PÜCKLER AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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Hermann von Pückler-Muskau has enjoyed a lasting reception among landscape architects at Harvard University, one far greater in its variety and longevity than perhaps should have been the case for a nineteenth-century German prince. Yet within a school that over the years has embraced forms of practice as disparate as country estates for the elite, park systems for city and regional planning, architectural modernism, and ecology-based design, Pückler has somehow been present at every turn. Maintaining a remarkably high profile, he has held a certain allure for almost every major figure who has shaped the pedagogy of the program.

The material traces of this legacy are to be found primarily in the archives of the Department of Landscape Architecture, and these records necessarily form the basis of any critical analysis of Pückler’s influence. As preliminary entry points, however, two titles held in multiple copies by the Graduate School of Design’s Loeb Library are particularly emblematic: the English translation of Pückler’s *Hints on Landscape Gardening* (1917) and Norman T. Newton’s *Design on the Land* (1971). Until recently, the library owned five copies of *Hints*. The pages were well worn, many passages had been underlined, notes had been scribbled in the margins, and most of the folded plans of Muskau Park had suffered rough handling. Clearly, these volumes had been used for many years, probably decades, as textbooks. The second title, Newton’s *Design on the Land*, had been throughout the 1970s and 1980s the most commonly prescribed text for history courses in American schools of landscape architecture. Pückler figures prominently in Newton’s rather idiosyncratic narrative of the nineteenth century, and unlike other advocates of “landscape gardening” he is singled out for high praise. In fact, if one were to read Newton without consulting other sources, one might easily conclude that Pückler had been the *only* German designer of merit working during that century. When one considers that Newton had been a professor at Harvard from 1949 until his retirement in 1966, the marked-up copies of *Hints on Landscape Gardening* take on added significance. One begins to wonder at what point Pückler had come to receive such extensive, perhaps even inordinate, attention in Harvard’s curriculum.

The answer to this question bears upon more than the insular history of one institution. For due to Harvard’s influential position within land-
landscape architectural education in America throughout the twentieth century, understanding Pückler’s place in that tradition is one of the best avenues for understanding his reception by American landscape architects and scholars in general. Toward that end, this study of Pückler at Harvard focuses first on two principal areas of inquiry: (1) the ways in which Pückler’s landscape designs and writings have been taught over the years in the Harvard curriculum, and (2) the reasons why his work has remained of perennial interest to faculty and students even as design fashions and ideologies changed over time. On the basis of this documentation, I then offer some observations on the effects that this pedagogical history has had on American historiography of the German landscape tradition, especially in its impact on the reception of other German designers and theorists of the nineteenth century.

The Early Years (1900–28); Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and James Sturgis Pray

The idea of creating a school of landscape architecture at Harvard originated with Nathaniel S. Shaler, professor of geography and dean of the college’s Lawrence Scientific School. A program in architecture had been established there in 1895, and a year later Shaler proposed that a companion program in landscape architecture be developed with Charles Eliot Jr. as its first head. Eliot never had the opportunity to serve in this role, for he died of meningitis the following year in 1897. But his father, Charles W. Eliot, exercised his considerable influence as the president of Harvard College to make Shaler’s proposal a reality in 1900. Harvard thus became the first American college to have a program in landscape architecture, which was led by Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and housed in the newly constructed Robinson Hall.1 During that first academic year, 1900–01, Olmsted taught the introductory course “Landscape Architecture 1,” and his approach to organizing this material served as a template for many decades. The goal of the course was to introduce students to the history of landscape architecture and to equip them with a basic vocabulary of its first principles. Sessions ran for the entire academic year, with an emphasis on garden history during the first semester and a broader discussion of environmental history, cultural geography, and landscape aesthetics during the second. The March 1900 Announcement describes the course as follows: “The types of landscape and garden design are taken up in the historical order of their highest development, but in addition to the critical description of historical examples with the aid of plans, drawings and photographs, reference is made whenever possible to actual examples, illustrative of the same principles, to be found in the vicinity of Boston.”2
We are fortunate to have a detailed knowledge of the contents of the lectures because the extensive notes taken by Olmsted’s teaching assistant, Arthur A. Shurcliff, have survived. Olmsted began the course with a survey of ancient gardens and devoted the remainder of the history sequence primarily to Renaissance Italy, seventeenth-century France, and the estates and parks of eighteenth-century Britain. Shurcliff’s notes do not indicate that Olmsted discussed any German gardens during that year, but the lecture of January 11, 1901, includes a brief reference to Christian C. L. Hirschfeld. It occurs in the context of a discussion of eighteenth-century British theorists, and Olmsted opines that although Hirschfeld’s garden typologies are somewhat arbitrary and not very useful, he did propound “a good many excellent ideas.” In parentheses, Shurcliff notes that Hirschfeld’s text was looked upon as “advanced reading.”

