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SPATIAL AND IDEOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE ABBOTS' GARDEN IN OLIWA IN THE 18TH CENTURY

INTRODUCTION

Since early Medieval time monasteries have played a tremendous role in shaping the image of Europe. After the so called “Dark Ages” they became centres of culture, science, education and art, as well as horticulture. Even though the oldest European Catholic monasteries were of Benedictine provenience, the Cistercians had the strongest influence on shaping the land, as they were being “grown into river valleys” according to their Rule and the teachings of St. Bernard of Clairvaux. This fact was already common knowledge, giving rise to a Latin proverb: “Bernardus valles, montes Benedictus amabat; oppida Franciscus, magnas Ignatius urbes” (“Bernard loved valleys, Benedict – mountain tops, Francis – towns, and Ignatius – big cities”) (Addis n.p.; Milecka, *Ogrody cystersów* 57).

Cistercian communities were associated with watercourses and lowlands. The driving force of the water was used in many areas of their economy, which quickly influenced the development of a high material culture of their abbeys (Manteuffel 189-199). Among their many contributions, Cistercians were responsible for introducing a new type of management in agriculture¹.

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¹ According to their original rule, monks were supposed to lead a self-sustaining life, living off the work of their hands. That is why on the land granted to them they set up huge agricultural estates

The monastic motto, *ora et labora*, (pray and work) and the rules laid down by St. Benedict of Nursia resulted in the development of a form of monastic life dedicated to God².

The Cistercians were the first entirely European international order which reached all countries in a relatively uniform way. Embracing Europe with a network of filiation monasteries, the Cistercians relied primarily on the financial security they were given in the form of land with their villages and settlements. They settled various areas in terms of agricultural conditions, most often still undeveloped wastelands. Such sites offered opportunities for profiling the economy and influencing the surrounding landscape. The places of settlement were carefully determined in the negotiation process between the founder, bishop, prince, monastery of the filiation line and the superior abbot. This process often took several years. Being an order of hermits, they carefully selected places to live, keeping an appropriate distance from the public reality (Eberl 44-45; Dettlaff 78).

The activity of the Cistercians was extensive, from the social and religious stimulation of customs through the implementation of the achievements of technology, construction, agriculture and horticulture, to high artistic culture. In addition, it is worth noting that Cistercian abbeys were distinguished by a rich theological programme, permeating various aspects of the monks' activity, including: architecture, fine and decorative arts and garden art. The contribution of the Cistercians to European culture and art was evident, especially in the 17th and 18th centuries, along with the growing prestige of the abbot's position as the property manager, independent fund keeper, principal and patron of the arts.

While the monks of the 17th and 18th century were recruited mainly from the middle class, rarely from the noble or peasant families, abbots were usually

some of them as big as 3000 hectares. Highly salaried abbeys divided their properties into the so-called *granges*. They consisted of a number of farm and industrial buildings, such as barns, granaries, warehouses, cellars (especially where vines were grown), byres, stables, dairies, mills, oil mills, fulling mills, sawmills, brickyards, bakeries, breweries. Large areas of Cistercian assets were occupied by agricultural crops, vegetables and fruits, including hop used for the production of beer. Water engineering, used in the construction of water devices, canals, locks, reservoirs for water retention and fish farming, played an important role in the Cistercian economy (Wyrwa, *Opactwa* 44-45; Addis n.p.; Eberl 210-213; Dettlaff 78-79; Milecka, "The four Elements" 92-93).

² On the one hand, the dynamism of life, changing views on the surrounding world and changes in the life of the Church were the reason for departing at various times and in various forms from the principles recommended by Benedict-one of the principles has generally not changed over the centuries, i.e. the obligation to live in a community under the rule of the abbot – the father of a community. It was very closely related to the rule of *stabilitas* (stability) – *stabilitas monastica*, *stabilitas loci*, i.e. the monk's attachment to the place and community. On the other hand, the network of Cistercian religious communities densely dotted across Europe contributed to cultural integration beyond the existing national divisions (Wyrwa, "Podróże" 88; Dettlaff 21).

representatives of significant families. They emphasised their position and the importance of the executed office by creating an appropriate setting – adapted to the prevailing nobility culture of the era. They arranged elegant rooms in their seats, expanded the existing ones and built new abbey houses of a representative character. Surrounded by decorative gardens, abbots' residences competed with secular palaces. These acts often contradicted the strict monastic observance but became a response to the changing realities and social expectations of the era. The high material culture of the order has often become a deliberate instrument of its socio-ideological mission (Dettlaff 81-84)³.

CISTERCIANS IN OLIWA

Despite the ongoing discussion on the actual date of the foundation of the Oliwa monastery, according to the Cistercian tradition, the date of 1178 and the Pomeranian prince Subislav as a founder are assumed. On March 18 that year, Subislav's son, Duke Sambor, was to fulfil his father's will by issuing a document in Gdansk to settle the Cistercians in Oliwa. As the monastery's material security, the Cistercians were also given the villages of Rumia, Starzyno and Żarnowiec, as well as the neighbouring Machowo, purchased in 1300 from the knight Radislav of Darzłubie (Dettlaff 16). The abbey was located northwest of Gdansk, in the Oliwa Stream valley as a branch of the French Clairvaux Abbey. Relationship with Clairvaux occurred through the Danish Esrom Abbey and the West Pomeranian Abbey in Kołbacz (Milecka, *Ogrody cystersów* 38-39; Dettlaff 87) (ill. 1).

³ The history of the Cistercian Order along with its architecture and art have been an object of extensive research, which in recent years has become even more detailed and broad in scope. Many joint publications appeared in the last few years (Wyrwa, Strzelczyk, Kaczmarek), concerning mainly archaeology, history, architecture and art, but also touching upon some aspects of Cistercian agricultural activities. The latest research classifying the present state of knowledge on Cistercian architecture including Oliwa Abbey and was published in a numerous joint studies (Łużyniecka, Świechowski, Kunkel; Kunkel "Dormitoria mnichów"; Świechowski, "Architektura"; Piwek, *Architektura kościoła*; Piwek, *Wystroje artystyczne*; Dettlaff). As yet, less attention has been devoted to the studies of Cistercian gardens and post-Cistercians landscapes in Poland (Ciołek; Majdecki; Eysymontt; Lipowicz; Olszewska; Milecka, *Ogrody cystersów*; Milecka, "The Cistercian Route"; Milecka, "Ogrody cysterskie – mit"; Rozmarynowska; Dekanski, Wetesko; etc.).



