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COMPARISON OF GARDEN PAVILIONS' SITE SELECTION IN CHINA AND ITALY

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Abstract. This study examines Chinese and Italian garden pavilions through a comparative approach, systematically exploring the similarities and differences in their site selection and the underlying cultural motivations. Chinese garden pavilions are profoundly shaped by the philosophy of "the unity of man and nature," emphasising harmony with natural landscapes and adaptable layouts. Techniques such as situating pavilions by mountains and water bodies are employed to achieve an organic integration of architecture and environment. In contrast, Italian pavilions embody geometric order and rational aesthetics, characterised by axial symmetry and the deliberate terrain modification to shape structured spatial sequences. Through an analysis of philosophical concepts, locational characteristics, and spatial organisation, the research reveals both the commonalities and differences in the siting of pavilions on elevated grounds, by water, on flat terrain, and in compositional groupings, while providing an in-depth examination of their relationships with topography, water features, vegetation, and other architectural structures.
Keywords: Chinese gardens, Italian gardens, garden architecture, pavilions, site selection

Introduction

In Chinese, pavilion architecture within gardens is referred to as "ting" (亭) or "yuan ting" (园亭), denoting roofed, wall-less structures designed for rest and shelter. In Western contexts, such structures are generally called pavilions, while terms like gazebo describe open-sided park structures, and kiosk refers to small booths for selling goods. This study focuses on pavilions within classical Chinese and Italian gardens that primarily serve for rest and landscape appreciation, so it uniformly refers to them as pavilions. The selection of a pavilion directly influences the spatial layout and visual hierarchy of the garden, and an appropriately positioned pavilion enhances the garden's overall cultural resonance and aesthetic coherence. Such importance is underscored by Ji Cheng, a Ming dynasty scholar and garden designer, in The Craft of Gardens (Yuan Ye), the first systematic treatise on Chinese garden design, where he noted, "All constructions must begin with selecting and establishing the site"[9].

Chinese gardens (as representative of Eastern natural-style gardens), European gardens (as models of Western formal gardens), and Islamic gardens (characterised by enclosed courtyards) together form the three major garden systems in the world, holding significant positions in garden history. Due to the differences in cultures, the evolution of pavilion architecture, and notable distinctions in geographical environments, aesthetic concepts, and building materials, classical Chinese and Italian gardens, as typical representatives, present starkly different philosophical ideas and design strategies in pavilion site selection. However, in expressing seclusion and poetic sentiment in Chinese gardens or the symbolism of power and order in Italian gardens, pavilions become indispensable garden elements thanks to their unique form and integration with the surrounding environment. Therefore, exploring how different philosophical concepts influence pavilion site selection and the relationship between pavilions and their surrounding environment is an essential issue in landscape creation, aimed at revealing the dual nature of pavilions as both viewing and scenic elements.

The evolution of classical Chinese garden pavilions has developed in parallel with the broader tradition of garden art. Consequently, numerous scholarly works have addressed pavilion design from various angles, with some specialised studies dedicated entirely to pavilions. These works cover multiple aspects, including function, site selection, form, aesthetics, and construction, often supplemented by rich imagery and case studies (e.g., Gao, Z. M., & Qin, L., Chinese Ancient Pavilions, (1994), Lu, R., Analysis of Garden Pavilions, (2004), and Zhu, J. Z., The Art of Chinese Pavilions, (2008)). Compared to monographs, journal articles offer more in-depth and broader research, spanning topics from the origin and development of pavilions[8][17] to functional layout[7], design principles[11][12], the creation of atmosphere[18], and even detailed structural techniques[1]. Throughout these studies, pavilion site selection remains a central issue, with one of the representative works being Gu Kai's research. Based on historical literature, Gu argues that the significance of pavilions in gardens as viewing spaces far outweighs their role as objects of observation[4]. Furthermore, he explores the architectural concepts and cultural symbolism behind the mountain summits' pavilions, revealing the connection between pavilion site selection, scenic views, artistic atmosphere, and garden layout[5].

The development of Italian pavilion architecture has been profoundly shaped by Western culture, philosophy, and artistic movements. Its functions extend beyond mere viewing, often integrating decorative elements such as sculptures and fountains to create a harmonious and unified landscape[15]. In Roman villa gardens, pavilions served as leisure and social spaces, with their locations strategically chosen to harmonise with the natural surroundings. During the Renaissance, gardens inspired by classical ideals emphasised geometric symmetry and unity[6], focusing not only on visual aesthetics but also on creating a solemn and harmonious spatial experience through axial and symmetrical layouts (e.g., the Organ and Dragon Pavilions at Villa d'Este). In the Baroque and Rococo periods, pavilions in royal gardens adhered even more strictly to axial planning, showcasing unmatched grandeur. During the 17th and 18th centuries[10][13], cross-cultural exchanges facilitated the dissemination of Chinese garden art to Europe, particularly through the writings and images of Jesuit missionaries who lived in China and extensively toured its gardens [16]. These texts and images inevitably influenced European pavilion designs and contributed indirectly to developing iconic garden imagery [2]. Scholars have also examined how traditional Chinese garden architecture specifically has impacted the design of small-scale European structures[11].

