

Edited by Karen Hope Goodchild,  
April Oettinger and Leopoldine Prosperetti

# Green Worlds in Early Modern Italy

## Art and the Verdant Earth



Amsterdam  
University  
Press

## Green Worlds in Early Modern Italy

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*Art and the Verdant Earth*

*Edited by Karen Hope Goodchild, April Oettinger and  
Leopoldine Prosperetti*

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# Introduction: A Fresh Vision of the Natural World in Renaissance Italy

Karen Goodchild, April Oettinger, Leopoldine Prosperetti

The verdant earth! Since 1982, National Public Radio listeners have heard this phrase each time the station invokes the John T. and Catherine D. MacArthur Foundation's commitment 'to build a more just, *verdant* and peaceful world'. Taking its position between justice and peace, verdancy is presented as desirable, even essential, for the well-being of humankind. The globe's verdancy is often cast as 'the green mantle of the earth', an age-old metaphor given a new life by Rachel Carson, the much admired environmentalist. Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) opened the nation's eyes to the fragility of our world.<sup>1</sup> The notion of a 'green mantle', Carson's title for her Chapter Six, is operative throughout *Silent Spring* as the author offers a gripping vision of the threads and filaments by which nature weaves the fabric of the earth. Aware of the power of natural imagery, she prefaced her scientific work with the elegiac *A Fable for Tomorrow*, a poetic rendering of a nameless town in the 'heart of America', where oaks, maples, and birches, as well as laurel, viburnum, and alder, delight a visitor's eyes before a 'grim specter' creeps upon the scene and a layer of white dust dulls nature's verdant garb. The publication of Carson's book was an explosive event, and, ever since, to be 'green' is to be aware of both earth's glorious garment and its perilous state. Forty years later, in 2002, E.O. Wilson characterized the biosphere as a 'unique, shimmering physical disequilibrium', preserving in this image the idea of nature's appearance as a rippling fabric that gathers gleaming lights in its restless folds.<sup>2</sup> This book will show that these sentiments are not uniquely the concerns of modern ecologists and environmentalists. They form part of a rich legacy bequeathed by countless poets and artists who, from the ancient lyricists to the neo-pastoralists of today, were devoted to bodying forth the earth in all her flowering and verdant manifestations.<sup>3</sup>

In echoing the theme of nature fashioning her green coat, Carson and Wilson are tied to writers of the past: classical poets, like Theocritus and Vergil, who gave us the topic of shaded repose in the countryside; and scriptural writers, like Saints Basil and

1 Rachel Carson, 'Earth's Green Mantle', *Silent Spring*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002), 63–85. Chapter 6 is widely available as a PDF.

2 E.O. Wilson, *The Future of Life*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 39.

3 For 'florida and frondosa', see Leon-Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. by Joseph Rykwert, et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988), IX:4.

Ambrose, who took it as their task to praise, in prose and poetry, the wondrous nature of the Creation. Both traditions, bucolic poetry and sacred eloquence, compiled a trove of words, epithets, and metaphors for the description of the natural world and especially of 'pleasant places' in the countryside. In Italy, in the Renaissance, this tradition was enriched by humanist poets, both in Latin and the vernacular, Petrarch, Poliziano, and Sannazaro among them. Eventually these literary treasures constituted a resource for the 'creative magic' of natural description, a kind of lyrical naturalism, which flourished as a culturally authoritative exercise, until, with the dominance of scientific botany and its Linnean nomenclature, the study of nature became a science, and greenery became the 'mere' ornament of landscape.

