cardinal Borghese's designers can be tracked through their graphite pencil marks, which suggest variations to spaces in the formal gardens and indicate the possible superimposition of avenues and their crossings, known as piazze (piazzas) or theaters (teatri), on the surveyed landscapes of the as yet unaltered vineyards (fig. 10). On the baro side, the appreciation of the landscape and the possibilities of embellishing it are noted with comments such as un piano bello (a lovely plateau), antichaglie (Roman ruins), or valle (valley).

Most important for our discussion, this plan shows the state of the baro by 1618–20 and the surrounding units of land, as yet unaltered, which would compose the baro after 1621, as well as their significant topographical and constructed features (figs. 8, 10). These include avenues and paths connecting the vineyards to each other and to the main roads, a large double staircase leading down from a bluff to a square pond with four ducks; water
drainage from the formal giardino area through a channel with four equidistantly spaced basins; rustic houses, several with loggias or small, compartmented gardens; and the long avenue flanked by holm oaks, described by Manilli in 1650. By the time of the plan of 1660–61 and Falda’s view, the ponds and channel would become a long rectangular lake, and large tree plantations would surround the several vineyard houses. For example, the casino of Vigna Severoli (bought in 1606), labeled “Costaguto” on the earlier plan (fig. 10), was expanded to become the “Casa del Gallinaro nella quale si conservano struzzi e Pauoni” (no. 19 on Falda’s view, fig. 1): once enlarged, it consisted of several buildings, some with ground floor loggias, around a courtyard, and it can be identified with the structure in the lovely drawing, attributed to Israël Silvestre, signed with his name and entitled “nella Villa Borghese,” now in the Cabinet des Étampes at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (fig. 11). The drawing, which may date from the eighteenth century, shows the pines and cypress that appear in Falda’s bird’s-eye view, as well as the uneven terrain that characterized the barco throughout its history.

Describing the Villa Borghese in 1650, Jacopo Manilli says that it was composed of three distinct enclosures, each of them separated by a wall from the others, and each containing “many smaller enclosures” (molti incinti minori) that gave great beauty to this estate, which measured four miles around its perimeter. Two enclosures extended axially out on either side of the palace, and they are referred to as the “first enclosure” and the “second enclosure” by Manilli, who also uses the generic term, garden (giardino), for each one, to differentiate them from the “third enclosure,” the hunting park. Of the nine entrances along the perimeter of the estate, the two principal ones were on the Via Pinciana and led the visitor into the first enclosure (fig. 1). After circulating along the grid of avenues and cross-avenues, the visitor could pass to the second enclosure through the palace itself or by side gates in the barrier-like complex extending from the narrow flanks of the palace, namely the two more private gardens called giardini segreti, twin aviaries, and a henhouse for exotic fowl. The first two enclosures and the palace were designed and their structures fully decorated in the period 1608–9 to 1621, when the last wallhangings and paintings were put in place.

Heilmann’s reconstruction of the layout and plantings stops with the year 1621–22, when he considered the villa quite complete in its design. However, my review of the documents reveals that a major recasting of at least the first enclosure, if not also the second, took place starting in 1624–25. This revision coincided with a huge planting campaign in the newly acquired and unified vineyards that now constituted the complete territory of the barco. After completing his land acquisitions to enlarge the barco, Cardinal Borghese decided to unify the vineyards and join them to the original barco by a new overall design, which primarily involved large groves of trees. This rethinking of the design of the villa included changing the character of the formal gardens as well. Thus, from the mid-1620’s on, the Villa Borghese underwent a major revision in terms of plantings and thus also in its spatial arrangement. Manilli recorded this newly achieved character in his guidebook of 1650, when the trees had been maturing for some twenty-five years.

In Manilli’s time, the first enclosure was densely planted; it had twenty-three compartments of evergreen trees, grouped in formations of increasing height and foliage crown: the royal laurel trees of the four compartments closest to the pilastro were smallest and most densely planted; then came some thousand fir trees (abete), taller than the laurels, and, beyond them, some four hundred umbrella pines, the majestic pinus pinea, tallest of all (figs. 1, 2, 9). The same concept of a large walled garden, ordered and filled with regular tall-tree plantations, governed the second enclosure, which contained sixteen compartments with a total of six hundred holm oaks, bordered by an L-shaped band of compartments of smaller laurel trees.

These two grand tree gardens of clear and large homogeneous units replaced a much more varied group of compartments that had been planted from about 1610 to 1614 (fig. 4). For example, in this first state of the Villa Borghese, the compartments of the first enclosure, which can be visualized both on the plan of 1618–20 and in a view of 1623 by Matteo Greuter, were filled with fruit and nut trees — olive, prune, almond, mulberry, and pine — planted in separate compartments according to species (figs. 4 and 8). Greuter’s view shows something similar in the Secondo Recinto. Except for a block each of pines and firs, these earlier gardens were very different from the tall pine and fir gardens and the stand of 600 holm oaks that replaced them around 1625. In addition, there was much uprooting of trees in the giardino and transplanting of them in the barco, thus shifting part of the former character of the giardino into part of the barco. In sum, around 1625 the two giardino enclosures and a good half of the barco were transformed by replanting and transplanting into a landscape form akin to the Villa Medici at Prato di, where the barco constituted the villa grounds and dense tree plantations filled the entire
enclosure. After the initial intense planting campaign in 1624–25, additional trees were acquired and planted, well into the 1630's. 33 The effect in the first enclosure can still be seen in photographs from the late nineteenth century (fig 12).

**THE BARCO OF THE VILLA BORGHESE**

Like the giardino at the Villa Borghese, the barco was made by clearing the former vineyards of their vines, vegetable gardens, and fruit orchards — including a splendid arboreto and giardino in which Andrea Capranica had invested some 2,000 scudi in 1616–20, a large sum, equivalent at that time to the annual income of a Roman gentleman from the untitled nobility. Little indication is given in the documents about the layout and planting of the first barco before 1618–20, except for some expensive leveling of terrain and for what we see in the contemporary plan (figs. 8 and 10). It was enclosed by a new wall built in 1616–17, presumably to keep the animals in, since in 1615 Cardinal Borghese declared his intention to “create a park for hunting animals in his villa.” 34 In the same years, windows with railings — “that look into the hunting park” — were cut into the western wall that separated the first two enclosures from the barco; Manilli would later describe the purpose of these same seven windows as being “for ease in viewing the hunts.” 35 After 1621, the original borders of the newly incorporated vineyards, as well as the wall of 1616–17 separating the first barco from them, were removed to create one unified landscape. Then, as some years later, in 1624–25, came the big campaign to replant all of the Villa Borghese with trees, which for the barco meant receiving several hundreds of the thousand holm oaks (lucani) bought in January 1625. 36 The results of this redesign of the barco from the mid-1620's on are recorded in Manilli’s guidebook, on the watercolored plan of 1660–61, and on Falda’s view, all of which confirm the particular new character given to the barco (figs. 2 and 9).

