Pursuing the Perspective. Conflicts and Accidents in the *Gran Palazzo degli Eccellentissimi Borghesi a Ripetta*

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Abstract

Palazzo Borghese a Ripetta is an example of how architecture can be distilled over centuries of projects and repentances, of additions and transformations driven by changing and contradictory political and economic interests. At the beginning of the 17th century, the building became a battlefield between renovation and conservation forces, eventually producing an irregular, strange cembalo-shape palace in which the axial transparency of perspective is replaced by a polycentric montage of events.

Perseguire la prospettiva. Conflitti e incidenti nel Gran Palazzo degli Eccellentissimi Borghesi a Ripetta

Palazzo Borghese alla Ripetta è un esempio di come l'architettura possa essere distillata in secoli di progetti e pentimenti, di integrazioni e trasformazioni guidate da mutevoli e contraddittori interessi politici ed economici. All'inizio del Seicento, l'edificio divenne un campo di battaglia tra le forze del rinnovamento e quelle della conservazione, che generò un palazzo a forma di cembalo eccentrico e irregolare, in cui la trasparenza assiale della prospettiva è sostituita da un policentrico montaggio di eventi spaziali.

Keywords: Palazzo Borghese, Perspective Analysis, Reconstruction.
            Palazzo Borghese, analisi prospettica, ricostruzione.

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1 | Introduction

«A Royal Palace should be sited in the city center, should be of easy access, and should be gracefully decorated, elegant, and refined, rather than ostentatious» [Alberti 1988, 121].

«All the architecture is played between the elaboration of a form – with the organization of the parts that perform functional tasks – and its planting to the ground [...]. I would like to make you understand that our planning effort extends between two moments: between the moment of abstraction, almost mental, of the form and the moment of the collision of that form with the site, with the topographic constraints» [Venezia 2011, 76].

At the end of the 15th century, the type of the Roman courtyard palace was developed by joining antiquarian suggestions and prototypes from Florence and Urbino to the model of the cardinal palace with a corner tower [Bruschi 1989]. Like Cardinal Riario's Palazzo della Cancelleria, the palatine church was assimilated behind a uniform stone facade, useful to consecrate the residence itself [Fagiolo 2012]; the corner tower was declined in the *altana* and an upper loggia was opened to look at the landscape in the distance; the main staircase leading to the *piano nobile* was placed under the *portico*; the courtyard, which was generally square and symmetrical to the vaulted vestibule, became the heart of the palace and was occasionally connected to a secret garden equipped with statues, fountains, nymphaeums and grottos. In the 1520s, Antonio da Sangallo the Younger's Palazzo Farnese set the architectural standard

of the *palatium* in Rome, becoming an icon of power. In the wake of Vitruvius and Leon Battista Alberti, a palace had to be closed at the ground floor, amplifying the liminal value of the monumental gate as well the private role of the square courtyard [Fantoni 2002, 100] while its façade, geometric shape and interior organization were to express magnificence, order, and, indirectly, the owner's political and economic power. Most of the ambitious Roman families, which were displeased with a passive adaptation to a site, often pursued also «a policy of active change, first of their own contours and then of the larger environment» [Connors 1989, 223] to exhibit their prominence and to enhance the formal qualities of their palaces. Palazzo Farnese itself was the fulcrum of an extensive urban redefinition and regularization project. Michelangelo is supposed to have planned an astonishing perspective sequence composed by: the axial via dei Baullari, which had been rectified and extended to became a section of the via Papalis [Cafà 2010]; the rectangular square with the two fountains made of ancient granite stone basins; the Vitruvian vestibule; the three-order cubic courtyard; the rear garden, and an unbuilt bridge designed to cross the Tiber and connect the palace with another garden by the villa Chigi-Farnesina and the Mons Janus beyond them. According to Vasari, standing «at the main portal of the palace toward the Campo di Fiori, one might see at a glance the court, the fountain, the via Giulia, the bridge, and the beauties of the other garden terminating at the other portal giving onto the Strada di Trastevere» [Ackerman 1986, 188].

Although Michelangelo's project was only partially fulfilled, the regular form of Palazzo Farnese testifies of a linear constructive process and a power able to guide it through the decades. On the contrary, Palazzo Borghese in Campus Martius, formally the urban *Reggia* of Pope Paolo III, results of decades of designs and repentances, of unifications and transformations driven by changing and contradictory political and economic interests.

The palace is close to the Tiber, in a trapezoidal area delimited by via Ripetta, via dell'Arancio, via Monte d'Oro and via Fontanella Borghese. Its historical and constructive events are closely related not only to the different families that have driven the transformations – in particular, the nearby palace of the Grand Duke of Tuscany in piazza Firenze – but also to the morphological features of the site, the activities of the port of Ripetta, the urban enterprises promoted by different popes, and the accomplishments of the religious communities and neighboring confraternities, such as the Hospital of San Giacomo degli Incurabili, the Confraternity of San Rocco, the Communities of the Illyrians (Schiavoni or Croats), and of Lombards [Fregna - Polito 1973; Zanchettin 2001; Simoncini 2007].

The complex development of the area known as *Hortacci* was enquired by Hibbard's [1962] fundamental study, Waddy [1990], Fumagalli [1994], and Cavazza [2003]. Their studies demonstrate that since the second half of the 16th century, the area was dominated by the palace of Rodrigo Borgia, which first passed to Ascanio Sforza (and was also inhabited by Felice della Rovere, a powerful illegitimate daughter of Julius II) and then to Maddalena Cibo, Leo X's sister, and her sons. In addition to via della Lupa, which descended towards the river and was later absorbed by piazza Borghese, the site of the future Palazzo Borghese was defined by three new straight streets: via Leoniana/Ripetta, opened by Leo X in 1513; via del Melangolo/Arancio, part of Baldassarre Peruzzi's lotting of piazza Monte d'Oro commissioned by Sigismondo Chigi, who had acquired the Cibo's estate, in 1523; and via Trinitatis/Fontanella Borghese in 1548, which around 1610 would become part of the new papal itinerary from the Quirinale to the Vatican [Connors 1989, 19]. Sigismondo's heirs lived in the palace until 1534. They were replaced, in sequence, by: Paolo III Farnese and his nephew Orazio, from 1544 onwards; the Cardinal Giovanni Poggio, who died in

Fig. 1: Rome, Palazzo Borghese seen from via della Lupa (photo by the author).

