

ABSTRAKT: Ferdynand Maksymilian Habsburg na budowę swojego zamku Miramare, uroczej rezydencji otoczonej wyjątkowym ogrodem, wybrał Triest położony nad brzegiem Morza Śródziemnego. Harmonijne połączenie stylów i form dało początek budowli zdolnej trwale przekształcić nadmorski krajobraz. Projekt ten był przesiąknięty duchem XIX w., który przypisywał ogrodom wiodącą rolę jako miejscem eksperymentów wśród bogatych kolekcji botanicznych. Ogród w Miramare jest owocem mistrzowskiej kompozycji i łączy różne koncepcje ogrodowe, przyjmując zarówno cechy parku krajobrazowego, jak i bardziej uporządkowane i symetryczne cechy ogrodu formalnego. Zrozumienie, przeanalizowanie i zbadanie go na wszystkich poziomach było niezbędne do opracowania projektu renowacji i reorganizacji, który rozpoczął się w ostatnich latach i nadal trwa. W niniejszym artykule przedstawiono niektóre ważne etapy tego strukturalnego i botanicznego procesu rekonstrukcji oraz jego metodologię, a także rozważania na temat znaczenia i wyzwań związanych z przywróceniem zielonego muzeum w dzisiejszych czasach.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: zamek Miramare, ogród historyczny, Triest, Habsburgo-
wie, konserwacja

THE GARDENS OF MIRAMARE: NATURE, ARTIFICE AND VISION

DOI: 10.36135/MPKJIII.01377329.2022.SWXXIX.pp.17-46

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*The Historical Museum and Park
of Miramare Castle*

Wilanów Studies
vol. XXIX, 2022 pp. 17–46
Yearbook, E-ISSN: 2720-0116

ABSTRACT: Trieste, on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, was where Ferdinand Maximilian of Habsburg chose to build his Miramare Castle, a charming residence surrounded by a unique garden. The harmonious mixture and coexistence of styles, forms and features gave life to a synthesis capable of producing a lasting transformation of the coastal landscape and its horizon. This project was permeated with the spirit of the nineteenth century, whose new scientific vocation and renewed taste for the study of nature attributed to gardens a crucial role as places of experimentation on rich botanical collections. The garden of Miramare is the result of a masterly composition and embodies various garden concepts, taking on both the features of a landscape park and the more orderly and symmetrical traits of a formal garden. Understanding, analysing and studying it at all levels was necessary to conceive a restoration and reorganisation project that began in recent years and is still ongoing. Some important phases of this structural and botanical redevelopment process and its methodology are presented here, along with considerations on the relevance and challenges of restoring a green museum today.

KEYWORDS: Miramare castle, historical garden, Trieste, Habsburg, conservation, restauration





Fig. 1

The castle and the park of Miramare. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare

The identity and history of the garden

Miramare Castle stands on the tip of Grignano, overlooking the sea to the north of the city of Trieste. The castle is surrounded by a park covering an area of 22 hectares. The creation of the garden and the construction of the castle progressed in parallel in the period between 1856 and 1860. The complex was conceived as a private residence worthy of Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian of Habsburg and his wife Charlotte of Belgium, and was built on a karst promontory less than a dozen kilometres away from the city (Fig. 1).¹

The project, which was to capture the patron's personal conception, was designed by Carl Junker (1837–1882), who completed the complex construction in four years. The decision to award the project to Junker, a hydraulic engineer trained at the Vienna Polytechnic who had worked mostly on aqueducts, was probably motivated by the extremely exposed location of the site chosen for the palace overlooking the sea, and the possible construction and hydraulic challenges that were feared to be encountered during this daring construction feat.

The construction of Miramare coincided with some key moments and episodes in Maximilian's life, spanning the period in which the archduke was governor of Lombardy-Venetia (1857–1859). For a few years, the castle became the young couple's home and refuge, and hosted the composite collection that Maximilian, an eclectic collector with a wide

¹ A. Contessa, 'Miramare, una simbiosi eclettica', *Rivista Treccani, Enciclopedia Italiana*, 8 July 2021, pp. 50–63.

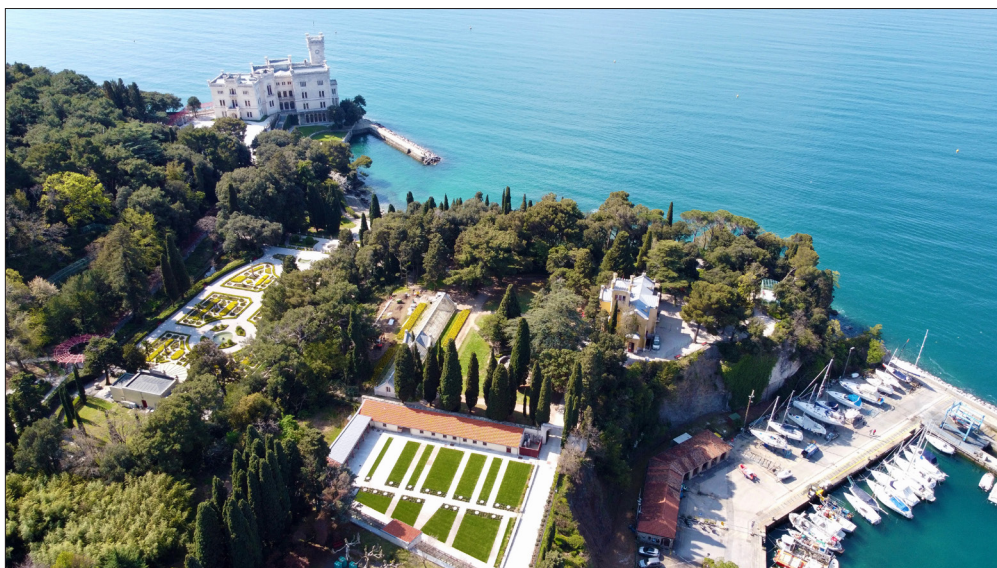


Fig. 2

The castle and the park of Miramare in a drone photograph. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare

range of interests, had put together, while the garden became a place of acclimatisation and botanical experimentation. The frigate *Novara* sailed off from the small port of Miramare in 1864, when Maximilian accepted the uncertain crown of Emperor of Mexico and met his tragic destiny: he was executed by a firing squad of Mexican republican forces in Querétaro in June 1867. It was that same frigate, the *Novara*, decked in mourning, to bring his corpse back to Trieste.²

The construction of Miramare Castle and its complex transformed the view of the barren karst landscape sloping down to the Adriatic forever, and made it an iconic landmark on the horizon of the Gulf of Trieste. The surprising symbiosis of the white castle boldly rising over the blue sea and the green backdrop of the vast garden produces an exceptional interplay of colours, and creates that unique combination of art, nature, sea and history that has always fascinated visitors (Fig. 2).

