

La Barco of the Star Summer Palace in Prague: A Unique Example of Renaissance Landscape Design

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The Star Summer Palace is one of the best-known architectural symbols of Prague.¹ [Fig. 1] The Battle of the White Mountain, an overture to the Thirty Years' War, took place right outside its walls in 1620. It was built in 1556–1557 by the Archduke Ferdinand II of Tyrol (1529–1595), the son of Emperor Ferdinand I, who was the first Habsburg crowned King of Bohemia. At the time the Summer Palace was built, Ferdinand II was Governor of Bohemia (an office he held from 1547 until 1567). He probably chose an original form of hunting lodge in response to the Royal Summer Palace in the gardens of Prague Castle, which had just been completed by his father to serve a representative function, and is regarded as the first architectural example of the Italian Renaissance style north of the Alps. The Archduke's main task as Governor was to act as the official representative of the Habsburgs at Prague Castle, but the Castle was a place where his father, the Emperor, remained the primary authority, so a location near Prague was selected both as a retreat and a place for the Archduke's own artistic patronage. The building was financed by the Archduke himself, without any contribution from the Bohemian Court Chamber.² In contrast to the rectangular ground plan of the Royal Summer Palace, which was encircled by an arcaded loggia and whose principal decoration are reliefs round the exterior of the building, the Star Palace had a unique ground plan in the shape of a six-pointed star, and white stucco decoration in the ground floor interior, which ranks among the finest Renaissance stucco work in Europe. [Fig. 2] Among its other specific features are its surprisingly large size, the decorative use of fortification building elements, and the technically challenging peaked roof, which was destroyed in the Thirty Years' War. Archduke Ferdinand was an intelligent and educated aristocrat, with a deep interest in his family's history and symbolism. He was also an organizer and inventor of flamboyant festivities and performances with complicated mythological content. As an amateur architect he had considerable influence on the appearance of the Summer Palace and the game preserve that surrounded it.³

Yet the Habsburgs already had another game preserve in Prague, the Alter Thiergarten (now Stromovka Park), which had been connected to Prague Castle since the Middle Ages. The small medieval hunting castle on this property had been rebuilt in 1500.⁴ So why was a second hunting palace needed in the countryside to the west

1 Two modern monographs exist about the Star / Stern / Hvězda Summer Palace: Ivan Muchka – Ivan Purš – Sylva Dobalová – Jaroslava Hausenblasová, *Hvězda. Arcivévoda Ferdinand Tyrolský a jeho letohrádek v evropském kontextu*, Prague 2014, with English summary on pp. 483–488. – Jan Bažant – Nina Bažantová, *Vila Hvězda v Praze. Mistrovské dílo severské renesance*, Prague 2013 (English version: Jan Bažant, *Villa Star in Prague. The Northern Renaissance Masterpiece. Advanced Guide to Czech Monuments*, Kindle Edition 2012).

2 For new findings on the financing of the Summer Palace and arguments about its private function, see Jaroslava Hausenblasová, *Stavební vývoj letohrádku Hvězda – písemné prameny a jejich interpretace*, in: Muchka – Purš – Dobalová – Hausenblasová (see note 1), pp. 54–56. Hausenblasová stresses, for example, that the Emperor did not show any interest in the Summer Palace, unlike the buildings in Prague Castle, which he carefully monitored. In the slightly older view of Jan Bažant, on the contrary, the Star Summer Palace was planned as a 'state villa', representing the newly acquired imperial status of Ferdinand I. See Bažant – Bažantová 2013 (see note 1), p. 13.

3 Ivan Muchka – Sylva Dobalová, *Ferdinand – vévoda architekt?*, in: Muchka – Purš – Dobalová – Hausenblasová (see note 1), pp. 111–113. – Madelon Simons, *Erzherzog Ferdinand II. als Statthalter von Böhmen, sein Mäzenatentum und sein künstlerischer Dilettantismus*, *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 4/5, 2002/03 (2004), pp. 120–135. – Madelon Simons, "Das Werk erdacht und cirkuliert". The Position of Architects at the Court of King Ferdinand I of Bohemia and His Son, Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, in: Marieke van den Doel (ed.), *The Learned Eye. Regarding Art, Theory and the Artist's Reputation. Essays for Ernst van de Wetering*, Amsterdam 2005, pp. 140–149. – Wolfgang Lippmann, *Der Fürst als Architekt*, *Georges-Bloch-Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Zürich*, 8, 2001 (2003), pp. 110–135, esp. 117–119, 124–125. – David Schönherr, *Erzherzog Ferdinand von Tirol als Architekt*, *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* 1, 1876, pp. 28–44.

4 Tomáš Durdík – Petr Chotěbor, *Ke středověké stavební podobě a vývoji hradu v Královské oboře v Ovenci u Prahy*, *Zprávy památkové péče* 59, 1999, pp. 344–350; on the Alter Thiergarten see most recently Sylva Dobalová, *Zahrady Rudolfa II. Jejich vznik a vývoj*, Prague 2009, pp. 172–184.

of the castle? The answer is, that the Archduke needed his private space and that it offered an opportunity for creating an artificially organized garden complex, in line with the most progressive European courts of the day. This was to be an ideal garden as well as a site for the breeding and hunting of stags.

