

Archive reports and memories. The Brera Botanical Garden of Milan (1982-2001)

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Abstract - The article, based on printed material about Italian and foreign gardens and on unpublished documents preserved in different Milanese archives, aims at reconstructing the history of the Brera Botanical Garden in the period between 1982 and 2001. This is a period of particular interest in that it illustrates how the Lombard and State institutions, after leaving the Garden in a state of neglect for many decades, went on, while deciding to restore it, to fail to understand its value, risking with their plans to misrepresent its history. However, over the years, these plans were dropped and replaced with a restoration job carried out according to the most modern historical-scientific guidelines of *The Florence Charter* (1982). Thanks to this restoration, the Garden was enabled to redefine its role and vocation.

Key words: Brera Botanical Garden, *The Florence Charter*, Milan, Polytechnic, State University, Twentieth century.

Riassunto - Ricordi d'archivio e memorie. L'Orto Botanico di Brera di Milano (1982-2001).

L'articolo, basato su materiale a stampa relativo a giardini italiani e stranieri e su documenti inediti conservati in vari archivi milanesi, si propone di ricostruire la storia dell'Orto Botanico di Brera nel periodo tra il 1982 e il 2001. Si tratta di un periodo di particolare interesse in quanto illustra come le istituzioni lombarde e statali, dopo aver lasciato l'Orto in stato di abbandono per molti decenni, avessero continuato, pur decidendo di restaurarlo, a non comprenderne il valore, rischiando con i loro progetti di travisarne la storia. Tuttavia nel corso degli anni tali progetti furono lasciati cadere e sostituiti con un lavoro di restauro effettuato secondo le più moderne direttive storico-scientifiche della *The Florence Charter* (1982). Grazie a questo restauro il Giardino ha così potuto ridefinire il proprio ruolo e la propria vocazione.

Parole chiave: *The Florence Charter*, Milano, Novecento, Orto Botanico di Brera, Politecnico, Università Statale.

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THE RENAISSANCE OF THE BRERA BOTANICAL GARDEN

This paper – based on printed material relating to Italian and foreign botanical gardens and unpublished documents housed in the Brera Botanical Garden Archives¹, in the private Archive of the Milanese architect Ugo La Pietra, in the Vico Magistretti Foundation and in the Archive of the Lombardy Region – aims at recalling the history of the Garden in the period between 1982 and 2001. As it will be seen, in year 2001 the first phase of the job undertaken in favour of the Garden was concluded. Thus, the foundations for opening the Garden to a series of new activities addressed to Milanese citizens was laid.

The reading of the documents (Fig. 1) reveals the date of 21 December 1983 to be particularly significant. In fact, it was then decided by the Lombardy Region² to appoint a professional to draw up a pilot project for the restoration of several monuments in the City of Milan³, including the Brera Botanical Garden. This resolution was followed in the early months of 1984 by the consigliere regionale per il Coordinamento Territoriale (Regional Councillor for Territorial Coordination), Maurizio Ricotti, with the booklet *Riabitare per rivivere* (1984), which listed all the monuments to be restored through the experimental pilot project⁴.



Fig. 1 - The part of the Historical Archive of the Brera Botanical Garden ordered so far (1982-2001). / La parte dell'Archivio storico dell'Orto Botanico di Brera ad oggi ordinata (1982-2001). (Courtesy Università degli Studi di Milano - MOBE, Museo Orto Botanico di Brera ed Erbario).

This document is of great interest for more than one reason. First, because it launched a new way of acting on the territory for the public institution, i. e., proceeding «as a private individual who, as the owner of a building, calls in an architect to enhance its value», and of identifying «a possible use [...] of spaces for projects not exclusively public, to be agreed upon⁵». These were new possibilities allowing for the first time the Region to freely choose its own professionals.

Another interesting aspect of the booklet is that it raises the question of why the Garden was in such a regrettable condition that it had to be restored on the initiative of the Region skipping the advice of the Biology Department of the State University which the Garden afforded to. In fact, the Department did not initially appear among the regional, municipal, and state institutions⁶ called upon to decide how the Garden should have been restored (Fig. 2).

In order to answer this question, it should be noted that by that year the Garden had ceased since a long time to be used as a tool for the study of systematic botany for which it had been founded in 1774 by Empress Maria Theresa of Habsburg, a role that it had maintained, albeit through ups and downs, until the early decades of the 20th century (Scotti Tosini, 1979a; Scotti, 1979b; Calabrò, 2008; Visconti, 2012; Banfi & Visconti, 2012; Banfi & Visconti, 2013; Visconti, 2013; Banfi & Visconti, 2014; Visconti, 2015). That is, until the turnaround brought about by Sergio Tonzig, Professor of Botany from 1939 to 1976 at the State University, when the study of Systematic Botany

and Floristics had been replaced⁷ by research in the field of Plant Ultrastructure and Physiology, which, especially through the searches of Erasmo Marrè and Giorgio Forti, reached its peak in the last thirty years of 20th century and did not involve the use of the Garden, if only in a very minor way⁸.

This lack of interest on the part of the Department for a tool that was no longer considered functional at the research targets it had been set for, was followed by a care deficiency for the botanical and architectural heritage of the Garden: a situation that we presume was the reason why the Region decided to consider unnecessary to involve the Department of Botany among the institutions mentioned above. It should also be added that, over the years, the lack of maintenance of the vegetation had dragged the Garden into a condition of worrying neglect, without any opposing voices being raised by other public institutions responsible, albeit from a different point of view, for its protection. Carlo Bertelli, sovrintendente dei Beni artistici e storici (Superintendent of Artistic and Historical Heritage) between 1978 and 1984, in December 1982, referring to the Great Brera project⁹, considered the Garden just a path between the Brera Palace Picture Gallery and the use of Citterio Palace as a contemporary picture gallery to be (Isnenghi M., 1982), without taking into account the State constraint placed on the Garden in all its parts (artefacts and botanical) through Laws 364/1909 and 1089/1939; Notification Document of 9 July 1912; Decree of 3 November 1978 (Cazzato, 1992).



Fig. 2 - The Garden's state of neglect in the 1980s. / Lo stato di abbandono dell'Orto negli anni Ottanta. (Courtesy Università degli Studi di Milano - MOBE, Museo Orto Botanico di Brera ed Erbario).

Returning now to the pilot project of the Lombardy Region, decisions were taken very quickly. On 21 December 1983, the task of drawing up a restoration project for the redevelopment of the Garden was entrusted to the two Milanese architects Vico Magistretti and Ugo La Pietra. The amount awarded (Italian lira 90,270,000) was charged to the 1983 budget¹⁰.

It should be noted in this regard that the two architects were faced with a complex task requiring, in addition to their specific skills, an in-depth botanical analysis. To carry out the botanical survey, La Pietra and Magistretti turned to their colleague Franco Giorgetta, not a botanist, but an expert in landscape architecture. Giorgetta carried out a plane inspection with the gardener Giacomo Sperati, employed there at the time. The job was started and completed in October 1984¹¹ and was followed by the project study¹².

In June 1989, the final drawings and plans were drafted and it came in surface that the project aimed, as in Bertelli's view, at giving the Garden the function of link between the Brera Palace and the future Museum in Citterio Palace and that, in order to achieve this purpose, it set out to overturn the existing layout of the garden. In fact, it envisaged the construction of a large paved area which would disrupt the setting of the previous paths, adding numerous benches and lampposts, and modifying the flower beds shape and size, and furthermore the building of a stepped structure in order to place the pots, equipped with elevated walkways¹³ (Fig. 3).

In the meantime, the Department decided to take the project into account. This resolution was most likely prompted by Claudio Longo, Professor of General Botany, and future scientific referee to the Garden, increasingly interested in it.

The Department analysed the project and judged it to be «very interesting overall¹⁴» and deemed it appropriate to set up a Rector's Commission, composed mainly of lecturers from the Department itself, should be set up in order to consider the technical and cultural facets of the Garden renovation and its possible uses. In the same year the Commission drew up a document with the aim of highlighting the Garden's situation in an even more complete way than the one described above. The document started with the following words «Nowadays the conditions of the Brera Garden are not very good, mainly because of inadequate maintenance due to a shortage of staff (only one gardener resident on site). The University's use of the Garden is very poor due to the distance between Brera and the scientific Institutes in Città Studi. Most of the University's needs are met by the educational and experimental Garden in Via Colombo¹⁵. Another limitation for the possible uses of the Garden is the presence of large trees keeping in shade at least the half of the surface and therefore restricting the growth of the species requiring light.

In the spring of 1986, a major pruning work was carried out¹⁶ and some seriously sick trees had to be felled. Although the light increased as a result of this work, the Garden remained rather shady. At present the Brera Garden lacks proper greenhouses. The large greenhouse on the north side built according to a design by Piermarini¹⁷ is currently taken by some classrooms of the Brera Academy of Fine Arts¹⁸. The only plants of any interest, apart

from the trees (some of which are very old), are a collection of solanaceous, numbering around 500 species¹⁹.

As a result, the Brera Garden cannot be considered in the same way as other botanical gardens with a predominant scientific purpose, both due to the distance from the scientific Institutes in Città Studi and to the small size. This Commission therefore assumes that the main purpose of the Brera Garden should be cultural. In other words, the Garden should be considered an integral part of the large Brera Palace together with its art collections, the recently restored Specola, etc. This cultural goal could best be achieved by restoring as much as possible of the original layout of the Garden as illustrated in the old documents. It is well known that botanical gardens began as *Horti Simplicium* in which medical plants were cultivated. This function should also be restored, giving it a didactic, popular rather than scientific imprint²⁰.

