

## Foreword

*For over 100 years, the Villa Melzi d'Eril and its gardens in Bellagio have belonged to my family: ever since Luisa Melzi d'Eril, married to my great-grandfather Gian Carlo Gallarati Scotti, left it to their son Tommaso Fulco. Since then, the commitment of my grandfather, my father Lodovico, and finally myself has been to preserve, maintain, and pass on its beauty, respecting the original design and the intentions of the first owner: Francesco Melzi d'Eril, Vice President of the Italian Republic in 1802, keeper of Seals of the Kingdom of Italy, and first Duke of Lodi. Together with architect and ornamentist Giocondo Albertoli, and with other prestigious artists and craftsmen, he conceived a particularly harmonious ensemble that dates back over two centuries and still stands as a pride of Lake Como today.*

*It is my personal pride to note that every year, tens of thousands of visitors come to the Melzi d'Eril property, drawn by a place that has always retained its appeal thanks also to the work of those who, over time, have taken care of the garden. Among them, I wish to remember with esteem and gratitude the figure of Nino Gandola, who for over forty years dedicated himself daily to the gardens of the villa and taught younger generations, ensuring that the secrets of his art were not lost.*

*In this edition of the Guide, special emphasis is placed on the Museum, founded by my father Lodovico Gallarati Scotti in the early 1970s, housed in the greenhouse (or orangery) and accessible to all garden visitors. The Museum was expanded and reopened in 2021 with a new exhibition project, and it bears the name "Lodovico Gallarati Scotti Museum" to honour his ongoing commitment to the preservation and enhancement of places and works that, according to his intentions, should "constitute a treasure for the entire community".*

*I am therefore particularly pleased to present a publication entirely dedicated to the gardens and the Museum of Villa Melzi d'Eril which is the result of historical research and direct observations. Visitors will thus be able to read about the history of its inhabitants, the events of its architecture and art, and also follow guided itineraries.*

*I thank all those who contributed to the creation of this volume: the authors, photographers, illustrators, graphic designers, and the editorial team. I am sure that by browsing through these pages, the public will gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the features of villa Melzi and its gardens, of Bellagio and its territory.*

*Enjoy your visit and your reading.*

Fulco Gallarati Scotti