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SACRUM OF NATURE IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE BUDAPEST VÁROSLIGET URBAN PARK

EVOLUTION OF SPACE COMPOSITION ASPECTS IN A 2 CENTURY-LONG HISTORY

SACRUM NATUREY W KOMPOZYCJI PARKU MIEJSKIEGO VÁROSLIGET W BUDAPESZCIE

ASPEKTY EWOLUCJI KOMPOZYCJI PRZESTRZENNEJ W DWÓCH WIEKACH - DŁUGA HISTORIA

ABSTRACT

*She (Nature) is an eternal present. Past and future are unknown to her.
The present is her eternity. She is beneficent.*
J.W.von Goethe

Goethe is speaking about the ever-lasting value and importance of Nature. Even in today's luminous, rushing and digital world, Goethe's faithful idea and the theory of Christian Hirschfeld, which brought to life the 18th-century urban public park movement, represents a value. Though the citizens' use and habits are varied in every age and region, society, the individuals need physical and spiritual recreation offered by urban parks. The overall goal of the research is to highlight the role of natural elements and urban landscape character in space composition means on the example of the two centuries old historic urban park in Budapest, the Városliget, one of the very first urban public parks.

Main research questions: What are the main landscape and nature structures and elements that define the composition? What are the main changes in compositional means in the long evolution of the park in the stress of urban development and social change? Can we find universal design means for the general park use forms or does the local spirit play the dominant role in public park design?

This study focuses on the composition means over time, in the transformation process of the Budapest Városliget, from the first landscaping and replantation of the swampy area in the outskirts of Pest town at turn of 18–19th century when Nature and her humanized garden and park forms became increasingly recognized as means and purposes of spiritual, physical and societal renewal.

The research is based on analyses of ecological, landscape aspects and features, of social, public and political input into planning and building that affected the composition and the construction of the urban public park. The analyses focus on the significant momentums of park evolution, while observations focus on the relations between changing social and landscape aspects in the design and planning process.

Keywords: urban public park, planting design, landscape garden, composition, Budapest Városliget urban park

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J.W.von Goethe

Goethe mówi o wiecznej wartości i znaczeniu natury. Nawet w dzisiejszym pospiesznym i zdigitalizowanym świecie, idea Goethego oraz teoria Christiana Hirschfelda, która ożywiła ruch miejskiego parku publicznego w XVIII wieku, stanowi wartość. Pomimo, iż sposób użytkowania i nawyki mieszkańców miast różnią się w zależności od wieku i regionu, społeczeństwo i jego poszczególne jednostki potrzebują fizycznego i duchowego wypoczynku, oferowanego przez parki miejskie. Głównym celem badań jest podkreślenie roli naturalnych elementów i charakteru krajobrazu miejskiego w kompozycji przestrzennej, na przykładzie dwustuletniego historycznego parku miejskiego Városliget w Budapeszcie - jednego z pierwszych publicznych parków miejskich.

Główny problem badawczy brzmi: jakie są główne krajobrazowe i naturalne struktury i elementy definiujące kompozycję? Jakie główne zmiany w kompozycji wpłynęły na długą ewolucję parku w zachodzącej presji rozwoju miasta i zmian społecznych? Czy możemy odnaleźć uniwersalne metody projektowania dla ogólnego użytkowania parku oraz czy lokalny duch miejsca pełni rolę dominantny w projektowaniu parku publicznego? Badania koncentrują się na znaczeniu czynnika kompozycji, zmieniającego się pod wpływem czasu, w procesie transformacji Városliget w Budapeszcie, od pierwszego zagospodarowania i wprowadzenia nasadzeń na bagnistym obszarze na obrzeżach miasta Peszt na przełomie XVIII i XIX w., kiedy natura i jej kulturowe ogrody i formy parków stawały się coraz częściej uznawane za środki i cele duchowej, fizycznej oraz społecznej odnowy.

Badania opierają się na analizie ekologicznych i krajobrazowych aspektów i cech społecznych, publicznych i politycznych, w planowaniu i budowaniu, które wpłynęły na kompozycję i konstrukcję publicznego parku miejskiego. Analizy skupiają się na istotnych momentach ewolucji parku, podczas gdy obserwacje koncentrują się na relacjach pomiędzy zmieniającymi się aspektami społecznymi i krajobrazowymi w procesie projektowania i planowania.

Słowa kluczowe: publiczny park miejski, projektowanie roślin, ogród krajobrazowy, kompozycja, park miejski Városliget w Budapeszcie

1. AIM OF THE RESEARCH

This research has been carried out in the frame of HYPPE research program opened by the Faculty of Landscape Architecture and Urbanism of Budapest, and it concentrates on the space structure analysis of 19th century urban public parks in Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Austria, Czech Republic and Poland. The urban park of Városliget, as the Hungarian case study in the frame of the HYPPE program, has been in the forefront of the research of public park movement together with the change of functions and urban development issues through two centuries long history of the Városliget. Several publications appeared on Városliget in the past couple of years with deep analyses of the ethical, aesthetical, and ecologic and design principles aspects of this historic urban park. Though the social functions and the usage forms and intensity have been surveyed from time to time, the most appropriate and relevant functional analyses were made in 2013-14¹. Owing to the new governmental development

ideas to create a new museum island with the intensification of the Városliget, the tree stock has been also surveyed. This database was fundamental for the survey of characteristic tree species and canopy, the witnesses of centuries passed by and in the city park, and that may reflect the early romantic period of the public park.

