KĀBUL: THE BĀGH-I BĀBUR

a Project and a Research into the Possibilities
of a Complete Reconstruction
THE RESTORATIONS ARE PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF

GIUSEPPE TUCCI

PRESIDENT OF THE ISTITUTO ITALIANO
PER IL MEDIO ED ESTREMO ORIENTE (IsMEO),
OF THE CENTRO STUDI E SCAVI ARCHEOLOGICI IN ASIA,
AND OF THE CENTRO RESTAURI

TUTTI I DIRITTI RISERVATI

Tipografia Don Bosco - Via Pranestina 468 - Tel. 25.82.640 - 00171 Roma
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bāgh-i Bābur as seen in October 1970</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE PROJECT. DESCRIPTION AND SUGGESTIONS</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canal waterfalls and pools</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The water</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Queen's Palace, The Pavilion and the Shrine</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Entrance Gate and the Karavanserai</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The upper reservoir</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walls, squares, paths</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport-grounds and swimming-pool</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The planting</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The memoirs of the Moghul Princes</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The travellers</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General history</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden art and history</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the Chinese influence in Europe</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the gardens in Europe at the end of the XIXth c.</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For plants and flowers</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VII
INTRODUCTION

The Bagh-i Babur is to-day not only a place for pilgrimage to the Emperor’s tomb, but it is also one of the public parks of Kabul. This double aspect explains why the Afghan Authorities are anxious to restore the site, not only as a shrine, but also as an added amenity for the benefit of the growing population of the town. In considering the restoration this must be kept in mind from the beginning.

A start has already been made when Shâh-Jahân’s Mosque was restored a few years ago by the Italian Archaeological Mission sponsored by the Institute for the Middle and Far East (ISMEO) of which Prof. Giuseppe Tucci is the eminent president. In fact, in the early months of 1970, Prof. Tucci was asked to consider if, he would accept to take on the complete restoration of the whole site, after the very successful restoration of the Mosque.

It is on the recommendation of Prof. De Angelis d’Ossat, Vice-President of Italian Committee of International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and Director of the specialization courses of the Rome International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property created by Unesco, that my name was mentioned to Prof. Tucci, probably because I had already been asked twice by the Centre to give lectures on the restoration of ancient gardens.

This is the reason why I found myself at Kabul in the autumn of 1970 to start the study I present here.

The Bagh-i Babur as seen in October 1970.

At first sight I had the impression that the garden, where the Emperor had wished to be buried, was very much changed since his days and had lost its original character through many alterations brought about during the long years of its existence. The only authentic features of the ancient Moghul garden were the Emperor’s grave and those of some of his relatives and Shâh-Jahân’s Mosque, and the three remaining very old chenars.

The retaining walls and the steps up to the upper terraces and the boundary wall seemed to be of a more modern date. The same could be said of the Pavilion and the Queen’s Palace, clearly buildings to be dated not later than the end of the XIXth century or the beginning of the XXth. Also the parterre and the three fountains below the Pavilion, were much more reminiscent of European XIXth century garden art than of an oriental garden going back to the early years of the XVIth century. But the most striking impression was given by the total lack of water: the consequence was a derelict dusty site where older trees were dying, and newer ones struggled to keep alive.
This was not the garden to which could be applied the couplets:

"I sing bright praise to her colourful tulips, the beauty of her trees makes me blush.
How sparkling the water flows from Pul-i-Mastaan!
May Allah protect such beauty from the evil eye of man!" (1)

Although I was supplied by the Afghan Authorities with a very good aerial photograph of the site in scale 1:2000 (2), I thought, considering the general situation, that the first step was to make a measured survey of the site, including all the existing features, the position of the remaining trees, the buildings, the fountains, to enable us to base our recommendations on factual findings. The survey plan (Plan 1), though absolutely essential for the subsequent project, is only a statement of the present situation.

What was that garden like in the old times when Bābur chose it particularly, amongst many others, for his last resting place? Historically, what vicissitudes had happened in the long years of its existence?

The research into history became imperative. In this respect I owe a great deal to Prof. Maurizio Taddei, whose knowledge of Afghanistan is deep and extensive. His help and generous advice throughout the long months of research and the formulation of the restoration project has been invaluable. I thank him here most sincerely.

But it has not been easy, as we lack documentary evidence. The gardens that still exist, as for instance Nimla, are of a later period (3). The miniatures showing Bābur supervising the planting of one of his gardens, the Bāgh-i Wafā, belong to the later years of the reign of Akbar, nearly 70 years after Bābur's death, and, though charming as works of art, it is difficult from them to visualize a garden in its reality, though they are full of suggestive details. Hence I had to base the whole research on the written words of old and modern texts to be able, gradually, to find a logical sequence from Bābur's times to our own century and to find suitable answers to very many questions, doubts and conjectures, which beset us when considering the actual state of the site to-day. I must add here that information regarding the Bāgh-i Bābur in our own times is very sketchy, and it is difficult therefore to be exact on the changes which have occurred since the beginning of the present century.

But what emerged clearly, while delving into the past, was the importance of the Bāgh-i Bābur as one of the very few links we possess to-day of a garden tradition which for more than 2500 years has subsisted in spite of wars and destructions, from the Greco-Hellenistic world and

---


(2) I must here thank the Afghan Ministry of Housing for the help given to carry out the survey and Mr. A. W. Tarzi of the Afghan Tourist Office for his valuable suggestions.

(3) The canals of the early Persian gardens were not larger than 3 feet (about 1 metre), enlarged on each side by stonework; the slabs being of about 18 inches to 2 feet (45/60 cm) each side. But during the evolution, which took place in India after Babur, the channels were gradually enlarged to become streams several metres wide, like at Shalimar and Achibald in Kashmir. Nimla, for this reason, can be dated to an intermediate period, probably from the end of the XVIth to the beginning of the XVIIth century, during the reigns of Akbar and Jehangir. But it does certainly not belong to Babur's time.
the Islamic culture to the India of the Moghuls Emperors. In the cross roads of Asia, Bābur appears as a milestone. Having lost the Persian gardens of Samarkand, this one, which precedes the great achievements of Shāh 'Abbās I and of Akbar, has remained, though in poor condition, up to our own times at least as a spacial entity.

To save it and to try to bring back some of its former splendours is probably a task which our modern age cannot discard.
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Bābūr in his lifetime planted and built several gardens at Kābul or in its surroundings (1). All these gardens, including the Bāgh–i Bābūr belong to the Persian garden tradition that, Bābūr, 14 years old, saw at Samarkand and Herat.

The gardens of Samarkand in his time were famous, though more than a hundred years old. The ambassadors (2) went to see a chamber which the Lord Timur Beg had set apart for feasting and the company of his women. In front of it there was a great garden, in which were many shady trees and all kinds of fruit trees, with channels of water flowing among them. The garden was so large that a great number of people might enjoy themselves there in the summer with great delight, near the fountains and under the shade of the trees”. And also in another garden they saw “there was a very lofty entrance made of bricks, and adorned with tiles in blue and gold”; and in the garden amongst the trees “there were avenues and wooden terraces on which people walked and there were many tents and awnings of red cloth, and of various coloured silks some embroidered in various ways and other plain. In the centre of the garden there was a beautiful house built in the shape of a cross and very richly adorned ...” (3).

Here we have all the elements of a Persian enclosed paradise: the shady trees, the channels of water and the jets springing out of flat pools, the awnings and tents, the platforms where to erect them and where to spread the carpets to sit upon, the Pavilion in the centre and the magnificent gate at its entrance.

All these features were composed on a strictly geometrical pattern on sloping ground, the central axis enhanced by canals flowing from terrace to terrace with waterfalls into the larger pools generally in front of a Pavilion.

The geometrical and axial lay-out is still that of the Hellenistic tradition of earlier times, but taken over by the Mohammedans in their conquests through Asia Minor (4). The need of irri-


(2) The narrative of the Embassy of Ruy Gonzalez de Clavijo to the Court of Timur at Samarkand 1403-6 AD translated by C. R. Markham. Kakluyt Society Series I, no. 26, 1870, pp. 126 and 136.