Green was the obsession of the Renaissance. Bruce Smith, in a masterful study, shows 'green stuff' to be a 'key' to understanding many aspects of the material and spiritual culture of Renaissance England, and, by extension, of the European continent, where verdure tapestries and 'cabinets verts' in formal gardens were the required backdrop of a genteel decorum.<sup>4</sup> Green, it was observed, was of all colors also 'the most gratefull and moste plesante to the Eyes'.<sup>5</sup> The verdant, as the *sine qua non* of restful pleasure, became deeply associated with *recreatio* as spiritual therapy, and thus was a sanctioned, healthy aspect of the management of one's life. All that green, in the end, was seen as a necessary antidote to the glare of marble halls in political life or the heat of battle that is the lot of the soldier. The visualization of green worlds, imagined and real, created a demand for technologies of green, which included the search for pigments with enough bite and power to rival in art the verdant splendors of nature.<sup>6</sup> The difficulty of finding pigments that do not fade or harm other pigments was only partially successful and explains the ruinous state of the color green in paintings by the Old Masters. No other color has suffered so much deterioration. For instance, it was noted in a recent catalogue on the art of Sandro Botticelli that the now dark and murky myrtles in *Primavera* (1483–84) and the *The Birth of Venus* (1483) would originally have been dazzling in their verdant brightness.<sup>7</sup> It is only recently that conservators are having success in reversing certain of the disastrous effects of the copper resins and bringing back the visual impact of greenery in renaissance art.<sup>8</sup> Thanks to restorations, Titian's mixed grove in his fabulous *Bacchus and Ariadne* can now be admired for something like the symphony of green that the painter intended it to be.

4 Bruce Smith, *The Key of Green, Passion and Perception in Renaissance Culture*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

5 Edward Norgate, *Miniatura, or the Art of Limning*, ed. Martin Hardie (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1919).

6 Green is hard to conquer. Vegetable dyes fade, copper resins (verdigris) are hostile; some are even poisonous.

7 Andreas Schumacher, ed. *Botticelli: Likeness. Myth. Devotion* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Städel Museum, 2010), 86.

8 For the technologies of green, see Noelle Streeton, *Perspectives on the Painting Technique of Jan Van Eyck*. (London: Archetype Books, 2013); Margriet Van Eikema-Hommes, *Changing Pictures: Discolouration in 15th to 17th Century Oil Painting*. (London: Archetype Books, 2006).

The contributors to this volume elaborate a fresh, multifaceted vision of the verdant earth as they address the Renaissance passion for greenery broadly in visual culture: in devotional imagery; in the *verzura* of festival culture; in the villa retreats of princes; in the marriage of literature and art; in the search for a greater naturalism in the depiction of gardens, woodlands, and remote forests; in the exploration of stormy weather; in the charms of Tivoli; and in all the various green coverts where poetry originates and the spirit reconnects with the Creator. What the essays reveal is that verdant imagery in the Renaissance was seen as a new enchantment that gave a bright gloss and a fresh, sensual liveliness to visual culture, a liveliness perhaps longed for after the Medieval insistence on intellectual and moralizing abstractions.

### Earlier Green Voices

It is important to note that the topic of the volume is the ‘verdancy’ which emerges as a specific theme in the visual culture of the Italian Renaissance. It is emphatically not a book about landscape, even if the greenery of views is, of course, part of the picture. The idea of a ‘green turn’ in cultural production is still relatively new. Inspired by Spenser’s groves and Shakespeare’s *Arden* in Tudor England, and the hexaemeral imagination of John Milton and the metaphysical poets who followed him in the seventeenth century, verdancy as a topic has been most actively pursued in English literary studies. Thus, from scholars of ‘green thoughts in green shades’, we find the color beginning to appear in titles. For example Robert N. Watson, in his *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance* (2006), uncovers green as a cultural poetics among cosmopolitan Protestants who, terrorized by the uncertainties that befell the cosmologies of Christendom, turned to Nature in hopes of finding ‘natural icons’ to compensate for the loss of devotional imagery.<sup>9</sup> Diane K. McColley’s chapter ‘Hylozoic Poetry: The Lives of Plants’, in *Poetry and Ecology in the Age of Milton and Marvell* (2007) is a powerful example of the green environment as *hule* or *silva*, the unsorted matter that is to be shaped into imagery by poetry.<sup>10</sup> Bruce Smith’s aforementioned *The Key of Green: Passion and Perception in Renaissance Culture* (2009) turns green into a key that unlocks overlooked aspects of Renaissance culture, while Leah Knight, in her book *Reading Green in Early Modern England* (2014), uncovers the often literal connection between reading texts and the color green.<sup>11</sup> Moving to the continent, Louisa MacKenzie, in *The Poetry of Place: Lyrical, Landscape, and*

9 Robert N. Watson, *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

10 Diane McColley, *Poetry and Ecology in the Age of Milton and Marvell*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007). McColley’s ecopoetical approach reminds us that in modern times, the word ‘green’ has become synonymous with environmentalism and the various offshoots of ecological thinking that it promotes.

