

GARDEN SCULPTURE AND FRESCO DECORATION IN 17TH AND 18TH CENTURY VENETIAN VILLAS

One of the most striking aspects of Italian Renaissance and Baroque villas is the close connection that links architecture and gardens. The two parts of the residence constitute, architecturally speaking, a unity, they were planned according to the same rules and lie on the same axes. The garden, in the quattrocento just a small outdoor extension of the house, to which it was often connected by the intermediary of a porch or a loggia, gradually increased its dimensions and importance. Its decoration became richer and more complicated, and in some interesting cases an iconography linked to that inside the nearby house was adopted also for the garden: Along the itinerary of house and garden a story was revealed, through paintings and statues as well as by means of the vegetation. A detailed letter written by Alessandro Braccesi to Bernardo Bembo around 1480 explained that the choice of plants in the Medici Villa at Careggi near Florence corresponded to their mythological connections.

Statues were adorning gardens since antiquity. At the beginning of the sixteenth century in Rome, starting with the Belvedere Court in the Vatican, archaeological collections were usually exhibited in gardens, conceived as sort of open air museums. Since around 1550, antique statues (in case of necessity completed with modern ones) became part of the general program which involved every aspect of the composition, from painted and plastic decoration to the vegetation and the fountains, giving form to an effective Gesamtkunstwerk. At that time the so-called "iconographer" came to the fore, a highly cultivated person whose profound knowledge was employed to establish the sophisticated iconographic program, that usually celebrated the patron and his circle. This was the case for Villa Medici at Castello near Florence, Villa Giulia in Rome, Villa d'Este in Tivoli, Villa Farnese at Caprarola and Villa Aldobrandini at Frascati, whose iconographic programs were suggested by the well known scholars Benedetto Varchi, Annibal Caro, Pirro Ligorio and Giovan Battista Agucchi, and (with the exception of the program of the villa of Castello which was limited to the garden), involved both interior and exterior, i. e. buildings and gardens. The texts of Pirro Ligorio and Father Agucchi are detailed descriptions of the iconographic programs of Villa d'Este and of Villa Aldobrandini, while Giorgio Vasari illustrated, in his *'Vite de' più eccellenti Architetti Pittori, et Scultori italiani'*, the program of the garden of Castello.¹

The same development took place in the Venetian terraferma, where, as it is well known, villa architecture was primarily linked to the agricultural exploitation of the fields, in contrast to the leisure purpose of most of central Italian vil-

las.² Statuary appeared in the villas of the Veneto in the 1530s-1540s, contemporaneously, or even before fresco decoration. Among the earliest examples are Villa Garzoni at Pontrecasale, work of the architect and sculptor Jacopo Sansovino, who executed himself the two important fireplaces with mantelpieces and possibly the statues of the inner courtyard and of the front garden, and Villa Brenzone at Punta San Vigilio, where antique and modern sculptures, accompanied by Latin inscriptions, were distributed along the itinerary of the garden, according to the program devised around 1540 by the owner himself, Agostino Brenzone. Since the 1530s, with Sansovino's *Biblioteca Marciana* and *Loggetta*, both in Venice, statuary became a fundamental ornament of Venetian Renaissance architecture.

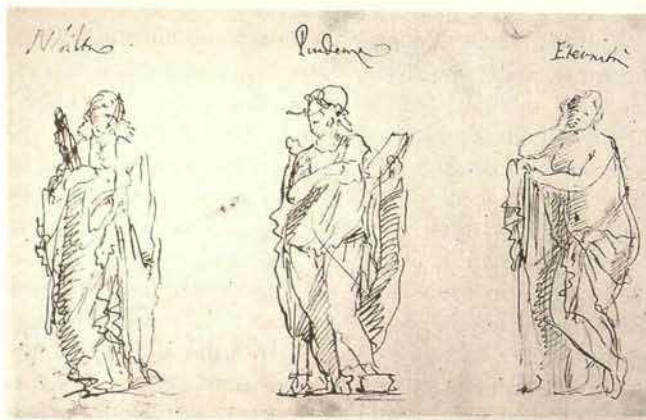
In his *'Quattro libri dell'architettura'* (published in 1570) Palladio sometimes mentioned the sculptors of his buildings, as it was the case for the sculptures for the four entrance stairways of the Rotonda, a work of Lorenzo Rubini, and always reproduced them in the illustrations, but he did not extend his attention to the garden. On the contrary, Vincenzo Scamozzi, in his *'Idea della architettura universale'*, published in Venice in 1615, wrote of statues in villa gardens, recommending to distribute them so as to let the axial view unobstructed, and suggested as subjects of fountains Neptune, Moses striking water, Apollo, young Tritons, river gods, nymphs, putti with dolphins and so on.³

From the second half of the seventeenth century statues in the gardens of the Veneto increased incredibly in number and importance, becoming, together with plants in pots (especially citrus)⁴, the main feature and ornament of the otherwise quite simple layout of the gardens, that were generally rectangular in form and subdivided in square compartments by perpendicular roads. The proliferation of statues was due to the combination of two factors: the availability of an easy to work and quite resistant limestone, the so-called *pietra tenera* from the Berici and Euganean Hills, Costozza and Nanto, and of extremely able artisans, or better artists, who, working for generations in large "botteghe", or workshops, transmitted their profession from father to son and to a large group of pupils. They could deliver in short time an incredible number of pieces of quite a high quality. The Marinali of Vicenza and the Bonazza of Padua are the most famous botteghe, but many others could be mentioned.⁵ So, the villas of the Veneto were invaded by a silent, white crowd, amounting up to one hundred and even more, in the same garden. The fame of Venetian artists reached all Europe: In 1717 Giovanni Bonazza sent statues of the four parts of the day to the Russian court for the

garden of the Summer Palace in St. Petersburg. For Peterhof his son Antonio executed in 1757 statues of Flora, Pomona, Zephyr and Vertumnus. Between the more common subjects of statuary, whose purpose was to celebrate the owner and his family, his ideals, virtue, fame over time, wisdom, culture and agriculture (the main reason of the existence of the villa) were allegorical figures, the four parts of the world, the four elements, the four seasons, the four parts of the day, the arts, Olympic deities, Roman heroes, nymphs and satyrs – a repertory traditional since the sixteenth century represented also in the fresco decoration inside. Their images were taken from classical manuals, like Vincenzo Cartari's 'Imagini de i dei', and Pierio Valeriano's 'Hieroglyphica', published both in 1556, the first in Venice and the second in Basel, and Cesare Ripa's 'Iconologia', whose first edition, followed by several others, appeared in Rome in 1593. Between the most interesting documents we must remember the so-called 'album del Marinali', a rich dossier of drawings by Orazio and his workshop reproducing, in several sheets, a varied repertory of statuary for gardens, but also for churches, with possible alternatives, today at the Museo Civico of Bassano del Grappa, near Angarano, birth-place of the stonecutters' family.⁶