The overall goal of the research is to highlight the role of natural elements and urban landscape character in space composition means on the example of the two centuries old historic urban park in Budapest, the Városliget, one of the very first urban public parks in the world.

2. INTRODUCTION INTO THE SOCIAL AND URBAN LANDSCAPE IMPORTANCE OF THE VÁROSLIGET

The Városliget belongs to the buffer zone of the UNESCO World Heritage Site that is famous of the unique and traditional urban landscape character and the built heritage of the city along the central part of

¹ Szilágyi K., Zelenák F., Kanczelné Veréb M., Gerzson L., Balogh P.I., Czeglédi Cs., Limits of ecological load in public parks – on the example of Városliget, *Applied Ecology and Environmental Research* (ISSN: 1589-1623) (eISSN: 1785-0037) 13: (2) 2014, p. 427-448; Szilágyi K., Zelenák F., Fekete O. Spance structure and open space recreation in

time dimensions, XLIV. *Teka Komisji Urbanistyki i Architektury*, Kraków 2016, p. 277-282, eISSN 2450-0038; Zelenák F., Balogh P. I., 2015, *The layers of park use. Visitor surveys of the Városliget in Budapest since the 90`s. Landscapes in Flux, ECLAS Conference Tartu, Book of proceedings*, 464-469. ISBN: 978-9949-536-97-9.

the Danube, together with the Andrassy street, the most important historic urban axes of the Hungarian capital. The 98-hectare public park is a significant element of the urban green infrastructure. This is the only public green area open for the residents of the inner districts. Park users love and understand the importance of Nature, the old trees and the landscape character of the park according to the 2013-14 park use survey made by the Department of Garden and Open Space Design².

3. RESEARCH METHOD

As a first step, the original design concept of the Városliget was analyzed in the scope of spatial composition and planting design principles. Then the existing tree stock was analyzed, where the mature trees were differentiated by taking into account the recently, in 2015 finished detailed tree register of the park. By the trunk diameter and the species growth potential, the age of each individual tree was calculated so as to select the trees that may be witnesses of the park's evolution from the very first building period and through all important development momentums up to the early 20th century.

The restricted, a 100-year wide focus of the tree canopy analyses was a fundamental decision inspired partly by the topic of the Cracow Conference, but at the same time, we are definitely sure of the spiritual and philosophical meaning of mature trees. A century-old tree stock is more than a natural value, it can be, and moreover, it should be seen as a sacrificed phenomenon for humanity with respect to Nature.

On the basis of tree stock evaluation, the compositional principles of planting design of tree-level have been defined and compared in the highlighted historic periods and momentums of the park.

4. SPACE COMPOSITIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE HIGHLIGHTED MOMENTUMS

During its history the site of the Városliget changed from time to time in its functions and ecological character, but from the end of the 18th century the governance and the urban society of Pest town arrived at a stage where, on the basis of the new era of Enlightenment, recreation and the love of nature appeared in the urban development and beautifying concepts³.

² Szilágyi K., Zelenák F., Kanczlerne Veréb M., Gerzson L., Balogh P.I., Czeglédi Cs., *ibidem*.

³ Schams F. (1821) – In: Siklóssy L., (1931): *Hogyan épült Budapest? (How Budapest was built?)* Budapest, p. 30.-31.

The result was the birth of one of the very first public parks in Europe in the first decades of the 19th century.

The Budapest Városliget has been serving the citizens for more than 200 years. The park was once established at the edge of Pest town, marking out a new direction for urban development in the 19th century. By the Millennium in 1896, the urban development resulted in built-in urban ring around the park.