The Star Summer Palace is situated within a dense forest and hidden behind a high wall. [Fig. 3] However, I would like to emphasize that some features of this forest were developed as part of the complex and designed at the same time as the Star Summer Palace. As a game preserve or hunting park, the woods functioned as an organic whole in tandem with the palace. Although modern scholars have largely overlooked this aspect of the complex, Renaissance travellers like Fynes Moryson observed in 1591 that the Star Summer Palace and a hunting ground derived its name not because of the ground plan of the palace and the golden star on its roof, but from the avenues in the forest, which were also arranged in the shape of a star:

‘The Emperour hath two inclosures walled about, which they call Gardaines, one of which is called Stella, because the trees are planted in the figure of starres, and a little faire house therein is likewise built, with six corners in forme of a starre’.⁵

However, scholars have largely dismissed this star-shaped landscape element in the Star Summer Palace’s park as a Baroque addition, because it was only known from the 1723 plan.⁶ [Fig. 4] However, the eighteenth-century plan is the earliest plan that we possess, but not the earliest record of the palace and its grounds. Another contemporary representation of the game preserve is a detail from an engraving in the book *Fama Austriaca* (Cologne 1627), showing the Battle of the White Mountain.⁷ [Fig. 5] The way the game preserve is depicted is somewhat curious; it shows the trees planted in the shape of a star. This formation can be seen as a literal interpretation of the written text; indeed, the words of Fynes Moryson can give a similar impression, as he does not mention that the star was supposed to be formed by avenues.

The Star Summer Palace was constructed over a short period of time, only a year and a half. The main part of the land on which the Summer Palace stood, a well-managed oak forest, which was rare in the vicinity of Prague, had been purchased by Ferdinand I in the mid-1530s. After 1548, thanks to Archduke Ferdinand several other adjoining plots of land were added to the site; these were located lower down, near the village of Liboc, and a fishpond was established there. All of this territory was contiguous and joined into a single whole. During this time, the wall surrounding the site was plastered, and a second lower, thinner wall around the building and the natural slope behind the palace was built, probably for an ornamental (terraced) garden. 11,000 trees were removed from the vicinity of the Summer Palace.⁸

Three gates featuring portals taken from Serlio’s models were also built.⁹ The gate from the side of the Benedictine monastery in Břevnov marked the main longitudinal axis of the palace site. The secondary axis connected the Renaissance house of the groundskeeper with the Summer Palace, and the third gate from the direction of the White Mountain completed the basic composition of the area. Five other paths formed the star-shaped design that interests us now.

On the Renaissance plan drawn in 1555 by the unknown Italian architect of the villa,¹⁰ we see the title ‘*La casa dil barco*’. [Fig. 6] *Barco* is the term that eventually became the English word ‘park’, and it refers to a hunting

5 *An Itinerary Containing His Ten Yeeres Travell Through the Twelve Dominions of Germany, Bohmerland, Sweitzerland, Netherland, Denmarke, Poland, Italy, Turkey, France, England, Scotland & Ireland*, written by Fynes Moryson, Volume 1, Glasgow 1907, p. 30. Philip Sidney visited the Star Summer Palace even before Moryson (in 1575 and 1577), and used it as a model for the star-shaped lodge of Basilius in *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* (*New Arcadia*); see Alexander Samson, *Locus Amoenus. Garden and Horticulture in Renaissance*, Oxford 2012, p. 11. – Michael Leslie, Spenser, Sidney, and the Renaissance Garden, *English Literary Renaissance* 22, 1992, pp. 3–36 (esp. p. 8). – Victor Skretkovicz, Symbolic Architecture in Sidney's New Arcadia, *Res*, N. S. 33, 1982, pp. 175–180. I am grateful to Lubomír Konečný for drawing my attention to this chapter in the life of the Star.

6 Franz A. L. Klosse, Plan of the Castle Water Supply, 1723, detail with the Star game preserve, Prague Castle Archive, SPS, location no. 247/2, 1723.

7 Kaspar Ens, *Fama Austriaca Das ist Eigentliche Verzeichnus denckwürdiger Geschichten [...]*, Köln am Rhein 1627, p. 463; see Markéta Lazarová – Jiří Lukas, *Praha. Obraz města v 16. a 17. století. Soupis grafických pohledů I. / Prague. Picture of the town in the 16th and 17th centuries. List of views on graphic art pieces, Vol. I / Prag. Stadtbild im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert. Verzeichnis graphischer Ansichten*, Vol. I, Prague, cat. no. 126; the prints are mentioned by one of the very first publications about the Star: Jacob von Falke, *Schloß Stern*, Vienna 1879.

8 Jan Morávek, Ke vzniku Hvězdy, *Umění II*, 1954, no. 3, pp. 199–211 (204).

9 For a discussion on the date the gates were built and the reconstruction of the gate on the Břevnov side in 1723 (the date on Klosse’s plan of the Star) see: Muchka – Purš – Dabalová – Hausenblasová (see note 1), pp. 429–431.

10 ÖNB Wien, location no. Cod. min. 108; the plans were first published by Morávek (note 8).

park, but often in the sixteenth century simply a park for the enjoyment of nature. It implied primarily ‘wooded land, with more trees than vines or vegetables, and natural terrain, in some cases independent of any residence’.¹¹ The Star Palace’s *barco* contained the hunting ground with its avenues and the summer palace. Near the palace there was a *galleria* (a ball game house, or more likely, a gymnasium), an aviary, fish ponds and probably a terraced garden, which unfortunately remained unfinished. The grounds immediately surrounding the Summer Palace were separated from the game preserve by a separate wall. [Fig. 7] Archduke Ferdinand also considered commissioning a fountain by Jacopo Strada and Wenzel Jamnitzer to be placed below the palace in the upper part of a terraced garden,¹² near the *galleria* building. [Fig. 8]

In fact, the palace was built in one of two focal points of an oval-shaped walled park, on the crest of a steep slope. Certainly, an easier building site could have been found, but this quality of contrasting landscapes – the flat wood of the game preserve and a steep garden [Fig. 9], cleared out of the overgrown forest and exposed to the afternoon sunlight – was a pleasing component to the Renaissance garden. From the windows of the Star Summer Palace visitors could have a panoramic view of the countryside, where the architectonic arrangement of alleys, walls and garden contrasted with the nature of trees, the surprise of a steep slope and the landscape outside the park boundaries. The composition of the park was in keeping with contemporary ideas for contrasting man-made order with natural wilderness, an approach extolled by Renaissance humanists such as Jacopo Bonfadio in his famous letter dated 1541 describing the gardens on the shores of Lake Garda. The topos of an Arcadian landscape is of course older, even if we take the first expression of it to be Jacopo Sannazaro’s romance *Arcadia*, first published in Naples in 1503.

