

CULTIVATING MYTH AND COMPOSING LANDSCAPE
AT THE VILLA D'ESTE, TIVOLI

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a new reconstruction and interpretation of the ideological programmes at the Villa d'Este in Tivoli, devised by Pirro Ligorio for Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este from 1560 to 1572. It traces the sixteenth-century visitor's progress through the garden, where a sculptural pantheon of classical deities and demigods located within mythically allusive settings transformed the visitor's journey into a lushly storyboarded experience, reconfiguring the garden as a site of mythic encounter. Investigating the intersection between the visitor's symbolic and sensory modes of experience at the Villa d'Este, this thesis pioneers a new approach to Italian Renaissance garden design, synthesising traditional interpretative approaches to iconography with innovative phenomenological methodologies from sensory anthropology and recent ecocritical perspectives on landscape in the Cinquecento. This critical framework reveals how the Villa d'Este's iconographic schema was augmented by the multisensory effects of water features and plantings, which reoriented the visitor within physically immersive mythic locales and microcosmic visions of the surrounding Tiburtine landscape. It also results in a new ecocritical interpretation of the Villa d'Este, engaging with representations of landscape features and natural phenomena within the garden as creative expressions of and responses to environmental concerns.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures.....	i
Introduction	
Setting the Scene.....	1
The Villa d’Este at Tivoli.....	1
Tivoli’s Ancient Legacy and Renaissance Revival.....	4
Reconstructing the Villa d’Este.....	11
Chapter 1	
Surveying the Study of Italian Renaissance Gardens.....	20
Introduction.....	20
1.1 Reconstructing and Decoding the Garden.....	21
1.2 Authorship and Experience.....	34
1.3 Rewilding the Garden.....	39
1.4 Reinstating the Senses.....	47
1.5 Into the Garden.....	51
Chapter 2	
Redefining the Garden Experience.....	56
Introduction.....	56
2.1 Garden of the Gods.....	58
2.2 Heterotopia: Merging Myth and Reality.....	63
2.3 Thirdspace: Synthesising Symbolism and the Senses.....	67
2.4 Garden of the Senses.....	70
2.5 Waterscapes of Seeing, Hearing, Bathing and Tasting.....	77
2.6 Plantscapes of Purity, Power and Exoticism.....	80
2.7 The Third Pleasure.....	87
Chapter 3	
First Terrace Plantscape: A New Garden of the Hesperides.....	89
Introduction.....	89
3.1 The Realm of Flora.....	91
3.2 Golden Apples of a New Hesperides.....	97
3.3 Jasmine and the Scent of Exoticism.....	109
3.4 Lost and Found in the Labyrinth.....	115

Chapter 4

First Terrace Waterscape: Realm of the Nature Goddess.....123

Introduction.....	123
4.1 Into the Hinterland.....	128
4.2 Fear and Flooding in Tivoli.....	133
4.3 Into the Valle d’Inferno.....	141
4.4 Monstrous Portents of Natural Disasters.....	152
4.5 Subjugating the Nature Goddess.....	157

Chapter 5

Second Terrace: Here Be Dragons.....160

Introduction.....	160
5.1 Monstrous Marvels in the Era of Exploration.....	165
5.2 Into the Woods.....	174
5.3 Into the Dragons’ Lair.....	186
5.4 Fear and Fascination in the Garden.....	193

Chapter 6

Third Terrace: Realm of the Tiburtine Sibyl.....196

Interlude: At the Crossroads.....	196
Introduction.....	198
6.1 Regenerating Tivoli.....	204
6.2 Reviving the Acque Albule.....	211
6.3 Passage to Rome.....	221
6.4 The Sibyl’s Prophecy.....	226
6.5 Reinstating the Tiburtine Sibyl.....	232

Chapter 7

Third and Fourth Terraces: Between Vice and Virtue.....234

Introduction.....	234
7.1 Hercules’ Choice.....	242
7.1.1 At the Crossroads.....	242
7.1.2 The Paths of Vice and Virtue.....	250
7.2 The Grotto of Venus Voluptas.....	253
7.2.1 The Bathing Beauty.....	253
7.2.2 Garden Isle of the Goddess.....	260
7.2.3 What Actaeon Saw.....	268
7.3. The Grotto of Chaste Diana.....	270
7.3.1 Beware the Bathing Beauty.....	270
7.3.2 Sylvan Haunt of the Huntress.....	280

7.3.3 Warning Tales from the Woods.....	285
7.4 A Landscape Trick of Moral Choice.....	290
Conclusion	
Fantasy and Reality in the Garden.....	293
Introduction.....	293
Environmental Awareness: Reconciling the <i>locus amoenus</i> and the <i>locus horridus</i> ...	294
Augmented Reality: Synthesising Symbolism and the Senses.....	297
Appendices.....	303
Bibliography.....	304
Primary Sources.....	304
Ligorio, Antichità di Roma Manuscripts.....	304
Principal Accounts of the Villa d’Este.....	306
Medieval and Renaissance Sources.....	307
Ancient Sources.....	311
Secondary Sources.....	315
Figures.....	342

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures are illustrated at the end of the thesis. Primary figures referenced recurrently throughout the thesis are collated in section one and subsequent figures are listed under their corresponding chapter. Photographs are my own unless otherwise indicated.

1. Primary Figures

- 1.1. Étienne Dupérac, *Palazzo et Giardini di Tivoli*, 1573, engraving. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- 1.2. Girolamo Muziano, View of the Villa d'Este, c. 1568, fresco. Salone della Fontana, Villa d'Este.
- 1.3. Stefano Cabral and Fausto del Re, *Topographia antico moderna dell'agro tiburtino*, from *Delle Ville e de più notabili monumenti antichi della citta, e del territorio di Tivoli*, 1778, pen and ink. Rome, xxii.
- 1.4. Cairoli Fulvio Giuliani, *Topographical map of Tivoli*, from *Villa Gregoriana in Tivoli*, 2005, map 1.
- 1.5. Daniel Stoopendaal, *Civitatis Tyburis Delineatio*, 1704, engraving.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. Sanctuary of Hercules Victor, first century CE. Tivoli.
- 2.2. Sanctuary of Hercules Victor, theatre. Tivoli.
- 2.3. Temple of the Sibyl, first century BCE. Tivoli.
- 2.4. Temple of the Sibyl, view from the Valle d'Inferno. Tivoli.

3. Chapter 3

- 3.1. Johann Friedrich Greuter, Metamorphosis of Limace and Bruno, from Ferrari, *De florum cultura*, 1633, engraving. Rome, 54.
- 3.2. Johann Friedrich Greuter, Metamorphosis of Melissa and Florilla, from Ferrari, *De florum cultura*, 1633, engraving. Rome, 518.
- 3.3. Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides, early first century CE, marble relief. Inv. Nr. 1008. Villa Albani Torlonia, Rome. From E. B. Harrison, 'Hesperides and Heroes: A Note on the Three-Figure Reliefs', 1964, plate 11, fig. C.
- 3.4. Federico Zuccari, Cardinal Ippolito's *impresa*, 1566-67, fresco. Stanza della Nobilità, Villa d'Este.
- 3.5. Entrance vestibule from the *porta principale*. Villa d'Este.
- 3.6. Étienne Dupérac, detail of citron espaliers, from *Palazzo et Giardini di Tivoli*, 1573, engraving.
- 3.7. Johann Friedrich Greuter, Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides, frontispiece from Ferrari, *Hesperides sive de malorum aureorum cultura et usu*, 1646, engraving. Rome.

- 3.8. Johann Friedrich Greuter, The Hesperides plant a citrus garden in Italy, from Ferrari, *Hesperides sive de malorum aureorum cultura et usu*, 1646, engraving. Rome, 343.
- 3.9. Golden apples motif wall tiles, Fountain of the Dragon, maiolica. Villa d'Este.
- 3.10. Golden apple boughs, Rustic Fountain, mosaic. Palazzo corridor, Villa d'Este.
- 3.11. Golden apple boughs, Grotto of Diana, stucco and mosaic. Villa d'Este. Photograph by D. Spencer.
- 3.12. Citron motif floor tiles, Grotto of Diana, maiolica. Villa d'Este. Photograph by D. Spencer.
- 3.13. Girolamo Muziano, detail of pergola, from View of the Villa d'Este, c. 1568, fresco. Salone della Fontana, Villa d'Este.
- 3.14. Jasmine-trained wall, fourth terrace. Villa d'Este.
- 3.15. Sebastiano Serlio, Hedge labyrinth designs, from *Tutte l'opere d'architettura et prospetiva*, 1619. Venice, 199.
- 3.16. Tarquinio Ligustri, detail of hedge labyrinth at the Villa Lante, from *Giardino detto Barco di Bagnaia*, 1596, engraving. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
- 3.17. Giacomo Lauro, detail of hedge labyrinth at the Villa Mattei, from *Giardino dell Ill Sig Ciriaco Matthei posto nel Monte Celio*, 1614, engraving. British Museum, London.

4. Chapter 4

- 4.1. Nature Goddess. Villa d'Este.
- 4.2. Fountain of the Flood. Villa d'Este.
- 4.3. First terrace waterscape. Villa d'Este.
- 4.4. Cascade Fountain. Villa d'Este.
- 4.5. Fish ponds, view from the Cascade Fountain. Villa d'Este.
- 4.6. Grand Cascade, Valle d'Inferno. Tivoli. Photograph by D. Spencer.
- 4.7. Gaetano Cottafavi, Grand Cascade of the Aniene, from *Raccolta delle principali vedute di Roma e suoi contorni disegnate dal vero ed incise da Gaetano Cottafavi*, 1837, engraving. Rome.
- 4.8. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Veduta della cascata principale del fiume Aniene nella città di Tivoli*, 1691, engraving.
- 4.9. View of the Aniene waterfall beneath the Ponte Gregoriano. Tivoli.
- 4.10. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Veduta per fianco della cascata principale del fiume Aniene in Tivoli*, 1691, engraving.
- 4.11. Gaetano Cottafavi, Grotto of Neptune, from *Raccolta delle principali vedute di Roma e suoi contorni disegnate dal vero ed incise da Gaetano Cottafavi*, 1837, engraving. Rome.
- 4.12. Grotto of Neptune, Valle d'Inferno. Tivoli
- 4.13. Waterfall issuing from the Grotto of Neptune, Valle d'Inferno. Tivoli.

- 4.14. Waterfall issuing from Lake Pelago and cascading into the Grotto of the Sirens, Valle d'Inferno. Tivoli.
- 4.15. Grotto of the Sirens, Valle d'Inferno. Tivoli
- 4.16. Cascade fountain, Central Grotto of the Sibyls. Villa d'Este.
- 4.17. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Veduta delle peschiere e giuochi d'acqua nel piano del giardino*, 1691, engraving.
- 4.18. Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon, *The Papal Ass*, 1523, woodcut.

5. Chapter 5

- 5.1. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Veduta del palazzo dal piano del giardino con le sue fontane*, 1691, engraving.
- 5.2. View from the first terrace up the central axis to the Fountain of the Dragon. Villa d'Este.
- 5.3. Giant Turtle. Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.
- 5.4. Winged and snake-tailed woman. Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.
- 5.5. Elephant devouring a man. Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.
- 5.6. Lion and dog attacking a dragon. Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.
- 5.7. Hell Mouth. Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.
- 5.8. Garden inscription. Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.
- 5.9. Ulisse Aldrovandi, Ethiopian Dragon, from *Serpentum et draconum historiae*, 1640, woodcut. Bologna, 422.
- 5.10. Ulisse Aldrovandi, Dragon captured in Bologna, from *Serpentum et draconum historiae*, 1640, woodcut. Bologna, 404.
- 5.11. Giovanni Antonio Rusconi, Dragon devouring Cadmus' companions, from Dolce, *Le Transformationi*, 1553, woodcut. Venice, 59.
- 5.12. Giacomo Franco, Cadmus and the slain dragon, from Anguillara, *Le Metamorfosi*, 1584, engraving. Venice, 66.
- 5.13. Bernard Salomon, Dragon devouring Cadmus' companions, from Tournes, *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée*, 1557, woodcut. Lyons, plate 38.
- 5.14. Bernard Salomon, Cadmus slays the dragon, from Tournes, *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée*, 1557, woodcut. Lyons, plate 39.
- 5.15. Léon Davent, *Cadmus Fighting the Dragon*, c. 1540-45, etching after Francesco Primaticcio. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- 5.16. Cornelis van Haarlem, *Two Followers of Cadmus devoured by a Dragon*, 1588, oil on canvas. National Gallery, London.
- 5.17. Sea monster, scale dei bollori, central stairway. Villa d'Este.
- 5.18. Scale dei bollori, central stairway. Villa d'Este.
- 5.19. Scale dei bollori, left stairway. Villa d'Este.
- 5.20. Grotesque head, scale dei bollori, left stairway. Villa d'Este.

- 5.21. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Veduta delle fontane della cordonata, e scale, che ascende al vialone delle fontanelle*, 1691, engraving.
- 5.22. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Fontana de draghi detta la girandola sotto il vialone delle fontanelle*, 1691, engraving.
- 5.23. Fountain of the Dragon. Villa d'Este.
- 5.24. Water jet, Fountain of the Dragon. Villa d'Este.
- 5.25. Dragon statues, Fountain of the Dragon. Villa d'Este.
- 5.26. Girolamo Muziano, Hercules and the dragon, 1565-66, fresco. Sala di Ercole, Villa d'Este.

6. Chapter 6

- 6.1. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Veduta d'una parte delle fontanelle nel vialone sopra la fontana de draghi*, 1691, engraving.
- 6.2. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Fontana e prospetto di Roma antica con l'isola Tiberina dal lato sinistro del vialone fontanelle*, 1691, engraving.
- 6.3. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Fontana della Sibilla Tiburtina, ovvero Albunea detta il fontanone con le statue della Sibilla e fiume Erculane et Aniene dal lato destro dal vialone delle fontanelle*, 1691, engraving.
- 6.4. The Sibyl Albunea above the central cascade, Fountain of Tivoli. Villa d'Este.
- 6.5. Cesare Nebbia, The madness of Athamas induced by the Fury (foreground), Ino flees Greece with her son Melicertes (background), 1569, fresco. Seconda Stanza Tiburtina, Villa d'Este.
- 6.6. Cesare Nebbia, Ino and Melicertes are carried across the sea to Italy by Neptune and his nymphs at Venus' behest, 1569, fresco. Seconda Stanza Tiburtina, Villa d'Este.
- 6.7. Cesare Nebbia, Albunea presides over the Acque Albule whose waters flow into the Aniene, 1569, fresco. Seconda Stanza Tiburtina, Villa d'Este.
- 6.8. Cesare Nebbia, The veneration of Albunea at Tivoli after the discovery of her statue in the Aniene, 1569, fresco. Seconda Stanza Tiburtina, Villa d'Este.
- 6.9. Cesare Nebbia, The Sibyl's triumphal procession from Tivoli along the Via Tiburtina to Rome, 1569, fresco. Seconda Stanza Tiburtina, Villa d'Este.
- 6.10. Fountain of Pegasus. Villa d'Este.
- 6.11. *Tabula Peutingeriana*, detail of Rome and environs showing the Acque Albule, 'ad aqua albulas', thirteenth century copy of third century CE original.
- 6.12. Fountain of Tivoli. Villa d'Este.
- 6.13. Central Cascade, Fountain of Tivoli. Villa d'Este.
- 6.14. Sibyl Albunea and son, Fountain of Tivoli. Villa d'Este.
- 6.15. Reclining river god, Fountain of Tivoli. Villa d'Este.
- 6.16. Vase-bearing nymph, Fountain of Tivoli. Villa d'Este.
- 6.17. Central Fountain, Salone della Fontana. Villa d'Este.

- 6.18. Girolamo Muziano, View of the Fountain of Tivoli, 1565, fresco. Salone della Fontana, Villa d'Este.
- 6.19. Girolamo Muziano, View of the Fountain of the Flood, 1565, fresco. Salone della Fontana, Villa d'Este.
- 6.20. Alley of the Hundred Fountains. Villa d'Este.
- 6.21. East view along Alley of the Hundred Fountains towards the Fountain of Tivoli. Villa d'Este.
- 6.22. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Prospetto e cascata del fiume Aniene col tempio della Sibilla vontigua alla Roma antica nel piano del vialone delle fontanelle*, 1691, engraving.
- 6.23. Extant Tivoli diorama, Rometta. Villa d'Este.
- 6.24. Reclining Tiber river god, Rometta. Villa d'Este.
- 6.25. Extant Rome diorama, Rometta. Villa d'Este.
- 6.26. Pirro Ligorio, *Antiquae urbis Romae*, detail of the Capitoline showing the Temple of Jupiter, 1553, engraving. From A. P. Frutaz, *Le Pianta di Roma*, vol. 2, 1962, fig. 25.
- 6.27. Pirro Ligorio, *Antiquae urbis imago*, detail of the Capitoline showing the Temple of Jupiter, 1561, engraving. From A. P. Frutaz, *Le Pianta di Roma*, vol. 2, 1962, fig. 26.
- 6.28. Pirro Ligorio, *Antiquae urbis Romae*, detail of the Capitoline above the Tiber Island, 1553, engraving.
- 6.29. Pirro Ligorio, *Antiquae urbis imago*, detail of the Tiber Island as a boat, 1561, engraving.
- 6.30. Basilica di Santa Maria in Aracoeli. Rome.
- 6.31. Column inscribed 'A CUBICULO AUGUSTORUM' (from the bedchamber of Augustus), Basilica di Santa Maria in Aracoeli.
- 6.32. Nicolo Martinelli, The Sibyl's prophecy to Augustus on the Capitoline, 1565-67, fresco. North wall above the high altar, Basilica di Santa Maria in Aracoeli.
- 6.33. Nicolo Martinelli, Augustus' vision of the Madonna and Christ, 1565-67, fresco. Vault above the high altar, Basilica di Santa Maria in Aracoeli.
- 6.34. Nicolo Martinelli, Augustus' sacrifice to God on the *Ara Coeli*, 1565-67, fresco. South wall above the high altar, Basilica di Santa Maria in Aracoeli.

7. Chapter 7

- 7.1. Lionskin-clad Hercules, second century CE, marble. Inv. Ma. 75, Louvre, Paris.
- 7.2. Reclining Hercules, second century CE, marble. Cortile della Pigna, Vatican Museums, Vatican City.
- 7.3. Albrecht Dürer, *Hercules at the Crossroads*, c. 1498, engraving. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- 7.4. Paolo Veronese, *The Choice Between Virtue and Vice*, c. 1565, oil on canvas. Frick Collection, New York.
- 7.5. Titian, *Sacred and Profane Love*, c. 1514. Galleria Borghese, Rome.

- 7.6. Raphael, *Vision of a Knight*, c. 1504. National Gallery, London.
- 7.7. Adamo Scultori, *Hercules at the Crossroads*, c. 1547-87, engraving after Giulio Romano. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- 7.8. Annibale Carracci, *Choice of Hercules*, c. 1596, oil on canvas. Capodimonte Gallery, Naples.
- 7.9. Pirro Ligorio, Design for the Fountain of Venus (1), c. 1565, drawing. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.
- 7.10. Pirro Ligorio, Design for the Fountain of Venus (2), c. 1565, drawing. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.
- 7.11. Capitoline Venus, second century CE, marble. Inv. Scu. 409, Palazzo Nuovo, Musei Capitolini, Rome.
- 7.12. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Fontana di Bacco in una stanza contigua al fontanone nel piano delle fontanelle*, 1691, engraving.
- 7.13. Sandro Botticelli, *Birth of Venus*, c. 1480s, tempera on canvas. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.
- 7.14. Titian, *Venus Anadyomene*, c. 1520, oil on canvas. Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh.
- 7.15. Giambologana, Venus Pudica, c. 1572, marble. Grotta Grande, Boboli Gardens, Florence. From C. Lazzaro, *The Italian Renaissance Garden: From the Conventions of Planting, Design, and Ornament to the Grand Gardens of Sixteenth-Century Central Italy*, 1990, 209, fig. 200.
- 7.16. Grotto of Venus. Villa Lante, Bagnaia.
- 7.17. Benedetto Bordone, Poliphilo's choice between the three portals, from Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 1499, woodcut. Venice, 135.
- 7.18. Benedetto Bordone, Portal of Gloria Dei (Glory of God), from Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 1499, woodcut. Venice, 136.
- 7.19. Benedetto Bordone, Portal of Gloria Mundi (Glory of the World), from Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 1499, woodcut. Venice, 137.
- 7.20. Benedetto Bordone, Portal of Mater Amoris (Mother of Love), from Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 1499, woodcut. Venice, 139.
- 7.21. Benedetto Bordone, Isle of Cytherea, from Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 1499, woodcut. Venice, 311.
- 7.22. Joscelyn Godwin, Diagram of the Isle of Cytherea, from Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 2005, Appendix D, 275.
- 7.23. Diana, second century CE, marble. Inv. Scu. 62, Palazzo dei Conservatori, Musei Capitolini, Rome.
- 7.24. Actaeon relief, central niche, Grotto of Diana, stucco. Villa d'Este. Photograph by D. Spencer.
- 7.25. Benedetto Bordone, Diana and Actaeon, from Bonsignori, *Ovidio Metamorphoseos volgare*, 1497, woodcut. Venice, 21.

- 7.26. Giovanni Antonio Rusconi, Diana and Actaeon, from Dolce, *Le Transformationi*, 1553, woodcut. Venice, 63.
- 7.27. Bernard Salomon, Actaeon discovers Diana bathing, from Tournes, *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée*, 1557, woodcut. Lyons, plate 40.
- 7.28. Bernard Salomon, Death of Actaeon, from Tournes, *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée*, 1557, woodcut. Lyons, plate 41.
- 7.29. Titian, *Diana and Actaeon*, 1556-59, oil on canvas. National Gallery, London.
- 7.30. Paolo Veronese, *Diana and Actaeon*, 1560-65. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia.
- 7.31. Grotto of Diana. Villa d'Este.
- 7.32. Golden apples, fleur-de-lis and white eagles floor tiles, Grotto of Diana, maiolica. Villa d'Este. Photograph by D. Spencer.
- 7.33. Caryatids bearing golden apple boughs, Grotto of Diana, stucco and mosaic. Villa d'Este. Photograph by D. Spencer.
- 7.34. Diana and Callisto relief, Grotto of Diana, stucco. Villa d'Este. Photograph by D. Spencer.
- 7.35. Diana and Callisto relief, detail of Callisto as a bear, Grotto of Diana, stucco. Villa d'Este. Photograph by D. Spencer.
- 7.36. Diana and Callisto relief, detail of Juno seizing Callisto, Grotto of Diana, stucco. Villa d'Este. Photograph by D. Spencer.
- 7.37. Bernard Salomon, Diana and Callisto, from Tournes, *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée*, 1557, woodcut. Lyons, plate 26.
- 7.38. Daphne and Apollo relief, Grotto of Diana, stucco. Villa d'Este. Photograph by D. Spencer.
- 7.39. Daphne and Apollo relief, detail of river god Peneus, Grotto of Diana, stucco. Villa d'Este. Photograph by D. Spencer.
- 7.40. Daphne and Apollo relief, detail of Daphne's metamorphosis into a laurel, Grotto of Diana, stucco. Villa d'Este. Photograph by D. Spencer.
- 7.41. Bernard Salomon, Daphne and Apollo, from Tournes, *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée*, 1557, woodcut. Lyons, plate 14.
- 7.42. Diana and her attendants relief originally depicting Pan and Syrinx, Grotto of Diana, stucco. Villa d'Este. Photograph by D. Spencer.
- 7.43. Bernard Salomon, Pan and Syrinx, from Tournes, *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée*, 1557, woodcut. Lyons, plate 18.

INTRODUCTION

SETTING THE SCENE

The Villa d'Este at Tivoli

In 1550, the Neapolitan architect and antiquarian Pirro Ligorio (1512/13-83) was commissioned by Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este (1509-72) to transform the wild valley beneath his residence at Tivoli into palatial gardens. And so the Villa d'Este was born, a site where myth and reality merged in an elaborate iconographic, hydraulic and botanical schema devised by Ligorio. Here, a sculptural pantheon of gods, goddesses, heroes and monsters transformed the visitor's journey through the garden into a lushly storyboarded experience, reorienting them within the world of myth. Ligorio's design is captured in an engraving by French architect Étienne Dupérac (1573) and depicted in the frescoed view by Italian painter Girolamo Muziano (c. 1568) in the palazzo (figs. 1.1 and 1.2).

This thesis presents a new reconstruction and interpretation of Villa d'Este's ideological programmes, focalised through the symbolic and sensory experience of the sixteenth-century visitor and informed by classical and Renaissance conceptions of landscape as a site of cultural and metapoetic significance. Ligorio's design reconfigured the garden as a site of mythic encounter, but the full richness and complexity of what I interpret to be a plurality of complementary and intersectional encounters has not yet been recognised or evaluated. Tracing the sixteenth-century visitor's journey through the garden, I show how a model of active participation in a complex of mythic encounters immersed the strolling visitor in an unfolding drama. A description of the Villa d'Este's projected design by Ligorio (c. 1568) reveals an elaborate system of symbolism which orbited around Tivoli's patron deities, Hercules and the Tiburtine Sibyl, whose sculptural

incarnations occupied prominent positions within the garden. These statues were sited within mythically allusive locales and microcosmic representations of the Tiburtine landscape, invoking the classical mythological traditions which surrounded these figures and their Renaissance reiterations. In evocative mythscapes, visitors followed the footsteps of Hercules through the Garden of the Hesperides, reliving his violent confrontation with the dragon who guarded the golden apples within; and unwittingly reenacted the hero's choice between the paths of vice and virtue. Distilled Tiburtine landscapes commemorated the restoration of the region's classical prominence by Cardinal Ippolito under the auspices of the Tiburtine Sibyl, foregrounding the sacred sites at the nexus of her prophetic ministry.

My methodology takes shape from the world within which the Villa d'Este had its inception: the definition of the ideal villa's function and experience by Italian humanist Bonfadio Taegio in his influential treatise, *La Villa* (Milan, 1559). Taegio conveyed how villas were designed to appeal to both the mind and the body, simultaneously stimulating the intellect and the senses. Based on Taegio's definition, this thesis employs three main interdisciplinary approaches to explore the Villa d'Este as a symbolic and sensory landscape, investigating the intersection between these two modes of experience to create an holistic interpretative model. Where previous interpretative approaches to Italian Renaissance garden design have focussed on iconography, thereby privileging visual and intellectual perception as the principal modes of garden experience, I incorporate phenomenological methodologies from the field of sensory anthropology in order to examine the visitors' physical responses to the garden's range of somatic stimuli. By synthesising these two iconographic and phenomenological approaches, this is the first study to demonstrate how the symbolism invested in the Villa d'Este's iconography was

augmented by the immersive, multisensory effects of water features and planting schemes. My third approach applies ecocritical perspectives on landscape in the Cinquecento to the Villa d'Este in order to define the garden's symbolic relationship with the surrounding topography. It engages with the representation of Tiburtine landscape features and natural phenomena within the garden as creative expressions of and responses to environmental concerns. This results in a new interpretation of the Villa d'Este as a site which reflected Tivoli's complex relationship with the volatile natural forces that governed the region, giving new insight into attitudes towards landscape management and conservation in the Cinquecento.

To set the scene for my study, this Introduction outlines important historical and geographical context for the Villa d'Este. The first section, 'Tivoli's Ancient Legacy and Renaissance Revival' begins by outlining the ancient cultural legacy of the Villa d'Este's Tiburtine setting, which inspired the villa's creation and informed its design. It introduces the Villa d'Este's patron, Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, and designer, Pirro Ligorio, then charts the villa's inception and construction through the turbulent decades of the Cardinal's frustrated papal ambitions in Rome from 1550 to his death in 1572. In the next section, 'Reconstructing the Villa d'Este', I survey the wealth of contemporary sources employed both to reconstruct Ligorio's original design for the garden, and to map the sixteenth-century visitor's progress and experience throughout. This establishes the context for the key scholarship and core methodologies surveyed in Chapter 1, 'Surveying the Study of Italian Renaissance Gardens', which culminates in a overview of the individual chapters of my thesis.

Tivoli's Ancient Legacy and Renaissance Revival

The Villa d'Este grew from ancient ground. Located thirty kilometres east of Rome and connected to the capital by the Via Tiburtina, Tivoli (ancient Tibur) was a suburban retreat for Rome's elite from the late second century BCE. Tibur was the home of emperors, senators, patrons and poets, from Emperor Hadrian's sprawling architectural complex to the south-west (second century CE), to the riverside Villa of Manilius Vopiscus (first century CE) celebrated by the poet Statius to the north.¹ The hilltop town stands beneath Monte Catillo on a lower acclivity of the Monti Tiburtini overlooking the vast Roman Campagna, rising above sloping vineyards, orchards and olive groves, bordered by woodland — an enduring landscape, to this day characterised by the same agricultural and topographical features which defined the region in antiquity and the Renaissance.² On the eastern side of the town, the Aniene River tumbles in dramatic waterfalls into the gorge below, known as the Valle d'Inferno (Valley of Hell), before snaking across the Campagna to join with the Tiber north of Rome, supplying the city's four great aqueducts in antiquity.³ The Aniene also generates travertine, a prized limestone formed from calcium carbonate deposited by the river's mineral-rich waters, which has been quarried along the

¹ Statius, *Silvae* 1.3. The major studies on Tivoli are Coarelli's archaeological survey of ancient Tibur (2007: 479-96), Sciarretta's history from the Palaeolithic age to the modern day (2015) and Giuliani's history of the Valle d'Inferno at Tivoli (2005), which is now the site of the nineteenth-century Parco Villa Gregoriana. Material evidence of Tivoli's ancient luxury villas includes two late Republican villas on the town's western slopes, erroneously attributed to Gaius Cassius and Marcus Brutus; an Imperial estate on the Via Tiburtina built over what is believed to be a villa which belonged to Emperor Augustus; and the ruins of the Villa of Quintilius Varus (first century BCE) on the slopes of the Valle d'Inferno (Sciarretta 2005: 47-48; Coarelli 2007: 489).

² On Tivoli's enduring topographical and agricultural situation, see Carocci 1998: 517-18 and Sciarretta 2015: 92-94.

³ The Aqua Marcia (144 BCE), Aqua Claudia (38-52 CE), Anio Vetus (272 BCE) and Anio Novus (38-52 CE) carried water from the Aniene to Rome, and with the exception of the Aqua Marcia, crossed the Tiburtine region, and their ruins are still visible. On the source and course of these aqueducts, see Coarelli 2007: 447-49.

Via Tiburtina from antiquity to this day and was used to build many of Rome's famous monuments, including the Colosseum and Saint Peter's Basilica.⁴

In the Renaissance (as today), the municipality of Tivoli spanned an area of approximately seventy square kilometres, extending from the hilltop town to the lower south-western slopes dominated by Hadrian's Villa and to the spa town of Tivoli Terme (ancient Bagni di Tivoli) on the level plain below.⁵ This area is depicted on an eighteenth-century map of the Tiburtine region by local historians Stefano Cabral and Fausto Del Re (1778), which identifies the various ancient ruins and sites scattered across the region (fig. 1.3). In the classical period, however, the territory was far more extensive, covering an area of approximately 350 square kilometres which included much of the Aniene valley basin in the Roman Campagna.⁶ Enjoying a lucrative economic connection with Rome as a result of its strategic position and rich natural resources, ancient Tibur thrived under the benevolent eye of its patron deities. Hercules presided over the town's travertine trade and agricultural interests. He was venerated by stonemasons at the Temple of Hercules Saxanus (first century CE) in the Tiburtine forum, now buried beneath the Cathedral of San Lorenzo; and worshipped as the protector of transhumant flocks at the Sanctuary of Hercules Victor (first century BCE) on the Via Tiburtina outside the town — the ruins of which are overlooked by the Villa d'Este (figs. 2.1 and 2.2).⁷ Tibur was the gateway to Rome and Hercules Victor its gatekeeper: his suburban sanctuary, an important cult site

⁴ Valued from antiquity for its durability, travertine was identified as *lapis tiburtinus* (Tiburtine stone) by Vitruvius (*De architectura* 2.7.1-2) and Pliny (*Naturalis historia* 36.49). The major study on travertine is Pentecost 2005; see also Coarelli 2007: 480.

⁵ Sciarretta 2015: 11-12.

⁶ Coarelli 2007: 479-80.

⁷ Coarelli 2007: 489-92; Sciarretta 2015: 52-3.

and bustling livestock market, marked the transhumance route which led through the town from the Apennine highlands to Rome.⁸ Tibur was also the seat of the oracular Tiburtine Sibyl, Albunea, who was venerated at the circular temple (first century BCE) which overlooks the Valle d'Inferno from the eastern acropolis parallel to the Villa d'Este (figs. 2.3 and 2.4).⁹ Albunea also gave her name to the therapeutic sulphur springs which supplied the ancient baths at Tivoli Terme, the Acque Albule (ancient *Aquae Albulae*, 'white waters' or 'waters of Albula'), over whose waters the Sibyl's prophetic utterances resounded, according to classical poets.¹⁰ Cairoli Fulvio Giuliani's topographical map of modern Tivoli highlights the topographical relationship between the Sanctuary of Hercules Victor, the Temple of the Sibyl, the Valle d'Inferno and the Villa d'Este (fig. 1.4). Similarly, an early eighteenth-century map of Tivoli by Daniel Stoopendaal (1704) presents an idealised rendering of the town in the Renaissance, orientated east rather than north to emphasise the parallel orientation between the Villa d'Este and the Temple of the Sibyl (fig. 1.5).

This ancient, myth-steeped landscape, rich in natural and archaeological resources, proved fertile ground for the Renaissance of classical antiquity in the sixteenth century, inspiring Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este to build a villa to rival those that were emerging from archaeological and literary enquiry during the Cinquecento. Born in 1509 into one of

⁸ On the religious and economic significance of the Sanctuary of Hercules Victor and the importance of the ancient transhumance route through Tivoli, see Coarelli 2007: 489-92 and Frizell 2009: 31-37.

⁹ Although it was known as the Temple of the Sibyl in the Renaissance, the temple's ancient dedication has been debated and variously identified with Vesta and Hercules, but the Sibyl remains the favoured attribution, based on the presence of a small cupboard set into the wall directly opposite the entrance to the temple, which is believed to have held a sibylline text (Giuliani 2005: 39-41; Coarelli 2007: 495).

¹⁰ On the baths, built by Hadrian in the second-century CE, see Mari 1983: 295-96 and Frizell 2009: 35-36. The medicinal properties of the Acque Albule were celebrated in antiquity (Strabo, *Geographica* 5.3.11; Pliny the Elder, *HN* 31.6), whilst poets described Albunea's prophetic presence (Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.82-84; Horace, *Odes* 1.7.12-13; Statius, *Silv.* 1.3.75).

Italy's oldest ruling families, Ippolito was the second son of Lucrezia Borgia (1480-1519) and Alfonso I d'Este (1476-1534), the third Duke of Ferrara, a flourishing centre of humanism and the arts where Ippolito was raised and educated.¹¹ There, he developed a lifelong passion for collecting antiquities which would one day draw him to Tivoli's ruin-scattered environs.¹² A family connection with the French court ensured an illustrious political career which yielded a vast income, facilitating Ippolito's lavish lifestyle and making him one of the wealthiest cardinals of the sixteenth century.¹³ Having spent over a decade in the French court from 1536 to 1549, Ippolito enjoyed a close relationship with King Francis I (reigned 1515-47), who helped him to secure the Cardinal's hat in 1539.¹⁴ Ippolito was also a favourite of King Henri II (reigned 1547-59), who appointed him Cardinal Protector of France in 1549, giving him charge of the French interests at the papal court.¹⁵ On the death of Pope Paul III, the Cardinal returned to Rome to enter the conclave of 1549-50 as the French candidate, but after his candidacy was rejected, he supported the election of Pope Julius III, who in return appointed Ippolito governor of Tivoli.¹⁶

¹¹ My portrait of Cardinal Ippolito's life and career is indebted to Pacifici's biography (1920), which incorporates much of the Cardinal's personal correspondence and accounts; and to Hollingsworth's studies (2000: 105-126, 2005, 2010: 132-52, 2016: 81-94) which explore the Cardinal's vast income and lavish expenditure throughout his career, and are meticulously reconstructed from Ippolito's letters and account books held in the Archivio di Stato, Modena.

¹² Having amassed one of the largest collections in Rome on his death in 1572, Ippolito's mania for acquiring antiquities is well documented and charted over his lifetime by Hollingsworth 2005: 44-45, 121, 190-91, 247.

¹³ Hollingsworth 2000: 105, 2005: 226, 2010: 132-33. The Este family had been connected with the French royal family from 1528, when Ippolito's older brother, Duke Ercole II d'Este married Renée of France, the sister-in-law of King Francis I.

¹⁴ Pacifici 1920: 29-56; Hollingsworth 2000: 105-6, 2005: 199-232.

¹⁵ Pacifici 1920: 98-108; Hollingsworth 2000: 106, 2005: 264-65.

¹⁶ Hollingsworth 2005: 264-65.

It was in September 1550 that Cardinal Ippolito first retired to Tivoli, there to lick his wounds following his first failed attempt to secure the papacy.¹⁷ Here, he found consolation in undertaking an extensive archaeological campaign to expand his collection of antiquities, employing Pirro Ligorio to excavate Hadrian's Villa and the ruins strewn across the Tiburtine region.¹⁸ As a result of his antiquarian expertise, Ligorio was also entrusted with the Cardinal's vision for the Villa d'Este: a commission to transform the governor's residence, an old Franciscan monastery on Tivoli's western slopes, into a palatial villa after classical models. Ligorio was an artist, architect and antiquarian, a man who shared Ippolito's passion for antiquity and had spent much of the time preceding his archaeological commission collating material for his antiquarian encyclopaedias, *Antichità di Roma*, which Ligorio spent the rest of his life compiling and refining until his death in 1583.¹⁹ Ligorio took the opportunity of his employment at Tivoli to explore the region, composing a study of Tivoli's history and geography together with a record of his

¹⁷ From 1549, Ippolito spent much of the rest of his life at the Villa d'Este in Tivoli and in Rome, where he had two residences: Palazzo Monte Giordano (now Palazzo Taverno) near the Ponte Sant' Angelo and Palazzo Montecavallo (now Palazzo Quirinale) on the Quirinal. The Cardinal's expenditure on these two residences is surveyed by Hollingsworth 2000: 110-24.

¹⁸ Pacifici 1920: 399; Coffin 2004: 14-15. My account of Ligorio's career derives principally from Coffin's biography (2004), the product of exhaustive research at the Archivio di Stato in Modena, Turin and Rome.

¹⁹ Coffin 2004: 19-25, 133-34; 2008: 44-45. There are four main collections of Ligorio's antiquarian manuscripts, known collectively as *Antichità di Roma*, but for the purpose of this study all references to *Antichità* refer to Ligorio's two major encyclopaedic works: the Naples manuscripts and the Turin manuscripts. Composed first were the Naples manuscripts (c. 1535-68), comprising twenty-nine books organised by subject matter in ten volumes (Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, XIII.B.1-10). Among these, the volume on the ancient gods is of greatest relevance to my study, which was compiled in the 1550s (*Libro X dell'antichità di Pyrrho Ligorio, nel quale si tratta de alcune cose sacre, et imagini, ornamenti degli dii de' gentili, et delli loro origini, et di chi prima le mostrò al mondo simbolicamente adorarli o reverirli*, Naples MS XIII.B.3). The Turin manuscripts (c. 1568-83) are divided into two groups: Turin A is in nine volumes organised according to subject matter (Turin, Archivio di Stato, a.II.6.J.19-a.II.14.J.27); and Turin B is an encyclopaedia of antiquity in eighteen volumes organised alphabetically, comprising twenty-three books (Turin, Archivio di Stato, a.III.3.J.1-a.III.15.J.13 and a.II.1.J.14-a.II.5.J.18). In addition to these manuscripts are two single volumes: the Paris manuscript on the city of Rome, dedicated to Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este and compiled in the 1550s (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ital. 1129); and the Oxford manuscript, comprised of miscellaneous drawings and notes which were collated after Ligorio's death (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon.ital. 138). For a complete list of titles of Ligorio's antiquarian manuscripts, see Mandoswky and Mitchell 1963: 130-39; for their dating and an overview of their contents, see Vagenheim 1987: 262-87 and Schreurs 2000: 22-50.

excavations in the *Antichità di Roma* Turin manuscript entitled *Antica città di Tivoli*, completed in 1579.²⁰ This work demonstrates Ligorio's extensive research into the region's ancient legacy and celebrated landscape, which informed his design for the Villa d'Este.

Work on the Villa d'Este came to an abrupt halt, however, after Ippolito's papal aspirations were thwarted a second time in the conclave of 1555, when he was charged with simony by the newly elected Pope Paul IV, stripped of Tivoli's governorship and banished to Ferrara in disgrace, not to be recalled or reinstated until the election of Pope Pius IV in 1559.²¹ It was not until 1560, when Ippolito withdrew to Tivoli once again to find consolation in his country retreat, that work on the Villa d'Este commenced in earnest. Here, the Cardinal vented the frustrations of two failed papal candidacies on his ambitious and expensive building project, and undertook a programme of civic and landscape reforms to restore the Tiburtine region to its ancient prominence — projects which were later to be fuelled by the disappointment of two further failed papal candidacies in the conclaves of 1565-66 and 1572.²²

The site of the Villa d'Este was a dilapidated Franciscan monastery at the summit of Tivoli's western slopes, overlooking a steep, rugged valley leading down to the Via del

²⁰ Ligorio, *Libro ò vero trattato, dell'antichità XXII di Pyrrho Ligorio, patritio napolitano et cittadino romano, et cittadino romano, nel quale si dichiarano alcune famose ville, et particolarmente della antica città di Tibure et di alcuni monumenti* (Turin MS a.II.7.J.20), ed. Ten 2005 — in order to differentiate from general references to the Turin manuscripts, this manuscript will be cited as *Antica città di Tivoli*. In his introduction, Ligorio wrote that he began his study in 1538 after visiting Tivoli when it was under the governorship of his former patron, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (governor from 1535-50), and recorded its completion in 1579 (*Antica città di Tivoli* f. 3r).

²¹ Hollingsworth 2000: 107-8; 2005: 265, 2016: 81. The charges were justified, as the Cardinal's letters reveal he had paid out substantial bribes to procure votes in the conclaves of 1549-50 and 1555 (Pacifici 1920: 268-70).

²² The Cardinal's programme of renewal at Tivoli is discussed in Chapter 6, Section 6.1, pages 204-11.

Colle which joins with the Via Tiburtina outside the town.²³ To create a palazzo worthy of the Cardinal, a double loggia was added to the building's façade and following interior renovations, an extensive programme of fresco decoration was undertaken from 1565 by a succession of painting workshops.²⁴ Records show that building works had progressed sufficiently on the palazzo for the Villa d'Este to become Ippolito's permanent summer residence from 1565, from which time he spent the summer and early autumn months in Tivoli (with the exception of 1566, when he was in acting as regent in Ferrara) up to his death on 2nd December 1572.²⁵ Transforming the rugged valley below into palatial gardens, however, was a far more dramatic undertaking, with major landscaping taking place between 1563 and 1565.²⁶ Misleadingly named the Valle Gaudente (Merry Valley), the site was described by a local historian as 'rough and wild, with cavernous ditches which could have easily sheltered wolves and other wild animals'.²⁷ Undeterred, Ippolito 'ordered the scrubland to be uprooted, the great rocks cleaved and the ditches levelled', as Ligorio

²³ Villa payments records are collated in Pacifici 1920: 160-65, 1921: 58-90 and Coffin 1960: 7-40, and an overview of Cardinal Ippolito's expenditure on the Villa d'Este is given in Hollingsworth 2000: 124-26 .

²⁴ A detailed account of the villa's interior decoration, including payment records, is given by Coffin 1960: 41-68; see also Catalano 2003: 33-53 and Occhipinti 2009: 151-290. The decoration was begun under the direction of Girolamo Muziano (1565-66 and 1568), followed by Federico Zuccari (1566-67 and 1572), Livio Agrestio (1568), Cesare Nebbia (1569) and finally, Matteo Neroni and Durante Alberti (1570-71).

²⁵ Villa records collated in Pacifici 1921: 60 list Cardinal Ippolito's residencies at Tivoli:
 1550, 9th September - 28th October.
 1555, 1st July - mid September.
 1560, mid July - mid September.
 1564, 1st September - 20th September.
 1565, mid July - end of October.
 1567, mid July - mid September.
 1568, mid July - end of October.
 1569, 20th June - mid October.
 1570, 1st July - end of October.
 1571, mid July - mid November.
 1572, mid August - 4th October.

²⁶ Land in the valley was purchased from 1560-65, with major landscaping completed in 1565 when work commenced on the fountains (Coffin 1960: 7-8; Pacifici 1920: 160-65, 1921: 61-64).

²⁷ Zappi, *Annali e Memorie di Tivoli*, 1576, 55, ed. Pacifici 1920. Translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

recorded in his account of the building works.²⁸ To irrigate the valley and supply the garden's fountains, Ippolito also constructed two aqueducts: one from the Rivellesse spring in Monte Sant'Angelo (1560-61) and another from the Aniene River on the eastern side of the town (1564-65).²⁹ Thus tamed, the steep valley was landscaped to create terraced gardens, as witnessed in Muziano's fresco (c. 1568) in the Salone della Fontana of the palazzo (fig. 1.2). The slope is dominated by a central axis in line with the garden's public entrance on the Via del Colle and the double loggia of the palazzo at the summit. This central axis is intersected by thirteen horizontal avenues and eight vertical avenues, which divided the slope below the palazzo into four terraces. The gardens were adorned with statues unearthed in Ligorio's excavations and hewn from travertine, furnished with fountains sourced from local springs and the Aniene, and landscaped with trees from the surrounding groves to create a distinctively Tiburtine garden grown from ancient roots.

Reconstructing the Villa d'Este

A wealth of contemporary sources make it possible not only to reconstruct Ligorio's original design for the Villa d'Este, but also to map the sixteenth-century visitor's progress through and experience of the garden. The five principal accounts of the Villa d'Este surveyed below and Dupérac's engraving (1573) are collated in the accompanying digital Appendices. Although the projected plan for the Villa d'Este was not realised fully on the Cardinal's death in 1572, an exhaustive description of the garden by Ligorio enables a reconstruction of the original, intended design: *Descrittione di Tivoli, et Giardino*

²⁸ Ligorio, *MS* f. 248r.

²⁹ Ligorio, *MS* f. 248r; Pacifici 1920: 167. These aqueducts are discussed further in Chapter 6, page 207.

dell'Illustrissimo Cardinal di Ferrara (c. 1568), henceforth referred to as the Ligorio manuscript (Appendix A).³⁰ The Ligorio manuscript maps the garden's sculptural, hydraulic and horticultural schema terrace by terrace in accordance with the visitor's pattern of circulation, beginning at the public entrance on the Via del Colle at the bottom of the garden and concluding on the fourth terrace.³¹ It also outlines the symbolism invested in the garden's design, tracing the movement of the visitor through a series of narrative threads which intertwine mythic and geographical topoi derived from Ligorio's antiquarian writings and the surrounding Tiburtine landscape. To accompany his description of the garden, Ligorio also produced a detailed illustration with a legend which corresponded with that of the manuscript.³² Although Ligorio's original illustration has been lost, it was reproduced, complete with the original legend, in Dupérac's engraving which illustrates the Villa d'Este 'not as it is, but as it would be when completed', as one sixteenth-century visitor observed (fig. 1.1, Appendix B).³³

In addition to these sources, a cycle of eight dedicatory Latin epigrams on the Villa d'Este and Tivoli, composed between 1569 and 1571 by Ippolito's humanist advisor, Marc-Antoine Muret, gives further insight into the garden's symbolism; these were published in

³⁰ Ligorio, *MS* ff. 247r-266v (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale), in Coffin 1960: 142-50.

³¹ The statues described in the Ligorio manuscript correspond with the inventory of sculptures at the Villa d'Este which was taken immediately after Cardinal Ippolito's death by the notary Fausto Pirolo from 3rd-4th December 1572, entitled *Inventario dei beni del Cardinale Ippolito II d'Este trovati nel palazzo e giardino di Tivoli* (Rome, Archivio di Stato, vol. 6039, ff. 356r-387r). The provenance of many of these sculptures has been traced by Ashby 1908: 219-56, who also translated the 1572 inventory into English (1908: 242-50).

³² This accompanying illustration is cited in the Ligorio manuscript (f. 248r-v). Note, because of its intricacy, Dupérac's legend is not included in figure 1.1, but can be viewed in detail in its digital format in Appendix B.

³³ Audebert, *Journal*, 1576-77, 171, in Lightbown 1964. In the caption beneath the engraving, Dupérac prefaces the legend by acknowledging the original illustration on which his is based. On the dissemination of the Ligorio manuscript and accompanying illustration, see Coffin 1960: 141-42, 2004: 84-85.

his poetry collection, *Eiusdem alia quaedam Poematia* (Venice, 1575).³⁴ A prominent member of the Cardinal's household from 1559 and a close friend, Muret spent his summers with Ippolito at the Villa d'Este, where they would take daily strolls in the gardens and read to one other from the classical and humanist volumes comprising Ippolito's library.³⁵ Together, Ippolito and Muret founded the *Accademia degli Agevoli* at Tivoli in 1571, an academic group dedicated to the study of Tiburtine history and geography which met regularly at the Villa d'Este.³⁶ Based on Muret's expertise in classical humanist thought, his close relationship with Ippolito and regular residency at the Villa d'Este, David Coffin, Jean-Eudes Girot and George Hugo Tucker have proposed that Muret influenced the garden's ideological schema and have recognised the importance of his Tiburtine poetry cycle in decoding its symbolism.³⁷

Whilst Muret's poems, the Ligorio manuscript, and its accompanying illustration are all fundamental to understanding the authorial intentions of the garden's architect and patron, contemporary descriptions and illustrations also give valuable insight into the experience of visitors. The *Lex Hortorum* established in the fifteenth century meant that Italian Renaissance gardens were open to public access at the discretion of their patrons, enabling them to exhibit their wealth in the form of spectacular waterworks, sculpture

³⁴ Muret, *Poematia* 36-44. The relevant poems are quoted in the chapters instead of the Appendices.

³⁵ Muret, *Legeramus Tibure*, c. 1572, 94-95, in Frotscher 1841 vol. 3. For Muret's career in the Cardinal's employ, see Coffin 1979: 335-36 and Girot 2012: 18-26. A list of Ippolito's library books is in Pacifici 1920: 374-67.

³⁶ In addition to Ippolito and Muret, the group's original members included the historian Uberto Foglietta, Archbishop Francesco Bandini Piccolomini, the philosopher Flamino Nobili, Cardinal Scipione Gonzaga and a number of Tiburtine scholars including the historian Antonio del Re and the Bishop of Tivoli, Giovanni Andrea della Croce. For the group's manifesto, see Pacifici 1920: 59 and Coffin 1979: 335-36; for the list of members, see Sciarretta 2015: 107. Sciarretta is a member of the *Società Tiburtina di Storia d'Arte* at Tivoli, which can trace its inception to the *Accademia degli Agevoli*.

³⁷ Coffin 1960: 78-79, 86-87, 1979: 327-29, 335-36, 2004: 85, 98; Girot 2012: 18-26; Tucker 2018: 218-51.

collections and exotic plantings to a large and varied audience.³⁸ There are four principal historic visitor's accounts of the Villa d'Este, the earliest of which is by Uberto Foglietta, a friend of Ligorio and an historian in Cardinal Ippolito's entourage who was also a member of the *Accademia degli Agevoli*. Foglietta wrote a description of the garden in a letter from Tivoli on 3rd August 1569 to Cardinal Flavio Orsini, entitled *Tyburtinum Hippoliti Cardinalis Ferrariensis* (Appendix C).³⁹ Foglietta's description, beginning at the main entrance on the first terrace and systematically continuing to the fourth terrace, corresponds with the visitor's circulation pattern outlined in the Ligorio manuscript. Accounts of the Villa d'Este by two Tiburtine historians, in Giovanni Maria Zappi's *Annali e Memorie di Tivoli* (1576) and Antonio Del Re's *Dell'Antichità Tiburtine Capitolo V* (Rome, 1611), take the same route and are written from the first person perspective of the strolling visitor, vividly recreating their journeys through the garden.⁴⁰ Zappi's description, 'La descrizione del raro e gentil giardino del mondo fatto dall'animo regio della degna memoria dell'ill.mo e r.mo sig.r Hipolito Cardinal di Ferrara', gives unique insight into the garden's landscaping and planting schema (Appendix D).⁴¹ The lengthy account of Del Re, a keen antiquarian and original member of the *Accademia degli Agevoli*, entitled 'Villa della Serenissima Famiglia d'Este', is also particularly significant for this thesis in its

³⁸ On *Lex Hortorum* and public access to gardens in Latium in the Renaissance — discussed at length in Chapter 1, page 36 — see Coffin 1982: 201-32, 2008: 164-89.

³⁹ Foglietta, *Tyburtinum*, 3rd August 1569, 58-64, in Seni 1902. Foglietta described the garden's architect as 'my dear friend, Pirro Ligorio' (*Tyburtinum* 62).

⁴⁰ Zappi's *Annali e Memorie di Tivoli* was published by Pacifici 1920.

⁴¹ Zappi, *Annali* 55-65.

proposed interpretations of the garden's ideological programmes (Appendix F).⁴² Del Re drew upon the Ligorio manuscript and Ligorio's *Antica città di Tivoli*, but also evidences the plurality of possible narrative encounters within the garden by way of educated knowledge of classical sources.⁴³

The last of the four principal visitors' accounts is the journal entry of a French aristocrat, Nicolas Audebert, entitled '*Le Palais, Jardin, et Fontaines, de Tyvoly*' (1576-77, Appendix E), who was a guest at Villa d'Este after Ippolito's death when the estate had passed to his nephew, Cardinal Luigi d'Este (1538-86).⁴⁴ In contrast to the majority of visitors, who experienced the garden as an ascent from the public entrance on the first terrace, Audebert, who was accommodated in the palazzo, gives insight into the experience of the privileged elite who descended from the palazzo to enter the garden at its highest terrace.⁴⁵ Enjoying a personal connection with the villa's owner, Audebert was also given access to and instructed in the hydraulic features and operation of the garden's fountains, which his account is unique in elucidating.⁴⁶

Short reports on the Villa d'Este are also given in the diaries of Grand Tourists as part of their accounts of Tivoli, including the French humanist Michel de Montaigne

⁴² Del Re's *Dell'Antichità Tiburtine Capitolo V* was the only text in a twelve book opus on Tiburtine history that was published and is divided into two volumes: volume one is dedicated to the Villa d'Este (1611: 1-71) and volume two is an account of Tivoli's history and geography (73-128). The first four books of Del's Re's Tiburtine history were published as *Le Antichità Tiburtine opera postuma* by R. Del Re (Tivoli, 1883).

⁴³ Over twenty classical writers are referenced by Del Re and among them Ovid, Virgil and Pliny the Elder are the most cited.

⁴⁴ Audebert, *Journal*, Lansdowne MS 720, British Museum, London; in Lightbown 1964: 170-90.

⁴⁵ Nonetheless, and perhaps pointedly, Audebert recorded that Pope Gregory XIII entered from the main entrance at the lowest terrace (*Journal* 181). Today, visitors also experience the garden as a descent from the palazzo, as the public entrance is now located at the top of the valley on Piazza Trento.

⁴⁶ Audebert, *Journal* 169-70.

(1581) and English writer John Evelyn (1645).⁴⁷ Finally, a series of twenty-six engravings depicting views of Tivoli and the Villa d'Este produced by Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Le Fontane del Giardino Estense in Tivoli con li Loro Prospetti, e Vedute della Cascata del Fiume Aniene* (Rome, 1691), offer important insight into individual responses to the garden, depicting visitors engaging directly with the fountains and capturing their reactions of surprise, awe and delight.

The pattern of circulation outlined in the Ligorio manuscript and echoed in visitors' accounts demonstrates how the garden's terraced layout was designed to control movement and create a sequence of mythic encounters, in which each terrace constituted a distinct locale with its own narrative theme and sculptural characters. A brief reconstruction of the terraces according to Ligorio's design is useful to contextualise these themes and to identify the key protagonists in the garden's sculptural pantheon. The Villa d'Este's public entrance led into a profusion of manicured plantings that spanned the lower section of the first terrace, giving way to a dramatic waterscape dominated by fountains and pools, across which the multi-breasted Nature Goddess faced the sea god Neptune riding a hippocampus-drawn chariot.⁴⁸ At the heart of the densely wooded second terrace, statues of Hercules loomed above a fountain of water-spouting dragons which lurked in a cavernous hollow cut into the hillside.⁴⁹ On the third terrace, the Tiburtine Sibyl sat enthroned above a cascading fountain in imitation of the waterfalls overlooked by her temple at Tivoli and across a narrow alley of fountains, the goddess Roma presided over a

⁴⁷ Montaigne, *Journal*, April 1581, 98-100, trans. Frame 2003; Evelyn, *Diary*, 6th May 1645, 263-65, ed. Dobson 1906.

⁴⁸ Ligorio, *MS* f. 248v-249v, 252v-253v.

⁴⁹ Ligorio, *MS* f. 249v, 254r-256r.

diorama of ancient Rome.⁵⁰ At opposite ends of the third and fourth terraces, Venus and Diana, in their respective archetypal incarnations as seductress and huntress, resided within rock-hewn grottoes.⁵¹ In the midst of this colourful pantheon, two distinctly Tiburtine figures took centre stage, as the patronage of Tivoli's presiding deities, Hercules and the Tiburtine Sibyl, was reinvoked by colossal sculptural incarnations which occupied prominent positions on the garden's principal horizontal and vertical axes. Around these figures, Ligorio created an ideological schema of intertwining mythic and geographical themes which underscored Cardinal Ippolito's relationship with the town's tutelary divinities and the Tiburtine renaissance that was at the heart of Ippolito's vision for Tivoli under his governorship.

A colossal statue of the Tiburtine Sibyl surveys the main horizontal axis from her commanding vantage point above the Fountain of Tivoli, identified in the Ligorio manuscript as the garden's 'principal fountain'.⁵² The garden's geographical theme unfolded around the Sibyl on the upper first terrace and the third terrace. Here, Ligorio created distilled, hyperreal visions of the Tiburtine landscape, which gave prominence to the topographical features for which Tivoli was famed and the sites sacred to the Sibyl. The Villa d'Este was to be a palimpsest of Tivoli — mythic, ancient and modern — and the Aniene its beating heart, supplying the garden's lifeblood through fountains and watercourses, celebrating the region's regeneration under Cardinal Ippolito's governorship. The presence of Hercules also constituted a personal reference to the Cardinal; he was

⁵⁰ Ligorio, *MS* f. 249v-251r, 256r-264r.

⁵¹ Ligorio, *MS* f. 251v, 264r-266v.

⁵² Ligorio, *MS* f. 256r.

invoked not only as Tivoli's tutelary deity, but also as patron deity of the Este family, who claimed Hercules as their ancestor.⁵³ At the heart of the garden, three statues of Hercules were to stand sentinel, one above another ascending the central axis, according to the Ligorio manuscript, although these are no longer in situ.⁵⁴ The Hercules triad marked the pivotal point of the garden's two mythic themes. The first centred around Hercules' eleventh labour, for which the hero stole the golden apples that were guarded by an unsleeping dragon in the Garden of the Hesperides. On the second terrace, the dragon's presence was evoked at the Fountain of the Dragon, above which the Hercules triad stood, expansively signifying the hero's triumph over the Hesperides' monstrous guardian. The second mythic theme played out on the third and fourth terraces, the layout of which was conditioned to represent Hercules' choice between the paths of vice and virtue, indicated by the pivotal position of the Hercules triad at the divergence of the central axis between the Grotto of Venus Voluptas to the east and the Grotto of Chaste Diana to the west.

In this way, the narratology embedded in the Villa d'Este was designed as a conciliatory and self-propagated tribute to its patron, but previous approaches have engaged with these ideological programmes in too narrow and limited a way, focussing on the authorial intentions of the garden's patron and architect to the exclusion of the visitor's experience. Investigating the Villa d'Este's ideological programmes from the perspective of the sixteenth-century visitor, this thesis demonstrates how the garden was a visceral and immersive experience for visitors, who found themselves reoriented within a rich and

⁵³ The ducal secretary of Ercole II d'Este, Giovanni Battista Giraldi, claimed he had traced the family's ancestry to Hercules' marriage to Galata, daughter of the King of the Celts, in his history of Ferrara, *Ab epistolis de Ferraria et Atestinis Principibus Commentariolum* (Ferrara, 1566), in Graevius and Burmann 1722: 4-5.

⁵⁴ Ligorio, *MS* f. 254r-255r.

complexly allusive mythopoeic landscapes conjured from Ligorio's antiquarian imagination.

CHAPTER 1

SURVEYING THE STUDY OF ITALIAN RENAISSANCE GARDENS

Introduction

This chapter presents a survey of relevant scholarship on Italian Renaissance gardens and is divided into four substantial sections according to the main iconographic, reception-based, ecocritical and phenomenological approaches I employ, followed by an overview of my thesis. Section 1.1, ‘Reconstructing and Decoding the Garden’, traces the chronological development of reconstructive and interpretative methodologies, with an emphasis on scholarship which has demonstrated the pervasive influence of classical antiquity, of particular relevance for Ligorio’s design for the Villa d’Este. For this purpose, I also identify key classical source material which informed Italian Renaissance garden design. Situated within this body of scholarship are the five major interpretative studies of the Villa d’Este, the limitations of which are also addressed: David Coffin’s *The Villa d’Este at Tivoli*, ‘Tivoli’s Ancient Waters Revived’ in Claudia Lazzaro’s *The Italian Renaissance Garden*, David Dernie’s *The Villa d’Este at Tivoli*, the *Villa d’Este* by Isabella Barisi, Marcello Fagiolo and Maria Luisa Madonna, and Carmelo Occhipinti’s *Giardino delle Esperidi: Le tradizioni del mito e la storia di Villa d’Este a Tivoli*.⁵⁵ Where these studies are concerned principally with decoding the symbolism invested in the garden’s iconographic schema by Ligorio for Cardinal Ippolito, my thesis is grounded in scholarship which gives due prevalence to the experience and reception of the visitor, surveyed in Section 1.2, ‘Authorship and Experience’. It is in this study of garden reception that the ecocritical and phenomenological methodologies reviewed in the following sections had

⁵⁵ Coffin 1960; Lazzaro 1990: 215-42; Dernie 1996; Barisi, Fagiolo and Madonna 2003; Occhipinti 2009.

their inception. Section 1.3, 'Rewilding the Garden' frames my thesis within emerging scholarship which has engaged with the disquieting features of Italian Renaissance garden design, in the form of monstrous sculptural figures and the representation of wild nature within its landscaped spaces, exploring the provocations these features offered to visitors. It foregrounds pioneering ecocritical studies which have investigated the garden as a site where environmental concerns and anxieties were manifest. Section 1.4, 'Reinstating the Senses' highlights the exclusion of the senses from scholarship on Italian Renaissance gardens, and positions my thesis in relation to the few recent publications which have recognised the fundamental role of somatic perception within early modern gardens. Finally, Section 1.5, 'Into the Garden' presents an overview of my thesis, outlining how the methodologies discussed in this chapter are deployed and developed across the individual chapters of my study.

1.1 Reconstructing and Decoding the Garden

There have been three major waves of study in reconstructive and interpretative approaches to the Italian Renaissance garden, which have focussed on architecture, iconography and plantings. Four of the five key studies of the Villa d'Este fall into the second wave, with the exception of Lazzaro's work, which explored the planting scheme alongside the garden's iconographic elements. Early studies were undertaken primarily by architectural historians and as such focussed on reconstructing villa architecture and design, engaging with ancient monuments and accounts of Roman villas to establish the classical antecedents of Italian Renaissance gardens. This was followed by the development of iconographic analysis by art historians, who applied interpretative methods

from the field of art history to the garden's decorative programmes, drawing upon classical poetic sources to decode its mythic evocations and symbolism. The third wave of study engaged with the organisation of the garden's botanical elements, exploring how ancient agricultural and botanical treatises informed Renaissance horticultural knowledge, planting conventions and conceptions of the natural world.

The first academic publication dedicated to the Italian Renaissance garden was by architect Wilhelm Tuckermann, *Die Gartenkunst der italienischen Renaissance-Zeit*, which surveyed the architectural development of the Italian garden from classical antiquity to the Renaissance.⁵⁶ Tuckermann adopted a reconstructive, source-based approach to villa design, presenting architectural illustrations accompanied by discursive reconstructions. He was the first scholar to identify the influence of ancient villa descriptions as well as surviving monuments. Utilising the epistolary descriptions of Pliny the Younger's villas in Tuscany and Laurentinum (first century CE) — the most comprehensive accounts of Roman villa gardens extant — Tuckermann demonstrated how key features of these ancient villas were replicated in Renaissance villa design.⁵⁷ His study paved the way for the architectural surveys of Inigo Triggs, *The Art of Garden Design in Italy*, Marie Luise Gothein, *Geschichte der Gartenkunst*, and Luigi Dami, *Il giardino italiano*, each of which produced a chronological conspectus to evidence the developmental relationship between the villas of classical antiquity and the Italian Renaissance.⁵⁸ Their critical engagement with classical source material alongside Renaissance design principles marked Triggs,

⁵⁶ Tuckermann 1884.

⁵⁷ Pliny, *Epistulae* 2.7, 5.6.

⁵⁸ Triggs 1906; Gothein 1914, published in English in 1928; Dami 1924, published in English in 1925.

Gothein and Dami out from their contemporaries, whose works were limited either to architectural studies in the academic field which overlooked classical influence, or amateur photographic anthologies, travel accounts and guidebooks.⁵⁹

As burgeoning interest in the Italian Renaissance garden converged with the rise of Fascism under Mussolini, the next key contribution to the field was the Fascist exhibition curated by Ugo Ojetti, *Mostra del giardino italiano*, held from April 25th to July 31st 1931 at the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence.⁶⁰ The exhibit of over 4,000 artefacts traced the history of Italian gardens from ancient Pompeii to the late-eighteenth century, a nationalistic display celebrating almost two thousand years of Italian garden history. It was not until the mid-twentieth century, however, that research on classical architectural influence was advanced significantly in John Coolidge's article, 'The Villa Giulia: A Study of Central Italian Architecture in the Mid-Sixteenth Century', and James Ackerman's monograph, *The Cortile del Belvedere*.⁶¹ Drawing extensively on ancient material culture, these were the first studies to demonstrate the foundational role of a range of classical design models on

⁵⁹ Charles Platt's *Italian Gardens* (1894), Julia Cartwright's *Italian Gardens of the Renaissance and Other Studies* (1914) and John Shepherd and Geoffrey Jellicoe's *Italian Gardens of the Renaissance* (1925) are key architectural surveys. The most famous travel account is Edith Wharton's *Italian Villas and their Gardens* (1904), whose generously illustrated study proved a keen interest in and understanding of garden design. Lavishly photographed guidebooks also include Aubrey Le Blond's *The Old Gardens of Italy: How to Visit Them* (1912) and Rose Standish Nichols' *Italian Pleasure Gardens* (1928).

⁶⁰ The exhibition catalogue was edited by Alfredo Lensi and Ugo Ojetti, with an introduction by Ojetti (1931: 23-25).

⁶¹ Coolidge 1943; Ackerman 1954. Although studies focus principally on ancient material evidence, Ackerman acknowledged the importance of literary accounts of Roman villas, citing descriptions of Nero's Domus Aurea by Tacitus (*Annales* 15.42-43) and Suetonius (*Nero* 31) and Pliny's country villas (*Ep.* 2.7, 5.6) as providing important architectural models.

individual gardens, heralding the next wave of scholarship on the Italian Renaissance garden to which classical influence was integral.⁶²

The next major advancement in the field was David Coffin's groundbreaking monograph, *The Villa d'Este at Tivoli*.⁶³ Not only was this the earliest and most definitive study of the Villa d'Este, it also marked a departure from the architectural focus of previous scholarship by applying iconographic methodologies from the field of art history to the garden's sculptural programmes.⁶⁴ The wealth of contemporary source material on the Villa d'Este enabled Coffin to present a reconstruction of the villa at the apex of its original design, which drew upon the Ligorio manuscript, Étienne Dupérac's engraving, financial records and visitors' accounts (fig. 1.1).⁶⁵ Coffin demonstrated how the Villa d'Este was designed with an ideal circulation pattern for visitors, as outlined in the Ligorio manuscript, through which its iconographic programmes were designed to be encountered and interpreted in a specific sequence to form a cohesive ideology. Where his predecessors considered the impact of ancient material culture and didactic sources on villa design, Coffin drew upon a range of poetic texts to interpret the mythic symbolism manifest in the Villa d'Este's iconography, identifying Ovid's compendium of classical mythology,

⁶² Key architectural studies which followed include Wolfgang Lotz's 'Architecture in the Later 16th Century' (1958: 129-39), Christoph Luitpold Frommel's *Die Farnesina und Peruzzis Architektonisches Früwerk* (1961) and *Der römische Palastbau der Hochrenaissance* (1973) and Ackerman's *Palladio's Villas* (1967).

⁶³ Coffin 1960.

⁶⁴ Soon after Coffin's monograph was published, Carl Lamb's *Die Villa d'Este in Tivoli: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Gartenkunst* (1966) appeared, although they were unaware of each other's research due to the restrictions following the Second World War. Like Coffin, Lamb examined the villa's interior and exterior iconography, although consideration of the classical influence is significantly less prevalent.

⁶⁵ A reconstruction of the garden is presented in the chapter, 'The Gardens and Fountains', and the following chapter, 'The Interior Decoration of the Villa', is dedicated to the palazzo (Coffin 1960: 14-40, 41-68).

Metamorphoses (first century CE), as a principal source.⁶⁶ Building on this text, together with Renaissance mythographies, Ligorio's antiquarian writings and Muret's dedicatory epigrams on the Villa d'Este, Coffin elucidated the mythical and allegorical references of the Ligorio manuscript, and identified three main systems of symbolism.⁶⁷ He demonstrated how the garden's design and decoration was conditioned to represent two myths of Hercules. First, Hercules' eleventh labour, whereby the hero stole the golden apples from the Garden of the Hesperides, was represented on the second terrace; and second, Hercules' choice between the paths of vice and virtue was illustrated on the third and fourth terraces.⁶⁸ In addition to these mythic narratives, Coffin also observed that the fountains on the third terrace were designed to recreate the natural landscape of Tivoli and the progress of the Aniene River from Tivoli to Rome.⁶⁹

Whilst the principal systems of symbolism identified by Coffin have been acknowledged in subsequent studies of the Villa d'Este and are foundational to this thesis, his reading is not without limitations. Identifying Hercules as the garden's sole protagonist, he overlooked the ideological significance of the Tiburtine Sibyl, a figure central to my interpretation. In doing so he failed to recognise the geographical schema which orbited around this figure, not only apparent on the third terrace, but also the upper first terrace, as I explore in Chapters 4 and 6. Furthermore, Coffin's iconographic focus meant that the role

⁶⁶ This interpretation is outlined in the chapter 'The Villa's Symbolism and Pirro Ligorio' (Coffin 1960: 78-97), which is reiterated in Coffin's biography of Ligorio in 'The Villa d'Este at Tivoli' (2004: 83-105).

⁶⁷ In addition to *Metamorphoses*, Coffin also cited Hesiod's *Theogonia*, Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Fasti*. Among the Renaissance works, Coffin cited Lelio Gregorio Giraldi's *Herculis vita* (Ferrara, 1539) and Pierio Valeriano's *Hieroglyphica* (Basel, 1556), as well as Muret's *Dedicato hortorum Tiburtinorum* (1575).

⁶⁸ Coffin 1960: 78-85; Ligorio, *MS* f. 254r 14-f. 254v 15.

⁶⁹ Coffin 1960: 85-88; Ligorio, *MS* f. 256r 22-262v 50.

of fountain water effects and plantings in enriching the visitor's experience and understanding of the ideological programmes was elided.

Although Coffin developed a new methodological framework for interpreting the ideological programmes of Italian Renaissance gardens, it was Elisabeth MacDougall who established his interpretative approach within the wider discipline. She began by modelling her PhD thesis, *The Villa Mattei and the Development of the Roman Garden Style* — an analysis of the Villa Mattei (constructed in the 1580s) — on Coffin's approach to the Villa d'Este.⁷⁰ MacDougall went on to adopt a greater synthesis between ancient literary and iconographic sources than Coffin, identifying classical tropes and narratives manifest in the allegorical programmes across a range of Italian Renaissance gardens, as evidenced in her series of pioneering articles which were collated in *Fountains, Statues and Flowers: Studies in Italian Gardens of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*.⁷¹ She demonstrated how scant archaeological evidence meant Renaissance garden designers drew extensively upon the efflorescence of classical literature for instruction and inspiration.⁷² Engaging with key design features, MacDougall identified groves, grottoes and fountains with the sacro-idyllic locales and landscapes described in pastoral and epic poetry, which were designed to evoke the classical literary ideal of the *locus amoenus* (pleasant place) — a

⁷⁰ MacDougall 1970. The Villa Mattei on the Caelian Hill in Rome was constructed on the site of a vineyard in the 1580s by Ciriaco Mattei and is now the site of the Villa Celimontana.

⁷¹ MacDougall 1994. This includes the following articles (listed in order of original publication): 'Ars Hortulorum: Sixteenth Century Garden Iconography and Literary Theory in Italy' (1972: 37-59); 'The Sleeping Nymph: Origins of a Humanist Fountain Type' (1975: 357-65); 'L'Ingegnoso Artificio: Sixteenth Century Garden Fountains of Rome' (1978: 85-113); 'A Circus, a Wild Man, and a Dragon: Family History and the Villa Mattei' (1983: 121-30); 'Imitation and Invention: Language and Decoration in Roman Renaissance Gardens' (1985: 119-34); and 'Il Giardino all'Antico: Roman Statuary and Italian Renaissance Gardens' (1989: 139-54). Subsequent references are to MacDougall 1994.

⁷² Archaeological remains of ancient gardens known in the sixteenth century included Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli, the Horti Liciniani and Villa of Maxentius in Rome and the Villa of Domitian at Castel Gandolfo.

concept discussed further in Section 1.3 below.⁷³ In doing so, she established the Italian Renaissance garden as a landscape of literary allusion, presenting a framework for the interpretation of iconography, fountains and landscaping based on classical invocation.

Critically, MacDougall was among the first scholars to examine the role of plantings in Italian Renaissance gardens and presented a reconstruction of the bulb garden of Cardinal Antonio Barberini (1607-71) at the Palazzo Barberini in Rome, based on an original inventory and Renaissance horticultural treatises.⁷⁴ She acknowledged and built upon the pioneering scholarship of Georgina Masson, whose contribution to the field of garden history has often been sidelined because she had no academic affiliation and her exposition was more lucid than critical. Masson's *Italian Gardens* comprises a series of reconstructions of gardens from antiquity to the seventeenth century which included their planting schemes.⁷⁵ The ambitious scope of her study and the volume of source material used to catalogue the plants grown in Italian gardens marked Masson out as an important contributor to the field of garden history.⁷⁶ In her subsequent publication, 'Italian Flower Collectors' Gardens in 17th Century Italy', Masson highlighted the disproportionate attention given to architecture and iconography, identifying a lacuna in scholarship on the fundamental role of plantings to Italian Renaissance garden design.⁷⁷

⁷³ MacDougall 1994: 67-78, 89-111. Among the epic works, MacDougall emphasised the influence of Homer's *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, together with pastoral poetry, including Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, Horace's *Odes* and Theocritus' *Idylls*.

⁷⁴ MacDougall 1994: 219-47.

⁷⁵ Masson 1961.

⁷⁶ Masson's contribution to the field was acknowledged when she was invited as one of four speakers at the first Dumbarton Oaks colloquium, *The Italian Garden* (24th April, 1971), the proceedings of which were published under the same title in 1972.

⁷⁷ Masson 1972: 61-80

This lacuna was subsequently addressed in Claudia Lazzaro's groundbreaking publication, *The Italian Renaissance Garden: From the Conventions of Planting, Design, and Ornament to the Grand Gardens of Sixteenth-Century Central Italy*. Lazzaro explored the Renaissance cultural understanding of the natural world and its mediation through planting conventions and iconographic representations of nature in the garden, demonstrating the classical invocation therein.⁷⁸ After surveying the ancient didactic and poetic texts which informed Renaissance horticultural practice, she identified the classical models of the garden's plant-led features: from groves and orchards designed to evoke the literary landscapes of myth and pastoral poetry, to labyrinths, arbours, pergolas, trellises and topiary which originated in ancient Roman gardens.⁷⁹ Her publication remains the key study on the role of plantings in Italian Renaissance garden design, paving the way for the recent works of Margherita Zalum, *Passione e cultura dei fiori tra Firenze e Roma nel XVI e XVII secolo*, and Elizabeth Hyde, *Cultivated Power: Flowers, Culture, and Politics in the Reign of Louis XIV*, which investigated the political and economic significance of exotic flower collections in the Renaissance.⁸⁰

The second part of Lazzaro's *The Italian Renaissance Garden* comprises four case studies on the Villa Castello and Boboli Gardens in Florence, both of which belonged to Cosimo I de' Medici (1519-74); the Villa Lante at Bagnaia of Cardinal Gianfrancesco

⁷⁸ Lazzaro 1990.

⁷⁹ Lazzaro 1990: 20-130. Lazzaro recognised the influence of ancient agricultural treatises, which instructed on plant cultivation: Cato's *De agricultura* (second century BCE), Varro's *De re rustica* (first century BCE), Columella's *De re rustica* (first century CE) and Palladius' *Opus agriculturae* (fifth century CE) were published in the collections *Rei rusticae scriptores* (Venice, 1472) and *Libri de re rustica* (Venice, 1514). Theophrastus' *Historia plantarum* (late fourth to early third century BCE), Dioscorides' *De materia medica* (first century CE) and Pliny's *Naturalis historia* (first century CE) were also mined extensively for information on plant classification and cultivation. Theophrastus's *Historia plantarum* was first published in 1483 (Treviso) and Pliny's *Naturalis historia* was first published in 1469 (Venice). Dioscorides' *De materia medica* was first published in Italian with a commentary by physician Pietro Andrea Mattioli (Venice, 1544).

⁸⁰ Hyde 2005; Zalum 2008.

Gambara (1533-87); and the Villa d'Este.⁸¹ In detailed reconstructions, she defined the aesthetic value of planting schemes to each garden's iconographic programmes. This brings us to the second major study on the Villa d'Este, 'Tivoli's Ancient Waters Revived', in which Lazzaro developed Coffin's reconstruction of the villa by reflecting on the garden's plantings schemes.⁸² Echoing Coffin, she characterised the visitor's journey through the garden as one of progressive narrative encounters, reiterating his interpretation of the garden's Hesperidian theme.⁸³ Lazzaro also offered new insight into Coffin's geographical exposition of the third terrace by considering its formal and symbolic relationship with the surrounding Tiburtine landscape, demonstrating how the locations of the fountains corresponded geographically with the landmarks they were intended to represent.⁸⁴ Like Coffin, however, Lazzaro overlooked the ideological importance of the Tiburtine Sibyl in this schema and failed to recognise the geographical theme on the upper first terrace. Furthermore, Lazzaro's reconstruction of Villa d'Este's botanical schema was limited to major horticultural features and did not include a number of plantings identified in the Ligorio manuscript and visitors' accounts, whilst also failing to consider the sensory properties of plantings beyond their aesthetic value. Nor did she recognise the symbolic potential of individual plants, emphasising the role of the planting schema in transforming the Villa d'Este into a mythically allusive landscape.

⁸¹ Lazzaro 1990: 167-269.

⁸² Lazzaro 1990: 215-42.

⁸³ Lazzaro 1990: 223-25.

⁸⁴ Lazzaro 1990: 230-37.

We turn now to the additional major interpretative studies on the Villa d'Este, beginning with David Dernie's *The Villa d'Este at Tivoli*.⁸⁵ Although Dernie contributed to a greater understanding of the villa's design and architecture, his exposition of the ideological schema not only relied heavily on previous interpretations, but is also riddled with inaccuracies. He misquoted the Ligorio manuscript on a number of occasions and omitted citations throughout, which shows he did not access the wealth of contemporary source material available. Rather than exploring the garden from the perspective of the strolling visitor, like Coffin and Lazzaro, Dernie presented a series of isolated case studies on the garden's fountains and as such, he overlooked the significance of the garden's plantings and landscaping. Furthermore, he muddled the various incarnations of the garden over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, describing ideological programmes which never existed, as they are a patchwork of decorative programmes from across the centuries.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, Dernie made some insightful observations on the garden's formal relationship with the surrounding landscape, although his survey of Tivoli's topography is not wholly accurate.

The next major study is the *Villa d'Este* edited by Isabella Barisi, Marcello Fagiolo and Maria Luisa Madonna, which incorporated and developed their earlier research on the Villa d'Este in a single volume.⁸⁷ Barisi's contribution, 'The Design of the Garden and its Botanic Architecture' surveyed the landscaping and plantings laid out in Ligorio's original

⁸⁵ Dernie 1996.

⁸⁶ A key example of this is his discussion of the Fountain of the Dragon on the second terrace, in which Dernie describes a statue of Jupiter behind the fountain as part of the original symbolism devised by Ligorio (1996: 37-45), when this statue was a seventeenth century addition and the Ligorio manuscript describes a statue of Hercules behind the fountain (*MS* f. 254r 14).

⁸⁷ Barisi, Fagiolo and Madonna 2003, trans. Bates, Byatt and Weston.

design and traces the development of the garden's botanical elements from the sixteenth century to the present day.⁸⁸ The two chapters by Fagiolo and Madonna are dedicated to interpreting the garden's iconographic schema: 'The Myths of Ippolito's Garden' and 'Pirro Ligorio and the "teatri delle acque": The Oval Fountain, the Rometta Fountain and the Water Organ'.⁸⁹ Unlike Coffin and Lazzaro, they do not offer a reconstruction of the garden, but instead examine its main patterns of symbolism. Their analyses are founded on the garden's Hesperidian and geographical themes identified by Coffin, but they also explore the symbolism's evolution as the garden was altered by successive owners in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Significantly for this thesis, Fagiolo and Madonna were the first to recognise the Tiburtine Sibyl as one of the garden's central protagonist, and proposed that the third terrace's geographical schema was intertwined with a mythic narrative which represented the Sibyl's initiatory journey from Greece to Italy.⁹⁰

The most recent study of the Villa d'Este features in Carmelo Occhipinti's *Giardino delle Esperidi: Le tradizioni del mito e la storia di Villa d'Este a Tivoli*.⁹¹ Rather than focussing on the Villa d'Este as the title indicates, Occhipinti also explores the history of Tivoli, the design and decoration of Monte Giordano (Ippolito's residence in Rome), as well as the artistic patronage of the Este family, with only one chapter dedicated to the

⁸⁸ Barisi 2003: 55-82. The study includes and develops material from Barisi's earlier articles: 'Anticipazioni sul restauro del verde storico di Villa d'Este' (1980: 55-59), 'Villa d'Este a Tivoli' (1989: 329-40), 'Villa d'Este' (1991: 153-58) and 'I restauri del giardino di Villa d'Este' (1992: 133-42).

⁸⁹ Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 83-94, 95-110. Both chapters incorporate material from their earlier studies, including Fagiolo's articles: 'Il significato dell'acqua e la dialettica del giardino: Pirro Ligorio e la "filosofia" della villa cinquecentesca' (1979: 179-89) and 'Il giardino come teatro del mondo e della memoria', (1980:125-47); and Madonna's articles: 'Il Genius Loci di Villa d'Este: Miti e misteri nel sistema di Pirro Ligorio' (1979: 190-226), 'Pirro Ligorio e Villa d'Este a Tivoli: la scena di Roma e il "mistero" della Sibilla' (1981: 173-96) and 'La "Rometta" di Pirro Ligorio in Villa d'Este a Tivoli: un incunabolo tridimensionale' (1991, unpaginated).

⁹⁰ Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 95-101.

⁹¹ Occhipinti 2009.

garden, ‘Giardino delle Esperidi. Cibeles: il quattro, il quadrato, il cubo’.⁹² Expanding on Coffin’s Hesperidian reading, Occhipinti proposed that Ligorio invested the villa’s design with a complex numerological dimension based on Platonic principles of geometry, through which the statues of Hercules and the Nature Goddess assumed an allegorical significance, symbolising a harmonious union of art and nature.⁹³ Beginning with the first terrace’s quadripartite design, he traced the repetition of fours, squares and cubes throughout the garden and palazzo.⁹⁴ This pattern, Occhipinti argued, reflected Plato’s identification of the earth with a cube, which was reiterated by Ligorio in *Antichità di Roma*, who explained the etymological derivation of the term ‘cube’ from the Nature Goddess’s cognomen Cybele, stating that this shape ‘represents the firmness of the earth’.⁹⁵ Thus, Occhipinti interpreted the garden’s quadripartite design and decoration as an image of the earth, which was embodied by the Nature Goddess. Unifying this reading with the garden’s Hesperidian symbolism, he also attributed the repetition of the number four to the Hesperides, who numbered four according to the mythographer Fulgentius,

⁹² Occhipinti 2009: 321-409. The first chapter surveys the wealth of visual depictions and literary descriptions of Tivoli, the Villa d’Este and Monte Giordano from the sixteenth century to the eighteenth century (13-112); the second is dedicated to Tivoli’s churches and Christian festivals (113-150); the third charts the design and decoration of the palazzo (151-290); and the fourth explores the artistic patronage of the Este family — focussing on the works of Raphael, Titian and Palma Vecchio — and catalogues the paintings at Monte Giordano (291-320).

