

The Image of *Bāgh-i Hāreth* in Balkh, Based on the Narration of Rabe'a in 'Attar's *Ilahi-Nama*

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Abstract | The layout and plan of a garden represent an important part of its characteristics. The Study of the existing gardens or garden documents is among the main ways to recognize the different types of gardens. However, many gardens have been demolished and therefore, in the absence of the mentioned examples, the historical and literary texts could make it possible to study them. In this regard, the current study aims to rediscover the image of the garden that 'Attar has implicitly described while narrating Rabe'a story. Therefore, the current study seeks to answer these questions: How is the general layout of *bāgh-i Hāreth*? and based on the poet's descriptions, which of the elements is included in this garden? The article seeks to answer these questions through the interpretation of the poem's text and the study on the retrieved image. In this regard, the mentioned image will be compared with other gardens' images and layouts. The result of this study shows that *bāgh-i Hāreth* consists of two sections, and these two sections are connected through the garden's entrance edifice. While the garden has an exterior and public area located opposite the edifice of *Tāq*, it also includes a private garden with a pavilion, an avenue, and a pool. The investigations show that this private garden has probably had a longitudinal spatial structure, which is similar to the garden described by Abu Nasr Heravi in the later centuries.

Keywords | Historic garden, Persian poetic narration, 'Attar, Rabe'a story, *Ilahi-Nama*.

Introduction | A part of the identity and characteristics of any garden is the result of its layout and plan. Our awareness of the gardens layout and their plan, in addition to the recognition of their diversity and scenes help us to recognize the Persian architecture. Some studies imply the diversity of gardens layout and their varied plans. However, a strong tendency to undermine the mentioned diversity by highlighting a specific type of garden layout could be realized. The problem threatens the values of garden making in Iran and ends to the limitation in perceiving the characteristics of the Persian architecture. The recognition of different garden

types is possible through referring to the constructed models. Though, in the absence of the historic samples, the image of the gardens, including the direct or indirect description of them in the literary texts could be useful. The current study investigates the text of a poetic narration by 'Attar to identify the most important characteristics of a garden including its general layout. In this relation the following questions could be proposed: How is the general layout of *bāgh-i Hāreth*? and based on the poet's descriptions, which elements are included in this garden? The study aimed to retrieve the layout and the most important characteristics of the mentioned garden and it is done through the interpretation of the poem and depicting the image of the scene and location described by the poet.

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Literature review

Persian poetry is among the main sources of historic garden studies. For instance, in the article “Paradise on Earth: The Terrestrial Garden in Persian Literature”, the real, as well as the imaginary aspects, have been addressed (Hanaway, 1976). These aspects have been mentioned in the article “Allegorical Gardens in Persian Poetic Tradition: Nezami, Rumi, Hafez” (Scott Meisami, 1985). In another article, the poem by Abdi Beig Shirazi has been studied and compared with the paintings of some painters to introduce some characteristics of Shah Tahmasb's gardens (Alemi, 2012). To clarify the layout of a garden, there have been some other researches done on long and short poetic narrations. In the first case, through the interpretation of Vis and Ramin story, the general layouts of the palace and the garden have been recovered and depicted (Jayhani, 2015). In the second case, the general spatial layout intended by Nezami in the Khājah Narration in *Mathnavi* of Haft Paykar has been rediscovered (Jayhani, 2016).

Theoretical framework and research method

The poet describes some scenes of the garden in order to reveal the relationship between two lovers. In this regard, the verses in which the garden scenes were described are selected in the narration of Rabe'a. Then, such specific characteristics of the scenes were extracted and interpreted as the images of garden. All in all, the layout of Hareth's garden could be compared to the other depictions described in *Irshad al-Zira'a* and *Mathnavi of Rowzat al-Sifat*.