Fig. 2: Development of construction stages of Palazzo Borghese (drawing by the author). 1. Tiber; 2. via Trinitatis; 3. piazza Monte D'Oro; 4. via del Leone; 5. Borgia/Sforza/Cibo/Chigi's estate; 6. Palazzo Farnese/Poggio; 7. Palazzetto Baschenis; 8. Palazzo of Grand Duke of Tuscany/Medici; 9. Palazzo Del Giglio/Deza; 10. Palazzetto Maffei; 11. Palazzo Borghese; 12. piazza Borghese.
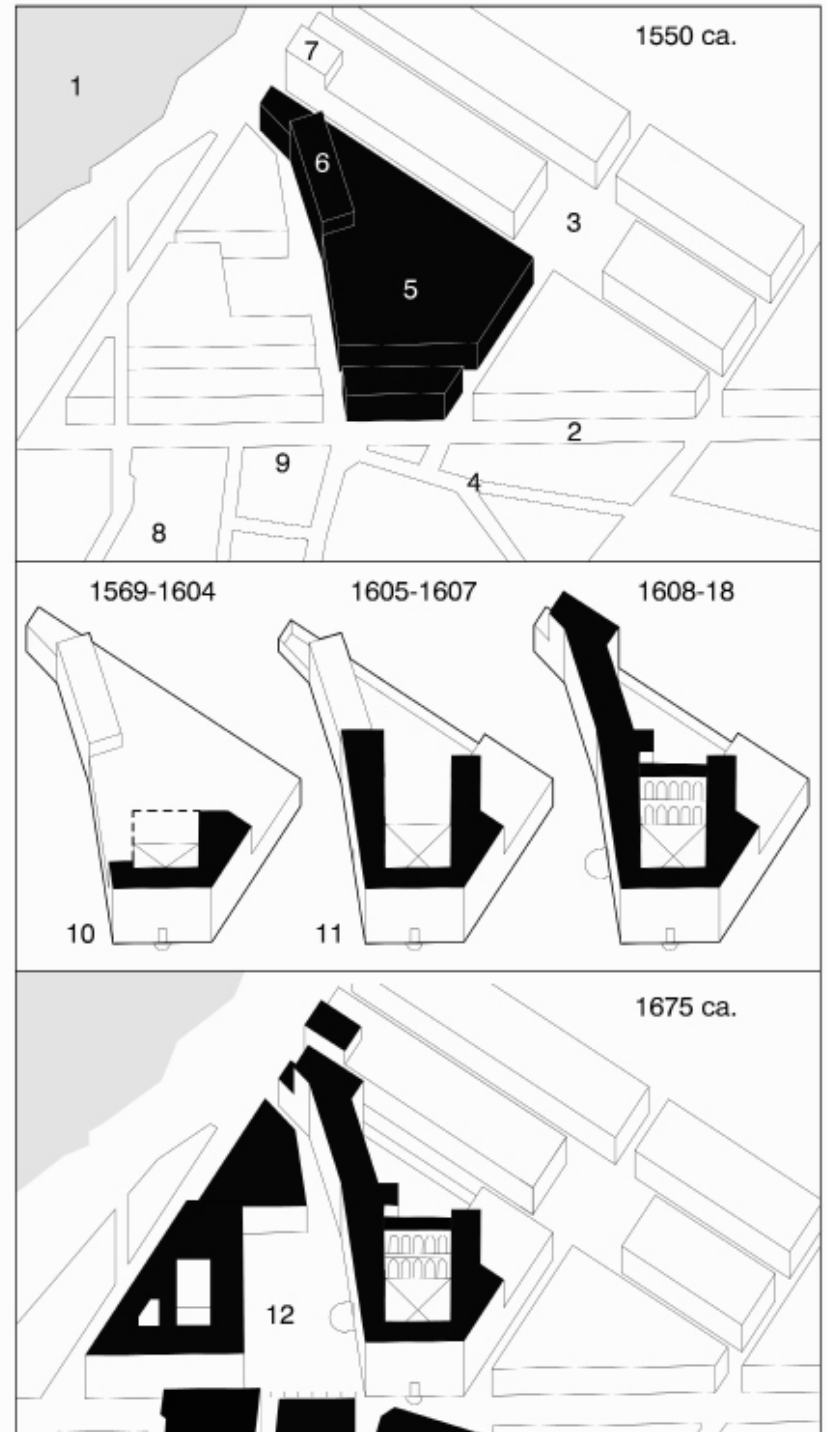
Bologna in 1560; and Tommaso del Giglio, procurator of finances and architectural achievements of the Farnese family. Del Giglio called Jacopo Barozzi da Vignola, the real *deux ex machina* according to Frommel [2013], to reshape his new palace starting with a façade with three stories of nine bays on via Trinitatis. After Vignola's death in 1573, the original arched courtyard on twin columns is continued by Martino Longhi the Elder. The palace was still unfinished when the Spanish cardinal Pedro Deza bought it in 1584. He asked Flaminio Ponzio to add a staircase in the corner of the courtyard and to extend the courtyard loggia towards via Monte d'Oro up to the fifth arch. After Sixtus V failed to aggregate the palace to the hospital and church of 'Schiavoni a Ripetta' in 1589, Palazzo Deza became a sort of luxury hotel that welcomed the emperor's ambassador, the Cardinal Aldobrandini and, above all, the Cardinal Camillo Borghese, whose family from Siena lived nearby, in some houses built in 1587 at Ripetta.

Although the efforts of the Borghese family, the reception of the palace was difficult and controversial, also inspiring fanciful interpretations. At the end of 1970s, Colin Rowe assumed Palazzo Borghese as a sort of contradictory organism that «contrives both to respond to this site and to behave as a representative palace of the Farnese type: but, with the 'perfect' *cortile* now embedded in a volume of highly 'imperfect' and elastic perimeter […] enabled to act as no more than a 'free' response to adjacency» [Rowe - Koetter 1978, 77-78]. Actually, the irregularities, the oddities, and the controversial cembalo-shape, which provoked the disfavor of 18th century critics, resulted mostly of a few specific decisions and events occurred in rather short period at the beginning of 17thcentury, after Camillo Borghese purchased it.

This article originates from hours of direct observations and conjectures from the windows of the nearby Faculty of Architecture as a student; develops from my direct involvement, together with Prof. Daniela Fondi, in the refurbishment design of piazza Borghese from 2007 to 2010 [Colonnese 2010]; and was enriched by the visit and the direct survey of a part of the interiors during the restoration activities directed by Mario and Fabio Baldini [1999], whom I sincerely thank. In particular, it focuses on the analyses and reconstructions of the projects depicted in two frescos in the Vatican apartments, generally disregarded by the scholars, and of a large plan of the first-floor at the Albertina Museum in Vienna. Compared with the documents describing the Pope's intents and the public reception of the building itself, they allow to elucidate a crucial phase of the conflict between the driving idea of a regular Renaissance palace and the empiric respond to the political and economic contingencies, exploited mainly through a policy of expansion, acquisition, and transformation of urban neighbors.

