

# ANNALES

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*Annali di Studi istriani e mediterraneei*  
*Annals for Istrian and Mediterranean Studies*  
*Series Historia et Sociologia, 26, 2016, 3*





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FROM CAMPAGNA TO ARCADIA: CHANGES IN THE RECEPTION OF  
TERRACED LANDSCAPES IN ART AND THEIR PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

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## ABSTRACT

*As upholders of the Campagna ideal of the Renaissance, (terraced) agrarian landscapes played an important role in ancient times: their appearance in Italian landscape painting testifies to an aesthetic sense for agriculture that was prevalent at the time. Later, however, terraced landscapes disappeared from view for a long time because the aesthetic ideal increasingly turned towards Arcadian scenes of nature with idealized natural, wooded, and pastoral landscapes. Their reappearance in nineteenth-century art and literature promoted the public appreciation of terraced agrarian landscapes. However, the agrarian landscapes of the intensively used lower regions are hardly any longer linked with scenic beauty. We therefore postulate that landscapes that are not aesthetically charged are in danger of being left at the mercy of urbanization and sheer functionality.*

**Keywords:** terraced landscapes, Campagna, Arcadia, agrarian landscapes, reception

DALLA CAMPAGNA ALL'ARCADIA: CAMBIAMENTI DELLA PERCEZIONE DEI PAESAGGI  
TERRAZZATI IN ARTE E LE LORO IMPLICAZIONI NELLA PRATICA

## RIASSUNTO

*Come elemento chiave dell'ideale della Campagna del Rinascimento, i paesaggi agrari (terrazzati) assumevano già un ruolo importante nei tempi antichi: la loro apparizione nella pittura di paesaggio dimostra un prevalente senso estetico per l'agricoltura. Eppure più tardi, i paesaggi terrazzati sono spariti di vista per un lungo periodo, a causa di un orientamento dell'ideale estetico verso l'immagine dell'Arcadia che idealizza i paesaggi naturali, forestali e pastorali. La loro riapparizione in arte e letteratura nel XIX secolo ha rinforzato la stima nel pubblico per i paesaggi agrari terrazzati. Al contrario, i paesaggi delle pianure coltivati intensivamente non vengono spesso valutati in riferimento alla bellezza. Ipotizziamo dunque, che i paesaggi che non vengono apprezzati esteticamente rischiano di essere esposti all'urbanizzazione e alla trasformazione puramente funzionale.*

**Parole chiave:** paesaggio terrazzato, Campagna, Arcadia, paesaggio agrario, percezione

## INTRODUCTION

Landscape and beauty are closely linked. The aesthetic experience of urban and rural cultural landscapes influences people's wellbeing and happiness. Land becomes landscape, when, thanks to sensory perception, it triggers sensations or is changed through symbolizations into something new, a kind of inner "invisible landscape." These constructs of landscapes are idealizations; they largely originated in antiquity and, especially, in the Italian Renaissance, influenced aesthetic judgements about landscapes (Rodewald, 2013). Thus, the beautiful landscape (Ital. *bel paesaggio*) was already explained by Marcus Terentius Varro (first century BC) in terms of the useful (Lat. *utilitas*) and the aesthetic (Lat. *delectatio*) in connection with the construction of Roman villas outside the cities (Meissner, 1999).

During the Renaissance, agriculture—particularly farming—was at the center of the artistic reception of the landscape and thus also in demand by the urban aristocracy. Ploughmen, oxen, donkeys, fences, cultivated terraces, and furrowed fields surrounded by hedges, embedded in a painted, realistic landscape (in the Verismo style), with streets, paths, farms, and villages, symbolized the necessity of farming to feed urban populations, such as those of Venice. In this glorification, reference was made to Virgil (70–19 BC) and his *Georgics*, a poem describing various farming techniques, which was continued by later agronomists and linked to the ideal of rural life according to ancient tradition. This turn to a simple rural life was the key theme in landscape painting during an intense but brief period, already appearing in the famous fresco *Allegoria del Buon Governo* (Allegory of Good Government) by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in Siena (c. 1338), and the calendar landscapes dominated by farm work in the frescoes in the Eagle Tower (Ital. *Torre di Aquila*) in Trent (end of the fourteenth century) and the better-known *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* (The Very Rich Hours of the Duke of Berry) by the Dutch Limburg brothers (c. 1416). Arable farming was also depicted in the famous 1444 painting by Konrad Witz, *The Miraculous Draft of Fishes*. The conception of that time was that the beauty created by the artist in his works should surpass nature, allowing it to become visible through the artistic creation (Liessmann, 2009). From the 1420s onward, the Italian artists' guild understood the landscape as an illusionary and realistic image of the land (Büttner, 2006).