With its statues that mark the main highlights, the embroidered flowerbeds that draw geometric decorations, and the belvederes that afford views of new vistas, the garden of Miramare is the result of masterly composition. Its parterres, fountains, monumental trees and groves still invite visitors

2 F. Cucchi et al., *Un Giardino in riva al mare: il Parco di Miramar ieri e domani: vicende storiche e prospettive culturali*, introd. G. Pirrone (Trieste, 1989); R. Fabiani, *Il castello di Miramare. Itinerario nel Museo Storico* (Trieste, 1989); G. Crozzoli, R. Fabiani, *Il Parco ed il Castello di Miramare* (Ponzano-Treviso, 2004); B.M. Rinaldi, 'Potsdam Reloaded. North and South: Prussian Influence on Miramare Park', in: *Prussian Gardens in Europe. 300 Years of Garden History*, eds M. Rohde et al. (Leipzig, 2007), pp. 104–09; R. Fabiani, *Il castello di Miramare. Guida al museo storico e al parco* (Venezia, 2014); A. Vendramin, 'Il parco di Miramare a Trieste, tra realtà e finzione', in: *Giardini storici verità e finzione. Letture critiche dei modelli storici nel paesaggio dei secoli XX e XXI*, eds M. Mosser, J.T. Rojo, S. Zanon (Treviso, 2021), pp. 199–216.

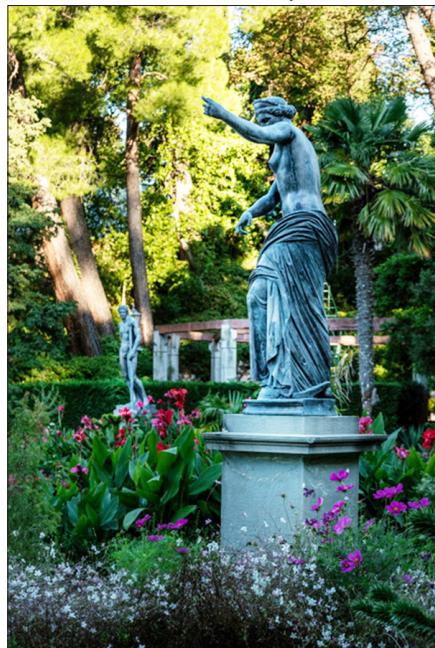
to stroll along the lanes or in the shade of the tall trees. The impression of harmonious naturalness that one perceives today when crossing the gates of the garden is indeed the fruit of an engineering project which required earthworks and bringing large amounts of soil and involved the planting of numerous specimens of different species, the levelling of the slopes, the creation of a number of main lanes and a maze of paths, water channels and two small lakes, the structuring and balancing open and closed spaces, perspectives, views, and glimpses of the sea.

Maximilian decided that Miramare would become the Mediterranean garden located in the northernmost part of the Adriatic Sea, and at the same time the European garden located in the southernmost part of the Empire, a place of botanical experimentation for species coming from a variety of countries, a garden of perennials carefully chosen and acclimatised, a thematic arboretum, with specimens grouped in the most favourable areas, of which currently only the Arbutus Grove is well preserved.

In the last four years, we restored the Camellia Path and the Prunus Grove, whose appearance had become unrecognizable for the proliferation of invasive vegetation, and we created the Orangery. In the uppermost part of the garden there is an area with shrubs and tall plants, partly useful for the study of the forestation of the Karst area. The vast park embodies different concepts of garden: it takes on the features of an English landscape garden, favoured in particular by the orographic course of the promontory, and at the same time the more orderly and symmetrical traits of a formal garden, with the geometrical organisation of the space in the parterre area near the central building.

Fig. 3

A nineteenth-century copy of the Capuan Venus. The original is at the National Archaeological Museum in Naples. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare



The horizontality of the parterre is marked by a series of tall columns, each with a statue of a mythological figure, commissioned from specialist firms in Berlin and Trieste. These are nineteenth-century copies of famous ancient statues, such as the famous Venus Medicea at the Uffizi, which Maximilian had the opportunity to admire during a visit to Florence in 1851, or the Farnese Hercules and the Capuan Venus at the National Archaeological Museum in Naples (Fig. 3).

The series of geometric parterres, organised into staircases and terraces sloping down to the sea, provides the necessary ornamental setting for an imaginary access path that presupposes a different point of view from the architectural one, that is to say from the sea, designing a sumptuous green variant of the motif of the access ramp with double rectangles and mirroring the monumental one with the crossed staircase that climbs from the small port and leads to the castle.

The Miramare complex owes very much to Karl Friedrich Schinkel in terms of style and architecture, and probably to Peter Joseph Lenné, the great gardener who had collaborated in the creation of many Habsburg gardens, in terms of the garden concept.³ However, the idea of bringing together in one place plants belonging to landscapes in the Americas (agave, yucca, pampas grass, araucaria) with those of the Mediterranean (cypresses, palms, juniper and citrus trees) probably catered to the archduke's desire and passion for exploration.

Maximilian's passion for botany is also evident in the choice of some species from areas other than those specific to the north-east of Italy. So, the Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*), the *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, the *Sequoia sempervirens*, the *Ginkgo biloba*, the *Albies cephalonica*, the *Pinus halepensis*, the *Cedrus deodara*, the *Pinus sabiniana*, the *Magnolia grandiflora* and others, still present in the park, were planted and became the most representative specimens of Maximilian's time for their imposing size.⁴ Experimentation and acclimatisation also included Mediterranean plants such as the strawberry tree (*Arbutus andrachne* x *andrachnoides* Link., *Arbutus unedo* L.), the *Phillyrea* L., and the *Quercus ilex* L. Specific areas of the park were dedicated to Mediterranean flora, with holm oaks, ash trees and downy oaks; the undergrowth was similarly composed of viburnums and laurels. Some of these trees are mentioned in the list of monumental trees.