These words prove a vision of the Rector's Commission that, much like Bertelli's mentioned above, aimed at assigning the Garden a generic function, i. e. a simple annex to the Brera Palace²¹.

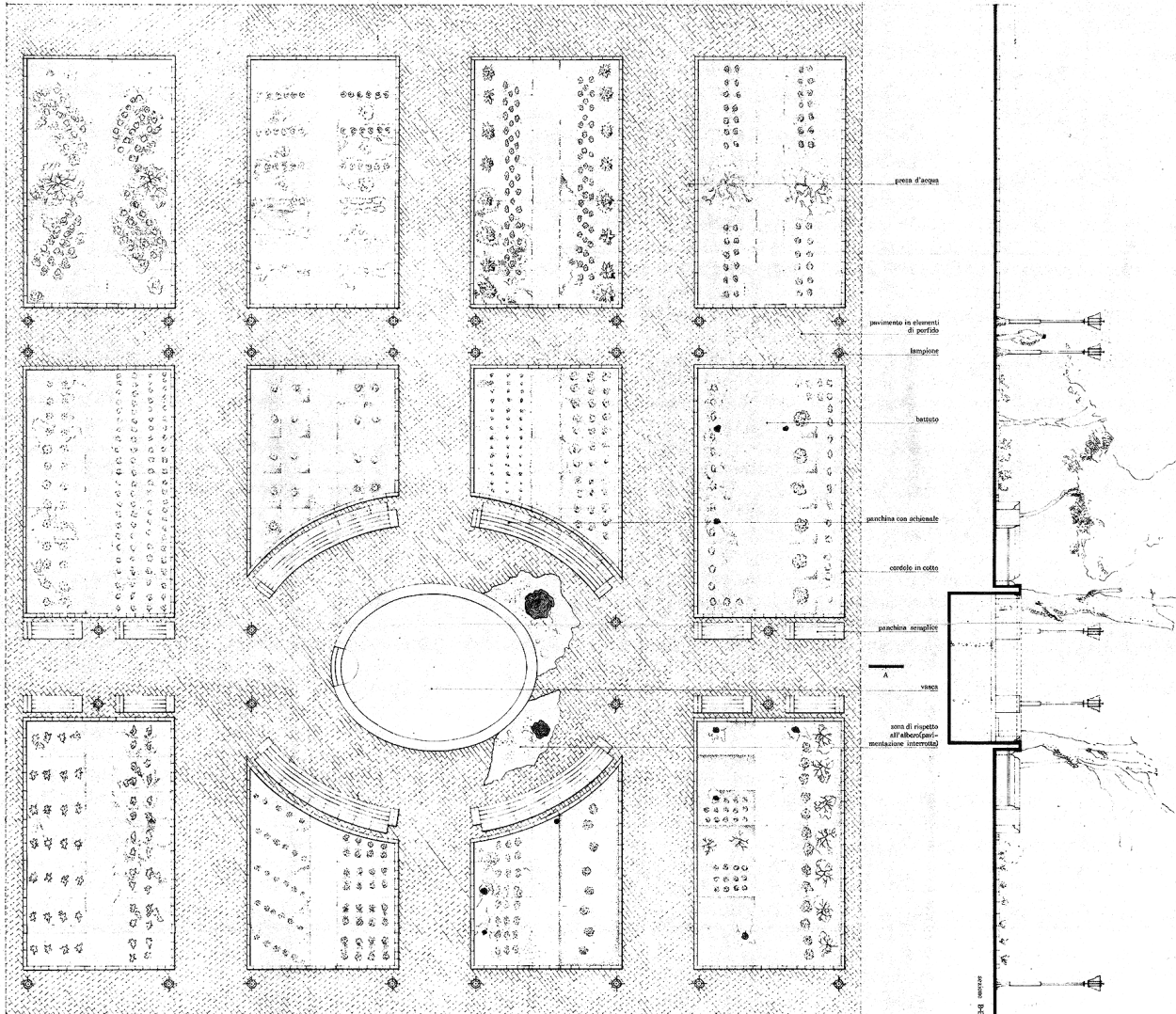
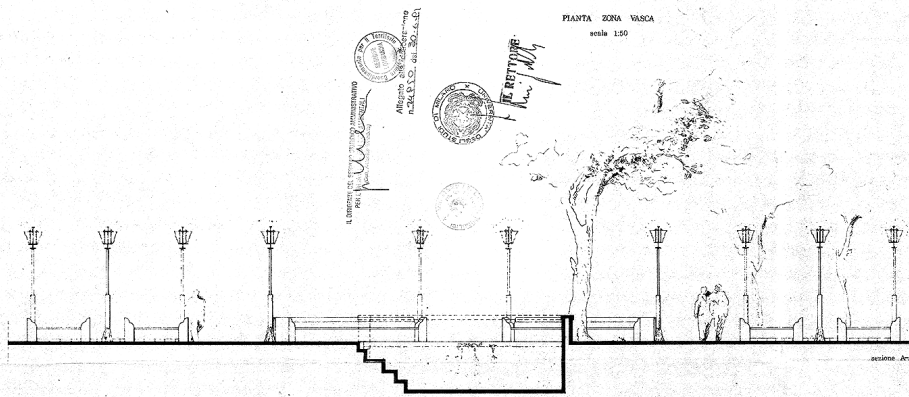
Regarding the technical aspects of the project, the Commission generally accepted them, expressing only a few doubts about the «paving of the paths in concrete and grit», the excessive width of the «lanes reducing a more rational use of the surface», and proposing instead «to build one longitudinal axis [...] and two orthogonal ones of different sizes» and to enlarge the surface of the flowerbeds²².

According to the Commission's opinions, the project seemed set to be carried out without any difficulty. However, as we shall see, it became the centre of an impassioned debate that rised a series of reflections and ended up questioning the very basis upon which it was founded.

The first doubts were raised in April 1990²³ by the Inspector of the Corpo Forestale dello Stato (State Forestry Corps), Alberto Guzzi, who, following an expert report requested by the Soprintendenza ai Beni Ambientali e Architettonici di Milano (Superintendency of Environmental and Architectural Heritage of Milan) on the advisability of proceeding with the plan, expressed his negative opinion on the excessive lighting, the disproportionate number of benches and their location, the choice of materials (porphyry), the excessive paving compared to the area reserved to plants and the lack of space for maintenance workers.

Because of these considerations, the Soprintendenza decided to investigate the matter, inviting the University to reconsider the planned layout, and more specifically to carry out «a stratigraphic analysis of the ground in order to identify, before the start of works, any kerbing of the original flowerbeds²⁴ and the previous water supply system». It also expressed doubts about the inclusion of the new greenhouse in the project and recommended to clarify its temporary function, while waiting for the return of the original greenhouses from the Academy of Fine Arts (located in Brera Palace), over which a dispute had been going on for years²⁵.

Hence the decision taken by the Rector of the Public University, Paolo Mantegazza, to require a review of the project²⁶, with regard to the inadequacy of the greenhouse



Regione Lombardia
ORTO BOTANICO
progetto di
UGO LA PIETRA e VICO MAGISTRETTI
1989

Fig. 3 - Layout of the Project La Pietra & Magistretti (1989). / Pianta del Progetto La Pietra & Magistretti (1989). (Courtesy Università degli Studi di Milano - MOBE, Museo Orto Botanico di Brera ed Erbario).

and the flowerbed kerbs, the recovery of the tanks, the placing of botanical labels, the inappropriate furnishings and lightings, and the display of the historical irrigation structures²⁷.

However, the project was announced to the City of Milan on 8 April 1991, without the University's requests being considered. The presentation occurred in the Congress Hall of the Fondazione Cariplo which, in accordance with its statutory aims, had drawn up the *Piano per l'Arte e la Cultura (Plan for Art and Culture)*, providing a contribution of Italian lira 500,000,000 to the University «for the start of renovation task on the historic Brera Botanical Garden²⁸». The news was reported in the newspapers with the wish that the Garden would return «to its former glory» (Anonymous, 1991; Rossi, 1991). However, it was to be a long time before the Garden could be restored and move towards not so much its former glory, but rather the building of its own role.

In 1994, the Ministero dei Lavori Pubblici (Ministry of Public Works) and the Lombardy Region authorised the restoration project of the Garden²⁹. Following this authorisation, in July 1995 the University's Board of Directors gave approval to the project «for the first functional lot of works (restoration of the boundary wall, construction of the greenhouse and adaptation of the service buildings)³⁰» and forwarded it to the Provveditorato regionale alle Opere Pubbliche (Regional Superintendency of Public Works) for approval and publication of the call for tenders. These procedures were expected to be completed in spring 1996. However, the Biology Department was not precluded during the works from «providing suggestions for organising the task planned in order to safeguard the Botanic Garden's tree heritage³¹». This opening was the result of a letter sent a few months earlier to the head of the University's Building Office, Aldo Di Silvestro, by Longo, who had meanwhile been appointed scientific referee of the Garden. Longo asked to be allowed to monitor the progress of the work in order to safeguard the heritage of the Garden and avoid the risk of inappropriate actions³². It should be noted that meanwhile he was dealing with an innovative action aimed at protecting the trees, as will be explained later.

