



## GARDEN VII. INFLUENCE OF PERSIAN GARDENS IN INDIA

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Landscape architecture has a long history in the Indian subcontinent. An indigenous garden tradition is referred to in the plays of Kālidāsa (5th century; *Raghuvamśa*, act 14.30; *Kumārasambhava*, act 6.46) and Śūdraka (6th century; *Mṛcchakaṭīka*, acts 5-6, 8), *Kādambarī* of Bāṇabhaṭṭ (7th. cent.; pp. 612-16), and elsewhere, although archeologists have so far discovered no remains of gardens from this period. Garden architecture is also mentioned by historians of the Delhi Sultanate (602-932/1206-1526) such as Šams Serāġ ‘Afīf (pp. 295-96). Traces of Sultanate period gardens in the Persian style survive around Delhi in the citadel (Kōṭlā) of the Tughluqīd Firūzšāh III (752-90/1351-88) and at Vasant Vihar (14th Cent.; Siddiqi).

Mughal landscape architecture, which was characterized by terraced sites, *čahārbāġ* (q.v.) plans, and raised walks, is perhaps most renowned for its dramatic and inventive use of moving water. Favored devices included fountain jets, water chutes carved with raised patterns in their floors to enhance the sparkle and sound of the water, and *čīnī-kāna* (niches) containing lamps set behind cascades so that at night they glittered through the falling water. Gardens were laid out in conjunction with palaces, fortresses, and mausoleums, as in the case of the tomb of Homāyūn at Delhi, of Akbar at Sikandra, and Tāj Maḥall in Agra (Ruggles, pp. 173-86; Begley, pp. 213-32). Although many examples of Mughal gardens survive, they have generally been modified with European plantings and many suffer from indifferent



upkeep.

*Gardens of Bābor and Akbar.* The Persian garden as it was known under the Timurids seems to have been introduced into the Indian subcontinent by Ẓahīr-al-Dīn Moḥammad Bābor (r. 932-37/1526-30; q.v.), founder of the Mughal dynasty. In his autobiography, the *Bābor-nāma*, he expressed his lifelong interest in horticulture and his fascination as a young man with the gardens of the Timurid capitals, i.e., Samarkand and Herāt. In addition he mentioned residential and pleasure gardens in the Timurid style which he built in Kabul (ed. and tr., Thackston, II, pp. 328, 459, 499-500, 524, tr. Beveridge, Appendix V, pp. lxxix-lxxxix; Wescoat, 1992, 352-54), Estālef (*Bābor-nāma*, ed. and tr. Thackston, II, pp. 281-82, 525-26), Qandahār (*Bābor-nāma*, ed. and tr. Thackston, II, p. 445), and Adīnapūr near Jalālābād (*Bābor-nāma*, ed. and tr. Thackston, II, pp. 272-73) after his conquest of Afghanistan in 910/1504. A special favorite was Bāḡ-e Wafā at Adīnapūr, which he established in 910/1508; it was laid out in four plots on rising ground, watered by a stream that flowed downhill into a square reservoir. Plantings included orange and pomegranate trees, bananas, and sugarcane. This garden is no longer extant. The site of Bābor's garden in Estālef can be identified with some assurance, though none of the original architectural or landscape features survives (Dupree, p. 135). A rock-cut stairway and chamber known as Čehel Zīna, above the old city of Qandahār, are thought to have formed part of Bābor's garden there, built after his conquest of the city in 928/1522 (*Bābor-nāma*, tr. Thackston, II, p. 440; Crane, pp. 103-4). The so-called Bāḡ-e Bābor at Kabul, to which the Mughal ruler's tomb was moved after his death, is of a later date (Crane, p. 101; Parpagliolo, pp. 8-11).