With time new images were added to the traditional ones, like peasants, exotic Indians, Turkish and oriental men, grotesque figures and witty dwarfs, masques and characters from the commedia dell'arte, interacting one another as in a lively open air theatre. A good example is the statuary of the garden of the Baroque villa Widmann at Bagnoli di Sopra, composed of one hundred and sixty pieces being part of different cycles, between which those executed by Antonio Bonazza and followers in 1742 for Lodovico Widmann representing putti holding the twelve Zodiac signs, but also soldiers, masques, an aristocratic couple, a hunter and a peasant woman, an old man and an old woman quarrelling, giving the impression of assisting to one of the goldonian plays often represented here in the eighteenth century.⁷ Particularly lively are the so-called indios of Villa Breda at Ponte di Brenta, the work of Giovanni Bonazza. The display of statues was intended to transmit a message, exactly like the frescoes inside, as we said. But while most paintings are still there and, even if in poor condition, are usually readable, have been photographed and studied,⁸ statues have been often removed from one place to another.

Fig. 1. Orazio Marinali, preparatory drawing for garden statues, Bassano, Museo Civico



To the original nucleus new statues were added in time and others were eliminated, sold or transferred, so that it is difficult to reconstruct their original number and display. The minor interest of scholars for sculpture and gardens compared to paintings make things even more difficult. A limited number of inventories of statues in the gardens of the Veneto exist.⁹ Few attempts have been made to study their meaning and reason. However, with the help of interesting documents, we will try to consider some cycles that are still readable.

The first, early example, is Villa Barbaro at Maser, built around 1556 on plans prepared by Andrea Palladio together with the patron Daniele Barbaro on the final slopes of the Asolo hills, and completed in the following years with frescoes by Paolo Veronese and sculptures by Alessandro Vittoria. This perfect example of the integration between interior and exterior decoration follows the iconographic program proposed by Daniele Barbaro himself. The precise meaning of the decorative program of Villa Barbaro, expressed through frescoes, stuccos and statuary, partly painted in the upper store of the building and partly tridimensional, in the garden, is not clear in every detail. Many scholars have been involved to decipher it. Harmony in the microcosm of the family, in the government of the land, in Venetian politics and in the cosmos is certainly one of the main items. Harmony is intended in a wide sense, as fortune, peace, love, concord. Allegorical and mythological figures are elements of the language through which this message is expressed. Veronese, Vittoria and also the other patron, Marcantonio Barbaro, brother of Daniele, were responsible for its display in the interior, in the giardino segreto at the back, and in the garden in front of the mansion.¹⁰

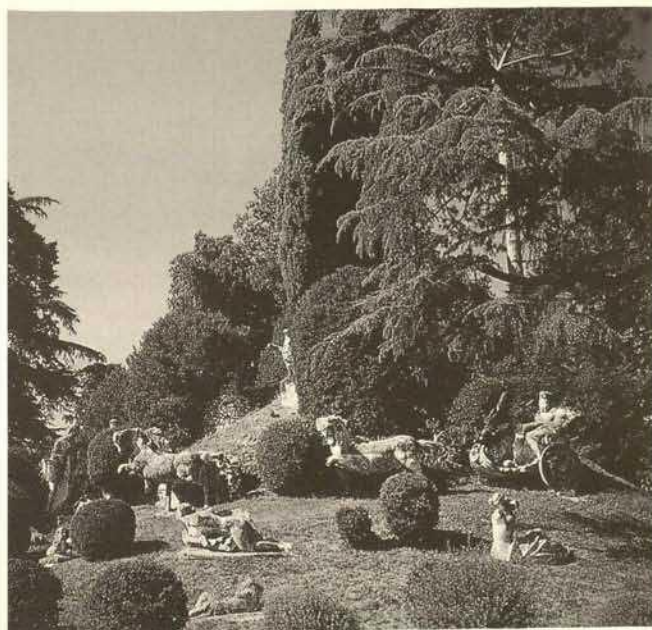
Let us now consider a later example, Villa Manin at Passariano, the residence of the powerful family which bought the accession in the Venetian nobility at a high price in 1651 during the Cretan war. The construction of the villa, located near Codroipo in the eastern district of the Serenissima called Friuli, started with Ludovico I Manin before 1656 and was frequently interrupted and therefore accomplished

Fig. 2. Villa Manin at Passariano, Hall looking north towards the gardens, painted by Louis Dorigny with the 'Triumph of Spring' and allegorical figures



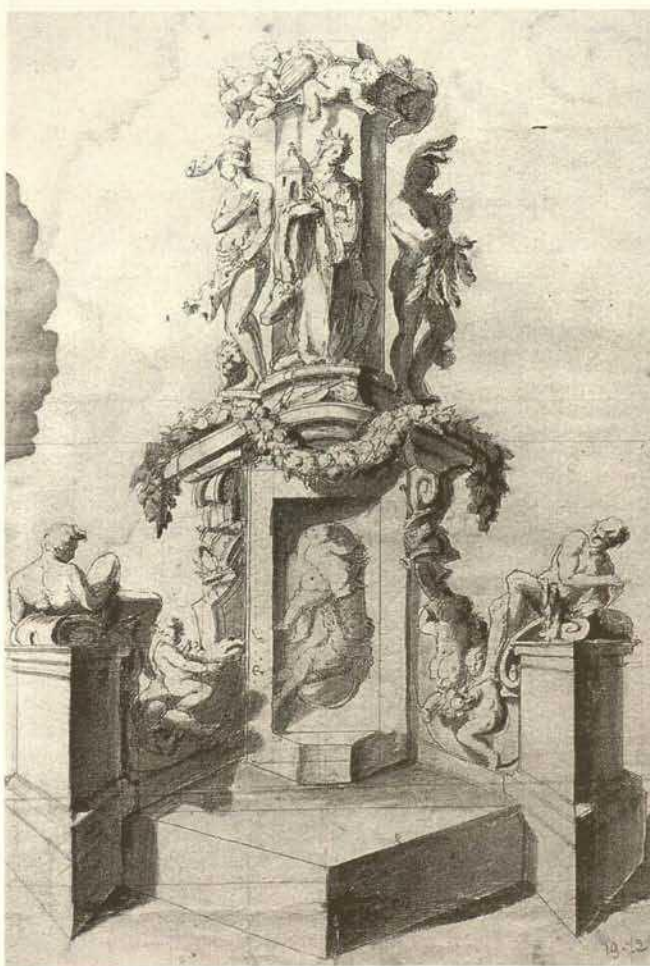
only one century later. Villa Manin has an ambitious architectural plan in which elements of traditional Venetian villa architecture were reinterpreted in the light of the Roman Baroque, to which refers the large "piazza quadra" (begun in 1707) and "piazza rotonda" in front (begun in 1718). The two towers at the side of the entrance gate, preceded by the drawbridge over the "peschiera", allude to the feudal power of the new aristocracy and remind us at the same time the utilitarian "torri colombari" of local tradition. Two representations of Herculean labours on top of the entrance welcome the visitor and others were visible in the huge rectangular garden at the rear of the mansion, begun around 1715, completed fifty years later in its original geometrical form, and in great part destroyed at the beginning of the nineteenth century to give place to a picturesque park. Rear gardens and front courtyards are clearly conceived as outside extension of the palace, according to the Renaissance and Baroque tradition. A great amount of statues, more than two hundred, are distributed in the villa, as well in the buildings as in the open air spaces. To go back to the eighteenth century formal aspect of the garden, that had an extension of eighty "campi", we must rely on documents, visual and written. Contemporary writings, as Daniele Florio's 'Le Grazie', illustrate the villa and its gardens. Of great interest is a refined series of twelve eighteenth-century prints which illustrate in details, with the help of the two legends, 'Indice delle cose più notabili del loco di Perseano di NN HH Co. Co. Manini', the general plan of the garden, divided in quadrangular compartments by perpendicular roads, with pavilions like the Bagno di Diana, two fortresses in miniature, one regular and one irregular, referring perhaps to the nearby Palmanova and to the models of the French military engineer Vauban, an open air theatre, a labyrinth, water towers, sun-dials, fountains, basins, and four small artificial hills at the north end, opposite to the front of the palace, which are the only surviving part of the Baroque plan.¹¹