The reception of the landscape in art provides valuable information on the socioculturally changing relationship of real to idealized landscapes (Büttner, 2006) and allows conclusions to be drawn about public perception and prevailing preferences for certain scenes. Thus, Emilio Sereni developed an image of the agricultural history of Italy based on written and pictorial sources (Sereni, 1961). In a recent study of the history of the reception of terraced landscapes in painting and literature in the Valais (Switzerland), the earliest mentioned representation of terraced

mountain slopes was a woodcut from 1550 (Rodewald, 2011). In travel literature, however, it was only in 1761 that Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1978; original: 1761), in his epistolary novel *Julie, or the New Heloise*, made a brief reference to the terraced vineyards he saw on a trip to Valais in 1744. Nonetheless, terraced landscapes, albeit more dominantly for viticulture than for farming, existed in Valais from the eleventh century onward, and are likely to have been very widespread since the thirteenth century (Wein- und Rebbaumuseum, 2010).

If one considers the written, and especially pictorial, sources of the reception of agrarian landscapes (understood as all landscapes that are cultivated; that is, arable farmland and terraced vineyards, but not pastoral land), a change in aesthetic appreciation is evident. There was hardly another type of landscape that had disappeared—since its idealization in the heyday of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, also in Flanders and Italy—so radically out of the artist's view and the interest of the observer, as agrarian landscapes, only to reappear out of its aesthetic doldrums as of 1800, in the form of its most spectacular expression as terraced landscapes. Since then, they have been considered globally to epitomize beautiful landscapes, as also reflected by the UNESCO World Heritage List. In contrast, the unspectacular agrarian landscape of plains and hills never recovered from its fading into artistic—and therefore also aesthetic—insignificance. It remained largely a landscape of functional production, consequently almost defenselessly at the mercy of agglomerations' growing demand for construction.

This contribution shows how, during the heyday of landscape painting of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a radical change took place in the aesthetic image of the landscape. It went from a rural Campagna idyll based on an agrarian (farmed) landscape, to the Arcadian ideal, with its increasingly dramatic and symbolic portrayal of nature and its emphasis on natural, wooded, and pastoral landscapes. This led to the loss of aesthetic interest in agrarian land, particularly in its terraced form on slopes, until it increasingly reappeared only in the nineteenth century. In this study, we start with Italian landscape painting in the Renaissance, broadening our view to encompass the artistic representation of Swiss terraced landscapes in the Valais, and discuss to what extent artistic representation also shapes public appreciation for a landscape. We link this to the use of and views on the landscape today: if we perceive no beauty in our farmland, its meaning is often reduced to pure functionality and efficiency, which often results in a carelessly arranged landscape.

## THE AGRICULTURAL IDEAL AS REPRESENTED IN TWO TOPOI, CAMPAGNA AND ARCADIA

## A) CAMPAGNA

The term Campagna referred to the "typically rural" and was accompanied by the idealization of the *vita rus-*

*tica* (rural life) which was meant to be useful, virtuous, and at the same time pleasant. In reality a hilly landscape surrounding Rome and Naples, the Campagna has inspired painters, writers, and educational travelers since the Renaissance, and it became the ideal of a well-kept rural landscape. The elevation of rural life suited the vision of well-heeled city dwellers, who with their desire for a *villa rustica* (country villa) in the Campagna also helped construct the character of the land, both in thought and in reality.

In *De re aedificatoria* (On the Art of Building, 1485), Leon Battista Alberti also emphasized the importance of including the correct design of the surrounding countryside in plans for villa construction (Fischer, 2012). The topos of the beautiful (cultivated) landscape as a culturally justified relationship of the contemplative with the useful side of peasant life allows the term *agricultura* to be understood in the sense of “agri-culture.” However, nature should always remain picturesque, and, according to the Tuscan agronomist Luigi Alamanni, only be subjected to gentle, imitative tasks (Sereni, 1961).