Although previous studies have analysed the construction characteristics of Chinese and Italian garden pavilions from multiple perspectives, such as history, function, and design principles, systematic analyses of the factors influencing pavilion site selection and spatial configuration remain insufficient. Moreover, there is a lack of cross-cultural comparative studies examining the similarities and differences in pavilion site selection and their cultural motivations. Therefore, this study

TABLE 1

Pavilion Samples and Selection Criteria [created by authors]

Garden/Site	Pavilion	City, Country	Type	Description
Jingyi Garden (Xiangshan)	Tayun Pavilion	Beijing, China	Elevated	Situated at the terminus of a mountain ascent, it exemplifies the elevated siting strategy characteristic of imperial northern gardens.
Yuyuan Garden	Wangjiang Pavilion	Shanghai, China	Elevated	Positioned atop an artificial rockery, it illustrates the southern private garden approach to elevated siting and long-distance viewing.
Villa Cicogna Mozzoni	Waterside Pavilion	Varese, Italy	Elevated	Located at the end of a monumental water staircase, it exemplifies the Renaissance use of pavilions to terminate axial perspective sequences.
Villa Monastero	Lakeside Pavilion	Varenna, Italy	Elevated	Integrated into a terraced composition with statues and stairways, it demonstrates the role of elevated lakefront pavilions in scenic focal design.
Keyuan	Boat-shaped Pavilion	Suzhou, China	Water	As a shoreline structure oriented toward the waterscape, it represents the Jiangnan tradition of integrating pavilion form with waterfront leisure.
Humble Administrator's Garden (Zhuozheng Yuan)	Hefengsimian Pavilion	Suzhou, China	Water	Entirely surrounded by water, it serves as a canonical model of island siting frequently cited in classical garden scholarship.
Villa Monastero	By Lake Upper Pergola-linked Pavilion	Varenna, Italy	Water	Open on three sides and connected to a pergola, it illustrates panoramic waterfront siting combined with architectural linkage.
Villa Durazzo Pallavicini	Waterside Pavilion	Genoa, Italy	Water	Placed as a focal element within a theatrical water sequence, it reflects the ornamental and exotic character of Romantic landscape design.
Huanxiu Villa	Crabapple Pavilion	Suzhou, China	Flat	Embedded in a flat-terrain setting with seasonal blossoms, it highlights the integration of architecture with horticultural display and multisensory experience.
Giardini di Villa Melzi	Simple Conical-Roof pavilion	Bellagio, Italy	Flat	Set on flat ground within a botanical garden, it represents the simple leisure function of shade-providing pavilions in nineteenth-century contexts.
Temple of Heaven Park	Double-Ring Pavilion	Beijing, China	Composition	Formed by two interlocking structures, it exemplifies compositional siting with symbolic and ceremonial connotations.
Castello di Celsa	Rooftop Pavilion	Siena, Italy	Composition	Positioned atop the main building, it illustrates the compositional use of pavilions as vertical accents enriching architectural silhouettes.

focuses on three key aspects: philosophical concepts, site characteristics, and layout principles. The aim is to uncover the core principles of pavilion site selection within different garden traditions, deepen the understanding of Chinese and Italian garden design principles, and provide theoretical support and practical insights for contemporary garden design and cross-cultural landscape studies.

Materials and Methods

This study adopts a cross-cultural comparative approach, based on field investigation of twelve representative pavilions—six from Chinese gardens and six from Italian gardens (Table 1). The analysis focuses on their siting characteristics, visual axes, circulation patterns, and integration within the overall spatial layout of the gardens. Cases were purposively sampled to cover the four siting types summarised in the literature—elevated, water-related, flat-terrain, and compositional—with at least one representative example of each type in both cultural contexts. Selection criteria required that each case (i) contained a clearly identifiable pavilion structure, (ii) was accessible for photographic documentation, and (iii) was representative within specific site types and cultural traditions. For instance, the Hefengsimian Pavilion in Suzhou's Humble Administrator's Garden exemplifies the water-surrounded island arrangement characteristic, while the pavilion terminating the water staircase at Villa Cicogna Mozzoni demonstrates the Renaissance use of elevated siting within an axial perspective sequence. Concise justifications for all twelve cases are provided in the Table. 1.

In addition to the twelve core cases, several further pavilions are referenced in the layout analysis to illustrate differing siting concepts in Chinese and Italian traditions. Diagrammatic analysis was employed to reconstruct plan views of the pavilions and their surrounding elements, enabling a visual examination of spatial positioning and landscape organisation. These supplementary cases serve solely as contextual illustrations and are not included in the comparative dataset described above.

