

SOFIA PARKS AND GARDENS (1878–1940)

ATANAS KOVACHEV^{1*} AND VALENTINA VARBANOVA²

¹ *Varna Free University “Chernorizets Hrabar”,
84 Yanko Slavchev St, “Chayka” District, 9007 Varna, Bulgaria,
e-mail: atanas.kovachev@mail.bg*

² *Regional History Museum – Sofia,
1 Banski Square, Sofia, Bulgaria,
e-mail: valentina.varbanova@abv.bg*

Abstract. The parks, gardens and landscaping of Sofia squares and boulevards are its priceless wealth and the most representative part of its rich green system. Their construction began after the Liberation of Bulgaria in 1878 with the help of foreign park builders, foresters and gardeners. All sites presented in the article are monuments of the garden and park art in our country. Their number is much larger, but we shall present the most iconic of them. We are paying tribute to the first builders, who tirelessly ensured that what they created in accordance with the European model reached future generations.

Keywords: Sofia parks and gardens, square landscaping, gardens around churches, boulevards.

1. INTRODUCTION

Until the Liberation of Bulgaria in 1878, the small settlement of Sofia with a population of about 14,000 people had no tradition of creating public gardens. The recreational areas were mostly outside the city. The rich plant diversity of the Sofia area was due to the vineyards in Korubalgar (nowadays the Lozenets region). The plains were located in the Banishora district and on the slopes of Konyovitsa and Gorna Banya. Alley trees were located only outside the city on the roads, connecting Sofia with Kyustendil, Plovdiv and Tsarigrad. The favourite recreational places of Sofia residents were the “Chardakliya” farmhouses along Tsarigradsko shose Blvd, “Katsiana” (village of Dolni Bogrov) and “Yukar” (village of Gorna Banya).

The political, social and cultural changes that occurred after the Liberation of Bulgaria and the declaration of Sofia as the capital gave a powerful impetus

* Corresponding author.

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to its urban planning and development. The first city architect, Antonin Kolar, was appointed on May 3, 1878. From September 1879, the capital also had a city gardener, Karl Betz, who was later replaced by Daniel Neff. The first zoning plan of the city was developed by arch. eng. Licurgo Amadei in 1980–1981.

In 1882, the Municipal Council decided to create a “Pepiniera” (nursery) for the development of Sofia, which had already met the needs by 1884. In the following years, new nurseries were established, both in the center and outskirts of the city, serving the districts of the growing capital. From 1889, the planting of trees along the Tsar Osvoboditel, Knyaz Dondukov, Mariya Luiza and Makedoniya Boulevards began.

The opening of the Cadastre and Regulation Department in 1889 at the Sofia Municipality gave an impetus to the planning and documentation of the parks and gardens in Sofia. The Austro–Hungarian engineers Joachim and Wilhelm Bartel, the technician Ludwig Bartel and the painter Joseph Oberbauer were invited. For several years, they designed the plans “handrisés” for the central part of the city – a total of 1,297 pieces in M 1:250. By 1895, the first botanical garden in Bulgaria was created in the yard of the newly opened First Male High School, near the present-day Levski Monument.

The area of the Pepiniera (now Borisova Gradina) also expanded and by 1897, it reached today’s Yavorov Alley. The Czech forester Julius Milde made a great contribution to the afforestation of Sofia. The landscaping of the Sofia Central Cemetery and the Sofia Theological Seminary complex in the Lozenets district is his work.

The park builders, who worked in Sofia after the Liberation, were affectionately called “gardeners” by the local population. Their names are known – the foreigners Daniel Neff, Julius Milde, Karl Betz, Lucien Chevalis, Jules Loschaux, Karel Neff, Anton Kraus, Johan Kelleler, Emil Aman and others, as well as their Bulgarian followers Iliya Todorov and Georgi Duhtev.

Until 1893, the chief gardener of the king’s gardens was Karl Betz and after him Lucien Chevalis, Jules Loschaux and Joseph Fry were successively appointed.

