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**THREE SOURCES OF MICHAEL JOHANN VON  
DER BORCH'S POEM "THE SENTIMENTAL  
PARK OF VARAKĻĀNI PALACE"**

The article was inspired by a recent literary source, noticed by several parties, "The Sentimental Park of Varakļāni Palace" (*Jardin sentimental du château de Warkland dans le Comté de Borch en Russie Blanche*), published in Warsaw in 1795 and written by Count Michael Johann von der Borch, a Polonised Baltic German aristocrat, mineralogist, naturalist and European intellectual. As there is an original French text as well as the translation into Latvian<sup>1</sup>, the author of this article prefers V. Jēkabsone-Valters' translation as the closest to the original in terms of language accuracy and conceptual content because, with two translations available, working with the two texts seems unnecessary. This document of the era provides both literary aesthetic and cognitive enjoyment, as well as an insight into the refined culture of the Enlightenment, at the same time allowing us to delve into how the heritage of Latvia's manor gardens and parks is understood.

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1 The first translation was *Jardin sentimental du château de Warkland dans le Comté de Borch en Russie Blanche*, published by Michal Jan Borch, Mihaels Johans fon der Borhs, *Varakļānu pils sentimentālais dārzs, Borhu grāfistē Baltkrievijā*. In *Cultural Landscape: Content, Perception, Transformation. The Baltic States in European Garden Culture*. Kulturlandschaft: Inhalte, Wahrnehmung, Transformation. Das Baltikum in der europaeischen Gartenkultur. Kultūrainava: tās saturs, uztvere un transformācijas. Dārzu un parku kultūra Baltijas valstīs un Eiropā (Rīga: Nacionālais apgāds, 2019), 41–75. Translation from French and Latin by Valda Jēkabsone-Valtere. Although the preface calls this the first publication, the translation of the poem published under the aegis of the National Library of Latvia is the second in chronological order. Mihals Jans Borhs, *Varakļānu pils jūtu dārzs. Michal Jan Borch. Jardin sentimental du chateau de Warkland* (Rīga: National library of Latvia, 2019). Translation of poetry by Māris Salējs.



FIG. 1. LANDLORD'S MANOR HOUSE AT VARAKĻĀNI. PHOTO: OJĀRS SPĀRĪTIS.

In order to justify the choice of literary work, it is necessary to describe its author briefly. Count Michael Johann von der Borch-Lubeschitz (1753–1811) was the son of Rzeczpospolita Grand Chancellor, son-in-law of John Browne, Vidzeme Governor General, and an influential nobleman at the court of King Stanislav II of Poland. From 1783 to 1789, the Italian architect Vincenzo Mazzotti was invited to plan and develop Varakļāni manor, Borch's most impressive residence in the Polish Vidzeme area, or Inflantia as it was called, including the construction of the manor house and landscaping the large park.<sup>2</sup> The spacious manor house is sometimes called a palace, and indeed, this classicist-style building with several blocks and

<sup>2</sup> Ulrich Thieme, Felix Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, Bd. 23/24 (Leipzig: E.A. Seemann, 1999), 302; Roman Aftanazy, *Dzieje rezydencji na dawnych kresach Rzeczpospolitej*, Tom 3 (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków: Zakład Narodowy imienia Ossolinskich Wydawnictwo, 1992), 345; James Stevens Curl, *The Oxford dictionary of Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 474.

the adjoining manager's quarters, guest houses, stables and barns is reminiscent of the dynamic architecture of Baroque palace ensembles in terms of scale and volume (Fig. 1). This corresponded exactly to the character of the owner of the palace, who kept developing his scientific and also fantasy projects during the unsettled and turbulent era of *Sturm und Drang*.

The park, for its part, is more than two centuries old and has been transformed by various of the manor's gardeners and fashion fads. During the two world wars it lost the trees that gave high dendrological value as well as its architectural and sculptural objects. The memories of the inhabitants have preserved only stories and romantic legends about individual lost monuments; or there is old photographic evidence, as is the case with the pyramid dedicated to the architect Vincenzo Mazzotti. Only a patient and keen-eyed visitor, wandering along the park's shady paths, might spot the foundation stones of a collapsed bridge, the remains of a gate post or the 'Love Stone', so admired by newlyweds.

#### ANGLES OF PERCEPTION OF LITERARY WORK

Before going into a reading of "The Sentimental Park of Varakļāni Palace", preparation for its perception requires some comment and a few key words. In the pages of his literary depiction, Count Borch emphasises that his "sentimental garden", i.e. Varakļāni Park, must first be perceived as an allegory and a series of literary images. According to the author of this article, the introduction to the poem, written in 1795, provides a rather poignant example of allegorical satire, which, indeed, shows excellent knowledge of the characteristics of heroes from ancient literature and mythology. One might think that, in the spirit of frivolous associations and ambiguous allusions so characteristic of 18<sup>th</sup>-century libertine literature, Count Borch would have tried to present himself as a sophisticated connoisseur of Rococo salon culture. However, the didactic orientation of the poem's message suggests something else. The coincidence of the reworking and publication of the poem with the events involving Poland and Russia in 1795 is more than significant.

The year the book was published was politically fatal to Poland's statehood. The form of expression of the poem in this case, even from an antiquated cultural-historical point of view, could contain

a covert allegorical political satire about the rotten court of the Russian Empire and its goings-on. In the triple partition process of the Polish–Lithuanian kingdom (on August 5, 1772, on January 23, 1795, and on August 24, 1795) the dominant intrigues, corruption, and the policy of conquest, sacrificed the independence of Poland, so important not only for Count Borch but for the entire Polish nation. After the division of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, Latgale, also called Polish Inflantia, or abbreviated to Inflantia, with the manors of Varakļāni, Preiļi, Galēni and Marinzeja, was included in the administrative-territorial area administered from Vitebsk. In the Count's literary work this territory is called "Russie-Blanche" or Belarus, but it is not directly identifiable with the modern Republic of Belarus.

The introduction, saturated with literary and mythological images like an intellectual rebus, perhaps also as a means of artistic expression, serves as an emotional contrast and forms a negative beginning for the subsequent didactic message. Stylistically, the introduction to the poem seems to contradict the political content in the description of the Temple of True Glory at the end of the literary work, which includes both well-deserved compliments of Count Borch's father-in-law, Governor-General George Browne, and hardly believable flattery of the Russian Tsarist dynasty. However, Count Borch's love of his Motherland, his set of values and sense of belonging to Poland, confirmed in a letter to his father in 1779<sup>3</sup>, are incompatible with the hypocritical assurances of loyalty to Tsarina Catherine II, and Tsar Paul I and his wife, Maria Fyodorovna, whose imperial policy destroyed Polish statehood (Fig. 2).

It appears to the author of the article that the courtesy gestures included in the poem dedicated to Count Borch's Varakļāni Park can be perceived merely as the theatrical respect of a nobleman for the ruling House. After the partition of Poland, all the property of the Borch family in Latgale came under Russian royal family control and, consequently, the welfare of Borch and his family depended on the monarch. It can be said that it was the accepted practice of an aristocratic upbringing that the subordinate affirms, loudly and visibly, his submission to the sovereign and swears allegiance to each

3 Aija Taimiņa, "BORCHIANA versus SICILIANA. Grāfa Borha Sicīlijas ceļojums un tā reminiscences literatūrā un mākslā", *Mākslas vēsture & teorija*, 16 (2013), 14.



FIG. 2. PORTRAIT OF COUNT MICHAEL JOHANN VON DER BORCH. AUTHOR UNKNOWN. FROM THE COLLECTION OF G. VON KRUZENSTJERN IN THE MARBURG ARCHIVE, UNIVERSITY OF MARBURG.

future master in succession. However, if in the poem *La Stanislade*, published in 1791, dedicated to King Stanislaus II August of Poland, Count Borch unreservedly and with deep respect expresses his loyalty to and love for his king<sup>4</sup>, then after the last partition of Poland the compliments expressed four years later in the poem "The Sentimental Park of Varakļāni Palace" sound merely dictated by the noble code of conduct<sup>5</sup>. Despite this, the political attitude of Count Borch as the King's authorised Polish envoy to Inflantia towards Polish state affairs is unequivocally evidenced by his political manifesto *Glos*

4 Michael Johann von der Borch, *La STANISLADE ou L'heureuse delivrance de STANISLAS II Roi de Pologne. Poeme* (Varsovie: De l'Imprimerie de P. Dufour, 1791).