That character can be reconstructed in some detail by referring to the plan of 1660–61 as a base map. 37 The park, or third enclosure, at the Villa Borghese constituted a different realm from that of the two formal tree gardens of the giardino area, although the same trees — pines and holm oaks — predominated on both sides of the dividing wall, deliberately providing conceptual and visual continuities (figs. 1, 2, 9). 38 This enclosure was divided roughly into two parts, forest-like groves and meadowland. From the beginning, the park had been a game preserve, unlike, say, the barco of the Villa Lante at Bagnaia, which had lost its function as a hunting park and where only carved animals on fountains allegorically evoked a harmonious animal realm. 39 With the considerable expansion of the Villa Borghese’s barco in 1618–21, its function as a natural, ecologically suitable habitat for fish, fowl, and other game was extended across a landscape labeled “Park for Animals” (“Barco d’Animali”) on the plan of 1660–61 and “Park for hares, goats, deer, and stags, with woods of various trees” on Falda’s plan of about 1675. 40 All areas, whether woods or open meadows, where herds of deer and goats grazed, served as habitat for animals: for example, on the north, a “regular woods” (“Boschetto quadro”) just outside the wall with the second enclosure was made of laurels, arbuzus, and junipers which, according to Manilli, “serve both as refuge and as nourishment for the beasts and the birds of this place”; the lake with its islands and four trees, “welcome refuge for the water fowl, who live here”; and lions, ostriches, and peacocks were kept in the former vineyard houses, now remodeled as pavilions, such as the House of the Fowl-Keeper (Casa del Gallinaro) and the Lions Den (Serraglio de leoni). 41

Essentially, the barco took its conceptual references from the farmlands and the grazing landscapes of the Roman Campagna. Formal garden design is not the governing concept, although symmetry and regularity (and the former paths among the vineyards) do structure the great groves of pines, nut trees, and holm oaks along the park’s edges, and it is likely that these boschi made reference to the forested slopes of the fief towns. In this third enclosure, there was a meeting, contrast, and reconciliation between regular formations of trees, which encased the former vineyard houses, and open, mown meadowland around the lake and to the west and north of it. 42

More than half of the land in the barco was given over to open meadows, which are watercolored on the plan of 1660–61 with the same yellow-beige ground, tinged with green and brown strokes, as the pasture landscapes labeled “sodi” — fallow land for grazing, not sown for grain — on the maps made of the Borghese casali in the same volume. This volume of maps made in 1660–63 opens with the plan of the Villa Borghese, which by implication is considered one of these farming properties (fig 9). 43 The barco was designed in such a way that its main entrances led from the first enclosure out into the park along great tree-lined avenues, of which the longest, measuring some 635 meters, was described by Manilli as “placed between the campagna, that bit of countryside which looks to the East, and the valley opposite” (fig 13). 44 Although the Villa Borghese has been
completely altered since the 1770’s, the original effect of this agrarian landscape can be conveyed by analogy, in a photograph of the similar barco area — quite unchanged — at the Villa Pamphilj (fig. 14).

Thus, in this zone of the villa, enclosed by its own wall more than two miles in length, one finds the landscape of the Roman farming estate, the casale, a category of agrarian property that Romans would have recognized as stemming from the second of three rings of land properties that extended out from the center of Rome. Manilli describes this agrarian landscape thus: “This enclosure . . . contains in its spaciousness valleys, hills, plains, woods, houses, and gardens; it serves . . . as a most comfortable shelter to the many animals of diverse species, such as hare, roe deer, fallow deer, stags, peacocks, ducks and other smaller birds, which one sees running and flying freely through its countrysides.” The phrase, “through its countrysides” (per le sue campagne) is important: Manilli reiterates the concept of the countryside in speaking of the park’s topography: “This whole Campagna, starting from the hill [where the longest avenue into the park was sited] and going to the border of the villa on the east, is full of varied trees.”

With this phrase, “through its countrysides,” meaning the agrarian landscapes of the park, Manilli touches at the heart of what makes the Villa Borghese different from the sixteenth-century Roman villas and different as well, if less so, from the Villa Montalto, with its division into two main parts, giardino and vigne (fig. 15). The villas Montalto and Borghese were both constructed on the sites of former vineyards, and some of those vineyards were used to make the formal gardens in each villa. But the remaining vineyards in each case were used differently: at the Villa Montalto some ten large vigne were joined together and left as kitchen gardens and vineyards in the area specifically called the Vigna; in contrast, at the Villa Borghese, an artificial piece of the Roman Campagna was intentionally re-created on the vineyards not used for the formal gardens. The radical difference between the two villas lay in the conceptual use of the Roman Campagna to represent a park landscape.

THE MEANINGS OF THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA WITHIN THE THREE RINGS OF LAND PROPERTIES AROUND ROME

Any interpretation of the park of the Villa Borghese, and in particular of its barco, involves reconstituting the categories in which the patron, Romans, and their visitors conceived and understood the forms of native landscapes and of those composed in villa gardens such as the parks of the estate villas, including their barbati with rural landscapes. In my view, Romans interpreted the landscapes in the countryside around them as a social geography of properties, in which categories such as ownership, uses, economic value, and location were extremely significant. Because they did so and because the most striking characteristic of the barco lies in its deliberate emphasis on vini in viva, it is important to understand where this vini originated, both geographically and in terms of property.

In studying the landscapes of the Roman territory, I have found that Romans and their visitors recognized architectural typologies and landscape categories as specific to certain urban and rural zones. For example, they thought of the land around their city in terms of three concentric rings around the city proper. Each ring corresponded to a category of rural property: the ring nearest Rome contained small agrarian properties called vineyards by the Romans (vigne), the next farming estates (casati), and the third sieve towns and their surrounding lands (feudi), which had been fortified settlements (castri) in the early medieval period. At the center of the three rings lay the urban fabric of Rome shrunk well within the Aurelian walls, as can be seen on all printed maps of Rome before 1800, from Bufalini’s to Nolli’s. Around this urban core, both inside and outside the walls, could be found the myriad small vineyards that constituted the first ring of properties. Its plots were separated by paths or by brushwood borders, and each plot usually had some farm buildings and was planted with a combination of vegetables, vines, and olive and fruit trees; grapevines predominated. In addition to grapevines and orchards, these vineyards could also contain small amounts of grassy pasturage. The famous villa gardens in Renaissance and Baroque Rome, including those of the Villa Borghese and the other estate villas, were created out of these vineyards and lay dispersed among them.