Even though Pückler does not appear in Shurcliff’s notebook, when one considers the importance of Muskau Park to Charles Eliot, the degree to which Eliot’s life and work were intertwined with the Olmsted family, and the extent to which Eliot’s spirit animated the new landscape program, it is difficult to believe that Pückler was entirely absent from classroom discussions during these years. In fact, evidence for this supposition can be found by looking at one of the school’s earliest teaching tools, its lantern slide collection. The logbooks of the collection record that two slides of Muskau Park were accessioned on March 10, 1904. The first, which shows a small woodland pond, is not attributed. However, the source of the second slide, a long meadow vista framed by trees, is clearly stated to be Olmsted himself (Figure 1).

Olmsted continued to teach the introductory course until he left the department in 1907. James Sturgis Pray, who had joined the faculty in 1902 and served as his teaching assistant during that time, took over responsibility for the course upon Olmsted’s departure. Additional staffing changes included the departure of Shurcliff, who returned occasionally as a visitor, and the arrival of new faculty member Henry Vincent Hubbard. That same year saw two other changes in the program that would prove critical for developments in the coming decades. The Lawrence School was dismantled in 1906, with architecture and landscape architecture becoming departments in the new Graduate School of Applied Sciences. And landscape architecture, which had previously awarded only a baccalaureate degree, was reorganized into a graduate program. It is also worth noting that the founding in 1901 of Harvard’s Germanic Museum, now the Busch-Reisinger Museum, strongly elevated the profile of German art and culture within the Harvard community during these years. There appears to be no evidence that members of the school of landscape architecture were directly involved in the museum’s
programs or collections. But it is reasonable to assume that with the construction of the museum’s Adolphus Busch Hall, begun with much fanfare just prior to the outbreak of World War I, interest in German studies among faculty and students would have been higher than usual.4

Following Olmsted’s departure, Professor Pray assumed the chairmanship of the landscape program, a position he held until 1928. During these two decades he continued to teach the introductory course, and it is in his written assignments that we find the first textual evidence of Pückler in the classroom. Pray’s teaching style relied heavily on having students prepare written reports. In the assignment of the “Third and Fourth Reports” of the spring term 1913, Pray lists the “grounds of Pueckler-Muskau” as a possible topic for “some example of informal landscape architecture.” The report was to be both “descriptive and critical” and be accompanied by original illustrations. Pray also states that the listed topics “are among those chosen in previous years.” Because the 1912–13 document is the earliest to have survived, we may conclude on the basis of this notation that versions of the assignment from previous years would also have listed Muskau Park, perhaps going back all the way to Olmsted’s tenure.5

During Pray’s chairmanship, several important books were published that would change the way landscape history was taught at Har-
ward. The first of these was *The Art of Landscape Architecture* by Samuel Parsons, which became required reading for Harvard students immediately after it was published in 1915. Parsons was a great admirer of Pückler and of German landscape design in general. In one typical passage Parsons states: “Germany, the home of landscaping in its fully developed form, presents the estate of Prince Pückler and the park of Babelsberg near Potsdam, as well as other parks in the empire, as good examples of the art and its proper practice.” This praise may have been based on less than extensive knowledge, however, for nowhere in the book does he mention such major figures as Ludwig von Sckell or Peter Joseph Lenné, and Gustav Meyer is present only in the bibliography. In the preface to this work, Parsons laments the fact that Pückler’s 1834 treatise had not yet been translated into English. The reader quickly realizes that he could not have meant this literally, for beginning on page two and running throughout the entire book one finds that Pückler has been liberally quoted in English translation. In fact, a full 58 of Parsons’s 335 pages—comprising seventeen percent of the book—are taken directly from Pückler. So to read Parsons in 1915 was also to receive an extensive preview of Pückler’s *Hints* in English for the first time (Figure 2).

Parsons’s book was quickly followed by another significant text that would soon become a classic in the field, Hubbard and Kimball’s *An Introduction to the Study of Landscape Design* (1917). Written by Henry Vincent Hubbard, the Harvard landscape program’s first graduate and a member of its faculty since 1906, and Theodora Kimball, the librarian of Harvard’s School of Landscape Architecture, the book sought to lay out the first principles of landscape design as it was then practiced and understood. The authors also incorporated many historical examples in the text, less to write a history per se than to illustrate their arguments about first principles. Their comments about German gardens are far more measured than Parsons, but they also exhibit a greater awareness of the breadth of German garden history and current practice. For example, they state: “In larger designs, such recognizable style as there has been in Germany has been first the Dutch, then the style of Le Notre, then that of the ‘Englischer Garten.’ In many cases these styles in Germany appeared in ill-considered imitations of their originals; but as disciples of the landscape school, Germany has shown in Hirschfeld, Sckell, and Prince Pückler von Muskau a conception of naturalistic design which worthily matched the work of Repton and Price, and largely inspired the naturalistic ideals of Petzold and of such a present-day writer as Camillo Karl Schneider.” Again, there is no mention of Lenné, but Hubbard and Kimball do go on to discuss the work of Hermann Muthesius and Leberecht Migge. It is also worth noting that Pückler’s treatise appears in the list of general references, and the illustration plates include one photo-
graph of Muskau Park taken by Hubbard, who had traveled with Olmsted to Germany around 1903. In fact, this photograph was the same one that Olmsted had given to Harvard’s lantern slide collection in 1904.

