Several years ago, on the occasion of the opening of an exhibition of photographs of Pückler’s parks by Udo Lauer, I spoke on the subject of Pückler in America. Many in the audience no doubt thought my choice of topic odd. Given Muskau’s remote location, what might Pückler and America have to do with one another? The audience members were by and large unaware of Pückler’s influence on the other side of the Atlantic. “Pückler and America” is a wide field which can be approached from many promising directions. I will plough just one furrow of this field and will try to give an idea of Pückler’s significance for landscape architecture in America.

Before turning to “Pückler and America,” it might be useful to consider “America and Pückler” briefly. Pückler looked for examples for his park design and for money everywhere. Perhaps in hope of finding both, he planned to visit the United States. In 1834, he described his plans in a letter to his publisher, Louis Hallberger, and anticipated that he would send “many truly interesting reports from America.”1 Perhaps Pückler was interested in trying to learn something about money-making from German immigrant Johann Jakob Astor, who was by then the richest man in the United States.2 Had he eventually visited Astor, he might also have met Jacob Ehlers, a German who, after emigrating to the U.S. in 1841, worked on the landscaping of the estates of several members of the Astor family.3 While in New York and the Hudson Valley, Pückler might perhaps have visited the English-born painter Thomas Cole, who stands along with Asher B. Durand as the founder of the Hudson River school of landscape painting.4 It has been suggested that the very popular “Hudson River Portfolio” (1820) of landscape prints by William Guy Wall, an Irish-born member of the Hudson River school, might have been an influence on Pückler’s arrangement of the waterfalls at Muskau.5 Although that argument has not stood up under closer scrutiny, it is still likely that the Hudson Valley and the Catskill Mountains would have been on Pückler’s itinerary.6 Had Pückler postponed his visit to the U.S. by a decade, his trip up the Hudson might have included a stop in Newburgh to visit Andrew Jackson Downing, who published his Treatise on Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America, the founding text of American landscape architecture, in 1841.7
Downing’s Treatise appeared during what I would call the “pre-professional phase” of Pückler’s influence in the U.S. In all, I would argue, the history of Pückler’s impact in America can be divided into five phases. The pre-professional phase was followed by an “encyclopedic phase,” an “enthusiastic phase,” a “professional phase” of the early twentieth century, and, finally, a “phase of subdued professional interest.”

The Pre-Professional Phase

As the first school of landscape architecture in the United States was established only in the early twentieth century, it would make little sense to speak of Pückler’s professional influence in the country during the nineteenth century.8 This is why I call the first phase the pre-professional phase. Certainly, interested Americans might have read about Pückler’s park-related ambitions in his Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei (Hints on Landscape Gardening), copies of which may have crossed the Atlantic after its publication in 1834. Francis (Franz) Lieber included an entry on Pückler in the 1836 edition of his Encyclopaedia Americana.9 The article made passing mention of the park at Muskau. In 1855, a New York publisher brought out an edition of the correspondence of the well-known English beauty and writer Marguerite, Countess of Blessington. In one of the letters reprinted there, “the prince” is described as “not only gossiping, but impertinent, affected, false, and not acquainted with the manners of good or bad society in England.”10 This brief characterization may not have affected his reputation as a landscape architect in America, but nor did it do anything to help his chances of finding a rich wife willing to subsidize his plans for the park at Muskau. One year after the appearance of the countess’ correspondence in the U.S., Downing’s Rural Essays was published posthumously. Downing mentions “that excellent judge of such matters, Prince Puckler-Muskau” in connection with a description of the Duke of Devonshire’s magnificent park at Chatsworth, which Pückler himself had visited during his travels.11 Downing had a high opinion of German parks, especially those designed by Peter Joseph Lenné, and he contributed to Pückler’s reputation among Americans interested in park and garden issues. Downing’s premature death in 1852 meant the loss of an advocate of Pücklerian design in America.

Further information about Pückler’s park in Muskau may have come to America via Adolph Strauch.12 Strauch was trained in the parks at Schönbrunn and Laxenburg in Austria, and he later worked for Pückler in Muskau. In 1845, the prince encouraged Strauch to broaden his experience and visit other gardens in Europe. After stays in Paris and London, Strauch travelled to Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1852. There, he designed both
private and public open spaces, most notably the bucolic Spring Grove Cemetery.\textsuperscript{13} Spring Grove earned him national fame in the United States and beyond,\textsuperscript{14} and I am certain Pückler would have been delighted with Strauch’s creative adaptation of many of his own ideas.