Fig. 3. Villa Manin at Passariano, view of Mount Etna, one of the four hills at the north end of the gardens



From the general flatness of the site emerged elements like the hills, suspended gardens, a perimetric walk along the walls, towers and belvederi, that allowed an elevated overall view. The four hills, smaller the lateral ones, higher the central ones, crowded with statues, are used as setting for the representation of mythological events.¹² From west to east they represent: The sons of Saturn, Jove, Neptune and Vulcan, sharing the world between themselves; Mount Etna with Pluto in his chariot rapes Proserpina, while the crying nymph Ciane is transformed in a fountain; Mount Parnassus with Apollo, Muses and Pegasus; and Apollo shooting arrows to the Piton. The Fame propagates these achievements with a trumpet, a figure often represented in painted cycles. A precise correspondence links the frescoes in the west and east staircases, executed between the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, with the hills at the northern end of the garden: Jove strikes with lightnings the giants is linked to the outside Etna, at whose feet the giants were buried. More, Latona transforming the inhabitants of Lycia in frogs in the ceiling of the east staircase is related to Apollo and Mount Parnassus, and the spring room painted by Dorigny corresponds also to the hill Parnassus, while the allée of the Erme is a reference to the fecundity of the land and to the agricultural interests of the Manin at Passariano.¹³ Frescoes and statuary in the Manin Olympus of Passariano allude to the glo-

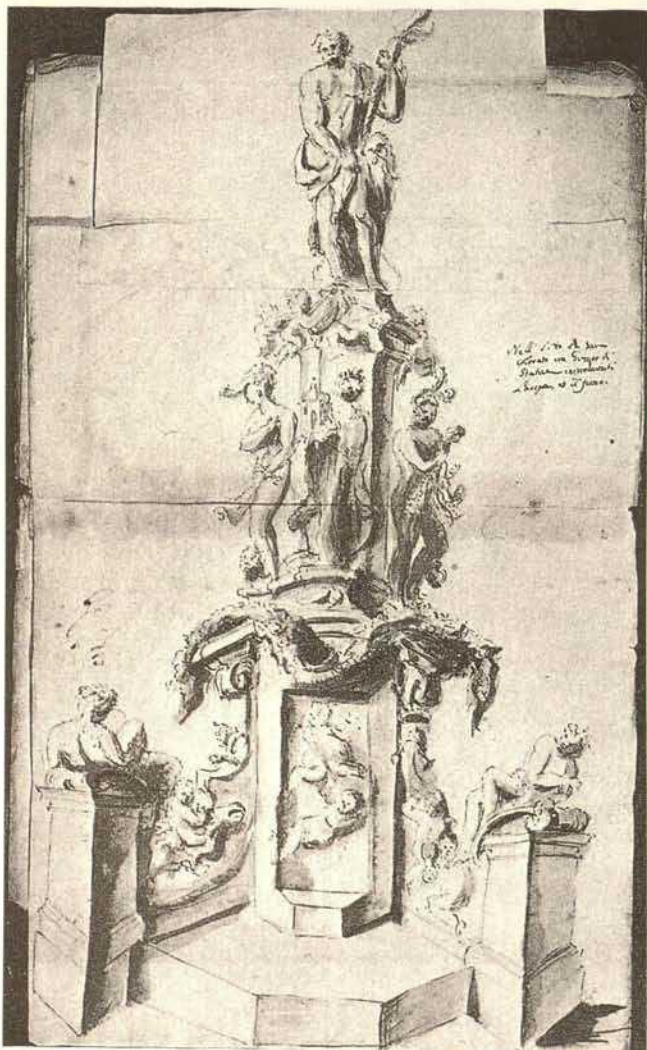
Fig. 4. The 'macchina' of Villa Lampertico, called 'La Deltiziosa', at Montegalabella, in a drawing of Orazio Marinali, Bassano, Museo Civico



rification of the family, its noble position, its interest in the arts, its political view, its admiration for Baroque Rome and for the France of Louis XIV. Like in Versailles we meet Apollo, Diana and their mother Latona. The name of the patron, Ludovico, is linked to that of the king of France. The relation between exterior and interior decoration in Villa Manin remembers that between the two vases of War and Peace at the beginning of the tapis vert and the two rooms with the same name at the extremities of the Galerie des glaces, at Versailles. Co-ordinator of a great part of the program was probably Giovanni Ziborghi, "mastro di Casa" from 1730 to 1765, and, later, Bernardino Zendrini.¹⁴

In Villa Barbaro a few inscriptions in the interior of the house, in the secret garden and in the grotto help us to understand the program of the villa. As already mentioned, inscriptions linked to statuary were the guiding line of the garden of Villa Brenzone at Punta San Vigilio. Even more relevant is the role of inscriptions in the garden of Villa Barbarigo at Valsanzibio in the Euganean Hills, started around 1660 and completed before the end of the century, one of the best preserved Baroque gardens of the Veneto, and also one of the more richly documented. It lies in a valley between two hills, and has a simple, quite rectangular plan, divided in twenty-four square compartments by perpendicular