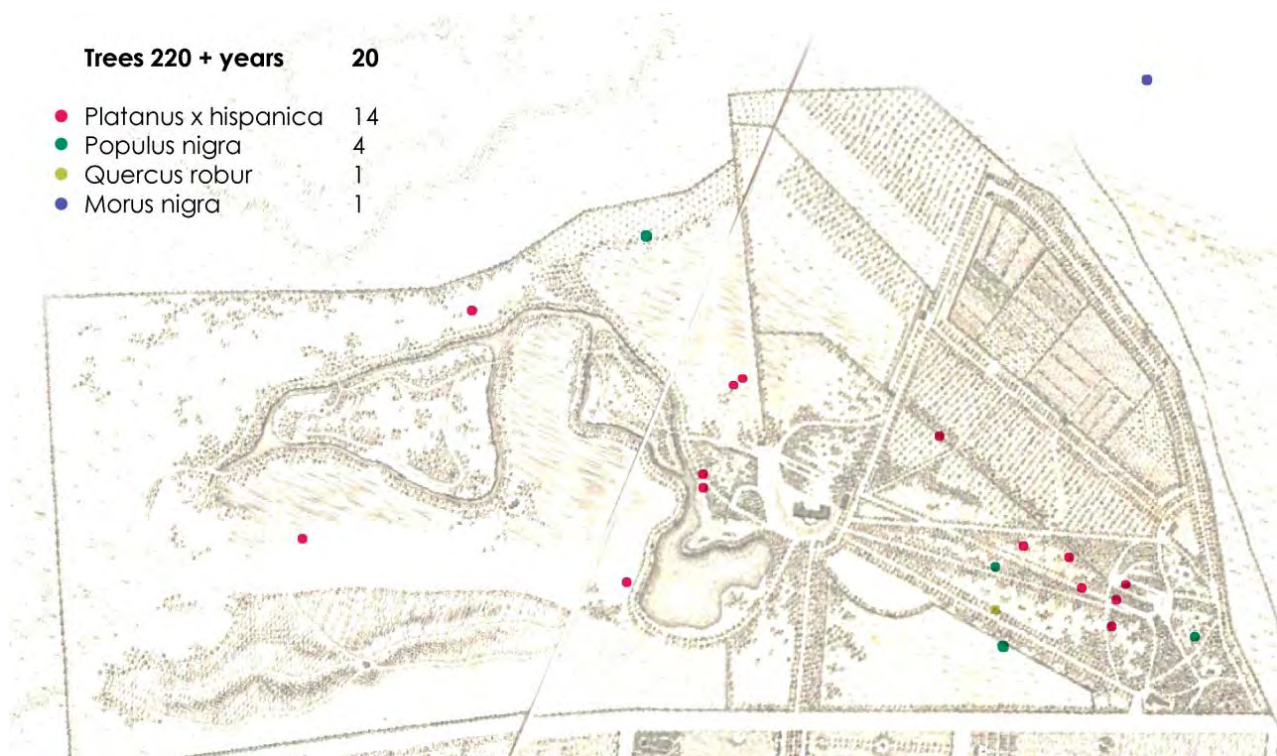
During its history, the park gave place to several events that required partial, in most cases only temporary built-up areas. Its territory hosted a grand variety of requisitions, but its recreational and urban ecological role always remained significant. The relief and clearing of the park was a target of several urban and green space development programs. The natural beauties of Városliget were comparable only to the ones of Margitsziget that time, and it's rich and diverse vegetation is still the most important value.

4.1. "Oxenflur" and "Stadt Wäldchen" – antecedents of Városliget

During the medieval ages the site was a rich royal game preserve, but later in the Ottoman times it became a marshy, sandy wasteland, called Oxenflur referring to its grazing functions. By the end of the 17th century, in accordance with the decree of Leopold the 1st, the area became the property of the Council of Pest. It was mostly used for grazing until intensive forestation was declared by Joseph the 2nd. As the process of forestation went on, more and more citizens visited the area for a walk or short excursions and even its name was changed into Stadt Wäldchen. The development of the town forest to a preferable recreational area was started by Archbishop Joseph Batthyány⁴.

The urban fabric importance of the Stadt Wäldchen has been strengthened by the double allée along the main street driving out the town center. The double allée of Platanus trees terminated at the small restaurant in the Town forest. The swamps to the left side have been dried out and drained in the form of a lake, while some orchards divided by new tree allées have been planted to the right. Twenty trees of four different species are recalling this very first character of this area: *Platanus x hispanica* (14), *Populus nigra* (4), *Quercus robur* (1), *Morus nigra* (1).

⁴ Archbishop of Esztergom, Cardinal (1727-1799), was a significant patronage of Baroque art in Hungary and one of the pioneers of the development of the public park of Városliget; Szilágyi K., Veréb M., *A Városliget 200 éve – Tervezési és parkhasználati változások egy városi park életében*, *4D Budapest*, 2014. 33, p. 20-45.



II. 1. Distribution of trees older than 220 years of the existing treestock, compared to the space structure of the public park before the realization of Városliget (base map: 1810 – Site survey of János Lipszky).

III. 1. Rozkład drzew starszych niż 220 lat w zestawieniu ze strukturą przestrzenną parku publicznego przed realizacją Városliget (mapa podstawowa: 1810 – badania terenowe Jánosa Lipszky'ego).

4.2. The first public park of Hungary

The Royal Beautifying Commission initiated the formation of “Stadt Wäldchen” into a public park in 1809⁵. The garden design plan was laid out by Heinrich Nebbien⁶ in 1813-16. It was evident to Nebbien that to make a town livable, the residents should be able to enjoy Nature, the green, representing the physical and mental refreshment. It should be an integrated part of the town, within reach, and realized in an imperishable, experiential and maintainable quality.

