



## GOL

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**GOL** (*gul*), rose (*Rosa* L. spp.) and, by extension, flower, bloom, blossom.

### ROSES

I. *Etymology*. Mid. Pers. *gul* (< \**wr̥da-*) “rose, flower,” non-Persian \**ward* (<\**warda-*) in Sogd. *wrδ* (Qarib, p. 411) and Arm. loanword *vard* (the meaning of Av. *varəδa-* in *Nirangistan* 97 is uncertain; see Bartholomae, col. 1369; Bailey, *Dictionary*, p. 378, s.v. *vala*), perhaps also Man. Parth. *wʾr* (*Mir. Man.* III, p. 18 [863]; Boyce, 1954, pp. 156-57). The Persian form is widely used in dialects (e.g., Māz. *gel* and [Hazārjarib dialect] *gāl*), but one also frequently finds *vel* and similar forms (e.g., Khot. *vala*, Semnāni *val[a]* and *vel*, and Shirazi *vel* “rose, beloved”; see Bailey, p. 378; Christensen, II, p. 182; Sotuda, s.v. *vel*; *Borhān-e qāṭeʿ*, ed. Moʿin, p. 2290, n. 2; McCarus, p. 130). The Iranian words are commonly assumed to be related to Gk. *rhodon* “rose” and Lat. *rosa* and to be of non-Indo-European origin (see, e.g., Watkins, s.v. *wrod-*). Similar forms are found in Semitic languages (Akk. *wurtinnu*, Heb. *ward*, Aram. *wardā*, Ar. *ward*, and Mid. Pers. heterogram for *gul*: WLTA for \*WRTA; see Maškur, II, p. 977, s.v. *ward[a]*; *Farhang ī Pahlavīk*, ed. Nyberg, p. 66, no. 14). Alfred Ernout and Antoine Meillet (s.v. *rosa*) suggest “a borrowing from Mediterranean civilization, perhaps Semitic, where the plant [i.e., rose] would have been cultivated.”

II. *Modern inventory of rose species*. The genus type *Rosa* L. (fam. Rosaceae) is represented by twenty species and twenty hybrids (not to mention eight “imperfectly known or doubtful recorded species”) as described by Jerzy



Zieliński in the vast geo-botanical area covered by Karl Rechinger's *Flora Iranica* (q.v.). The general distribution of particular species in some adjacent regions will be noted, but most of the numerous specific synonyms will not be mentioned. In the case of Persia, the information in Ḥabib-Allāh Ṭābeti (pp. 628-51; partly outdated) and in M. Kātamsāz has been used in this article. Persian or local names, where recorded, are from Ṭābeti and Karim Javānšīr.

Based on Zieliński, Kātamsāz has described the following first fourteen species (plus 8 hybrids; pp. 35-69).

1. *Rosa persica* (Ṭābeti: *Hulthemia persica*; Pers. *varak*), a low shrub (50-60 cm high), with a reddish brown macula at the base of the yellow petals of its simple flowers; habitat: the steppes of Azarbaijan, Hamadān, Qazvin, Tehran, Semnān and Dāmḡān, Gorgān, Khorasan, etc.; also found in Afghanistan (Herat) and Turkmenistan (Zieliński, p. 6; Kātamsāz, pp. 38-39).

2. *R. hemisphaerica* (*gol-e zard*, lit. “yellow rose”), an erect bush 1-1.5 m high, “a beautiful and characteristic species, related to *R. foetida*” (Zieliński, p. 8), with solitary yellow flowers (40-50 mm in diameter); habitat: Azarbaijan, Lorestān, Māzan darān, Semnān, Khorasan; also reported from Armenia, the republic of Azarbaijan, and Anatolia (geo-botanical details in Zieliński, p. 8). According to Ṭābeti (p. 647), “this [species] has a *por-par* [“double”] variety that has been cultivated in gardens and houses [in Persia] since times long past.” Johann Schlimmer reports (p. 492) that the *gol-e zard*, *R. sulphurea* (i.e., *R. hemisphaerica*), was introduced from Persia into Europe by the French scientist and traveler Guillaume-Antoine Olivier (1807) under the name *R. berberifolia* (according to modern nomenclature, however, the latter is a synonym of *Rosa persica*, mentioned above).

3. *R. foetida*, Austrian briar, also called *gol-e zard* (cf. the synonym *R. lutea*), an erect (3-4 m high) or effuse shrub with yellow and sometimes bicolored (yellow and red) flowers. The specimens with two-color flowers are reported by Ṭābeti (p. 643) as a distinct variety, i.e., *R. foetida* var. *bicolor*, called *gol-e do-ru(ya)*, lit. “double-faced rose.” Javānšīr (p. 156) records also *gol-e do-rang* “bicolored rose” and *zola* for *R. lutea*; habitat: Azarbaijan, Zanjān, Qazvin, southern slopes of the Alborz (including Tehran province), Kurdistan, Lorestān, Hamadān, Isfahan, Fārs; it is also reported from Afghanistan (Kabul province), Iraqi Kurdistan, etc. (Zieliński, pp. 8-9; Kātamsāz, p. 43).

