

CITIES AS SHARED HABITATS

Young researchers for sustainable urban futures



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Edited by

Fekete Albert – Salamin Géza – Szövényi Anna



Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences,
Institute of Landscape Architecture, Urban Planning and Ornamental Horticulture
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Other mentors

Ildikó Réka Báthoryné Nagy (MATE),
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CONTENT

Foreword.....	7
SPACE – SOCIETY – ECONOMY	9
Tamás Ackermann: <i>Rural Disadvantages in Digital Spatial Inequalities</i>	11
Tímea Csizmadia: <i>Communities on the Move – The Role of Recreation and Social Capital in Shaping Small Towns</i>	16
Tamás Gyulai: <i>Human-centered Sustainable Dstrategies with Smart Cities</i>	23
Szverle Szandra: <i>Early School Leaving and Regional Disparities: Social and Urbanization Challenges in the Southern Great Plain Region</i>	30
Andrea Wallner: <i>Opportunities to Develop Cultural Identity in a Housing Estate Environment</i>	41
Dániel Zách: <i>The Characteristics of Urban Development in Different Historical Periods: The Case of Tatabánya</i>	47
URBAN SPACE	57
Anna Benkő, Imola Gecséné Tar: <i>Traditional Vernacular Flower Gardens</i>	59
Lejla Hargitai, Anna Eplényi: <i>Children’s Physical Activity and Movement Intensity on Playgrounds in Budapest</i>	66
Dániel Komes, Albert Fekete: <i>Functional and Urban Structural Transformations of Public Parks in Transylvania: A Case Ctudy of Cluj-Napoca and Târgu Mureş</i>	78
Petra Pásztói, Ildikó Réka Báthoryné Nagy: <i>Exploring the Morphology and Revival Opportunities of Budapest’s Historic Courtyards</i>	88
Ádám Pirty: <i>The Impact of the Northern Hungarian Planning Company (Északterv) on the Region’s Architecture Through Corporate Publications</i>	93
URBAN PLANNING & HERITAGE	101
Maja Natália Erdei, Máté Sárospataki: <i>The Impact of Modern Olympic Games on Urban Open-Space Planning</i>	103
Zsófia Gabriella Fehér: <i>Shared Spaces, Shared Futures: Engaging the Next Generation in Participatory Planning</i>	113
Miklós Gyurasza, Máté Sárospataki: <i>The impact of water features associated with historical gardens on the urban landscape</i>	121
Levente Haleczky, Albert Fekete: <i>The Development and Evolution of the Tree-Lined Streets of Budapest</i>	129
Flóra Keszei: <i>Toward Creative Cities: Insights for Hungary through UNESCO’s Creative Cities Framework</i>	139

URBAN DEVELOPMENT & REGIONAL PLANNING **145**

Tamás Dongó, Péter Ekler, György Alföldi: *Scientometric Foundations for Understanding Participatory Urban Planning*.....147

Imre Jakus: *Spatial and Temporal Trends of Suburbanisation in the 4 Largest Cities of the Great Plain, With a Special Focus on the Period After 2011*.....154

Virág Kutnyánszky, Zsolt Miklós Szilvácsku: *Changes in the Zones of the Hungarian National Ecological Network*162

Richárd Szalóki, Petra Szakonyi: *Brownfield Rehabilitation Planning. Past, Present, Future of Győr*.....169

Georgina Zsuzsanna Szecsei:
Reuse of the Szolnok Granary – Preserving Our Built Heritage176

FOREWORD

The continuous spread of cities and urban lifestyles, along with the increasing distance from natural environments, creates environmental challenges, new urbanisation trends, and opportunities. For the sake of our future, we must wisely seek out settlement forms that can effectively help us live together and create “shared habitats.” The available land determines the physical boundaries of urban development. At the same time, the success of conscious settlement formation depends largely on cooperation skills, governance, and the adequacy of planning mechanisms and processes.

Our settlements and spatial systems must be able to respond to the dynamics of environmental and social change. These present new challenges and tasks from time to time, requiring continuous development and renewal in the field. The contribution of scientific research is essential for this.

