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The sixteenth-century Italian grotto: a theatre performing Ovidian stories

Introduction

The *Metamorphoses* is a long Latin narrative poem written in 8 AD by the Roman poet Ovid.[1] This poem consists of 15 books and is written in hexameter verse. The whole poem is a collection of Greek and Roman mythology and tells in chronological order the history of the world from its creation to Julius Caesar's deification. As the title implies, this poem tells many mythological stories of physical transformations, and the most famous metamorphosis includes Daphne's transformation into a laurel tree in the story of Apollo and Daphne, Syrinx's changing into reeds in the story of Pan and Syrinx, and Narcissus's metamorphosis into the Narcissus flower in his story of self-love. The vivid narrative and sensationalistic details make it an ideal source for Renaissance artists to visualize mythological subjects.[2] Artists made representations of those stories in various media, among which painting, book illustration, and sculpture were the most frequently used. Lorenzo Bernini's sculpture of *Apollo and Daphne* depicts the transforming moment of Daphne and is a famous example of the artistic representation of this Ovid's story (Fig.1).

The sixteenth-century Italian grotto presents a different spatial and multimedia form representing Ovid's stories. Those grottoes were normally named after a particular myth and functioned as an enclosed theatre, using mechanical and decorative settings to perform mythological stories.[3] Different from the other single art forms such as painting and sculpture,

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[1] Ovid (43 BC- 17 AD) was a Roman poet, living during the reign of Augustus. Two of his most celebrated poems are *Ars amatoria* written in 2 AD and *Metamorphoses* written in 8 AD. In his early life, he was sent to Rome by his father for the study of Rhetoric. His father hoped him to practice law for a living, but later Ovid resumed law and started his literary career. His first work, the *Amores*, written in 16 BC, achieved great success. And by 8 AD, his finished one of his most ambitious work, *Metamorphoses*. However, in 8 AD, before the *Fasti*, the other ambitious work that he had planned, was finished, he was banished by Augustus to Tomis on the Black Sea, and there he spent the rest of his life. His *Metamorphoses* is an influential work in Western culture. This book is both important for many later artists and the later authors including Geoffrey Chaucer and William Shakespeare. In the following parts, I will mainly discuss his influence on the Renaissance grottoes in gardens.

[2] Ovid's influence on art, see Paul Barolsky, "Ovid's Web" *Arion : A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 11, No. 2 (2003): 45-77; Christopher Allen, "Ovid and Art." In *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, 336-67 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[3] Naomi Miller, *Heavenly Caves: Reflections on the Garden Grotto* (Boston ; London: Allen & Unwin, 1982).

the sixteenth-century grotto is a complex form combining multiple single art forms including painting, sculpture, and architecture. The manipulation of water also gives dynamic and playful properties to the grottoes.[4] The richness and complexity of the settings make the grotto a special art form in expressing the Ovidian poetic stories and naturally bring the question regarding the planning and organization of different components that the grotto consists of. How were these components organized to make the grotto tell a mythological narrative? In my research, I turn to these grottoes and the mythological stories they told. I borrow the concept of "narrative painting" from painting, the definition and origin of which I will further explain in the first chapter, and name the grotto that tells a story "the narrative grotto".[5]

Narrativity was once included in the Renaissance *Paragone*, a series of competitions among various art forms. These forms included poetry, painting, sculpture, and architecture. The Latin phrase "*ut pictura poesis*" by the ancient poet Horace, meaning "as is painting so is in poetry", was used again in the sixteenth century to make a comparison between poetry and painting and elevate the status of painting to that of poetry.[6] Painting and sculpture were also experiencing rivalry over which can better express the poetic. Then what was the place of "narrativity" in these discussions? Narrativity was taken as a standard of examining to what extent these art forms expressed the poetic. It was argued that poetry is superior to the visual arts because poetry is able to narrate stories over a period of time, but the visual arts as static forms can only depict a single moment. Bernini tried to prove sculpture's capability of telling stories as good as painting by making the sculpture *Apollo and Daphne*.[7] In this sculpture, he depicted the climax of the story that Daphne is changing into the laurel tree. Her legs have already become part of the trunks, but her twisting upper body has not changed. The depiction of a changing moment implies a possible narrative of the story of Apollo and Daphne. In those discussions at that time, being narrative is closely associated with the poetic properties of a certain art form. In my

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[4] The manipulation of water in the garden can be divided into two kinds, namely water plays and the water-driven automata. See Anatole Tchikine, "*Giochi D'acqua*: Water Effects in Renaissance and Baroque Italy." *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes* 30, no. 1 (2010): 57-76.

[5] "Narrative painting" means the painting that tells a story. More discussions on this term and its application to the grotto will be seen in the first chapter.

[6] See Malcolm Bull, "*Ut pictura poesis*."

[7] Ann Thomas Wilkins, "Bernini and Ovid: Expanding the Concept of Metamorphosis." *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 6, no. 3 (2000): 383-408.

research, I continue to take narrativity as a standard of examining the narrativity of the grotto. In Bernini's case, he already proved the possibility for the static form of sculpture to formulate a narrative. Then in the case of the grotto that comprises more than one art form, the grotto has the same or even more possibilities of forming a narrative. I take the mythological performance of the grotto as its narrative and explore how the grotto transformed the Ovidian stories. Comparing the original text and the shaping of the grotto, I ask what poetic characteristics of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* had been transformed into the grottoes and what new properties of this medium emerged.

Werner Wolf's research of narratology and its applicability to the visual arts serves as the supporting theory of my research.[8] In his application of narratology to painting, two questions that he explores are whether the painting can be called a narrative and how we apply a narratological reading to the narrative painting. Firstly, Wolf explains his interpretation of what narrative is. Wolf regards "narrativity" as a defining quality of "narrative" and argues that a narrative could be achieved by various media including texts and the visual arts by satisfying the content elements of narrative and fulfilling the qualities of narrativity. The content elements of narrative are characters, action, and setting. To achieve a narrative, these elements need to be connected in specific ways.[9] Their connections help a narrative achieve various qualities of narrativity. Two fundamental qualities of narrativity are representationality and experientiality. Wolf writes "representationality means that narratives create or re-create 'a world' which can be deciphered as such by a recipient"[10], and he refers to experientiality as a recipient's conscious involvement. There is also a third quality of narrativity, meaningfulness (or integrativity). This quality means that the content elements need to be brought into intelligible and meaningful connections with each other.[11] These three qualities of narrativity are the main qualities that define a narrative.

Then as for painting, some qualities such as representationality and experientiality could immediately be fulfilled by painting, because a painting could depict the story of a certain

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[8] Werner Wolf, "Narrative and narrativity: A narratological reconceptualization and its applicability to the visual arts." *Word & Image* 19, no. 3 (2003): 180-97.

[9] Wolf, 186.

[10] Wolf, 186.

[11] Wolf, 186.

character and get the viewers involved by meticulous depictions of details. But painting is also confronted with difficulties if a painting is to be depicted as a narrative. Firstly, narrative needs to involve time to express the changes, but this temporality is missing in the painting. Secondly, it is hard for the pure visual works to unfold the inner world of the thoughts, so it is also hard for a narrative painting to express the purpose of the characters and fulfill the additional narrative quality of intentionality. To solve these problems, painting needs to rely on other devices to fulfill its narrative, such as emblematic elements and symbols, which invite recipients to fill in the narrative elements that are missing in painting. Paintings' captions or titles could also help. Wolf calls these extra devices extracompositional or extrinsic devices.[12] But besides difficulties, Wolf also points out painting's superiority in representing "parallel scenes of a multi-strand narrative simultaneously".[13] Through a comparison with literature, painting's limitations and advantages in expressing a narrative are made clear and help to construct a new narratological approach in analyzing the narrative painting.

Based on Wolf's theory, in the narrative reading of the grotto and its Ovidian stories, three main questions should also be asked: whether the grotto can be called a narrative, how the spatial narrative of the grotto is constructed and how we examine the narrativity of the grotto narrative. The spatial narrative has the same difficulty as the narrative painting in the representation of the inner world of thoughts, motivations and emotions. However, the spatial narrative could naturally achieve the quality of experientiality and get the visitors physically involved, because the visitors need to get into the grotto in the first place. Therefore, in the process of the grotto's achieving a narrative, the grotto also needs to overcome the limitations of this certain medium (or this complex of various art forms). Based on this primary comparison between the grotto and painting, I will apply a narrative reading to the grotto and its Ovidian stories from four layers. The first layer is an iconographical interpretation of the stories. Questions followed are how we recognize the stories of the grotto as Ovidian stories and what content elements that were originated from Ovid's accounts we could identity in the grotto. The second layer is an exploration of this certain

[12] According to Wolf, in the visual arts, intrinsic devices mean the representation of a narrative world without resorting to other media, and extrinsic devices mean the use of aids of narrative representation from other media. See Wolf, 189. Then as for the grotto as a complex of various media, its spatial setting, the sculptures inside, the paintings on the wall, and various water plays are all intrinsic devices of the grotto.

[13] Wolf, 192.

medium and mainly examines the two qualities of representationality and meaningfulness. I ask how the grotto made a meaningful connection among its various narrative components and, specifically for this medium, how the grotto dealt with the involvement of time and the representation of the inner world. The third layer explores the communicative connection between the grotto and its recipients. The question is how the grotto got its recipients involved in its "narrative". And the last layer is focused on the comparison between poetry and the grotto. I zoom out a bit to see the respective limitations and strong points of each medium.[14]

To enable a narrative reading, I will first reconstruct the mythological performance in the grotto by combining visual and textual analysis. Previous research on the grotto tends to take the grotto as decorative art and use iconography as the methodology.[15] The other approach is to include the grotto in the study of water effects in the garden and take a technical perspective.[16] In Bay's dissertation, she reconstructs the visiting experience of the grotto as a combination of symbolic and sensory modes of experience.[17] Her reconstruction strongly proves that the grotto is more than decorative art, and has the potential of constructing meaningful transmissions. Based on her understanding, I focus on the narrative capability of the grotto. There are multiple reasons why the narrative capability of the grotto is neglected. First, there are not as many extant grottoes as paintings and sculptures. Also, the dynamic settings of the grottoes are not working

[14] The comparison between painting and poetry has been long-established since Renaissance. In today's discussion, Wolf argues that painting is superior to poetry in one thing that painting can depict multiple phases, but poetry cannot do that. Barolsky also points out the fundamental differences between poetry and painting. Inspired by Wolf, I also extend my discussion into a comparison between poetry and the grotto as two different media. See Paul Barolsky, "*Ut Pictura Poesis et Ut Pictura Non Poesis*." *The University of Chicago Press Journals* 32, No. 4 (2203): 20-2.

[15] Two main examples are John Hunt's research of Ovid's influence in the decorative motifs of gardens and Peter Jackson's research of the decorative motifs used in the grottoes. See John Dixon Hunt, "Ovid in the garden" in *Garden and Grove* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 42-58; Peter W.Ward-Jackson, *Some Main Streams and Tributaries in European Ornament from 1500 to 1750* (Victoria and Albert Museum Bulletin Reprints ; 3. London, 1972).

[16] In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, lots of engineers also visited the Italian gardens and made detailed research on the water plays and mechanical settings of the gardens. This engineering perspective continues in nowadays' research on the grotto and its water plays. Examples see Tchikine; Matteo Valleriani, "Sixteenth-Century Hydraulic Engineers and the Emergence of Empiricism." In *Conflicting Values of Inquiry*, 39-68. Vol. 37 . Intersections, 2015.

[17] See Miriam Susannah Deborah Bay, *Cultivating Myth and Composing Landscape at the Villa d'Este, Tivoli.* Also, in Tchikine's work, he mentions the sensory experience of the grotto, although this idea is not developed.

anymore. What remains of the grotto is simply a static room with naturalistic and rustic decorations, and some statues of the grotto are even taken away. Therefore, descriptions of contemporary travelers will be consulted to reconstruct the performances and water plays. Cultural and social contexts will also be involved as an extra device to decode the grotto's rich performance. Based on those pieces of information, it also requires a combination of literary and visual analysis to understand the original ingenuity of the grotto, but scholars tend to work within disciplinary boundaries. This is another reason why the narrative capability of the grotto has not been given much attention.

As case studies, I will mainly focus on the grottoes in the gardens surrounding the Villa d'Este and at the Pratolino, and in the Boboli garden. The grottoes of the first place were designed by Pirro Ligorio (c.1512-1583), and the grottoes of the other two places were both made by Bernardo Buontalenti (c.1531-1608). I choose the grottoes of these places as their grottoes are the most delicately made and carefully designed and present the huge potential of the grotto as a narrative art form. The mythological motifs applied by those grottoes were also used in other less elaborate grottoes, such as the deluge myth in the garden of the Villa Lante and the Venus figure in the garden of the Villa Carpi. These grottoes will also be mentioned in the subchapters as comparisons.[18]

In the case study of the Villa d'Este, I will mainly discuss the Ovidian stories of Venus and of Diana. Villa d'Este was designed by Pirro Ligorio, who was fascinated by classical antiquities. Many grottoes of Villa d'Este are named after mythological figures, such as the Grotto of Diana and the Grotto of Venus. In Bay's dissertation, she reconstructs the original design of Villa d'Este by Pirro Ligorio. Besides four principle contemporary visitor's writings of Villa d'Este,[19] she also consults Ligorio's writing *Descrittione di Tivoli, et Giardino dell' Illustrissimo Cardinal di Ferrara*. Ligorio's writing serves as a possible source to figure out his artistic pursuit in garden design.

In the case study of the Buontalenti's grottoes, I will mainly examine the cultural

[18] I define the grotto as an enclosed place with rustic decorations and entertaining water plays. However, in the subchapters, some rustic fountains (in some research, they are also called the grotto fountain) made under the same mythological topics will also be mentioned. Although they are not an enclosed space, they combine the water plays and rustic decoration and are worth to be mentioned.

[19] Uberto Foglietta; Giovanni Maria Zappi, *Annali e Memorie di Tivoli*; Antonio Del Re, *Dell' Antichita Tiburtine Capitolo V*; Nicolas Audebert, "*Le Palais, Jardin, et Fontaines, de Tyvoly*'. See Bay.

transformations of the deluge myth and some erotic stories. The Buontalenti Grotto (also called "*Grotta Grande*" in Italian) is a triple grotto in the Boboli garden. It consists of three chambers. The theme of the first chamber is "deluge", which might refer to the deluge myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha in Ovid. The same deluge motif is used in the Grotto of Deluge at the Pratolino. These grottoes are shaped as an underwater world or a wasteland after the deluge. Besides the deluge myth, Ovid's erotic stories are also constantly used in the grotto. Two other grottoes at the Pratolino, namely the Grotto of Pan and Fame and the Grotto of Galatea, make representations of the Ovidian story of Pan and Syrinx and the mythological figure of Galatea. In the Grotto of Pan and Fame, the story of the goddess Fama is also represented, although it is not an erotic one . The secondary literature that I will mainly consult is Webster Smith's research on Buontalenti's Villas. He uses accounts of several contemporary travelers, including Francesco Bocchi, Fynes Moryson, and Francesco de' Vieri, to reconstruct the grotto's performances.[20]

This paper consists of three chapters. The first is "The grotto, expressing the poetic". In this part, I place the making of the Renaissance grotto in two contexts: the classical reception in the Renaissance garden and the intellectual debate between poetry and other art forms. Then I introduce Wolf's theory of narrative and narrativity. Based on his theory, I explain the cultural transformations of Ovid's narrative into the spatial narrative in the grotto from a narratological perspective. The second and third chapters are case studies of the Ligorio's and Buontalenti's grottoes. I examine the narrativity of the grottoes by comparing Ovid's original poems with the narrative of those grottoes. Other grottoes made in the same mythological motifs are involved as comparisons.

[20] Francesco Bocchi, *Beauties of the City of Florence*; Fynes Moryson, *The Itinerary of Fynes Moryson*; Francesco de' Vieri, *Delle marauigliose opera di Pratolino*. See Webster Smith, *Studies on Buontalenti's Villas. I: Text* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1958).

Chapter 1

The grotto, expressing the poetic

1.1 The grotto and myth

The sixteenth-century grotto emerges as a new creation based on the ancient Roman form. The earliest grottoes could be traced back to pagan times when they were used as the shrines of the gods.[21] This sacred function of the natural grotto was later replaced by a more entertaining and profane function since Roman times. The Romans built artificial grottoes in their gardens as an early manifestation of natural nostalgia. In the Renaissance, the grotto as an ancient form was rediscovered. The Renaissance grotto was also built in gardens and made as a naturalistic reproduction of a cave with rustic materials and entertaining water effects. The other function of the grotto besides an entertaining one is to accommodate the patrons' collections of statuary and thus display a fascinating combination of art and nature.[22] The Renaissance grotto is also an early museum form, and its setting and the statues from patron's collections are always complementary to each other and made into an integral entity. The use of mythological stories creates and strengthens this connection between the settings and the collections. The element of metamorphosis in the stories of Ovid is always an important element for representation. The meaning of metamorphosis hidden in the mythological stories at the same time includes the natural transformations of water and stone, which happen in the grotto, into part of a coherent narrative and experience of the grotto. For example, the stalactites on the façade of the Buontalenti Grotto in the Boboli garden continue to grow because of the dripping water (see Fig.3.9). This natural process of growth corresponds with the theme of new life's regeneration that the first chamber's spatial narrative and Ovid's deluge myth from which this spatial narrative may get inspiration both try to express. I will elaborate on this case later in the third chapter.

The representation of classical mythology including Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in art is a

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[21] Miller, 10.

[22] Galleries, loggias, special pavilions, and the grottoes were built in the gardens for display of collections. See John Dixon Hunt, "Cabinets of Curiosity" In *Garden and Grove* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 74.

Renaissance fashion. There are multiple reasons why mythology is so attractive to Renaissance artists. The revival of classical mythology liberates their imaginations after a long medieval time of Christianity stories' dominance.[23] Mythology evokes to all people moral principles and ancient cosmological knowledge, the understanding of which was limited to the groups of philosophers and poets in medieval times.[24] In the specific case of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, its particularity lies in its theme of metamorphosis and its rich collection of love stories. The descriptions of metamorphosis opened up the imaginations of the artists, and the stories of love allow artists to freely present human experiences including love and sensitivity. But for the patrons, the use of mythology including Ovid's stories may have the other reason that they wished to manifest their wealth and power and bring back the ancient honor by reproducing or recreating the ancient narrative stories. In the context of this fashion, mythology, especially the influential *Metamorphoses*, also became an important source for contemporary visitors to read and identify the classical allusions of the grottoes and gardens. In the modern scholar John Hunt's study of the contemporary visitors to the Italian gardens, he writes, "Educated visitors to Italy were familiar with their Latin reading with the villas and gardens of the ancient. Some of them, like Addison, even prepared themselves for an Italian visit by reading relevant texts."[25]

A distinct mythological motif of the grotto is the erotic story. The grotto as a hidden venue of the garden naturally becomes a perfect place where erotic stories can be told. In the modern scholar Naomi Miller's study of the grottoes, she also mentions the depictions of satyric drama in the form of painting in ancient grottoes.[26] This tradition continued in the sixteenth-century grottoes in gardens. At the Pratolino, the Grotto of Galatea performed the myth of Galatea and Triton, and the Grotto of Pan and Fame was inspired by the myth of Pan and Syrinx. In the last chamber of Buontalenti Grotto at the Boboli garden, four satyrs were added to support the sculpture of Venus.

The other popular motif is the myth of deluge. The myth of deluge tells the destruction of the deluge sent by deities and the rebirth of new human beings after the flood. This myth is seen

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[23] Allen, "Ovid and Art", 337-38.
[24] Allen, 338-39.
[25] Hunt, "Classical ground and Classical gardens" In *Garden and Grove*, 11.
[26] Miller, 20.

in Buontalenti's Grotto of Deluge at the Pratolino and the first chamber of his Buontalenti Grotto in the Boboli garden. This motif also appears in the form of fountain such as the fountain of deluge at the Villa Lante and the Villa d'Este. There are also many other stories used in the grottoes. The mythological figure of Venus always appears in the grottoes and the grotto fountains as a symbol of love and beauty. At the Pratolino, the figure of Cupid was used as an entertaining setting, playing with the visitors and sprouting water as his arrows to them. However, in the grottoes, while some Ovidian stories are constantly represented, there are also many other stories hardly used as a motif.[27] The scope of Ovid's mythology is much broader than what had been represented in art.

The narrative of the grotto does not remain unchanged. The grotto's narrative is also experiencing a process of metamorphosing. Sculptures inside the grotto might be moved and altered, so sometimes a new narrative needs to be constructed. Although Ovid's *Metamorphoses* plays a central role in the construction of the grotto narrative, his poetry is not the only source for the shaping of the grotto. Some other classical and contemporary literature are also supplementary materials. For example, Virgil's pastoral poetry and the Renaissance work *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* are also important sources for the depiction of landscape.[28] These references to multiple sources fulfill the visualization of a literary narrative.

In my interpretation, we could see mythological stories as an inspiration for artists to actively create a coherent narrative, which is the case in the Grotto of Pan with the sculpture of Syrinx trapped insides at the Pratolino. However, in some cases, we could see mythological stories as a solid literary source to explain the seemingly disconnected components in the grotto, as historians understand the first chamber of Buontalenti Grotto as the representation of the deluge myth. Although it is argued that some mythological explanations to the grotto might be an overinterpretation by historians, from a different perspective, historians' explanations prove the narrative potential of the grotto as an art form. In the following parts, I will first turn to the historical debates between poetry and other art forms and then develop a narratological

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[27] Allen, 336.

[28] Francis Ames-Lewis, "Painting and Poetry" in *The Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist* (New Haven [etc.]: Yale University Press, 2000), 173-76; see also Stephen Hinds, "Landscape with Figures: aesthetics of place in the *Metamorphoses* and its tradition" In *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, 122-49.

theoretical frame to discuss this specific connection between poetry and the grotto.

1.2 Dialogues between poetry and other art forms

While we can easily identify some literary counterparts in the grotto and apply the term "the narrative grotto", the fundamental nature of this originally literary term "narrative" is questioned. Wendy Steiner, a pioneer scholar who specializes in discussing the complex interrelations between art and literature, criticizes the use of "narrative painting" in art history as being too loose.[29] It seems any painting which makes "a visual representation of some literary narrative" or "the representation of any kind of action in a picture"[30] can be called a narrative painting. Therefore, this appropriation of "the narrative grotto" from "the narrative painting" requires more rigid and systematic research into the characteristics of narrative.