4.2.1. The original design

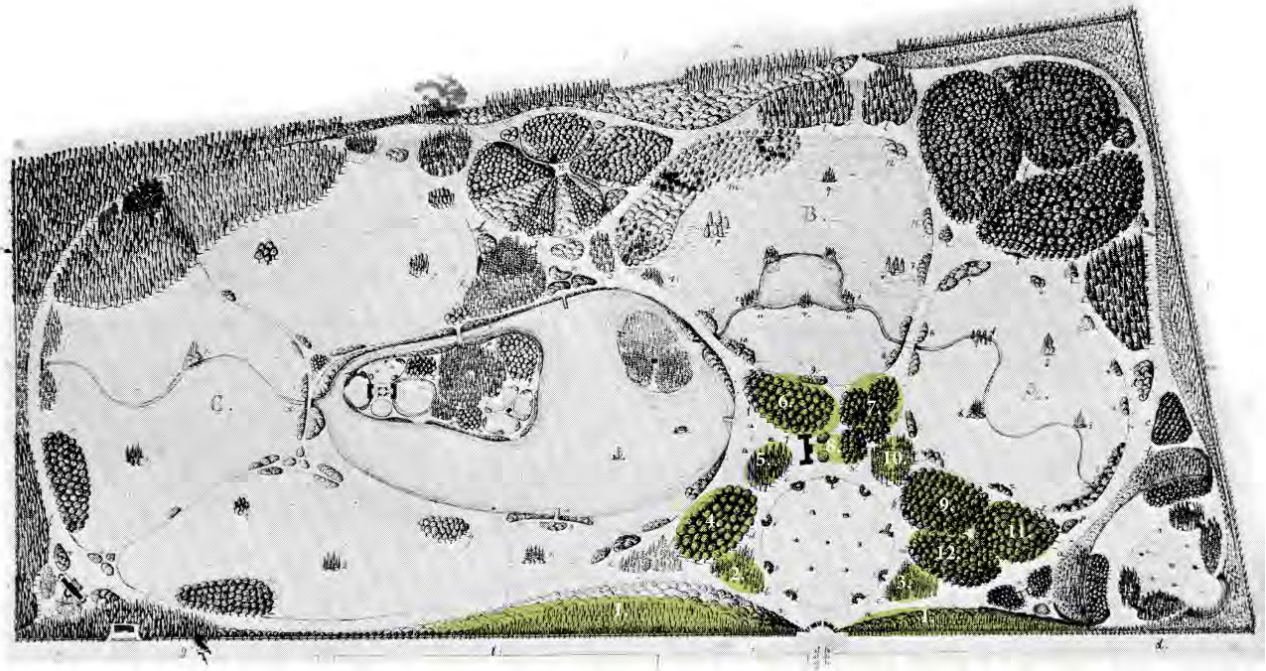
Woody vegetation was given a primary role in planting design of Nebbien. According to his concept, the colors are to influence the feelings while the crown forms have an impact on the conscious mind, and in this way the design is able to ensure a wide variety

of impressions for the park users. He applied at least two different forms and two different colours in each composition in the border planting of the park (1st group: 1. Populus nigra ‘Italica’ + Robinia pseudoacacia + Cytisus laburnum, 2. Pinus strobus + Betula pendula + Tamarix tetrandra, 3. Larix decidua + Spartium junceum), the smaller tree clumps around the entrance area were unified (1st group: 4. Platanus x hispanica, 5. Populus x canadensis, 6. Tilia tomentosa, 7. Gleditsia triacanthos, 8. Robinia pseudoacacia, 9. Acer platanoides, 11. Acer psudoplatanus, 12. Acer rubrum). In order to create more intimate atmosphere and to offer the impressions of an island of Nature in the urban context, Nebbien created closed space walls on the boundary of the park that were composed by evergreen and deciduous trees and elevated into the park space system with a shrub level.

The structure of the park was strictly defined by large clumps of deciduous and evergreen trees, woody areas, solitary trees and wide meadows. Nebbien tried to avoid using determined lines of trees or alleés. The only formal part of the Városliget was the so called Rondo, where a 190 meter diameter circular lawn appeared surrounded by a triple way system of a path and a riding and carriageway. This formal space form was planned for a promenade function

⁵ Schams F., *ibidem*.

⁶ Christian Heinrich Nebbien (1778–1841) was a German-born landscape architect, mainly active in Austria. His most famous creation is the Budapest Városliget urban park, and several castle gardens in the historic Hungary, like the Brunswick castle in Martonvásár, the Andrásy manor in Betliar, Slovakia, the castle park in Dolna Krupá, Slovakia, and the castle park of Savarsin in Romania.



and to highlight the entrance area of the park at the termination of the main urban axes, the Városligeti fasor.

