A Compendium of the Ancient Magnificence of Rome: Giacomo Manilli’s 1650 guidebook to the Villa Borghese

Eirik Arff Gulseth Bøhn

Giacomo Manilli’s guidebook to the Villa Borghese, printed as an exclusive octavo, was published in Rome by Lodovico Grignani for the jubilee year of 1650.1 Widely disseminated, it was purchased, perused and brought home by Early Modern travellers to Rome, and has more recently proven an essential source for scholars, for whom it counters the lacunae of information on the structure and contents of the first iteration of the Villa Borghese.2 Thus enjoying a long history of readership and an afterlife as documentary source, the book has virtually escaped attention per se, although it was essential to establishing a novel genre of printed books; the guidebook dedicated to a single, secular site.

Its publication in Rome coincided with an increase in production of handy, portable volumes aimed at the wealthy traveller, and as such the book partakes in the printed exchange aimed at creating a canon of the city’s monuments.3 When, at the onset of the Grand Tour, the Villa Borghese had become a highlight of the Roman itinerary, its international fame appears partially due to the place secured for it by Manilli’s guidebook.4 Listing, measuring, transcribing and explaining the villa’s contents, from its orange trees to its ancient reliefs, the guidebook, in its compact comprehensiveness, appears as the textual double of the site. This article will give a survey of its structure, claims and vocabulary, as well as its author and publisher, with an examination of its position in the publishing activity related to villas in Rome around the middle of the seventeenth century.

1. I am much indebted and grateful to Anna Blennow and Stefano Fogelberg Rota, as well as to Victor Plahte Tschudi for their generous help in preparing this article. My thanks are due to Adriano Aymonino for his suggestions and comments. All translations appearing in the following are my own, unless otherwise stated.
2. Manilli 1650. Alternately spelled Jacopo and Iacopo. The book is noted by Schudt no. 1104; Cicognara no. 3772; Olschki no. 17478; Fossati-Bellani no. 973.
3. Whereas in the case of the Villa Belvedere, a surviving programme authored by Monsignor Agucchi can be overlaid like tracing paper on the gardens, the lack of any coherent and comprehensive document of programme leaves the Villa Borghese a place of zealous collection and display for which there is no comprehensive, explicative document.
4. It should be noted that this tradition precedes the publication of Manilli’s book. Pompilio Totti’s Ritratto di Roma moderna, first published 1638, describes the villa as ‘one of the wonders of the world’. Totti 1638, 341.
Further enquiry is needed to establish a clearer picture of Giacomo Manilli. His post as *guardaroba* to the Borghese family would entail that he managed the many precious objects on the property, in addition to being partially responsible for the logistics of display which followed the seasons.  

5. Manilli uses *guardaroba* for *guardarobbiere*. For seventeenth-century usage of *guardaroba* and *guardarobba*, entailing the position in the *famiglia* and the storage space, respectively, see Waddy 1999, 33; ibid. n. 87. An attribution to Manilli of documents relative to the *fabbrica* of the Villa Mondragone in Frascati for the period 1618–1621 features in the index of the Archivio Segreto Vaticano. If this is correct, Manilli’s service to the Borghese had exceeded thirty years by the time the guide was published. ASV, Archivio Borghese, 4143.
With collections of artworks and furnishings being moved back and forth between the family’s palace in the Campo Marzio, that in the Borgo, and the villa on the Pincio, the household was to some degree in a state of material flux, and Manilli would have been involved in this shuffling of precious artefacts. As artists and men of letters often held comparable offices in the *famiglia*, it is possible, and likely, that Manilli authored the text himself, an assumption supported by the musings on attributions and iconography that appear in the text.\(^6\) Claiming authorship at the outset of the book, he does not mention having consulted a poet or scholar to aid in his task, and we may speculate whether his attributions and iconographic identifications partially derive from the inventories he would have had access to, and perhaps himself authored.\(^7\) Indeed, large portions of the guidebook read like an inventory to which directions, courtesies and occasional poetic descriptions are applied.

While Manilli is a somewhat elusive figure in the Borghese household, the guidebook’s publisher, Lodovico Grignani, was firmly established in the circles of printers and booksellers in Rome at the time. His was an effective and esteemed printing business, and his portfolio comprised works for the Italian nobility, including the Aldobrandini and the Barberini, as well as for the Habsburgs. For the Barberini, he printed Leone Allacci’s *Apes urbanae, sive De viris illustribus* in 1633, dedicated to Antonio Barberini, one of Scipione Borghese’s successors as Cardinal Nephew. At the time of the publication of Manilli’s guidebook, he also printed the second volume of Athanasius Kircher’s *Musurgia universalis*, as well as *Roma sotterranea* by Antonio Bosio, certainly among the most important *seicento* books on the city, published to coincide with Holy Year celebrations. Grignani’s signature was shorthand for quality, typographically refined and including elaborate frontispieces on quality paper, and his involvement doubtless lent a certain prestige to the Borghese publication.

Manilli starts his book with a dedicatory preface, with the nominal recipient Giovanni Battista Borghese (Fig. 2). Giovanni Battista had not yet reached his teens at the time, and the true patron of the work was therefore likely his paternal grandfather, Marcantonio, then proprietor of the villa.\(^8\) While Cardinal Scipione Borghese had so indelibly imposed his image on the garden estate

---

6. Rosichino, the author of the pamphlet dedicated to Pietro da Cortona’s Barberini ceiling, was enlisted as sweeper for the *famiglia*. Cesare Ripa, the iconographic scholar, served as *maggiordomo* to Cardinal Antonio Maria Salvati. The painters Giovanni Battista Viola, Andrea Sacchi and Pier Francesco Mola served for periods as *guardaroba* to the Ludovisi, Barberini and Pamphili, respectively. See Cappelletti 2014, 286; Beldon Scott 1991, 136–137.

7. Rosichino (see above, note 6), claims to have elicited a learned man, “a poet or a philosopher”, to explain the ceiling’s iconography. Rosichino 1640, 1–2.

8. Although the work is formally dedicated to *Principe* Giovanni Battista Borghese, he was not officially bestowed with the title of Prince until 1654, when he legally came of age. ‘Giovanni Battista Borghese’ in De Caro, 1971.
Fig. 2. Manilli’s dedication to Giovanni Battista Borghese. Photo: author.
at the Pincio, and conversely owed much of that image to his garden estate, the interventions of
Marcantonio to the family villa were miniscule in comparison.⁹ The imprint left by the latter on
the property was restricted to minor commissions and relocations of the collection, and the book
may have been a substitute, as it were, for more significant and costly additions and alterations to
the villa and its collections.¹⁰

Although to some extent saturated with the stock vocabulary of encomium, the wording of
Manilli’s dedication is revealing of certain priorities and lends an insight into the motivation be-
hind the book. By writing the guide, Manilli wishes to elucidate, preserve and disseminate the site
and its artefacts. Setting out his charge, he declares that his purpose is to provide iconographic
exegesis for curious foreigners, more specifically those visiting from North of the Alps, who, he
explains, have an insatiable appetite for Roman antiquities.¹¹ This ardour for antiques comes with
a desire for comprehending their meaning, hence he has taken it upon himself to author an expla-
nation. It is to this desire for semantic clarity that Manilli wants to contribute with annotations.
The learned foreigner, he says,

... seeks a more accurate understanding of the mysterious ancient eruditions that the bas-reliefs and the statues
throughout the property comprise, admiring in these a Compendium of the ancient Magnificence of Rome.¹²