2 | The Image of the Building in Two Vatican Frescos

The cardinal Camillo Borghese from Siena bought the palace on February 14th, 1605, from the heirs of Pedro Deza, a Spanish cardinal died in 1600. Three months later, Camillo was elected Pope with the name of Paolo V and gave the unfinished palace to his brothers, with the task of transforming it into an 'imperial palace'. The inner courtyard passed from a square to a rectangular scheme with five by seven arches; the western wing was continued on the future Piazza Borghese, arriving first at nine and then at thirteen bays. When a second gateway was added in the middle of this sort of second façade, Leon Battista Alberti's [1968, V, 340] idea that the house is expected to have only one entrance was definitely denied and the palace's development took an alternative, ambiguous development.

Around 1607, Paolo V commissioned two frescoes of the palace in Campus Martius to be painted onto the lunettes of the Papal Representative Apartment in the Vatican Palaces, together with the

other Borghese's works. The frescoes show two opposing views of the building: the façade on Via Trinitatis and the courtyard seen from the garden. Both the views present an idealized form of the building with several dimensional and design inconsistencies between the views and concerning with the actual urban configuration. The image of the palace seems to negotiate the heritage of the original Vignolesque project for Tommaso Del Giglio, procurator of finances and architectural achievements of the Farnese family, with the actual palace being built under the supervision of Flaminio Ponzio, till 1613, and then of Jan Van Zanten (Giovanni Vasanzio) together with Carlo Maderno.

Such historical imagery might be inaccurate as the anonymous artist might have painted either from a verbal description rather than a personal knowledge of the site; likely, the artist intended to create a sort of visual hyperbole, as the palace and site are depicted in an idealized form. This was a quite common attitude. For example, some years later, the obscure Orazio Busini took inspiration from emphatic axiality, symmetry, and uniformity of Palazzo Farnese to engrave an idealized plan of Palazzo Barberini inscribed in a square as «a panegyric in the language of architecture tailored to the perceived inclinations of a potential Barberini patron» [Beldon Scott - Connors 1995, 219], which indirectly confirms the long-lasting influence of Sangallo's masterpiece. Anyway, the analyses reveal elements that allows to consider these frescoes as a compromise between previous designs and the project actually being executed.

2.1 The façade and the piazza

The first view (in figure 3, above) shows the palace as a trapezoidal, monolithic, and symmetrical prism with a central door and a quadrangular square before. It is surrounded by smaller buildings. The virtual beholder is placed on the axis of the entrance on via Trinitatis. Both sides of the building are visible and present the same grade of foreshortening. The right wing of the building extends to the whole via Monte d'Oro and, except for the tower, replicates the other on the future Piazza Borghese, with thirteen bays and a central gateway.

A sort of *temenos* marked by a fence, the raised rectangular piazza breaks the continuity of via Trinitatis, imposing itself as a *sagrato* at the same level of the interior courtyard. It may respond to the altimetric difference that existed between via Trinitatis and the vestibule, which was eventually solved by a circular *cordonata*. The stone balustrade with statues upon recalls the piazza built in the same years in front of the Villa Pinciana, today Galleria Borghese. The cross of stairs with the central fountain emphasizes the sacredness of the palatine threshold, giving the palace a role of urban center.

A geometric analysis has confirmed that the façade, which is proportioned according to a golden rectangle, reproduces the built one. A perspective analysis has allowed to measure the depicted space. A first geometric horizon line is placed by the upper frame of the third-floor windows and rules the elements in the lower part of the composition. The side fronts of the palace converge instead to vanishing points placed on a second lower horizon line which is located near the windows of the second level, practically half of the total height of building. The painter used vanishing points placed on two different horizon lines to ensure, at the same time, the visibility of the piazza and to give a monumental character of the building by depicting it 'from below'. The perspective setting produces a horizontal symmetry between the lines of the upper eaves and the ground. This stratagem gives the painted architecture an abstract quality that can be generally found in the illustrations of architectural and perspective treatises.

A perspective rectification has been made by considering the piazza first as a square and then as a rectangle with the statues placed in the nodes of a square grid. These two hypotheses, combined with the presence of two different horizons, led the author to explore several configurations. As the

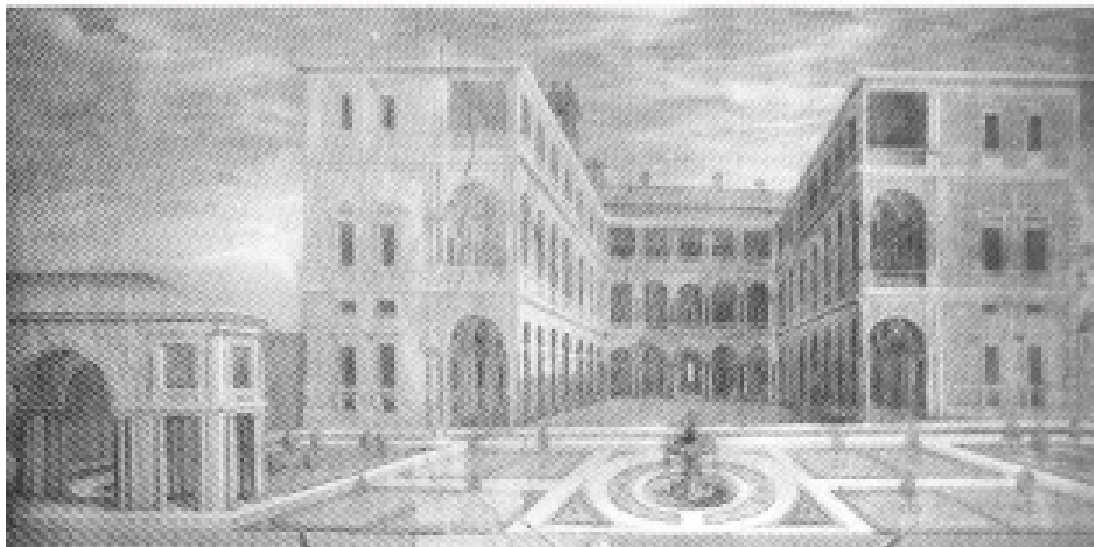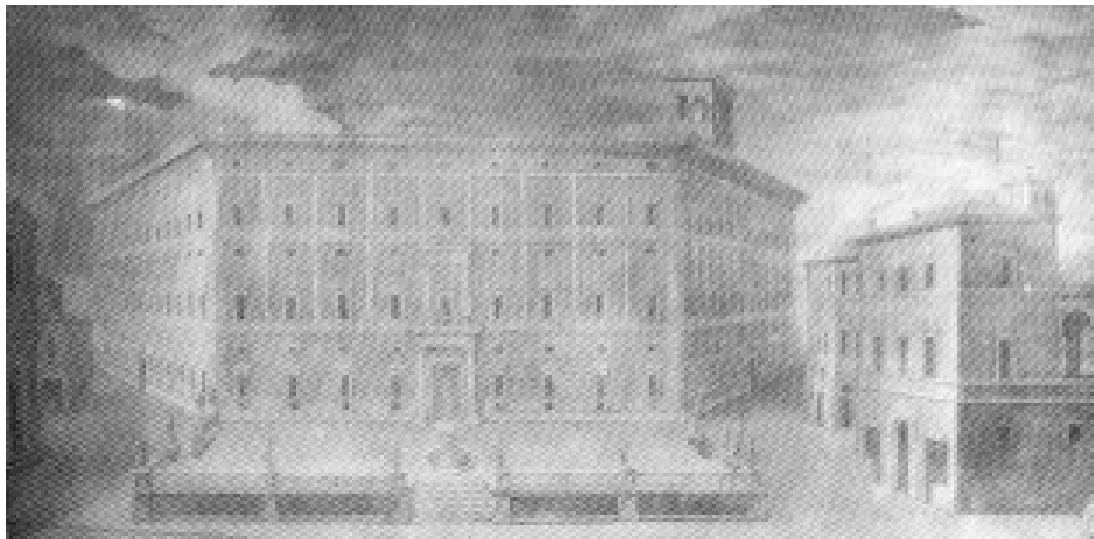Fig. 3: Palazzo Borghese (above) and the Courtyard of Palazzo Borghese (below). Rome, Papal Representative Apartment in the Vatican Palaces, 1607 ca. (Fumagalli 1994, 32).

