Scientific Papers. Series B, Horticulture. Vol. LXIII, No. 1, 2019
Print ISSN 2285-5653, CD-ROM ISSN 2285-5661, Online ISSN 2286-1580, ISSN-L 2285-5653

WATER AS ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE CAROL I PARK IN BUCHAREST

Ileana Maria PANȚU

University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest,
59 Marasti Blvd., District 1, Bucharest, Romania

Corresponding author email: ileana.pantu@gmail.com

Abstract

The Carol I Park in Bucharest was designed in 1906 by the French landscape architect Édouard Redont in a mixed style. The initial composition of the park incorporated water as one of its main elements. Water was used in various forms: lake, water mirror, jet, spring, stream and cascade. Its forms were gradually thought from the city towards the heart of the park, from artificial to natural, from the classical to the landscaping style. With a sinuous contour, a lake encapsulated three islands with expo pavilions. In front of the lake, on a hill, Redont placed a cascade with a grotto and a group of statues in a romantic French style. Water was driven from it towards the lake in two winding canals. The main alley in a geometric style was dotted by neoclassic water mirrors with jets whose breadth grows from the park's entrance towards the lake. In 1960, The Carol I Park was radically transformed and lost most of its French influence (the cascade, the basin with jets etc.). The presence of the lake was diminished through a monumental bridge that crosses it.

Key words*: water, landscape design, composition, French romantic style, classic style.*

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I will briefly present one essential element in the composition of the Carol I Park in Bucharest. Formerly created forthe General Romanian Exhibition of 1906, this park was designed by the French landscape architect Jules Édouard Redont in a mixed style for this worldwide event. King Carol I and the Romanian authorities invited the specialist to conceive this park after his other great success in Romania, the Bibescu Park in Craiova, the largest natural park in the country at the time, for which he won international prizes in 1899 (Rigaud O., 1994; Monuments historiques, 1990; Blanchon et al., 2001) and in 1900, at the famous Universal Exhibition in Paris, where he was rewarded with the gold medal and the first prize (Teodorescu, 2007; Dumitrescu, Popescu, 2010; Braun, Păsărin, 2009).

Redont created a mixed style park for the project of the General Romanian Exhibition, with a dominant landscape style. He structured the park's general composition over a maincirculation axis, in a rigorous classical style ample and sophisticated up to detail, which continued visually over a sinuous lake towards a hill arranged on Dambovita's river cornice. On this hill he placed the most important building in the park – the elegant Palace of the Arts as vanishing point of the axis' perspective. At the palace's foot, in a typically romantic French style,Redont conceived an extensive cascade with a cave and a group of graceful statues from which the water was driven towards the lake. The area around the lake and the hill was conceived in free, landscaping style. (Figure 1)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to present water as an essential element in the composition of the Carol I Park in Bucharest the following methods were used: *in situ* analysis; study of documents: archives, books, reviews, internet sites, images;data analysis and image processing were achieved using common vector graphics software; systemisation of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The initial composition of the Carol I Park (Figure 1) incorporated water as one of its main elements. Water was utilized in various forms:

lake, water mirror, jet, spring, stream and cascade. Its forms were gradually thought from the city towards the heart of the park, from artificial to natural or translated in stylistics terms from the classical to the landscaping style.

The lake, watercourses and water features summed 2 ha, meaning 6% of the park's surface (Figure 2).

The main alley was designed in a geometric, rigorous style and dotted with neoclassical water mirrors with jets whose breadth grew from the point of entry into the park towards the lake. (Figure 3, 4).