⁹³ Occhipinti 2009: 321-48.

⁹⁴ Occhipinti 2009: 324-27; in particular, he highlighted first terrace’s design composed of four plant beds subdivided into squares that was intersected by the four arms of the cruciform pergola and flanked by four labyrinths, above which four pools were planned to spanned the terrace, as shown by Dupérac (fig. 1.1).

⁹⁵ Plato, *Timaeus* 21-22; Occhipinti 2009: 327-32. Elucidating the etymology of ‘Cybelle’, Ligorio explained it denoted the cuboid shape of a six-sided dice in Latin, derived from the name of the Phrygian goddess: ‘*Fu detta Cybelle come dice Sesto Pompeo dalla figura geometrica fatta appunto come un quadro di un dado chiamata cubo che è cosa che moltiplica, perché in se si raddoppia volendo augumentare la sua forma et questo cubo fu consacrato per dimostrare la fermezza della terra, perché è simile a un dado che sempre iace da un lato e si ferma, gittatelo come volete. Si che il nome lei viene da cubo, che si scrive KOYBO. In la lingua poi phygiana si dice Cybe, et Cybelle la Dea.*’ (Naples MS XIII.B.3, f. 566; see also Turin MS a.III.8.J.6, f. 158v). Ligorio identified Cybele — known to the Romans as Magna Mater, the Great Mother — with the Nature Goddess and her incarnation as Ephesian Diana (Turin MS a.III.8.J.6, f. 158v; a.II.14.J.27, f. 196v), whose epithets and attributes are discussed at length in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.

signifying the philosophical disciplines of ‘study’ (*studium*), ‘understanding’ (*intellectus*), ‘memory’ (*memoria*) and ‘eloquence’ (*facundia*).⁹⁶ It was through the employment of these disciplines that the wild Valle Gaudente was tamed by art to create the Villa d’Este. Thus, the Nature Goddess and Hercules (who stood for the Hesperides in the absence of their sculptural incarnations) assumed an allegorical function as figurations of nature and art respectively, sharing the garden in harmony.⁹⁷ Although aspects of Occhipinti’s interpretation are intriguing, it lacks the rigour and scope of his predecessors’ studies, offering a selective reading of the garden’s ideological schema rather than engaging with its individual elements in any detail. Problematically, it is also based on complex, obscure principles of Platonic geometry and humanist numerology, which would only have been appreciated by a specialist audience.

It is also important to acknowledge a fifth study on the Villa d’Este by Alessandra Centroni, *Villa d’Este a Tivoli: Quattro secoli di storia e restauri*.⁹⁸ Although this is not one of the key interpretative studies which I develop across the individual chapters of this thesis, it is nonetheless a significant contribution. Centroni charted the villa’s architectural and iconographic development through the centuries, from its creation by Cardinal Ippolito through its different incarnations under each of its successive owners, up to its restoration in the twentieth century and ongoing conservation. Although Barisi, Fagiolo and Madonna engaged with the evolution of the garden’s botanical and iconographic elements and Coffin

⁹⁶ Fulgentius, *Exposition Virgilianae Continentiae secundum philosophos morales* 55.12-13; Occhipinti 2009: 341-45. This interpretation is less convincing, as the number of Hesperides varies in different traditions, typically between three (Hesiod, *Theog.* 215) and four (Apollonius, *Argonautica* 5.1427), and Ligorio himself named six Hesperides: ‘...dall’*Hesperide figliuolo di Atlante, nominate, Aegle, Arethusa, Hesperethusa, Eurythia, Vesta et Peremenos*’ (Turin MS a.III.11.J.9, f. 40r).

⁹⁷ Occhipinti 2009: 347-48.

⁹⁸ Centroni 2008.

outlined the villa's later history, this is the only comprehensive survey of the Villa d'Este's historical development and current state.⁹⁹

The five major studies on the Villa d'Este have presented interpretations of the garden's ideological programmes which emphasise the design intentions of Cardinal Ippolito and Ligorio, examining the meaning they invested in the iconographic schema. The resultant readings, therefore, have limited the experience of the garden to an intellectual exercise in decoding classical symbolism, presenting interpretations which require a knowledge of classical antiquity possessed by an elite minority of sixteenth-century visitors. In doing so, they have overlooked the plurality of psychological and physical responses articulated by visitors in contemporary accounts. This thesis develops a new interpretative approach which investigates the visitor's experience to demonstrate how the garden was an interactive and immersive encounter for all, regardless of classical education or social status. This approach has its foundation in scholarship which foregrounds the reception and experience of historic visitors, reviewed in the following section.

1.2 Authorship and Experience

Alongside the development of reconstructive and interpretative approaches to Italian Renaissance gardens, two further directions of study emerged: the first investigated the function and use of villas according to the pursuits of their patrons, which provides important context for the second direction, focussed on the reception of gardens based on the experience of visitors. The former wave of scholarship was led by Coffin's *The Villa in*

⁹⁹ Coffin 1960: 98-124.

the Life of Renaissance Rome and Ackerman's *The Villa: Form and Ideology of Country Houses*.¹⁰⁰ Coffin and Ackerman defined the country villa's principal function in accordance with its classical antecedents as a place of *otium* (leisure), a retreat from *negotium* (business), reflecting the villa's function outlined in Vitruvius' *De architectura* (first century BCE) and the letters of Pliny the Younger.¹⁰¹ This concept was reiterated in Italian Renaissance treatises which drew upon an exhaustive range of classical sources, principal among which were Leon Battista Alberti's architectural treatise, *De re aedificatoria* (Florence, 1485), and Bartolomeo Taegio's treatise on country villas, *La Villa* (Milan, 1559).¹⁰² Whilst Ackerman was principally concerned with the architectural development and typology of the country villa, Coffin presented a vivid portrait of villa life by surveying the intellectual and cultural pursuits of its patrons. He explored their use as both quiet places of therapeutic retreat and humanist study, as well as lavish stages for the display of art, sculpture and botanical collections, where guests were entertained with theatre, music, debate, hunting and fine dining.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Coffin 1979; Ackerman 1990.

¹⁰¹ Vitruvius' *De architectura* was first published in 1486 (Rome) and published in Italian in 1521 (Como); Pliny's *Epistulae* was first published in 1508 (Venice).

¹⁰² Alberti modelled his work on Vitruvius' *De architectura* and the ninth book of his treatise, dedicated to the ornamentation of private buildings, villas and gardens, drew extensively on the villa descriptions from Pliny's letters. A complete list of ancient authors cited by Alberti can be found in the appendix of Rykwert's translation (1988: 363-65). Likewise, Beck wrote in the introduction to his translation of Taegio: '*La Villa* can be read not only as a conversation between interlocutors but also as a dialogue between the author and his literary sources' (2011: 54), and explored the extensive influence of Taegio's ancient sources (2011: 54-58).

¹⁰³ Subsequently, Coffin developed his research on the lives of villa patrons in two further publications. In the first, *Gardens and Gardening in Papal Rome* (1991), he extended his scope to include gardens from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century. In the second 'The Self-Image of the Roman Villa During the Renaissance' (1998: 181-203), Coffin narrowed his focus to exploring the interior decoration of villas in Latium, — including the Villa d'Este — as stages for the self-representation and self-aggrandisement of their owners.

Having explored the use of villas by their patrons and elite guests, Coffin subsequently turned to their access by members of the public in his seminal article, ‘The “Lex Hortorum” and Access to Gardens of Latium during the Renaissance’.¹⁰⁴ Established in the fifteenth century, the *Lex Hortorum* gave members of the public free access to villa gardens, enabling patrons to display their collections to a large, diverse audience.¹⁰⁵ Coffin traced the origins of the *Lex Hortorum* to fifteenth century Roman villas, where an inscription inviting citizens to enter was often inscribed by the public entrance, the earliest example of which was at the Villa of Cardinal Carafa (c. 1476-83, now the Quirinal Palace). In Rome, inscriptions welcoming visitors into the gardens of Palazzo Valle (c. 1520s), Villa Giulia (1551-55), Villa Medici (c. 1564-76) and Villa Mattei (c. 1580s) were also in place, although Coffin acknowledged that the *Lex Hortorum* was observed so broadly by the mid sixteenth century that many villas which were open to the public did not have inscriptions. Coffin concluded by reflecting on the relationship between patterns of circulation and iconography, which was laid out in accordance with the visitor’s movement through the garden to form cohesive themes and narratives.¹⁰⁶

Although Coffin did not consider the experience of the public visitor beyond their movement through the garden, his article paved the way for a new direction of study which emphasised the reception of gardens. This was the focus of John Dixon Hunt’s *Garden and Grove: The Italian Renaissance Garden in the English Imagination 1600-1750*, which

¹⁰⁴ This article was first published in 1982: 201-32, and subsequently republished in *Magnificent Buildings, Splendid Gardens* (2008: 164-89), a collection of twenty articles by Coffin.

¹⁰⁵ Coffin did observe, however, that ‘one cannot, of course, interpret this right of access in a modern, democratic...Undoubtedly the outcasts of sixteenth-century Roman society, such as beggars or the Jews, might not be accorded that privilege’ (2008: 169).

¹⁰⁶ Coffin 2008: 180-85. In doing so, he extended his earlier observations on the Villa d’Este’s circulation pattern and iconography to Italian Renaissance gardens more broadly.

explored gardens from the cultural perspective of English travellers on the Grand Tour.¹⁰⁷ Hunt investigated how classical invocation was mapped and re-mapped onto gardens by Grand Tourists, who carried guidebooks with anthologies of ancient literature describing landscapes, villas and gardens to enhance their experience and understanding of their visits, which transformed each garden visit into a journey through classical landscapes.¹⁰⁸ He was also the first to identify definitively Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as the principal source of iconography and symbolism in the Italian Renaissance garden, reflecting the text's extensive use as a compendium of myth in Italian Renaissance art and literature.¹⁰⁹ Illustrated vernacular translations also meant that the text enjoyed widespread popularity: Giovanni dei Bonsignori's *Ovidio Metamorphoseos volgare* (Venice, 1497), Lodovico Dolce's *Transformationi* (Venice, 1553) and Giovanni Andrea dell'Anguillara's *Le Metamorfosi* (Venice, 1584) were widely disseminated across Italy. Ovid's landscapes, Hunt contended, presented a picture of Italy's ancient topography populated with mythic figures, and in the same way, the garden was seen as a revival of classical topography and therefore populated with scenes, figures and features of Ovidian landscape.

In subsequent studies, Hunt championed a reception-based approach to historic gardens. In his contribution to the Dumbarton Oaks volume edited by Michel Conan, *Perspectives on Garden Histories*, 'Approaches (New and Old) to Garden History', Hunt lamented the trend in iconographic methodologies which emphasised the authorial

¹⁰⁷ Hunt 1986.

¹⁰⁸ Popular sixteenth-century guidebooks to Rome included Bartolomeo Marliani's *Urbis Romae Topographia* (Rome, 1534), Lucio Fauno's *Della antichità della città di Roma* (Venice, 1553), Andrea Palladio's *L'antichità di Roma* (Rome, 1554) and Lucio Mauro's *Le antichità de la Città di Roma* (Venice, 1556).

¹⁰⁹ Hunt's chapter 'Ovid in the Garden' (1986: 42-58) is dedicated to this subject, which was first published as a journal article (1983: 3-11).

intentions of garden designers and patrons over the experience of visitors.¹¹⁰ He advocated a new approach which focussed on garden reception:

We need, above all, a history of the reception or consumption of gardens that acknowledges that they yield as much a dramatic as a discursive experience. There is a virtual dimension to the designed landscape: despite its palpable objectivity, it needs an addressee, as it were, to receive it — a spectator, visitor, or inhabitant, somebody to feel, to sense its existence and understand its qualities. To use or to inhabit a landscape may be regarded as a response to its design, and to study such responses will bring us to a better understanding of design history.¹¹¹

Hunt's *The Afterlife of Gardens* was the outcome of his advocacy for an exploration of the experienced garden, which surveyed a range of gardens from the Renaissance to modernity.¹¹² His discussion of Renaissance gardens was particularly significant in demonstrating the agency of visitors exemplified in contemporary descriptions, as well as fictional and visual representations of gardens.¹¹³ Conan was also a key contributor to the development of this new direction of study, editing two Dumbarton Oaks volumes dedicated to the garden reception which marked a turning point in the discipline. The first, *Landscape Design and the Experience of Motion*, is comprised of case studies exploring a range of historic gardens from the perspective of the strolling visitor and the impact of their movement on possible meanings.¹¹⁴ The second, *Baroque Garden Cultures: Emulation, Sublimation, Subversion* investigated the social reception of gardens from the

¹¹⁰ Hunt 1999: 77-90.

¹¹¹ Hunt 1999: 89.

¹¹² Hunt 2004.

¹¹³ Hunt 2004: 57-172.

¹¹⁴ Conan 2003.

late sixteenth century to the eighteenth century as sites of cultural expression, charting the evolution of their meanings over time.¹¹⁵

These studies have made a distinction between the authorial intentions of individuals who designed and owned gardens, and the experience and reception of those who visited them in order to emphasise the latter in the wake of scholarship which focussed on the former. Authorship and experience, however, are not mutually exclusive. Where previous studies have privileged one of these aspects over another, this thesis offers an integrated model which recognises the Villa d'Este as a stage for individual representation according to the design and ideological intentions of Ligorio and Cardinal Ippolito, whilst also considering the reception and experience of the visitor. The following two sections outline the ecocritical and phenomenological methodologies which I employ to develop this integrated model.

1.3 Rewilding the Garden

The formal and symbolic relationship between the Italian Renaissance garden and the surrounding landscape has been fundamental to understanding its cultural significance — discussed at length in Chapter 2.¹¹⁶ This geographical relationship is particularly important

¹¹⁵ Conan 2005. Like Hunt, Conan recognised the emphasis on garden authorship over experience in scholarship and in the introduction to *Baroque Garden Cultures*, called for a new direction of study: 'Repeated calls have been made in the last five years for the study of the social reception of gardens as a step in renewing an understanding of garden culture. By taking up this challenge we are trying to negotiate a turning point in garden history. To a large extent, garden history has been concerned up to now with establishing the intentions of patrons and garden designers' (2005: 1).

¹¹⁶ Major studies on this relationship include Eugenio Battisti, '*Natura Artificiosa to Natura Artificialis*' (1972: 1-36); Daniel Cosgrove, *The Palladian Landscape: Geographical Change and Its Cultural Representations in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (1993); Hunt, *Greater Perfections: The Practice of Garden Theory* (2000); Mirka Beneš and Diane Harris, *Villas and Gardens in Early Modern Italy and France* (2001). Recent scholarship includes Mauro Ambrosoli, 'From the Italian Countryside to the Italianate Landscape: Peasants as Gardeners and Foreign Observers in Italy, 1500-1850' (2011: 145-68); Lionella Scazzosi, 'Gardens and Landscapes as "Open-Ended Works" between Continuity and Transformation' (2011: 169-83); and Beneš, 'Gardens and the Larger Landscape' (2016: 187-216).

for the Villa d'Este, where Tiburtine landscape features were represented within the garden. Where previous studies have only engaged with the ideological value of the Villa d'Este's geographical schema, however, this thesis draws upon two new approaches to the Italian Renaissance garden which have examined the psychological impact and ecological significance of representations of wild nature within the garden. The first approach has challenged the garden's well-established conceptualisation as an invocation of the classical *locus amoenus* (pleasant place), and emphasised its disquieting sculptural elements which conjured the *locus horridus* (fearful place).¹¹⁷ The second, a pioneering ecocritical approach, has engaged with figurations of natural phenomena and landscape features in garden sculpture and fountains as artistic expressions of environmental concerns.

In Section 1.1, we have seen how defining features of the classical *locus amoenus* were incorporated within the garden in the form of cool fountains, shaded groves and naturalistic grottoes to evoke the sacro-idyllic landscapes of ancient poetry and myth.¹¹⁸ Foundational surveys by MacDougall and Lazzaro also evidenced the extensive invocation of mythic 'paradises' within the Italian Renaissance garden: the Garden of the Hesperides; Mount Parnassus, home of Apollo and the Muses, and the source of poetic inspiration; the Golden Age, an abundant era when humanity lived in harmony with nature; and Arcadia,

¹¹⁷ Key studies on these landscape topoi in classical literature are Mark Edwards, '*Locus horridus* and *locus amoenus*' (1987: 267-76); Petra Hass, *Der locus amoenus in der Antiken Literatur: Zu Theorie und Geschichte eines literarischen Motivs* (1998); and in Diana Spencer's *Roman Landscape: Culture and Identity* (2010: 17-30).

¹¹⁸ Lazzaro 1990: 66-166; MacDougall 1994: 67-78, 89-111. These garden features correspond with the defining characteristics of the classical *locus amoenus*, summarised by Charles Segal: 'a secluded grove, quiet water, shade, coolness, soft grass, sometimes rocks or a cavern are the usual attributes' (1969: 4). For further discussion of the Renaissance revival of the classical *locus amoenus*, see Chapter 4, pages 128-29.

the bucolic landscape of pastoral poetry.¹¹⁹ Key examples are witnessed at Cardinal Alessandro Farnese's villa at Caprarola (begun in 1559), designed to evoke an Arcadian or Golden Age locale, and Cardinal Gianfrancesco Gambara's Villa Lante at Bagnaia (begun in 1568), identified with Parnassus. At the entrance to the woodland park at the Villa Farnese, an Arcadian setting was directly evoked by the 'pastoral' Fountain of the Shepherd: in the central niche of a naturalistic grotto stood a shepherd, flanked by pairs of satyrs, rivers gods, and rustic herms.¹²⁰ At the entrance to the Villa Lante, visitors were immediately translated to a new Parnassus by the Pegasus Fountain, where busts of the nine Muses surround a central statue of Pegasus, who presides over a jet of water symbolising the Hippocrene spring of poetic inspiration.¹²¹ Lazzaro also proposed that the popular sculptural incarnations of nature deities — in the form of river and mountain gods, generative goddesses and nymphs — not only reconfigured the garden as a site of mythic encounter, but also represented the harmonious relationship between nature and culture therein.¹²²

In recent studies, however, a more nuanced and integrative approach has begun to feature, as scholars have identified a darker mode of nature's representation within the

¹¹⁹ MacDougall 1994: 89-101; Lazzaro 1990: 131-66. Additional studies on the Italian Renaissance garden as a *locus amoenus* or earthly paradise are John Prest's *The Garden of Eden: The Botanic Garden and the Re-creation of Paradise* (1981), in Terry Comito's *The Idea of the Garden in the Renaissance* (1979: 25-50) and Hunt, 'Paragone in Paradise: Translating the Garden' (1996b: 55-70).

¹²⁰ The Villa Farnese's Golden Age and Arcadian associations are investigated by Lazzaro (1990: 134-35, 154-56).

¹²¹ Lazzaro observed that the entire layout of the Villa Lante recreated the mythic site: from the entrance, visitors ascended a steep hill in order to reach the Loggias of the Muses at the garden's summit, representing the peak of Mount Parnassus where the Muses resided (1990: 133-34, 243-69).

¹²² Lazzaro 1990: 131-66. In addition to her discussion of these figures in her major publication, Lazzaro also published a number of articles on personifications of nature: 'The Visual Language of Gender in Sixteenth-Century Garden Sculpture in the Renaissance' (1991: 71-113), 'Gendered Nature and Its Representation in Sixteenth-Century Garden Sculpture,' (1998: 246-73) and 'River Gods: Personifying Nature in Sixteenth-Century Italy' (2012: 70-94).

Italian Renaissance garden. In his article, ‘Les mouvements de l’âme: Émotions et poétique du jardin maniériste’, Hervé Brunon proposed that colossal statues personifying mountain and river gods embodied both the generative and destructive potential of nature and constituted an antagonistic element to garden design which embedded the *locus horridus* as a key element in the experience.¹²³ Brunon’s principal example is Giambologna’s forty-foot sculpture of Appennino (completed c. 1580) at the Medici Villa di Pratolino (begun in 1569), which personified the Apennine Mountains:

But the Mannerist garden is not content with its contrast with the surrounding landscape, and integrates the representation of the wild world within its walls. At the heart of Pratolino, in a site surrounded by mountain woods, the Colossus of Appennino, sculpted by Giambologna, embodies this wild nature. Mounted on an artificial hill (destroyed during the seventeenth century), the giant is composed of rocks and presses the earth from which a stream flows. In short, he represents the anthropomorphic image of the *locus horridus*, facing the palace from which the statue is separated only by a park, which reflects the *locus amoenus*.¹²⁴

Brunon’s hypothesis was expanded by Luke Morgan in *The Monster in the Garden: The Grotesque and the Gigantic in Renaissance Landscape Design*, who recognised the potential of colossal statues personifying landscape features to terrify beholders and classified them as monsters.¹²⁵ Like Brunon, Morgan challenged traditional conceptions of Italian Renaissance gardens as paradisaal retreats from reality, investigating the antagonistic element of landscape design evinced in its monstrous sculptural figures. These he categorised in a ‘monstuary’, which comprised ‘the excessive’, ‘the deficient’, ‘the hybrid’

¹²³ Brunon 1998: 103-36.

¹²⁴ Brunon 1998: 123. In the revised and published edition of his PhD thesis on Giambologna’s Appennino, Brunon also explores the statue’s antagonistic presence in the garden (2008: 230-39, 265-95, 682-83, 703-10).

¹²⁵ Morgan 2016. In Morgan’s ‘monstuary’, the excessive, the deficient, the hybrid and the giant are exemplified respectively by the multi-breasted Nature Goddess at the Villa d’Este (2016: 83-93), the disembodied, gaping Hell Mouth at Bomarzo (93-105), the rapacious harpy (95-113) and giant avatars of nature personifying rivers and mountains (115-134) across multiple sites.

and ‘the giant’.¹²⁶ Morgan’s categorisations are based on Ambroise Paré’s *Des monstres et prodiges* (Paris, 1573), a pseudo-scientific treatise classifying the causes and types of monsters which exemplifies a widespread cultural fascination with the monstrous in the sixteenth century. He also traced the motif of the monster in a utopian landscape Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, where idyllic landscapes, inhabited by savage creatures and capricious divinities, are juxtaposed with acts of violence and metamorphosis.¹²⁷ Investigating the psychological impact of the garden’s monstrous cast, Morgan redefined the garden as a dualistic space, in which *locus amoenus* and *locus horridus* co-existed, and where monsters were essential antagonists in the garden’s ideological programmes, reifying its paradisaal elements. This created a sublime experience for garden visitors which mingled both terror and delight. It is within this new interpretative tradition that my thesis has its genesis, as I identify the Villa d’Este’s monstrous figures whose fear-inducing qualities have been overlooked in previous studies.

Building on this growing recognition of the disquieting iconographic and ideological modes manifest within the Italian Renaissance garden, my second analytical framework moves the field into a new direction by combining the discourse of binaries (delightful and terrifying) with contemporary ecocritical approaches to landscape. Established in the 1990s, ecocriticism emerged as ‘the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment...an earth-centred approach to literary studies’ according to the influential definition by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm in *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, the first edited volume dedicated to

¹²⁶ Morgan 2016: 15-134.

¹²⁷ Morgan 2016: 3-7.

ecocritical approaches to literature.¹²⁸ Expanding beyond literary theory, ecocriticism has increasingly added interdisciplinary value to investigations of environmental issues throughout history in order to inform contemporary debate on global ecological crisis.¹²⁹ Indeed, classicists have traced ecological awareness to the very origins of western narrative, recognising ancient myths as examples of an epochal awareness of the destructive effects of civilisation on the environment, which were designed to transmit both warnings and wisdom surrounding humanity's relationship with the natural world that remain relevant to this day.¹³⁰

Despite the complex, dialogic relationship between Italian Renaissance gardens and their contextual landscapes, — a relationship which was at the heart of Ligorio's design for the Villa d'Este — ecocriticism has only recently been applied to the study of gardens in the Cinquecento. Mine is the first study to demonstrate the value of this theoretical approach to the Villa d'Este. My ecocritical engagement with the garden and the

¹²⁸ Glotfelty and Fromm 1996: xviii.

¹²⁹ In addition to Glotfelty and Fromm (1996), foundational studies on ecocritical theory include Laurence Coupe's edited volume, *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism* (2000); Greg Garrard's *Ecocriticism* (2004) and edited volume, *The Oxford Handbook of Ecocriticism* (2014); Lawrence Buell's *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (2005); and Timothy Clark's *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment* (2011).

¹³⁰ An emerging area of study in classics and ancient history, ecocriticism has gained momentum in recent years following the influential articles by Jill Da Silva, 'Ecocriticism and Myth: The Case of Erysichthon' (2008: 103-16), and Esther Eidinow, 'Telling stories: Exploring the relationship between myths and ecological wisdom' (2016: 47-52). Da Silva interpreted the myth of Erysichthon — who is cursed with insatiable hunger after felling an oak tree sacred to Ceres that leads him to consume his own body (Ovid, *Met.* 8.739-884) — as an allegorical warning against anthropocentric environmental attitudes which lead to self-destruction, demonstrating the transformation of '*mythos* into *logos*, fiction into reason' which resonates to this day, as mass deforestation continues to fuel widespread famine (2008: 103). Where Da Silva engaged with the Erysichthon myth as an ecological warning, Eidinow examined myths more broadly as 'repositories of ecological wisdom' which shaped ancient attitudes to the natural world that continue to offer theoretical and practical insights into environmental concerns (2016: 47). Building on these ecological perspectives on myth, Christopher Schliephake's edited volume, *Ecocriticism, Ecology, and the Cultures of Antiquity* (2017), pioneered an ecocritical approach to ancient literary and material culture, investigating how the ancients experienced, interpreted and responded to environmental issues. The upcoming volume edited by Ailsa Hunt and Hilary Marlow, *Ecology and Theology in the Ancient World: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives* (2019), extends beyond a classical conspectus to examine ancient ecological attitudes through human relationships with the divine across pagan, Jewish and Christian theological traditions.

surrounding Tiburtine landscape builds upon two recent studies which have pioneered an ecological approach to Italian Renaissance garden design: Catherine Walsh's PhD thesis, *Renaissance Landscapes and the Figuration of Giambologna's Appennino: An Ecocritical Analysis*, and Shannon Kelley's article, 'Arno River floods and the Cinquecento grotto at the Boboli garden'.¹³¹ Both scholars built upon Carolyn Merchant's investigation of destructive attitudes to the natural world in early modern scientific texts, in conjunction with studies by Robert Watson and Ken Hiltner dedicated to expressions of ecological awareness and anxieties in Renaissance literary and visual culture, which focus on environmental degradation arising from an era of urban expansion which saw increased air pollution, climate change and deforestation.¹³²

Walsh and Kelley argued that the Italian Renaissance garden encapsulated a discourse of ecological conflict, reflecting cultural anxieties of naturogenic threat from and anthropogenic threat to the environment: from devastating natural disasters and treacherous landscapes, to environmental degradation caused by human agency. They contextualised their readings within the global phenomenon known as the Little Ice Age, a period of global cooling during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries which brought colder weather to Europe.¹³³ In Italy, the effects of this phenomenon were compounded by widespread deforestation following a major population increase in fifteenth century, which

¹³¹ Walsh 2015; Kelley 2016: 729-51. Walsh is currently working on a publication which expands upon the ecological discourse of her thesis to explore the relationship between humanity and landscape in Italian Renaissance art.

¹³² Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (1980); Watson, *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance* (2006); Hiltner, 'Renaissance Literature and Our Contemporary Attitude toward Global Warming' (2009: 429-42), *What Else is Pastoral?: Renaissance Literature and the Environment* (2011) and 'Early Modern Ecocriticism' (2014: 81-93).

¹³³ The major study on the climatic consequences of the Little Ice Age is in Wolfgang Behringer's *A History of Climate* (2010), chapters 4 to 5: 'Global Cooling: The Little Ice Age' (85-120) and 'Cultural Consequences of the Little Ice Age' (121-167).

led to hydro-meteorological disasters across the country. Walsh's thesis explored how the sculpture of Appennino, together with personifications of rivers and mountains, 'reflect environmental awareness and latent, ecological anxieties' of both damage to and by the natural world, with particular emphasis on the environmental effects of widespread deforestation in early modern Italy.¹³⁴ Next, Kelley identified the storm-simulating water effects in Bernardo Buontalenti's Grotta Grande (completed c. 1583-93) at the Boboli Gardens as: 'a complex reaction to classical accounts of a universal deluge as well as to the local Arno floods of the late Cinquecento', focussing on the devastating floods of 1547, 1557, 1589 and 1601.¹³⁵

Bringing these two approaches to bear on the Villa d'Este, I show how representations of wild nature within the garden not only reflected responses of fear and awe to landscape, but also expressed and responded creatively to environmental concerns and anxieties. Fear within and as a product of the landscape are crucial to my analysis, and benefit substantially from the critical perspective of ecocriticism. Together, this thematic and critical model marks an important starting point for the new interpretative paradigm this thesis develops. Ultimately, this results in an holistic understanding that accounts for how the Villa d'Este's mythic and geographical themes were unified across all four terraces which previous analyses have failed to recognise.

¹³⁴ Her approach is defined thus: 'the use of ecocriticism means examining the relationships between art and nature, focusing on the material aspects of artworks and the reception of those artworks, and how they reflect damage to and by the environment' (Walsh 2015: 6).

¹³⁵ Kelley 2016: 730.

1.4 Reinstating the Senses

Despite the emphasis placed on the rich sensory experience of the Italian Renaissance garden by contemporary writers — surveyed in Chapter 2 — somatic perception has been largely neglected in the study of early modern gardens and only in recent scholarship have the senses been reinstated at the heart of the garden experience.¹³⁶ As outlined in Section 1.1 above, the foundation of interpretative approaches to Italian Renaissance garden design in iconographic analysis has meant that scholarship has focussed principally on architectural design and sculptural programmes, overlooking the rich, multisensory experience generated by fountains and plantings. As a result, studies have privileged visual and intellectual perception as the principal modes of garden experience, failing to consider the myriad olfactory, gustatory, auditory and haptic elements of its design.

Despite the shift towards social reception and individual responses to the garden championed by Hunt and Conan discussed in Section 1.2 above, multisensory experience continues to be elided from scholarship on historic gardens.¹³⁷ Even in the recent volume on new approaches to the Italian Renaissance garden edited by Mirka Beneš and Michael Lee, *Clio in the Italian Garden: Twenty-First-Century Studies in Historical Methods and Theoretical Perspectives*, intellectual and visual perception remains the focus of the chapters dedicated to cultural reception.¹³⁸ Similarly, in the new volume, *A Cultural*

¹³⁶ Chapter 2, Section 2.4, pages 70-76.

¹³⁷ In Hunt's *The Afterlife of Gardens* (2004) and Conan's *Landscape Design and the Experience of Motion* (2003) and *Baroque Garden Cultures* (2005), sensory perception is omitted from the reception of designed landscapes beyond the experience of movement.

¹³⁸ Beneš and Lee 2011. Part four of this volume, 'Ways of Seeing Landscape: Reconstructing Horizons of Perception and the Imaginary' explores gardens from the perspective of historic visitors. In 'The Imaginary of Generative Nature in Italian Mannerist Gardens' by Antonella Pietrogrande focuses on the intellectual and psychological experience of visitors through the relationship with ancient myth in the Renaissance cultural imagination in the garden (2011: 187-202). Denis Ribouillault's chapter 'Toward an Archaeology of the Gaze: The Perception and Function of Garden Views in Italian Renaissance Villas' engages with modes of viewing the garden through fresco decoration (2011: 203-32).

History of Gardens in the Renaissance edited by Elizabeth Hyde, the senses remain conspicuous in their absence in Hyde's chapter on the function and reception of early modern gardens.¹³⁹

It was not until the very recent publication of *Sound and Scent in the Garden* edited by Dede Fairchild Ruggles — the outcome of the 2014 Dumbarton Oaks symposium — that the senses were recognised as an integral mode of garden experience in the field of garden history.¹⁴⁰ This study incorporated new methodologies derived from the field of sensory anthropology pioneered by Constance Classen, David Howes and Anthony Synnot in *Aroma: A Cultural History of Smell* and developed in the *Sensory Formations Series* edited by Howes.¹⁴¹ It also built on phenomenological approaches to the physical experience of landscape developed in Paul Rodaway's *Sensuous Geographies: Body, Sense, and Place*.¹⁴² Whilst scholarship on the history of sensory anthropology has focussed primarily on urban, medical and religious contexts, with the notable exception of Rodaway's investigation of natural landscapes, this groundbreaking volume is the first

¹³⁹ Hyde 2016: 97-124.

¹⁴⁰ Fairchild Ruggles 2017.

¹⁴¹ Classen, Howes and Synnot 1994. The *Sensory Formations Series* is comprised of: Michael Bull and Les Back, *The Auditory Culture Reader*; Howes, *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader* (2004); Carolyn Korsmeyer, *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink* (2005); Classen, *The Book of Touch* (2005); Jim Drobnick, *The Smell Culture Reader* (2006); Elizabeth Edwards and Kaushik Bhaumik, *Visual Sense: A Cultural Reader* (2008); and Howes, *The Sixth Sense Reader* (2009).

¹⁴² Rodaway 1994.

publication dedicated to the garden's sensory experience to date.¹⁴³ In the introduction to the volume Fairchild Ruggles explained: 'The contributors explore the sensory experience of gardens specifically as places where people encounter landscape in a staged manner, as a result of intentional design' in order to define 'how the senses contribute to the experience of those places'.¹⁴⁴

Breaking new ground in the study of Renaissance gardens were the contributions by Elizabeth Hyde, 'The Scent of Power: Flowers, Fragrance, and Ephemerality in the Gardens of Louis XIV', and Anatole Tchikine, 'The Expulsion of the Senses: The Idea of the "Italian Garden" and the Politics of Sensory Experience'.¹⁴⁵ Hyde's chapter is rich in new perspectives on planting conventions, defining how the olfactory properties of floriculture were exploited in formal gardens of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to create potent displays of wealth and power.¹⁴⁶ Tchikine's contribution denounces the

¹⁴³ The history of sensory anthropology is an emerging discipline and key scholarship on the senses in the Renaissance includes: François Quiviger, *The Sensory World of Italian Renaissance Art* (2010); Richard Newhauser and Corine Schleif, *Pleasure and Danger in Perception: The Five Senses in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (2010); and Herman Roodenburg, *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Renaissance, 1450-1650* (2014). More significant advances in understanding the historic role of the senses, however, have been made in the field of classics, most notably in Eleanor Betts's edited volume *Senses of the Empire: Multisensory Approaches to Roman Culture* (2017) and *The Senses in Antiquity* series edited by Mark Bradley and Shane Butler, which inform my study. *The Senses in Antiquity* is edited as follows: Butler and Alex Purves, *Synaesthesia and the Ancient Senses* (2013); Butler and Sarah Nooter, *Sound and the Ancient Senses*; Bradley, *Smell and the Ancient Senses* (2014); Michael Squire *Sight and the Ancient Senses* (2015); Purves, *Touch and the Ancient Senses* (2017); and Kelli Rudolph, *Taste and the Ancient Senses* (2017).

¹⁴⁴ Fairchild Ruggles 2017: 9.

¹⁴⁵ Hyde 2017: 123-152; Tchikine 2017: 217-254.

¹⁴⁶ This expands the conspectus of her earlier publication, *Cultivated Power: Flowers, Culture, and Politics in the Reign of Louis XIV* (2005), discussed above on page 28. Where the olfactory significance of plants has been overlooked in other Renaissance scholarship, research into the role of plants in the ancient sensory experience is also applicable to a Renaissance context. Of key relevance to this thesis are Jane Draycott's 'Smelling trees, flowers and herbs in the ancient world' (2014: 60-73) and Laurence Totelin's 'Smell as Sign and Cure in Ancient Medicine' (2014: 17-29) from Bradley's edited volume on ancient olfaction, together with Jo Day's 'Scents of Place and Colours of Smell: Fragranced entertainment in ancient Rome' (2017: 176-92) from Betts's volume on the senses in Roman culture — see Chapter 2, Section 2.6 for further discussion.

expulsion of the senses from the study of garden history as an ‘historical distortion’ and a ‘social and emotional disengagement’ which must be remedied:

With their historical significance valued over and above their sensory appeal, Italian gardens are now primarily the repositories of works of architecture and sculpture — often dispossessed of their original meanings and settings — or the embodiments of scholarly and popular clichés about beauty and art, rather than places of encounters with nature, spontaneous social interactions, and genuine recreation.¹⁴⁷

He heralds an innovative multisensory approach to Italian Renaissance gardens, developing his earlier work on the physical experience of fountains and water effects to explore a range of the garden’s sensory stimuli.¹⁴⁸

Despite innovation in the field of sensory anthropology and Dumbarton Oak’s leading publication *Sound and Scent in the Garden*, there has not yet been a study that investigates somatic perception within a specific Italian Renaissance garden. My thesis is the first study to do so, applying phenomenological methodologies to explore and map the visitor’s sensory experience within the Villa d’Este. Furthermore, in *Sound and Scent in the Garden*, somatic perception is largely separated from the garden’s intellectual experience, and Tchikine’s investigation of somatic stimuli does not acknowledge their integrality to the experience and interpretation of the garden’s ideological programmes. This thesis is the first synthetic study to draw together the garden’s somatic and symbolic elements. It defines how the Villa d’Este was designed to generate a physically immersive sensescape for the visitor, which was integral to their hermeneutic progress through the garden’s

¹⁴⁷ Tchikine 2017: 241, 243.

¹⁴⁸ Tchikine, ‘Giochi d’acqua: water effects in Renaissance and Baroque Italy’ (2010: 57-76) and “‘L’anima del giardino’: water, gardens and hydraulics in sixteenth-century Florence and Naples’ (2014: 129-54).

narrative, engaging the visitor as an active participant in the unfolding drama, as well as grounding the garden's fantastical, mythic topoi in an experiential, sensory reality.

1.5 Into the Garden

As I have outlined, the influence of classical antiquity has been fundamental to the historiography and development of the Italian Renaissance garden, from early estate-design, to the inception of academic study in the late nineteenth century, to new approaches to garden history in the last decade. In particular, the influence of classical literature, both didactic and poetic, permeated every element of the Italian Renaissance garden. This was as much the case in its design principles as it was evident in the meaning invested in its ideological programmes. Architectural, agricultural, horticultural, botanical and natural history treatises, as well as villa descriptions, provided a polyphony of inspiration, not to mention fundamental material on garden design, and informed horticultural knowledge. The depiction of landscape in pastoral and epic poetry was also crucial to the Renaissance understanding of the natural world in its wider sense, and therefore informed its mediation through aesthetic convention in garden design. From the world of myth came a rich cast of characters, settings and stories which shaped the narrative programmes of the garden. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the definitive compendium of ancient mythology, but also a literary epic ripe with the language of sensual stimuli, was principal among these sources.

In this new interpretative approach to the Villa d'Este, I synthesise the garden's rich palette of ancient and Renaissance symbolic vocabularies, environmental elements and somatic stimuli to reconstruct the intellectual and sensory experience of the sixteenth-century visitor as an holistic immersion, demonstrating how the garden's mythic narratives

were dramatised by a complementary scheme of iconography, water features and plantings. This transformed the experience of walking through the garden into a sequence of mythic encounters, in which each of the garden's four terraces constituted a distinct narrative and locale, engaging the strolling visitor as an active participant in the unfolding drama through evocative mythscapes.

This thesis is organised into seven chapters. Having surveyed the scholarship and core methodologies developed across my thesis in this chapter, Chapter 2, 'Redefining the Garden Experience', contextualises my synthetic approach to the Villa d'Este's intellectual and somatic elements within Bonfadio Taegio's tripartite model in *La Villa* (Milan, 1559), wherein three somatic and intellectual 'pleasures' defined the garden experience. Based on an iconographic schema, this model filters the garden by way of a set of key classical figures especially significant for their symbolic value within and evocation of the inhabited qualities of ancient landscapes of myth. It also expands upon my phenomenological approach to the garden, highlighting as contextual evidence the emphasis placed on the rich, multisensory experience of gardens by Italian Renaissance writers, and identifying the range of sensory stimuli that derived from fountains and plantings.

Chapters 3 to 7 are dedicated to the sequential narratives which unfolded on each of the Villa d'Este's terraces, tracing the visitor's journey from the public entrance on the Via del Colle to the summit of the garden. Chapter 3, 'A New Garden of the Hesperides' engages with the lower part of the first terrace which was dominated by a vibrant plantscape, dismissed in previous studies as purely decorative or utilitarian in function. Pioneering a new interpretation of this plantscape, I establish its foundational and programmatic role in the garden's Hesperidian symbolism, demonstrating how a prevailing

planting scheme of citrus fruits and exotic specimens reoriented visitors within a new Hesperides. In the Cinquecento, citrus fruits were identified with the golden apples and Hercules' eleventh labour was interpreted as an aetiology for the introduction of citrus to Italy — an aetiology which was appropriated by Cardinal Ippolito to give the Villa d'Este its unique Hesperidian status. Incorporating methodologies from sensory anthropology, I show how the olfactory properties of plantings were concentrated within horticultural structures, defined as 'pungent *loci*', which augmented the garden's Hesperidian narrative within a physically immersive reality.

Chapter 4, 'Realm of the Nature Goddess' introduces the garden's Tiburtine theme in the elaborate waterscape of fountains and pools which spanned the upper first terrace. In a new ecocritical approach, I demonstrate how this waterscape was designed to recreate Tivoli's Valle d'Inferno in microcosm, reflecting a disquieting vision of this landscape governed by the nature's destructive forces, dramatised by the deluge-simulating water effects at the Fountain of the Flood and personified by the multi-breasted Nature Goddess. Contextualising my interpretation within the Little Ice Age which exacerbated the Aniene's propensity for flooding, I demonstrate how the waterscape played upon local and national fears of flooding. This waterscape is defined as a pendant to the third terrace's bucolic representation of Tivoli, and was designed, I argue, to illustrate the untamed, post-classical landscape before it was restored to its ancient splendour by Cardinal Ippolito.

Chapter 5, 'Here Be Dragons', engages with the climax of the garden's Hesperidian narrative at the Fountain of the Dragon on the second terrace, building on recent scholarship which has investigated the dystopian elements of Italian Renaissance gardens, evinced in the presence of monsters and wild nature therein. Identifying the dragons as

monstrous marvels that inhabited the edges of the known world — frontiers that were being explored in the Renaissance — I show how the second terrace's monster-inhabited woods played upon fears of untamed nature and foreign lands, whilst also satisfying a cultural fascination with exotic marvels. This chapter culminates in a new phenomenological approach to the Fountain of the Dragon, examining the immersive sensory assault generated by its water features which dramatised Hercules' violent encounter with the Hesperides' monstrous guardian.

Chapter 6, 'Realm of the Tiburtine Sibyl' demonstrates how the third terrace's geographical schema commemorated Cardinal Ippolito's regeneration of the Tiburtine region, expanding on the ecocritical interpretation outlined in Chapter 4. Where previous studies have failed to recognise the Tiburtine Sibyl's central role in the garden's ideological schema, I define the Sibyl as the figurehead for the Cardinal's regeneration programme, who embodied the benevolent governing forces which supplanted the volatile Nature Goddess in the wake of Ippolito's landscape reforms. Furthermore, I show how the third terrace was designed to foreground the sites at the nexus of the Sibyl's prophetic ministry at Tivoli and Rome, underscoring a geo-political ideology which emphasised the region's fundamental role in Rome's prosperity.

Chapter 7, 'Between Vice and Virtue', focusses on the design elements of the third and fourth terraces which were conditioned to represent Hercules' choice between vice and virtue, indicated by the hero's pivotal position at the divergence of the central axis between the Grotto of Venus Voluptas on the third terrace and the Grotto of Chaste Diana on the fourth terrace, leading visitors to reenact unwittingly the hero's choice in their progress through the garden. Previous studies have engaged with the complex humanist symbolism

invested in this schema, presupposing a knowledge of classical humanist possessed only by an elite minority of visitors. I argue that the theme of Hercules' choice was defined by complementary phenomenological encounters within the two grottoes, where the sculptural incarnations of Venus and Diana not only personified vice and virtue, but engendered experiences of each, drawing visitors into contrasting voyeuristic encounters unified by the mythic trope of the bathing goddess.

This thesis concludes by reflecting on the main iconographic, phenomenological and ecocritical approaches employed in my new interpretation of the Villa d'Este, which results in new perspectives on Italian Renaissance gardens, paving the way for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REDEFINING THE GARDEN EXPERIENCE

Introduction

The foundation for my synthetic approach to the Villa d'Este's sensory and intellectual experience is based upon the definition of the villa's function and the experiences it produces set out by Italian humanist Bonfadio Taegio in his widely disseminated treatise *La Villa* (Milan, 1559), a work which marked the apogee of the Renaissance revival of villa construction and associated literature in Italy.¹⁴⁹ Pervaded by vivid descriptions of Milanese villa gardens which convey both their physically immersive qualities and symbolic significance, *La Villa* is fundamental to understanding interest in and appreciation of individual responses to the garden's somatic and semiotic elements.¹⁵⁰ The treatise takes the form of a dialogue between Taegio under the pseudonym Vitauro and his companion Partenio, whom Taegio seeks to convince that the country villa is superior to city life.¹⁵¹ The basis for Taegio's argument is that the villa functioned principally as a place of leisure, designed for the pursuit of pleasures which gratified both the mind and the body. Whilst the 'pleasures of the villa are many', Taegio concluded, 'all delights boil down to three kinds of pleasures', and he presented a tripartite model, defining the villa's

¹⁴⁹ On the popularity of *La Villa* (written in Italian to appeal to a wide audience, in contrast to many Renaissance treatises in Latin), contextualised within the extensive body of Italian Renaissance literature dedicated to the villa (part of an architectural and literary tradition dating to classical antiquity), see Ackerman 1990: 107-111 and Beck 2011: 1-3, 15-22.

¹⁵⁰ Taegio's emphasis on his own experience of and responses to villa gardens is so pervasive that Beck, in the introduction to his translation of *La Villa*, observed: 'Taegio never described or even mentioned an actual building in *La Villa*. Instead, he alluded to villa buildings by rendering their gardens in language so poetical as to frustrate any attempt to reconstruct them' (2011: 2).

¹⁵¹ Vitauro is the pseudonym under which Taegio founded the humanist literary society, the Academy of the Shepherds of the Agogna, between 1544 and 1546 (Beck 2011: 4-7).

‘first pleasure’ as sensual, its ‘second pleasure’ as intellectual and its ‘third pleasure’ as a synthesis of these two pleasures:

You ought to know, as man is composed of mind and body, so one of the three pleasures is only of the body and is called sensual...The other is only of the spirit, which is that one of them that contemplating the marvellous effects of nature passes through the better hours. The third pleasure participates in the sensual and the intellectual, as is that of poetry, of rhetoric, of music, for reason of which it gladdens the spirit and the ear, the one through art and the other through number. Now these are the three modes of pleasure that you ought to take in your pleasant villa.¹⁵²

By way of this tripartite model, Taegio not only demonstrated that was the villa a place of sensual pleasures, but that these were inseparable from the villa’s intellectual pleasures, encapsulated in the final term ‘third pleasure’, comparable to the complex enjoyment of poetry, rhetoric or music which stimulate both the mind and the senses. Taegio’s tripartite model grounds the theoretical framework upon which my synthetic approach to the Villa d’Este’s symbolic and sensory experience is based, and contextualises my analysis within the intellectual world of its design and development. This chapter demonstrates how Taegio’s model not only sympathetically prefigures theoretical approaches to the perception of space devised by spatial theorists and now widely established within landscape studies, but also provides a refined theoretical framework tailored specifically to the spatial perception of the Italian Renaissance garden.

Section 2.1, ‘Garden of the Gods’, is concerned with the villa’s intellectual mode (second pleasure), which Taegio defined according to its symbolic status as a site of mythic invocation, comparing the gardens of his description to the landscapes of myth and envisioning them to be inhabited not by static antique statues, but by a lively cast of mythic

¹⁵² Taegio, *La Villa* 249, trans. Beck 2011.

figures from the Roman pantheon. Section 2.2, 'Heterotopia: Merging Myth and Reality', contextualises the garden's symbolic status within theoretical perspectives on designed and natural landscapes as cultural artefacts inscribed with myth and meaning, and defines the garden as a heterotopia, a real-world site which encapsulated a mythic dimension. In Section 2.3, 'Thirdspace: Synthesising Symbolism and the Senses', I show how Taegio's tripartite model can be employed to draw together two major divergent approaches to historic landscapes within a synthetic theoretical framework, one which facilitates my new methodology that combines traditional interpretative approaches to the Italian Renaissance garden as a symbolic space with phenomenological approaches to landscape as a place of mutable sensory encounter. Section 2.4, 'Garden of the Senses', engages with the villa's sensory mode (first pleasure), conveyed by Taegio through vivid descriptions of the garden's somatic stimuli, which are also contextualised within Renaissance literary culture in order to demonstrate the integrality of the senses to the garden experience. The following Sections 2.5 and 2.6, 'Waterscapes of Seeing, Hearing, Bathing and Tasting' and 'Plantscapes of Purity, Power and Exoticism', present a methodological toolkit for identifying and defining the range of somatic effects generated by fountains and plantings. Finally, in Section 2.7, 'The Third Pleasure', I reflect on what is gained when all three of Taegio's 'pleasures' are understood as part of an holistic design thinking, resulting in a new interpretative approach to the Villa d'Este.

2.1 Garden of the Gods

In *La Villa*, Taegio's identification of the garden's 'second pleasure', its intellectual mode, can be defined according to its symbolic status as a landscape of mythic invocation in two

distinct ways. First, as a site which emulated exemplary ancient and mythic gardens, and secondly, as a locale inhabited by the same figures who populated the landscapes of myth. Taegio conveyed how this mythic dimension was generated by the harmonious blending of art and nature within the garden, which in effect created a new kind of landscape, defined by Taegio as the ‘third nature’. First coined by Italian humanist Jacopo Bonfadio in a letter describing the gardens surrounding Lake Garda (1541), Taegio adopted the term eighteen years later in *La Villa* to describe the Milanese garden of Cesare Simonetta at Castellazzo:

And the fruits are more flavourful here than elsewhere, and all things born of the earth are better. As for the gardens that are in this region, and those of the Hesperides and those of Alcinous and Adonis, the industry of the peasants has been such that nature incorporated with art is made an artificer, and the ‘connatural’ (*connaturale*) of art; and from both of them is made a third nature.¹⁵³

Here are without end the ingenious grafts that show with great wonder to the world the industry of a wise gardener, who by incorporating art with nature brings forth from both a third nature, which causes the fruits to be more flavourful here than elsewhere...the gardens of the Hesperides and of Adonis ought to yield to this very pleasant garden.¹⁵⁴

In these passages, Bonfadio and Taegio used the term ‘third nature’ to define the garden in relation to both the surrounding topography and the exemplary gardens of antiquity. John Dixon Hunt has demonstrated how this term was employed to create a hierarchy of landscape based on human intervention, adapted from Cicero’s description of agricultural lands as ‘second nature’ in *De natura deorum*, which by implication, designated ‘first nature’ as the wilderness or uncultivated territories.¹⁵⁵ By characterising landscape as a ‘trio of natures’, Hunt observed, Taegio and Bonfadio emphasised the

¹⁵³ Bonfadio, Letter to Plinio Tomacello, August 1541, 96, ed. Greco 1978; trans. Beck 2011: 58.

¹⁵⁴ Taegio, *La Villa* 161-63.

¹⁵⁵ Cicero, *Nat. D.* 2.152. Hunt 1996b: 55-70, 2000: 32-75; see also Beck 2002: 327-31, 2011: 59-69.

dialogic relationship between the garden and its surrounding agrarian and natural landscapes, advocating the importance of contextualising the garden, both topographically and symbolically, within its surroundings.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, by identifying the garden with a ‘third nature’, a landscape fashioned and enhanced by human artifice, Bonfadio and Taegio articulated the cultural understanding of the garden as a form of art. Reflecting on this conception of landscape, Elizabeth Hyde observed: ‘The earth itself served as the artist’s palette. But more importantly, one might think of the earth as the artist’s canvas in the Renaissance’.¹⁵⁷ In the same way Renaissance artists revived the classical tradition by capturing mythic narratives on canvas, so architects and designers created gardens in the image of mythic landscapes, populated with iconographic representations of the figures who had once inhabited Italy’s sacro-idyllic topography.

It follows, therefore, that the term ‘third nature’ was used by Bonfadio and Taegio with specific reference to three exemplary ancient gardens — of the Hesperides, of Alcinous and Adonis — two of which belonged to the world of myth. As outlined in the Introduction, the Garden of the Hesperides was home to a tree bearing golden apples, which were stolen by Hercules for his eleventh labour.¹⁵⁸ In Homer’s *Odyssey*, the Greek hero Odysseus encounters the sempiternal gardens of Alcinous, king of the Phaeacians, on the island of Scherie, where trees and vines produce miraculous fruit which ‘neither perishes nor fails in winter or in summer, but lasts throughout the year’, and flowers

¹⁵⁶ Hunt used Bonfadio’s description of Lake Garda to define this trio of natures: ‘Following his reference to gardens as a third nature, he returns to what Cicero would have labeled the second, the world of citrus and olive groves, orchards and “green pastures”, and then to their “enemy” or “opposite” — the “tall, arduous, steep, sloping and menacing mountains” that surround the Italian lakes to their north.’ (2000: 34).

¹⁵⁷ Hyde 2016: 5.

¹⁵⁸ The Garden of the Hesperides is discussed at length in Chapter 3.

‘bloom the year through’.¹⁵⁹ The gardens of Adonis refer to a ritual performed as part of the summer *Adonia* festival, when devotees grew ephemeral flowers and herbs in small, shallow pots to commemorate the short life of youthful Adonis, who was transformed into an anemone by Venus after his premature death.¹⁶⁰ Bonfadio and Taegio upheld these three ancient gardens as ideal models to emulate and surpass as part of a continuum with contemporary gardens, invoking the classical precedent established by Pliny the Elder: ‘antiquity gave its highest admiration to the garden of the Hesperides and of the kings Adonis and Alcinous’.¹⁶¹ This passage from Pliny was quoted by Giulio Pomponio Leto in the preface to his popular commentary on Columella’s tenth book on gardening (Rome, 1472), an acknowledgement of the ancient exemplars to which garden designers should aspire, and thus an inducement to his contemporaries to understand the mythic gardens of the Hesperides and Alcinous as in some sense real.¹⁶²

It is unsurprising, therefore, that Bonfadio and Taegio also envisioned gardens to be populated by the same divine pantheon that inhabited mythic landscapes. Thus, alongside the garden’s real-world context of agricultural and uncultivated environments, there was also a well-known mythic hinterland invoked within. Bonfadio described giants and

¹⁵⁹ Homer, *Od.* 7.115-16, 126, trans. Murray 1919. Homer describes orchards filled with pears, pomegranates, apples, figs and olives (*Od.* 7.113-14), where fruits ripen under a constant summer breeze: ‘continually the West Wind, as it blows, quickens to life some fruits, and ripens others; pear upon pear waxes ripe, apple upon apple, grape bunch upon grape bunch, and fig upon fig’ (7.115-20).

¹⁶⁰ These ritual gardens are described by Plato (*Phaedrus* 276b) and Theophrastus (*Historia plantarum* 6.7.3). Adonis’ death and metamorphosis is recounted by Ovid (*Met.* 10.708-37), who alludes to the *Adonia* festival in Venus’s lament for Adonis: ‘Every year your untimely death shall be re-enacted, and so the tale of my sad lamentation will last for ever’ (10.726-27). The key study on the role of the gardens of Adonis in the *Adonia* festival is Detienne 1994: 99-122.

¹⁶¹ Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 19.19, trans. Rackham 1938. On Pliny as the source for Bonfadio and Taegio, see Beck 2002: 327-334, 2011: 67-69.

¹⁶² Leto, *Commentary* 181, in Brown 1960. Also published in Venice (1480), Bologna (1494) and Reggio Emilia (1499).

Olympians as part of the landscape surrounding Lake Garda, whilst his own villa played host to a trio of deities: ‘Venus in her favourite dress, Zephyrus accompanied her, and her mother Flora goes about distributing flowers and life giving scents’.¹⁶³ Likewise, Taegio declared that the villa was enjoyed ‘not only by men but also gods and goddesses’, and listed among them, ‘Bacchus, Pan, Saturn, Ceres, Diana, Flora, Pale, Satyrs, Fauns, Silvans, Driads, Oriads, Napee, Amadriads, Naiads, and other such deities’.¹⁶⁴ Taegio imagined both the Milanese villas and their surrounding countryside as inhabited by a mythic pantheon. The garden at the Villa Taverna of Francesco Taverna was decorated with fountains which ‘quench the thirst of Priapus’ and ‘with their sweet murmurs arouse the envy of those in Helicon who are so dear to Apollo and the learned sisters’; and was bordered by ‘thick forests, where the Satyrs and Pan’s followers with the Dryads like to sing the praises, and the pomp and the riches of the pleasant place’.¹⁶⁵ The Villa Castellazzo of Cesare Simonetta thrived under the ‘reign of Venus and of her son Cupid’, and Simonetta was compelled to ‘frequently leave the city of Milan in order to enjoy the very sweet countryside of Apollo, and of the Muses’.¹⁶⁶ Describing the villa of Pietro Paolo Arrigono, Taegio declared, ‘Here Apollo has come to live with the learned Thespiads, and the flowering dryads’, and also counted Hercules, Venus, Vertumnus, Pomona, and Flora among the villa’s denizens.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Bonfadio, Letter to Plinio Tomacello 96, trans. Hunt 2000: 33.

¹⁶⁴ Taegio, *La Villa* 151.

¹⁶⁵ Taegio, *La Villa* 157.

¹⁶⁶ Taegio, *La Villa* 163-65.

¹⁶⁷ Taegio, *La Villa* 195.

Thus, ‘third nature’ not only defined the harmonious blending of art and nature within the garden, but also referred to the merging of myth and reality, expressing a continuity between Italy’s mythic hinterland (part of ‘first nature’) and the Italian Renaissance garden. Here, mythic sites and their divine inhabitants were made manifest once again through allusive landscaping and sculptural programmes to create a garden of the gods. In this capacity, the Italian Renaissance garden was not only a continuum of ancient exemplary gardens, but also of the symbolic conception of landscape in classical antiquity, populated with the same figures who inhabited the landscapes of myth. As a site of mythic invocation, therefore, the Italian Renaissance garden reflected what anthropologist Marc Augé defined as the cultural impulse to invest landscapes with meaning by animating it with stories and populating it with tutelary deities and primal forces.¹⁶⁸ This was powerfully realised at the Villa d’Este, where the garden’s central protagonists, Hercules and the Tiburtine Sibyl, represented the re-invocation of Tivoli’s tutelary deities who once presided over the Tiburtine topography. In the following section, the garden’s symbolic status as a real-world site which encapsulated mythic elements is defined according to spatial theory, and contextualised within interpretative and ethnographic approaches to natural and designed landscapes.

2.2 Heterotopia: Merging Myth and Reality

As a landscape of mythic invocation, the Italian Renaissance garden reflects Michel Foucault’s definition of the garden as a ‘heterotopia’, a real place which also encapsulates

¹⁶⁸ Augé, 1995: 42; quoted below, page 64.

a symbolic or mythic dimension.¹⁶⁹ For this reason, the term heterotopia has been applied to ancient Roman gardens by Katharine von Stackelberg in recognition of both their ‘architectural and decorative elements that referenced classical myths’, and their mythic status: ‘That the ancient garden had a mythic dimension can be seen by the repeated literary references to the Elysian fields, the garden of the Hesperides, and Homer’s garden of Alcinous’.¹⁷⁰ Likewise, Italian Renaissance gardens were designated with the same heterotopic status by Luke Morgan, by virtue of the extensive mythic invocation in their design and iconographic schema, which consciously revived classical conceptions of the garden’s mythic status.¹⁷¹

Foucault’s concept of space as a cultural construct, in which his discussion of heterotopias is framed, has been influential in shaping interpretative and ethnographic approaches to landscape and garden history.¹⁷² His spatial theory was developed by Augé in his ethnological approach to geography, which engaged with the inscription of meaning and myth onto landscape by cultures in order to investigate the relationship between societies and the natural world.¹⁷³ Augé described landscape as an ethnoscape, ‘a space where memory and imagination join forces in visualising a shared, communal interpretation of the world’, as Diana Spencer succinctly defined.¹⁷⁴ The deities which

¹⁶⁹ Foucault 1986: 25. In his definition, Foucault used the example of Persian charbagh (meaning ‘four gardens’), which are organised around a quadripartite design intersected by walkways: ‘The traditional garden of the Persians was a sacred space that was supposed to bring together inside its rectangle four parts representing the four parts of the world, with a space still more sacred than the other that were like an umbilicus, the navel of the world at its centre (the basin and water fountain were there); and all the vegetation of the garden was supposed to come together in this space, in this sort of microcosm.’ (1986: 25-26).

¹⁷⁰ von Stackelberg 2009: 52.

¹⁷¹ Morgan 2016: 35-38.

¹⁷² Foucault 1986.

¹⁷³ Augé 1995: 42-44.

¹⁷⁴ Spencer 2010: 5-6.

inhabited the landscapes of classical myth (and the gardens in Taegio's *La Villa*) evince what Augé defined as the cultural impulse to imbue landscape with meaning by populating it with tutelary divinities and primal forces, to 'detect in it the traces of chthonian or celestial powers, ancestors or spirits which populate and animate its private geography'.¹⁷⁵

Reflecting the spatial theories of Foucault and Augé, interpretative and ethnological approaches to landscape history are based on its symbolic conception, as scholars have combined cultural geography with semiotic analysis to define the social and symbolic significance of landscape. Influential studies by Geoffrey and Susan Jellicoe, Denis Cosgrove, Stephen Daniels, James Duncan, David Ley, Kenneth Olwig and Simon Schama have explored how landscape has been shaped by the cultural practices and values of societies over the centuries in order to transmit meaning and myth.¹⁷⁶ To interpret this meaning, scholars engaged with landscape as either an image or as a text (broadly defined), metaphors which emphasised the 'authorship' of landscape. As an image, landscape was interpreted in the same way art historians approached iconography, as conveyed by Cosgrove and Daniels: 'landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing or symbolising surroundings'.¹⁷⁷ Bringing text into the frame, Duncan summarised: 'landscape, I would argue, is one of the central elements in a cultural system, for as an ordered assemblage of objects, a text, it acts as a signifying system through which a social system is communicated, reproduced, experienced, and explored'.¹⁷⁸ The same

¹⁷⁵ Augé 1995: 42.

¹⁷⁶ Jellicoe and Jellicoe 1975; Cosgrove 1984, 2007; Daniels and Cosgrove 1988; Duncan 1990; Duncan and Ley 1993; Schama 1995; Olwig 2002.

¹⁷⁷ Daniels and Cosgrove 1988: 1.

¹⁷⁸ Duncan 1988: 17.

ethnographic understanding of landscape also informed theoretical approaches to historic gardens, including Italian Renaissance gardens, which have been explored as cultural artefacts, stages for individual and cultural expression, as outlined in depth in Chapter 1. Hunt, in his seminal publication on the practice of garden theory, defined gardens as ‘concentrated or perfected forms of place-making’, which ‘focus the art of place-making in the way that poetry can focus the art of writing’.¹⁷⁹

Whilst ethnographic and interpretative approaches have been fundamental to elucidating the cultural and symbolic value of historic landscapes and gardens, including those of the Italian Renaissance, they have tended to prioritise cultural and elite ‘authorship’ rather than engaging with the experience and agency of the individual, overlooking the plurality of physical experiences generated by and refracted onto and through landscape as a material space. Within the study of the Italian Renaissance garden, the result is that scholars have typically engaged with what Taegio identified as the villa’s ‘second pleasure’ and disregarded the villa’s ‘first pleasure’, the garden’s sensory experience. In doing so, they also overlooked the garden’s ‘third pleasure’, the synthesis of its symbolic and sensory elements. The emphasis placed upon the symbolic value of the garden by Foucault and of landscape by Augé, means that their compatibility with Taegio’s conceptual model of intellectual and sensual spatial perception falls short in their neglect of the physical experience of space. This neglected element of physical spatial perception was first addressed in Henri Lefebvre’s and Edward Soja’s thirdspace model, which heralded a new wave of phenomenological approaches to landscape that incorporated methodologies from sensory anthropology.

¹⁷⁹ Hunt 2000: 11; see also Hunt 1996a: 55-70, 1996b: 1-5.

2.3 Thirdspace: Synthesising Symbolism and the Senses

Although this is the first study to recognise the methodological value of Taegio's tripartite model and apply it to the Italian Renaissance garden, its applicability for twenty-first century scholarship is evident in its compatibility with the model influentially developed by spatial theorists Lefebvre and Soja. Challenging Foucault's emphasis on the symbolic value of space, Lefebvre and then Soja outlined a tripartite model which gave equal prevalence to physical and symbolic modes of spatial perception.¹⁸⁰ The following spatial categories were identified by Lefebvre and refined according to Soja's 'thirdspace' definitions: firstspace (Lefebvre's 'perceived space') is the physical perception of space; secondspace (Lefebvre's 'conceived space') is the intellectual or symbolic conception of space; and thirdspace (Lefebvre's 'lived space') is the simultaneous experience of these physical and intellectual modes, which was also defined by Soja as 'real-and-imagined space'.¹⁸¹

Lefebvre and Soja have been influential in shaping phenomenological approaches to landscape history which have more recently been applied to historic gardens. John Douglas Porteous and Tim Ingold were early and prominent advocates of phenomenological approaches, who challenged established notion of landscape as a cultural construct in favour of an approach which engaged with the physical perception of individuals.¹⁸² It was Porteous, however, who paved the way for sensory approaches to landscape, as one of the first geographers to refocus attention on non-visual perceptions of

¹⁸⁰ Lefebvre 1991, first published in French in 1974; Soja 1996: 11.

¹⁸¹ Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1996: 11.

¹⁸² Porteous 1985: 356-78, 1990; Ingold 1993: 152-174, 2000.

landscape, coining a vocabulary of sensescapes ('smellscape', 'soundscape', 'tastescape' and 'touchscape') to create a new terminology for defining the somatic experience of landscape.¹⁸³ Porteous' successors, geographers Yi-Fu Tuan and Paul Rodaway, likewise demonstrated the power of the senses to define a place, and despite their emphasis on the physical experience of landscape, these scholars acknowledged the blending of symbolic and sensory perceptions of space, in accordance with Soja's 'thirdspace' or 'real-and-imagined' space.¹⁸⁴ Ingold and Porteous thus broke new ground within which a rethinking of the relationship between individual and environment might be scrutinised, and wherein a new evaluation of Taegio's tripartite model becomes especially relevant.

The development of phenomenological approaches in landscape studies, together with the pioneering work on sensory anthropology by Constance Classen, David Howes and Anthony Synnot, established a foundation for the recent engagement of physical and sensual perception in the study of historic gardens.¹⁸⁵ As outlined in Chapter 1, Michel Conan's edited volume on the experience of motion within designed landscapes marked the beginning of this shift into exploring physical perception within historic gardens in the Dumbarton Oaks scholarly community, although its focus was principally upon haptic experience.¹⁸⁶ The major breakthrough came in the form of a subsequent Dumbarton Oaks publication which finally placed the senses at the heart of the garden experience: Dede

¹⁸³ Porteous 1985: 356-78, 1990.

¹⁸⁴ Tuan 1974, 1979, 1993; Rodaway 1994.

¹⁸⁵ Classen, Howes and Synnot 1994; this work on the cultural history of smell paved the way for the *Sensory Formations Series* (ed. Howes) introduced in Chapter 1, pages 48-49.

¹⁸⁶ Conan 2003; discussed in Chapter 1, pages 37-28.

Fairchild Ruggles' edited volume, in which chapters by Elizabeth Hyde and Anatole Tchikine's chapter heralded a new wave of sensory approaches to Renaissance gardens.¹⁸⁷

Despite the synthetic approach to physical and symbolic spatial perception advocated by Lefebvre and Soja, however, studies in landscape and garden history have typically focussed on only one of these two modes of spatial perception. As outlined above, ethnological and interpretative approaches have engaged with 'secondspace', the cultural and symbolic conception of landscape; whilst phenomenological approaches have engaged with 'firstspace', the physical perception of landscape, rather than synthesising the two approaches in the realisation of the Lefebvre's and Soja's 'thirdspace'. Nonetheless, the applicability of Lefebvre's and Soja's thirdspace model to historic gardens has been demonstrated in three significant studies which have engaged with the spatial perception of ancient gardens. First, von Stackelberg's studies of the gardens in the House of Octavius Quartio and the House of the Menander excavated at Pompeii, and the *Horti Lamiani* in Rome; secondly, Spencer's reconstructions of Pliny the Younger's villas and Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli; and thirdly, Elaine James' study of the garden described in the biblical poem, Song of Songs.¹⁸⁸ These scholars applied Lefebvre's and Soja's thirdspace model to present reconstructions of the physical and symbolic perception of gardens for which there is little or no material evidence, employing textual descriptions as their principal source.

Taegio's tripartite model, to which the thirdspace model closely corresponds, offers a more refined theoretical framework tailored specifically to the spatial perception of the

¹⁸⁷ Fairchild Ruggles 2017; Hyde 2017: 123-152; Tchikine 2017: 217-254; see Chapter 1, pages 49-50.

¹⁸⁸ von Stackelberg 2009: 51-54, 101-140; Spencer 2010: 113-34, 172-85; James 2017: 55-87.

Italian Renaissance garden. Firstspace (physical perception) is refined according to Taegio's 'first pleasure', the garden's sensory experience; secondspace (symbolic conception) corresponds with the 'second pleasure', the garden's intellectual experience as a site of mythic invocation; and thirdspace (real-and-imagined experience) corresponds with the 'third pleasure', the synthesis of the garden's sensory and symbolic elements. By employing Taegio's tripartite model in my study of the Villa d'Este's symbolic and sensory experience, this study draws together the divergent interpretative and phenomenological approaches to landscape and garden history. Having defined the garden's intellectual mode in Section 2.1, the following sections engage with the garden's sensory experience.

2.4 Garden of the Senses

Where Taegio's 'second pleasure' has been at least implicitly central to studies of Italian Renaissance gardens, his 'first pleasure', sensory perception, has remained elusive until recent scholarship. In *La Villa*, Taegio's accounts of gardens are pervaded by vivid descriptions of the myriad somatic stimuli encountered within. In his panegyric on the 'the pleasures that a man gets from the villa', Taegio conveyed the capacity of gardens to gratify the five senses, from pleasant views and cool fountains, to warm breezes, sweet scents and the sound of birdsong:

What shall we say of the pleasures that a man gets from the villa by seeing rising up from a living rock a clear and cool fountain; which shows to the eyes that look into it the secrets of its clear base as if it were none other than pure crystal? Whose eyes are those, to whom appears the view of a delightful grove, whose plants so graciously receive the rays of the sun that the grass from them takes the greatest recreation? Who does not enjoy seeing, when the warm zephyrs breathe, the trees budding and almost in a race one with the other to reclothe themselves with green leaves?...Who is not delighted by the sweetness of the fragrances that one smells being sweetly exhaled by the various flowers?...Who is not delighted by the sweet accents of the little birds when, almost in

competition with each other, they serenade their sweethearts?...I pass with silence many other similar things that delight the senses.¹⁸⁹

Here, Taegio presents the villa as the sensory summation of the surrounding countryside, where the natural landscape's synaesthetic elements are encapsulated and concentrated. By narrating his somatic responses to the villa, Taegio demonstrates how the multisensual pleasures of sight, smell, sound, taste and touch were fundamental to the experience and enjoyment of the Italian Renaissance garden.

Amongst the range of somatic stimuli identified by Taegio, he emphasised the sensory properties of fountains and plantings in particular. His account of Cesare Simonetta's garden at Castellazzo presents an olfactory extravaganza, with plants 'diffusing sweet smells', from 'fragrant lavender', 'sweet-smelling, precious, and rare shrubs' and the 'big and pleasing fragrance' of a pergola trained with jasmine and roses which generated 'fragrant and pleasant shade'.¹⁹⁰ Similarly, at Francesco Taverna's villa Taegio was delighted by 'its shrubs, its flowers, its herbs, its smells', and reminiscing on the pleasures of Count Girolamo Cavaliero's villa in Robbio he recalled, 'the very sweet smells of all those flowers'.¹⁹¹ The significance attributed by Taegio to the olfactory properties of garden plantings was underscored in his concluding remarks of *La Villa*, in which he conveyed their health benefits: 'green and living plants comfort not only the sight; with the fragrances that they exhale they greatly help the vital spirits of a man'.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Taegio, *La Villa* 207-9.

¹⁹⁰ Taegio, *La Villa* 159-61.

¹⁹¹ Taegio, *La Villa* 157, 175.

¹⁹² Taegio, *La Villa* 227.

The acoustic, haptic and gustative properties of fountains are also repeated refrains in Taegio's gardens descriptions. He wrote of the deliciously cool, thirst-quenching fountains decorating Francesco Taverna's gardens which made such 'sweet murmurs' they aroused the envy of Apollo and the Muses.¹⁹³ In Cesare Simonetta's garden he described how, 'with soft murmur runs a rivulet of water, flowing from a clear fountain'; Signor Camillo's villa at Calvairato was decorated with 'lively fountains that, flowing through diverse channels with sweet murmuring, go watering all the parts of the pleasant garden'; and 'cool fountains that sweetly murmuring surround the sunny place' that was Lucio Cotta's villa in Olbia.¹⁹⁴ At the villa of Pietro Paolo Arrigono, the acoustic properties of the fountains were enhanced by the sounds of a breeze and birdsong that together they created a natural harmony: 'from a fountain of very white marble springs very clear water that goes babbling through the very pleasant wood with its pleasant whisper, which, as it joins the murmuring of the sweet breeze and the singing of the pretty little birds, produces a harmony that sweetens the air so that it never grows stale.'¹⁹⁵

Taegio, therefore was setting out to characterise the various somatic elements of garden experience, and can thus be argued to bring an intellectual distance to defining the relationship between garden and visitor. To understand the wider significance of the garden's sensory mode and its manifestation in literary culture, two important texts exemplify the prevalence and potency of somatics in defining the garden experience: the fictional gardens of Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* (Venice, 1471) and Francesco

¹⁹³ Taegio, *La Villa* 157.

¹⁹⁴ Taegio, *La Villa* 163, 179-181, 185; for murmuring fountains, see also 117, 171, 187, 189.

¹⁹⁵ Taegio, *La Villa* 197.

Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Venice, 1499), in which the sensory properties of plantings and fountains are also foregrounded.

In *Decameron*, the story begins with a party of ten aristocratic young Florentines who escape the plague-ravaged city during the Black Death outbreak of 1348 to take refuge in the country, where they entertain themselves for ten days in a succession of garden settings by taking it in turns to recount the one hundred stories which comprise the ten books (or days) of *Decameron*. On the third day, the company arrive at a hilltop villa environed by abundant gardens, which they declare to be an earthly paradise.¹⁹⁶ The group's initial rapture at the garden derives not from its appearance, but from the olfactory pleasures of its plants, of blossoming grapevines, sweet-scented flowers, exotic jasmine and ripening citrus fruits:

There were wide walks both running around the garden and intersecting one another in the middle...covered over in trellised vines that gave every promise of producing grapes in abundance that year. They were all then in flower and filled the garden with a fragrance that, mingling with the odors of the many other sweet-smelling plants that were growing there, made them feel as if they were standing in the midst of all the spices that ever grew in the East. The sides of the walks were almost completely enclosed by red and white rosebushes and by jasmine, so that one could walk along any of them in pleasant sweet-smelling shade...bright green orange and lemon trees were covered with blossoms as well as both mature and ripening fruit, and that provided a pleasant shade for the eyes as well as delightful odors for them to smell.¹⁹⁷

As they explore the garden, the party are further enraptured by a fountain at the centre, delighted by the various aesthetic, kinetic, acoustic and tactile properties of its water effects:

¹⁹⁶ Boccaccio, *Decameron* 200-3, trans. Rebhorn 2013.

¹⁹⁷ Boccaccio, *Decameron* 201.

In the middle of this lawn there stood a fountain of gleaming white marble, covered in marvelous bas-reliefs. Out of a figure placed on a column at its centre, a jet of water shot high into the sky and then fell back down again into the limpid pool below with a delightful splashing sound...The water that overflowed from the brimming fountain was carried away from it through a hidden conduit and then rose to the surface in a series of beautiful, ingeniously contrived little channels that completely encircled the lawn.¹⁹⁸

The somatic properties of the garden's plantings and water effects induce further sensual pleasures, as the Florentines proceed to weave 'the loveliest garlands for themselves' from the fragrant flowers, and 'refreshed themselves by washing their faces in the cool water' from the inviting fountain.¹⁹⁹ As well as conveying the garden's aesthetic appeal, Boccaccio, in tune with the didactic vision of the 'first pleasure' produced by Taegio, conveyed its particular enchantment for the occupants principally through the sensory stimuli.

Whilst Boccaccio focussed on the sensory experience of the garden's plantings and water effects, in *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, Colonna's garden ekphrases are even more significant because they foreground the senses. This is achieved by emphasising the physical responses of the occupant to the garden's sensory stimuli through Poliphilo's first-person narration. The story follows Poliphilo's quest to find his beloved Polia after he falls asleep and finds himself in a dream world where he must journey through a series of natural and architectural landscapes and locales (including various gardens). Within these settings, Poliphilo finds himself either terrified, bewildered or enraptured. In the first garden Poliphilo encounters, Colonna effectively foregrounds the site's somatic experience by personifying the senses as five nymphs who preside over an abundant pleasure garden:

¹⁹⁸ Boccaccio, *Decameron* 201-2.

¹⁹⁹ Boccaccio, *Decameron* 202-3.

Orassia (Sight), Osfressia (Smell), Achoe (Hearing), Guessia (Taste) and Aphaea (Touch).²⁰⁰ Here, the Nymphs of the Five Senses employ their erotic charms to tempt Poliphilo from his quest, urging him to take ‘joyful consolation in us, and give yourself over to solace and pleasure’.²⁰¹ In a tangible metaphor for the seductive and immersive potency of the senses, the nymphs proceed to disrobe and invite Poliphilo to bathe with them in a garden fountain, where they anoint him with an aphrodisiac unguent that leaves Poliphilo, ‘sexually aroused and lasciviously stimulated to the point of total confusion and torment’.²⁰² Within the garden setting, Poliphilo’s erotic encounter with the Nymphs of the Five Senses can be interpreted as an allegory for the powerful physical effect of the garden’s somatic stimuli upon the occupant, which is characterised by seduction, personified by the nymphs, and immersion, signified by the fountain and aphrodisiac unguent.

Poliphilo’s encounter within the garden of the Nymphs of the Five Senses establishes a precedent for the succession of gardens encountered on his journey to find Polia, each of which induce an array of sensual pleasures that delay him. Indeed, Poliphilo disentangles himself from the lascivious nymphs only to find himself enraptured by the palace gardens of Queen Eleuterylida, which are so ‘gratifying to the senses’ that Poliphilo insists on lingering to take a tour of them.²⁰³ Likewise, at the climax of his journey on

²⁰⁰ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 75-80, trans. Godwin 2005. The nymphs’ garden is: ‘broad in extent, rich in herbs and plants, charming to look upon, rich in every crop, graced with many hills, stocked with all the harmless animals, conspicuously equipped for every pleasure, abundant in every fruit and adorned with the purest of springs’ (*Hypnerotomachia* 78).

²⁰¹ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 79.

²⁰² Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 83-87.

²⁰³ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 124, 123-34.

Venus's garden isle, Poliphilo's lush surroundings arouse such sensual euphoria that Poliphilo, by his own admission, is distracted from the object of his quest:

This incredibly delicious and pleasant place with its unbelievable decoration of spring greenery, the birds chattering the pure air and flying twittering through the new foliage: all this gave the utmost delight to the external senses...I felt ardently impelled to the height of bliss...and breathed avidly such fragrance as I have never known before, by immortal Jupiter! I truly did not know which of my senses I should fix firmly on my intended object, distracted as I was by so many different pleasures, by such excessive gratification, and by such voluptuousness.²⁰⁴

Poliphilo's powerful physical response to the garden, which drives him to a state of ecstatic distraction analogous to sexual arousal, invokes the seductive and distracting influence of the Nymphs of the Five Senses from his first garden encounter. Indeed, throughout *Hypnerotomachia*, the physical effect of gardens upon Poliphilo is so powerful that it distracts him repeatedly from his quest for Polia and even delays the progress of the narrative, as the text constantly digresses to enable Poliphilo's effusive landscape descriptions. Like Taegio and Boccaccio, therefore, Colonna placed the senses at the heart of the garden experience, embodying their potency in the Nymphs of the Five Senses, who can be identified as the unseen *genius loci* of the Italian Renaissance garden, exerting the same seductive influence they used upon Poliphilo to entice visitors to linger. To define the visitor's sensory experience, therefore, it is necessary to identify the properties and effects of the garden's sensory stimuli: principally, its fountains and plantings, explored below.

²⁰⁴ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 358.

2.5 Waterscapes of Seeing, Hearing, Bathing and Tasting

In the courtyard of the Villa d'Este palazzo, a nymph lies sleeping above a basin into which water falls beneath her, whose murmuring has lulled her to sleep. She is the *nympha loci* 'nymph of the place', a figure typically found at the entrance of Italian Renaissance gardens, popularised by the example in the Belvedere of the Vatican (1512), which was accompanied by the pseudo-ancient Latin epigram:

Nymph of this place, custodian of the sacred fountain,
I sleep while I hear the murmuring of the smooth-sounding water.
Spare me, whoever touches upon this marble cave, do not disturb my sleep.
Whether you drink or wash, be silent.²⁰⁵

The popularity of the sleeping nymph as a fountain type in Italian Renaissance gardens was sufficient to conjure the associated epigram and the statue personified fresh water springs, signifying the potability of the water.²⁰⁶ What garden historians have failed to recognise, however, is that the sleeping nymph type also embodied the four sensual pleasures of the fountain: seeing, hearing, bathing and tasting, the very same sensory stimuli associated with fountains identified by Taegio in *La Villa* and Boccaccio in the enchanted garden of the *Decameron* — as outlined in Section 2.4 above — and that was a trope amongst Cinquecento writers.

The poetic, onomatopoetic language used to describe fountains in sixteenth-century Italy reveals a distinctly multisensory experience of water effects, which emphasised sound, touch and taste alongside their visual appeal. This made the experience of fountains

²⁰⁵ '*Huius nympha loci, sacri custodia fonti / Dormio dum blandae sentior murmur aquae. / Parce meum quiquis tangos cava marmora somnun / Rumpere: sive bibas, sive lavere taces.*', trans. Barkan 1999: 242.

²⁰⁶ On the popularisation of the sleeping nymph at the Vatican as a fountain type, see Bober 1977: 223-39; and the on the fountain type's prevalence in Italian Renaissance gardens, see MacDougall 1994: 37-55, 1975: 357-65, and Lazzaro 1990: 14-46, 1991: 97-99.

inherently interactive rather than purely aesthetic. Indeed, Anatole Tchikine's studies of water features in Italian Renaissance gardens have demonstrated convincingly how fountains were designed to engage visitors as active participants rather than mere spectators through their exploitation of water's multisensual properties.²⁰⁷ Tchikine defined Renaissance and Baroque fountains as a form of interactive art, designed by *fontanieri* 'to stimulate or transform sensory experience' through a range of engaging visual, kinetic and acoustic effects:

They [*fontanieri*] sought to achieve artistic effects through exploiting the physical properties of their materials, or by 'blending art and nature', to put it into sixteenth-century terms, and saw the spectator as an active participant in the creative process rather than as a passive observer...sixteenth and seventeenth-century *fontanieri* focused on one exclusive medium, water, and were mainly concerned with its appearance, movement, and sound.²⁰⁸

The multisensory experience induced by fountains was celebrated by the Sienese humanist Claudio Tolomei in a letter to Giambattista Grimaldi (1543) vividly describing the fountains of Rome, who recounted the somatic pleasures of 'seeing', 'hearing', 'bathing' and 'tasting' they afforded.²⁰⁹ Tolomei recorded the sounds of 'murmuring' (*mormorio*), 'gurgling' (*gorgogli*), 'sweet music' (*dolce la musica*) and 'soothing noise' (*soave rumore*) accompanying the different water effects, which he identified according to natural phenomena, witnessing 'currents' (*correnti*), 'jets' (*zampilli* or *pispini*), 'rain' (*pioggia*), 'spattering' (*spezzate*), 'bubbles' (*bollori*), 'ripples' (*tremoli*), 'sweat' (*sudori*), 'dew' (*rugiada*) and 'boiling' (*viscighe*).²¹⁰ In the preceding decade, the

²⁰⁷ Tchikine 2010: 57-76, 2014: 129-54, 2017: 226-36.

²⁰⁸ Tchikine 2010: 57.

²⁰⁹ Tolomei, Letter to Giambattista Grimaldi, 26th July 1543, 362-63, in Ferrero 1967.