The third book of significance to appear at this time was, of course, the English edition of Pückler’s *Hints on Landscape Gardening*, which like Hubbard and Kimball’s *Introduction* was published in 1917. Coming on the heels of the centennial of Muskau Park in 1915, it was the second volume in a series of “authoritative books” commissioned by the American Society of Landscape Architects and edited by John Nolen. The first had been Humphry Repton, *The Art of Landscape Gardening* (1907). Samuel Parsons wrote the extensive introduction to *Hints*, weaving together Pückler’s biography and the history of the park with a critical assessment of its value for early twentieth-century designers. The painter

Figure 2: An illustration from Pückler’s *Hints on Landscape Gardening* (1834) as reproduced in Samuel Parsons, *The Art of Landscape Architecture, Its Development and Its Application to Modern Landscape Gardening* (1915).
Bernhard Sickert provided the translation. A close comparison of the English text of *Hints* with the Pückler quotations in Parson’s 1915 book reveals an interesting subhistory. If one reads the two side by side, one notices that most of the passages are identical, but that there are significant variations in a number of sentences. Parsons obviously relied on Sickert for his book, but not the exact text that was published two years later. The source of the discrepancies is best explained by a comment in Hubbard and Kimball, where they note that Parsons took his lengthy quotations from an early version of Sickert’s translation.¹⁴

With the publication of these three texts between 1915 and 1917, students at Harvard now had readily available information on Pückler as well as some additional commentary on the broader history of German landscape design. And by 1925 the *Annual Pamphlet* published by the School of Landscape Architecture began listing *Hints* among its suggested readings. The two decades of Professor Pray’s chairmanship also saw the expansion of other resources that made Pückler’s work more accessible. In 1909 an additional thirty-four lantern slides of Muskau Park were added to the library’s collection. One was a plan taken from the book *Charles Eliot, Landscape Architect* (1902); another was a photograph taken by Professor Hubbard. The remaining slides were contributed by the landscape architect Thomas Warren Sears (SB 1906), who even while a student in the Harvard landscape program had garnered attention for his skills in photography. It is not clear whether Sears had been specifically asked by the school to take these photographs or if he had done so on his own initiative, but in either case it is clear that he owed his interest in Muskau Park to his studies at Harvard.

The establishment of the Charles Eliot Traveling Fellowship in 1914 made such documentation of European gardens a regular component of the Harvard curriculum, which not only benefited individual students but also augmented the landscape library’s growing collection of visual materials. Students who won the prize were required upon their return to submit measured drawings and other renderings of selected gardens they had visited. Many also purchased illustrated books and postcards for the school (many of which were difficult to obtain in the United States), for which they were later reimbursed. The most popular destinations were Italy, France, England, and, to a certain extent, Spain. However, a few students also chose locations less frequented by Americans, including the Netherlands, Scandinavia, and Germany. A good example of the latter was the winner of the prize for 1920–21, Raymond White Blanchard, who spent an entire month in Germany. While in Berlin in June 1921, he stayed briefly in the home of Adolph Otto, General Secretary of the German Garden City Society, who was a personal friend of both James Sturgis Pray and Theodora Kimball. Otto provided assistance to Blanchard by
arranging site visits in the area, including the gardens of Sanssouci of which Blanchard gave a glowing report. Not surprisingly, one of the highlights of Blanchard’s Berlin itinerary was an entire day spent at Muskau Park (Figure 3).15

Figure 3: Raymond White Blanchard’s itinerary in Germany as detailed in a letter to James Sturgis Pray. Harvard University Archives: Raymond White Blanchard to James Sturgis Pray, July 8, 1921; UAV 332.148, sub-series 2, box 1, folder “Raymond White Blanchard.”
Bremer Pond (1928–38)

It is during the chairmanship of Bremer Pond, who held the post from 1928 to 1950, that some of the most extensive documentation of Pückler’s presence in the Harvard curriculum can be found. Pond (MLA 1911), who had served as Pray’s teaching assistant since 1915, had over a decade of teaching experience when he took over the introductory course in 1928. As indicated on the “Distribution of Time” chart for the academic year 1937–38, the course met in three hourly sessions per week, with an additional two hours devoted to analytic drawings of historical gardens based on slides and photographs (Figure 4).16 The course summary for 1935–36 shows that Pond annually devoted an entire lecture to what he termed the “German Romantic” style, which exceeded the level of attention given to the topic by either Olmsted or Pray.17 Perhaps this is not surprising given that even during his assistantship under Pray, Pond seems to have viewed Muskau Park as an exemplary design. For records
show that in 1926 he had added a highly evocative lantern slide of the park to the library’s collection, a long vista that reaches over a slight crest and then falls away into the distance (Figure 5).18

