

Sören Fischer

**“Fingere alcune aperture,  
in quelle far paesi da presto e di lontano”  
On the Concept of the Framed Vista in  
Early Modern Italian Villas**

**Abstract**

*The present article focuses on the aesthetics of the framed view and on selected illusionistic landscape frescoes in Venetian villas of the 16th century. Hereby this study shifts the focus to a motive, seemingly purely decorative at first sight, but which is, as it is proven here, a central core of the interior of many villas, such as the Villa Godi (Lugo di Vicenza), Villa Barbaro (Maser), Villa Rotonda (Vicenza) and Villa Pisani (Lonigo). By observing the iconographic and dramatic significance of framed views on to the landscape the study allows various conclusions on the perception of the villa space from the observer's perspective.*

**The framed vista in the Renaissance – an introduction**

In no other century have both artists and contractors given such careful consideration to the subject of illusionist landscape painting like in the Italian Cinquecento.<sup>1</sup> It is this form of murals, in which broad-sized painted landscapes feign a seemingly real vista in the numerous villas by using illusionist frame architecture, enabling the presentation of landscapes as framed pictures. What one could enjoy in the interiors was no longer the panoramic view introduced and standardized as *topos* by Francesco Petrarca. Instead the infinite landscape in itself disintegrated within the medium of painting into lots of adjacent window-like segments, which often competed with real windows and hence were compared with them. The created nature by the painter could be thus enjoyed only in the form of a human-made restrained section trying to surpass the real window vistas.

Unlike any other artist from the first half of the 16th century Baldassare Peruzzi mastered the subject of the illusionist landscape painting in a confident and innovative manner.<sup>2</sup> By order of the banker Agostino Chigi (1465–1520) Peruzzi – at this point very experienced in the design of theatre backdrop and façade paintings – had created a monumental illusionist landscape painting shortly before



Figure 1: Baldassare Peruzzi, *Sala delle Prospettive*, Villa Farnesina, Rome, shortly before 1519.

1519 in the Roman Villa Farnesina, which directs the viewer's gaze past the coloured marble columns to the vedutas of contemporary Rome (Fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> The painting with its imitation of various marble sorts got to this place probably during the preparations for the contractor's wedding with his Venetian lover in August 1519.<sup>4</sup> Peruzzi designed the entire hall with a stage-like pilaster and column colonnade as a cover-deep balcony, whose inner frieze above the viewer has a mythological figure program. Recently, Bertsch too has referred to the meaning of the perspective-created Renaissance stage for the development of the landscape vista: "The perspective vista is ultimately influenced by these prospects and the viewing habits of the Renaissance have been thus significantly revolutionized."<sup>5</sup>

Peruzzi expressed most clearly the theatrical space breakup at the front side of the hall, where balconies with double colonnades challenge the material existence of the fixed wall. Illusionist spaces are created in that they are barely taken for a painting from far away. The painting constituted thus a coincidence of real space and fictitious architecture space staging the painted surrounding landscapes in the framed form and not as undivided panorama.<sup>6</sup>

The contemporaries were aware of the mastery of this deception ability, which surpassed significantly the older examples of the illusionist landscape painting thanks to its highly mimetic quality, such as Andrea Mantegna's *Camera degli Sposi* (Mantua, ca. 1465–1474), the anonymous wall frescos of the *Loggia dei*

Cavallieri di Rhodi (Rom, ca. 1471) and the Sala Baronale in Castello Challant (Issogne, ca. 1494–1502).<sup>7</sup>

One of them was Sebastiano Serlio, who emphasized precisely this room as an example for a perfect illusion in the Libro Quarto of his architecture treatise published in 1537: “But if one intends to decorate the interior of buildings with paintings in various colours, one could fake in the walls of the balconies around the gardens and the courts yard some openings which showed lands from near and far, all sorts of coloured stuff. That is how one fakes the real, and when looking outside the building one can see all of the previously mentioned things. And that is what Baldassare [Peruzzi] did [...]”<sup>8</sup>

Serlio expressed clearly the deceptive potential of the painting, which enables opening out fixed walls in the form of landscape vistas. It is not only attributed a purely decorative function, but simultaneously an imitative quality. The illusionist landscape architects have the ability of imitating the real, that is, the nature as well as of directing the observer’s gaze to a variously differentiated nature like watching through real windows: “one fakes the real when looking outside the building” [*“si finge il vero, che guardando fuori de gli edifice”*].

Notably the framing of the painted landscape view, constituted by *trompe l’œil*, developed into a leitmotif of interior decoration in the villa of the 16th century. It is the frame, which inevitably presents the feigned reality of the painted landscapes to the observer. What ultimately is used as a theme in the painting is the interweaving of image and observer space and the focus on the transitory ability of the screen. The wall surface appears in the sense of Leon Battista Alberti as a “*finestra aperta*”: an open window.<sup>9</sup>

The window character of the illusionist landscapes appears as a program where the artists have searched for an inevitable comparison situation with the real villa architecture. An example for this is the painted Stanza del Giuramento in the Villa Imperiale near Pesaro by Girolamo Genga and his associates since 1530 (Fig. 2). The painting imitates adjoining windows on all walls, which are rhythmized by flat pilasters. The perpendicularly framed windows on the Arcadian landscapes imitate deliberately the real architecture creating in this manner interplay between nature and art.

A similar method was used about two decades later in the Venetian Villa Godi, which was built on a hill by Andrea Palladio for the Vicentine-aristocrate Girolamo Godi. In his architecture treatise “*I Quattro Libri dell’Architettura*” published in 1570 Palladio played up the vista ability of the Villa: “At Lonedo, a place in the Vicentino, is the following house, belonging to Signor Girolamo de’ Godi. It is situated on a little hill that has a very fine prospect [...]”<sup>10</sup> But Palladio em-



Figure 2: Girolamo Genga, Stanza del Giuramento, Villa Imperiale, Pesaro, 1530–1537.



Figure 3: Andrea Palladio, Villa Godi, Lonedo, 1537-1542. Framed view from the Salone onto the landscape.

phasized the edifice-landscape relation as especially characteristic even prior to the architecture and the function of the individual rooms. Indeed his debut work around 1537 features impressive landscape spectacles, which are presented to the observer in a graduated movement dramaturgy as panorama, vista and prospect.<sup>11</sup> While the observer enjoys the near and far hills at his feet from the perspective of the big house stairway, the landscape disintegrates from the loggia interior into three clearly separated vistas. From the position of the central parlour the ultimate enhancement of the landscape's framing takes place. It definitely turns into a picture (Fig. 3).

However, it is particularly characteristic for the villas of the Venetian Republic that the contemporary interest in the framed vista is not only reflected in the architecture but also in the wall paintings of the country houses of the 16th century. Like in the Villa Godi, versatile vistas are added to the interior here. This has been realized especially convincingly in the Stanza di Bacco e Proserpina decorated *a fresco* in 1548 by Gualtiero Padovano (1505/1510–1552/1553) (Fig. 4). The painter feigned a circular pillar colonnade, surrounding an erected perpendicular vista window at the west wall. The landscape behind it shows a green surface covered by a luminous yellow-violet sky, which numerous promenaders visit. The fresco is a mirror-inverted iteration of the opposite real east window drawing a paragonal level of meaning between architecture and painting, between real and painted vista.

Previous research has not enunciated clearly enough the immanent vista character of these illusionist landscapes and the significance of their seemingly architectural framing. Instead of conceiving the landscapes as integral parts of a complex villa aesthetics based on antique patterns, it described them in purely decorative function as “decorative landscapes” [*“paesaggi decorative”*] or “ideal places” [*“paesi ideali”*].<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, researchers were content with their interpretation of landscapes as reconstructions of antique wall paintings as bequeathed to the Early Modern Age by Vitruvius and Pliny the Elder in their scripts “De Architectura Libri Decem” and “Naturalis Historia”.<sup>13</sup> At first view, the frescos also show great concurrence with the antique landscape images passed down by Vitruv and Pliny the Elder. For instance, one finds in them “harbors, foothills, coasts, rivers, springs, straits, sacred sites, groves, mountains”<sup>14</sup> as well as “pleasure forests, hills, fish ponds, channels, rivers, shores, and all things the heart desires just like different figures of promenaders or ship passengers”.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless a decisive difference is to be noted in all the contact points. While the antique authors write about landscape images, the illusionist landscapes of the numerous Italian villas of the 16th century surmount their pictorial character with a claim to absolute reality:<sup>16</sup> The painted windows become vistas.



Figure 4: Gualtiero Padovano, Stanza di Bacco e Proserpina, Villa Godi, 1548. Western wall with illusionistic window vista.

It is remarkable that the simulated landscapes often surpass the real views from windows quantitatively and are to be perceived as the actual protagonists of the interior spaces. For instance, there are eight windows in the south wing of the

Villa Godi and nine painted vistas, whereas there are 14 windows in the central structure of the Villa Barbaro built by Palladio in the 1550s and 26 illusionist vistas.