11 For Smith, see n.4 above. Leah Knight, *Reading Green in Early Modern England*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014).

*Ideology in Renaissance France* (2011), reveals the cultural poetics of the great poets of the French Renaissance, Ronsard and DuBellay, who were inspired by a love of their respective native provinces to write a 'poetry of place' which offered restorative images of locales ravaged during the wars of religion.<sup>12</sup> What comes across in all these studies is both the cultural significance of green as a color or a facet of the natural world, and the many ways in which this importance is made manifest in Early Modern literary and visual culture.

In Italy, interpretations of greenery in art were, for a long time, understood as subordinate to two concerns: first, to a classicizing, literary vision of the natural environment, and second, to the idea, among art historians, that 'pure' landscape is the goal of green art and the logical result of artistic evolution. But cultural historians and humanist geographers have broadened our perspective. In 1988, in *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environment*, Denis Cosgrove, the pioneer of what is known as cultural geography, offered a different way of looking at the realities of the Italian landscape, regarding them as terrains that were socially constructed, shaped as much by a human hand as by Nature herself.<sup>13</sup> In this vision of the natural environment, trees are often seen as timber, shrubs promise pliant branches for hurdles and baskets, foliage is fodder for livestock and running water sets mills into motion.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, Simon Schama, in *Landscape and Memory* (1995), took a more rugged look at the pleasant places of the pastoral tradition, offering a brutal account of humans and nature in a perpetual tug of war. Verdancy in Schama's account is no longer pleasant and poetic, but becomes a vision of the earth where vegetation is dominant. Before Schama, Robert Pogue Harrison, in *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (1992), had already speculated on the role that the forests – he called them 'the sylvan fringe of darkness' – played in the cultural imagination. Here, too, verdancy takes on a somber hue.

Turning to studies more narrowly focused on art, Michel Pastoureau, an expert on pigments and colors, recently delighted the world with a book of illustrated essays on the color green, delving into its changing historical meanings.<sup>15</sup> In general, however, art historians have been slow to join the green chorus. Promisingly, books by Christopher Wood on Albrecht Altdorfer, Joseph Koerner on Caspar David Friedrich, and

12 Louisa MacKenzie, *The Poetry of Place: Lyrical, Landscape, and Ideology in Renaissance France*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

13 Dennis Cosgrove, *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design, and Use of Past Environments*. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989).

14 Cosgrove's 're-vision' of landscape should be compared to a very different account of the representation of green worlds that was presented in the same year in an exhibition entitled *Places of Delight: The Pastoral Landscape* at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. This exhibition celebrated a long tradition of imagining the green retreats of would-be poets, a tradition that found an early and highly successful expression in the art of Giorgione and Titian. See Robert Cafritz, Lawrence Gowing, and David Rosand, eds., *Places of Delight: The Pastoral Landscape* (Washington, D.C.: Phillips Collection in association with the National Gallery of Art, 1988).

15 Michel Pastoureau, *Green: The History of a Color* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).



Michel Weemans on Herri met de Bles do draw attention to the green contents of these masters' landscapes in studies that subject the depiction of greenery to visual and cultural analysis.<sup>16</sup>

As suggested above, for scholars of Early Modern Italian art, a limited idea of the pastoral has been the principal lens through which to view Early Modern verdancy. This volume hopes to expand the valences of that connection. Students of Northern Italian landscapes have rightly insisted that the 'fresh look at nature' in Renaissance art coincided with the appearance upon the cultural scene of a new and revolutionary book, Jacopo Sannazaro's *L'Arcadia*.<sup>17</sup> Written in the 1480s and published in 1504, Sannazaro's verse spread rapidly across Europe, being printed in 60 different editions and multiple languages in the sixteenth century alone. Clearly popular, it fundamentally changed the European perception of nature. It also created, in one fell swoop, the idea of Arcadia as a poetical, and even a spiritual landscape. As with many Renaissance artifacts, Sannazaro's *Arcadia* was an invention forged in part from an incomplete ancient record. Sannazaro created the Renaissance Arcadia from scattered references by Vergil, who, however, never meant for it to be any other place than the cold and hostile dwelling place of the god Pan. That later generations came to think of Arcadia as a Vergilian idea re-activated by a Renaissance poet is one of those 'antiquarian mistakes' not resolved until modern scholarship. Arcadia, it is now agreed, was Sannazaro's invention, and his vision became the fountainhead of a pastoral tradition that was multiform, pervasive and enduring.