Beyond the limit of the vineyards, called “area of brushwood and end of the vineyards” on seventeenth-century Roman maps of the areas outside the walls, came a belt some twenty to fifty miles wide of farming estates, devoted to grain and dairy production, the principal agricultural investment of Rome’s upper classes. This landscape of farms, which ranged in size from 100 to 3,000 or more acres (40 to 1,200 hectares), extended to the hills rising at the edge of the Campagna. Out on the farms, which were known as tenute (landholdings) or casali (farms, from the word for farmhouse), herds of cows, sheep, and goats grazed on meadowlands rented
seasonally from the big landowners; their herders produced cheeses to be consumed in the city (fig 7). The massive abandonment of grain production for less labor-intensive dairy farming, which had already begun in the fifteenth century, led progressively to the mown, over-grazed and deserted look of the Roman Campagna that foreigners described in their travel journals.

The third ring of properties was located in the hills and mountains beyond the Campagna, and consisted of the fiefs of the oldest families of the Roman nobility (fig 16). Throughout the sixteenth century, the medieval castles in these feudal seats were embellished with the villa gardens of their new lords, for example the Villa d’Este of the cardinal-governor of Tivoli, the Villa Lante at Bagnoia, and the palatial complex of the Farnese at Caprarola. The landscapes around the fief towns were characterized by agrarian lands planted with olives, grain, and vines, but especially by natural forests of native oaks, firs, chestnut and hazelnut trees, holm oaks, elms, and beeches.

THE BARCO AS A PIECE OF THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA AT THE VILLA BORGHESE

The campagna land of the barco was both maintained and used in the same way as the farmlands of the casali in the Roman Campagna. It was mown twice a year for hay, just as were the pastures in the various Borghese farms in the Roman Campagna. In May and October of 1614, for example, the annual harvesting seasons, workers were paid for “the mowing of the hay in the park” (la falciatura del fieno nel parco) at the Villa Borghese, a practice that continued throughout the 1620’s and after. During these years, “companion mowers” (compagni falciatori) were paid for the same activity at the Borghese farms, as in the “mowing of six rubbia [about 27 acres] of meadow in the Tenuta del Finocchio [and] in the Tenuta di S. Antonio. ” near Frascati in June of 1624.35 The hunting park at the Villa Borghese also became an artificially contrived pastoral landscape for grazing livestock, which were bought to populate this campagna or casale portion of the barco. The importation of livestock to complete the re-creation of a miniature dairy farm, or casale, seems to have occurred at the very end of the construction and planting of the barco, hence as a lively finishing touch. In early September of 1631, Salvatore Galeotti arrived at the Villa Borghese. He was placed “in charge of the four calves at the Porta Pinciana” (the Villa Borghese was also called the Villa Pinciana), and began to receive a monthly salary as vaccaio, the term used for the men who tended the great herds of cows and sheep in the farms of the Campagna, as well as for a specific profession in Rome’s agricultural economy.53 In November of 1633, the pasturelands of the hunting park at the Villa Borghese were rented again to a man who had been using them, as he wrote in a rental receipt, for grazing “my sheep” (le mie pecore).54

The idea of re-creating the Roman Campagna at the Villa Borghese can be visualized by comparing both the uses and plans of its hunting park with those of the Roman farming estates in the Campagna. Following a long tradition, the owners — Roman noblemen and cardinals of the court — used parts of their casali for pastures such as netting birds, hunting, fishing, and promenading. These activities are depicted, for example, on many of the tax maps of casali, made or collected in 1660–61 for the Catasto Alessandrino (fig. 7). Among them, several maps of 1633 record the Cesarini farming estates in the Pontine marshes south of Rome. Since 1633 was the year of Cardinal Scipione Borghese’s death, these activities are contemporary with the cardinal’s life at the Villa Borghese, which included hunting with his retinue or with guests. For example, at their farm of Fossignano the duke and duchess Cesarini arrived in their carriage in the midst of the agrarian labor of shepherds and pig herds standing about in the landscape and stopped to view beaters pressing birds towards a huge net stretched out for their hunt (fig 17). By the early seventeenth century, these same activities were introduced as recreational villa sports in the new landscapes of the Roman estate villas, and the Cesarini view could easily have been taken at the Villa Borghese or the Villa Pamphilj.

The new character introduced in the hunting park at the Villa Borghese becomes clearer if we draw comparisons with preceding bachi at Pratolino or in the outlying fief towns of Latium, such as the Barchetto at Caprarola, the ones built at Villa Lante at Bagnoia and Villa Colonna at Marino in the 1580’s, and the one acquired by Cardinal Borghese in 1613 from the Altemps family or built immediately thereafter by him at Frascati, below the Villa Mondragone and its surrounding agrarian estate. Through their uses and decoration, these parks fall into two different categories: those for actual hunting like the Barchetto and those — without large game animals — for strolling and dining.55 The hunting park of the Villa Borghese, remarkably, juxtaposed both. It contained game for the hunt; it was planted with groves of trees and adorned with fountains, seats for resting, tables for outdoor dining, and sculpture, usually with rustic themes.
appropriate for woodlands. For example, in 1623–24, a "marble table, which stood in the Courtyard of the Kitchens" near the main palace of the Villa Borghese, was “brought to the hunting park, where it stands at present.” This was followed by “the carving of ten seats of local stone which are in the barro around the Table at the little lake, and four more are at the head and the foot of the Avenue.”56

Neither hunting nor decorated parkland was a new development in Roman villa design, and in fact Ammannati had described the estate of the Villa Giulia in a letter of 1555 in these terms: “And at every few paces throughout the villa there are places to rest and to set up tables in the shade.”57 Architectural structures set in undesigned landscape, like the staircases in the hill overlooking the lake at the Villa Borghese, had been used in the vigna areas of Roman villas before. For example, about 1550 there were ramps and stairs laid out in the boschetto and sloping areas of the Villa d’Este on the Quirinal. Ramps and stairs also characterized those areas of the Villa Maltèsi (built in the 1580’s) in which plantings were partly left natural and the sloping terrain was left unaltered.

