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Hungarian gardeners on western study tour in the early 19th century

Introduction

Better-trained gardeners at the most admired Hungarian country house gardens of the 18th century were almost exclusively from abroad, mainly from German-speaking lands. As the names of important estate gardeners suggest German origin, more local gardeners from the economically more developed, often urban and affluent German ethnic minority can also be hidden in the records. However, based on archival sources for a number of important country houses, it can be safely said that they were indeed almost exclusively from abroad. They have probably travelled substantially as required across the German-speaking realm¹ before taking up positions in Hungary. In fact, the years of experience they gained while on their obligatory study tour might have been their main appeal; very little is known about the training of gardeners in Hungary with the exception of the gardeners' guild in the then capital of the country, Pozsony (present-day Bratislava), whose population and proximity to Vienna tied it to the German lands culturally.² Regrettably, sources are scarce on the estate gardeners' background, life, or even their activities in or contributions to the layout of the designed landscapes they were responsible for. Not surprisingly, their experiences as visitors of other gardens also remain in the dark.

This phenomenon means that sending head gardeners of the largest country house estates to travel was not at all required: if they had come from foreign lands with plenty of experience from abroad, why would they be sent to the west again? The three years' worth of training and travel secured a place at a prestigious country house garden and considering the relatively short life span of gardeners in that age, refreshing their knowledge by sending them to the west again would have been an excessive luxury. Whether all Hungarian-born gardeners, on the other hand, passed the borders of the Habsburg Monarchy while on their obligatory study tour during the 18th century, is difficult to ascertain. The information on a Hungarian garden designer responsible for the layout of the Count Chotek garden

1 A brief summary on the impacts of travel on gardening and on the typology of gardeners' travels are Hubertus Fischer and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, 'Das Reisetagebuch des hannoverschen Hofgärtners Heinrich Ludolph Wendland aus dem Jahr 1820 – Eine Einführung', in Hubertus Fischer, Georg Ruppelt and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds.), *Eine Reise in die Schweiz: Das Reisetagebuch des hannoverschen Hofgärtners Heinrich Ludolph Wendland aus dem Jahr 1820*, München: Akademische Verlagsgemeinschaft, 2015, pp. 9–27, here pp. 14–15 and 17–18.

2 Joseph Hans Csákós, *Pressburger Gärtner*, Bratislava: Pressburger Gärtner-Genossenschaft, 1929.

in Laxenburg in the mid–18th century shows that this must have happened and some of them were found good enough to take up important positions abroad.³

In consequence, foreign influences had been quite direct in the 18th century. Designers such as Anton Zinner (c. 1676–1751), imperial garden engineer, travelled from Vienna to the north-western parts of Hungary, which were close to the imperial capital, to implement changes in a handful princely or even royal pleasure grounds.⁴ He worked under the Le Nôtre pupil Dominique Girard in Vienna beforehand, thus transplanting the latest fashion in garden design to Hungarian soil. The very cream of Hungarian society, the magnates often owned properties in Vienna or in other parts of Lower Austria where they employed the best craftsmen they could find in Vienna, often associated with the imperial court itself, including landscape designers and gardeners. Count József Czobor, the infamous last member of his family who eventually lived up his entire wealth, used a French gardener called Moleon to lay out his Lower Austrian country house garden in Neuaigen in 1761.⁵ Count Pálffy called in the gardener Johann Philipp Brenning from as far as the Orange-Nassau court in Dillenburg to run his famous pleasure garden at Királyfa (today Kráľová pri Senci in Slovakia).⁶ Brenning later designed the grounds for the Magyarbél Chateau of Cardinal Imre Csáky in 1740, mixing French patterns with Dutch spatial arrangements.⁷ They are just few examples of foreign gardeners on Hungarian soil or in the service of Hungarian clients in the 18th century.

This chapter is part of a wider research on the influences of travel on Hungarian landscape design. Following on the obvious first-hand experience of 18th century foreign gardeners who went to Hungary and transformed design fashions, the research aims to shed light on why this happened in the first place. How and where did clients become informed about examples they wanted to be followed in their own pleasure gardens?⁸ To what extent did gardening and architectural literature influence them and what was the role of their own experiences gained during their

3 Alexander Bethge, Salzmann's Reise durch Sachsen und Oesterreich in den Jahren 1750 und 51, *Hamburger Garten- und Blumenzeitung* 21 (1865), pp. 358–365, here p. 363.

4 Kristóf Fatsar, Anton Zinner im Dienste der Esterházy, *Die Gartenkunst* 19 (2007), 2, pp. 285–294. Several details on Zinner's oeuvre in Hungary were amended by Kristóf Fatsar, *Átváltozások: Eszterháza nagy parterjének vázlatos története*, in Kristóf Fatsar (ed.), *MM XC: Tanulmányok és esszék a 90 éves Mőcsényi Mihály tiszteletére*, Budapest: BCE Tájépítészeti Kar, 2009, pp. 77–90.

5 Hungarian National Archives, E 171, Fasciculi 902 and 903.

6 Kristóf Fatsar, *Magyarországi barokk kertművészet*, Budapest: Helikon, 2008, p. 351.

7 Kristóf Fatsar, 'A magyarbéli kastély építéstörténete és kertje a Csákyak birtoklásának idején', in Edit Szentesi, Klára Mentényi and Anna Simon (eds.), *Kő kövön: Dávid Ferenc 73. születésnapjára I–II*, Budapest: Vince, 2013, vol. I, pp. 527–556, here p. 551.