*Arcadia* is an Early Modern romance written alternatively in prose and verse; it is a work that draws inspiration from the Middle Ages and classical antiquity, from various literary modes and tropes. Its compendious form offers many treasures, and for well over a hundred and fifty years it stood as a capacious model for verdant imagery in madrigals and canzoni, and in the theater, and provided artists with subject matter for their paintings, which include shepherds and nymphs living their lives in some of the most beautiful landscapes in the Old Master tradition. Early in the sixteenth century, these paintings reflected the natural beauty of the Veneto. When production shifted to Rome, it was the sparkling verdancy of Tivoli that inspired the great pastoral paintings of the Roman school.

*Arcadia's* influence on the visual arts was direct and specific. In *Arcadia*, the names and properties of a large variety of trees and shrubs are celebrated, their characteristics captured in memorable epithets. This figuring came in part from Vergil's apt images. Thus, in Sannazaro, Vergil's spreading beech, becomes a *faggio ombroso*, the tremulous

16 Christopher Wood, *Albrecht Altdorfer and the Origins of Landscape*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); Joseph Leo Koerner, *Caspar David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape*. (London: Reaktion Books, 1990); Michel Weemans, *Herri Met De Bles. Gli stratagemmi del paesaggio nel tempo di Bruegel e di Erasmo*. (Rome: Jaca Books, 2013).

17 A phrase borrowed from Antonio Mazzotta, *Titian: A Fresh Look at Nature*. (London: The National Gallery of Art, 2012).

poplar is forever an image of the shivering Heliads, and trees whisper as they answer the wind. Indelible images of sylvan treasures were translated from Vergil's Latin to Sannazaro's Italian, and then, across Europe, adapted to local dictions by the translators of *Arcadia*. This incarnation of trees at once naturalistic and meaningful is just one example of the way *Arcadia* spurred a green revolution in European art, mobilizing new codes for the representation of verdancy. It is these varying modalities for showing the phenomena of the green world, from the metaphoric and the metaphysical to material and botanical, that are of interest in this volume as they apply to the visual arts.

Green's complexity is apparent, for instance, in the writings of Giorgio Vasari, who understood *paesi* to be both individual details of nature and distant outdoor spaces. Perhaps surprisingly, Vasari frequently describes a single painting as having multiple landscapes, or *paesi*. His use of a plural term shows that for him 'landscapes' could refer to several ornamental vignettes within one work, from trees to verdure to buildings to natural light to dramatic, even cataclysmic, weather effects.<sup>18</sup> A green mantle is nature's ornament, her raiment, and her chief artifice, but it is not empty frippery. Similarly, *paesi* in Vasari's understanding – as natural vistas, storms, clumps of trees, or garden elements – are artistic embellishments that can supplement the meaning of larger compositions in both their artistry and their content. Understanding green as the significant embellishments of the earth bodied forth in art will teach us how to be better readers of the Early Modern green world, and this conception of verdancy brings the present volume into the orbit of a growing scholarship on ornament.

Following Sannazaro and Vasari, we acknowledge that green had multiple valences, from spiritual, to material, to political, to economic, and beyond, and thus the following essays are organized into three sections. The first, 'Devotional Viridescence', explores the divine poetics and sacred therapeutics of greenery in Early Modern Italian art. The second, 'Green Building', looks at the verdant structures built and painted in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, interpreting these complex, growing arches, labyrinths, pavilions, and bowers as works of 'natural artifice' that tell us as much about artistic theory as about the significance of green in courtly settings. The third, 'Sylvan Exchange', analyzes the give-and-take of green imagery across regional traditions within and beyond Early Modern Italy, often through Northern European artists finding employment in Northern Italy and Rome.