The appeal of Campagna involved the “purity of the air,” the “serenity of the sky,” “distance from the diseases of the cities,” the “loneliness of life,” “distance from noise,” “natural joy at the fields,” “purity of customs,” the “good life,” and “happiness” (Mathieu Castellani, 2003, 33ff). In other words, particular importance was attached to the cultural component of the landscape.

However, the topos of the Campagna also had ecological downsides: large-scale deforestation especially on the hills; the reclamation and drainage of swamps; and the conversion of mixed-use, irregularly located meadows, fields, vineyards, and the originally closed cultivated areas into open fields and meadows, which led to the first clearing of the cultivated landscape (Sereni, 1961). This continued throughout the industrialization of agriculture and persists today.

## B) ARCADIA

The concept of Arcadia goes back to Virgil and Jacopo Sannazaro, and idealized a natural, wooded, and exclusively pastoral landscape, which was regarded as the ideal land (German: *Sehnsuchtsland*; Rodewald, Gantenbein, 2016). With his work *Arcadia* from 1502/1504, Sannazaro sparked an unexpected wave of enthusiasm that started in the place of publication, Venice. His Arcadia, populated by shepherdesses and shepherds, satyrs, and nymphs, was both an autobiographical landscape (he grew up in the Picentine Mountains near Salerno) and an imaginary one, a place he wistfully associated with happiness and a rediscovered golden age. This topos of an idyllic landscape became a key element in painting, literature, music, and humanistic philosophy. Between 1500 and 1520, during the creative phase of Giorgione, Giovanni and Gentile Bellini, Cima da Conegliano, the

young Titian, Lorenzo Lotto, Giulio Campagnola, and others, the Campagna motif began to be mixed with that of the bucolic; that is, the natural, wooded, and wild (possibly also because of the strengthening influence of the pictorial language of northern artists such as Albrecht Dürer; Büttner 2006). In parallel, there was a shift in the type of agricultural activity depicted in the paintings, from farmers working in the fields (the Campagna ideal) to pastoral activity by shepherds with their flocks (Arcadia).

The pastorally oriented nature idyll was associated with a glade in the middle of flowering meadows with stately individual trees, surrounded by a wild-looking forest. It also includes meandering streams, and sometimes waterfalls, springs, and grottos. Waterfowl, wild geese, and deer and bulls also join the scene. Even wild animals such as wolves, bears, and foxes do not feel particularly threatening. Sometimes it is possible to catch a glimpse of distant broad plains with homes and brightly lit mountains in the background. There are gravestones and other mysterious traces of the past. The bucolic scenery of Arcadia is ideally linked to the most pleasant weather conditions, which only a lasting spring can provide: “a long celebration of nature” (Wehle, 2008, 45). The Arcadian themes of nature dominated artists’ representations of the landscape until the Romantic period. Meanwhile, arable farming as well as terraced landscapes widely disappeared from landscape painting.

Both topoi of scenic beauty are often not clearly separable; namely, in the highly productive phase of landscape painting at the start of the sixteenth century. Thus, in certain lyrical texts such as those of François de Belleforest (1559), the *vita pastorale* (shepherds’ life) and the *vita rustica* (rural life based on farming) are intertwined. But a stronger emphasis began to take place on the natural moods of a landscape with its powerful elements—the play of light and shadows, the rivers, glades, and a wilderness—which underlined the free life of the shepherds far from the city, amid fantastic scenery. With Guercino, Nicolas Poussin, Claude Lorrain, and Salomon Gessner, the Arcadian pastoral landscape achieved classical perfection in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, at the start of Romanticism Arcadia disappeared (Brandt, 2006), unable to keep up with the happy promise of progressive thought. In *Faust, Part Too*, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1986; original: 1832) let it die as an illusion of an ancient place of happiness. Later, Arcadia was reduced to a private idyll of the bourgeoisie. However, it had nonetheless maintained the power to justify the nature conservation movement of the end of the nineteenth century, which in turn re-emerged in the environmental movement that began in the 1960s. Thus, Arcadia today lives on in nature conservation, but also in widely appreciated mountain agriculture; that is, today’s pastoralism.