4. *R. pimpinellifolia*, Scotch/burnet rose, a low (50-100 cm high) or repent bush



with white or cream flowers 40-50 mm in diameter; habitat: Azarbaijan (Kātamsāz, p. 44); it is also reported from Anatolia, the Caucasus, Ṭāleš (Lankarān), and Central Asia (Zieliński, pp. 11-12).

5. *R. beggeriana* (*su/arāy*; Javānšir, p. 155), “a highly polymorphic species,” which has induced “some authors to split it up [into varieties], usually on the basis of a single character” (Zieliński, p. 14; cf. the 14 varieties thereof recorded by Ṭābeti for Persia, pp. 631-34). It is a shrub, 2-2.5 m high, with small white flowers in corymb or panicles; habitat: Gorgān, Māzandarān, Semnān, Tehran, Isfahan, Kohgiluya and Boir Aḥmad, Yazd, and Kermān (Kātamsāz, pp. 45, 47); also reported from Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, etc. (Zieliński, pp. 13-14).

6. *R. webbiana*, a shrub, 2-3 m high, with pink or white flowers 30-60 mm in diameter; reported from Persia only by Kātamsāz (p. 48) as occurring in a few localities in northern Persia; widely distributed in Afghanistan (Zieliński, p. 15).

7. *R. Boissieri*, an erect shrub, 3-4 m high, similar to the European *R. montana*, with white to dark pink flowers, 50-60 mm in diameter; habitat: Azarbaijan, Tehran province (Lavāsān), Khorasan (Kātamsāz, p. 50); also reported from Iraḡi Kurdistan, Anatolia, etc. (Zieliński, p. 17).

8. *R. orientalis*, a shrub 1-1.5 m high, with white or pale pink flowers, solitary or in clusters of 2-5 flowers, each 24-50 mm in diameter; habitat: Kermānšāhān, Kurdistan, Lorestān, Baḡtiāri, Hamadān, Arāk, Qazvin, Tehran; also reported from Iraḡi Kurdistan, Armenia, Anatolia, etc. (Zieliński, p. 18; Kātamsāz, pp. 52-54).

9. *R. elymaitica*, a bush up to 1 m high, with small pink (and rarely white) flowers, solitary or in clusters of 2-6 flowers; habitat: Hamadān, Kermānšāhān, Lorestān, Kohgiluya and Boir Aḥmad, Baḡtiāri, Isfahan, Fārs, Arāk, Qazvin, Tehran; also reported from Iraḡi Kurdistan and eastern Anatolia (Zieliński, p. 19; Kātamsāz, pp. 54-56).

10. *R. villosa*, a dwarf species, 0.3-1.5 m high, with pink and sometimes white flowers, solitary or in corymbs; habitat: localities in Azarbaijan, Hamadān, and Baḡtiāri (Kātamsāz, p. 56). It is not recorded by Zieliński.

11. *R. pulverulenta*, a low repent bush, usually 10-50 cm high, with pink (and rarely white) small flowers, each 10-20 mm in diameter, solitary or in clusters



of 2-4 flowers; habitat: Azarbaijan, Gilān, Māzandarān, Lorestān, Isfahan, Qazvin, Tehran, Semnān, Gorgān (Kātamsāz, p. 59); also reported from Turkmenistan (Zieliński, p. 20).

12. *R. iberica*, an erect (1-2 m high) or effuse shrub, with pink (and rarely white) flowers, 20-25 mm in diameter, solitary or in clusters of 2-4 flowers; habitat: Azarbaijan, Zanjān, Gilān, Māzandarān, the Alborz range, Tehran, Semnān, Gorgān (Kātamsāz, pp. 60, 62); general distribution: Anatolia, Iraq, the Caucasus, Turkmenistan (Zieliński, p. 21).

13. *R. canina* (*itburni*, *kelik*; Javānšir, p. 155), dog rose; an erect (1-4 m high) or repent shrub with pink or white flowers, each 35-45 mm in diameter, solitary or corymbose, widely distributed in Persia; habitat: Azarbaijan, Gilān, Māzandarān, Gorgān, Semnān, Khorasan, Kurdistan, Lorestān, Kohgiluyā and Boir Aḥmad, Hamadān, Isfahan, Tehran, Fārs (Kātamsāz, pp. 63, 65); also reported from Tāleš (Lankarān), Iraqi Kurdistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan (Zieliński, pp. 22-24).

14. *Rosa moschata* (syn.: m. var. *R. nastarana*), musk rose (Pers. *nastaran*), a climbing shrub, 10-12 m high, with white flowers growing in corymbs or cymes and rarely solitarily. This species is “at present only known in cultivation and [is] often naturalized in Southwest Asia, North Africa, and South Europe”. According to some authors, its country of origin is the Mediterranean [area], and according to others it is Iran” (Zieliński, p. 26). As *nastaran-e širāz(i)* “Shiraz musk rose,” it is cultivated in many places in Persia, particularly in Fārs, where the fragrant *‘araq-e nastaran* (musk rose distillate, see [GOLĀB](#)) is extracted and commercialized.

