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**URBAN IMPROVEMENT: THE
MAKING AND USING OF GREEN
SPACES IN ST. PETERSBURG
(1870s-1910s)**

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URBAN IMPROVEMENT: THE MAKING AND USING OF GREEN SPACES IN ST. PETERSBURG (1870s-1910s)²

With intensive industrialization process St. Petersburg faced with urbanization by the second half of the 19th century. Due to the transformation of the city green spaces became part of this process, so environmental as well as health care issues occurred at the center of public debates. It was then that issues related to urban green spaces occurred in the focus of public attention. They became the main topics in periodicals, as well as in special brochures and publications on urban development. Gardens and parks were perceived as an important element of the urban environment, as a significant public good, and they were crucial due to the recreational and sanitary point of view, as places necessary for residents to relax and to improve their health while walking there. As a result, green spaces have become part of the process of forming the public sphere in St. Petersburg. Ceasing to be private, they gradually offered more leisure activities for all residents of the city. However, the (re)making of green spaces in St. Petersburg was a result of a clash of interests of different actors involved – gardeners and architects, who were members of professional communities, and representatives of the city municipality. The same interest was paid by citizens whose voices are explicitly seen in periodicals. Each interest group had different vision of how urban gardens and parks should have been organized and functioned. Examining extensive body of sources that included journal and wallpaper publications and official documents of the office of city authorities I would like to analyze how different communities of experts that were involved in these transformations worked with nature in the urban environment and to focus on contested character of the emerging green public spaces.

JEL Classification: Z

Keywords: green spaces, St. Petersburg in 19th century, urbanization, spatial history, urban history

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Introduction

During the 19th century, green spaces, alleys, squares, parks, and gardens were becoming an integral part of urban infrastructure and a significant social, cultural, and public phenomenon. This research is focused on green spaces of St. Petersburg, the capital of the Russian Empire, during the period of its intensive transformation at the end of 19th – beginning of 20th cc. It was then that issues related to urban green spaces became the focus of public attention. The rapid growth of the capital's population, as a result of rapid industrialization and increased flow of migrants who came to work, the growing problems associated with a shortage of housing (especially in central areas of the city), despite intensive development, inadequate public transport, the spread of dangerous epidemics – all these issues forced the city municipal government and various groups of experts to look at urban green spaces in a different way. Gardens and parks were perceived as an important element of the urban environment, as a significant “public good”, their importance was understood both from the recreational and sanitary point of view, as places which could improve citizens` health. Gradually, people realized that the rational transformation of this green infrastructure into an exemplary urban horticulture based on scientific methods will help to solve a whole range of social, cultural, sanitary, and hygienic problems. Various groups of actors – representatives of the municipal government, garden scientists, architects, as well as residents of the capital saw the problem of transformation of green infrastructure and ways to solve it differently. This study focuses on how the formation and use of green spaces in St. Petersburg was an arena for their active interaction and sometimes clashes of their different interests, views, and values.

Green spaces recently became the interest for scholars from a variety of research fields. Using this research object, they, on the one hand, drew attention to the special position of nature in urban infrastructure³. On the other hand, it allowed them to look at nature as part of society⁴. The concept of “green spaces” was developed by interdisciplinary group of researchers led by Benjamin W. Stanley. They proposed a theoretical framework, which should provide a tool for interdisciplinary urban research. Their structuralist approach implies the division of urban space into 7 categories (food production areas, parks and gardens, recreational space, plazas, streets, transport, facilities, and incidental space), which helps better contextualize different functions of public urban spaces. They also suggested dividing urban space into two parts: “grey” and “green”,

³ Brantz D., Dumpelmann S. *Greening the City: Urban Landscapes in the Twentieth Century*. University of Virginia Press, 2011; Stanley W. B., Stark B. L., Johnston K. L., Smith M. E. *Urban Open Spaces in Historical Perspective: A Transdisciplinary Typology and Analysis // Urban Geography*. 2012. No. 33 (8). P. 1089-1117.

⁴ Johnston M. *Trees in Towns and Cities: A History of British Urban Arboriculture*. Oxford: Windgather Press, 2015; Way T. *A Nation of Gardeners: How the British Fell in Love with Gardening*. London: Prion, 2010.

where buildings, roads, bridges (hard-surfaced constructions) are *grey* part of the city and all natural elements introduced into the city infrastructure (vegetated lands) are *green*⁵. As a result, green urban spaces are spaces with elements of greenery such as gardens, squares, parks, lawns, flowerbeds, etc. They often play crucial role in discussions about the ecology of the city, about the health of citizens, and urban development. Another distinctive approach to understanding green spaces is the concept of socio-natural sites developed by V. Winiwarter, M. Schmid, and G. Dressel⁶. Their idea dissolves a line between “natural” and “cultural” and focuses on practices which integrated natural elements in urban surrounding. Rather than repeating the ontological difference between nature and culture I would like to show how natural elements were integrated into urban landscape and how they became a crucial element of urban culture and heritage. During the 19th century, nature was gradually integrated into the urban space through social practices, festivals, discussions about the ecology and sanitary condition of the city, development of rules of behaving in gardens, etc. This research is also inspired by the spatial approach formulated by Henri Lefebvre in his famous work “Production of Space”⁷. He proposed a complex dynamic model of space, which can simultaneously be used as a research tool. According to Lefebvre, space is divided into three components: *material*, i.e. factual geometrical reality; *social*, expressed in social norms and practices; *symbolic*, which relates to symbolic representation and perception. His concept of space production was then developed in the works of the German researcher M. Löw, who gave space an even greater “potential”, which means that it is simultaneously produced by human, and then in response constructs social practices⁸. Such approach will allow a more comprehensive view of the process of urban space formation in the second half of the 19th century.

In historiography, the theme of urban nature occupies the minds of researchers from various fields. T. Way in his monograph showed how greening policy of British cities in the 18–19th centuries directly depended on the figure of the monarch⁹. For him, the history of urban greenery became a part of political history. L. Culver, in turn, on the example of Los Angeles in the 20th century, showed how private access to nature was given an advantage over creating opportunities

⁵ Stanley B. et al. Urban Open Spaces in Historical Perspective: A Transdisciplinary Typology and Analysis // Urban Geography. 2012. No. 33. P. 1089–1117.