What Pond meant by the term “German Romanticism” can be discerned from his Outline History of Landscape Architecture, published in 1936 and again in 1937 as a study guide to his course. The lecture on Germany, part of a series on “The Naturalistic or Informal Style,” focuses on the work of Sckell and Pückler, including an image of Sckell’s Englischer Garten in Munich as well as a plan of Park Muskau (Figure 6).19 One curious feature of Pond’s outline is that he gives the names Switzer and Salzmann in conjunction with Sanssouci and puts a question mark next to the date of 1830. A comparison with secondary sources shows quite clearly that Pond’s information about Sanssouci was taken directly from John Claudius Loudon’s An Encyclopaedia of Gardening (1822), the earliest editions of which predate most of Lenné’s work in Potsdam. In Loudon’s entry on Prussian gardens, he states: “The ancient gardens of Sans Souci, at Potsdam, are in the mixed style of Switzer, with every appendage and ornament of the French, Italian, and Dutch taste. Various artists, but chiefly Manger, a German architect, and Salzmann, the royal gardener (each of whom has published a voluminous description of his works there), were employed in their design and execution.”20 In addition to relying on Loudon’s account, Pond’s understanding of the site would also have been hampered by the limitations of Harvard’s lantern slide collection. In contrast to the library’s extensive documentation of Muskau Park,
whose photographic images emphasize the vistas and water features of the landscape, the slides of Sanssouci were fabricated primarily from postcards, most of which focus the viewer’s attention on architectural features (Figure 7). Not surprisingly then, Pond’s examination questions regarding Sanssouci consistently refer to the garden’s early developments of the eighteenth century, especially the area around the New Palace that he describes as being in the “German Renaissance” style. While acknowledging the reality of these limitations, the omission of Lenné in Pond’s syllabus nevertheless remains perplexing when one considers that Samuel Parsons, in his introduction to Pückler’s Hints, refers to Lenné’s work in Potsdam as “the glory of Germany,” and students such as Blanchard had returned from their travels in Germany with favorable, firsthand descriptions of Sanssouci. As such, these details highlight the fact that knowledge of German gardens, even among leading American scholars at that time, remained at best fragmentary.

Whereas Pray had favored written reports for the history assignments, Pond chose to structure the introductory course around required reading lists and frequent examinations. Pückler figures prominently in these assignments. During the spring term 1930, for example, the required eighth reading includes passages from Pückler’s Hints (58–99), and the subsequent test requires students to discuss Pückler’s recommendations for the grouping of trees, the preparation of soil, the layout of roads and paths, and the design of water features and islands. Similarly, the next reading assignment includes additional passages from Hints (13–47), and the students are examined on Pückler’s advice on boundary plantations. In the spring term 1931, the eighth reading assignment is identical, but the exam question is slightly different, asking students to describe Pückler’s method of laying out a park. Students also had the option of taking a credit examination at the beginning of the academic year, which would allow them to skip this required introductory course if they exhibited a sufficient command of the material already. Pond sometimes included questions about Muskau Park and Pückler’s writings in these examinations, such as in the set of questions from Sept. 19, 1933. Extant reading assignments and examinations through 1936 show a similar pattern.

**Modernism and the Creation of the GSD (1936–49)**

The year 1936 marked a turning point in the teaching of landscape architecture at Harvard. What had previously been separate Schools of Landscape Architecture, Architecture, and City Planning were consolidated to create the Graduate School of Design, whose basic departmental structure remains intact today. Joseph Hudnut was recruited from Co-
GERMANY:


Romanticism and "rusticity". Influence of climate and topography, and interest in horticulture. Emotionalism.

Chief designers:

F. L. von Sckell, 1750-1823.
Thomas Blaikie, 1750-1833.
Count Rumford, 1753-1814.
Prince Pückler Muskau, 1786-1871.

Typical projects:

1777-85 Schwetzingen (Von Sckell).
1788-1803 Englischer Garten, Munich (Rumford, Von Sckell).
1804 Nymphenburg, Munich (Von Sckell).
1820? Sans Souci (Switzer, Salzmann).
1840 Muskau (Pückler Muskau).

Reaction against extremes. Adaptation of informal design to large and small areas. "Carpet bedding".

Figure 6: Bremer Pond's entry for German gardens in his Outline History of Landscape Architecture (1936), vol. 2, 43.
Figure 6: Continued
lumbia University to serve as dean; Walter Gropius joined the faculty of architecture and was appointed chair the following year, remaining in that position until 1952. Under Hudnut’s leadership, the teaching of history was de-emphasized under the banner of modernism, inaugurating what has been described by some as a “purge” of the history books in the school’s library. It was also during this time (1936–38) that Garrett Eckbo, Daniel Kiley, and James Rose were students in the landscape architecture program, launching a period of design experimentation and a revolt against history that are now legendary. In 1939, Christopher Tunnard, having just published his Gardens in the Modern Landscape (1938), joined the department and began offering a course entitled “European Landscape Development.” Emphasizing modern trends in European garden design, especially as they related to innovations in painting and sculpture, his chairmanship from 1939 to 1942 reinforced the general tendency that was sweeping over the restructured School of Design.