Preserving a fragile treasure chest

This essay aims to summarise briefly the results of the studies carried out on the Miramare Park in the last four years in view of and alongside the great conservation and restoration project recently launched after a long period of neglect that had produced a state of distress at all levels throughout the park.

The process of restoring a historic garden rests on an assumption, namely the idea that it is to some extent possible to replicate the features it may have presented at the time of its creation. These need to be studied, discovered, and understood. Research on documentary sources and on

3 M. Vannucchi, *Giardini e Parchi. Storia, morfologia, ambiente* (Firenze, 2006), pp. 169–86; 213–23; S. Pace, 'Del metodo eclettico. Le vicissitudini di un'idea di modernità in architettura, tra Settecento e Ottocento', in: *Arte e cultura fra classicismo e lumi. Omaggio a Winckelmann*, eds I. Carla, R. Balestreri, L. Facchin (Milano, 2008), pp. 109–25; D. Karg, 'Peter Joseph Lenné – a catalogue of his works for the Land Brandenburg', in: *Prussian Gardens in Europe. 300 Years of Garden History*, pp. 326–31; A. Campitelli, *Ville e giardini d'Italia tra natura e artificio* (Milano, 2019).

4 *Taxus baccata*, *Phillyrea latifolia*, *Cedrus atlantica*, *Calocedrus decurrens*, *Abies pinsapo* Boiss, *Picea smithiana* (morinda spruce), *Trachicarpus fortunei* (palm), *Pinus nigra* var. *austriaca* Badoux (Austrian pine), and *Cupressus arizonica*. Monumental plants (article 7 of Law no. 10 of 14 January 2013) such as the strawberry tree grove (*Arbutus unedo* L.), *Quercus ilex* L., *Cupressus sempervirens* L. and *Pinus sabiniana* Douglas.

historical drawings and projects have certainly provided valuable information. However, it is necessary for the context from which it originated to be perfectly clarified and understood. The conservation of gardens is inspired by a spirit which, as in the case of historical monuments, is based on the idea of readability and reversibility. However, because it deals with living matter, it should also provide a certain margin of creativity.

Taking for granted the Florence Charter (ICOMOS/IFLA1981), we considered the historic garden of Miramare, a true treasure chest cherishing a fragile living heritage, as an art artefact which includes architectural monuments and plant monuments. Created as a place of delight and leisure for the nobility, it is now a reference point that is deeply rooted in the surrounding area, an environmental and ecological resource essential to the quality of life and to the physical and mental well-being of the local population. During the last decades, books by diverse authors, documents issued by the Italian Ministry of Culture, studies carried out by academic institutions, and a number of case studies have been published and provide a valid help in orientation and comparison with other similar realities and an in-depth study of the projects carried out.⁵

The Florence Charter considers historic gardens from a cultural point of view, as living monuments with a particular public interest, independently from their history, style, design, amplitude, and their public or private character.⁶ Concerning these sites, the Charter outlines the dynamic qualities of their components that may contribute to change their original form and design over time.

Miramare historic garden has been considered a 'green museum', a real open-air museum, which is in continuous movement and constant development, and an organic structure with a vegetal soul, where a different operational approach from that used for the monumental and museum heritage is needed. Like all cultural and historical heritage, historic gardens are a common asset, a collective heritage that the public must be able to enjoy and which often bears the weight of considerable anthropic influences.

5 Several documents and projects are discussed in Lionella Scazzosi's publications for the Polytechnic of Milan, Department of Architectural Designing. See L. Scazzosi, *Reading and assessing the landscape as cultural and historical heritage*, pp. 335–55, published online: 23 January 2007, doi.org/10.1080/0142639042000288993. Numerous documents are issued by the Italian Ministry of Culture, from the *Testo Unico dei beni culturali* (1999), *Codice dei Beni Culturali e del Paesaggio* (2004), to the most recent *Linee guida e norme tecniche per il restauro dei giardini storici* (2021) and *Proposte di intervento per il restauro e la valorizzazione di parchi e giardini storici* (2022). Among the numerous available case studies, see for example *New Challenges for Historic Gardens' Restoration: A Holistic Approach for the Royal Park of Moncalieri Castle (Turin Metropolitan Area, Italy)*.

6 International Council on Monuments and Sites and International Federation of Landscape Architects (ICOMOS/IFLA), *Charte de Florence* (Paris, 1981).

By studying and analysing the Miramare site, the complexity of the whole emerges under various aspects: the orographic, botanical, architectural, and aquatic ones, not to mention the multifaceted idea behind its creation, in which the concept of landscape park and geometric garden blend, harmoniously culminating in the spectacular terraces sloping down to the sea. Raised in a culture in which stylistic eclecticism was widespread, Maximilian, passionate about botany, science and art, devoted himself to creating a garden with much fervour, purchasing lot after lot of the land surrounding the castle, over time achieving a considerable extension that was destined to grow further, as revealed by his last projects dating back to the Mexican period.

Thanks to his refined knowledge of the 'art of botany', and to the collaboration of his gardener Anton Jelinek, Maximilian channelled his research into the creation of a garden with marked romantic and picturesque features, recovering at the same time some elements of the classical garden, and experimenting with the acclimatisation of numerous exotic and continental species. The general layout of the garden, which has been preserved rather faithfully, now features large areas kept as woods or lawns, numerous botanical species, and some notable monumental trees in the landscape garden areas.

At the orographic level, the garden includes flat areas, hilly areas and cliffs over the sea. As for the architectural aspect, it should be borne in mind that in addition to the Castle, other pavilions such as the Stables, the Castelletto, the Ducal Bath, the Kaffeehaus, the Historic and New Greenhouses, and the many lodgings that once housed the staff are elements of interest. Not less important is the aquatic aspect of Miramare, whose territory comprises two small natural streams, one channelled and the other pouring into the sea, two artificial basins forming small lakes, numerous fountains, and a canal.

Moreover, the vast park, conceived according to the romantic setting typical of the time in which it was created, has always been an important experimental forestation centre that saw the use of tree species that had a huge impact on a territorial scale (reforestation of the Karst), and an area for acclimatising exotic species. It is therefore a composite whole, whose protection, care and enhancement require an organic rethinking of the design, maintenance and functions, building on the available knowledge.

The aim of this essay is to present the first results of this still ongoing restoration process, since it could be of interest both for methodological purposes and for the planning of historic parks constant care. In this essay, published for the first time are the analysis performed, the first initiatives carried out, and the methodological framework practiced, dealing with one of the most critical issues in our days, that is how to merge historical and conservation values with a sustainable approach in a museum place that daily welcomes a great number of visitors.