Other examples of a *barco* with a terraced architectural garden can be found in Italy; the Villa Medici in Caprarola features a casino in the upper garden that is separated by a wooded area from the main house. At the Villa Lante in Bagnaia, the *barco* was intersected by paths that connected fountains, orchards, a maze, and other features without forming a regular geometric scheme, with no axis or hierarchy. Shortly afterwards, a similar arrangement appeared in the criss-crossing pathways of the Parco Nuovo in Pratolino, even though it was connected to the Parco Vecchio by a central axis. Nevertheless, in all of these Italian gardens, one feature was missing: free ranging animals such as deer, wild boar or hare.

Vavřinec Špan of Španov (1531–1575) was a doctor of medicine and a poet who lived at the court of Archduke Ferdinand, and he celebrated the Star Summer Palace in his Latin verses.¹³ He describes green oaks planted in the shape of a star and forming eight long avenues, with apple and pear trees on either side, that measured ‘fifty paces’ across – approximately thirty-seven metres. These exceptionally broad avenues also appear in the account of Pierre Bergeron, the French diplomat at the court of Rudolf II, who visited the hunting preserve in 1600.¹⁴ Only one of the avenues, the main axis, still exists today; its width is about thirty metres.

I would like to highlight the phenomenon of these avenues. When the Star Palace was constructed, they were on the verge of becoming a standard feature in French and Italian landscape gardens. Yet there is a big difference between the avenues of a *barco*, or wooded park, and stand-alone paths through the countryside. North of the Alps, pathways of the stand-alone kind appeared in France and the Netherlands around 1540, in England after 1600, and in Germany around 1650.¹⁵ Although there are examples from East Central Europe, they are not well known. Among the most famous and frequently cited of these countryside avenues is the one connecting Salzburg

11 An abbreviation of the definition by Claudia Lazzaro, *The Italian Renaissance Garden. From the conventions of Planting, Design, and Ornament to the Grand Gardens of Sixteenth-Century Central Italy*, New Haven – London 1990, pp. 109–110.

12 For more detail on the question of the fountain see: Jaroslava Hausenblasová, *Stavební vývoj letohrádku Hvězda – písemné prameny a jejich interpretace*, in: Muchka – Purš – Dobalová – Hausenblasová (see note 1), pp. 52–65 (60–62).

13 *Ferdinandopyrgum i.e. Descriptio metrica palatii... ab archiduce Ferdinando non procul ab urbe Praga constructi*, written shortly after 1555, ÖNB Vienna, Cod. 9902, fol. 3r–7r. Špan of Španov’s manuscript is mentioned already in Morávek (see note 8), p. 211, note 33; on Špan of Španov see Josef Hejnic – Jan Martinek, *Rukověť humanistického básnictví v Čechách a na Moravě 5*, Prague 1982, vol. 5, pp. 289–296; for a Czech translation of the poem see Vavřinec Špan ze Španova, *Ferdinandova obora Hvězda*, in: *Očima lásky: Verše českých básníků o Praze*, translated by B. Ryba, Prague 1941, pp. 53–59. – *Killy Literaturlexikon. Autoren und Werke des deutschsprachigen Kulturraums*, Vol. 11 Si–Vi, Berlin – Boston 2012, pp. 76–77. See also Skretkovicz (see note 5), pp. 178–179.

14 Eliška Fučíková (ed.), *Tři francouzští kavalíři v rudolfínské Praze. Jacques Esprichard, Pierre Bergeron, Francois de Bassompierre*, Prague 1989, pp. 62, 69, 88.

15 Clemens Alexander Wimmer, *Bäume und Sträucher in historischen Gärten. Gehölzverwendung in Geschichte und Denkmalpflege*, Dresden 2001, pp. 34–35 – Idem, *Alleen - Begriffbestimmung, Entwicklung, Typen, Baumarten*, in: Ingo Lehmann – Michael Rohde (ed.), *Alleen in Deutschland. Bedeutung, Pflege und Entwicklung*, Leipzig 2006, p. 15.

and Hellbrunn, dating from 1613–1615. Another example is the avenue with four rows of trees that Albrecht von Waldstein had made between Jičín and Valdice in the 1630s. In Prague, the first pathway of this type appeared in 1616, during the reign of the Habsburg Emperor Matthias II, and connected Prague castle with a Lusthaus in the Alter Thiergarten; the avenue was lined with lindens and willows. In Vienna, where the Habsburgs had their main residence, at least two Renaissance avenues existed. Both of them were connected with the Prater hunting grounds, whose layout then was quite different from the present-day one, because the course of the Danube has since been altered substantially. One of the avenues was relatively hidden in the Prater and during the reign of Ferdinand I it may have been simply a clearing cut from the trees, which was later planted with a boarder of trees.¹⁶ Part of this pathway is given the name *Langer Gang* on Bonifaz Wohlmut's 1547 plan of Vienna. (Today it is the Hauptallee in Prater.)

The second example was a pathway from Vienna's centre to the Prater lined with not two, but four rows of trees, which was much admired by Vincenzo Scamozzi in the third book of his treatise *L'idea della architettura universale* (1615). It is likely that this avenue survives today as Praterstraße. Maximilian II, elder brother of the Archduke Ferdinand,¹⁷ had it built in 1564. It also connected the imperial *châteaux* of Ebersdorf and Neugebäude.