So how did the teaching of landscape history, and of Pückler in particular, fare during this period of ideological change? The answer, perhaps surprisingly, is that it managed quite well. Documents from 1942–43, for example, show that the history of landscape architecture continued to be a required course. Even in the midst of “purge” and

Figure 7: Lantern slide of Sanssouci in the Harvard collection created from a postcard. Courtesy of the Frances Loeb Library, Harvard Graduate School of Design.
“revolt,” or at least the talk of it, Chairman Pond continued to ensure that history received its proper due in the curriculum. One does notice a significant shift, however, in Pond’s reading lists, which begin to de-emphasize primary texts in response to the growth of the secondary literature. It is during this time that Pückler’s *Hints* is dropped from the reading assignments, and one sees the first instance in which students are asked to assess Pückler’s work on the basis of secondary sources. The seventh reading test in 1936, for example, requires students to summarize Marie Luise Gothein’s remarks on Pückler rather than analyze Pückler’s own text. This exam question would not have been possible when Pray was teaching the course because Gothein’s *History of Garden Art*, published in German in 1914, did not appear in its English edition until 1928 and was not acquired by Harvard’s library until 1935. This shift away from primary sources toward secondary literature would continue in Pond’s teaching throughout the 1940s, when Pückler’s *Hints* remained absent from reading lists but his ideas remained fair game for final examination questions.

One might also ask why, then, during this period of emphasis on modernism and the future, that the works of a nineteenth-century German prince continued to be of relevance at all. For much of Pückler’s appeal to Harvard landscape architects during the first three decades of the program had been his usefulness to the two dominant paradigms of landscape practice during those years: (1) the design of country estates, and (2) city planning. The former avenue of work had largely disappeared due to the economic upheavals of the Great Depression. The latter discipline had gradually developed an identity distinct from landscape architecture. After having been introduced into the landscape curriculum by James Sturgis Pray in 1909–10, city planning had become a separate degree program by 1923 and its own school by 1929, with Henry Vincent Hubbard as the first chairman. Pückler’s influence on city planning in early twentieth-century America through Charles Eliot had, of course, been profound. When John Nolen wrote the opening “Note” to Pückler’s *Hints* in 1917, he took great care to highlight this aspect of his legacy: “Fürst von Pückler-Muskau was not only one of the best interpreters of the landscape art of his time, he was also a prophet of city planning. More than a hundred years ago he dwelt upon the necessity for natural and picturesque beauty in great cities, giving as an example the open parks and irregular streets of London.” So with the splintering of what had just a few years prior been a more integrated form of practice and education, one of the most compelling reasons for studying Pückler in Harvard’s landscape program no longer existed.

Pückler’s continued relevance at Harvard during these years can best be explained by a certain shift in thinking about landscape design that
was rooted in modernism itself. A good example of this new conceptualization can be found in Bremer Pond’s “Report to the Committee of the GSD regarding the curriculum for instruction in landscape architecture, March 17, 1943.” In this report, Pond emphasizes the effect of changing economic conditions and technical innovations on the scope of the profession, which in the years following World War II would have to concern itself primarily with housing, recreation, transportation systems, and large-scale government initiatives rather than projects for private, wealthy individuals. The key to mastering this new situation, Pond believed, was to grasp that the fundamental character of landscape design is “space.” He writes: “The men practicing this [traditional] form of [landscape] design primarily handled Space, learning to design in Space and Space Relations, and from the nature of its problems this idea has been always the ‘basic principle’ of landscape architecture. . . . The major function of the landscape architect will remain primarily ‘space design’ since he deals with the landscape in both its broadest as well as in its more restricted form.”

The ideas expressed in this quotation bear more than a passing resemblance to an article by Charles Downing Lay in the January 1918 issue of Landscape Architecture magazine entitled “Space Composition.” In that essay, Lay argues that the fundamental element of landscape design is space—not form, color, or some other attribute—and he claims that an intuitive understanding of this principle by earlier designers such as Humphry Repton and Charles Eliot, among others, was ultimately responsible for the success of their work. (The inclusion of Lay’s article among the required readings for the landscape design course L.A. 2.b-c in 1949 attests to postwar interest in this topic.) Whether Pond had Lay’s 1918 article in mind when he wrote his curriculum report cannot be determined, but the ascendancy of modernist ideology at the GSD made the times ripe for reassessing some of the classics on the basis of what could now be appreciated as their abstract spatial qualities. It would not be Pond who gave Pückler this contemporary makeover, however, but a professor who had joined the Harvard faculty the same year that the modernist Christopher Tunnard had arrived: Norman T. Newton.