As far as financial matters are concerned, at the Meeting of the University Board of Directors held on 31 March 1992, the general project for the restoration of the Garden was approved for a total estimated cost of Italian lira 2,400,000,000. However, the funds had yet to be raised. Cariplo itself, which had already allocated Italian lira 500,000,000, made available a total contribution of Italian lira 1,188,211,073 for the first functional lot in order to reach the required amount³³.

But the situation was bound to change once again, due to the attention developed in those years towards historical gardens, the growing awareness of their fragility and the need for their correct and conscious recovery. Many studies had been carried out on the subject³⁴, which had gradually carved out a growing place in the debate within the various disciplines relating to the gardens. The basis of the new concept was the promulgation on 21 May 1981 of the ICOMOS-IFLA - *The Florence Charter – Historic gardens* (1982).

The Florence Charter recognises the value of historical gardens as «monuments» and «documents», going beyond the idea of them as a simple outline of monumental artefacts and contributing to the development and deepening of the discipline of restoration and conservation of these sites. The historical gardens even more than artistic and architectural heritage, are indeed subject to evolution and deterioration. Regarding their conservation, art. 14 states: «The historical garden shall be conserved in an appropriate environmental setting. Any change of the physical environment that may be detrimental to the ecological balance must be banned. These remarks concern the entire feature, both internal and external (ditches, irrigation system, paths, resting areas, cultivation, etc.)». Furthermore, regarding the way of its fruition, art. 18 underlines that «if the historical garden is ment to be visited and walked, it is clear that the access should be adjusted according to its extension and fragility, so as to preserve its substance and cultural message».

The Florence Charter and the growing interest and awareness that was increasingly affecting historical greenery provided the Garden with a sound foundation, giving the possibility to develop a series of actions aimed at challenging the La Pietra and Magistretti project. It should be noted indeed the relevance of the job carried out by Longo in support of the Garden's floral heritage, together with the two new gardeners, Manuel Bellarosa and Paola Caccia, appointed in 1993 and 1994 respectively. Thanks to their hiring, he was able to take a next step, after the request mentioned above, i. e., the possibility to follow the state of the Garden's works. In fact, in the early months of 1996 he had agreed with his colleague Mario Orsenigo³⁵ and written a second letter to Di Silvestro underlining the risk of an overbuilding in the Garden, pointing out the following remarks: «It has been ten years since the project was approved, during which there has been a great change in vision of lighting and green spaces. In the culture of the 1980s, lighting was seen as a high value: the more abundant the light sources and the brighter the light, the better. Now, however, more discreet light sources are preferred, especially in a garden. In the 1980s, the ideal was the urbanised garden. Now the idea of more natural greenery with less artefacts is gaining ground. Consequently, making the Brera Garden look like a city boulevard with rows of lampposts is an action which, as well as damaging the plants, does not correspond to today's aesthetic sensibility³⁶».

This opinion was shared and strengthened by Pasquale Tucci, professor of Physics at the University and head of the historical heritage of the Brera Astronomical Observatory, whose history had been closely interlaced with that of the Garden for centuries.

Tucci was aware of the Garden hazards related to La Pietra and Magistretti project thanks to the draft of a letter addressed to the Rector submitted him by Bellarosa, who was concerned about the upcoming start of works³⁷.

The letter, although never sent, was the source of a significant breakthrough. It led indeed to Tucci's inclusion in the action taken by Longo to reduce the potential dangers of the project. Driven by a high level of professionalism and civic-mindedness, Tucci wrote a letter on 4

July 1996, together with Longo, Guido Tagliaferri, professor of Applied General Physics, Bellarosa himself and Agnese Mandrino, librarian and archivist at the Astronomical Observatory and an expert gardener, to the Soprintendenza ai Beni Storici e Artistici (Superintendence of historical and architectural Heritage), the Soprintendenza ai Beni Ambientali e Architettonici (Superintendence of environmental and architectural Heritage), the Fondazione Cariplo (Cariplo Foundation), the Rector of the University, the Association Italia Nostra³⁸ and the architects La Pietra and Magistretti. In this document he asked for «a reduction in the size of the paved surface; a drastic reduction in the number of lampposts and benches, which [were] absolutely unusual in such quantities in botanical gardens; the suspension of the construction of steel and concrete greenhouse in the *arboretum*, considering that the mayor of Milan Marco Formentini [had] publicly committed to the Academy of Fine Arts of Brera a space in the Ansaldo Area in order to transfer there the activities taking place in the old greenhouses, so that these could return to their original destination; and finally the greatest possible compliance to the original design of the Garden³⁹».

Tucci's stance was followed by a prompt adhesion by Fabio Garbari⁴⁰, President of the Italian Botanical Society⁴¹, while the project was already underway and seemed unstoppable⁴². A few months later, Augusto Pirola, director of the Botanical Garden of the University of Pavia⁴³, and the Association Italia Nostra⁴⁴ joined in. Finally, came the voice of the agronomist Andrea Colombo Leoni, of the Arbotech Company, charged by Longo with analysing the La Pietra e Magistretti project in order to estimate any damage that might be caused to the trees by the construction of the new greenhouse⁴⁵. Colombo Leoni's report set out the risks that the greenhouse would cause to the trees, especially the Caucasian wingnut *Pterocarya fraxinifolia* (Poir.) Spach, and advised against its construction.

Encouraged by these opinions and thus willing to further consolidate his position against the project, Longo, in full agreement with the gardeners, commissioned the photographer Giorgio Franzoni «to carry out a survey of the *status* of the Garden in order to get a clear document of the historical value of the ancient trees, the artefacts and the 18th century underground water system⁴⁶».

Following this approach, the Biology Department further more revised its assumptions⁴⁷ and requested the University's Board of Trustees to charge La Pietra and Magistretti «to remove the greenhouse and extend the service building on the boundary wall in order to create rooms for the staff of the Botanical Garden⁴⁸».

Faced with this request, matching the rise of a set of new views, Magistretti took note of the new situation and withdrew from the project, declaring that he «could not participate in the execution of the task⁴⁹». The project and the direction of the job was therefore entrusted exclusively to La Pietra, who did not fail to express, during the public meeting *L'Orto di Brera Un mistero milanese (The Brera Garden a Milanese Mystery)* organised in March 1997 by the Associazione Italiana Architettura del Paesaggio (AIAPP), his «regret for the reject of the project accepted up to then⁵⁰».

In response to La Pietra's stance, and in sharp contrast to it, Tucci and Longo organised, together with Erminio Giavini, director of the Biology Department, a public meeting at the Museo di Storia Naturale di Milano (Museum of Natural History of Milan) where the future of the Garden was discussed in front of a large audience of Milanese citizens⁵¹, with regard to the «problems connected with the restoration, protection and enhancement of the historical and cultural heritage⁵²».

The interest shown in the Garden by the citizenship convinced Tucci and Tagliaferri to take even more incisive action and to write to Giavini and Longo in July 1997, listing the points still under discussion, namely that the original design of the flowerbeds was being altered, that the previewed porphyry covering was inappropriate, and that a building [the greenhouse] was envisaged in the *arboretum*. The letter ended with the request to «withdraw the assignment to architect La Pietra, who proved to be out of step with the guidelines coming from various institutions and personalities inside and outside the University⁵³».

Meanwhile, Longo and the gardeners undertook a meticulous search for authoritative voices of associations, institutions and individual professionals supporting a restoration respectful of the history of the Garden. The first outcome was the inspection of the Garden by architect Giulio Crespi, a fellow of Italia Nostra, who wrote to Longo, drawing attention to the need to give priority to «careful maintenance and timely restoration and the availability of qualified workers». He went on suggesting «a maintenance programme duly considering the public wishes, but avoiding massification and unintelligent uses». Finally, he concluded with the following words: «The Garden is already there, all that is needed is to maintain it through the gardeners, historical custodians, guided by responsible botanists⁵⁴».

His words were followed on 16 July 1998 by a notice from the Società Botanica Italiana (Italian Botanical Society), which argued in favour of a conservative restoration⁵⁵.

Meanwhile the Dipartimento di Ingegneria dei Sistemi Edilizi e Territoriali (DISET) (Engineering of Building and Territorial Systems Department) of the Politecnico, informed by Longo and the Biology Department, had taken the same line, but with greater authority. When asked by them, on 10 July 1997, professor Lionella Scazzosi drew up a general report proposing the drafting of a survey aimed at redeveloping the site in accordance with the new concepts of restoration proposed by *The Florence Charter*⁵⁶.

However, Scazzosi's report was not immediately considered by the Biology Department, which at the Council Meeting of 14 July 1997 recorded, under the heading *Project for the restoration of the Brera Botanical Garden*, the following: «The Department Council takes into account the restoration project for the Brera Botanical Garden set up by the architect Ugo La Pietra. It unanimously approves the opinion on the restoration project [...] and proposes to send a copy to the Soprintendenza alle Belle Arti (Superintendency of Fine Arts) and the President of Fondazione Cariplo⁵⁷».

In order to understand why the Department did not consider the report by the Polytechnic, which it itself had consulted, and instead approved the project variation proposed by La Pietra, it should be noted that shortly before the Polytechnic drew up the above report, the University Building Division Office, had already approved, with the Rector's signature, the variation⁵⁸. The Department thus found itself faced with a decision that had been taken in accordance with the usual bureaucratic procedure and that was difficult to change, due the proximity of the dates and the approval previously obtained by the public institutions responsible for authorising the project. At the same time, however, it did not let go of the new vision brought by the Polytechnic's report, so much so that on 1st October, prompted by Longo and the gardeners, appealed to the National Committee for the Study and Conservation of Historical Gardens active at the Ministero del Beni culturali e ambientali (Ministry of Cultural and Environmental Heritage) and to the Milanese Superintendence. The appeal drew attention to the historical nature of the Brera Botanical Garden «in order to ensure its protection from any changes that might cause the loss of its historical and natural features⁵⁹».