⁶ Winiwarter V., Schmid M., and Dressel G. Looking at Half a Millenium of Co-existence: the Danube in Vienna as a socio-natural site // Springer. Water Hist. 27 March 2013. P. 101–119.

⁷ Lefebvre H. The Production of Space. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

⁸ Löw M. The Constitution of Space: The Structuration of Spaces Through the Simultaneity of Effect and Perception // European Journal of Social Theory. 2008. No. 11 (1). P. 25–49.

⁹ Way T. A Nation of Gardeners: How the British Fell in Love with Gardening. London: Prion, 2010.

for public green spaces in the city¹⁰. The history of nature's integration into urban landscapes, therefore, allows to address more global historical issues.

As for Russian historiography, it lacks in theoretical understanding of green urban spaces. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union provided researchers with more diversity in the choice of research topics so today urban history has different research fields. As a result, today there is an extensive field of cultural history of cities. One of the most outstanding works in this direction is a research held by L.V. Koshman. In her monograph on urban life in 19th century Russian cities, she attempted to study the city as a socio-cultural organism using a historical and cultural approach. The “cultural” approach to studying the city allowed her to understand changes in urban landscape¹¹. Another researcher A.V. Mazanik, who discussed the cultural turn in urban history, consequently summarized that “the urban environment follows its own specific development logic”¹². Another important turn in Russian historiography was to understand the phenomenon of civil society in the 19th century Russia, especially in the second half of the century. Here researchers discovered the activity of many public organizations of the Russian Empire, which could be engaged in scientific, public, charitable, and other types of activities¹³. Their activities significantly transformed the urban space and offered new public practices for residents. Besides that, some authors focus on the role of government institutions, which in the second half of the nineteenth century began to play a key role in urban development¹⁴. Most researchers note that the main problem of the St. Petersburg administration was the status of the capital city. Consequently, all bureaucratic institutions were concentrated here, and it was difficult to establish an adequate interaction between them. Other researchers mostly explored the artistic component of gardens and parks¹⁵. Their credit is that they noticed a key change in urban gardens and parks in the second half of the 19th century, when public urban spaces became multifunctional and were incorporated

¹⁰ Culver L. Race, Recreation, and Conflict between Public and Private Nature in Twentieth Century Los Angeles // *Greening the City: Urban Landscape in the Twentieth Century* / ed. by Dorothee Brantz and Dumpelmann, Sonja. University of Virginia Press: 2011. P. 95–114.

¹¹ Koshman L.V. *Gorod I gorodskaiia zhizn` v Rossii 19 stoletii*. Moscow: Rossijskaia entsiklopediia (ROSSPEN), 2008.

¹² Mazanik A.V. «Kulturnii povорот» b rossiiskaia istoricheskaia urbanistika // *Proshlyi vek* (ed.. A. I. Miller). Moscow: INION RAN, 2013. C. 223–240.

¹³ Bradley J. *Associations in Tsarist Russia: Science, Patriotism and Civil Society*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009; Tumanova A.S. *Samoderzhavie I obschestvennye organizatsii v Rossii. 1905–1917*. Tambov: TGU G.R. Derzhavina, 2002; Grosul V.I. *Russkoe obschestvo 18–19 vekov: Traditsii I novatsii*. Moscow: Nauka, 2003.

¹⁴ Bater James H. Some Dimensions of Urbanization and the Response of Municipal Government: Moscow and St. Petersburg // *RUSSIAN HISTORY/HISTOIRE RUSSE*. Vol. 5. Part 1. 1978. P. 46–63.; Suhorukova A.S. *Neobhodimoe vmeshatel'stvo: munitsipal'naiia vlast` I arhitekturnyi oblik goroda // Kul'tury gorodov Rossiiskoi imperii na rubezhe 19 – 20 vekov (Materialy mezhdunarodnogo kollokviuma, St. Petersburg 14–17 June 2004)*. St. Petersburg.: Izdatel'stvo “Evropeiskii dom”, 2009. P. 162–173.

¹⁵ Gorkhov V.A. *Zelenaia priroda goroda: Sadovo-parkovoe iskusstvo Rossii*. Vol. 2. Moscow: Arkhitektura-V, 2012; Goryshyna T.K. *Zelenyi mir starogo Peterburga*. St. Petersburg.: “Iskusstvo-Spb”, 2010; Naschokina M.V. *Sadovo-parkovoe iskusstvo // Kirichenko E.I. Russkoe gradostroitel'noe iskusstvo. Gradostroitel'stvo serediny 19 – nachala 20 veka. Kniga vtoraiia*. Moscow: Progress-Traditsiia, 2003. P. 54-104; Vesnina N. N. *Gorodskie sady I parki Sankt-Peterburga 19 – pervoi treti 20 vekov. Funktsional'no-tipologicheskaia kharakteristika // Pamiatniki istroii I kul'tury Peterburga. Issledovania I materialy*. Vol. 7. St. Petersburg: Beloe I Chernoe, 2004. P. 100–123.

into urban daily practices which changed their look. However, there are no works which would understand urban green spaces as a common interest for different groups of actors. Some works are at best devoted to one actor. Moreover, even though historiography notes a change in the planning of urban gardens in the second half of the 19th century, researchers do not go deep into the causes of this transition. I believe that routes of this issue hide in the gradual formation of the public sphere in the second half of the 19th century, when previously private spaces became public and accessible to all citizens of St. Petersburg. However, this transition was not unambiguous either. In addition, I want to show that the process of forming St. Petersburg's garden infrastructure and defining mechanisms of interaction with this public space took place in the process of collision of various interests.

To uncover such complex problem, I turned to the various types of historical sources. These sources are divided into visual and written one. Visual sources contain 19th century maps of St. Petersburg. They allow to see the expansion of urban space and how natural elements are gradually integrated into it. The second type of sources refers to guidebooks of 19th century St. Petersburg. Such specific source helps to reconstruct the image of the city and identify when green spaces have become one of the most important parts of urban space. Periodicals, especially magazines published by city authorities and some public Societies interested in urban greenery (Imperial Russian Society of Gardening and Imperial Russian Society of Architects) allow to identify the main actors involved in the formation of green spaces in St. Petersburg, as well as the problems they tried to solve. Finally, records of the municipal administration, which are located in the Central State Historical Archive and the Russian State Historical Archive of St. Petersburg, contain many cases on gardens, parks, and squares in the city. With the help of them, it is possible to reconstruct decision-making mechanisms of the city authorities on creation or reconstruction of city gardens and parks.