The use of "narrative painting" can be traced back to the Renaissance time and Alberti's discussion of *istoria* in his treatise *On Painting*. He dedicated the second part of his treatise to a discussion of how to make an *istoria*. *Istoria* was referred to as a new mode of narrative painting, and John Spencer explains the meaning of "*istoria*" in his English translation of *Della pittura* that "It is to be built upon ancient themes with human gestures to portray and project the emotions of the actors."[31] For Alberti, being narrative means a combination of actional and emotional expressions. This loose definition emerged as his defense of the visual arts, especially painting, in an intellectual background that poetry was considered as a superior form over the visual arts. He took painting as a learned art and advised painters to be familiar with "poets and orators and other men of letters" as so to get inspiration for painting from such learned minds.[32] He also proposed that painting should learn from poetry and "emulate the aims, intentions, and methods

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[29] Wendy Lois Steiner, *Pictures of Romance : Form against Context in Painting* (Chicago [etc.]: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 8.

[30] Wolf, 180.

[31] Anthony Grafton, "Historia and *Istoria* : Alberti's Terminology in Context" *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 8 (1999): 40.

[32] Leon Battista Alberti, *Leon Battista Alberti On painting and On Sculpture*, ed, and trans. (C. Grayson, London, 1972); see Ames-Lewis, 165.

of poetry".[33] Therefore, although his definition of narrative painting is rather loose and broad, he is an early theoretical pioneer in associating poetry with painting and applying poetry's principles to narrative painting. The Renaissance painters were also making paralleling experiments of poetic transformation. Some artists made representations of the classical stories or applied classical themes and subjects to reconstruct their own poetic narratives. For example, Sandro Botticelli's *Primavera* was a recreation of classical themes, inspired by Angelo Poliziano's new narrative based on the classical texts.[34] Some artists also made more free explorations that avoided narrative and were inclined to shape poetic atmosphere. Giorgione was a distinct example who preferred themes related to natural effects rather than narrative subjects. Not all these experiments can be called a narrative painting, but they did transform some traits of poetry into painting and confirm poetry's potential of being transformed into other art forms.

In my discussion of narrative, Werner Wolf's theory adds more literary significance to the definition of this term and its defining quality of "narrativity". The two theories on which Wolf's narratological reconceptualization is mainly based emphasize temporality and experientiality respectively as the important characteristic of narrativity. In Gerald Prince's 1982 book *Narratology*, he continues a more "traditional, plot-centered"[35] definition of narrative and focuses on temporality, which refers to the change of events and situations that involves time and contingencies.[36] In Monika Fludernik's 1996 book *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology*, she points to the delivery and transmitting quality of narrative. Experientiality means that narrative should trigger some experiences of humans, emotionally or physically.[37] She takes narrative as a cognitive frame that can be applied to various medial realizations besides verbal texts. Her definition, although she refers to oral narrative specifically in her discussion, still brings the possibility of being applied to other media including different art forms. Interestingly, these two theories correspond with some parts of Alberti's use of *istoria*. If we rephrase Alberti's *istoria* in narratological terms, then *istoria* is also a medial realization of narrative and embodies temporality and experientiality as two important qualities of narrative. Therefore, these modern

[33] Ames-Lewis, 166.
[34] Ames-Lewis, 172-6.
[35] Wolf, 181.
[36] Wolf, 181.
[37] Wolf, 181-2.

narrative theories as well historical theories including Alberti's provide us with a good basis to study the interrelation of poetry and other art forms. But what is lacking here is still a coherent theory and more careful examination, which I will try to do in the next part. I plan to expand these narrative discussions to the grotto as a complex of art forms.

1.3 Narrative and narrativity of Ovid's work and the grotto

In Wolf's theory, he explains two basic functions of narrative, "namely to enable the experience of time and to invite a receiver to re-experience a story",[38] and these two functions determine two fundamental qualities of narrativity: representationality and experientiality. With his further analysis of narrative's functions, we can explain why Ovid's work is so appropriate for cultural representations and why narrative is so important for cultural transformations. One basic function of narrative is to enable a conscious concept of time, as narrative such as historical ones give meaning to the past and offer readers an idea of time.[39] In *Metamorphoses*, Ovid integrated different accounts of mythology into a coherent narrative by using chronological order. With his integration, the history from the creation of the world is thus rendered in human time and becomes transmissive stories. The other function of narrative answers why narrative is applied to the shaping of the grotto. The second basic function of narrative is a communicative function. Narrative can get a narratee involved to re-experience a story and participate in the construction of meaning.[40] First, narrative is used by the grotto to make a meaningful connection between different components. Then at the same time, narrative continues to take effect on the visitors, and their visiting adds lively properties to the narrated stories. In the grotto, the visitors are invited to decode the mythological narrative that has been encoded by the designers. In this process, the memory and imagination of the visitors start to work, and the visitors are thus also weaving meaning into the grotto narrative. This communicative function can further be testified by

[38] Wolf, 185.
[39] Wolf, 184-5.
[40] Wolf, 184-5.

different accounts of the grotto by different visitors.

To examine the narrativity of the grotto, now I turn to a fundamental question: what makes the grotto fulfill a narrative. The basic constituents of narrative are characters, action, and setting.[41] A setting allows the experience of changes to happen. Characters are reacting to different situations with certain actions or sometimes emotions. We can easily identity characters of the narrative grotto, including deities in human forms such as Diana and Venus, and non-human characters such as Unicorn at the Villa Castello or even water in the Grotto of the deluge. The grotto itself provides a setting like a theatre platform where those stories could happen. The actions of characters are sometimes literally performed by sculptures' movements and sometimes hinted by decorations and settings and need to be decoded, as well as emotions, which are even harder to be explicitly expressed through the grotto. The actional and emotional implications are made possible by a close connection between the grotto and *Metamorphoses*. *Metamorphoses* as a book with meticulous depictions of characters' emotions serves as an important literary source, based on which the visitors could apply literary counterparts to fulfill the emotional expressions of the grotto characters.[42]

Further, intelligible connections need to be made among the narrative constituents. Narrative integrates changes and experiences in a meaningful way, and for Ovid, his way to achieving coherence is chronology.[43] Besides integrativity, teleology is also an extra but important quality for the narrative with a high degree of narrativity. The discrete actions of characters are not random but with a purpose such as achieving a certain goal. If it is not in a literary form, the transformation and representation of purpose and teleology, or in Wolf's words "inner world of thoughts"[44], would be hard. However, it is tricky in the case of the cultural transformations of *Metamorphoses*, as the purpose of characters concerns physical changes or can be expressed by physical metamorphosis. For example, the purpose of Deucalion and Pyrrha is the rebirth of humans, which is enabled by a transformation from stones to human, and the

[41] This is a classical categorization in the level of "story" or content and is used by Wolf to clarify the content elements of narrative from a narratological perspective. See Wolf, 186.

[42] These implications are also extracompositional devices, which will be explained later. I will further pose more concrete examples based on the certain grottoes in the case studies.

[43] Wolf concludes that the ways of integrativity include chronology, repetition, unity, causality, and above all teleology. See Wolf, 187.

[44] Wolf, 189.

purpose of Daphne is escaping from Apollo, which can be implied by her turning into a tree. What makes metamorphosis suitable for a narrative transformation is that the purpose required in connecting narrative components becomes a physical, visible one and easy to be represented in a visual form. The transmissive trait of teleology in Ovid's poetry makes the art pieces that take his poetry as an inspiration easier to achieve a high degree of narrativity.

Painting tends to achieve a narrative by making visual representations of a certain changing moment,[45] and the representations of the grotto also include its sensory expressions and interactions with the visitors, which painting can not rely on to construct a narrative. In other words, the narrative grotto pays much attention to the experientiality quality of narrative and makes the most of narrative's communicative function[46]. The teleology of narrative gets a recipient engaged by using both intracompositional and extracompositional devices,[47] and the latter are important effects in the grotto narrative. Intracompositional devices refer to the suspense of stories and uncertainty of causality, which are special effects used in the shaping of narrative itself. By creating or delaying expectations, narrative makes the recipient intellectually and emotionally involved in stories. Then extracompositional devices mean the use of a specific context to raise the recipient's sympathy and create an extra way for narrative's transmission. The literary text of *Metamorphoses* is the most important extracompositional device for the visitors to interpret the grotto narrative, and I will mainly discuss this device in the later parts. The grotto narratives did not always fulfill all the functions of the narrative by themselves, so for the contemporary visitors who were familiar with *Metamorphoses* and prepared themselves before visiting the grottoes, they could fill in the missing parts of the grotto narrative and still make a narrative reading. The other extracompositional device is the contemporary context of Florentine for the Florentine grottoes with a deluge motif.[48] In the recipient's bodily experience in the grotto,

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[45] Wolf particularly refers to the monophase painting. As it is impossible to present multiple phases at one painting, the painter usually chooses a turning point or the ending of a story to make a narrative possible. Wolf, 190.

[46] Considering Alberti's concept of *istoria*, *istoria* also needs to care about the experientiality of the painting. Representationality and experientiality are both important qualities of the narrative expressions. However, compared with the visiting experience of the grotto, appreciation of the painting tends to be limited to a visual experience. So, instead of saying that painting does not care about experientiality, we should say that painting and the grotto have different modes of transmission.

[47] Wolf, 188.

[48] Shannon Kelley, "Arno River Floods and the Cinquecento grotto at the Boboli garden." *Renaissance*

this contemporary context becomes a second way for the recipient to interpret the grotto narrative, both emotionally and intellectually. The making sense of mythological narrative in an extra context again strengthens the teleology of its narrative to a specific contemporary audience and thus strengthens the narrativity of the grotto. I will further explain this second device in the analysis of the grottoes with a deluge motif.

If again, we compare the grotto and painting in terms of their respective realizations of narrative, we may say that the grotto is easier to achieve a higher state of narrativity than painting. The grotto narrative can naturally achieve the communicative function of narrative, as the grotto provides a spatial narrative that can get people involved spontaneously. We may say that the grotto is even a superior form to poetry, as poetry has to rely on detailed descriptions to fulfill its communicative function, but the grotto manages to do that naturally.[49] However, the temporality trait of narrative is problematic both in painting and the grotto. First, painting is a static visual art, so artists deal with painting's lack of temporality by visualizing a turning point in the process of change to imply different phases. In the case of the grotto, the grotto needs to deal with time spatially. The grotto has its limitation in that it is not a theatre where real actors literally perform a play. The grotto relies on its modes of transmission, including water effects, rustic decorations, frescos, and so on, to play a spatial narrative and requires the visitors to personally experience and interpret. The grotto is a combination of static and dynamic transmission modes. Mechanical settings and water plays can actively involve time and display different phases. However, the abundance of modes used in the grotto also invites the question of how to arrange and make the most of them to create a coherent narrative with a high state of narrativity. We may wonder which poetic part should be transformed as a static decoration and which should be turned into a special water effect. In the following case studies, I will explain the arrangements of different modes with concrete examples.

From the theoretical analysis above, I can make a general conclusion that the grotto is a potential art form for narrative expression. The grotto has both representationality and

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[49] The limitations of painting have been well-addressed. However, compared with painting, poetry also has its limitations. Wolf thinks painting can present multiple phases, which is impossible for poetry. And Michelangelo argues that painting is a superior form than poetry, as painting satisfies the nobler sense, the sense of sight. See Wolf, 192; Ames-Lewis, "Painting and Poetry", 166.

experientiality, and to some extent, can achieve better teleology than painting by using both intracompositional and extracompositional devices. The spatial settings bring the grotto narrative an effective communicative function and also raise the question concerning dealing with changes in the space.

Chapter 2

Pirro Ligorio and the grotto of antiquities at the Villa d'Este

Introduction

In this chapter, I will explore Ligorio's principles of transforming and appropriating myth. He used mythology as his strategy of curating the antiquities and followed Ovid's narrative closely. This chapter is mainly about two competing characters, Venus and Diana, and the representations of their stories in the grottoes in the garden of the Villa d'Este. I will explore Ligorio's transformation of Ovid's stories in the Grotto of Venus and of Diana and their narrative connection in the scale of the garden. Based on these examples, we can take a comprehensive look at Ligorio's narrative transformation of Ovid's stories and learn about how he achieved narrativity in the grottoes.

Venus and Diana are two important competing figures in *Metamorphoses*, with one representing love and the other denying love. In some stories, Venus, the goddess of love, is portrayed as an ambitious deity who intends to expand her empire by the power of love. This power of love possessed by Venus is more than powerful than all forces: in the story of Apollo and Daphne, even Apollo could not resist the power of love to pursue Daphne. Venus's empire of love is only diminished by the virgin goddesses, such as Diana, who reject love and sexuality.[50] These two competing figures have their respective grottoes, the Grotto of Venus and the Grotto of Diana at the Villa d'Este. These two grottoes are found on two different sides of the garden and can be reached by two different paths. The Grotto of Diana includes several Ovidian stories from *Metamorphoses* with the myth of Actaeon and Diana as the most prominent one, and the Grotto of Venus recreates a scene of Venus's bathing. These two grottoes are also endowed with a large garden narrative, the choice of Hercules. This narrative incorporates these two grotto narratives and guides part of the garden design.

To understand the grotto narratives, I will first introduce the mythological systems applied to the garden with Hercules's stories as the main system. In the following two parts, I will discuss

[50] Patricia J. Johnson, "Construction of Venus in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* V", 138-9.

these two grotto narratives and their transformation from the myth, based on which I will examine the narrative qualities of each grotto narrative. I will also bring in other grottoes which share the same literary sources as a comparison. Through comparison, we can know better Ligorio's personal preference in using Ovidian mythology and realize a fact that not all grottoes could fully achieve all the qualities of the narrative. Also, the fact that more than one grotto could be related to one specific literary source could also strengthen the validity of the possible connection between the grotto narrative and Ovidian stories. Through these three parts, Ligorio's transformation of Ovidian stories in the scale of the grotto and the garden will be made clear.

The modern scholar David Coffin's study on Villa d'Este provides the most systematic interpretation of this garden's iconographical systems, which include the mythological and geographical systems. He points out the theme of virtue and vice as a central theme of the garden and the story of Hercules's choice as the main thread. He connects the statues of Hercules with the Grotto of Venus and the Grotto of Diana and refers to these two grottoes as representations of vice and virtue.[51] Based on Coffin's work, the art historian Claudia Lazzaro adds that the garden itself was a recreation of the mythical garden.[52] Miriam Susannah Deborah Bay's dissertation adds the sensory analysis of the visitors' experience in the scale of the whole garden and each grotto. Her sensory analysis serves an important basis for further understanding of the experientiality of the grotto narratives. She also points out many similarities between the description in the contemporary literature *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* and the visiting experience of the Grotto of Venus.[53] Based on these mythological associations discovered by modern scholars, I can specify a certain Ovid story and compare between this text and the reconstruction of the grotto. Reconstruction is made possible by two contemporary works. One is Giovanni Maria Zappi's 1576 travelogue *Annali e Memorie di Tivoli*.[54] Zappi is a Tiburtine historian studying the history of ancient Tibur (modern Tivoli). He vividly recorded his journey in the Tivoli garden in his travelogue. And the other is the contemporary historian Antonio Del Re's *Dell'Antichità Tiburtine Capitolo V*.

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[51] David Robbins Coffin, "the Villa's Symbolism and Pirro Ligorio" in *The Villa D'Este at Tivoli* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960), 78-97.

[52] Lazzaro, "Tivoli's Ancient Waters Revived" in *The Italian Renaissance Garden* (New Haven [etc.]: Yale University Press, 1990), 215-42.

[53] Bay, 150-2.

[54] Bay, 14.

Through their accounts, we get to know the characters, the representations of their stories, the spatial settings, and the visitors' feelings in the grottoes. Through comparison with Ovid's text, we get to know how these factors were influenced by the mythological stories and further examine the narrative qualities of the grotto narrative.

2.1 Classical myth at the Villa d'Este

Villa d'Este is an ambitious work of Ippolito II d'Este (1509-1572), the Cardinal of Ferrara, at Tivoli. He was appointed as the governor of this hill town of Tivoli in 1549 and entered Tivoli in 1550. A local old monastery, Santa Maria Maggiore, was assigned to him as his official residence.[55] The Cardinal found the Tivoli climate beneficial for his health in his one-month stay at Tivoli,[56] but the old and unobtrusive convent was far from satisfactory compared with his previous splendid residence. Therefore, the Cardinal decided to rebuild this old convent as his new villa and initiate a garden plan conforming to the hilly geography, and this plan was assigned to Pirro Ligorio, who was also the Cardinal's private archaeologist.[57] With this plan, the Cardinal hoped to render this place to match his position and the magnificence of his family. This ambitious work was also a manifestation of his desire to become the pope.[58] However, he always failed and never made it to that position. He could only put his fortune and efforts as much as he can into the construction of Villa d'Este. This marvelous work made him achieve the honor which could be rivaled against the pontifical one.

The construction of Villa d'Este had spanned over twenty years. The early preparation started from the Cardinal's purchasing properties below the convent in 1550.[59] Great efforts had been

[55] David Coffin makes detailed research on how the Cardinal was appointed as the governor of Tivoli and his life at the Tivoli, see Coffin, "early history of the villa" in *The Villa D'Este at Tivoli*, 3-13.

[56] Coffin, *The Villa D'Este at Tivoli*, 6.

[57] Coffin, *Tivoli* (short for *The Villa D'Este at Tivoli*), 6-7.

[58] Coffin, *Tivoli*, 5, 78-9.

[59] Coffin, *Tivoli*, 6-7.

put into managing sufficient water supply to support the fountains and pools. However, the work paused in 1555 because the Cardinal was deprived of his governorship of Tivoli and forced to leave Tivoli.[60] Only in 1560, when he returned to Tivoli, the construction of gardens and the palace could restart. The garden was left unfinished when the Cardinal died in 1572.[61] After his death, Luigi Cardinal d'Este took over the Villa d'Este and did the finish touches, but many plans of the grottoes and fountains were never realized.

The 1573 engraving of the villa and its garden by the French architect Étienne Dupérac shows the original planned design by Ligorio (Fig.2.1).[62] From this engraving, we can speculate Ligorio's original intention and grasp the garden narrative. A distinct feature of Ligorio's garden plan is his avid use of mythological themes in Ovid. This could be seen by taking a quick look at Dupérac's engraving that many of the grottoes and the fountains were named after the Ovidian figures, such as Fountains of Leda, Grotto of Venus and Grotto of Diana. Why did he refer to so many Ovidian motifs? One important reason is that the Cardinal's rich collections of the antiquities naturally provides a ground for Ligorio to return to Ovid's text and plan mythological programs. For Ligorio, he took the appropriation of Ovidian stories as his main curating strategy. According to Coffin, the garden of the Villa d'Este is also famous for its display of the Cardinal's rich collection of the antiquities.[63] The cultural situation of Tivoli provided the Cardinal with a good chance to expand his collection. Tivoli is rich in archaeological resources, including the Sanctuary of Hercules Victor, the Temple of the Sibyl, and the Valle d'Inferno, all of which are important Roman ancient remains.[64] This territory of future Villa d'Este also included several ruins of the Roman villas, such as Hadrian's.[65] As for the Cardinal's collection, many ancient statues were bought from Rome by the Cardinal or found directly through archaeological excavations at Tivoli. Ligorio also participated in the archaeological excavations at Tivoli as the Cardinal's private archaeologist, and this made him familiar with the Cardinal's collection of the antiquities and

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[60] Bay, 9.

[61] Coffin, *Tivoli*, 98.

[62] Coffin refers to this engraving as an important pictorial evidence to understand the villa and its garden's original condition. He also compares this engraving with other accounts of the original design and finds this engraving exactly fit in with other accounts. See Coffin, *Tivoli*, 15-6.

[63] Coffin, *Tivoli*, 78.

[64] Bay, 6.

[65] Coffin, *Tivoli*, 6.

further helped him to plan mythological themes based on these antiquities. And the other reason for his appropriations of Ovid's myth is that he was also passionate about the study of the antiquities and ancient literature, especially Ovid's works.[66] Before Ligorio was appointed, he already started his continuous study of Tivoli's history and geography. This experience of on-site working at Tivoli helped Ligorio broaden the scope of the Tivoli part in his book *Antica città di Tivoli*.[67] And more importantly, Ligorio's extensive research on antiquities and ancient literature helped him to freely borrow classical models in the refashioning of Villa d'Este. And because of his passion and abundant knowledge, he could plan mythological programs to incorporate antiquities and the garden as a coherent whole.

According to Coffin, Ligorio's symbolic programs in the garden include both mythological programs and a topographical program. There are two mythological programs: one is Hercules's story which is the most explicit, and the other is the story of Hippolytus.[68] Start from Hercules's story. Standing prominently in the center of the garden is the Fountain of Dragon ("23" in Fig.2.1), representing the mythological Dragon that guarded the Garden of the Hesperides. This symbolic fountain implies an intention of making this site a reproduction of the mythical garden with golden apples.[69] In Hercules's myth, one of his labors required by Eurystheus is to overcome the dragon guarding the Garden of the Hesperides to get the golden apples. By placing a juxtaposition of the statues of Hercules and the Fountain of Dragon, Ligorio implies that Hercules defeats the dragon, gets the golden apples, and now guards this mythical and real Tivoli garden as well as the Este family. The story of Hercules is also blended with the Cardinal's ambition that he takes over the golden apples from Hercules. In the villa rooms, the Cardinal's personal *impresa* of an Este eagle carries branches with golden apples, and a motto from Ovid is carved on the

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[66] Bay mentions that Ligorio recorded in his book of how he studied Ovid's works for his design of the stucco reliefs in the Grotto of Diana, see Bay, 274; Philip Jacks also mentions Ligorio's studies on Ovid's work for his design of the Fountain of Deluge, see "Pirro Ligorio and the design of the Fontana del Diluvio at the Villa d'Este", *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes* 39, no. 4 (2019): 271-304.

[67] Bay, 9.

[68] The symbolic meaning is made explicit through the anonymous Parisian manuscript written in 1571. This manuscript made detailed descriptions of the Villa d'Este. Also, as mentioned by David Coffin, gardens and its decoration are ephemeral, and it is impossible to identify accurately the original iconographical program. Hence, although through integration of seemingly disconnected parts can we make the garden stories explicit. See Coffin, *Tivoli*, 91-2.