Beginning in 1519 Bābor built a series of Persian-style gardens in his newly-conquered north Indian lands: in the Punjab beside Lake Kalda Kahar (or Kala Kahar) in the Salt Range east of the Indus (*Bābor-nāma*, ed. and tr. Thackston, II, p. 475), at Chitr near Patiala (*ibid.*, II, p. 560), and farther south at Sikri (*ibid.*, III, pp. 732-33), Dholpur (*ibid.*, III, pp. 702, 723-24, 755), Gwalior (*ibid.*, III, pp. 724, 731-32), and Agra (*ibid.*, III, pp. 642-44, 803). Traces of the Bāḡ-e Šafā near Lake Kalda Kahar were still visible in the 19th century (Crane, p. 98), and remains of Bāḡ-e Nīlūfar at Dholpur are still today rather extensive: a rock-cut terrace with sunken pool (*ḥawz*) and water chute, a well (*čāh*), a dam (*band*), water channels, a mosque, and a bathhouse (*ḥammām*; Moynihan; Crane, pp. 99-100, figs. 1-4). The garden at Agra, described as a *čahārbāḡ* (q.v.) and named Bāḡ-e Hašt Behešt, was laid out on the east bank of the Jumna River



immediately after Bābor's entry into the city (Rajab 932/May 1526). In his biography, Bābor emphasized that it was planned with order and symmetry in contrast to the irregularity and disorder which, he stated, characterized Indian garden design. It was planted with roses and narcissus and was adorned with a number of structures, including a *tālār* (columned audience hall) and *kalwat-kāna* (private apartment; *Bābor-nāma*, ed. and tr. Thackston, III, pp. 642-43). It has been frequently identified with the still-extant Rām Bāḡ, but this link is not supported by either archeological evidence or by the style of the Rām Bāḡ's existing architecture. Bābor's Agra garden was soon surrounded by additional gardens built by members of his court; they resembled Persian and Afghan models so closely that the suburb where they were located was called "Kābol" (*Bābor-nāma*, ed. and tr. Thackston, III, pp. 643-44; Koch, 1986).

In 993/1585 Bābor's grandson, Akbar (r. 963-1014/1556-1605; q.v.), annexed Vale of Kashmir, which, with its enclosing mountains, cascading water, and abundant vegetation offered numerous settings for dramatic water landscapes. Akbar exploited these possibilities in the construction of the Nasīm Bāḡ (Jahāngīr, tr., II, pp. 150-51; Crowe, Haywood, and Jellicoe, pp. 83-84), a residential garden in the Persian style, located on terraced terrain just north of Srinagar on the western shore of Lake Dal.

*Gardens of Jahāngīr.* The finest examples of surviving Mughal garden architecture, however, date from the reigns of Akbar's son Jahāngīr (1014-37/1605-27) and his grandson Šāh-Jahān (1037-68/1628-57). Three of Jahāngīr's gardens in Kashmir, Aċībal, and Vērṇāḡ at the southern end of the Kashmir valley near Islamabad, and Shalamar (Šālamāl) Garden near Srinagar, are still extant (Jahāngīr, pp. 54, 343-44, 355-56, tr., I, p. I, 92, II, pp. 151, 173; Crowe, Haywood, and Jellicoe, pp. 94-112). Of these, the most famous is the Shalamar Garden, laid out in 1028/1619 on a sloping site east of Lake Dal. It consists of three ascending terraces linked together by a broad axial canal with water-chutes. The lowest terrace, with the *dīvān-e 'āmm* (public audience hall) at its back, was the public garden with the main entrance; the second, with the *dīvān-e kāṣṣ* (private audience hall) at the center, was the emperor's private garden; and the third, a quadripartite garden with a great black marble pavilion sheltering a square central basin fed by a fountain, was the ladies' garden (*zanāna*). Although its original plantings have been modified, the form of the garden is largely original, exemplifying in both its ordered geometry and dramatic use of water, the classic form of Indo-Muslim garden. The nearby Našāṭ Bāḡ, built around 1034/1625 by Āṣaf Khan (Enāyat Khan, p.



126; Crowe, Haywood, and Jellicoe, pp. 113-20), probably brother of Jahāngīr's wife, Nūr-Jahān, is one of the most charming of Mughal gardens. It was laid out at the foot of a mountain and originally descended to the waters of Lake Dal on twelve terraces, one for each sign of the Zodiac.

