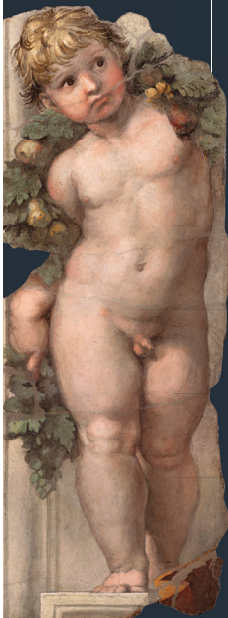


The exhibition **'Raphael and the Antique in Agostino Chigi's Villa'** concludes the celebrations of the 'Triptych of Italian Ingenuity', which began with the exhibition **'Leonardo in Rome. Influences and Legacy'** (2019), and continued in 2021-2022 with the three exhibitions dedicated to Dante: **'Dante's Library'**; **'The Reception of the Comedy from Manuscripts to the Media'**; and **'With Dante's Eyes. Artistic Italy in the Age of the Comedy'**.

This exhibition draws attention to a key – albeit so far poorly investigated – aspect of the Italian Renaissance: while Raphael's turn to classicism in the second decade of the 16th century is well-documented by numerous studies, little attention has been paid to the influence that the important collection of statues, sarcophagi, cameos, reliefs, books, and ancient coins owned by Agostino Chigi might have had on Raphael himself. Chigi and Raphael, who died in April 1520 just five days apart, were very close, both as friends and at work. After Popes Julius II and Leo X, Agostino Chigi was Raphael's most assiduous and munificent sponsor.



Villa Farnesina,
via della Lungara 230,
Rome

Opening hours

Open daily, Tuesday to
Sunday 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Last admission 5 p.m.
Closed Mondays

Open on public holidays

9 and 10 April | 25 April |
2 June

Holiday closures

1 May | 29 June

Prices

€ 16.00 —
Visitors aged from 18 to 65

€ 12.00 —
Visitors over 65, Teachers
with ID card, ICOM, FAI,
and Italian Touring Club
members

€ 10.00 —
Visitors aged from 10 to 18,
students (secondary
schools and universities
with school letter
or ID card)

€ 5.00 —
For each student
belonging to a school
group (max 30 students)
with accompanying
teacher (free admission
for the teacher)

Free —
For children up to 10 years
of age, accompanied by
parents; disabled visitors
with accompanying
person; journalists with
press card, licensed
tourist guides

€ 30 —
Family ticket for parents
with dependent children

€ 3.00 —
Italian | English APP

Credits

Videos —
with the contribution from
Accademia di Belle Arti
of Rome

Augmented reality —
LumenXR

Installations —
Stable Atmospheres by
Stefano Conticelli |
Connection by Nives
Widauer

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ACCADEMIA NAZIONALE DEI LINCEI
Il Trittico dell'Ingegno Italiano 2019 - 2021



Raphael

AND THE ANTIQUE

in the Villa of Agostino Chigi

curated by Alessandro Zuccari and Costanza Barbieri

with the patronage of



in collaboration with



media partner



supported by



Villa Farnesina
6th April —
2nd July 2023

During the construction of this Trastevere Villa and its gardens, Agostino Chigi's antiquarian collection most probably offered an outstanding benchmark to all those artists working to build and decorate the villa. They could challenge themselves against the revered models of classical statuary, assimilating them to produce their own works, driven by their desire to bring about a systematic *restauratio* of ancient Rome.

Statues and frescoes in the Loggia of Cupid and Psyche

The Loggia of Cupid and Psyche was the original entrance to the villa. It is named after the stories taken from Apuleius' *The Golden Ass* and painted by Raphael and his assistants. The story tells about Psyche, who had fallen in love with Eros and had to face four difficult trials before she was allowed to enter Olympus and marry her beloved.

No statues were recorded in the inventory. There were most probably plans, however, to move the statue of Psyche Capitolina – formerly documented in the gardens of Chigi's villa – to the space in the Loggia specially decorated by Raphael to host it, together with a statue of Eros, similar to the Farnese statue on display here.