Norman T. Newton (1950–66) to the Present

Newton began teaching the landscape history course after Pond stepped down from the chairmanship in 1950. Newton’s reading assignments from 1952 show that not only was Hints back on the required list, but students were expected to read even more of Pückler’s text (3–9, 13–30, 39–47, 113–25) than in the early days of Pond. However, it is not just the
number of pages that is of interest here. For if we take a close look at which sections Newton decided were important, we see that his selection is almost the perfect inverse of Pond’s. That is, Newton assigned everything that Pond did not, and vice versa. In brief, Pond had made sure that students read every practical suggestion that Pückler had written, from the layout of roads and paths to the physical preparation of soils for planting. And they had been tested on the same. One gets the sense that Pückler, far from being viewed as a historical figure through whom we might better understand nineteenth-century German culture, served more handily as a dispenser of practical how-to advice for the here and now. For Newton, the lessons to be learned from Pückler were somewhat different, and this understanding is reflected in his choice of readings. Instead of the nitty-gritty details of construction, Newton focuses on what Pückler has to say about the grand sweep of things, typified by his remarks on general theory at the beginning of the treatise and by the comprehensive description of the park as viewed by carriage ride in the second half. Newton’s concern is with the conception of the whole, not the execution of the parts.

If we look closely at the reading assignment for 1958, we begin to understand better the new perspective he brought to Pückler’s work. For listed directly above Pückler’s Hints is the well-known modernist classic Space, Time and Architecture (1941) by Siegfried Giedion. Even more directly than Lay’s comments on the spatial basis of landscape design, it is Giedion’s language that shows up in Newton’s description of Muskau Park. In Design on the Land, Newton writes:

The crowning glory of the park...is the firm integrity of its magnificent pastoral spaces. Here Pückler seems to have revealed most clearly the innate understanding of spatial structure—the awareness of spaces as components of design—sought in vain among the usual English landscape gardening works. It cannot with any certainty be stated that Pückler was conscious of this; obviously he did not write of space as a working material of design. Yet in this masterful creation of his one sees again and again the handling of spatial sequences on clearly enunciated sight-lines—first a large sunny space, then a shadowy constricted space, next a still larger sunny one again—with a kind of pulsation that imparts a vibrant, living quality to the entire great composition.

This Giedionesque vocabulary is amplified even further in Newton’s discussion of Pückler’s use of variety, where he states, “It is doubtful that the prince ever thought in such a twentieth-century term as that of space-
time. Yet he seemed to sense intuitively the dynamic quality of the time dimension, whether in recognizing the variation of light at different times of the day or in calling for changes of viewpoint as one progresses along a given travelway.”39 And if on this point we also consult Newton’s lecture notes, which formed the basis for Design on the Land, we find the following phrases: “Dynamism—conscious use of parallax; variety in changing views with time; space-time sense.”40 If we look at the Thomas Sears photographs in the slide collection, some of which Newton used for his book, we can see examples of what Newton referred to as “parallax” (Figure 8). Newton’s desire to communicate Pückler’s relevance to his audience of mid-twentieth century design students is quite understandable, so perhaps it should come as no surprise that he would use the language of space-time and parallax to drive home his point. For as Newton reminded his students each year in the course’s opening lecture: when practicing history one should, in his opinion, “detach from time and look for present helpfulness.”41

Pückler remained part of the Harvard curriculum after Newton’s retirement in 1966, most notably during the tenure of historian Mirka Benes from 1988 to 2005.42 Benes’s annual lectures on Pückler were part of a more extensive treatment of early nineteenth-century Germany that encompassed the work of Sckell, Lenné, Schinkel, and others. Concerned especially with the rise of the public sphere and the incipient development of regional planning, or “land embellishment” (Landesverschönerung), Benes’s treatment of the period foreshadowed a different way in which Pückler would be put to pedagogical use at Harvard within just a few years. In the fall term 2002, Carl Steinitz, the Alexander and Victoria Wiley Professor of Landscape Architecture and Planning, organized a studio in collaboration with the Anhalt University of Applied Sciences to envision future scenarios for Bad Muskau and its surrounding cultural landscape.43 Without delving into the details of this study, it is enough in this context to underscore its significance as the most recent high point in a long chronology. For it illustrates that the landscape architecture department at Harvard, having been drawn to Pückler’s work from its very inception, continues to engage with that legacy in creative ways that exceed the bounds of historical study.

Conclusion

The significance of this institutional history lies primarily in the effects that the specific approaches to teaching Pückler at Harvard have had on the American reception of his work, as well as on American historiography of nineteenth-century German landscape architecture more broadly. Several of these effects have been noted in passing, but it will be helpful
to summarize them. Certainly, much of the emphasis on Pückler’s work at Harvard can be traced to the influence of Olmsted and Eliot during the early formation of the landscape program. Their appreciation for Pückler was deeply felt, and they imparted their firsthand knowledge of his work.
to colleagues and students looking for precedents useful to their own endeavors. With the expansion of historical knowledge during the chairmanships of James Sturgis Pray and Bremer Pond, one might have expected a concurrent broadening of the history curriculum to include more of the German landscape tradition, especially considering Pray’s professional connections in Germany and the translation of Goethein’s History of Garden Art in 1928. The latter contains a rather compressed account of the nineteenth century, to be sure, but it does treat Pückler as one among several roughly equal figures rather than as the main protagonist. It is true that Pond included a number of works by Ludwig von Sckell in his lectures, but one is left to wonder why after having turned to Loudon for information on Prussian gardens, he did not also make use of the Encyclopaedia’s extensive entry on Lenné’s Volkspark in Magdeburg (1824–36). Considering that this essay appears under the heading “Public Parks,” a subject of considerable contemporary interest, it would have been a logical choice for inclusion in lectures and assigned readings.44