Ill. 1. The monastery in Oliwa (marked by a circle) against Cistercian abbeys in Medieval Europe (according to Kinder)

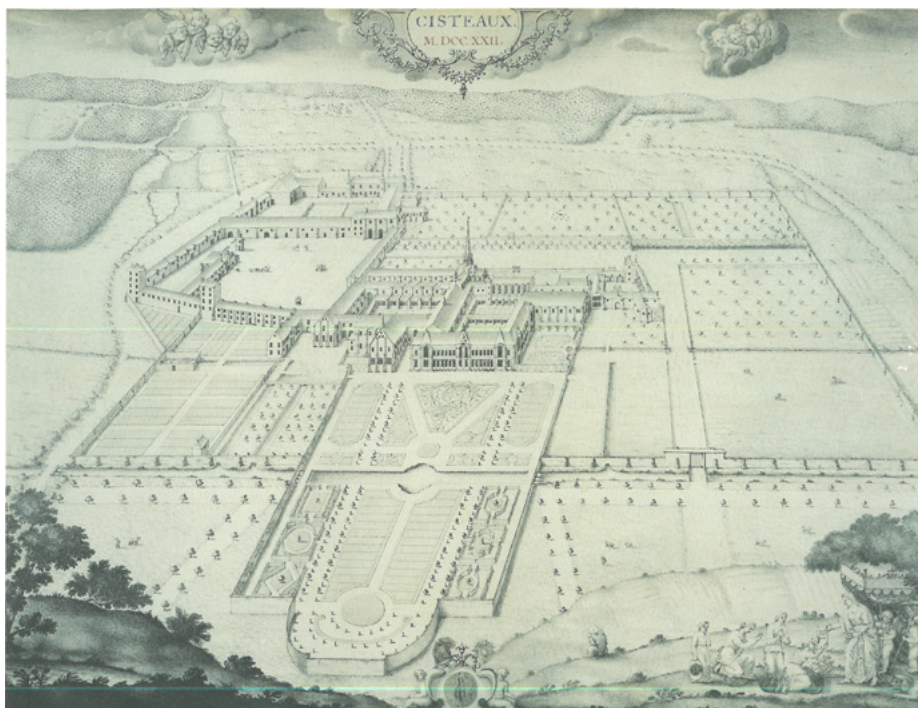
Thanks to further donations, the monastic dominion finally reached the shores of the Baltic Sea. From the beginning of the 13th century until the partition of Poland and transformation changes in 1772, Cistercian goods constituted a compact domain. Then, other grants, purchases and exchanges of lands led to the creation of a significant monastic economic dominion in Eastern Pomerania⁴.

ABBOTS' GARDEN

Since the Middle Ages, within the larger monastic complexes, an abbot occupied a separate building, outside the enclosure, in an open part, accessible to lay people and visitors. Separate gardens for the exclusive use of the abbot and his guests were established next to the abbot's houses. They had the character of an ornamental and representative garden, separate from the conventual gardens. Abbots' gardens

⁴ Before secularisation, the Chełmno diocese owned 293,888 ha of land, woods and ponds, of which 21,915 ha were owned by the Cistercians of Oliwa (*Diecezja chełmińska* 23, after Dettlaff 78; Dettlaff 89, 97).

existed, among others in the French abbeys in Citeaux and Clairvaux or German Maulbronn. In Poland, the abbot's gardens were established in Oliwa and Sulejów. In the beginning, these were relatively modest compositions; only in the Renaissance, and especially in the Baroque period, abbot's houses resembled secular palaces, as did the surrounding gardens, which in terms of size and splendour were not inferior to the palaces (Majdecki 69) (ill. 2).



Ill. 2. Prinstet, The Abbey of Citeaux in 1722,
bird's eye view, Bibliothèque municipale de Dijon, ref. no. 90045, Cl. Perrodin,
The Burgundy Regional Tourist Board and the Association „Citeaux 98”,
reproduction from the authors' collection

The Oliwa palace, as the representative seat of the abbots, was probably built in the 15th century. Originally it was a one-story building, later raised by another storey and then rebuilt many times due to damage and the changing needs of subsequent abbots (Kilarski, Mamuszka, Stankiewicz 28; *Oliwskie szeptę* 4).

Despite advanced studies, we have yet to learn what the earliest garden looked like. The conventual garden was probably a composition of prevailing utilitarian function. The first mention of a decorative garden next to the abbot's residence comes from the 16th century. It was most likely located on the eastern side of the abbots' old seat (Kromer 2007).

Along with the expansion of the abbey's assets, the role and rank of the abbot as manager and superior grew. The list of Oliwa Abbots from the time of the introduction of the Tridentine reform to the liquidation of the abbey included outstanding figures important to the Church and playing key roles in state and international politics. They included *inter alia*, Abbot Kasper Geschkau (abbot in the years 1569-1584), member of the Maritime Commission during the reign of King Sigismund Augustus and supporter of King Steven Bathory in his conflict with Gdansk. In 1581, he led the incorporation of Oliwa into the Polish province of the Cistercians Order (Dettlaff 97). Under his rule, the Abbots' Palace destroyed in 1577 was rebuilt (*Oliwskie szeptę* 4).

Among the many prominent abbots, those who significantly contributed to the development of the abbots' residential complex deserve special attention. In 1611, abbot Dawid Konarski (1589-1616) separated the abbot's estate from the monastic property (Prokop, entry 529), which resulted in the creation of an autonomous residential centre within the abbey.

In the times of abbot Jan Grabiński (1630-1638), the abbey's palace was extended with a new southern wing (the so-called New Abbots' Palace). The works began on March 10, 1637 (*Oliwskie szeptę* 4).

Abbot Aleksander Kęsowski (1641-1667) became famous as a patron of the arts and founder of churches, chapels and altars. He was also a co-creator of the concept of *Kalwaria Wejherowska* (Calvary of Wejherowo). His main goal was to rebuild the monastic economy, which was impoverished after the Swedish War (1626-1629), when the entire monastery, including the abbots' seat, was plundered and destroyed. His numerous economic endeavours enabled the reconstruction of the abbots' residence. In his role as abbot, he often hosted the Queen Louise Mary Gonzaga, the wife of the King Ladislaus IV and John Casimir. The abbot's garden was probably restored to its former glory in the time of Kęsowski.

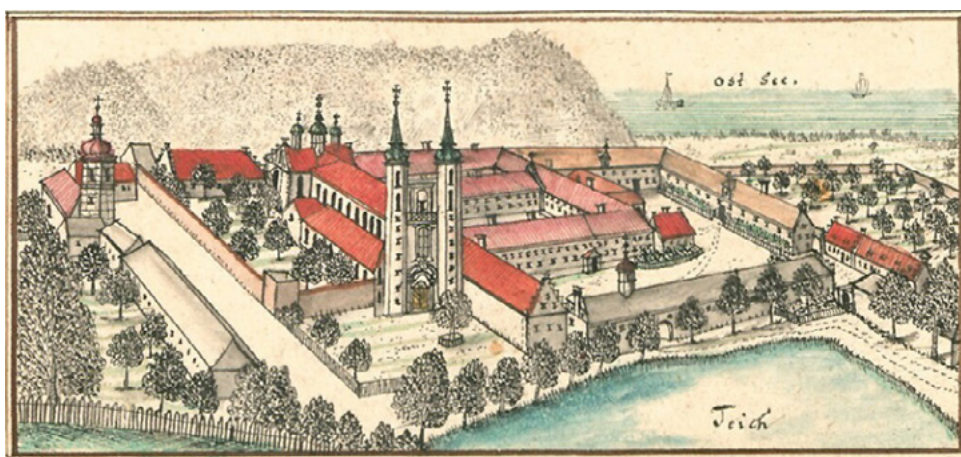
It was during the reign of this abbot they the monastery was occupied by a geodesist, Father Robert Werden, delegated, among others, around 1643 to Wejherowo to lay out the Calvary route running in accordance with the physiognomy of Jerusalem (Schulz 274; Dettlaff 106).