## METHOD OF ANALYSIS

This study used the following method to assess the reception of landscapes depicted in Renaissance paintings. First, we viewed the most important works of landscape painting of the Venetian school (as represented in the museums and churches of Venice, and dominant in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), and investigated the prevalence of agricultural fields or terrace-like structures. We complemented these observations with studies on a broad selection of literature on Italian landscape painting of the Renaissance, as well as some texts from around 1500 (e.g., by Pietro Bembo and Jacopo San-nazaro). To identify terraces, the analysis of historical agrarian landscape forms by Sereni (1961) was used as an aid. The study differentiated between terraces with gentle slopes (Ital. *ciglionamento*) and steep terraces (Ital. *a gradoni*), which were constructed to enable the cultivation of slopes. The analysis of the representation of agricultural landscapes was placed in relation to the two landscape ideals, Campagna and Arcadia, and subsequently also to the terraced landscapes of Valais—which, as a popular travel destination, was referenced in a wealth of art and literature at the time.

A more detailed presentation of the appearance of terraced landscape painting of the Venetian Renaissance period as well as of the terraced landscapes of Valais was published, in German, in the journal *Naturschutz und Landschaftsplanung* (Nature Conservation and Landscape Planning; Rodewald, 2014) and in the publication *Ihr schwebt über dem Abgrund – die Walliser Terrassenlandschaften: Entstehung – Entwicklung – Wahrnehmung* (Hovering on the Brink. Terraced Landscapes of the Valais: Creation—Development—Perception; Rodewald, 2011; French translation: 2013).

## RESULTS: THE RISE AND FALL OF TERRACED LANDSCAPES IN ART

## A) THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF EMBANKMENTS AND SLOPE-PARALLEL STRUCTURES IN GOTHIC AND EARLY RENAISSANCE PAINTING

One of the earliest depictions of obviously cultivated horizontal hill areas with regular tree planting on the slopes is the mid-fourteenth century work *Orazione nel giardino degli Ulivi* (The Prayer in the Garden of Olives) by Barna Senese. According to Sereni (1961), this is the first conscious representation of a landscape form that moves towards terracing, which was widespread in Tuscany during the Renaissance. In linear, almost terrace-like form, vines are depicted on the fresco by Ambrogio Lorenzetti. The individual plant lines follow the slope outline and are, as in the bocage landscapes in France, enclosed by hedgerows or rows of trees, as was common for a long time. Nonetheless, Otto Pächt (2002)

called the frequently occurring terrace-shaped rocks “corkscrew mountains,” a typical form of the depiction of mountain landscapes in the Middle Ages, which was still prevalent in the fifteenth century (e.g., in Jacopo Bellini’s work *San Gerolamo nel deserto* ‘Saint Jerome in the Desert’, or in Sassetta’s *Viaggio dei Re Magi* ‘Journey of the Magi’ from around 1435).

## B) THE DEPICTION OF DISTINCTIVE EMBANKMENTS AND TERRACES BETWEEN 1460 AND 1530

Although the landscapes of the High Gothic period of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as Pächt (2002) somewhat disparagingly said, were still primarily “accessories and wallpaper” to the narrative imagery in the foreground, this changed under the influence of Flemish art in the mid-fifteenth century. The famous view from the window in the landscape of Jan van Eyck (*Madonna of Chancellor Rolin*) of 1435 or the *Miraculous Draft of Fishes* by Konrad Witz (1444) are today considered the first realistic, distinctive landscape paintings. Moreover, whereas the landscape scenes in the late Middle Ages were shaped by rocky terraces, rising steeply behind the figures in the foreground, a first expansion of dimension in terms of width and depth was made by Jacopo Bellini (*San Cristoforo* ‘Saint Christopher’, in the Parisian sketchbook, 1430–1450). The furrows, boundary lines, and individual trees in this Campagna emphasized a “natural” geometrization, allowing a sense of depth.

Andrea Mantegna, Cima da Conegliano, and the brothers Giovanni and Gentile Bellini were outstanding masters of increasingly expressive landscape paintings: Mantegna (1431–1506) repeatedly used motifs of an agrarian landscape (*Orazione nell’Orto* ‘Prayer in the Garden’ 1464, *La Crocifissione* ‘The Crucifixion’ 1459, and *San Giorgio* ‘Saint George’ 1467). Thus, with his 1455 fresco *Il martirio di San Giacomo* ‘The Martyrdom of Saint James’, he was the first to create a prototypical hill landscape based on real observations, in which numerous lines, marked by shrubs and trees (fruit trees), ran parallel to the slopes.