Rabe'a Narration in 'Attar's *Ilahi-Nama*

Farid al-Din Abu Hamed Mohammad 'Attar Neihshaburi is known as a poet and mystic of 12th and early 13th centuries A.D. There is a dispute about his death date, but it is said that it has been around 1230 A.D. (Safa, 2002, 858). *Ilahi-Nama* is probably the second *Mathnavi* of 'Attar. Besides the main narration and based on the relationships between the characters, the poet narrates some peripheral stories (Zarrinkoob, 2000, 81-82). One of *Ilahi-Nama*'s stories is Rabe'a Narration. The narration is an illustration of the life and fate of Rabe'a Quzdar who is the first well-known female poet (Ashrafzadeh, 2003, 21). She is Ka'b's daughter and Hareth's sister. 'Attar, in a part of *Ilahi-Nama*, through mentioning a concise narration, has addressed the story of the love between Baktash and her. Besides describing the love between them, 'Attar also has described the garden of Hareth, the ruler of Balkh and his father's successor.

Hareth's Garden

Describing Hareth's garden, 'Attar points to a palace

in front of which an excellent garden was placed. The second half of the verse debates about a garden as real paradise around the palace ('Attar Neyshaburi, 2008, 374, 5795). The garden's layout can be partially understood from this concise and useful description. The garden, or the main part of it, is located in front of the palace and at the same time, the palace is surrounded by an open green space. Therefore, the palace is a pavilion which is located inside the garden in a way that the main part of the garden is located in front of the palace. The poet then describes the details of the flowers and blooms and wind and *Sabā* (ibid, 374). He implies the Yusef of *gulshan* and states that the birds are singing in *chaman* (ibid, 374). The poet continues with a description of the water surface which is crinkled like *Suhān*, by the *Mushkīn* (Fragrant) wind (ibid, 374, 5809). This simile has been also used by Nezami in *Iskandarnamah* (Nezami, 2009, 1325, 13). What should be noted is the necessity of the presence and blowing of the wind for crinkling the water which has been portrayed by the poet. In the next verse, 'Attar denotes the Nowruz wind by which the water surface is crinkled like a shield ('Attar, 2008, 374, 5810). What 'Attar has intended is clarified by this introduction. He has not mentioned the running water as well as *jūy* or *nahr* (water stream). Since, in contrast to stagnant water, the running water does not need *Mushkīn* and Nowruz wind to be crinkled. In the Persian literature, it is natural to describe water by words such as *daryā*, *daryācheh* and *ābgīr* (sea, lake, and pond) (*Loghat-Nama*, 1998, s.v. “*Daryacheh*”). 'Attar himself implies Afrasiab crossing the sea known as *āb-i zireh* which is also described by Ferdowsi in *Shahnameh* (Ferdowsi, 2007, 111). So it seems that 'Attar, from among different meanings of water such as the *nahr* and *jūy* (water stream), has intended the *daryā* and *daryācheh*, which means as a big *Howz* (pool) in the garden (*Loghat-Nama*, 1998, s.v. “*Daryacheh*”). In this case, another example in a verse from the poem *Bagh-i Now* (New garden) by Farrokhi Sistani can be noted that based on the poet's description, is a deep sea in the middle of a garden (Farrokhi Sistani, 2009, 54, 1064). 'Attar continues expressing that another *Kowthar* was running from each side ('Attar, 2008, 374, 11). Both *jūy* (stream) and *howz* (pool) ascribe the *Kowthar*, which is a pool in paradise (*Loghat-Nama*, 1998, s.v. “*Kowthar*”). These *jūys* or water streams, based on 'Attar's description, are running from every side. It should be noted that flow is the main characteristic of the water stream. These streams are running from at least one side and these sides may have been more. When the poet has mentioned a big pool and water stream simultaneously and ascribes both as *Kowthar*, indicates that the stream and the pool represent water and most probably, they are correlated.

For example, like the well-known allegory extracted from the *Kowthar*, the water streams are connected to the pool. Therefore, it seems that 'Attar, in these verses, describes one of the most familiar images inside the garden. He, however, does not clarify where the pool is located and for example, whether it is located in the middle of the building or opposite it. However, the poet's emphasis on the *Mushkīn* wind, which has crinkled the water, must be taken as a reason for the existence of the pool in the middle of the garden.