It is hard to say about the shape of the monastery gardens and the role they played in the 17th century. Certainly at that time, the whole complex had to be significant and extensive. Ulryk Werdum in his account of his trip through Poland in the years 1670-1672 noted: "It is a beautiful monastery, with many buildings, a large garden, rich income" (Liske 274, cit. after: Dettlaff 106).

The period of office of the abbot Franciszek Mikołaj Zaleski (1722-1740) had a significant influence on the spatial development of the abbot's residence. This abbot faced the challenge of rebuilding the abbey after destruction during Northern

War. He also rebuilt the Abbots' Palace in 1740 (Dettlaff 99; *Oliwskie szepty* 4). Probably these works were also accompanied by a new arrangement of the surroundings of the palace and the Abbot's garden.

The monastery garden in its early shape has been illustrated on the drawing from ca. 1727 published by Friedrich Bernhard Werner in his book *Topographia oder Prodromus Delineati Silesiae Ducatus...* (Werner 84). The illustration shows a wall-enclosed garden to the south of the monastery buildings as well as other forms of greenery in the abbey's closer and more distant surroundings. The Old Abbot's Palace is seen to the left of the cathedral presbytery; however, the abbot's garden is unseen (ill. 3).



Ill. 3. Cistercian abbey in Oliwa, drawing by F.B. Werner from ca. 1727, *Topographia oder Prodromus Delineati Silesiae Ducatus...*, vol. 1, manuscript, 1750-1800, p. 84, Wrocław University Library, ref. No. R551

In the first decades of the 18th century, it would seem reasonable to assume the garden had to have established a representative character already because in 1734 King Augustus III chose the location to host a party on the occasion of the naming day of the Russian Empress Anna Ioannovna (1693-1740) who was staying in Gdansk at that time (Eysymontt 31; Rozmarynowska 160).

Abbot's Józef Jacek Rybiński (1740-1782) is famous for his special achievements in relation to the abbots' residence. During his activity, the monastery complex, the Abbots' Palace and the adjacent garden were expanded. Rybiński was a well-educated and sophisticated person. In his youth, he studied at the Jesuit college in Stare Szkoty near Gdansk. Moreover, he had to show great abilities and political sense, because at an early age he held the office of the secretary of the Lithuanian vice-chancellor at the court of King Augustus II. In approximately 1728, he

joined the Cistercian Order in Oliwa; he studied law and theology in Prague and Rome. After his return to Oliwa, he was entrusted with the position of secretary of the Polish Cistercian Province (Dettlaff 108-109).

He was known to be an open-minded person with broad horizons. Not only did he meet and host celebrities of his time⁵, he also travelled extensively. During the diplomatic missions entrusted to him, he visited Germany, the Netherlands, France and England (Bernoulli 468; Dettlaff 109), where he could see the gardens of bishops and secular palaces. He was fluent in French (Bernoulli 468), the Prussian chamberlain Ernst von Lehndorff called him *abbé des boudoirs* (abbot of the salons) (Lehndorff 15).

Thanks to the Rybiński's foundation, the so-called New Abbots' Palace in Oliwa was rebuilt (1754-1756). The new architectural design of the building was created in the fashionable Rococo style according to the design of a Saxon architect working at the Polish royal court, Ephraim Schröger. This two-storey building was covered with a mansard roof with dormers. The body of the building was decorated with a three-storey, protruding avant-corps and arcades open to the garden (Iwicki 132-133; Dettlaff 109-110; *Oliwskie szept* 4; Rozmarynowska 160) (ill. 4).

Swiss philosopher and jurist, and above all the traveller Johann III Bernoulli who visited Oliwa several times, incl. in 1778, wrote: "The abbot's palace is truly beautiful, with modern but simple, noble architecture and well-furnished" (Kayser 3)⁶.

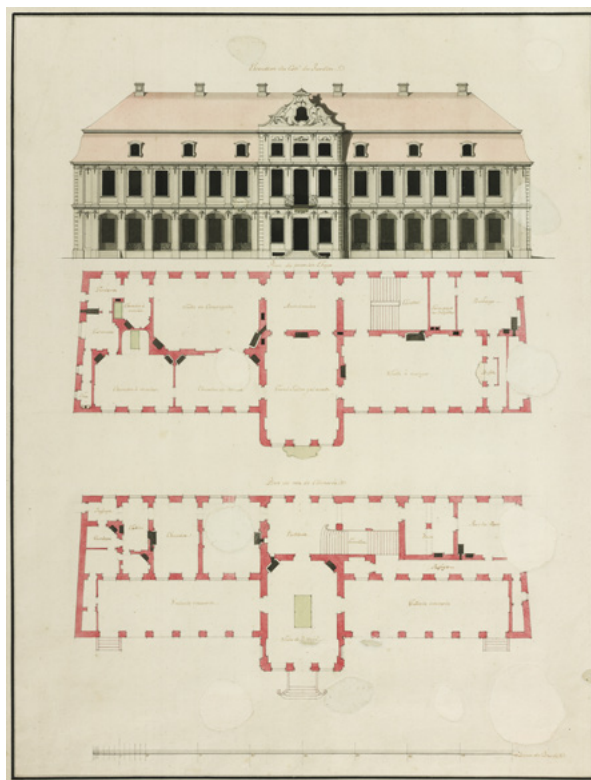
The involvement of an outstanding architect such as Ephraim Schröger proves the ambitious plans to modernise the abbot's seat in accordance with the current fashion. The New Palace had to meet the living standards of the time, the French *commodité* and the representative functions of an abbot's court⁷. Rybiński, as a person familiar with the newest cosmopolitan trends, was also known for his moderate lifestyle and modesty in his monastic ministry.

Jan Trebbels, in his funeral speech on the death of the abbot, recalled: "He built a magnificent palace, established significant buildings, gave exquisite feasts to eminent personalities in the country and abroad, received visits from the most dignified people in the country and revisited them. But there was no pride, no conceit and haughtiness in it, nor ambition or recklessness is evidenced by his modestly furnished apartment, which he chose for himself during his stay in Oliwa, a modest table when he was alone, the solitude he liked, when circumstances allowed" (Kayser 3).

⁵ He maintained contacts, among others with bishop-poet Ignacy Krasicki, a leading representative of the Polish Enlightenment, an encyclopaedist and commentator of the gardening activities of the Polish aristocracy, author of the *Letters of Gardens* (1801) (Malawski, *Polskie ogrody* 123).

⁶ Facsimile available at: http://www.dawnaoliwa.pl/biblioteczka/1930_keyser.html.

⁷ There were separate passage for servants, dining room with a buffet, backroom and a cupboard room, a billiard room as well as a music room (Lorentz 33).



Ill. 4. Project of the New Abbot's Palace by Ephraim Schröger, ca. 1754, Warsaw University Library, inv. no.: Inw.zb.d. 763

The new abbot's seat was framed by a garden, which Rybiński significantly expanded. However, the urban development of Oliwa made it impossible to organise the entire garden composition along one axis continuing the axis of the palace; therefore, the composition of the garden was developed along an asymmetrical transverse axis (Eysymontt 32).