The question arises as to why the focus has been put in so many villa projects of the Cinquecento on illusionist landscapes and the associated vista situations. Gerd Blum has already come to the conclusion that the aesthetics of the framed landscape view were an important motif of the Italian secular architecture since the last quarter of the 15th century.<sup>17</sup> However, his conclusion referring to the state of research about the staged vistas in the architecture is that “the architectural staging of vistas in the Italian Renaissance has been barely researched so far.”<sup>18</sup> Blum attributes the significant rise of staged vistas in the architecture to the contemporary experiences with the prospect as well as to Leon Battista Alberti’s definition of the painting as a window in his treatise about painting “*Della Pittura*”: “The novel perspective painting of the Quattrocento as well as Alberti’s definition of the painting as an undivided, rectangular ‘*finestra aperta*’ were groundbreaking for the introduction of the framed vistas in the Renaissance’s architecture: Undivided, rectangular, all’antica framed vista windows started to appear first in painting and relief art since ca. 1420, before they were used in the built architecture with significant delay.”<sup>19</sup>

In the Giardino pensile of Urbino’s palace, expanded with vista balconies in 1464 by Luciano Laurana and Francesco di Giorgio Martini by order of Federico da Montefeltro (1422–1482), five high windows with benches open the court towards the West (Fig. 5).<sup>20</sup> Their form absorbs via the form of the remaining Travée windows of the Palazzo the framed Corinthian pilasters and the antiquated woodwork. Thanks to the magnificent architectural bordering, which does not repeat the forms of a picture frame, the views on the near hill receive a raised pictorial quality: The wide landscape panorama collapses in five clearly limited natural sections. Thus, the Giardino shows Urbino’s landscape only as a limited image. Therefore, one needs not puzzle about the functions of Urbino’s windows, which do not serve either the purpose of lightning or ventilation. Their architectural purpose is to warrant framed vistas of the fecund landscapes.

Regarding the concept, the Giardino reveals its close relationship to the equation of painting with a window view as stated in Alberti’s treatise about painting (“*una finestra aperta*”).<sup>21</sup> The pilaster través of the wall windows act as fulcrum of this connection, repeating the contemporary framing of paintings in the style of *tavola quadrata all’antica*. Blum has expressed the following thought in this context: “The vista windows of the palace garden prove to be early architectural realizations of the modern, undivided, rectangular vista window, which has



Figure 5: Luciano Laurana and Francesco di Giorgio Martini, Palazzo Ducale, Urbino, from 1464. Window with vista of the Giardino pensile.

evolved into one of the central dispositives of perception of the modern age and into a ‘symbolic form’ of the Western world view.”<sup>22</sup> The connection to the back, then, the most modern kind of picture framing, showed the almost pictorial quality of the framed landscapes quite plainly to the observer.

### **Pliny the Younger and the aesthetics of the framed vista**

However, it would be premature to explain the copious appearance of illusionist landscapes in the 16th century solely with the window vista as described theoretically by Alberti. Above all, “Della Pittura” does not answer the question, why precisely the villas were turned into places, where framed vistas were staged not only through architecture, but also through painting. Instead, one must turn their gaze toward the early Imperial politician and writer Pliny the Younger (61/62 – c. 113 AD), who shaped fundamentally the vista and prospect topos in the villa in his two big villa letters II, 17 and V, 6. There was no room in Plinius’ writing that did



not view, look or watch (“prospicit”, “videt”, “spectat”, “adspicit”<sup>23</sup>), no chamber that did not relate visually to other residential areas, the gardens or the far landscape. The intrinsically endless and often wild nature was tamed by nothing else than the manmade architectural framing and hence made bearable in visual sense. And even where the landscape presented itself as a panorama like in the case of the Tuscany villa, he compared it with the controlled structure of a theatre: “The character of the country is exceedingly beautiful. Picture to yourself an immense amphitheatre, such as nature only could create. Before you lies a broad, extended plain bounded by a range of mountains, whose summits are covered with tall and ancient woods, which are stocked with all kinds of game.”<sup>24</sup>

These villa descriptions, which due to lacking architectural knowledge served in the Renaissance as a major source for the reconstruction of the Villa all’antica, provided according to the pursued thesis here the central template for the illusionist landscape painting. In his villa letters, Pliny took his readers on virtual tours through his villas in Latium, Tuscany and at the Lake Como. Pliny’s villas are places for leisure and relaxation, for literary work and political peace. The vistas and prospects framed by window or portico architecture, usually available from the dining rooms on the surrounding stretches of land, serve as a visual guarantee for the relaxing villa life; an aesthetics, which has also had a decisive influence on the Italian villa of the Renaissance in the literary tradition.<sup>25</sup>

For Pliny, a room can be experienced in full only when it provides the observer with various vista windows, when the security at the inside meets the architecturally framed landscape.<sup>26</sup> Hence, Pliny surpassed the treatise about architecture “De Architectura Libri Decem” by Vitruvius too. The latter also recommended a high building lot for a country home, but he elaborated on the aesthetic quality of the framed vistas just as little as Alberti in his treatise about architecture “De Re Aedificatoria” from 1450.<sup>27</sup>

A case in point for Pliny is the veranda (“Zotheca”) of the Laurentian villa, in which the landscape is not perceived as panorama, but rather indulged into from three windows. The window framing, whose aesthetic function has been presented in detail by Drerup and Lefèvre, fulfills a function that arranges the outer world.<sup>28</sup> The landscapes rise into manmade pictures and gain artificial quality through the architectural limitation: “A veranda protrudes very nicely into the centre of the opposite wall. [...]. It includes a divan bed and two armchairs; the sea lies at its feet, the villas are in its back and the forests at its head. [The room] separates and unites so many landscape images in as many windows.”<sup>29</sup>

By imposing a manmade outline framework on nature in the form of windows and rows of columns, one makes nature reassuringly tangible and turns it

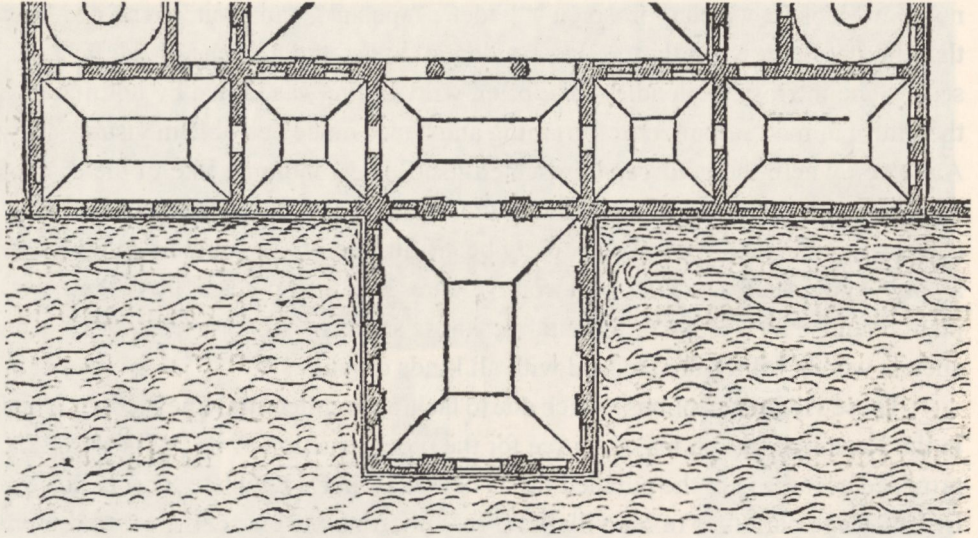


Figure 6: Vincenzo Scamozzi (1615), Reconstruction of the Plinian Villa Laurentina. Detail: the beach triclinium.

into an almost artificially created painting.<sup>30</sup> The combination of versatile sight axes as an aesthetic element of spatial experience can be found not only in the described veranda. It is also a motif of interior effect in the dining rooms of the Laurentian villa. The description of the beach *triclinium*, which was reconstructed in a drawing for the first time by Vincenzo Scamozzi in his 1615 published treatise “L’Idea della Architectura Universale” sounds as follows (Fig. 6):<sup>31</sup> “Right in the middle across [a row of arcades] is a friendly front room, followed by a quite beautiful dining hall, which protrudes up to the beach and when the Southwest stirs up the sea, it is washed by the tails of the already roaring waves. It has double wing doors or just as high windows on all sides granting a view ahead, to the right and to the left so to speak on three seas. In the back one has a view on the front room, the arcades, the courtyard, arcades again, then the atrium, forests and the mountains in the distance.”<sup>32</sup>

Pliny added the description of a graded view through the entire villa axis, trailing off in the distance of the landscape, to the three-sided vista motif. The *triclinium* in the immediate beach vicinity turned in this manner into a clear balcony, in which the framed landscapes became an integral indulgence element.<sup>33</sup> Particularly, the window architecture ensured that the observer assumed a distanced, even protected position towards nature. Instead of seeing the sea as a panorama in its entire splendor, Pliny perceived it in neatly arranged sections, which he could observe individually like a painting (“*quasi tria maria prospectat*”).<sup>34</sup>