Fig. 4: Palazzo Borghese seen from via Trinitatis/Borghese. Digital reconstruction of the rectangular square in via Trinitatis after perspectival restitution of the fresco. Balustrades and statues are taken from the Casino Pinciano (photomontage by the author).

frescoes show an attitude to idealize and consider the delineation of plan and elevation as two distinct operations, the piazza is presumed to have been designed with a rectangular form but then represented as a square, whose diagonals identify the side fronts' vanishing points on the lower horizon.

The perspective rectification has revealed also the 'true form' of the depicted palace. Its trapezoidal plan has sides inclined by 108 degrees with respect to the facade. When compared with the internal angles on piazza Borghese and via Monte d'Oro, which respectively are 102 and 122 degrees wide, this angle appears to be a compromise (and certainly a smaller angle would make rendering the windows on the shortened fronts more complicated). By assuming the façade is about 41 meters long, the sides result to be about 65 meters long, only three meters longer than the actual size of the wing on piazza Borghese. This is a negligible error when considering the approximations of this graphic operation, based on digital pictures of the frescoes.

As the painting closely reflects the general shape of the palace, the painter probably followed the indications of a still fairly regular project. Some discrepancies concerning with the built façade, such as the rustication which is visible only at the ground floor and in the corners of the upper levels, could derive from a previous project. The choice of an angle of about 108 degrees, which is also the internal angle of a regular pentagon, evokes the image of the Palazzo Farnese in Caprarola, whose façade is as long as Palazzo Borghese's.

2.2 The courtyard and the garden

The second fresco shows an even more idealized situation. The courtyard with loggias on three orders is open to the garden. The two wings appear to be as long as the courtyard. Two lower walls border the garden, which is divided by square parterres and enriched by a central fountain and a casino in the foreground (in figure 3, below). Some details of the palace faithfully respect the actual building, such as the discontinuity between the pitch above the façade and that of the loggia; others seem to be linked with either solutions specifically developed for the fresco or previous design stages, such as the lack of the fourth side of the portico and the evident similarities between the shorter fronts and the facades of Palazzo Farnese in Piacenza.

A geometric analysis has revealed some parts of the palace were adapted to fit specific geometric schemes, such the front elevation of the loggia which is inscribed into a square. The perspective analysis has revealed the existence of a single perspective horizon line placed by the ground-floor windowsills and a central main vanishing point placed on it by the main door open to via Trinitatis. The perspective restitution has revealed that all of the lines converge to a single vanishing point. The thickness of the two wings, which is much lesser than real, fosters the idea of a very regular building. The casino is a sort of triumphal arch, perhaps placed in order to fill the horizontal format of the fresco and make the building look even more monumental. It certainly resulted of a design chronologically closer to the depicting of the fresco. In particular, the solution of the central arch on pairs of free columns adjacent to a square pillar, in addition to mentioning the courtyard theme of the palace, shows similarities with other buildings commissioned by Scipione Borghese and designed by Van Zanten with the help of Maderno: for example, the Casino Aurora in the gardens of Quirinale or the facade of the church of San Sebastiano, both of them clearly inspired by Bartolomeo Ammannati's Casino of Villa Medici [Antinori 1995]. The depicted casino was possibly designed for this garden, in a version in which Palazzo Borghese probably would occupy the whole site up to piazza Monte d'Oro, or for some location near Villa Borghese. Moreover, the casino's size is also compatible with the front on via Ripetta and it could even be an early design for the future loggia on the Tiber.

Fig. 5: Left: Trapezoidal plan of Palazzo Borghese (black) after the perspectival restitution of the fresco overlapped onto a regular pentagon (white line) and the actual plan (light gray); right: Combination of the two plans after perspective rectification of frescoes (drawing by the author).
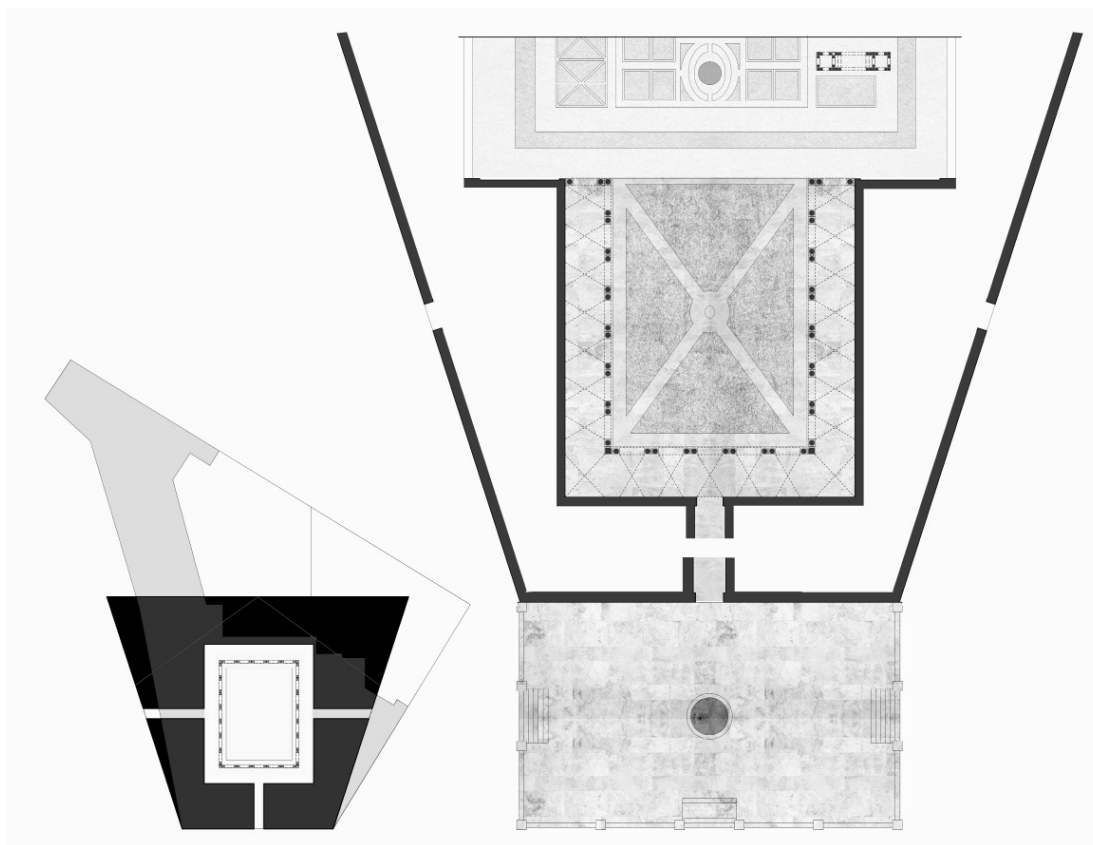
3 | The Albertina Plan

