



International
SOCIAL SCIENCES
STUDIES JOURNAL



SSSjournal (ISSN:2587-1587)

Economics and Administration, Tourism and Tourism Management, History, Culture, Religion, Psychology, Sociology, Fine Arts, Engineering, Architecture, Language, Literature, Educational Sciences, Pedagogy & Other Disciplines in Social Sciences

Vol:5, Issue:30
sssjournal.com

pp.1078-1084
ISSN:2587-1587

2019 / February / Şubat
sssjournal.info@gmail.com

Article Arrival Date (Makale Geliş Tarihi) 10/01/2019 | The Published Rel. Date (Makale Yayın Kabul Tarihi) 28/02/2019
Published Date (Makale Yayın Tarihi) 28.02.2019

TRANSFORMATION OF HISTORICAL GARDENS TO URBAN PARKS; EXAMPLE OF VILLA BORGHESE, ROME

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Article Type : Research Article/ Araştırma Makalesi

Doi Number : <http://dx.doi.org/10.26449/sss.1325>

Reference : Göker, P. (2019). "Transformation Of Historical Gardens To Urban Parks; Example Of Villa Borghese, Rome", International Social Sciences Studies Journal, 5(30): 1078-1084.

ABSTRACT

Historical cities, like any organism living in nature, adapt to changing conditions of daily life and go through an urban development process by preserving the cultural values that make up the historical texture of the city as well as fulfilling the city's requirements. Historical urban parks reflect the socio-cultural structure, thought and life philosophy and space setup of the old society. These areas are assessed as vital city components today since their urban locations are valuable and suited to the new urban space needs. Construction of Villa Borghese, one of the greatest historical parks of Rome, started as the residential building garden of Cardinal Scipione Borghese in 1605. Villa Borghese garden, covering an area of nearly 80 hectares, consists of historical structures as well as a lake, temples, fountains, and sculptures. The park is made of three major sections and went through numerous changes since its erection date and transformed into a historical urban park. Villa Borghese was purchased by Rome Municipality and opened to public use in 1903. In this study, historical development of Villa Borghese and changes that it experienced during the process of its arrival to the present day and its current use and function by taking the form of a historical urban park were examined.

Key Words: Villa Borghese, Rome, historical gardens, Historical urban parks

1. INTRODUCTION

The rich history of Rome, a city of noble aristocratic families such as Barberini, Borghese, Torlonia and Pamphili, has left a mark in the gardens of historic residences such as Villa Borghese, Villa Ada, Villa Pamphili, Villa Torlonia and Villa Albani, a testimony of different ages, garden tastes, fashions and novelties that make up landscapes of extraordinary interest, and that today are public, no longer private. They are true "outdoor museums" that narrate important moments of garden arrangement, from the 16th to the 17th, the 18th or the 19th century up until the gardens of the 20th century. Rome also has many 19th century and 20th century historical parks linked to the development of the city, EUR among them, and the headquarters of the World Exhibition of the 40s, with an interesting scattering of green areas and avenues. A great variety of park structures, together with the great variety of species of plants used, the weather conditions and the morphology of the territory, have always favoured the use of many species and variety on the territory of Rome, with obvious composition potential (Lenotre, 2014). In the course of the decade around 1600 the landscapes of Roman Villa Gardens changed from the Roman and their foreign visitors called garden (Giardini, vigna, or villa) to what they termed parks (parchi). These new Roman parks were ten to fifteen times the size of the earlier giardini, of which the Villa Medici was typical to contemporary visitors like Alessandro Tassoni, a poet and playwright, or John Evelyn, a famed antiquarian and garden connoisseur, the villa walls several miles in length witness to their huge size and topographical scale of landscaping were one of their most remarkable features. With the construction of Villa Borghese from 1606 to 1630's on the Pincian Hill outside its city gate, inhabitants and visitors alike could add the parchi and

barchi (hunting parks). To their expanding vocabulary about villa. The Villa Borghese was soon followed by other large parchi, among them the villa Ludovisi and Pamphilj (Mirka, 1997).