Thereby amplifying the recurrent Early Modern analogy between books and buildings, Manilli
describes the sculpture collection, as fathomed by the estate in its entirety, as a cluster of the nar-
ratives that collectively formed the Roman past. The implicit connection was to scholarly works on
Roman history like Giulio Pomponio Leto’s *Romanae historiae compendium*.¹³ The poet Scipione

⁹. Minozzi 2011, 48. It is worth noting that Cardinal Scipione shared the sobriquet “delizia di Roma” with his
villa, confounding the image of his property and his persona.
¹⁰. On Marcantonio’s interventions to the villa, see Minozzi 2011, 48.
¹¹. As Tracy Ehrlich reminds us, both Pietro Rossini and Pietro de Sebastiani likewise explicitly state that
their guidebooks are written with foreigners in mind. Ehrlich 2005, n. 92. Fioravante Martinelli’s *Roma
ricercata*, first published in 1644, was likewise authored for forastieri. Unlike these, Manilli explicitly addressed
transalpine travellers.
¹². Manilli 1650, VI–VII. “Cerca di conseguire più esatta notizia delle misteriose erudizioni antiche, che i
bassi rilievi, e le Statue di tutto’l luogo in sestesse rinchiudono; ammirando in esse un Compendio dell’an-
tica Magnificenza Romana.” Dominique Barrière’s book on the Villa Aldobrandini likewise cites an ‘Arts
compendio’, see below n. 60. In the dedicatory preface to his third edition of the *Roma ricercata nel suo sito*,
illustrated by Barrière, Fioravante Martinelli wrote to Flavio Chigi: “e racchiudendosi in quest’opera un
compendio dell’antichità sagre e profane di questa città, non deve uscire alla luce sotto il patrocinio di altro,
che di chi è un bel compendio delle virtù di quel sovrano Zio [Alexander VII], che è di si gran città Supremo
Monarca.” Martinelli 1658, XIV. The quality of compendiousness could be applied circularly to sculpture
collections and galleries, their patrons, and the guidebooks that comprised them.
¹³. The verb *compendere* would at the time also entail to compress, or fathom. Leto’s work *Romanae historiae*
Francucci had already employed the same vocabulary to evoke a notion of microcosmic comprehensiveness in his poetic description of the Galleria Borghese in 1613, lauding the gallery as “the theatre of the Universe, and compendium of wonders”.\textsuperscript{14} With such an encyclopaedic claim to the Roman past, the villa, Manilli seems to suggest, constitutes the book of Rome, the guidebook being its exegesis in octavo.

Besides infusing the villa with the narratives that constituted the collective memory of Rome’s ancient past, the statuary also imbues the site with the material presence of a temporally specific antiquity. Later in the book, Manilli ventures into discussions on the dating of antiquities, distinguishing Republican from Imperial, Christian antiquity from pagan Rome. In part, it is this notion of time that prompts him to write the guidebook. He professes that his efforts oppose the work of the \textit{Years}, “destroyers of human things”, evoking a \textit{vanitas} motif that likely more than anything resonated with the ancient sculptures on the property, material testaments to the passage of time.\textsuperscript{15} There is an awareness of temporality and decay, and the agency of print in checking it. By submitting the book for printing, Manilli seeks to perpetuate the memory of the “admirable site” and to spread its fame to the most remote nations.

Prior to this dedicatory introduction, however, are two significant leaves (Fig. 3). The first, appearing on the verso of the title page, is a nine-line stanza by an anonymous author. Evoking pastoral idyll, and a place both topographically specific and outside of time, it proclaims the Borghese gardens as a home for an itinerant ancient tradition:

\begin{quote}
Here in the garden of the Hesperides
The guardian dragon does not angrily assail
The errant Hercules
In this sacred garden
In the company of Jupiter’s noble bird [the eagle]
He gently smiles upon the gates of the Borghese
Here, tired from wandering
And from his noble labours
Rests Alcides [Hercules], among the sunlit slopes.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

\textit{compendium} was published in several editions in the first decades of the sixteenth century and was widely read. Comparisons between books and buildings was a fairly common seventeenth-century trope. The word \textit{frontispiece}, first used to describe a building’s façade, took on its current meaning as a title page, or an image facing a title page, over the course of the century.

\textsuperscript{14} “Si rivolgesse solo con sommessi accenti a celebrare le mute Imagini della sua ammirabile, et incomparabile Galleria; di quella Galleria, che par fatta il teatro dell’Universo, il compendio delle maraviglie, e la vaghezza dello sguardo humano.” Francucci 1613, 6v.

\textsuperscript{15} “Con la qual fatica contrastando io (mi sia lecito di dir tanto) con gli anni distruttori delle cose humane, spero di perpetuar la memoria di questa ammirabil fabrica, e di trasmetterne la notizia appresso le più remote Nazioni.” Manilli 1650, III. François Perrier’s \textit{Segmenta nobilium signorum et statuarum: quae temporis dentem invidium evasere...}, published in 1638, revisited the Quattrocento trope of sculpture and temporal decay, its frontispiece showing Chronos gnawing away at the Belvedere torso.

\textsuperscript{16} Manilli 1650, II. “Qui d’Hesperio Giardino / Drago custode non assale irato / Hercole peregrino / In
Although of unknown authorship, the poem bears significant resemblance to Ludovico Leporeo’s *Villa Borghese*, a poem composed of 109 six-line stanzas and dedicated to Cardinal Scipione, printed at the printing house of the Apostolic Camera in 1628. The sunlit slopes, or *piagge apriche* in the guidebook verse, appears in the first stanza of Leporeo’s poem, and is a reference to Petrarch’s poem number 303 of the *Canzoniere*. Although a love poem, Petrarch’s verse evokes an Arcadian refuge from sorrow and a place of repose for errant deities, much as does the stanza in the

17. Of particular interest, Leporeo’s poem is structured in a fashion similar to an itinerary, with reference to specific points inside the villa complex.

Fig. 3. The poem and etched plate appearing at the outset of the book. Photo: author.
guidebook, for which it is the model. The renaissance humanist Trifone Gabriele had called upon the very same Petrarchan line to signal his withdrawal from the city in a letter to his nephew Vincenzo Rimon- do in 1529. Like Trifone, the poem in the guidebook, in drawing on the example of poetic authority to evoke an antiquity come to life in the gardens, suggests the ideals of *otium*.

The stanza stands in direct relation to the image on the facing page, a combined etching and engraving that can be fairly securely attributed to Dominique Barrière, the Marseille-born draughtsman and engraver who enjoyed a considerable popularity in Rome at the time (Fig. 4). Mirroring the facing poem, the image does much to evoke an ancient tradition coming alive in the Borghese gardens. The scene is portrayed with intimacy and immediacy and seen from the perspective of the visitor perambulating the gardens to find it inhabited by Hercule, Fame descending from above proclaiming the arms of the Borghese. The figures appear against a background of a pergola with a sculpture in a niche, opening up towards a fountain, thus summarising the elements of ordered nature, statuary and waterworks that make up the gardens. Hercule is sat under a tree, club suspended, with the skin of the Nemean lion, and the golden apples of the Hesperides strewn around his feet. Like them, the trumpet of Fame grants immortality.

