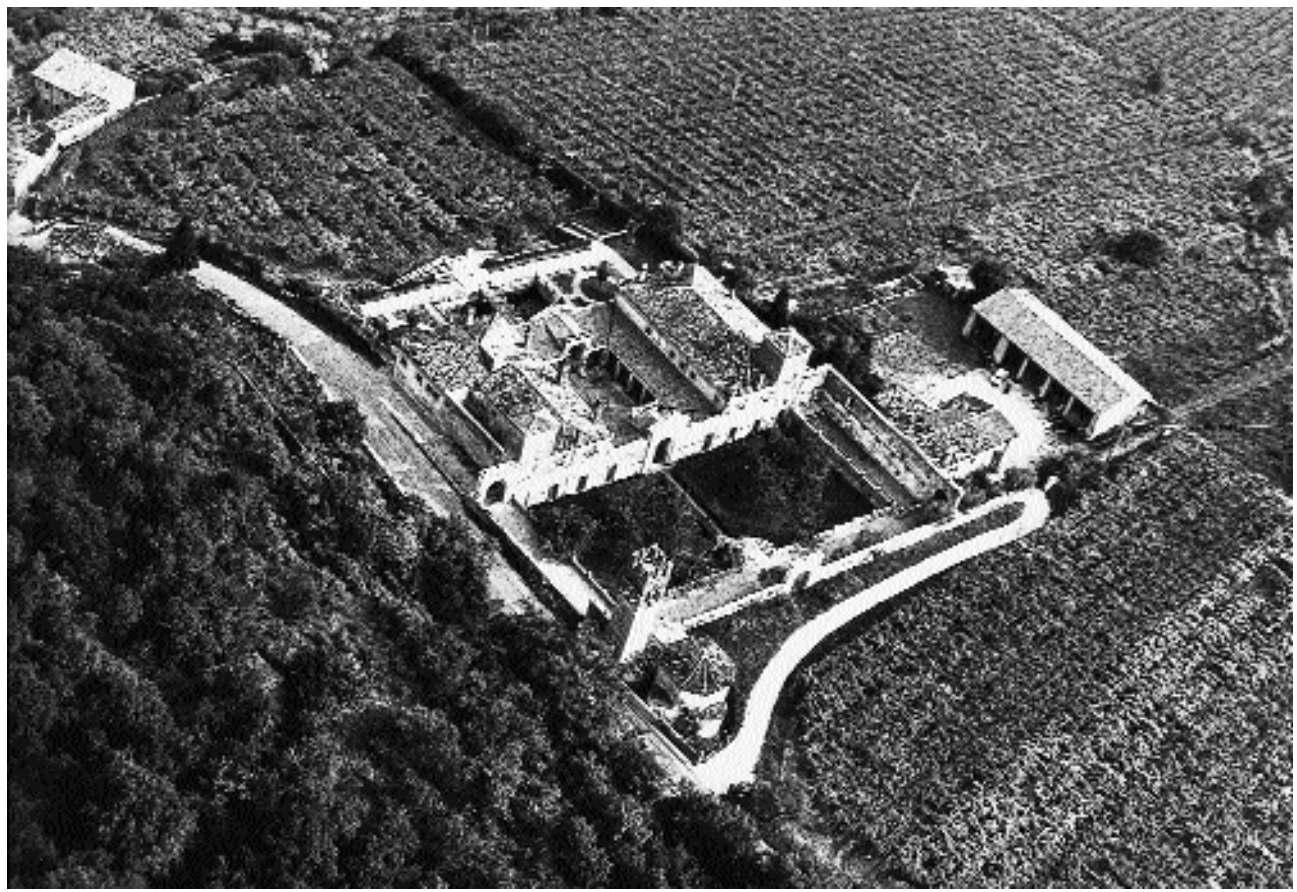
«In lode della Fumane»: Veronica Franco, Giulio Della Torre and the ideology of the venetian villa

Life *in villa*. A concept dear to Renaissance men and women but reserved for a select few whose wealth and status provided them the funds and permitted them the time to escape to comfortable and oftentimes luxurious estates in the suburbs and rural hinterland of almost every significant town and city in early modern Italy. Although we know a great deal about the villas, their builders, their gardens, and the way these villas were used and enjoyed by patrons and guests, we know less about the relationship between the ideology of *villeggiatura* and villa design with the more well-studied arts of painting and sculpture, particularly in the realm of the increasing attention paid by early modern intellectuals and commentators to theory and practice in the arts. Even less well understood might be the way that the readily gendered agricultural lands and pleasure gardens of these villas provided fertile ground for contemporary dialogues about the nature of art and the way men and women could and should respond to the sublime beauty of the villa garden. In this essay, I propose that we think about the rich opportunities villas and gardens offered Renaissance writers as they continued to develop the *paragone* between art and nature that dominated the theoretical discourse of the sixteenth century and that one particular figure, the esteemed poet and courtesan Veronica Franco provides a lens for her readers that brought into more clear focus the process through which man and nature conspired to create beauty[1].

Villeggiatura, the Valpolicella and Veronica Franco

Villa culture and the Venetian transformation of the *terraferma* in the early modern period have been a central concern of art and architectural historians for decades. The dominant role and powerful visual allure of the villas designed by Palladio for Venetian patrons and local nobility, however, has largely shunted aside villas not associated with the major figure in the canon of Renaissance villa design and as a result, left scholars of other villas in the unenviable position of champions of secondary buildings and gardens understood only as foils of Palladio's more prized masterworks. This essay hopes to build on a rich, if lesser known, tradition of scholarship of the broader expanse of villa architecture and *villeggiatura* studies and argue for the greater prominence in art and architectural theory of the integrated gardens and structure of the villa Della Torre at Fumane[2]. This villa, located above the small town of Fumane some few kilometers north and west of Verona in the Valpolicella, reveals a sensitivity to and acknowledgment of the importance of the natural elements of the landscape in the villa complex and the ideological transforma-



Villa Della Torre.

tion of nature by man in our experience of the shapes created and enjoyed by man when *in villa*[3]. Although this *all'antica* villa does not currently occupy a prominent position in the hierarchy of significant early modern Venetian country houses and gardens, the connection between this project, its patron, Giulio Della Torre, architects including Michele Sanmicheli, intellectuals and archetypal practitioners of *villeggiatura* such as Pietro Bembo, and one of the best known – if not the best known – female poet of the Renaissance, Veronica Franco, justifies more study of the relationship between this particularly exquisite ex-

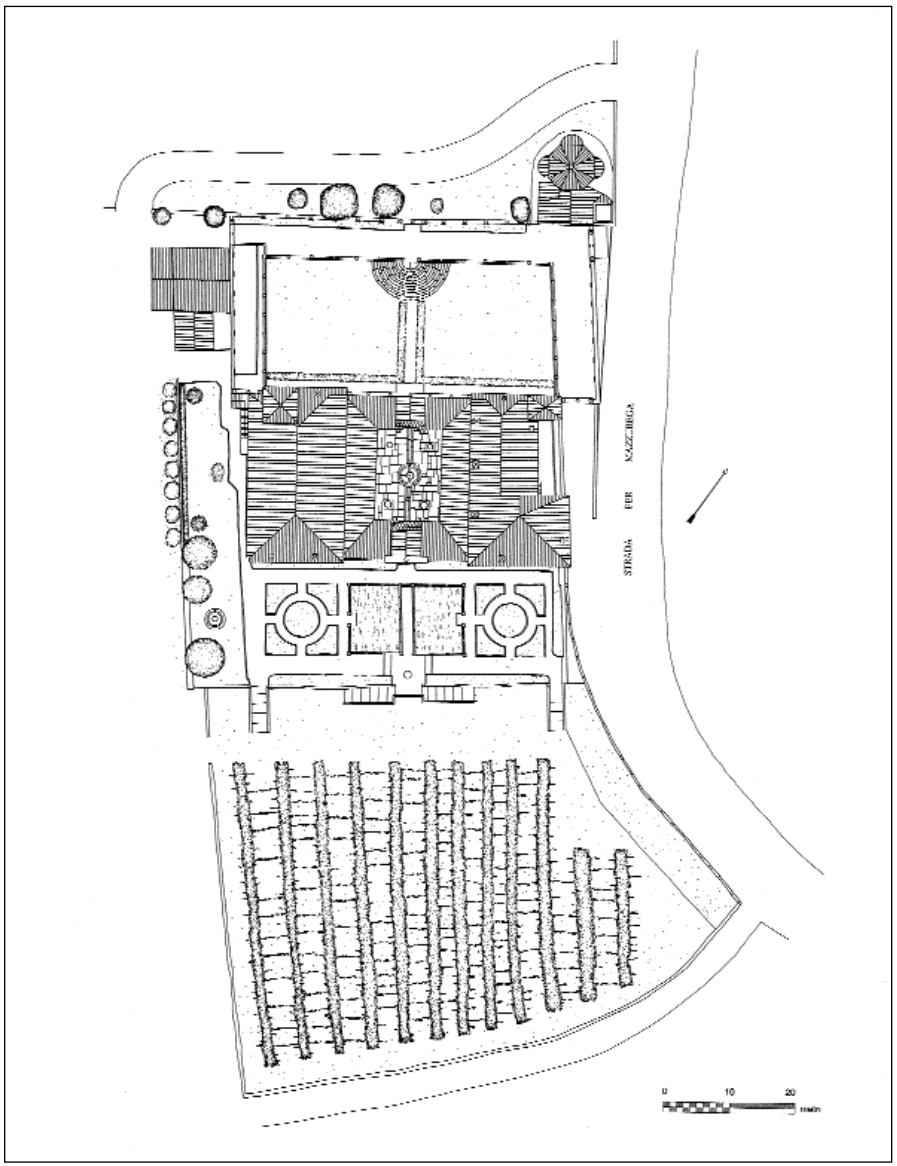
Veronica Franco (from the first edition of *Rime*, 1576).

