CHAPTER 1

Roman Gardens, Representation, and Politics

Over time, the manner in which gardens of Roman upper-class houses were used and conceptualized changed. By the late Republic, if not earlier, elite domestic gardens were expected to conform to the *dignitas* and social standing of the owner. Just as the upper-class *domus* had a strong political and symbolic meaning,[1] so too did the garden spaces, particularly the peristyle garden, found in urban houses and in extra-urban villas.[2] Although initially peristyle gardens belonged to the 'private' portion of the house, where a more restricted group of people than those allowed to access the *fauces* and *atrium* were received,[3] in the later part of the first century BC they had achieved a much more 'public' dimension. This phenomenon is crucial for explaining the boom in the construction, in close proximity to Rome's centre, of suburban residences with large gardens and parks (the *horti*), followed by ambitious architectural projects comprising gardens for the enjoyment of the population at large, such as Pompey's theatre and annexed quadriportico *post scaenam*, which framed a large garden space. The *horti* were a late Republican feature of the *Urbs* that capitalized on Rome's improved water supply and other public works such as flood prevention measures. Therefore, the private *horti* benefited in part from the long-standing political tradition of patronage of public works. These suburban properties of the rich, by using the term '*hortus*' in their name, which in Latin indicated a range of green spaces, but more generically the space where vegetables, fruit, and flowers were grown, made an explicit reference to a specific landscape of production – horticulture. This shows, on the one hand, that vegetable plots and orchards were a main feature of the landscape just outside Rome's gates, and on the other, the desire to align the properties with the ideals of self-sufficiency and the *bonus agricola*. The grand garden projects of L. Licinius Lucullus and

[1] Wiseman 1987. [2] For incorporation also at a lower social level see George 1998.
[3] On the social structure of Roman domestic spaces, see Wallace-Hadrill 1994.

Pompey, discussed later in the chapter, show that in late Republican Rome gardens also forcefully entered the political discourse. This phenomenon in turn explains why, when coupled with the Roman upper classes' idealized view of agricultural practices, the pursuit of horticulture and the creation of new fruit varieties by grafting became highly charged symbolic activities, able to confer 'glory' and future 'remembrance' on the practitioner.[4]

Therefore, although topics addressed in this chapter are not directly connected to horticulture and arboriculture in particular, they are nonetheless fundamental in understanding how, by the early imperial period, the domestication of foreign plants and the creation of new fruit cultivars came to be charged with many symbolic meanings. As explored in Chapter 4, the practical side of fruit cultivation as embodied by grafting was also ideologically emblematic, part of a positive elite discourse on taming nature and achieving fame and future remembrance. Such a viewpoint had developed out of the increasingly prominent and symbolic role gardens and plants in general came to have as embodiment of the qualities and virtues of their (elite) owners, further enhanced by the use of gardens as spaces for political advancement and public commemoration. Thus, in order to understand upper-class direct involvement in horticulture and why it gained great momentum in the early first century AD, we need to look first at gardens as a means of self-representation and, ultimately, at gardens as political tools.

Gardens and Elite Self-Representation

The peristyle garden, which became common in Roman architecture from the second century BC onwards, is the green space within the house that is most often associated, in some fashion or other, with the specific personal image the owner wished to project to an audience of close friends, clients, guests, and rivals. Indeed, domestic gardens could confer status and could be seen as representative of their owner's public image: plants could be chosen to convey specific meaning and references, in the same way as statuary and other art adorning the garden could be thematic and intended to suggest specific conceptual points of reference. An oft-quoted example of intentionally planning a domestic garden space and surrounding architecture as the projection of the owner's culture and pursuit of philosophy

[4] Plin. *HN* 15.49 and discussion in Chapter 4.

concerns Cicero naming the gardens at his villas after the Platonic Academy and the Aristotelian Lyceum.[5]

Cicero's correspondence offers a good example of how the choice of art pieces to be displayed in the garden to complement the vegetation was carefully planned, in order to send specific messages to visitors: while entrusting himself to the good tastes and ability of Atticus to find statues in Greece, he repeatedly specified that he was looking in particular for statuary appropriate for the garden of his villa in Tusculum.[6] The garden in question, which Cicero had named the 'Academia' to allude to his philosophical interests, could not make do with just any nice statue; they had to be suitable for a lecture hall (*ornamenta γυμνασιώδη*), so the subject the sculpture represented was important. Here, the garden space and adjacent rooms had a clear intellectual connotation and were the space in which to engage in productive philosophical and literary *otium*; he famously said that if you have a garden in your library you have everything you need.[7] Indeed, various Ciceronian literary works in the form of dialogues are set in peristyle garden spaces. As he writes in a letter sent to Atticus in 66 BC, a herm with the head of Athena was a most apt ornament for the Academy 'since Hermes is the common emblem of all such places and Minerva special to that one'.[8] More than once Cicero feels the need to stress in his missives that Atticus should look for specific subjects, 'above all for those that will appear to you as suitable to a lecture hall and colonnade' (*et maxime quae tibi gymnasi xystique videbuntur esse*).[9] Cicero was indeed disappointed years later by the purchase made on his behalf of statues of Bacchants and Mars: these pieces were not suitable for a library, nor were they appropriate to Cicero's interests.[10]

Turning to archaeological evidence, often sculptures found in the gardens of rich residences comprised busts of philosophers, poets, or

[5] Cic. *Tusc.* 2.9; *Div.* 1.8; *Fin.* 5.1.1–4; besides Plato and Aristotle, another important philosophical garden 'model' is, of course, the Garden of Epicurus.

[6] See Cic. *Att.* 1.6.2, 1.8.2, 1.9.2.

[7] Cic. *Fam.* 9.4.

[8] Cic. *Att.* 1.4.3: *quod et Hermes commune est omnium et Minerva singulare est insigne eius gymnasi.*

[9] Cicero repeats the exhortation to Atticus in letter 1.9.2: *quicquid eiusdem generis habebis dignum Academia tibi quod videbitur, ne dubitaris mittere et arcae nostrae confidito. genus hoc est voluptatis meae. quae γυμνασιώδη maxime sunt, ea quaero* ('Anything you may have of the same sort which you think suitable for the Academy, don't hesitate to send it and trust my purse. This is how my fancy takes me. Things that are specially suitable for a lecture hall are what I want', trans. D.R. Shackleton Bailey, Loeb edn).

[10] Cic. *Fam.* 7.23.2; see in particular the sentence *ea enim signa ego emere soleo quae ad similitudinem gymnasiorum exornent mihi in palaestra locum* ('My habit is to buy pieces which I can use to decorate a place in my palaestra, in imitation of lecture halls', trans. D.R. Shackleton Bailey, Loeb edn); possibly it is the house on the Palatine that Cicero refers to here.

statesmen. The so-called Villa of Cassius in Tibur, for instance, featured a large peristyle garden embellished with herms of poets and statesmen, an explicit allusion to the qualities the owner wanted to claim, whereas outside Italy the second-century AD villa of the prominent Herodes Atticus at Eua in the Peloponnese featured, in the peristyle garden, unitary mosaic and sculptural decoration, linking the mythological and literary themes of the mosaics with the sculptures placed in front of the porticoes.[11]

However, conveying particular messages via the garden display started with the choice of plants. As I have discussed elsewhere, the diffusion of plane trees in Roman private and public gardens (e.g., Villa S. Marco at Stabiae; the Porticus Pompeiana in Rome, on which see below) was at times not simply motivated by utilitarian and ornamental considerations, but also by intentionally wanting to allude to specific cultural frames of reference.[12] The plane tree, which attracted the disapproval of moralist writers such as Pliny the Elder, had rich foliage and wide-spanning branches, thus providing pleasant shade in summer.[13] It was a good choice for large garden spaces, where it was planted in rows in front of the porticoes (Figure 1.1). Since this tree is not an evergreen, once it had shed its leaves in the autumn, it did not obstruct sunlight in winter, so that covered walkways and adjacent rooms would not be deprived of light. Pliny writes, drawing on Theophrastus, that the plant had been imported into the Ionian Sea, to adorn the tomb of Diomedes on the island of Diomedis, and from there was introduced into Sicily. From Sicily, the plane tree crossed to Rhegium, where Dionysius of Syracuse used it to adorn his palace, and then it steadily spread northwards so that, by Pliny's time, it had reached 'as far as Belgium and actually occupies soil that pays tribute to Rome'.[14]

[11] For example, in the north portico, in front of a mosaic depicting Menelaos holding the body of Patroclos, was a statuary group representing the same subject. The villa finds were in part published in Spyropoulos 2001; for information on this and other villas owned by Herodes Atticus, see Papaioannou 2018. On the sculptural display in villas: Bartman 1991; Neudecker 1988 (especially 65–6, villa of Cassius); Neudecker 1998.

[12] Marzano 2014. The plane tree is mentioned only briefly and in a list with other trees (e.g., laurel, plum, white and black myrtle, Abellan nuts) by Cato, *Agr.* 133 when discussing propagation of plants by layering.

[13] A plant imported from foreign lands and climates only *umbrae gratia*, for the sake of its shade: Plin. *HN* 12.6. However, for all his disapproval of a plant that does not produce any fruit, Pliny does list various medicinal remedies for a range of ailments obtained from the bark, leaves, seeds, and flowers of the plane tree: *HN* 24.39.44–5.

[14] Theophr. *Hist. pl.* 4.5.6; Plin. *HN* 12.6: *ad Morinos usque pervecta ac tributarium etiam detinens solum* . . .

Figure 1.1 Castellammare di Stabia (Italy): Villa S. Marco, view of the lower peristyle garden with pool, replanted plane trees, and casts of ancient root cavities of plane trees. Photo by Bildagentur-online / Universal Images Group Editorial / Getty Images.