The scenic aesthetization in the beach triclinium squeezes into the observer's perception not only through the windows but primarily through the axially described prospect (“[...] *a tergo cavaedium, porticum, aream, porticum rursus, mox atrium, silvas et longinquos respicit montes.*”<sup>35</sup>). As Drerup deduced from antique house architectures, a decisive role was ascribed to such consciously set prospect situations, which narrowed down the landscapes to sections, in the early imperial time: “What has brought the villa into being as a type of construction into being and promoted it, is, explained unilaterally, the surrounded landscape as a completion of its construction, i.e., as an aesthetic stimulus of the experienced tension between the inside and the outside. Certain landscape sections shaped by the rewarding motif are allowed in as goals of prefabricated perspectives, as optical axes in the living quarters of the villa [...]” “*Was die Villa als Bauform ins Leben gerufen, sie vorangetrieben hat, ist, um es einseitig zu formulieren, die umgebene Landschaft als Komplettierung ihrer Bauform, d.h. die als ästhetischer Reiz genossene Spannung zwischen drinnen und draußen. Es sind bestimmte, durch das lohnende Motiv geprägte Landschaftsausschnitte, die als Zielpunkte vorgebauter Perspektiven, als optische Achsen in den Wohnbereich der Villa hineingelassen werden [...]*”<sup>36</sup>

### About the literary and architectural reception of the framed vista in the Italian Renaissance

No one described the aesthetics of the framed vista more elaborately than Pliny the Younger. It is therefore not surprising that the villa letters for contractors, architects and painters have been evaluated as a central source for the early modern reconstructions of antique vista and prospect scenarios. As Lise Bek presented, the Pliny reception began already in the mid-14th century.<sup>37</sup> For instance, one could trace back particular phrases of the garden and landscape description in Giovanni Boccaccio's (1313–1375) *Decamerone*, written between 1349 and 1353, to Pliny's villa letters. Already at that time the author must have possessed them. However, Boccaccio does not focus on the villa like Pliny. It is rather the garden, which as a *locus amoenus* becomes the place for the narrations of the protagonists.<sup>38</sup>

Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374), who dedicated himself to extended landscape descriptions in his numerous letters, was of fundamental importance for the revival of a Pliny-based landscape reception at the outset of the Early Modern Age.<sup>39</sup> Next to the descriptions of the *loci amoeni* it is especially Petrarca's

intentional search for high positioned vista points joined by an embracing viewing angle, which associates him to Pliny in spirit. Especially the ever repeating description of the landscape view as “*spectaculum*” indicates that the poet was most probably familiar with the villa letters.<sup>40</sup> Landscape is conceived in them as theatrical just as it is in the Pliny letter about the Tuscany villa (“*imaginare amphitheatrum aliquod inmensum*”<sup>41</sup>).

Around 1420, the large-scale reception of Pliny’s villa letters both in stylistic and aesthetic manner began. The Italian scholar Guarino Veronese (1374–1460) rediscovered a large part of the letter collection. He came across a Pliny codex in Verona’s Biliotheca Capitolare in 1419, which, according to contemporary counting, contains the books I-VII and IX with ca. 220 letters.<sup>42</sup> It was his use of the letters that penetrated into the consciousness of the humanistic literature unfolding their inspiring impact.<sup>43</sup> Two years after the first Italian printing shop was established in 1469/1470 the letters were printed in a typeset book in Venice. In the time period between 1471 and 1519 more than a dozen prints flooded the markets in Naples, Rome, Bologna, Milan and Florence.<sup>44</sup> An exemplary glance on texts by Guarino Veronese, Andrea Palladio and Agostino Gallo illustrates how inspiring the antique villa descriptions were for the contemporary villa literature. In Pliny’s tradition the villa is seen as a perfect place, if various vistas on the landscape, framed by architecture, are provided.

The Italian scholar and archive researcher Guarino described in several letters, written in the summer of 1419 just a few months after the Pliny codex was discovered, his country estate in Valpolicella.<sup>45</sup> In the following quote, the Plinyian metaphor of the landscape as a theatre is remarkable. It is used to conceive nature as a well-regulated space: “It [the villa] is settled on a soft hill, so indiscernibly rising that you are not aware that you are climbing until you see that you have reached the top [...]. Where you cannot catch a glimpse of any rows of variegated little trees in the shape of a theatre mountains are laterally in your back. Further ahead, wide fields delight the eyes but they never satisfy them [...].”<sup>46</sup>

The half-round, hilly topography of the landscape (“quasi theatrum”), the easy access and the delightful backdrop were the definition for the perfect villa already in Pliny’s writing.<sup>47</sup> Just like the antique author, Guarino shifted his attention further to the description of the framed vistas. The windows and their exact direction towards certain perspectives (“*fenestras ita dispositas*”), however, serve less the practical considerations than the lighting and ventilation, they grow according to the antique villa aesthetics into places of a topic landscape staging: “The windows [of the villa] are positioned in such manner that one of them shows the meadows, the other one the flat fields and [yet] another the river and the visible

evergreen forest. [...] Such are the often conveyed indulgences, to which I invite you, my estimated gentlemen.”<sup>48</sup>

Margherita Azzi Visentini described by using the example of the Villa Medici on the mountain slope that the conscious direction of vista balconies and windows was discussed not only in the literature but it was also reflected in the contemporary villa architecture. In this building constructed for Giovanni di Cosimo de' Medici by Michelozzi between 1451 and 1457 the loggia are “included as integral part in the building justifying thus the perfect reciprocal penetration of inside and outside, garden and landscape, which would become a distinguishing characteristic of villa architecture in the future.”<sup>49</sup>

The subject of the framed vista was discussed at length in the villa books of the 16th century as well.<sup>50</sup> These books, whose genre tradition relied on their antique and medieval roots, experienced their peak in Italy in the mid-16th century. Most of the books [...] composed in the form of an antique scholar dialogue, appealing to aristocratic land owners, pursued three intentions: the ennoblement of agriculture as high art, the presentation of a schoolbook with practical advice for agricultural economy and the description of the enjoyable villa life, which was very often associated with landscape descriptions.

Next to Alberto Lollo, Bartolomeo Taegio and Anton Francesco Doni, the writer and villa owner Agostino Gallo dealt intensively with the vista aesthetics featured by his villa near Brescia. In his 1569-published book “Le venti giornate della vera agricoltura e de' piaeri della villa”, which had been published in an abbreviated version in 1564 and 1566, Gallo emphasized the vista potential of his *Saletta della peschiera*. Similar to the dining room of Pliny's Tuscanian and Laurentian villa the Saletta features adjacent windows (“per le finestre che vi erano da ogni lato”), which enable a visual enjoyment of the garden and the fields on all sides. The perception of the garden and the landscape, limited by the framing, is stylized into an elementary moment of a delectable villa life: “*Essendo ritornato M. Vincenzo il quinto giorno nell' hora solita dall'Avogadro, & ritrovatolo nella saletta della peschiera sotto alla colombara di mezo, dove non solo si compiaceva nel mirare per le finestre che vi erano da ogni lato, il gran pergolato, il giardino, l'horto & i campi suoi, che sono da Oriente; ma ancor'una infinita di pesci, che vanno, & guizzano tuttavia per laqua, onde salutatolo, & poi maravigliatosi grandemente di così bella prospettiva, entrò a i parlamenti soliti, dicendo.*”<sup>51</sup>

The motif of the staged prospect – referred to as “*una mirabil prospettiva*”<sup>52</sup> by Gallo – assumes an important aesthetic role in the villa books. In Gallo's villa the view is cast through a pergola, then through a balcony over the court and through a gate, behind which a path runs. This “beautiful and long [...] view”



Figure 7: Rossellino, Palazzo Piccolomini, Pienza, 1459–1462, Framed view from the Salone onto the garden and the landscape.

[“bella, e lunga [...] vedutta”] is supplemented in the text by the close trees and the blossoming meadow. Prospect and landscape indulgence are united into a semantic entity<sup>53</sup> “*Gio.Bat. Poscia che cosi ragionando, e rimirando queste vaghezze, siamo pervenuti in capo, senza che entriamo nella sala di questa colombara, fermamoci un poco in mezo di questa porticella, poiche l’occhio nostro trappassa questo pergolato, la loggia, e vede tutto il cortile, e quanti passano dirimpetto alla porta per la via. Corn. Certamente che questa è una mirabil prospettiva.*”<sup>54</sup>

The pictorial staging of landscapes in the Palazzo Piccolomini (1459–1462) from Pienza illustrates exemplary that such prospect aesthetics was also anchored in the architecture of palaces and villas and thus a close correlation between text and image can be recognized. The entire ground floor of the family palace built by order of Pope Pius II, born Enea Silvio Piccolomini, by Rossellino is traversed by a prospect there (“uno prospectu”<sup>55</sup>). This prospect ends in the North in a “Giardino pensile” and in the lying landscape beneath (Fig. 7). The palace’s outline strives deliberately for this dramatic impact. If the visitor enters the papal building from Corso his gaze falls through the narrow vestibule on the front arcade row of the peristyl, then on the court, the posterior shadowed pillar row and the big exterior

door just to end finally through the wide outside balcony in the greenery of the garden and the vista window in the garden wall.