2. WITHIN THE HISTORICAL PROCESS VILLA BORGHESE

When Cardinal Camillo Borghese became Pope Paul V (papacy 1605–1621), he promptly conferred a cardinalate upon his nephew Scipione Caffarelli, there after known as Cardinal Borghese. The new cardinal and his relatives soon began amassing land for a large suburban estate, or *vigna*, on the Pincian Hill just outside the northern walls of the city. Family pride, sporting pleasure, and aesthetic delight motivated the design of their villa in the early years of the seventeenth century. Although suffering today from insufficient maintenance like many Italian public parks the gardens of the Villa Borghese remain a popular amenity for modern Romans, and its art galleries constitute a museum of international renown. The casino designed by Flaminio Ponzio (1560–1613), with its extensive decoration completed by the Flemish architect Jan van Santen (Giovanni Vasanzio), was conceived as a close cousin of the nearby Villa Medici both in plan and in the heavy ornamentation of its exterior walls (stripped of their sculpture by Napoleon). When completed, the Borghese Gardens consisted of three separate enclosures, or *recinti*. The first *recinto* was a *bosco* of regular *boschetti* (compartments of trees) planted in the 1620s in front of the villa. This section was accessible to the public. A second *recinto*, which was reserved for the private use of the family, lay behind the villa. It was planted with groves of holm oak. The third *recinto* consisted of a well-stocked game park on the irregular lands to the north. Between the first and second *recinti*, the villa was constructed, with an intimately scaled private garden — *giardino segreto* — placed on either side of it. High walls surrounded the entire estate. The wall that originally screened the two *giardini segreti* from the transverse avenue running in front of the villa was torn down during the nineteenth century modernization in the English style. The condition of these small gardens today is considerably altered from that of the seventeenth century, when they were filled with espaliered citrus trees, free standing orange trees, and, in the springtime, masses of exotic bulbs. Gone, too, are the birds that sang in coppernetted cages in the twin aviaries that still stand in the northern garden. Beyond the aviaries, which were probably inspired by those of the Farnese Gardens atop the Palatine, is the Meridiana, a sundial. Aesthetic and sensual pleasures motivated the creation of the Villa Borghese. Art collecting, social entertainment, and hunting were the principal purposes it served. Sculpture was used decoratively in its application to the villa facades and throughout the garden. To understand the change that took place in Italian villa design between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, one can compare the siting of the Villa Borghese with that of the nearby Villa Giulia. As at the Villa Aldobrandini, the Villa Giulia and its garden are powerfully united through axial composition. The Borghese Villa, on the other hand, is not the principal organizing force and focus of axial planning, but simply one element within a broader landscape composition. The landscape itself is treated in a less particular, more loosely articulated fashion than those of earlier gardens. In all these ways, the Villa Borghese announces its participation in a new era of Italian landscape design. Begun in 1644, the beautiful *casino*, tall, compact, and richly decorated with sculpture and frescoes in the manner of the Villa Borghese, was completed by 1648. Like the Villa Borghese, its primary function was as an art gallery and a place for social entertainment. There were no bedrooms, as the family residence lay a short distance to the west on the Via Aurelia. Although the plan of the *casino* was traversed by two of the several wide axes dividing the grounds into a notably regular composition, the elegant structure was not a focal point in the overall design of the gardens. The low *parterres de broderie* of the *giardini segreti* next to the villa show French influence on later Italian garden design. The transformation of the original compartmentalized design of these *parterres* to an embroidered pattern probably did not occur until the eighteenth century, as Italian gardeners long resisted this style, although it had been popularized elsewhere in the mid seventeenth century through French pattern book engravings. The park was later laid out in a more natural way. At the end of the eighteenth century an artificial lake was created in the middle of the park. On the island in the lake, a small Ionic temple was built. It is dedicated to Aesculapius, the god of healing (Mirka, 1997).

