

The subject of this study is a small castle of Vrchotovy Janovice and its last owner, baroness Sidonie Nadherná. Originally a medieval fortress, during 18th and 19th century it was turned into a romantic chateau surrounded by an impressive landscape park. The last owner of the castle, baroness Sidonie Nadherná (1885 - 1950), a highly educated and independent woman, became a close friend of the two outstanding figures of Central European culture, poet Rainer Maria Rilke and essayist and critic Karl Kraus. Both were visiting the castle and for both it became an inspiration in their writing.

During the WWII, the castle served as the headquarters of SS-troops and after a short period of attempts to recover it, Sidonie Nadherná left to exile in England in 1949. Throughout following years, castle and park were subject to gradual devastation, its owner being almost forgotten. Fortunately, in late 1950's, it became a property of National Museum. In the early 1960's letters to Sidonie from both Rilke and Kraus were published and became an important resource for studies of their lives.

Especially by Karl Kraus, the publishing of the letters revealed many yet unknown aspects of his personality and writing. For him, the relation to Sidonie Nadherná and his stays in park of Janovice, were the very impulse to create his own lyrical poetry, entirely different from his hitherto known polemic works. Sidonie's work in designing and keeping the park became for Kraus a metaphor of his own social critics and in their personal relation the park was turned into a sanctuary of their passion, a parallel to a Garden of Eden itself.

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