5 Michael Johann von der Borch, *Jardin sentimental du château de Warkland dans le Comté de Borch en Russie Blanche = Varakļānu pils sentimentālais dārzs, Borhu grāfistē, Baltkrievijā = Cultural Landscape: Content, Perception, Transformation. The Baltic States in European Garden Culture = Kulturlandschaft: Inhalte, Wahrnehmung, Transformation. Das Baltikum in der europaeischen Gartenkultur = Kultūrainava: tās saturs, uztvere un transformācijas. Dārzu un parku kultūra Baltijas valstīs un Eiropā* (Rīga: Nacionālais apgāds, 2019), 73–74.

*jasnie wielmoznego Imci Pana Michala Hrabia Borchy*, published in 1786, in which he analyses the rights and duties of the nobility as well as aspects of obedience. He treats on the relationship between state institutions and the individual's hierarchical subordination, in whose mutually coordinated actions he also sees the meaning of his life.<sup>6</sup> In this literary work, devoted to understanding the rule of law, Count Borch reveals himself not only to be a responsible citizen loyal to the ideas and social structure of Polish statehood, but also shows himself a zealous defender of cooperation between the Sejm and the nobility council, and a supporter of the king.

#### A POEM ABOUT THE PARK AND THE PARK IN THE RESEARCHER'S EYES

The author's intention here is not to dwell on the many and interesting episodes in Count Michael Johann von der Borch's life, but to make an attempt to sketch in the relationship between images, symbols and hints, and associative Enlightenment recommendations, for developing a park landscape that encourages sentimental and romantic experiences, based on the allegorical poem "The Sentimental Park of Varakļāni Palace". The didactic purpose of creating a particular environment was accomplished by integrating small architectural forms into the landscape, the presence of artwork of allegorical content, elements of iconology, epigraphy and emblems, which were supposed to generate images of various art synthesis for the suggestive impression on the park visitors' emotional perception. This interconnection is also indicated in the title of the original version of Count Borch's poem of 1791, *Jardin moral et emblematique* ("Moral and Emblematic Garden"), which is mentioned in the publication by Polish art historian Jolanta Polanowska<sup>7</sup> and was printed in 1795 with significant modifications.

The plot of the poem presents a philosophical and didactic composition with a popular traveller's motif in the aesthetics of Romanticism. The protagonist of the poem – an unnamed young

6 Michael Johann von der Borch, *Głos Jasnie Wielmoznego Imci Pana Michala Hrabia BORCHA, Oboznego W. Xtwa LITEWSKIEGO, Jako Posła z Xięstwa Inflantskiego w Izbie Poselskiej na Dniu 28. Sctobra R. 1786* (Miany, 1786).

7 Jolanta Polanowska, "Ogrod w Warklanach - dzieło właściciela Michala Jana Borchy i architekta Vincenza de Mazzottiego", *Biuletyn Historii Sztuki*, 74 (3-4) (2012), 583.

man who could be any member of the Borch family or any reader – walks the paths of Varakļāni Park, which have been carefully planned in the author's imagination. On his way the traveller learns about numerous architectural and sculptural objects, and the park landscape. The perception of their didactic content, similar to the intellectual exercises typical of Enlightenment pedagogy in cultural theory and in sentimental and romantic cultural clichés, guides the young traveller through spiritual and ethical challenges and leads him to important findings about an individual's world of values. However, certain questions remain unanswered: is Count Borch's literary essay "The Sentimental Park of Varakļāni Palace" related to the concept and layout of the real park at Varakļāni manor, because today one can only use one's imagination to see the traces of the park that was created 230 years ago? But, does what we see correspond to what was there, or, under the influence of the poem, do we "see" a phantom that may not have been there at all? And, finally, to what extent does the poem reflect Vincenzo Mazzotti's ideas as a landscaping specialist? How far has the Count, skilled in creating scientific texts and essays, gone to give these ideas literary content, form and the power of expression?

In one voice with Count Michael Johann von der Borch we could say: how nice that in art, and often in life, there is not just one answer, one truth that can be unequivocally found only in one field of profession or science. The owner of Varakļāni manor himself was not a simple person, but an intellectual of wide scope, with deep and thorough knowledge of both natural sciences and culture. Therefore, when trying to access the repository of his spiritual heritage, we would have to be provided with several keys because trying to unlock this heritage with only one key would give us only part of the truth. In the excellent book *Latvian Manor Gardens and Parks*, Ilze Māra Janelis, a researcher of Latvian historical parks, compares "The Sentimental Park of Varakļāni Palace" with a modern park landscape. Quite objectively, she has come to realise that the Count's literary "essay on the new sentimental (romantic) garden is so abundant in allegory that it cannot be used to get any complete visual picture"<sup>8</sup> of the park's layout. So, there is an insurmountable gap between the literary and the cultural heritage immortalised in the park landscape.

8 Ilze Māra Janelis, *Latvijas muižu dārzi un parki* (Rīga: Neputns, 2010), 119.

In his book *The History of Latvian Culture 1710–1800* (1975) Andrejs Johansons, an exile historian living in Sweden, was the first to urge researchers to address the cultural values of 18<sup>th</sup>-century Latvia's aristocracy in architecture and environmental design, including Count Michael Johann von der Borch's composition, largely ignored by the interwar-period and Soviet historians. However, when searching for information even in the rich libraries of European universities and living behind the Iron Curtain, Johansons did not have the opportunity to compare the reality with the information found in literature. And, although Johansons has quite extensively recounted the content of Count Borch's work, he was eventually held captive by his own conclusion when assuming that "he [Count Borch] himself described the park in the book *Jardin sentimental du château de Warkland*, published in French in Warsaw in 1795, of which only one or two copies have been preserved in just a few European libraries."<sup>9</sup>

It is in the last decade that several researchers in both Latvia and Poland have turned to the biographical, scientific and literary work of the family of Count Borch and Michael Johann von der Borch in particular, as well as the issue of Varakļāni manor and park. This has yielded a complete syncretic picture of this unusually gifted and creative personality of the Enlightenment. Already in 2012, Polish art historian Jolanta Polanowska published a voluminous and richly illustrated study titled *Ogrod w Warklanach - dzieło właściciela Michala Jana Borchy i architekta Vincenza de Mazottiego*, which included the knowledge accumulated over several years on the heritage of the Varakļāni manor ensemble, its park and the Counts Borch.<sup>10</sup> This research was followed in 2013 by the publication of *BORCHIANA versus SICILIAN: Count Borch's Sicilian Travels and their Reminiscences in Literature and Art*, authored by Aija Taimiņa, Head of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Department at the Academic Library of the University of Latvia. This volume provides an extensive survey of the Varakļāni manor owner's scientific research in the geography, botany, mineralogy of the continental part of Italy, the islands of Sicily and Malta, as well as significant excerpts from letters that take us closer to the personality of this prominent scientist and his system

9 Andrejs Johansons, *Latvijas kultūras vēsture 1710–1800* (Rīga: Jumava, 2011), 65.

10 Polanowska, "Ogrod w Warklanach - dzieło właściciela Michala Jana Borchy i architekta Vincenza de Mazottiego".

of values. Taimiņa's article in the journal *History and Theory of Art*, published in 2013 by the Institute of Art History, Art Academy of Latvia, was complemented by Jolanta Polanowska's<sup>11</sup> and architect Jānis Zilgalvis'<sup>12</sup> reflections on the concept and architectural qualities of the Varakļāni manor ensemble.

Encountering two almost simultaneous editions of the composition "The Sentimental Park of Varakļāni Palace" in the ecosystem of Latvian literary history, academician Māra Grudule focused on Count Michael Johann von Borch's sources of inspiration and aptly identified the parallels of his literary genre in 18<sup>th</sup> century libertine and moralising literature, as well as searching for them in the art theory of European parks and how this is echoed in Latvia<sup>13</sup>. The article by Grudule perfectly corresponds with the biographical facts and opinions mentioned in the chapter titled "Ravens' Gold and Varakļāni Palace Library" in Kristīne Zaļuma's research book *Invisible Library: Fourteen Historical Collections of the National Library of Latvia*, published in 2019. The special value of the article is its insight into the systematics of Count Borch's extensive library and the range of its diverse collections, which document the research interests of the enlightened aristocrat not only in architecture and art, literature and economics, landscaping and horticulture, but also in natural sciences such as chemistry and medicine, geography and zoology, mineralogy and botany.<sup>14</sup> This understanding of the scope compares with another giant of equally universal interests and knowledge, the geographer, traveller, botanist and biogeographer Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859), whose scientific theories might be based on Count Michael Johann von der Borch's observations concerning indicator plants as determining the mineral composition of soil which he had published a quarter of a century earlier.