²¹⁰ Tolomei, Letter to Giambattista Grimaldi 362-63, trans. Tchikine 2010: 57.

writer Annibale Caro used the same onomatopoeic language to describe the fountains of a Roman garden in a letter to Giovanni Guidiccioni (1538), recording the ‘murmuring’ (*mormorio*) and ‘gurgling’ (*gorgoglio*) he heard accompanying water effects of ‘rain’ (*pioggia*), ‘jets’ (*zampilli*), ‘bubbling’ (*bollori*) and ‘trickling’ (*gemitii*).²¹¹

Tchikine observed that the same poetic, onomatopoeic vocabulary used by Tolomei and Caro in their letters to define water effects was universal, pervading the language used by professional writers and garden visitors alike.²¹² Most notably in Leandro Alberti’s popular guidebook to Italy, *Descrittione di tutta Italia* (Bologna, 1550), Pirro Ligorio’s unpublished treatise, *Nobiltà dell’antiche arti* (composed c. 1570-80), the horticultural treatises of Giovanvittorio Soderini, *Trattato degli arbori* (c. 1580-90) and Agostino del Riccio *Agricoltura sperimentale* (c. 1595), and Daniello Bartoli’s discursive account, *Le Fontane di Roma, di Tivoli, di Frascati* (1645). Significantly, the same rich vocabulary was also used to describe the fountains of the Villa d’Este in the Ligorio manuscript and the visitors’ accounts of Audebert, Foglietta, Zappi and Del Re, revealing a hitherto unexplored aspect of their intellectual and physical perception. This onomatopoeic language of fountains reveals their myriad effects and properties, as well as giving insight into the sensory experience and the physical responses of the sixteenth-century visitor.

In addition to recreating the sight and sound of natural phenomena, garden fountains were also valued for their gustative and immersive haptic properties, thereby completing Tolomei’s quartet of ‘seeing’, ‘hearing’, ‘bathing’ and ‘tasting’.²¹³ They

²¹¹ Caro, Letter to Giovanni Guidiccioni, 13th July 1538, 611-12, in Jacomuzzi 1974; trans. Tchikine 2010: 57.

²¹² Tchikine 2010: 58.

²¹³ Tolomei, Letter to Giambattista Grimaldi 362-63.

provided drinking water, satisfying thirsty visitors and were an effective, refreshing way to cool the air and create a salubrious atmosphere — this was the primary purpose of water jets (*zampilli*) and artificial rain (*pioggia*).²¹⁴ Often, this cooling effect was taken a step further, with water tricks and jokes (*giochi* and *scherzi di acqua*) hidden underfoot which were triggered by the visitor's steps. Tolomei recounted how the 'greatest pleasure' of water effects were hidden jets that showered unsuspecting visitors with water, causing 'laughter, confusion, and pleasure for all'.²¹⁵ Indeed, Tchikine observed how the 'seventeenth-century engravings of the gardens in Rome, Frascati, and Tivoli by Falda and Venturini (1675-89) show them as bizarre adult playgrounds where people of different age and social rank enjoy themselves in a variety of unexpected ways'.²¹⁶ The sensory properties of fountains, therefore, were an integral element of Italian Renaissance garden design, and their water effects delivered both practical and pleasurable somatic value to the garden experience.

2.6 Landscapes of Purity, Power and Exoticism

Further enhancing the Italian Renaissance garden's sensory experience were a diverse range of plantings whose olfactory properties generated a powerful sense of place, as the descriptions of Taegio, Boccaccio and Colonna convey. This phenomenon can be defined according by Porteous' coinage of the term 'smellscape', which describes a locale defined

²¹⁴ Tchikine 2010: 58.

²¹⁵ 'Ma di quelle è da pigliar gran diletto, le quali stando nascoste, mentre l'uomo è tutto involto ne la meraviglia di sì bella fonte, in un subito, come soldati che escon d'agguatto, s'apreno e disavvedutamente assagliano, e bagnano altrui: onde nasce e riso e scompiglio e piacer tra tutti.' (Tolomei, Letter to Giambattista Grimaldi 363).

²¹⁶ Tchikine 2010: 63.

by an immersive olfactory experience.²¹⁷ Porteous observed how olfaction constitutes a far more powerful physical response to an environment than vision, as smells permeate the body and stimulate the mind, generating a physical and intellectual connection to a place:

Psychological research indicates that olfaction seems to stimulate emotional or motivational arousal, whereas visual experience is much more likely to involve thought and cognition. Vision clearly distances ourselves from the object...by contrast, smells environ. They penetrate the body and permeate the immediate environment, and thus one's response is much more likely to involve a strong effect...while one may stand outside a visual landscape and judge it artistically, as one does a painting, one is *immersed* in a smellscape; it is immediately evocative, emotional, and meaningful.²¹⁸

In studies on the significance of olfaction in pre-modern societies, Classen has also emphasised the primacy of smell over vision in cultural perception, demonstrating convincingly that 'smell once occupied a much larger part of the sensory and symbolic consciousness, and, in certain significant cases, was even believed to be superior to sight'.²¹⁹ This was particularly true of odoriferous plants, as Classen has shown in her historical survey of olfactory decline in western culture, which takes as its principal example the domestic rose: from antiquity, roses were valued principally for their fragrance, and cultivated to enhance the potency and variety of their scents up to the eighteenth century, when the importance attributed to olfaction began to decline and roses — among other domestic plants — were bred principally for their colour and form.²²⁰ The importance of botanical olfaction can be traced to antiquity, when a direct correlation was

²¹⁷ Porteous coined the term 'smellscape' in his article of the same name (1985: 356-78) and developed his analysis in his subsequent publication on smellscape (2006: 89-106).

²¹⁸ Porteous 2006: 91

²¹⁹ Classen 1993: 36; see also Classen 1993: 15-36, 2006: 375-90 and 2013: 65-92 on olfaction in early modern Europe.

²²⁰ Classen 1993: 15-36.

drawn between the aroma of a plant and its practical utilisation, as Jane Draycott has observed: ‘A plant’s smell was significant, not just as a means of identifying the specimen correctly, but also because a specimen’s smell was itself a property and, as such, could be useful: unlike today, a plant’s properties were in antiquity far more important than its appearance’.²²¹ A powerful example of this was witnessed in the use of aromatic flowers in chaplets, garlands and wreaths — used in a variety of religious, ritualistic and erotic contexts — which were believed to have therapeutic benefits.²²² In *Naturalis historia*, Pliny wrote that roses, lilies and violets were favoured for this purpose on account of their sweet, health-giving fragrance, even claiming that the scent of violets could prevent drunkenness and hangovers.²²³ Similarly, it was common practice to stuff upholstery with mint, not only for the air-purifying properties of its diffusive odour, but also because its smell was thought to be mood-enhancing and revitalising, whilst also being a deterrent to scorpions.²²⁴ It follows, therefore, that as well as their use in daily life, odoriferous specimens were also integral to ancient medicine, with both pleasant and unpleasant botanical scents valued for their health benefits.²²⁵

Given their classical antecedents and the extensive influence of ancient didactic texts on botanical and horticultural knowledge in the Cinquecento, it is unsurprising that in

²²¹ Draycott 2014: 61.

²²² Draycott 2014: 70. On the use of scents in religious ritual, see Clements 2014: 46-59; on the erotic significance of floral and herbal scents in antiquity, see Butler 2014: 74-89.

²²³ Pliny, *HN* 21.10-11, 18, 76. The vogue for floral chaplets, garlands and wreaths even gave rise to synthetic reproductions, Pliny writes, bemoaning the vulgar fashion of women adorning themselves with crowns of perfume-soaked silk flowers fringed with nard leaves (*HN* 21.11).

²²⁴ Pliny, *HN* 19.159, 20.145, 23.147, 152. For a list of the practical uses of odoriferous plants in daily life in antiquity, see Draycott 2014: 70-72.

²²⁵ Totelin has investigated the role of scent in preventative and curative medicine in Bradley’s edited volume on smell in antiquity (2014: 17-29), and in the wider context of ancient botany in her collaboration with botanist Gavin Hardy (2015).

Italian Renaissance gardens the olfactory properties of plants were multivalent. Their scents purified the air and acted physically upon the sensory system to evoke exotic landscapes and mythic locales. Just as fountains were appreciated for refreshing and cooling the air to generate a salubrious atmosphere, floral and herbal scents were likewise imbued with therapeutic, air-purifying properties.²²⁶ Thus there was a direct complementarity between the roles of water and scent in garden design. In his architectural treatise, *De re aedificatoria* (Florence, 1485), Leon Battista Alberti associated bad air with foul smells and good air with sweet smells, advocating floral fragrances as purifying and therapeutic.²²⁷ The health-giving properties of floral and herbal scents was also conveyed in *Decameron* by Boccaccio, who described how the inhabitants of Florence carried bunches of ‘flowers’ and ‘sweet-smelling herbs’ during the plague of 1348, and would ‘hold these things up to their noses, for the thought the best course was to fortify the brain with such odors against the stinking air’.²²⁸ Boccaccio also recorded the practice of decorating rooms with flowers to purify and scent the air, and as noted above, in *La Villa*, Taegio advocated the olfactory benefits of plants to ‘greatly help the vital spirits of a man’.²²⁹

Cardinal Ippolito d’Este himself was very much invested in the notion of the therapeutic properties of scent. Two of his regular expenses were perfumed gloves, which were anointed daily to maintain their scent, and custom-made air fresheners in the form of

²²⁶ On the perception of good air versus bad air in Renaissance medical theory, see Siraisi 1990: 115-54 and Tchikine 2017: 236-38.

²²⁷ Alberti, *Aed.* 140-42, 294-96, trans. Rykwert, Leach and Tavernor 1988.

²²⁸ Boccaccio, *Decameron* 8.

²²⁹ Boccaccio, *Decameron* 19, 22, 472; Taegio, *La Villa* 227, quoted above in full, page 71.

perforated copper and silver balls, which were refilled regularly with musk and perfume.²³⁰ Ippolito's prolific use of perfume was not only for its therapeutic properties, however, it was also a mark of his power and status. Classen, Howes and Synnott have highlighted the importance of odour in the history of politics, demonstrating that although the status of smell has been marginalised in modern Western culture and as such no longer plays a role in the political arena, this was not once the case, observing, 'formerly power was personal, and therefore imbued with the smell of those who wielded it'.²³¹ In Imperial Rome, costly perfumes were employed by individuals to denote wealth and status, suffusing bodies, private residences and public spectacles.²³² According to Suetonius, Emperor Caligula regularly bathed in scented oils, whilst the route of Nero's triumphal procession through Rome was anointed with perfume and in his opulent Golden House, the dining rooms were installed with panels from which flowers would cascade, together with pipes that sprinkled the guests below with perfumes.²³³ Jo Day has demonstrated how this practice of *sparsiones* — the showering of crowds with flowers and perfumes at events, particularly in theatres and amphitheatres — was not only a munificent display by wealthy patrons and emperors, but also generated potent smellscape which showcased imperial power.²³⁴ In the same way a plethora of animals, gladiators, actors and victims were commanded from across the empire to entertain Roman audiences, so *sparsiones* purveyed imperial power

²³⁰ Hollingsworth 2005: 45, 90, 169, 262-63.

²³¹ Classen, Howes and Synnott 1994: 161.

²³² The use of perfumes is explored throughout Bradley's edited volume on smell in antiquity (2014), in particular see Draycott 2014: 70, 73 and Butler 2014: 75-89.

²³³ Suetonius, *Caligula* 37.1, *Nero* 25.2, 31.2. On the use of perfumes by Roman Emperors, see Bradley 2014: 142-44.

²³⁴ Day 2017: 176-92.

through exotic scents, immersing audiences in valuable botanical resources controlled by Rome. Unsurprisingly, the flower most commonly used in *sparsiones* was also the most costly: the saffron crocus (*Crocus sativus*), which was imported from Sicily, Greece and Libya, and cultivated for the scent, spice and yellow dye produced by its delicate stigmas.²³⁵ Highlighting the correlation between saffron's expense and exoticism, Day observed that its popular use in *sparsiones* enhanced the visual experience of theatrical spectacles: 'It brought a deeper layer of meaning to games and shows, where its scent and colour were redolent of wealth and access to the resources of the wider Roman empire'.²³⁶

In the Renaissance as in antiquity, power was not only manifest in the fragrance of individuals, like Cardinal Ippolito, but also their estates and therein, their gardens. Indeed, whilst scholars have acknowledged that the diverse plantings in the Italian Renaissance garden constituted botanical displays of wealth, status and power, Elizabeth Hyde was the first to explore the integrality of scent to this experience, using the gardens of King Louis XIV at Versailles as a model.²³⁷ Hyde explored how the introduction of new plants from early Renaissance onwards gave rise to an 'increasingly botanically literate' elite in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, who appreciated plants for their rarity and exotic origins.²³⁸ As a result, 'the fragrant flowers could spark comparisons between

²³⁵ Day outlines the expense and labour invested in saffron production: 'Even today, saffron remains the most expensive spice in the world, with recent prices cited at £6000 a kilogram... This high price is due to the fact that its production cannot be mechanised. Red saffron threads are the dried stigmas of the saffron crocus (*Crocus sativus* L.) and each flower possesses only three stigmas. Every flower must be picked by hand during the brief autumnal flowering season and the stigmas separated from the petals and stamens that same day' (2017: 187).

²³⁶ Day 2017: 187. According to Pliny, the highest quality saffron was cultivated in Greece at Mount Corycus in Cilicia, Mount Olympus in Lycia and the island of Thera; in Sicily around Centuripe; and in Libya around Cyrene (HN 21.17).

²³⁷ Hyde 2017: 123-52. Key studies on Italian Renaissance botanical collections as status symbols, particularly collections of exotic specimens, are Lazzaro 1990: 27-28 and Zalusky 2008, 2016: 78-93.

²³⁸ Hyde 2017: 130.

Versailles and the distant lands where the flowers had originated', which created 'an aura of sensual exoticism, but an exoticism controlled and cultivated by the French king'.²³⁹ Commanded from across the globe, the exotic odours which characterised the gardens of Louis XIV were olfactory purveyors of geo-political power, comparable to the saffron-scented theatres and amphitheatres of antiquity which showcased the botanical resources of the Roman empire.

The same olfactory expressions of power through botanical exoticism and evocation exhibited by Roman emperors and Louis XIV at Versailles are equally applicable to the patrons of Italian Renaissance gardens.²⁴⁰ In the garden of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, the Florentines are transported to exotic landscapes as they smell the flowers: 'the odors of the many other sweet-smelling plants that were growing there, made them feel as if they were standing in the midst of all the spices that ever grew in the East'.²⁴¹ Two centuries later, Taegio made a similar observation of Cesare Simonetta's garden, where the scent of roses, jasmine and exotic flowers evoked the exotic places from which the plants originated, bringing Simonetta's garden fame:

The main walkway, which subdivides the place in a cross, is covered by a pergola of new vines, whose sides are nearly all covered with roses and jasmine, so that their big and pleasing fragrance makes the garden seem in truth like all the spiceries of the Orient are there...I say nothing of the sweet-smelling, precious, and rare shrubs, brought from parts of India, that make famous the beauty of this sunny place.²⁴²

²³⁹ Hyde 2017: 130.

²⁴⁰ Hyde 2017: 130, 148.

²⁴¹ Boccaccio, *Decameron* 201.

²⁴² Taegio, *La Villa* 161.

Within the garden, the olfactory properties of plants were exploited and concentrated through plantings schemes and horticultural structures. Plantings were traditionally organised into three distinct groupings: native and exotic flowers and herbs were displayed in *giardini dei semplici*, fruit trees were allocated to the *prato* and trees to the *bosco*.²⁴³ The training of plants in arbours, pergolas and labyrinths also enabled the fragrance of flowers and fruits to be maximised in structures which created discrete, immersive olfactory environments. Expanding on Porteous' definition of 'smellscape', sensory anthropologist Jim Drobnick defined designed spaces and structures which are created to maximise olfactory experience as "pungent *loci*", an olfactory parallel to *genius loci* or spirit of the place', which are created to evoke a specific responses and associations in those who enter the space.²⁴⁴ Although Drobnick applied this term to contemporary art installations, it is equally applicable to the comparatively staged nature of the Italian Renaissance garden, where plantings, arbours, pergolas, labyrinths, orchards and woods were designed to reorient visitors within somatically immersive sites, *loci* which augmented the garden's mythic symbolism.

2.7 The Third Pleasure

As the first study to recognise the methodological value of Taegio's tripartite model and apply it to the Italian Renaissance garden, this thesis draws together divergent interpretative and phenomenological approaches to landscape and garden history. This

²⁴³ On the division and organisation of plantings in Italian Renaissance gardens, see Lazzaro 1990: 20-46 and Zalum 2016: 74-86.

²⁴⁴ Porteous 1985: 356-78, 1990; Drobnick 2002: 37. Drobnick coined the term 'pungent *loci*' in his article on the use of olfaction in modern art installations (2002: 31-47) and developed his theory in the a later publication with Fisher (2006: 320-34), which takes as its model Noritoshi Hirakawa's installation, *Garden of Nirvana*, at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles.

synthetic model results in a new approach to the Italian Renaissance garden which engages with both the sensory and symbolic modes of spatial perception to redefine the garden experience. On entering the Villa d'Este, visitors were not only located within a mythically allusive landscape, but one augmented by multisensory encounters. Here, the inseparable blending of symbolic and sensory experience culminated in an augmented reality that reflected Taegio's indefinable 'third pleasure', which he compared to the enjoyment of poetry, rhetoric or music which engage both the mind and the senses. Traditionally, statues and iconography have been the focus for study of the Villa d'Este's mythic cast and narratives. Across the following chapters, I demonstrate that it was the garden's fountains and plantings, and in particular, their sensory properties, that brought these statues to life, completed their meaning and set the scene for their narratives to be played out, thereby drawing mythic casts of characters and their real-world settings into a complementary relationship.

CHAPTER 3

FIRST TERRACE PLANTSCAPE: A NEW GARDEN OF THE HESPERIDES

Introduction

A vibrant, geometrically arranged plantscape was designed by Ligorio for the lower part of the Villa d'Este's first terrace, where the majority of visitors entered the garden from the public entrance on the Via del Colle.²⁴⁵ Étienne Dupérac's engraving depicts an immense cruciform pergola intersecting the garden's central axis and dividing the centre of the terrace into four squares, with each square subdivided by paths to form sixteen compartments of the '*giardino dei semplici*', creating a geometric pattern which was enhanced further by two labyrinths flanking the pergola on either side (fig. 1.1).²⁴⁶ This part of the garden has received the least scholarly attention in previous studies of the Villa d'Este. David Coffin, Claudia Lazzaro, David Dernie and Isabella Barisi considered the plantscape principally as decorative, whilst also encapsulating the utilitarian element of the *giardino dei semplici*, an ornamental kitchen garden where flowers were grown beside herbs, vegetables and fruit trees, which supplied the Cardinal Ippolito's table.²⁴⁷ However, the omission of this plantscape from scholarship on the Villa d'Este's mythic symbolism is

²⁴⁵ Ligorio, *MS* f. 248v A. Although Ligorio was responsible for the garden's design, payment records show that botanist Evangelista Quattrami da Gubbio was employed by Cardinal Ippolito from 1568 as 'master of simples', and was tasked with acquiring plants for the Villa d'Este (Coffin 1991: 211-12). Quattrami recorded his four-year employment at the Villa d'Este (from 1568 to the Cardinal's death in 1572) in the dedication of his philosophical treatise, *Vera dichiarazione di tutte la metafore* (Rome, 1587, 6-7).

²⁴⁶ Ligorio, *MS* f. 249rv-249v E-H.

²⁴⁷ Zappi, *Annali* 56-57; Audebert, *Journal* 187-88. Coffin 1960: 15-17; 2004: 86; Lazzaro 1990: 30, 34, 221-23; Dernie 1996: 48; Barisi 2003: 65-68. Fagiolo and Madonna (2003) overlooked the plantscape entirely, whilst Occhipinti incorporated its quadripartite design in his discussion of the garden's numerological significance (2009: 234-35). The Renaissance *giardino dei semplici* was an evolution of the medieval kitchen garden: the term '*semplici*' (simples) originally referred to medicinal and culinary plants, but by the sixteenth century came to include ornamental flowers and exotic specimens. On the development of the kitchen garden into the ornamental *giardino dei semplici*, see Lazzaro 1990: 33-45, MacDougall 1994: 221-26 and Zalum 2016: 73-86.

inconsistent with the ideological continuity manifest in the garden's terraced design, and reflects a fundamental flaw in previous interpretative approaches.

In this chapter, I present a new reconstruction and interpretation of the first terrace plantscape. This engages with the terrace's previously overlooked botanical elements, demonstrating the significance of this plantscape as a formative and fundamental part of the Villa d'Este's ideological schema. Tracing the sixteenth-century visitor's journey through this preliminary plantscape, I show how a prevailing planting scheme of citrus fruits and exotic specimens was designed to set the scene for the garden's Hesperidian narrative, evoking the myth of Hercules' eleventh labour and reconfiguring the Villa d'Este as a new Garden of the Hesperides. The focus of this chapter is on the terrace's three defining horticultural features: the citron wall espaliers at the entrance which extended throughout the entire garden, the cruciform pergola dominating the central axis and the four hedge labyrinths flanking the pergola. Designed to concentrate the olfactory properties of plants, these horticultural structures augmented the garden's mythic themes within a physically immersive reality.

In Section 3.1, 'The Realm of Flora', I outline the context underpinning my symbolic reading of plants at the Villa d'Este, investigating the mythic significance attributed to plants in Renaissance Italy, which derived principally from botanical aetiologies and associations recounted in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Section 3.2, 'Golden Apples of a New Hesperides', engages with the Hesperidian symbolism manifest in the garden's citron espaliers, in the light of the identification of the golden apples with citrus fruits in the Cinquecento and the contemporary interpretation of Hercules' eleventh labour as an aetiology for the introduction of the citrus genus to Italy. A dedicatory epigram on the

Villa d'Este by Marc-Antoine Muret, describing how the golden apples stolen by Hercules were gifted to Cardinal Ippolito and planted in the garden, reveals how this mythic aetiology was appropriated by Ippolito to give his garden unique Hesperidian status. Section 3.3, 'Jasmine and the Scent of Exoticism', explores the visitor's immersive olfactory experience within the cruciform pergola, the interior of which was trained with jasmine, an exotic species introduced to Italy from Asia. Through its evocation of the distant lands being discovered in the Renaissance era of exploration, this jasmine-trained pergola constituted a botanical display of geo-political power that aligned Cardinal Ippolito, as a collector of exotic specimens, with Hercules' introduction of citrus to Italy. Finally, in Section 3.4, 'Lost and Found in the Labyrinth', I demonstrate how visitors were empowered to cast themselves as mythic protagonists whilst traversing the hedge labyrinths, reflecting Ligorio's allegorical vision for the wider garden, through which visitors followed in the footsteps of mythic figures.

3.1 The Realm of Flora

This section sets out the wider context within which planting schemes delivered significant narrative power, matching the symbolic import of the more explicit design-thinking evident in the iconographic elements of Italian Renaissance gardens. This context highlights the interpretative weaknesses caused by the neglect of the first terrace plantscape at the Villa d'Este, but also enriches understanding of the botanical elements fundamental to the more ostentatiously storyboarded narratives of the upper reaches of the garden, addressed in subsequent chapters.

In *La Villa* (Milan, 1559), Bartolomeo Taegio conveyed how plants were valued not only for their ornamental appeal, but also as integral elements in the garden's intellectual — or symbolic — experience: 'flowers and herbs not only delight the corporeal eyes of the spectators, but with very sweet food they nourish even those of the mind'.²⁴⁸ Indeed, it is evident from the efflorescence of botanical symbolism in Italian Renaissance art that plants were invested with rich and complex meanings, which, as studies by Mirella Levi D'Ancona, Jack Goody, Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi and Gretchen Hirschauer have demonstrated, derived extensively from the aetiologies and divine associations of plants in classical mythology.²⁴⁹ Of these studies, D'Ancona's encyclopaedia of botanical symbolism in Italian Renaissance painting remains definitive. She identified Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as the principal source for the mythic associations of plants amongst an exhaustive range of classical and Renaissance literary sources, reflecting Ovid's wider influence on Renaissance art.²⁵⁰

Despite the extensive inquiry into iconographic botanical symbolism by art historians, the symbolic role of plantings within the Italian Renaissance garden has received comparatively little attention. As discussed in my survey of scholarship in Chapter 1, early studies of Italian Renaissance garden plantings by Georgina Masson, Elisabeth MacDougall and Lazzaro focussed on their ornamental and utilitarian value, whilst recent works by Margherita Zalum and Elizabeth Hyde have engaged with the

²⁴⁸ Taegio, *La Villa* 163.

²⁴⁹ D'Ancona's encyclopaedia of botanical symbolism (1977) catalogued the meanings attributed to each plant depicted in Italian Renaissance painting. Goody investigated symbolic and economic value of flowers from antiquity to modernity, dedicating a chapter of his work to floral symbolism in Renaissance art and literature (1993: 166-205). Tongiorgi Tomasi explored botanical symbolism in her exhaustive survey of floral illustration from the fifteenth century to modernity (1997) and in Medici art with Hirschauer (2002).

²⁵⁰ D'Ancona 1977. Key studies on the extensive influence of Ovid on Italian Renaissance art include Panofsky 1969; Barkan 1986: 175-206; Allen 2002: 336-67 and Barolsky 2014.

political and economic significance of exotic flower collections.²⁵¹ This thesis demonstrates how the same mythically allusive representation of plants which pervaded the visual arts in early modern Italy was also evident — and exploited — within planting schemes. After outlining the mythic significance of plants in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, I turn to the influence of Ovidian botanical symbolism in two key texts: in the fictional garden of Venus at the climax of Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Venice, 1499) and in Giovanni Battista Ferrari's horticultural treatise, *De florum cultura* (Rome, 1633).

The landscape of *Metamorphoses* is inherently symbolic, populated by Ovid with an array of flowers, herbs and trees — amongst other landscape features and natural phenomena — which embodied the victims of metamorphosis.²⁵² Hyacinth, narcissus, crocus, violet and anemone were the floral incarnations of ephebic youths Hyacinthus, Narcissus, Crocus, Attis and Adonis who were struck down in their prime and subsequently metamorphosed into flowers.²⁵³ Heliotrope, bindweed and mint were once nymphs who fell foul of capricious gods.²⁵⁴ Lilies, marigolds, poppies and amaranth conjured erotic landscapes where virgins innocently picking flowers were abducted by opportunistic deities.²⁵⁵ Laurels recalled the nymph Daphne, transformed into the tree to escape the

²⁵¹ Chapter 1, pages 27-28. Masson 1961; Lazzaro 1990; MacDougall 1994; Hyde 2005, 2017: 123-52; Zalum 2008.

²⁵² On the symbolic role of Ovid's landscapes, populated by the victims of metamorphosis, see Segal 1969, Leach 1988: 343-52, 440-67 and Hinds 2002: 122-49.

²⁵³ *Met.* 3.353-56, 4.283, 10.195-208, 725-37; *Fasti* 5.5.223-28.

²⁵⁴ Clytie became the heliotrope after wasting away with love for Apollo (*Met.* 4.265-70); Smilax was metamorphosed into bindweed after her lover Crocus was transformed into the saffron crocus (*Met.* 4.283); Mente was desired by Hades and transformed into mint by his jealous wife Persephone (*Met.* 10.728).

²⁵⁵ Europa and Persephone were both gathering flowers in a meadow when they are abducted by gods: Europa by Zeus in the form of a bull (*Met.* 2.843-75) and Persephone by Hades (*Met.* 5.385-400, *Fast.* 4.428-50). On flower-filled meadows as a prelude to erotic encounter in myth and the association between flowers and virginity in classical antiquity, see Segal 1969: 33-38 and Calame 1999: 151-74.

unwelcome advances of Apollo, who was also responsible for the metamorphosis of Cyparissus into a cypress, which became a symbol of mourning in memory of the youth's premature demise.²⁵⁶ Similarly, poplars represented the lamenting Heliades whose tears for their dead brother became amber as their bodies were transformed into trees; whilst the tragic deaths of lovers Pyramus and Thisbe were immortalised by blood-red fruits of the mulberry.²⁵⁷ As well as narrating these botanical aetiologies, Ovid also categorised the divine associations of plants: laurel and palm were sacred to Apollo, rose and myrtle to Venus, ivy and grapes to Bacchus, olive to Minerva and elm to Neptune.

Whilst the influence of Ovid's botanical aetiologies and associations has been surveyed in Italian Renaissance iconography, their extensive invocation in Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* has been overlooked.²⁵⁸ Although the pervasive influence of *Hypnerotomachia* on Italian Renaissance garden design has been surveyed by Lazzaro, Ada Segre and John Dixon Hunt, their studies focussed on its illustrations and descriptions of garden layouts and planting patterns, rather than on the text's botanical content.²⁵⁹ *Hypnerotomachia* is, in fact, replete with plant references which have received little scholarly attention, with the exception of Sophia Rhizopoulou's recent survey, which revealed 285 botanical entities associated with 672 passages.²⁶⁰ Rhizopoulou concluded

²⁵⁶ Daphne was transformed into a laurel by her father Peneus, a river god, in answer to her call for help to escape from Apollo (*Met.* 1.451-567). Cyparissus wasted away with mourning after his beloved stag was killed (*Met.* 10.106-42).

²⁵⁷ The Heliades became poplars as they lamented the death of their brother (*Met.* 2.364-6). Star-crossed lovers Pyramus and Thisbe die beneath a mulberry tree, their blood staining its white berries to red (*Met.* 4.51-166).

²⁵⁸ On Ovid as a source for Colonna, amongst numerous classical sources, see Godwin 1999: ix-xi, 2005: 292-95, who translated the text into English.

²⁵⁹ Lazzaro 1990: 20-22, 37-45; Segre 1998: 82-106; Hunt 2004: 57-76, 2015: 129-39. See also Morgan 2016: 19-23, Polizzi 1998: 61-81 and MacDougall 1994: 41-44, 103.

²⁶⁰ Rhizopoulou 2016: 191-201.

that *Hypnerotomachia* provides important evidence for botanical observation in early modern Italy, shedding unparalleled light on the cultural and symbolic significance of botany, and offers great potential for developing better synoptic understanding.²⁶¹ Exploring the Ovidian botanical symbolism manifest in *Hypnerotomachia* is a step towards understanding the text's overlooked botanical content and recentring it in a new context within the scholarly tradition.

The crucial evidence is located at the climax of *Hypnerotomachia*, where Poliphilo, the story's protagonist, finds himself on Cytherea, the garden isle of Venus. Populated almost entirely by victims of botanical metamorphosis derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, each flower, herb, fruit and tree that Poliphilo encounters on his journey through the garden evokes mythic aetiologies or associations. He describes plants which memorialise deaths: 'the bindweed of Smylax who became a flower for love of beautiful Crocus'; 'mint, commemorating the fierce hatred of Proserpine for the nymph Mente'; and 'the flower of Adonis, standing crimson'.²⁶² The scent of apples evokes the golden apples of the Hesperides: 'fruitful apple branches diffused their scent everywhere, producing such beauty of colour and sweetness of taste as never did the tree of Gaditanian Hercules'.²⁶³ Likewise, fragrant laurels, 'redolent of incense', cause Poliphilo to recall the story of Daphne and Apollo: 'the grove was Daphnic, or laureated with many laurels...the evergreen plant made from the daughter of the River Peneus, whose leaves Apollo took to

²⁶¹ Rhizopoulou noted that although '*Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* has attracted much interest from art and architecture scholars, as well as garden and print historians', and also 'influenced a wide range of disciplines, including garden design...very little research has been carried out in relation to the botanical content' (2016: 191-92).

²⁶² Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 295, 304, 362.

²⁶³ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 304.

ornament his lyre'.²⁶⁴ A grove of nut trees conjures the metamorphosis of lovelorn Phyllis: 'changed into an almond tree, who gave the name of phylla to the leaves'.²⁶⁵ Similarly, the sight of amber conjures the story of the Heliades' transformation into poplars for Poliphilo: 'Not even the daughters of Phaeton, weeping beside the river Erin, melted into such amber'.²⁶⁶ The sight and scent of the plants encountered by Poliphilo within the garden of Venus are so powerfully evocative that his journey through the garden becomes a retelling of the botanical myths from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which is itself clearly providing an inspiration for how Colonna selected the plants for inclusion in Venus's garden. In this episode, plants take centre stage in the narrative, constituting a prelude to Poliphilo's divine encounter with Venus at the heart of the garden — and the climax of the narrative — by reorienting him within the world of myth in which Venus resides.²⁶⁷ In *Hypnerotomachia*, therefore, Colonna highlighted the metaphoric role of plants as a fundamental element in the garden's intellectual experience, as well as their role in its sensescape, as discussed at length in Chapter 2, Section 2.6.²⁶⁸

The mythically allusive properties of plants were not limited to fictional gardens, however, but also characterised their scientific representation in Ferrari's influential horticultural treatise, *De florum cultura*. This is another important context whose omission has impoverished understanding of the Villa d'Este's holistic impact. Dedicated to the classification, cultivation and display of ornamental flowers, this treatise combined

²⁶⁴ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 295.

²⁶⁵ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 296.

²⁶⁶ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 304.

²⁶⁷ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 358-68.

²⁶⁸ Chapter 2, Section 2.6, pages 80-87.

Ferrari's botanical expertise with his antiquarian knowledge, containing mythic aetiologies for garden flora and fauna, some of which he invented where no classical precedent existed.²⁶⁹ Two of Ferrari's pseudo-mythic aetiologies were illustrated in accompanying engravings by Johann Friedrich Greuter. In the first plate, Flora, goddess of flowers, transforms the neglectful gardener Limace into a snail and the flower thief Bruno into a caterpillar; in the second plate, two of Flora's followers, Melissa and Florilla, are metamorphosed by the goddess into honey bees and flowers respectively (figs. 3.1 and 3.2). Ferrari's horticultural treatise thus demonstrates how myth was not only deeply ingrained in the cultural understanding of botany — to such an extent that myth was inseparable from science — but also continued to be reinvented to create new aetiologies sympathetic to ancient practice.

The mythic significance attributed to plants by Colonna and Ferrari highlights their symbolic potential within the Italian Renaissance garden, and was witnessed powerfully at the Villa d'Este. Here, the garden's Hesperidian symbolism was augmented by citrus planting and iconographic schemes. Identified with the golden apples of the Hesperides in the Renaissance, citrus became a leitmotif at the Villa d'Este that signalled the reinvention and appropriation of a mythic botanical aetiology by Cardinal Ippolito, which reconfigured his garden as a new Hesperides.

3.2 Golden Apples of a New Hesperides

When Taegio declared that the Milanese garden of Cesare Simonetta surpassed the Garden of the Hesperides — discussed in Chapter 2 — he invoked a classical precedent that

²⁶⁹ On the influence of Ferrari's *De florum cultura*, particularly on the advancement on botanical science and plant taxonomy, see Freedberg 1997: 47-50.

upheld this mythic site as a model to emulate, expressing a continuum between the Italian garden and the paradisaal Hesperides.²⁷⁰ Home to the Daughters of the Evening, the garden lay at the westernmost reaches of the world, where a tree bearing golden apples belonging to the goddess Hera was tended by the Hesperides and guarded by an unsleeping, hundred-headed dragon, who was slain by Hercules when he stole the coveted apples for his eleventh labour.²⁷¹ At the Villa d'Este, Ligorio exploited Hercules' connection with Tivoli — where he was venerated in antiquity — and with Cardinal Ippolito — whose family claimed to be descended from the hero — and he designed the garden as a new Hesperides, commemorating the hero's eleventh labour.²⁷² It is probable that Ligorio also drew inspiration from the ancient marble relief of Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides, which he describes located above the doorway to Monte Giordano, Ippolito's residence in Rome (early first century CE, fig. 3.3).²⁷³ Now housed in the Villa Albani Torlonia (Inv. Nr. 1008), the relief depicts a youthful Hercules seated beneath the spreading branches of a fruit-laden tree, around which a snake is coiled, and framed by two of the Hesperides.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ Taegio, *La Villa* 161-63; quoted in Chapter 2, page 59. This Hesperidian precedent was established by Pliny the Elder (*Naturalis historia* 19.19) and applied to the Italian garden by Renaissance writers, as outlined in Chapter 2, pages 59-61.

²⁷¹ Hercules' eleventh labour is recounted in Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 2.5.11; Apollonius, *Argonautica* 4.1390-1449; Virgil, *Aeneid* 4.480; Ovid, *Met.* 4.631-648, 9.190 and Pliny the Elder, *HN* 5.8. Ligorio gave multiple accounts of the myth in both versions of *Antichità di Roma*, the lengthiest of which are in the Turin manuscripts under the headings '*Hesperia*' (Turin MS a.III.11.J.9, ff. 40r-40v) and '*Malo Aureo*' (Turin MS a.III.13.J.11, ff. 26r-27v).

²⁷² Hercules' veneration at Tivoli in antiquity is discussed in the Introduction (pages 5-6), as is his connection to the Este family (pages 17-18).

²⁷³ '...si vede in Roma nelli marmi in più luoghi e tra l'altre sculture ne vedemo una sopra al portone di Monte Giordano, che ora è conosciuta dall' illustrissimo signor Hippolito cardinal di Ferrara sommo lume del secol nostro. Qui dunque si vede la istoria di questo modo: d'un Ercole che siede in un scoglio appiedi al quale è un dragone su un arbore, cioè serpe, avanti di esso è Hesperide, giovane vaga et onesta vestita di sottilissimi panni e con la sinistra mano tiene i pomi in un ramo, e con l'altra mano mostra vergognarsi del ragionamento che ella dimostra far con Ercole.' (Ligorio, Naples MS XIII.B.7, f. 113; see also Naples MS XIII.B.3, f. 121).

²⁷⁴ On the provenance of this relief, which was in place at Monte Giordano from at least 1503, see Bober and Rubinstein 2010: 189.

The garden's Hesperidian symbolism is the subject of a dedicatory epigram on the Villa d'Este by Muret, Ippolito's close friend who spent the summers with him at Tivoli.²⁷⁵ In his second epigram entitled *Dedicatio hortorum Tiburtinorum* from the Tiburtine cycle in *Eiusdem alia quaedam Poematia* (Venice, 1575), Muret related how the gardens were consecrated to Hercules, who had entrusted the golden apples to Ippolito, who planted them at the Villa d'Este:

The golden apples which Hercules seized
 From the unsleeping dragon, these Hippolytus now holds.
 He, mindful of the accepted gift,
 Has wished to be sacred to the donor the gardens which he has planted here.²⁷⁶

This epigram presents Ippolito supplanting the unsleeping dragon as guardian of the golden apples, an ideology which was reinforced by the visual and literary motifs comprising the Cardinal's *impresa*, which was integrated into the Villa d'Este's iconographic schema.²⁷⁷ Painted in the four corners of the Stanza della Nobilità in the palazzo — decorated by Federico Zuccari (1566-67) — the crest depicts a wreath of golden apples encircling a white eagle, which was the central heraldic device on the Este coat of arms (fig. 3.4).²⁷⁸ Intertwined with the wreath is the Latin inscription, '*Ab insomni non custodita dracone*' (no longer guarded by the unsleeping dragon), quoted from Ovid's

²⁷⁵ As outlined in the Introduction (pages 12-13), Muret was a prominent member of the Cardinal's household from 1559 and his Tiburtine poetry cycle (composed between 1569 and 1571 at the Villa d'Este) reveals a detailed knowledge of the garden's ideological schema, which scholars believe he also influenced (Coffin 1960: 78-79, 86-87, 1979: 327-29, 335-36, 2004: 85, 98; Girot 2012: 18-26; Tucker 2018: 218-51).

²⁷⁶ Muret, *Dedicatio hortorum Tiburtinorum II, Poematia* 41; trans. Coffin 1960: 78. The first poem in this dedicatory pair, which describes how Ippolito dedicated his gardens to Hercules and his mythic namesake Hippolytus, is discussed in Chapter 5 and quoted on page 237.

²⁷⁷ For the creation of the Cardinal's *impresa*, see Coffin 1960: 57-58 and 1979: 329-31.

²⁷⁸ Coffin 1960: 56-58.

account of Hercules' eleventh labour, which Ligorio also cited in his main accounts of the myth in the *Antichità di Roma* Turin manuscripts.²⁷⁹

Aspects of the garden's Hesperidian symbolism have been investigated by Coffin, Lazzaro, Dernie, Fagiolo and Madonna, and Occhipinti but have focussed on the sculptural incarnations of Hercules and the dragon on the second terrace — the subject of Chapter 5.²⁸⁰ As a result of this iconographic emphasis, the integration of Hesperidian symbolism through the botanical representation of the golden apples has been overlooked, despite the fact that Muret claimed these legendary fruits had been planted within the garden. What previous studies have failed to recognise is the connection between the golden apples and the prevailing planting scheme of citrus. This missed connection is clearly signalled by the Renaissance reinvention of Hercules' eleventh labour as a botanical aetiology: a powerful explanation for how citrus fruits were introduced to Italy. Thus, the Villa d'Este's Hesperidian symbolism was more obviously programmatic than previously understood because of its vivid invocation from the first moment that visitors entered the garden and, embraced by a fragrant plantscape of citrus and exotic specimens, found themselves reoriented within a new Hesperides.

Public visitors to the Villa d'Este entered at the garden's lowest terrace through the '*porta principale*', located at the bottom of the valley on the Via del Colle, the main road

²⁷⁹ Ovid, *Met.* 9.190. '*Di questi pomi parla Ovidio quando dice: AB INSOMNI NON CUSTODITA DRACONE, e queste pome portò delle estreme parti de la Libya in Grecia Ercole e le presentò ad Eurystheo*' (Ligorio, Turin MS a.III.11.J.9, f. 40v; the same quotation is repeated in Turin MS a.III.13.J.11, f. 27v). On the Hesperides myth in Ovid, see Fratantuono 2015: 27-44.

²⁸⁰ Coffin 1960: 78-81, 2004: 91-92, 98-99; Lazzaro 1990: 223-25; Dernie 1996: 36-37; Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 86-90; Occhipinti 2009: 340-47. The Fountain of the Dragon on the second terrace is identified in the Ligorio manuscript with 'the famous dragon which guarded the Garden of the Hesperides', and three statues of Hercules were to stand sentinel above this fountain (Ligorio, MS f. 254r-255r).

leading west from Rome to Tivoli.²⁸¹ The entrance led into a vestibule, aligned with the garden's central axis and vaulted by a trellised arbour 'in the manner of Roman gardens', as local historian Zappi described, which was trained with vines 'covered with different grape varieties' (fig. 3.5).²⁸² This vine-wreathed arbour created the prospect of a shaded corridor and concealed any view of the garden beyond, but as the visitor progressed through the vestibule, the scent of citrus beckoned them towards the first terrace, intensifying with every step. Emerging from the vestibule onto the terrace, the source of the citrus scent was revealed. Fans of espaliered citrons (*citrus medica*) wreathed the walls on either side of the entrance, extending along the width of the terrace and overlaying the enclosing walls of the entire garden, as outlined in the Ligorio manuscript.²⁸³ This hitherto unobserved detail is also depicted on Dupérac's engraving (figs. 1.1 and 3.6).²⁸⁴ Payment records show that mature citrons were the first plants purchased and planted at the Villa d'Este, and thus were evidently fundamental to the garden's design.²⁸⁵ In their position as entrance motif to the first terrace, citrons therefore announced the garden's Hesperidian theme and through the dynamic of 'conceal and reveal', together through their scent trail, they amplified the symbolic significance of the golden apples stolen by Hercules for his eleventh labour.

²⁸¹ Ligorio, *MS* f. 248v A. As outlined in the Introduction (pages 13-15), contemporary accounts of the Villa d'Este by Foglietta, Zappi and Del Re begin at this public entrance on the Via del Colle and describe the garden as an ascent from the first terrace, reflecting the circulation pattern outlined in the Ligorio manuscript. The exception to this is Audebert's account, which begins at the palazzo, where he was entertained as a guest.

²⁸² Zappi, *Annali* 56; see also Ligorio, *MS* f. 248v B. Pliny the Younger described vine-wreathed arbours at his Tuscan villa (*Epistulae* 5.6.36-9).

²⁸³ Ligorio, *MS* f. 248v C. Whilst the citron espaliers covered the enclosing walls of the entire garden, Zappi marvelled at their proliferation on the walls either side of the entrance vestibule (*Annali* 56).

²⁸⁴ Figure 3.6 depicts the clearest rendering of the espaliers on the fourth terrace as an example, but close examination of Dupérac's engraving shows espaliered walls throughout the garden (fig. 1.1).

²⁸⁵ Mature citrons were ordered from Corneto (modern Tarquinia) in May 1566 (Coffin 1960: 20).

The correlation between citrus fruits and the apples of the Hesperides in Renaissance Italy — reflected in their Linnaean botanical classification, *Hesperidium* — can be traced back to antiquity, when citrons were the first citrus species introduced to the Mediterranean.²⁸⁶ Ancient writers Pliny the Elder (first century CE), Martial (first century CE) and Athenaeus (third century CE) located the Garden of the Hesperides within the Atlas mountain region of Mauritania (modern day Morocco) in North Africa, and identified the golden apples with the citrons for which the area was famed.²⁸⁷ Visual material evidence supports this tradition: a metope depicting Hercules' eleventh labour at the Temple of Zeus in Olympia (c. 460 BCE) features golden apples which have been identified as either quinces or citrons; coins minted in Rome (second century CE) show Hercules beneath a citron tree; and the fruits of the tree depicted in the relief of Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides at Monte Giordano could easily be identified as citrus (fig. 3.3).²⁸⁸ Campanian frescoes (first century CE) in the Villa of Poppaea (Oplontis) and the House of the Priest Amandus (Pompeii) depict Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides beneath a tree with golden fruits; whilst citrons are also present, as Jashemski discovered, in the garden at the House of the Garden of Hercules, demonstrating that the fruits' association with the golden

²⁸⁶ On the introduction of citrus fruits to the Mediterranean and their association with the golden apples in antiquity, see Tolkowsky 1938: 149-97; Andrews 1961: 35-46; and Caruso 2013: 11-20. *Citrus medica* was first documented in the Mediterranean in the fourth century BCE and cultivated in Italy by the fifth century CE: it was first identified as the Median or Persian apple by Theophrastus (*Historia plantarum* 4.4.2-3, fourth century BCE), and subsequently by Virgil (*Georgics* 2.126-46, first century BCE) and Dioscorides (*Materia medica* 1.166, first century CE). Pliny the Elder classified the citron as '*malum citreum*' (*HN* 15.47, 16.107, 17.64); and Palladius described his citron groves on Sardinia and near Naples, dedicating a chapter of his agricultural treatise to their cultivation (*Opus agriculturae* 4.10, fifth century CE).

²⁸⁷ Pliny, *HN* 5.1.12, 13.29.91; Martial 13.37, 14.89; Athenaeus 3.83. Continuing this tradition, Ligorio located the Garden of the Hesperides in Libya: '*Quella fatica che dicono esser la duodecima comandatagli da Euristeo furono li pomi d'oro dell'estrema Lybia dell'Hesperide, li quali erano guardati da uno horribile dracone*' (Naples *MS* XIII.B.7, f. 113; see also Turin *MS* a.III.11.J.9, f. 40r; Turin *MS* a.III.13.J.11, f. 26r; Turin *MS* a.II.5.J.18, f. 32v).

²⁸⁸ Tolkowsky 1938: 171; Andrews 1961: 38.

apples was also manifest in ancient gardens.²⁸⁹ The discovery of the so-called Farnese Hercules (third century CE) in 1546 by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese at the Baths of Caracalla in Rome was particularly important in continuing the ancient association, as the hero holds what was understood to be the apples of the Hesperides in his right hand, inspiring a number of similar depictions in Italian Renaissance art.²⁹⁰

As the Renaissance revival of classicism coincided with the widespread cultivation of citrus plants in sixteenth-century Italy, the citron's Hesperidian association persisted and developed to encompass lemons and oranges, which had been introduced to Italy in the Middle Ages.²⁹¹ It was the Italian humanist Giovanni Pontano who crystallised and universalised the Hesperidian status of the citrus genus in his popular didactic poem on citriculture, *De hortis Hesperidum sive de cultu citriorum* (Venice, 1505).²⁹² Part mythography and part botanical treatise, this Latin poem reconfigured Hercules' eleventh labour as an aetiology for the introduction of citrus fruits — including citrons, lemons and oranges — to Italy, attributing the country's thriving citriculture to its Hesperidian heritage.²⁹³ Reinvented by Pontano for a sixteenth-century audience, the Garden of the Hesperides became an abundant and originary citrus garden in North Africa, Hercules a

²⁸⁹ Jashemski 1979: 285.

²⁹⁰ Stafford discusses the influence of the Farnese Hercules and surveys Hercules' eleventh labour in Renaissance art (2012: 129-30, 203-18), which is elucidated further in Chapter 5, together with the symbolism attributed to the three golden apples.

²⁹¹ Lemons and bitter oranges were cultivated throughout Italy by the sixteenth century, having been introduced to Sicily during the Arab occupation in the ninth century, but sweet oranges were not introduced until the mid sixteenth century (Attlee 2015: 49-50; Lazzaro 1990: 324).

²⁹² On the transmission of the Hesperides myth and Pontano's sources, see Caruso 2013: 14-16, who highlights the identification of oranges with the golden apples in two epigrams by Francesco Patrizi (c. 1480) and Uglino Verino's panegyric to Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain (1492). Caruso also traced the popularity and legacy of Pontano's *Hortis Hesperidum* (2013: 21-24).

²⁹³ '*neve hortensem contemne laborem,/ Herculeae decus et pretium memorabile clavae./ Orbe etenim hesperio niasique ad litora quondam/ Oceani auriferis primum sese extulit hortis/ Citrius, arboreae referens praeconia palmae.*' (Pontano, *Hort. Hesp.* 1.51-55).

botanical explorer, and the stolen apples identified as citrons, lemons and oranges. Presenting Italy's celebrated citrus fruits as direct cultivars of the golden apples, Pontano made Italy a new Hesperides and heralded an era in which this Hesperidian status was invoked extensively within the Italian garden, as citrus became its defining botanical feature. The poem's pervasive influence on citrus cultivation is attested in Giovanni Battista's Ferrari's lavishly illustrated treatise on citriculture, *Hesperides sive de malorum aureorum cultura et usu* (Rome, 1646), for which Pontano's poem was a principal authority.²⁹⁴ Composed in four books, the first is dedicated to the mythic origins of citrus fruits, which are traced back to the Garden of the Hesperides, and the subsequent books are dedicated to citrons, lemons and oranges respectively. Like Pontano, Ferrari presented the myth of Hercules' eleventh labour as an aetiology for the introduction of citrus fruits to Italy from Africa, identifying the three golden apples as the originary citron, lemon and orange. Mythic scenes engraved by Johann Friedrich Greuter accompany the text: the frontispiece depicts Hercules standing above the vanquished dragon just as the three Hesperides present him with the golden apples, pictured as citrus fruits; and another plate from book 3 depicts the Hesperides directing the planting of an Italian citrus garden (figs. 3.7 and 3.8).

²⁹⁴ Celio Calcagnini's short treatise 'De citrio, cedro et citro commentatio', published in his collected works, *Opera aliquot* (Basel, 1544, 470-83) was also cited repeatedly by Ferrari. It is important to note that Ferrari's *Hesperides* was written in collaboration with his well-connected patron Cassiano dal Pozzo (1588-1657), who established the *Museo Cartaceo* (Paper Museum) in the early seventeenth century, dedicated to images of antiquities and natural history — many by major artists including Ligorio, Poussin and Galileo — which was accessible to artists, scientists and antiquarians. On Ferrari's behalf, dal Pozzo corresponded with experts across Italy to collate a wealth of information on citrus fruit, as well as commissioning accompanying illustrations. Dating from 1626 to the 1650s, this collection amounts to 131 folios entitled, *Notizie diverse del sig. Abb. Cav. Cassiano dal Pozzo; originale spettante a' Agrumi et Historie d'essi; stampata in Rome del P. Gio. Batta. Ferrari della Compagnia di Giesù sotto il Titolo d'Hesperides con il disegno della Veduta Riviera di Salò* (Archivo dal Pozzo MS 39, Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Rome). The catalogue of citrus images in dal Pozzo's *Museo Cartaceo* are collated in Baldini and Freedberg 1997: 181-280. In this volume, Freedberg charts the foundational role of *Notizie diverse* in the composition and illustration of Ferrari's *Hesperides*, together with dal Pozzo's personal scientific and financial contributions (1997: 45-83), and Baldini examines the manuscript's contribution to citrus taxonomy (1997: 85-100).

The citron-wreathed walls of the Villa d'Este emerged in the midst of a citrus mania which swept Italy during the sixteenth century and continued throughout the seventeenth century, fuelled by the Renaissance era of exploration. In gardens across Italy, aristocrats displayed citrus collections which combined naturalised varieties with rare specimens and exotic imports, facilitated by botanical exploration across Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas.²⁹⁵ Among the most renowned collections in the Cinquecento were in Lancilotto Borromeo's gardens on Isola Madre (begun in 1501) on Lake Maggiore, the Belvedere Court (begun in 1506) orange trees at the Vatican, and Cosimo I de' Medici's orange and dwarf citrus collections in Florence at the Villa Castello (begun in 1537) and the Boboli Gardens (begun in 1550).²⁹⁶ Following the publication of Pontano's *Hortis Hesperidum* at the turn of the sixteenth century, citrus collections conferred such gardens with Hesperidian status and associated their patrons with Hercules' botanical exploits, even in the absence of iconographic references, as witnessed in contemporary literary descriptions of gardens.

Taegio, in his account of Cesare Simonetta's garden at Castellazzo in *La Villa*, described an abundance of 'lemons, oranges, and citrons, which have their fruit, hanging fresh, unripe and ripe, together with their flowers', which prompted him to claim that this garden surpassed that of the Hesperides.²⁹⁷ In response to the citrus collection in another Milanese garden at Cavairato owned by Camillo Porro, Taegio wrote that 'here are seen

²⁹⁵ On Italy's citrus mania in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Attlee's study on the history of citrus in Italy (2015: 7-16), and Laszlo's global history of citrus (2008: 45-46). On the wider impact of global exploration from mid-fifteenth century on the botany of Italian Renaissance gardens, see Zalusky 2016: 78-86 and Lazzaro 1990: 26-28.

²⁹⁶ For a comprehensive list of Italian Renaissance citrus collections, see Tolkowsky 1938: 186-90; for the Medici citrus collections, see Attlee 2015: 12-27.

²⁹⁷ Taegio, *La Villa* 161-63.

represented by nature...the golden apples of the Hesperides'.²⁹⁸ Reflecting on the citrus groves surrounding Milan, Taegio declared that 'Juno deprived the flourishing garden that she has in the distant parts of the West of golden apples, in order to make this happy land famous'.²⁹⁹ Likewise, Lorenzo Gambara, in his poem *Caprarola* (Rome, 1581) dedicated to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, identified the citrus collection at the Villa Farnesina in Rome with the golden apples: 'Behold the fragrant citrus grove, behold the golden apples unguarded by the watchful dragon!', thereby recalling the verses of Muret's earlier epigram on the Villa d'Este.³⁰⁰

This rich contextual landscape demonstrates that at the Villa d'Este, the citron espaliers flanking the entrance to the first terrace evoked the Hesperides long before the visitor reached the sculptural incarnations of Hercules and the dragon on the second terrace. Furthermore, the planting of espaliered citrons onto the enclosing walls of the entire garden show citrons to have been a defining feature, a botanical leitmotif which consistently reoriented the visitor within the mythic Hesperides in their progress throughout the garden and in their recognition of its boundaries. This then was augmented further by the extensive deployment of iconographic citron motifs throughout the Villa d'Este which were designed to evoke the Hesperidian apples. Citron-laden boughs rendered on maiolica tiles, in stucco relief and mosaic embellish the grottoes and fountains: key examples are witnessed at the Fountain of the Dragon on the second terrace, in the Grotto of Diana on the fourth terrace and the rustic fountains in the main corridor of

²⁹⁸ Taegio, *La Villa* 179-81.

²⁹⁹ Taegio, *La Villa* 194-95.

³⁰⁰ Gambara, *Caprarola* 6. Muret's epigram is quoted on page 99.

the palazzo (figs. 3.9-3.12). Taken together with the clear contextual imperative evident across comparable gardens, where citrons were crucial elements in the design, their significance right at the start of the Villa d'Este's visitor experience must have been immediately apparent to those entering through the *porta principale*.³⁰¹

Whilst citrus collections gave numerous Italian gardens Hesperidian status and aligned their patrons with Hercules, sensitising visitors to the Villa d'Este at point of entry, my reading's emphasis on the wider significance of the first terrace in Ligorio's scheme transforms understanding of the coherence of the Villa d'Este's plantings and of this particular symbolic frame. Part of the delight for visitors was the enrichment of what might initially appear to be a standard garden cliché, transforming it into an introduction to a much more complex and holistic sensory narrative than comparable gardens exhibited. Moreover, in exploiting the legendary standing of Hercules' connection to Tivoli and the Este family, it gave Cardinal Ippolito's garden a unique Hesperidian status to rival and surpass all others. This assumption of singular status was conveyed in Muret's dedicatory epigram, quoted above, which can be interpreted in dialogue with Pontano's aetiology for the introduction of citrus to Italy by Hercules.³⁰² Appropriating this aetiology, Muret's

³⁰¹ Significantly, the Hesperidian association between citrons and the golden apples had been employed as an Este device before the creation of the Villa d'Este. In his cookbook, *Libro novo nel qual si insegna a far d'ogni sorte di vivanda* (Venice, 1564), Cristoforo di Messisbugo, renowned chef to the Este court in Ferrara, recorded a banquet held on 20th May 1529 by Ippolito I d'Este (Cardinal Ippolito's uncle) at which places were marked by citrons carved with each guest's initials and coat of arms (*Libro novo* 9-10). In the context of the banquet, the allusion to the Apple of Discord would not have been lost on the elite guests. Enraged that she had not been invited to a banquet held by the gods, Eris, goddess of discord, stole a golden apple from the Garden of the Hesperides and, having inscribed the apple with the words 'to the fairest', Eris threw the apple amongst the gods at the banquet to exact her revenge, causing Aphrodite, Hera and Athena to fight over it, as each claimed they were the fairest to whom the apple was addressed (Apollodorus, *Bibl.* E3.2). Their dispute was eventually settled by the mortal Paris, who declared Aphrodite to be the most beautiful after she promised him the love of the most beautiful woman in the world, Helen, wife of King Menelaus of Sparta; thus Eris set in motion the events which led to the Trojan War (Apollodorus, *Bibl.* E3.2-3).

³⁰² Pontano's *Hortis Hesperidum* was certainly known to Muret, who acknowledged Pontano's influence on his work in the preface to poetry collection, *Iuvenilia* (Paris, 1552). It is likely that Ippolito was familiar with *Hortis Hesperidum* even before he met Muret, given the poem's popularity and the fact his mother, Lucrezia Borgia, had been the lover of Francesco Gonzago, to whom the poem was dedicated.

epigram presented an imaginative localised and personalised mythology for Cardinal Ippolito which envisioned that Hercules brought the golden apples to Tivoli, where his descendant Ippolito planted them in his garden. Evidence for this claim was even substantiated by Ligorio himself, who recorded that Hercules was worshipped as the guardian of the golden apples at the Temple of Hercules Saxanus (first century CE) at Tivoli, describing a statue discovered there: ‘he held a club in one hand, and in the other, the apples stolen from the Garden of the Hesperides, guarded by the dragon with a hundred heads’.³⁰³ Thus, Muret’s epigram presented the Villa d’Este as the foremost and original of all Hesperidian gardens in Italy, and the real citrons wreathing the garden walls were envisioned as direct cultivars of the golden apples brought to Tivoli by Ippolito’s ancestor, Hercules.

The choice of citrons to represent the golden apples at the Villa d’Este also constituted a defining feature in the garden’s smellscape, which augmented the citrons’ symbolic association. Citrons possess the most powerful scent of all citrus fruits, producing a highly diffusive odour which exudes from every part of the plant: from its essential oil-saturated fruit, to its aromatic white flowers and evergreen foliage.³⁰⁴ In her study on the history of citrus in Italy, Helena Attlee vividly conveys the citron’s pervasive scent: ‘it exudes a perfume so powerful that it can engulf the ground floor of a house, moving from room to room in penetrating swathes. It smells stronger, wilder and more exotic than a lemon, like the lemon’s big brother, like Mediterranean heat cut through with

³⁰³ Ligorio, *Antica città di Tivoli* f. 3av. Other than Ligorio’s account, there is no evidence for this statue having been discovered at Tivoli, and his description bears striking resemblance to the aforementioned Farnese Hercules discovered in 1546.

³⁰⁴ Attlee 2015: 179-80.

sweet violets and something spicy.’³⁰⁵ By training this odoriferous, evergreen plant — which flowers and fruits simultaneously throughout the year — onto the enclosing walls of the Villa d’Este, the citron espaliers generated a perpetually golden and verdant façade of fragrant coverage, which extended from the first terrace entrance to the outlying walls of the entire garden.³⁰⁶ Trained to concentrate their olfactory potency, the citron espaliers can be defined as ‘pungent *loci*’ — in accordance with Jim Drobnick’s definition of structures designed to maximise olfaction and instil a powerful sense of place by grounding an individual’s intellectual experience in a physically immersive reality.³⁰⁷ At the Villa d’Este, therefore, citrons were not only a symbolic leitmotif, but by generating a fragrance trail which led through the entire garden, citrons were also an olfactory leitmotif that continually reoriented visitors within this new Hesperides. These citron espaliers were the first in a series of pungent *loci* which characterised the plantscape of the first terrace; the second lay directly ahead of the visitor from the entrance vestibule in the pergola.

3.3 Jasmine and the Scent of Exoticism

The centre of the first terrace was dominated by an immense cruciform pergola. This was composed of wooden trellises trained with vegetation and featured a central domed pavilion, as depicted in Dupérac’s engraving and the detail from Girolamo Muziano’s frescoed view of the Villa d’Este in the Salone della Fontana of the palazzo (figs. 1.1 and

³⁰⁵ Attlee 2015: 179.

³⁰⁶ Ligorio, *MS* f. 248v C; Zappi, *Annali* 56.

³⁰⁷ Drobnick 2002: 37. Drobnick’s work on olfactory theory is discussed in Chapter 2, page 87.

3.13).³⁰⁸ Previous scholarly engagement with Italian Renaissance pergolas by Lazzaro and Natsumi Nonaka has emphasised their visual effect: pergolas defined axes and organised space, whilst mediating the visitor's movement by blocking or channeling views; this, Lazzaro explained, 'made the experience one of separate, enclosed spaces and directed vistas'.³⁰⁹ At the Villa d'Este, the cruciform pergola emphasised the garden's cross-axial design and divided the centre of the terrace into four compartments to create the geometric *giardino dei semplici*, which Audebert and Zappi recorded was planted with vegetables, herbs and fruit trees to supply the Cardinal's table, together with 'rare and exotic plants', according to Audebert.³¹⁰ Like the arbour-vaulted vestibule through which visitors entered the garden, the pergola also had a role in staging the visitor's ability to foresee their route, and therefore in controlling the experience of the garden as an episteme. Importantly, the pergola concealed the terraces and palazzo ahead from view, whilst also making possible staged reveals: two intersecting pathways offered views of the plant beds on either side, enticing visitors from the pergola and separating the terrace into discrete sections to explore systematically. Nonaka explained how the pergola at the Villa d'Este also 'established a goal-oriented path' by directing movement up the garden's central axis towards the palazzo, which presented a visual goal when visitors finally exited the pergola

³⁰⁸ Ligorio, *MS* f. 249r F, f. 252v m 2. Muziano was employed by Cardinal Ippolito from 1560 and worked on the interior decoration of his villas on Monte Giordano and the Quirinal in Rome; for Muziano's work at the Villa d'Este, see Tosini 1999: 189-232 and Venturi 1891: 203; for his employment by the Cardinal, see Frommel 1999: 16-62 and Venturi 1890: 196-206.

³⁰⁹ Lazzaro 1990: 30; Nonaka 2017. Although pergolas feature broadly in Lazzaro's discussion of architectural structures created from plant materials (1990: 30-32, 59), Nonaka's recent publication is the first comprehensive study of architectural and iconographic incarnations of porticoes and pergolas in Renaissance Italy, and includes discussion of the pergola at the Villa d'Este (2017: 92-97).

³¹⁰ Zappi, *Annali* 56-57; Audebert, *Journal* 188.

onto the upper first terrace, at which moment a view up the central axis was revealed for the first time.³¹¹

By engaging with the pergola principally as an architectural structure, however, Lazzaro and Nonaka overlooked the horticultural elements fundamental to its design, and they conveyed the visitor's experience principally in visual terms. Examining the plants which were trained onto the pergola reveals that it was designed to generate an immersive olfactory experience, one which complemented the scents already in play at the entrance, and further shaped the visitor's orientation within Cardinal Ippolito's new Hesperides. Visitors' accounts record that the pergola's exterior was trained with ivy — which provided evergreen coverage throughout the year — and grapevines. These vines included the prestigious local '*pergolese*' variety (now called '*pizzutello*'), which was popular amongst 'all the princes and cardinals of Rome', according to Zappi, who also described jasmine wreathing the interior of the pergola.³¹² This scheme meant that whilst evergreen ivy gave the pergola a distinctive shape and provided multipurpose coverage throughout the year, the pergola also flexed in tune with the seasons. In spring and summer the grapevines and jasmine, both vigorous climbers, provided visual interest, hinted at Dionysiac pleasures and offered a rich olfactory palette to enhance the shaded, cool environmental experience within the pergola during the hottest months of the year. The pergola's verdant canopy was therefore perennially dense, but especially so during the summer months when the jasmine

³¹¹ Nonaka 2017: 94-95.

³¹² Zappi, *Annali* 56; Zappi discussed the virtues of the pergolese grape earlier in his work (*Annali* 4); see also Audebert, *Journal* 188 and Del Re, *Tiburtine* 70 for the presence of pergolese grapes at the Villa d'Este. The *pizzutello* grape has been cultivated in Tivoli from antiquity to this day: it was first identified by Pliny (*HN* 14.4) and Columella (*De Re Rustica* 3.3.1) as the '*dactylis*' grape on account of its elongated berry, before becoming known as the '*pergolese*', as it was traditionally grown on pergolas. Tivoli's annual *Sagra del Pizzutello* festival has been held every September since 1845 (Sciarretta 2015: 93).

was in flower and the grapevines were fruiting, before the autumn harvest.³¹³ Effectively blinded and deafened to the rest of the garden, the visitor was subject to a ‘tunnel vision’ which refocussed sensory perception within the pergola.

Jasmine had a particularly powerful impact on visitors, through both its potent scent and exotic status. Defining the olfactory properties of jasmine, perfumer Mandy Aftel described its odour as ‘rich and warm, heavy and fruity, intensely floral’, and explained how the scent is a powerful olfactory stimulant, inducing an ‘intensely narcotic’ effect which derives from its main chemical component, indole, which ‘lends jasmine the putrid-sweet, sultry-intoxicating nuance that makes jasmine essences the same delicate aphrodisiac today as they were in the past’.³¹⁴ Blooming in summer, jasmine transformed the interior of the pergola into a pungent *locus* with the highly diffusive scent of its abundant white blossoms. Lining the pergola’s walls and trailing overhead, jasmine generated a corridor of concentrated scent, and some sense of its impact can still be experienced when walking along the jasmine-trained walls of the Villa d’Este’s fourth terrace and in Tivoli’s historic centre, where the heady perfume pervades the streets throughout the summer months (fig. 3.14). Trained to maximise its olfactory effect, therefore, jasmine was employed to create an immersive environment within the pergola. Ippolito could have expected the experience to be both arresting and revelatory for visitors, given jasmine’s exotic botanical status. Introduced to Italy in the early Renaissance,

³¹³ The *pizzutello* grape is typically harvested in September when the *Sagra del Pizzutello* is held (Sciarretta 2015: 93).

³¹⁴ Aftel 2006: 214.

jasmine (*Jasminum grandiflorum* and *Jasminum officinale*) was at that time a costly, rare plant not yet widely cultivated.³¹⁵

Sensory anthropologist Douglas Porteous emphasised the ‘insider/outsider antinomy’ of olfaction, in which the senses are heightened in unfamiliar environments and unfamiliar smells are perceived to have greater intensity — a phenomenon particularly applicable to the introduction of new scents into traditional smellscape, including the introduction of foreign plants into native gardens.³¹⁶ As an exotic addition to the smellscape of the Italian garden, therefore, jasmine generated a powerful olfactory experience that was at least rare, and in this design context may have been unique to the Villa d’Este.³¹⁷ As I noted in the context of citrus cultivation above, the sixteenth century was an era of exploration that fuelled a mania for collecting rare and exotic plants in Italy, and, whilst such specimens were exhibited in gardens visually to display the wealth and status of their patrons, Hyde has demonstrated how scent also played a crucial role in these botanical power displays.³¹⁸ Evoking the foreign lands from which the plants originated, Hyde explained, botanical scents were important elements in creating an aura of exoticism, controlled and cultivated by the garden’s patron, someone who had the power to command

³¹⁵ In the Renaissance, jasmine was believed to have been introduced to Italy by Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama, following his expeditions to India from 1497-1503 (Cumò 2013: 535). Evidence shows that jasmine came to Italy earlier, however, as it was known in Italy during the fourteenth century, featuring in a garden in Boccaccio’s *Decameron* (201; quoted in Chapter 2, page 73). Nonetheless, jasmine maintained its exotic status in the sixteenth century (Lazzaro 1990: 28, 325).

³¹⁶ Porteous 2006: 90. Describing the effect of introducing new odours into traditional garden smellscape, Porteous cited the radical development in English gardens in the Victorian era, when hundreds of exotic species were imported from across the British Empire (2006: 99).

³¹⁷ Although plant-trained pergolas were a typical feature of Italian Renaissance gardens, the use of jasmine in the pergola at the Villa d’Este is unprecedented, no doubt on account of its costly, exotic status.

³¹⁸ Hyde 2005, 2017: 123-52.

rare specimens of scent as well as visual interest from across the globe.³¹⁹ As context, the evocative potential of exotic scents is evident in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, where his group of Florentines gathered within an Italian garden are transported to distant lands by the smell of flowers, as discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.6.³²⁰ In *La Villa*, Taegio made a similar observation in the garden of Cesare Simonetta, where the scent of a pergola wreathed with roses and jasmine was redolent of the Orient.³²¹ It is possible that this evocative jasmine-trained pergola was the inspiration for the pergola at the Villa d'Este, as Taegio's treatise was published in 1559, the year before work commenced on Cardinal Ippolito's garden in earnest.

A new plant for a new Hesperides, jasmine represented what we know to have been Ippolito's geo-political power as a Herculean collector and cultivator of exotic specimens.³²² This puts Ippolito into the same kind of framework adopted in Pontano's *Hortis Hesperidum*. There, Pontano cast Vasco da Gama, the explorer traditionally accredited with introducing jasmine to Europe, as a Renaissance Hercules, specifically referencing his introduction of new species from India to the Mediterranean just as Hercules had imported citrus from the mythic Hesperides in North Africa.³²³ In the same way Hercules pioneered the cultivation of citrus fruits in Italy, therefore, so Ippolito

³¹⁹ Hyde 2017: 130.

³²⁰ Boccaccio, *Decameron* 201; quoted in Chapter 2, page 73.

³²¹ Taegio, *La Villa* 161; quoted in Chapter 2, page 86.

³²² Ippolito's interest in acquiring rare and exotic species is attested in his employment of Evangelista Quattrami as 'master of simples' (see page 89, footnote 245). In the dedication of his philosophical treatise, *Vera dichiarazione di tutte la metafore* (Rome, 1587), Quattrami recorded that he was employed to source different plant varieties from across Italy for the Cardinal's gardens in Rome and Tivoli: '*Però mentre visse la felici mem. dell' Cardinale di Ferrara, non mancai di cercare per quattro anni di continuo diverse parti dell'Italia, per ridurre in Monte Cavallo di Rome et in Tivoli ne i suoi giardini, diversi forti di semplici, come semplicità.*' (6-7).

³²³ Pontano, *Hort. Hesp.* 1.343-63.

acquired jasmine for Tivoli from Asia, emulating the hero's botanical innovation. Just as the familiar odour of citrons, a domesticated exotic species in sixteenth-century Italy, conjured Hesperidian associations for the visitor to the Villa d'Este, its mingling with the exotic and alien fragrance of jasmine created a new scent for Ippolito's new Hesperides. In this way, the Villa d'Este was simultaneously drawing upon recognisable tropes for inserting power and myth into garden narratives, and innovating through the novel combination that coherently drew out Hercules' authority as an explorer and returning conqueror. What is more, the complementary significance of citrus and jasmine in defining the smellscape of the Villa d'Este becomes all the more apparent in the context of the personal use of these two scents by the Cardinal. As noted in Chapter 2, Ippolito's prolific use of perfume was well documented in his account books, which detail a daily haircare regime that included the anointing of his beard with citrus and jasmine oils.³²⁴ These signature scents not only signified the Cardinal's wealth and geo-political influence by conjuring the exotic lands from which citrus and jasmine originated, therefore, but also evoked the smellscape of Ippolito's new Hesperides at the Villa d'Este.³²⁵

3.4 Lost and Found in the Labyrinth

Four labyrinths were to be the third and final pungent *loci* of the first terrace plantscape. They are depicted in Dupérac's engraving as identical concentric squares, each following a unicursal route to the centre of the maze (fig. 1.1). The Ligorio manuscript describes four

³²⁴ Chapter 2, pages 83-84. Hollingsworth 2005: 39, 47, 66, 254.

³²⁵ The exotic, evocative potential of the garden's unique olfactory signature is comparable to the saffron-scented theatres and amphitheatres in ancient Rome as purveyors of empire and exoticism, discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.6, pages 84-85.

hedge labyrinths composed of plant pairings trained against trellises: orange with myrtle, arbutus with honeysuckle, pine with laurustinus and fir with broom.³²⁶ This design element was never implemented, however, and visitors' accounts reveal only two completed labyrinths on the west side of the garden: one of myrtle and the other of laurustinus.³²⁷ Because they were never realised, previous studies of the Villa d'Este have disregarded the significance of the labyrinths described in the Ligorio manuscript, and do not go beyond acknowledging their existence in the garden's projected plan.³²⁸ Closer examination of the architectural, symbolic and olfactory potential of these labyrinths, however, reveals they were a key element in Ligorio's design for the garden. As well as completing the trio of pungent *loci* which characterised the first terrace, the labyrinths represented another node in the garden's legendary associations — an evocation of their classical incarnation from the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur — and another physical stage in the garden's reorientation of visitors within a specific mythic locale, reflecting Ligorio's allegorical vision for the Villa d'Este.

In Renaissance Italy, labyrinths were typically identified with the story of Theseus and the Minotaur. The labyrinth held King Minos of Crete's monstrous offspring, the Minotaur, a creature half man and half bull, who devoured Athenian youths sent to Crete as tribute until Theseus succeeded in navigating the labyrinth and slaying Minotaur with the

³²⁶ Ligorio, *MS* f. 249r H.

³²⁷ As there are no existing payment records for the labyrinths during Cardinal Ippolito's lifetime, it seems that the two labyrinths recorded by Zappi (*Annali* 57) and Audebert (*Journal* 187-88) were completed after Ippolito's death in December 1572.

³²⁸ Coffin 1960:17; Lazzaro 1990: 241; Dernie 1996: 48; Barisi 2013: 68; Occhipinti 2009: 322.

aid of Minos' daughter, Ariadne, whose thread guided him through the maze.³²⁹ The historical development of labyrinths was, in this context, principally underpinned by manuscript illustrations of Roman mosaics featuring mazes and ancient literary accounts by Pliny the Elder, Virgil and Ovid.³³⁰ Ovid recounts how Daedalus, 'an eminent master-craftsman', constructed a maze for King Minos, a structure which was designed 'to cheat the eye with bewildering patterns of tortuous alleys'.³³¹ This mythic backdrop was enthusiastically evoked in the labyrinth's horticultural incarnation in Renaissance Italy, as demonstrated in a letter written by Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga on 4th December 1479 to Francesco Maffei, master of his household in Rome, which included instructions for a garden labyrinth at his palazzo in San Lorenzo.³³² Gonzaga outlined details of a labyrinth constructed from hedges, thought to be the first garden maze documented in Italy, with the following instructions on the accompanying iconography:

Put the story of Theseus on the façade where the labyrinth is, but paint on the wall only his entrance to the labyrinth to the point at which he was given the thread; from there on the natural labyrinth itself should be considered sufficient to conjure up the death of the Minotaur.³³³

³²⁹ Pliny, *HN* 36.19; Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.1-105; Ovid, *Met.* 8.155-82. Many illustrated editions of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, published from the fifteenth century to the seventeenth century, featured depictions of the labyrinth accompanying the text, catalogued in Kern 2000: 184-85. Ligorio was familiar with the myth, recounting it in both versions of *Antichità di Roma* (Naples *MS* XIII.B.3, f. 218; Turin *MS* a.III.9.J.7, f. 44v).

³³⁰ The Cretan labyrinth's literary transmission has been charted by Doob 1990: 17-38. The definitive historical survey of labyrinths, however, is by Kern (2000), who traced the Cretan labyrinth's literary and visual transmission (2000: 105-41). Kern also catalogued iconographic depictions of labyrinths in Europe from the fifteenth century to the seventeenth century (2000: 179-85, 207-12, 226-35), labyrinths in Italian Renaissance art (191-205) and Renaissance garden labyrinths in architectural treatises and iconography (247-65).

³³¹ Ovid, *Met.* 8.157, 159.

³³² Gonzaga, Letter to Francesco Maffei, 4th December 1479, 57-58, in Chambers 1976. The palazzo was demolished in 1483 and is now the site Palazzo della Cancelleria; all documents relating to the original palazzo are collated in Chambers 1976: 21-58.

³³³ Gonzaga, Letter to Francesco Maffei 58, trans. Coffin 1979: 183; '*A la faccia dov'è el labyrintho se mettese la historia de Theseo, non facendo sul muro de graffio se non l'andare suo al labyrintho fin dove li fu dato el filo, cum lassare che el labyrintho pui' li naturale se intenda supplire al resto fin a la morte del Minotauro, qual se intenda essere fatta li dentro.*'

At the apogee of the Italian Renaissance garden in the sixteenth century, such visual prompts no longer accompanied mazes because, as Lazzaro explains, ‘the garden labyrinth is so thoroughly identified with the antique construction that no further pictorial explanation is necessary’.³³⁴

Whilst the symbolic association of the Renaissance Italian labyrinth with the mythic Cretan maze has been amply acknowledged by scholars, the phenomenological significance of their design has typically been overlooked.³³⁵ In contrast to the multiple pathways of Daedalus’ ‘multicursal’ maze, garden labyrinths typically followed a ‘unicursal’ pattern: a single, circuitous route from the entrance to the centre within a square or circular design, as Lazzaro has shown in her survey of Italian Renaissance garden labyrinths.³³⁶ This unicursal pattern is witnessed in the garden maze designs in Book 4 of Sebastiano Serlio’s influential architectural treatise, *Tutte l’opere d’architettura et prospetiva* (Venice, 1619; Book 4 was first published in Venice, 1537) (fig. 3.15). It is probable that the Villa d’Este labyrinths were based on the designs by Serlio, who had been employed by Cardinal Ippolito to design his Fontainebleau residence, the Grand Ferrare (1544-46).³³⁷ The same unicursal designs characterise the labyrinths depicted in engravings of the Villa d’Este and the Villa Lante in Bagnaia (begun in 1568), the Villa Mattei (constructed in the 1580s) in Rome (figs. 1.1, 3.16 and 3.17). In his horticultural treatise,

³³⁴ Lazzaro 1990: 55; see also Coffin 1988: 183-84 and Kern 2000: 191, 247.

³³⁵ Kern 2000: 179-86, 191-205; Doob 1990: 145-71.

³³⁶ Lazzaro 1990: 52; see also Kern 2000: 247-65. I have employed Doob’s definitions to identify the contrasting ‘multicursal’ and ‘unicursal’ labyrinth designs (1990: 19-20).

³³⁷ The five books comprising Serlio’s treatise were first published individually: following the publication of Book 4, Book 3 was published in 1540 (Venice), Books 1 and 2 in 1545 (Paris) and Book 5 in 1447 (Paris). On Serlio’s design for the Grand Ferrare, see Frommel 2003: 219-38.

Agricoltura sperimentale (c. 1595), Agostino del Riccio revealed that garden labyrinths, by virtue of their marked contrast to the multicursal Cretan maze, possessed powerful mythic resonance. Riccio instructed that garden mazes should follow a single, circuitous route to centre because the maze-walker ‘does not want to lose themselves’, but to retrace the footsteps of the mythic hero Theseus, ‘who took the ball of the thread and attached it to the entrance of the labyrinth to reach the middle, and, in so doing, he won the victory and escaped death. In this way, one emerges from the labyrinth [like Theseus] every time’.³³⁸ He concluded by praising the labyrinths at the Villa d’Este and the Villa Lante as ideal models which adhered to these unicursal design principles.³³⁹

Thus, unicursal garden mazes were designed to recreate the positive outcome of Theseus’ route through the labyrinth. This empowered maze walkers to cast themselves as mythic protagonists, as they were guided by a unicursal path to the centre of the labyrinth in the same way Theseus was guided by Ariadne’s thread. The labyrinth’s mythic evocation transcended its visual representation, therefore, and was dependent upon the authorised movement of the maze-walker, who became an active agent in the narrative unfolding as they traversed the labyrinth. In *De florum cultura*, Ferrari highlighted this fundamental kinetic element in the narrative and spatial agency of garden labyrinths, writing that they should be designed both ‘to capture the eyes...and to intrigue the feet also’.³⁴⁰

³³⁸ ‘Non ci resta a dichiarare altro in questo primo quadro ove è questo laberinto con otto fonte et grotte dette, se non che se tu non vuoi smarrirti dei fare come fece l’inamorato di quella vaga donzella, che prese il gomito del refe et l’attaccò al principio del laberinto infino che arrivò al mezzo, et hebbe la vittoria et scampò la morte. Così s’esce d’ogni laberinto, ogni volta che si fa in questa guisa’ (Riccio, *Agricoltura* 94, in Heikamp 1981).

³³⁹ ‘Hor metto il disegno, perché puoi torre quel disegno del laberinto che è dipinto nel giardino di Bagnaia, o quel del giardino di Tivoli che è bello e bene inteso’ (Riccio, *Agricoltura* 94).

³⁴⁰ Ferrari, *De florum* 1, 24.

The phenomenological deployment of the labyrinth myth was not new in Renaissance Italy. It has been identified by Rebecca Molholt in the design of Roman mosaic floor mazes, which featured iconography that aligned the maze-walker's kinetic experience with that of Theseus.³⁴¹ Observing that the mythic meaning of mosaic labyrinths was inseparable from their tangible experience, Molholt contended that maze-walkers were 'actively engaged in the narrative unfolding underfoot', and as such, 'their traversal easily takes on a metaphoric meaning, as mosaics energise lived spaces and the beholder's actual path and the horizon of myth are fused'.³⁴² The fusion of visual, kinetic and mythic experience identified by Molholt in Roman mosaic mazes is equally applicable to garden labyrinths, the organic composition of which added further phenomenological elements to the maze-walkers' experience. Where the ancients trod two-dimensional mosaic mazes underfoot, visitors to hedge labyrinths in the Italian Renaissance garden were enclosed within three-dimensional walls of plants, which possessed potent and carefully designed olfactory properties.

Had the labyrinths designed by Ligorio for the Villa d'Este been realised, they would have generated very distinctive immersive olfactory environments for the visitor. The planting combinations described in the Ligorio manuscript project a diverse palette of scents, with each labyrinth dominated by a distinct perfume.³⁴³ Citrus was to characterise the myrtle and orange maze, whilst the arbutus and honeysuckle labyrinth would be pervaded by the sweet perfume of honeysuckle flowers in spring and summer. The mazes

³⁴¹ Molholt 2011: 287-303. Molholt's principal source is the labyrinth mosaic in the Baths of Theseus and the Minotaur (fourth century CE) from Belalis Maior in Tunisia, which depicts Theseus in combat with the Minotaur at its centre.

³⁴² Molholt 2011: 287-88, 299.

³⁴³ Ligorio, *MS* f. 249r H.

which combined pine with laurustinus and fir with broom were to have woody scents, as conifers pine and fir have sharp, resinous properties; and these would be enhanced in spring and summer with sweet-scented flowers from the laurustinus and broom. Such plantings were chosen to maintain the labyrinths' verdant structure throughout the year — all except honeysuckle and broom are evergreens — and the pairings would ensure that there was not a season without at least one labyrinth being coloured with sprays of flowers. Thus, Ligorio's labyrinths were designed to engage visitors in an active and tangible reenactment of myth, where the narrative unfolding underfoot with the visitor's movement as they retraced Theseus' journey was further augmented by the powerful olfactory experience of the surrounding hedges.

Myth and scent were not the only two triggers embedded in these planned labyrinths, and the renewed agency demanded of and by these features had a wider narratological role in shaping an overarching story. Visitors were encouraged to find a reflection of the architect's allegorical vision for the garden in the labyrinth's placement at the beginning of the scheme, as can also be seen in the labyrinths at the Villa Lante and Villa Castello in Florence. Located at the beginning of the visitor's journey through the garden, the labyrinths at the Villa d'Este were to function as both a prelude to and microcosm of the visitor's experience within the wider garden, where visitors followed in the wandering footsteps of Hercules and the Tiburtine Sibyl through a series of mythic locales. Significantly, the labyrinth was also a symbol of narrative composition in the Renaissance, representing hermeneutic progress through the written word and in some instances, through architectural spaces — Ligorio himself compared the design of

Hadrian's Villa to the Cretan labyrinth.³⁴⁴ Just as circuitous garden labyrinths generated the illusion of becoming lost, yet guided the occupant on a unicursal route in imitation of Ariadne's thread, so the Villa d'Este's multiple pathways and tree-screened terraces must have appeared bewildering, yet the garden's terraced design mediated the visitor's movement through the circulation pattern that Ligorio devised.³⁴⁵

The trio of pungent *loci* which characterised the first terrace plantscape, therefore, reoriented the visitor within physically immersive mythic locales, setting the scene for the garden's Hesperidian narrative, the heroic protagonist and monstrous antagonist of which awaited the visitor on the second terrace. To reach this part of the garden, however, visitors had to traverse the upper first terrace, an abundant waterscape of fountains and pools, and the zone which marked the beginning of the Villa d'Este's Tiburtine ideological schema.