What was new in the Villa Borghese was the conscious modification of traditional categories of landscape and property known to Romans within the three rings of landed properties around their city. Cardinal Borghese and his architects achieved this by transplanting landscape elements from the second ring of properties around Rome, the farms, and from the third ring, the fief-town castles and their hunting parks, into the first ring of vineyards. These elements were primarily the forms and uses of the Campagna landscape and of the walled game parks, lakes, hillocks, and extensive boschi (forests) characteristic of the fiefs.58

Such landscape transpositions had ancient Roman models. When Maunili invoked parity with ancient Roman horti in his opening line on the Villa Borghese, he and his patron, Prince Giovanni Battista Borghese, were surely thinking of the villa as a contemporary configuration of an ancient Roman imperial estate and probably, more specifically, one like the Golden House (64–68 AD) of the emperor Nero. The size of this huge estate can be estimated from the fact that it extended from the base of the Palatine hill to the Esquiline. Antiquarians, such as Giacomo Lauro in his Antiquae urbis splendor of 1612–14, provided visual reconstructions of the Golden House based primarily on the ancient texts of Tacitus and Suetonius. Lauro’s view, which shows a stag and a hare around a lake with ducks, interpreted the Neronian estate as a juxtaposition of giardino and barro (fig. 18).59 An identical pairing was created at the Villa Borghese at the time Lauro was making his reconstructed view. Tacitus had described the marvel and the shock of seeing “fields and lakes and the air of solitude given by wooded grounds alternating with clear tracts and open landscapes” in the Golden House, which lay at the center of the city, a literal transposition of rus in urbe.60 The parks at the villas Borghese and Pamphilj were constituted precisely by such “wooded grounds alternating with clear tracts and open landscapes.” Maunili’s words describing the barco at the Villa Borghese mentioned above give a range of features equivalent to those evoked by Tacitus; “This enclosure ..., contains in its spaciousness valleys, hills, plains, woods, houses, and gardens.” By their location and their contents, the Roman estate villas, especially the villas Montalto, Borghese, and Pamphilj, reinterpreted in modern configurations the ancient topographical conceit of the Golden House, which included palaces, gardens, woodlands, enclosures for animals, and the lake over which the Colosseum was later built.61

The presence of the lake at the Villa Borghese makes it possible to suggest a very specific interpretation of its designer’s intention — in this instance the approach to landscape. The landscaping of the lake and its surrounding area constitutes a re-creation of particular natural topography on the model of ancient Roman villas, in which natural features such as hills, forests, meadows, and lakes were miniaturized or built to scale as at the Golden House. The lake at the Villa Borghese lay in a valley surrounded by a grove of forty plane trees; in its center were two islands planted with two plane trees each (fig. 19). This was probably the first time since antiquity that a lake, as opposed to an ornamental fountain or pool in an architectural setting, had been built in a Roman villa close to the city, and it could evoke several ancient waterpieces, of which Nero’s lake on the estate of the Golden House was geographically most relevant. The next instance of a lake near Rome occurred in the Villa Pamphilj in the 1650’s (fig. 3). Both ancient and modern precedents for lakes in villas existed in the third, outer ring of properties around Rome, for example, the original lakes and dams in the villas at Genazzano and Bomarzo and at the enclosed hunting park at Caprarola (ca. 1569–75), called the barro and sometimes the pauro of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese.62 These Renaissance villa lakes were modeled on antique examples such as Varro’s aviary garden and his use of the river at his villa at Cassiun and Nero’s villa with its dammed-up lakes at Sublacqueum, later Subiaco.63
In a remarkable passage, Manilli described the landscaped setting of the lake at the Villa Borghese using words that reveal exactly how he and his contemporaries thought that this approach to landscape design should be perceived. Referring to the stand of very old oak trees on the hill above this lake as a macchin (thicket), he wrote: “This thicket, which dominates the little lake, has an effect — in proportionate scale — not unlike that made by the mountain of Viterbo on whomever stands on its flank and looks towards the lake of Vico” (figs. 1 and 13).64 In other words, to the viewer of this lakeside landscape at Villa Borghese, the configuration of hill overlooking the lake was to evoke, at proportionate reduction of scale, the way the mountain of Viterbo near Caprarola and Bagnaia appeared to the viewer standing on its slope and looking towards the Lake of Vico. More Neronian one cannot be, in terms of representing rus in urbe.

Graduate School of Design
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

NOTES

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1 Alessandro Tassoni, Divino Libri di Pensieri Divosi (Carpi, 1620), p. 521, remarked on the Roman villa gardens of his day: “The very excessive walls that enclose the gardens, which once before were cultivated fields, are covered with sweet-smelling plants and scattered with lemons and oranges of golden color” [Le lunghissime mura, che circondano i giardini, che dianzi furono campagne, coperte di verdura odontata, e sparse di cedri, e d’arauchi di color d’oro]. I thank Dr. Kristina Herreman Fiore, Rome, for kindly sharing Tassoni’s writings on villas with me. Visiting the Villa Borghese on 17 November 1644, John Evelyn described it as “somewhat without the City walls, circumscribd by another wall full of small turrets and banquetting houses; which make it appear at a distance like a little

2 For the definition of barco, see Pietro Roccasceca, Ricerche sul l’esito di parchi e giardini (Rome, 1990), p. 13, where the Vocabolario della Crusca of 1612 (contemporary with the first phase of construction on the Villa Borghese’s barco) is cited: “Parco Place where game animals are enclosed, surrounded by wall or by other enclosure, which today we commonly call Barco” (Parco. Luogo dove si racchiudono le fiere, cinto di muro, o, d’altro riparo che oggi più comunemente diciamo Barco). However, as Roccasceca and numerous documents show, the word barco was used from the 1560’s on, in both Tuscany and Lazio; an example is F. De Vieni, Discorsi delle meraviglie opere di Pretolino (1587), p. 42, “si scende nel barco che è pieno di diverse fontane,” cited by Roccasceca, p. 13.

3 In speaking of Roman villas or village gardens, I use the word “villa” as it was used in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Rome, meaning the entire property constituted by palace, gardens, and landholdings and not the main building alone. On the meaning of “villa” in Renaissance Rome, see Elisabeth B. MacDougall, “The Villa Matiei and the Development of the Roman Garden Style,” Ph. D. diss., Harvard University, 1970, pp. iv, ix-x; James S. Ackerman, The Villa: Form and Ideology of Country Houses (Princeton, 1990), p. 9 and passim.

4 The process of land acquisition, the documented attribution of the design to the architect Flamigno Ponzo, and the construction and architectural style of the main palace, which was built in 1612–14, have been discussed by Christoph Heilmann in a thorough article based on research in the Borghese archives, “Die Entstehungsgeschichte der Villa Borghese in Rom,” Münchener Jahrbuch des bildenden Kunst, ser. 3, 24 (1973): 97–158; also see Beata Di Gaddo, Villa Borghese Il giardino e le architetture (Rome, 1985).

5 Diary of John Evelyn, pp. 144–45.


7. Baltasar Grangier de Liverdis, Journal d’un voyage de France et d’Italie fait par un gentilhomme français Commeencé le quatrième septembre 1660 & achevé le trentième May 1661 (Paris, 1667), p. 401: “la Vigil Bourghese, hors la ville, qui est une des plus belles & des plus agréables qui se voyent à Rome, soit pour son esteniudé, soit pour ses eaux, soit pour la diversité de belles allees, dont elle est partagée, & qui fournissent toute l’année la plus charmante vertheut qu’il se puisse voir ... En un mot, rien n’y manque de toutes les choses que l’on peut definir pour le rendre un des plus gentils Parcs de Rome” (orthography as in original text).

