

DOMENICO GISBERTI AT 1670 Oh what a lovely place to retreat to, such grace, such delight, such a little earthly paradise did I have the luck to see today, hardly an hour from Salzburg [...]

That is Hellbrunn, truly worthy of its name because all around it has water clearer than glass, clearer than crystal and more transparent and translucent as the sky itself [...]

The famous memorial to Archbishop Markus Sittikus who loved this hill with its hundred streams weeping into the green lap of a broad plain, the fallow happiness of a place, which deserves to be coveted by the whole world.[...]

And really, if one looks upon the walls one can say that they are the fortress of entertainment, look upon the theatre and one has the plays of pleasure, and finally, as far as the fountains are concerned, here is the graceful jubilation of water.[...]

I do not risk [...]to write that beneath stone arches the water condenses to mist, evaporates as dew, becomes light and is hued with the colours of the rainbow, as it gushes from sieves and dissolves as rain [...] that it gushes into balls and forms a world beneath the feet of cupid, which exists all the longer the more transient it is.[...]

I find the epitome of Venice in these waters, Rome among these buildings reduced to a brief outline [...] the garden is a water labyrinth, a play of the naiads, a theatre of flowers, an amphitheatre of leafy passages, a capitol of statues, a museum of the graces.[...]

Oh lovely loneliness! Inhabited only by pleasure.

*Those are the enthusiastic words of Domenico Gisberti (1635 – 1677), the secretary and poet to the Bavarian Court in Munich, who in the summer of 1670 accompanied the elector couple Ferdinand Maria and Henriette Adelaide to Salzburg and reports of this journey and stay with the archbishop in the form of imaginary letters. He writes a difficult, Baroque Italian and shows his panegyric art with rare expressions, affected comparison and literary, historical and mythological allusion.*