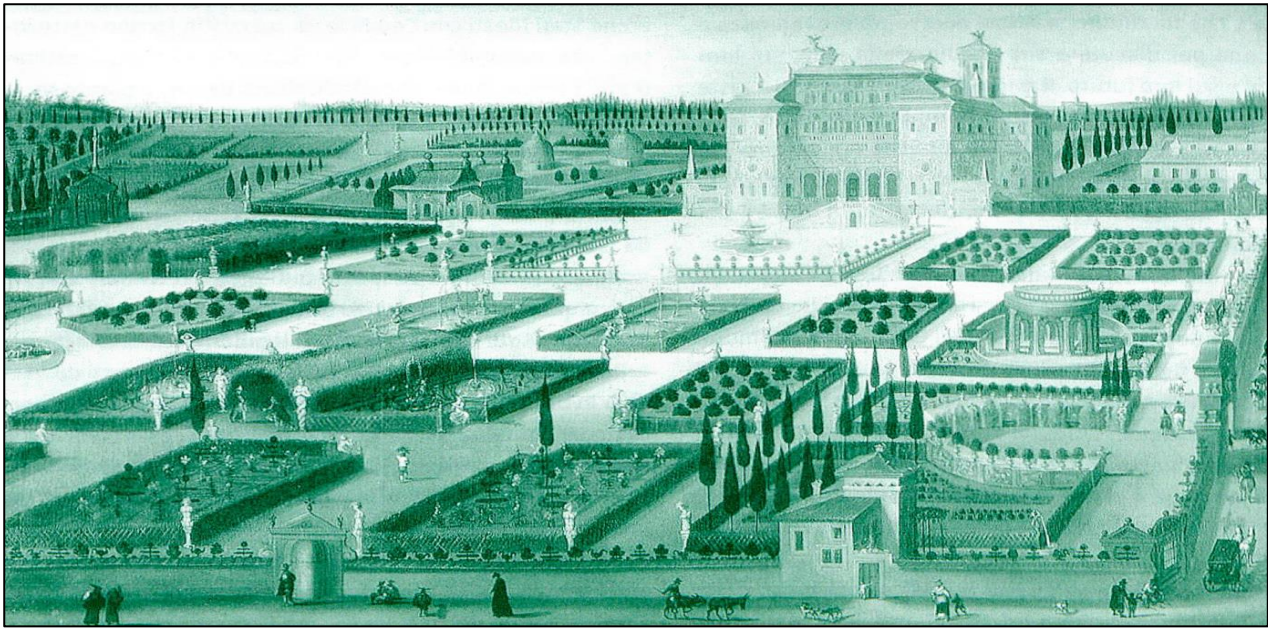


Figure 1. Villa Borghese, Year: 1625 (Azzi-Visentini, 2004)

In 1903 the city of Rome obtained Villa Borghese from the Borghese family and opened the park to the public. The eighty hectare/148 acre-large park now featured wide shady lanes, several temples, beautiful fountains and many statues (Bianchi, 2013)



Figure 2. Layout Plan of Villa Borghese Park (Orijinal, 2017)

3. THEMES SURROUNDING THE VILLA BORGHESE

The untouched state of Villa Borghese has some Cardinal Scipione era movements that it embodies and the main purpose of using villa ggiatura is predominantly collecting artwork along with patronage. After the resurrection of classical thinking and practices via the beginning of Renaissance, Villa giatura also reached a considerable popularity. Ancient Romans' thoughts on differentiating concepts like society, affairs, and politics of the city (*negotium*) from other concepts like quiet and healthy moderation of the country (*otium*) is embraced by noble families. Villas are the getaways that leads to a renewal of body and mind that are tired from the constant disturbance and concerns of the non-rural life. Bluebloods could utilize these places in order to find solitude and delight the important visitors with his/her means and wealth (Ricci, 1906). Relaxation, Entertainment and Exhibition are the main objectives of the villa. Among other Roman villas, Villa Borgese, with a composition that resembles a park more than a garden, is the state-of-the art dominant landmark. Starting from 1550's, Rome Villas were the authoritative ecole with such symbols like Giulia and Medici in Rome and D'Este at Tivoli or Lante at Bagania and many more which Europe regarded highly.