³⁴⁴ Ligorio, *Antica città di Tivoli* f. 50. Doob highlighted the metaliterary significance of labyrinths in Virgil's *Aeneid* (6.1-105) and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (8.155-82), and charted the transmission of this concept in the Medieval and Renaissance literature (1990: 192-221). Lefaivre's interpretative study of Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia* demonstrates the metatextual and meta-architectural significance of labyrinths within the text (2005: 89-91). Reflecting the placement of garden labyrinths, Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia* begins with Poliphilo becoming lost in a labyrinthine forest (13-19), and he even invokes Ariadne's aid: 'I prayed to Ariadne of Crete, who had given the ingenious thread to Theseus, so that he could kill her monstrous brother and come forth from the tangled Labyrinth, that she might likewise deliver me from this dark forest.' (15).

³⁴⁵ The circulation pattern outlined in the Ligorio manuscript is discussed in the Introduction, pages 11-12.

CHAPTER 4

FIRST TERRACE WATERSCAPE: REALM OF THE NATURE GODDESS

Introduction

Emerging from the pergola or adjacent axes onto the upper part of the garden's first terrace, visitors found themselves within a glimmering waterscape of vast pools and polyphonic fountains. At the eastern end of the terrace stood the Fountain of the Flood, where the many-breasted Ephesian Diana originally surveyed the pools below from her high vantage point, before the statue was moved in the seventeenth century to the garden's north retaining wall, where it stands today (figs. 4.1 and 4.2).³⁴⁶ Identified in the Ligorio manuscript and the inventory of 1572 as the Nature Goddess, the statue concealed a hydraulically-powered organ which produced music that preceded a sequence of water effects simulating a flood.³⁴⁷ Continuing at the level beneath the Fountain of the Flood, this deluge tumbled down the hillside through a network of hidden chambers and cascaded into the fountains occupying the three caves below, which formed the Grottoes of the Sibyls.³⁴⁸ Four rectangular fish ponds bordered by water-spouting columns were planned to span the length of the terrace, as depicted in Étienne Dupérac's engraving, but the easternmost pond directly below the Fountain of the Flood was never completed and the site is now occupied by the seventeenth-century Cascade Fountain (figs. 1.1, 4.3-4.5).³⁴⁹ Dupérac's engraving also includes the unexecuted Fountain of Neptune at the terrace's western end, which was

³⁴⁶ Ligorio, *MS* f. 253v 10; Pirolo, *Inventario* f. 377v; Ashby 1908: 242.

³⁴⁷ Ligorio, *MS* f. 253 11.

³⁴⁸ Ligorio, *MS* f. 249v K. Reconstructions of the Villa d'Este's hydraulic system investigated in this chapter and subsequent chapters are reliant on Lombardi's survey of the sixteenth-century hydraulics (2003: 60-61).

³⁴⁹ Ligorio, *MS* f. 252v 3-253r 5. Zappi recorded that work had commenced on the final pool, but remained unfinished (*Annali* 57). Now part of the modern waterscape, the Cascade Fountain was designed by Lorenzo Bernini and completed in 1661, when the Villa d'Este was under the ownership of Cardinal Rinaldo I.

to feature a statue of the god riding a hippocampus-drawn chariot representing the sea, according to the Ligorio manuscript.³⁵⁰ Here, the water originating from the Fountain of the Flood was to end its course, having been carried across the length of the terrace by the four ponds in a dramatic sequencing of water from east to west.

Like the plantscape discussed in Chapter 3, this part of the garden has received markedly less scholarly attention than the upper terraces because it was never completed. This has resulted in interpretations of the first terrace's ideological significance which are either inconclusive, or are inconsistent with the intertwining mythic and Tiburtine themes that characterised the Villa d'Este's design. David Coffin overlooked the meaning invested in the waterscape entirely, dismissing the Fountain of the Flood as an 'hydraulic curiosity' with no significance beyond its ability to amuse visitors.³⁵¹ Similarly, Carmelo Occhipinti disregarded any cohesive schema in the waterscape, only engaging with the Nature Goddess as a sculptural figuration of the earth.³⁵² Subsequently, Claudia Lazzaro, Marcello Fagiolo and Maria Luisa Madonna posited that the waterscape represented the universal progress of water from the earth, signified by the Nature Goddess at the Fountain of the Flood, to the sea, symbolised by the Fountain of Neptune — a reading which reflects neither of the garden's principal themes.³⁵³ However, Fagiolo and Madonna also recognised a Tiburtine theme: interpreting the Nature Goddess as a benevolent, generative deity analogous to the Tiburtine Sibyl and identifying the Fountain of the Flood's water

³⁵⁰ Ligorio, *MS* f. 253r 8-253v 9.

³⁵¹ Coffin 1960: 91; as he put it, at the Fountain of the Flood 'the *fontanieri* express not the symbolic meaning of the gardens and fountains but rather the amusing devices they can create'.

³⁵² Occhipinti 2009: 327-32.

³⁵³ Lazzaro 1990: 226-29; Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 83-86 — their reading collates research from earlier publications (Fagiolo 1979: 179-89; Madonna 1979: 190-226, 1981: 173-96).

effects with the waterfalls of the River Aniene, they argued that the fountain represented Tivoli's acropolis, where the river cascaded beneath the Temple of the Sibyl into the Valle d'Inferno.³⁵⁴ This conclusion was not extended into a full reading of the terrace as a whole, but some advances in developing a wider frame are evident, though only briefly and partially articulated, in David Dernie's study. Dernie suggested that the Fountain of Neptune was named after the Grotto of Neptune, the cave in the valley basin directly beneath the Temple of the Sibyl into which the Aniene cascaded, and proposed that the waterscape thus recreated the river's progress from Tivoli's acropolis into the grotto below.³⁵⁵

Although compelling, this interpretation ignored most of the terrace and failed to provide a cohesive explanation for the sequence of water features as a fully worked through experience. In order to reinforce his Tiburtine reading, Dernie elided key features in the terrace's design: both the Grottoes of the Sibyl and the pools. Tackling each disputable aspect of Dernie's topographic correspondence, there is no evidence to suggest that the Nature Goddess was associated with the Tiburtine Sibyl in the Renaissance or in Ligorio's antiquarian writings, as Fagiolo and Madonna also proposed. Furthermore, the cave now known as the Grotto of Neptune was not identified as such until the eighteenth century.³⁵⁶ Nor does Dernie's reading accurately reflect the geography of the Valle d'Inferno: in the sixteenth century, the Aniene's principal cascade fell beneath the Temple

³⁵⁴ Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 83-86, 104-8. Lazzaro's analysis focussed on the Ephesian Diana statue type as a symbol of generative nature in Renaissance mythology (1990: 144-45, 1991: 74-82).

³⁵⁵ Dernie 1996: 48-50.

³⁵⁶ The earliest identification of the grotto with Neptune is in Lorenzo Moni's poem, *La villa estense di Tivoli* (Palestrina, 1702), and the name does not appear in accounts of the Valle d'Inferno by Ligorio (*Antica città di Tivoli* f. 2v-3), Zappi (*Annali* 42) or Del Re (*Tiburtine* 119-20).

of the Sibyl and into Grotto of Neptune (as it is now called), out of which water flowed to form a small lake in the valley basin, which emptied into a second grotto on the other side of the valley, now called the Grotto of the Sirens.³⁵⁷ Dernie's identification of the Fountain of Neptune with the grotto beneath the Temple of the Sibyl is problematic, therefore, as the fountain's westernmost position opposite the Fountain of the Flood is inconsistent with the geographical reality of the grotto's location (whatever name one gives to it) directly beneath the waterfall. Indeed, in terms of position, the Grotto of the Sirens is relationally much more comparable to the Fountain of Neptune's location with respect to the Fountain of the Flood.

The correlation between the Fountain of the Flood and the Aniene cascades at the Tiburtine acropolis posited by Dernie, Fagiolo and Madonna is similarly contentious, as this site was in fact represented by the Fountain of Tivoli on the third terrace, where the Tiburtine Sibyl's statue presides over a grand cascade in imitation of the town's geography — discussed at length in Chapter 6 (figs. 6.3 and 6.4).³⁵⁸ This naturally raises the question: why would two adjacent fountains be designed with identical symbolism? What is more, this proposed interpretation has elided the significance of the Fountain of the Flood's name designated in the Ligorio manuscript, and as such, scholars have overlooked the visceral impact of its cacophonous, flood-simulating water effects on the visitor.³⁵⁹

In this chapter, the inconsistencies of previous readings are addressed in a new ecocritical interpretation, one which demonstrates how local fears of the Aniene's

³⁵⁷ In addition to contemporary sources, my discussion of the Valle d'Inferno's sixteenth-century outlook derives from Giuliani's archaeological and topographical survey of the site (2005). The Grotto of the Sirens was named in the late eighteenth century by artist Abraham Louis-Ducros after painting the valley.

³⁵⁸ Ligorio, *MS* f. 256r-256v 22.

³⁵⁹ Ligorio, *MS* f. 253v 10.

perennial flooding were manifest in the first terrace's geographical schema. I show how the waterscape, read as a whole, represented the Tiburtine topography in far greater detail than previous studies have recognised, recreating the Aniene's progress from the acropolis and tracing its course through the Valle d'Inferno. Dominated by the Fountain of the Flood, this terrace encapsulated a wild and horrifying vision of the Tiburtine landscape, subject to the destructive forces of the Aniene.

Section 4.1, 'Into the Hinterland', situates my interpretation within two new approaches to the Italian Renaissance garden outlined in the review of scholarship in Chapter 1, both of which have engaged with the disquieting representation of wild nature within the garden.³⁶⁰ In Section 4.2, 'Fear and Flooding in Tivoli', I investigate the ecological concerns of Tivoli's inhabitants, centred around their complex relationship with the Aniene River, which sustained the town's thriving economy whilst also causing frequent, devastating floods — a local phenomenon exacerbated in the Cinquecento by a period of global cooling known as the Little Ice Age. I also consider contrasting conceptions of the Valle d'Inferno, which was lauded by ancient poets and Grand Tourists as a *locus amoenus*, but as the site of flooding and resultant landslides, was known by Tivoli's inhabitants as the Valley of Hell. Having contextualised my ecocritical interpretation, Section 4.3, 'Into the Valle d'Inferno', demonstrates the full value of my synthetic approach. Here, I make plain how the first terrace waterscape functioned as a unity through which visitors could experience and reflect upon the volatility of the Valle d'Inferno. This section takes us through the somatic and psychological impact of the Fountain of the Flood's hydraulic effects, and sets out the full significance of its dramatic

³⁶⁰ Chapter 1, Section 1.3, pages 39-46.

sequencing of sound and water for the entire terrace. This was designed to provoke responses of awe and fear in visitors, playing upon fears of untamed nature and conjuring up a sense of powerlessness and discomfiture that played a significant role in framing the subsequent phases in the visitor's journey. Section 4.4, 'Monstrous Portents of Natural Disasters', then teases out the connection between this unsettling vision of the Tiburtine landscape and the imposing Nature Goddess who presided over it. In her multi-breasted form, she is a 'monstrous' figure, personifying both the generative and destructive potential of nature, and an entity who also embodied the monstrous portents associated with the hydrological disasters which plagued Italy during the sixteenth century. Finally, in Section 4.5, 'Subjugating the Nature Goddess', I draw these readings together in order to argue that the waterscape's ideological significance lay in its contrasting dialectic with the third terrace's geographical schema, which represented a bucolic vision of the Tiburtine landscape, commemorating Cardinal Ippolito's regeneration of the region.

4.1 Into the Hinterland

This section takes as its starting point the representation of wild nature on the first terrace waterscape at the Fountain of the Flood. From this new interpretative approach builds my redefinition of the Villa d'Este as a dualistic space which encapsulated the classical topoi of the *locus amoenus* (pleasant place) and the *locus horridus* (fearful place).³⁶¹ This reading also has significant implications for the second terrace, as Chapter 5 demonstrates,

³⁶¹ These topoi are surveyed in classical literature by Edwards 1987: 267-76, Hass 1998 and Spencer 2010: 17-30. Key examples of the *locus amoenus* are found in Plato's *Phaedrus*, in which two philosophers take refuge under a shady plane tree beside a cool stream (230b-c); and in the bucolic landscapes described by Theocritus (*Idylls* 7.131-46), Virgil (*Eclogues* 1.51-58), and Horace (*Odes* 1.7). The *locus horridus* is witnessed in Horace's vision of wild nature presided over by Bacchus (*Odes* 2.19), Aeneas' passage through the dense forest of Avernus surrounding the foreboding entrance to the Underworld in Virgil's *Aeneid* (6.179-211, 238-45) and the dark wood of Seneca's *Thyestes* (641-82).

and for the fourth terrace, discussed in Chapter 7. Paola Giacomoni's definition of these landscape topoi provides important context for the discussion which follows:

...[the *locus amoenus*] is envisioned as a retreat and a place of meditation amidst the natural elements; a shady and pleasing environment, made cool and gratifying by a fruitful and welcoming source that stirs philosophical reflection or poetic inspiration in a safe and shielding environment... [the] disharmonious and non-rational view of nature corresponds to the notion of a place where the same elements are taken and vested with a tragic bent: the wood becomes a wilderness devoid of any safe point of reference, shade becomes disquieting darkness, the fruitful water turns stagnant or thunders down, in any case becomes dangerous. Wild, irrational and menacing nature, characteristic of the *locus horridus*.³⁶²

As outlined in Chapter 1, the Italian Renaissance garden has traditionally been conceived by scholars as a utopian site, designed to evoke the *locus amoenus* or earthly paradises of myth — topoi which characterised the representation of gardens in Renaissance didactic and poetic literature.³⁶³ Foundational studies by Elisabeth MacDougall and Claudia Lazzaro have demonstrated how Renaissance Italy enthusiastically adapted defining features of the classical *locus amoenus* so that grand garden design conjured up the sacro-idyllic landscapes of ancient poetry in the form of pleasant fountains, shaded groves and naturalistic grottoes.³⁶⁴ In contrast to the soothing, poetry-inspiring springs of the *locus amoenus*, however, the water effects at the Fountain of the Flood located the visitor within a threatening *locus horridus*, exemplifying the 'disharmonious and non-rational view of nature' described by Giacomoni, whereby 'the

³⁶² Giacomoni 2007: 83-4.

³⁶³ Chapter 1, pages 26-27, 40-41. The major study for the transmission of the classical *locus amoenus* in Medieval and Renaissance literature is Curtius 1953: 183-202. The topos is also surveyed in the fictional gardens of Italian literature by Gianetto 2003: 231-57, Giamatti 1996 and Ricci 1996: 6-33; and in villa treatises by Samson 2012: 1-23 and Beck 2011: 26-47.

³⁶⁴ Lazzaro 1990: 66-166; MacDougall 1994: 67-78, 89-111.

fruitful water turns stagnant or thunders down, in any case becomes dangerous'.³⁶⁵ Such a disquieting natural feature belonged to the imagined wild hinterland beyond the villa's walls, rather than within, as Bonfadio Taegio's treatise on country life, *La Villa* (Milan, 1559), makes plain. Bringing Taegio back into the frame, after his definition of the garden as an ideal 'third nature', — a harmonious blend of art and nature distinct from utilitarian farmland (second nature) and untamed landscapes (first nature) — he stated that the idyllic status of country villas was defined and reified by their proximity to the wild:

Because of the proximity of their opposite...*in villa* one sees threatening mountains, serpents' lairs, dark caves, horrid cliffs, strange crags, steep precipices, fallen rocks, hermits' huts, rough rocks, mountainous deserts, and similar things that, although one can hardly gaze upon them without horror, nevertheless render more complete the joys and happinesses of the villa.³⁶⁶

In this graphic picture of the hinterland as a *locus horridus*, Taegio articulated contemporary anxieties of untamed and unknowable 'first nature' beyond the human domain, manifest not only in the threat of the wild, but also the potential horrors it concealed. Taegio's contrasting responses to fearful 'first nature' and idyllic 'third nature' can be defined according to antithetical modes of environmental perception outlined by geographical theorists: the wild was a 'topophobic' (fear-inducing) landscape, whilst the villa was a 'topophilic' (pleasure-inducing) site.³⁶⁷

In recent studies, scholars have challenged the established conception of the Italian Renaissance garden as a *locus amoenus*, demonstrating that it was not only designed to

³⁶⁵ Giacomoni 2007: 83-4.

³⁶⁶ Taegio, *La Villa* 215. For Taegio's definition of the 'three natures', see Chapter 2, pages 58-61.

³⁶⁷ The term 'topophilia' was employed by Tuan to define 'the affective bond between people and place or setting' (1974: 4). Subsequently, the term 'topophobia' was coined Relph to denote 'all experiences of spaces, places, and landscapes which are in any way distasteful and induce anxiety and depression' (1976: 27). On the application of these terms within landscape studies, see Relph 1976 and Tuan's definitive survey of topophobic landscapes in the cultural imagination throughout history (1979).

engage in a contrasting dialectic with the surrounding landscape, as Taegio described, but also incorporated topophobic features from the wild hinterland within its walls. As discussed in Chapter 1, Hervé Brunon and Luke Morgan contended that colossal statues personifying mountain and river gods in Italian Renaissance gardens embodied both the generative and destructive potential of nature, constituting an antagonistic element in garden design.³⁶⁸ Observing that ‘the giant figure of the river god or man mountain logically evokes the scale of the subject in the environment at large’, Morgan argued these statues were designed to provoke the same reactions of awe and fear as their natural counterparts, concluding: ‘If the giant, as a sort of tutelary divinity of the sixteenth-century conveys a message, it would be that nature is not always amenable’.³⁶⁹ Like Brunon, Morgan contended that the topophobic presence of these colossi made the garden a dualistic space, in which *locus amoenus* and *locus horridus* co-existed to create a sublime experience which mingled both terror and delight — a concept already, as we have seen, expressed by Taegio (quoted above).³⁷⁰ It is within this new interpretative tradition that my reading in this chapter has its genesis.

Expanding upon this growing recognition of the topophobic experience embedded within garden design, this chapter also develops recent ecocritical approaches to the Italian Renaissance garden by Catherine Walsh and Shannon Kelley.³⁷¹ As outlined in Chapter 1, both scholars contextualised their readings within the climatic consequences of Europe’s

³⁶⁸ Chapter 1, pages 42-43. Brunon 1998: 103-36, 2006; Morgan 2016.

³⁶⁹ Morgan 2016: 130.

³⁷⁰ Morgan 2016: 6; 168-71; Taegio, *La Villa* 215.

³⁷¹ Chapter 1, pages 44-46. Walsh 2015; Kelley 2016: 729-51.

Little Ice Age in the Cinquecento.³⁷² In Italy, the effects of this global cooling were compounded by widespread deforestation following a major population increase in fifteenth century, which led to hydro-meteorological disasters across the country.³⁷³ In the light of this ecological crisis, Walsh investigated the environmental awareness and ecological anxieties manifest in figurations of rivers and mountains, with particular emphasis on Giambologna's Appennino (completed c. 1580) at the Villa di Pratolino.³⁷⁴ Of particular relevance to the subject of this chapter, Kelley interpreted the preponderance of fountains in the late Cinquecento which recreated the water effects of floods and storms as commemorations of the devastating floods which were widespread across Italy, using Bernardo Buontalenti's Grotta Grande (completed c. 1583-93) at the Boboli Gardens as her principal example.³⁷⁵

Bringing these pioneering approaches to bear on the Villa d'Este, the first terrace waterscape becomes accessible as an exemplar for embedding in the visitor's experience both topophobic responses to the Tiburtine hinterland and environmental concerns surrounding the Aniene River. Exploring fear within and as a product of the landscape, this chapter shows how representations of wild nature on the first terrace waterscape not only reflected topophobic responses to landscape, but were also creative expressions of environmental concerns and anxieties.

³⁷² The major study of Europe's Little Ice Age is Behringer 2010: 85-167.

³⁷³ The hydro-meteorological effects of the Little Ice Age in Italy are surveyed by Delmonaco, Margottini and Serafini 1999: 45-64.

³⁷⁴ Walsh 2015.

³⁷⁵ Kelley 2016: 729-51.

4.2 Fear and Flooding in Tivoli

Before demonstrating how the first terrace waterscape was designed to recreate the topography of the Valle d’Inferno, it is important first to present a picture of this site — immortalised in accounts by ancient poets, Renaissance historians and Grand Tourists — as it was before it was altered radically in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, to appreciate the ecological concerns and anxieties manifest in the waterscape, it is essential to understand Tivoli’s fundamentally fruitful but periodically destructive relationship with the Aniene River, which caused frequent, devastating flooding throughout the town’s history. Contrasting topophilic and topophobic conceptions of the Valle d’Inferno are also investigated in this section, in order to define why the same landscape lauded in pastoral poetry as a *locus amoenus* was known to Tivoli’s inhabitants as the Valley of Hell.³⁷⁶

Rushing down from its source sixty kilometres south-east of Tivoli (at Trevi nel Lazio in the Monti Simbruini), the Aniene flows on the town’s eastern side, where it originally widened to form a meander, as shown on Daniel Stoopendaal’s map of Tivoli (1704), before falling in a series of cascades into the Valle d’Inferno (fig. 1.5). In the wake of a particularly violent flood in November 1826, this situation was altered after Pope Gregory XVI commissioned hydraulic engineer Clemente Folchi to implement a flood-prevention scheme, with work in progress from 1832 to 1835.³⁷⁷ Folchi diverted the majority of the river’s course away from the town through two channels under Monte Catillo, which emptied on the north-eastern side of the Valle d’Inferno where Tivoli’s grand cascade now falls (fig. 4.6). An engraving by Gaetano Cottafavi (1837) depicts the

³⁷⁶ According to Zappi, the valley was known as the ‘*pellago*’ (from which the Lake Pelago derived its name) as well as the ‘*Valle d’Inferno*’ (*Annali* 3, 42); Del Re only used the latter epithet (*Tiburtine* 119).

³⁷⁷ A detailed account of the project reconstructed from contemporary accounts is in Giuliani 2005: 71-78.

view across the valley following the project's completion, when the site was renamed the Villa Gregoriana and opened as a public park, which it remains to this day (fig. 4.7).³⁷⁸

Before the nineteenth century, however, the situation at Tivoli was altogether more dramatic, with two main waterfalls tumbling beneath the town and into the valley, as captured in two engravings by Giovanni Francesco Venturini (1691). The first cascade fell into the gorge between the meander island and the main town — identified in the legend of Stoopendaal's map as the 'Mouth of Hell' (number 16, '*Baratrum os Inferi vocatum*') — which is now spanned by the Ponte Gregoriano, where a small cascade still falls in pale imitation of the original rendered in Venturini's first engraving (figs. 1.5, 4.8 and 4.9). The second, principal cascade fell directly beneath the Temple of the Sibyl into the valley below, as shown on Venturini's second engraving (fig. 4.10). From the acropolis, this cascade originally plummeted over 120 metres into the cave now designated as the Grotto of Neptune, depicted in Cottafavi's engraving (1837), and rushed out in smaller cascades to collect at the bottom of the valley in Lake Pelago — these once turbulent waters have now been reduced to a more gentle flow (figs. 4.11-4.14). Likewise, the violent rapids formed by the river emptying through the Grotto of the Sirens on the valley's northern side have also been tempered (figs. 4.15). On the other side of the valley, the river regained its former trajectory, and still snakes across the Campagna to join with the Tiber north of Rome at the end of its ninety-nine kilometre course.

A site of outstanding natural beauty even to this day, the Valle d'Inferno has been celebrated as a *locus amoenus* of poetic inspiration since antiquity, featuring in pastoral

³⁷⁸ The grand cascade is now known as the '*cascata Bernini*', as shown on Giuliani's map (fig. 1.4), after alterations were made to the cascade outlet in 1690 by Luigi Bernini (brother of Lorenzo Bernini).

panegyrics by Propertius, Horace and Statius.³⁷⁹ Propertius marvelled how ‘Anio’s water cascades into spreading pools’ and Horace lauded the ‘plunging Anio’, but Statius gave the most detailed picture of the valley in his poem describing Manlius Vopiscus’s villa (first-century CE) on the slopes opposite the acropolis, the ruins of which still remain:

What beauty found in places richly blessed
before man’s artful touch! Nowhere has Nature
indulged herself so lavishly. Tall groves
bend over swiftly moving streams; deceptive
reflections answer leafy boughs; along
the river’s length the same dark image flits.
The Anio himself — his deference
is wonderful — foam-white downstream and up,
here drops his swollen rage and rocky rumbling.³⁸⁰

In the sixteenth century, Ligorio found this dramatic landscape unaltered, haunted by the voices of ancient poets, whose verses infuse his own description of the valley in *Antica città di Tivoli*.³⁸¹ From the end of the Cinquecento to the eighteenth century, travellers came from across Europe to marvel at the landscape which commanded praise of ancient poets, and the site continued to inspire an efflorescence of poetry, paintings, and impassioned accounts of numerous Grand Tourists.³⁸² Following a visit to the Villa d’Este in May 1645, John Evelyn also recorded the astonishing sight of the Valle d’Inferno:

...we went to see the so famous natural precipice and cascade of the river Anio, rushing down from the mountains of Tivoli with that fury that, what with the mist it perpetually casts up by the breaking

³⁷⁹ Propertius, *Elegiae* 3.16.2-4, 4.7.81; Horace, *Odes* 1.7.12-14; Statius, *Silvae* 1.3.

³⁸⁰ Propertius, *Elegiae* 3.16.3-4, trans. Goold 1990; Horace, *Odes* 1.7.13, trans. West 2008; Statius, *Silvae* 1.3.24-32, trans. Nagle 2004.

³⁸¹ Ligorio, *Antica città di Tivoli*, f. 2v-3, 9v; Ligorio quotes Horace (*Odes* 1.7.13), Propertius (*Elegiae* 1.20.8, 4.7.81), Virgil (*Aeneid* 7.100-102) and Martial (5.60.5) in his opening account (f. 2v-3).

³⁸² A selection of accounts and paintings of Tivoli by Grand Tourists are collated in Giuliani 2005: 79-84.

of the water against the rocks, and what with the sun shining on it and forming a natural rainbow, and the prodigious depth of the gulf below, it is enough to astonish one that looks on it.³⁸³

Notwithstanding its celebrated natural beauty, the Valle d’Inferno has also been at the heart of Tivoli’s thriving economy from antiquity. The town owed its prosperity to the Aniene’s abundant, mineral-rich waters which generated a wealth of natural resources and local industries, as well as providing an important trade route to Rome that ensured a long-standing, lucrative connection with the capital, as outlined in the Introduction.³⁸⁴ Tivoli’s oldest industry is travertine limestone deposited by the Aniene, which has been quarried along the Via Tiburtina from antiquity to this day and was used extensively in the building of Rome.³⁸⁵ The Aniene was also integral to the town’s agricultural prosperity, irrigating its groves, orchards and vineyards, as Ligorio’s citation of Propertius attests: ‘because the river rushes into Tivoli, Propertius wrote, “foaming Anio irrigates orchard fields”. Therefore the whole countryside, including gardens and vineyards, is irrigated by the river, which increases the fruits of the region’.³⁸⁶ Indeed, the vineyards and olive groves dominating the slopes of Monte Tiburtina — a defining feature of the Medieval and Renaissance landscape — were so productive that Tivoli became famed for its wine and olive oil, both exported in vast quantities to Rome, as Giovanni Maria Zappi and Antonio

³⁸³ Evelyn, *Diary* 265, ed. Dobson 1906.

³⁸⁴ Introduction, pages 4-5. The importance of the Aniene River to Tivoli’s economy from antiquity to the Renaissance is surveyed by Giuliani 2005: 67-72 and Sciarretta 2015: 90-94.

³⁸⁵ Coarelli 2007: 480; Sciarretta 2015: 38, 126-27. On travertine and Hercules’ veneration by stonemasons at the Temple of Hercules Saxanus (first century CE) at Tivoli, see the Introduction, pages 4-5.

³⁸⁶ ‘...perché nella parte dove si precipita in Tivoli fa molti rami Properzio, nel libro quarto, lo chiama Anio ramoso, così dicendo: ramosus Anio qua pomifer incubat arvis; così dunque tutto il paese di giardini e di vigne egli inafiando accresce i frutti’ (Ligorio, *Antica città di Tivoli* f. 3r; Propertius *Elegiae* 4.7.81). Horace also witnessed ‘orchards watered by swiftly flowing streams’ and praised ‘the sacred vine in the kindly soil round Tibur’ (*Odes* 1.7.12-13, 1.18.1).

Del Re recorded.³⁸⁷ Furthermore, the Aniene's fast-flowing currents supported the numerous mill industries which were foundational to Tivoli's economy in the Renaissance, when the river's hydraulic power was exploited by grain, oil, textile and paper mills which lined the riverbanks.³⁸⁸

But the same river that sustained Tivoli's economic lifeblood was also a source of frequent, devastating flooding. During periods of heavy rainfall and storms the meander and waterfalls would overflow, causing extensive damage to the town and claiming many victims through flooding and resultant landslides.³⁸⁹ One such event was described by Pliny the Younger in the earliest account of flooding at Tivoli, and dating to the early first century CE. Pliny recorded how the Aniene, swollen from rainfall, destroyed groves and buildings, leaving many injured and dead in its violent wake:

The Anio, most delightful of rivers — so much so that the houses on its banks seem to beg it not to leave them — has torn up and carried away most of the woods which shade its course. High land nearby has been undermined, so that its channel is blocked in several places with the resultant landslides; and in its efforts to regain its lost course it has wrecked buildings and forced out its way over the debris...incessant rain, gales and cloudbursts have destroyed the walls enclosing valuable properties, rocked public buildings, and brought them crashing to the ground. Many people have been maimed, crushed, and buried in such accidents, so that grievous loss of life is added to material damage.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁷ Zappi, *Annali* 3-4; Del Re, *Le Antichità Tiburtine opera postuma* (Tivoli, 1883) 73-76. Del Re wrote: '*in Tivoli ve n'è tanta quantità, che ogni anno ne porta gran copia in Roma; et pare frutto peculiare di detta città*' (*Tiburtine postuma* 74). In his study of Tivoli's agricultural history, Carocci emphasised the Aniene's integrality to the region's viticulture and olive cultivation: 'irrigation permitted the growth of a rich and specialised agriculture where vineyards and orchards were more extensive than arable farming' (1988: 517).

³⁸⁸ Ligorio recorded that as well as irrigating the town, the Aniene also powered its mills and forges: '*detto Aniene, deriva dal lago Fucino: per valli nelli confini di Tiburtini irrigando e molto utile alla città loro per che accomoda quella a molti effetti di molini, da cartiere, et da fucine di ferro et molina.*' (*Antica città di Tivoli* f. 2v; see also Zappi, *Annali* 3, 116; Del Re, *Tiburtine* 119-20, 142, 133). On the importance of the mill industry to Tivoli's economy, see Sciarretta 2015: 91-92, who surveyed the extensive network of water channels which supplied these mills, together with records of *molendinarii* (mill workers).

³⁸⁹ Flood damage was exacerbated by the fragile nature of the rocky sediment characterising the soil around the valley, which triggered violent landslides (Giuliani 2005: 15-18).

³⁹⁰ Pliny, *Epistulae* 8.17.3-5, trans. Radice 1969.

Ancient understanding of the complex dualism of the landscape is clearly conveyed in this extract. In contrast to the site described in ancient poetry as a *locus amoenus*, Pliny presents the Valle d'Inferno as being transformed by the deluge-swollen river into a topophobic vision of wild nature, characteristic of a *locus horridus*.

Although repeated efforts were made to protect Tivoli by diverting the Aniene's course away from the town, it continued to be plagued by floods and landslides until Folchi's flood-prevention scheme was implemented in 1835.³⁹¹ The valley precipice was a particular and constant source of anxiety for Tivoli's inhabitants: ruins of buildings and bridges discovered in the gorge beneath the acropolis and meander island reveal that landslides triggered by flooding caused the valley to widen over time, swallowing parts of the town.³⁹² The engravings of the Tiburtine cascades by Venturini testify to this phenomenon, depicting sloping riverbanks around the valley rather than the sheer drops witnessed today, as well as a bridge between the acropolis and meander island which no longer exists (figs. 4.8 and 4.10).

In the sixteenth century, Tivoli saw five major floods — the greatest number documented in any century until the 1800s — when the town's geographical predisposition to flooding was exacerbated by the Little Ice Age which brought a dramatic increase in snow and rainfall across Europe, causing hydro-meteorological disasters across Italy. The floods in Tivoli of 1531, 1564 and 1576 were chronicled by Zappi, the most devastating of

³⁹¹ In addition to Pliny's record, written accounts of flooding, collated by Pacifici 1936: 11-24, exist for the following years: 1305, 1405, 1420, 1432, 1489, 1531, 1564, 1576, 1589, 1592, 1671, 1688, 1740, 1753, 1757, 1779, 1804, 1805, 1808, 1809, 1822 and 1826. Giuliani has surveyed evidence for flooding and flood-prevention efforts from antiquity until 1835 (2005: 15-37).

³⁹² Giuliani 2005: 18, 21-22.

which occurred in September 1564 during Cardinal Ippolito's governorship.³⁹³ Zappi recounted how the floodwaters took so long to recede and caused 'such serious damage and ruin' that Ippolito donated seven hundred *scudi* to the town for reparations, and the Pope himself visited the town to bear witness to the devastation:

In the time of the papacy of Pope Pius IV, in the year of 1564, his holiness departed from Rome to visit the city of Tivoli in the month of September, when the river and waterfalls of the Aniene had flooded. His Holiness, understanding the extent of the [flood] damage, had resolved to go and see it, together with many princes, barons and cardinals. Here, they saw the reparations which were being undertaken by three hundred workers...and witnessed the frightful state of the swollen river.³⁹⁴

With flooding and landslides concentrated around the Valle d'Inferno it is unsurprising that from the sixteenth century, the site was known to the inhabitants as the Valley of Hell — a far cry from the *locus amoenus* of classical poetry.³⁹⁵ Indeed, local historian Del Re struggled to fathom how the valley which instilled such fear in the Tiburtine populace could have been the idyllic setting of Manlius Vopiscus' villa: 'It is difficult for some people to believe that this was the site of Vopiscus' villa...since it seems improbable that he should want to build a sumptuous villa, as Statius describes, in such a rugged and precipitous place, which, for all its horrors, is called Hell by inhabitants.'³⁹⁶ Del Re goes on to recount how the river had weakened and washed away the ancient villa's foundations, reducing it to a ruin, and recognised the same destructive forces at work in the

³⁹³ A chapter of Zappi's *Annali* is dedicated to the flooding (73-74), entitled, '*Li diversi tempi in li quali si summerse il pelago overo la cascata delle acque del fiume Aniene della città di Tivoli*'.

³⁹⁴ Zappi, *Annali* 73. Ippolito's contribution is also attested in town records, collated in Pacifici 1920: 50. To put his contribution of 700 *scudi* into perspective: from 1560, the Cardinal's net income was 80-85,000 *scudi* — for a detailed breakdown of his income sources in this year, see Hollingsworth 2016: 82.

³⁹⁵ This epithet first appears in two texts published in 1576: Zappi's history of Tivoli (*Annali* 42) and Bacci's treatise on the River Tiber (*Del Tevere, della natura et bontà dell'acque et delle inondatione*, Rome, 1, 12). It is also used by Ligorio in *Antica città di Tivoli* (1538-79, f. 9v.).

³⁹⁶ Del Re, *Tiburtine* 119.

town: ‘in our times, we have seen the same ruinous effects of this weakening of the soil, as oil and wheat mills have fallen to the bottom of the precipice’.³⁹⁷ For residents of Tivoli, therefore, the valley was a topophobic landscape that marked the focal point of the Aniene’s destructive potential and negative impact on the local economy, and one which had the power to reduce the town to same state as ancient Rome’s fallen empire, witnessed in the ruins scattered throughout the valley basin.

At the nexus of Tivoli’s ongoing prosperity and periodic ruin, therefore, the Valle d’Inferno encapsulated elements of both *locus amoenus* and *locus horridus*. Even Ligorio — who echoed the ancient poets’ sentiments about the valley in the opening of *Antica città di Tivoli*, and only documented the Aniene’s benefits to Tivoli — conceded that *Valle d’Inferno* was not an unjustified epithet.³⁹⁸ In his chapter on the Tiburtine acropolis, Ligorio expressed how his sense of wonder at the Aniene cascades was tempered with fear, induced by their deafening roar: ‘tumbling through the narrow gorge carved out by the waters themselves, and then falling from the tall cliff, the river is awesome to see, but the ear-splitting noise it makes is so terrible and horrifying to hear, that it is not without reason the citizens have named this place Hell’.³⁹⁹ Thus, Ligorio — whose conception of the valley was filtered through the romanticised lens of classical poetry, and yet could not have been unaware of the river’s destructive potential — regarded the Valle d’Inferno as ‘a place

³⁹⁷ Del Re, *Tiburtine* 119-20.

³⁹⁸ Ligorio, *Antica città di Tivoli* ff. 2v-3r.

³⁹⁹ ‘Da questa parte dove essi si vedono, si potent contemplare l’acque balzante che si sommergono per varie caverne forate nel monte et in uno particolare speco dall’antico corso dell’acque fatto, che hanno consumato et tagliato il monte, et il luogo formato di strana et horribile vista, dove manualmente si vedono anco dell’altri fori et vie per varie occasioni fatte per le bisogne della città; ove in quello profondo, dove cade la copiosa onda del fiume, empie la valle di pioggia, ove, scorrendo et urtando per le vie strette gatte dall’acque i stesse et cadendo dall’altissime rupe, la vista fa sì strano vedere che per la novità che porgono e per lo strepito gli orecchi non odino e fanno spavento e terrore negli animi di riguardanti: che non poca cagione ha dato alla cittadini chiamare il luogo Inferno.’ (Ligorio, *Antica città di Tivoli* f. 9v).

that is both wonderful and terrible to behold'.⁴⁰⁰ This dualistic conception infused his design for the waterscape at the Villa d'Este, which represented a microcosmic vision of the Valle d'Inferno governed by the river's volatile forces, as the following section demonstrates, generating a sublime experience which mingled delight and terror.

4.3 Into the Valle d'Inferno

A year after the devastating flood of 1564, work commenced on the waterscape — a correlation which cannot have been coincidental. This began with the pools spanning the terrace in 1565, followed by the Fountain of the Flood on the eastern summit in 1566.⁴⁰¹ In the same way that the Aniene transformed the Valle d'Inferno from a *locus amoenus* into a violent *locus horridus* when the river flooded, so the tophobic environment generated by the waterscape and the hydraulic organ at the Fountain of the Flood was periodically disrupted by a tumultuous deluge. Simulating the Aniene's flood-swollen cascades, this deluge which began at the fountain set in motion a dramatic sequencing of water and sound that reverberated across the length of the terrace from east to west, recreating the river's progress through the Valle d'Inferno. This new synthetic reading fully realises the Fountain of the Flood as the source of an immersive, topophobic encounter for visitors which played upon both local and national ecological fears of cataclysmic flooding, reflecting the widespread impact of hydrological disasters in the Cinquecento.

Water features in Italian Renaissance gardens were principally designed to reproduce the visual, acoustic and kinetic properties of water in the natural world, and as

⁴⁰⁰ Ligorio, *Antica città di Tivoli* f. 9v, quoted above. It is highly probable Ligorio, working on the Villa d'Este throughout 1564, witnessed the devastating flood which occurred in September of that year.

⁴⁰¹ For payment records detailing the dates of the work on the waterscape, see Coffin 1960: 17-19.

such, the same onomatopoetic language employed by Renaissance writers to describe natural phenomena was also applied to fountains, as outlined at length in the Chapter 2.⁴⁰² This rich vocabulary also pervaded contemporary accounts of the Villa d'Este's fountains, conveying a range of hydrological associations with a distinctly Tiburtine theme that was particularly prevalent on the first terrace waterscape. Not only does the Ligorio manuscript explain that the Fountain of the Flood was named after the '*diluvio*' (flood) it simulated, but the same language used by Renaissance writers to describe the Aniene's progress through the Valle d'Inferno also infused visitors' accounts of the waterscape.⁴⁰³

Anatole Tchikine has highlighted the multisensory nature of water features, which engaged garden visitors as active participants rather than passive observers, and he defined fountains as a form of interactive art, comparable to modern art installations.⁴⁰⁴ There has been a tendency to assume that the primary function of Renaissance garden water features was playful and pleasant. As summed up by Tchikine, they were 'ludic...designed to delight and amuse', rather than delivering ideological value or the kind of cultural shock factor recognisable in modern interactive art.⁴⁰⁵ This repudiation derives, of course, from the traditional conception of the Italian Renaissance garden as a reinvention of the classical

⁴⁰² Chapter 2, Section 2.5, pages 77-80.

⁴⁰³ '*Fontana del Diluvio così chiamata per infiniti capi d'acqua, che n'escono con mirabile impeto*' (Ligorio, *MS* f. 253v 10); it is also identified as '*fonte del Diluvio*' in the 1572 inventory (Pirolo, *Inventario* f. 377v; Ashby 1908: 242). On the widespread use of the term '*diluvio*' as a synonym for '*alluvione*' (flood) in Italian Renaissance literature, see Niccoli 1990: 143-44.

⁴⁰⁴ Tchikine 2010: 57-76, 2014: 129-54, 2017: 217-254. For further discussion, see Chapter 2, pages 77-78.

⁴⁰⁵ Tchikine contended that 'while the works of modern and contemporary art, such as self-destructing mechanical assemblages of urban waste (Tinguely) or grand pianos trapped in large rooms with walls covered in stacks of felt (Beuys), usually convey specific messages as statements of a particular idea or ideology, the garden culture of Renaissance and Baroque Italy had no such agenda...Instead of provoking the viewers through making them experience shock, discomfort, or disgust, these 'moving' statues, 'singing' birds, overflowing basins, and suddenly emerging or disappearing jets, ludic by their very intent, were primarily designed to delight and amuse (2010: 57).

locus amoenus, principally designed to promote toponilic experiences, which, as this chapter demonstrates, is misplaced. Instead, visitors' accounts of the Villa d'Este describe a dramatic soundscape produced by the Fountain of the Flood, which enhanced the toponilic quality of the *diluvio*, revealing that water effects had the potential to signify a recognisably real-world threat, and to elicit responses of shock and fear. The failure to identify this disquieting aspect of fountain design underpins previous interpretative approaches to the Fountain of the Flood, which my new holistic reading addresses.

The Aniene's symbolic progress across the first terrace began on the eastern summit at the Fountain of the Flood, corresponding topographically with the cascade which fell beneath the Temple of the Sibyl on the eastern acropolis, as shown on Stoopendaal's map (fig. 1.5).⁴⁰⁶ The statue of the Nature Goddess which originally occupied the central niche was flanked by two gentle cascades rising continuously from the basin, but the fountain's main feature was a hydraulic performance in two 'acts': a musical harmony played by a water-powered organ concealed behind the Nature Goddess, which was followed by a violent deluge (figs. 4.1 and 4.2).⁴⁰⁷ Although Dernie, Fagiolo and Madonna identified the fountain's twin cascades with the Aniene waterfalls, they failed to recognise the connection between the deluge simulation and the Aniene's propensity for flooding.⁴⁰⁸ Eliding the designed contrast between the two acts in the hydraulic performance entirely, Lazzaro, Fagiolo and Madonna instead contended that the fountain

⁴⁰⁶ Although Stoopendaal idealised the parallel orientation between the Villa d'Este and the acropolis, the unbroken line between the fountain and the temple is witnessed on Giuliani's topographical map (fig. 1.4).

⁴⁰⁷ Ligorio, *MS* f. 253v 10; Zappi *Annali* 61-62; Audebert, *Journal* 184-86; Del Re, *Tiburtine* 66-67.

⁴⁰⁸ Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 104-6; Dernie 1996: 49. Although Dernie equated the deluge with the universal mythic deluge described by Ovid (*Met.* 1.252-312), his exposition is cursory and he made no reference to local or national concerns about flooding (1996: 49).

signified nature's creative potential when harnessed through human intervention, realised in the water-powered organ.⁴⁰⁹ In doing so, the full dramatic significance of the hydraulic performance, manifesting both the creative and destructive forces of water, and reflecting the Aniene's volatile nature, was lost.

A complete reconstruction of the original water features is made possible by a survey of the hydraulic system by Patrizio Barbieri and Leonardo Lombardi, who designed the working replica of the water organ that is now housed in the extant *tempietto* (fig. 4.2).⁴¹⁰ After the sixteenth-century organ had rusted beyond repair, this protective *tempietto* was added to house a new organ in the seventeenth century (no longer extant), replacing the statue of the Nature Goddess.⁴¹¹ Although the hydraulic performance was initiated manually by two hidden levers, the system was powered automatically once these mechanisms were triggered.⁴¹² The first lever released water from a reservoir above the fountain, which fell through a network of aeolic chambers behind the façade and collected in a large chamber beneath the statue of the Nature Goddess to produce the musical effects.⁴¹³ The second lever released the water from this chamber through multiple pipes concealed around the fountain's central niche and basin, initiating the deluge.

Two long trumpet blasts announced the beginning of this performance, and then the organ began to play as the chamber beneath the central niche filled with water and turned

⁴⁰⁹ Lazzaro 1990: 229; Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 104-108.

⁴¹⁰ Barbieri 2004: 187-221; Barbieri and Lombardi 2004: 141-51. This replica has been in situ since June 2003 and was reconstructed from drawings by the designer, Claude Venard, together with contemporary descriptions, but principally Audebert's detailed account of the hydraulic system (*Journal* 184-87).

⁴¹¹ This replacement organ was destroyed in the eighteenth century. The evolution of the water organ is charted by Barbieri 1986: 3-61.

⁴¹² Barbieri and Lombardi 2004: 141-51.

⁴¹³ Audebert recorded being lowered through a manhole in the fountain piazza and into 'a small underground room like a cave' beneath the fountain, where he saw part of the aeolic chamber network (*Journal* 185-86).

the musical wheel; this conveyed a melody through the twenty-two organ pipes concealed behind the Nature Goddess.⁴¹⁴ Although the tune is not identified in contemporary accounts, Nicolas Audebert recorded that ‘the organ plays a single song composed of five parts, which is long and melodious’.⁴¹⁵ Zappi recounted how this unique feat of engineering was met with admiration and astonishment: when Pope Gregory XIII visited the Villa d’Este in 1573, he was ‘so gratified and amazed that he wanted to hear the music not once or twice, but three times’; whilst ‘many cardinals, princes, lords and gentleman could not believe this organ was powered by water and played by itself, and thought there must be someone hidden inside’.⁴¹⁶ Despite provoking initial reactions of delight, however, this was only the first part of the performance, and it was followed immediately by the deluge.⁴¹⁷

A sudden torrent of water issuing from pipes concealed in the fountain’s central niche signalled the beginning of the frightening *diluvio*, flooding the basin and causing the two columns on either side of the Nature Goddess suddenly to surge high into the air — an effect replicated by the twin jets at the seventeenth-century Cascade Fountain (fig. 4.4).⁴¹⁸ For Audebert, this violent deluge recreated the effects of a tempest or thunderstorm:

When the music ends, a small lever is pulled to open a series of pipes, and in an instant, such a great quantity of water begins to issue from around the rustic mount [on which the Nature Goddess stood]

⁴¹⁴ Zappi, *Annali* 61; Audebert, *Journal* 186. The trumpet sounds issued from twin aeolic chambers directly beneath the reservoir above the fountain, which were flooded simultaneously, forcing air through two large pipes to produce the wind notes; the water then filled the chamber below connected with the water organ (Barbieri 2004: 192-95; Barbieri and Lombardi 2004: 141).

⁴¹⁵ Audebert, *Journal* 186. Del Re also identified the tune as a ‘madrigal’, a single song composed of multiple parts (*Tiburtine* 67).

⁴¹⁶ Zappi, *Annali* 61.

⁴¹⁷ Zappi *Annali* 62; Audebert, *Journal* 186.

⁴¹⁸ Zappi, *Annali* 62; Audebert, *Journal* 186; Del Re, *Tiburtine* 66-67.

that there appears to be a tempest or a thunderstorm, because the water makes such a deafening noise as it surges forth with force and violence. Rising from underground, the water is thrown into the air and reaches the height of two spears, then, at the end, it gradually diminishes and the cascades resume their normal, gentle flow. This is why it is called the Flood.⁴¹⁹

Enhancing this tumultuous display, Audebert recounted, were accompanying sound effects of murmuring and gurgling issuing from a trumpet-bearing Triton in the fountain basin, which intensified with the deluge and faded away as it subsided:

During this flood, in the midst of the water is a stone Triton holding a trumpet, which resounds with a harsh sound that continues throughout the tempest and the thunderstorm. It begins with a murmuring and this noise gradually increases, then slowly subsides, and in the end there is nothing more than a gurgling and a murmuring that seems to come from far away, as if the Triton had withdrawn.⁴²⁰

Significantly, murmuring and gurgling were terms frequently used by Renaissance writers to describe the noises produced by fast-flowing rivers. In Jacopo Sannazzaro's pastoral romance *Arcadia* (Naples, 1504), the Erymanthos River 'murmurs' (*mormorio*) as it rushes through plains and forests.⁴²¹ The cacophonous soundscape recorded by Audebert also bears striking resemblance to Ligorio's description of the 'ear-splitting noise' created by the Aniene cascades that was 'terrible and horrifying to hear'.⁴²² The link between the Fountain of the Flood and the Aniene cascades becomes all the more apparent when comparing the language employed by Ligorio and Zappi to describe their water effects. Ligorio's image of the waterfall beneath the acropolis, '*dove cade la copiosa onda del*

⁴¹⁹ Audebert, *Journal* 186.

⁴²⁰ Audebert, *Journal* 186-87; the sounds of 'murmurant' (murmuring) and 'gargoulement' (gurgling) described by Audebert correspond with the Italian 'gorgoglio' and 'mormorio'. These discordant sounds were achieved by the gradual expulsion of air from an aeolic chamber beneath the fountain (Barbieri 2004: 194-95; Barbieri and Lombardi 2004: 141).

⁴²¹ Sannazzaro describes the Erymanthos: '*con certi bollori di bianche schiume, si caccia fore nel piano, e per quello transcorrendo, col suo mormorio va fatigando le vicine selve*' (*Arcadia* 88-89, ed. Carrara 1952).

⁴²² Ligorio, *Antica città di Tivoli* f. 9v.

fiume' (where an abundant wave of the river falls), recalls the fountain's '*inifiniti capi d'acqua*' (infinite springs of water) in the Ligorio manuscript.⁴²³ Witnessing the flood simulation, Zappi documented how '*quali scaturiscano l'acqua con tanta gran forza et violenza*' (the water flows with such great force and violence), echoing his description of the Valle d'Inferno, where '*la qual cascata con tanta grande violenza*' (the water cascades with great violence).⁴²⁴

Thus, the Aniene waterfalls were not only represented by the twin jets, rising and cascading continuously from the Fountain of the Flood, as previous studies have posited, but were recalled even more vividly by the hydraulics specifically produced for the flood simulation.⁴²⁵ Periodically flooding the basin and transforming the two gentle cascades into surging columns, the *diluvio* powerfully evoked the Aniene's flood-swollen waters, the unexpected torrents and encroachments of water, and even conjuring the violent storms that caused the river to overflow, as Audebert described. This turbulent water display, transforming delight to terror, and surprise to shock, was further enhanced by the soundscape it generated. It reproduced the murmuring and gurgling of rapid-flowing rivers but also recalled the deafening roar of the Aniene cascading into and occasionally devastating the Valle d'Inferno. These discordant effects were thrown into sharp relief by the water organ's gentle melody which preceded the deluge, which in turn dramatised the contrast between nature's creative and destructive potential.

⁴²³ Ligorio, *Antica città di Tivoli* f. 9v; Ligorio, *MS* f. 253v 10.

⁴²⁴ Zappi, *Annali* 42, 62.

⁴²⁵ Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 104-6; Dernie 1996: 49.

The deluge did not end at the Fountain of the Flood, however, as Lombardi's survey of the garden's original hydraulic system has revealed, but continued at the level below in the three caves comprising the Grottoes of the Sibyls.⁴²⁶ When the deluge ended, the water tumbled through the network of aeolic chambers which extended down the hillside and connected with the fountains located in each grotto, transforming their gentle flow into violent cascades — the hidden chamber behind the central grotto is still visible through the fountain (figs. 4.16). This recreated in miniature the topography of the Aniene's progress into the Valle d'Inferno, where the river fell beneath the acropolis into the site now known as the Grotto of Neptune, which is composed of three large communicating caves, echoing the three garden grottoes — a further important parallel overlooked even in Dernie's geographical interpretation.⁴²⁷

From this nexus of civilisation and destruction, flood and fertility, the Aniene's symbolic progress continued from the Fountain of the Flood through pools spanning the terrace below, which recreated Lake Pelago in the valley basin, an identification secured through a wider somatic frame of reference: their accompanying water features reproduced the same effects as the Aniene cascading into the valley. Each pool is bordered by travertine columns which originally shot fine jets into the air, which Zappi identified as '*pioggia artificiosa*' (artificial rain) — these jets are shown in a reduced capacity in Venturini's engraving (1691, fig. 4.17).⁴²⁸ This rainfall effect was also witnessed in the Valle d'Inferno, over which the cascades cast a vapour identified by Renaissance writers as

⁴²⁶ Lombardi 2003: 60-61. Ligorio, *MS* f. 249v K.

⁴²⁷ As outlined above, Dernie identified Grotto of Neptune with the Fountain of Neptune on the western side of the terrace based on their shared name (1996: 49), but the grotto was not attributed with this name until the eighteenth century. On the three caves comprising Grotto of Neptune, see Giuliani 2005: 9.

⁴²⁸ Zappi, *Annali* 57; Ligorio, *MS* f. 254v 3-5.

‘*pioggia*’: Ligorio recounted how the cascade beneath the acropolis ‘filled the valley with rain’.⁴²⁹ Similarly, Del Re witnessed ‘the great waterfall which produces vapours of water that look like fine rain’, and Andrea Bacci also recorded how the Aniene ‘falls and sprays a light mist that looks like fine rain’.⁴³⁰ In addition, Evelyn’s account of the valley (quoted above) reveals how this mist formed a rainbow when the sun shone, and this was also replicated by the pools, as Montaigne testified: ‘the various jets intersect in mid air, producing a continuous, heavy rain which falls violently into the water below, and the rays of the sun create a rainbow that is just as brilliant and natural as one you might see in the sky’.⁴³¹ Although the Fountain of Neptune on the terrace’s western end was never executed, its identification with the sea in the Ligorio manuscript indicates that this fountain represented the conclusion of the Aniene’s progress across the terrace to a new and Mediterranean expansive vista.⁴³²

Ligorio’s microcosmic vision of the Valle d’Inferno powerfully dramatised the volatile forces of the Aniene which governed the Tiburtine landscape, reproducing the distinctive visual, acoustic and kinetic properties of the river’s flow and flooding. The tumultuous *diluvio* which issued periodically from the Fountain of the Flood to violently disrupt the waterscape’s tranquility thus captured the Aniene’s capacity to transform the valley into a *locus horridus* when the river flooded, generating the same sublime

⁴²⁹ ‘...ove in quello profondo, dove cade la copiosa onda del fiume, empie la valle di pioggia’ (Ligorio, *Antica città di Tivoli* f. 9v).

⁴³⁰ ‘...le acque sono corse all’ingiù verso la valle, dove è la villa di Vopisco, e ivi fanno una caduta altissima, che produce vapori d’acqua a guisa di minutissima pioggia’ (Del Re, *Tiburtine* 119). ‘Minori cadute per altezza sono queste dell’Aniene, ch’in più rami intorno alle ripe di Tivoli, come per gradi, ne scende e minutamente spruzzando a guisa di minuta pioggia’ (Bacci, *Del Tevere* 1, 33).

⁴³¹ Evelyn, *Diary* 265, quoted on page 135-36; Montaigne, *Journal*, April 1581; for this rainbow effect, see also Audebert, *Journal* 183.

⁴³² Ligorio, *MS* f. 253r 8-253v 9.

experience of delight and fear for visitors which characterised conceptions of the Valle d'Inferno. Furthermore, the stark contrast between the water organ's gentle melody and the cacophonous deluge not only illustrated the juxtaposition between nature's benevolent and destructive potential, but also encapsulated Tivoli's volatile relationship with the Aniene, which brought prosperity and periodic ruin to the town. In the light of the hydrological disasters which plagued the town from antiquity, and the recent devastating flood in 1564, visitors could not have failed to appreciate the Aniene's destructive forces manifest in the deluge simulation. This compelled visitors to experience physically the violence and horror of the river's flood-swollen waters in an encounter made all the more immediate by the fact that the Fountain of the Flood was supplied by the Aniene itself.

Despite the waterscape's distinctly Tiburtine theme, however, the Fountain of the Flood reverberated beyond local fears of flooding. As noted above, Kelley hypothesised that the preponderance of *diluvio* and *pioggia* fountains across Italy in the late Cinquecento reflected national anxieties of widespread hydrological disasters caused by Europe's Little Ice Age.⁴³³ Like Tivoli, Rome saw devastating flooding throughout the sixteenth century in 1514, 1530, 1557, 1589 and 1598.⁴³⁴ Kelley contended that the deluge-themed fountains built in Rome during the 1590s were a direct result of the Tiber floods: two *Fontane del Diluvio* were built at the Orti Farnesiani and the Vatican, and a *Fontana del Pioggia* at the Quirinal Palace — echoing the correlation between the Fountain of the Flood's creation at

⁴³³ Kelley 2016: 729-51; her principal example is the Grotto Grande (1583-93) at the Boboli Gardens in Florence: Kelley argued that this grotto commemorated the severe Arno floods of 1547, 1557 and 1589, and identified the metamorphic figures who appear to be emerging from the cave as flood victims trapped by landslides or drowning (730, 741-49; see 738-40 for a comprehensive list of *deluvio* fountains and grottoes).

⁴³⁴ The major Tiber floods from antiquity to modernity are listed by Aldrete 2007: 241-52.

Tivoli in 1566 following the flood of 1564.⁴³⁵ This trend was also witnessed outside Rome: at the Villa Farnese in Caprarola, the *Fontana del Pioggia* (c. 1572) simulated a heavy downpour; a *Grotta del Diluvio* (c. 1578) stands at the summit of the Villa Lante in Bagnaia, which originally flowed in three violent torrents and showered unsuspecting visitors with hidden jets; and another *Grotta del Diluvio* (c. 1580) featured at the Medici Villa di Pratolino, which generated a rain shower and the sounds of thunder.⁴³⁶ This vogue for *diluvio* fountains and grottoes was almost certainly instigated by the Fountain of the Flood at the Villa d'Este, which was the first of its kind, completed in 1568. The wealth of replicas this fountain engendered demonstrates how the ecological anxieties encapsulated in its design not only preoccupied the Tiburtine populace but resonated more widely, particularly in and around Rome, reflecting the impact of hydrological disasters across Italy. As a creative response to environmental concerns surrounding the natural disasters which accompanied widespread climate change, the Fountain of the Flood expressed both the destructive power of water and its potential to be controlled through human intervention. What made the Fountain of the Flood so unique and its impact so pervasive, however, was its representation of both rational and irrational fears associated with widespread flooding. Having outlined the rational impetus behind its flood-simulating effects, we now turn to the Nature Goddess, whose iconic characterisation reflected the irrational fears of monsters associated with hydrological disasters.

⁴³⁵ Kelley 2016: 739-40; for a detailed account of these fountains, see MacDougall 1994: 81.

⁴³⁶ See Lazzaro for the fountains at Pratolino (1990: 59-60), Caprarola (60) and Bagnaia (265-67).

4.4 Monstrous Portents of Natural Disasters

The natural disasters which occurred in Italy during Europe's Little Ice Age were widely regarded as divine punishment for sin, giving rise to mass hysteria around monsters as accompanying portents which were 'discovered' in the wake of storms, earthquakes and critically, floods.⁴³⁷ After a devastating flood in Rome in December 1495, triggered by heavy rainfall, reports began to circulate of a monster discovered on the banks of the Tiber when the floodwaters receded. This culminated in the publication of the widely-circulated pamphlet by Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon illustrating a creature dubbed 'The Papal Ass' (1523, fig. 4.18).⁴³⁸ The monster was composed of human, animal and dragon body parts, including a donkey's head, a dragon's neck and legs, a woman's torso and genitalia, and an old man's head for a left buttock. In the accompanying polemic tract, Luther and Melanchthon claimed that the monster was a divine portent sent to condemn the papacy, and explained how each body part symbolised a different vice of which the pope was guilty.⁴³⁹ But the papal ass was not the only monster left in the flood's wake. In his apocalyptic poem *Del diluvio di Roma del 1495* (c. 1496), Giuliano Dati also interpreted the flood as a sign of divine reckoning, witnessed in the birth of two monstrous creatures in the aftermath: a piglet with a man's head and a hen with four feet.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁷ On the monster mania surrounding these hydro-meteorological disasters and their interpretation as divine portents, see Niccoli 1990: 30-60, Daston and Park 1998: 182-3, and Knoppers and Landes 2004: 67-92. The interpretation of monsters as divine portents is reflected in the etymology of the word monster (*mostro* in Italian), which derives from the Latin terms: *monere* (to warn), *monstrum* (that which is worthy of warning), and *monstrare* (to point to that which is worth of warning) (Knoppers and Landes 2004: 3).

⁴³⁸ The definitive study on the papal ass is Buck 2014, who collated the reports which gave rise to Luther and Melanchthon's pamphlet, tracing its dissemination across Europe, particularly in Italy and Germany.

⁴³⁹ Buck explained the significance of each body part comprising the papal ass, contextualising Luther and Melanchthon's interpretation within papal iconography and Reformation discourse (2014: 17-28).

⁴⁴⁰ 'E una troia un porco partorì/ col capo tutto d'homo, e poi morì./ Con quattro piedi nacque una gallina' (Dati, *Del diluvio di Roma*, in Niccoli 1990: 32; this poem was not published).

Characterised by hybridity and an excess of body parts, the monsters which accompanied the flood of 1495 reflected the irrational fears incited by widespread hydrological disasters. It follows, therefore, that a figure with the same excessive and hybrid attributes presided over the Fountain of the Flood at the Villa d'Este: the Nature Goddess, whose multiple breasts and animal-tiered body not only signified nature's generative potential, as traditional interpretations propose, but also encapsulated a monstrously excessive image of unbridled nature (fig. 4.1).

The Nature Goddess was modelled on an ancient statue of Ephesian Diana in the Farnese collection, and executed by Flemish sculptor Gillis van der Vliete in 1568 to stand in the Fountain of the Flood's central niche.⁴⁴¹ In *Antichità di Roma*, Ligorio described Ephesian Diana variously as 'Diana Multimammis', 'Natura Generante', 'Madre Natura', 'Dea Natura', or simply 'Natura', as well as identifying her with various ancient mother goddesses including the Roman Bona Dea, Syrian Ataratheh (known to the Romans as Dea Syria), Phrygian Cybele or Dindymene (Roman Magna Mater), and Egyptian Isis.⁴⁴² Widely identified as the Nature Goddess in the Cinquecento, the Ephesian Diana statue type was interpreted by Ligorio as a personification of the natural forces that created and govern the earth, the nourishment of which was signified by the sculpture's multiple

⁴⁴¹ The Farnese statue is a Roman copy of a Hellenistic original (second century BCE), which is now housed in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples. For documents of the Villa d'Este statue's design and commission, see Coffin 1960: 18-19.

⁴⁴² 'De la Diana Ephesia o Natura Generante, e de la Diana Sardiana overo Iunone...Ora i Greci et i Romani per la Natura Generante prendevano la celeste Venere, che flussivamente trapassa in tutte le parti dal cielo nella terra, e la dicono Bona Dea, Madre Magna Idaea. Gli Ephesii multimammis, come l'appellano il Divo Hieronymo et Arnobio. E generalmente la dicono Diana Ephesia. Altri Aphrodite Gea, li Syri Dea Syria, i Thraci Dindymene, i Phrygii Cybelle, i Perinunti e gli Aegypti Iside' (Ligorio, Turin MS a.II.14.J.27, f. 196v). On the generative deities and epithets with which Ligorio associated Ephesian Diana, see also Naples MS XIII.B.1, ff. 24r, 38r-v, 388v; Turin MS a.III.9.J.7, f. 129r; Turin MS a.III.11.J.9, ff. 160r-v; Turin MS a.III.13.J.11, ff. 139v-140v. For her identification with Cybele specifically, see Naples MS XIII.B.3, f. 566; Turin MS a.III.8.J.6, f. 158v; Turin MS a.II.14.J.27, f. 196v.

breasts — a definition which echoes that of Italian mythographers Vincenzo Cartari and Cesare Ripa.⁴⁴³ In the fountain setting at the Villa d'Este, Lazzaro observed, the goddess' symbolic breasts assumed a literal significance as water flowed from them, symbolising the springs and rivers generated by the earth, as elucidated in Ripa's *Iconologia* (Rome, 1593 and 1603).⁴⁴⁴ In the sculptural context of the water organ, the Nature Goddess has been interpreted by Lazzaro as an image of nature's creative potential harnessed by human engineering, a harmony of water and artifice to produce music which echoed the wider interplay of art and nature in the garden as a 'third nature'.⁴⁴⁵

The problem with Lazzaro's reading is that it is founded on the conception of nature as a purely benign entity, a monologic interpretation that is inconsistent with the destructive forces witnessed in the *diluvio* simulation, and manifest in widespread ecological fears of hydrological volatility and the prodigies to which they give birth. Moreover, recent studies by Antonella Pietrogrande and Morgan have challenged traditional privileging of the Ephesian Diana's generative associations in the Cinquecento, and emphasised aspects of this incarnation that made her presence in the garden

⁴⁴³ 'Ephesii chiamavano multimammis, che è la Natura Generante detta dalla qualità di lei per la quale figuravano le potenzie del cielo e de la terra, come che ella abbracci la generazione e munizione de' nutrimenti. La quale Diana ha in testa la medesima corona che ha la cognizione che in mano la sostiene, cioè il cielo in forma di città, attorno la testa un velo che la circunda, qual ci rappresenta il cielo che amanta la terra stabile...Più di sotto il petto è pieno di infinite mammelle picciole e grandi, significante il nutrimento delle cose picciole e delle grandi che sono sopra della terra in infinite forme.' (Naples MS XIII.B.3, f. 242; see also Turin MS a.III.9.J.7, f. 129r); Cartari, *Imagini de gli Dei de gli Antichi* (Venice, 1556) 118; Ripa, *Iconologia* 125 (Rome, 1593 and 1603). The statue is identified as the Nature Goddess in contemporary visitors' accounts (Zappi, *Annali* 61; Audebert, *Journal* 184-5; Del Re, *Tiburtine* 66-67). On the Renaissance revival of the ancient statue type as a personification of Nature, see Nielsen 2009: 455-96.

⁴⁴⁴ Lazzaro 1990: 144; see also 1991: 78-113, in which Lazzaro contextualised the Nature Goddess's generative associations within the vogue for statues of goddesses — particularly Venus — with water-spouting breasts in Italian Renaissance gardens. Ripa wrote, 'La zinna, che scatorisce acqua, ne rappresenta i fonti, e i fiumi, che ella scatorisce', ('The breast, which shoots water, represents the springs, and the rivers, which flow from it [the Earth]', *Iconologia*, 1603, 125; trans. Lazzaro 1991: 92).

⁴⁴⁵ Lazzaro 1990: 229; see also Dernie 1996: 68; Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 104-6 for similar interpretations.

disquieting.⁴⁴⁶ Tracing the pre-Olympian origins of the Ephesian Diana statue type as the Great Mother, Pietrogrande argued that the Nature Goddess evoked a darker mode of mythic representation in the garden, which harked back to a landscape governed by volatile, primal forces of nature.⁴⁴⁷ Morgan's study on monsters in the Italian Renaissance garden is especially relevant here, and his conclusions persuasively categorise the Nature Goddess as 'the excessive', whose multiple, perpetually lactating breasts constituted a monstrous distortion of the postpartum figure.⁴⁴⁸ Morgan's categorisation is based on Ambroise Paré's pseudo-scientific treatise classifying the causes and types of monsters, *Des monstres et prodiges* (Paris, 1573), in which Paré classified humans with excessive body parts as 'an example of too great quantity of seed'.⁴⁴⁹ Identifying the Nature Goddess as such an example of excessive physiology, Morgan observed that 'from a sixteenth-century medical perspective, she would have appeared as a blighted specimen of monstrous generation'.⁴⁵⁰ Based on her associations with nature, the goddess' superabundant excretions presented an image of uncontrolled and uncontrollable nature, Morgan argued, reflecting the fact that 'Nature is yet to become a fully exploitable resource'.⁴⁵¹ Thus, the Nature Goddess was an apposite figure to preside over the Fountain of the Flood at the Villa d'Este, embodying the same generative and destructive capacity

⁴⁴⁶ Pietrogrande 2011: 187-202; Morgan 2016: 83-93.

⁴⁴⁷ Pietrogrande 2011: 187-202.

⁴⁴⁸ Morgan 2016: 83-93.

⁴⁴⁹ Paré, *Des monstres* 4, 8, trans. Pallister 1995. Chapter 4 of Paré's treatise is dedicated to the excessive (4, 8-32) and begins with the following classification: 'On the generating of monsters, Hippocrates says that if there is too great an abundance of matter, multiple births will occur, or else a monstrous child having superfluous and useless body parts, such as two heads, four arms, four legs, six digits on the hands and feet, or other things' (4, 8).

⁴⁵⁰ Morgan 2016: 87.

⁴⁵¹ Morgan 2016: 92-93.

witnessed in the water organ and *diluvio* simulation, the experiences of which comprised its two-part hydraulic performance.

The Nature Goddess's relationship with the *diluvio* gains momentum when we consider the statue's identification in Villa d'Este payment records as Fortuna, a figure associated by Renaissance writers with rivers and specifically, with floods.⁴⁵² In a philosophical discourse on fate and fortune in his unpublished *Intercenales* (c. 1440), Leon Battista Alberti compared Fortuna to a swirling river, explaining that one had to be a strong swimmer to withstand her overwhelming currents.⁴⁵³ Similarly, Fortune is an irrational feminine force likened to a flood-swollen river in Niccolò Machiavelli's political treatise, *Il Principe* (Rome, 1532) — an edition of which, Cardinal Ippolito had in his library:

I compare Fortune with one of our destructive rivers which, when it is angry, turns the plains into lakes, throws down the trees and the buildings, takes earth from one spot, puts it in another; everyone flees before the flood; everyone yields to its fury and nowhere can repel it.⁴⁵⁴

The Nature Goddess's identification with Fortune, therefore, makes her connection with the *diluvio* simulation all the more compelling, as it follows that the same goddess who

⁴⁵² Multiple payment documents dating between June 1568 and December 1569 identify the statue as '*Dea della fortuna*'; collated in Coffin 1960: 17-18. Although Ligorio did not draw a direct connection between Fortuna and the Nature Goddess in *Antichità di Roma*, Fortuna's Greek counterpart Nemesis was closely associated with the goddess Cybele, with whom Ligorio identified the Nature Goddess, as outlined above — on the association of Nemesis with Cybele through their worship at Smyrna, see Ascough 2005: 47-48. Ligorio identified Nemesis with Fortuna and specifically, with Fortuna Adrastea (Inescapable Fortune), describing her ancient winged depiction with a cornucopia, ship's rudder and globe, or wheel of fortune: '*Nemesis è nome della dea altramente detta Rhamnusia dal vico dove fu venerata, come è detto in Rhamno vico. Fu stimata esser la Fortuna, che ogni cosa puote e vendica tutte le tristizie degli uomini che sotto colore di pietà o di religione ingannano, che sono facinorosi et impii, e si dice Fortuna Adrastea, e la dipinsero con le ali sugli omeri e la dipinsero con le ali sugli omeri, la testa armata e la aegide di Minerva nel petto cinta, il corno dell'Abondanzia, il timone della nave col globo della terra accostato ad esso freno, e tiene il fuso delle parche, come si vede nelle antichità*' (Turin MS a.III.14.J.12, f. 153v).

⁴⁵³ Alberti, *Intercenales*, 'Fatum et Fortuna' 41-57, ed. Bacchelli and D'Ascia 2003.

⁴⁵⁴ Machiavelli, *Il Principe* 90, trans. Gilbert 1989. Pacifici 1920: 375 — as noted in the Introduction, a list of the books in Ippolito's library is collated in Pacifici 1920: 374-67.

personified the springs and rivers which nourished the earth also embodied the floods which periodically devastated it.

The link between the Nature Goddess and the destructive Tiburtine forces over which she presided is crystallised by Statius' poem dedicated to the Villa of Manlius Vopiscus at Tivoli (quoted above) part of a collection of poems, *Silvae*, which featured in Ippolito's library.⁴⁵⁵ In his panegyric on the Valle d'Inferno, Statius declared, 'Nowhere has Nature indulged herself so lavishly', presenting a feminine but also indulgent personification of the natural forces which created and governed the valley — a personification with which both Ippolito and Ligorio would no doubt have been familiar.⁴⁵⁶ Where the Nature Goddess's excessive form evoked the monstrous portents associated with the hydrological disasters which plagued Italy, her latent association with the Valle d'Inferno made her an apposite figure to preside over Ligorio's microcosmic vision of this landscape on the first terrace.

4.5 Subjugating the Nature Goddess

By simulating the floods which plagued Tivoli, the waterscape represented a dark and fearful vision of the Tiburtine landscape under the dominion of the implacable Nature Goddess, who personified the volatile forces of nature that governed the region, and whose monstrous form embodied irrational fears of flooding as divine portents. Reflecting on the vogue for flooding-simulating fountains and grottoes in the Cinquecento, Kelley concluded that these structures were designed to commemorate the floods which brought widespread

⁴⁵⁵ Pacifici 1920: 376.

⁴⁵⁶ Statius, *Silv.* 1.3.25-26, quoted above, page 135.

devastation: '[they] are artful meditations on the fragility of art in light of the colossal forces of nature, and they are artistic coping mechanisms for the victims of an ecological disaster augmented by anthropogenic causes in flood-prone locations'.⁴⁵⁷ At the Villa d'Este, however, the ecological anxieties — both rational and irrational — encapsulated by the Fountain of the Flood and waterscape were not without a wider ideological agenda of Nature as a force to be governed.

To return to the analogy of fortune as a flood, Machiavelli compared the ability to control Fortune's potentially devastating effects, by implementing plans and strategies, to the mitigation of hydrological disasters through flood-prevention strategies:

...we need not therefore conclude that when the weather is quiet, men cannot take precautions with both embankments and dykes, so that when the waters rise, either they go off by a canal or their fury is neither so wild nor so damaging. The same things happen about Fortune. She shows her power where strength and wisdom do not prepare to resist her, and directs her fury where she knows that no embankments and dykes are ready to hold her. If you consider Italy — the scene of these variations and their first mover — you see that she is a plain without dykes and without any embankment; but if she were embanked with adequate strength and wisdom...this flood either would not make the great variations it does or would not come upon us.⁴⁵⁸

Despite its metaphorical content, Machiavelli expressed a fundamental desire see the flooding which plagued Italy prevented through human intervention, highlighting the potential for human mastery over nature. This very aspiration was witnessed at the Villa d'Este, where Ippolito's hydraulic mastery over the Aniene and its tributaries was manifest in his harnessing of these waters through aqueducts to supply his garden's spectacular fountains. At the Fountain of the Flood, this mastery was made all the more powerful by the fact that it was directly supplied by the Aniene through Cardinal Ippolito's new

⁴⁵⁷ Kelley 2016: 751.

⁴⁵⁸ Machiavelli, *Il Principe* 90.

aqueduct, the Canale Estense (1564-65).⁴⁵⁹ It was not until visitors reached the garden's third terrace, however, that the concept of nature — specifically, Tiburtine nature — as a force governable by the Cardinal became fully apparent.

In Chapter 6, we shall see how the third terrace represented an idyllic vision of the Tiburtine landscape which commemorated Cardinal Ippolito's regeneration of the region and reinstatement of the Tivoli's oracular presiding deity, the Tiburtine Sibyl. The ideological agenda of the first terrace waterscape, therefore, lay in its contrasting dialectic with this pastoral representation of Tivoli, which was designed as a pendant to the waterscape. Presiding over the disquieting Tiburtine waterscape, the Nature Goddess, personified the raw, untamed and volatile forces of nature that governed the post-classical landscape before the subjugating influence of Cardinal Ippolito. This topophobic landscape retrospectively reified the third terrace's commemorative schema, where visitors were reoriented within a microcosmic vision of the bucolic abundance to which the Tiburtine region was restored by Ippolito, which was presided over by the benevolent Tiburtine Sibyl who supplanted the Nature Goddess.

⁴⁵⁹ Lombardi 2003: 60.

CHAPTER 5

SECOND TERRACE: HERE BE DRAGONS

Introduction

Rising sharply above the level plane of the garden's lowest terrace, the steep second terrace was dominated by dense '*boschi*' (woods) and ascended by three parallel stairways named the '*scale dei bollori*' (stairs of the bubbling fountains). This scheme is outlined in the Ligorio manuscript and illustrated by Étienne Dupérac and Girolamo Muziano (figs. 1.1 and 1.2).⁴⁶⁰ An engraving by Giovanni Francesco Venturini (1691) shows the perspective from the first terrace: views up the eastern and western stairs traversing the slope offer only distant glimpses of the third terrace, but the central stairway following the main axis presents visitors with a more enticing visual goal, revealing a great column of water rising from the midst of strange — but as yet indiscernible — figures at the Fountain of the Dragon (figs. 5.1 and 5.2). Here, four dragons spout water from gaping jaws into a surrounding oval pool; in the grotto niche behind, a statue of Hercules bearing a club was to stand, according to the Ligorio manuscript, but this feature was never realised.⁴⁶¹ This fountain marked the pivotal point of the garden's Hesperidian narrative, augmenting the citron leitmotif initiated on the first terrace which signified the golden apples in Cardinal Ippolito's possession, as described in Marc-Antoine Muret's dedicatory epigram on the Villa d'Este discussed in Chapter 3.⁴⁶² The Ligorio manuscript is particularly important for understanding the fountain's role in linking terraces one and two through the golden apples

⁴⁶⁰ Ligorio, *MS* f. 249 M, f. 253r-254r 12.

⁴⁶¹ Ligorio, *MS* f. 254r 15. Although described in the Ligorio manuscript, this statue was not recorded in any visitors' accounts, nor is it listed in the inventory of 1572 (Pirolo, *Inventario* ff. 356r-387r; Ashby 1908: 242-50), indicating it was never purchased.

⁴⁶² Muret, *Dedicatio hortorum Tiburtinorum II*; quoted in Chapter 3, page 99.

motif, highlighting the designed ideological continuity between the dragons, which represented the dragon Ladon slain in Hercules' eleventh labour, and the Cardinal's *impresa* in the Stanza della Nobilità, which presented Ippolito as the new guardian of the Hesperidian apples (fig. 3.4):

The Fountain of the Dragon is so called because it represents the famous Dragon which guarded the Garden of the Hesperides...a colossal Hercules with his club in his hand, who stands in the central niche, is the Protector of the Eagle who slayed the dragon, alluding to the Cardinal's *impresa*, which is an Eagle with a branch of the apples of the Hesperides, and the motto reading '*ab insomni non custodita dracone*' [no longer guarded by the unsleeping dragon].⁴⁶³

Based on this exposition, previous studies have been quick to recognise the Fountain of the Dragon's importance in identifying the Villa d'Este with the paradisaical status of the Hesperides, and I will briefly set out the dominant reading, which depends substantially on David Coffin's analysis.⁴⁶⁴ Coffin argued that the fountain represented a very specific ideology of virtue for Ippolito, in the light of the Renaissance moralisation of Hercules' eleventh labour.⁴⁶⁵ He drew on the contextual significance of Pierio Valeriano's influential dictionary of symbology, *Hieroglyphica sive de sacris Aegyptiorvm literis commentarii* (Basel, 1556). Valeriano interpreted the eleventh labour as an allegory for Hercules overcoming vice, in the form of the dragon which stood in for 'the softness of voluptuous desire' (*voluptuosam libidinis mollitudinem*), in order that he might attain

⁴⁶³ Ligorio, *MS* f. 254r 14-f. 254v 15. See Chapter 3 for the Cardinal's *impresa* (page 99), as well as the deployment of the golden apples and citrons as complementary visual and botanical motifs throughout the garden and palazzo (pages 106-7 and figures 3.9-3.12).

⁴⁶⁴ Coffin 1960: 78-81, 2004: 91-93; Lazzaro 1990: 223-25; Dernie 1996: 36; Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 86-90; Occhipinti 2009: 340-47. The paradisaical status attributed to the Hesperides in the Renaissance is outlined in Chapter 2, pages 59-61.

⁴⁶⁵ The moralisation of Hercules' eleventh labour in Renaissance art and literature is surveyed by Stafford (2012: 203-18) within the context of the twelve labours' interpretation as allegories of virtue overcoming vice — discussed further in Chapter 5. This moralisation had its foundation in antiquity: Apollodorus recounted how Hercules, having murdered his family in a fit of madness, redeemed himself by completing twelve labours and was rewarded by the gods with immortality (*Bibliotheca* 2.4.12-15, 2.8.1).

virtue, represented by the three golden apples symbolising Hercules' 'moderation of anger' (*excandescantiae moderatio*), 'moderation of avarice' (*avaritiae temperamentum*) and 'noble contempt of pleasures' (*generosus voluptatum contemptus*).⁴⁶⁶ The same symbolic association is evident, as Coffin observed, in the literature of the Este court: in Lilio Gregorio Giraldi's *Herculis vita* (Ferrara, 1539), dedicated to Ippolito's brother Ercole II d'Este, the golden apples signified that Hercules was 'not irascible' (*non iracundus*), 'not avaricious' (*non avarus*) and 'not voluptuous' (*non voluptuosus*).⁴⁶⁷ Coffin's argument is also substantiated by Ligorio in the *Antichità di Roma* Turin manuscripts, who stated that the three golden apples symbolised Hercules' three virtues in overcoming 'anger' (*l'ira*), 'avarice' (*il furore*) and 'wicked appetites' (*tristo appetito delle cose odiose*).⁴⁶⁸ According to Coffin, therefore, the Fountain of the Dragon had a dual symbolism, identifying the garden with the paradisaical Hesperides and aligning the Cardinal, as guardian of the golden apples, with Hercules as an *exemplum virtutis*.

Although compelling, Coffin's exposition of this Hesperidian symbolism focuses exclusively on iconography and presupposes a knowledge of classical humanism possessed largely by an elite, educated minority. Thus, it is curiously one dimensional in its exclusion of the popular experience as a powerful element in the Villa d'Este's symbolic arsenal, and as I have already argued, it excludes the role of sensory design. Furthermore, when one

⁴⁶⁶ Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* 22, 386. Coffin 1960: 79, 2004: 93.

⁴⁶⁷ Giraldi, *Herculis* 1, 581, ed. Faes 1696. Coffin 1960: 79.

⁴⁶⁸ 'Ercole, sendo gran filosofo, vinse li tre affetti che perturbano l'animo, e questi sono li tre pomi aurei che egli porta in mano a sua gloria di aver superato l'ira, il furore et il tristo appetito delle cose odiose' (Ligorio, Turin MS a.III.11.J.9, f. 40v; see also Turin MS a.III.13.J.11, f. 26r). By identifying the three golden apples with specific virtues, Ligorio expands upon his more general description of the golden apples in the Naples manuscripts as 'the three effects which disturb the soul' that Hercules overcame: 'Perciò i meli aurei che sono i medesimi meli detti Hesperidi, Hercole se le nasconde in mano et dopo la sostiene, per che egli, come sono quelli tre, così vinse i tre effetti che perturbano l'animo' (Naples MS XIII.B.3, f. 16).

examines the detail of the Fountain of the Dragon's somatic effects and its contextual landscaping, it becomes especially strange that it should be argued to occupy a pivotal role in identifying Ippolito's garden with the Hesperides without accounting for these aspects. Thus, the question I pose is: why was a fountain representing a monster and located within dense woods employed to signify the garden's paradisaal status?

Moving away from the iconographic focus of previous studies, in this chapter, I investigate the hitherto unexplored psychological and phenomenological impact of the second terrace's woodland setting and water features.⁴⁶⁹ This terrain reveals a darker mode of mythic representation and, thereby, also marks a continuation of the disquieting narrative elements of the first terrace waterscape, adding to the unifying holistic reading I am developing for the garden as a whole. Visitors were drawn further into the garden's Hesperidian narrative, I argue, less by the intellectual process of recognising intertextual links with the Cardinal's crest and the detail of Hercules' exemplarity in Renaissance moral philosophy (delightful though the intellectual pleasures of joining those dots must also have been, for educated visitors), than by the familiar trope of the monster in the woods and by the physically immersive experience of the Fountain of the Dragon's water effects. This reading results in a new and much more satisfyingly complete understanding of the Villa d'Este's Hesperidian schema. It demonstrates how the second terrace was designed to build on the experience of the first terrace's acknowledgement of the shared challenges faced by humanity in an uncontrollable environment, generating a universal mythic experience for visitors, regardless of their social status or antiquarian knowledge.