The grounds of the Prater, the Viennese hunting lodge, are of special interest to this study, particularly the land adjacent to the *Grünes Lusthaus*, which was built under Maximilian II, around the same time as the Star Summer Palace or perhaps one or two years earlier. This small *Lusthaus* and the grotto within it were also built on a central plan; however instead of a star, it took the form of a Greek cross with convex corners.¹⁸

Of particular interest is a small complex close to this summer palace and the pheasantry. An important source for this is a 1557 manuscript about the Prater, dedicated to Maximilian II, *Brevis et dilucida domini dom: Maximiliani inclityi regis Bohemiae et archiducis Austriae [...] Viennae ad Danubii ripas et diatae seu amoenarii ad puteum cervinum et horti, et imprimis veteris quincuncis descriptio*, whose author was the humanist, lawyer, and professor at the University of Vienna Georg Tanner.¹⁹ The manuscript particularly praises the way the trees have been planted using a *quincunx* layout (with spacing in the form of a cross), which according to Tanner was reserved for only the most distinguished owners of private gardens (although it was a common design choice in ancient times, and is still in use today). The manuscript even speaks of a 'royal quincunx' (*Regii quincunx schema*). Tanner states that Emperor Maximilian was so taken with this idea, based on classical texts from antiquity, that he had a separate enclosure (measuring 300 x 87 m) made within the Prater game preserve using the quincunx system.²⁰ [Figs. 10, 11] More than 600 trees of various species were supposed to have been planted in this area, including apple and pear trees as well as various exotic species. The Emperor himself measured out the line along which the trees were to be planted, with the help of a rope from the window of his summer palace. The court architect Bonifaz Wohlmut, who designed a number of buildings for the Habsburgs, especially in Prague, drew up six alternative geometric diagrams and a map of the part of the Prater where the summer palace was, which were included in Tanner's manuscript.²¹ However, the garden was designed by the Viennese humanist Sebastian Huetstocker. According to Tanner, the summer palace contained a dining hall with fountains on the walls as well as a grotto with marble encrustations and stalactites. Finally, everything was decorated with paintings, gold, and silver.

Both summer palaces, in Prague and in Vienna, have an anti-classical, experimental character based on

16 Hilda Lietzmann, *Irdische Paradiese. Beispiele höfischer Gartenkunst der I. Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Munich – Berlin 2007, pp. 61–62. I am grateful to Dr Andreas Kusternig for his comments about Prater during a discussion in the Prague symposium.

17 Maximilian II Habsburg was titular King of Bohemia from 1549, but he was not crowned until 1562.

18 The Prater summer palace was situated close to the later Baroque summer palace designed by Isidoro Canevale, which can still be seen in the Prater today.

19 ÖNB, Cod. 8085; Joseph Chmel, *Die Handschriften der k. k. Hofbibliothek in Wien* 2, Vienna 1841, pp. 276–292. The treatise has been briefly analysed by: Karl Rudolf, *Die Kunstbestrebungen Kaiser Maximilians II. im Spannungsfeld zwischen Madrid und Wien, Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 91, 1995, pp. 165–256 (179–182). – Hilda Lietzmann, *Das Neugebäude in Wien. Sultan Sülleymans Zelt – Kaiser Maximilians II. Lustschloß*, Munich – Berlin 1987, pp. 29–31. – Dirk Jacob Jansen, Taste and Thought: Jacopo Strada and the Development of a Cosmopolitan Court, in Lubomír Konečný and Štěpán Vácha (eds.), *Hans von Aachen in Context: Proceedings of the International Conference, Prague 22–25 September 2010*, Prague 2012, pp. 171–178 (173–174). On Tanner see especially Franz Gall, *Georg Tanner, ein Waldviertler Gelehrter des 16. Jahrhunderts*, in: *Festschrift Franz Loidl zum 65. Geburtstag*, 2, Vienna 1970, pp. 118–131. – J. Ansbach, *Geschichte der Universität Wien und ihre Gelehrten von 1520 bis 1566*, Vol. 3, Vienna 1888, pp. 279–289 (286–287).

20 The dimensions were deduced by Karl Rudolf (see note 19), p. 179.

21 In the early 1560s Wohlmut used the quincunx in designs for the garden terraces below the Belvedere Summer Palace; see most recently Sylva Dobalová, *Erzherzog Ferdinand II. von Habsburg, das Lusthaus Belvedere und die Fischbehälter im Königlichen Garten der Prager Burg, Die Gartenkunst* 20: 2, 2008, pp. 11–18 (= The House of Habsburg and Garden Art, ICOMOS – IFFLA 25–29. 4. 2007, Vienna).

a central ground plan. In both cases the person who had the palace built was not content with the state of the surrounding forest, and attempted to organise nature and to ‘improve’ it, so that it was artistically (geometrically) formed. Dirk Jansen noticed that it is possible to draw a quincunx within the ground plan of summer palace in Vienna;²² to which it may be added that in the Star complex, too, the building is characterised by the shape of a star, just like the park itself.

What was the origin of the star-shaped pathways in the Star game preserve? Perhaps we can allow ourselves to speculate that it is not such a big step from the quincunx formation to that of a star, or even, as Špan put it, of a ‘hexagon of green oaks, divided up by eight pathways’. In his treatise Georg Tanner also comments briefly on the star and cross formations. According to him they are grounded in numerology. The cross, or X, is the number 10 in Latin; divided by 2 it becomes 5, the symbol of the quincunx.²³ A joining of two crosses forms a star. The star in fact multiplies the quincunx. [Fig. 12] According to Tanner, this formation of a star comes from Pliny the Younger’s *Historia Naturalis*.²⁴