While in classical Greece the tree had various associations with Persian rulers and Greek tyrants,[15] most well-educated Romans would have readily associated the plane tree with the Platonic Academy in Athens, where a famous plane tree with gigantic roots existed, and with the Aristotelian Lyceum too. As with Greek gymnasia in general, where plane trees were commonly found, the famous philosophical schools in which discussions and teachings occurred outdoors and in shaded porticoes also sported plane trees. Thus, in the Roman world, a garden shaded by plane trees is often understood as a symbol of famous philosophical schools, which in turn suggested that the intellectual pursuits taking place in the Roman garden were worthy of these schools. Such associations – plane tree and

[15] The Lydian Pythius had gifted a golden plane tree to King Darius; Xerxes, while travelling from Phrygia to Lydia, had adorned a beautiful plane tree with gold: Hdt. 7.27, 7.31; Dionysius the Elder of Syracuse planted plane trees in his residence at Rhegium: Plin. *HN* 12.7; for extraordinarily large and hollow plane trees, providing an unusual setting for the banquets of the powerful, see Plin. *HN* 12.9–10 (Licinius Mucianus dining with 18 companions inside a hollow plane tree in Lycia and Emperor Gaius similarly dining with 15 companions inside a tree on one of his estates in Velletri).

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intellectual activity – are most notable in Cicero's writings, but he is not the only example.[16]

The Symbolic Meaning of Plants

Cicero's own experience on the occasion of his exile in 58 BC offers the best instance of trees in a private garden being taken as a symbol of their owner's public persona. As is well known, Cicero's house in Rome was confiscated and razed to the ground, to be replaced by a shrine to *Libertas* voted by P. Clodius Pulcher;[17] thus, in a *damnatio memoriae* of sorts, Cicero's enemies tried to erase his public image at various levels. Outside of Rome, his villa in Tusculum was pillaged; his neighbour and enemy Gabinius, the consul of 58 BC, had furnishings and other objects removed to adorn his own villa nearby, as if these objects were trophies taken from an enemy in a war. But the pillaging did not limit itself to furniture and other portable items: the trees from Cicero's garden were also dug up and taken away to be planted in Gabinius' garden. Cicero's own account of these actions, to be found in the speech *de domo sua*, presents the audience with a dramatic crescendo meant to instil outrage in the listeners at the actions of both consuls, targeting his house on the Palatine and the villa in Tusculum:

> *cum domus in Palatio, villa in Tusculano, altera ad alterum consulem, transferebatur: scilicet eos consules vocabant: columnae marmoreae ex aedibus meis inspectante populo Romano ad socrum consulis portabantur: in fundum autem vicini consulis non instrumentum aut ornamenta villae, sed etiam arbores transferebantur, cum ipsa villa non praedae cupiditate – quid enim erat praedae? – sed odio et crudelitate funditus everteretur.* (Cic. *de domo* 62)
>
> when my house on the Palatine and my country mansion at Tusculum were being made over one to each of the two consuls (the nominal consuls, that is to say), when the marble columns were being taken down from my apartments and handed over to the consul's mother-in-law, while to the consul's estate adjoining were transferred not merely the furniture or ornaments of the mansion, but even the very trees, while the mansion itself was razed to the foundations as a sacrifice not to the greed of booty – for what did it amount to as booty? – but to merciless hatred. (trans. N.H. Watts, Loeb edn)

[16] E.g., see the case of Pliny the Younger discussed in Marzano 2014.
[17] Cic. *de domo* 116; Plut. *Cic.* 33.

The remark about *arbores* seized together with *instrumentum aut ornamenta* is not just a rhetorical device to influence the audience's mood. It also shows that the garden, with its chosen combination of plants and statues, had a strong symbolic value as a vehicle of social status and self-representation. Cicero's enemies wanted to destroy all that belonged to him and that represented him as a public figure.

Rome was not the first culture/civilization to retaliate against someone's plants and garden and one might wonder how much the developments observable in the late Republic were influenced by Hellenistic, or even earlier eastern Mediterranean cultures. For instance, according to Diodorus, when the Phoenicians revolted against Persian rule in 391 BC, their first hostile action was to cut down the trees of the Persian royal park. Only after the park had been destroyed did they turn to more strategic actions that should have had a higher priority, such as burning the stored-up fodder for the Persian horses.[18] Persian royal parks, with plants gathered from different regions of the kingdom, were a microcosm of the land ruled by the king and it was these plants, and what they symbolically proclaimed, that the Phoenicians wanted to destroy first.[19]

The fate of Cicero's trees from his Tusculan villa can be fully understood only when placed against two points of references. The fact that, by his time, not only the whole garden, but individual plants as well could have such valence was the outcome of the domestic garden becoming a place for displaying refined taste and communicating to others the social standing of the owner. At the same time, during the first century BC, the boundaries between politics, public architecture, and private architecture had become increasingly blurred, and the houses and villas of prominent public figures were increasingly seen as the seat of political actions.[20] As discussed in the next section, such blurring of boundaries reached its peak in Pompey's theatre complex built next to his *horti*. Here, what was in all effects a victory monument was integrated into the private space of the *horti* and villa within so that, in Amy Russell's words: 'public and private expressions of the same ideas [were juxtaposed] in such tight proximity that the difference between them was completely erased'.[21]

Private villa gardens continued to speak of the owner's public image well after the late Republican period. Pliny the Younger and his villa garden *in*

[18] Diod. 16.41.5; cf. Sextus Iulius Africanus, *Cestii* 2-D16 (*Apparatus Bellicus* 32, Wallraff *et al.* edn) on how to eradicate fruit-bearing trees in the field in the context of war to deprive the enemy of food, quoting advice of the Quintilii brothers.

[19] See discussion in Chapter 2. [20] Coarelli 1983. [21] Russell 2016, 163.

Tuscis are an excellent example of elite self-representation as reflected in the vegetal display of the garden. Pliny describes his Umbrian villa in *Epistle* 5.6, and from the detailed description of the garden spaces one can appreciate that this is an explicit case of a garden being the tangible representation of its owner's public image and status. Much has been written on Pliny's description of his villa *in Tuscis* and the one in Laurentum, which was much closer to Rome. Throughout the ages many 'renderings' of his villas have been attempted in drawings, etchings, and models.[22] What matters in order to explore how the garden space was conceived as representing the owner's public image is not necessarily to ascertain what Pliny's garden and villa really looked like, but to understand how, in the literary description he gives, both the garden space as a whole and individual plants operate on multiple meanings and levels of symbolism. What the reaction of the reader (or of the viewer of the real garden) was, and what meanings he or she would be receptive to, depended entirely on the person's own cultural background and frame of reference.

Before getting to the description of the various parts making his villa garden, Pliny pauses first on the description of the beautiful natural landscape that surrounds his estate. Starting with nature, even if this is, in fact, a cultivated agricultural landscape, is important before moving on to the garden, because Pliny's garden encapsulates a complex interplay between the gardening *ars* which models nature into something manifestly artificial (e.g., trees trimmed in the shape of animals) and the application of this *ars* to making something artificial *look* natural.[23]

The first section of the garden described in the letter is the portico with its associated *xystus* or enclosed garden, which had box bushes expertly shaped into unnatural forms by the art of topiary.[24] These artificial forms are then followed by the description of the nearby slope: here 'artificial' trees pruned in the shape of animals contrast with a more natural view: an expanse of acanthus that gives the impression of a pool of water.[25] Then Pliny moves on to the large garden in the shape of a hippodrome, a specific garden form common in late first-century/second-century villas, where one

[22] DuPrey 1994; DuPrey 2018.

[23] In the modern era, the different expressions of gardens as either very formal, symmetric spaces or as completely natural-looking spaces (but still the fruit of human planning) are well exemplified by the French formal garden of the eighteenth century and the English landscape garden of the late eighteenth / early nineteenth century: see contributions in Leslie and Hunt 2013, vols. IV (*Gardens in the Age of Enlightenment*) and V (*Gardens in the Age of Empire*).

[24] On *topiarii* as essential for the well-kept garden: Plin. *Ep.* 3.19.3.

[25] Plin. *Ep.* 5.6.16. Note, however, the continuation of the theme of artifice: the acanthus plants appear to be something different from what they, in fact, are.

would exercise by walking, riding, or driving a small chariot.[26] This space was marked out by plane trees, with their trunks and branches covered by ivy so that the trees were all linked together; as mentioned, the plane tree was useful in a garden to give shade, but it also made a statement about the owner's education and the quality of intellectual pursuits that would take place under the shade of these trees.[27] In the centre of this space are the lawn and many box hedges, skilfully pruned into diverse shapes, including, and most appropriately for a hippodrome garden, box pruned in the shape of obelisks (the *metae* in the real circus); these are interspersed with fruit trees. These fruit trees bring horticultural productivity as part of the setting for elite exercise and *otium*. As we shall see later in the book, fruit trees and other plants were often part of the vegetal spectacle to be enjoyed while strolling, preferably with friends to whom expertly cultivated trees could be pointed out. Thus, the aesthetic qualities of fruit trees were interwoven into the ideal of agricultural productivity and control of nature that the villa and its *fundus* represented.

It is here that one finds the culminating point of the garden as self-representation: box shaped as letters to form Pliny's and the gardener's own names. Pliny's entire description of the garden emphasizes the skilful artifice that was behind its creation (*ars*) and here we find the final touch: the signature of the creator(s), just as a statue displayed along a garden portico may have a base with the signature of the artist. The fact that Pliny's own name and the gardener's name are shown together in the same garden area is interesting and ambiguous at the same time: are they both the creators? Is Pliny to be understood as the conceiver of the garden plan and the gardener simply as the person who transformed the wishes of his master, assuming it was a slave-gardener? And if the gardener was indeed a slave or a freedman, would he have been immortalized thus?[28] These are questions that remain unanswered, but the clipping of bushes in the shape of these names shows that the garden was understood as an artful creation and as an achievement worthy of explicit commemoration.

More plane trees, but shorter than those encircling the 'hippodrome' (*breuioribus platanis*, §35), are to be found in the very centre of the hippodrome garden, together with acanthus and 'more figures and more names' (*plures figurae pluraque nomina*, §36), presumably also shaped out

[26] E.g., at villa Marina di S. Nicola north of Rome or at the Villa of the Quintilii on the Via Appia; cf. also the case of inscriptions giving the length of the garden and how many times one needed to walk back and forth to complete one mile (1,000 paces): e.g., *ILS* 6030.

[27] Plin. *Ep.* 5.6.32–6.

