

Original Research Article

The Concept of the Garden in Qājār-Era Documents from Shiraz: A Lexical Analysis*

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Abstract | The historical, perceptual, aesthetic, and climatic characteristics of the Persian garden have been the focus of numerous studies. However, the lexical structure of the Persian garden and the way it is organized in the language of historical sources have received far less attention. This is despite the fact that linguistic analysis of historical sources, including documentary records, can reveal new dimensions of the Persian garden. This study aims to reconstruct the Conceptual Structure of the Garden as represented in the language of everyday documents from Shiraz during the Qājār period. It hypothesizes that the concept of the garden in this period was a structured, non-referential construct constituted through a network of lexical items that defined the garden by the relationships among its constituent elements rather than by the intrinsic qualities of any individual element. Accordingly, the study addresses two questions: What semantic relationships exist among the lexical items associated with the category of the garden in Qājār-era documents from Shiraz? How are these relationships organized into a unified conceptual structure? This qualitative study draws upon lexical studies and structural linguistics. A corpus of 32 documents describing the constituent elements of gardens was selected from the National Library and Archives of Iran and the Women's Worlds in Qājār Iran archive. By examining the semantic relationships among the lexical items occurring in these documents, the study reconstructs the Conceptual Structure of the Garden represented in documentary language. The findings indicate that the documentary Conceptual Structure of the Garden consists of two primary components, *arṣeh* and *ashjār*, and is founded upon multiple relationships between land and trees. This structure is organized through a network of circulation routes (*khiyābān* and *rāsmān*), a water-supply system (*majrā*, *mamar*, and *madkhal*), and enclosing elements (*judrān*, *hīṭān*, *darb*, and *dargāh*), which together constitute what this study terms the Conceptual Structure of the Garden. This structure emerges from syntagmatic relationships, semantic oppositions, and lexical collocations among the lexical items denoting the constituent elements of the garden in the documents. No individual element occupies a privileged position within the overall structure. Quantitative dimensions, physical form, exchange value, and aesthetic description are absent from this conceptual structure. The garden therefore appears in Qājār-era documents as a self-organizing conceptual structure that differs in significant respects from modern architectural and aesthetic conceptions.

Keywords | Structural linguistics, Lexical semantics, Persian garden, Qājār-era documents, Shiraz

Introduction | The Persian garden has most often been examined through historical and literary descriptions, the accounts of European travelers, archaeological evidence, and theoretical or aesthetic analyses. These studies have produced diverse and multifaceted understandings of the Persian garden; however, the way in which the garden is categorized in the language of historical sources and documents has received far less attention. Examining the Persian garden from a linguistic

perspective, particularly through historical documents, makes it possible to investigate the semantic relationships among lexical items within a linguistic system rather than focusing on individual gardens. On this basis, the Conceptual Structure of the Garden can be reconstructed as a system of lexical categories. Research of this kind draws on methods developed within lexical studies and structural linguistics. Nevertheless, research on the lexicon of the Persian garden has to date been predominantly lexicographical in approach and has paid comparatively little attention to the network of lexical relationships through which the garden is constituted.

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The present study aims to reconstruct the Conceptual Structure of the Garden as represented in a corpus of everyday documents from Shiraz dating to the Qājār period. These documents were produced in the course of everyday transactions among ordinary people and have often been overlooked in architectural history because of the difficulty of reading historical documents, limited archival accessibility, and the absence of a corresponding physical referent. Since the garden components recorded in these documents do not fully correspond to what are conventionally regarded as the architectural components of a garden, this distinction offers additional insight into how the garden was understood by people during the Qājār period. This study hypothesizes that Qājār speakers conceived of the garden as a structured network that can be understood as a Conceptual Structure. Accordingly, it addresses three principal questions: (a) What lexical items denote the category of the garden in everyday documents from Qājār-era Shiraz, and what relationships exist among them? (b) What are the constituent elements of the Conceptual Structure of the Garden represented in these documents? (c) What new understanding does this Conceptual Structure provide of how people during the Qājār period conceived of the garden?

Literature Review

Any study of the Persian garden inevitably refers to some of its constituent elements. However, some have paid closer attention than others to lexical details. These studies may be divided into two groups. The first examines the semantic field of the garden; that is, it investigates lexical items whose meanings share one or more semantic features and are related to one another within the same semantic field. Accordingly, the semantic field of the garden may be studied through sets of synonymous lexical items within individual semantic domains. For example, Barati (2005) identified numerous nouns and adjectives referring to the concepts of the garden and green space and clarified several ambiguous terms by consulting dictionaries. Similarly, Shahcheraghi (2012, 92–97) compiled a classification of synonymous and semantically related lexical items associated with the garden and green space. At another level, Alemi (1994/2013), in an effort to identify the types and forms of the Persian garden, selected several lexical items from the garden's semantic field and described the constituent elements of some of them.