A support for a conservative restoration was communicated shortly afterwards (28 October 1997) by Pier Fausto Bagatti Valsecchi, architect and fellow of Italia Nostra, who underlined how the Garden was «rightly included in the large family of historical gardens, for which a precise theory [had] been elaborated in recent years regarding the necessity and criteria of their conservation and the methodology to tackle with the problems concerning recovery and restoration⁶⁰». Finally, Scazzosi expressed the same opinion during a 4 December 1997 conference entitled *Gli orti botanici. Restauro a Padova, Firenze, Torino e Milano*⁶¹ in which she illustrated her support to the new concepts of historical gardens restoration. Scazzosi's commitment and belief on the need of restructuring the Garden according to strict conservation criteria, led Longo and the gardeners to ask her to extend her report of July 1997 and to draw up a proper policy document, which she delivered on 15 January 1998. In the introduction to the document, entitled *Ricerche e indagini conoscitive preliminari a un progetto di conservazione, manutenzione e gestione dell'Orto Botanico di Brera*, she pointed out the need of «providing the Garden with a project that [would] use all the most up-to-date methodologies developed and tested by the restoration disciplines for historical gardens, both in Italy and abroad, considering the *The Florence Charter*». The document went on indicating the plan, i. e., the conservation and enhance on the physical heritage; the setting up of the Garden as an open-air museum; and the maintenance and management of the site in the short, medium, and long term. Finally, it proposed the set up a scientific committee for the restoration of the Garden, aimed at bringing together all the skills needed to draw up the project⁶².

This new proposal was finally approved by the Biology Department following the steadiness expressed by Longo in conducting the meetings, discussions, and reflections with his colleagues, with the aim at getting to a consultancy contract between the Polytechnic (DISET) and the

University (Biology Department)⁶³. Shortly afterwards, in May 1998, the Scientific Committee for the Restoration of the Garden was set up⁶⁴, as proposed by Scazzosi.

In the same year Scazzosi began preliminary studies, which showed that the condition of the Garden, following Longo's attention and care together with the constant work of the gardeners, was no longer in the severe state of deterioration observed in 1984, when the Lombardy Region had included it in the pilot project. The following step was the development of a methodological procedure aimed at the enhancement and conservation of the garden as a historical asset, i.e., geometric survey of the architectural and plant components, historical research, botanical survey and assessment of the condition of the tree heritage, survey of the manufactural features (eighteenth-century water system and basins, plots of land, fencing wall, small nineteenth-century specula, etc.), chemical and physical analysis of the materials (mortar, plaster, bricks, stones, etc.). Scazzosi herself stated on 29 July 1998 that «there was no need for reconstructions, major restorations, additions and changes; what was needed, as generally for most historical assets, was careful, attentive and respectful extraordinary maintenance of the garden and activities aimed at enhancing and reusing it⁶⁵». As can be seen, Scazzosi based her plan on *The Florence Charter* and adhered, as she herself later wrote, to the criterion of the utmost respect for all the traces that had come in from the past, i. e., the shape, the mineral and vegetable materials and the value of the Garden as an archive (Scazzosi, 2000, 2001, 2002).

The conservation intervention, carried out between 1998 and 2001, involved the recovery of the boundary walls, tanks and part of the hydraulic system, and the arrangement of the brick kerbs of the plots in accordance with the existing shape.

The restored Garden was inaugurated on 8 May 2001 in the presence of the Rector Mantegazza and the President of the Cariplo Foundation, Giuseppe Guzzetti. For the occasion, Longo had prepared an illustrated short leaflet of the Garden from then on open to visitors⁶⁶.

This was the end, after almost fifteen years, of the bumpy process that began with the Lombardy Region's request to architects La Pietra and Magistretti and went on amidst many difficulties and changes of perspective. Over the years, the two architects' project had become obsolete, although it had had the great credit for starting the debate that finally led to the recognition of the value and history of the Garden.

Maintenance of the garden's plant heritage: the choice of a scientific criterion

Due to the difficulties and obstacles that the Garden had to overcome in order to obtain recognition of its historical and cultural significance, it is not surprising that for many years the Garden's activities were limited to the strictly routine maintenance of the trees.

It was only in 1986 that the first extraordinary action was carried out, consisting in the pruning by the Scarpellini Company, consulted by Longo, of some centuries-old trees that were in a state of serious deterioration. This was a traditional operation carried out on a Chinese parasol-

tree *Firmiana simplex* (L.) W. Wright and two historical specimens of ginkgo *Ginkgo biloba* L., species repeatedly used in the 18th and the 19th century by the Milanese nobility as a reference for the oriental gardens of their villas.

This extraordinary work was also carried out on an Osage orange *Maclura pomifera* (Raf.) C. K. Schneid., whose foliage needed lightening, and on two tree of heaven *Ailanthus altissima* (Mill.) Swingle, both of great historical value, as they arrived in Lombardy from central China around the middle of the 19th century. These trees were indeed part of a vain attempt aimed at solving the deep crisis of silk manufacturing due to the pebrina epidemic, by replacing mulberry trees and silkworms with other plant and butterfly species (Galbani, 1995).

Further action was carried out on an eastern American black walnut *Juglans nigra* L. and on a Caucasian wingnut, the former originating from North America and the latter from the Caucasus, both brought to Lombardy probably in the 19th century as fast-growing species in order to deal with the shortage of wood affecting the region at that time. Finally, two poplars, perhaps planted in the Garden for experiments in paper production, and a centuries-old majestic European nettle tree *Celtis australis* L. were felled⁶⁷.

Almost ten years later, another extraordinary action, highly innovative, was carried out. The Arbotech Company was commissioned for applying the first Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) in a botanical garden, i.e., an analysis of the trees on a biomechanical basis and according to a survey methodology aimed at assessing the structural conditions of the trees in order to act on them using targeted and selective techniques. In April 1995, Longo presented the Biology Department with an estimate of costs from the Arbotech Company and, having obtained approval for his request⁶⁸, addressed the Rector with the following words: «As I already told you [...] we have decided to undertake a conservation work on the trees of the Brera Botanical Garden, some of which are historical monuments over two hundred years old. This is the first time that such an action is going to be carried out, and not just a simple destructive pruning. The work, commissioned to a company specialised in the care of the trees, will cost around thirty million Italian lira, 'eating up' a large part of our yearly budget relevant to the botanical gardens. I therefore ask you for an extraordinary contribution to this expenditure. The word 'extraordinary' is particularly appropriate in this case, as the tree preservation work, once done, is not needed for many years to come⁶⁹».

With this action, the Garden applied a new way of looking at tree care. The maintenance techniques changed: simple pruning and cutting to reduce the foliage, carried out by the operator using a ladder truck, was replaced by the work of expert tree climbers who could climb inside the foliage in order to select, in a less invasive and more specific way, the parts to be removed or consolidated. The decision to adopt these techniques was based on the one hand on the excellent results obtained from their use in the field of physiology and mechanics of large trees, and on the other on the consideration of the fragility of the Garden and the consequent serious risk of access with heavy mechanical vehicles, such as ladder trucks.

The following year a new company, Demetra, resumed the work of maintaining the plants in the Garden in accordance with modern cultivation principles, with the production of a thematic map of the diameter intervals of the trees and shrubs, using Differential Global Positioning Systems (DGPS)⁷⁰, which replaced the job carried out by Giorgetta in 1986 and mapped out the trees and shrubs in the Garden in accordance with up-to-date criteria. Shortly afterwards, a thematic map of forty trees was made and their stability was also verified (VTA). Because of the results obtained using these techniques, the decision was taken to eliminate pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* L., honey locust *Gleditsia triacanthos* L. and Osage orange.

Nowadays the maintenance of the Garden's tree stock is still carried out according to the most advanced criteria of modern arboriculture.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

At side with the work on the trees, Longo and the gardeners organised activities for schools and the general public with the twofold aim of raising awareness of the historical and cultural value of the Garden and acting as a link between the City of Milan and the world of nature.

The following are some of the most significant examples of these activities, mainly focused on the relationship between art, landscape and urban green spaces.

Appendices 1, 2 and 3 provide a detailed list of the many other initiatives, including the close relationship with schools, carried out by the Garden both inside and outside its boundaries.

In 1994, in addition to Longo's lectures to the students of the Botany Course⁷¹, the project *Alla scoperta di Brera* was launched by the Pinacoteca for primary schools and went on for several years with the support of the other institutions of Brera Palace, i. e., Brera Astronomical Observatory, Istituto Lombardo Accademia di Scienze e Lettere, Accademia di Belle Arti, Biblioteca Nazionale. In this project, the Garden did not just give space, but brought its own expertise, as the following words by Daffra & Sicoli (1998) show in reference to the common target of the Pinacoteca and the Garden to connect nature and art: «[The children] after examining the 'painted lawns' are guided by two gardeners in observing the correct sowing of a 'real lawn'. Then, in the Garden's laboratory, they study the sown flowers from a scientific point of view, complete their identity cards and use the images in order to create a decorative composition. In the classroom, after the visit to the Pinacoteca, the pupils carry out the assessment sheets and finally, during the last meeting, put up a meadow using a technique chosen by the teacher from among those proposed by the educational operator (painting and spot-printing with tempera, collage with various materials), creatively rethinking all the knowledge acquired during the activity».