Philosophy concepts

Gardens are a dialogue between humans and nature, with different interpretations of nature giving rise to distinct garden expressions. In Dualism and Polarities: The Structure of Architectural and Landscape Discourses in China and the West, Feng, S. D. and Jackson, M. compare the Western and Chinese perceptions of the human-nature relationship. In Western thought, humans and nature are regarded as a mutually independent "dualistic" relationship. At the same time, traditional Chinese garden culture emphasises its interdependence and transformation, akin to the dynamic balance of Yin and Yang in the Tai Chi symbol. This conceptual difference directly impacts pavilion architecture's spatial

presentation and site selection. Chinese pavilions are sited to harmonise with nature, often near mountains and water, or hidden among trees and flowers, blending into the natural surroundings. In Italy, pavilions are strategically placed using geometric symmetry and precise layouts, reflecting rational planning and spatial control to create meticulously crafted spaces.

Furthermore, the spatial aesthetic cultures of China and Italy also influence the selection of pavilion sites. The Taoist philosophy of "mutual generation of emptiness and solidity" is extended in garden design and fully embodied in the design and placement of pavilions.

For instance, open-sided pavilions are often situated by water or atop mountains, where the expansive presence of water and sky serves as an abstract spatial backdrop that accentuates the pavilion's tangible form, while simultaneously creating an immersive sense of openness for visitors within the confined structure. At times, pavilions are partially concealed within the landscape, allowing glimpses of their form to spark the viewer's imagination of the hidden surroundings, thus extending the perception of space beyond what is immediately visible.

Classical culture and Renaissance ideals profoundly shaped the spatial aesthetics of Italian gardens. The pursuit of rational beauty greatly influenced the placement of pavilions: while they are often located beside water features or pathways for viewing purposes, and more characteristically placed at key points along axes or geometric intersections, frequently in combination with terraces or staircases, to emphasise spatial sequence and visual focus.

Therefore, Chinese garden pavilions focus on harmonising with nature and creating a poetic ambience, valuing spatial fluidity and symbolism. On the other hand, Italian garden pavilions highlight human intervention in shaping nature, emphasising spatial order and ceremonial qualities.

Site location characteristics

Despite significant differences in the design philosophies of Chinese and Italian pavilions, certain commonalities in site selection are evident. A comparative analysis of typical case studies reveals four main types of pavilion placement:

Terrain High Point

In Chinese and Italian gardens, pavilions are commonly placed on hillsides, mountain peaks, or elevated ground, providing expansive views of the surrounding landscape while enhancing spatial hierarchy. In Chinese gardens, such positioning reflects the cultural emphasis on achieving harmony between the structure and natural scenery, highlighting their close interdependence[5]. This approach is particularly evident in natural scenic areas and extensive northern imperial gardens, where pavilions at mountain summits abound. For example, the "Tayun Pavilion" in the Jingyi Garden at Xiangshan (Fig. 1) crowns the ascending terrain, acting as the visual terminus of the garden space and enriching the mountain's silhouette. Even in urban gardens without natural topography, artificial rockeries are constructed to form elevated sites for pavilions, such as the "Wangjiang Pavilion" atop the Grand Rockery in Yuyuan Garden, Shanghai (Fig. 2). The frequent use of names like "Wang" (to gaze) or "Guan" (to view) suggests that their primary function is scenic appreciation, especially of distant views.

Italian terraced gardens, developed by leveraging the country's unique topography, occupy a distinctive position in global landscape architecture. Elevation differences allow garden pavilions to effortlessly incorporate borrowed scenery beyond the garden boundaries, expanding the perceived spatial scope. Italian garden design vividly manifests the classical notion that beauty lies in harmonious proportion. Clear visual axes are typically established through the strategic arrangement of stone structures, such as steps, sculptures, grottoes, niches, columns, pavilions, in combination with water features —such as canals, cascades, fountains, and waterfalls, as well as meticulously maintained plant elements like clipped shrubs, labyrinths, and potted specimens. For instance, the pavilion at Villa Cicogna Mozzoni is situated at the terminus of the terraced garden and aligned with the perspective axis of a 16th-century water staircase (Fig. 3). A double row of cypress trees directs the viewer's gaze.

In contrast, water meanders down the steps, reinforcing the garden's spatial depth and formal order. Although the siting of pavilions often prioritises views, their compositional role within the landscape is equally emphasised. At Villa Monastero, located on the eastern shore of Lake Como and originally a convent, renovations during the 19th and 20th centuries introduced a pavilion within its botanical garden (Fig. 4). This structure exemplifies the Italian tradition: symmetrical stairways, statues, and stone columns are harmoniously integrated with the pavilion, establishing it as a focal point within the terraced composition.

