Lecture 8: Roman Villeggiatura and Ceremony of Entry

"Captive Greece took captive her savage conqueror and brought civilization to the rustic Latins."

Horace
Villa = building in the country designed for owner’s enjoyment and relaxation

since ancient Rome the villa has remained unchanged because it fulfills a need that never alters
the villa fulfills a fantasy impervious to reality

Getty Villa - inspired by Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum, possibly owned by Julius Caesar’s father-in-law
Ancient Roman tradition of *villeggiatura*: the withdrawal to the country by urban Romans - ancient and Renaissance

Cicero associated *otium* with study and philosophy

retreat for enjoyment of a peaceful, private life removed from either the political duties or mercantile affairs of the city.

Rome = double city > papacy + city
constantly changing population

almost every Roman owned at least one vigna on hillsides or just outside the Aurelian walls
“For besides the attractions which I have mentioned, the greatest is the relaxation and carefree luxury of the place…” Pliny
Pliny the Younger
“...you, such an harmonious variety of beautiful objects meets the eye, whichever way it turns. My house, although at the foot of the hill, commands as good a view as if it stood on its brow, yet you approach by so gentle and gradual a rise that you find yourself on high ground without perceiving you have been making an ascent. Behind, but at a great distance, is the Apennine range. In the calmest days we get cool breezes from that quarter, not sharp and cutting at all, being spent and broken by the long distance they have travelled. The great part of the house has a southern aspect, and seems to invite the afternoon sun in summer (but rather earlier in winter) into a broad and proportionately long portico, consisting of several rooms, particularly a court of antique fashion…”
ancient Romans attained a standard of living - destroyed by invasions from the north - only beginning to be restored in the 16th century relied on Pliny’s letters
Scamozzi reconstruction of Pliny’s Laurentian villa

Raphael = unique desire to emulate ancient Roman models as well as ideals

Antonio da Sangallo, (after Raphael) design for Villa Madama
Raphael succeeded Bramante as chief Vatican architect

**Cortile del Belvedere** = 1st villa all’antica of the Renaissance

- scale and elevation change
- balance of interior and exterior elements

desire to recreate and exceed the luxurious life of antiquity

Leo X met every day with Fra Giocondo, translator of Pliny, for scholarly discussions
Papal Villeggiatura
not regulated by the rhythm of agriculture but rather by weather and religious calendar
mid-July to mid-September
from Feast of St Peter (June 29) to Feast of All Saints (November 1)

Antonio Pollaiuolo, Villa Belvedere, Vatican, drawing after Heemskerck
in 1513-17 Leo X bought property on Monte Mario
site of earlier villa belonging to Arcangelo Tuzio, Leo’s primary doctor

area of Monte Mario below the villa site known as Prato di Falcone
near vigna of Falcone Sinibaldi (d. 1492)
Apostolic Protonotary and treasurer to Innocent VIII and Alexander VI

strategic location
1.5 miles north of Vatican
juncture of 2 roads from north
Via Cassia and Via Flaminia
just above Milvian Bridge
Leo as new Constantine
legend that Pope Leo III presented the sacred French royal banner to Charlemagne on Monte Mario
submission to Imperium Christianum

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Leo as new Constantine
Raphael, Villa Madama (originally called Villa Falcona)
commissioned by Cardinal Giulio de’Medici, cousin to Pope Leo X, and future Pope Clement VII
begun around 1518
all’antica style set on Monte Mario, overlooking the Vatican borgo, 2 miles to the south

close to the Via Triumphalis, ancient road and major route to Vatican
ritual stopping place - staged entry - before meeting Pope
ceremonial function

Raphael died soon after it was begun
livable in spring of 1523 - Florentine ambassadors stopped there
Sack of Rome 1527 brought work to a standstill
Clement died 1534

May 1527, during the sack of Rome
Clement hiding in Castel Sant'Angelo
watched smoke rise from his villa
saying that Cardinal Pompeo Colonna was repaying
the Pope for destroying the Colonna castles in 1526

sold to Empress Margaret of Austria, who was known as Madama
illegitimate daughter of Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor
wife of Alessandro de’Medici, 1st Duke of Florence (assassinated in 1537)