Cima da Conegliano (1459–1517/18) presented his landscape scenes in the style of the poetry of Virgil’s rural idyll, which united humility, generosity, and simplicity (Villa, 2010). His gentle, colorful paintings reflect a landscape image that corresponds to the Arcadian-pastoral ideal. What is depicted are cultural landscapes dominated by meadows and orchards, but which unlike in Mantegna’s work show no clear signs of being farmed, serving nature instead. Field and meadow structures running parallel to the slopes are found in his c. 1495 work, *San Girolamo nel deserto* (Saint Jerome in the Desert).

According to Pächt (2002), Giovanni Bellini’s *San Francesco nel deserto* (Saint Francis in the Desert) from around 1485 is the earliest Italian landscape painting (see Figure 1). In the background of the picture, which

is influenced by the Flemish style of painting, there is a castle-like city, under which lie clearly depicted terraces. Cultivated fields with farmers at work are also found in his work *Madonna col Bambino* (Madonna and Child, c. 1510), which was embedded in the familiar landscape of Vicenza. Rectangular, regular fields—likely to have been ordered following a plan, parallel to the slopes and surrounded by hedges—are also recognizable in the background of *Pietà* (c. 1505). A clearly terraced slope can be seen in the left corner of the painting *Cristo al Calvario e il Circeneo* (Christ at Calvary and the Cyrene, around 1460) by the Bellinis. Around the same time, the work *Presepio e altre storie evangeliche e di Santi* (The Nativity and Other Stories of the Gospel and Saints) by Antonio Vivarini appeared, with gently insinu-

ated sloping terraces in the background. This is similar to what can be seen in another painting by Giovanni Bellini (*Cristo nell'orto* 'Christ in the Garden'), where, below the town, hedge structures typical of his style appear, parallel to the slopes.

Farming—considered beautiful, even paradisiacal—became a form of culture with which well-to-do townspeople surrounded themselves artistically. This turn to the rural and thus to one's familiar homeland led not only to agrarian reform, but in particular also to a boom in construction of detached houses, which triggered a first period of urban sprawl. No foreign country, no travel experience, nor new insight was sought; instead, depictions were devoted to nostalgia for one's own land, which at the time was, notably, being traveled by other



Figure 1: *San Francesco nel deserto* (Saint Francis in the Desert) by Giovanni Bellini (1433–1516) (The Frick Collection, New York). Wall terraces cover the mountain slope in the background, to the left.

Europeans (Kiel, Neri, 1952). The Campagna was a cultural metaphor for a human-friendly nature and a contrast to the frightening seas and high mountains, to nature that was uninfluenced and unable to be influenced.

### C) THE DISAPPEARANCE OF TERRACED LANDSCAPES

The widely appreciated Campagna ideal of a peaceful, almost garden-like cultural landscape, which was recognized by the locals and loved by the townspeople, underwent a shift in the sixteenth century. This occurred amid political confusion; the end of the humanistic circle of Caterina Cornaro in Asolo in 1509; the military defeat in the battle of Cambrai in the same year, which caused the destruction of the Venetian countryside, considered the familiar Campagna idyll; and the death of Giovanni Bellini in 1516. Thus, the existing Campagna ideal gave way to the Arcadian, moving towards a landscape more strongly influenced by pastoral literature, in which nature was emphasized. This Arcadian motif also contained dramatism and wilderness (e.g., as in *La Tempesta* 'The Storm' or *Il Tramonto* 'Sunset' by Giorgione). Giorgione—like Titian at the beginning of the sixteenth century, but also the painters of the seventeenth century—was driven to paint landscapes for themselves and to "imitate" nature (Kiel, Neri, 1952). Hence, nature was in the foreground; the rural-farming idyll and thus the terraced landscapes retreated (see also Ambroise et al., 1989). This was to an extent due to the influence of Flemish landscape painting, which also used farming village-like motifs (e.g. Brueghel and Bouts), but refrained from depicting terraces because this type of landscape did not appear there.

Terraced agrarian landscapes were closer to the landscape ideal of the early Renaissance than to the Arcadian and sublime nature of the Enlightenment. Thus, in the first landscape depictions of the great Venetian Renaissance painters Vivarini, Mantegna, Bellini, Giorgione, Cima da Conegliano, and Titian, farmland was found fairly frequently (terraced agrarian landscapes, however, only occasionally). They first appear in 1450, disappearing again with the later Renaissance painters in 1520.