The second group comprises studies that draw upon historical, literary, and agricultural texts to reconstruct the components or physical layout of the garden. These may, in turn, be divided into two categories. The first includes research that has identified garden-related lexical items through the study of historical treatises on agriculture and cultivation. For example, scholars working on “*Mafātīḥ*

al-Arzāq”, written in 1853–1854 by Muḥammad Yūsuf Nūrī, a mustawfi (financial administrator) of Fars, have discussed features such as water channels, the entrance building, and the kushk, while also examining the garden layout and methods of planting and arranging vegetation (Jamal.al.din, 2018). Similarly, Qāsim ibn Yūsuf Abū Naṣr Haravī (1977, 280–284), in “*Irshād al-Zirā‘a*” (1515), referred to the architectural elements of the garden, and this treatise has subsequently been used by numerous scholars to reconstruct the layout of an ideal garden (see Subtelny, 2002; Jamaledin, 2015; Akhlaghi Sharif & Jayhani, 2025). Another example is Bailey's (1997) study of the Persian manuscript “*Bayāẓ-i Khush-Bū‘ī*” (1627–1637). Although the manuscript does not provide technical architectural definitions, it refers, in addition to several lexical items also found in “*Irshād al-Zirā‘a*”, to various garden components and certain measurements.

Another group of studies has sought to reconstruct the layout of historical Persian gardens through literary sources. For example, in his study of “*Haft Paykar*”, Jayhani (2016) identified several components of the so-called Khwāja Garden and determined their spatial relationships within the reconstructed garden layout. Similarly, through an analysis of verses from the “*Shāhnāmeḥ*”, Farzin (2014) identified correspondences between the components of the *bāgh*, *būstān*, and *gulistān* and the spatial form of the city. In addition, ‘Abdī Beg Shīrāzī (1515–1580) devoted particular attention in his poetry to the khiyābān (garden avenue) and provided detailed descriptions of the architectural components of Shāh Ṭahmāsp's gardens in Qazvin. These descriptions have subsequently been used by scholars to reconstruct those gardens (see Alehashemi, 2012; Jayhani & Rezaepour, 2017, 59–90; Yarahmadi et al., 2018). Overall, most previous studies have relied on textual sources to investigate the physical form of the garden, have focused primarily on formal gardens, and have paid little attention to the gardens of ordinary people. Even Pirniyās (2008, 425–459) writings on the Persian garden, despite the wide range of garden components they identify, fall within this same line of inquiry. Despite this substantial body of scholarship, no previous study has reconstructed the concept of the garden as represented in documentary language by drawing upon everyday documents and examining the semantic and lexical relationships among its constituent elements.

Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative research strategy based on the structural analysis of lexical items in historical documents. Accordingly, identifying garden-related lexical items and analyzing the relationships among them constitute the core of the investigation. The research proceeded in several stages. First, lexical items associated

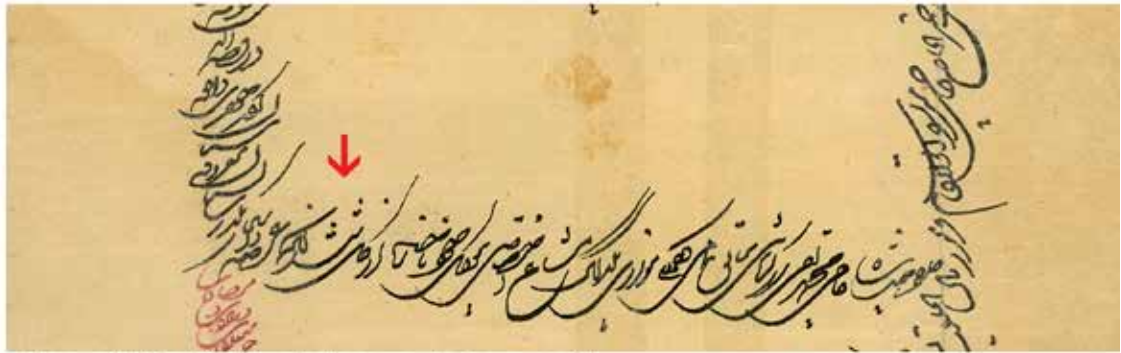
with the garden were extracted from the historical documents. Next, the use and meaning of each lexical item were examined within its documentary context, and the relationships among them were identified. The resulting network of relationships was then established. Finally, on the basis of this network, the Conceptual Structure of the Garden was reconstructed and explained. The documentary corpus was compiled through searches of the National Library and Archives of Iran [NLAI] and the Women's Worlds in Qājār Iran [WWQI] archives using the keywords *bāgh* (garden), *būstān*, and *bāghcheh*, with the search limited to the Qājār period. A total of 32 documents were identified as relevant to the objectives of the study. Documents were selected solely on the basis of the presence of linguistic data related to the category of the garden; documentary genre was not itself a selection criterion. The earliest document dates to 1826–1827 and the most recent to 1924–1925, although the majority of the corpus (26 documents) dates from 1882–1883 onward. The corpus comprises sale contracts, lease agreements, settlement deeds, one power of attorney, and two petitions. Fig. 1 presents a sample of the documents examined in this study. The red markers added to each document indicate the beginning of the passage describing the constituent elements of the garden. A transcription of these passages is provided alongside each document and is therefore not reproduced in the main text. The study deliberately avoids the historical-philological approach within lexical semantics, which is concerned with semantic change over time, in order to maintain its analytical framework within the theoretical principles of structural linguistics.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, the concept of the garden refers to its linguistic representation in historical documents. Since concepts are constituted through relationships among lexical items, understanding these relationships becomes the primary object of investigation. Within this framework, the analytical focus shifts from the meaning of the word to the study of the lexicon. A word is a linguistic form occurring in speech or writing, whereas the lexicon refers to the body of linguistic information available to the speakers of a language. Lexical studies provide the means to identify, examine, and analyze these units in order to understand how information is organized within the lexicon and how lexical relationships are structured (Gandomkar, 2019, 362 & 363). Because lexical items are inherently meaningful, the study of meaning in this approach does not depend on the situational context or the speakers' background knowledge. Since historical documents contain their own internal linguistic evidence, lexical semantics, relying exclusively on intralinguistic meaning, makes it possible to investigate the semantic relationships among linguistic units in historical