[69] Lazzaro, *The Italian Renaissance Garden*, 223-4.

wooden ceiling that "*Ab insomni non custodita dracone*", meaning "[The apples] no longer guarded by the sleepless dragon".[70] The story of Hercules conquering the dragon also represents that Hercules overcomes the voluptuous desire and guards his virtues. When the statues of Hercules are associated with the Grotto of Venus and the Grotto of Diana ("17" "18" in Fig.2.1), another story of Hercules, the choice of Hercules, appears. The Grotto of Venus represents the vice, and the Grotto of Diana represents the virtue. The statues of Hercules and these two grottoes tell a story of Hercules's choice between the path to vice and the path to virtue. These two stories of Hercules, the choice of Hercules and Hercules conquering the dragon, are also connected as they express a similar theme of the fight between voluptuous desire and the virtue. Inspired by Hercules's stories, this theme of vice and virtue is a dominating theme in the mythological programs of the garden.[71]

The other mythological story is the story of Hippolytus. This motif is expressed less extensively than that of Hercules in the garden. The Fountain of Aesculapius ("8" in Fig.2.1) tells the story of Hippolytus being resurrected by this god of medicine. Hippolytus, who rejects the seduction of his stepmother Phaedra and is therefore expelled by his father, is also a heroic character representing chastity. Apart from expressing the wish that the Cardinal could emulate the virtues of the mythological figures of Hercules and Hippolytus, the choice of those figures also has symbolic importance for the Cardinal, the Este family, and Tivoli. Firstly, the Cardinal gets his name Ippolito II d'Este from Hippolytus. And Hercules is the mythical ancestor and patron deity of the Este family.[72] The ruins of the Sanctuary of Hercules Victor also unveil the long regional importance of Hercules that he was venerated as the protector of transhumant events through Tivoli to Rome.[73]

Another symbolic system in the garden is the topographical program. Above the Fountain of Dragon, the Oval Fountain (also called Fountain of Tivoli) and the Fountain of Rome ("14" "19" in Fig.2.1) are located respectively in the eastern and western garden and connected by the alley

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[70] Translated by Coffin, *Tivoli*, 79. This motif of the Este eagle carrying golden apples also occurs in the grotto Fountain of Venus in the courtyard of the old convent, and I will return to the connection between this motif and Venus in the third subchapters.

[71] Coffin, *Tivoli*, 81-4.

[72] Coffin, *Tivoli*, 78, 85.

[73] Bay, 5-6.

of hundred fountains in between (see Fig.2.1). Three statues set on the grottoes of the Oval Fountains are personifications of the three rivers in the Tiburtine territory: the Anio, the Albuneo, and the Erculaneo River.[74] Above the Oval Fountain is the Fountain of Pegasus ("15" in Fig.2.1). Pegasus is the source of the fountain.[75] In Ovid's account, Minerva tells the story of how Pegasus creates the Fountain of Hippocrene on Mountain Helicon, home of the virgin Muses, by its hooves. Due to the special location of this fountain, Ligorio also interpreted this fountain as the fountain of virtue or memory in his manuscript.[76] The layout of these fountains represents topographical connections between Tivoli and Rome. Water starts from the fountain of virtue and flows from Tivoli into Rome. Tivoli and Rome are connected by waterways. The never-finished Fountain of Neptune ("29" in Fig.2.1) in the lower part of the garden was planned to represent the sea as the destination receiving the water from Rome.[77]

Why mentioned the topographical program along with the mythological program? In the later narrative reading, we will see that these different symbolic systems are overlapped and interconnected in this garden. For the designer, mythology did not stand alone for determining the location and the composition of the grottoes and fountains in the garden. The topographical program also plays an important role in setting the different grottoes and fountains in place. By putting a myth next to a certain topographical element, the designer could endow the myth with another meaning. For the visitors, the mythological and typographical elements are inseparable in their visiting experience. The visitors' narrative reading of each grotto is always intervened by other elements in between. From both the perspective of the designer and visitors, they will reach or grasp a spatial mythological story rendered with regional and contemporary colors.

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[74] Coffin, *Tivoli*, 85.
[75] *Metamorphoses* V, 250-93.
[76] Coffin, *Tivoli*, 87.
[77] Coffin, *Tivoli*, 87.

2.2 Hercules's choice: the paths to the Grotto of Venus and the Grotto of Diana

Based on a general understanding of the garden's symbolic programs, in this part, I will elaborate on the story of Hercules's choice. This story is an essential part of the garden's mythological programs, and more importantly, it connects the two grottoes that I will discuss and builds up a narrative connection between these two grottoes and the whole garden. For Ligorio, the characters of Hercules, Venus, and Diana were predetermined by the collection of antiquities, and this narrative helped him to make a meaningful connection between these ancient statues. According to Coffin, when the stories of Venus and Diana are fitted into this narrative of the choice of Hercules, the figures of Diana and Venus naturally become representations of virtue and vice respectively.[78] Coffin's understanding only includes two grottoes but dismisses the spatial connection between them within the garden. Bay further argues that the two paths to each grotto could also be included in this narrative and points out that these two paths symbolize the diverging paths to virtue and vice (see Fig.2.1).[79] Here, following their interpretations, I want to look at the literary text to further strengthen Bay's argument and see how this narrative is transformed into the spatial narrative of the garden.

The story of Hercules's choice was told by Prodicus in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*. When Hercules was about to reach his youth, he started to think about which road to take, the path of virtue or the path of vice. Two women with contrasting looks approached him. The one with a charming look said to him, "follow me, and I will lead you along the pleasantest and easiest road. You shall taste all the sweets of life; and hardship you shall never know." Hercules asked her name, and she answered, "My friends call me Happiness, but among those that hate me I am nicknamed Vice." Then the other woman with a white robe and a sober look came near and said, "if you take the road that leads to me, you will turn out a right good doer of high and noble deeds … But I will not deceive you by a pleasant prelude: I will rather tell you truly the things that are, as the gods have ordained them. For of all things good and fair, the gods give nothing

[78] Coffin, 82
[79] Bay, 250-2.

to man without toil and effort."[80] Some content elements of this garden narrative could easily be recognized. In the garden, this spatial narrative starts from the Fountain of Dragon, at the rear and above which three statues of Hercules were placed.[81] These Hercules statues are the main characters of this garden narrative. The representation of two different paths that Hercules once faces is also seen in the garden. Above the Fountain of Dragon on the left is the path to the Grotto of Venus ("17" in Fig.2.1). This path is rendered as "the pleasantest and easiest road", as this road is flat and straight, aligned with the alley of the Hundred Fountains ("13" in Fig.2.1) and covered by tree shades.[82] Compared with vice's appealing road, the path to virtue is without "a pleasant prelude" and brings physical suffering. The Grotto of Diana ("18" in Fig.2.1) is set on the hilltop, and the path to this grotto is exposed to sunshine and zigzagging with a steep incline.[83] The contrast between the two paths shows that virtue is much harder to reach than vice.

As for the temporality of this garden narrative, it could only be realized through the visitors' experience. The statues of Hercules would not literally move and make his choice, so here the visitors move and choose between two paths. The original story of Hercules' staying in one place and hearing what two women say is transformed into the spatial representation of two different paths and the visitors' experience of making their choices and choosing one path at first. The path to the Grotto of Venus as an easy road with more attractions always lure visitors to turn left and directly reach an enclosed piazza where the Grotto of Venus and the Fountain of Tivoli are set. Then to reach the Grotto of Diana, the other important attraction, the visitors need to go back to the end of the alley of the Hundred Fountains, go upstairs, and walk an even longer distance without shades (compared with the distance they will walk if they choose the Grotto of Diana at first).

The paths are connected with two grottoes, and the grotto narratives are also part of the garden narrative. The Grotto of Venus creates an immersive atmosphere where visitors can appreciate the beauty of bathing Venus and escape punishment. But in their visit to the Grotto of Diana, they will soon encounter the harsh punishment that Actaeon received as a result of his

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[80] Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.1, 22-8.

[81] Two of the Hercules statues were set in place after the Cardinal died and were still extant until the seventeenth century. The Hercules statues are part of the antiquity collection. See Coffin, *Tivoli*, 79-80.

[82] Bay, 250-1.

[83] On the sensuous pleasure of this path, see Bay, 251-2.

discovering Diana bathing. This contrast between the stories of two grottoes forces the visitors to make the same moral pondering as Hercules,[84] and the ending of the narrative that Hercules chooses the more arduous path of virtue is only exposed when visitors make their choices and ultimately reach the Grotto of Diana. This contrast makes the experience of walking through different paths meaningful and renders the time of visiting the garden into the time of a mythological story.

Back to the layout of the garden, the other settings nearby the grottoes offer some extra contexts to interpret this garden narrative of Hercules's choice. The Grotto of Venus as a grotto with pleasure is placed in the piazza of the Fountain of Tivoli. This placement implies that Tivoli, the Cardinal's territory, is also a place with pleasure. The Grotto of Diana is placed on the hilltop, accompanied by the Fountain of Rome. And this placement tells a narrative of the Cardinal that the virtue he pursues is next to his dream place, Rome. However, the roads to Rome and virtue are both arduous. These geographical elements enrich the garden narrative of Hercules's choice.

2.3 The Grotto of Venus: Venus' love territory

How is the Grotto of Venus rendered as the grotto with pleasure? As Venus is an important Ovidian figure, then in this Grotto of Venus, what mythological stories of Ovid did this grotto tell? With these questions, we enter the Grotto of Venus in this part. The Grotto of Venus is located in the southeast wall of the enclosed piazza of the Fountain of Tivoli. Now in the grotto, only a basin is extant. When Zappi visited this grotto, he saw a naked marble Venus with hands covering her shameful parts and left leg next to a tree stump in the center places.[85] The character of Venus can be immediately identified from her naked body and position of arms, which are typical of the Venus Pudica type and in a similar look as the Capitoline Venus (Fig.2.2).[86] Nearby the Venus

[84] Bay, 252.
[85] Zappi, *Annali e Memorie di Tivoli*, 61; see Bay, 254.
[86] Venus Pudica is a classic figural type. Female statues in this type are always shaped as naked with

statue, there used to be two statues of nude *putti* with a goose. Later they were moved to the Fountains of Swans, built after the Cardinal died.[87] Probably at the same time, the Venus statue was substituted by the statue of Bacchus, as shown in Venturini's engraving in the seventeenth century (Fig.2.3).[88] On the side of the basin around Venus, four more nude boys were lifting vases to their shoulders and pouring water into the basin. In the surrounding niches, water flows out of vases and rustic fountains.[89] According to Zappi, the coolness of this room and the murmur of water with different effects made this room greatly enjoyed in the summer.[90]

Venus is an important character of *Metamorphoses*. Ovid's Venus is a goddess with complex temperaments, and her most notable and most exploited role is her traditional role as an inspirer of love. In the art field, she is always rendered as a pleasure provider. There are many of her stories in *Metamorphoses*, but here the difficulty in curating this ancient statue of the bathing Venus is that Ovid did not write a single story related to Venus's bathing in *Metamorphoses*. We could say that because of the limitation of literary reference, Ligorio put many efforts in strengthening the role of this grotto in the garden narrative as an alternative, which is already seen in the previous analysis of the pleasant path to the Grotto of Venus. Also, based on the statue itself, Ligorio reproduced the scene of Venus's bathing and transformed the grotto into a mythical site. This reproduction was realized by the statue of Venus in a near-life size and the combination of a basin, surrounding rustic fountains, and the water sounds produced by them. This setting authentically reproduces a spot where a real bathing scene happens. This theatrical setting blurs the distance between reality and mythological scenes.[91] When the visitors enter this grotto, they immediately enter a mythical site and seem to encounter a real scene of bathing. In this process, their desire for peering is satisfied. For this grotto narrative, although its narrativity might be weak on its own, as it lacks temporality and only presents a state of Venus's bathing

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arms covering her private parts. Although shaped in a position of hiding her body, this position draws viewers' attention to the hidden parts more readily. This type has many variants. A prominent example depicting Venus Pudica is Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*. In sculpture, some Venus statues are accompanied by a vase, and in this grotto the Venus statue is with a trunk on the side.

[87] Coffin, 34.

[88] Coffin, 34.

[89] Zappi, 61; also see in Venturini's engraving.

[90] Zappi, 61.

[91] Verity Platt, "Viewing, Desiring, Believing: Confronting the divine in a Pompeian house." Art History 25, no. 1 (2002): 87-112.

without the involvement of changes, it has a strong communicative function. This grotto could get the visitors involved in Venus's love territory, both physically and emotionally.

A possible reference of the bathing scene in Ovid's stories is Venus's birth. Venus is born in sea foams, so she gets her Greek name "Aphrodite", meaning "foam". In book four of the *Metamorphoses*, she tells her own birth that "I should find some favour with the sea, for in its holy depths in days gone by from sea-foam I was formed, and still from foam I take my name in Greece."[92] This narrative has always been understood as the origin of the artistic motif of the Venus's birth, and Boticelli's painting *Birth of Venus* is a famous example of representing this scene. These two scenes of Venus's bathing and Venus's birth have many similarities. They both depict the moment when Venus appears out of the water, and both are aimed at arousing the same pleasure of the viewers. Here, this ancient statue of bathing Venus could be understood as a recreation of the birth of Venus. This reference to Ovid's narrative strengthens the role of this grotto as a pleasure provider in the garden narrative.

Also, when the visitors enter this room, a role of an observing satyr might be projected onto the visitors. Satyrs are lustful characters in *Metamorphoses*, and they chase different nymphs including Syrinx and Pomoma.[93] Although there is not a specific story that tells satyr observing the bathing Venus in Ovid's stories, we can see a relevant literary counterpart in the 1499 contemporary literature of Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, which makes frequent references to classical mythology and weaves many mythological characters into its new narrative of Poliphili's searching for his beloved in the dream. The fact that the book's publication year of 1499 is before the year of the construction of this garden makes it also a possible source for Ligorio's grotto design. In this book, there is a scene depicting a satyr observing the sleeping nymph, and many modern scholars have identified that a similar scene of satyr observing the sleeping Venus which is constantly seen in the painting derives from this book and its accompanying woodcut (Fig.2.4).[94] Here in the grotto, the sleeping Venus is replaced by a bathing Venus, and the visitors become the observing satyr. The bathing Venus and the lying Venus have many similarities. They are both naked and vulnerable, and both can satisfy the

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[92] *Metamorphoses* IV, 521-62.

[93] *Metamorphoses* I: 689-721; XIV: 623-97.

[94] Marcin Fabiański, "Correggio's "Venus, Cupid and a 'Satyr'." Its Form and Iconography." *Artibus Et Historiae* 17, no. 33 (1996): 161.

visitors' lustful desire for peering. Then for the invaders, their role of a satyr could therefore be aroused by relating to a *Hypnerotomachia* scene of viewing a nude nymph.

What *Hypnerotomachia* might offer for a narrative reading of the Grotto of Venus is more than a scene of a satyr observing the naked nymph. This book is the other possible source that makes a meaningful visiting experience from the Hercules statues to the Grotto of Venus. As mentioned, the Grotto of Venus has weak narrativity on its own, so its connections with other garden components are important for us to make a narrative reading on this grotto. Besides the choice of Hercules, the garden experience of making a choice and then entering Venus's love territory could also find its literary counterparts in *Hypnerotomachia*. Although there is no direct evidence confirming Ligorio's reference to this book, Bay points out that this combination of the plot of making a choice and the motif of bathing Venus is a unique one and could only find correspondent counterparts in *Hypnerotomachia*.[95] Based on Bay's analysis, I will continue to make a narrative reading by referring to the relevant text in *Hypnerotomachia*. And then I will also bring in some other grottos which are related to the same text as well. These contemporary grotto examples imply a general influence of *Hypnerotomachia* on the garden design.

In *Hypnerotomachia*, on Poliphilo's way of searching for his beloved Polia, he also confronts three choices for him in the form of doors. He chooses the most beautiful door of *Mater Amoris* (Mother of Love), and there he finds Polia. Then they are taken to the island of Cythera. After going through the garden composed of concentric circles, he reaches the center of the garden (Fig.2.5), but a curtain blocks their view. Intrigued by the desire, Poliphilo violently unveils the little curtain, and finally, Venus is exposed to them. Poliphilo's experience of making a choice and finally seeing Venus corresponds with the visitors' experience of making a choice in the place of Hercules statues and ultimately entering the Grotto of Venus, so this part of the garden narrative achieves the narrative quality of representationality.

Also, in Poliphilo's experience, *Hypnerotomachia* described in detail his emotional changes, especially before and after he sees Venus. Then in a similar experience as Poliphilo, the garden visitors might also experience the similar emotional changes. From the literary text, we could approach the experientiality of this part of the garden narrative. In *Hypnerotomachia*, Poliphilo

[95] Bay, 261-68.

says when he sees Venus:

> And behold! I saw clearly the divine form of her venerable majesty as she issued from the springing fountain, the delicious source of every beauty. No sooner had the unexpected and divine sight met my eyes than both of us were filled with extreme sweetness, and invaded by the novel pleasure that we had desired daily for so long, so that we both remained as through in an ecstasy of divine awe.[96]

This detailed description of Poliphilo's strong desire and final ecstasy of viewing Venus parallels the similar urgent desire of the garden visitors and their strong emotional strike when they finally see the bathing Venus. When Poliphilo and Polia finally confront the sudden exposed naked Venus, in *Hypnerotomachia* a description of the naked Venus follows:

> The divine Venus stood naked in the middle of the transparent and limpid waters of the basin, which reached up to her ample and divine waist, reflecting the Cytherean body without making it seem larger, smaller, doubled or refracted.[97]

This description is also applicable to the visiting experience inside the Grotto of Venus. In Zappi's travelogue, he also first mentioned the beauty of Venus and then described in detail how the surrounding waters flowed into the Venus' basin.[98] The visiting route to this grotto and the spatial setting of this grotto could fully make the visitors experience as Poliphilo does in the garden of

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[96] *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 361.

[97] *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 362.

[98] When Zappi entered the Grotto of Venus, he firstly wrote down the appearance of Venus, "*In questa prima grotta in prospettiva si ritrova una Venere di marmo di tutto rilievo ignuda, che con la man manca si copre le sue parti vergognose, bellissima, con la camiseia posta sopra un troncone a sè vicino*'", and soon turned to the surrounding water, "*quatro altri fantocci un poco maggiori tengono ciascun di essi il suo vaso in spalla, per li quali esce acqua di bellissima maniera, tutti di marmo, bellissimi, di tutto rilievo, ignudi; a piedi alla Venere si ritrova una conchiglie che circonda intorno 25 palmi e in mezzo vi esce un lampollo d'acqua di tal sorte che in quella stanza si gode grandemente nella estate per il fresco*." See Zappi, 61. It is not clear whether Zappi read *Hypnerotomachia*. So far, we can only tell from the publishing year of their works. As *Hypnerotomachia* was printed in 1499 and, Zappi's travelogue was published in 1576, it is possible that Zappi may have read this contemporary literature.

Cythera and share the similar emotional changes as Poliphilo does. In that case, the visitors are playing the role of Poliphilo, and again, the Grotto of Venus gets the visitors emotionally involved. This part of the garden from the statue of Hercules to the Grotto of Venus achieves the qualities of representationality and experientiality. Also, in this journey, Poliphilo's and the visitors' lustful desire makes sense of this part of the garden narrative and helps its achieve the quality of teleology.

The same text of *Hypnerotomachia* could also inspire a different design of the visiting route. A detail that is not seen in the route to the Grotto of Venus is the form of Venus's garden. In *Hypnerotomachia*, the fountain of Venus is placed in the innermost of her Cytherean garden, the center of a series of concentric circles (see Fig.2.5). This form of garden is used in two places of two Medici gardens, the Boboli garden of Francesco de' Medici and the Castello garden of Cosimo de' Medici, to accommodate their Venus. The statue of the bathing Venus in the Boboli garden is placed in the innermost chamber of the Buontalenti Grotto (Fig.2.6). The visitors could only approach the innermost chamber with the bathing Venus after they penetrating the first two chambers. The other example is the labyrinth of the garden of the Villa Castello (see Fig.3.1). In Cosimo's original plan, he planned to put the Fountain of Venus (also called Fountain of Florence) in the center of a labyrinth and referred to the layout of Venus's garden in *Hypnerotomachia* as his inspiration.[99] This form and the placement of Venus in the center have the possibility of arousing the visitors' interest and curiosity during their visiting experience. For these two examples and the Grotto of Venus in the garden of the Villa d'Este, they may achieve the same emotional involvement, although with different approaches to transforming the literary narrative. However, in these two Medici gardens, the fundamental quality of representationality is weak because only a small part of the literary narrative was represented in these gardens. Therefore, we may doubt whether these two parts could be called a narrative grotto or a narrative labyrinth. Besides a discussion of narrativity, with a comparison between these two Medici gardens and the garden of the Villa d'Este, we can also find out a difference between them. In the Medici gardens, the reference to the mythological narrative is only limited within a small part of the garden, and in the garden of the Villa d'Este, the same narrative is transformed into the main structure of the

[99] Lazzoro, 176.

garden narrative.

Besides this traditional role of Venus as the goddess of Love, Ovid's Venus has the other role as an ambitious empress intending to expand her empire with her power of love.[100] Through a narrative reading of the grotto, we can see this role of Venus is another reason for the Cardinal to choose or agree on Venus's stories as the representation. This ambition of Venus is first shown in the first love story Apollo and Daphne and reaches the peak in the story of the rape of Proserpina by Pluto. This second story is told by Calliope in a poetry singing contest between the Pierides and the Muses. Calliope sings that while Venus sees Pluto moving, she embraces Cupid and said:

> My child, my hands and weapons, my power,
> Seize those arrows, that overcome all,
> and devise a path for your swift arrows to the heart of that god
> to whom the final share of the triple kingdom fell.
> You conquer the gods and Jupiter himself,
> the lords of the sea, and their very king, who controls the lords of the sea.
> Why is Tartarus excepted? Why not extend your mother's kingdom and your own?
> We are talking of a third part of the world.
> And yet, as is evident to me,
> I am scorned in heaven,
> and Love's power diminishes with mine.[101]

In Calliope's song, Venus's ambition is fully exposed when she avidly asks Cupid to help her conquer more land with their power of love. Venus has her weapon as well. She executes rape as punishment on the virgin goddesses who deny the control of love,[102] and as told in the later story after this passage, Proserpina becomes a poor victim. This dual identity of Venus provides an underlying narrative context to decode the Grotto of Venus. Contextualizing this narrative in

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[100] Johnson, 128.
[101] *Metamorphoses* V, 332-84.
[102] Johnson, 139.

the contemporary context, we will realize that the Cardinal may also take happiness and pleasure as his power to expand his territory. There is also implication in the layout of including the Grotto of Venus in the piazza made for the Fountain of Tivoli that this powerful force of love belonged to the territory of the Cardinal. Therefore, when visitors are indulged in the pleasure of viewing, they are already conquered by the realm of love and by the power of the Cardinal as well. This hidden meaning might be grasped by the learned visitors.

Now we can see that the meaning of the Grotto of Venus is rich. For the grotto itself, it presents Venus as a pleasure giver and its narrativity is not strong. The Grotto of Venus achieves a fundamental quality of experientiality, but the qualities of temporality and meaningfulness in its narrative is only obvious when this grotto is connected with other garden components. The extracompositional devices, including the literary works such as *Metamorphoses* and *Hypnerotomachia* and the contemporary context of the Cardinal's ambition, all bring meanings to the Grotto of Venus and its connection with other garden components, so Venus could have a second role as an ambitious empress, and other characters such as Hercules and Poliphilo could also be involved. For the larger narrative, such as the garden narrative (compared with the small grotto narrative), temporality is realized by the visitors' movement. In the stories of Hercules's choice and Poliphilo's unveiling Venus, the visitors are playing the role of these main characters and experience as they do. In this process of experience, these main characters' inner world such as purpose and emotion could also be unfolded.