Historical Context: City growth and transformation of urban green spaces of St. Petersburg in 19th – early 20th cc.

St. Petersburg today attracts many tourists, artists, art, and history lovers because it is primarily associated with heritage sites of the past. The historic center with its imperialist buildings, squares and parks creates the identity of the city, its symbolic image in the minds of people. All these spaces have long been an integral part of the urban culture of the northern capital, its identity. But that was not always the case. The turn to such perception of urban space took place in the second half of the 19th century. Historical maps of St. Petersburg show that in first half of 19th

century gardens and parks were mostly located in country residences and used only by their owners. Nikolai Ivanovitch Tsylov, famous cartographer and member of Russian Geographic Society, compiled in 1853 all historical maps of St. Petersburg from 1703. Maps from 1840 (Fig. 1) and 1849 (Fig. 2) show St. Petersburg surrounded with green symbols which indicate vegetation, however there are no such symbols in the city itself in spite the fact that Letnii and Tavricheskii gardens already existed at that period. This is explained by the fact that by that time urban space had not yet been differentiated strictly into public and private. The gardens in the city were owned by private owners, the imperial family, or some official departments. They could be open to the public only on certain public holidays. It was a kind of goodwill gesture from their owners. On the contrary, maps from the second half of the 19th century show green elements of the city as well as buildings and streets. Yulii Gubner, a doctor, in 1877 prepared a “St. Petersburg Sanitary condition map” (Fig. 3) where parks and gardens play a crucial role from the point of sanitary and citizens` health perspective. All next maps and plans tried to visually indicate urban green spaces because they became very important not only for representation but also for health functionality of city itself. They became important as public spaces that provided leisure time not only on certain holidays, but at any time of year.

Green spaces appeared as crucial elements of urban space because in the middle of the 19th century the city was buried in planned development and more systematic measures were needed to create new green areas and maintain old ones. The issue of urban greening became the focus of public attention. In periodicals there were a lot of appeals to the city services about the lack of fresh air in the capital. The construction of new plants and the large influx of peasants from the village have challenged the city authorities. For residents who could not afford to leave the city, urban gardens began to play an important hygienic and even psychophysiological function¹⁶. Making new gardens, keeping them in proper condition, organization of leisure in them have become public problems. As a result, the phenomenon of “public” (“*obschestvennye*”) gardens and parks emerged¹⁷. Some researchers who studied gardens from an artistic point of view, noted this transition, but did not go deeper into its causes. “Public” green spaces were meant to provide a variety of leisure activities and ideally had to be accessible to all city residents. For example, the Alexander Garden, the largest project of the second half of the 19th century, was the first to provide playgrounds for children, places for trade with ice cream and drinks, flowerbeds with rare plants to

¹⁶ Goryshyna T.K. Zelenyi mir starogo Peterburga. St. Petersburg.: “Iskusstvo-SPb”, 2010. P. 158–159.

¹⁷ Vergunov A.P., Gorkhov V.A. Vertograd: Sadovo-parkovoe iskusstvo Rossii (ot istokov do nachala 20 veka). Moscow: Kul`tura, 1996. P. 355–361; Vesnina N. N. Gorodskie sady I parki Sankt-Peterburga 19 – pervoi treti 20 vekov. Funktsional’no-tipologicheskaiia kharakteristika // Pamiatniki istroii I kul`tury Peterburga. Issledovania I materialy. Vol. 7. St. Petersburg: Beloe I Chernoe, 2004. P. 100–123.

popularize gardening among the public. However, sources show that the phenomenon of “public” gardens remained for the most part an idea, because despite the liberal reforms in the city up to the 20th century, the social differentiation of residents by class status continued to exist.

In the 1860s, on the wave of public uplift and state reforms of Alexander II, the Institute of Urban Self-Government (*Samouplavlenie*) of St. Petersburg became more active. The City Council (*Duma*) began to meet not only on special occasions, but also on a regular basis¹⁸. As a result, in 1869, they established the post of city gardener. Johann Paul Friedrich Adolf Wiese, who appears as Ivan Pavlovich in the sources, was elected for this position. He had occupied it for 21 years until 1890. Under his leadership city authorities created Kalinkinskii, Nikolskii, Lomonosovskii, Grecheskii, and Novo-Manezhnyi square. After retirement in 1890 his son – Vladimir Ivanovich Vise, who had served until 1916, held the post. The city gardener was responsible for the management of the entire garden economy. He hired a staff of gardeners, monitored the gardens and parks of the capital, but only those owned by the city. In total, by 1907 in the capital of the Russian Empire there were about 62 green spaces. However, V.I. Vise and I.P. Medvedev pointed out in their work that only 20 green areas inside the city belonged to the city authorities¹⁹. The rest areas were managed by various ministries, departments, imperial charities, and individuals. This situation shows how heterogeneous urban space was. This problem went in parallel with the formation of the public sphere in St. Petersburg. That is why the emergence of the phenomenon of “public” gardens and parks did not guarantee access to them for all citizens because a lot of urban spaces were still in private possession. As a result, this complex situation created problems for managing the diversity of urban spaces.

The problem of managing all this diversity of territories, actors and their opinions fell on the City Council, which found itself in the center of solving the problems of improvement of St. Petersburg after 1870. In 1870, a new Regulation on authority and responsibility of city government institutions was established. Before that, the economic part of the city was in the hands of the General Directorate of Railways and Public Buildings. After 1870 the Duma was entrusted with the “care” (*popechenie*) of the city economy, external improvement of the city and its sanitary and hygienic condition²⁰. Thus, urban development has become a key problem for city

¹⁸ Peterburgskaia gorodskaia Duma, 1846–1918 / ed. B.B. Dubentsov, V.A. Nardova. St. Petersburg: Liki Rossii, 2005. P. 15.

¹⁹ Vise V.I., Medvedev I.P. *Opisanie drevesnykh nasazhdenii goroda Sankt-Peterburga (parki, sady, skvery, bul' vary, allei. Istoria ikh vozniknovenia i dal'ne'shego razvitiia)*. St. Petersburg: Gorodskaia tipografiia, 1907.

²⁰ *Ibid.* P. 22.

governing institutions. Statistical data show that the expenses of the City Council for the improvement of the capital have been steadily growing since 1873²¹.