The viewshaft reduces the landscape, which according to Arnold Esch too “is described and seen as incarnate by Pius from a certain point, which is familiar to him” [“bei Pius von einem bestimmten, ihm vertrauten Punkte aus leibhaftig gesehen und beschrieben [wird]”]<sup>56</sup>, to an extreme excerpt: The outside world becomes a picture. The Pope himself described this viewshaft in his *Commentarii* (ca. 1463–1464), a mixture of autobiography and diary, as follows: “Those people [namely] who have entered the palace through the main entrance in the North can see with one single glance [“uno prospectu”] the row of pillars, the atrium and – through the opposite door – the lower balcony and the garden up to its very end, and walk around comfortably without coming across bumps, stairs or other obstacles.”<sup>57</sup>

The visual aesthetics described here suggests that Pius II was inspired by Plinius’ beach *triclinium* of the Laurentian Villa, which offered next to the revolving windows a deep viewpoint through the rooms on the mountains on the horizon.<sup>58</sup> The garden and landscape vista appears framed to the observer in Pienza like in the antique villa due to the multiply graded architecture. The rhythmic change of the building sections lightened and shadowed by daylight emphasizes the optical appeal referring at the same time to the conceptional proximity to the antique atrium house.

No architect of the Early Modern Age could realize the vista aesthetics inspired by Pliny as convincingly as Andrea Palladio. The latter showed already at the end of the 1530s in his first country estate, the Villa Godi, how interested he was in this visual correlation between architecture and landscape. He managed to raise dramatically the vista effects with the Villa Almerico-Capra, so-called Villa Rotonda, near Vicenza (Fig. 8). The villa’s relation to the outer world, especially through the four big porticos, has been examined by researchers in many cases and the architect himself was aware of the particular Pliny-related quality of the vistas at this place.<sup>59</sup> Hence, not only did he describe in his “I Quattro Libri dell’Architettura” the lovely position, but he also pointed out the magnificent, perspective-composed vistas to all sides. (“gode da ogni parte di bellissime viste”): “Its situation is as advantageous and delicious as can be desired, being seated on a hillock of a most easily ascent, at the foot of which runs the Bacchiglione, a navigable river. On the other side, it is surrounded by several hills, that seem to form a great theatre, and which besides are all of them cultivated, being very fertile, abandoning with excellent fruits and vineyards: so that having the advantage of fine prospects on all sides, some confined, some more remote and some farther than the sight can reach I have made Porticos to all the four fronts.” (Transl. by Nicholas du Bois)<sup>60</sup>



Figure 8: Andrea Palladio, Villa Almerico-Capra „La Rotonda“, Vicenza from the late 1560s.

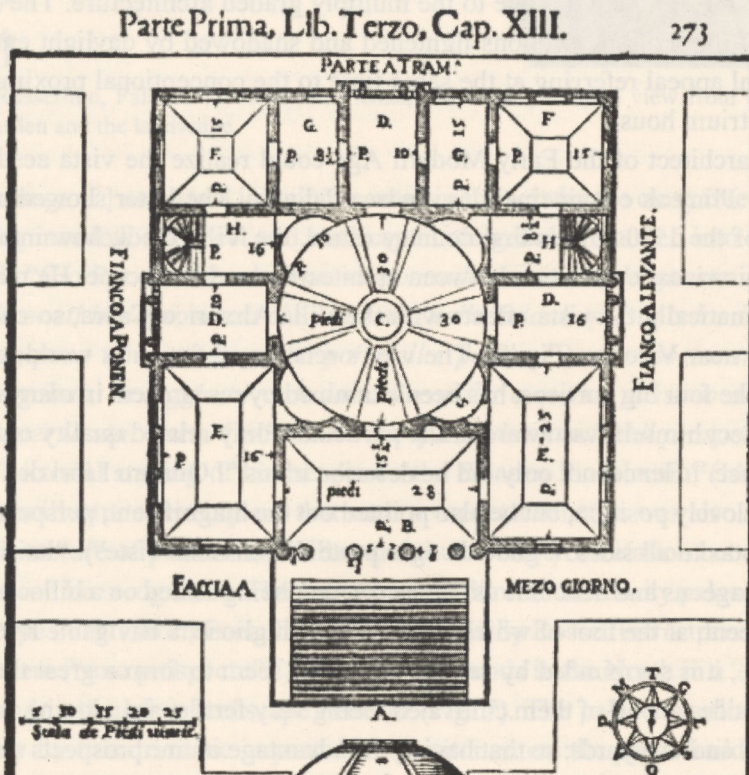


Figure 9: Vincenzo Scamozzi (1615), Plan of the Villa Pisani, so-called. Rocca Pisana, Lonigo, around 1576.





Figure 10: Vincenzo Scamozzi, Villa Pisani, so-called. Rocca Pisana, Lonigo, ca. 1576, framed view from the Salone onto the landscape.

Above all, from the central parlour the hilly landscape presents itself in Plinyian tradition as framed images. Thus, Palladio anticipated the Villa Pisani, so-called Rocca Pisana, in Lonigo, which was built in 1576 just a few years later by the architect Vincenzo Scamozzi (Fig. 9 and 10). Here too, the circular parlour offers

four architectural prospects on the landscape. The vistas bordered by the framing portico and window architecture (“quattro vedute”) are a foundation for the evocation of antique space experiences. Scamozzi himself praised in his treatise “L’Idea della Architectura Universale” the framed vistas, which can be enjoyed from the centre of the building: “The building is constructed in such a way so that the center of the hall [sala] offers to the observer in all directions four different views through the four main doors, through the loggia and through the small rooms. From all these openings the light is shining horizontally in the central room [sala]. And in this way, the facades, its identical windows and views are mirrored on each opposite sides. Therefore it should be noted that the villa offers largest possible spaces for amusements: Be it because of its views, be it because of the purified air.”<sup>61</sup>

### **The example of the Villa Barbaro: Framing and landscape in the Venetian Villa**

A particularly clear example for the extent of impact the correlation between framing and landscape, motivated by Pliny, had not only on architecture but also on inner decoration and, above all, on illusionist landscapes of numerous villas of the 16th century, is the Villa Barbaro in Maser. As shown below, the dominance of illusionist landscapes in the decoration system of this villa motivates significantly involved artists and contractors to study Pliny’s letters. Fritz Burger had already observed that the specific isolation of the central structure from the rear living quarters, that is, from the protrusion of the parlour, could be convincingly explained only by using antique villa descriptions.<sup>62</sup> What was realized in Maser through architecture was an antiquarian reconstruction of the beach *triclinium* of the Laurentina and its vista and prospect situations.

The parlour is the architectural transition point in this context (Fig. 11). With its arms, which adjoin the three windowed exterior walls, it ensures a landscape staging related to the antique dining hall. The observer observes from the middle of the room to three sides through high door-like windows. He does not perceive the landscape as panorama, but in the shape of framed sections like in Pliny’s case: “It has all around swing doors or just as high windows granting thus a vista on the left, on the right and straight ahead so to speak on the three seas [...]”<sup>63</sup> The real landscape of Maser rises thus to a picture; naturalness and artificiality run through the space staging into an aesthetic unit.

These appealing vistas are supplemented by a deep prospect, which unites visually the Salone, the Sala dell’Olimpo, the vista doors, the garden and the clos-

