Thomas Beck's critical edition of Bartolomeo Taegio's La Villa is an important addition to the body of published primary sources of landscape architectural theory. Beck offers the first English translation of a well-known Italian treatise that was first published in 1559 in Milan by Francesco Moscheni.

The book presents a broad picture of the advantages of rural life in sixteenth-century Lombardy in the form of a dialogue between two gentlemen, Vitauro and Partenio. Vitauro, in whose voice we recognize Taegio's own, maintains the superiority of rural life compared to urban life. He tries to persuade Partenio to leave Milan and settle in the countryside. One of the benefits, Vitauro argues, of living in the countryside is the pursuit of otium, or honorable leisure, which involves indulging in reading and writing and engaging in learned conversations without any of the distractions that are typical of the urban environment. The dialectic of rural otium and urban negotium was certainly not new at the time Taegio was writing. Fifteen years earlier it was the dominating theme of another work on villa life published in Venice, Alberto Lollio's Lettera...nella quale...egli celebra la villa e lauda molto l'agricoltura. Taegio, however, as Beck points out in the introduction, distances himself from both his contemporaries and predecessors by separating the villa from its agricultural context, as when he makes Vitauro "defer the discussion of agriculture to a more convenient occasion" (22). Unlike other contemporary contributors to villa literature, such as Giuseppe Falcone and Agostino Gallo, the pleasure of villa life for Taegio does not derive from the landowner's direct involvement in agriculture, but is firmly rooted in the tradition of vita contemplativa that originates with the writings of Cicero and the younger Pliny. An essential part of the pleasure of living in the countryside derives from the presence of gardens. Although he mentions more than two hundred of them, Taegio only describes in detail those of Cesare Simonetta at Castellazzo and of senator Pietro Paolo Arrigoni. While the latter is described in terms of the gods and goddesses to whom each plant is sacred, with little if no information about the articulation of space, the description of Simonetta's garden has the flavor of an actual visit. In the related passage Taegio describes a square and well-proportioned garden enclosed by a hedge, whose paths are neither too wide nor too narrow but such that they agree well with the delicate garden. The agreement of all the garden parts seems to be achieved by the use of geometry and proportion, which guarantee that "l'occhio al mirar non ne sente offesa alcuna" (the eye by looking cannot see anything wrong, 158). The creation of garden compartments symmetrically disposed along paths crossing each other at right angles is not an original contribution of Taegio or of Cesare Simonetta to garden making. We find similar advice for the layout of gardens in Luigi Alamanni's La coltivazione, a vernacular poem on agriculture published in Paris in 1546 that seems to be Taegio's direct source in this case.1 “The eye would not be offended,” says Alamanni repeating Columella's advice, whenever man exerts control over nature, as when sowing seeds attached to a rope so that they will grow as trees that will be perfectly aligned.2 Taegio makes his original contribution to garden theory when he gives a well-ordered and geometric garden a new, if somewhat generic, appellation. He explains that in Simonetta's garden are to be found the ingenious grafts that show with great wonder to the world the industry of a wise gardener, who molds nature with art and therefore makes—a terza natura (160–61). This is one of the most quoted passages of Taegio's treatise because it includes one of the earliest articulations of gardens as “third nature,” that is, as a cultivated nature that differs both from the agricultural fields and urban infrastructure of the cultural landscape (second nature), and from wilderness (first nature).

While the meaning of terza natura as that which mediates between art and nature has been addressed before by garden historians, Beck's commentary delves into the archaeology of the phrase by tracing the dialectic of art and nature to classical Roman literature. Beck points out that in the Renaissance, gardens are addressed for the first time with the same lexicon used by Cicero and Horace to discuss works of rhetoric and poetry. Although the writings of the younger Pliny anticipated, implicitly, a possible interaction between nature and art in the making of gardens, it is with Taegio, according to Beck, that gardens are finally described as an explicit result of that collaboration. Beck's discussion of terza natura is insightful, but it would have benefited from a more thorough elaboration of

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1. See Alamanni, La coltivazione, p. 176.

2. Taegio, La Villa, p. 158.
the meaning of the word *arte*. Beck assumes that the word has a purely aesthetic connotation but neglects the possibility that in the context in which it is discussed may also mean technique, especially if one considers that *terza natura*’s main responsibility is to make the fruits of Simonetta’s garden “more flavorful” (161).