Water-friendly

Waterfront pavilions can be categorised into two types: those with one to three sides facing water and those surrounded by water. Though both emphasise proximity to water, they create distinct visual and atmospheric effects—pavilions by the water's edge offer open spaces for viewing and leisure. For instance, the boat-shaped pavilion in Keyuan, Suzhou

Fig. 1. Tayun Pavilion in Jingyi Garden, Beijing
[Illustration by Ning Liu]

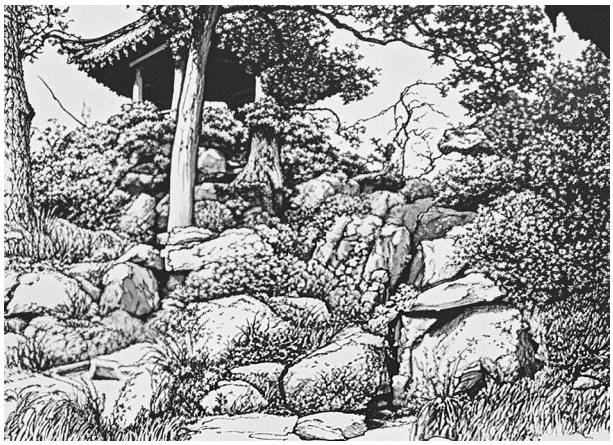


Fig. 2. Wangjiang Pavilion in Yuyuan Garden, Shanghai
[Illustration by Ning Liu]

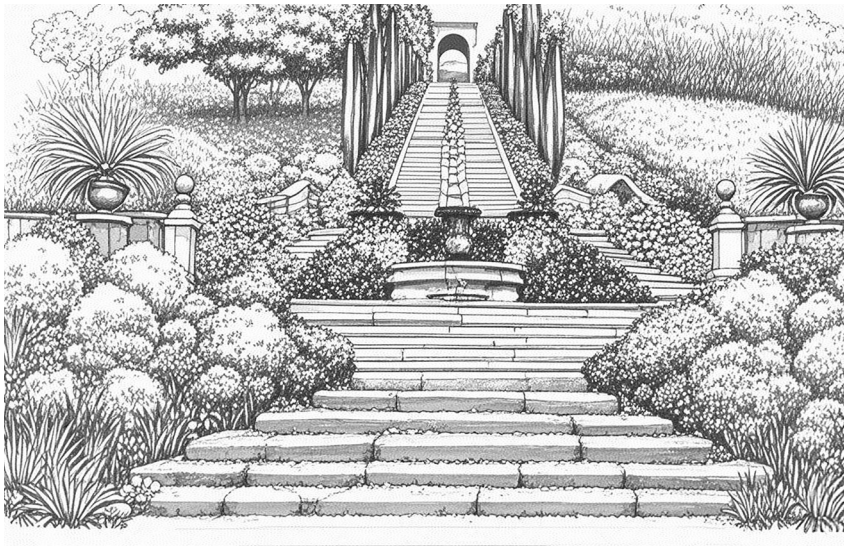


Fig. 3. Pavilion in Cicogna Mozzoni, Varese
[Illustration by Ning Liu]

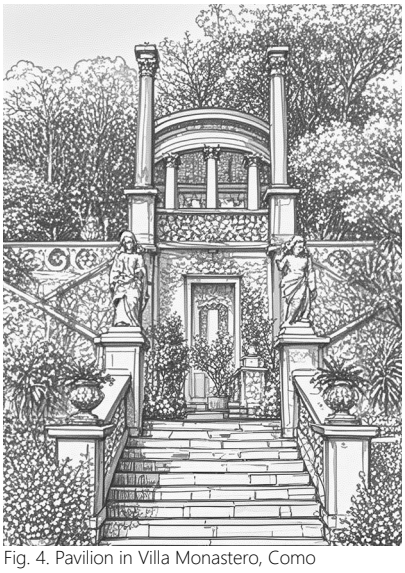


Fig. 4. Pavilion in Villa Monastero, Como
[Illustration by Ning Liu]

Fig. 5. Pavilion in Keyuan Garden, Suzhou
[Illustration by Ning Liu]

Fig. 6. Hefengsimian Pavilion in Zhuozheng Garden, Suzhou
[Illustration by Ning Liu]

Fig. 7. Pavilion in Villa Monastero, Como
[Illustration by Ning Liu]

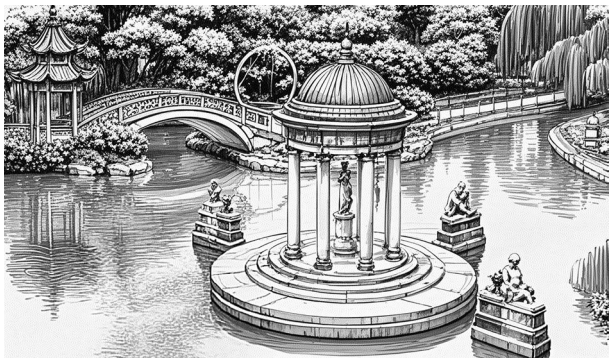


Fig. 8. Pavilion in Villa Durazzo Pallavicini, Genova
[Illustration by Ning Liu]

(Fig. 5), faces east and features stone tables and drum-shaped stools inside, with a "Wuwangkao" (a kind of chair) by the railing for visitors to lean on and enjoy the waterscape [18]. Pavilions surrounded by water, however, form independent scenic centres. The "Hefengsimian" pavilion in the Humble Administrator's Garden (Fig. 6) appears like a floating island, spatially independent yet visually connected to its surroundings through water reflections, showcasing the Chinese garden pursuit of contrast between reality and illusion and the creation of poetic imagery.