In 1607, probably during the very making of the frescoes, Enea Orlandini definitively abandoned the adjacent Palazzo Farnese-Poggio and the Borghese family could acquire it. Instead of demolishing it, they decided to keep it and simply to continue the «Palazzo alla Imperiale, per non dir alla Pontificale, con tutte le habitationi et membri di stanze, che sono necessarie ad un Papa» [Orbaan 1922, 85; Hibbard 1962, 49]. The design of the façade was kept unchanged up to Via Ripetta to cover the old building and make everything uniform. Only a vertical band of rustication marks the passage between the two facades, whose divergence angle is about 6 degrees wide. The courtyard was completed with a double loggia on the garden side, closed by a wall on the ground floor with only a central door to access the secret garden. An oval plan staircase, inspired to Mascherino's *lumaca* in the Quirinale Palace, was built in the garden, at the intersection between the fourth arm of the loggia and the western wing. Anyway, Paolo V was not fulfilled with these works. In October 1608, he complained about the *fabrica*, «da q.le sebene è grand.ma bella et magnifica, in ogni modo non solo la facciata, ma anco molte stanze vengono storte, et del tutto vogliono ne sia stata causa la parsimonia, et l'haver voluto salvare la fabrica vecchia» [Orbaan 1922, 117-118; Hibbard 1962, 53]. He is supposed to be even looking for an alternative site to move his family, which, in the meantime, had grown both in number and status, and expressed requests of increasing complexity.
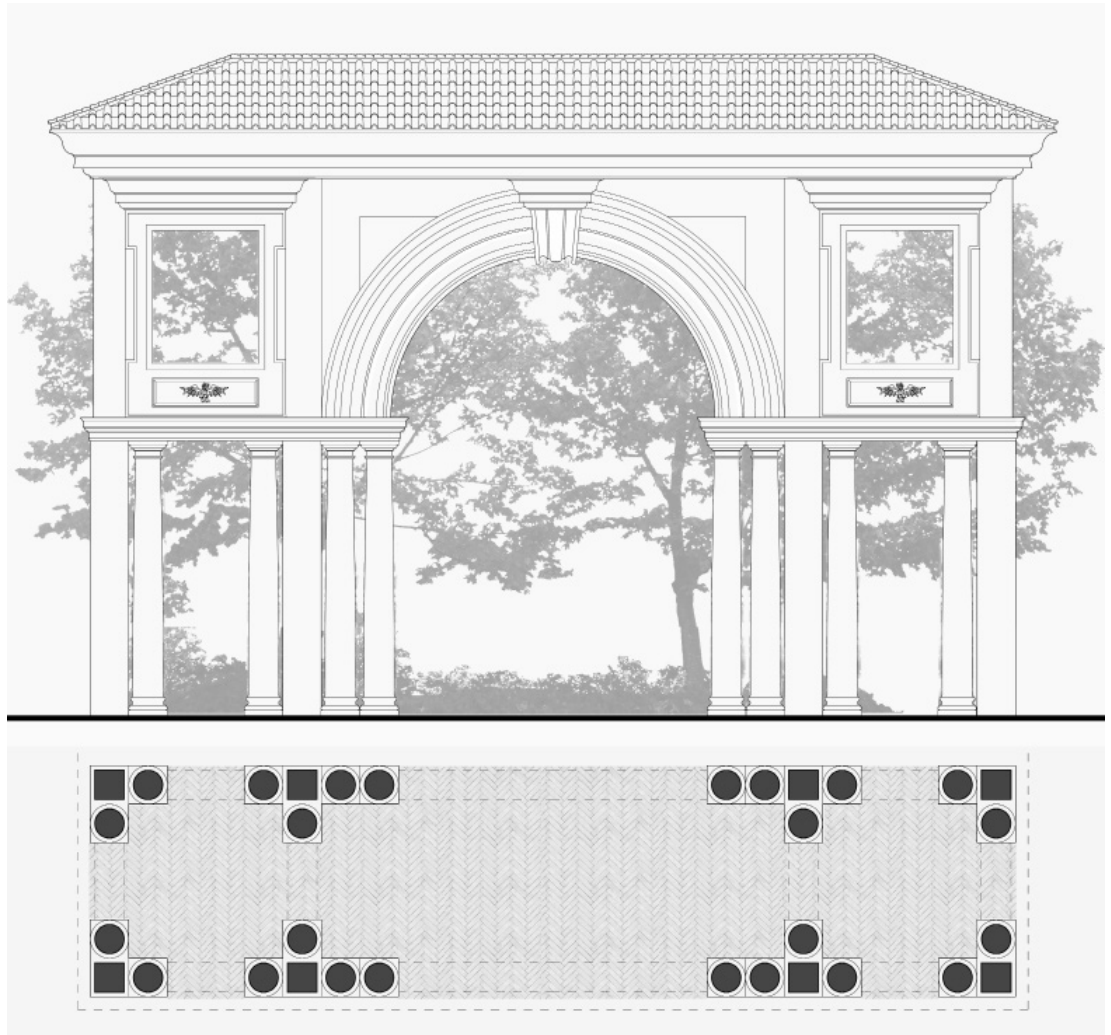
Fig. 6: Plan and elevation of the Casino after perspectival restitution of the fresco (drawing by the author).