8 Most of these parks are discussed in an excellent synthetic study by Claudia Lazzaro, The Italian Renaissance Gardens: From the Conventions of Planting, Design, and Ornament to the Grand Gardens of Sixteenth-Century Central Italy (New Haven–London, 1990); for the sixteenth-century parks and woods, see esp pp 109–30.

9 It is not clear from the ancient texts of Tacitus and Suetonius whether the Golden House of Nero included a hunting preserve on its estate, but it is likely that it did. Otherwise, enclosed hunting parks existed only on estates outside of Rome, for which see J.K. Anderson, Hunting in the Ancient World (Berkeley–Los Angeles, 1985), pp. 89–100. After the medieval period, there appear to have been only two enclosures in Rome itself, the barchette in the Vatican compound.
and the situation of Cardinal Ascanio Sforza near the Baths of Diocletian, both in use around 1500. On these, see David R. Coffin, *The Villa in the Life of Renaissance Rome* (Princeton, 1979), p. 123, as well as pp. 111–45 on the extra-urban barchi and hunting lodges of Renaissance Rome. A hunt on horseback in the enclosed Vatican *bano* is depicted on the view of Rome by Fra Paolino da Venezia, ca. 1520; the animals include lions, deer, a bull, goats and hare; see Amedeo Frutaz, *Le prime di Roma*, 5 vols. (Rome, 1962), vol. 2, pl. 143


11. For these *vigne* and villas, see MacDougall, "Villa Mattei," and Lazzaro, *Italian Renaissance Garden*, 109–111, and passim.

12. For the few plantings of the traditional Roman formal garden, see MacDougall, "Villa Mattei," Lazzaro, especially pp. 20–21, 30–37, 82–94; for the *bosco* and groves, especially pp. 43–45.

13. As an example, one can cite the *bano* at the Villa Mondragone, seat of the Borghese family at Frascati; this *bano* had been laid out in the 1570s by Cardinal Marco Sittico Altemps. In acquiring it the Altemps family in 1613, rather than building it anew, Cardinal Borghese also acquired it with the feudal associations of the Altemps’s ancient lineage. Robert to Altemps was made a duke in 1585 and his town of Gallesse given the title of duchy. For the history of the Villa Mondragone and its construction, see F. Grossi-Gondi, *La Villa dei Quirinti e la Villa di Mondragone* (Rome, 1901), pp. 44–75, esp. pp. 65 and p. 75; Coffin, *Villa in Renaissance Rome*, pp. 54–58. Tracy Ehrlich is completing a major study of the Borghese villas at Frascati, with a focus on the Mondragone, and she has kindly informed me that the Altemps *bano* had been built prior to its acquisition by Cardinal Scipione Borghese.


15. Bartolomeo Ammannati, one of the key architects of the Villa Giulia, reported in a letter of 1555 that by that date there were 36,000 trees "being planted all over the site" (*piantandosi per tutto*). For his letter, see MacDougall, "Villa Mattei," pp. 195–96. If Ammannati is not inventing the number, 36,000 trees indicate a huge estate. "I will tell you that 36,000 have been planted so far" (*ma dirò che ve ne sono piantati ventitré mila*). To visualize these trees on the ground, one needs to add the 400 pines, the 1,000 firs, and the 600 holm oaks in the first two enclosures flanking the main piazza of the Villa Borghese by 1650, and multiply the surface covered by those 2,900 trees some 18-fold to grasp just how immense an estate the Villa Giulia was. For a recent summary on the Villa Giulia, see Coffin, *Gardens and Gardening*, pp. 139–42.

16. The slight deviation from the pattern was Cardinal Felice Peretti, called Montalto, who, however, became Pope Sixtus V in 1585, very soon after beginning his cardinalate villas; his Villa Montalto initiated the development of the estate villa in Rome.


20. This figure comes from calculating the total superficies of *canali* in the Campagna Romana, and then the relative numbers owned by families and ecclesiastical institutions, from documents in the Vatican Library, related to the Catasto Alessandrino.

21. In a see-saw situation, the Roman barons went more and more into debt and had to sell their lands, because, on the one hand, they attempted to remain competitive in the increasingly luxurious way of life of the new aristocracy, and because, on the other, they did not have access to the system of papal nepotism that was enriching their rivals Jean Deluneau, *Vie économique et sociale de Rome dans la seconde moitié du XVIe Siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1957–59), 1: 457–58, 469–85, for debts of the Roman barons; pp. 471–81 for the sale of the lands.


23. For the chronology to 1621–22, see Heilmann, *Villa Borghese in Rom,* pp. 102–14.

24. The two watercolored plans are in Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Archivio Borghese (henceforth: AV, AB), vol. 310, *ultimo* 181, and vol. 3001, fol. 3, respectively. The later of the two, which presents little record of topography but a great deal of visual information about the water system, plantings and trees, was dated by Heilmann, "Villa Borghese in Rom," p. 105, to around 1633, the year of Cardinal Borghese’s death. However, I think that it was most likely made around 1660–61, because it is the first sheet in a volume of watercolored maps of Borghese farms in the Roman Campagna, in AV, AB, vol. 3001. These maps, dated variously to 1660–63, are clearly copies of the original ones made in 1660–61 for the Catasto Alessandrino, the 500-odd tax-maps collected for Alexander VII of the 1600s and farms in the Campagna. The plan of the Villa Borghese in question may also be a copy from 1660–61 of one made in a somewhat earlier period, when the villa’s trees had matured quite fully, by the 1630’s or 1640’s. For Marulli, see Villa Borghese *Fuori di Porta Pinciana Descritta Da Incomo Marulli Romano*.
TRANSFORMING THE VILLA BORGHESE

Guentarobba di detta Villa (Rome, 1650) Coffin, Gardens and Gardening, pp 147-49, has summarized the main points of Manilli's description.

25 Toponyms useful for reading Falda's view are provided on a plan of 1885 in ASV, AB, vol 114, Lettera Aggiunta B, legend.


27 Ibid., p. 113 and n. 156; identifies the “Casino del Coscugato” (the Casino that was Coscugato's) as the Palazzetto d'Orologio and the “Casa che era del Cennini” (the house that was Cennini's) with the Castello Mediavale in the Villa Borghese today, from payments in ASV, AB, vol 352 (13 December 1622).

28 Manilli, Villa Borghese, p. 2 Manilli says that the villa measured “three miles around” (tre miglia di giro), but the figure of “four miles in Compasso” quoted by the English visitor in 1692 seems more accurate.