In Venturini's seventeenth-century engraving of the Grotto of Venus, the statue of Venus was already substituted by the statue of Bacchus (see Fig.2.3).[103] When the main character was changed from Venus to Bacchus, the god of the vine, the original theme of erotic ecstasy was correspondently transformed into ritual and festive ecstasy. An alternative narrative might be constructed by visitors with Ovid's works as an extracompositional device. In Ovid's account, Bacchus is always present with festive cults. He encourages festivals and celebrations. He also sends wine to the marriage feast and banquet.[104] In his festivals, all people are overcome by "the shrieks of women, men made with wine, crowds with obscenities, and empty drumming" and

[103] Coffin, 34. However, Coffin did not mention the reason of this substitution is not clear, and I speculate the statue of Venus might be sold.

[104] *Metamorphoses* XII, 536-79; XIII, 623-39.

drown in a fanatical state.[105] However, this possible narrative reading triggered by the character of Bacchus has to rely much on the visitors' imagination instead of a direct representation of a certain story in the grotto. The new Grotto of Bacchus also no longer has a narrative connection with the garden. The change of the statue makes the garden narrative of Hercules's choice lost.

2.4 The Grotto of Diana: a grotto dedicated to chastity

Different from the Grotto of Venus which is reproduced as a mythical site and presents many variants of Ovid's stories, the Grotto of Diana is more like an elaborate story pavilion, following the Ovidian narrative more closely. Also, different from the Grotto of Venus with only one character, the Grotto of Diana includes many characters and stories, so the spatial design of this grotto also includes the composition of different stories besides the design of the path to reaching this grotto and the representations of each story. As part of the garden narrative of Hercules's choice, this grotto is the destination of the path to virtue. Diana is chosen as the main character of this grotto, as she is a famous symbol of chastity, and her story of Diana and Actaeon becomes the dominant narrative. Based on this narrative and the main character, Ligorio added more ancient statues that are symbols of chastity and stucco reliefs telling consequences of betraying chastity. These additions strengthen a grotto theme of chastity and virtue and the role of this grotto in the garden narrative of Hercules's choice. In this part, I will first reconstruct this grotto and then explore the transformation of the dominant narrative and other additional narratives from Ovidian stories. Then I will explore how the dominant narrative and other additional narratives interact with each other in one spatial setting and how or whether narrativity is achieved in this grotto with several stories.

The Grotto of Diana is in a cruciform plan. Now the ancient statues have been moved to museums, and only some grotto reliefs are still extant. The statues of Penthesilea, Queen of the

[105] *Metamorphoses* III, 528-71.

Amazons, and the Roman heroine Lucretia were placed on each side of the entrance. Inside, the statue of Diana used to stand in the central niche on a rustic mount above a circular basin (Fig.2.7). She is shaped in the act of hunting, holding a bow ready to shoot, and her bound stands next to her (Fig.2.8). That Diana and Venus are two opposing characters can also be reflected from their statues' different shaping. Diana is clothed, opening her chest, standing straight, and seemingly staring at her prey in the distance without fear. Venus is naked, twisting her body and looking down at the ground shyly. What accompanies them is also different. Diana is with a dog, and Venus is with a trunk or vase. These side components correspond with their own identities. At the end of the left side, there used to stand the statue of Minerva. As for the right side, although without a statue, it is connected with a loggia, leading to the countryside view. These ancient statues are now kept in the Museo Capitolino in Rome.[106] Only the stucco statues accompanying Diana on both sides of the central niche are extant. Those stucco statues are female statues in classic costumes and holding baskets with golden apples on their heads (Fig.2.9). Here, the mythological symbol of golden apples in the mythical Garden of the Hesperides appears again and keeps being repeated all over the floor, walls, and ceiling (Fig.2.10).[107] The vaults are also covered by painted golden apples, lilies, and roses. Painted branches stretch from baskets held by the female statues over the vaults. On top of the vault where all stretching branches meet is the Este family symbol of a white eagle. Behind the central niche is the story of Diana and Actaeon, part of which can still be distinguished (Fig.2.11). Oher stucco reliefs on the side walls tell the stories of Perseus and Andromeda, Apollo and Daphne, Pan and Syrinx, and Diana and Callisto, and the last three stories can still be seen in the grotto.[108]

In Ligorio's original design, a second fountain of Hippolytus was planned in the place of Minerva.[109] As mentioned above, the story of Hippolytus (from whom the Cardinal got his name) was supposed to be the second iconographical program arranged in the garden. One reason

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[106] Coffin, 35.

[107] Zappi described in detail the decorative motifs of lilies, golden apples and eagles on the floor. See Zappi, 62-3.

[108] According to Coffin, there used to be four stucco reliefs. However, the story of Perseus and Andromeda was not extant, and there are hardly any descriptions of this narrative, even in Bay's study. Therefore, in the following discussions, this story will not be mentioned. See Coffin, 35.

[109] The Parisian manuscript mentions a fountain of the chaste Hippolytus in place of Minerva. See Coffin, 36.

why the Fountain of Hippolytus was planned in the Grotto of Diana is that this character of Hippolytus is also a symbol of chastity. Hippolytus's refusal of his stepmother's seduction proves his chastity. The other reason is that Diana is also a character in Hippolytus's story. Hippolytus is killed at Troezen after expelled by his father, and Diana saves him. Diana asks Aesculapius to save the life of Hippolytus. Diana saves people with virtues.

However, as for the representation of the dominant story of Diana and Actaeon, a problem in the first place is that there are many discrepancies between the shaping of this statue and Ovid's description of Diana in this story. Ovid wrote down this moment before transformation when Diana finds her spied on by Actaeon:

> However, though her band of nymphs gathered in confusion around her,
> she stood turning to one side, and looking back,
> and wishing she had her arrows to hand.
> She caught up a handful of the water that she did have,
> And threw it in the man's face.

Ovid's Diana is different from the statue of Diana in this grotto. Ovid's Diana is a bathing Diana, and the grotto Diana is an armed Diana. Ovid clearly mentioned that Diana takes off all her weapons before bathing, so when she finds Actaeon, her immediate thought is "wishing she had her arrows to hand."[110] But in the grotto, she is present as an armed hunter accompanied by her hound. Therefore, the original purpose of this ancient statue is not to represent Diana as a character in this story of Diana and Actaeon but eulogize her as a brave hunter. Although this depiction is different from the original description, this typical representation of Diana makes us immediately identify this character as Diana. The story of Diana and Actaeon is Ligorio's addition to accommodating the Diana statue. Then a question comes: how he included this depiction of Diana into a different mythological narrative selected by him?

Ligorio's first step is the recreation of the spatial setting based on Ovid's accounts. The spatial setting of this grotto is a reproduction of the natural cave where according to Ovid the story of

[110] Before Diana bathed, she "gives her spear, quiver and unstrung bow to one of the nymphs, her weapon-bearer." *Metamorphoses* III, 165-205.

Diana and Actaeon happens. This natural cave is also where Diana lives. Ovid dedicated much space to describe this place:

> There was a valley there called Gargaphie, dense with pine trees and sharp cypresses,
> sacred to Diana of the high-girded tunic,
> where, in the depths, there is a wooded cave,
> not fashioned by art. But ingenious nature had imitated art.
> She had made a natural arch out of native pumice and porous tufa.
> On the right, a spring of bright clear water murmured into a widening pool,
> enclosed by grassy banks.
> Here the woodland goddess, weary from the chase,
> would bathe her virgin limbs in the crystal liquid.[111]

The similarities between Ovid's description of the environment and the grotto setting are obvious. Ligorio reproduced a cave made in a naturalistic way in the wooded garden of the Villa d'Este. Ligorio also extensively applied porous materials to the walls and arches as decoration. This way is similar to how Diana made a natural arch. The description of "a spring of bright clear water murmured into a widening pool" could also find its counterpart in the grotto: below the statue of Diana, water flowed from the basin down to the pool. This fountain represents the spring that brings water for nymphs to bathe. All these similarities make Ligorio's intention explicit that this grotto is shaped as Diana's home where she lives and bathes with other nymphs. Therefore, visitors' entering the grotto means that they already intrude a sacred cave in the role of a contemporary Actaeon. This approach of reproducing a mythical site is the same as the approach in the Grotto of Venus, but in this grotto more stories were involved in this mythical site. This site is also a story pavilion.

Ligorio's second step is the addition of stucco reliefs depicting different phases of this story. The added reliefs bring temporality to the narrative of Diana and Actaeon, and imply the action of the still statue of Diana. Although today in the central niche only the upper relief depicting

[111] *Metamorphoses* III, 138-64.

tree canopies is extant, the original relief story was recorded by another contemporary historian Antonio Del Re. He wrote that "the walls around are of rustic mosaic of stones and enamels of different colors, decorated with the stories … of Actaeon when he wanted to see Diana bathe in the spring and, sprinkled by her with water, became a deer lacerated by his dogs".[112] Del Re's description implies that this relief contains depictions of two phases in one illustration. The first phase is before Actaeon's metamorphosis: Actaeon happens to see Diana bathe. When Diana finds Actaeon, she splashes water on him. The second is after his metamorphosis into a stag: he is chased and lacerated by his hounds.[113] These two phases could be identified from the extant relief. The first phase is depicted on the left part of the central niche. The left side with extruded rock represents the sacred cave where Diana and her followers bathe. And the second phase is on the right part. The woody right part resembles the woodland where Actaeon loses his life. By placing the Diana statue in the middle, Ligorio included Diana in the narrative as well. The Diana statue separated two phases and marked a transforming moment when she finds Actaeon and splashes water on him to trigger his physical metamorphosis. If the visitors viewed from left to right, they could follow the timeline and get the whole story. The sprayed water is also part of the grotto narrative. The Diana statue could not move. The water sprayed by the fountains implies Diana's action of splashing water on Actaeon. And for the visitors, the water will also bring them the feeling of fear that they might be the next Actaeon. The sprayed water implies the action of the still Diana and along with the spatial setting together helps this grotto narrative achieve experientiality.

Besides this main story, there are also other stories, including Diana and Callisto, Daphne and Apollo, and Pan and Syrinx. Compared with the elaborate representation of the main narrative, other stories were depicted in a more sober manner. They are only represented in one form of stucco relief. Also, instead of depicting two phases, other stories only present a single moment, either the character's transforming moment or the moment after his or her transformation. As Wolf mentions in his application of narrative to painting, in the representation

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[112] The original account is "*Le pareti intorno sono di mosaic rustic di pietre e smalti di diversi colori, ornato delle storie … di Atteone quando volle veder Diana bagnarsi nel fonte e, spruzzato da lei con l'acqua, divenne cervo lacerate dai propri cani*'. See Zappi, 63; cited by Bay, 273.

[113] Ligorio was also familiar with Ovid's account of this story. Ligorio mentioned and transcribed these two phases in Ligorio's Naples manuscript. See Bay, 274.

of a narrative, painting tends to depict a changing moment to involve time and imply temporality. Here the stucco relief, as a similar form to painting, uses the same strategy. In the story of Diana and Callisto, Diana is standing with her nymphs in the left woods and holding her bow, ready to shoot a bear on the right of the picture (Fig.2.12). This bear is the poor Callisto after her metamorphosis. This depiction of Callisto hiding behind a tree trying to escape from hunters and hounds follows closely Ovid's description:

> Ah, how often she wandered near the house and fields that had once been her home,
> not daring to sleep in the lonely woods!
> Ah, how often she was driven among the rocks by the baying hounds,
> and the huntress fled in fear from the hunters!
> Often she hid at the sight of wild beasts forgetting what she was,
> and through a bear she shuddered at the sight of other bears on the mountains
> and feared the wolves though her father Lycaon ran with them."[114]

Callisto starts to fear after being transformed into a bear, so in the relief, this character is graphically represented by her action of hiding and intention of escaping from the hunt. In other reliefs depicting the stories of Daphne and Apollo and Pan and Syrinx, a metamorphosing moment of Daphne's arms changing into branches and Syrinx's body transforming into reeds were depicted (Fig.2.13.14.15).[115] These stucco reliefs also achieve the quality of experientiality in the same way as painting by meticulously depicting details such as setting, characters and their actions. In this grotto, each narrative has its independent representation and accomplish the fundamental narrative qualities separately. The representation of each story has many similarities with the representation in the form of painting. However, for each story, it also shares a similar difficulty with painting that the descriptive scenes of each story might be hard to directly unfold the inner world of the characters. In other words, the quality of meaningfulness could be hard to

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[114] *Metamorphoses* II, 466-95.

[115] According to Bay, this extant relief of Pan and Syrinx is a restoration showing Diana and her followers. But originally, Del Re recorded that this relief told the story of "Syrinx, loved by the god Pan … who pursued her until her path was obstructed by the river, where she was transformed into trembling reeds." See Antonio Del Re, *Dell'Antichità Tiburtine Capitolo V*, 41; Bay, 288.

achieve.

In this grotto, this difficulty is solved by the combination of stories in one spatial setting. The spatial composition of these stories is with hierarchies. The hierarchies between representations of the dominant narrative and the added narratives and the active and passive metamorphosis step by step make the theme of chastity distinct and make each story achieve the quality of meaningfulness. Firstly, the theme of chastity is determined by the dominant narrative of Diana and Actaeon. Its depiction in the largest size and the placement in the central niche behind the Diana statue are intended to catch the visitors' attention in the first place. From this story, they realize that peering on the bathing Diana could result in a harsh punishment. When the visitors go deeper, stucco reliefs of other stories in a smaller size are gradually exposed. The juxtaposition of all these stories forces the visitors to ponder upon the possible connection between these stories, in which process the theme of chastity hidden behind each story could emerge as a solid connection of all these stories. This connection strengthens the teleology of each story and their combination in one grotto.

In a further comparison between the smaller added stories, we can see that Ligorio also tried to stress each character's intention by making a different representation of each story. This comparison naturally happens, as there is no sequence in viewing the added stories. These stories are all in the same size and placed symmetrically on the left and right sides of a cruciform plan, so after viewing the central narrative, visitors could freely explore the other stories, during which a comparison between different stories would spontaneously happen. These added stories could be classified into two main kinds: one is about characters' active metamorphosis for preserving their chastity, and the other is about characters' forced transformation as a punishment. These two kinds have different representations. The meaning of metamorphosis is different for Daphne, Syrinx and Callisto. For Callisto, metamorphosis means a negative punishment. But for Daphne and Syrinx, they choose metamorphosis as their active defense for chastity. Their bravery and sacrifice are what Diana appreciates and serve to highlight the grotto theme. Therefore, the depiction of their transformations in the stucco reliefs are placed in the center of the relief and in a larger proportion, and Callisto's passive physical metamorphosis is placed on the side. This difference in depiction again stresses the virtue theme.

However, these stories and their implications are not explicit to all. Zappi's account of the

Grotto of Diana is more abstract than that of Del Re. Zappi could recognize the figures of Diana and her followers and identify the famous story of Apollo and Daphne, but he was not familiar with other stories. He described other stories as "various rare and beautiful similar works as Apollo and Daphne" and other ancient statues as "statues and figures rare in the world."[116] For him, the narrativity of these grotto narratives is weak. Therefore, in Zappi's encounter with the Grotto of Diana, his failure in identification prevents him from the fear feeling, so he could be fully immersed in the appreciation of the rare beauty as he described. Or we can say that this fear feeling might be overcome by his preoccupied appreciation of the art of the grotto.

In these two grottoes, the Grotto of Venus and the Grotto of Diana, we can view the use of the Ovidian narrative from multiple perspectives. From the perspective of museology, Ovidian stories provide many mythological narratives to curate ancient statues. These stories could be used alone or combined together in one grotto. While Ovid's narrative serves as the main inspiration, there is also the case that other contemporary works written based on mythology might come in as well as an extra reference. From the perspective of narrative structure, Ligorio and Ovid took different approaches in integrating stories, which also marks the distinct difference between these two different forms of garden and poem. Ovid's strategy of chronology fails in the garden, as time can only be experienced instead of being read or being represented in the garden. To enable the involvement of time and achieve temporality, Ligorio designed many sensory triggers to entice the visitors to move and experience. In the Grotto of Diana, the visitors also need to move and compare between different stories.

The grotto as a complex of multiple art forms helps overcome the limitation of each art form by putting them together to build up a spatial narrative. The static sculptures of Venus and Diana within the Cardinal's collection of antiquities do no present a transforming moment, so time is not involved in these sculptures. To deal with this limitation of these sculptures, in the Grotto of Diana, Ligorio added to the still statue of Diana stucco reliefs depicting different phases to accomplish a full narrative. The added stucco reliefs also have their limitation of being hard to unfold the inner world of characters and achieve the narrative quality of meaningfulness, so Ligorio put stories with the same theme of virtue together and set hierarchies in the spatial

[116] The original accounts cited are "*statue et figure rare al mondo*" and "*si vede Daffine et Apollo con diversi rari et belli lavori simili*". See Zappi, 63-4.

composition. In the Grotto of Venus, Ligorio connected this grotto with other garden components and took this grotto narrative as a phase of the larger garden narrative. The garden narrative initially involves time because the visitors always need to walk and experience the change of the view. In this way, this grotto also participates in the construction of a spatial narrative. The grotto allows a flexible composition of different art forms. Ligorio made use of this grotto characteristic of flexibility and truly transformed many of Ovid's mythological stories into the grotto narratives with a high state of narrativity.

Chapter 3

Bernardo Buontalenti and his grotto of technical ingenuity

Introduction

In this chapter, I will talk about the other artist Bernardo Buontalenti and his planning of the garden and the grotto narrative for the Medici gardens, namely the garden of the Pratolino and the Boboli garden. Buontalenti designed the triple grotto (called Buontalenti Grotto) in the Boboli garden and guided its construction from 1583 to 1593. As for the Pratolino, Buontalenti was appointed as the principal designer of the Pratolino by Francesco in 1569.[117] Buontalenti planned the garden and conducted most of its grotto design.

There are many differences between Buontalenti's and Ligorio's design. While Ligorio planned a coherent mythological program in the scale of the whole garden, Buontalenti was more fascinated with small tricks than depicting a large picture in the garden. The eighteenth-century art historian Francesco Milizia wrote about Buontalenti that "His taste in architecture is the Florentine taste: grandiosity in the whole ensemble, capricious smallness in the details. And in caprices Buontalenti vented himself strongly".[118] Buontalenti's style in pursuit of fantasies continues in the grottoes but hardly in the garden scale.

Buontalenti's style of design matches the preference of his main patrons, Cosimo de' Medici (1519-1574) and Francesco de' Medici (1541-1587), the first and the second Grand Duke. Compared with the garden of Villa d'Este in which every statue was planned with a specific place (although there were also cases when statues were sold or removed), the gardens of their Medici villas tended to have a more flexible plan in the disposition of the statues and fountains. The Medici family valued a single piece of artwork, such as a specific fountain, over a coherent garden design.[119] In their villas and gardens, statues were regularly moved to a different venue or another

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[117] Webster Smith, "Pratolino." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 20, no. 4 (1961): 155.

[118] Francesco Milizia, *Dizionario delle belle arte del disegno* (Antommaria Cardinali, Bologna, 1827), 182; quoted by Smith, see Smith, *Studies on Buontalenti's Villas*, 11.

[119] Lazzaro, 198.

villa. However, it does not mean that there were no symbolic programs planned in the Medici gardens. As for the grottoes in the Medici gardens, obviously, they do not have a coherent narrative connection with the whole garden like Ligorio's grottoes did in the garden of the Villa d'Este, but here Buotalenti's grottoes still have a symbolic role serving the symbolic programs of these gardens. Later I will explain some common symbolic themes in these gardens.

The other difference between Ligorio and Buontalenti's design is the starting point of their grotto design. In the previous chapter, we have already seen how the ancient antiquities served as a starting point for Ligorio's grotto design, although sometimes he also made changes to the narrative that the antiquities were originally planned for. Buontalenti's grotto design started from his intention of experimenting with his new technologies and figuring out new technical ways of exhibiting art and nature. Also, what Buontalenti needed to curate in these Medici gardens were mostly contemporary artworks instead of the antiquities, and sometimes he also made sculptures on his own (such as in the Grotto of Galatea and the Grotto of Pan and Fame, which I will discuss in the following parts). The Medici family deviated from the tradition of using ancient statues and appointed contemporary artists to make the fountain and statue design.[120] On the one hand, the new artworks make the symbolic programs of these gardens not limited by the available collections of antiquities. But on the other hand, the fact that Buontalenti continued to make references to Ovidian stories in his grottoes makes us wonder why he chose a certain story and how this mythological story could accommodate a contemporary artwork. This will be one main question that I will explore in this part.

In this part, I will mainly focus on the grottoes of the Boboli garden and the garden of the Pratolino, but in the first part I will also introduce another Medici garden, the garden of the Villa Castello, to explain some common characteristics of the Medici gardens. This garden was planned by Niccolò Tribolo (1500-1550), Cosimo de' Medici's favorite garden designer.[121] These three gardens share some similar symbolic programs in the garden design. In the art historian Claudia Lazzaro's collective works on the Italian Renaissance gardens, she explains the iconographical programs of the Castello garden and the Boboli garden. In this part, I will further extend her

[120] Liliane Châtelet-Lange and Renate Franciscond, "The Grotto of the Unicorn and the Garden of the Villa Di Castello", *Renaissance Studies* 25, no. 1 (2011): 57.

[121] Lazzaro, 167.

interpretations into the understanding of the Pratolino. Based on a general understanding of the Medici gardens, I will explain the symbolic role of the grottoes, especially those with mythological motifs.

In the following two parts, I will delve into an Ovidian motif, the myth of the Deluge, which Buontalenti might refer to in the grottoes of the Pratolino and the Boboli garden. He was facing two different situations, one with the contemporary sculptures to curate and the other without. I will analyze these two cases and explore how he built up spatial narratives in these two grottoes. Also, a practical question regarding this motif is to what extent the grotto narrative of "deluge" is connected to the deluge myth. In the previous study on the grotto in the Boboli garden, the architectural historian Webster Smith addresses the possibilities of this reference to Ovid's mythology.[122] The scholar of English Shannon Kelley mentions the possible influence of Ovid's work but brings in the accompanying doubt on the mythological interpretation as well. She further points out the contemporary context of floods as a second solid reference.[123] Based on these studies, in the following two parts, I have to do two things. The first is to continue examining Buontalenti's possible transformation of Ovid's deluge myth, and the second is to explore how Buontalenti built up his spatial narratives in the deluge grottoes based on Ovid's stories.