Fig. 5. The 'macchina' of Villa Lampertico, called 'La Deliziosa', at Montegaldella, in a drawing of Francesco Muttoni, Porlezza, Archivio Comunale



ular roads. Its elements are almost all there, and in their original place, except for the vegetation. Instead of the completely controlled growth of the evergreen parterres, topiary and pergolas of the formal seventeenth-century garden, exotic shrubs and trees have been planted at the end of the eighteenth century, according to the vogue of the landscape garden, which, with their uncontrolled growth, have submerged every other element. The initial state of the villa and garden is testified by the illustrations in the album of Domenico Rossetti, 'Le fabbriche e i giardini dell'Ecc.ma Casa Barbarigo', published in Verona in 1702, while the painting of the late seventeenth century by an unknown artist, gives an extremely accurate image, partly ideal, as suggested by the exactly symmetrical structure, with its rectangular plan geometrically subdivided in 24 square compartments, and by the impossible frontal view.

The statues, probably in great part executed by Enrico Maregno (active between 1679 and 1714)¹⁵ were originally emerging elements, with fountains and a few pavilions, like the imposing Bagno di Diana, presented in front and side in the painting. They carry the message that the garden intends to transmit, illustrated by the distich inscriptions published by Giacomo Salamone in his 'Agri patavini inscriptiones sacrae et prophanae' of 1696, (the inscriptions, the author informs us, were copied in 1690) and today are still in great part readable. Diana is a central figure, dominating the transverse axis of the garden, a water axis, with her two

Fig. 6. The 'macchina' of Villa Lampertico, called 'La Deliziosa', at Montegaldella



O. Martini e aiuti, Fontana con le allegorie dei quattro continenti della terra; giardino posteriore di villa Conti, Lampertico a Montegaldella

lovers, Endimione and Atteone. At her sides, at the top of the Bagno, are Hercules and Mercurius. Local rivers (Brenta and Bacchiglione) and winds (Fountain of Eolus) represent the generous nature of the Euganean Hills. Mythological and allegorical figures (the giants Polifemo and Tifeo, Ope with the child Jove, Time, the four liberal arts) allude to the paradise of the villa as opposed to the hell outside, and accompany the visitor in a kind of initiatory walk that introduces to the terrace in front of the house, through the stairs where the essence of the complicated message is explained culminating on the terrace in front of the house, preceded by the long inscription on the steps,¹⁶ where nature and art finally find a perfect balance, well illustrated by the group of statues representing health, fecundity, joy, abundance, rest, agriculture, flora, genius and solitude, (Salubrità, Diletto, Allegrezza, Abbondanza, Riposo, Agricoltura, Flora, Genio, Solitudine). Recently in the program of the garden were read allusions to the contemporary political situation of Venice and of the Barbarigo family, who was involved in the war against the Turks.¹⁷

Only four statues survived of the original group of twenty-three made probably by Giovan Battista Bendazzoli for the late eighteenth-century garden of Villa Beregan, situated at the edge of Monte Crocetta, in a picturesque site just outside Vicenza called le Maddalene, but a short poetry written by the owner himself, Nicolò Beregan, illustrate the message transmitted by them.¹⁸ In Beregan's "parterre filosofico", as the garden was called, allegorical statues ("scolti sassi, che fan corona al verde smalto"), in group of four (the elements; the parts of the world; the arts linked to the ground: hunting, fishing, pastoral, agriculture; the parts of agriculture: cereals, vines, meadows, orchard; the sciences needed for a good agriculture: geometry, astronomy, mechanics and natural history; the two forces that inspire all human actions, interest and pleasure) accompanied the visitor from the entrance courtyard, through house and gar-

Fig. 7. Villa Cordellina Lombardi, Montecchio Maggiore, front garden, sculptures representing Mars and Venus or Rinaldo and Armida, attributed to Antonio and Francesco Bonazza



dens up to the peschiera, reaching at the end a complicated plastic group dominated by Jove and Minerva, with allegorical figures representing the victory of the Beregan family over cupidity, by means of religion, philosophy and virtue. The subject appears exactly as the counterpart of contemporary frescoes, with moral allusions well representing the principles of enlightenment.¹⁹ Moreover, the description of the statues of the Beregan parterre recalls, in the articulation of the allegorical figures, the description of the "grande commande" made in 1674 by Colbert to Le Brun, related to twenty-eight statues for the parterre d'eau of Versailles, of whom Claude Nivelon, biographer of Le Brun, gave the detailed allegorical program: "Ce parterre est une représentation de toute la masse ou construction universelle. Les quatre éléments étaient placés aux angles du parterre représentés sous la figure de quatre enlèvements (...) De plus, vingt-quatre figures qui ont été placées dans le tour d'un autre parterre sont les quatre représentations des éléments simples, les quatre parties de l'année, les quatre parties du jour, les quatre parties du monde, les quatre poèmes, les quatre complexions de l'homme, le tout avec leurs attributs en général, par lesquels est dépeint et figuré, comme est dit, l'union ou l'enchaînement de ce qui compose l'univers."²⁰ The drawings by Le Brun derive from Ripa's richly illustrated French edition of the 'Iconologia', published in 1644.

While in Villa Barbaro and Villa Beregan the iconographer was the owner himself, and in Villa Manin probably the "maestro di casa", in other cases the general program was supervised by one of the artists involved. We wonder, for example, if Giambattista Tiepolo, while painting the frescoes in Villa Loschi Zileri Dal Verme at Biron di Monteviale, Villa Cordellina at Montecchio and Villa Valmarana ai Nani, all near Vicenza, gave also suggestions for the plastic ornamentation of their gardens, which were reorganized more or less at the same time. Allegorical statues in grisaille were painted by Tiepolo in Villa Loschi, for whose garden Francesco Muttoni presented a project actually never executed. Were the two artists in contact with one another?