But that would be the subject of yet another reflection.

11 Jolanta Polanowska, "Michał Jan Borch and his Residence in Varakļāni: Genesis and Ideological Programme = Mihals Jans Borhs un viņa Varakļānu rezidence: Ģenēze un ideoloģiskā programma", *Mākslas vēsture & teorija*, 16 (2013), 18–32.

12 Jānis Zilgalvis, "Varakļāni – muiža un tās saimnieki gadsimtu gaitā / Varakļāni – Manor and its Owners over the Centuries", *Mākslas vēsture & teorija*, 16 (2013), 33–36.

13 Māra Grudule, *Grāmatiņa, kas nodrošina ceļojumu laikā* (27.02.2020), <http://www.punctummagazine.lv/2020/02/27/gramatina-kas-nodrosina-celojumu-laika/> [accessed on 15/12/2020].

14 Kristīne Zaļuma, *Neredzamā bibliotēka. Latvijas nacionālās bibliotēkas 14 vēsturiskās kolekcijas* (Rīga: Latvijas Nacionālā bibliotēka, 2019), 189, 196.

### WHY IS JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU INVOLVED?

To proceed with the development of this article it is important to consider the fact that the tandem of two spiritually related personalities, the Italian architect and landscaping artist Vincenzo Mazzotti and Count Michael Johann von der Borch, a scientist of great erudition and interest in botany and nature research, lasted nine years, from 1784 to 1793<sup>15</sup>. This coincides with the most important European Enlightenment landscaping and park theorist, fruit-tree breeder and publicist, Christian Cay Lorenz Hirschfeld (1742–1792), professor of philosophy and art history at the University of Kiel, and an active writer. His most notable theoretical achievement was the five-volume “Theory of the Art of Gardening” (*Theorie der Gartenkunst; Théorie de l'art des jardins*), published between 1779 and 1785 in both German and French, becoming an irreplaceable handbook for the architects who worked for European and Russian aristocrats as well as for amateur practitioners. Its popular theoretical and practical advice for the layout of gardens and parks along with countless proposals for the construction of small architectural objects in artificially created landscapes provided rich material for inspiration and imitation. The visualisation of C. Hirschfeld's theoretical ideas in nature and their transformation into landscape compositions with the help of gardeners' art were facilitated by the copper-engraved illustrations by Jean-Henri Brant and Christian Gottlieb Geysler. The depicted stage-designed landscapes, in which cascades of trees and bushes surround pavilions, grottoes, bridges, sculptures and artificial ruins, have also served as a source of inspiration for the creation of landscapes in Latvia's manor parks.

Christian Hirschfeld had never visited England to explore English parks, but his knowledge of them came from the studies of projects and theoretical treatises by Joseph Addison, Thomas Whately and William Chambers, as well as from indirect information on England's most important parks. There is no reason to believe that the influence of English park samples would play a particularly dominant role on Hirschfeld's theoretical views because the author is just as excited about German, French and Russian parks as about English parks,

15 Zaļuma, *Neredzamā bibliotēka. Latvijas nacionālās bibliotēkas 14 vēsturiskās kolekcijas*, 189.

describing them as the most significant achievements of the art of designing gardens and parks. On the other hand, Hirschfeld's advice, instructions in landscaping and his acumen, the literary passages included in the book with elements of nature observation and interpretation, and the sentimental and romantic admiration of the changing moods of the seasons and the run of the day formed an essential part of Enlightenment moral and cultural philosophy. To a large extent, he was influenced by the views of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and, by including a picture and a description of Rousseau's tomb in Ermenonville Park, France, in his treatise on gardening, he proposed planting green artificial islands in the park landscape as a token of love as well as respect for outstanding individuals (Fig. 3).

It is no matter of chance that the illustration in Hirschfeld's book depicts the landscape of Ermenonville Park with the priest-persecuted freethinker's tomb on a poplar-surrounded islet in the middle of a pond. The tombstone was erected by the friend and the philosopher's last pupil, Marquis René Louis de Girarden.<sup>16</sup> To describe the place of Rousseau's walks, plant gathering and the last refuge of his dignity, C. Hirschfeld devotes an emotional and picturesque description: “Now here – on a small, poplar-planted islet, which since J. J. Rousseau's last days has been called Elysium – a long night reigns, facing the rising sun. The water that surrounds it flows noiselessly, as if for fear of disturbing the silence of the scene with the slightest noise. The small lake is surrounded by hillocks that separate it from the rest of the world and turn the whole area into a mysterious sanctuary that is neither shady nor sad but conveys gentle melancholy. /---/ In the very centre, above the sacred ashes rises a six-foot-high monument, decorated with simple but beautiful ornaments. Tall poplars cast a reverent shade over the green grass and some roses and, when reflected in the water, they look even taller (Fig. 4). And the thought of Rousseau resting here discourages anything that might interfere with the wish to continue contemplating this touching solemnity.”<sup>17</sup> The quote well describes Hirschfeld's writing style, rich in sentimental associations, the elements of which are borrowed from the essays of the Enlightenment philosophers and the works of writers.

16 Christian Cay Lorenz Hirschfeld, *Theorie der Gartenkunst*, 5 Bände in zwei Bänden (Hildesheim; New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1973), 59.

17 *Ibidem*, 60.



FIG. 3. JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU'S TOMB IN ERMENONVILLE PARK. ILLUSTRATION FROM HIRSCHFELD'S *THEORIE DER GARTENKUNST*, 59.



FIG. 4. JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU'S TOMB IN ERMENONVILLE PARK. PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

### VIEWS OF A PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KIEL ON SENTIMENTALISM

Christian Hirschfeld's *Theory of the Art of Gardening* is not just a guide to garden and park layout. In the pages of the book, in addition to illustrative and technical advice for landscape gardeners and architects, an enthusiastic reader will find emotional nature descriptions and passages of sentimental spiritual discoveries. They contain picturesque recommendations for creating garden landscapes that match the colours of both the season and the time of day. Describing the type of garden dedicated to the morning mood, with the term 'morning' already used in the sense of a complex allegorical concept, Hirschfeld gives his reader a verbally formulated pictorial and allegorical scene along with the task to be performed by the gardener. He writes, "The garden of the morning mood loves a lot of space, grass and flowers – these are the scenes of lovely youth which stand out especially in the sparkle of the dew."<sup>18</sup> By providing advice on the species of trees and shrubs to choose, Hirschfeld pays great attention to the recommendations for creating a panoramic landscape. Among these recommendations are the following tips: "The building to be built in the morning garden should embody liveliness, delight and encouraging activity. If there is a lake near the garden or a river flows, the shore could be decorated with a fisherman's house since fishing belongs to morning activities. If the owner of the park is a science lover, this is the place for the temple of Apollo, based on beautiful columns, and in front of the entrance, shining in the sun, there would be a sculpture of the father of all muses (Fig. 5). /---/ The dome of the Morning Temple is decorated with a relief hemisphere crowned with the sculpture of the young Phoebus, holding a torch on the east side of the pavilion to illuminate the head of Apollo, friend of the morning hours."<sup>19</sup>

The author of the treatise personally addresses every park creator and gardener, and, talking about the creation of an autumn-style garden, hails him as an artist: "The garden artist must pay close attention to the glorious coincidences that help to describe the season in this area, because as soon as he notes a stimulating painting in nature,

<sup>18</sup> Hirschfeld, *Theorie der Gartenkunst*, 5.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, 7–8.