⁴⁶⁹ Coffin 1960: 78-81, 2004: 91-93; Lazzaro 1990: 223-25; Dernie 1996: 36; Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 86-90; Occhipinti 2009: 340-47.

Section 5.1, 'Monstrous Marvels in the Era of Exploration' categorises the dragons at the Villa d'Este as monstrous marvels that inhabited the foreign lands where once only mythic heroes had travelled, but were now being discovered by European navigators in the Renaissance. This section situates my exposition of the second terrace within the discussion commenced in Chapter 4, where I began to show the productivity of recent challenges to the prioritisation of the classical *locus amoenus* as a model for understanding the Italian Renaissance garden. Here, as for my new reading of the first terrace waterscape, I bring into focus the importance of the dystopian features, evinced in the iconographic incarnations of monsters within. Section 5.2, 'Into the Woods', identifies the Fountain of the Dragon's woodland setting within the tradition of the *locus horridus*, which was designed to provoke responses of sublime foreboding in the visitor by playing upon fears of untamed nature, manifest in the threat of the woods and the savage beasts that lurked within, together with the counterintuitive allure of exploring such mysterious and potentially dangerous landscapes. This topophobic experience was augmented by the distinctly Tiburtine vision of the wild which, I argue, characterised the second terrace, where the *boschi* and *scale dei bollori* reflected the region's woodland and river typology. Section 5.3, 'Into the Dragons' Lair' employs contemporary accounts to recreate the Fountain of the Dragon's original water effects, demonstrating how they generated an immersive visual, aural and haptic assault upon the visitor, simulating a 'dragon attack' which dramatised Hercules' violent encounter with the guardian of the Hesperides. Finally, Section 5.4 'Fear and Fascination in the Garden', returns to the question of why the second terrace was designed to draw visitors into a topophobic encounter with monsters in the woods, reflecting on the visceral and sublime experience this terrace produced.

5.1 Monstrous Marvels in the Era of Exploration

The dragon-inhabited woodland on the second terrace was not the visitor's first experience of a topophobic landscape within the garden, nor was it their first monstrous encounter. In Chapter 4, we have seen the ecological anxieties centred on untamed nature manifest in the deluge-simulating Fountain of the Flood, and personified by the many-breasted Nature Goddess. Where the Nature Goddess embodied the monstrous portents associated with hydrological disasters which plagued Italy throughout the sixteenth century, dragons reflected a widespread cultural fascination with monsters as exotic marvels 'discovered' during the Renaissance era of exploration. The conception of dragons as marvels inhabiting foreign lands was intrinsically linked with their role in classical myth as guardians of sacred locales at the unexplored edges of the known world, places where only heroes dared to venture.⁴⁷⁰ Ligorio himself identified dragons as such in his treatise on dragons dedicated to Giovanfrancesco Lottino (1512-72), *Del Dracone* (written before 1568), which comprises three books on draconic creatures in classical myth and astrology — including dragons, serpents of land and sea, hydras, basilisks, cockatrice, Gorgons and a plethora of reptilian monsters.⁴⁷¹ In the introduction to book one, Ligorio described dragons as 'custodians of various sacred sites', citing examples of those which guarded the golden fleece at the Temple of Mars in Colchis (Georgia), the Temple of Aesculapius in

⁴⁷⁰ On dragons inhabiting the edges of the ancient Graeco-Roman world and their role as sacred custodians, — often of golden treasures — see Romm 1987: 5-54, 1992: 69-70, 118-119; on Hercules' eleventh labour as a key example of this trope, see Ogden's monograph on dragon myths in classical antiquity (2013: 33-40).

⁴⁷¹ Ligorio, Turin MS a.II.11.J.24, ff. 1-42. Book one, *Tratta del significato del dracone*, is dedicated to draconic creatures in Greek and Roman myth, elucidating their associations with specific heroes, deities, cults, temples, sacred sites and the zodiac (Turin MS a.II.11.J.24, ff. 1-16v). Book two, also entitled *Tratta del significato del dracone*, explores their taxonomy, symbolic significance and associations with medicine (Turin MS a.II.11.J.24, ff. 17r-29r). Book three, *Il terzo tratto della natura del gallo et del basilisco*, is dedicated to the basilisk, which is hatched from a serpent's egg incubated by a chicken (Turin MS a.II.11.J.24, ff. 29v-42). Henceforth, this three-volume treatise is cited collectively as *Del Dracone*.

Pergamum (Turkey) and the Garden of the Hesperides beneath the Atlas mountain range in North Africa.⁴⁷² Thus, in the same way as foreign plants were displayed in gardens across Italy in the sixteenth century to generate an aura of exoticism, as outlined in Chapter 3, so gardens were also populated by monstrous marvels from across the globe to indulge the cultural fascination with the exotic. Marvels and myth converged at the Villa d'Este, where the monstrous figures at the Fountain of the Dragon conjured the undiscovered Hesperides, located by classical and Renaissance writers in Africa, which remained largely unexplored in the sixteenth century.

Fascination with monstrous marvels was fuelled by exploration across Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas, which began in the mid-fifteenth century, and saw the introduction of new plants, animals and minerals to Europe. In their seminal study on monsters in Europe from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment, Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park demonstrated how this era of exploration caused many monstrous creatures once believed to inhabit the margins of the world to 'migrate' to Europe, where they became 'naturalised'.⁴⁷³ That these monstrous marvels were objects of curiosity, eliciting responses of awe and pleasure as well as fear and horror, is reflected in the widespread popularity of two treatises on monsters: Ambroise Paré's *Des monstres et prodiges* (Paris, 1573), discussed in Chapter 4, and Italian naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi's *Monstrorum*

⁴⁷² 'Tenivano i serpi per custodi de alcuni luoghi sacrali...come il dracone in Colcho che guardava nel Tempio di Marte Vendicatore il velo d'oro, e come quello che guardava il tempio di Aesculapio in Pergamo città dell'Asia...e così etiandio quel Dracone che guardava i Pomi Hesperidi sotto il Monte Athlante' (Ligorio, *Del Dracone*, Turin MS a.II.11.J.24, f. 2r). Although Ligorio describes the Colchian dragon guarding the golden fleece in a temple, in the mythic tradition it is located a grove sacred to Mars. The fullest accounts of the myth, in which the hero Jason succeeds in defeating the dragon and stealing the fleece, are Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*, Ovid, *Met.* 7.1-158 and *Heroides* 12.

⁴⁷³ Daston and Park 1998: 172-73; they cite the following key examples: 'Benvenuto Cellini claimed to have seen a salamander in a blazing fire during his youth in Florence, while the basilisk, once a fearsome Eastern lizard, began to crop up in European settings' (1998: 173). Van Duzer also traces the migration of monsters to Europe in conjunction with the transportation of exotic animals in the Renaissance (2012: 433-35).

historia (written in the late sixteenth century, and published posthumously in Bologna, 1642), both of which catalogue and illustrate monsters discovered across the globe.⁴⁷⁴

Fascination with the monstrous also pervaded grand garden design in Cinquecento, as Luke Morgan's study on the iconographic representation of monsters therein has shown, which included giants, dragons, hybrids and wild animals, together with grotesque, distorted and disembodied images of the human body.⁴⁷⁵ These monsters, Morgan argued, were designed to elicit both topophobic *and* topophilic responses from garden visitors, and in combination, to generate a sublime experience which mingled awe and horror.⁴⁷⁶ Marking the pinnacle of the interest in monsters from across the globe, as manifest in the Italian Renaissance garden, was the Sacro Bosco at Bomarzo (begun in 1553), owned by Pier Francesco Orsini (1523-83), a woodland park inhabited by colossal monsters and exotic creatures. Here, lions and bears share the tree-dappled shade with fantastic beasts, including a giant turtle and a three-headed dog, alongside twin-tailed mermaids and Medusa-like serpentine hybrids (figs. 5.3 and 5.4). Other sculptures are arranged in dioramas replete with violence and horror: a colossal statue of Hercules breaks the back of the giant Cacus, and welcomes the visitor at the entrance of the park; venturing further, visitors discover a man being devoured by an elephant, a dragon being mauled by a lion and a dog, and even find themselves 'swallowed' by a giant, gaping mouth (figs. 5.5-5.7). At the heart of Sacro Bosco, an inscription conveys how the park brought together all the marvels from around the world in one place for visitors to enjoy: 'You who have travelled

⁴⁷⁴ On monsters as objects of fascination in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Daston and Park 1998: 73, 180, 187-90; and as exemplified in the treatises of Paré and Aldrovandi, see Davies 2012: 56-71.

⁴⁷⁵ Morgan 2016; for Morgan's 'monstuary' of the garden, see Chapter 1, page 42 and footnote 125.

⁴⁷⁶ Morgan 2016: 140-41, 168-71.

the world wishing to see great and wondrous marvels, come here, where there are hideous sights, elephants, lions, bears, ogres and dragons’, an agenda which reflects the migration of monsters from the edges of the world to Europe, as identified by Daston and Park (fig. 5.8).

As monstrous marvels, dragons had a particularly powerful association with the unexplored edges of the world, particularly with Africa, where classical and Renaissance writers located the Garden of the Hesperides — including Ligorio who repeatedly sited the garden in Libya — as outlined in Chapter 3.⁴⁷⁷ Chet Van Duzer’s studies on the geographical distribution of monsters in cartography from the Middle Ages to the sixteenth century have shown that dragons were frequently depicted in and around the African continent on maps.⁴⁷⁸ The well known legend, ‘*Hic sunt dracones*’ (Here there are dragons), was inscribed on Jean Mansel’s world map in *La Fleur des Histoires* (c. 1460-70) above a winged dragon depicted beside Africa. The same legend also featured on the Lenox globe (1510), in this instance on south-eastern coast of Asia.⁴⁷⁹ Although Africa was being discovered by European navigators from the late fifteenth century, sixteenth-century maps continued to depict monsters — particularly dragons — on the continent.⁴⁸⁰ Given its vast size, however, the majority of the continent remained unexplored and Van Duzer observed that these maps demonstrate that ‘Africa continued in its ancient role as a

⁴⁷⁷ Chapter 3, pages 102-4; Ligorio, Naples *MS* XIII.B.7, f. 113; Turin *MS* a.II.11.J.24, f. 2r; Turin *MS* a.III.11.J.9, f. 40r; Turin *MS* a.III.13.J.11, f. 26r; Turin *MS* a.II.5.J.18, f. 32v.

⁴⁷⁸ Van Duzer 2013, 2012: 287-435.

⁴⁷⁹ Van Duzer 2013: 60-61, 2012: 389. These maps were influenced by earlier *mappae mundi* from the ninth to the twelfth century which depicted dragons or serpent in the area of Africa, including a twelfth-century example which bears a legend in south-eastern Africa reads ‘*Locus draconum et serpentium et bestiarum crudelium*’ (A place of dragons and serpents and vicious beasts) (Van Duzer 2013: 401-2).

⁴⁸⁰ Van Duzer 2013: 402.

source of monsters into the sixteenth century and beyond'.⁴⁸¹ This ongoing phenomenon is witnessed in Italian cartographer Giacomo Gastaldi's world map, *Cosmographia universalis et exactissima iuxta postremam neotericorum tradition* (1561), where dragons and sea serpents are shown along the southern coast of Africa.⁴⁸² It is unsurprising, therefore, that according to Aldrovandi's treatise on dragons, *Serpentum et draconum historiae* (written in the late sixteenth century, and published posthumously in Bologna, 1640), dragons were indigenous to Africa.⁴⁸³ In the section dedicated to '*Natura et Locus*', Aldrovandi specified their inhabitation of Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia, and included an accompanying woodcut illustration of a dragon recently 'discovered' in Ethiopia (fig. 5.9).⁴⁸⁴ Similarly, in *Del Dracone*, many of the draconic creatures described by Ligorio are sited in Egypt and Libya.⁴⁸⁵

The dragons at the Villa d'Este, therefore, represented a monster that still existed at the edges of the map. In fact, the first dragon 'sighted' in Italy was in May 1572 — months before Cardinal Ippolito's death in December — terrorising the countryside near Bologna, an event recorded in various letters and poems, as well as Aldrovandi's treatise.⁴⁸⁶ According to Aldrovandi, this dragon's body was entrusted to him after it was killed, —

⁴⁸¹ Van Duzer 2013: 400-2.

⁴⁸² Van Duzer 2013: 416-17.

⁴⁸³ Aldrovandi, *Serpentum*, 421-24. Aldrovandi made a clear distinction between crawling serpents, to which book one of his treatise is dedicated ('*De Serpente*', 2-309), and dragons, which are distinguished by their feet and, or, wings, and are the subject of book two ('*De Dracone*', 311-427).

⁴⁸⁴ Aldrovandi, *Serpentum*, 421-24. Aldrovandi does, however, acknowledge the 'migration' of dragons to Europe, as outlined below.

⁴⁸⁵ On dragons and serpents in Egypt, see *Del Dracone*, Turin MS a.II.11.J.24, ff. 3r, 18v, 20v, 21v, 27r; and in Libya, see ff. 2r, 14r, 23r-v, 34v. Interestingly, as well as the Garden of the Hesperides, Ligorio situated the lair of Medusa and her Gorgon sisters in Libya (*Del Dracone*, Turin MS a.II.11.J.24, f. 14r).

⁴⁸⁶ Aldrovandi, *Serpentum* 401-6. Contemporary descriptions of the event in correspondence and poetry are collated in Findlen 1996: 17-31.

given his expertise on monsters — which he displayed in his museum of curiosities, and it inspired him to write his treatise on dragons.⁴⁸⁷ His illustration of the Bologna dragon was widely circulated across Italy in private letters and pamphlets before it was published in his treatise (fig. 5.10).⁴⁸⁸ In an untitled Latin epigram commemorating the discovery (c. 1572), Augustus Gottuvius compared Aldrovandi to Odysseus, who had encountered such monsters in his travels across the world.⁴⁸⁹

In this comparison between Aldrovandi and Odysseus, however hyperbolic, we see further important context for the Villa d'Este's own dragons on the second terrace. Identified with the dragon who guarded the Hesperides, these dragons can now be shown not only to be the embodiment of exotic marvels yet to be seen in Italy, but also an evocation of an earlier and mythic age of exploration, when only heroes dared to venture to the edges of the known world. This was reflected in the context of the first terrace waterscape experience, where visitors were led to understand the terrors and dangers of a world in which even the local environment might become death-dealing and destructive, and in the opening of that perceptual vista from Tivoli to the wider ocean (had the Fountain of Neptune been completed) by way of the Aniene's course to sea. On reaching the second terrace, visitors found themselves in a world of terrors and marvels every bit as thrilling and horrifying as they might expect to find were they to venture into the world's remaining wild spaces.

⁴⁸⁷ Aldrovandi, *Serpentum* 401-6.

⁴⁸⁸ On the dissemination of Aldrovandi's illustration across Italy, see Findlen 1996: 18-19.

⁴⁸⁹ 'Aldrovandi primus Ulysses erit/ Forunate draco scriptorus Ulysses egebas: Qui celebrem toto redderet orbe gravis/ Non minus indiguit te fortunatus Ulysses, Omnia Museaeum nunc Micorcosmus habet' (Gottuvius, *Epigram on Aldrovandi*, in Findlen 1996: 18).

Within the Fountain of the Dragon's foreboding woodland setting, visitors who knew their mythology might also recall Cadmus' encounter with the Ismenian dragon in the depths of an ancient forest in an unexplored region of Greece, an episode which expresses the fear of monsters associated with both foreign lands and with forests.⁴⁹⁰ Fleeing from his father's wrath in Tyre (in modern-day Lebanon), Cadmus travelled across the sea to the undiscovered region of Boeotia in central Greece where he founded Thebes.⁴⁹¹ On their arrival at the site, however, Cadmus and his companions discovered a venomous dragon hiding in a cave, guarding Mars' sacred spring:

Nearby stood an ancient forest whose trees had never been felled,
a grotto in its midst all overgrown with creepers and brushwood.
A structure of rocks created an arch low down, and out of it
water was gushing in streams. Deep down in the heart of the cave
was a dragon sacred to Mars, which flaunted a golden crest,
fiery glinting eyes, a flickering forked tongue,
three marshalled ranks of teeth and a body swollen with venom.
Here the Tyrian strangers come on their fateful mission.
They entered the grove and lowered their pitchers to catch the water.
A mighty splash! At once, with a fearsome hissing, down from
the length of the cave there emerged the blue-black head of the dragon.
...The poor Phoenicians, whether they drew their swords or attempted
flight or stood stock still in terror, the monster was on them,
to crunch them up with his fangs or crush in his strangling coils.⁴⁹²

This violent episode held a macabre fascination for a Renaissance audience, generating a wealth of well-known visual depictions in the Cinquecento. Gruesome scenes of the dragon devouring Cadmus' companions and renderings of Cadmus slaying the

⁴⁹⁰ Ovid, *Met.* 3.1-130.

⁴⁹¹ At the beginning of the Cadmus episode, Ovid recounts: 'Young Cadmus wandered the wide world over, staying away from his country, avoiding his father Agénor's wrath' (*Met.* 3.6-7) and on the advice of the oracle at Delphi, travelled to Greece to establish the city of Thebes (3.7-12).

⁴⁹² Ovid, *Met.* 3.26-37, 45-7.

dragon were artistic leitmotifs, featuring in popular illustrated editions of *Metamorphoses*. In Italian vernacular translations, a woodcut (in effect, a popular-cultural medium) by Giovanni Antonio Rusconi of the dragon mauling Cadmus' companions accompanies the episode in Lodovico Dolce's *Transformationi* (Venice, 1553), and the frontispiece illustrated by Giacomo Franco for book three of Giovanni Andrea dell'Anguillara's *Le Metamorfosi* (Venice, 1584) features a triumphant Cadmus standing over the slain dragon (figs. 5.11 and 5.12). Similar scenes feature in the woodcuts by Bernard Salomon for Jean de Tournes' *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée* (Lyon, 1557), which were replicated by Virgil Solis for Johannes Spreng's *Metamorphoses Ovidii* (Frankfurt, 1563) (figs 5.13 and 5.14).⁴⁹³ In these vignettes, the dragon is surrounded by the partially devoured limbs and bones of its victims, depicted in the act of consuming one of Cadmus' companions, his naked torso hanging from its gaping jaws. Paintings of the Cadmus episode show similarly grisly scenes, exemplified Léon Davent's etching, *Cadmus Fighting the Dragon* (c. 1540-45, after a design by Italian artist Francesco Primaticcio), in which Cadmus battles a two-headed dragon upon a mound of his companions' mutilated bodies' (fig. 5.15). Marking the pinnacle of the morbid cultural fascination with this macabre episode is Cornelis van Haarlem's oil painting, *Two Followers of Cadmus Devoured by a Dragon* (1588, fig. 5.16). In the foreground of this graphic rendering, the dragon sinks its teeth into the head of one of Cadmus' companions, whilst simultaneously tearing the body of another apart with its claws, and in the background, Cadmus is shown thrusting his spear into the dragon's head.

⁴⁹³ Solis simply enlarged and reversed Salomon's woodcuts, so only Salomon's are included as figures.

Given the popularity of the Cadmus episode in artistic renderings and the extensive deployment of Ovidian imagery at the Villa d'Este, it is likely that Ligorio used the Cadmus episode as a prototype for the Hesperidian design of the second terrace.⁴⁹⁴ Significantly, Cadmus features in Ligorio's *Del Dracone* as the first in a catalogue of dragon slayers, followed immediately by Hercules.⁴⁹⁵ Ligorio defined Cadmus' victory over the dragon as an act of virtue which gave him a place among the pantheon of heroes, thereby attributing Cadmus the same *exemplum virtutis* as Hercules in defeating the Hesperides' guardian.⁴⁹⁶ Ligorio was not the first to draw a comparison between these two heroic feats: Francesco Colonna had already acknowledged his use of the Cadmus episode in his protagonist's terrifying encounter with a dragon in *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Venice, 1499).⁴⁹⁷ With a self-reflexive nod to Ovidian invocation, the incident is foreshadowed by an ekphrasis in which Poliphilo observes a frieze depicting Cadmus as he 'slew the scaly dragon at the gushing spring'.⁴⁹⁸ In the same way, we can now see key elements of Ovid's Cadmus narrative were repurposed as design features for the Villa d'Este's second terrace to set the scene for Hercules' encounter with the dragon. Indeed, there is a long history linking the two dragon-slaying myths, and the intertextual

⁴⁹⁴ Significantly, Salomon had been employed by the Cardinal in 1540, — as outlined in Sharratt's biography on Salomon (2005: 104-5) — so Salomon's illustrations may have been particularly influential, especially given their widespread popularity and extensive replication in subsequent editions of *Metamorphoses* (Sharratt 2005: 88-91).

⁴⁹⁵ Ligorio, *Del Dracone*, Turin MS a.II.11.J.24, ff. 13v-16r.

⁴⁹⁶ 'Cadmò uccise un'Dracone, che haveva morti i suo i compagni, per che egli cercando Europa sua sorella combatte con un prudere tafano done furore morti alcuni de suoi et posai havevando uinto acquisto altri uomini Heroici per suo ascuito, i quali si dipingono per la sapienta loro col dragone accanto essendo da quei tali conosciuta la grave virtù di Cadmo, uolleno la amichitia sua; a per cio disseno che quei Heroi, che per la virtù sua lo favorivano su maggior serpente admirato' (Ligorio, *Del Dracone*, Turin MS a.II.11.J.24, f. 13v; see also Naples MS XII.B.3, f. 384).

⁴⁹⁷ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 61-62.

⁴⁹⁸ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 60.

connection is evident from antiquity. In *Metamorphoses*, Ovid made only a brief reference to Hercules's encounter with Ladon in book nine, having already recounted in detail Cadmus' encounter with the Ismenian dragon in book three, a description that could stand in for both episodes as a point of recall.⁴⁹⁹ Both stories feature dragons which are guardians of sacred locales, monsters who lurk at the heart of deceptively idyllic sites (a forest; a garden), which are located at the undiscovered edges of the known world. Furthermore, just as Hercules defeats Ladon in order to steal the golden apples, so Cadmus slays the Ismenian dragon in order to found the city of Thebes at the site which it guarded.⁵⁰⁰

Like Ovid, therefore, Ligorio set his dragon at the heart of dense woods. Not only did this evoke the macabre Cadmus episode popularised in Renaissance art and highlight the continuing presence of monsters at the edges of the known world, it also reflected the contemporary literary trope of the monster in the woods. For monsters not only inhabited foreign lands in the Renaissance, but also lurked in the dark depths of forests. It is to this topophobic trope that we now turn.

5.2 Into the Woods

The dragon-inhabited *boschi* on the second terrace were a manifestation of the fears associated with the woods and the threat of what monstrous creatures might lurk within.

⁴⁹⁹ Ovid refers only to Hercules having 'captured the apples so closely watched by the sleepless dragon' (*Met.* 9.190). On the connection between Cadmus and Hercules as dragon-slayers, see Ogden 2013: 33-39, 48-53.

⁵⁰⁰ Ovid *Met.* 3.1-130. A third draconic guardian of a sacred site at the edges of the known world is the aforementioned Colchian dragon which guarded the golden fleece in Mars' sacred grove in Colchis (modern day Turkey). Like the golden apples taken by Hercules from the Hesperides, the golden fleece was stolen by the hero Jason with the help of the sorceress Medea (Apollonius, *Arg.*; Ovid, *Met.* 7.1-158 and *Heroides* 12.)

Garden historians who equate *boschi* with the sacro-idyllic woods of the pastoral landscape described by ancient poets have overlooked the fact those which feature in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* — the primary classical source for Italian Renaissance garden iconography — were altogether more sinister.⁵⁰¹ Inhabited by savage beasts and capricious deities, Ovid's sylvan settings are stages for acts of horror, violence and metamorphosis, as witnessed in the Cadmus' encounter with the Ismenian dragon.⁵⁰² Another influential classical example of the forest as a *locus horridus* features in Virgil's *Aeneid*, where the savage woods of pre-Roman Italy are characterised by their malevolent shade and labyrinthine trails that confound those who venture within. Virgil's woods also assume a fantastical quality through their associations with the Underworld, harbouring monsters and ghosts.⁵⁰³ In book 6, an ancient forest surrounds the entrance to the Underworld at Lake Avernus near Cumae, into the dark heart of which Aeneas is guided by two doves sent by his mother Venus to recover the golden bough that will lead him back to the land of the living following his descent.⁵⁰⁴ On entering the Underworld, Aeneas exchanges this foreboding forest for supernatural woods that are all the more menacing: giants, dragons and hybrid creatures lurk in the gloom beneath a great, ancient elm; the shade of his fallen companion haunts the eerie, silent woods lining the banks of the River Styx; and the ghost of Aeneas' spurned lover, Dido, wanders amidst a myrtle grove encircling the Plains of

⁵⁰¹ As outlined in Chapter 1 (pages 26-27, 40-41), the incorporation of *boschi* and groves in Italian Renaissance gardens were identified with the sacro-idyllic landscapes of classical poetry and as features characteristic of the *locus amoenus* by Lazzaro 1990: 66-166 and MacDougall 1994: 67-78, 89-111.

⁵⁰² On the *locus horridus* in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, see Segal 1969: 12-13, 75-76, Leach 1988: 343-52, 440-67, Hinds 2002: 122-49 and Bernstein 2011: 67-98.

⁵⁰³ On dark woods as *loci horridi* in Virgil's *Aeneid* and their Underworld associations, see Doob 1990: 238-40, Hardie 1994: 27, 141-42, and Kliszcz and Komorowska 2017: 45-60.

⁵⁰⁴ Virgil, *Aen.* 6.179-211, 238-45; this forest is ancient ('*antiquam silvam*', 6.179), boundless ('*silvam immensam*', 6.186) and dark ('*nemorumque tenebris*', 6.238).

Mourning.⁵⁰⁵ Virgil further conveys the treacherous nature of the woods in book 9, which sees the Trojan warriors Nisus and Euryalus seeking sanctuary in a forest dense with ilex and brambles following a night raid on the enemy camp in Latium. The tortuous tracks and deceptive darkness of the moonlit wood proves their undoing, however, leading to their tragic demise as the heroes soon become lost and separated, only to fall foul of the enemies they sought to evade in the very place they took refuge.⁵⁰⁶

To return to Paola Giacomoni's definition of classical landscape topoi, the second terrace *boschi* was characteristic of the *locus horridus*, exemplifying a 'non-rational view of nature', whereby the pleasant grove or sacred wood 'becomes a wilderness devoid of any safe point of reference', shade becomes disquieting darkness', as witnessed in Ovid and Virgil.⁵⁰⁷ It also reflected contemporary anxieties of untamed and unknowable 'first nature' beyond the human domain, articulated by Bonfadio Taegio in *La Villa*, who painted a vivid picture of the wild hinterland beyond the villa's walls as a threatening *locus horridus*, as outlined in Chapter 4.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁵ Virgil, *Aen.* 6.282-89, 337-90, 440-45. As Putnam observed, the boundaries between the woodland in the lands of the living and the dead are blurred: 'It is never clear — and was probably never meant by Virgil to be clear — where woods end and underworld begins', thereby enhancing the association of Italic woods with their uncanny supernatural counterparts (Putnam 1965: 59). Indeed, the Underworld is a place of both figurative and material woods, as Virgil compares its dark, maze-like halls to the unnavigable gloom of a moonlit forest: 'They walked in the darkness of that lonely night with shadows all about them, through the empty halls of Dis and his desolate kingdom, as men walk in a wood by the sinister light of a fitful moon when Jupiter has buried the sky in shade and black night has robbed all things of their colour' (*Aen.* 6.268-72; trans. West 2003). On Virgil's unifying use of '*umbra*' to describe sylvan darkness, the gloom of the Underworld and the shades of the dead, see Theodorakopoulos 1997: 163-64.

⁵⁰⁶ Virgil, *Aen.* 9.375-445. Like the woods of book 6, which Aeneas only succeeds in navigating with birds and the golden bough to guide him, this Latin forest is similarly dark and labyrinthine: 'It was a wood full of dense undergrowth and dark ilex trees, all of it choked thick with brambles, and the path glimmered only here and there among the faint tracks left by animals', full of 'deceptive twists and turns' (*Aen.* 9.381-83, 393). On the parallels between the journey of Aeneas into the Underworld and the Nisus and Euryalus episode, see Hardie 1994: 27, 141-42.

⁵⁰⁷ Giacomoni 2007: 83-4; for full quotation, see Chapter 4, page 129.

⁵⁰⁸ Taegio, *La Villa* 215; see Chapter 4, pages 129-30. Taegio's definition of the 'three natures' is discussed at length in Chapter 2, pages 58-61.

Entering the woods on the second terrace, visitors found themselves within a distinctly Tiburtine vision of the ‘first nature’ — a feature which has been entirely overlooked in previous studies, yet remains fundamental to the storyboarded experience with which the Villa d’Este was designed. The trees composing the *boschi* and the water effects of the *scale dei bollori* (stairs of the bubbling fountains) were designed to evoke the region’s woodland and river typology, reconfiguring the second terrace as a microcosmic vision of Tiburtine topography. By incorporating defining features of the surrounding landscape within the garden, this terrace generated a ‘first nature’ experience designed to elicit responses of awe and fear from visitors. It made manifest the processes of estrangement and otherness which — by way of the continuing Hesperidian theme and Cadmean allusions — could imbue even the local with a sense of horror and threat, and established the setting for the domestic horrors of the monster in the woods theme which would become manifest at the Fountain of the Dragon.

The Tiburtine landscape is characterised by the forested slopes of the Monti Tiburtini and the cascading waters of the Aniene, which rush down from their source in the Monti Simbruini — as outlined in Chapter 4 — and on the second terrace, these defining topographic elements were translated into controlled garden features.⁵⁰⁹ The *scale dei bollori* were named after the bubbling effect produced by the water-chains which formed the balustrades of the stairways ascending the second terrace. At the top of the central stairway leading to the Fountain of the Dragon, water pours from the gaping mouths of sea monsters on either side, streaming down parallel chains of travertine shells, which generate swirling eddies and bubbles as the water spills over them (figs. 5.17 and 5.18). The stairs to

⁵⁰⁹ Chapter 4, pages 134-37.

the right are bordered by long water channels terminated by stepped pedestals, from which grotesque faces leer with spouts protruding from their mouths — the matching set of fountains planned for the left stairway were never implemented (figs. 5.19 and 5.20). Although these water-chains now operate at a reduced capacity, an engraving of the stairs by Venturini illustrates the water effects described in the Ligorio manuscript, and recorded in visitors' accounts: jets of bubbling water rise into the air from the pedestals as water gushes from the spouts of the grotesque masks, falling into the channels below in a constant, babbling stream (fig. 5.21).⁵¹⁰

Like the fountains on the first terrace, the *scale dei bollori* were designed to recreate the visual, acoustic and haptic properties of water in its natural environment, and Anatole Tchikine observed that '*bollori*' was a term used by Renaissance writers to describe the bubbling effects generated by rapid mountain streams.⁵¹¹ *Bollori* feature in Leonardo da Vinci's study of rivers (c. 1500), defining the percussive bubbling of mountain river currents.⁵¹² The term also appears in Jacopo Sannazzaro's pastoral romance *Arcadia* (Naples, 1504), describing the River Erymanthos as it tumbled down the mountainside with 'great and frightening noise' (*rumore grandissimo e spaventevole*), accompanied by 'bubbles of white foam' (*bollori di bianche schiume*).⁵¹³ Significantly, the term was also employed in Andrea Bacci's treatise on the Tiber, *Del Tevere, della natura et*

⁵¹⁰ Ligorio, *MS* f. 253r-254r 12; Foglietta, *Tyburninum* 60; Zappi, *Annali* 59; Del Re, *Tiburtine* 64; Audebert, *Journal* 180.

⁵¹¹ Tchikine 2010: 58. The classification of the water effects of Italian Renaissance fountains is outlined in Chapter 2, Section 2.5, pages 77-80.

⁵¹² 'Dove vi vede monti surgere nell'acque corrente, surgere a uso di bollori, ivi è segno di gran profondità, donde tali bollori risaltano dopo la percussione che fa l'acqua sopra del fondo' (da Vinci, *Scritti* 638, in Recupero 2002).

⁵¹³ 'Al capo d'un fiume chiamato Erimanto pervenimmo; il quale da pie' d'un monte per una rottura di pietra viva con un rumore grandissimo e spaventevole, e con certi bollori di bianche schiume, si caccia fore nel piano' (Sannazzaro, *Arcadia*, 88-89, ed. Carrara 1952).

bontà dell'acque et delle inondatione (Rome, 1558), to convey the bubbling produced by the fast-flowing Aniene, a description which was also quoted in Antonio Del Re's account of the Aniene.⁵¹⁴

At the Villa d'Este, therefore, the perpetual downward stream and bubbling effects of the *scale dei bollori* recognisably reproduced the rapid, turbulent flow of mountain rivers, evoking the Aniene's rushing waters. This is reflected in the onomatopoeic language used in visitors' accounts to the acrobatic sequencing of water down the stairways. Del Re described 'spouts of water' (*cannelle di acqua*) pouring from the mouths of the grotesque heads, and the 'bubbles of water' (*bollori d'acqua*) produced by the jets rising into the air on the pedestals.⁵¹⁵ For his part, Giovanni Maria Zappi recounted the dramatic display of 'jets, spouts, and springs of water' (*lampolli, spicoli, et sorgente di acqua*), and professed to be awestruck by the seemingly 'infinite waters' (*acque infinite*), wondering 'can such a marvellous thing be believed by those who have never seen such a garden?'.⁵¹⁶

Although Zappi demonstrated the topophilic responses elicited by the *scale dei bollori*, this lulled visitors into a false sense of security. The seemingly unending flow of water running down the stairs encouraged movement up the terrace, beckoning the visitors to discover its elusive source. In following this inducement, visitors then reached the Fountain of the Dragons, where monsters awaited. The grotesque masks and sea monsters from whose mouths water flowed served to increase the surprise and even dismay on reaching the Fountain of the Dragon because their seemingly unthreatening miniature hints

⁵¹⁴ 'Più cruda di questa e alquanto più gravetta, non già manco utile, è quella dell'Aniene; e per questo soglio io per gl'infermi fare a quella levare due bollori, quanto sia dal fuoco dirotta.' (Bacci, *Tevere* 2, 46; and quoted in Del Re, *Tiburtine* 132-33)

⁵¹⁵ Del Re, *Tiburtine* 64.

⁵¹⁶ Zappi, *Annali* 59.

at a far less monstrous presence presiding over the water's source. The reality of the encounter that follows was thus by design markedly different to the apparently safe world of controlled nature and even domesticated monstrosity which the water stairs' inhabitants deceptively promised. In this sense, the *scale dei bollori* also enticed visitors towards the dragons' lair in the same way in which Ovid recounts how Cadmus' men, 'in search of water from running springs', were lured unwittingly towards the dragon's cave by the 'gushing streams' which flowed from it.⁵¹⁷

Echoing the Ovidian scene-setting was the surrounding *boschi* which concealed the Fountain of the Dragon in a Tiburtine woodland, not unlike the 'ancient forest' in which the Ismenian dragon lurked — drawing in the other key Ovidian intertext.⁵¹⁸ Although the Ligorio manuscript only records 'woods of various sorts of trees', payment records provide much more and compelling detail in support of this reading; they show orders for 179 sweet chestnuts (*castagne*), 70 elms (*olmi*) and 51 firs (*abeti*), purchased between 1568 and 1569.⁵¹⁹ These trees reflect the natural woodland typology of the Monti Tiburtini: sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), silver fir (*Abies alba*), wych elm (*Ulmus galbra*) and field elm (*Ulmus minor*) are features of Lazio's high forest area, and to this day, grow across the Monti Simbruini.⁵²⁰ The capacious foliage of these tall trees meant that the second terrace

⁵¹⁷ Ovid, *Met.* 3.28, 38, 42; for full quotation, see page 171.

⁵¹⁸ Ovid, *Met.* 10.86-108, 3.28.

⁵¹⁹ Ligorio, *MS* f. 249 M. Sweet chestnuts: '77 *castagne per piantare*' (Jan 17, 1568), '102 *Castagni*' (Feb 18, 1568), '*per prezzo di più piante di Castagno*' (Dec 7, 1569); elms: '*per prezzo d'olmi 70*' (Mar 13, 1568); firs: '*per il prezzo de 51 Abeti*' (Mar 13, 1568) (payment records in Coffin 1960: 20).

⁵²⁰ Surveys of the woodland typology of Lazio (Bianco and Ciccarese, 2013: 39, 47-58) and the Monti Simbruini (Attorre *et al.*, 2006: 139, 142-43) catalogue *Castanea sativa*, *Abies alba*, *Ulmus galbra* and *Ulmus minor* in the region's high forest area.

was ‘covered by the gentle shade made by the dense forest’, according to Uberto Foglietta, conjuring up the Tiburtine woods.⁵²¹

The prevalence of sweet chestnuts — ordered in the largest quantities and accounting for approximately three quarters of the trees composing the *boschi* — is particularly significant.⁵²² Approximately 85 kilometres north of Tivoli lie the famed chestnut groves of Canepina in the Monti Cimini. These have dominated the area from antiquity to this day, as Piero Bevilacqua’s survey of Lazio’s historic landscape has shown, forming the nutritional and economic foundation of surrounding populations for centuries.⁵²³ Canepina’s chestnut groves were celebrated for both their nuts and their wood: from the Middle Ages until the end of the twentieth century, chestnut wood was used for making the barrels that supported the region’s flourishing wine production.⁵²⁴ Although payment records do not reveal the origin of the sweet chestnut trees planted at the Villa d’Este, it is likely they came from the groves of Canepina and represented not only the inclusion of the region’s mountain woodlands, but also its celebrated natural resources.

As well as locating visitors within a microcosmic vision of the region’s mountain forests, the *boschi* also materialised the more foreboding woods of classical and contemporary literary invention. Chestnut, fir and elm have grown throughout the Mediterranean since antiquity, and populated the forests of myth: each featured in Ovid’s catalogue of woodland trees, and thus recalled Cadmus’ encounter with the Ismenian

⁵²¹ Foglietta, *Tyburtinum* 60.

⁵²² Elms were also planted along the garden’s westernmost vertical axis (Ligorio, *MS* f. 251v b; Zappi, *Annali* 57; Del Re, *Tiburtine* 36), thus of the 70 ordered, a significant number would not have featured in the *boschi*.

⁵²³ Bevilacqua 2012: 389-91. The volcanic soil and heavy rainfall in the Monti Cimini provide ideal conditions for chestnuts, and today, one thousand hectares of chestnut trees cover the high forest area (Bevilacqua 2012: 389).

⁵²⁴ Bevilacqua 2012: 389

dragon within an ‘ancient forest whose trees had never been felled’.⁵²⁵ Similarly, it was under the shade of a giant elm tree that Virgil described all manner of monsters lurking in the Underworld.⁵²⁶ Developing from mythic origins, the monster in the woods became a powerful and familiar trope in Italian Renaissance literature, evoking the topophobic locales and monstrous encounters popularised in Dante’s *Inferno* in the *Divine Comedy* (Florence, c. 1330-31), Giovanni Boccaccio’s *Decameron* (Venice, 1471) and Colonna’s *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*.⁵²⁷

Inferno opens with Dante lost in a ‘dark wood’, an allegory for the spiritual wilderness of sin in which the poet finds himself, having strayed from the path of righteousness.⁵²⁸ In order to escape the woods and redeem himself, Dante must ascend a mountain, but his progress is hindered by three ravenous beasts: a leopard, a lion and a wolf.⁵²⁹ Following this encounter, the poet finds the wood terrifying even to recall:

How hard it is to say what that wood was,
a wilderness, savage, brute, harsh and wild.
Only to think of it renews my fear!⁵³⁰

In Boccaccio’s *Decameron*, a foreboding forest is the setting for the third tale on the fifth day, in which two young lovers, Pietro and Agnoletta, become lost after fleeing

⁵²⁵ Ovid, *Met.* 10.86-108, 3.28.

⁵²⁶ Virgil, *Aen.* 6.282-89

⁵²⁷ Harrison’s study of the cultural significance of the forest in literature from antiquity to modernity charts the development of the forest as a *locus horridus* in classical thought (1992: 1-60) to its incarnations in Renaissance literature (61-106).

⁵²⁸ Dante, *Inferno* 1.2, trans. Kirkpatrick 2003. On the dark, labyrinthine woods in Virgil’s *Aeneid* (6.179-211, 238-45) as a source for Dante, see Brownlee 2007: 143-47, Lansing 2010: 287-89 and Howard 2010: 78-79. Dante’s forest as an allegory for spiritual wilderness is explored by Harrison 1992: 81-87.

⁵²⁹ Dante, *Inferno* 1.31-60.

⁵³⁰ Dante, *Inferno* 1.4-6.

Rome to elope.⁵³¹ After being separated, Pietro stumbles blindly through the undergrowth in search of Agnolella, becoming increasingly afraid of encountering wild beasts:

...he was afraid, both for his own sake and for that of his beloved, of the wild animals that generally lurk in the forest, and at every moment he imagined some bear or wolf seizing her and ripping open her throat.⁵³²

When night falls, no sooner does Pietro climb a tree ‘to avoid being devoured by wild animals’, than a pack of hungry wolves appear to tear his horse from limb to limb, and gorge themselves, ‘leaving nothing but the bones behind’.⁵³³ Like Dante’s dark wood, Boccaccio’s forest is a place of horror and violence, one in which his protagonist’s anxieties of what lurks within become manifest.

In Colonna’s *Hypnerotomachia*, the forest takes on a more fantastical — yet no less topophobic — quality. The story begins with Poliphilo wandering into a dense wood in search of his beloved Polia. Soon becoming lost, Poliphilo fears he has found himself in the pseudo-mythic Hercynian Forest described by ancient writers (now identified with the Black Forest in Germany), and becomes ‘incapacitated by terror’, fearing the attack of wild animals or monsters:

I found myself in the cool shade, humid air and sylvan darkness. This made me suspect, not unreasonably, that I had arrived at the vast Hercynian Forest, where there was nothing but lairs of dangerous beasts and caverns full of noxious creatures and fierce monsters. I was defenceless and terribly afraid...would I meet a hateful death, or could I hope for rescue as I wandered in the opaque

⁵³¹ Boccaccio, *Decameron* 409-16.

⁵³² Boccaccio, *Decameron* 411.

⁵³³ Boccaccio, *Decameron* 412-14.

and shadowed wood?...I was becoming incapacitated by terror and fully expecting some wild beast to leap out of somewhere and devour me.⁵³⁴

Poliphilo's anxieties are realised when he encounters 'a hungry and carnivorous wolf', from which he flees, only to walk unwittingly into the lair of a 'frightful and horrific dragon' soon after.⁵³⁵ Meanwhile, Polia encounters similar horrors when she too becomes lost in a 'wild wood planted with shady trees', where she witnesses two maidens being devoured by wolves, lions, vultures and a dragon.⁵³⁶

Elements from each of these literary episodes are recalled in the layout of the second terrace *boschi*. Dante's progress up the mountain to safety hindered by wild beasts, mirrors the ascent of visitors up the steep terrace, who faced the dragon before reaching the distant goal of the palace. Dante, Pietro and Poliphilo all have their fears of the woods realised when they encounter the violent beasts that lurk deep within, like visitors who found the monsters at the Fountain of the Dragon at the heart of the *boschi*. In each of these episodes, the threat of the woods becomes manifest in the form of wild animals, or indeed, monsters, that threaten to consume their inhabitants, exemplifying contemporary anxieties of wild nature. Indeed, the same anxieties expressed in these literary accounts were also articulated by Taegio in *La Villa*, whose catalogue of topophobic landscape

⁵³⁴ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 14-15. The dark, mythic quality with which the Hercynian Forest was attributed in classical literature is explored by Woodburn Hyde 1918: 231-45 and Winkler 2016: 170-72. In his commentary on the Gallic Wars, Caesar recounts how the breadth and impenetrability of the forest initially blocked his invasion of Germania, and describes seemingly fantastical creatures which inhabited the forest, including a one-horned deer akin to a unicorn, an elk with no joints which sleeps in the trees and a bull-like beast almost the size of an elephant (*Bellum Gallicum* 6.24-25). Pliny the Elder's account of the Hercynian Forest is similarly fantastical, featuring giant oaks and birds whose feathers glow in the dark (*Naturalis historia* 4.25, 16.1-6).

⁵³⁵ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 21, 61. Colonna makes a subtle reference to Hercules' eleventh labour in Poliphilo's encounter with the dragon, as he exclaims, 'It was enough...to make Hercules, the feared protector tremble, despite the knotted club he got from Molorchus' (*Hypnerotomachia* 62).

⁵³⁶ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 399, 402-3.

features included ‘serpents’ lairs’, reflecting fears of the savage beasts that haunted the wild hinterland beyond the villa’s walls.⁵³⁷ At the Villa d’Este, therefore, the dragons in the *boschi* were the realisation of the topophobic perception of the wild, and the fear of being devoured within — a fear which was not entirely misplaced given the untamed wilderness from which the garden was transformed. To those familiar with the garden’s original site, described by Zappi as ‘rough and wild, with cavernous ditches which could easily have sheltered wolves and other wild animals’, the *boschi* on the second terrace represented an untamed remnant of this wilderness, where savage beasts might still lurk.⁵³⁸

The second terrace by design was, therefore, more complex than previous analyses have suggested, and its iconography, sensescape and patterns of movement need to be read against a much richer contextual field than has been attempted in previous scholarship. This approach underlines the unification of conflicting topophilic and topophobic responses in the visitor, reflecting contrasting conceptions of nature. In reproducing the Aniene’s rushing waters and the Tiburtine forests, the *scale dei bollori* and *boschi* recalled defining features the Tiburtine landscape celebrated since antiquity, and even evoked the region’s celebrated natural resources with the presence of sweet chestnuts. As representations of ‘first nature’, however, these woodland and water features also played upon fears of untamed nature and the unknown terrors it concealed, evoking the established literary trope of the monster in the woods — a fear which was realised at the Fountain of the Dragon.

⁵³⁷ Taegio, *La Villa* 215; for full quotation, see Chapter 4, page 130.

⁵³⁸ Zappi, *Annali* 55.

5.3 Into the Dragons' Lair

At the heart of the second terrace, a cavernous hollow cut deep into the hillside forms the dragons' lair, not unlike the cave of the Ismenian dragon described by Ovid from which water flowed in 'gushing streams', as shown on Venturini's engraving (fig. 5.22).⁵³⁹ Twin flights of curving stairways enclose the oval pool within shadowy walls, and water jets spray in tall arcs from the vases lining the balustrades, shrouding the fountain below in misty rain (fig. 5.23).⁵⁴⁰ At the centre of the pool, a column of water surges from the midst of four water-breathing dragons (figs. 5.24 and 5.25). The omniscient, panoramic perspective of their back-to-back configuration invokes the unsleeping, hundred-headed dragon who guarded the Hesperides, with which they are identified in the Ligorio manuscript.⁵⁴¹ Had the colossal statue of Hercules bearing a club been placed in the grotto niche behind the fountain, as the Ligorio manuscript stipulated, the fountain diorama would have echoed Muziano's fresco in the Sala di Ercole (1565-66), which depicts the eponymous hero raising his club to strike the many-headed dragon (fig. 5.26).⁵⁴² Venturini's engraving of the Fountain of the Dragon indicates how it would have appeared had the original iconographic schema been realised, with three statues of Hercules

⁵³⁹ Ovid *Met.* 3.30.

⁵⁴⁰ Ligorio, *MS* f. 254r 13.

⁵⁴¹ Ligorio, *MS* f. 254r 14; according to the manuscript, 'this Dragon was fabled from antiquity to have a hundred heads'.

⁵⁴² Ligorio, *MS* f. 254r 14.

positioned one above another ascending the central axis — although the seated figure depicted in the grotto niche is Jupiter, which was added after Ippolito's death (fig. 5.22).⁵⁴³

As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, expositions of the Fountain of the Dragon in previous studies have a strong visual and intellectual bias, focussing on its iconographic and ideological significance in identifying the Villa d'Este with the paradisaical Hesperides, and aligning Ippolito with Hercules' virtue.⁵⁴⁴ Contemporary visitors' accounts, by contrast, present the Fountain of the Dragon as a powerfully immersive sensescape, describing an encounter defined by the fountain's myriad water effects. Now operating at a significantly reduced pressure, the hydraulic features pale in comparison to their original capacity. Historic visitors described a violent water display accompanied by sound effects which mimicked artillery fire, culminating in a sudden downpour from hidden jets that soaked unsuspecting bystanders.⁵⁴⁵ Despite the prominence of these hydraulic features, however, the relationship between the Fountain of the Dragon's water effects and Hesperidian iconography has yet to be meaningfully investigated. Dismissing any correlation, Tchikine, considered the Fountain of the Dragon as a rare example of the 'discrepancies between the display of water and its immediate architectural or sculptural

⁵⁴³ Seventeenth-century visitor Del Re recorded 'a white marble statue of Jupiter', identified by the 'thunderbolt raised in his left hand' (*Tiburtine* 65). The statue was added by Cardinal Alessandro d'Este after 1586, when the villa passed to him following Cardinal Luigi's death, who was Ippolito's successor (Coffin 1960: 102, 106). This addition altered the Hesperidian schema, and the Fountain of the Dragon assumed a new significance under Cardinal Alessandro: Dernie (1996: 37-45) and Fagiolo and Madonna (2003: 90-92) proposed that the new statue identified the dragons with the serpent Typhon, who sought to overthrow Jupiter in a battle for the cosmos, but was ultimately vanquished by one of Jupiter's thunderbolts, as told by Hesiod (*Theogonia* 820-22).

⁵⁴⁴ Coffin 1960: 78-81, 2004: 91-93; Lazzaro 1990: 223-25; Dernie 1996: 36; Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 86-90; Occhipinti 2009: 340-47.

⁵⁴⁵ Principal accounts of the Fountain of the Dragon are by Zappi (*Annali* 58), Audebert (*Journal* 180-81), and Del Re (*Tiburtine* 65), although additional sources are also cited below. According to Lombardi's survey of the sixteenth-century hydraulic system, the Fountain of the Dragon's original design featured a high-pressure pump system which propelled water at high velocity to produce the accompanying sound effects (2003: 60-61).

setting’, and claimed that ‘neither the sounds of artillery nor the abundant *pioggia* [rain] that it in turn produced bore any relationship to the four water-spouting beasts from which it derived its name.’⁵⁴⁶ Both Tchikine’s evaluation of the Fountain of the Dragon and scholars’ emphasis on its paradisaical evocations reflect the traditional conception of the Italian Renaissance garden as a reinvention of the classical *locus amoenus*, designed to promote topophilic experiences — but this is a conception which, as this chapter and Chapter 4 has demonstrated, is misplaced. The Fountain of the Dragon, was in fact a powerful manifestation of the garden’s topophobic elements, representing the dark heart of the *locus horridus* on the second terrace, and the site of encounter where fears of the monster in the woods were realised. Contemporary descriptions of the fountain reveal how the sensory properties of water were exploited to generate an immersive visual, aural and haptic assault upon the visitor, which brought the garden’s Hesperidian narrative to a climax in a uniquely topophobic encounter.

In his discursive account, *Le Fontane di Roma, di Tivoli, di Frascati* (1645), Daniello Bartoli surely had the Fountain of the Dragon in mind when he marvelled at the capacity of hydraulic features ‘to bring dead statues to life with motion’, and give them myriad voices, having heard sound effects like the ‘moaning of the sorrowful, roaring of the angry, singing of the happy’.⁵⁴⁷ In 1620, Fulvio Testi wrote in a letter to Duke Cesare d’Este that the water streaming from the statues’ mouths at the Fountain of the Dragon gave the illusion of fire-breathing dragons through a kind of synaesthesia: ‘human

⁵⁴⁶ Tchikine 2010: 68. Tchikine’s conclusion derives from a preceding assertion that fountains were ‘primarily designed to delight and amuse’ (2010: 57), as discussed in Chapter 4, page 142-43 and footnote 405.

⁵⁴⁷ ‘Avvivare col moto statue morte...Gemer come vogliose, mugghiar come infuriate, cantar come allegre’ (Bartoli, *Fontane* 264, in Marietti 1836).

ingenuity has confused the elements and has given water the effect of fire'.⁵⁴⁸ Similarly, an anonymous English visitor recounted the horror of his encounter at the Fountain of the Dragon in his memoirs of Italy, *A True Description of what is most worthy to be seen in all Italy* (1610): 'you shall see a a Dragon with four heads, spouting water the height of six men, with so great a noise, as if many musquets were continually discharged, the water being of so black a colour, that it resembleth an ugly smoke, fearful to behold'.⁵⁴⁹ Each of these accounts convey the animating effect that water features had upon their accompanying statuary, giving the illusion of motion, sound and even fire or smoke, thereby disproving the kind of reading exemplified in Tchikine's evaluation — that the Fountain of the Dragon's hydraulic effects were incompatible with their sculptural setting — and emphasising a symbiotic relationship between the two media which made the dragons all the more terrifying.⁵⁵⁰

At the Fountain of the Dragon, the capacity of water to animate sculpture and to instill fear into the beholder was exploited to its greatest potential in the sound effects generated by its hydraulic display, which replicated the acoustics of a military bombardment. Although the mere sight of the four water-breathing dragons was, according to Zappi, sufficient to 'frighten those who look upon them', their malevolence was magnified by the sound of gunfire emitted by the high-pressure jets which spewed from the monsters' gaping jaws.⁵⁵¹ Nicolas Audebert, who was given access to and instruction in the

⁵⁴⁸ 'l'ingegno umano ha sconvolti gli elementi e ha saputo attribuire all'acqua l'effetto del fuoco' (Testi, Letter to Duke Cesare d'Este, 27th October 1620, 346, in Cantù 1856).

⁵⁴⁹ Anon., *True Description* 30, in Harley 1745.

⁵⁵⁰ Tchikine 2010: 68.

⁵⁵¹ '...quattro dragoni grandissimi del naturale, coll'ale e bocche aperte di tal sorte che spaventano gli homini nel riguardarli' (Zappi, *Annali* 58).

garden's hydraulic system, recorded that each jet made 'a noise like shots of arquebuses' (*coups de harquebuses*), and the cumulative effect of the four jets sounded 'like a battery of arquebuses' (*escoppetterie de harquebusiers*).⁵⁵² Del Re also compared the water jets to the noise of 'many arquebuses fired together' (*più archibugi scarcati insieme*), a description which is echoed in subsequent seventeenth-century accounts.⁵⁵³ But the aural assault did not stop there. Punctuating the sound of gunshots emitted by the dragons was the boom of cannon fire which accompanied the column of water rising from the midst of the winged statues — this was operated by a pump which made the water surge up at regular intervals, Audebert and Del Re recount, rather than rising in a continuous stream as it does today.⁵⁵⁴ This pump produced a sound described as 'shots of a great cannon' (*coups de gros canon*) by Audebert, and a 'small explosion' (*piccola bombarda*) by Del Re.⁵⁵⁵

The distinctly military soundscape generated by Fountain of the Dragon's hydraulic features was unique among fountains in the Cinquecento, whose water effects were typically designed to reproduce the natural movement and sounds of water.⁵⁵⁶ Indeed, Tchnikine has shown that military motifs in fountain design did not appear until the

⁵⁵² '...quatre Dragons faicts d'escailles lesquelz jettent l'eau par la bouche et de la force qu'elle sort comme par secousses, faict un pareil bruit que coups de harquebuses, de sorte que cela continuant, il semble d'une escoppetterie de harquebusiers' (Audebert, *Journal* 181). An arquebus is an early type of musket, used in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries (Parker 1996: 20, 60).

⁵⁵³ 'Alle volte con arte detta acqua sa scoppi a guisa...di più archibugi scarcati insieme' (Del Re, *Tiburtine* 65). Montaigne also heard 'the noise of harquebus shots' (*Journal* 325).

⁵⁵⁴ '...entend parmy ce bruit comme quelques coups de gros canon qui est le gros tuyau du milieu qui ne jette que par intervalles' (Audebert, *Journal* 181); 'Fra le quattro schiene de' Draghi sorge una sistola d'una grossa quantità d'acqua in alto palmi venticinque, che nel ricadere frange se stessa' (Del Re, *Tiburtine* 65).

⁵⁵⁵ Audebert, *Journal* 181, quoted in footnote 554 above; 'Alle volte con arte detta acqua sa scoppi a guisa di piccola bombarda' (Del Re, *Ville* 65). Dupérac's legend records a 'clamour like the shots of artillery' (23, fig. 1.1); Montaigne also heard the 'noise as of cannon shots' (*Journal* 325) and Testi described a sound like 'exploding gunpowder' (Letter to Duke Cesare d'Este, 346).

⁵⁵⁶ As introduced in Chapter 2, Section 2.5, pages 77-80.

seventeenth century, most famously in Gian Lorenzo Bernini's naval-themed Fontana della Barcaccia (1629) in Piazza di Spagna.⁵⁵⁷ In its reproduction of the acoustics of a relentless artillery assault — one eighteenth-century visitor compared the experience to 'a military attack' (*un attacco guerresco*) — the Fountain of the Dragon replicated the growing real and ideological significance of technology in the transformation of western European politics and global outlook.⁵⁵⁸ Within the specific context of the fountain's Hesperidian iconography, therefore, these violent sound effects simulated a 'dragon attack' in which the monstrous statues were animated to terrifying effect and weaponised, their gaping mouths filled with gunshots and their wings thundering with cannon fire. Visitors were thus enveloped in a monstrous military soundscape which transported them into the heat of an epic battle.

Sound was — and is still — amplified within the curving walls of the fountain's cave-like enclosure. Even in its present reduced hydraulic capacity, the Fountain of the Dragon can be heard when ascending the central stairway. In its original capacity, therefore, the fountain is likely to have projected an even more significant 'acoustic horizon' — a term coined by Schafer to define the distant reach of loud soundscapes designed to draw people to their source, such as the ringing of church bells which call people to worship.⁵⁵⁹ Reverberating down the stairs, and using the current soundscape as comparison, this acoustic horizon had a much more complex texture and a differently

⁵⁵⁷ Thnikine 2011: 311-31.

⁵⁵⁸ Having heard the sounds of gunshots (*molti archibugi che si scaricano a più ripres*) and been showered with rain (*pioggia*), Stefano Cabral concluded '*quest'acqua rappresenta in pochi momenti un latteo fonte, un attacco guerresco, e un orrido temporale.*' (*Delle Ville e de più notabili monumenti antichi della città, e del territorio di Tivoli*, 1779, 5).

⁵⁵⁹ Murray Schafer 1994: 53-55.

punctuated relationship-effect on the *scale dei bollori*, which drew visitors to discover the elusive source of the water that streamed continuously down its balustrades. The immersive effect of the aural assault at the fountain was further augmented by a literal immersion. Del Re recounted how ‘torrential rain’ (*rovinosa pioggia*) appeared unannounced at regular intervals, shooting from vases lining the balustrades of the pool’s encircling stairways and soaking unsuspecting visitors beneath.⁵⁶⁰ As discussed in Chapter 4, the vogue for such heavy rain simulations in Italian Renaissance gardens were associated with storms and hydrological disasters, and had distinctly disquieting connotations.⁵⁶¹

By dramatising the climax of the garden’s Hesperidian narrative, the Fountain of the Dragon’s ‘attack’ fully engaged visitors in an immersive visual, acoustic and haptic experience. Through this topophobic encounter with the monster in the woods, visitors became active — if unwitting — agents in the unfolding narrative, as they relived Hercules’ violent battle against the dragon, rescripted for a newly technocratic world of monstrosity. Had the club-wielding statue of Hercules been positioned in the grotto niche behind the fountain, this iconography would have further empowered visitors to cast themselves in the role of heroic protagonist: poised for battle, Hercules standing directly opposite the visitor, presenting a mirror image to which the beholder — and not just Cardinal Ippolito — could aspire.

⁵⁶⁰ Del Re, *Tiburtine* 65; see also Ligorio, *MS* f. 254r 13 and Audebert, *Journal* 181.

⁵⁶¹ Chapter 4, pages 150-51.

5.4 Fear and Fascination in the Garden

We now return to the question posed in the introduction to this chapter: why, when it was designed to draw visitors into a topophobic encounter with monsters in the woods, did the Fountain of the Dragon mark the focal point of the garden's Hesperidian narrative? A further question we could ask is that, if the Villa d'Este was identified with the mythic Hesperides, why did Ligorio create a woodland *locus horridus* in the midst of this paradisaal garden? Morgan argued that the incorporation of wild nature and monsters within Italian Renaissance gardens was designed to reify its paradisaal elements, citing the Sacro Bosco at Bomarzo as his key example:

If it is a vision of Arcadia, then it presents, surely, an image of Arcadia under threat. Yet perhaps this is what Arcadia has always been — a dualistic concept that, in its reflection on an ideal, requires its opposite. Without the threat of the dark wood, the rapacious harpy, the murderous giant, or the entrance to hell itself, Arcadia has no definition. If so, then the monsters and giants may be necessary to idyll.⁵⁶²

Such observations are particularly applicable to the Villa d'Este: one could easily substitute 'Arcadia' for the 'Garden of the Hesperides' here and replace the Morgan's list of monsters with dragons.⁵⁶³ For Cardinal Ippolito to claim his garden had singular Hesperidian status,

⁵⁶² Morgan 2016: 170-71.

⁵⁶³ At Bomarzo, Morgan's analysis shows how Virgil's description of a new 'Arcadia' in Italy might participate in a wider framing narrative of the garden's Arcadian associations, bringing both the wilderness and monstrous qualities of the site that would become Rome into the picture (Morgan 2016: 139-40, 170-71). In book 8 of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas allies himself with the Arcadian settlers led by King Evander who founded the city of Pallantium near the Tiber. Surrounded by lush woodland, Pallantium is a new Arcadia with elements of the surrounding rustic zone incorporated within the city boundaries. Evander draws Aeneas' attention to three groves on and around the Capitoline Hill: one sacred to Romulus, another named the Argiletum and a third where the Arcadians claim to have sighted Jupiter (*Aen.* 8.342-56). However, Evander explains that this idyllic sylvan territory was hard won and once sheltered a fire-breathing giant named Cacus who terrorised the local population (*Aen.* 8.190-200). The Arcadians' prayers for deliverance were answered when Hercules, having stolen the Cattle of Geryon for his tenth labour, was herding them across Italy and came to Latium where Cacus stole from the drove, incurring wrath of the hero, who crushed the monster to death with his bare hands (*Aen.* 8.190-267). Thus, the Hercules and Cacus episode echoes the trope of the hero ridding a paradisaal or idyllic site of its monstrous inhabitant that is central to the Hesperides myth.

the citrons which evoked the golden apples could not be without their monstrous guardian. But the presence of dragons had a more specific purpose in the context of the garden's Hesperidian symbolism as monstrous marvels. In the same way that Ippolito had commanded exotic specimens from across the globe, in the form of jasmine and the exotic plants on the first terrace, so he had also brought monsters from the edges of the world to satisfy the widespread fascination with monstrous marvels. For what better monster to embody the convergence of classical literary tropes and exotic marvels than the dragon who guarded the Hesperides in the far reaches of North Africa. In the Renaissance era of exploration, the discovery of foreign, monster-haunted lands was no longer the exclusive territory of mythic heroes like Hercules and Cadmus, and on the Villa d'Este's second terrace, visitors were empowered to cast themselves as mythic heroes, or indeed, explorers. In this way, the second terrace reflected the same agenda as the Sacro Bosco, where visitors experienced the visceral thrill of encountering sculptural incarnations of exotic beasts and monsters from around the world, brought together for their enjoyment. Thus, the live-action, dragon-inhabited woodland at the Villa d'Este elicited the same sublime responses of fear and awe as monstrous marvels, which, although horrifying, held a powerful fascination for visitors.

The power of this encounter to disquiet was amplified by its localism. Rather than adventuring to the blank spaces in the map, visitors found that these delicious horrors might be encountered within a distinctly Tiburtine vision of a *locus horridus*. Hence — and in tune with the disquieting wilderness of the slopes and valley from which the garden was transformed — the second terrace also prompted comparison with the Cardinal's

campaign to reinstate Tivoli as the *locus amoenus* of poetic inspiration.⁵⁶⁴ This undertone of exploitation and conquest returns me to the value in reading the narrative in ecocritical terms, and sets the scene for the visitor's upward progress to the third terrace. This revival of the region's ancient prominence, whether benign or exploitative or a combination of the two, was the central theme of the garden's third terrace. There, visitors would discover that Ippolito not only claimed to be the guardian of a new Hesperides, but that in his governorship of the Tiburtine region, he had also created a new Tivoli.

⁵⁶⁴ There are echoes of Hercules' exploits in this endeavour, who similarly restored the sylvan idyll of Evander's new Arcadia in Latium.

CHAPTER 6

THIRD TERRACE: REALM OF THE TIBURTINE SIBYL

Interlude: At the Crossroads

Ascending the stairways which led from the Fountain of the Dragons, visitors found themselves at a crossroads at the heart of the third terrace, a perspective illustrated in Giovanni Francesco Venturini's engraving (1691, fig. 6.1). At this point of spatial deliberation, the garden's central vertical axis is intersected by the Alley of the Hundred Fountains, a line of water spouts pouring into three, tiered channels which span the length of the avenue and convey water across the terrace from east to west.⁵⁶⁵ The unbroken line of the Hundred Fountains blocks progress up the central axis, presenting visitors with a choice between two pathways: to the right, the Fountain of Rome (also known as the Rometta) at the avenue's western end; to the left, the Fountain of Tivoli (also known as the Oval Fountain) at the eastern end, as depicted by Venturini (figs. 6.2 and 6.3). This choice was devised to guide the visitor along the third and fourth terraces in a pattern of circulation through which the garden's ideological programmes could be encountered and interpreted in a specific sequence, in order to form two complementary narratives.

The significance of the visitor's choice at this crossroads was first observed by David Coffin, who contended that the visual allure of the Fountain of Tivoli — identified in the Ligorio manuscript as the garden's principal fountain — enticed visitors to turn left and traverse the terrace from east to west.⁵⁶⁶ Coffin's conjecture is further substantiated by the Ligorio manuscript, which outlines the third terrace's circulation pattern beginning

⁵⁶⁵ Dupérac's engraving erroneously depicts the central axis' continuation onto the fourth terrace (fig. 1.1).

⁵⁶⁶ Coffin 1960: 82-3; Ligorio, *MS* f. 256r 22.

from the Fountain of Tivoli, traversing the Alley of the Hundred Fountains and concluding at the Rometta.⁵⁶⁷ The sequential experience of this route encouraged and empowered visitors to decode the terrace's geographical schema in a particular way. According to the Ligorio manuscript, the Fountains of Tivoli and Rome represented their eponymous topographies in microcosm, and the water's progress along the Alley of the Hundred Fountains recreated the course of Tivoli's waters from the east to Rome in the west, where the Aniene joined with the Tiber.⁵⁶⁸ Uberto Foglietta also elucidated this symbolism:

Thence, from the fountain [of Tivoli] is a triple canal which, cutting across the hill, goes with its water to the other fountain, which has the form of the location and of the city of Rome and of the Tiber...And the statues are not only well arranged for decoration of the site and for the pleasant view, but there is a hidden theme, not wanting in gentility, to personify subtly the nature of the Tiburtine ground. Inventor of this was that most famous architect of our time and my very dear friend Pirro Ligorio.⁵⁶⁹

In addition to this geographical schema, Coffin proposed that the visitor's choice at the divergence of the central axis cast them as unwitting participants in a mythic narrative illustrating Hercules' choice between the paths of vice and virtue, respectively represented by the Grotto of Venus Voluptas on the eastern end of the third terrace and the Grotto of Chaste Diana at the western terminus of the fourth terrace.⁵⁷⁰ The final two chapters of this thesis trace the two narratives that derived from the visitor's choice to turn left at the crossroads on the third terrace, which led them in the footsteps of Tivoli's presiding deities: the Tiburtine Sibyl, the subject of this chapter, and Hercules, the subject of Chapter 7.

⁵⁶⁷ Ligorio, *MS* f. 256r 22-262v 50.

⁵⁶⁸ 'The Fountain of Tivoli...is so called because it represents the mountain and rivers of Tivoli's countryside', 'the Fountain of Rome is so called because it represents ancient Rome' (Ligorio, *MS* f. 256r 22, f. 261r 43).

⁵⁶⁹ Foglietta, *Tyburinum* 62, trans. Coffin 2004: 86.

⁵⁷⁰ Coffin 1960: 80-87.

Introduction

On the third terrace, the ancient patronage of Tivoli's resident Sibyl was reinvoked. Presiding over the distilled vision of the surrounding countryside at the Fountain of Tivoli, the Tiburtine Sibyl's colossal incarnation sits enthroned above the central cascade (figs. 6.3 and 6.4).⁵⁷¹ Uniquely among the statues in the garden, she was originally identified by an accompanying plaque, inscribed '*SIBYLLA ALBVNEA*' — a figure whose renown reverberated far beyond her ancient veneration at Tivoli.⁵⁷² Albunea first appears in connection with the Aniene in Varro's catalogue of Sibyls (first century BCE), as transmitted through Lactantius' *Divinae institutiones* (fourth century CE), which was itself widely disseminated in the Renaissance:

...the tenth [Sibyl] was from Tibur and was called Albunea, and was worshipped as a goddess at Tibur by the banks of the river Anio, in whose waters an image of her is said to have been found, holding a book in her hand. Her oracles were moved to the Capitol by the senate.⁵⁷³

Embellishing Varro's account, Tiburtine historians Giovanni Maria Zappi and Antonio Del Re claimed that the statue was discovered in the river at the bottom of the Valle d'Inferno and for this reason, the circular temple on the acropolis overlooking the valley was dedicated to the Sibyl.⁵⁷⁴ Albunea also gave her name to the Acque Albule, the therapeutic sulphur springs which supplied the ancient baths at Tivoli Terme, and over whose white

⁵⁷¹ Ligorio, *MS* f. 275r 24; Pirolo, *Inventario* f. 377v; Ashby 1908: 242.

⁵⁷² Ligorio, *MS* f. 275r 24; Audebert, *Journal* 178; Del Re, *Tiburtine* 47. Although the plaque was not mentioned explicitly by Zappi, he still identified the statue as 'the Tiburtine Sibyl, also known as the Sibyl Albunea' (*Annali* 60). For the Sibyl's veneration at Tivoli in antiquity, see the Introduction, page 6.

⁵⁷³ Varro in Lactantius, *Div. inst.* 1.6.12, trans. Bowen and Garnsey 2003. Ligorio cited Varro's catalogue in his entry on the Sibyls in the *Antichità di Roma* Turin manuscripts (Turin *MS* a.II.3.J.16, ff. 160r-v; Turin *MS* a.II.6.J.19, f. 149v). On the popularity and dissemination of Varro's catalogue in Lactantius in the Cinquecento, see Holdenried 2006: 56-57 and Raybould 2016: 23-24.

⁵⁷⁴ Zappi, *Annali* 43; Del Re, *Tiburtine* 120. On the identification of this temple with the Sibyl in the Renaissance and its debated ancient dedication, see the Introduction, footnote 9.

(*alba*) waters the Sibyl presided and prophesied, according to both classical and Renaissance sources.⁵⁷⁵ Not only did Albunea's ancient association with the region's waters persist throughout the Renaissance, but her oracular powers also gained widespread renown. As Zappi recorded: 'the Tiburtine Sibyl, whose name was Albunea, was a remarkable prophetess who is famous throughout Italy in these times for foretelling many noteworthy things'.⁵⁷⁶ During the Middle Ages, her oracular fame spread across Italy owing to the popularity of two sibylline apocalyptic texts, the *Sibylla Tiburtina* and the *Ara Coeli* legend, which attributed prophecies of Christ's birth to Albunea.⁵⁷⁷

The Tiburtine Sibyl's sacred status in Tivoli and throughout Italy explains her colossal incarnation at the Villa d'Este's principal fountain, which identified her as one of the garden's main protagonists. Her importance is further attested to by the sibylline fresco cycle by Cesare Nebbia (1569) adorning the Seconda Stanza Tiburtina in the palazzo, which comprises five scenes depicting the mythic and prophetic tradition connected with Albunea: from her mortal origins as the Theban princess Ino, to her divine incarnation as the Sibyl Albunea at Tivoli, from whence she delivered her oracles to Rome (figs. 6.5-6.9).⁵⁷⁸ Yet scholars have long underestimated this figure's ideological significance within the third terrace's geographical schema and the wider garden's Tiburtine theme.

⁵⁷⁵ Zappi, *Annali* 70; Ligorio, *Antica città di Tivoli* f. 3, 69-71v; Bacci, *Discorso delle Acque Albule* 2-3; Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.81-106; Horace, *Odes* 1.7.12; Statius, *Silvae* 1.3.75.

⁵⁷⁶ Zappi, *Annali* 43.

⁵⁷⁷ The *Sibylla Tiburtina* survives in approximately one hundred manuscripts dating between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries, which are collated in Holdenried 2006: 173-222, who has examined their transmission and dissemination (71-170). The earliest version of the *Ara Coeli* legend is in John Malalas' *Chronographia* (c. 502), which was subsequently elaborated and popularised in *Mirabilia urbis Roma* (c. 1143), *Legenda aurea* (c. 1275) and *Speculum humanae salvationis* (c. 1309-1324); for the legend's transmission and dissemination, see Raybould 2016: 387-38.

⁵⁷⁸ The fresco cycle is based on the accounts of Ino's origins and deification in Ovid (*Met.* 4.416-562, *Fasti* 6.485-550), according to Del Re (*Tiburtine* 48), as well as Varro in Lactantius (*Div. inst.* 1.6.12).

Previous studies have identified the Fountain of Pegasus on the hill above the Fountain of Tivoli as the pivotal point of the terrace's symbolism (fig. 6.10).⁵⁷⁹ Their interpretation reconfigures Tivoli as a new Parnassus, the mythic home of Apollo, divine patron of the arts, and the Muses, goddesses of the arts.⁵⁸⁰ At the Fountain of Pegasus, a jet of water rises from a mount beneath the winged horse, representing the Hippocrene spring of poetic inspiration which emerged from the ground struck by Pegasus' hoof on Mount Parnassus (or Mount Helicon), as outlined in the Ligorio manuscript and visitors' accounts.⁵⁸¹ Venturini's engraving reveals that Pegasus was originally drawn into the iconographic tableau of the fountain below, visible above the Sibyl — an effect which is now lost behind overgrown vegetation (fig. 6.2). Coffin was the first to recognise the Cardinal's personal ideology invested in the Tiburtine and Parnassian themes.⁵⁸² Identifying the ten female figures encircling the Fountain of Tivoli's basin with the Muses and highlighting the geographical analogy between the mountaintop sites of Parnassus and Tivoli, Coffin observed: 'as the Muses through their patronage of the arts and science made Mount Parnassus famous, so the Cardinal of Ferrara by his patronage made Mount Tivoli a great centre of the arts'.⁵⁸³ Juxtaposed with the Rometta opposite, he concluded that the

⁵⁷⁹ Coffin 1960: 85-88, 2004: 89-90; Lazzaro 1990: 230-36; Dernie 1996: 72-73; Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 98-101, 106-8.

⁵⁸⁰ On Parnassus as a mythic paradise and its invocation in Italian Renaissance gardens, see Chapter 1, pages 40-41.

⁵⁸¹ Ligorio, *MS* f. 259r 36. Both mountaintop homes of the Muses, Mount Helicon and Mount Parnassus were conflated in the Renaissance, as exemplified in Villa d'Este visitors' accounts, in which the Fountain of Pegasus is identified with Parnassus (Zappi, *Annali* 62) and Helicon (Audebert, *Journal* 177-78; Del Re, *Tiburtine* 47).

⁵⁸² Coffin 1960: 85-88, 2004: 89-90.

⁵⁸³ Coffin 1960: 87. As noted in the Introduction (page 4), Tivoli stands on a lower acclivity of the Monti Tiburtini, which was represented by the artificial mount above the Fountain of Tivoli, according to the Ligorio manuscript (f. 256r 22).

Fountain of Tivoli presented the town as an artistic centre to equal — and even rival — Rome.⁵⁸⁴

Coffin's interpretation was adapted by David Dernie, Marcello Fagiolo and Maria Luisa Madonna who argued that the Parnassian symbolism aligned Cardinal Ippolito's governorship and artistic patronage of Tivoli with Apollo, who brought Parnassus fame as divine patron of the arts.⁵⁸⁵ Claudia Lazzaro also developed Coffin's reading to demonstrate how the identification of Tivoli's waters with the Hippocrene spring conveyed a geo-political ideology which emphasised the role of Tivoli's waters in Rome's prosperity.⁵⁸⁶ Through this argument, the three channels which conveyed water along the Alley of the Hundred Fountains to the Rometta not only represented the three rivers of the Tiburtine region, as outlined in the Ligorio manuscript, but also signified the three ancient aqueducts which carried water from the region to Rome: the Aqua Marcia, Anio Vetus and Anio Novus.⁵⁸⁷ Lazzaro's reading thus crystallised the importance of Tivoli's waters to Rome as the three channels debouched at the Rometta, which featured a diorama of the ancient city prospering, because it was surrounded and irrigated by water from the Tiburtine region.⁵⁸⁸

These interpretations are important, but only partially satisfactory. They do not fully account for the Tiburtine Sibyl's role, with only Fagiolo and Madonna making an

⁵⁸⁴ Coffin 1960: 87-88; 2004: 89-90.

⁵⁸⁵ Dernie 1996: 72-73; Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 98-99; 106.

⁵⁸⁶ Lazzaro 1990: 230-36; she observed that the Rivellesse spring which supplied the third terrace's waterworks had its outlet at the Fountain of Pegasus, thereby enhancing the Parnassian association by assimilating Tivoli's waters with the Hippocrene spring — both of which inspired poetry and brought their respective locales fame. On Tivoli's waters as a source of poetic inspiration and the importance of the Aniene to Tivoli's economy in antiquity and the Renaissance, see Chapter 4, pages 134-37.

⁵⁸⁷ Lazzaro 1990: 232-33.

⁵⁸⁸ Lazzaro 1990: 234-35.

effort to understand the terrace's geographical schema in terms of the Sibyl's initiatory journey from Greece to Italy, as recounted in Ovid's *Fasti* and depicted on the first two scenes of the sibylline fresco cycle in the Seconda Stanza Tiburtina.⁵⁸⁹ Illustrating the Sibyl's tragic origins as the mortal Ino, the first scene depicts Ino with her son Melicertes in the background, fleeing from her husband Athamas, shown murdering their other son Learchus in the foreground, having been driven mad by the snake-haired Fury on the right (fig. 6.5).⁵⁹⁰ In the second fresco, Ino and Melicertes are carried across the sea to Italy by Neptune and his nymphs at the behest of Venus, Ino's grandmother (fig. 6.6).⁵⁹¹ Based on these frescoes, Fagiolo and Madonna proposed that the Alley of the Hundred Fountains symbolised Ino's journey across the sea from Greece to Italy, concluding at the Rometta, which recreated the ancient city where Ino landed.⁵⁹² In this reading, the Fountain of Tivoli marked her final incarnation as Albunea, the Tiburtine Sibyl. This interpretation, however, is dependent upon visitors having classical expertise and although for many of the educated elite this would have been the case, nonetheless it is not a mythic cycle which could be expected to spring to mind for those entering through the *porta principale* and without the sibylline fresco cycle to prompt the connection. Moreover, when one factors in the experiential qualities of the terrace, its relationship with the lower terraces and the choices in movement that its features encourage, the flaws in this reading become clear.

⁵⁸⁹ Ovid, *Fasti* 6.485-550; Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 95-101 (this study brings together material earlier articles on the Tiburtine Sibyl by Madonna 1979: 195-226, 1981: 173-96).

⁵⁹⁰ Ino was the daughter of Cadmus, the founder and king of Thebes who we encountered as the slayer of the Ismenian dragon in Chapter 5, pages 171-74. Ovid recounts how Juno sent a Fury to punish Ino for adopting Jupiter's illegitimate son, Bacchus, after he was torn from the womb of Ino's sister, Semele, who had died when Juno, jealous of her husband's mortal lover, tricked Semele into making Jupiter to reveal himself to her in his full power (*Met.* 3.260-313, 4.416-52, *Fasti* 6.485-94).

⁵⁹¹ Ovid, *Met.* 4.523-42, *Fasti* 6.495-550.

⁵⁹² Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 98-99.

As this chapter will demonstrate, the elements of the Sibyl's initiatory journey mapped onto the terrace by Fagiolo and Madonna are inconsistent with the sequential experience of the geographical schema outlined in the Ligorio manuscript, beginning at the Fountain of Tivoli and concluding at the Rometta. Fundamentally, they do not engage with the broad range of material available on the Tiburtine Sibyl and only consider two of the five scenes comprising the sibylline fresco cycle, overlooking the richness of interpretation available by employing the complete cycle to decode Albunea's significance. This chapter draws upon the wealth of literary and visual material on the Tiburtine Sibyl to redefine her ideological significance at the Villa d'Este as the central figure around whom the terrace's symbolism orbited, reconciling her mythic and prophetic role with the geo-political dialectic between Tivoli and Rome. For the first time, I demonstrate how the Fountains of Tivoli and Rome were designed to foreground the sites at the nexus of the Sibyl's prophetic ministry: the Acque Albule at Tivoli Terme, where she was consulted as an oracle, and the Capitoline Hill in Rome, where she foretold the birth of Christ. Developing my ecocritical interpretation of the first terrace waterscape in Chapter 4, I demonstrate how the third terrace's mythic, prophetic and geo-political themes converged to create an ideological schema which commemorated Cardinal Ippolito's regeneration of the region under the auspices of the Tiburtine Sibyl and underscored the importance of Tivoli to Rome's prosperity.

Section 6.1, 'Regenerating Tivoli', begins by contextualising the terrace's geo-political ideology in the wake of Ippolito's frustrated papal ambitions, and surveys the ambitious civic and landscape reforms he undertook to restore the Tiburtine region to its ancient prominence. Section 6.2, 'Reviving the Acque Albule', shows how the Fountain of

Tivoli evoked the site of the Acque Albule and reinvoked the Tiburtine Sibyl's patronage. This fountain, I argue, commemorated Cardinal Ippolito's restoration of the Acque Albule, which had been swallowed by marshland, and reflected his wider revival of the region's waters. In Section 6.3, 'Passage to Rome', I demonstrate how the third terrace showcased the wealth of natural resources which consolidated Tivoli's lucrative connection with Rome, engaging with the Alley of the Hundred Fountains as the symbolic route of the Aniene, which not only conveyed the town's natural exports to the capital, but also its spiritual export: the Tiburtine Sibyl. In Section 6.4, 'The Sibyl's Prophecy', I present a new interpretation of the Rometta, demonstrating how it was designed to foreground the site of the Capitoline Hill, where the Tiburtine Sibyl is said to have foretold Christ's birth to Emperor Augustus. Here, I examine Ligorio's design-led engagement with the literary and visual traditions concerning the Sibyl's oracle, identifying the hitherto overlooked connection between the sibylline fresco cycle at the Villa d'Este and the frescoes depicting the Sibyl's prophecy in the church of Santa Maria in Aracoeli, which was legendarily founded on the site where Augustus received his divine revelation from Albunea. This chapter concludes with Section 6.5 'Reinstating the Tiburtine Sibyl', which defines the bucolic, commemorative geographical schema on the third terrace as a pendant to the wild and disharmonious vision of the Tiburtine landscape on the first terrace waterscape, as introduced in Chapter 4.

6.1 Regenerating Tivoli

To appreciate the geo-political ideology manifest on the third terrace, which commemorated Cardinal Ippolito's regeneration of Tivoli and foregrounded the region's

longstanding role in Rome's prosperity, it is important to understand the effort and expense that the Cardinal invested in civic and landscape reforms during his governorship at Tivoli. By framing these reforms against the dramatic sequence of events which led to Ippolito's withdrawal to Tivoli, it becomes apparent that his programme of renewal was also fuelled by a conciliatory fervour in the wake of his frustrated papal ambitions in Rome.⁵⁹³ The Cardinal's repeated attempts to secure the papacy, which resulted in no fewer than four humiliating defeats and a period of exile, gave rise to a fundamentally fraught relationship with Rome, which contextualises the geo-political rivalry of the third terrace.

Having acquired the coveted Cardinal's hat in 1539, on the death of Pope Paul III, Ippolito set his sights on the papacy in 1549.⁵⁹⁴ He entered the conclave as the French candidate and despite paying out substantial bribes, his candidacy was opposed by the imperial faction; after it was rejected, he supported the election of Pope Julius III, who in return appointed Ippolito governor of Tivoli in 1550.⁵⁹⁵ Although Ippolito commissioned the construction of the Villa d'Este during his first year as governor, his retreat to Tivoli was short-lived and he returned to Rome to enter the conclave of 1555, where his candidacy was not only rejected, but he was also charged with simony by Pope Paul IV and forced into exile in Ferrara until 1559, when his crimes were finally pardoned by the newly-elected Pope Pius IV.⁵⁹⁶ In a letter to his brother, Ercole II d'Este — dated 9th July 1555, months before he was exiled in September — Ippolito wrote that he had withdrawn

⁵⁹³ These events were summarised in the Introduction, pages 7-9, and are expanded upon below.

⁵⁹⁴ The political events of 1538 which culminated in Ippolito's acquisition of the Cardinal's hat in October 1569 are charted in Hollingsworth 2005: 199-232.

⁵⁹⁵ Hollingsworth 2005: 264-65. On Ippolito's connection with the French court, see the Introduction, page 7.