June 1519
letter from Castiglione to Isabella d’Este
Raphael is engaged on a country house for Cardinal de’Medici
conceived as Medici villa suburbana + papal hospitium
to welcome diplomatic guests en route to Vatican
theater of diplomacy
ceremony of entry
diplomatic stopover from 1523
like Pliny, Raphael oriented it for ideal summer and winter apartments
elaborate baths
provisions for swimming, dining indoors and out, theatrical entertainment, stables for 400 horses
ancient Roman triumphal entries
312 Constantine’s victory over Maxentius at Milvian Bridge
800 Charlemagne met at Milvian Bridge by pontifical court
and nobility on his way to coronation
1452 Frederick III met at the foot of Monte Mario by
Papal Vice-Camerlengo and pontifical court, senators and
magistrates of Rome and Roman nobility
on his way to coronation
spent night at villa of Tommaso Spinelli
then entered Rome by Porta del Popolo
Raphael’s description echoes Pliny the Younger’s letters describing his Laurentine and Tuscan villas. Raphael’s design is an experimental reconstruction of Pliny’s textural villa. Raphael’s description echoes Pliny the Younger’s letters describing his Laurentine and Tuscan villas. Elaborate structure overlooking the Tiber with a central axis through entry loggia on the south opening onto circular central court and then a theater. Central court surrounded by main salons and rooms. Nymphaeum, hippodrome.
Uffizi drawing = Raphael's final plan, drawn by Antonio da Sangallo
never completed
semicircular exedra - all that remains of an intended
circular, central court of the villa (10)
central axis - hall (34)
leads into great loggia opening onto NW gardens (33)
main salon 28
2 smaller rooms 30, 29

diaeta = pleasant place for conversation
Raphael designed 3 roads to approach the villa:
- Main road from Vatican would enter the courtyard with its ceremonial stairs
- Straight road from Milvian Bridge to central entrance
- Up hill to Via Triumphalis, extending central axis
ideology: Leonine pontificate = a continuation of Constantinian era
goal of universal church to unify East and West
1st Christian Roman Emperor
victorious under the sign of the cross
Raphael and assistants, Victory of Constantine
Raphael specifically mentioned the view of the Milvian Bridge in his letter: "from this spot, one may see the road leading straight from the villa to the Ponte Milvio, the beautiful countryside, the Tiber and Rome."
And the belvedere rising in the center which looks out to the east and north, and with elevated gaze covers whatever beauties Rome encompasses all around, above and below, let this be your seat, Leone, king and father of mankind.

conceived as papal benediction loggia

circular central court (divine) > arrival and departure point for dignitaries
Castiglione describes it as: “vigna sotto la croce di Monte Mario”
ie. the 14th century Oratorio della Croce adjoining the Villa Mellini
now the site of the observatory

since 1470 visitors to the Oratory received indulgences

Medici papal villa was sited below the cross and overlooking the Milvian Bridge
Roman pilgrimage and Christian triumph
Christ raises/heals Lazarus in front of Villa Madama
Medici as healers and peace makers
bringers of golden age of Augustus
completed part > northwestern
intended for summer use
overlooking garden
inspired by Roman imperial baths and palaces

Nero’s Domus Aurea
Loggia all’antica
3 bays - domed central bay
southwest bay > glorification of Leo X
northeast bay > glorification of Cardinal Giulio de’Medici

network of meanings
ancient literature - cosmology - Medici dynasty - foreign policy

**BUT**
Cardinal Giulio wrote that he did not want anything obscure that would require inscriptions and explanations
SW vault - Neptune calming the seas > Virgil, Aeneid
symbol of superior reason > metaphor for ruler

Leonardo Neptune > produced for Antonio Segni in praise of Julius II
“Lighthearted mythological scenes from Ovid would do very well.”

