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## **Space, state, territory, region and habitat: Alpine gardens in the Habsburg countries**

BOTANICAL GARDENS REPRESENT institutionalised space, in which epistemes are not only present as elements, but are put into practice on many different levels. Moreover, the self-referential connection to space of each botanical garden receives its dimensions by various space connotations, and variable scientific allocations of meaning also communicate with entirely different, overlapping political spaces of connotation. The aim of this paper is to look at constellations between politics and science as well as between concepts and practices, but also to try to answer the question in what context this specific form of a botanical garden, namely an alpine garden established itself and what scientific questions were solved in those gardens.

It was no coincidence that the first alpine garden in the Habsburg Countries was laid out in the centre of this political formation, in Vienna, and here even within the Imperial Gardens of Schönbrunn Palace. While the entire palace area with the system of Roman figures represented the traditional cosmic order of the imperial power with reference to Rome regardless of space and time, the so called “Dutch Garden” represented a place within the same area, in which plant mercantilism abounded and in which getting a hold of colonial resources after successful collecting expeditions took place. However, together with the “Tiroler Hof” as a counter place to the “Dutch Garden” and its exotic flair, the alpine garden within the Schönbrunn area showed the connection to rural areas, to a region invested with a special nature and culture (also called “fatherland”) and owes its origins (around 1800) to the initiative of Archduke Johann, a liberal opponent of the Emperor Franz II. A representation of the flora of all Habsburg Countries, whose political growing together of judicially different territories to a single state developed, was not realised in Schönbrunn, but at another place, namely in the gardens of Prince Eugene in Belvedere Palace (Vienna), in correspondence with the floristic activities of the botanist Nikolaus Host.

About fifty years later, the idea of an alpine garden was not realised in the center of the Habsburg Monarchy but at its periphery, namely in the botanical garden of the University of Innsbruck, in the heart of the Alps. Anton Kerner (as of 1877 von Marilaun), a professor of natural history who was the head of the botanical garden from 1860 to 1877, turned the garden into a centre of internationally renowned alpine studies. The cultivation of alpine plants, carried out in long-term experiments on various experimental surfaces and various altitudes was to document non-hereditary changes caused by the environment. The controversial hypothesis of characteristics acquired by hereditary transmission was being discussed.

In the midst of the mountains, the variable habitat formed the focus of the investigation, while Kerner was laying out the garden area in Innsbruck planted with alpine plants as a fixed “schematic reflection of orographic and geognostic conditions in the Tyrol”, which was to represent the Tyrol in its entirety. While at first, the alpine plants had been transferred from the periphery to the centre in Vienna and the work of the botanists was limited to collection activities — which, at the same time, documented the idea of a stabile unchangeability of the large variety of the alpine plants — the Innsbruck concept mobilised the consciousness on the chances of organisms as modifications of habitats, while, at the same time, the origin of alpine plants was represented in a more stable schema of garden design.

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