ample of the late-sixteenth century Italian villa. More importantly, perhaps, is my contention that this villa's buildings and gardens ultimately help us better understand the role of the country house in its time, the nature of the gardener's art, and Renaissance concepts of beauty and artifice.

In the 1570s Veronica Franco composed a poem describing her lover Marc'Antonio Della Torre's villa in the Valpolicella[4]. Her poem, *In lode della Fumane*, identifies a role for beauty in a Veronese landscape valued for agricultural purposes. According to Franco, the «flowering» beauty of the serrated hills, *bel prato*, and a *fiorito amenissimo giardino* paid «sweet tribute» to the «hand» of the *giardinier*. Thanks to the gardener's art, the «cultivated trees» and «green mantle» «ornament» the garden. For Franco, these natural elements, touched by the «hand» of the gardener, transformed the lands around the Villa Della Torre into a garden in which «art does not surrender before the boasting of nature». This essay will look more closely at Franco's ekphrasis, the *paragone* between art and nature in early modern garden history, and the roles of Nature and artifice in the Renaissance villas of the Venetian *terraferma*.

The villa Della Torre

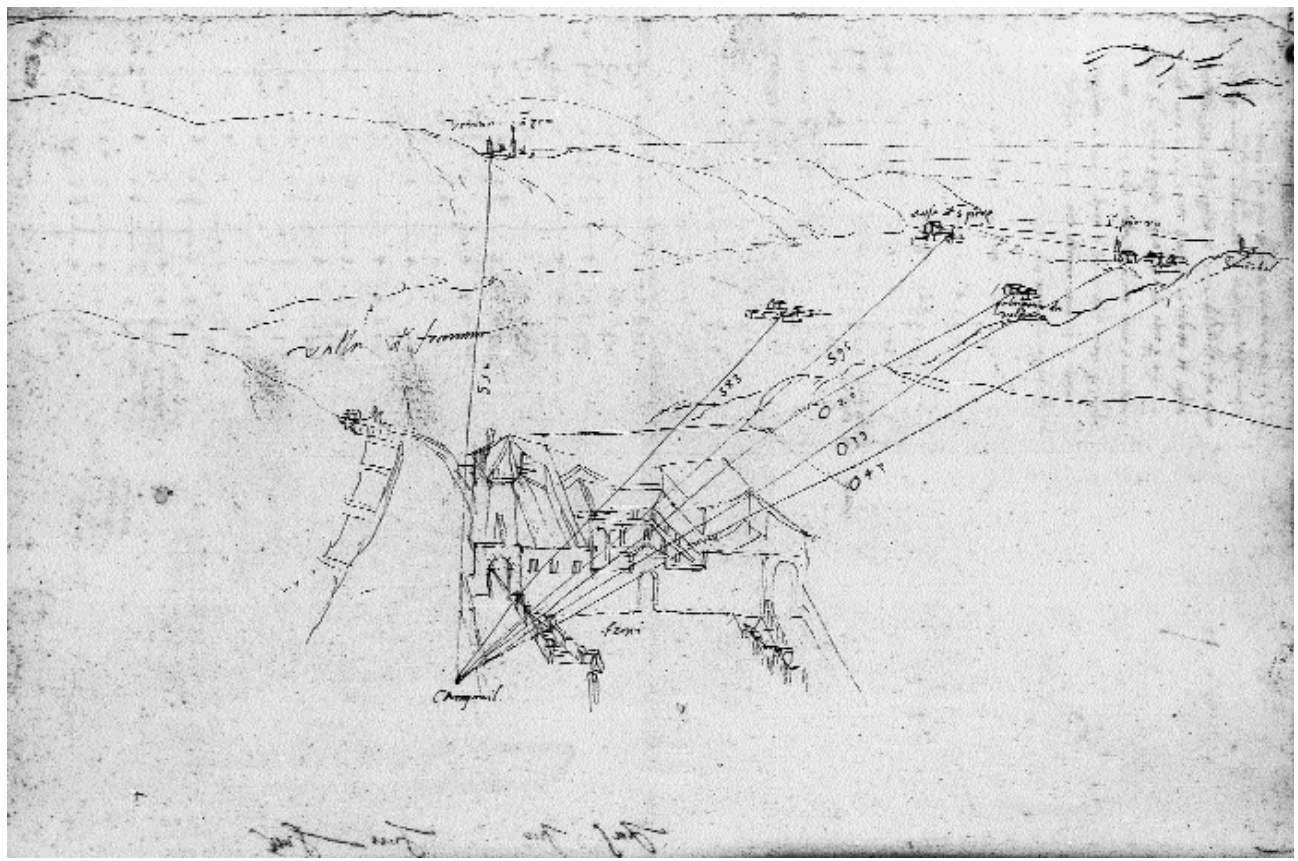
In 1504, the recently married Giulio Della Torre found himself saddled with a run-down estate that came as a wedding present from Guido Antonio Maffei after he married Guido's daughter Anna in 1504[5]. Quite soon after taking possession, Giulio embarked on a mission to turn the property into a comfortable and profitable villa. A birds-eye view by Cristoforo Sorte[6] of the *casa dominicale* indicates that the expansion of the villa was begun by the mid-1560s; and the villa must have been at least partly renovated by 1543 when Francesco Della Torre, Giulio's eldest son, waxed poetic about the spray from the «fountains of Fumane» and «vacations» in a letter to Donato Rullo[7]. As Cammy Brothers stated in her 1994



Muqarnas article, the villa created by Giulio Della Torre (1481-c.1558) in the Valpolicella, is among the best examples of the villa *all'antica* surviving in the Venetian *terraferma*[8].

Giulio's project has left a paper trail in the Venetian and Veronese archives. Petitions for improvements to the property, primarily the diversion of water to the house and its gardens, date the project to the middle of the sixteenth century[9]. Similarly, records of payments made to Domenico Ridolfi for grotesque chimneys and other ornamental plasterwork show that the residence was well under way when the stuccatore worked at Fumane[10]. With Ridolfi and Sorte connected to his renovation, Giulio's villa occupies a special place in the history of the villa in the Veronese[11]. The status of these artists and the beauty of the villa justify its inclusion in any discussion of the Venetian Renaissance villa. What is more relevant to this argument is the connection between the Villa Della Torre at Fumane and the history of garden art in early modern Italy.

Nestled on a sloping hillside above the village, the Villa Della Torre a Fumane was renovated and expanded in the 1530s and 1540s[12]. The final project features a cortile set between two wings and two gardens. The upper garden served as a forecourt to the *casa di villa*. It also appears that this garden space, with its regular perimeter, terracing, ornamental portals, chapel and multiple stairs featured more architectural or monumental elements than the orchard beyond. This garden thus served as an intermediate zone that revealed the unequal weight of natural and artificial along the axis of the villa. The visitor to the villa, who we may surmise entered from the north or top,



Cristoforo Sorte, *View of villa Della Torre* (1560).