The *Tāq* and Throne of Hareth

The poet continues his description by portrait of a *tāq* (vault) which is located in front of the garden, while Hareth's throne is in front of the iwan (loggia):

In front of the garden, there is a tāq (vault) as high as the sky / Hareth's throne is in front of the Iwan ('Attar Neyshaburi, 2008, 347, 5812).

Curved and vaulted ceiling are among the meanings of *tāq* (*Loghat-Nama*, 1998, s.v. "*Tāq*"). In this case, the *tāq* must be considered as a part of another building such as the previously described palace. For example, *tāq* is the ceiling of an iwan in front of which or close to which is located Hareth's throne. In this case, the palace must have an iwan which was close to the garden with a high *tāq* above it. The poet continues that King Hareth is sitting in the *pīshān* (frontage) as a shining sun ('Attar Neyshaburi, 2008, 374, 5813).

In this case, his throne must have been in the *pīshgāh* (proscenium) or opposite it. Therefore, when the poet says the throne is in the *pīshān* (Frontage) of the iwan, it means that it is in front of it or close to it; but *tāq* has also other meanings. At least, 'Attar in *Khusraw-Nama*, when the maid gets close to the garden of Khuzestan's King, denotes an iwan which looked to be identical to the *Tāq-i* Nushirvan or *Tāq-i* Kasra, which is attributed to the era of Shapour I to Khosrow I or Anushirvan (Besenval, 2000, 203). 'Attar considers the *tāq* of the garden of Khuzestan's King to be similar to the *Tāq* of Anushirvan. Therefore, with higher probability, what is introduced by 'Attar as a high-rise *tāq* with an iwan in Rabe'a narration, should itself be an independent building. 'Attar's method of description for the introduction of elements that are beside each other must be especially taken into consideration. He first states that there has been an excellent garden opposite or in front of the palace. In *Khusraw-Nama* and in the description of Khosrow Garden, he has applied the same method and has stated that there is a palace in front of the garden, which is similar to those found in paradise ('Attar Neyshaburi, 1961, 231, 4957). Describing the garden of Khuzestan's King, he also states that there is a *dukkān* (platform)

in front of the iwan and its landscape (*ibid*, 46, 934). In this view, Hareth's garden is partly similar to the garden of the King of Khuzestan. Inside the garden and at the end of it, there is a palace which is also surrounded by open green spaces, and in front of the garden, there is an edifice which is named *Tāq*. In the garden of Khuzestan's King, there is a roofed and high-rise platform in front of the garden. However, it should be noted that the edifice of *Tāq* of Hareth's garden has an iwan and a *pīshān* (Frontage) for the throne. Therefore, the mentioned *Tāq* must have been an important space and thus, it is more detailed than the roofed *dukkān* of the garden of Khuzestan's King. On the other hand, the mentioned iwan may be in front of the palace inside the garden, or on the opposite of the edifice of *Tāq* outside the garden. The first type of spatial organization is not acceptable for the placement of the Shah's throne. Therefore, iwan and the throne are not in front of the described palace, but on the opposite of the edifice of *Tāq* or the entrance edifice. The poet has not described the mentioned space, but he states that all the servants, companions, and nobles of the world are standing in front of the King's throne ('Attar Neyshaburi, 2008, 374, 5814-5817). Therefore, there should have been another garden or a square or *jilowkhān* (forecourt) in that area. The poet has not mentioned this subject, however, the concept of *pīshān* (Frontage) is important and considerable.