In order to realize just how much was missing from the American version of German landscape history, one need look no further than Hermann Jäger’s Gartenkunst und Gärten, sonst und jetzt (1888). Devoting approximately eighty pages to the German nineteenth century alone, Jäger’s account highlights the contributions of Sckell, Pückler, and Lenné, but also gives considerable space to many others, including Gustav Meyer, Eduard Petzold, Eduard Neide, and Rudolf Siebeck, who according to Jäger “chose their own path.”45 Somewhat surprisingly, Jäger’s book was included on Harvard’s reading lists from 1904 to 1914, and the copy in the landscape library was part of the collection bequeathed by Charles Eliot.46 Nevertheless, despite the fact that this more detailed history of the German tradition was not only available but was also required reading during the early years of the program, it never became established within standard narratives of the nineteenth century.

Newton’s treatment of Pückler in Design on the Land becomes more comprehensible when placed in the context of this institutional history. For his decision to devote an entire half chapter to Pückler—to the exclusion of all other German designers—simply underscores a viewpoint that had been present in Harvard’s scholarly tradition all along. This is not to suggest that the attention given to Pückler over the years at Harvard has been unwarranted, but that what has been until recently a very narrow view of German landscape history among American scholars can largely be traced to the influence of historians in this department. As the reception of Pückler’s work continues to expand beyond this tradition, it can be hoped that a more comprehensive understanding of its relation to other contemporary developments will gradually emerge.
Notes


2 Harvard University, School of Landscape Architecture, Annual Pamphlets 1900–01 to 1923–24, 2 vols. in 1, Frances Loeb Library Special Collections (abbreviated hereafter as FLL/S) Rare Ref H261d, 1:9.

3 Arthur A. Shurtleff, “Landscape Architecture: Notes of the lectures given during the year 1900 at Robinson Hall,” 2 vols., FLL/S Rare NAB 280 Sh562. Harvard’s copy of Hirschfeld’s Theorie der Gartenkunst (1779–85) is part of the collection bequeathed by Charles Eliot.

4 The museum was under the leadership of Kuno Francke, professor of German literature. The designer was the Dresden architect German Bestelmeyer.

5 “Landscape Architecture 1 (Fine Arts 1f.) 1912–1913 (Second Half-year) Third and Fourth Reports,” UAV 332.148, subseries 3, box 9, folder “L.A. 1a 1912 to June 1919,” Harvard University Archives. Harvard’s copy of Leibniz, Kant, Schopenhauer, Goethe, Hegel, and even Hirschfeld, the latter for whom there was no published English edition.

6 Harvard University, School of Landscape Architecture, Annual Pamphlets 1900–01 to 1923–24, FLL/S Rare Ref H261d.


8 Because the translations are not attributed, readers in 1915 might have assumed that Parsons had provided them himself, especially considering that The Art of Landscape Architecture includes translated quotations from Leibniz, Kant, Schopenhauer, Goethe, Hegel, and even Hirschfeld, the latter for whom there was no published English edition.

9 Fifty-one pages are from Hints. Seven pages are from Tour of England.


11 Ibid., 363, plate 21. For Hubbard’s travels with Olmsted, see Simo, Coalescing, 16.


13 John Nolen, introductory note to Hints on Landscape Gardening, by Hermann, Fürst von Pückler-Muskau (Boston, 1917).

14 Hubbard and Kimball, Introduction, 364.

15 Blanchard was in Germany from May 19 to June 19, 1921, where his itinerary included Munich, Nuremberg, Würzburg, Dresden, Leipzig, Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen, Essen, and Cologne. His stay in Bremen included a meeting with Leberecht Migge. Raymond White Blanchard to James Sturgis Pray, June 15, 1921; July 8, 1921; July 13, 1921; Raymond White Blanchard to Theodora Kimball, Sept. 19, 1921; UAV 332.148, subseries 2, box 1, folder “Raymond White Blanchard,” HUA. Elbert Peets, the traveling fellowship winner for 1917–18 (postponed to 1920), also spent about a month in central Europe. Between July 23 and August 20 Peets visited Munich, Vienna, Prague, Dresden, Berlin, Potsdam, Hamburg, Bremen, Essen, Düsseldorf, and Cologne. Given his travel route, it is quite possible that he went to Park Muskau as well. UAV 332.148, subseries 2, box 1, folder “Elbert Peets,” HUA.

16 “Distribution of Time, Academic Year 1937–38,” UAV 510.20.5, Course data, problems and miscellaneous records of B. W. Pond, 1917–1930, box 1, folder “Miscellany,” HUA.