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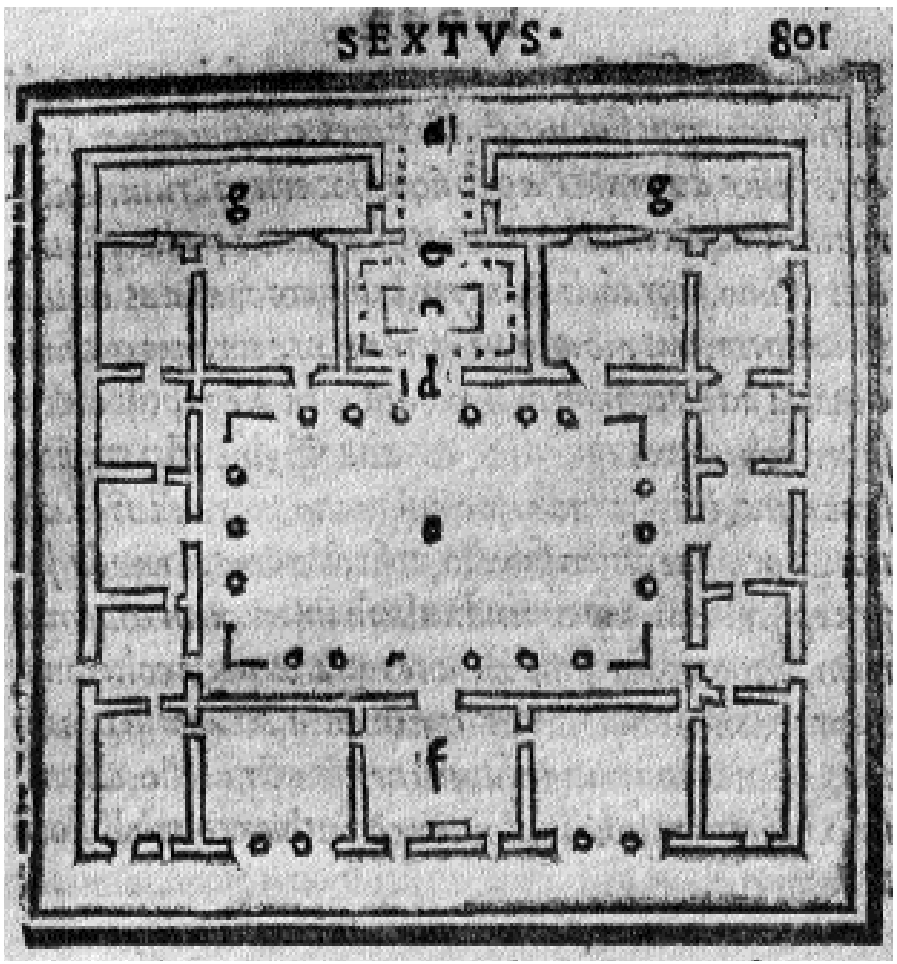
Plan of villa Della Torre [from *Villa Della Torre...*, tav. 1, drawing by Arturo Sandrini, Giovanni Castiglioni and Filippo Legnaghi].

moved more or less consecutively through an orchard, a garden, a court, a room, and so on[13]. The apparently complete villa appears in the birds-eye view sketch attributed to Cristoforo Sorte and dated January 7, 1562[14]. Sorte's line drawing of the villa appears to have been a preliminary sketch for a map of the valley and approximates a snapshot of the area taken from the bell-tower of the chapel located in the corner of the upper walled garden of the complex.

Although extremely schematic, Sorte's *veduta* shows the central courtyard flanked by two two-story residential blocks and separated by walls from the upper and lower gardens. The pre-existing structure inherited by Giulio from Guido Antonio ran along the



House with atrium by Fra Giocondo [*M. Vitruvius per Jocundum solito castigatior factus...*, Venetiis 1511].

public road along the northwestern edge of the property and was transformed during the renovations into the left-hand wing of the villa[15]. Sorte's image shows a two-story elevation in the main *cortile* that cannot be rectified with the current state of affairs in which a colonnade supports the shed roof of a portico that runs around the perimeter of the courtyard. As a result, Giulio's *cortile* has a smaller area open to the sky than we see in the Sorte view. Furthermore, the sloping roofs of the portico approximate more successfully the atrium court described by Vitruvius[16]. Arturo Sandrini suggests that the rather «casual» arrangement of the colonnaded courtyard follows the dictums of the Roman theorist and compares the plan of the Villa Della Torre to the illustration of the *domus antiqua* in the Fra Giocondo edition of *De architectura* of 1511[17]. The difficulty with accepting Sandrini's argument that Giulio Della Torre relied upon the Giocondo illustration or had explicitly followed Vitruvius' text is the lack of an adjacent atrium or triclinium. The plan of the Villa Della Torre arranged a peristyle court between two structures and two garden courts with the entrances to the court marked by pedimented portals on the main axis of the villa that was established parallel to the original building. Although the tympana of the two gates firmly establish a link between the central peristyle court and the upper and lower gardens, the space directly behind them is not distinguished from the perimeter colonnade and does not correspond to the subsidiary atrium shown by Fra Giocondo. In any case, the building does not replicate either model; but Sandrini has correctly called attention to the "residential villa" discussed by the ancient and early modern architects[18]. In other words, the arrangement of the walled enclosure into a series of outdoor rooms, with the *cortile* holding the center, appears to follow Vitruvius by opening up a country residence to views of its garden.

Villa Della Torre, atrium.

The terribly dilapidated villa was restored in the twentieth century. As a result, there is limited evidence for the layout of the two garden courts above and below the *cortile*. A view of the villa from the eighteenth century indicates that the two areas were planted and that they were linked to the atrium or court and the fields on the slopes below the walled enclosure by a watercourse[19]. The surveyors, Michelan-

gelo Mattei and Stefano Foin, indicated that the water was brought to the villa from a canal from the North. At an outer wall that enclosed a *Brollo* or orchard north of the complex, the canal split into a smaller waterway through the orchard that went underneath the inner wall and reappeared in the upper garden. A second watercourse continued along the public road to a communal fountain on the exterior of the villa before it re-entered the villa and rejoined the first waterway in the garden. The watercourse then flowed from the upper garden into the *cortile* where it fed a fountain at the center of the court. Howard Burns claims that the watercourse ran on the surface underneath the entrance arch that separated the *cortile* from the upper garden and the 1752 map would seem to support this argument[20]. Unfortunately, the mapping standards of surveyors for the *Beni Inculti* often make little or no distinction between waterways that were to be left open as canals or covered because the intent of the *disegno* was to accurately portray the flow of the water that the applicant wished to modify.

The gardens of the villa Della Torre

Upon entering the upper garden from the orchard, the visitor found himself on a paved terrace running parallel to the north wall. At the west end, in the corner of the complex bound by the *strada commune*, stood the *tempietto* or chapel attributed to Sanmicheli[21]. Sanmicheli was active in the province, constructing fortifications for the city as the chief engineer of the republic[22]. He is also connected with other villas in the area, but we cannot assign the Villa Della Torre to the famous architect because Vasari, who notes that Sanmicheli was responsible for the «beautiful […] round temple», does not also name Sanmicheli as the architect of the villa itself, a strange oversight if the prominent artist had indeed contributed anything concrete to the design of the house and gardens.

From the terrace you step down a semicircular stair that spills down to the level of the garden in a series of concentric convex steps. The semicircular stair appears in the 1752 birds-eye view, but is not included by Sorte in his earlier drawing. Instead, Sorte shows stairs on either side of the upper garden that descend next to the arms of the terrace on the west and east walls. Currently, there is no way to access the garden from the "wings" of the upper terrace. As I have pointed out, Sorte's image does not agree with the facts on the ground, particularly with regard to the peristyle; therefore, it is certainly possible that the semicircular stair was simply left out of the sketch. Similarly, it is quite possible that the side stairs were removed at a later date, as an exterior portal in the corner perpendicular to the facade of the chapel and gates at the end of the terrace wings are no longer used[23]. Despite the confusion created by the two views of the villa, it is clear that the upper garden served as a forecourt to the *casa di villa*. It also appears that this garden space, with its regular perimeter, terracing, ornamental portals, chapel and multiple stairs featured more architectural or monumental elements than the orchard beyond. This garden thus served as an intermediate zone that revealed the unequal weight of natural and artificial along the axis of the villa. The visitor to the villa, who we may surmise entered from the north or top, moved more or less consecutively through an orchard, a garden, a court, a room, and so on[24].

Villa Della Torre, lower garden.

To the south of the courtyard was a somewhat larger enclosure comprised of an upper and lower terrace. The paved upper level was even with the *cortile*. The majority of the terrace surface is made up of a large rectangular *peschile* or fishpond. A three-arched bridge set on axis with the doorway crosses the fishpond. Further to the outside are small parterre gardens that do not appear in either view of the villa. Up-

Villa Della Torre, Sanmicheli chapel.

on crossing the bridge there is a small square platform on which stands a round stone table. The view across the bridge from the central court is open as the dining platform, if that was its function, also serves as a landing that extends beyond the retaining wall and is closed only by a balustrade. From the landing two stairs descend perpendicular to the main axis down to the lower terrace. There are also two straight stairs at the extreme ends of the upper terrace.