This volume presents a selection of research results from young scholars in the field of urban planning. The volume is a follow-up to the 1st Hungarian Doctoral Student Conference on Urban Studies and Planning held on February 6, 2025, from which 20 research papers were selected for further elaboration in this volume. The conference, and thus this volume, was organised with the cooperation of leading Hungarian organisations in the field of urban planning: the Hungarian Society for Urban and Spatial Planning, the University of ELTE Centre for Geography, Corvinus University of Budapest – Department for Geography and Planning, Technical University of Budapest, Department of Urban Planning and Design.

The 21 studies in the book present the interesting findings of the latest generation of researchers on urban green spaces, sustainability, and the challenges of urban planning processes to a broader audience.

The Editors:

Albert Fekete
Anna Szövényi
Géza Salamin

ExploreParis, 2025: <https://exploreparis.com/en/6899-time-travel-from-the-1998-stade-de-france-to-the-2025-olympic-village.html> (2025.01.31.)

IOC, 2025: <https://www.olympics.com/en/news/olympic-venues-overview-ioc-london> (2025.01.23.)

Landezine, 2025: <https://landezine.com/queen-elizabeth-olympic-park-by-hargreaves-associates/> (2025.01.23.)

Mérce: <https://merce.hu/2019/12/24/grand-paris-mint-akarat-es-kepzet-i-parizs-es-kulvarosai/> (2025.01.31.)

NBC, 2025: https://www.nbcbayarea.com/investigations/olympic-arenas-often-fall-into-disrepair-so-la-vows-to-rely-on-existing-venues-in-2028/3622107/?utm_source=chatgpt.com (2025.01.30.)

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SHARED SPACES, SHARED FUTURES: ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATION IN PARTICIPATORY PLANNING

ABSTRACT

Participatory planning methods in urban planning and governance are receiving increasing attention for boosting the acceptance of development plans, solving local problems more effectively, and strengthening social cohesion. Albeit youth participation has evolved from tokenism into an institutionalized form in the past decades, a number of challenges remain. The aim of this research is to present the evolution of youth participation in urban planning since the early 2000s in Europe and the United States, while focusing on what role digital participatory tools can play in these processes. The research was supported by exploring existing studies of youth participation in urban planning through a historical literature review. According to the research findings, although effective participatory processes should involve the broadest range of local actors, including youth, in both regions, their purposeful involvement in participatory planning processes is often overlooked or dismissed, while successful means of their engagement are not widely adopted. Digital planning tools are rising mostly in Northern European planning and are easily adapted by youth, but can only complete in-person methods. The research results show that successful examples of youth involvement contribute to increasing community cohesion and creating vibrant public spaces for all ages. Participatory planning needs to cater to the emotional and developmental factors of youth and invest in resources from training to the adoption of a playful approach to successfully gain the valuable inputs of youth to build the cities of the future.

Zsófia Gabriella Fehér

Doctoral School of
International Relations and
Political Science,
Corvinus University of
Budapest, email: zsofia.
feher@stud.uni-corvinus.hu

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participation*

1 Introduction

In the 21st century, in order to successfully address challenges in urban development, such as social cohesion or urban decay, a multidisciplinary approach is needed. Participatory planning, designed with the right methods, can help us to create attractive living environments for all ages, reflecting actual needs (Csanádi et al, 2018). By these means, the affected community can participate, take responsibility, express their interests, and incorporate information only they possess (Düll, 2017). This also includes younger citizens, referred to interchangeably by the terms children, adolescents, youth, or young people in urban planning literature (Simpson, 1997). Engaging the public can also help to create lively and functional spaces. External spaces have always formed the community zone of the city, and the qualities of a livable city are closely tied to possible activities in the public space (Kocsis, 2015). Leisure activities in outdoor places have also been shown to have practical benefits in promoting young people's long-term health and wellbeing (Abbott-Chapman & Robertson, 2015). Even though urban planning has shifted from expert-led rational planning to more inclusive participatory planning, the meaningful involvement of youth in planning is still a rarity, despite young people's fresh views and novel ideas. With growing urban populations and increasing attention to youth rights, youth involvement is crucial to creating a sustainable future (Palmberg Ingelstam, 2021). Since 2015, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has been the most widely ratified international instrument, which states that the opinions of children and young people should be considered when people make decisions about issues involving them, which extends to urban planning (United Nations, 1989; Palmberg Ingelstam, 2021). Undoubtedly, there is a minimal understanding of the proper circumstances of youth participation in planning, and the role of digital tools in facilitating youth involvement is still in the early stages, even though younger generations, the digital natives, are much more open to the opportunities of planning through digital

tools (Teodorescu, 2024). Therefore, to cover a research gap, two research questions were established:

1. How has youth engagement evolved in participatory planning methods in public space development projects since the early 2000s in Europe and the United States?
2. What role could digital tools play in the involvement of youth in public space development projects?