This is roughly the brief list of problems faced by St. Petersburg in the second half of the 19th century concerning the development of urban green spaces. The following will show how these problems were reflected in the eyes of the various interest groups that have defended their right in the management of gardens and parks in St. Petersburg. Three main groups were singled out in the research: *institutions of city government* (St. Petersburg City *Duma*, consultative body, and *Uprava*, executive board); the *public*, i.e., urban dwellers not related to the city administration; and *professionals* related to gardens and parks (architects and gardeners).

“Wishing to Keep Parks Open to the Public”: City Duma in Attempts to Resolve the Heterogeneity of Urban Space

Everyone knows that back in 1785 Catherine the Great granted the cities of Russian empire autonomy. However, it was only nominally, Catherine did not establish any real city government. Even though such government (*City Duma*) was founded first in 1848 in St. Petersburg, the city government was passive until 1870. In 1870 a new City Statute was created, according to which the Duma was entrusted with “care of the city economy, external improvement of the city, its sanitary and hygienic condition”²². Before that Duma mostly financed all other urban services and did not take practical part in city management. As a result, after expanding its powers, the Duma joined the implementation of a major project of Alexander Garden in 1871–1875. In 1878 there was an idea to create a master plan for the settlement of construction in St. Petersburg, which was ratified by law in 1880. And in 1886 the post of head of the city gardens was established.

Besides that, within the walls of the St. Petersburg city government, many less essential decisions were made regarding the management of the urban green spaces. At the beginning, i.e. during the period of 1870–1880s, the City Council tried to transfer the management of gardens and parks to other authorities. As a result, there were attempts to attract city entrepreneurs to organize leisure activities in green spaces of the city. For example, a certain bourgeois Vasilii Ni-

²¹ In particular, the maintenance of boulevards and public gardens in 1873 required 26.636 rubles, 40.659 rubles. - in 1888, 59,060 rubles. - in 1898, and finally, 85.525 rubles. - in 1900. The statistics were taken from: Peterburgskaia gorodskaia Duma, 1846–1918 / ed. B.B. Dubentsov, V.A. Nardova. St. Petersburg: Liki Rossii, 2005.

²² Peterburgskaia gorodskaia Duma, 1846–1918 / ed. B.B. Dubentsov, V.A. Nardova. St. Petersburg: Liki Rossii, 2005. P. 22.

kitich Egarev rented a part of Ekaterinhof to “give the working and factory population an opportunity to have a suitable cheap entertainment in their free time” in the form of “public festivities, with the sale of tea, coffee, beer and snacks ...”²³. Such management methods absolutely did not satisfy the city gardener Vladimir Vise. In his published work on parks and public gardens in St. Petersburg, he often complained that the transfer of green spaces to private figures leads to the destruction of vegetation²⁴. In his opinion, gardens and parks in St. Petersburg required special supervision and care by specialists. Attempts to attract specialists were made, but they were unsuccessful. In 1874, after successful cooperation with the Imperial Russian Gardening Society in the establishing of the Alexander Garden, the garden was completely transferred under the management of the Society to avoid its rapid deterioration. In 1890, the Society even offered to take over the management of all the city gardens²⁵. However, by the turn of the century the situation had changed, and such measures would have created a situation of collision between different municipal authorities. The city government would have to constantly check the intentions of the Society while building new roads or reconstructing of buildings.

In other cases, Duma was trying to solve problems on its own. There are two main problems that can be highlighted here: first of all, the city government tended to organize a dialogue between the various authorities and residents of the city to achieve consensus; second of all, in some cases, the Duma had to balance between private and public property in its decision-making process.

There are many cases in the archives where citizens in the second half of the 19th century have applied to the Duma for a construction of a new park or garden in their area. Pushkin Square, for example, was created not only by the initiative of residents, but also at their financial expense. Since the construction works had been finished in 1881 the square and its further maintenance were transferred to the city authorities²⁶. On the contrary, the project of the square on the corner of Telezhnaia and Zolotonoshskaia (now professor Ivashentsov Street) Streets was less successful. As it turned out, the area that was chosen for the square belonged partly to the Church and the local hospital. The Church agreed to give the territory, but the Duma still rejected the residents' petition “due to the proximity of the Botkin Hospital and the city isolation house”. Subsequently, the residents addressed the Mayor for the second time, but they did not receive any reply. The

²³ Po pros'be V.N. Egariova ob otdache emu v arendu chasti Ekateringofskogo sada. Doklad // Izvestiia Peterburgskoi gorodskoi Dumi. Vol. 113. No. 1. St. Petersburg, 1894. P. 60.

²⁴ Vise V.I., Medvedev I.P. Opisanie drevesnykh nasazhdenii goroda Sankt-Peterburga (parki, sady, skvery, bul'vary, allei. Istoria ikh vozniknovenia i dal'ne'shego razvitiia). St. Petersburg: Gorodskaiia tipografiia, 1907.

²⁵ O peredache sodержaniia vseh gorodskikh sadov, skverov i pitomnikov Imperatorskomu Rossiiskomu Obschestvu Sadovodstva. Doklad // Izvestiia Peterburgskoi gorodskoi Dumi. Vol. 99. No. 21. P. 36.

²⁶ Central State Historical Archive of St. Petersburg. F. 513. Op. 120. D. 225. O porekte ustroistva skvera na IIPushkinskoi ulitse. 1881–1885.

square was not built since there were no appropriate ways to dispose any real estate in the city property.

Another case took place in 1902. In the spring of this year, the Duma discussed the problem about unauthorized gardens along the embankment of the Volkovka River. After inspecting the area, the commission found out that the gardens, created by the residents themselves along the embankment, were in the territory owned by the city. Therefore, the owners were offered to sign a contract with the City Municipalities for renting. As the owners were poor peasants, they did not have enough money to pay the rent. Finally, City Council made a curious decision: “thanks to the construction of palisades fenced with decent latticework fences, this area has now become comfortable”, so it was decided to leave the owners the right to the unauthorized gardens²⁷. Guided by the idea of public good, authorities decided to leave the gardens untouched, which contradicted the general plan of St. Petersburg and the principles of urban land ownership.