The lower terrace is now a relatively small orchard, but it appears to have been a quadripartite garden with a central fountain or pool. The 1752 view indicates that the perimeter and two cross-arms were paved. Again the lower garden does not appear in Sorte's sketch so that the organization of the garden in the eighteenth century cannot be compared to the situation in the Renaissance. Although the lack of information about the planting of the lower and upper gardens is disappointing, we are assured that they were green and carefully manicured. In contrast to other villas near Verona such as the villa Verità at Lavagno with its boxwood hedges and flowers, at the villa Della Torre «one can speak of a lawn at the center of the peristyle, of enormous pots of citrus trees on the borders and, facing the *brolo*, of a thicket of fruit trees: a system that is a consequence of the scarcity of water in the area».[25] Annamaria Conforti Calcagni discusses the architectonic nature of the gardens of the villa Della Torre at Fumane[26]. In Mattei and Foin's 1752 view, we «read quite clearly the compositional rapport in which architecture and open space weld themselves together into a compact, defined and unique form». She does not see the garden as «an appendix, more or less necessary to the architecture, but as one of the integral parts»[27]. Similarly, «the greenery is not showy» at Fumane, says Giuseppe Franco Viviani, and «the masonry architecture dominates the vegetal»[28].

Veronica Franco and the villa Della Torre

There is one contemporary description of the villa that supports the analysis of modern scholars, a poem: *In lode di Fumane*, composed by Veronica Franco, the famous sixteenth-century courtesan[29]. She published a collection of poems in Venice in 1575, *Terze rime*, and then a collection of letters in 1580 and was widely read in her lifetime. In any event, at some

Villa Della Torre, Sanmicheli chapel.

point in the early 1570s, Marc'Antonio Della Torre, Giulio's grandson, hosted Franco at the villa he had inherited[30]. Like other members of his family, Marc'Antonio served the diocese of Verona, but is better known as an *amante* who cohabited with Veronica lived for a time[31]. Masson reminded us that Marc'Antonio «was known as a connoisseur of beautiful and intelligent women» and that Franco's description of the «luxurious beds» at his villa «confirms della Torre's gallant reputation and to indicate how Veronica and her host enjoyed themselves during her visit»[32]. In what appears to have been her limited spare time, Franco composed an ode to the *genius loci* of Marc'Antonio's villa. According to Franco, the «flowering» beauty of the serrated hills above Verona makes them suitable homes for Flora and Pomona[33]. Her description of the entry into the villa pointed out the sheer joy she felt moving through a *bosco* of tall pines and cypresses as she arrived at Fumane[34]. Franco also describes the «silver liquid» throughout, water in such abundance that «the fresh rivers and merry fountains almost play tricks» as «various courses sink across the floor softly and quietly»[35]. Although Franco is not explicit, she identifies one part of the villa as a *bel prato* while she calls another a *fiorito amenissimo giardino* that is a «sweet tribute» to the «hand» of the *giardinier*[36].

Veronica Franco's life and works have been and remain a minor but entertaining subset of early modern Venetian studies, perhaps because her career and circle of friends (or clients) makes her interesting to historians, students of italian literature and art historians. I suppose the widespread interest in Franco might also be the result of her career choice of courtesan and her survival of a trial for witchcraft before the Inquisition. Georgina Masson effectively ushered in an era of "Franco studies" when she included her biography in her *Courtesans of the Italian Renaissance*. In her profile of Franco, Masson mentions the ekphrasis of Fumane and enunciated what she viewed as the Petrarchan or 'pastoral' elements of Franco's praise poem while she focused her reader's attention on the elite Veronese noble's love for country living. As Masson also produced one of the earliest surveys of Italian Renaissance gardens, I suspect that her brief account of Veronica Franco's visit to Fumane and her similarly concise analysis of the character of the gar-

dens of the villa Della Torre prompted later scholars to return to Franco's poem in an effort to make sense of the Renaissance "idea" of the garden.

Franco offers us an additional insight into the relationship between the gardens of the villa Della Torre and currents in garden theory that I have discussed at greater length elsewhere[37]. According to Franco, the «cultivated trees» and «green mantle» «ornament» the garden. It would seem that these natural elements, after the «hand» of the gardener touches them, give shape to the site and transform it into a garden. The important role played by the gardener in this transformation is carefully explained in the poem: in the garden, «art does not surrender before the boasting of nature»[38]. The apparent superiority of the gardener's art echoes a phrase coined by Jacopo Bonfadio, a troubled and ultimately tragic Milanese humanist, a few years before Franco wrote her poem in a letter he wrote that described the nature of the garden as a *terza natura* or a 'third nature' located somewhere between wild nature and our built environment[39].

'Terza natura'

Bonfadio and his 'third nature' has been the key to almost every study of the Italian Renaissance garden, despite that fact that he hedged his bet and never carefully or clearly defined his neologism as an appropriate term for villa gardens, gardens in general or the larger managed landscape of the increasingly productive and intensely cultivated agricultural terrain that supports villa investment[40]. What is important for us, however, is that Franco has no trouble declaring *arte* as the victor, expressing a confidence the dark soul of Bonfadio could never match. After her sojourn at the villa Della Torre, Franco could take the empirical evidence gained in *villeggiatura* and move toward a poetic yet convincing definition of the very things that completed a villa and marked it as a creation of the human hand. As a result, for Franco Nature, so powerful a presence in this country estate, is quite easily contrasted with the splendid architecture that Franco forces her reader to confront. Standing on one of the terraces, Franco wonders about the merits of nature or art: «The beauty of the site […] my eyes see from the palace […] is rich […] but then the work I see inside displays the art that equals and passes nature»[41]. In this passage, Franco offers her reader a vision of her lover's magnificent triumph over created Nature, an unsurprising rhetorical flourish that elevated the poet as it praised her paramour. However, the assignment of this poem to the category of paean misses the mark. Mary Rogers rightly recognized the eye of a critic in a recent essay and Franco's poem is now better understood as one of a series of brief excursions into the morass of aesthetic theory that ushered in an increasingly intellectual approach to the arts in early modern Italy[42].

Art historians have addressed the role of "artifice" in Renaissance painting and architecture. For example, Georgia Clarke reminds us that the intensely "worked" capitals of Baldassare Peruzzi were one reason his contemporaries applauded his *artificio* and found in his architecture a «manifestation of *ingegno*, or skill»[43]. This characteristic of "beauty" in art has also been a significant but poorly understood element of the art of the garden in the Renaissance. Bonfadio, in an admirable effort to define a place for the garden

as a hybrid of art and nature, introduced a new term. Franco, born in the wonderfully strange, floating city of Venice, took a stronger position in the debate that favored art over nature, but her audience could not fail to agree that the beauty of the villa was compounded by the natural beauty of its site and the artificial nature of its gardens. Franco's «awareness of the terms and topics of current art debates», according to Mary Rogers, is quite clearly exhibited in her letter to Tintoretto[44]. In the letter, the poetess praises her portrait (a thing she describes as «the work of your divine hand») as an example of the painter's power. «You concentrate», she wrote Tintoretto, «entirely on methods of imitating – no rather of outdoing – nature». Furthermore, «divine nature sees how skillfully you imitate, even surpass her […] so she will never dare grant to men of our time the high, bold intelligence required to explain in full the excellence of your art»[45]. (A statement that may have been a stab at Aretino but that also warms the heart of an art historian of "another" time who would like to do just that I should think).

The nature of Nature was another concept that piqued Franco's interest and raised questions among her contemporaries. Franco suggested that her fellow poets and other members of the intellectual elite found in Mother Nature inspiration for the creation of beautiful objects. Where she differed in her assessment of the situation in Sixteenth-century Venice was in her increasing faith in the ability of the modern artist. Thus, she speaks out about distaste for those who love only Phidias and Apelles and argue that «nature was a loving mother to men of antiquity but that she is a cruel stepmother to men today»[46]. Although her praise of Tintoretto as the equal to the greatest painters from antiquity effectively paraphrases similar discussions about Michelangelo and Titian, it is worth mentioning here as a typical component of any debate about the *ethos* and *praxis* of all art as a manifestation of the maker's reflection of the wonders of divine creation and the powerful influence of Mother Nature on all human endeavors.

In addition to the debate over the "maternal" or guiding role played by nature, Renaissance theorists also wrestled with the development of language suitable for the description of the garden or any "improved" landscape. Authors like Bartolomeo Taegio and Jacopo Bonfadio, for example, began to use a new term, *terza natura*, which presented the garden as the creation of a nature that was distinct from God's first, created nature[47]. Bonfadio was an itinerant scholar from Salò on Lake Garda who used the term in a letter to his friend, Plinio Tomacello, in 1541[48]. The designation of not one but three natures reflected a new theory of gardens in which the garden would be defined as a 'third nature' that occupied a middle ground between the raw nature created by God and the world of men. The "reclaimed" lands of the *terraferma* most likely fit into the second nature; but the new theory of a *terza natura* incorporated aesthetic concerns primarily associated with villa gardens. For Bonfadio and Taegio, the artifice (*artefice*) that created the beautiful (*vago*) garden justified its separation from God's creation on one extreme, and from the realm of roads, bridges, and aqueducts on the other. Both authors acknowledged a problem with this 'third nature': the lack of boundaries between the group of natures. This problem was a result of the

simple fact that many of the materials of the garden – e.g. plants, stones, water – are themselves natural and the act of gardening replicates the ingenuity and labor identified as the source of "second nature". Lacking a term for such an intermediary landscape, Bonfadio and Taegio introduced the phrase *terza natura* in their discussions of the art and artifice of the garden.