Echoing the first line of the opposing stanza, the theme of the Hesperides, with its Ovidian connotations of change, is significant beyond the reference to the Herculean labours, recurrent in

19. For Trifone Gabriele, see Parker 1993, 99, 115.
20. For Barrière’s position in Rome, see Trezzani 2008, 193; Negro Spina 1990, 255–264. Unlike the fold-out appearing later in the book, this image does not carry a signature. Its attribution to Barrière, however, seems beyond reasonable doubt.
21. Although the pose relates to the Melancholy Hercules type, commonly sat under a tree with apples at the feet, the figure reflects a different temperament. A similar Hercules appears in the etched frontispiece to De Rossi’s *Li Giardini di Roma*. This plate, titled *Gli Esperidi Romani*, designed by Giovanni Battista Manelli and etched by Flemish artist Arnold van Westerhout, appears as an amalgam of a number of Villa-related plates, including Greuter’s engraving after Guido Reni’s design appearing in Ferrari’s Hesperides, showing the Hesperides as muses for the cultivation of citrus fruits in a villa garden.
Roman palatial decorations.\textsuperscript{22} The Gardens of the Hesperides was known as the realm of sunset on the Western edge of the world, the Hesperides being the nymphs of the setting sun, as suggested by the \textit{piagge apriche} appearing in the poem.\textsuperscript{23} More than a reference to immortality, a recurrent feature in decorations commissioned by noble families competing for power in Rome, evoking the Gardens of the Hesperides was likely a play on the villa’s topographic relation to the city, located as it was beyond the city gates to the West. As Rome was commonly referred to as ”the world”, \textit{urbs et orbis}, the villa outside the Aurelian Walls thus represented a pastoral realm beyond it, and beyond time, in a conflation of mythological topos and urban topography. To this realm the wandering Hercules has come to rest.\textsuperscript{24}

Moreover, the apples of the Hesperides had also been associated with oranges since antiquity, the Greek name for citrus fruits being Hesperidoeidē.\textsuperscript{25} There was therefore a connection between the mythological site and the natural bounty and variety of fruits that formed an important part of the villa, and which Manilli emphatically describes in his guidebook, by inference evoking an Arcadian Golden Age.\textsuperscript{26}

This connotation carried particular topicality at the time of the guidebook’s publication, as the ambitious \textit{Hesperides: sive de Malorum Aureorum cultura et usu} by Jesuit scholar Giovanni Battista Ferrari had been published in Rome a mere four years earlier.\textsuperscript{27} This scientific volume on the cultivation of lemons and other citruses opens with a book on the Herculean myth, in which Ferrari ventured that the mythical garden of the Hesperides was a translocatable \textit{topos}, noting that the Hesperides had abandoned their original dwelling, in a “locus incertus”, and relocated to Italy.\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{itemize}
\item[22.] The Hesperides were metamorphosed into elm, poplar and willow trees upon the loss of the apples they guarded from Jupiter. ‘Hesperides’ in Grimal & Kershaw 1991.
\item[23.] The theme of the realm of the sun may have resonated with the recurrent Apollonian iconography evoked by Scipione Borghese and his poets, as well as most famously in Guido Reni’s ceiling painting in the first Borghese casino on the Quirinal. The location of the Garden of the Hesperides was somewhat disputed in Antiquity. While most authors agree it lays West, Apollodorus locates it to the far North of the world. Frazer 2002, 221, n.1. The location was again disputed in the seventeenth century. In the \textit{Hesperides} 5–6 (see below, pages 73–75), Giovanni Battista Ferrari provided a philological discussion of ancient writers’ geographical attributions of the original location of the garden.
\item[24.] As Kristina Herrmann Fiore has demonstrated, Hercules was among the hyperbolic similes attached to Cardinal Scipione’s name, and we may speculate whether this was carried over to Marcantonio. Herrmann Fiore 2008, 231. If so, the reclining Hercules embodies both the prince withdrawing from the duties of his office to pursue otium (“qui stanco dal camino, e da tante sue nobili fatiche”), as well as an itterant classical tradition that has found refuge on the Pincio.
\item[25.] “Hesperides” in Grimal & Kershaw 1991.
\item[26.] Citrus friuts on the property are treated in Campitelli 2009.
\item[27.] Ferrari 1646.
\item[28.] Ferrari 1646, 5.
\end{itemize}
Fig. 5. Dominique Barrière, *Hercules inter Hesperides Romanis in hortis Mediceorum*, from Giovanni Battista Ferrari, *Hesperides: sive de Malorum Aureorum cultura et usu*, 1646.
By kind permission of the Leiden University Library, 678 A 2. Photo: author.
Ferrari’s exegesis of the Hesperidian mythology was accompanied by a number of plates depicting the subject engraved by prominent artists. The first among these was an etching by Barrière of a celebrated relief showing Hercules reposing in the Gardens of the Hesperides, previously the property of Ippolito d’Este and at the time located in the Medici gardens (Fig. 5). The wording in Barrière’s title as it appears in the lower margin is suggestive: “Hercules among the Roman Hesperides in the Garden of the Medici.” The combined verse and image at the outset of Manilli’s guidebook, then, picked up on a topos associated with the Villa Medici on the opposite side of the Pincian Gate, the Villa Borghese’s main rival in the contest for the most magnificent villa in Rome. In contrast to this engraving, however, Barrière’s reclining Hercules in Manilli’s guidebook was a living deity, whose ultimate reward of immortality is portrayed as otium, lived out within the walls of the Borghese gardens.

Spanning nearly two hundred pages, the description that follows Manilli’s dedication is exhaustive, and frequently takes on the qualities of a list of objects as the visitor passes through the space. A look at its notable features, however, reveals how Manilli delineates the villa in print.

Certain aspects of note appear in the brief introduction, spanning a mere two pages, that serves both to describe the topography of the site and to reiterate Manilli’s statement of purpose. Starting off with topography, he emphasises the villa’s exteriority to the city and the topographic diversity of its landscape. In this, he seems to be consciously emulating ancient writings on villas, in particular the letters of Pliny the Younger. Indeed, Manilli immediately asserts that the villa, with the amleness and variety of the site, the maestà of the buildings, the copiousness of the

29. Although principally about genealogies and cultivation of citrus fruits, Ferrari’s volume fathoms Hercules’ myth and discusses the virtues of different painters. The wealth of prominent graphic artists involved in its production included Bloemaert, Greuter and the less known Camillo Cungi, all of whom would contribute to Girolamo Teti’s Aedes Barberinae, to be discussed below.

30. For the relief, see Bober & Rubinstein 2010, no. 138, 189. It was drawn by Pisanello and Girolamo da Carpi, and appears in the Codex Coburgensis. Further to this, Pirro Ligorio noted that the dragon guarding the apples figured as a snake in the relief. Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli, Ligorio Ms XIII, B7, fol. 113 r.


33. Henning Wede sees Hesperides iconography as the overarching iconographic programme for the Villa Borghese, with the Manilli frontispiece and poem as point of departure. Wede 2000, 52–61. Whereas Wede, ibid. 47, 53, reads the etching as showing Hercules outside the gates of the Villa Borghese, it may be argued that the structure depicted in the background is rather a pergola, and that the scene portrays the interior of the gardens. Such a pergola flanked by sculptures is depicted in the engraving of the villa by Gottfried van Schayck and Matthias Greuter from 1623. While the rustic tree against which Hercules leans certainly is no feature of any seventeenth-century garden, its appearance is explained by the iconographic tradition of the motif.

34. See for instance the letter to Gallus, in Melmoth 1914, XXIII.
waterworks, and in the collections of painting and sculpture, will favourably compare to the famous **horti** of the ancients. It is the villa in its entirety, then, and not merely the works of art, which rivals Antiquity.