## Part One: Devotional Viridescence

'O marvelous handiwork of almighty God!' Thus exclaims the shepherd Sincero in Sannazaro's *Arcadia* as he marvels at a riverine landscape. Here, the patristic language is surely evoking the Christian God, and, in *Arcadia*, nature's beauty sometimes

18 See Karen Goodchild, "A Hand More Practiced and Sure": The History of Landscape Painting in Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*, *Artibus et Historiae* 32, no. 64 (2011): 25–40.

underscores the powers of a divine, Christian, creator.<sup>19</sup> The ability of natural imagery to bring humans closer to God is explored in Part One: 'Devotional Viridescence'. Encountering the Christian divine in green nature is a type of epiphany akin to the hearing of oracles in the groves of Ancient Greece. It allies with the doctrine that nature can be read as a book of divine instruction, conveyed by the creatures and phenomena that can be observed in Nature. In these scenarios, Nature becomes a sort of green temple for both physical and spiritual health.<sup>20</sup> Expanding on the notion of verdant experience as a path to spiritual illumination, artists in the Renaissance elaborated on the poetic language of verdure, invoking the variable moods of trees and greenery to heighten the devotional appeal and dramatic impact of their works through the sensual details of nature.

Rebekah Compton's essay 'The Green Spaces of Fra Lippi and Botticelli' treats the 'value, availability, and virtues' of the color green through a close study of the titled artists' innovative experiments with a variety of pigments; describes the eager reception wealthy viewers gave these newly-available, vivid, greens; and discusses the contemporary understanding of green's power to soothe and delight the eyes and hearts of the faithful in culturally-specific ways. Florentine painters struggled to find methods for using verdigris and malachite that would faithfully reproduce nature's greens in their tempera paintings, desiring to please a client base eager to encounter artistic verdancy. In this quest, the titular artists were pioneers of a new type of devotional imagery, one quickly embraced by their patrons and followers, showing Mary and the infant Christ paired with vibrantly-colored grass, trees and flowers.

April Oettinger, in 'Anthropomorphic Trees and Animated Nature in Lorenzo Lotto's 1509 *St. Jerome*', offers another example of green's power to amplify spiritual imagery. In her essay the focus is on the ways Lorenzo Lotto created a spiritual landscape through the device of anthropomorphic trees which, by virtue of their crooked forms, seem to comment on the twists and turns of Jerome's struggle to find God in the desert. Thus, Lotto's work is an early example of the hermitage landscape, a type that flourished as a branch of landscape painting, persisting into the nineteenth century in the art of Caspar David Friedrich and others. Turning away from the arid solitudes of the Desert Fathers, in such works, a hermit's habitat would be full of vegetation and indeed alive with the rustle of ancient forest trees. Lotto's imagery heralds an expanding interest in the lyrical, and sometimes haunting, potential of arboreal imagery to reinforce the meaning of the principal subject.

Paul Holberton's essay "'Honesta voluptas': the Renaissance Justification for Enjoyment of the Natural World' closes this section on the power of verdancy to affect mind, soul and body with a close reading of Erasmus' *Convivium religiosum*. In this

19 Marsha S. Collins, *Imagining Arcadia in Renaissance Romance*. (London: Routledge: 2016), 76–77.

20 In lay society, the doctrine of nature as a book of divine knowledge may have fostered a love of nature in people who otherwise felt excluded from the mysteries of the Church. Sarah Ritchey, 'Spiritual Arborescence: Trees in the Medieval Christian Imagination', *Spiritus* 8, (2008): 64–82.

colloquy, the Dutch humanist proposed the enjoyment of the natural environment as 'honest pleasure': an occasion for Epicurean delectation. Erasmus's recommendation of natural scenery as a source for a soul's delight may, Holberton suggests, have helped legitimate a retreat into the garden as a spiritual refreshment. The author tests his reading of this Erasmian dialogue with an analysis of the Christian-Epicurean dimensions of Giorgione's *Three Philosophers*.

## Part Two: Green Building

The third prose section of Sannazaro's complicated work evokes the green world turned by artifice into human ornament. As dawn breaks, pastoral structures are draped with *rami verdissimi di querce e di corbezzoli* – 'the greenest branches of oak and arbutus' – and doorways are ornamented with *corona di frondi a di fiori di ginestre e altri* – 'cornices made of fronds and flowers and Spanish broom and other verdure'.<sup>21</sup> These images of plant matter artistically and architecturally arrayed presides over the essays in Part II, 'Building Green'. Each contribution in this section explores the fruitful tension between nature's viridescent matter and its artful transformation by the hands of humans into the highly contrived green structures painted illusionistically in palaces as well as trained to grow in courtly gardens.