(4) It is a historical fact that the new conquerors in Asia Minor evolved their own style on preceding gardens. They had two great examples before them: the Ancient West Asian one, as they found it evolved and modified through Mesopotamia and Iran, and the Roman one, as they found it in North Africa. But the influences were by no means running only from West to East, but also from East to West: for instance the Sacred tree of Buddha becoming
Ideal reconstruction of a garden at Samarkand, based by D. N. Wilber on the descriptions given by Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo, Ambassador of the King of Castile to Timur Shah in 1403/1406, of the one called Gul-Bagh or Rose garden. Note the central hill where the pavilions and palace were placed, the channels of water and the square pools, the enclosed geometrical lay-out and the avenues with trees planted 'à la ligne'.

gation dictated the whole plan and arrangement, but it derived also from the Paradise garden of the Koran: the ground being divided into eight terraces with the four rivers flowing crossways through them, forming a pool sometimes very large in the middle, and other pools receiving the waterfalls gushing from one level to the other. All these pools were square in shape (1), full in Moslem gardens the Tuba or the tree of Happiness. Timur conquering Dehli in 1398 carried away virtually all the skilled workmen to his own capital at Samarkand. It was due to Bābur and his descendants to revert the trend back towards India. For the historical sequence see: Marie Luise Gothein, Geschichte der Gartenkunst, Vol. I, Chapter V, Jena 1914; D. N. Wilber, op. cit., Chapter 2; Edward Hyams, A history of gardens and gardening. London 1971, Chapter 6.

(1) D. N. Wilber, op. cit., gives quite a number of different shaped pools, lobed or scalloped, mostly taken from XVth century miniatures pp. 37-40. But I wonder if these different shapes were due more to a love for elegance and artistic quality and do not reflect the more simple reality of the actual garden. Probably more elaborate pools belong to the interior courts of buildings
architecturally these gardens were very simple, but enclosed by serrated battlements, they
created, in the murmur of the running streams, the splash of the jets, the sweet smelling herbs
and rose bushes, the trees, willows, planes, cypresses, a truly peaceful paradise, shut out from
the tumults of the ever changing world of conquests and battles.

When the twenty years old Bābur descended from the mountains of the Hindu Kush, he
took with him the everlasting memory of Samarkand. And, being from the beginning, fully
aware of his historical image, not only as a conquering chief, descendant from Timūr and Genghiz
Khān, but also as a man of culture, a real Lord of the Renaissance, he knew that he was bring­
ing into a new land, new ideas, a new culture, a new civilized way of life.

On the 14th June 1504 (1), stopping at Istalif before reaching Kābul, he notes: “A one
mill stream having trees on both banks, flows constantly through the middle of the garden. Its
course was zig-zag and irregular. I had it made straight and orderly - so the place became very
beautiful”. And again: “I ordered that the spring should be enclosed in mortared stonework
10 x 10, and that a symmetrical rightangled platform should be built on each of its sides,
so as to overlook the whole field of the arghwan (Juda trees)”.

As a modern garden lover he prides himself to have brought the Ālū-bālū, the wild cherry
of the North into Kābul. In 1838 Vigne saw and described them as being the undergrowth
under the trees of the Bāgh-i Bābur (2).

This romantic, gallant, genial Prince of Oriental history, as Mrs. Villiers Stuart describes
him in her book “Gardens of the Great Mughals” (3), had always a keen perception of the essential
elements of a climate, a region, a landscape. On reaching Jalālābād Bābur says: “I all at
once saw a new world: the vegetables, the plants, the trees, the wild animals all were different.
The birds were of different plumage, and even the manners and customs of the tribes were of a
different kind” (4).

He had also a feeling, a quick appreciation of the potential possibilities of a site: “I laid
out the four gardens known as the Bāgh-i Wafā (5) on rising ground, facing south and having the

---

(1) The Babur Nama in the translation of A. S. Be­
veridge op. cit., p. 216.

(2) C. T. Vigne, A personal narrative of a visit to
Ghuzni, Kabul and Afghanistan 1840. London 1843,
p. 200.

(3) C. M. Villiers Stuart, Gardens of the Great Mu­
ghals. London 1913, p. 94.

(4) This passage from the Bābur-nāma, was taken
from: The Builders of the Moghul Empire by Michael
Prawdin. London 1963, p. 32. See also A. S. Beverid­
ge, op. cit., p. 229.

(5) The Bāgh-i Wafā or Garden of Fidelity is the one
that Bā bur laid out in 914 AH. (1508-9 AD.) and descri­
bles at length. It must have been one of his favourite
gardens because there are in the British Museum and the
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, several miniatures
showing Babur giving instructions for the planting of this
garden. The miniatures date from the times of Akbar.
See: The Babur nama Erskin translation op. cit., p. 141,
and A. S. Beveridge, op. cit., pp. 208-414. Several
modern authors, including D. N. Wilber, make a geo­
graphical mistake locating the Bāgh-i Wafā on the Kābul
river near Kābul and not on the Surkh-rūd, one of its
affluents much closer to Jalālābād, approximately in
the area where Nimla lies. But Nimla is a garden of a
later period.
Surk–rud between it and Fort Adinapur (1). There, oranges, citrons and pomegranates grow in abundance. The year I defeated Pahar Kahn and took Lahore and Dipalpur, I had plantains (bananas) brought and planted there; they did very well. The year before I had sugar canes planted there; they also did very well. The garden lies high, has running water close at hand, and a mild winter climate. In the middle of it, a one mill stream flows constantly past the little hill on which are the four garden plots. In the southwest part of it there is a reservoir, 10 × 10 yards, round which are orange trees and a few pomegranates, the whole encircled by a trefoil meadow. This is the best part of the garden, a most beautiful sight when the oranges take colour. Truly that garden is admirably situated”.

The Bāgh-i Wafā was on the road to the Khyber Pass, south of the Kābul river into which the Surkh-rūd flows not far from Jalālābād, at about 50 miles from Kābul, a splendid halting place on the march to India. It was here that Bābur, waiting to be joined by the army led by Humāyūn before the conquest of India, rested for a few days: “Those were the days of the garden’s beauty; its lawns were one sheet of trefoil; its pomegranate trees yellowed to autumn splendour, their fruit full red; fruit on the orange trees green and glad ... the pomegranate were excellent ... the one excellent and blessed content we have had from the Bāgh-i Wafā was had at this time. We were there three or four days; during the time the whole camp had pomegranates in abundance”. The whole camp means the army, because “between the garden and the mountain (the Koh-i Sefid) there may be as much interval as would serve a party to encamp on” tells Babur (2).

The custom to stop and camp in gardens when on a long journey, became very much part of the way of life of the Moghul Emperors in India, though their mode of travelling was not any more the small group of armed men but that of a complex multitude of an Imperial Oriental Court (3).

At the time of Bābur not all gardens were lived in all the year round. He himself and his Har­REM housed, when at Kābul, in the Bālā–Ḥiṣār. The tent, the carpet, the light travelling gear of Nomadic people were still the only shelter for outside life; only afterwards the tent and the silk awnings became permanent structures in the gardens of the Great Moghuls at Agra, Dehli, Sikri, Lahore and Kashmir. But Bābur himself was completely wrapped in the more simple early Persian tradition: tank, canal, beautiful trees, fruits and flowers.

In her translation of the Bābur-nāma A. S. Beveridge, in Appendix V “Baber’s gardens in and near Kābul”, gives a list of ten gardens (4). In this list the Chār–Bāgh is mentioned, where Bābur for five days feasted the birth of Humāyūn. But there is no indication that the Chār–Bāgh was the modern Bāgh-i Bābur.