15. *R. gallica*. Although “the occurrence[of it] in the *Flora Iranica* area has not yet been confirmed” (Zieliński, p. 24), Tābeti (pp. 643-44) has reported it from Arāk and Minudašt (in Gorgān province), giving *R. centifolia* (cabbage rose) as a synonym (sic) and two Persian names: *sag-gol* (lit. “dog rose”) in Minudašt, and *gol-e rašti* “Rašt rose.”

16. *R. damascena* (syn.: *R. gallica*, var. *damascena*, Damask rose (Pers. *gol-e moḥammadi*). It is recorded only in Tābeti (p. 640), who, however, adds that “this shrub is probably a hybrid, namely *R. gallica* X *R. centifolia*” (sic). Kātamsāz (p.

68) mentions it only as the hybrid *R. X R. damascena*. According to Tābeti, this



dubious taxon has semi-double fragrant corymbose pink flowers. In any case, the *gol-e moḥammadi* is widely cultivated in some places (notably Qamṣar in Kāšān province) to obtain the well-known distillate *golāb* (rose water); hence it is also called *gol-e golāb* (see also [GOLĀB](#)).

III. *Rose species in pre-Islamic lore.* The *Bundahišn* (q.v.), listing *gul* (rose) as one of the fragrant flowers (*guls*; tr. Anklesaria, 16.13, tr. Bahār, p. 87), mentions particularly its species *gul i sad-warg* “the hundred-petaled rose” (cf. *R. centifolia* above) as belonging (or attributed) to the divinity Dēn (q.v.; tr. Anklesaria, 16A.2, tr. Bahār, pp. 88-89). Similarly, in the Pahlavi text *Xusraw ī Kawādān ud rēdag* (ed. and tr. Monchi-zadeh, sec. 72) the scent of *gul* is compared to that of the beloved/dear friends (cf. Ṭa‘ālebi, *Ġorar*, p. 708). Mention is also made in the *Bundahišn* (tr. Anklesaria, 16.13) of a certain, probably rosaceous, flower whose name has been variously read and translated: *kēḍī* “pandanus” (Anklesaria); *kīda* (Bahār, pp. 87-88, 182 n. 15: “unidentified”); *kēdag* “*kādi*” (*Pandanus odoratissimus* L.) according to Behzādi (tr., pp. 58, 276 n. 10). The same word and flower is mentioned in the *Xusraw ī Kawādān ud rēdag* (sec. 71): “obscure name of a flower” in Unvala’s transcription and translation; “*gētik* ‘a fragrant rose’” (quoted from Steingass; cf. *Borhān-e qāṭe’*, ed. Mo‘in, pp. 1830, 1868) in Monchi-zadeh’s reading and interpretation. Its scent is compared to that of *hu-niyāg[ān]*, i.e., people of noble ancestry. For a different identification of this flower, see below.

According to the *Nowruz-nāma* (attributed to ‘Omar Ḳayyām), the mythical Iranian sovereign Ferēdūn (q.v.), among other innovations, “originated the *gol* (rose), the violet, the water lily, and the like in the garden.”

IV. *In New Persian literature.* The rose has had a predominant place in classical Persian poetry (e.g., see Ḥāfez, p. 140, addressing it as *pādšāh-e ḥosn* “king of beauty”), where it is sometimes called *gol-e sorḳ* or *sorḳ-gol* “red flower,” and *gol-e suri* (*suri* “red”; cf. Kurd. *sō/ur*, Pashto *sur*, Baluchi *so/uhr*, etc., cognates of Mid. Pers. *suxr* > Pers. *sorḳ*, Av. *suxra-*, all meaning “red”), probably to avoid confusion with *gol* “flower” in general or to stress redness (because not all roses are red). It occurs mainly in four different poetical contexts:

1. First and foremost as an outstanding feature of the spring; e.g., Manučehri Dāmḡāni (p. 1): “*Now-bahār āmad o āvard gol o yāsamanā*” (The new spring came, and brought the rose and jasmine); and Moḥammad-Taḳi Bahār: “*Now-bahār āmad o sorḳ-gol ḳanda zad*” (The new spring came and the red rose laughed, i.e., opened out; *Divān* I, p. 500).



2. In close association with, and in sharp contrast to, *kār* “thorn” (as rose bushes are more or less prickly); cf., e.g., Sa’di: “*Gol-e bi-kār moyassar našavad dar bostān*” (Thornless roses cannot be had/found in the garden; *Ġazaliyāt*, p. 492), and “*Har jā ka gol ast kār ast*” (Wherever there is a rose, there are thorns; *Golestān*, p. 502), now a proverb. This contrast between the rose, symbolizing beauty and smoothness, and thorn as a symbol of harshness has often been utilized by poets to convey the general idea that success in attaining one’s goal is usually concomitant with hardship, or that pleasures are often marred by annoyances such as thorns scratching the hand wishing to pluck a rose; cf. Sa’di: “*Ganj o mār o gol o kār o ġam o šādi ba ham-and*” (Treasure [buried underground] and snake, rose and thorn, sorrow and mirth go together), and Faḡr-al-Din Gorgāni’s “*Har ān ġāh-i ka dāri gol čedan kār/ravā bāšad ka dast-at rā kalad kār*” (Whenever thou art picking roses, it is acceptable that thy hand be pricked by the thorn; p. 297).