Still more questions arise with Villa Cordellina at Montecchio Maggiore, near Vicenza, built for the rich lawyer Carlo Cordellina from 1735 to 1747 according to plans by Gior-

Fig. 8. Giambattista Tiepolo, preparatory drawing for a sculptural group representing Rinaldo and Armida, (London, Victoria and Albert Museum), probably for Villa Cordellina Lombardi



gio Massari, perhaps with the participation of Francesco Muttoni for the additions used as horse stables and guest house. Giambattista Tiepolo painted the main hall in 1743 and the Bonazza executed at the same time the statues for buildings and gardens.²¹ The same spirit and cultural background preside painted and plastic decoration inside and outside, the main topics being the virtues and moral qualities of a good lawyer and the happiness of aristocratic rural life and of agriculture, for whose improvements Carlo Cordellina was actively involved. The same mythological and allegorical figures are represented in the frescoes and in the statues. Tiepolo, probably on suggestions by Francesco Algarotti, gave sketches for some statues. Seven drawings by Tiepolo are clearly connected to the two groups of lovers in the southern court, even if the subjects are not exactly the same, as the sculpted groups represent Jove and Juno, Mars and Venus, while the drawings represent Rinaldo and Armida, Zefir and Flora, Diana and Endimion, Diana and Orion.²² Eight fine urns representing the four seasons, positioned at couples on top of the pilasters of the four gates that link the southern "corte nobile" to the side gardens with the "cedrara" (i.e. orangerie), and these with "orto" and "brolo". They show lively scenes of family and country life and are topped with flowers and fruits corresponding to the represented season. These urns are probably the work of Antonio Bonazza, but their elegance recalls the art of Giambattista Tiepolo. A similar urn is painted in the 'Mythological Scene' by the young Tiepolo, at present in a private collection at Genève.²³

The same question could be advanced for Villa Valmarana ai Nani: Were Giambattista Tiepolo and his son Giandomenico, painters of the fescoes in the villa and in the guest house, also responsible for the garden statuary? In particular the seventeen statues of dwarfs that give the name to the villa were somehow inspired by the Tiepolos? The dwarfs represent a soldier, a servant, a king, the guardian of the Serail, and other professions which recall the figures of the commedia dell'arte, and of the contemporary Goldonian theatre. This subject is not frequent in villa gardens.

Six excellent dwarfs, probably made by Orazio Marinali, are in the orangerie staircase of Villa Trento da Schio at Costozza di Longare, another group at Villa Nani Mocenigo at Monselice, where they refer to the family name, and others in the Giardini Valmarana al Castello in Vicenza. Lionello Puppi associates the iconography of the dwarfs to the German edition from 1716 of 'Il Callotto resuscitato', with prints derived from grotesque figures of Callot. Tiepolo could have seen this publication during his stay in Würzburg, just before he started to work for the Valmaranas.²⁴ Today the statues are standing on the enclosure walls and look outside, a situation that evidently does not correspond to the original one. It is possible that they were moved there around 1785 during the renovations commissioned by Elena Garzadori, daughter-in-law of Giustino Valmarana, patron of the Tiepolos. At that time, a lot of previously neglected statues, some of them of great quality, were repaired and re-expound.

And again we wonder about the relationship between architect and sculptor in the planning of garden pavilions and gateways like at villa Trissino²⁵ and at villa Pisani at Stra,²⁶ both masterpieces of Venetian Rococo, where structural and decorative parts are conceived as an inseparable

whole. How much did Francesco Muttoni and Girolamo Frigimelica influence the figurative ornamentation of buildings like the portals of Villa Trissino, topped with fanciful volutes, urns and trophys, and the hexagonal Orangerie of Villa Pisani, culminating with twelve statues of the arts? Perhaps the involved artists collaborated so closely together in such works that it is difficult to define the precise role of each one. This was, probably the case for the complex "macchina" of Villa Conti Lampertico, called "La Deliziosa", at Montegaldella, a huge composition where the four parts of the world and the four corresponding rivers are superposed in a octagonal planned structure,²⁷ topped by a group of two male figures, one sitting and one staying, animated by sprightly putti astride capricious volutes, a motive recurrent in the work of Muttoni. We know two drawings related to this composition: One drawing, probably made by Orazio Marinali, to whom the sculptures have always been attributed, or by somebody of his workshop, lacks the plastic group at the top. This drawing was found in the already mentioned 'album del Marinali' at Bassano's Museo Civico.²⁸ The other drawing is more detailed and complete and was made by Francesco Muttoni, who probably gave the general plan of the "macchina". An inscription on the drawing reads "Nel Sitto A sarà collocato un Gruppo di Statue rappresentanti l'acqua e il fuoco". This refers perhaps to the sculpture group at the top²⁹ and seems to be a good example of collaboration!

Sculpture is an essential part of these compositions, as we have seen. Therefore we are concerned if it is separated from the environment for which it was planned. That happened often in the past. Statues from Venetian villas are today in Villa La Pietra near Florence and in the Huntington Gardens, San Marino, California, just to mention two rather satisfactory examples.³⁰ That still happens today. We regret that an auction house of international renown recently proposed the sale of a series of statues of the Bonazzas and guaranteed that they were from a garden near Padua and could be sold, as a group or separate. This provoked not only the irreparable mutilation of that garden, but the loss, with the works of art, of the key for reading the message that the entire villa intended to transmit.³¹

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Margherita Azzi Visentini, *Die italienische Villa. Bauten des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart 1997, with detailed bibliography; Idem, *Scritti teorico pratici sull'arte dei giardini*, Milano, Il Polifilo (in publication).
- 2 The bibliography on Venetian villas is extremely rich. See, for the essential references, Margherita Azzi Visentini 1997 (see: footnote 1), pp. 221-294, 352-355 (bibliography).
- 3 Vincenzo Scamozzi, *L'idea della architettura universale*, Venezia 1615, p. 344.
- 4 Alessandro Tagliolini and Margherita Azzi Visentini (editors), *Il giardino delle Esperidi. Gli agrumi nella storia, nella letteratura e nell'arte*, Firenze 1996. Apart citrus, vegetation was limited to flower beds near the house, in order "to leave free the vista", and to row trees architecturally cut to form pergolas or espaliers along the edges of the garden. The introduction of exotic trees like magnolia grandiflora, liriodendron tulipifera, ginkgo biloba, taxodium distichum etc., at the end of the eighteenth century, changed completely the traditional relationship between architecture, garden and landscape in Venetian villas.