'Attar has repeatedly used the word *pīshān* in his works. In *Loghat-Nama* in which all the evidence for the mentioned word have been selected from 'Attar's poems, the word *pīshān* has been used as the opposite of *pāyān* (the end); and it means *pīsh-i pīsh*, *sadr-i khāneh*, *pīshāneh*, *pīsh khāneh* and *pīsh makān* (*Loghat-Nama*, 1998, s.v. "*pīshān*"). 'Attar's verses which have been mentioned in *Loghat-Nama* as the evidence, show that in his view, the *pīshān* is the start point. He always uses *pīshān* as the opposite of *pāyān* and "the end". Therefore, using both *pīsh* which shows the sequence of the spaces and the word *pīshān* is a reason for the placement of edifice of *Tāq* in start point of the garden, however, it should be noted that the poet must have selected a special position for Hareth's sitting on the throne. In this regard, the meaning of *pīshān*, especially those which do not contradict the intended concept, must be taken into consideration. It means that a specific space should be imagined which is consistent with 'Attar's intended concept for *pīshān*. A loggia or iwan which is on the second floor is among the meanings of *pīshān*, *pīsh khān* or *pīsh khāneh* (*ibid*). In this case, the edifice of *Tāq* has been a palace or mansion that overlooks an external garden or open space. The mentioned space may be another garden, a forecourt or a square in which

the servants stood in a queue.

Meeting of Rabe'a and Baktash

When the Shah is sitting on the throne in the *pīshān* or the Frontage of the edifice of *Tāq*, calling others before him, Rabe'a goes to the roof and watches the glorious ceremony:

Came to the roof Ka'b's daughter / her eyes gazing at the glory of the ceremony ('Attar Neyshaburi, 1998, 375, 5820). 'Attar's description, in this case, is related to verses after the description of the edifice of *Tāq*. Therefore, it seems that Rabe'a has gone on the edifice of *Tāq*'s roof watching the servants stood in a queue. Rabe'a shortly looks at each side and sees Baktash (ibid, 375, 5821). She falls in love with Baktash and asks the nursemaid to help her (ibid). According to 'Attar's description, Baktash also falls in love with her (ibid, 378), and the day Rabe'a goes out to the *dihlīz*, he grabs her skirt. Rabe'a becomes angry (ibid, 379, 5921-5923). The reason should be sought in Rabe'a's words, who is afraid of the presence of the servants in that area (ibid, 379, 5931). *Dihlīz* should be a corridor or hallway which connects the private garden to the exterior garden. This *dihlīz* in 'Attar's narration reminds another *dihlīz* noted by Beihaghi in the description of *bagh-i Khasseh* as a part of the garden's portal (Bayhaqi, 2002, 198). In Qayoomi's description of *bagh-i Khasseh*, *dihlīz* has been a part of *tāram*, which should have been the garden's entrance hall (Qayoomi Bidhendi, 2008, 13). Therefore, it seems that *tāram* is a building with a dome similar to where 'Attar has mentioned as *tāq*. The poet has once used the word *pardeh* (*sarapardeh*) which can be a harem close to the garden, but he has not provided any explanations about it ('Attar Neyshaburi, 2008, 375, 5842).

An Image of Bāgh-i Hareth

It was previously stated that 'Attar had mentioned *chaman* in the garden in which the birds were singing (ibid, 374, 5808). 'Attar has provided no further explanations according to which the position or quality of *chaman* can be guessed. In order to better understand the garden space, the important elements in the garden and their positions and roles must be identified. For instance, what is *chaman*? And where is the pool, and how is the placement of the palace, *Tāq*, and other elements? In order to know where the pool is located, the route and hierarchy in the poet's description must be clear. 'Attar starts the description of the garden with the palace and it is the origin and start point of his descriptions. Then, he speaks of the garden's characteristics and mentions its general elements such as the flower, bloom, and tulip (ibid, 374) which are usually seen in the area surrounding the garden's palace and pavilion more than

other areas. At the end of his description of the garden's characteristics, 'Attar mentions the *chaman* and states that the birds are singing in it loudly. The poet gives the *chaman* an important role which is an effective element based on his description. To understand the *chaman* in the narrative poem of 'Attar, other verses in Rabe'a narration should be scrutinized. 'Attar describes that the Rabe'a walks in the *chaman* reading verses and asking the *Shabgīr* wind to deliver a message to Baktash (ibid, 379-380, 5942-5944).