FIG. 5. PROPOSAL FOR THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO. ILLUSTRATION FROM HIRSCHFELD'S *THEORIE DER GARTENKUNST*, 7.

his observations will be rewarded. By mixing the colours of trees and shrubs in their diversity, he can show both the common and the different that no other season knows."<sup>20</sup> To stage a mood characteristic of autumn in the park, Hirschfeld lists things, architectural objects and other landscape elements the presence or even number of which will guarantee the desired result. The text clearly reveals the clichés typical of late 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape park design, which were varied as needed like the decorations to set the stage, and used to create an emotionally saturated environment: "Ruins of buildings, broken columns, a moss-covered tombstone, a dilapidated hut that had served as a dwelling for a now-dead old man, and all this testifies to the vanishing nature of things, that, by their presence, highlight seriousness, reflection, and gentle melancholy, becoming a soul-stirring

20 Hirschfeld, *Theorie der Gartenkunst*, 160.



FIG. 6. RUINS, A SYMBOL OF MELANCHOLY AND EXTINCTION. ILLUSTRATION FROM HIRSCHFELD'S *THEORIE DER GARTENKUNST*, 161.

theatre stage of extinction."<sup>21</sup> (Fig. 6) In addition, in the chapters of his handbook Hirschfeld already uses the principle of route description as a stylistic technique, guiding the reader down the set paths and, like an expert guide, with imaginative comments suggesting the means to create an artistic and experiential park landscape.

In order not to immerse oneself in an endless narrative of Hirschfeld's theoretical treatise, but to emphasise what is already clear from what has been said, it is important to mention that the structure of Count Borch's poem is like a strictly directed theatrical walking route in an imaginary park landscape. As dictated by the use of the traveller motif, characteristic of sentimental and romantic literature, a series of adventures and the literary hero's progression from one object of observation and cognition to the next contribute to his spiritual and moral evolution. It can be said with great confidence

21 Hirschfeld, *Theorie der Gartenkunst*, 161.



that journey as an artistic technique for the development of Count Borch's poem has encouraged borrowing its stylistic design from natural and architectural images, works of art, allegories and symbols characteristic of park design, which we find in Hirschfeld's *Theory of the Art of Gardening*. The chapter "On Forest Scenes" begins with a description of a tempting walking route: "Already in the groves and forests, which have not yet been touched by beautifying taste, a nature's friend will find rest and delight. Soon he will wonder under the dark canopy of trees, rich in foliage, and take in the refreshing cool air, then again he will come out into a bright field and turn his liberated gaze to the sky and the mountain peaks rising in it."<sup>22</sup> In the introductory lines, he describes the untouched nature in words that stimulate physical sensations and visual imagination, but then, with heightened emotionality, the author's message transforms into an aesthetic and intellectual experience: "Farther, the desert turns into amusement grounds with numerous sideshows that hail Freedom and Love, and, together with the Creator, the heart of an intelligent observer is overwhelmed by the feeling of the highest Bliss."<sup>23</sup>

#### HIRSCHFELD'S IDEAS IN THE POEM ABOUT VARAKĻĀNI PARK

Although fragments of poetry and prose in Borch's composition "The Sentimental Park of Varakļāni Palace" are constantly interchanging, the form and style of expression of the prose narrative attract attention. The parallels observed both in its syntax and in the rhythm of the language and even in the system of the chosen images make it possible to assume that there is a certain interaction between the prose texts of the two authors. The first similarity lies in the literary hero, a traveller, who in Count Borch's composition is personalised in the image of a young man who leaves the lord's manor, the cradle of this young nobleman, and embarks on an educational world trip. However, the great universe – the "ocean of human life" – is replaced by a microcosm, the material and spiritual heritage of the owner of Varakļāni manor, perceivably the land of fantasy, reduced to the dimensions of a didactic walk. The parts of Hirschfeld's treatise on the topic of the forest also contain passages of

22 Hirschfeld, *Theorie der Gartenkunst*, 53.

23 *Ibidem*.

similar content with tips for the traveller on how to note and perceive, emotionally and philosophically, natural formations in an untouched or a well-groomed park environment: the terrain, a change of dark thickets and sun-lit meadows, old and large trees, shrubs, flowers in the grassland, and how to take delight in the mirror of a pool, in the murmur of a river or a stream.

In the chapter "On Forest Scenes", the anonymous literary hero of which, "he", savours the proposed route, the author's words are worthy of Rousseau's glorification of nature: "These are not concocted scenes, but the true and unmodified nature itself. Not all of it, just a small part. And what can all these views with tall hedges and long alleys do, you, stunned supporters of ostentatious art! Rather, approach the forest beauty with a sound taste. Nothing has been changed or transformed there, because in it you will find scenes that nature offers for a variety of pleasures and recreation. It [the forest] will cultivate your abilities and augment their activity. Here he [the traveller] will reveal a scene filled with sweet exquisiteness. The foot of the hill is surrounded by groups of young and slender trees, but the vista between the large trees allows you to see a captivating view of the forested mountains in the distance among which a dazzling lake shines. The rest of the hill slopes are shadowed by wooded ascents. At the round top of the hill rises the Entertainment Pavilion, the beauty of which has been taken care of by Graces. All around the ascents to the hill emanates the scent of lovely flowers rising above the green and fresh grass."<sup>24</sup>

The lines of the poem "The Sentimental Park of Varakļāni Palace" about the artificially inserted and thought-provoking objects in the forest landscape and their allegorical nature as well as their architectural and landscaping role allow us to easily see the similarity with the previously quoted excerpts from Hirschfeld's text. With the fervour of a traveller setting out on a romantic journey, Count Borch's imaginary literary hero, a young man "takes a boat to a pleasure island where the magical reflection on the water seems doubly charming. It is an easily accessible island covered by a thick and mysterious forest: the air is full of sweet scent; roses, intertwined with honeysuckle and jasmine, create imperceptible hiding places; a soft and delicate lawn with thousands of flowers stirs sensuality

24 Hirschfeld, *Theorie der Gartenkunst*, 54.

and invites you to relax. The young traveller feels pleasantly uplifted and spiritually excited, he walks down a path lined with roses and lilies-of-the-valley, overwhelmed with the aroma of mignonettes and vanilla. The young man arrives at the Temple of Myrtle where he sees Amor, the mighty god of the place, who smiles from the basket of flowers and invites him to relish the pleasures of the island. The young man feels that he is completely ready for it, but suddenly he notices an adder crawling out from under the basket and showing its poisonous sting."<sup>25</sup> The flow of the poem's prose text, like poetry, draws the reader into the harmonious stream and pulls him along without even letting him stop to decipher the meanings of the concepts therein. The symbolic images, allegories, mottoes, inserts in Latin, and semiotic associations, with poetry and prose alternating, create a dense text corpus, typical of a cinematographic script which does not borrow directly from the works of other authors, but in the background one can feel the possibilities provided by the rich library of an Enlightenment intellectual, as well as an excellent orientation in scientific literature and fiction.

As the concentrated plot of the poem, about a young man's journey in the vast park, is designed as an alternation of several similar situations, it is worth quoting another passage from Hirschfeld's text which shows stylistic parallels with Count Borch's literary imagination, text construction and poetic thought. The main task of both Hirschfeld's and Count Borch's literary works is to popularise the findings and values of pedagogical upbringing. This comes out very clearly in the lines of *Theory of the Art of Gardening* about the role of nature in the development of an individual's cognitive abilities and emotions towards the individual's own ethical growth. In the chapter titled "On the Role of Trees", Hirschfeld verbally visualises a staged scene in a forest or a park that has the specific goal of creating an atmosphere of activated individual self-knowledge: "Another setting is created for Peace and Reflection. There is no significant or living object there that could disturb the peace of the soul, no distant views that would control it. In a small area surrounded by densely growing trees, with a calm surface of water that mirrors the treetops, there is a pavilion dedicated to blessed reading and

25 Borch, *Jardin sentimental du château de Warkland dans le Comté de Borch en Russie Blanche*, 63.

self-reflection. To eliminate any melancholy from this scene, it has as many windows and light as necessary."<sup>26</sup>

Some researchers note a similarity in Count Borch's poem to Rousseau's *Julie ou la nouvelle Héloïse*, published in 1759 and written in the form of letters, whose psychological drama is confronted with the extolment of natural feelings as opposed to affected human relationships, deformed by the conventions of behavioural clichés.<sup>27</sup> In this novel, which, along with its author Rousseau's name, gained immense popularity in European intellectual circles, there is a thesis of returning to nature in two ways: by calling for the restoration of humanity and unpretentious simplicity, and by perceiving vernacular rural environment and everyday life in harmony with nature as a model of an ideal society. The conviction of the author of this article urges to trace ideological parallels with the sentimental message of both Hirschfeld and Count Borch with the publication of Rousseau's didactic novel *Emile ou de l'éducation* three years later, in 1762. Emphasised even more than in the previous novel is Rousseau's idealistic idea that an individual is flawless and natural from birth, but that civilisation leads him or her to decadence. Therefore, the only way to happiness is to return to the natural state found in harmony with nature.