2. THE FIRST SPECIALISTS

The following have made an outstanding contribution to the Sofia landscaping:

- Julius Milde, Czech, agronomist and forester, he arrived in Bulgaria in 1879 and participated in the afforestation of the Boris’ Garden. On his initiative,

artificial landscaping was carried out in a part of the garden – between Tsarigradsko shose and the Fish Lake, nowadays known as the Lily Lake. In 1890, Milde was appointed as assistant forest inspector of Sofia. In 1893, he established the first forest nursery in the site of today's garden in front of the Military Club. The afforestation at the foot of Vitosha near Knyazhevo, where the forest of Bali Efendi was located, was also his work.

- Karl Betz, German, gardener and entomologist. In some sources, he is listed as a Czech, in others as a German. He was one of the first foreigners to come to Bulgaria. He was invited in 1882 by Prince Alexander Battenberg to be the court gardener of the King's Garden.
- Daniel Neff, Swiss, municipal gardener of Sofia, creator of the first metropolitan parks and gardens. He came to Bulgaria in 1882, having previously been a court gardener in Bucharest. He designed the first plan of the Boris' Garden in 1882 and managed it until 1890. He had a great contribution to the landscaping of Sofia's boulevards.
- Anton Lacher, Czech, gardener. He came to Bulgaria in 1894. He joined the Royal Botanical Garden in Sofia as a gardener in 1895. He later applied the accumulated experience in the "Evksinograd" Park, 1902–1919.
- Anton Kraus, Czech, gardener and park builder. Before coming to Bulgaria, he worked on the Vienna parks. He arrived in Bulgaria in 1897 and lived here for 57 years. Before coming to Sofia, he worked as a gardener at the "Evksinograd" park since 1897. He applied the accumulated experience as a manager of the "Vrana" Park near Sofia. His creative work is connected with the expansion of the Palace Park 1909/1920. Kraus planted ornamental plant species from Austria–Hungary and Spain.
- Richard Neuwirth, Czech, park builder. He worked in Vienna, Stuttgart and France. He served as Assistant Gardener at the Parks and Gardens Society in Prague. He arrived in Bulgaria in 1905 and before coming to Sofia, he worked for years on the Ruse parks and gardens in 1895/1896 and 1925/1926. His work in Sofia was for a short time, but it left a lasting mark. He was the head gardener at the "Vrana" Park in 1922, after which he returned to Rouse again and worked there until 1935.
- Joseph Fry, French, municipal gardener from 1906 until 1933. He rebuilt the Boris' Garden, further developing the ideas of his predecessors. In 1910–1912, he planted the two main alleys in the garden. The Rosarium was created based on his idea. He was the organizer of the annual flower exhibitions in the garden. In regard to the landscaping of the capital, Joseph Fry reached the peak of garden and park artistry.

- Alois Slezacek, Karel Hanusch and Jan Hoffmann were garden practitioners. The first two worked at the same point in time at the Royal Botanical Garden in Sofia between 1913 and 1916. Jan Hoffmann worked as a gardener at the “Vrana” Park in 1905–1909 and participated in the creation of the lotus lake.
- Josef Celikoper, Czech, botanist, gardener and rock worker, he created rock gardens and participated in the creation and development of the “Vrana” Park.

The Sofia town plan designed by the German professor Adolf Musmann (The “Musmann” Plan) was approved by the National Assembly on 12 April 1938. It envisaged rich landscaping of Sofia and transforming the city into a “city garden”. Unfortunately, the war years that followed and the political events thereafter hindered the implementation of this concept of making the capital green.

The emblematic parks and gardens of Sofia can be presented in different ways – by chronology, by authors, by park design. We prefer to take an integrated and synthetic “picture” in the context of the social and aesthetic significance of the presented sites.

3. THE ROYAL GARDENS AND PARKS

These gardens and parks were some of the first where the achievements of the garden and park art were most clearly demonstrated:

- The King’s Garden was created in 1879 by the first Sofia gardener, Karl Betz. It was located on the territories between today’s General Gurko St, Vasil Levski Blvd and Hristo and Evlogi Georgievi Blvd. The first tropical plant species in our country were planted there.
- Boris’ Garden dates back to 1882 as a Pepiniera – a nursery on a part of the common land of the city of Sofia, near Eagle’s Bridge, Figs 1 and 2. The park builders over the years have been Daniel Neff, Karl Neff, Emil Aman, Joseph Fry, Julius Milde, Georgi Nikolov, Georgi Duhtev, etc. Over the years, the park has been expanded and enriched. Sofia residents’ favourite places are the avenue of numerous notable Bulgarians, Ariana Lake, Fish Lake, the first astronomical observatory of Sofia University, the summer stage, the theater, the “Maria Luiza” Bath House, the Rosarium, sports facilities and others. The historical part of the park has the status of a garden and park reserve.
- The City Garden (Alexander’s Garden) is the oldest public garden in Sofia, Figs 3 and 4. Before the Liberation in 1878, the square before the ad-



