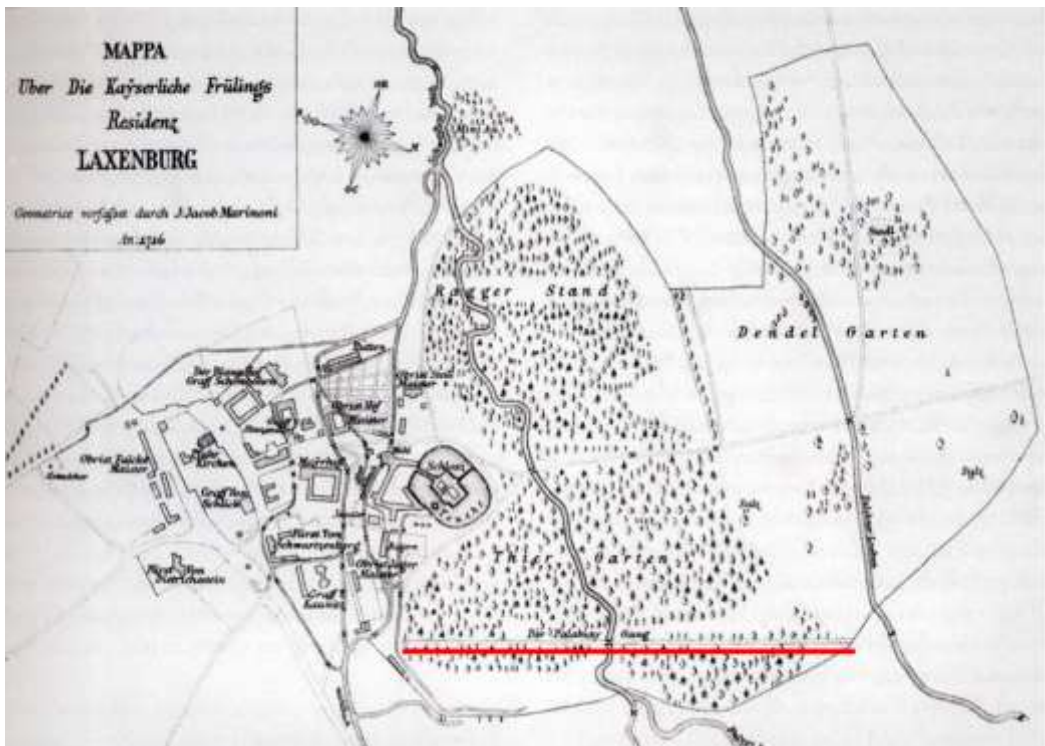


A road ... like any other?

Looking on the internet for traces of ‘jeu de mail’ courses can give nice surprises. By accident, I found one course in Austria, about 20 km south of Vienna, at Laxenburg Castle. In the park of the castle, many roads have disappeared, new ones appeared, or existing ones have got a new direction. But there is one road which is still in the same place and as straight as plotted in the 17th century: the ‘Palamay Gang’.

‘Der Palamay Gang’ just above the red line. With about 750 metres, the alley had a moderate length. – Detail of the drawing by Johann Jakob in ‘Mappa Uber die Kayserl: Herrschaft Laxenburg, 1716. – <http://laxenburger.blogspot.com>



The alley, bordered with a low fence, had a length of 1002 feet (ca 750 metres) and had a surface of battered earth. The mail course was already in use during the reign of Emperor Leopold I (1640-1705). Joseph von Österreich-Lothringen (1741-1790), the later emperor Joseph II, was a keen mail player in his younger years. He had the force and the skill to play the course in three strokes.

(‘Der Schloßpark Laxenburg.-Ein Führer durch Geschichte und Gegenwart’, Géza Hajós –Laxenburg, Schloß Laxenburg Betriebsgesellschaft, 1998).

The course suffered from flooding, and it was regularly repaired; it was closed in 1804, probably also due to lack of players, who had chosen less strenuous divertissements.



Today, the Palamay Gang is asphalted and is in use as a walking path. – Photo: Helmut – <http://laxenburger.blogspot.com>, 2016