8 The impacts of travelling gardeners' experiences on their patrons' designed landscapes is summarised in Hubertus Fischer, 'Travel and travel reports of German court gardeners in the early nineteenth century, with a focus on Heinrich Ludolph Wendland', *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes* 36 (2016) 3, pp. 185–193. Many case studies of travels in pursuit of garden ideals can be found in Hubertus Fischer, Sigrud Thielking and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds.), *Reisen in Parks und Gärten: Umriss einer Rezeptions- und Imaginationsgeschichte*, München: Martin Meidenbauer, 2012.

travels? And most crucially, how, when and why did they chose to send their local gardeners abroad to study instead of just using foreign horticultural and other landscape-related experts on their estates?

The formal, French-inspired landscape style was still very much in fashion in the Habsburg monarchy, including Hungary, when the English socialite Lady Mary Coke first visited Vienna in the autumn of 1771. She had acquainted the most important persons in the imperial court but she frequently noted formal design of gardens. On Prince Stahremberg's suburban garden she noted it was "too much in the french taste to please"⁹ her. The advancement of the landscape garden in the British Isles informed her opinion when she wrote of the imperial summer gardens in Schönbrunn that the "Gardens are very large, & part of them very fine lying ground, but not laid out advantageously. As all taste of that kind is confined to our island, it has not yet cross'd the sea."¹⁰ She stayed there for the whole season, so in early March 1772 she could experience the recent changes by the imperial architect Hetzendorf von Hohenberg and she was disappointed by the lack of progress in landscape design: "[...] the gardens at Schonbourne are intirely changing. 'Tis amazing the sums of money the Empress lays out, and as She leaves all the Changes She makes to others, I am obliged to say that none of the works out of doors are done with a good taste. 'Tis a pity to see so much money spent in making things worse then they were."¹¹

The eventually recognized backwardness in landscape design, even at the highest places of the Habsburg monarchy, resulted in another wave of western-educated designers coming to Vienna and also to Hungary towards the end of the 18th century. The change of tastes required new landscapes in the rapidly spreading English style. Some of these landscape designers, like the probably Venetian cleric Giulio Pellegrini da Trieste had limited influence outside the circles of one branch of the Count Esterházy family in the 1760s and 1770s. Others in the 1790s, like Bernhard Petri or Rudolph Witsh, followed by Heinrich Nebbien in the early years of the 1800s, had much wider impact as many of them were publishing their landscape interventions and, before and/or after their tenure in Hungary, were employed by various important dynasties across Europe.¹²

However, it has been recognized that relying on a constant flow of western designers is unlikely to remain sustainable, and the horticultural advances of the

9 *The Letters and Journals of Lady Mary Coke*, Volume Third 1769–1771, Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1892, p. 480.

10 *The Letters and Journals of Lady Mary Coke*, Volume Third 1769–1771, Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1892, p. 465.

11 *The Letters and Journals of Lady Mary Coke*, Volume Fourth 1772–1774, Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1896, p. 38.

12 Kristóf Fatsar, European Travellers and the Transformation of Garden Art in Hungary at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century, *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes* 36 (2016) 3, pp. 166–184.

time would require more substantial tours for local gardeners to keep up with the changes. In consequence, landowners had to invest in their gardeners rather than just expecting an influx of foreign expertise.

By the turn of the 19th century, a journey across Europe was not exceptional for the more ambitious ones and for those whose travels were sponsored by their employers. Mainly members of the latter group are the ones whose journeys shall be discussed in this chapter. The reason behind this is that freelance or commercial gardeners hardly ever left any evidence behind. Sources on sponsored travels, on the other hand, had better chance of survival as travellers had to report on their expenses and experiences to their patrons. Although this paper introduces a rather small selection of travelling gardeners from Hungary during the first half of the 19th century, there is a fair chance that their catalogue will grow, should sources become more available and accessible.

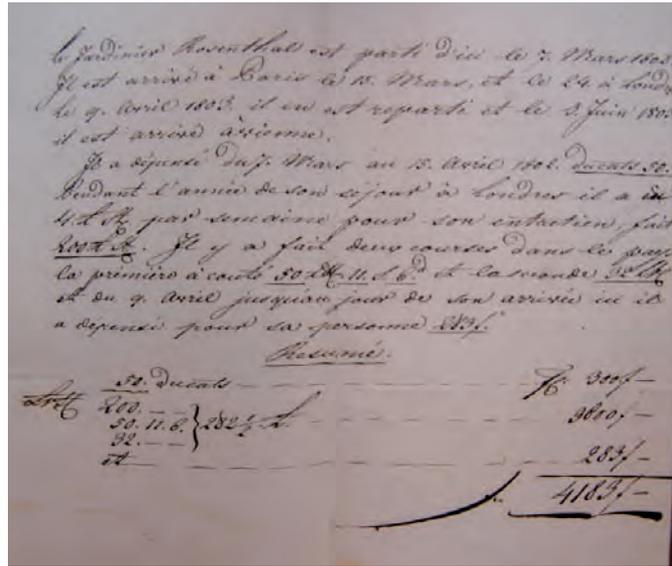
Gardeners of Princes Miklós II and Pál II Esterházy

It appears that garden tourism of the elite¹³ is closely related to the study tours of their gardeners. In the following sections there will be examples when the western journeys of Hungarian magnates have been almost immediately followed by the study tours of their estate gardeners. Analysing the similarities and differences of travel destinations of gardeners and their masters reveals much about the specific period in which they travelled, the employers' expectations and social connections, but also the gardeners' personal choices and limitations. Alas, seldom can we rely on data on destinations of both master and gardener. Nevertheless, knowledge on travel destinations of a number of travellers, members of both the elite and the horticultural professional world, can disclose the places of interest in the first half of the 19th century in terms of horticultural expertise as well as accessibility.