[28] See Chapter 4 for elite figures claiming the 'grafting' creations of their gardeners as their own.

of box bushes. Whose names these were, we are left to wonder. Pliny's own words describing this garden arrangement encapsulate the tension between natural (the expanse of acanthus) and artificial (the topiary); he writes that this is a most urbane work of art with, in its middle, an *imitation* of natural landscape.[29] Finally, next to the hippodrome garden was a private retreat: a room with alcove and bed. Since a thick vine covered the entire structure, letting little light through the windows, the impression is of being in a grove, not in an architectural space.[30] The play between 'real' and 'artificial', between nature and imitation of nature, continues here as well: the central garden is openly artificial, whereas the private suite, though a built structure, gives the impression of a grove.[31]

As discussed by Spencer,[32] in this letter Pliny makes several suggestions about himself through the plants of his gardens. The plane trees evoke philosophy and the Platonic Academy, acanthus and laurel suggest literary pursuits, ivy and vines recall Bacchus and viticulture and allude to Pliny as the estate owner: grape was the cash crop he grew on this estate, as is well known from his writings and from archaeological evidence.[33]

Pliny's garden had been carefully planned to match the aesthetic ideals of the owner, but also to offer to guests a spectacle proportionate to the owner's social standing. Despite the different sociopolitical situations, both Cicero's and Pliny's villa gardens share a common denominator: they were a means of self-representation. This could be achieved by subtle allusions (e.g., plane trees to suggest the world of Greek philosophy and hence of the owner's intellectual pursuits), by explicit references which showed the degree of control exercised over nature (the box shrubs clipped to form Pliny's name), or, even more explicitly, by making the garden the setting for the display of statues of the owner. Leaving aside the imperial excess of the 120-feet-high painting of Nero displayed in the Horti Maiani,[34] one can recall the case of Regulus who, writes Pliny the Younger, had statues of himself placed along the river bank in his Horti trans Tiberim: these

[29] Plin. *Ep.* 5.6.35: *et in opere urbanissimo subita uelut inlati ruris imitatio.*
[30] Plin. *Ep.* 5.6.38–9. Cf. §39: *non secus ibi quam in nemore iaceas.*
[31] Purcell 1996a; Kuttner 1999b.
[32] Spencer 2010, 133–4; on garden/villa estate descriptions by Pliny and Statius as exercises in self-representation and in literary programmatics, see Myers 2005.
[33] E.g., Plin. *Ep.* 8.1; for the archaeological evidence for Pliny's villa: Braconi and Uroz Sáez 2009; Marzano 2007, 110–13; wine production in the Upper Tiber Valley is well attested by the production and diffusion of the so-called Spello amphorae or Altotiberine, used to ship the wine down the Tiber: Manconi 1989; Lapadula 1997.
[34] Plin. *HN* 35.51.

statues were clearly supposed to be seen also by those who navigated up and down the Tiber, not simply by whoever was in the actual garden.[35]

Even when a garden and its plants did not convey an especially crafted 'message', they could be a general display of the owner's tastes and wealth, as trees themselves could be, economically, valuable. In other words, 'garden economics' also had a role to play in the general discourse of garden self-representation and elite competition. Unlike the case of the trees in the Persian royal park mentioned earlier, Cicero's trees were not cut down: rather, they were transplanted to Gabinius' nearby villa garden. Now as then, well-established trees could be valuable, since it took time for a tree to grow. We are not told in Cicero's specific example whether the plants were fruit trees or ornamental trees, but regardless, taking established older plants – if they could be transplanted successfully – was more convenient than planting young trees and waiting for them to reach the proper height or bear fruit, which could take several years.[36] Indeed, as is illustrated by an anecdote about the *domus* on the Palatine of L. Licinius Crassus, co-censor with Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus in 92 BC, real estate could greatly increase in value thanks to the presence of mature trees or of particularly sought-after plants. L. Licinius Crassus had several lotus trees in his garden, a tree commonly known to us as the European hackberry or nettle tree.[37] According to the story reported in Valerius Maximus, Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus had been highly critical of Licinius Crassus for having columns of expensive Hymettian marble in his house. When asked by Licinius to estimate the value of the house, Domitius gave the sum of 6 million sesterces. But when asked what the value of the house would be, minus ten small trees from the garden (*arbusculae*), he said 3 million, allowing Licinius to give a sharp reply: who was to be considered more extravagant, Crassus, for paying 100,000 for ten marble columns, or Domitius, who had valued the shade given by the trees at 3 million sesterces?[38]

[35] Beard 1998, 32; Plin. *Ep.* 4.2.5. [36] Marzano 2007, 98–9.

[37] The exact number of lotus trees present in Licinius Crassus' garden varies in the literary sources: Pliny the Elder gives six (*HN* 17.1–5), whereas Valerius Maximus reports ten (9.1.4).

[38] Val. Max. 9.1.4: *uter igitur luxuriosior est, egone, qui decem columnas centum milibus nummum emi, an tu, qui decem arbuscularum umbram tricies sestertii summa compensas*? Pliny (*HN* 17.3–4) essentially recounts the same story, but with some differences in the details. Trees could be sold. The *Digest* (19.1.20, Pomponius ad Q. Mucius 31) refers to the sale of trees on a farm when discussing the actions for sale: 'Quintus Mucius writes: "the owner of a farm sold the trees standing on his property; he accepted money for them, but declined to deliver them. The buyer asked what he ought to do, since he feared that these trees had apparently not become his property"' (trans. A. Watson).

Although the lotus tree produces small edible fruits, it seems that its appeal to elite Romans rested exclusively on the plant's ornamental qualities. Pliny the Elder reports that this type of tree was highly appreciated as an ornamental plant in domestic gardens because the thick foliage offered shade during the hot Italian summers, but it shed its leaves early, thus not impeding solar light in winter; in addition, the bark had a decorative effect said to have been agreeable to the eye.[39]

The Political Significance of Lucullus' *Horti*

Garden spaces entered the highly competitive politics of late Republican Rome as a means by which charismatic personalities vying for power and presence in the public sphere sought the citizenry's attention. The means could be indirect (private gardens communicating something about their owners' wealth, culture, and sophistication) or direct (public gardens as amenities for the urban populace and as setting for acts of *liberalitas*). The various *horti*, suburban residences within private parks/gardens, which appear more frequently in the sources for the first-century BC period and which later became a feature of imperial Rome, are an expression of this phenomenon.

Initially, these *horti* were basically suburban villas with gardens and, one could presume, orchards too. Demand for land at the periphery of Rome was high, its use ranging from prime real estate to burial grounds, supply of building material, and vegetable plots,[40] and large *horti* could be split up into smaller holdings to satisfy the demand from elite buyers, as the businessman and art dealer Damasippus did with *horti* along the Tiber.[41] Later in the imperial period, the name *horti* was regularly used to refer to property holdings with multiple and diverse uses, and often sections of the former 'parks' were converted to habitation, including cases of *insulae*.[42] The diversity of use was already there in the late Republic; a prime example is the case of Furius Crassipes' property, Cicero's son-in-law, which comprised *horti* and *tabernae plurimae*.[43] None of the late Republican

[39] Plin. *HN* 16.124. [40] See discussion in Purcell 2007.

[41] Cic. *Att.* 12.29, 33; cf. Hor. *Sat.* 2.3. He was probably the son of L. Junius Brutus Damasippus, the *praetor* of 82 BC killed by Sulla: Rawson 1976, 101.

[42] Purcell 2007, 298, who notes that the various financial personnel attested for the imperial *Horti* (*dispensatores*, *exactores*, etc.) indicate the handling of serious financial transactions. See, e.g., *CIL* 6.6299: *insularius de hortis Pompeianis*, referenced by Purcell, *ibidem* at note 44.

[43] Cic. *Q. fr.* 3.7.1 = Shackleton Bailey 25.8.

horti, though, was more politically charged or contributed more to shaping the elite's interest in plants and gardens than Lucullus' and Pompey's *horti*.

When L. Licinius Lucullus returned to Rome in 66 BC after his eastern military campaigns against Mithridates, the king of Pontus, his hope to be granted a military triumph quickly did not materialize. Although most senators were in favour of granting him the honour of a triumph, the assembly of the people, urged by the tribune C. Memmius, rejected the proposal.[44] The charges brought by C. Memmius were that Lucullus had unduly prolonged the war and monopolized its booty.[45] The political situation at Rome and the rivalry between Lucullus and Pompey were such that Lucullus had to wait for three years before being granted the right to celebrate a triumph in 63 BC.[46] Even then, his long-awaited triumphal celebration was partly spoiled when the proposal of two of the tribunes of the people to grant Pompey extraordinary honours was approved.[47] During this whole time, Lucullus did not give up his military *imperium*, and hence the chance to finally celebrate his triumph; this meant that he could not cross the *pomerium*, the sacred boundary of Rome. It is believed that, for this reason, being 'forced' to wait outside the limits of the city proper, Lucullus embarked on a grand building project, the creation of the suburban residence and gardens that came to be known as the Horti Lucullani. These *horti* became very famous. When Lucullus died around 56 BC, the property must have passed to his son, who was still a minor; but when he also died at the battle of Philippi in 42 BC, the *horti* were in all likelihood among the *praemia bellorum* confiscated by Octavian and Agrippa, ending up in the hands of Valerius Messala Corvinus.[48] The fame of the *horti* continued throughout the Julio-Claudian period, second only to the Horti Sallustiani. A notorious later

[44] Wiseman 1994, 341–2; in Plut. *Cat. Min.* 29.5, Memmius' action is explained as courting the favour of Pompey more than out of personal rivalry. See Hillman 1993, 217. Opposition to Lucullus' triumph might have come also from the *equites/publicani*, who were unhappy with Lucullus' financial reforms in Asia. Plutarch reports that Lucullus' equestrian enemies allied themselves with the tribunes of the plebs (*Luc.* 20.5; cf. also *Luc.* 24.3; *Cat. Min.* 29.3); see also Morrell 2017, 38–9.

[45] Plut. *Cato Min.* 29.3; Plut. *Luc.* 34.4 reports on P. Clodius Pulcher fomenting discontent among the soldiers by stressing that they have been serving in a long military conflict 'receiving no suitable rewards from so long a campaign, but convoying the wagons and camels of Lucullus laden with golden beakers set with precious stones while the soldiers of Pompey, citizens now, were snugly ensconced with wives and children in the possession of fertile lands' (trans. B. Perrin, Loeb edn).

[46] Van Ooteghem 1959, 161–3 thinks that Lucullus' triumph was in fact voted by the assembly of the People in 66 BC, as indicated by Plutarch, but that its celebration was delayed until 63 presumably by tribunician veto or by *inimicorum calumnia*. See also Hillman 1993.