She has been singing these verses alone and she has been careful not to let any other people hear them. The poet describes that Hareth, Rabe'a's brother, who was on the other end of the *chaman*, hears these inappropriate verses and becomes angry, shouting at her. *Chaman* has different meanings. Here, *chaman* has been described as a linear space with two sides: on one side, Rabe'a has been singing and on the other side, it was Hareth who heard her song. At the same time, *chaman* must be at least a semi-enclosed place in which one can feel privacy and sing a seductive song aloud. Regarding to *lughat-i Fors* by Asadi in the second half of the 11th century AD, these two characteristics conform with a specific meaning of *chaman* which is the pathway inside the garden (Asadi Toosi, 1957, 157), or in the newer expression, the garden's avenue. It should be noted that *chaman* in 'Attar's *Khusraw-Nama* has also the same meaning ('Attar Neyshaburi, 1961, 91). Rabe'a's seductive song in the garden is a reason for its privacy and that this garden was private and it might be a harem. In this case, it seems that the intended form and position for the edifice of *Tāq*, which has been overlooking the external garden is convincing.

Here, it is necessary to look back at the poet's initial description of the *chaman*. The poet's description reminds a unique *chaman*, which is indicative of the main avenue of the garden. However, the poet in the same position also describes the pool and stream flowing from every side. Although the poet's description is so compact, paying attention to the probable position of the described place indicates that he is facing numerous subjects. Somewhere opposite the palace is full of flowers and has a pool and at the same time is connected to a unique *chaman* or the main avenue. These elements can be all seen in the area opposite the pavilion and further investigation of 'Attar's poem shows that he mentions the *Tāq* as the garden's portal or entrance edifice in front of the garden right after describing the pool and avenue and streams flowing from each side.

The rediscovered garden image depicts the primary layout of a classic garden in the medieval Iran, which has been mentioned in *Irshad al-Zira'a* by Abu Nasr Heravi (Heravi, 1968, 280-282) and in *Mathnavi of Rowzat al-*

Sifat by Abdi Beig Shirazi under the title of *Bagh-i Bahram Mirza* (Abdi Beig Shirazi, 1974, 49-50, 445-451). However, the garden of Hareth has had a vast forecourt or square outside the garden and opposite the main portal and shows the more complete layout of the garden. At the same time, the garden and the image of its internal space has an ambiguous point. The poet's description does not reveal exactly whether the garden has only a longitudinal avenue or it also includes an important latitudinal avenue too. 'Attar points out the streams, which are running from each side vaguely; the streams probably must be flowing along the garden's avenues. The poet's description and his emphasis on plurality denotes running of the streams from every side in the garden. It seems that the poet's description, informs us of the existence of the streams and inevitably, another pathway other than the main avenue. The main *chaman* or avenue is the one placed between the palace and *Tāq* as the entrance edifice. Therefore, the image of *bagh-i Hareth* is more detailed than descriptions of Abu Nasr Heravi and Abdi Beig and its central space

might have been the cross-section of the avenues along which streams are running.

Conclusion

Based on 'Attar's poem, an image of *bagh-i Hareth* can be illustrated. This image is a manifestation of the garden intended by 'Attar while composing the narration. The garden includes a palace on the endpoint of the main pathway or avenue and it is in the form of a pavilion. The most important avenue is the one which continues from the palace and the full-of-flower open space in front of it to the garden's portal, which is called by 'Attar as the edifice of *Tāq*. The mentioned edifice must have been a very vast building based on 'Attar's poem. In the image of *bagh-i Hareth*, this edifice overlooks a forecourt or a square and this open space is a place intended for ceremonies. Like any other building close to the square, the edifice of *Tāq* also overlooks the square or the forecourt and at the same time, the square and people inside it can be seen from its roof.

Endnote

1. Alemi, M. (2006).
2. Abouei & Jayhani. (2014).
3. In this article, the verse number is provided after the page number.
4. See also Jayhani & Rezaei-poor (2017), 146.
5. *ibid*, 75.

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