The aim at linking art and nature went on in 1988 with the start of a long collaboration between the Garden and the painter Renata Bonzo⁷², who up to now organises botanical watercolour courses for adults.

These events were sided by the organisation of various exhibitions, including two engravings inspired by

the Garden and produced by the students of Riccardo Galleni from the Brera Academy. This exhibition was held in 1998 and 1999⁷³. Furthermore, two exhibitions took place in 1999, the first on the subject *I pomi d'oro Cento varietà di agrumi*⁷⁴, and the following one entitled *Ciclopica* by sculptor Nicola Salvatore⁷⁵. Finally, the Garden hosted a series of concerts organised by Legambiente and the Civic School of Music from 1998 to 2000⁷⁶.

The relationship between art and nature was also the theme of the Garden's participation in the project *La scuola adotta un monumento*⁷⁷. In the 1996-1997 and 1997-1998 school years the Garden welcomed nine classes from the Parini Upper School, carrying out with them an activity soon dubbed *I piccoli archeologi*, because the students, working with the Garden's staff, dug out four flowerbeds hitherto invisible because covered by vegetation and earth. The staff reconstructed the plants that might have been grown in these beds and, together with the students, grounded plants

of those species. At the end of the two years, the pupils guided their parents in the Garden and showed their work⁷⁸ (Fig. 4).

At the same time, a landscape-oriented project, called *Alla scoperta della flora della Pianura padana nell'Orto Botanico di Brera*, was carried out in January 1998⁷⁹ together with the Associazione Didattica Museale (ADM), active in the Museum of Natural History of Milan as an organiser of guided tours for schools and adults.

The following year the subject of green areas within the City was carried on through the relationship established with the Parco Nord (North Park)⁸⁰, involved with school activities since school year 1989-1990⁸¹, under the guidance of the director and designer Francesco Borella and the supervision of the Park's educational activities manager, Massimo Urso. The result of direct contact between the operators of the two structures was an activity involving 30 classes from various primary and secondary schools (Fig. 5).



Fig. 4 - *The school adopts a monument*, activity carried out by the Garden and the Parini School in the school years 1996-1997 and 1997-1998. / *La scuola adotta un monumento*, attività coordinata dall'Orto e dalla Scuola Media Parini negli anni scolastici 1996-1997 e 1997-1998. (Courtesy Università degli Studi di Milano - MOBE, Museo Orto Botanico di Brera ed Erbario).



Parco Nord Milano

Settore Educazione Ambientale

Il seme, il percorso, l'idea

Orto Botanico di Brera | UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO

Il Parco Nord è un parco giovane, ma nonostante la giovane età (i primi rimboschimenti risalgono al 1983) rappresenta ormai una realtà viva e consolidata.

Il nostro Parco è il risultato di un'opera coraggiosa, che affonda le sue radici da un lato nelle più recenti tecnologie di sistemazione del verde, dall'altro nella tradizione che vuole il nostro Paese culla del giardinaggio e luogo di nascita dell'istituzione Orto Botanico quale momento di conservazione e riproduzione dei "semplici", ovvero delle piante utilizzate in medicina.

La nostra proposta, elaborata insieme agli operatori dell'Orto Botanico di Brera, sarà semplice e vedrà come protagonista, oltre agli ambienti Orto e Parco, il seme.

Il seme nella sua identità di propagatore delle specie vegetali (verranno consegnati alla scolaresca un certo numero di semi da seminare a scuola), e nella sua veste di contenitore di idee, di intelligenza viva, così come riportano tradizioni antiche.

Siamo disponibili, grazie anche alla collaborazione con la coop Koinè, ad accompagnare le scolaresche lungo questo percorso, che prevedrà attività e visite al Parco e all'Orto di Brera in stretta relazione alle esigenze didattiche degli insegnanti e alla parziale disponibilità (per naturali problemi di salvaguardia) dell'Orto stesso.

Ci rendiamo inoltre disponibili ad un incontro preliminare con gli insegnanti per chiarire i particolari della nostra proposta e per accogliere eventuali altre indicazioni.

Per ogni informazione contattare il responsabile del servizio Massimo Urso presso gli uffici del Consorzio.

Contatti telefonici:
 Parco Nord Milano - 02/26226333
 Orto Botanico di Brera - 02/89010419

Parco Nord Milano - via Clerici, 150 - Sesto San Giovanni

Fig. 5 - Poster of the Northern Park showing the activity carried out with the Botanical Garden in 1999. / Poster del Parco Nord con l'indicazione dell'attività svolta con l'Orto nel 1999. (Courtesy Università degli Studi di Milano - MOBE, Museo Orto Botanico di Brera ed Erbario).

The Parco Nord had been carrying out educational activities for ten years, while the Garden was just beginning to take its first steps. The aim was at introducing children and young people from the northern area of Milan to a new born park, the Parco Nord, and a historical garden. The event, which involved two outings, the first to the Parco Nord or the Garden and the second to the Parco Nord, where the undertaken activities were reviewed, aimed above all at learning about how plants reproduce and ended with each class receiving a kit containing various materials, including seeds to be planted at school. The event also gave rise to the set up of a network between the schools involved, with the purpose of encouraging an exchange of information not only between classes in the same school, but also between different schools⁸².

The importance of these events is confirmed by the award of the *Michetta d'argento* to the gardeners Caccia and Bellarosa in March 2000 by the Municipality of Milan/Legambiente⁸³.

THE BOTANICAL GARDEN BEYOND 2001

Trying to draw a balance of the activities carried out in the twenty years here discussed, we can say that, with great effort and determination, in this period the necessary cornerstones were laid for the Garden to develop and grow in the following years up to the present days. An example of this development was the recognition by the Municipality of Milan of the value and potential of the Garden, and the consequent assignement (September 2001)⁸⁴ to

coordinate the educational activities of the Garden for the compulsory schools. In October of the following year, the Botanical Garden participated in the set up of the Network of Botanical Gardens of Lombardy, namely Bergamo, Bormio (SO), Milano Cascina Rosa (now Orto Città Studi), Pavia, Romagnese (PV) and Toscolano Maderno (BS) with the aim of «enhancing and sharing experiences, in order to stimulate internal and external communication»⁸⁵.

Finally, following the Ministerial Decree of 10/05/2001 and DGR n. 7/11643 20/12/2002⁸⁶, the Garden was acknowledged by the Lombardy Region in agreement with the State University (2005)⁸⁷, as Brera Museum of Historical Botanical Garden together with the Astronomical Museum⁸⁸. Consequently, several new perspectives opened for the Garden (Fig. 6), including the establishment in 2002 of a group of Auser volunteers who worked under the gardeners for several years and several improvements, such as the new entrance from via Fratelli Gabba opened in 2013, the layout of the renewed *arboretum* in 2018 and the start of the construction of the info-point (Testa, 2019).

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Fig. 6 - The Garden today. / L'Orto oggi. (Courtesy Università degli Studi di Milano - MOBE, Museo Orto Botanico di Brera ed Erbario).

Garden; Lionella Scazzosi for her suggestions on the restoration of the Garden; Pasquale Tucci for supporting the historical parts of the research; Ugo La Pietra for making his archive available and Andrea Pellicani for making its consultation easier; Margherita Pallino for consenting to consult and reproduce the documents housed in the Vico Magistretti Foundation Archives; Cristina Palo for her careful reading of the text and useful advice; Antonella Testa, Elvira Cantarella, Alessandra Zanzi for their numerous and continuous suggestions; Manuel Bellarosa for the comments on the text; Raniero Bellarosa for facilitating the research in the Lombardy Region Archives; Augusto Viansson Ponte for the translation revision. Finally, we would like to thank Giorgio Chiozzi, editor in chief of NHS, for the patient and scrupulous editorial care, supported by the attentive work of Michela Mura.

NOTES

¹ The documents that now make up the Archives of the Brera Botanical Garden (henceforth AOBB) were collected by Paola Caccia during her service at the Garden and sorted between 2018 and 2019 by Paola Caccia and Agnese Visconti. They cover the period from 1982 to 2001. The documents are of different kind (letters, notes, memos, scattered issues of reviews, newspaper cuttings, minutes of meetings, lists, circular letters, books, photographs, films, etc.) and number over a thousand. They are kept in files collected in ten boxes arranged in chronological order (see AOBB, Inventory). Documents for subsequent years are being sorted out.

² The basis of the resolution was the current legislation relating to environmental assets, their conservation and inventorying and the promotion of implementation tools for their recovery, for which reference should be made to L.R. 30, 19/03/1980, Bollettino Ufficiale della Regione Lombardia (henceforth BURL), 1st ordinary supplement to n. 12, 20 March 1980.

<http://www.consultazioniburl.servizirl.it/pdf/1980/02121.pdf#Page5>;

L.R. 21 del 22/04/1974, BURL, 1st ordinary supplement to n. 17, 24/04/1974

<http://www.consultazioniburl.servizirl.it/storicoBurl/burl/RicercaBollettini.aspx>;

L.R. 52 del 31/08/1981, BURL, 1st ordinary supplement to n. 35, 2/09/1981 <http://www.consultazioniburl.servizirl.it/pdf/1981/02351.pdf#Page2>;

DPR 616 del 24/07/1977, BURL, extraordinary supplement to n. 37, 15/09/1977; <http://www.consultazioniburl.servizirl.it/pdf/1977/03371.pdf#Page2>

³ Fondazione Vico Magistretti (henceforth FVM), Regione Lombardia, Deliberazione n. III/34500, Session of 21 December 1983.