### D) THE REKINDLED INTEREST IN TERRACED LANDSCAPES AS SEEN IN THE VALAIS

Viticulture in the Swiss Canton of Valais likely goes back to Roman times, and the expansion of the vineyards in the late Middle Ages was already substantial. Nonetheless, the terraced landscapes of the Valais were a rare subject in the widely known paintings of the time, compared to their depictions in the Italian painting of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. There are no known representations of terraced landscapes by the first real Swiss landscape painter, Caspar Wolf (1735–

1783), nor by the great English Alpine painters, such as John Robert Cozens (1752–1799) and Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851).

Even in the book *Switzerland / La Suisse pittoresque* by William Henry Bartlett, which was published in 1834 in London and contains numerous steel engravings, there are no terraced slopes. The works depict the idealized, untouched nature of the mountain world: mountains, glaciers, forests, rivers, and now and then some shepherds and herds: the Arcadian ideal. This view of the beautiful landscape, focused on nature, collided with that of terraced landscapes as intensively cultivated, regularly structured, fenced-in land. This changed as of the mid-nineteenth century: with the artists of the "School of Savièse," the rural daily life of the Valais mountain population became the focus of attention, also in view of the romanticized urban potential customers in Europe. Gradually, terraced vineyards appeared in paintings, as foreground scenes and in portraits.

The growing artistic interest in the Valais agrarian landscape, in which Campagna motifs can be recognized, cannot be explained without the social changes that took place in parallel. These include the development of tourism and the growing economic importance and expansion in the area dedicated to viticulture. Related to this was the heroization of the winemaker: he appears in almost dwarf-like fashion in the huge theater of steps at dizzying heights, cultivating his vines on the smallest level surfaces wrested from the mountain. Literary depictions played a crucial role in promoting this image.

As in the visual arts, mainly the mountains and primeval nature were the focus of the extensive Alpine literature at the start. Between the sixteenth century and end of the nineteenth century, the manmade terraced slopes between Sierre and Sion, where many commercial travelers, scholars, and writers inevitably passed on their way through the Rhône Valley, were hardly the focus of landscape descriptions. Every now and then, sober and rational mentions can be found, as in this quote from 1600 by the French agricultural scientist, Olivier de Serres (1539–1619): "The earth of mountains or steep slopes is softened by traversing walls, called *bancs* . . . to hold the earth back, and prevent it from sliding down as a result of rain and frequent ploughing" (in Ambroise et al., 1989, 45; translated from French). Also in Rousseau (1712–1778), references can be found to the existence of terraced vineyards (Rousseau, 1978; original: 1761), as well as in the travelogue of the physicist Alessandro Volta (1745–1827; Volta, 1991) or that of Louis Simond (1767–1831; Simond, 1822, in Pitteloud, 2005).

After his professional journey through the Valais in 1885, the French professor of agronomy Victor Pulliat (1827–1896) was the first to describe in detail the individual vineyard locations from Salgesch to Martigny (Pulliat, 1885). Through him, the terraced vineyard landscapes are appreciated more broadly. Moreover, through the tales of the writer Charles Ferdinand Ramuz



*Figures 2a/b: Edmond Bille, Vignoble valaisan (Vineyard in Valais), 1918 and the situation today (Photos: Robert Hofer, SL-FP).*

(1878–1947) from Lausanne, terraced landscapes were shrouded in a myth of the happy and self-contained winegrower amid monumental scenery. Thus, in the photo volume *Valais* he describes in minute detail the efforts of the mountain farmers (Ramuz, 1943). Ramuz could therefore also be described as *Monsieur le Paysage en terrasses* (Mr. Terraced Landscape), so deeply did he influence the public perception and appreciation of this landscape form in Switzerland (Rodewald, 2011).

Due to their great economic importance, the terraced vineyards of the Valais were maintained, and they still exist today. As part of the belief in progress and the devaluation of traditional management, many of the original dry stone walls were however torn down in the 1960s and 1970s and the terraces were combined into larger cultivation units; unprofitable vineyards were

turned into building land (see Figures 2a/b). Such decisions were determined by economizing cultivation, rather than by aesthetic claims of society. This was associated with a form of sobering up and aesthetic demystification of these erstwhile idealized landscapes.