2 Methodology

For this research, a historical literature review was chosen as the primary method, which allows for an exploration of the evolution of youth involvement in participatory planning and the emergence of digital tools in this process by collecting and analyzing existing research findings (Labaree, 2009). The research was carried out from the early 21st century due to the rise of digital technology and social media, which transformed youth's interactions. The study also focuses on both the United States and Europe as regions, as both have seen a policy shift towards inclusive governance since the turn of the century and have high rates of technology usage (Reiersølmoen, Gianni, & Divitini, 2018).

To conduct this research, the five-step technique of literature review was conducted: creation of a text database and research panorama, building on the main authors' findings and conclusions, location of origins and conceptual framework, and defining the research subject (Almadi, 2019). First, the necessary keywords were identified ("participatory planning", "urban planning", "youth engagement", and "youth participation" with "Europe" and variations of "United States" for geographical narrowing). For this research, the keywords were searched for both individually and combined in the EBSCO and Web of Science databases. Several filters were used to narrow down the results, such as scientific, peer-reviewed journals, years of publishing (2000-2024), type of content (academic journals, books, and e-books), and English-language.

3 Research panorama

The final text database is composed of 30 sources and categorized in Excel, containing the most essential information (author, year of publication, title, publisher, discipline, type of content). All of the sources are scientific, peer-reviewed works, except for one conference paper; all are research articles.

The authors' range consists of 78 different authors. As seen in Figure 1, Derr, V. (3) carried out the most research on the subject, with Cushing, D. F. (2) and Rodela, R. (2) having the second most published work.

The years of publishing range from 2002 to 2024, with a remarkable increase from

the late 2010s, which supports the topic's significance. The increase since the 2020s is due to researchers focusing on the possibilities of youth engagement in smart city planning (see Figure 2).

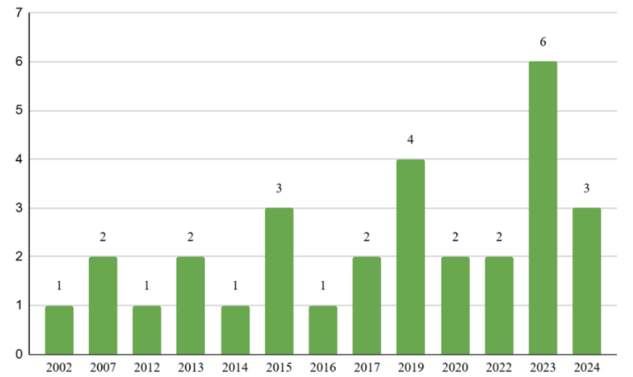


Figure 2 -Years of publishing (n=30).