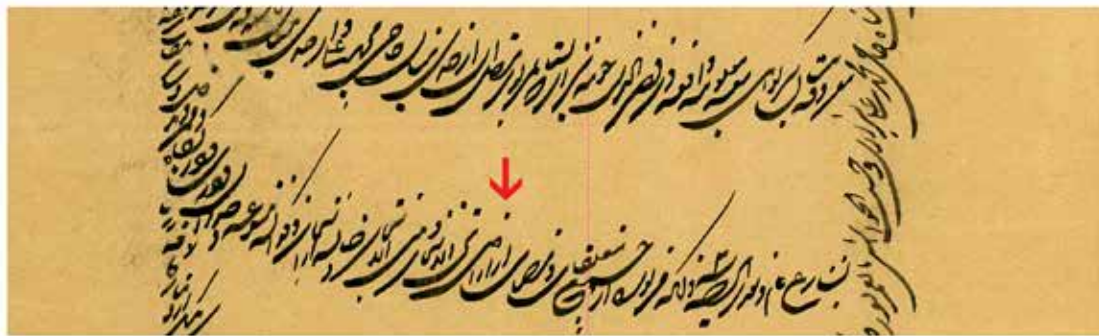
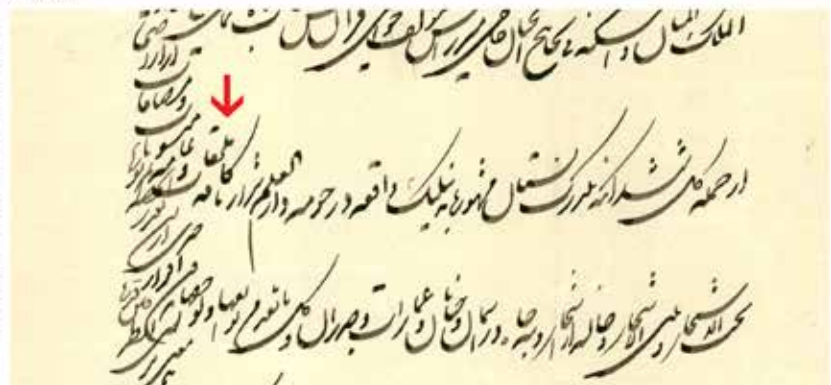
documents (see Safavi, 2021, 57). Accordingly, the concept of the garden can likewise be studied as a semantic system. Within the structuralist tradition, such a system is referred to as a Structure.

By definition, a Structure is a system of elements and units constituted internally through the relationships among its constituent parts (Matthews, 2001/2023, 296). Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), the founder of structural linguistics, argued that language and other forms of cultural signification can be studied as relatively autonomous and self-organizing systems of linguistic units, independent of their users and apart from historical change, solely on the basis of differential relationships (de Saussure, 1983/2024). This linear Structure, in which linguistic units are organized along the syntagmatic and associative (paradigmatic) axes, is founded on the differential character of linguistic units and gives rise to the network that constitutes the Structure of a system. Inspired by these principles, structural semantics emerged as an approach that studies meaning as a system, with particular emphasis on the synchronic dimension. Within this framework, identifying the internal relationships among linguistic units in each lexical field became a model for describing lexical meaning. Likewise, the analysis of linguistic devices, such as synonymy, semantic opposition (antonymy), hyponymy, meronymy, and related semantic relations, led to the development of a relational approach to semantics that expands the range of semantic relations through the description of oppositional relationships among linguistic units (Gandomkar, 2022, 209–264). Accordingly, the Conceptual Structure of the Garden refers to the way in which the lexical items associated with the category of the garden are arranged and organized within the linguistic system of the documents examined in this study. The elements of this system are organized linearly along the syntagmatic and associative axes. From a structuralist perspective, the value of each unit, or lexical item, belonging to the category of the garden is determined by the relationships it establishes with other units within the same semantic field. The recurrence of these relationships across the documents reveals part of the way in which the garden was organized in the mentality of Qājār speakers and thus provides a basis for reconstructing the concept of the garden. Within this perspective, the linguistic items associated with the garden become mutually interdependent, and the value of each depends on its relationships with the others. Thus, as in the case of language, the garden may likewise be understood, in Harland's words (1987/2016, 28), as a system of meaning and categories transmitted by society from one generation to the next and so integrated as a coherent whole that no individual element can be understood independently of its position within the system.