29 The support structures of this aristocratic household were clustered along the streetwise edges of the second enclosure, namely the stables, kitchen building (U-shaped around a courtyard), pantries, dog kennels, storerooms and services for the Borghese family retinue, a very large wine cellar, and a separate compound for rabbits.

30 Cardinal Borghese may also have been trying to outdo the new changes — taller trees and hedges — that Cardinal Alessandro Montalto brought to his grand uncle's (Sixtus V) Villa Montalto sometime between 1590 and his own death in 1625, but the precedence of one cardinal over the other in innovation is not yet clear from documents. It has not yet been established just when the triangular garden in front of the main palazzo of the Villa Montalto was planted with the tall cypresses and other trees, seen first in Isalbri Silvestro's view of ca 1645-50. These tall trees do not fulfill (they only frame) the two compartments of the triangular garden in Mattia Greuter's view of ca 1623 and in Falda's views of ca 1675. To date on the Villa Montalto, see MacDougall, “Villa Mattei,” pp 67-71, and her Appendix V, pp 236-62; Coffin, Villa in Renaissance Rome, pp 165-69; Coffin, Gardens and Gardening, pp 142-45; Matthias Quast, Die Villa Montalto in Rom: Entstehung und Gestaltung im Cinquecento (Münich, 1991).

31 MacDougall, “Villa Mattei,” pp. 71-74, was the first to note the change in height in the hedges and trees of Roman villa gardens, which she dated “sometime after the 1630's,” using the example of the Villa Borghese and Manilli's description in 1650. The payments from the Archivio Borghese, which I cite in the footnotes that follow, document her intuition and place the major change around 1624-25.

32 There appear to have been one block each of the “quadrco de Pini” (compartment of pines) and “il quadrco dell iichi e delle mandorle... nel quadrco de brugni demanri la Casa del vignaro...” (the compartment of figs and almonds in the one of olives in the one of plum trees near the House of the vineyard-keeper) and “acanto il quadrco dell' Aebiti” (near the compartment of firs), among others. For their planting in 1610-34, see ASV, AB, vol 4174, date of April 10, 1612, in the libretto, “Lavori di Scarpello...” MDCXI-III. For the compartment of firs, ASV, AB, vol 4174, date of 30 April 1613.

33 For a sample of payments documenting the planting of the new tree gardens in 1624-25, see ASV, AB, vol 6044, no 43 (January 1-12, 1625) for 16 men “have cavato et piantato l'Aebiti, nel quadro del giardino al palazzo del Cardl Borgh.

ese ” (who dug and planted the firs in the compartment of the garden at the palace of Cardinal Borghese). (Jan 12-18) 28 men "a piantare il lauri grossi condotti dalla vignia Aluviti et cavar et ripiantar l'Aebiti, et fare il 2 novi viali " (to plant the big laurels brought from the Vigna Aluviti... and to dig and replant the firs, and to make the two new avenues...). For the purchase of 1,000 uprooted holm oaks (licini), see ASV, AB, vol 6044, no 15, (4 January 1675), “quedi licini i detto Vincente hia cavati alla Marina et in diversi loght et condotti a sue spese al Giardino et nel Barco dell' Cardl de Borghese a Posta Pinciana ove si sono pienuti et numero " (which holm oaks the said Valentino dug up along the seacoast and in other places and brought at his expense to the Giardino and the Barco of Cardinal Borghese at Porta Pinciana where they were planted and numbered. ) The new planting required frequent sorties by piantatori and suppliers into very diverse sites of the Roman countryside, as well as into the mountains of Tuscany for fir trees, not native to the Roman area, for example the remarkable expedition described in ASV, AB, vol 6046, no 175 (undated, but early 1625), “Spese fatte da m r Don.rco Savini p(er) l'andata a monte Pulciano, p(e)riglar" Abbini " (expenses of master Domenico Savini for his trip to Monte Pulciano to get fir trees).

34 An example is in ASV, AB, vol 6044, no 43 (January 19-25, 1625), 25 men are paid, “hanno cavato l'Aebiti et ripiantato et cavar le Brugnie et visiste et cerese de quadr et fatto lo fosse, et piantato nel Barcho" (who dug up firs and replanted [then] and dug up plum, visite, and cherry [or possibly: arbu-] trees from the compartments, and dug the ditches, and planted in the Barco). I have not been able to identify visiste. See, for example, ASV, AB, vol 6095, p. 46 (account of 10 April 1633, paid on 6 October), 25 scudi “m.(one)ua restanti" were paid "in piane de Pini grossi, è piccoli N o 110 della Villa Pinciana" (in kind, with 110 pine trees between large and small ones, from the Villa Pinciana) Villa Borghese was called the “Villa Pinciana" in the Borghese papers, as well as in Manilli’s guidebook, to distinguish it from the “Ville Tuscolane," Cardinal Borghese's group of villas at Frascati.

35 . . fare il Barco dell'Animali nella sua Vigna “ASV, AB, vol 114, no XI (21 October 1615) Vigna was often used in Rome at that time to refer to the entire villa complex. One of the earliest references to the barco is in 1611, when a small portion of the Parmegianeriy garden was assessed “per addizzare il filo del muro attorno il Parco" (to straighten the lin of the wall around the park); ASV, AB, vol 1097, draft script at end of no 318. For work on the enclosing wall, see ASV, AB, vol 1094, no 81, “Misura a et siima del muro del barco" (March 14 to June 10, 1616), partially cited in Heilmann, “Villa Borghese in Rom.,” p 111 and nn. 136-37.

36 “ Ringhiere che guardano in d.(ett)o Barco." The windows cut in the barco wall were paid in several accounts, including ASV, AB, vol 4174 (19 March 1616 to 18 February 1617) and ASV, AB, vol 6085 (8 July 1616), published in Heilmann, “Villa Borghese in Rom.;” Manilli, Villa Borghese, p 162: “per commodit di veder le caccce.”

37 These holm oaks appear in four immense regular groves in the barco on Falda's view as no 26, “Piano de licini "

38 Falda's view shows still further changes in planting between 1660 (oi, the 1640's and 1650's) and 1675, notably the filling in of the open meadowland around the lake with trees. It must
also be noted that Faldas's use of perspective and his need to fit the large estate villas on his copper plate and page size often led him to foreshorten the terrain of the parks considerably, for example those at the villas Borghese and Pamphilij, in his *Li Giardini di Roma*.

This massive range of trees, which governs both the first and third enclosures on a diagonal axis (properly recorded on the plan of 1618–20 [fig 6], but "corrected" on the one of 1660–61 [fig 7], appears to be a design generated from the entrance area on the Via Pinciana. In fact its axial orientation was generated by the sheaks and *ovette* of the first vineyard purchases of 1606, which predates the purchases that went to form the first *messure* in 1608–9.

