

**The historical garden. For a history of restaurations. The anglo-italian culture in the projects of russell page. Analysis and hypothesis of the restauration of the garden in Silvio Pellico's villa in Moncalieri, Italy**

di Danila Attivissimo

Relatore: Maria Adriana Giusti

Correlatore: Paolo Pejrone

It is difficult to place within the history of garden's architecture the position of the English landscapist Russell Page. He was a man interested in the tendencies and theories of planning which permeated his times; he absorbed the cultural influences of the countries which he visited and witnessed during his long working activity several social changes which also influenced gardening materials and techniques. In his only one published book "The Education of a Gardener" he writes about the strong influence he absorbed from Gertrude Jekyll's works relating to her theory of the color which Russell developed by studying the effects produced by light, shadow and the seasons. After working in France and Italy, he modified his approach towards the larger formality of the classic French planning and the sculptural quality of the Italian tradition. He lived in times when there was a strong interest for garden's formal taste. The studies on the Italian garden of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were made known through the books written by Edith Warton and Geoffrey Jellicoe with whom Page worked for many years. In regular gardens he appreciated proportion and clarity, but above all the wise utilization of water, to which before any other element, one owes the sensation of harmony in these places.

He worked in Italy in the second half of the twentieth century; probably the anglosaxon culture of Count Rossi induced them to look for Page in 1952 to realize a garden near their residence at La loggia near Turin. In a second time he realized the park of Villa Agnelli at Villar Perosa and the project for Villa d'Agliè, owned by the Giacosa family.

In 1956 he went to Ischia for the garden of La Mortella owned by the composer William Walton and in 1964 began his interventions at San Liberato near Bracciano for Count Sanminiatielli and in the grounds of La Landriana at Ardea belonging to Marquess Lavinia Taverna. Thereafter he was called at Monbello, at Pozzolo Formigaro and Vistorta. The relationship which he had with his customers was always very stimulating for Page; through their personalities he confronted himself with the different cultures of the places where he intervened, he met enthusiastic gardeners who realized his massive projects in the course of the years. Particularly, he had a privileged relationship with the Ajmone Marsan family who, after acquiring the Silvio Pellico estate close to the Moncalieri hills, in the nineteenth century property of the Barolo family, decided to entrust him with the project for the area facing the main building.



*Villa Silvio Pellico in Moncalieri. The main building*

Page realized a terraced garden, organized on two main axes divided by water pools. Through the utilization of regular hedges he was able to create a succession of "rooms" characterized by the use of the vegetation, that of the presence of sculptorial elements and defined by the drawings of the floors.



*Villa Silvio Pellico in Moncalieri. The garden*

It extends over an area of about five hundred square meters, including the area dedicated to orchard culture, grassy plants and bulbs for the cultivation of cut flowers. About five hectares of the estate are occupied by the nineteenth century park with trees and ornamental shrubs and vast meadows.



*Villa Silvio Pellico in Moncalieri. The cross axis of the garden*

The operating methodology of the preserving intervention, be it in its preliminary cognitive and analytical phases, be it in those more properly propositional and operational, embraces all the components which constitute the garden and concerns the following phases: cognitive phase, analysis of the preserving state and thematic mapping. Separation of the interventions and write-up of the special specifications of the contracts to carry out the ordinary and extraordinary maintenance of the architectonic manufactures and of the green works. The management phase will permit, in the end, to preserve the estate, inasmuch as the integration of the restoration project with the programmatic expectations will permit the preservation of the projected quality.

For further information, e-mail: [danila.attivissimo@libero.it](mailto:danila.attivissimo@libero.it)