Bābur from Agra in 1528 gives orders for a garden called the “‘Avenue garden” at Kābul:

---


(2) J. Leyden and W. Erskine, op. cit., p. 142.


water was short and a canal of the volume of one mill stream had to be diverted (1). At the same date he also writes: “I had water brought from Tutum Dara to rising ground south west of Kwoja Basta, there made a reservoir and planted young trees. The place got the name of Belvedere, because it faces the fort and gives a first rate view. The best young trees must be planted there, lawns arranged and borders set with sweet herbs and with flowers of beautiful colour and scent”. Though also the Bāgh-i Bābur is a belvedere with extensive views it does not seem that the garden Bābur describes here can be identified with it. As for the Avenue garden the only other document we have is a print from the early part of the XIXth c. has for title: “The Avenue at Baber’s Tomb” (2).

Mrs. Villiers Stuart in her book says that Bābur was buried in his favourite garden “Of the New Year” near Kābul. This garden is not mentioned in the list of the Bādshāh-nāma. So we really do not know the name of the garden Bābur chose for his last resting place.

It must have been a land bought, as it was customary, or else it would mean misfortune. It was also the tradition for the Moghul Princes to keep up various pleasure grounds outside cities to enjoy during their life time; one of which was always chosen as the owner’s last resting place, the central baradari becoming the Mausoleum, like for instance Akbar’s Tomb at Sikandra near Agra.

With the eye for a good prospect that Bābur possessed, and, because in India he had been homesick for the high mountains of his youth, it is easy to imagine his wish to be buried at Kābul, in the most dramatic spot outside it on the slope of the hill Shāh-i Kābul, the Sherderwaza of European writers, looking towards and with an unsurpassable view over the Chār–dih plain towards the snow of Paghmān and the barren rocky hills which have been the hunting grounds of rulers in Kābul (3).

And, as he was an open air man, a man who loved to be amongst trees and flowers, no baradari had to be built over his tomb, just a marble slab under the great blue sky of Kābul.

Bābur died in Agra on the 5th of Jumādā in the year 937 AH. (26th december 1530 AD.) without having seen Kābul after the conquest of India. His body was first interred in the Arām-Bagh in front of the place where the Tāj-Mahal now stands, in one of his first Indian gardens.

It is not sure when he was brought to Kābul. We know from Gulbadam, his daughter, that Kāmrān, his second son, made a pilgrimage to his tomb at Agra in 1539 AD. (936 AH.) after the battle of Chausa. Then she says that the body was brought to Kābul before 1544, when Humāyūn in Kābul had words with Kāmrān for his incivility towards the Bēga-Bēgum, the Bībī Umbarica, Bābur’s Afghan wife. Had she brought her father’s body to Kābul? This is not stated (4).

But by whom and when this happened is rather immaterial. The next more weighty fact was the pilgrimage of Jahāngīr to the tomb of Bābur at Kābul in 1607 AD. (1016 AH.) It hap-

---

1. A. S. Beveridge, op. cit., p. 647.
4. This information has been taken from A. S. Beveridge, op. cit., p. 709.
pened on the same day when Ruqayya Sultan Begum, Hindal's daughter, visited her father's tomb next to Bābur's (1).

Jahāngir's visit to Kābul is important historically, as he gave several orders regarding the gardens in that city and the Bāgh-i Bābur. He was camped in a garden called Shahhrārā, belonging to an aunt of Bābur's, in which magnificent chenars had been planted by Bābur himself. Jahāngir gave orders that all gardens in Kābul should be enclosed by walls, that a 'chabutra' a marble platform should be placed in front of Bābur's tomb for prayers, a head stone be placed at the head of the tomb for which he dictated the inscription. This is the marble headstone still existing where the inscription in magnificent Persian lettering can be admired. He also ordered that the group of tombs should be enclosed by a marble screen. This screen was eventually placed there in the time of Shāh-Jahān, probably carved by Hindustani stonecutters who had been working at the Tāj-Mahal.

Shāh-Jahān's first visit to Kābul happened in the twelfth year of his reign (1638). It was then that the garden was taken care of and completely restored. The description given in the Bādsah-nāma (2) is as follows:

"The burial garden was 500 yards (gaz) long; its ground was in 15 terraces 30 yards apart. On the 15th terrace is the tomb of Ruquiya Sultan Begum (she was a daughter of Hindal, a grand daughter of Babur, was Akbar's first wife and brought up Shah-Jahan). Babur's tomb is on the 14th terrace. In accordance with his will, no building was erected over it; but Shah-Jahan built a small marble Mosque on the terrace below. It was begun in the 17th year of Shah-Jahan's reign and was finished in the 19th after the conquest of Balkh and Badakstan at a cost of 30,000 rupees. From the 12th terrace running water flows along the line (rusta) of the avenue; but its 12 waterfalls, because not constructed in cemented stones, had crumbled away and their charm was lost; orders were given therefore to renew them lastingly; to make a small reservoir below each fall and to finish with Kabul marble the edges of the channels and the waterfalls and the borders of the reservoirs. And on the 9th terrace there was to be a reservoir 11 × 11 yards (9.90 × 9.90 m), bordered with Kabul Marble, and on the 10th terrace one 15 × 15 yards (13.50 × 13.50 m) also with marble borders, and at the entrance another 15 × 15 yards. And there was to be a Gateway adorned with gilded cupolas befitting that place, and beyond (peshl the Gateway, a square station one side of which should be the garden wall, and the other three filled with cells; that running water should pass through the middle of it, so that the destitute and poor people, who might gather there should eat their food in those cells sheltered from the hardships of snow and rain".

While Jahāngir's orders were on the whole limited to a few improvements, those of Shāh-Jahān on the contrary have considerable more weight and purpose. He was trying to give to the garden a character more befitting a Mausoleum. He could not alter Bābur's wish of a simple slab under the sky, nor could he change the general lay-out and the natural environment; but with the Marble

---

(1) A. Roger and H. Beveridge, Memoirs of Jahangir. Tuzuki-i Jedangiri Royal Asiatic Society 1909-1914, i 106. The Shahhrārā is still partly in existence as one of the modern parks of Kābul.

(2) The description of the Bāgh-i Bābur in Shāh-Jahān's time was found in A. S. Beveridge, op. cit., Appendix V, but described apart from the list of 10 gardens (1; c.p. 588). It is clear that it had been taken from the Badsah Nama op. cit.
screen, the Mosque, the pools, the waterfalls built in stone, the imposing Gateway and the Karavanserai, he was creating a linear composition on the main axis, well at the height of the Moghul tradition, which had then reached with the Tāj-Mahal and the Black Pavilion at Shalimar on Lake Dal in Kashmir the peak of its splendours. Not for nothing Shāh-Jahān was the greatest builder of the Dynasty.

But after him there are no more news on the Bāgh-i Bābur. Probably his orders were carried out considering the descriptions we have on the Mosque, the Marble screen, the waterfalls, written in the earlier part of the XIXth century by European travellers. But no one mentions the great Gateway, and only a few speak of a Mosque near the Kabul river at the bottom of the garden. Charles Masson is the only one to record the Karavanserai (1).

In 1842 a severe earthquake hit Kabul. The damage was considerable: battlements, walls, houses in ruins. When W. L. Walton visited the Bāgh-i Bābur in 1846 he says that "once" the garden was enclosed by walls of unfired bricks. J. N. Allen in 1843 notes that "The Mosque was in good and substantial repair". But later in 1895 J. A. Gray, Abdur Rahamn's surgeon, speaks of some pillars supporting the Mosque's roof.

After the Moghul Dynasty the country passed through a very unsettled period – wars and a succession of different rulers. Therefore nobody had any time, thought or money to devote to peaceful pursuits like the upkeep of a garden, even if this was one of the most famous and sacred in the history of Kabul.

But before concluding this brief historical sketch with the happenings in our modern times, I wish to make a diversion in considering the evolution of the gardens since the Moghul's times.

I have tried to show how Bābur bringing Persian ideals into the country, became a starting point, a bridge between the Hellenistic Islamic tradition of the geometrical irrigated enclosure and India, where it flourished into the most magnificent achievements absorbing also local trends and ideals. The Moghul gardens in India and Kashmir, though, were still aligned to the classic ideal which consisted in a strong architectural feeling in the three dimensions in relation to each other, length, depth and height. These principles, as old as civilization itself, reached their continuous evolution up to Shāh-Jahān. But already at the end of the XVIIth c. European travellers had discovered China and a new philosophy of life and its relation to the physical world (2).

