

# **Mediterranean Influences on Horticultural and Garden Developments in South Australia between 1836 and 1938**

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## Table of Contents

	Page
Abstract	5
Acknowledgements	6
Disclaimer	8
Figures	9
Maps	11
<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>2.0 Methodology</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>3.0 Transplanted Mediterranean Cultural Landscapes</b>	<b>31</b>
3.1 Architecture	31
3.2 The Grand Tour	35
3.3 Mediterranean adventures, scandals and romances	40
3.4 Botanisers and suitable occupations for ladies of quality	41
3.5 Bible Study, Sunday Schools and Mediterranean realism	44
3.6 Mediterranean Fashion	48
3.7 Music and the Mediterranean	49
3.8 Travel and travel writers	50
3.9 The Mediterranean as an Idea	52
<b>4.0 The Mediterranean and the Media</b>	<b>57</b>
4.1 The Mediterranean climate type	57
4.2 The Mediterranean, the media and medicine	61
4.3 Philip Muskett – the art of living in Australia	67
4.4 Acclimatisation Societies	71
4.5 Grapes, Wine and wine making	75
4.6 The Olive, olive growing and olive oil	77
4.7 Information Sources for the Colony of South Australia	89
4.8 George Strickland Kingston (1807-80) and Settlers of Substance	92
4.9 South Australian sources	95
4.10 Botanic gardens and nurseries	101
4.11 Walter Bagot (1880-1963) and Elsie Cornish (1870-1946)	112
4.12 Mediterranean ascendancy	127
4.13 The Mediterranean as a source of International architectural style	131
4.14 American Influences	141
4.15 The Bagot – Cornish Collaboration Summarised	149
4.16 George Goyder (1826-98) and John ‘Forester’ Brown (1878-90)	153
<b>5.0 Conclusion</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>6.0 Bibliography</b>	<b>177</b>
6.1 Primary Sources	177
6.2 Secondary Sources	179
6.3 Theses and Unpublished Documents	184
<b>Appendix 1: The Mediterranean Climate According to Peter Dallman</b>	<b>185</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Alvise Cornaro (1484?-1566)</b>	<b>187</b>

<b>Appendix 3:</b> Italian Influenced Buildings in Adelaide	190
<b>Appendix 4:</b> Italianate Buildings in South Australia	196
<b>Appendix 5:</b> Early South Australian Nursery Catalogues and Seed Lists	200
<b>Appendix 6:</b> Additional Primary Reference Material	201

“Ask simple questions, because the answers to complicated questions probably will be too complicated to test, and even worse too fascinating to give up.”

Alfred Crosby, *‘Ecological Imperialism’*  
Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 6



Charles Hill, *The Artist and his Family* – c.1860 (Art Gallery of SA collection)  
The artist and his family dine *al fresco* under a pergola decked with Sturt's Desert Pea (*Clianthus formosus*).

## **ABSTRACT**

To define the extent of this research, this thesis reviews the first settlement of South Australia in 1836 and concludes with the Depression of 1938 having regard to its landscape development. This enables the documentation of Mediterranean influences from the earliest moments of European settlement in South Australia until the great financial crash that virtually suspended significant landscape commissions until after World War 2 when refugee migration from the Mediterranean region introduced a direct influence on society and culture here.

Braudel's view of history as wave-like is used as an aid to understand the nature of the Mediterranean influence as transposed in South Australia. Extending his simile the waves have perhaps been less influence than the thin line of foam left in their wake. While individual and official enthusiasms for things Mediterranean waxed and waned over that century, the threads of the idea remained and appear now to be drawing together in a developing consciousness woven from past associations and developing events that seem almost inescapable.

It is timely to consider the impact of Mediterranean influences on the development of ideas in South Australia as it clearly influenced this cultural and physical landscape and the body of ideas that determined these patterns, and may in future find a richer expression.

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## **DISCLAIMER**

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopying.