Having proclaimed the fame of the site all over Europe, thus contextualising the villa on a continental rather than merely Italian scale, Manilli describes the rhetoric of his endeavour. Notably, he states that his descriptive charge is executed without ornament, so as to let the beauty of the things themselves enhance the text that contains them, as though his description had mimetic qualities, serving as a vehicle for the virtues of things.\(^35\) Departing somewhat from his previously stated emphasis on sculpture, he here asserts that the guide serves foremost for those aspiring to the connoisseurship of paintings.\(^36\) More significant are his reflections on the organisation of the space that appear towards the end of this introduction. Although vaguely stated, they suggest a contained, compartmental and concentric organising principle, subdividing the large space into sections, which, Manilli notes, adds to the overall beauty of the site. Vaguely echoing the vocabulary recurrent in description of cities, he conceives of the villa as circumscribed and defined by walls and, moreover, contained in enclosures, or recinti, encompassing sub-divisions, repeating the walled master enclosure.\(^37\) Although accurately describing the villa as a partitioned space, this brief textual sketch of the site suggests an organisation more geometrically ideal, graphic and ordered than the topographic reality. Stretching from the landmark Porta Pinciana to the Muro Torto, he divides the villa in the **primo recinto**, containing the giardino, reaching to the palazzo to the West and ending in a park to the South. The second enclosure is made up of **varij boschi** and "other parts", all of which, he writes, he will describe in due course. Between these two enclosures is the **palazzo**. The third **recinto**, much larger than the two others together, stretches all the way to the Muro Torto, containing the park and a **vigna**.

While the subsequent description of the villa in its entirety is divided into chapters according to the walled compartments of the site, treating the Palazzo in a separate chapter between the first and second **recinto**, the narration takes the form of an itinerary, starting from the **portone** to the South, from where visitors were likely to arrive.\(^38\) Progressing through the space, Manilli gives

\(^{35}\) Manilli claims that his description is "nuda per se stessa d'ogni ornamento; rendendola assai ornata le cose medesime, che in essa si contengono". Manilli 1650, 1.
\(^{36}\) "potrà tuttavia servir' alla curiosità di tutti; e più degli altri, à quei, che si dilettan di conoscere le maniere de' Pittori celeberrimi; molte fatiche de' quali si posson qui vedere, con sommo studio raccolte". Manilli 1650, 1–2.
\(^{37}\) "Di dentro contiene ancora molti ricinti minori, che distinguendo il luogo in più parti, lo Rendon più vago alla vista." Manilli 1650, 2.
\(^{38}\) Various guidebooks to the city treat the villa in itineraries relating to the Piazza del Popolo. Richard Lassels approached from the mausoleum of S. Costanza, by S. Agnese fuori le mura, "crossing over the fields" to get to the villa. Lassels 1670, 170.
detailed directions on where to walk, adding points of reference for navigation. Throughout the itinerary, landscape references and cardinal points are also given in the margins for ease of navigation. While most marginalia in the book serve this function, some marginal notes denote artworks of particular interest, highlights from the collection consistent with those lauded in guidebooks to the city and mentioned by travellers. Notably, although not without precedent, iconographic references occasionally appear in the margins, all but one pointing to the Ovidian narratives portrayed in statues and reliefs, stories in which Manilli appears well versed.

Progressing through the gardens and palazzo, Manilli’s description is comprehensive and encyclopaedic, quantifying and measuring everything from stairs to fruit trees, citing artworks both ancient and modern and their authors. Topography and elements of landscape and horticulture are given, the measurements of paths and hedges are provided, as are the types of plants and numbers of trees, evoking botanical bounty. An at times curious exactitude prevails, as when the tree-lined avenue, the Vialone degli Olmi, is described somewhat architecturally as being 942 palmi in length. While, contrary to the judgement of Cicognara, who noted that Manilli had portrayed the villa “rather poetically”, the overall vocabulary and descriptions of landscape are mostly matter-of-fact and with efforts invested in accuracy, Manilli occasionally makes lyrical excursuses, as when describing the wine grotto, where he evokes Arcadian idyll in a poetic description of nectar and ambrosia. Pastoral poetics return in the description of a little stream, pleasing to the birds, who, Manilli says, from the abundance and variety of fruits need not fly elsewhere for nourishment. Likewise with the description of the uccelliere, which he terms the “delightful prisons” for

39. For example, “dove il muro si sporge più infuori”. Manilli 1650, 39.
40. Manilli, or perhaps Grignani, finds the Seneca, Juno, Bacchus, David, Apollo and Daphne, and the Borghese Gladiator, among other, worthy of marginal notations.
41. This is also a feature of the Aedes Barberinae, see examples Teti 1642, 86–89. In relation to an ancient relief showing Pluto and Proserpina, Manilli notes “Ovid. 5. Metam. Claudia, de raptu Proserp”, Manilli 1650, 35. cf, ibid., 51: “Sopra le due porte dentro l’Giardino, son posti due bassi rilievi, simili affatto l’uno all’altro, d’Ino e Melicerta, convertiti da Nettuno, a preghiere di Venere, in Dei marini; come scrive Ovidio nel quarto delle sue Trasformazioni, ivi: At Venus immeritæ neptis miserata labores, &c.”. The reference is to Ovid, Met. IV, 531. With reference to a relief with the story of Niobe: “… come lo descrive Ovidio nel libro sesto delle sue Metamorfosi, ivi: Anteusus Niobe thalamos cognoverat illam, &c.”, Manilli 1650, 57. A reference to “book eight” appears, ibid., 59–60.
42. Manilli 1650, 7–8. Similarly, the spiral staircase leading to the first floor in the palazzo is described as consisting of 87 steps, measuring seven palmi wide, Manilli 1650, 89.
43. Cicognara 3772. The book appears here under the header “Roma Antica e Moderna”, with the following comment: “Questo Manilli era il Guardaroba del Palazzo, e s’avvisò di scrivere questa descrizione piuttosto poeticamente.” For the wine grotto, see Manilli 1650, 24.
44. Manilli 1650, 21–22.
the plenitude of birds.\textsuperscript{45} Manilli frequently returns to the notion of ordered nature, where nature and artifice compete and merge, as in the giardino of the first recinto.\textsuperscript{46} Similarly, nature and art yield variety and order, respectively, in the third recinto.\textsuperscript{47}

Throughout, the ancient epigraphy punctuating the gardens is exhaustively transcribed and typeset to mimic the appearance on the stone, set in all majuscules and a larger font so as to imitate Roman script. The inscription on a Greek altar, serving as base for what Manilli identifies as the statue of Plotina Augusta, wife of Trajan, is given in full in the original Greek, with a Latin translation appearing below (Fig. 6).

Inside the palazzo, Manilli explains, modern painters compete with the sculptors of antiquity, perhaps attesting to the widespread artistic copying from the villa’s collection of antiquities. A condensed passage sets out a paragonistic trope describing continuity and revival, by pitting modern stucco against ancient marble, a rivalry played out as delight for the senses and food for thought. In what appears as a poetic reversal of the legend of Augustus transforming the city of Rome from brick to marble, we glimpse a notion of the villa as a theatre for the rivalry between the ancient and modern city:

Facing the piazza is the Palazzo, placed in between the first and second enclosures. The architecture, by the Flemish Giovanni Vansanzio, abounds with the stuff of wonder both inside and out, for one might say that it is here, in the infinite number of famous sculptures,
that Antiquity contributes in making the site majestic. Here, in the statues, and in the busts of distinguished persons, and in the bas-reliefs portraying history and myths, the most mysterious among those that the learned ancients left to posterity, sight finds plenty of distractions, and the mind finds exercise for reason. And our age, with the beautiful ornaments in stucco, and with many sculptures in marble, and with the paintings by famous artists of our century and of the past, has endeavoured greatly not to surrender the adornment of this site to the past centuries.  