Around the Rondo loose forms of tree clumps appeared, preparing the visitors for the landscape style park and for the experience of Nature. Each of these clumps was characteristic and uniform in colour and form, while strong contrast was given by the neighboring clumps. It is also remarkable, that in the entrance area (marked in green in 1st graph) there were no two identical tree clumps. The change of species in the separate clumps ensured an ever-changing new experience for the visitors and also the compositions could foster the orientation. Not only aesthetic reasons laid behind the strong concept of using only one or two tree species in each clump. This planting design concept created a clear woody situation where the spontaneous and natural renewal of the tree stock was a given possibility. Planting design reflects the same system both in tree and shrub level.

4.3. Mid-19th century, a 30 years after the park realization

Although the implementation of Városliget lasted at least 15 years, Nebbien's creation of garden art could only be partially implemented; some built structures had to be deleted out of the plan owing to the lack of investable money. Several parts, segments and elements of the park, but mostly its spirit did even faithfully represent the specific, romantic view of nature of that historic period. The spatial proportions and forms were constructed close to the original plan, though a significant area has already

II. 2. The original design of the Városliget, the former Stadt Wäldchen, by Henrich Nebbien, 1816.

III. 2. Oryginalny projekt Városliget, Stadt Wäldchen, Henrich Nebbien, 1816.

been taken for the construction of the first railway line along the north-west side of the park. In spite of the designer's strict intention to avoid architectural linear elements of tree allées, the great meadow still was fragmented by a double allée from a previous planting period and also some other smaller allées appeared in the park at the turns of the path system and through the meadows. Even though the Rondo was a very characteristic element of the design, no trees around remained around it from this time, presumably because the main entrance was by time to time in the focus of renewal concepts through the centuries.

4.4. 1896 - Millennium of the State Foundation

In 1896, around the 60% of the area of Városliget was utilized for an expositional area of the National Exhibition organized for the festivities of the Millennium of Hungarian State Foundation⁷. A great number of buildings and pavilions were built for the event that resulted in the building-in and the intensive utilization of the meadows and even some intensively wooded park areas. The new elements provoked the development of the path system, which

⁷ Jámbo I., The City Park of Nebbien, The public garden of Pest is 200 years old, *Transylvania Nostra*, 2015/1, p. 48-54.

fragmented the previous generous space-structure. Most of the 53 trees remained from this period are to be found outside of the expo area. This fact indicates that a significant tree felling was necessary for the new functions. As a compensation, remarkable tree plantation was also implemented. According to our survey, 243 specimens remained from the turn of the 20th century that is also an important proof of the stability of the new, fragmented space-structure, in a strong contrast to the Nebbien's large-scaled space structure and form.

During this period the Rondo was replanted by *Platanus x hispanica* individuals. The No.4 clump (Figure 1.), composed of *Platanus x hispanica* (141) in the Nebbien's plan, could have been replanted in the second part of the 19th century recalling the concept of the original design. In other planting design aspects, no intentions to recall the Nebbien's design concept could be observed. The original plantation concept of a high variety of unified tree clumps did dramatically disappear in the era of Hungarian Millennium. Allées of *Platanus x hispanica* were the most characteristic of that period; more than half of the planted trees a sycamore trees. But 20 other species appeared in the park too, and six of them were new specimens according to the planting design of Nebbien: *Quercus robur* (10), *Sophora japonica* (6), *Ulmus laevis* (4), *Celtis occidentalis* (9), *Morus alba* (1), *Broussonetia papyrifera* (1). (Figure 3.)

4.5. Reconstructions of Városliget in 1929

Following the Millennium events, some parts of the park were annexed to different institutional developments. In order to fulfill the infrastructural demands of the new functions and reorganize after the disappearing ones in 1929 Károly Råde⁸ draw up a reconstruction plan for the park. Unfortunately, the plan aimed rather to conserve the given spatial structure after the Millennium Expo period. The proportions of open areas and the densely planted clumps have been irreversibly changed. The small islands of green spaces fragmented by the new complicated path system were framed by trees, and only tiny grass areas were left in-between without any function.

⁸ Károly Råde (1864-1946) is a German-born gardener, a dendrologist, who was invited to Hungary in 1893 at the invitation of the Ministry of Agriculture for the development of the ornamental gardening department of the then Royal Horticultural Academy. Based on his plans, the Buda Arboretum was set up in 1893-94. Between 1912 and 1930 he was head of gardening of Budapest Horticulture Directorship. During the re-planning of the City Park, he aimed to develop the park to an even greater recreations capacity.

The plantation tendency of the turn of the century seems to be followed in this period. No significant, dense tree clumps are appearing, rather allées again along the path system and still *Platanus x hispanica* (114) is the dominant species. Three other species appear in remarkable number. 32 pieces of *Populus nigra* can be observed in the survey, which were previously planted and two other species following the previous planting tendency: *Sophora japonica* (15) and *Celtis occidentalis* (33). There are only a few more of new species in the park, in a small quantity: *Ailanthus altissima* (3), *Catalpa bignonioides* (1), *Pyrus piraster* (1), *Thuja orientalis* (1) and *Taxodium distichum* (2). (Figure 4.)