Waddy [1990] attributes to the death of his younger brother Giovan Battista in 1609, and to the consequent changes in family needs, the decision to welcome the relatives in the palace in Campus Martius.

A large sheet conserved in Vienna shows the plan of the first floor of the building[1]. It is generally dated to 1611 but it could be anticipated to 1610, when the ambition for a huge, isolated palace was still alive. It records both the status of these works – the parts with the walls filled – and a project of occupation of the entire site. It includes: a suspended garden on via Ripetta with no apparent loggia; the completion of the wing along the whole Via Monte d'Oro; and a long, suspended gallery on via dell'Arancio. The insertion of a third staircase at the new gateway in via Monte d'Oro, as already depicted in the fresco, would have divided the building into three separate apartments, in view of the coming of Marcantonio or Scipione Borghese and their relatives.

[1] Girolamo Rainaldi (Carlo Maderno, Flaminio Ponzio, Jan Van Zanten, Francesco Borromini), plan of Palazzo Borghese, 1611 ca., 51,2 x 74,3 cm. Vienna, Albertina, Zeichnung und Druckgrafik Sammlungen, AZRom 1001.
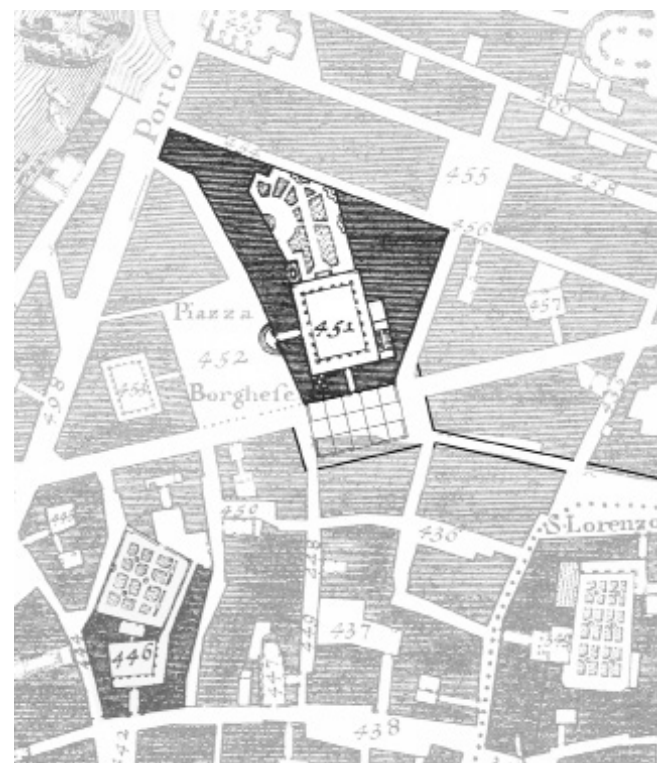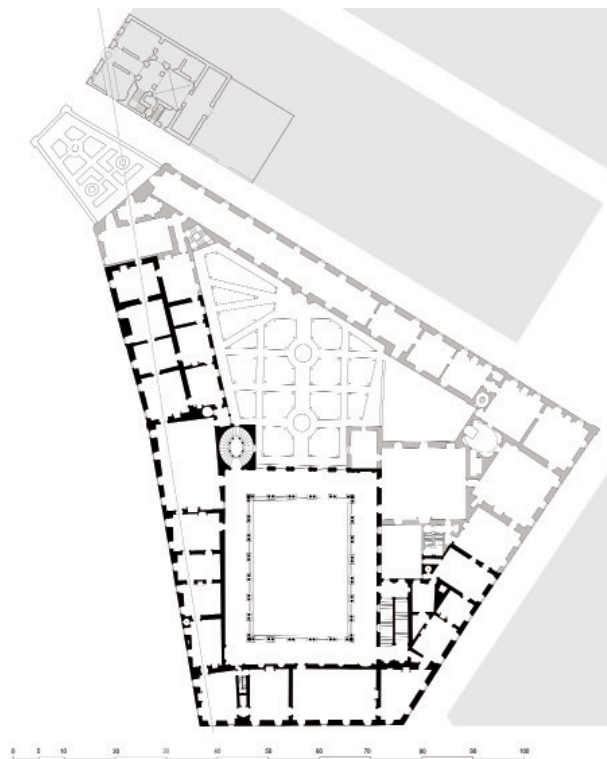
Fig. 7: Plan of first floor of Palazzo Borghese, 1611 ca. Vienna, Albertina, AZRom1001. This large design (51,2 x 74,3 cm) has been alternatively attributed to Girolamo Rainaldi, Carlo Maderno, Flaminio Ponzio, and Jan Van Zanten while Francesco Borromini is supposed to be the draftsman.

Fig. 8: Plan of first floor of Palazzo Borghese after the Albertina sheet (drawing by the author). Black filled walls mark the existing palace while gray filled walls identify the planned extension. The shape of surroundings in light gray as well the plan of first floor of Palazzetto Baschenis have been added by the author.

Fig. 9: Palazzo Borghese with the rectangular square along via Trinitatis, with the partial cut of Palazzetto Maffei-Borghese and hypothetic trajectory of the street to via del Corso and via Frattina Below, the Palace of the Grand Duke of Tuscany (drawing by the author on G.B. Nolli's Plan of Rome, 1748).

The plan, which has been redrawn and integrated with the nearby palace to show the complete perspective enfilade and evaluate the tested solutions, reveals the difficulty of achieving regular and well-lit rooms, having to consider at least six different alignments – the courtyard and the external walls – and trying to make the most of the interstices for service stairs and closets. In the difficult interlocking of quadrangular rooms, the architect adopted geometries that empirically orchestrate the windows jambs, the vaults deformation, the projections of the internal partitions and regularize the rooms by differentiated enlargements of the external walls. At the same time, the plan reveals a great attention to the geometric system of the rectangular courtyard. Perpendicular to the via Trinitatis, it presents two staircases in the opposite corners and two vestibules on the two orthogonal axes. The fictitious regularity of the crystalline vestibule-courtyard system [Borie - Micheloni - Pinon 2006], which Sebastiano Serlio [1619] had stated as the fundamental core of the palace plans for *Siti di diverse forme fuori squadro*, is also extended to the garden, with the design of the parterres and another tower symmetrical to the one with the oval staircase. The interiors follow the orientation of the courtyard but, as one moves away from the lesser façade, they gradually assume the orientation of the wings on piazza Borghese and via Monte d'Oro, emphasizing the geometric autonomy of the different sections and apartments.