This conception was based on a different outlook, more on visual perceptions of nature in its own rights, and less on mathematical certainties. The outside space, the gardens, was planned not on a relation of determined numbers, but more on the effect on the eye of the beholder of first planes, middle planes and background: the pictorial qualities of a natural landscape. These new ideas arriving in Europe while the gardens in the great manner of Louis XIV were reaching their utmost possibilities at Versailles, Marly, St. Cloud and St. Germain, created in the realm of ideas a complete cesura, which started in England a new development, the English Land-

---


(2) This change in feelings and objectives was promoted by innumerable descriptions of travellers, ambassadors and missions visiting China. During the whole of the XVIIIth century the controversy raged among the connoisseurs or the professionals, and it would be impossible to document here each single phase. I have mentioned the most important publications on the age in the Bibliography.
The Survey plan no. 1 represents the situation found in October 1970. Most of the beds of the central parterre are missing, the Karavanserai is only present in its outer walls. The trees are far less, most still standing but dead. Mulberry seedlings have sprung here and there.
scape Park and became in Europe le Jardin Anglo-Chinois of the XVIIIth century. But unfortunately it led in Europe to gardens of the utmost romanticism loosing, in the research for sentiments, the real balance of what belongs to nature and what derives from man and disrupting the logical sequence of shapes and forms. All the XIXth century witnessed a polemical battle between the romantic attitude to gardens and a more classical one. At the same time, due to the unquestionable advances made in horticulture and botany, the gardener took the lead over the architects or the artists, so that by the end of the century the gardens were more a show of horticultural ability, eclectic, of dubious artistic substance which generically is called ‘Fin de Siècle’ (1).

It is a real pity that when the new rulers of Afghanistan at the end of the XIXth century, took a new interest in the Bâgh-i Bâbur, they were more influenced by this particular phase of European gardens and did not look back to their own Islamic tradition.

The first to get busy was the Amir ‘Abd ar-Rahmân Kâhn. Probably to him or to his son Hâbibullâh are due the Pavillon and the palace, called the Queen’s Palace, two buildings which exist to-day and are worth to be kept, as they represent a genuine phase of Afghan Architecture. ‘Abd ar-Rahmân was a great builder. He loved pure air, beautiful views and gardens full of flowers.

We do not know, and no indication is given in his Memoirs, what else he did in the Bâgh-i Bâbur. Perhaps some of Shâh-Jahân’s pools were still in existence, but no evidence is available except for a photograph, published in 1906, after his death, showing the Pavillon, the residence of Major Cleveland, doctor to the Afghan Court (2). The photograph does not show very clearly the structures in front, probably belonging to a pool empty of water. Was it the pool on the 9th terrace described in the Badshah-nâma being 11 x 11 yards square?

But of course ‘Abd ar-Rahmân was more interested to foster the economic development of his country, and he prides himself of having founded the first manufacturing work at Kâbul: “in a piece of land outside the city of Kabul and still quite close to it... the site commanded a beautiful view, and on the one side of it was a canal to convey water for use in the works... and on the lower side was the River Kabul to carry all waste away” (3).

---

(1) A real assessment of this European garden period, which precedes our own times, has not yet been completely made. I mention some publications of the period in the Bibliography.  
Certainly it is where to-day several works can be seen on the slopes of the Kūh-i Darvāza, south of the Bāgh-i Bābur. In this way water which came from the same canal as for the pools and the cascades, was partly diverted for other uses and the lack of irrigation accelerated the decay of the trees, already in a bad state at the time of Charles Masson, who in 1838 noted: “the groves are no longer kept in order, and sad havoc has been perpetrated amongst the trees...” (1).

This state of affairs must have gone on, delapidation following delapidation, if we have to take into account the description that Mr. Pernot gives of the gardens in 1925: “of the 15 terraces, which have been described by travellers in rapturous words, there are only some fragments of canals in ruins and a few old trees” (2).

When Nādir Shāh ascended the throne of Afghanistan, the Bāgh-i Bābur took a new lease of life; but it took more and more the character of a public play-ground with the construction of swimming-pools and enormous water reservoirs, the top one with a capacity of nearly 6200 cubic metres. New trees were planted along the central parterre; in fact the few trees still existing along it are probably not older than 25 to 30 years. But their selection has not been very happy, not based on local trees nor on the garden’s tradition. Walls were built or repaired on the higher terraces, and Babur’s tomb was protected by a small pavilion of very doubtful architectural value. It was probably then, that the old chenar under the Mosque was enclosed into a walled platform, probably to prolong its life with the renovation of the root system.

Whoever looked at the central parterre from the Pavilion saw a flower garden around the three fountains, descending from terrace to terrace. But the sound of water running from one level to the other was missing. But if “the spirit of the garden Paradises of Europe hides in the flowers, the grass, the trees, the soul of an Eastern garden lies in none of these: it is centred in the running water which alone makes its other beauties possible”. And also: “In Europe when speaking of fountains the actual sculpture and stone work are, as a rule intended and understood, whereas in India (and we could add Persia as well) the term implies the water jet itself springing out of the water surface” (3). So the present fountains at the Bāgh-i Bābur do not belong to the composition of a garden in the Persian tradition. Bābur was never responsible for one of the existing three.

The whole conception of the central parterre we see to-day, is European and not Islamic. It was not that the Persians or Turks or Indians had no flowers in their gardens: actually everything was conceived and organized to enjoy flowering trees, roses and sheets of bulbs and sweet smelling herbs (4). But the main theme was the water giving life to all the rest.

---

L’inquietude de l’orient: en Asie Musulmane.
(3) C. M. Villiers Stuart, op. cit., pp. 10 and 145.
(4) On the question of flowers and plants used in these gardens, see the last paragraph of this study.

see also Wilber, op. cit., pp. 37 and 40.
THE PROJECT – DESCRIPTION AND SUGGESTIONS

In the light of the historical research and of the actual state of the garden, it is evident that to bring back the Bāgh-i Bābur to its former splendours, is not a question of a restoration, but of a complete reconstruction of a lost environment. Only by bringing back the grove of magnificent trees, the murmur of water falling from terrace to terrace can we hope to achieve that something which made Bābur choose this site as his last resting place. It would also befit the tradition: a place for pilgrimage and a holiday resort for the people of Kābul (1).

But to-day we cannot ignore that later additions like the Queen’s Palace and the Pavilion have a great weight in the general composition; with the shrine (the tombs and the Mosque) they are the main structural elements, which have to be restored and rendered functional for the modern needs of the Kābul citizens. The same applies to the swimming-pool and the upper reservoir, though less important in the general lay-out. They are to-day derelict and incongruous, but they must become an integral part of the design. Of course the real problem is the water and the reafforestation of the site.

All these points have been considered in the project I present here in two solutions both valid: See Plans 7 and 9 (2). Plan 7 with an open parterre in front of the Pavilion, while Plan 9 is a reconstruction based on the descriptions of the XIXth century travellers, and gives more importance to the Avenue and the presence of magnificent trees. But as on the site, there is very little to be absolutely sure one way or another, I have also analysed several other aspects deriving from observations on the site, on the descriptions which have reached us and from the aerial photograph of the Afghan Authorities. This photo taken evidently some years ago, compared with the survey, shows how the decadence of the whole site is to-day much more advanced.

Canal, waterfalls and pools

During the survey a few tests were carried out to find where the canal and the pools had been (3) but not complete and not enough to know for certain: definitely there are foun-

(1) This has been so from times immemorial. Fairs "mela" were organized under the trees, girls danced in their shade to the soft tones of the lyre and the tambourine – families made festive excursions to the garden and even to-day it is used by children from neighbouring schools. See also: Charles Masson, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 241.

(2) For the Plans and Drawings I am indebted to the help of Mrs Elena Morandi, whom I thank most heartily.

