



GOLĀB

GOLĀB (< *gol-āb*; Arabicized as *jol[l]āb*), rose water, a distillate (*‘araq*) obtained chiefly from the *gol-e moḥammadi* (see **GOL**), the best-known product made from rose petals in Persia. It is widely used in sherbets, sweetmeats, as a home medicament, and (in special *golāb-pāšes* “rose-water sprinklers”) on some religious occasions (e.g., in funeral services in mosques, an attendant offers it to each arriving participant to sprinkle on his hands and face before touching a copy of the Qur’ān to be read silently during the service). Reputedly the best is the *golāb* of Qamṣar in Kāšān, where *golābgirān*, the ceremonial process of plucking roses and extracting *golāb* from them in Ordibehešt/April-May, has become a tourist attraction. In olden times, however, according to Abu Maṣṣur Ṭa’ālebi Nišāburi (*Ṭemār*, s.v. *ward Jur*, tr., p. 548), the rose water of Jur (Gōr, the old name of Firuzābād, q.v., in Fārs) was “proverbial as to its fragrance, and was exported to the farthest countries in the East and West. Every year as [part of] the *karāj* of Fārs, 27 million bottles [sic] thereof, one thousand *raṭls* of *gol-angobin* (see below) were sent to the Caliphs’ court” (in his *Laṭā’ef al-ma’āref* [tr., p. 229], however, Ṭa’ālebi reports 30,000 bottles and 10,000 *raṭls*; cf. Eṣṭakri, pp. 152-53; Ebn Ḥawqal, p. 298; Moqaddasi, p. 443; *Hodud al-‘ālam*, ed. Sotuda, pp. 131-32; Ebn Faṣṣih, pp. 204-5).

Attar (or otto; < Pers. *‘aṭr* < Ar. *‘eṭr* “perfume”), a very fragrant essential oil obtained from rose water, is also produced, but in a much smaller quantity and sold at a much higher price, because (as communicated by a private producer to the present writer) about four tons of rose petals are needed to obtain only one kg of attar, which sells at about US \$5,000 on foreign markets!



Strangely, neither *golāb* nor otto (commercialized as '*atr-e gol-e moḥammadi* in tiny vials) figure separately in official export statistics (cf. the latest published in Gomrok-e Irān, for 1377 Š./1998-99).

Similarly, the '*araq-e nastaran* (eglantine distillate), believed (like *golāb*) to be "of a hot nature," is also commercialized. It is used in a sherbet as "cardiac tonic," and "good for nephritis, diarrhea, stomach ache, and 'coldness' of nerves" (quoted from the promotional folder "*'Araqiyāt-e sonnati*" "Traditional distillates" published by Mojtama'-e kešt o šan'at-e Irān Targol, Tehran, n.d.).

The petals of particularly fragrant roses are used to make rose preserve (*morabbā-ye gol*), formerly called *gol-qand* (with sugar), and *ḥalwā-ye gol-e zard*, with the petals of some fragrant yellow variety (recipes in Āšpaz-bāši, p. 47, and in Hekmat, "*ḥalwā-ye gol*," pp. 141-42), and *ḡul-ə pālūdā*, a Gilāni specialty made with the petals of a special fragrant white rose, rice flour, milk, butter, and sugar (recipe in Kāvar, pp. 206-7).

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