[47] Wiseman 1994, 358. [48] Grimal 1984, 130; *ILS* 5990.

owner of these *horti* was the Empress Messalina, Claudius' wife, who coveted them so much she was able to force the owner at the time, Valerius Asiaticus, to commit suicide so that she could possess them.[49]

According to ancient commentators and modern scholars, the creation of these elegant *horti* marked Lucullus' retirement from political life and his systematic pursuit of pleasures and refined elegance.[50] As discussed later in this chapter, things might, in fact, have not been as clear-cut as the surviving sources make us believe. But for now, the question that interests us is why Lucullus embarked on the *horti* project. His choice cannot be seen in isolation, especially when his chief rival and political enemy, Pompey, upon returning from the eastern military campaigns, built his famous theatre-cum-temple and garden-portico complex, which, in effect, offered the population of Rome the first public garden of the capital.

The references in ancient texts to the general Lucullus, particularly after his return from the eastern campaigns, tend to agree on one general point: Lucullus became the epitome of luxury, of refined taste often pushed to excess. Whether one considers the use of purple coverlets on his couches and the preparation of all kinds of meat and elaborate pasties for the banquets for which he became notorious,[51] the complex engineering works for the fishpond of his villa just off the coast of Neapolis,[52] or the first introduction of black marble to Rome from Melos (which was named after him, the Lucullan marble),[53] Lucullus' name stood for extravagance and the extreme wealth that could afford all kinds of wants and sophistications. Well known is Lucullus' *triclinium* within an aviary described by Varro in the *de Re Rustica*: one could admire a certain type of bird flying about while the same bird was being served, cooked, on the diner's plate![54] This dining setting created that *natura–ars* combination mentioned above in the case of the (later) garden of Pliny and which is a trope of Roman literary and visual language.

[49] Tac. *Ann.* 11.1; Valerius Asiaticus' last act was to have his monumental funeral pyre built in the *Horti*, in a spot just opposite the *ustrinum* erected where Augustus had been cremated: Broise and Jolivet 1998, 200; Tac. *Ann.* 11.3. In a twist of fate, it was in these very *Horti* that Messalina was killed: Tac. *Ann.* 11.32, 37. In the second century AD, the Horti Lucullani seem to have passed to the Acilii Glabriones, and took the name of Horti Aciliorum: *LTUR*, s.v. 'Horti Aciliorum' (H. Broise – V. Jolivet). On the location of the Ustrinum Augusti south of the Horologium, near Montecitorio and not to the east of the Mausoleum Augusti, see *LTUR*, s.v. *ustrinum Augusti* (V. Jolivet); Patterson 1992, 199; cf. Strabo 5.236, who wrote that the *kaustra* (= *ustrinum*) was an enclosure in 'mid-plain'. On the *Horti* being a symbol of power in the Julio-Claudian period and on the improper behaviour of women who coveted them: Beard 1998, 27.

[50] On Lucullus' life: Keaveney 1992 (ch. 8 deals with his building activity). [51] Plut. *Luc.* 40.

[52] Plut. *Luc.* 39. [53] Plin. *HN* 36.49

[54] Varro, *Rust.* 3.4.3, although the combination of dining room and aviary did not work as intended!

Anecdotes on Lucullus' display of wealth and on the sharp criticism it attracted abound in the literary texts. Pliny, for instance, reports a rebuke on the part of a censor, who negatively commented on the fact that one of Lucullus' villa estates had more floors to sweep than soil to plough, thus negating the very essence of the *villa*, which was supposed to be a working farm.[55] As has been noted, in various literary sources Lucullus is presented as the discoverer of three novelties, in all likelihood all connected in some degree to the idea of *truphe*, that is, of luxury which has destructive consequences:[56] he was the first general to encounter camels; he introduced to Rome black marble; and he imported the cherry tree into Italy.[57] For some authors, Lucullus' indulgence in luxuries started shortly after his return from the East, where he had collected rich booty; for others, such as the Augustan writer Nicolaus of Damascus, the turning point was the celebration of his triumph. It was after this event that:

> he abandoned the old-time temperance and drifted into an extravagant mode of life, becoming in every way the foremost guide to luxury among the Romans, since he had harvested for himself the wealth of the two kings Mithridates and Tigranes.[58]

The Horti Lucullani stood on the *collis hortulorum*,[59] the modern Pincian Hill, an extra-urban hill overlooking the Campus Martius, to the west of modern Via di Porta Pinciana and Via Francesco Crispi. Today, the area is occupied by the Villa Borghese Gardens. Lucullus' *horti* stood in the general area of the Villa Medici, the Hertziana library, and the Convent and Church of SS. Trinità dei Monti. While the exact extension of the ancient *horti* is not known, estimates have suggested an area of *c.*25 hectares, a size also often proposed for other late Republican *horti*, but some of these suburban gardens could have been larger than this.[60] Broise and Jolivet, who conducted targeted archaeological investigations in the

[55] *HN* 18.7.32; passage quoted in Littlewood 1987, 11, note 20.

[56] Gorman and Gorman 2014 for an analysis of the meaning of *truphe* in classical and Hellenistic literature, which concluded that the meaning of destructive luxury as historical causation derived from Latin authors and was adopted by Greek writers of the Roman period but was not present in earlier literature.

[57] Tröster 2008, 49. On Lucullus and camels: Plut. *Luc.* 11.6 = Sall. *Hist. frag. 3.42 Maur.*; Amm. 23.6.56; black marble: Plin. *HN* 36.49; the cherry tree: Plin. *HN* 15.30.102; Athn. 2.50f–51a; Tert. *Apol.* 11.8; Amm. 22.8.16. The introduction of the cherry into Italy by Lucullus is discussed in Chapter 2.

[58] Nicolaus of Damascus, *FgrH* 90, F77a, quoted from Tröster 2008, 49.

[59] A term used by Suet. *Nero* 50.

[60] See Purcell 2007 on the danger of reconstructing a 'green belt of elegant residences cum parks around Rome and on the high variability, and transient status of properties in the *suburbium*, due to the pressure on this land for various uses.'

area of Villa Medici, remarked that there is no solid evidence in support of an area as large as 25 hectares.[61] Remarkably, there is only one ancient source that gives the topographical location of these *horti*, and that is Frontinus' treatise on aqueducts, when he observes that in the Campus Martius the '*arcus Virginis initium habent sub hortis Lucullanis*', i.e., the start of the (above ground) arcades leading to the end point of the *Aqua Virgo* aqueduct is located just below the *horti* of Lucullus.[62]

For all their fame, there are few firm ancient reports of the Horti Lucullani at the time of Lucullus himself. The first uncertainty is the exact date of their creation. Their construction could have started right after Lucullus returned from Asia in 66 BC, while he was waiting to celebrate his triumph of 63 BC. The fact that the area chosen for the project was suburban and outside the *pomerium*, which Lucullus as holder of *imperium* could not cross, speaks in favour of this idea, as does the fact that the area chosen prominently overlooked the Campus Martius. This part of Rome, to use Patterson's words, was 'the setting for two of the key self-defining activities of the Roman aristocracy, electoral rivalry and military ambition'.[63]

Placed outside the city's *pomerium*, the Campus Martius was the place where the *comitia centuriata* met, the assembly of the men-at-arms that elected the consuls and the censors; from the mid second century BC onwards, it was also where the *comitia tributa* had their electoral meetings.[64] Significantly, the area also had a strong association with the triumph, since it was in the Campus Martius that the army gathered before joining the *triumphator* entering the city from the Porta Triumphalis at the north. Therefore, already in the mid-Republican period, aristocrats had focused their euergetic building activity in the Campus Martius area to glorify themselves and their families. Normally, these were dedications of religious buildings, such as the four temples of Largo Argentina; often the building activity was financed *ex manubis*, from the spoils of war, so that the temple was at once a symbol of the founder's religious piety and of his military prowess. If indeed Lucullus started the construction of his *horti* right after his return to Rome from the East, the

[61] Broise and Jolivet 1998, 191.

[62] Front. *Aq.* 22; *LTUR*, s.v. 'Horti Lucullani', p. 67 (H. Broise – V. Jolivet). The Aqua Virgo was built by Agrippa in 19 BC; there is a connection with Lucullus' properties also for the very start of this aqueduct, which was located *in agro Lucullano*, on the VIII mile of the Via Collatina.

[63] Patterson 1992, 194.

[64] Patterson 1992, 194; this was the assembly of the 35 territorial tribes into which Roman citizens were divided and which elected the quaestors, the curule aediles, and the military tribunes.

people of Rome could not have failed to notice the significance of having the general wait for his triumph in a residence overlooking the very place from where that triumph one day would start.

Little is known about the appearance of these *horti* in their first phase. Plutarch is the only author to mention the luxury of Lucullus' building projects and the fame of his gardens, so that while it is assumed that these were lavish gardens with various elegant buildings and many works of art, Plutarch was of course writing more than one hundred years later, when the Horti Lucullani had become imperial property and their appearance had changed. Of the various anecdotes attributed to Lucullus, perhaps only the episode about a dinner he would have offered to Cicero and Pompey in the dining room of Apollo took place in these *horti*.[65] The famous library in which, according to Plutarch, Lucullus hosted Greek intellectuals and friends is now believed to have been in Lucullus' Tusculan villa, not in his Roman *horti*.[66]

The only identified archaeological remains that can be, in part, attributed to Lucullus' phase belong to the garden proper rather than to the built part of the *horti*. Excavations led by Henri Broise and Vincent Jolivet have identified a large and complex network of underground water channels (*cuniculi*). These are not a unitary project, but the combination of at least three different channel systems.[67] Since these channels are located 4 metres below the modern level of the Villa Medici, they are considered unsuitable to feed fountains and other water displays popular in imperial Roman architecture. Rather, the network of *cuniculi* was a combination of a passive system of irrigation and drainage channels, channelling rainwater to where it was needed.

Therefore, beside the fact that in Lucullus' phase the *horti* certainly had various planted areas and a system for irrigation and drainage, we do not have any other secure elements to reconstruct their appearance and extension in this early phase of their existence. We can speculate, though, on the

[65] Plut. *Luc.* 41.4–7; Hillman 1993, 225, suggests the dinner took place in late 61 BC, after Pompey's offer of marrying one of Cato's nieces, and was a direct attempt at solving his *inimicitia* with Lucullus and pre-empting any opposition to his *acta*.