Interest in terraced landscapes was only rekindled in the 1980s and 1990s. This was based on public criticism of the large-scale leveling of these areas, a changed agrarian policy, model projects, and growing knowledge about the ecological, cultural-historical, and especially aesthetic content of these possibly “perfect” anthropogenic landscapes. The growing consciousness of the values of the terraced landscapes, especially also their aesthetic rediscovery, led to restoration projects that included diverse actors and culminated, for example, in the 2007 entry of the terraced landscape of Lavaux in

#### BOX 1: VISPERTERMINEN, THE HIGHEST VINEYARD: RECEPTION AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

“You have heard of the cunningness of pagan wine. Once again the tiny vineyards have planted themselves on top of one another on the little walls. Only here, and then no longer, are they assured of fully ripening. That is perhaps why they want to go higher than anywhere else—there towards Terminen, yonder towards Zeneggen—and they creep deep into the furrowed valley. Nowhere else do the yellow and blue berries ripen sweeter than here, in the glow of the glacial sun” (Gentinetta, 1943, 42, original in German).

Numerous literary sources describe this, especially Charles Ferdinand Ramuz (1878–1947) (1943) and Friedrich Gottlieb Stebler (1852–1935) (1901): the highest vineyard in Europe, the Terbiner terraced vineyards (from *Tärbinu*, the local name for Visperterminen) in the area of Rieben, next to the village of Visperterminen and the hamlets of Ober- and Unterstalden. At an elevation of 650 to nearly 1100 m, the slope traverses about 500 meters in elevation, thanks to numerous high dry-wall terraces (see Figure 3). The Heida growing here is one of the oldest grape varieties of the Valais. The walls turn the steep slopes into small vine-gardens, often no larger than 100 m<sup>2</sup>. The climate is favorable: the slopes face south and the region is the driest in Switzerland. The large stone surfaces of the masonry, and the föhn wind, provide warmth to the Rieben vines until the late autumn.

The newest restoration of fallow plots began in the 1990s with the participation of the municipality of Visperterminen, the St. Jodern Cellars (Germ. *Jodernkellerei*) in Visperterminen, and external actors. When an owner put up his plots for sale in 1998, the initiators seized the opportunity, founding the Heida Guild in 1999 (Heida Zunft, 2016). The board planted 209 vines and offered these for sale as a membership fee: 209 buyers from diverse professions were quickly found. Those in charge made the effort to pass on their complete knowledge about viticulture and traditional management to members unfamiliar with the profession. The members are obligated to help with vineyard maintenance once or twice a year on all plots of the Heida Guild. In return, they receive a bottle of Heida once a year. In 2012, a cooperative was established for the preservation of terraced vineyards in Visperterminen (the *Genossenschaft für den Erhalt der terrassierten Rebberge von Visperterminen* or GTRV; GTRV, 2016); it is a joint effort that enables the professional maintenance of the dry stone walls to continue.

The Heida Guild and the GTRV are examples of how an originally privately cultivated vineyard became common heritage property. The fact that these old vineyards were maintained to the present day is also thanks to their strong valorization through literature and photography (Figure 4).



*Figure 3: The vineyards of Visperterminen today (Photo: SL-FP).*

*Figure 4: Vintage in Visperterminen, 1946 (Max Kettel, Médiathèque Valais – Martigny).*

the Swiss Canton of Vaud in the UNESCO World Heritage List. This enabled the preservation of a unique landscape, but for many other terraced landscapes it is too late.

#### SYNTHESIS: OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND?

We postulate that the disappearance of Campagna as its own topos of beauty is one of the factors responsible for the loss of this aesthetic side of farming itself, which still describes itself as “agri-culture,” but which one-sidedly gave up the humanistic ideal of the combination of leisure, beauty, strength of mind, and contemplation in favor of economic activity and sheer hard work. Thus, there may have been a closer correlation than previously believed between the agricultural development of the plains (towards industrialization, with negative effects on the landscape, biodiversity, soil, and water ecology) and the loss of the Campagna ideal as a delicate balance between the useful and the aesthetic. If ideals of beauty cease to appear, the actual landscape also disappears, as occurred with the erasure of Campagna in the reclaimed river valleys and plains during the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The land became a hotchpotch of settlements; the ideal of freedom and happiness turned into pure economic purpose. Aesthetic disinterest left farmland to its fate, as a place of intensive production that was damaging to the ecosystem and landscape, or of urban sprawl.