4.6. Today and tomorrow

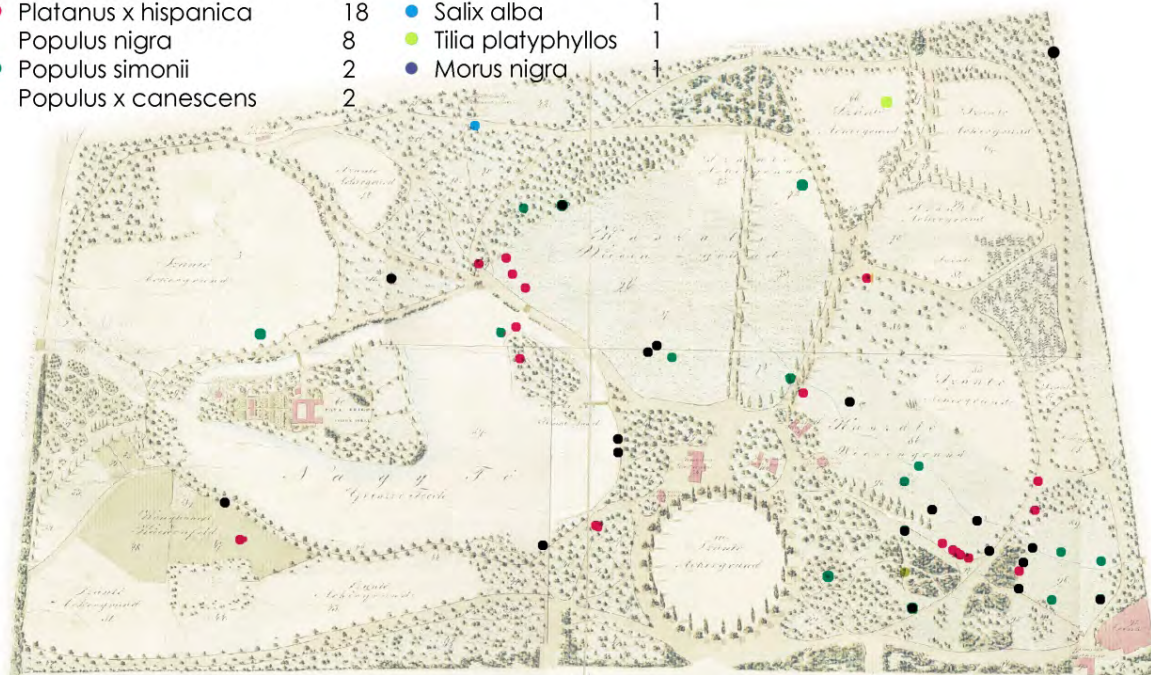
The space structure of the Városliget is loosened in its character nowadays. The little island formed in the turn of the twentieth century has disappeared. Only the witness trees, the formal Rondo and the lake remember the visitor on the original space structure. Even the transition between the city fabric and the public park has significantly changed in the last 80 years. The former entrance (Rondo) has been repositioned at the end of Andrassy Street. In the area connecting the two entrances – along the Dózsa György Boulevard – a new function appeared in the form of an 80 meters wide paved area, called Felvonulási (Parade) Square, which was used in the socialist area for military parades and for the state organized marches of workers on May 1st. Otherwise the wide longitudinal square along the south east border of the park was – and is – utilized for car parking. This intervention tore down a significant part of the park and cut even the eastern third part of the Rondo. Fortunately, most of the valuable mature trees forming the circular space still remained. The original plantation design has disappeared, the definite, dense clumps of trees are merged into one huge cloud of canopy. Only two meadows and the lake break its unity.

In 2016 a design competition was organized for the renewal of the Városliget.⁹ The winner concept has been inspired by the plans of Nebbien. Different density of tree plantation appears in the plan,

⁹ According to the government decree adopted in April 2014 a Museum Quarter of five new museum buildings is going to be built in the City Park until 2019 in the framework of a priority investment. The development leads to the significant increase of the proportion of the built area, currently at 5%, and extends the cultural touristic traffic to the entire surface of the park. An important part of the designated development areas has a valuable tree stock. The government's plans for the renewal of the park "hosting" the new museums inevitably puts the Capital's 200 year-old park in a vulnerable and subordinated position.