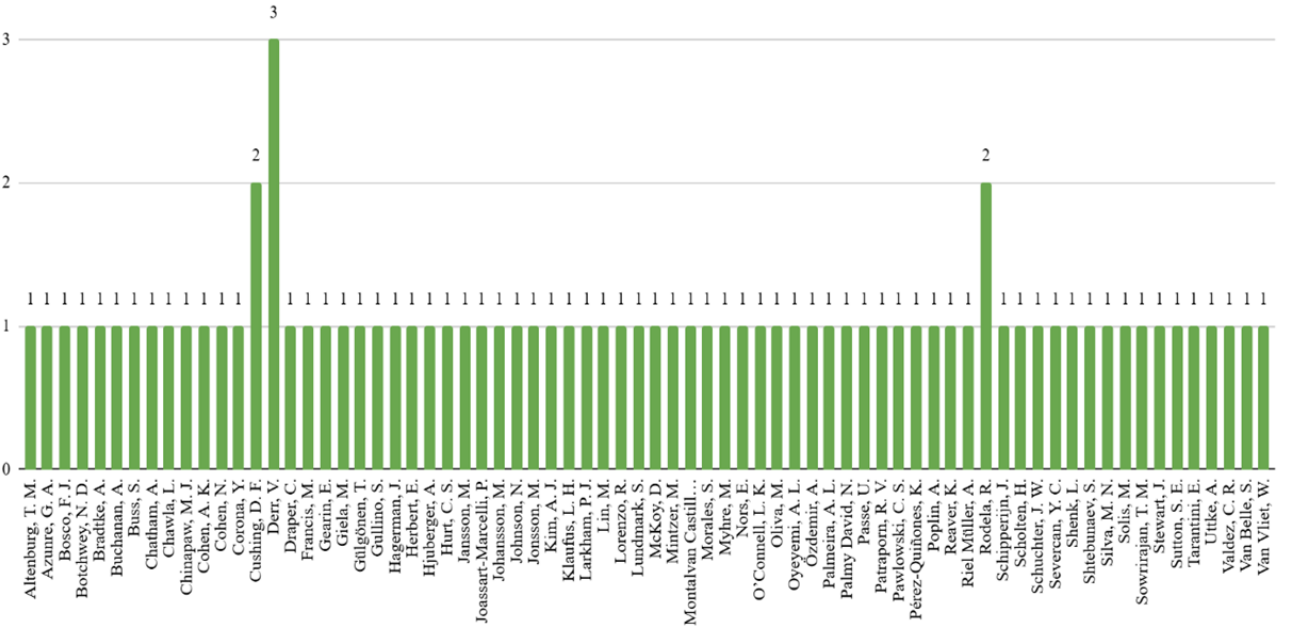


Figure 1 -Range of authors (n=78).

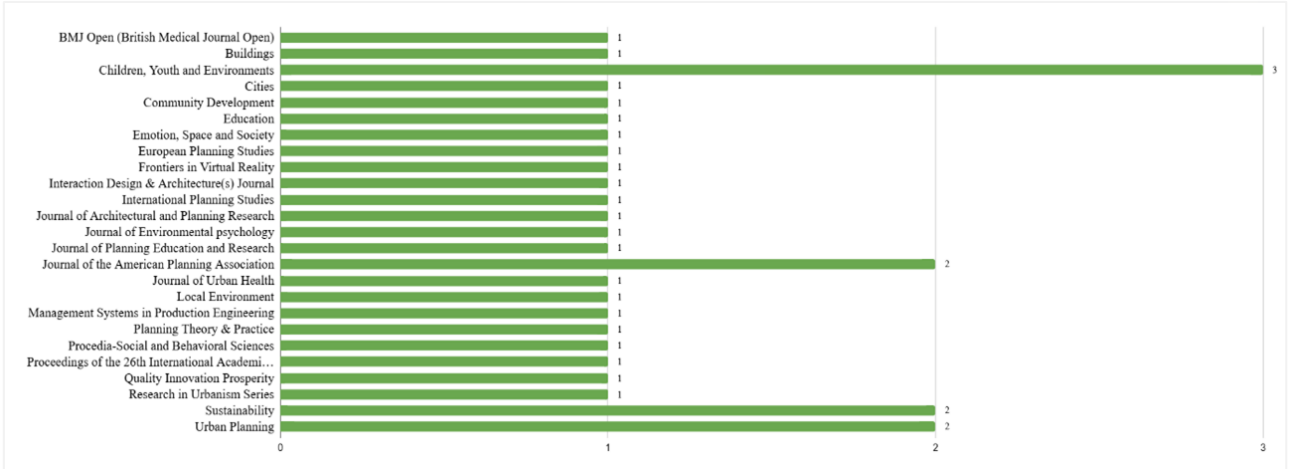


Figure 3 -Disciplines of sources (n=25).

The disciplines of the sources vary, as seen in Figure 3, with the greatest accumulation being of related fields, such as planning, urban planning, architecture, and design. Scientific works on child development, public health, sustainable development, and product engineering are also relevant to the research.

After completing the scientific search, the context of the study narrows down to the investigation of digital participation opportunities within youth involvement in public space development projects (see Figure 4.).