The first gardener who went to a western study tour from Hungary during this period was the Kismarton (now Eisenstadt in Austria) court gardener Anton Pölt (c.1770–1836) in 1804. Born probably in Lower Austria, he arrived to Hungary around the age of five when his father took up the Princely Head Gardener position at Eszterháza, dubbed as the Hungarian Versailles at the time, in 1775. He grew up there and no doubt started to learn his trade under his father's supervi-

13 Kristóf Fatsar, "Enjoying country life to the full – only the English know how to do that!": Appreciation of the British country house by Hungarian aristocratic travellers' in Jon Stobart (ed.), *Travel and the British country house: Cultures, critiques and consumption in the long eighteenth century*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017, pp. 145–167.

Fig. 1 Summary of Konrad Johann Rosenthal's travel costs to and while in Britain (Esterházy Privatstiftung, Burg Forchtenstein – Archiv Central-Direction, No. 1882/1804)



sion. He was elevated to the Court Gardener status at Eisenstadt in 1803 and was sent to London for a year-long study tour from June 1804 to August 1805.¹⁴

His travel was most likely inspired by Prince Miklós II Esterházy's (1765–1833) own trip to London during the summer of 1803 when he made an excursion there for a few months while residing in Paris with family members. He consequently sent his gardener to see and experience English gardening a year later.¹⁵ Pölt of course followed well-trodden paths; his master sought advice from the Russian Ambassador to Vienna, Count Andrey Kirillovich Razumovsky (1752–1836), who himself sent his gardener Konrad Johann Rosenthal (1769–1843) to London for a somewhat longer period just two years earlier, from March 1802 to June 1803 (fig. 1). Pölt's budget was set up to mirror Rosenthal's, and princely officials carefully weighed how to make his tour more efficient and economical.¹⁶

Pölt's records reveal every detail of his travel to and from London (fig. 2), but his report on English gardening, probably including details on his long excursions around all parts of Great Britain and promised to be submitted upon his return, seems to be missing from the Prince Esterházy archives. He has not rushed to London but stopped on the way to see famous gardens and other sights: he records his visits in Nuremberg, Würzburg, Aschaffenburg, Amsterdam, Haarlem, Leiden, the Hague, Berlin, Potsdam and Dresden.¹⁷ His destinations on the con-

14 Kristóf Fatsar, The geographical and social reach of the Esterháza gardens: consumption of nursery plants in Hungary in the 1820s. *History of Retailing and Consumption* 1 (2015) 3, pp. 186–208, here pp. 190–191.

15 Kristóf Fatsar, Hungarian Garden Tourists in Search of Lancelot Brown's Legacy, *Garden History* 44 (2016), Suppl. 1, pp. 114–124, here pp. 118–119.

16 Esterházy Privatstiftung, Burg Forchtenstein – Archiv, Central-Direction, No. 1882/1804.

17 Esterházy Privatstiftung, Burg Forchtenstein – Archiv, Central-Direction, No. 2953/1804.

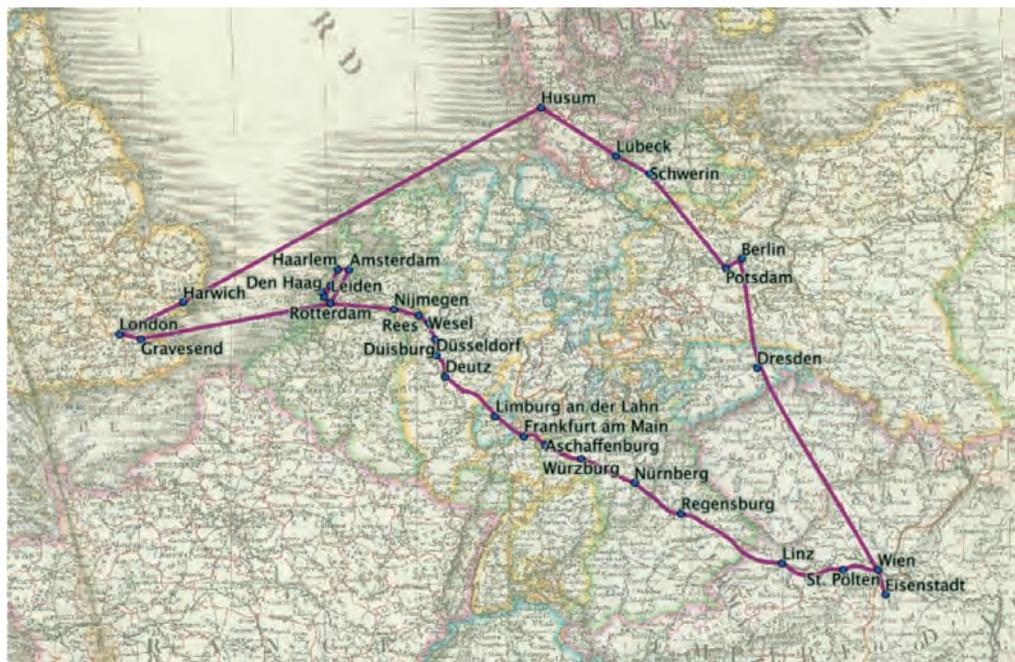


Fig. 2 Anton Pölt's route to and from London in 1804–1805

continent were not always specific to gardening except in Holland, which was his key target in terms of improving his horticultural expertise. His patron's connections have probably influenced his choice of destinations in Britain but surely Rosenthal's recently made acquaintances also helped him to experience more.