Trevor Nottle

Date

## Figures

	Page
Charles Hill, <i>The Artist and his Family</i> (1860)	3
12 <sup>th</sup> Century Arab map	7
Early 14 <sup>th</sup> Century map	8
Fra Mauro, <i>The Western Mediterranean</i> (1458)	10
Mid-15 <sup>th</sup> Century map	11
Mare Nostrum	12
S.T. Gill, <i>Prospect House</i> (1850)	16
Rundle Street cafes and al fresco diners	23
Marine villa, mural at Herculaneum	26
<i>Shrubland Park</i> by Sir Charles Barry (1851)	28
Luigi Mayer, <i>Fragments at Ephesus</i> (1810)	30
19 <sup>th</sup> Century terra cotta garden sculpture – <i>Ceres</i>	32
Savannah grassland and eucalypt forest near Rhynie	34
Lionel Lindsay, <i>The Old Moorish Market</i> (1927)	38
Lionel Lindsay, <i>A Winding Street in the Albaicin</i> (1927)	39
John Stringer Sargent, <i>Almina, daughter of Asher Wertheimer</i>	41
Anthony van Dyck, <i>Elizabeth, or Teresia, Lady Shirley</i> (1622)	43
Jean-Baptiste Vanmour, <i>The Royal Sultana</i> (1712)	45
Seppelt family mausoleum, Barossa Valley, South Australia	46
<i>Le Petit Journal</i> – Queen Victoria visits the French Riviera (1891)	57
George Lambert, <i>Cheltenham Street</i> (1910)	58
South Australian coastline near Maslins Beach	66
Savannah grassland and open woodland, Clare Valley	67
Corrugated landscape of vineyards, Summertown	69
Vineyards, Clare Valley	70
Dorrit Black, <i>The Olive Plantation</i>	72
Olive grove, Adelaide Parklands	73
Senor Villani, Extract: Illustrated guide to pruning olives	77
<i>Coriole</i> , McLaren Vale	80
<i>Nurney House</i> , Kingston Terrace, North Adelaide	87
<i>Albogasio</i> , Lago Lugano photo. Josephine Bagot,	88
Bookplate of Josephine Bagot	91
<i>Forest Lodge</i> , Pine Street, Stirling	92
Copy of the <i>Medici Vase</i> at Forest Lodge	93
<i>Forest Lodge</i> , Pine Street, Stirling	94
Armorial majolica garden urn at <i>Forest Lodge</i>	95
Lawrence Johnston's <i>La Serre de la Madone</i> near Menton, French Riviera	97
<i>Broadlees</i> , Waverly Ridge Road, Crafers	99
19 <sup>th</sup> Century Nursery Catalogue	101

<i>Côte d'Azur</i> (20 <sup>th</sup> Century travel poster, Musée d'Orsay)	103
Rupert Bunny, <i>An Idyll</i> (1901)	105
<i>Summer on the French Riviera</i> (English travel poster, Musée d'Orsay)	106
<i>MS Adele</i>	108
<i>Anlaby</i> , an Edwardian Era Garden Party	109
Ferdinand Bac, <i>Les Colombières</i> on the French Riviera (1919)	111
Hamo Thornycroft <i>Teucer</i> (1904)	113
<i>Parc St Bernard</i> , landscape designed by Gabriel Guévrékian	114
California State Building, Panama-Pacific International Exposition (1915)	118
Court of Abundance and Mulgardt's Tower (1915)	119
<i>Nurney House</i> , Kingston Terrace, North Adelaide	121
Student Union Building, War Memorial Drive, Adelaide	122
<i>To Catch a Thief</i> with Monaco in the back ground	124
The Veringde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) settlement and trading post at the Cape of Good Hope	135
The Governors Palace and VOC offices at Cape Town (1700's)	137
Goyder's Line (Feb 1866)	145
Title page: Joseph Pitton de Tournefort's <i>A Voyage into the Levant</i>	153
Ferdinand Bac, <i>Villa Fiorentina</i>	157
<i>A milk vendor</i> in the streets of Nice (1910's)	161
<i>A seller of fish</i> in the streets of Nice (1910's)	162
<i>A water seller</i> in the streets of Nice (1910's)	162
Schematic map of the world by Isodore of Seville (1472)	166
<i>Holmwood</i> , Devonshire Street, Gilberton	182
Italianate mansion, Fisher Street, Highgate	183
Venetian – Italian architecture, Wakefield Street, Adelaide	184
<i>Glenara</i> , Roberts Street, Glenelg	188