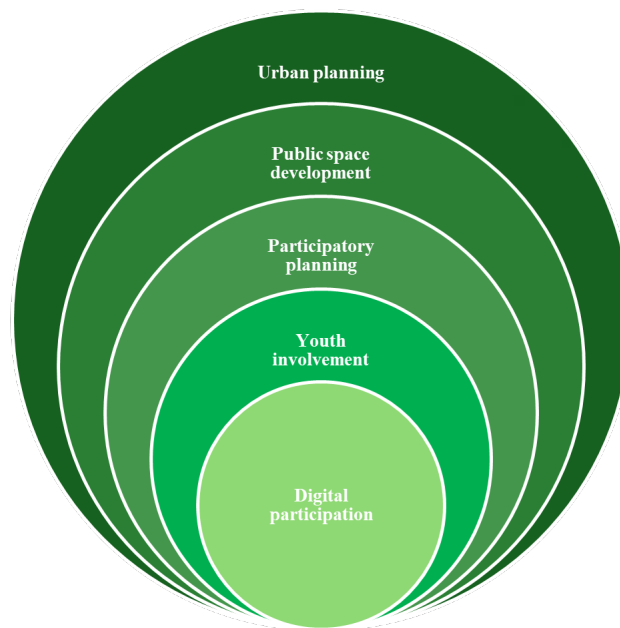


Figure 4 - Context and focus of the research

4 Literature review

4.1 The evolution of youth participation

The involvement of children in planning has evolved through several different stages, from tokenism to more effective participation to institutionalisation up until the 21st century (Hart, 1992; Francis & Lorenzo, 2002). The decades-long debate on the appropriate methods of involvement has been accompanied by several classification efforts in the 2000s, and the main findings advocate for children and adult co-production in shaping urban environments (Francis & Lorenzo, 2002; Varney, 2007). However, in both regions, their purposeful involvement in participatory planning

processes is often overlooked or dismissed due to indifference, lack of capacity, or preconceptions, while successful means of their engagement are not widely adopted (Cushing, 2015; Lundmark, Jonsson, Myhre, Hjuoberger & Rodela, 2023). Not only does youth participation appear to be a low priority in general, but local authorities place more emphasis on informing than on actual involvement in decision-making structures by valuing them as partners and giving them power and control (Palmy David & Buchanan, 2019).

To counter this, educational methods were used to prepare young people for their involvement in urban planning (Uttke, 2012; McKoy, Stewart, & Buss, 2015), to develop critical thinking about their environment, and to influence decision-making. Yet, doubts have risen given the emotional labour performed by kids in the roles of planners (Bosco & Joassart-Marcelli, 2015) and the inclusivity of the processes regarding children from disadvantaged socio-spatial backgrounds (Sutton, 2007; Derr, Chawla, Mintzer, Flanders, Cushing & Van Vliet, 2013; Azunre & Sowrirajan, 2021). Today, planning for youth cannot be reached without ensuring that adult society takes responsibility for children's viewpoints and fair participation (Jansson, Herbert, Zalar, & Johansson, 2022).

4.2 Emergence of digital tools

Research on digital participatory planning increased from the second half of the 2010s to strengthen youth participation with new methods (Poplin, Shenk & Passe, 2017), as participatory processes previously mainly only included photography-based techniques (Francis & Lorenzo, 2002; Uttke, 2012; Derr & Tarantini, 2016; Özdemir, 2019). As the majority of youth, regardless of socio-economic background, own smart devices and are generally more tech-savvy, planners build on their skills to introduce innovative technologies for engagement (Poplin, Shenk & Passe, 2017). Scandinavian planning often uses playful elements such as interactive mapping, online serious games, sound fiction, augmented reality, and Minecraft for urban planning (Scholten, 2017; Poplin, Shenk & Passe, 2017; Reaver,

2023). Digital participation of youth is an increasing body of literature in people-centred smart city planning (Giela, 2023; Montalvan Castilla & Riel Müller, 2023). Teenagers are especially drawn to the possibilities of living in a smart city, while they are also capable of critically examining the concept and incorporating missing aspects, such as equity or environmental-friendliness (Shtebunaev, Gullino & Larkham, 2023).