Describing artworks inside the palazzo as elsewhere, Manilli summarily remarks on motifs and authorship, occasionally exercising connoisseurship, discussing attributions, dating and subject matter. Although erring in a number of cases, there is a degree of precision in these attributions, citing disputed authorships, copies from other artists and pupils of masters. When describing a painting of Christ carrying the Cross, he notes that it is attributed to Raphael, working in his early style. Discussing certain painters, Manilli also confers the title of 'pittore antico-moderno', evoking a notion of all’antica painting, or perhaps what he perceives as painters working in an earlier, renaissance style. Describing antiquities proper, he also shows discernment, presenting nuanced datings, as when noting "a large marble head of the young Nero, placed atop a very old tripod, perhaps made at the time of the Republic". Similarly, he lists "an ancient head, very large, which from the way the hair is tied reveals itself to be a Greek piece". He also discusses the dating of early renaissance works on stylistic grounds, suggesting a degree of learning on the subject, and


51. “…è alzata una gran Testa di marmo, di Nerone giovane, sopra un Tripode assai antico, fatto forse al tempo della Republica ...” Manilli 1650, 141.

52. “una Testa antica, assai grande, che alla legatura de’ capegli in mezzo, mostra d’essere opera Greca.” Manilli 1650, 10. Similarly, “Sopra le sei Porte son posti dentro à cornici belissime di stucco, altrettanti bassi rilievi. Il primo sopra la Porta del Portico rappresenta il rito antico nuziale, di spargere fiori innanzi alle porte degli Sposi. [...] Sù la Porta della Galleria, in faccia à questa, si vede in un basso rilievo,.compagnio di questo primo, e dell’istessa mano, scolpito un ballo nuziale di cinque Ninfe vestite.” The latter pair is identifiable as the Borghese Dancers and its pendant. Manilli 1650, 56–57.
appears to express doubt about a piece credited to Praxiteles. Similarly, he debates a disputed identification of a sculpture as Juno, citing the lack of dignity in the portrayal of the subject. Like Aldrovandi, he distinguishes restored and ancient portions of single pieces of statuary. When speculating about iconographic interpretations, he occasionally relates that he cannot successfully read the stories depicted in reliefs due to their positioning, further attesting that the attributions are his own.

While we will unsuccessfully mine Manilli’s guidebook for explicit statements of an overall iconographic programme for the villa, its author occasionally engages in speculations about the meaning of ensembles of sculptures, at one point venturing that a grouping of statuary signify the peace and prosperity of the Borghese family, deserving of assistance from the gods. In other statements, we glimpse a notion of sculptures engaging in performative relationships, connected by the act of looking at each other across space, alluding to recurrent notions of the rhetorical agency of statuary in the seventeenth century. A similar performativity is suggested by the case

53. “Sopra uno scabellone di noce, à foggia di piedestallo, posa un Frontespizio similmente di noce, con uno sportello in mezzo, opera d’intaglio antico di due, o tre secoli; dal quale, nel aprire che si sà, sbuca fuori la testa spaventosa d’un Mostro, che stride con voce horrenda.” Manilli 1650, 70. Likewise, p. 170: “ hà questo Casino nella sua faccia un Pilo grande di marmo, dove si vede scolpita in basso rilievo, la caduta di Fetonte, opera, per quanto ne mostra la maniera del far, del terzo, o quarto secolo.” On a relief of Venus with Cupid on top of a dolphin: “opera secondo alcuni, antichissima di Prassitele”, Manilli 1650, 63.


55. “Di sopra, si vedono Marte, e Giunone: e Mercurio, con un’altra Deità, la quale si conosce essere stata ristorata à tempi nostri.” Manilli 1650, 142. Notably, large parts of the Borghese sculpture collection had been restored during the time of Scipione, but Manilli seems to be largely unaware of this, or otherwise reluctant to disclose it.

56. On two dragons in stone and the statue of a river, “simbolo forse della Vigilanza, che deve havere il Principe in mantener ne’ Popoli, che governa, l’Abbondanza, espressa non incongruamente nel Fiume”, Manilli 1650, 9, Also, p. 38: “Hà questo basso rilievo da i lati, due frammenti, i quali, per esser di figure assai picciole, poste in luogo altissimo, non si possono distintamente conoscere.” Similarly, p. 44: “Da i lati, & in mezzo un basso rilievo, del quale, per la sua distanza, non si può dar notizia.”

57. “Vuol forse tutta questa composizione di figure darci à vedere, che in una Famiglia, per mezzo della Pudicizia si conserva la Pace coniugale, e l’Allegrezza: significate, questa per l’uva il cui liquore rallegra il cuore dell’huomo; e l’altra de’l ramo d’uliva: e che viene tal casa fatta degnà dell’assistenza degli Dei, per rendersi felice, e copiosa di beni, e per ornarla d’ogni virtù.” Manilli 1650, 142–143.

58. As Frances Gage has noted, this occurs in Rossini’s Il Mercurio errante (1693), where sculptures of Faustina and Juno face each other. Gage 2014, 288; Manilli 1650, 142: “Di sopra, nel secondo ordine, Giove, e la Pudicizia, che si guardano l’un l’altro: e Nettuno similmente, con una Pudicizia, e nell’istess’atto di guardarsi in faccia.”
of speaking statues in the two herms, by Pietro Bernini assisted by Gian Lorenzo, “almost courte-
ously inviting foreigners to marvel at the delights of the place”.

Glancing at the landscape of related publishing activity in mid-century Rome, we find timely
resonances and the appearance of certain volumes that may have prompted the production of the
Manilli guidebook. However, rather than Manilli, it is predictably Dominique Barrière who con-
stitutes the clearer connection between these works and the Borghese volume.

Whereas Barrière had contributed with an engraving of the Medici-relief for Ferrari’s Hesperides in 1646, he would deal more directly with villas the following year, in 1647, when he him-
self signed off as both draughtsman and engraver of Villa Aldobrandina Tusculana (Fig. 7). This
precious volume consisted exclusively of views of the Villa Aldobrandini in Frascati, and bore a
dedication to the young Louis XIV. The work constitutes something of a precedent for Manilli’s
guidebook, in that it celebrates a single, Roman villa in print. Barrière’s volume, however, was
printed in folio and consisted entirely of plates, in addition to a dedication and a brief “ad lectore-
num” preface. It was designed as a presentation volume for enjoyment in the library, where the viewer
might tour the villa by leafing through a succession of views. As such it constitutes an effective,
printed and mobile simulacrum of the villa.