● **Trees 220 + years** 20
 ● **Trees 220 - 180 years** 33

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|---|
| ● <i>Platanus x hispanica</i> | 18 | ● <i>Salix alba</i> | 1 |
| ● <i>Populus nigra</i> | 8 | ● <i>Tilia platyphyllos</i> | 1 |
| ● <i>Populus simonii</i> | 2 | ● <i>Morus nigra</i> | 1 |
| ● <i>Populus x canescens</i> | 2 | | |

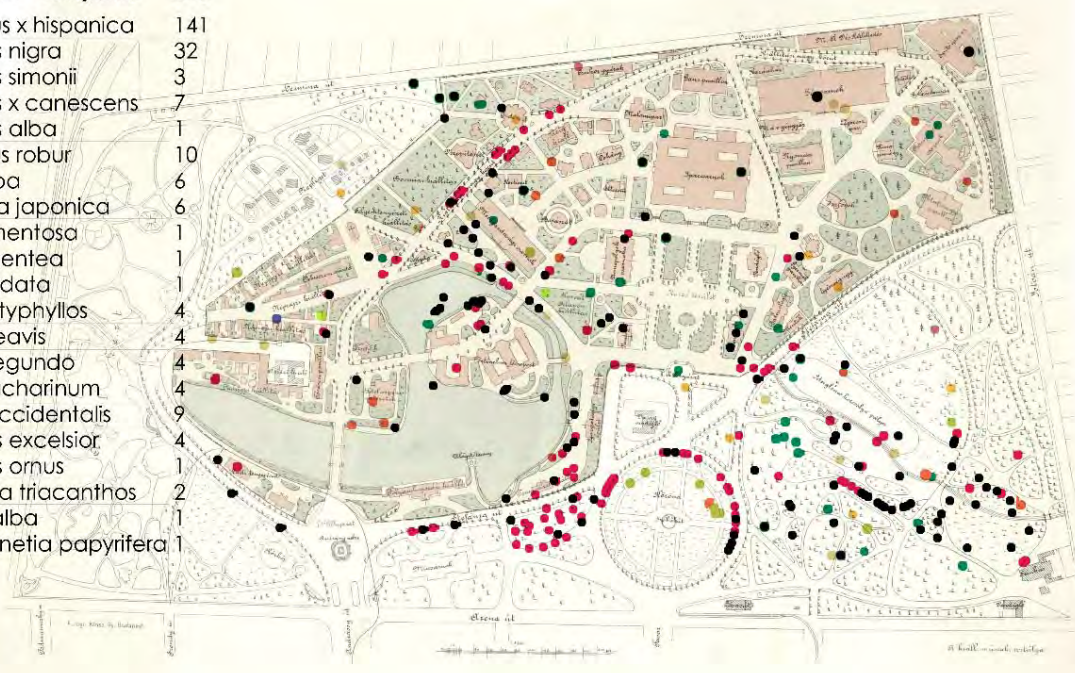


II. 3. Distribution of trees older than 180 years of the existing treestock, compared to the space structure of the Városliget after the realization (base map: 1851 – Site survey, Beáta Fabó, National Archive).

III. 3. Rozkład drzew starszych niż 180 lat w zestawieniu ze strukturą przestrzenną po realizacji parku Városliget (mapa podstawowa: 1851 – badania Beáty Fabó, Archiwum Narodowe).

● **Trees 180 + years** 53
 ● **Trees 180 - 130 years** 243

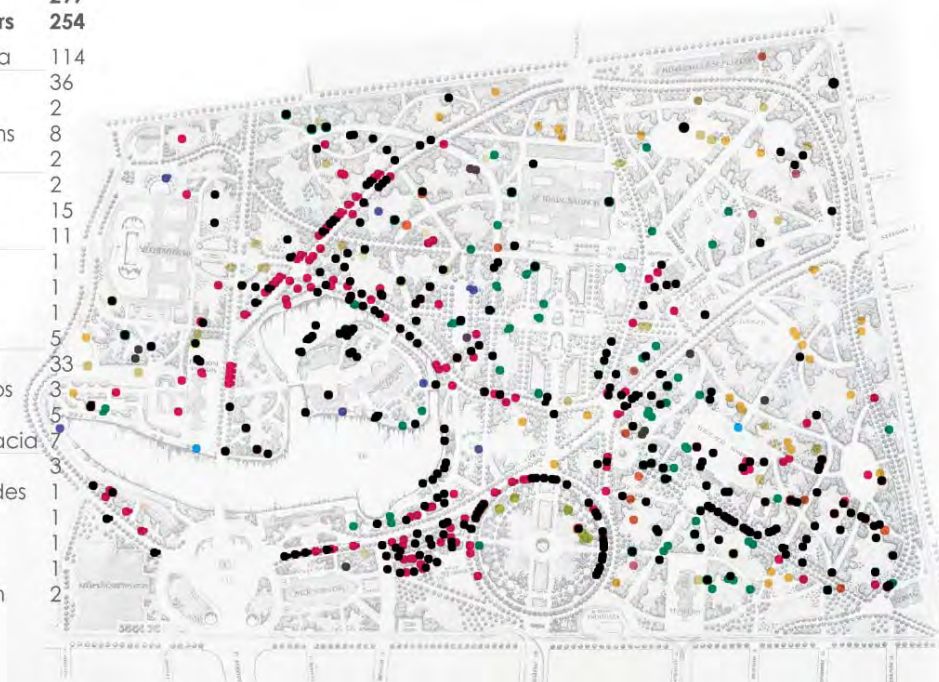
- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| ● <i>Platanus x hispanica</i> | 141 |
| ● <i>Populus nigra</i> | 32 |
| ● <i>Populus simonii</i> | 3 |
| ● <i>Populus x canescens</i> | 7 |
| ● <i>Populus alba</i> | 1 |
| ● <i>Quercus robur</i> | 10 |
| ● <i>Salix alba</i> | 6 |
| ● <i>Sophora japonica</i> | 6 |
| ● <i>Tilia tomentosa</i> | 1 |
| ● <i>Tilia argentea</i> | 1 |
| ● <i>Tilia cordata</i> | 1 |
| ● <i>Tilia platyphyllos</i> | 4 |
| ● <i>Ulmus laevis</i> | 4 |
| ● <i>Acer negundo</i> | 4 |
| ● <i>Acer sacharinum</i> | 4 |
| ● <i>Celtis occidentalis</i> | 9 |
| ● <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> | 4 |
| ● <i>Fraxinus ornus</i> | 1 |
| ● <i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i> | 2 |
| ● <i>Morus alba</i> | 1 |
| ● <i>Broussonetia papyrifera</i> | 1 |



