Review paper

A view over the gardens of Villa Lante di Bagnaia, Italy

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Abstract
In Bagnaia area from Italy are some important locations from landscape design point of view. Bagnaia is a small and charmingly historical town in Northern Lazio, in the Province of Viterbo. The town is famous for its great relic of aristocratic grandeur (one of several in this part of Lazio), the sixteenth-century Villa Lante. As is often the case in Italy, the term ‘villa’ is misleading, because it’s really the garden for which the place is famous. The garden is in a Renaissance style.

Key words: Villa Lante, gardens, history, fountain, Renaissance.

Introduction
Bagnaia has a wonderful Renaissance Piazza. Bagnaia is located on the Via Francigena, the once busy Roman road through the Cimini Hills. However, the first specific historical mention of Bagnaia is in 963 A.D., when the village was known as Bangaria. Since the 13th century, the lands of Bagnaia had been in the gift of the Pope, usually given to the Bishop of nearby Viterbo. However, it was not until the 16th century that an Episcopal residence was built there. During the middle Ages the village obtained some fine architecture, especially during the Renaissance period, after the construction of the Villa Lante increased its popularity as a resort. In 1576 Tommaso Ghinucci, a Siennese architect oversaw the enlargement of the suburbs of what was now becoming a small town. At the beginning of the 16th Century, Cardinal Raffaele Riario began creating Villa Lante, when he had a wall built to enclose 22 hectares of land. This came to include a garden and an adjacent hunting reserve, which is now a public park. Subsequent owners, most notably one Cardinal De Gambara, continued the work, commissioning improvements that have resulted in what is praised as one of Italy's finest Renaissance gardens. These changes today are most obvious in the vicinity of the Piazza 20 Settembre (20th September), inspired by Piazza del Popolo in Rome.

Material and methods
In the present paper is studied the Bagnaia area from Northern Lazio, in the Province of Viterbo, Italy, were could be found Villa Lante. Its park was designed by the most famous architects of the Renaissance first among them Jacopo Barozzi called Vignola. This is where Louis XIV’s landscape architect André LeNotre, learnt the use of woods as accessories to the gardens. As the garden rise in steps the mood changes. Water runs down through a variety of lively fountains and water features, and trees and hedges offer shade. The visitor can enjoy a series of different panoramas as they pause at each level. The Villa Lante is named after the Lante della Rovere family, who owned the estate for three centuries until 1933. Earlier, the property went with the position of Bishop of Viterbo, and it was the holders of this august position who were responsible for the pleasure grounds we can enjoy today. A long stone “table” halfway up is said to be where the cardinals could
entertain guests at feasts, keeping wine bottles cool in the central trough (and presumably their feet cool in the water channel below); a lovely idea whether or not it is true. Photo 1 presents a bird’s eye view of Villa Lante and the village of Bagnaia while in photo 2 it is shown the plan of Villa Lante and a section through it.

Results and discussions

In the architecture of the Villa, elements of Nature (water and vegetation) and pieces of masonry (fountains and small palaces) are subordinated to a precise scheme of overall symbolic elements. The Fountain of Pegasus (photo 3) takes its name from the figure of a winged horse in the centre; it is a big oval basin with curved sides, cut into a slope of the hill and topped with a balustrade of small columns. The idea for the design of this fountain, built during the period when Cardinal Montalto was finishing the park (1587-1623), is taken from the similar Ovate Fountain in the Villa d’Este in Tivoli. In photo 4 are presented the Quadrato and the Fountain of the Moors commissioned by Cardinal Montalto. Originally, an ingenious device emitted harmonious sounds due to the violent beating of water below the “mountains” as it spurted from the points of the star forming a veil of water that partially hid the Moors. Four walkways with balustrades divide the main pool into four basins and lead to the triple circle of pools with the statue of Moors that has been attributed to Taddeo Landini.
Photo 5 presents the Fountain of the Lamps which stands at the first level with entrances to the small palace. It is round, with concentric basins that are partially sunken into the ground, similarly to a Greek amphitheatre and half of it is secured into the embankment behind. Seventy torches spur out water jets that frame a central water spout. The Fountain of the Giants (photo 6) is thus named because of the two large figures of reclining giants that lie there, interpretable as personifications of River Arno and River Tiber, symbols of the two souls of Tuscia. The fountain is a symbolic representation of Earth, as one of the four natural elements, and of Water, no longer from sea but fresh river water.

Up until 1615, the Fountain of the Dolphins (photo 7) was completely covered over by a wooden kiosk. There are sixteen dolphins arranged in pairs at the corners of an octagon, holding up the same number of volute spouts. Here a play of water is employed and form spouts all the base water shoots up to spray anyone at close range or who happens to sit down on the benches. The water from the Fountain of the Dolphins naturally flows into the Fountain of the Chain (photo 8), spouting from the mouth of a peperino stone crayfish, emblem of Cardinal Gambara. The water rushes down the slope enclosed by peperino volutes in leaps and bounds, so that it appears to be a crystalline chain, until reaches the Fountain of the Giants. The chain of water is formed by vaulted that are joined together by water that bubbles out from the gills of a shrimp.
The Fountain of the Flood (photo 9) forms a visual conclusion to the whole and, in a more general sense, provides the underlying theme that is developed throughout entire garden. The leitmotiv here is Water, bubbling out in its natural state from a rocky slope inside. Symbolically speaking, Rain is the source of all Water, and so, of all fountains as they depend on Water for their existence. From above, a series of water spouts pointing towards the centre of the clearing may sprinkle visitors by surprise. Loggias provide a place for relaxation and house statues of the Muses, the coat-of-arms of Cardinal Gambara and the prison bars of Saint Lawrence, Patron Saint of Viterbo. The loggias of the Muses allegorically allude to the peaks of Mount Parnassus emerging from the waters of Deluge.
So this Villa is similar in many ways to the other major Villas in Lazio that were fashioned at the same time, such as Farnese Palace in Caprarola and the Villa d’Este in Tivoli.

Conclusions
Villa Lante di Bagnaia is one of the most representative Italian gardens from Renaissance. The ground-areas with plants, in a topiary form, are the traditional part of Italian gardens and the grounds from Villa Lante are some to refer at. Another important element is water. In the gardens from Villa Lante water is leaded in several ways, being found in seven fountains: Fountain of Pegasus, Fountain of the Lamps, Fountain of the Giants, Fountain of the Moors, Fountain of the Chain, Fountain of the Dolphins and Fountain of the Flood. It has been suggested that the arrangement of the fountains embody their own particular allegorical meaning, in that the architect may have wished them to represent the four elements of Nature: WATER (Fountain of the Flood and Fountain of the Dolphins); EARTH (Fountain of the Giants); FIRE (Fountain of the Lamps) and AIR (Fountain of the Square).

References
www.bagnaia.vt.it/home_en.htm