⁵⁹⁶ Hollingsworth 2005: 265-66.

from Rome to Tivoli for the sake of his health following the physically and psychologically debilitating effects of the conclave, and conveyed his frustrations at the papal elections.⁵⁹⁷ ‘I have retired here to Tivoli as planned, where I am enjoying the effects of the air, which is notably finer to that of Rome, and I hope will be of great benefit to my health’, he wrote, concluding, ‘the more one interferes in papal affairs, the more one runs the risk of a storm’.⁵⁹⁸ When Ippolito eventually returned to resume his governorship of Tivoli in 1560, however, his experience of the frustrations of two failed papal candidacies seem to have been more than could be addressed simply by building a palatial villa. He thus threw himself into an extensive programme of regeneration to create a Tiburtine empire worthy of a Cardinal — works which were subsequently fuelled by further disappointment following two more failed attempts in the conclaves of 1565-66 and 1572.

Cardinal Ippolito’s civic and landscape reforms in the Tiburtine region are well-documented and were undertaken alongside the construction of the Villa d’Este.⁵⁹⁹ To provide a lush vista from the gardens, the arid western slopes that they overlooked were irrigated and planted with grapevines and fruit trees to create the *Orti Estense* (1560-65), which spanned the area from the ruined Sanctuary of Hercules Victor down to the Via del Colle.⁶⁰⁰ Additional reclamation projects included transforming the dilapidated grounds

⁵⁹⁷ On the extreme conditions and deleterious effects of the conclave in the early modern period, see Pattenden 2017: 68-83.

⁵⁹⁸ Ippolito, Letter to Ercole II d’Este, 9th July 1555, in Pacifici 1920: 269. Zappi also recorded that Ippolito found Tivoli’s air beneficial to his health (*Annali* 32), and Ligorio praised the quality of the air, for which Tivoli was famed in antiquity: ‘*Le quali opere sono state tutte di Romani perche il sito bello et fertile, come il buono aere, li tiro a fabricare maravigliosi luoghi come commodi a Roma et perche molti concorrevano in questo luogo per la sanità dell’aere*’ (*Antica di città Tivoli* f. 2v).

⁵⁹⁹ For the timeline of the Villa d’Este’s construction, see the Introduction, pages 8-11. In addition to contemporary accounts, the Cardinal’s Tiburtine reforms are also catalogued in Pacifici 1920: 163-67, which incorporates payment records and Ippolito’s correspondence.

⁶⁰⁰ Foglietta, *Tyburinum* 58; Zappi, *Annali* 55; Pacifici 1920: 166-67.

surrounding the Rocca Pia fortress (built in 1461) on the southern side of the town into a small park for hunting and fishing, called the *Barchetto* (1564-65), and reforesting a large area of the Ponte Lucano district (six kilometres west of the town) to form the *Barco*, a large game park (1564-65).⁶⁰¹ The Cardinal's most celebrated works, however, centred around his mastery over and revival of the region's waters. To provide the town with drinking water and to supply the fountains at his villa, Ippolito constructed two aqueducts. The Rivellesse aqueduct was first (1560-61), which brought water to Tivoli from the Rivellesse spring, a tributary of the Aniene six kilometres south of the town on Monte Sant'Angelo, and supplied the town and the villa.⁶⁰² The second aqueduct, the Canale Estense (1564-65), supplied the gardens exclusively, carrying water directly from the Aniene on the eastern side of the town which entered the garden at the Fountain of Tivoli, as shown on Daniel Stoopendaal's map (1704, fig. 1.5).⁶⁰³ Furthermore, following the devastating flood in September 1564, the Cardinal donated 700 *scudi* towards the reparation works, as discussed in Chapter 4.⁶⁰⁴

Although Ippolito was praised by local historians for bringing drinking water to Tivoli and for his contribution to flood-prevention efforts, he gained wider renown for reviving the Acque Albule at Tivoli Terme. Celebrated from antiquity to this day for their therapeutic properties, the sulphurous Acque Albule have their outlets in two lakes: the

⁶⁰¹ Pacifici 1920: 166-67; for payment records, see also Seni 1902: 34-35, 103-104.

⁶⁰² Ligorio, *MS* f. 248r; Zappi, *Annali* 3, 55, 62; Del Re, *Tiburtine* 7, 143-44; Pacifici 1920: 167. The Rivellesse aqueduct arrived at Piazza Trento outside the palazzo, from which three conduits flowed: the first supplied the palazzo and the upper garden, the second also fed the upper garden, the third had its outlet at the Fountain of Pegasus and supplied the Fountain of Tivoli and Fountain of the Flood (Lombardi 2003: 60).

⁶⁰³ Ligorio, *MS* f. 248r, 256v 22; Zappi, *Annali* 3, 55, 62; Del Re, *Tiburtine* 144; Pacifici 1920: 167. The Canale Estense supplied the fountains on the third terrace and the lower terraces (Lombardi 2003: 60).

⁶⁰⁴ Chapter 4, page 139. Zappi, *Annali* 73; Pacifici 1920: 50.

smaller now called the Lago delle Colonelle and the larger the Lago della Regina, where baths were built by the Emperor Hadrian (second century CE).⁶⁰⁵ In antiquity, these lakes were known as the *Aquae Albulae* ('white waters' or 'waters of Albula') and their widespread fame is not only attested in ancient written sources, but also by their presence on the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, a map of the ancient Roman world with Rome at its centre which survives in a thirteenth-century copy of what is believed to be a lost third-century CE original, indicated by the legend '*ad aqua albulas*' (fig. 6.11).⁶⁰⁶ This ancient identification persisted throughout the Renaissance, and even on the eighteenth century map of the Tiburtine region by Stefano Cabral and Fausto Del Re (1778), the larger lake and its tributary are still identified as '*Lago, e corso dell'acqua Sulfurea del Albula*' (fig. 1.3). Following the collapse of an ancient channel which prevented the lakes from overflowing, the Acque Albule had been overwhelmed by marshland; Ippolito began draining this in 1550 and building a new aqueduct in 1561, one of his earliest projects at Tivoli.⁶⁰⁷ In his treatise on the springs, *Discorso delle Acque Albule* (Rome, 1564), Andrea Bacci praised Ippolito for 'rediscovering' the Acque Albule, so that people could once again enjoy the therapeutic benefits for which they were renowned in antiquity.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁵ On Hadrian's baths, see Mari 1983: 295-96 and Frizell 2009: 35-36. The medicinal properties of the Acque Albule were celebrated in antiquity (Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* 31.6; Strabo, *Geographica* 5.3.11) and the Renaissance (Ligorio, *Antica città di Tivoli* f. 67-70v; Zappi, *Annali* 66-70; Del Re, *Tiburtine* 172-73), most famously in Bacci's treatise, *Discorso delle Acque Albule* (Rome, 1564). Today, the springs continue to draw visitors to the various spas they supply at Tivoli Terme.

⁶⁰⁶ On the dating of the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, see Talbert 2010: 83-84, 133-57, who dated the lost original to Diocletian's reign (third century CE) which was, in turn, a copy of an earlier map (first or second century CE).

⁶⁰⁷ Zappi, *Annali* 66-67; Pacifici 1920: 167, 344.

⁶⁰⁸ '*Merce dell'Illustrissimo e Reverendissimo Carinal di Ferrara protettore e padre di quel la partia il quale dipoi che ha fatte seccare tutte le plaudi, che occupavano quello amena pianura, si son discoperte, et noi doppo alcune, espe rientie, per qualche professione che habbiamo fatta intorno à questa materia delle acque, le habbiamo riconosciute, e rimesse da dieci anni inqua nell'uso di prima*' (Bacci, *Acque Albule* 8).

Cardinal Ippolito's regeneration of the region was also commemorated in two poems by Marc-Antoine Muret in *Eiusdem alia quaedam Poematia* (Venice, 1575), both of which were entitled *Tibur* — henceforth *Tibur I* and *II*.⁶⁰⁹ In his first poem celebrating the Villa d'Este (composed c. 1569), Muret lauded the Cardinal for taming the wild and inhospitable site of the Valle Gaudente to create palatial villa gardens, as outlined in the Introduction.⁶¹⁰ The poem begins:

Whosoever will contemplate the heights of Tivoli, city of Hercules,
Where the venerable Hippolytus, great cardinal of the Sacred College,
Beloved of the gods, has tamed what were before harsh places
Of eternal rock, and made them less forbidding, with a gentle slope.⁶¹¹

In the companion poem, *Tibur II* (composed c. 1571), Muret widened his perspective, presenting a picture of a ruined and neglected landscape that no longer reflected the bucolic abundance for which it was famed in antiquity, and describing how Ippolito had restored the region to its ancient glory:

Darling of the Ancients, Tibur, in the course of the years,
Had fallen into ruin, and had lost her ancient beauty.
Nowhere were there canals, nowhere orchards, nowhere
Any traces of such great beauty.
Those places so often celebrated by ancient poets,
Had become filthy, and were bristling with shameful neglect.
The Nymphs mourned the joys that had been snatched from them,
And mournful Anio would stir his but languishing waters.
Devouring Time had so disfigured all, that a stranger
Might ask in the very midst of Tibur, "Where is Tibur?"
Hippolytus, a hero of divine heart, and glory of the Sacred
College, did not brook this spectacle.

⁶⁰⁹ Muret, *Poematia* 36-37.

⁶¹⁰ Introduction, pages 10-11.

⁶¹¹ Muret, *Tibur I* 1-4, trans. Tucker 2018: 227.

He wiped away the decay of this place, restoring its first
 Appearance, and bidding that it enjoy its customary honour.
 At his command, the woods, bid to grow green again,
 Began to grow luxuriant with spreading leaves.
 He bade new fountains gush up everywhere;
 And without delay, new fountains did spring forth.
 Around which he set, transported from ancient ruins,
 Many a statue polished by Phidias's hand.
 Anio himself, wearing a crown of pale olive,
 Flowed thereto, and joined his own efforts.
 Rightly therefore do the sacred springs and verdant woods
 Vie with each other to extol the name of Hippolytus to the stars.
 And, every time a light breeze whispers it with a soft murmur,
 Each in turn repeats "Hippolytus".⁶¹²

Here, Muret not only emphasised Ippolito's revival of Tivoli's waters, but also conveyed his mastery over them through the creation of aqueducts and fountains, witnessed in particular in the image of the newly-crowned river god Anio (Aniene) joining with Ippolito's efforts, which echoes the verses describing the Canale Estense in *Tibur I*.⁶¹³ Furthermore, he foregrounded the landscape features celebrated by classical poets, recalling the panegyrics of Propertius, Horace and Statius, who praised the Aniene's fast-flowing waters and tumbling cascades, together with the lush groves and fruitful orchards which characterised the region, as outlined in Chapter 4.⁶¹⁴ Following the arrival of the Cardinal in Tivoli, therefore, the natural forces which had governed the landscape were brought under the control of Ippolito, who had restored Tivoli to a poetry-inspiring *locus amoenus*, renewing its ancient splendour. Where Muret commemorated Ippolito's

⁶¹² Muret, *Tibur II*, trans. Tucker 2018: 229.

⁶¹³ 'Hard flint hewn out, a marvel! and rocks excavated,/ And a path made by hand through the entrails of the great mountain:/ Along which Father Anio might tumble on an unwonted river-bed./ Falling a long way along this murky path,/ He issues forth, and does not begrudge the trees his ice-cold water' (Muret, *Tibur I* 12-16, trans. Tucker 2018: 228).

⁶¹⁴ Chapter 4, pages 134-36. Propertius, *Elegiae* 3.16.3-4, 4.7.81; Horace, *Odes* 1.7.12-13; Statius, *Silvae* 1.3.24-32.

regeneration in verse, Villa d'Este visitors reaching the third terrace gained their insight through a combination of symbolic and experiential effects which reoriented them within a microcosm of this renewed bucolic landscape.

Months after Cardinal Ippolito's third unsuccessful bid for the papacy, in the conclave of 1565-66, work commenced on the third terrace. This began with the Fountain of Tivoli in 1566, followed by the Rometta in 1567 and finally, the Alley of the Hundred Fountains in 1569.⁶¹⁵ The terrace's construction not only followed Ippolito's third failed papal attempt, but also the implementation of his major civic and landscape reforms (1560-65). It is apposite, therefore, that its design should commemorate his efforts at Tivoli within a scheme which juxtaposed the two spheres, contrasting the benefits he had delivered for Tivoli with Rome's dependence on his new seat of power.

6.2 Reviving the Acque Albule

The Fountain of Tivoli marked the first act in the terrace's intertwining geographical and sibylline narratives. As outlined in the introduction above, previous studies have interpreted this fountain in dialogue with the Fountain of Pegasus, which aligned Tivoli with Parnassus (home of the Muses) and the region's waters with the poetry-inspiring Hippocrene spring.⁶¹⁶ In the light of Cardinal Ippolito's revival of Tivoli's waters, this section outlines a new interpretation which redefines the Tiburtine Sibyl as the focal point of the fountain's geographical schema and as the figurehead for Ippolito's programme of

⁶¹⁵ The conclave of 1565-66 concluded in January and work commenced on Fountain of Tivoli in August 1566; for payment records, see Coffin 1960: 29-30.

⁶¹⁶ Coffin 1960: 85-88, 2004: 89-90; Lazzaro 1990: 230-36; Dernie 1996: 72-73; Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 98-101, 106-8.

renewal at Tivoli. The Fountain of Tivoli not only represented a distilled vision of the Tiburtine landscape, I argue, but also recreated in microcosm the two sites with which Albunea was associated in the Renaissance: the Temple of the Sibyl and the Acque Albule. My synthetic reading makes clear the role of the temple's evocation touched upon in previous studies, but also introduces and analyses the compelling evidence which indicates that this fountain was also designed to recreate the site of the Acque Albule, commemorating their restoration by Ippolito.

At the Fountain of Tivoli, the Tiburtine Sibyl sits enthroned beneath an artificial mount composed of rustic tartaro formations and above a spectacular cascade, representing Monte Tiburtina on which Tivoli was built and the famous cascades of the Aniene (figs. 6.4, 6.12-6.14).⁶¹⁷ She is flanked by two reclining river gods bearing vases from which water flows to merge with the cascades beneath them — the statues are now difficult to identify amidst the overgrown vegetation, but are depicted on Venturini's engraving (figs. 6.3 and 6.15). According to the Ligorio manuscript, these three figures 'represent the three rivers of the Tiburtine region': the Aniene and the Erculaneo reclined either side of Albunea, who personified the Albuneo — although the latter two watercourses are, in fact, small tributaries of the Aniene.⁶¹⁸ The cascade tumbling beneath Albunea is joined by ten miniature cascades which flow into the oval basin from vases held by ten female figures — identified in the Ligorio manuscript as nymphs — which occupy the niches of

⁶¹⁷ Ligorio, *MS* f. 256r 22; Pirolo, *Inventario* ff. 377v-78r; Ashby 1908: 242.

⁶¹⁸ Ligorio, *MS* f. 257r 24. Del Re noted Ligorio's misidentification of the Erculaneo as a river (*Tiburtine* 48) and Ligorio himself described the Albuneo as a tributary of the Acque Albule in both versions of *Antichità di Roma* (Naples *MS*, XIII.B.9, f. 18r; Turin *MS* a.III.3.J.1, f. 12, quoted below in footnote 627; *Antica città di Tivoli* f. 71v).

encircling arcade.⁶¹⁹ Today, all but one of these figures are obscured by vegetation, but their original prominence is illustrated by Venturini (figs. 6.3 and 6.16).

Both Coffin and Lazzaro observed that Albunea's placement at the Fountain of Tivoli, seated directly above the central cascade, mirrors the geographical reality of the Temple of the Sibyl above the Aniene's principal waterfall.⁶²⁰ Lazzaro has also noted that the fountain's eastern location in the garden is aligned with the temple on the eastern acropolis — a geographical relationship emphasised on Stoopendaal's map of Tivoli, which idealises the parallel orientation between the Villa d'Este and the acropolis (fig. 1.5).⁶²¹ What Coffin and Lazzaro failed to observe, however, is that the connection between the villa and the acropolis was also underscored in the decorative schema of the palazzo. In 1565, the same year construction commenced on the Fountain of Tivoli, Girolamo Muziano was commissioned to decorate the Salone della Fontana, the largest room in the palazzo, with frescoes illustrating the Villa d'Este and the Tiburtine landscape.⁶²² Opposite the frescoed view of the gardens on the western wall stands a fountain decorated with mosaic which depicts the Tiburtine acropolis and the Temple of the Sibyl, echoing the parallel orientation of the acropolis and the Fountain of Tivoli (figs. 1.2 and 6.17). On the northern and southern walls, images of the Fountain of the Flood and the Fountain of Tivoli are surrounded by riverine, ruin-scattered scenes of the Tiburtine landscape (figs. 6.18 and 6.19). These frescoed juxtapositions present a dialogue between Tivoli and the Villa d'Este, the Aniene and the garden fountains, highlighting Cardinal

⁶¹⁹ Ligorio, *MS* f. 259r 34; Pirolo, *Inventario* f. 378r; Ashby 1908: 242.

⁶²⁰ Coffin 1960: 85; Lazzaro 1990: 230-31.

⁶²¹ Lazzaro 1990: 230-31.

⁶²² For payment records, which indicate the decoration was completed in 1568, see Coffin 1960: 50-51.

Ippolito's regeneration of the region. Dora Catalano, in fact, identified this ideological agenda in her study of the palazzo decoration: 'Facing each other are images of the original city of Tibur and Ippolito's new villa, seeming to suggest a comparison between past and present, myth and reality, and between the untamed power of water in the mysterious nature of the Aniene waterfall, and the Cardinal d'Este's harmonious and intelligent reorganisation of the natural world'.⁶²³ The symbolic and geographical alignment between the acropolis and the Fountain of Tivoli, therefore, illustrated Ippolito's mastery over the Aniene, as the violent cascade which tumbled beneath the Temple of the Sibyl was replicated in refined microcosm. The fact that this fountain was directly supplied by the Aniene through Ippolito's new aqueduct, the Canale Estense, made this vision of hydraulic mastery all the more powerful.

Further emphasising Ippolito's subjugation of the Aniene was the designed contrast between the Fountain of Tivoli and the visitor's earlier encounter at the Fountain of the Flood on the first terrace. This dialectic was emphasised by the adjacent location of the fountains on the eastern side of the garden, which was, in turn, echoed in their rendering on adjacent walls in the Salone della Fontana. As outlined in Chapter 4, the Fountain of the Flood simulated the Aniene's deluge-swollen cascades, dramatising a wild vision of the Tiburtine landscape governed by the volatile forces of the Aniene which provoked reactions of shock and fear in visitors. The Fountain of Tivoli, by contrast, delighted visitors with its gentle imitation of the same cascading waters, whilst the idyllic setting of the enclosing piazza and playful water tricks concealed in the arcade behind the fountain created a complementary topophilic environment.

⁶²³ Catalano 2003: 50.

In their effusive descriptions, Zappi declared that ‘inside the piazza of the Oval Fountain, you will think your mind is playing tricks on you, so great are the splendours of that place’, and Del Re recorded that one of his patrons, Cardinal Francesco Bandini Piccolomini (1505-88), considered the Fountain of Tivoli to be ‘the queen of fountains’ (*regina delle fontane*).⁶²⁴ Ten plane trees (*Platanus orientalis*) were planted in front of the fountain, three of which remain, providing inviting shade, according to visitors’ accounts, and the cool air beneath the canopy was suffused with the scent of citrus exuded by the citron and orange espaliers which wreathed the walls of the piazza.⁶²⁵ Visitors who were drawn into the arcade encircling the oval basin by its appealing shade were then caught in water trick, where hidden jets concealed underfoot were activated by the visitor’s steps, spraying them with ‘*spicoli di acqua*’ (water jets), as Zappi recounted.⁶²⁶ Whereas the violent deluge at the Fountain of the Flood reflected Aniene’s violent capacity, therefore, the refined and playful water effects at the Fountain of Tivoli showed the same river brought under Cardinal Ippolito’s control as symbol of his regeneration of the region.

The second locale evoked by the fountain brought the Tiburtine Sibyl to the fore. Straightforwardly, her statue is identified with the Albuneo ‘river’ in the Ligorio manuscript which was, in fact, the tributary which flowed from the principal outlet of the

⁶²⁴ Zappi, *Annali* 60; Del Re, *Tiburtine* 46. Zappi also considered the statues to be ‘*bellissimi*’ and the water effects ‘*dilettevoli*’ (delightful) (*Annali* 60-61). Laudatory descriptions of the fountain and piazza are given by Audebert (*Journal* 177-78) and Del Re (*Tiburtine* 46-53). Foglietta also gave an impassioned account, declaring the statues as ‘*perfettissime*’, the water features ‘*bella*’ and praising Ligorio for the design (*Tyburinum* 61-62).

⁶²⁵ Ligorio, *MS* f. 250v S-T; Zappi, *Annali* 60; Del Re, *Tiburtine* 46. Foglietta declared that the beauty of the piazza was enhanced by the shade of these planes: ‘*Nè aggiunge poca bellezza la grata ombra di platani, piantati nel terreno che è dinanzi la fontana*’ (*Tyburinum* 62).

⁶²⁶ Zappi, *Annali* 60. Del Re described the same feature as ‘*schizzi d’acqua*’ (*Tiburtine* 50); see also Audebert, *Journal* 177-78. On the playful nature of hidden water jets in Italian Renaissance gardens, see Chapter 2, page 80. On their violent incarnation simulating heavy rainfall (*pioggia*) and storms, see Chapter 4, pages 150-51, and featured at the Fountain of the Dragon, see Chapter 5, page 192.

Acque Albule into the Aniene, as shown on Cabral and Del Re's map (fig. 1.3).⁶²⁷ Given the widespread renown of the Acque Albule and their close connection with the Tiburtine Sibyl in the sixteenth century, visitors could reasonably have been expected to have made this extra connection and to have associated the fountain's central statue with the local healing springs. In fact, Ligorio's more comprehensive exposition of Albunea's presiding presence over these springs in *Antica città di Tivoli* reveals how ancient poetic descriptions of the Acque Albule were crucial in informing the Fountain of Tivoli's design.

For Ligorio, the Acque Albule was a site where myth and reality merged. He recognised that the therapeutic properties of the springs derived from their sulphurous mineral content, referring to the didactic accounts of Vitruvius, Pliny the Elder and Pausanias, and in the light of his excavation of the nearby ruins of the Baths of Hadrian, he understood their ancient use.⁶²⁸ Nonetheless, Ligorio also sited the Acque Albule in the temporal realm of myth. Now surrounded by scrubland on the outskirts of Tivoli Terme, the springs were bordered by woods in the Renaissance, which according to Ligorio were consecrated to Albunea.⁶²⁹ He equated the Acque Albule with the sacred sulphur springs described in Virgil's *Aeneid*, where King Latinus consulted an oracle to advise him on whether to give his daughter, Lavinia, in marriage to the Trojan hero Aeneas:

⁶²⁷ Ligorio, *MS* f. 257r 24. In the *Antichità di Roma* Turin manuscripts, Ligorio identified Albunea with a spring: 'Albunea è nome di fonte', and explained that the tributary which flowed from this spring into the Aniene was known in the masculine form as the Albuneo, 'le acqua del fonte cadendo nel fiume Aniene che hor si dice Teverone et dicesi Albuneo Fonte mascolinamente', and goes on to identify Albunea's spring with the Acque Albule (Turin *MS* a.III.3.J.1, f. 12r; see also *Antica città di Tivoli* ff. 3r, 71v; Naples *MS* XIII.B.9, f. 19v).

⁶²⁸ In *Antica città di Tivoli*, Ligorio recorded his excavations at the Baths of Hadrian (f. 67-68) and described the therapeutic properties of the Acque Albule (69-70v), citing Pliny the Elder (*HN* 31.6), Vitruvius (8.3.2) and Pausanias (4.35.10-11).

⁶²⁹ Ligorio, *Antica città di Tivoli* f. 3v, 71v, quoted below; see also Naples *MS* XIII.B.7, f. 184.

In this place where the river runs is the grove, or indeed the forest, of Tiburtinus, to which Horace refers when he describes ‘plunging Anio and the Tiburtine woods’, and this wood was consecrated to Albunea, of whom Virgil speaks in the seventh book of the *Aeneid*: ‘he consults the groves beneath lofty Albunea which, grandest of forests, resounds with her holy fountain, and darkly breathes forth harsh sulphur’.⁶³⁰

Ligorio returned to these Virgilian verses in his subsequent chapter on the Acque Albule in *Antica città di Tivoli* to elucidate their connection with the Tiburtine Sibyl: ‘For in truth this spring was consecrated to the goddess, to whom the Tiburtine people built a circular temple in the town above the mouth of the river...this is the same water of Albunea which issues from the woods sacred to this goddess’.⁶³¹

Ligorio was not alone in associating the springs with Albunea’s prophetic ministry. Zappi also identified the Acque Albule with the oracular site described by Virgil, quoting the same verses as Ligorio as well as Martial’s epigram: ‘Destination: the frosty crags of Hercules’ own Tibur, where Albula seethes and fumes with sulphur springs’.⁶³² Del Re also described ‘the woods and the spring of the goddess, the Sibyl Albunea’ and critically, in his introduction to *Discorso delle Acque Albule*, Bacci declared it was widely known that the

⁶³⁰ ‘In questo lato donde corre il fiume, era il luco o vogliamo dire bosco di Tiburto, secondo ci accenna Orazio Flacco quando dice: *et praeceps Anio et Tiburti lucus, il qual bosco fu sacro ad Albunea, laonde Virgilio nel settimo dell'Aeneide disse: lucosque sub alta, e poscia seguita: consulit Albunea, nemorum quae maxima sacro fonte sonat.*’ (Ligorio, *Antica città di Tivoli* f. 3; Horace, *Odes* 1.7.12-13; Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.82-84, trans. Putnam 1995: 109). On the association between the Acque Albule at Tivoli and the fount of the oracle Albunea in the *Aeneid*, see Horsfall 2016: 11-13. Ligorio went on to assert the ancient, mythic status of Albunea’s grove, which he claimed was ‘as old as ten ages of man’, dating it to the same era in which Troy was destroyed: ‘dal bosco Albunea a essa dea consacrato, toccando le radici del colle et delle mura della città edificata dieci età di huomo, secondo alcuni, incirca anzi alla destruttione di Troia’ (*Antica città di Tivoli* f. 3).

⁶³¹ ‘Virgilio il dice et il suo commentatore più illustre, che fu detto dalla dea che i Greci chiamano Leucothea, che i Latini dicono Albunea e Sibilla Tiburtina, onde il poeta nel settimo dell'Aeneide disse: *Consulit Albunea nemorumque maxima sacro fonte sonat.* Perché nel vero il fonte fu a questa dea consacrato, alla quale i Tiburtini fecero un tempio di forma rotondo, come avemo al suo luogo disegnato, nella parte della città sopra all'entrar del fiume, che è la medesima Acqua Albunea che viene dal bosco sacro ad essa dea, come avemo detto nel libro dei templi antichi, perché Albunea tenivano per la Sibilla che rispondeva in queste contrade di Tivoli’ (Ligorio, *Antica città di Tivoli* f. 71v).

⁶³² Zappi, *Annali* 66, 70; Martial 1.12 — I am grateful to Gideon Nisbet for this translation of Martial.

Sibyl had imbued the springs with therapeutic properties.⁶³³ ‘According to common opinion’, he wrote, ‘the waters were enchanted by the famous Tiburtine Sibyl, who made them beneficial for every kind of infirmity’.⁶³⁴

At the Fountain of Tivoli, therefore, the colossal figure of Albunea — identified by the accompanying plaque — presiding over the waters should have been sufficient to conjure the site of the Acque Albule. But the statue’s evocative potential was also augmented by the planting scheme of the piazza and the fountain’s water effects. On entering the piazza, visitors were transported to a sylvan setting, where plane trees transformed the manmade boundaries of the walled square into a secluded grove, evoking the wood consecrated to Albunea where her springs were located.⁶³⁵ At the fountain ahead, the white foam formed by the eleven cascades playing on the pool’s surface also recalled the white, sulphurous vapour exhaled from the Acque Albule, whilst their resonant quality, reverberating within the walled piazza, were reminiscent of the Sibyl’s prophetic utterances which resounded from her springs, as described by Virgil and highlighted by Ligorio.⁶³⁶

This new interpretation of the fountain is augmented by a fully integrative reading of the sibylline fresco cycle in the Seconda Stanza Tiburtina. Whilst the first two scenes in the cycle depict Albunea in her mortal incarnation as Ino fleeing Greece and her journey

⁶³³ Del Re, *Tiburtine* 113; in two earlier passages he explained: ‘*e che l’intesso nome Leucotea viene attribuito ad Albunea fonte, credono forse, che siano l’istesse Albunea Sibilla, Albunea Selva, e Albunea Fonte*’ (47); ‘*il nome di Albunea si trova attribuito alla selva, alla fontana in territorio di Tivoli*’ (48).

⁶³⁴ Bacci, *Discorso delle Acque Albule* 2-3.

⁶³⁵ Foglietta described the piazza as ‘a shadowy grove of plane trees’ (*Tyburtinum* 62), and the Ligorio manuscript also testifies that the planes were a defining feature of the Fountain of Tivoli enclosure, identifying it as the ‘*Piazza dei Platani*’ (Ligorio, *MS* f. 250v S), an epithet echoed by Del Re (*Tiburtine* 50).

⁶³⁶ Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.82-84; Ligorio, *Antica città di Tivoli* f. 3, 71v.

across the sea to Italy, the third scene illustrates her incarnation as a spring, according to Del Re (figs. 6.5-6.7).⁶³⁷ To the right, Albunea sits with her son, her foot resting on a vase from which water cascades into the river below; to the left, a river god reclines holding a cornucopia in one hand and a vase from which water issues into the river beneath him (fig. 6.7). Coffin erroneously identified this scene as Albunea's arrival in Italy at the mouth of the Tiber, represented by the river god on the left, but Del Re's description is more in line with the evidence, as the vase at Albunea's feet indicates the personification of a watersource.⁶³⁸ Sculptural figurations of springs and rivers in the form of vase-bearing nymphs and river gods were a popular feature in Italian Renaissance gardens, as witnessed in the water-pouring river gods and nymphs at the Fountain of Tivoli.⁶³⁹ The fresco, therefore, shows Albunea presiding over the Acque Albule, whose waters joined with the Aniene, personified by the reclining river god.

This fresco reveals striking parallels with the Fountain of Tivoli's design, indicating a cohesive interpretative scheme. Albunea's frescoed depiction, seated with her son above cascading waters, mirrors her sculptural incarnation above the grand cascade at the fountain, where she is similarly clad in matronly robes (fig. 6.14). Furthermore, the recumbent river god on the left of the scene closely resembles the river gods at the fountain, who are likewise holding cornucopias and vases (figs. 6.3 and 6.15). Crystallising the fresco's connection with the fountain is the scene's sylvan setting, evoking the grove

⁶³⁷ *'Nella seconda camera...in un quadro, fra detti due ovati, sta la moglie d'Atamante convertita in Fonte'* (Del Re, *Tiburtine* 25). Del Re also reiterated Ino's transformation into a spring in reference to the scene depicting her journey across the sea: *'In un quadro più basso sta quando Nettuno e Venere, tirata da Delfini in una conchiglia marina, aiutano sulla schiena d'un Tritone la moglie con due figlioli convertiti in Dei marini e la madre in Fonte.'* (*Tiburtine* 25).

⁶³⁸ Coffin 1960: 63.

⁶³⁹ These statue types have been surveyed extensively by Lazzaro 1990: 146-48, 1991: 104-6, 2012: 70-94.

consecrated to Albunea where her springs were located, that was, in turn, represented by the plane trees in the piazza.

Reflecting the Renaissance conception of the Acque Albule as a site where the lines between myth and reality blurred, the Fountain of Tivoli not only recreated the springs which were celebrated for their therapeutic properties, but also evoked the oracular Sibyl's presiding presence. The fountain's identification with the Acque Albule, therefore, strengthened the ideological alignment of Tivoli's waters with the Hippocrene spring. Just as the Hippocrene possessed supernatural properties of poetic inspiration which brought Parnassus fame, so the Acque Albule were imbued with miraculous oracular and healing properties which brought Tivoli renown. By reviving the springs for which the region was famed from antiquity, it was Cardinal Ippolito who transformed Tivoli into a new Parnassus and the Fountain of Tivoli commemorated this restoration, fusing Parnassian symbolism with local legends surrounding the Acque Albule. Indeed, it is surely Ippolito's restoration of the Acque Albule to which Muret refers in the concluding verses of *Tibur II*: 'Rightly therefore do the sacred springs and verdant woods vie with each other to extol the name of Hippolytus to the stars'.⁶⁴⁰ By enthroning Albunea's colossal incarnation above the commemorative Fountain of Tivoli, therefore, Ippolito effectively reanimated Albunea's ancient prominence alongside her sacred springs, making her the figurehead for his reforms at Tivoli. What is more, her oracular role also prefigured the sibylline ideology at the Rometta, where the significance of Ippolito's reanimation of Albunea was fully realised.

⁶⁴⁰ Muret, *Tibur II* 23-24; trans. Tucker 201: 229.

6.3 Passage to Rome

The third terrace's geographical schema continued to unfold with the visitor's journey along the Alley of the Hundred Fountains (figs. 6.1, 6.20 and 6.21). According to the Ligorio manuscript, the sculptural figurations of the Aniene, Erculaneo and Albuneo at the Fountain of Tivoli correspond with the three tiered channels which carry water along the alley to the Rometta, representing the watercourses that merge with the Aniene, which then joined the Tiber outside Rome.⁶⁴¹ As outlined above, previous studies have extended the Parnassian symbolism at the Fountain of Tivoli to the Rometta, contending that their juxtaposition of the town with the capital was designed to present Tivoli as a centre of the arts to equal, and even rival, Rome.⁶⁴² Lazzaro also observed how the symbolic progress of water across the terrace underlined the fundamental role of Tivoli's waters to Rome's prosperity.⁶⁴³ What previous studies have failed to recognise, however, is how this schema lavishly showcased the wealth of Tiburtine resources which were exported along the Aniene to Rome.

The top tier of the Hundred Fountains was originally lined with a procession of twenty-two boats interspersed with vases, all composed of travertine.⁶⁴⁴ In the late seventeenth century, a number of these features were replaced by Este eagles, fleur-de-lis, and obelisks, which were not part of Ligorio's original schema.⁶⁴⁵ The extant boats and vases are now completely obscured by overgrown vegetation, although their original

⁶⁴¹ Ligorio, *MS* f. 260r 39.

⁶⁴² Coffin 1960: 87-88; 2004: 89-90; Dernie 1996: 72-73; Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 98-99, 106.

⁶⁴³ Lazzaro 1990: 235-37.

⁶⁴⁴ Ligorio, *MS* f. 260v 40; Zappi, *Annali* 59; Del Re, *Tiburtine* 53.

⁶⁴⁵ For payment records of these changes, implemented by Cardinal Luigi d'Este, see Coffin 1960: 28-29.

appearance is captured in Venturini's engraving of the Hundred Fountains, which also shows the seventeenth century additions (figs. 6.1). In their original incarnation, the boats lining the top tier formed a flotilla of 'cargo' ships that would have appeared to float towards the Rometta above the water channels. These boats represented the exportation of Tivoli's famous natural resources that ensured the town's lucrative connection with Rome: wine, grapes, olive oil and travertine were shipped along the Aniene to the capital, as outlined in Chapter 4.⁶⁴⁶ The Hundred Fountains, therefore, highlighted the importance of Tivoli's exports — in addition to its waters — to Rome, which was presented at the Rometta as a city flourishing as a result of all these commodities.

This geo-political ideology was reinforced at the Rometta, which was composed of two dioramas, the first representing Tivoli and the second Rome, both of which have been severely damaged over time due to subsidence and are almost unrecognisable from their original designs, which are shown in Venturini's engravings (figs. 6.2 and 6.22). The first diorama, arranged on an artificial hill against the southern retaining wall, depicted Tivoli's famous cascades: the Aniene was personified by a colossal river god seated beside the Temple of the Sibyl, beneath which waters tumbled in imitation of the Aniene cascades (figs. 6.22 and 6.23).⁶⁴⁷ This hill was originally planted with olive trees, according to the Ligorio manuscript, which reinforced the theme of Tivoli's famous natural resources and the export-economy focused on Rome.⁶⁴⁸ Concealed behind the cascading waters in a hollow at the base of the hill, a statue of the Tiber reclines (fig. 6.24). Beneath him, the

⁶⁴⁶ Chapter 4, pages 136-37.

⁶⁴⁷ Ligorio, *MS* f. 261r-261v 43.

⁶⁴⁸ Ligorio, *MS* f. 261r-261v 43.

waters gather in a pool which flowed into the second diorama: a reconstruction of ancient Rome (figs. 6.2 and 6.25). Here, the importance of Tivoli's waters to Rome's historical and enduring prosperity was witnessed in the mingling of the Aniene's waters with the Tiber, which the Ligorio manuscript describes as 'irrigating the roots of the hill' on which the miniature ancient Rome stood.⁶⁴⁹

The fundamental role of Tivoli's waters in Rome's flourishing status was further signified by the three-tiered design of the Hundred Fountains, which as Lazzaro has observed, reproduced the three ancient aqueducts — the Anio Vetus, Anio Novus and Aqua Marcia — that carried water from the Tiburtine region to Rome.⁶⁵⁰ Lazzaro also observed that, although the Fountain of Pegasus aligned Tivoli's waters with the Hippocrene spring of artistic inspiration, the progress of water across the terrace from the Fountain of Tivoli to the Rometta symbolically imbued the city with the creative potency of Tivoli's waters, suggesting that it was through the town's creative agency that the arts were able to flourish in Rome.⁶⁵¹ Indeed, as the water travelled along the third terrace and flowed through each fountain, it was associated with a succession of potent properties that were realised at the Rometta. The three aqueducts which brought the real Aniene's potable waters to Rome, as represented by the three channels of the Hundred Fountains, became part of the architectural iconography at the Rometta in the repeated form of the distinctive Roman achievement, the arch — here given urban context as arches between the seven hills, and highlighting not only Rome's emphatic development of this powerful architectural form,

⁶⁴⁹ Ligorio, *MS* f. 262v 48; Pirolo, *Inventario* f. 378v; Ashby 1908: 244.

⁶⁵⁰ Lazzaro 1990: 234-35.

⁶⁵¹ Lazzaro 1990: 235-37.

but also representing anew the relationship between form (signifying the aqueducts) and content (their waters).⁶⁵² In the same way, the therapeutic properties of the sacred Acque Albule springs, invoked at the Fountain of Tivoli, were echoed at the Rometta's Tiber Island, which was associated with health and medicine in antiquity as the site of the Temple of Aesculapius, an association which persisted into the Renaissance and was consolidated when a hospital was founded on the island in 1584. Thus, the potable, therapeutic, hydrocratic and creative potency of Tivoli's waters merged with the Tiber and flowed into Rome, rendering the city prosperous by their powerful real and symbolic properties.

I have so far focused on the commodities, the water and the relationship between these real exports and the creative power that Ippolito's new Tivoli was designed to represent. All of these, to some extent, have been noticed by previous studies of the garden. I have not yet touched on the significance of Tivoli's most influential export to Rome: the Tiburtine Sibyl. With this added element, the impact of which occupies the following section, I am breaking new ground and ensuring again that the potential of a fully holistic reading is explored. Between the boats on the Hundred Fountains' top tier and water-spewing grotesque heads lining the lower tier, stucco reliefs depicting scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* decorated the central panel at the visitor's eye level. These reliefs have deteriorated beyond recognition, but Venturini's engraving indicates their original prominence (fig. 6.1).⁶⁵³ Although it is no longer possible to identify the scenes, their significance remains evident: juxtaposed with the abundant water display, these scenes of

⁶⁵² Ligorio, *MS* f. 262r-262v 45.

⁶⁵³ For payment records of these reliefs, see Coffin 1960: 29.

metamorphosis emphasise the transformative power of water — specifically Tivoli's waters — and were also evidently in dialogue with the Tiburtine Sibyl's story. Not only were Albunea's origins and deification recounted by Ovid, but she was intrinsically linked with the transformative power of water: Ino's metamorphosis into a goddess had a oceanic backdrop, taking place in the Ionian Sea, and her divinity was bestowed by a marine deity, Neptune, as depicted in the second scene of the sibylline fresco cycle in the palazzo (fig. 6.6).⁶⁵⁴ Albunea's association with water's metamorphic powers was then crystallised at Tivoli, where her image was discovered in the Aniene and where her divine powers were realised at the Acque Albule, a spring which possessed transformative healing properties.

The *Metamorphoses* reliefs were therefore imbued with greater meaning following the visitor's encounter with Albunea's colossal incarnation at the Fountain of Tivoli. Thus, although the third terrace's geographical symbolism can still be 'read' from east to west, illustrating the Sibyl's journey from the mouth of the Tiber to Tivoli, as Fagiolo and Madonna proposed, the Sibyl's significance became all the more apparent through the visitor's journey in the opposite direction, from the Fountain of Tivoli to the Rometta.⁶⁵⁵ In this new interpretation, the Alley of the Hundred Fountains marked the continuation of Albunea's story following her arrival in Tivoli, from whence she travelled to Rome to deliver a prophecy of Christ's birth to the ancient pagan world. It follows, therefore, that the Sibyl's story should reach its conclusion at the Rometta.

⁶⁵⁴ Ovid, *Met.* 4.416-562, *Fasti* 6.485-550.

⁶⁵⁵ Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 98-99.

6.4 The Sibyl's Prophecy

The sibylline fresco cycle in the palazzo concludes with two scenes which underscore the Tiburtine Sibyl's important connection to Rome. According to ancient legend and its Renaissance reiteration, after the statue of Albunea bearing her sibylline oracles was discovered in the Aniene, she was worshipped at Tivoli and her oracles were taken to the Senate in Rome and stored in the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill.⁶⁵⁶ The fourth fresco illustrates this very event, depicting Albunea's veneration on the riverbanks of the Aniene, with her circular temple in the background and priests holding tablets inscribed with her oracles in the foreground (fig. 6.8). The fresco cycle concludes with the Sibyl in a triumphal procession from Tivoli along the Via Tiburtina towards Rome, alluding to the prophecy for which she was famed in the Renaissance: foretelling Christ's birth to the pagan world in Rome, as recounted in the *Sibylla Tiburtina* and the *Ara Coeli* legend (fig. 6.9).⁶⁵⁷ In the light of these two frescoes, I now propose a new interpretation of the Rometta, one which demonstrates for the first time Ligorio's design-led engagement with the prophetic literary and iconographic tradition surrounding the Tiburtine Sibyl. Previous interpretative approaches have failed to recognise how the Rometta, which presented visitors with a three-dimensional 'map' of the city with the Capitoline at its centre, was designed to foreground the two sites at the nexus of the Sibyl's prophetic ministry in Rome. This design, I argue, not only represented the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus where her oracles were stored by the Senate, but also invoked the church of Santa Maria in Ara Coeli, which was, legendarily, founded on the site where she foretold Christ's birth.

⁶⁵⁶ Varro in Lactantius, *Div. inst.* 1.6.12; Zappi, *Annali* 43; Del Re, *Tiburtine* 120.

⁶⁵⁷ See footnote 577 above for the transmission and dissemination of these legends.

Coffin was the first to recognise that Ligorio's design for the Rometta was based on his two maps of ancient Rome, *Antiquae urbis Romae* (Venice, 1553) and *Antiquae urbis imago* (Venice, 1561), both of which depict a bird's eye perspective of the city from an imaginary viewpoint to the west of the Janiculum, with the Capitoline Hill at the centre.⁶⁵⁸ On both maps, the Capitoline is identified by the Temple of Jupiter, with the hill rendered in greater detail on the *Antiquae urbis imago*, where statues of the Capitoline triad are visible (figs. 6.26 and 6.27). In the same way, the Capitoline occupied a central position at the Rometta, where Rome's seven hills were represented by the corresponding temple located on each hill, according to the Ligorio manuscript, with the city's famous ancient monuments featured behind the temples, as depicted by Venturini (fig. 6.2).⁶⁵⁹ Although the hills are not identified individually in the Ligorio manuscript, building accounts (1570) identify the central hill — directly behind the figure of Roma on Venturini's engraving — as '*Monte del Campidoglio*'.⁶⁶⁰ Venturini's engraving also makes it possible to identify the temple representing this hill as the Temple of Jupiter, the design of which corresponds with the temple rendered on both of Ligorio's maps (figs. 6.26 and 6.27). Furthermore, just as the Capitoline is depicted at the heart of the city directly above the Tiber Island on Ligorio's maps, so the Temple of Jupiter stands directly above a boat representing this island at the Rometta — the boat even replicates Ligorio's artistic rendering of the island on *Antiquae urbis imago* (figs. 6.28 and 6.29).

⁶⁵⁸ Coffin 1960: 27-28; 2004: 89. On Ligorio's sources and methods for his imaginative reconstructions of ancient Rome, together with the character of the maps, see Burns 1988: 19-92. For a broader discussion on how the ancient city was codified by Renaissance artists and antiquarians in their attempts to map the ancient city onto the contemporary topography based on the classical tradition of Rome's seven hills, see Vout 2007: 295-323 and 2012: 121-87, who highlights Ligorio's influential role in mapping and reconstructing the city's ancient monuments, whilst also exploring the prevalence and significance of Capitoline-centric viewpoints.

⁶⁵⁹ Ligorio, *MS* f. 261v-262r 44.

⁶⁶⁰ For these building accounts, see Coffin 1960: 25.

As well as foregrounding the temple where the Tiburtine Sibyl's oracles were housed, the central position of the Capitoline at the Rometta also alluded to the Ara Coeli. Legendarily, this was the altar built by Emperor Augustus on the site of his oracular encounter with the Tiburtine Sibyl on the Capitoline.⁶⁶¹ The legend was popularised in *Mirabilia urbis Romae* (c. 1140), an account of Rome's pagan antiquities sublimated into a Christian discourse, which became the definitive guidebook to the city from the twelfth century and throughout the Renaissance.⁶⁶² Where the sibylline fresco cycle at the Villa d'Este concludes with the Sibyl's journey to Rome, the *Ara Coeli* legend takes the story forwards and brings the Tiburtine Sibyl's story to its conclusion at the Capitoline.

According to the legend recounted in *Mirabilia*, Augustus, unsettled by the Senate's proposal to worship him as a deity, summoned Albunea from Tivoli to give him counsel at his residence on the Capitoline.⁶⁶³ Here, she prophesied Christ's birth as the heavens opened, revealing a dazzling vision of the Madonna and Christ before a heavenly altar.⁶⁶⁴ In response, Augustus renounced the Senate's plans for his deification and, to commemorate the altar revealed to him by the Sibyl, built the Ara Coeli (altar of heaven) at the site of the encounter, around which the Basilica di Santa Maria in Aracoeli was then built (fig. 6.30). These events all took place in Augustus' bedchamber and to this day, one

⁶⁶¹ For the key texts in which this legend appeared and its widespread dissemination, see footnote 577 above.

⁶⁶² *Mirabilia* 2.1. For a list of the text's numerous editions and details of its transmission, see Kleinhenz, 2016 (vol. 2): 988-89.

⁶⁶³ *Mirabilia* 2.1, 36, ed. Nichols 1889.

⁶⁶⁴ *Mirabilia* 2.1, 37-38.

of the columns in the church's central nave bears the inscription, 'A *CUBICULO AUGUSTORUM*' (from the bedchamber of Augustus) (fig. 6.31).⁶⁶⁵

As well as being one of Rome's oldest and most venerated churches, the central location of Santa Maria in Aracoeli reinforced the fame of the church's legendary foundation, giving it preeminent status in Rome's sacred topography. At the highest point of the Capitoline, the church visually dominated the city and stood at the nexus of Rome's civic power in the sixteenth century, beside the governmental buildings lining Michelangelo's Piazza del Campidoglio (1536-46), including the Palazzo dei Conservatori which housed the ancient bronzes donated to the public in 1471 by Pope Sixtus IV.⁶⁶⁶ In addition to the column which purported to be from Augustus' bedchamber, the basilica's legendary foundation was also commemorated at the high altar. The apse above was painted by Pietro Cavallini with a fresco depicting the Tiburtine Sibyl revealing the vision of the Madonna and child to Augustus (late thirteenth to early fourteenth century).⁶⁶⁷ Subsequently destroyed in the sixteenth century when high altar's apse was removed in 1561 to make way for a chancel, a description of the fresco is given in Giorgio Vasari's *Le vite de' piu eccellenti pittori scultori, e architettori* (Florence, 1568).⁶⁶⁸

The creation of a larger chancel facilitated a grander replacement for Cavallini's fresco and in 1565, Nicolo Martinelli (known as Trometta) was commissioned to decorate

⁶⁶⁵ *Mirabilia* 2.1, 37. Founded in the eighth century, the basilica was originally called Santa Maria in Capitolio, but was renamed by the Franciscans in 1249 in recognition of its legendary founding.

⁶⁶⁶ Noreen's study on the continuity between the Medieval and Renaissance Ara Coeli iconography has demonstrated how the basilica's fame was reinforced by its central location and by the architectural programme of renewal on the Capitoline in the sixteenth century (2008: 99-128).

⁶⁶⁷ On Cavallini's fresco, see Noreen 2008: 102-3.

⁶⁶⁸ 'Ma la migliore opera che in quella città facesse fu nella detta chiesa d'Araceli sul Campidoglio, dove dipinse in fresco nella volta della tribuna maggiore la Nostra Donna col Figliolo in braccio circondata da un cerchio di sole, e abasso Ottaviano imperadore, al quale la Sibilla Tiburtina mostrando Gesù Cristo, egli l'adora' (Vasari, *Vite* 1, 167).

the new vault with three frescoes depicting the *Ara Coeli* legend, thus reinforcing the connection between the high altar and its legendary founding.⁶⁶⁹ The story unfolds above the altar from the left to right, beginning on the northern wall with the Sibyl's prophecy to Octavian on the Capitoline Hill, indicated by the steep stairs in imitation of those leading up to the church itself, and the Latin legend above reads, '*OCTAVIANO SYBILLA INSINUAT*' (the Sibyl's prophecy to Octavian) (fig. 6.32). In this fresco, Sibyl points upwards to the second scene of the Madonna and Christ directly above the altar (fig. 6.33). The story concludes on the southern wall, with Augustus' acceptance of Christ and his offering to God at the altar built in his bedchamber, above which is inscribed, '*D.O.M. OFFERT OCTAVIANUS*' (Octavian's offering to God) (fig. 6.34).

There is compelling evidence which indicates that Ligorio drew inspiration from the basilica's legendary foundation and the *Ara Coeli* iconography for his development of the Villa d'Este's ideological emphasis on the Tiburtine Sibyl. Ligorio was certainly familiar with the *Ara Coeli* legend, as his description of Santa Maria in Aracoeli attests, which features in his single-volume manuscript on the city of Rome dedicated to Cardinal Ippolito, which was compiled in the 1550s.⁶⁷⁰ Significantly, Ligorio's work at the Villa d'Este — commencing in earnest in 1560 — coincided with another commission from Pope Pius IV to rebuild the corridor across Piazza d'Aracoeli between Palazzo Venezia and

⁶⁶⁹ The high altar's remodelling, which was funded by wealthy widow Flaminia Margani whose family chapel was located in the church, is surveyed by Heideman 2001: 500-13 and Noreen 2008: 109-111.

⁶⁷⁰ '*Ara Celi, quella bella chiesa che è sul Monte Capitolino che vi si ascende per infiniti gradi, fu così detta perché d'indi Ottaviano Augusto contemplò il cielo, allora quando la Sibilla gli mostrò la Madre col nostro Salvatore, con la quale avea a prender umana carne e nascere da essa Vergine nel tempo del suo imperio, quello che era signore di tutto il mondo e salvatore volse per noi patire tanti mali per insegnarci la via di ascendere a contemplare la sua divinità che avanza ogni splendore et ogni altro bene, cibo dell'anima immortale.*' (Ligorio, *Il primo libro delle antichità di Pirro Ligori napoletano, nel quale paradossalmente confuta la commune opinione sopra varii e diversi luoghi della città di Roma e fuori di essa. All'illustrissimo e reverendissimo signor Hippolito secondo cardinal d'Este*, Paris MS it.1129, 122; see also Turin MS a.III.10.J.8, f. 32v).

the Torre di Paolo III next to the basilica.⁶⁷¹ This project lasted until the end of 1565, the year Trometta commenced work on his frescoes, and so it is probable that Ligorio actually witnessed them in progress.⁶⁷² What is more, Trometta's commission (1565-67) coincided with the creation of the garden's third terrace, on which work began in 1565. Adding weight to this cumulative evidence is that Trometta's frescoes were completed in 1567, the same year work commenced on the Rometta, indicating that they may have played a part in Ligorio's development of the ideological schema centred around the Tiburtine Sibyl.⁶⁷³

Where the frescoes depicting the Sibyl's story at the Villa d'Este conclude with her journey to Rome, the fresco cycle at Santa Maria in Aracoeli brings the Tiburtine's Sibyl's story to its conclusion with the prophecy that brought her widespread renown across Italy. By presenting a diorama of ancient Rome with the Capitoline at its centre, therefore, the Rometta was designed to promote a dialectic correspondence between Albunea's incarnation at the Villa d'Este and her foundational role in Rome's sacred topography. The Temple of Jupiter, which occupied the prominent position at the centre of the Rometta, represented the site where her oracles discovered at Tivoli were stored, as shown on Ligorio's *Antiquae urbis Romae* and *Antiquae urbis imago*. But the Capitoline Hill also evoked the Sibyl's prophecy, which was commemorated by Augustus' Ara Coeli, and on both of Ligorio's maps, the steep steps to the Temple of Jupiter evoke those of Santa Maria in Aracoeli (figs. 6.26 and 6.27, 6.30).

⁶⁷¹ Coffin 1954: 51-2, 2004: 50-51.

⁶⁷² For Ligorio's payment records, see Coffin 1954: 51-52; for Trometta's payment records, see Heideman 2001: 501.

⁶⁷³ For payment records, see Coffin 1960: 29-30.

This dialectic was made all the more powerful by the view afforded at the Rometta, where the city's past and present incarnations merged. The fountain's position on the western side of the garden means that visitors can see modern Rome's skyline on a clear day. Zappi described this view as one of the best in the world and was able to see not only Rome, but also make out St. Peter's Basilica (as one still can).⁶⁷⁴ The strong visual link between the ancient city at the Rometta and Rome in the distance, therefore, drew St. Peter's Basilica into the orbit of the garden's ideological programmes. For what monument could better mark the fulfilment of the Sibyl's prophecy of Christ's birth and the institution of Christianity than St. Peter's Basilica at the heart of the Vatican? The view effectively juxtaposed Rome's past and present incarnations, presenting visitors with two images of the city, one before and one after the Sibyl gave her prophecy: the ancient pagan city represented by the temple diorama at the Rometta and the contemporary Christian city seen on the horizon. In the light of Cardinal Ippolito's thwarted papal aspirations, this new reading of the Rometta reveals a deeply personal ideology embedded in the third terrace's ideological programmes. In essence, this was that Rome would not flourish if not for Tivoli's exports, and papal — but also more broadly, *Christian* Rome — would not exist if not for Tivoli's greatest export, the Tiburtine Sibyl.

6.5 Reinstating the Tiburtine Sibyl

As introduced in Chapter 4, the third terrace was designed as a pendant to the first terrace waterscape. As contrasting, distilled visions of the Tiburtine region, these terraces

⁶⁷⁴ 'Gli dico essere una delle più belle viste che siano al mondo, et oltre di questo la mattina a bon hora quando si vede il tempo limpido et chiaro si vede la citta di Roma con la fabrica di S. Pietro' (Zappi, *Annali* 64).

promoted a dialectic between the disquieting, flood-dominated waterscape presided over the Nature Goddess and the harmonious, bucolic third terrace which powerfully illustrated Cardinal Ippolito's regeneration of the region. Through this juxtaposition, the Nature Goddess personified the untamed forces of nature which governed the post-classical landscape before the subjugating influence of Ippolito's programme of renewal. Presiding over the commemorative schema on the third terrace, the Tiburtine Sibyl, therefore, not only embodied the benevolent forces which brought the region fame and prosperity, but was also the figurehead for Ippolito's reforms. It was this deity whose prominence and sacred springs Cardinal Ippolito had reinstated and revived at Tivoli, as witnessed by the topographic scenography representing the Acque Albule at the Fountain of Tivoli, presided over by Albunea's colossal incarnation. Reinstated by Ippolito as Tivoli's tutelary deity, therefore, the Sibyl supplanted the volatile Nature Goddess.

Infusing the ecological interplay manifest in this commemorative Tiburtine schema was also a geo-political ideology which extended beyond Ippolito's endeavours at Tivoli to the capital. By overlaying the third terrace's geographical symbolism with the story of the Sibyl, Ippolito's retirement to Tivoli following his failed attempts to secure the papacy was justified by the garden's ideological programmes, which commemorated his regeneration of the region to which Rome, legendarily, owed its Christian status.

CHAPTER 7

THIRD AND FOURTH TERRACES: BETWEEN VICE AND VIRTUE

Introduction

On the third terrace, where the garden's central axis is intersected by the Alley of the Hundred Fountains and diverges into two pathways, Hercules stood sentinel over the crossroads. The aged hero reclined languidly on the spoils of his completed labours in a grotto niche above the line of the Hundred Fountains, atop which a second lionskin-clad Hercules stood, representing the hero's apotheosis, as outlined in the Ligorio manuscript (second century CE, figs. 7.1 and 7.2).⁶⁷⁵ Although these statues have been removed, the positions they originally occupied are shown in Giovanni Francesco Venturini's engraving (1691), depicted from the divergence of the central axis on the third terrace (fig. 6.1). Hercules was the protagonist whose footsteps the visitor had followed through the garden, from the first terrace plantscape which reoriented them within a new Hesperides, to the dense woods on the second terrace, where Hercules' encounter with the golden apples' monstrous guardian was recreated at the Fountain of the Dragon. The Hercules statues at the garden's crossroads marked the beginning of a new narrative schema in which visitors were once again cast in the role of mythic protagonist. The divergence of the central axis left the unwitting visitor poised to reenact Hercules' choice between the paths of vice and virtue. At the end of the left path, in the Fountain of Tivoli's enclosing piazza, was the Grotto of Venus Voluptas, which the Ligorio manuscript explains was 'dedicated to appetite and voluptuous pleasure'; to the right, the path led up towards the Grotto of

⁶⁷⁵ Ligorio, *MS* f. 263r 51-264r 54; Pirolo, *Inventario* f. 378v; Ashby 1908: 244. The recumbent Hercules is now in the Cortile della Pigna in the Vatican Museums and the standing figure is in the Louvre (Inv. Ma. 75). As both statues date to the second century CE, it is probable that they were excavated from Hadrian's Villa, as indicated on the plaque accompanying the statue of the lionskin-clad Hercules in the Louvre.

Chaste Diana, ‘dedicated to honest pleasure and chastity’, at the western end of the fourth terrace’s summit.⁶⁷⁶

David Coffin was the first to observe the ideological significance of the garden’s ‘Y’ configuration, in which the statues of Hercules occupied a pivotal position between the Grottoes of Venus and Diana.⁶⁷⁷ The garden’s layout and iconography, he argued, was conditioned to represent Hercules’ choice, mirroring Renaissance visual representations of the myth which depicted Hercules at the crossroads between the paths of vice and virtue:

The gardens present the theme of the choice of Hercules between Voluptas, represented by the Grotto of Venus, and Virtue, exemplified by the Grotto of Diana...The Choice of Hercules was symbolized by the Pythagorean Y, since, after pursuing a straight uneventful path of life, a youth when he came of age had to choose between the diverging paths of Virtue or Vice as Hercules did.⁶⁷⁸

Coffin presented compelling evidence that this myth — in which Hercules rejected vice in favour of virtue’s path — was appropriated by Cardinal Ippolito as a personal ideology which aligned him with Hercules’ virtue, thereby paralleling the ideological agenda of the garden’s Hesperidian symbolism discussed in Chapter 5.⁶⁷⁹ First, Coffin highlighted that each statue in the projected Hercules-crossroads triad was explicitly identified with an episode exemplifying the hero’s virtue in the Ligorio manuscript.⁶⁸⁰ The manuscript explains that the triad represented how the hero attained divinity, symbolised by the

⁶⁷⁶ Ligorio, *MS* f. 251v Zc.

⁶⁷⁷ Coffin 1960: 78-85.

⁶⁷⁸ Coffin 1960: 82-83.

⁶⁷⁹ Chapter 5, pages 161-62.

⁶⁸⁰ Coffin 1960: 80-82; Ligorio, *MS* f. 263r 51-264r 54. On the statue of Hercules bearing a club which was to occupy the niche behind the Fountain of the Dragon on the second terrace, see Chapter 5, page 160.

lionskin-clad statue, by virtue of his labours, represented by the club-wielding and recumbent figures:

In the niche corresponding with the Fountain of the Dragon below is placed Hercules in old age... posing on top of his spoils and trophies...Placed on the large pedestal above is an ancient, giant statue of marble which represents the same Hercules...The act of being wrapped in a lionskin, in conjunction with the first two statues, the labour in which he kills dragon and his repose where he reclines upon his spoils, represents the immortality for which reason Hercules was worshipped as a god.⁶⁸¹

This symbolism, Coffin noted, was supplemented by the frescoes in the Sala di Ercole by Girolamo Muziano (1565-66), where scenes of the twelve labours adorn the lower part of the vault, culminating in Hercules' apotheosis on the ceiling accompanied by images of the four Cardinal virtues.⁶⁸² Secondly, Coffin explained, the Grotto of Diana (signalling virtue's path), was located on the avenue identified as the 'Cardinal's Walk' in the Ligorio manuscript and the inventory of 1572, where Ippolito strolled regularly.⁶⁸³ Thirdly, the grotto's moral symbolism was to be represented by two fountains: the first 'dedicated to Diana, goddess of chastity', and the second to the Cardinal's mythical namesake, 'chaste Hippolytus, who chose to suffer death rather than succumb to the lust of his stepmother Phaedra' — although this latter fountain was never executed.⁶⁸⁴ To emphasise his connection with Hippolytus, the Cardinal also commissioned Ligorio to design a series of sixteen tapestries for the palazzo depicting episodes from Hippolytus' virtuous life which,

⁶⁸¹ Ligorio, *MS* f. 263r 51-264r 54.

⁶⁸² Coffin 1960: 83-84.

⁶⁸³ Coffin 1960: 84-85; Ligorio, *MS* f. 251r Z; Pirolo, *Inventario* f. 378v; Ashby 1908: 244. The avenue is also identified as the Cardinal's Walk in building accounts (Coffin 1960: 3).

⁶⁸⁴ Coffin 1960: 84-85; Ligorio, *MS* f. 264r-264v 55. The myth of Hippolytus is the subject of Euripides' *Hippolytus* and Seneca's *Phaedra*: a faithful devotee of Diana who dedicated himself to a virtuous life of chastity and hunting, Hippolytus spurned the advances of his stepmother, Phaedra; she then accused him of rape and his father Theseus invoked Neptune's vengeance, ending with a sea monster causing Hippolytus to be thrown from his chariot to his death.

Coffin argued, paralleled Ippolito's career.⁶⁸⁵ The scenes included Hippolytus' resurrection as the Latin god Virbius, a distinction bestowed upon him by Diana for his dedication to chastity, and inviting a parallel with Hercules' apotheosis as a result of his virtuous labours. Finally, the palazzo frescoes reinforced the garden's moral symbolism, Coffin observed, with six rooms dedicated to the theme of virtue, including those comprising Ippolito's private apartment. To indicate the density of allusion this represented, the Salone (reception hall), the Stanza della Virtù (antechamber) and Camera del Cardinale (Ippolito's bedchamber) are decorated with fifty-two personifications of virtue.⁶⁸⁶

The Hercules' choice theme, therefore, aligned the Cardinal with the virtuous exempla of Hercules and Hippolytus, illustrating how the Cardinal would likewise attain heaven for following a virtuous path in life. It was for this reason, Coffin concluded, that the Cardinal dedicated his garden to Hercules and Hippolytus, as conveyed in Marc-Antoine Muret's first dedicatory epigram on the Villa d'Este from his Tiburtine cycle in *Eiusdem alia quaedam Poematia* (Venice, 1575):

Labours did not crush Hercules, nor did seductive pleasure
 Ever soften the soul of chaste Hippolytus.
 Kindled with love of both these virtues,
 To Hercules and to Hippolytus, Ippolito dedicates these gardens.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸⁵ Coffin 1960: 69-70, 84-85, 2004: 99-105. Ligorio's tapestry designs, which were never realised, are now in the Morgan Library, New York, together with a detailed accompanying description by Ligorio (*MS M.A.* 542), both of which are collated in Coffin 1960: 151-59, figs. 90-105. In the accompanying description, Ligorio cited Ovid (*Met.* 15.492-546) and Seneca's *Phaedra* as his main sources for the myth of Hippolytus (*MS M.A.* 542, f. 2r, in Coffin 1960: 152).

⁶⁸⁶ Coffin catalogued the fifty-two personifications of the Virtue in these three rooms (1960: 161-63). The three adjacent rooms were also dedicated to the theme of virtue: the Sala di Ercole, decorated with the hero's twelve labours and apotheosis, together with the four Cardinal virtues; the Stanza della Nobiltà, featuring personifications of Nobility, Virtue and the Liberal Arts, with the Cardinal's crest in the four corners; and the Stanza della Gloria, depicting the four Cardinal virtues surrounded by allegorical images of glory (Coffin 1960: 83-84, 2004: 93-98).

⁶⁸⁷ Muret, *Dedicatio hortorum Tiburtinorum I*, trans. Coffin 1960: 78. The second epigram in this dedicatory pair, discussed at length in Chapter 3, is quoted on page 99.

Coffin's interpretation significantly adds to the ideology of the Villa d'Este as a journey through Cardinal Ippolito's development of a new 'myth' of autarky in the wake of his banishment from Rome. This theory is compelling, but Coffin never worked through its fullest implications and provided only a cursory exposition of how Hercules' choice was translated into the wider garden setting. Moreover, he neglected the influence of the myth's numerous and diverse visual renderings beyond the motif of Hercules at the crossroads.⁶⁸⁸ It is unsurprising, therefore, that his reading has been disputed in key subsequent studies of the Villa d'Este by Claudia Lazzaro, David Dernie, Marcello Fagiolo and Maria Luisa Madonna. Although they accepted the parallel drawn between Cardinal Ippolito and the virtuous exemplarity of Hercules and Hippolytus through the garden's iconography and corresponding palazzo decoration, these scholars rejected Hercules' choice as an overarching theme on the grounds that it deviated from the garden's primary Hesperidian narrative, and Hercules' role as *genius loci* of Tivoli — despite the broad hint given by Muret's epigram.⁶⁸⁹

In this chapter, I refine and develop Coffin's interpretation to prove its wider validity in a new reading of the Hercules' choice narrative — one which foregrounds the phenomenological experience of the visitor and expands the significance throughout the garden. As with his engagement with the Villa d'Este's Hesperidian narrative, Coffin's

⁶⁸⁸ Problematically, Coffin referred to visual renderings of Hercules' choice without citing any specific examples to support his argument, and his engagement was limited to the following statement: 'Pictorial representations of the Choice of Hercules often have the personifications of Voluptas and Virtue pointing out to the young Hercules two contrasting ways' (1960: 83), which Coffin only supported by citing Panofsky's study (1930) on the myth in Renaissance art and literature.

⁶⁸⁹ Lazzaro 1990: 239-40, 318 fn. 97; Dernie 1996: 82, 94-95; Fagiolo and Madonna 2003: 88-89, 116-118. Occhipinti disregarded Coffin's theory entirely in his discussion of the garden's Herculean themes (2009: 340-47).

iconographic interpretation of the Hercules' choice theme was based upon his reading of the assumed authorial intentions of the garden's patron, and as such, focussed on a complex symbolism which could only have been decoded by visitors well-versed in classical humanism. By privileging the intellectual experience of an educated minority, Coffin diminished the richness of interpretation available by exploring the narrative-conditioned layout of the third and fourth terraces as it was designed to be encountered, from the perspective of the strolling visitor, many of whom were educationally different to those familiars and intimates of the Cardinal. Furthermore, in emphasising the ideological significance of Hercules and Hippolytus to the Cardinal, scholars have also more broadly overlooked the compelling narratological impetus in the designed relationship between Venus and Diana as antithetical personifications of vice and virtue. This new reading demonstrates how visitors were drawn into the narrative of Hercules' choice as active participants — regardless of their classical knowledge — through complementary phenomenological encounters which augmented the garden's iconographic symbolism: first, by the visitor's own motion through the third and fourth terraces; and secondly, through contrasting moral experiences in the Grottoes of Venus and Diana.

To cover the complexities of the ideas embodied in Hercules' choice theme, this chapter is divided into three main sections with subsections, with a concluding fourth section. Section 7.1, 'Hercules' Choice', demonstrates the influence of the myth's visual renderings on the Villa d'Este's design. In subsection 7.1.1, 'At the Crossroads', I trace the myth's ancient inception and Renaissance revival to contextualise its cultural significance in the Cinquecento. Surveying the influence of the myth's visual renderings on the Villa d'Este's design, I show how the principal motifs which typified Hercules' choice in

Renaissance art were translated into a three-dimensional setting through the layout, landscaping and iconography of the upper terraces. In subsection 7.1.2, 'The Paths of Vice and Virtue', this design is explored from the perspective of the strolling visitor, whose motion generated a narrative thread which linked the iconographic elements of the Hercules' choice theme into an allegorical sequence, thereby transforming the visitor's movement through the garden into a metaphor of moral choice, and making them an active agent in reenacting a popular myth.

Section 7.2, 'The Grotto of Venus Voluptas', and Section 7.3, 'The Grotto of Chaste Diana', are dedicated to the visitor's contrasting encounters within the two grottoes, which were designed to reorient the visitor within comparative mythic scenographies through the classical literary trope of the bathing goddess, manifest in the statues of Venus and Diana. Through this unifying trope, I argue, these statues not only personified vice and virtue, but also implicated the visitor in a moral choice by drawing them into antithetical voyeuristic encounters, which I examine according to psychoanalytic theory through contrasting 'scopophilic' (pleasure in looking) and 'scopophobic' (fear in looking) experiences.⁶⁹⁰

Beginning with the Grotto of Venus, in subsection 7.2.1, 'The Bathing Beauty', I examine how the mythically-allusive sculptural setting of Venus emerging from her bath invited scopophilic viewing, engaging the visitor in an act of voyeurism which thereby implicated them in vice. Having contextualised this encounter within the mythic trope of the bathing goddess, in subsection 7.2.2, 'Garden Isle of the Goddess', I explore the

⁶⁹⁰ The term 'scopophilia' was coined by Freud (1961), and employed by Mulvey to define the pleasure of voyeurism in her influential article on visual pleasure in narrative cinema (1975: 6-18). The antonym 'scopophobia' was coined by psychologists Hinsie and Campbell (1960) to define the 'fear of being looked at', but subsequently employed by Allen (1974) to mean the 'fear in looking' in his study on scopophobia, and in this study, the term is used to define the fear associated with voyeurism.

parallels between the grotto's design and the climactic episode of Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Venice, 1499) on the Isle of Venus. Here, Poliphilo's alternative version of Hercules' choice culminates in a voyeuristic revelation of Venus bathing in a fountain which bears striking resemblance to the one adorning the Grotto of Venus.⁶⁹¹ The concluding subsection 7.2.3, 'What Actaeon Saw', shows how the link between the grotto and the literary episode is crystallised in the juxtaposition of Venus bathing with the story of Diana and Actaeon.

Moving on to the Grotto of Diana, in subsection 7.3.1, 'Beware the Bathing Beauty', I argue that the sculpture of Diana was the antagonistic foil for her desirable counterpart, and for the first time, demonstrate the allegorical significance of statue's accompanying stucco relief, depicting Actaeon's metamorphosis into a stag after he witnessed Diana bathing. Captured in her huntress aspect and framed against the relief, the scopophobic sight of Diana exacting her revenge upon Actaeon for his voyeurism was designed to convict the visitor of their scopophilic indiscretion in the Grotto of Venus. In subsection 7.3.2, 'Sylvan Haunt of the Huntress', I show how the story of Actaeon reverberated beyond its visual rendering, outlining how the grotto's design and contextual landscaping were modelled on Ovid's description of Diana's woodland cave in *Metamorphoses*.⁶⁹² Subsection 7.3.3, 'Warning Tales from the Woods', highlights the hitherto overlooked ideological significance of the stucco reliefs in the Grotto of Diana which depicted scenes from *Metamorphoses*. In the light of the moral significance invested in the visitor's contrasting voyeuristic encounters in the Grottoes of Venus and Diana, I

⁶⁹¹ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 292-368.

⁶⁹² Ovid, *Met.* 3.154-78.

demonstrate how these Ovidian reliefs constituted a series of cautionary tales illustrating the dangerous consequences of vice in the guise of voyeurism.

Finally, in Section 7.4, ‘A Landscape Trick of Moral Choice’, I reflect on the experiential quality of the Hercules’ choice theme, comparing its playful and theatrical nature to hidden ‘*giochi*’ and ‘*scherzi d’acqua*’ (water jokes and tricks) which were designed to surprise, delight and amuse visitors.

7.1 HERCULES’ CHOICE

7.1.1 At the Crossroads

Hercules’ choice was a moral tale of enduring cultural significance from its ancient inception — traced to the fifth century BCE account by Prodicus, extant in Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* — to its Renaissance revival.⁶⁹³ According to Prodicus, the story goes that in his youth, Hercules sat to ponder which moral path his life should follow; at that moment two beautiful women appeared before him, one voluptuous and scantily clad, the other sober and modestly dressed.⁶⁹⁴ The more alluring of the pair identifies herself as Vice, and entices Hercules with promises of comfort and pleasure: ‘follow me, I will lead you along the pleasantest and easiest road, and you will taste all the sweets of life but never know its hardships’.⁶⁹⁵ Despite these temptations, Hercules chooses the ‘hard and long’ road that Virtue exhorts him to follow, drawn by her promises of heroism and lasting renown: ‘if you

⁶⁹³ Prodicus 84b in Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.1.21-33.

⁶⁹⁴ Prodicus 84b in Xenophon *Mem.* 2.1.22.

⁶⁹⁵ Prodicus 84b in Xenophon *Mem.* 2.1. 23-24, trans. Marchant and Todd 2013.

should take the road that leads to me, you will turn out very much a good doer of fine and noble deeds'.⁶⁹⁶

The efflorescence of visual and literary representations of Hercules' choice in the Renaissance, collated in Erwin Panofsky's exhaustive survey, testify to the myth's widespread popularity, particularly in the Cinquecento.⁶⁹⁷ As a moral allegory, the myth was easily absorbed into Italian humanist rhetoric. Post-classical variations of the myth, which first appeared briefly in Francesco Petrarch's *De vita solitaria* (1346) and at length in Coluccio Salutati's *De laboribus Herculis* (1406), present Hercules' choice as two divergent pathways, incorporating the Pythagorean model of a moral choice signified by the letter 'Y' from Lactantius' *Divine Institutes* (fourth century CE).⁶⁹⁸ Ligorio adopted this crossroads device in his rendition of Prodicus' account in the *Antichità di Roma* Naples manuscripts, in which Hercules' choice between Vice and Virtue is a literal choice between two paths that turn to the right and the left.⁶⁹⁹ Critically, Salutati's *De laboribus Herculis*

⁶⁹⁶ Prodicus 84b in Xenophon *Mem.* 2.1.27, 29.

⁶⁹⁷ Panofsky (1930) evaluated the theme of Hercules' choice in art and literature from the fourteenth century to the seventeenth century; the myth's cultural significance during the peak of its popularity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is also surveyed by Wind 1967: 141-51.

⁶⁹⁸ Petrarch, *De vita solitaria* 1.4.2, 2.9.4; Salutati, *De laboribus Herculis* 3.7.1-4; Lactantius' *Divine Institutes* 6.3. Petrarch and Salutati used Cicero's Latin version of Hercules' choice as their source (*De Officiis* 1.118), as Xenophon's account was not widely disseminated until it was translated into Latin by Sassola da Prato (c.1442-44). The myth's transmission and Renaissance revival is traced by Mommsen 1953: 178-92 and Galinsky 1972: 185-229.

⁶⁹⁹ Extending over two folios, Ligorio's account begins with a summary of the myth according to Prodicus: 'Prodico recito cusi, che stando Hercole in una solitudine quando egli uscì de gli anni puerili, et considerando qual huomo fusse, e a' qual via si voltasse per vivere felicemente, gli apparvero due Donne. L'una delle quali l'auttor chiama la Virtù, et l'altra il Vitio. Poi che dunque l'una et l'altra l'hebbono parlato salutandolo e' espose i beni che havea ciascuna, et che Hercole volle per guida la Virtù. La quale disse alla sua ministra pigliatelo per la mano, accio che venghi ad haver ben giudicato, lo conduce così preso per la mano in un certo luogo alto e' dilettevole et eminente, sopra posto ad un piano largo e spatioso, dove si scorgeano due sommità, che di lontan pareva che si terminassero ad un fine. Ma la Virtù doppo de tal vista fattolo avvicinare, appresso gli mostrò quelle sommità esser molto lontane tra loro. Questa dice che guarda a man destra, si chiama la sacra habitatione dell'Amicitia mia compagna et sorella. L'altra da man destra manca, è quella de la simulatione, Dea parente de la tristitia. Avvicinati dunque et considera o' Hercole la natura di tutte due i luoghi, accioche tu non credi, che siano una cosa medesima guardando di lontano, et comandò alla prudentia, che gli fusse appresso guida, et gli dichiarasse ogni cosa.' (Ligorio, Naples MS XIII.B.3, ff. 93-94; see also Naples MS XIII.B.10, f. 135v).

was fundamental in establishing the Renaissance moralisation of Hercules' labours as allegories of the virtuous hero overcoming vice, as introduced in Chapter 5.⁷⁰⁰ In a four-volume treatise recounting moralised renditions of the labours, Salutati conceived Hercules' choice to follow virtue's path in his youth as the originary myth from which all the hero's virtuous endeavours derived.⁷⁰¹ In the wake of this account, the protagonist penned by the writers of the Este court in Ferrara is a post-choice Hercules whose virtuous labours enable him to attain divinity, as witnessed in Pietro de Bassi's *Le fatiche d'Ercole* (1431), Lilio Gregorio Giraldi's *Herculis vita* (Ferrara, 1539) and Giambattista Giraldi Cintio's *Ercole* (Modena, 1557). In addition to the myth of Hercules' choice, these texts were no doubt invaluable to Ligorio for constructing a personal ideology for Cardinal Ippolito around the allegorical tradition surrounding Hercules.

The moral significance of Hercules' choice is at the heart of the subject's visual renderings, which depict the hero poised to make his choice between two divergent pathways. Although these renderings incorporate the Pythagorean 'Y' motif from the myth's literary renditions rather than an 'X', the tradition became known as Hercules at the crossroads. Albrecht Dürer's engraving, *Hercules at the Crossroads* (c. 1498) is the earliest known example of the subject by a major artist, featuring Hercules standing between a nude, cowering Vice and a clothed, club-wielding Virtue (fig. 7.3). In the background, the landscape is divided into two separate vistas by a central tree marking the crossroads: on

⁷⁰⁰ Chapter 5, pages 161-62. The influence of Salutati's moralised Hercules is traced by Witt 1983: 212-19, and the allegorical representation of Hercules' labours in Renaissance art and literature is surveyed by Wind 1967: 141-51, Hall 2008: 126-41 and Stafford 2012: 203-18.

⁷⁰¹ Salutati, *De lab.* 3.7.1-4. Salutati cites Seneca's depiction of the Stoic hero in *Hercules furens* and *Hercules oetaeus* as his source for the moralised Hercules, and begins his treatise by stating his aim is to justify how Hercules could be deified in *Hercules oetaeus* having murdered his family in *Hercules furens* — the influence of Seneca's tragedies on Salutati is explored by Witt 1983: 212-19.

the left, a steep path leads to a castle on a hill, and to the right, the landscape gently slopes downwards to a lush river valley. Dürer's composition of the myth's *dramatis personae* at the crossroads, framed against a symbolic landscape — divided into contrasting challenging and appealing pathways by a central tree — influenced a wealth of depictions in Italy.⁷⁰²

One of the most notable examples of Hercules' choice in sixteenth-century Italian art is Paolo Veronese's *The Choice Between Virtue and Vice* (c. 1565), produced in the same decade as the creation of the Villa d'Este gardens (begun in earnest in 1560) and only a few years before Ligorio's manuscript (c. 1568) outlining the garden's projected plan was written (fig. 7.4). Veronese's figures are in modern attire, set within a sloping landscape: at the centre, Hercules turns his back on opulently dressed Vice beneath him, in order to embrace laurel-crowned Virtue above, who stands under an oak tree — the laurel and oak are symbols of victory and virtue respectively which emphasise Hercules' *exemplum virtutis*.⁷⁰³ Titian's allegorical interpretation of the subject, *Sacred and Profane Love* (c. 1514), has no central heroic figure, but like Dürer's engraving features a central tree which divides the landscape behind the female figures into two discrete topographies: behind the clothed woman on the left is a meandering road lined with oak trees leading to a hilltop castle, in contrast to the verdant valley pictured behind the nude figure on the right (fig. 7.5).

Two other depictions of Hercules' choice which had the greatest potential influence on Ligorio's design for the Villa d'Este were those produced by Raphael and his pupil,

⁷⁰² On Dürer's extensive influence on Italian Renaissance art, see Crawford Luber 2005: 1-39; and on the influence of Dürer's *Hercules at the Crossroads* in particular, see Thornton 2004: 1-13.

⁷⁰³ On the symbolism of the laurel and the oak see D'Ancona 1977: 201, 250-52.

Giulio Romano, under whom Ligorio had trained and among the few artists whose work he praised.⁷⁰⁴ Raphael's allegorical rendition, *Vision of a Knight* (c. 1504), portrays a central figure sleeping beneath a tree which divides the scene between soberly attired Virtue to his left, standing before a path meandering up a hill to a castle, and richly dressed Vice to his right, in front of a river valley (fig. 7.6). Romano's more faithful rendering of the myth is no longer extant (c. 1510-46), but survives in Adamo Scultori's copy, *Hercules at the Crossroads* (c. 1547-87), whose engraving shows Hercules seated, resting on his club, as he considers the roads presented to him by modestly dressed Virtue, who points up to a hilltop castle, and semi-nude Vice, who points to a path through a tree-lined valley (fig. 7.7). Annibale Carracci's *Choice of Hercules* (c. 1596) seems to have borrowed a number of elements from this rendering: his Hercules leans on his club beneath a tree between fully clothed Virtue and diaphanously draped Vice, the former pointing to a road zigzagging through a steep, barren landscape, and the latter pointing to a flower-strewn path (fig. 7.8).

Significantly, key elements of these visual renderings are echoed and embellished in Ligorio's account of Hercules' choice, in which the protagonist resists the seductive, artful charms of Vice in favour of solemn but benevolent Virtue.⁷⁰⁵ Vice's well-trodden path is shadowed by pleasant 'woods full of cypresses, laurels and other evergreens and

⁷⁰⁴ On Ligorio's connection to the school of Raphael and his praise of Raphael and Romano, see Coffin 2004: 7.

⁷⁰⁵ Ligorio compares the noble bearing and stern features of virginal Virtue to an ancient statue, describing her simple clothes and benevolent gaze which instilled admiration in all who met her: '*una Vergine non di bella faccia in prima fronte, ma si bene munita, e ripiena di ferma et antica bellezza a simiglianza de le statue antiche, le quali hanno bisogno di tempo per considerarle, et di occhi acuti et accurati. Il suo vestimento era bianco senza arte...La guardatura sua era semplice et generosa, il viso costante e immutabile, et s'alcuno se le accostava per onorarla et ammirarla*' (Ligorio, Naples MS XIII.B.3, f. 94). Vice, by contrast, is a wanton seductress who tempts men to follow her with her artful guise and empty promises: '*in cambio de la vera bellezza si vedeva il viso dipinto, in cambio del riso allegro ghignava di nascosto. Essa per parere amabile fingeva d'amar quei che entravano, ma non si accostando alcuno spontaneamente, ella correva di lontano, andava loro in contra, s'inclinava, et con molte carezza conduceva di sopra dentro l'albergo suo...come vedi, che tende agguati a chi entr, e gli abbraccia, et fa cose maravigliose, incantando, e' persuadendo a' non temere et salire.*' (Ligorio, Naples MS XIII.B.3, f. 94).

fruit trees' and warmed by 'gentle breezes'.⁷⁰⁶ By contrast, the less-travelled road of virtue is not for the faint of heart, not only meandering up 'a steep and precipitous cliff blanketed in dark cloud', but also 'surrounded by precipices and valleys filled with piles of human bones and deadly, poisonous animals'.⁷⁰⁷

It is unsurprising, therefore, that same three motifs that characterise both Ligorio's account and visual representations of Hercules' choice in sixteenth-century art also featured in the design of the Villa d'Este gardens: Hercules at the crossroads, the antithetical personifications of Vice and Virtue and the contrasting topographies of their paths. Importantly, Muziano's frescoed view of the Villa d'Este in the Salone della Fontana (c. 1568) provides crucial evidence for the garden's design-led engagement with contemporary depictions of Hercules' choice, the significance of which Coffin failed to recognise (fig. 1.2). Echoing the depictions of Dürer, Titian, Raphael, Romano, Scultori and Caracci, the fresco includes the iconic central tree: a towering oak dominates the foreground, in line with the garden's central axis and significantly for my argument, marking the point at which the axis diverges into two pathways where the statues of Hercules were positioned. Furthermore, the oak — a symbol of virtue in the Renaissance — is the same tree under which Virtue is portrayed by Veronese, and oaks also line virtue's path in Titian's painting.⁷⁰⁸ Furthermore, the central tree divides Muziano's frescoed view

⁷⁰⁶ *'Mostrava come la prima da uomo era l'ombra per i boschi circostanti e la piena di cipressi, di lauri e d'altri arbori semper verdi, et fruttiferi. Intorno spirano aure piacevoli atte a 'dar nutrimento e accrescimento a quelle piante, non romperle e svellerle. Il luogo tutto mostrava essere quieto senza alcuno strepito, giocondo e allegro vi si vedevano certi pochi huomini entrare, e uscire con piacere senza mai mutare il viso.'* (Ligorio, Naples MS XIII.B.3, f. 94).