In the last part, I will discuss a double grotto at the Pratolino, the Grotto of Pan and Fame. While the name of "deluge" brings uncertainty regarding Ovid's influence, the name of "Pan and Fame" confirms Ovid's influence on the design of this double grotto. In this part, I will concentrate more on Buontalenti's technical creation including both visual and auditory effects. I will explain what Ovid's narrative offered for his technical experiments and examine the state of narrativity in this double grotto.

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[122] Webster Smith, *Studies on Buontalenti's Villas. I: Text* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1958).

[123] Shannon Kelley, "Arno River floods and the Cinquecento grotto at the Boboli garden", *Renaissance Studies* 30, no. 5 (2016): 729-51.

3.1 Symbolic programs and the grotto narrative in the gardens of the Villa Castello and the Pratolino and the Boboli garden

Among the gardens of the Villa Castello and the Pratolino and the Boboli garden, the Castello garden had the most systematic symbolic design, and this design was firstly planned by Niccolò Tribolo. This description of "systematic design" seems not to correspond with the description of "a flexible plan" mentioned in the introduction part of this chapter. The fact is that although this garden started with a systematic design, much of Tribolo's design was not executed, and after his death, other artists took over his work and made changes to his original plan.[124] These changes made the Castello garden fail to present a coherent picture. Tribolo's symbolic programs in the Castello garden include a topographical program and a second program of celebrating the water that Cosimo brought to Florence city. These two programs are also seen in the other two Medici gardens, although less organized than in Tribolo's plan of the Castello garden. These programs show the preference of the Medici family in planning their gardens and some common functions that the Medici gardens were built for.

Start from analyzing the Castello garden. The plan of the Castello garden was initiated in 1537, right after Cosimo de' Medici became the head of the Florence government.[125] Tribolo was immediately commissioned as the principal garden designer.[126] He planned an allegorical program representing the city of Florence and its surroundings to create a small Tuscany.[127] In his program, although only a half of which was executed, Castello was to be shaped as a miniature of Tuscany (Fig.3.1). The Fountain of Florence with a round basin stands at the center of the labyrinth (see the detail of Fig.3.1). Personifications of Monte Asinaio and Monte della Falterone were planned in the niches in the highest land of the garden (see the detail of Fig.3.1).[128] These are mountains guarding the north of Tuscany. On the lower wall embracing the labyrinth garden, Tribolo planned two niches with personifications of the Mugnone and the Arno river (see the

[124] Lazzaro, 167.
[125] Lazzaro, 167.
[126] Lazzaro, 167.
[127] Châtelet-Lange, 57; also see Lazzaro, 177.
[128] Châtelet-Lange, 57.

detail of Fig.3.1).[129] Arno river is an important river of Tuscany, feeding and nurturing Tuscany,[130] and Mugnone river is a tributary of the Arno river. Mugnone river goes through the city of Florence and joins the Arno river in Florence (Fig.3.2). The placement of these symbolic fountains in the garden follows the actual topography that water starts from the mountain in the highest place, then flows through rivers, and eventually reaches Florence.

The other program that Cosimo intended to present in the Castello garden is the celebration of the portable water that he brought to Florence and the accompanying fertility and wealth in Florence.[131] This program is achieved by the presence of Neptune, the god of the sea, and personifications of the river gods such as Oceanus, the father of the river gods. In the Castello garden, on top of the Fountain of Hercules and Antaeus, Hercules lifts Antaeus up as if from the Earth, and then water is sprouted out from Antaeus's mouth (Fig.3.3). This fountain borrows the story from Hercules's twelve labors, and Hercules's lifting up Antaeus to bring water symbolizes Cosimo's deed of bringing water out of the ground in Florence.[132]

The topographical allegory and the program of celebrating the water could also be seen in the gardens of Francesco de' Medici, the second Grand Duke and the son of Cosimo. Take the Pratolino as an example. The villa of the Pratolino used to stand at the top of the hill, and the garden was planned both on the north and south slope of the hill (Fig.3.4). In the north of the palace stands a gigantic statue of Appennino ("8" in Fig.3.4). This statue stands in a semi-circular basin and represents the Mount Appennino, a mountain extending along the length of peninsular Italy and embracing the northeastern Tuscany (Fig.3.5). Most of the villa were demolished in the nineteenth century, and this statue is the only surviving part. In the Grotto of Pan and Fame sat Giambologna's statue of the personification of the Mugnone river ("18" in Fig.3.4). At the base of Ammannati's fountain in the south of the garden, there was the personification of the Arno river ("19" in Fig.3.4).[133] Celebration of the Florentine water was implied by the group sculpture of Mount Parnassus with statues of the Muses and Pegasus on the top ("31" in Fig.3.4). In Ovid's account, Pegasus creates the spring and brings sacred water to the mount where the Muses live.

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[129] Châtelet-Lange, 57; also see Lazzaro 176-77.
[130] Kelley, 731-2.
[131] Châtelet-Lange, 51.
[132] Lazzaro, 174.
[133] Clare Angela Brown, "Pratolino and the Transforming Influence of Natural Philosophy", 24.

These statues elevate the Florentine water as sacred water. However, the topographical position of these symbols did not strictly follow the actual topography as the garden surrounding the Villa Castello did. For example, the palace instead of the mountain was placed at the top, and the statue of Pegasus symbolizing the origin of water was set on the lower part of the garden.

Another theme hidden in these gardens is a theme opposite to the celebration of water. That is the representation of nature's destructive power. While water nurtured the Florentine people, the recurrent Florentine floods also brought disasters. The grottoes with the name of "deluge" at the Pratolino and in the Boboli garden recreate scenes of deluge's coming and people's suffering. The Fountain of Hercules and Antaeus at the Castello was also built in the contemporary context of the Florentine context. This fountain was built after the 1557 Florentine flood. Cosimo commissioned the sculptor Bartolomeo Ammannati to design this fountain. Therefore, besides the meaning of celebrating the water, this fountain has a second meaning of expressing the wish of Cosimo to control this natural power. The scene of Hercules's defeating Antaeus symbolizes Cosimo's wish of conquering floods as Hercules.

In these gardens, we already see the presence of some mythological characters and references to some Ovidian stories. These characters and stories play a compositional role in the symbolic programs, but they do not have a narrative connection with other components within the garden as what the grottoes do in the garden of the Villa d'Este. Also, to fit in with the garden program, many of the Ovidian stories need to be transformed to represent a different story in contemporary or regional contexts. For example, in the Fountain of Hercules and Antaeus, the water sprouted by Antaeus represents the fresh Florentine water. The intention of Hercules to defeat Antaeus in the original story of Hercules's twelve labors had been drastically changed. What remains unchanged are the characters and their actions. These ways of using mythological references are also applicable to understanding Buontalenti's use of Ovidian stories and characters. Besides transforming Ovidian stories to fit in with the symbolic programs of the gardens, Buontalenti also transformed the stories according to his need, so his grottoes always present different stories compared with Ovid's accounts. In the next part, I will start examining Buontalenti's representation of Ovid's deluge myth in the contemporary context of the Florentine floods in the grotto of the Boboli garden. This grotto of deluge is both a part of the garden program of showing nature's destructive power and Buontalenti's personal creation.

3.2 A chamber for Michelangelo's slave sculptures and the deluge myth about rebirth

One of the common motifs that Buontalenti used for his grottoes is the deluge. This motif is seen in the first chamber of Buontalenti Grotto in the Boboli garden and the Grotto of Deluge at the Pratolino and is implied by the scenes of destruction and the visitors' experience of getting bathed. This motif has different functions in their different representations by Buontalenti, but one thing in common is that water tricks play an important role in both grottoes. In this part, I will firstly discuss the first chamber of Buontalenti Grotto and talk about the other grotto in the next part. This chamber was designed to accommodate four unfinished contemporary marble sculptures of slaves made by Michelangelo (Fig.3.6). Why did Buontalenti curated these sculptures with a deluge motif? On the one hand, these slave sculptures with their bodies bent do fit in with a destruction scene, as they seem to be suffering from the falling muds caused by the floods (Fig.3.7). According to Kelley, this grotto scene could be contextualized in the contemporary context that the Florentine people suffer from the floods.[134] And she explains that Buontalenti made this chamber to "memorialize the fragility of human affairs in light of the colossal forces of nature in Florence."[135] On the other hand, the shaping of these sculptures also brings a second possibility of reading that these sculptures present a scene of stones' metamorphosing into human form. Ovid's account of human's rebirth from stones after the deluge in his deluge myth enables this reading. Although Buontalenti did not state the influence of Ovid's works on his grotto design, Ovid's work offers the other possibility of a narrative reading of the first chamber and implies Buontalenti's possible reference to the Ovidian myth of the deluge. With this second interpretation, we can see that Buontalenti may also express a wish of rebirth after the deluge by referring to this Ovidian myth.

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[134] Kelley, 745.
[135] Kelley, 731.

The Grotto of Deluge lies in the first chamber of Buontalenti Grotto in the Boboli garden. The construction of the Boboli garden started in 1549, right after Eleonora of Toledo, Cosimo's wife, purchased the Pitti Palace and its adjoining territory.[136] Tribolo was commissioned to plan the Boboli garden behind the Pitti palace (Fig.3.8). But one year later, Tribolo died, and Vasari took over his work.[137] In the following years, until the completion of the garden in 1590, sponsors of the garden changed from Cosimo to Francesco and to Ferdinando (1549-1609), the third Grand Duke of Tuscany, and more artists and sculptors were involved. Buontalenti was one of those. Buontalenti was assigned by Francesco to transform a reservoir into a grotto, and this is the later triple grotto of the Buontalenti Grotto. In the time of Cosimo, this reservoir was built to ensure the water supply in the dry periods.[138] After taking over the work from Tribolo, Vasari added to the reservoir a classical façade with two niches displaying the sculptures of Apollo and Ceres by Baccio Bandinelli. After the reservoir lost its original function, Francesco assigned Buontalenti to transform it into a grotto. Michelangelo's sculptures of four slaves were also an important trigger for Francesco to deciding on transforming the reservoir to accommodate these sculptures. Buontalenti made the architectural layout and the decorative design and added the second rustic story to Vasari's façade (Fig.3.9). This work continued from 1583 to 1593, and after Francesco died in 1587, his son Ferdinando became the sponsor for the finishing touch.[139]

Inside the grotto, the first chamber is well-preserved, and only the water supply is stopped, and Michelangelo sculptures are substituted by the replicas (the original ones are displayed in Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence). This room presents a post-diluvian scene. The walls and ceiling are fully decorated with stucco, stalactites, and marble mosaics (see Fig.3.6). On the side walls, pastoral scenes with mountains, trees, and animals are painted as background, and human figures and trees shaped by porous materials are embedded onto those pastoral paintings (Fig.3.10). Encrusted by the rustic materials, these figures seem to be covered by muds after the floods. These figures vary. There are shepherds with their sheep, a woman supporting the vase on her head, a reclining river god holding an overflowing urn, and other twisted bodies who

[136] Lazzaro, 191.
[137] Lazzaro, 191.
[138] Uffizi Galleries, https://www.uffizi.it/en/artworks/grotta-del-buontalenti.
[139] On the process of this transformation, see Uffizi Galleries, https://www.uffizi.it/en/artworks/grotta-del-buontalenti.

seem to suffer from pain (Fig.3.11.12). Placed in the four corners of the room are the sculptures of four slaves by Michelangelo (Details see Fig.3.7). They are drowned in the dense surroundings of rustic stone, and their bodies are resisting the falling muds or trying to get out of stone. Depicted on the vaults are the scenes of animals perching in the ruins and plants growing out of fissures (Fig.3.13). Back at that time, the walls were also covered by growing mosses.[140] The thin tubes hidden behind the walls dripped water to make walls damp so mosses could grow.[141] Besides growing mosses, there are more water tricks. On the base of two side walls are two basins with water. An opening in the vault brings natural light inside, so the water can reflect the light onto the wall decoration. We can imagine that the refracted light with the water patterns on the wall makes the underwater scene more graphic. According to Lazzaro, at that time, hidden jets under the floor awaited visitors: when visitors stepped into the room, they would immediately get bathed by the sprouted water.[142] Because of the water trick, the visitors would experience two phases of the deluge. One is during the deluge when water flows and people suffer, and the other is after the deluge. When visitors triggered the hidden jets, the sprouted water recreated the scene of flood coming. For the visitors who had experienced the floods, the sprouted water could arouse a feeling of terror. When the water left, the scenes of people covered by mud reappeared on the side walls, and then the visitors could relax. The change of water got the visitors emotionally involved in the story of this chamber. But now the basins are dry, and this water trick is gone.

These scenes and the experience could also find their literary counterparts in Ovid's accounts. The process of flood coming and leaving is also recorded in the myth of the deluge in Ovid:

> Overflowing, the rivers rush across the open plains,
> sweeping away at the same time not just orchards, flocks, houses and human beings,
> but sacred temples and their contents.
> Any building that has stood firm, surviving the great disaster undamaged,

[140] The same trick is seen in Sacro Bosco (Gardens of Bomarzo) in Bomarzo. Surfaces of sculptures are kept moist so that mosses could grow and cover the sculptures.

[141] Lazzaro, 201.

[142] Lazzaro, 201.

still has its roof drowned by the highest waves, and its towers buried below the flood.[143]

When the water goes:

Now the sea has shorelines, the brimming rivers keep to their channels,
the floods subside, and hills appear.
Earth rises, the soil increasing as the water ebbs,
and finally the trees show their naked tops,
the slime still clinging to their leaves.[144]

There are many similarities between the Ovidian and Buontalenti's settings of the deluge. The correspondences between myth and the grotto may be attributed to Ovid's and Buontalenti's common experiences and observations of the natural floods. Buontalenti's pastoral scenes depicted on the walls are correspondent with the Ovidian setting of "orchards, flocks, houses and human beings." In the first chamber, the figures such as shepherds with sheep and women with vases also appear to strengthen this setting. The trees with slime in Ovid's account could also be seen on the walls in the form of stucco sculpture with the rustic surface. These similarities do prove Buontalenti's intention of reproducing the overflowing water and representing the destructive power of water.

So far, these similarities in the depiction of the first phase of floods are not compelling enough to prove the Ovidian account as a possible reference of this chamber. These scenes of destruction and the experience of floods might also be originated from Buontalenti's personal experience of floods. The land where Buontalenti was born was near the Arno river,[145] and this land had been threatened by the overflowing river for a long time.[146] In 1547, his family houses collapsed because of the Arno floods, and Buontalenti was the only survivor of his family. This traumatic experience shapes Buontalenti's future career as an engineer and explains his particular

[143] *Metamorphoses* I, 274-92.
[144] *Metamorphoses* I, 313-47.
[145] On Buontalenti's biography, see Smith, *Studies on Buontalenti's Villas*, 3-15.
[146] Kelley, 741.

attention to the design of water. Here, in this first chamber, Buontalenti's representation of the deluge scenes could also be a recreation of his bodily experience of the floods.

If we only analyze the grotto narrative based on Buontalenti's representation of the deluge scenes, either the scenes of a mythological or contemporary deluge, this chamber narrative already achieves temporality by controlling the water's coming and retreating and also experientiality by making the visitors literally experience these two phases of the deluge. The way how this chamber achieves temporality is different from Ligorio's way of intriguing the visitors to move and experience. Here, Buontalenti's way is to let the space change, and the visitors could stay, observe and experience these changes happening in one space. However. here the narrative quality of meaningfulness seems to be weak. What is the point of recreating a deluge scene? Considering Buontalenti's personal experience, we know that his representation of the deluge is to memorialize his family and other Florentine people. But, when this grotto narrative is taken as a transformation of Ovid's deluge myth, this narrative's teleology is only made clear by associating the deluge scene with the slave sculptures. This association will also bring more compelling proofs of Buontalenti's reference to Ovid's deluge myth.

In the first chamber, when the slave sculptures are understood as the new human beings transformed from stones, the phase of after the water goes tells the story of rebirth. Rebirth becomes a supporting theme of this grotto narrative. Ovid wrote about the phenomenon that when the flood retreats, new species are found:

> when the seven-mouthed Nile retreats from the drowned fields
> and returns to its former bed, and the fresh mud boils in the sun,
> farmers find many creatures as they turn the lumps of earth.[147]

If we recall the details of the first chamber, there are many details supporting the theme of rebirth. The regeneration of life is seen on the vault, where scenes of new lives living in ruins are delineated and on the side walls where mosses used to grow due to moisture. The continuous growing stalactites on the façade of Buontalenti Grotto tell the same regeneration theme. Also,

[147] *Metamorphoses* I, 416-37.

as Ovid said, "heat and moisture create everything",[148] the contrast or combination of the garden heat and the grotto moisture and coolness hints a suitable atmosphere for the growth of new life.

Furthermore, by relating the shaping of the slave sculptures and Michelangelo's sculpting process to the rebirth phase of Ovid's deluge myth, we can discover more possibilities of Buontalenti's references to Ovid's deluge myth. Just as the human shape emerged out of the marble, the new human beings are also metamorphosized from stones in Ovid's myth. In the myth, only Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha survive. They get an oracle from the goddess Themis that they need to throw behind the bones of their great mother. This "great mother" refers to the earth, and the bones are stones in the body of the earth. They follow this oracle first with doubt, but later human forms do appear from the stones that they throw behind:

> The stones, and who would believe it if it were not for ancient tradition,
> began to lose their rigidity and hardness,
> and after a while softened,
> and once softened acquired new form.
> Then after growing, and ripening in nature,
> a certain likeness to a human shape could be vaguely seen,
> like marble statues at first inexact and roughly carved.[149]

This mythological process of stones transformed into human forms parallels the process of artists' sculpting, during which human shape also appears out of stone. To sculpt is to turn the marble into life. The placement of these unfinished marble statues in a deluge setting also implies the mythological rebirth of human beings from stones after disasters. The roughly carved surface of the sculptures also fits with Ovid's description of the not sharply-defined human shape that is roughly carved out of marble. The *non finito* feature of Michelangelo's sculptures naturally presents a changing moment between stone and human form, so this feature makes the sculptures naturally involve time and further implies a mythological process of human's rebirth.

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[148] *Metamorphoses* I, 416-37.
[149] *Metamorphoses* I, 381-415.

These sculptures have the quality of temporality, and this implication of time is strengthened by filling in the mythological deluge setting where this metamorphosis happens. According to the modern art historian Paul Barolsky, he believes that the *non finito* feature of Michelangelo's sculpture is a result of the influence of Ovid's poetry.[150] He thinks that Michelangelo was "exploring the effects of the Ovidian *non finito*", and therefore he calls the action of Michelangelo's carving as "poetic chisel."[151] His assumption, although is not confirmed, could also be a reason explaining why Buontalenti chose the Ovidian story of Deucalion and Pyrrha: because this story could be the narrative from which Michelangelo got inspiration, so Buontalenti chose this story to curate these sculptures.

These slave statues were not originally made for the deluge myth, and there is a change of narrative in these sculptures' displaying. These sculptures were originally commissioned for Pope Julius II's tomb and later given to Cosimo by Michelangelo's nephew as an alternative to settle his debt.[152] Francesco took over these sculptures after Cosimo died and planned on a new grotto to display them. Those sculptures got their name "slaves" or "prisoners" from their original purpose of serving the tomb. Pope Julius II is a great patron of art, so in Ascanio Condivi's biography of Michelangelo, he interpreted those sculptures as prisoners in bonds, "representing the Liberal Arts, as well as painting, sculpture, and architecture."[153] Placing them on the tomb implies that all the virtuous things including the Liberal Arts were finally slaves of death, just as Julius. In this chamber, the deluge scene is an addition of Buontalenti. And when these sculptures were placed in the rustic grotto with the background of the deluge, the meaning of "slaves" is not lost. Their name of slaves provides them with another explanation rooted in the regional context that the Florentine people are slaves of the recurrent floods.[154]

Although there is no direct proof confirming that Michelangelo did take Ovid's poetry as an inspiration and Buontalenti did take Ovid's myth of the deluge as a curating strategy, Ovid's myth of the deluge is still useful for a narrative reading. This literary source serves as a compelling

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[150] Paul Barolsky, "Florentine Metamorphoses of Ovid", *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics* 6, no. 1 (1998): 12-3.

[151] Barolsky, 13.

[152] Kelley, 749.

[153] Ascanio Condivi, *Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti*, trans George Bull (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 26.

[154] Kelley, 749.

literary source to interpret the first chamber of Buontalenti Grotto and does make a meaningful connection among different components within this chamber. We can also see that the representation of Ovid's deluge myth in the grotto is kind of different from the original myth. The main characters of Deucalion and Pyrrha are missing, and the slave sculptures and the essential element of water become the main characters of this chamber. Although the characters are changed, the phases of the deluge's coming and human's rebirth corresponds with Ovid's narrative, and the expression of hope remains unchanged. This expression of hope is also strengthened by the contemporary context of the Florentine floods and Buontalenti's memory of the floods. For Buontalenti, the transformation of this Ovidian myth in this chamber is both to accommodate Michelangelo's sculptures and the personal experience of himself.

3.3 The Grotto of Deluge and the Grotto of Galatea: two interconnected spatial narratives

Buontalenti reuses this motif of deluge in the Grotto of Deluge at the Pratolino, but this grotto had a different representation. This grotto was without a predetermined sculpture for Buontalenti to curate, and was more concentrated on the wide application of different types of water plays and automata empowered by water than depicting a real deluge scene on the side walls. Overall, this grotto had a more entertaining atmosphere than the first chamber of Buontalenti Grotto. However, if we read this grotto as a narrative, then we will realize that in this grotto many narrative components are missing, for example the main character. Also, without the human sculptures, this grotto could not represent the important phase of human's rebirth which could associate this grotto with Ovid's deluge myth tightly. For this grotto alone, it did not have a high state of narrativity, and its association with Ovid's deluge myth was also weak.

In this grotto, Buontalenti's reference to Ovid's deluge myth is only made clear by associating this grotto with its adjoining grotto, the Grotto of Galatea. These two grottoes together built up two interconnected spatial narratives of the deluge myth and Galatea's story. In this part, I will

continue to explore Ovid's mythological allusions hidden in the deluge motif and explain how Buontalenti constructed the spatial narratives with these two grottoes.