Urban space is inherently heterogeneous. Despite the existence of many legal regulatory mechanisms, there is always some deviation. From the point of view of urban improvement, gardens and parks are not only touristic green areas, but also unauthorized gardens created by the residents of the city. In the second half of the 19th century, this phenomenon created problems, as there was no legal regulation of this kind of spaces. Therefore, City Council could make decisions that contradicted with the general planning to regulate the diversity of the capital city. At first glance, it may seem that the Duma after 1870 monopolized the right to manage gardens and parks, but the public nature of green spaces drew the attention of the general public and various public organizations, whose opinion could also be taken into account.

“The Rules for Visitors to the Gardens”: Green Spaces as Places of Social Interaction

Urban space is not only a result of conscious planning. It is also a place of unplanned meetings, chaotic movement, and uncertainty. Random interactions between citizens make urban space public. Squares, alleys, cafes, gardens, and parks provide opportunities for social interaction between different social groups. Urban space is public, that is, it provides an opportunity for unplanned social interactions between strangers. In this way, the city becomes an endless set of social practices through which space becomes familiar and tangible to people. This moment when the

²⁷ О mestakh, zaniatykh pod ustroistvo sadov na naberezhnoii reki Volkovki // Izvestiia Peterburgskoi gorodskoi Dumy. No. 8. St. Petersburg, 1902. P. 195.

practices/rules are created the urban space becomes public, the residents get from private sphere to the public one.

Until the middle of the 19th century, cities in Russian Empire played a largely representative role of imperial power. Public spaces (gardens, alleys, and boulevards) were only used for large festivals. Gardens, which belonged to the nobility or imperial family, were opened to the public only on public holidays. Then there were held festivities with all kinds of entertainment. City guidebooks are full of descriptions of such events. However, the second half of the century has brought many new things to the city and urban practices. The infrastructure of cities became more complex, which had a direct impact on the problems of urban improvement²⁸. The city was expanding with the influx of peasants from the village in search of income. Along with them, another culture of rural people, still unknown to the city dwellers, came to the town. As a result, the society demanded the creation of public spaces accessible to all residents of the city at any time of year. Gardens and parks became one of the places where the city public from different social strata spent their leisure time.

Green spaces became the main places where different social layers collided. The study of their history demonstrates not only microconfrontations, as will be shown by the example of Alexander Garden, but also social dynamics in general. For example, in the first half of the 19th century Ekaterinhof Park played an important role for citizens. It was actively used for official events with participation of tsar's family. Over time, however, economic support for the park has become more difficult. As a result, the aristocracy gradually lost interest in Ekaterinhof. By the middle of the century, it was almost abandoned. Consequently, it became a favorite place for workers²⁹. Closer to the end of 19th century²⁹ on the pages of newspapers one could see articles devoted to drinking problems in Ekaterinhof. D.R. Brower, who researched the practices of the working class in St. Petersburg, described the leisure time of the workers in every detail³⁰. This example illustrates how the reformation period, urbanization and modernization changed the social landscape of St. Petersburg. These changes entailed the need to organize proper leisure activities for residents of different social groups.

One of the ways to solve this problem, which was followed by the administration of St. Petersburg, was the organization of supervision over the visitors and working out the rules of their

²⁸ Koshman L.V. *Gorod i gorodskaya zhizn' v Rossii 19 stoletia*. Moscow: Rossijskaja entsiklopedija (ROSSPEN), 2008. P. 67.

²⁹ Antonov B.I. *Istoricheskie sady*. St. Petersburg: "GLAGOL", 2006. P. 55.

³⁰ Brower D.R. *The Russian City between Tradition and Modernity, 1850-1900*. Oxford: University of California Press, 1990. P. 144-145.

visit. On the pages of the Duma bulletin from the 1880s you can find a lot of orders of the mayor, which implied “the strictest supervision to prevent any ugly or indecent actions on the part of anyone”. It was supposed “not to let drunk and dirty people into gardens and squares, and not to allow the poor to gather at the entrances”³¹. However, the measures taken “to distract [citizens] from drinking” were quite different³². In this case, the Duma came up with proposals to create conditions in which drunkenness would be replaced by any other, more reasonable activity. Hence the idea to attract entrepreneurs for leisure activities appeared. The same way events were organized in gardens on behalf of public organizations. For example, the Duma was often approached by the Trusteeship of People's Sobriety (*Popechitel'stvo o narodnoy trezvosti*) with a request to give them green spaces to organize leisure time there³³. The Imperial Russian Gardening Society was particularly distinguished. It periodically organized major international and national exhibitions in the Mikhailovskii Manezh or the Tavricheskii Garden. The Society organized six major exhibitions: international exhibitions were held in 1869, 1884 and 1913; all-Russian exhibitions – in 1890, 1899 and 1908. These were reviews of gardening objects, from tools to exhibits of rare flowers and trees. The exhibition space was always lined up to resemble a luxurious garden. At the exhibitions it was possible to walk along artificial reservoirs, hills, and bridges. There were always buffets, orchestras and terraces for visitors³⁴. All these actors tried to use green spaces to satisfy their needs. The City council attempted to distract people from drinking; public organizations rented gardens and parks to draw attention to their activities; private entrepreneurs tried to earn money. Their activities together shaped the appearance and practices of visitors to city gardens and parks.

However, St. Petersburg of the second half of the 19th century was very different from the early ones. The city was no longer homogeneous and did not represent only the imperial court and aristocratic families. The large influx of bankrupt peasants gradually formed a layer of workers.

³¹ O poriadke i blagochinii v obschestvennykh sadakh. Prikaz gradonachal'nika // Izvestiia Peterburgskoi gorodskoi Dumi. Vol. 94. No. 14. St. Petersburg, 1889. P. 194.

³² O ratsyonal'nom ustroistve razvlechenii i ob ustroistve v Petrovskom parke stseny dlia predstavlenii. Doklad // Izvestiia Peterburgskoi gorodskoi Dumi. Vol. 83. No. 30. St. Petersburg, 1886. P. 349.

³³ Ob otdache v pol'zovanie popechiytel'stva o narodnoi trezvosti chasti Aleksandrovsogo parka dlia ustroistva narodnykh guliarii. Doklad // Izvestiia Peterburgskoi gorodskoi Dumi. Vol. 134. No. 15. P. 1429.

³⁴ Mezhdunarodnaia vystavka sadovodstva v Sankt-Peterburge 5–18 Maiia 1869 goda. St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Morskogo Ministerstva v Glavnom Admiralteistve, 1870. P. 50–51; Uspenskii P.P. Opisanie mezhdunarodnoi vystavki sadovodstva v Sankt-Peterburge s 5 po 20 Maiia 1884 goda. St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo knigoprodavtsev-izdatelei K. Rikker i A.F. Devrien, 1884. P. 5.