3. As the innamorata of the nightingale in an imaginary love story developed by Persian poets (see [BOLBOL](#); [GOL O BOLBOL](#)); hence the jocular expression *kešvar-e gol o bolbol* (the rose-and-nightingale country) used (sometimes disparagingly) to refer to modern Persia.

4) The delicate prettiness of someone’s body (usually the poet’s sweetheart) or his/her rosy complexion are often compared to rose petals (*barg-e gol/gol-barg*); cf. the literary compound adjectives *gol-andām/-badan* “rose-bodied” and *gol-rok/-čehr(a)/-edār* “rose-faced.” It should be also noted here that the word *gol* means (red) rose in most derived and compound adjectives and nouns (including toponyms), e.g., *goli* “pink,” *gol-gun/-fām/-rang* “rose-colored, rosy,” *gol-bon* “rose bush,” *golestān/golzār/golšan* “rose garden” or “a place where abound roses and possibly other flowers” (for the numerous toponyms with *gol*, see Dehḡodā, s.vv.).

The flowers celebrated by classical Persian poets (particularly of the Ghaznavid period) in their description of the spring include the following rosaceous species or varieties, usually determined only as to their coloration and/or fragrance; hence it is almost impossible to identify most of them with any degree of certainty:

1. Rose in general. The rose is sometimes characterized only as *gol-e sork/suri/ātaši* “red rose” (rarely, as *gol/ward-e mowarrad* “rosy rose,” e.g., in Manučehri Dāmġāni, pp. 16, 208).



2. *Gol-e kāmġ/kār*; probably a scarlet variety of rose (Manučehri, p. 31: *gol-e sorġ-e kāmġār*; for citations from other poets see Rangġi, pp. 345-47; Gardizi, ed. Ĥabibi, p. 151 indicates that this rose, found in Marv, was named for a certain Kāmġār and is extremely red).

3. *Gol-e sapid* “white rose.”

4. *Gol-e zard* “yellow rose,” probably *R. hemisphaerica* or *R. foetida* (see above).

5. *Gol-e do-ruy(a)/do-rang* “two-faced/-colored rose.”

6. *Nastaran*, already mentioned as a fragrant flower in the *Bundahišn* (tr. Anklesaria, 16.13; tr. Bahār, p. 88), where it is also said to be the emblem of the Amēšāspand Rašnu (tr. Anklesaria, 16A.2; tr. Bahār, p. 88). It is most probably a variety of the dog rose (see *R. canina* above) with fragrant corymbose white flowers; as to its color and its scent cf. *nastaran-e mošk-buy* □ *sim-aš dar gardan-ast* “the musk-scented *nastaran* □ has silver in its collar,” *ān nastaran ġo nāf-e bolurin-e delbar-i* “that *nastaran* [is] like the crystal-clear navel of a sweetheart” (Manučehri, pp. 18, 114), and *nastaran lo’lo’-e bayzā/lālā dārad andar ġušvār* “the *nastaran* has white/brilliant pearls in [its] earring” (Farroġi Sistāni, p. 175).

7. *Nasrin*. Some lexicographers (e.g., Dā’i-al-Eslām, s.v.) believe it to be the same as *nastaran*, but Manučehri has mentioned both as two different flowers in the same poem (ll. 1513 and 1524). His description “*nasrin dahān ze dorr-e monazzad konad hami*” (the *nasrin* makes [its] mouth of strung pearls) would indicate a double white rose; de Fouchécour (p. 85) defines *nasrin* as “small white hundred-petaled rose,” apparently translating *nasrin*’s definition in the *Borhān-e qāte’* (ed. Mo’in, p. 2139), where it is vaguely described as being of two kinds, *gol-e moškin* “musky rose” (probably the above *R. moschata*, called *nasrin* also in Arabic; cf. Issa, p. 157, n. 10), and *gol-e nasrin*, which in Arabic is called *ward šini* “Chinese rose” (Issa, p. 157, no.2, gives *jolnasrin* and *al-ward al-sāini* as Arabic equivalents of the dog rose). Some modern lexicographers, however, present *nasrin* as (a kind of) narcissus, e.g., Solaymān Ĥayyem (Ĥāim), Moĥammad Mo’in, and, following them, Gilbert Lazard (cf. also Schlimmer, p. 395, who equates it with *Narcissus jonquilla*, giving *gol-e moški/anbari* as its synonyms).

For a detailed description of the literary uses of various roses by the 11th-century poets, see de Fouchécour concerning *gol*, *nastaran*, and *nasrin* (pp.



68-73, 84-85).