When entered from the main gate, the road goes to a grotto fountain placed face to face with a tall garden wall instead of going to the casino. Nowadays, the Fontana dei Cavalli Marini (the fountain of sea horses) is on the location where the old garden is since it has transformed into an English landscape garden. Christoph Unterberger, a German painter and garden architect has built this fountain in 1770. The narrow road collides sideways to the front side of the casino just half a distance from a big rondel. Other parallel roads follow the two main ones and this facilitates a beautiful scenery of fountains and pavillions. While it can be seen that the casino is not the leading role in this scene, the line of roads scattered in a beautiful manner according to the layout are. The garden's elements like pavillions, fountains, aviaries and lastly, the casino, all together improve to the experience there on equal levels. Boskets are throngly found in the garden, surrounded by clipped hedges. Trees such as *Pines*, *Cupresses*, *Myrtus* and *Laurus nobilis* are also planted there. (Azzi-Visentinii, 2018).



Figure 3. Layout Plan of Villa Borghese Park (URL 1, 2019)

4. DESIGN PRINCIPLES OF VILLA BORGHESE

Itinerary: Giardini Segreti, Parco dei Daini, Valle del Graziano.

Route: Departure from the gate of via Pinciana at the corner of Viale dell'Uccelliera First

- **Giardini segreti**

The Giardini Segreti at Villa Borghese create a system of "precious gardens" with a museum and cultural value of primary importance, an ideal continuation of the historical and artistic itinerary of the Borghese Gallery on the outside, for the observation and learning of a little known chapter of history of the Italian garden. The gardens are 4 + 1 each with its own historical character from the point of view of the plant and design differentiated according to the characteristics of each individual garden. The designers of the garden were based on the elaboration and analysis of the data emerging from specific historical research relating to the park of Villa Borghese and to research on the flower gardens of the 1600s in Italy and in Europe. The gardens are called:

- **Parco dei Daini**

The Parco dei Daini, formerly called "Giardino delle perspectives" or "private garden of the prince", was the prince's private garden, characterized by the presence of a vast Arboretum of *Quercus ilex*.

- **Valle del Graziano**

The valley of Graziano or Valle dei Platani, a large area set up as a naturalistic garden embellished by the presence of the majestic and ancient specimens of *Platanus orientalis*.

Second itinerary: Giardino del Lago, Piazza di Siena, Casina Raffaello, Casina delle Rose

Route: Departure from the gate of Piazza E. Sienkiewicz on Via Pinciana

- **Giardino del Lago**

The "*Piano Bello*" or "Piano dei Licini" of the third enclosure of Villa Borghese with the large plant of about eight hundred oaks became Giardino del Lago in the late 1700s. The construction of the garden marks an epochal turning point for the plant architecture of the villa with the introduction of the "sinuous" line of the English landscape garden. Piazza di Siena, Casina dell'Orologio, Boschetto Casina Raffaello, Casina delle Rose. The square was created in the late 1700s, surrounded by avenues of *Ulmus minor* and *Quercus ilex*. At that time the first circuit was already enclosed by a box hedge, eighteen *Cupressus sempervirens*, two *Pinus* trees, one of which already exists and the other to replace a *Morus* trees.

Third itinerary: Pincio, Valle della Fontana Rotonda, Galoppatoio

Route: Departure from Mickievicz street corner viale Trinità dei Monti (ascent to the Pincio viewpoint)

- **Pincio**

The Garden or Public Walk of the Pincio, also called the "Garden of the Great Caesar" was designed and started to build by the French administration that governed, at the time Rome, in the year 1813/1814. On the area of the Pinciano hill in the IV district, Campo Marzio, the architect Valadier created a garden that fused together the elements of the Italian garden, loggias, exedras, terraces and glades, groves, exotic plants material, irregular paths, typical of the English garden, all included in the idea of a new French public garden with large spaces for the leisure of the population, flowerbeds ("parterre") of geometric design, wide-looking belvedere with wide, symmetrical tree-lined avenues converging radially in round widenings. As soon as Villa Borghese became public in 1902 it was decided to connect it to the Pincio Garden. The link was built in 1908 by a bridge that crosses the Muro Torto street and an avenue with rows of *Magnolia grandiflora*.