(3) I am indebted to the Italian Embassy at Kabul, among much other kind help, for this search giving me their gardener with pick and spade. My thanks are due specially to Dr. Ungaro and the Afghan gardener.
Plan 3 – A possible solution to the earlier position of the canal and waterfalls based on the line shown on the aerial photograph.

Plan 4 – A second alternative suggested specially by the XIXth century descriptions and by Atkinson's print of a channel parallel to the Mecca direction but besides the Mosque.
Plan 5 – This is a suggestion based on the description given in the Badshah Nama, with the main axis corresponding to the Mecca direction very much as it is to-day. But the first pool was where the Pavillion now stands. It has been chosen for the detailed plan no. 7.

Plan 6 – This is the fourth alternative. It is based on the description that Charles Masson in 1838 gave of the Bagh-i-Babur with the Avenue running along the channel and the waterfalls, and having the first pool among the Chenars on the left. It has been chosen for the detailed plan no. 9.
dations of a wall, the length of which is of about 100 m, running parallel to the central parterre on the right of it looking up towards the pavilion. There are also, under the actual level, in the centre of the lower square and in front of the Karavanserai, rests of foundations probably of a pool. See Survey Plan no. 1.

If this will be proved, then Shāh-Jahān’s canal, pools and waterfalls were on the central axis of the modern parterre. See Plans 5 and 7.

There are still people in Kābul who remember from their youth three square pools: one below, one in the middle, one on the terrace immediately under the Pavilion. This may be confirmed by the photograph of Major Cleveland’s Residence in the Pavilion. See Photo 4. But even so, doubts still remain for two reasons:

a) was it possible that the lay of the land in older times was on a different angle to the modern one?

b) most descriptions speak of the waterfall as beside the Mosque, not below it.

I have tried to reconstruct graphically the different possibilities in 4 sketches: plans nos. 3-6.

Plan no. 3: In the aerial photograph there seems to be a line coming from a lost garden on the other side of the road leading to the upper entrance to the Bāgh-i Bābur, that enters the grounds on a parallel line to the orientation of the Queen’s Palace, but on a different angle to the central line corresponding to the direction of the Mecca, on which the Mosque and the tombs are directed. Also there are, in the photograph, the rest of a particular structure, which might be the foundations of the Gate ordered by Shāh-Jahān. Its inclination is almost parallel to the line mentioned. Was then the canal running from above to the centre of this structure? It is possible. It would answer the fact of the cascade starting from the 12th terrace beside the Mosque and reaching with the last pool the lower level in front of the gate. But then the actual position of the Pavilion becomes a nonsense.

Plan no. 4: The second alternative is that which is suggested by some of the early XIXth century descriptions of a cascade beside the Mosque, but parallel to the direction of the Mecca. This solution would justify the foundations of an earlier wall running on the same lines. But it does not solve the relationship to the gate, to the Karavanserai and the foundation of a pool on the central line of to-day.

Plan no. 5: This alternative seems to be the most acceptable. Shāh-Jahān had the canal in the centre of the line of the Mecca direction. It corresponds to the present situation, except in one point: the first pool was on the tenth terrace, exactly where the Pavilion now stands. The pool was in the centre of the grove of old chenars of which three are still existing. It corresponds also to the print included in Walton’s book and showing Major Thompson’s tent beyond a square pool. See photographs 8 and 9. This alternative has been chosen for Plan no. 7.

Plan no. 6: This is the fourth suggestion – a suggestion which explains almost all points, and is practically the reconstruction of the description that Charles Masson gave in 1832-38 which is worth quoting: “the ground (of the Bāgh-i Bābur) is laid out in a succession of terraces, elevated one above the other and connected in the centre by flights of ascending steps. At each flight of steps is a plot of chenars or plane trees, and to the left of the superior flight is a very magnificent group of the same trees, surrounding as they overshadow a tank or reservoir of water.
The principal road leads from west to east up the steps and had formerly on either side lines of sâbr or cypress trees, a few of which only remain. Canals of water derived from the tank were conducted parallel to the course of the road, the water falling in cascades over the descent of the several terraces. This tank is filled by a canal noted by Bâbur himself. It is that which he tells us was formed in the time of his paternal uncle Ulugh Beg Mirzâ by Wayth Atkeh... (1).

In this description we have: first that the Avenue ran along the waterfalls, but was separated from them by lines of cypress trees, so that the ascent was on the right of the cascades, and secondly that the tank was in the middle of the chenars at the top and therefore the waterfalls were on the central line of the grounds. The Avenue being on the right, justifies also the position of the gateway, and of the wall which might have been part of the foundations of the steps and the road. But it does not coincide with the view in Atkinson’s print of the Avenue at Bâbur’s tomb, see photo 13 where a wall was on the right of the path.

Though it is not the symmetrical lay-out one would expect from a garden so close to the Persian tradition, yet the whole asymmetry gives a perfectly balanced composition so well adapted to the site, that I present it as an alternative plan for a possible restoration and evidently a less expensive one. See Plan no. 9.

These four attempted reconstructions have been done to clear as much as possible the conflicting factors that beset us in this case, where the situation of to-day is so different from the descriptions and the orders given in the past. But only a systematic search will give us the right answer on which to base a proper plan of restoration.

The water

The main problem is of bringing back to the Bâgh-i Bâbur the water: without it, no reconstruction of Shâh-Jahân’s water channel can become a reality.

In older times, as Babur says, the water was brought by a stream conducted along the bottom of the Kûh-i Darwâza, “and all the gardens about the hill are cultivated by means of this stream ” (2).

The cut of this canal can still be seen along the slopes of the hill. See photos 23, 24, 29. Its entrance into the garden is evident: from the open channel it passes under the Queen’s Palace, through some barracks or sheds and comes out on the 12th terrace besides the Mosque.

This canal is to-day empty. Where did the water which fed it come from? There are two versions: one, that Wayth Atkeh in the time of Bâbur’s uncle took the water from the Kâbul river at its entrance into the plain of Chahâr-Dih and was carried on the western side and round the hill of Kûh-i Derwâza to the Bâlâ Hîshâr. It was called Bâlâ Jû, the upper canal, and in its way, as already mentioned, watered all the gardens on the slope including the Bâgh-i Bâbur. But there was another canal to the east of the Bâlâ Hîshâr called Jû-î Pul-i Mastân, whose water was derived from the Lûghar river as it enters the plain of Shevaki and had a course of about

(2) This information from the Babur nama J. Leyden and W. Erskine translation p. 136 is also given by Charles Masson, op. cit., p. 284, Vol. II.
5 miles. This version is sustained by H. G. Raverty, who was in Afghanistan in the time of Timūr Shāh. Describing the geography of Kabul he says: "a cut has been made from the Logar river, sufficient in water to turn four watermills, and brought into this garden (the Bāgh-i Bābur), but at present Timur Shah Durrani, has drawn off three fourths of the water and carried it into his Harem Serai" (1)

It is not certain, but it could have happened that the cut from the Lōghar river at a certain point joined the old canal of Ulugh Beg Mirzā, doubling the volume of its water. But of course, as we have seen, now and then everybody diverted this water for other purposes.

To-day a well with a pump exists in the Bāgh-i Bābur at the south bottom of the garden. It sends the water up through pipes into the old cut near the Mosque, and is channeled from this point into the upper modern reservoir. From this reservoir a sluice can be opened in one of the cabins underneath it, and the water is brought down the hill in small ditches, but not enough for the whole surface of the garden. Nevertheless, while I was making the survey, even this little quantity of water filled suddenly the silence. It was a revelation of what the Bāgh-i Bābur could have been when the waterfalls were working. Even in such a derelict state, it was as if the garden had found again its soul and its voice. But either the volume of water from the well is very little, or it has to serve other purposes. During the four weeks I made the survey, the pump was put on once and for a few hours only. The upper reservoir had barely 1-10th of water, considering its capacity. At the end of October, probably after a very hot and dry summer, I was faced with the driest conditions of the whole year.

The main problem is, therefore, where to find water. Either one tries to bring back water in the old channel, even if this means from a long distance, or to make tests in the lower part of the site for a supply from deep wells.