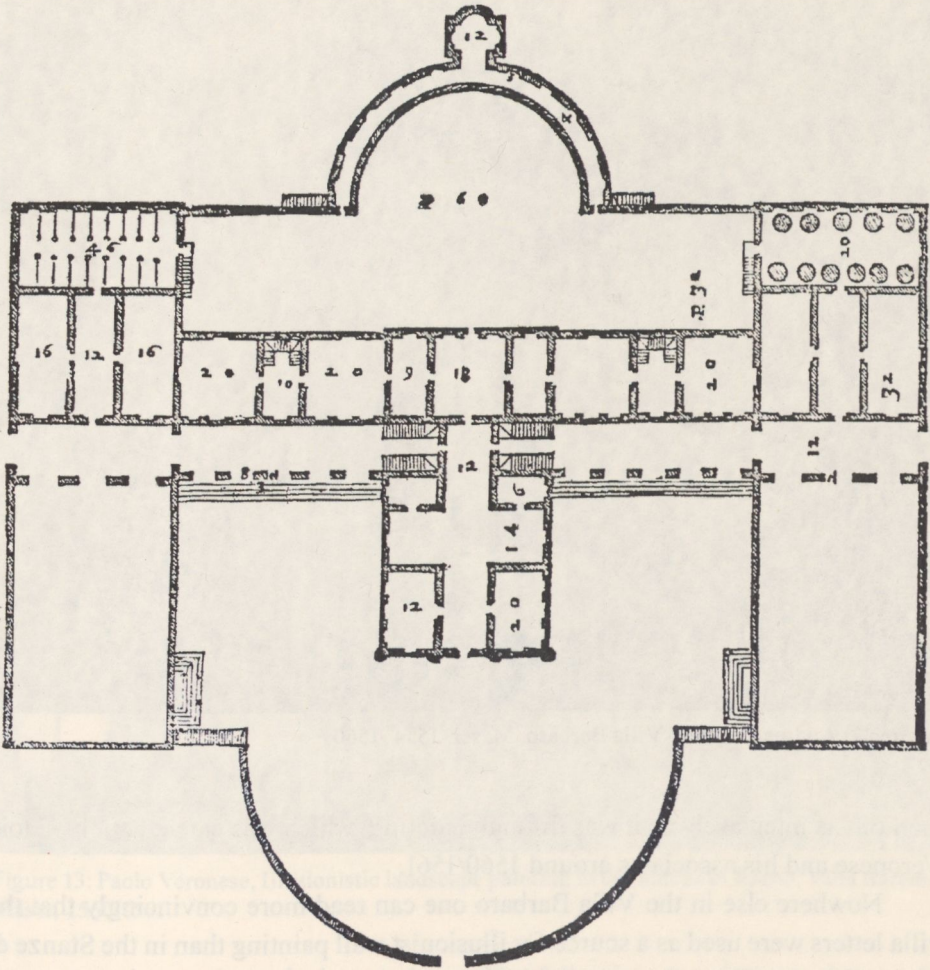


Figure 11: Andrea Palladio (1570); Plan of the Villa Barbaro, Maser, 1554–1560.

ing nymphaeum. Similar to the Plinyan dramaturgy and comparable with the Palazzo Piccolomini in Pienza, different, variously illuminated space sections are switched consecutively turning the final outer world into a painting framed by architecture (Fig. 12): “[...] the dining hall faces to the rear the parlor, the arcades, the courtyard, the arcades again, then the atrium, forests and the mountains in the distance.”<sup>64</sup>

Resorting to Pliny the villa followed not only the vista topos, constitutive for the villa aesthetics, but the humanistic schooled brothers Barbaro, the villa’s contractors and part of the Venetian elite, showed their guests the proximity to the Roman villa architecture. The Plinyan vista staging was realized through no other



Figure 12: Andrea Palladio: Villa Barbaro, Maser, 1554–1560.

medium as intensively as it was through painting, which was carried out by Paolo Veronese and his associates around 1560/1561.

Nowhere else in the Villa Barbaro one can read more convincingly that the villa letters were used as a source for illusionist wall painting than in the Stanze di Bacco.<sup>65</sup> As it will be shown in the following passages, this room strives primarily through the painting for an antiquarian reconstruction of various garden sheds, as existing in the Laurentian and Tuscanian Villa.<sup>66</sup>

When the observer enters the Stanza di Bacco, he finds himself back in a white marble pavilion, which seems to be enthroned on a hill in the middle of a landscape (Fig. 13). Comparable to the villa descriptions by Guarino Veronese and Agostino Gallo the room is presented with its circulating windows as a garden shed, as Belvedere. Beyond the painted windows graceful meadow and coast landscapes are located with promenaders and shepherds, ruins as well as the fantastic portrait of a portico villa as central codes of the villa ideology.

Garden sheds played a significant role for Pliny as well. Since they were freestanding, the surrounding gardens and landscapes could be more directly experienced than in the main houses. From the visual perspective the outer world



Figure 13: Paolo Veronese, Illusionistic landscape painting in the Stanza di Bacco, Villa Barbaro, Maser, 1560/1561.

became a picture through the windows. The following description refers to the pavilion (“diaeta”) of the Laurentina: “At the upper end of the terrace and the lobby as well as the garden there is a garden pavilion, my quiet love, yes, indeed love! I’ve built it myself. There is a sunbath in it with view to the terrace here, to the sea there and to the sun on both sides [...]. Amidst the opposite wall a veranda protrudes very nicely, which is united or separated with the living quarters by pushing forward and backward the glass walls and curtains. It contains a sofa and two armchairs; to one’s feet one has the sea, to one’s back the country houses, to one’s head the forests; it separates and unites these three landscape images [*“facies locorum”*] with its three windows.”<sup>67</sup>

In particular, the seemingly walkable Ionic pillar balconies in the Villa Barbaro, which lead on the South side to a real, and on the North side to a painted widow, can be recognized as reconstruction attempts of the Plinyan veranda. Just

like in Pliny's work both the real and the fictitious outside world turn into paintings in association with the bordering architectural framing ("facies locorum").

The Stanza di Bacco shows some parallels that can be interpreted as realizations of the literary ekphrasis in comparison to the freestanding Lusthaus ("cubiculum") of the Tuscanian Villa.<sup>68</sup> According to Pliny, this marble building, communicating with the outer world through swing doors and windows, stood at the end of the hippodrome amidst a shade-producing garden. Splashing wells, grape-vines and a food storage covered by a pergola form a secluded ideal place together with it:<sup>69</sup> "A small Lusthaus directly across the circular bench [the food storage, author's note] returns the appealing image to the latter, which it has received from it. It gleams of marble; with its swing doors it opens itself leading into the greenery; and it casts a glance up and down from its windows on another greenery."<sup>70</sup>

So the building not only had windows at eye level, but it was just like the text passage allows its reconstruction: "*alia viridia superioribus inferioribusque fenestris suspicit*" also open in the vault or roof section through the windows.<sup>71</sup> An architectural opening also defines the interior room effect in the Stanza di Bacco. The observer views a blossoming nature in the form of illusionist wine pergolas both through the six wall windows and through the openings in the vault and in the zenith. The eye wanders up and down quite in the sense of Pliny's description.

Apart of the architectural characteristics the physical proximity to nature associates the painting with the antique villa letters. So, powerful vines twine around behind the northern and eastern painted vista windows of the Stanza di Bacco, they grow on the outside of the pavilion uniting with the fructiferous pergolas in the vault mirror. The entire Stanza is entwined by grape-vines and implements the following construction description about the Tuscanian Villa bequeathed by Pliny: "As a luxurious vine strives towards the apex through the entire building by climbing it. One lies there no differently than in a forest, but only one does not feel the rain like in a forest."<sup>72</sup>

### Concluding remarks

It becomes clear that Paolo Veronese got inspired by architectural motifs from the villa letters in the design of the wall painting. As the complexity of the deceptive architecture suggests, Andrea Palladio and maybe Daniela Barbaro too advised him. The latter had dealt intensively with antique architecture as his Vitruvius commentary from 1556 shows.<sup>73</sup> The painted evocation of a freestanding

villa pavillon all'antica, the success of which significantly depends on the framed landscape vistas, pursues a visual strategy in the Villa Barbaro, which refers to a revival of an antique villa together with the villa architecture and the figured decoration shares. The illusionist landscape frescoes must be addressed as integral parts of the architectural and painted total design just like in numerous other Italian villas of the Early Modern Age.<sup>74</sup>

The initially quoted descriptions of antique wall paintings by Vitruvius and Pliny the Elder are less the foundation for the fictitious vistas, but it is rather the literally shaped topos of the vista and prospect by Pliny the Younger in his two villa letters, which is revived in this manner in the villas. Since this analysis can show that Pliny's letters were significant primarily for the villa architecture but also for the framed vista motif, it can expand the concept, which the research about the vital Pliny reception in the European secular building of the Early Modern Time has been attempting to sketch out for a while.

Accordingly, the contemporary experiences with the perspective stage just like Leon Battista Alberti's definition of the picture as a rectangular window do not play alone an important role for the framed vista in the villa of the Early Modern time.<sup>75</sup> Pliny's letters and the aesthetics of the framed vista based on them since the early Quattrocento are to be seen as the actual foundations for the legitimation of the both the painted and real window vistas. Like in the ancient villas, the observer can enjoy in the Villa Farnesina, the Villa Imperiale, the Villa Godi or the Villa Barbaro multiple vistas on arcadian-pastoral landscapes especially through the medium of wall painting. These landscapes evoke the peaceful world of rural life conveying a dramaturgic frame to the literally-based ideal image of the villa with vista.

The painted windows, which are as fundamental for the antiquarian reconstruction of ancient room experiences as the often antiquated villa architecture, create the decisive control points in the perception aesthetics of buildings and they are perceived as visual realization of the dramaturgic connection between the framing foreground architecture and the far landscape, which is experienced upon entering the building. Like the villas themselves, the rooms with pictures offer "bellissime viste"<sup>76</sup> and "diverse prospective",<sup>77</sup> regardless whether through real or painted windows. This programmatic equation associated with a vista staging, constituted by the framing trompe l'oeil and the selected landscape section, deprives the painting of its pictorially-artificial nature: The picture is transformed into an architecturally staged vista to an ideal world in the sense of a reality claim.