[66] *LTUR*, s.v. 'Horti Lucullani'. Russell 2016, 150, seems to imply that the library he 'opened to all' was in the Roman *Horti*. See Cic. *Fin.* 3.1.7–9 for an encounter between Cicero and M. Porcius Cato that took place in Lucullus' library in Tusculum. The irregular *opus reticulatum* walls forming various monumental terraces, visible until the sixteenth century in the convent of the SS. Trinità dei Monti, were initially thought to belong to Lucullus' phase of the *Horti*, but have been since proved to date to the Augustan era and attributed to Messalla Corvinus' phase of ownership: see Coarelli 1983, 202–3; Broise and Jolivet 1987, 758; Patterson 1992, 200.

[67] Broise and Jolivet 1998, 192–3.

reasons for their construction. The emergence in Rome of powerful personalities and charismatic leaders whose powers were not directly dependent on traditional Republican institutions caused what has been defined as the 'politicization of the private realm';[68] consequently, in the late Republic the house also became a functioning centre for political activities. As noted by Patterson, 'as the level of aristocratic competition increased in the last century of the Republic, so the architectural idiom of religious monuments was exploited to exalt the aristocrats whose houses contributed significantly to their political identity'.[69] It is in this perspective that one must see Lucullus' building project at a prominent site overlooking the city of Rome.

Plutarch's life of Lucullus is the most extensive source of information on the general, and he places Lucullus' retirement from public life in 66 or in 63 BC, thus implicitly making the *horti* project an entirely personal and private affair: the creation of a luxurious retreat for a retired general. However, the *horti* can be seen in a very different perspective if, in fact, Lucullus did not retire in 66/63. In the *Life of Lucullus*, Plutarch is at pains to reconcile the (negative) love for luxuries Lucullus had, especially in the matter of banquets,[70] with his admiration for Lucullus, his philhellenism and his involvement with the philosophy of the Academia.[71] As is often the case with ancient biographies, Plutarch's treatment of Lucullus' life falls into two parts, the earlier one in which all the positive traits are explored, the latter in which the negative sides emerge. Plutarch consciously maintains a chronological divide between the two (one of the reasons for placing Lucullus' retirement from political life in 66 BC),[72] aptly presented in his own words as the two parts of a comedy:

> Ἔστι δ' οὖν τοῦ Λουκούλλου βίου, καθάπερ ἀρχαίας κωμῳδίας, ἀναγνῶναι τὰ μὲν πρῶτα πολιτείας καὶ στρατηγίας, τὰ δ' ὕστερα πότους καὶ δεῖπνα καὶ μονονουχὶ κώμους καὶ λαμπάδας καὶ παιδιὰν ἅπασαν. (Plut. *Luc.* 39.1)
>
> And it is true that in the life of Lucullus, as in an ancient comedy, one reads in the first part of political measures and military commands, and in the latter part of drinking bouts, and banquets, and what might pass for revel-routs, and torch-races, and all manner of frivolity. (trans. B. Perrin, Loeb edn)

[68] Coarelli 1983, 199. [69] Patterson 1992, 200.
[70] E.g., *Luc.* 41.4: Lucullus' banquets were 'much talked about in the city'.
[71] See insightful analysis by Tröster 2008. [72] Hillman 1993.

The association between the general and luxury, which became fossilized in the literary tradition and has even entered modern parlance with the use of the adjective 'Lucullan' in English or *luculliano* in Italian to indicate something lavish, rested on anecdotal material that can be ultimately sourced to contemporary Pompeian propaganda aimed at discrediting Pompey's chief political rival.[73] In fact, Lucullus does not seem to have retired from political life after celebrating his triumph. While during the three years he waited for the triumph outside of Rome's *pomerium* he could not participate in meetings of the senate or other political activity in the city, after 63 BC Lucullus' name is mentioned on various occasions in connection with key debates in the senate and other events. Even Plutarch, who in his biography states that Lucullus retired from public affairs in 66 BC but elsewhere writes that he withdraws from political life in 63 BC, after the triumph,[74] is, some sections later, compelled to declare that the former general had not removed himself from public life entirely, since at times he 'would still go down to the forum in support of his friends, and also to the Senate, whenever there was need of combating some ambitious schemes', sure evidence of continuing political engagement.[75]

On the basis of the inconsistencies in the story of Lucullus' retirement from politics, it has been proposed that Lucullus' retirement needs to be dated later than generally assumed.[76] Lucullus seems to have been still deeply engaged in politics at least throughout 60 and 59 BC. In 61 BC, according to Cicero's testimony, Lucullus was present at a public meeting, when he, Q. Hortensius, and the consul M. Valerius Messalla, were verbally attacked by Clodius.[77] In 60 BC he opposed the ratification en bloc of Pompey's eastern *acta*, instead insisting for a prompt debate of each of them and comparison with the provision he had drawn when in the East, so that the senate could choose the better option.[78] Lucullus is mentioned also as one of the witnesses in the trial against Clodius that followed the Bona Dea scandal,[79] as one of the advisors of Cicero in the context of the conspiracy of Catiline and its aftermath,[80] and as a member of the jury in the trial against Flaccus. Hillman examines various passages

[73] Tröster 2008, 50. [74] See *Luc.* 38.2, 37.3–6. [75] Tröster 2008, 70.
[76] Hillman 1993, 224–6. [77] Cic. *Att.* 1.15.5.
[78] Hillman 1993, 224; Dio 37.49.3–50.1; App. *BC* 2.9.31–2; Vell. Pat 2.40.5. On the political context of Roman rule in the provinces, most notably Asia, and the types of settlement being developed by Rome in the first century BC, see Morrell 2017.
[79] Cic. *Mil.* 73; Plut. *Cic.* 29.4. His testimony is seen as a revenge against Clodius, who had mutinied against Lucullus at Nisibis in 67 BC: Hillman 1993, 224; see also Tröster 2008, 72.
[80] Lucullus is given as present in the senate in 63 when the fate of the conspirators was decided: Cic. *Att.* 12.21.1; Plut. *Cic.* 31.5.

in Plutarch's *Lives* that seem to point to 59 as the actual year of Lucullus' retirement from political life, right after the ratification of Pompey's *acta*, a date earlier proposed by Gruen.[81] An additional detail in support of Lucullus' participation in political life up to 59 is the fact that the informer Vettius involved him in an alleged plot to murder Pompey, thus showing that at this time Lucullus was still seen as a political threat.[82]

All this is relevant to understanding the motivation behind the *horti* building project. If one places the building of the *horti* at the moment of Lucullus' retirement from public life, then the complex is seen only as the luxurious refuge of a retired general who has become a private man; this is how the surviving ancient anecdotes about Lucullus generally refer to the *horti*. However, if Lucullus was still involved in Rome's political debates and events, the *horti* project suddenly acquires political significance. As has been said, 'it is only against a background of ongoing public activity that the anecdotes about Lucullus' extravagance become meaningful as instruments of political propaganda'.[83]

If one agrees with the idea that the emphasis on Lucullus' pursuit of a luxurious life away from politics that entered the literary tradition was the result of negative Pompeian propaganda,[84] the creation of the *horti* cannot be simplistically seen as the creation of a private refuge, a suburban villa with large gardens in which to perpetually engage in luxurious *otium*. Instead, the *proximity* of the *horti* to the heart of Rome meant that they were in the public eye and that, precisely because of their proximity, they could perform various functions related to public life, including political functions. Therefore, while *horti*, and gardens in general, could evoke the idea of leisure away from *negotium*, of luxury, and even pleasure due to the association between gardens and Epicurean philosophy, they could also be used to make specific statements about one's social standing and to host activities aimed at increasing one's popularity and political clout. As noted in the case of the early imperial *horti*, they were seen as 'both part of, and apart from, the activity of the city, politics, public life'.[85]

[81] Hillman 1993, 219–20; Gruen 1974, 52–3. See, e.g., Plut. *Pomp.* 48.4: Λεύκολλος δὲ ἀπειπὼν ἡσυχίαν ἦγεν ὡς οὐκέτι πρὸς πολιτείαν ὡραῖος· ὅτε δὴ καὶ Πομπήϊος ἔφη, γέροντι τὸ τρυφᾶν ἀωρότερον εἶναι τοῦ πολιτεύεσθαι ('while Lucullus renounced the struggle and led a life of ease, on the plea that he was past the age for political affairs; whereat Pompey remarked that for an old man luxurious living was more unseasonable than political activity', trans. B. Perrin, Loeb edn). Cf. *Mor.* 785f–786; *Luc.* 38.5.

[82] As stressed by Hillman 1993, 114; 224; Cic. *Att.* 2.24.3; Plut. *Luc.* 42.7–8.

[83] Tröster 2008, 72. [84] As advanced by Tröster 2008. [85] Beard 1998, 24.

What could Lucullus do while waiting, with his army, for three years to celebrate his triumph? Where could he regularly meet with his many clients and friends, if he could not cross the *pomerium*? Where could he host and entertain the officers in his army, and perhaps, on occasion, also the soldiers? Where could he be out of Rome's *pomerium*, as prescribed, but at the same time very much visible from the Campus Martius during political gatherings, so as not to be forgotten? He had to create a venue and build it with a garden space that was visible, spacious, and convenient to both the elite and common citizens whom he wished to impress. Private delectation and public enjoyment converged in the politics of the late Roman Republic, and politicians' *liberalitas* (but not *largitio*, bribery!) embodied in banquets and entertainments was something the *plebs romana* should not be deprived of.[86]

Unlike a *domus*, which, regardless of the wealth of its owner, could receive only a finite number of visitors in its atrium, *triclinia*, and peristyle garden, the *horti* were arguably a venue with a higher entertaining potential and flexibility. While the extension and appearance of the Lucullan *horti* remain speculative, the entertaining potential of suburban *horti* and villas (since the residence in the *horti* was closer to a villa than a urban house) can be gauged by Caesar's likely use of his Horti trans Tiberim to stage a massive banquet in 45 BC and by L. Marcius Philippus, in his villa in Puteoli, being able to host and give a dinner (if in somewhat cramped conditions) to Caesar and the 2,000 men with whom he showed up in December of 45 BC.[87] Lucullus' *horti* must be seen in the context of the hostile stories about the general enriching himself in the East while stinting his men of their just rewards. The juxtaposition of the two raises the question: did his political enemies attempt to counterbalance the political clout that accrued to Lucullus from his entertainments and acts of patronage in the *horti*, framing them as mere extravagant architecture and luxurious living on the part of a hedonistic retired general rather than an active participant in current politics? A positive answer to this question best accounts for the available evidence.