Vincenzo Scamozzi also reflects along similar lines in the third book of his treatise *L’idea della architettura universale*, which we have mentioned earlier. In chapter twenty-three, he discusses gardens and orchards. Using references to gardens in texts from antiquity he reconstructs an unnamed orange grove which had the trees planted in the quincunx formation. Scamozzi praises the excellent geometrical ground plan of this orchard, that of a pentagon. He also states that the usual meaning of the word quincunx refers to a simple arrangement into the form of the number five on a die. In general, several ways of spacing trees are known, including arrangements similar to a star or a diamond. Scamozzi points out that an orchard may have a ground plan that is triangular, quadrangular, pentagonal, hexagonal, septagonal, or octagonal. He goes on to evaluate these formations from an aesthetic point of view, and as part of this assessment Scamozzi comments directly on the Star park in Prague, in a passage which has gone unnoticed by previous studies: ‘For greater beauty it is possible to establish the number of pathways and different views, not only in the manner of the radial rays used in the Star, His Grace’s beautiful site near Prague [*non solo la modo di raggi, come la Stellata luogo delizioso di sua maesta vicino a’ Praga*] but also by parallel lines along its sides. Such a feature can be very useful and pleasant to see for visitors’.²⁵ Scamozzi had visited Prague in 1599/1600.

However, the star plan of avenues in the wood may also have had a practical motive; as animals were being chased during a hunt, observers were posted to spot those that ran across the radial paths of the wood. These observers then signalled to the hunters where the game was. We do not know for certain precisely when this practice began; it may have been at the French court of King Francis I, who differentiated between various types of hunts, enriching them with elaborate court ceremonial. Hunting was also very popular with the Habsburgs; indeed, it could be said that Habsburg identity was built on certain types of hunt. In this, Archduke Ferdinand followed the example of his grandfather, Maximilian I, a prolific hunter. Red deer, roe deer, wild boars, and pheasants were all bred in the Star game preserve, as well as wild geese and ducks. The Star hunting grounds also saw hawking displays. Later Rudolf II used cheetahs in his hunts there. Despite these many programs and events, the area of the Star game preserve is quite small, only 84.15 hectares.

It is also likely that there was an open space between the star-shaped pathways between the Star game preserve and the Summer Palace itself, so that the forest did not stretch right to the gate of the low wall encircling the Summer Palace. Hawking demonstrations, which Archduke Ferdinand particularly enjoyed, occurred in meadows. The Archduke may have also wanted to observe animals in the paths or near the building from the summer palace’s windows. In a famous treatise on gardening and agriculture from the early fourteenth century, Pietro de Crescenzi wrote:

‘The garden of a king and other illustrious lords should contain a palace on the southern part, where they can escape from heavy thoughts and renew their spirit. An enclosure for animals like hare, stag, roebuck etc. should be built on the other side, also with fishponds... In the garden there should be rows of trees spaced far apart from the palace to the distant grove, so that the animals placed in the garden may be seen easily from the palace.’

22 Jansen (see note 19), p. 174.

23 The quincunx is the main theme of Thomas Brown’s treatise *Garden of Cyrus* (1658).

24 ÖNB, Cod. 8085, Fol. 36.

25 Vincenzo Scamozzi, *L’idea della architettura universale*, Venice 1615, p. 327 (Parte Prima, Libro Terzo, cap. 23).

Complexes consisting of a hunting pavilion and game preserve were common in north-western Europe. Among the most famous complexes of this type in France was the Château de Madrid in the Bois de Boulogne near Paris.²⁶ The largest and most splendid example was Chambord with its still extant forest (established 1519).²⁷ Other examples from the time of Francis I include La Muette de Saint-Germain (near Saint-Germain-en-Laye) and Challuau, both from the 1540s. All of these castles are included in Jacques Androuet Du Cerceau's *Les plus excellens Bastiments de France* (1576–79). Nevertheless, although Du Cerceau frequently depicted buildings surrounded by grounds, he did not document any star pathways similar to those in Prague. We do, however, see the same irregular arrangement of pathways as was common in Italian gardens, and in some cases, straight avenues continuing into the countryside.

Of great importance in shaping the views of the Habsburgs on this type of building was Mary of Hungary's hunting pavilion at Mariemont, built 1546–1549, surrounded by an artificial park, which was established on land that had been farms and fields and was then stocked with deer and boar brought from the hunting reserve of Soignes near Brussels.²⁸ [Fig. 13] Archduke Ferdinand stayed at his aunt's court just before this hunting enclave was laid out (from October 1544 to April 1545, and again in the winter of 1546). In Krista De Jonge's view, the long avenues defining the landscape around Mariemont were adopted by Philip II in the royal estate of Aranjuez in Spain.²⁹ [Fig. 14] The countryside surrounding the palace in Aranjuez was landscaped in 1553–1598. A star-shaped formation of twelve pathways (*Las Doze Calles*) was gradually laid out to the north of the palace after 1572; its purpose was primarily aesthetic.³⁰ However, the size of the multi-functional complex surrounding the imperial residence in Aranjuez was enormous in comparison with the Prague site. It was the largest landscaping project in the early modern period, and it also included agricultural land. At this time, the Star game preserve was still a small, walled enclave.

In the mid-sixteenth century, the Star game preserve in Prague was not the simple, functional area that it is today. Rather, it served as a hunting preserve while simultaneously conforming to the aesthetic, geometric, and numerological demands of a planned royal garden. Rather than being a later phenomenon as some scholars have assumed, the star as a landscape element had already appeared in the Renaissance. Organizing 'wild' nature in this fashion was considered the privilege and prerogative of a patrons like Archduke Ferdinand. Not content merely to delegate, archival sources indicate that Ferdinand played an active role in the design of the Summer Palace, even personally measuring its parameters on the site, but that is another chapter of the Star Villa's story. Establishing order in an otherwise wild landscape was, in any case, one of the primary purposes of designing the park and summer palace. In the realization of the Star Summer Palace and its landscape, a careful balance was struck between the natural and the artificial, and Archduke Ferdinand played multiple roles as creator, organizer, and consumer.