The Room of the Frieze, Antechamber to the Study of Il Magnifico

This Room hosted the most important collection in the Palace, with eight life-size statues, including a statue of Hercules – Agostino Chigi's favourite hero. The entire north wall is dedicated to him, depicting the Labours of Hercules. There are also Apollo, Diana, and Jupiter, visible in augmented reality, in relation with the painted scenes of Apollo and Marsyas, Diana and Actaeon,

and Jupiter and Semele. The relief of the marine thiasos from Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli – already known in the 16th century – can be compared with the frieze with a similar subject painted by Peruzzi.

Loggia di Galatea, 'Modernly Ancient' Raphael

According to Chigi's biography, not only was the palace filled with statues, but also the gardens. Both Raphael and Baldassarre Peruzzi took the Pan and Daphnis of Palazzo Altemps as models, for example for the satyr's head under the feet of Perseus, in the vault of the Loggia of Galatea. The collections of the gardens of Chigi's villa – to furnish Agostino's residence provided models and offered inspiration for the stories painted by his artists. This was particularly true for Raphael, who by 1514 had already embraced classicism. The fresco of Galatea features an impressive repertoire of motifs from antiquity that were often faithfully reinterpreted by Raphael. A case in point is Doidalsas' *Crouching Venus*, which served as a model for the Nereid – on the left of the Nymph – known through the copy held at Palazzo Altemps. Raphael's *Putto Holding a Garland* from the Accademia di San Luca is for the first time compared to the winged cupids and the Eros holding the reins of Galatea's chariot.

Sala delle Prospettive, Panegyrics on Agostino Chigi's Villa

Chigi's villa was much celebrated by renowned humanists, from Pietro Bembo to Pietro Aretino. Both *De Viridario* by Egidio Gallo and *Suburbanum* by Blosio Palladio are on display together with the first inventory of the house drawn up after Agostino's death, providing a snapshot of the furnishings held in the villa. Chigi's collecting criteria were inspired by the theories of Giovanni Gioviano Pontano as set out in his three treatises on civil virtues entitled *De Splendore*, *De Magnificentia*, and *De Liberalitate*, published in Naples in 1498. Moreover, *De Magnificentia* is the cultural model inspiring Agostino: luxury and ostentation, devoid of any moralistic intent, became positive values. A copy of the Knife-Grinder is on display in this exhibition. This statue had been identified with the augur Attus Navius, who had pitted religious authority against political authority. Later it was identified as the Scythian Slave in the Flaying of Marsyas. On display there are also classical texts by Theocritus and Pindar – printed by Chigi –, as well as by Ovid and Apuleius. These were iconographic sources for the stories painted in the loggias and halls. Five marble heads were placed in the niches, associated with the same deities frescoed by Peruzzi: Diana, Minerva, Juno, Venus, and Apollo.

Gems, Cameos, Medals: Agostino's cabinet

According to the inventories made after Agostino's death, he had owned an astonishing number of cameos, carnelians, loose pearls or pearl jewels, precious stones, rings with sapphires, diamonds, emeralds, and rubies. Following ancient Roman tradition, opulent collections were symbols of affluence and of the greatness of the soul of their wealthy owner. The artists working at Chigi's site were thus able to create their own works directly from ancient models. Raphael's design for the figure of Alexander in the Wedding of Alexander and Roxane is derived from the Antinous Farnese, while the engravings depicting the god Pan are taken from the Pan and Daphnis in Palazzo Altemps. The Venus Wounded by Cupid derives from the Seated Venus in the Vatican Museums. Models from glyptics are the famous 'Sigillum Neronis' for Raphael's Apollo in the School of Athens and for Peruzzi's Apollo of the Loggia of Galatea. The 16th century head of Antinous reminds of the model that inspired Raphael when he designed the statue of Jonah, carved by Lorenzetto for Santa Maria del Popolo.



The Portrait of the Beloved and a Planned Engagement

Sebastiano Luciani had just moved to Rome from Venice when he was commissioned by Agostino to portray Margherita Gonzaga, to whom he had proposed. The painting held at the Uffizi – erroneously known as *La Fornarina* – might be Margherita's portrait, shown here in the version held by Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica-Galleria Corsini. This marriage proposal failed, however, and in 1519, at the request of Leo X, the banker married Francesca Ordeaschi, a young Venetian woman with whom he had been living for five years. Also on display are the effigies of Agostino Chigi and his brother Sigismondo, as well as the commemorative medal from the Bargello Museum with Agostino's own portrait and, on the back side, the allegory of Prudence with her two faces.