## Maps

12<sup>th</sup> Century Arab map

Early 14<sup>th</sup> Century map

The Western Mediterranean including the islands and Northern Africa, Fra Mauro, 1458

A mid-15<sup>th</sup> Century map of the Eastern Mediterranean

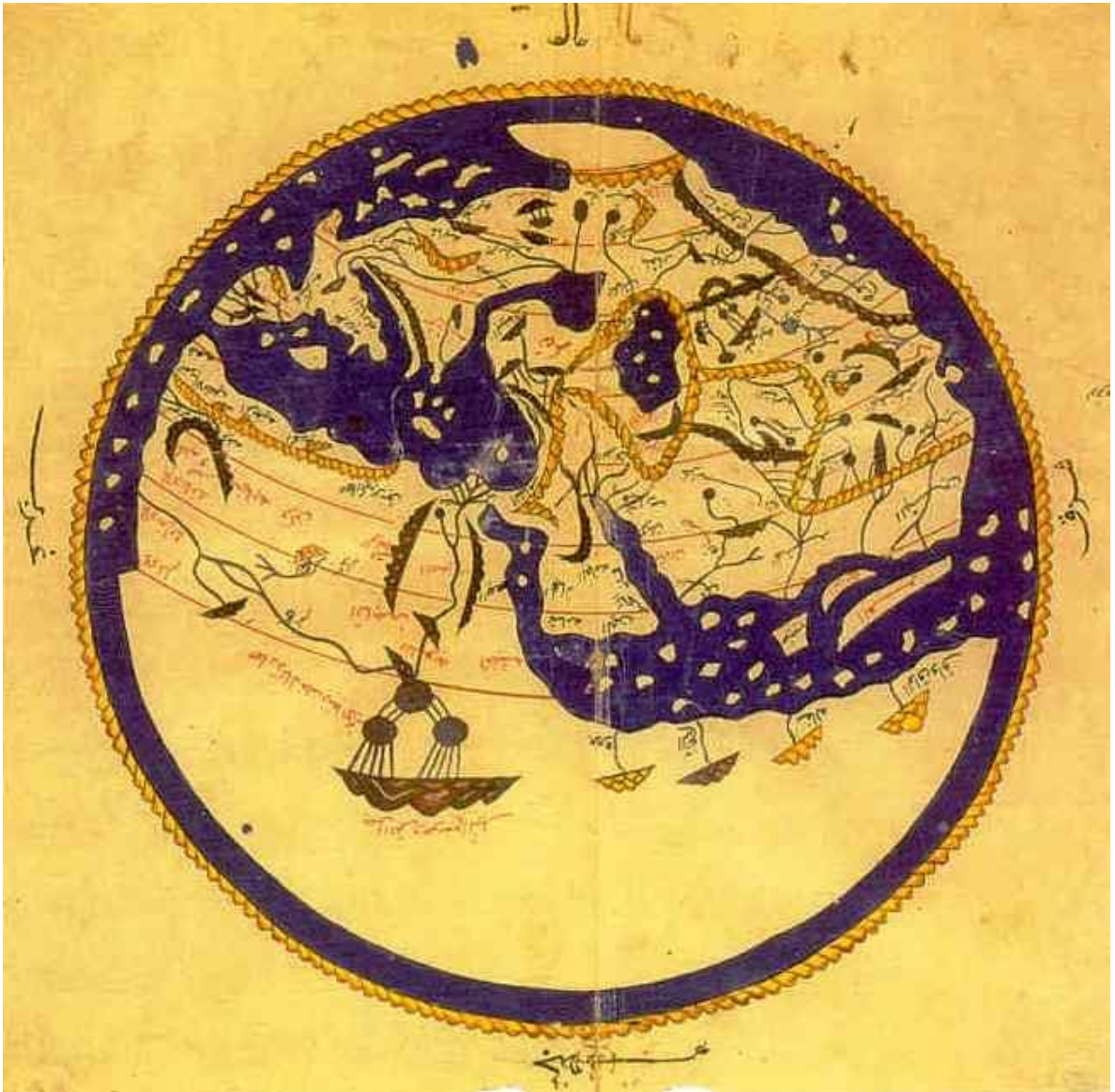
*Mare Nostrum* – ‘Our Sea’ the Mediterranean shore-line in full