While in London (fig. 3), Pölt followed the instructions given before his departure. It has been specified to pay attention to forcing houses and chemical substances used in horticulture. He also had to order seeds of newly discovered exotic species. Prince Esterházy was thus among the first estate owners in Europe

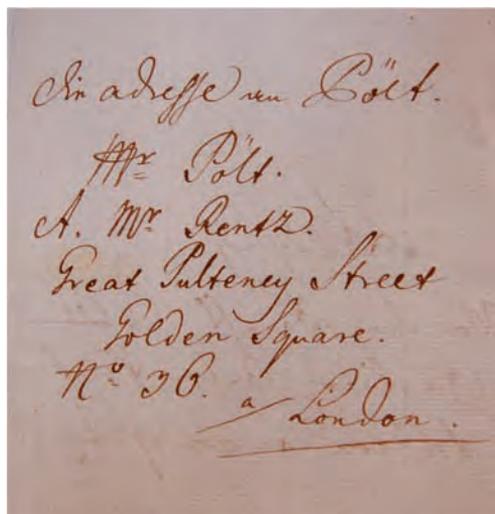


Fig. 3 Anton Pölt's address in London in 1804–1805 (Esterházy Privatstiftung, Burg Forchtenstein – Archiv Central-Direction, No. 3573/1804)

who could get his hands on the latest North American novelties, which cost him not less than £150. As Pölt's expertise was in 'edible gardening', he studied forcing houses at the very beginning of 1805 and the so-called spring culture a few months later. It was at this time that he was ordered to return back to Eisenstadt as his sponsor had had doubts whether he can learn substantially more while staying in London. Pölt, on the other hand, was so determined to go on excursions to further parts of Great Britain that he pretended not to have received the Prince's letter and immediately left London to fulfil his desire to spend several more weeks with travelling. Upon his return to London he claimed that he received his orders too late.

It appears that other gardeners in the service of the Esterházy Princes were also sent abroad to improve their skills and knowledge. Joseph Foedisch, similarly to Pölt, also served as a gardener in Eisenstadt, although from the 1820s only. When the British writer Julia Pardoe visited Eisenstadt in 1840, she claimed that "[t]here is scarcely a nobleman's seat in England with which he [Foedisch] is not acquainted; and he talks of Stowe, and White-Knights, and Frogmore, and fifty others, in connexion with particular plants which he acquired at each".¹⁸

There is one more travelling gardener who can most likely be associated with the Esterházy princes: Paul Gollnhofer must have been related to gardeners with the same surname at various Esterházy seats. The 'Kunstgärtner' Gollnhofer travelled to England in 1841, although that time he resided in Kassel.¹⁹ He seems to be breaking the trend of the usual directions of gardeners: he might have been trained in Hungary and later seeking employment in the west.

Gardeners of Counts György and László Festetics

Sponsoring the travels of court/head gardeners was gaining ground among Hungarian magnates during the first decades of the 19th century. The Count Festetics family had a long history of sending their employees from their principal estate and country seat at Keszthely to lengthy study trips to the west. The highly trained personnel were not only employed at the estate but also as professors at the Georgikon Agricultural College in Keszthely, the first of its kind in Europe, the foundation of Count György Festetics (1755–1819).²⁰ The first Georgikon professors were Hungarian nationals trained in western universities. However, in later years

18 Julia Pardoe, *The City of the Magyar, or Hungary and her Institutions in 1839–1840* (London: George Virtue, 1840), vol. III, p. 362. She calls him 'Fetish' in her work.

19 The National Archives, Public Record Office, Home Office, Class: HO 3, Piece: 20.

20 Zsigmond Csoma, *Kertészet és polgárosodás: Az európai szülészeti-borászati-kertészeti ismeretek oktatása, szaktanácsadása a Georgikonban és a Keszthelyi Uradalomban a 18. sz. végétől a 19. sz. közepéig*, Budapest: Centrál Európa Alapítvány, 1997; see also György Kurucz, *Keszthely grófja: Festetics György*, Budapest: Corvina, 2013, p. 224.

they were sent again to the west for market research and for just purely gain more recent knowledge.

Their brief was complex, including all aspects of agriculture. Even the professor of economy, János Asbóth, had to visit the imperial gardens at Schönbrunn in 1802, and to survey Count Károly Esterházy's pleasure gardens in the Hungarian town of Ács en route in 1806. On his way back from his latter tour to Moravia and Lower Austria, he again visited important gardens in Vienna, negotiating seed acquisitions in the Theresianum and meeting with the head gardener at the Augarten.²¹ In 1810, economic practican Károly Fleckel was sent to Switzerland via Bohemia, Saxony, Berlin and Göttingen.

Gardeners at Keszthely were also sent abroad to experience, probably the first among them being Gergely Bene (1785–1846), who was later elected member of the Horticultural Society of London (today the Royal Horticultural Society), the Royal Saxon Viticultural Society (Königlich Sächsische Weinbaugesellschaft) and the Pomological Society of Altenburg (Pomologische Gesellschaft zu Altenburg).²² He started his career at the Georgikon, and went on to gain experience in Laxenburg, Schönbrunn, Stuttgart, and in Paris at both the Princesse de Vaudémont's gardens and the famed Cels nurseries. He later worked for the Barons Orczy in their celebrated and publicly accessible park in Pest (originally designed by above mentioned Bernhard Petri).

His journey has probably taken place between 1817 and 1819, after finishing with his apprenticeships in the various foreign establishments but before Pál Gerics and József Lehrman were sent off by the son and successor of Count György, Count László Festetics (1785–1846). The tour has probably followed up his training, and was perhaps made possible by his savings during his stations as apprentice gardener. His destinations included Brussels, Ghent, Utrecht and Amsterdam in what was then the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, and several German princely palaces and estates like Herrenhausen in Hanover, Münster, Wilhelmshöhe in Kassel, Wörlitz, the Pfaueninsel in Potsdam, Berlin and Dresden.