Fig. 1. Knyaz Boris' Garden, Rosarium, Aerial photograph of 1928*



Fig. 2. Knyaz Boris' Garden, The first university observatory

*All the illustrations in the article are taken from the Archive of the Regional History Museum – Sofia.



Fig. 3. Aerial photograph of the City and Palace Gardens from the 20s of the 20th century



Fig. 4. The City Garden, Lithography from the end of the 19th century

ministration building was reforested. The creation of the garden began immediately after 1878 under the design of the first Sofia city architect, Antonin Kolar. Over the years, the garden has been expanded to the south and reached today's General Gurko Street. The gardener Daniel Neff took care of its afforestation. Karl Betz and Joseph Fry worked on the garden. Over the years, the fountains have changed – marble, cast iron, water mirror. The garden is surrounded by a beautiful metal fence. In 1923, a marble fountain from the 16th century was installed, it was probably once located

in the courtyard of a mosque, demolished after 1878. Prof. Bogdan Filov delivered a speech at its opening. After 1945, the traces of the fountain were lost and its fate remains unknown. In 1907, the City Casino (arch. Naum Torbov) was built at the southwest end of the garden. After 1920, the garden was reconstructed. Nowadays, it has been changed, but just as it was in the past, it is still a favourite place for recreation of Sofia residents.

- The Royal Garden was created in 1883 after the reconstruction of the old Turkish administrative building. Rare exotic trees and shrubs have been preserved since the initial afforestation until today. A rock corner with a gazebo was made in its northeast part. There were flower parterres in front of the main entrance and in its eastern part. The rezoning of the garden was changed in 1946, when the square of the former palace was created. Nowadays the garden is well maintained and its alleys were renewed in 2018.
- The Royal Botanical Garden was created in 1887 by the gardeners Lucien Chevalis, Emil Aman, Joseph Fry, Jean Morizet and Johann Kellerer. The greenhouses were built on the site of the King's Garden under the design of the arch. Friedrich Grünanger. The gardeners Joseph Fry and Jean Morizet remodeled the garden with an emphasis on ornamental vegetation. In 1896, the first rock garden was created by Johann Kellerer. By 1930, the vegetation in the garden exceeded over 3,000 species.

The “Vrana” Park was created in 1899 through the work of many gardeners, the most prominent of whom were Kraus, Kent, Pükler, Gonzago, etc., Fig. 5. There are many stories surrounding the creation of the park, but it is known for sure that Prince Ferdinand I built the hunting lodge, arch. Georgi Fingov, 1905, and the royal palace, arch. Nikola Lazarov, 1912. Notable sites in the park are the lake with lilies from Japan, China and Austria, the “Daalem” rock garden, the royal stables, the rare tree and plant species, the greenhouse and others. About 820 tree and shrub species are present there.

The Royal Children's Garden was opened in 1936 on the site of the Royal Botanical Garden. It was created under the design of the palace gardener, Wilhelm Schacht. There were carousels, slides, a pool, a labyrinth and a children's summer theater with 600 seats, a rock garden with alpine flowers, gardeners – Johann Kellerer and Joseph Tsolikofer. In 1954, the complex with the Soviet Army Monument was built on the same site, architects, Mitov, Vasilyov, Neykov, Kapitanov, sculptures, Funev, Dalchev, Georgieva, Emanuilova, Zidarova, etc.

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the construction of important buildings for the state and church institutions in Bulgaria



Fig. 5. “Vrana” Park, Aerial photograph from the 1930s

began. They were large gated complexes, built on the outskirts of Sofia at that time. They were surrounded by beautiful planned parks, surrounded by high fences.