In the fourth part of the novel *Emile ou de l'éducation* the vicar of the Savoy region, when addressing Emile, in his famous *credo* voices Rousseau's views in the following words: "When you'll use your education-cultivated abilities to speak openly to people to gain their consent, do not act against your conscience. /---/ Follow the path of truth or only the one indicated by the clarity of your heart. Do not turn away because of vanity or illusion. May courage and God be with you also in the presence of philosophers, always preaching humanity."<sup>28</sup> When paying attention to the conceptual content of the message, one cannot ignore the philosophical and ethical categories, expressed in the text in the form of desire or imperative: conscience, truth, clarity of heart, courage, humanity, which underline the individual's choice or character features.

26 Hirschfeld, *Theorie der Gartenkunst*, 55.

27 Johannes Scherr, *Illustrierte Geschichte der Weltliteratur*, Erster Band (Stuttgart: Franck'sche Verlagshandlung, 1899), 244.

28 *Ibidem*, 247.

### THE ROLE OF EMBLEMS IN THE MORALISING MESSAGE

Renaissance culture, which was starting to print illustrated books, enriched the imagination of artists and educated people with graphic images of allegorical content in them, such as symbols, emblems and miniatures. By slightly varying educational or moralising accents as well as reproducing religious and philosophical ideas in the form of miniature images, the subsequent periods of art – Baroque, Rococo and Classicism – also formed the basis of the taste and value system of the society of their time. The text of Count Michael Johann von der Borch's poem names a host of symbols and allegories which, for a classically educated Enlightenment individual, opened up a peculiar world of associations in which he could immerse and reflect on the proposed topics. This knowledge was promoted by dictionaries and encyclopaedic collections of symbols and emblems, handbooks of iconology for both artists and housewives, illustrations in moralizing literary publications and poetry collections.

Iconography, as an auxiliary branch of art history, serves the understanding and interpretation of visual imagery, mainly in the social and humanitarian fields. In general, iconography helps us understand the symbolic and allegorical content of works of fine art. In order to avoid misunderstanding, it must be said that the subject of iconography looks at more than the symbolic meaning of a visually perceptible work of art. In order to create a work of fine art with iconographical content, the artist performs the opposite action and materialises the concept contained in the symbol and allegory. However, he or she comes to an iconographically interpretable symbolic image by conveying its conceptual content in a verbal form. This means that a visual image is not compulsory for the existence of symbolic content of iconographic value, since it is also possible to include a symbol or an allegory in a literary form. Thus, the complex essence of an iconographical visual artwork ideally prescribes three components: the conceptual name of the symbol rooted in the cultural tradition, its visualisation in the form of fine art and a definitive explanation or interpretation of the symbol.

On the other hand, in various arts a symbol, the understanding of the content of which requires the involvement of iconography as an auxiliary science, can also exist in one of its 'states of aggregation'. Conversational language and poetry can often do with the verbal conceptual designation

of a symbol, for example, using capacious concepts such as friendship, eternity, passion, loyalty, etc., in the meaning of a symbol. By transferring the symbolic content onto the work of visual art, fine arts will completely dispense with a verbal explanatory description if the artistic image is so eloquent that it will be possible for the public to guess and interpret the composition without comment. In some cases, especially in the period between the Renaissance and the 20<sup>th</sup> century, artists gave their allegorical and symbolic works of art laconic titles that facilitated their perception. The third component – extended verbal explanation – will be rather characteristic of prose and the art of rhetoric or theatre with the potential of extensive interpretation.

A brief prose passage from Count Borch's poem reveals the tenor of the allegorical content in which every word can become a symbol in fine arts: "After being warned of the dangers of **love**, the young man rushes away from the charm of this place. Mistaking **ambition** for true **glory** and seeing a nearby hill with a shining dome, he proceeds there. A well-trodden road, all grooves and ruts, leads to it. Two women, whom he will later come to know as **Flattery** and **Hypocrisy**, do not skimp on their advice. The young man walks on and arrives at the top of the hill where a luxuriously decorated building rises. The traveller's young, honest heart is not enticed by it, but his passionate spirit experiences the intoxication of empty **ambition**. He quickly walks through the building, admires it and is surprised that it is empty. In a corner there is a marble block and the words written on it lend a clue to the causes of the abandonment."<sup>29</sup>

From today's point of view, it is difficult to reconstruct the details of the author's creative process. However, it can be assumed with great certainty that Count Borch's library, which contained many original copperplate engravings and art books, would have those of images of emblems, allegories, and symbols, as well as their explanations. The educated part of the society found in them an impetus for philosophical exercises of thought, letters, poetry, while for artists it was paintings and sculptures. West European intellectuals were most often inspired by the book *Iconologie*<sup>30</sup>, compiled by the French

29 Borch, *Jardin sentimental du château de Warkland dans le Comté de Borch en Russie Blanche*, 64.

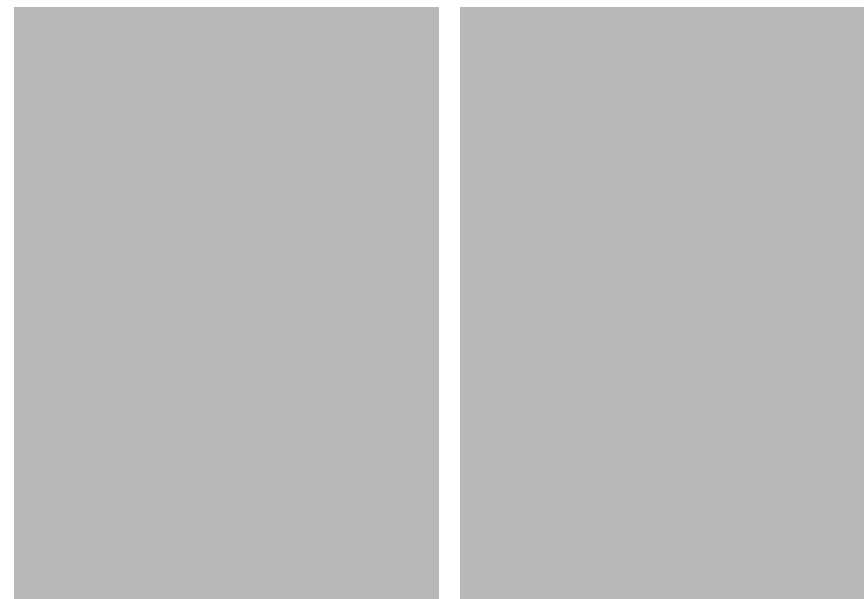
30 Jean Baptiste Boudard, *Iconologie tiree de divers auteurs: ouvrage utile aux gens de lettres, aux poetes, aux artistes, & generalement a tous les amateurs des beaux arts* (Parme: Chez l' auteur: De l'Imprimerie de Philippe Carmignani, 1766).

Rococo sculptor Jean Batiste Boudard, published in Parma in 1759 and in Vienna in 1766. It contained 630 copper engravings with explanations and comments on the meaning of symbols and allegories. Adapted translations of Boudard's book were published by several other authors, thus expanding the geography of iconology studies and, for the benefit of the readers, simplifying the commentary of symbols and reducing the number of graphic images. Livonian spiritual culture, formed by Baltic German aristocrats and writers, has also preserved such an edition: *Ikonologie des jetzigen Zeitalters oder Darstellung einiger allegorischer Personen nach heutiger Sitte*<sup>31</sup>. Its author is Ulrich Heinrich Gustav von Schlippenbach, the owner of Jamaiķi and Ulmale manors, whose essays and books on architecture, art, park landscaping and aesthetics can be found in the printed works of the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The author of this article has at his disposal a volume on iconography, printed in Vienna in 1801, with 225 copper-engraved allegories and commentary.<sup>32</sup> Although this book was published during Count Borch's lifetime, while writing his poem "The Sentimental Park of Varakļāni Manor", he may have been inspired by similar earlier books in Italian, French, German, Dutch and other languages that served to cultivate taste and morality.