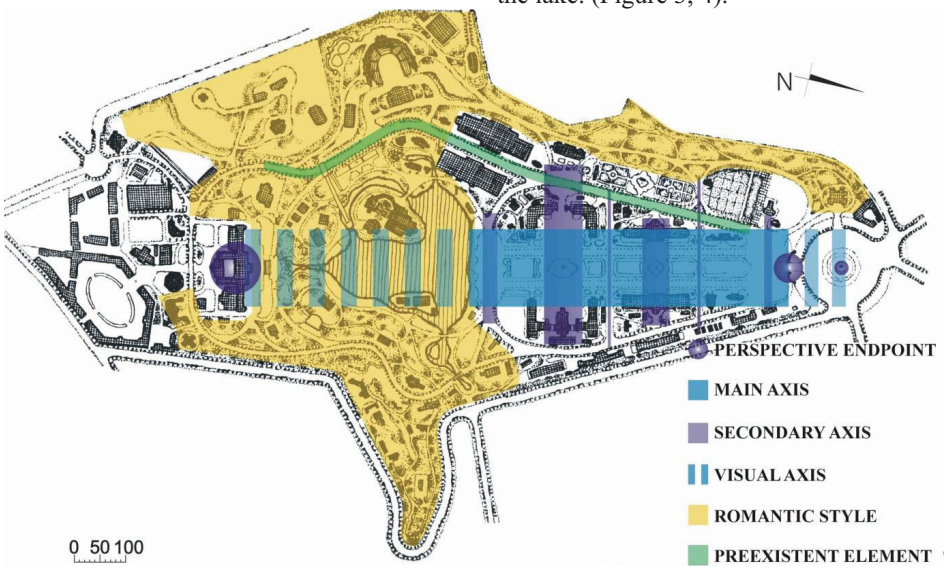

Figure 1. The initial composition of the Carol I Park in 1906 (Marcus, 1958; Pantu, 2011; Pantu, 2017)

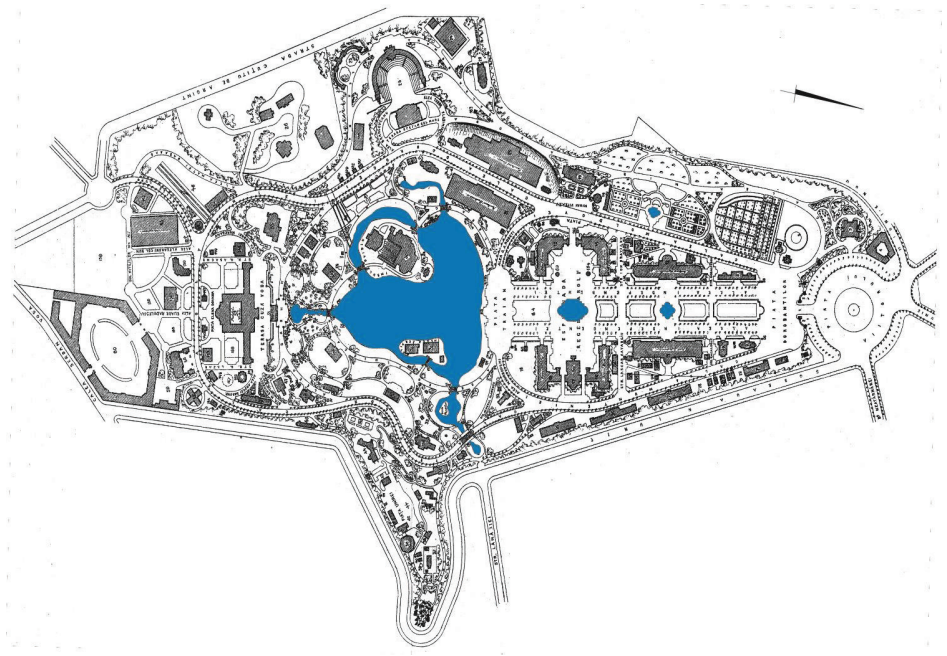

Figure 2. Water in Carol I Park Plan in 1906 (processed after Simetria Publishing House Archives; Mexi*et al.,* 2018)

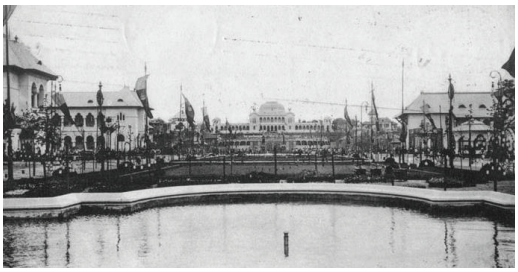

Figure 3. Water basin with jet on the main axis, 1906 (http://www.ringincentrulvechi.ro;Pantu, 2017)

Figure 4. Decorative basin on the main axis in front of the Royal Pavilion (Pantu, 2017)

With a modest surface, the lake was designed on the former pond, being permanently fed by the neighbouring springs, on the foot of Filaret Hill, part of the river Dâmboviţa cornice. An essential element of the composition of the park, the lake was used for leisure activities too: in the summer for boats – gondolas, a yacht and even a small ship, owned by the Commissioner of the World Exhibition (Teodorescu, 2007), and in the winter for skating (Potra, 1990).

In 1906, the lake brought several elements of novelty, "which our country had never seen before": the burning lake (a night show), the Water Chute and the boat slide (Teodorescu, 2007), which made Romania follow the same pace of the worldwide trend – not only the European one, but also with American one.

With a sinuous contour, laced and in a French romantic style, the lake encapsulated three islands of various sizes with expo pavilions – Ovid'sIsland with a summer theatre (Figure 5), the Island of the Snake with Dobrogea's Pavilion as a mosque where Muslims gathered each Friday (Potra, 1990) (Figure 6) and the Island of the Birds (Figure 7).