“There are enough Old Testament scenes in the pope’s loggia.”
Francesco de Hollanda, Volta dorata, Domus Aurea, c. 1530
Perino del Vaga + Giovanni da Udine
Sala dei Pontifici
below Sala Costantina

astrological
message of predestined
Medici papacy
Leo’s triumph - angels sound the trumpet and hold aloft censor, psaltery and tiara
Medici antiquarianism
never completed
semicircular exedra - all that remains of an intended circular, central court of the villa
central axis - hall
leads into great loggia opening onto NW gardens

2 rooms off loggia overlook river
in 1519 Cardinal Antonio del Monte (made cardinal by Julius II in 1511) and his nephew, Balduino, brother of Julius III purchased a vigna on Monte Valentino outside the Porta del Popolo, north 1/2 mile

commissioned Jacopo Sansovino to design a villa

1527 Sack of Rome

1533 death of Antonio del Monte
Cardinal del Monte’s nephew, Gianmaria Ciocchi del Monte elected Pope in 1550
Julius III
in emulation of Julius II > return of Golden Age

immediately began buying land adjacent to his uncle’s
on the Via Flaminia side of the Tiber
opposite Villa Madama

patronized a new group of artists:
Giacomo Vignola, Bartolomeo Ammannati, Prospero Fontana
Taddeo Zuccaro and Pietro Venale
Julius III’s life centered on his villa

“His Holiness goes so often to the vigna that one cannot speak to His Holiness each time.” Sienese ambassador

severe gout of feet and hands

water cure
villa site - oddly askew in relation to Via Flaminia and access road that was widened by Julius orientation may have been determined by Cardinal Antonio’s earlier building
1550 after election - Julius III bought up surrounding land
built a boat landing so he could travel by boat
developed entire area - trees, birds, stocked ponds, fountains
pergola from Tiber to Via Flaminia
water from Acqua Vergine

by 1552 acquired all the hills between
the city and the Milvian bridge

Praised as 8th wonder of the world
intended to rival Villa Madama

Vasari was the first architect
showed his plans to Michelangelo
Ammannati and Vignolo joined the team
originally a rectangular structure
perhaps like the one designed by Sansovino for Cardinal Antonio
like his Villa Garzoni
rear semicircular portico added to earlier structure
Anonymous, View of Ammanati’s Fountain of Julius III
c. 1560
*Julius III Pont Max Publique Commoditati Anno III*
bust of Apollo flanked by statues of Fortuna and Abundance
above
statues of Roma, Neptune and Minerva
spatial progression as built
2 story casino: rectangular exterior, curving interior
  semicircular loggia
  rectangular courtyard enclosed on 3 sides
  2nd loggia - leads into 2nd courtyard - Nymphaeum
  semicircular + 3 stories
  2 lower stories below ground
  2 curving flights of stairs
  2 story loggia
  rectangular garden walled beyond

awkward juncture
spatial progression as built
2 story casino: rectangular exterior, curving interior
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series of semicircles
reference to del Monte coat of arms
in 1560 Duke Cosimo de'Medici visited Rome to honor Pius IV and to seek the title of Grand Duke

“On Tuesday, November 5, the Most Excellent Duke arrived at the city and was lodged at the villa of Pope Julius III outside the gate of Sta. Maria del Popolo, whence in a carriage he went secretly to kiss the foot of the Pope and then returned to the villa where were the Cardinal de'Medici, his son, and the Duchess, his wife, with many nobles.”

Diary of Papal Master of Ceremonies Firmanus
“At the Villa Giulia it is almost impossible to distinguish the part played by Vignola from that of Ammanati, of Sansovino, of Vasari, of Michelangelo himself and from the influence exerted from all the courtiers.”