The star-shaped avenues of the Star Summer Palace and game preserve were probably one of the first European examples or possibly the very first example of this element, which became a feature of Andre Le Nôtre's work some hundred years later. The commonly-held view that the star principle was first applied in the Baroque period and expanded after Le Nôtre's use of it at Versailles³¹ is not supported by the previous existence of the Prague Star Summer Palace and park.

26 Monique Chatenet, *Le château de Madrid au bois de Boulogne*, Paris 2000.

27 Monique Chatenet, *Chambord*, Paris 2001.

28 Krista De Jonge, Les jardins de Jacques Du Broeucq et de Jacques Hollebecque à Binche, Mariemont et Boussu, in: Carmen Añón (ed.), *Felipe II. El Rey íntimo. Jardín y Naturaleza en el siglo XVI*, Madrid 1998, pp. 191-220. – Krista De Jonge, Mariemont, "Château de chasse" de Marie de Hongrie, *Revue de l'Art* 149, 2005, pp. 45-57. – Krista De Jonge, Maulnes et le développement de l'architecture en Europe du Nord au milieu du 16ème siècle. Quelques remarques, in: J. Pieper (ed.), *Das Château de Maulnes und der Manierismus in Frankreich. Beiträge des Symposions am Lehrstuhl für Baugeschichte und Denkmalpflege der RWTH Aachen 3.-5. Mai 2001* (Aachener Bibliothek, 5), Munich – Berlin 2006, pp. 143-155. – Krista De Jonge, Le parc de Mariemont. Chasse et architecture à la cour de Marie de Hongrie, in: Claude d'Anthenaise – Monique Chatenet (eds.), *Chasses princières dans l'Europe de la Renaissance, Actes du colloque de Chambord (1er et 2 octobre 2004)*, Paris 2006, pp. 269-286.

29 De Jonge, Le parc de Mariemont (see note 28), p. 286.

30 Catherine Wilkinson Zerner, European Convergences: Philip II and the Landscape of Aranjuez, in: Jean Guillaume (ed.), *Architecture, Jardin, Paysage. L'environnement du château et de la villa aux XV^e et XVI^e siècles*, Paris 1999, pp. 243–258.

31 For this development, depending also on the use of cartographic instruments, see for example Thiery Mariage, *The Word of Andre le Nôtre*, Philadelphia 1999.



1. The Star Summer Palace, 2013.

Photo: I. P. Muchka



2. The game preserve, with the Star Summer Palace.

Photo: <http://foto.mapy.cz>



3. A. Brocco, Aeneas Carrying Anchises from Burning Troy, the central scene in the main hall of the Star Summer Palace, 1556–1560.

Photo: Vlado Bohdan, Institute of Art History, ASCR, v.v.i

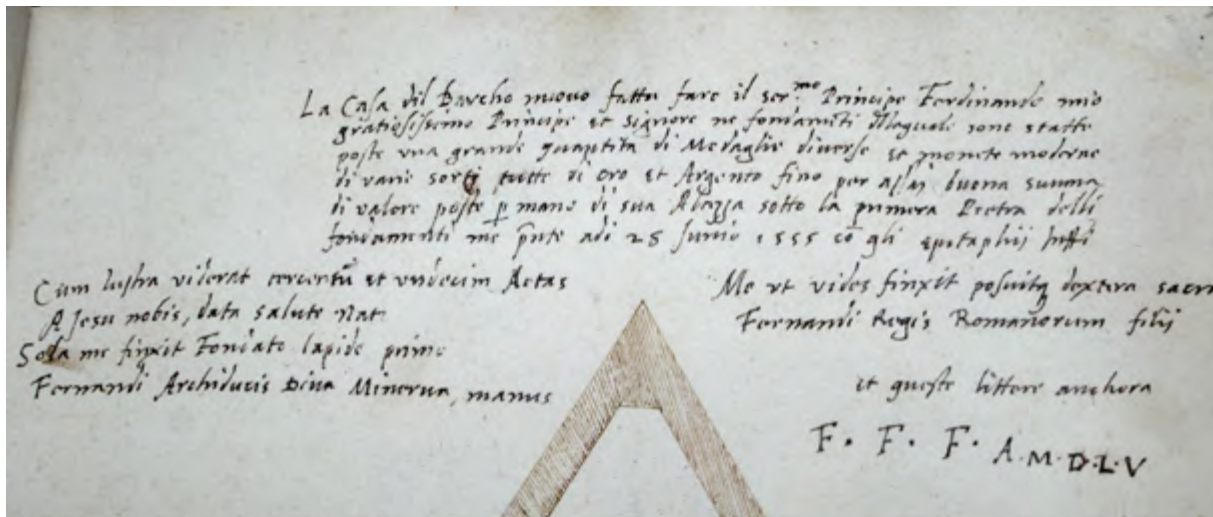


4. Franz A. L. Klose, The Star game preserve, detail from a Plan of the Castle Water Supply, 1723, Prague Castle Archive, Collection of Plans

From: S. Dobalová, Zahrady Rudolfa II. Jejich vznik a vývoj, Prague 2009



5. The Star Summer Palace and part of the game preserve, detail, from: Kaspar Ens, *Fama Austriaca* [...], Cologne 1627.



6. Plan of the Star ground floor, a detail, ÖNB Vienna, 1555.

Photo: Institute of Art History, ASCR, v.v.i.