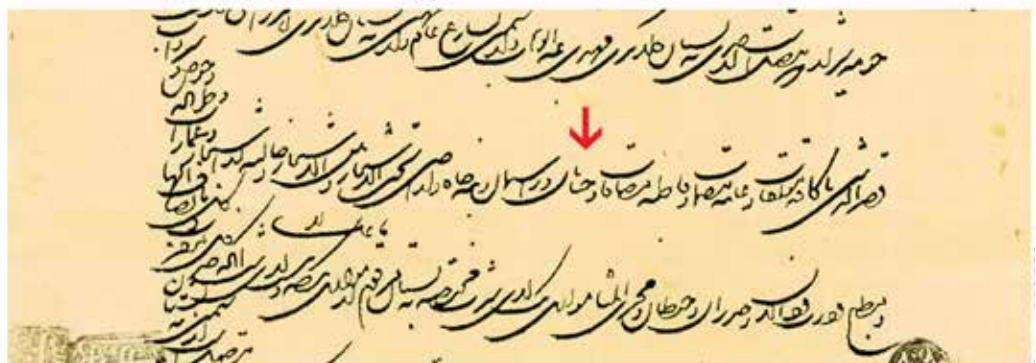


...One undivided sixth share, held as an exclusive ownership interest, of the entire six-dāng of the *arseh* and *ashjār* of a garden, known as Būstān-e Gūd-e Jafarī, situated in Qasr al-Dasht on the outskirts of Shiraz...

...Including the entire six-dāng of one garden, known as Nīlīk, situated on the outskirts of Dār al-eilm of Shiraz, together with all its appurtenances, installations, and appendant elements, comprising the land beneath the *ashjār*, the land between the *ashjār*, the land devoid of *ashjār*, the well, *rāsmān*, *khayābān*, buildings, and water channels...



...Together with the proportional interest corresponding to the aforementioned three dāng in all its appurtenances and appendant elements, including the land beneath the *ashjār*, the land between the *ashjār*, the land devoid of *ashjār*, various fruit trees, *judrān*, *darb*, *dargāh*, *mamar*, *madkhal*, and all other appendant elements...



...Together with all its appurtenances, all appendant elements, and all adjuncts, including *khayābān*, *rāsmān*, the well, the land beneath the *ashjār*, the land between the *ashjār*, the land devoid of *ashjār*, buildings, a stable, a pool, a cellar, a kitchen, *darb*, a corridor, *judrān*, *hītān*, and the *majrā al-miyāh* (watercourse)...

Fig. 1. Historical documents examined in this study. Source: NLAI, 1882, 1885, 1903, 1913.

Research Findings

• Linguistic items in the semantic field of the Garden

An analysis of the lexical items associated with *bāgh* (garden) indicates that, in the documents examined, the category of the garden consists of a conceptual core (*būstān*) together with several lexical forms and subcategories, namely *bāghcheh* and *nāranjestān*. In most cases, *būstān* is used synonymously with, and as a substitute for, *bāgh*, whereas *bāghcheh* and *nāranjestān* constitute distinct subcategories. The distinction among these subcategories is based on such features as size, the type of trees, and function. Multiple semantic relationships exist between the word *bāgh* and its subcategories. The first is hyponymy. In principle, *bāgh* is the superordinate term whose meaning encompasses those of its hyponyms, *būstān*, *bāghcheh*, and *nāranjestān*. In the documents, however, *būstān* effectively replaces *bāgh* and, in most instances, is used without any change in meaning. The documentary evidence therefore indicates a relationship of functional synonymy between *bāgh* and *būstān* in the legal language of the Qājār period. Originally, *būstān* referred to a place where fragrant plants were cultivated, although dictionaries also define it more broadly as a garden (Dehkhoda, 1998, Vol. 3, 4742). Through semantic extension, the term came to function, in accordance with the linguistic intuition of Qājār speakers, as a synonym for *bāgh*. The documents show that the word *bāgh* appears only once, in the power of attorney issued by Hājji Riḍā Baqqāl to his wife and son (Women's Worlds in Qājār Iran Archive [WWQIA], 1925). In all other cases, *būstān* is used without any perceptible change in the meaning of the linguistic sequence.

Another lexical item is *bāghcheh*, whose distinctive feature, in contrast to *bāgh*, is its smaller size. A sale contract dated 1905–1906 refers to “a small *būstān* located north of Shiraz, near the city, known as *Bāghcheh-ye Nilik*” (National Library and Archives of Iran [NLAI], 1906). Other documents mention *Bāghcheh-ye Jelū-ye Bahārband*, situated outside the *Qaṣṣābkhāneh* Gate (WWQI, 1907), as well as several *bāghchehs* located outside the *Bāghshāh* quarter in 1924–1925 (*ibid.*, 1924). Another subcategory is *nāranjestān*, which literally denotes a place where bitter orange and other citrus trees are cultivated. A document dated 24 October 1890 describes a *nāranjestān* in the Lab-Āb quarter as comprising “six *bāghchehs* planted with bitter orange, plane, and other trees” (NLAI, 1890). Although *nāranjestān* belongs lexically to the category of the garden, this document indicates that, in certain instances, it occupies an intermediate position between the conceptual categories of the garden and the house. The distinction among these three lexical items within the semantic field of the garden rests on two criteria. The first is size, which differentiates one term from another. The second concerns the semantic features of each lexical item, namely the type of trees associated with it and its function.