Figure 5. Ovid's Island with the Roman Arenas and the Cuţitul de Argint church in the background, 1906 (Zaharia)

Figure 6. Snakes Island with the mosque, left to The Royal pavilion, 1906 (Zaharia)

Figure 7. Birds Island, nowadays – 2011

Two winding canals were crossed by rustic bridges made of stone and reinforced concrete which imitates tree trunks, a pattern which had been retrieved from the French landscape parks, in the Alphand style (Figure 8).

In front of the lake, on a hill arranged on Dambovita's river cornice, under the Palace of Art, in a typically romantic French style, Redont conceived an extensive cascade with a cave and a group of elegant statues from which the water was driven towards the lake(Figure 9).

This project had been designed by the architect Remus Iliescu, who built it with the contracting engineer VasilePetrescu (Potra, 1990).

The sculptural artwork was inspired by the JepilorLegend, a folkloric tale discovered by Queen Elisabeth of Romania and published by the Queen under her Carmen Sylva pseudonym. The story is about two brothers falling in love for the same girl, who jumpedinto the water to avoid getting the brothers at war one against the other. This way, the girl turned into a river and the brothers became theJepi Mountains.

After reading this tale, the sculptor DimitriePaciurea got the inspiration to turn it into a sculpture. He proposed the artwork to the Commissioner of the Exhibition, Istrati, who accepted it, but under the condition of harmoniously fitting the artwork in the cave project submittedby the architectIliescu. (Teodorescu,2007). The short deadline made Paciurea to enlist the help of two other sculptors. Therefore, under his guidance, each of them created a statue. The two giants were created by Paciurea and FedericStorck and the nymph by Filip Marin, Storck's student(Figure 10).

Figure 8. View of the main axis with the lake and an Alphand style bridge over a canal in foreground (the Romanian National Library Archives; Pantu, 2017)

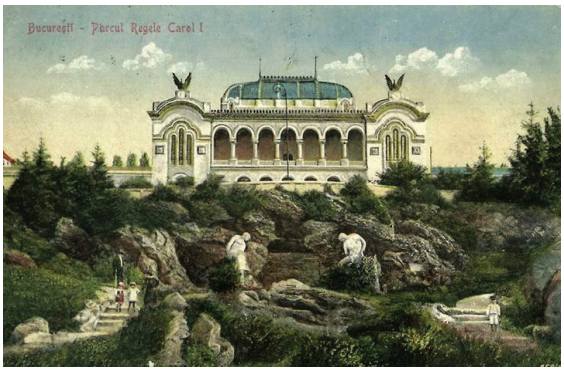

Figure 9. The Palace of the Arts and the grotto with sculptural artwork (http://caramica.blogspot.ro/2012/06/imagini-vechi-din-bucuresti-parcul.html)

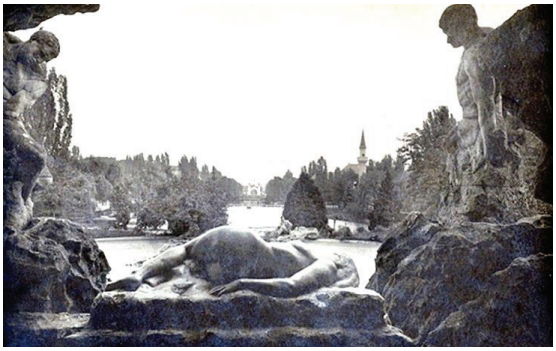

Figure 10. View from the grotto towards the lake (Bădescu,Voicu, 1999)

Figure 11. The construction site of the grotto with the sculptor Paciurea (Zaharia, 1906)

Although created artificially, the cave had a strong naturalistic feature, as the majority of the mineral elements found in the romantic French parks. Historian Teodorescu reports that there were 413 cubic meters of stones in mortar (Teodorescu, 2007), but they were all artificial rocks, as can be seen from the pictures taken during the waterfall creation (Figure 11). The

rocks used for Bibescu Park in Craiova and all other French style landscape developments, were also artificial. Here we see the remarkable French influence in the design, the materials used and the production process.