The Abbots' New Palace garden was created basically in the Baroque style with some elements, which can be classified as Rococo ones. With a characteristic fragmentation of the composition, asymmetry and a large *en gazon* (of lawn) share (Malawski, "The style" 299). The new garden was established to the south and east of the abbot's residence. Classic baroque motifs known from the creations of Le Nôtre (Olszewska 115) were used there, including channels, clipped avenues and bowers. A distinguishing treatment was the introduction of a "false perspective". The effect of illusion was obtained by manipulating the width of the channels and espalier alleys. In addition, an orangery was built in the garden to cultivate orange trees and other exotic plants, which was a flagship piece of equipment for the noble residence

(Malawski, “Od ogrodu” 67). During the implementation of the project, Rybiński used the help of Warsaw gardeners Hentschel and Dębiński, who had worked for the great aristocratic families of Zamoyski and Czartoryski (Dettlaff 110).

It is assumed that the garden design was made by Hentschel, while its implementation was entrusted to the gardener Kazimierz Dębiński, from Kock (*Oliwskie szeptę 5*)⁸, who worked earlier in the Wilanów gardens for Prince August Aleksander Czartoryski. Perhaps it is possible its shape was also influenced by the abbot himself, who, thanks to numerous travels, was familiar with Western European trends (Eysymontt 32).

Despite its small size, the garden was surrounded by a wall and had an extensive spatial and ideological program to satisfy the needs related to the representative, aesthetic as well as spiritual function—serving relaxation and contemplation. The core of this garden was a biaxial, asymmetrical layout with a baroque disposition, and the palace situated *entre cour et jardin*. Outside the front façade of the palace, there was a *court of honour (cour d'honneur)*. The back side of the building, was occupied by a garden salon, which started with a small court, separated by a channel from the ornamental *parterre de gazon*, decorated with a palmette motif on the palace axis. The salon was framed by two linden *berceaux*. At the end of the parterre, was a big rectangular basin later called “The Swan Pond”. Its extension towards the east was a narrowing avenue framed with hedges of 5 m high (ill. 5). Next it turned into an expanding water channel, along which ran of the lower linden bowers (ill. 6). An important reason for such a location of the avenue and the channel was to obtain a perspective overlooking the sea, which was less than 3 km away. The impression was intensified by the effect of the sun emerging from the sea surface at the right times of the day and year. The significant fact is that the Cistercians named this avenue “The Road to Eternity” (later changed into “The Prince’s View”) (Lipowicz 126).

This type of nomenclature introduced an element of religious spirituality into the typically secular elements of the garden decor. For example, leading this avenue to the east could refer to the symbolic east orientation of the churches, and the rising sun could tactfully refer to the Christological symbolism and eternal life (Olszewska 116-117, 120; Rozmarynowska 161).

The southern façade of the palace and the high lanes forming the “Road to Eternity” are illustrated by a drawing by Matthäus Deich from ca. 1760 (Deich ill. 35). The drawing presents the view of the complex from the south-east together with the fenced gardens of the New Palace of the Abbots (ill. 7).

⁸ It is possible that Schröger, who was also involved in designing gardens, participated in the creation of the garden concept (Lorentz 36; Wyszomirska 402-412).



III. 5. "Road to Eternity"; photo by Małgorzata Milecka, 2015



III. 6. View through the Baroque bower; photo by Małgorzata Milecka, 2015



Ill. 7. Cistercian abbey in Oliwa ca. 1760, the Abbots' New Palace seen on the right, M. Deich, *50 Prospecte von Danzig sind zu haben bey Matthäus Deisch*, ill. 35, the National Library of Poland, ref. no. A.780/G.XVIII/III-56

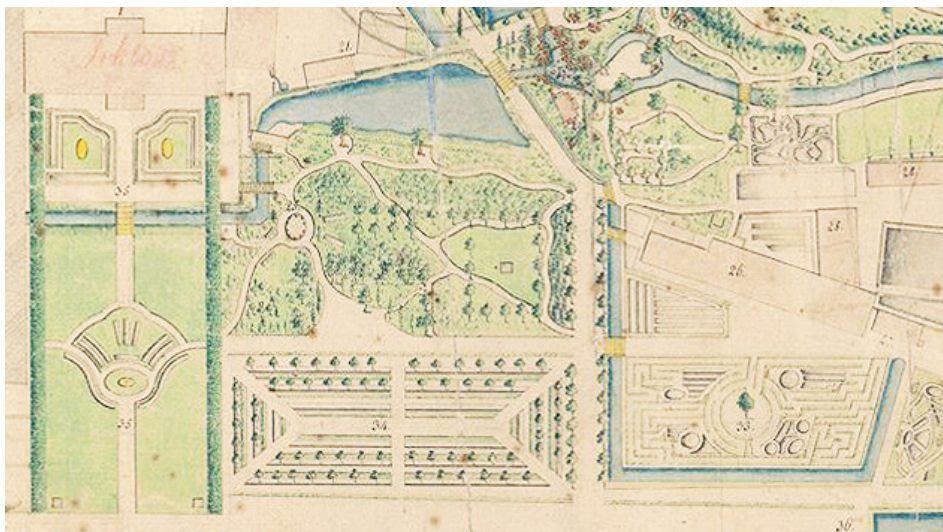
An interesting description of this alley from 1798 was published in *Travel Diary* by a Protestant clergyman and lecturer at the University of Heidelberg, Johann Friedrich Abegg: "The most surprising pleasure is to see the so-called large alley. Since it is higher than the land between it and the sea, the sea appears directly at the point where the avenue ends, which is wonderful. Through the perspective, you can see the life of the sea in its vastness, and you get the impression that it is within arm's reach, while you are still at least half a mile away from it" (Lipowicz 124-125, after: Abegg 275).

Other interesting observations about the optical illusion in the garden were also made in 1881 by professor Stanisław Tarnowski "...all this, is somehow skilfully and illusorily, it seems as if there was no compartment between this channel and the sea as if the sea began just outside the garden" (cit. after: Fabiani-Madeyska 258-259).

Along the shorter axis, there was a view to the south. Through the *oculus* opening in the border hedge, the view opened onto the picturesque village of Polanki (Rozmarynowska 162).

Cistercian spirituality was also emphasised by the ideological program of two garden interiors situated along the viewing axis. One of them was an oblong, rectangular "green hall" planted with rows of trees called *Paradisus* (Paradise). Then, there was a maze with a "tree of life" in the middle. Which symbolically marked the earthly journey and the search for the path leading to salvation and immortality, which

was identified by the *arbor vitae* growing there. This mystical program opened the garden to a new spiritual dimension (Olszewska 117) (ill. 8).



Il. 8. „Paradise” (in the middle) and the maze (on the right side) marked on the plan of the Oliwa Abbot’s garden by Saltzmann (fragment), 1792, Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku, ref. APG: 9, 2/688

Abbot Rybiński made the garden available to visitors. Initially the park was opened occasionally, usually on Sundays and holidays (*Oliwskie szeptę* 5).

A rather schematic layout of the monastery gardens from the time of Rybiński is presented in the plan of Oliwa from 1801⁹ (ill. 9). On this plan, an unknown cartographer marked the garden behind the palace, a pool, an elongated channel known as the “Road to Eternity” or “Moonlight View”. There is also a maze marked in a different way. The remaining areas of the abbot garden as well as the conventual garden, were marked schematically as areas with regular divisions, densely wooded (Eysymontt 37).