The fundamentals of the methodology of a conservation project should be based on the consideration that, due to their tangible and intangible values, historic gardens belong to our cultural heritage and require specific rules, protection measures, scientific studies, management and overall planning. A restoration project concerning a historic garden requires a systematic methodology that should involve several different steps: observation and site analysis, recognition and detection of existing conditions, historical research and analysis of the available documentation, instrumental investigation and finally the development of a preventive maintenance program.

Concerning the methodological framework applied in this project, it must be noted that several analyses were performed regarding both the historic garden structure and its current status. The evaluation of the current structure of the garden (plan structure, composition, path system, vegetation) was realized by means of a field survey, drone views and photographs, and it included geo-referring mapping. The survey project included architectural, infrastructural and decorative furnishings, and a plant survey.⁷

As to botanical knowledge, we carried out an analysis of the homogeneous areas of vegetation, compositional perspectives and naturalistic features, individuating the monumental or highly valued trees, the exotic species, the presence of invasive plants, as well as defining the principal critical issues. A recognition of the composition and structure of the vegetation was carried out by means of field surveys, phytostatic investigations (evaluation of tree stability), and a plant survey with DGPS (Differential Global Positioning System).

In parallel, historical and iconographic research was carried out on different documental sources. The first survey revealed the lack of a substantial and structured research on this garden. The historical and archival studies that we carried out concerned the few extant cartographical maps, plans, documents and photographs from the era that belong to the museum collection and those preserved at the State Archive of Trieste, where a bulk of the almost never-studied documents concerning the Miramare site is held. The research on this archive is still ongoing, but it is beyond our strengths, professional capabilities and horizons, and should be carried out in collaboration with other institutions.

⁷ Relief of the topographic network of the park with orthophotos; relief of the museum's buildings (Castle, Castelletto, Ducal Bath, garden pavilions, ancient greenhouses); detailed survey of the windows of the Castle, and the electrical and water systems network; laser scanner and topographic survey of the park's carriage road; relief with photoplan of the San Canciano Chapel; preliminary investigations for seismic checks of the park pavilions.

The knowledge and study of the garden

There are few studies dedicated to the Miramare Park, save for the collection of essays by several authors written in 1986 and collected in the only extant publication entirely dedicated to the park.⁸ As the first point in our research, a historical analysis was performed, with the aim to identify historical permanence. It must be pointed out that there exist no documentary records of the original project, and the names of the persons who designed the garden and provided the botanical choices are not known (i.e., we know the names of the gardeners, but it is not clear who made the design of the entire park). Until today, no extensive research has been carried out on this garden, and the extant documentation has not been the object of systematic study.

The first part of the research involved the analysis of internal records and references from the museum collection, including documents, books, maps and ancient photographs. Then we started a long and still ongoing research on the historical material concerning Miramare at the Trieste State Archive, where is collected a vast amount of various and heterogeneous documents. Most of the information about the park that we have collected in the last years has been detected from marginal material and fragmentary documentation, such as furniture orders and payment receipts.

The material belonging to the museum collections was studied in depth. Research on our collection of maps and prints, and the study of the original drawings of the Miramare Castle and its park by Carl Junker have been fundamental in raising awareness of the evolution of the original project and building of the site (Fig. 4).

Photographic and documentary records from the nineteenth century have been crucial to understanding the original garden design as conceived by Maximilian of Habsburg. Giuseppe Malovich's photographs dated 1864–1868 were particularly useful because they allowed us to see and understand the garden in its early days. Those taken shortly later by Sebastianutti and Benque show the vegetal growth that took place in a few years, as well as the project as a whole (Fig. 5). These photographs have been valuable in the designing of the botanical redevelopment project for the site. For example, the photographs made us discover a parterre characterised by remarkable volume and verticality, featuring evergreen, exotic or Mediterranean species, which were painstakingly identified and were very useful in reorganising the garden (Fig. 6). A few pictures of the Miramare construction site painted around 1857 by Albert Rieger and Carl Haas helped us to understand the great impact of the construction of the castle and the park on the barren hill, and gave us an idea of what the original appearance of the karst spur must have been like (Fig. 7).

⁸ Cucchi et al., *Un Giardino in riva al mare*; Rinaldi, 'Potsdam Reloaded', pp. 104–09. On holiday places, see L. Zangheri, 'Storia del giardino e del paesaggio. Il verde nella cultura occidentale', *Giardini e paesaggio*, vol. 6, 2002, pp. 169–86.



Fig. 4

A project of the Miramare Park designed and painted by Wilhelm Knechtel (1837–1924) in 1866. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare

Recent research we carried out in the sections of the Miramare Library dedicated to Botany, Gardens and Gardening opens a glimpse on the sources of inspiration of this garden. The Miramare Library books on botany, flowers, plants and gardens shed light on the interests and knowledge of those who conceived the castle garden and on their most intimate sources of inspiration.⁹

The study of the books in Maximilian's Library, which had never been attempted before, was enlightening to achieve a deep understanding of the concept behind the identity and design of the garden. The chapter on Botany in the Historical Library Catalogue is part of the larger section labelled Natural Sciences, number XIV, which also includes volumes dealing with the natural science: Physics and Meteorology, Chemistry, Mineralogy, Geology and Palaeontology, Zoology and Anthropology, and Medicine. In the Botany section, there are atlases and manuals of botany, studies on

⁹ A. Contessa, *Ars Botanica. Paper Gardens in the Miramare Library* (Milan, 2022).



Fig. 5

specific species (including the *Liliaceae*, palms, conifers, cypresses, orchids, sponges), treatises on single places (Prague, Jihlava in the Czech Republic, and the botanical garden of Padua). Among the publications of this section, there are texts related to Archduke Maximilian's research during his trip to Brazil between 1859 and 1860 on a species of the Aroidea (*Genera Aroidearum* by Heinrich Wilhelm Schott), the complete edition of these studies, published posthumously in Vienna in 1879, and previous treatises on the same species in Latin.

In the historical Library catalogue, dated 1863, there is an independent section for works on Gardening, which includes some twenty books in English, French and German, several treatises on landscape architecture, studies of gardens and buildings in gardens, descriptions of European parks, and other publications specific to certain botanical species. The characteristics of the library show that Maximilian was aware of the discussions of his time regarding different garden concepts.