Philips *Commonwealth Atlas* c. 1940

Collins *Australian Clear School Atlas 1940*

Mediterranean climate regions of the world after DiCastrì et al 1981

Schematic map of the world by Isidore of Seville, 1472



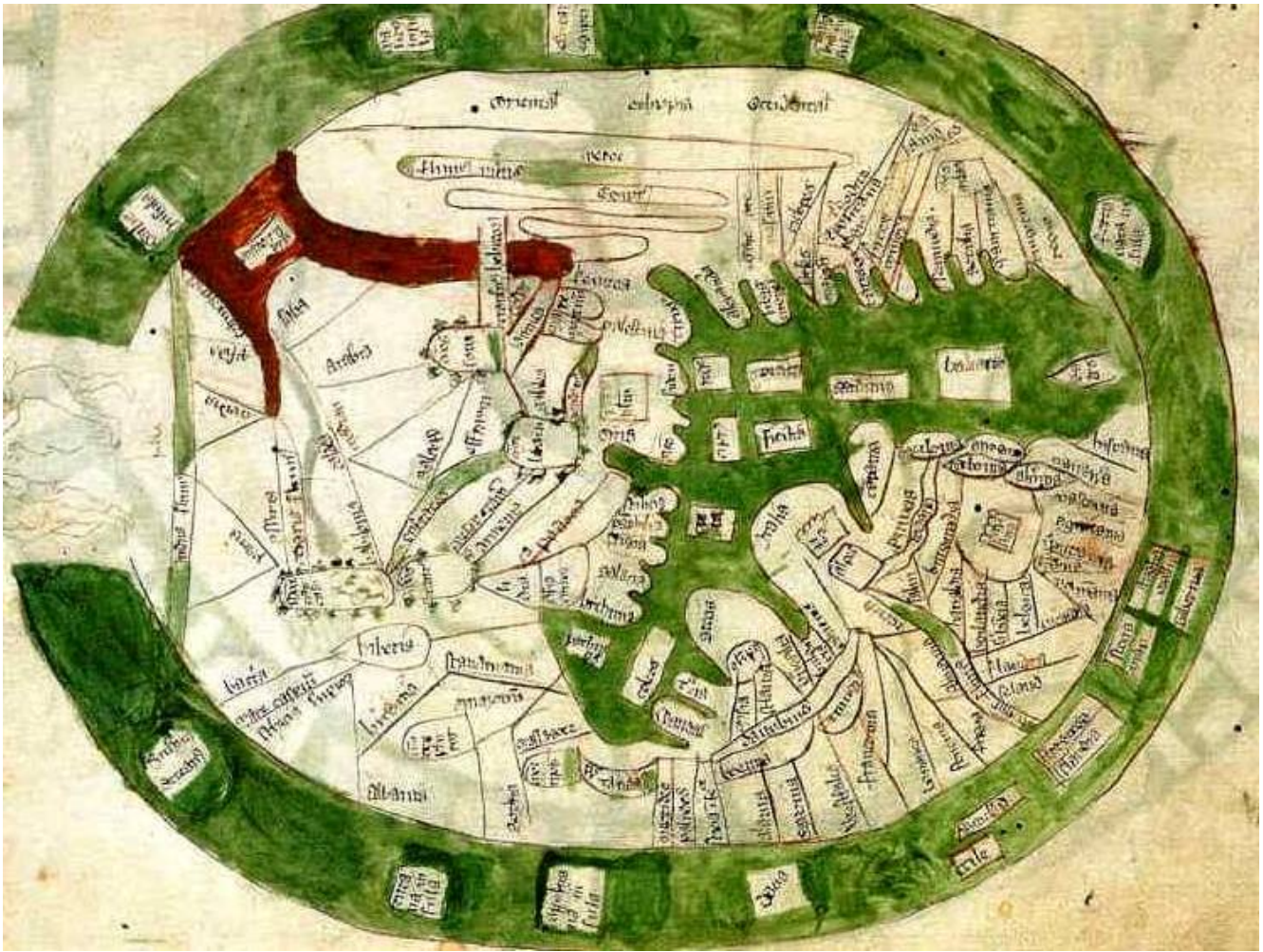
12<sup>th</sup> Century Arab map of the nameless sea – our sea, the *Mare Nostrum* that was common ground for those who inhabited the lands around its shores since at least the Minoan period.<sup>1</sup>