Veronica Franco and the nature of the garden

Although there is simply no way to fully explore this issue in an essay on a single villa, I would like to suggest that the Renaissance recognized the existence of multiple natures, including the improved nature championed by villa owners in early modern Italy. What the villa Della Torre and Franco's poem permit, rather, is an argument for the peculiar character of the Veneto and the Venetian and *terraferma* elite's support for a theory of gardens in which a theme from Cicero's *De natura deorum* became the most appropriate way to characterize a Venetian garden. The thematic return to the "nature" of a place was integral in Franco's poetry and bears thinking about if we hope to understand her language as a key to understanding Renaissance garden theory. In her paean to Venice, Franco praised the city as the supreme example of the man-made. Indeed, the city's "surpassing" beauty marked her as «in a way set apart from what is seen on earth [as if] Venice was built upon the waters according to supernatural heavenly intent»[49]. Moreover, the floating city deserved the highest praise for «all the things that art, nature, and heaven with industrious hands have created here»[50]. In other words, God and man worked in tandem to produce the Jewel of the Adriatic. Similarly, in her *Lode di Fumane* Franco announces that Marc'Antonio's residence «is the unique creation into which» nature «put all her effort and all her care». At the villa «heaven sends down its favor from above and earth makes no less an effort to compete, adorning this place with her own elements. The imagination of every human art is excelled by the arrangement of all the good that, gathered together, is shared out her: and yet the beautiful place preserves clear reminders of the height attained by the great skill of art to make beautiful things»[51].

In his 1563 *Letter in praise of the Villa*, Alberto Lollio provided one of the strongest historical arguments for "hands-on" villa life in the Renaissance[52]. In his discussion of the villa garden, Lollio tells his friend Ercole Perinato that «we delight in those things made with great efficacy, not only the living and true (*vive e vere*) works of the hands of Nature, but the dead and false (*morte e finte*) of art»[53]. Lollio's letter often appeared in collections that included Bonfadio's letter to Tomacello. The two letters represented two powerful statements about the physical and psychological benefits of gardens and the country life. Bonfadio's letter set out the parameters of the garden as the pleasant intermediary between untouched wilderness and the civilized world constructed by man. Bonfadio claimed, however, that he could not really name the garden («a cui non saprei dar nome») but that he was certain that it possessed a different "nature" than the other two because only in the garden were art and nature indistinguishable[54]. We have seen how Lollio also noted the explicit roles played by nature and man in the cultivation of a garden. Although Lollio did not describe the garden using the new term, 'third nature',

his enunciation of the collaboration between art and nature recalled Bonfadio's new concept of a *terza natura*. In other words, Lollio raised the question concerning the nature of the garden at precisely the same time the Veneto was in the midst of a similar debate about the nature of Nature and the nature of gardens.

Bonfadio's reticence in "naming" this 'third nature' has led modern historians to use the term, *terza natura*, as shorthand for the wonders of the Italian Renaissance garden. However, despite the origin of the term in northern Italy, some historians deny that the concept *terza natura* penetrated the Veneto. Lionello Puppi, for example, stated that «nature was subordinate to artifice» in sixteenth-century gardens like Bomarzo and the Villa d'Este[55]. Even though he is an authority on Venetian villa architecture, Puppi believed, however, that the «spirit of adventure» that embraced artifice in the garden was not shared by Venetians. «The spread of such ideas» such as the «third nature» or the incorporation of nature in art, said Puppi, «did not extend to the Veneto region, which resisted any attempt to achieve a marriage of art and nature, preferring to create a setting which complemented the architecture of the villa or palazzo rather than competed with it or even overwhelmed it»[56]. Although I agree with his assertion that «regional differences in cultural expression» allowed for the term 'third nature' to be «interpreted in a variety of ways»[57], I feel that Puppi missed the mark. In short, the poetic treatment of the "nature" of the Venetian garden by Bonfadio and Franco among others placed the Veneto in the vanguard of Renaissance garden culture, as they indicate that the paradigmatic 'third natures' were, in fact, those created in the Cinquecento Veneto.

If we consider Franco's understanding of the role played by nature, heaven and art in the creation of Venice or the villa Della Torre, then we begin to see her poetry as an echo of the overarching theme of the relationship between the different elements that combine in a final work of art and, more specifically, in this case a city or a garden. Furthermore, her acknowledgement of a competition between heaven and earth recalls the *paragone* between art and nature so integral to early modern art theory and enunciated in her letter to Tintoretto. When we consider her ekphrasis of Fumane, we then must reconsider the identification of the gardener and the patron as the engineers behind the development of that artifice which Franco found both appealing and the equal to the created nature that landscape architecture molded into a proper garden. In her words, «the gardener, standing at the entrance» to the villa «lets [the sweetest and clearest waters] inside, for, following art, they do whatever a talented man designs for them to do». Thus, the gardener uses nature in the process of transforming nature into a new and more beautiful object. Franco then continues to examine this hierarchical relationship when she declares that «art does not yield to nature the glory of the garden's artifice» and that the artistry of this garden and villa is particularly seductive and satisfying.

Giulio Della Torre and the 'all'antica' villa

Giulio Della Torre's villa at Fumane integrates house, gardens and agricultural lands with rustic ornament and water features make his villa a paradigmatic *all'antica* villa that, in turn, influenced the development of villa culture in the *provincia di Verona*.

The admirable proportions of the central *cortile*, the powerful presence of the rusticated columns and doorways, and the handling of the terraces flanking the courtyard residence have provided ammunition for historians interested in the attribution of the villa to one of the many architects and artists working in the Veneto during the construction of the Fumane residence. Arguments in favor of Giulio Romano, Cristoforo Sorte and Michele Sanmicheli rely on the principle that the superlative design of the Villa Della Torre must have been developed at least with the consultation of one or more than one of these masters[58]. The lack of any archival material documenting payments to any of these men casts doubt on their participation despite the survival of a birds-eye view of the villa attributed to Sorte and the visible similarity between the muscular architecture and virile ornamentation with the work of both Romano and Sanmicheli[59]. In his monograph on the Villa Della Torre, Arturo Sandrini addresses scholars' attempts to connect a high-profile architect with the *all'antica* villa. He believes that Giulio Della Torre's training as a sculptor and his personal stake in the income from the property made him the most logical author of the design. Margherita Azzi Visentini agrees, stating, «in all probability [the villa] is a work of its proprietor»[60]. Giulio's friendship with the Venetian poet and statesman Andrea Navagero, who was clearly responsible for the design of his own gardens on Murano and outside of Treviso, not to mention his relationship with both Giambattista Ramusio and cardinal Pietro Bembo, two other high-profile Venetians who also directed the layout of their villa gardens and decoration of their own villas, suggests that Sandrini makes a good point that the idea behind many villas was generated in conversation among the *padrone* class and, as a result, the authors of individual villas are in many instances the patrons themselves.

Giulio Della Torre's interest in antiquities and his involvement in the accademia Gibertiana indicate that the style chosen for his renovation of Guido Antonio Maffei's country house must be understood as another facet of a comprehensive interest in the antique. Giulio, a lawyer and member of the small number of Veronese families that exerted control over the city and its province, cherished the history of his family and Verona. Azzi Visentini claims that he was an important "protector" of Giovanni Caroto, the painter who published a collection of views of the city, *De le Antiqità de Verona*, in 1560[61]. As he had for his son Girolamo and his friend Giambattista Ramusio, Giulio produced a portrait medallion of Caroto that shows the artist at work at a desk under the admiring gaze of a nude male. Caroto's engravings were based on drawings he had done some years earlier and, therefore, while Giulio was still alive which he corrected and published, apparently, in response to the release of Palladio's *I Quattro Libri*[62]. Caroto's illustrations had been published some twenty years earlier in 1540 by Torello Saraina, *De origine et amplitudine civitatis Veronae*[63]. In Saraina's dialogue, Caroto is one of three speakers, along with Jacopo Villafranca and Giovan Nicola Cappella, in a conversation about local cultural traditions, the Roman antiquities visible in the city, and of the inherent problems facing a student of archeology[64].

As a medallist and sculptor, Giulio's work reveals his sensitivity to ancient prototypes. Shortly after

Giulio's death, Hubert Goltz published a history of Julius Caesar that he based on images of Roman coins and mentioned Giulio as the owner of an important collection of ancient money[65]. Although we cannot know the extent of Giulio's collection, at least two members of the younger generation of Della Torres, including his nephew Giambattista, owned *antiquissimae medaleae*[66]. In any event, Giulio's own work and his support for Giovanni Caroto reveals a strong preference for ancient types and suggests that his redesign of his country house into a true villa *all'antica* should be considered as a powerful statement of a pervasive interest in ancient, Roman style.