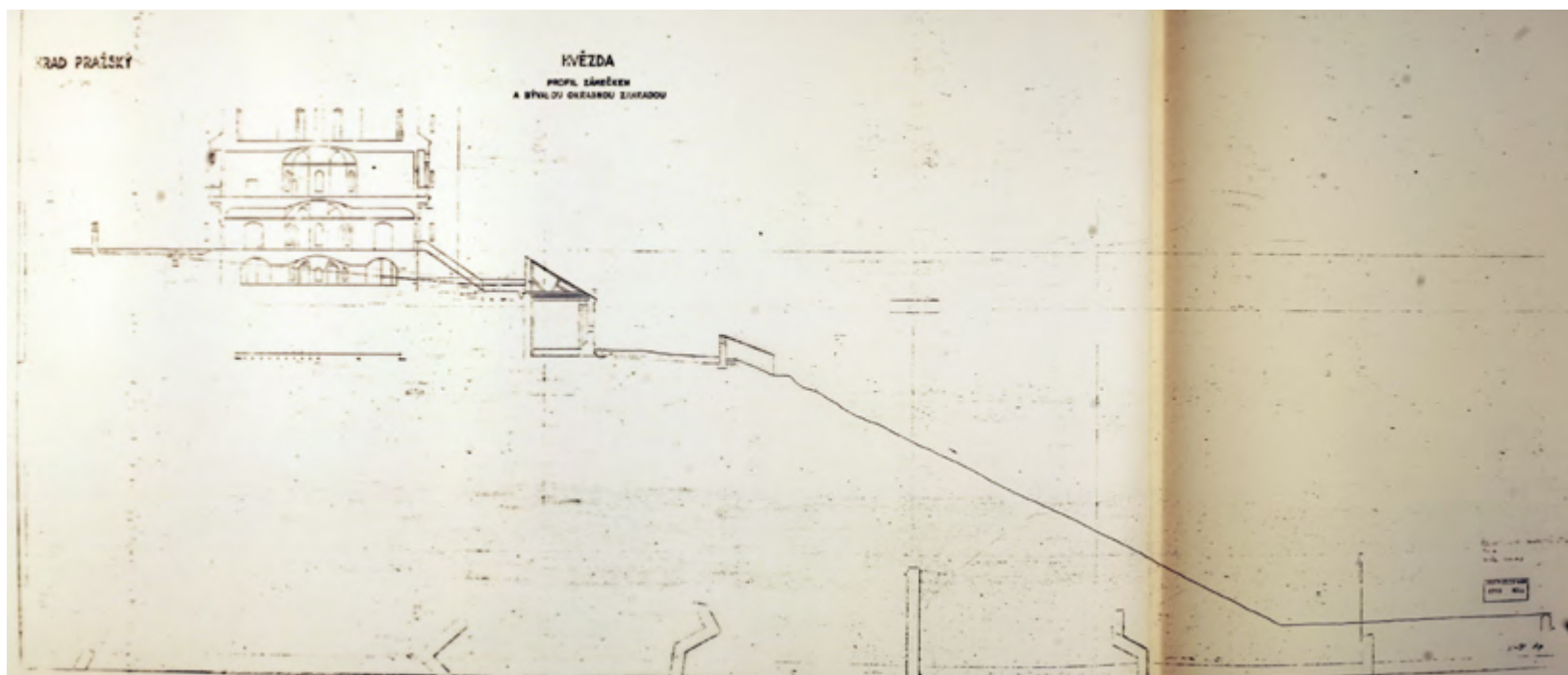
7. Model of the Star Summer Palace, exhibited in the palace.

Photo: I. P. Muchka



8. *Galleria* or ball game house under the Star Summer Palace.

Photo: S. Dobalová



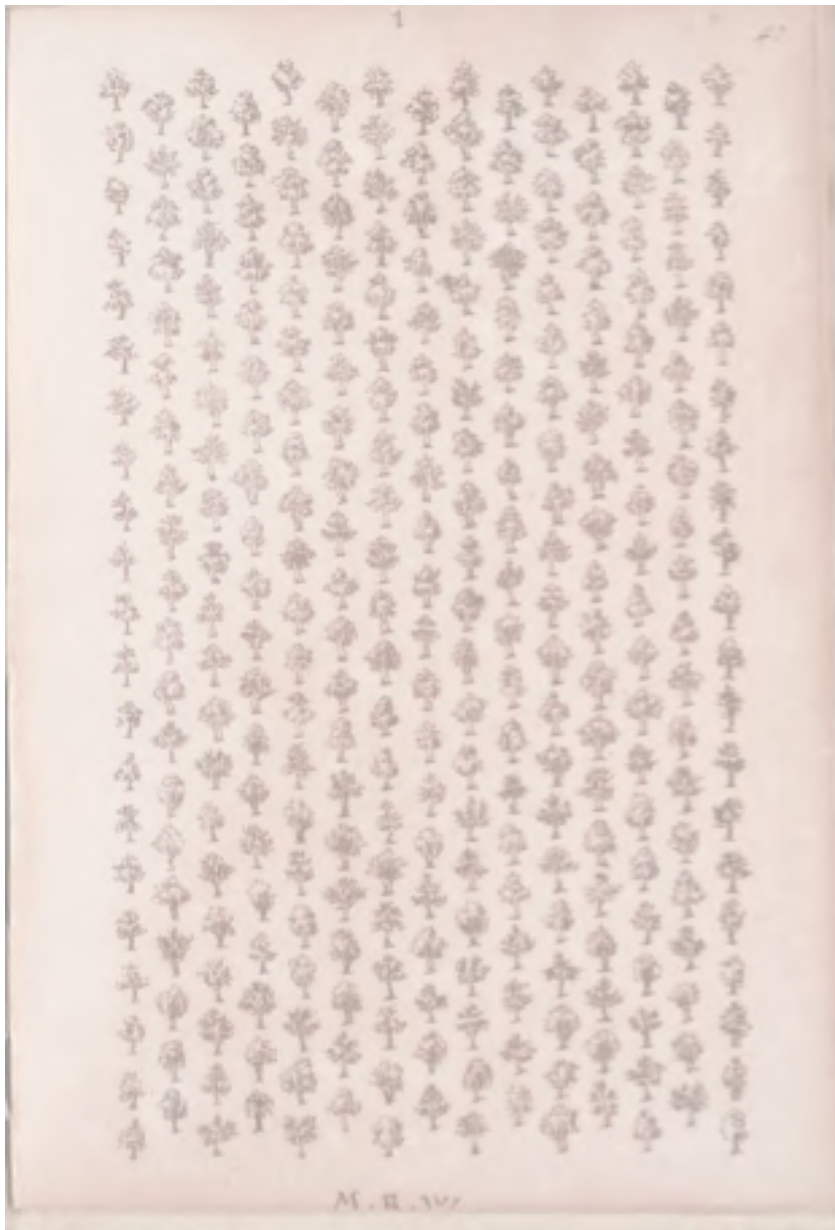
9. Karel Fiala, Cross-section of the Star Summer Palace and ornamental garden, ca. 1945.