[86] Cic. *Mur.* 77.

[87] D'Arms 1998 suggests that at least one of the two *epula* Caesar offered to the Roman people in 45 BC, after his return from Spain, was staged in his *Horti.* The very large triumphal banquet of 46 BC for at least 198,000 people, which probably occurred over several days, seems to have taken place in the Campus Martius area (Beard 2007, 261 prefers the Forum as venue); however, the use also in this case of the Horti Transtiberim alongside the Campus Martius cannot be excluded. Cic. *Att.* 13.52.

Pompey himself used the *horti* he owned to a very political end. In July 61 BC he distributed money among the tribes in order to secure the election of L. Afranius as consul for 60 BC and, according to Plutarch, the people 'went to Pompey's gardens to get it'.[88] *Liberalitas* in the late Republic is a concept that, when it was done for political advantage and the expectation of something in return, often takes on negative connotations.[89] Pompey's distribution of money to the Roman tribes was classed as straight bribery: he was buying their votes. Lucullus may have tried a different tactic, offering something different to his clients and the people. The triumph itself also included a large banquet Lucullus offered to the population of Rome, which was staged at various locations within the city and surrounding *vici*, a practice attested several times in the first century BC on occasion of triumphal celebrations.[90] Clearly Lucullus did not shy away from entertaining the population at large to build popularity and to reflect his *dignitas*. The very fact that Lucullus' political enemy, Pompey, decided to mark his military and political successes by impressing on the urban fabric of Rome not only the first stone theatre but a quadriporticus containing a garden suggests that he was engaging in the same 'garden battle' as Lucullus, but bringing the whole matter one step further: a symbolic garden, not in the context of semi-private *horti*, but rather as a proper public building, as the 'first public gardens of Rome', even though, as we shall see, the connection with a private residence was not completely severed.[91]

The Porticus Pompeii

On 29 September 55 BC, Pompey inaugurated the theatre he had built in the Campus Martius. The day chosen for the inauguration was significant:

[88] Plut. *Pomp.* 44.3: καὶ τοῦτο κατιόντες εἰς τοὺς Πομπηΐου κήπους ἐλάμβανον; passage referenced in D'Arms 1998, 34. See also Plut. *Cat. Min.* 30.5: εἶτα μέντοι πράττων τινὶ τῶν φίλων ὑπατείαν ὁ Πομπήϊος ἀργύριον εἰς τὰς φυλὰς ἔπεμπε, καὶ περιβόητος ὁ δεκασμὸς ἦν, ἐν κήποις ἐκείνου τῶν χρημάτων ἀριθμουμένων ('Afterwards, however, in trying to secure the consulship for one of his friends, Pompey sent money to the tribes, and the bribery was notorious, since the sums for it were counted out in his gardens', trans. B. Perrin, Loeb edn). Although Plutarch's knowledge of the events from 66 to 61 BC is, apart from Catilina's conspiracy, rather imperfect, with misdating of events, the detail about the bribery taking place in his *horti* is not disputed. On Plutarch's treatment of the events in these years, see Hillman 1993; Hillman 1996. Cic. *Att.* 1.16.12 places the money distribution in July of 61 BC.

[89] On the evolution of the concept of *liberalitas* in Rome, see Coffee 2017 (with the review by Rosenstein in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 2017.11.04 and author's response in 2018.07.13).

[90] On the triumphal feast for the Roman people: Marzano 2009.

[91] On the theatre and porticos complex, see Monterroso Checa 2010.

according to Pliny, 29 September was both Pompey's birthday and the anniversary day of the magnificent triumph he had celebrated in 61 BC, his third triumphal celebration.[92] His *theatrum* was an architectural novelty. Not only was it the first stone theatre built in Rome, much later than the developments in permanent entertainment structures observable in small towns of Italy such as Pompeii, but it also featured a large garden-quadriportico behind the stage building, a senate house (where Caesar was assassinated in 44 BC) and a temple dedicated not to a 'state' cult but to Pompey's personal patron deity, Venus Victrix.[93] The entire complex was a celebration of Pompey's military successes and glorious deeds, which echoed the achievements of deified heroes such as Hercules and of the greatest general of all, Alexander. Objects, works of art and even the plants (see below) displayed in the architectural complex, many part of the booty collected by Pompey, evoked his military achievements. The temple to Victorious Venus dominating the *cavea* of the theatre and the stage represented the culmination of the celebration of Pompey's success achieved by divine protection: he was *Felix*, blessed and fortunate. The theatre could accommodate 40,000 people according to Pliny the Elder, or a more plausible 17,580 according to the Regionary Catalogues.[94] An additional novelty of this architectural complex was the well-planned garden area encircled by the quadriportico, in effect the first public park of Rome. It is worth noting that, just as Rome was late vis-à-vis other towns of Italy in acquiring a permanent theatre, so she might also have been in the case of public garden spaces. A fragmentary inscription from Capua, dated to the late second century/early first century BC, commemorates the local magistrates who, besides staging *ludi*, built *hortos* – gardens – from their own money, together, it seems, with a portico with an overhanging roof to give shade and shelter to the public amenity.[95] The incompleteness of the text does not allow a better understanding of the nature of these gardens and how they related to the other benefactions, but some kind of public use of the spaces, possibly as gardens attached to a temple (the text, before breaking off, mentions Hercules), seems clear.

[92] Plin. *HN* 37.6.13. The temple dedicated to Venus Victrix that stood *in summa cavea* was inaugurated a few years later, in 52 BC: Gell. *NA* 10.1.6.

[93] The theatre complex incorporated another four shrines, all dedicated to personifications, possibly to be located around the upper part of the theatre seating: to *Honos*, *Virtus*, *Felicitas*, and a divinity whose name started with 'V'. See Claridge 2010, 239.

[94] Plin. *HN* 36.115; *LTUR*, s.v. 'Theatrum Pompei' (P. Gross); Claridge 2010, 241. See also Monterroso Checa 2010.

[95] *ILLRP* 723.

Architectural echoes from the eastern Mediterranean are possible, since one of the magistrates, named Ofellius, may be the same Gaius Ofellius Ferus who, in *c.*100 BC, received an honorific statue in Delos in the Agora of the Italians.[96]

The Porticus Pompeiana was a complex in which the central *nemus* (a grove featuring paths and fountains) was the integral and unifying element of its various architectural parts, namely the porticoes that surrounded it. The configuration changed the meaning of the term itself: before Pompey's *porticus*, the word designated a covered colonnade without a garden in particular, but after that it primarily came to designate a garden space surrounded by roofed colonnades.[97] When a few decades later other *porticus* were built in Rome, clearly taking inspiration from Pompey's building, the central green area became their primary and noteworthy characteristic; these *porticus*, such as the Porticus Vipsania (built by Marcus Agrippa) and the Porticus Liviae (built by Augustus in honour of his wife Livia Drusilla) were, in fact, public gardens.[98]

The functions encompassed by the various parts of Pompey's complex, bringing together entertainment, political and commercial activities (the complex also featured shops and various rooms for meetings), and religious worship, were also innovative. As it has been noted, the 'unified form of the garden and buildings makes a powerful reference to Italic fora suggesting a politically aggressive attempt to shift the focus of the city west from the Forum Romanum'.[99]

The garden-*porticus* part of Pompey's building seems to have become immediately popular with the city population as a place to gather, stroll along shady paths, and, in the words of the elegiac poets, to have amorous encounters.[100] References to the Porticus Pompeii/Pompeiana in contemporary writers and later authors reveal some information about the central garden layout. Double rows of plane trees, sculptured fountains, and several thematic groups of statues were to be found in the garden and

[96] *IDelos* 4.1688. On the commercial connections between Italians and the eastern Mediterranean, see Roselaar 2019.

[97] As noted by Gleason 1994a, 13.

[98] Strabo 5.3.8; Plin. *HN* 14.11; Mart. 1.108.3.

[99] Gleason 1994a, 13.

[100] Prop. 4.8.75; Prop. 2.32.11–16: *scilicet umbrosis sordet Pompeia columnis / porticus, aulaeis nobilis Attalicis, / et platanis creber pariter surgentibus ordo, / flumina sopito quaeque Marone cadunt, / et sonitus lymphis toto crepitantibus orbe, / cum subito Triton ore refundit aquam* ('Pompey's portico, I take it, is not good enough for you, with its shady columns, resplendent with brocaded awnings, or the dense avenue of plane-trees rising evenly, the streams which issue out of the slumbering Maro, or the sound of the water which splashes all round the basin, when the Triton suddenly pours forth a fountain from his lips', trans. G.P. Goold, Loeb edn).

surrounding porticoes.[101] These statues depicted only female figures and were articulated into three broad groups: (1) personifications of conquered nations; (2) female authors and famous *hetairai*, friends of artists, writers, and statesmen; and (3) statues embodying portents.[102] Several scholars have stressed how statuary, paintings, and plants on display in the garden portico all had a highly symbolic meaning.[103] The theatre itself, with the 'water flowing in channels' mentioned by Valerius Maximus, might have symbolically represented the *oikoumene* or the entire world, while the garden portico, with its thematic female statuary groups, was meant to align Pompey with mythical figures who had undertaken trips to the underworld, notably Dionysus and Heracles.[104] A further layer in this association was, of course, Alexander the Great, who had exploited the myth of Dionysus triumphing over India in his eastern campaigns. Every part of the new architectural complex had been carefully planned to carry specific meanings and glorify Pompey. It has been suggested that the advisor behind the choice of statuary might have been Atticus, Cicero's friend, or M. Terentius Varro.[105]

We can assume that Pompey started this building project in 61 BC, after the celebration of his third triumph. This means that, if a starting date of *c.* 66 BC for Lucullus' project is correct, Pompey's projects started only some five years after the *horti* of Lucullus came into being. The similarities between the Porticus Pompeiana and the suburban *horti* of Rome have been noted, and Pompey's own Horti Pompeiani were near the theatre-garden-cum-portico complex,[106] thus virtually making the *horti* and

[101] Vitr. *De arch.* 5.9.1; Prop. 2.32.11–16; Ov. *Ars* 3.387; Mart. 5.10.5. The complex is depicted in fr. 39a of the Severan marble plan of Rome: Lloyd 1982; see Stanford Digital Forma Urbis Romae Project: http://formaurbis.stanford.edu/fragment.php?record=204 (accessed October 2017).