## Endnotes

- 1 The presented research results about the illusionist landscape frescoes of the 16th century and the associated aesthetics of the framed vista have been made possible by scholarships of the German Academic Exchange Service and the German Study Centre in Venice. On illusionist Renaissance wall painting see: Sven Sandström, *Levels of Unreality. Studies in Structure and Construction in Italian Mural Painting during the Renaissance*, Uppsala 1963; Eva Börsch-Supan, *Garten-, Landschafts- und Paradiesmotive im Innenraum: eine ikonographische Untersuchung*, Berlin 1967; Michaela Krieger, 'Zum Problem des Illusionismus im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert – ein Deutungsversuch', *Bruckmanns Pantheon, Internationale Zeitschrift für Kunst*, LIV, 1996, pp. 4–18; For illusionistic landscape painting cf. Sören Fischer, *Das Landschaftsbild als gerahmter Ausblick in den venezianischen Villen des 16. Jahrhunderts: Sustris, Padovano, Veronese, Palladio und die illusionistische Landschaftsmalerei*, Petersberg 2014.
- 2 See about Peruzzi and the Sala delle Prospettive: Christoph Luitpold Frommel, *Baldassare Peruzzi als Maler und Zeichner*, Wien, München 1967/1968; Manfred Luchterhandt, 'Im Reich der Venus. Zu Peruzzis Sala delle Prospettive in der Farnesina', *Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana*, 31, 1996, pp. 207–243; Fischer, *Das Landschaftsbild als gerahmter Ausblick*; Sören Fischer, 'Das Odeo Cornaro, die Villa Farnesina und der Oecus kyzikenos: Wandmalerei und Architektur im Spannungsfeld zwischen vitruvianischer Textexegese und Interpretation', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 77, 2014, pp. 199–220.
- 3 See about the theatrical character of the illusionist wall painting Sandström, *Levels of Unreality*, pp. 91–92.
- 4 Luchterhandt, 'Im Reich der Venus', p. 224; Julian Kliemann and Michael Rohlmann, *Wandmalerei in Italien, Hochrenaissance und Manierismus*, München 2004, pp. 197, 199.
- 5 "Der perspektivische Ausblick wird nicht zuletzt durch diese Prospekte beeinflusst und die Sehgewohnheiten der Renaissance dadurch wesentlich revolutioniert." Christoph Bertsch, *Villa Garten Landschaft: Stadt und Land in der florentinischen Toskana als ästhetischer und politischer Raum*, Berlin 2012, p. 201.
- 6 Luchterhandt, 'Im Reich der Venus', p. 235–237.
- 7 About these frescos see Fischer, *Das Landschaftsbild als gerahmter Ausblick*, pp. 21–22; Fischer, 'Das Odeo Cornaro, die Villa Farnesina und der Oecus kyzikenos: Wandmalerei und Architektur im Spannungsfeld zwischen vitruvianischer Textexegese und Interpretation', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 77, 2014, pp. 199–220.
- 8 "Ma se dentro gli edifici si vorrà ornar con la pittura di diversi colori; si potran con buon giudicio, messo dalla ragione, & nelle mura di loggie intorno a giardini, & ai cortili fingere alcune aperture, & in quelle far paesi da presto & di lontano, aere, casamenti, figure, animali, & ciò che si vuole, tutte cose colorite: perche così si finge il vero, che guardando fuori de gli edifici, si possono vedere tutte le sopradette cose. [...] Et questo fece Baldassare [Peruzzi] così dotto in questa arte [...]." Sebastiano Serlio, *I sette libri dell'architettura*, Venice 1584, IV, 11, fol. 191v.
- 9 Fischer, *Das Landschaftsbild als gerahmter Ausblick*, pp. 21; introduction into the window form of the picture in Alberti's work: Klaus Krüger, *Das Bild als Schleier des Unsichtbaren. Ästhetische Illusion in der Kunst der frühen Neuzeit in Italien*, Munich 2001, pp. 27–45.
- 10 "In Lonedo luogo del Vicentino è la seguente fabrica del Signor Girolamo de' Godi posta sopra un colle di bellissima vista [...]." Andrea Palladio, *I quattro libri dell'architettura*, Venice 1570, II, 15, p. 65.



- 11 See about the architectural landscape vistas in the Villa Godi Gerrit Smienk and Johannes Niemeijer, *Palladio, the Villa and the Landscape*, Basel 2011, pp. 35–41.
- 12 These designations of the illusionistic landscapes in the Venetian villas of the 16th century can be found, for instance, in Wolfgang Wolters' 'Tiziano Minio als Stukkator im Odeo Cornaro zu Padua', *Pantheon. Internationale Zeitschrift für Kunst*, XXI, 1963, pp. 20–28 and pp. 222–230, here p. 224; Alessandro Ballarin, 'Una villa interamente affrescata di Lamberto Sustris', *Arte veneta*, XX, 1966, pp. 244–249, here pp. 247; Fabrizio Magani and Chiara Gini, *Ville delle Provincia di Padova. Villa die Vescovi, Luvigliano*, Padua 1996, p. 35.
- 13 Vitruvius, *Zehn Bücher über Architektur, De Architectura Libri Decem*, ed. by Franz Reber, Wiesbaden 2009, VII, 5, 2; Plinius der Ältere, *Naturalis historiae libri XXXVII, Naturkunde*, Buch XXXV, ed. by Roderich König, Darmstadt 2007, XXXV, 116.
- 14 "Häfen, Vorgebirge, Küsten, Flüsse, Quellen, Meerengen, Heiligtümer, Haine, Berge." Vitruvius, *Zehn Bücher über Architektur*, VII, 5, 2: "[...] portus, promuntoria, litora, flumina, fontes, euripi, fana, luci, montes [...]."
- 15 "Lustwälder, Hügel, Fischteiche, Kanäle, Flüsse, Gestade, und was man sich nur wünscht, sowie verschiedene Gestalten von Spaziergängern oder Schiffsreisenden."
- 16 See also Jutta Allekotte, *Orte der Muße und Repräsentation: Zu Ausstattung und Funktion römischer Loggien (1470–1527)*, Electronic ressource. Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Bonn, Bonn 2011, p. 132, who also argues regarding illusionist landscapes against a sole inspiration by Vitruvius and Pliny the Elder.
- 17 Gerd Blum, *Idealer Ort und inszenierter Ausblick: Architektur und Landschaft in der italienischen Renaissance – Von Leon Battista Alberti über Andrea Palladio bis zu Giovanni Battista Agucchi*, Habil.-Schrift Univ. Basel 2010, Manuscript, print in preparation.
- 18 "die architektonische Inszenierung von Ausblicken in der italienischen Renaissance [...] bisher noch kaum untersucht worden ist" Gerd Blum, 'Palladios „Villa Rotonda“ und die Tradition des „idealen Ortes“: Literarische Topoi und die landschaftliche Topographie von Villen der italienischen Renaissance', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 70, 2007, pp. 159–200, here p. 166.
- 19 "Für die Einführung gerahmter Ausblicke in die Architektur der Renaissance waren die neue perspektivische Malerei des Quattrocento und die albertianische Definition des Gemäldes als ungeteilt-rechtwinklige „finestra aperta“ wegweisend: Ungeteilt-rechtwinklige, all'antica gerahmte Ausblicksfenster werden zuerst in Malerei und Reliefkunst ab ca. 1420 dargestellt, bevor sie – mit deutlicher zeitlicher Verzögerung – in der gebauten Architektur auftreten." Blum, *Idealer Ort und inszenierter Ausblick*, esp. III, p. 152; IV, 1, p. 245.
- 20 Gerd Blum, 'Fenestra prospectiva. Das Fenster als symbolische Form bei Leon Battista Alberti und im Herzogpalast von Urbino', Joachim Poeschke and Candida Syndikus (ed.), *Leon Battista Alberti. Humanist, Architekt, Kunsttheoretiker*, Münster 2008, pp. 77–122, here pp. 95–119.
- 21 Leon Battista Alberti, *Della Pittura*. Über die Malkunst, ed. by Oskar Bätschmann and Sandra Gianfreda, Darmstadt 2002, I, 19, p. 92. Cf. also Blum, 'Fenestra prospective', p. 116.
- 22 "Die Ausblicksfenster des Palastgartens [...] erweisen sich als frühe architektonische Realisierungen des neuzeitlichen, ungeteilt-rechteckigen Ausblicksfensters, das sich zu einem der zentralen Wahrnehmungsdispositive der Neuzeit und zu einer ‚symbolischen Form‘ des westlichen Weltbildes entwickeln wird." Blum, *Idealer Ort und inszenierter Ausblick*, III.1, p. 153.
- 23 Pliny the Younger, *Briefe. Epistularum libri decem*, ed. by Helmut Kasten, Berlin 2011, II, 17, 13 and 20; V, 6, 15 and 21.