4. INSTITUTIONAL PARKS

The close-type institutional parks include:

- The Park of the National Military School (nowadays the “Georgi Rakovski” National Defence College) Figs 6 and 7. Its foundations were laid in 1887 in accordance with the design of arch. Friedrich Grünanger. At the same time the enclosure of the park began, whose territory was outside of the city at that time. It houses the educational building, arch. Antonin Kolar, 1894, the headquarters, the church, the square, alleys and a lake. The Victory Alley connects the guard house, built in 1913, with the ceremonial square. The afforestation in front of the main building dates back to the beginning of the 20th century by the forester, Petar Berov. A variety of tree vegetation prevails in the park. From 2010, the park entrance on Han Omurtag St has been opened to the public. Outdoor cultural events are hosted at the park.



Fig. 6. Military School Park, Aerial photograph from the 1920s



Fig. 7. Gazebo in the park of the Military School

- The park of the Sofia Theological Seminary “Saint Ivan Rilski”. In 1897, the Sofia Municipality allocated 50 decares of land in the Lozenets District for the construction of the Theological Seminary Complex. The main building was opened in 1903, arch. Friedrich Grünanger, and the Saint Ivan Rilski’s Church in 1904. In 1930, the beautiful fence was built. The afforestation and the layout of the park were carried out by the gardener Emil Aman. The tree vegetation is characterized by a rich variety. The history of the Seminary is full of vicissitudes. The building and the park served as: a military hospital (1916–1918), Faculty of Agronomy of Sofia University, 1920–1923, The Pioneers Palace, 1950–1990. The Seminary complex was returned to the Holy Synod in 1990.

The park of the Sofia Central Cemetery does not fall within the group of institutional parks. The cemetery has been operational since 1889. In 1910, the city gardener Joseph Fry was sent to Vienna to make improvements to the landscaping of the cemeteries in accordance with the European model. A municipal service takes care of the alleys and graves. The entrance was formed by a three-winged arch with pavilions. There are several churches on the territory of the cemetery – The Assumption of the Virgin’s Orthodox Church, the Saint Francis’s Catholic Chapel, the Armenian Church, the Jewish Synagogue, etc. The military cemeteries are English, German, French and Italian. Today, the Military Memorial and 65 artistic tombstones are an immovable cultural heritage in the Sofia Central Cemetery.

5. GARDENS

The Sofia city and district gardens occupy a large part of the historical green system of Sofia.

- Before the creation of the Doctor’s Garden, Figs 8 and 9, a Monument of the Medical Officers who died during the Liberation War was placed at the site. In 1883, the Doctor’s Monument was built under the design of arch. Anton Tomishek. The creation of a garden began in 1889 under the design of Daniel Neff. Later, Joseph Kelleler also worked on it. From 1990, Karel Neff (son of Daniel Neff) took care of the garden. He rebuilt it and reforested it with plant species, imported from Erfurt. Trees and shrubs from North America and rare exotic species were planted. In 1907, the rock garden was completed under the design of the gardener Hristo Mihov. Sofia Municipality took over the garden in 1936, when a reconstruction was carried out in accordance with the design of the park designer, Georgi Duhtev.



Fig. 8. The garden with the Doctor's Monument,
Aerial photograph from the 1930s



Fig. 9. The Doctor's Monument
at the beginning of the 20th century

- “Bukata” Garden is located on Prague Blvd. It was established in 1934 on the site of the Oborishte Square in the post-liberation “Bukata” neighbourhood, east of the Russian Monument. Its park builder is Georgi Duhtev. In 1934, a cast-iron fountain, imported from Austro–Hungary, was moved there at the beginning of the 20th century from Slaveykov Square. It is now restored and operational. The garden is fenced with an openwork hedge along its perimeter. It is also called the “Madara Garden”.

The capital has many small district gardens, created between the beginning of the 20th century and 1944, which have preserved their historical vegetation. Today, they are renovated and maintained and delight the residents and guests of Sofia. They following fall within them: the garden at the “Lozenets” bathhouse, the “Takev” garden along Solunska St, near the Slaveykov Square, the garden at the “Poduene” bathhouse, the garden at the Velchova Zavera Square, next to the Sofia Seminary, the garden at the Zhurnalist Square and others.

6. LANDSCAPING AROUND SQUARES

Our capital is rich in square spaces, which were formed after the implementation of the first post-liberation regulatory plan. After their creation, the squares were landscaped and have been preserved to this day.