No doubt it was Count László Festetics who maintained the most generous study tour scheme among the Hungarian nobility. But his aims were also much more ambitious. He wanted to give a new impetus to the teaching at the Georgikon, so he organised the several year long tours of the medic Pál Gerics who was to become professor of veterinary science and rector ('archon') of the Georgikon and that of József Lehrmann, originally a gardener at the Festetics country seat at Keszthely who from 1826 became professor of horticulture and viticulture at the same institution.²³

21 Kurucz 2013, pp. 233–234.

22 *Tudományos Gyűjtemény*, 13 (1829), vol. II, p. 114.

23 Csoma 1997, pp. 58 and 138.



Fig. 4 Pleasure gardens and designed landscapes visited by Pál Gerics during his travels in England and Scotland, 1821–1823

They travelled independently, but sometimes had to meet up and spend some time together. Their itineraries were carefully drawn up and their travel eased by plenty of letters of recommendation from their master and his circles. While travelling, they had to keep a journal, books on their spending, and sending letters to their master but also monthly reports to the estate management. The reports included passages on the things they saw, the people they met, the books they read or acquired and other similar considerations.²⁴ The network they maintained has increased over time and they have obtained letters of recommendations on their own right. Gerics, for example, had a letter of recommendation to Peter Joseph Lenné but they haven't met as Lenné was not at home at the time Gerics called. Gerics was the one who stayed much longer in England (fig. 4), and was able to acquire John Claudius Loudon's *Encyclopedia of Gardening* and send it home just after its publication in 1822. Count Festetics was therefore one of the first ones on the continent whose library contained this important work.

It was Gerics who was given more resources. He was also the more educated between the two of them, having spoken several languages besides his native Hungarian and the lingua franca of the kingdom, German. He spoke in the official language of the country, Latin, and he was well versed in French and English, and

²⁴ Very similar requirements applied to the Austrian court gardeners on their study trips, see Jochen Martz, "Though they have many pleasant aspects, they do not outshine the Imperial and Royal court gardens.": Prussian court gardens in the light of 19th-century travel accounts of Austrian court gardeners", in Heiner Krellig and Michael Rohde (eds.), *Prussian Gardens in Europe: 300 Years of Garden History*, Stiftung Preußische Schlösser und Gärten – Edition Leipzig: Potsdam – Leipzig, 2007, pp. 314–319, here p. 314.

possibly in Italian too. Lehrmann of course knew Hungarian and German, and must have learnt French while spending much time there, but he had to be accompanied by Gerics in and around London to find his way around.

Gerics graduated from the University of Vienna as a medical doctor and went on to be trained in the veterinary sciences. He was interested in agriculture, mainly in animal husbandry, of course, but as a medic he visited all the botanic gardens along his road as well. His botanical interest extended to some aspects of gardening, mainly to designed landscapes, which he often described as he did with other objects of touristic interest such as architecture or cultural phenomena.

Gerics's travels had originally been approved by Count György Festetics. It was the old count who made him chair of the veterinary sciences at the Georgikon in 1818, and upon Gerics's request to let him learn more about the veterinary sciences abroad. His journey to Vienna, Altdorf and Berlin has been scheduled at the end of the 1818–1819 academic year, however, Count György died during the year. For Gerics's great luck, Count László sent him to an even longer journey to see practically all countries in the west of Europe with the exception of Ireland (which Gerics tried to visit but returned ashore due to being seasick) and the Iberian peninsula (which Festetics didn't consider beneficial for Gerics's education).

Gerics left Keszthely in the autumn of 1819 and stayed five months in Vienna to recover from some illness and to prepare for the long journey. He finally started his travels on 19 March 1820, heading to Silesia through Moravia, then to Saxony, Prussia, Anhalt, Mecklenburg, Hamburg, Hanover, Kurhessen, the Netherlands (including Belgium), England, Scotland, France, Switzerland, Baden, Württemberg, Hohenzollern, Bavaria, Tirol and finishing in the northern parts of Italy before returning across Austria to Keszthely in 1825.

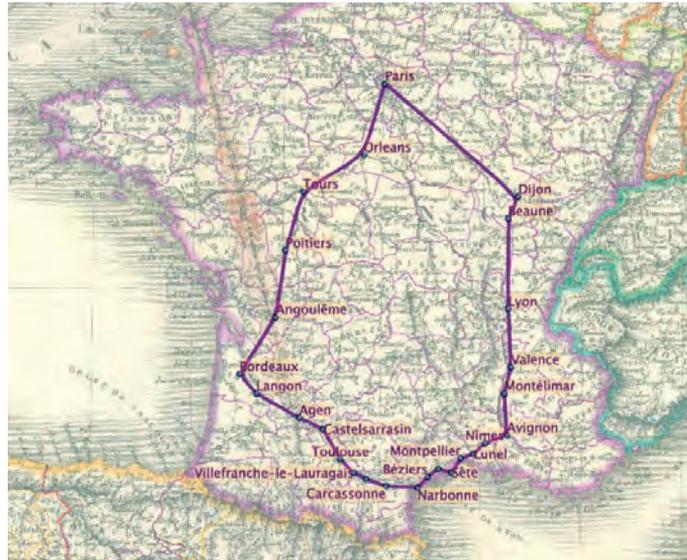
The reason behind this detailed knowledge of Gerics's travels is that most of his reports and other records related to this journey have survived in the Count Festetics archives,²⁵ and he also prepared a ten-volume work on his travels for publication around 1840.²⁶ This latter achievement was probably inspired by other travel journals that were published in the late 1830s and early 1840s by influential Hungarian intellectuals to educate the wider public about the current state of the western world. Gerics must have felt that his several years' worth of experience in foreign lands must be more informative than the experience of those who spent only a few months on the road.