- 5 See: Camillo Semenzato, *La scultura veneta del Seicento e Settecento*, Venezia 1966; Idem, Bonazza, in: Jane Turner (editor), *The Dictionary of Art*, 4, 1996, pp. 310-311; Idem, Marinali, in: Jane Turner (editor), *The Dictionary of Art*, 20, 1996, pp. 422-423, with bibliography.
- 6 On Marinali's album see: Franco Barbieri and G. Menato, *Pietra di Vicenza*, Vicenza 1970; Franco Barbieri, *Le scene della scultura*, in: I Tiepolo e il Settecento vicentino, exhibition catalogue, Milano 1990, pp. 226-245, at pp. 231-236; M. Azzi Visentini, "Et in Arcadia ego". Innovazioni e tradizione nel giardino veneto del Settecento, *ibidem*, pp. 350-381, at pp. 377-79. Drawings of the Marinali are also in Vicenza's Museo Civico.
- 7 Francesco Cessi, *Lo zodiaco di A. Bonazza e della sua scuola nel giardino di Villa Widmann a Bagnoli*, in: "Padova e la sua provincia", XI, 1965, 1, pp. 9-12.
- 8 On the painted decoration of Venetian villas see: Luciana Crosato, *Gli affreschi nelle ville venete del Cinquecento*, Treviso 1962; Mercedes Precerutti Garberi, *Affreschi settecenteschi delle ville venete*, Milano 1968; Francesca D'Arcais, Giuseppe Pavanello, Franca Zava Boccazzi, *Gli affreschi nelle ville venete dal Seicento all'Ottocento*, with an introduction by Rodolfo Palucchini, Venezia 1978.
- 9 Explaining the view of the garden of Villa Sagredo at Marocco in his 'Istoria e coltura delle piante', published in Venice in 1726, Paolo Bartolomeo Clarici remembers the great number of "marmoree Statue, che in forma gigantesca sopra eminenti basi s'innalzano", or "annicchiate ne riparti del Giardino (...) riescono di prospetto, ed ornamento in qualsivoglia situazione".
- 10 On Venetian statuary, apart the already mentioned writings by Semenzato and Barbieri, see Camillo Semenzato, Antonio Bonazza (1698-1763), Venezia 1957; A. Nava Cellini, *Storia dell'arte in Italia. La scultura del Seicento*, Torino 1982; Idem, *Storia dell'arte in Italia. La scultura del Settecento*, Torino 1982; Paolo Goi, *Il Seicento e il Settecento*, in: Idem (editor), *La scultura nel Friuli-Venezia Giulia. Dal Quattrocento al Novecento*, Pordenone 1988. On the iconographic meaning of the decoration of Villa Barbaro see R. Cocke, Veronese und Daniele Barbaro: The Decoration of Villa Maser, in: 'Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes', XXXV, 1972, pp. 226-246; Douglas Lewis, Il significato della decorazione plastica e pittorica a Maser, in 'Bollettino del Centro Internazionale di studi di architettura Andrea Palladio', XXII, 1980 (1985), part I, pp. 203-213; Luciana Crosato Larcher, Considerazioni sul programma iconografico di Maser, in: 'Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz', XXVI, 1982, pp. 211-256; I.J. Reist, Divine Love and Veronese's Frescoes at the Villa Barbaro, in: 'The Art Bulletin', LXVII, 4, 1985, pp. 614-635.
- 11 Eighteenth-century prints and writings help to understand the meaning of the iconographic program of Villa Manin. Of great interest are especially the fourteen prints, ten related to the gardens, of the series *Locco dei N.N. H.H. Co.Co. Manin di Perseireano*, of which only two copies are known, one in the Biblioteca Civica di Udine (Archivio Manin) and the other in the Museo Correr, Venice. Important informations are given by the contemporary writings of F. Beretta, *La Patria del Friuli descritta e illustrata colla storia e monumenti di Udine sua capitale e delle altre città e luoghi della provincia*, Venezia 1753; Natale Dalle Laste, A.S.E. Co. Lodovico Manin, Procuratore di S. Marco. *Gratulatione dei Deputati della città di Udine*, Venezia 1764; D. Duranti, *Persereano, Canti due per le nozze del N.H. Signor Conte Giovanni Manin e la N.D. Signora Samaritana Delfin*, indirizzati agli eccellentissimi sposi, Udine 1765; D. Florio, *Le Grazie. Poemetto per le nozze del cav. Giovanni Manin colla N.D. Samaritana Delfino*, Venezia 1768. See Francesca Venuto, *La vicenda edilizia del complesso di Passariano*, in: 'Arte in Friuli - Arte a Trieste', 7, 1984, pp. 53-74; Lionello Puppi, "Fortunam Virtus vincere sola potest". L'Olimpo dei Manin a Passariano, in: 'La letteratura e i giardini', papers of the meeting, Firenze 1987, pp. 395-409; Martina Frank, Una fervida stagione di committenza gentilizia: I Manin, in: 'Studi veneziani', n.s., XXIII (1992), pp. 147-162; Martina Frank, *Virtù e fortuna. Il mecenatismo e le committenze artistiche della famiglia Manin tra Friuli e Venezia Giulia nel XVII e XVIII secolo*, Venezia 1996,

pp. 31-55; Francesca Venuto, *I Manin e la villa di Passariano: Storia di un sito, di un palazzo e di un giardino*, in: Gilberto Ganzer (editor), *Splendori di una dinastia*, exhibition catalogue, Milano 1996, pp. 26-32; Francesca Venuto, *La statuaria di Villa Manin*, in: Mariella Moreno (editor), *Codroipo. Inventario dei Beni Culturali del Comune*, 26, Passariano 1996, pp. 155-173. Venuto's text is completed with plans indicating the actual location of each statue.

- 12 The statues in the hills were bigger than the others and roughly refined. Originally they were plastered and probably painted. The remaining plastic decoration of the garden, composed of around one hundred pieces, mainly statues, but also herms, vases, trophies etc., is today aligned along the main allées. The elegant turkish trophies are a clear homage to Giulio-Antonio Manin, who died at Candia serving his country. Together with the statues in the front courtyards, in the buildings and in the chapel they amount to 230 pieces. Giovanni Bonazza and his sons Francesco and Tommaso are responsible for the most consistent group (around one hundred pieces) and the most refined. Agostino Testa, Antonio Pietrobelli, Orazio Marinali, Giuseppe and Paolo Gropelli, Francesco Bertos, Giuseppe Zimin-



Fig. 9. Bonazza's workshop, urns with motifs of spring, eastern "brolo", Villa Cordellina Lombardi, Montebelluna Maggiore

ian and Pietro Danielelli collaborated to the plastic decoration of Villa Manin. We find two artificial hills at the limit of the garden, at the sides of the "stradon" introducing to the fields, more or less like in Villa Manin, in other gardens of the Veneto. Villa Cornaro (called "Il Paradiso") at Castelfranco had hills with pavilions described by Petr Andreevic Tolstoj in 1697, today still surviving in the landscape garden, crowned with horses once at their feet. See Margherita Azzi Visentini, *La Villa Cornaro, detta "Il Paradiso"*, poi Revedin-Bolasco, a Castelfranco Veneto, in: *Il giardino come labirinto della storia*, II, papers of the meeting (1985), Palermo 1990, pp. 7-11; Margherita Azzi Visentini, *Villa Cornaro. Castelfranco Veneto*, in: Idem (editor), *Die Gärten des Veneto*, München 1995, pp. 129-131. Artificial hills were built in the same position in the gardens of Villa Grimani at Martellago. See: Bernard Aikema, *A French Garden and the Venetian Tradition*, in: 'Arte Veneta', XXXIV, 1980, pp. 127-137.