Saint Alexander Nevski Square, Figs 10 and 11. The landscaping of the square space around the Saint Alexander Nevsky’s Cathedral takes up an area of 15 decares. It includes separate elements, located in front of notable buildings, built in the period 1882–1980. The design of the square was begun in 1912 by the city gardener Joseph Fry. It included the gardens and landscaping around the Saint Sophia’s Church, Sofia, 6th century, the Synodal Palace, 1908, the State Printing House, the National Assembly, etc. Over the years, the green necklace around the square has been enriched with works of monumental sculpture art. An important part of the square is the garden in front of the Saint Sophia’s Basilica. By 1890 and before the restoration of the church, a small garden with a wooden fence was created to the south and west of it. After 1912, it was included in the overall landscaping of the square. East of the apse of the church in 1921 and around the grave of Ivan Vazov, deciduous and coniferous trees were planted. The reconstruction of the garden dates back to 1935, when a small square with a fountain and a statue of Saint George was created in the middle of it.

Russian Monument Square, Fig. 12. It was created in 1882 under the design of the gardener Daniel Neff. At that time, it was located outside the city.



Fig. 10. Landscaping around Saint Alexander Nevsky's Cathedral,
Aerial photograph from the 1930s



Fig. 11. Saint Alexander Nevsky Square and the State Printing House



Fig. 12. The Russian Monument
at the beginning of the 20th century

The monument was erected in 1882 under the design of the Czech architect Vokar in memory of Emperor Alexander II. It is the first of many memorials commemorating the Liberation of 1878. The landscaping was originally laid out in a circle around the monument with four alleys leading to it that had tall trees planted around them. During the reconstruction of 1927 under the design of Joseph Fry, the trees were cut down and four flower figures were created. A low metal fence closes the circle around the monument.

An emblematic Sofia square is Saint Nedelya Square, Figs 13 and 14. Until the Liberation, it was called “Korucheshme”, because of the nearby spring. It was also known by other names – “Saborniy”, “Sveti Kral”, etc. The territory is part of the “Serdika–Sredets” Historical-Archaeological Reserve. The square is the compositional center of the main city axes. It is surrounded by significant buildings – the Faculty of Theology, the Sofia Metropolis, etc. The garden around the church was created by the gardener Joseph Fry, in 1905. The landscaping of the square frame was completed in 1915. After the attack of 1925 and the construction of the new church, arch. Ivan Vasilyov and arch. Dimitar Tsolov, the green areas kept their outlines, but the flower groups were no longer so rich in terms of species and forms. Over the years, due to the need for tram stops, the green areas have decreased and changed in terms of shape and plant species.



Fig. 13. The garden around the Saint Kral's Church from the 1920s



Fig. 14. Saint Nedelya Square



Fig. 15. Banski Square from the 1930s, Aerial photograph



Fig. 16. The garden of Banski Square from the 1930s

One of the oldest markets in Sofia is Banski Square, Figs 15 and 16. The garden in front of the mineral bath is part of the former Grain Market. Its western part was completed in 1915. The eastern part was afforested in 1928. Until 1934, there was also a garden at the north of the bath (nowadays, the building of the Architecture and Town Planning Department of the Metropolitan Municipality is there on Serdika Street). Rare plant species are planted in the garden. During the reconstruction of the square in 2004, the historical landscaping and the fountain installed in 1957, sculptor Georgi Bakardzhiev, were restored. The building of the Central Mineral Bath was completed in 1913, Petko Momchilov and Friedrich Grünanger. It has been emblematic of the architecture of Sofia since the beginning of the 20th century. It is now the Sofia History Museum. The other notable buildings nearby are the Central Market Hall and the Banya Bashi Mosque.

The garden, east of the National Assembly Square was one of the first nurseries in Sofia at the end of the 19th century. In 1927, part of the terrain was set aside for a garden. The monument of Saint Kliment Ohridski was installed in 1979, sculptor Lyubomir Dalchev.

The young capital quickly built important public buildings. One of the first in terms of time and importance after the liberation is the building of the National Assembly. It was opened in 1884 under the design of the Serbian architect Konstantin Jovanović. A cast-iron Viennese Fountain, surrounded by greenery, was placed in the square in front of it. After the erection of the monument to Emperor Alexander II, a low vegetation landscaping, surrounded by an openwork railing, was designed by the Italian sculptor, Arnaldo Zocchi.