The circumstances of Lehrmann's travels, on the other hand, are more concealed as only a selection of his reports, instructions, lists of reference letters and

25 Hungarian National Archives, P274, Jelentések, 5) Gerics Pál. A summary of this source is in György Kurucz, 'Tanulmányúton Nyugat-Európában: Gerics Pál georgikoni tanár angliai levelei gróf Festetics Lászlóhoz', *Agrártörténeti Szemle*, 39 (1997) 3–4, pp. 655–724.

26 Pál Gerics, *Európa műveltebb tartományáiban tett utazási jegyzések* I–X, Hungarian National Library, Manuscript Collection, Quart. Hung. 3727/1–10.

Fig. 5 József Lehrmann's tour from Paris to the south of France in spring 1822



other travel-related materials survived in the Festetics archives.²⁷ He also left behind a detailed report on his observations on viticulture, horticulture, vinegar production and distillation while on an excursion from Paris to the south of France in 1822 (fig. 5).²⁸ The long journey in the early 1820s was not Lehrmann's first travel abroad sponsored by the Festetics family. He has already been sent to Vienna for a year in the early days of 1812 to develop his skills while being a garden apprentice at Keszthely.

According to the original itinerary of his travel, given to him by Count László Festetics and his estate management at the end of July 1820, Lehrmann travelled through Moravia to Prussia, then turning south again to visit Saxony travelling, followed by the western German provinces more or less downstream along the Rhein, to reach the United Netherlands, as they were at the time, first going to northern before travelling to the southern provinces. After the Low Countries he was again to go back to Germany, this time more or less upstream along the Rhein to reach Frankfurt for the second time.

Lehrmann eventually left Keszthely three months after Geric's and the two met up in Berlin for a few days in late August or early September, and later in Frankfurt again at the end of November. They have met for the third time in Brussels in the middle of 1821 to cross the English Channel and spend a few weeks in and around London. Lehrmann left London in mid-September for Paris, and France became his home while away from Hungary, as he received letters there from Keszthely as long as until the summer of 1824. The end of that year finds him in Milan (fig. 6),

²⁷ Hungarian National Archives, P274, Jelentések, 6) Lehrmann József.

²⁸ Joseph Lehrmann, *Fortsetzung meiner Anmerkungen vom Jahr 1822, über den Weinbau und die Gärtnerney [...]; so auch über Essig und Destillationsfabriken*, Hungarian National Library, Manuscript Collection, Quart. Germ. 1325.

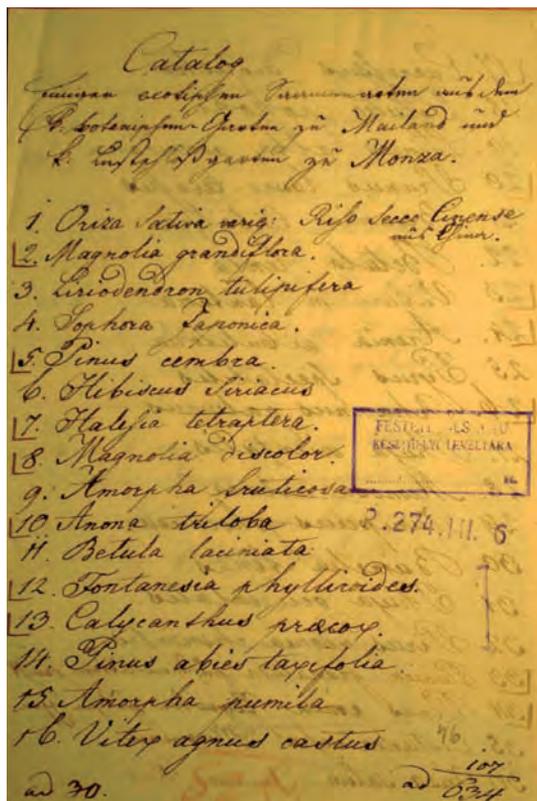


Fig. 6 Catalogue of exotic seeds from the Botanic Garden of Milan and from the Royal Villa Garden of Monza sent home by József Lehrmann (Hungarian National Archives, P274, Reports, No. 6. József Lehrmann – 3. d., f. 46r.)

and he returned to Keszthely some time during the following year. Based on a list of reference letters that he was furnished with before and during his travels, he has probably travelled to Switzerland and Bavaria too, and in Italy as south as Naples. Upon his return he was made a professor at the Georgikon where he lectured on horticulture and viticulture for decades to come.

Travelling gardeners in the 1830s and 1840s

The journey of one more estate gardener deserves a special mention as he provided information on the horticultural advancements of the whole of Germany for John Claudius Loudon's influential *The Gardener's Magazine*.²⁹ The circumstances were similar to Anton Pölt's travels earlier: Count Lajos Széchényi (1781–1855) travelled to Britain in early 1834,³⁰ and the following year sent his gardener Carl Ritter (1797–after 1847) for a study tour in Western Europe, including England. It is remarkable that three decades after Pölt's travels a practicing estate gardener was

²⁹ Interestingly, Loudon was well aware of the requirements in Germany to travel three years after the apprenticeship years, see Jan Woudstra, 'The rise of formal education for gardeners in Prussia and Great Britain', in *Prussian Gardens in Europe* (see note 24), pp. 308–313, here pp. 309–310.