During the tour of Varakļāni Park, transformed into an imaginary structure, the character of the literary hero is tested, and various personalised allegories temper him against nasty temptations, but his observations and reflections are sublimated into ethical categories of value. The allegories and symbols found in the pages of the book on iconography are defined so as to comment on the philosophical and ethical abstraction depicted in the illustration of the copper engraving, first of all for the needs of the artist, and also to arouse the conceptual understanding of the image in every user of the collection. Christian Sambach, compiler of the book *Gloire* in French and *Der Ruhm* in German, describes allegory No. 46, Glory, in the following way: "This deity is depicted in the image of a young and very beautiful woman in long robes and with stars around her head. She sits on a cloud, holding a palm branch in one hand and with the

31 Ulrich Heinrich Gustav von Schlippenbach, *Ikonologie des jetzigen Zeitalters oder Darstellung einiger allegorischer Personen nach heutiger Sitte* (Riga, 1807).

32 Christian Sambach, Joseph Stöber, *Iconologie: oder Ideen aus dem Gebiete der Leidenschaften und Allegorien, bildlich dargestellt für Zeichner, Mahler, Dichter, Gelehrte, Erzieher und Freunde höherer Geschmacksbildung* (Wien: Im Verlage bei Anton Doll, 1801).



FIGS. 7. AND 8. ALLEGORIES OF GLORY AND AMBITION. ILLUSTRATIONS FROM *ICONOLOGIE ODER IDEEN AUS DEM GEBIETE DER LEIDENSCHAFTEN...*

other hand giving her favourites a laurel wreath. Her bare breasts and hands indicate that fame is a reward for work and honour. The wings are a testimony to her majesty."<sup>33</sup> (Fig. 7) Such a comprehensive or minimal interpretation of the descriptive text for the printed images depended, of course, on the situation, on the scope of knowledge and associations of each user, as well as on the objective to be achieved, which could include assessment, encouragement or condemnation.

Even a small essay is devoted to the description of the allegory of Ambition (in German *Die Ruhmbegierde*, in French *Ambition*) in the encyclopaedia of iconology, which seeks to define the symbolic image of complex personification and express its extensive philosophical and ethical content through a description of action and motivation, or cause and effect. A comment reads: "It is characterised by an excessive penchant for size, and in art it is portrayed as a woman dressed in green to show that hope encourages envy and helps to

33 Sambach, Stöber, *Iconologie: oder Ideen aus dem Gebiete der Leidenschaften...*, 16.

overcome adversity and misfortune as indicated by the allegory's bare feet. Her wings testify to her unceasing desire to strive up, and her audacity is evidenced by the various sceptres and crowns which she alternatively puts on her head. She is blindfolded since she cannot make out differences and is blind about anything that she thinks she has earned."<sup>34</sup> (Fig. 8) Other allegories in the collection of iconology are described in similar verbal definitions, including those mentioned in the quote: flattery, hypocrisy and many others. The few examples mentioned here are sufficient to illustrate the genre of sources of influence in which the genesis of the personifications of virtues and vices listed in Count Borch's poem is to be found.

At the beginning of the article about the literary work of Count Michael Johann von der Borch "The Sentimental Park of Varakļāni Palace", the presence of emblems was mentioned by referring to the original title of the poem's first version, *Jardin moral et emblematicque*, and then providing evidence of emblems as a source of inspiration and reflection for the author. As the literary hero travels through the park created by Count Borch's imagination and enters the kingdom of Amor, god of love, and his Temple of Myrtle, he "looks around the place where an inscription is visible among the numbers of love and the emblems of tenderness".<sup>35</sup> The prose text is followed by eight lines of poetry in which, with the help of thesis and antithesis, the author reveals the moral choices for the young traveller and warns against error if he were to choose only playful joy and passion as his guides in life. In the pages of the poem we also happen to encounter the personification of Amor for a second time, when the Temple of Marital Love is mentioned, the institutions of marriage and family are praised, but a warning of the misery of a wrong choice is given. In the description of the Temple of Marital Love, Count Borch, with dramaturgical dexterity, introduces an emblematic scene with a tripod and the image of a glowing heart in it instead of frankincense. This is complemented by the following motto: *Toujours tendre et fidèle*.<sup>36</sup>

34 Sambach, Stöber, *Iconologie: oder Ideen aus dem Gebiete der Leidenschaften...*, 38.

35 Borch, *Jardin sentimental du château de Warkland dans le Comté de Borch en Russie Blanche*, 63.

36 *Ibidem*, 539.

Count Borch, as the author of the poem, does not reveal the source of his literary idea, but the Latin version of the motto, *Sincerus et Fidus*, is well known and widely represented in European emblematic literature. One of the most popular and much-translated collections of emblems by which Count Borch may have been inspired to describe the idea of spousal loyalty in the poem's prose text, is the book *Symbola et Emblemata*, printed by Henrik Wetsten in Amsterdam in 1705, complemented with a translation into Russian and 840 rondo-format emblems, supplemented only by the name of the emblem and laconic motto texts translated into Russian, Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, English and German.<sup>37</sup> The motto in Count Borch's poem perfectly corresponds to the family values, love and loyalty of the spouses, which are personified by both Cupid and Hymen. In the book *Symbola et Emblemata*, this motto corresponds to emblem No. 787, in the centre of which stands Amor holding a ring, a sign of spousal unity, his foot stamping a mask as a symbol of hypocrisy and pretence.<sup>38</sup> (Fig. 9)

The text of the poem does not directly describe the composition and plot of the emblem; however, a comparison of Count Borch's text with a traditional explanation of the image reveals that the associative imagery of the literary message is borrowed from the interaction of the graphic image and the philosophical motto. Maintaining the notion of emblems as a synthesis of miniature allegorical graphic image and epigraphics, this and many other similar sentences, rooted in emblematic traditions, as well as winged expressions and phrases, verbal images of mythological or religious semantics, such as a snake with its tail in its teeth (Borch 2019, 70), lend Count Borch's poem the metaphorical depth and breadth that makes this composition similar to a philosophical essay. This is evidenced by the following quote from the poem "The Sentimental Park of Varakļāni Palace": "In the middle of the orchard rises a majestic temple built of rough stones. At its foot there is an image of a serpent with its tail in its teeth, but the inscription on the

37 *Symbola et Emblemata Jussu atque auspiciis Sacerrimae suae Majestatis Augustissimi ac Serenissimi Imperatoris Moschoviae Magni Domini Czaris, et Magni Ducis Petri Alexeidis, totius Magnae, Parvae & Albae Rossiae, nec non aliarum multarum Potestatum atque Dominiorum Orientalium, Occidentalium Aquilonariumque Supremi Monarchae, excusa* (Amstelaedami: Apud Henricum Wetstenium, 1705).

38 *Ibidem*, 265.



FIG. 9. *THE SINCERUS ET FIDUS* ('SINCERE AND FAITHFUL') EMBLEM. ILLUSTRATION FROM *SYMBOLA ET EMBLEMATA JUSSU ATQUE AUSPICII SACERRIMAE...*

main beam says: Temple of Eternity” (Borch 2019, 70). European intellectuals were familiar with *Nucleus emblematum selectissimorum* by Gabriel Rollenhagen, 17<sup>th</sup> century German poet, in which the emblem under No. 45 depicts this ouroboros symbol, a coiled serpent with its tail in its mouth, often used in emblematic literature (Fig. 10). The graphic image is further complemented by the allegory of life’s terminated nature within the serpent’s coil, reinforced by the images of a child and a skull, or the beginning and the end. The lemma of the emblem comments on this composition in the following wording: *Nascentes morimur, Finis ab origine pēdet. De vita ad mortem mors rediviva trahit.*<sup>39</sup>

39 In English: ‘We die as we are born, the end stems from the beginning. From life to demise pulls [us] the reviving death.’ Gabriel Rollenhagen, *Nucleus emblematum selectissimorum quae itali vulgo impresas vocant privata industria studio singulari, vndiq, congruilitus, non paucis venustis inventionibus auctus, additis carminib, illustratus* (Arnhem: J. Janssoniū, 1613), 45.



FIG. 10. *THE FINIS AB ORIGINE PĒDET* ('THE END STEMS FROM THE BEGINNING') EMBLEM. ILLUSTRATION FROM ROLLENHAGEN’S *NVCLEVS EMBLEMATVM SELECTISSIMORVM...*, 1613.