The Grotto of Deluge at the Pratolino was lodged in the southern palace as part of the palace Pratolino which no longer exists ("g" in Fig.3.14). This grotto was connected with the stairs to the second floor on one side and the small Grotto of Galatea on the other side ("i" in Fig.3.14). Entering from the southern entrance, visitors entered the Grotto of Pan and Fame at first ("q" in Fig.3.14). After going through meadows, they encountered an antechamber leading to the Grotto of Deluge. This grotto contained four niches: two were embedded with fountains in rustic decorations, and the other two were with living plants.[155] There were various water tricks. There were animal settings sprouting water to the people who stopped and looked at them. There were also automata like the revolving globe held by a boy statue above his head.[156] Water was also sprouted from the ceiling. All these tricks were made to ensure that the visitors could get bathed in this grotto. In the contemporary travelogues of the English traveler Fynes Moryson and of the French traveler Michel de Montaigne, they both recorded their experiences in the Grotto of Deluge at the Pratolino. Moryson writes, "with the turning of a Cocke, the unseene waters cause a noise like thunder, and presently a great shower of raine fals."[157] And Montaigne writes about the further result:

> the whole grotto is filled with water, and all the seats squirt water up to your bottom; and, as you fly from the grotto and run up the palace stairs, anyone who wished to indulge in this kind of sport may let loose from every two steps of that stairway a thousand jets of water, which will bathe you until you reach the upper part of the house.[158]

From their descriptions, we can see that the amount of water could associate this grotto with the deluge. Understanding with the grotto name of "deluge", the great shower of water imitated the first phase of flooding coming and made the visitors run to avoid getting soaked. The Grotto of

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[155] Smith, *Studies on Buontalenti's Villas*, 40-1

[156] Smith, *Studies on Buontalenti's Villas*, 40-1.

[157] *The Itinerary of Fynes Moryson*, I, 329. Quote by Smith, "Pratolino", 158.

[158] Michel de Montaigne, *Journal de voyage en Italie par la Suisse et l'Allemagne en 1580 et 1581*, (ed.) Charles Dédéyan (Paris, 1946), 186. Quoted by Smith, "Pratolino", 158.

Deluge at the Pratolino has a more entertaining and interactive atmosphere than the first chamber of Buontalenti Grotto depicting scenes of people's suffering. Interpreting these water tricks in the contemporary context of the Florentine floods, we could say that these playful water tricks including animals' spitting water and Cocke's turning and making sounds help people to reexperience the water in a more pleasant atmosphere.[159] With this experience, the tragic ending in the miserable memories of the local people could hopefully be removed.

The various water plays did not immediately relate this grotto to Ovid's deluge myth. From the analysis of the previous part, we already know that it is hard for the grotto to be associated with Ovid's deluge myth only by recreating the deluge scenes in the grotto, as the deluge scenes could also be a recreation of Buontalenti's personal memory. Also, although the dynamic water plays could achieve the quality of temporality, the lack of a certain character still made it hard for the visitors to apply a narrative reading. The narrative association of the Grotto of Deluge with Ovid's myth is only made explicit by its connection with its adjoining grotto, the Grotto of Galatea. At the Pratolino, the visitors could only reach this grotto after they went through the Grotto of Deluge. When the visitors wanted to escape from the showers of water, besides going upstairs, the visitors could also choose an opposite direction which led them to the Grotto of Galatea.

The Grotto of Galatea contains two Ovidian characters of Galatea and Triton and presents the Ovidian stories of these two characters. This grotto was elaborately decorated with corals, mother-of-pearl, and shells, and these rustic materials were shaped into reefs (Fig.3.15). Cracks were intentionally made on the ceiling to imitate the cracks of a natural cave. In the context of the deluge, these cracks also imitated the destruction caused by floods. In the description of a Florentine Francesco de' Vieri, he recorded that the characters of this grotto were movable.[160] The figure of Triton first appeared from the rustic reefs. He blew the conch, and then the figure of Galatea came out from another reef, pulled by two dolphins spouting water out of their mouths.[161] Two other nymphs also emerged from other places to keep her company.[162]

In this grotto where visitors took shelter from the waters, the deluge myth and the story of

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[159] Kelley, 747.

[160] Francesco De' Vieri, *Della marauigliose opera di Pratolino* (Florence, 1586), 35.

[161] The motif of Galatea drawn by two dolphins constantly appears in the Renaissance depiction of Galatea. A prominent example is Raphael's fesco *Triumph of Galatea* for the Villa Farnesina in Rome.

[162] De' Vieri, 35.

Galatea were intermingled. In Ovid's myth, Triton's horn calms the waves and withdraws the cascades. Triton "lifted the hollow shell that coils from its base in broad spirals, that shell that filled with his breath in mid-ocean makes the eastern and the western shores sound."[163] So, the sound of the horn marks the end of disasters. The same is in the Grotto of Galatea. When visitors heard the sounding horn by Triton, it implied that they already found a safe place to stay, and more importantly, it reminded the visitors that the water that they had experience was a mythological deluge. The Grotto of Galatea picked up the deluge narrative from the Grotto of Deluge and told the phase of after the deluge. The Grotto of Galatea fills in the missing characters of the Grotto of Deluge and made possible the mythological reading of the Grotto of Deluge. Because of the character of Triton, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* might also come in as an extracompositional device for the visitors to fill in the missing parts. In this way, a narrative reading of the Grotto of Deluge is also possible.

In the Grotto of Galatea, Triton's sounding horn also made the figure of Galatea appear. In Ovid's story of Galatea, Galatea has a fierce suitor Cyclops who plays the panpipes to sing his song of love to Galatea. When he sings his song, Galatea is hidden by the rock.[164] In Ovid's account, Cyclops accidentally found Galatea and her real lover Acis hidden by the rock. Here, Buontalenti did not represent this plot but made this sea nymph appear because of Triton's blowing conch. Triton's conch could make water hold back, and when the water goes, Galatea could also lift her "shining head from the dark blue sea" as Cyclops sings.[165] Triton's ability to control water makes these two stories entangled. In the Grotto of Galatea, his action and auditory effects in a post-diluvian setting performed the Ovidian account of how water retreats. And his performance also got part of the Galatea story involved that water goes and Galatea appears. Buontalenti took these Ovidian characters and their accompanying actions out of their original accounts and recombined them in the Grotto of Galatea. His combination brought new interconnected spatial narratives.

In the case of the Grotto of Deluge at the Pratolino, we could see that water effects alone could not provide a solid narrative imagination. In the grotto narrative, characters are always

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[163] *Metamorphoses* I, 313-47.
[164] *Metamorphoses* XIII, 738-88.
[165] *Metamorphoses* XIII, 789-869.

important for achieving the narrative. In this case, when the grotto is without a predetermined statue to accommodate, Buontalenti added the Grotto of Galatea as part of the spatial narrative to trigger the narrative reading. The visitors could only apply a narrative reading to the Grotto of Deluge after they went through this grotto and reached the Grotto of Galatea. In this process, besides the dynamic water effects and movable statues, the visitors' movements between two grottoes also help the spatial narratives achieve the quality of temporality. This approach of combining the grottoes to construct the spatial narrative is kind of similar to Ligorio's approach in the garden of the Villa d'Este, but the different thing is that Buontalenti's combination is a recreation of himself. These stories were originally disconnected in Ovid's stories, but in the Grotto of Deluge and the Grotto of Galatea, their close geographical connection brought them together, so the visitors could encounter these stories as two interconnected spatial narratives. Why did Buontalenti intend to enable this narrative reading? A possible reason is that in this way he could make sense of his wide application of various water tricks. A narrative reading brought a meaningful connection to the various entertaining and dynamic components of his Grotto of Deluge at the Pratolino.

3.4 The Grotto of Pan and Fame and the representations by automata

For Buontalenti, the deluge motif allowed him to experiment with various water tricks, and in the Grotto of Pan and Fame, he applied another technical invention, kinetic automata. In the previous part, we have already seen the application of this invention to the movable statues in the Grotto of Galatea. The statues of Triton and Galatea became moveable because they were combined with kinetic automata. According to the modern scholar Matteo Valleriani, these automata were driven by air pressure, and Buontalenti's research on pneumatic technology enabled this invention.[166] With this invention, the characters' actions could be literally represented, and the

[166] Matteo Valleriani, "Sixteenth-Century Hydraulic Engineers and the Emergence of Empiricism."

grotto narrative could have a dynamic and more direct representation. In the Grotto of Pan and Fame at the Pratolino, this technical invention was applied again and played an important role in representing the main stories, the story of Pan and Syrinx and the story of Fama. Based on the previous analysis of the Grotto of Galatea, in this part, I will more concentrate on the analysis of technical expressions. I will elaborate on Buontalenti's technical expressions of these two Ovidian stories and examine the narrativity of these spatial narratives.

The Grotto of Pan and Fame was lodged in the southern entrance of the Pratolino palace. The personification of the Mugnone river stood under an arch in the middle of the chamber. The Mugnone river is the other river that nurtures Florence, and this statue of the Mugnone river was also part of the topographical program planned in the Pratolino garden.[167] The two grottoes were planned on each side of this statue, and together built up a large chamber to accommodate this statue. One grotto was the Grotto of Pan, and the other was the Grotto of Fame. The view of each grotto is shown in Stefano della Bella's engravings (Fig.3.16). On the right wall was the figure of the goddess Fama with wings.[168] She could flap her wings, because this statue was combined with automata, and her movements could be triggered by compressing and releasing air. The accompanying sound of water imitated her sounding golden trumpet. Below Fama, a peasant fed water to a thirsty serpent.[169] This scene of drinking implies that this grotto was also planned to celebrate the potable water of Florence. On the left, the god Pan and the nymph Syrinx were shown in an illusionistic landscape background. This background connected these two separate figures and invited the visitors into the physical setting where this story would happen. In this chamber of two grottoes and the statue Mugnone, stalactites and porous materials covered the walls and the vaults' fringes. The panels filling the ceiling seemed to depict scenes as well, but these scenes could hardly be recognized from engravings. At the first glance, the rustic materials

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In *Conflicting Values of Inquiry*, 49.

[167] As mentioned in 3.1, the gigantic statue of Appennino represents the Mount Appennino is part of the topographical program. Here the personification of the Mugnone river was part of this garden program.

[168] In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, this goddess is called Fama. And in Stefano della Bella's engravings, this double grotto is called the Grotto of Pan and Fame. Therefore, when I refer to Fama as an Ovidian figure, I would call her Fama, and her house in *Metamorphoses* the house of Fama. When I describe the grotto or the chamber, I would call it the Grotto of Fame or the chamber of Fame.

[169] Smith, "Pratolino", 158.

throughout the walls and the sound of water bouncing around render the gathering of different stories with a harmonious look.

The performance of the story of Pan and Syrinx is seen in the description of De' Vieri's travelogue and Da Prato's 1886 celebratory text for the Demidoff family who took over the Pratolino later.[170] According to their descriptions, Pan sat on the reeds and held his bagpipe. When the performance began, Pan stood up, played his pipes, and turned his head to Syrinx. Hearing this sound, Syrinx seemed to get annoyed and transformed into the reeds with water spouting out (I understand this transformation is made possible by Syrinx's retreating and reeds moving forward and covering her. This might be a similar mechanism applied in the Grotto of Galatea to making Galatea appear out of a rock). Da Prato also described another auditory effect of a cuckoo, "Amidst all these changes, a cuckoo rises from the fronds that are part of the decoration and starts to sing a sweet song."[171] In Valleriani's analysis of Buontalenti's technology, this performance including various sounds and movements was controlled by the hydraulic systems and pneumatic devices set in the engine room with several chambers behind the Grotto of Pan.[172] The pneumatic devices play an important role in making the statues move and produce various auditory effects. By filling in the drum of some chambers, the statues could stand up, or the cuckoo could sing. By emptying some of the drum, the statues would sit down, or the cuckoo would stop singing. By producing the wind in some chambers, Pan's pipes could produce music. And by bringing water to the statues, the statues could spout water.[173] This Ovid's story including the plots of music playing, the characters' chasing, and transformation (which could be implied by the statue's movement) allows Buontalenti to apply all these technical settings within one grotto. The other interesting thing is that these mechanical systems were not always working. The visiting experience was carefully designed in advance, and only when the visitors came to the right place, the plumbers who controlled the systems would start the performance.[174]

This Ovidian story of Pan and Syrinx could be recognized from many counterparts in the

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[170] See Cesare Prato Da, *Firenze ai Demidoff. Pratolino e S. Donato. Relazione storica e descrittiva preceduta da canni biografici sui Demidoff* (Florence: 1886), 260-1; De' Vieri, *Della marauigliose*, 43-4.

[171] Prato, 260.

[172] Valleriani, 51-2.

[173] Valleriani, 51-2.

[174] Valleriani, 51-2.

grotto, for example, the main figures Pan and Syrinx, the reed pipes held by Pan, and the sweet sound of pipes' playing imitated by water and the climax of Syrinx's transformation into reeds. For this spatial narrative, its temporality was achieved both visually and auditorily. The start and end of the pipes' song and the movements of Pan and Syrinx represented different phases of this story. For the visitors, they could also be enchanted by this spatial setting which was rich in the visual effects and the beautiful music. However, *Metamorphoses* as an extracompositional device also worked and brought questions. If the visitors pondered upon this story, then they could realize that this Ovidian story had been adapted by Buontalenti. In Ovid's account, the story of Pan and Syrinx is told by Mercury to make Argus sleep. This story starts from Mercury's playing pipes. Although Argus is already a bit drowsy, when he sees Mercury's pipes, he still asks him how pipes were invented, and then Mercury tells the story of how the god Pan chases Syrinx and how Syrinx is transformed.[175] Ovid transcribed this story told by Mercury:

> Now Mercury still had to relate what Pan said,
> and how the nymph, despising his entreaties,
> ran through the wilds till she came to the calm waters of sandy Ladon;
> and how when the river stopped her flight
> she begged her sisters of the stream to change her;
> and how Pan, when he thought he now had Syrinx,
> found that instead of the nymph's body he only held reeds from the marsh;
> and, while he sighed there, the wind in the reeds, moving,
> gave out a clear, plaintive sound.
> Charmed by this new art and its sweet tones
> the god said 'This way of communing with you is still left to me'
> So unequal lengths of reed, joined together with wax, preserved the girl's name.[176]

The grotto narrative did not strictly follow the original timeline and instead recreated a new narrative by selection and reorganization. In the original story, Pan could only get the pipes after

[175] *Metamorphoses* I, 689-721.
[176] *Metamorphoses* I, 689-721.

Syrinx was changed into reeds. But in the grotto, Pan already held the pipes and played them. The pipe song originally marks the ending of the story but now became the beginning of the new narrative and later a trigger of Syrinx's transformation. The other details including Syrinx's running, begging for help from other river nymphs, and being caught by Pan were all left out by Buontalenti. He only chose the most enchanting phase of Syrinx's transformation and the following phase of the wind playing the pipes. He changed the sequence of these two phases and reorganized them to make a new narrative. Reeds play multiple functions in constructing the new narrative: shaping the characters (Pan blowing the reed pipes), constructing the plot settings (Pan and Syrinx both sitting on the reeds), and pushing forward the narrative (the water sound imitating reed pipes make the figure of Syrinx transformed into reeds). Meanwhile, Ovid's narrative strategy of embedding the story of Pan and Syrinx into the story of Mercury and Argus brings the second approach of reading. Before Mercury starts to tell this story, he is playing the reed pipes, and this sound makes Argus ask about their origins. Therefore, the sound of reed pipes could also be the start of this story. When the figure on the right stood up and played the pipes, he was both Pan and Mercury. He started the story as Mercury and participated in the story as Pan. In this grotto, two narratives of Mercury and Pan and Syrinx overlap.

Take a closer look at the shaping of Pan and Syrinx. These figures were not antiquities within the patron's collection nor the contemporary artworks commissioned by the patron. Valleriani mentions these figures as "very large automated machines", which means that these figures were combined with the mechanical settings.[177] These automated machines and these statues were both designed by Buontalenti. There are many discrepancies between Buontalenti's shaping of these two characters and Ovid's descriptions of these two characters. Ovid wrote about Syrinx's look:

> her dress caught up like Diana she deceives the eye,
> and could be mistaken for Leto's daughter,
> except that her bow is of horn, and the other's is of gold.[178]

[177] Valleriani says that "These (Pan and the nymph Syrinx) are neither paintings nor statues, but rather very large automated machines". See Valleriani, 49.

[178] *Metamorphoses* I, 689-721.

Syrinx is supposed to be shaped in a similar look as Diana, both with a belt around the waist and a horn bow in her hand. In the 1557 Bernard Salomon's *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée*, an illustrated version of *Metamorphoses*, Salomon's Syrinx is half-drowned in the reeds and dressed exactly as Diana (Fig.3.17).[179] However, in this grotto, Syrinx was sitting on the reeds naked. As for the god Pan, Pan is a half goat and half human god "whose head is crowned with a wreath of sharp pine shoots".[180] These features of Pan are all depicted in Salomon's woodcut. In the grotto, this Pan did wear a wreath of pine needles. But as Pan was sitting, it is not clear to us that whether the other half-goat body was shaped in this grotto. Even in De' Vieri's and Da Prato's descriptions, they did not particularly mention the shaping of Pan's body. These missing details seem to imply Buontalenti's unfamiliarity with the original Ovidian texts. But from the other perspective, these missing details also demonstrate Buontalenti's focus on making technical experiments instead of strictly following Ovid's account. He chose and reorganized the useful parts and left out the less useful information.

Opposite to the chamber of Pan was the chamber of Fame. The figure Fama was also combined with mechanical settings, so she could flap her wings and fill with water the cup held by the peasant. Why was Fama, the personification of rumors, placed on the other side of Pan and Syrinx? It was hardly addressed in the previous studies. One reason might be that Fama as the goddess of rumors was made to witness the erotic story of Pan and Syrinx. And the other reason might be attributed to Ovid's description of the house of Fama:

> All rustles with noise, echoes voices, and repeats what is heard.
> There is no peace within: no silence anywhere.
> Yet there is no clamour, only the subdued murmur of voices,
> like the waves of the sea, if you hear them far off,
> or like the sound of distant thunder when Jupiter makes the dark clouds rumble.[181]

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[179] Bay, 286.
[180] *Metamorphoses* I, 689-721.
[181] *Metamorphoses* XII, 39-63.

According to this description, the Grotto of Pan and Fame filled with various sounds of water resembles the house of Fama. Ovid used water as a metaphor. He compared the murmur of voices to "the waves of the sea", which implies that the sounds in the house of Fama could be represented by the sounds of water in the Grotto of Fame. Also, same as the house of Fama, this grotto was only with gentle acoustic effects created by water, such as the pipes' playing and the birds' singing. These sounds in the grotto might also echo as the voices echo in the house of Fama. Therefore, various acoustic effects of the grotto could find their literary counterparts, and the name of the Grotto of Fame could make sense of all these effects. Further, Ovid's account of the house of Fama that "crowds fill the hallways: a fickle populace comes and goes" [182] corresponds with the fact that this grotto was also a place where visitors come and go. This grotto was located at the southern entrance of the villa. Visitors came in and went through the "house of Fama", and in this house of rumors, they witnessed the erotic story of Pan and Syrinx. This geographical similarity blurred the boundaries between myth and reality.

Also, these two stories are originally disconnected in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and this combination is again a recreation of Buontalenti. By putting them together in one chamber, Buontalenti built up new connections between them. Within the same physical space, stories visually and acoustically interacted with each other. The character of one story could be the witness of the other story, and the acoustic effects of one story could also be the components of the other story. These two grottoes shared the same technological inventions as well. For visitors with an eye of technical appreciation, this grotto was still with coherence. Buontalenti's way of connecting stories is more flexible and imaginative than Ligorio's way. For example, in the Grotto of Diana, Ligorio only brought together the stories with the same chastity theme. The stories chosen by Ligorio all had a strong teleological connection, but this teleological connection between stories is hardly seen in Buontalenti's design. Within Wolf's standard of examining the state of narrativity which is set based on literary analysis, we could say that Ligorio's grotto narratives have a higher state of narrativity, and Buontalenti's grotto narratives have a comparative lower one. However, Buontalenti's grotto narratives demonstrate that the grotto narrative may achieve coherence or meaningfulness in a more flexible way. They could also

[182] *Metamorphoses* XII, 39-63.

achieve coherence by making visual, auditory, and even technical connections between different components or different stories. These connections could also make sense of the stories' combination.

As for Buontalenti himself, we may wonder why mythological stories mattered to him or why he used so many mythological references. In the analysis above, we have already known the reasons for his possible references to each specific Ovidian story: he may represent the deluge myth as a mythological version of the real life and therefore express the hope of rebirth after the deluge; he may also find from many Ovidian stories the approaches of making sense of the combination of various water effects and technical inventions. But why did he always go back to Ovid's stories? And why his patrons who supported contemporary art also allowed these possible references? We may still remember the *Paragone* context in which artists used literature to elevate the position of sculpture and painting. Here, the use or recreation of Ovid's poetry may have the same function. For the patrons, especially Cosimo, who supported contemporary art, using classical myths such as Ovid's poetry is a way to promote contemporary art. And for Buontalenti, representing Ovidian stories is a decent and reliable way to make sense of his technical experiments. His representations of these Ovidian stories are never reproductions but recreations by technical language (and his personal experience). The same technical setting could have different meanings when they were used in different narratives. Literary contexts had expanded the meaning that technical language could express.

Conclusion

The grottoes of the sixteenth-century Italian gardens present a variety of transformations of Ovidian stories in *Metamorphoses*. Ovid's stories were transformed, reorganized, or combined in different grottoes, and these transformations were applicable to various situations. Some stories could be transformed to curate the ancient statues within the patrons' collections of antiquities; some could be used to accommodate the contemporary artworks commissioned by the patrons; some stories with rich accounts of sounds and movements could also allow the artists to display various visual and auditory effects enabled by the technical inventions. The flexibility in the transformation of Ovidian stories partially explains their popularity in the grotto design.

How is a spatial narrative constructed in the grotto? Firstly, we look at the content elements of the grotto narrative. The characters and setting of the grotto narrative are easy to be identified. For the grotto built to accommodate a sculpture, this sculpture predetermines the main character of the grotto narrative. Then setting is the inner space of the grotto created based on Ovid's account. Another element of action is associated with the narrative quality of temporality.

To tell a story, a narrative has to achieve the quality of temporality. Temporality means the involvement of time and changes. How does the grotto achieve this quality? Firstly, the grotto is always rendered as a mythical site based on Ovid's account. In this way, the boundaries between myth and reality are blurred, and the time of the visitors' walking around in the grotto is turned into the time of a certain myth. Also, the grotto could involve changes on its own or only represent one phase and be combined with other garden components telling different phases to together involve changes. In the first situation, changes could be implied by painting. In the Grotto of Diana, a series of paintings depicting different moments or static paintings depicting a transforming moment were both used to imply changes. Changes could also be literally represented. In Buontalenti's grottoes, his technical inventions and water tricks made the characters or space literally change. In his grottoes with a deluge motif, the change of water could enable the space to represent two phases of the deluge's coming and after the deluge. In his Grotto of Galatea and the Grotto of Pan and Fame, the characters were no longer static statues

but could move and even metamorphose. In the other situation, temporality is enabled by the visitors' movements. The timeline of a certain story is transformed into a certain route of visiting the garden. To make the visitors strictly follow this route so as to follow the timeline, many guiding triggers on this route need to be designed.