- 24 “Die Landschaft ist ganz herrlich. Stelle Dir ein riesiges Amphitheater vor, wie es allein die schöpferische Natur hervorbringen kann. Eine weit ausgedehnte Ebene wird rings von Bergen umschlossen, die Berge zeigen um ihre Gipfel hoch gewachsenen, alten Baumbestand; dort zahlreicher, mannigfaltiger Wildbestand.” Pliny the Younger, *Briefe. Epistularum libri decem*, V, 6, 7. Quoted by *Letters by Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus*. Translated by William Melmoth. Revised by F. C. T. Bosanquet. [[http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2811/2811-h/2811-h.htm#link2H\\_4\\_0006](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2811/2811-h/2811-h.htm#link2H_4_0006)]
- 25 Fischer, *Das Landschaftsbild als gerahmter Ausblick*, pp. 26–55.
- 26 Lise Bek, ‘Ut ars natura – ut natura ars. Le ville di Plinio e il concetto del giardino nel Rinascimento’, *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici*, 7, 1974, pp. 109–156, here p. 113.
- 27 Vitruvius, *Zehn Bücher über Architektur*, I, 4, 1; VI, 6, 1; Leon Battista Alberti, *L’Architettura. De re aedificatoria*, ed. by Giovanni Orlandi and Paolo Portoghesi, 2 Bd. Milan 1966, Bd. II, IX, 2, p. 793.
- 28 Heinrich Drerup, ‘Die römische Villa’, *Marburger Winkelmannprogramm*, 1959, p. 1–24; Heinrich Drerup, ‘Bildraum und Realraum in der römischen Architektur’, *Mitteilungen des Archäologischen Instituts. Römische Abteilung*, 66, 1959, pp. 147–174; Eckard Lefèvre, ‘Plinius-Studien I. Römische Baugesinnung und Landschaftsauffassung in den Villenbriefen (2,17; 5,6)’, *Gymnasium. Zeitschrift für Kultur und humanistische Bildung*, 84, 1977, pp. 519–541.
- 29 “In der Mitte der gegenüberliegenden Wand springt sehr hübsch eine Veranda vor [...]. Sie enthält eine Liege und zwei Sessel; zu Füßen liegt das Meer, im Rücken Villen und zu Häupten Wälder. So viele Landschaftsbilder scheidet und vereint [der Raum] in ebenso vielen Fenstern.” Plinius d. J. (2011): II, 17, 21: “contra parietem medium zotheca perquam eleganter recedit [...]. lectum et duas cathedras capit; a pedibus mare, a tergo villae, a capite silvae; tot facies locorum totidem fenestris et distinguit et miscet.”
- 30 Pliny the Younger, *Briefe. Epistularum libri decem*, V, 6, 13.
- 31 Vincenzo Scamozzi, *L’idea dell’architettura universale*, Venedig 1615, III, 12, pp. 265–268.
- 32 “Mitten gegenüber [einer Arkadenstellung] befindet sich ein freundliches Empfangszimmer, anschließend ein recht hübscher Speiseraum, der bis an den Strand vorspringt, und wenn der Südwest das Meer aufwühlt, wird er von den Ausläufern der bereits gebrochenen Wogen gespült. An allen Seiten hat er Flügeltüren oder ebenso hohe Fenster und gewährt somit nach rechts und links und vorn Ausblick sozusagen auf drei Meere; nach hinten blickt er auf das Empfangszimmer, Arkaden, Hofraum, wieder Arkaden, dann auf die Vorhalle, auf Wälder und die Berge in der Ferne.” Pliny the Younger, *Briefe. Epistularum libri decem*, II, 17, 5: “est contra medias cavaedium hilare, mox triclinium satis pulchrum, quod in litus excurrit ac, si quando Africo mare impulsum est, fractis iam et novissimis fluctibus leviter adluitur. undique valvas a ut fenestras non minores valvis habet atque ita a lateribus, a fronte quasi tria maria prospectat; a tergo cavaedium, porticum, aream, porticum rursus, mox atrium, silvas et longinquos respicit montes.”
- 33 Hermann Winnefeld, ‘Tusci und Laurentinum des jüngeren Plinius’, *Jahrbuch des archäologischen Instituts*, 1891, pp. 201–217, here p. 212, III. 3; Reinhard Förtsch, *Archäologischer Kommentar zu den Villenbriefen des jüngeren Plinius*, Mainz 1993, III. 42.4.
- 34 Lefèvre, ‘Plinius-Studien’, pp. 521–522.
- 35 Pliny the Younger, *Briefe. Epistularum libri decem*, II, 17, 5.
- 36 “Was die Villa als Bauform ins Leben gerufen, sie vorangetrieben hat, ist, um es einseitig zu formulieren, die umgebene Landschaft als Komplettierung ihrer Bauform, d.h. die als ästhetischer Reiz genossene Spannung zwischen drinnen und draußen. Es sind bestimmte, durch das lohnende Motiv

geprägte Landschaftsausschnitte, die als Zielpunkte vorgebauter Perspektiven, als optische Achsen in den Wohnbereich der Villa hineingelassen werden [...]” Drerup, ‘Die römische Villa’, p. 19.

37 Bek, ‘Ut ars natura – ut natura ars’, p. 122.

38 See about the garden in “Decamerone” as locus amoenus Edith Kern, ‘Die Gärten in der Rahmenerzählung des Decameron’, Peter Brockmeier (ed.), *Boccaccios Decameron*, Darmstadt 1974, pp. 244–270.

39 A relevant source about Petrarca’s landscape description: Karlheinz Stierle, *Francesco Petrarca. Ein Intellektueller im Europa des 14. Jahrhunderts*, Munich, Vienna 2003, pp. 292–343.

40 See about the landscape staging as a theatrical “spectaculum” esp. Stierle, *Francesco Petrarca*, pp. 308–311; 313–314.

41 Pliny the Younger, *Briefe. Epistularum libri decem*, V, 6, 7.

42 The codex discovered by Guarino belonged to the class  $\gamma$  (“Familie der acht Bücher”). For further reading see Remigio Sabbadini, *Storia e critica di tesi latini*, 2nd rev. ed. by Eugenio u. Myriam Billanovich. Padua 1971, pp. 263–264; Remigio Sabbadini, *Le scoperte dei codici latini e greci ne’ secoli XIV e XV*, revised and extended edition by Eugenio Garin, Bd. 1. Florenz 1996, pp. 242–243.

43 Sabbadini, *Storia e critica di tesi latini*, pp. 263–270.

44 For the edition history of the Pliny letters between 1471 and 1515 see Federico Gamberini, ‘Materiali per una ricerca sulla diffusione di Plinio il giovane nei secoli XV e XVI’, *Studi Classici e Orientali*, 34, 1984, pp. 133–170, here pp. 157–170.

45 Guarino Veronese, *Epistolario*, ed. by Remigio Sabbadini, Bd. 1, Venice 1915, letters no. 142, 143, 145, pp. 234–241.

46 “Sie [die Villa] ist auf einem weichen Hügel gelegen, so unmerklich ansteigend, dass dir nicht bewusst wird hochzusteigen, bis du siehst, dass du oben angelangt bist [...]. Dort, wo du keine Berge erblickst, stehen hier im Rücken, dort an der Seite, gereiht vielfältige Bäumchen wie in Form eines Theaters. Weiter geradeaus dann erfreuen weite Felder die Augen, sättigen sie aber nie [...]” Guarino Veronese, *Epistolario*, letter no. 145, pp. 239–241. Addressed to Thoma Fanenso a. Zenon Othobello. Dated to 17th September [1419]: “*Ea est molli fundata clivio, ita »sensim sine sensu« crescente, ut non ante te ascendere intelligas quam ascendisse te videas [...]. Ubi colles videre desieris, qui a tergo qui a latere variis distincti arbusculis quasi theatrum circumstant, lata quaedam a fronte et diffusa planities oculos pascit nec tamen saturat [...].*” Cf. Pliny the Younger (2011): V, 6, 7 u. 14.

47 Pliny the Younger, *Briefe. Epistularum libri decem*, V, 6, 7 and V, 6, 14.

48 “Die Fenster [der Villa] sind so ausgerichtet, dass sich den einen die Wiesen, den anderen die ebenen Felder und [wieder] anderen der Fluss und der sichtbare Wald des ewigen Grüns zeigt. [...] Derart sind die bereits oft mitgeteilten Genüsse, zu denen ich Euch, Ihr hohen Herren, einlade.” Guarino Veronese, *Epistolario*, letter no. 145, p. 241. Addressed to Thoma Fanenso a. Zenon Othobello. Dated to 17th September [1419]: “*fenestrae ita dispositae ut aliae prata aliae planissimos campos aliae flumen et assiduae viriditatis silvam visendam offerant. [...] Huiusmodi sunt ablectamenta, ad quae seape communicanda vos invito, viri optimi.*” Cf. Pliny the Y. (2011): II, 17, 21; V, 6, 15.

49 “als integrierender Bestandteil in das Gebäude einbezogen und begründen damit jene vollkommene wechselseitige Durchdringung von Drinnen und Draußen, Garten und Landschaft, die in der Folge zu einem herausragenden Kennzeichen der Villenarchitektur werden sollte.” See as

an introduction to the Villa Medici in Fiesole Margherita Azzi Visentini, *Die italienische Villa. Bauten des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart 1997, p. 55.