⁷⁰⁷ *'Ma di gratia disse pon mente all'altra parte, dove dando di cozzo la maggior parte de le persone, et così gli mostrava primamente l'entrata ch'era simigliante all'altra come se detto. Il fine di poi si terminava in una rupe erta et relevata precipitosa, coperta in cima d'una nuovola scura, da ogni banda, et d'intorno erano precipitij et valli et monti d'ossa humane accumulate insieme, ripiene per tutto d'animali mortiferi et velenosi.'* (Ligorio, Naples MS XIII.B.3, f. 94).

⁷⁰⁸ D'Ancona 1977: 250-52.

into two discrete topographies: on the left, the gardens slope up steeply to the palazzo; to the right, the level first terrace gives way to a view across the Roman Campagna. The country plain where the Aniene snakes across the Campagna towards Rome echoes the lush river valley which indicated vice's appealing road in contemporary art. Likewise, the criss-crossing pathways up the garden's steep fourth terrace beneath the palazzo evoke the zigzagging road leading to the hilltop castle and representing virtue's challenging path.

Based on the incorporation of motifs from visual representations of Hercules' choice in Muziano's fresco, it is evident that Cardinal Ippolito embraced a design where the steep ascent of his gardens represented a new path of virtue, culminating at the palazzo — an association augmented by the villa's decorative theme of virtue. What is more, the visual analogy between the road to Rome and vice's path emphasised the wider significance of the Hercules' choice theme, drawing it into the Cardinal's autarkic vision for Tivoli in the wake of his papal disappointments in Rome, and embellishing the darker aspects of the relationship between the Rometta and the real city on the skyline on the third terrace, discussed in Chapter 6.⁷⁰⁹ Whereas static, two-dimensional paintings offered only a window into the world of myth, through which the passive observer might peer, the narrative-conditioned layout of the Villa d'Este's third and fourth terraces enabled visitors to enter that mythic landscape as agents. At the divergence of the central axis, visitors faced the same choice as Hercules between the paths of vice and virtue — although unlike the hero, they were unaware of the moral significance of their choice.

Where Coffin failed to explore the three-dimensional quality of this layout, Michel Conan demonstrated how the visitor's motion was fundamental in unifying the narrative

⁷⁰⁹ Chapter 6, page 232.

elements of the Hercules' choice theme.⁷¹⁰ He defined the Villa d'Este as 'a landscape metaphor of moral choice', emphasising how the garden's narrative-conditioned layout was defined by the movement of the visitor:

A landscape metaphor comes into existence when motion through a landscape invites an interpretation by its visitors that *displaces* the meaning of their own motion in favor of a *new* meaning...Hence spatial design acquires a magical power when the experience of moving through the material world of the garden in present time transports visitors into the different world and temporality of a narrative.⁷¹¹

Conan thus observed that the garden was designed with a hidden moral agenda which led unwitting visitors to reenact Hercules' choice in reverse, as they encountered the Grotto of Venus (exemplifying vice) on the third terrace, before reaching the Grotto of Diana (exemplifying virtue) on the fourth terrace. The moral implications of the visitor's choice were revealed through a narrative thread generated by their own movement, which drew together the Hercules statues at the crossroads and the two grottoes into 'a series of correlated allegorical images, illustrating opposite consequences of a moral choice and representing a subject engaged in choice'.⁷¹² Like Coffin, however, Conan's reading presupposed a knowledge of classical humanism — possessed by an elite minority — that enabled visitors to decode their journey as a reenactment of Hercules' choice, and to identify the statues of Venus and Diana as allegorical incarnations of vice and virtue.

Coffin and Conan both failed to recognise how the contrasting paths of vice and virtue from sixteenth-century visual depictions were translated into the garden setting,

⁷¹⁰ Conan 2003: 289-317.

⁷¹¹ Conan 2003: 301-2.

⁷¹² Conan 2003: 298; Conan also used the example of the hedge maze at Versailles designed by André Le Nôtre (1672-77), which featured fountains depicting moral tales from Aesop's fables, inviting visitors to reflect on their moral choices as they chose which route to follow through the labyrinth.

transporting visitors to the mythic settings as tropes familiar from contemporary visual culture and intelligible without the depth of classical scholarship that their explanations depend upon. The experiential quality of these paths, therefore, went well beyond the visual and kinetic horizon of perception outlined by Coffin and Conan to encompass a suite of somatic stimuli which augmented the Hercules' choice theme.

7.1.2 The Paths of Vice and Virtue

We now turn to the visitor's experience of the routes which led them to the Grottoes of Venus and Diana. Vice's appealing path, depicted as a straight and easy level road or downward incline in contemporary art, was reimagined on the eastern side of the third terrace. Here, the short walk along the Alley of the Hundred Fountains led directly to the Grotto of Venus, located within the south wall of the piazza which enclosed the Fountain of Tivoli (fig. 7.13).⁷¹³ As introduced in Chapter 6, the visual appeal of the Fountain of Tivoli — identified in the Ligorio manuscript as the garden's principal fountain — enticed the visitor to turn left at the crossroads towards the Grotto of Venus, leading visitors, unaware of the implications, down the path of vice.⁷¹⁴ Visitors' accounts reveal that it was not only the Fountain of Tivoli that drew them eastwards, however, but also the inviting shade of the surrounding plane trees.⁷¹⁵ Ushered from the sun-exposed alley into the shaded piazza, visitors found themselves within a secluded grove with all the features of a *locus amoenus*, where the cascading fountain cooled the citrus-scented air, perfumed by citron and orange

⁷¹³ Ligorio, *MS* f. 251v Zc.

⁷¹⁴ Chapter 6, pages 196-97. Ligorio, *MS* f. 256r 22-262v 50.

⁷¹⁵ The piazza is described as the 'Piazza dei Platani' in the Ligorio manuscript (f. 250v S, 258v 33) and the 'Piano de Platani' by Del Re (*Tiburtine* 50). For descriptions of the inviting shade these trees provided, see Chapter 6, page 215.

espaliers which wreathed the surrounding walls.⁷¹⁶ The invitingly cool Grotto of Venus offered further refuge from the heat — a feature praised by Giovanni Maria Zappi — and completed the transformation of the piazza into a *locus amoenus*.⁷¹⁷ Thus, the grotto's sacro-idyllic setting corresponded with the lush landscape through which Vice's path leads in Ligorio's *Antichità di Roma* and depictions of Hercules' choice by Dürer, Titian, Raphael, Scultori, Romano and Caracci.⁷¹⁸

Virtue's challenging road, characterised by a precipitous path meandering up a steep hill by Ligorio and in visual representations, was recreated on the fourth terrace, the garden's steepest incline, where the Grotto of Diana stood at the western terminus of the summit.⁷¹⁹ Surmounting the steep ascent was an arduous task for the visitor: the bewildering maze of intersecting pathways which zigzagged between copses of densely planted trees, illustrated on Étienne Dupérac's engraving and Muziano's fresco, offered no direct route to the Grotto of Diana (figs. 1.1 and 1.2). Conan contended that having attained this grotto, visitors were invited to reflect on how their chosen path through the garden had led them to reenact Hercules' choice in reverse, in contrast to the Cardinal, whose choice to follow virtue's path was indicated by the statues of Diana and of Hippolytus, as Coffin also argued.⁷²⁰ Both readings overlook the fact that the Cardinal's personal ideology of virtue was not only conveyed through the garden's iconographic

⁷¹⁶ Ligorio, *MS* f. 250v T. As outlined in Chapter 4 (page 129), the defining features of a *locus amoenus* include a shaded grove and cooling fountain, frequently accompanied by a natural grotto.

⁷¹⁷ '...in quella stanza si gode grandemente nella estate per il fresco' (Zappi, *Annali* 61).

⁷¹⁸ Ligorio, Naples *MS* XIII.B.3, f. 94, quoted above.

⁷¹⁹ Ligorio, Naples *MS* XIII.B.3, f. 94. As noted above on pages 244-46, the fourth terrace's steep, criss-crossing pathways strongly evoke depictions of Virtue's path Titian, Raphael and Caracci as a vertiginously zigzagging road.

⁷²⁰ Conan 2003: 293; Coffin 1960: 84-85.

schema, but also by opposite patterns of circulation imposed on visitors, who ascended the garden from the public *porta principale* on the first terrace, in contrast with Ippolito, who descended from the palazzo to enter the garden at its highest terrace.

The garden's contrasting circulation patterns determined the sequence in which the Grottoes of Venus and Diana were encountered, and therein, presented two potential scenarios for the reenactment of Hercules' choice. The Cardinal's route was conditioned to exemplify virtue's path: descending from his palazzo residence, Ippolito entered the garden at the fourth terrace's summit on the Cardinal's Walk, which led directly to the Grotto of Diana at the western end of the avenue. Visitors ascending the garden, however, were led — or indeed misled — to reenact Hercules' choice in reverse and unwittingly followed vice's path, encountering the Grotto of Venus on the third terrace before reaching the Grotto of Diana. Thus, the visitor's predetermined route following vice's path effectively juxtaposed their own moral failure with the Cardinal's virtue.

The moral choice enacted by the visitor traversing the path of vice, however, was merely the prelude to what awaited them in the Grottoes of Venus and Diana. Where Coffin and Conan only recognised the iconographic significance of these grottoes as correlated allegorical images illustrating the moral implications of the visitor's choice at the crossroads, in the following sections, I show how the grottoes generated correlated moral experiences which augmented the grottoes' iconographic symbolism and challenged the visitor to choose between vice and virtue.

7.2 THE GROTTA OF VENUS VOLUPTAS

7.2.1 The Bathing Beauty

On entering the Grotto of Venus, which was ‘dedicated to appetite and voluptuous pleasure’, the visitor became an unwitting voyeur upon confronting the sight of Venus bathing at the centre of an elaborate fountain.⁷²¹ This voluptuous nude not only echoed the alluring incarnations of Vice in the sixteenth-century depictions of Hercules’ choice surveyed above, but also implicated the visitor in vice by drawing them actively into an act of scopophilic voyeurism as a result of their choice to enter the grotto. In her influential article on visual pleasure in cinema, Laura Mulvey applied the Freudian coinage ‘scopophilia’ (pleasure in looking) to voyeuristic viewing, redefining the term as the ‘pleasure in looking at another person as an erotic object’.⁷²² Mulvey’s observations on the gendered construction of scopophilia in cinema for the benefit of a male gaze are equally applicable to the Grotto of Venus, which reflected the wider homocentric production and consumption of the female nude in sixteenth-century art:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female...In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. Woman displayed as sexual object is the leitmotif of erotic spectacle.⁷²³

⁷²¹ Ligorio, *MS* f. 251v Zc.

⁷²² Mulvey 1975: 17. Mulvey’s study drew together Freudian and Lacanian gaze theory in order to define the relationship between desiring subject and desired object in cinema (1975: 6-18). Mulvey’s principles of scopophilia have been widely applied to the visual arts, and critically for this study, they were employed by Fredrick (1995: 366-88) and Platt (2002: 87-112) to explore the visual pleasure of erotic mythical frescoes in ancient Pompeian houses.

⁷²³ Mulvey 1975: 11.

In the Grotto of Venus, the erotic appeal of the female nude was exploited to its fullest potential by the statue's architectural setting and decorative schema, which drew visitors into the voyeuristic scenario of stumbling upon the goddess bathing.⁷²⁴

To begin with a reconstruction of the grotto, which now bears little resemblance to its original design after centuries of remodelling, but originally featured a central fountain crowned with a statue of Venus.⁷²⁵ Although the fountain is no longer extant, the statue can be identified from Ligorio's sketches (c. 1565) and contemporary accounts as a Venus Pudica type, depicted nude beside her discarded clothes as she emerges from her bath, with one hand covering her breasts and the other her pudenda as if aware of an illicit onlooker (figs. 7.9 and 7.10).⁷²⁶ The statue type is exemplified by the Capitoline Venus at the Musei Capitolini in the Palazzo Nuovo (second century CE, Inv. Scu. 409, fig. 7.11). Captured in the apparently modest act of hiding her nakedness, Venus's pose draws attention to the very areas she is attempting to conceal, seeming to forbid, and yet coyly inviting, scopophilic viewing. Surveying the popular depiction of Venus Pudica in classical sculpture and Italian Renaissance art, Nanette Salomon concluded that the attention drawn

⁷²⁴ The portrayal of the female nude in Western art as a voyeuristic object for a male audience is surveyed by Berger 1972: 45-64, with particular emphasis on Italian Renaissance art; and the erotic appeal of the female nude in garden sculptures is explored by Lazzaro 1991: 71-113.

⁷²⁵ Ligorio, *MS* f. 259v. 38; Zappi, *Annali* 60-61; Audebert, *Journal* 178-79; Del Re *Tiburtine* 51-52. The grotto's transformation over the centuries is charted by Coffin 1960: 106-7.

⁷²⁶ Zappi described the statue after the Venus Pudica type, whose clothes were draped over a tree stump, rather than a vase like the Capitoline Venus: '*In questa prima grotta in prospettiva si ritrova una Venere di marmo di tutto rilievo ignuda, che con la man manca si copre le sue parti vergognose, bellissima, con la camiscia posta sopra un troncone a sè vicino*' (*Annali* 61). Audebert also witnessed the statue: '*la fontaine de Venus de laquelle il y a une tres belle statue toute nue, qui de sa main gaulche couvre ses parties honteuses*' (*Journal* 178-79), and it is recorded in the inventory (Pirolo, *Inventario* f. 378r; Ashby 1908: 242). When Del Re wrote his seventeenth-century account, however, the statue of Venus had been replaced by one of Bacchus (*Tiburtine* 52), as depicted in Venturini's engraving of the grotto (fig. 7.12). Ligorio also described the statue type in *Antichità di Roma* (Naples *MS* XIII.B.3, f. 323, quoted in footnote 737 below).

to the goddesses' breasts and genitalia by her pose, together with the bathing context, conveyed a 'licensed voyeurism' associated with the figure type.⁷²⁷

As well as evoking depictions of Vice, this sculpture also corresponds with Ligorio's description of 'earthly Venus' (*terreste Venere*), who is the antithesis of 'heavenly Venus' (*celeste Venere*), in accordance with Plato's dualistic concept of sensual and spiritual loves expounded in *Symposium*.⁷²⁸ In the Naples manuscripts, Ligorio summarises the concept thus: 'Plato, in the *Symposium*, speaks of two Loves: one is born from the heavenly Venus, the other from the earthly Venus; and from the heavenly derives honest and beautiful love, and from the lesser, wicked and lustful love'.⁷²⁹ Expanding on these incarnations of Venus in the Turin manuscripts, Ligorio characterises earthly Venus as an embodiment of sensual desire who delights 'in vain lasciviousness and pleasures, which give rise to the dangers of brazenness'; whilst her celestial counterpart is concerned with 'lofty and divine things', personifying 'chaste love'.⁷³⁰ These dualistic paradigms were well-established tropes in Renaissance art, most notably featuring as the central motif in Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love* (fig. 7.5), which demonstrates the close association

⁷²⁷ Salomon 1996: 81. Surveying the broader theme of women bathing in Western art from antiquity to the nineteenth century, Roberts also concluded that the subject's popularity derived from its voyeuristic appeal (1998: 114).

⁷²⁸ Plato defines the dual nature of love according to the antithetical incarnations of the goddess Aphrodite: Aphrodite Urania is the heavenly goddess of spiritual love, and Aphrodite Pandemos is the common or popular goddess of sensual love (*Symposium* 180d-e).

⁷²⁹ 'Platone, nel Simposio, dice di dui Cupidini: l'uno nato dalla celeste Venere, l'altro dalla terrena: et dala celeste discese l'amor honesto et bello, et dall'inferiore, cupidine brutto et libidinoso' (Naples MS XIII.B.3 f. 316, see also ff. 322-23 on 'Celeste Venere'). These passages on Venus feature within an extended discussion of Venus's aspects and attributes (Naples MS XIII.B.3, ff. 307-41).

⁷³⁰ 'Bellezza, o beltade, è di due sorte intesa, e nella pulchritudine delle belle fattezze, e nella bontà dell'animo. Quella ch'è bellezza semplicemente, che fa vanamente più delle volte innamorare è quella che si dà alla figura di Venere, dalli costumati detta vana bellezza. Quella che nasce e si scorge nell'animo virtuoso è quella ch'è degna dell'onesta et immortale fama, ch'è bellezza artificiosa et onesta, e l'una e l'altra d'esse bellezze in due modi si contemplano: l'una nella celeste Venere, l'antra nella terrena, e la celeste costa di cose alte e divine, e del casto amore che ha l'aurea collana. La terrestre costa della Venere che non si stende più oltre, che nella vana lascivia, nelli piaceri, donde nascono i fignimenti, i pericoli e le sfacciatageni.' (Ligorio, Turin, MS a.III.6, vol. 4, f. 35v).

between personifications of Vice and Virtue and figurations of earthly and heavenly Venus.⁷³¹ Both sets of antithetical figures no doubt informed the featured sculptures in the narrative-conditioned design of the third and fourth terraces, making Venus Voluptas and Chaste Diana recognisable tropes to visitors well-versed in contemporary art.

The voyeurism incited by Venus Pudica was further licensed by the salubrity of the grotto, together with an elaborate fanfare of water effects and whimsical statuary surrounding the goddess. These features conspired to entice the willingly compromised visitor to linger, and fundamentally, to look, amplifying the sense of spectacle connoted by the nude female. Having found refuge in the grotto from the summer heat, Zappi recorded that ‘in this chamber you can enjoy the coolness in summer, and the murmuring of the waters which create different effects’, and gave an enthusiastic description of the fountain.⁷³² Venus took centre stage, ensconced in a giant shell atop a central mount from which a ‘spout of water’ (*lampollo d’acqua*) rose, whilst water cascaded from four ‘rustic fountains’ (*fontane rustiche*) in surrounding niches into a basin below; thence, four vase-bearing putti poured water into the goddess’ bath and four other cherubs frolicked with swans.⁷³³ These water effects are shown in an engraving of the grotto by Giovanni Francesco Venturini (1691) after Venus had been replaced by a statue of Bacchus (fig. 7.12). Framing the central statue, the fountain’s babbling waters, rustic features and playful putti wove a narrative scenography around Venus, augmenting the act of bathing in which she was captured within a correspondingly theatrical setting. Contextualised within the

⁷³¹ On the employment of this Platonic concept in Italian Renaissance art, see Hendrix 2004: 99-174; and on the depiction of the female nude as a earthly Venus in the Renaissance, see Tinagli 1997: 121-54.

⁷³² Zappi, *Annali* 61.

⁷³³ Zappi, *Annali* 61. The putti and swans were also described by Ligorio (*MS* f. 259v 38), Audebert (*Journal* 178-79) and Del Re (*Tiburtine* 51).

grotto, the fountain blurred the lines between mythic subject and real space, reorienting the visitor within a naturalistic setting where they may well have tried to convince themselves of the truth of the fantasy — to have stumbled upon Venus bathing in a rustic cave.⁷³⁴

The Grotto of Venus, therefore, was coded as a site of male scopophilic fantasy. At the heart of Mulvey's exposition of cinematic scopophilia is the role of male fantasy in contextualising voyeuristic spectacle within a narrative framework to exploit woman's erotic appeal: 'the fantasy world of the screen is subject to the law which produces it', she wrote, as 'the determining male gaze projects its fantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly'.⁷³⁵ Despite its cinematic context, Mulvey's observation is particularly applicable to the Grotto of Venus because of the viewing context: the pleasure in viewing the female nude was augmented by a narrative scenography that located the grotto's occupants — both sculptural and real — within a rustic bathing setting. This generated what was evidently a 'scene' in which Venus was cast in the role of passive and framed erotic object, and in which the visitor was invited to enter and thus to participate as voyeur.⁷³⁶ It is this last and genuinely participatory element that takes the experience beyond the cinematic. Indeed, Venus's attempt to conceal her nakedness, as if aware of the visitor's presence, heightened their sense of participation in the voyeuristic encounter, and made the onlooker aware of the illicit nature of their scopophilic gaze.

⁷³⁴ Platt identified the same phenomenon in the Pompeian House of Octavius Quartio, where the setting depicted in frescoes of Actaeon witnessing Diana bathing was echoed in the surrounding architectural space: 'Each [fresco] is positioned close to water in an artificial *locus amoenus*, which brings the setting of the painting, with its motif of bathing, into the viewer's own space. Myth and reality are potentially confused' (2002: 12).

⁷³⁵ Mulvey 1975: 11.

⁷³⁶ Similarly, Platt observed that the effect of echoing the bathing setting of the Diana and Actaeon frescoes within the architectural space (by positioning them next to fountains), the viewer was drawn into the fresco's narrative: 'The viewer of the painting, within the architectural space of the house itself, is thus identified with the voyeur' (2002: 12).

I have outlined the ways in which every visitor might trace the story through well-known iconography and sensory experience, but visitors educated in classical humanism could also appreciate in detail the mythic scenography evoked by the fountain. The figure of Venus Pudica emerging from her bath echoed the iconic depictions of the goddess rising fully-formed from the sea in Sandro Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* (c. 1480s) and Titian's *Venus Anadyomene* (c. 1520) (figs. 7.13 and 7.14) — indeed, Ligorio described the Venus Anadyomene type in the same pose as Venus Pudica.⁷³⁷ Like the Villa d'Este Venus, Botticelli depicted the goddess standing on a large shell, in the act of concealing her breasts and pudenda. This composition was not only mirrored by the statue in the Grotto of Venus, but further echoed in Cesare Nebbia's fresco from the Seconda Stanza Tiburtina (1569), which shows the goddess floating on the sea in a shell, in the act of rescuing Ino from drowning, as discussed in Chapter 6 (fig. 6.6).⁷³⁸ Although Titian's Venus does not reflect the posture of Venus Pudica, pictured wringing her wet hair, the subject is the same, as the goddess emerges from the sea with a shell floating in the background, alluding to the myth of her birth. Critically, this scene derives from Ovid's retelling of Venus's birth from the perspective of a male voyeuristic gaze in *Fasti*, in which a band of satyrs spy upon the naked goddess emerging from the sea: 'She was on the shore, drying her dripping hair. A

⁷³⁷ Ligorio wrote that the Venus Anadyomene (meaning 'Venus rising from the sea') shared the same pose of the Cnidian Aphrodite by Praxiteles (fourth cent. BCE), of which the Roman Venus Pudica is a copy: '*Venere Anadiomene, e 'il medesimo che la Cnidia che si fa tutta gnuda come che eschi del mara, alcuni la fanno piegata col corpo, e s'appoggia con la sinistra mana sopra un scoglio, o sopra un vaso con la veste sopra, o' con la mano diritta si asciuga i piedi, o 'che si calza il sandalo spezie di calcimento, e alcune hanno il suo cupido e alcune no. Ma sempre gnuda la dimostrano, et uscita dal mare*' (Ligorio, Naples MS XIII.B.3, f. 323). According to Hesiod, Venus was born as a fully-formed woman from the sea foam formed by the castrated genitals of the Titan Ouranos (*Theog.* 185-200).

⁷³⁸ Visitors attuned to the third terrace's symbolism centred around the story of Ino, discussed in Chapter 6 (page 202), may have made the connection between Venus's representation in both statue and fresco alluding to her birth from the sea, to which Venus makes reference in Ino's story when she pleads with Neptune to transform Ino and her son into sea gods: 'Some credit is owed me in your domain, if I once was formed out of form in the midst of the sea, as the story survives in my Greek name' (Ovid *Met.* 4.536-37; Venus's Greek name, Aphrodite, comes from '*aphros*', 'sea foam').

lecherous gang of satyrs saw the goddess'.⁷³⁹ Where all visitors could participate in the scopophilic scenario of happening upon the bathing beauty in the Grotto of Venus, those possessed of specialist knowledge were reoriented within a mythic framework, which evoked famous depictions of Venus's birth and cast them in the same voyeuristic role as Ovid's lascivious satyrs. Indeed, this scopophilic scenario is also witnessed in the Grotto Grande at the Boboli Gardens (begun in 1550), where Giambologna's Venus Pudica (c. 1572) stands at the centre a fountain, with water-spewing satyrs leering at her from the basin below, inviting the onlooker to do the same (fig. 7.15).

The Grotto of Venus, therefore, functioned as an elaborate, myth-themed peep show.⁷⁴⁰ What is more, it is evident from Ligorio's writings that the grotto setting was itself indicative of a transgressive encounter within. This aspect — what a visitor could expect to find within a grotto — is a key element in my analysis. In his unpublished treatise outlining the artistic and moral standard of fountain design, '*Nobiltà dell'antiche arti*' (c. 1570-80) in the Turin manuscripts, Ligorio recorded how a nude statue of Venus had been condemned as 'dirty and obscene' (*sporca et obscena*), and listed it among the subjects too explicit for public viewing.⁷⁴¹ In doing so, he echoed Leon Battista Alberti's sentiments in *De re aedificatoria* (Florence, 1485), who objected to 'obscene' nude sculptures adorning

⁷³⁹ Ovid, *Fasti* 4.140-42. On Ovid's voyeuristic retelling of Venus's birth, see King 2006: 132-35.

⁷⁴⁰ The use of mythic subjects and locales to make eroticism admissible was a common practice in sixteenth-century art, exemplified in the Italian sex manual, *I modi* (Rome, 1524, 1527; Venice, 1550), in which engraver Marcantonio Raimondi used mythic pairings (Mars and Venus, Bacchus and Ariadne, for example) to illustrate different sex positions. A less explicit example can be seen in Carracci's fresco series, *The Loves of the Gods* (1597-1608), at the Palazzo Farnese in Rome.

⁷⁴¹ '*Questo disegno fu beffato da alcuni religiosi, i quali dissero che, per esservi Venere ignuda, era cosa sporca et obscena, essendo cattivo proponimento nell'esempio della publica onestà, che si dee rappresentare le cose caste.*' (Turin MS a.II.16.J.29, f. 4v). He also considered two fountain designs featuring nude females to be too sexually explicit for public viewing, describing one of Galatea as 'too lascivious' (*tropo lascive*), and another of Leda and the swan as 'dirty' (*sporca*) (Turin MS a.II.16.J.29, ff. 6r-6v).

gardens.⁷⁴² Rather than censoring such sculptures altogether, however, Ligorio recommended that ‘lascivious things should be used or placed in locations which are not always seen’.⁷⁴³ The permissibility of discrete settings for erotic sculptures is not only witnessed in the Grotto of Venus and the Grotto Grande in the Boboli Gardens, but also in the Grotto of Venus at the Villa Lante, which houses a nude statue of the goddess provocatively squeezing her water-spouting breasts (fig. 7.16). Approaching the grotto at the Villa d’Este, the visitor should have been primed to feel a frisson of expectation that an illicit encounter awaited within, the secluded setting inducing a sense of transgressive behaviour before the visitor had even entered. Thus, even to enter was to choose vice.

In the light of the function of garden grottoes as private settings for erotic viewing, therefore, the two grottoes which marked the *dénouement* points of the Hercules’ choice narrative become all the more significant in implicating the visitor in a moral choice. Whilst they may not have been attuned to the moral significance of their choice at the crossroads, visitors were culturally primed to recognise that entering the Grotto of Venus would implicate them in a scopophilic act of vice, irrespective of what the grotto actually contained.

7.2.2 Garden Isle of the Goddess

The scopophilic encounter with the bathing goddess in the Grotto of Venus, which marked the climax of the visitor’s unwitting choice to follow vice’s path, is fundamental to

⁷⁴² Alberti, *Aed.* 300-1.

⁷⁴³ ‘...fuor dall’ esempj che devono esser degni di onestà in cause publiche, e deono le cose lascive essere usate e poste ne’ luoghi che non sempre si veggono, benché sono degne di non essere in niun luogo permesse’ (Turin MS a.II.16.J.29, ff. 6v-7r, trans. Coffin 2008: 48).

identifying a key and hitherto overlooked influence on the representation of Hercules' choice at the Villa d'Este. Although the Hercules' choice narrative and the voyeuristic trope of the bathing goddess both had their foundation in myth, the unique combination of these topoi at the Villa d'Este derived from a contemporary literary source: Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*.

As well as a popular subject in Italian Renaissance art, the hero at the crossroads was also a literary topos, amongst the earliest examples of which featured in *Hypnerotomachia*.⁷⁴⁴ In a variation on the crossroads motif, the central protagonist Poliphilo faces a choice between three portals in his quest for his beloved Polia, and like Hercules, he is advised on which route to take by two antithetical female personifications, Logistica (Reason) and Thelemia (Will or Desire).⁷⁴⁵ Like Virtue and Vice, represented to the left and right of Hercules in contemporary art, Logistica and Thelemia are similarly identified with left-right moral symbolism: they first appear flanking the throne of Queen Eleuterylida (Free Will) who commends them to Poliphilo as guides, and they are depicted in the same positions on either side of the protagonist in accompanying woodcuts cited below.⁷⁴⁶ In an inversion of the allegory, Poliphilo follows the advice of Thelemia and chooses the most appealing door of *Mater Amoris* (Mother of Love), entering the realm of Venus.⁷⁴⁷ Here, Poliphilo's journey reaches its climax on Cytherea, Venus's garden isle,

⁷⁴⁴ On the hero at the crossroads motif in Renaissance literature (particularly Italian), see Hall 2008: 126-141 and Panofsky 1930: 103-141. A principal example is from the Italian crusader romance *Orlando Furioso* (Ferrara, 1532) by Ludovico Ariosto, in which two knights come to a crossroads on their way to Jerusalem: although the left road appears pleasant and easy, the knights choose the more challenging and wilder looking road to the right, which, it transpires, is shortcut to Jerusalem (*Orlando Furioso* 15.93).

⁷⁴⁵ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 135-40.

⁷⁴⁶ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 121-39.

⁷⁴⁷ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 137-40.

culminating in a encounter with the goddess bathing in a fountain which bears close resemblance to the one in the Grotto of Venus.⁷⁴⁸ Despite the widespread influence of *Hypnerotomachia* on Italian Renaissance garden design, no one has identified the text as a likely model for Ligorio and his representation of Hercules' choice at the Villa d'Este.⁷⁴⁹ Closer examination of Poliphilo's moral choice and encounter with Venus bathing, however, demonstrates how the episode informed the third terrace's narrative-conditioned design, and in particular, Ligorio's fountain design. Tracing Poliphilo's journey from the *Mater Amoris*'s portal to the Cytherean Fountain of Venus reveals striking parallels with the Villa d'Este visitor's progress from the crossroads to the Grotto of Venus.

In *Hypnerotomachia*, accompanying woodcut illustrations attributed to Benedetto Bordone depict Poliphilo's choice between three portals, the first of which shows him with Logistica and Thelemia before the three doorways inscribed *Gloria Dei* (Glory of God), *Mater Amoris* (Mother of Love) and *Gloria Mundi* (Glory of the World) (fig. 7.17). At the door of *Gloria Dei* appears an aged matron named Theude (Pious) who stands 'at the entrance to a stony road, difficult to travel...a rugged disagreeable place with narrow passes' (fig. 7.18).⁷⁵⁰ Horrified at the sight, Poliphilo moves on to the door of *Gloria Mundi*, where an armoured woman named Euclelia (Glorious) emerges, and although 'the location and site seemed very rough' to Poliphilo, Logistica urges him to enter: 'O Poliphilo, do not shrink from manly combat in this place, for when the labour is past, the

⁷⁴⁸ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 292-368.

⁷⁴⁹ On *Hypnerotomachia* as a principal source for Italian Renaissance garden design, see Chapter 3, page 94.

⁷⁵⁰ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 136; Theude is attended by six 'ill clad and wasted' women, whose names similarly embody their realm's pious theme: Parthenia (Virgin), Edosia (Guardian), Hypocolinia (Hesitant), Pinotidia (Prudent), Tapinosa (Humble) and Ptochina (Fearful).

reward remains' (fig. 7.19).⁷⁵¹ The steep, unappealing landscapes and modest female figures depicted in the illustrations of both portals mirror virtue's challenging path, whilst Logistica's exhortation to Poliphilo to choose the doorway of *Gloria Mundi* recalls Virtue's promise that Hercules will be rewarded for his labours.⁷⁵² It is the central door of *Mater Amoris*, however, that Poliphilo chooses at Thelemia's behest, having been captivated by the portal's guardian, Philtronia (Seductive), and the lush landscape where she dwells (fig. 7.20):

Her looks were wanton and capricious, and her joyful airs seized and captivated me with love at the first sight of her. She dwelt in a voluptuous place, its grounds clad with green herbs and flowers; a place of abundant solace and ease, running with clear, gushing springs and loud with the noise of meandering brooks. It was a delicious, well-watered place, with open meadows and the cool, almost cold shade of leafy trees.⁷⁵³

Colonna's inversion of the hero at the crossroads topos, in which Poliphilo is seduced by the pleasures behind the door of *Mater Amoris*, parallels the experience of the Villa d'Este visitor. Just as the pleasant springs and the cool shade of leafy trees entice Poliphilo into the realm of Venus, it was the appeal of the Fountain of Tivoli and its tree-shaded piazza that led — or misled — visitors to turn left at the third terrace crossroads and unwittingly follow the path which led to the Grotto of Venus.⁷⁵⁴

⁷⁵¹ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 137; Euclelia is accompanied by six 'noble and respectful maidens', named in accordance with the portal's ideology: Merimnasia (Careful), Eptitide (Necessary), Ergasilea (Labour), Anectea (Endurance), Statia (Stability) and Olistea (Mobility).

⁷⁵² Prodicus 84b in Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.1.33.

⁷⁵³ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 138; the names of Philtronia's six 'beautiful serving maids' reflect the sensual pleasures that await Poliphilo behind the portal: Rastonelia (Leisure), Chotasina (Feeding), Idonesa (Form), Tryphela (Enjoyment), Etiania (Friendly) and Adia (Pleasing).

⁷⁵⁴ Significantly, in the same way the verdant piazza marked the antithesis of the visitor's recent topophobic experience at the Fountain of the Dragon within the second terrace's *locus horridus*, so Poliphilo's entrance into the *locus amoenus* of Venus's realm follows his terrifying encounter with the dragon in the dark forest (Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 61), as discussed in Chapter 5, pages 183-84.

Having chosen the portal of *Mater Amoris*, Poliphilo is reunited with Polia and together, they journey to Venus's garden isle, Cytherea.⁷⁵⁵ Here, Venus is revealed to the lovers after Poliphilo rends her fountain's enshrouding curtain with an arrow, in an encounter defined by Hester Lees-Jeffries as 'a material metaphor for sexual consummation and erotic ecstasy'.⁷⁵⁶ Although pertaining to the Fountain of Venus, this interpretation resonates with the entire Cytherean episode, as Poliphilo reaches the fountain in a state of sensual rapture analogous to sexual arousal, induced by the sensory pleasures encountered on his passage through the garden isle. Lees-Jeffries' interpretation, therefore, can be expanded to define the garden isle of Cytherea as an allegory for erotic encounter, imbued with sexual imagery suggestive of arousal, penetration and climax.

Poliphilo's progressive arousal is conveyed through his enraptured description of Cytherea, to which an entire chapter is dedicated.⁷⁵⁷ Composed of concentric circles, the isle is a kaleidoscope of superabundant, perennial flora planted according to taxonomy in ever diminishing rings, culminating at the central Fountain of Venus, as depicted on the accompanying illustration and in Joscelyn Godwin's reconstruction of the island (figs. 7.21 and 7.22). Poliphilo's journey to this fountain is suffused with erotic imagery. Describing a steadily intensifying sensual arousal as he penetrates deeper into the garden, Poliphilo is overwhelmed by his senses and driven to a state of ecstatic distraction:

I felt an imperceptible sweetness thrilling through me to the point that I did not know what to do with it. This incredibly delicious and pleasant place with its unbelievable decoration of spring

⁷⁵⁵ On the Fountain of Venus as the climax of Poliphilo's erotic quest, see Lees-Jeffries 2007: 70-84 and Furno 2000: 70-82.

⁷⁵⁶ Lees-Jeffries 2007: 70. Furno also understood this image as 'a clear metaphor of the act of carnal love' (2000: 70).

⁷⁵⁷ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 290-325.

greenery, the birds chattering in the pure air and flying twittering through the new foliage: all this gave the utmost delight to the external senses...I felt ardently impelled to the height of bliss...and breathed avidly such fragrance as I have never known before...I truly did not know which of my senses I should fix firmly on my intended object, distracted as I was by so many different pleasures, by such excessive gratification, and by such voluptuousness.⁷⁵⁸

It is in the throes of this euphoric state that Poliphilo comes to the Fountain of Venus, an encounter comparable to that of the Villa d'Este visitor's similar sensory seduction within the citrus-scented piazza of plane trees and babbling waters that enclosed the Grotto of Venus. Like the fountain in Colonna's narrative, captured concentrically within an amphitheatre within a theatre within the garden, as shown on Godwin's illustration, the grotto fountain was similarly concealed within a grotto within a piazza within the garden, and therein, was its most privately located fountain (fig. 7.22). The two fountains — fictional and real — are thus positioned in intensely intimate locations, and both Poliphilo and the Villa d'Este visitor must journey deep into the gardens of Cytherea and the Villa d'Este to reach them.

The inherently sexual motif of Poliphilo penetrating Venus's garden in an increasingly aroused state gains momentum when he reaches the centre of the island, where he finds the fountain concealed behind a curtain of red velvet, embroidered with flowers and inscribed 'YMHN' (Hymen, Marriage).⁷⁵⁹ At the fountain, the penetrative imagery culminates in an act unambiguously analogous to deflowering, when Poliphilo rends the hymeneal veil with an arrow presented to him by Cupid.⁷⁶⁰ The curtain parts to reveal the Venus 'standing naked in the clear and limpid waters', the sight of which

⁷⁵⁸ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 358.

⁷⁵⁹ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 361.

⁷⁶⁰ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 361.

induces a pervasive physical pleasure in Poliphilo and Polia akin to erotic ecstasy, that stimulates and ultimately satiates their desire:

I saw openly emerging the divine form in the fruity fountain, and from her venerable majesty emanated deliciously all beauty; and right after the unexpected divine vision appeared to my eager eyes, we were both of us uplifted by an extreme sweetness, and pushed and overwhelmed by a new pleasure so long derided that we remained together as in ecstasy.⁷⁶¹

This ecstatic response to the theophanic vision of Venus marks the climax of the erotic imagery that suffuses Poliphilo's journey to the centre of Cytherea, which, as an allegory of sexual encounter, is consolidated by Poliphilo's portrait of the goddess. Poliphilo expresses Venus's sensuality by transposing botanical elements of the surrounding garden onto her body: her hair is 'like the tendrils of the vines', her face is 'rosy...her cheeks shaped like apples were crimson', and her lips are 'coral red, the home and dwelling place of a perfumed bud', whilst her body 'exhaled an ambrosial perfume'.⁷⁶² Mediated through Poliphilo's voyeuristic gaze, Venus's body is transfigured into a fecund and fragrant gardenscape, composed of the same plants that fill her overabundant garden.⁷⁶³ Thus, Poliphilo's passage through Venus's garden is analogous to an exploration of the goddess' body, culminating in its penetration, expressed through the rending of the fountain's hymeneal veil, and reaching a climax when the sight of the bathing goddess satiates Poliphilo's desire.⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁶¹ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia*, trans. Furno 2000: 76; for the description of Venus, I have employed Furno's more literal translation.

⁷⁶² Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia*, trans. Furno 2000: 76.

⁷⁶³ On the association between the female body and gardens in the Renaissance, see Garrard 2010: 89-120.

⁷⁶⁴ The sexual imagery of the fountain as a penetrable vessel is reinforced first, by its intimate location, enclosed concentrically within the outer rings of the garden and therein, suggestive of female genitalia; and secondly, when Mars enters the fountain to seduce Venus: 'he and she embraced...knotting themselves together with divine gestures and passion' (Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 368).

Poliphilo's erotic epiphany parallels the experience of the Villa d'Este visitor, who on entering the Grotto of Venus, was similarly cast in the role of illicit voyeur spying the goddess bathing. Indeed, the grotto fountain even borrows elements familiar from Colonna's fiction. There, the goddess is surrounded by a host of attendants, including cherubs and white doves — a vignette echoed by the swans and vase-bearing putti accompanying the Villa d'Este Venus.⁷⁶⁵ Not only does the subject matter of the grotto fountain correspond with Colonna's fountain, but the visitor's mode of viewing was also aligned with Poliphilo's scopophilic predilection, who compares Venus's body to a work of art:

...the divine body appeared through transparency with radiance, her majesty and venerable appearance were revealed with wonderful light like a precious carbuncle and a shiny sparkle in the rays of the sun, and this with an art and an admirable composition never seen nor conceived of by men...Her chest whiter than snow was a treasure, with her two breasts swollen and uplifted, her ivory body was smooth.⁷⁶⁶

Given Poliphilo's ekphrastic mode and the popularity of the subject of Venus bathing in Renaissance iconography, the reader could be forgiven for thinking this is a description of a statue or icon. Here, Venus's body appears to be composed of marble, gemstones and ivory. Poliphilo's voyeuristic response to the sight of Venus bathing epitomises what Helena Katalin Szépe defined as 'the scopophilic emphasis of the book, the parallel of

⁷⁶⁵ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 362-63.

⁷⁶⁶ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia*, trans. Furno 2000: 76.

looking at art and the body as sources of erotic pleasure’, for as Lees-Jeffries observed, ‘Poliphilus derives pleasure above all, from looking at beautiful things’.⁷⁶⁷

In this further interpretative layer, the transformation of the goddess into a work of art licenses Poliphilo’s voyeurism as a species of aesthetic appreciation. Similarly, the statue of Venus Pudica at the Villa d’Este elided aesthetic and erotic modes of viewing: although the subject was considered ‘dirty and obscene’ by Ligorio, he acknowledged its artistic value and sanctioned its display in discrete locations.⁷⁶⁸ Within the Grotto of Venus, therefore, visitors were given license to indulge in an act of intentional voyeurism when viewing the bathing goddess, whose voluptuous incarnation incited the same scopophilic response as Poliphilo’s theophanic revelation of Venus, but offered the exculpatory pendant that if enjoyed solely for aesthetic purposes, the act and ‘actors’ together become less obscene. By reading in Poliphilo, however, the unlikelihood of such an aesthetic victory triumphing over the basely sensual is made very clear.

7.2.3 What Actaeon Saw

The link between the sculptural and fictional Venuses is crystallised in their juxtaposition with another bathing goddess. Depicted in the central niche of the Grotto of Diana was the myth of Actaeon, who was transformed into a stag by Diana after stumbling upon her bathing and was subsequently torn apart by his own dogs, as told by Ovid.⁷⁶⁹ It is

⁷⁶⁷ Szépe 1996: 381; Lees-Jeffries 2007: 59. Lees-Jeffries also identifies the text’s ‘exploration of scopophilia, or voyeurism, the erotic pleasure of looking’ (2007: 59), and concludes that ‘Poliphilus’ solipsistic and self-referential relationship with aesthetic objects (he values them as much for their pleasurable effect upon him as for any notion of their intrinsic worth) is one of the *Hypnerotomachia*’s most distinctive features’ (74).

⁷⁶⁸ Ligorio, Turin *MS* a.II.16.J.29, ff. 6v-7r.

⁷⁶⁹ Ovid, *Met.* 3.131-251.

unsurprising, then, that Diana also features in Poliphilo's epiphany. Poliphilo's initial response to the sight of Venus bathing is fear, as he recalls Actaeon's fate after witnessing Diana bathing in her sacred valley: 'As I came to myself, I began to experience a justifiable fear, thinking of what Actaeon saw in the valley of Gargaphie'.⁷⁷⁰ Thus in Colonna's story the two bathing goddesses are integrated into one experience and its interpretation.

It is probable, therefore, that Ligorio's inspiration for the sequencing and representation of Hercules' choice at the Villa d'Este was drawn — at least in part — from Colonna's inversion of the moral allegory in *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. Just as Poliphilo's choice to follow the easy, pleasant route of *Mater Amoris* leads him to the voyeuristic revelation at the Fountain of Venus, so the Villa d'Este visitor's choice to turn left at the crossroads towards the Grotto of Venus's leafy setting culminated in a scopophilic encounter with the bathing goddess. Thus, from the crossroads, visitors no longer followed Hercules' virtuous path as they had through the Hesperidian scenography of the garden's lower terraces, and instead, followed in the footsteps of pleasure-seeking Poliphilo. For both Poliphilo and the Villa d'Este visitor, however, the malevolent shadow of Diana hung over their voyeuristic encounter with Venus. Unlike benevolent Venus, — who invited Poliphilo's scopophilic viewing in *Hypnerotomachia* and allowed the lewd satyrs who spied on her emerging from the sea to go unpunished in *Fasti* — Diana did not permit herself to be the erotic object of a man's gaze and punished voyeurs with violence, as the cautionary tale of Actaeon in the Grotto of Diana revealed.

⁷⁷⁰ Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia* 361-62.

7.3 THE GROTTA OF CHASTE DIANA

7.3.1 Beware the Bathing Beauty

On entering the Grotto of Diana, which was ‘dedicated to honest pleasure and chastity’, any frisson of expectation the visitor had of an erotic encounter within — following the myth-themed peep show in the Grotto of Venus — was confounded when they were met with the sight of Diana hunting.⁷⁷¹ A closer look revealed that the statue, which occupied the grotto’s central niche, was framed against a relief of Actaeon’s metamorphosis into a stag after witnessing Diana bathing, the significance of which has been entirely overlooked in previous studies of the Villa d’Este.⁷⁷² Although the statue was not immediately identifiable with personifications of Virtue in the sixteenth-century depictions of Hercules’ choice surveyed above, the Actaeon relief drew Diana into a contrasting dialectic with the sculpture in the Grotto of Venus through the mythic trope of the bathing goddess.⁷⁷³ Unified by this trope, the visitor’s scopophilic encounter with Venus bathing was juxtaposed with Actaeon’s voyeuristic encounter with Diana, for which he was cruelly punished.

In her exposition of cinematic scopophilia, Mulvey contended that the pleasure of erotic viewing was dependent upon the viewer escaping punishment for their voyeurism.⁷⁷⁴

⁷⁷¹ Ligorio, *MS* f. 251v Zc.

⁷⁷² Although the Actaeon relief is acknowledged by Coffin (2004: 92, 1960: 35), Dernie (1996: 94-5), Fagiolo and Madonna (2003: 118), and Occhipinti (2009: 374), in their expositions of the Grotto of Diana, these scholars offer no insight into its significance. Lazzaro neglects the relief entirely in her discussion of the grotto (1990: 238-39).

⁷⁷³ As well as Virtue, the virgin huntress is comparable with the chaste figure of heavenly Venus, as outlined on pages 255-56 above. Indeed, concluding his account of the earthly and heavenly Venuses, Ligorio lists both Diana and Ippolito among the figures who exemplify the virtuous qualities associated with heavenly Venus, who are ‘armed with the beauty of the soul’: ‘...*e fu amata la bellezza dell'animo da Diana Aricina, da Ippolito, da Bellerofonte, da Telegono, da Iosepho, da Philonome, da Aegeria, da Iuturna, e da Hersilia, che tutte furono armate della bellezza dell'animo*’ (Turin *MS* a.III.6.J.4, f. 35v).

⁷⁷⁴ Mulvey 1975: 13-14.

Whilst cinema offers voyeurism with impunity, Mulvey observed, fear of punishment is nonetheless intrinsic to the voyeuristic experience, and linked with the primal fear of castration in psychoanalytic theory.⁷⁷⁵ Correspondingly, psychoanalytic interpretations of the Actaeon myth have identified the story as a fundamental expression of castration anxiety. Leonard Barkan and Nancy Vickers interpreted Actaeon's metamorphosis and death as a symbolic castration, meted out by Diana as punishment for witnessing the forbidden sight of her virgin nakedness.⁷⁷⁶ In this myth, scopophilia is undermined when pleasure in looking gives way to fear in looking — a fear which, as Vickers observed, occurs when Diana beholds Actaeon in the act of viewing, and responds to his objectifying gaze with her own powerful gaze, which is both accusing and destructive:

Actaeon sees Diana, Diana sees Actaeon, and seeing is traumatic for both. She is ashamed, tries to hide her body (her secret), and thus communicates her sense of violation. Her observer consequently knows that pleasure in the sight before him constitutes transgression; he deduces that transgression, although thrilling (arousing), is threatening (castrating).⁷⁷⁷

Thus, Actaeon experiences scopophobic voyeurism — for which, in the absence of existing terminology, I am repurposing the psychoanalytic term 'scopophobia' (fear in looking) to define the fear of punishment in looking at a person as an erotic object, based on Mulvey's definition of scopophilia.⁷⁷⁸

⁷⁷⁵ Developing Lacanian and Freudian gaze theory, Mulvey recognised the 'castration anxiety' that derived from scopophilia: 'woman as icon, displayed for the gaze and enjoyment of men, the active controllers of the look, always threatens to evoke the [castration] anxiety it originally signified' (1975: 13).

⁷⁷⁶ In his survey of the myth's ancient and Renaissance incarnations, Barkan was the first to identify Actaeon's transformation and death as metaphors for castration (1980: 317-59). This castration motif is also explored by Vickers 1981: 273-75, and in the myth's depiction in Roman frescoes by Fredrick 1995: 366-88. On further psychoanalytic interpretations of the Actaeon myth, see Harris 2017: 179-81.

⁷⁷⁷ Vickers 1980: 275. Diana's refusal to be the passive object of Actaeon's gaze and subsequent action in transforming him into a stag undermines the gendered construction of scopophilia outlined by Mulvey (1975: 17), based on an active male viewer and passive female object, as detailed above on page 253.

⁷⁷⁸ Mulvey defined scopophilia as the 'pleasure in looking at another person as an erotic object' (1975: 17), and I adapt Allen's definition of scopophobia as the 'fear in looking' (1974: 6).

The psychological anxieties manifest in the Actaeon myth, therefore, had powerful implications for the visitor's encounter within the Grotto of Diana, which have been hitherto overlooked. At the Villa d'Este, visitors experienced both the pleasures and fears of voyeurism through contrasting encounters in the two grottoes, which functioned as immersive signifiers of Hercules' moral choice between vice and virtue by implicating visitors in an analogous erotic dilemma. Where the scopophilic spectacle of the bathing beauty in the Grotto of Venus offered and encouraged erotic viewing with impunity, in the Grotto of Diana, by contrast, visitors were confronted with the fatal consequences of Actaeon's corresponding voyeuristic encounter with another bathing goddess. This invited them to reflect on the implications of their own voyeurism and the powerful dynamic of their behaviour. Within the Grotto of Diana, Actaeon's story was dramatised through a powerfully immersive architectural setting and iconographic schema, which located its occupants — both sculptural and real — within a three-dimensional mythic scenography that aligned the visitor's experience with that of Actaeon in a scopophobic encounter.

Although the iconographic schema in the grotto's central niche is no longer extant, contemporary accounts make it possible to reconstruct the original diorama. Atop the existing rustic mount, from which water flowed into the circular basin below, stood the statue of Diana which is now housed in the Musei Capitolini in the Palazzo dei Conservatori: captured in the act of hunting and accompanied by a hound, Diana reaches for an arrow from the quiver on her back with one hand, and in the other, she originally held a bow (second century CE, Inv. Scu. 62, fig. 7.23).⁷⁷⁹ In the niche, surviving fragments

⁷⁷⁹ Ligorio, *MS* f. 264r-264v 55; the existence of the bow is also attested by Audebert (*Journal* 173), Zappi (*Annali* 63), Del Re (*Tiburtine* 43), and recorded in the 1572 inventory of sculptures (Pirolo, *Inventario* f. 378v; Ashby 1908: 244).

of the stucco relief show a woodland setting which formed the backdrop for a tableaux depicting the story ‘of Actaeon when he wanted to see (*volle veder*) Diana bathing in the spring and, having been splashed by her with water, was turned into a stag and torn apart by his own dogs’, according to Del Re (fig. 7.24).⁷⁸⁰ This tableaux can be identified with two key episodes in Ovid’s version of the myth (an identification confirmed by Zappi, who cited *Metamorphoses* as the source for the grotto reliefs):

And while the virgin goddess was taking her bath in her usual
 pool, as fate would have it, Actaeon, Cadmus’ grandson,
 wandered into the glade. His hunting could wait, he thought,
 as he sauntered aimlessly through the unfamiliar woodland.
 Imagine the scene as he entered: the grotto, the splashing fountains,
 the group of nymphs in the nude...
 She [Diana] wished that her arrows were ready to hand,
 but used what she could, caught up some water and threw it into
 the face of the man. As she splashed his hair with revengeful drops,
 she spoke the spine-chilling words which warned of impending disaster:
 “Now you may tell the story of seeing Diana naked —
 If story-telling is in your power!” No more was needed.
 The head she had sprinkled sprouted the horns of a lusty stag.⁷⁸¹

Actaeon fled where so many times he had been the pursuer.
 He fled from the dogs who had served him so faithfully...
 Crowding around him, they buried their noses inside his flesh
 and mangled to pieces the counterfeit stag who embodied their master.⁷⁸²

Not only was Ovid’s account cited by Ligorio in *Antichità di Roma*, demonstrating his familiarity with the story, but with its intertwining themes of voyeurism and violence,

⁷⁸⁰ ‘Le pareti intorno sono di mosaico rustico di pietre e smalti di diversi colori, ornato delle storie... di Atteone quando volle veder Diana bagnarsi nel fonte e, spruzzato da lei con l’acqua, divenne cervo lacerato dai propri cani’ (Del Re, *Tiburtine* 39). Audebert also witnessed the story of Actaeon (*Journal* 173), and Zappi recorded that the grotto was decorated with reliefs depicting scenes from *Metamorphoses* (*Annali* 63).

⁷⁸¹ Ovid, *Met.* 3.173-77, 189-94.

⁷⁸² Ovid, *Met.* 3.228-29, 249-50.

the Actaeon myth was a popular subject in classical and Italian Renaissance art, inspiring a wealth of depictions in the sixteenth century which exploited the erotic potential of the bathing goddess for the benefit of the viewer.⁷⁸³ The two Ovidian episodes were popularised as artistic leitmotifs in illustrated editions of *Metamorphoses*, indicating how the Actaeon relief in the Grotto of Diana originally appeared.⁷⁸⁴ Illustrations of the first episode feature Actaeon beholding Diana bathing with her nymphs in a pool and the goddess splashing the intruder to initiate his metamorphosis. Juxtaposed with these voyeuristic vignettes were grisly images of Actaeon's death, shown in the form of a stag, surrounded by hunters and being mauled by his dogs in a woodland setting. These scenes were combined in a single illustration in Italian vernacular translations, as exemplified in Benedetto Bordone's woodcut for Giovanni dei Bonsignori's *Ovidio Metamorphoseos volgare* (Venice, 1497) and Giovanni Antonio Rusconi's woodcut for Lodovico Dolce's *Transformationi* (Venice, 1553) (figs. 7.25 and 7.26). Subsequently, the two scenes appear in separate illustrations by Bernard Salomon for Jean de Tournes' *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée* (Lyon, 1557), which were replicated by Virgil Solis for Johannes Spreng's *Metamorphoses Ovidii* (Frankfurt, 1563) (figs. 7.27 and 7.28).⁷⁸⁵ Given the popularity of illustrated editions of *Metamorphoses* and the extensive deployment of Ovidian imagery at

⁷⁸³ Ligorio focuses on the two elements central to Ovid's account of Actaeon discovering Diana bathing and his transformation into a stag: 'Acteone, che i greci scrivono AKTAION, figliuolo di Aristaeo et di Autonoe, figliola di Cadmo, fu convertito in cervo da Diana per che nel fonte nuda lhavea veduta. Secondo scrive Ovidio nel terzo della Metamorphose. Questo nepote di Cadmo fu nel vero ucciso et per che andava vestito di pelle di cervo fu da i suoi cani istessi lacerato, come dice Apollodoro che furono cinquanta cani. Diana si mutò in cerva per vincere nel corso chiunque con lei faceva a' correre, il che denota che essa più che niuno pianeta è velocissima nel suo moto.' (Ligorio, Naples MS XIII.B.3, f. 395). The theme of voyeurism in the Actaeon myth's visual renderings is explored in classical sculpture by Schlam 1984: 82-110 and Slater 1998: 18-48; in Roman wall painting by Leach 1981: 307-27, Fredrick 1995: 366-88 and Platt 2002: 87-112; and in Italian Renaissance art and literature by Barkan 1980: 350-51 and Schiesari 2010: 93-126.

⁷⁸⁴ On the translation of the Ovidian episodes into artistic leitmotifs in illustrated editions of *Metamorphoses*, see Barkan 1980: 345-50.

⁷⁸⁵ As Solis copied Salomon, only Salomon's illustrations are included as figures.

the Villa d'Este, it is probable that the grotto relief replicated such illustrations, combining the two motifs in a single tableau.⁷⁸⁶ The extant stucco fragments support this theory, which appear to divide the relief into separate scenographies: the rocky outcrop on the left could easily constitute the grotto setting of Diana's pool, with the trees on the right forming the woodland backdrop of Actaeon's death scene.

The myth's visual renderings also reveal a stark contrast between the scopophilic portrayal of Diana in the Renaissance artistic tradition and her scopophobic incarnation at the Villa d'Este, which heightened the visitor's sense of betrayal on encountering the vengeful goddess in the Grotto of Diana. Marking the pinnacle of the myth's erotic fascination in the Cinquecento are the paintings by Titian (1556-59) for King Philip II of Spain, and by Veronese (1560-65), which present sensuous displays of female nudity, inviting viewers to share in Actaeon's voyeuristic response to the erotic spectacle, but not in his punishment (figs. 7.34 and 7.35).⁷⁸⁷ In his survey of the myth in Italian Renaissance art, Barkan concluded that 'the fable of Actaeon becomes a pleasant excuse for the showing of naked women in a state of excited *pudeur*, or else Actaeon, whether peeping or being transformed or both, becomes a trivial requisite in the scene of Diana's bathing'.⁷⁸⁸ Thus, the bathing goddess connoted the same licensed voyeurism as the portrayal of Venus Pudica in Renaissance art and empowered the viewer to perpetuate Actaeon's crime whilst

⁷⁸⁶ As noted in Chapter 5, Salomon had been employed by the Cardinal in 1540, so Salomon's illustrations may have been particularly influential.

⁷⁸⁷ Barkan highlighted the compelling visual impetus of Actaeon as an internal voyeur in Renaissance art, who licenses and invites the viewer's voyeuristic response (1980: 345-46). Mulvey observed the same phenomenon in cinema: 'A woman performs within the narrative, the gaze of the spectator and that of the male characters in the film are neatly combined without breaking narrative verisimilitude' (1975: 12), and gave the example of Marilyn Monroe's first scene in *The River of No Return* (1954): as Monroe performs to a crowd of men, the camera mimics their erotic gaze, lingering on her legs and basque-clad body before revealing her face, making voyeurs of all viewers.

⁷⁸⁸ Barkan 1980: 349.

escaping his punishment. But where Ovid and sixteenth-century artists depicted Diana meting out her punishment without leaving the confines of her pool, letting Actaeon's dogs exact her bloody vengeance, in the Grotto of Diana, visitors encountered a startling inversion of the goddess' traditional scopophilic representation.

Here, Diana was an active participant in Actaeon's death: the bathing setting evoked by the fountain on which the statue was mounted — with water flowing from the rocky plinth into the circular pool below — gave the impression that Diana had just leapt from her bath and donned her clothes to join the hunt for Actaeon (figs. 7.23 and 7.24). This effect was enhanced by the statue's dynamic pose: striding forward in a wind-blown tunic that gives the illusion of motion, Diana reaches for an arrow from the quiver on her back to notch her bow and is accompanied by a hunting dog.⁷⁸⁹ This was a well-attested statue type in the Renaissance, and one which Ligorio associated with two of the goddess' epithets in the lengthy passages dedicated to Diana in the Naples manuscripts.⁷⁹⁰ First, Ligorio identified the statue with Diana Lygodesma, a Greek epithet meaning 'willow-bound' which originated from the Sanctuary of Artemis Ortheia in Sparta, where a cult statue of the huntress was discovered in a willow grove, according to Pausanias.⁷⁹¹ In the following passage, Ligorio explains that the same statue was also associated with the

⁷⁸⁹ The statue's illusion of movement is discussed by Schlam 1984: 106-7 and Slater 1998: 28-30.

⁷⁹⁰ On this ancient statue type in Renaissance art, see Bieber 1977: 71-78, Bober and Rubinstein 2010: 68-69. Diana's aspects, attributes and veneration are outlined in detail by Ligorio in Naples MS XIII.B.3, ff. 136-147.

⁷⁹¹ Ligorio describes Diana with bow in hand and reaching for an arrow from her quiver, clothed in a short chiton and supported by the trunk of a willow (*salice*), in the context of her epithet Lygodesma: '*Diana Ligodesma, havea in una mano l'arco, con l'altra si cava il strale dal carcasso che ha doppo le spalle cinto. Vestita con habito corto sopra dele ginocchia, et succinto, con li suoi Artemidi in gamba, cio è i stivaletti fatti di pelle di pardo; et appiedi ha un tronco con rami di salci, per che dal salce fu cognominata ligodesma, nei quali la sua imagine fu trovata, per esser fatta appresso de Spartani*' (Naples MS XIII.B.3, f. 141). Although not cited by Ligorio, his source is Pausanias' account of the Sanctuary of Artemis Ortheia (*Description of Greece* 3.16.10-11). On Diana's veneration at Ortheia as a huntress and her association with willows, see Bouvrie 2009: 153-94 and see Budin 2016: 24-31.

goddess' Latin epithet Diana Nemorensis ('Diana of Nemi' or 'Diana of the Wood'), derived from her veneration at the sanctuary which was legendarily founded by Hippolytus at the site of the goddess' sacred grove on Lake Nemi, known as '*speculum Dianae*', (Diana's mirror) near Aricia in Lazio.⁷⁹² Not only does Ligorio associate this statue with the myth of Hippolytus — discussed in the introduction to this chapter — but it is also intrinsically linked with groves sacred to Diana which echo the woodland scenography in which Actaeon discovers the goddess bathing. The statue's scopophobic potential, however, was crystallised in its pairing with the stucco relief illustrating Actaeon's crime and punishment. Visitors primed to recognise grottoes as places of erotic encounter, as witnessed in the Grotto of Venus, were no doubt shocked to find a clothed and punitive goddess who not only denied their erotic gaze, but threatened it with punishment.

Although the sculpture of Diana in her huntress aspect was a well-known type, its pairing with the Actaeon relief was unique to the Villa d'Este. Within the architectural context of the grotto, this sculptural pendant generated a scopophobic effect comparable to that of ancient wall paintings, which featured the same leitmotifs as those depicted in the grotto's central niche. In their studies of Pompeian frescoes, David Fredrick and Verity Platt demonstrated how depictions of the myth were designed to play upon the viewer's fear of punishment for voyeurism by juxtaposing erotic images of the bathing goddess,

⁷⁹² Echoing his description of Diana Lygodesma, Ligorio adds the sculptural detail of a hound accompanying Diana Nemorensis, making the statue bear even closer resemblance to the one at the Villa d'Este: '*E' la medesimo Diana Taurica Ligodesma. La quale da Romani fu' detta Nemorense et vesta per che era di oppenione che oreste la portasse ancho in Italia dentro certi fasci di legna involta onde fascelite fu appellata. Ma nel vero la Diana Nemorense la feceano con l'arco et col carcasso come la Diana Aulidense detta agrotera, con le veste corte et succinte alla cacciatrice, conle artemide in piedi, con l'arco et col carcasso, con un cane levriere, et con la luna in fronte sicome ne havemo vedute di bassorilievo un fragmento sul lago di Nemo Aricino dove ella havea il Tempio già consecrato prima da Hippolito figliuolo di Teseo et Hippoliti Amazone, et il laco fu chiamato speculum Dianae.*' (Naples MS XIII.B.3, f. 141). On Diana's worship at Nemi from the Bronze age to the second century CE, see Green's monograph (2007), particularly 112-25 on her huntress aspect and hunting cult, and 208-234 on the myth of Hippolytus.

which enticed the viewer to imitate Actaeon's transgressive gaze, with graphic depictions of his death, which forced the visitor to confront the implications of their own voyeurism.⁷⁹³ Significantly, Platt also observed that the Actaeon frescoes the House of Octavius Quartio were located behind fountains, which brought the bathing setting of the painting into the architectural space of the viewer, creating a dynamic dialectic between the image and the viewer by confusing the boundary between myth and reality, thereby heightening the viewer's sense of participation in the narratives they beheld.⁷⁹⁴ In the Grotto of Diana, the same dialectic between myth and reality was not only on display in the central fountain, which recreated the pool in which the goddess bathed, but was made all the more powerful by the life-sized statue of Diana, a scale and pose which brought the myth's vengeful antagonist into the visitor's space. This resulted in a far more terrifying prospect than just incorporating the bathing setting recessively into the grotto's architecture. Occupying both the mythic scenography of the Actaeon relief and the architectural space of the grotto, Diana mediated between these two fields to generate an immediate encounter in which the visitor was not only confronted with Actaeon's fate, but was also in danger of being implicated in it.

Contextualised within the bathing setting evoked by the fountain and captured in the act of hunting, Diana was drawn into the narrative depicted in the Actaeon relief. Given the probability that Actaeon's death was depicted on the right side of the niche, as outlined above, the corresponding aim of Diana's bow — orientated to the right — may well have shown the goddess poised to deal the killing shot. Expanding on the Ovidian episode, in

⁷⁹³ Frederick 1995: 366-88; Platt 2002: 87-112.

⁷⁹⁴ Platt 2002: 12, quoted above in footnote 734.

which the goddess ‘wished that her arrows were ready to hand’ but had to settle for transforming Actaeon into a stag and allowing his dogs to hunt him down, this diorama saw Diana reunited with her arrows and fulfilling her wish for Actaeon to die by her hand.⁷⁹⁵ By dramatising the goddess’ participation in Actaeon’s death, this mythic diorama subverted the traditional depiction of Diana and Actaeon in Renaissance art as erotic object and voyeur respectively. In a reversal of these roles, Diana was not subjected to Actaeon’s erotic gaze, and instead, Actaeon fell prey to the goddess’ accusatory and destructive gaze — actualised in a real-world sense though the life-mimicking statue — which stripped him of his power as active viewer and reduced him to an object of Diana’s wrath.⁷⁹⁶

Confronted with this scene, the visitor experienced the same role reversal as Actaeon in the midst of the contrasting scopophilic and scopophobic encounters in the Grottoes of Venus and Diana. Drawn into Actaeon’s scopophobic encounter by the three-dimensional incarnation of the goddess, which brought the myth’s protagonist into their space, the visitor was invited to reflect on the consequences of their own repeated voyeurism. For not only had visitors perpetrated the same crime as Actaeon in the Grotto of Venus, but those who entered the grotto on the fourth terrace with expectations of a similar erotic spectacle were further implicated in his guilt, having already committed themselves to voyeuristic viewing.⁷⁹⁷ Diana’s dynamic pose compounded the visitor’s

⁷⁹⁵ Ovid *Met.* 3.189, 91.

⁷⁹⁶ Diana’s participation in Actaeon’s death is an inversion of the gendered dynamic of scopophilic voyeurism outlined by Mulvey (1975: 17), dependent upon an active objectifying male gaze and passive female object, as discussed on pages 253-54.

⁷⁹⁷ Platt observed a comparable erotic dilemma in the House of Octavius Quartio, where visitors saw a nude painting of Venus on entering, which made the viewer ‘open to the dialectics of the desirous gaze’ as they observed the next fresco of a bathing goddess, who was identified as Diana by a companion fresco of Actaeon: ‘It is only by viewing and identifying Actaeon and his hounds that the viewer can then identify the crouching nude as Diana. Yet by then he has already committed himself to a transgressive viewing, because he has confused the goddess with the erotic realm of her divine opposite...even in recognizing that dilemma, the viewer has already violated Diana’s body with his gaze, and so repeated Actaeon’s error.’ (2002: 101).

scopophobia, giving the illusion that she might turn to meet their gaze at any moment, and that they too would share in Actaeon's punishment. Like Actaeon, therefore, visitors were divested of the power of their erotic gaze — so readily indulged in the Grotto of Venus — by Diana, and had the potential to become an object of her wrath, fearing the goddess' destructive gaze as they also feared to gaze upon her. This scopophilic encounter was made all the more immediate by the architectural setting of the grotto, which located the visitor within the same mythic site in which Actaeon was located in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

7.3.2 Sylvan Haunt of the Huntress

The scenography within the Grotto of Diana — 'representing the cave where Actaeon discovered Diana', as Nicolas Audebert recorded — delivered an explicit narrative impact, but even before entering, visitors were empowered to recognise the significance of their encounter thorough by the grotto's design, contextual landscaping and location within the garden.⁷⁹⁸ Ovid located Actaeon's encounter within the wooded valley of Gargaphie in Boeotia, Diana's sacred haunt, where a spring issued from a natural cave, forming a clear pool in which the goddess would bathe:

Now picture a valley, dense with pine and tapering cypress,
called Gargaphie, sacred haunt of the huntress Diana;
there, in a secret corner, a cave surrounded by woodland,
owing nothing to human artifice. Nature had used
her talent to imitate art: she had moulded the living rock
of porous tufa to form the shape of a rugged arch.
To the right, a babbling spring with a thin translucent rivulet
widening into a pool ringed round by a grassy clearing.

⁷⁹⁸ '...au bout de la montee y à a main gaulche une tres belle grotte, qui est une petite chambre appelee La Caverna, laquelle est soubz terre, sauoir soubz le bout de la haulte allee. Par la est representee la Caverne ou Acteon trouva Diane' (Audebert, *Journal* 173).

Here the goddess who guards the woods, when weary with hunting,
would come to bathe her virginal limbs in the clear, clean water.⁷⁹⁹

Despite Audebert's identification and the widespread influence of *Metamorphoses* on Italian Renaissance garden design, the Grotto of Diana's relationship to this Ovidian model has been overlooked.⁸⁰⁰ By investigating the correlation between the garden grotto and its mythic counterpart, however, it becomes evident that key elements of Ovid's description not only informed grotto's design and decoration, but were also incorporated into the landscaping and layout of the fourth terrace, with significant implications for the whole garden. Tracing the visitor's journey through the densely wooded fourth terrace to the Grotto of Diana reveals how their progress paralleled Actaeon's journey to the forest-secluded cave where he stumbled upon the bathing goddess.

Evoking the woods of Gargaphie, 'dense with pine and tapering cypress', the fourth terrace was landscaped with triangular copses of densely planted trees, as described in the Ligorio manuscript, and depicted in Dupérac's engraving and Muziano's fresco (figs. 1.1 and 1.2).⁸⁰¹ These images also illustrate how the density of plantings increased with the garden's gradient. There is an important, dramatic shift between the manicured plantscape of the level first terrace and the *bosco* dominating the steep second terrace, which culminated in the thick copses of trees spanning the steepest fourth terrace. With the cultivated 'third nature' planting elements concentrated on the lowest terrace giving way to the 'first nature' nature experience generated by the progressively dense woodland

⁷⁹⁹ Ovid, *Met.* 3.154-64.

⁸⁰⁰ On *Metamorphoses* as a principal source for Italian Renaissance garden design, see Chapter 1, pages 36-37.

⁸⁰¹ Ovid, *Met.* 3.154; Ligorio, *MS* f. 251r Z.

landscaping on the upper terraces, the garden seemed to grow increasingly wild and impenetrable with the visitor's ascent.⁸⁰² This ascent not only evoked the depiction of virtue's challenging path in visual renderings of Hercules' choice, as outlined above, but also gave the effect of penetrating deeper into the woods, reflecting Actaeon's journey into the depths of the forest, where the trees thickened in the valley of Gargaphie. Correspondingly, the bewildering effect of the intersecting pathways which zigzagged between the copses of trees, offering no direct route to the terrace's summit, recreated for the visitor Actaeon's directionless wanderings — who 'sauntered aimlessly through the unfamiliar woodland' — that brought him to Diana's sacred haunt.⁸⁰³

Unlike unwitting Actaeon, however, the visitor ascending the fourth terrace was already attuned to the potential threat of the woods, following their topophobic encounter at the Fountain of the Dragon in the second terrace *boschi*, discussed in Chapter 5. Significantly, large orders for sweet chestnuts, elms and silver firs purchased in 1568 and 1569 indicate that these copses were composed of the same trees as the *bosco* on the second terrace.⁸⁰⁴ It must have been with trepidation, therefore, that some visitors traversed the fourth terrace, anticipating more monstrous encounters in the woods. On reaching the grotto at the westernmost corner of the terrace's summit without incident, however, many visitors must have proceeded without caution, and in the wake of their recent scopophilic

⁸⁰² The 'three natures' are discussed at length in the Chapter 2, pages 58-61.

⁸⁰³ Ovid, *Met.* 3.175. Actaeon's fateful journey into the dark heart of the woods is evocative of the malevolent, labyrinthine forests encountered by Aeneas and his companions in Virgil's *Aeneid*, particularly the treacherous forest in which Nisus and Euryalus become lost and meet their tragic demise (*Aen.* 9.375-445), as discussed in Chapter 5, pages 175-76.

⁸⁰⁴ Ovid, *Met.* 3.154. Payment records show orders for 179 sweet chestnuts, 70 elms and 51 silver firs purchased in 1568 and 1569 (Coffin 1960: 20); for the composition of the second terrace *boschi*, see Chapter 5, pages 180-81.

encounter in the Grotto of Venus, would have been deceived in their expectations of a second voyeuristic spectacle.

Located in the westernmost corner of the fourth terrace's summit, the Grotto of Diana mirrored the setting of the Ovidian grotto: 'in a secret corner, a cave surrounded by woodland'.⁸⁰⁵ Yet where Ovid emphatically describes a naturally formed cave, 'owing nothing to human artifice. Nature had used her talent to imitate art', the Grotto of Diana was the reverse, an artificial structure which imitated nature. Indeed, the grotto's lavish interior decoration bears witness to the conscious inversion of this description, as the very elements that betrayed its artifice were exploited to crystallise its Ovidian invocation.⁸⁰⁶

The unassuming entrance to the Grotto of Diana betrays none of this vibrant decoration that characterised the immense cruciform cavern within, where every surface of the cavernous space remains adorned to this day (fig. 7.31). An intricate mosaic of maiolica tiles covers the floor in a repeated refrain of golden apples, fleur-de-lis and white eagles, which are echoed on the walls and vault above (fig. 7.32). Marking the four corners of the cruciform's central square, caryatids balance baskets of golden apples on their heads, from which fruit-laden branches climb up onto the ceiling, clustering around the white Este eagle crowning the vault (fig. 7.33). Between the twisting boughs of golden apples, scrolling vegetal motifs wreath the walls and ceiling, framing marine or riverine scenes depicting human hybrids with fish tails and wings (fig. 3.10). Where the Este emblems and

⁸⁰⁵ Ovid, *Met.* 3.156.

⁸⁰⁶ Ovid, *Met.* 3.157-58. A comparable interpretation of Ovid's description is witnessed in the distinctly architectural setting of Titian's *Diana and Actaeon* (fig. 7.29), as Panofsky observed: '[Titian] took his clue from Ovid's description; but he reversed the accent. Instead of depicting a cave where the "genius of nature" had imitated art, he depicted an architectural setting where art had followed the "genius of nature". For him and his contemporaries a Gothic vault combined with rusticated pier, was the man-made equivalent of what Ovid describes as a structure "produced by nature in imitation of art". And the ruined state of this structure... gives the impression that nature is recalling her own' (1969: 158).

golden apples reflected the garden's Hesperidian symbolism, the scrolling motifs and hybridised forms augmented the grotto's mythic setting, deriving from classical *grotteschi*. This term takes its significance from the Renaissance rediscovery of the grotesque style in Nero's Domus Aurea: excavated in the late fifteenth century, the long-buried palace appeared to be a network of subterranean caves decorated with various vegetal, bestial and hybrid motifs.⁸⁰⁷ As such, *grotteschi* became a typical feature of loggias and grottoes in Italian Renaissance garden design, evocative of their ancient, pseudo-subterranean origins.⁸⁰⁸ What is more, they were also explicitly linked with the Ovidian theme of metamorphosis by Ligorio in his unpublished treatise on '*grotteschi*' in the Turin manuscripts.⁸⁰⁹ Contending that *grotteschi* were invested with a complex symbolism in antiquity, Ligorio catalogued the various motifs and proposed interpretations of their meanings based on mythic sources, deciphering hybridised forms as humans undergoing metamorphosis into plants, animals and even landscape features, in accordance with Ovidian myth.⁸¹⁰

In light of their metamorphic character, therefore, the *grotteschi* decorating the Grotto of Diana not only enhanced the classical evocations of the cavernous setting, but also augmented the mythic diorama in the grotto's central niche depicting Actaeon's

⁸⁰⁷ On the misinterpretation of the Domus Aurea as a network of grottoes in the Renaissance, see Dacos 1969 and Morgan 2016: 47-51.

⁸⁰⁸ Morgan surveys the use of *grotteschi* in Italian Renaissance garden design (2016: 47-68), amongst the most notable examples of which are those in the garden loggia at the Villa Madama in Rome and the Grotto of the Animals at the Villa Castello in Florence.

⁸⁰⁹ Ligorio, Turin MS a.III.10.J.8, ff. 151r-161v.

⁸¹⁰ Ligorio's treatise on *grotteschi* and his mythological interpretations are explored by Coffin 2008: 32-43. Ligorio wrote: 'the grotesque pictures of the pagans are not without meaning and are contrived with some fine philosophical skill and depicted poetically, because, as we have been able to see, in these same ancient paintings are subjects of consequence and conformity. They parallel one another like a palinode of answers and harmonies' (Turin MS a.III.10. 8, f. 154v; trans. Coffin 2008: 34).

metamorphosis into a stag. Indeed, the diorama and *grotteschi* are linked by the intertwining themes of water and metamorphosis. Actaeon's metamorphosis occurs when Diana splashes him with water from her pool, which brought into the visitor's space by the naturalistic fountain which spilled into the circular basin below, recreating Ovid's description of 'a babbling spring with a thin translucent rivulet widening into a pool'.⁸¹¹ The transformative power of Diana's fountain, therefore, was echoed and amplified by the metamorphic figures depicted in the marine and riverine scenes on the vault above. What is more, the same intertwining themes of water and metamorphosis were also witnessed on the three additional stucco reliefs of scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

7.3.3 Warning Tales from the Woods

The myth of Actaeon in the grotto's central niche was one of four stucco reliefs 'depicting various stories from *Metamorphoses*', as Zappi recorded, which featured the myths of Diana and Callisto, Daphne and Apollo, and Pan and Syrinx, according to Del Re's description.⁸¹² Significantly, the fullest accounts of each of these myths by Ligorio in *Antichità di Roma* are grouped together in the Naples manuscripts.⁸¹³ Like the Actaeon

⁸¹¹ Ovid, *Met.* 3.160.

⁸¹² Zappi witnessed, '*bellissimi fregi con diverse historie di relevo della Metamorfosi*', but only recorded the myth of Daphne and Apollo among them (*Annali* 63). Del Re described the following scenes: '*Le volte di sopra e le pareti intorno sono di mosaico rustico di pietre e smalti di diversi colori, ornato delle storie...di Atteone quando volle veder Diana bagnarsi nel fonte e, spruzzato da lei con l'acqua, divenne cervo lacerato dai propri cani; e di Dafne, la quale amata da Apolline e seguita e giunta da lui che prender la voleva, divenne sempre verde lauro; e di Siringa amata da Pane Dio, fatta dai Gentili della Foresta, la quale da lui perseguitata e giunta per l'impedimento del fiume, divenne tremola canna; e di Calisto, una delle vergini di Diana, la quale avendola scoperta gravida la discacciò dal commercio delle sue vergini e la perseguitò, e Calisto fu convertita in Orsa*' (*Tiburtine* 40-41). Audebert also witnessed scenes depicted in the grotto which correspond with those recorded by Del Re and Zappi (*Journal* 174).

⁸¹³ The stories of Daphne and Syrinx are recounted together under the title '*Di Daphene et di Syringa*' (Naples *MS* XIII.B.3, ff. 357-58; see also Turin *MS* a.II.8.J.21, f. 70v on Daphne; Naples *MS* XIII.B.4, f. 86 on Syrinx), followed by the myth of Callisto (Naples *MS* XIII.B.3, f. 478; see also Turin *MS* a.III.8.J.6, f. 174r).

relief, the ideological significance of these stucco reliefs has been entirely overlooked in previous studies of the Villa d'Este, in which, at best, their meaning is said to be obscure.⁸¹⁴ The key to interpreting their significance, however, lies in the central narrative of Actaeon, which was not only the largest of the Ovidian reliefs, occupying the grotto's central niche, but also the first myth witnessed by visitor. The three additional scenes decorated the walls on the arms of the cruciform cavern, and as such were not immediately visible to the visitor on entering the grotto. Just as Actaeon, having wandered too far into the woods, was drawn into an illicit voyeuristic encounter that resulted in his metamorphosis, in the three accompanying reliefs, visitors witnessed the transformations of three nymphs who fell prey to the unwelcome erotic gazes of those they encountered in the woods. Contextualised within the moral implications of the visitor's contrasting voyeuristic encounters in the Grottoes of Venus and Diana, these Ovidian reliefs represented a series of cautionary tales illustrating the metamorphic consequences of vice, manifest in unbridled voyeurism and the sexual transgression that it engenders.

Although the stucco reliefs are now in varying stages of deterioration, surviving fragments indicate that the scenes were based on the popular woodcuts by Salomon in *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée*, which were replicated extensively in illustrated editions of *Metamorphoses*.⁸¹⁵ Together with Del Re's description, these illustrations make it possible to reconstruct the original appearance of the reliefs. On the wall panel to the right

⁸¹⁴ Although the stucco reliefs are acknowledged by Coffin (1960: 35, 2004: 92), Fagiolo and Madonna (2003: 118), and Occhipinti (2009: 374), they offered no insight into their significance. Lazzaro identified the reliefs inconclusively as 'metaphors for the protean character of water and all of nature in the garden' (1990: 239) and elucidated no further. Dornie claimed they defy interpretation: 'the meaning behind these scenes, all precisely chosen from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, is complex, and perhaps its complete sense has been lost to us' (1996: 94-5).

⁸¹⁵ On the popularity, dissemination and replication of Salomon's woodcut cycle, see Sharratt 2005: 88-91.

of the central niche, Del Re observed the story ‘of Callisto, one of the virgins of Diana. On discovering Callisto was pregnant, Diana banished her from her company of virgins and punished her, and Callisto was transformed into a bear’.⁸¹⁶ This brief comment depends on Ovid, who recounts how Jupiter assumes the form of Diana to seduce Callisto, leaving the pregnant nymph to the mercy of Diana, who casts Callisto out from her company after seeing her swollen belly as she bathes in a woodland pool.⁸¹⁷ The story then ends with Juno, Jupiter’s jealous wife, taking revenge on the unfortunate nymph; seizing her by the hair, she transforms Callisto into a bear.⁸¹⁸ On the partially deteriorated relief, a woodland setting and two vignettes are still visible: on the left, Diana’s attendants look on as Juno seizes Callisto — whose outline is still extant — by the hair, as depicted in the Salomon illustration of the episode (figs. 7.34-7.37).⁸¹⁹ On the right, Callisto, in the form of a bear, takes refuge in the woods, as she is pursued by hunting dogs in the background and Diana in the foreground. Striding forward with her bow strung and windswept clothes, this iconography echoes the statue from the grotto’s central niche. Just as Diana is presented participating in Actaeon’s death, therefore, this scene also expands on the Ovidian narrative by placing Diana in the midst of the hunt for Callisto, when Ovid does not. As with the Actaeon diorama, the emphasis of this relief is on Callisto’s punishment, witnessed in the juxtaposition of Juno’s vengeance in transforming Callisto with Diana’s wrath in hunting her.

⁸¹⁶ Del Re, *Tiburine* 41.

⁸¹⁷ Ovid, *Met.* 2.409-55. Incidentally, this woodland pool bears striking resemblance to the one in which Actaeon discovered Diana bathing (*Met.* 3.160-64, quoted above, page 273): ‘the goddess entered the cool of a wood, where a babbling brook was smoothly flowing along its familiar sandy bed’ (*Met.* 2.455-56).

⁸¹⁸ Ovid, *Met.* 2.455-95.

⁸¹⁹ I am grateful to my supervisor, Diana Spencer, for the photographs of the stucco reliefs.

In contrast to Callisto and Actaeon, whose transformations were punishments, the two remaining reliefs depict nymphs who escaped the unwanted sexual attentions of lustful gods through metamorphosis. On the wall opposite the Callisto relief, Del Re identified the story ‘of Daphne, loved by Apollo, who pursued her so that he might have his way with her, and she became an evergreen laurel’.⁸²⁰ This again follows Ovid, who describes how Daphne is chased by Apollo through the forest, and when she comes to the river presided over by her father Peneus, she prays to him for aid and is transformed into a laurel.⁸²¹ The existing relief depicts Daphne mid-metamorphosis as her arms become branches, and although the figure of Apollo is no longer extant, his silhouette is still visible, shown reaching out for Daphne in a scene which closely resembles the Salomon illustration, but with the addition of Peneus, who reclines in the right-hand corner, identified by the vase from which the waters of his river flows (figs. 7.38-7.41).