[102] Kuttner 1999a; De Rose Evans 2009 for a discussion of the statuary group as depicting *hetairai* or not.

[103] Kuttner 1999a; von Stackelberg 2009, 80–3. On the paintings displayed in the portico, see Plin. *HN* 35.59, 114, 126, 132.

[104] Val. Max. 2.4.6: *Cn. Pompeius ante omnes aquae per semitas decursu aestivum minuit fervorem*; Sauron 1987, 464; see also Coarelli 1971–2.

[105] See Cic. *Att.* 4.9.1, dated 27 April 55 BC. Atticus: Coarelli 1971–2; Varro: Sauron 1987, 467.

[106] Gleason 1994a. Here I follow the hypothesis that the Horti P. were located in the Campus Martius in proximity of the Porticus P. and that fr. 57 of the *Forma Urbis Romae* with the label *HORTI P* attests to the continued existence of the toponym also in the imperial period, when part of the *horti* must have been divided into lots and sold for building activity (see *CIL* 6.6299, attesting an *insularius ex horteis Pompeian.*). There is no definite agreement on the location of the Horti Pompeiani, due to the unclear status of the ancient sources about the three properties Pompey had in Rome and its immediate vicinity: the paternal *domus* in the *Carinae*; a new house he built and the *horti* (see *LTUR*, s.v. 'Horti Pompeiani' (V. Jolivet). Locations proposed for the *Horti* have included: the western side of the Pincian hill and part of the plain below, to accommodate Asconius' note that they were divided into *horti superiores* and *horti inferiores*; the southern end

garden-portico an extension of each other.[107] With this project, Pompey was giving a response to Lucullus' *horti*. However, by making the garden-portico part of a public architectural complex which celebrated his military victories, the impact it had on the population at large was much more far-reaching and meaningful than what Lucullus' *horti* might have achieved, both in the impression they created on the viewer/visitors and in terms of fixing popular attention. The two gardens – those of Lucullus and those of Pompey – were different but converged on investing their patrons as heroes of both military and political prestige.

Lucullus, and probably Pompey too, could well have been motivated, in their *horti*, by 'botanical imperialism', a concept that will be elaborated in Chapter 2. As we shall see, Lucullus was credited with having imported the cherry tree into Italy from the Pontic region and with having given the plant its name. The late Republic is also a period when we see trees and plants being treated as spoils of war and being exhibited in the triumphal procession among the booty. Pompey, according to Pliny's testimony, was the first general to exhibit *live* trees in his triumph celebrated in 61 BC. In the case of Pompey's trees (balsam and ebony), they could have been symbols of the new geographic regions conquered and an important allusion to – even a promise of – the new revenues that would flow into Rome's coffers.[108] It is possible, but not provable, that Lucullus had intended to display the cherry trees in his triumph and that perhaps he ended up planting them in the newly built *horti*.

There is another dimension that may explain why both Lucullus and Pompey, the two chief generals who had fought Mithridates, were interested in creating gardens and in bringing plants to Rome from the regions in which they had campaigned. Mithridates, in his propaganda during the conflict with Rome, had presented himself as a ruler uniting both

of the Quirinal hill, identifying the *horti superiores* with the Horti Scipionis (but contra see Jolivet 1983); and the Campus Martius, near the Porticus Pompeiana complex. This last proposal seems the most plausible, able to explain information in the literary texts, such as the fact that during the process against Milo, Pompey, who had 'barricaded' himself in the *Horti*, demanded that the senate meetings take place in the portico of his theatre. In this scenario, one has to see in the residence in the *Horti* the house (*oikia*, Plut. *Pomp.* 40.5) which Pompey built between his triumph in 61 and the inauguration of the theatre in 55. Plutarch describes it as being an *epholkion* behind the large theatre complex. Plutarch's use of the term 'house' for '*villa in hortis*' is consistent with Cicero's own usage: at *Mil.* 67 he refers to the residence in the *horti* as *domus*.

[107] Russell 2016, 153–78; *LTUR*, s.v. 'Horti Pompeiani' (V. Jolivet), p. 79. The residence in these *horti* was built between 61 and 55, so at the same time as the Porticus Pompeiana.

[108] See Marzano 2014; as discussed in Chapter 2, 'botanical imperialism' is not a Roman 'invention' but has antecedents in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, not to mention Persia.

the Greek *and* Persian traditions, normally at odds with each other in the writings of Greek and Latin authors.[109] Mithridates was known for his interest in the medicinal properties of plants and in identifying antidotes to various poisons; he is said to have had gardens at his residences in which a range of plants from close-by and afar were cultivated. Certainly, he had been very scrupulous in studying the plants' properties, since Pompey came into possession of a chest containing the king's botanical reports and notes on various herbal prescriptions and their effects.[110] Pompey gave due value to such knowledge and ordered a Latin translation of these documents.[111]

In the Persian tradition, the garden of the ruler is important. The Persian garden is the *paradeisos*,[112] but it is also the royal park in which the ruler planted trees and plants coming from the various regions of his dominion and transferred all kinds of animals, re-creating symbolically in the microcosm of the park the macrocosm of the empire's territorial expansion. In addition, designing gardens and planting trees with one's own hands was deemed as most suitable for a ruler: this is the picture of the 'good' Persian king Cyrus that Xenophon gives in the *Oeconomicus* in reference to the visit of Lysander, the Spartan statesman, to Cyrus at his palace in Sardis.[113] Lysander learns, to his surprise, that the design of the park, the perfect spacing of the trees, and the determinations of the orthogonal intersections were the work of the king himself, including planting some of the trees with his own hands:

> Ταῦτα τοίνυν, ὦ Λύσανδρε, ἐγὼ πάντα καὶ διεμέτρησα καὶ διέταξα, ἔστι δ' αὐτῶν, φάναι, ἃ καὶ ἐφύτευσα αὐτός. (Xen. *Oec*. 4.22)
>
> Well, Lysander, the whole of the measurement and arrangement is my own work, and I did some of the planting myself. (trans. O.J. Todd, Loeb edn)

It is interesting that the words Xenophon puts in Cyrus' mouth place activities related to war, agriculture, and (athletic) competition on the same level, and as suitable for the king:

[109] As discussed by Serena 2020.
[110] Pompey ordered his freedman, the grammarian Pompeius Lenaeus, to translate it all into Latin: Plin. *HN* 25.7.
[111] See discussion in Chapter 2.
[112] *Paradeisoi* is the Greek word used to indicate the gardens of Babylon and probably derives from the Median word *paridaiza* and Old Persian *paridaida* = a pleasure garden or some kind of enclosure; see Tuplin 1996, 80–131.
[113] Xen. *Oec.* 4.20–5.

> ὄμνυμί σοι τὸν Μίθρην, ὅταν περ ὑγιαίνω, μηπώποτε δειπνῆσαι πρὶν ἱδρῶσαι ἢ τῶν πολεμικῶν τι ἢ τῶν γεωργικῶν ἔργων μελετῶν ἢ ἀεὶ ἔν γέ τι φιλοτιμούμενος. (Xen. *Oec.* 4.24)
>
> I swear by Mithras that I never yet sat down to dinner when in sound health, without first working up a sweat at some task of war or agriculture, or exerting myself in some sort of competition. (trans. O.J. Todd, Loeb edn)

Whether this was a special Persian cultural tradition (Strabo tells us that Persian nobles were trained in hunting and gardening)[114] or not, it is clear that it resonated positively with Greek mentality: Cyrus is praised by Lysander for his virtues, and the praise for royal gardening is repeated by Cicero in the *de Senectute*.[115] As we have seen in discussing the creation of gardens by Lucullus and Pompey, by the time of the late Republic connections between gardens and political power were current in Rome. In addition, the important association of war and agriculture as simultaneous occupations for the upper classes was to have its own long-lived development in Rome's culture; as discussed in Chapter 4, Pliny the Elder used the language of military victory to refer to the grafting of new fruit varieties, thereby bringing to bear on mundane agricultural techniques a huge ideological and cultural baggage traceable at least as far back as the Greek and Persian worlds.

The royal Persian parks like that of Darius' palace at Susa had been an inspiration for the parks of the Hellenistic kings,[116] such as the royal park of the Seleucids in Antioch on the Orontes. On a lexical level, the idea of *paradeisos* was still present centuries later: in the second century AD, Aulus Gellius equates *vivaria* or *leporaria*, the enclosed parks destined to the raising of game and birds for *pastio villatica*, to 'the *paradeisoi* of the Greeks'.[117] Could it be that Lucullus' and then Pompey's garden building were a Roman take on this Persian theme taken on by Mithridates?[118] There is no indication that the peristyle garden spaces built by elite Romans made a conscious cultural reference to the worlds of Hellenistic Greece and Persia,[119] but a conscious reference to certain themes and practices embodied by Mithridates on the part of the two generals who had

[114] Strabo 15.3.18; Fauth 1977, 4–5 for the hunter and the gardener as royal ideals.
[115] Cic. *Sen.* 59.79. [116] Nielsen 2001. [117] Aul. Gell. *NA* 2.20.4.
[118] In the past it had been suggested that Lucullus' gardens were made according to Persian tradition because Cassius Dio refers to these *Horti* as *Asiatici*, and that Pompey calling Lucullus Xerxes in a toga referred to his garden building. However, the adjective Asiaticus refers to the later owner of the Horti Lucullani, not to the manner in which Lucullus created the gardens.
[119] As pointed out by Zarmakoupi 2014, 113.

fought and defeated him is plausible: they were emulating what they knew and had seen rather than some larger historical tradition.