V. In “non-literary” works (including lexicons). Our oldest treatment of roses in Persian is by the learned Il-khanid vizier Rašid-al-Din Fażl-Allāh (d. 718/1318), also an expert horticulturist, who, in a chapter on *gol* cultivation and grafting (pp. 63-65), distinguishes seven roses in terms of their coloration: red; full red; whitish red (also called *gol-gun* “pink,” and *gol-e p/fārsi* “Fārs rose” in Iraq; “tulip-colored rose”; white; yellow, including a hundred-petaled yellow variety peculiar to Pārs and “seldom found elsewhere”; and *do-ruy* “two-faced” (i.e., the inner and outer sides of each petal being of a different color). He adds that each of these varieties (*anwā*) differs according to climate and soil condition in every province. Strangely enough, he asserts (p. 65) that the *gol* “grafted on orange, apple, citron, lemon (*limu*), quince, and myrrh trees becomes more fragrant,” and that “in Bukhara and Samarqand provinces they graft the *gol* on willows and poplars □ for *tafarroj*” (pleasure from viewing something delightful or wonderful). Another horticulturist, Abunašri Heravi (q.v.), the author of *Eršād al-zerā’a*, (q.v., comp. 921/1515-16), in a chapter on “*gol-e sork* and the like” (pp. 202-7), mentions sixteen kinds of *gol*: *gol-e malla* (?); *gol-e panj-barg* “five-petaled rose” (incidentally, all simple roses have five petals); *gol-e sork-e rasmi* “standard red rose,” “from which *golāb* [rose water] is obtained”; *gol-e sork-e šad-barg* “hundred-petaled red rose”; *gol-e ātaši(n)-e panj-barg* “fiery five-petaled rose”; *gol-e ātaši-e mašhadi* “Mašhad fiery rose, having a hundred petals”; *gol-e ātašin-e abraš* “speckled fiery rose”; pink “speckled rose, with white speckles”; *gol-e ra’nā* “elegant/graceful rose,” “with yellow and red petals” (probably the same as *gol-e do-ruy*); *gol-e baḡdādi* “Baghdad rose,” “somewhat reddish”; *gol-e qāzqān* (?), with *kabud* (dark blue, azure; probably meaning “pale”) flowers, “widely cultivated in gardens”; *gol-e zard-e šad-barg* “yellow hundred-petaled rose”; *gol-e šābuni/rowḡani* “soapy/oily rose” (?); *gol-e moškin* “musk-scented rose,” also called *šaš-māha* “lasting six months,” “with a hundred petals”; *nastaran*, with white (its *rasmi* variety), red, or *mala* (?) flowers, “which used to be (found) in gardens [but] has disappeared now”; and *nasrin*. Abunašri, too, claims (p. 235) that “the *gol* may be grafted on the willow and poplar.”

In the 19th century, Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khan E’temād-al-Saltāna (*Ma’āter wa’l-āṭār*, pp. 136-37), listing the novel flowers, fruits, and the like introduced or propagated in Persia during the reign of Nāšer-al-Din Shah Qājār (1264-1313/1848-96), has mentioned “eight sorts of *gol-e sork-e mo’ayyedi*” (?) and “the *gol-e baḡdādi*, which looks like the *gol-e raštī*” (“rose from Rašt,”



Gilān; see below).

In modern times, a number of other rose species have been mentioned by some lexicographers, usually with vague definitions or equivalents:

1. *Gol-e rašti*: “a pale rose, whose petals are used” (Dehḵodā, s.v.); Moʿin (p. 3341) gives *gol-e ḥāji-ṭarḵāni* or *haštarkāni* “Astrakhan rose” as its synonym.
2. *Gol-e sorḵ-e hamiša-bahār* “ever-blooming red rose,” (a kind of) double *nastaran* (identified by Schlimmer, p. 492, as *R. semperflorens/sempervirens*), and defined by Dāʿi-al-Eslām (s.v. *gol*) as “the scentless variety of *gol-e golāb*.”
3. *Gol-e čāy*, tea rose (Dehḵoda, s.v.; synonyms in Ḥāim: *gol-e Bambaʿi/tokm-e morḡi* “Bombay/ovoid rose”; Ḥāim, s.v. *gol*). According to Moʿin (p. 3341), it is “a beautiful hybrid orange double rose, so called for the resemblance of its coloration to that of tea-bush blossoms” (a doubtful justification, for this name refers to the usually tea-scented flowers).
4. *Gol-e peyvandi* “grafted rose” or *gol-e sorḵ-e farangi* “European red rose,” “popularly said of large double varieties of hybridized or grafted roses” (Moʿin, p. 3340).
5. *Gol-e giti* (cf. *gētik*, above): “A comely rose, the good-quality variety of which used to be brought from Bašra, and whose musk- and amber-scented petals are placed in clothes to perfume them” (Moʿin, p. 3349).