The stucco relief that now occupies the panel to the left of the grotto’s central niche is a restoration, showing Diana surrounded by attendants, but according to Del Re, the relief originally illustrated the myth ‘of Syrinx, loved by the god Pan...who pursued her until her path was obstructed by the river, where she was transformed into trembling reeds’ (fig. 7.42).⁸²² Ovid recounts how the nymph was metamorphosed into water reeds by her sisters, enabling her to escape Pan when he cornered her beside a river.⁸²³ It is probable that the original relief, like its counterparts, resembled the Salomon illustration, which

⁸²⁰ Del Re, *Tiburine* 40.

⁸²¹ Ovid, *Met.* 1.452-568.

⁸²² Del Re, *Tiburine* 41.

⁸²³ Ovid, *Met.* 1.689-712.

shows the satyr-god Pan embracing the reeds into which Syrinx is being transformed (fig. 7.43).

Uniting the four myths are the themes of voyeurism and metamorphosis, intertwined with the motifs of water and the woods. Each myth illustrates the dangers of the erotic gaze, which threatens the chastity of the myths' female figures: Actaeon beholds the forbidden sight of Diana's naked virgin body, whilst Callisto, Daphne and Syrinx fall foul of gods who see them and subsequently desire to possess them. In each myth, voyeuristic viewing leads to transformation, and for Actaeon, to death. Water plays a crucial role in each myth, and divides the episodes into pairs. Actaeon and Callisto both suffer punishment following bathing encounters in pools: Actaeon is splashed with vengeful drops from the pool where Diana bathes, and the same crystal-clear waters that reveal her nakedness to Actaeon also reveal Callisto's pregnancy when she bathes with the goddess. Correspondingly, the metamorphoses of Daphne and Syrinx both take place beside rivers: Daphne calls upon her father, a river god, for aid, whilst Syrinx is transformed into water reeds.⁸²⁴ In the light of this water motif, the juxtaposition of the reliefs with the hybrid *grotteschi*, depicting human-fish hybrids in mid-transformation against aquatic backdrops, becomes all the more significant in emphasising the grotto's fluid and metamorphic quality, and thus, its potential danger.⁸²⁵

The visitor's sense of danger was further heightened by the woodland setting shared both by the figures in the Ovidian narratives and the visitor in the densely wooded

⁸²⁴ These pairings are also reflected in the type of metamorphoses the figures undergo: Actaeon and Callisto become animals, while Daphne and Syrinx become vegetation.

⁸²⁵ It is probable the juxtaposition of these reliefs with *grotteschi* may also have derived from the Salomon cycle, which frame many of the scenes in borders of *grotteschi*.

fourth terrace. Indeed, Ligorio — like Ovid — described a woodland setting for each of the myths recounted in *Antichità di Roma*.⁸²⁶ In the reliefs, the woods become a moral wilderness of sexual deviance and violence, a space which results in physical transformation that reflects the bestial nature of its occupants, as explored in Chapter 5.⁸²⁷ Located in the same woodland setting as these unfortunate victims of metamorphosis, the visitor might reflect on the danger of the woods in which they found themselves, fearing that they too might become lost within — both literally and morally. Thus, the cautionary tales depicted on the stucco reliefs were not simply incidental colour but were fundamental to augmenting the allegorical and spatial relationship between the Grottoes of Venus and Diana as contrasting moral encounters which reflected the theme of Hercules' choice.

7.4 A LANDSCAPE TRICK OF MORAL CHOICE

This new reading has demonstrated how visitors were engaged in a reenactment of Hercules' choice both intellectually and physically through the garden's narrative-conditioned design. This meant that visitors who did not possess the classical expertise required to decode the sequence of allegorical images illustrating Hercules' choice were nonetheless aware of their own moral choice, enacted through contrasting voyeuristic encounters within the two grottoes, where visitors were convicted of their scopophilic act of vice in the Grotto of Venus through their scopophobic encounter in the Grotto of Diana.

Previous interpretative approaches to the Hercules' choice theme by Conan and Coffin have emphasised the Cardinal Ippolito's ideological agenda. This focused primarily

⁸²⁶ Ligorio, Naples *MS XIII.B.3*, ff. 357, 478.

⁸²⁷ On Ovidian woodlands as settings for violent encounters and metamorphosis, see Chapter 5, page 171-72 and 175; and pages 181-85 for the theme of monsters and beasts in the woods.

on an alignment between Ippolito and Hercules' virtuous exemplum, articulated through the Grotto of Diana's iconographic schema; the Cardinal's moral superiority was further underscored by the visitor's moral failure in unwittingly choosing vice's path. The garden's narrative-conditioned design was, in essence, an elaborate and theatrical trick staged by Ippolito. This led visitors up through the challenges of the third and fourth terraces in order to implicate them as eager voyeurs, playing upon the expectations raised by the vogue for grottoes as discrete settings for sculptural peep-shows in sixteenth-century gardens. Visitors culturally primed to recognise grottoes as places of scopophilic indulgence, and fresh from their titillating encounter in the Grotto of Venus, must have been shocked to discover the clothed and punitive goddess within the Grotto of Diana, who not only denied their erotic gaze, but threatened it with punishment.

Although this trick was at the visitor's expense, it nonetheless generated an experience which was fundamentally thrilling. What Conan defined as a 'landscape metaphor of moral choice' could equally be described as a landscape trick of moral choice, comparable to the so called '*giochi*' and '*scherzi d'acqua*' (water jokes and tricks) — hidden jets that sprayed unsuspecting visitors — that were a popular feature of Italian Renaissance gardens.⁸²⁸ Indeed, Italian humanist Claudio Tolomei considered such water tricks the 'greatest pleasure' of fountains, which incited 'laughter, confusion, and pleasure for all', as discussed in Chapter 2.⁸²⁹ In the same way, the landscape trick at the Villa d'Este reflected the playful and theatrical nature of Italian Renaissance garden design witnessed in contemporary engravings. As Tchikine observed, 'engravings of the gardens

⁸²⁸ Conan 2003: 301.

⁸²⁹ Tolomei, Letter to Giambattista Grimaldi, 26th July, 1543, 363, in Ferrero 1967; see Chapter 2, page 80, footnote 215, for the original Italian.

in Rome, Frascati, and Tivoli by Falda and Venturini (1675-89) show them as bizarre adult playgrounds where people of different age and social rank enjoy themselves in a variety of unexpected ways.’⁸³⁰

The landscape trick of moral choice at the Villa d’Este, therefore, was not only staged by Cardinal Ippolito as part of an ideological agenda conveying his virtue, but also to entertain his visitors as they approached the end of the journey. This was, in fact, the third and final act in a suite of entertainment intertwined with the garden’s Hercules narratives designed for the visitor’s enjoyment. Through the Hesperidian schema, Ippolito satisfied visitors’ fascination with exotic specimens acknowledging the era’s astonishing discoveries and exploratory successes. The jasmine-wreathed pergola which reoriented visitors with a new Hesperides on the first terrace generated an olfactory aura of exoticism, which enabled visitors to immerse themselves in the potent smellscape of foreign lands. At the Fountain of the Dragon on the second terrace, visitors not only encountered the Hesperides’ guardian, but also bore witness to monstrous marvels that inhabited the unexplored edges of the known world. Through the Hercules’ choice theme on the third and fourth terrace, Ippolito indulged visitors’ scopophilic predilection in the Grotto of Venus, only to confound their voyeuristic expectations in the Grotto of Diana, which revealed that visitors had been part of an elaborate trick stage-managed by their host. For many visitors who were not attuned to the complex symbolism surrounding the Hercules’ choice theme, the scopophilic and scopophobic encounters which culminated in this theatrical landscape trick would have defined their experience of the narrative-conditioned layout which characterised the Villa d’Este’s upper terraces.

⁸³⁰ Tchikine 2010: 63.

CONCLUSION

FANTASY AND REALITY IN THE GARDEN

Introduction

At the Villa d'Este, myth and reality merged to create a lushly storyboarded garden experience. Here, the sculptural pantheon of gods, goddesses, heroes and monsters which inhabited the garden were located within physically immersive environments generated by a complementary scheme of water features and plantings. This reoriented visitors within microcosmic mythscapes and landscapes, engaging them as active participants in the narratives which unfolded as they traversed the garden. Visitors retraced Hercules' footsteps through the Garden of the Hesperides, reliving his confrontation with the dragon who guarded the golden apples. They then went on to reenact unwittingly the hero's choice between vice and virtue, a drama played out amidst the secret bathing settings of voluptuous and vengeful goddesses. In distilled Tiburtine landscapes, visitors encountered the monstrous Nature Goddess presiding over a dark vision of the post-classical landscape, and they also witnessed the region restored to its ancient, bucolic abundance under the Tiburtine Sibyl's benevolent patronage.

This thesis concludes by reflecting on the interpretative, ecocritical and phenomenological approaches employed to present my new interpretation of the Villa d'Este. The first section of this Conclusion, 'Environmental Awareness: Reconciling the *locus amoenus* and the *locus horridus*', defines how representations of the Tiburtine topography within the Villa d'Este expressed and responded creatively to environmental concerns, focussing on conclusions arising from Chapters 4 and 6. The second section, 'Augmented Reality: Synthesising Symbolism and the Senses', engages with the

immersive sensescapes and evocative environments generated by water features and plantings which enhanced the garden's iconographic programmes, drawing together the key arguments developed throughout this thesis.

Environmental Awareness: Reconciling the *locus amoenus* and the *locus horridus*

In developing an holistic reading of the Villa d'Este, this thesis drew on ecocriticism in order to demonstrate that the distilled Tiburtine landscapes represented within the Villa d'Este's sequence of terraces were both creative expressions of and responses to environmental issues. Previous studies by David Coffin, Claudia Lazzaro, David Dernie, Marcello Fagiolo and Maria Luisa Madonna, and Carmelo Occhipinti have framed the Villa d'Este within the traditional conception of the Italian Renaissance garden as a reinvention of the classical *locus amoenus*, proposing that its Tiburtine themes aligned Tivoli with the bucolic abundance of ancient pastoral poetry and mythic paradises of Mount Parnassus and the Garden of the Hesperides.⁸³¹ My study, however, has demonstrated how the garden's Tiburtine schema was characterised by contrasting representations of landscape which invoked the *locus horridus* alongside the *locus amoenus*, expanding upon recent scholarship which has engaged with the incorporation of monstrous figures and wild nature within Italian Renaissance gardens.

I have built upon important work by Luke Morgan, who outlined how monsters embedded the *locus horridus* within the garden to reify its paradisaal elements and to promote a sublime experience, but I have developed these implications in a new direction

⁸³¹ Coffin 1960, 2004: 83-105; Lazzaro 1990: 215-242; Dernie 1996; Fagiolo, and Madonna 2003: 83-94, 95-110; Occhipinti 2009: 321-409.

in order to find the richest contexts for understanding the Villa d'Este.⁸³² Thus, I have drawn out the possibilities created by Catherine Walsh and Shannon Kelley in pioneering ecocritical approaches in order to explore the environmental concerns manifest in statues and fountains representing natural phenomena.⁸³³ Developing these new critical perspectives, this study has outlined how topophilic and topophobic representations of landscape reflected Tivoli's complex relationship with the volatile forces of nature which governed the region and the country, and also commemorated Cardinal Ippolito's efforts to control these forces through a programme of regeneration. This has resulted in an innovative, integrated interpretation of the Tiburtine schema on the first terrace waterscape and the third terrace, which also sheds light on the Cardinal's geo-political agenda as Tivoli's governor in the wake of his frustrated papal ambitions in Rome.

Chapter 4, 'Realm of the Nature Goddess' redefined the first terrace waterscape as a disquieting vision of the Valle d'Inferno governed by the destructive forces of the River Aniene, thereby encapsulating local and national fears of hydrological disasters which were exacerbated in the Cinquecento during Europe's Little Ice Age. In the same way the Valle d'Inferno was periodically transformed from a site of celebrated natural beauty into a *locus horridus* when the Aniene flooded, so the glimmering waterscape was dominated by the Fountain of the Flood which simulated the floods that frequently devastated the town through its dynamic water effects. Presiding over this volatile Tiburtine landscape was the many-breasted Nature Goddess, whose grotesquely excessive incarnation not only personified the uncontrollable agency of nature, but also embodied the monstrous portents

⁸³² Morgan 2016.

⁸³³ Walsh 2015; Kelley 2016: 729-51.

associated with hydrological disasters in Renaissance Italy. The environmental anxieties manifest on this terrace were also informed by a geo-political ideology which powerfully illustrated the wild, post-classical Tiburtine landscape before it was restored to its ancient, bucolic abundance by Cardinal Ippolito. This schema became fully apparent on the third terrace, which commemorated Ippolito's regeneration of the region, as outlined in Chapter 6, 'Realm of the Tiburtine Sibyl'. A pendant to the topophobic waterscape, this terrace celebrated Ippolito's mastery over the Aniene through the creation of aqueducts and revival of the Acque Albule springs under the auspices of the Tiburtine Sibyl. The Sibyl was the figurehead for Ippolito's reforms, supplanting the Nature Goddess as the region's tutelary deity and symbolising the importance of Rome's geo-political relationship with Tivoli, thereby justifying Ippolito's retreat to the town following his failed attempts to secure the papacy.

In previous ecocritical approaches to the Italian Renaissance garden, the representation of wild nature therein has been understood according to humanity's antagonistic relationship with the natural world, as expressions of anxieties surrounding damage by and to the environment. Walsh interpreted the mournful, colossal figure of Appenino as an embodiment of the destructive effects of deforestation in the Apennine mountains which were widespread across Italy and exacerbated flooding nationally.⁸³⁴ Kelley argued that the vogue for flood-simulating fountains in the Cinquecento commemorated the hydrological disasters in Italy during the Little Ice Age.⁸³⁵ At the Villa d'Este, however, I argue that the environmental outlook was altogether more optimistic,

⁸³⁴ Walsh 2015.

⁸³⁵ Kelley 2016: 729-51.

revealing creative responses to natural disasters and highlighting contemporary attitudes to landscape conservation. In the light of Tivoli's post-classical decline, the garden's Tiburtine schema commemorated Cardinal Ippolito's landscape and civic reforms at Tivoli. In the wider context of the floods which plagued Tivoli and Italy during the Cinquecento, however, the Villa d'Este also presented nature as a governable force. This naturally raised the question: if water could be controlled through human intervention on a microcosmic scale in gardens, how much sooner could the same hydraulic engineering be employed to prevent flooding on a regional and national scale? Indeed, at Tivoli, such prevention schemes were eventually witnessed in the creation of the Parco Villa Gregoriana in 1835, which diverted the Aniene away from the town and brought an end to local flooding.

Although expressions of fears surrounding widespread natural disasters in Europe's Little Ice Age are manifest in the representation and sculptural figurations of wild nature within the Italian Renaissance garden, we also witness creative responses to these phenomena in an era of hydraulic advancement. Furthermore, in a century which saw widespread deforestation across Italy, the Villa d'Este bears testament to Cardinal Ippolito's extensive investment in landscape conservation in the Tiburtine region. This study, therefore, has identified an environmental awareness hitherto unrecognised in Italian Renaissance gardens, paving the way for new ecocritical approaches.

Augmented Reality: Synthesising Symbolism and the Senses

This is the first study to adopt a synthetic approach to the symbolic and sensory modes of perception within the Villa d'Este — and indeed, in any Italian Renaissance garden — in order to reconstruct the historic visitor's experience. It comes in the wake of traditional

interpretative approaches to gardens in the Cinquecento as cultural artefacts, to be decoded in the same way as a text or an icon. These approaches have emphasised the garden's iconographic and symbolic elements to the exclusion of the senses, whilst also privileging the authorial agenda of patrons and designers over the reception of visitors.⁸³⁶ Previous studies of the Villa d'Este have followed this narrow interpretative model, investigating the meaning invested in the iconographic programmes devised by Cardinal Ippolito and Ligorio.⁸³⁷ Although the resultant readings have been compelling, outlining mythic themes interwoven with Ippolito's personal ideological agenda, they are based on visitors possessing an intimate knowledge of classical humanism to decode the garden's intricate systems of symbolism. By engaging exclusively with the Villa d'Este's visual and symbolic elements, therefore, these studies not only overlooked the senses as a fundamental mode of perception, but also privileged the experience of an elite minority over the majority of visitors.

In this thesis, the above disparities have been addressed by synthesising interpretative approaches to iconography with phenomenological methodologies derived from the field of sensory anthropology, and only recently applied to garden history.⁸³⁸ By giving equal prevalence to the garden's intellectual and somatic elements, my approach is consistent with the cultural conception of gardens in Renaissance Italy, and it gains weight

⁸³⁶ As outlined in Chapter 1 (pages 24-26), Coffin (1960, 1979, 1991), was the first garden historian to move away from the architectural focus of previous studies and apply interpretative approaches from the field of art history to the iconographical programmes of Italian Renaissance gardens, an approach adopted and developed by MacDougall (1970, 1994) and Lazzaro (1990).

⁸³⁷ Coffin 1960, 2004: 83-105; Lazzaro 1990: 215-242; Dernie 1996; Fagiolo, and Madonna 2003: 83-94, 95-110; Occhipinti 2009: 321-409.

⁸³⁸ For phenomenological approaches to historic gardens pioneered in the recent *Dumbarton Oaks* edited by Fairchild Ruggles (2017), see Chapter 1, Section 1.4 (pages 47-51), which highlights the importance of studies by Tchikine (2010: 57-76, 2014: 129-54, 2017: 217-254) and Hyde (2005, 2017: 123-152) to my critical engagement with the senses.

from its foundations in the principal modes of garden experience identified in Bonfadio Taegio's *La Villa* (Milan, 1559).⁸³⁹ Taegio defined the garden according to three 'pleasures': sensual (first pleasure), intellectual (second pleasure) and the inseparable blending of these two pleasures which stimulated the senses and the mind simultaneously (third pleasure).⁸⁴⁰ This study is the first to recognise the methodological value of Taegio's tripartite model and apply it to the Italian Renaissance garden, demonstrating how somatic stimuli were fundamental design features integral to the garden's symbolism. At the Villa d'Este, I have argued, the multisensory properties of water effects and plantings were exploited to create immersive environments and interactive encounters which augmented the garden's iconographic schema, empowering visitors to engage with its mythopoeic meaning without an intimate understanding of classical humanism.

Chapter 3, 'A New Garden of the Hesperides', and Chapter 5, 'Here Be Dragons', reframed the Villa d'Este's Hesperidian narrative within dramatic sensescapes. On the first terrace plantscape, citron espaliers, a jasmine-trained pergola and hedge labyrinths formed a series of pungent loci which conjured the exotic, mythic horizon of Hercules' eleventh labour and reoriented visitors within a new Garden of the Hesperides. Where these plantings created an attractive smellscape characteristic of a *locus amoenus*, the dense woodland dominating the second terrace transported visitors to a *locus horridus*, where cultural fears of the woods were realised at the Fountain of the Dragon. Here, Hercules' violent encounter with the monstrous guardian of the Hesperides was dramatised through a

⁸³⁹ The emphasis on the garden's sensory experience by Italian Renaissance writers is explored at length in Chapter 2, Section 2.4, pages 70-76.

⁸⁴⁰ Taegio, *La Villa* 249. For detailed discussion of Taegio's tripartite model, which I have adopted and overlaid with 'thirdspace' models derived from spatial theory, see Chapter 2, Section 2.3, pages 67-70.

sequence of water effects which simulated a ‘dragon attack’. These effects animated the statues at the fountain as water-breathing dragons, reproducing the deafening acoustics of a military bombardment which culminated in a haptic assault on unsuspecting visitors, who were drenched by hidden water jets. Continuing in the footsteps of Hercules through the third and fourth terraces, visitors reenacted the hero’s moral choice by their own motion through the garden in an elaborate landscape trick defined by kinetic and phenomenological experience, as outlined in Chapter 7, ‘Between Vice and Virtue’. The visitor’s contrasting voyeuristic encounters with the bathing goddesses in the Grottoes of Venus and Diana were enhanced by planting schemes which generated complementary settings: a fragrant, shaded grove prefigured for the scopophilic sight of Venus, and a dark, foreboding woodland foreshadowed the visitor’s scopophobic confrontation with vengeful Diana.

The same immersive scene-setting and interactive encounters characterised the garden’s Tiburtine schema, detailed in Chapter 4, ‘Realm of the Nature Goddess’, and Chapter 6, ‘Realm of the Tiburtine Sibyl’. On the first terrace waterscape, the Valle d’Inferno was recreated by an acrobatic sequencing of water features which reproduced the visual, acoustic and kinetic properties of the Aniene’s flow and flooding. Here, the topophobic quality of the tumultuous deluge which issued from the Fountain of the Flood, encapsulating local and national anxieties of hydrological disasters, was realised to full effect by accompanying cacophonic water features. Similarly, the monstrously excessive qualities of the Nature Goddess, who embodied nature’s volatile forces, were enhanced by the water which caused her multiple breasts to lactate perpetually to grotesque effect. On the third terrace, by contrast, visitors were located within an idyllic Tiburtine landscape

where the topophilic properties of water were exploited in soothing fountains and playful water tricks, reflecting Ippolito's revival of Tivoli's ancient waters and reinstatement of the Tiburtine Sibyl who presided over them in antiquity.

The Villa d'Este's botanical and hydraulic elements, therefore, augmented the garden's mythopoeic experience within a physical reality. Plantings generated pungent loci and distilled visions of the surrounding landscape to locate visitors within the sensorial realm of myth. Through dynamic soundscapes combined with visual and haptic stimuli, water effects recreated natural phenomena, animated iconography and entertained visitors with playful water tricks. The inseparable blending of real-world and fantastical landscapes, senses and symbolism in Italian Renaissance gardens which created multisensory, mythopoeic environments reflect the human compulsion for escapism but also the instinct to find patterns and meaning in the unfamiliar and alien.⁸⁴¹ By reinterpreting the Villa d'Este within a phenomenological frame, this thesis has worked towards a new definition and understanding of the Italian Renaissance garden as an augmented reality, encouraging the study of these sites as experiential locales rather than cultural artefacts, and demonstrating the importance of integrating the garden's symbolic and sensory elements.

Although the connection between Italian Renaissance gardens and modern theme parks has long been recognised, their emphasis on sensory experience and multi-media fantasy, I argue, makes them precursors to augmented reality in modern gaming

⁸⁴¹ On escapism as a fundamental human desire and its various forms throughout history, see the seminal study by Tuan 1998.

technology.⁸⁴² The gaming industry is pioneering multisensory augmented reality systems to enhance modern virtual technologies, through which virtual, computer-generated environments can be overlaid with real-world somatic stimuli.⁸⁴³ Already on the market are virtual reality headsets which mediate visual and auditory perception through three-dimensional retinal display, headphones and speakers; whilst 360 degree motion-tracking treadmill platforms and body suits simulate physical interaction by enabling users to walk, run, jump and even engage in physical combat. In development are masks which trigger olfactory responses through under-nose scent emitters, and tongue patches which simulate gustatory responses. It will be interesting to see whether and how studies of historic gardens might in future join the conversation about the new modes of understanding which technological mediation and immersive bodily augmentation promise.

By drawing together traditional iconographic approaches to Italian Renaissance gardens with innovative ecocritical and phenomenological methodologies, my thesis has articulated a new critical framework for the reconstruction and interpretation of Italian Renaissance gardens. This paves the way for future research in two key directions of study: first, in environmental attitudes towards landscape management and conservation manifest in Italian Renaissance garden design; and secondly, in the multisensory experience of these gardens as sites in which iconographic programmes were augmented by a diverse range of somatic stimuli in order to generate physically immersive narrative encounters.

⁸⁴² The key study on the connection between historic grand garden design and modern theme parks is Young and Riley 2002.

⁸⁴³ The major recent study on the use and development of multisensory augmented reality in modern technologies is Papagiannis 2017, who has explored the simulation of tactile sensations (2017: 23-34), hearing (35-52) and smell and taste (53-64), and how these stimuli augment digital storytelling (65-90).

APPENDICES

Appendices are collated on the supplementary CD. All webpages were last accessed on 4th September 2018.

- A. Pirro Ligorio. c. 1568. *Descrittione di Tivoli, et Giardino dell'Illustrissimo Cardinal di Ferrara*. Cod. Ital. 1179, ff. 247r-266v. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale.
Published in D. Coffin. 1960. *The Villa d'Este at Tivoli*. Princeton, Princeton University Press: Appendix A, 142-50.
- B. Étienne Dupérac, *Palazzo et Giardini di Tivoli*, 1573, engraving. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
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- C. Uberto Foglietta. 3rd August 1569. *Tyburtinum Hippoliti Cardinalis Ferrariensis*.
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- D. Giovanni Maria Zappi. 1576. 'La descrizione del raro e gentil giardino del mondo fatto dall'animo regio della degna memoria dell'ill.mo e r.mo sig.r Hipolito Cardinal di Ferrara fabricato in la magnifica città di Tivoli e destinato in luogo ove si dice Valle Gaudente, fatta da me Gio. M. Zappi da Tivoli del MDLXXVJ', *Annali e Memorie di Tivoli*. Edited by V. Pacifici. 1920. Tivoli, Società Tiburtina di Storie e d'Arte: 55-65.
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Libro X dell'antichità di Pyrrho Ligorio, nel quale si tratta de alcune cose sacre, et imagini, ornamenti degli dii de' gentili, et delli loro origini, et di chi prima le mostrò al mondo simbolicamente adorarli o reverirli. Naples MS XIII.B.3.

Libro XIX dell'antichità di Pyrrho Ligori napolitano, dove si tratta de pesi e de misure varie de diverse nazioni e de vasi e navi appartenenti a l'uso umano. Naples MS XIII.B.4.

Libro XXXIV delle antichità di Roma, di Pyrrho Ligori nel' qual si tratta delle iscrizioni di statue, tanto di dei come de heroi et altri huomini inlustri, con altre cose diverse secondo l'occasione de le dedicationi fatte da diverse condizioni d'huomini profani. Naples MS XIII.B.7.

Libro quarantesimo dell'antichità di Pyrrho Ligori napolitano, nel quale si tratta d'alcune imagini de' fiumi et de' fonti, e particolarmente si narra dei nomi di essi, et de lachi, et d'altre cose di memoria degne presso di diverse nationi. Naples MS XIII.B.9.

Libro XLVIII di Pyrrho Ligorio, nel quale si tratta de diversi costumi delle genti usati in seppellire l'morti. Naples MS XIII.B.10.

Archivio di Stato, Turin — Turin A

Libro XIII di Pyrrho Ligorio patrizio neapolitano e cittadino romano dell'antichità, nel quale si contiene delle più chiare fameglie romane, con la particolar dichiarazione delle cose fatte et applicate ai soggetti sculpiri nelle loro medaglie. Turin MS a.II.6.J.19.

Libro ò vero trattato, dell'antichità XXII di Pyrrho Ligorio, patritio napolitano et cittadino romano, et cittadino romano, nel quale si dichiarano alcune famose ville, et particolarmente della antica città di Tibure et di alcuni monumenti. Turin MS a.II.7.J.20.
Edited by A. Ten. 2005. Rome, De Luca.

Libro XXVII dell'antichità compilato da Pyrrho Ligorio citadino romano e patritio napolitano, delle medaglie di Cesare, di Bruto, di Cassio, di Augusto et di Marco Antonio et di Lepido triumviri. Turin MS a.II.8.J.21.

Libro XLVII di Pirro Ligorio patritio napolitano, et cittadino romano, nel quale si tratta del significato del dracone, dedicato al signor Francesco Lottino Volterrano. Turin MS a.II.11.J.24, ff. 1-16v.

Libro XLVIII di Pyrrho Ligorio, nel quale si ragiona, del significato del dracone, al signor Francesco Lottino dedicato. Turin MS a.II.11.J.24, ff. 17r-29r.

Libro terzo trattato della natura del' gallo et del basilisco, scritto per Pyrrho Ligorio al medesimo signor Francesco Lottino. Turin MS a.II.11.J.24, ff. 29v-42.

Untitled. Turin MS a.II.14.J.27.

Libro, o Trattato di Pirro Ligorio patrizio napolitano cittadino romano d'alcune cose appartenenti alla nobiltà dell' antiche arti, et massimamente della pittura, della scultura, e dell' architettura, et del bene et del male, che s' acquistano coloro, i quali errano nell' arti, et di quelli che non sono della professione, che parlano troppo per parer dotti di quel che non sanno, e detrattando altrui se stessi detorpano. Turin MS a.II.6.J.29.

Archivio di Stato, Turin — Turin B

Il libro primo dell' antichità di Pirro Ligorio patrizio neapolitano e cittadino romano, nel quale se contiene di tutte le cose più illustre tanto delle città, come de' castelli, vici e ville e luoghi, come ancora de' monti, de' mari, seni, isole, stagni, fontane e fiumi, e degli uomini e delle varie nazioni, e particolarmente di quei che per virtù sono stati nominati eroi e dei da' gentili, e degli nostri episcopi, dei luoghi e de' santi di memoria degni, tutti col dritto nome compilati e brevemente dichiarati. E tutte dedicate all' illustrissimo nome dell' altezza del signor duca Alfonso secondo, e serenissimo principe di Ferrara, di Mutina Lepida, di Regio et cetera. Turin MS a.III.3.J.1.

Libro secondo dell' antichità di Pyrrho Ligorio patrizio neapolitano e cittadino romano, nel quale si tratta, secondo l' ordine dell' alfabeto, di tutti i luoghi, de' monti, città, fontane, laghi, e fiumi, et degl' homini illustri. Turin MS a.III.6.J.4.

Libro terzo nel quale di contiene de' diversi luoghi, delle città, castelli, vici municipale, et delle tribù, et popoli, delle provincie, et regni, dei mari, de' fonti, e fiumi, delle porti, seni, et delle isole et della homini illustri d' ogni portata fatti di laude degni, come di quelle, che per virtù, e santimonia sono celebri, et degni antistiti delle città, et popoli tutelari, et degnissimi pastori. Turin MS a.III.8.J.6.

Libro quattro dell' antichità di Pyrrho Ligorio patrizio neapolitano e cittadino romano, dove si narra d' alcuni luoghi et città più degni di memoria. Turin MS a.III.9.J.7.

Libro sesto dell' antichità di Pyrrho Ligorio patrizio neapolitano e cittadino romano, nel quale si narra delle antichità delle città e luoghi più illustri degni di memoria. Turin MS a.III.10.J.8.

Libro ottavo dell'antichità di Pyrrho Ligorio, patrizio neapolitano e cittadino romano, dove si tratta delle città, castella, e ville, et delli homini illustri et dei luoghi, di monti, de fonti, et fiumi, de' stagni, et mari, et isole, et delli siti notabili della terra. Turin MS a.III. 11.J.9.

Libro XII de l'archeologia di Pyrrho Ligorio patrizio neapolitano e cittadino romano, ove si contiene delli monti, mari, fonti, fiumi, dell'isole, delle città, castella, ville, et luoghi et delli homini più illustri d'ogni sorta di dignità, et grado, celebrati tanto delli gentili come dei nostri santi uomini. Turin MS a.III.13.J.11.

Libro XIII dell'antichità di Pirrho Ligorio patrizio neapolitano e cittadino romano, nel quale si tratta delle città più famose, et dei luoghi più illustri, et degni di memoria, come sono montagne e fiumi. Turin MS a.III.14.J.12.

Libro XVIII dell'antichità di Pyrrho Ligorio patrizio neapolitano e cittadino romano, nel quale sono compilate tutte le città, et le ville, et alloggiamenti più illustri, come delli homini di laude degni. Turin MS a.II.3.J.16.

Libro XX dell'antichità di Pyrrho Ligorio patrizio neapolitano e cittadino romano, nel quale si tratta delle cose più degne di memoria delle città, de luoghi, de fiumi, de monti, colli, et cose più memorabili. Turin MS a.II.5.J.18.

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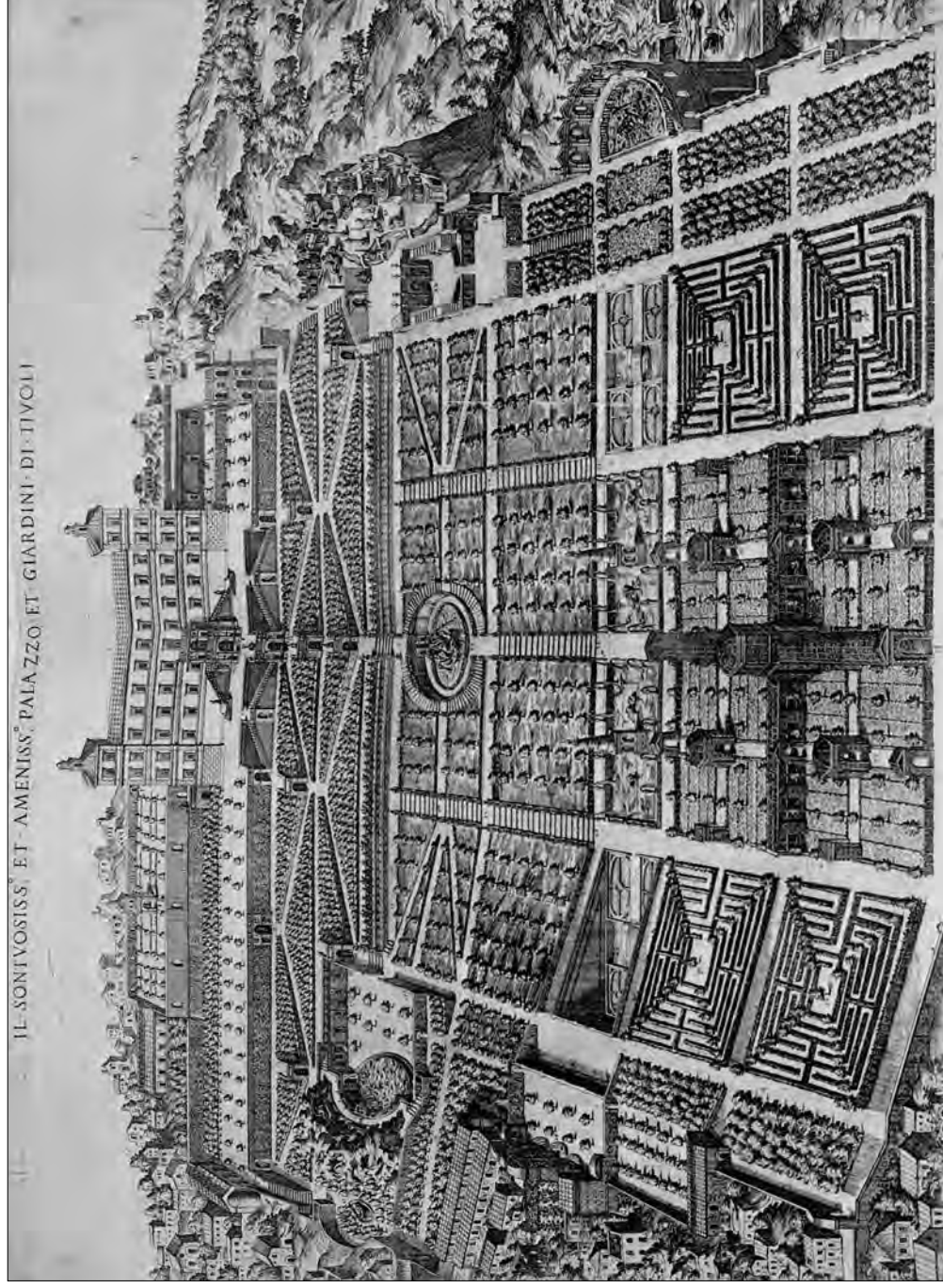
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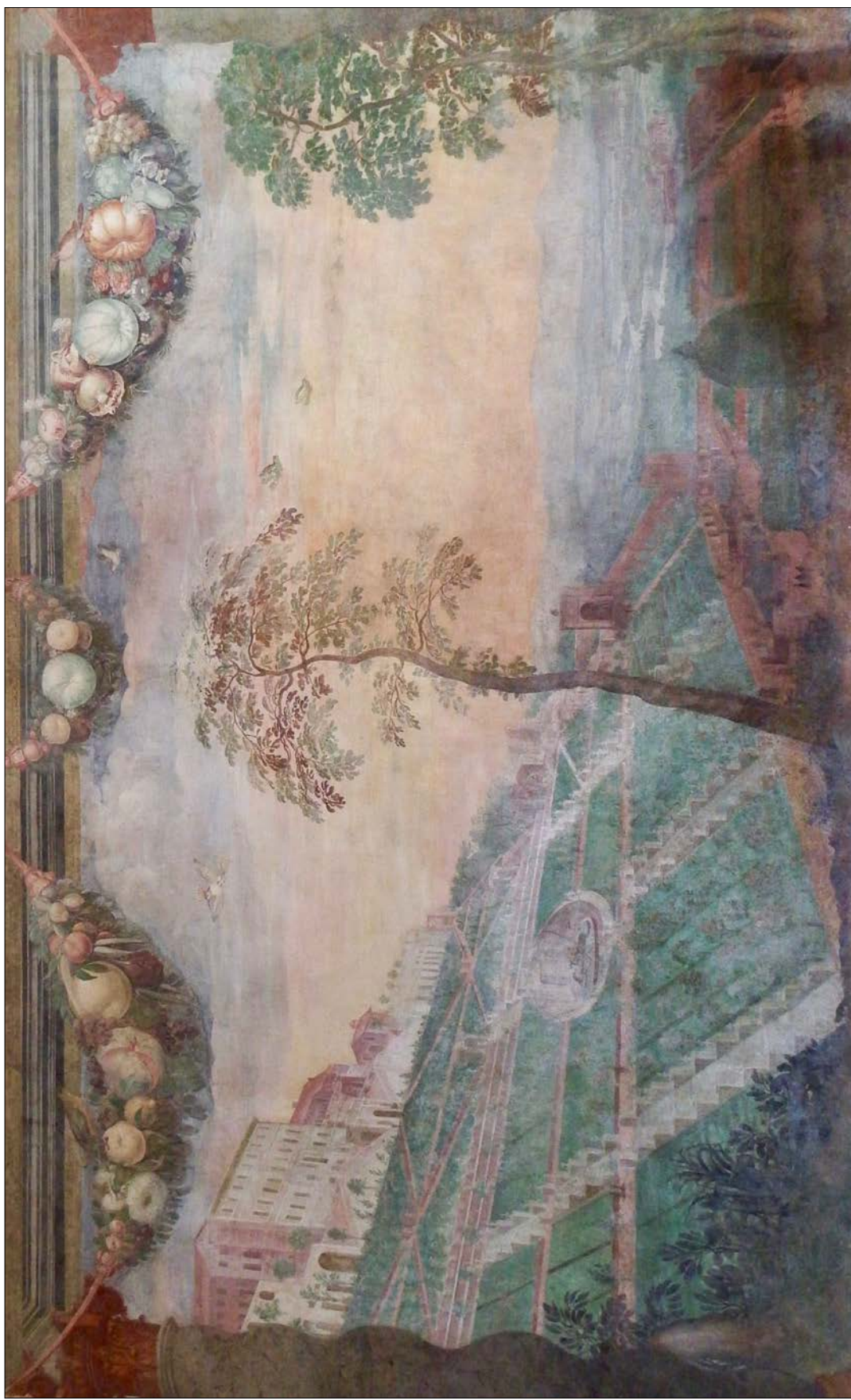
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FIGURES

1. Primary Figures



- 1.1. Étienne Dupérac, *Palazzo et Giardini di Tivoli*, 1573, engraving. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
(See Appendix B for digital format with legend).



1.2. Girolamo Muziano, View of the Villa d'Este, c. 1568, fresco. Salone della Fontana, Villa d'Este.



1.3. Stefano Cabral and Fausto del Re, *Topographia antico moderna dell'agro tiburtino*, 1778, pen and ink.



1.4. Cairoli Fulvio Giuliani, *Topographical map of Tivoli*, 2005.



1.5. Daniel Stoopendaal, *Civitatis Tyburis Delineatio*, 1704, engraving.

2. Introduction



2.1. Sanctuary of Hercules Victor, first century CE. Tivoli.



2.2. Sanctuary of Hercules Victor, theatre. Tivoli.



2.3. Temple of the Sibyl, first century BCE. Tivoli.



2.4. Temple of the Sibyl, view from the Valle d'Inferno. Tivoli.

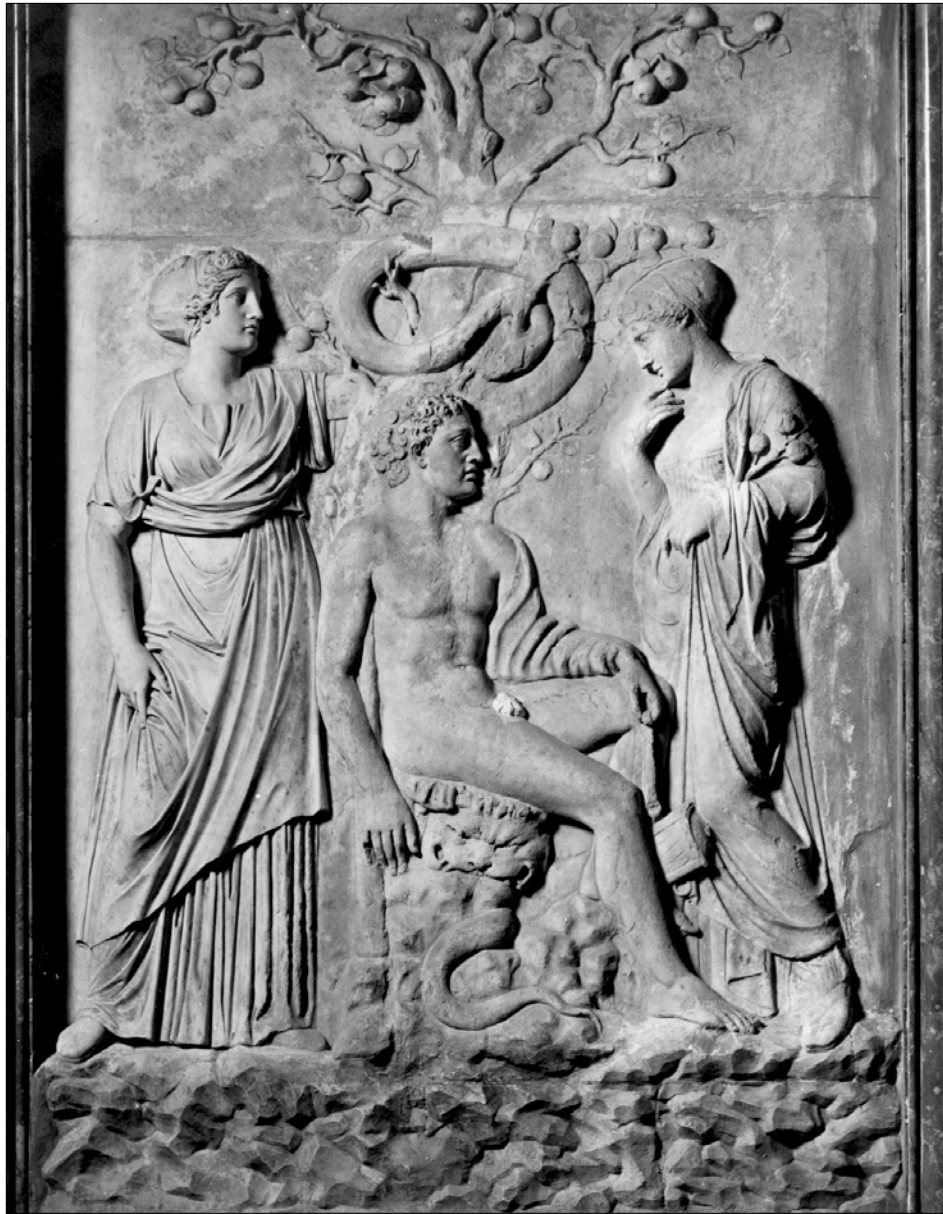
3. Chapter 3



3.1. Johann Friedrich Greuter, Metamorphosis of Limace and Bruno, from Ferrari, *De florum cultura*, 1633, engraving.



3.2. Johann Friedrich Greuter, Metamorphosis of Melissa and Florilla, from Ferrari, *De florum cultura*, 1633, engraving.



3.3. Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides, early first century CE, marble relief.
Inv. Nr. 1008, Villa Albani Torlonia, Rome.



3.4. Federico Zuccari, Cardinal Ippolito's *impresa*, 1566-67, fresco. Stanza della Nobilità, Villa d'Este.



3.5. Entrance vestibule from the *porta principale*. Villa d'Este.



3.6. Étienne Dupérac, detail of citron espaliers, from *Palazzo et Giardini di Tivoli*, 1573, engraving.



3.7. Johann Friedrich Greuter, Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides, frontispiece from Ferrari, *Hesperides sive de malorum aureorum cultura et usu*, 1646, engraving.



3.8. Johann Friedrich Greuter, The Hesperides plant a citrus garden in Italy, from Ferrari, *Hesperides sive de malorum aureorum cultura et usu*, 1646, engraving.



3.9. Golden apples motif wall tiles, Fountain of the Dragon, maiolica. Villa d'Este.



3.10. Golden apple boughs, Rustic Fountain, mosaic. Palazzo corridor, Villa d'Este.



3.11. Golden apple boughs, Grotto of Diana, stucco and mosaic. Villa d'Este.



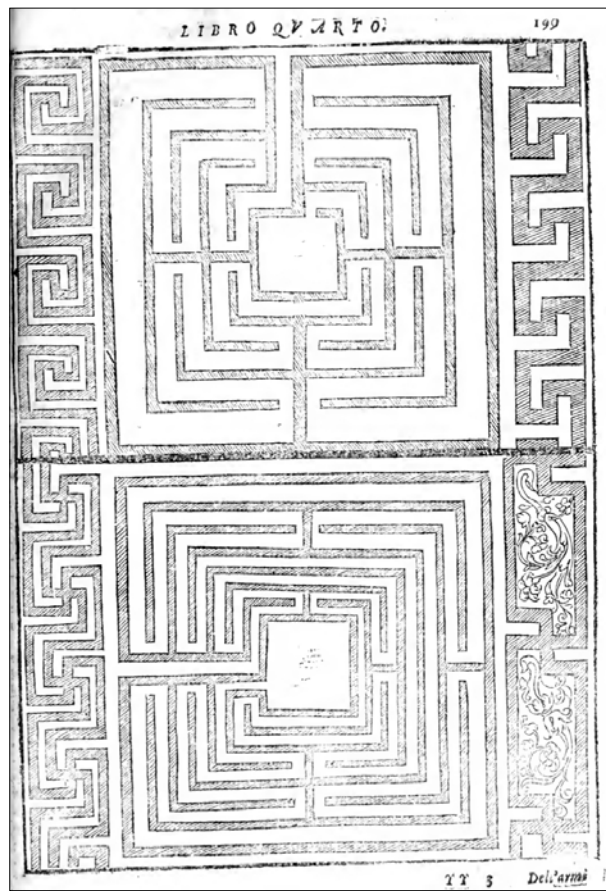
3.12. Citron motif floor tiles, Grotto of Diana, maiolica. Villa d'Este.



3.13. Girolamo Muziano, detail of pergola, from View of the Villa d'Este, c. 1568, fresco.
Salone della Fontana, Villa d'Este.



3.14. Jasmine-trained wall, fourth terrace. Villa d'Este.



3.15. Sebastiano Serlio, Hedge labyrinth designs, from *Tutte l'opere d'architettura et prospetiva*, 1619.

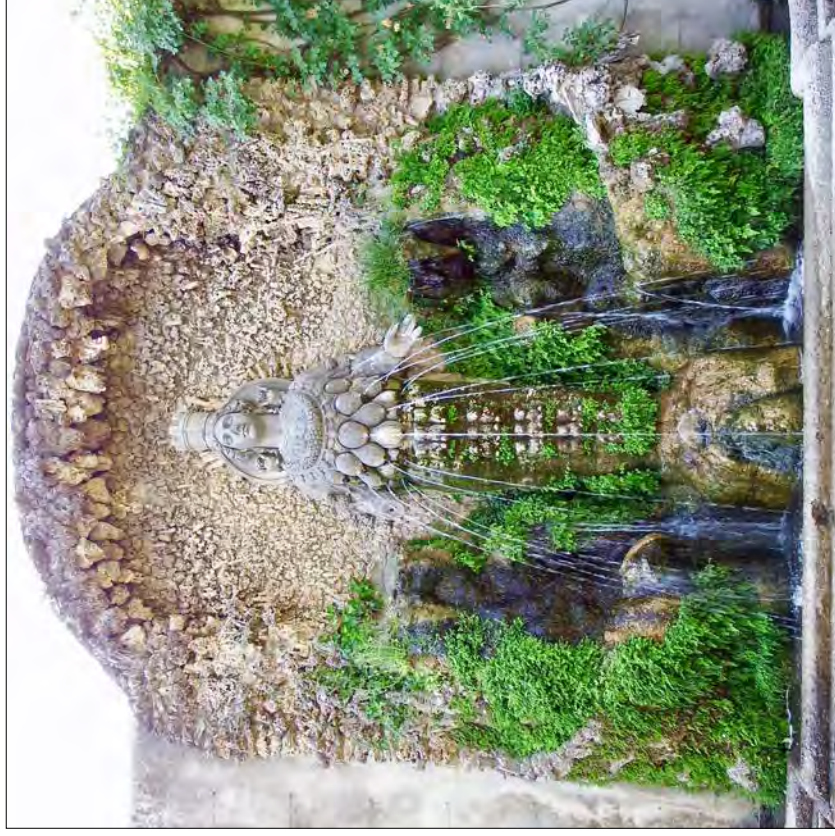


3.16. Tarquinio Ligustri, detail of hedge labyrinth at the Villa Lante, from *Giardino detto Barco di Bagnaia*, 1596, engraving. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.



3.17. Giacomo Lauro, detail of hedge labyrinth at the Villa Mattei, from *Giardino dell Ill Sig Ciriaco Mattei posto nel Monte Celio*, 1614, engraving. British Museum, London.

4. Chapter 4



4.1. Nature Goddess. Villa d'Este.



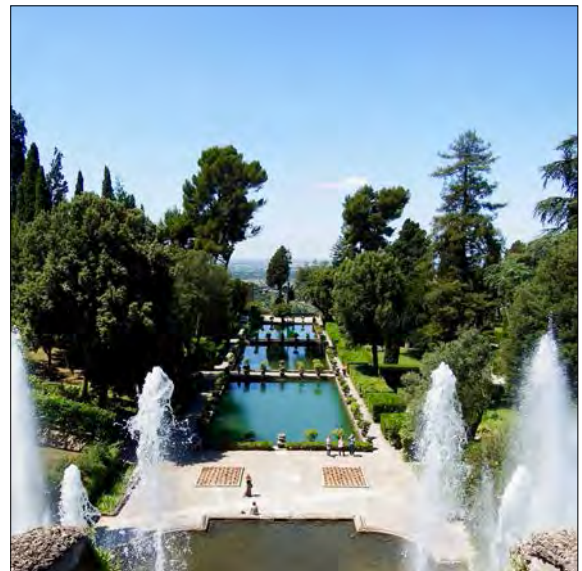
4.2. Fountain of the Flood. Villa d'Este.



4.3. First terrace waterscape. Villa d'Este.



4.4. Cascade Fountain. Villa d'Este.



4.5. Fish ponds, view from the Cascade Fountain. Villa d'Este.



4.6. Grand Cascade, Valle d'Inferno. Tivoli.



4.7. Gaetano Cottafavi, Grand Cascade of the Aniene, from *Raccolta delle principali vedute di Roma e suoi contorni disegnate dal vero ed incise da Gaetano Cottafavi*, 1837, engraving.



4.8. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Veduta della cascata principale del fiume Aniene nella città di Tivoli*, 1691, engraving.



4.9. View of the Aniene waterfall beneath the Ponte Gregoriano. Tivoli.



4.10. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Veduta per fianco della cascata principale del fiume Aniene in Tivoli*, 1691, engraving.



4.11. Gaetano Cottafavi, *Grotto of Neptune*, from *Raccolta delle principali vedute di Roma e suoi contorni disegnate dal vero ed incise da Gaetano Cottafavi*, 1837, engraving.



4.12. Grotto of Neptune, Valle d'Inferno. Tivoli.



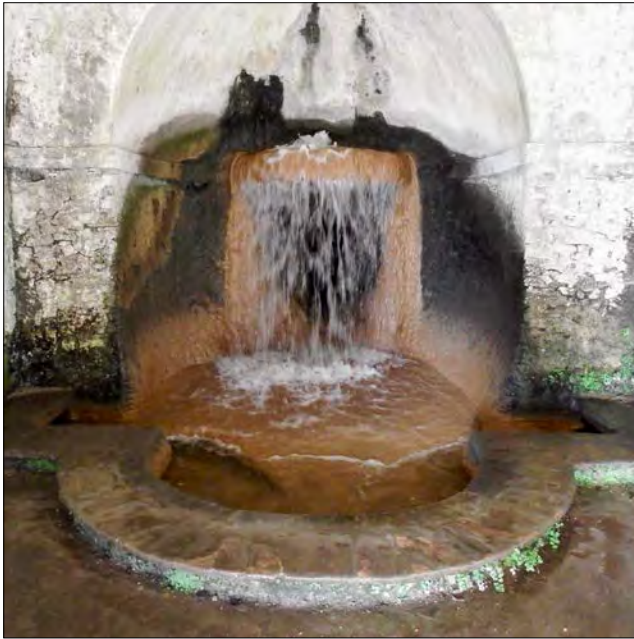
4.13. Waterfall issuing from the Grotto of Neptune, Valle d'Inferno. Tivoli.



4.14. Waterfall issuing from Lake Pelago and cascading into the Grotto of the Sirens, Valle d'Inferno. Tivoli.



4.15. Grotto of the Sirens, Valle d'Inferno. Tivoli.



4.16. Cascade fountain, Central Grotto of the Sibyls.
Villa d'Este.



4.18. Martin Luther and Philip
Melanchthon, *The Papal Ass*,
1523, woodcut.

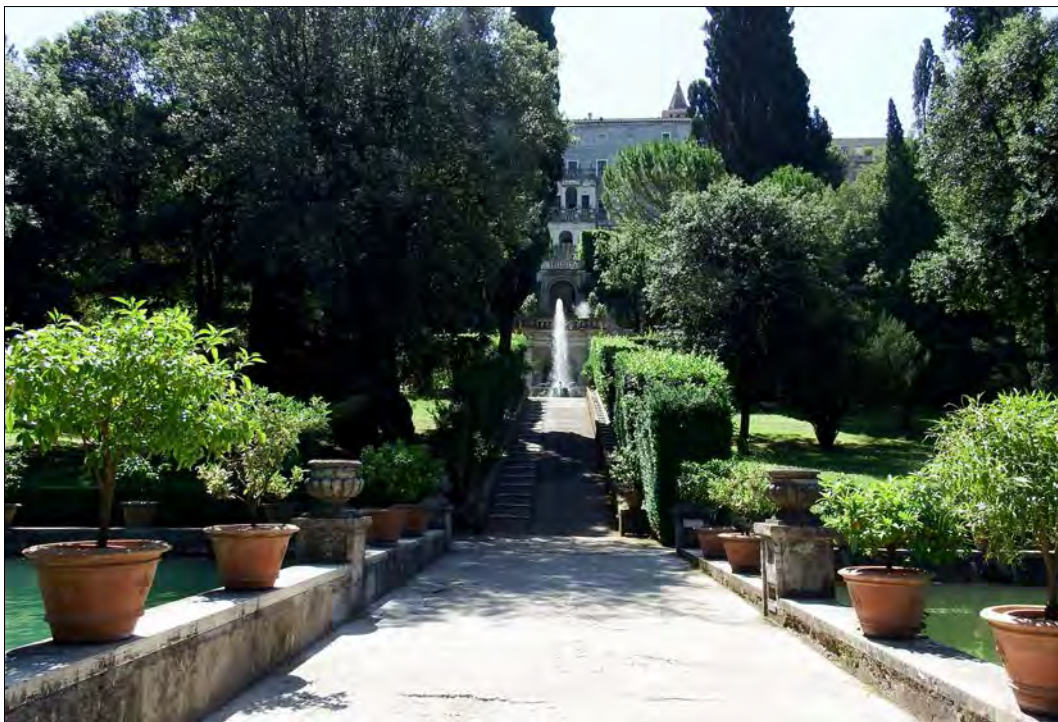


4.17. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Veduta delle peschiere e giuochi d'acqua nel piano del giardino*, 1691, engraving.

5. Chapter 5



5.1. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Veduta del palazzo dal piano del giardino con le sue fontane*, 1691, engraving.



5.2. View from the first terrace up the central axis to the Fountain of the Dragon. Villa d'Este.



5.3. Giant Turtle. Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.



5.4. Winged and snake-tailed woman. Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.



5.5. Elephant devouring a man. Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.



5.6. Lion and dog attacking a dragon. Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.



5.7. Hell Mouth. Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.



5.8. Garden inscription. Sacro Bosco, Bomarzo.



5.9. Ulisse Aldrovandi, Ethiopian Dragon, from *Serpentum et draconum historiae*, 1640, woodcut.



5.10. Ulisse Aldrovandi, Dragon captured in Bologna, from *Serpentum et draconum historiae*, 1640, woodcut.



5.11. Giovanni Antonio Rusconi, Dragon devouring Cadmus' companions, from Dolce, *Le Transformationi*, 1553, woodcut.



5.12. Giacomo Franco, Cadmus and the slain dragon, from Anguillara, *Le Metamorfosi*, 1584, engraving.



5.13. Bernard Salomon, Dragon devouring Cadmus' companions, from Tournes, *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée*, 1557, woodcut.



5.14. Bernard Salomon, Cadmus slays the dragon, from Tournes, *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée*, 1557, woodcut.



5.15. Léon Davent, *Cadmus Fighting the Dragon*, c. 1540-45, etching after Francesco Primaticcio. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



5.16. Cornelis van Haarlem, *Two Followers of Cadmus devoured by a Dragon*, 1588, oil on canvas. National Gallery, London.



5.17. Sea monster, scale dei bollori, central stairway. Villa d'Este.



5.18. Scale dei bollori, central stairway. Villa d'Este.



5.19. Scale dei bollori, left stairway. Villa d'Este.



5.20. Grotesque head, scale dei bollori, left stairway. Villa d'Este.



5.21. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Veduta delle fontane della cordonata, e scale, che ascende al vialone delle fontanelle*, 1691, engraving.



5.22. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Fontana de draghi detta la girandola sotto il vialone delle fontanelle*, 1691, engraving.



5.23. Fountain of the Dragon. Villa d'Este.



5.24. Water jet, Fountain of the Dragon. Villa d'Este.



5.25. Dragon statues, Fountain of the Dragon. Villa d'Este



5.26. Girolamo Muziano, Hercules and the dragon, 1565-66, fresco. Sala di Ercole, Villa d'Este.

6. Chapter 6



6.1. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Veduta d'una parte delle fontanelle nel vialone sopra la fontana de draghi*, 1691, engraving.



6.2. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Fontana e prospetto di Roma antica con l'isola Tiberina dal lato sinistro del vialone fontanelle*, 1691, engraving.



6.3. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Fontana della Sibilla Tiburtina, ovvero Albunea detta il fontanone con le statue della Sibilla e fiumi Erculane et Aniene dal lato destro del vialone delle fontanelle*, 1691, engraving.



6.4. The Sibyl Albunea above the central cascade, Fountain of Tivoli. Villa d'Este.



6.5. Cesare Nebbia, The madness of Athamas induced by the Fury (foreground), Ino flees Greece with her son Melicertes (background), 1569, fresco. Seconda Stanza Tiburtina, Villa d'Este.



6.6. Cesare Nebbia, Ino and Melicertes are carried across the sea to Italy by Neptune and his nymphs at Venus' behest, 1569, fresco. Seconda Stanza Tiburtina, Villa d'Este.



6.7. Cesare Nebbia, Albunea presides over the Acque Albule whose waters flow into the Aniene, 1569, fresco. Seconda Stanza Tiburtina, Villa d'Este.



6.8. Cesare Nebbia, The veneration of Albunea at Tivoli after the discovery of her statue in the Aniene, 1569, fresco. Seconda Stanza Tiburtina, Villa d'Este.



6.9. Cesare Nebbia, The Sibyl's triumphal procession from Tivoli along the Via Tiburtina to Rome, 1569, fresco. Seconda Stanza Tiburtina, Villa d'Este.



6.10. Fountain of Pegasus. Villa d'Este.



6.11. *Tabula Peutingeriana*, detail of Rome and environs showing the Acque Albule, 'ad aqua albulas' (top right), thirteenth century copy of third century CE original.



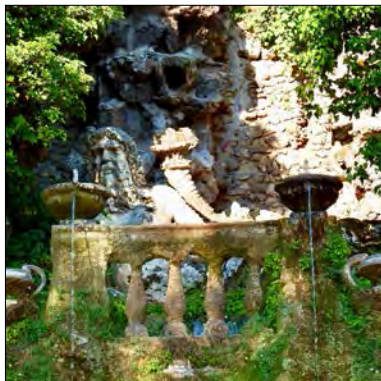
6.12. Fountain of Tivoli. Villa d'Este.



6.13. Central Cascade,
Fountain of Tivoli.



6.14. Sibyl Albunea and son,
Fountain of Tivoli.



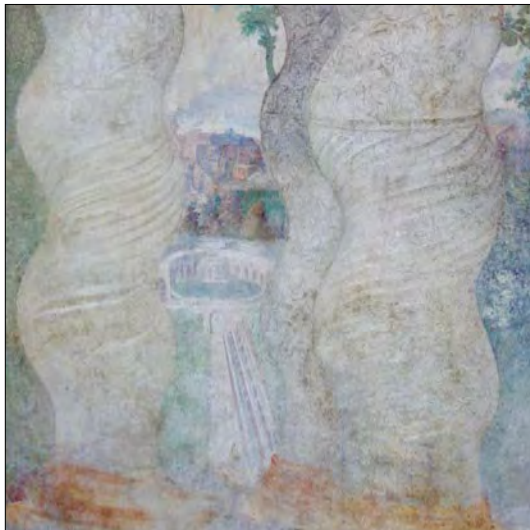
6.15. Reclining river god,
Fountain of Tivoli.



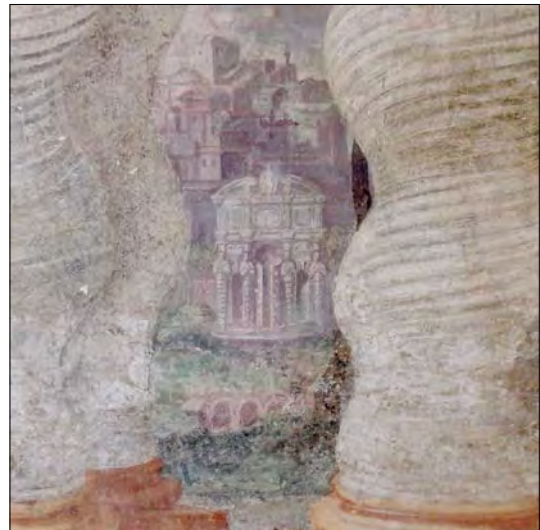
6.16. Vase-bearing nymph,
Fountain of Tivoli.



6.17. Central Fountain, Salone della Fontana. Villa d'Este.



6.18. Girolamo Muziano, View of the Fountain of Tivoli, 1565, fresco.
Salone della Fontana, Villa d'Este.



6.19. Girolamo Muziano, View of the Fountain of the Flood, 1565, fresco.
Salone della Fontana, Villa d'Este.



6.20. Alley of the Hundred Fountains. Villa d'Este.



6.21. East view along Alley of the Hundred Fountains towards the Fountain of Tivoli. Villa d'Este.



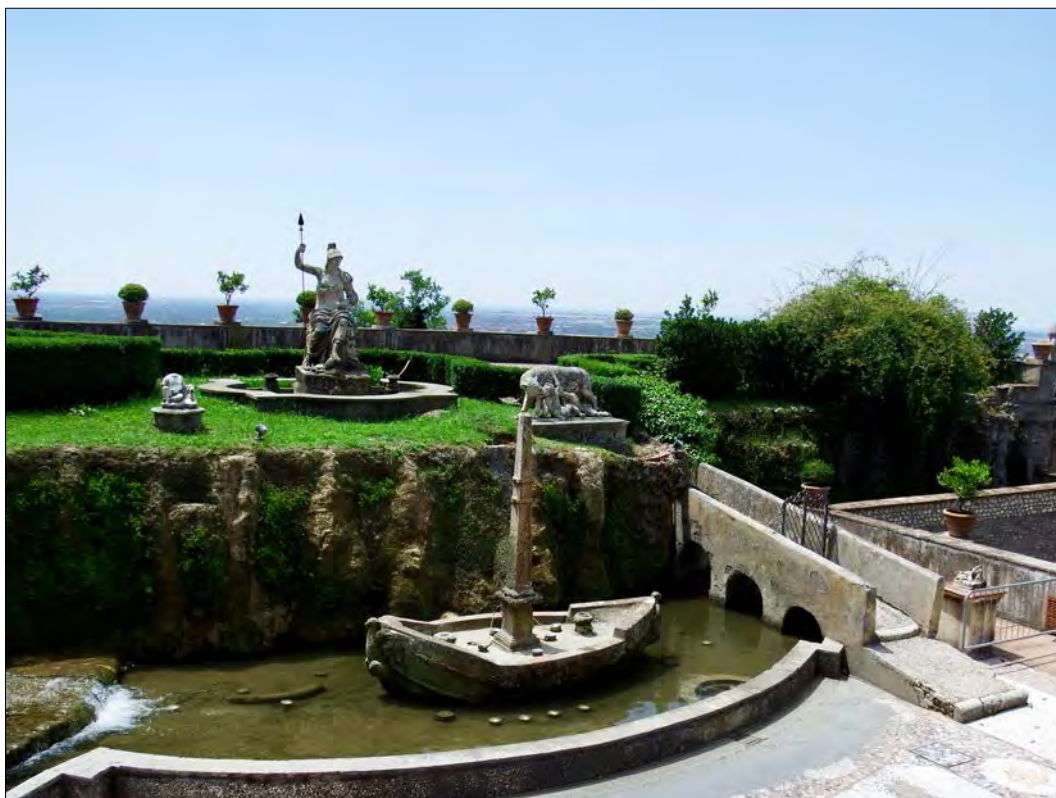
6.22. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Prospetto e cascata del fiume Aniene col tempio della Sibilla contigua alla Roma antica nel piano del vialone delle fontanelle*, 1691, engraving.



6.23. Extant Tivoli diorama, Rometta. Villa d'Este.



6.24. Reclining Tiber river god, Rometta. Villa d'Este.



6.25. Extant Rome diorama, Rometta. Villa d'Este.



6.26. Pirro Ligorio, *Antiquae urbis Romae*, detail of the Capitoline showing the Temple of Jupiter, 1553, engraving.



6.27. Pirro Ligorio, *Antiquae urbis imago*, detail of the Capitoline showing the Temple of Jupiter, 1561, engraving.



6.28. Pirro Ligorio, *Antiquae urbis Romae*, detail of the Capitoline above the Tiber Island, 1553, engraving.



6.29. Pirro Ligorio, *Antiquae urbis imago*, detail of the Tiber Island as a boat, 1561, engraving.



6.30. Basilica di Santa Maria in Aracoeli. Rome.



6.31. Column inscribed 'A CUBICULO AUGUSTORUM' (from the bedchamber of Augustus). Basilica di Santa Maria in Aracoeli.



6.32. Nicolo Martinelli, *The Sibyl's prophecy to Augustus on the Capitoline*, 1565-67, fresco. North wall above the high altar, Basilica di Santa Maria in Aracoeli.



6.33. Nicolo Martinelli, *Augustus' vision of the Madonna and Christ*, 1565-67, fresco. Vault above the high altar, Basilica di Santa Maria in Aracoeli.

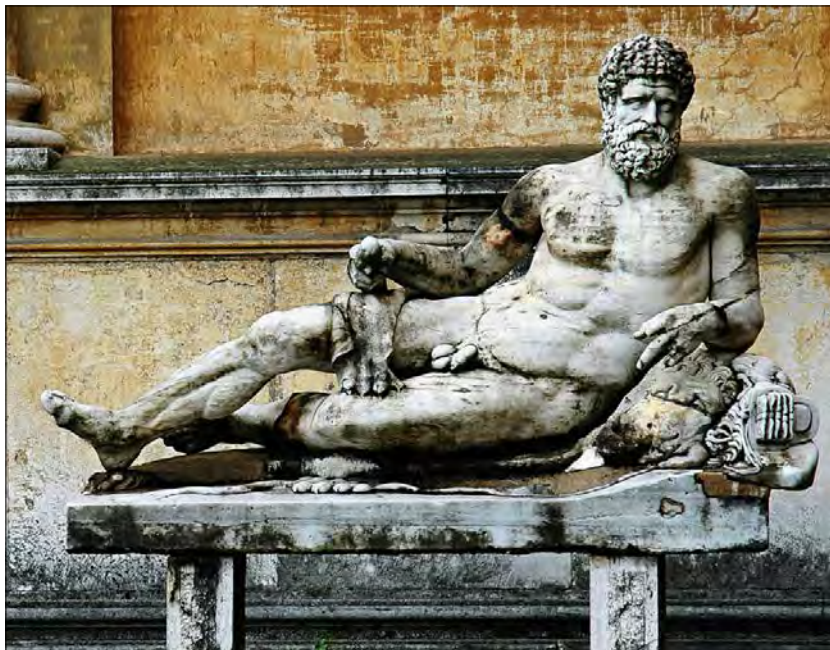


6.34. Nicolo Martinelli, *Augustus' sacrifice to God on the Ara Coeli*, 1565-67, fresco. South wall above the high altar, Basilica di Santa Maria in Aracoeli.

7. Chapter 7



7.1. Lionskin-clad Hercules, second century CE, marble.
Inv. Ma. 75, Louvre, Paris.



7.2. Reclining Hercules, second century CE, marble.
Cortile della Pigna, Vatican Museums, Vatican City.



7.3. Albrecht Dürer, *Hercules at the Crossroads*, c. 1498, engraving. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



7.4. Paolo Veronese, *The Choice Between Virtue and Vice*, c. 1565, oil on canvas. Frick Collection, New York.



7.5. Titian, *Sacred and Profane Love*, c. 1514. Galleria Borghese, Rome.



7.6. Raphael, *Vision of a Knight*, c. 1504. National Gallery, London.



7.7. Adamo Scultori, *Hercules at the Crossroads*, c. 1547-87, engraving after Giulio Romano. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



7.8. Annibale Carracci, *Choice of Hercules*, c. 1596, oil on canvas. Capodimonte Gallery, Naples.



7.9. Pirro Ligorio, Design for the Fountain of Venus (1), c. 1565, drawing. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.



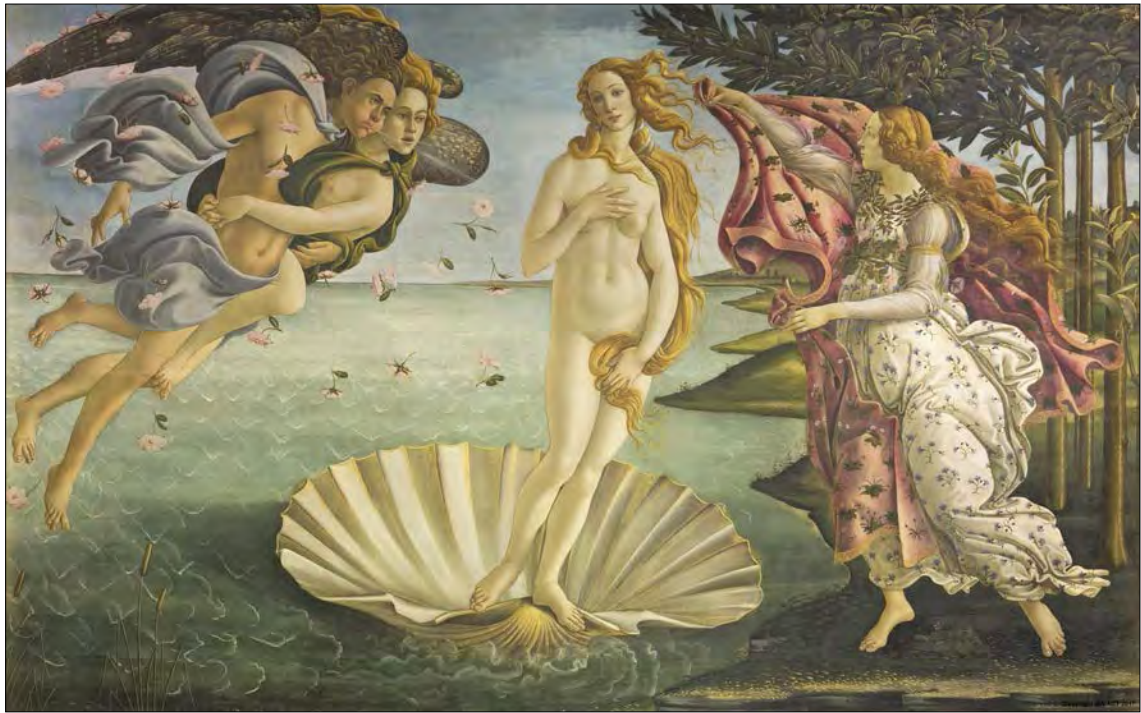
7.10. Pirro Ligorio, Design for the Fountain of Venus (2), c. 1565, drawing. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.



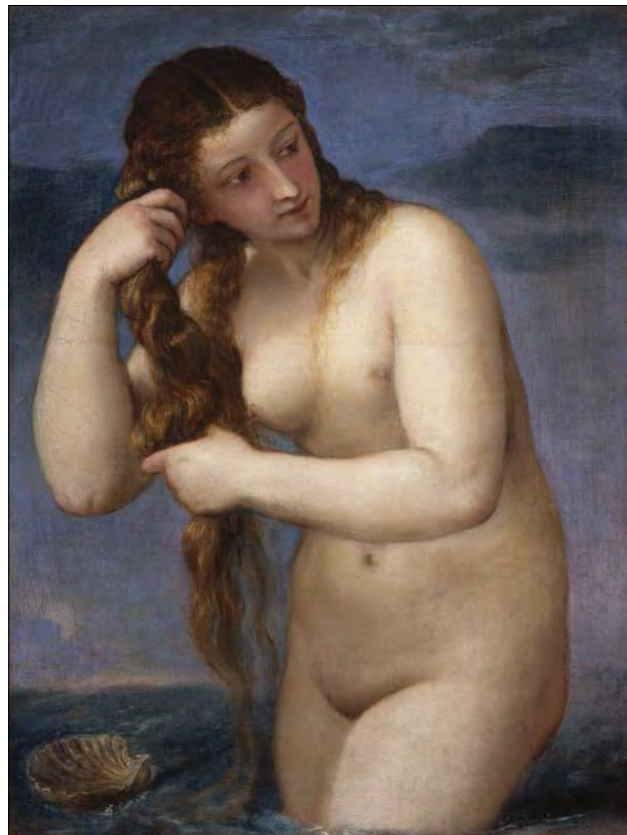
7.11. Capitoline Venus, second century CE, marble. Inv. Scu. 409, Musei Capitolini, Rome.



7.12. Giovanni Francesco Venturini, *Fontana di Bacco in una stanza contigua al fontanone nel piano delle fontanelle*, 1691, engraving.



7.13. Sandro Botticelli, *Birth of Venus*, c. 1480s, tempera on canvas. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.



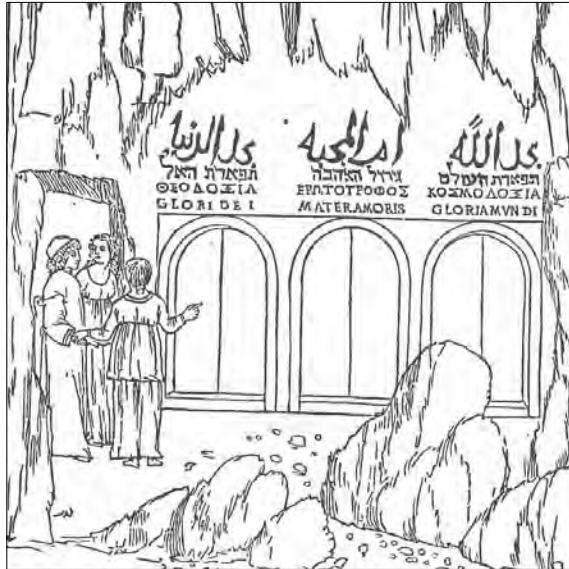
7.14. Titian, *Venus Anadyomene*, c. 1520, oil on canvas. Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh.



7.15. Giambologna, Venus Pudica, c. 1572, marble.
Grotta Grande, Boboli Gardens, Florence.



7.16. Grotto of Venus. Villa Lante, Bagnaia.



7.17. Benedetto Bordone, Poliphilo's choice between the three portals, from Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 1499, woodcut.



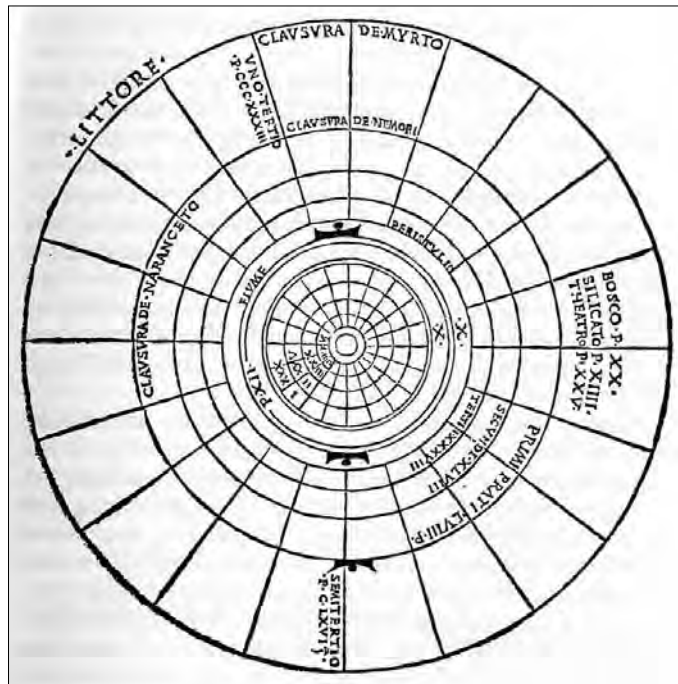
7.18. Benedetto Bordone, Portal of Gloria Dei (Glory of God), from Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 1499, woodcut.



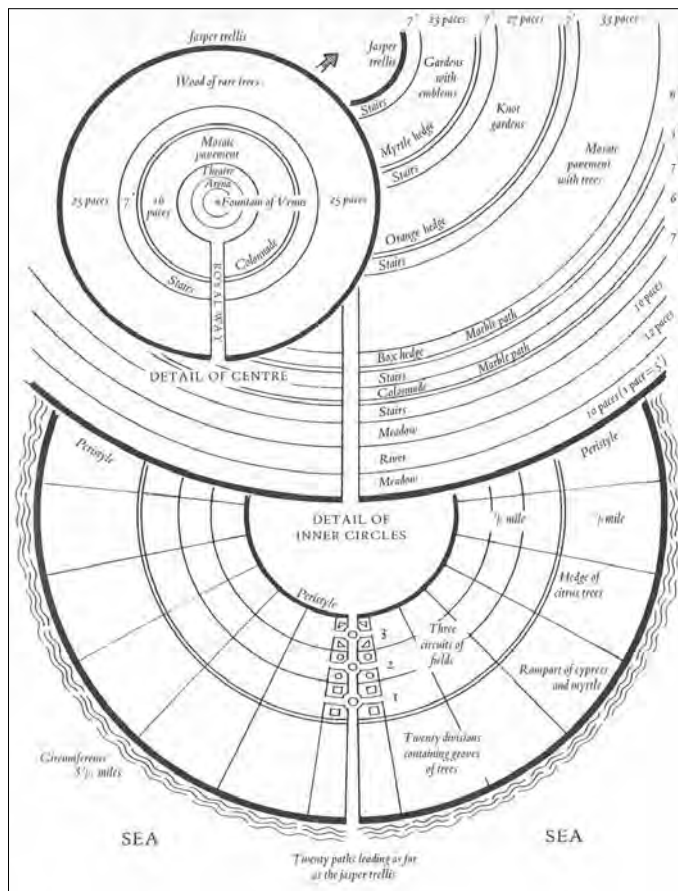
7.19. Benedetto Bordone, Portal of Gloria Mundi (Glory of the World), from Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 1499, woodcut.



7.20. Benedetto Bordone, Portal of Mater Amoris (Mother of Love), from Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 1499, woodcut.



7.21. Benedetto Bordone, Isle of Cytherea, from Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 1499, woodcut.



7.22. Joscelyn Godwin, Diagram of the Isle of Cytherea, from Colonna, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 2005.



7.23. Diana, second century CE, marble.
Inv. Scu. 62, Musei Capitolini, Rome.



7.24. Actaeon relief, central niche, Grotto of Diana, stucco.
Villa d'Este.



7.25. Benedetto Bordone, Diana and Actaeon, from Bonsignori, *Ovidio Metamorphoseos volgare*, 1497, woodcut.



7.26. Giovanni Antonio Rusconi, Diana and Actaeon, from Dolce, *Le Transformationi*, 1553, woodcut.



7.27. Bernard Salomon, Actaeon discovers Diana bathing, from Tournes, *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée*, 1557, woodcut.



7.28. Bernard Salomon, Death of Actaeon, from Tournes, *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée*, 1557, woodcut.



7.29. Titian, *Diana and Actaeon*, 1556-59, oil on canvas. National Gallery, London.



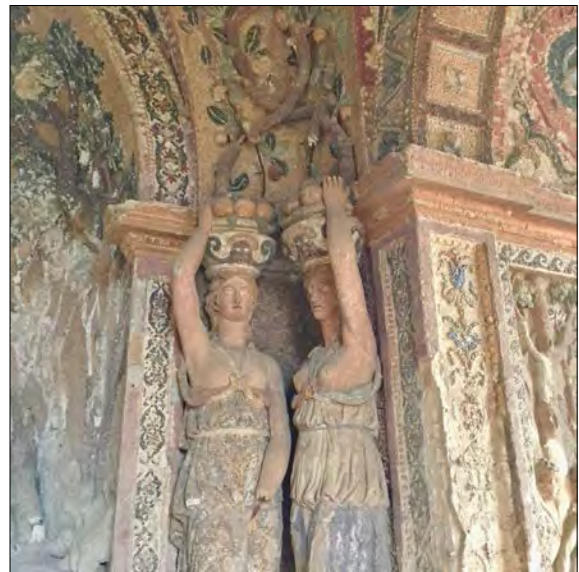
7.30. Paolo Veronese, *Diana and Actaeon*, 1560-65. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia.



7.31. Grotto of Diana. Villa d'Este.



7.32. Golden apples, fleur-de-lis and white eagles floor tiles, Grotto of Diana, maiolica. Villa d'Este.



7.33. Caryatids bearing apple boughs, Grotto of Diana, stucco and mosaic. Villa d'Este.



7.34. Diana and Callisto relief, Grotto of Diana, stucco. Villa d'Este.



7.35. Diana and Callisto relief, detail of Callisto as a bear, Grotto of Diana, stucco. Villa d'Este.



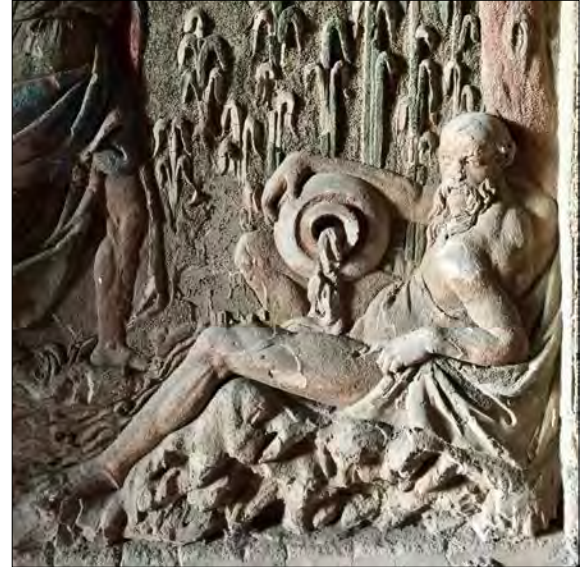
7.36. Diana and Callisto relief, detail of Juno seizing Callisto, Grotto of Diana, stucco. Villa d'Este.



7.37. Bernard Salomon, Diana and Callisto, from Tournes, *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée*, 1557, woodcut.



7.38. Daphne and Apollo relief, Grotto of Diana, stucco. Villa d'Este.



7.39. Daphne and Apollo relief, detail of river god Peneus, Grotto of Diana, stucco. Villa d'Este.



7.40. Daphne and Apollo relief, detail of Daphne's metamorphosis into a laurel, Grotto of Diana, stucco. Villa d'Este.



7.41. Bernard Salomon, Daphne and Apollo, from Tournes, *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée*, 1557, woodcut.



7.42. Diana and her attendants relief originally depicting Pan and Syrinx, Grotto of Diana, stucco. Villa d'Este.



7.43. Bernard Salomon, Pan and Syrinx, from Tournes, *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée*, 1557, woodcut.