³⁰ The National Archives, Public Record Office, Home Office, Alien Arrivals, HO5, Piece 27, Certificate no. 8/1834.

still required to gain experience from travel in a mid-career stage. The originally Saxon national Ritter, after serving more than a decade in the imperial gardens in Vienna, became garden director of the Hungarian count in 1832.³¹ While traveling in England between mid-July and mid-September of 1835,³² he gave his notes, almost certainly after a personal visit, to Loudon to be published under the title ‘Notes on the Trees, Gardens, Gardeners, Garden Artists, and Garden Authors of Germany’, which includes the most important names and sites of the entire German-speaking realm, including Hungary.³³ Loudon’s thirst for foreign news must have been the reason that he accepted information from a virtually unknown individual. Ritter intended to publish his observations on European gardens under the title *Briefe über Gärten und Gartenreisen, durch Ungarn, Deutschland, Frankreich, England und die Schweiz*, probably influenced by Pückler-Muskau’s *Briefe* (published in 1830 and 1831) and perhaps also by his *Andeutungen* (published in 1834), but his plan never materialised.³⁴ He did publish, however, several books on landscape gardening and related subjects in the second half of the 1830s (fig. 7).

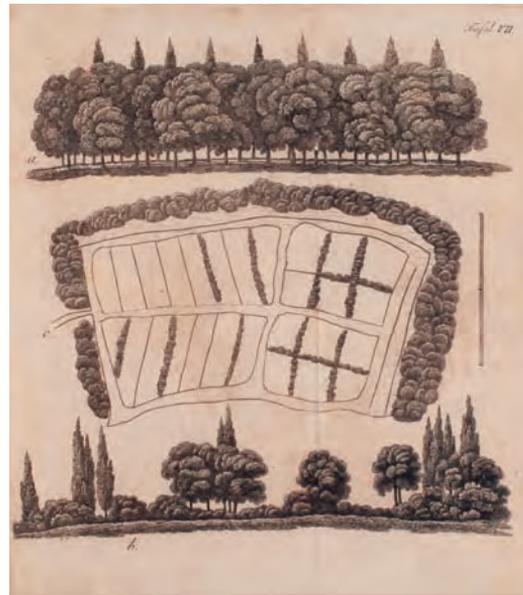


Fig. 7 Carl Ritter’s design for the embellishment of an agricultural estate from his publication *Anleitung zur Verschönerung der Landgüter und Landschaften...*, Wien, Tendlar & Schaefer, 1839 (Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Rare Book Collection, Washington, DC)

31 Jan Mokre, ‘Karl Ritter – ein sächsischer Gärtner in Wien: Anmerkungen zur Karriere eines “zudringlichen Ausländers” in den Wiener kaiserlichen Hofgärten zu Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts’, *Die Gartenkunst*, 10/2 (1998), pp. 229–42; Kristóf Fatsar, ‘Carl Ritter tervezési programja a pozsonyi Bruckenaus-kert átalakításához’, in Orsolya Bubryák (ed.), *“Ez világ, mint egy kert...” Tanulmányok Galavics Géza tiszteletére*. Budapest: MTA Művészettörténeti Kutatóintézet – Gondolat, 2010, pp. 279–292.

32 The National Archives, Public Record Office, Home Office, Alien Arrivals, HO5, Piece 28, Certificate no. 2239/1835. He arrived to London on 15 July 1835 and departed from Dover on 10 September in the same year.

33 *The Gardener’s Magazine*, 12 (1836), pp. 200–201. Loudon gave credit to his source as follows: “The above notes were furnished by M. J. Ritter [sic], Garden Director in Austria and Hungary whilst in London, in July, 1835”.

34 *Oesterreichische National-Encyclopädie* (Wien: Friedrich Beck, 1836), vol. 4, p. 394.

Western travels remained a part of the education of a gardener, and the more ambitious ones travelled far to learn more. It is not impossible that Ritter used his own resources to travel to the west of Europe, as he was quite adventurous, having been part of the not too successful Caribbean expedition sent by Emperor Francis I of Austria while he was still quite young, spending most of the time between December 1819 and July 1821 in Haiti due to the political turmoil there.³⁵

However, Franz Frey (1795–1861), the garden director of Prince Ferdinand of Saxon-Coburg-Gotha's (1785–1851) Hungarian and Austrian estates from 1827 until his death, has almost certainly spent his own money as part of his education in gardening. He started to work in the imperial gardens of Vienna and Laxenburg at the age of 16 before travelling abroad, almost certainly spending some time in France as he spoke French too. The majority of the 14 gardeners under his line management had many years of experience from previous employment, but only half of them had travelled abroad before joining the Coburg estates. The younger ones, those who were born after 1810, did not even go to a study tour but were trained in various Coburg estates, both in Hungary and Austria.³⁶