Little or nothing is known about the interest in gardens and passion for botany of the mistress

The parterre of Miramare in a photograph by Guglielmo Sebastianutti, *Album Miramar*, Leipzig 1873. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare

Fig. 6

The parterre of Miramare in a recent photograph. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare





Fig. 7

Carl Haase, *The Miramar Castle under Construction*, oil on canvas, 1857. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare

of the house, Charlotte of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, daughter of the king of Belgium. The Castle Library gives us perhaps a small glimpse of what was probably a passion she shared with her husband, and her possible role in the design of the Miramare garden and its botanical collection.

In the creation of Miramare, Maximilian of Hapsburg was also inspired by the many European and Mediterranean gardens he visited throughout his life, as we learn from reading his travel diaries. We know, for example, how much he loved orange trees and their intoxicating scent; he had known them since he was a child from the greenhouses of the Habsburg residence of Schönbrunn, which was very dear to the archduke's heart. This admiration is found throughout the notes in the travel journals from his journeys across the Mediterranean, for instance when he describes the charm and scent of citrus groves in Sicily which he had visited in 1852.¹⁰

Among the material belonging to the State Archive analysed and studied in depth are the letters from the gardener Anton Jelinek to Maximilian of Hapsburg. Though there is no trace of the answers possibly sent by the archduke, these letters are precious, as they make it possible to follow the botanical phases of the construction of the garden and the concept behind the project.¹¹ Thanks to the correspondence of Anton Jelinek, head gardener of Miramare Park, we know of the efforts made

10 F.M. d'Asburgo, *Reiseskizzen – Viaggi in Italia, 1851–1852, Diari dell'Arciduca Massimiliano d'Asburgo* (Leipzig, 1867).

11 P. Dorsi, 'La nascita del parco di Miramar nelle relazioni inedite di Anton Jelinek', in: Cucchi et al., *Un Giardino in riva al mare*, pp. 21–54.



Fig. 8

to grow orange trees at Miramare. Jelinek recounts how he struggled to protect ‘the saplings’ from the harsh Trieste winters of the second half of the nineteenth century, and their miserable fate after a few days of the freezing bora winds. This allowed to us to identify some of the ancient varieties of bitter orange trees that are characterised by particularly fragrant flowers: *Citrus aurantium*, *Citrus aurantium salicifolia*, *Citrus aurantium Paradisi*, *Citrus aurantium crispifolia*, *Citrus aurantium fetifera*, *Citrus aurantium corniculata* and *Citrus aurantium caniculata*. These sources inspired the botanical choice made in 2020 as part of the project to redesign the space in front of the New Greenhouses in the Miramare Park in order to bring citrus fruit trees back to Miramare.

The reorganisation of this area included the planting of bitter orange trees in handmade terracotta pots and the installation of an irrigation system. The plants are sheltered in the New Greenhouses from early November throughout the winter, and then relocated outside in spring (Fig. 8).

The New Greenhouses area with the Orangery in a recent photograph. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare

Miramare and the Savoy period

Between 1931 and 1937, Miramare Castle became the residence of Duke Amedeo of Savoy-Aosta and his family. On that occasion the complex and in particular the castle were renovated and modernised to adapt it to the duke’s needs and requirements. His wife Anna d’Orléans and

his daughters Margherita and Maria Cristina continued to occasionally live in Miramare until the middle of 1943. Photographs dating from the duke's time reveal a parterre reduced to extreme horizontality, if compared with the photographic images from Maximilian's time, which show a parterre rich in plants that were once foreign to our environment and in the mid-nineteenth century were considered rare. Their presence had been eradicated in a period when it was preferred to emphasize the recently conquered 'Italianity' of the area through the simplified features of the Italian garden. It was also probably an aesthetic choice made by Duke Amedeo, who had chosen a linear, essential and modern style for the garden.

His choices for the furnishings of the rooms in the castle intended for his family were similar. The dukes of Savoy considered the nineteenth-century rooms of the Habsburg castle to be antiquated and far removed from their taste. They had many rooms modified, preserving the original appearance only in the ceremonial quarters used for gala receptions, concerts and ceremonies. The more intimate residential spaces were refurbished in an elegant and simple style, in tune with the upper middle-class taste of the time, with art déco architectural details, such as a geometric design of the ceiling or an opaline ceiling light.

The choice of furniture, simple yet refined, as well as the porcelain, reflects the attention to new aesthetic trends that made it a lifestyle, marked by modernity, comfort and rationality, without sacrificing the use of the finest materials, such as exotic woods from the Caucasus or Madagascar, alongside the classic olive, cherry and walnut. The fine porcelain tableware with the Savoy crown was made at the Richard Ginori Doccia factory, run in those years by Gio Ponti. In the duchess' private living room, which has its original 1930s decor preserved in an almost unaltered condition, we find refined expressions of the prevailing art déco style of the time: the ceiling with its chandelier, the geometrically designed glass doors, and the consoles and cabinets in cherry wood and *bois de rose* with an opaline background imitating alabaster, where precious glassware by Napoleone Martinuzzi is displayed.

The garden redevelopment project

The botanical impoverishment of the parterre area started at the beginning of the twentieth century and in the following decades spread to the entire park, due to the senescence of some trees that had reached the end of their natural cycle, the proliferation of some invasive species that had gradually suffocated others, the spread of diseases, such as the invasive pest (*Cydalima perspectalis*) that caused severe damage to boxwood hedges, the lack of study and knowledge, and finally neglect. Several areas had become inaccessible and were simply closed to the public, others were bare and in poor condition.

The turning point was marked by the decree of the Italian Ministry of Culture that included Miramare among the thirty museums with special autonomy, and the appointment in 2017 of a director, chosen by an international commission, who would be responsible for the entire complex, castle, park, and all its outbuildings under the name of the Historical Museum and Park of Miramare Castle (Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare). At that point, a conservation and recovery project – one with a vision and at the same time one based on a patient analysis of historical, documentary and photographic sources, combined with the topographical survey and the study of traces, at times tenuous, of the various works carried out over time – was absolutely necessary to renew and refine the knowledge that would allow a conservative and innovative restoration of the park.