It is not clear how familiar Frederick Law Olmsted, America’s first great landscape architect, was with Pückler’s work. In 1850, Olmsted went on a hiking tour of Britain and the continent with his brother John and their friend Charles Loring Brace.\textsuperscript{15} We know that the travelers visited the English Garden in Munich, but we do not know whether Olmsted was aware of Muskau. In his long entry on “Park” for the \textit{The American Cyclopedia} (1875), Olmsted dedicated a few lines to parks in Germany but did not mention Muskau.\textsuperscript{16}

There is still much that we do not know about this early pre-professional phase of Pückler’s reception in America. It is a topic that needs more research.

\textbf{The Encyclopedic Phase}

There seems to be almost a quarter century of silence about Pückler before he shows up again in America a few years after his death. This new interest is reflected above all in encyclopedias. In 1876, five years after Pückler’s death, an entry in the \textit{American Cyclopedia} refers to his “magnificent parks at Muskau and Branitz.”\textsuperscript{17} In 1879, the \textit{Globe Encyclopedia} mentions Pückler’s “extensive and celebrated park gardens” and notes that he had described them in his \textit{Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei}.\textsuperscript{18} Encyclopedia references such as these may have helped satisfy the strong interest in popular education and higher learning that swept America in late nineteenth century. This situation helped to prepare the third phase of Pückler’s significance for landscape architecture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Like the first phase of Pückler’s American career, this second phase warrants more research.

\textbf{The Enthusiastic Phase}

The third phase of Pückler’s influence in America, which I have dubbed the enthusiastic phase, coincides with the beginning of the professionalization of landscape architecture. In 1898, the Association of New England Park Superintendents, the first professional organization of its kind in the country, was established in Boston; it later changed its name to the American Institute of Park Executives and merged with several other organizations in 1965 to create the National Recreation and Park Association.\textsuperscript{19} The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) was founded in 1899,\textsuperscript{20} one year before Harvard launched the first full-blown academic program in landscape architecture.
Although the *Andeutungen* had not yet been translated into English, Pückler’s park at Muskau was well known at least within professional circles in the Northeast in the last decade of the nineteenth century. One source of that knowledge was the Arnold Arboretum, which had been established in 1872 on the outskirts of Boston. In 1892, John George Jack, a lecturer in arboriculture at the arboretum, reported on his visit the previous year to “the famous Muskau Park, the masterwork of Prince Hermann von Pückler” in the professional journal *Garden and Forest*. The area around the park in Muskau, Jack wrote, “is a most unpromising one for the creation of what has been called the best park in Germany.”

For him, the park was an oasis in a desert, and he described what he saw there enthusiastically. “The arrangement of the specimens and groups of trees is so admirable that there is not a feature distracting or displeasing the eye. Fresh vistas and landscape-pictures are brought out at every step or every visit, and roads and paths are so skillfully planned that their existence is unsuspected until they are stepped upon.” Jack especially liked the design of the roads in the park at Muskau: America, he argued, could have used a “Prince Pückler in the designing of some recently made parks where roads often seem to be a mean feature, where hills and great rocks have to be removed or mutilated and natural ponds filled in order to conform to lines traced on some chart, apparently without much reference to topography.” The park at Muskau, by contrast, offered “a perfectly harmonious picture.”