*Gardens of Šāh-Jahān.* Šāh-Jahān's major landscape works were on the north Indian plains, at Lahore, Delhi, and Agra. His Shalamar Garden in Lahore, built between 1051/1641 and 1053/1643 (Lāhūrī, II, pp. 233-36; 'Enāyat Khan, p. 298), is the most spacious of Mughal gardens, with three descending terraces linked by an axial canal (Plate III, Plate IV; Figure 5). Its most spectacular feature is the enormous tank in the rectangular middle terrace, with marble pavilions on three sides and raised stone dais (*čabūtrā*) at the center, approached by a pair of stone causeways. More than a hundred fountain jets rise from the surface of the pool. The highest, or *zanāna*, terrace and the lowest, or public, terrace are of equal size, square, divided into four by watercourses, and further subdivided by secondary channels (Kausar, Brand, and Wescoat, pp. 24-29). Other important terraced gardens of the period of Šāh-Jahān included the Rowšanārā Bāg, Šālamāl Bāg at Delhi, and, at Lahore, the garden of Zīb-al-Nesā' Bēgom, Awrangzēb's eldest daughter, dated to 1056/1646 (Rahman Dar, pp. 20-21). Elegant garden courts were also laid out in the fortresses of Agra, Delhi, and Lahore. The Angūrī Bāg in Agra Fort is divided into four quarters by raised, white marble walks radiating from a central *čabūtrā*; they are laid out in complex but symmetrical patterns of parterres (Crowe, Haywood, and Jellicoe, pp. 162, 164-66). The Mahtāb Bāg, planted with pale flowers like jasmine and narcissus, and the Ḥayātbaḳš Bāg, both in the Red Fort in Delhi, were severely damaged after the Mutiny in 1857 (ibid., pp. 159-61). The little Čašma-šāhī Bāg, three miles south of Jahāngīr's Shalamar Garden on Lake Dal, was built in 1041/1632, probably for 'Alī-Mardān Khan, Šāh-Jahān's comptroller of works; it was named for the cleverly confined spring in the hall of the upper pavilion (ibid., pp. 138-41).

*Gardens under Awrangzēb and later.* Early in the reign of Awrangzēb (1068-1118/1658-1707), his foster brother Fedā'ī Khan laid out a terraced garden at Pinjaur near Ambala, reversing the usual Mughal pattern. The principal entrance is on the upper terrace, instead of the lowest, thus looking down rather than up the main canal, which descends from terrace to terrace through water-chutes. Parterres planted with flowers are laid out symmetrically on either side of the long canal, along which the so-called Rang Maḥall and other architectural features are arrayed (Crowe, Haywood, and



Jellicoe, pp. 185-87). Awrangzēb himself founded gardens at Awrangābād in the Deccan, but these are of no great distinction (*ibid.*, p. 183).

The Mughal “rococo” style, best represented in the 18th-century architecture of Lucknow, is reflected in landscape architecture as well. An outstanding example is the Qodsīyā Bāg (1161/1748) outside the Kashmir Gate in Delhi, characterized by an imposing gateway, complex system of basins, fountains and watercourses, pavilions, mosque, and *čabūtrā* overlooking the Jumna River (Goetz; Tandan, I, pp. 201-10, II, pp. 61-66). Nineteenth-century gardens like the Qayşar Bāg and Sekandar Bāg in Lucknow were laid out in a semi-European or semi-Chinese style (Tandan, I, pp. 209-10). Despite its quadripartite arrangement, the “Mughal garden” laid out by Edward Lutyens for the Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi is essentially of the Italian type.

The traditions of Mughal garden-craft were preserved in the prosperous Rajput states of Rajputana and Central India after they had fallen into decline elsewhere. Rajput gardens in the Mughal style, located in palaces or below the dams of artificial irrigation lakes are found at Amber, Jaipur, Bikaner, Udaipur, Dig, and elsewhere (Joshi, pp. 12-29; Tillotson, pp. 193-196).

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