Despite several alternative attributions to the contrary, the conventional wisdom concerning the design of the Villa Della Torre places the responsibility on the patron, Giulio Della Torre, instead of on a professional architect. There are budgets, which admit to the subcontracting of hydraulics and stonecutting to specialists; however, the concept and the arrangement appear to spring from Giulio's interest in the makeover of a family farm into a proper villa. Looking at a later plan of the villa it is impossible to miss the dominant feature of the composition. Rather than consider the villa as an obtrusive intervention into the landscape, Giulio's final product becomes a linchpin in the management of the larger agricultural territory of Fumane, connected to the verdant countryside by the lifeline of the irrigation system which enters the villa at the top and travels through each zone of the formal part of the property before exiting the lower garden and orchard to circulate through the neighboring fields. Each step of the water's path becomes a celebrated focus of the individual unit. Each unit becomes itself part of a larger organic composition by the understanding of the movement, origin and destination of this water in the adjacent elements of the complex and the surrounding holdings of the Della Torre.

Rustication and villa architecture

Although the rusticated masonry of the Villa Della Torre a Fumane expresses its powerful *all'antica* monumentality, the design of the villa reveals a deep sensitivity to the landscape on which it was built. The horizontal run of columns, the axial plan and the simple geometry of the terraced gardens follow the natural slope of the terrain while they offer the main house spectacular views across the Valpolicella toward the distant capital of the province. In plan, the villa approximates a Hellenistic peristyle house. The choice of a rustic order satisfied the need to correlate the style of the residence with its location in the country and its function as a *casa di villa*. Similar columns and ornamental rustication were features of both the Villa Ramusa and two late Bembo villas in the Padovana. As a result, the thick and rough *colonne bugne* of the Villa Della Torre at Fumane reflect the embrace by Navagero's friends of Raphael's architectural vocabulary and do not by themselves support an attribution to either Romano or Sanmicheli. Although the plan of the Della Torre country residence does not recall any of the surviving villas built by Navagero's circle, this can be explained by the condition of the property when it was purchased from the Maffei some years before. Furthermore, the fact that the Villa Della Torre was completely re-constructed around the middle of the sixteenth century makes it more likely that

the owner had a chance to digest the latest commentary on Vitruvius and incorporate new concepts in *all'antica* design in the plan[67]. The use of heavily rusticated ornament for a residential structure that borrows directly from recent illustrations of the ancient peristyle house that accompanied Vitruvius' text associates the rustic with *all'antica* architecture and specifically with the ancient villa. Similarly, the sensitive connection between the man-made structure of the residence and its setting suggests that recent developments in the recreation of the *all'antica* villa inspired Giulio Della Torre to make a better or more pure Roman villa.

As an *all'antica* villa that enunciates an integration of the built and the planted, the Villa Della Torre at Fumane stands out as a concrete example of the link between Navagero's ideology and villa architecture, particularly if we accept that many of the new features of the designed landscape were developed after Giulio received and digested Navagero's letters from Spain. As a graduate of the University of Padua and a practicing artist, Giulio appreciated the value of experience and the corresponding careful study of examples, be they coins, elevations or gardens. As the brother of renowned physician who worked on commentaries of the works of Rhazes (*al-Razi*) and Avicenna, Giulio also cannot have been blind to the contributions of the great Islamic and Arab thinkers. Navagero provided a convenient link between the two most powerful historical entities in the Mediterranean basin.

Navagero's letters from Spain underscored one point: that Islam had been a vital force in the shaping of their world. Simply stated, Navagero made a case for the induction of Arab philosophers and Islamic monuments into their respective halls of fame. For a villa owner such as Giulio, Navagero's discussion of the territory of Roman Spain and Islamic al-Andalus amounted to an ekphrastic aid to the better reincarnation of the classical villa characterized by Pliny, Varro and Columella. In plan and execution the Villa Della Torre owes something to the latest developments in Mannerist architecture, especially to Giulio Romano's Palazzo del Te in Mantua. The sequence of framed garden rooms, cortili, peschiere and grottos recalls the pattern of Romano's masterpiece. More pertinent to what Navagero brought to light, though, is the spectacular sensitivity to the coherent and unified presentation of the villa and garden complex that makes the Villa Della Torre a suitable stand-in for Navagero's lost villas.

From a formal perspective the Villa Della Torre compares favorably in a very straightforward comparison between one of the gardens visited and described by Navagero in his letters and the center cortile of the Della Torre complex. An axial view of the Villa Della Torre exhibits a sequence of garden rooms similar to the flowing, interconnected spaces of the Alhambra and the Generalife. After reading Navagero's letters, Giulio had a clear example of a garden and building complex in which the negative space of the planted areas appeared to move into and often through the solid mass of the surrounding or flanking structures. The permeable nature of the columnar screen of the peristyle courtyard and the portals along the central axis open the residence up. The villa was brought to life by the swift and noisy passage of the water that Giulio redirected to enter the upper terrace and then

flow through the central court, into the fish ponds, out of a spout in a grotto, across the lower terrace or orchard and then, finally, out of the walled enclosure and on to the fields below.

At the Villa Della Torre, the running water confirmed the open plan of the villa and the permeable character of the structure. Later Renaissance villa gardens are well known for the splendid waterworks. In some of these gardens, the flowing water links areas of the garden together. Several garden historians have pointed to Navagero's letters as a possible source for the dynamic use of water in the gardens of mid-Cinquecento Italy. His descriptions of Granada offer a tantalizing model for the proliferating fountains and burbling water chains in the gardens of powerful clerics and princes. The clever use of hydraulics and the characterization of water as a connector in a thematic or narrative garden in Roman Renaissance gardens does not exactly replicate, however, the passage of water from landscape to structure and back to landscape noted by Navagero as a feature of Spain's Moorish gardens and seen some decades after at Fumane.

Acqua corrente

Fascination with this kind of moving water was not entirely novel, but Navagero's description of the Alhambra piqued the interest of his friends. Pietro Bembo, for example, digressed from his account of the Italian Wars in the final chapter of his *History of Venice* when he described the 1512 embassy of Domenico Trevisan to Cairo and spoke in glowing terms of the charms of the Palace of King Laseraffo of Egypt[68]:

> The King heard that it was a great man – one as illustrious as himself – sent to him by order of the Senate and received him with every honor in a most ample loggia in one of his most lovely gardens; From every column of the loggia hung a cage with singing nightingales; and the water of the fountains, that ran from more than one side, seemed to murmur sweetly as if accompanying the songs of the birds…

Bembo's ekphrasis reminds us of the increasing number of travelers' descriptions of gardens and landscapes circulating in Venice in the Cinquecento[69]. Of these, Navagero's letters provide the most explicit link between a garden aesthetic and villa culture. Thanks to the high-profile role played by his nephew, Bernardo, as an ambassador and Cardinal, the charms of the Granadine palaces seen by Navagero in 1526 would have reached an appreciative audience in Rome and, thus, may have contributed to the increasingly daring use of waterworks in the great gardens built for *papabile* clerics and their ilk. But it is more likely that the recipients of the original letters in Spain, Ramusio, Bembo, and the Della Torre would have asked their author to carefully explain himself and, perhaps, assist them or direct them in their efforts to make equally magical gardens that revealed the hands-on role played by their patrons.

The adjacent Brenta provided Pietro Bembo with all the noisy water he needed at his suburban villa, and his family villa, the Noniano, sat at the juncture of the Brenta and a canal. The Villa Ramusa, on the other hand, did not have a large, natural watercourse nearby, but smaller channels cut across the property, and their importance was underscored by Sanmicheli's *ponticello*. Situated as it was on the slope some dis-

tance from Verona, the Villa Della Torre offered quite different opportunities to its patron than did the other villas we have discussed, because they are all located on rather flat terrain. The terraces above and below the house allowed the water, which arrived on the property in a canal from a spring some distance away, to descend playfully through the complex, rushing swiftly across a *prato* at one point, shooting toward the heavens at another, disappearing beneath the ground to reappear in a subterranean grotto, and, finally, quenching the thirst of a series of fields further down the slopes. A spring day in Giulio Della Torre's compound must have astounded visitors with the music of the rushing canals and the sprinkling fountains, as the dynamic *acqua corrente* streamed through the villa. Navagero's letters introduced to Italy a prototypical garden complex where just this type of living, burbling water surged or meandered through rooms, courts, and gardens invigorating palaces and visitors alike.