Agricultural terraces for crop production had already disappeared in a creeping process that began in 1800, hardly noticed by the public—in their place came either meadows or pastures, vineyards, or building land. In many places, former farmland was replaced by encroaching forest. Vineyard terraces, however, were retained, due to their greater economic importance, although many of the

original dry stone walls were destroyed. The economizing of cultivation dominated decisions; society made no aesthetic claims on these spaces. The once idealized Campagna landscapes, aesthetically demystified, were “out of sight, out of mind.” For many of these areas, their aesthetic rediscovery came too late, whereas for others it was their salvation (e.g., for UNESCO World Heritage sites).

We postulate that with a return to the Campagna of old we could lay the basis for a future stronger orientation of agriculture to aesthetic considerations, which is currently often lacking in intensively used production sites. A good example of a more aesthetically oriented cultivation is mountain agriculture, picturesque and loved by tourists, in which the old ideal of Arcadia lives on; another is terraced landscapes, whose aesthetic rediscovery in the nineteenth century—at least where viticulture is concerned—saved them from collapse and disuse (but only partially from intensification of use). Preserving the Geneva countryside (Fr. *Campagne genevoise*) can, for example, to a large extent be attributed to the urban population’s continuing city vs. country idealization, which is underpinned by cultural historical foundations (Mulhauser, 2013).

This analysis of the reception of terraced landscapes in art shows that there is a correlation between the aesthetic appreciation of art and literature, and the way society handled landscapes in practice. The vineyard of Visperterminen, Valais, is an excellent example (see Box 1). It would therefore be important, even indispensable, to reestablish this relationship to maintain and emphasize the services for the common good provided by farmers, and to protect important cultural landscapes from being abandoned and trivialized. For this purpose, it is necessary to identify and communicate the aesthetic qualities of agrarian landscapes in general, and of terraced landscapes in particular.

## MED CAMPAGNO IN ARKADIJO: SPREMEMBE V DOJEMANJU TERASIRANE KRAJINE V UMETNOSTI IN NJIHOVE PRAKTIČNE POSLEDICE

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### POVZETEK

*Dojemanje krajine v umetnosti nudi dragocene informacije o družbeno-kulturnem spreminjanju odnosa med resničnimi in idealiziranimi krajinami. V tem prispevku dokazujemo, da je v zlatih časih krajinskega slikarstva v 15. in 16. stoletju prišlo do izrazite spremembe v dojemanju lepote krajine – od kmečke, ruralne idile lepo obdelane krajine (Campagne) k bolj dramatičnemu in simboličnemu arkadijskemu idealu narave s poudarkom na naravnih, gozdnih in pastirskih krajinah. Zaradi tega je estetsko zanimanje za kmečke krajine, zlasti za obdelana terasirana pobočja, upadlo in se znova uveljavilo šele v 19. stoletju. Raziskava temelji na analizi najpomembnejših del krajinskega slikarstva beneške šole, literarnih študijah italijanskega krajinskega slikarstva v renesansi in izvirnih besedilih iz obdobja okoli leta 1500. Spreminjajoče se upodobitve kmečkih krajin obravnavamo v odnosu do dveh krajinskih idealov – Campagne in Arkadije – ter tudi do terasastih krajin švicarskega kantona Valais, ki se kot priljubljena potovalna destinacija pojavlja v številnih likovnih in literarnih delih. Na tej osnovi nato razpravljamo, do kolikšne mere je umetniška upodobitev oblikovala odnos javnosti do krajine. Predpostavljamo, da bi vrnitev k staremu idealu Campagne lahko postavila temelje za večji posluh kmetijstva do estetike, ki je danes na območjih intenzivne pridelave pogosto primanjkuje. Dober primer pridelave, ki v večji meri upošteva estetsko dimenzijo, je slikovito gorsko kmetijstvo, ki ga obožujejo turisti in v katerem še naprej živi starodavni ideal Arkadije. Drug primer, bližji idealu Campagne, so terasirane krajine, katerih estetika je znova pritegnila pozornost v 19. stoletju, kar jih je – vsaj na področju vinogradništva – obvarovalo pred propadom in opuščanjem (a ne v celoti pred intenzivno rabo).*

**Ključne besede:** terasirana krajina, Campagna, Arkadija, kmečke krajine, dojemanje

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