For: Baglioni, see Lazzaro, *Italian Renaissance Garden*, pp 266–68.

Faldas's caption: "Parco di lepri, Capri, Daini Cerui con boschi di vari alberi: "Pompilipo Totti, *Ritorno di Roma Moderna* (Rome, 1638), pp. 341–42, described the *barco* in the 1630's as in use for hunting: "Vi è il vero d'animali, ove tal'ora per dietro si può essercitare la caccia" (There is the game preserve, where now and then for pleasure one can stage a hunt)."

These are nos. 19 and 25 on Faldas's view. The quotations are from Manilli, *Villa Borghese*, p. 162: "che servono e per ricovero, e per nutrimento delle Fiere, e de gli Vcelli di questo luogo" and "grato albero a' gli Vcelli d'acqua, che qui soggiornano.

Manilli, *Villa Borghese*, p. 161, perceptively described the *barco* in these terms: "il Parco, con vna Vigna contigua, ha' mostro la Natura nella inegualitá del sito, quanto ella nell'operare si diielli d'aver varie, & ha' insieme dato campo all'Arte di mostrare l'industria sua nel disporre, e regolare con ordine certo uno spazio si vasto" (the Park, with an adjacent Vineyard, has revealed Nature in the unevenness of the site, how much in her work the delights in being varied; and at the same time has given Act free rein in showing her industry in disposing and controlling such a vast space with certain order [italics mine].

This duality of variety in nature and order in art must be seen within the contexts for complementaries and opposites described by Lazzaro, *Italian Renaissance Garden*, passim.

The label "sodi" near one of the houses in the lower left hand corner of the *barco* on the watercolored plan of Villa Borghese identifies this area as fallow meadowland.


Ibid., pp 165, 164: "Tutta questa Campagna, cominciando dalla Collina fin' al fine della Villa a Levante, e piena d'alberi diversi . . ."

The hunting park of the Villa Borghese remained private land, even if visitors and tourists could gain entrance, and was thus available for specific social and personal uses by the Cardinal and his guests, as strolling, hunting and diplomatic receptions. In contrast, at the Villa Montalto, the vineyards in the designated *Vigna* were nearly all rented out to vineyard-keepers (*vignaroli*) and kitchen gardeners (*ortolani*) for agricultural production. For example, in July of 1590, Camilla Peretti, sisters of Sixtus V, rented the "vignae" in several parcels (i.e., the original ones acquired) to three men who would cultivate them; Vittorio Massimo, Villa Montalto (Rome, 1836), p. 59, n. 1, cited in MacDougall, "Villa Mattei," p 246.


ASV, AB, vol. 1051, "Entrata ed Usita di Villa Borghese 1618," vol 21r (May 19), vol. 42r (October 10) was the moving of hay: "falcitatura di rubia 6 di prato nella Tenuta del finocchio nella Tenuta di S Antonio." In November of 1626, anson other occasions, the grass of the *barco* was cut and sold for 55 scudi: p(e)r l'ebra del Barcho vend (u)to sc 55 a Mario e Hepolito venturini; ASV, AB, vol 1141, no XLVIII (November 1626.)

ASV, AB, vol 1141, no. XLVII (September 1631): "Salvatore a Esato, Temps Modernes, 88 (1976), 19–74; Florence, n. 1."

Porta Pinciana in this case refers to the Villa Pinciana, as the Villa Borghese was called to distinguish it from the Villa Mondragone and other Borghese villas at Frascati. On the *vasali*, see Ercolani Metalli, *Usi e Costumi della Campagna Romana*, 1st ed (Rome, 1903; rpt. Rome, 1982), pp 123–50.

ASV, AB, vol 1141, no. LIV (8 November 1633)

On the *barchi* (parks without game animals) at Baglioni and Pratolina, the Colonna park at Marino, the "Sacro Bosco" at Bomarzo, and the park at Pritigliano, see Lazzaro, *Italian Renaissance Garden*, pp. 111–30 ASV, AB, vol 4174 (3 October 1614), for work on the *barco* at Mondragone, including "alla Pergolata In fondo il barco" (on the pergola at the end of the barco). For hunting parks in Latiun, see Coiffin, *Villa in Renaissance Rome*, pp 11–45.

ASV, AB, vol 6043, no 281, fols 2r, 3v (26 July 1623): "tavola di maumo, quale stava nel Cortile delle Cucine et postula al barco, dove sta al presente" and "la fattura de nio ian scabelli di sperone se sono al barco attorno la Taula del laghetto, et quattro a capo e a piedi il Viale." The stools were made of *speuma*, ox *pata gabina*, a volcanic stone from the ancient site of Gabina on the Via Faenestina, very close to the Borghese farm of Pantano. It is important to note that in 1624–25 the long rectangular lake had not yet been built at the Villa Borghese, the lake would be placed on the site of the four ponds and the water channel, which are mentioned in ASV, AB, vol. 5043, no. 383 [Mis (u)ra e stima de lavori di scarpe 12, 29 February 1624], a payment "Per haver fatto l'incastro all(i) Canali che portan (o) lacqua da un laghetto al altro . . ." (for having made
the joint in the canals that bring water from one little lake to
the next)

57 "E per la villa ad ogni tanti passi vi sono bucoli da riposare e
fai tavole all'ombra." Again, for Ammianus's letter, see Mac-
Dougal, "Villa Mattia," n 1, pp 195–96

58 It is important to note that the Barchetto at Caprarola, as de-
picted in the fresco of theloggia terrena at the Villa Lante, Bag-
agna, contained a lake with trees planted in orderly rows
around it.

59 Lutro, who took some twenty years to produce the first part
of his book in 1612, may also have circulated individual prints
earlier, as was common in Roman print publishing. Accord-
ingly, his view of the Domus Aurea, engraved before 1612, may
already have been in circulation by 1600. Thus, even before its
actual publication in Lutro’s book, it could possibly have pro-
vided inspiration for the layout of the initial hunting park at
the Villa Borghese, which took place in 1609–12.