As villa owners, Pietro Bembo, Giambattista Ramusio, Girolamo Fracastoro and Giulio Della Torre were members of an elite group in Renaissance society. The noblemen Bembo and Della Torre fit our ideal of the typical member of this group, while Fracastoro and Ramusio, the physician and the secretary respectively, make it abundantly clear that the country life had tremendous appeal for nobles and non-nobles alike. In each case, these men invested time and money in the creation of villas that provided refuge or respite from the city, perhaps the most traditional purpose of the villa. Their villas, however, also reveal the new role of the villa in the sixteenth-century Veneto that was based on a revised *all'antica* villa type these men developed as colleagues of Andrea Navagero.

Giulio Della Torre's villa at Fumane integrates house, gardens and agricultural lands with rustic ornament and water features make his villa a paradigmatic *all'antica* villa that, in turn, influenced the development of villa culture in the *provincia di Verona*. The admirable proportions of the central *cortile*, the powerful presence of the rusticated columns and doorways, and the handling of the terraces flanking the courtyard residence contribute to the experience of this villa as a prototype of a particularly Veronese neo-classical country house. Moreover, Giulio Della Torre's villa at Fumane stands out as the most complete statement of the true *all'antica* villa envisioned by Navagero and his circle. Rightfully identified as a *unicum* by Arturo Sandrini, the Villa Della Torre integrated a powerful rustic courtyard villa house with a series of terraced gardens and the larger agricultural landscape.

The pronounced *romanitas* of the structure and the soothing Moorish rhythms of the waters reflect the principles of the agricultural villa developed after Navagero returned from Spain. More importantly, perhaps, the rustic vocabulary used by Giulio Della Torre for his villa indicates that his close friend, the architect Michele Sanmicheli, had a greater influence on villa architecture than has been previously believed. Furthermore, the villa *all'antica* created by Giulio involved the Roman style promoted by Sanmicheli in a statement of man's ultimate role in the fashioning of a delightful "third" nature where the divine first nature and the human second nature became one in the garden.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Giulio Della Torre's villa at Fumane offers us an image of the increasingly complex ideology of *bonificazione* and country house living. For Veronica Franco, the "sight" of the villa Della Torre «delights all who see it, and its memory alone strikes blows to my heart»[70]. The main reason for her joy and sorrow were the powerful statements made by the villa's architecture, ornament, gardens and setting that both thrilled her and other visitors and made one wish to return when too long away. Her poem speaks eloquently of the successful design of a country house as a celebration of the agricultural lands of the Valpolicella and of the structure's elegant interaction with the site thanks to the refined application of the gardener's art.

«The gentle, native beauty of the site leads the eyes outside the palace to see how rich nature is in these surroundings». Thus, being in the villa forces the viewer to address the beauty inherent in divine and created nature. Franco does not, however, judge that the "first" nature is in any way superior to that nature shaped by men. Indeed, she continues on to point out that «then, inside, art displays such skill that it equals and outdoes nature, so that the eye, drawn to wonder, rests here»[71]. At Fumane and in Franco's language we find a strong case for the victory of artifice. The victory is not without its sadness, for viewers of the complementary beauties of the Veronese and the artistry of Fumane are «never satisfied entirely» by the «prodigious banquet» that God and man have brought to our table.

Notes

1 Veronica Franco's life and works have been central to scholarship and popular media. Among the important contributions to Venetian studies and gender studies are the works of the editors of her best known writing such as Ann Rosalind Jones and Margaret Rosenthal and scholars such at Mary Rogers whose work on Franco raises questions about class, gender and early modern literature within the scope of Italian or Venetian culture. See: Veronica Franco, *Poems and selected letters*, edited and translated by A.R. Jones and M.F. Rosenthal, Chicago 1998; M.F. Rosenthal, *The honest courtesan: Veronica Franco, citizen and writer in Sixteenth-century Venice*, Chicago 1992; M. Rogers, *Fashioning identities for the Renaissance courtesan*, in *Fashioning identities in Renaissance art*, ed. M. Rogers, Aldershot 1999, pp. 91-105.

2 For the most comprehensive discussion of the villa Della Torre at Fumane see: *Villa Della Torre a Fumane*, a cura di A. Sandrini, Verona 1993. See also: M. Azzi Visentini, *La villa in Italia: Quattrocento e Cinquecento*, Milano 1995, pp. 246-248.

3 A recent study of the villa approaches the subject from the point of view of an artistic "commission" and provides arguments for the closer association between the design of the villa and Francesco Della Torre, the secretary to bishop Matteo Giberti,

an argument that begins to help us more easily understand the transfer of ideas from Mantua and other centers of high style in the Renaissance to this ex-urban and provincial project. See M.T. Franco, *Per villa Della Torre a Fumane: la committenza, una data certa e altre questioni*, in *Magna Verona Vale. Studi in onore di Pierpaolo Brugnoli*, a cura di A. Brugnoli e G.M. Varanini, Verona 2008, pp. 611-634.

4 Franco's poetry appeared in the 16th century in a volume of collected works: Veronica Franco, *Terze Rime*, [Venetiis] 1575. See also: Veronica Franco, *Rime*, a cura di S. Bianchi, Milano 1995.

5 B. Chiappa, *I Della Torre fra Cinquecento e Settecento*, in *Villa della Torre a Fumane...*, pp. 65-68.

6 Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Confini, b. 262

7 Francesco Della Torre to Donato Rullo, May 16, 1543, in *Lettere volgari...*, iii, 19.

8 C. Brothers, *The Renaissance reception of the Alhambra: the letters of Andrea Navagero and the palace of Charles V*, in *Muqarnas XI: an annual on islamic art and architecture*, ed. G. Necipoglu, Leiden 1994, pp. 79-102. Brothers' article makes a connection between Navagero's letters from Spain and the contemporary design project of the Villa Della Torre as a potential early manifestation of the relationship between Islamic landscape design and Italian early modern gardens.

9 Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Provveditori ai Confini, b. 260; and Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Beni Inculti, Processi, b. 96: Antonio Della Torre, *Diversione Progno di Fumane*, 16 December 1561, Cristoforo Sorte and Giovanni Battista Remi *periti*.

10 On Ridolfi at the Villa Della Torre see: E.M. Guzzo, *Nota sugli apparati decorativi*, in *Villa Della Torre a Fumane...*, pp. 177-195. On Ridolfi see: R. Brenzoni, *Nuovi dati d'archivio sul Falconetto e su Bartolomeo e Ottaviano Ridolfi*, «Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti», 112 (1953-1954), pp. 279-295 and A.M. Conforti Calcagni, *Bartolomeo Ridolfi*, in *L'architettura a Verona nell'età della Serenissima (sec. xv-sec. xviii)*, a cura di P. Brugnoli e A. Sandrini, 1988, ii, pp. 197-200.

11 Azzi Visentini, *La villa in Italia...*, pp. 246-248.

12 On the dating of the Fumane project see: A. Sandrini, *Villa Della Torre: l'antico, la natura, l'artificio*, in *Villa Della Torre a Fumane...*, pp. 109-159.

13 Azzi Visentini, *La villa in Italia*, p. 246, concurs, calling the upper garden «the entrance court».

14 M.S. Tisato, *Cristoforo Sorte per la cronologia di alcune ville veronesi del '500*, «Antichità Viva», 15 (1976), p. 45. Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Provveditori ai Confini*, b. 262.

15 P. Brugnoli, '*Preistoria*' *di una villa: i Maffei e i loro possessi fumanesi*, in *Villa Della Torre a Fumane...*, p. 6.

16 *De architectura*, vi,v,3.

17 Sandrini, *Villa Della Torre...*; Sandrini reproduces the plan from *M. Vitruvius per Jocundum solito castigatior factus, cum figuris et tabula, ut iam legi et intellegi possit*, Venetiis 1511, c. 103*v*.

18 L. Pellecchia, *Architects read Vitruvius: Renaissance interpretations of the atrium of the ancient house*, «Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians», 51 (1992), pp. 377-416.

19 Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Provveditori sopra li Beni Inculti, m. 137, d. B/6. Stefano Foin and Michelangelo Mattei, December 10, 1752.

20 Brothers, *The Renaissance...*, p. 102 n. 96.

21 According to Vasari, «for the noble Counts della Torre of Verona, Michele built a very beautiful chapel in the manner of a round temple, with the alter in the centre, at their villa of Fumane». Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the most Eminent Painters, Sculptors & Architects*, translation by G. Du C. de Vere, London 1912 [reprint New York 1976] p. 228.

22 A.M. Conforti Calcagni, *Le mura di Verona. La città e le sue difese, dalla fondazione romana all'unità d'Italia*, Verona 1999, pp. 83-99. In a fascinating coincidence, the new pentagonal bastion constructed by Sanmicheli in his system of fortifications for Verona is called a *baluardo di Spagna* or *Spanish bastion*. Moreover, the multiple Spanish bastions came to be known as *orti* or gardens and «for another four centuries cheered with their produce Veronese tables», pp. 84-85.