6. GARDENS AROUND CHURCHES

One of the most attractive and favourite places for recreation of the people of Sofia are the Sofia gardens around church buildings.

- The Tri Kladentsi/Yuch Bunar Square was created at the intersection of Pirotska St and Opalchenska St in accordance with the regulation plan of Sofia from 1887. In 1895, a place was allocated there for a new Saint Nicholas of Sofia's Church, Fig. 17. It was built in 1900 under the design of arch. Anton Tornyov. The landscaping and afforestation began in 1911 by the city gardener Joseph Fry. In 1927, the well-landscaped garden was equipped with electric lights. In its center, in 1932, a monument was erected – an ossuary of the Bulgarian militiamen, sculptor Toma Deliradev. The alleys have been reconstructed and a rosarium has been created.

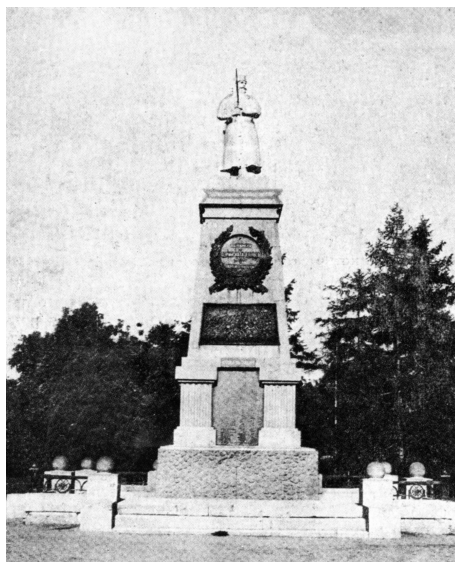


Fig. 17. The garden around the Saint Nicholas of Sofia's Church.
The monument of the Edirne Epic



Fig. 18. The garden in front of the Seven Saints' Church from the 1920s

- The garden around the Saint George of Sofia's Church was established in 1935 under the design of arch. Georgi Fingov. With its greenery, it surrounds the church dedicated to one of the nine Sofia saints. It was completed in 1909 under the design of arch. Aleksi Nachev. The garden is landscaped with deciduous trees and shrubs. Fortunately, the fountain with the otter designed by arch. Vasil Zidarov from 1935 has been preserved.
- The Seven Saints' Church and the garden of the same name have always been associated with the centuries-old history of Sofia, Fig. 18. The Kodzha Dervish Mehmed Pasha Mosque (The Black Mosque) with a spiritual school, a bath house and a caravanserai was located on the site of the garden. In 1903, the mosque was rebuilt into a church under the design of the architects Petko Momchilov and Yordan Milanov. The garden was created later, in 1930, by the gardener Joseph Fry. Its composition follows the central axis towards the entrance of the church.
- Sofia grew territorially between the two world wars. Refugees arrived, new districts were built and, accordingly, new churches were built and beautiful gardens appeared around them.
- The Holy Trinity's Church (Konstantin Velichkov Blvd/Pirotska St) was built in 1927 by refugees, residents of the district. A small park with various vegetation was created around it. At the north-east end of the park, directly in front of the Holy Trinity's Church, a rock garden was created. An artificial lake was built in the park, as the water used to flow from the rock garden years ago. The park was reconstructed in 2009.
- In 1934, the St St Peter and Paul's Church was built according to the design of arch. Rachev and arch. Neykov again along Konstantin Velichkov Blvd, south of the Holy Trinity's Church. It is located in a park that is the site of an old nursery created in 1889. It is connected with the afforestation of the "Konyovitsa" and "Razsadnik" districts. The construction of the park followed the Sofia general plan from 1938, the "Musmann" plan. In 1940, a picturesque landscape park with deciduous trees and ornamental shrubs was created. For the people of Sofia, it is also known by the name "Borimechkata" park.

7. BOULEVARDS

The historical green system of Sofia includes not only its squares, parks and gardens, but also its landscaped boulevards and river banks. The first boulevards were directed to main communication directions such as the Old Railway Station, the Russian Monument Square and Tsarigradsko shose Blvd.