The economic position of the abbey strengthened under Rybiński’s management. He personally supervised business activities and transactions. However, this good situation was interrupted by the political crisis and the first partition of Poland. In 1772, the Prussian administration was introduced to Pomerania, and religious goods were confiscated for Prussia. The abbot was granted an annual salary of 4,000 thalers and allowed to live in the palace he had built. The abbot died in 1782 (Dettlaff 110-111).

⁹ Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku. *The Plan of Oliwa upon Gdansk*, 1801, sign. 9,2/18/701.



III. 9. Cistercian's Abbey on the plan of Oliwa upon Gdansk, 1801,
Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku, sign. 9,2/18/701

ABBEY, UNDER PRUSSIAN ADMINISTRATION

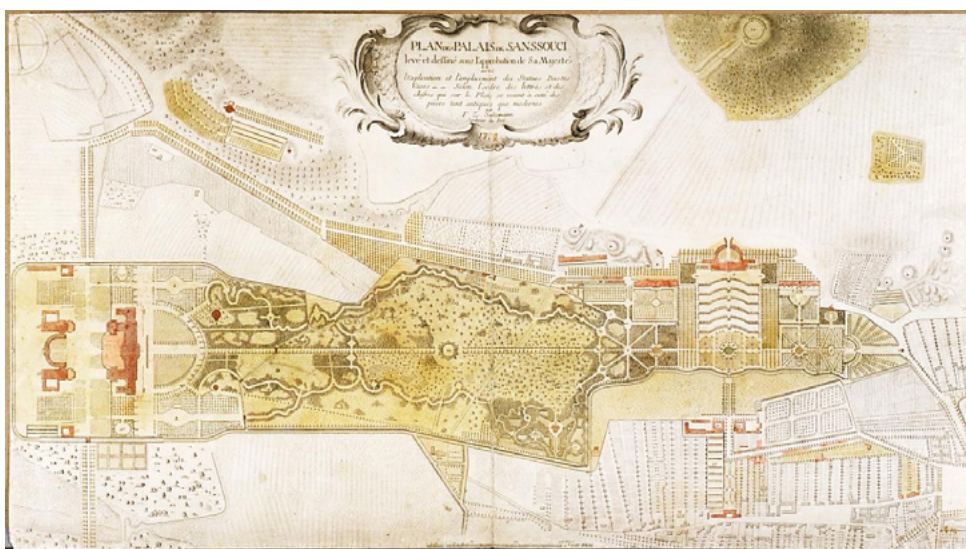
The confiscation of Cistercian goods after the first partition of Poland by the Prussian King Frederick II and the dissolution of the monastery by a decree of the one of his successors Frederick William III, in 1831 ends the process of expanding the monastery. As a result of the dissolution and parcelling of the post-Cistercian property, there was also the liquidation or reconstruction of a number of residential and farm buildings, and latterly the plunder of works of art from the Abbot's Palace (Kilarski, Mamuszka, Stan-kiewicz 8-10; *Oliwskie szept* 4).

The King of Prussia appointed the next abbots. They were commandant abbots who were not Cistercians (Cistercian priors were responsible for managing the monastery). Prince Karl (actually: Johann Nepomuck Karl) von Hohenzollern-Hechingen became abbot after Rybiński's death (1782) and held this position until his death in 1803. His successor, Prince Joseph Wilhelm Friedrich von Hohenzollern-Hechingen, nephew of Prince Karl, managed the Cistercian estate from 1803 until the dissolution of the monastery in 1831 (died 1836) (Eysymontt 32; Wyrwa, *Opactwa cysterskie* 129; Dettlaff 110-111).

Prince Karl was a well-known frequenter of Gdansk's salons; he settled in the palace at the age of less than 50 and, like his successor, became known as the one who depleted the Cistercian assets. However, he took care of his seat – the Abbots'

Palace. He also enlarged the garden up to the Pacholek hill (Ger. Karlsberg)¹⁰ (*Oliwskie szepty* 4; Iwicki 238-239).

Prince Karl commissioned the gardener from Potsdam, Johann Georg Nicolaus Saltzmann (1764-1831), who proposed a partial transformation and extension of the garden in the new-fashionable Anglo-Chinese style (*Oliwskie szepty* 5). Johann was the son of the royal gardener Friedrich Zacharias Saltzmann who worked in the gardens in Potsdam (Eysymontt 32; Kromer 182-186). Saltzmann became famous primarily as the author of the plan of the Sanssouci Park (ill. 10), which was engraved in copper by Johann Friedrich Schleuen in 1772, to which he added a forty-page explanation. His innovation was a hunting area located to the west of the Sanssouci Palace. This so-called “Deer Garden” (Ger. *Rehgarten*) follows the convention of an Anglo-Chinese park (Wimmer 55).



Ill. 10. Plan of the Sanssouci at the end of the reign of Frederick II, copperplate by Johann Friedrich Schleuen, after the drawing by Friedrich Zacharias Saltzmann, 1772, Potsdam, Germany (Plan des friderizianischen Parks Sanssouci von 1772, Johann Friedrich Schleuen, after: Zeichnung von Friedrich Zacharias Sal(t)zmann), SPSG, Plankammer Potsdam, Plansammlung Nr. 7416, Potsdam

Saltzmann built various types of oriental-style buildings including wooden menagerie with artificial animals in the abbot's garden. These, stylised as Chinese, follies were wooden bridges, temples and gazebos. One of these was the so-called “Grotto of Whispers” (also known as the “Ears of Dionysus”). There were two niches

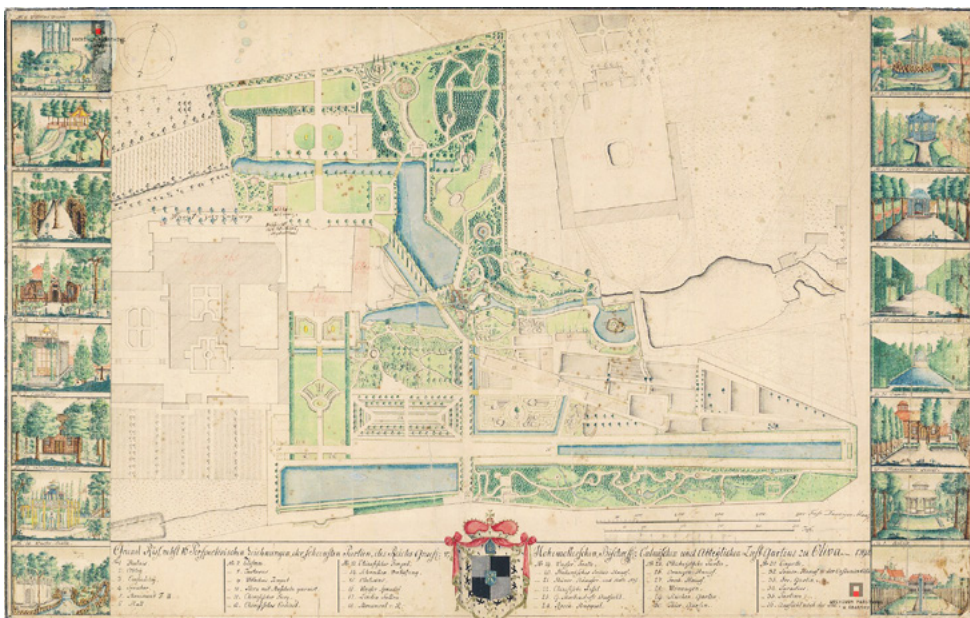
¹⁰ *Pacholek* (English: bollard – a post used for mooring, later renamed *Karlsberg*, after: Prince Karl).

situated opposite each other. Their uniqueness was that two people in the grottos, with their backs to each other, could hear each other's whisper (*Oliwskie szepty* 5; Rozmarynowska 161).