The lexical items denoting *bāgh* are counted using the word *darb*. Examples include: “one *darb* of an orchard (*būstān*) known as Karīm Lūṭī,” located outside the *Bāghshāh* Gate (WWQI, 1921); “one *darb* of an orchard called *Shahābābād*, belonging to *Asfandiyār Khān*” (*ibid.*, 1916); and “one *darb* of an orchard known as *Hājji ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn*, near the crossroads of *Qaṣr al-Dasht*” (*ibid.*, 1930). *Darb*, an Arabic word, emphasizes the large and imposing character of an entrance or gateway (Dehkhoda, 1998, Vol. 7, 10545). It is not, however, the only word-category used to count items within the semantic field of the garden. In a few cases, the word *qeṭ‘eh* appears instead. Literally, *qeṭ‘eh* means “a piece,” “fragment,” or “portion” of something (Dehkhoda, 1998, Vol. 11, 17641). For example, a sale contract dated 1850–1851 refers to “three-quarters of the undivided share of the entire six *dāng* of a *qeṭ‘eh* of orchard known as *Anārakī*, located in the village of *Qaṣr al-Dasht* on the outskirts of *Shiraz*” (NLAI, 999/34804). The frequent use of *darb* suggests that, in the language of these documents, the garden was conceived as a discrete unit – a unit that could be counted and, consequently, owned and transferred.

• Reconstructing the concept of the Garden through lexical relationships

The lexical items referring to the constituent elements of the garden are interconnected through a network of semantic relationships. Reconstructing this network makes it possible to recover the Conceptual Structure of the garden. An examination of the documents shows that, at the most general level, the appurtenances of a *būstān*, regardless of its size, consist of two fundamental components: ‘*arṣeh*’ and *ashjār*. For example, a deed recording the sale of one-sixth of the garden known as *Gūd-i Ja‘fari* in *Qaṣr al-Dasht*, dated 1882, describes the *būstān* as comprising ‘*arṣeh*’ and *ashjār* (NLAI, 1882). The same document further indicates that the garden contained no building. Although ‘*arṣeh*’ is conventionally understood in legal terminology as the counterpart of a *yān* (built property), within the category of the garden ‘*arṣeh*’ and *ashjār* function not as opposites but as the garden’s two principal constituent elements. This distinction provides the basis for examining the other appurtenances of the garden, each of which is defined in relation to these two elements and to one another. In these documents, *arāḏi* (land) forms part of the ‘*arṣeh*’, and from this point onward a series of systematic relationships is established between the land and the trees. These relationships are frequently expressed through a conventional documentary formula: “lands beneath the trees (*taḥt al-ashjār*), between the trees (*bayn al-ashjār*), and devoid of trees (*khālī az ashjār*)” (*ibid.*, 1819, 1904, 1903, 1885). With only minor variations in wording or sequence, and occasionally

with one of the elements omitted (*ibid.*, 1887), this triadic expression defines the relationship between the land, rather than the ‘arṣeh as a whole, and the trees. The ‘arṣeh, however, is not limited to these categories. Land without trees also remains conceptually related to the trees, provided that it is suitable for cultivation. Such land represents areas prepared for future planting. Following this recurring documentary formula, the documents frequently refer to khiyābān and rāsmān as elements of the ‘arṣeh (*ibid.*, 1885, 1913). Together, they constitute the circulation system of the garden and form another conceptual pair within its Conceptual Structure. Khiyābān has been defined as a passage for movement within a garden, a constructed pathway, typically extending between two rows of trees, and a route running among the bāghchehs and trees along the length and width of the garden (Dehkhoda, 1998, Vol. 7, 10173). It has also been described as a level pathway in gardens and cultivated fields intended for circulation (Anvari, 2002, Vol. 4, 2920). The documentary evidence is consistent with these definitions. For example, at the end of the description of the appurtenances of a būstān in Qaṣr al-Dasht, dated 12 June 1819, the document refers to “the khiyābān lined with plane and white poplar trees” (NLAI, 1819). In most of the documents, however, the species of trees are rarely specified unless it was necessary to emphasize ownership. An example appears in a marginal note to the same document, which refers to the cypress, musk willow, Russian olive, and other trees located along the upstream side of the garden watercourse as belonging to a different owner. The nature of khiyābān can best be understood through its relationship with rāsmān. The term rāsmān does not appear in Persian dictionaries². However, the root rās means “path” or “way,” suggesting that rāsmān may denote routes or path-like passages. In the documents examined in this study, khiyābān and rāsmān exhibit a collocational relationship; that is, they consistently occur together and occupy the same syntagmatic context. The documentary evidence clearly indicates that khiyābān refers to a relatively level and deliberately constructed passage within the garden, prepared specifically for circulation. The available evidence, however, suggests that rāsmān refers to more informal and less predetermined routes. Thus, although both share the semantic feature of facilitating movement, they are distinguished by the degree to which they are predetermined, with plannedness constituting their distinctive feature. To strengthen this interpretation, it is necessary to examine the other lexical pairs and their collocational relationships within the documentary corpus.