17 “Landscape Architecture 1a (Fine Arts 1f) Summary, 1935–36,” UAV 510.20.5, box 1, folder “Course Material,” HUA. “Drawings in the History Courses” and “Course Meetings,” UAV 510.20.5, box 2, folder “L.A. 1a (F.A. 1f) Readings, Tests, etc. 1928–32,” HUA.
13, 1940.

Minutes of the Toparian Club

on February 5, 1940; and Henry Russell Hitchcock,

ture

on modernism were soon followed by others, including Dean Joseph Hudnut,

designs, bridges, and temples, fortunately seldom carried out, owe their objectionable fea-
tures to the influence, if not the pencil, of Schinkel” (ibid., xi).

22 Samuel Parsons, introduction to Hints, xxixn. In another passage of the introduction, however, Parsons disparages Schinkel’s influence on Pückler: “It is difficult to understand how Prince Pückler could have been so carried away by his admiration of Schinkel whose fame has not come down to us with any real distinction. Schinkel’s undoubted versatility both in architecture and painting and his great learning in Greek art gave him vogue at the time. It is probably that many of the extraordinary conceptions found in Pückler’s flower designs, bridges, and temples, fortunately seldom carried out, owe their objectionable features to the influence, if not the pencil, of Schinkel” (ibid., xi).


24 UAV 322.148, subseries 3, box 3, folder “L.A. 1a, Sept. 1929–June 1935,” HUA. For several years beginning in 1937, Pückler is dropped from the reading lists and exams, but during the years 1937–39 students were still asked on the final exam to compare examples of the naturalistic style in England, France, and Germany. UAV 322.148, subseries 3, box 6, folder “L.A. 1 and 2, Sept. 1935–June 1940,” HUA.

25 Simo, Coalescing, 30.


27 Of the many ways one can track the rapid rise of modernism at Harvard, one of the most unusual is through the Minutes of the Toparian Club. Compiled by members of a social club for landscape architecture students, it includes both typed and handwritten accounts of guest lectures, competitions, field trips, parties, receptions, and other events held from April 7, 1914, to June 9, 1941. The first mention is a lecture delivered by Fletcher Steele on March 22, 1932, entitled “Modern Trends in Landscape Architecture,” in which Steele includes his own design at Naumkeag as an example. The next is a lecture given by James Rose (while still a student) on November 5, 1937, entitled “Modern Landscape Architecture,” which attempts to draw a distinction between “modern” and “modernistic” design. These lectures on modernism were soon followed by others, including Dean Joseph Hudnut, “The Modern Garden” on May 13, 1938; Christopher Tunnard, “Modern Trends in Landscape Architecture” on February 5, 1940; and Henry Russell Hitchcock, “Modern Garden Design” on May 13, 1940. Minutes of the Toparian Club FLL/S SB469.5.H3 T66x, pp. 157, 202, 217, 247, 250.

28 “Required Courses for B.L.A. 1942–1943,” UAV 510.20.5, box 1, folder “Miscellany,” HUA. In this document the course is listed as Arch.Sci. 1c, “History of Landscape Architecture.”


31 Nolen, introductory note to *Hints*.

32 Bremer Pond, “Report to the Committee of the GSD regarding the curriculum for instruction in landscape architecture, March 17, 1943,” UAV 510.120, pp. 4–5, HUA.


34 “Syllabi, course outlines and reading lists in Landscape Architecture, 1930–1948,” HUC 8548.2.1, HUA.


36 This contrast seems to have been deliberate, for contained within the boxes of Newton’s archived course materials is a copy of Bremer’s 1936 *Outline History of Landscape Architecture*. HUGFP 110.65, box 1, folder “L.A. 1–3a, 1–1b course lists, notes, exams,” HUA.

37 “Landscape Architecture 1–1b, Architectural Sciences 105, First Assigned Reading, March 12, 1958,” UAV 322.148, subseries 3, box 6, folder “L.A. I and II, Sept. 1935–June 1940,” HUA. The page ranges for Giedion in this reading are 101–08, 124–28, 184–89, and for the second reading, 190–211, 315–18, 465–501. The “Hour Examination” for the same date includes the following question: “State briefly the differences, if any, that you find between the attitudes of Pückler-Muskau and Downing toward impressing the beholder of a work of ‘landscape gardening’ with the effort involved in its creation” (ibid.). Note: Given the document’s date, it is not clear why it was placed within this folder.


39 Ibid., 239.

40 “Pückler-Muskau,” HUGFP 110.65, box 1, folder “Norman Newton, L.A. 1–Notes on the development of landscape architecture,” HUA.

41 “Introductory,” ibid.


43 Carl Steinitz et al., *Alternative Futures for the Prince Pueckler Cultural Landscape* (Cambridge, Mass., 2003). This was not the first time that Steinitz had dealt with planning issues in eastern Germany, having led a similar studio for the Dessau-Wörlitzer Gartenreich in 1997 and another for the Spreewald several years prior to that.

44 Loudon, *Encyclopaedia*, 1202–08.


46 Harvard University, School of Landscape Architecture, *Annual Pamphlets 1900–01 to 1923–24*, FLL/S Rare Ref H261d.