60 See Manilli, Villa Borghese, p 1, for the purity of the Villa Borgh-
ese with ancient Roman gardens, "gli antichi Horti " Tacitus,
The Annals, trans John Jackson, Loeb edition (London–Cam-
bridge, Mass, 1937), Book XV, p 42 (xliv) On the interest in
reversed categories such as city and country in antiquity, see
Nicholas Purcell, "Town in Country and Country in Town," in
Ancient Roman Villa Gardens, ed Elisabeth B MacDougall,
Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape
pp 198–200

61 This interpretation is elaborated in my "Villa Panphili", 2:
505–6, 584–86. Although the subject merits more elabora-
tion than is possible here, ancient Roman hunting parks, such as
those far outside Rome described by Varro and other writers
on rustic life, also surely served as conceptual models and as
historical legitimation for Cardinal Borghese’s evocation of
Roman antiquity in his basilica Vatican, in De re rustica, has his
interlocutors describe a hunt: "On the estate at Tibur that
Varro here bought from Piso, a trumpet was sounded at regu-
lar hours and you saw boars and wild goats come for their
food. Indeed, when I was at Hortensius’s place at Lumen-
tum..., there was a wood of more than fifty acres, so our host
told us, surrounded by a park wall, which he called not a war-
ren but a chase [theatrophiium]," cited in Anderson, Hunting in
the Ancient World, p 86. It is interesting to note that among
the books of Cardinal Scipione Borghese’s library in the main
palace of the Villa Borghese, there was a copy each of the works
of Suetonius, Tacitus, and Pliny the Younger ("Plinii Caciiliii
Epistoleae, 1601"), as well as of modern writers who dealt
with aspects of villa life and gardens, including "Lettere di Claudio
Tolomei in Venetia 1584," and "Histoire de simples aromatis
de Garzia dall’Sarto, in Venetia 1597." For the inventory of
the books, taken ca 1615–21, and the library itself, see Victoria von
Flemming, "Ozio con dignità? Die Villenbibliothek von Kar-
dinal Scipione Borghese," Römische Quaestionschrif f christliche
Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte, 85, 3–4 (1990): 182–224,
who describes it aptly as a "working library."

62 Details on the dams and lakes at Genazzano and Caprarola
can be found in Coffin, Villa in Renaissance Rome, pp 133–34,
243–45; the word pare for the Barco at Caprarola is used by
Cardinal Farnese himself in a letter of 1569, cited by Coffin, p
133 "About two miles in circumference, the Barco [at Capra-
rola] encompassed wood and meadows with a variety of wild
life as well as a lake for fishing." (p 133)

63 The ancient sources were few, and the ancient structures were
usually known only from descriptions, which, however, were
rich in formal terms. Thus, the few ancient Roman villas that
had lakes or dams were the ones that Renaissance and Baroque
designers of villas used, regardless of their location, near Rome or
further out The Canopus Canal and the so-called Mattitone Theater, which had an artificial island, at
Hadrian’s villa — although not natural lakes, but water-piec-
es — could have provided significant formal elements for the
loug rectangular lake and its islands at the Villa Borghese
Manilli, Villa Borghese, pp 166–67: "Questa macchia domi-
nando il piccolo Lago, fa’ proporzionalmente effetto non disi-
mile di quelli, che si faccia la mo’(n)tagna di Viterbo, a’ chi’
su’ la sua costa riguarda il Lago di Vico. The plan of 1660–61
does not give the detail of the oak stand, but Falda’s view does
Fig. 1 Rome Villa Borghese Bird’s-eye view by Simone Felice, ca 1675. From G.B. Falda, *Li Giardini di Roma*, ca 1675. In the upper left corner, one can see the ancient massive masonry of Muro Torto near the Porta del Popolo; along the top edge of the view, the road that led to the Papioli neighborhood in the north; along the bottom edge, the large Via Pinciana also running north from the city gate; and to the sides, the connecting roads among the vineyards, including the Via di Muro Torto at the left. (Photo courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)
Fig. 2 Rome, Villa Borghese. View of the *casino*, adjacent tree gardens, and *bosco* in the distance, as redesigned after 1625. From G.B. Falda, *Li Giardini di Roma*, ca. 1675. (Photo: courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)
Fig. 3 Rome Villa Pamphilj Bird’s-eye view by Simone Felice, ca 1675 From G B Falda, *Li Giardini di Roma*, ca 1675
Fig 4 Rome, Villa Borghese Bird's-eye view by Matteo Greuter First enclosure and palace, ca 1623 (Photo: courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)
Fig 5: Pratolino, Villa Medici The Appennino View by Stefano Della Bella, ca 1650 (Photo: *Fons Sapientiae Garden Fountains in Illustrated Books* [Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1977])
Fig 6 The Tuileries palace and gardens Detail of Plan de Paris by Jacques Gomboust, 1662 Several squares of tree gardens were planted during the regency of Catherine de Médicis, 1562–66; avenues of mulberry and other trees were added ca 1600 for Henry IV (Photo: courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)
Fig. 7 Casale di Castel Campanile Farm belonging to Prince G B Borghese, on the Via Aurelia west of Rome. Map dated 27 April 1655, central portion. From the Archivio di Stato, Presidenza delle Strade, Catasto Alessandrino. (Photo: Archivio di Stato, Rome)
Fig 8 Rome Villa Borghese and surrounding vineyards. Plan of ca 1618–20 From the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Archivio Borghese, vol 301, interno 181 (Photo: courtesy of the Archivio Segreto Vaticano)
Fig. 9 Rome Villa Borghese Plan of ca 1660-61. Probably copy of an earlier plan showing the villa in the 1640's–1650's. Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Archivio Borghese, vol 3001 fol 3. (Photo: courtesy Archivio Segreto Vaticano)
Fig 10 Rome Villa Borghese Plan of ca. 1618–20, showing part of the *barco* and of the Borghese *vigne* rented to Cennino and Costaguto. Detail of fig 8 (Photo: courtesy Archivio Segreto Vaticano)

Fig 11 Rome Villa Borghese Casa del Gallinai o (ex-*vigne* Severoli), view to northwest. Drawing entitled “nella Villa Borghese” attributed to Ismaël Silvestre. Cabinet des Estampes, Bibliothèque Nationale (Photo: courtesy Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)
Fig 12 Rome Villa Borghese Fontana dei Cavalli Marini. Hedges and boschetti along the main entrance avenue from Via Pinciana. (Photo: from Charles Latham, *The Gardens of Italy* [London-New York, 1905], 1: 67)
Fig 13 Rome. Villa Borghese. "Campagna" area of the baro, with lake at center, avenue of holm oaks to right. Detail of fig 9 (Photo: courtesy Archivio Segreto Vaticano)
Fig 14 Rome Villa Pamphilj Avenue and pine forest in the bosco, view to west

Fig 15 Rome Villa Moutalto Bird's-eye view to northeast Detail of map of Rome by G B Falda, 1676 (Photo: from F Ehrle, *Roma al tempo di Clemente X* [Rome, 1931])
Fig. 16 Castel Belmonte. Fief of the Mattei family. Oil on canvas by Paul Bril, 1601. Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini, inv 1983, no. E 44914 (Photo: courtesy Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale, Rome)
Fig 18 Rome *Domus Aurea Neronis*. Reconstructed view by Giacomo Lauro, *Antiquae urbis splendor*. Rome, 1612–14, pl 101