Other components of the ‘arṣeh identified in the documents belong to the garden’s water-supply system: mamar, madkhal, and majrā (NLAI, 1885; 1903; 1906; WWQI, 1914). These Arabic terms sometimes appear on their own and sometimes together with a well (*chāh*). Although their order is not entirely fixed, they generally occur in the same sequence. Notable exceptions include a document dated 30 August 1880, which refers only to “mamar and the well” (NLAI, 1880), and another document from 1913 in which only the well is mentioned (*ibid.*, 1913). Nevertheless, the term *chāh* itself appears relatively infrequently. The distinction between mamar and majrā recalls that observed between khiyābān and rāsmān. Mamar denotes a place of passage, a thoroughfare, route, or passageway (Dehkhoda, 1998, Vol. 14, 21530), whereas majrā, in its more specific sense, refers to the channel through which water flows (*ibid.*, Vol. 13, 20311). For example, a sale contract for a būstān known as Golrizī in Qaṣr al-Dasht, dated 10 October 1885, refers not only to the “mamar of the well” but also to “the majrā of the drinking water belonging exclusively to the garden, branching from the qanat channel” (NLAI, 1885). Both majrā and mamar denote a medium through which something passes and are, in this respect, functionally synonymous. Their distinctive feature, however, lies in the nature of that passage. Majrā specifically designates the course through which water flows, whereas mamar denotes a place of passage in a more general sense. At the same time, the cited document clearly indicates that the majrā was a branch taken from the main qanat channel and may have extended from one garden to another. Consequently, neighboring landholders could possess easement rights over it. By contrast, mamar appears to refer primarily to the course through which water passed within an individual būstān, a feature belonging exclusively to that garden and therefore not subject to the rights of others. The distinctive feature separating the two terms is thus embedded in the legal rights associated with them. Furthermore, the relationship between majrā and mamar appears analogous to that observed between khiyābān and rāsmān. In both cases, the former represents a deliberately planned element, whereas the latter appears to have developed gradually in response to practical needs. The third term within this system is *madkhal*. This word may be read in two ways: *madkhal*, meaning a place of entry, an opening, or an access route; or *mudkhal*, meaning a place through which something is introduced or conveyed (Dehkhoda, 1998, Vol. 13, 20535). Since all of these terms belong to the water-supply system of the būstān, either reading may be appropriate depending on the documentary context. Water may enter the garden through a *mudkhal*

connected to a well, through a madkhal connected to a qanat, or through both.

Other lexical pairs also appear within the vocabulary of the garden. Since every *būstān* is a walled or enclosed space encompassing both the ‘arṣeh and the ashjār, the *judrān*, *ḥiṭān*, darb, and dargāh are likewise regarded as appurtenances of the garden. All of these lexical items stand in a relationship of meronymy, forming a hierarchical part-whole structure. The relationship between *judrān* and *ḥiṭān*, however, is of another kind as well. *Judrān* is the plural of *judr* or *jidār*, meaning a wall or any similar enclosing structure (Dehkhoda, 1998, Vol. 5, 7551; Anvari, 2002, Vol. 3, 2107). Although these two lexical items frequently occur as adjacency pairs in the documents, they also stand in an associative relationship. *Ḥiṭān*, the plural of *ḥā’iṭ*, likewise means “walls” (Dehkhoda, 1998, Vol. 6, 9253). A differential distinction nevertheless exists between the two terms. *Ḥiṭān* refers specifically to the outer walls that define the boundaries of a property, whereas *judrān* denotes walls in the more general sense and most commonly refers to walls separating two spaces. One would therefore expect that, where necessary, only *ḥiṭān* would appear independently in the documents. However, in the sale deeds of *Golrīzī Būstān* (1885) and a *būstān* in Qaṣr al-Dasht (1819) (NLAI, 1819), the term *judrān* appears on its own (ibid., 1885). The reason is that the *jidār* of a *būstān* separates the grounds of adjacent gardens, thereby dividing two spaces while at the same time functioning as a wall in the general sense. For this reason, the sale deeds of *Sarkūhī Būstān* (ibid., 1903), *Nilik Būstān* (ibid., 1913), and *Qā’id Būstān* (ibid., 1904) refer only to *judrān* rather than *ḥiṭān*. The relationship between darb and dargāh is one of meronymy. Both are parts of the *ḥiṭān* and, more generally, components of the *judrān* of each *būstān*. Thus, in the documentary language, the enclosure of the garden and its constituent elements derive their meaning from the relationships they establish with one another.

Up to this point, the category of the garden has been identified as a Structure composed of lexical items, each deriving its significance from its relationships with the others. Some *būstāns*, however, are described in greater detail, with their particular appurtenances enumerated according to the circumstances of each document. In the sale deed of *Golrīzī Būstān* discussed above, the document refers to “buildings, a stable, a ḥawḍ, a cellar, a kitchen, a gate, and a corridor” between the description of the lands devoid of trees and the references to the *judrān*, *ḥiṭān*, and the *majrā* of water. This indicates that some gardens contained substantial architectural complexes. By contrast, other documents refer only to “buildings” (‘amārāt) (ibid., 1913), “buildings

erected within the *būstān*” (ibid., 1887), “protected buildings” (‘amārāt-i maḥrūseh) (WWQI, 1930), or simply “buildings and a ‘yān” (ibid., 1914). The limited attention given to the architectural components of the *būstān*, or the brief references to its buildings, reflects the lesser importance these features held for the parties involved when compared with the ‘arṣeh of the garden. In practice, these lexical items do not participate in the same network of semantic relationships as the principal lexical items defining the category of the garden. Rather, their function is primarily to enumerate the particular properties included in the transaction.