Barrière also authored a similar volume of plates some years after contributing to the Man-
illi guidebook, possibly published for the first time in the 1660’s. This time, the subject was the
Villa Pamphili, the estate recently completed outside the city walls and to the north, with plates

59. “Al primo capo, quasi invitando cortesemente i forastieri à goder le delizie del luogo, si vedon’alzati sopra
pedestalli quadri di trevertino, coll’arme di Casa Borghese, due Termini di marmo, rappresentanti, l’uno il
Dio degli horti; e l’altro, Pomona; opere moderne di Pietro Bernini, aiutato dal Cavaliere Lorenzo suo figli-
uolo, all’hora giovinetto.” Manilli 1650, 4.
60. Barrière 1647. Berlin Katalog 3490. Further inquiry is needed to establish when Barrière prepared his
designs for the volume. The reference to the ‘Artis compendio’ appears here in the “ad lectorem”, 3.
61. The style and presentation of Barrière’s book is of a high order. Reproducing a number of Domenichino’s
frescoes from the villa, Barrière evokes Ovidian, and in particular Apollonian, imagery, as in the plate cele-
brating the Gesamtkunstwerk staging Mount Parnassus, “a miracle of art”, where Apollo and the Muses come
to life as breathing creatures among the family. Here Barrière blurs the boundaries of myth and reality, real
and artistic space.
62. No date of publication appears on the Pamphili volume. A dating of 1673–1675 is indicated by Trezza-
ni, who does not cite evidence to substantiate this claim. Trezanni 2008, 189. Contrary to this claim, a terminus
ante quem during the Chigi pontificate can be established by the imprimatur, which was signed by Monsignor
de Angelis while archbishop of Urbino, a post he resigned in March 1667. This emerges from an unidentified
manuscript cited in D. Andrea Lazzari 1795, 407. The imprimatur was also signed by Giacinto Libello, who
was part of the Sacred Congregation of the Index as early as 1654, when he, on January 15th, signed a decree
on behalf of the index. His signature also appears on later decrees, and he signed off in the ad lectorem of the
Index Librorum Prohibitorum Alexandri VII. Pontificis Maximi iussu editus, in 1664. The above decrees are repro-
duced in this volume.

89
Fig. 7. The frontispiece of Dominique Barrière, *Villa Aldobrandina Tuscalanae sive variij illius Hortorum et fontium prospectus*, 1647. By kind permission of the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) Rome, K 370 kl. Fol Rara Platn. Lm 4 [int.3]. Photo: author.
showing its fountains and sculpture collections (Fig. 10).\textsuperscript{63} Like the Villa Borghese, the Pamphili garden estate was financed by papal revenue channelled through the cardinal nephew of the reigning pope. But whereas Manilli’s guidebook appeared long after the pontificate of Paul V, the Pamphili volume may have been printed while the Pamphili family still held the Holy See. Indeed, the Pamphili pope had licensed the publication of the Manilli guidebook, and his papal brief, signed by Papal Secretary M. A. Maraldus, was reproduced in its entirety as imprimatur in Manilli’s guidebook, perhaps best understood as a gesture of generosity from the family in power.\textsuperscript{64} Regardless of the time of their publication, payment records show that Barrière was commissioned to produce his Pamphili plates prior to the publication of Manilli’s guidebook, with payments registered from December 1648 onwards.\textsuperscript{65} We may therefore conclude that a flurry of villa related prints and books were in preparation around the time of Grignani’s publication of the Villa Borghese guidebook, and that Barrière’s involvement was the common denominator.\textsuperscript{66} Moreover, as the preparation of the three volumes on the villas Aldobrandini, Borghese and Chigi fall within a limited timeframe, they appear to be immediately interrelated, stimulated by direct competition and set in production with a degree of expediency. Comparing the fold-out perspective elevations of the main palazzi contained in the three works, Barrière can be seen using the same representational scheme in each (compare Figs. 8, 9, 10).

Similar in format to the Aldobrandini and Chigi volumes was Girolamo Teti’s \textit{Aedes Barberinae}, an expensive folio dedicated to the Palazzo Barberini ceiling frescoes that appeared in 1642, subsequently expanded and reissued in 1647.\textsuperscript{67} This volume employed the same, prominent Northern engravers that contributed to Ferrari’s \textit{Hesperides}, and featured, alongside detailed engravings of Pietro da Cortona’s celebrated ceiling fresco, its textual exegesis. Like the Villa

\textsuperscript{63} Barrière (n.d.) \textit{Villa Pamphiliæ}. Berlin Katalog 1301.

\textsuperscript{64} The brief is signed at S. Maria Maggiore “under the fisherman’s ring” on the 15\textsuperscript{th} of January 1650, “in the sixth year of our pontificate”. If this dating is correct, the privilege preceded Manilli’s preface by more than a month. The imprimatur is signed by the viceregent “A. Rivaldus” (Ascanio Rivaldo). Co-signing the imprimatur was “Fr. Raymundus Capisuccus” (Raimondo Capizucchi), that year appointed secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Index.

\textsuperscript{65} On the basis of Pamphili payment records, Mirka Benes has established that Barrière was paid for the Pamphili etchings between 1648 and 1660. Payments after 1656 refer exclusively to plates showing the statuary on the property. Benes 1989, p. 523, n. 42, p. 534, n. 132. On December 23, 1648, a payment of 30 scudi was registered to Barrière: “s. 30 a D. Bernier [Barrière] da Marziglia a conto dell’intaglio che fà d’acquafora dele Prospettive della Villa di S. Pancrario.” Cited in Negro Spina 1990, 259.

\textsuperscript{66} Barrière was paid large sums for his prints in the period. Borromini paid him 400 scudi for six etchings in 1660. Connors 1980, 268. For the collaboration between Barrière and Borromini, see Connors 1980; Tschudi 2017, 138–139.

\textsuperscript{67} 2000 aurei went into the production of the first volume, according to Filippo de Rossi, who published the second edition. See Frangenberg 2003, 137, n. 16.
Fig. 8. Dominique Barrière, elevation of the Villa Borghese, from Manilli’s *Villa Borghese*, 1650.
Photo: author.

Fig. 9. Dominique Barrière, elevation of the Villa Aldobrandini, from *Villa Aldobrandina Tusculana*, 1647.
By kind permission of the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) Rome,
K 370 kl. Fol Rara Platn. Ln 4 [int.3]. Photo: author.
Aldobrandina, it was conceived with a foreign audience in mind. It was dedicated in its 1647 issue to Cardinal Mazarin, and was used as a diplomatic gift.

While Teti’s *Aedes Barberinae* promoted the Barberini through their commissioned ceiling frescoes, the *Galleria Giustiniana*, published in two volumes in 1636 and 1636–1637, graphically reproduced the statuary of the Giustiniani collection, and so constitutes a different kind of predecessor to Manilli’s guidebook in claiming an encyclopaedic collection of ancient statuary.

The profound differences between the publications mentioned here and the Manilli guidebook notwithstanding, these books nevertheless constituted a context of internationally oriented volumes conceived as an effective and relatively economic apparatus of promotion, one that could be shipped off, presented to the nobility in Italy and beyond, securing the place of the sites they described in an emerging canon of secular Roman palaces. As Mirka Benes and Tracy Ehrlich

68. It was donated to the Grand Dauphin of France and the Spanish Ambassador. Frangenberg 2003, 137. There are also volumes bearing the arms of Fabio Chigi and Giulio Sacchetti on the binding. Beldon Scott 1991, 195.
have demonstrated, the effectiveness of print as vehicle of promotion for these estates was fully understood and exploited by the competing families. While the Borghese at the time of Cardinal Scipione had efficiently employed Greuter to claim superiority among the villas of Frascati through print, by emphatically enhancing their Villa Mondragone in views of the landscape, the Pamphili enlisted Barrière to promote their villa in a series of etchings. In the employ of Camillo Pamphili, Barrière created a version of the villa specifically adapted to French taste that existed exclusively in print, making the book and the building complementary parts of the Pamphili’s villa enterprise. What was at stake was successfully emphasising the family’s magnificence through the embellishment of the city, conveyed through the medium of print. This much was recognised by Paolo Giordano Orsini, who authored a poem celebrating Teti’s efforts in making the *Aedes Barberinae*. Evoking a notion of travelling sheets of a static palace, he remarked on the multiplicity of the book and the singularity of the building in a relationship of 100 to 1. Indeed, in his preface, Teti himself described his undertaking as comparable to that of constructing a second, parallel building.