Photo: Collections of Museum of Czech Literature (PNP)



10. Bonifaz Wohlmut, Complex with the Green Summer Palace in the Prater, in Georg Tanner, *Brevis et dilucida* [...], ÖNB Vienna.

From: D. J. Jansen, Taste and Thought: Jacopo Strada and the Development of a Cosmopolitan Court, in: *Hans von Aachen in Context*, Prague 2012.



11. Bonifaz Wohlmüt, Quincunx, from: Georg Tanner, *Brevis et dilucida* [...], ÖNB Vienna.

From: I. Muchka et al., *Hvězda. Arcivévoda Ferdinand Tyrolský a jeho letohrádek v evropském kontextu*, Prague 2014



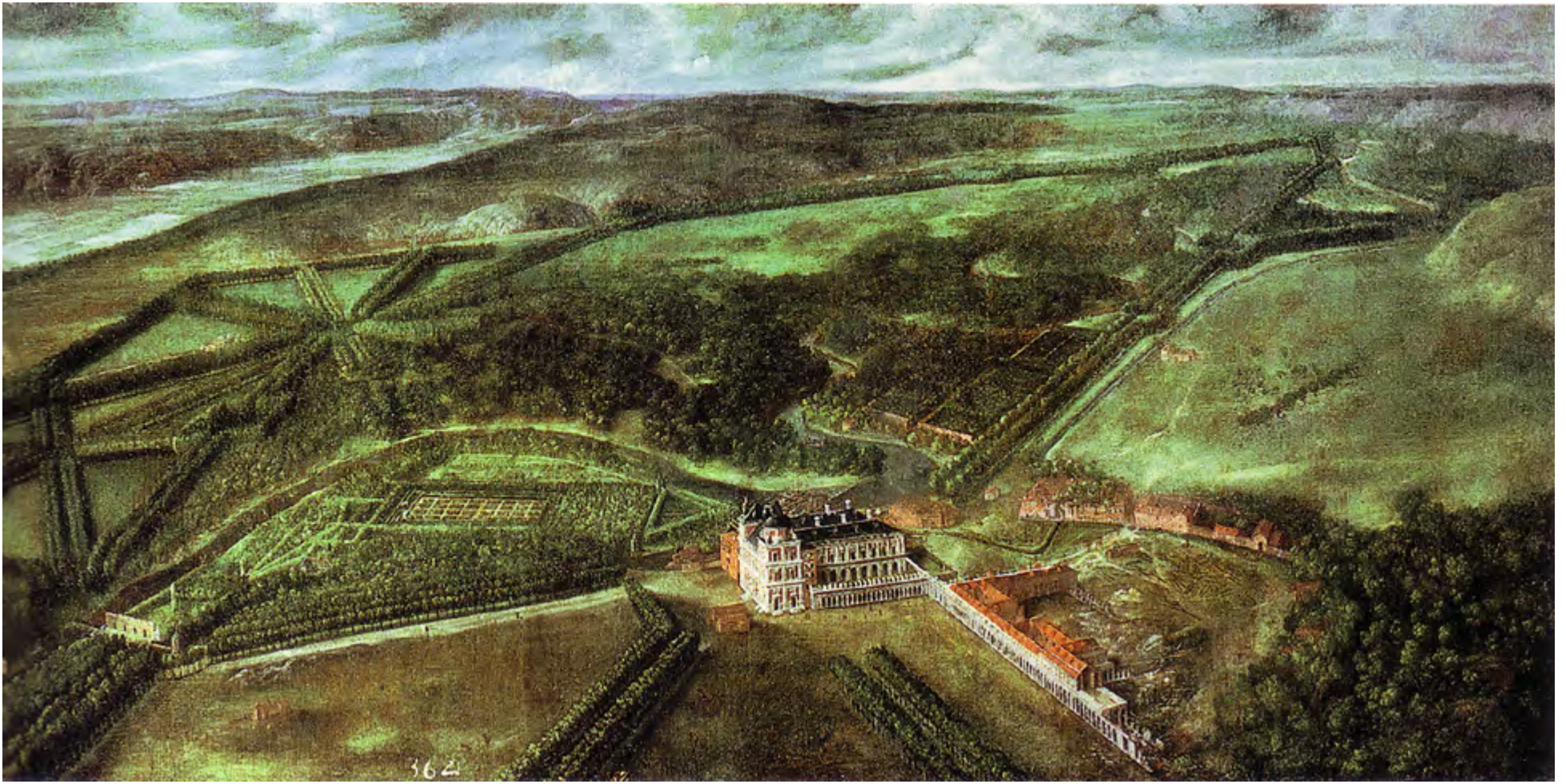
12. Diagram of a star, from: Georg Tanner, *Brevis et dilucida* [...], ÖNB Vienna.

From: I. Muchka et al., *Hvězda. Arcivévoda Ferdinand Tyrolský a jeho letohrádek v evropském kontextu*, Prague 2014



13. Jan I Brueghel, Castle of Mariemont, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon.

Photo: Wikipedia



14. Anonymus, Bird's-eye view of Aranjuez, c. 1630, Prado Museum.

Photo: Wikipedia