In Italian gardens, waterfront pavilions are often built beside natural lakes or rivers, emphasising openness and scenic views. The pavilion at Villa Monastero by Lake Como (Fig. 7) features three open sides and a roof connected to a second-level pergola, which visitors can climb for elevated views. It offers panoramic vistas of Lake Como, serving as a resting spot and an integral part of the lakeside scenery, enhancing the harmony between the garden and its natural environment. Pavilions placed within the water in Italian gardens tend to serve as visual landmarks rather than functional spaces. At Villa Durazzo Pallavicini, for example, the waterside pavilion (Fig. 8) functions primarily as a visual focal point within the spatial sequence. Notably, this garden also includes a Chinese pagoda-inspired structure. Though it adopts features of traditional Chinese architecture, such as a multi-eave roof and upturned ridges, decorative details like volute ornaments and hanging bells reflect a romanticised European interpretation of exotic culture.

Built on flat terrain

Building pavilions on flat terrain is the most common layout in Chinese gardens, usually appearing in two forms. The first is a pavilion set amid specific scenery, such as flowers or groves, where visitors within the pavilion can enjoy a distinct view. The Crabapple Pavilion in Huanxiu Villa (Fig. 9) is a classic example, nestled among crabapple blossoms to create a multisensory experience of sight and fragrance. The second type is a roadside pavilion, often numerous and accompanied by trees, with stone tables and stools for rest, thus prolonging visitors' stay and enriching the dynamic garden experience.

By contrast, pavilions on level ground in Italian gardens emphasise formal independence and clearly defined leisure functions. In the Giardini di Villa Melzi, for example, stepping stones lead to a simple pavilion with a woven conical roof surrounded by tall trees (Fig. 10). Its unadorned form harmonises with the natural setting while providing shaded rest, enhancing the spatial depth and richness of the landscape.

Scenic compositions

In addition to standing alone, pavilions are often integrated with other structures to create cohesive scenic compositions. In Chinese gardens, this integration is particularly distinctive. The Double-ring Pavilion in the Temple of Heaven Park, Beijing (Fig. 11), comprises two identical circular pavilions interlocked to form an embracing structure. The "Fulang Pavilion" in Geyuan Garden, Yangzhou, showcases another combinatory method, where the pavilion intertwines with winding corridors and jagged rockeries, complemented by seasonal flora to create an evolving spatial sequence. These combinations embody the principle of "constructing pavilions according to the terrain."

Italian gardens, by comparison, focus more on aesthetic integration with ornamental structures. Functioning as standalone focal points within the garden's layout, often combined with niches or sculptures to enhance visual appeal. Others serve as architectural appendages at or alongside main buildings to enhance spatial layering and scale. The pavilion atop the main building of Castello di Celsa (Fig. 12) not only occupies a commanding height for panoramic views but also enriches the building's silhouette through its integrated design.

Layout analysis methodology

The siting of pavilions reflects the aesthetic interest and embodies the overall planning principles of garden design. Although the Chinese and Italian gardens differ in cultural philosophy, both emphasise harmony with the surrounding environment. Whether by adapting to the terrain, being complemented by vegetation, or integrated with other architectural elements, pavilions consistently serve as key nodes in shaping the spatial order of the landscape.

(1) *Relation to topography*

The topography directly influences the layout of pavilions, as different landforms determine their siting and construction methods. Owing to the flexibility of Chinese pavilion designs, in addition to common shapes such as squares, circles, and polygons, more figurative forms like fans or plum blossoms are also adopted, or the design is adjusted according to the terrain. For example, in the Zhuozheng Garden in Suzhou, a fan-shaped pavilion is extended outward over convex terrain (Fig. 13-1). At the same time, in the Summer Palace, the Yangrenfeng Pavilion adopts a concave fan-shaped layout to fit its sunken foundation (Fig. 13-2). In more

Fig. 9. Pavilion in Villa Huanxiu, Suzhou
[Illustration by Ning Liu]

Fig. 10. Pavilion in Giardini di Villa Melzi, Como
[Illustration by Ning Liu]

Fig. 11. Pavilion in the Temple of Heaven Park,
Beijing [Illustration by Ning Liu]

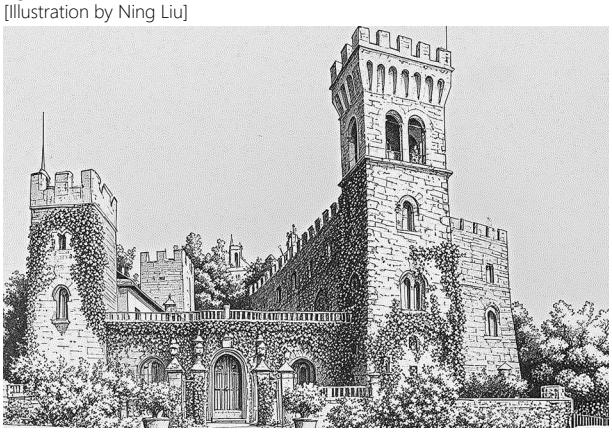


Fig. 12. Pavilion in Castello di Celsa, Siena
[Illustration by Ning Liu]