Lucullus' intentions with the creation of his *horti* cannot be precisely known but they can be plausibly surmised, especially when seen in relation to his active political engagement until 59 BC rather than his so-called retirement in the mid 60s. There was more to the *horti* and how they were used than private refuges from the hurly-burly of political life: their use by Pompey and, later, Caesar, attests *horti* as active political spaces. The topographical link between their *horti* and the Campus Martius can be argued for both Lucullus' and Pompey's case. While the Horti Lucullani overlooked – and were visible from – the Campus, the Horti Pompeii were in the Campus Martius itself, near the theatre of Pompey.[120] The exact location of Pompey's gardens may not be known,[121] but convincing arguments have been put forward about the *horti* and the residence within being physically connected to the theatre-portico and for the villa in the *horti* being one and the same as the *domus rostrata* mentioned in the sources.[122] As noted by Russell, for most of the 50s BC Pompey was a holder of *imperium* and therefore could not enter the *pomerium* to reside in his house at the *Carinae*, but he could conveniently stay in the *horti* in the Campus Martius just outside the city's limits.[123]

It is beyond the scope of this book to offer a systematic investigation of the suburban *horti*, a topic treated in various studies.[124] However, the apparent innovation of Lucullus in designing suburban *horti* which could absorb large public functions leads to the question of whether the *horti* of Lucullus were the first gardens of this sort to be created in Rome. A unique passage in Cicero's *de Natura deorum* (2.4.11) reveals the existence of Horti Scipionis. They are mentioned in connection with an episode that occurred in 163 BC involving Tiberius Gracchus. These *horti* were located not far from the *pomerium* line and the *auguraculum* to be used in the *auspicatio* on the part of the consul before opening the electoral comitia, so they were probably located in proximity of the *Saepta*, on the side of the

[120] Plut. *Pomp.* 40.8–9.
[121] Grimal 1984, 129 and Palmer 1990 argue that the *Horti Pompeii* were not on the Campus Martius plain.
[122] Russell 2016, 156–62; *LTUR* s.v. 'Horti Pompeiani' (V. Jolivet). See also footnote 106.
[123] Russell 2016, 161. Asconius (33, 36, and 50 Clark) reports that in 52 BC Pompey was living in his *horti*.
[124] Grimal 1984; Andreae 1996; Cima and La Rocca 1998; Hartswick 2004; Frass 2006; Luschin 2008.

collis Latiaris.[125] The existence of the Horti Scipionis in 163 BC gives a *terminus ante quem* for their creation and the connection with the Scipiones revealed by their name means their creation should be attributed to either Scipio Africanus or his son. Besides this, we do not know anything else about the property, its appearance, or whether at the time of Scipio Africanus (and of Tiberius Gracchus) they would have been referred to as *horti* or whether this was a late Republican label applied by Cicero for a property just outside Rome's *pomerium*, like the many *horti* being created in his time.

Regardless of the name of this property, however, a serious possibility is that the emphasis on 'horticulture' in this type of suburban residence and their definition as *horti* started with Scipio's example and was in part indebted to the Carthaginian experience. Carthage was renowned for the farms that were in its territory devoted to commercial agriculture, including intensive horticulture.[126] The famous Mago, whose work had been, by order of the senate, translated into Latin when Carthage was destroyed in 146 BC and constituted an important source for the Latin agronomists, was a great expert in arboriculture. Perhaps it was the levels of horticulture observed in the farmhouses around Carthage that inspired the creation of the Horti Scipionis as a suburban residence with fruit orchards. If this were the case, it can be speculated that in Rome the semantic differentiation from the single noun *hortus*, which primarily meant vegetable patch, into the plural *horti*, meaning a house with large ornamental gardens, slowly started with the creation of the Horti Scipionis. The *horti* = fruit orchards would have thus been the linchpin between *hortus* = vegetable patch and *horti* = residence with large gardens.

Gardens for the People

The connection between *horti* or other large garden spaces, public entertainment, and political propaganda was strong.[127] In the last decades of the Republic, public banquets entertaining a large portion of Rome's population came to play an important role in securing popularity, and hence, political support. When his theatre was inaugurated in 55 BC with magnificent games displaying a number of wild animals never before seen in

[125] *LTUR*, s.v. 'Horti Scipionis' (F. Coarelli), 83.
[126] Cash-crop agriculture had a relevant role in the surroundings of Carthage at least as early as the late fourth century BC, when Agathocles' expedition took place: Diod. 20.8.
[127] D'Arms 1998.

Rome, Pompey also staged a *convivium publicum*. Cicero mentions almost in passing this *convivium* in his speech against Piso, and no details about it are given, but it may have taken place within the space framed by the Porticus Pompeii or, possibly, in Pompey's nearby *horti*,[128] and it may be that the public banquet staged by Caesar in 45 BC after his Spanish victory also took place in his Horti trans Tiberim. The entertainment Caesar staged was on a massive scale, 22,000 *triclinia*, which taken literally should mean 22,000 sets of three couches, ergo a banquet for a total of at least 198,000 people.[129] The Forum, which in the earlier Republican period had been a venue for public banquets, could not have accommodated such a large gathering of people,[130] not to mention the logistical side of it: transporting, storing the provisions, and preparing them for the banquet. A location in Caesar's property by the Tiber seems more practical than the busy Roman Forum.

The Campus Martius was important politically and symbolically. As a consequence, victorious and charismatic generals at the head of personal armies focused their attention on its spaces, not only because it was a large flat area that, despite being prone to floods, offered a field for developing substantial building projects. Caesar used the Campus Martius to respond to Pompey's building activity with various projects of his own: the Saepta, his Forum, and, significantly, a theatre (later completed by Augustus and dedicated to the memory of Marcellus). The first stone amphitheatre of Rome was also built in the Campus Martius by Statilius Taurus, and it is probably not just a simple coincidence that this building was erected on part of Pompey's *horti*. The Horti Pompeiani, which had become the property of Antony after Pompey's death, were in all likelihood one and the same with the *horti* of Agrippa. Agrippa left them in his will to Augustus and in turn the emperor made them public:[131] the full circle of public use of these suburban houses with gardens was thus completed.

Augustus appears to have fully understood the potential of garden space for one's popularity; several of his projects or those of his closest associates featured garden spaces, such as the mausoleum of Augustus, the Porticus

[128] Cic. *Pis.* 65: Cicero brings this up to stress that Piso, while attending the banquet, would not have the courage to show himself at the games, because *solet enim in disputationibus suis oculorum et aurium delectationi abdominis voluptates anteferre* ('it is his habit in all his discussions to attach higher value to the pleasures of the belly than to the delights of the eye and the ear', trans. N.H. Watts, Loeb edn). D'Arms 1998, 37, note 24.

[129] D'Arms 1998, 40. On this number being possibly higher, see Marzano 2020b.

[130] According to D'Arms' calculations (1998, 40), setting up 22,000 *triclinia* would have occupied 275,000 m^2.

[131] *LTUR*, s.v. 'Horti Agrippae' (F. Coarelli); Suet. *Iul.* 8; Dio 44.35.3; 54.29.4.

Octaviae, the Porticus Liviae, and the Porticus Vipsania. The 'greening' of Augustan Rome, to echo Christopher Hallett's words,[132] comprising also the restoration of a number of old temples and shrines in groves, had a religious dimension in promoting ancient cults. However, within this religious and ideological framework, the importance a green oasis could have for the ordinary people on Rome's busy and crowded streets should not be underestimated.[133] Rome, as it had developed by the late Republic, was a choking urban environment, and Augustus was well aware of it. Caesar himself realized this: he willed his Horti trans Tiberim, which in life he had used for public entertainment and self-promotion, to the Roman people. However, in the same way as political patronage was not unitary but nuanced, gardens for public or even private enjoyment were specific to the patrons' self-representation and political representation.

The city of Rome was not the only urban centre to enjoy benefactions comprising the construction of porticoed gardens. Around 12–11 BC, Tiberius gave to the *municipium* of Altinum 'temples, porticoes, and gardens', as attested by an inscription found reused in the baptistery on the island of Torcello near Venice and attributed to Altinum.[134] Possibly the plural nouns displayed by this epigraphic text are a rhetorical amplification to emphasize Tiberius' generosity: the benefaction may have actually been a temple with quadriportico and central garden. Be that as it may, Tiberius' benefaction was in line with what was happening in Rome: garden spaces were in fashion as a welcome addition to the urban fabric and, as discussed in the next chapter, the interest in acclimatizing new plants and developing new cultivars was in full swing.

To conclude, the blurring of boundaries between private and public architecture in terms of social and political significance that occurred in Rome throughout the first century BC helped to bring about an ideological development in garden spaces. Plants displayed in a garden could convey specific meanings, as discussed in the case of the plane tree and its intellectual evocations. When such plants were exotica imported from newly conquered lands, they spoke also of territorial conquests and military might. The gardens of prominent Romans symbolically represented the public persona of the owner and also directly entered political discourse when used as a venue for patronage of large groups of elite supporters and

[132] Hallett 2021. [133] Farrar 1996, 180.

[134] *CIL* 5.2149: [*Ti(berius) Claudius Ti(beri) f(ilius) Ti(beri) n(epos)*] / *Nero, co(n)s(ul), templa, porticus,* / *hortos municipio dedit*. Around this time Tiberius was in Aquileia (12–11 BC, see Suet. *Tib.* 7.2.2–3).

entertainment for the citizenry at large. Lucullus' gardens were a means to improve his popularity and continue an active patron–client relationship while he was awaiting his triumph outside of Rome's *pomerium*, while also probably responding, in a Roman way, to the combination of Persian and Greek traditions about the ruler/general/gardener picked up by Mithridates. At the same time, of course, the Lucullan *horti* provided a venue where the general could display his *liberalitas* and affirm his political presence near the city without crossing the *pomerium* and thus infringing the law. Tending to plants had been used in classical literature as an allegory for the care of the state. Pompey's grand building project was his response to Lucullus' *horti*, openly presenting his garden as a public space, attached to a new and important urban entertainment venue. He seems to have chosen plants for the garden that spoke of his victories, continuing the idea that gardens could say much about the virtues and achievements of their owner/creator. The multi-layered cultural complexity that one can find in the garden spaces of the late Republic is the background and fertile 'humus' on which horticulture and plant-transplanting grew as an elite, ideologically charged activity. Less representationally, the practicalities of responding to the demands for fresh food for growing urban markets and the vast provincial colonization programmes were phenomena that climaxed in the Augustan age, propelling various advances in horticulture and arboriculture, as I shall discuss in Chapters 3 and 7.