Another garden attraction was a stone cascade that was arranged in the place where Mill No. VII was once located (*Oliwskie szepty* 2, 5).

Saltzmann probably supervised the implementation of the project. After its completion in 1793, he remained in the abbey permanently, receiving the title of the chief inspector of the garden in Oliwa (Eysymontt 34).

The spatial layout of the garden was presented by Saltzmann's plan (1792)¹¹ (ill. 11). It was framed on both sides by a border with sixteen perspective views of the most beautiful parts of the garden. The plan shows two stylish phases in 18th-century garden art. It is French in its concept, although it is already a rococo garden from Rybiński's times and a new *Anglo-Chinois* part (Olszewska 116).



Ill. 11. Plan of the monastery garden in Oliwa, 1792, Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku, ref. APG: 9,2/688

In line with the French fashion for English-Chinese gardens, the new abbot introduced many different garden follies in a relatively small space. These types of gardens were often saturated with various types of architecture and artefacts,

¹¹ J.J. Saltzmann, *Plan of the abbot's garden in Oliwa (Plan ogrodu opackiego w Oliwie)*, 1792, Archiwum Państwowe w Gdańsku, sign. 9,2/18/688.

introducing the stroller into different emotional states, which by their exotic, antique or rustic form were to emphasise the idea of naturalness in the garden. In the Oliwa garden, the first group was especially numerous. They were: Chinese temple, Chinese gazebo, Chinese island, Chinese mountain with gazebo, Chinese cabinet and Ottoman pavilion, Elysium, Italian summer house, Summer house in the chestnut avenue, William's Temple, Hermitage, Chapel, Grotto of Tartarus and Cascade. There were also various kinds of statues and inscription stones (Rozmarynowska 167).

What remains to be seen today from that arrangement are two manmade hills on the northern side of the park (ill. 12) and a cascade on the Oliwa Stream (which might have been built on the site of the old mill which had stood there until the 16th century) (ill. 13).



Ill. 12. Artificial hill, location of one of the Chinese pavilions;
photo by Małgorzata Milecka, 2015



III. 13. Cascade on the Oliwa Stream; photo by Małgorzata Milecka, 2015

According to Abbeg, the garden was decorated with several stone monuments commemorating the former abbot Jacek Rybiński, Prince Charles Hohenzollern and the ruler of Prussia: Frederick II and his successors, Frederick William II and Frederick William III (Lipowicz 125).

The paths were given winding shapes, characteristic of Chinese gardens, for which, as early as 1685, the English essayist and theorist of garden art, Sir William Temple, coined the term *Sharawdgi* (Hobhouse 166). The ideas of naturalness were also to be emphasised by a pond with irregular shores, winding streams with cascades and paths leading to “wild” corners of the garden. There was also a wilderness in the southern part of the garden, below the channel.

The utilitarian nature of the garden was practically abandoned, and only a new kitchen garden near the orangery was established (it was moved from the southeastern part of the garden) (Eysymontt 39).

The noble seriousness and Cistercian spirituality gave way to the joyful mood of the made up world constituting an idealised vision of surprising-nature – wild and exotic. The new gardens were also an expression of rebellion against the baroque planning associated with the rigid rules of the court culture.

Through the frivolous forms, numerous exotic and funny motifs, such as a menagerie with wooden animals, the garden gave the impression of a peculiar oddity (Rozmarynowska 167).

Terrible Chinese and Indian gods grinned at the passers-by from rose gazebos. Threatening wooden bears, painted in natural colours, climbed the trunks of old trees. Monkeys, squirrels and parrots, from the same workshop, sat on the branches. One could even find lions and tigers as if the intention was to present Raff's¹² Natural History in its entirety but in bigger dimensions – reported Johanna Schopenhauer. (Schopenhauer 249)

The idea of a new type of garden was in line with the prevailing imaginations about the gardens of China and the Chinese provenance of the new picturesque style spread in England (Malawski, *Polskie ogrody* 330-344).

This rich architectural program turned out to be extremely expensive, which left the abbot in debt. The empty abbey cash desk resulted in the lack of further work and ongoing repairs, also after the death of Prince Karl. This state of affairs was confirmed by the accounts of visitors to the garden, who reported visible negligence.

Nevertheless, the new abbot – Prince Joseph managed to buy Pachołek Hill from the Free City of Gdansk, embellished it and placed a cross on its top¹³ (Iwicki 238-239; Rozmarynowska 168).

In this way, the hill was incorporated into the ideological and spatial layout of the garden, allowing it to reflect best the values of the place where the Cistercian abbey was located for a reason. However, the eighteenth-century creator had completely different motives than those followed by the founders of the monastery six centuries earlier, looking for shelter in the greenery and a natural “buffer” separating life inside the monastery walls from the influences of a secular culture.

Two obelisks accentuated the entrance to the path leading up the hill. The obelisk on the left was dedicated to the gods of the seas and bore the inscription *Les dieux des mers*. The obelisk on the right was dedicated to the forest gods and was labeled the inscription *Aux dieux des bois*. At this point, the path has forked, giving the option to choose the route. The path on the left led to the top of the hill, on which there was a small pavilion with stairs leading to the rooftop from which a beautiful view of the sea was unfolding. The path on the right led through a magnificent lush forest (Lipowicz 124-125).

After the death of Prince Joseph, the garden became the property of the King of Prussia and was used as quarters for generals from Gdansk military units. The next inhabitant of the Abbots' Palace was the niece of Prince Joseph, Maria von

¹² Georg Christian Raff (1748-1788) was a German writer and teacher, author of natural history textbooks for children.

¹³ On 21 May 1787 Prince Bishop Karl in the company of Queen Louise and King Frederick William III walked up the neighbouring view hill. After this event the hill received the name of the Queen, and her statue unveiled in 1889 by a division of the Military Association of Sopot stood on the hill until 1945. In 1977, the bust of Polish King Sigismund II Vasa was placed on the pedestal of the Louise's statue in commemoration of the Polish victory at sea over the Swedish Armada on 28 November 1627.

Hohenzollern-Hechingen. On her recommendation, the windows were installed in the palace's open gallery (*Oliwskie szept* 4).

The garden pavilions, just like the monastery itself, were devastated during the Napoleonic Wars, which was noted by the Dutch merchant Willem de Clercq (Lipowicz 127), who stayed in Oliwa in 1816. In 1807, the French organised a field hospital in the monastery (Eysymontt 34).