Nowadays, on the NW side of the park, a monumental neoclassical fountain built in 1870 by the Bucharest Mayor, Grigore Cantacuzino, is still standing on the side road to Giurgiu that became an alley of the park. The fountain named after Mayor Cantacuzino, was builtin stone by the architect Freinwald and sculptor Karl Storck, who got inspiration from the Triumphal Arches. (Marcus, 1958; Teodorescu, 2007; www.cIMeC.ro). It is the oldest fabric in the park that has survived to this day (Pantu, 2011) (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Cantacuzino Fountain, august 2010

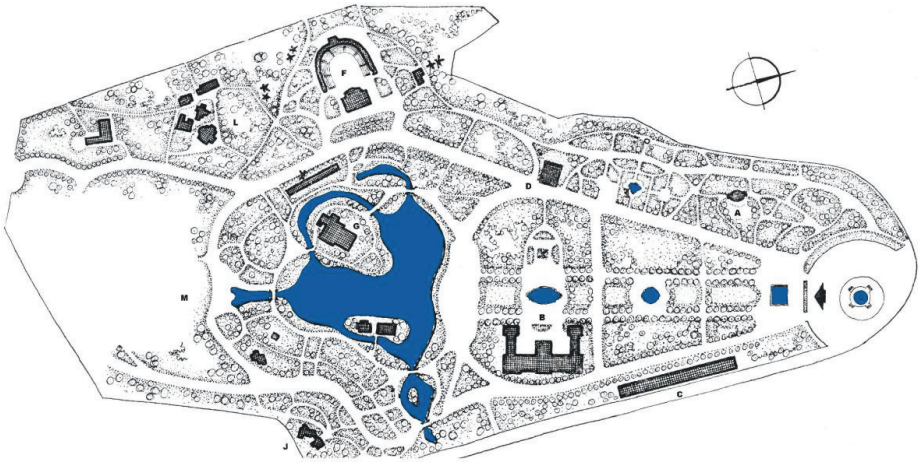

Figure 13. Water in Carol I Park Plan in 1957 (processed after Marcus, 1958)

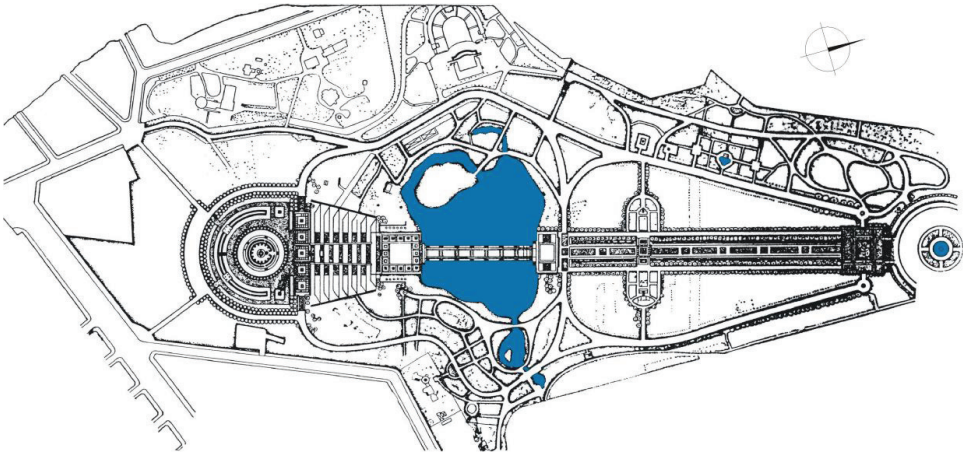

Figure 14. Water in Carol I Park Plan in 1964 (processed afterArhitecturaR.P.R. journal, 1964; Raducan and Pantu, 2004)

Carol I Park underwent a second and significant phase of development in 1935 (Figure 13). This is when it hosted the first edition of the *Celebrate Bucharest Month* exhibition, an event that caused major transformations in the park amongst which a monumental artesian fountain placed in the circular plaza that led to the main access point to the park (Figure 15). The famous Romanian architect, Octav Doicescu, designed it in modernist style with an elegant mosaic representing the signs of the Zodiac (Pantu, 2011). The main circulation axis also received a rectangular modernist water mirror at the principal entrance. (Figure 16)

Figure 15. The main axis from the entrance in 1977 with Zodiac Fountain(postal card 1977; Pantu, 2015)

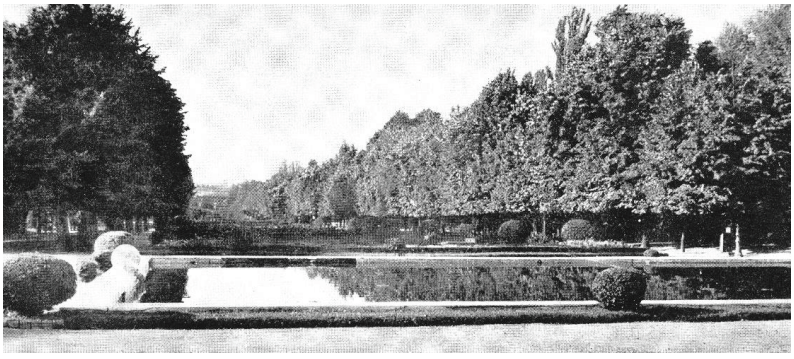

Figure 16. The main axis from the entrance in 1957 with the rectangular water mirror (Marcus, 1958)