*Garden and Forest* was edited by Charles Sprague Sargent, the founding director of the Arnold Arboretum. Sargent seems to have appreciated Muskau and may have visited it while touring Europe between 1865 and 1868. It was he, perhaps with the backing of Frederick Law Olmsted, who had recommended to Jack that he visit Muskau. Muskau is mentioned time and again in *Garden and Forest* during its first five years of publication (1888–92). Readers in 1888, for example, were referred to Pückler’s *Andeutungen*, which had appeared over a half century earlier, and in 1890 they were directed to the French translation of 1847, *Aperçu sur la plantation des parcs en general, joint à une description du parc du Muskau*. *Garden and Forest* also took note in 1890 of the guidebook, *Der Park von Muskau* (1856) by Eduard Petzold, the longtime director of the park in Muskau, and of Petzold’s *Fürst Hermann von Pückler-Muskau in seinem Wirken in Muskau und Branitz, sowie in seiner Bedeutung für die bildende Gartenkunst Deutschlands* (Prince Pückler-Muskau and His Activities in Muskau and Branitz, and His Significance for Garden Art in Germany, 1874). A detailed map of the Muskau park appeared in *Garden and Forest* in 1891. The map accompanied a contribution by Charles Eliot, to whom I will turn later.
Sargent had a direct connection to Muskau in the person of Alfred Georg Rehder. Rehder was the grandson of Jacob Heinrich Rehder, who had worked as Pückler’s gardener in Muskau from 1818 until his death in 1852. In the spring of 1898, the 36-year-old Alfred Rehder was sent to America by Ludwig Möller, the editor of the professional journal Möller’s deutsche Gärtnerteitung. Rehder was meant to stay for six months, but, rather than return, he stayed in the U.S. and worked as Sargent’s right-hand man. He remained at the Arnold Arboretum until his retirement in 1940.

Sargent’s interest in Pückler’s park at Muskau was shared by his nephew, Henry Sargent Codman. A partner in Olmsted’s firm, Codman published “a list of works on the art of landscape gardening . . . which have been published in English, French, German and Italian” in Garden and Forest in 1890. Codman’s bibliography, which he described as complete as he had “been able to make it,” included some 300 titles. About one-fifth of the books listed were marked with a star, indicating that Codman considered them to be of “special interest.” Pückler’s Andeutungen carried such a star. In compiling this bibliography, Codman had drawn upon a number of private and public libraries, including the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale. German authors were well represented in his own library, as the catalogue of the Codman collection at the Boston Public Library attests. Among the German titles Codman owned were Pückler’s Andeutungen as well as Petzold’s Fürst Hermann von Pückler-Muskau and his guidebook to Muskau. Codman died in 1893 at the age of 43. At the Olmsted firm he was succeeded by Charles Eliot.

Charles Eliot was the son of Charles William Eliot, the long-serving president of Harvard who transformed the university into a research institution on the German model. While planning a two-year tour of Europe, the younger Eliot was advised by Frederick Law Olmsted to visit Muskau. He took that advice and was deeply impressed by what he saw. Muskau, he wrote, was

landscape gardening on a grand scale, and the resulting scenery is extremely lovely. Altogether it is the most remarkable and lovable park I have seen on the Continent. There are no ledges; but steep irregular slopes of river bluffs, and hills beyond. The woods have an almost American variety of species, and many American plants are very common,—such as wild Cherry, Acacia, and Cornel. I found even Clethra, Hamamelis, and Diervilla [Weigela]. There are many large Oaks, and much Juglans (walnuts), Liriodendron, Magnolia, Negundo, Tilia, etc. One valley is all Conifers. A long stream, derived from the river, is exceedingly
well treated; its varied banks are covered with Cornus, etc., and masses of American Asters, Eupatorium and Golden-rod. The water about the Schloss is also most exquisite with a tiny island or two, a water terrace, and a landing under a far-reaching Nergundo. The distant parts are wholly naturalesque, with well-designed roads and paths, and charming views from capes of highland over the river valley and the almost hidden Muskau village... This work of Fürst Pückler is of a sort to make me very proud of my profession! For here in a land of dull, almost stupid scenery, Nature has been induced to make a region of great beauty, great variety, and wonderful charm.33

Eliot had prepared thoroughly for his visit to Muskau. During visits to the British Museum in October 1885 and in January 1886, he requested a total of twelve books in German, the majority of which related to Muskau. They included Pückler’s _Andeutungen_ and Petzold’s two works on Pückler and Muskau.34

Eliot had his camera with him during his visit to Muskau. Six of his photographs of the park and the castle have survived; four are shown here (Figures 1–4).35 Eliot, who was later to play a decisive part in the development of Boston’s park system,36 was certain that Pückler’s park in Muskau had a lesson for landscape architecture in the United States, which he felt was still in its infancy.37 For “us Americans,” Eliot wrote in one of his contributions to _Garden and Forest_, “the significance...of this work at Muskau is very obvious.”38 When, he went on to ask, “shall a rich man or a club of citizens, an enlightened town or a pleasure resort, do for some quiet lakeshore of New England, some long valley of the Alleghenies, some forest-bordered prairie of Louisiana, what Pückler did for his valley of the Neisse?”39

Eliot knew that some of Pückler’s “essays on landscape were long since translated into French” and hoped “that they may yet appear in English, for they contain a very clear presentation of the elements of landscape design, as well as many lively descriptions of his work at Muskau.”40 I am sure Eliot would have been a sensitive translator had he lived long enough to take on the project. He died very unexpectedly, however in 1897 at the age of 38. Two years later, his father, who, like the younger Eliot, had become aware of the importance of landscape architecture for America through Olmsted’s influence, established the program in landscape architecture at Harvard.