This project must be seen in a broader context, that of a landscape contemporary to its creation, which had changed profoundly over the years.¹² Many tall trees, especially among the evergreens, had been lost, leaving room for the unchecked growth of Mediterranean scrub (holm oaks, downy oaks, ash trees, laurels, viburnums), whose branches now blocked the view of the sea and the castle. Many paths had become impassable, preventing access to several areas of the park. With a view to redeveloping the park, a series of works was needed to rebalance the vegetation while respecting its natural growth, in order to establish a proper balance between the original vegetation and the spontaneous growth and to protect specimens of particular value. It was necessary to prune the trees, to make the foliage less dense and provide greater visibility in order to recover the panoramic views and their exceptional scenic effects, enhancing the refined harmony of the walls, *rocaille*, and the delicate metal gazebos whose original sage green colour had to be restored.

The overall redevelopment of the complex, started under its administration as an autonomous entity in the years 2017 and 2018, has developed from the study of the documentary and photographic sources mentioned above, but also had to take into account the contingent problems resulting from the poor condition of many trees. The project involved the securing of some areas requiring emergency interventions (consolidation, pruning, etc.), the definition of a study path (landscape scale survey, architectural surveys of artefacts, monitoring of the plant heritage, etc.) and the opening of several work sites. The restoration and reorganisation of some green areas such as, for example, the upstream area and the Walkway above the Holm Oak Lane (January to April 2019), the cleaning and reorganisation of Maximilian's pastini (terraces) (January to April 2020), the botanical restoration of the Upper Parterre (spring

12 *La fabrique du jardin à la Renaissance*, eds L. Gauguin, P. Liévaux, A. Salamagne (Paris, 2019), pp. 12–15.

Fig. 9

The parterre of Miramare in a drone photograph.
Museo Storico e il Parco del
Castello di Miramare

2020), the reorganisation of the area of the New Greenhouses with the planting of ancient citrus varieties and the creation of the Orangery (summer 2020), the botanical restoration of the Camellia Path (autumn 2020), the reorganisation of the area adjacent to Swan Lake and the creation of the Prunus Grove (spring 2021), and the botanical restoration of the Lower Parterre (spring and summer 2021), all fall within the scope of these works.





Fig. 10

The Ducal Bath with the redevelopment of the entire adjacent forested area. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare

It is worth noting that the reorganisation of the Parterre of the Miramare Park, which occupies a central area within the museum complex and is therefore one of the most visited areas, also considers its central position and the existence of the Kaffeehaus (Fig. 9). The project for the reorganisation of the Parterre was conducted in two consecutive and consequent phases, starting from its upper part and ending with the works to restore the lower part facing the sea (Fig. 10). The overall project was marked by a scholarly vision of this particularly delicate portion of the garden.

Restoration of the botanical richness

The documentary and photographic sources consulted to reconstruct the evolution of the area have shown that the general layout had been substantially preserved until a few years ago, with the exception of the internal design of some symmetrical compartments. However, since the 1930s, that is the period of Duke Amedeo of Savoy-Aosta, there had been a radical change in the choice of plants and blooms, favouring low seasonal blooms, to the detriment of the great botanical richness of Maximilian's eclectic garden.

The current restoration work was aimed at restoring the botanical varieties and the verticality that had been lost, and enhancing the aesthetic value expressed by the statues placed on high columns. The preparatory work included a project to design the flowerbeds to be re-created and to redesign the symmetrical compartments characterising the parterre. Within each of them, evergreens and seasonal flowers were planted according to the founder's preferences. These were not only inherent from a scholarly point of view, but also particularly interesting from the point of view of sustainability, which the restoration of a garden today must absolutely take into account. The choice of blooms fell on perennial and annual species with low water demand, and thus flowering varieties of various exotic origins, particularly from South America, were selected. Accordingly, the evergreens planted are *Buxus sempervirens*, *Araucaria araucana*, *Trachicarpus fortunei*, *Yucca gloriosa*, *Trachicarpus fortunei*, *Thuja globosa* and *Juniperus communis*.

The project provides for an initial seasonal bloom in the spring with daffodils and other bulbs. Red and white *Gaura lindheimeri*, pink *Canna idica*, white and pink *Zinnia marylandica double zahara*, *Erigeron karvinskianus*, *Cleome hassleriana*, white and pink *Cosmos bipinnatus*, white, pink and burgundy *Dahlia*, white, pink and burgundy *Echinacea*, and *Solanum jasminoides* were chosen for the summer bloom. Finally, in order to have a layout reflecting more faithfully the historical image of the parterre, the existing lawn was replaced with a layer of gravel whose colour was sampled in relation to the blooms. The botanical and agronomic project was accompanied by the construction of an irrigation system to improve efficient use of water resources, and by the

development of an annual and weekly program for flowerbed maintenance, plant pruning, periodic mowing and preventive activities.

Between 2020 and 2021, the design of the lower parterre area was completed by faithfully following that of the late nineteenth century and planting the following species: *Buxus sempervirens* in pots, *Hedera helix*, *Thymus glabrescens*, and white *Gaura lindheimeri*. Bamboos were planted around the two circular fountains and the circular flowerbeds found in the photographs were relocated. In the area near the sea, the cypress specimens now missing were replanted. At the same time, we enriched the flowerbeds with succulent plants, adding specimens of *Yucca filamentosa*, *Yucca gloriosa*, *Agave americana*, *Agave americana medio picta* and *Agave geminiflora* to the existing yuccas. An irrigation system was also installed in this area, and a small fountain was placed near the triangular flowerbed with the collection of succulent plants.

Architectural upgrade

In 2021, several study, fact-finding and restoration projects were carried out. These have made it possible to expand the scientific horizons and the usable spaces within the area, with regard to the collection and the castle as well as to the park with its buildings, furnishing, trees and plants. Particular attention was focused on the built heritage, with works including the restoration of the Ducal Bath (January to July 2021), the restoration of the Castelletto (from December 2020, ongoing), the redevelopment of the Swan Lake and adjacent areas (2021), and the project to restore the Historic Greenhouses to a usable condition (in progress).

The restoration of the Ducal Bath with the redevelopment of the entire adjacent forested area was particularly interesting (Fig. 11). The small building by the sea, which affords a marvellous view of the castle and the gulf, was built at the end of the nineteenth century but takes its name from Duke Amedeo of Savoy-Aosta, who would often use it during his sojourns in Miramare. The building and its surrounding area, which had for years been lying in a state of abandonment, have been the subject of a comprehensive recovery that has allowed us to open them, for the first time, to the public for guided tours.