- 13 On the fresco decoration of Villa Manin see: Francesca D'Arcais, Giuseppe Pavanello, Franca Zava Boccazzi 1978 (see: footnote 8) p. 210, tavv. 231-232; Martina Frank 1996 (see: footnote 11) pp. 46-53.

- 14 See: Michelangelo Muraro, La villa di Passariano e l'architetto Giovanni Ziborghi, in: Tagungsbericht der Dreiländer-Fachtagung der Kunsthistoriker, Graz 1972, pp. 44-60; Francesca Venuto, Giovanni Ziborghi "mastro di casa" Manin, in: *Venezia Arti*, 5, 1991, pp. 73-80.
- 15 As suggested by Camillo Semenzato, Una proposta per il giardino di Valsanzibio, in: *Arte Veneta*, XXIX, 1975, pp. 219-223. But different hands have executed the statuary of the garden. On Villa Barbarigo see: Lionello Puppi, The Giardino Barbarigo at Valsanzibio, in: *Journal of Garden History*, III, 1983, pp. 281-300; Margherita Azzi Visentini (editor), *Die Gärten* cit., pp. 138-141; Lionello Puppi, "Quivi è l'inferno e quivi il paradiso". Il giardino di villa Barbarigo a Valsanzibio nel Padovano, in: Monique Mosser and Geroge Teysso (editors), *L'architettura del giardino d'occidente*, Milano 1992, pp. 181-183; Loris Fontana, Valsanzibio, Valsanzibio (Padova) 1990.
- 16 On the steps between the garden and the terrace in front of the house the following long inscription is addressed to the visitor: "Tù, che curioso giungi, è à parte, à parte / Giri per rintracciar vaghezze rare, / Osserva, e di, che, s'una pur n'appare, / E tutto di Natura, e nulla d'Arte. / Qui più splendenti il Sol suoi rai comparte, / Qui Venere più bella esce dal Mare: / Sue mutanze la luna hà qui più chiare, / Qui non giunge à turbar furor di Marte. / Quivi Saturno i parti suoi non rode, / Qui Giove giova, ed'hà Sereno'l Viso; / Quivi perde Mercurio ogni sua frode. / Qui non ha luoco il pianto, hà sede'l riso; / Qui della Corte'l fulmine non s'ode; / Quivi è l'inferno, e quivi il Paradiso."
- 17 On the program of the Barbarigo garden see: Lionello Puppi, "Quivi" (see : footnote 15); Loris Fontana, cit. The last has read in the statuary of the garden references to the Turkish war in which Venice was involved at the time, as well as other allusions to the family affairs in this war. For example the verses "Puote solo Endimion fermar la luna" would refer, according to Fontana, to the moon of Islam, and not only to Diana.
- 18 Nicolò Beregan, Dilucidazione del parterre filosofico nella Villa dell'Autore ne' sobborghi di Vicenza detta il Moracchino, in: *Poesie diverse di Niccola Beregan*, Padova 1786, pp. 87-90; Margherita Azzi Visentini, *Il giardino veneto tra Sette e Ottocento e le sue fonti*, Milano 1988, pp. 167-170.
- 19 The eighteenth-century iconographic programs open to the new philosophical and scientific approach of enlightenment, see: Barbara Mazza, Il trionfo della scienza ovvero "La luce dell'intelligenza vince le tenebre dell'ignoranza", in: *Studi veneziani*, n.s., XXIII (1992), pp. 163-181.
- 20 See, on the iconographic programme of the gardens of Versailles, Claude Nivelon, *Vie de Charles Le Brun*, ms., Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. Fr. 12987; abstracts in Pierre de Nolhac, *La création de Versailles d'après les sources inédites. Etude sur les origines et les premières transformations du château et des jardins*, Versailles 1901.
- 21 On Villa Cordellina see: Remo Schiavo, La Villa Cordellina Lombardi di Montecchio Maggiore, Vicenza 1975; Idem, Giovanni Battista Tiepolo alla villa Cordellina di Montecchio Maggiore, Vicenza 1989; Lionello Puppi (editor), *La Cordellina: l'Olimpo in villa*, in: *I Tiepolo e il Settecento vicentino* cit., pp. 296-381. On the statues of Villa Cordellina see: Remo Schiavo, *La Villa Cordellina* cit.; Giovanni Mariacher, *Le sculture di Villa Cordellina Lombardi*, in: Lionello Puppi (editor), *La Cordellina* cit., pp. 321-323. Remo Schiavo has noted affinities on the treatment of faces in paintings and sculptures. For the involvement of Giambattista Tiepolo in the gardens of villas where he painted, see: Margherita Azzi Visentini, *I giardini del Tiepolo*, in: Lionello Puppi (editor), *Giambattista Tiepolo ... acts of the meeting* (1996), in print. In 1863 have been sold the four statues originally on the eastern and western small towers of the villa, representing Time, Aesculapius, Fortune and Hercules. On the ceiling of the main hall of Villa Cordellina Tiepolo painted the Triumph of Virtue and Nobility in the centre, and around it six monochromes with allegorical figures, representing Politics, War, Poetry and Painting, Music, Merit and Advice (Consiglio), the two last taken from Ripa; in the east and west walls of the same room The Contenance of Scipio and The family of Dario in front of Alexander, related to the civic virtues of the patron,
- while on the "sovrapporte" were painted the four continents. On the iconographic programme of Tiepolo's frescoes, probably inspired by Francesco Algarotti, see: Lionello Puppi, Carlo Cordellina committente d'artisti. Novità e appunti su G. Massari, G. B. Tiepolo, F. Guardi, F. Lorenzi, O. Calderari, in: *Arte Veneta*, XXII, 1968, pp. 212-216; Barbara Mazza, Il trionfo della Ragione. Giambattista Tiepolo per Carlo Cordellina, in: Lionello Puppi (editor), *La Cordellina* cit., pp. 306-315. Statues, vases, trophies and various plastic decoration figure in Tiepolo's paintings, but mostly copied from different models, particularly ancient ones, made available by recently published repertories. On the subject see now: Giuseppe Pavanello and Paola Rossi papers of the congress on Giambattista Tiepolo, Lionello Puppi (editor), in preparation. On the conservation problems of the garden statues see: Filipa Aliberti Gaudioso, *Le sculture del giardino. Vicende e problemi di conservazione*, in: Lionello Puppi (editor), *La Cordellina* cit., pp. 324-328.
- 22 Tiepolo's drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum were first connected to the Cordellina's statues by George Knox, *Catalogue of the Tiepolo Drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum*, London 1960, nn. 74-80, pp. 16-17, 55-56. For George Knox the plastic group generally identified as Mars and Venus represents instead Rinaldo and Armida, the same subject of two drawings. Five similar drawings of group of figures related to statuary, with their pedestal, by Giambattista, numbered by the artist's own hand, in the Berlin Printroom (inv. Nn. 4487-90 and 12322), are mentioned by J. Byam Shaw, Domenico Tiepolo, London 1962, pp. 39-40, who discusses also a serie of drawings by Giandomenico clearly related to garden statuary.
- 23 The painting, in a private collection of Genève, was first published as a young work, dated about 1724-25, by Morassi, who identified the subject as the Death of Narciso or of Giacinto. See: Antonio Morassi, *Settecento inedito*, in: *Arte Veneta*, XVII, 1963; Aldo Rizzi (editor), *Mostra del Tiepolo. Dipinti*, exhibition catalogue, Milano 1971, n. 10, p. 31.
- 24 See: Lionello Puppi, I Tiepolo a Vicenza e le statue dei "nani" a Villa Valmarana a San Bastiano, in: *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze Lettere Arti*, 1967-68, pp. 243-50; Idem, I "nani" di Villa Valmarana a Vicenza, in: *'Antichità viva'*, VII, 1968, 2, pp. 34-46.
- 25 Muttoni, in his exceptional series of drawings for the gardens of the upper villa, represents statues with great accuracy. On the Trissino villas in Trissino see: Margherita Azzi Visentini, Francesco Muttoni architetto di giardini: Villa Trissino Marzotto a Trissino, in: *Arte Veneta*, XLIV, 1993, pp. 34-47; C. Crovella, *Le ville Trissino-Marzotto a Trissino*, doctoral thesis, University of Udine, 1995-96, pp. 79-88, with reproduction, subject and location of the eighty statues today in the gardens of the two Trissino villas, mainly the work of Angelo De Putti and Giacomo Cassetti, of the Marinali school.
- 26 On the garden of Villa Pisani see André Corboz, *Il Parco di Stra* (1719): piste per una ricerca, in: *Il giardino come labirinto della storia*, II, papers of the conference, Palermo 1990, pp. 25-47. André Corboz has noted that Giambattista Tiepolo, who worked at the main hall of Villa Pisani many years after the construction of the garden, painted elements of Frigimelica's walls of the villa many times in his work (loc. cit., pp. 31, 33, footnote 33). In the inventory of the Villa Pisani at Stra made by Giannantonio Selva in 1806 are listed the following statues by Antonio Bonazza, mainly groups, still in place: Apollo and Diana, Nemesis, Hercules and Sole, Venus and Mars, Zephyr and Flora, Neptune and Pomona, Aurora and Triton, Indolence and Gluttony, Envy and Mida, Daphne and Apollo, Arrogance and Ira. Cfr. R. Gallo, Una famiglia patrizia. I Pisani ed i palazzi di S. Stefano e di Stra, in: *'Archivio veneto'*, XXXIV-XXXV (1944), 67-70, Venezia 1945, pp. 65-228; L. Fontana, *Villa Pisani a Stra*, Fiesse d'Artico (Ve), 1983, p. 66, footnote 28. Twelve statues representing the arts (music, geometry, etc.) are at the top of the exagonal pavilion of the garden.
- 27 On the huge "macchina", around eight meters high, of Villa Conti Lampertico, probably originally conceived as a fountain, see: Renato Cevese, *Ville della provincia di Vicenza*, Milano 1980 (first edition 1971), pp. 408, 410; Franco Barbieri and G. Menato, *Pietra* cit., pp. 92-95.