⁴ These monuments were Cortile, Piazzetta and Orto Botanico di Brera; Pescarzo, a hamlet of Capo di Ponte, Certosa di Pavia, Palazzo Dugnani, power stations on the Naviglio di Paderno, Villa Eremo in Lecco, Villa Castiglioni in Magenta, Chiesa dell'Incoronata in Lodi, Villa Annoni in Cuggiono, Palazzo Cusani in Milan, Chiesa dei Disciplini in Quinzano d'Oglio, Monastero di sant'Agostino in Bergamo, Castello di Vigevano, Stabilimento Einstein in Pavia, Palazzo Gallio in Gravedona, Villa Cusani Confalonieri in Carate Brianza; and in addition the filing of the Catasto teresiano (Teresian Cadastre) and of the Catasto del Regno Lombardo-Veneto (Cadastre of the Lombard-Venetian Kingdom).

⁵ FVM, Regione Lombardia, *Riabitare per rivivere*.

⁶ FVM, Regione Lombardia, Deliberazione n. III/34500 della Regione Lombardia, seduta 21 Dicembre 1983, punto 1.

⁷ Unlike the Universities of Florence, Pisa, Palermo, Naples, Padua and Pavia.

⁸ Thus Claudio Longo, former professor of General Botany at the Biology Department of the University of Milan, and scientific referee of the Garden, during an interview by the authors in Spring 2021.

⁹ The project aimed at restoring and recovering Citterio Palace (purchased by the State in 1972) to be carried out in order to create the modern and contemporary section of Brera Palace Art Gallery (Bon Valsassina, Daffra, Guccione (eds.), 2014).

¹⁰ FVM, Regione Lombardia, Deliberazione n. III/34500, seduta del 21 Dicembre 1983, punto 1 (for the assignement to Magistretti and La Pietra); punto 3 (for the amount of the total sum).

¹¹ Archivio La Pietra (henceforth ALP), Orto Botanico di Brera, Undated attachment to an undated letter (but October 1984) by Franco Giorgetta who informs that the survey had been carried out. See also the letter from La Pietra to Magistretti dated 17 December 1984, in which the writer states that Giorgetta had completed the job but had not yet issued an invoice (FVM, Fondo Regione Lombardia, Corrispondenza).

¹² See Ricotti's letter to Magistretti and La Pietra dated 21 June 1984 (FVM, Regione Lombardia, Corrispondenza).

¹³ Part of the design documentation in La Pietra, 1986.

¹⁴ AOBB, box 4, file Università-Orto, Verbale della Riunione del Dipartimento (16 gennaio 1986).

¹⁵ Founded in the 1950s and located on the corner of Via Mangiagalli and Via Colombo, it had been part of the Botanical Institute until 1982, when the latter was merged with the Biology Department, established in that same year. It no longer exists because a building belonging to the Agriculture Faculty was built in the area.

¹⁶ See the section entitled *Maintenance work on the Garden* in this publication.

¹⁷ The greenhouses were designed by the architect Giuseppe Piermarini, sovrintendente alle fabbriche statali (superintendent of state-owned buildings), but were never built (Scotti Tosini, 1979a; Visconti, 2012). The greenhouses referred to by the Rectoral Commission were built in 1855 by the architect Luigi Voghera under the direction of Vincenzo Masserotti, after years of requests by the previous director of the Garden Giuseppe Balsamo Crivelli (Banfi E. & Visconti A., 2014).

¹⁸ The greenhouses were given up by the University to the Brera Academy in 1955. See the Considerazioni del Dipartimento di Biologia sul progetto di ristrutturazione dell'Orto Botanico di Brera of 4 April 1991 (AOBB, box 4, file Restauro).

¹⁹ The plants are now in the Toscolano Maderno Garden, acquired by the University in 1991.

²⁰ Verbale della Commissione dell'Orto Botanico di Brera, undated (but short after 10 January 1986) (AOBB, box 4, file Università-Orto).

²¹ In 1990, following the conference *Un orto botanico per Milano* held in Palazzo Dugnani on 14 May 1987, the journal *folia di ACER* adopted this opinion, expressing the hope for the creation of a new botanical garden for Milan, considering that the Brera Botanical Garden had «more of a historical value» and that «due to its intrinsic characteristics it could not be considered a true botanical garden. Its limited surface area [5,000 m²], its location in the city centre and at the point where two museums [Brera and future Citterio] meet, and its almost total neglect, [were] elements that [made] it problematic to use it for anything other than the acceptable and highly desirable purpose of providing a green area for visitors to the Brera Palace» (Anonymous, 1990).

²² Verbale della Commissione dell'Orto Botanico di Brera, undated (but after 10 January 1986) (AOBB, box 4, file Università-Orto).

²³ Thus Guzzi in his letter of 26 April 1990 to the Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici (AOBB, box 4, file Restauro).

²⁴ Thus the Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali e Architettonici in its letter of 29 May 1990 to Paolo Mantegazza, Rector of the Public University of Milan (AOBB, box 4, file Restauro).

²⁵ See the Considerazioni del Dipartimento di Biologia sul progetto di ristrutturazione dell'Orto Botanico di Brera, 4 April 1991 (AOBB, box 4, file Restauro) and also the letters previously sent (December 1, 1987, March 10 and May 10, 1989) by Mantegazza to the Director of the Academy of Fine Arts of Brera, Daniela Palazzoli (AOBB, box 4, file Università-Orto).

²⁶ As can be seen from La Pietra's letter to Mantegazza dated 1st July 1991 (ALP, Orto Botanico di Brera).

²⁷ See the letter from the Divisione edilizia to La Pietra of 28 June 1991, confirmed by the letter to the Rector of 1 July 1991. Both documents in ALP, Orto Botanico di Brera).