II. 4. Distribution of trees older than 130 years of the existing treestock, compared to the space structure of the Városliget dating back to era of the National Exhibition (base map: 1896 – Site survey, Beáta Fabó, Hungarian National Archive).

III. 4. Rozkład drzew starszych niż 130 lat w zestawieniu ze strukturą przestrzenną parku Városliget z czasów Wystawy Narodowej (mapa podstawowa 1896 – badania Beáty Fabó, Archiwum Narodowe).

● Trees 130 + years	297
Trees 130 - 100 years	254
● <i>Platanus x hispanica</i>	114
● <i>Populus nigra</i>	36
● <i>Populus simonii</i>	2
● <i>Populus x canescens</i>	8
● <i>Populus alba</i>	2
● <i>Salix alba</i>	2
● <i>Sophora japonica</i>	15
● <i>Ulmus laevis</i>	11
● <i>Acer campestre</i>	1
● <i>Acer negundo</i>	1
● <i>Acer platanoides</i>	1
● <i>Acer sacharinum</i>	5
● <i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	33
● <i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	3
● <i>Aesculus hippoc.</i>	5
● <i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	7
● <i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	3
● <i>Catalpa bignonioides</i>	1
● <i>Morus alba</i>	1
● <i>Pyrus pyraster</i>	1
● <i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	1
● <i>Taxodium distichum</i>	2



II. 5. Distribution of trees older than 100 years of the existing treestock, compared to the space structure of the Városliget after the Millennium Exhibition (base map: 1928 – The renewal design of Ráde Károly).
 III. 5. Rozkład drzew starszych niż 100 lat w zestawieniu ze strukturą przestrzenną parku Városliget po realizacji Wystawy Milenium (mapa podstawowa 1928 – proj. Ráde Károly).

● Trees 100 + years	551
● Trees under 100 years	6554



● Trees 100 + years	551
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II. 6. Distribution of trees older than 100 years of the existing treestock compared to the existing space structure of the Városliget (on the left) and to the winner renewal concept of the competition carried out in 2016 (on the right – The renewal design of Garten Studio Landscape Architect Office).
 III. 6. Rozkład drzew starszych niż 100 lat w zestawieniu z istniejącą strukturą przestrzenną parku Városliget (po lewej) i nagrodzony w konkursie z 2016 r. projekt rewitalizacji (po prawej – proj. Garten Studio Landscape Architect Office).

but the mature trees can all remain. The area around the Rondo is formed by similar space compositional principles, but it may remain a question of future that also the species of the trees are selected with similar strong aesthetic and ecologic principles as the original intent treated them, since apart from the *Platanus* clump no coherent cluster can be traced now around the Rondo.

5. CONCLUSION

Currently, 7105 trees specimens compose the canopy of the Városliget. 7% of the existing tree stock is over 110 years old, but only 53 trees (0,75%) were left from the period that preserved the core of the original space structure. The most characteristic species of them are *Platanus x hispanica* and *Populus* species (*Populus nigra*, *Populus simonii*, *Populus x*

canescens). As new temporary functions appeared in the park, the infrastructure had to develop, new space structure was evolving. Unfortunately, instead of a comprehensive renewal, the existing structure was fragmented into little islands, framed by alleés of trees. With the new plantation pattern, some new species appeared that were not listed on the original design (*Celtis occidentalis*, *Sophora japonica*, *Ulmus laevis*). Not only new species appeared, but several characteristic tree species vanished from the Városliget that composed the unified clumps of tree such as: *Larix decidua*, *Betula pendula*, *Castanea sativa*, *Pinus nigra*, *Pinus strobus*.

Despite the built-in territories and the changes of usage, Városliget still provides the experience of nature. The most important value of the park is the mature vegetation deriving from the plantings of the 19th century, as the plantations began with the 180 plane trees offered by Palatine Joseph. These trees adapted very well to the local endowments of high underwater levels, no wonder that the plane trees are still the oldest and most magnificent ones in the park.

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