#### FLOWERS IN GENERAL

*In pre-Islamic lore.* The *Bundahišn* (16.13, 16A.1-3, tr. Anklesaria, pp. 149-53, tr. Bahār, pp. 87-88) mentions, in addition to rose species, eleven other “sweet-smelling” flowers, some of which are unrecognizable today. The identifiable ones are *yāsmīn* “jasmine,” *čambag* (probably the same as *yās-e čampā* in modern nomenclature), *narges* “narcissus,” *wanafšag* “violet” (see [BANAFŠA](#)), *hērīg* “wallflower,” *alālag* “buttercup” (“anemone” according to MacKenzie, s.v.), and *kurkum* “saffron.” Further, the following flowers figure in the list of fragrant flowers and herbs connected with the thirty-one Aməša Spəntas (q.v.; the name of the related Aməša Spənta is given in brackets; the flowers already mentioned are not repeated here): *saman ī spēd* “white saman” (i.e., *yāsaman*; Wahman, see [BAHMAN](#)), *marzangōš* “marjoram” (Ardwahišt, q.v.), *sōsan* “lily” (Hordād), *ādurgōn* (New Pers. *ādar-gun*, lit., “fire-colored,” unidentified), *nīlōpal* “nenuphar, water lily, lotus” (Ābān, q.v., see also [ANĀHĪD](#)), *hērīg-ī suxr*



“red wallflower” (Srōš), *hērīg-i zard* “yellow wallflower” (Rām), *bōyestān-abrōz* (New Pers. *bo/ustānafruz* “amaranth”; see [BOSTĀNAFRŪZ](#)), *sunbul* “hyacinth” (Wahrām), and *hamāg-wahār*, probably the same as the present *gol-ehamiša-bahār* “marigold” (Ard).

*In classical literature.* Apart from roses, the favorite flowers described or mentioned by classical poets in the description of spring include the following: the violet, *lāla* (tulip, etc.), narcissus, hyacinth, lily, nenuphar, jasmine, wallflower, *arġavān* (q.v.; purplish blossoms of the Judas tree), and *gol(-e)-nār* (blossoms of the pomegranate; for an account by the 5th/11th-century Persian poets of these and some flowers of lower frequency [e.g., corn poppy, *šaqāyeq*], see de Fouchécour’s circumstantial inventory and analysis, pp. 60-63, 73-84, 86-87, etc.). Many later poets have mentioned these “classic” flowers as floristic clichés. The neo-classic poet Moḥammad-Taqī Bahār (*Divān* I, p. 500) has introduced a number of new ones: *gol-e ṭāwusi* (probably the broom, *Cystus scoparius*), *pičak* (bindweed, convolvulus), *gol-e maymun* (snapdragon), (*gol-e*) *aṭlasi* (petunia), *miḳak* (carnation), (*gol-e*) *minā* (aster), (*gol-e*) *šam’dāni* (geranium, pelargonium), *zanbaq* (iris), and *gol-e āzarmi* (cyclamen?).

Unique in its kind in Persian literature is *Ramz al-rayāḥin* (“Secret of fragrant plants”), a *maṭnawī* comp. in 1089/1678 by a minor poet of the Safavid era, Ramzi Kāšāni (b. 1040/1630-31), a kind of tenson in which the favorite garden plants of those times participate. Twenty-three specific flower species or varieties are mentioned (the Persian names are given here only if somewhat different from those mentioned elsewhere in the article): narcissus, violet, (white) jasmine, blue/pale jasmine (*yāsaman-e kabud*), red blossoms of the Judas tree, simple French marigold (*gol-e ja’fari*), larkspur, yellow wallflower, clove gilliflower (*qaranfol*), *gol-e āšeq-o-ma’šūq* (lit. “the lover-and-sweetheart flower”; unidentified), *zolf-e ‘arusān* (lit. “brides’ hanging curls”; love-lives-bleeding, *Amaranthus caudatus*), *ra’nā(-zibā*; uncertain), iris, yellow iris, white iris, *gol-e moškja* (musk rose?), lily, *nastaran*, hyacinth, (corn) poppy, yellow rose, red rose, [*gol-e*] *bid-mošk* (catkins of *Salix aegyptiaca*; see [BĪD](#)), and two unspecified items: *gol-e* (sic) *rayḥān* (sweet basil?), and *šekufa* (fruit-tree blossoms in general). Beginning with the narcissus, each of the flowers mentioned extols itself in various numbers of *bayts*, but is disparaged or scorned by a competitor, which, in turn, boasts about itself, only to be depreciated by the next disputant.