Fig. 19. Landscaping along Knyaginya Mariya Luiza Blvd
at the beginning of the 20th century

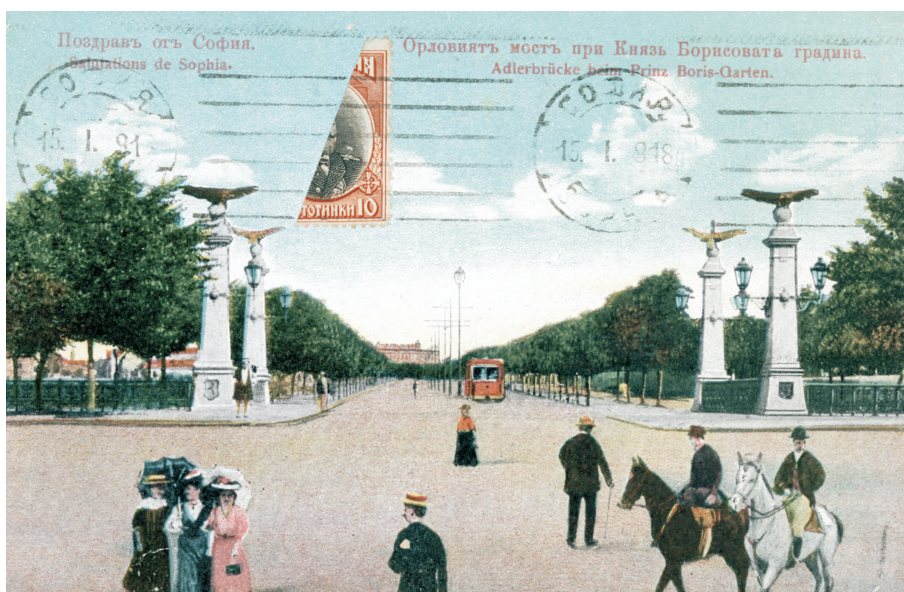


Fig. 20. Landscaping along Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd
at the beginning of the 20th century

One of the first landscaped boulevards was Makedoniya Blvd, connecting the square of the same name with the intersection at the “Russian Monument” and Knyaginya Mariya Luiza Blvd in the section between Lion’s Bridge and the station, designed at the beginning of the 20th century, Fig. 19. Today, it is one of the best landscaped boulevards of the capital with pedestrian walkways and rich vegetation. At the beginning of the 20th century, connecting the garden in front of the first railway station with Lion’s Bridge, the boulevard played the role of a promenade and it was a favorite place to take a walk for the people of Sofia. Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd planted with the emblematic chestnuts in its part from the National Assembly Square to Eagle’s Bridge has been repeatedly praised in songs, Fig. 20. At the beginning of the 30s of the 20th century, the beds of the Perlovska and Vladayska river (affectionately called “channels” by the population) were corrected and lined with granite. Their banks were richly landscaped. We can take pride in the “Lilac Boulevard” along the Perlovska River in the section from Eagle’s Bridge to today’s National Palace of Culture. All of the mentioned streets and river banks have the status of historical landscaping nowadays.

8. CONCLUSION

We made an attempt to present emblematic elements of Sofia’s green system. It is interesting to ask ourselves what is its condition nowadays? The requirements for these facilities to be objects of immovable cultural heritage (garden and park art) could be narrowed down to two main evaluation criteria:

- preserved volume-spatial and improvement condition and;
- presence of original authentic vegetation.

The conservation of park and gardens is considered one of the most difficult tasks of restoration. The object of perseverance is living nature itself. It develops, breathes, grows, blooms, depends on the climate and above all on beneficial human intervention. From this point of view, we can conclude that the parks and gardens of Sofia today are in good condition in terms of appearance and maintenance. Most of them have been reconstructed in recent years. Elements of modern life have been included – playgrounds, pavilions and garden furniture. What could be given more attention in the future is the inclusion of the historical garden design in their equipment. There is no lack of prototypes in literature – lanterns, benches, garden furniture. The new pavements, laid during the repairs, are far from the original ones in terms of material and design.

The emblematic parks, gardens, square and street landscaping of Sofia are part of the rich green system of the capital. If we paraphrase a well-known thought and apply it to the green wealth of the capital, it would sound like this: “We did not inherit Sofia’s parks and gardens from our fathers and ancestors, but borrowed them from our children and grandchildren – and that means, that they should be preserved, protected and passed on to future generations in all their beauty and grandeur”. This is the meaning of sustainable development, which has become a cause in the modern world.

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