And the resettlement of numerous bourgeois families to the city created a group of wealthy citizens, who, however, did not have aristocratic origin³⁵. This issue could create situations of social tension in public places.

The case of Aleksandrovskii Garden is illuminating in this sense. After Emperor Alexander II expressed his wish to create a garden in the very center of the city, a commission was set up in the City Duma to implement the idea. The members of the Gardening Society were involved in the work. Gardener E.L. Regel, Director of the Imperial Botanical Garden and Vice-President of Gardening Society, was appointed as project manager. According to his plan, Alexandrovskii garden included a zoning: there were two playgrounds for children, an observation deck overlooking the Neva, small areas with rare plants as well³⁶. The first thing that catches your eye when you look at the plan is the desire of the authors of the project to create a new type of green space. A public garden that considered the interests of all public and provided them with leisure activities in the city center. However, the overly restrictive measures of the mayor, described earlier, led to the consequences described by an unknown author in the newspaper "Novoe Vremia". The author of the article devoted to "Rules for visitors of city gardens", sharply criticized the work of police and watchmen who were watching the order in Aleksandrovskii and Letnii gardens³⁷. According to him, "persons of simple rank, dressed as the police put it, 'in the village way' were forbidden to enter the garden". In his opinion, such a principle of dividing citizens into "elite" and "village" public is completely unacceptable. This example shows the clash of two opinions addressing the problem of the urban public space: the first is a liberally-minded society which, after the post-reform period, aspired to democratization (that is why such article appeared in the liberal newspaper "Novoe Vremia"); the second is more conservative force, which tried to preserve some social differentiation based on the class distinctions of the citizens.

The period of the second half of the 19th century in Russia is a period of active development of the public sphere, which began to occupy more and more members of society. It had a direct impact on urban space. Urban gardens and parks have been used by all residents of the city from different social estates. These social groups may have encountered within the same public space. Consequently, social differentiation within the city inevitably took place. The more respect-

³⁵ Otcherki istorii Leningrada. Tom Vtoroi. Period kapitalizma: vtoraiia polovina 19 veka / ed. B.M. Kochakov, S.S. Volk, N.V. Kireev, S.M. Levin. Moscow, Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1957. P. 173–175.

³⁶ Regel` A.E. Aleksandrovskii sad // Vestnik Rossiiskogo Obschestva sadovodstva, 1875. No. 3. P. 150–162.

³⁷ Pravila dlia posetitelei gorodskikh sadov // Novoe vremia. 1881. No. 1962 (August 5). P. 3.

able central gardens and parks (Alexander and Letnii gardens) were guarded by police that monitored visitors` behavior. In turn, peripheral green spaces (Ekaterinhof) were left unattended and became a favorite destination for less well-off members of society.

“Urban Oases”: Evolution of Perception of Green Spaces in St. Petersburg

In the 18th century gardens, parks and squares were located mostly in country residences. Only nobility could afford such luxury spaces, so gardens served as a tool for the representation of power and the status of owners. As map analysis has shown during the 19th century, green spaces were gradually integrating into the urban landscape. New gardens and parks appeared, or the already existing ones could move from private to urban property. One of the cases of changing the status of the garden was Ovsianikovskii square, which was created by Stepan Tarasovich Ovsianikov, local bourgeois. After his death in 1894, the family transferred the square to the city ownership due to the lack of funds for its maintenance. More and more gardens were becoming public in St. Petersburg. Gradually, they became one of the main attributes of representation of the image of the capital.

Green spaces in St. Petersburg have always played an important role in representing the northern capital for tourists. That is why the starting point for studying the perception of green spaces was to look at the city through guidebooks. Throughout the 19th century, the genre of guidebooks has undergone significant changes. The guidebook authors of the first half of the 19th century built their narrative as a literary work, a walk through the city and did not distinguish gardens and parks in their narrative. Green spaces gave it an artistic touch, were perceived as story decorations. Illuminating in this respect are the guidebooks of P.P. Svinin and V.P. Burnashev (pseudo. Buryanov V.), published in 1838³⁸. Admiralty Boulevard and Letnii Garden, which were the most important green areas of St. Petersburg, were mentioned only in the context of folk festivals and celebrations held annually. They were important as spaces for festivals, but not as places of daily use. By the 1860s, authors paid more attention to the structure of the guidebooks. Having become more “utilitarian” in their essence, the guidebooks began to resemble directories with all

³⁸ Bur`ianov V. Progulka s det`mi po Sankt-Peterburgu I ego okrestnostiam. P. 2. St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Glavnogo upravleniia puteii soobscheniia I publichnykh zdani, 1838; Svin`in P.P. Dostopamiatnosti Sankt-Petersburga I ego okrestnostei. P. 1. St. Petersburg: tipografiia V. Plavil`schikova, 1816–1826.

the necessary information for visitors to St. Petersburg³⁹. Gardens, parks, and squares began to stand out in separate chapters. They appeared in the sections like “Places for Summer Walks”⁴⁰, “Public Amusements”⁴¹, “Squares”⁴². In the descriptions, green spaces were presented as “oases that provide clean and invigorating air to weary inhabitants”⁴³. The question arises as to how to explain this change in the representation of green spaces.

As we saw earlier in the 1860s, the idea of “public” gardens arose, which influenced the way they were designed in the future. This was due to the existing consensus in society about the need for gardens and parks for the residents of the capital. They ceased to be the decoration of the city facade but became important in terms of daily leisure. It became necessary to create a planning hierarchy of zones, create entertainment facilities, sports, and playgrounds for children. Many residents could not afford to rest at the cottages outside the city, so they actively appealed to the discourse of health and urban sanitation. For example, designing Greek square in 1882, in correspondence between agencies in the city administration often reproduced that the creation of a small square is necessary “because of the improvement of the area in terms of sanitation”⁴⁴. The same rhetoric was used in the 1907 report of the Commission on Public Benefits and Needs⁴⁵.