*In technical works on agriculture.* Rašid-al-Din Fażl-Allāh describes, in addition to ten of the above-mentioned “classical” or favorite flowers, the culture of the



*marzanguš* (sweet marjoram; myosotis), several kinds of *kaṭmi* (marsh mallow, hollyhock, etc.), the *zanbaq* (Arabian jasmine; not to be confused with *zanbaq* “iris”), and some Chinese plants or flowers (with their awkwardly transcribed, unidentifiable native names; pp. 95-103, 205-7, etc.). Abunašri Heravi deals with about twenty-seven flowers (some of them with one or more species/varieties treated separately). The new ones, with identifiable names, include the following: *šab-dust* (p. 200; unknown; lit., “night-loving,” so called because “it gives off its strong scent from sunset to sunrise”; not to be confused with *šab-bu* “wallflower”; most probably what is now known as *maḥbuba-ye šab*, lit. “darling/sweetheart of the night”); Astarābād hyacinth (pp. 201-2); a twining plant with “extremely delicate fragrant flowers” (unknown); *gol-e zibā* (p. 209; lit., “the pretty/graceful flower”); a bulbous yellow flower, with double or semidouble varieties, “blooming before any other flower” (unknown); [*gol-e*] *kabud* (p. 215; lit., “the blue flower”; unknown); [*gol-e*] *sepehri* (p. 215; lit., “the celestial flower”; unknown); *hamiša-bahār* (p. 216; marigold); [*gol-e*] *kašḱāš* (poppy, with several varieties; pp. 216-17); *qaranfol* (p. 218; pink); [*gol-e*] *nāfarmān* (pp. 221-22; larkspur; now called [*gol-e*] *zabān-dar-qafā*); *gol-e nowruzi* (pp. 223-24; lit., “Now-ruz flower”; “a yellow flower □ smaller than the tulip”; unknown).

*In European travelers’ accounts.* Some 17th-century and later Europeans (travelers, resident missionaries, etc.) have made remarks on the flowers of Persia. Perhaps the earliest are those of the Capuchin French missionary Raphaël du Mans (q.v.), who, in his report, mentions (p. 232) the following, not without his usual derisive tone about all things Persian: As for “flowers □, which are so much extolled in our countries, here they have but a few [varieties of] tulips [probably also meaning corn poppies], which are driven away from our flower-beds like [the weed] couch grass □, the amaranth, larkspur, stock, pink, French marigold, white and red lilies, iris, and small flowers such as daisies, narcissi, etc.” By contrast, his contemporary fellow-countryman, the merchant and observer Jean Chardin (q.v.) had a high opinion of Persian flowers (III, pp. 345-49): “In Persia there are all the flowers we have in France and in the most beautiful countries of Europe □. In India there are not so many kinds of flowers as in Persia □ [which], by the vividness of [their] colors, are much more beautiful than those in Europe and India.” Then, in addition to various roses, he extols the following with details about their colors, general habitats, etc.: simple and double jasmines, Spanish jasmine, tulips, anemones, simple buttercups, fritillary, jonquil, “seven to eight kinds of narcissus,” lily of the valley, violets and lilies “of all colors,” simple



and double pinks, clove pink, French marigolds “with a dazzling color,” marsh mallows “with a beautiful color,” hyacinth, myrtle [blossoms], yellow and red stocks, and “all colors of musk mallows.”

Two British amateur botanists, Alice Fullerton and Nancy Lindsay, visited Persia in 1934 in search of flowers. Their investigation, restricted chiefly to Solṭānābād (present-day Arāk, q.v.) district (with casual trips to Qazvin, Tehran, and Isfahan), related by Fullerton, is condensed in an appendix (pp. 185-95). In addition to several indigenous species of rose (with a particular interest in *Rosa berberifolia* = *R. persica*, see above), the report includes the following “flowers” (only scientific and/or popular English names are used; Persian names have been provided if generally acceptable ones exist): Abundant Persian lilac (*yās-e banafš/šīrvāni*), which, like the oleaster (*senjed*, q.v.) blooms, filled the air with their heady scent in spring; various poppies (*šaqāyeq*); various grape hyacinths (*kalāḡak*, *zāḡak*, etc.); *Convolvulus* spp. (*pičak*, *nilufar-e šahrā’i*); thistles “in many shapes and colours”; *Anthemis* spp. (*bābuna*, *gāv-čāšm*, etc.); corn/ixia lily “growing everywhere”; two species of iris; several species of hollyhock (*kaṭmi*); mallow (*panirak*); hyssop (*zufā*); white and yellow salvias (*maryam-e goli*, *salvi*, etc.); wild gladioli (*gelāyol*); cranesbill (*šam’dāni-e waḡši* “wild geranium”); *Bongardia chrysogonum*, “[the earthnuts of] which the peasants eat, with flowers like a giant cowslip”; a strange ruddy orchid, *Philipia* [sic; i.e., *Phelypaea* = *Anoplon*]; blossoms of the salt tree (*Halimodendron argenteum*); white and pink oleanders (*kaṭ-zahra*); stocks; blossoms of the local variety of Judas tree; and *Dianthus* spp. (*mičak*, *qaranfol*, etc.).