Unlike the treatise itself, which, being a dialogue, does not contain thematic chapters, Beck’s introduction is divided into twelve sections that place *La Villa* and its author in their social, economic, political, philosophical and literary contexts. We learn from Beck that Taegio was a learned jurist and man of letters who belonged to an old Milanese patrician family. His professional activities and his lineage must have facilitated his acquaintance with the aristocratic Lombard families he lists in his treatise. Beck’s contextualization of the treatise is learned and meticulous. He points out that Taegio’s dialogue is not based on a Ciceronian model, and that it is not documentary because its interlocutors are not based on existing individuals. In addition, Beck rightly observes that *La Villa* can be considered as a dialogue between Taegio and his numerous sources, which range from Xenophon and Plato to Cato and Virgil, and from Petrarch to Poliziano and Jacopo Sannazzaro. Beck perceptively suggests that if Vitruvius’s position within the dialogue “is demonstrated to have more validity than Partenio’s,” this is not because “it is reasoned better, but because it is represented as having more authority” (54). It is unfortunate that none of the topics that Beck addresses so knowledgeably in the introduction is mentioned in the book’s index, which only includes a list of the names of villa owners mentioned in Taegio’s text. Also missing from the book’s bibliography is Iris Lauterbach’s work on Milanese villa culture, which is one of the few scholarly efforts to address Taegio and his dialogue in its entirety.3

While the only printing of Taegio’s work in 1559 allowed for a limited circulation of *La Villa*, Beck’s edition will surely contribute to expand its popularity among both scholars and students, not only because of its accurate translation but also because the book includes the original Italian text. *La Villa* is an exceptional document because it reflects on existing gardens and for this reason constitutes an invaluable source of information about sixteenth-century villa culture in Lombardy. With the addition of Beck’s careful contextualization of Taegio’s work, this book is a welcome addition to the body of literature that constitutes garden theory.

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Notes
2. Ibid. (v. 197), 166.

Martha D. Pollak
*Cities at War in Early Modern Europe*

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The cities in Martha Pollak’s new book are not really at war. They are preparing for war and commemorating war, but the actual warfare is left out of the picture. Though most of the cities she discusses experienced one or more sieges, the military operations themselves are not the focus of her study. Likewise, Pollak does not examine fortifications as such, but rather their multifarious effect on the conception and representation of the city—what she calls “military urbanism”: “an international style of urban design characterized by uniformity, geometrical clarity, architectural economy, and unadorned monumentality” (i).

The ambitious aim of *Cities at War in Early Modern Europe* is to demonstrate that the military component was of central importance in the history of urbanism between 1550 and 1700. Of course, the gripping conjunction between cities and war has been explored before; a fine example is *La ville et la guerre*, edited by Antoine Picon, oddly never cited by Pollak.1 But overall historians of urban design have hitherto downplayed military considerations. A notable exception is Enrico Guidoni and Angela Marino’s two-volume *Storia dell’urbanistica*, to which Pollak is evidently indebted.2 Pollak’s subject matter—urban design and military culture—remains that of her earlier book, *Turin, 1564–1680* (1991), but she now expands her survey to the whole of Europe, and offers not a chronological narrative but a thematically organized study.3 She splendidly succeeds in rectifying the familiar picture by showing how well-known manifestations of baroque city planning were generated by military urbanism.

The pan-European approach is particularly praiseworthy, for although war was the most international of phenomena, most modern studies of military architecture and urbanism remain confined within present-day national frontiers. Pollak’s comparative survey ranges from Valletta to Stockholm and from Naples to London. Her attention goes mainly to the leading and best-studied regions: Italy, France, Northern Europe. Few examples from more peripheral areas are included. One also wonders why Europe’s overseas colonies are not considered, given that many of the new fortresses created there would provide compelling illustrations to her thesis. Laudably, Pollak’s book, like its subject, is not only transnational, but transdisciplinary: it goes beyond urban planning to embrace symptoms of military culture as varied as garden forts and mock sieges, war games and fireworks, triumphal arches and equestrian statues. She has brought together a wealth of material in a rich book that will interest not just architectural, urban, and military historians, but students of court culture, festivals, cartography, and prints. While the width of Pollak’s geographical and thematic coverage are distinctly innovative, her methodological approach remains fairly traditional; although she is fortunately less concerned than many of her predecessors with the elusive and confusing concept of the “ideal city,” her study still relies primarily on printed sources—treatises and engravings in particular—which often present a rather idealized picture of the “real” city.

Pollak writes vigorous prose and does not shun metaphors: she compares