Both the baroque (rococo) garden of Rybiński and the English-Chinese creation of the Hohenzollerns were gradually degraded and transformed in accordance with the prevailing fashion. In the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century the garden received a form of more naturalistic, dendrological park. Saltzmann died in 1831, and the gardener Johann Georg Schondorf (1810-1884) was appointed to his position. Schöndorff probably removed the demerged architectural equipment. He also introduced many exotic trees and shrubs to the park. The result of this gardener's activities were yew trees (*Taxus baccata* L.) planted on the parterre behind the palace, formed into spheres and cones, referring to the former baroque decor of that part of the garden (ill. 14). However, all water systems, as well as clipped hedges and bowers have been preserved.

In 1881, Julius Gottlieb Radike (1829-1898) from Gdansk became a gardener in Oliwa. Since 1899, Erich Wocke (1887-1941), a native of Bavaria, looked after the garden for another 30 years. He arranged a famous alpine garden with 570 alpine species in the park. It was the most essential work of him who kept it out of his pocket after retirement (Eysymontt 34-36; Lipowicz 127; Rozmarynowska 169).



Ill. 14. Abbots' Palace surrounded by Baroque *berceaux*;
photo by Małgorzata Milecka, 2016

Despite the presence of elements that can be considered rococo, the garden of Rybiński still presented a baroque concept of planning. In Oliwa, Rococo, as a style in garden art, was basically limited to the decoration of the garden parterre, which visually complements and sets the façade of the palace. The smaller scale of individual elements of the garden and the desire to saturate the available space with various attractions were not only an effect of lack of space but also a rococo tendency.

Although it is believed that the Rococo style was essentially not a continuation of the Baroque, but took an opposite position, and it was rather an expression of rebellion against the binding doctrine in art (Tomkiewicz 5; Białostocki 13); most often, both styles coexisted naturally, combining in different proportions. This fact often hampers the unequivocal classification of works of art as baroque or rococo. Often we are dealing with baroque architecture or art in which there are only some glimpses of Rococo – limited to (proportions, the way the planes are worked out, articulation of divisions, ornamentation, etc.). Likewise, the new Rococo motifs quite subtly permeated the garden art, which retained many of the formal elements of the Baroque. Rococo gardens in Poland often did not reach the same completed form and ideological context as they did in France, which country is considered to be the homeland of the Rococo (Tomkiewicz 6). It seems that Rococo as a leading style, rarely appeared in the gardens of church dignitaries who followed the traditional patterns outlined by the royal court and the 'official' art of the Holy See. While Rococo was considered the private art of the nobility and the rich bourgeoisie associated with the centres of large cities (Lewicka-Morawska, Mrozek 298). These models were primarily generated by Paris, from where they were sent directly or via Dresden to Warsaw, from where they spread to the largest Polish cities and magnate courts. The Rococo manner was restrained in the abbot's gardens, which were parts of the monastery complexes.

In this case, the focus was on the more appropriate, and at the same time well-rooted and still up-to-date baroque solutions. Rococo innovations were rather an expression of modernity than a rebellion against forms considered traditional ones. In Oliwa rococo motifs actually became the binder between the old garden and its new part of *the Anglo-Chinoise* costume.

Both concepts of the garden, i.e. the Rococo and the English-Chinese garden, arose from the same new way of perceiving nature – primitive, disordered and exotic one to discover – which attempts were made in the gardens of China. At the end of the 17th century in England, Sir William Temple noticed the possibility of irregularity affording an alternative basis for design, as he wrote in his essay *Upon the Garden of Epicurus* (1692):

I have seen in some places, but heard more of it from others, who have lived much among the Chinese; a people, whose way of thinking seems to lie as wide of ours in Europe, as their country does. Among us, the beauty of building and planting is placed chiefly in some certain proportions, symmetries, or uniformities; our walks and our trees ranged so, as to answer one another, and at exact distances. The Chinese scorn this way of planting, and say a boy that can tell an hundred, may plant walks of trees in straight lines, and over against one another, and to what length and extent he pleases. But their greatest reach of imagination, is employed in contriving figures, where the beauty shall be great, and strike the eye, but without any order or disposition of parts, that shall be commonly or easily observed. (Temple 54)

The idealised vision of China and its gardens became a source of inspiration from which Rococo art drew abundantly – both in terms of ornamentation and ideas.

However, the concept of the abbot's garden in Oliwa remained baroque and in that context, the French concept of an English-Chinese garden could seem like a radical break with the doctrine of formal arrangement.

The Medieval notion of beauty by Saint Bernard (the author of the Rule applied by the Cistercians) and his first followers is represented in the statement that “inner beauty is greater than any external ornaments” (Eco 19) at the end of the 18th century seemed to be no more actual. The essence of the original idea guiding the “white monks”, a monastery – a Cistercian one in particular – was to be a place of man's return to the state it was on the day of his creation by God. In accordance with this interpretation, Cistercians believed that unnecessary things are not and will never be a part of the state of a man seeking “goodness, beauty and truth”, and that there should be no place for them, let alone permission to use them, in a Cistercian abbey. In this context, it is interesting to evaluate Cistercian décor seven hundred years after the foundation of the monastery, which implemented the ideas of Saint Bernard.

The baroque garden of Rybiński continued the need to organise and tame the nature, which increased since the Middle Ages. Such an attitude towards nature was emphasised in the sermons by St. Bernard, who wrote:

From the beginning, my brethren, God showed that He is pleasing to order and that nothing that was not order has never been accepted by Him, who is the true essence of order. (Hufgard 5)

Whilst in accordance with contemporary fashion, Saltzmann tried to imitate by nature employing the popular concept of irregular Chinese gardens. In the case of the new abbot's garden, the return to nature and the admiration for the beautiful landscape was associated with the latest cosmopolitan fashion associated by some commentators with libertine (Łojek 9-11) attitudes rather than monastic spirituality.

The secular nature of the new garden was emphasised not only by the introduction of new elements derived from the culture of the Far East or pagan deities but also by changing the names of those already existing. (for example, the alley called by the Cistercians “The Road to Eternity” was renamed “The Prince’s View”).

The abbot himself avoided religious duties.

Although he travelled willingly to avoid the tiring celebrations of Corpus Christi procession, and the three sermons that he was obliged to deliver were postponed year after year until his own clock stroke the final hour (he died in 1803). (Schopenhauer 248)

Archival sources, including cartographic materials, show to what extent the principles of Cistercian monastery space organisation in early modern period diverged from its ideological and functional origins. However, new Prussian abbots saved the baroque-rococo part of the garden. The new adjacent *Anglo-Chinois* style part was an example of an ideological and compositional revolution. The spatial arrangement introduced by the last two commendatory Prussian abbots was as much surprising as it was uncommon in monastery gardens¹⁴.

We can find several pieces of written evidence of Oliwa Park in the 19th century. However, a detailed report by the mother of famous philosopher – Johanna Schopenhauer on her reception of the park composition and the figure of its last host is the most interesting and vivid (Schopenhauer 246-250) (Appendix 1).

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¹⁴ Chinese motifs appeared also in the residence of primate Michał Poniatowski in Jałbonna (Poland). In 1782 the primate built there a Chinese gazebo (Malawski, *Polskie ogrody* 501-502).