- **Valle della Fontana Rotonda**

The area was purchased by the Borghese family in 1820; the green arrangement of the area encountered many difficulties with the construction of a pond which was then dried up in 1850 and replaced by a still existing fountain. The works continued over the years with large land movements due to the construction of Viale delle Magnolie which transformed the valley into an amphitheater with the creation in the center of a large oval basin in 1910. The green limits of the area involved the designers who elaborated a mixed pattern between the landscape garden of English tradition and the rigid geometric scheme of Italian style with lanes of *Quercus*, regular *Pinus* trees and mixed groves of *Laurus nobilis* trees.

- **Galoppatoio**

The area was purchased by the Borghese family in 1832. The plant-free zone was used to make horses trot. After years of decay it was reorganized by the municipality in 1933. The construction of the parking lot in the year 1966/72 obliged the municipal administration to rearrange the whole green area with trees and bushes and the hedges plant to mask the access ramps and the services of the same.

5. ROLE OF HISTORICAL URBAN PARKS IN THE CITY; VILLA BORGHESE

Historical parks and gardens carry the traces of the past, as well as various activities for the residents and visitors.

- **Economic Benefits**

Thanks to their natural and cultural features, historical parks help to the national economy via improving the tourism potential. Nowadays, cultural areas are creating problems regarding to development policies of developed countries because of immense value-added potential. Villa Borghese facilitates to the tourism potential with its cultural heritage and historical complexes along with museums and relics.



Figure 4. Villa Borghese (Orijinal, 2017)

- **Improve Public Health**

The quality of life are badly affected by many things like faster growing population, unplanned urbanization and migration, along with changing social, economic, political statuses and impairment of the local environment that people live in. Historical parks located in Urban environment contribute to both active and passive recreation of people from all ages and therefore, these places should be considered to be around most prestigious locations in the urban environment since they provide both for the ecological equilibrium and for recreational demands of the populace and the city. Meeting the needs of the urban area with its facilities, these places are also beautifully mild green locations that are also practical. Villa borghese provides people with a variety of recreation opportunities as a historical urban park with natural flora-fauna. In this respect, it offers the opportunity to socialize and spend time with nature.



Figure 5. Use of nature and water in Villa Borghese (Orijinal, 2017)

- **Art and Culture Programs**

Today, there is a tremendous flowering of artistic and cultural activity in urban parks, from large-scale performing arts festivals to long-term residencies with arts organizations. Parks and the arts have become mutually beneficial: the arts can play an essential role in revitalizing a park, and parks in turn can help solve problems faced by artists and arts organizations. Since parks are the democratic spaces of a city, where communities can come together to express their identities, the marriage of parks and the arts makes perfect sense. Parks can be a vital place for the cultural expression of a community and a city (AbdelHafeez, 2010). Various structural elements (gallery, casino building, historical places, ponds, sculptures, reinforcement elements, etc.) within the boundaries of Villa Borghese carry the traces of the .past to the present



Figure 6. Art in Villa Borghese (Orijinal, 2017)

6. RESULT

Urban parks are important places for the conservation of biodiversity within cities. Urban parks and open spaces are a necessary part of the urban inheritance. They not only provide an enjoyable and natural environment but also increase the quality of life in urban areas and deal with essential environmental functions. Villa Borghese as a Historical parks and other urban green spaces in the city are a part of the urban cultural heritage. It is very important subject within the various structural elements, which mould the city landscape. One of the main criteria for the modernity of European cities is the percentage of landscape - green spaces in them and protected cultural and natural frame of the city (Council conclusion on architecture, 2005). Urban identity and social coherence are affected by aesthetical, psycho- emotional and social factors in addition to parameters of a physical accessibility. The genius loci, spirit of the place, is a primordial aspect within the city sustainability as well as a background for sustainable urban development. The city development must be balanced with the natural (physical) geographical conditions, economic forces, and cultural trends. It should be noted that the traditional stable (i.e. sustainable and balanced) city development ideology is now trying to add emphasis on self-culture factor. Culture is understood as a kind of factor in balancing the interests of ensuring the common living locus as the essential guarantee of human rationality, because only a high cultural level of society is a good position to implement the sustainable development goals and objectives.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The are study of this research was conducted by the author in July 2017.

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