



Comparative Study on the Layout of Chahārbāgh and the Fourfold Pattern for Persian Garden Based on the Texts from 10th AH (16th AD)

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Abstract

This article intends to recognize the original characteristics of the layout of chahārbāgh during 920s/1510s to 960s/1550s and clears the relation between it and the fourfold pattern attributed to the main form of gardens in Iran. Two texts have been purposely selected and studied; *Irshād al-zira'e* by Abu Nasr Heravi and *mathnavī of Rawza al-sifāt* in the third khamsa by Abdi Bayk Shirazi. Chahārbāgh and fourfold pattern for the garden have been mentioned in Persian and Islamic garden studies frequently and it has been usually accepted that they have the same or very similar fundamental characters. The article starts with a literature review during recent decades that shows how some scholars have interested to interpret the term of chahārbāgh literally. This short review will help to understand how the concept of chahārbāgh and fourfold pattern have been expanded and this propensity has been followed until now. Afterward, chapter eight of *Irshād al-zira'e* will be studied and the reconstructed plans based on that chapter would be assessed and compared together. It is referred to four reconstructed plans by Galina Pugachenkova, Ralph Pinder-Wilson, Mahvash Alemi, and Maria Subtelny to clear those characteristics of the layout of chahārbāgh which there is less doubt about them. In this case, a rectangular enclosure, rows of trees along the walls and a linear structure include a pathway, water canal within it, the pool, the mansion, and the platform define the layout of chahārbāgh. A comparison between reconstructed plans does not clear a significant difference between them that can address to a fourfold pattern. A depicted painting in Herat in 899/1494 will also be studied. It shows the layout of chahārbāgh had been echoed in paintings before Heravi's manual. Comparing that painting and its pictorial structure with Heravi's text indicate that the described layout by Heravi has been recognized in Herat at the end of the 9th/15th century and it is not an invention by him. The next step will be comparing the mentioned layout with other samples with a similar structure, for instance, the garden of Bahram Mirza in the 10th/16th century which was described by Abdi Beyk Shirazi and *bāgh-i Chihilsutūn* in Isfahan in the 11th/17th century. The article will also scrutinize the layout of the *bāgh-i Shāh* in Sa'ādātābād in Qazvin in the 10th/16th century which could be considered as a garden with a couple of crossed pathways due to Abdi Beyk's description. The spatial structure mentioned by Heravi and the pattern of the gardens described by Abdi Beyk are not exclusive and have continued at the end of the 10th/16th and 11th/17th century in Kashan and Isfahan. The conclusion clears that at least during the 920s/1510s to 960s/1550s the layout of chahārbāgh could not consider as a fourfold pattern and that layout was not the peerless pattern for garden making. This study shows that the layout of chahārbāgh and the fourfold pattern are not the same and in official poetries for the court, a garden with crossed pathways has not been called chahārbāgh.

Keyword: Historic garden, Chahārbāgh, Fourfold pattern, *Irshād al-zira'a*, *Rawza al-sifāt*

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