People in Kabul told me that the city stands on a sea of water; but, as all the water supply for an increasing population is drawn from wells all over the town, it is very doubtful how much water can be drawn from the existing water-table. Very many trees, specially chenars, in the city itself are dying; it may be a sign of the lowering of the water-table and diminishing water supply.

It must then be taken seriously into consideration how water can be economized as much as possible. Probably by creating two water supplies: one for the pools and the cascades, which could be on a closed circuit recuperating the water once it has reached the lowest pool and sending it back to the upper level. And one for irrigation only, using the upper reservoir, filled completely, as a storage tank for the driest months. But the whole area where the reservoir stands, should be enclosed and kept for maintenance purposes only. See Plans 7 and 9.

---

(1) I must thank here Prof. Maurizio Taddei for the information concerning H. G. Raverty on the water cut from the Lōghar. It is also mentioned by Charles Masson, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 284, though it seems from what he says that the Lōghar cut supplied the city of Kabul but not the Bāgh-i Bābur. As Masson visited Kabul later than H. G. Raverty the Lōghar cut had been definitely diverted for other purposes.
The Queen's Palace — The Pavillion and The Shrine.

As I have already mentioned, these three elements constitute the main features of the upper terraces of the Bâgh-i Bûbur to-day.

What is needed is to emphasize their visual relationship by creating more befitting surroundings, apart the restoration required for the two buildings of the XIXth century. In this respect the project, both the Plans 7 and 9, envisages a reorganization of space: a parking place close to the Palace and a paved concourse in front of the Pavilion. This means eventually a reconstruction of the sustaining walls on the east side of the Mosque. The solution seems possible and at no great expense.

In detail, analyzing the main points, we have to make more specific recommendations:

a) The pavilion is to-day on the 10th terrace where the first pool of Shah-Jahân was once among the old chenars. In fact a foundation of something pre-existing to its construction can still be seen on one side of it, see photo no. 7.

In the two proposals, Plans 7 and 9, I have kept the Pavilion, though this means not 12 waterfalls, but only 9.

The reconstruction of this structure is very urgent: the platform of the terrace is in a precarious state, some of the sustaining pillars out of line, part of the railings are missing; on the whole a dangerous situation which ought to have been closed to public access. See photo 6 (1).

Looking again at the photograph published in 1906 by Hamilton (photo 4) and at the photos no. 3 and 4 taken during the survey, there are differences which cannot be explained: first in 1906 the Pavilion had no lower storey; second the difference in level between the 10th and the 9th terrace was far less than it is to-day; third the portico in 1906 on the left seems to be on a lower level, while to-day it is on the same level as the Pavilion's terrace. I have not been able to find explanations to these points. Probably in the reconstruction carried out under the orders given by Nâdir Shâh, the level of the 9th terrace was lowered and the ground floor put in. This ground floor divided in several small rooms of no depth should be blocked by a stone wall as a strong foundation to the elegant portico above. The restoration of the upper part may suggest the future public use of this building, may be, as a rest-hall with catering facilities.

b) The Queen's Palace — This palace was probably built by 'Abd ar-Rahmân(2) for his third wife Bibi Ḥalîma, who gave him two sons, one borne 1881 and died 1883, and the second in 1889, Moḥammad ‘Omar Khân. The heir Ḥabibullâh, born from a former wife, on coming to the throne after 'Abd ar-Rahmân's death, gave the palace to the dowager Queen Bibi Ḥalîma as her residence. Hence the name of the Queen's Palace (3). It became later the residence of the German Embassy and in our times became a school for tribal children. To-day it belongs to the Afghan Army as a depot and storage place.

---

(1) I have beard lately that the Pavillion has been restored.
(3) All what is said here are purely personal conjectures, as I have not been able to find reference on this Palace, nor it is mentioned in the lives of the Ameer 'Abd ar-Rahmân or his son Habibullâh. Records of its construction may exist in the Kâbul Archives or Library, which should be consulted.
Plan 7 - Proposed reconstruction of the garden. The water channel, the pools and the terracing correspond to the description of the Badshah Nama.
Plan 7 – Proposed reconstruction of the garden. The water channel, the pools and the terracing correspond to the description of the Badshah Nama.
Plan 9 - An alternative proposal based on the detailed description Charles Masson gives of the Bagh-i-Babur when seen in 1838.
The restoration of this palace forms an integral part of the reconstruction of the Bāgh-i Bābur. But its conditions are rather bad, and restorations cannot be left for too long. No systematic survey has been done, and therefore nothing is known on the conditions inside. But by demolishing the unsightly sheds or barracks which have been added, a very beautiful portal, now enclosed, can be brought to light. Plans can be worked out only when the future destination has been decided: Museum, Cultural Centre, halls for Concerts or for conferences or what in the developing city of Kābul is necessary as public institutions.

c) The Shrine (Mosque and Tombs). It is important I feel, that this part of the garden where the Mosque and the tombs are, should be kept as a separate enclosure from the rest of the garden, in the same spirit perhaps as the 'Giardini Segreti' of the Renaissance. Already the flights of steps leading up to them, make a definite separation, which could be enhanced by careful planting, choosing the plants from the lists mentioned in the Bābur-nāma and loved by Bābur, like the yellow and red Afghan rose, the jessamin and the Ālūbālū, the wild cherry. To do so a certain irrigation is necessary – not as running water but carefully by hose.

Once the tombs were enclosed by a marble Screen see photo 17. "The tomb of the great Monarch is accompanied by many monuments of similar nature commemorative of his relatives, and they are surrounded by an enclosure of white marble curiously and elegantly carved. A few arghwan trees (Juda trees) in the early spring putting forth their splendid red blossoms, flourish, as it were, negligently about the structure..." (1).

Today parts of this screen are lying about behind the Mosque; others are in the Kābul Museum. Whether it would be possible to reconstitute the screen on the site is a matter of conjecture, but probably very difficult to carry out, as not all the pieces are existing, and also because of the

---

growth of the arghawān trees to-day. But a reconstruction of the screen for the sake of history and the beauty of the white marble and its carvings should be done in the Museum itself and why not in the reconditioned Queen’s Palace?

The Entrance Gate and the Karavanserai

Though Shāh-Jahān gave orders to have such an imposing gate constructed, we do not know if it was really built or just started and never completed. The indications on the aerial photograph are too vague to be taken into consideration. No reconstruction is therefore possible.

But the Karavanserai, as the aerial photograph shows, was more or less existing in its external walls up to our times. I suggest therefore to recondition it as a square patio open towards the cascades. Plans 7 and 9. Taking advantage of a higher level around the existing walls, the result probably of all the rubble fallen from the roofs of the former cells, I propose a raised walk and steps towards the centre keeping some of the trees in the middle.

The upper reservoir.

Once this reservoir was also used as a swimming-pool, with a terraced end to sit out. People in Kābūl remember to have bathed here about thirty years ago.

As I have explained beforehand in the reconstruction, this reservoir should be kept purely as a water storage and not open to the public. Therefore it is necessary to plant trees, hedges, for this purpose, to create a screen between it and the Shrine. To do so I propose to demolish the steps at the end to reduce the capacity of the reservoir to the main deep pool, to get more space for planting. The cabins under the concrete terrace should also be kept for storage and maintenance purposes.

Walls – squares – paths.

The squallor of the present Bāgh-i Bābur depends not only on the lack of water and of trees, but also on the fact there are no constructive lines to hold together the whole composition specially from the 10th terrace downwards. The upper terraces are far better, the walls defining levels and spaces.

When the canal and the waterfalls have been definitively fixed, their walls will suggest how they should be connected on the two sides. Temporarily I have designed a new readjustment of the slopes. See Plans 7 and 9, showing firm lines of retaining walls forming, in the Persian tradition, four squares large enough to give flat terraces for flowers, fruit trees and flowering shrubs.

The boundary wall, though a poor imitation of an Islamic design, cannot be changed, only kept in order and repaired, specially where the two entrances are. These should be redesigned; at least the one at the bottom near the Karavanserai.