As noted earlier, *nāranjestān* occupies an intermediate position between the semantic fields of the house and the garden. Evidence for this interpretation lies in the principles governing the enumeration of its appurtenances, which follow the documentary conventions used for houses rather than those applied to gardens. A sale deed dated 1890 concerning part of the ‘arṣeh and a ‘yān of a property known as *Nāranjestān*, located in the Lab-Āb quarter and owned by Ḥaydar ‘Ali Khān, the representative of the British Government, describes it as comprising “multiple upper and lower buildings, a cellar, together with all buildings, the courtyard, a pool, six bāghchehs planted with bitter orange, plane, and other trees, as well as gates, a privy, mamar, madkhal, *judrān*, and *ḥiṭān*” (NLAI, 1890). In other words, the *nāranjestān* functioned as one of the courtyards of a house and acquired this designation because of the size of its bāghchehs and the abundance of bitter orange trees. The boundary between the categories of the garden and the house is therefore not entirely rigid in the documentary language. Rather, *nāranjestān* represents a point of overlap between these two conceptual categories.

Discussion: The Conceptual Structure of the Garden

An examination of the relationships identified among the lexical items demonstrates that the conception of the garden in Qājār-era documents is not simply that of a collection of trees and buildings. Rather, it is a network of relationships organized around four semantic cores (Table 1): land, circulation routes, the water-supply system, and enclosing boundaries. Each of these cores is connected to the others through a series of oppositional and syntagmatic relationships, and together they constitute the Conceptual Structure of the Garden. Analysis of the arrangement of garden-related lexical items in the documents further indicates that these relationships follow a largely sequential pattern while retaining sufficient flexibility to accommodate both the preferences of individual scribes and the

Table 1. Types of lexical relationships contributing to the reconstruction of the Conceptual Structure of the Garden in the documents. Source: Author.

No.	Lexical Pair	Distinctive Feature	Role in Reconstructing the Conceptual Structure of the Garden
1	Land with trees/ Land without trees	Planted land/ Unplanted land	Defines the extent of the planted area and the land available for future planting.
2	Khiyābān/ Rāsmān	Pre-planned route/ Route formed over time	Distinguishes formal circulation routes from informal paths within the garden.
3	Majrā/ Mamar	Planned public watercourse/ Informal water passage formed over time	Distinguishes shared and garden-specific components of the water-supply system.
4	Ĥiṭān/ Judrān	Outer boundary walls/ Internal dividing walls	Distinguishes the outer enclosure from the internal spatial divisions of the garden.

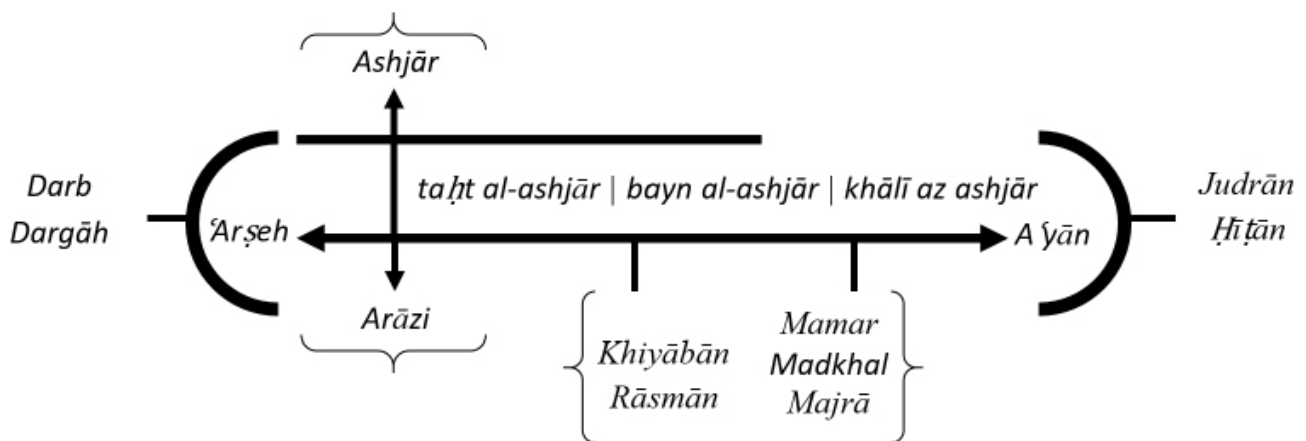


Fig. 2. The Conceptual Structure of the Garden in the Documents. Source: Author.

subject matter of each transaction. Formalizing these relationships and identifying the sequence in which these appurtenances appear reveal the concept of the garden as represented in the documents (Fig. 2). This Structure has been reconstructed on the basis of the speakers' internal linguistic knowledge. Examining the meanings of the lexical items together with the semantic relationships among them reveals the combinatorial principles governing their use and demonstrates that the selection of each lexical item from the available linguistic repertoire reflects a deliberate choice from the Linguistic Atlas of the garden. As the documentary evidence indicates, the two components, 'arṣeh and ashjār, constitute the fundamental framework of the garden. 'Arṣeh encompasses both the land and everything situated upon it while at the same time

standing in opposition to a 'yān, which occupies only a marginal position in the documentary conception of the garden. Consequently, the documents devote relatively little attention to the details of the a 'yān. The 'arṣeh itself comprises two principal components: land and routes, that is, spaces through which water flows and people move. Land is defined in relation to the trees and constitutes the most significant component of the 'arṣeh, since it is the various relationships between the arāzi and the ashjār that are described in greatest detail throughout the documents. These relationships define the garden not as an architectural object but as a topological and, at the same time, legal entity closely bound to the juridical concept of the garden. Although it is self-evident that a garden comes into being through the presence of trees, the land between the trees and even

the land without trees nevertheless remains part of the garden. Accordingly, the triad of land beneath, between, and without trees collectively denotes the entirety of the garden land.