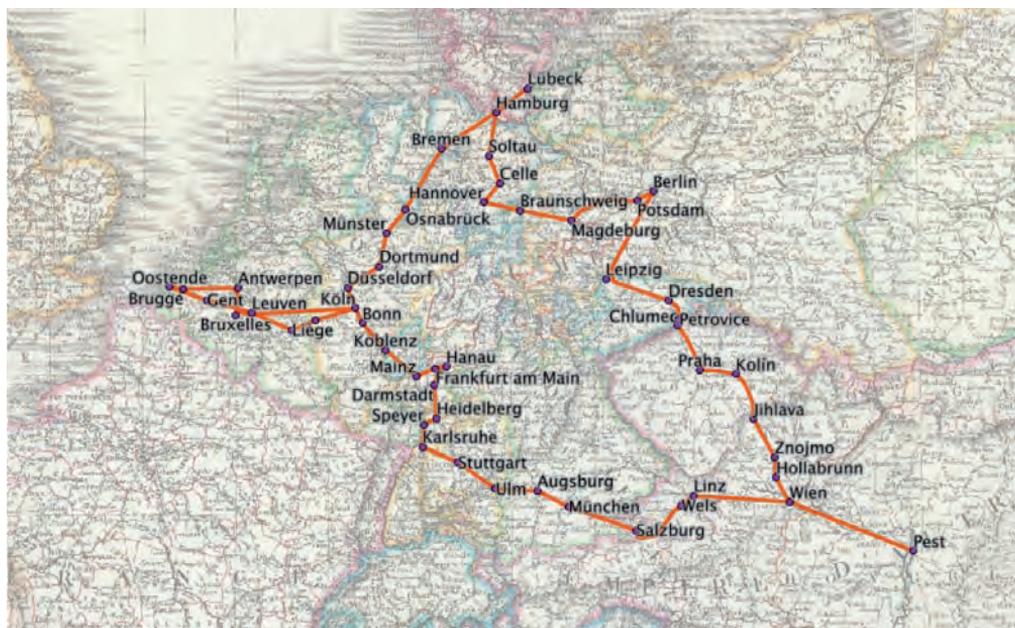


Fig. 8 Travel route of Ármin Peczy in 1842–1846

35 Ritter, Karl [Carl], *Naturhistorische Reise nach der westindischen Insel Hayti auf Kosten Sr. Majestät des Kaisers von Oesterreich*, Stuttgart: Hallberger, 1836.

36 Kristóf Fatsar, 'Die Gärtner des Herzogs Ferdinand von Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha unter der Leitung des Schloss- und Garteninspektors Franz Frey' in Zsuzsanna Cziráki, Anna Fundárková, Orsolya Manhercz, Zsuzsanna Peres and Márta Vajnági (eds.), *Wiener Archivforschungen: Festschrift für den ungarischen Archindelegierten in Wien, István Fazekas*, Wien: Institut für Ungarische Geschichtsforschung in Wien, Balassi Institut – Collegium Hungaricum Wien, Ungarische Archivdelegation beim Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Wien, 2014, (Publikationen der Ungarischen Geschichtsforschung in Wien, Bd. X.) pp. 315–330.

Analysing the travels of commercial gardeners or freelance designers of Hungary until the middle of the 19th century, or as a matter of fact even after that, is even more challenging, as sources are virtually non-existent. As can be seen from the case studies above, records of even the sponsored travels of gardeners at great country estates have been lost or destroyed in most cases. Research on entries into Britain between 1836 and 1849 revealed some horticultural professionals entering the United Kingdom: József Gaál (entry: 11 April 1837), Johann Steiner (15 May 1846) and József Képes (22 March 1847) all claimed to be gardeners from Hungary but their destinations or even departure from Britain remains a mystery. It cannot even be ascertained whether they travelled as part of their normal professional education or were sent to an extensive and no doubt expensive study tour.

The only known Hungarian gardener travelling as part of his apprenticeship in this period is Ármin Pecz Sr (1820–1896) who in the 1860s earned fame as both a nurseryman and a landscape designer.³⁷ He started his education in the University Botanical Garden at Pest from March 1837 where he spent three years, followed by work in Archduke Joseph's Palatinal Garden at Buda for another two years. From February 1842 he spent one and a half year in Vienna working for Franz Joseph Mülbeck, and also in the Prince Metternich and Baron Pasqualate gardens. He started his journey in October 1843, mainly on foot,³⁸ and only occasionally by train and ship (fig. 8). He first travelled to Prague with seven other workmen of different professions and nationality, and via Dresden, Leipzig, and Berlin he arrived to Potsdam in December, where Hermann Sello employed him. According to Pecz, he became Sello's right hand man while working in the Sanssouci and the Damengarten. Pecz's memoir provides a fascinating insight to the management of the royal gardens and how professional life was conducted, including practical and technical details.

Pecz left Potsdam in February 1845 to arrive in Hamburg in the next month after visiting Magdeburg, Braunschweig, Hanover, Celle and Soltau. In Hamburg he worked for Richard Richers, and met with another Hungarian gardener named József Medos at James Booth's nursery in Flottbek. In August 1845, he was on the road again, visiting gardens in Lübeck, Bremen, Ghent, Brussels, Koblenz, Karlsruhe, Stuttgart, Augsburg and Munich. Pecz pursued a very successful career in the second half of the 19th century, having delivered designs for such important

37 Gábor Alföldy, 'A Hungarian gardener in Potsdam: Ármin Pecz Sr. and relations between Prussian and Hungarian garden art in the 19th and 20th centuries', in *Prussian Gardens in Europe* (as in note 24), pp. 232–237.

38 Joseph Boos, son of the director of the Austrian court gardens, also travelled on foot in 1821 and 1822, see Martz 2007, p. 314.

Fig. 9 Ármin Pecz's design for the Népliget Park in Budapest, 1868 (Budapest City Archives)



projects as the People's Park in Budapest in 1868 (fig. 9),³⁹ which also earned him a prize at the London International Exhibition of 1871.⁴⁰

Conclusion

However scarce are sources on gardeners' journeys, it can be safely said that determination and ambition to travel abroad has returned the investment in terms of knowledge, prestige and other measures of success. The individuals discussed above have all reached prestigious positions in their later career such as princely estate gardener, college professor or highly influential landscape designer. Obviously, the surviving records on horticultural travels belong to the most successful gardeners, and there might have been others whose investment into accumulating knowledge abroad happened in vain. There might be others besides those gardeners to Britain whose names are not known to us. But it is unlikely that the phenomenon of Hungarian gardeners travelling en masse remained unnoticed.

³⁹ Budapest City Archives, XV.16.b.226/99.

⁴⁰ Luca Csepely-Knorr, *Barren Places to public spaces: A history of public park design in Budapest 1867–1914*. Budapest: Budapest City Archives, 2016, pp. 108–111.