The works described above are a part of the process of renewal of the visitors' paths to the castle and the park, which will continue in the coming years with new projects: for example, the replacement of the signposting in green areas, the renovation of the old Greenhouses, the continuation of the redevelopment of the Castelletto and its parterre, currently almost no longer visible, and the study and restoration of the Chapel of San Canciano; at the same time, the parterre surrounded by the said buildings will be reorganised with a revision of both its botanical elements and its installations.

Among the most interesting works, worth mentioning are those on the Historical Greenhouses, present in Junker's drawings and plans, which

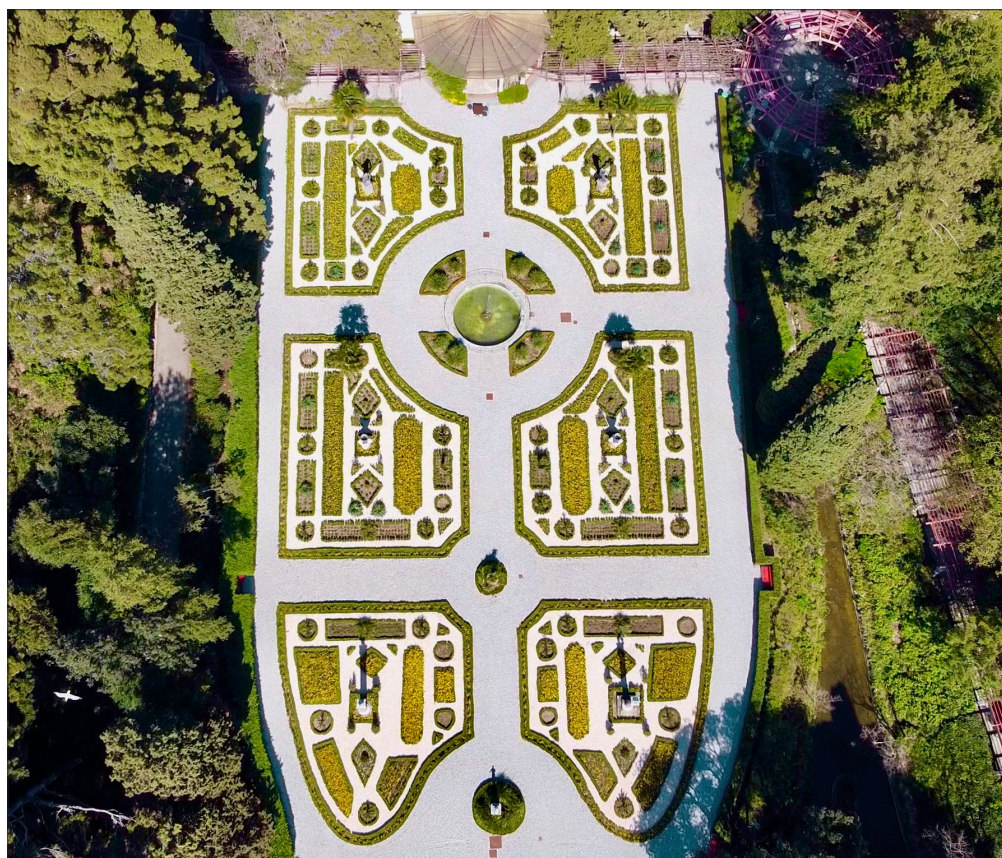


Fig. 11

The parterre of Miramare in a recent drone photograph. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare

was presumably built between early 1856 and 1860. Their presence is attested on some maps representing the overall architecture of the park, where the presence of the Glashaus is identified, as well as by the letters of the gardener Jelinek to Maximilian of Habsburg.¹³ It should also be noted that some documents in the Miramare Castle Archives testify to work being carried out on the Greenhouses during the years in which Duke Amedeo of Savoy-Aosta stayed at the Castle (1931). The glazed building consists of a partially buried wall structure presumably composed of stone blocks (sandstone) alternating with bricks. The objective of the renovation in the study is to plan the works needed to restore the greenhouses to their original function, possibly interpreted broadly in the sense of production, maintenance, research and monitoring of species for the management of Miramare Park, an opportunity to carry out educational and awareness-raising activities concerning the richness of the botanical heritage. The recovery of the original function of the greenhouses appears to be the most appropriate purpose for the building, which features optimal conditions of orientation and isolation to be

13 P. Dorsi, 'La nascita del parco di Miramar nelle relazioni inedite di Anton Jelinek', in: Cucchi et al., *Un Giardino in riva al mare*, pp. 21–54.

a nursery for the park's plants and to temporarily house rare and delicate species for educational purposes.

An accessible green museum

The redevelopment project of a historical site often faces the problem of its accessibility to a large and diverse audience. The accessibility of museum spaces is one of the fundamental objectives of contemporary models of inclusion, which is often hindered by the morphology of historical sites that host the museums, as ancient residences were certainly not built to be usable and accessible to all. A green museum should protect and enhance the heritage of the site while also promoting and improving its physical, cognitive and digital accessibility to the public.

The goal of having an increasingly accessible and inclusive museum is universally recognised. In order to pursue the goals of fair access and use, and achieve the environmental, social and psychological benefits that follow, in a spirit of inclusive design, the Historical Museum and Park of Miramare Castle has implemented important strategies to ensure that projects are socially sustainable and facilitate the achievement of a greater environmental quality and enhancement of the public good. In this regard, we would like to mention the installation, in 2019, of a new lift available to the public inside the castle, which has made it possible to overcome the architectural barriers between the floors of the building and, for the first time, make the visit to the main floor possible also for people with motor disabilities. Most of the park is free of architectural barriers and can be enjoyed by all visitors, and only some portions have paths with steps or other impediments; yet its sheer size poses a challenge for many visitors.¹⁴ For this reason, an electric shuttle service was launched in the summer of 2021, making it possible for everyone to visit the upper and more remote areas of the park.