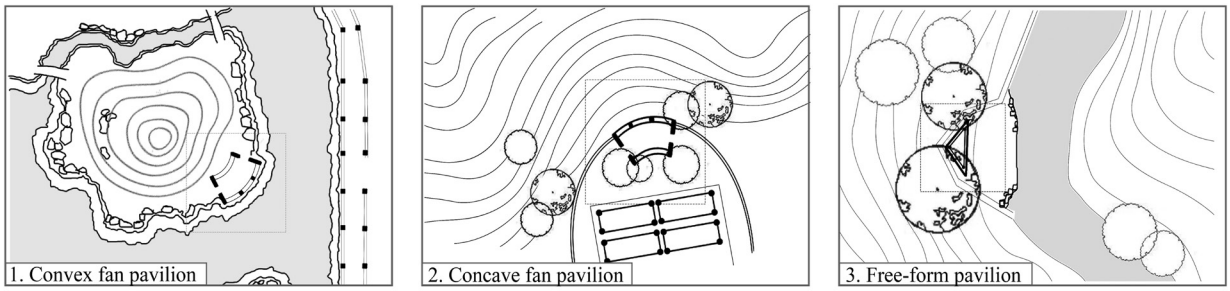
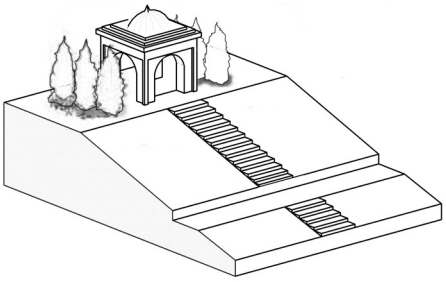


Fig. 13. Chinese garden pavilions and topographical treatments [Elaboration by Ning Liu]



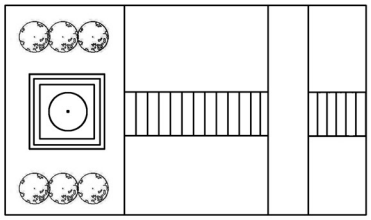


Fig. 14. Italian garden pavilions and topographical treatments [Elaboration by Ning Liu]

complex terrains, pavilion forms even transcend geometric conventions, being determined instead by existing features such as rocks and trees, as seen in the Aoyi Pavilion at Qingcheng Mountain[14] (Fig.13-3). This design flexibility enables a richer integration of Chinese pavilions with the terrain. Moreover, in mountainous gardens, pavilions are typically arranged along natural slopes, incorporating native rocks and undulating landforms with minimal topographical alteration. Such an approach highlights the exceptional adaptability of Chinese pavilions to their environment.

Similarly, Italian terraced gardens use existing topographical conditions for pavilion construction but tend to emphasise spatial control and a sense of order. When dealing with height differences, the terrain is often levelled or broadened to create regular platforms for pavilions, which are connected through orderly elements such as flat steps and terraces (Fig.14). Pavilion forms are predominantly regular, such as circles or rectangles, with design choices primarily driven by visual composition to ensure coherence with the overall spatial layout and precise control of perspective relationships.

(2) *Relationship to water*

By leveraging the characteristics of water, pavilions create rich visual effects while contributing to ecological functions such as air humidification and temperature regulation. Despite their shared affinity for waterfront locations, Chinese and Italian pavilions exhibit distinct design methodologies and spatial arrangements. In Chinese gardens, the spatial relationship between pavilions and water can generally be classified into three types—near, extended, and cross—according to their proximity and orientation to the water surface (Fig. 15)[3]. Pavilions built along the shoreline (near) are typically placed with one side facing the water, capturing reflections and incorporating the boundless water scenery into the confined space of the pavilion. Pavilions extending over the water (extend) are positioned with one side connected to the shore and three sides surrounded by water, blurring the boundary between land and water. This creates an impression of the pavilion hovering over the water, as seen in the Shanshuijian Pavilion of the Ouyuan Garden, where the structure spans a narrow pond and opens to the water on three sides, giving the illusion of endless water extension. Pavilions within the water body (cross) are placed at the centre of the water and typically connected to the shore by bridges or stepping stones, immersing visitors in a waterscape experience. Additionally, Chinese gardens feature pavilions built on islands or above bridges.

By contrast, Italian pavilions are predominantly positioned near the water, whereas extended and cross configurations are seldom seen. Compared to Chinese gardens, which use small artificial lakes or ponds to foster a more intimate and serene atmosphere, Italian pavilions are more commonly positioned alongside vast natural water bodies like lakes or coastlines, highlighting spatial openness and continuity. Moreover, cross-type pavilions are exceptionally rare in Italian gardens and generally function as ornamental features within water scenes rather than as actual spaces for human occupation. This contrasts with the Chinese design philosophy, which treats pavilions as spaces for viewing and touring.