The grotto narrative also has a strong communicative function. In the first place, the grotto could get the visitors physically involved. More importantly, the visitors are turned into active participants of the grotto narrative. Sometimes, their movements could help the grotto narrative achieve temporality, and sometimes their references to *Metamorphoses* which serve as an extracompositional device also help fill in the missing narrative qualities of the grotto narrative. But in the later process, this extracompositional device did not always work. The visitors could also figure out some discrepancies between the grotto's representations and Ovid's descriptions. In this case, the grotto brings them new experiences outside the literary scope.

How could the grotto unfold the inner world of the main characters? As mentioned, the grotto as a spatial setting could be rendered as a mythical site, so one way is to let the visitors literally experience as the main characters. In this process, the visitors and the mythical characters may share a similar emotional change. The other way is by combining stories with the same theme. The common meaning of these stories and the intentions of each character could be understood by comparing between these stories and relating them to each other. These two ways help the grotto narrative achieve the quality of meaningfulness. However, not all grottoes could achieve this quality. Even for the grotto narrative which applied the second approach, an understanding of the meaningful connection between its stories might be conditional. For the visitors who are unfamiliar with *Metamorphoses*, these stories might only be fantastic decorations without a clear connection.

When Ovid's *Metamorphoses* serves as an extracompositional device, it helps build up literary connections between the grotto's different components. But the spatial connections between these narrative components of the grotto are more than the possible literary connections. In Buontalenti's grottoes, he put disconnected stories together. In the grotto, the visual and auditory coherence could also build up new spatial connections between the originally disconnected stories, and these connections further help strengthen the representationality quality of each spatial narrative. The combination of Ovidian stories by visual and auditory

coherence is the other approach of combining different Ovidian stories.

In my paper, I mainly take Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as an extracompositional device, but for the visitors, more contexts could be involved, such as the personal experience of Florentine floods and the contemporary context of the patrons' ambition. Outside the grotto, these contexts could decide the position of these grottoes in the garden and connect the grotto with symbolic programs of the garden, and inside the grotto, these contexts could also influence the grotto design and then enrich the grotto narrative.

As a complex of art forms, the grotto achieves its spatial narrative with collaboration of various art forms. The grotto's composition of various art forms helps a single art form overcome its limitations in constructing a certain Ovidian narrative. The limitations of each art form are obvious: the sculpture could not move, one painting could only represent one phase and the architectural space is static and without any characters. So, in these grottoes, we could see how painting fills in the missing phases of one single sculpture, how automated machine makes the statues move, how the sculptures and paintings render the space as a mythical site and how the flowing water change a static space. An art form or a technique of other fields could fill in the qualities that the other art form could not achieve.

For different artists, they have different preferences in constructing their grotto narratives. While Ligorio tried hard to truly transform Ovid's stories and unfold the inner worlds of those Ovidian characters, Buontalenti cared more about the expressive contents in Ovid's stories and the visual and auditory effects of his grottoes. Therefore, their grotto narratives also present different narrative qualities. Ligorio's grotto narratives tend to achieve the quality of meaningfulness, but as for Buontalenti, he valued the quality of representationality over the quality of meaningfulness. Among the grottoes of Buontalenti, the only possible unfolding of the characters' emotions and wishes is in the first chamber of Buontalenti Grotto in the Boboli garden. His personal feelings toward the contemporary floods and a hope for new life corresponded with the characters' feelings and wishes and were therefore naturally exposed in his planning for curating the slave sculptures. Both for Ligorio and Buontalenti, this form of the grotto always offers them the possibility of organizing a spatial narrative with a high state of narrativity.

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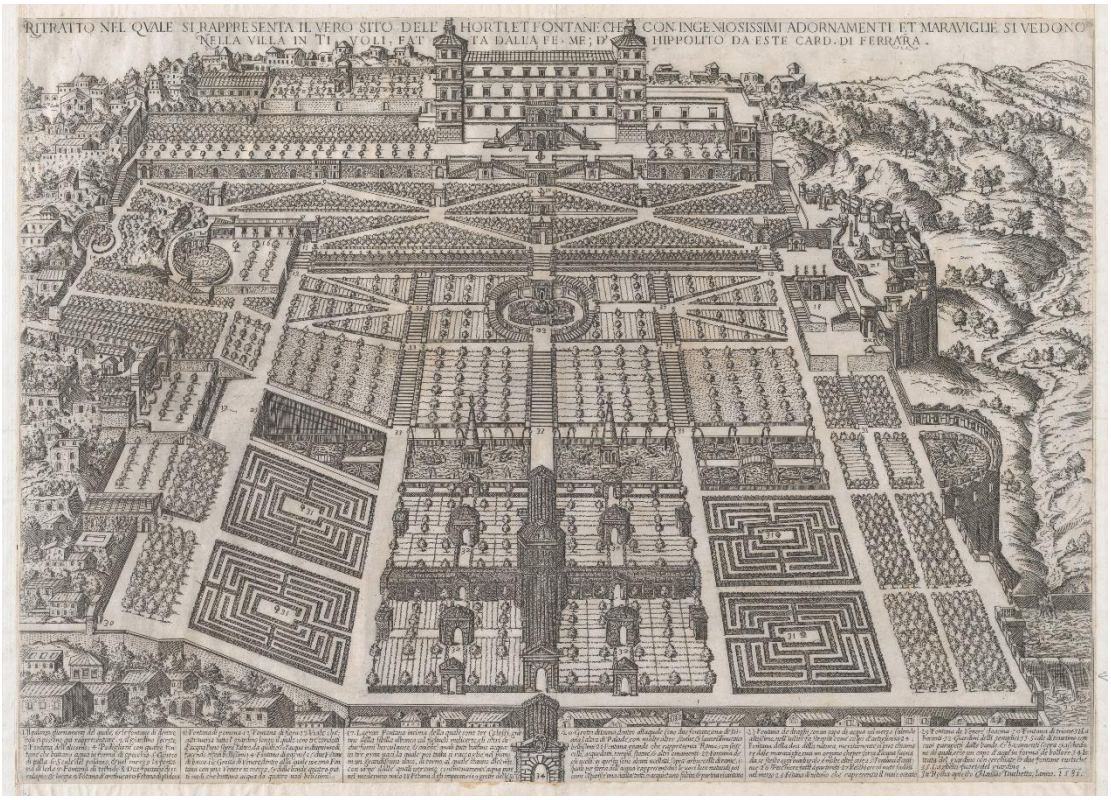
Pictures

Introduction

Fig.1 Lorenzo Bernini, *Apollo and Daphne*. From Galleria Borghese, Rome.

Second chapter



Since the legend of the Dupérac engraving proved illegible in reduction it was eliminated, and the numbered identifications that appear in it are translated below and keyed to the illustrations in this book. The numbers on the engraving were illegible also and the surprinting corrects the position of No. 18, misplaced in the Fountain of Rome on the engraving. Projects marked with an asterisk either were not executed or were not completed with the symbolism originally planned.

1. The Palace (Figs. 3-7)
2. Secret Garden (Fig. 133)
3. Fountain of the Unicorn
4. Pavilion
5. Tennis Court
6. Fountain of Leda
7. Fountain of Thetis*
8. Fountain of Aesculpius and Hygieia
9. Fountain of Arethusa*
10. Fountain of Pandora
11. Fountain of Pomona* (Fig. 29)
12. Fountain of Flora*
13. Alley of the Hundred Fountains (Figs. 27-29)
14. Oval Fountain or Fountain of Tivoli (Figs. 30-33, 134)
15. Fountain of Pegasus (Fig. 34)
16. Two Fountains of Bacchus (Figs. 35-36)
17. Grotto of Venus (Fig. 38)
18. Grotto of Diana (Fig. 39)
19. Rometta or Fountain of Rome (Figs. 20-26, 127)
20. Fountain of the Emperors* (Fig. 19)
21. Fountain of the Owl (Fig. 18)
22. Stairs of the Bubbling Fountains (Fig. 15)
23. Fountain of the Dragon (Figs. 16, 17, 137)
24. Water Organ or Fountain of the Goddess of Nature (Figs. 9-13, 117, 118)
25. Grottoes of the Sibyls*
26. Fountain of Antinoüs*
27. Fish Pools (Fig. 14)
28. Fish Pools with Mete Sudanti*
29. Fountain of Neptune*
30. Fountain of Venus Cloacina*
31. Fountain of Triton*
32. Labyrinths
33. Herb Gardens
34. Entrance Below the Engraving
35. Small Lakes Outside the Garden*

Fig. 2.1 E. Dupérac, Engraving of the Villa d'Este. From Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Fig.2.2 the Capitoline Venus in the Museo Capitolino. From Museo Capitolino.

Fig.2.3 Venturini, Engraving of the Grotto of Bacchus. From Coffin, *The Villa D'Este at Tivoli*, illustrations 38.

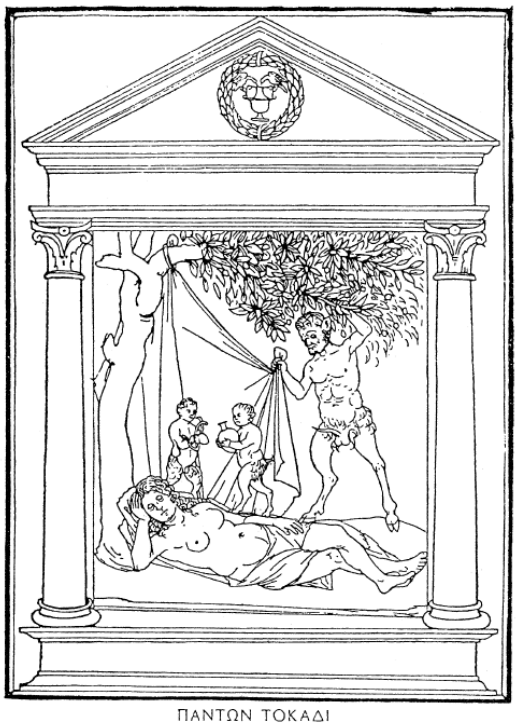


Fig.2.4 a woodcut of *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, depicting a satyr observing a sleeping nymph. From Marcin Fabiański, "Correggio's "Venus, Cupid and a 'Satyr'." Its Form and Iconography."

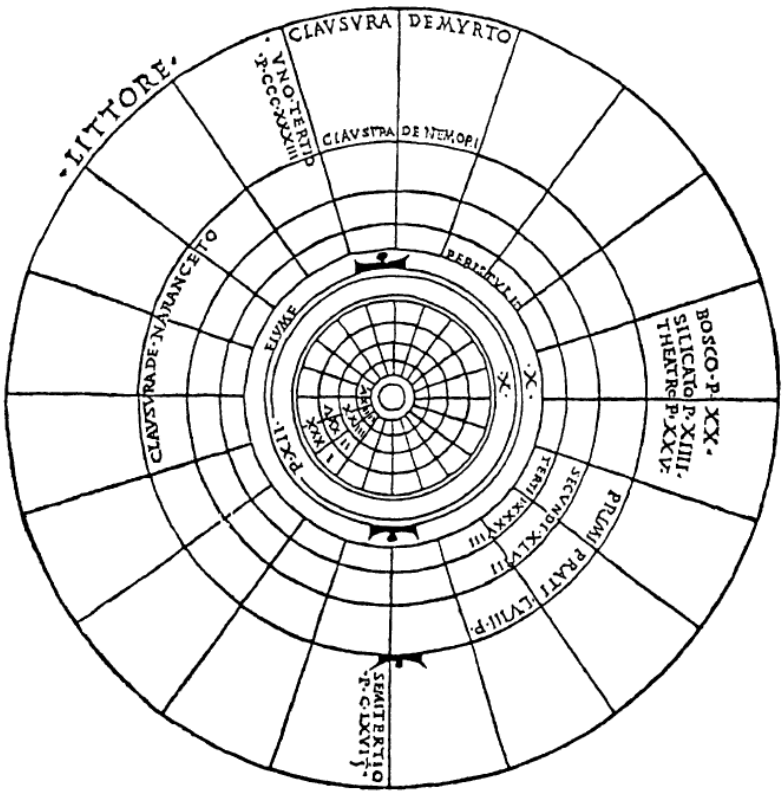


Fig.2.5 the ground plan of Cythera with the Fountain of Venus in the center. From *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*.

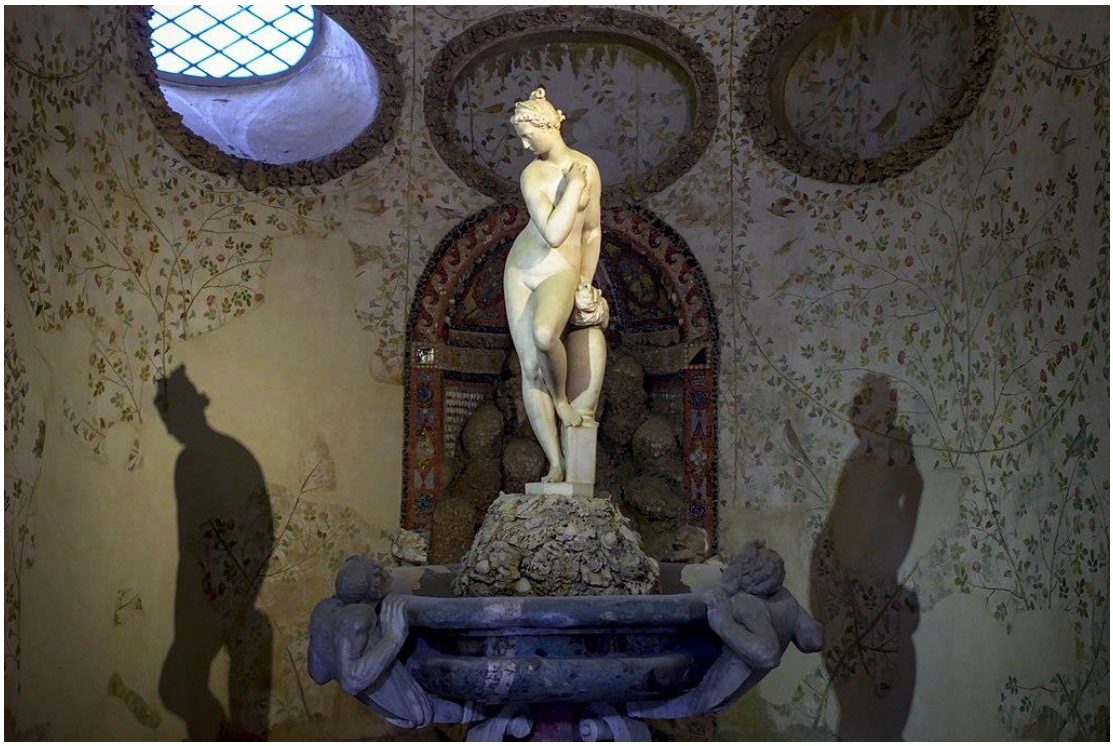


Fig.2.6 bathing Venus in the last chamber of Buontalenti Grotto. From Wikiwand.

Fig.2.7 the Grotto of Diana. From Lazzaro.

Fig.2.8 the ancient statue of Diana, now in the Museo Capitolino. From Bay.

Fig.2.9 female stucco statues. From Coffin.

Fig.2.10 decoration of golden apples. From Bay.

Fig.2.11 stucco relief of Diana and Actaeon in the central niche. From Bay.

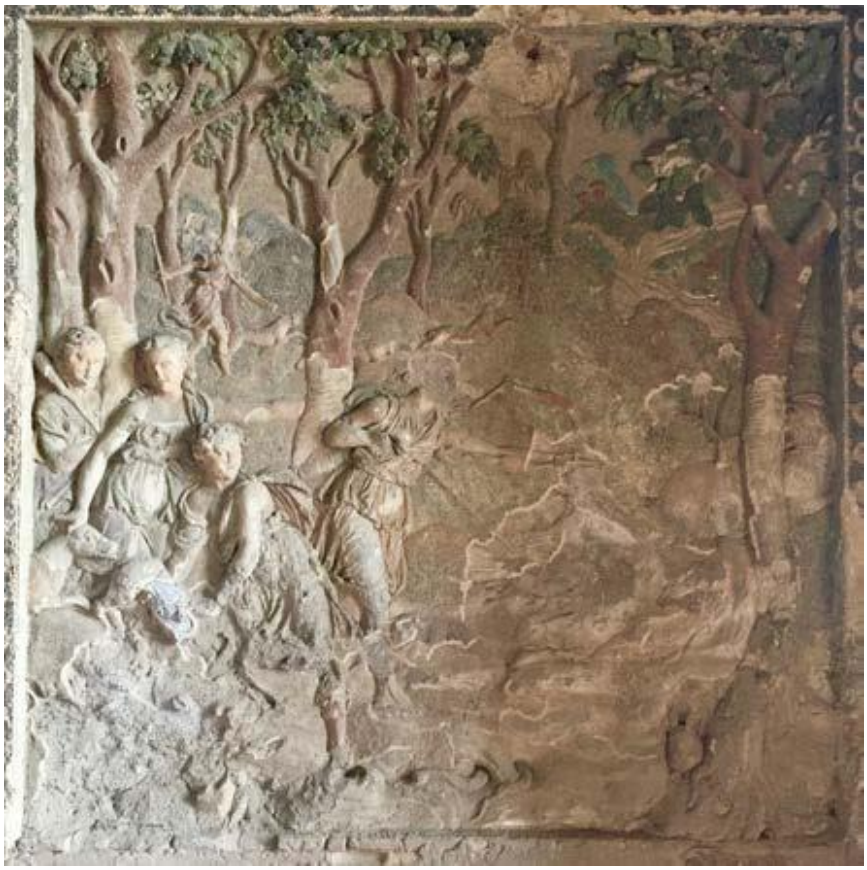


Fig.2.12 Diana and Callisto. From Bay.

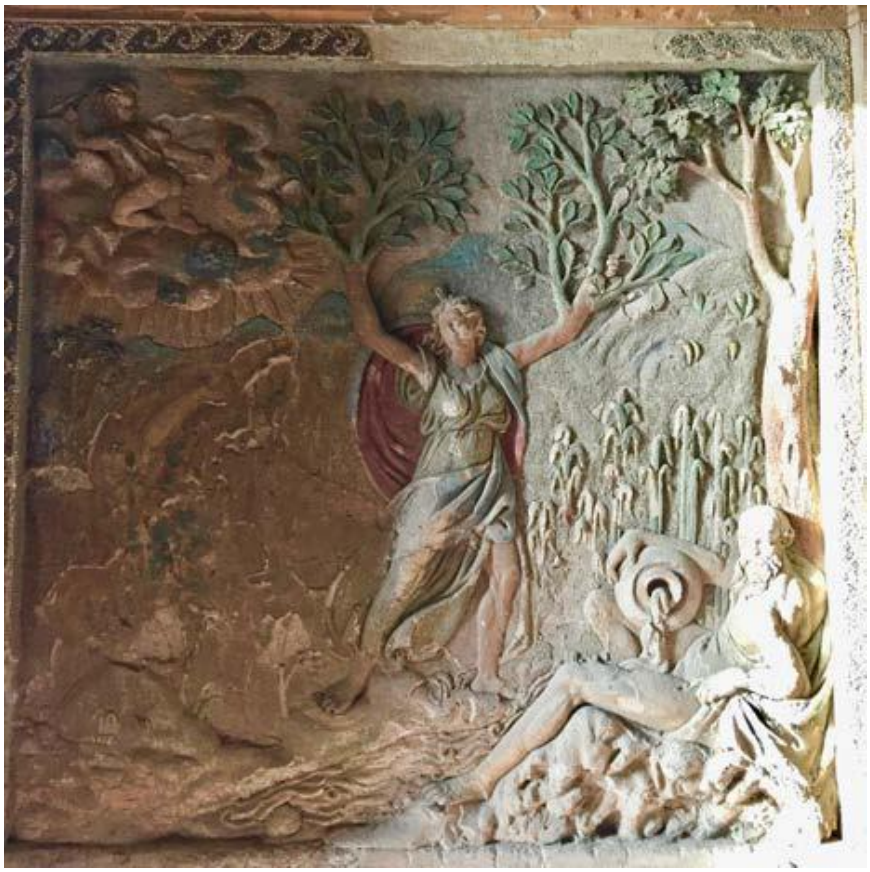
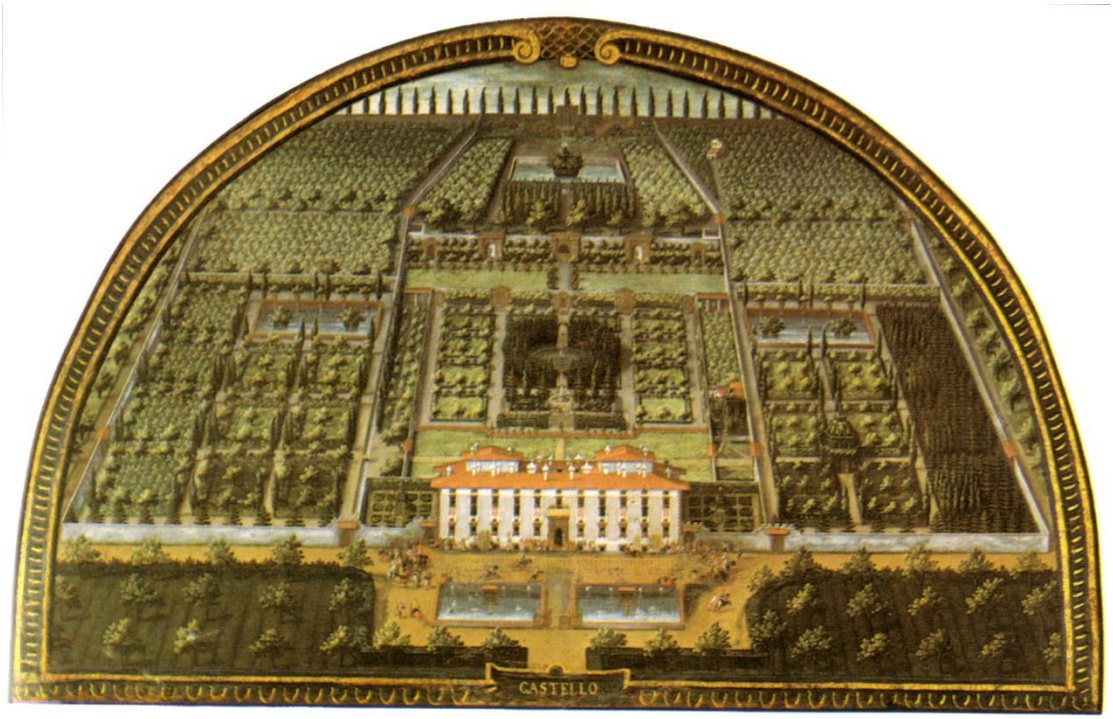
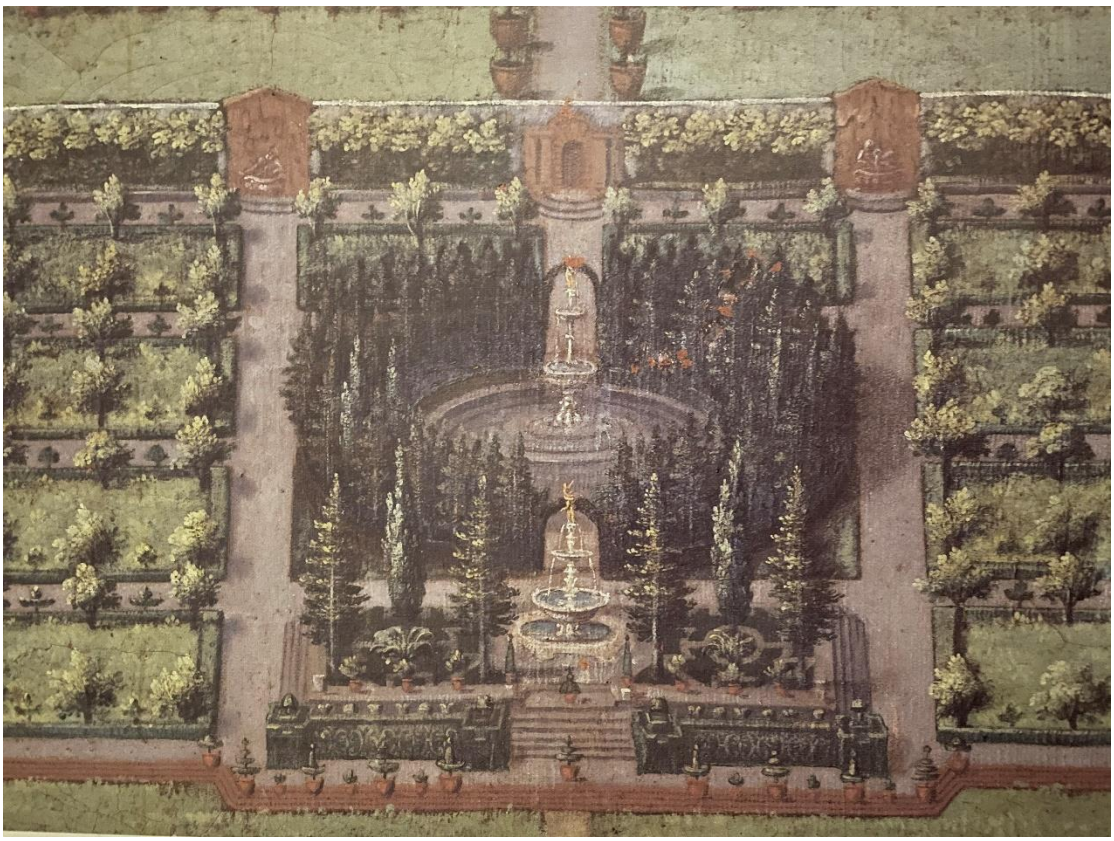


Fig.2.13.14.15 stucco reliefs of Daphne and Apollo and Pan and Syrinx (the last one is a woodcut from the 1557 book *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée*. According to Bay, this woodcut is similar to the original stucco relief of Pan and Syrinx). From Bay.