### THE PROBLEM OF CULTURAL TRANSFER AND BORROWING

Researchers have always been preoccupied with questions of cultural transfer and borrowing, the migration of personalities, archetypes and ideas in the Age of the Enlightenment, given the rich encyclopaedic and theoretical literature of the period. In our case, the processes of cultural transfer and synthesis of ideas point to a rather complex interaction of circumstances and ideas under which two related yet seemingly autonomous artistic systems have emerged: Varakļāni manor park and Count Borch’s literary work “The Sentimental Park of Varakļāni Palace”. The question of how close the parallels are in terms of landscaping, architecture and themes of Varakļāni park and the textbook Stowe Landscape Garden, remains relevant. In the chapter of Count Borch’s first version of the poem, written between 1781 and 1792 in Polish and titled *Nadpisy Do Ogrodu mojego sentymentalnego Warklanskiego Zamku*, which has a description of the Temple of Virtue

and True Glory, the author included, as in a pantheon of the nation, the most important historical figures in order to strengthen the sense of Polish statehood and patriotism. Among them are the names of kings Jan III Sobieski, Stanislav II Augustus, warlords and politicians Hodkevich, Zamoyski, Lubomirsky, Potocki, as well as several scholars and writers, including Copernicus, Sarbievsky, Konarski, Opalinski, and others.<sup>40</sup> Here one can see a direct ideological parallel with the Shrine of British Worthies built in the part of Stowe manor park called Champs Elysées with 14 busts of prominent British rulers, philosophers, poets and scientists placed onto a semi-circular wall: Elizabeth I, William III, Bacon, Locke, Newton, Shakespeare, Milton, and others.<sup>41</sup> In the 1795 version of the poem, Count Borch pays tribute to his father-in-law, Count Johann Georg (George) Browne, Vidzeme Governor General, who died in 1792, and 'placed' his bust in the literary Temple of Virtue and True Glory on the edge of the Champs Elysees, which is just like the Shrine of British Worthies in Stowe. But in addition to the bust of the Governor General, the temple at Varakļāni sentimental park, created by Count Borch's imagination, also holds portraits of Russian Empress Catherine II, Tsar Paul I and his wife Maria Fyodorovna.<sup>42</sup> The hypothesis for why they are included was given at the beginning of the article.

Literary evidence of the time suggests that both the idea of a bust of Johann Georg von Browne in the pages of the poem "The Sentimental Park of Varakļāni Palace" and the very text of the monument have been transferred from the pages of Count Borch's biography of the Governor General in 1794, *Histoire de La Vie de George de Browne*, the last chapters of which are devoted to the description of the funeral in Skaistkalne Catholic Church and the efforts of the relatives to preserve the memory of the famous statesman.<sup>43</sup> The original German version of Governor General Browne's biography quotes the memorial

40 Polanowska, "Ogrod w Warklanach - dzieło właściciela Michala Jana Borch'a i architekta Vincenza de Mazottiego", 571–573, 585, 594.

41 Torsten Olaf Enge, Carl Friedrich Schröer, Hans Wiesenhofer, Martin Classen, *Gartenkunst in Europa 1450–1800. Vom Villengarten der italienischen Renaissance bis zum englischen Landschaftsgarten* (Köln: Benedikt Taschen Verlag, 1990), 205.

42 Borch, *Jardin sentimental du château de Warkland dans le Comté de Borch en Russie Blanche*, 72–73.

43 Michael Johann von der Borch, *Histoire de La Vie de George de Browne, Comte du Saint – Empire, Gouverneur General de Livonie et D'Esthonie etc.* (Riga: Chez I.F. Hartknoch, 1794), 69–70, 77–79.

text of the tombstone at Skaistkalne, but in the French edition, printed in 1794, Count Borch published this text as translated from German. The tombstone itself has not survived to this day, so the poignant message must be judged only by the printed word. The German edition contains the following version:

Hier schläft ein Held - der goldnen Vorzeit werth!  
 Des unbezwungner Arm fast ein Jahrhundert  
 Der Welt und seinem Vaterlande diente:  
 Hier schläft sein theures silbergraues Haupt,  
 Womit er uns und dieses Land bewachte.  
 Hier ruht ein großes liebevolles Herz,  
 Voll Tugend und voll sanfter Menschlichkeit,  
 Uns und dem Lande ewig unvergeßlich:  
 Hier unsre Tränen - dort sein ew'ges Lohn<sup>44</sup>

Both the French version of Governor General Georg von Browne's biography and its German translation report that in memory of the deceased father, the Count's son and two sons-in-law had commissioned his marble bust.<sup>45</sup> It can be concluded from the description that the bust would also have a pedestal in the shape of the period style, the four faces of which would be covered with a carved tribute. As the texts on the bust pedestal are identical both in Count Borch's poem "The Sentimental Park of Varakļāni Palace" and in his own Count Browne's biography *Histoire de La Vie de George de Browne*, their repeated quoting in this article appears unnecessary.<sup>46</sup> There is no reason to question the fact that a bust and a pedestal were made, since a biographical essay dedicated to Browne's life and its end has been made public in two languages. However, trying to imagine the real situation at Varakļāni manor and striving to distinguish the possible development of the park scenario from the hypothetical one, the situation described in "The Sentimental Park of Varakļāni

44 Michael Johann von der Borch, *Leben des Reichsgr. Georg von Browne, General-Gouverneur von Liefland und Esthland, Oberfeldherr der Russischen Armeen etc. etc. Aus dem Französischen, mit einer Vorrede von L. Schubert* (Riga: bei Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1795), 78.

45 Borch, *Histoire de La Vie de George de Browne, Comte du Saint – Empire, Gouverneur General de Livonie et D'Esthonie etc.*, 79; Borch, *Leben des Reichsgr. Georg von Browne...*, 77.

46 Borch, *Histoire de La Vie de George de Browne, Comte du Saint – Empire, Gouverneur General de Livonie et D'Esthonie etc.*, 77–78.

Palace" with Count Browne's bust on a pedestal in the Temple of Virtue and True Glory may prove to be merely fruit of an active imagination, which fully corresponds to the Classicism traditions of memorial culture, and the pages devoted to the concept of the park present an already materialised form.<sup>47</sup> Unfortunately, neither historical memory nor documents provide incontestable evidence of the existence of such a bust and pedestal in Varakļāni manor park. It could have been located very close to the manor house or put up on one of the park walking routes. However, taking into account the tendency during the period of Classicism to use busts and pedestals made in classical art traditions as either outdoor or interior elements, a version of installing a chamber-style bust and pedestal in one of the palace halls cannot be ruled out.

One may keep asking the question: is Varakļāni manor park a mirror image of Stowe manor park in Buckinghamshire, well-known in the history of European gardens and parks, as James Stevens Curl and Susan Wilson, authors of the *Oxford Dictionary of Architecture*<sup>48</sup> claim? In search of answers to similar questions, Polish art historian Jolanta Polanowska has even carried out a statistical comparison to identify the remains of the literary phantom as well as architectonic and landscape realisation of Varakļāni manor park to assess the correspondence between the objects mentioned in the poem and those found in the park. Similarly, the examination of the typological and numerical relationship between Varakļāni park and, as sometimes claimed in literature, the pavilions, bridges, sculptures, obelisks, mausoleums and other small architectural elements of Stowe landscape garden, obliged her to objectively acknowledge that "the concept of the Varakļāni Park project emerged neither under the influence of the English model nor Stowe park, but was created by Michael Jan Borch"<sup>49</sup>. After this respectable conclusion, it is not necessary to repeat the researcher's path of deduction a second time.

However, there is another aspect that researchers have ignored in the comparison of Varakļāni and Stowe, allowing themselves to be deceived by the eclectic composition of Count Borch's poem "The

47 Borch, *Jardin sentimental du château de Warkland dans le Comté de Borch en Russie Blanche*, 72.

48 Curl, *The Oxford dictionary of Architecture*, 474.

49 Polanowska, "Ogrod w Warklanach - dzieło właściciela Michała Jana Borchy i architekta Vincenza de Mazottiego", 598.

Sentimental Park of Varakļāni Palace". Its libertine introduction, moralising middle, and its ending, rich in extolling flattery, lure researchers down a different path, making them believe in the Count's political mimicry, turning his back on the King of Poland, the monarchy, and the nobility's code of honour, pride, and self-confidence. This is incompatible with serving imperial rulers who had degraded Polish independence. When trying to compare the visual likeness of Varakļāni park, which was conceived on an unexciting plain but had not yet grown during the life of Count Michael von der Borch, to Stowe manor park, which was developed over two centuries in the water-rich landscape of England with its undulating hillocks and valleys, the researcher will inevitably be disappointed.