- 28 Camillo Semenzato, *La scultura cit.*, pp. 98, 103, fig. 72; Franco Barbieri, *Le scene cit.*, pp. 233-234.
- 29 The drawing is one of a dossier of 289 given by the artist at his native town of Cima, and today in the Archivio Comunale of nearby Porlezza, in northern Italy (Fondo Muttoni, XV, 135). Natalia Grilli, *Un archivio inedito dell'architetto Francesco Muttoni a Porlezza*, Firenze 1991, p. 156.
- 30 The gardens of Villa la Pietra, near Florence, were planned in a Renaissance revival style from 1904 under the direction of their owner, Arthur Acton, and of his gardener, Mariano, with a series of three terraces looking down to Fiesole and Florence. A great number of Venetian garden statues, a giant Hercules and others by Orazio Marinali's workshop, and others attributed to Francesco Bonazza, were distributed in the gardens. Masques of the commedia dell'arte were located in an open-air theatre. A recent archival discovery kindly communicated by Fernando Rigon have revealed that an entire group of statues of the Marinalis were bought by Arthur Acton around 1924 from Villa Santogiocaffi Pedrina of Ponte di Barbarano Vicentino. See: Harold Acton, *Ville Toscane*, Milano 1973, pp. 145-148; Luigi Zangheri, *Ville della provincia di Firenze*, Milano 1989, pp. 132-147.

On December 11th, 1918, at an art sale at French and Company in New York, twenty stone statues, made in the workshop of Giovanni Bonazza and his sons, were bought by Henry Edwards Huntington, from the estate of Luther Kountze, who had bought them from a garden near Padua. They represent Mars,



Fig. 10. The statue of 'Time' in Villa Barbarigo at Valsanzibio, from D. Rossetti, *Le fabbriche ...*, 1702

Minerva, Perseus, Fire, Light, Music, Dance, Dancing Peasant, Piping Nymph, Musician, Baccant, Italian Peasant, Youthful Warrior, Female Warrior, Amazon, Peace, Victory, Flora, Husbandry and Arboriculture. Huntington, a very successful man of commerce enriched with the railroad business, was then living in New York at his residence of 57th Street and Fifth Avenue, but was in the meantime very busy with the construction of buildings and gardens in the large California Estate of San Marino, Pasadena (six hundred acres), ten miles north of Los Angeles, that he considered, since his first visit in 1892, a specially-favored land. He acquired the property in 1903, after a long, careful investigation about the best place for his dreamed estate, at the death of J. de Barth Shorb, its previous owner. The construction of the gardens started in 1904 under the supervision of William Hertrich, with the Lily Pond, the Palm Garden and the Desert Garden, followed by the North Vista, the Rose Garden and the Cyclad Collection. The Venetian statues, backed by azaleas and palms, were located in the North Vista, closed at the far end by the San Gabriel Mountains. The gardens were officially opened on August 30th, 1919. See: James Thorpe, *The Creation of the Gardens*, in: *The Founding of the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery*, San Marino, Ca, 1969, pp. 332-350.

- 31 Sotheby's sale of October 26th, 1989, offered a group of seventeen early eighteenth-century stone statues from a Venetian garden attributed to Giovanni and Antonio Bonazza, Orazio Marinali and Giovanni Marchiori. Let's hope that at least this small group will stay together!