Gustavo Giovannoni
Casino > public facade - 2 story block faces NW
rectangular front - semicircular in rear
originally preceded by semicircular piazza
rusticated central triumphal arch motif
Doric below - Ionic above
axial and symmetrical

Porta Maggiore, 52 AD, by Claudius
Porta Praenestina (E)
tension

nature <<< order

rusticated lower floor <<< refined, elegant upper
doric <<< ionic

male <<< female

central triumphal arch motif > reference to del Monte coat of arms

wishful thinking > Julius III’s foreign policy = disaster
atrium
entrance vestibule
corinthian pilasters with niches between antique statues of consuls
lost vault fresco by Taddeo Zuccaro
Apollo and the Muses
Parnassus
reference to Julius II
civilization
golden age
dining room
music room
Feast of the Gods, attributed to either Taddeo Zuccaro or Prospero Fontana
dining room
vault fresco, room to left of entrance vestibule
golden age in the abundance of nature >> passions and drunken revelry
Worship of the Source > Acqua Vergine
music room vault: Prospero Fontana and workshop, Prudence Subduing Fortune

in corners: Theological Virtues Hope, Faith, Charity, Religion (law)
Dance of Nymphs with their Children, while Mercury and Apollo Watch
Discovery of Calisto’s Pregnancy - Feast of Nymphs with Children - Diana Punishes Cupid
Philostratus Imagines
fruitfulness of nature > pastoral bliss
goat gnawing leaves > classical type/medieval symbol of lust
Fall of Humankind - need for redemption
**Sala dei Sette Colli**
inspired by Julius’s name > del Monte
prologue of comedy composed for his coronation 1550
7 hills of Rome were transformed into 7 monti
with Giulio del Monte as their brother and Lord

piano nobile - central salone
frieze with 7 hills of Rome

Jupiter  Capitoline  Neptune

Caelian
Aventine

Capitoline
allusion the bust of Constantine
8th hill - 8th marvel/wonder > Villa Giula surpasses the marvels of ancient Rome
Villa Giulia = 8th wonder
“the semicircle of the palace makes the theater and this other, which I shall describe, makes the scene.”

Ammannati letter to Benavides

private facade facing garden and nymphaeum
open, graceful > Ionic throughout
austerity of architecture compared to exterior facade > order, reason
tunnel vault of semicircular portico
trompe l’oeil pergola with putti holding papal arms
upper wall: circles and squares framed by Doric pilasters
lower wall: engaged Ionic columns and pilasters
breaks rules > Doric above Ionic
triumphal arch entry to nymphaeum
niches originally filled with statues
  Mars/Venus
  Dionera/Hercules
  Vertumnus/Pomona
  Venus/Cupid with arms of Mars
  Pan/Bacchus
Busts of emperors above
end wall - stucco reliefs
  papal imprese
  Justice and Peace
  Occasio and Fortuna
  personifications of Charity and Religion
in attic: Hercules as river god with maiden fleeing = Acqua Vergine that runs along the river Ercole
red porphyry basin with statue of Venus holding swan from whose beak gushed water in center
given to Julius by Ascanio Colonna in 1553 from baths of Titus
14 colored Ionic columns from Baths of Tivoli decorate the loggia. Julius paid for excavation of Tivoli in June 1552. Curving stairs descend from interior triumphal arch into semicircular nymphaeum.
first courtyard with hemicycle - Hercules and Venus (Leda and Swan) flank Ammannati Fountain
river gods - gods - seasons - elements
4 plane trees offered shade in middle level
plane trees decorated the nymphaeum of Plinys Tuscan villa

lower level: sleeping Venus or nymph
series of semicircles
4 herms support grotto niche
above Doric pilasters frame a triumphal arch flanked by niches and riverbeds
above - Ionic columns articulate triumphal arch
Ammannati presented model to Pope on Easter 1552
sunken courtyard
grotto with origin of the Acqua Vergine
heart of the villa
from here all emanates
private inner sanctum
shaded
cooled by running water of
Aqua Vergine
and fountains

Julius suffered from gout
processional experience
from society to water, pleasure and the body, to nature
progression towards reflection and contemplation
orangerie
garden of Hesperides
paradise
order
villa as theater
teatrum mundi
triumphalism
artifice ≫ reality