23 The chapel entrance and one of the two archways opening off of the terrace wings are blocked up while the third, which gives onto the public thoroughfare is gated.

24 Azzi Visentini, *La villa in Italia...*, p. 246, concurs, calling the upper garden «the entrance court».

25 G.F. Viviani, *Giardini in villa*, in *La letteratura e i giardini*, atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Verona-Garda 2-5 ottobre 1985, Firenze 1987, p. 422.

26 A.M. Conforti Calcagni, *Giardini di città e di villa: dalla simbologia medioevale alla razionalità illuministica*, in *L'architettura a Verona...*, pp. 361-364.

27 *Ivi*, p. 361.

28 Viviani, *Giardini in villa...*, p. 422.

29 The entire poem is included as an appendix in *Villa*

Della Torre a Fumane..., pp. 220-231. *In lode di Fumane...* was also published by Abdelkader Salza, *Scrittori d'Italia*, Bari 1913, pp. 337-352. The translations are my own but I am indebted to the numerous translations. The subsequent notes refer to the Italian edition and numeration in Veronica Franco, *Poems and selected letters...*, pp. 252-281.

30 Azzi Visentini, *La villa in Italia...*, p. 248, dates the poem c. 1575.

31 G.P. Marchi, *Marcantonio Della Torre e Veronica Franco*, in *Villa Della Torre a Fumane...*, p. 294.

32 G. Masson, *Courtesans of the Italian Renaissance*, London 1975, p. 161.

33 *In lode di Fumane*, in Veronica Franco, *Poems and selected letters...*, p. 254, v. 40 and v. 66.

34 *Ivi*, p. 256, vv. 80-84: «Entra 'l sol quanto entrar se gli consente / da un bosco d'alti pini e di cipressi, / pien d'ombre amiche al dí lungo e fervente; / e gode di veder quivi con essi / de la sua amata in corpo umano fronde, / già braccia e chiome, or verdi rami spessi…».

35 *Ivi*, p. 258, vv. 106-111: «… co' bei liquidi argenti intorno sparsi / porgon dolce liquor da trar la sete, / e le candide membra da lavarsi. / Dai freschi rivi e da le fonti liete, / quasi scherzando, l'acque in vario corso / declinan verso 'l pian soavi e quete».

36 *Ivi*, p. 258, vv. 114-123.

37 C.J. Pastore, *Expanding Antiquity: Andrea Navagero and Villa Culture in the Cinquecento Veneto*, Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Pennsylvania, 2003, esp. chapter one: *The Cultural Context and the Idea of the Antique*, pp. 14-130.

38 *In lode di Fumane*, in Veronica Franco, *Poems and selected letters...*, vv. 127-128: «Non cede l'arte a la natura il vanto / ne l'artificio del giardin…».

39 Pastore, *Expanding Antiquity...*, pp. 7 ss.

40 On Bonfadio see: J. Dixon Hunt, *Paragone in Paradise: translating the garden*, «Comparative Criticism», 18 (1996) pp. 55-70 and J. Dixon Hunt, *Greater perfections: the practice of garden theory*, Philadelphia 2000, particularly chapter 3, *The idea of a garden and the three natures*, pp. 32-75. On third nature, see: A. Rinaldi, *La ricerca della «terza natura»: artificialia e naturalia nel giardino toscano del '500*, in *Natura e artificio: l'ordine rustico, le fontane, gli automi nella cultura del Manierismo europeo*, a cura di M. Fagiolo, Roma 1979, pp. 155-175; A. Tagliolini, *Storia del giardino italiano*, Firenze 1988, pp. 226-228; L. Puppi, *Nature and artifice in the sixteenth-century italian garden*, in *The architecture of western gardens: a design history from the renaissance to the present day*, edited by M. Mosser and G. Teyssot, Cambridge 1991, pp. 47-58.

41 *In lode di Fumane*, in Veronica Franco, *Poems and selected letters...*, p. 266, vv. 268-272: «La bellezza del sita, alma, natía, / gli occhi fuor del palazzo a veder piega / quanto ivi ricca la natura sia; / ma poi di dentro tal lavor dispiega / l'arte, che la natura agguaglia e passa».

42 Rogers, *Fashioning identities...*, p. 99.

43 G. Clarke, '*La piú bella e meglio lavorata opera*': *beauty and good design in italian Renaissance architecture*, in *Concepts of Beauty in Renaissance Art*, edited by F. Ames-Lewis and M. Rogers, Aldershot 1998, p. 111.

44 Rogers, *Fashioning identities...*, p. 99.

45 Veronica Franco, *Poems and selected letters...*, p. 37.

46 *Ivi*, p. 35.

47 The Italian term, *bonificazione*, is now translated as 'reclamation', but its root indicates that the main feature of the transformation was seen as the improvement or 'making good' of the terrain in question. *La Villa: dialogo di M. Bartolomeo Taegio*, Melano, Francesco Moscheni 1559, p. 58.

48 Jacopo Bonfadio to Plinio Tomacello, in *Lettere volgari di diversi nobilissimi huomini et eccellentiss. ingegni, scritte in diverse materie, Libro secondo*, Venetiis, Aldi Filii 1548). The letter is also included in a nineteenth-century collection that includes a biography of the artist: *Lettere di Jacopo Bonfadio con un'orazione di Cicerone per lui tradotta e colle notizie sulla sua vita scritte da G.B. Corniani*, Como 1825, p. 18. See also: R. Urbani, *Jacopo Bonfadio*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, xii, Roma 1970, pp. 6-7.

49 Veronica Franco, *Poems and selected letters...*, p. 129.

50 *Ivi*, p. 219, capitolo 22: *Franco again, to Venice and her distant lover*, vv. 22-23.

51 *Ivi*, p. 255, capitolo 25: *In lode di Fumane*, translation of Jones and Rosenthal.

52 The letter was included in a collection edited by Dionigi Atanagi: *Lettere di diversi autori*, Venetiis 1556, pp. 570-602.

53 *Lettera di M. Alberto Lollio a M. Hercole Perinato in laude della villa*, in *Delle orationi di M. Alberto Lollio gentil'huomo*, Ferrara, Valente Panizza Mantovano 1563, p. 221.

54 *Lettere di Jacopo Bonfadio...*, p. 58.

55 Puppi, *Nature and artifice...*, p. 56.

56 *Ivi*, p. 57.

57 *Ivi*, p. 56.

58 Sandrini mentions these architects, citing Vasari's association of the villa Della Torre with Sanmicheli, and also notes Licisco Magagnato's hypothesis regarding the role of the *stuccatore* Bartolomeo Ridolfi, the man responsible for the outlandish anthropomorphic chimneys in the villa, as a potential contributor to the design of the structure. Sandrini, *Villa Della Torre...*, pp. 112-113 and p. 169 notes 16-21. Also see: G.F. Viviani, *Le ville della Valpolicella*, Verona 1983, p. 188; G.F. Viviani, *La villa nel veronese*, Verona 1975, p. 46; and Conforti Calcagni, *Bartolomeo Ridolfi...*, pp. 198-200.

59 Sanmicheli is also put forward as the designer of the chapel in the upper courtyard of the villa, and that attribution is more convincing.

60 Azzi Visentini, *La villa in Italia...*, p. 246.

61 Giovanni Francesco Caroto, *De le Antiquità de Verona*, Verona, Paolo Ravagnan 1560 (facs. rpt.: G. Schweikart, *Le antichità di Verona di Giovanni* Caroto, Verona 1977).

62 P. Marini, *Andrea Palladio*, in *L'architettura a Verona...*, ii, p. 186. The exact date of Giulio's death is not known, but he must have been deceased by 1558 when his son Antonio registered himself as the son of «the late (*quondam*) dr. Giulio Della Torre,» L. Franzoni, *Collezionismo e cultura antiquaria*, in *Palladio e Verona*, a cura di P. Marini. Verona 1980, p. 94.

63 G. Mazzi, *Il Cinquecento: il nuovo lessico*, in *L'architettura a Verona...*, p. 149.

64 *Ibidem.*

65 Hubert Goltz, *C. Iulius Caesar sive Historiae Imperatorum Caesarumque Romanorum ex antiquis numismatibus restitutae*, Bruges 1563.

66 Franzoni, *Collezionismo...*, p. 94, cites the testament of Giambattista Della Torre of november 8, 1568.

67 Mazzi, *Il Cinquecento...*, pp. 162-164.

68 P. Bembo, *Istoria Viniziana*, introduzione di E.A. Albertoni, Milano 1978, p. 398.

69 It also reminds us that his close friend and fellow villa builder, Navagero, had himself toured Moorish sites and could have confirmed for Bembo facts about the type of palaces and gardens found in Syria and Egypt such as that visited by Trevisan.

70 Veronica Franco, *Poems and selected letters...*, p. 265.

71 *Ivi*, p. 267.