The plan also reveals an optical stratagem to pursue at least an apparent order in the interior rooms. On the first floor of the long wing, there is an enfilade that starts ideally from the window of the corner room on via Trinitatis and ends in the central window of the loggia towards Ripetta. It cuts throughout the full sequence of 13 rooms, probably focusing on a tree of the suspended garden-terrace. Its axis follows a trajectory that is parallel to the first part of the wing but inevitably diverges by six degrees from the wall of the old Palazzo Farnese-Poggio. Although causing a few problems in the arrangement of fireplaces, furnishings and decorative motifs of the rooms, it was considered a necessary accessory to provide the visitors with at least an illusory, perspective unity of most of the rooms at the *piano nobile*.

In July 1610, Paolo V gave a new impulse to the works. He ordered to open a road connecting the palace to via del Corso before via Frattina; to buy the buildings on the other side of the upcoming Piazza Borghese, «quelle casette rincontro al palazzo et farci qualche bello edificio […] et l'altra casa dove habita Monsignor Varella con tutta l'isola per farvi un palazotto dove si possa retirare Il Signor Francesco con la moglie, quando Sua Santità volesse stare qualche giorno nel Palazzo grande» [Orbaan 1922, 175-176; Hibbard 1962, 54]; and to extend the palace to Via Ripetta and make a stable there. As a consequence of these commands, Flaminio Ponzio, and later Jan Van Zanten and Carlo Maderno, tried with no success to widen and regulate via del Leone, connecting the shorter façade of the palace to San Lorenzo in Lucina and via Frattina beyond the Corso [Salvagni 2018, 215]. Paolo V also had bought and demolished eight blocks owned by the Hospital of San Giacomo to widen the space in front of the long wing; brought the palace to incorporate the so-called 'wood courtyard'; and asked his architects to complete the front on via Ripetta with an elegant loggia on two orders onto a high terrace with a rusticated façade. Borghese family also bought the building inhabited by Agostino Maffei from the 'frati di Minerva' in front of the façade on via Trinitatis, «affinché altri non vi si annidi et vi fabrichi ad emulazione del lor palazzo che li è di rincontro» [Orbaan 1922, 177]. This acquisition was probably propaedeutic to the opening of the rectangular square depicted in the fresco as it would involve the partial demolition of that building, too.

As the raised and walled piazza was never made, Paolo V decided to focus on the other one, the future Piazza Borghese and to pursue rather a policy of complementary estate acquisitions and redefinition of the urban surroundings, definitely abandoning the idea of a single palace as well contaminating it

with typological parts. A unitary and linear development of the palazzo was shattered by the family organization itself which eventually parceled the building. The increasing functional demands of the family's and its larger and larger court were fulfilled with a policy of buildings acquisitions. This practice, which only partially was finalized to redefine the urban surroundings, indirectly graduated the relationship between the core of the building and the outer city in a very peculiar way and contributed to the typological contamination of the palace itself, converting it into a sort of an urban hub around a system of squares.

4 | From Palatium to Palaces around a Piazza

In his *Pianta di Roma*, Matthaus Greuter includes an unusual, detailed bird's eye view of Palazzo Borghese, resembling the style of Etienne Duperac and Jacques Lemercier's views. Greuter depicted the building according to the same point of view of his map, focusing on the loggia in via Ripetta, revealing the square parterre of the suspended garden and exalting the folding of the long wing. Curiously the number of courtyard arches is wrong, since Greuter seems to have added one more for each side, a mistake visible also in the later edition of Pierre Mortier [Bleau 1704-1705]. This view testifies that in 1618 the palace was mostly completed in all its effective extension and organization. The view is also the last picture of the building as a solid and autonomous block out of the urban context, on the wake of Palazzo Farnese. Soon after, the focus shifted from the palace to the piazza, which had also the consequence of emphasizing the irregularity of the palace itself.

After demolishing several houses, the Borghese opened their *piazza* in 1610 while completed the palace of the family around 1616. Marcantonio, son of Giovanni Battista, moved in the palace of family in 1619 and, on the death of Paolo V, Scipione Borghese moved into the main palace and had the new piazza closed with short columns and chains to protect it from the antagonist sights of the Grand Duke of Tuscany [Connors 1989].

The opening of the piazza amplified the ambiguity between the two gateways as well the visibility of the long, bent wing built upon the trace of the old via della Lupa. The problematic reception of the palace is already testified by a 17th century guide which emphasize the size and richness of the palace but mention only the courtyard with its 100 columns, the interior «ornamenti Imperiali» and pieces from the gorgeous art collection, stating that «che più facilmente si potria giudicare un Castello, che Palazzo» [Mari 1628, 146]. While Francesco Borromini [1999, 72] stated the problem of the «facciate storte» was common to almost all the palaces implanted in the center of the city, Francesco Milizia [1768, II, 114] would openly deplore the «strana pianta a cembalo» of the palace. Meanwhile, the piazza becomes the true center of the complex and the protagonist of the commercial pictures: bounded on the left by a portion of the family palace and on the right by the façade on via Trinitatis, it looks like a private urban stage opened on the river behind it which the artist could re-proportionate according to size of the canvas, as in Alessandro Specchi's engravings.