The ground where people walk, sit and gather should be paved, specially round the Pavilion, the pools and the swimming-pool. The material for this paving depends on what is avail-
able at Kabul and of course on its cost. The paths should be slightly raised, to allow irrigation but firmly based. There are to-day only a few square feet of an old paving, made of stones placed edgways in a herring-bone pattern. It is very pleasing although in bad condition. Of course, the road entering the upper gate and the parking place should be in asphalt edged with flat stone slabs.

**Sport-grounds and swimming-pool.**

In the project I keep the swimming-pool in existence. The ugly concrete shelter and an upper empty tank, should be demolished; the ruined construction at the far end levelled up and reconstructed as a club house with the necessary services (Wc, showers and lockers); a smaller pool for children should be added; the existing retaining walls reconstructed to follow the new lines of the design; the main swimming-pool reconditioned with proper machinery to keep the water clean; paving should be provided around the pool and a small channel of water built around it for washing feets before entering the main pool, if not, dust soil gravel, will in no time put the machinery out of order. The whole area should be shut away from the rest of the garden by a screen of trees and shrubs.

A provision for a play area at the bottom of the garden and two tennis courts on the other side, the south end of the garden, have been considered. But not knowing the exact demand for these play facilities at Kabul, they are here only as a suggestion, though their placing in the general design is right. Others could be added if required.

**The Planting.**

More than planting, as I said before, it is a question of a proper reafforestation to bring back, in time, the Bāgh-i Bābur to that state of venerable grove all visitors of the XIXth century speak of. The description they give of the beauty of the trees, their masses, the variety of the flowering shrubs is rapturous. "Besides the imposing masses of plane trees... lines of tall tapering and sombre cypresses, and its multitude of mulberry trees, there are wildernesses of white and yellow rose bushes, of jasmines and other fragrant shrubs... (1). But there were also magnificent white poplars (2), some of them still existing, the wild cherry Bābur's Ālūbālū (3), the Hawthorn (Crataegus oxyacantha or turkestanica) a few of them round the Mosque, and fruit trees for the benefit of travellers as H. G. Raverty records.

In the replanting of the garden therefore, this double aspect of tall shady trees (the grove) and of flowering shrubs and fruit trees has to be kept in mind. The plans 7 and 9 are in fact conceived in accordance: the tall trees following up the line of the waterfalls, the slopes and the lower levels, leaving square open spaces at the sides for the flowering trees and the fruits needing more air and sun. But it is early yet to give a detailed and proper planting plan, that can solve

---

(2) H. Havelock, *Narrative of the wars in Afghanistan* 1838-9, volumes 2. London 1840.
all the different situations down to what Bābur describes: "lawns be arranged (trefoil), and borders set with sweet herbs and with flowers of beautiful colour and scent" (1).

The climate of Kabul belongs to a narrow belt of a temperate climatic zone, where, as Bābur tells us "its warm and cold districts are close to each others. From Kabul you may in a single day go to a place where snow never falls, and in the space of two hours you may reach a spot where snow lies always ..." (2).

On the whole, the climate at Kābul can be said to be of the Mediterranean type in its colder zones. This explains the presence of cypresses along the waterfalls. But from the times of Bābur many changes have happened, as for instance the disappearance of original woods in the neighbouring areas due to several causes. The lack of trees has changed the climate to the worst, but it is not the only factor. The lack of snow in the winter months specially on the heights close to the town, is probably as important. This is a world wide phenomenon of our present age. The consequences are: less water in the rivers, the lowering of the water-table, drier climatic conditions; less snow means also lower temperatures, icy periods. These facts influence greatly the older vegetation used to less freezing temperatures and more moisture.

The trees that seem to be mostly affected are, as I said before, the chenars. The cypresses have disappeared, and more pines (Pinus austriaca) have been planted with Thuia orientalis. All trees which withstand colder temperatures and drier conditions.

But the tree which seems to stand up to a different situation is the mulberry (Morus alba and nigra) darakht-i lāgh and darakht-i tūt as they call them in Kābul. These trees seed themselves all over the place. But even so there is quite a number of them dead but still standing. They should be removed.

The whole problem, as I see it, reverts on water. If we can have sufficient supply, there is no need to panic in front of the difficulties of the reconditioning of the bulk of the trees, which should be those that existed and are to be given that particular environment. Young chenars planted to-day, adapt themselves to new climatic conditions, much more than the old ones. I have seen this happening in very many cases, including the pine woods on the Adriatic, where a similar change in climatic conditions has brought havoc amongst the old stands of Pinus pinea, the umbrella pine.

But having considered all this, a question remains: was the grove pre-existing Bābur's times? A natural wood on the slopes of the Kūh-i Darwāza, not planted in regular lines, which Babur loved as one of the most pleasant spots of the Kābul area? Or did he plant it himself?

The XIXth century drawings and descriptions give the impression of a natural wooded slope. It might have happened in the evolution of time naturally even if the first planting was done in regular rows, as the whole Persian garden tradition shows. We have very numerous garden descriptions, though of later times than Bābur’s, showing as Chardin says "trees and orchards planted 'à la ligne'" (3). And though his descriptions refer to Shāh ‘Abbās I and his followers, that is gardens of the XVIIth century, there is no difficulty to imagine that also earlier gardens were planted in similar fashion (4).

(1) A. S. Beveridge, op. cit., p. 647.
(3) Chardin (Sir John), Voyages ... en Perse et autres lieux de l'Orient. Amsterdam 1711, Chapter VI, p. 22.
(4) D. N. Wilber, op. cit., Chapter 2, pp. 53-60 and see the graphic drawing of a reconstruction of the Gul-
There is a choice to be made here: against the tradition, my plans show more an informal planting of trees, though kept in rigid boundaries, to try to recapture the effect of a real grove, and not trees planted in rows. That is why I speak of reafforestation and not so much as planting a garden. Because I feel that only in this way, choosing an ecological approach, that means trees belonging to the climate of Kabul and massed in space, we can hope to succeed in giving back to the Bāgh-i Bābur its own old environment.

Of course at this stage, with plans in a relatively small scale, as I said before, there is no question to go deeper into details.

But the details are very important in a general composition and more in a reconstruction; not only architectural details of walls channels and pool but also how the beds for flowers have to be realized. We have a complete documentation regarding the trees and the flowers used in the Moghuls gardens: not only Bābur speaks extensively of them, but also we have lists of identified trees, shrubs and flowers from the other Namas, specially those of Akbar and Jahāngīr.

Also all authors from the very early travellers give long descriptions of the plants used and how the beds (1) were designed sometimes in elaborate patterns. The Persian poets speak extensively of the flowers, describing the most beautiful ideal garden of all, that of the Koran.

But one thing is certain: the flowers used were the indigenous wild flowers of their countries, not at all the new hybrids of modern horticulture (2). It is a fact too that a great number of our hybrid varieties stem from the natural wild flowers of the Asiatic mountain ranges: so the tulips, the anemones, the crown imperial, the jonquils etc., but above all the rose varieties obtained by crossing the Persian rose (Rosa foetida) with a hybrid perpetual by Pernet Ducher in the late years of the XIXth century, thus creating the new strain of the pernettiana roses.

The rose was so important in the Persian world of gardens that gul meaning rose, also means a garden (3). Probably the saying that Bābur converted the world into a rose garden, means that he planted very many gardens. He was delighted to find several kinds of tulips in the fields; he had them counted, they were more than 30 kinds; and he relates his pleasure in the discovery of a rose-scented one (4).

Therefore the ultimate end in the restoration of the Bāgh-i Bābur is to add to the trees, the flowers of the land in which he delighted.

---

Bāgh or Rose garden at Samarkand described by Clavijo, op. cit.

1 D. N. Wilber gives in his book (op. cit.); examples of Persian flower beds. He also mentions the dry gardens of Khorāsān NE Iran, where water was so scarce that the beds were created in a design of coloured stones.

P. 36, Plates 10–11.

2 Lists of plants used in gardens are innumerable. See Wilber, op. cit., Chardin, op. cit., Villiers Stuart, op. cit.

3 D. N. Wilber, op. cit., p. 22.

4 D. N. Wilber, op. cit., p. 24.
CONCLUSION

The study I present here is only a beginning. Much more work is needed to be able to render in executive drawings the reconstruction, and fix the policies needed for its execution.