The Professional Phase

In 1906, the American landscape architect Samuel Parsons, Jr., spent three full days exploring the park at Muskau.41 Parsons had begun his career
working with Calvert Vaux on Central Park and had gone on to direct park planning in the city for nearly thirty years. Parsons was instrumental in the organization of the ASLA in 1899—it was founded in his office—and he served as its first vice president. Although Parsons seems
to have been generally disappointed by Europe’s public parks, he was clearly impressed by Muskau. He wrote: “The greater extent and larger features of river, lake and hilltop of Muskau give it an incontestable advantage over the smaller areas of the New York parks although we
may except perhaps the noble natural beauties and distant views of Van Cortlandt and Pelham Parks and Prospect Park, Brooklyn. But when we come to the details of Muskau...it's superiority at once impresses the American vision.” Parsons continued to admire Muskau, and it is here where I suggest marking the beginning of the fourth phase of Pückler’s significance for landscape architecture in America, the professional phase of the early twentieth century.

In his book *The Art of Landscape Architecture* (1915), Parsons called Pückler’s work at Muskau unsurpassed and offered several photographs and planting plans as evidence. Parsons’ *Art of Landscape Architecture* was followed two years later by an English translation of Pückler’s *Andeutungen* by Bernhard Sickert under the title *Hints on Landscape Gardening*. The translation had been published with the support of the ASLA and included an introduction by Parsons. It was the second title in a series of texts that the ASLA hoped would help set standards for the fledgling profession.

Parson’s was not alone in voicing admiration for Pückler. The 1917 translation of the *Andeutungen* included a preface by John Nolen, another noted American landscape architect and city planner. The year 1917 also saw the publication of *An Introduction to the Study of Landscape Design* by Henry Vincent Hubbard and Theodora Kimball. This book, which was to serve as a standard text for American students in the field for decades, included descriptions of the work of Pückler and Petzold in Muskau. A second edition appeared in 1929, and it was last reprinted in 1969.

Although Pückler’s park in Muskau served as a textbook example of park design for American students through much of the twentieth century, it was difficult for them to actually visit the park after World War II. The Allies’ decision to take the Oder-Neisse line as the German-Polish border cut Pückler’s park in two. During the forty-year existence of the German Democratic Republic, Americans interested in Pückler’s work had only very limited opportunities to see it firsthand. Professional attention to Pückler, so marked in the early decades of the twentieth century, clearly began to wane.

**The Phase of Subdued Professional Interest**

The unexpected collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the reunification of Germany opened the way for renewed professional interest in Pückler’s work. Compared to the enthusiasm both German and American professionals in landscape architecture had expressed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this new attention to Pückler’s work is rather subdued, and for that reason I would label this final phase of Pückler’s influence in America the phase of subdued professional interest. Given the long-standing reciprocal ignorance
among German and American landscape architects about professional developments in the other country, I find it remarkable that Pücklerian park design still seems to be of significance for landscape architecture in the U.S.

Much of this revived American interest in Pückler seems to be historically focused. A short article on metropolitan open spaces published in 1989, for example, noted that “as American cities expanded, several early landscape architects, inspired by the work of Pückler-Muskau and others, envisioned vast open space systems extending through and around the nation’s growing urban regions.”47 This is clearly a reference to the professional phase of the early twentieth century. One of the main examples of metropolitan open spaces this article cited was the Minneapolis park system; I have found no evidence, though, that suggests either of the two landscape architects responsible for Minneapolis’ park system, Horace W. S. Cleveland and Theodore Wirth, were influenced by Pückler’s work. That Pückler did have an influence elsewhere in the Midwest is made clear by a recent collection of studies on the history of landscape architecture in that region.48 The essay on Adolf Strauch’s work in Cincinnati, for instance, calls attention to the connection between Strauch and Pückler and features an old engraving of Muskau Park.49 Similarly, the essay on Edward Kessler, who designed parks for Kansas City, Indianapolis, and several other Midwestern cities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, underscores the deep impression Pückler’s work made on Kessler.50