This was the known world when the Moroccan Ibn Battutah (1304 – 1368/69) set out on his travels that were written about in his book *Turfat al-nuzzar fi ghara'ib al-amasar wa aja'ib al-asafar* also known as the *Rihlah* or *The Precious Gift for Lookers into the Marvels of Cities and Wonders of Travel*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> David Albulafia (ed.) *The Mediterranean in History*, J. Paul Getty Museum, with Thames & Hudson, Los Angeles, 2003, p.6

<sup>2</sup> For a modern abridged translation see Tim MacIntosh Smith *The Travels of Ibn Battutah*, Picador, London, 2002.



Early 14<sup>th</sup> Century map of the Eastern Mediterranean (rotated so the place names can be read) with the Red Sea at top Left.

The map shows the Levant, a popular destination for pilgrims and merchants of the period. Interestingly the map shows Jerusalem at the centre of the known world, a reflection on the significance given to the three Abrahamic religions at that time – Judaism, Christianity and Islam.<sup>3</sup>

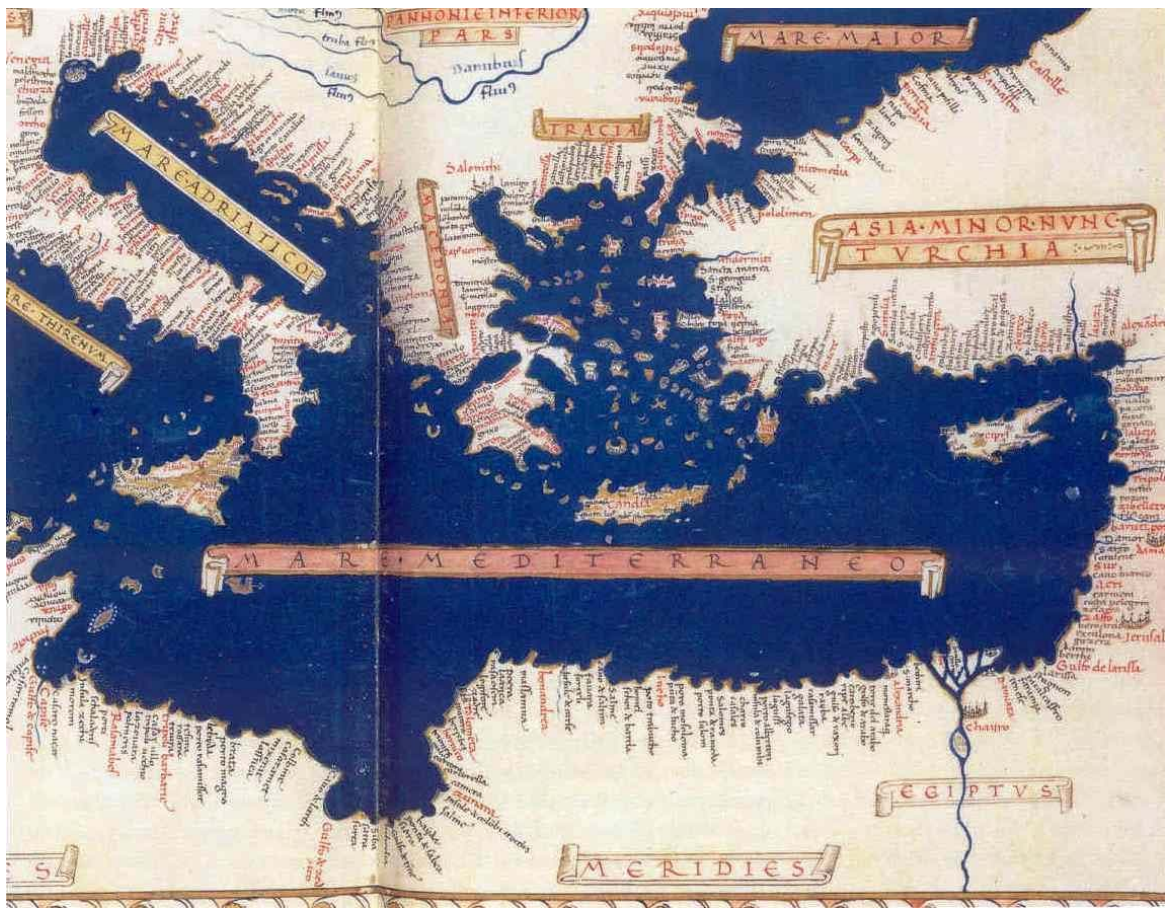
<sup>3</sup> Albulafia, *The Mediterranean in History*, p. 6.