Later, gardens and parks began to interest architects with their professional and special view of urban space. Their articles began to appear on the pages of the magazine “Zodchii” in 1880s–1890s. All articles were written by three authors. One of them was Vladimir Yakovlevich Kurbatov (January 24, 1878 –February 12, 1957). He conceptualized the urban space in terms of historical and cultural heritage. Another was Georgy Kreskentyevich Lukomsky (March 14, 1884 – March 25, 1952), historian, art critic and artist. He tried to theoretically conceptualize the phenomenon of the city and its artistic character in general. Finally, the magazine published articles by Arnold Karlovich Hensch (August 25, 1866 –February 13, 1920), who devoted his works to the phenomenon of “garden cities”. On the example of projects in the United Kingdom, he wrote whether this concept was applicable in Russia.

³⁹ Anisimov E., Bekasova A., Kalemeneva E. Books That Link Worlds: Travel Guides, the Development of Transportation Infrastructure, and the Emergence of the Tourism Industry in Imperial Russia, Nineteenth – Early Twentieth Centuries // *Journal of Tourism History*. No. 8. 2016. P. 184-204.

⁴⁰ Pushkariov I.I. *Putevoditel' po Sankt-Peterburgu I ego oksrestnostiam*. St. Petersburg: tipografiia Departamenta vneshnei torgovli, 1843. P. 462.

⁴¹ Grech A.N. *Ves' Peterburg v karmane: spravochnaia kniga dlia stolichnykh zhitelei I priezhykh s novym planom Peterburga*. St. Petersburg: tipografiia E. Pratsa, 1846. P. 134–138.

⁴² Chervikov A.P. *Putevoditel' po Sankt-Peterburgu s prilozheniem programm vsekh uchebnykh zavedenii I shesti planov Peterburga*. St. Petersburg: tipografiia A. P. Chervikova, 1865. P. 14–19.

⁴³ *Novyii putevoditel' po Sankt-Peterburgu*. St. Peterburg: E. von Grinberg, 1877. P. 34.

⁴⁴ Russian Historical State Archive. F. 1287. Op. 40. D. 2028. Delo ob ustroiistve skvera na svobodnom uchastke gorodskoi zemli pri basseine reki Ligovki v Rozhdestvenskoi chasti Peterburga.

⁴⁵ O dal'neiishem razvitiu sadovogo dela v Sankt-Peterburge. *Doklad / Izvestiia Peterburgskoi gorodskoi Dumy*. No. 6. P. 1004.

All authors used green spaces to try to theoretically comprehend the phenomenon of the city. For example, G.K. Lukomsky discussed the “artisticity” of the city, meaning by this the visual integrity of the city space⁴⁶. On the other hand, raised the urgency of urban planning when addressing the idea of “garden city” created by Ebenezer Howard, which reached a Russian reader at the turn of the century⁴⁷. Interestingly, K. Skolimovsky criticized the concept because of the chaotic nature of urban space, which cannot be absolutely controlled and planned⁴⁸. Perhaps, therefore the idea did not find a strong response in Russia in the future. In addition, gardens, parks, and squares of St. Petersburg were crucial as the elements of urban heritage. The urban space in this case is an object of reconstruction or, conversely, conservation. V.I. Kurbatov proposed to consider cultural heritage sites from three points of view – aesthetic, historical and archaeological. If space in all three aspects was unnecessary, it had to be rebuilt or destroyed⁴⁹. That is what he proposed to do with the Field of Mars in 1909.

Obviously, in the second half of the 19th century, green spaces of St. Petersburg began to play more functions than the representative ones. First, the *leisure sector* has expanded significantly. Public organizations often used gardens and parks as places for their events. The Sobriety Society and the Gardening Society were outstanding in this area. In some cases, green spaces could serve an *educational function*. The most striking example is the Alexander Garden, where signs with the names of rare plants and trees were to develop visitors' interest in gardening. Gardens also began to play an important role in terms of their *ecological importance*. There were many calls in the press for new gardens and parks to improve the hygienic atmosphere in the city and allow citizens to breathe clean air. This was especially true for those citizens who could not afford to travel outside the city in summer. In some cases, one garden or park could not perform all the functions at once, as interest groups gave greater preference to only one function. Functions may therefore conflict with each other when developing green space organization models. For example, in 1899, the City Duma refused to lease the Alexander Park to the Sobriety Society to keep the space open for all residents. Apparently, the Sobriety Society plan was to create a paid entrance for visitors to improve Society's activity. The resulting multifunctionality of urban green spaces has subsequently influenced their representation in various sources.

Thus, while gardens and parks played only a representative role in the first half of the 19th century, from 1870s they turned out to be the most important part of urban development. The city

⁴⁶ Lukomskii G.K. Mysli o khudozhestvennosti gorodov // Zodchii. 1910. P. 17–19.

⁴⁷ Anan'ich B.V., Kobak A.V. “Goroda-sady” v Rosii v nachale 20 veka // Kul'tury gorodov Rossiiskoi imperii na rubezhe 19 – 20 vekov (Materialy mezhdunarodnogo kollokviuma, Sankt-Peterburg 14–17 June 2004) / ed. B.I. Kolonitskii, M. Steinberg. St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo “Evropeiskii dom”, 2009. “. 140–147.

⁴⁸ Skolimovskii K. Goroda-sady // Zodchii. 1904. P. 209–211.

⁴⁹ Kurbatov V.I. K voprosu o pereustroistve Marsova polia // Zodchii. 1909. P. 237.

became the center of life for many social groups. St. Petersburg significantly expanded and complicated its structure. There was a consensus in society on the need for large green areas that would provide residents with a wide range of leisure activities. Consequently, the phenomenon of “public” gardens and parks, in which different zones were designed, was born. There were argues in the press if some green spaces were changed or shortened. At the turn of the 19th – 20th centuries green spaces became the object of theoretical reflection on the city among architects.

Conclusion

The idea of this article was to use Henri Lefebvre`s spatial triad concept to describe the history of formation, use and perception of green spaces in St. Petersburg in the 19th century. This conceptual framework helped to ask new questions to the material already studied, but showed that sometimes it is impossible to draw a clear boundary, for example, between the use (social practices) and symbolic representation of space (perception and images). Urban space is so heterogeneous that sometimes it is impossible to strictly divide it into categories.