While the Borghese guidebook thus related to these graphic tomes in its subject matter and international orientation, Manilli’s only real precedent in format and purpose was the well-known short pamphlet guide to Pietro da Cortona’s ceiling fresco in Palazzo Barberini, authored by Rossichino the floor sweeper. This pamphlet, with its mere 10 pages of text in octavo format, shares essential features and motivations with the Manilli guidebook, prompted as it is by a desire to explain the artistic meaning of a single site for visitors. Addressing the audience in a short appeal to the reader, Rossichino states that he has authored the description in order to elucidate the iconography of the fresco for those who seek to comprehend more than the beauty of its form and colour. Like Manilli, he is explicitly motivated by the curiosity of a constant stream of visitors, some of whom interrupt him in his work, and he has therefore consulted a scholar to clarify and convey the meaning of “*cose così speculative et alte*”, the fresco’s “mysterious eruditions”, as it were. Besides this address to the reader, the pamphlet contains an exegesis of the fresco iconography in the vernacular and, in the reprinted edition of 1670, a Greek distich and two short poems in Latin

70. Teti 1642, 1–2; Frangenberg 2003. Beldon Scott notes that “[the *Aedes*] usefulness remained independent of a personal visit to the edifice.” Beldon Scott 1991, 195.
71. Rosichino is mentioned in documents as first *scopatore*, later *scopatore secreto*, the latter “a position of some responsibility among the servants of a patrician household”. Beldon Scott describes him as “a kind of doorman-cicerone who was charged with admitting visitors into the salone to view Cortona’s masterwork”. Beldon Scott 1991, 136–137.
72. As Edward Chaney points out, “curiosity” was much in vogue, and provided justification for increasingly secular oriented travels for young, British noblemen. Chaney 2006, 204–205.
and Italian. As such, it constitutes a few leaves of learning for the amusement of the moderately cultured visitor in a neat and handy size, a purpose altogether different than Teti’s lavish presentation volume.71

As already noted, it is the presence of visitors that prompts Manilli, like Rosichino, to author his exegesis, as both authors make clear in their prefaces. The Cortona ceiling fresco was famed among travellers even prior to its unveiling and quickly found its way into guidebooks to the city.72 Similarly, the partial accessibility of the grounds of the Villa Borghese to a large audience, set down in the Lex Hortorum, and proclaimed on a marble plaque in revival of the ancient law of urbanitas, is well researched and well documented.73 The author of the guidebook poem stressed this point when evoking the friendly guardian dragon, the drago custode, who welcomes the visitor to the gardens.74 Here then, lay the potential for disseminating the villa to a greater audience than the handful of upper nobility the presentation library volumes were likely to reach.

The task of ciceroning these curious foreigners through print, or interlocuting, as it were, between iconography and visitor, often befell a member of the famiglia, and it may have been one that Manilli executed in both actual and printed space.75 Rosichino’s guide testifies to the presence of the author of the pamphlet on the site, and it is not at all unthinkable that Manilli himself would make an appearance for the curious foreigners in person.76

Indeed, the itinerary charted out by Manilli in the guidebook appears to be ideal, rather than actual. We may question whether it is likely that visitors deemed worthy of being granted access to the palazzo in its entirety would venture through the space unattended. Rather likely accompanied, on occasion perhaps by Manilli himself, the guidebook would be superfluous then and there. And we may speculate whether the guidebook was rather gifted on the occasion, as a memento of

73. As Beldon Scott observers, this volume was intended for the average visitor, whereas the Teti volume was aimed at noble patrons and foreign dignitaries. Beldon Scott 1991, 195.
74. See Beldon Scott 1991, 195.
75. For notions of private and public spaces in seventeenth-century Rome, see Waddy 1990, 3–13. For access to the Villa Borghese, see Herrmann Fiore 2008, 220. Tipping the guardaroba could grant access to otherwise inaccessible spaces. See Cappelletti 2014, 286. For the Lex Hortorum, see Coffin 1982. For the plaque, see Manilli 1650, 159. For a discussion of Vatican and Victoria and Albert copies, see Herman Fiore 2008, 241, n. 21.
76. This dragon figured as a bronze sculpture in the gardens, and was celebrated by Maffeo Barberini, the future Pope Urban VIII in a poem printed in Paris in 1620. See Lavin 1968, 230–231.
77. In the case of the Villa Borghese, Lelio Guidicciioni was employed to guide the Grand Duke of Tuscany. See Cappelletti 2014, 285. For Guidicciioni, who originated in Lucca and figured in Rome’s literary world, see Summerscale 2000, appendix 2, 364.
78. The 1623 engraving of the villa complex by Gottfried van Schyck and Matthäus Greuter shows the presence of a guide, who may well be the celebrated Swiss-Guard cicerone Giovanni Alto. For Alto, see Tschudi 2017, 74, 84–87.
the visit with the specific aim of disseminating the description of the site and its collection. Who, after all, would need a guidebook as they were accompanied through the rooms of the villa?

While the Barberini, Aldobrandini and Chigi opted for presentation library volumes addressed to local patricians and foreign royalty, Marcantonio Borghese, enlisting Manilli and Cri-gnani, chose to relate to an altogether different tradition, namely the guidebooks that listed the precious artefacts of the city, frequently in *paragone* between the ancient and modern, as in Franzini’s *Descrittione di Roma antica e moderna*, published by Andrea Fei in 1643. This book, and a wealth of others like it, quantified and measured the city of Rome, listing its sites, reliquaries and artefacts both ancient and modern; in short, delineated the city’s topographies both architectural, religious and antiquarian in walkable itineraries interlacing the city from gate to gate.

The Manilli guidebook resembles these books in its format, structure and vocabulary, in its octavo size and number of pages. Charting an itinerary through the villa, listing its landscape features, buildings, fountains and artworks along the way, it describes the villa as though it were a city. In its very format, then, it is suggestive of a larger, urban order. By emulating guidebooks to the city, it seems to imply through its structure and language that the Villa Borghese is a microcosm of Rome, lending credence to its author’s claim that the collection, and by extension the site itself, is a compendium of the ancient city, inherently embodying its virtue of magnificence. As such, Manilli provides the book of the book of Rome.

Whereas in the city sites of particular interest both pious and ancient were spread across its large and sprawling fabric, requiring guidebook authors to sequence itineraries in walking days according to various principles, the Villa Borghese might be traversed in the span of a leisurely afternoon. Progressing through the *compendio* of the ancient city while strolling along the gardens and palazzo, the curious foreigner might cover the city’s past, contained and compacted, within the villa walls. The guidebook’s promise of providing the full deciphering of this compendium, however, remains only partially fulfilled. Like authors of guidebooks to the city frequently sought to make sense of buildings and statuary that were the relics of an often distant past, so Manilli described a villa that, although only recently constructed and furnished, already was at a remove from its original strategies of display. After all, eighteen years had passed since Cardinal Scipione’s demise. While, then, Manilli’s inventory is exhaustively conveyed, albeit summarily explained, his text is distinctly *post factum* and at a degree of distance from the intentions that had originally conditioned the structuring of the compendium he sought to explain. Thus, the guidebook portrays a space where the arrangements of statues at times seems enigmatic, even to the guardaroba. In this lack of overall coherence of the site, Manilli locates the aesthetics of his book. As the itinerary

---

79. Examples are numerous, including Lucio Mauro’s *Le antichita de la città di Roma brevissimamente raccolte*, which appeared in numerous editions.
ends by the Muro Torto on the guidebook’s last page, the author concludes with an intimation of aporia:

Through this gate one exits for the Muro Torto, where this great villa comes to an end. If, in the description of which one finds little observance of order, it should not come across as puzzling to those who know, that beautiful things lend themselves to being described without order and at random, as much as they do in a methodical fashion.80

As Thomas Frangeberg has pointed out, Tetti’s Aedes Barberinae remained a crucial tool of family promotion in the 1670s, long after its publication and the end of the Barberini pontificate.81 Similarly, we may think of the Manilli–Crignani guidebook, appearing as it did well after significant additions and alterations to the villa had seized and long after Borghese influence in Rome had declined, as a mobile, effective and comparably inexpensive means of promoting the villa, and by extension maintaining the family’s prominence at home and abroad.