The Western Mediterranean (upside down once again) showing the islands and Northern Africa drawn by Fra Mauro in 1458.

The numerous fortified buildings along the North African coast represent the strongholds of the greatly feared Barbary pirates who raided the Southern shores of Europe for the slave trade.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Albulafia, *The Mediterranean in History*, p. 7.



A mid-15<sup>th</sup> Century map of the Eastern Mediterranean with great detail of the numerous towns and cities along the coast lines, as well as the densely clustered islands of the Aegean.

The Black Sea, the *Mare Major* - 'Great Sea' that feeds the Mediterranean is depicted as the source and all the lesser seas have been named.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Albulafia, *The Mediterranean in History*, p.15.

NOTE: This map is included on page 16 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

*Mare Nostrum – ‘Our Sea’ in Roman times and now known as the Mediterranean Sea, a name that did not come into general use until the late Middle Ages.*

*Shown here is the full shore-line; the well considered North, West and East, and the less considered South.*

NOTE: This map is included on page 17 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Philips *Commonwealth Atlas* c.1940

With a little more displacement north and west this comparative map could have included Turkey and the southern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, thus establishing a meaningful sense of scale to facilitate discussions about Mediterranean Influences in South Australia; as it stands the reader will have to engage the imagination to make the transposition.

(Courtesy: Richard Aitken)

NOTE: This map is included on page 18 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

*Collins Australian Clear School Atlas c.1940*

The figure depicts in broad brush application the major climatic regions of Australian including the significant areas where the Mediterranean climate type prevails.

(Courtesy: Richard Aitken)

NOTE: This map is included on page 19 of the print copy of the thesis held in the University of Adelaide Library.

Mediterranean climate regions of the world after DiCasteri et al 1981<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> F. DiCasteri, D.W. Goodall, R.L. Specht (eds) *Ecosystems of the World* 11. *Mediterranean Type Shrublands*, Elsevier, Amsterdam, 1981.



S.T. Gill, '*Prospect House*', the seat of G. B. Graham Esqr, near Adelaide, South Australia - 1850 (Art Gallery of SA collection)

A white Italianate villa on a hill overlooking Adelaide from the heights of the limestone ridge at Prospect, and set in a garden of plants suited to the Mediterranean climate.