50 See about the literature genre of the villa books Bernhard Rupprecht, 'Villa. Zur Geschichte eines Ideals', Wladimir Weidlé (ed.), *Wandlungen des Paradiesischen und Utopischen. Studien zum Bild eines Ideals*, 1966, pp. 210–250, here pp. 221–226; James S. Ackerman, *The Villa. Form and Ideology of Country Houses*, London 1990, pp. 108–133. For the landscape descriptions in the villa books of the 16th century see Fischer, *Das Landschaftsbild als gerahmter Ausblick*, pp. 41–45.

51 Quoted here according to Agostino Gallo's edition, *Le venti giornate della vera agricoltura e de' piaceri della villa*, Turin 1579, V, p. 97.

52 Agostino Gallo, *Le dieci giornate della vera agricoltura e de' piaceri della villa*, Venice 1565, IX, fol. 177r.

53 Pliny the Younger, *Briefe. Epistularum libri decem*, II, 17, 5.

54 Gallo, *Le dieci giornate*, Venice 1565, IX, fol. 176v–177r.

55 Enea Silvio Piccolomini (Pius II.), *Pii Secundi Pontificis Maximi Commentarii*, ed. by Ibolya Bellus and Ivàn Boronkai, Textvolume, Budapest 1993, IX, 23, p. 432.

56 Arnold Esch, *Landschaften der Frührenaissance. Auf Ausflug mit Pius II*, Munich 2008, p. 58.

57 Enea Silvio Piccolomini (Pius II.), *Pii Secundi Pontificis Maximi Commentarii*, IX, 23, p. 432: "Ingressi palatium maiori ianua ad boream versa peristillum et aream et per posticum infimam porticum et hortum et ultimas horti metas uno prospectu contuentur, et passu placido nil pedibus elevatis cuncta deambulate possunt."

58 Pliny the Younger, *Briefe. Epistularum libri decem*, II, 17, 5.

59 Blum, 'Palladios "Villa Rotonda"', pp. 190–194; Fischer, *Das Landschaftsbild als gerahmter Ausblick*, pp. 40–41.

60 "Il sito è de gli ameni, e dilettevoli che si possano ritrovare: perche è sopra un monticello di ascesa facilissima, & è da una parte bagnato dal Bacchiglione fiume navigabile, e dall'altra è circondato da altri amenissimi colli, che rendono l'aspetto di un molto grande Theatro, e sono tutti coltivati, & abundantanti di frutti eccellentissimi, & di buonissime viti. Onde perche gode da ogni parte di bellissime viste, delle quali alcune sono terminate, alcune più lontane, & altre, che terminano con l'Orizzonte; vi sono state fatte le loggie in tutte quattro le faccie: [...]" Palladio, *I quattro libri dell'architettura*, II, 3, p. 18.

61 "Questa fabrica è talmente concertata, che stando nel mezo della Sala si hanno le quattro vedute in croce da quattro gran portoni, e dalla Loggia, e da' Salotti d'ouve viene il lume orizzontale nella Sala, & anco dal di sopra, e la maggior parte della aperture d'una faccia incontrano quelle dell'altra: la qual cosa si dee [sic] offerare, e massime ne' luoghi da doporto; così oer le vedute, come per il purifica dell'aria." Scamozzi, *L'idea dell'architettura universale*, I, III, 13, pp. 272–273.

62 Fritz Burger, *Die Villen des Andrea Palladio. Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Renaissance-Architektur*, Leipzig 1909, p. 108; Fischer, *Das Landschaftsbild als gerahmter Ausblick*, pp. 116–119.

63 "Ringsum hat er Flügeltüren oder ebenso hohe Fenster und gewährt somit nach links und rechts und vorn Ausblick sozusagen auf drei Meere [...]" Pliny the Younger, *Briefe. Epistularum libri decem*, II, 17, 5: "undique valvas aut fenestras non minores valvis habet atque ita a lateribus, a fronte quasi tria maria prospectat [...]"

64 “[...] *nach hinten blickt der Speiseraum auf das Empfangszimmer, Arkaden, Hofraum, wieder Arkaden, dann auf die Vorhalle, auf Wälder und die Berge in der Ferne.*” Pliny the Younger, *Briefe. Epistularum libri decem*, II, 17, 5: “[...] a tergo cavaedium, porticum, aream, porticum rursus, mox atrium, silvas et longinquos respicit montes.”

65 For the illusionist landscape painting of the Stanza di Baccho see Sören Fischer, “As a luxurious vine strives towards the apex through the entire building by climbing it” [“Denn ein üppiger Rebstock strebt über das ganze Gebäude hin zum First und erklettert ihn”] – Paolo Veronese, *Andrea Palladio und die Stanza di Baccho in der Villa Barbaro als Pavillon Plinius des Jüngeren*, *Kunstgeschichte*, e-journal, 2013, 29 pages; Fischer, *Das Landschaftsbild als gerahmter Ausblick*, pp. 110–127.

66 Pliny the Younger, *Briefe. Epistularum libri dieci*, II, 17, 20–21, 24; V, 6, 20, 28–40.

67 “*Am oberen Ende der Terrasse und weiterhin der Wandelhalle und des Gartens steht ein Gartenpavillon, meine stille Liebe, ja, wirklich Liebe! Ich selbst habe ihn gebaut. In ihm befindet sich ein Sonnenbad mit Ausblick hier auf die Terrasse, dort aufs Meer und beiderseits auf die Sonne [...]. In der Mitte der gegenüberliegenden Wand springt sehr hübsch eine Veranda vor, die sich durch Vor- und Zurückschieben von Glaswänden und Vorhängen mit dem Wohnraum verbinden oder sich von ihm trennen lässt. Sie enthält ein Sofa und zwei Sessel; zu Füßen hat man das Meer, im Rücken Landhäuser, zu Häupten Waldungen; diese drei Landschaftsbilder [“facies locorum”] scheidet und vereinigt sie mit ihren drei Fenstern.*” Pliny the Younger, *Briefe. Epistularum libri decem*, II, 17, 20–24: “In capite xysti, deinceps cryptoporticus, horti, diaeta est, amores mei, re vera amores. ipse posui. in hac heliocaminus quidem alia xystum, alia mare, utraque solern [...]. contra parietem medium zotheca perquam eleganter recedit, quae specularibus et velis obductis reductivse modo adicitur cubiculo, modo aufertur. lectum et duas cathedras capit; a pedibus mare, a tergo villae, a capite silvae; tot facies locorum totidem fenestris et distinguit et miscet.”

68 Pliny the Younger, *Briefe. Epistularum libri decem*, V, 6, 38–39.

69 For the reconstruction of this building complex see Förtsch, *Archäologischer Kommentar zu den Villenbriefen des jüngeren Plinius*, pp. 93–94.

70 “*Der Rundbank gerade gegenüber gibt ein kleines Lusthaus der Rundbank das reizvolle Bild zurück, das es von ihr empfängt. Es schimmert von Marmor; mit seinen Flügeltüren öffnet es sich und führt hinaus ins Grüne; auf andres Grün schaut es aus seinen Fenstern oben und unten hinauf und hinab.*” Pliny the Younger, *Briefe. Epistularum libri decem*, V, 6, 37–38: “e regione stibadii adversum cubiculum tantum stibadio reddit ornatus, quantum accipit ab illo. marmore splendet, valvis in viridia prominet et exit, alia viridia superioribus inferioribusque fenestris suspicit despicitque.”

71 Förtsch, *Archäologischer Kommentar zu den Villenbriefen des jüngeren Plinius*, p. 14 translated the description of the above and below situated windows very clearly in this sense: “it gazes upwards and downwards to another green with its top and bottom windows”. [“[...] auf anderes Grün blickt es mit seinen oberen und unteren Fenstern hinauf und hinab.”]

72 “*Denn ein üppiger Rebstock strebt über das ganze Gebäude hin zum First und erklettert ihn. Man liegt dort nicht anders als im Walde, nur den Regen spürt man nicht wie im Walde.*” Pliny the Younger, *Briefe. Epistularum libri decem*, V, 6, 39: “nam laetissima vitis per omne tectum in culmen nititur et adscendit. non secus ibi quam in nemore iaceas, imbrem tantum tamquam in nemore non sentias.”

73 Norbert Huse, ‘Palladio und die Villa Barbaro in Maser: Bemerkungen zum Problem der Autorschaft’, *Arte Veneta*, XXVIII, 1974, pp. 106–122.

- 74 Fischer, *Das Landschaftsbild als gerahmter Ausblick*, pp. 136.
- 75 Bertsch, *Villa Garten Landschaft*, p. 201; Blum, *Idealer Ort und inszenierter Ausblick*, chapter IV. 1, p. 245.
- 76 Palladio, *I quattro libri dell'architettura*, II, 15, p. 65.
- 77 Giovanni Galeazzo Rossi, *Lettera del signor cavalier Gio. Galeazzo Rossi bolognese. Al r. sig. Giovanni Carga. Sopra la villa di Tuscolano dell'ill. e reverendiss. monsig. Gio. Battista Campeggio vescovo di Maiorica*. Bologna 1571. [Bibl. Marc. Ve., MISC 2077. 012], o. S.

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