Although the material form of Varakļāni park has no direct visual similarities with Stowe park that would allow a convincing statement about the conceptual closeness of the spatial development of both parks, they are connected through certain spiritual parallels which may be indicative of the closeness of the underlying ideological and emotional views. The expansion of Stowe landscape garden in the mid-eighteenth century was related to a movement of spiritual resistance from the British political opposition, the so-called Whig Party, defending British liberalism and constitutional freedom against the monarchist conservative policies of King George I and George II of the House of Hanover.<sup>50</sup> The embodiment of the political views of Lord Cobham and the Whig aristocracy in the transformation of Stowe park was implemented by fundamentally abandoning the traditions of the French-style geometric garden and preferring open-plan parks with staged "natural" landscape elements – allegorical buildings, sculptures and memorials – that manifest ethical, political and intellectual ideals. Count Borch's poem, in both encrypted and open wording, contains key words and hints that guide the reader to the expression of a masked political opposition. In a literary form, however, it is easier and faster to implement this opposition than to grow a park.

If, after comparative studies of all possible source materials, Polanowska has acknowledged the originality of Count Borch's work, then perhaps the owner of Varakļāni manor has had some other sources of inspiration. At this point, the author of this article, drawing on his own experience and the sum of observations, must invoke the

50 Enge, Schröer, Wiesenhofer, Classen, *Gartenkunst in Europa 1450–1800*, 204.





FIG. 11. C. HIRSCHFELD'S PROPOSAL FOR A MAUSOLEUM, OR 'MOURNING HOUSE', TO BE BUILT IN THE PARK. ILLUSTRATION FROM HIRSCHFELD'S *THEORIE DER GARTENKUNST*, 57.

already widely cited parallels with the theoretical manual *Théorie de l'art des jardins* by Christian Cay Lorenz Hirschfeld, Professor at the University of Kiel. His book has inspired both landscape architects and park owners in the widest geographical range in Europe. The etymology of the Temple of Eternity and the Temple of Glory in Count Borch's literary work is not difficult to identify with the memorial buildings proposed by C. Hirschfeld, and mausoleums and temples fall into this category both in terms of memorial and celebratory senses, while their style includes buildings of religious or allegorical nature, or commemorating historical events. According to Hirschfeld, these buildings, as the illustrations to the text show, have nobility, deep seriousness and melancholic solemnity; they "fulfil a new mission with a moralising effect on the viewer's soul".<sup>51</sup> (Figs. 11 and 12) In the prose part of Count Borch's poem, the same thought is expressed about the Temple of Glory: "Overwhelmed by the sacred

51 Hirschfeld, *Theorie der Gartenkunst*, 57.



FIG. 12. C. HIRSCHFELD'S PROPOSAL FOR A TEMPLE IN THE PARK. ILLUSTRATION FROM HIRSCHFELD'S *THEORIE DER GARTENKUNST*, 60.

experience of deep reverence, the young man will kneel on the steps of the altar and humbly ask for the help of nature and God, thus respectfully ending his journey and moving toward the Temple of True Glory. This artistically decorated and majestic temple, blessed by immortality, has been built in sincere gratitude, respect, trust, diligence and true feelings, and it is located on a hillock in the centre of a round terrace to which flat stairs lead from several sides."<sup>52</sup>

It is no wonder that, for the needs of the manor and Vārakļāni village Catholic parish, in 1814, Count Michael Johann von der Borch's widow financed the construction of a round pantheon-shaped mausoleum with a domed roof, the basement vaults of which preserved the family sarcophagi.<sup>53</sup> The family chapel-mausoleum, as

52 Borch, *Jardin sentimental du château de Warkland dans le Comté de Borch en Russie Blanche*, 71.

53 Jānis Cakuls, *Latvijas Romas katoļu draudzes. Kūrījas arhīva materiālu apkopojums* (Rīga: Rīgas Metropolijas kūrījas izdevums, 1997), 465.

the last memorial building related to the literary concept of the manor park, symbolically completed the work started by the creator of the manor park. In honour of the memory of the scientist Michael Johann von der Borch, who died in 1811 and was buried in the basement crypt, the Count's relatives installed an altar on the ground floor of the mausoleum, which housed relics of St Victor, consecrated by the bishop and brought home from Rome (Fig. 13).

In this way, the family vault and the memory of the legendary Count Michael Johann von der Borch in the eyes of the faithful also gained the protection of a patron saint and became a place of worship for Catholics from a wide area. In imitation of the Pantheon in Rome, so popular in Classicism and Empire architecture, a similarly shaped chapel-mausoleum like the one in the chapter "On Temples and Grottoes" from Hirschfeld's book (Fig. 11), was built in 1817 in Preiļi manor park, property of a branch of Count Borch's family. This is neither the first nor the only time in the history of Latvian architecture when the recommendations of garden and park theorist Hirschfeld for the use of ancient temple forms in standard buildings provoke interest in the customers of the Classicism period.

### EPILOGUE

At the end of the article, countless questions have remained unanswered. Attempts to find answers to them have only increased doubt, obscurity and speculation. Assessing the sources critically, it would be correct to start by establishing how much of the literature available outside Latvia and published in our country can be trusted, if there is no reliable document about Varakļāni manor park that could be deemed a source. How accurate have foreign historians and their distance research been in their hypothetical assumptions, and where have they led interpreters of the history of Latvian parks and gardens? Was the opinion of our researchers about the genesis of Varakļāni manor park formed on the basis of independent observations, and is it well grounded? And, last but not least, how serious is the effect of the literary and poetic charm of Count Michael Johann von der Borch's literary work "The Sentimental Park of Varakļāni Palace" on our ability to judge autonomously and distinguish intellectual heritage from the material cultural heritage of a landscape park, a dendrological collection, or an architect-constructed philosophical



FIG. 13. ST VICTOR CHAPEL AT VARAKĻĀNI, COUNT BORCH'S FAMILY MAUSOLEUM (1814). PHOTO: OJĀRS SPĀRĪTIS.

and spatial structure? Perhaps due to the rich metaphor of the poem, our eyes see more than has ever been encrypted in the park's architecture, monuments, paths and landscape? Or, perhaps, when reading the emblematic inscriptions on the literature-constructed temples, our ears hear the whispers of the stone sculptures that adorn their roofs.

**OJĀRS SPĀRĪTIS:** THREE SOURCES OF MICHAEL JOHANN VON DER BORCH'S POEM "THE SENTIMENTAL PARK OF VARAKĻĀNI PALACE"  
**KEYWORDS:** MICHAEL JOHANN VON DER BORCH; SENTIMENTALISM; ROMANTICISM; EMBLEMATIC; LANDSCAPE; PARK; ALLEGORY

## SUMMARY

History permits us to trace so-called Polish Inflanty, in the territory of the former Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, to the contemporary Republic of Latvia. In this case we are particularly interested in the estate of Warkland (Warklany, Varakļāni). The ensemble of manor and park is typical for large estates in Eastern Europe, including a village and its infrastructure and a separate manor and park as a spatial, architectural, botanical and social entity.

Originating from Baltic-German nobility, 'Polonised' count Michael Johann von der Borch-Lubeschitz und Borchhoff (1753–1810) was the son of a Chancellor of Poland and Lithuania. He was a member of several academies of science, in Siena, Dijon and Lion, and penfriend of Voltaire and academicians in Russia and France. After researching the mineralogy of Italy, Sicily, France, Germany, England, the Netherlands and Switzerland M. J. von der Borch left for his estate in Varakļāni, the Polonised part of eastern Livonia, called Polish Inflanty. At this time he also composed literary works and poems, among which is one remarkable piece of didactic and emblematic content "The Sentimental Park of Varakļāni Palace" (*Jardin sentimental du château de Warkland dans le Comté de Borch en Russie Blanche*, 1795). This poem illustrates in a passionate and classical way an emblematic approach to contemporary political structures, and the goals of education in general. In *Jardin sentimental*, which is a theoretical and didactic manual, Borsch describes, through the metaphor of the estate park of Warkland, the route of an imaginative hero, full of expectation and temptation.

The main subject of the report is an analysis of the text of the poem contextualised by history and contrasted with evidence from contemporary Warkland.

## CV

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