- ²⁸ Thus in the Cariplo Per l'arte e la cultura document of 8 April 1991 (AOBB, box 4, file Restauro).
- ²⁹ See the letter from the ministro ai Lavori Pubblici (Minister of Public Works) Francesco Merloni to the Public University of Milan and the Lombardy Region, as well as to the Soprintendenza ai Beni Ambientali e Architettonici, MURST, Milan City Council, of 11 April 1994 (AOBB, box 4, file Università-Orto).
- ³⁰ AOBB, box 4, file Università-Orto, Approvazione dei lavori di restauro.
- ³¹ Thus the head of the Building Office, architect Aldo Di Silvestro in his letter of 30 November 1995 to Erminio Giavini, director of the Biology Department (AOBB, box 4, file Università-Orto).
- ³² Thus Longo in his letter to Di Silvestro of 20 July 1995 (AOBB, box 4, file Università-Orto).
- ³³ As can be seen from the excerpt of the minutes of a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Public University, probably held in July 1995 (copy of the document in AOBB, box 4, file Università-Orto).
- ³⁴ See, among others, Blazy & Gilles Clément, 1995; Boriani (ed.), 1996; Sarti & Clément, 1999; Clément, 1994, 1999; Clément & Mansion, 1999.
- ³⁵ As can be seen from the undated (but January 1996) letter signed by both of them to Mantegazza and Di Silvestro, in which some explanations on the project for the restructuring of the Garden were asked (AOBB, box 5, file Università-Orto Corrispondenza).
- ³⁶ Thus in his letter of 5 June 1996 (AOBB, box 5, file Università-Orto Corrispondenza).
- ³⁷ The letter is dated 4 July 1996 (AOBB, box 5, file Università-Orto Corrispondenza).
- ³⁸ www.italianostra.org
- ³⁹ See the document in AOBB, box 2, file Università-Orto Corrispondenza.
- ⁴⁰ See his letter of 24 July 1996, in AOBB, box 5, file Università-Orto Corrispondenza.
- ⁴¹ Founded in Florence in 1888 and governed by law on 13 March 1986, in order to promote the progress and spread of botanical culture and science and their applications. Further information at <http://www.societabotanicaitaliana.it/contenuti/lo-stato/9>
- ⁴² See document Licitazione privata per l'appalto delle opere di ristrutturazione, restauro e qualificazione dell'Orto Botanico di Brera in Milano [...] esito licitazione privata presented in the Meeting of the Milan University Board of Directors of the 18 July 1996 (AOBB, box 5, file Restauro).
- ⁴³ See his letter to Longo of 7 November 1996 (AOBB, box 5, file Università-Orto Corrispondenza).
- ⁴⁴ See the document Orto Botanico di Brera Breve memoria (AOBB, box 5, file Restauro).
- ⁴⁵ As can be seen from the report by Colombo Leoni dated 10 October 1996 (AOBB, box 5, file Restauro).
- ⁴⁶ See AOBB, box 5, file Varie.
- ⁴⁷ Thus in the Department Council Meeting of 16 September 1996 (AOBB, box 5, file Università-Orto Corrispondenza).
- ⁴⁸ As can be seen from the Rector's letter to La Pietra in March 1997, in which Mantegazza stated that the request for a variant had been decided at the meeting of 17 December 1996. (ALP, Orto Botanico di Brera).
- ⁴⁹ As can be seen from the Rector's letter to La Pietra dated 10 April 1997 (ALP, Orto Botanico di Brera, 10 April 1997).
- ⁵⁰ For the public meeting, see AOBB, box 5, file Restauro, Aiapp. For Aiapp, founded in 1950 with the aim of planning and designing urban and rural landscapes in space and time, on the basis of the natural characteristics and historical and cultural values of the territory, see <https://www.aiapp.net/>
- ⁵¹ Interest in the Garden by Milan's citizens had already emerged earlier. During the Spring Day organised by FAI on 19 March 1994, when the Garden was opened to the public for the first time. See Mosca, 1994. A copy of the article in AOBB, box 3, file FAI. For the FAI Spring Day, see the document Milano: unica metropoli europea senza un orto botanico signed by Claudio Longo (AOBB, box 3, file FAI).
- ⁵² AOBB, box 5, file Incontro Università (TV interview 16 April 1997 on VHS).
- ⁵³ AOBB, box 5, file Università Orto Correspondence.
- ⁵⁴ Thus Crespi in his letter of 8 July 1997 to the Biology Department (AOBB, box 5, file Restauro).
- ⁵⁵ See the letter sent on 16 January 1998 to Longo by Carlo Del Prete, coordinator of the Working Group for Botanical Gardens and Historical Gardens (AOBB, box 3, file Restauro).
- ⁵⁶ Thus Scazzosi to Giavini and Longo (Letter 10 July 1997, in AOBB box 5, file Restauro).
- ⁵⁷ AOBB, box 5, file Restauro.
- ⁵⁸ Thus Mantegazza to Magistretti and La Pietra (Letter 10 April 1997, in ALP, Orto Botanico di Brera).
- ⁵⁹ AOBB, box 5, file Restauro.
- ⁶⁰ AOBB, box 5, file Restauro. On Bagatti Valsecchi's concept of historical gardens, see Bagatti Valsecchi [1997].
- ⁶¹ The conference was held on the initiative of AIAPP in the Aula Magna of the Museo Civico di Storia Naturale (AOBB, box 5, file Restauro).
- ⁶² AOBB, box 6, file Restauro.
- ⁶³ Letter of 24 April 1998 from the administrative secretary of DISET to the Director of the Biology Department (AOBB, box 6, file Restauro).
- ⁶⁴ Its members were Claudio Longo (Professor of Botany, scientific referee of the Brera Botanical Garden) as President, Lionella Scazzosi (Professor of Architectural Restoration at the Politecnico di Milano) as coordinator in charge, Margherita Azzi Visentini (Professor of History of Architecture at the Politecnico di Milano), Maurizio Boriani (Professor of Urban Restoration at the Politecnico di Milano), Rosanna Caramiello (Professor of Agricultural Botany), Giorgio Galletti (Superintendent of the Environmental and Architectural Heritage of Florence, responsible for the state-owned Gardens of Boboli, La Petraia and Castello), Patrizio Giulini (Professor of Systematic Botany at the University of Padua and member of the National Committee for Historical Gardens of the Ministry for Cultural and Environmental Heritage), Lorenzo Jurina (Professor of Construction Techniques at the Politecnico di Milano), Giuseppe Rallo (Superintendent of the Environmental and Architectural Heritage of Venice and responsible for the State Garden of Villa Pisani di Strà), Aurora Scotti (Professor of History of Architecture at the Politecnico di Milano), Sandra Sicoli (Superintendent of the Historical and Artistic Heritage of Milan), Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi (Professor in History of Art at the University of Pisa), Aldo Di Silvestro (Head of the Building Office at the University of Milan), Carlo Soave (Professor in Genetics coordinator for the Botanical Gardens at the Biology Department, University of Milan) (AOBB, box 6, file Restauro).
- ⁶⁵ Thus Scazzosi in her letter of 28 July 1998 to all members of the Scientific Committee (AOBB, box 6, file Restauro).
- ⁶⁶ See the page on the event in *Sistema universitario*, June 2001, and the leaflet conceived by Longo. Both documents in AOBB, box 10, file Restauro.
- ⁶⁷ Thus Claudio Longo in his letter of 7 April 1986 to the Director of the Biology Department and to Di Silvestro (AOBB, box 4, file Università-Orto).
- ⁶⁸ See the minutes of the Department Council of 21 April 1995 (AOBB, box 4, file Università-Orto).
- ⁶⁹ Longo to Mantegazza in his letter of 29 May 1995 (AOBB, box 4, file Università-Orto Corrispondenza).
- ⁷⁰ See the report of the task carried out by Demetra, undated (but, 1998) with the title Rilievo botanico mediante sistema DGPS dei soggetti arborei ed arbustivi radicati all'interno dell'Orto Botanico Braidense and the attached map (AOBB, box 6, file Restauro).
- ⁷¹ See the Longo's Opening address to the students which took place in the Garden on 18 January Academic year 1993-1994 (AOBB box 3, file Varie).
- ⁷² <www.renatabonzo.it> For Bonzo's activities in the Garden, see, for example, her participation in 1998 in the conference series organised by Legambiente *Le forme degli alberi e i colori dell'autunno* (AOBB, box 7, file Visite guidate/Legambiente) and the drawing and watercolour course held in 1999 (AOBB, box 8, file Visite guidate/Visite adulti/Legambiente).
- ⁷³ For the first exhibition, see Galleni's letter to Giavini of 12 June 1998 asking to be allowed to use the Garden (AOBB, box 7, file Visite

- guide), and for the second, Galleni's letter to Longo of 19 March 1999 and the related illustrative material (AOBB, box 8, file Guided tours/Exhibitions).
- ⁷⁴ See the press release and illustrative material of the Exhibition (10-11 April) in AOBB, box 8, file Visite guideate/Mostre.
- ⁷⁵ See the letter from Longo and Francesco Sala, Head of the University's Botanical Gardens, to the President of the cultural association Arte e Apotropia; the illustrative material on the exhibition; the article by Raddo (1999), in (AOBB, box 8, file Visite guideate/Mostre/Nicola Salvatore).
- ⁷⁶ See, respectively: for 1998 the programmes of the concerts held on July 30, 1998 and July 31, 1998, and the related article by Cirillo (1998) (AOBB, box 7, file. Visite guideate); for 2000 the report on the concert held in the Garden on 10 May 2000 sent by Legambiente to Carlo Soave, Director of the Biology Department, to Sala and Longo (AOBB, box 9, file Visite guideate/Legambiente).
- ⁷⁷ For this project see <http://www.lascuolaadottaunmonumento.it/>
- ⁷⁸ See the letters on the project sent on 20 October and 24 November 1997, 23 January and 21 April 1998 by the Headmistress of the Parini Upper School to the Superintendency of Artistic and Historical Heritage and to the Biology Department, and the illustrative material (AOBB box 7, file Scuole).
- ⁷⁹ See the illustrative material sent by ADM to the Garden in June 1998 (AOBB, box 7, file Scuole).
- ⁸⁰ <https://parconord.milano.it/>
- ⁸¹ See Parco Nord Milano, 1998. A copy of the volume in AOBB, box 7, file Scuole, subfile Parco Nord.
- ⁸² For these activities, see the documents (letters, reports, illustrative material) collected in AOBB, box 7, file Scuole, subfile Parco Nord.
- ⁸³ See the letter sent by Legambiente to Mantegazza, Soave, Sala and Longo on 30 March 2000 (AOBB, box 9, file Visite guideate/Legambiente).
- ⁸⁴ See letter of 4 April 2001 from the director of Educational Services, Alberto Ferrari to Longo (AOBB, box 10, file Scuole/sezione didattica Comune di Milano).
- ⁸⁵ Material being sorted.
- ⁸⁶ Legislative references: D.lgs. 112/1998: definizione del concetto di standard per i servizi museali; DM 10/05/2001: definizione dei criteri tecnico-scientifici e gli standard di funzionamento e di sviluppo dei musei; DGR n. 7/11643 20/12/2002: Verifica della presenza dei requisiti minimi individuati sulla scorta del DM 10/05/2001. This Ministerial Decree, drawn up with the support of the Italian Regions, exhibits the guidelines for the achievement of quality goals in museums, but leaves it to the Regions, according to the principle of subsidiarity, to precise the lines of action.
- ⁸⁷ Material being sorted.
- ⁸⁸ Material being sorted.
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APPENDIX 1 - LIST OF THE GARDEN'S ACTIVITIES

Since 1996, when the La Pietra and Magistretti project was still under discussion, the Garden started a new collaboration with the Green University of Milan¹ hosting the courses organized by the latter and carrying out visits for the participants, in connection with the themes of the courses. In October 1996 the Garden broadened its perspectives by involving the association Gruppo Ornitologico Lombardo (Lombardy Ornithological Group) (GOL)² for a census of the avifauna living in it. In December 1997 the meeting entitled *Gli orti botanici storici. Restaurari a Padova, Firenze, Torino e Milano*, was organized by the Garden together with AIAPP, where the guidelines of the *Carta di Firenze* were recalled and made public³.

Participation at the above initiatives gave visibility to the Garden, so much so that in May 1998 the first requests to use it for photographic⁴ and video⁵ shootings were received: as an example, let us note the request (December 1999) by the Historical Collections of the Municipality of Milan for the exhibition *La Milano del giovin signore*⁶.