The analysis of historical maps showed that gardens and parks were gradually integrating into the urban space of St. Petersburg. This does not mean that until the second half of the 19th century they did not exist. Until now, they were not perceived as important elements of the city. The gardens were a phenomenon of private property, they were opened to all comers only on special occasions. With the significant expansion of the city and the influx of new residents by the 1860s, there was a need for public spaces that were open to everyone at any time of year. As a result, the idea of “public” gardens and parks appeared, which were designed to provide all residents, regardless of their origin, with fresh air and leisure. Such changes in the perception of urban space have attracted the attention of various actors, who tried to solve the problem of St. Petersburg landscaping. The City Duma as a city government body faced the problem of managing the whole variety of the imperial capital. The city's imperial status created confusion among state and public organizations that could own gardens and parks. However, in all cases, the city administration tried to protect the interests of the public. Urban residents often asked the Duma to create new green spaces in their areas. They often reacted sensitively to the problems of urban greenery, which was reflected in the pages of periodicals and city guidebooks. Consequently, the representation of the city gradually changed, where gardens and parks have become an essential part of the image of St. Petersburg.

These trends have led to a gradual transition of part of the city space from private to public ownership. Some previously private gardens could be given to the city property, which automatically made them public. However, this process did not take place at once. We can say that the formation of the public sphere in the Russian Empire took long period of the 19th century. As for the green spaces, many of them were still closed to a certain public because of the remaining class stratification in society, which was demonstrated by the example of Alexander Garden. Despite the liberal reforms, the social differentiation of public spaces persisted. Some green spaces were occupied by people from poor estates, while the central, more presentable gardens were designed for wealthy estates, other estates were not allowed there. Thus, the problem of public sphere formation lies in ambiguity and heterogeneity of urban space.

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Illustrations

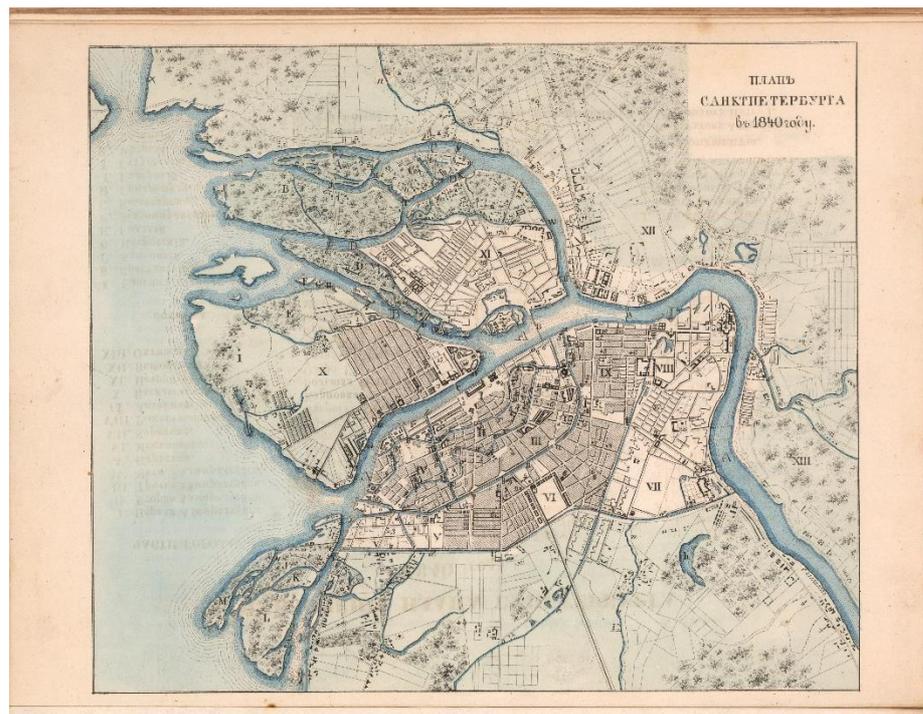


Fig. 1. Tsylov N.I. Plan Sankt-Peterburga v 1840 godu / David Rumsey Map Collection.

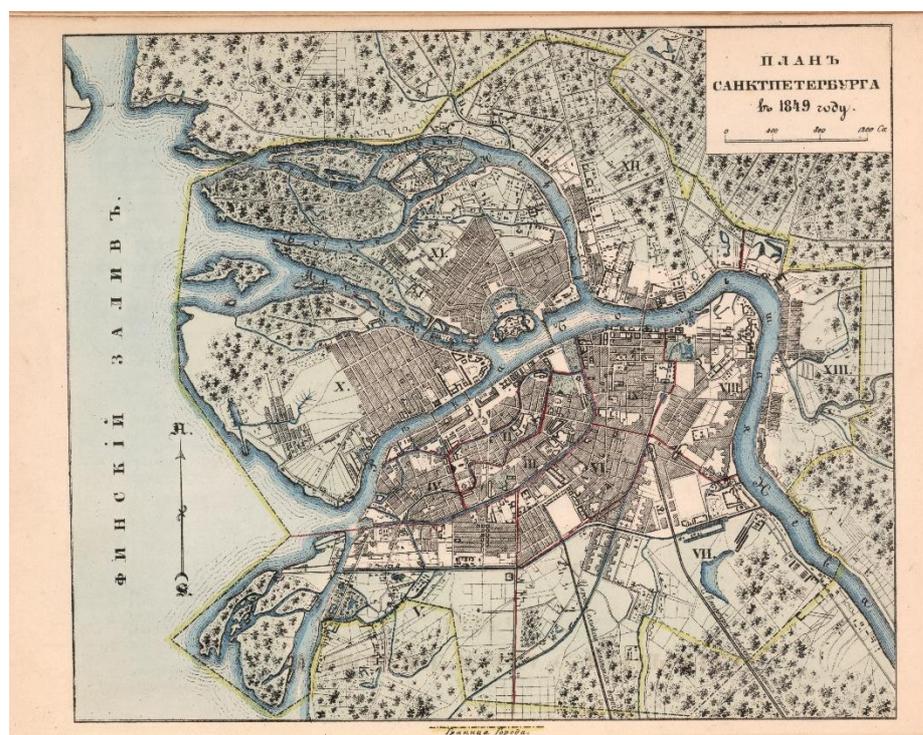


Fig. 2. Tsylov N.I. Plan Sankt-Peterburga v 1849 godu / David Rumsey Map Collection.



Fig. 3. Gubner U.U. Plan Sankt-Peterburga v Sanitarnom Otnoshenii. St. Petersburg: Kartograficheskoe Zavedenie A. Il'ina, 1877.

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