Jill Pederson's essay 'The *Sala delle Asse* as *Locus amoenus*: Revisiting Leonardo da Vinci's Arboreal Imagery in Milan's Castello Sforzesco', provides an important study of Leonardo's botanical imagination as bodied forth in his creation of a room-sized bower woven from the branches of 'living' mulberry trees. Pederson discloses the complexities, literal and contextual, of Leonardo's verdant architecture, integrating recent findings on the original appearance of the *Sala* with investigations into the poetic and theatric presentations of nature in the Sforza's courtly ambit, and exploring both in relation to the elaborate spatial hierarchies of the ducal villa, garden, and grounds.

Complex, multi-valent, naturalistic spaces such as the *Sala delle Asse* occasioned a new theory and terminology of verdure by the mid-sixteenth century, the age of Giorgio Vasari. 'Naturalism and Antiquity, Redefined, in Vasari's *Verzure*', by Karen Goodchild, closely examines the ways in which the greatest of all Renaissance art theorists deploys the term *verzure*, a word entirely absent from his 1550 edition of *The Lives of the Artists*, but one that emerges significantly in the 1568 edition. Tracing Vasari's very particular use of the word *verzure*, a term Vasari uses only in reference to trained plant structures, either painted or real, the essay shows what Vasari thought was the best way to deploy fictive green architecture in interiors and also which artists he believed had the appropriate skills for this task. Vasari's *verzure* is revealed to be meaningful garden ornament that shows both a patron's sophistication and an artist's talent through dazzling multi-media

21 Jacopo Sannazaro, *Arcadia*, 3.2. [letteraturaitaliana.net](http://letteraturaitaliana.net) (February 28 2018). Trans. K. Goodchild.

displays of perfected naturalism and ancient reference. Ultimately, the essay locates the origins of this elevated green form with artists working in Raphael's workshop, who then moved princely *verzura* across Italy and beyond.

Continuing to address the meanings of *verzura* in Italian gardens and paintings, Natsumi Nonaka's essay 'Verdant Architecture and Tripartite Chorography: Toeput and the Italian Villa Tradition' investigates the Flemish artist Lodewijk Toeput's adjustments of Northern landscape pleasures to suit Italian humanist concerns. By analyzing works such as *Pleasure Garden with Maze* (c.1579–84), Nonaka shows how Toeput merged the Northern European tradition of the world landscape with Italian villa and garden *vedute*, creating images in which green architectural elements add ancient cachet in a spatially meaningful way. The spaces thus demarcated, Nonaka argues, express a new humanist adaptation of ancient Roman spatial categories, expanding the otium/country vs. negotium/city dyad of antiquity to encompass a third, and most artful, category, the *verzura*-arrayed garden.

### Part Three: Sylvan Exchange

Philip Sidney was determined to export Sannazaro's greenery to England. He adapted *Arcadia* for his homeland, and in Book 1, Chapter 19 we read:

It was indeed a place of delight; for thorow the middest of it, there ran a sweete brooke, ... the field itself being set in some places with roses, & in al the rest constantly preserving a flourishing greene; the Roses added such a ruddy shew vnto it, as though the field were bashfull at his owne beautie: about it (as if it had bene to inclose a Theater) grew such a sort of trees, as eyther excellency of fruit, statelines of growth, continuall greennes, or poetickall fancies haue made at any time famous. In most part of which there had bene framed by art such pleasant arbors, that (one tree to tree, answering another) they became a gallery aloft from almost round about, which below gaue a perfect shadow, a pleasant refuge....<sup>22</sup>

Here, Philip Sidney transplants Sannazaro's locus amoenus and his mixed grove, his vision of an eternally-green nature responsive to every human need, to England. Here is proof that the Italian poet's artistry very quickly inspired the writers of other countries to create their own home-visions of nature. Such transference also occurred in the visual arts, and is the subject of the essays in Part III: 'Sylvan Exchange'.