From school year 1998/99 to school year 2010/2011 the Garden took part, together with the University (Applied Physics Department), in the event *Storia e scienza a Brera*, launched with the aim at introducing schools to the Brera Palace, and more specifically to the Astronomical Observatory. Groups of schoolchildren of all levels took part in the event, following both the astronomy lessons and the educational and recreational activities organised by the Garden⁷. In the school year 1999-2000 the Garden joined, together with WWF Lombardia and Teatro Laboratorio di figure in Florence (Mariotti, 2008), the environmental education proposal *Verdi Armonie* of the Milan Municipality, Sezione Servizi Educativi. The proposal was envisaging a teacher training course, at the end of which every teacher was offered the opportunity to visit the Garden with their classes. Following this first contact, a collaboration between the University (Biology Department, Brera Botanical Garden) and the Education Department of the Municipality of Milan started for the following school year 2000-2001, which was to last more than ten years⁸. During all these years, groups of teachers and students from Milanese Universities and the Polytechnic took part in the Garden's activities, either in order to attend general lectures or to learn about more specialised issues and problems, or to write degree dissertations⁹.

Other meetings in collaboration with AIAPP about gardening were held in English in the Garden in 2000 and 2001 by AIAPP member Clare Littlewood¹⁰.

A further implementation of the Garden's activities, and at the same time an opportunity for it to be known in the outside world, occurred with the participation in specialized exhibitions, i. e., the *Flowers and Colours* held in April-May 1998 in Minoprio Park¹¹ and the *Flower and Plant Show* organised by Orticola, where the Garden took part in year 1998 with a small collection of annual plants and seeds¹²; in 1999 with a stand on the theme of *Ginkgo biloba*¹³; and in 2000 with posters showing the stages of the restoration work in progress¹⁴. In spring 1999 the Garden took part in the FAI¹⁵ event *L'arte di educare (The art of education)* at the Villa della Porta Bozzolo in Casalzuigno¹⁶.

In May 2000 a collaboration began with the Associazione Dimore Storiche Italiane (ADSI), Lombardy Section-Young People's Group, for the event *Milano Cortili aperti (Milan Open Courtyards)*, during which the Garden opened its doors on Sundays¹⁷. This collaboration went on for the following years. In 2000, with the Garden undergoing full restoration, the first requests aimed at using its spaces for peculiar events started, and went on in the following years particularly for the Fuori Salone del Mobile¹⁸.

NOTES

¹ The Green Universities, active in the major Italian cities, were a tool used by the environmental movement since the early 1980s for discussion, meeting, research, in-depth study and popular education on the major environmental issues http://www.centrodiaculturaccologica.it/home/node/ricerca_universitaverdi.

² Established in 1986 with the aim at studying the avifauna in its environment (AOBB, box 5, file GOL); for Gol see <http://www.associazioni.milano.it/gol/>

³ AOBB, box 5, file AIAPP Green Thursday 2.

⁴ See the letter sent to the Garden by Bruna Ginanni l'11 giugno 1998 and the granting of the Garden's clearance to the request of Fabio Romani del 12 maggio 1998 (both in AOBB, box 7, file Visite guidate docc. 124 e 135).

⁵ AOBB, box 6, file Visite guidate.

⁶ AOBB, box 8, file Visite guidate.

⁷ See the programs of the event in AOBB, box 7, file Scuole.

⁸ AOBB, box 9, file Scuole.

⁹ Faravelli F., academic year 1996-1997 - L'Orto Botanico di Brera Note preliminari per un possibile recupero, Dissertation, Politecnico di Milano, (AOBB, box 7, file Tesi-Pubblicazioni); Pirillo M., academic year 2000-2001 - Analisi di visite guidate finalizzate alla costruzione di una didattica all'Orto Botanico di Brera, Dissertation, Università degli Studi di Milano (AOBB, box 10).

¹⁰ AOBB, box 9, file Visite guidate.

¹¹ AOBB, box 7, file Visite guidate.

¹² AOBB, box 7, file Visite guidate/Orticola.

¹³ AOBB, box 8, file Mostre/Orticola

¹⁴ AOBB, box 9, file Visite guidate/Orticola.

¹⁵ www.fondoambiente.it

¹⁶ AOBB, box 8, file Visite guidate/Mostre.

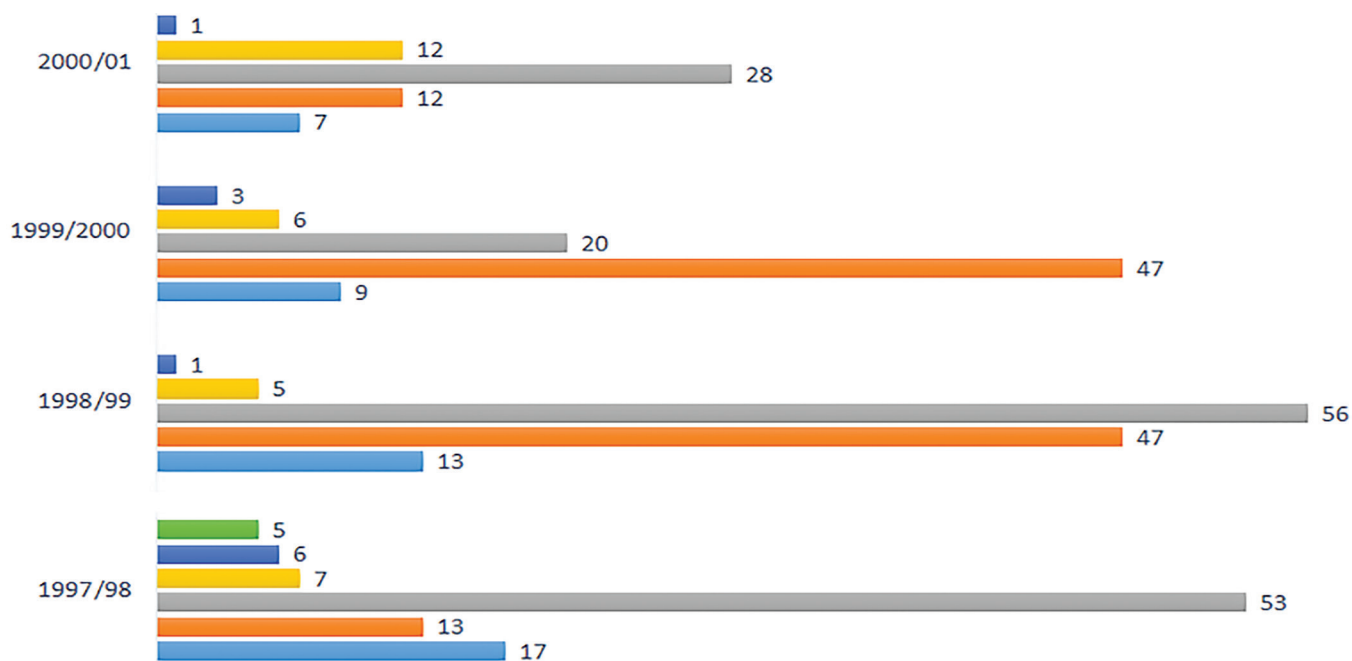
¹⁷ AOBB, box 9, file Visite guidate.

¹⁸ AOBB, box 9, file Visite guidate.

APPENDIX 2: NUMBER OF CLASSES VISITING THE GARDEN PER YEAR PER GRADE

Please note: this graph was compiled on the basis of the number of classes and not pupils. In fact, the schools' requests (Milan, Lombardy, Veneto, and Emilia) did not always specify the number of pupils involved. Among the

schools listed in the graph, some participated in specific and innovative activities. These schools and activities have been described above. For 2000/2001, the drop in attendance was due to renovation work.



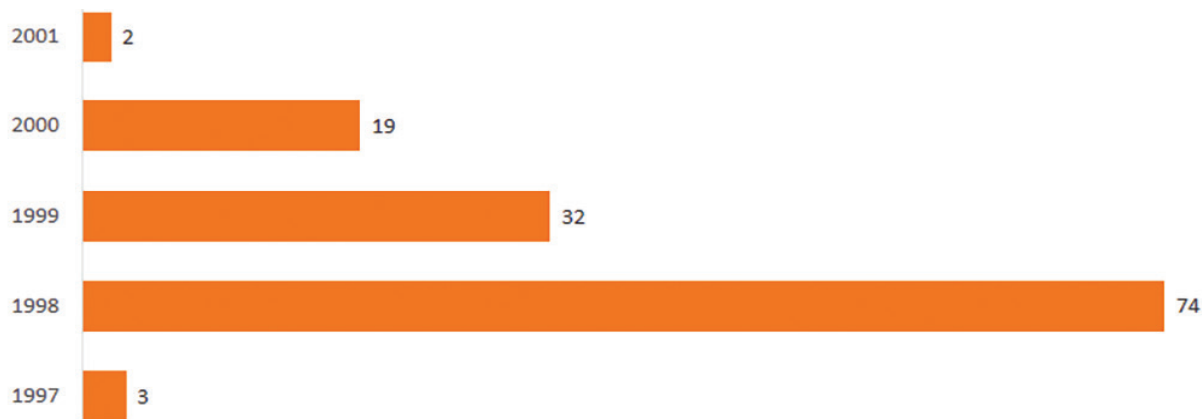
Number of classes per School Year. / Numero di classi per anno scolastico.

■ Summer Camp. / Centri estivi. ■ University. / Università. ■ Upper School 1. / Medie. ■ Upper School 2. / Superiori.
 ■ Primary school. / Elementari. ■ Preschool. / Materna.

APPENDIX 3 - NUMBER OF ADULT GUIDED TOUR GROUPS PER YEAR

Please note: this graph has been compiled on the basis of number of groups and not of individuals as the requests by group-organisers did not always specify the number of

participants. For 2000/2001 the decrease in attendance is due to the restoration works.



Number of guided tour groups per year. / Numero di gruppi in visita guidata per anno.