Routes derive their meaning through their relationship with water and movement. The semantic feature shared by the appurtenances belonging to this domain is that they provide spaces for passage. The documentary evidence indicates that khiyābān and rāsmān represent two distinct types of routes, and a comparable distinction can be observed between majrā and mamar. In both cases, the principal difference lies in the degree to which these routes are predetermined and formally established. Darb and madkhal designate points of entry into the ‘arṣeh of the garden: the former for people and the latter for water. Darb derives its meaning through its relationship with dargāh, and dargāh, in turn, through its relationship with judrān or ḥiṭān. Judrān functions as the general term for the walls of the garden because it separates two adjoining spaces. The distinctive feature of ḥiṭān likewise lies in this spatial relationship: the term generally refers to the outer boundary walls, where one side is occupied by a built mass, thereby defining the limits of the property. Ḥiṭān acquires its meaning only through its collocation with judrān, rather than in isolation. Consequently, it is more closely associated with the architectural complex than with the garden itself. The relationships of meronymy and member-collection within the Linguistic Atlas of the Garden further clarify the meaning of each of its constituent elements. In this way, the semantic field associated with each group of garden elements forms an intermediate layer between the mind and the external world, while all of these semantic fields are ultimately encompassed by the lexical item bāgh.

While much of the scholarship on the Persian garden has emphasized geometry, visual axes, the kūshk, and spatial organization, the documents examined in this study present a different picture. Within an aesthetic interpretation, trees function primarily as visual elements that reinforce or accentuate the ways in which the constructed features of the garden are perceived. Such an interpretation is grounded in visual perception and, although it does not deny the social, cultural, natural, or economic values of the garden within a systemic perspective, it places its visual qualities above all others. By contrast, the concept of the garden reconstructed in the present study is explicitly founded on relationships -relationships that are equal, multidimensional, cognitive, and conceptual, and therefore fall outside the domain of purely visual or aesthetic perception. Within this conception, no single component of the garden takes precedence over another; the significance of each derives solely from the relationships it establishes with the others.

Accordingly, the identity of the garden no longer rests on the intrinsic characteristics of its constituent elements but on the position each occupies within the network of relationships linking them together. Within the Structure of the Garden, the individual qualities of its constituent elements lose their analytical significance, while the Structure itself takes precedence over its parts. For this reason, the documents provide little description of the individual characteristics of these elements. Reduced to its most fundamental components, the Structure of the Garden distinguishes itself from other structures, such as the house or the caravanserai, while remaining internally coherent and self-organizing.

Conclusion

By shifting the focus from the architectural aspects of the garden to the linguistic items constituting the category of the garden, this study has revealed another layer of its conceptualization. From this linguistic perspective, the concept of the garden is understood as a relational Structure formed through the multiple relationships among the linguistic items found in everyday Qājār-era documents. These linguistic items should not be regarded merely as part of the Linguistic Atlas of the Garden available to the speakers of that period; they may also be understood as cognitive constructs shared by ordinary people and understood independently of any particular physical instance. Within this framework, the conceptual foundation of the garden rests upon the relationship between the land (‘arṣeh) and the trees (ashjār). This relationship is organized through the network of routes (khiyābān and rāsmān), the water-supply system (majrā, mamar, and madkhal), and the elements defining the enclosure of space (judrān, ḥiṭān, darb, and dargāh). Consequently, secondary elements such as buildings, wells, or water channels do not play a constitutive role in the Conceptual Structure of the Garden, and their presence or absence does not alter its underlying Structure. At the same time, the absence of quantitative and qualitative descriptions in the documents further reinforces the relational and structural character of the concept of the garden. The identity of the garden depends less on the measurable, evaluative, or even describable attributes of its constituent elements than on the network of relationships among them.

This conception transforms the garden into a coherent and integrated system founded on the syntagmatic relationships among these linguistic items, in which the meaning of each linguistic item is determined by its differential relationship to the others. In other words, within the documentary framework examined in this study, the omission or substitution of any of the principal linguistic items alters the Conceptual Structure of the Garden and transforms it into a different conceptual category. Lexical changes across historical periods may therefore not only influence our present understanding of the Persian garden but

also reflect changes in the conceptual world of the people who used these terms. For example, the lexical choices introduced during the Pahlavi period may have influenced the way people understood the garden in that period, and the continuation of such changes may even have contributed to the discontinuity of certain historical conceptions of the garden. This question, however, requires a separate study. Furthermore, future research may examine other historical sources on the Persian

garden from a linguistic perspective and reconstruct additional Structures. A historical study of these Structures could, in turn, provide a basis for investigating transformations in the concept of the garden.

Declaration of No Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest in conducting this research.

Endnotes

1. ‘Arṣeh is defined in the lexicon as the part of a parcel of land on which no building stands; it denotes an open expanse, area, or extent of land and is the opposite of a ‘yān (Dehkhoda, 1998, Vol. 10, 15805).

2. In transliterated Middle Persian texts, rās means rāh (road or way), reflecting the phonological interchangeability of the consonants s and h in the language (ibid., Vol. 8, 11706).

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