(3) *Relationship to vegetation*

In Chinese gardens, the choice of plants around pavilions goes beyond aesthetic and ecological purposes, carrying rich cultural symbolism. Species are often chosen for their

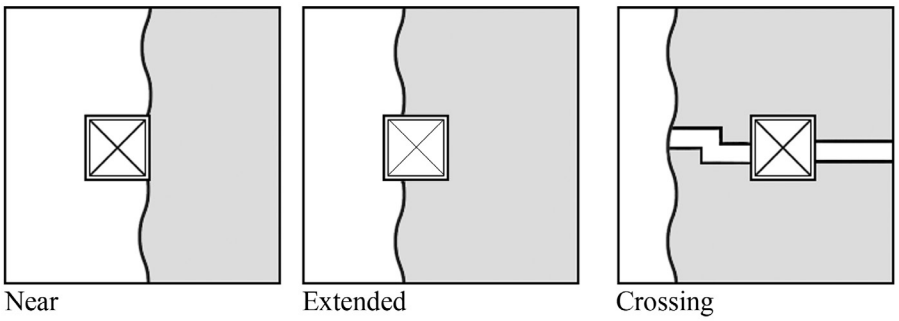


Fig. 15. Garden pavilion with water treatment [Elaboration by Ning Liu]

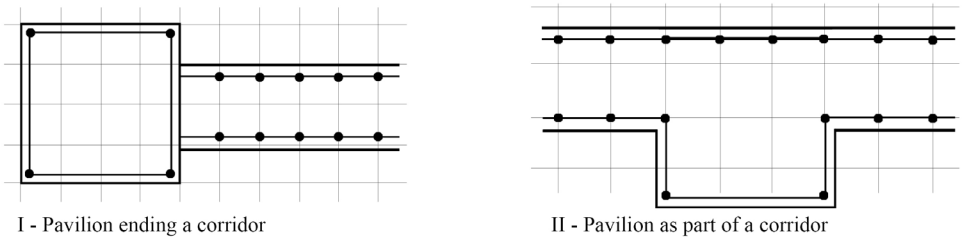


Fig. 16. Two combinations of pavilions and corridors in Chinese gardens [Elaboration by Ning Liu]

poetic associations or symbolic meanings, fostering a dialogue between the pavilion and its vegetative setting that deepens the garden's cultural expression. For instance, in Suzhou's Humble Administrator's Garden, each of the four pavilions is paired with distinct plantings to reflect seasonal transitions: peonies beside Xiuqi Pavilion to evoke the vitality of spring; lotuses encircling Hefengsimian Pavilion to fill the air with summer fragrance; orange trees and maples around Daishuang Pavilion to capture the essence of autumn; and wintersweet near Xuexiangyunwei Pavilion, its blossoms likened to fragrant snow in winter. Seasonal enjoyment is further enhanced by the ripening of fruits, such as tasting loquats in spring, harvesting lotus seeds in summer, and picking oranges in autumn, allowing the pavilion to serve both as a viewing platform and a space for experiencing the rhythms of nature.

In contrast, the plants in Italian gardens, shaped by geometric principles, primarily serve to define spatial boundaries, reinforce axial alignments, and elevate the ceremonial character, rather than merely providing decorative greenery. Common plants include symmetrically arranged trees (e.g. cypresses, lindens, chestnuts), neatly trimmed hedges (e.g. boxwoods, laurels), enclosed flower beds (e.g. roses, lavenders), and occasional climbers (e.g. ivy, wisteria). Pavilions are typically placed at the termini of tree-lined vistas or framed by symmetrical plantings to establish clear spatial focal points. The formal arrangement of vegetation emphasises order and directs visual flow, ensuring a cohesive relationship between the pavilion and the landscape.

(4) *Relationship with other structures*

The divergent development of standalone architecture in China and the West significantly influences how pavilions are integrated with other architectural elements. In China, a dispersed layout strategy is adopted, allowing pavilions to be flexibly embedded within garden spaces and combined with various structures such as other pavilions, corridors, etc. Among these, the combination of pavilions and corridors is particularly prevalent, typically realised in two configurations (Fig.16), pavilions positioned at the termini of corridors or incorporated directly within the corridors themselves. A representative example of the first configuration is the fan-shaped Pavilion at the turning point of the climbing corridor in the Shizilin Garden, where the pavilion is chamfered into a circular form, and a small eastern space is reserved for plantings of banana trees and bamboo. This layout enables the pavilion to receive cool breezes from the east, west, and north, while shielding it from the warmer southern wind. The returning airflow along the corridor and enclosing walls amplifies the sound of the wind within the pavilion, creating a seamless integration of name and experience. The Long Corridor of the Summer Palace exemplifies the second configuration, in which the corridor extends outward to incorporate a pavilion, thus interrupting the monotony of its otherwise continuous linear spatial composition.