In its vernacular and unadorned form, Manilli’s book addresses the travelling gentleman amateur, whom Giulio Rospigliosi termed the middlebrow readership.82 As such it is intended for a different reader than Tetti’s Aedes Barberinae, the latter stemming as it did from the circle of high learning at the Barberini court.83 With its preface signed in late January, Manilli’s book was ready for the significant influx of tourists for the Holy Year of 1650. For the vast majority of these visitors, most of whom were pilgrims, the book would be an unlikely souvenir, secular and likely too expensive. Yet Holy Year celebrations had by this time become increasingly magnificent and invested in display, drawing European nobility to witness the spectacle.84 One such traveller, a certain H. Robinson, signed his Manilli guidebook, “Rome, in the Holy Year of 1650” and added “Sweet is the labour of remembrance”.85

80. “Per questo Portone s’esce à Muro torto, e viene à terminarsi questa gran Villa: nella descrizzion della quale se si trova poca osservanza d’ordine, non doverà ciò parere strano à chi sà, che le cose belle tanto piacciono proferite senz’ordine, & à caso; quanto proferite ordinatamente.” Manilli 1650, 175.
81. Frangenberg 2003, 137.
“... ma vengo a far consideratione, che nello stesso Epico si presuppongono i Lettori di tre sorti, il volgo, [è] la plebe che per lo più non ha lettere; i nobili gentiluomini, che rattenuti dalla commodità non si profondano negli studi, e sogliono esser mediocrementemente letterati, & i letterati, che sopra i libri consumano gli anni loro; il gusto di ciascuno di questi è differente dagli altri, e però essendo impossibile il satisfare a tutti egualmente, insegna Aristotele all’Epico Poeta, che s’ingegni di piacere a i nobili, e mediocrementemente letterati, perche il mezzo communica con gli estremi; e pertanto così facendo, piacerà non solo a i mediocri, ma forse a qualche dotto, & a qualche ignorante ancora.” Rospigliosi 1628, 489.
83. This congregation of learned men was called the purple swans. See Beldon Scott 1991, 194; Frangenberg 2003, 137.
85. British Library, 795.b.12,(1.). I am grateful to Hannah Graves at the British Library’s Corporate Archive collections for her help in researching this volume.
Fig. 11. A copy of Manilli’s Villa Borghese from the collection of George III.
© British Library Board, 171.m.19.
It would seem likely that the Villa Borghese’s renown as among the greatest Roman estates at the onset of the Grand Tour, years after Scipione Borghese’s passing, owed in part to Manilli’s guidebook. We find evidence for this in the account of Richard Lassels, who, in his posthumously published *Voyage to Italy* of 1670 deems the Pincian estate “the greatest Villa that’s about Rome”. To Lassels, the superiority of the villa rests on its copiousness and the variety of its features, from statues to fish ponds, as he lists the full range of attributes accounted for by Manilli, reiterating the guidebooks vocabulary of plenty, while explicitly referring other travellers to consult it:

86. Lassels 1670, 171. Italics in the original. By “greatest” Lassels here means largest, but this appears to also entail most praiseworthy. By comparison, his description of the Villa Medici is, shorter, far more dispassionate, and certainly less specific. Lassels 1670, 175–176.

For here you have a store of walks, both open and close, fish ponds, vast cages for birds, thickets of trees, store of fountains, a park of deer, a world of fruit trees, statues of all sizes, banqueting places, Grottos, wetting sports, and a stately palace adorned with so many rare statues & pictures, that their names make a book in octavo, which I refer you to.87

Indeed, the guidebook enjoyed a somewhat widespread readership, evident from the number of copies appearing in British collections, and it would seem likely that the book contributed to shaping the emerging English country house, with a copy notably appearing in King George III’s library (Fig. 11).88

However, the book also enjoyed an afterlife in later iterations. When writing a new guidebook for the villa, published 50 years later, in 1700, Domenico Montelatici relied heavily on Manilli’s text.89 An interesting later edition of the guidebook appeared with Dutch philologist Sigebert Haverkamp’s Latin translation, published at Leyden by Pieter van der Aa in the second decade of the eighteenth century (Fig. 12).90 In addition to his exhaustive translation, Haverkamp added an introduction, a synopsis and an index of names and notable artefacts contained in the villa, now with a greater emphasis on sculpture.91 This edition also featured a somewhat curious reworking of Barrière’s etching of Hercules and Fame, in which the unknown artist expanded the former’s motif to either side in order to create a landscape format, transporting the figures from inside the Borghese gardens to a barren land outside of it. Here, the Alps figure in the left background, beyond which lay the oltremontane (Fig. 13).

87. Lassels 1670, 171.
88. The King George volume at the British Library, 171.m.19, features a binding with the King’s coat of arms and is extensively annotated in French and English, appearing to have been used as a language textbook of sorts. A Bodleian copy, Bod 8° K 92 Linc, was signed “S.T. Stile of Wateringbury in Kent, June the 25”, with a quote from Thomas Southerne’s play ‘Oroonoko’ (premiered 1696) on the lower pastedown: “This spot of ground is more to me than t[h]e extended plains of my great father[s] kingdoms here I will reinge [sic.] in joys to power unknown my love is my empier [sic.] your heart’s my throne.” My thanks are due to Jo Maddocks at the Bodleian Library for researching the details of this volume.
89. Montelatici 1700. Schudt 1105.
90. Manilli 1723. Haverkamp’s name is variously spelled Siewert, Sijvert etc.
91. Haverkamp’s introduction lists the by now canonical sculptures from the Borghese collection, and references the many engravings of these by Perrière, De Rossi and others. Manilli 1723, V–VII.
Fig. 13. Unknown artist, copy of the etching appearing in Manilli’s *Villa Borghese* (1650), from the Haverkamp 1723 edition of the guidebook.

**Bibliography**


Fossati-Bellani, L. V. 1957. I libri di viaggio e le guide della raccolta Luigi Vittorio Fossati-Bellani: Catalogo descrittivo, Rome


Jones, P. M. 2017. Altarpieces and Their Viewers in the Churches of Rome from Caravaggio to Guido Reni, Aldershot.


Lassels, R. 1670. The voyage of Italy: or a compleat journey through Italy, Paris.


Leto, G. P. 1500. Romanæ historiæ compendium ab interitu Gordiani Iunioris usque ad Iustinum III, Venice.


Mauro, L. 1562. Le antichità della città di Roma brevissimamente raccolte da chiunque ne ha scritto è antico è moderno, Venice.