Third chapter





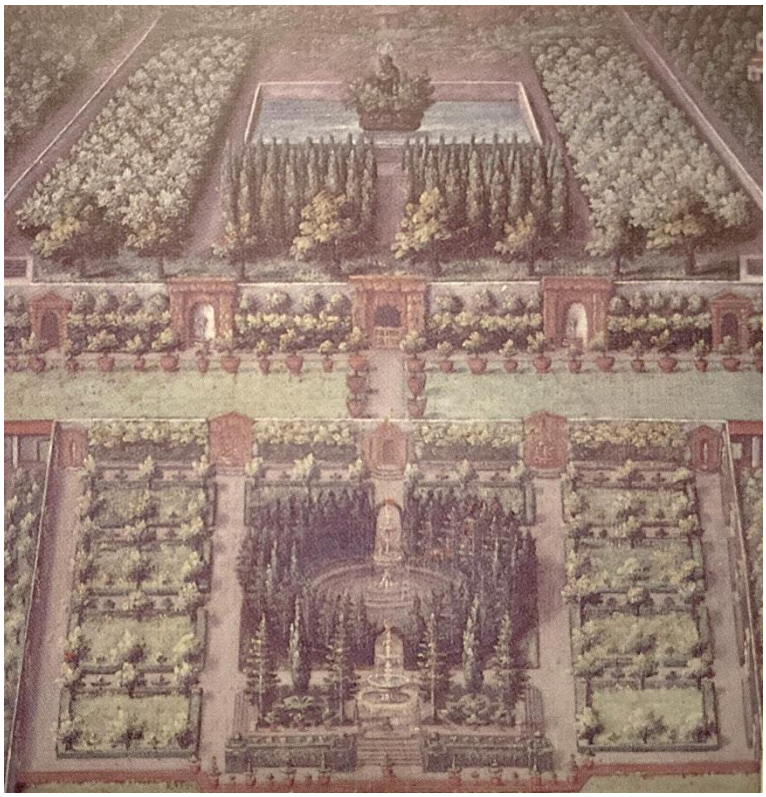


Fig.3.1 Giusto Utens, the map of Villa Castello, 1599 (below are two details. One is the Fountain of Florence and the labyrinth, and the other is two paralleling walls with niches). From Museo di Firenze, Florence.

Fig.3.2 the Mugnone river and the Arno river in Florence. From Google Map.

Fig.3.3 the Fountain of Hercules and Antaeus, From Loredana Marzia Frizzi.

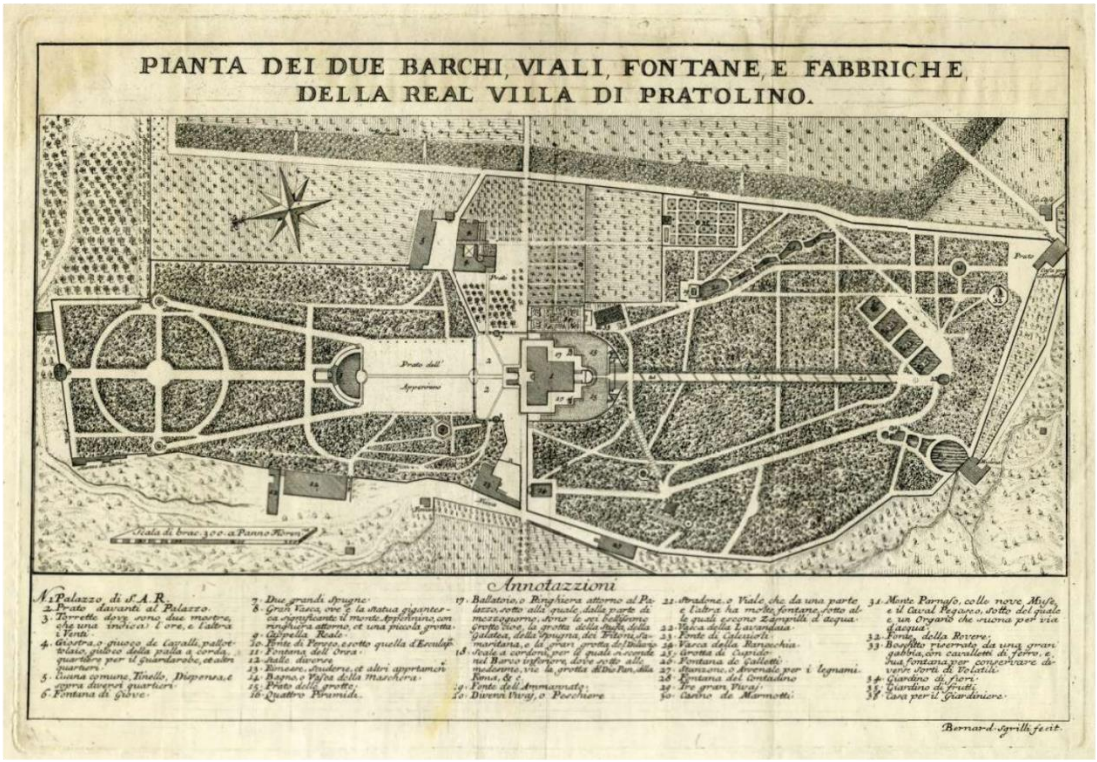


Fig.3.4 Bernard Sgrilli, the map of Pratolino, 1742. From the British Museum, London, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1858-1113-126.

Fig.3.5 relief map of Mount Appennino. From Wikipedia.

Fig.3.6 the first chamber of Buontaleit Grotto. From Uffizi Galleries, Florence.

Fig.3.7 details of one corner and one slave. From Uffizi Galleries, Florence.

Fig.3.8 Giusto Utens, Boboli garden and Pitti Palace, 1599. From Museo di Firenze, Florence.

Fig.3.9. the Vasari façade and Buontalenti's added second story. From Uffizi Galleries, Florence.

Fig.3.10 pastoral scenes and figured covered by rustic materials on the side wall. From Uffizi Galleries, Florence.

Fig.3.11 the other side wall. From Uffizi Galleries, Florence.

Fig.3.12 details of the reclining river god. From Uffizi Galleries, Florence.

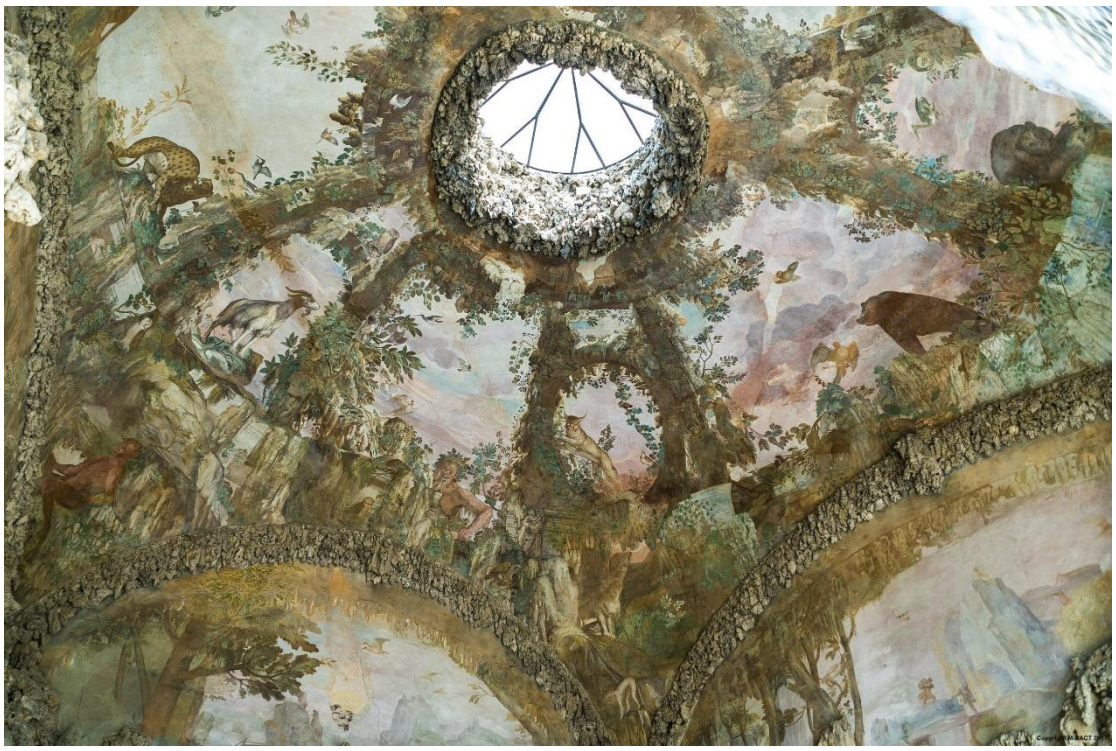


Fig.3.13 vault painting and a ceiling opening. From Uffizi Galleries, Florence.

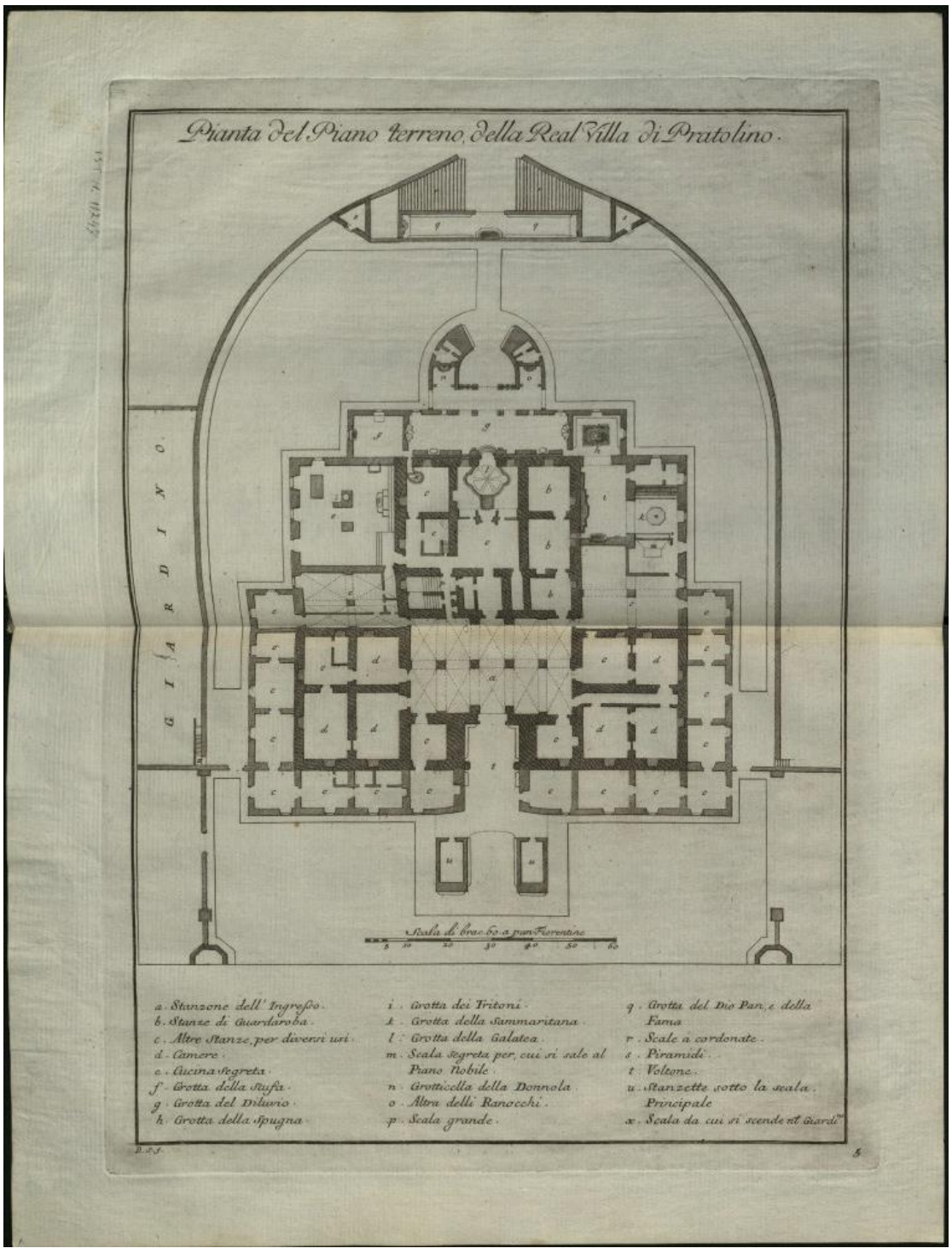


Fig.3.14 Bernard Sgrilli, the ground floor of Pratolino palace, 1742.

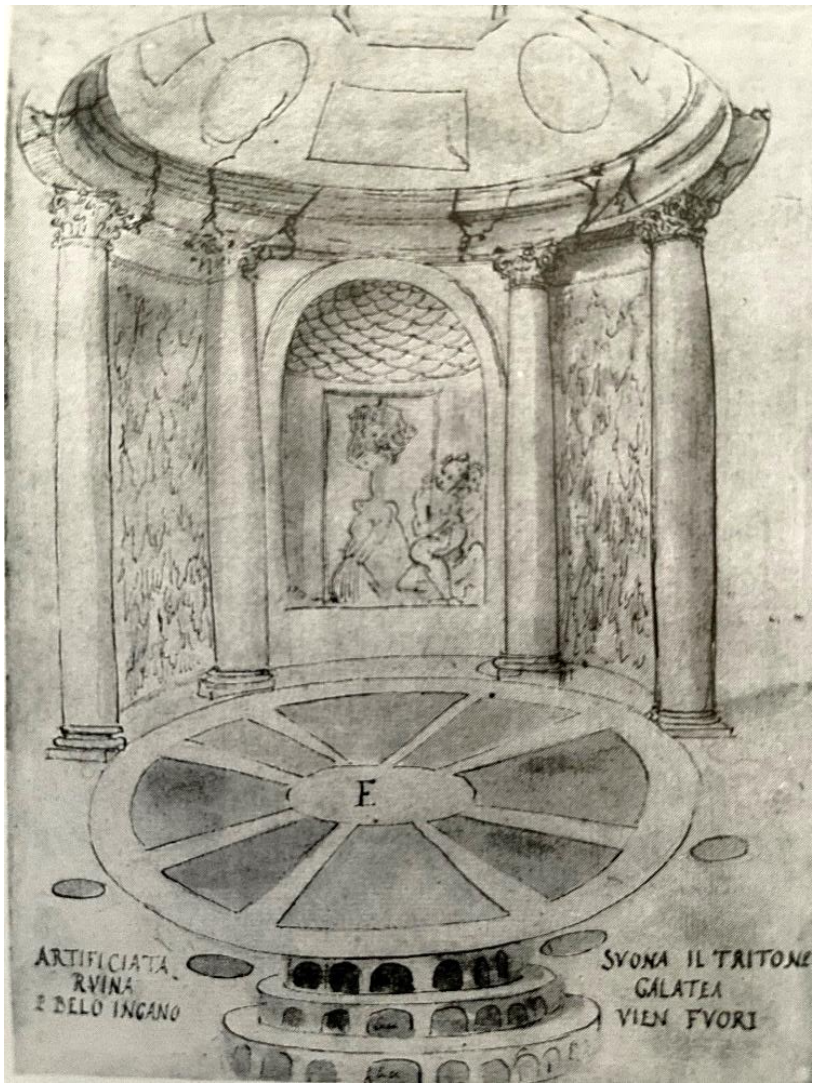


Fig.3.15 Giovanni Guerra, the Grotto of Galatea at Pratolino, 1604. From Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna. From Lazzaro.

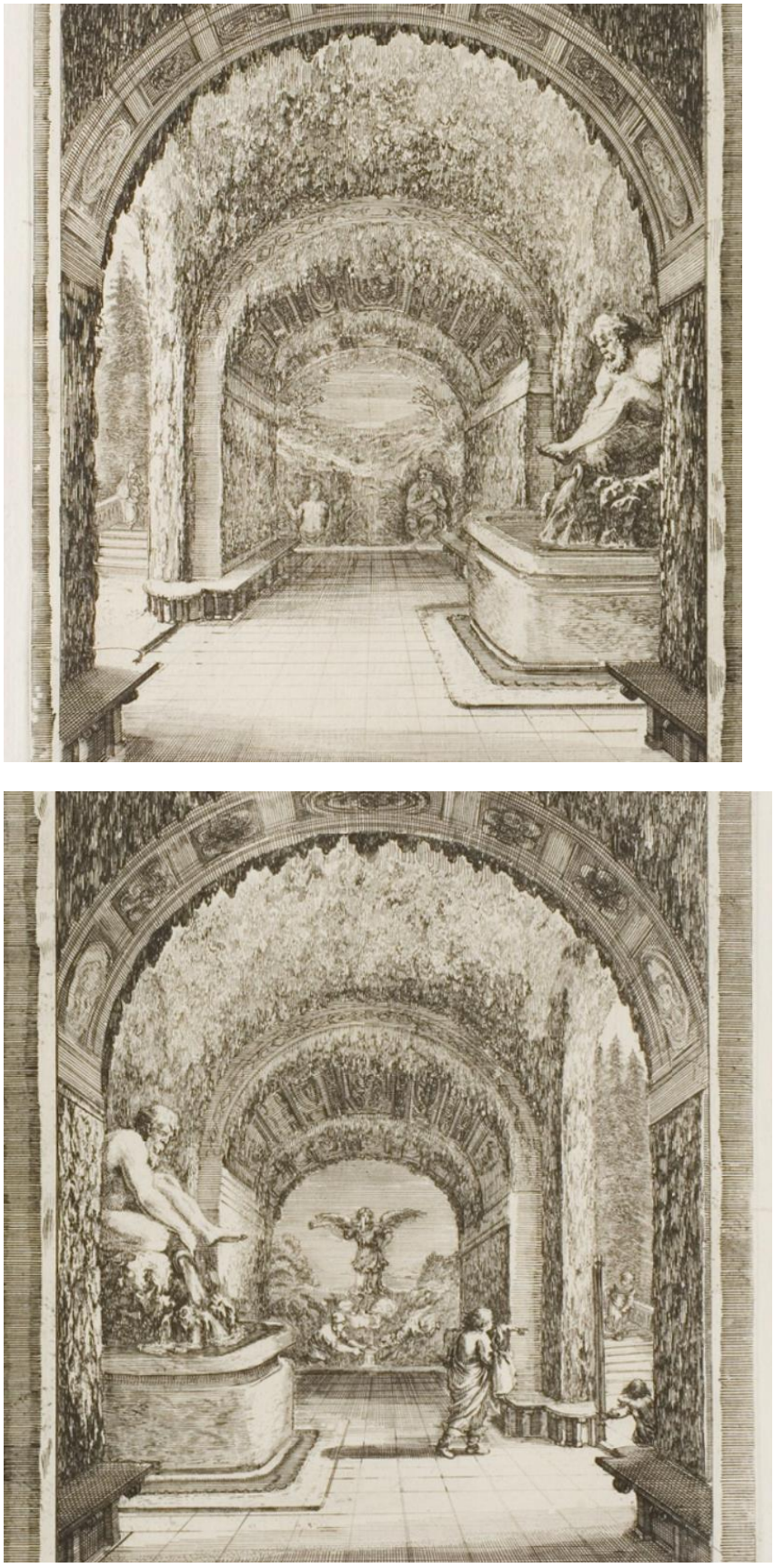


Fig.3.16 Stefano della Bella, two views of the Grotto of Pan and Fame, 1653. From Art Institute Chicago.

Fig.3.17 Bernard Salomon, Pan and Syrinx, 1557. From *La Métamorphose d'Ovide Figurée*.