

THE VILLA FARNESINA



The frescoes of Peruzzi, Raphael and Sodoma still dazzle visitors to the Villa Farnesina, but they survive in a stripped-down environment bereft of its landscape, sealed so it cannot breathe. Turner takes you outside that box, restoring these canonical images to their original context, when each element joined in a productive conversation. He is the first to reconstruct the architect-painter Peruzzi's original, well-proportioned, well-appointed building and to re-visualise his lost façade decoration – erotic scenes and mythological figures who make it come alive and soar upward. More comprehensively than any previous scholar, he reintegrates painting, sculpture, architecture, garden design, topographical prints and drawings, archaeological discoveries, and literature from the brilliant circle around the patron Agostino Chigi, the powerful banker who 'loved all virtuosi' and commissioned his villa-palazzo from the best talents in multiple arts. It can now be understood as a Palace of Venus, celebrating aesthetic, social and erotic pleasure.

James Grantham Turner is James D. Hart Professor in the Department of English at the University of California, Berkeley. A scholar of unusual range who brings together literature, art, the environment, cultural and intellectual history, and gender and sexuality, he is the author of eight books, including the *Politics of Landscape* and *Eros Visible*, the latter cited for its 'extraordinary vitality' and as a 'most important' contribution to Renaissance Studies. Turner has won fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, among others.