However, the issues of cognitive accessibility and the enhancement of digital accessibility are no less important when visiting a historical park. In this regard, we would like to draw attention to a thematic path within the park, which is currently being designed. It will be dedicated to people with motor and cognitive difficulties. New signage will be installed throughout the park. Each sign will offer the possibility to communicate digitally with users and provide a dual historical/cultural and naturalistic itinerary, in order

14 A. Contessa, F. Krecic, 'Migliorare l'accessibilità di una residenza ottocentesca: il nuovo ascensore nel Castello di Miramare a Trieste', in: *Accessibilità e Patrimonio Culturale. Linee guida al Piano strategico-operativo, buone pratiche e indagine conoscitiva per la fruizione ampliata nei luoghi della cultura italiani*, eds G. Cetorelli, M.R. Guido (Rome, 2020, Series: *Quaderni della valorizzazione*, vol. 7), pp. 185–92; A. Contessa, 'I Musei tra pubblico e privato', *Finestre sull'Arte*, dicembre 2020; A. Contessa, 'Nella crisi il museo ha investito per migliorare il dialogo coi bambini', interview with Director Andreina Contessa by Ilaria Baratta, *Finestre sull'Arte*, 10 April 2020.

for the visitor to discover both the trees and green areas of historical and botanical interest and the monuments and points of historical and artistic interest. The idea is to offer a path that is easy for all users, and at the same time allows you to discover the peculiarities of the park, including through the use of technology that can compensate for disabilities.

Accessibility and communication to users are going to be implemented through digital, standardised, modular and scalable systems that are under construction. Orientation, which is a critical component for visitors to feel comfortable walking through the park, will be improved by placing signs consistently along pathways, following the goals of way-finding strategies: identification and navigation; encouragement to visit, explore, and appreciate; improvement in knowledge about what the park has to offer; improvement in one's confidence to explore; an enhanced perception of safety in the park.

Modern technology can be useful to the knowledge and enhancement of historical memory and in this sense to remain faithful to the principles which its founder identified as essential to this garden: its experimental essence and its multifaceted and eclectic character.

A further project concerning both accessibility and restoration/re-qualification is scheduled for the years 2022–2025. The activities will focus on the restoration of the ancient carriage road through the park, which is attested on historical maps and which leads to a currently inaccessible area. It is a sinuous path that crosses two galleries in stone blocks, now closed due to their precarious state and instability, and develops between the Stables pavilion and the top of the park. It represented a fundamental communication artery of the area, providing a link with the old train station used by Maximilian and Charlotte, which in the future can perhaps be developed as an alternative to the access to the castle along the sea. The initiative aims to raise the standards of management, maintenance, safety and reception of visitors through the restoration of the entire route and the opening of the two currently walled galleries, to make them accessible and open to visitors. This expansion of accessible routes within the garden will allow the improvement and strengthening of the cultural offer and services for tourists and the local community, opening up a portion of the ancient site that has been inaccessible for years.

Conclusion

We keep in mind that the preservation of a historic garden involves the concepts of protection and conservation, and it requires persistent management and planning. Concerning the Miramare Garden, the essential aim is to adopt a sustainable restoration intervention over time in order to define monitoring activities and precise care programs.

Identification of the historical configuration of the park's elements – including botanical species to be preserved and safeguarded, as well as

a system of paths which were closed to the public for several years and which we wanted to return to public use – represented the key element from which to start the restoration of the park, together with the re-designing of the parterre and the reconstruction of its botanical collection, grounded on a serious analysis of the extant historical documentation. In this essay, we share the first results of this still ongoing process.

The improvement of accessibility, the enhancement of the historic botanical collection, the enlargement of areas open to the public, and in general the renewal of the garden look have met the approval of the visiting public, as attested by the periodic monitoring by the Ministry of Culture, and by spontaneous expressions by the visitors.¹⁵ In the last two years, the garden has also began to offer new cultural experiences involving various arts. Thanks to the collaboration with important institutions such as the Società dei Concerti and the National Theatre of Trieste, concerts and itinerant evening shows have been performed, offering the visitors a new aesthetic and sensory dimension to their sojourn at Miramare.¹⁶

The next step was the organization of an international and interdisciplinary conference (in September 2022), under the title *Green museums, sustainable beauty: Conservation, knowledge and management of a historical garden in the age of sustainability*. The conference presents an occasion to share and discuss the first results of our endeavour with the major representatives of the sector: directors of museums and historical parks, architects, academics, gardeners, botanists and the most important European associations dealing with public and historical parks and gardens.

In addition, the Miramare conference aims to solicit a commitment and to define a discussion on the actions necessary for the knowledge and promotion of the heritage of historical gardens and parks, opening a discussion on conservation and management of plant heritage in their context, landscape systems and historical residences. The Miramare Park is the most important historical garden in the north-eastern part of Italy and, owing to its history and position, a historical hallmark of Mitteleuropa. This conference aims to become a venue for regular meetings so as to create a scientific and operational reference for other historical green areas in the use of sustainable and environment-friendly practices. The conference was structured around the issues related to the function of historical gardens and their configuration, in relation to their maintenance and management, the identification of guidelines for a cognitive

15 If we could consider the reaction of the public to the renovation process as a criterion for the evaluation of the project, the results would be very positive, witness the innumerable compliments and words of gratitude the visitors send to the staff in many diverse ways.

16 The performances created especially for Miramare by the Teatro Stabile del Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Politeama Rossetti, are *Shakespeare in the Park* and *The Secrets of the Archduke's Gardens*. Performed during the summer, these shows are sold out every night.

study of the arboreal heritage, and for the definition of a plan for conservation, scheduled and constant periodic maintenance, and the definition of long-term actions, marked by the informed and economic use of resources and the protection of biodiversity.

The Miramare Park is a living historical and botanical site that wishes to be a vibrant ground for culture, research and science.

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- p. 18 The castle and the park of Miramare. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare; photo by Fabrice Gallina
- p. 19 The castle and the park of Miramare in a drone photograph. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare; photo by Stefano Cofolli
- p. 20 A 19th-century copy of the Capuan Venus. The original is at the National Archaeological Museum in Naples. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare; photo by Stefano Cofolli
- p. 26 A project of the Miramare Park designed and painted by Wilhelm Knechtel (1837–1924) in 1866. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare
- p. 27 The parterre of Miramare in a photograph by Guglielmo Sebastianutti, *Album Miramar*, Leipzig 1873. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare
- p. 27 The parterre of Miramare in a drone photograph. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare
- p. 28 Carl Haase, *The Miramar Castle under Construction*, oil on canvas, 1857. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare
- p. 29 The New Greenhouses area with the Orangery in a recent photograph. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare
- p. 32 The parterre of Miramare in a drone photograph. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare; photo by Stefano Cofolli
- p. 33 The Ducal Bath with the redevelopment of the entire adjacent forested area. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare; photo by Stefano Cofolli
- p. 36 The parterre of Miramare in a recent drone photograph. Museo Storico e il Parco del Castello di Miramare; photo by Stefano Cofolli

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