*Acclimated flowers.* The modern inventory of acclimated plants in Persia comprises a sizable number of species introduced for their ornamental and/or fragrant flowers. The dates and agencies of the introduction of most of them is unknown, but many of them have been imported, propagated, and improved since the reign of Nāšer-al-Din Shah Qājār, particularly in the second half of the 20th century. The only record of introduction (E’temād-al-Salṭana, *Ma’āter wa’l-ātār*, pp. 136-37) includes the following, most of them with two or more varieties or forms (for comparative botanonymical purposes the literal meanings of Persian appellations are also given): *kaṭmi-e derakṭi* (“treelike hollyhock”; rose of Sharon); *gol-e yač* (“ice [season] flower”; Japan allspice); *gol-e ṭāwusi* (“peacock [feather]-like flower”; some bicolor species of *Coreopsis*?); *gol-e šad-tumāni* (“one hundred-tomans’ worth flower”; peony); *gol-e kowkab* (“star flower”; dahlia); *gol-e Maryam* (“Mary’s flower”; tuberose);



*kar-zahra* (“donkey’s bane”; oleander); *gol-e sâ’at* (“clock flower”; passionflower); ten varieties of simple and double *gol-e šam’dāni* (“candle-stick flower”; cranesbill), some with fragrant leaves; *gol-e ašrafi* (“ašrafi [?] flower”; a species of calendula?); *gol-e šāh-pasand* (“king-pleasing flower”; vervain); *gol-e āviz* (“pendant/pendulous flower”; fuchsia); *gol-e nāz* (“coquettish flower”?); the sun plant = *Portulaca grandiflora*); *gol-e hamiša-bahār-e farangi* (“European [hybridized] marigold”); *banafša-ye farangi* (“European violet”; pansy); *gol-e mār* (“snake flower”; ?); *gol-eḳanjari* (“dagger-like flower”; Spanish bayonet?); *gol-e lādan* (“labdanum flower”; nasturtium); *gol-e dāwudī-e farangi* (“European David-flower,” large double chrysanthemum); *gol-e ḳoršidi* (“sun-like flower”; clivia?); *sonbol-e holāndi* (“Dutch hyacinth”); *miḳak-e por-par* (“double pink”; carnation); double *gol-e zabān-ba-qafā* (“tongue-in-the-nape flower”; larkspur); simple and double *lāla-ye farangi* (“European [fancy] tulip”); *gol-e ‘aqrab* (“scorpion flower”; ?); *gol-e maymun* (“monkey flower”; snapdragon); *gol-e [aṭlasi-e] dahan-aždar* (“dragon-mouthed [i.e. ringent] petunia”); *gol-e estekāni* (“tumbler-like flower”; bellflower); *sinerer* (cineraria); *sālviā* (salvia, sage); *feloks* (phlox); *tāj-ol-moluk* (“kings’ crown”; columbine); and a few other unidentifiable ones.

Among other commonly cultivated imported plants/flowers some have retained their foreign, usually altered, names, e.g.: *gelāyol* (< Fr. *glaiëul*; the florists’ hybrid gladioli), *gelisin/gilisin* (< Fr. *glycine*; wisteria), *begoniā* (begonia), *siklāma/siklama* (< Fr. *cyclamen*), *āzāla* (< Fr. *azalée*; azalea), *gol-e kāktus* (< Fr. *cactus*; flowers of various cacti), *orkida* (< Fr. *orchidée*; orchid), *rubeki* (< Fr. *rudbeckie*; rudbeckia, black-eyed Susan), *māgnoliā* (magnolia); but most of them have been given Persian names, e.g., *gol-e šarāb(i)* (“wine[-smelling] flower”; Carolina allspice), *gol-e kāḡazi* (“papery flower”; bougainvillea), *gol-e šeypuri* (“trumpet-like flower”; calla lily, arum, etc.), *gol-e āhār* (“starch flower”; zinnia), *gol-e aḳtar* (“star flower”; canna, Indian shot), *gol-e telgerāfi* (“telegraph [line] flower”; creeping myrtle), *gol-e morvārid* (“pearl flower”; snowberry tree), *gol-e setāra’i* (“starlike flower”; cosmos, Mexican aster), *gol-e ḥanā* (“henna flower”; balsam = *Impatiens balsamina*), *gol-e dogma(i)* (“button[-like] flower”; strawflower, globe amaranth), *gol-e āftāb-gardān* (“turning-with-the-sun [flower]”; sunflower), *narges-e derakṭi* (“treelike narcissus”; mock orange), *lāla(-ye) ‘abbāsi* (“Abbās tulip”; marvel of Peru), *pič-e Aminoddowla* (“Amin-al-Dawla’s climber”; honeysuckle), *gol-e mo’inottojjāri* (“Mo’in-al-Tojjar flower”; rhododendron), *beh-e žāponi* (“Japanese quince”; japonica), *ḳaṭmi-e žāponi* (“Japanese hollyhock”; China rose=*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*), *minā(-ye) farangi* (“European aster”; China aster),



*deraḳt-e/gol-e panba/par* (“cotton/feather tree/flower”; smoke tree), *pič-e anāri/šeypuri* (“pomegranate-/trumpet-like climber”; tecoma, trumpet creeper), *morg-e behešti* (“paradisiacal bird”; bird-of-paradise flower), *ḥosn-e Yusof* (“Joseph’s beauty”; flame nettle), *bent-e qonsol* (“the consul’s daughter”; poinsettia; the last two items are not “flowers”: the former is esteemed for its showy leaves, and the latter for its showy bracts).

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