In contrast, Italian architecture adopts a centralised spatial strategy, wherein the main building is the dominant focal point that orchestrates the entire garden composition. Pavilions are typically arranged symmetrically on either side of the main structure or placed atop it as architectural embellishments, thereby preserving visual order and compositional balance. For instance, the pavilion atop the Castello di Celsa's main building enhances the visual experience's vertical extension. Furthermore, due to fundamental differences in construction materials and structural systems, Chinese pavilions—primarily constructed of timber—are lightweight and readily combined with corridors, bridges, and other elements, facilitating a fluid and dynamic spatial experience. Italian pavilions, typically constructed from masonry, tend to adopt more stable yet constrained configurations, functioning primarily as integrated extensions of the main building that reinforce its architectural coherence and contribute to the overall unity of the garden composition.

Conclusion

An analysis of the conceptual principles, locational characteristics, and construction methods of pavilions present in Chinese and Italian gardens reveals that, although both traditions share certain similarities—such as the preference for elevated positions or waterfront settings—the differences in siting philosophy, spatial articulation, and integration with surrounding elements remain the defining features.

The divergence in traditional cultural and philosophical foundations profoundly shapes the perceptions of nature and spatial aesthetics in China and Italy, thereby influencing the siting strategies of garden pavilions. In Chinese classical gardens, deeply rooted in Confucian and Daoist philosophies such as "the unity of man and nature" and "following the way of nature", pavilions are arranged in harmony with the environment, resulting in spatial layouts marked by fluidity and variability. In contrast, Italian gardens, shaped by geometric principles and an aesthetic of order, prioritise proportion, symmetry, and spatial control. Italian gardens, shaped by the principles of geometry and the aesthetics of order, strongly emphasise proportion, symmetry, and spatial control. Consequently, pavilions function primarily as ornamental focal points or as devices for reinforcing geometric composition, rather than as expressions of seclusion and harmonious integration with nature, as seen in Chinese gardens.

Although Chinese and Italian pavilions are sited on elevated terrains, their design philosophies diverge significantly. Chinese pavilions follow the natural topography, aligning with the slope to harmonise with the surrounding environment. In contrast, Italian gardens typically involve modifying and levelling terrain to create platforms for pavilions. The design of Italian gardens generally entails reconfiguring and levelling the terrain to accommodate pavilion construction on flat platforms.

Regarding the interaction between pavilions and water, Chinese pavilions engage in multi-dimensional interactions with water, situated along shorelines, extending over water surfaces, built on bridges, or even directly within water bodies. Italian pavilions, however, are predominantly positioned near water to enhance spatial depth through borrowed scenery.

Using pavilions that cross over water is comparatively rare and primarily decorative, focusing on visual extension rather than functional engagement.

Regarding planting design, vegetation surrounding Chinese pavilions emphasises cultural symbolism to enhance the intended atmosphere. In contrast, Italian pavilions adhere to geometric aesthetics to establish a sense of order within the landscape.

Regarding relationships with other architectural elements, Chinese pavilions, characterised by their light wooden structures, are frequently combined with different features such as corridors and bridges to create fluid spatial experiences. Italian pavilions, generally constructed as masonry structures, serve mainly as architectural appendages to the main building, reinforcing the compositional balance of the overall design.

Chinese pavilions are strategically positioned to interact with the natural environment, producing a dynamic viewing experience in which changing perspectives continuously reveal new spatial layers. Italian pavilions emphasise a static viewing experience while creating open and orderly spaces for contemplation. These contrasting approaches reflect the fundamental differences in Eastern and Western perceptions of nature and spatial aesthetics, which have shaped the evolution of their respective garden arts and ultimately fostered distinct cultural and landscape experiences.

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Kopsavilkums

Pētījumā tiek salīdzināti Ķīnas un Itālijas dārzu paviljoni, sistemātiski analizējot to līdzības un atšķirības izvietojuma izvēlē un pamatā esošajās kultūras motivācijās. Ķīnas dārzu paviljonus dziļi ietekmē filozofija par "cilvēka un dabas vienotību", kas uzsver harmoniju ar dabas ainavām un elastīgu plānojumu. Tiek izmantotas tādas metodes kā paviljonu novietošana kalnu un ūdenstilpju tuvumā, lai panāktu organiska arhitektūras un vides saplūsmi. Savukārt Itālijas paviljoni iemieso ģeometrisku kārtību un racionālu estētiku, ko raksturo asiālā simetrija un apzināta reljefa pārveidošana, lai veidotu strukturētas telpiskās sekvences. Analizējot filozofiskos konceptus, izvietojuma raksturlielumus un telpisko organizāciju, pētījums atklāj gan kopīgās iezīmes, gan atšķirības paviljonu novietojumā uz paaugstinājumiem, pie ūdens, uz līdzenas zemes un kompozicionālās grupās, vienlaikus padziļināti izpētot to attiecības ar reljefu, ūdens elementiem, veģetāciju un citām arhitektoniskām struktūrām.