Leopoldine Prosperetti sets the stage for this transnational exchange of green visions with her essay 'Titian: Sylvan Poet', arguing that Titian's unique, lyrically-natural, and meaningful depictions of trees – alone and in groups – are not only a

22 Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, ed. Katharine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008), 1.19.

defining aspect of his art, but also were of great importance in shaping the sylvan visions of the great landscape painters who came after him. She shows how the print medium helped him to spread this imagery to a Europe hungry for better ways to body forth the green world; traces several key motifs he developed, ones with long resonance in European scenery; and concludes by asking us to reevaluate our human drive to call forth the green beauties of nature, insisting we understand it as an eco-poetic urge of particular note in our current ecological crisis.

A further development of landscape imagery, and one that also had an immediate impact on European art, is revealed in Patrizia Tosini's 'From Venice to Tivoli: Girolamo Muziano and Invention of the Tiburtine landscape'. Muziano (c.1532–92) first painted in Padua and Venice, was taught by the Italian Domenico Campagnola and the Dutch Lambert Sustris, and then moved South to work in Rome and nearby Tivoli. Tosini's essay traces the influences that allowed Muziano to invent the transformational, complex, verdant imagery that emerged in his Tivoli works, especially those at Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este's villa. She explores the impact of Venetian draftsmen, particularly Titian and Campagnola, on his early style, and shows how his Roman manner changes, in part because of the wild verdancy of Tivoli, to become one that influenced generations of artists to come.

Continuing this section's investigation of the spread of green imagery within Italy and from Italy outward, and also its exploration of the connection between artistic virtuosity and natural imagery, Sabine Peinelt-Schmidt's essay 'Of Oak and Elder, Cloud-Like Angels, and a Bird's Nest: The Graphic Interpretation of Titian's *The Death of St. Peter Martyr* by Martino Rota, John Battista Fontana, Valentin Lefebre, John Baptist Jackson, and their Successors' provides a close assessment of reproductive engravings after Titian's sylvan tour de force, his *Death of St. Peter Martyr* altarpiece (1529, destroyed 1867). The titular printmakers, working in Venice, Rome and other places on the continent, subtly reworked Titian's original vision, minimizing the religious narrative and emphasizing the visual presence of the forest trees and accompanying natural details. Peinelt-Schmidt contrasts written descriptions of the work with copies made from it, showing how, in part, the lack of detailed verbal exegesis of its much-admired landscape allowed printmakers the creative freedom to shift the work in their own 'green' directions. These free translations of Titian's magisterial vision of greenery, from painting to print, she argues, did much to shape the portrayal of verdure in Western art.

Finally, in 'The Verdant as Violence: The Storm Landscapes of Herman van Swanevelt and Gaspard Dughet', Susan Russell moves between the Netherlands, Rome and France, seeking to settle the question of who invented the genre of the 'land storm' by looking very closely at the works of these artists. A good part of her essay is devoted to tracing the origins of a new landscape genre, but Russell also addresses larger cultural trends in Italy that might have raised interest in the 'land storm' in general. Natural philosophy flourished in Rome, especially in the circles at



the Barberini court. Along with contemporary analyses of ancient texts on storms, Roman scholars produced scientific investigations into atmospheric conditions and their effects on the earth, studies that may well have triggered a response by landscape artists working in Rome, creating works with immediate impact in France and beyond.

## Conclusions

Russell's essay, moving from country to country, from visual to textual analysis, from humanist inquiries into ancient texts to then-contemporary scientific musings on weather and climate, is a fitting end to our three sections, bringing together many of the methods used in other essays and showing how artistic visions of the green world continued to be innovated into the seventeenth century and beyond, in part through inspiration by multiple past practices, from ancient writings to early sixteenth century art theory. But this is not the end of the volume. 'Green Worlds' closes with a coda by Paul Barolsky entitled 'A Brief Journey Through the Green World of Renaissance Venice', a text enjoining the reader to look once again at a number of justifiably-famous images of verdancy. Just as this essay collection does, Barolsky's journey begins with some fifteenth century Florentine landscape revelations, but his main goal is to linger in sixteenth-century Venice, a century and locale renowned for its green poetic vision. Barolsky asks us to consider the ways certain revolutionary Venetian works blur distinctions between nature and art, between painting and poetry, between spirituality and play, insisting that certain paintings can never be fully understood. His essay closes our book with a suggestive meditation on the scholarly paradox of the verdant world's sensual delights, insisting that 'there is never an exact equivalence between word and image.' No ...there are only infinite shades of green.