The opening of the *piazza* did not stop the centrifugal attitude of the Borghese family. Despite the size of the palace and the many buildings purchased and transformed to house members of their court, the Borghese family was always looking for a suitable site to build a private chapel. In 1648, they bought the nearby Palazzetto Baschenis, designed in the 1520s by Baldassarre Peruzzi. They intended to converting it into a church and connecting it with a bridge to the loggia on via Ripetta, nearby the indoor tennis court built in 1613 [Waddy 1990, 54]. Eventually the small palace remained a residential satellite of the Palazzo Borghese but it was involved years later in the works of the Prince Giovanni Battista. In 1671, he commissioned Carlo Rainaldi to design the secret garden according to a radial pattern and to create a new independent gallery on the ground floor, the so-called *Galleria Terrena*
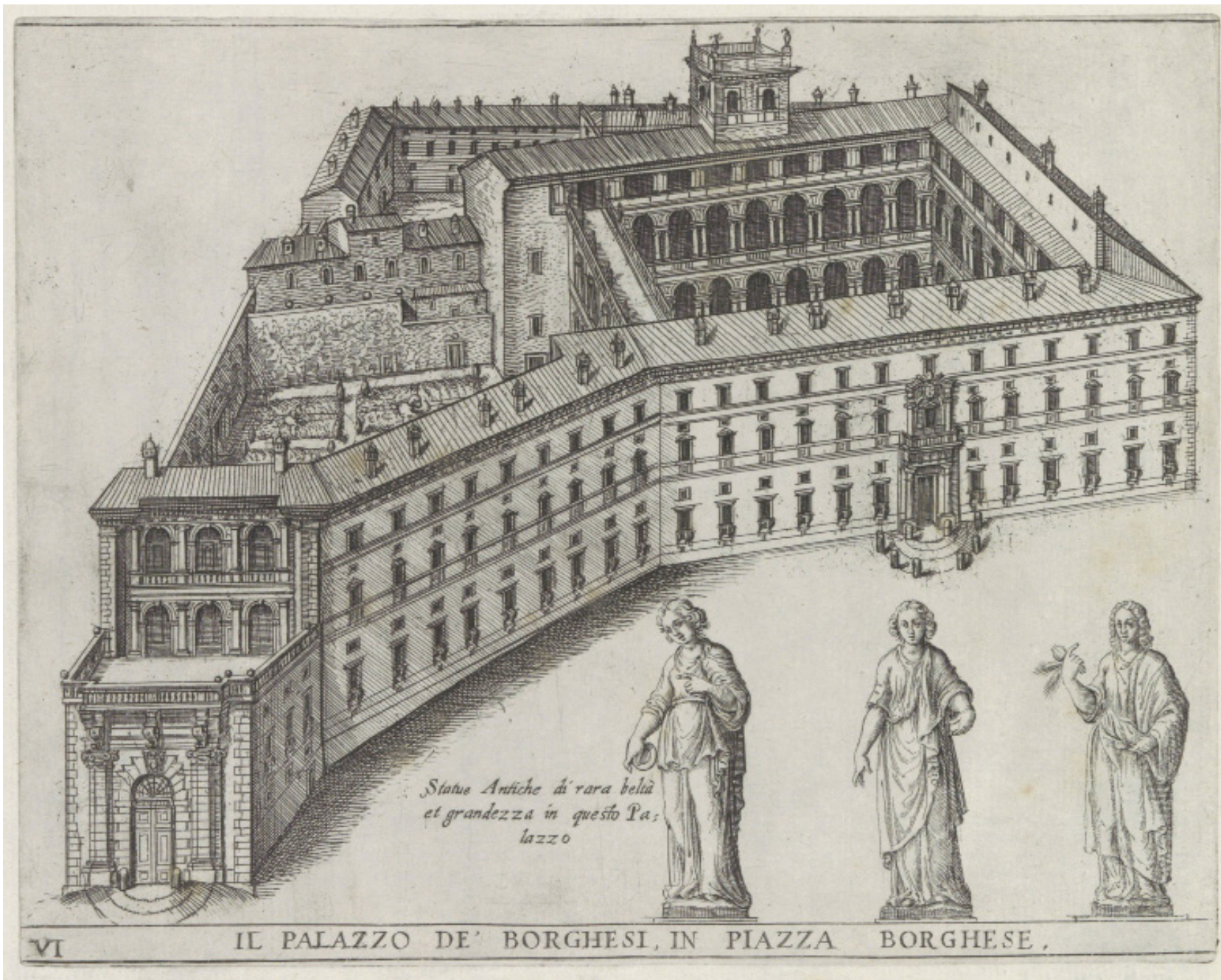
Fig. 10: Matthaus Greuter, Il Palazzo de' Borghesi in
Piazza Borghese, 1618. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (RP-P-
2016-671-11).

which was to became increasingly autonomous in function and accessibility [Waddy 1990, 59]. Almost responding to the success of Borromini and Giovanni Maria da Bitonto's solid perspective in Palazzo Spada, Rainaldi traced a new, actual enfilade just below that at the first floor [Phani 1988]. It was accessible from the vestibule of piazza Borghese and, through appropriate corresponding openings, it bypassed via dell'Arancio and penetrated through the corner room of the old Palazzetto Baschenis, whose façade was partially reshaped. The perspective ended with a fountain placed on its façade, right above the new gateway, and the river landscape on the background. This second *Canocchiale prospettico* confirms the importance of making the interiors transparent and of visually appropriating of the city outside. In particular, it afforded the river landscape, meticulously framed, to became part of the private collection of the princes, and, at the same time, the gallery ideally to become a part of the city's artistic attractions. Hibbard [1971, 63] noted that the Ripetta wing is the result of the insertion of typical elements of a suburban villa on the front of an urban building facing the river port. The same could be said about the analogy between the raised rectangular square painted in the fresco and the enclosure with statues and fountains around the villa Pinciana. These examples suggest that the palace was somehow «turned inside-out», promoting an «intermingling of indoors and outdoors» [Hibbard 1971, 64]. This is emphasized by contradictory dynamics, such as the gradual privatization of the spaces and buildings around the palace, the interiorizing of the river landscape produced by the perspective enfilade of the apartments, the introduction of indoor sport activities, and the public opening of the *Galleria Terrena* at the end of the 18th century.

5 | Conclusion

In the first decades of 17th century, mostly between 1607 and 1611, a series of choices and episodes readdressed the development of Palazzo Borghese from the Roman idea of *Palatium* embodied by Palazzo Farnese to a sort of hub connecting different buildings and spaces ruled no more by an axial perspective transparency but rather by a polycentric composition of monumental events. Despite the intrinsic inconsistencies, the image of the palace in the two frescoes in Vatican Library immortalizes Paolo V's architects' reception and reformulation of the 'official' project as well the attempt to redefine the whole area according to criteria of symmetry and centrality. In the frenetic oscillation between *conservatio* and *renovatio*, such a prospective became soon a distant memory. The Albertina plan testifies of the very last attempt to orchestrate most of the palatine functions occupying the whole lot and still ensuring geometric order, apparent symmetries, and perspective transparency. The enfilade proposed in the long wing, first at the *piano nobile* and, decades later, at in the *Galleria Terrena* at the ground floor, eventually involving the nearby Palazzetto Baschenis, demonstrates the need to impose the unifying and reassuring power of the perspective within a complex that was gradually stretching and disarticulating. Anyway, the palace gradually lost the geometric relationship with the central courtyard, turned into a polycentric structure expressing the core of the different familiar groups it was addressed to, and then overflew the buildings around it, resulting in an urban system around a system of squares.

Pope's intolerance for the irregularities of the palace found an echo in the critical reception by guides and critics while the 'commercial' representations often present adjustments and censures aimed at orienting and mitigating the effects of its direct experience. While the *Dado Farnese* looks like the mark of an ineluctable power exerted onto a subjugated territory, Palazzo Borghese looks like a montage resulting of a conflict between centripetal, renovating forces and centrifugal, conservative ones. It rather reveals itself as a sort of dignified urban fragment, whose monumental episodes develop a sort of intertextual attitude [Hibbard 1971, 63] that introduce an additional level of relationships between Palazzo Borghese and the city and connote the building as a mirror absorbing, reflecting (and distorting) the city itself.

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