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APPENDIX 1

JOHANNA SCHOPENHAUER, *JUGENDLEBEN UND WANDERBILDER*
 (GDAŃSKIE WSPOMNIENIA MŁODOŚCI, PP. 247-250)
 TRANSLATED FROM POLISH BY BARBARA MICIUŁA

In the meantime, our neighbourhood has gained a lot in the person of the successor to the recently deceased abbot [Jacek Rybiński, who died in 1782]. To replace this pious old man, who was born as a Pole and knew only the speech of his native country [!], who lived in monastic seclusion and did not participate in the events of the world, the King of Prussia appointed for the post-Prince Bishop of Warmia of the House of Hohenzollern [Karl von Hohenzollern-Hechingen]. A former military officer, if I am not mistaken, a colonel in the French service, at the approaching evening of his life, changed his knightly sword for a bishop's crosier and chose to stay in Oliwa over the cleric glow of being a bishop, to enjoy the last rays of his life coming to its end. Notwithstanding his high ecclesiastical dignity as Prince Bishop, he remained, in the purest sense of the word, a satisfied man of the world maintaining sophisticated social customs. Although he travelled willingly to avoid the tiring celebrations of the Corpus Christi procession, and the three sermons that he was obliged to deliver were postponed year after year until his own clock struck the final hour [he died in 1803], but he was at the same time benevolent, considerate and caring for the poor and for his subjects and, because of this, generally respected and liked. Cheerful and undemanding by nature, he was always a welcome guest for his neighbours in Oliwa. Approaching him were the young and the old; once in the distance, they saw his priestly wig, a long purple coat and purple stockings. As a bishop, he was exempted from wearing a monk's frock. [...] His great love for horticulture, especially for improving fruit tree growth, led to a cordial relationship between him and my husband. And I had great pleasure because of the wonderful flowers, particularly the huge carnations which he used to grow and which I have never again seen so beautiful. The design and ornamentation of his garden were indeed rather in

a Baroque style, and today might seem silly, but in fact, they represented maybe just a little bit overloaded yet quite widespread style of the time in Germany, referred to as the English garden. Wherever there was a suitable place, poetic inscriptions were placed to immediately instruct the passers-by what they should feel. In his good nature, the bishop willingly allowed visitors to enter his garden and was glad when he saw that it was so frequently attended on Sundays and public holidays. On such days it was crowded with visitors who were so concentrated on reading the inscriptions submitted to them that they forgot to admire the natural wonders that surrounded them. However, entirely different peculiarities entered this formerly French garden, now decorated in the English manner. Terrible Chinese and Indian gods grinned at the passers-by from rose gazebos. Threatening wooden bears, painted in natural colours, climbed the trunks of old trees. Monkeys, squirrels and parrots – all from the same workshop – sat on the branches. One could even find lions and tigers, as if the intention was to present Raff's *Natural History* in its entirety but in bigger dimensions. And yet, the irony in words was not allowed here, but at the same time, it was hard to hide an imperceptible smile. But it gave the owner and inventor of the curiosities so much pure childhood joy, and so much did he constantly labour for the pleasure of people he did not even know that it would be barbaric to destroy this satisfaction of his with harsh criticism. A unique alley of clipped hedges, which had grown to a dizzying height I had not witnessed elsewhere, distinguished this garden from others similar to it. The finest Rococo one could imagine. May now, when the monastery has been abandoned after the death of the last Oliwa monk, a good local spirit blow away the wind and frost from this place and never allow a deadly axe to approach it. Maintaining an ideal ratio of the width to an amazing height of leafy green walls, this alley, running from the garden front of the palace, does not only cross the entire length of the garden but runs further on by a distance of at least one-hour walk reaching the far Baltic Coast, its deep blue waves constituting its end. At least so it would seem to a deceived eye due to an optical illusion which does not disappear until one reaches the true border of the alley in the form of a wide embankment. A significant stretch of the field separating the alley from the opposite pine forest as well as another one, just as long, lying on the other side between the forest and the seaside, escapes the eye completely by skillfully calculating the perspective in such a way so as to make the forest look as if it was the extension of the beech alley, and the Baltic Sea – its final frontier.

SPATIAL AND IDEOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE ABBOTS' GARDEN IN OLIWA IN THE 18TH CENTURY

Summary

Ever since the Medieval era, Cistercian monasteries have been the centres of architecture, horticulture, art and craft. Their abbeys were also distinguished by a rich theological program. Within the larger monastic complexes, the abbot occupied a representative building, surrounded by an ornamental garden. In the 15th century, the Abbot's Palace was erected at the Abbey in Oliwa, which had been founded in 1178. The abbot's seat was repeatedly expanded by successive abbots, including Kasper Geschkau, Dawid Konarski, Jan Grabiński, Aleksander Kęsowski, and Franciszek Zaleski. Józef Jacek Rybiński in particular made some notable achievements, including building a new Rococo palace surrounded by a Baroque garden, which was characterised by a rich program referring to Christian symbolism. After 1772, Cistercian goods and properties were confiscated by Prussia. In 1782, Prince

Karl von Hohenzollern-Hechingen, and then his nephew Prince Joseph, became the new abbots. With the help of the gardener Johann Georg Saltzmann, Prince Karl enlarged the garden with a new English-Chinese section with a rich Oriental program. The article presents the history of the garden, the evolution of its ideological program and layout, the landscape values of the former monastery complex as well as its contemporary resources.

Keywords: Oliwa; Cistercians; monastic garden; abbot's garden; chinoiserie; rococo; baroque

PRZESTRZENNE I IDEOWE PRZEMIANY OGRODU OPACKIEGO W OLIWIE W XVIII WIEKU

Streszczenie

Od średniowiecza klasztory cysterskie stanowiły ośrodki architektury, ogrodnictwa, sztuki i rzemiosła. Ich opactwa wyróżniał także bogaty program teologiczny. W obrębie większych zespołów klasztornych opat zajmował reprezentacyjny budynek otoczony ozdobnym ogrodem. W XV wieku wzniesiono Pałac Opatów w Opactwie oliwskim ufundowanym w 1178 roku. Siedzibę opata rozbudowywali wielokrotnie kolejni opaci, między innymi: Kasper Geschkau, Dawid Konarski, Jan Grabiński, Aleksander Kęsowski, Franciszek Zaleski. Szczególne osiągnięcia w tej dziedzinie miał Józef Rybiński. Zbudował on nowy rokokowy pałac otoczony barokowym ogrodem. Ogród charakteryzował się bogatym programem nawiązującym do symboliki chrześcijańskiej. Po 1772 roku dobra cysterskie zostały skonfiskowane przez Prusy. W 1782 roku nowymi opatami zostali książę Karl von Hohenzollern-Hechingen, a następnie jego bratanek książę Józef. Z pomocą ogrodnika Johanna Georga Saltzmannna książę Karol powiększył ogród o nową angielsko-chińską część o bogatym programie orientalnym. Artykuł prezentuje historię ogrodu, ewolucję jego programu ideowego i układu przestrzennego, wartości krajobrazowe dawnego zespołu oraz jego współczesne zasoby.

Słowa kluczowe: Oliwa; cystersi; ogród klasztorny; ogród opata; chinoiserie; rokoko; barok