

Anatole Tchikine and Pierre de la Ruffinière du Prey's publication on the Plinian tradition, subtitled *Visions of Antiquity in the Landscape of Umbria*, is an exemplary contribution to Italian garden and landscape history. Their protagonist, Francesco Ignazio Lazzari, employed landscape as a "tool of historical inquiry," serving as a model for our own time. It is not an easy feat to co-author a scholarly publication, particularly one that reads seamlessly, as if written by a single hand. Yet, Tchikine and du Prey have done so, engaging in painstaking work in the archives as well as in the landscape of Umbria itself. Given that Lazzari's manuscript is replete with arcane references, the authors have offered both a translation and an interpretation that makes it accessible to a broader audience interested in the architecture and landscape of Italy. One persistent difficulty with regional studies of Italian gardens is their rendering almost exclusively by Italian scholars, whereas this volume offers the Umbrian landscape to a global English audience.

The role of Pliny the Younger in the architectural imagination is the subject of an extensive literature, to which du Prey has contributed significantly. Pierre was himself a student at Princeton of David Coffin, who pioneered the scholarly study of the Italian garden in the United States, together with Elisabeth MacDougall. The blend of architecture, landscape, and horticulture that is the subject of Lazzari's attention is well suited to scholars trained in the tradition of Coffin and MacDougall.

As dedicated as Lazzari was to re-situating the so-called "Tuscan" villa of Pliny in the local landscape of Umbria, specifically Pitigliano, he was concerned not simply with the garden per se but with the landscape setting of the ancient estate. The "Plinian villa" as described in Pliny's own letters is distinguished by this larger setting, including concern for hillside topography, panoramic views, and ample water supplies. For Lazzari, the legacy and prestige of antiquity was shouldered not only by actual ruins but also by the landscape of the upper Tiber valley with its deep cultural memories.

The importance of garden traditions in the construction of regional identity is underscored by this volume, particularly given the determination of the Fascists to deny regional particularities of geography and topography in favor of a uniform national style (the so-called *giardino all'italiana*). Tchikine and du Prey are not the first to re-visit the 1931 *Mostra* that was staged in Florence (most notably addressed in seminal work by Claudia Lazzaro). However, their work serves as an important reminder of the way ideas around the conquest of nature took hold in the scholarship, even though such ideas were foreign both to Pliny and to Plinian-inspired Renaissance garden designers. Finally, given that Lazzari lived until the year 1717, we are reminded that his dedication to the Plinian tradition was not simply an outgrowth of a narrow Renaissance antiquarianism, it reflected a broader pan-European concern for the classical language of architecture that flourished in the eighteenth century.

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