In 1960, Carol I Park suffered more radical transformations and lost a lot of its French influence as the cascade and the basin with jets(Figure 14, 15, 17). The presence and the landscaping characteristics of the lake were attenuated through a monumental bridge that crosses it(Pantu, 2015) (Figure 14, 17).As though according to the plan of the park (Figure 14), the bridge does not seem to take that much of the area devoted to the lake, in the images one can notice that, given its monumental character and the height at which it was built, it diminishes a lot the area of the lake in visual terms (Figure 17).

Figure 17. The main axis towards the entrance with the monumental bridge over the lake in 2012

CONCLUSIONS

Carol I Park has a tremendous value and one of its main features is based on water.

From the historical point of view, the lake, part of its channels and the Cantacuzino fountain are major elements of the landscape, which were specific for that epoch. The waterfall cave and the sculptural artwork were additional elements of evidence in this respect, which, unfortunately, no longer exist.

Carol I Park, classified as a park with a generally non-uniform composition, has a significant landscape value and reveals major landscape style or manner elements. The lake, the water channels and the former waterfall cave are free, landscape style elements, whereas the Cantacuzino fountain and the former axis basins of water are elements of geometric, neoclassical style.

The global value of Carol I Park has a major significance for the Romanian material and spiritual heritage.

REFERENCES

Bădescu, E., Voicu, I. (1999). *Old Bucharest. Le vieu Bucarest*, CD ROM, NOI Media-Print Publishing House, Bucureşti& D.O.R. Kunsthandel, Olsberg

Blanchon, B., Rigaud, O. (2001). Edouard Redont. 1862-1942. in Racine M. (2001). *Créateurs de jardins et de paysages en France du XIXe siècle*. Actes Sud. Publishing House, Ecole Nationale Superieure du Paysage, Arles

Braun, G., Păsărin, G.B. (2009). Par amour pour la France et la Roumanie et d'autres livres de la donation Nicolae P. Romanescu, in *Lucrările Simpozionului Internaţional Cartea. România. Europa,* Biblioteca Bucureştilor Publishing House, Bucharest

Dumitrescu, L., Popescu, D. (2010). *Parcul « Nicolae Romanescu »* in http://memorielocala.aman.ro/files/parcul.html

Marcus R. (1958). *Parcuri şi Grădini din România*, Editura Tehnică Publishing House, Bucharest

Mexi, A. et al. (2018). *Prin Parcuri Publice din Sudul României,* Simetria Publishing House, Bucharest

Pantu, I.M. (2011). Carol I Park in Bucharest at the Beginning of the 20th Century. *Bulletin of University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca. Horticulture, 68 (I)/*, 400-407.

Pantu, I.M. (2011). Carol I Park in Bucharest in the '30s – Celebrate Bucharest Month. *Scientific Papers. Series B. Horticulture, Volume LV*, 310-315

Pantu, I.M. (2015). Carol I Park in Bucharest in the Second Half of the 20th Century. *Scientific Papers. Series B. Horticulture, Volume LIX*, 385-392.

Pantu, I.M. (2017). Initial planting design of the Carol I Park in Bucharest. *Scientific Papers. Series B. Horticulture, Volume LXI,* 389-398.

Potra, G. (1990). *Din Bucureştii de ieri.* Ed. Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică Publishing House, Bucharest

Raducan, V., Pantu, I.M. (2004). Study of the Evolution of Carol Park in Bucharest. Point of View on the Placement of the People's Salvation Cathedral in Carol Park, *Scientific Papers. Series B. Horticulture, Volume XLVII*

Rigaud, O. (1994). *1883-1986, Le jardin à l'anglaise*. In*Il était… 3 fois la Patte d'Oie*. Ville de Reims Publishing House, Reims

Teodorescu, V. Z. (2007). *Un parc centenar. Parcul Carol I*. Muzeul Municipiului Bucureşti Publishing House, Bucharest

Zaharia, A. (1906). *ExpoziţiuneaGeneralăRomânădin 1906 fotografiată de Al. Zaharia*. Stereoscopicphotos

*** (1964) *Arhitectura Republicii Populare Române Journal 1 / 1964*

*** (1990).*Monuments historiques, Issues 167-168*