After reviewing the existing literature, it can be concluded that digital tools come easily to youth, and gamification can raise their engagement rate. Surprisingly, digital planning tools are almost exclusively a feature of Northern European planning (Poplin, Shenk & Passe, 2017; Jonsson, Myhre, Hjuoberger & Rodela, 2023; Reaver, 2023). While young people are more adept at digital planning than older generations, the drawbacks of the digital divide, digital addiction, and power imbalances are still evident (Poplin, Shenk & Passe, 2017; Bradtke, 2020; Reaver, 2023). In-person participatory methods cannot be replaced with digital; research supports the use of mixed-methodology in planning projects.

4.3 Uncovering youth values

Since the 2010s, facilitators of youth involvement have stressed that the future visions of youth also support economic-social-environmental sustainable prospects as they advocate for equitable, healthy, peaceful, and green spaces (McKoy, Stewart, & Buss, 2015; Severcan, 2015). Urban planners also noted that children are more sensible about spatial-social problems and can be equipped for designing cities in an equitable manner (Derr & Tarantini, 2016). The United Nations Child Friendly Cities initiative's targets (safe and accessible cities, which have variable green and open spaces) have also been proven to be beneficial to all citizens (Jansson, Herbert, Zalar & Johansson, 2022).

Youth often represent values profitable for all ages, such as environmental protection, accessibility, safety, and inclusivity (Lin & Patraporn, 2023; Solis, Morales, Cohen, Pérez-Quñones, Chatham, Hagerman, ... &

Valdez, 2024). Young people are, in every case, trying to make the world a better place, but this often clashes with adult perspectives of urban development, who sometimes dismiss their ideas as idealistic approaches (Derr, Corona & Gülgönen, 2019). Incorporating children's ideas into plans and policies has always been and still is one of the most challenging aspects of children's participation.

5 Conclusion

This study examined youth engagement in urban planning in Europe and the United States from the 2000s onwards. The findings highlight the benefits of co-production between children and adults in planning, yet youth perspectives remain underrepresented in both regions. While young people's involvement can benefit all stakeholders, concerns persist regarding their emotional labour and the inclusivity of processes. Digital planning tools and gamification can enhance engagement, though they are mostly widespread in Northern Europe. Despite the digital proficiency of the younger generations, the digital divide and power imbalances continue to hinder youth participation. Combining digital and in-person participatory methods can be more effective and lead to more holistic design outcomes. Young people's values, such as environment-friendliness, accessibility, safety, and inclusiveness, benefit all generations.

The limitations include the limited geographical scope, which affects the applicability. The broadness of the age range in studies might also overlook nuances within them. Further studies could explore the current state of youth participatory practices from a non-Western perspective, particularly with comparative study methods, or carry out longitudinal research of youth involvement projects with digital participatory methods. The results of the research so far can also provide a foundation for a further study to investigate the opportunities, difficulties, and good examples of children and youth participation in urban planning projects in Hungary.

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THE IMPACT OF WATER FEATURES ASSOCIATED WITH HISTORICAL GARDENS ON THE URBAN LANDSCAPE

Miklós Gyurasza

IMATE Doctoral School of Landscape Architecture and Landscape Ecology, miklos.gyurasza@gmail.com

Dr. Máté Sárospataki

MATE Institute of Landscape Architecture, Urban Planning and Garden Art, Department of Garden Art and Landscape Design, sarospataki.mate@uni-mate.hu

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ABSTRACT

In Europe, after antiquity, it was the Renaissance that once again brought the fashion of constructing large-scale ornamental gardens, a trend that persisted unbroken throughout subsequent stylistic historical eras. Garden design spread as an important tool of representation, enjoying great popularity among rulers, nobles, and affluent burghers. Typically, the greater the wealth of the patron, the more they endeavored to create truly expansive and opulent gardens. The grandeur of a garden was defined foremost by its spatial scale and the attractions within it, particularly the number and size of the water architecture employed. The water supply for these highly water-demanding gardens was addressed either by utilizing and modifying existing natural water sources or through artificial construction. In many cases, water could only be channeled into the gardens via engineering solutions, such as building surface and underground canals, water towers, and aqueducts resembling those of the Romans. To this day, European cities retain canals and structures originally created to supply water to horticultural works. Some continue to serve their original purpose, while others have adopted new functions. Yet most have influenced the shaping of urban structures over time and, in aesthetic, functional, or ecological terms, still exist as vital elements of cities. All of this can be reconstructed and verified using historical maps, old depictions, and written accounts.