More information is needed on several points: the possible supply of water, whether any foundations of the canal and pools are still existing, the complete survey of the Queen's Palace and its future destination, the details of the Pavilion.

As I have tried to explain, considering the very scarce autentic elements still existing on the site, more than a restoration we should speak of a reconstruction of the garden in such a way as to recreate as far as possible an example of what were the gardens like in Babur's and his descendants's times. The work is not easy; it needs tact-taste and a deep knowledge in all fields, architecture, archaeology, and specialized techniques. To realize it a team of experts is needed. But if the Afghan Authorities will give the lead, the further organization can be found.

"Paradise is the eternal abode of Bābur Bādshāh" is written on his tomb.

Befitting his memory the place of his everlasting rest, should gradually become again the Paradise on earth he loved.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Memoirs of the Moghul Princes


—, The history of Humayun by Guldaban Begam translated. Royal Asiatic Society, 1902.


Muḥammad Amin Qazwini, The Badshah Nama (Bibli. Indica ed.).

The Travellers


J. Chardin, Voyages du Chevalier Chardin en Perse et autres lieux de l'Orient. Amsterdam, 16861; London, 16862; Lyon, 16873; London, 16964; Amsterdam, 17115; Paris, 17236; Amsterdam, 17357; Paris, 18308; Argonaut Press Editions, with an introduction by Sir Percy Sykes, London, 19279 (Sir John Chardin's Travels in Persia).

A. Bournes, Travels into Bokara: containing the narrative of a voyage on the Indus... and an account of a Journey from India to Cabool Tartary and Persia. Performed by order of the Supreme Government of India in the years 1831–32 and 33., London, 1842, Volumes 1 and 2.

Ch. Masson, Narrative of various journeys in Beluchistan, Afghanistan, the Panjib and Kalet during a residence in those countries. 4 Volumes, London, 1844.


J. Atkinson, The expedition into Afghanistan: notes and sketches descriptive of the Country, con-


F. Bernier, Collection of travels through Turkey into Persia and the East Indies, being the travels of Mr. Tavernier, Bernier and other great men, Churchyard, 1684.


General History

H. M. Elliot, The History of India as told by its own Historians. The Muhammedan Period. London, 1871.

J. P. Ferrier, History of the Afghans London. 1858.


Tichy Herbert, Afghanistan. Das Tor nach Indien. Leipzig, 1940.


Architecture


Garden Art and Histories


For the Chinese influence in Europe

M. L. Gothen, op. cit. Volume II, Chapter XV.

For the Gardens in Europe at the end of the XIXth c.

M. L. Goethein, *op. cit.* Volume II, Chapter XVI.

General


For plants and flowers

The Namas specially Bābur, Akbar and Jahāngīr give accounts of the trees and flowers they used in their gardens.
The same applies in the accounts of the various travellers.
See also: D. N. Wilber, C. M. Villiers-Stuart and Edward Hyams. They all speak extensively on the plants used.
PLATES
Fig. 1 - Aerial photograph taken some years ago. The scale corresponding to 1/2000 m. If one compares this view with the 1970 Survey made of the site, the increasing decay of the site is evident; for instance: the parterre is here much more in evidence, the walls of the Karavanserai at the bottom are still existing, the site is much more wooded. A line coming in from old gardens on the right may be the original lay-out of the land at Babur's times, discarded eventually when Shah Jehan's reconstruction was based on the Mecca direction.
Fig. 2 - View from the upper entrance. The wall on the right belongs to the XIXth century palace, called the Queen's Palace. The Pavilion is seen in the distance amongst the only old surviving chenars. The mulberry on the left is in an advanced state of decay. The hill at the back is the Koh-i-Derwaza having the noon gun site on the left. The city of Kabul lies behind.

Fig. 3 - The Pavilion, a construction dating from the early years of the XXth century, once residence of Major Cleveland, surgeon to the Afghan Court.
Fig. 4 - A miniature from Baber's Memoirs Persian Manuscript, Br. M. OR 3714. Probably showing the Bagh-i-Wafa, or Garden of Fidelity near Jelalabad, as the plants shown, lemons and pomegranates, refer to a milder climate than that of Kabul.
Fig. 5 - Babur Padshah feasting the birth of Humayun in the Chah-i-bagh at Kabul. Note the plane tree, “the chenar” one of the most popular trees at Kabul. From the same Manuscript.
Fig. 6 - Miniature, double page, showing the Emperor Babur giving instructions for the planting of a garden, signed Bishandas. From a Manuscript book: The Wagiat-i-Babari - Moghul School about 1600. Victoria and Albert Museum, 1 M 276-276 A - 1913.
Figs. 7 and 8 - These two photographs must be seen together:

7 - The view as seen in October 1970 towards the Pavilion from the lower part of the garden.

8 - The reproduction of J. Atkinson’s print called: The Avenue at Baber’s tomb, dated 1838/39. It gives the view of the channel of water, waterfalls and pools that to-day are not any more existing. The only feature which connects this print to our times is the shape of the hill in the background.
Figs. 9 and 10 - The same applies here:

9. The situation to day.

10. A print published by W. L. Walton in 1844/46 showing Major Thompson's tent beyond a square pool. Even here the hill in the background, and specially the rocky ledge falling abruptly seems to be the only point in common. But the chenar on the right of the print is very similar to the old chenar still existing, though encased to day in a cemented platform. The pool therefore was practically where the Pavilion now stands. It was the pool mentioned in the Badshah Nama to be constructed on the 10th terrace by order of Shah-Jahan.
Fig. 11 - The old chenar as it is today, unfortunately seen the other way round towards the Queen's Palace.

Fig. 12 - The Pavilion photographed in 1906 and published by A. Hamilton as Major Cleveland's residence at Kabul, seen from the lower terrace (the 9th as given in Shah-Jehan's memoirs). The structure in front is not clear, but it might have belonged to a pool corresponding to the second pool described in the Badshah Nama.

Fig. 13 - The Pavilion from the lower terrace to day.
Fig. 14 - The state of the central parterre to day taken from the terrace below the Pavilion.
Fig. 17 - The state of the garden to-day looking south.
once brought water to the gardens. It took the water from the Kabul river at its entrance into the Cha-
har-deh plain. It was called Balla Jiu, the upper canal, and had been built by Weis Atke at the
time of Ulugh Beg Mirza, Babur's paternal uncle. It watered all the
gardens along the slope of the
Koh-i Derwaza.

Fig. 19 - The canal having passed
through the Queen's Palace comes
out from under some barracks
near the Mosque.
Fig. 20 - Detail of the Pavilion.
Fig. 23 - The Queen's Palace seen from the bottom of the garden against the Koh-i-Derwaza. Note the line of trees on the right showing the position of the water channel.

Fig. 24 - The side of the Queen's Palace from the upper entrance. The canal comes in next to the tree, but a diversion has been seen, to lead the water down the slope.
Fig. 25 - The marble screen enclosing Babur's tomb, ordered by Jehangir. Note the chabutra for prayers in front. Print from Charles Masson's book of travel through Afghanistan.

Fig. 26 - Babur's tomb as it was in the early 1900s, published in A. Hamilton's book Afghanistan.

Fig. 27 - Babur's tomb in our own times before the protecting roof was built (from Caspini e Cagnacci).

Fig. 28 - Babur's tomb as it is to-day.
Fig. 30 – The walls of the Karavanserai as they are to-day.

31 – The centre of the Karavanserai to-day. New mulberry seedlings are springing up all over the place.
The fifteenth terrace were Ruquiya Sultan Begum, Hindal’s daughter and grand daughter to Bahur, lies buried.

Fig. 32 - The upper terraces and the enclosing walls probably as they were thirty years ago. (From Caspari e Cagnacci).

Fig. 33 - The fifteenth terrace were Ruquiya Sultan Begum, Hindal’s daughter and grand daughter to Bahur, lies buried.