

BOOK REVIEWS



LA CURA DEI GIARDINI STORICI. TEORIA E PRASSI. *Michael Rohde*. Edizione italiana a cura di Massimo de Vico Fallani. *Giardini e paesaggio*, vol. 31. Leo S. Olschki, Firenze (Italy), 2012. pp. XIII + 569. ISBN 978-88-222-6149-6. € 58.00.

The author of this interesting volume has, for some time, worked with historic gardens in Germany and has asked the important question of how to define professional, sustainable and lasting care of historic gardens and how to put it into practice. Michael Rohde, director of the garden of the Prussian Castles and Parks of Berlin-Brandenburg Foundation, together with a team of four other authors, has created an important base not only for understanding historic gardens but also for future research about caring for and preserving them. This 570-page book is the result of two research projects undertaken at the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Hannover.

The first part of the book is dedicated to the past: the theory of the art and design, and the care for trees, flowers, paths and waterworks are documented in detail, crossing over all stylistic periods. In the first part, the various members of the working group describe the techniques adopted in the various periods considered. Barbara Vogt reports about studies on flowers, flowerbed ornamentation and provides a list of flowers used and certification of their origin from Renaissance up to the XX century. The chapter by Andreas von Hoeren documents changes in the use of irrigation and hydraulic systems from the Renaissance to the 20th century.

The second part of the volume is dedicated to the care and restoration of historic gardens. Some well-known parks are taken as example and interventions undertaken and recommended for trees, shrubs, blossoms, paths and waterworks are described, with precise instructions for their care. There are numerous color illustrations of historic plans, engravings, drawings and inventories, adding valuing to the theoretical and practical parts of the work.

The volume concludes with results and recommendations to care for historic gardens properly.

As Massimo De Vico Fallani points out in the Presentation, “reading this book will, for some, be a surprise because it reveals a well-structured reality toward the mastery of curative nature which is not always known, at least not in present times, by those working in Italy, and draws attention to maintenance, which is often overlooked.”

This book enriches the considerable literature available on historic gardens from historic and cultural and scientific and technical points of view, offering the reader meaning and knowledge about his topic which plays a leading role in the image of our country.

Francesco Ferrini