Pückler crops up in American reference works and textbooks published in the past two decades. The short biographical entry for Henry Vincent Hubbard in the handbook American Landscape Architecture: Designers and Places (1989) includes a photograph of the “long view” in Muskau that had earlier appeared in Hubbard and Kimball’s Introduction to the Study in Landscape Design.51 The Chicago Botanic Garden’s Encyclopedia of Gardens (2001) does not give Pückler his own entry, but several articles discuss his work.52 General surveys and textbooks such as Elizabeth Barlow Rogers’s Landscape Design: A Cultural and Architectural History (2001) tend to give only brief attention to Pückler. Rogers, for example, discusses Pückler in a short section entitled “Repton’s Influence in Germany.”53

The renewed though subdued interest in “Pückler and America” is a promising sign. It may contribute to a new understanding of Pückler’s work from a democratic and tri-national—German, American, and Polish—perspective. The ongoing restoration of Pückler’s park in Muskau is not simply the re-creation of a landscape park but also a project that is creating new opportunities and new hope in an economically hard-pressed region. The project extends beyond the park itself
and aims at the creation of a *Kulturlandschaft*, a cultural landscape, that encompasses the regions on both sides of the Polish-German border.\(^{54}\) Pückler’s work could take on a new importance in the twenty-first century if this social dimension of Muskau Park’s restoration receives international attention. There could perhaps be yet another phase in the story of “Pückler and America.”

**Notes**


3 See the entry on Ehlers by Cynthia Zaitzevsky in Charles A. Birnbaum and Robin Karson, eds., *Pioneers of American Landscape Design* (New York, 2000), 104–06.


5 Martin Sperlich, “Das neue Arkadien, Der Garten als utopische Landschaft,” *neue heimat, Monatshefte für neuzzeitlichen Wohnungs- und Städtebau* 26, no. 6 (1979): 10–23. Sperlich notes that Wall’s Hudson River Portfolio, which began to be issued in 1821, a decade and a half before Pückler published his *Andeutung über Landschaftsgärtnerei*, helped popularize a “fresh romanticism” (*frische Romantik*) focused on the “New Rhine” in New York much as illustrated English travel books had helped foster a “middle-class romanticism about the Rhine” (*rheinische Bürgerromantik*). “Obviously,” Sperlich then argues, “Pückler who planned to visit America, copied his artificial water falls at Muskau from these examples” (22).


7 On Downing, see Birnbaum and Karson, eds., *Pioneers of American Landscape Design*, 96–100.


9 “Pückler-Muskau (Hermann Lewis Henry, prince of),” *Encyclopaedia Americana* (Philadelphia, 1836). In the preface to the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia Americana*, which appeared in 13 volumes between 1829 and 1833, Lieber noted his debt to the *Allgemeine deutsche Real-Encyclopädie für die gebildeten Stände* published by the Leipzig firm F. A. Brockhaus.


14 In Germany, for example, Oswin Hüttig mentioned Strauch in his *Geschichte des Gartenbaus* (Berlin, 1879).

15 See Frederick Law Olmsted, *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England* (Columbus, 1852; revised edition, Columbus, 1859).


22 Ibid., 124.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.


30 Ibid., 131.

31 Ibid., 135. Petzold’s guidebook: *Der Park von Muskau* (Hoyerswerda, 1856).


34 Mention should also be made here of Ludmilla Assing, *Aus dem Nachlass des Fürsten Pückler-Muskau* (Hamburg and Leipzig, 1873–76).


37 In a short contribution to *Garden and Forest*, Eliot wrote of the park at “Paulovsk” (sic) that there was “no futile striving after the loveliness of England or any other foreign land” and “no planting of incongruous specimens and no out-of-place flower-bedding”; the “park of Muskau teaches the same lesson, and under conditions closely resembling those of our Middle States.” Charles Eliot, “Anglomania in Park Planning,” *Garden and Forest* 1 (1888): 64.


39 Ibid., 39.

40 Ibid.


42 See also Parsons’s *Landscape Gardening* (New York, 1895).


45 Ibid.


54 See the brochure issued by the Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Park Bad Muskau, “Muskauer Kulturlandschaft” (2001).